

SURAWUT PUDTHAISONG: POLITICAL POWER AND POLITICAL RESOURCES:
A CASE STUDY OF KING RAMA I (1782-1809). THESIS ADVISOR :
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This thesis aims at studying the nature of political resources, its utilization, mode of acquisition and transformation of political resources during the reign of King Rama I.

The study shows that constituent parts of political resources incorporate wealth deriving mostly from trade with China; manpower coming from efficient management of traditional recruited persons; capability of King Rama I to recruit courtier and relatives to serve him since he was serving King Taksin; Bhuddhism as the mainspring of Dharmaraja concept to legitimize his acquisition of power; and the control of vassalage which provides him as sources of goods, manpower, and prestige.

On utilization of power, it is found out that both means of direct use of power as in case of the execution of King Taksin and indirect use of power by means of arbitration as in case of act of incorporation of Lanna territory, by means of divide and rule and balance of power as in case of the control of southern territory and Malaya. King Rama I also makes use of his authority through royal edicts.

What is borne out through the study is that when situation changes, level of importance and content of certain political resources changes as well. This is testified by the higher priority of the battle quality, administrative quality and generosity as shown in the case of Chao Phya Chakri. These are qualities contributing to his ascension to the highest position and becoming king which are different from what are needed during the Ayudhya and Dhonburi periods where by being member of the royal lineage is most important. Religion is extensively made use of as political resource specifically on the concept of Dharmaraja which is manifested in legal aspect, Bhuddhist literature, reformation of the Sangha, and the purification of the Tri Pitaka, all of which are different from what was done in the past.