

**BANGKOK AND THAI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:
ASPECTS OF CHANGE, 1820-1970**

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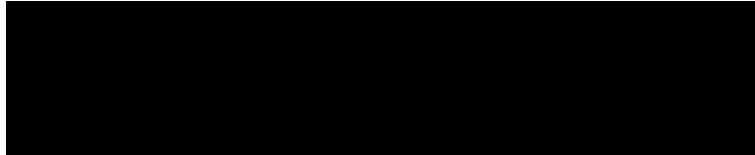
**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
the University of New England**

JULY, 1994

Certificate

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.



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ABSTRACT

Bangkok has played a dominant role in the economic development of Thailand. The main findings of this thesis suggest that Bangkok's primacy was clearly established from around the 1820s. Bangkok has held a concentration of the nation's wealth, has been centre of domestic and international trade, the seat of government, the most populous area in Thailand. Factors affecting Bangkok's "primacy" varied through time. Between 1820-1851, three key factors were significant for Bangkok's development. Firstly, Suay collection (tribute taxes) was controlled by the King and his royal family. Suay constituted the largest portion of exports under the royal trading monopoly. Secondly, the role of canal construction was important to facilitate Suay collection from the provinces to Bangkok for exports and also for public and royal construction activities in Bangkok. Thirdly, Chinese migrants constituted a large portion of population in Bangkok and played an important role in developing the non-agricultural sector. Between 1851-1932, the role of Bangkok was enhanced. Four factors were significant. One was the liberalisation of trade under the Bowring treaty in 1855. Trade and the city developed together. Trade brought capital, labour (mostly Chinese), and western ideas. Bangkok became the fastest growing area, being a centre of trade and business and depended on the supply of Chinese labour. Secondly, canal construction. Growth of trade and industrialisation in Bangkok was accelerated by a network of canal construction in the Central Plain. Canals provided cheap transportation for bulky products, above all rice. Thirdly, road construction in Bangkok helped transform the city from a "floating city" to a "land-based city". Road construction led to an increase in land and terrace house investment, the expansion of trade and business and the expansion of land transportation. Fourthly, the establishment of the Ministry of the Capital (1892-1922) led to the development of facilities necessary for urban growth. The Ministry was empowered to collect taxes which were spent on construction and maintenance of roads, canals, and water supply. The Ministry also annexed adjacent areas to make room for urban growth. The estimated Bangkok's population for Bangkok city and suburbs was around 300,000 in 1900 and increased to around 400,000-480,000 in 1920.

Between 1932-1950, the role of Chinese immigrants became increasingly significant in developing trade and commerce in Bangkok. The Chinese were to be found in all works of commercial life, from the highest to the lowest. They were coolies, skilled labour, middlemen, industrialists, merchants and so on. The influx of Chinese immigrants helped to keep down wages in Bangkok until 1941.

Finally from the early 1960s onwards, Bangkok grew rapidly, and it exercised a powerful influence upon many aspects of Thai economic, social, and cultural life. Three factors have been significant. Firstly, there has been the influx of "cheap labour" migrants from provincial areas. This was caused by the rapid growth of population, mostly in rural areas, from the late 1940s that significantly increased the supply of labour and led to a relative decline in wage rates and household incomes in rural areas. Secondly, the Vietnam war boosted the rapid growth of Bangkok as a financial, industrial, commercial, and tourist centre. U.S. military air bases brought a massive injection of military expenditure and indirectly induced foreign direct investment. Tourism boosted construction activity, for example, hotels and department stores. Thirdly, the role of provincial highways encouraged labour mobility from the provinces, and expanded the size of the domestic market and facilitated exports and imports.

To My Beloved Family and Professor Malcolm Falkus for his Encouragement

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been completed without the generosity of the Department of Economic History, The University of New England, and Sukhothai Thammatirat Open University, which gave me financial assistance.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Professor Malcolm Falkus, Head of Department for his guidance and inspiration through all the stages of the thesis writing. He took the trouble to go through draft after draft, and made valuable comments that helped me to improve the study.

I am indebted to several institutes for providing consultation materials during the process of researching my thesis:

Thailand: Bangkok National Archives; Bangkok National Library; Bank of Thailand Archives; Thammasat University (Central and Faculty of Economics Library) Central Library of Chulalongkorn University Library; Srinakharintarawiroj University Library; and Ministry of Interior Library.

Australia: The National Library of Australia; Dixson Library of The University of New England; Menzies Library and Chifley Library of The Australian National University.

Japan: Library of the Institute of Developing Economies.

There were several persons whose names are given below who also gave valuable comments and indirect assistance to me during the preparation of thesis writing:

Professor B. J Terziel, Dr. Chanvit Kasetsiri, Dr. Chatthip Nartsupha, Dr. Chris Baker, Dr. Pasuk Phongpaichit, Dr. Dow Mongkolsmai, Dr. Chira Hongladarom, Dr. Sompop Manarungsan, Dr. Amajit Kaur, Dr. Anfon Van Der Kraan, Dr. Larry Sternstein, Mr. Andrew, and Mrs. Helen McFarlane, Mr. Frits Dielh, Mr. Mark Maurice, Mr. Chalong Suntarawanich, Miss Suvimon Rungcharoen, Miss Suntharee Asavai, Miss Siriporn Sajjanand, Miss Supaporn Somsrnuan, Miss Thichawadee Pinkaew, Ms Chuanpit Tongklaw, Mr. Prasert Phattaravittakorn, Mr. Paul Gough, Mr. Ayut Nissapa, Miss Takako Miyaji, and Miss Harue Usuda.

I am most grateful to Dr. Chris Baker and Dr Pasuk Phongpaichit for helping me edit the English of this thesis. Special thanks also go to Dr. Anuchat Pongsumlee, and Miss Kulya Nitirungarus for their invaluable help while I was in Canberra. I am also grateful to Mr. Adul Kanansin, who lent me his printer while I was in Tokyo.

The errors in this thesis, both of fact and judgment, are my responsibility alone.

Abbreviations

B.E.	Buddhist Era
ESCAP	Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific
JSS	Journal of the Siam Society
L.E.	Little Era, the Thai lesser Era which began on the 21 st March 638 A.D
N.A.	National Archives, Bangkok
NESDB	National Economic Development and Social Development Board
N.L.	National Library, Bangkok
PPB	The Privy Purse Bureau
R.S.	Rattanakosin Sok ,or Bangkok Era (1781= A.D., Except for the months of January, February and March of the Rattanakosin Sok R.S.plus 1782= A.D).
TDRI	Thailand Development Research Institute
TURA	Thai University Research Associates

Glossary

Amphur	District, administrative subdivision of province.
Ban	Village, house, home
Bia Wat	Annual salary
Chao Phasi	Tax farmer
Chao Muang	"Lord of the town"; local governor (before the 1890s reforms)
Chao Phraya	The highest rank of the Thai ancient civil nobility
Changwat	Province
Chin	Chinese
Farang	Westerner
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Haab	A measure of weight equal to 60 kilogram
Hongtaew	Terrace house, rows of identically -built rooms, shops or apartments, or row house
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
Isan	Northeast-region of Thailand
Ken	Te conscript
Krasuang	Ministry
Krung	City
Khun	Title for the lowest rank of conferred nobility
Kwien	A capacity measure for paddy equal to 15 piculs (one picul is equal to 60 kilograms), and also cart, bullock cart, wagon
Krom	Administrative department
Krommuan	Lowest of the conferred princely ranks
Klong	Canal, waterway
Kum	Handful, package, bundle
Kum	Waxing moon
Lek	Citizen, able-bodied man
Luang	Conferred rank, higher than "Khun ", below "Phra"

Menam or Manam	River
Muang	Country; state; district; town
Monthon	Unit of provincial administration or "circle", one monthon contains a set of provinces or "changwats"
Nai	Lord
Nai	Mr
Nai Roi	Caravan trader
Nakorn or Nakhon	Town, city
Nakornbarn	City administration
Phasri or Pasri	Tax, duty toll, customs
Phasri Rongran	Shop and house taxes
Phra	Conferred rank, higher than "Luang", below "Phraya"
Phraya	Conferred Rank, higher than "Phra, below Chaophraya"
Phrai	Indentured peasant
Phrai Luang	Phrai indentured to the King
Phrai Som	Phrai indentured to a noble
Picul	One picul was equal to 133.5 lb which was changed to 60 kg., or about 132 lb in 1855.
R & R	Rest and recuperation
Rai	Unit of land; 1 rai = 0.16 hectare= 0.4 acre
Sakdina	Status hierarchy under the traditional monarchy
Samuhanayok	Archaic Minister of the Interior
Sen	Unit of linear measurement equivalent to 40 metres
Sok	An ancient Thai measure of length equal to the distance from the elbow to the extremity of the middle finger: roughly 50 centimetres
Suan	Garden
Suay	Tax, tribute, especially tax in kind

Tang	An ancient- measure of 20 litres
Talard	Market place
Tanon	Road
Tarang wa	The unit of measurement equal to two metres squares
Tical	European word for Baht
Tumbon or Tambon	Group of villages, official administrative subdivision under Amphur
Tumlueng	A Thai monetary unit of four Baht
Tung	Field
Wa	The measure of length equal to two metres
Wat	Buddhist Monastery

Siamese Money and Weight

A. Money:

800 Bia	= 1 Fuang
2 Fuang	= 1 Salueng
4 Salueng	= 1 Baht
4 Baht	= 1 Tumlueng
20 Tumlueng	= 1 Chang

B. Expressed as decimals of Baht :

1 Bia	= .00015625
1 Fuang	= .125
1 Salueng	= .25
1 Baht	= 1.0
1 Tumlueng	= 4.0
1 Chang	= 80.0