

บทคัดย่อ

## **King Chulalongkorn – A First True Honorary European**

เคลาร์เพเทอร์ ชัมลเลนบาค

บทปาฐกถาพิเศษนี้กล่าวโดยสังเขปเกี่ยวกับพระปรีชาสามารถของพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวที่ได้ทรงดำเนินนโยบายทางการทูตอย่างชาญฉลาด ทำให้ให้สยามรอดพ้นการตกเป็นอาณานิคมของมหาอำนาจตะวันตก โดยใช้นโยบายผูกมิตรกับยุโรปและให้ความสนใจปรับปรุงพัฒนาประเทศตามแบบอย่างตะวันตก ในขณะที่ยังคงสามารถธำรงรักษามรดกวัฒนธรรมไทยไว้ได้อย่างดี การที่พระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวทรงพระปรีชาสามารถเจริญพระราชไมตรีระหว่างราชวงศ์ในยุโรปและราชสำนักสยามเป็นผลสำเร็จระหว่างเสด็จประพาสยุโรปครั้งแรก ปี พ.ศ. 2440 ทั้งที่หลายประเทศขณะนั้นมีได้เป็นมิตรกับสยามเท่าที่ควรในขั้นแรก แสดงให้เห็นถึงพระอัจฉริยภาพของพระองค์อย่างแท้จริง ความใส่ใจพระทัยในศิลปะขนบธรรมเนียมประเพณีของยุโรปเป็นที่ประทับใจของผู้บรรยายอย่างยิ่ง ถึงกับมีทัศนะว่า พระบาทสมเด็จพระเจ้าอยู่หัวรัชกาลที่ห้าทรงมีพระราชจริยวัตรเสมือนหนึ่งเป็น “ชาวยุโรปแท้จริงพระองค์แรก”

เนื้อหาของคำบรรยายครอบคลุมหัวข้อใหญ่สามหัวข้อ ตามลำดับ คือ 1) สถานการณ์ในเอเชียและยุโรปในรัชสมัยของพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว สมัยการเมืองยุคอาณานิคมกำลังเฟื่องฟู 2) นโยบายการทูตเพื่อสร้างสัมพันธภาพอันดีระหว่างสยามและยุโรปของพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว อันเป็นกุญแจสำคัญนำไปสู่ความสำเร็จแห่งรัชสมัยของพระองค์ 3) ความร่วมมือระดับรัฐในการเสริมสร้างสันติภาพและความเจริญร่วมกันระหว่างยุโรปและประเทศไทยใน

วารสารยุโรปศึกษา

สมัยปัจจุบัน เพื่อดำเนินตามแบบอย่างที่พระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว  
ทรงเคยปฏิบัติมาแล้วไว้ นั่นคือ การประสานความร่วมมือฉันมิตรระหว่างประเทศใน  
เอเชียและยุโรป โดยอาศัยหลักความเข้าใจซึ่งกันและกัน

**King Chulalongkorn – A First True Honorary European** \*  
H.E. Klauspeter Schmallenbach \*\*

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Professors,  
Distinguished guests,  
Sawadee-Krap,

It always gives me great joy to attend an event hosted by the Centre for European Studies at Chulalongkorn University. Most of you will know that we have had the privilege of co-operating with the Centre for many years. Consequently it was without hesitation that we decided to support a project dedicated to the King whose name was given to this university and who is remembered as one of Thailand's most outstanding monarchs.

That is why I am grateful for the invitation to say a few words today.

My gratitude goes to the President of Chulalongkorn University, Professor Dr. Tatchai Sumitra. Also, my thanks go to Professor Dr. Charit, the Director of the Centre for European Studies, for his

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\* Special remarks from the International Colloquium "*The First Visit of King Chulalongkorn to Europe in 1897*" on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2004 at Room 105, Maha Chulalongkorn Building, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok.

\*\* Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Thailand (2001 – 2004)

tireless efforts in promoting academic and personal links between the European Union and Thailand.

My special appreciation goes – of course – to my dear friend Professor Dr. Pornsan Watanangura, whose prolific writing illustrates so well the importance of our EU - Thailand relationship.

As we will listen to many distinguished scholars in the course of this seminar, I will limit myself to highlighting only a few issues:

- I would like to briefly touch upon the Asian and European landscapes at the time of King Rama V,
- Then look at the King's approach towards Europe. This is from where I derived the title of my presentation, as I consider his efforts and achievements in building relations with Europe as being key to his successful reign,
- And, finally, let me speculate about what King Chulalongkorn would see as important when looking at today's Europe.

King Chulalongkorn reigned during a challenging time. On the one hand he realised the necessity to continue the modernisation and the opening-up of Siam, initiated by King Mongkut.

On the other hand he had to face the challenge of pursuing this idea without compromising the internal stability and the external independence of his kingdom.

This was a huge task, and the King had hardly any models to follow, and certainly not an Asian model. Basically, there was only one thing all Asian nations had in common: they had to face

colonialist rule or military pressure from outside, and the Asians had to look for an answer themselves. But a closer look shows a detailed and different picture:

Japan had been forced by an outside power to open the country to the world. This pressure led to two responses: externally, Japan turned to Europe. But the main response was an internal one: the ensuing modernisation of Japan became known as the Meiji revolution, and it was accompanied by an important power shift back to the Tenno, ending the old Shogun regime.

China was in a different situation. Following tradition, there was China, and then there was the rest of the world – the idea of a community of nations was inconceivable for the Chinese mind at the time. Therefore, the Western world's attempts failed to undermine what they considered to be restrictive trading and government regulations. Internally, the weakened Qing dynasty was confronted with rebellions sprouting all over the country. The overall policy response was defensive, at best.

And, finally, India was still firmly under colonial rule, with today's Myanmar being part of British India. Likewise, Indochina was under French domination.

Against this background, the King had to shape a policy, fending off colonialist pressure and modernising the country with some support from outside.

While Siam was forced to give up some territory to France and Great Britain, the King introduced legal reforms, schools, roads,

railways, and the country's first post offices. He overhauled the administration of Siam to a form of cabinet government with twelve ministers.

The results of this policy are still visible today: we see a modern Thailand, a democratic country, and the only nation between Indonesia and Palestine to have withstood the forces of colonial hegemony. Thai society could and did preserve much of its cultural richness. No wonder that these most remarkable achievements are still in vivid memory today. I myself have witnessed people laying wreaths in memory of the King called “Phra Piya Maharaj”.

Europe played a key role and served as a reference point in the King's policy of modernisation and reform. King Chulalongkorn's two visits to Europe (1897 and 1907) – as different as they were in purpose – document not only the political and diplomatic wisdom of the King, but also his genuine interest in European art, culture, lifestyle and politics. Building relations with European powers – some of which were not at all genuinely friendly toward Siam – was a task requiring considerable skills.

But these skills made him in my view a “true European”:

- building constructive and much closer relations even with difficult European counterparts (much as Robert Schuman and Konrad Adenauer did over half a century ago),
- while preserving the values of his own motherland during its modernisation[61].

Which Europe did Chulalongkorn experience?

At the turn of the century, the old continent saw a cultural boom unheard of until then. Music, literature, architecture and visual arts were flourishing in European cities. It was also a time of big technological progress and the establishment of modern mass transport and communication systems. London, Paris, and Vienna were about to build the first underground mass transit systems – as Bangkok is doing today.

Politically, Chulalongkorn encountered in Europe a mosaic of nation States, dominated by Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. It was the Europe that had “invented” nationalism, the most successful political force of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and on the brink of turning into dreadful national chauvinism.

Nationalism created identities and gave states a legitimate base. But it required uniformity and haunted Europe until very recently, not only in the Balkans, as an “ethnic” or exclusive nationalism. Furthermore, nationalist ideas were exported worldwide, in one way or another.

King Rama V saw a Europe that would still have to go through the catastrophes of two world wars. It was the continent that still had to suffer from a very painful learning process before adopting a new approach that would lead to European integration. At this time, most European states defined their relations with the outside world by means of military power. This approach was aggressively accompanied by expansionist policies and the establishment of colonies and dependent territories even in the remotest parts of the world.

It was the first full-size era of globalisation, radiating from Europe, and powered by improved means of transport and the hunger for economic expansion.

I mentioned earlier that Britain and France in particular had strong rivalling interests in SE-Asia. Siam was surrounded by British Burma and French Indochina. All this – the overall political atmosphere as well as the hard facts on the ground – makes clear how delicate King Chulalongkorn's task was when he embarked on his state visit to fourteen European countries in April 1897.

Even though King Chulalongkorn's trip could not prevent the making of territorial concessions vis-à-vis the colonial powers, the achievements of this trip are nevertheless remarkable. King Rama V led Siam into the international arena and managed to gain international recognition for his kingdom. This was possible because King Chulalongkorn understood Europe.

A small, yet important example documents this well: ahead of his trip to Europe, the King decided that he and his entourage should wear western clothes during their stay, and respect European, rather than Thai, court etiquette. This decision was certainly not made out of insecurity or weakness. It is more likely that King Chulalongkorn had realised that in the Europe of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, most exotic things were considered interesting but sometimes also inferior. In other words: the King knew about the narrow-mindedness that ruled some political circles and drew his own conclusions.



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The friendly reception he and his delegation experienced in all countries – even in France – and the establishment of long-lasting bonds with European royal families give evidence of the King's successful strategy. He won respect wherever he went without neglecting Siam's political interests.

Since then, more than one hundred years have passed. And no doubt, King Chulalongkorn's Europe of 1897 was profoundly different from today's. The concept of the mighty, sovereign nation state has weakened. It has given way to the concept of European integration.

The process of European integration – unthinkable at the time of King Chulalongkorn – has created a Europe at peace and led to a new European identity. Former enemies have turned into partners and embarked on a process of ever-closer cooperation.

Soon, ten new member states will join the European Union. Soon – or should I say sooner or later – we will also give ourselves a European Constitution. The European Union, in short, is the greatest peace project ever undertaken.

And while military power defined relations between Europe and the then outside world, Europe has today an honest desire to base our relations on partnership, cooperation, mutual respect and understanding. Today, Europe wants to see the rule of law maintained and fully respected in international relations.

Most of the achievements of European integration have not come easily. The fact that we manage to address conflicts in a

democratic manner, and that the process of European integration still advances, is proof enough that the spirit of cooperation and partnership is prevailing.

This spirit of cooperation is not limited to internal European matters. The “mentality of cooperation” also rules our thinking and our interaction with third countries. The European Union is certainly not – and will hopefully never become – an inward-looking giant.

Let me give you an example of how we continue to take great interest in our relations with Southeast Asia in general and with Thailand in particular.

A few months ago, the European Commission released “A New Partnership with Southeast Asia”, and all of its member states actively endorsed it. This document reflects our belief that our relations with SE Asia should be comprehensive and reach beyond trade, tourism and development cooperation.

What we want is a deepening of our dialogue on all levels. We want to emphasize the many features and values that unite us while maintaining respect for cultural and religious diversity. This is no theoretical exercise. A concrete result is the beginning of exploratory talks with our Thai partners on the possibility of concluding a comprehensive bilateral cooperation agreement.

King Chulalongkorn did not find the same favourable conditions for cooperation and partnership when he first travelled to Europe in 1897.

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All the more reason then that his efforts to build constructive relations with Europe deserve recognition and respect.

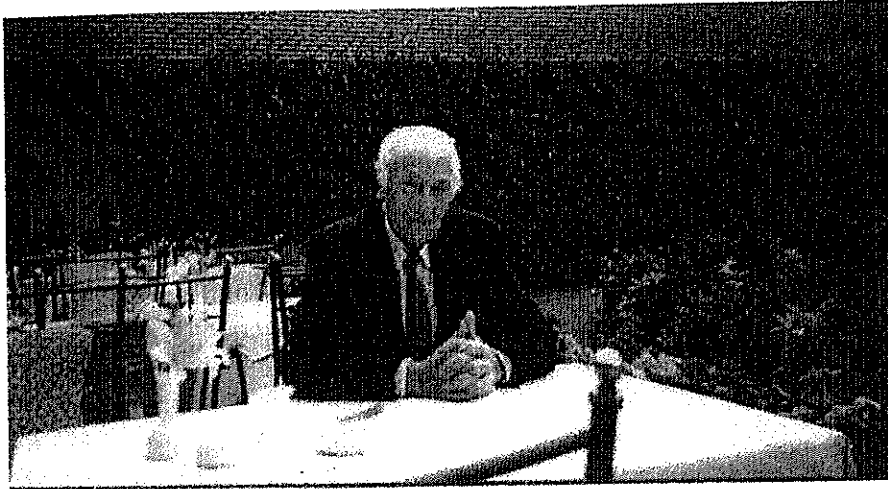
The King spent nine months in Europe and visited 14 countries. Even though it is difficult to measure Chulalongkorn's contribution to the building of modern relations between Thailand and Europe in figures or time spent, it documents the monarch's enormous commitment to building bridges. Therefore, it is certainly right to call Chulalongkorn "a first true honorary European".

If King Rama V could look at Europe today, I am certain he would be the first to applaud the European peace project, which we call the EU. He would certainly welcome European integration. He certainly would hail the principles governing the EU: the rule of law, the respect for human rights, and the spirit of co-operation and partnership with SE Asia. He would be aware of today's form of globalisation, with its chances, challenges and perils.

More than one hundred years ago, King Chulalongkorn gave us an example, which has not lost its validity.

If Thais and Europeans follow his example and work on our bilateral relations with the same commitment and endurance, we can expect the very best for the quality of our future relations.

Thank you very much. Khob Khun Maak Krap.



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