CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Thailand (also known as Siam) is a part of Southeast Asia. Its borders touch the Indian Ocean and Burma in the west, Cambodia and Laos in the east, Laos and Burma in the north, and Malaysia and the Gulf of Siam in the south. The total area of the country is approximately 198,000 square miles; and the total population, about 40 million.¹ About 93 per cent of the population are Buddhist and nearly 77 per cent speak Thai.² The official religion of the country is Theravada (Hinayana) Buddhism.

The Thai people belong to a distinct race, with a history as old as that of the Chinese people.³ According to tradition, they inhabited the central part of present-day China about 4,500 years ago. In course of time, they were forced out of their homes by the Chinese and the Mongols and migrated southwards to the provinces of Szechuen and Yunnan. Finally, they established themselves in an area further south, known as the Golden Peninsula.⁴

² Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
The history of Thailand as a nation began about 800 years ago when King Ramkhamheng fought to combine several principalities into one kingdom. The royal capital of the country then was Sukhothai; later it was moved to Ayuthiya; later still it was shifted to Thonburi, and today it is Bangkok.

Following a coup d'etat in June 1932, the King became a constitutional monarch, and real power passed into the hands of a military junta. During the regime of Field Marshal Phibum Songgram, the King was totally stripped of his powers, so much so that he was not free to travel abroad or even in his own kingdom. The junta took repressive measures against anyone who had sympathy with Leftist ideas and silenced all opposition by raising the bogey of Communism. The successor of Phibun Songgram, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, said in his Constitution Day Address in 1959 that the people should not look upon themselves as entitled to constitutional government until they had achieved national discipline. He further disclosed that he would not tolerate any demand for political freedom or human rights lest they should put national security

5 Ibid.
It is interesting to note that of all the countries of Southeast Asia, Thailand alone escaped the humiliation of being colonized. This was due, among other things, to the nature of the foreign policy pursued by the country. Thus to gain a proper perspective of the foreign policy of Thailand during 1954-71, it is important to cast a cursory glance over the country's foreign relations in the historical past.

EARLY CONTACTS WITH ASIAN COUNTRIES

Thailand and Khmers

The Thais and the Khmers fought each other off and on for many centuries. In the beginning most of the territories which now belong to the Thais were Khmer possessions. In the thirteenth century the position changed. The Thais extended their realm beyond the Mekong River and made Cambodia a vassal state.9


A Chiangmai chronicle of the eleventh century A.D., speaks of a Khmer king, Surya Varman I (1002-50) and says that his kingdom extended up to the valley of Chao Phraya. He occupied the Mekong Valley up to Luang Prabang. According to an inscription of that period found at Lopburi, the empire of Surya Varman I included both the Mon Kingdom of Dvaravati and the Malay Kingdom of Nakhon Sri Thammarat. Surya Varman II (1113-50) was easily the most powerful king that the Khmers ever had. He built Angkor Wat and Banteay Chhmar (the largest religious building in the world, now in ruins, in the Dangrek mountains) and conquered the Mons, the state of Champa, and Annam. It was during his reign that the Thai influx into the valley of Chao Phraya began. Some of them settled at Lopburi. With the passage of time more and more Thais came and settled in the valley. The successors of Surya Varman II, especially Jayavarman VIII (1243-95), who was neither a warrior nor a statesman, could hardly resist the influx.

The Thais were able to consolidate their power when a Thai chieftain, who had married a daughter of Jayavarman VII, defeated the Khmer Governor of the Upper Menam Valley and established the Kingdom of Sukhothai. Ramkhamhaeng, who ascended the throne in 1270, expanded his kingdom far and

10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., p. 108.
13 Ibid., p. 117.
wide at the expense of the Khmer Empire. Further north, another Thai prince, Nangrai by name, conquered the old Mon kingdom of Haripunjaya in the Meping Valley and built the city of Chiengmai. Both he and Ramkhamheng established close relations with Kublai Khan, who had conquered Nancho in 1253. 14

King Ramkhamheng became a renowned statesman. Under him the Thais absorbed the best elements of the various civilizations with which they came into contact. Sukhothai became "the cradle of Thai civilization". 15 Through continuous contact with China and India, the Thais enriched their civilization and culture. From the Khmers the Thais learnt techniques of political organization. They also adopted their alphabet and borrowed a considerable number of words. In the hands of Thai artists Khmer art underwent a transformation. The Thais moulded it according to their own genius and enriched it with what they had learnt from contact with their western neighbours, the Mons and Burmese. From the Mons and the Burmese the Thais took juristic traditions of Indian origin. From the Sinhalese they received the precious message of the Buddha. They also absorbed Sinhalese artistic traditions. 16

This does not mean that the strife between the Khmers and the Thais ceased with the accession of King Ramkhamheng.

15 Hall, n. 9, p. 161.
16 Ibid.
to the throne. M. Bernard Philippe Groslier points out that the excavations undertaken in 1952-53 on the site of the royal palace at Angkor Thom confirm the story of the city's destruction by the Thais in 1431 and of its consequent abandonment as their capital by the Khmers. During the sixteenth century, Thai control extended throughout the valley of Chao Phraya, and eastward beyond the Mekong River. Cambodia was Thailand's vassal. So were many of the sultanates of the Malay peninsula. It was only after the advent of the English and the French in mainland Southeast Asia during the nineteenth century that Thailand renounced or otherwise abandoned its sovereign rights over many of the Indo-Chinese, Malayan, and Burmese territories which had long been part of its empire.

Thailand and China

When the Europeans entered the hinterland of Thailand in the 1930s, they found well-established overland trade routes there between China and Thailand in spite of natural barriers like mountains and rivers (such as the Mekong, the Salween, and the Sweli). The routes were of ancient origin. The annual caravans used those routes for their journeys to Shan territory (Burma) and Thailand. Other routes led to Nan and Lampang in Thailand and to Luang Prabang (Laos). The Chinese brought copper pots, silks, rock salt, tinsel, and lace. In

return they carried copper, ivory, horns and tea back to China.  

Chinese emissaries visited Thailand during the Sukhothai period in 1282, 1293, and 1294. The King of Sukhothai Ramkhamheng sent tributary missions to Peking in 1296, 1297, and 1299. King Ramkhamheng of Sukhothai paid two visits to China -- the first in 1294 while Kublai Khan was still alive; and the second in 1300. King Ramkhamheng brought some Chinese porcelain experts to Thailand. Besides, he secured the Chinese Emperor's recognition of his Empire. This was a great achievement; for China was then a Great Power.  

More tributary missions followed in 1314, 1319, and 1323. Sukhothai missions to Peking ceased after that.  

During the Ayuthiyan period, there was an exchange of commodities and good wishes between China and Thailand. In 1592, the King of Thailand offered to send an army to aid China against Japan. China, however, gracefully refused the offer. The fact that such an offer was made at all indicates the extent of cordiality between Thailand and China.  

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King Phra Narai (1658-88) established a fleet to carry on commerce with China. His junks at one time numbered more than four hundred. However, in the nineteenth century when the European Powers came upon the scene and entered into treaty relations with the countries of Southeast Asia, the number of ships in the Thai fleet started dwindling. Its strength was reduced to less than a hundred ships when the European owned steamers started competing with local craft.22

In 1842, when China was defeated in the Opium War, King Mongkut, an expert in international politics decided that China was no longer a Great Power and discontinued payment of tribute to that country.23 Instead he sought to strengthen his country's relations with the European Powers that were active in the region.

Thailand and India

Thailand and India have had cultural relations from time immemorial. The two countries have influenced each other enormously, especially in the field of religion. The Thais used to believe in animism in ancient times. They used to believe in ancestor worship as well. They carried their beliefs with them when they migrated from Central China first to Yunnan

22 Purcell, n. 18, p. 110.

23 Chakrabongse, n. 14, pp. 197-201; and Dhirawegin, n. 19, p. 7. For details about King Mongkut, see the memoirs of Sir John Bowring, The Kingdom and People of Siam (London, 1969).
and later to Thailand. When they encountered Buddhism, they adopted it as their national religion. Although Thailand's people are predominantly Buddhist today, they still subscribe to certain animistic beliefs. Indeed these beliefs are embedded in the popular customs of the country. Owing to the influence of Cambodia, Thailand has drawn a good deal on Hinduism also. One can also notice traces of Brahmin influence in their rites and rituals. 24

Buddhism was first introduced to the land of the Menam Chao Phraya in the form of Hinayana Buddhism at Nakhon Phathom in 329 B.C. (B.E. 300). However, it was during the reign of King Ram Kham heng of Sukhothai that Buddhist influence in Thailand reached its highest peak. He sent some Thai Buddhist monks to Ceylon in 1253 (B.E. 1800). These monks returned to Thailand with Pali writings, including the holy Tripitaka. They also brought some Ceylonese Buddhist monks. The King embraced Hinayana Buddhism and made it the national religion. He also invited the Ceylonese monks to settle down in his capital, Sukhothai. Buddhism thus became the religion of majority of the people of Thailand. 25

As in other scriptural religions, so in Buddhism, formal doctrine is intertwined with customs, attitudes,


25 Suriyabongse, ibid.
traditions and daily devotions that are not sanctioned in writing. Some of these derive from the Indian milieu in which Buddhism developed; others were added when Buddhism reached the mainland of Southeast Asia. The result is a complex of beliefs and practices which is in many ways uniquely Thai and which informs virtually every phase of the nation's life.

During the period of five hundred years stretching from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century, Thai-Indian relations were mainly cultural. Only once did Thailand evince interest in matters other than cultural during this period, and this was in the seventeenth century, when Prasat Tong was King of Thailand. Prasat Tong massacred Japanese merchants and sailors in his territories by way of punishment for their behaviour. He was unhappy with the Dutch, too, and deprived them of their monopoly over trade in Thailand. As he had cordial relations with the kings of the Coromandel Coast and the Nawab of Bengal, he felt that trade relations with India would be an adequate substitute for Japanese and Dutch trade. When the British acquired power and influence in India, relations between Thailand and the European Powers too once again became close.

Cultural contacts between Thailand and India, however, remained unaffected by these political developments. Many Thai

26 Ibid.

27 Thompson, n. 21, p. 138.
Buddhist monks continued to come to India on pilgrimage to the Buddhist shrines at Buddha Gaya. King Chulalòngkorn (1868-1910) came to India on 18 December 1871 to study the British system of administration with a view to introducing reforms in his own country. He visited Calcutta, Delhi, and certain religious places connected with the Buddha such as Buddha Gaya, Varanasi, Sarnath and other holy places. He was the last Thai King to come on a state visit to India.

Thailand and Burma

Thailand's relations with Burma grew hostile after the sixteenth century. The Toungoo kings of Burma made repeated raids on Thailand and its Lao vassals during the latter half of the sixteenth century. There were frequent wars between Burma and Thailand over the control of the Chao Phraya Valley and the Northern Thai States.

King Tabinshweti (1531-51) of the Toungoo dynasty was a great military leader. In 1535 he sent his forces northward to capture the central granary district at Kyankse. He later led them southward down the Irrawaddy Valley. He conquered the Mon capital in 1539 and occupied the Tenasserim.

28 Chakrabongse, n. 14, p. 225.
Coast in 1541. He attacked Thailand in 1548-50, though without success. He was assassinated upon his return to Burma.

King Bayinnaung, who became king in succession to Tabinshweti, resumed attacks on Thailand and Laos. The Burmese forces which marched under him included a sizable number of Portuguese mercenaries. He captured Ayuthiya twice (in 1564 and again in 1569). After he captured it for the second time, it remained under his control till his death in 1581.

The hero who regained independence for Thailand from Burmese rule was Prince Naresuen. This monarch, who succeeded to the throne of Ayuthiya in 1590, repulsed Burmese invasions in 1585, 1587, and again in 1592. He captured Lovek in 1594 and occupied the Tenasserim Coast. Gradually he extended his control as far north as the mouth of the Salween River and also re-established Thailand's suzerainty over Laos.

But in the eighteenth century the Burmese under the rulers of the Konbaung dynasty resumed their attacks upon Thailand. After consolidating his authority over Upper and Lower Burma, Alaungpaya attacked Ayuthiya in 1760. However, Ayuthiya put up a memorable defence and King Alaungpaya was injured in battle. He passed away on his way back home.

In 1764, Hsinbyushin, a son of Alaungpaya, succeeded to the throne. He also made an attempt to take Ayuthiya in

30. Cady, n. 17, p. 66.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
1766. As usual the Thais put up resistance. It was only after laying siege for more than a year that Hainbyushin's forces were able to reduce the fort. This time Ayuthiya was utterly destroyed. Soon after, however, the Burmese forces had to return home to defend their country against Chinese attacks from Yunnan. 33 The Mons, too, rose in revolt, and disaffection spread in Lower Burma. These events gave the Thais an opportunity to strengthen themselves. And when the King of Ava (Burma), Bodawpaya (1782-89) invaded Thailand a few years later he was not only a repulsed but also obliged to surrender the city of Chieng Mai and other territories to Bangkok. 34

Thailand and Vietnam

Just as there are natural barriers between China and Thailand which make communications extremely difficult, if not impossible, there are natural barriers like rivers and mountains between Thailand and Vietnam, too. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, there was little contact between these two countries. Though Buddhism continued to be the predominant religion in both the countries, they were practically cut off from each other during that period.

In the seventeenth century there arose a rivalry between the Thais and the Vietnamese for sovereignty over the Khmer territories. The Khmer kingdom was vulnerable to

33. Ibid., pp. 74-75.
34 Ibid.
aggression both from the Thais and the Vietnamese and was frequently overrun by foreign armies. Peace came only in 1862, when France negotiated a treaty to make Khmer (Cambodia) a French protectorate. Captain Doudart de Lagree negotiated this treaty on behalf of France with the then Khmer king.

In 1431 the Thais defeated Angkor and installed a puppet ruler to rule over the territories. In 1594 they took the Khmer capital, Lovek, and placed it under a military governor chosen from among their own ranks. They also established a degree of suzerainty over Cambodia. In 1618 Cambodia repudiated Thai control. Two years later the King of Cambodia, Jayajettha, married a Vietnamese princess of the Nguyen family of Hue. In 1623 she secured her husband's permission for Vietnam to set up a customs house at Prek Nokor, a site which is now called Saigon. This was an important event; for it sparked a rivalry between the Thais and the Vietnamese and eventually led to the Vietnamese colonization of the delta. In 1658, Jayajettha's eldest son (by the Vietnamese princess) succeeded to the Cambodian throne with the help of an army from Saigon. 35

The ruler of Saigon, Ang Non, twice attempted to seize the throne of Cambodia (in 1679 and 1682), but the Thais prevented him from doing so both times. 36

36 Ibid., p. 13.
In 1714 a Thai vassal ruler of Cambodia was driven out of Lovek by his uncle, Keo Fa, with the support of Vietnamese and Lao troops. Thailand sent forces to restore its vassal, but in vain. It sent military expeditions one after another. In 1717 it mobilized a very large army equipped with war junks and attacked the southern provinces of Cambodia. Even this came to nothing. However, a Thai force which followed the traditional land route and attacked Keo Fa's capital from the north-west was able to secure Keo Fa's submission. Keo Fa then offered his allegiance to Ayuthiya and was allowed to keep his throne. 37

When Ayuthiya was destroyed by the Burmese in 1767, Mac Thien Tu of Vietnam tried to take advantage of Thailand's misfortunes by placing a pro-Vietnamese ruler on the Cambodian throne. In 1769, the Thai King, Praya Tak, sent a force to remove the puppet ruler, but it was defeated. He then personally led an expedition against Hatien and destroyed it. He also drove the Vietnamese vassal king out of Cambodia and placed a candidate of his own choice on the Cambodian throne.

During the reign of King Chakri (by the end of the eighteenth century) cordial relations developed between Thailand and the Nguyen family of Hue. Prince Nguyen Phuoc Anh of Hue gave his sister in marriage to King Rama I of

37 Ibid. Also see Chakrabongse, n. 14, pp. 127-9.
Thailand. For the first time many Vietnamese came to settle in Thailand. Thereafter Thailand annexed Siam Reap (Angkor), Battambang, Sisophon, Monkolbaurey, and Korat on its Indo-Chinese borders. In 1794 King Chakri chose a pro-Nguyen heir to the Cambodian throne to please King Anh of Hue. In return King Anh helped Thailand in its efforts to deal with Burma. This friendship between Thailand and Vietnam had its effect upon Cambodia, too; for Cambodia adopted the practice of sending tributes to the rulers of both Vietnam and Thailand.

In the nineteenth century, there were fewer instances of rivalry between Thailand and Vietnam. The Europeans, with their sophisticated weapons, started coming into Southeast Asia and influencing the politics of the region. England and France vied with each other for colonies in mainland Southeast Asia. Thus a new alignment of political forces began to operate in the region.

**Thailand and Japan**

Relations between Thailand and Japan date back to the sixteenth century. In 1593 the Thai King had 500 Japanese soldiers in his army. European travellers of this period reported the existence of a large Japanese colony at Ayuthiya.

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38 Poole, n. 35, p. 13.
It was through these expatriates that Shogun Ieyasu of Japan learnt of Thailand's wealth and power. In 1593 Ieyasu asked the Thai King for cannon and scented wood. In exchange he offered three suits of armour and ten long swords. 40

It is said that the Japanese, both expatriates and others, wielded considerable influence in Thailand's internal affairs in the seventeenth century. 41 Some even obtained positions in the Government. For instance, there is the case of Kitani Kyuzaemon of Nagasaki. It is said that this man helped the Thais with crucial advice in overcoming the army of Ava (Burma). By way of reward he was later appointed to an exalted post in Thailand's administration. 42

A Nagasaki merchant, Tsuda Matazaemon by name, came to Thailand in the Keicho era (1596-1614). He is also said to have helped the Thais in beating back a Burmese invasion. The King of Thailand rewarded him by giving away his own daughter to him in marriage. 43

The Siamese-Dutch Treaty of 1664 gave the Dutch a practical monopoly of Thailand's foreign trade. It mentioned

40 Thompson, n. 21, p. 123.
Japanese merchants among those to be excluded from trade in Thailand. Thus it virtually snuffed out all relations between Thailand and Japan for many centuries.

Japanese-Thai relations were resumed in 1887, when Prince Devawongse, who was then Thailand's Foreign Minister, paid an official visit to Japan. He signed a Declaration of Friendship and a Treaty of Commerce with Japan on 26 September 1887. The two nations also decided to establish regular diplomatic relations between each other by appointing ambassadors and consuls.44

Yet another significant development occurred in Thai relations with Japan when, on 25 February 1898, a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation between the two countries was signed in Bangkok. By this treaty the subjects of either of the signatories residing in the territory of the other signatory became entitled to receive "full and entire protection of persons and property as well as full and entire freedom of commerce and navigation." 45

Japan's victory over Russia in 1905 excited widespread admiration in Southeast Asia. It exploded the myth of Western invincibility. It boosted the morale of the countries of Asia. Asians everywhere felt confident about their ability to defeat the Western Powers and manage their affairs themselves. Japan thereafter went on increasing its influence.

44 Ibid.
in the region. The Washington Conference of 1922 gave Japan a free hand in East Asia, and after the economic depression of 1929 Japan increased its trade enormously in the region.

Thailand increased its economic and political ties with Japan. It abstained when a motion to seek censure of Japan for invading Manchuria was debated and put to the vote in the League of Nations in 1937. Later on 8 December 1937, it signed a trade agreement with Japan. Under this agreement Japanese subjects gained in Thailand the right to own or lease houses, manufacturing plants, warehouses, cemeteries, and charitable institutions in the same way as the natives of Thailand.46

During the Second World War, Thailand was constrained to participate in the war on the side of Japan. Japanese troops landed in Thailand on 8 December 1941 and asked to be allowed passage for an invasion of Burma and Malaya. Finding no alternative, Thailand accepted the Japanese demand. It also agreed to sign a Japan-Siam Offensive-Defensive Pact on 11 December 1941. Thailand was assured of Japanese help in regaining the territories it had lost to Indo-China, Malaya, and Burma under the treaties of 1893, 1904, 1907, and 1909. Indeed Thailand obtained possession of those territories in August 1943 with the help of Japan.47 However, when the

46 Ibid.
Second World War formally came to an end on 2 September 1945, Thailand felt it politic to make suitable changes in policy in order to adjust to the new world order and restored to their respective countries all the territories it had gained through the Siam-Japan Treaty of August 1943.

**Early Contacts with the West: Thailand and Portugal**

The Portuguese were the first among the European peoples to come to Thailand. They arrived in 1511. Soon they established friendly relations and obtained the necessary permission to trade in Thailand. The Thais called them "Farang". In the second half of the sixteenth century a war broke out between Thailand and Burma, and about a hundred Portuguese volunteered to serve in the Thai Army. After the war, in which Thailand was victorious, the King of Thailand rewarded the Portuguese volunteers by giving them land on the west bank of the Chao Phraya River and by allowing them to build their homes there and also erect a church. 48

Thus the first European community and the Christian religion found a home in Thailand.

The Portuguese appear to have brought to Thailand three things—namely the art of making firearms, the art of using firearms in warfare, and the art of building fortifi-

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cations against firearms. 49

The Thais soon excelled in the art of firearms. It is said that in 1606 the Shogun of Japan thanked the King of Thailand for the firearms he had sent him and asked for more. 50

Thailand and Holland

The Dutch came to Thailand in connexion with their trade with China. They found Thailand useful for their trade. Early in the seventeenth century they established a factory at Ayuthiya. The Chief for Japan, Brouwer, opened this factory in 1613 and appointed Merchant Cornelius Van Nijenroode as its manager. 51 Ayuthiya offered a market for the sale of imported cloth and other manufactures. The Dutch purchased hides and skins and sapan wood here for sale in Japan, and rice for sale in Java. They also opened a branch of their establishment for the tin trade at Patani.

The Portuguese, who were already well established as traders in the region, grew jealous of the favours that the Dutch were receiving in Thailand. The King of Portugal, therefore, asked the Viceroy of Goa to send an embassy to the King of Thailand and request him to drive the Dutch out of his

49 Ibid., p. 2.
50 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
kingdom. But instead of complying with that request, the King of Thailand granted more and more facilities to the Dutch. He even gave them the island of Mergui at the mouth of the river Tenasserim.

When in 1620 Thailand was at war with Cambodia, Governor General Jan Pietersgeon Coen sent two vessels from Batavia to render assistance to the King of Thailand. A number of Dutch guns dating from those times can still be seen in front of the Ministry of Interior in Bangkok.

**Thailand and France**

French missionaries established themselves at Ayuthiya in 1662. They confined themselves at first to their mission of converting the Thais to Christianity. Constantine Pheulkon, the Chief Minister of the King of Thailand, was already a convert, and he naturally encouraged them in their activities.

Eventually the missionaries attracted the notice of the King of Thailand. They gave him an account of the greatness of Emperor Louis XIV of France and said that the French had defeated the Dutch in Europe. Encouraged by these missionaries the King of Thailand sent an ambassador, Phra

53 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
54 Ibid., p. 19.
Pipat Rachamaitri, to the Court of Louis XIV. One Father Gayme accompanied Phra Pipat Rachamaitri as interpreter. The party started from Ayuthiya on 24 December 1680 but perished on the way.  

In 1684 the King of Thailand sent two more emissaries, Khun Walit and Pichit, for the same purpose. These were escorted by a missionary called Father Vachat. On their arrival in Paris, they found that the Court was in no mood to send an envoy to Thailand. Thereupon Father Vachat made an appeal to the King to reconsider the question in the interest of the spread of Christianity. He assured the King that there was scope for conversions in Thailand. He also told him that Phaulkon, the favourite Chief Minister of the King of Thailand, had recently been converted by Portuguese Jesuits. The King of France then relented and received the Thai envoy.  

France sent M. de Chamount as Ambassador to Thailand on 22 September 1685. On his arrival in Thailand he received a warm reception. In his letter to King Phra Narej, Louis XIV acknowledged the hospitality the French missionaries were enjoying in Thailand.  

The activities of the French missionaries soon roused suspicions. The missionaries were regarded as men of intrigue bent on mischief. Their patron, constantine Phaulkon,

56 Ibid., also see Chakrabongse, n. 14, pp. 59-67.  
57 Chakrabongse, ibid.  
58 Bowring, n. 23, p. 354.
was brutally murdered for championing the French cause. The disturbances that followed resulted in French missionary activity being declared illegal.

Relations between the two countries snapped, and for many decades thereafter there was hardly any contact between them. In 1884, however, the French returned as conquerers. They took Tonkin and, as the predominant Power in Indo-China, sought territorial agreements with Thailand. They occupied the strategic Indo-Chinese province of Stung Treng on 1 April 1893 and the island of Khone on the following day. Next they set their eyes on Luang Prabang, Battambang, and Siemreap, which belonged to Thailand.

Auguste Pavie, the French Minister in Bangkok, sent a message to Foreign Minister Prince Devawongse of Thailand, asking him to vacate the territories left of the river Mekong, which included Luang Prabang. He also said that the French gunboats \textit{Inconstant} and \textit{Comete} would arrive at Paknam to support the French claim to Luang Prabang. Thailand replied that it would be illegal for the French to send any gunboat and that any such action by the French would be contrary to the spirit of all previous treaties between the two countries. There was no further correspondence. On 14 July 1893, the French gunboats, fully equipped with men and material, came up in the river Chao Phraya. When they reached Paknam, there were skirmishes between the Thai and French forces. However,

\footnote{Thompson, n. 21, p. 188.}
finding the French force far superior to his own, the King of Thailand, Chulalongkorn, called for a truce.  

France demanded all the territories on the left bank of the Mekong River, an indemnity of three million francs and punishment for those who had attacked French boats at Paknam. Thailand submitted to these terms. On 30 October 1893 a Siamese-French Treaty was signed. The Governor of Cochin-China, Le Mire de Villors, negotiated this treaty with Thailand. By this treaty France received three million francs by way of indemnity, together with some fifty thousand square miles of territory and specific advantages for its subjects in Thailand. Thailand also agreed to demilitarize its Indo-China frontier. France occupied Chentabun as a guarantee.

The Treaty of 1893 did not solve all the problems between the two countries. In the beginning of 1904 an Entente Cordiale was signed between Great Britain and France. Under this agreement the two countries apportioned spheres of influence to each other in Southeast Asia. As Thailand fell within the French sphere of influence, the French representatives, Delcasse, started negotiations with Phra Suriya, the Thai Minister in Paris, with a view to the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement. On 13 February 1904 these two countries agreed on the following:

60 Chakrabongse, n. 14, pp. 248-53.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
(a) Outright cession by Thailand of all its territories opposite Luang Prabang on the right bank of the Mekong River to France;

(b) exclusive right to the French to construct railway lines on the right bank of the Mekong, from Phnom Penh to Battambang; and

(c) extraterritorial rights to French citizens in Thailand. 63

The French Parliament was not, however, satisfied with this new treaty and refused to ratify it. It expressed its disapproval of the decision to renounce French rights over Chentabum and the 25-kilometre zone. Fresh negotiations with Thailand followed. By the Protocol of 29 June 1904 Thailand agreed to give Trat or Krat in exchange for the French evacuation of Chentabum and the district of Kentao near Chiangkarn. 64

The new line of frontier cut off Trat or Krat from the Thai Kingdom. The French tried to impose the Cambodian language, laws, and customs on the new territory, but abandoned the attempt when they found that the people of Trat were wholly Thai and could not be assimilated to the language, ways, and customs of Cambodia. 65 The language became a great barrier between the people and the new administrators.

Lieutenant-Colonel F. Bernard, who headed the boundary commission set up to divide the territories between Thailand

63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid. Also see M.L. Manich Jumsai, History of Thailand and Cambodia (Bangkok, 1970), pp. 199-200.
and Indo-China faced many problems. He, therefore, returned to France and proposed new plans to solve the border problems with Thailand. 66 The Government of France accepted them in November 1906. Then, in Bangkok, he initiated fresh negotiations with Thailand over the border problems.

Finally the two countries signed a treaty on 23 March 1907. Under this treaty Thailand ceded the three provinces of Battambang, Siemreap, and Sisophon to France. In return Thailand got the district of Dansai and the province of Trat, with all the islands situated to the south of Lem Ling up to and including Koh Kut. The French Government also relinquished its jurisdiction over French citizens. It agreed to their being judged either by the ordinary Thai courts or by an international court. 67

Thus Thailand settled its problems with France. In 1943, though Thailand got back Luang Prabang, Battambang, Siemreap, and Sisophon for a temporary period, it agreed to part with those territories after Japan surrendered to the Allied forces.

**Thailand and Britain**

By the beginning of the nineteenth century Britain had already gained considerable influence in South Asia. It controlled Malacca, Malaya, Singapore, and Burma. When

66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
it acquired Tenasserim, Tavoy, Martaban, and Arakan (Burma) by the treaty of 24 February 1826, it felt the need for territorial and commercial agreements with Thailand, which had survived as an independent country in the midst of colonized Malaya, Burma, and Indo-China. Thailand had Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, and Trengganu under its control at that time. There were periodical requisitions of money and supplies on behalf of Thailand in these territories. The rulers of these territories wanted to send only the triennial dispatch of the Bunga Mas (a token of respect, friendship, and awe) to the Government of Thailand. When, therefore, the sultans of Kelantan and Trengganu approached the British authorities in Malaya and informed them that they wanted some concessions in the taxes they were paying to Thailand, the British Government appointed Captain Henry Burney as envoy to Bangkok and charged him with the task of sorting out all these problems with Thailand.

Captain Burney succeeded in coming to an agreement with Thailand in 1826. Article 12 of the treaty that was signed thereafter stated that:

Siam shall not go and obstruct or interrupt commerce in the states of Trengganu and Kelantan. English merchants shall have trade and intercourse in future with the same facility and freedom as they have heretofore had. The English shall not go and molest and attack or disturb those states upon any pretence whatsoever. 68

68 Thompson, n. 21, pp. 150-4.
69 Ibid.
The treaty released British merchants from all restrictions except the obligation to pay the customary duties. The British gained the right to trade freely in Thailand without official opposition.

Thailand agreed to keep its hands off Persak. Britain made a reciprocal promise, adding that Selangor would not be permitted to attack Persak. The sultan of Selangor was to govern his state as he pleased. What was more, he was to send the Bunga Mas to Bangkok only if he cared to do so. Thailand was free to send diplomatic missions to Persak. The only restriction in the matter was that no such mission should exceed fifty men. 71

After the signing of this treaty Britain further strengthened its commercial and political relations with Thailand. In 1842 it defeated the Chinese Empire. This impressed upon Thailand the need for extra vigilance in the maintenance of its independence. King Mongkut (1851-68) of Thailand decided to develop friendly relations with the British. At the same time he opened the door to other European influences in Thailand.

In 1855 Thailand concluded a Treaty of Friendship and Commerce with Britain. Queen Victoria conferred on Sir John Bowring plenary powers to negotiate a treaty on behalf of Britain. In token thereof, her sign manual was affixed to

70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
his documents.

Under this treaty -

(a) British subjects gained the right to trade freely in all seaports, to reside permanently in Bangkok, to buy and rent property in the environs of Bangkok, and to travel freely in the interior;

(b) they also gained the right to trade directly with individual Siamese;

(c) import duty was fixed at 3 per cent ad valorem for all articles, with two exceptions - namely (i) opium, which was exempted from duty but which was to be sold only to the opium concessionaire, and (ii) bullion, which was also exempted from duty;

(d) articles for export were to be taxed only once (whether inland, transit, or export), and duties were specified on practically all major and minor products of the country; and

(e) the Siamese Government reserved the right to prohibit the export of salt, fish, and rice whenever these articles were scarce. 72

An important concession that the British gained through this treaty was extraterritorial rights. The treaty provided that a British Consul should reside in Bangkok and exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction over all British

72 For the full text of the treaty, see Appendix 1. Also see Chakrabongse, n. 14, pp. 197-201.
citizens in Thailand. This meant that British citizens would be free from the jurisdiction of Thai courts in Thailand and be answerable to the British Consul in Bangkok alone. 73

The treaty was epoch-making; for it attracted the attention of other European Powers. In the next few years Thailand was obliged to sign similar treaties with many of them: with France and the United States in 1856; with Denmark in 1856; with Portugal in 1860; and with Prussia in 1862. In 1868, John Bowring himself was commissioned to conclude such treaties on behalf of Thailand with Belgium, Italy, Norway, and Sweden.

The British derived immense benefit from their treaty. The British Bombay Burma Corporation entered the teak industry in the forests of Northern Thailand. Singapore and Hong Kong began to trade with Thai ports heavily. Of all foreign Powers, it was Britain which made the largest capital investment in Thailand. 74

Another important development in Thai-British relations was the treaty of 1909. When France concluded a treaty with Thailand in 1907 and got Battambang, Siemreap, and Sisophon, Britain also felt encouraged to demand Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, Trengganu, and Pattani from Thailand. Under pressure Thailand signed a treaty with Britain in 1909 for settling

73 Chakrabongse, ibid.
74 Ibid.
territorial problems. Under this treaty Thailand transferred to
Britain its sovereign rights over Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, and
Trengganu— an area of about twenty thousand square miles.
Britain at the same time gave up its extraterritorial rights in
Thailand. During the Japanese occupation of Southeast Asia
in the Second World War, Thailand got back Kedah, Perlis,
Kelantan, and Trengganu for a temporary period, but it return­
ted those territories to Britain as soon as the war was
over.

**Thailand and Russia**

During the nineteenth century Thailand tried to forge
friendly relations with Russia. It was reported as early as
1865 that Thailand was eager to establish close contacts with
Russia. Officers of the Russian ships calling at Bangkok
conveyed to their Government in Moscow the message that Thailand
was willing to enter into official relations. It is even said
that in 1882 Thailand formally offered a Treaty of Commerce
to the Russians. It came to nothing as the Russians showed no
particular interest. Thai willingness to develop close rela­
tions was again demonstrated in 1891, when a Thai mission led
by Prince Damrong went to St Petersburg to negotiate a treaty.

The mission failed.

75 Thompson, n. 21, p. 166.
76 Andrei Lovenov-Rostovsky, *Russia and Asia* (New York, 1933),
p. 208.
However, by mid 1891, there was a distinct change in the political and economic climate of Russia, and the Russians sought to reverse their old policy of neutrality in international affairs.

One reason why Russia became interested in Southeast Asia was that it had concluded an alliance with France that very year and had pledged its support to France in the Anglo-French competition for power and influence in the region of Southeast Asia. Another reason was the need to find markets for the surplus oil produced at the Baku Oil Fields. 77

In order to express the newly found Russian interest in friendly relations with Thailand, the Russian Crown Prince, who later became Tsar Nicholas II, was deputed to pay a visit to Thailand. He arrived in Bangkok in 1891 and was enthusiastically received. King Chulalongkorn held the view that friendly relations with Russia, then a Great Power, were in the interests of his country. He paid a State visit to Russia in 1897. He hoped to persuade the Russians to counsel France against pressing new claims upon Thailand. 78 During this visit Tsar Nicholas invited the King of Thailand to send one of his sons to live in St Petersburg and receive education there. King Chulalongkorn accepted the invitation and sent Prince Chakrabongse, a son of his favourite wife.

77 Ibid.
78 Dhiravegin, n. 19, p. 32.
Sagowbha, to Russia in 1898. The Prince stayed in Russia until 1906, and relations between the two dynasties continued to be warm. 79

In 1898, when France began to harass Thailand with apparently unending claims, King Chulalongkorn once again sent Prince Damrong to St Petersburg to deliver a personal letter to the Tsar. He requested the Tsar for his assistance in dealing with the French and in persuading them to cease their encroachments on the Thai borders with Indo-China. Tsar Nicholas, now an important ally of France, strongly urged France to moderate its claims with regard to Thailand. 80

The Damrong mission also succeeded in establishing diplomatic relations between Russia and Thailand. In 1899 Russia sent its first diplomatic representative to Bangkok. In 1911 the Grand Duke Boris represented the Tsar at the coronation of Rama VI.

However, in October 1917, when Russia became Communist, relations between the two countries were suspended. They remained so till the end of the Second World War.

Thailand and the United States

Compared with their Portuguese, Dutch, French and British counterparts, US traders in Thailand were not exploitative.


80 Chakrabongse, n. 14, p. 250.
The first Americans to arrive in Thailand were missionaries. They came in 1823 and introduced many useful things in Thailand, including the art of printing Thai letters.\(^1\) Thanks to the enterprise of an Englishman called Captain Low, a printing plant for the Thai script had come up at Calcutta in India. Later this plant was transferred to Singapore. In 1836 US missionaries went to Singapore and brought it to Bangkok. Again, it was US missionaries who, in 1837, gave Thailand the boon of vaccination against small pox. They also started the first newspaper, the Bangkok Recorder, in 1844.\(^2\)

During the Second World War Thailand and the United States co-operated with each other in ousting the Japanese, who had virtually occupied Thailand. The Japanese had made Thailand a springboard from which to launch attack upon the rest of Southeast Asia. The Japanese encouraged Thailand to pursue racist and dictatorial policies. A decree, passed on 10 June 1942, reserved twenty-seven trade and professions exclusively for the Thais. These professions included even hair-dressing and brick manufacture. People of Chinese origin permanently settled in Thailand were excluded from residence in certain areas of the Thai cities. Many Thai intellectuals resented Japanese interference in the affairs of

\(^1\) Rajanubhab, n. 43, p. 7.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Dhiravegin, n. 19, p. 199. Also see Nuechterlein, n. 7, p. 69.

\(^4\) Nuechterlein, ibid.
their country. They organized a resistance movement, called the Free Thai Movement (FTM), aimed at ousting the Japanese and overthrowing the dictatorial regime in Thailand. The United States co-operated with the leaders of the FTM. Members of the FTM were trained mostly in the United States, and by the end of 1944 there were ten thousand of them. In Thailand proper, a guerrilla force of some fifty thousand was raised to fight the Japanese. The FTM established contacts with US forces and assisted them in fighting against Japan. Thus the United States and Thailand co-operated with each other for a common objective. As a result, Thailand won the goodwill and appreciation of the United States and vice versa. US co-operation with the FTM laid the foundations of a durable friendship between the two countries.
