

Thesis Title The Presentation of Tikā Petitions to the
King and the Establishment of the Supreme
Court of siam, 1874-1912. * .

Name Nanthaka Pollachai

Concentration History of Southeast Asia

Department History

Academic Year 1989

Abstract

This thesis purports to study the process in which the reorganization of Siamese judicial proceedings led to King Chulalongkorn's relinquishing of his nominal role as supreme judge and his sole privilege in considering tikā petitions. According to tradition, since Sukhothai times. The kings are expected to pay close attention to all the tikās and pass judgements over them. This study examines whether it was in reality possible for the kings to perform their duties effectively in providing justice to the petitioners. It also analyzes the various factors which came to influence, during the transitional period, the establishment of the so-called Sān Rāp Sāng. "Court of the King's Judgements", which functioned more or less like a Sān Tikā, "Supreme Court", and the subsequent transfer of the Sān Tikā to the newly-established Ministry

of Justice.

The result of this study reveals that whether a king in the past would discern the importance of the tikās and their implications concerning the welfare of his subjects depended very much on his character. King Chulalongkorn apparently placed much emphasis on examining tikās before passing his final judgements. Owing to the increase volume of work and unsurmountable obstacles, the king on his own initiative delegated his judicial power to the Ministry of Justice and authorized the Sān Tikā judges to act on his behalf. The king only retained his judicial responsibility in matters thought to be of political nature. The purpose of this change was to enable the separation between the judicial and administrative powers in the government. It was then hoped that the reorganization of the Siamese judiciary would provide the plaintiffs with better justice, and this should raise the status and integrity of Siamese Courts in the eyes of the West. Since then, the Sān Tikā has remained the Supreme Court of the country.

The study also finds that a large number of tikās presented for the king's perusal contained allegations of various matters against certain member of the royal family, high-ranking government officials, and member of the existing judiciary. These petitions seem to have

provided King Chulalongkorn with invaluable evidence of his subjects' bad social conditions, and prompted him to reform Siamese judicial system. Besides, they serve as indispensable data for one to look at the administration and socio-economic conditions of Siam between 1974-1912.