

The Establishment of Bureau of the Royal Household: The Reform of the Siamese Royal Court after the 1932 Revolution

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宮内庁の確立
－1932年革命後のシヤム宮廷の改革－

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Abstract

This article examines how the Siamese palace court was reformed through the establishment of the Bureau of the Royal Household. The purpose is to show that the process in which the organization was instituted was a part of the monarchical reform under the constitutional government after the 1932 revolution. The study was conducted by examining three circumstances which concerned the administrative and financial reallocation of the Siamese royal court: the reestablishment of the Ministry of the Palace in 1933, the abdication of King Rama VII in 1935, and the founding of the Bureau of the Royal Household in 1935. Based on the archival documents, this article finds that the power to manage the royal affairs was gradually commanded by the revolutionary government. This could be explained in the following manner. After the Revolution, constitutional principles led to changes in the governmental institutions, including the palace court through the three incidents above mentioned. In addition, this article argues, the royal court reform was also a result of the political negotiations and struggles among the elites after the revolution. After conflicts such as the 1933 Outline Economic Plan, the Civil War, and the parliamentary debates over the royal prerogatives in the constitutional regime, King Prajadhipok eventually abdicated in March 1935. This article examines the process by which the government took control of the palace court after the abdication. As a result, the royal court could not act politically against the government as before because it was directly under the Prime Minister's command. In sum, after the 1932 revolution, the Siamese royal court was changed due to constitutional governance principles and political struggles among the elites.

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1. Introduction

The end of the absolute regime in 1932 led to significant changes in the Siamese royal court. Politically, the monarch's role was changed under the constitution so that the king could not perform any public affair unless the constitution allowed him to do so. Culturally, the monarchy, as a concept of national identity created by King Vajiravuth (the sixth monarch of the Chakri Dynasty), was replaced by that of the nation constructed by the post-revolution government. This was expressed through some cultural inventions, such as the National Day, the National Anthem, and the change of the country's name from Siam to Thailand in 1939. Similarly, the palace court was reformed by new administrators in accordance with the constitutional concept of governance. As a result, the Ministry of the Palace was replaced by the Bureau of the Royal Household (*Samnak Phra Ratchawang* – hereafter called the BRH) in August 1935. How the new leaders instituted the BRH is the main focus of this article. It also looks at the process by which the revolutionary government reformed the Siamese royal court between 1932 and the establishment of the BRH three years later. The ideas which led to the reform, as well as a political implication of the BRH's administrative hierarchy, are also investigated. This article will contribute more knowledge concerning the monarchy of Thailand in the transformative period after the revolution.

The previous studies of the 1932 revolution scarcely mentioned the establishment of the BRH.¹ However, it is possible to categorize the previous work into three groups. The first group is comprised of official writings detailing changes in the Siamese royal court between King Mongkut's reign (King Rama IV, reigned 1851-1868) and the present time.² These writings provide useful chronological information about the royal household but do not contain any analysis of the changes to the royal household. The second group is composed of academic writings which relate the royal court reform to political changes after the revolution. Using forbidden archival information, Bruce Lockhart studied the changes in the Siamese court after 1932. He proposed that it had been controlled by the government more intensively after King Prajadhipok (King Rama VII, reigned 1925-1935) abdicated. He emphasized the regent's collaboration with the new regime as a key factor.³ Based on his writing, Lockhart believes that the constitutional monarchy system would have been healthier if the royal court had more power. Another prominent study in this group (which could be considered as the first Thai academic paper recognizing the origin of the BRH) is that of Chai-anan Samutwanit, which described the establishment of the BRH as just a part of the bureaucratic system reform without any relation to a status of the monarchy in the constitutional regime.⁴ Lockhart and Chai-anan emphasized that the post-abdication establishment of the BRH let the government assume full control of the royal court; however, they ignored the concept of constitutional monarchy which influenced the leaders who tried to reform the royal household.

The last group of studies concerns the management of the crown properties before and after the 1932 revolution and provides knowledge about the investment of the Siamese monarchy and politics within the crown property.⁵ However, despite their useful information and valuable perspectives, the establishment of the BRH was not their main focus. Therefore, contrary to the scholarly work mentioned above, this article argues that the establishment of the BRH was a significant incident amidst the political circumstances after the revolution. The BRH founding process was composed of three related elements: the restructuring of the royal court, the reform of the royal finances, and the constitutional concept of governance. To investigate these factors by studying the primary sources, this article argues, would contribute to the body of knowledge concerning the 1932 revolution from the angle of the royal court reform.

This article is organized as follows: after an introduction, the royal court administration and the royal financial management in Siamese absolutist period are described to clarify what happened after the revolution. Next, the article will look at three post-old-regime events which affected the royal household: the reestablishment of the Ministry of the Palace, the abdication of King Prajadhipok, and the founding of the BRH. Lastly, the article's conclusions will be discussed.

2. The Royal Finance and the Royal Court Administration before and after 1932

The economic and political changes occurring since the mid nineteenth century had significant effects for Siam. The Chakri Dynasty succeeded in constructing the royal-centered modern state within a half century after the country was opened to the western world, and Siam's political response to the colonial powers led to an establishment of the absolutist state. The centralization of power brought about the founding of the royal court organization, with financial and administrative reforms.

When the king of Siam became the biggest investor in the country (due to new capital accumulation under the 1855 Bowring Treaty), all financial organizations of the state and the royal court required a new management plan. The Ministry of Finance was established in the reign of King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V, reigned 1868-1910) for collecting and centralizing the state's wealth. As part of the establishment process, the king had divided his personal properties from that of the state, and the Privy Purse Bureau (PPB) was set up to manage the private fortunes of the king and invest in various kinds of business.⁶ However, between 1890 and 1898 15 percent of the state's finances had been arranged as a budget of the monarchy in which the king's personal expenses and the royal court's expenditures were included. The monarchy's budget was estimated approximately 1.5 - 2 million baht a year during that period, and it was determined precisely at 6 million baht in 1899.⁷ However,

after 1900 the amount was augmented by 500 thousand baht every year until it yielded 9 million baht in 1905. As the country endured the Great Depression during the early reign of Rama VII, it decreased from 9 million to 6 million baht. After that, in 1931 it was reduced again to 5 million baht and was fixed at that amount until the year after.⁸ When the revolution took place, the two main categories of the royal finance still remained: the properties under the PPB's management and the budget which the Crown was annually allocated from the state. The first was comprised of the personal assets of the king and the royal family members, including those which later were categorized as the state's properties. The second involved the restructure of the palace court, which will be investigated in this article. How to manage those two categories was the question the leaders of the new regime needed to resolve.

The overlapping of power in the management of the state finance and personal budget of the king made the separation of the two categories rather ambiguous. When the PPB, which had been the personal investing organization of the king, ran out of capital in King Vajiravuth's era, the king tried to make a loan from the Ministry of Finance to compensate the debt. Archival evidence indicates that the next king had to use the state's finances to solve the debts which the PPB borrowed from the Ministry of Finance.⁹ It was the state's budget that was used to support the personal expense of the sovereign, so it was not easy to clarify the demarcation between the state's finance and the royal budget.

The centralization of power and the relationship with the West during the absolutist period also affected the Siamese royal court's administration. In the premodern period, Siam had four major administrative ministries, one of which, the *Wang*, was responsible for the palace's affairs.¹⁰ The royal clerkship (*Ratcha Lekhanukan*) in charge of the royal archival work was initiated in the reign of King Mongkut. When the Revenue Control Office (*Ho Rasadakorn Phiphat*) was established in the 1870s to centralize the state's fortunes, it also took on the duty of budget auditing.¹¹ As part of the administrative reform implemented during King Chulalongkorn's reign, the *Wang* was promoted to become the Ministry of the Palace (*Krasuang Wang*) to be responsible for routine work in the palace as well as the royal rituals, the royal guards and the servants in the palace.¹² The administrator was appointed a minister (*Senabodi*) to run the organization under the king's order. The Ministry consisted of many departments; however, some bureaus were directly under the king's command, such as the Department of the Chamberlain. Due to the economic crisis, many departments in the ministry were combined to save money.

The post-revolution government had to resolve the financial and administrative management systems of the Siamese royal court, which were holdovers from the absolutist

regime. The uniqueness of the royal financial management was the ambiguity of the demarcation between the king's private budget and the state's budget. Such an obscurity would be solved by the post-revolution government. After the absolutist regime was overthrown, the royal court was still under the king's power. The political conflicts and the negotiations between the government and the king brought about changes to the palace court. As a result, the king's power in the administration of the royal court gradually decreased.

3. Ministry of Palace reestablished and the Royal financial reform

Between June 1932, when the Siamese absolute state was toppled, and March 1935, when King Prajadhipok abdicated, Siamese political development was the result of negotiations between the government and the king. Some compromises were successful, such as the drafting of the permanent Constitution, which officially was promulgated on 10 December 1932, and the first two cabinets, which were comprised of both the aristocrats in the old regime and the new leaders. Some negotiations failed and led to widening conflicts between the elites, for instance, the Outline Economic Plan of Pridi Banomyong. The reestablishment of the Ministry of the Palace in 1933 was a successful example. It affected, in principle, the financial and administrative managements of the palace court, yet in practice some significant aspects remained unchanged from the old regime.

After the revolution, the king's budget was scaled down several times. According to primary sources, King Prajadhipok approved the cabinet's proposal to have royal budgets reduced twice in 1932. First, the court's budget was reduced from 5 to 4.5 million baht.¹³ Second, the government required the king to cut down the royal budget again by 50 percent.¹⁴ However, a compromise between the new leaders and the king resulted in an actual decrease of 1 million baht, or approximately 22 per cent of the 4.5 million baht. It should be remarked that, by the first year of the revolution, the idea to decrease the royal budget seemed to have been shared among the Siamese elites, due to the economic crisis Siam had been enduring for years.

The royal court's organization had a special status in the bureaucratic system after the revolution. Its allowance was from the state's budget, but it was not subject to parliamentary decree. The Ministry of the Palace was replaced by the Palace Administrative Office (*Sala Wakan Phraratchawang*).¹⁵ Although no archival evidence of the administrative status of royal affairs during the first months after the revolution, the organization was obviously legalized by the Ministries and Departments Establishment Act promulgated in May 1933, and was designed to have 10 departments, including the PPB.¹⁶ Until December 1933, when the Ministry of the Palace was again promoted to be a ministry, the Palace Administrative

Office's civil servants were actually under the king's power, and its budget was under neither governmental nor parliamentary control. Although the organization's budget was annually allocated by Parliament, the king could use its monies freely.¹⁷

One and a half years after the revolution, some significant changes were made to the administrative and financial organizations of the royal court. In the government's Ministry Reform Bill submitted to the House in November 1933 (only a month after the Baworadej Rebellion), the Ministry of Palace was reestablished, but under the government's control.¹⁸ When the Bill was approved, the organizations and administrators under the Ministry of the Palace were made subordinate to the cabinet, and the Minister of the Palace would not be appointed by the king, but would be accountable to the Parliament.¹⁹ The organizations that oversaw the royal affairs, such as the PPB, became the government's responsibility.²⁰ As Pridi Banomyong clearly stated to the House, "[the government] wants to have the state affairs reformed constitutionally".²¹

The government tried to separate the king's private budget from the budget of the Ministry of the Palace, so that the latter would be allocated in the same way as other state budgets. Constitutionally, most of the Siamese royal court's budgets became the state's, and Prajadhipok controlled only the private budget of the king. In the previous year, the king's private budget was 1 million baht; however, because that amount also included other expenses of the Ministry of the Palace, Prajadhipok had only 500,000 baht for his actual personal expenditures.²² For the 1934 fiscal year, the private budget of the king was 600,000 baht, including some routine expenses in the royal court, and the government allocated another 2 million baht to the Ministry of the Palace. This demarcation was clearer than the allocation during the absolutist period because the king was excluded from commanding the finances of the royal court.

However, the royal financial relocation resulting from the promulgation of the 1933 Ministries Reform Act was still unclear in practice. Although the Ministry of the Palace and its sub-departments were officially under the government's control, some important organizations, especially the PPB, were practically royal prerogatives. During the Annual Fiscal Bill review session, the MP asked the government why there was no report of the PPB's monies in the Bill. The Prime Minister replied that the PPB's wealth was not of the government; rather, they were the private properties of the king. Another MP was curious about the "special expense" in the budget of the Ministry of the Palace, but even Pridi Banomyong could not answer the question.²³ These ambiguities seemed to result from two factors. First, it was just the initial step to separate the private budget of the king from those of the royal court and in this first set of modifications to the royal systems the

government had left the king some power. Second, in late 1933 (just a few months after the Baworadej Rebellion) the conflict between the government and the king was still intense. The government tried to compromise with the royal court²⁴, including the re-assignment of budgets and budgetary control; however, as this was apparently the first time an attempt had been made to separate the king's private expenses from the royal court's budget, the transfer of authority was incomplete, e.g., the ministry of the Palace was reestablished under the government's ostensible control, but for all practical purposes was managed by the king's power.

To sum up, changes in the royal court's financial and administrative management were brought about by the reestablishment of the Ministry of the Palace in 1933 in accordance with constitutional principles. The control of the royal organization was transferred to the government, and Parliament allocated the ministry's budget. Although some aspects were still under royal control, the principle of constitutional monarchy was initially enacted in Siam through reforms made to the royal court.

4. The Crisis of Abdication

As mentioned above, political conflict among Siamese elites was one of the key factors that influenced the restructuring of the royal court after the 1932 revolution. 'The chain of events', which was the result of Pridi's Outline Economic Plan²⁵, included more than a year of negotiations by King Prajadhipok (then resident in England) with the government for more power in the constitutional regime and ended with the abdication of the king in March 1935. The rearrangement of the Siamese palace court took place again in the context of the abdication crisis.

Conflicts between the king and the People's Party (a group of civilian and military bureaucrats who overthrew the Siamese Absolute Monarchy) started immediately after the revolution took place in June 1932; however, such conflicts had been eased by compromises by and negotiations between the two sides. Many of the ministers and members of the National Assembly were comprised of bureaucrats from the absolutist period, and the drafting of the first Permanent Constitution was performed under the king's eyes.²⁶ The new round of conflicts began when Pridi Banomyong, a key leader of the People's Party, proposed the Outline Economic Plan. The proposed plan caused conflicts between the royal court and the People's Party, as well as among the members of the People's Party themselves. A series of political crises occurred: the coup by royal permission in April 1933, the temporary political refuge of Pridi Banomyong, the counter-coup d'etat by the People's Party in June 1933, and the Baworadej Rebellion in October 1933. After the Rebellion, the king stayed

mainly outside Bangkok until he left for Britain in January 1934. Prajadhipok eventually abdicated on 2 March 1935.

The abdication of King Prajadipok was the last act in the chain of event provoked by Pridi's Outline Economic Plan. Generally, the royalists expressed two concerns during the conflict: first, based on their understanding of Pridi's plan, that the government would opt for communistic policies, second, that the king held too little power in the constitutional regime. Since his self-exile to England, King Prajadhipok negotiated with the government for more power, including the right to veto parliamentary-approved bills, to grant royal pardons, and especially the power to appoint the second class of the MPs. When his requests were refused, he began using the threat of abdication to force agreement. However, the government did not concede to such demands, and eventually, the king was forced to abdicate in March 1935. Subsequently, the government chose the nine-year old Prince Ananda (then living in Switzerland) to ascend the throne. As a result of his age, the royalists no longer had any influence in the political arena, and the government assumed the power to administrate the country.

The House of Representatives was the arena in which the new leaders expressed their sentiment toward the monarchy. The Ministry of the Palace, whose budget in the 1935 Fiscal Year Bill was 2.3 million baht, was strongly criticized by some MPs, apparently due to the threat of abdication by the king in the last phase of conflict between himself and the government. One MP asked if people derived any benefit from the Ministry of the Palace, and proposed that the budget of the PPB (the state organization running the king's private fortunes) should be removed from the state allocation. Another MP proposed that the government should ask the king to reduce the Ministry of the Palace's budget by 2 million baht in order to help the poor, and a third MP proposed that the Ministry should decrease its administrative level to that of a department.²⁷ However, there was no response from the government to such questions. Only two weeks after the session began, King Prajadhipok abdicated.

Prajadhipok's abdication resulted in many changes to the Siamese royal court, including a second round of modifications to the royal budget and the Ministry of the Palace's administration. The royal budget was decreased and re-categorized, and the administrative structure of the Ministry of the Palace was reformed so that it became a smaller organization. According to archival sources, the chairman of the House's Budget Committee proposed reducing the royal budget to the Prime Minister because the new king was very young and was then residing abroad. However, it is possible that Prince Wan Waithayakorn Worawan, an advisor to the Prime Minister and a Budget Committee member, already had

discussed this idea with the cabinet. The defenders of the monarchy's budget included the Minister of the Palace and the regent.

The most obvious change to the royal budget was the reduction in its size. Before the abdication, the 1935 Fiscal Year Bill included three proposed categories for the royal budget: the king's private budget, the special budget, and the annual grant for the royals.²⁸ After the king abdicated, the committee proposed to have the royal budget reduced to 600,000 baht. Another suggestion of the committee was that the special budget should be removed from the Ministry of the Palace's budget, and the remained budget should be re-categorized to be 'the budget for royal charities'. In addition, the annual grant for the royals would be decreased to 200,000 baht, and the committee suggested some conditions under which the royals could receive their grants. It was not surprising that the Minister of the Palace and the regent did not agree with the committee's proposals. After considering all comments, the cabinet agreed with the committee. However, it was probably the regent's remarks that led the government to have the title of the king's private budget changed to 'the budget for His Majesty's use while he is young'.²⁹ This was done to convince the regent that the reduced budget of 100,000 baht was not permanent.³⁰ When Parliament approved the 1935 fiscal year Bill, there were four categories included under the Central Budget, including 'the budget for His Majesty's use while he is young', 'the budget for royal charities', 'the budget for the regent', and 'the annual grant for the royals. All of which was 505,200 baht. The Ministry of the Palace, which had had its administrative structure reduced as mentioned above, received 1,003,115 baht budget.³¹

With the reorganization of the Ministry of the Palace, which resulted in a merger of redundant organizations, the transfer of some sub-organizations to other Ministry, and a limit on the state allowance for special organizations (such as the PPB), the state was able to save money.³² Further savings in the Ministry of the Palace's budget were realized by the promulgation (on the very last day of the year) of the Second Ministry Reform Act.³³ Most of the PPB's civil servants would now receive their salary from the organization's own benefits.³⁴ In addition, this Act reduced the number of the Ministry of the Palace's organizations, transferred the Department of Royal Guard to the Ministry of Defense, and combined some departments.³⁵ Therefore, the main organizations of the Ministry of the Palace remained only the Office of the Minister's Secretary, Office of the Permanent Secretary, the PPB, and the Department of Royal Private Secretary.

In summary, Prajadhipok's abdication was a significant juncture in Siamese politics, wherein the government had gradually imposed its power on the royal court and made changes to the royal household. The cabinet now controlled most of royal affairs under the

Ministry of the Palace. The government further had reduced and re-categorized both the Ministry's allowance and its hierarchical organizations. A more thorough transformation of the royal household was soon to occur.

5. The Establishment of the BRH

The ambiguity remaining from the reestablishment of the Ministry in 1933, i.e., the still-independent Privy Purse, was still not clarified. This was resolved when the Ministry of the Palace was transformed into the BRH. The most significant part of the establishment of the BRH was that the Prime Minister now completely controlled the PPB, thus finally bringing the entirety of the royal court's financial organization under the government. It could be argued that the origin of the BRH reflected the post-revolution elites' preferences regarding the status of the royal court in the constitutional regime.

The BRH originated in a proposal of the Ministry of the Palace Reform Committee (hereafter called the MPRC). The MPRC was appointed by the cabinet not long after the promulgation of the 1935 Fiscal Year Act.³⁶ The chairman of the MPRC was Prince Sakolwannakorn Worawan³⁷, who, according to primary sources, had the most active role in the committee.³⁸ About two months after being appointed, the committee submitted its first report to the cabinet, which included a proposal, intended to save the state's budget, that the administrative rank of the Minister of the Palace should be reduced to that of a department, owing to the fact that royal affairs were less significant than they had been under the previous reign. Prince Sakol predicted that this change would save more than 300,000 baht a year due to the reduction in the number of civil servants resulting from the merger of all relevant organizations in the Ministry.³⁹ The committee made a further suggestion that contained constitutional reform elements – the new organization, initially titled the Department of the Palace (*Krom Wang*), would be directly subject to the Prime Minister and would function as a mediator between the royal court and the government. It was claimed that this idea originated in England, “which was well-known as the constitutional governance country”.⁴⁰

Several additional changes proposed by the MPRC led to conflict between the MPRC and the regent. For example, the committee suggested that all of the Brahman should be removed from the royal court, possibly to remove the Hinduist rituals from the Siamese palace court,⁴¹ and that the court's experts in law and international relations should also be removed. Interestingly, in replying to the committee, the regent argued that the positions could not be removed from the royal court unless it was approved by the House of Representatives.⁴² The MPRC countered that to remove the legal expert would avoid conflicts between the monarchy and the Parliament, which was the normal resolution in the

countries with constitutional monarchies.⁴³ The inevitable result of the conflict between the MPRC and the regent was that the Siamese royal court would be reformed in the constitutional framework.

However, the most significant part of the MPRC's proposal was the reduction of the Ministry of the Palace's status to that of a department, thereby also reducing the Minister to be a department head, diminishing the previously relatively autonomous administration to become an organization under the control of the Prime Minister, and decreasing the budget of the new department (the most important priority of the proposal).⁴⁴ The MPRC's proposal also further reformed the royal court's financial management by reducing the administrative rank of the Privy Purse from that of a Department (*Krom*) to that of a Bureau (*Samnakngan*), and, since Siamese civil law precluded state organizations with ranks less than *Krom* from performing juristic acts, thereby preventing the PPB from implementing any business without the approval of the Prime Minister, who became its direct superior.⁴⁵ Hence, the Privy Purse became the cabinet-administered constitutional organization for managing the monarchy's finances.

Most of the MPRC's proposals were approved by the cabinet, in a meeting which ended the conflict between the regent and the MPRC. Pridi Banomyong's suggested title for the new organization, the Bureau of the Royal Household, was approved.⁴⁶ The proposal was then submitted as a Bill to the House of Representatives. Some MPs did not agree that the royal court should be under the Prime Minister's power, and argued that it should remain under the king's control.⁴⁷ However, Parliament eventually approved the Bill, and the BRH was established in August 1935.⁴⁸

6. Politics of the Reform

With the establishment of the BRH, the royal administrative and financial affairs were no longer under the king's power. The BRH acted as a mediator between the regent and the government.⁴⁹ These changes accomplished one goal of the 1932 revolution, namely, to decrease the king's power in public affairs and to transfer that power to the government and the parliament. However, the royal household reform can better be understood with reference to precepts of constitutional government.

In a constitutional monarchy, the monarch's power is constrained by law. Article 57 of the Permanent Constitution, promulgated on 10 December 1932, stated that any action of the king would be invalid unless it was countersigned by a minister. This was a practice of the significant principle that the executors of public power must be accountable to the people in the constitutional monarchy governmental system. The Ministers and the Speaker of the

House of Parliament represent the people in accordance with the principle that the people are the proprietors of sovereignty. To be accountable to the people means that administrators may be criticized, punished, and even retired from their posts. In the case of royal affairs, which had been treated as an affair of the state, the monarch was immune to criticism and punishment and could not be retired. Now, the monarch could not do anything publicly by himself, but instead had to carry out royal affairs through a process called 'counter signature'.⁵⁰ Thus, by transferring the control of the affairs of the palace court, i.e. the financial and administrative issues, from the king to the cabinet, the post-revolution elites realized the implementation of this principle.

Archival documents also indicate that the source of the government's idea to separate the king's budgets from those of the royal court was the budgetary system of the British constitutional monarchy. Addressing the MPs' curiosity during the Fiscal Year Bill session, Prince Wan explained that "[w]hen the constitutional regime had been established in the country, the government afforded to reform the royal budget as correct as in other countries, such as Britain".⁵¹ According to Prince Wan, the king's personal budget would be allocated by the Parliament, but it could be spent by the king without any restriction. However, the budget of the royal household would be subject to the Ministry of Finance's regulations and could be investigated by the State Audit Commission in the same manner as other state budgets. Therefore, the Siamese royal finance was reformed according to the British model.

The royal household reform in 1935 also prevented the palace's roles in the political arena. After the revolution, the Ministry of the Palace and the Palace Administrative Bureau were officially the king's secretary organizations. The establishment of the BRH made the royal court's political roles impossible. Being subject to the Prime Minister, the BRH's administrator could not do anything against the government. In addition, because they would be directly appointed by the Premier, the civil servants of the BRH could not perform any political roles either. Thus, the Siamese royal court was also de-politicized based on constitutional principles of governance, or, in the other words, the politics of the establishment of the BRH was to exclude it from politics.

7. Conclusion

According to this article's hypothesis, three related factors involved in the BRH's establishment. The first of these, the royal household administration, involved the reduction of the Siamese palace court's status from a ministry to a department directly under the Prime Minister's control. The second factor, the royal financial reform, was indirectly accomplished through the first, as the smaller size of the BRH required a smaller annual budget. The last factor was the constitutional monarchy concept of governance. Inspired by

the British model, after the 1932 revolution and King Prajadhipok's abdication in 1935, the elites separated the king's private budget from the budget of the royal court, and assumed the management of the royal household's finance from the king. When the BRH was established, the royal household became a governmental organization. It could be argued that changes in the Siamese palace court above mentioned reflected the constitutional orientation of the Siamese monarchical institution which the post-1932 government tried to invent in the constitutional regime. Eventually, the power to administrate the royal household was shifted to the government due to the political struggles and negotiations during the years after the revolution.

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Notes

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- ⁹ Thailand’s National Archives (N.A.), R.7 K.19/6.
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- ¹¹ Chandrarat Prawalpath, “Kan sukxa preabtheab ratchasamnak nai samai ratchakarn thi 5 lae ratchakarn thi 6,” [A comparative study of the court of king Chlalongkorn with that of king Rama VI], MA Thesis, Department of History, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University, 1978, p. 60.
- ¹² The Office of Royal Secretary, *Prawat Samnak Ratcha Lekhathikan*, pp. 5-76.
- ¹³ Minutes of the National Assembly Meetings, 59/2475, 31 March 1933.
- ¹⁴ Records of Cabinet Meetings, hand written, August 1932.
- ¹⁵ “Announcement of Civil Servants shuffling and Ministries merging,” *Rajchakijjanubeksa* Vol. 49(29 June 1933): 182.
- ¹⁶ “The Ministries and Departments Establishment Act,” *Rajchakijjanubeksa* Vol. 50(12 May 1933): 172-178.
- ¹⁷ Minutes of the National Assembly Meetings, 26/1933, 23 November 1933.
- ¹⁸ Tipawan Jeamteerasakul, *Pathommathas Thang Kanmuang Khong Pridi Banomyong* [The Early Political Thought of Pridi Banomyong] (Bangkok: Aksornsarn, 1988), pp. 236-241.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ “The Ministry of the Palace Regulation Act,” *Rajchakijjanubeksa* Vol. 50(January 1934): 902-907.
- ²¹ Minutes of the National Assembly Meetings, 26/1933, 23 November 1933.
- ²² N.A. (3) SR0201.4.1/4.
- ²³ Minutes of the National Assembly Meetings, 15/1933, 20 February 1934, and 32/1933, 27 March 1934.
- ²⁴ *Thalangarn reung Prabat Somdej Phra Mahaporamintara Maha Prajadhipok Pra Pokklao Chaoyuhua song Sala Rachasombat* [The Government’s Declaration on King Prajadhipok’s Abdication] (Bangkok: Lahuthos, 1935).
- ²⁵ The ‘Outline Economic Plan’ was the economic proposal of Pridi Banomyong, a major leader of the People’s Party who overthrew the Siamese Absolutist regime. He pushed the

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- plan in early 1933. Its socialist content (forced collective farmland by the state, forcing the people to be the state's employees) brought about conflicts between the supporters and the antagonists of the plan. When the conflict arose, Phya Manopakornnitithada, the Prime Minister, shut down the National Assembly and made the Constitution defunct. As a result, Pridi had to exile himself to France. Since April 1933, the antagonism between the royal court and the Promoters of the Revolution was more intense. The latter, led by Luang Phibulsongkram, seized the power of Mano's government on June 20, 1933. Phya Phahol was appointed the new Prime Minister, and his cabinet tried to bring Pridi back to Siam. Pridi's return to the country made the royal camp afraid of his socialist thought, and their anxiety pushed the royalists to stage a coup led by Prince Baworadej, a former minister in the absolutist period, against the government in October 1933. It became a civil war between the royalists and the government. However, the movement was defeated and became the well-known 'Baworadej Rebellion'. A few months after the rebellion, King Prajadhipok departed for England and never returned to Siam. Somsak Jeamtheerasakul argues that Pridi's Outline Economic Plan was the primary cause of the conflicts mentioned above. Somsak Jeamteerasakul, "kwam phid plad thang prawattisat khong Pridi Banomyong," (Pridi Banomyong's historical fallacy) in *Prawattisat thee pheung sang* [History that was just constructed] (Bangkok: 6 Tula Ramluek, 2001), pp. 3-8.
- ²⁶ Thamrongsak Petchlert-anand, *2475 lae 1 pee lang kan patiwat* [the 1932 Revolution and a year after] (Bangkok: Asian Studies Institution, 2000), pp. 79-139.
- ²⁷ Minutes of the National Assembly Meetings, 23/1934, 21 February 1935.
- ²⁸ N.A.(3)SR 0201.4.1/4.
- ²⁹ Records of Cabinet Meetings, 74/1934, 20 March 1935. English translation here is adapted from Bruce McFarland Lockhart, 'Monarchy in Siam and Vietnam, 1925-1946,' p. 500.
- ³⁰ Minutes of the National Assembly Meetings, 64/1934, 30 March 1935.
- ³¹ "The 1935 Fiscal Year Act," *Rajchakijjanubeksa* Vol.51(31 March 1935): 1457-1472.
- ³² N.A.(3)SR 0201.4.1/4.
- ³³ Before 1940, the Siamese calendar began in April and ended in March.
- ³⁴ Minutes of the National Assembly Meetings, 67/1934, 31 March 1935.
- ³⁵ "The Second Ministry Reform Act, 1934," *Rajchakijjanubeksa* Vol.51 (31 March 1935): 1440-1442.
- ³⁶ Records of Cabinet Meetings, 1/1935, 3 April 1935.
- ³⁷ Prince Sakolwannakron Worawan (1888-1953) was a son of Prince Naradhip Prapanpong and Mom Phan Worawan Na Ayuthdhaya. He started his education at home, as other royals did at that time, then at Ratchawitthayalai School. In 1904 he left Siam for studying in England by the Government's scholarships. He graduated in Law (3rd class honored degree) from Cambridge University in 1910. He came back to Siam in 1914 and

had a position in the Ministry of Interior. After the revolution of 1932 he was moved to the Ministry of Agriculture and Economics, then the Department of Public Relation, and back to the Minister of Interior again in 1933. See *Biography and Speeches of Prince Sakonwannakorn Worawan* (Thonburi: Phanijchareon, 1956). He was appointed to hold positions in several committees of the post-revolution cabinet.

³⁸ Other committees were Phra Dulyathanprichawwhite, Phra Charnbannakij, Khun Worasitdarunwej, and Phya Bamreuphak.

³⁹ N.A. (2)SR 0201.14.1/10.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Anti-Hinduist sentiment was common among the promoters of the 1932 revolution, as evidenced by governmental attempts to reform the royal ploughing ceremony (*Rak Na Kwan*).

⁴² N.A. (2)SR 0201.14.1/10.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* According to the 1933 Ministries Reform Act, the highest level organization in the Siamese bureaucratic system was the Ministry. Each Ministry was administered by a Minister. The Department was the lower hierarchical rank, headed by a Director General.

⁴⁵ Records of Cabinet Meetings, 62/1935, 9 September 1935, Records of Cabinet Meetings, 65/1935, 16 September 1935, Records of Cabinet Meetings, 68/1935, 25 September 1935, and Records of Cabinet Meetings, 72/1935, 4 October 1935.

⁴⁶ Records of Cabinet Meetings, 30/1935, 30 June 1935.

⁴⁷ Minutes of the National Assembly Meetings, 2/1935, 6 August 1935.

⁴⁸ "The 1935 Civil Servant Regulation," *Rajchakijjanubeksa* Vol.52 (11 August 1935) 1226-1228, and "The 1935 Ministry Adjustment," *Rajchakijjanubeksa* Vol.52 (11 August 1935): 1229-1233.

⁴⁹ Bruce McFarland Lockhart, "Monarchy in Siam and Vietnam, 1925-1946," pp. 481-482.

⁵⁰ Yud Sang-Uthai, *Kam Athibai Kodmhai Raththathammanun, 2475-2495* [The Explanation of the Constitutional Law, 1932-1952] (Phranakara: Chusin, 1952), pp. 331-410, and Yud Sang-Uthai, "Amnart lae kwuam raphidchop nai rabob prachathippatai," [Power and Accountability in Democratic Regime] in N.A.(3)SR0201.1.44/28. Yud, graduated the doctoral degree in Law from Germany, a committee in drafting the 1949 Constitution, the Secretary of the Law Council in 1953, has been acknowledged as one of the most expert in Public Law in Thailand. His biography is available in *Yud Sang-Uthai* (The Funeral Volume), 1980.

⁵¹ Minutes of the National Assembly Meetings, 64/1934, 30 March 1935.

Appendix
Major Events in Siam, 1925-1935

1925	King Prajadhipok's enthronement
24 June 1932	Revolution overthrowing the absolute monarchy
27 June 1932	Promulgation of the Temporary Constitution authorized by Pridi Phanomyong
10 December 1932	Promulgation of the Permanent Constitution
February 1933	Submission of Pridi's Outline Economic Plan to the cabinet
March 1933	Outline Economic Plan crisis
1 April 1933	Parliament shut down by Phya Mano
12 April 1933	Pridi's exile to France
20 June 1933	Counter-coup led by Luang Phibul Songkram / Beginning of Phya Phahol's Premiership
29 September 1933	Pridi's return to Siam
11-23 October 1933	Baworadej Rebellion
December 1933	Reestablishment of the Ministry of the Palace
12 January 1934	King Prajadhipok's departure for England
August 1934	Conflicts over the king's power
February 1935	1935 Fiscal-year Bill review session in the Parliament
2 March 1935	King Prajadhipok's abdication / King Ananda's enthronement
April 1935	Appointment of the Ministry of the Palace Reform Committee (MPRC)
August 1935	Establishment of the BRH