

SIAM UNDER RAMA III

WALTER F. VELLA



MONOGRAPHS OF THE ASSOCIATION
FOR ASIAN STUDIES

IV

WALTER F. VELLA

SIAM UNDER RAMA III

1824—1851

Published for the Association for Asian Studies by

J.J.AUGUSTIN INCORPORATED PUBLISHER
LOCUST VALLEY, NEW YORK

SIAM UNDER RAMA III

*The publication of this series is made possible
by the generous assistance of the Council for
Economic and Cultural Affairs, the Ford
Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Adloff,
and Mr. Charles S. Gardner*

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
PRINTED IN GERMANY BY J.J.AUGUSTIN GLÜCKSTADT
1957

TO
DOROTHY

PREFACE

THIS HISTORY of Siam during a reign period was undertaken in the belief that, in a field of history as little explored as that of Siam, a general analysis limited to a relatively short period of time would prove more valuable than a study more sharply focused in subject. The Third Reign of the Bangkok dynasty is, in many respects, particularly rewarding for study. It is a period by and large typical of traditional Siam, unmarked by any drastic social, economic, or cultural changes. Yet, because it is relatively recent in time, a considerable quantity of Siamese documentation has been preserved for the period.

A basically phonetic system of transliteration of Siamese names and terms has been used—except for personal names in cases where the individual's own method of transliterating his name is known. The system is that recommended by the Royal Institute of Siam in 1939 and outlined in the *Journal of the Thailand Research Society* of March 1941. Only one deviation has been made: for the sake of clarity, "ü" has been used in place of the "u" recommended by the Royal Institute.

I wish to thank Dr. Woodbridge Bingham for his invaluable advice regarding this study from the time it was initiated and for the aid, encouragement, and historical instruction he gave me throughout my graduate studies at the University of California. I am indebted to Dr. Mary R. Haas for many valuable suggestions regarding this study and for first stimulating my interest in Siam through her excellent direction of my first studies of the Siamese language. I am grateful to Dr. Joseph R. Levenson for reading the manuscript and for giving me—through acquaintance with his concepts of history—an insight into new dimensions in history. Other people I should like to thank for aid or advice given me are Miss Kanok Samsen, Princess Poon Pismai Diskul, Mr. Cecil Hobbs of the Library of Congress, and Dr. Elizabeth Huff of the East Asiatic Library of the University of California. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Edward A. Kracke, Dr. Robert I. Crane, and other members of the Monograph Board of the Association for Asian Studies who contributed ideas and suggestions for the improvement of the book. My warm thanks also go to Dr. Arthur F. Wright for first encouraging me to submit the manuscript for publication.

I wish also to express my appreciation to the late Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, whom I never met but whose pioneering works in many fields of Siamese history have been invaluable sources for this history. Finally, I should like to thank Dorothy Burgeson Vella, my wife, for her constant encouragement, for editing the entire manuscript, and for aiding in innumerable other ways throughout the preparation of the book.

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
I. The King and the Court	3
II. Relations between the Government and the People	14
III. Religion	28
IV. The Arts	43
V. Malay Vassal States	59
VI. Laotian Vassal States	78
VII. Relations with Cambodia	94
VIII. Relations with Burma, Annam, and China	109
IX. Relations with the West	115
X. Conclusion	141
Appendix	
Important Events in the History of Siam	145
Bibliography	
Materials in the Siamese Language	148
Materials in Western Languages	157
Siamese Equivalents for Authors and Titles of Siamese Works .	163
Illustrations	
Rama III	frontispiece
Main Buddha Image in Bot, Wat Parinnayok	facing 50
Maps	
1. Malay Vassal States, 1824, in Relation to Siam .	facing 60
2. Siam and Its Laotian Vassal States, 1824.....	facing 78
3. Cambodia, 1824, in Relation to Siam.....	facing 94
4. Siam and Its Vassals, 1851	facing 108
Index	174

INTRODUCTION

THE YEARS 1824 to 1851, the subject of this study, are part of the history of "Old Siam"—a state with kings who had absolute powers and were regarded as semidivine; a wealthy and powerful aristocracy; a farmer-peasant population in a state of semivassalage; a self-sufficient economy; a fairly extensive, but vaguely controlled, empire; a distant or hostile attitude toward neighboring states; and a minimum of contact with or influence from the Western world.

For four hundred years the general character of Siam had remained essentially unchanged. In 1767 a profound blow to the whole social structure was inflicted when, at a culmination of the almost constant wars with Burma, Siamese forces were sadly beaten, the land occupied, and the capital, Ayutthaya, looted and burned. In a few years' time, however, the old society was being restored and centralized government resumed. The beginnings were made under a general, Taksin, who set himself up as king and built a new capital at Thonburi, across the Čhaophraya River (the Menam) from Bangkok. After the deposition of Taksin in 1782, the process was continued by another general, who moved the capital to Bangkok and established a new dynastic line, Čhakkri.

The first three Čhakkri kings were interested primarily in reestablishing the patterns set in Ayutthaya. The first king was preoccupied with restoring the stability of the state, improving its defenses against Burma, recapturing defecting vassal states and provinces, and reestablishing the old laws and bases of government. The second king found time to devote to restoring arts and literature, expanding the palace, and erecting Buddhist monuments as well. The third king of the dynasty, who came to the throne in 1824, forty-two years after the establishment of the dynasty, in his rule of twenty-seven years closely followed the policies of his predecessors. Although diplomatic and trade relations with the West, which had been at a standstill since 1688, were renewed during the reign and a British imperialist neighbor installed in southern Burma and on the Malay Peninsula, these changes had no strong effect in Siam until the following reign.

During the century since Rama III's death great changes have taken place in Siam. Government administration has been centralized and organized along Western lines. As a result of the *coup d'état* in

1932, a constitutional monarchy has been established. The country has acquired railroads and telephone lines, health centers and experimental farms, motion picture theaters and beauty parlors. These and similar changes testify to the rapid adoption of thoughts and things Western since 1851.

Yet many of the characteristics of "Old Siam" can be found in the "New Siam" or Thailand of today. A descendant of the same dynasty to which Rama III belonged sits on the royal throne in Bangkok. The king has been divested of absolute powers; yet the great reverence with which he is treated is a reflection of the radiance of semidivinity in which Siamese kings long basked. And the absolutism characteristic of Old Siam, while no longer associated with the person who occupies the royal chair, has not disappeared from the modern Siamese state. The old aristocracy of Siam also persists, although it is perhaps more significant for the ideas and attitudes it has transmitted to others in the country than as a class. The economy of Siam has during the last century become closely enmeshed in the trade of nations; yet the majority of the Thai are still engaged in self-sufficient farming. The old social bonds of the mass of the population—feudalistic ties and slavery—have been abolished, but their effects have not been entirely erased; the Thai peasant today is still to a great extent submissive to and overawed by authority. The empire of Old Siam, it certainly appears, is a thing of the past; tributary appendages have either been incorporated in the realm or lost. Yet "lost" territories have not been lost from the mind, as the pan-Thai movement of World War II years clearly demonstrated. And absorbed territories in the south and in the northeast have shown, from time to time, separatist tendencies. Even in territories indisputably loyal to Bangkok, old vassal chiefs or *chao*, although no longer possessing political power, still can be identified, still are respected by local peoples. It is in Siam's relationship with the outside world that the most apparent changes have taken place. A withdrawn nation, in a state of voluntary seclusion similar to that of China and Japan at the time, has become a full member of the international community. Yet it is clear that Siam's old view of the outside world has not been completely repudiated; Thailand's willingness to concede to external pressures in recent years bears a close resemblance to the ability of Old Siam to give way to pressures that broke more intransigent and inflexible states in Eastern Asia. Despite the vast changes that have taken place and are taking place, much of Old Siam is patent in the Thailand of today; much has only assumed new garb; much will long be preserved.

CHAPTER I

THE KING AND THE COURT

THE THIRD KING of the Čhakkri, or Bangkok, dynasty, King Phra Nang Klao, more commonly referred to as King Rama III,¹ acceded to the throne on the death of his father on July 21, 1824. Rama III, who had been born Prince Thap² and had in 1813 been awarded the rank of Prince Čhetsadabōdin,³ was then thirty-seven years old. The new king had been very active as a prince. He had directed a force to

¹ During the reign the king was not referred to as either Phra Nang Klao or Rama III. The system of referring to Siamese kings of the Bangkok dynasty with a reign number preceded by "Rama" was originated by King Vajiravudh, Rama VI. The name Phra Nang Klao seems to have been used first by King Mongkut, Rama IV. During the reign of Rama III the king was merely referred to as king in a lesser or grander style. For example, on the gold tablet inscribed at the time of his coronation Rama III was styled: "Phrabatsomdet phrabōrom rachathirat ramathibōdi sisinthara mahačhakraphat dirachathibōdin, tharanintharathirat, rattanakasaphatkarawong, ongparamathibet, triphuwanetwaranayok, dilokrattanarat chatachawasai, samuthaidaromon, sakončhakrawalathiben, suriyentharathibōdin hariharintharathadathibōdi, siwibun khunakkhani ritthiramesuan, tham-mikrachathiratchadechochai, phromthepa dithepnaribōdin, phuminthara-paramathibet lokkhachetthawisut, makutprathet khatamahaphutthathangkun, bōrombōphit phraphutthačhaoyuhua" (Rama V, *Phrathamthetsana Chaloem Phrakiat Phrabatsomdet Phra Nang Klao Čhaoyuhua* [Sermon Honoring Rama III], Bangkok: Aksōnnit, 1938, pp. 44-45). During the reign of Rama III it became popular to refer to Rama I as Phaendinton, or First King, and Rama II as Phaendinklang, or "Middle" King. Supposedly to avoid the obvious implication that he was Phaendinplai, or Last King, in 1849 Rama III had two Buddha images cast and dedicated to his two predecessors giving them the names Phra Phutthayotfačhulalok and Phra Phutthaloetlasulalai, which he wished used instead of Phaendinton and Phaendinklang. (Čhaophraya Thiphakarawong, *Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Ratanakosin Ratchakan Thi 3* [The Royal Chronicle of the Third Reign of the Bangkok Dynasty], Bangkok: Sihong, 1934, p. 323.)

² *Ratchasakunwong: Phranam Čhaofa lae Phra-ongčhao nai Krung Ratanakosin* (The Royal Family: Names of Čhaofa and Phra-ongčhao of Bangkok Times), Bangkok: Thai, 1920, p. 20. H. G. Quaritch Wales states in his *Siamese State Ceremonies* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1931), p. 39, that the first three Čhakkri kings are not known to have had personal names. This statement is incorrect. The personal names of Rama I, Rama II, and Rama III were Duang, Chim, and Thap respectively (*Ratchasakunwong* . . . , pp. 1, 8, 20).

³ Prince Sommot Ammōraphan, *Rūang Chaloem Phrayot Čhaonai* (Appointment of Royalty to Official Ranks), revised by the Royal Institute (Bangkok: Sophon, 1929), I, 34.

protect the country from a threatened attack from Burma; headed the port department, where he had been in charge of the building of merchant ships and had been in close contact with European traders; and held other high positions.⁴ During the last years of the reign of Rama II, it appeared to Europeans that Prince Čhetsadabōdin had taken over all important matters of state. One European observer said of the prince: "All matters relating to peace or war, to foreign intercourse, or domestic regulations, to affairs of religion, of policy or of justice, are equally at his disposal, and rarely referred to the King."⁵ Europeans generally considered him to be capable, intelligent, and well informed.⁶

It was the prince's age, experience, influence, and personal qualities, rather than his rank in the scale of princes, that won him the throne. There were three main classes of inherited titles for princes in Siam: Čhaofa was the title of the child of a king by a queen; Phra-ongčhao, of the child of a king by a lesser wife, the child of the heir apparent, or the child of a Čhaofa; Mōmčhao, the child of a Phra-ongčhao.⁷ Although he was the oldest son of Rama II, Prince Čhetsadabōdin's claim to the throne was weakened by the fact that he was only a Phra-ongčhao since he had been born before his father became king and his mother had never been elevated to the position of queen.⁸ Rama II had had one queen who had borne him two sons with the highest inherited title of Čhaofa—Prince Mongkut and Prince Čhuthamani. The former prince had the clearest right to the throne. This prince, however, was still a minor (he was not quite twenty years old), had no political affiliations (his principal supporter—his maternal uncle, Prince Phithakmontri—had died in 1822),⁹ and had just entered the priesthood to serve the customary short term of indoctrination in the faith when Rama II died.

Although Rama II had the right to do so, he had appointed no new heir apparent when the first heir apparent died in 1817. The choice of

⁴ Rama V, *op. cit.*, pp. 36–41.

⁵ George Finlayson, *The Mission to Siam and Hué the Capital of Cochin China in the Years 1821–2* (London: Murray, 1826), p. 128.

⁶ John Crawford, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China*, 2nd ed. (London: Colburn and Bentley, 1830), I, 193.

⁷ Two lower titles—Mōmratchawong, the title for the child of a Phra-ongčhao, and Mōmluang, the title for the child of a Mōmratchawong—were not regarded as denoting princely rank; they merely indicated descent from the king.

⁸ Rama V, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁹ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Ratana-kosin Ratchakan Thi 2* (The Royal Chronicle of The Second Reign of the Bangkok Dynasty), Bangkok: Thai, 1916, p. 353; Crawford, *op. cit.*, I, 162.

successor thus devolved upon the leading princes and chief ministers of the country. A Siamese source states that these princes and nobles, considering Prince Mongkut's youth and inexperience and knowing that he had decided not to contest any decision they made for fear it might cause disturbances in the country,¹⁰ selected Prince Čhetsadabodin as the person best able to continue the young dynasty, control internal affairs, and protect the country from external dangers, particularly the Burmese threat, which was still regarded as considerable.¹¹ European sources usually state that Prince Čhetsadabodin usurped the throne.¹² And this conclusion is clearly warranted on the basis of a provision in the palace laws, dated 1358, according to which a son of a queen is heir to the throne. But it may be argued that this provision had been so frequently violated or ignored in the intervening five centuries of Siamese history that by 1824 it was considered inoperative. There appears to be no mention of the provision in Siamese writings of the period; instead there is stress on the right of a king to choose his successor or on the selection of a new king by the leading princes and chief ministers of the country.

During the first months after the accession of Rama III, the court was engrossed in numerous ceremonies. The preparation of the corpse of Rama II began immediately after that king's death. On July 22 his body was placed in a golden urn, which was then installed in Dusit Mahaprasat Palace Hall, and it lay in state there until the royal cremation on April 29, 1825¹³. The coronation of the king took place on August 1, 1824. Shortly after, the king was installed in the royal palace. After Rama III had moved to the royal residence, all the princes and officials of the country took the customary oath of allegiance to him.¹⁴ This rite consisted of the reading of an oath of loyalty, which contained terrible imprecations against anyone who was disloyal to the king, by a court Brahman. After the reading of the oath the princes and nobles drank the water of allegiance. This oath was regularly taken in Bangkok and the provincial capitals twice yearly.¹⁵

One of the first acts of Rama III as king was to appoint to office various officials in the central government. There were two main

¹⁰ Rama V, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹¹ *Loc. cit.*; Thiphakarawong, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

¹² See, for example, Crawford, *op. cit.*, I, 151-152; Mgr. Pallegoix, *Description du royaume Thai ou Siam* (Lagny: 1854), II, 98-99; Malcolm Smith, *A Physician at the Court of Siam* (London: Country Life, 1947), p. 21.

¹³ Thiphakarawong, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4; Pallegoix, *op. cit.*, I, 261.

¹⁵ Pallegoix, *op. cit.*, I, 294; Wales, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-198.

classes of officials in Siam—royal officials, who were princes, and noble officials, who were commoners. There were seven principal *krom*, or department, ranks to which only princes could be appointed. These ranks, in order of importance, were Krom Phraratchawangbōwōn Sathan Mongkhon, Krom Phraratchawangbōwōn Sathan Phimuk, Krom Somdet Phraya, Krom Phra, Krom Luang, Krom Khun, and Krom Mūn. The *krom* rank title was followed by a conferred name that indicated the department of which the prince was titular head. (Actually, many of these *krom* positions were sinecures.) This conferred name was used in place of the given name. Noble officials were also given ranks and conferred names. The principal noble ranks were, in order of importance, Čhaophraya, Phraya, Phra, Luang, and Khun. The conferred name given a noble also usually indicated his duties. Noble officials did most of the administrative work of government; the leading nobles actually controlled the government departments.

The first official appointed by Rama III was the Krom Phraratchawangbōwōn Sathan Mongkhon, the Uparat or heir apparent,¹⁶ the highest-ranking royal official in the kingdom below the king. The king chose an uncle who was his close personal friend and had helped him secure the throne,¹⁷ Prince (Krom Mūn) Sakdiphonlasep, for this post. The Uparat was formally installed in office on September 10, 1824.¹⁸ The second highest appointment made by Rama III was the honorary appointment of his mother to Krom Somdet Phra Sisulalai, or Queen Mother.¹⁹ In his first year as king Rama III also appointed eight princes (Phra-ongčhao), including two uncles and three younger brothers, to Krom Mūn rank.²⁰

The most important positions for nobles that Rama III filled in 1824 were those of head of the Department of Royal Pages²¹—a strategic position, since most of the high noble officials of the country received their training and began their careers as pages for the

¹⁶ This prince is often referred to as the "Second King" in European sources. The use of this term is questionable; it is neither a literal translation of the word "Uparat" nor a functional equivalent. A close literal translation of "Uparat" would be "Vice-King." "Heir Apparent," however, seems to be the closest functional equivalent for the position during this period.

¹⁷ R. Lingat, "History of Wat Mahadhatu," *Journal of the Siam Society* (hereafter referred to as *JSS*), XXIV (1931), 18; "Siamese Royalty (Historical Sketch)," *Siam Repository*, V (1874), 496.

¹⁸ Thiphakarawong, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁰ Sommot Ammōraphan, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37. The list given in Thiphakarawong, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7, differs slightly from the one given in the above source.

²¹ Phraya Ratchamontri, head of Krom Mahatlek.

king—and head of the department in charge of registering and marking the people.²² Other relatively minor noble positions—e.g., chiefs of palace bodyguards and of forts—were also filled in 1824.²³

Rama III made no appointments to the principal positions for nobles—those of Senabōdi, or Chief Ministers of the king—in the first year of his reign because all these positions were filled at the time of his accession. (It was the custom for a king to retain officials, both princes and nobles, in at least as high positions as they had acquired in previous reigns unless there were particular reasons for demoting a person.) It was not long, however, before Rama III was able to place his own choices in these positions. By 1830 nearly all of the former Senabōdi had died and been replaced by new appointments. There were six Senabōdi: Čhaophraya Bōdinthōndecha, Čhaophraya Mahasena, Čhaophraya Yommarat, Čhaophraya Phonlathep, Čhaophraya Phrakhlāng, and Čhaophraya Thammasa. These officials held the top administrative positions in the government, heading, respectively, the Departments of Mahatthai (North), Kralahom (South), Nakhōnban (Capital), Na (Lands), Phrakhlāng (Foreign Affairs), and Wang (Palace).

The two officials Rama III relied on most heavily were the officials appointed to head the leading departments in the government, the Mahatthai and the Kralahom. The head of the Mahatthai Department was Čhaophraya Bōdinthōndecha. He had been appointed head of that department and acting Senabōdi in 1827; in 1829 he was made a full Senabōdi.²⁴ Čhaophraya Bōdinthōndecha served as head of the Mahatthai Department until his death in 1849.²⁵ He was, by all accounts, extremely capable and was the outstanding military leader of the reign. The other of the two officials on whom Rama III relied most heavily was the Čhaophraya Phrakhlāng, more commonly called simply the Phrakhlāng. He had been the Phrakhlāng (Minister of Foreign Affairs) when Rama III acceded to the throne²⁶ and during the reign of Rama II had been described as the head of the party favoring the accession of Rama III.²⁷ Rama III retained the Phrakhlāng in his old post and on the death of the head of the Kralahom Department in 1830 awarded the Phrakhlāng the superintendency of

²² Thiphakarawong, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 94; Prince Sommot Ammōraphan, *Rūang Tang Čhaophraya Krung Ratanakosin* (Appointments to Čhaophraya Rank in Bangkok Times), revised by the Royal Institute (Bangkok: Lahuthot, 1931), p. 28.

²⁵ Thiphakarawong, *op. cit.*, p. 330.

²⁶ Sommot Ammōraphan, *Rūang Tang Čhaophraya* . . . , p. 35.

²⁷ Damrong, *op. cit.*, p. 353; Crawford, *op. cit.*, I, 162.

that department as well.²⁸ He held both positions thereafter throughout the Third Reign.

Rama III kept in close contact with his officials and maintained close control over their activities. Unlike his father, the king was keenly interested in personally investigating and deciding on government matters. In addition to performing the many ceremonial functions required of a King of Siam, Rama III regularly met with his officials twice daily—once for one or two hours before noon and again for four or five hours after nine o'clock in the evening. The evening audiences were by far the more important, and when urgent business was at hand they sometimes lasted until five o'clock in the morning.²⁹ At these audiences the king heard official reports, asked questions of the various officials, and made decisions.³⁰ While the king on occasion deferred to the judgment of an official whom he believed to have superior knowledge regarding a particular situation, he at all times kept himself well informed on government business and in a position of command on important matters.

On May 1, 1832 the Uparat died. Rama III, hearing that the servants of the leading princes, and presumably also the princes, were much excited about the question of who was to be the new Uparat, consulted with the Senabodi on the matter. The king, who had no immediate choice for a new heir apparent, proposed to leave the position vacant. He decided to follow the proposal of one noble who suggested that Rama III promote the leading princes to higher department ranks and thus satisfy the ambitions of the "servants."³¹ In 1832 seven princes—three uncles, three brothers, and one cousin—were promoted, three to Krom Luang and four to Krom Khun rank. One princess, a sister, was also promoted to Krom Khun rank.³² This was the only occasion—except for the beginning of the reign—on which a number of princes were given new *krom* ranks.³³

This approach to the problem of the position of the Uparat, how-

²⁸ Thiphakarawong, *op. cit.*, p. 105; Sommot Ammraphan, *Ruang Tang Chaophraya* . . . , p. 35.

²⁹ Rama V, "Ratchakan Thi 3" (Rama III), in Department of Fine Arts, compiler, *Ruang Phra Rathanukit* (Royal Duties), Bangkok: Phrañhan, 1946, pp. 7-14; Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, postscript to *Luang Udom Sombat, Chotmai Luang Udom Sombat* (Letters of Luang Udom Sombat), 2nd ed. (Bangkok: Thai, 1915), pp. 437-439.

³⁰ See Udom Sombat, *op. cit.*, *passim*, for verbatim reports of some audiences.

³¹ Thiphakarawong, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

³² *Loc. cit.*; Sommot Ammraphan, *Ruang Chaloe Phrayot* . . . , pp. 37-38.

³³ Only six members of royalty were appointed to *krom* ranks in other years, and of these six no more than two were appointed in any one year (Sommot Ammraphan, *Ruang Chaloe Phrayot* . . . , pp. 36-39).

ever, did not provide a complete solution. It led, or at least contributed, to the most serious court disturbance of the reign—the events that resulted in the execution for treason of the then highest-ranking prince in the country, Prince Rakronnaret.³⁴

Prince Rakronnaret, uncle of the king, had, it is said, expected to be appointed Uparat.³⁵ He was, instead, appointed Krom Luang. By 1838 he had become the highest-ranking prince in the country, since all other princes of Krom Luang rank or higher had died by that year. Rama III had entrusted Prince Rakronnaret with many responsibilities that gave the prince considerable power. The prince had acquired some judicial functions, was charged with the disbursement of funds to the Buddhist order and salaries to government officials, and could appoint some nobles. From time to time some intimations were reportedly given the king that the prince was abusing his power.³⁶ It was not until the end of 1848, however, that the king gained full knowledge of the prince's improper activities. In November 1848 Rama III received a petition from a noble accusing Prince Rakronnaret of giving an unjust verdict in a legal case. The matter was investigated, and it was found that the charge was true and that the prince had been guilty of accepting bribes. The king was enraged that so high a prince should pervert justice for a bribe and ordered a full investigation of the prince's activities. This and subsequent investigations, reports from officials and the prince's wives, and interviews of the prince and his actor friends by the king brought forth a mass of damaging information regarding the prince that amazed the king. The prince was discovered to have abused all his official responsibilities: he had taken bribes in court cases and from people seeking office; and he had misappropriated much of the government money he had handled. In addition, the personal life of the prince was found to be reprehensible in the eyes of the king. The prince, it was discovered, had come to prefer the company of his actor friends to that of his wives. When Rama III asked the prince if he considered this proper behavior, the prince replied that he did not consider it the concern of the king. Rama III thought otherwise. He told the prince that he considered the prince's behavior chaotic, dishonorable, and disgraceful to his relatives, his country, and his king. The most serious

³⁴ The principal source for the account of Prince Rakronnaret that follows is Thiphakarawong, *op. cit.*, pp. 317–321.

³⁵ J. H. Moor, *Notices of the Indian Archipelago, and Adjacent Countries* (Singapore, 1837), p. 215.

³⁶ *Bangkok Calendar* (1849), as quoted in *Siam Repository*, I (1869), 338. The account given in this source, pp. 337–339, is lengthy but contains many inaccuracies.