

BANGKOK **MODERN:**

The Transformation of Bangkok with Singapore and Batavia as Models (1861-1897)



Udomporn Teeraviriyakul

Abstract

In the mid-nineteenth century, Siam changed significantly because the European powers had expanded their political and trading activities into Southeast Asia, including Siam. The commercial treaties of the 1850s started the process of bringing Siam into an orbit of modernity. To fit the new “international standard”, the Siamese government needed to create “Bangkok Modern” following the West. One of the main points this study found is that the modernizing of Bangkok made the landscape of the city change from a moat-fortified city to a modern city with a form of Western modernity.

This research work makes the argument that the transformation of Bangkok commenced gradually from the reign of King Mongkut, not, as has been commonly believed, after the First Grand Tour to Europe of King Chulalongkorn in 1897. More importantly, Bangkok under King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn adopted a form of modernity from “the colonial modernity”, using Singapore and Batavia as models as both King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn were more familiar with these cities than other colonial cities. As evidence of this, King Chulalongkorn visited Singapore and Batavia 26 years before going to Europe, and it was during this 26-year period that reforms changed the appearance of Bangkok. This can be seen through the construction of roads, shophouses, and a modern infrastructure influenced by Singapore and Batavia.

CONTENTS

List of Table	vii
List of Figures	vii
List of Maps	xiii
Foreword	ix
Acknowledgements	xi
Abstract	xii
1 Introduction	1
2 Historical Background in the nineteenth century	21
The decline of the old trade system and the coming	
of a new system	22
The new trade system in Southeast Asia and its impact	32
Civilization and Modernization in term of the new	
world standard	59
3 The Emergence of Modern Bangkok	72
Transforming Bangkok to be a “modern city”	72
Singapore and Batavia as models for Bangkok	103
Method s of Learning from Singapore and Batavia:	
Process of learning and educating people in Bangkok	110
4 Bangkok and Its Transformation	121
Impact of Singapore and Batavia on “Bangkok Modern”	121

Bangkok Modern: City of Beauty-Hygiene-Order	157
5 Conclusion	185
References	195

List of Table

Table1 Illustration of ideas that King Chulalongkorn Adopted ' <i>modernity form</i> ' from Singapore and Batavia in 1871	144
--	-----

List of Figures

Figure 1 Photo of King Chulalongkorn in his early reign	138
Figure 2 Photo of King Chulalongkorn in 1896	138
Figure 3 Shophouses on Aussadang Road	149
Figure 4 Shophouses on Phra Sumen Road	149
Figure 5 Shophouses, Ta Tian-Ta Chang-Mahachai roads	149
Figure 6 Shophouses in the first Western commercial zone in Bangkok (Charoen Krung-Bamrung Muang- Pheung Nakorn roads)	150
Figure 7 Shophouses in Singapore	151
Figure 8 Ku Muang Derm during the reign of King Chulalongkorn and Vilanda Bridge in Bangkok	162

List of Maps

Map 1 Map of Bangkok (1901)	155
------------------------------------	-----