

*100th anniversary of King Prajadhipok
of Siam's commencement of service in
Thailand and anniversary of the 10th
Asian cycle of his birth*

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Proposed to UNESCO for consideration under the Anniversaries and Great Personalities of the World Project

1.Full Title of the Project: A 100th anniversary of King Prajadhipok of Siam's commencement of service in Thailand and anniversary of the 10th Asian cycle of his birth:

1.1. The Tenth Zodiac Cycle of His Birth (8 November, 2013)

1.2. The Centenary of his Homecoming from the Long Study Abroad (20 April 2014) to Begin His Service in Educational, Social and Cultural Development, and in Communication, Democracy and Peace in Thailand and Internationally

A. Information concerning the event to be commemorated

Explanation Note

The year of this double anniversary covers the time from 8 November 2013 until 8 November 2014 which is marked by 2 important dates: the anniversary of the 10th zodiac cycle of the birth of King Prajadhipok, and the centenary of his return to his homeland after a long study in England and thus the beginning of his dedication to the works in the fields of UNESCO's competence.

On the Concept of the Asian Zodiac Cycle.

In Thailand, as in many Asian countries such as China, Japan, and Vietnam, a cyclic system of 12 years based on the lunar calendar, takes on a great traditional cultural significance.

(For Further reference see, for example: 1.the article on "The Thai Concept of Time" by **Anthony Diller, Preecha Juntanamalaga, Australian National University, 2000**, on

https://digitalcollections.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/41890/3/thai_time.html

2. The article on Chinese Zodiac, http://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/social_customs/zodiac/astrology

3. The article on Japanese ZODIAC CALENDAR & LORE, on <http://www.onmarkproductions.com/html/12-zodiac.shtml>)

Each year of the Asian Zodiac cycle is symbolized by an animal whose name becomes the name of the year, for example, in Thailand, King Prajadhipok was born in the year of the Snake (*Pee Ma Seng*) which coincided with the year 1893 of the Christian era

The completion of each cycle of 12 years is known in Thai as "*Krob Rob Pee Naksat*" (the completion of the cycle of the animals' years). This zodiac system has been used in Thailand since the olden days and it represents a very ancient system in many Asian societies as well. However, the decimal numeral system is also widely used especially in mathematics and calculation.

A Zodiac cycle in a person's life marks an important passage from one stage into the next. For example, at age 12, a Thai child completes the first cycle of life, and according to the Thai tradition, a ceremony of "top-knot cutting", an important "rite of passage" is usually held to mark his or her leaving childhood and entering puberty. At 24, a man should be ordained into monkhood for at least 3 months before being eligible for marriage.

With westernization and longer years at school, Thai children nowadays generally do not wear top knots anymore, and the ceremony of cutting the top-knot as an important rite of passage has almost completely disappeared from the Thais' life-cycle celebration.

Ordination into monkhood is still widely practiced, but the age is now open and flexible, depending on conveniences.

The celebration of a person's birth, especially when the person reaches the age of respected maturity, namely, at the 5th cycle (at the age of 60), is a cultural as well as social event. Subsequent cycles: the 6th cycle (at 72), the 7th cycle (at 84), the 8th cycle (at 96) and so on are also celebrated in a culturally important way. One such was held during the reign of King Prajadhipok himself on the auspicious of His 3rd cycle (at 36) Anniversary of His Birth. During November 6-12, 1929, the celebrations included not only religious and customary rites but also activities that demonstrated the King's effort to connect with a cross-section of his people in a personal way. 3,518 twelve years old scouts and schoolchildren born in the same Zodiac Year of Maseng (the Small Snake), as he, but of 1917, were assembled to offer him their good wishes and to receive from him souvenir pins bearing his royal initials in the form of a snake. In his Speech to them, he urged them to learn to think, not to unthinkingly follow others. He, then, explained that, by doing so, they stood to be as "developed" (charoen) as others and to be able to think up something of benefit to humanity and the world. This demonstrated his special interest in children and their education. Audiences were also granted to Royal Family members and those born in the Maseng Zodiac Year of the same and different cycles to him. They were also given souvenirs bearing his snake-like initials. Members of the foreign diplomatic corps were also granted an audience after dinner hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Celebrations of the Zodiac Cycle were thus recognized internationally at that time.

More recently, Thailand convened a nationwide celebratory event when His Majesty King Bhumibol, born in the year of the Rabbit reached the age of 60, marking his 5th cycle, in 1987. Subsequently there was a celebration of his 6th cycle (72nd anniversary) in 1999, and recently, the celebration of the 7th cycle (84th anniversary) of the King held in 2011. On those important occasions, special emblems were also designed and adopted for official use in all activities in connection with the celebrations nationwide throughout the celebration year.

(References: 1) Banjerd Indhuchandrayong (ed.), Archival Records of the Daily Activities of King Prajadhipok (in Thai), Bangkok: The Office of the Secretariat to the Prime Minister, B.E. 2537 (1994) pp. 619-629 2) Banjerd Indhuchandrayong (ed.), A Compilation of King Prajadhipok's Addresses and Speeches, Bangkok: The Office of the Secretariat to the Prime Minister, B.E. 2536(1993).

*(See more details about Royal emblems for special celebrations at---
<http://www.soravij.com/essays/emblems.html>),*

November 8, 2013 marks the 10th zodiac cycle of the birth of King Prajadhipok which coincides with the 120th anniversary of his birth in the western decimal system. This is considered a grand occasion indeed and is worthy of a special celebration to mark the occasion.

On the Celebration of Homecoming after a Long Absence from Native land

In Thailand, a person's long absence from home is always a cause for concern and homecoming is an anxiously awaited event for the entire community. In the early twentieth

century, especially, when communication was not by far as convenient and as fast as at present, homecoming after many years of studying abroad was celebrated with religious as well as social and cultural ceremonies.

When a person travels a very long distance to a foreign country at a very young age of 12 and returns home after living and studying abroad for 7 years, it is natural that his or her family and the entire community feels very concerned that his or her return is a safe and complete one, both in body and in spirit.

Usually, a traditional and age-old ceremony of “*Rub Kwan*” or “*Soo Kwan*” is held to ensure the safe and complete return of the person’s spirit which is known in the Thai language as “*Kwan*”.

Kwan, in Thai belief, is the spirit or the soul of a person that resides at the top of one’s head and protects one from harm and illness. When one travels a long distance or returns from a very long and rough trip, the ceremony is performed involving the participation of Buddhist monks, a respected sage, family elders and all members of the community. This ceremony is still widely practiced even today in all regions of Thailand. Foreign visitors arriving in Thailand are often welcomed with the “*Soo Kwan*” ceremony especially in the north and northeastern part of Thailand where a tradition like this is kept very much alive.

Since the time of King Chulalongkorn, princes, sons of noblemen and a number of commoners’ children were selected and given scholarships to study abroad from an early age. The aim was to adequately build up a corps of competent and modern educated manpower in various fields to run the newly created government.

All of Queen Saovabha’s 5 sons were sent to various countries in Europe at a young age to study according to the King’s plan. One of them however became ill and chose to return home. All the royal princes, following King Chulalongkorn’s tradition, had to take a solemn vow not to behave inappropriately or against traditions while living abroad, for example to marry a foreign woman and to drink excessively and be drunk.

All scholarship students, especially the royal children, were under the care and strict supervision of the Siamese Ambassador to that country who periodically submitted a detailed report directly to the King on the progress made by each of them.

Since the time of King Chulalongkorn, when a Royal Prince or a student granted the King’s scholarship returned home from a long study leave in a foreign country, it was with the purpose of taking up the responsibility which was to be assigned to him by the king. His return marked the beginning of his service and dedication the throne and to the entire nation which he would perform as best as he could.

2. Brief description of the Celebration

2.1. The celebration for the Commemoration of the great personality of King Prajadhipok, from November 2013-November 2014, will be a double anniversary of two important events in connection with King Prajadhipok’s life, namely the Commemoration of the 10th Zodiac cycle (120th anniversary) of King Prajadhipok’s Birth (8 November 2013) and the Centenary of his Homecoming from His 7 years Study in England (20 April 2014).

This double anniversary celebration will be spread out throughout the year from November 2013-November 2014. (See attached chart of activities planned for the celebration)

The celebration will be a national and regional series of events with nationwide and international participation involving various types of activities to be undertaken by the Parliament, many ministries and departments in the government, and agencies in the private sector. During this year-long celebration, the King Prajadhipok Institute will act as the national coordinator and the main organizer. (see [King Prajadhipok's Institute Website :www.kpi.ac.th](http://www.kpi.ac.th))

2.2. An inter-agency committee has been set up to plan and coordinate this important celebration. (See List of the Committees set up for the various main activities) The Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary has already confirmed His Majesty's grant of permission for the celebration.

2.3. This celebration will emphasize, not only the activities of a celebratory nature as such, but rather those that will promote a better understanding of the life, visions, and works of a great personality-- a promoter of education for all, including non-formal education and education for women, of culture and communication, and of international understanding, democracy and peace.

The celebration will also shed light on the significance and critical period of history in which he was born into and during which he lived and worked, a time of global changes and great turbulences which provided unique social, economic and political contexts to his life and works. The contexts however were not too different from our time and our situations as seen in many parts of the world today.

2.4. The aims of the celebration activities will be:

- promoting the intellectual, social and cultural processes of learning at various levels about the life and works of King Prajadhipok in the fields of education, social sciences, culture, communication, democracy and peace,

- promoting the exchanges and sharing of knowledge and lessons learned both at the national and international levels from studying the life and works of this great personality, particularly his ideas, concerns, visions and values which in many ways still continue to impact, influence or challenge the thinking, the debate and the study on many aspects of development in Thailand and in other countries of the world

- promoting the understanding of the influences and impacts of western education on Thailand's modernization and development as seen through the Study abroad Scholarships Scheme, begun in King Chulalongkorn's time and continued though in different ways until today.

- promoting the photographic and cinematographic legacy left behind by King Prajadhipok especially the photographs and films taken by him and his entourage during his visits to the important places in the neighbouring countries (now ASEAN) as well as during his visits to countries in Europe, Japan, USA and Canada.

2.5. The following areas of his work will be the focuses of the celebration:

- A) Education, especially the expansion of universal basic education for quality of life and for meaningful participation in development
- B) Education and research in some trans-disciplinary areas, such as education for democracy, good governance, good leadership, transparency, peace; and human rights
- C) Protection of cultural heritage and participation in the cultural life with special emphasis on the establishment of museum, theatre, the Royal Academy to promote

cultural education, the participation in cultural life, promotion of Thai music, laws on cultural properties and copyrights.

- D) Communication for development: especially the building of infrastructure to link communities and enhance equal access to development services and opportunities, the promotion of free press, radio, photography, and cinematography
- E) Sports for health
- F) International exchanges and cooperation for mutual respect and mutual cultural understanding

The list of activities planned for the year-long celebration appears in attachment 2.

3. Historical Background

3.1 His Birth and the Social and Political Setting

King Prajadhipok (8 November 1893 – 30 May 1941), was the 7th King of Siam of the Chakri House. He was born in the year of the Franco-Siamese Crisis when the French naval blockade threatened Bangkok and forced King Chulalongkorn to conclude a Treaty in October 1893, an event which brought great strains, emotional, political and economic, on the King and his government. On the other hand, the year of his birth coincided with the advent of cinematography, as in that year, Thomas Alva Edison produced the first type of movie box called *Kinetoscope* and sold it worldwide. This event probably had an impact on his interest in cinematography later.

Prajadhipok's short life and reign (1925-1934) coincided with one of the most turbulent and fast-changing times in the history of the world and of Siam --- the "*Fin de Siècle*", the years before the World War I, and the building up of tensions before the World War II. It was indeed a period of international disequilibrium characterized mainly by the impact of expansion of the European colonization, the worldwide economic problems, the vast social unrests, and the political turmoil and transformations in many parts of the world.

King Prajadhipok's reign, as one historian---the late Professor David Wyatt, formerly with Cornell University, succinctly described it, was ..."*On the one hand the story of the movement of great historical forces---of political aspirations, public opinion, social and political mobilization, economic modernization, and so on---while on the other hand it is very much the story of individuals and personalities and their effect upon historical events. It is not easy to assess the relative merits of each of these, but the understanding of all is crucial to the history of the period.*" (See David Wyatt, 1982, Thailand: A Short History, p 234)

Born to King Chulalongkorn (1853-1910) as the youngest of all his 33 sons, and the last of the 9 children of Queen Soavabha Bhongsri (known, after her 1897 Regency, as the Queen Regent), Prince Prajadhipok received his early education at the age of 6 at the Royal Junior Cadet School where he was given a formal general education in Thai and English, as well as some basic disciplinary training in preparation for a higher military education and career in the future. **(See Photo 1)**

His father, like his grandfather, King Mongkut (1804-1868), was a visionary leader under the system of the Siamese monarchy. Their priority policy was to construct a modern state of Siam in order to escape western colonization, to gain international recognition, and open up to modernization for exchange and cooperation with the world. This policy was implemented especially in King Chulalongkorn's long reign, through the reform and modernization of the state and its bureaucracy and army, with due emphasis on the building of qualified manpower in needed fields.

King Chulalongkorn established various types of schools in Thailand, both for children of royalty and commoners, within and outside the palace, in Bangkok and in the provinces.

Wider expansion of basic education was at once launched, even before the establishment of the ministry of education proper, with the support of the Buddhist temples in all parts of the country. For his own family, the King personally planned and supervised the education of all his sons and the sons of his high officials who were encouraged to study first in Siam and later, if possible, abroad, with the advice of some trusted officials. Later, he also extended the study- abroad scheme to sons of commoners so that they would return to work as qualified officials in his newly established ministries.

(Reference: 1. David Wyatt: online book, Politics of Reform-- Education in Thailand in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn, 1969; 2. Gerald W. Fry: The Evolution of Educational Reform in Thailand, Department of Educational Policy and Administration, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota, 2002 also accessible on line; 3. Chris Baker and Pasuk Pongpaicit, A History of Thailand, 2005, p.66-67)

3.2. A Siamese Prince in the Western World

Prince Prajadhipok, being the youngest son, with the least chance of becoming King considering a very large number of his full and half brothers in higher ranks of succession, was advised to pursue a military career that would benefit his health, and enable him to serve his country in an appropriate way.

At the age of 12, after the ceremony of cutting the top knot, **(See photo 2)** he was sent to France first, and later to England where he was boarded at the home of an English teacher, Mr. C. W. Bell, for language tutoring, and for learning of other subjects under Mr. Coleman, another teacher, before being admitted, at age 14, to Eton College, in 1906.

Mr. J. H. M. Hare, the House Master at Eton regularly reported in writing the progress of the Prince's education from 1908-1910. The school reports showed that he was "*reserved but intelligent*"; a "*sensible, pleasant and dependable person*" "*with plenty of character*". He was "*regular and conscientious in his work*" and "*making steady and good progress*" though "*slow in his working methods*". In subject matters, he was "*weak in Latin*", but "*very fair indeed in French*", "*satisfactory in Math and Science*". He "*seemed to be musical and promising*", "*steadily improving in Violin*", and generally "*enjoyed the sports*". (Reference : copies of Mr. J. H. M. Hare's letters from Eton College, Windsor, with attached letters and reports from the Division Master and instructors, dated 28th July 1908; 24th July, 1909, July 26, 1910, National Archives, Bangkok.)

After graduation from Eton in 1910, and at the advice of the Siamese Ambassador in England, the King sent this young Prince to the Woolwich Military Academy **(See photo 3)**

In that same year, King Chulalongkorn died. Prince Prajadhipok returned to Siam in March 1910 to attend the Royal Cremation Ceremony. Crown Prince Vajiravudh, Prince Prajadhipok's eldest full brother, ascended to the Throne, known also as King Rama VI.

After the Cremation and the Coronation, Prince Prajadhipok travelled back to England on the Trans--Siberian Rail and enrolled at the Woolwich Academy. He graduated in 1913, and from February 1913-June 1914, he was a commissioned officer in the Royal Horse Artillery in the British Army based in Aldershot. In February 1914 he was granted the honorary rank of 2nd Lieutenant.

(Reference: 1. Copy of letter signed by J.S. Ewart and R.. Brad, by the command of His Majesty King George.R.I, appointing Prince Prajadhipok to the Honorary Rank of 2nd Lieutenant, given at the Court of Saint James's, 2nd of February 1914. 2) Archives พ.ร.บ. ๓๓๓. ๓๓. 43.6.4/8 concerning the commission in the Royal Horse Artillery in the British Army of Prince Prajadipok, BE 2456-2457), National Archives of Thailand)

3.3. Homecoming and Dedication to the Service of His Nation

Homecoming, after a long absence from one's family and home environment, is always an important event in an individual's and the community's life in Thailand. In the early twentieth century, the Thai government, with the reform policy of King Chulalongkorn, sent a number of young students to Europe each year in order to strengthen the qualified and experienced manpower for the running of the newly conceptualized government.

In Rama V's reign, 301 Thai students were studying abroad on Scholarships to Great Britain, 47 in the United States, 24 in France, and a number scattered in other countries. In the early period of King Prajadhipok's reign, the king noted that some member of the royal students had not chosen proper fields of study and had asked that they be reminded of their responsibility to prepare themselves for useful services in the government. (See: B. A. Batson, *The End of The Absolute Monarchy*, 1984, Chapter 1—"Siam, the west and the monarchy", and chapter 3—"King and realm.")

In general, Thai students completing the studies and returning home have to face the challenges of settling back comfortably into the Thai ways of life which is quite different from that in the west, and to try to bring the new knowledge learned in the west to apply to the Thai situations and to improve the work in the native country. This is not always a smooth and happy experience for many students having been exposed and habituated to the western lifestyle and the freedom of living in a foreign country.

There is a tradition long practiced in Thailand of welcoming the King or a close relative of the King, who returns from a trip abroad. This occasion is known in Thai as "Sadet Niwat Pranakorn". In the early 20th century, this was an important state affair as long distance travelling to faraway countries in those days entailed many inconveniences. Even today, for nobles as well as for commoners, returning home after a long absence in a foreign land always calls for huge reception by relatives and friends.

Prince Prajadhipok's education abroad had been designed by the king and his government. When he graduated from Eton and later from the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, he became an honorary commissioned officer of the British army in 1913.

In 1914, when the First World War broke out in Europe, King Vajiravudh, his eldest brother, first declared Siam's strict neutrality. He ordered Prince Prajadhipok to resign from the British Army, but to remain in England to study international law and history of warfare with some private teachers. Later that year, the King ordered his return to Siam and to serve as a military official in Siam. (Archives ๒๓๓ ๓๓ 43.6.4/14 concerning the education of Prince Prajadhipok, BE 2457) (Further Reference:--1) King Chulalongkorn's royal archives ๓ 49/ 54, ๓ 49/55 concerning the Royal Princes studying abroad, the National Archives of Thailand; 2) King Vajiravudh 's royal archives, ๒ 4.3/1, Report on the education of Prince Krom Khun Sukhothai 25July -11 November BE 2453)

For Prince Prajadhipok, coming home during the war time, after more than 7 years of studying in England since the age of 12, marked an important turning point in his life and the beginning of his dedicated service to the nation. As a 2nd Lieutenant in the British Army, when the war broke out, he indicated his willingness to serve the British army alongside his classmates. But being a younger brother of the reigning King of a country that had declared neutrality, he was duty-bound to return home to begin his career as an officer in his country's army.

On February 6, 1914, he therefore had an audience with King George V to bid his leave, and hence began his journey home arriving in Bangkok on 20 April 1914. (Reference: Archives of King Prajadhipok, King Prajadhipok Museum, Amarin Printing, 2002, p. 23..."Return to Siam")

His homecoming was especially warmly welcomed by his Mother, Queen Soavabha Bhongsri whose health had deteriorated since the death of her husband, King Chulalongkorn, and whose elder sons including the reigning King, her eldest son, had become too busily involved with the state affairs. Prince Prajadhipok regularly visited his mother at the Pyathai Palace, staying long hours quietly to keep close watch in her chamber into the late evening while she was visited by many guests and her team of physicians. (Source: M. Smith, *A Physician at the Court of Siam*", Kuala Lumpur:Oxford University Press, 1982).

The King, Rama VI, his eldest brother, was particularly keen to see that his youngest full-brother should serve the government "as a Siamese prince should". Prince Prajadhipok was immediately assigned to the Siamese Army, as an aide to Field Marshall Prince Chakrapong Krommaluang Pitsanuloke, Chief of the Army General Staff. Later, after working arduously, he was promoted to the rank of Captain and Commander of the Battery of the Royal artillery Guard 9 Source: King Prajadhipok's archives, K P Museum, *ibid*)

Moreover, celebration of homecomings after a long absences are not confined to that from education abroad. Indeed, King Chulalongkorn's (Rama V) return from his 1907 eight months trip to Europe was celebrated with grandeur at the national level. (Peleggi; Maurizio, *Lands of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002)

After an absence of some six months in the United States of America and Canada, necessitated by King Prajadhipok having to have surgery for cataract in his left eye but which involved many formal and informal activities as well, the King and the Queen's Homecoming on October 12, 1931 was clearly an occasion for all to celebrate. Naval ships and boats belonging to ordinary people, decorated with flags, flocked to the Royal Yacht Maha Chakri to extend to them a warm and spontaneous welcome. Other activities were also organized, less lavish than at the time of King Chulalongkorn's return from Europe because of the effects of the Great Depression. These included much rehearsed performances by courtiers at Ambhara Mansion, Dusit Palace. (Reference: The Office of Her Majesty's Principal Private Secretary, *A Collection of Photographs of the Activities of Queen Rambhai Barni of the Seventh Reign*, Bangkok: Krungthep (1984) Printing Company, B.E. 2528 (1985), pp. 138-139

3.4 Return to Tradition: A Buddhist Ordination and Marriage

In 1917, when he was 24 and after working in the army for 3 years, Prince Prajadhipok took the traditional ordination leave from the Government's service and entered Buddhist monkhood in a royally sponsored ceremony at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. He studied the Buddha's teaching at Wat Bovornives temple and remained a monk there throughout the three-month Buddhist Lent (**See photo 4**)

The peaceful and modest life of a monk seemed to suit him so well that the Supreme Patriarch (Pra Maha Samana Chao Krom Praya Vajirayanvaroros, one of King Mongkut's sons who assisted King Chulalongkorn in extending primary education using Buddhist temples as schools) invited him to stay in monkhood for life so that he might serve the Religion with a chance of becoming the Supreme Patriarch. Prince Prajadhipok declined and indicated that he had a previously-made commitment to the young Princess Rambhai Barni (20 December 1904 – 22 May 1984),

In August 1918, he married this 14 year-old Princess, **(See photo 5)** a descendant of King Mongkut, in a royal ceremony held at the Bang Pa-In Palace. They registered their names as the bridal couple in the marriage registration book, with the King as sponsor and witness, with some senior members of the royal family as other witnesses. **(See Photo 6)**. After the wedding, they lived in a palace, Known as Sukhothai Palace, built as a gift for him by Queen Soavabha

(Reference: Pra Worawongtheu Krommun Bhittayalapa Bhruthakara, The Royal Biography-- Archiving the Royal Wedding, p 6)

3.5. Health, Advanced Training, and Foreign Visits

Prajadhipok's health was not always good. The Royal Archives have a record of him falling seriously ill at the age of 3. (Reference: The Royal Archives, กต. 6.6/1). While studying in England, he took up various kinds of sports which he tried to play regularly in order to maintain a relatively good health.

In 1920, he fell seriously ill and the doctor who treated him in Thailand recommended a change of climate and a specialist's further treatment in Europe. As the World War I had ended, the King gave permission for him to visit Dr. Hepp, in Paris, who diagnosed him as suffering from Dengue Fever and intestinal disorder, and treated him for 6 weeks until he was cured. (Reference: National archives นวช กต 6.6/14)

After five weeks of medical treatment, Prince Prajadipok, wrote a letter dated 2 May 1921 to the King asking permission to attend advanced training at École de Guerre in France **(See photo 7)** using his own private funds. In this letter in Thai, he wrote... *"I have realized that I do not possess enough knowledge to benefit the army and have often contemplated resigning from my post... But here is an opportunity to be further educated in a new and advanced programme in France where recently a Japanese Prince with a Colonel rank has come for training." ..."This will also be an opportunity for the education of my wife"...* and that... *"My doctor also thinks that it will certainly be good for my health as the exercise and the proper training are what I need"...* -- *"I am therefore seeking your permission to take leave to study here for 3 years, one year for a preparatory training and 2 years for the advanced course...And since this is a personal affair, I would like to use my own money so that it would not be a burden on the government's budget."...* (Reference: Copy of Prince Prajadhipok's letter dated 2nd May BE 2464, in Thai, addressed to His Majesty King Rama VI, National Archives)

He was attached to the Brigades Unit 20, at Nancy, under the supervision of Colonel Degraix, for 6 months; during this time he underwent a 2-months training at the infantry unit 26, another 2 months at the artillery unit, and 2 more months at the cavalry unit, and observed the operation of other units including the chief of staff office. On 27 April, 1922, he underwent the Programme of the courses of study including "the theoretical passing courses of the rank of Colonel at Versailles". The programme was organized and signed by General Hengault, Under Chief of the General Staff (Reference: General Hengault's letter, Paris, 25th April, 1922)

He completed the training and received his certificate in 1923. The King then commanded him to return to Siam via the United States to observe the progress there, and to stop in Japan and Hong Kong for unofficial visits and to meet a number of distinguished personalities in those countries.

(Reference: Royal Archives, กต.6.6/14 concerning Somdej Choafa Krom Khun Sukhothai receiving military training in France, BE 2464-2466)

Upon his return to Siam, Prince Prajadhipok was granted the colonel rank and was assigned to work in the Chief of Staff Unit of the army in his brother's Government. He worked diligently both in Bangkok and in the provinces, and lived a quiet life with his wife at their riverside residence, The Sukhothai Palace. Childless, the couple adopted a few nieces and nephews who grew up at their Palace. The family enjoyed playing Siamese traditional music and some sports.

3.6. Succession to the Throne

Succession had occasionally been a political issue in ancient Siam. King Chulalongkorn, however, reformed the Palatine rule and created the position of The Crown Prince. At the investiture of the Crown Prince, Vajiravudh, in 1895 (then a student at Sandhurst and later at Oxford,) who later became King Rama VI, the King also proclaimed the Crown Prince's mother as Queen Soavabha, (and later when he went abroad, appointed her as the Queen Regent) indicating that succession would pass to the sons of this queen as a priority. The line of succession was later clearly established in the Palatine law concerning succession, issued in 1924 by King Rama VI, that all the full brothers of the King (born to Queen Soavabha), unless disqualified for some reasons specified in the succession law, were directly in line to succeed and had the priority over the princes born to other queens of Royal blood of King Chulalongkorn (Reference: National Archives: ร 6 ก 1/3 รัชทายาท) Unfortunately, during the period of 1920-1923, Prajadhipok's older brothers born to Queen Saovabha (the Queen Mother of the King) unexpectedly passed away, one by one.

Under the circumstances, Prince Prajadhipok, in 1923-1924, suddenly found himself next in line to the throne, unless and until the King had a son. The King then began to command him to serve as Regent whenever he was out of the Capital, and required him to perform many functions including chairing the Ministers' Council and signing day-to-day documents on behalf of the King. This compelled the young Prince to pay serious attention to all matters concerning government administration. Soon, the King promoted him, from the previous royal title of “*Krom Khun Sukhothai Dharmaraja*”, granted in 1906 by Chulalongkorn, to “*Krom Luang Sukhotai Dhama Raja*”. (Reference: Royal Decree by King Rama VI, November 1925, on the appointment of Somdej Choafa Krom Luang Sukhothai Dharmaraja, National Archive)

In 1925, King Vajiravudh became abruptly ill, and after 15 days, passed away in the early hour of 26 November 1925, aged 44. Married without a son, with only a daughter born just one day before his death, he left a will naming his youngest brother as the successor to the throne.

Prince Prajadhipok's succession received the consent of the Assembly of the Royal Family. (Record of the special meeting of all members of Royalty and Ministers, 26 November 1925, at 8 a.m. at the Amarindravinichai Hall, The Grand Palace, National Archives) He was crowned in a traditional ceremony on 25 February 1926 (**See photo 8**) and became the 7th King of the Chakri Dynasty of Siam, also known as King Rama VII. He was 33 years old. On his Coronation Day, he proclaimed his wife Queen Rambhai Barni. He never took other wives or consorts but remained married to her until his death. (**See photo 9**). (Archives of the Coronation, compiled by Pnya Prakasaksornkit (Sagniem Ramanant)

3.7. Inheritance of Problems and Challenges

3.7.1 Origin of the Problems

“The seventh reign began in 1925 amid economic and political crisis, and the absolute monarchy came to an end in 1932 amid further economic and political crisis... but there was

a middle period from mid-1926 to 1930, when it appeared that the King and his advisors had dealt successfully with the economic and political difficulty they had inherited and when the future of the reign and the monarchy looked bright.”

This is how Benjamin Batson partly described the reign of King Prajadhipok in his book, (p71), ***End of Absolute Monarchy in Siam***, 1984, based on his Ph.D. dissertation on the same subject, at Cornell University. (Asian Studies Association of Australia, Southeast Asian Publication Series, No. 10, available at Central Library, Chulalongkorn University and the Library of the Sukhothai Dharmathiraja University, Bangkok.)

Indeed, King Prajadhipok inherited serious and complex problems, many of which were related to the worldwide troubles and trends that had spread from Europe and America to Asia following the First World War. These problems had also been aggravated by many situations in Siam at the time. The worldwide problems and trends that had impact on the Thai situations could be summarized as:--1) The economic depression, following the WWI; 2) The decline in power or popularity of empires and the monarchy in many parts of the world; 3) The widespread nationalistic and socialistic movements especially in Europe and Asia.

Economics and finance in Siam had given King Prajadhipok reasons to be gravely concerned even before the end of his brother's reign.

At the beginning of the World War I, King Rama VI, educated in England for 15 years in military science, history and law, had maintained strict neutrality. But in July 1917, he had decided to declare war on the Central Power, not without long and careful planning on his part, or dispute from some groups of people in Siam, as many Thai princes and elites had studied in Germany and many German traders and companies had been working on many important projects in many parts of Siam. By June, 1918, an expeditionary force of 1,300 men had been dispatched to France, and had crossed the Rhine River with the French forces and spent several months camping in a German town patrolling the area. (Keith Hart, the Military Participation of Siam in the First World War 1914-1918, Thailand Information Centre at Chulalongkorn University ,p 3, cited in Stefan Hell, 2007, “Siam and the League of Nations, Modernization, Sovereignty and Multilateral Diplomacy, 1920-1940”,p26.)

The Thai troops flying the newly created Siamese flags, had also proudly taken part in the Victory Parade at the Champs Elysees in Paris, then in London and Brussels in the course of July 1919. Later, many of the troopers had stayed on for advanced training in Europe.

Siding with the Allied and emerging in the winning camp had helped raising Siam's profile and its visibility internationally, as well as a sense of patriotism at home. Siam was subsequently invited to send a delegation to the Paris Peace Talks, signed the Versailles Treaty, and became a member of the League of Nations. The King and his Minister of Foreign Affairs seized the opportunity to instruct the Siamese delegations to lobby for the revision of the unequal treaties that Siam had been forced to sign with many countries in the past to safeguard its independence. The process of the negotiations with the European countries on the revision of these treaties was long and arduous, taking 6 years to complete, and the Siamese, exhausted, had to depend largely on the foreign experts, notably the two Harvard professors and former advisors of the Siamese Foreign Affairs who were able to push the negotiation to a successful conclusion. (Stefan Hell, *ibid*, p 30-33)

By this time, the costs of war and its aftermaths had begun to take its cruel toll on the World and Siam. Siamese national spending had also increased hugely due to King Rama VI's investments on the building of modern nationhood, nationalism and the international prestige of Siam. The organization of international events, such as--- his second Coronation attended by international and national dignitaries and guests, the Bangkok Public Exhibition 1922, the

international cooperation in the League of Nations and in other multilateral organizations, as well as the negotiations for the revision of treaties, though rewarding in the long run, had created heavy financial burdens. The King's projects, such as the establishment of the Military Academy and the Boy Scout Movement, the introduction of a new defense mechanism (The Wild Tigers Corps), and the reform and expansion of the Palace administration, as well as the infrastructure constructions and other modernization projects--- all these had contributed to the country's budgets falling into deep deficits for consecutive years. The annual expenditures had increased more than 50% while revenues gaining only 25%. (Reference: the national budget of Siam from 1920-1925, cited in Kiatchai Pongspanich: Revolution, printed by Prae Pittaya BE 2514, Mayuree Nokyoungthong, M.A Dissertation, Chulalongkorn University, BE 2520, The Economic Problems of Siam in the Reign of King Prajadhipok)

Rama VI's policy and swift reforms, though important in many ways, had raised criticism from many corners. The old conservatives, including some senior members of Royalty, had regarded the King as being too westernized in his style of behavior. The new elites including the "young Turks" in the military, especially commoners educated abroad on King Chulalongkorn's extended scholarship schemes, who had returned to serve at various government offices, had been strongly unhappy with the King's system of favoritism that had excluded them. Views and opinions had been expressed strongly and freely in the press, and rumours had dangerously spread to the point of coming too close to reality. (The incident of the Palace revolt 1912 was a case in point)

(Further reference: 1) Clark D. Neher, 1979, Modern Thai Politics: From Village to Nation; 2) D. K. Wyatt, The Rise of Elite Nationalism 1910-1932, Chapter 8, in Thailand, a short History; 3) Kobkua Suwannathat- Pian), pdf., The Development of Thai Nationalism : 1910-1925)

3.8. Coping with the Economic crisis

3.8.1 The First Round of Crisis 1926-1930

In 1926, King Prajadhipok, long recognizing the urgency of the economic situations, immediately moved to find effective solutions and to quickly mend the huge deficits. He created a Financial Advisory Committee to control the expenses; he also engaged a British financial advisor, Sir Edward Cook, from the Indian Civil Service, known as "the axe" for his previously successful retrenchment operations in India (Reference: The StraitsTimes, 22 November 1924), to advise the King in this matter. A drastic retrenchment scheme was proposed together with plans to increase revenues.

The King approved the retrenchment proposals and the plans for the increase of revenue. He decided to cut his own royal allowance by 40% before taking the decision to cut the budgets of most Government ministries, merging or abolishing some departments, and laying off a number of officials, resulting in a sudden and sharp unemployment among young graduates. He also decreed the 1928 Currency Act that held the respected international currencies, the sterling at that time. (Reference: 1) Benjamin Batson, End of Absolute Monarchy in Siam, p 50, 2) King Prajadhipok's letter to Choa Phya Sri Pipat, No. 336/ 709 dated 21 February 1930; 3) Christopher Burk:Thiland's Political Economy, on chenry.webhost.utexas.edu/archives98/)

King Prajadhipok's government was able to recover from the crisis in the first few years, for in the 1927 and 1928 the budgets were seen as greatly improved, with surplus funds to spend on public works and with some cash reserve. After that, the budget seemed to continue to stabilize for a few years. (Reference: Summary of national budget BE 2469-2475, National Archives) and Sir Edward Cook having completed his term of service, left Thailand with praises for his success. (The Straits Times, 1930)

3.8.2 The Second Blow 1930-1932

The year 1930 saw a worldwide economic storm which hit Siam really hard, severely affecting the price of rice and other main export items. In that year, King Prajadhipok had to travel to the United States for his first eye operation; and Prince Boriphat acted as Regent

and President of the Supreme Council. A conflict then flared up between the Ministry of Defense, under Prince Boworadej, and the Ministry of Commerce and Communication, under Prince Purachatra, over the demand for a budget increase to cover higher salary for the personnel of Defense. The Commerce and Communication ministry strongly protested and the Council decided to reject the request, resulting in Prince Boworadej's submission of his resignation. The King, upon receiving the report from the Council, asked for a cabled explanation from Prince Boworadej. When it failed to come, the King accepted the resignation.

In 1931, taxes on luxurious imported merchandise were increased and the policy of retrenchment was coming back on the government's agenda raising fear and criticism at all levels. Criticism was strongly expressed in the markedly increased number of newspapers. (The total number of newspapers in the 7th reign was 56 daily newspapers and 136 periodicals in 1926-1930. Reference: Porntip Deesomchoke, "The Concept and Promotion of Communication in the reign of King Rama VII, BE 2553" p 44)

Even within the Cabinet and the Supreme Council, there were several heated debates on the economic and financial policy and measures to be adopted. The new French educated English finance advisor, Mr. Hall-Patch, seemed not very familiar with the Siamese financial and economic system, advised the Council and the King to delay the establishment of an economic committee at a high level to oversee the total economic situation.

On 21 September 1931, Great Britain announced its suspension of the gold standard and the Thai Cabinet and the Supreme Council met urgently to debate the repercussion of the situation. Upon Hall-Patch's advice and insistence, the Council decided on 30 September to leave the sterling and to remain on the gold standard. This decision caused great alarm in many sectors as the Thai currency was linked with the sterling and most of Siam's assets abroad were in sterling.

The King, who had recuperated from his eye operation and was aboard a Canadian ship on his journey home, sent many telegrams to his representatives in New York, London and Paris to try to seek the possibility of foreign loans on credits, but the replies he received were disappointing as the terms of credits offered were considered unacceptable by the government of Siam. In mid-October the King arrived back in Bangkok and immediately called the meetings with the Supreme Council and the Cabinet after which he established a special Cabinet subcommittee composed of Prince Boriphat, Minister of Finance, Minister of Commerce and Communication, and Minister of Foreign affairs, to deal with the preparation of the 1932-33 budget.

In 1932, the big debate in the Thai government centered on whether or not to abandon the gold and return to the sterling which also meant devaluing the Baht. The opinions were divided with Minister of Finance and Hall-patch in the minority.

On this heated issue, the King held a round table with all his advisors from every economic-related ministry, and they mostly disagreed with the Finance Ministry and its chief advisor who held on to what he called "classical measures for classical disorder" (Batson, *ibid*, p. 198) by maintaining the gold link, imposing drastic reduction in government expenditures and increasing taxation, while other ministries were mainly concerned with internationally competitive trading, particularly of rice, the country's main export and the ramification on the public at large. Greater concerns were expressed about the cutting of expenditures (50 % as proposed) and also the tax increase which would have deeper economic and political repercussions throughout the country. Independent opinions were received from some former advisors then living outside Siam including Sir Edward Cook. Finally, Hall-Patch resigned and the Minister of Finance, Phya Komarakul Montri was sacked.

King Prajadhipok sat at the center of all these conflicting debates and advices, hoping the advisors would be able to come to a common ground that would serve the best interest of the country, knowing too well that, at the end of the debates, it was he who would have to make the decision. (Batson, *ibid*, p 195-203)

In January 1932, he began to fully inform the general public about the seriousness of the situations and prepare them for the upcoming measures. He first issued a government's communiqué, but he was then flooded with letters of petition for government's help.

He further tried to communicate directly to the representatives of the public sector to build up the general understanding and to gain their support for his new retrenchment policy. At the Celebration of his Coronation Day, 1932, when all members of Royalty and government officials and dignitaries gathered, he thanked the assembly for the kind words of blessing, but dwelt at great length on the economic development of Thailand, from modern agriculture, international trade, the reduced tariff for train transportation that would benefit farmers, the expansion of cooperatives, the issuing of new laws on fuel conservation, the trade mark law and copyright law, the International Conference on opium and the decreased standard price of gold. Then he turned to Siam's trade in rice and the international competitiveness, and how the commodity price in the international market affected the price in the country. He explained why some countries led by England took themselves off the gold standard and why other countries such as the U.S.A and France still maintained the gold. He warned that Siam needed to be prudent in her decision, and not to try only to protect the value of the Baht, but needed to take other measures to increase the revenue of the country and control the expenditures. These measures, he frankly told them, no matter how prudent they might be, would undoubtedly inflict pains on various sectors and cause displeasure, but they were deemed necessary in view of the world crisis. He called on everyone to unite in order to overcome the problems which threatened the country's security. (National Archives of Thailand: King Prjadhipok's Coronation Day Speech, 1931, in Thai. Please note that February 1932 in the Thai calendar was still counted as 1931 since the Siamese New Year traditionally began in April.)

On 5 February 1932, the King gave even a longer, more detailed and more direct statement to an assembly of military officers which was published in the newspaper later. (See Pim Thai newspaper, 3 February 1931). He explained the economic difficulties in other countries and in Thailand, plainly presenting to them all the possible options the country had, together with the pros and cons, as follows;

- 1) not cutting the expenditure and not reducing the government personnel, but printing more bank notes, but at the end the money would become priceless papers with deeper inflation;
- 2) seeking foreign loans on credits which would risk losing the country's assets and property and at the end national independence;
- 3) increasing the national income through the promotion of agriculture and increasing the farmers' produce, reducing farmer's expenses and promoting marketing;
- 4) retrenchment policy which had been heavily criticized in the press.

He concluded his lengthy speech by admitting that he had failed to take up the necessary retrenchment measures earlier as experts were still contradicting one another in their views, and he, not knowing much about finance, had to listen to the experts and to decide what was best. Though this decision was difficult, not to do it now would lead to worse hardship in the future. He hoped the officials and the people would understand and forgive him for causing the hardship. He asked for their cooperation and asked the military officials to sacrifice to salvage the nation's economy.

This speech, however, became controversial at that time and was interpreted by some as the King's confession of failure, and as his being a weak and ineffective leader. (Chula Chakrabongse, *ibid*, p.679)

(Further references: 1) The National Budget Act 1920-1930, cited in Kiatchai Pongpanich: The Revolution of 1932, Prae Pitaya BE 2514; 2) M. A. Puge, Economic Development of Thailand, 1929,

Washington, Trade Information Bulletin 606); 3) Mayuree Nokyoongthong: The Siamese Economic Problems during the Reign of King Prajadhipok (BE 2468-2477), Dissertation for MA in History, Chulalongkorn University BE 2520; 4) Benjamin B. Batson: End of Absolute Monarchy in Siam, chapter 7: the Economic Crisis.; 5) Pim Thai newspaper, Saturday 13 February 1932, cited in full in "Life and Work of King Prajadhipok", p. 299, compiled by the Fine Arts Department, and published on the occasion of unveiling King Prajadhipok's Monument in front of the Parliament, BE. 2524)

3.9. The Political Problems and the End of Absolute Monarchy

3.9.1 Summary of the general situation

The political wind in Siam had in fact begun to drift from its course in the last reign, and it seemed that in the early years of the seventh reign the storm only waited to gather more winds and clouds. As the events unfolded, King Prajadhipok finally went into history as the last absolute Monarch of Thailand, and the first king to serve under the constitution, and the first King to abdicate and die in exile.

There was a "revolution", or rather a "coup d'etat", on 24 June 1932, organized and carried out by a small group of civilian and military officials which brought the long- serving system of absolute monarchy in Thailand to its end.

Having long anticipated that a change would have to come, and having searched and planned for the best way to introduce the change from the top down, King Prajadhipok appeared to be rather calm and composed in his dealing with the coup which violently pre-empted his opportunity to deliver his own constitution. He cooperated with the coup party with civility and dignity to avoid bloodshed and to ensure the safety of the senior members of the royal family, arrested and detained as hostages. He agreed to remain on the throne as a symbol of continuity and normalcy, and also to render credibility to the political change in the eyes of the Thai public as well as foreign governments. Yet he continued to negotiate with them in writing on all the points that he believed to be important for the monarchy, the country and the people in the long run. He presided over the opening of the Parliament and performed the ceremonial granting of the first permanent constitution to the "people," (**See photo 10**), appointed the Prime Minister and approved the appointment of the government's new cabinet as proposed by the coup party.

Though things seemed to go smoothly on the facade, there were tensions, conflicts, and confusion all around. Within one year, the coup members and the government were divided among themselves leading to a countered coup from within, followed by the promulgation of a new constitution and the forming of a new government. This was followed by a failed revolt staged by a military group based outside Bangkok led by Prince Boradej, the former Minister of defense who had resigned during King Prajadhipok's government.

On 12 January, 1934, the King, accompanied by the Queen and a small entourage, left the country for Europe and England for his second eye operation. On the way, he also made observation tours to study various models of democracy practiced in different countries, and to meet with many leaders and dignitaries of those countries at that time (**See photo 11**). Meanwhile, he continued his correspondences with the government and negotiated with them on crucial issues regarding the role of the King under the constitution, most notably the traditional right of the King to veto, to receive petitions and to give pardon in cases of death sentences, especially for political prisoners. He asked the members of Parliament to give time and careful consideration to his proposals.

Finally, King Prajadhipok saw that he could not be of useful service to his country in the way he believed, sent a long letter on 2 March, 1935, from his house in England announcing his abdication and giving full reasons for his decision. He stated in his most often-quoted paragraph, that..."*I am willing to surrender the powers that I formerly exercised to the people*

as a whole, but I am not willing to transfer all these powers to any particular individual or any group, to use these absolute powers without heeding the true voice of the people.”

(Reference : King Prajadhipok's Abdication statement, in Thai, Bangkok, Bamrungnukulkit Printing, BE.2478, p. 384-389)

After abdication, the King continued to live a quiet life with the Queen and their adopted son and nieces in various houses near London, never returning to Thailand. He died of heart failure on 30 May 1991, and was cremated in a simple ceremony at the Golders Green Cemetery. His ashes were kept at the residence where the Queen continued to live until 1949 when the government invited Her to return to Thailand bringing back with her the ashes of the late King to be properly interred with the remains of the members of the Royal family.(Reference: The Life and Work of King Prajadhipok, compiled by the Fine Arts Department, published on the occasion of the unveiling of King Prajadhipok's Monument, presided by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulayadej, in front of the Parliament, BE 2527)

In Thailand today, King Prajadhipok is remembered as “The Granter of the First constitution to the Thai Nation”, and his monument, erected in 1980, still stands in front of the Thai Parliament representing this important act. **(See photo 12)**

3.9.2 The King's Efforts toward Democracy

King Prajadhipok was evidently very aware of the political consciousness that had arisen among the new elites educated from abroad, and the growing resentment against the absolute monarchy among the new intellectuals who had mostly studied in France and England.

A few days after Coronation, he took the initiative to create a Supreme Council, in addition to the Council of Ministers and the Privy Council that had existed in the past reigns. The new Supreme Council, comprising 5 most respected and most experienced senior members of the Royal family--3 of them were the King's uncles, and 2 were his half brothers--who each had served with great wisdom and dedication in the country's administration in various fields especially in the reign of King Chulalongkorn. The Supreme Council was to meet in the King's presence and to advise the King on important matters on which the King had to decide. However, some people criticized him as shunning the responsibility of the absolute King.(Chula Chakrapongse: Chao Cheewit, in Thai, Klang Pitaya Printing House, BE. 2517, p.665)

Though the King knew that the final decision always rested with the King, he still wanted to have some kind of democratic process to be in place, and also to guard himself against the danger of absolutism, for he knew, from his education in England and France and from his extensive reading and travelling abroad, that absolutism was already going out of mode and that democracy of some kind was needed for Siam. (Reference: Archives of King Rama VII ๙๓. 47/32, National Archives, Batson, ibid, Chapter 5: The Political World)

From the beginning, King Prajadhipok, perhaps more than any senior members of his Councils and even his foreign Advisors sensed the real urgency in preparing for a political change in Siam. From 1927-1930 he purposefully made several tours to far-away provinces to gain first-hand knowledge about the people, their education, and their living conditions, for example, he visited Pitsanulok, Prae, Nan, Lampang, Chiangrai and Chiangmai in the north; and Pattalung, Trang, Ranong, Phuket, Panga, Pattani, in the South **(See photo 13)**

3.9.3 Memorandum on Some Problems of Siam 1926

In 1926, very early in his reign, King Prajadhipok invited Dr. Francis B. Sayre to discuss with him and advise him on the best possible ways to prepare the country for a democratic change. Dr. Sayre, a Harvard Law Professor who had, after the World War I, represented Siam in the successful negotiations with European countries to eliminate extraterritoriality and unequal treatments, was able to come to Thailand only during his

summer holidays. Dr. Sayre had received the Siamese title of Praya Kalayanamaitree for his highly valuable contribution to Siam and was believed to understand the Thai situation and be sympathetic to the cause of Siamese development.

(References: Archives of the 7th Reign สม. 47/ 32 บันทึกการปกครอง ; and Francis B. Sayre: The Passing of Extraterritoriality In Siam, American Journal of International Law 71, 1929; F. B. Sayre: Glad Adventure, p 129)

The King sent to Dr. Sayre in July 1926 "**a memorandum on some of the Problems of Thailand with Questionnaire for your consideration**", admitting that the questions were "*written in a hurry*", and though the list of the problems was not exhaustive, they were those that he treated as "*important*." The questions included the issues on: Succession to the throne, Limited Monarchy, Parliamentary Democracy, and the Constitution.

(Reference: King Prajadhipok's paper, in English, dated 23 July 1926, entitled "Problems of Siam", sent to Praya Kalayanamaitri (Dr. Francis B Sayre), National Archives.)

Dr. Sayre wrote back on 27 July, giving brief answers to the King's 9 questions, but attached a full length document giving his rather complete thoughts on the following issues: On the Framework of the Government, he stated in the first paragraph that "*I do not think it practicable to consider at this time the organization of a popular representative parliament in Siam. A workable parliament is absolutely dependent upon an intelligent electorate. Without intelligent control by the people such a body would be sure to degenerate into a corrupt and tyrannical body*"

In addition, he attached a paper; "Outline of Preliminary Draft" of the Constitution. The first article in the Draft stated that... "*the supreme Power throughout the Kingdom shall be vested in His Majesty the King*". Article 2 stated that "*the King shall appoint a Prime Minister who shall be responsible to the King for the entire executive work of Government. He may be dismissed by the King at any time*"...

Dr. Sayre also drew an administration chart in which the King appeared at the top of the administrative chart, under him would be a Prime Minister who would supervise all the Ministries. There would be a Supreme Council which "*would act as advisory body to the King whose function would be to ask questions of policy and not to be related to the cabinet, though the Prime Minister, and no other minister, would be a member of the Council.*" (Reference: Dr. Sayre's paper submitted to the King, 27 July, 1926, National Archives)

Subsequently, the King sent Dr. Sayre's paper and the attached documents to the Supreme Council for consideration and comments.

On August 1, 1926, Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, former Minister of Interior (from 1892-1915) and a member of the Supreme Council, wrote back to the King, in English. In his long and straight-forward memorandum, he made specific comments on both the King's and Dr. Sayre's papers in his 12-points argument, He cautioned that... "*There are many more works to be done, ...and Rome was not built in a day*"... "*till the people are sufficiently educated to understand their responsibility in the election... it would be impractical to have a parliamentary government.*" In short, Prince Damrong dispelled the King's anxiousness to quickly prepare for the reform of the government system of Siam, and expressed his doubt in the usefulness and practicality of having a Prime Minister as proposed by Dr Sayre. (Reference: Memorandum, in English, submitted by Prince Damrong Rajanubhab to King Prajadipok, dated 1st August 1926, Archives of the 7th Reign, สม. 47/32 บันทึกการปกครอง, National Archives, Bangkok.) (Further references: Kobkua Suwannathat Pian: Kings, Country, and Constitutions-- Thailand's Political Development 1932-2000,(specific reference to the part on King Prajadipok's experience)

3.9.4 Initiatives on Municipality and Local government

The King did not give up. He turned his attention to the idea of having a reform at the local government. He was interested in the system of representative local government in some countries and wanted his ministries to study the concept of Municipality that existed in other countries, in the hope that if such a system could be established and some form of representative government at the local level could be put in place, the officials and the people could together learn from it, and the experiment could serve as a model for a democratic government at the national level in the future.

On 12 August, 1926, he sent a letter to Prince Lopburi Ramesra, his Minister of Interior asking the Ministry to undertake a study on the municipality system of the neighbouring states and to set up a committee to plan and prepare for a suitable system to be established as a case study in Siam soon. (Ref Archives of the 7th Reign ม 7.5(1-2)/1 on the establishment of the municipality)

A law was subsequently issued to set up an experimental municipality project in an area on the western coast, specifically from Hua Hin to Cha-am. Meanwhile, a long and detailed paper was received by the Minister of Interior from Sir Edward Cook on the **“Municipalities in Siam”** which summarized the obstacles he found in the systems of other countries and suggested that: *..“the experiment on local government should be started in some limited number of areas”...* and that: *“the spread of primary education started in the last reign would constitute a new factor in the future.”* (Reference: letter dated 16 th August 1927, signed by Sir Edward Cook on Municipality of Siam, Archives of the 7th reign, ม 7.5 (1-2)/ การจัดการประชาบาล, National Archives, Thailand)

A Committee was subsequently established comprising representatives from the Ministries and Departments to be involved in the municipality project, i.e., the Railways Department, the Interior Ministry, the Tax and Revenue Department, the Public Work Department, and the Finance Ministry. Sir Edward Cook, Advisor to the Ministry of Finance, was also invited to be advisor to the committee.

Another foreign advisor on municipality, Mr. R.D. Craig, submitted 2 papers on a similar form of local government in other countries. The first paper, dated May 30th, 1926, was jointly submitted to the Minister of Interior by Mr. Craig, and 2 Thai high officials-- Phya Chinda Raksh and Phra Krisnamarapatt. Based on their experiences gained during the observation tour to Singapore and Hong Kong, they made proposals for future policy which cut across many ministries and departments, namely, taxes, roads, sewage and sanitation, water supply and electricity, hospitals, boundaries, legislative power, and staff. They again ended on a note of hope that. *“Rome was not built in a day....the ideal municipality is now only a dream to come with gradual development.”*

The second paper, dated 1st August, 1930, was also submitted to the Minister of Interior. It was based on Mr. Craig's study on the local government system in England, France, Italy and Germany, made during his home leave in 1930, and proposed a model for Bangkok which Mr. Craig believed was a different case. Mr. Craig also warned against the *“...disadvantages of a system of local government, democratic step, but if encouraged too liberally too early, could exceed the bounds of control.”*

These papers were then presented to the King together with comments from the Committee supporting Mr. Craig's proposal. In addition, the Ministry of Interior proposed at the end of the second paper that a law be decreed first, and the plan for the establishment of the municipality in Bangkok should wait until the law was announced.

The King received the first paper on 2 July, 1928, considered and suggested in writing on 13 July that Bangkok could follow some aspects of administration and system of Singapore and

Hong Kong with some suitable adjustments and asked the two ministries concerned to begin a process of planning along the line.

He received the second paper on 16 August 1930, and wrote back on 19 August saying that though it was reasonable to wait for the law to be issued first, yet he thought the committee should begin to "*consider and plan for the establishment of a municipality in Bangkok at the same time, and I want to see this municipality in Bangkok to be self-sustained before I die*" (He underlined the last phrase). As regards the law on the municipality, the Minister of Foreign Affairs opposed to certain parts in connection with the foreign residents enjoying equal rights as the Siamese residents. The king took note and asked the drafting committee to incorporate this concern in the law. (Reference: National Archives, the archives of the 7th reign, on municipality)

3.9.5 Drafting the King's Constitution

King Prajadhipok had planned to give the nation a constitution as part of the celebrations on the 150th anniversary of the Chakri Dynasty, on 6 April, 1932.

During his journey to Canada and the U.S in 1931 for his first eye operation and treatment, he made several public statements which indicated his intention to gradually introduce political changes in his country. He also had earlier asked Prince Devavongsa to draw up a constitution to be granted to the people in April, but many princes opposed the project. (Reference: 1) GB, F5918/4260/40,29 June 1932, Johns to Sir John Simons, cited in Batson, *ibid*, p 163; 2) Daily Mail, 3 June, BE 2474, King Prajadhipok's interview with D.S. Garden, translated by จ. ศิริศิริ, Archives of the 7th reign, National Archive).

Upon his return from abroad, the King subsequently had an audience with two eminent lawyers in the government, namely-- Pnya Sri Wisarn Waja, a British educated Thai legal expert and Permanent secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Raymond B Stevens, a Harvard educated American and a former congressman in the U.S. who had been working as advisor to the ministry of Foreign affairs of Siam since 1926. By his command, they submitted early in 1932, an "Outline of the changes in the Form of Government" together with their individual comments on the Outline. The draft, as Batson analyzed, was "*strikingly similar to that actually implanted by the constitutional regime*" (Batson, *ibid*, p.149). Both of them pointed out in their separate comments that though a constitutional monarchy in Siam was inevitable and desirable, they doubted that "*the proper time had come since the general level of education of the people was still low*". In sum, they recommended a gradual move towards democracy.

The three documents were, on 12 March, 1932, subsequently presented to the Supreme Council for consideration and discussion. Many Councilors were on a long sick leave. Prince Damrong wrote to the King's secretary that he agreed with the two lawyers' comments that the time had not come to implement the plan. There was no record that the Supreme Council officially met to discuss the Draft Constitution. (Further reference Prudhisana Jumbala: Prajadhipok, The King at the transition to Constitutional Monarchy, Manuscript, to be published in the near future)

3.9.6 The Coup d'état 1932

This historic act which ended the system of absolute monarchy had been planned and secretly organized by a small group of students who were young and intelligent and, perhaps idealistic and ambitious, who were from the civilian and military sectors and meeting frequently while still in Paris (**See photo 14**). Upon their return they joined the government service and moved up the ranks rather quickly receiving the royally granted title of *Luang*.

They were able to persuade a number of people to join them including some military commanders at the rank of Colonel and with the title of *Praya*. The great economic depression of 1930 and the strict retrenchment policy, coupled with the continued discontentment among the new elites, gave them enough reasons and justifications to execute their revolution in 1932, the year when the government celebrated the 150 anniversary of the founding of the Capital at Bangkok.

The revolution that they had planned was actually carried out by a group of military commanders who at 4 o'clock in the morning on June 24 took control of Bangkok and arrested 11 senior members of Royalty, as well as some senior Ministers of King Prajadhipok's government, and detained them as hostages. They were able to bluff and trick other officers of about 49 military and naval officers and 65 civilians, many of them did not know the full and real purpose, to join. The revolutionary leader, on behalf of what they called "the People's Party (*"Kana Rasth"*)", read out loud the revolutionary party's announcement and distributed their strongly worded manifesto, comparing the situation in Siam then with the revolutions that had taken place in Europe and the toppling of the regimes in those countries. This was addressed to a rather limited crowd gathered in front of the Anantasamakom Throne Hall. Then they sent a telegram to the King to surrender and cooperate.

The King was at his seaside residence at Hua Hin and was playing golf in the early hours. Evidently he had long anticipated the coming of this event, yet he was displeased that the revolutionary party had used violence and force, and disappointed that the coup d'état deprived him of his chance to give to the people, at his own initiative, the constitution and the gradual reform of the monarchic system that he had long studied and prepared for since 1927. Unfortunately his several efforts toward democracy and the intention to grant the constitution to the people had been delayed by the advices of his senior Thai and foreign advisors, the delay that proved to be crucial.

(References: 1) Benjamin Batson, Ph. D. Dissertation, Cornell University, *The End of the Absolute Monarchy in Siam*, 1977; 2) David Wyatt, *The Rise of The Elite Nationalism, in Thailand: A Short History*; 3) Tawatt Moarapong, *the Cause of Revolution, in Modern Thai Politics: from village to nation.*, edited by Clark D Neher; 4).correspondences between King Prajadhipok, Dr. Francis B. Sayre the King's special legal advisor, and Prince Damrong in 1921; 5) King Prajadhipok's interview with the US. Press in New York during his convalescence from his eye operation in 1932, translated into Thai and printed in Daily Mail on 3, June, 1932; 6) The draft constitution and comments by Raymond B. Stephens, a legal advisor from Harvard University, and Phya Sri Visarn Vaja, a Barrister-at- Law from England and concurrently permanent secretary of Foreign affairs. See also, Batson, *Documents from the end of the Absolute Monarchy*, Ithaca 1977. Archives documents are accessible at the National Archives, Bangkok)

One member of the Supreme Council managed to escape the arrest and went to Hua Hin to inform the King of the coup movements in Bangkok. Meanwhile, the Minister of Defense together with some military commanders and troopers who were on their inspection trip in the South also came immediately to consult with the King. They were all displeased at the harsh accusations made by the "promoters of the coup d'état, the use of force against senior members of the Royal family, and the propaganda language to incite hatred against the Siamese monarchy as a whole, accusing the Monarchy of never having done any useful act for the people and comparing the situations in Siam with those in the German and Russian empires under the already overthrown system. (Reference: *The Kana Rasd's Annoucement*, 24 June BE 2475, printed in full in Chai-Anant Smudrwanich and Kattiya Kannasutr, *Ekasran Kan Pokkrong Thai, Social Sciences Society of Thailand*, 2518, p 209-211; Prince Chula Chakrabhongse, *Lord of Life*, in Thai, Klang Pittaya Printing, BE 2517, p 687-8)

Despite the precariousness of the situations, King Prajadhipok chose not to launch an opposition from Hua Hin, but to deal with the coup party with calm and cordiality.

(Further reference: Announcement of the "People's Party" ,24 June 1932, cited in full, in Chaianant Smudhavanich and Kattiya Karnasut, Political and Administration Documents of Thailand, Social Science Society of Thailand, BE 2518, pp209-211)

In his letter dated 25th June 1932, from Hua Hin, he offered, with sound reasoning, to cooperate, as he stated (in Thai) ...*"for the sake of peace and stability of the land and the people, and not wanting to see bloodshed, but to deal with the situation calmly so as to avoid loss to the country"*.. and...*" Indeed I have also considered changing along the same line into a constitutional monarch. I therefore accept to be "Hoon Cherd" (meaning puppet)... to bring the country back to the state of normalcy, and to redeem the country's international credibility as soon as possible"*... He ended the letter by saying *"As you all know that I am not in the best health and would not probably be able to endure the hardship for too long, and as I am childless and having no ambition beyond my rank or ability, I only honestly want to help support and sustain our country's development and progress."*
(Reference: the King's letter reproduced in full, in Prince Chula Chakrabongs: Lord of Life, (in Thai),Prae Pittaya, BE 2514, pp 692-693)

The King politely declined the offer made by the coup party to send a war-ship to escort him back to Bangkok, but chose to return in his royal train. He gave audience to the "promoters of the coup d'etat" (as they called themselves), agreeing to sign the Amnesty Decree of 1932 that they had drafted to pardon all the coup participants for their act of revolt and absolve them of all the mal intentions. (Reference Pol. Lieutenant Sathier Lailaksna: Compilation of Laws of the Century, Volume 45, pp 129) He also accepted their traditional apology, consisting of flowers, candle and joss sticks, which they presented in asking forgiveness for their transgression against the monarchy. The King said in a tone of tolerance...*"Your apology gave me great pleasure, not because it was addressed to me personally, since personally I have already forgiven you long time ago, but because you stated in your apology that the monarchs and the monarchy in the past had contributed to the development of the country all along..."* (Reference: 1) the Apology Speech made by the coup party, cited in Nai Sudjinda, The Democratic King, in Thai, Siam Printing, Bangkok, BE 2519, pp 286,2) the King's Pardon Speech, reproduced by Piman Jamjaras: Rajawalee, Pan Fa Pittaya Pringting House, BE. 2509, pp 841-843)

3.9.7. Granting the Constitution, 1932

On June 27th 1932, the King signed a provisional constitution, and the leader of the Coup party subsequently appointed 70 members of parliament which met on the next day. A Drafting Committee was set up to draft the first Constitution which was completed, submitted and approved by the parliament in November 1932. The Constitution was officially presented on 10 December 1932, in a grand ceremony of state, held at the Anantasamakom Throne Hall and attended by members of Parliament and dignitaries. The King, dressed in the full traditional regalia and seated on the throne under the Nine-Tiered Umbrella, signed the Royal Decree on the Proclamation of the Constitution of the Royal Kingdom of Siam to be granted to his people. The speaker of the House then received the Constitution Book from the King.

In the preamble of the Constitution, it was stated...*"The Kings of the House of Chakri having ruled the country and brought about progress and development in the last 150 years, and now that the people of Siam have developed and have received a higher level of education, with high officials who are able to lead Siam into a further stage of development.... His Majesty King Prajadhipok having read and approved the content of the Constitution is therefore pleased to grant it to his people for their Freedom and Democracy from now on. May this Constitution be a pillar of progress that will lead to the people's happiness, and the country's further victory and future progress. May the members of the Royalty, the officials*

both civilian and military present at this gathering, and all the people of the Kingdom, be united in a common effort to safeguard this constitution and may they live by it in accordance with our wishes for a long time to come” (Reference: Sathier Lailak, ibid, volume, 45, BE 2575, p400, in Thai)

This constitution was indeed an outcome of a tense, though civil, series of negotiation between the drafters of the constitution and the King who painstakingly considered the draft and wrote back his letters to counter-propose on many points he felt important in the text of the constitution.

The King having signed the constitution, proceeded to appoint the first Prime Minister as proposed by the revolutionary party, and thereafter appointed the ministers proposed by the Prime Minister.

All seemed to move forward smoothly, though behind the scene tensions were building up rapidly which stemmed mainly from the difference of views on the concept of the constitutional monarchy and the democratization of Siam.

With the political change, the King and the members of the Royal family who had been very visible in the public affairs during the 7th reign suddenly disappeared from the scene almost totally. After the coup in 1932, some key members of the King's Supreme Council were asked to leave the country permanently upon release from the detention as hostages. King Prajadhipok, however, continued to firmly negotiate behind the scene on many points where he believed the rights of the people to be represented and to be heard were not respected, and where the rights of the King as head of State was not honoured. Soon the cataract on his eye again affected his vision badly and an operation was needed. He decided to go to Europe and England for this purpose, despite the government's advice against it.

3.9.8. Abdication, Self- Exile and Death

There were many turns of events that followed the revolution of 1932. Clouded in mystery and controversy, confusion and mistrusts, were many episodes that followed the coup. There were stories about disagreements, conflicts and competition within the group of 114 coup promoters and among the various factions within the government, and the wider differences on certain issues between the King and those who had seized power. (Reference: Prudhisan, ibid, pp34-45)

On 20 June 1933, one year after the historic revolution which overthrew the absolute monarchy, another coup was staged. The Prime Minister was ousted and some ministers were replaced with members of the coup. Once again the new coup party submitted to the King to sign an amnesty decree, to appoint a new Prime Minister and a new cabinet, and to preside over the opening of Parliament which the King, with perseverance, complied. (Reference: Sathier Lailak, ibid, volume 46, p. 216,217,200,218,365.)

Five months later, there was a revolt started by a military group based outside Bangkok. It was headed by former Minister of defense, Prince Boworndej, who had resigned from the post over a budgetary cut in 1930 under King Prajadhipok. The King, evidently in his effort to be neutral, left in a boat to Songkla with the Queen and a small entourage. Nevertheless, the fact that he did not give a clear-cut support to either the government or the rebels was appreciated by neither side.

The suppression of the revolt led the government to issue an Act of the Protection of the Constitution which the King tried to veto unsuccessfully. According to the Bangkok Times of 23 November, 1933, several people were arrested, exiled to remote prisons and sentenced to death or life imprisonment.

In early 1933, the King's vision was suffering badly. He had had, in 1930, the first operation on his left eye in America, and now he needed the second stage of the operation as a required follow-up treatment. He decided to go to England for this operation, to be followed by a temporary stay for recuperation. On the way, he made visits to many countries in Europe to promote what he termed in his Farewell Speech to the Thai people on 11 January, 1973, "*the bonds of friendship that bind us to foreign nations*" and to observe democracy at different levels. He also met with many leaders and important personalities in those countries of the time.

After the eye operation performed by Dr. Sir Stewart Duke, Elder of the London Clinic Hospital, he continued to exchange views and to negotiate via correspondence with the Siamese government on various issues, mostly in connection with the role of the monarchy under the constitution. Their differences grew wider and finally the King, finding that he could not continue to serve his country in the way he believed, announced in a long statement his abdication.

Changing back to his previous title, Prince Prajadhipok of Sukhodaya (Sukhothai), he sought and received political asylum in England and retired into private life, spending most of his time reading, playing some sports, gardening and listening to music, surrounded by the Queen, their adopted son, the Queen's nieces and some close cousins. Friends were sometimes invited to visit his house where he lived until his death on 30 May, 1941, aged 48. (Reference: Pimsai Swasti and Ping Amranand: Siamese Memoirs, 2011, p.21, p.37)

(Further reference: Archives on His Majesty King Prajadhipok's travel to Europe, 1933-1934, Part 1-16, published by royal permission and distributed at the royal sponsored funeral of the General Preecha Siriworasarn, 12 November, 1983)

3.9.9. The Revival of His Memory

When King Prajadhipok died in 1941, a very simple ceremony was held at Golders Green. As observed by one of his close relatives attending the funeral, only a wreath was received from the very young King Ananda, his half nephew, who was enthroned after King Prajadhipok's abdication, and still a student in Switzerland. But no representation was received from the government. (Ping Amranan in Pimsai and Ping, *ibid.*, p.74)

In 1949, the Thai government invited Queen Rambhai Barni who continued to live in England to return to Thailand, and to finally bring back the ashes of King Prajadhipok to his home country. **(See photo 15)**

In 1959, when a new building was being planned to house the Parliament of Thailand, some members of parliament submitted a letter to the Prime Minister suggesting that the people of Thailand should take this opportunity to pay gratitude to His Majesty King Prajadhipok who "*ruled the country with kindness and benevolence as King of Siam for 9 years.*" In their view, it was because of him that Thailand had been granted the constitution. They proposed that a life-sized monument in his likeness be erected as part of the construction plan of the new Parliament House.

Five years later, this proposal was seriously taken up, and committees were appointed to raise funds, to design and to construct the monument. Finally, the monument was unveiled by His Majesty King Bhumibol on 10 December 1980, in a solemn ceremony, with Buddhist monks chanting, and a Brahmin reading an invocation to the holy beings, and military and civilian high officials gathering in full attendance. It has since then become a tradition for a wreath to be laid by the representatives of all sectors in front of this monument on December

10, every year. (Reference Archives for the design and construction of the Monument of King Prajadhipok)

Visitors to Thailand will also find that there are bridges, a university, a hospital, an institute and a museum, all built many years after his demise to honour his name. Surprisingly also, long after his abdication and many years after his untimely demise, a good number of national and international scholars still found his life and work of profound interest, and many studies and researches have been undertaken and published on various aspects related to his life and reign.

In 1993, the year of the 100th anniversary of King Prajadhipok's birth, national celebrations were organized by various government agencies, the parliament and the private sector. Many publications based on academic studies on his life and works were published, and many seminars and discussions were organized the reports of which have been printed for academic use.

(See 1. Bibliography on King Prajadhipok and Queen Rambhi Barni, and Annotated List of Researches, Theses, and Dissertations on the life and various aspects of work of King Prajadhipok, compiled and published by Sukhothai Dhamathiraja University in preparation of the establishment of King Prajadhipok Library, BE 2530 and 2538 respectively ;

2. Notes at the end of each chapter of the of Benjamin Batson's Book, " End of Absolute Monarchy in Thailand", 1984

3. Compilation of Speeches and Statements of King Prajadhipok compiled and published by the Committee for the Compilation and Verification of Historical Documents and Ancient Manuscripts)

4. Describe how this event has had a genuine impact at the regional and/or international level.

4.1 An International Forum

The life and works of King Prajadhipok have inspired many scholars, international, regional and Thai, to study, research and write books on him.

The celebration of the double anniversary of King Prajadhipok is an opportunity, not only to pay tribute to this great personality in a specially significant way, but also to invite national and international scholars, as well as the interested public, to revisit his life, to reconsider his concerns, and to ponder his ideals which can now be better understood and appreciated in the light of new studies and publications, and also in the present-day context of rapid worldwide changes and the challenges of globalization. Many major concerns and questions about sustainable and human development today are indeed similar to those of King Prajadhipok's time.

The numerous researches on various aspects of King Prajadhipok's life published by Thai and international scholars in the past decades have shed light on many issues that will allow us to review, reinterpret, and recover in more balanced ways and with better insights, this historic time and this historic personality. The understanding of the intricate interplays of the social, political and economic forces: global, western, regional and national, at that time, will enable us to have a better understanding of our own time and the current happenings and events that are now taking place in all regions in the present day. (Reference: 1) Biography of researches and dissertation on King Prajadhipok, Sukhothai Thammathirat University. 2) Benjamin Batson's extensive notes on his reference sources both in Thai and English, provided at the end of each chapter in his PhD. Dissertation, "End of Absolute Monarchy in Siam")

Because Prajadhipok's time was one of the most rapidly changing and turbulent periods where the interplay of international forces and national forces caused great conflicts and confusion as well as unexpected impacts on national situations in many regions, and because his life and works, torn between those forces and overwhelmed by those conflicts, mirrored those of many leaders in the world, then and now, this celebration can serve many

valuable purposes:- as continuing quests, as lessons, and as inspirations to all of us across the regions.

His Quests Remain Relevant Today

His philosophical thinking about a “good leader” or a “good king” and the “concept of ruling with Dharma,” for example, is relevant and comparable to the global development debate of today on the notion of “**good leadership**” and “**Good Governance**”; and his unrelenting quests and searches for the best possible means to ensure justice and human rights, and rights of the people, are the lofty ideals of UNESCO widely supported by its member countries, and deserve to be seriously considered by all concerned especially from today’s perspectives. His quiet struggle to establish a peaceful process of handling conflicting national issues especially those issues that concern the life and development of the larger number of people, and his efforts to find a balanced “co-habitation” with people who had different ideas from him, are still the dilemma for many leaders and as well as ordinary people in diverse cultures and societies.

His Legacy of Documents, Photos and Films: an open international source of study

He left as our legacy a huge body of documentation which contains the records of his time and of how the various forces interrelated, and personalities interacted and interplayed. His countless speeches, letters, memoranda, preambles to his decrees, and a wealth of photographs he took and the films that he made, focused primarily on the human factors and their socio cultural development, in Siam and other countries he visited.

The speeches, memoranda and decrees in particular, reflect his honest struggles to find the development that would be best appropriate for Siam in the long run, and be rooted in the interest for the betterment of the people in general, through education and communication. In fact, the ideal development that he was searching for is close to the ideal or notion that we now call “sustainable development.”

His concerns and actions in economic and political reform, his belief in and commitment to the promotion of basic education as a fundamental developmental right for the larger number of people, his advocacy for lifelong learning for himself, his wife and relatives, for senior members of the royal family, for his officials, and for the people, his laws on the protection and presentation of cultural property, his dedication to the peaceful process, his promotion of communication for development using dialogue and consultation to increase knowledge and awareness, and to influence attitudes and policies-- all these are outstanding and significant visions. Interestingly, these visions came from an “absolute king” in a Southeast Asian country, in the post- World War I period. Though not properly appreciated in his own period and in his own country, and hence controversial at the time, yet these ideals are now at the very core of the values in UNESCO, and on which many member countries place strong emphasis and commitments, and therefore are of continuing relevance to many societies in today’s world.

(Reference: Compilation of Speeches and statement of King Prajadhipok, compiled by The Committee for the Compilation and Verification of Historical Documents and Ancient Manuscripts, Bunjerd Intujanyong, editor, BE.2536)

4.2 Description of his Works

4.2.1 Education

In His memorandum on “Democracy in Siam,” to his Advisory Council in 1927, he wrote: *“if it is admitted that some day we may be forced to have some form of democracy in Siam, we must prepare ourselves for it gradually. We must learn and we must educate ourselves. We must learn and experiment so as to have an idea as to how a parliamentary government would work in Siam. We must try to educate the people to be politically conscious, to realize their real interests so that they will not be misled by agitators or mere dreamers of Utopia. If*

we are to have a parliament, we must teach the people how to vote and how to elect representatives who will really have their interests at heart”

Though heavy and urgent political and economic problems dominated the entire public agenda of Prajadhipok's reign, there were in fact many other aspects of his concerns, interests, and works which were equally important in the long run.

At the root of his social and cultural concerns was Education. Acceleration of the provision of basic education to the people was deemed most necessary, particularly since the low level of the general education of the majority of people in Siam was, as often cited by his senior Thai and foreign advisors, considered as being the major obstacle to having a democratic government that he had planned to introduce. Therefore, in spite of the budget deficit in the early years of his reign followed by the great economic depression, King Prajadhipok was resolved to accelerate the delivery of the primary education services in his Kingdom as widely as possible. Retrenchment policy aside, he made several significant laws in Education, particularly:-

1) *The Amendment of the Education Decree, 1930*, (BE 2473), on the expansion of basic and free education to the areas previously not extended to in 1921, in the past reign. This amendment resulted in the primary education services expanded to 3817 previous districts (76.76% of all districts in the country), increased from the 2311 districts (45.75%) which had previously received education services since the 1921 Act.

2) *The abolition of education tax* previously levied on men age 18-60 with school-age children, as stipulated in article 5 of the 1921 Primary Education Act of the previous reign. In line with the acceleration of universal educational policy, King Prajadhipok wanted to provide an incentive to people to send their children to school without financial burden. In an agrarian society like Siam, parents tended to keep their children home to work on the farm, and education fees had been used as a measure to enforce schooling of children, since the parents had already had to pay for the education of their children through this process. King Prajadhipok, however, saw this measure as being unjust, especially in view of the depression. He therefore amended the law to have this paragraph on the tax deleted from the Bill.

3) *The 1930 Amendment of the Private Education Act* King Prajadhipok amended the Private education Act of the previous reign by adding a new paragraph to article 5 of the Act which prohibited the teaching of intolerance or hatred among people of different races and groups or classes, or incitement that could lead to disrespect or destruction, either by force or by threat, of people or institutions, such as-- the King, the government, the work of official agencies, the laws and decrees, as well as other different people. During his reign there existed 3 types of private schools in Siam: 1. The schools run by foreign missionaries of many denominations, 2. The Chinese community-based schools with different dialects, 3. Thai Schools including temple-based schools in communities. Those private schools had the freedom to use their own textbooks and the language of their community as medium of instruction, and had their own curricula. This amendment was aimed at preventing schools or teachers in those schools at that time from exercising excessive freedom, either in the use of textbooks or teaching.

4) *Strengthening the teacher's training programme.* Because of the rapid expansion of primary education to wider areas in all parts of the country, there was a severe shortage of qualified teachers. Of all the teachers who were engaged in the teaching profession in all the schools, only 11 % were properly trained from Teacher's Colleges. The Ministry of Education and Ethics therefore put in place a new set of regulations on the required qualifications of teachers at the pre-primary, primary, and the secondary school

levels, both in the Arts Stream and in the Science Stream. Training courses were organized for in-service teachers, as well as for pre-service teachers.

5) The reform of the administration system of the Ministry of Education. He reformed and reorganized the structure of administration of the Ministry of Education 3 times to make it more effective and responsive to the country's changing needs and situations.

6) Further Development of and reform initiatives for Chulalongkorn University. This university was first established as the School for the Training of Civil Servants and was upgraded to a full-fledged degree-granting university in the reign of King Rama VI. King Prajadhipok further developed it with the opening of many areas of modern education, particularly in Sciences which later grew into Sciences and Medical Sciences. During his reign, various faculties opened up their admission based on qualification without regards to social backgrounds enabling many children of commoners to pursue their academic interest in accordance with their ability, and with government subsidy, or support from some members of royalty and international agencies through scholarship programmes.

The King also initiated a reform process for Chulalongkorn University, in close consultation with 3 princes, Prince of Chainat, Prince Dhani who was his minister of education, and Prince Mahidol of Songkla (his half-brother to whom he became very close as they shared many interests in development issues. Prince Mahidol, (the father of Rama VIII and King Bhumibol, or Rama IX) proposed that the university become autonomous with a special decree allowing it to be directly under the supervision of the Supreme Council and the King, while the other 2 princes preferred it to be under the Ministry of Education. He set up a Central Committee for the reform of the university's faculties and curriculum, and to consider the feasibility of this university becoming a "chartered university."

He continued the studying abroad scheme but revised the rules and regulations concerning government-scholarship students in view of the economic crisis. Recognizing the increased importance of Science, he set up his personal-funded annual scholarship programme for science students studying within the country. He also presided over graduation ceremony at the university and personally handed the degree certificates to graduates. After the degree granting ceremony, he usually gave a speech to the students to promote their self-esteem and their sense of responsibility to the society.

7) School Visits by the King. In the 7th reign, the King made several visits to the provinces and foreign countries, accompanied always by the Queen. They included schools in every of their itineraries. The schools they visited were of various types, including missionary schools, Chinese schools and Schools of Fine arts.

8) King Prajadhipok's Home School. This is an aspect of the King's work that the public rarely knew about. Since homeschooling is nowadays an option integral to the concept of Education for All, though in practice it is not very clearly understood in Thailand, this narrative by Prudhisan Jumbala is included here for glimpses into the King's model of a home school. (The writer's father was one of the children raised by King Prajadhipok at Sukhothai Palace teaches Government and Development at the Faculty of Political science, Chulalongkorn University. His article was presented in Thai at the annual academic seminar, BE 2536, of the Historical Society, 12-13 February, 1997, Chulalongkorn University. The quoted text came from his hand-written note in English for Savitri Suwansathit, 26 October, 2012)

The King had brought up children since his bachelor days and continued to do so after his marriage, which proved childless. His method of bringing them up was notable for being a combination of formal schooling and homeschooling that aimed to nurture all-rounders. The boys were sent to school outside the palace while the girls were privately tutored in small classes in the palace. At home, they played together and partook, often with the King, in

various kinds of sports, tennis and squash, for instance, for their physical well-being as well as to learn to strictly abide by the rules of the game. Often, the King himself would swim with them in the rough- and- ready pool. In the evening, he animatedly told them bedtime stories, such as about Tarzan and his jungle adventures, thereby inculcating in them a love of nature. Their leisure time was invariably spent with their Majesties, the children playing board games and the King reading, sometimes partaking in their conversation. Furthermore, the King a liberal that he was, encouraged them to ask questions, to try to find answers for themselves, as well as to express their preference and opinions, thus preparing them to become good citizens in the democracy that was His Majesty's quest. Hand-on experience was very much part of their socialization. The King, being a keen photographer and cinematographer, would involve the children in the pastime that include developing pictures, as well as to act in the movies.... They also learned to play Thai musical instruments..."

As an evolution and an extension of his homeschool, the King, some two years before the 1932 coup, personally set up a small school called "Rong Rien Yaowakumarn" (School for Youths), a name reminiscent of that of the one prince during the Fifth Reign, in the grounds of Dusit Palace. Admitted to it were sons of senior officials, rather than princes, who were taught by knowledgeable teachers modern subjects as well as Siamese history and culture, replete with field visits to ancient sites. The intention, according to a former student who became a Professor of Horticulture and a President of Kasetsart University, Rapee Sagarik, the King's intention was to prepare them properly for study abroad. While they would imbibe modern knowledge, they would not forget their Thai roots. However, the school was disbanded soon after the 1932 coup and the students were found places at other schools. (Reference: Professor Rapee Sagarik's talk at a seminar organized for the King Prajadhipok and Queen Rambhai Barni Memorial Foundation for its former dissertation scholarship holders on December 17, B.E. 2547 (2004) transmitted in the Foundation's Annual Report of B.E. 2548 (2005) pp. 12-13

9) Education for women. The King was evidently appreciative of women's intellectual capacity and was very supportive of women's education, starting with the education of his wife, his nieces and female relatives who were brought up in his Palace. Women were admitted for the first time into the university in his reign with the first 7 female students enrolled in the Faculty of Pre-Medicine in 1927, and 3 of them graduated from the Medical School in 1932, another 2 graduated in 1933.

The acceleration of the expansion of primary education enabled schooling to be accessible to a great number of young girls who would otherwise have missed out on this opportunity if education had continued to be provided in limited areas or only in the temples.

One of the King's interesting private projects was "The University Day" held at his Palace. The king organized what he called the "University Day" every Thursday by inviting the 5 daughters of the Prince of Nakornsawan, whom the King amicably called the "University Group" since these royal young ladies did not attend any school or university as such but were educated by private tutors--Thai, English and French, at their father's palace called the "Bang Khun Prom Palace University" by many people including the King. Appreciative of their lively intelligence and their thirst for continuing education, the king invited them to his palace every Thursday so that they could join him and the Queen at the dinner table, and in other social activities he organized for his officials and guests, such as movie showing, musical concert, or informal discussion with his other guests and dignitaries. On other days they were free to come to use the sports facilities at the palace, such as tennis and swimming, for their physical education. This arrangement enabled these ladies to continue to learn and developed at their own pace and according to their interests, and to exchange views and information with the King and his guests.

During his visits to Singapore and Indonesia, he wrote daily letters addressed simply “*To University*” meaning these 5 ladies collectively. The letters were meant for their informal education, for he described the places and the things he saw and the people he met in quite lengthy detail. He asked “*University*” to make copies of these letters and to edit them for him in case he might publish them in the future. This never happened. Twenty years later, when Queen Rambhai Barni brought King Prajadhipok’s ashes back to Bangkok, the “*University*” as a token of their gratitude, compiled and edited these letters, wrote their introduction and signed their names at the end, and published 3500 copies in book form for general distribution on that occasion. (Reference: Preface to the compilation of letters of HM King Prajadhipok to the daughters of HRH Prince Boriphat, Prince of Nakornsawan, sent from his journey to Java in the year of the snake, BE.2472, for distribution on the occasion of His Majesty’s ashes returning to Bangkok in the year of the cow, BE.2492)

4.2.2 Culture

Prominent among his cultural achievements were the forward-looking laws he decreed on the preservation of cultural properties, on the establishment of museum in Bangkok to serve as a learning center for the people, the copyright and trademark laws, and the decree on the establishment of the royal academy for the learning of literature, arts, crafts and music. His interest in this area went beyond laws, for He visited many museums during his visits to many countries and accepted to inaugurate the Museum of Bangkok and the Royal Institute Council when they were opened to the public.

King Prajadhipok established, in 1926, the Royal Institute to promote the study and research in the fields of Fine Arts, Architecture and Performing Arts. The Council was also to promote Literature and Archaeology as well.

Between 1926-1930, he decreed a number of important laws on cultural properties, notably:

a) ***Museum Act, 1926***, establishing the Museum in Bangkok with the objectives of collecting and conserving important archaeological evidences and works of art, and displaying them for public appreciation and education;

b) ***Law concerning the exporting of archeological or ancient objects and art objects, from within the country, 1926***

c) ***Copyright and Trade Mark Law 1931.***

d) ***Promotion of Traditional Thai Music.*** Music had always been King Prajadhipok’s special interest since his childhood, and this interest continued during his reign and after his abdication until his demise. (Pimsai and Ping, *ibid* , p.54-57) .

In 1927, because of his retrenchment policy, the Division of Music and Performing Arts was dissolved causing some of the musicians to be turned out of their jobs, with only some aspects of this Division’s work transferred to the secretariat of the King. To assist the musicians, the King founded a private Siamese Orchestra for them in his palace with members of the royal family and officials in his Government and his palace joining in the practice. He also took up music lessons with these officials as teachers, and began to play “saw duang”, a string instrument with a bright high pitch, as his preferred instrument. On the occasion of his 3rd cycle, Prince Paribatra, the Prince of Nakornsawan presented him with a handsome “saw oo” and he also played this instrument regularly. During his reign, notation of Thai classical music using western notes and scores was begun from 19 February 1930 - 25 June 1932, resulting in the notes and scores of The Home Rong Yen (The evening Overture) for the Piphat ensemble in the Pleng Tam Kwan Series which are now still in use. This project unfortunately was discontinued because of the coup d’etat on June 24, 1932. (Reference: Seminar on “King Prajadhipok’s Musical Interests and Tastes,” 2003)

e) ***The King’s Compositions.*** In consultation with the musical teachers of his time, the King, fascinated by some traditional Siamese musical tunes, and based on his study of

them, recomposed three pieces of music for which he wrote down the lyrics and the notes. To this day, these songs, namely, “*Ratree Pradab Dao*” (*Starry Night*) composed in praise of Queen Rambhai Barni’s serenity and inner beauty; “*Khamen La-or Ong*,” with a Khmer-like tune, composed after his return from his visit to French Indochina that included Cambodia and “*Kluen Kratob Fung*,” composed from the sound of the waves, remain invaluable legacies to Thai musicians of latter generations (**See photo 16**). (Reference: Malinee Sagarik, Luang Pradit Pairoah (Sorn Silapa Bunleng) Foundation, Paper delivered at King Prajadhipok Museum, 2003)

f) Religious Literature, Architecture and Arts A devout Buddhist who had been ordained in the monkhood before marriage, King Prajadhipok paid great attention to religious affairs. He undertook many important activities in this area. He ordered the editing of the Thai version of the Tri Pitaka and its printing in book form in 1930, known as the Siamrath Tri Pitaka, and gave the copyright to the Maha Mongkut Raja Vidhayalai, or the Monks’ University founded by King Mongkut, his grandfather. He also commanded that the published Tri Pitaka books were to be distributed to various universities in the world and to temples in Thailand.

In the area of Buddhist architecture, he ordered the renovation of some important temples, especially: the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the Temple of Suwannaram in Ayuthya, Pra Prathom Chedi or the Grand Pagoda in Nakorn Prathom, the Rajabopit Temple, built as the temple of the Fifth Reign.

Since these activities were mostly undertaken at his own initiatives, he made an initial donation to cover part of the expenses for the activities and invited all members of the royal family, the high officials, and the general public to make voluntary donations to the remaining cost. Due to the economic depression at the time, he did not want his initiatives on religious affairs to be additional burdens to the government’s budget but did not want to neglect this important aspect of cultural and spiritual uplifting and development of the country. (Reference: National Archive, archives of the seventh reign)

g) International cultural exchanges and Promotion of International Understanding. King Prajadhipok placed high importance on diplomacy and international exchanges to promote better cultural understanding among nations and peoples. For his Coronation, he instructed Prince Dhani Nivat, an Orientalist trained at Oxford, to pen in English, a detailed account of the ceremony and the Buddhist and Brahmin rituals involved for distribution to foreign guests. Each year on Coronation Day, he made speeches in reply to members of the foreign diplomatic corps who bade him good will. In the one in 1927, he made particular mention of the successful negotiations to amend all the treaties through the cooperation and realism of all the countries concerned. He was thus certain that good relations between Siam and foreign countries would endure now that they were on an equal footing.

International cultural exchanges and understanding, as well as education, was the very subject of his speech to a group of American college professors and students on a tour of the country. He praised them for using travel as a way to educate themselves because they would see with their own eyes rather than simply believe what they read. Contrary to the author, Rudyard Kipling, he believed that East and West could meet in friendship and exchange of both culture and technology.

(References: Dhani Nivat, Prince. The Coronation of His Majesty King Prajadhipok, King of Siam, B.E. 2492 (2nd ed), 1949; Banjerd, B.E. 2537, *ibid.* J. cited

He supported the national and international programs of the Siam Society, a private organization whose membership were both foreign and Thai and whose purpose was to

promote friendship through the search for and exchange of knowledge . He accepted the Siam Society's invitation to attend a number of academic and cultural lectures by international scholars. Invited to inaugurate its Permanent Home at Soi Asoke, Bangkok, but unable to attend because of the coup d'etat, he sent the Siam Society a cordial letter of apology and to wish them good progress in the future.

He visited some ethnic and minority communities in the country and even took some photographs and movies of their cultural activities which are now kept in the national archives and the national cinematographic center in Bangkok.

In the speeches he delivered during his 1926 visit to the the North, he urged the ethnic Lawa, who welcomed him in Chiangmai, to continue to be loyal, to be honest, to refrain from corrupt practices and not to cause harm to other countrymen of the same nation. He also told the Chinese merchants there that he considered the Chinese to be like brothers and sisters of the Thai and that those who had settled in the realm, "under the shade of the Bodhi Tree." had rights no different to those of the Thai. The American Christian missionaries running a school there were praised for their merit-making in so doing. The local people of Chiangmai and the North in general, he recounted the ever increasing bonds between them and other parts of the country as a result of improved transport. He also drew from history the lesson that disunity between the diverse groups in the same country usually led to trouble and danger.

(Reference: Banjerd Indhuchandrayong (ed.), A compilation.....,B.E. 2537, already cited)

Recognizing inter-dependency the relationships between the nations of the world in the twentieth century, he maintained close and continued ties and bonds with personalities and leaders of countries established since the time of his Father, King Chulalongkorn, who visited Europe twice. Some of them and / or their descendants visited him in Bangkok and on his sojourns abroad, for example, Crown Prince Fedrik of Denmark visited (who later became King Fedrik IX) in 1930. He also entertained as appropriate other foreign dignitaries to promote international understanding and cooperation as well as international cultural relations with organizations, countries and their people. The League of Nations Committee on Opium Addiction, on an observation tour, was treated to luncheon at Bang Pa-in Palace in Ayutthaya on December 14, 1929. On the 7th of the same month and year, the Maharajah of Kaptuala, a guest of Prince Purachatra, the Prince of Kampaengphet, was also extended the same kind of hospitality. (Reference: Banjerd, B.E. 2537, already cited)

As occasion that demonstrated the King's philosophical and literary inclinations and interest in education was when, without prior appointment, he invited Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali Indian thinker, educator, poet and Winner of the 1931 Nobel Prize for Literature to deliver a dinner talk at his Palace four years earlier, on October 13, 1927. Interestingly, it was on "Asia's international culture." Furthermore, the relationship established then appears not to have been a fleeting one as Tagore later sent "Their Royal Highnesses the King and Queen of Siam" a private greeting card in 1929. The King and Prince Dhani Nivat, the Minister of Education and Morals, also took the opportunity to ask Tagore to select a learned Indian to come to Siam to further cultural relations, something that materialized in Prafulla Kumar Sen, coming, M.A., to teach Sanskrit at Chulalongkorn University and to establish a Dharma center at Bovarnanives Temple of the then Supreme Patriach, as well as to strike up a fruitful relationship with the Thai scholar of literature and culture, Phraya Anuman Rajadhon. Tagore's works are now well-known in Thailand. A translated version of Crescent Moon is recommended reading for school children.

(Reference: Prudhisana Jumbala, "On Rabindranath Tagore's audience with King Prajahipok" in King Prajadhipok's Institute Newsletter, October B.E. 2553 (2010) pp. 9-10, which cited Assistant Professor Savitri Charoenpongse's presentation at Chulalongkorn University on July 2, 2010, Tagore's greeting card, is kept at the King Prajadhipok Museum.)

In his own reign, King Prajadhipok, accompanied by the Queen and his high officials, made 4 visits to foreign countries to promote diplomatic and cultural relations. Clearly he believed travel was the way to learn at first hand. Two of the visits were in fact extension of his travels for eye treatments to the USA and to England where he had his first and second eye operations in 1931 and 1934.

At the end of July 1929, he made a visit to promote closer relations with the neighbouring countries: Singapore, Java, and Bali, where he observed, not only the modern administration of the colonial governments, and other modern institutions such as hospitals, medical universities, and naval operations, agricultural and fishery promotion projects and also the topography, in those countries, but also visited archaeological and cultural sites and museums, and had some exchanges with the local leaders in those areas.

Cultural relations were thus cemented with fellow Asians and international relations with the then British and Dutch rulers furthered. A musician himself, he took a special interest in gamelan music and also the rich array of local and ethnic dances in both Java and Bali. Two sets of gamelan musical instruments were presented to him. They are now kept at the National Museum in Bangkok. The movies the King took at Borobudur and Prambanan demonstrated his attention to the details of the monuments that would be of interest to present day archaeologists and art historians. He also exhibited knowledge in his conversation with a Dutch anthropologist who acted as a guide and who was thereby keen to come to Siam to learn more. The King also acquired some Balinese carved stone mythical figures as cultural souvenirs to decorate the garden of Klai Kangvol Palace, his newly built private seaside residence in Hua Hin.

(Reference: 1) King Prajadhipok's daily letters from Singapore and Indonesia, printed and distributed by Princess. Siriratana Busbong, Princess. Suthawongsewijitr, Princess. Pisit somsmai, M.C. Churairatanasiriman, Princess. Chantrakarnmanee, on the occasion of the return of King Prajadhipok's ashes to Thailand, 1958. These letters were written daily by King Prajadhipok in his hand-writing, in the tradition of King Chulalongkorn's letters from Europe known as "Klaiban", describing in detail the visits he made on each day to various places of interest during his travel to Singapore and Indonesia. The letters were dated from 31 July to 24 September, 1929 and were addressed collectively to "University", with specific reference to these 5 daughters of Prince of Nakornsawan, whom the King called amicably the "University Group;" 2) Prince. Damrasdamrong Devakul, The Official Daily Records of the royal Visit of King Prajadhipok to Java, printed and distributed as a royal present on New Year day, 1930)

From May-June 1930, he visited the French protectorate Indochinese countries, namely Vietnam and Cambodia to promote friendship and better understanding with the French government and the native dignitaries in those countries. In Vietnam, he was warmly received by the French Governor General at Saigon, the French Ambassador to Siam, and the Mayor of Saigon, and he awarded them and other high officials with the Royal Decorations of Siam. He visited, among other places in Saigon, the Pasteur Institute, two colleges of Fine Arts, the Museum, a Vietnamese Temple, the Botanical Garden and the Zoo, a hospital, a French- Chinese school, a Thai-Vietnam Football match, and the marketplace and a Convent. In Hue, Na Trang, and Dalat, he visited the Imperial Palace. The Queen paid an official visit to the Queen Mother at her Imperial residence first. The King followed later, after having been welcomed officially by the Regent de l' Empire d' Annam, the Imperial Tombs, Lan Co village, The Cham Museum, an Oceanographic Institute, the Cham Temple at Ponagar, The Pongau waterfalls, the Mois ethnic community of Dalat, two dairy and fruit farms: "Ferme de Camly" and the Dankia farm near Lake Camly, and the Fanthiet town which produced fish sauce. **(See photo 17).**

Before his arrival in Cambodia, he received Phra Chao Maneewongse of Cambodia who cordially called on the King for private exchange in Saigon. Upon arrival in Angkor Wat in Cambodia, he further visited Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, Angkor Wat, Phnom Penh and Battambang,. There was a car accident during the trip, and one of the ladies in his

entourage suffered a head injury and died in the accident. The King then declined all social entertainments and receptions, and after the official visits scheduled in advance, he returned to Siam via Aranya Prathes.

Soon after his return, the King sent Luang Pradist Phairoh (Sorn Silpabanleng), an accomplished Court musician to Cambodia to be with the Court classical ensemble of Phra Chao Maneewongse in Phnom Penh for a time. Upon his return, the musician composed a number of Thai classical pieces with Khmer-like tone. The King himself composed a piece called "Khmen La-or Ong" in Khmer-like tone late that year. These serve as enduring evidence of fruitful cultural relations and exchanges that resulted from the visit.

(Reference: 1) M.C. Vibul swasdi Swastikul, *The Daily Records of the Royal Visits to Vietnam and Cambodia, 1930*, published by royal permission at the funeral of Khun Warandab Chatrakul, a former maid of honour of Queen Rambhai Barni, 24 November, 1993.; 2) His Majesty King Prajadhipok's Speech in response to the Welcoming address by the Governor General, 15 April, 1930) 3) Anand Narkkhong (ed.), *A Register of Ampawa Artists*, Bangkok: Luang Pradist Phairoh (Sorn Silpabanleng) Foundation, B.E. 2554 (2011) p. 29; The Department of Fine Arts, *King Prajadhipok's Royal Biography and Activities*, Bangkok: The Secretariat of the Parliament, B.E. 2523 (1980), pp 73-80

From April to October 1931, the King went with Queen Rambhai Barni on a largely unofficial visit to the USA and Canada so that the King could have a cataract operation on his left eye, a surgery unavailable in Siam at that time. However, from Ophir Hall, White Plains, Maryland in the USA, which they rented for their stay for the operation and his recuperation, Their Majesties visited many places that suited their interests and were also given formal welcomes at government offices. Notably, they made a courtesy call on President and Mrs. Herbert Hoover at the White House on April 29, were officially welcomed to the City of New York at New York City Hall on May 4 as well as given the Golden Key to the City of White Plains two days previously. The King was also presented with an Honorary Doctorate of Law by George Washington University in recognition of his governing ability. The King and Queen also gave interviews to members of the American Press at Ophir Hall. The King, apart from remarking on how Thai women were becoming fashionable and trained for the professions, intimated that he was planning to grant universal suffrage in due course. A first step almost ready at hand was to introduce local self-government at the municipal level. In terms of inter-cultural relations, it is interesting to discover that the King had privately commissioned Raymond B. Stevens, the American General Advisor to the Siamese Government, to conduct a public relations exercise about Siam and the royal visit both prior to and during it. The two volumes on newscuttings he submitted to, note, "Their Royal Highness the Prince and Princess of Sukhodaya," bear witness to the effort being to explain to the American Press and general public that Siam was a country with a long history and cultural past that was, similar to the USA, proud of its independence.

Though Their Majesties were received as Visitors of State upon their arrival in Ottawa, Canada, on August 10, 1931, the visit was a private one in which the King partook in a number of sports with the local people as well as enjoyed nature. On the way to the USA by ship, Their Majesties transited Shanghai and participated in the Hanamutsuri ceremony marking the Day of Vesak (the Full Moon Day of the Buddha's Birth, Enlightenment and Death with no After life) at Hibaya Park in Tokyo. They also paid homage to the Daibutsu huge bronze image of the Buddha. Both of these, in early April 1931, demonstrated that the King readily recognized that despite difference in sects and ceremonial rituals, the Japanese followed the teachings of the same Buddha as the Thai. Their Majesties also went to see Emperor Hirohito at his Palace where they were presented with the highest Japanese decorations.

(References: 1) King Prajadhipok's Institute, *King Prajadhipok: A Pictorial Biography* (second edition), Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing (PLC), B.E. 2544 (1991), pp 68-73; 2) The Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary, *A Compilation of Photographs of Queen Rambhai Barni of the Seventh Reign and Her Royal Activities*, Bangkok; Krungdhep (1984) Co. Ltd., B.E. 2525 (1985), pp 117-139 3) National Archives, *Newsclipping of Their Majesties in USA: 1931*

The last visit abroad made by King Prajadhipok during his reign was to Europe, which began on January 12, 1934. There was never a homecoming for he abdicated and subsequently died in the United Kingdom. Cementing foreign relations was one of the two stated reasons, the other being for him to have a follow-up operation on the cataract in his left eye. A significance of this visit abroad of King Prajadhipok, accompanied by his Queen Rambhai Barni, was that he now did so as

Constitutional Monarch and was thus meant to reassure the European countries of continued good intentions Siam had towards them even after the change in the form of government. Furthermore, the King must have wanted to observe and study at first hand the rapidly fluctuating political and ideational currents there as the slow recovery from the Great Depression began, so that he could gauge their repercussions, not only on Siam but also on the world. Thus it was that as many as 9 countries were visited, Italy (and the Vatican) and France prior to the surgery in London, the UK, on May 10, 1934; and Denmark, Germany, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Switzerland afterwards. Their Majesties returned to the UK at the end of September and took up residence at Knowle, the rented house from where the King, on March 2, 1935, abdicated.

At all the countries visited, except for Switzerland, where the visit was entirely private, there were official parts followed by longer unofficial and private ones. The King met European Monarchs and former Monarchs, heads of state and heads of government as well as politicians of a diverse range of political ideology or dispositions. Among the politicians were Italy's Mussolini, Hitler's Germany, Prime Minister MacDonald (the first Labour PM) and also Members of Parliament of both Houses and different political parties at Westminster where he joined them for lunch, apparently as the first foreign Monarch to have done so. Interestingly, he also had private discussions with well known intellectuals and authors, such as Somerset Maugham, H.G. Wells and Aldous Huxley. All this vouched for the fact that he was seriously engaged in learning about the range of political, social, and cultural views and ideas then held by Europeans without necessarily concurring with any particular perspective. Notably also, he went to the Vatican on two occasions, one to visit Pope Pius XI, the other to attend a ceremony at St. Peter's Basilica to honour a Catholic priest of the Salacians, members of which operated schools in Siam. He also went to a Catholic seminary where Thai students were studying. In doing so, the King was symbolically expressing religious tolerance and also performing his Kingly duty as patron of all religions in Siam as well as taking an interest in the education Thais were receiving abroad. This was also the case in London where he attended a meeting of the Samaggi Samagom under Royal Patronage at which Thai students in the UK and representatives of those in France and Germany gathered in an atmosphere of conviviality. He also made donations to the two associations in the UK and France.

The cultural activities the King attended or partook in included, for instance, visits to churches, palaces, operas, concerts, National Academies, art galleries and museums, as well as a number of hot spring spas and tennis tournaments. He also visited his alma mater, L'Ecole Supérieure de Guerre in France, Eton College and Aldershot in the UK where he renewed his acquaintances and observed their progress. In Rome, he pursued his interest in film-making by visiting the International Cinematographe Educative set up by the League of Nations.

The other royal activities included many visits to industrial sites, laboratories, agricultural stations, flower shows and many other enterprises. His visit to the Skoda Company of Czechoslovakia's industrial plants is hailed as having "contributed to the fast development of economic relations." The first sugar refinery in Thailand built by the Company in 1937 in Lampang is an example. (References: Vichitwongse Vudhikrai, Phraya, Archival Record of King Prajadhipok's Visit to Europe, B.E. 2476-2477, first published as a Cremation Volume at the Cremation of Lieutenant General Pja Sirivorasarn at Wat Dhepsirin Dharavas on November 12, B.E. 2526 (1983); Buzard, Pierre A., King Rama VII of Siam's Official Visit to Czechoslovakia in 1934, Bangkok: King Prajadhipok Institute in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Institute of International Relations in Prague, B.E. 2547 (2004)

In addition, mention should be made of the King's sojourns abroad before he became King and also after his abdication. His 1910 return to the United Kingdom after a home visit involved transits in Japan, Hongkong, Shanghai and Russia to travel by the Trans-Siberian Railway. During his time in England, he frequented France and Germany. On the way to France in 1920, he and his Consort made stops in Egypt and Italy. They returned from France via the USA (New York, San Francisco, Hawaii) and Japan, to familiarize themselves with those countries by order of King Vajiravudh. After his abdication, as The Prince and Princesses of Sukhodaya, they travelled very privately with a few relatives to France for spa treatment as well as to Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Egypt. A relative who acted as the driver related that the King was a connoisseur of European civilization, archaeology and art. In Egypt, he by chance met a police sergeant who invited him to his house where a delicious dinner was laid for them. He also met Egypt's then current Prime Minister, Ali Maher, with whom he discussed the utmost importance of maintaining one's country's independence even if that

involved sacrifice. At home in rural England, they were involved in the village community activities and the villagers used the endearing but respectful term, “the squire,” to describe the ex-King. (References: Department of Fine Arts, 1980; already cited; Narutama (pseud), Under the White Umbrella: A Biography as told by M.C. Karawik Chakrabandhu, Bangkok: Praew Press, B.E. 2539 (1996)

g) King Prajadhipok and Peace-seeking. King Prajadhipok was a man whose life was marked from birth by the threat of war, violent conflicts and actual wars. Yet he was a man of peace.

Trained as a soldier who was at the ready to fight in the first World War alongside his British army officers, Prajadhipok as King pursued from the very beginning of his reign a program of change towards a Constitutional Monarchy that was designed to avoid violent conflicts and bloodshed. It was therefore an incremental one, with much attention paid to timeliness and also the sustainability of the new system.

Even as an Absolute Monarch, his way of conducting the affairs of state and the making of policy decisions was to aim for consensual agreement, and failing that, to abide by majority decisions even if those differed from his own. Never did he impose his own will, and admitted as much. When faced with the challenge to the Absolute Monarchical system in 1932, the King chose the course of action to comply with the coup group’s overt wish for a constitutional Monarchy, not least in order to avoid fighting and bloodshed. He then endured a series of marked differences and even the taking up of arms to force decisions by the coup group and others, with a tolerance and decency that were the hallmark of his personality. Yet, he held on to what he considered to be the core principles of democracy: the rule of law, the protection and promotion of human freedom and popular sovereignty. When in October 1933, political conflict exploded into armed fighting, he advised non-violent conflict resolution that was the democratic way. When this was not taken up, he continued to walk the tight rope of political neutrality that was the proper course for a constitutional head of state. Risking the vagaries of Nature, Prajadhipok physically distanced himself, and thereby the Monarch, from the violent armed clashes.

Having considered that he had throughout tried his utmost to ensure a peaceful transition from Absolute Monarchy to Constitutional Monarchy as a variety of democracy without success, Prajadhipok resigned his Kingship and saved the Monarchy as well as left as his legacy the core principles of democracy for later generations to appreciate and realize.

Even as he was contemplating his abdication, he dutifully made the effort to travel around Europe to cement and initiate peaceful relations. He simultaneously sought to comprehend, for himself and for the good of his country, the rapidly changing political developments there not long before the outbreak of the Second World War. The latter he endured, trying all the while to find a peaceful and safe niche for himself and his family, at great cost to his health and, eventually, his own life.

The biography of this peace-seeker needs to be appreciated and better understood. (Reference: Prudhisan Jumbala, 2012, already cited)

4.2.3 Communication for Development

Linking peoples and communities The development of public transportation and communication system for Bangkok and the provinces, to link communities and bridge development gaps, had started in the reign of King Chulalongkorn. In the reign of King Prajadhipok, in spite of the severe economic downturns, the King saw the necessity to further improve the system and extended it to benefit a greater number of people. Because of retrenchment, he brought under one ministry the Railways Authority, the Road and Highway System, the Water Transportation and Communication, the aviation, and the Telegraph and Post Offices. Later in his reign he added to this Ministry the work of the Ministry of Trades, and renaming it the Ministry of Trades and Communication. He amended the laws in connection with all these systems and issued new laws for the use of motorcars in some provinces. Concessions were given to private firms to expand small lanes and roads to accommodate trade and transportation and communication needs of the communities and the people, in Bangkok and major cities. The roads built in this reign, such as Prjadhipok

Road on the Thonburi side of the River, remain important and are still very much in use today.

One of the most significant projects was the building the first bridge ever across the Chao Phya River, to link Bangkok, the capital of Siam built by King Rama I, with the old capital of Thonburi which was the capital of the King of Thonburi or Pra Chao Tak (Sin). King Prajadhipok wanted this bridge to be a symbolic unification of communities of people living on the Thonburi side of the river and the communities on the Bangkok side. These two cities were long separated by the wide river, and people had to paddle boats to cross over to visit and do business with the people on the other bank of the river. He dedicated this bridge to King Rama I on the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the Founding of Bangkok which fell on April 1932. Short of budget to be allocated to this project, the King divided the cost of construction into 3 parts and he contributed one part of it, invited all royal members of the Chakri dynasty to contribute to the second part, and for the remaining part, he invited the private sector and general public to make voluntary donations. After the fundraising, whatever amount that remained uncovered was then allocated from the government's budget. The bridge did link the communities and narrowed the gaps between the Capital and the provinces on the other side of the river.

Freedom of Expression King Prajadhipok also promoted modern mass communication including the printed media, radio and cinema for the purpose of public education, the flow of ideas and information. He emphasized the role of mass communication for the dissemination of knowledge, information, and for the exchange of ideas and views, and in spite of his being an absolute king, never imposed censorship on the media.

The Printed Media. Printing was introduced to Siam by an American missionary in the third reign of the Chakri Dynasty, and two newspapers were started by some American printers with limited circulation. In the fourth reign, King Mongkut was interested in printing and started to print the Royal Gazette to announce government decrees, policies and important events. This led the way for the Thai-owned newspapers to be printed in the later reigns.

In King Chulalongkorn's period, many Thai-owned newspapers came into being with ownership resting with some educated princes. These newspapers, 17 dailies and 47 periodicals to be exact, served to promote wider literacy and readership among the Thais many of whom were taught in the palaces or by the monks at the community temples, while a good number of people taught themselves to read and write from reading the printed papers, which after they had been read by subscribers, were sold to shops to be used as wrapping paper in Bangkok and in the countryside, thus allowing children free access to printed reading materials.

During the reign of Rama VI, there was a boom in the newspaper business, and the number of dailies and periodicals expanded rapidly. Educated commoners became journalists and columnists and they wrote about new ideas and ideologies that they had learned from abroad or read from foreign books. Though the King and the government increasingly became a target of printed criticism, the King and some of the princes wrote and printed their views in the government-owned newspapers. The King used many pen names and enjoyed a literary pursuit, wrote articles which expounded the importance of modernization and nationalism as well as many various issues. It was a period of true press freedom, and there was no censorship at all.

When King Prajadhipok came to the throne, the printed media expanded even more and there were 56 newspapers in circulation, 38 of which were owned by private individuals, 16 by some legal entities, and 2 did not give the name of the owners. Of all these printed media, 89.4% operated and existed only for a short period of 1 year or less than 5 years, the remainders existed for 6 years and longer, with only 4 that remained operating for 27 years.

It is interesting to note that of all these, 52 newspapers existed during the reign of King Prajadhipok before the political change. This would indicate that King Prajadhipok, then an Absolute Monarch, preferred the Press to engage in self-regulation rather than to impose state regulation on the newspaper. After the 1932 Coup abolishing the Absolute Monarchy, however, only 4 newspapers stayed in operation. The 1932 Amendment to the Law on Books, Documents, and Newspapers, followed by the new Law on Printing 1933, also introduced censorship of the press into the Thai society for the first time in history.

(Reference: Pornthip Deesomchoke, Associate Professor, Ph.d, " Concepts and Measures of King Prajadhipok's Promotion of Political communication"p.9, pp21-23,Sukhothai Dharmathiraja University, 2010)

Radio Broadcasting Radio broadcasting was introduced as a new medium of communication in Siam during the reign of King Prajadhipok. It was used in 1927-1929 on an experimental basis by Prince Purachatra of Kampangetch, an engineer educated in Europe, who was also Minister of Commerce and Communication at that time. After some success, the Minister started to operate radio transmission for the public from the **Radio station of Bangkok at Phyathai**. This station was inaugurated on 25 February, 1930, with the transmission of the King's speech on the occasion of his Coronation Anniversary, live from the ceremony at the Amarinda Winichai Throne Hall. In his Speech, the King made reference to the radio broadcasting ..."*Radio broadcasting, long experimented with and launched, the objective is to promote education, commerce and recreation for the benefit of traders and the people at large. In order to control the operation, we have imported a good broadcasting transmitter and installed it at the Phyathai Radiotelegraphy Station. We are pleased to launch it today.*"(reproduced in Prudhisarn Jumpala, his handwritten article: "King Prajadhipok and communication for development", 26 October 2012)

Three days afterward, the King visited the radio station and from then became a fan of radio, tuning in usually at night in his bedroom. (**See photo 18**). In September that year, an amendment was made to the Radio and telegraph Bill allowing private and household ownership of radio receivers. Within less than a year after the amendment of this law, there were 11,007 radio receivers owned by private individuals in Siam

In February 1931, the Supreme Council approved the Minister's request to run commercial advertisements on radio which brought in significant income to compensate for the investment cost for the radio broadcasting project. . (Reference: Sa-gniam Paothongsook, "Radio in Thailand", 1983, cited in Pornthip, ibid)

Photography and Cinematography King Prajadhipok was a true movie fan. This was probably a habit he had picked up from his student days in England and France where movie-going was very widely popular among young people at the time. In Siam, he enjoyed screening silent movies at his palace for his own viewing and for his guests before his enthronement. When sound movies came to Thailand, he and the Queen went sometimes to the public movie hall, for example, the Sri Krung newspaper reported that on 9 and 19 of October, 1930, that the King and the Queen went to see the " talking movies at Pattanakarn Theatre." During his visit to Java, the newspaper also reported that he and the queen took a taxi to see a movie at a public theatre and was not recognized by most local people.

He was also interested in photography for which he seemed to excel since his childhood days, having won a prize at a photo contest in 1905. He also liked producing and directing movies, and saw movies as being useful for education and communication as well as for entertainment. He was a member of the Amateur Cinema League Inc., located in New York, and later he organized a meeting of cinematographers in Thailand and founded the Amateur Cinema Association of Siam under his patronage (**See photo 19**).

He produced mostly documentary films and films for entertainment. In 1931 when he went to the USA for his first eye operation, he took the opportunity to visit Hollywood production studios. Documented were state ceremonies and his visits to the countryside in the north and the south of Thailand, as well as to neighbouring countries that are now ASEAN member states, namely, Singapore, Java and Bali, and French Indochina (Vietnam and Kampuchea). State ceremonies were documented very much as historical records for posterity. The films made on Java recorded in considerable detail the stone carvings at Borobudur and Pramanan, for instance. These films have been restored and copied by the Film Archive, The King also made a least one notable film around a story he wrote off the cuff for the children in his retinue to act on an island in the Gulf of Siam. **Waen Viset** (the Magic Ring) taught the children to perform good deeds and to be kind rather than use magic to harm others. **(See photo 20)** The films are lasting records of the ways of life during the reign and remain to be researched and studied more deeply. The total number of films that he made and left as a heritage to Thailand amounted to 500 rolls or about 120,000 feet long and had been categorized into 23 titles. (Reference: 1) Prudhisana, 2012, *ibid*; 2) Dome Sukwong, King Prajadhipok and cinematography, a paper presented at the seminar on Thai Society in the reign of King Prajadhipok, 7-8 February, 1998)

A Movie Hall for the People In the reign of King Prajadhipok, movies became rapidly popular and there were about 20 movie halls in Bangkok and Thonburi which showed imported films. These halls were small wooden houses with tin roofs and poorly constructed and very hot. On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the founding of Bangkok, King Prajadhipok, being a huge fan of movies, donated his own money of about 9 million Bahts for the construction of a modern, air conditioned, movie house, designed and built by a Thai architect and a Thai engineer, equipped with modern lighting and stage technology of the time, with the holding capacity of 2000 persons. The King went to lay the founding stone and aptly named it “Sala Chalerm Krung” (the House to celebrate the Capital City). It served, and continues to serve to this day, as a modern popular movie hall and theatre hall since its inauguration in July 1933. (Reference: www.salachalermkrung.com)

4.2.4 Physical education, Sports and Games

Sport as a social connector with people

King Prajadhipok was a keen sportsman since his years in England and throughout his life. In spite of his small size, he played cricket and the Field Game and was cox in rowing with other boys at Eton. Though he also had other interests in the Arts, sports and games were important in his life because it helped him to improve his health and his life and (Andrew Gailey: “**A Thai Prince at Eton**” in “**The King and His Garden**”, a booklet published on the occasion of the restoration and improvement of the Garden dedicated to King Prajadhipok of Siam who made a generous donation to the school in 1928)

In Thailand, he was known to swim and play squash and tennis with his relatives and the children he adopted and brought up, but soon took up golf and played it regularly with his wife in his Palace compound in Bangkok and Hua Hin. Golf seemed to be a useful exercise that suited his pace and he also used it to connect socially and diplomatically with other people and promote unity among his friends and officials, though sometimes when his eyes were suffering from the cataracts he complained that he was seeing two balls on the grass instead of one. (King's Prajadhipok's letter of 9 September 1930, from Hua Hin, to his adopted son Prince Jirasak in USA). His wife, Queen Rambhai Barni also played golf in her own style and stride; and she occasionally played with state dignitaries during the royal visits abroad. She continued to play golf after the King had passed away and became a role model for women golfers in Thailand. The King was also an active patron of amateur golf tournaments, both

men's and women's. However, he discouraged people from making golf an incessant topic of conversation.

On Sportmanship

Both the King and the Queen emphasized sportmanship and fair play as a democratic attitude in game and in life. In the King's speeches, given on many occasions to students, boy scouts, and school administrators in Bangkok and in the provinces, he never failed to mention the usefulness of physical education and sports and games, for personal physical development and for the development of unity, team work and peace. (see for example, his speech given to the students of Vajiravudhi college, 10 November 1928 and other speeches in Compilation of King Prajadhipok's speeches, statements and decrees, *ibid.*)

5. Web site(s): see section above

6

C. Information concerning the activities organized on this occasion by the country/countries concerned

Place, Type of activity, Institution responsible Planned funding

Activities to be held In Thailand

The activities, to be spread out throughout November 2013-November 2014, will be organized in Thailand with the participation of international scholars as well as in the countries visited by King Prajadhipok. The various institutes in Thailand will act as host to these activities and will provide funding and personnel to support them. For example commemorative stamps have been designed and will be issued by the Post Authority of Thailand. Academic seminars and students activities will be organized by King Prajadhipok Institute, Chulalongkorn University and Sukhothai Thamathirat University. The Ministry of culture will organize activities in connection with the commemoration of the establishment of national museum, national libraries and archives, the commemoration of his musical works.

Activities to be held other countries

As for the activities to be held in other countries, a special committee has been set up to plan the organizing of photographic exhibitions and seminars in the neighboring countries which King Prajadhipok visited in 1930, and which have now become ASEAN.

In addition, photographs and films from his visits to countries in Europe, USA, and Japan, and especially in England and France where he lived and studied for a long period of time, are being researched upon with the possibility of promoting cultural relations and international understanding during the year of the double anniversary celebration. The Thai Embassies in those countries will be involved in this project.

D. Links with UNESCO

1. The celebration is related to the UNESCO's ideals and works in the following fields:
Education: Education for All... expanding educational services and providing free primary education; reform of education administration; support private education initiatives by communities; education for citizenship and for sustainable development

Culture: Protection and preservation of cultural heritage, providing access to cultural participation through museum exhibition and education, promote cultural education of cultural creativity, promotion of copyrights.

Social sciences: Human rights and Democracy; Peace promotion; conflict resolution through peace means; gender equality
Communication and information for development, and the memory of the world project
Transdisciplinary projects: Peace Education; Democracy and Good Governance; Sustainability

2. How do you wish UNESCO to participate? We wish UNESCO to be associated with the celebration of this double anniversary from November 8, 2013, to November 8, 2014, to mark the tenth zodiac cycle of the birth anniversary (120th anniversary in the decimal system) of King Prajadhipok, and the centenary of his homecoming after a long study abroad in England.

We wish UNESCO to use some flexibility in applying the criterion (d) especially considering the UNESCO's long-standing support for the concept of Cultural Diversity, by accepting and including this event in the UNESCO's list of celebrations for the next biennium 2014-2015, with no financial obligation.

3. Please state in what way this commemoration is linked to, and promotes, UNESCO's objectives and missions

The activities to be organized during the event will be educational, cultural, communication, and social-science oriented in nature, They will be linked to UNESCO's ideals and objectives and will aim at linking academic and cultural communities across the regions as well as "building peace in the minds of men and women" through education, research, symposium, exhibition and cultural exchanges.

E. Please add any other information

Information about King Prajadhipok's Institute, and the King Prajadhipok Museum, as the main host and coordinator of this commemoration, and its previous activities is attached. (See also KPI website)

ANNIVERSARY OF A PERSONALITY

Though the double anniversary celebration of the 10th zodiac cycle of King Prajadhipok's birth as well as the centenary of his homecoming to dedicate his life to the service of his nation (November 2013 – November 2014) is an event of national importance, the celebration is very much at the international levels. The event is about a great personality widely known regionally and internationally, in his time and at present, who actively throughout his life, promoted the cause of educational, cultural, and communication development, and also brokered the cause of peace and democracy, in many tangible ways.

His life and work, his interactions with the various powerful economic, social and political forces that spread throughout the world and greatly impacted his country and his region, and his negotiations and communications to various influential personalities on the importance of education for all, and participatory development for democracy and peace, both within the country and internationally, have been studied and researched upon by international scholars until today .

A. Information concerning the personality to be commemorated

1. Family name: Chakri Dynasty

First name: born Prince Prajadhipok , later crowned as King Prajadhipok or RamaVII

2. Born: 8 November 1893 **Died:** 30 May 1941.....

3. Field of activity to be celebrated

Education,
Social science,
Culture,

.....
4. Brief description of the personality and of its most important works

Below, are quotations from the writing of many historians describing the personality of King Prajadhipok Those writers either had known King Prajadhipok personally or had profoundly studied his life and his works.

- 1) **Prince Chula Chakrapongse** (historian and writer, whose father was an older full brother to King Prajadhipok, and whose mother was a Russian woman, described King Prajadhipok in his book, “*Choa Cheevit*”, BE 2503, with the following description, in Thai) :
“He cannot be described as being as handsome as some of his older brothers. Though he was small, he had his great dignity and charm, but a bit shy and reserved in nature making people in general not able to appreciate his charming personality underneath. He was educated in the military college, yet he was an avid reader who read on a wide- range of subjects, both in English and French, and was therefore incredibly knowledgeable in many fields. He was a good conversationalist who could carry on a conversation tirelessly and with a very good sense of humour. He never got angry when people interrupted him or disagreed with him but was generally sympathetic with other people in all aspects. As Hall (D.G.E. Hall, History of Thailand, page 675) rightly stated that “King Prajadhipok never thought that he would be King nor did he want to be King’ . But if any other Prince had been King at the time when Siam needed to undergo a political change, maybe it would have been to the disadvantage to the country. And one day in the future, The Thai people would recognize King Prajadhipok as a wise king, a philosopher who had saved the institution of the Thai monarchy, a valuable aspect of the Thai cultural Heritage”
- 2) **Professor David Wyatt** (an American professor and historian who taught Thai and Southeast Asian History at Cornell University, described King Prajadhipok in his Short History of Thailand, 1982)
: *“ –The King was hardly as weak, timid, or unsure of himself as some have thought. He was a hard working, effective executive, he was intellectually equal to the demands of his office, and was capable of overruling the opposition of his advisers and ministers. He, and those around him, simply underestimated the force of nationalism that was growing within the Bangkok elite.....Paradoxically, it would seem, Prajadhipok did not want to be an absolutist, and on critical issues, he hesitated to force his will on the ruling elite. Thus he shrank from using absolute power to end absolute power.”*
- 3) **Gerald Sparrow** (an international lawyer who lived in Thailand, wrote in his 1960-1 Book, and was quoted in Benjamin Batson, *ibid*, 1984)
: *“Siam had never been governed so efficiently, and so wisely as it was under King Prajadhipok, and whisper who dares, the standard has not quite been maintained since... In England he died, and only now are the Siamese people beginning to realize how good and honest and enlightened he was.”*
- 4) **Malcolm Smith**,(wrote in “A Physician at the Court of Siam”, Kuala Lumpur:Oxford University Press, 1982, P. 117). *“When I first met him (Prince Prajadhipok) he had no expectation, nor I believe any desire, to become King, and that he did so was surely one of the strangest tricks that fate ever played on man...His interests were mainly intellectual and with them he combined a retentive memory and a practical mind. His appointment to a post in the army, for which he was not suited either by inclination or ability, was quite in keeping with the government practices. A more peace-loving man it would have been hard to find. The role he might have filled with more great destination,...he would have become the head of the Buddhist faith in the country...”*

- 5) **F. K. Exell** (an Englishman who came to teach at Suan Kularb school in the later years of King Rama VI's reign, later resigned to work at the Siam Bank. He wrote in "Siamese Tapestry", London, Robert Hale Limited, 1963 , pp 77-78)
... "It was impossible not to admire this slim, cool figure who had taken on a job he never wanted. How much happier he would have been with his studious pursuits and the wife he loved so dearly. ... He was of almost dwarf dimensions, yet well proportioned.. and his intelligence was of a very high order... to me there was something sad about him but this was soon forgotten when he smiled. He had a charm of manner which was so typically Siamese"

5. Full list of her or his works and/or actions (Please refer to 4.2 above)

6. Please state whether this commemoration related to the work as a whole or to a particular work or action (if so, which?)

...The commemoration will only focus on the areas of education, Social and Human Science, Culture and Communication, as well as some trans-disciplinary themes such as Peace, Human Rights, Democracy Education and Good Governance , and will not be directly related to the political and economic areas of his work as such, though these two areas were the important contexts of his time and influenced other fields of his work

7. Describe how this work/action has had a genuine impact at the regional and/or universal level

***The events organized during the double anniversary celebration of this great personality who devoted his life and work to the cause of educational and cultural development, the promotion of communication, the promotion of a broad-based democracy, and the promotion of peace will enhance the ideals of UNESCO, particularly in the fields of democracy and peace and in education, culture, social sciences, and communication which are the programmes of activities of UNESCO.

Exhibitions of his photographs and films taken during his visits to promote better understanding among peoples and relations with countries in Asia, Europe and America during the post-first world war time will foster international understand and promotion of peace.

...Please also see 4.1 in the above section for more detail. ..

***8. Web site(s): A website and facebook on the celebration will soon be launched.

B. Anniversary to be celebrated A double anniversary will be celebrated during the time from November 8, 2013 to November 8, 2014, to mark the 10th Zodiac Cycle Anniversary of Birth of King Prajadhipok (coinciding with the 120th anniversary) as well as the Centenary of his Homecoming from His Seven-Years of Study in England.

Please see part 1 and the explanation note on the zodiac cyclic system of celebration and the significance of homecoming in the Thai tradition.

Dates (s) chosen for the celebration: The Celebration will begin on November 8, 2013 and the celebration activities will be hosted by different agencies throughout the year until November 8, 2014 ...

.....
C. Information concerning the activities organized on this occasion by the country/countries concerned

Place, Type of activity, Institution responsible, Funds requested

Please see section C in the above part.

This is to be a national as well as a regional and international celebration with national and international events such as Symposium, Academic Seminars, Travelling Exhibitions, Publications, and musical concerts, film showing and other cultural events, to be organized by national agencies and regional organizations in Thailand, Thai Embassies in many countries, with the participation of international and Thai scholars.

The organizing of international events, such as travelling exhibitions of his photographs and films taken during his visits to Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia, as well as to Japan in 1929-1930, and during his visits to European countries, USA. and Canada, in 19331-1932, are being actively planned.

***No funding support is requested from UNESCO

D. Links with UNESCO

1. Please indicate the field of competence of UNESCO to which this celebration is related

Education

Science

Culture

Social and human sciences

Communication

Trans-Disciplinary projects:

Please see details on links with UNESCO in the section on Anniversary of Event

.....
2.How do you wish UNESCO to participate?

We wish to have UNESCO support and recognize this celebration of event and personality as a its celebration and accept to include it in the UNESCO's List in the coming Biennium 2014-2015, with no financial obligation.

.....
3. Please state in what way this commemoration is linked to, and promotes, UNESCO's objectives and missions

Please see answers in the above part especially in section 4) **Describe how this event has had a genuine impact at the regional and/or international level. (on page 23 onward)**

.....
E. Please add any other information

.....
...Attached please find the following documents for further information:

1. Information about King Prajadhipok Institution and its previous activities

2. Information about King Prajadhipok's Museum

3. King Prajadhipok: A Pictorial Biography, with explanations in Thai and English.

4) The website on this national event will soon be announced.

Attachment 1

List of the Inter-ministerial Committee for the National Celebration of the Double Anniversary for King Prajadhipok, November 2013-2014.

Attachment 2

List of proposed activities

1. A traditional Buddhist merit- making ceremony;
2. A special exhibition at the King Prajadhipok Museum open to students, the general public and the international scholars and tourists;
3. An International Congress on the theme of Political philosophy, Good Governance and Peace, and on the concept of " Dharma Raja", and other related topics, to be convened by King Prajadhipok Institute in 2013-14;
4. The issuing of commemorative stamps and coins;
5. A Thai traditional musical concert to highlight "King Prajadhipok's compositions, and a regional seminar on Asian traditional music.
6. Students' activities related to democracy education, good governance, and peace education to be organized by schools and universities;
7. The laying of wreaths and other appropriate civil ceremonies at the monument of King Prajadhipok in front of the Parliament and other activities to be organized by the Parliament;
8. A commemorative program related to the theme: "King Prajadhipok and the Protection of cultural Property and Museum Development in Thailand." such as exhibitions and lectures, organized by the National Museum, in Bangkok and in the provinces,
9. An Exhibition and lecture at the Siam Society on "King Prajadhipok and the Siam Society"
10. Publications
11. A seminar on Sports for Health.
12. Radio and television programmes.
- 13 Seminars on the moving images and movies taken by King Prajadhipok in the provinces of Thailand, and in other countries such as his movie on the monuments and arts of Borobudur and Java.
- 14 Seminars on King Prajadhipok's personal writings, for example, letters written during his visits to other countries, and his writing for children on Buddhism, as well as on the books from his personal library.
15. Seminars on the influences of western education on the Thai students studying in Europe since the reign of King Chulalongkorn and the impacts on the developments in Thailand

(See attachment 2 for further details)



Photo 1

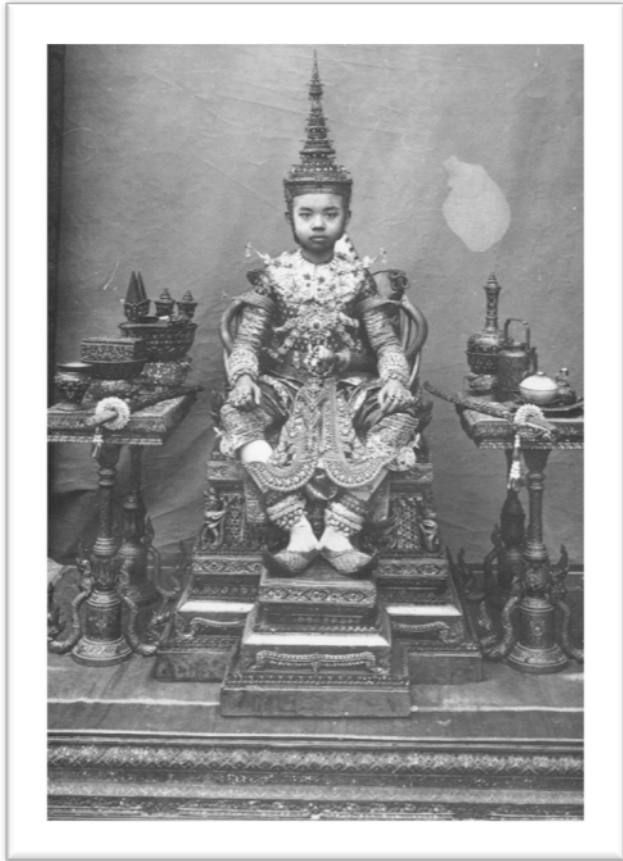


Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

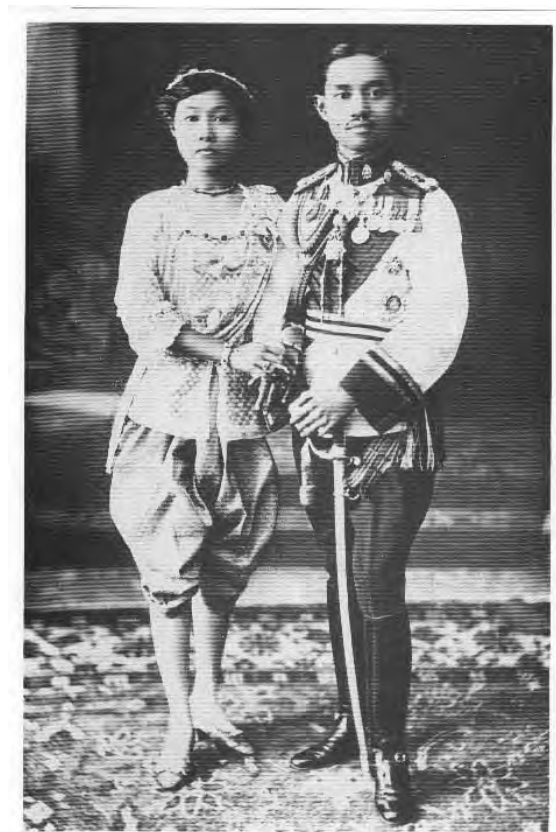


Photo 6



Photo 7

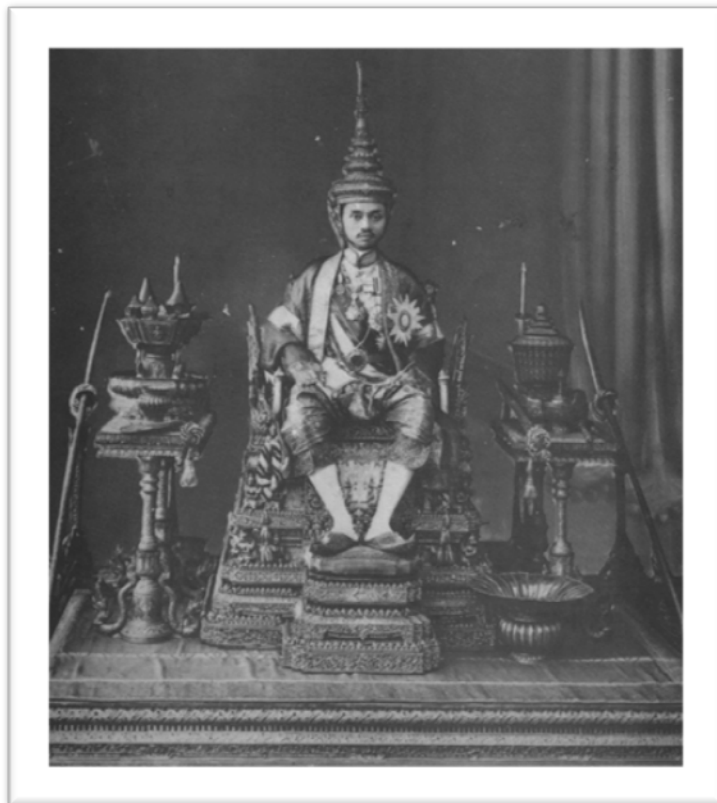


Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10

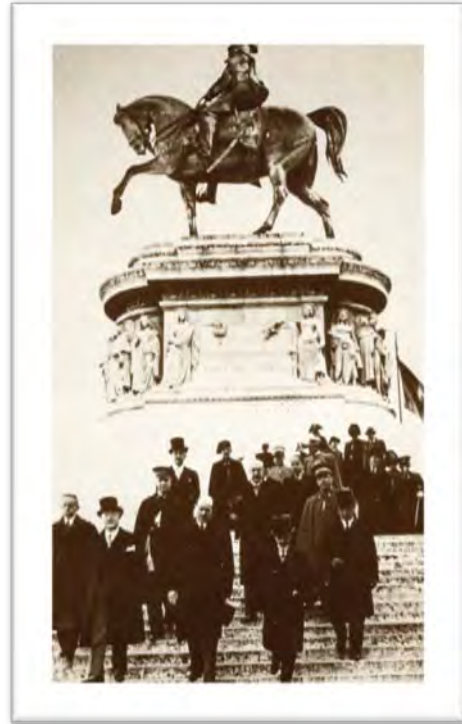
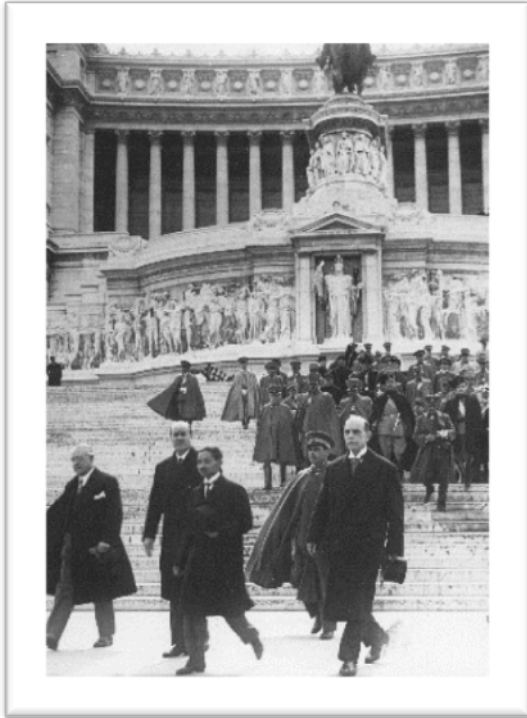




Photo 11



Photo 12



Photo 13



Photo 14

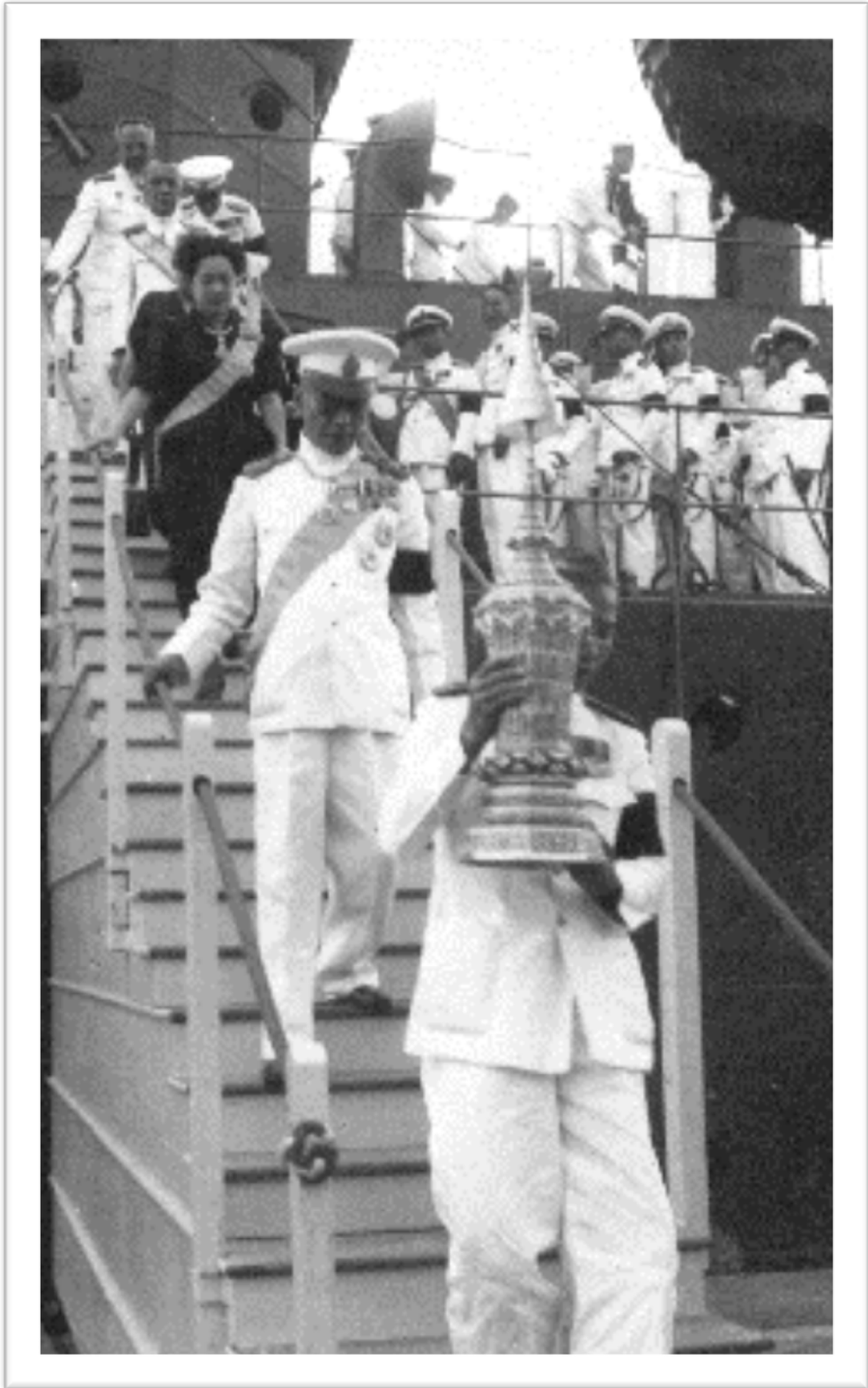


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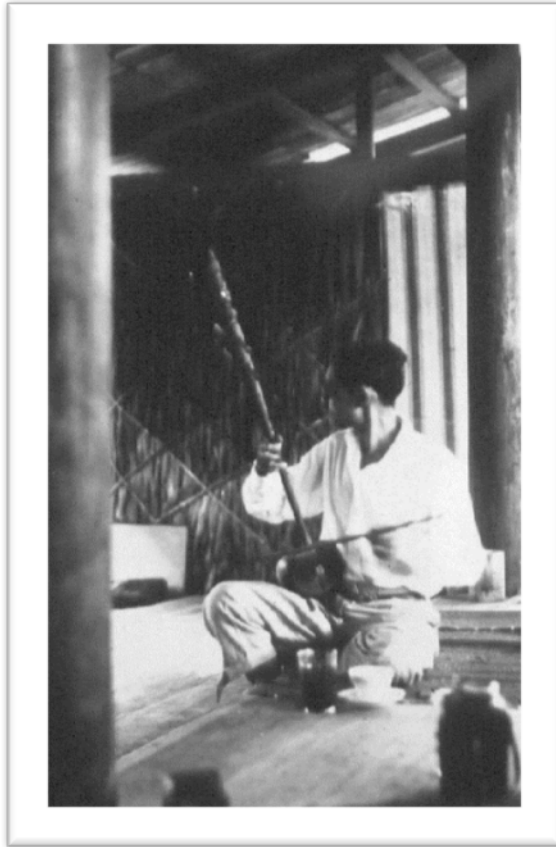


Photo 16



See photo 17

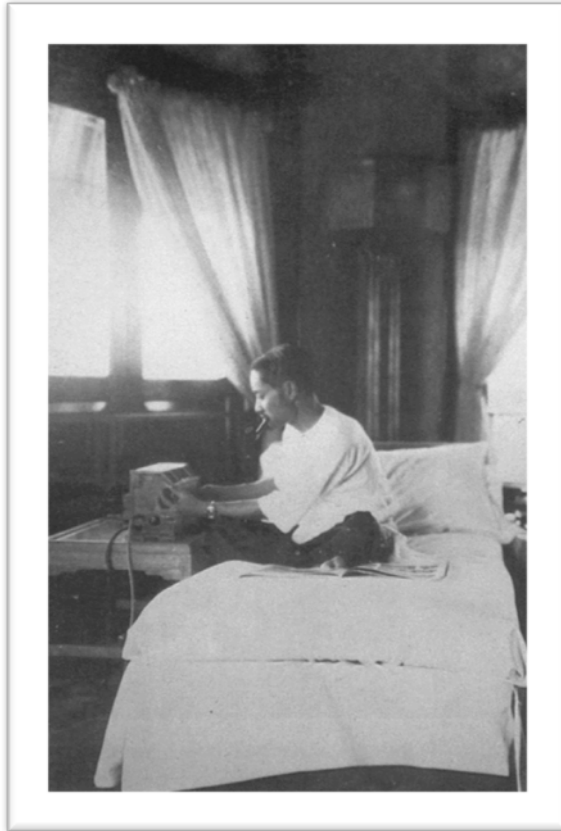


Photo 18

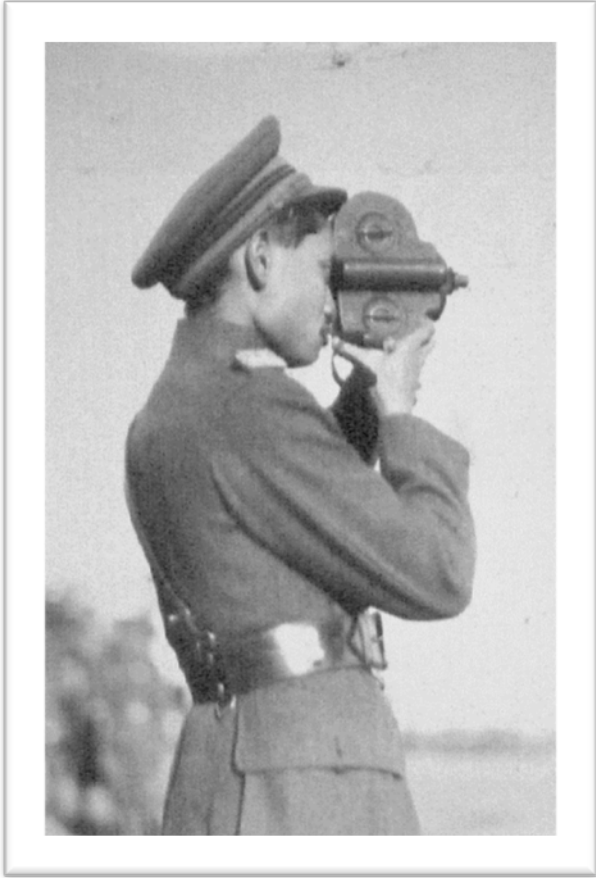


Photo 19



Photo 20