

The Royal Palaces

THAI CULTURE, NEW SERIES No. 23



THE ROYAL PALACES

BY

H.H. Prince Dhaninivat, Kromamün Bidyalabh Bridhyākorn



The Grand Palace from the Chao Phraya River



PUBLISHED BY
THE FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT
BANGKOK, THAILAND
B.E. 2558



Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram, the Chapel Royal of the Emerald Buddha

Preface

Thailand is very rich in precious arts and cultural heritage which represents a long-lasting independence, prosperity and stability of the country. These various fields of heritage have been preserved, accumulated and inherited throughout generations until the present. This legacy brings pride, dignity and prestige to Thai people. Therefore, it should be shared with the world so that Thai wisdom can be appreciated.

The Fine Arts Department is responsible for the preservation, promotion, transmission and dissemination of arts and culture of the Thai nation. As such it has compiled and published a book series of 25 volumes written by experts in their respective fields. Their areas of knowledge include artistic works, architecture, music and dramatic arts as well as language and literature. Each series has been reprinted from time to time. In this publication, there are no alterations to the contents although some illustrations have been added for the benefit of the readers.

The Department hopes that this series of books will be a resource among the international community to help them understand Thailand better through its unique arts and culture.

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PUBLISHED BY

The Fine Arts Department, Na Phra That Road, Bangkok 10200, Thailand
Tel. 0 2224 2050, 0 2222 0934

PRINTED BY

Rungsilp Printing Company Limited
85-95 Mahanakorn Road, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500, Thailand,
Tel. 0-2236-0058, 0-2266-5486 Fax. 0-2238-4028

THE ROYAL PALACES

FIRST EDITION 1963

SECOND EDITION 1968

THIRD EDITION 1969

FOURTH EDITION 1972

FIFTH EDITION 1990

SIXTH EDITION 2015

SEPTEMBER, 2015 (B.E. 2558)

ISBN 978-616-283-219-2



Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall,
the Grand Palace, Bangkok

H.H. PRINCE DHANINIVAT, KROMAMÜN BIDYALABH BRIDHYĀKORN

was educated at Rugby School and Oxford University, where he took a second class in the Honour School of Oriental Studies and a B.A. On returning home he first served in the Ministry of the Interior, and later became chief of the administrative bureau of the Circle of Ayudhya. When King Rama VI came to the throne, he was appointed as the Private Secretary to the Queen Mother and later Private Secretary to the king (foreign correspondence section) as well as clerk of the Cabinet Council and Secretary of the Privy Council. Under King Prajadhipok he was appointed Minister of Public Instruction. During this time he also served as Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and Literature, a Civil Service Commissioner, and Vice-President and Commissioner General of the Boy Scouts Association. Retiring in 1932, he was later appointed in 1947 as one of the members of the Supreme Council of State. He was Regent of Thailand until the King returned and assume his duty in B.E. 2494 (1951). After that he was appointed President of the Privy Council.

He was also Hon. LL. D. (FEU. Manila) & Hon Litt. D. (Chula U., Bangkok), Hon. Ph. D. (Silpākorn Univ., Bangkok).

Outside of government service he was a member of the Siam Society Council, Hon. President of the Siam Society, and the Hon. President of the Boy Scouts Association.

Publications : In English - The Coronation of Prajadhipok, King of Siam, Bangkok 1926; The Siamese Version of the old Javanese Tale of Panji, in India Antiqua, Leiden, 1948 ; The History of Buddhism in Siam, in the Ceylon Government Encyclopaedia of Buddhism ; The old Siamese Conception of the Monarchy, in J. Siam Soc. XXXVI, 2 ; The Rāma Jataka, in J. Siam Soc. XXXVI, 2 ; The Reconstruction of Rāma I of Bangkok, in J. Siam Soc. XLIII, 1; The Rāmakien, in J. Burma Res. Soc. etc. Commemoration Vol. II; Hide Figures of the Rāmakien, in the Ledermuseum at Offenbach, J. Siam Soc. LIII, 1 ; SEATO Lectures 1961, Allegories of the Monsoon in Siamese literature, Univ. of Indiana 1966, etc.



Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, built in the reign of King Rama V.



THE ROYAL PALACES



THE CHAKRI DYNASTY

In a work describing the royal palaces a summary seems called for regarding their owners, many of whom built or repaired to a considerable extent, as follows :

Rāma I, the Founder of the Dynasty, also called *Phra Buddhayodfa*, 1782-1809, built Bangkok City, the Grand Palace including the groups of the Audience Hall of Dusit, the *Mahamontien* and the Chapel Royal of the Emerald Buddha; also built or repaired important monasteries.

Rāma II, *Phra Buddhaloelsa*, son of Rāma I, 1809-1824.

Rāma III, *Phra Nangklao*, son of Rāma II, 1824-1851, made a general repair of the Grand Palace, built the *Suddhaisvarya Pavilion** of the east wall, and made general repair of the city and monasteries of the capital and outlying provinces.

Rāma IV, *Phra Chomklao*, son of Rāma II, better known abroad as King Mongkut, 1851-1868, built a new villa in the Grand Palace, the Chapel Royal of the Crystal Buddha and the *Mahisraprasad* in the *Siwalaya Gardens*; the *Disrobing Pavilion* of *Abhornpimok* in the group of the Audience Hall of Dusit; also the *Chandrakasem Palace* in Ayudhya, the 'Hill Fort' of *Phra Nakongiri* in Phetchaburi.

Rāma V, *Phra Chulachomklao*, better known as King Chulalongkorn, son of Rāma IV, 1868-1910, built the Chakri Residence, the *Boromapiman* and the *Sala Sahadaya* in the Grand Palace; built Dusit Palace including the *Ananta-samagom* New Throne-Hall, now the Parliament, also *Phya Thai Villa*; rebuilt *Bang Pa-in Palace*, Ayudhya; and commenced *Ban Puen Villa*, Phetchaburi.

Rāma VI, *Phra Mongkutklao*, better known abroad as King Vajiravudh, son of Rāma V, 1910 - 1925, rebuilt and added to *Phya Thai Villa* which is now a military hospital; built *Chitralada Villa* in north Bangkok; *Sanamchandra Villa* in Nakhon Pathom, now given over to the Provincial Administration.

Prajadhipok, son of Rāma V, *Phra Pokklao*, 1925 -1935, built *Klai Kangwon Villa* in Hua Hin.

Ananda-Mahidol, nephew of *Prajadhipok*, 1935 -1946, had not yet taken up permanent residence in the country.

Bhumibol Adulyadej, brother of *Ananda-Mahidol*, 1946 - now, built *Phuphing Villa* up the Peak of *Suthep* in Chiang Mai and made extensive repairs of *Chitralada Villa* and in the Grand Palace.

* Please refer to the spelling table of proper names at the end of this book.



The Grand Palace in Bangkok, was built in 1782, on the eastern bank of the Chao Phraya River. Its plan followed that of the royal palace of Ayudhya.

THE GRAND PALACE*

The leading group of royal residence in Bangkok, and in fact in the whole Kingdom, is doubtless the Grand Palace, situated on the left Bank of the river Chao Phraya. It was built simultaneously with the city of Bangkok in 1782 - 1783 to house not only the sovereign's living quarters but also many of the principal government offices as well as the extensive grounds of the Chapel Royal of the Emerald Buddha. It consists of four main sections as follows.

a. The Front Court. Starting at the main, or northern, entrance, the Viset-Chaisri gate, we have, on our left, guard rooms and beyond them the precincts of the Chapel Royal, which will be described later. On our right there is the Ministry of Finance and

behind it the Comptroller General's office, a substantial building which used to be the Foreign Office. To the south of this is the Treasury. Along the wall of the inner court are what used to be stables of the royal elephants, now stores of the Royal Household Department. Crossing the road to the east side we have the Sālā-Sahadaya, formerly a palace club called Concordia Hall, a name from which was paraphrased the present name in Siamese. It has served various reception purposes including that of being the place for a foreign state guest to entertain their Majesties as a return courtesy. To the east again of this lies the extensive ground of the Chapel Royal of the Emerald Buddha.

* This book was originally written by H.H. Prince Dhaninivat, Kromamün Bridyalabh Bridhyākorn in 1963. Nowadays some buildings inside the Grand Palace were renovated and transformed into new functions, for instance, the Ministry of Finance was changed to Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles, the Foreign Office to a part of the Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary and the Treasury to the Pavilion of Regalia, Royal Decorations and Coins and some government offices were transferred to settle outside the Grand Palace. The updated information of all these buildings and places inside the Grand Palace can be found in the book *Grand Palace* published by the Bureau of the Royal Household.

b. The Inner Court. Passing through the double gate of Pimān Chaisri, we come upon an inner reception court, consisting of four groups of main buildings as well as a few detached ones. Commencing from the west, we have the group of the audience hall of Dusit A., on the site of a former audience-hall of Amarindrabhisek, burnt down in that initial reign. The present equilateral audience hall is built in the shape of a Greek cross and named the Dusit Hall, or Dusit mahāprāsād (1). It is noted for its pure Siamese style and dignified simplicity. Its north wing leads to a balcony on which is a throne for outdoor receptions of a formal character for which it has been but seldom used. The last occasion was when King Rāma VI received the oath of fealty from the court after being crowned in 1911. Within the hall is a throne of mother-of-pearl surmounted as usual by a nine-tiered white canopy. Behind this in the south wing is a window in the form of a throne somewhat resembling King Nārāi's throne in the palace of Lopburi. In the east wing is a bed of mother-of-pearl serving on occasions of ceremony in modern days as an altar. The west wing is bare of furniture of any sort. The four wings are in fact but one big hall of audience, no partition existing between them save a screen which has now been removed

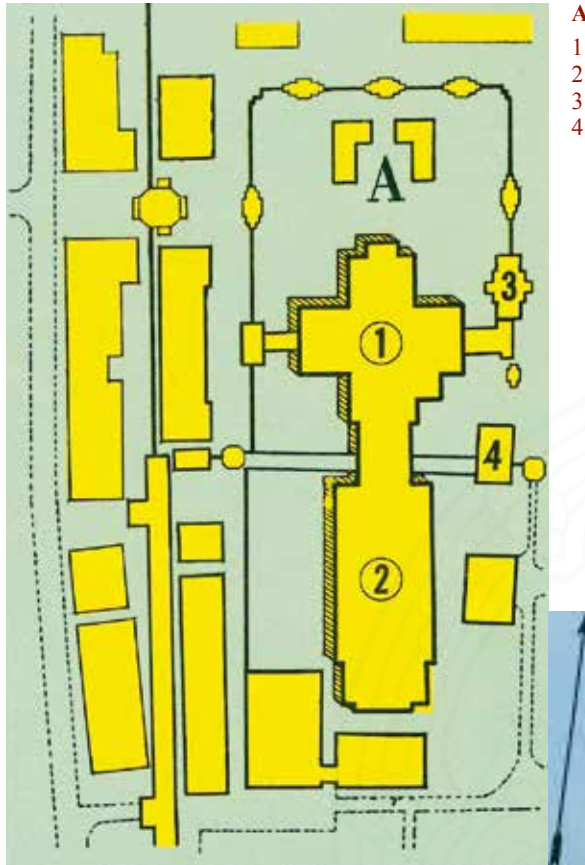
from the south wing. This is a black lacquer and gilt screen made at the order of King Mongkut depicting an obsolete ceremony of Indrābhisek not known to have been celebrated for some centuries back and has been described in print.* The hall communicates with what seems to have been intended as a living quarter situated to the south amid gardens and is given the name of Pimān Ratyā, the 'night abode' (2), although it does not seem to have been used as a regular residence. On the low wall of this group is a gem of beauty named Ābhornpimōk, the 'Disrobing Pavilion' (3), where the sovereign in the old days alighted from his state chair on which he had been carried here and doffed his ceremonial hat and golden gown before entering the hall of audience. The pavilion, incidentally, was reproduced and sent to be exhibited at the Brussels Exposition of 1958, and drew much attention.

Around this group are a number of smaller edifices, among which is a two-storeyed Council Chamber built by King Chulalongkorn for his meetings of the Cabinet Council which he invariably attended but is now turned into the seat of the deliberations of the King's Privy Council (4).



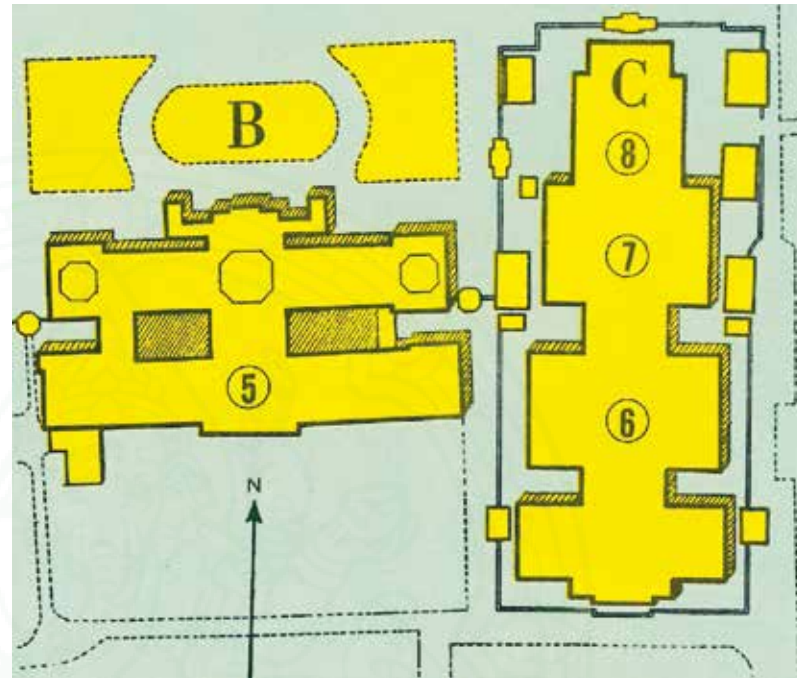
Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall, the Grand Palace, built in the reign of King Rama I. It has been used as a Hall for lying in state of kings, queens and honoured members of royal family.

* cf. Dhani : The Gilt Lacquer Screen in the Hall of Dusit, Artibus Asiae, Coedès presentation number 1960.



A. Group of the Hall of Dusit

1. The Audience Hall of Dusit,
2. The Bimān Ratyā,
3. The Disrobing Pavilion,
4. Chamber of the Privy Council.



B. The Chakri Residence and the Mahāmontien

5. The Chakri Residence,
6. Chakrapartipimān,
7. Inner Audience Hall of Pāisāl Taksin,
8. Audience Hall of Amarindra.



Door panels at the entrance to Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall made of iron decoratively wrought in beautiful designs.



Central part of the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall with protruding porch. On both sides of the porch there are large steps from Throne Hall the ground in front of Phra-thinang. In front of the steps there are two models of the elephant.



The Oil Painting of "The Reception at Fontainebleau by the Emperor Napoleon III of the Siamese Ambassador sent by King Mongkut", Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, the Grand Palace, Bangkok.

Turning now further east we come to the centre of the Inner Court **B**, with the Chakri Residence on its south front. This was built as his living quarters on the site of his mother's residence during the preceding reign and was named the Chakri Great Mansion, in Siamese 'Chakri Mahāprāsād' (5). The latter word is a technical term for a formal edifice in honour of a King and would be distinguishable by its spire like roofing. King Rāma I, the founder of the dynasty built the Dusit group and topped his audience hall of that name with such a spire thereby ranking it as a prāsād. Rāma III built the pavilion on the east exterior wall and topped it with another prāsād (12). It used to be and still is the place where a king gives audience to the populace outside. King Mongkut, modest in his taste, built the disrobing pavilion (3) just described to be an asset to the Dusit group; but also built an edifice in the grounds of his favourite residence further east and dedicated it to the memory of his father (11), Rāma II who never built a separate prāsād for himself. The custom has not been revived since the sixth reign.

As for the mahāprāsād of Chakri, it occupied a considerable area. Fronting the Inner Court is the grand staircase leading up to a foyer. Reception halls flank it on either side leading in each case to a sitting room, the 'private room' for the King to receive individual

guests on the east side and a sort of a boudoir for the Queen on the west, though originally this was intended to be an office of the King's Private Secretary, the quarters of a Queen being naturally in the living apartments behind. Directly south of the centre foyer is the Chakri Throne Room, where the King received, and still receives foreign envoys on the occasion of the presentation of their letters of credence etc. It is aptly decorated with four canvasses depicting diplomatic receptions of the past. One on the right as one enters is the reception by Queen Victoria of King Mongkut's ambassador, Prayā Montri Suriyawongse, at Buckingham Palace; further along the same wall is depicted Louis XIV's reception in the Galérie des Glaces at Versailles of P̄ra Visutra-Sun̄orn, ambassador of King Nārāi of Ayudhya; a third on the other side of the room is a painting of King Mongkut's reception of the British envoy, Sir John Bowring; and the fourth the reception at Fontainebleau by the Emperor Napoleon III of the Siamese ambassador sent by King Mongkut, a present from that Emperor to the King here. The crystal lamps and vases decorating the hall were presented to King Chulalongkorn by foreign monarchs. At the far end of the throne Room is the niello throne with a nine-tiered white canopy made for King Chulalongkorn.

To the left of this audience hall is the dining room built on the site, as mentioned above, of the original private house of Queen Dhebsirindra, King Chulalongkorn's mother; and to the right a sitting room where is hung a canvas portrait of King Mongkut. Behind these rooms again were the living quarters of the King now demolished owing to their inferior material. Behind this group of edifices are the houses of the female members of the Royal Family who lived in the palace. These were substantially built in brick by King Rāma III to a pattern resembling in a remarkable manner such houses in the winter Palace of Imperial Peking though there is no record of their being modelled on them.

The third group of edifices within the Inner Court is the one called the Mahā Montien, the 'Great Residence' C. In the first half of the XIXth century it doubtless formed the residence proper where the founder and his two immediate successors lived regularly. The group consists of the living apartment called Chakrapartpiman (6), southern most of the three edifices forming the group, containing the royal bedchamber and a big sitting room which now houses an exhibition of the regalia. It is now customary for a sovereign to pass a night after his coronation by way of actually assuming residence in the palace of his forefathers. This section is fronted by an antechamber decorated with interesting murals. On either side of the entrance into the living apartment above described are depicted seals of state—the royal lion of the Minister of the Interior, the elephantine lion of the Minister of Defence and the Deity of the Crystal Lotus of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Other walls bear pictures of the Hindu heavens and divinities adopted into Buddhism as artistic decorations. From this antechamber a few steps lead up to the inner audience hall named Pāisāl Taksin (7) (also spelt Baiśāl Daksin) again decorated with beautiful murals depicting the Hindu heaven of Thawathingsa, in Siamese Dawadhing. The coronation of a monarch also takes place in this hall, hence the presence there of the Octagonal Seat and the Coronation Chair of Bhadrapiṭh. On the former the monarch receives the invitation of representatives of the people who beg His Majesty to rule over the Kingdom and on the latter he receives the regalia including the crown and white canopy from the High Priest of Siva, this ceremony being Brahmanic in essence possibly due to the influence of ancient Khmer culture. In



Phra Thawan Thewaphiban-Entrance to the Amarinthra-winitchai Audience Hall, in the north is located in front of the Phra Maha Monthian group. Three spires over the gates are shaped in the form of crowns and fully adorned with Chinese ceramic.

the middle of the hall is an altar wherein is installed the symbolised figure of SIAM, the formal name of which is P̄ra Syāmadevāḍhirāj, or shortly P̄ra Syām. At the aperture on top of the steps from the antechamber is the spot where King Rāma I used to sit at his meals within the private circle of his family. He is said to have made regular use of this hall and died here. There is also a window opening out to on the courtyard below, where, it is handed down, on getting up in early morning the hard-working King used to sit on a bench and, looking out, enquired of the gentlemen of the court below whether there was any urgent state business and if so proceeded at once to deal with it. His son, Rāma II, erected a small pavilion paved with a single teak plank opposite this (Size 60" 110") and was in the habit of doing obeisance here in passing; and the habit has been carried on by his descendants who now pay joint respect to their ancestors,

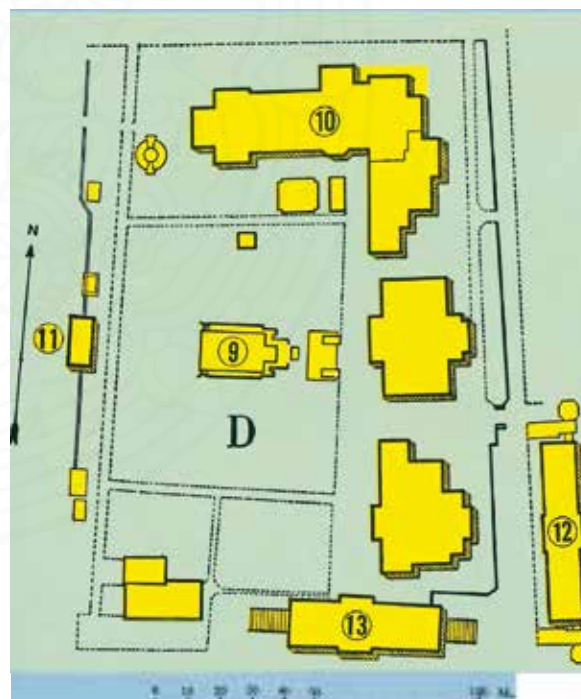
whose charred relics are kept in golden urns in the small chamber west of the hall of *Āisāl* above. East of *Āisāl* is a similar chamber where images of the Buddha are kept. North of *Āisāl*, again, on ground level is the Audience-hall of Amarindra (8). Here is placed the upper throne in the shape of a boat, which is now used as an altar. The throne proper is placed in front of this, surmounted by the nine-tiered canopy of white cloth, the *svetachatra*. The hall is the locale of state ceremonies. This group of the *Mahāmontien* is surrounded by a low wall, within which is the exquisite reconstruction in white marble and gold of the pavilion of anointment for the sovereign.

Further east in the Inner Court is situated the beautiful *Śivālaya* Gardens **D**, a big lawn flanked by artistic edifices in the centre of which rises the marble chapel of the Crystal Buddha, discovered first in the forests of the north-east by hunters who considering it highly sacred gave it to their Chief, the Prince of *Champāsak*, who in turn presented it to his liege, *Rāma* II. When King Mongkut built his villa here he also erected this chapel for the Crystal Buddha in the centre of what was then a park within the palace. The villa had to be pulled down soon after his death owing to non-durable material though the chapel remains (9). It is decorated inside with murals depicting the image's history; but parts of it having been bombed during the last war the concluding murals were damaged and had to be redrawn with the latest phases of *Bāngkok* history represented including the bombing and the present King's return to the capital.

The northern portion of the Gardens contains the edifice known as *Boromaṇimān* (10), built originally for the Crown Prince *Vajiravudh*, later *Rāma* VI, who often resided in it. His nephews succeeding on the throne, *Ananda Mahidol* and His present Majesty *Bhumibol*, have both lived there at times. Since the tragic death of King *Ananda* it has not been personally occupied. It was then repaired with considerable additions and is now used for the reception of heads of states who visit their Majesties. Around the Gardens there is the *Mahisraprāsād* (11) on the west wall, a dignified but modest shrine of slender proportions built in dedication to his father *Rāma* II by King Mongkut; an elevated hall of *Śivālaya* accessible on the east and west by majestic flights of steps, built by King *Chulalongkorn* flanking the south wall; the new wing of modern quarters which are tastefully designed in the national architectural mode; and on

the north the multiple roofs of the edifices of the Chapel Royal of the Emerald Buddha. The architectural gems thus surrounding the spacious lawn with its Chapel of the Crystal Buddha in the middle reflect a multitude of colours which at evening parties which are given there give an indelible impression of beauty which is hard to forget.

Beyond the grounds of the *Śivālaya* Gardens there is on the east wall of the palace yet another pavilion ranking as a *prāsād* (12) used as a hall of public audience where from a balcony the sovereign receives the public. It is flanked beyond the wall by the former parade ground, beyond which again are the *Saranrom* Palace with a garden of the same name, which are now given over to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Behind this is *Suan Kulāb* House, formerly residence of Prince *Chulalongkorn* which was converted after he came to the throne into a modern school. The name survives elsewhere though the original house is no longer used for educational purposes.



D. The *Śivālaya* Gardens

- 9. The Chapel of the Crystal Buddha.
- 10. *Boromaṇimān* House,
- 11. *Mahisraprāsād*,
- 12. *Suddhaisvarya* Hall,
- 13. *Śivālaya Mahāprāsād*.



Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram (The Temple of the Emerald Buddha), Bangkok.

C. The Chapel Royal of the Emerald Buddha houses, as its name implies, an image of the Lord in an attitude of meditation. Though it is now obvious that the image is made of a single piece of jade, the name Emerald has stuck on from familiarity. Its veneration by all classes of people without racial or national distinction is manifested on days when the Chapel is open to the public, and people of various raiment throng to pay respect. We can see on these occasions Karens, Burmese, Shans and the western garbed Chinese, Japanese and Thai nationals. The Emerald Buddha is regarded too as the palladium of the Siamese Monarchy.

It has had a long history to its record.* Legends abound to the effect that it owed its origin to the monk Nāgasena. Interlocutor with the Greek King Menander, or Milinda, of Sākala, now identified with Sialkot in Pakistan. It is supposed to have had a long series of peregrinations all over the East till it reached this country. Authentic history, however, gives us the fact that when thunder struck an old chedi in Chiang Rai, in 1434, among the debris of its masonry was found an image of the Buddha which, though gilt all over, showed green stone on the nose where the gilt stucco broke off. When the stucco was stripped off it was discovered to be a perfect image in green which was believed to be emerald. The King of Lānnā, reigning in Chiang Mai, heard of this and had the image taken to his

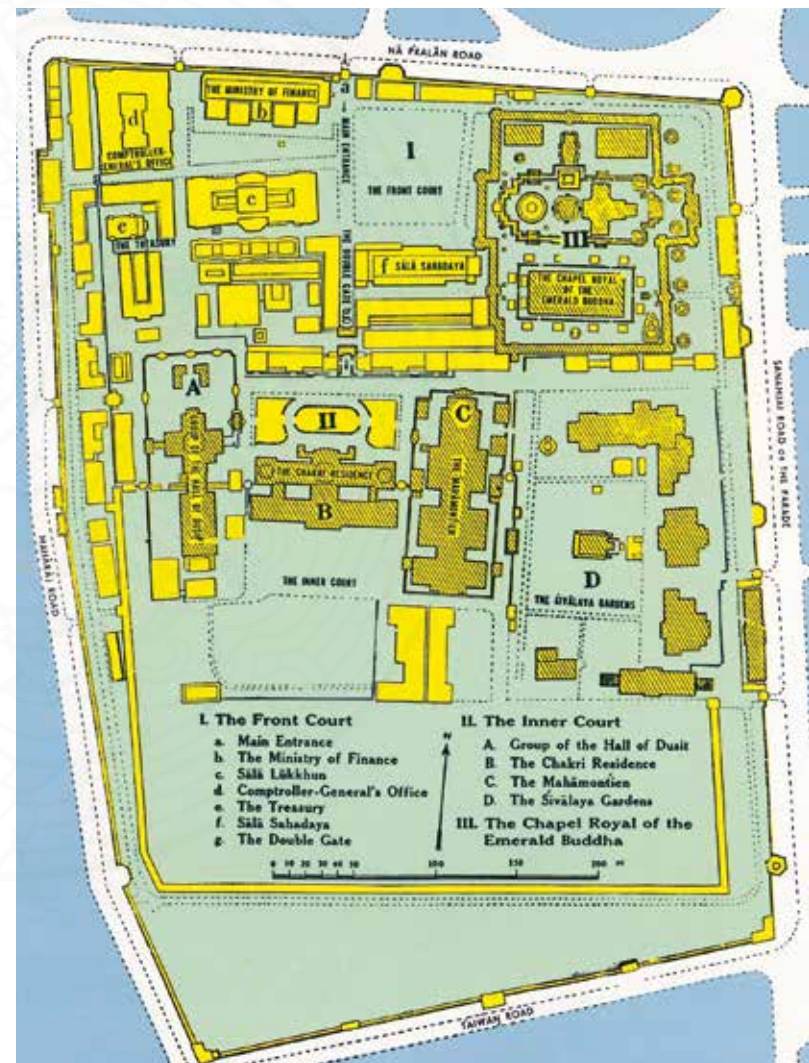
* cf. The Ratanapimpawons (Ratanabimbavaṇṣa) in Pali, date 2nd half of XV Century ; Royal Proclamations vol. I in Siamese, Vol. I pp. 1-20, 1916 ; Le Culte du Buddha d'éméraude, in JSS. XXVII, I. pp. 9-38 ; 1934. Lingat ;

capital where it was set up in a place of honour in 1468. A vacancy on the throne of Lānnā occurred and the government invited Prince Jayajettha of Luang P̄raBāng, then called Sao, to come over and reign there, because he was descended on the mother's side from a former king of Lānnā. Jayajettha returned not long after to his native state of Sao to succeed again to its throne taking the Emerald Buddha with him. He later transferred his seat of administration to Vientiane, again taking the Emerald Buddha with him. It remained there for some 215 years till the war with the King of Thonburi, whose expeditionary force under the command of his generalissimo, Chaophraya Chakri, brought the Buddha back from its sojourn beyond its native land for some 215 years. The image was duly installed in its present quarters at the time of the establishment of Bangkok as capital of the new Siam.

On the altar in front of the Emerald Buddha is placed an image cast by King Mongkut and held in high veneration by successive kings of the dynasty. It is known as the Sambuddhabarnī Buddha. On either side of the front of the main altar are two standing images of the Buddha in regal attire. They were set up by Rāma III in dedication to his predecessors on the throne. He gave them the names of P̄ra Buddhayodfā and P̄ra Buddhaloelā. Now, at that time it was deemed impolite to refer to elders by their personal names. King Rāma I was usually spoken of as His Majesty of the initial reign; and Rāma II His Majesty of the middle and the reigning Rāma III as that of the present reign. Obviously such a system of reference could not last. The founder of the dynasty soon became in general parlance 'His Majesty of the Image called P̄ra Buddhayodfā, and his son 'His Majesty of the Image called P̄ra Buddhaloelā; and the references became later shortened into P̄ra Buddhayodfā and P̄ra Buddhaloelā until King Rāma VI decreed the expediency of referring to his predecessors simply as Rāma with indications of due ordinal numbers attached. Rāma was of course one of the names in the full titles of all the kings of the dynasty.

Thai Buddhist edifices are usually decorated with murals. In the Chapel Royal of the Emerald Buddha (14) we have the traditional life-story of the Buddha on the wall above the line of the

window frames, with of course the scene of the temptation by and victory over the Evil Māra on the wall fronting the main altar and a scene of early Indian cosmology accepted into Buddhism behind it. Between the window-frames are depicted scenes from the Jātaka, so-called 'birth-stories', in some of which we may recognise very familiar edifices in the Grand Palace of modern Bangkok, thus demonstrating the age of the murals. Behind the windows again



PLAN OF THE GRAND PALACE



Front view of the Ordination Hall of Phra Phuttha Rattanasathan.

A pair of pavilions and stone pillars for lantern hanging on both sides. In the middle stands a Mondop-spire belfry adorned with Chinese ceramic.

are nursery-rhymes; whilst the door-panels contain exquisite inlaid work in mother-of-pearl, dating from the first reign of the Bangkok period. A feature should be noticed of a chapel royal, i.e. a chapel within the palace, is the screening of the back portion which is thus reserved for the use of the sovereign who in days of the past were in the habit of spending long hours in the chapel. Similar partitioning would be found in the Bôt of Wat Arun which was the chapel royal of the King of Thonburi.

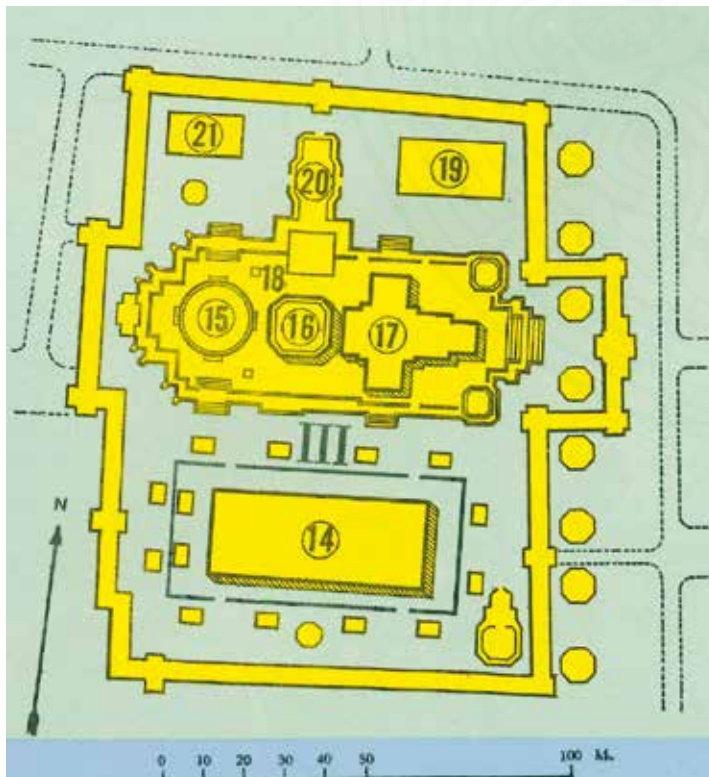
To the north but within the precincts of the Chapel Royal of the Emerald Buddha is a raised terrace accessible by five grandstairs and others of smaller dimensions. On this are a Reliquary in the shape of a golden chedi (15), a Depository of the Canon of Buddhism which was contained in a mother-of-pearl case now provisionally removed elsewhere (16), a Pantheon (17) where are set up the statues of the eight past sovereigns of the Chakri dynasty and a model of Angkor Wat reproduced at the order of King Mongkut which is fairly accurate. Scattered in between these monuments on the terrace are fanciful animals of mythology, evolved out of the imagination of artists, valued for their aesthetic inspiration. The brass miniatures of elephants record those of the 'white' variety acquired in the first five reigns.

To the north of the terrace on level ground we find three buildings, namely the Library, the west facade of which is said to be the finest of its kind in Bangkok (19); the gabled vihāra decorated with tiles and porcelain in which is kept the old time stone slab used as his throne by King Ramkamhaeng of Sukhothai who named it the 'manangsila' stone (20); and finally the mausoleum where are kept the crematory relics of a number of members of the Royal Family (21). Turning to the south of the terrace we have behind the Bôt two small chapels housing effigies of the Buddha, in the northerly one of which are murals accredited to the famous painter In Khong of the fourth reign period. They seem to look better after being toned down with age.

The Chapel Royal is surrounded by an extensive ground on which are to be found a wealth of artistic architecture above described. Around the precincts runs a gallery with attractive murals depicting the whole story of the Rāmakien, an epic adopted in times beyond memory from the saga of the Indian hero Rāma of Ayodhyā. Though forming no part of the Buddhist religion of Siam, as may be gauged from the valuation written of it by the author of the standard version in his epilogue of the story in 1797, thus:



Mural at the entire compound walls, Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram



“This romance of the Rāmakien...should not be regarded as of basic value, but is merely a part of His Majesty’s dedication to the glory of the Master’s teachings,” the Rāmakien is nevertheless widely appreciated as literature and art. The complete story as presented in the murals of the gallery was later written down in klong verse by King Chulalongkorn and his circle of literary friends and duly inscribed on stone plates which were set up on pillars opposite to the respective mural with the additions of portraiture of individual characters of the story painted in their respective colours.

E. The Chapel Royal of the Emerald Buddha.

- 14. The Chapel Royal,
- 15. The Golden Čedi,
- 16. The Depository of the Canon,
- 17. The Pantheon,
- 18. The Model of Angkor Wat,
- 19. The Library,
- 20. The Gabled Vihāra,
- 21. The Mausoleum.



Vimanmek Mansion, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.

The World's Largest Golden Teakwood Mansion, built in 1900 under the royal command of King Rama V.

The Story of the Gallery commences from the north gate with the discovery through ploughing in the ground of the heroine Sīdā (Skt. Sītā) and her adoption by King Janok (Skt. Janaka) of Mithilā; her eventual marriage with Rāma (green complexion with a crown of victory) after winning a tournament of strength in archery; their exile through the intrigue of a stepmother; their adventures down south culminating in the abduction of Sīdā by the demon-King Ōsakanth of Longka (green with a tiered crown); their war to recover her in which we have a long series of campaigns by the demon-King and his numerous family and allies, occupying half the length of the galleries; then post war incidents featuring the quarrel arising from Rāma's jealousy resulting in the Banishment of Sīdā who is finally accepted into the bowels of Mother Earth, whence she originally sprang; several minor wars some of which are related as if they took place in the land of the Thai; and a final scene of conclusion and awards for services rendered in the continuous wars, incidentally winning King Prajādhīpok's prize at the time of the general restoration in 1932 for its beautiful execution of artistic details.

On days when it is open to the public a monk is invited to give a sermon in the morning to a congregation consisting of whomever

that may wish to come in. It is an interesting motley crowd. This is followed by a second one in the afternoon. Between the two sermons the crowd disperses, for, as they might well say to the monk in the phraseology of the days of the Buddha.

“May the Venerable monk give us leave to depart; many are our duties, many are our commitments.”

The formula of farewell is in fact used on similar occasions in the Dhammayut congregations.

Then, if one is not too burdened by his ‘many duties’ for the day, one is free to dream away among the variegated colourings of the edifices within these romantic precincts, charmed by the soft tinklings of the bells aloft among the eaves of the tall buildings.

DUSIT PALACE

Towards the end of the XIXth century when the city of Bangkok was becoming crowded and expanded in all directions King Chulalongkorn conceived the idea of building a country house in north Bangkok. He was already an active participant in planning

the extension of the capital. One of his ideas was the Rachadamnoen, the 'Kings Avenue', somewhat in the style of the Champs Elysées of Paris, to stretch north from the Grand Palace to his country house in north Bangkok, to either side of which would be gradually moved the government offices now getting cramped for space all over the old city. The Avenue thus terminates at the country house of the King where later the people of Siam contributed to celebrate their monarch's attainment to a record reign of 42 years and set up an equestrian statue of the King on the plaza of the terminus. As it happened the subscription was popular and the amount so over-contributed that what was left over became a considerable nucleus for the erection of the building of what is now known as the Arts Building of Chulalongkorn University. Every evening if he was free from social or ceremonial engagements he would drive to the site of the new country house which he named Dusit Villa, surrounded by his children and younger members of the Court mostly riding bicycles. At the country house he would walk around superintending the planting of trees and the planning of the estate.

The country house was ready for occupation by 1898, consisting of a few moderate-sized edifices, of which Amṇorn House was the principal building. Private houses of the Royal Family surrounded it on all sides, and a number of offices of His Majesty's suite, a Council cum-Audience Chamber, guard rooms and even a stable for the white elephant. The whole ground was laid out as a park to which was to be added later a big marble throne-hall of western design topped of course with a capitol. The frescoes of the domes were however decorated with topics of Thai history of the Chakri dynasty. It was never finished in the life-time of its initiator. After a decade or so as a throne hall it became the seat of the Legislature. It was said to have been lent to the government; and from time to time there have been renewed proposals in the House of returning it. With this addition of a throne-hall the residence became changed into a palace.

There is yet a feature of Dusit Palace which cannot be left out. By the side of a big artificial lake there is a wooden Thai house of one storey called the Rūan Ton, "King's House", raised on stilts in the same way as old Thai houses are built in the country along the river up north where occur regular annual inundations after the



Phya Thai Palace, Bangkok, built in 1909 during the reign of King Rama V. Nowadays becomes a part of the "Phra Mongkut Klao Hospital" (military hospital).

rains. The architecture and planning are in strict accordance with Thai patterns. It has been, and still is, used for entertaining foreign guests of the sovereigns in a regular Thai fashion—Thai food, and Thai dress, being usually *de rigueur*.

In latter days after he returned from a second trip to Europe, King Chulalongkorn conceived the idea of having a farm house on the outskirts of the city named Phya Thai, somewhat reminiscent of le Hameau near the Palace of Versailles. There the Queen and her ladies indulged in farming rice and poultry. It became her regular residence after the King's death. King Rāma VI also lived there later and made considerable additions of substantial houses. It has now been given over to the military as a hospital .

Between this farm-house and Dusit palace Rāma VI built a villa on the fields of Sompoy and named it Chitraladā. Striding across the vast rice plains it is well exposed to breezes specially in the kite season when the weather begins to be hot. Succeeding sovereigns have resided here including His present Majesty who has made many additions.



Phutthaisawan Chapel, Palace to the Front, Bangkok.
Phra Phuttha Sihing, one of the most revered Buddha image, is now enshrined in the Chapel.

THE PALACE TO THE FRONT

When Rāma I built his Grand Palace, his brother and former comrade-in-arms was appointed Prince of the Palace to the Front. He built his residence, the “Wang Na”, between what is now known as Wat Mahathat and the canal called Klong Lord, stretching down to the river Bank. In three generations this palace was rebuilt almost in its entirety by the fourth occupant of the principedom, the one best known as His Majesty Phra Pinklao, the only “Second King” of the Bangkok régime. This palace has now been turned over to the National Museum save its southern section which is the Thammasat University. Contrary to the Grand Palace which faces north, the

Palace to the Front faces east as does the one in Ayudhya, now called the Chandrakasem Palace of King Mongkut. Formerly its front wall was further east than it is now. Within the walls, now demolished for the most part, we come upon the Hall of Sivamokkhavimān, now a museum of Prehistory and the Chapel Royal of Buddhaisvarya where is now kept the ancient image of the Sihinga Buddha, another object of great veneration throughout the whole kingdom.

Further to the west there is the group known as the Vimān, which is quite elaborate in planning and occupies a much bigger area than any contemporary residence including the Grand Palace edifices of that time. It consists of (a) the audience hall; (b) an antechamber where old conveyances are displayed; (c) a trio of two-

storeyed mansions in a row with courtyards in between, of which the central was more often used than the others as the living quarters of the Prince or Second King; and (d) sections of houses north and south of the Vimān which include also lesser royal residences. The south section was turned over to the military when the office of the Prince was abolished in King Chulalongkorn's reign. What remained of the Prince's family and household was invited to move into the Grand Palace and the remainder of the Palace was turned over later to the National Museum.

At the back of the Palace to the Front near the river stood a private chapel of beautiful workmanship and finely drawn murals.

King Rāma I also appointed an able general of his campaigns, who was also a nephew, Kromluang Anuraks Deves to be Prince of the Palace to the Rear. His residence was on the right bank of the river where is now the Sirirāj Hospital. The office was never renewed after his death.



Phra Nakhon Khiri, commonly known as Khao Wang, built in the reign of King Rama IV.

ROYAL PALACES OUTSIDE BANGKOK

A. Those built by King Mongkut.

The first three kings of the dynasty lived invariably in the Grand Palace. King Mongkut, however, travelled extensively both as a monk before his accession to the throne and as a monarch afterwards. He was fond of his people and proud of his native land. In his travels he built villas outside Bangkok, mostly on a smaller scale; but, being his own prime minister he could not be away too long from the capital, to be in constant touch with which was important. Among his residences are :

1. At P̄ra Pathom to the east of the great monument which he set up covering the original ancient chedi of the Dvāravati period. This has been pulled down to make room for the new municipal offices.

2. At Petchaburi. He built a more substantial palace on the top of the hill which is called Mahaisavarya Hill and named the residence Nakhonkiri (Phra Nakhon Khiri), 'the Hill Fort'. Thus perched on top

of the hill it commanded an extensive view all round including the sea on the south east. The palace was reverently preserved after his death by the Ministry of the Interior which was under one of his sons, Prince Damrong. Every piece of furniture and fitting even including tinned meat and fruits in syrup found at the time of his demise remained in their places till the occupation by alien forces during the second world war. On top of the building was a cabin, as of a boat captain, and below was a sitting-room looking over the country around. Behind the living quarters was a sanctuary apart from the house and next to it a hall for religious meetings where on festival days he invited monks to come up and deliver sermons. There was also a theatre where plays were performed to which the people were admitted. Comparatively free access to the sovereign was permitted. It is related that on an occasion of these performances a country swain, being struck by the charm of a dancer, brought with him a garland for presentation but was arrested by the guard for the lady was



Aisawan Thippahaya-at Pavilion, Bang Pa-in Palace, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya.

one of the King's favourite wives; on learning of the incident the King ordered his release at once taking no offense at the seeming insolence. There was also an observatory, for His Majesty was a keen astronomer. The residence on top of the hill was approached by a flight of steps. Beyond the group of houses forming the residence was a group of religious edifices – a chedi, a vihāra and outhouses for rest. This group leads to a path behind, which descends to a deep cave of the dying Buddha and further on to the road below. At the front approach the King built a monastery for monks in his characteristic style of architecture of small proportions but tastefully ornate. It is called the Monastery of the Great Samana (Wat Maha Sammanaram), i.e. the Buddha.

3. In the north he had several country houses of less permanent material. At Prabād and Bang Pa-In there were such houses but they no longer remain. At Ayudhya, however, he built with more permanent material some houses within the Palace to

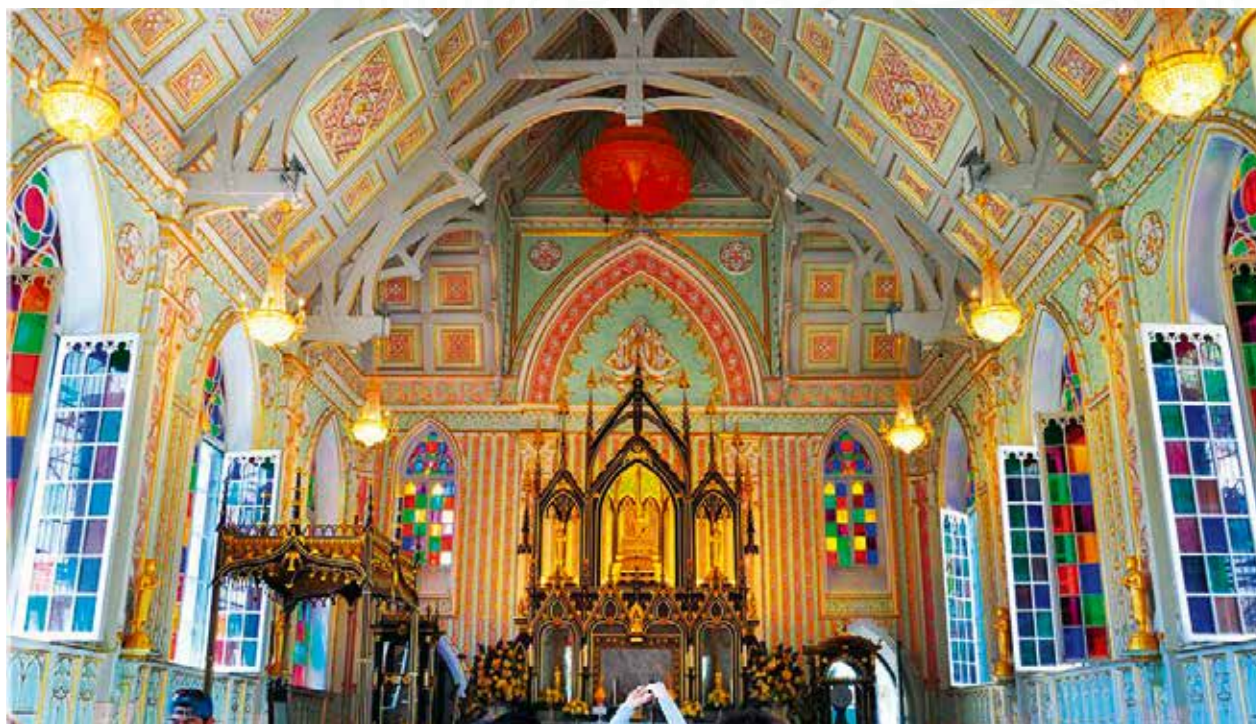
the Front of the Ayudhya régime which remained till quite recently though they do not have anything of interest. At Lopburi the King built houses on the site of King Nārāi's famous palace and they now form the local museum, standing side by side with the Greek workmanship of the older palace. An incident of interest is related showing the liberal attitude of King Mongkut. In building over the ruined ground of Nārāi's palace, which was then cleared from jungle the King recalled an incident of history. When King Nārāi was an invalid on his deathbed, his page who was still faithful to him, got killed by conspirators. King Nārāi advised his entourage that was left to escape from the palace for personal safety. Learning that that would not be possible for the palace was surrounded by Pra Pētarājā's men he invited a chapter of monks into the palace; and, dedicating his palace to religion to enable them to carry out an ordination of his men, thereby legalising such a ceremony as being celebrated on church ground. In the reign of King Mongkut the land had become

deserted and unclaimed by the Church; but, having been an abbot in earlier days, the King felt some scruples in taking possession of it without compensation. He therefore dedicated land to the same amount to provide revenue for three monasteries which could be considered as having had some connection with King Nārāi, namely: Wat Jumṇol, north of the Palace at Bang Pa-In, Wat Senāsnārām at Ayudhya, and Wat Kavistrārām south of the Palace at Lopburi itself.

B. By King Chulalongkorn.

The King had two palaces outside Bangkok. He first built Bang Pa-In as a summer residence, for the large rice plains around permitted copious cool breezes for the palace. It was built around the only remaining edifice of the summer palace of King Prāsād Thong of Ayudhya and in every likelihood occupied a much larger area than the older palace. Among its main features are the audience hall by the side of the river in which is an interesting collection of historical watercolour paintings of scenes in history; a wooden chalet of good taste which has unfortunately been razed to the ground by fire; a tower of observation and a two-storeyed Chinese villa of intricate

wood carving and Chinese furniture presented to the King by the Chinese Community of Bangkok. Around these are a number of smaller houses for members of the Court. The ground is picturesquely planned with intersections of canals and islands. The palace formed a suitable ground for residence during the high-flood season when the court was usually in residence. From here King Chulalongkorn used to paddle out for picnics or for participation in the people's meritorious pastimes such as the presentation of the Kathin robes. The people around became friends of the dynasty even down to the present time, when even minor members of the royal family, such as the author, would be offered seasonal dishes when visiting the locality. Opposite the palace on the other Bank of the river King Chulalongkorn built a monastery, Wat Nives, in the Gothic style of architecture. In his latter days he also planned another villa on the plains of Petchaburi at the village of Bān Pūn. The architect was the German Karl Dohring since famous through his books on architectural designs. It was never finished during the King's lifetime and now stands a monument to German architecture within the military garrison of the place.



Wat Nivet Thammaprawat, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya.



Phra Thinang Watchariromaya, Sanam Chan Palace, Nakhon Pathom.

C. By King Rāma VI

A little to the west of Nakhon Pathom, King Rāma VI had, while still Crown Prince, a country seat which he named Sanām Čhandra. At that time considerable archaeological finds were being recovered from an old channel east of the town and the whole vicinity was suspected to have had some connection with the ancient state of Śrīvijaya, for the finds revealed characteristics of Dvāravati art. Even Mauryan symbols like the deer and the wheel were largely evident. Coupled with this there existed local traditions which claimed the name of Śrīvijaya for these localities. Although by the time of Crown Prince Vajiravudh (King Rāma VI) the identification with that old name had been generally given up in favour of territories further south, it was still felt that this locality must have been very old and a seat of ancient civilization. The idea of such a probability fired the imagination of the young Prince so much that he visited now and again these localities; and, finding it dry and healthy, decided to build a country house on the spot. The name Sanām Čhandra had nothing

to do with a claim for antiquity for it was merely a custom to connect it with the house of an Heir to the Throne. When the young Prince became King he went on with his affection for the place and did not seem to have given up the romantic imagination of its antiquity for he named one of the edifices to be built there the Prāsād-Śrīvijaya. This edifice was never built for some reason - perhaps that of the decision of scholars all over the world that Śrīvijaya would not be identifiable with this locality. The palace was nevertheless a favourite residence on account of its freedom from humidity. The whole group was tastefully designed and was singular in the provision of what was then up-to-date furnishing. After his death the palace was presented by his successor King Prajadhipok to the local administration which used it as a government house. The effort of Kings Mongkut and Rāma VI rescued the country around P̄ra Pathom from being abandoned to rank vegetation to become a provincial centre where the presence for three months a year of the Court of Rāma VI with its brilliant social features enhanced its standing.

King Rāma VI also built a temporary residence in wood on the beach to the north of Hua Hin, to which he gave the name of Marigadayawan Park. It had the advantage over Hua Hin of having a stream which accounted for its comparatively green aspect; but with his death the residence was more or less neglected and has now passed to the Government.

D. By King Prajadhipok

King Prajadhipok, on the other hand, preferred Hua Hin; and built there his Klaikangwol, ‘Sans Souci’, villa. Although Marigadayawan could have been developed into a much pleasanter seaside resort, Klai Kangwon, with the new irrigation system of the Phetchaburi basin, succeeded in establishing the royal preference for it to the present day.

E. By King Bhumiphol

His present Majesty has in the last few years bought from his personal means and built his mountain resort named Phuping above the hill of Suthep outside Chiang Mai. It has constantly come in useful for the reception of state guests and is surrounded by beautiful mountain scenery overlooking the northern metropolis. One of its assets is of course the cool mountain air. The presence of the King and Queen among them has endeared the sovereigns to the people of Chiang Mai who seem ever ready to welcome them and their guests from over the seas.

A Note on Spelling

As most of the proper names in this book were written in the Pali and Sanskrit languages, the editorial board has provided a table comparing them with the spelling according to the Royal Institute’s Principles for the Romanization of the Thai Script which is more familiar and widely used today as shown below.

Words written in the Pali and Sanskrit languages.	Words transcribed to the Royal Institute’s Principles for the Romanization of the Thai Script
Abhornpīmōk	Aphonphimok
Amarindrāphisek	Amarinthraphisek
Ananta-samagom	Ananta Samakhom
Chakri Mahāprāsād	Chakri Mahaprasat
Chandrakasem	Chankasem
Indrabhisek	Inthraphisek
Dawadhing	Daowadueng
Jumpol	Chumphon
Mahaisavarya	Mahaisawan
Mahisra-prāsād	Mahison Prasat
Marigadayawan	Maruekkhathaiyawan
Prabād	Phra Bat
Phra Nakongiri	Phra Nakhon Khiri
Phra Syāmdevādhirāj	Phra Sayam Thewathirat
Prince Jayajettha	Prince Chaiyachettha
Sālā Sahadaya	Sala Sahathai
Sambuddhabarnī Buddha	Samphuttha Phanni Buddha
Sanamchandra	Sanamchan
Sihinga	Sihing
Śivālaya	Sivalai
Sivamokkhaviman	Siwamokkhaphiman
Sihinga	Sihing
Suddhasvarya	Sutthaisawanya
Thawathingsa	Daowadueng
Wat Nives	Wat Nivet

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