



KINGS OF SIAM FROM THE CHAKRI DYNASTY

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King Rama I



(1782-1809)

His Majesty King Phutthayotfa Chulalok, or **Rama I**, was a great general. The new King of Siam was also an accomplished statesman, a lawmaker, a poet and a devout Buddhist. His reign has been called a "reconstruction" of the Thai state and Thai culture, using Ayutthaya, the old capital, as model, but at the same time not slavishly imitating all things Ayutthayan. He established the present capital of Bangkok in 1782 and found the Royal House of Chakri, of which the ruling Monarch, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, is the ninth Rama. The aspect of his reign has been interpreted as a major change in the intellectual outlook of the Thai elite, or a re-orientation of the Thai world view. During his reign, attacks from nearby enemies were frequent, but he was able to defeat the enemies as well as counter attacks. At this time, Chiang Mai was added to the Thai Kingdom, and the Malay states of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu all sent tribute to King Rama I. The recovery of the Thai state's place and prestige in the region was one of King Rama I's major achievements.

born: 20 March 1736; King for 27 years;
died age: 74

King Rama II



King Rama I's son, **His Majesty King Phutthaloetla Naphalai** or **Rama II**, acceded to the throne peacefully and was fortunate to have inherited the crown during a time of stability. His Reign was remarkable for the heights attained by Thai poetry, particularly in the works by the King himself and of Sunthorn Phu, one of the court poets. The reigns of King Rama II

(1809-1824)

and his two sons, Rama III and IV, marked the first stage in the Thai kingdom's dealings with the West during the age of Imperialism.

born: 24 February 1767; King for 15 years;
died age: 58

King Rama III



(1824-1851)

His Majesty King Nangklao, or **Rama III**, refused to acknowledge the claims of Western powers to increase shares in the Thai trade, but he was a shrewd ruler. He upheld Buddhism above all, but at the same time, allowed Christian missionaries to work in the Kingdom.

born: 31 March 1787; King for 26 years;
died age: 64

King Rama IV



(1851-1868)

On the other hand, **His Majesty King Monkut**, or **Rama IV**, was the first Chakri King to embark seriously on reforms based on Western models in which he concentrated largely on the technological and organizational aspects of reform. Road buildings, canal diggings, ship building, the reorganization of the Thai army and administration, and the minting of money to meet demands of a growing monetary economy were the main changes during his reign. He was also an accomplished astronomer. He predicted the coming of an eclipse during his reign, and organized a group of astrologers, both foreign and Thai, to witness the spectacular event. He also started the modernisation process of Thailand, which was dutifully continued by his son.

born: 18 October 1804; King for 16 years;
died age: 66

■ *King Rama V*

King Monkut's son, **His Majesty King Chulalongkorn**, or **Rama V**, came to the throne at the age of 16 and died as one of



(1868-1910)

Siam's most loved and revered kings, after a remarkable reign of 42 years. Modern Thailand may be said to be a product of the comprehensive and progressive reforms of his reign, for these touched almost every aspects of Thai life. The King faced the western world with an eager attitude, and adapted some Western ideas and inventions in progressing Thailand to a modern and up-to-date future. He was the first King to travel to the Western countries and avoided Thailand from being colonized through careful negotiations with the English, French and Portuguese. He also travelled extensively throughout his kingdom for he was passionately interested in his subjects' welfare and was intent on the monarchy assuming a more visible role in society. During his reign, communications system was revolutionized, the post and telegraph services were introduced and a railway network was built. Such advances enabled the central government to improve its control over outlying provinces.

born: 20 September 1853; King for 42 years; died age: 58

■ *King Rama VI*



(1910-1925)

King Chulalongkorn's son and heir, **His Majesty King Vajiravudh**, or **Rama VI**, was the first Thai king to have been educated abroad, in his case at Harrow School and Oxford in England. He was notable for his accomplishments as a poet, dramatist and polemicist, and was notable in the modernization of the educational system. He set up Vajiravudh College, the first English public school style boarding school and Chulalongkorn University.

born: 1 January 1880; King for 16 years; died age: 46

■ *King Rama VII*

His Majesty King Prajadhipok, or **Rama VII**, was also the son of Rama V and the younger brother of Rama VI. He was a



(1925-1934)

liberal and a conscientious man. He was well aware of the desirability of establishing Siam in the international political community as a country with a modern and liberal constitutional system of government. He finally granted a system of constitutional monarchy in 1932, which after hundreds of years, ended the absolute monarchy in Siam. He abdicated in 1935 and lived quietly in England until his death in 1941.

born: 8 November 1893; King for 9 years;
died age: 48

King Rama VIII



(1934-1946)

The new king was **His Majesty King Ananda Mahidol**, or **Rama VIII**, then a ten-year-old grandson of Rama V. He was very much loved by the people, but due to his young age, was mostly away pursuing his studies in Switzerland. During his absence, the People's Party was left relatively free in shaping the destiny of a kingdom. King Ananda Mahidol returned to Thailand in 1945, and unexpectedly died in 1946.

born: 20 September 1925; King for 13
years; died age: 21

■ **King Rama IX**



(1946-present)

King Ananda's younger brother, **His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej** became **Rama IX**, who is the present king of the Thai kingdom. He is much loved and revered. In 1996, His Majesty became the longest reigning monarch in the history of Thailand and currently the world. The Thai people threw a big celebration in commemoration of his 50th year on the throne, and the celebration continues until this day. In 1999, the Thai people also saw another big celebration, one that celebrated the 72nd birthday of the King, which is an extremely auspicious year for the Thais people, representing the 6th cycle (of 12

years) of a person's life.

born: 5 December 1927; Celebrated 60
years on the Throne (Diamond Jubilee) in
2006; Currently the longest reigning
Monarch in the world