

Siam Avoids Colonization, Bangkok is the Exchange

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Abstract

Siam has never been a colony of Europe during the period of colonization, 1800s-1900s. To avoid British colonization, the Bangkok capital city subsequently privileged and welcomed British settlement in exchange for sovereignty. This article aims to answer the questions why Bangkok had done what it did. Who were the British subjects and what territories did the British settlements gain in Bangkok.

After Siam and Britain negotiated for long duration, the conclusion of the final treaty, the Bowring Treaty came into force. In exchange, Siam had to privilege extraterritoriality rights and assign territories for the settlement of British and British subjects in Bangkok indefinitely. Regarding the treaty ratification in 1856, the definition of the British subject was clearly defined for care and protection. These people were natural born British or naturalized British subjects which included Asian colonizers known as “Asiatic subjects.” They were identified with certificates and passports. Consequently, the beneficial advantages of the treaty really attracted many immigrants coming to Bangkok in particular for the protection of rights and for the issuing of land owners with title deeds. Soon later, when new comers settled, they initially asked for road construction for trade in Bangkok for supporting commerce within British port networks. At the same time, British and British subjects’ communities settled naturally. Later Chinese and Indian communities densely settled in the south. From sojourner to settler, as a result of the treaty, British subjects finally became the settlers and citizens of Siam. So, it could be said that Siam avoided becoming a British colony, but in exchange she traded specific privileged rights, permitted the settlement of British and its subjects in Bangkok.

Keywords: colonization, The Bowring treaty, British subject and Asiatic subject

I Free Trade in Siam and the Forced Treaty

Mercantilism is the economic system assumes that the role of state is to maintain the wealth of its kingdom by supporting trade aboard in particular, licensed state vessel trade monopolies appeared in Europe since the sixteenth to eighteenth century.¹ During the late eighteenth century, the “free trade” pattern was introduced to replace monopoly trade because of the problems from the stakeholders of the licensed British East India Company.² The advocates of free trade were supported by private “country” traders who accepted the theories of free trade based on the work of Adam Smith. Based on liberal economic ideology, the British therefore turned her trade pattern to establish commercial hegemony and strategically planned for territorial acquisition and colonial expansion into Southeast Asia. This suggests that the British replaced the former model of monopoly trade with the so-called new era of “**commercial capitalism**”.

Therefore, the economic domination and territorial acquisition were simultaneously used to control the colonies. Then during this period Britain was truly the most powerful nation significantly formulating diplomatic trade relations in terms of treaties. Prior to the mid-eighteenth century, the significant British policy appeared towards these treaties as phenomena. Examples include the profit returned by exporting cotton and opium to China, expansion of territorial acquisition in several ports along the coast between India and China. Particularly in 1785, British East India company increasingly gained commercial interest also focused on the cotton and opium trade from India mostly exchanged items including tea, silks, and porcelains to China.³ British East India Company finally later formulated a possible alternative site for a final free trade and finding a real port of free trade.⁴

Extensively, she expanded her influential power to control the interests through the conclusion of treaties. Later, Britain’s territorial acquisition and economic hegemony emerged together along with the expansion on a large scale of threats to some local states. Almost all states in mainland Southeast Asia had been invaded by British dominions such as Burma, Singapore, Malay, or concession ports along Malay to China. Under these circumstances the clear need of Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century was for a sea harbor which would combine the advantages of a repair station with a trading center for the Malay Archipelago, and at the same time along on the main sea route to China.⁵

These treaty practices appeared firstly in 1786, when Francis Light, one of British company official had negotiated with the Sultan of Kedah for a lease of Penang Island, a few miles off the Kedah coast.⁶ Concerned about a secure place in the sphere of maritime trade, and at the same time, decisively exercising a doctrine of non-intervention. Britain avoided involving itself in the internal politics of the Malay Peninsula entirely. This is evidenced according to the non-intervention policy under Pitt's India Act.⁷ Accordingly no increased territories in the Malay Peninsula, there would be only a place for exporting raw cotton from Bombay to China. British found Penang to serve as this harbor which solved the naval problem for the defense of British interests in the Indian Ocean because it would assist the China trade and provided a port city for the trade of the Malay world. Nevertheless, in 1797 there was skepticism about Penang's potential as a naval base. It did not satisfy the needs of British interests neither as a trading post nor as a naval base because it was too far north to attract trade through the straits or to control the pirate infested waters that were too distant from Burma's teakwood supplies to become a shipbuilding center.⁸

Therefore, alternatively, Singapore was the choice to replace Penang for British Empire.⁹ At the same time, the Bangkok port of Siam that actually traded with China extended to Singapore. This caused the Penang Council of Britain to consequently send a diplomatic trade mission to Bangkok to negotiate for better conditions of trade. Penang with permission from British India letters sent presents expressing friendly sentiments to Bangkok.¹⁰ Then, when Bangkok invaded Kedah in 1818, the Sultan of Kedah had several times prior asked the British Company for friendly interference on his behalf with Bangkok. The British Company had steadily refused because it feared that it might lead to a more direct participation in Malayan affairs.¹¹ However, when the Siamese aggressively claimed control over Kedah, this forced the British Government to abandon and end the previous policy of avoiding all political relations previously set two decades ago.¹² The point of non-intervention policy was really unrealistic in terms of the actual situation in the Malay world at that time. The threat of Siamese expansion southward was real. Siam created disorders and chaos in the Malay lands particularly within Penang's commercial orbit. Hence, British company official, John Crawfurd was instructed to go to Bangkok for an important company mission.¹³

The first British mission to Siam was led by John Crawfurd in 1822. Crawfurd was largely concerned with resolving the legal status of Penang.¹⁴ Siam's policy in the Peninsula took a new turn, one of increased control over existing Malay vassals and of asserting its power over hitherto independent Malay rulers. The British Indian Government desired two things. The first regarded the belief that trade did not depend on special privileges or presence of an agent, but on the freedom of trade.¹⁵ The missions were instructed to refrain from demanding or even hinting at the establishment trading factories, exemption from jurisdiction and custom imposition, and monopoly of favorite article. Additionally, it was the preference to have an official written record of all the concessions granted in the form of a letter either from the king to the Governor-General, or from a Siamese minister to Crawfurd himself.¹⁶ As a result of Crawfurd's mission was unsuccessful.¹⁷

The second mission of British company began with the mission of Henry Burney, which formulated the first Anglo-Siamese treaty known as the Burney treaty in 1826. As mentioned, when Siam claimed sovereignty over the Malay local States these actions would destroy British trade in the peninsula. In its reply the Supreme Council of Britain hesitated to sanction any attempt to make a formal treaty with Siam by breaking its agreement with principle of non- political intervention.¹⁸ Significantly, in 1825, Henry Burney ascertained the Siam's attitude towards the Anglo-Burmese wars and the British conquests resulted in an attempt to negotiate eventually for a real commercial treaty. The object of the treaty was mainly to counteract the disposition by the Siamese to co-operate with the Burmese in the first war and to remove the disquiet occasion to the settlement of Penang by the Siamese occupation of the territories.¹⁹ The negotiations proceeded rapidly and Burney presented his first treaty draft on March 29th, 1826. By June 20th he succeeded in concluding the first modern treaty of friendship and alliance conclusively engagement between Britain and Siam.²⁰ In thirteen articles, item by item, the pledges were mutual, the responsibilities equal, and the advantages were the same for both parties. A treaty are composed of an explicit denial of extraterritoriality, an agreement to trade freely according to the "customs of the place," an explicit denial of any right to rent land or establish factories without permission including denial of the right to import opium. In one article of a commercial agreement also included with the ban on an export of rice.

This treaty is an equal treatment of subjects. Britain had no objection whatsoever to the local law or to any conduct of the local authorities. On the contrary, Britain placed their subjects in Siam under local law and jurisdiction. Treaty stipulated these points. The first is stressed the need for free trade to exist in Siam as direct trade on either side allowing buy and sell without the intervention of other persons in other countries, but they needed to conduct themselves under Siamese Laws. They had to be granted permission to reside in Siam and duties could be placed to comply with the customs of Siam. The second is the abandonment of royal monopoly which Siam familiarly and the last is the recognition two kinds status of British subjects, European and Asiatic subject who obtained a certificate and passport.

Sir James Brooke instructed the third mission. He was being charged with plenipotentiary powers from the Queen of Britain in August 9th 1850.²¹ To negotiate for ratification of a new Treaty of 1826. Brooke showed how Britain desired to strengthen peaceful relations and increase trade with Siam. To end drastic revisions of the former treaty were required and the main points of his proposed treaty were the granting of the rights of residence and purchase of land, guarantee of freedom of worship, guarantee not to obstruct merchants, and permission to appoint consul with extraterritorial rights. His missions composed of asking for drastic reforms for the reduction of a measurement duty, removal of the prohibition to import opium, removal of the ban on the export of rice and also demanding free trade in Bangkok or other Siamese ports without any intervention. The negotiations were broken off and left an unfavorable impression.²² Brooks left Siam on September 28th, 1850.

II The Bowring Treaty 1855 and the Supplementary Attachment 1856

After several negotiations between Britain and Siam, the final conclusion in term of the treaty came to end in 1855 known as the Bowring treaty. All the needs of Britain were concluded with the remarkable turn in Siam because it was explained as the origin of many preceding changes, such as transforming the country to an absolutist state, connecting with the world market, moving towards modernization of bureaucracy and adapting cultural practices with western culture. One of the significant of negotiations was that Britain would abandon its attempts to conquer Siam.

There were also significant provisions which probably assume that there was a concentration of settlements by the British and British subjects in Bangkok. The treaty caused the increased settlement of new comers who were British subjects of Britain in Bangkok given the privilege of the right and certification of “land owner.”

In the first place before going to examine the above mentioned, It is necessary to examine in details of treaty provisions which privileged these subjects of Britain as following. The first privilege of British subject is the extraterritorial right appeared in article 1 and 2 upon these clauses:

*“Any disputes arising between Siamese and British subjects shall be heard and determined by the Consul, in conjunction with the proper Siamese officers; and criminal offences will be punished, in the case of English offenders, by the Consul, according to English laws, and in the case of Siamese offenders, by their own laws.”*²³

The second point is the assigned boundaries to settle only Bangkok and nearby appeared in Article 4 stated that:

*“British subjects are permitted to trade freely in all the seaports of Siam, but may reside permanently only at Bangkok, or within the limits assigned by this Treaty. British subjects coming to reside at Bangkok may rent land, buy, or built houses, but cannot purchase lands within a circuit of 200 sen (not more than four miles English) from the city walls, until they shall have lived in Siam for 10 years, or shall obtain special authority from the Siamese government.”*²⁴

The treaty addressed the assigned spatial boundaries for British subjects to reside in Bangkok with land ownership. This article explicitly granted permission for British subjects to reside and to settle down in Bangkok or within the limits of assigned boundaries. Granting the right to settle down in the country implies granting land ownership to the British and her subjects as well. According to this provision, the Siamese government officially permitted the settlement of British and their subjects with the certification right on land ownership. As a result, this provision, undoubtedly, attracted new comers recently arriving at Bangkok port. Additionally, the third point addressed allowing direct purchases from the producer from which they trade directly to the parties without the interference and fixed import tariff. Article 8 stressed that the details of bene-

ficial conditions on trade between two countries and their subjects and fixed import tariff at three percent as well.²⁵

This Treaty required that trade must be done directly between merchants and producers. Most importantly, it set a new requirement for opium trade, there will be no tax for the opium traffic and such trade will be monopolized by opium farmer. Finally, this Treaty provided room for Siam for the case of food shortages. The treaty allowed the Siamese government to prohibit exportation of rice, salt and fish in case of scarcity occur in the country. In particular, the British forced Siam to integrate into the world economy under formal treaty since 1855, then it can be said that since the Treaty took effect, it significantly conditioned the changes in urban Bangkok tremendously. This Anglo-Siamese Treaty concerns international trade. The Treaty fixed import tariff of goods from Britain at three percent which was significantly less than other countries. In brief, this article of the provisions established significant conditions toward Bangkok's changes toward policies of extraterritoriality and assigned specific boundaries for residing only in Bangkok. British subjects and citizens were permitted to trade freely in all the seaports of Siam, but may reside permanently only within Bangkok, or within the limits assigned by the Treaty. The British subjects coming to reside at Bangkok may rent land, buy, or build houses, but cannot purchase lands within a circuit of 200 sen (not more than four miles English) from the city walls, until they shall have lived in Siam for 10 years, or shall obtain special authority from the Siamese government. One year later, Siam and Britain needed to negotiate for clear point of understanding after treaty took effect with ratification in 1856. The agreement officially known as the supplementary attachment of 1856.

The attachment also addressed these topics in the articles. The first is clear to identify for British subjects under the protection of certificate and passport in article 5. Explicitly marked pillars assigned boundaries in practices and by implication, the granting of land ownership as well. The Siamese government officially also permitted the settlement of British and their subjects with the certification right on land ownership. Undoubtedly, these advantages attracted new comers arriving at Bangkok port certainly especially to grant an extraterritorial rights for the British subjects which all British subjects coming to Siam shall receive very privilege from the Siamese Government full protection and assistance to

enable them to reside and prevention from all insecurity including with trade favoritism.²⁶

III Who are British Subjects and how they identify themselves

Concerned with carefully crafted treaty provisions, Britain found that the first thing the British subjects should do when they arrived in Bangkok was to present themselves at the Consul in order to obtain a certificate and passport for traveling over the assigned bounded territories. It is very important to stress that Britain gave significant emphasis on the privileges that her subjects would gain from this Treaty including issuing passports and certificates for ensured protection.

The point of the treaty was very concerned with identifying the British subjects using the identification. The Treaty stipulated careful details of the process to obtain and use passports very clearly in 1855 that:

“All British subjects intending to reside in Siam shall be registered at the British Consulate. They shall not go out to sea, nor proceed beyond the limits assigned by this Treaty for the residence of British subjects, without a passport from the Siamese authorities, to be applied for by the British Consul; nor shall they leave Siam if the Siamese authorities show to the British Consul that legitimate objections exist to their quitting the country. But within the limits appointed under the preceding Article, British subjects are at liberty to travel to and from under the protection of a pass, to be furnished them by the British Consul, and counter-sealed by the proper Siamese officer, stating, in the Siamese character, their names, calling, and description. The Siamese officers at the Government stations in the interior may at any time, call for the production of this pass, and immediately on its being exhibited, they must allow the parties to proceed; but it will be their duty to detain these persons who, by travelling without a pass from the Consul, render themselves liable to the suspicion of their being deserters; and such detention shall be immediately reported to the Consul.”²⁷

However, the term of British subject was carefully defined particularly in the meaning of their “Asiatic subject” identify by specifying races and monitoring their certificates of renewal for each journey. Again in Supplementary attachment of 1856 as following:

“All British subjects, without exception, shall be allowed to

participate in this overland trade.... All traders, under British rule, may cross from the British territories of Mergui, Tavoy, Ye, Tenas sarim, Pegu, or other places, by land or by water, to the Siamese territories, and may trade there with facility, on the condition that they shall be provided by the British authorities with proper certificates, which must be renewed for each journey."²⁸

Defining the status of British subjects in Siam originated with the Bowring Treaty's terms of extraterritoriality in 1855. The treaty significantly identified Bangkok as a place of the settlement of British subjects. They could gain privileged right of the jurisdiction, land holding, and fixed tariff of trade. Also, the treaty effectively established a system of identifying British subjects through documents in particular certificate and passport.

The British Subject

In general, treaties between Siam with Britain or western powers did not specify which Foreign subjects. They generally use the word "subject" as in particular "British subject" which did not define the word "subject" and whom it refers to.²⁹ Regarding all foreigners are not under Siamese jurisdiction, but they must be subject to specific jurisdictions. In general, foreigners who are not subjects of such colonial powers must generally subject themselves to the local laws. A close scrutiny of any such claim of special privilege is, therefore, necessary for the purpose of the effective exercise of territorial authority. However, when the right of extraterritoriality was first granted there were only a few British subjects in country. Their appearances were different from that of the Siamese, so they could easily be distinguished. Local authorities had no trouble differentiating them. However after the colonization of Britain was extended to large neighboring territories of Siam such as Burma and Malay States this process of differentiating "subjects" became more complicated. The subjects of these countries poured into Siam in large numbers for trading. These British subjects began to claim the rights of their colonial masters coming to Siam. They claimed to have the same special privileges accorded to British subjects. Subsequently, the process of differentiating British

subjects created conflicts and were pursued with great difficulties to the Siamese authorities.

The former method of distinguishing between the native and alien by a mere method of distinguishing by an appearance became practically impossible. Local authorities were often unable to tell an alien from a Siamese.³⁰ They were protected with a level of hierarchy of extraterritoriality enforcement. So, it became necessary to know each of the British protectorates and their subjects carefully at first. They can be divided into four kinds of privileges with British protection. First in the hierarchy are natural born subjects. Second naturalized subjects and Asiatic subjects, including Chinese who are from British territories.

Natural Born Subjects

In general, there are no questions about one's nationality for the cases natural born subjects in Siam.³¹ Britain, as well as some other European countries, regard a person born of foreign parents within her domain as her subjects and she also regards her own subjects all persons born of British parents aboard.³² Regarding illegitimate children, their nationality generally follows that of their mother.³³ In particular the English law assigns illegitimate children of English women abroad with the nationality of the place of birth. This certifies that children born beyond the Britain could be admitted as the British subjects. Additionally, the illegitimate children of foreigners born in England are British subjects in virtue of soil.³⁴ That means all English born in Britain are natural born subject, but the exceptional implementation was the illegitimate children.

Naturalized subject

Naturalization is primarily a personal matter for each individual who wishes to divest themselves of his present nationality in favor of a new one. But the desire to change his/her nationality cannot generally be accomplished without the consent of the government whose nationality he/she desires to acquire or the consent of both governments involved. Each state has the inherent right to regulate such matters by its own municipal laws to suit domestic interests, and to be consistent with the general rule of the law of the nation.³⁵ English laws for English subjects were based upon such premises until 1870. These principles included indelibil-

ity of natural allegiance and of the liberty of emigration. “Everyone was free to leave his country; but whatever he/she decided. English law proceeds he/she had the privileges as well as the liabilities, of a “British subject”.³⁶


In 1870 an Act was passed providing British subjects with the rights of becoming naturalized in a foreign state but would lose his/her British citizenship. Persons naturalized in a foreign state before the passing the Act were permitted to make declaration within two years stating their wish to remain British subjects.³⁷ As to the legal status of naturalized subjects in their new status, many countries, including England, the United States, and Russia received them into their territories with equality on par with their natural-born subjects. When they travel to third foreign state they will have the same rights there and receive the same protection as native born citizen. As to the person naturalized in a colony, an eminent English jurist considers person naturalized in a British colony is not divested with the equality of a native born British subject in a foreign land.³⁸


Asiatic subject

There is certainty as to the law according to British law that aliens naturalized in British colonies have the privileges of British subjects only within the colony in which they are colonized. British subjects who were native Asian people called “Asiatic subject” When they went to other regions with identification of being British subjects in the order of British agreement. That means they were treated under protection of the British law on condition of correct identification. Considering this point, John Bowring mentioned the treaty provision in 1826 that it should be modified to include those of the Malayan peninsula. In particular, Bowring identifies Peguans who have since become “our subject” Following this the Bowring Treaty concluded in 1855. Article 5, which stressed again the process to obtain evidence of identification including certificates and passports. Certainly, British government was, at the time, concerned with protecting her subjects since the 1820s. Particularly, Britain specified in detail to obtain of certificates and passports in both treaties. Consequently, in the second treaty, the Bowring Treaty stipulated the rights pertaining to extraterritoriality is significant. The British government recognized their subjects under the certified documents very carefully according to the treaty’s provisions.

The example of British Certificate

No. 153

 HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S
LEGATION &
CONSULATE GENERAL,
BANGKOK.



CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION
For the Year 1889.

I hereby Certify That *Jasper Young*
is duly registered in this Consulate
as a *British subject*
Dated this *8* day of *May* 1889
W.A. Smith ^{at} Consul.
153 Number.
Page in Fol.
Signature of Party registered,
Jasper Young

NOTE—This Certificate of Registration must be carefully kept by the party in whose favour it is issued.

Figure 1: Certificate of registration for “British Subject” of British Consulate in Siam on 8/5/1889 (in the reign of King Chulalongkorn)
Source : online <http://sale23.eurseree.com/cgi-bin/info/agora.cgi>

British protected person

It is not only Asiatic subjects who the British government paid greater attention to in the Treaty provisions. There are other significant actors who Britain also wanted to protect similarly. This group included the Chinese. They were protected by British law through registration. Chinese persons can be considered as another group which concerned the British government. In addition, when the treaty was ratified in 1866, certain clauses regarding Asiatic subjects were stressed clearly.⁴⁰ It can be seen that Chinese and Asiatic subjects were the ones whom the British government needed to protect. They were already mentioned clearly in the Bowring Treaty agreement. Particularly, the protection given to Chinese was specified as a group that was “entitled to his protection”. The protections for Chinese by the British government was developed in relation to the circumstances of war. Since the first Opium wars between Britain and China in 1840-42 that of the conclusion of the Treaty of Nanjing. Chinese nationals became subject to the British Crown. This first war ceded Hong Kong Island outright to Britain and opened five treaty ports: Amoy, Canton, Fuzhou, Ningbo, and Shanghai to foreign consuls, traders, and missionaries. The Treaty enforced the adoption of China to most-favored-nation principle regarding diplomatic agreements with western countries. A decade later, the second war occurred in 1856-60, ending with the Convention of Beijing. Britain dominated the Southern tip of the Kowloon Peninsula. Later the Britain was able to acquire extensions of their colonies into Hong Kong and Kowloon through naming them New Territories, These territories were leased by China to the British for a period of 99 years ending in 1997.

However, in general, it should be noted that the Chinese “subjects” of the British Crown were treated separately from the Chinese “coolie” in Bangkok. Chinese immigrants who wanted to be a British subject had to register at the British consul in Bangkok and apply for their own certificates. If they did not register; they could not claim to be the British subjects. Therefore, the number of Chinese British subjects were less in number than the Chinese “coolie” in general in Bangkok. Instead of register as British subjects, Chinese coolie actually registered to be the member of their Chinese secret society for the protection. That means there were not everyone who emigrated from China or even from the treaty ports of China would be the British subjects. Also, British Indian

was coming to settle in Bangkok in large numbers at the same time. After India was the colony of the British Empire, the British Indian subjects actually came to settle down in Bangkok and own business associated with British merchants. They were both British subjects and either or British protected person.

Although the British registration clause was asserted in the Treaty the enforcement was not effective. The registration of the British subjects at their consulate was made voluntarily. The other mean of identification was passports, but they were inadequate. Later on, in 1880 a complaint of the difficulties owing to the claim to British protection among those who did not possess any identification appeared. The inconvenience was caused by the granting of collective passports by the Indian officials to Burmese subjects who crossed over to Siam Burmese subjects would enter Siam and disperse throughout the country, still laying claim to British protection under the original collective passport. In such circumstances it became practically impossible for the British consular as well as the Siamese authorities to achieve verification in each case.

Therefore, the Bowring treaty marked the beginning of the change of status of British and their subjects in Siam in favor of the local jurisdiction. It may be considered the second stage of extraterritoriality within the kingdom. It stated local court and local law especially in Article 7 which provided that the native Indian subjects of Her Majesty entering territories in Siam, who are not provided with passports under Article 4, shall be liable to the local courts and the local law for offences committed by them in Siamese territories.⁴¹ By virtue of this treaty the Siamese courts in the north, or at Chiangmai have jurisdiction to try and to punish British subjects for the crime of dacoit, when it was committed in Siam. And the prisoners were legally apprehended in Siam, irrespectively of fact that they had passports with them or not. Moreover, Siam actually issued collective passport as well.

The Example of Passport of British subject in Siam

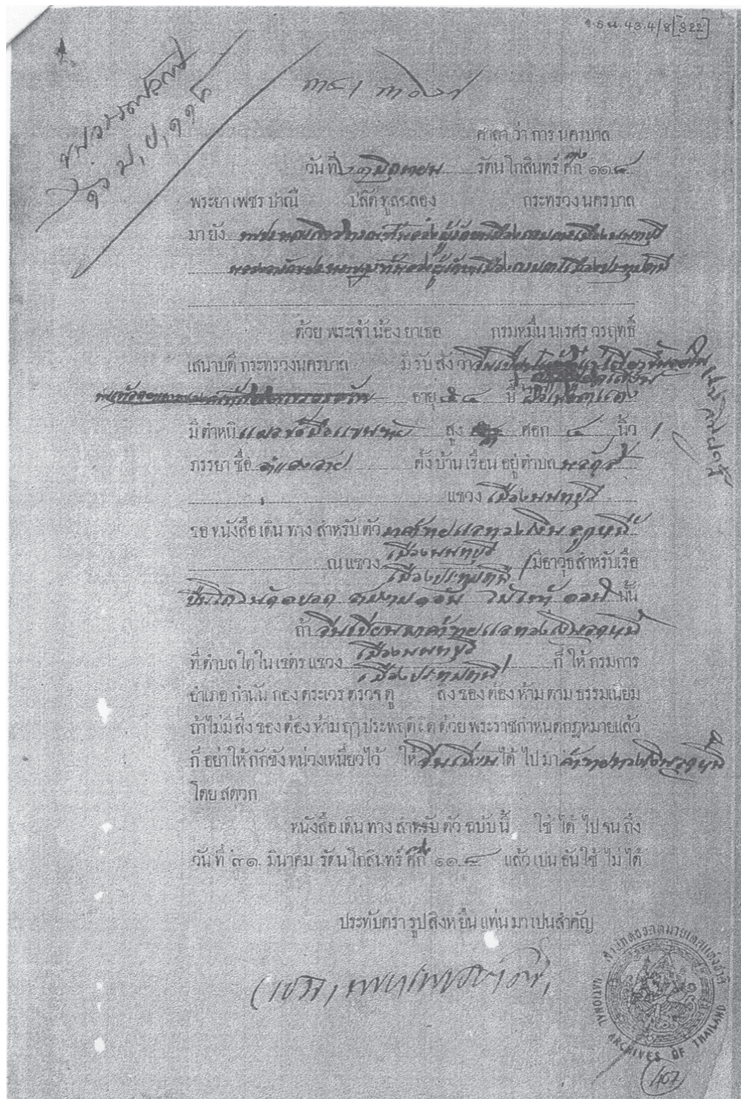


Figure 2: Passport for individual person of British subject in 1899

Source: N.A.5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs 34.25 passports of British Subject (1867-1877)

The Example of Collective Passport of British subjects in Siam

[illegible]

Figure 2: The example form of Collective passport 1904

Source: N.A. 5. Ministry of Foreign Affairs 34.55 Asking for traveling passport for Mong Thong La (Burmese British subject) (1904).

In summary, the protection of British subjects according to the Bowring Treaty provision conditions brought specific identification practices to use and produced documented identification of their subjects. These practices effectively created new types of persons in Bangkok. They are the descendants of the British subjects who have arrived and reside in Bangkok even today. We should take note of the explicit changes in Bangkok from which these persons who are of mixed of nationalities and protected their rights under the colonial power's power and jurisdiction not Siamese law. Because of a diversity of racial and national identity confusion and difficulties occurred regularly, especially when conflict appeared. In particular the more British and their subjects came to settle in Bangkok, the more there were cases of juridical and jurisdiction conflicts, and difficulties occurred.

Since the Bowring treaty effectively came to term in Siam, the documents became the significant form to identify people who were protected or judged under British law. This was especially the case for British or her Asiatic subjects who were conditioned protected and judged under consular Court . However, it could be said that the identity of British subjects were classified by documents i.e. certificate and passport. The level of British protection for her subjects based on a kind of categorized protection. Different kind of hierarchical definitions of protection were differently concerned such as natural born subject , naturalized subject, Asiatic subject, or protected person. After that, significant of the identification to the British subject was very seriously based on passport. Passport became the most significant documents to identify these British and Asiatic subject for protection in International court or contracts and agreements for the teak or timber business. Consequently, the development process to define exact term of British subject was increasingly complex since 1855 to 1906. Thereafter, passports were used to separate British subject from Siamese subject and became the model for Siam to issue identification for her subjects later in history. Siam created passport system in country.

A form of the Siamese passport bars similarly with a form of British passport. It could be argued that the influence of British instrument in controlling her subjects was subsequently brought to benefit Siam. Particularly, British passports became a model for the modern Siamese passport. Such development were clear when Prince Damrong, Ministry of

Interior, adopted passports for Siamese subjects in 1895 and developed forms of Siamese passports very similar to the British subjects' passport. Especially, it was developed to be an identity card later for every Siamese subject in 1900.

IV British and British subject residences in Bangkok

The Treaty 1856 specified both permitted and forbidden boundaries for settlement sites. After the Bowring Treaty took effect for six years, there were a small number of Europeans and Americans in Bangkok. In 1862, Bangkok Calendar recorded the numbers of European residents as 102 and American as 40. That meant at that time, foreigners in Bangkok were small in numbers. It is impossible to assume the direct numbers of British subjects. Although British subjects were required to register at Consul, many did not appear in the official records. Until 1883 the first official census of the Bangkok population known as **The 1883 Bangkok Postal Census *Sarabanchi*** (สารบาญชี). It recorded the names of the residents (household heads) and their occupations and economic activities, social relation of masters and ethnicity, types of houses, owner or renter status, payment of Chinese head tax, and addresses classified by roads, irrigation canals, and clustered villages along the river, the departments to which household heads were attached, and the title and rank of household heads.⁴² It was published by Department of Post and Telegraph to expedite the postal service. To facilitate the mail service, a register of the population was needed. To this end, the Postal Census was completed in 1883. A publication of The Census was divided into four Volumes. According to the Volume 3, it recorded the residences in “roads and lanes” (ถนน แลตรอก). This classification covered many residences in the central districts, especially along roads as Charoen Krung (เจริญกรุง), ***Bamrung Mueang*** (บำรุงเมือง), and ***Fueang Nakhon*** (เฟื่องนคร).⁴³ The significant of the three Volume census showed the data of Bangkok's Population exactly. It helps to see the composition of the population at that time more clearly.

The Census indicated the total Households in Bangkok are composed of many nationalities. Save for Siamese, ***Chinese*** are outnumbered other groups in Bangkok, ***Khaek*** (แขก) is second and ***Westerners*** third. The white European British who lived in Bangkok were included as westerners. The map below shows their residences.

Map of British subject residences in Bangkok according to Postal

census 1883



Source: Malinee Khumsupa, “Change in Urban Bangkok 1855-1909: The Impact of the Settlement of The British and Their Subjects”(Ph.D Dissertation, Chulalongkorn University,2011) p. 151.

After that, commercial activities in the 1880s resulted in a high price for prime land, which attracted investment. The Privy Purse Bureau was a major source of capital for the king. It was the largest land owner in Bangkok. Some of its major commercial activities included rentals collection from market places and row houses. In this way, the expansion in investment of capital was certainly a factor in the physical as well as commercial growth of Bangkok. This is how investment by the Privy Purse Bureau accommodated and benefited from the growing population.⁴⁴ The Chinese accounted for a significant portion of house rental in Bangkok. Almost eight percent of total renters were Chinese.⁴⁵ The impact of road construction within the city walls and in the main commercial districts stimulated the growth of brick shop-houses; construction of shop houses played an important part in shaping the landscape of Bangkok.⁴⁶ Therefore, these residences in Bangkok the standard architectural homes in Bangkok's mostly urban population. The most convenient residencies in Bangkok were shop houses that were located all around the core city. They were also cheaper than building homes on the vacant land plots. Chinese, Indians, or Malays probably settled in these shop houses in Bangkok.

Regarding the growing economic activities in Bangkok from the 1880s onwards, several important developments took place. Above all, the international rice trade was developed on a large scale. This was a crucial factor in attracting a substantial influx of immigrants. Trade brought a range of economic activities to Bangkok, such as rice mills, shipping, warehousing, banks, manufacturing production, and distribution of imports and exports. Centers of trade and commerce such as **Bang Rak** (บางรัก) and **Sampheng** (สำเพ็ง) was pressured by the growing demand of transportation. Then, the growth of trade and business in Bangkok resulted in a rise of the price of land.⁴⁷

Noticeably, Europeans and their subjects gradually located their communities in the south of the Bangkok's urban areas i.e. **Bang Rak** and **Sampheng**. Therefore, in case of British subjects, they were able to settle in Bangkok without any difficulty. They were protected with the right to hold land and protected from land lost. Additionally, if they wanted to settle in Bangkok temporarily, there were a lot of shop houses for rent including the small pieces of lands made ready for foreign ownership. Therefore, the possibility for British and British subjects consequently

settled mainly in the south of the Bangkok's urban areas. As a result, the south of Bangkok became the appropriate place welcoming new comers.

V Conclusion

When the Bowring Treaty took effect, several foreigner privileges were negotiated for Siam's sovereignty. These were mutually beneficial terms. The fifth British mission would end with the conclusion of official Bowring treaty. This article seeks to point out a misunderstanding about Britain as the conqueror or threat to Siam. If we reconsider carefully through the development of relations, it is found that Britain needed a port of Bangkok for the settlement of British subjects to support trade networks only. At the same time, the benefits for the privileges for her subjects included naturalization rights local Siamese subjects. Consequently, such treaty terms helps Siam to avoid becoming a British colony. Then, these former British Siam "Asiatic" and even British who settled in Siam became a part of the diverse ancestry of the Siamese people in the present-day. That means when Siam needed to avoid becoming a colony, she needed to open her ports and allowed for the settlement of British and British subject.

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N.A. = National Archive of Thailand

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