

KING RAMA V'S INCOGNITO VISIT TO SAMUT SONGKHRAM PROVINCE IN 1904

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the result of documentary study, in combination with field surveys, in tracing the routes and places visited by King RAMA V during his incognito visit to Samut Songkram Province in 1904. The result of the study reveals that most of those routes and places still exist today. Though some minor canals have become shallow or narrower trespassing and though some places are in a dilapidated state, they still satisfactorily portray the events that took place during the royal incognito visit. The remaining historic routes and places play a significant role in local history. They are invaluable cultural heritages of Samut Songkram Province that should be conserved.

Keywords : *King Rama V / incognito visit / Sadej prapat ton / Samut Songkram*

INTRODUCTION

Samut Songkhram Province, or Muang Samut Songkhram as it was known in the past, is renowned for the significant role it has played in Thai history, especially in its involvement with the royal founding father of the Chakri Dynasty. The province was once a place of residence of King Rama I, then serving in the position of Luang Yokkrabut of Ratchaburi, during the time when the Ayutthaya Kingdom was under Burmese rule. It was also the birthplace of King Rama II, as well as his mother Somdetphra Amarintramataya, and royal consort Somdetphra Srisuriyanetramataya. Subsequently, a number of monarchs of the Chakri Dynasty have paid visits to this province, the most notable of all being the incognito visit of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) in 1904. On that occasion he was accompanied by senior members of the royal family and high ranking court officials. Among those included in the royal entourage were King Rama VI, then the Crown Prince, H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupab, H.R.H. Prince Nakhonsawan Vorapinit, H.R.H. Krom Luang Nakhon Ratchasima, H.R.H. Princess Sukhumalmarasri, H.R.H. Krom Luang Srirattanakosin, and Chaophraya Surawongwattanasak (Toh Bunnag).¹

This article aims at presenting the results of a survey of the routes and places in Samut Songkhram Province visited by King Chulalongkorn in 1904. The information was compiled by means of document analyses and field surveys, based mainly on the chronicles of H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupab (*Chodmai Het Sadej Praprat Ton*) and the article entitled ‘Tracing the Royal Footsteps of the Royal Incognito Visit to Samut Songkhram’ published in “*Amphawa*”, a special edition of the academic journal published by the Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University. Apart from these two major sources, existing documents and literature, old maps, images, and interviews of local residents were also utilized to ensure breadth and depth as well as to verify the data collected. (*Figure 1*)

REASONS BEHIND THE ROYAL INCOGNITO VISIT

Prince Damrong Rajanupab’s explains the origins of his chronicles compiled on the occasion when he was among the entourage of King Chulalongkorn’s visit to Samut Songkhram in Rattanakosin Era 123(1904). The trip, known in Thai as ‘*Kan Sadej Praprat Ton*’, was widely accepted to be particularly more interesting and entertaining than the other trips made during the reign of King Rama V. King Vajiravudh (Rama VI), who was then the Crown Prince, had commissioned Prince Damrong to author the chronicles, with permission graciously granted by King Chulalongkorn, in 1905, for publication in a monthly journal by the name of ‘*Taweepanya*’.²

So as to make the narration of the events more captivating, Prince Damrong wrote *The Chronicles of the Incognito Visit* in the form of a series of letters written by Naisong-anupab Humprae, a royal page, to a friend named Mr. Pradit to narrate the events and happenings during the trip. The original version comprised seven letters, with one more letter subsequently added in 1911, totaling eight letters³. In the first letter of Naisong-anupab, the reasons behind His Majesty’s incognito visit in 1904 were described thus:

¹ H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupab. *Incognito Visit*. Bangkok: Bannakij Trading. 1996. Page 3.

² Ibid. Page 1.

³ Loc. Cit.

...As for the reasons for his visit, I learned that before he made a trip to Bang Pa-in, His Majesty did not feel well, and he intended to get some repose and treatment as he always had. He was preoccupied by some worries, as well as some obligations to fulfill and hence had hardly had any rest. His Majesty was rather indisposed having lost his appetite and suffered from insomnia. The doctors, therefore, felt that a trip to get away from it all for a while would bring about speedy recovery and enable His Majesty to regain his health. The members of the royal family and the officials who accompanied him suggested that His Majesty take time off from his undertakings and royal activities and take this sojourn as recommended by the royal physicians. His Majesty consented to this idea, so he took a boat trip, with picnic boats and steam boats included in the procession, from Bang Pa-in... It was learned that the Ministers had prohibited officials from organizing an official welcoming ceremony as His Majesty wanted this trip to be kept private, going or stopping over wherever he pleased...⁴

The origin of the term “incognito visit” or “sadej prapat ton” was detailed in the third letter of Naisong-anupab:

...when we reached Wat Ph leng, His Majesty bought a four-oarsman paddle boat which he named ‘rua ton.’ He asked his entourage to figure out the meaning of this name. Some interpreted the name as ‘rua krueng ton’ (food); some chose to follow the interpretation in a boat song of ‘song rue ton ngam cherd chai’ (traveling elegantly by a paddle boat); others simply explained that the name ‘ton’ came from Luang Nai Sak, the person in charge of royal pages in the procession. The explanation was that the first name of Luang Nai Sak was ‘Oan,’ and His Majesty often called him ‘Ta Oan.’ Thus, ‘rua ton’ simply meant ‘rua Ta Oan’ or ‘Ta Oan’s boat.’ Different versions of the meaning of the name ‘rua ton’ had been attempted, and I did not even know which one was correct... We called the trip today ‘prapat ton,’ and the term ‘prapat ton’ had been used to refer to His Majesty’s private trips ever since...⁵ (Figure 2)

After this trip, His Majesty King Rama V graciously gave a portrait of himself dressed in casual attire assuming the appearance like any commoner called ‘kruang ton’ to his ‘trip mates’ with a personal note written attached at the bottom. In the photograph given to ‘Ta Oan’ or Luang Nai Sak, the inscription read “A picture in kruang ton given to Luang Sak, nai wen ton, who accompanied His Majesty in the “prapat ton” and who was ‘ton hate ton’(beginning reason).”⁶ (Figure 3)

⁴ *Ibid. Pages 1-2.*

⁵ *Ibid. Pages 8-9.*

⁶ *Pladisai Sithithanyakij. King Rama V’s Incognito Visit. Bangkok: Good Morning Publisher. 2006. Page 38.*

INCOGNITO VISIT TO SAMUT SONGKHRAM PROVINCE

The incognito visit of King Chulalongkorn in 1904 was undertaken mainly by boat and by rail. The trip originated at Bang Pa-in Palace on July 14, 1904 and ended in Bangkok on August 7, 1904, involving a number of provinces including Pathumthani, Nonthaburi, Bangkok, Thonburi, Samut Sakhon, Ratchaburi, Samut Songkhram, Phetchaburi, Nakhon Pathom, Suphan Buri, Ang Thong, and Ayutthaya along the way.

King Chulalongkorn's trip to Samut Songkhram was made by boat along the Om River from Ratchaburi Province, entering Samut Songkhram Province at the market located at the mouth of Wat Pradu Canal on July 21, 1904. The King spent three nights in the province before continuing to Petchaburi Province along Mae Klong River on July 24, 1904.⁷ (*Figure 4*)

■ The first day of His Majesty's incognito visit

In the fourth letter of Naisong-anupab, the accounts of King Rama V's incognito visit to Samut Songkhram Province on July 21, 1904, were described:

...On July 21, after His Majesty went to the market, the boats in the royal procession left Ratchburi Province and went along the main river to await him in Samut Songkhram Province. His Majesty went on a four-oarsman paddle boat, with a newly-purchased boat as the secondary boat in the procession. Both boats were tugged by a small steam boat. The procession entered Om River, dropping by the market at the mouth of Wat Pradu Canal to restock food...⁸

The market at the mouth of Wat Pradu Canal was an old community situated on the mouth of Wat Pradu Canal on the border of Ratchaburi and Samut Songkhram Provinces. Most of the residences in the area were row houses made from wood, with the front facing the canal. Wood planks were laid on the front of these houses to create walkways. In the past, this area served as a major commercial center, with both markets on land and floating markets. At present, the development of land transportation networks has brought about the changes in the role the community plays. What is left today is a small community with only some traces of its past prosperity. Old wooden row houses on the banks of the water routes, old shop signboards, and old furniture can still be seen, but now only a small number of shops are still in operation, and the rest are used solely as residences.

From the market at the mouth of Wat Pradu Canal, King Rama V went along the canal until he reached Pradu Temple, now located in Tambon Wat Pradu, Amphawa District. The kitchen crew prepared His Majesty his breakfast at this temple. After that, he watched a holy water-blessing ceremony conducted at the temple, as described in the fourth letter of Naisong-anupab:

...After leaving the market, we took the paddle boat into the small canal until we reached Pradu Temple. We stopped there to cook and have

⁷ Wannasilpa Peerapan. "Tracing His Majesty's Incognito Visit to Samut Songkhram Province." *Amphawa: An Academic Journal of Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University*. August 2006. Page 9.

⁸ H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupab. Pages 13-14.

breakfast. The kitchen crew surveyed the temple and were surprised to find out that the temple was renowned for its lustral water. There were many sick people waiting to be treated with the holy water... After we were done with our breakfast, we all went to witness the holy water-blessing ceremony...⁹

On the ground of the temple nowadays, there stands a big Neem tree which is believed to be the same tree to which the King's boat was tied. There are a pavilion housing a canopy of a boat given by King Chulalongkorn to Luang Pu Chaeng, the former abbot of the temple and a museum displaying objects of religious significance given by the King to the former abbot. Life-size replicas made from white clay of Luang Pu Chaeng and other highly-respected monks made by the current abbot and other ancient objects are also on display. In addition, the temple is also the place where the museum of His Supreme Patriarch is situated. The sermon hall of the temple is renowned for its mural painting on the ceiling dating more than 100 years. (Figure 5,6)

On his way back from Wat Pradu Canal, before entering Om River, the King stopped over at the residence of 'Ta Mor Si' to watch *Lakhon Jatri* (a Thai classical drama dance), as narrated in the letter of Naisong-anupab:

...On the way back from Pradu Temple, we heard the sound of Lakhon Jatri coming from an orchard. His Majesty ordered the boat to make a stop, expressing his wish to find out what ceremony was being carried out. We found that Lakhon Jatri was being performed at the house of 'Ta Mor Si,' who came down to welcome the visitors...¹⁰

It was already late in the evening when the King left Wat Pradu Canal. The steam boat tugged the royal boat along Om River into Mae Klong River. He instructed his entourage to stop at the residence of the chief of Amphawa District to cook dinner. This event, as narrated by Prince Damrong in the letter of Naisong-anupab, is recorded thus:

...It was already late when we left Wat Pradu Canal. The steam boat tugged the boat into the main river. Night time was already descending upon us and we were unable to find a suitable place to cook dinner. Along the way, we saw a house with a neat and clean appearance. It had a houseboat next to the bank. His Majesty opined that perhaps we could ask them to provide a place for us to cook our dinner. He then instructed Prince Damrong to ask for permission from the owner of the house. Prince Damrong found out that the house belonged to the chief of the district ('nai amphur'), but he was not at home, as he was running errands with his steamers on the opposite side of the river. His wife was not acquainted with Prince Damrong, but she allowed us to use her houseboat to cook the meal. After we had loaded our food and appliances onto the houseboat, during which time Prince Damrong had not yet left the main house, the chief arrived. Hurrying to the main house to pay respects to the Minister of Interior who was paying him a visit, the chief did not notice His Majesty on the houseboat. After having exchanged a

⁹ *Ibid. Page 14.*

¹⁰ *Ibid. Page 15.*

few words with the chief, Prince Damrong received a note from Nai Asadawuth who prostrated himself on the floor to deliver the letter. The note had been dispatched by His Majesty urging Prince Damrong not to reveal his true identity. When Prince Damrong returned to the boat, many district chiefs and village administrators had accompanied him. The royal entourage was told to pay their respects to Prince Damrong as if they were his attendants, while His Majesty hid discretely behind the canopy at the back of the boat, allowing Prince Damrong to take His Majesty's seat. Prince Damrong made an excuse that it was a full moon night and hence he would prefer to stand at the front of the boat, and he urged the group to be dismissed. After the boat left the main residence of the district chief, Prince Damrong complained of his discomfort and having to perform those ceremonies, but the rest simply laughed at him. At about 9 p.m., the boat reached the royal place of residence in Samut Songkram...¹¹

The aforementioned chief of district was Khun Wichitsamathakarn, the then chief of Amphawa District. A piece of evidence could be found in the fourth letter of King Rama V to King Rama VI, then the Crown Prince, narrating his visit to Samut Songkram in 1909 as such:

...September 9: Today's route was short, as the boat set off late. When the boat reached the Samut Songkram government center, we stopped over at the boathouse as always. I went on a motor boat to have a look at the mouth of the bay, before returning along the same route. We briefly went to see Sunakhon Canal before going back to Amphawa to visit Khun Wichitsamathkarn, the chief of the district, whose house I visited during the previous incognito trip...¹²

The house of the chief that His Majesty visited during this trip was situated on the banks of the Mae Klong River, at Hua Laem community, in the present Amphawa Municipality. It belongs to the 'Kanchanalai' family. According to the field survey, this traditional Thai house was built with teak wood, and it consists of four small houses with a balcony in the front. The roof of the house is made of corrugated iron, and the structure is beautifully made with wood carvings above the window frames and on the front wall. However, the houses are generally in a rather dilapidated state, except for the one on the east which was built after the others and is still in quite good condition. (Figure 7)

King Chulalongkorn's accommodation in Samut Songkram was the Royal Pavilion Boat anchored next to the old government center. According to the map compiled by the Royal Thai Survey Department in 1912, the center was situated around the mouth of Mae Klong Canal (Sunakhon Canal) between Ladjuan Canal and Yai Temple in Tambon Mae Klong. In the past, this area was a major center of administrative offices, but they have all been relocated since, leaving only one Chinese shrine behind. Currently under the supervision of Muang Samut Songkram Municipality, the area is rented to local tenants who built their residences on the land. Mr. Iew Jiamsakul, a 76-year-old tenant who has rented the land to build his house, describes the old government center: (Figure 8)

¹¹ H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupab. Pages 15-16.

¹² H.R.H. King Chulalongkorn. Royal Letters of King Rama V During the Visit to Monthon Ratchaburi B.E.2452. Published in memoriam for the cremation ceremony of Chao Jom Arb at the royal cemetery, Debsiridravas Temple. December 21, 1961. Bangkok: Mahamakuta Rajavidyalaya Press. 1961. Page 20.

...In the old days it was very spacious, with its boundary extending to Yai Temple. All buildings were made from wood, including the Registry office, the Governor's residence, row houses, and a police station. All these were demolished more than 50 years ago, one after another. The Chinese shrine has been in existence for more than 100 years, but the structure is newly built. In the past, it was made from wood just like the other buildings...¹³

■ The second day of His Majesty's visit

July 22, 1904, the second day of King Rama V's incognito visit to Samut Songkhram Province, commenced with a visit to Phuangmalai Temple, followed by an excursion to Klong Amphawa market, as narrated by Prince Damrong Rajanupab in the fourth letter of Naisong-anupab:

...In the morning of July 22, His Majesty went to Phuangmalai Temple before going to Klong Amphawa market. The visit was also incognito, just like His Majesty's visit to Pradu Temple. However, an occurrence took place that inconvenienced the royal visit. In Samut Songkhram, there exists a strict rule that if there is a stranger's boat docks in the area, the local residents are required to inform the district chief, who would then make haste to greet the visitors. It was a customary practice by the people in Muang Samut Songkhram. Also, two of the royal family members who accompanied his Majesty, as well as Khun Sawanvinit, had many relatives and acquaintances in the Amphawa area. When these people realized who the visitors were, they were delighted and called others to help them welcome these guests. The more we tried to escape, the more they pursued us. In the end, His Majesty had to use the 'rua ton' (the newly-purchased boat) and went on his way, leaving the royal vessel for the village and district chiefs, and local residents of Amphawa to the purposes of displaying their welcoming gestures as much as they so pleased...¹⁴

Situated on the west bank of Mae Klong River, opposite the old city hall of Muang Samut Songkhram, Phuangmalai Temple was constructed between 1882 and 1887. Its original name was 'Phuangmalai Suntararam' before it was shortened to 'Phuangmalai.' During the time of this royal visit, the abbot of the temple was 'Phrakru Dhammadinai' or 'Luang Por Kaew' who was well-known for his incantations. He built a stupa which was a replica of a Mon-styled one in Burma to house the Lord Buddha's relic. Apart from this pagoda, most of the structures on the grounds of the temple are subsequent additions or modifications. For instance, it is specified that the stucco work with ceramics decorating the wall on the front of the consecrated assembly hall and the door facades were completed in 1921. (Figure 9)

There are two waterways connecting Phuangmalai Temple with Klong Amphawa market—one is Mae Klong River; the other is a shortcut to Phee-lok Canal. There is no evidence which route was the one used by King Rama V during his incognito visit, but it was likely to be the

¹³ Interview of Mr. Iew Jiamsakul, age 76. Wat Yai Community. June 13, 2007.

¹⁴ H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupab. Pages 16-17.

shortcut to Phee-lok Canal as it was a shorter distance and the canal itself was a large canal that facilitated convenient transportation.

Khlong Amphawa market is located on the mouth of Amphawa Canal, currently in Amphawa Municipality. In the old days, Khlong Amphawa market was a center of water trade, including land markets, floating markets, houseboats, and residences built along the canal banks. (*Figure 10*) The Khlong Amphawa market visited by King Rama V was likely to be the floating market, from the mouth of Amphawa Canal to the inner area of the canal, especially the mouths of Bangchak Canal and Daowadung Canal, which were the connecting points of the canals and their surrounding communities.¹⁵ The development of land transportation and the construction of the dam at the origin of Mae Klong River have reduced the significance of water transportation, and the once-prosperous Khlong Amphawa market gradually lost its importance until it finally disappeared until 2001 when a conservation and community tourism development project was initiated. The project aims at conserving and renovating rundown structures and buildings in the community as well as restoring the floating market in the form of an evening market. Such efforts have resulted in the resurrection of the Amphawa community, turning it into the popular eco-tourist attraction of Samut Songkhram Province it is today. (*Figure 11*)

After the excursion to Khlong Amphawa market, King Chulalongkorn paid a visit to Daowadung Temple. There, he stopped to have breakfast before going to the residence of Kamnan Chan. This event was briefly described by Prince Damrong Rajanupab in the letter of Naisong-anupab as follows:

...After His Majesty returned from his visit to Amphawa Canal, the boat continued before stopping to allow the group to have breakfast at Daowadung Temple. After that, he continued to Bang Noi and proceeded to the residence of Kamnan Chan. His Majesty used Mae Klong Canal as his return route, arriving at his place of residence at around 8 p.m....¹⁶

The route to Daowadung Temple could be surmised as having been Daowadung Canal as this was the shortest route, and the canal was wide enough to accommodate the boats. The route went past the south side of Daowadung Temple before going into Nong-or Canal for a short distance to disembark on the pier on the front of the temple.

Located in Tambon Bangchang, Amphawa District, Daowadung Temple is a very old temple believed to have been built during the Ayutthaya Era. The water in the Samyaek Daowadung Canal is considered to be sacred and was used in the royal ceremonial purification bathing rituals for the installation of the primary monarch of the Chakri Dynasty. A field survey has revealed that after access to the Temple was possible by road, the pier was left unattended until it became dilapidated. Today there remains only a trace of the stairways at the pier, and the pavilion at the front of the temple is in serious need of maintenance. The consecrated assembly hall at present is a replacement constructed during the reign of King Rama VI. (*Figure 12,13*)

From Daowadung Temple, King Rama V proceeded to the residence of Kamnan Chan, who was then the Chief of Tambon Tha Kha. According to the field surveys, the canal that runs past Daodong Temple at present has considerably narrowed due to bridge construction and the building of structures encroaching into the canal. From Daodong Temple, Plab Canal runs to

¹⁵ Wannasilpa Peerapan. *Page 19*.

¹⁶ H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupab. *Page 17*.

the north, and from that point there are several canals connecting Plab Canal with Tha Kha Canal. It is assumed that during King Rama V's incognito visit, the direct route to Tha Kha Canal was selected before turning into Sala Canal, which is the present location of Tha Kha floating market, before turning again into a small subsidiary canal leading to the residence of Kamnan Chan.

A field survey has shown that Kamnan Chan's address is 64/2 Moo 2, Tambon Tha Kha, further down the bank of a small canal branching from Sala Canal which is the location of the present-day Tha Kha floating market. The residence is a traditional Thai house consisting of a group of small houses. However, only two of them are left. A wide open porch connects the two houses, and on the side there is a kitchen which is a subsequent addition. (Figure 14)

Mr. Jaroon Chandraprapa, a 75-year-old descendant of Kamnan Chan (Chan Chandraprapa) stated that during the historic royal visit, by royal behest Kamnan Chan was appointed 'Muen Patikomkunnawat'.¹⁷ He elaborated that during the King's visit to Kamnan Chan's residence, the neighbors were holding a ceremony celebrating an ordination to the monk hood. Before leaving the house for the temple, the ordination candidate named 'Hoon Saekow' came to pay homage and respects to King Chulalongkorn.¹⁸ It was speculated that the temple where the ordination took place was Daodong Temple and that the King might have attended the ordination ceremony at the temple, as described in a royal correspondence written during his visit to Samut Songkhram in 1909:

...After returning from the temple, we cooked and had lunch at the residence of Prince Paribatra Sukhumbandu ... After that, we went on paddle boats along Amphawa Canal, dropping by Daowadung Temple where we once stopped over for a meal in the previous trip before entering Daodong Canal and continuing to Daodong Temple. We stopped over at the temple where I once watched an ordination ceremony...¹⁹

In the Chronicles, the details of His Majesty's return route to accommodation in Muang Samut Songkhram were not given. It was specified only that the Mae Klong Canal route was used on his return trip so that the return route was the same as the route used during His Majesty's visit to Samut Songkhram in 1909 as described in a letter penned by King Rama V:

...I thought of going to Bangyai, but it seemed already too late, so we took a turn into Khwang Canal to get to Sunakhon Canal before entering Ladjuan Canal and coming out at the mouth of the canal on the north side of the provincial hall...²⁰

Khwang Canal is a large canal branching off from Daowadung Canal at Daodong Temple on the south-eastern side. From Kwang Canal, there is a route connecting Laddan Canal to Mae Klong Canal (Sunak Hon Canal) beside Pak Lad Temple before entering Lad Chuan Canal to get to Mae Klong River in the same vicinity as the government center of Samut Songkhram. (Figure 15)

¹⁷ Apichate Keungwong. *King Rama V's Incognito Visit from the Accounts (Interview) of Mr. Jaroon Chandraprapa, age 75.* November 2, 2005. A handwritten document. Page 1.

¹⁸ Loc. Cit.

¹⁹ H.M. King Rama V. Page 22.

²⁰ Loc. Cit.

■ The third day of His Majesty's incognito visit

The accounts of the third day of His Majesty's incognito visit to Samut Songkhram Province were briefly mentioned in the Chronicles as follows: "*On July 23, in the morning His Majesty the King paid a visit to the Provincial Hall before proceeding to Amphawan Temple. He returned to his lodgings in the evening.*"²¹

During this trip to Samut Songkhram Province, King Chulalongkorn graciously affixed his signature in the provincial guestbook, stating "*July 23, morning (10 a.m.), a visit, all looked fine and in order, Chulalongkorn Rex.*" The document has been retained by the province. (Figure 16)

Amphawanjetiyaram Temple is a second-rank royal temple situated near the mouth of Amphawa Canal in the present Amphawa Municipality. This temple occupies a position of great prominence in connection with the illustrious founding fathers of the Chakri Dynasty as it was the birthplace of King Rama II. The temple was built on the land donated by Somdet Phraroopsirisopak Mahanaganaree, the mother of Somdetphra Amarintramataya. It was Queen Amarintramataya and her siblings who commissioned the construction of this temple. In a letter written by King Chulalongkorn during his visit to Samut Songkhram in 1909, the description of the temple was given:

*...The shape of the assembly hall is similar to those built in the reign of King Rama I, similar to Suwandalaram Temple, but the principle Buddha image is similar to that of Wat Arun. The boundary stone slabs were added by King Rama IV while the Vihara and monks' quarters were mostly completed during the reign of King Rama III. The tall stupa is surrounded by a portico with a flared top, a strange design as none is as big as this...*²² (Figure 17)

Major renovations of Amphawanjetiyaram Temple were undertaken in 1995. A mural painting depicting the life of King Rama II as well as the stories from the various pieces of literary compositions authored by His Majesty was commissioned by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. The Royal Princess herself painted the face of the portrait of King Rama II, the faces of drum soldiers, and the trees alongside the fortress portraying the late King's royal procession to the capital. On the temple grounds there are also the tall stupas housing King Rama II's ashes, Songdharma Mansion, the princely residence, the sermon hall, monks' quarters, and a statue dedicated to the memory of this king.

■ The final day of His Majesty's visit

Prince Damrong Rajanupab narrated the last day of King Chulalongkorn's incognito visit to Samut Songkhram Province in the fifth letter of Naisong-anupab:

...In the morning of the 25th, His Majesty went on a junk boat to the mouth of Mae Klong River to observe "Lamu" fishermen at work. There were three junk boats in the procession. We bought shrimps and fish

²¹ H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupab. Page 17.

²² H.M. King Rama V. Page 21.

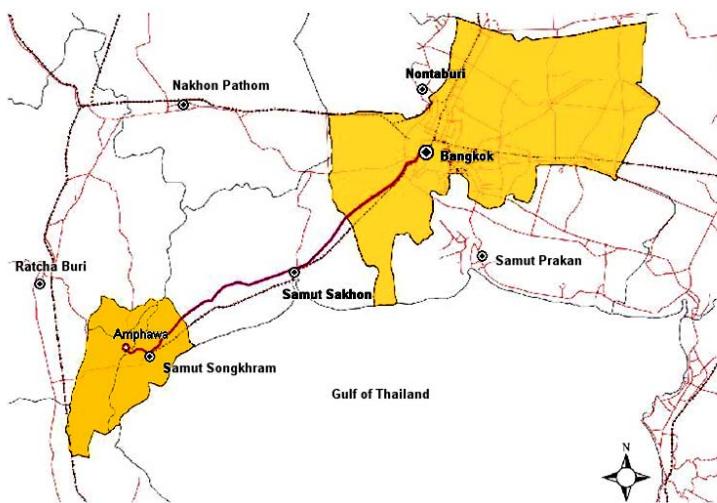


Figure 1: Map of Samut Songkhram Province

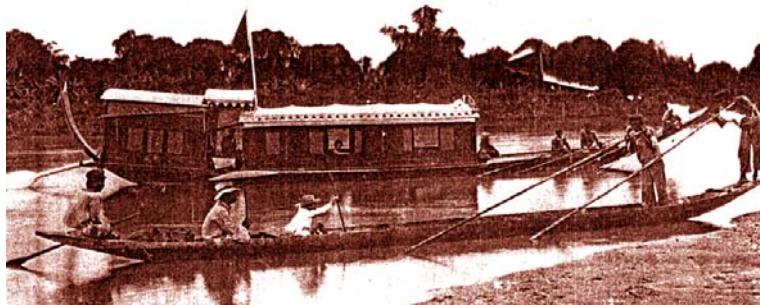


Figure 2: The boat used during the royal visit in 1904



Figure 3: The photograph of His Majesty King Rama V in casual attire



Figure 5: The present-day market at the mouth of Wat Pradu Canal

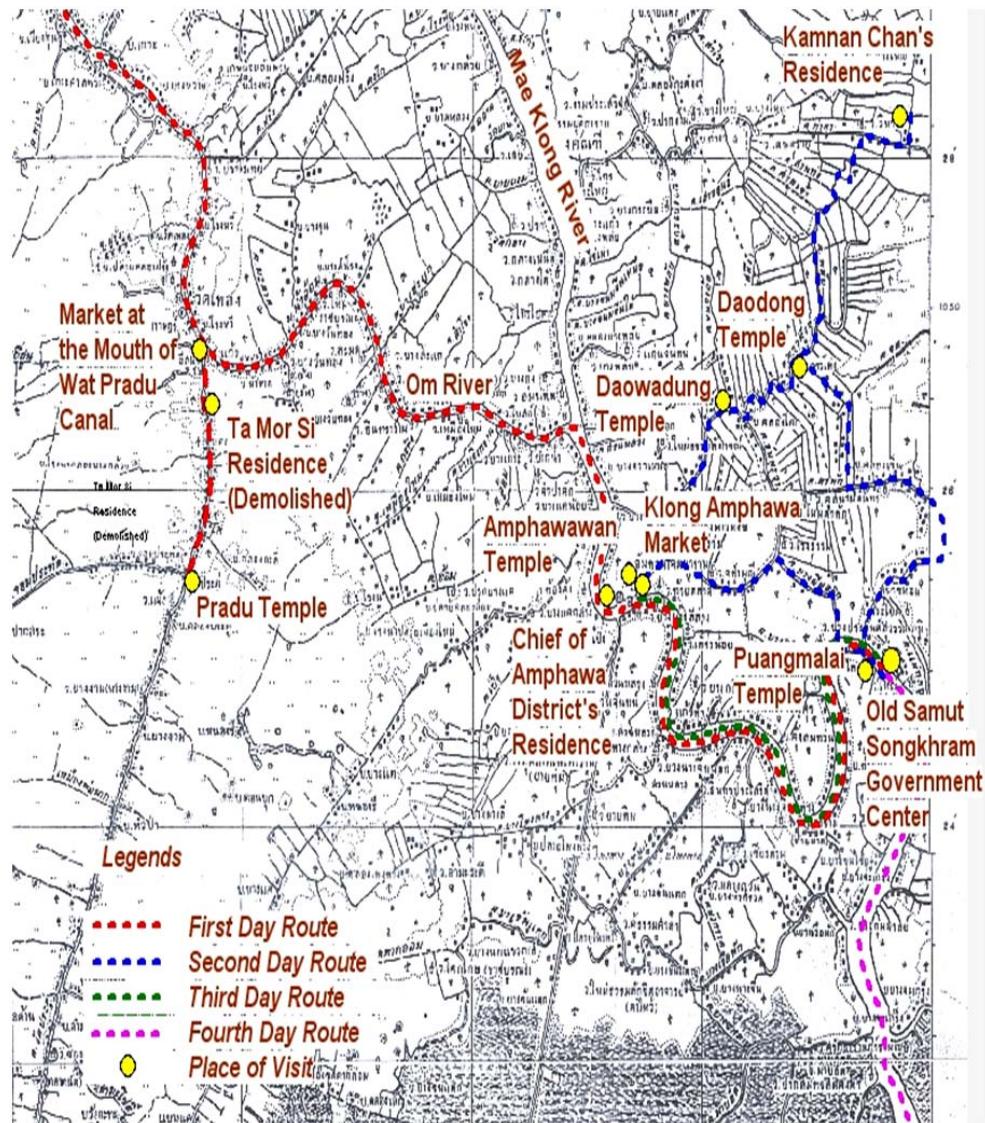


Figure 4: A map depicting the routes and stopovers during King Chulalongkorn's visit to Samut Songkhram Province

caught by the fishermen, and cooked rice-soup with three types of seafood on the boats. The recipe was an improvisation His Majesty thought of that morning. From the day I was born never once have I had a rice soup as delicious as today's meal. We were lucky as the sea was smooth and the winds were strong, propelling the junks to move fast, as though they were steamers. Prince Abha was the captain steering His Majesty's vessel out of the mouth of Mae Klong River...²³

²³ H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupab. Page 18.



Figure 6: The Neem tree in front of the temple around which the royal boat was tied



Figure 7: The house of the chief of Amphawa District at present



Figure 8 : General condition of houses located in the area which was once the administrative center of Samut Songkhram



Figure 9: The consecrated assembly hall of Puangmalai Temple



Figure 10: General condition of Amphawa Canal in the past

‘Lamu’ refers to small fish stakes along the coast. In the past, there were numerous fish stakes of all sizes around the mouth of Mae Klong River. Nowadays, there are hardly any left due to a reduction in abundance of sea life, increased costs, and the implementation of modern fishing



Figure 11: General condition of Amphawa Canal at present



Figure 13 : Samyaek Wat Daowadung Canal



Figure 12 : The consecrated assembly hall of Daowadung Temple



Figure 14 : Kamnan Chan's residence at present



Figure 15: The area around the mouth of Laddan Canal connecting to Mae Klong Canal

equipment. In addition to 'lamu,' around the mouth of the Mae Klong River there is 'Don Hoi Lod,' a river bar covering two areas of land—"Don Nok" at the mouth of Mae Klong River and "Don Nai" at Chuchee Village, Tambon Bangjakreng, and Bangbor Village, Tambon Bangkaew, both of which have emerged as popular tourist attractions in Samut Songkhram Province.

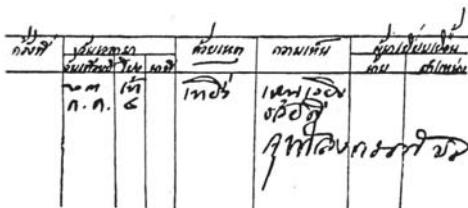


Figure 16: The handwriting of His Majesty King Rama V in the guestbook of Samut Songkhram Province



Figure 17: The assembly hall of Amphawanjetiyaram Temple

SUMMARY OF THE SURVEYS OF ROUTES AND PLACES OF VISITS DURING HIS MAJESTY KING RAMA V'S INCOGNITO VISIT TO SAMUT SONGKHRAM PROVINCE

The survey of routes and places of visits during King Rama V's incognito visit to Samut Songkhram Province in 1904 has shown that there remain traces of most of the routes and places from that historic visit that have survived up to this day. With regards the routes used during the visit, all of which were waterways, it was found that the rivers and major canals are still in operation, whereas some minor canals which were smaller in size have become shallow due to sedimentation, or they have become narrower due to encroachment. For this reason, replicating His Majesty's trip could not be done at some points. With regard to the places of visits during King Chulalongkorn's incognito visit to the province, most of the places still exist to this day. Even though some are now in a dilapidated state or have been altered dramatically from their original states, they still satisfactorily portray the events that took place during the visit.

The routes and places of visits included in the present study play a significant role in the local history, and they form an invaluable cultural heritage of Samut Songkhram Province. At present, they are neglected and in serious need for attention from their owners, local residents, and related government agencies. All parties involved, therefore, should combine their efforts for the task of maintaining, developing and restoring these cultural heritages so that they can be preserved as the pride of Samut Songkhram Province.

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Maps

GISTDA Quickbird Sattellite Image of Amphawa, Samut Songkhram Province, Digital Globe, 2007.

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Interview

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