

## CHAPTER 3

### The Development of History Education

#### 1. Transition of Curricula : History Education in the Structure of Social Studies

Referring to the development of curriculum in Thailand prior to 1895, there were no subjects which could be called "social studies". In those days, the educational system was not like the present one. The educational ladder had three steps: prayok 1, 2 and 3. In the curriculum of prayok 1 in 1895, subjects such as "Summarized Version of Phongsawadan" (phraratchaphongsawadan-yo) and "Phongsawadan of Ancient Cities" (phraratchaphongsawadan krung kao) were taught in the framework of the Thai language course. At the level of prayok 2, "phongsawadan of present age and more detailed phongsawadan" (phraratchaphongsawadan patchuban lae phitsadan) were taught as a part of the Thai language course. At prayok 3 grade, the subject geography was formed as an independent subject, while history was still taught within the study of the Thai language course.

#### The 1902 Curriculum

As a result of the educational reform in 1902, the three levels of prayok were reorganized as four levels, namely moolasuksa (fundamental education), prathom (primary education), mathayom

(secondary education) and mathayom-sung (upper-secondary education).<sup>1</sup>

The 1902 curriculum of secondary education includes the subjects "Geography and History" (phumisad lae phongsawadan). "Detailed Geography of Siam" (phumisad siam doi laiad) as well as "Phongsawadan of Incidents of Important Region" (phongsawadan prakob hai ru hedphon khong thin thi samkan) was taught in the level of mathayom 1. ("Detailed Geography of Siam" had a session to practice drawing a map of Siam.)<sup>2</sup>

### The 1909 Curriculum

The curriculum was again revised in 1909. Concerning moolasuksa (fundamental education), the goals of the subject "Knowledge of Thailand" (khwaam ru ruang muang thai) were to incorporate a sense of love for the nation and to motivate students to help develop their country. Two main topics in parallel with these goals were ①Geography of Thailand (phumisad khong prathed thai), and ②History and Administration (prawatisad lae rabob kaan pokkhong). These two topics were further divided into three points, namely, ①Land of Thailand, and Thailand's Foreign Relations (including political strifes); ②Summarized Phongsawadan of Thai Nation (How Thailand came into existence); and ③The Way of Political Administration<sup>3</sup>

With regard to prathom (primary education) level, the subject "Geography and Phongsawadan" (phumisad kab phongsawadan) was set with the following goals for students: to know about their own country and

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<sup>1</sup> วิชาการ, กรม, กระทรวงศึกษาธิการ. เอกสารประกอบการพิจารณาปรับปรุงหลักสูตรในการศึกษาระหว่างชาติ พ.ศ. 2513 ฉบับที่ 1 ความเป็นมาของหลักสูตรสามัญศึกษา, กรุงเทพฯ: กรมวิชาการ, กระทรวงศึกษาธิการ, 2513. หน้า 141-143.

<sup>2</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 144.

<sup>3</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 145-147.

the world in order to widen their view, and to know how Siam related to other countries. The geography part of the course covered the world, Siam and neighboring countries. Concerning the geography of Siam, such topics as the monthon-administration system, railways, rivers, canals, principal mountains, sea, staple products of Siam were dealt with.

As for the part of phongwasadan, the precis of phongsawadan of the nation and administration system were the contents of the study course.<sup>4</sup> Wutdichai mentions that the textbooks of phongsawadan for primary education at that time were quite detailed and of a high standard, which was more suitable for secondary education. However, secondary education was not yet popular, and the textbooks of phongsawadan Siam (for prathom) were widely used for teaching history.<sup>5</sup>

At the nathayom (secondary education) level, the subject of "Geography and Phongsawadan" (phumisad kab phongsawadan) was taught along the same line as in primary education, but was more detailed.

As for the nathayom-sung (upper-secondary education) level, geography and phongsawadan, which had been combined as one subject, were first separated to be independent two subjects. Concerning phongsawadan, there were two courses; ① A Complete Version of Phongsawadan Siam and ② Phongsawadan of the World with Emphasis on Important Places. These were studied over three years.<sup>6</sup>

Although the contents and the line of history education of the 1909 curriculum were basically maintained until the political change which ended the absolute monarchy in 1932, the curriculum was revised twice first in 1913 and then in 1921, and there were some minor changes of direction as follows:

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<sup>4</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 148-149.

<sup>5</sup> Wutdichai Moolsilpa, personal communication, March 23, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> วิชาการ, กรม, กระทรวงศึกษาธิการ. เอกสารประกอบการพิจารณาปรับปรุงหลักสูตรในการศึกษาระหว่างชาติ พ.ศ. 2513 อังคัย 1 ความเป็นมาของหลักสูตรสามัญศึกษา, หน้า 149-151.



### The 1913 Curriculum

The 1913 revision concerned the framework of the whole educational system.

(National Educational Plan 1909)	(Post 1913)
- Moolsuksa (fundamental)	⇒ Prathom (primary)
- Prathom (primary)	⇒ Mathayom-ton (lower-secondary)
- Mathayom (secondary)	⇒ Mathayom-klaang (middle-secondary)
- Mathayom-sung (upper-secondary)	⇒ Mathayom-plaai (upper-secondary)

#### (1) Prathom (primary education)

The subject "Knowledge of Thailand" (khwaam ru ruang muang thai) followed the preceding path, but an attempt was made to lessen the volume of contents in order the pupils would not have to memorize too much.

#### (2) Mathayom-ton (lower-secondary education)

The curriculum of "Geography and Phongsawadan" (phumisad kab phongsawadan) was not changed at all. But it is noteworthy that the words "phrai faa khaa phaendin" which literally means "subjects of dynasty or reign" were replaced by the expression "khon chan saaman" (common people), in the study course of "Morals."

#### (3) Mathayom-klaang (middle-secondary education)

Neither Geography nor Phongsawadan subject were touched. (There was no word changed in the curriculum.)

(4) Mathayom-plaai (upper-secondary education)

In both geography and phongsawadan study courses, the volume of contents was reduced. Although school textbooks were not revised, it became compulsory for teachers to submit the syllabus to the Education Department, the forerunner of the Ministry of Education. The aim was to summarize the contents just enough to read the phongsawadan of Siam and other countries.<sup>7</sup>

Incidentally, this period corresponds to the beginning of King Rama VI's reign (1910-25). The King himself was strongly influenced by his educational experiences in England and launched the Boy Scout movement in 1913. The introduction of the Boy Scout activities in the 1913 curriculum of mathayom-ton level resulted. In addition, it was also during this period that the Civil Service School (formerly the Royal Page's College) was upgraded to become Chulalongkorn University. Upon the foundation of Chulalongkorn University, the Faculty of Arts, Science was newly created.<sup>8</sup> That meant that history education was introduced at the higher education level. The better part of the students majoring in history were preparing to be teachers in schools of lower level. The beginning of history education at the university, therefore, laid the foundation for the rise of qualified teachers.

The 1921 Curriculum

The Primary Education Act was passed in 1920 and the Law on Compulsory Education took effect in 1921. The law stated that children of both sexes, regardless of religious creed, had to attend school

<sup>7</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 154-156.

<sup>8</sup> Watson, Keith, Educational Development in Thailand, Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1980. p.193.

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, 70ปี จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย กำนันจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, 2530. หน้า 15.



between the ages of seven and fourteen.<sup>9</sup> The curriculum was revised accordingly, but the curriculum of social studies (morals, geography, and phongsawadan) was not affected at all. The 1913 curriculum was still in use.<sup>10</sup>

However, in 1928, some minor adjustments were made in the social studies curriculum. The weight of geography was comparatively decreased, and the history study course placed less emphasis on ancient times and gave priority to contemporary history as well as the history of the West. This curriculum was applied until the introduction of the following curriculum in 1937.<sup>11</sup>

It is worth noting that the word "prawatisad"(history) was for the first time used instead of "phongsawadan" in the guidelines for the 1928 curriculum. (The term "phumisad" for "geography" continued to be used, while two different terms were used for history subjects in the curricula.) However, this does not mean that the new term had never been used beforehand in the curricula at all. Indeed, in the curriculum of 1909, the term "prawatisad" was used as one of the themes of social studies, while the subject itself was still titled "phongsawadan." Such confusion of terminology or the coexistence of two words indicates that the time around 1920 was a transitional period for history writing. According to Wutdichai, it was in the year 1916 that the word "prawatisad" was first introduced to replace "phongsawadan" in the academic circle.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Watson, Educational Development in Thailand, p.105.

<sup>10</sup> วิชากร, กรม, กระทรวงศึกษาธิการ, เอกสารประกอบการพิจารณาปรับปรุงหลักสูตรในการศึกษาระหว่างชาติ พ.ศ. 2513 อันตบ 1 ความเป็นมาของหลักสูตรสามัญศึกษา, หน้า 156.

<sup>11</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 157.

<sup>12</sup> วุฒิชัย มูลศิลป์, "ประวัติศาสตร์กับการศึกษา," หน้า 68.

### The 1937 Curriculum

The first revision of the curriculum after the political change in 1932 was carried out in 1937. It was social studies that went through the most drastic revision, because social studies were regarded as the most effective means to inform pupils and students of the new administration system. However the main part of the revision took place neither in geography nor in history, but in the study course of "Morals" (chanya). This was expanded in contents and reorganized into new subjects called "Duties of Citizens" (nathi phonlamuang) and "Civics" (sinlatham).

"Duties of Citizens" consisted of four parts, namely, ① Duties of Citizens, ② Constitutional System, ③ Regional Administration System, and ④ Important Days (of the Thai nation).

As for "Civics" (sinlatham), religious elements were excluded for the first time, following the newly-introduced policy of democracy. The idea behind the change was not to teach any particular religion as a compulsory subject.<sup>13</sup>

The minor change made in the curriculum of history in primary education was the addition of excursions throughout the region which were aimed at making pupils get in touch with neighboring historical places.<sup>14</sup>

As for the lower-secondary education level, the following three points were stated as the main topics of history education.

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<sup>13</sup> วิชากร, กรม, กระทรวงศึกษาธิการ, เอกสารประกอบการพิจารณาปรับปรุงหลักสูตรในการศึกษาระหว่างชาติ พ.ศ. 2513 อังคัพ 1 ความเป็นมาของหลักสูตรสามัญศึกษา, หน้า 158-159.

<sup>14</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 161.



- (1) Biographies of Ten National Heroes of Thai History
- (2) History of the Thai Race (especially the "important" incidents)
- (3) History of Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Thonburi, and Bangkok.<sup>15</sup>

According to Watson, "during the 1930s education was seen as an instrument for furthering democracy and developing a sense of Thai nationalism. The latter was extended during the 1940s."<sup>16</sup> The appointment of Phibunsongkhram as prime minister in 1938 spurred the flourishing nationalism.

#### The 1948 Curriculum

The next revision of the curriculum was carried out in 1948. This time, the subject "Knowledge of Thailand" (khwaam ru ruang muang thai) at primary school level was retitled "Geography and History" (phumisad·phrawatisad). While the geography part was the same as in the previous curriculum of 1937, the history part was modified. Thai national history of various ages became its main subject. The biographies of ten national heroes of Thai history, and relationships with foreign countries such as China, England, America and France were taught in the study course.<sup>17</sup>

It was in 1948 that the word "sangkhom suksa" (social studies) first appeared in the curriculum. Until then, there were four minor subjects or fields such as ① Duties of Citizens, ② Civics, ③ Geography

<sup>15</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 161-162.

<sup>16</sup> Watson, Educational Development in Thailand, p.135.

<sup>17</sup> วิชาการ, กรม, กระทรวงศึกษาธิการ, เอกสารประกอบการพิจารณาปรับปรุงหลักสูตรในการศึกษาระหว่างชาติ พ.ศ. 2513 อันดับ 1 ความเป็นมาของหลักสูตรสามัญศึกษา, หน้า 164.



and (4) History, existing independently, which were not organized as one group. Even after being called social studies, there was no change in formation, though there was some enlargement of contents in each subjects. (It was not until 1978 that some new subjects were added to the social studies part of the curriculum.<sup>18</sup>)

### The 1950 Curriculum

The curriculum of mathayom was revised again in 1950. The study course of social studies became more detailed and informative than preceding ones. As for history subject, it traced Thai history from the beginning, and covers world history as well.<sup>19</sup> The curriculums of 1948 and 1950 had been the basis of history education until the revision on a large scale in 1960.

### The Trend of Educational Administration

In 1951, the National Education Plan, which is regarded as the first major post-war statement on educational policy, came into effect. Watson states that "education was no longer just seen as a desirable means to modernization as in Chulalongkorn's reign, nor as an essential prerequisite for democracy as in the 1930s, but it was now seen as a partner in economic planning."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> วิชากร, กรม, กระทรวงศึกษาธิการ, ความเป็นมาของหลักสูตรและการนำหลักสูตรสังคมศึกษาระดับมัธยมศึกษาฉบับปรับปรุง พ.ศ. 2533 ไปใช้, กรุงเทพฯ: กรมวิชาการ, กระทรวงศึกษาธิการ, 2533. หน้า 10.

<sup>19</sup> วิชากร, กรม, กระทรวงศึกษาธิการ, เอกสารประกอบการพิจารณาปรับปรุงหลักสูตรในการศึกษาระหว่างชาติ พ.ศ. 2513 อันตบ 1 ความเป็นมาของหลักสูตรสามัญศึกษา, หน้า 165.

<sup>20</sup> Watson, Educational Development in Thailand, pp.136-137.

In 1959, a National Council of Education was created, which later became the National Education Council (NEC). By the following year, 1960, the National Scheme of Education replaced the 1951 Plan. Upon the enforcement of the Plan, the new educational system was introduced. Instead of the previous system of 4+3+3+2 (4 years for primary education, 3 years for lower-secondary education, 3 years for middle-secondary education, and 2 years of upper-secondary education), a new system of 7-3-2 was put into operation. (7 years for primary education, 3 years for lower-secondary education, and 2 years for upper-secondary education)<sup>21</sup> The new curriculum of 1960 was issued accordingly. A detailed examination of the curricula of 1960, 1975, 1978, 1981 and 1990 are to be found in the next chapter.

Later in 1978, the educational system was changed to "6+3+3" (6 years for primary education, 3 years for lower-secondary education, and 3 years for upper-secondary education), which has been adopted until now. The curriculum of mathayom-ton was revised in 1978, which was followed by the revision of mathayom-plaai in 1981. The latest revision took place in 1990, involving every level of education.

Concerning the whole framework of social studies, subjects related to social studies were first contained within the scope of other subjects like the Thai language. As time passed, the importance of teaching social studies became recognized. Not only did the number of subjects increase, the contents of each subject also became richer in information. The syllabus called for students to learn by 'memory' rather than by study.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.138.



Recently it was realized that memory-centered education does not result in students' acquirement of knowledge or proper understanding of subjects and the society. As Thai society was going through rapid change, it was quite necessary to educate students to adjust themselves to such changes. It became a prime goal of social studies to teach students to become "good members" of contemporary society. Therefore, the education was modified to invite students to think and to understand rather than to learn by heart.

The report quoted so far concluded the chapter of social studies with the following passage. "Social studies are the subjects which are the most problematic, thus require revision most but are most difficult to revise, and the least fruit can be expected through revision. However, no matter how it is hard, the effort should be made steadily to improve the study course."<sup>22</sup>

## 2. Political Contexts as the Basis for History Education

We have so far taken a general view of the changes in curriculum since the beginning of this century. Those changes concern the whole structure of social studies, the contents of the study course, and/or the naming of a subject. It is difficult to identify the factors behind these changes just by looking at the surface. Both direct and indirect elements have affected the transition of the curriculum. More detailed examination of the curriculum and textbooks should be done in

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<sup>22</sup> วิชากร, กรม, กระทรวงศึกษาธิการ, เอกสารประกอบการพิจารณาปรับปรุงหลักสูตรในการศึกษาระหว่างชาติ พ.ศ. 2513 อังคัพ 1 ความเป็นมาของหลักสูตรสามัญศึกษา, หน้า 167.  
(translated by the writer)

order to analyze the meaning of each change, which exceeds the intention of this sub-chapter. From the findings, a few significant points can be pointed out as background factors to explain the state of history education. Thus, the following three topics will be discussed to interpret the political context of each stage of political development in relation to the conditions of history education from the latter part of King Chulalongkorn's reign until the end of 1950s.

- [1] Modernization and Educational Reform
- [2] Formation of the Nation State
- [3] Nationalism and History Education

## 2.1 Modernization and Educational Reform

The reign of King Chulalongkorn is said to be the age of reform and modernization,<sup>23</sup> and education was destined to play an important role in the modernization process. Although we started discussing the curriculum from the beginning of the 20th century, it is worth tracing back to the early years of King Chulalongkorn's reign in order to see the initial state of modern education, its ideals and development on which the curricula of latter days were constructed.

The King's tour abroad in 1871-1872, the destinations of which were Dutch and British colonial possessions in Java, Malaya, Burma, and India, resulted in his realization of the importance of education. As a

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<sup>23</sup> วุฒิชัย มูลศิลป์, การปฏิรูปการศึกษาในรัชกาลที่ 5, กรุงเทพฯ: สมาคมสังคมศาสตร์แห่งประเทศไทย, 2516. หน้า 23.



result, he decided to make education the pillar of modernization, as well as the means of reformation.<sup>24</sup>

Upon the development and expansion of the bureaucratic system, there was an urgent demand for talented men to enter the civil service. Such measures as the establishment of schools, employment of Westerners as advisors, and the initiation of the King's Scholarship were taken.<sup>25</sup> However, modern education was not designed only to meet the needs of the bureaucracy. Education for the general public was also regarded as important, reflecting the demand for man power on a large scale, which was parallel to the gradual abolition of slavery.<sup>26</sup>

Administration for education was arranged in the latter half of the 1880s. The Education Department was founded in 1887 and was later incorporated into the Ministry of Public Instruction in 1889. Prince Damrong was appointed as both director-general for the Education Department and as Minister of Public Instruction, and took the initiative in carrying out King Chulalongkorn's educational reforms. Nevertheless, the Prince was transferred to the Ministry of Interior in 1892 in order to cope with the national crisis caused by colonial threats from the West. This transfer of the head of the Ministry of Public Instruction is believed to have been a serious loss to the education.<sup>27</sup> Although Thailand's first curriculum was issued in 1892, it was not put into practice smoothly for the first a few years.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 31 และ หน้า 66.

<sup>25</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 61-64.

<sup>26</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 92.

<sup>27</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 111.

<sup>28</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 117.

King Chulalongkorn's second trip abroad (first trip to Europe) in 1897 was the opportunity to break down such stagnation and to accelerate the progress of education.<sup>29</sup> The further development of education in this period indicates that Siam had escaped from the life-or-death crisis for the nation for the moment, which enabled the ruling class to launch upon domestic schemes including educational administration.<sup>30</sup> At this stage, policies on education were worked out clearly along the lines that "education is not only for the benefit of the people, but also for the prosperity of the nation."<sup>31</sup>

When considering the initial state of history education, we need to think of it in connection with the whole educational situation briefly stated above. In sum, education was designed to be the motivating force behind modernization and reformation, and the chief purpose of modernization and reformation was to bring about national unity in Siam. Indeed, Siam was struggling to establish a nation state.

(The issue of nation state will be discussed in the following part.) As history education was conducted under such conditions, it thus, laid emphasis on the unification of the Siamese nation rather than the diversities of the regions and the people.

Secondly, let us now look at point how typography played a role in the spread of education. The printing press did not arrive in the country until 1835.<sup>32</sup> Before the introduction of typography in Siam,

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<sup>29</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 121.

<sup>30</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 144.

<sup>31</sup> เรื่องเดียวกัน, หน้า 216. (translated by the writer)

<sup>32</sup>Phillips, Herbert P., "The Culture of Siamese Intellectuals," Changes and Persistence in Thai Society, ed. by Skinner, G. William and Kirsch, A. Thomas, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975. pp. 324-357.



books including school textbooks needed to be transcribed, which made education accessible only to the limited number of people in the ruling class.<sup>33</sup>

The publication of newspapers in the early days can be divided into three stages according to the originator of the given paper.

The first stage was the period in which westerners launched newspapers. The first newspaper published in Thailand was the Bangkok Recorder (in Thai) initiated in 1844 by an American missionary, Dan Beach Bradley. As for English language newspapers, the Bangkok Daily Advertiser published in 1868 by S. John Smith and Thomas Andres was the first.

The second stage was shouldered by a group of royalty. This group is represented by such papers as Court started in 1875 and Vajirayan started in 1884.

Commoners first came on the scene in the third stage. The first papers launched by 'common' journalists were Siam Praphed (started by K.S.R. Kulap in 1897) and Thun Wiphak Phochanakij (started by Tianwan in 1890). Being the representatives of intellectuals in the era of an absolute monarchy, these two journalists challenged the upper-classes, who monopolized knowledge and information, and tried to enlighten the people by introducing modern ways of thinking in their publications.<sup>34</sup>

The initiation of publishing activities, thus contributed to a mass-education. In the field of history education, it is noteworthy that the paper, Bangkok Recorder carried articles on phongsawadan.

<sup>33</sup> วุฒิชัย มุลศิลป์, การปฏิรูปการศึกษาในรัชกาลที่ 5, หน้า 16.

<sup>34</sup> Akagi, Osamu, "Shimbun (newspaper)," Tai no Jiten (encyclopedia of Thailand), (in Japanese), compiled under the supervision of Ishii, Yoneo, Kyoto: Dohosha, 1993. pp. 163-164.

Moreover, the editorial staff revised provincial phongsawadan like Phongsawadan Yonok.<sup>35</sup> K.S.R. Kulap, being a historian as well, also contributed toward distributing phongsawadan Siam in the society.<sup>36</sup>

As a result of such attempts, history, which had previously been for the ruling class, was then within the reach of common people. The promotion of such publication indirectly supported the educational activities.

## 2.2 The Foundation of the Nation State

Regarding history education, it is noticeable that it commenced simultaneously with that of geography, and these two subjects were taught as a set. Geography education was closely related to history education and vice versa. Wit analyses that the political motivations to teach these two subjects had the same objectives, that is to motivate students to "love the nation" and become conscious of being Thai. Geography education provided students with knowledge of "concrete" aspects, while the study of history had afforded knowledge of "abstract" aspects. And they have worked together to fulfill the above-mentioned educational aims effectively.<sup>37</sup>

This analysis seems to reach a very important point. Both history and geography have been strongly linked with the concept of "nation state." In order to establish the concept, people needed to be informed of the state of the nation geographically, as well as to realize that their territory was "inviolable." At the same time,

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<sup>35</sup>Sunait Chutintaranond, personal communication, October 6, 1995.

<sup>36</sup> วุฒิชัย มูลศิลป์, "ประวัติศาสตร์กับการศึกษา," หน้า 78.

<sup>37</sup> วิทย์ วิศทเวทย์, ปรัชญาการศึกษาไทย 2411-2475, หน้า 22.



history education functioned to foster the sense that Thai people had a long-sustained history in common. It helped to promote the feeling of belonging to the nation, which was indispensable to reinforce the structure of nation state from inside.

Such an attempt to establish the nation state was a result of the critical period that Siam had gone through particularly during the two decades preceding the issuing of the 1902 curriculum. In order to understand the urgent need to bring about the nation state, let us take a brief look at how Siam struggled to maintain its independence. The issue of the nation state will now be dealt with regarding two points, namely, stability of national borders and internal integration.

#### 2.2.1 Stability of National Borders

Siam formally entered into diplomatic relations with the West in 1855 by concluding the Bowring Treaty, and by 1870 Siam had concluded unequal treaties with 12 Western countries including America. In the meantime, Siam was, willingly or unwillingly, caught up in a power struggle between Britain and France in neighboring Indochina.

France estimated the economic value of the Mekong valley very highly and determined to match the growth of the British Empire in Burma. Then in the 1880s, the French began to regard the increase of Siamese activity in Laos as dangerous. Together with territorial ambitions of the French, this gave rise to the Franco-Siamese Crisis of 1893. The French laid claim to all of Laos, east of the Mekong by virtue of France's succession to the "rights" of Vietnam, and sent gunboats up the Chaophraya River. Siam was defenceless against the gunfire, and had no choice but to accept the terms offered. Moreover, both Chanthaburi and Trat (provinces in the East of Siam) were placed under French occupation until the fulfillment of the terms.

The French annexation of Laos brought Britain and France into territorial contiguity in the upper reaches of the Mekong River. In 1896, Britain and France agreed on the Mekong as the boundary between British Burma and French Laos. The two nations guaranteed the independence of all that portion of Siam drained by the Chaophraya River system, while claiming rights over portions of Siam outside the Chaophraya valley - Britain on the Malay Peninsula and France in areas drained by the Mekong in the northeast, in western Cambodia, and the province on the Gulf of Siam southeast of Bangkok.

The first decade of the twentieth century was spent revising the unequal treaties. By the year 1904, in which an Entente Cordiale between France and Britain was concluded, Siam was ready to bargain for the removal of the treaty disabilities. Negotiations with Britain and France went on intermittently for many years. To withdraw the French from Chantaburi and Trat, Siam ceded territories opposite Luang Prabang and the small remainder of Champassak in southern Laos to France. But it was only in 1906 that the French evacuated Chantaburi and Trat.

The most tangled question for Siam was about the extraterritorial rights of the British and French. In particular, the French enrolled anyone born or claiming descent from a person born in Laos or Cambodia, or even Chinese who claimed to come from French Shanghai as "French subjects," who were thus beyond the reach of the Siamese courts. Siam, as a consequence, had to cede the provinces of Battambang, Siem Reap, and Sisophon in western Cambodia to France for the abandonment of all claims of jurisdiction over their Asian "subjects" by concluding a 1907 treaty.

As for Britain, the Siamese government gave up the rights of suzerainty over the Malay states of Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah, and Perlis, in return for the British agreement to transfer their consular jurisdiction over all British subjects in Siam to the Siamese courts as



soon as modernized law codes were promulgated.

In the end, Siam yielded up 176,000 square miles (456,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of territory in order to preserve its independence. This land was equivalent to nearly half the area that had been under Bangkok's suzerainty at the end of the Third Reign. And Siam had barely secured the sovereignty which was indispensable in framing the nation state.<sup>38</sup>

### 2.2.2 Internal Integration

The establishment of a nation state could not be accomplished simply by delimiting a border line with world-wide recognition. It is also essential to centralize a country's administrative power. As for Siam's case, several measures were taken to reform the administrative structure.

With regard to the central government, new ministries began to take shape in the late 1880s with the transfer of old departments from one ministry to another. The centralization of revenue collection in the Ministry of Finance functioned effectively to create some interdependence between ministries that formerly had enjoyed fiscal independence.<sup>39</sup>

Such administrative reform in the central polity enabled the government to strengthen its control over outlying provinces. Until the reformation, provincial administration had remained largely autonomous. Although governors were appointed by and subject to the King, in practice, they were given a free hand, as long as the governors regularly remitted the amount of revenue due to the capital. Poor

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<sup>38</sup>Wyatt, David K., *Thailand - A Short History*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1984. pp.199-208.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, p.201.

transportation and communication facilities, and duplication of jurisdiction between the great ministers of civil affairs were factors behind the lack of centripetal force of the polity.<sup>40</sup>

In 1893, the thesaphiban system was introduced by Prince Damrong, the newly appointed Minister of Interior. He grouped a number of provinces into single administrative units called monthon meaning "circle" under the control of resident commissioners. The new system of administration was introduced with the aim of developing a hierarchy of regional, provincial and district jurisdictions.<sup>41</sup> Decisions made by the King were then transmitted through the Ministry of Interior to each administrative unit directly. This vertical chain of command brought about a complete change in the traditional administrative system in which provincial lords ("chao muang" in Thai) were entrusted with full power in provincial administration.

King Chulalongkorn's first trip to Europe in 1897 became the turning point in mapping out the new direction of modernization. Observing the unevenness of European modernity and the irrational persistence of local customs, he decided to direct the reform by maintaining the "best" values of Siamese civilization within a borrowed structure.<sup>42</sup>

The field of education was also affected by this decision. Attempts were made to integrate traditional Thai instruction with modern structure. However, unlike the Ministry of Interior, they could not begin with a ready-made structure to contain the essentially secular

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<sup>40</sup>Likhit Dhiravegin, Political Attitudes of the Bureaucratic Elite and Modernization in Thailand, Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Co.,Ltd., 1973. p.12.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p.14.

<sup>42</sup>Wyatt, Thailand - A Short History, p.211.



educational system. It took the Ministry of Public Instruction a decade to create effective educational services and meaningful syllabi in the schools. Eventually, by the end of King Chulalongkorn's reign, a professional class of educators, both modern in minds and Thai at heart, came on duty.<sup>43</sup>

Domestic integration of a diverse population by means of administrative reform was a very critical question. The main problem was to create a sense of unity among the Thais living in what would be found as a Thai nation state. However, it was aiming not only to reinforce the government's administrative power over ethnically and culturally-"Siamese" people, but also to extend an executive authority over minorities residing in the territory of Siam.

Integration of minorities was not only an issue during the age of reform, but has been a serious question until now. Historically, minorities in Thailand came from such ethnic groups as the Lao of the Northeast, the Muslims of the South, hill peoples of the North and Northeast, and comparatively recently, Vietnamese refugees in the Northeast.<sup>44</sup> As a consequence of integration measures taken to date, there is no significant ethnic problem by which the government is now confronted, except for the separatists' movement by Malay Muslims in the South. However, in the process of modernization, it was a very crucial matter to integrate various ethnic groups into the Siamese polity in order to avoid any disruption of the 'nation.' The attempt, needless to say, ran parallel with the delimitation of the national border described earlier.

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<sup>43</sup>Wyatt, David K., The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969. pp.384-385.

<sup>44</sup>Ishii, Yoneo, Sangha, State, and Society, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986. pp.122-130.

Akagi discusses the history of delimiting borders in Siam, saying that in the pre-modern era, Siam was a combination of many muang (provinces) with a krung (capital city) as a core. Muang were classified into three categories; ① neighboring muang, ② distant muang, and ③ subjugated muang (which had been former vassals or tributaries of Siam), according to the distance with the krung. (The area of the krung and neighboring muang was called rajathani, and placed under the rule of the central polity.) This conventional formation of krung and muang was established in Ayudhaya and succeeded to later dynasties, though the center was transferred to Thonburi and Bangkok. Under the situation that krung and muang were coexisting and loosely connected, there was no concept of "border" in the present sense. It was not until the latter half of the 19th century that Siam perceived the meaning of a modern state as well as the meaning of "border," by being involved in international politics.

According to Akagi, the border, no matter how it is demarcated, should be recognized both domestically and internationally. He names border by two functions; "external border" and "internal border." An "external border" is fixed when it is acknowledged among nations, especially by neighboring nations which may have a conflict of interests. On the other hand, an "internal border" is settled when the sovereignty of a given nation reaches all over its territory. While an "external border" can be indicated by a visible line, an "internal border" is invisible, since it is hard to judge "to what extent the national sovereignty is recognized by the citizens." Such factors as language, religion, system of landownership, land surveying, and cartography concern the issue of acceptance of an "internal border" by the residents. Only the overlap of both "internal" and "external" borders can complete the national border, and accomplish the establishment of a modern sovereign nation.



Thailand, like other Asian nations, demarcated the national boundary against its will, due to pressure of Western imperialism, and the border was, so to say, a product of international politics. Nevertheless, it is unique to Thailand that its leaders had considered the meaning of the border in the modern world, and made the attempt to establish the sovereign power inside the framework given by the West. Various political measures had been taken continuously until the middle of the 20th century, aimed at constructing prathet (nation), and to combining the krung, neighboring muang, and distance muang. While an "external border" was demarcated in the first decade of this century, it was not until after the World War II that Thailand's "internal border" completely overlapped it.

Although it took a considerably long time, the process of establishing the "internal border" went smoothly. Akagi analyzes that the cession of the territories of subjugated muang, which were ethnically different in nature, consequently, made it easier to integrate the nation.<sup>45</sup>

Among the various measures taken to establish the "internal border," education played an important role. The teaching of social studies, as well as the Thai language, was one of the essential educational objectives. Both geography and history were subjects to which great importance was attached. The former was important particularly under the circumstances that Thailand was going through the process of delimitting the border line. (It is worth regarding that

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<sup>45</sup>Akagi, Osamu, "Taikoku no 'Kokkyo' Kakutei: Kindaiteki Shukenkokka no Seiritsukatei (Thailand's Demarcation of 'Border': Process of Establishmint a Modern Sovereign Nation)," Tonan Ajia no Kokusaikankei (International Relations in Southeast Asia), (in Japanese), ed. by Yano, Toru, Tokyo: Kobundo, 1991. pp.125-140.

the secondary education geography course of 1902 had a syllabus to practice drawing the map of Siam.) The latter was considered to be very effective in forming the sense of unity among the nation, since history was to be shared by all citizens as a common asset. Both subjects were designed to support and reinforce the structure of the nation state.

### 2.3. Nationalism and History Education

In framing the study course of history education, nationalism had been a very decisive factor. Let us refer to the nature of nationalism raised in Thailand.

According to Ishii, the history of nationalism in Asia differs entirely from that in Europe. Asian nationalism developed in response to the European powers equipped with imperialism. It evolved broadly into two forms, "colonial" and "noncolonial," depending on whether the given state was successful in maintaining its political independence. "Most Southeast Asian countries were colonized, and the nationalism thereby developed can be defined as a political, economic and cultural self-emancipation movement seeking the sovereign independence and sovereign equality of the colonially oppressed people. Only Japan and Thailand remained independent, and their 'noncolonial' nationalism was in essence a political, economic, and cultural self-defence movement by the traditional ruling classes. That these two countries avoided colonization was due, in large measure, to the success of the ruling classes in imposing reform above and, though to different degrees, in centralizing power in the state."<sup>46</sup>

It was during the reign of King Chulalongkorn that modernization was successfully implemented by the ruling class and the institutions of

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<sup>46</sup> Ishii, Sangha, State, and Society, p.147.



a centralized nation state were firmly implanted. By the end of the reign of King Rama VI, Siam had joined the League of Nations and secured her position as a member of the community of modern states. Being planned and executed by the ruling classes, the modernization of Thailand aimed to entrench their privileged position by rationalizing the enforcement of their authority. The masses were constantly excluded from the process. Even the Constitutional Revolution in 1932, which replaced the absolute monarchy with a constitutional one, was in essence a court revolution, since it failed to fundamentally alter the relationship between ruler and ruled. For the majority of the Thai people, it was no more than an exchange of royal absolutism (or an oligarchy of princes) for a military oligarchy.<sup>47</sup>

While he is known as a poet, dramatist and polemicist, King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) was a convinced nationalist. Having been educated in England, he tried to implant a Western-style nationalism. The King formed his own paramilitary organization called Sua Pa (the Wild Tiger Corps) to inculcate nationalism and promote national unity. Upon the outbreak of the World War I, he decided to participate in the war on the Allies side, which in consequence helped Siam gain recognition in the international community.<sup>48</sup>

According to Ishii, King Vajiravudh was remarkably influenced by English ideas and culture from his younger days in England. Although he was not originally heir to the throne, he became crown prince in 1895, due to the death of his elder half-brother. From this time on, as the future king, he had to learn traditional Thai values, internalize them,

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>48</sup>Office of Prime Minister, Thailand in the 90s, Bangkok: the Office of Prime Minister, 1991. p.27.

and even assert their superiority, though his mind was deeply rooted in English values. "If nationalism begins with individual self-awareness premised on the existence of the 'other,' then for Vajiravudh the 'other' was neither a universality nor other individuals, but something within himself. His nationalism was born of the struggle between the 'Englishman' within and the 'Thai' who was destined to become king.<sup>49</sup>

It was during his reign that the tri-colored national flag was first introduced, replacing an earlier design which had a white elephant (emblem of the absolute monarch) on a red background. The new national flag was composed of five horizontal bands of red, white and blue. The outer bands of red represent the nation. The inner bands of white indicate religion, while the blue band, occupying the central area symbolizes the monarchy.<sup>50</sup>

The concept of these three complementary elements originated in the era of King Rama V, and was systematized to be the authorized ideology in the sessions of King Rama VI's lectures addressed to the members of Sua Pa. Later on, this concept was presented by Khun Wichitmatra in the form of the book titled Lak Thai (Thai principles) in 1929. Not only as the title of the book, but rather as a embodied slogan, the word, lak thai has become widely known to the people.

In reality, these three constituent elements of lak thai are not treated equally. The concept of the nation is inferior to that of the king and Buddhism, and is supposed to support these latter two. It was not simply for effectiveness of design that the blue band symbolizing the king was placed in the center, enclosed by the white color of Buddhism, and bordered by the red of the nation. The king and Buddhism,

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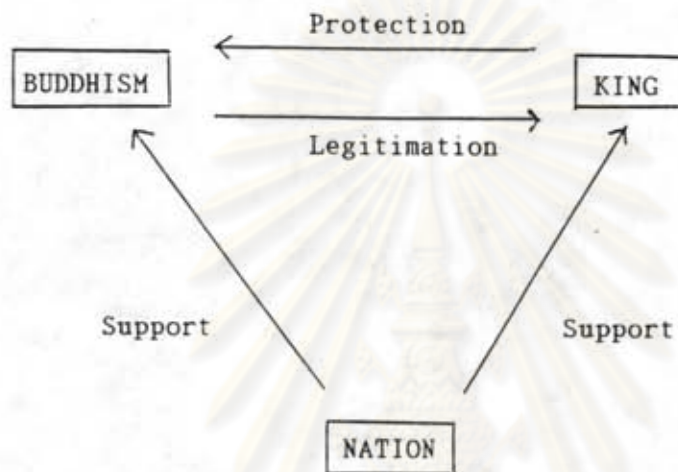
<sup>49</sup>Ishii, Sangha, State, and Society, p.161.

<sup>50</sup>Office of Prime Minister, Thailand in the 90s, p.4.



on the other hand, are related by the king's position as defender of Buddhism and by Buddhism's provision of the king's legitimacy to rule.<sup>51</sup>  
(See figure 3.1)

Fig. 3.1: Internal Structure of Lak Thai



(Source: Ishii, Sangha, State, and Society, p.165)

In 1932, the coup d'etat initiated by the People's Party brought an end to the absolute monarchy. After Siam became a constitutional monarchy, fourth concept, "the constitution" was added to the book, Lak Thai. The nature of lak thai, thereby, changed, owing to the policy that attached more importance to the constitution than to the king. Besides, the absence of King Rama VIII (King Ananda Mahidol) from the country for education in his youth consequently weakened the charisma of the royalty.

This trend continued until the end of Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram's regime in 1957. Being a leader of the People's Party,

<sup>51</sup> Ishii, Sangha, State, and Society, p.164.

Phibun had a great esteem for Western principles and idealism. The change of country's name of Siam to Thailand in 1939 was a reflection of his principle to build the state on the basis of the Thai nation.<sup>52</sup>

Phibun argued for this change that it would signify that the country belonged to the Thai as opposed to the economically dominant Chinese, however, it also had broader implications. By adopting the word "Thai" to represent the nation, it was aimed to imply Thai- (or Tai-) speaking peoples outside the borders of Siam.<sup>53</sup> Due to this interpretation, it was considered that Phibun was seeking hegemony over Thai- (Tai-) speaking people in the neighboring countries.

This policy of Phibun was also regarded as nationalism, yet it was similar neither to the nationalism of King Rama VI nor to that of Sarit Thanarat who was to overthrow Phibun's regime in 1957.

Sarit's emergence brought a reactionary trend to Thai politics. Sarit's political goal was the modernization of Thailand, through which he intended to protect the country from political instability, especially from the invasion of communism. It was Sarit who formulated and executed Thailand's first national economic development program. He sought legitimacy for his government by supporting a lak thai social order.<sup>54</sup>

He parted from the politics based on constitutional and parliamentary democracy, and tried to revive the traditional patriarchal polity. The king's position, which had become merely symbolic since the

<sup>52</sup>Akagi, Osamu, Tai no Seijibunka - Go to Ju (Political Culture of Thailand - Solidity and Flexibility, (in Japanese), Tokyo: Keisoshobo, 1989. pp.91-92.

<sup>53</sup>Wyatt, Thailand - A Short History, p.253.

<sup>54</sup>Ishii, Sangha, State, and Society, pp.164-165.



political reforms of 1932, was raised, and the charisma of the royalty was exploited in order to strengthen the government's authority.<sup>55</sup>

It is not easy to trace the curricula and examine them together with the transition of the nature of nationalism described above. Nevertheless, the change of political direction after the end of the absolute monarchy was rather obvious in the 1937 curriculum. The emphasis put on the new subjects, "Duties of Citizens" and "Civics," which were designed to teach the new administration system, reflects the political atmosphere of the authorities of those days. Moreover, history education, which stressed the significance of "national heroes" and the "Thai race," reflects the nationalistic elements, accentuated during Phibun's regime. The influence of Sarit's reactionary nationalism, based on lak thai principles will be, if at all, reflected in the series of curricula issued after 1960, which will be the subject of the following chapter.

At any rate, it should be remembered that nationalism in its various forms has been flowing alongside the path of education of social studies from one era to the other. And as in Ishii's analysis, the development of nationalism in Thailand, no matter when and by whom, never had an opportunity nor the intention to confront the establishment of the ruling class topped by the king.

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<sup>55</sup>Akagi, Tai no Seijibunka - Go to Ju (Political Culture of Thailand - Solidity and Flexibility), p.92.