CHAPTER 3: EMERGENCE OF A REGIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS
IN SIAM/THAILAND AND THE PHILIPPINES

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the emergence of a regional consciousness in Thailand and the Philippines. As is well known, the Kingdom of Siam, located in mainland Southeast Asia, was the only country in the region never to have been colonised by the Europeans. Students of Thai history focus mainly on how kings sought to prevent colonisation in the colonial era before the Second World War. Researchers of Thai foreign policy in the colonial era pay attention to the Kingdom of Siam’s relations with colonial powers. Relations with neighbouring countries in the period was not sufficiently discussed, as is regional awareness of the Kingdom of Siam. A cursory review of Thai history shows how Siam or present-day Thailand maintained her independence in the colonial era by developing its own foreign policy. The next section explores how Thais in the period were aware of the larger region when they negotiated and discussed issues of territory with Europeans. Siam’s entry into the League of Nations as an independent nation after the First World War witnessed great awareness of the region and its perception in the first half of the twentieth century.

In contrast to Thailand, the Philippines, which is located on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, was a Spanish and American colony over three centuries. Scholars on the Philippines tend to discuss nationalism after the Philippine Revolution and relations with the U.S. It is said that Filipinos are of Malay blood, but historians seldom discuss their Malay consciousness in the modern era. Discussions on Malay consciousness have been overlooked in the discussion of nationalism and were not mentioned in terms of the Filipino viewpoint on regionalism. After discussing its historical background, we will
see how Filipino nationalists struggled to create national and regional consciousness based on the Malay race in different religious worlds. With the development of nationalism after the Philippine Revolution, borders of the Philippines were fixed by the U.S., differentiating the nation from the region. The last section discusses how nationalists viewed the region surrounding the Philippines.

Siam/Thailand

Historical background

The terms Thai and Siam have not been well-discussed among historians. It is well-known that the prime minister, Phibun Songkhram, has changed the country’s name from Siam to Thailand in 1932, but historians seldom mention the origins of these terms. According to Briggs, the term ‘Thai’, or ‘Tai’, was first written as ‘Dai’ in the 1292 inscription by king Ramhamheng. ‘Thai’ or ‘Tai’ appeared in several records by 1317. The meaning of the term was originally used only for the people of the Sukhothai kingdom, which was free from the Khmer kingdom. On the other hand, according to Briggs, the term ‘Siam’ is older than ‘Thai’, and originally ‘Syam’ designated the upper Menam valley. This term was inscribed as Syam-kuk on base-reliefs of Angkor Wat made during the middle of the twelfth century. Briggs also argued that the term and other variations such as Syam, Sien or Sienlo were recognised to indicate the Sukhothai kingdom by the Chinese dynasties during the same century.¹ The terms Siam and Thai have been shared with Europeans since their arrival to Southeast Asia. The colonisers had the perception that the kingdom was different from the kingdoms of Burma and

Vietnam. Therefore, the terms never became a term of reference for the geographical region combined with the two kingdoms.

During the early history of Thailand, the Sukhothai and Lanna kingdoms were the most important. The Sukhothai kingdom emerged in the centre of Thailand in the thirteenth century. The third powerful king, Ramkhamhaeng, recorded an inscription in 1292 which mentioned that he controlled Luang Phabang in present-day Laos to the Malay Peninsula. However, a scholar observes that it is highly unlikely that he governed all these territories. No documents prove that even the Chao Phraya river valley was under his control.\(^2\) The kingdom attempted to advance into southern areas of the Chao Phraya valley by the fourteenth century, but it was blocked by another new kingdom, the Ayutthaya kingdom.

On the other hand, a kingdom which emerged in north Thailand during the end of the thirteenth century was the Lanna kingdom. The king, Mangrai, established hegemony over Chieng Saen and Chiang Mai during the early stages, extending its sphere through marriage between his family and another Thai ruler’s family. Moreover, in order to defend his kingdom from the Mongol Empire, which had powerful forces at the time, king Mangrai made a pact with the Sukhothai kingdom.\(^3\) However, the Lanna kingdom became among the rulers under Burma in the middle of the fifteenth century. The capital was moved several times and ruled by the Burmese for the last two centuries. The kingdom was governed by an unpopular Burmese governor who was toppled by locals in the last capital Chiang Mai, in 1775.

In terms of laying Thai cultural foundation, the Sukhothai kingdom was significantly important. The kingdom was geographically located on the ‘dividing-line’\(^4\) between the spheres of Khmer in the east and of Mons and Burmese in the west. Its

location made a distinction from neighbouring cultures during the same period. Furthermore, because of easy communication with lower Burma, the kingdom was able to build up and keep relations with Ceylon, which was the centre of Buddhism. The facts resulted in absorbing and incorporating in the civilisation of Siam. The Sukhothai kingdom was gradually merged into the Ayutthaya kingdom in the middle of the fifteenth century.

The Ayutthaya kingdom had been in existence before 1351. It flourished as a trading centre, and represented the culmination of a process of alliance-building and territorial consolidation. The kingdom sought to extend its influence over Cambodia and the Malay Peninsula. Its diplomacy with the West was good and the Westerns were interested in trading only, neither attacking nor colonising. The number of trades with the West, especially after 1500, increased, but the Burmese was the main threat to its security. The kingdom was attacked by the Burmese in 1569. During the siege, King Chakrap`at and Prince Mahin died. A pro-Burmese king was appointed and the kingdom was controlled by the Burmese for over fifteen years. Subsequently, Naresuen swept away the Burmese soldiers in the capital and made a glorious era for Ayutthaya. However, the kingdom was attacked again by the Burmese in 1767. This time the aggression brought to an end to the kingdom. The kingdom existed for over four centuries.

Taksin, who was a provincial governor at the end of the Ayutthaya kingdom, established his base in Thomburi after sweeping away Burmese and defeating many rivals. His reign began in 1767. However, his dynasty did not last long. He desired to be a higher spiritual status as a king, and attempted to force Buddhism monks to accept him

---

5 Ibid.
6 M. C. Ricklefs, et al., ibid., p. 99.
7 D. G. E. Hall, ibid., p. 268.
8 Ibid., pp. 272-276.
as the status. In 1782, his dynasty was toppled by his General Chao Phraya Chakri and other subordinates, and the king was later executed.\(^9\)

After the downfall of the Thonburi dynasty, Chao Phraya Chakri moved the capital to opposite Thonburi and established a new capital, Bangkok. He was enthroned as King Ramathibodi in 1782 (generally referred to as Rama I), and reigned the Chakri dynasty. The dynasty stable and prosperous after internal chaos by the eighteenth century. During the early stage of Rama I, there were conflicts with the Burmese, but the Burmese they later stopped posing threats. Although Burmese attacked Phuket island in 1810 in the reign of Rama II, it was easily expelled and the reign was almost free from any major conflicts.\(^10\) While Siam continued to control over the northern Malay Peninsula, Cambodia and Lao kingdoms, the dynasty faced British threats after the acquisition of Penang and Singapore in the reign of Rama I and II, and Bangkok had tension with the British on the affairs in the Peninsula since then.\(^11\) On the other hand, the reign of Rama II introduced a commercial sugar production by the Chinese, which later became an export item to trade with Western merchants. The sugar trade grew during Rama III, especially to Singapore,\(^12\) but increasing trade was targeted to be negotiated with the British.

During the reign of King Rama III, the British sent an agent of the British East India Company, Henry Burney, to seek Siam to join the British side in a war in Burma, but to no avail. The British invaded parts of Burma and occupied some seaports such as Tenasserim in the south. This occupation forced Siam to wake up and negotiate with the British, as the Siam court always rejected discussions.

\(^9\) M. C. Ricklefs at el, ibid., pp. 138-139.
\(^10\) D. G. E. Hall, ibid., p. 466.
\(^11\) M. C. Ricklefs at el, Ibid., p. 140.
After extensive discussions, the British and Siam concluded a treaty (called Burney Treaty) in 1826. The treaty agreed that, while the British recognised the Siam’s position in the Malay Peninsula, the Siam accepted to change the trading processes and to take a cut in its trading revenue. Nevertheless, British and U.S. officers came to demand free trade and extraterritoriality between 1850 and 1851, but no agreements were made. The issues were not settled, but Rama III demised, while his brother, Mongkut, was crowned as Rama IV.

The formation of territory

Thailand, formerly called Siam, is surrounded by four countries: Burma in the west, Cambodia in the east, Laos in the north, and Malaysia in the south. Whilst all of these countries were once colonised, Thailand has never been colonised and was in fact the only Southeast Asian country which retained its political independence during the colonial era. Its success in preserving its independence was not the outcome of accidental circumstances, but can be attributed to the wise diplomacy of its then two kings: King Mongkut (Rama IV) and King Chulalongkorn (Rama V). With much attention being given to their colonised neighbours, Siam managed to secure its independence during the cruel colonial era.

Although Siam secured its independence, during the reign of Rama III and at the early stages of Rama IV’s reign, there was no concept of borders for its territory. As Southeast Asia originally had a small population with long coastlines rivers, and thick forests, people lived in port-towns and villages along shores and rivers. From these towns or villages charismatic kings emerged, established, and governed kingdoms.

---

13 M. C. Ricklefs et al, ibid., pp. 95-96.
14 Ibid., p. 97.
Nevertheless, unlike European kingdoms, Southeast Asian kingdoms had no fixed borders. Territories of kingdoms were decided not by its boundaries, but by networks or relations between kings and tributary rulers, which was the most important factor for the kingdoms’ survival. In other words, the domain of kingdoms were not based on land itself. Wolters called the relations between supreme kings and rulers ‘Mandalas or circles of kings.’ He explained that Mandala represented a particular and often unstable political situation in a vaguely definable geographical area without fixed boundaries, where smaller centres tended to look in all directions for security. Interestingly enough, Mandalas would expand and contract in concertina-like fashion. This system lasted up to the nineteenth century in the European colonial era.

The Mandala system also existed in Siam. Tongchai Winichakul discussed the eight characteristics of the premodern boundary in Siam's conception and concluded that ‘[t]he sphere of a realm or the limits of a kingdom could be defined only by those townships’ allegiance to the centre of a kingdom.’ In terms of peripheries from the royal court, what was important was not territorial areas, but ‘power relationships.’ The Siam court had perceived the realm of kingdom not as space, but as points and lines like other kingdoms of Southeast Asia. This concept to no small extent had an impact on the regional consciousness of the kings. Before discussing this aspect, we will see how Siam formed its current territory as an independent country.

Colonial menace had first grown from the west and north of Siam. The first Anglo-Burmese war broke out during the reign of Rama III and the Konbaung Dynasty, a formerly powerful force which had earlier destroyed the kingdom of Ayutthaya in 1767, was defeated in 1826. The defeat caused the Tenasserim area (currently known as Tanintharyi region), which is located at the southernmost part of Burma and once home

---

18 Ibid.
to an important seaport called Mergui, to cede to the British. This development posed a large threat to Siam. Further, the defeat of the Qing Dynasty of China in the Opium War in 1842 also led to the apprehension of the Siam court. According to SarDesai, Mongkut, who was still in his monkhood, anticipated from this defeat that Siam would not be able to stay free from colonialism seeing that even the great country, China, had fallen victim to the Western colonialism. He perceived that the Siam society would have to accommodate to the Western ways. After Mongkut became a king, as a first step he decided to abolish paying tribute to China and ended the relationships between lord and vassal in 1854, which changed Asian international relations. In the following year, the new king signed the Bowring Treaty with the British to allow foreign free trade in Siam. Although this was an unequal treaty, the Royal court attempted to preserve its independence by opening up its market to the world. Following the Bowring Treaty, several European countries also concluded similar treaties with Siam. Notwithstanding this, the French attempted to put pressure on the king but Mongkut hoped ‘to use the stronger British against the rival French and minimise the losses.’

During Mongkut’s reign, Vietnam was the targeted area to be colonised by the French. Since the middle of the 1850s, France had attempted to gain a foothold in Vietnam. After attacking and occupying Da Nang in the middle of the city in Vietnam, it then captured Saigon in 1859. With seizure of other provinces around the city, France called this area Cochin China in 1862. To further expand its colony, France advanced into Cambodia and offered to protect it. Although the Cambodian king accepted the French protectorate over its kingdom in 1863, Siam strongly renounced this because of its suzerainty over the country. As a result, Siam and French signed a new treaty in 1867, whereby Siam gave up its dominion over Cambodia and accepted the French protectorate.

---

21 Ibid., p. 125.
At the same time, France acknowledged the suzerainty of Siam over Battambang and Siem Reap provinces of Cambodia, which at the time were directly governed by Bangkok. This treaty was the first step of the relinquishment of Siam’s territories. France captured Vietnam by 1884 and further attempted to expand territories to the east side of the Mekong river.

Siam was deprived from having authority over the territory in the northeastern part of Laos in 1888 and had received further demand to cede the rest of the Laos territory to France. As Siam regarded all of the above as part of its vassal, it did not find France’s demand acceptable. When the strained relations between Siam and France reached breaking point, Siam finally had no choice but to accept the demand. Since France had possibly harboured further territorial ambitions, the British, who had been observing the happenings, realised that it may face threats of commercial interests and was also aware of the possibility that its interests in Burma would clash in the future if France extended its claim. For this reason, the two powers agreed to form a buffer area in 1893 and signed a declaration for a buffer zone along the Mekong river. However, as Likhit Dhiravegin argued, this declaration was not to guarantee the independence of Siam. The declaration only implied that ‘the British and France could change the agreement otherwise if they so desired. It was not guaranteed that Siam’s integrity and independence would be respected by the two powers.’ This buffer zone resulted in Siam securing its independence.

However, the surrender of Siam’s territories continuously occurred. In 1897, Siam concluded a secret agreement with the British for the protection of British commercial interests in the northern part of the Malay Peninsula. The agreement stipulated that Siam agreed not to cede the territories or islands lying to the south of Muong Bang Tapan

---

23 D. G. E. Hall, ibid., p. 695.
24 Likhit Dhiravegin, ibid., p. 55.
without British consent. In return, the British agreed to support Siam in resisting any attempt by a third power to exert influence in the said territories. Further, an Anglo-Siamese treaty was entered into in 1909 where Siam officially transferred the four Malay states, i.e. Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Trengganu, under the control of the British. In return, the British promised to grant a loan to construct a railway in the south of Siam, as King Chulalongkorn attempted to strengthen the integration of the southern part of Siam by building railways. All of Siam’s vassal territories were ceded by 1909, but this did not cause major problems. In the traditional system of Southeast Asia, it was not regarded as calamitous for concessions of secondary territories to be made. Since the core of the kingdom, i.e., the essence of sovereignty, was not damaged, ‘such concessions were a legitimate instrument of policy.’ Nevertheless, with their awareness of boundary conceptual nations, Siamese elites felt humiliated during the series of cessions. This humiliation thereafter led to the formation of the ‘Pan-Thai movement’ in the 1930s to regain the surrendered territories. According to a document issued by the Thailand government in 1940, the total area ceded to France by 1907 was 467,500 sq. km. and the total area ceded to British was 51,200 sq. km. (the total area of Thailand as of 1940 was 513,447 sq. km.)

During the Second World War, Thailand (the new name for Siam since 1939) attempted to recover the lost territories. According to the British report, the coup d’état was ‘a turning-point in the attitude of the Siamese towards the Western world,’ and Siamese had anti-occidental feeling. The British officer concluded that this feeling caused Siamese to awake jingoism, which has taken the shape of an irredentist movement which aims at recovering the territories surrounding Siam.

25 Ibid., Appendix D, p. 102.
27 Thailand: How Thailand Lost Her Territories to France, Bangkok: Department of Publicity, 1940. This document has no page number.
28 DOC 279: Memorandum by Sir J. Crosby on the present-day attitude of Siam towards the Western Powers, and towards Britain in particular, 1938.
Songkhram negotiated with France for the return of the provinces of Battambang and Siem Reap, but the negotiations fell through. Thailand fought with France at the Gulf of Thailand in January 1941 and suffered great damage. The prime minister then asked the Japanese government for support. After intervening and negotiating in Tokyo, Thailand gained the lands on the right side of Mekong River and the west-northern part of Cambodia via the Treaty of Tokyo in May that same year.29

The Japanese forces invaded Thailand in December 1941. The Phibun government was pro-Japanese at the time, but after a while became gradually anti-Japanese because of the negative impact of Japanese presence in Thailand and unfair economic treatments.30 To relieve Thailand’s frustration, the Japanese government ceded the Shan state of Burma and the four Malay states to Thailand in 1943.31 This helped Thailand to regain part of its lost territories, but unfortunately this transfer brought significantly negative impact on Thailand’s diplomatic relations with the British after the war.

Having declared war against the British and the United States, Thailand became a defeated nation and was subsequently compelled to return the Shan state and the four Malay states to their former colonial power, the British. While the defeated country was requested to restore the Battambang and Siem Reap provinces to France, Thailand surrendered its claim in exchange of becoming a member of the United Nations, in order to benefit from joining the international community. Almost all the borders of Thailand has remained since then.

The cession of the peripheral territories since the nineteenth century had instilled regional consciousness among the Thai elites. We will now look at the regional consciousness of the two kings who laid foundation on the modern Thailand: Mongkut and Chulalongkorn.

29 Kakizaki Ichiro, ibid., pp. 165-168.
Regional awareness of the Siam kings

The regional awareness of the Siamese was born when they came into contact with the British and American missions in the nineteenth century. Siam started trading relations with the United States in 1818 under the reign of Rama II, but the commercial relation was not active during the reign of Rama III due to the king’s strong suspicions of the West. After Edmund Roberts, who was appointed by the President of the United States as ‘special agent or envoy to the courts of Cochin China, Siam, and Muscat,’ visited Siam in 1833 ‘for the purpose of effecting treaties which should place our (American) commerce in those countries on an equality with that enjoyed by the most favoured nations,’ the two parties concluded the Treaty of Amity and Commerce despite the king’s suspicions. Unfortunately, the king fell ill and passed away in 1836.

After fourteen years, American envoy Joseph Balestier came to Bangkok to negotiate the modification of the treaty of 1833 and to enter into more extended commercial intercourse with the United States. He was officially appointed in 1849 as ‘Special Agent of the United States to Cochin-China and the other portions of South Eastern Asia’ by the President, Zachary Taylor. Balestier asked to be granted an audience with the king of Siam by using this title, but failed. This was due to the fact that he did not follow the Siam customs to communicate with the king and also due to his overbearing attitude.

What is significant here is not the fact that Bel estier’s negotiation failed, but that he used his official title with the regional term in his letters to the Siam court. He sent an
official letter with his title to seek an audience with the Siam king in the middle of March 1850, where he insisted to directly deliver a letter from the President of the United States.\textsuperscript{37} In return, Khun Phia Nai Wai Voranat, Commissioner of the Naval Forces of the King of Siam, gave the envoy a confirmation letter that Siam court had received, but this letter from the Commissioner had used the title ‘Envoy from the United States of America’ only.\textsuperscript{38} Though there is no evidence whether the Siamese understood the title, it is obvious that the Siamese learnt the new term ‘South-Eastern Asia’ for the first time when the letter from Balestier was received.

However, the official letter from the foreign mission customarily did not reach the king. The procedure was that the letter must first be translated into Siam language and carefully checked in the Great Office of Foreign Department before it is read to the king when a visitor is granted an audience.\textsuperscript{39} Failure to follow this procedure and the fact that there was no official stamp in the official letter led to the envoy being rejected an audience by the Siam court. When Balestier, who was at a loss, begged to have an audience with the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chan Phyan Phia Klang via a letter, the letter used his official title again.\textsuperscript{40} The American mission also addressed the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chaw Khan Phya Sipipat, on 10 April, 1850 with the official title. These letters clearly show that at least the Siam officers learnt the regional term through the title of Balestier during this period. When the President of the United States appointed him with this title, the regional term was familiar among the government officers, but the Siam court had just learnt it for the first time. The Siamese officers might have been curious but perhaps had no idea of the regional concept.

\textsuperscript{37} U.S. Congress, Senate, Message from the President of the United States in answer to a resolution of the Senate, calling for information in relation to the mission of Mr. Balestier, Late United States Consul at Singapore, to Eastern Asia. 32nd Congress, 1st session, Doc. 38, Washington D.C., 1852, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} U.S. Congress, Senate, ibid., p. 69.
Incidentally, when the American envoy visited Cochinchina before Siam, a memorandum with the governor of Kwang-nam at the town of Turong was signed. This memorandum also addressed Balestier using the title with the regional term.\(^{41}\) Further, to pass a letter of the President of the United States to Sultan of Brunei, Balestier sent a letter to seek audience with the Sultan, which used his official title.\(^ {42}\) In short, the officers in Vietnam and Brunei also learnt the regional term in 1850.

Rama III passed away in 1851 and Mongkut was then crowned as Rama IV. Mongkut was born as the eldest child of Rama II, but was not elected as a king by the Council of Princes and Ministers upon Rama II’s demise in 1824. At almost the same time when Rama III was enthroned as a king, Mongkut entered into monkhood. His monkhood lasted for twenty seven years before he was installed as a king. This period was important and laid the foundation for him to acquire much knowledge and gain much wisdom. Studying Pali language which was the most significant language for the study of Buddhism, he also learnt Latin, which was the first language of Western knowledge, as well as English, taught by American missionaries.\(^ {43}\) Through his knowledge of these western languages, he also studied chemistry, geography, mathematics, physics, and his favourite subject, astronomy.\(^ {44}\) By reading many books, he acquired much knowledge and accommodated Western ways. This acquisition of knowledge was helpful to lay the foundation for him to accept and adopt the Western styles for domestic modernisation of Siam.

After his enthronement in 1851, King Mongkut signed a new treaty in 1855, i.e., the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between the British Empire and the Kingdom of Siam (better known as the Bowring Treaty), which opened up Siam to the West. The representative of the British tasked to negotiate this treaty was the then Governor of Hong

\(^{41}\) Ibid., p. 44.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., p. 83.
\(^{44}\) Ibid., p. 21.
Kong, Sir John Bowring, with whom the king communicated with directly in English. While the Treaty of 1855 had no mention of any regional terms, the previous Treaty of 1826, called the Burney Treaty, had stated ‘English Country’ and ‘within the English boundary.’ It described the English countries as ‘Prince of Wales Island’ (Penang), ‘Malacca,’ and ‘Singapore.’ Thus, both Rama III and Rama IV understood these terms; they also understood that the British became Siam’s neighbour because it annexed parts of Burma during their reigns. Mongkut read through the old treaty before negotiating and producing the new treaty and he understood the meaning of the above two terms, indicating not only the Straits Settlement but also India and Burma.

What is important here is that King Mongkut deeply understood that the British colonised the territorial space with its boundaries next to Siam, not using the Mandala concept without borders. The wise king apparently adopted the same boundary concept as the British and thus made all efforts and took special care to prevent any conflicts from the borders with the British. The king quickly understood the significance of a border concept in the colonial period in Southeast Asia and did his best to maintain Siam’s independence by accepting and adopting the Western ways.

Mongkut adopted not only the boundary concept but also the Western regional concept. We can see his regional consciousness from his letters of correspondence with Bowring and other documents. In letters corresponding with Bowring, the term ‘Asia’ was not used at all. When Mongkut proposed to bestow decorations on Queen Victoria in 1861(?) and in return expected the same from the Queen, he wrote, though the king did not end up being bestowed, It will prove the greatest honor to us here among the Eastern Monarchies. Obviously he indicated that Siam belonged to the Eastern region.

---

46 The British and Burma had wars three times in the nineteenth century. These resulted in annexing the upper Burma in 1852 and the lower Burma in 1885. In the following year the whole of Burma was incorporated into the Indian empire.
47 Tongchai Winichakul, ibid., p. 72.
After Bowring published the two volumes of books, *The Kingdom and People of Siam* in 1857 and offered them to the King, Mongkut read through the said books, and then proceeded to comment and point out errors and mistakes in the books through a letter. As there was usage of the terms ‘Asia,’ ‘Asiatic,’ and ‘Eastern Asia’ in the books, Mongkut would have understood the meaning of these terms together with the other collective terms referred to in the books, such as ‘Eastern Archipelago’ and ‘the Indian Archipelago.’

To cite another piece of evidence, when the American envoy, Townsend Harris, visited Bangkok before going to Japan, he had an audience with Mongkut on 1 May, 1856. The king asked the envoy how many treaties had been made between the United States and ‘Eastern nations.’

This clearly shows that the king indicated ‘Eastern nations’ as kingdoms in Asia. The king, who was a great reader and liked to obtain any English books related to Siam, read the book *Narrative of a Residence at the Capital of the Kingdom of Siam.* As this book also referred to the terms ‘Eastern Asia’ and ‘Eastern Archipelago,’ these regional terms were familiar for the king. In another case, when the king offered elephants to the then President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, in a letter, he used the term ‘Asia’ twice, not ‘the East.’

The king also made a geographical reference that is ‘the islands of Ceylon, Sumatra and Java are near to the continent of Asia.’

The king also voraciously read through English newspapers that were published in Bangkok and Singapore. While the newspapers in Bangkok dealt mainly with the affairs of European and American countries, some papers like *Bangkok Readers* reported on the areas surrounding Siam such as Burma, Cochin-china, India, and Java. The king became

---


51 Abbot Low Moffat, ibid., p. 53.


53 Abbot Low Moffat, ibid., pp. 92-93.
familiar with the ‘regional’ affairs through the English newspapers. Interestingly enough, *Bangkok Calendar* referred to ‘South-Eastern Asia’ in a travelogue of protestant missionary in 1866. The author mentioned that ‘Our destination was first to Amherst, Burmah, and thence to Singapore.’ As it would appear that the king read this article, he might have understood the regional term, but there is no evidence that the king had used this word.

King Mongkut had regional awareness of the Western concepts through his knowledge of English. Since Rama III was not an English commander and communicated through a Malay interpreter when John Crawfurd visited Bangkok, at least the king had no way of knowing the English regional terms. On the other hand, Mongkut acquired much knowledge in English and had learnt the regional concept. There was the possibility that to some extent the Siam court recognised the term ‘South Eastern Asia’ as above mentioned, but the king mainly used the term ‘East’ to indicate the entire of Asia, which was a term of common usage among the Western countries. King Mongkut attempted not to cause friction and conflict with the Western powers as much as possible, accepted a national concept with a border territory as an independent country, not as a vassal of any Western powers, and followed the Western ways in international relations. When Siam adopted the Western-made regional terms, this meant that Siam shared with the powers not only the Western border concept but also the regional concept.

In an era that drew borders around the world, a region was transitionally created based on border territories and countries/states, although most of them were under colonial powers. It can be said that Siam, which retained its political independence unlike its colonised neighbouring kingdoms, recognised the Western regional concept earlier than

---

54 *Bangkok Readers* issued in 1865 stated that the editor had communicated through letters from the king.
55 *Bangkok Calendar*, 1866, p. 74.
any other elites in the region. During the period of time when other South-East Asian countries were colonised in the nineteenth century, as Hall said, ‘it is not too much to say that Siam owed the preserved independence to Mongkut more than anyone else.’\(^{58}\)

The king, who had a strong interest in astronomy, was infected with malaria during his observation of the solar eclipse in the southern of Siam and passed away after a few months in 1868. After the demise of King Mongkut in 1868, his son Chulalongkorn was crowned as Rama V at the age of sixteen. Chulalongkorn’s English skills contributed towards the modernisation of Siam and the preservation of its independence during the colonial era. For five years prior to his coronation, he learnt English from a British tutor, Anna Leonowens, together with other princes and princesses.\(^{59}\) His fluent English helped him to navigate global affairs easily like his father.

The king has a great reputation for being successful in preserving Siam’s independence along with bringing domestic modernisation to Siam. This was because of his firm decision to do so. The decision led him to visit Singapore and Java on an inspection tour in 1871. The tour had been planned at the final stage of Mongkut’s reign, but the plan was halted due to his sudden demise. Despite his sudden death, the tour plan was carried on by the new king Chulalongkorn, and he visited the two islands in 1871. This was the first time that the king of Siam went overseas since King Naresuan went to Burma for war in the seventeenth century.\(^{60}\)

Though Lim described the tour as a ‘Study Tour’\(^{61}\) to inspect the process of modernisation in the two islands, the trip actually bore much political significance. As a king who was still a minor at the time and governing the country with a Regent, the purpose of the travel was mainly to display his dignity and place Siam on equal footing

\(^{58}\) D. G. E., Hall, ibid., pp. 666-667.
with the European countries, especially the British which colonised Siam’s neighbours. Before the king’s departure to Singapore, the Siam court requested the Singapore government to prepare accommodation, events and so on. However, the Singapore government paid little attention to the king’s trip until the last minute. Through the Siam Consul to Singapore, the court repeatedly made requests to the British, but the Consul finally received a letter from the Singapore government accepting the requests only right before the king’s departure, though the king had already been on board at the time.

It seems that the Singapore government’s change of mind was due to the activities of the commercial community of Singapore, not from respect towards the king.

Although Siam and the British has had an intimate relationship since the reign of Mongkut, Siam noticed that ‘the Singapore Government does not have any respect for Siam’s prestige.’ The British government followed Siam’s requests properly and seemingly respected the king’s dignity. In Singapore, the king talked to many officials and businessmen without interpreters. This helped to enhance his dignity and also to deepen his personal relationships. According to the local newspaper in Singapore, the tour - at least in Singapore - was successful. After Singapore, the king continued on to visit Batavia (currently known as Jakarta) and other towns in Java and had discussions with the officials of the Dutch East Indies. As Kannibar argued, through the tour the King Chulalongkorn successfully made the kingdom of Siam visible and appear civilised in the eyes of the two European powers, namely the British and the Dutch. By visiting the two colonial grounds in Asia, the young king presented Siam to be a politically independent presence to the major powers. In this sense, the tour was in effect a political tour. After arriving in Bangkok, the king informed the Regent of his desire to visit Europe,
but this request was declined due to the long distance. Instead, with the Regent’s recommendation, the king visited Malacca, Penang, Burma, and India in the same year.  

To prevent from being colonised by the European powers, the Kingdom of Siam attached special importance to building friendly relations with adjacent colonial governments. There were great risks and it was a challenging task for the new king to visit the colonised areas in order to survive in a cruel colonial era. He attempted to build up cordial relations with the major powers, in particular the British, and visited their main cities as the first step. The main purpose of the visit was to preserve Siam’s independence, and it is worthwhile to note that the king himself conducted ‘regional foreign diplomacy’ at the early stage of the reign.

His trip to Europe took place in 1897. This trip lasted for nine months and the number of countries he visited reached fourteen, including Britain and Russia. The direct reason for the trip was due mainly to the fact that in 1893, Siam was forced to cede the left side of the Mekong river to France. The king was angry with this and also with the non-intervention of the British despite Siam’s request for assistance. The king’s objective for the trip was successfully achieved, especially with regards to his trip to Russia, as he managed to persuade the Russian tsar to oppose new territorial claims by France, which was an ally of Russia. To some extent, Russia was able to exert its influence upon France on this issue.

In a series of inspection during the overseas trip, the king himself visited both the Western and Eastern regions. Given that the use of regional terms such as ‘the West,’ ‘Europe,’ ‘the East,’ ‘Eastern countries’ and others have been in widespread use in many English books and newspapers at least since the reign of Mongkut, King Chulalongkorn

---

66 Lim Pui Huen, ibid., p. 27.
67 Ibid., p. x.
68 Ishii Yomeo and Sakurai Yunio (eds.), Tounan Ajia shi I, Tairikubu (The history of Southeast Asia, the part of the mainland), Tokyo, Yamakawa shuppansha, 1999, p. 412.
knew of these terms. Unfortunately, the king’s English documents made little mention of regional names and his regional perspectives, but his half-brother, Prince Damrong related this.

Prince Damrong accompanied the king to Singapore and Java in 1871 and held several important ministerial posts, such as the minister of education and of the interior. He was also fluent in English. Since he was at the centre of sovereignty, there is a great possibility of sharing regional consciousness with the king and other prince officials. In the speech text titled ‘The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam’ in 1925, he used the term ‘the East’ or ‘Eastern’ as adjectives a few times, which is meant to be equal to the term ‘Asia.’ He had clearly recognised that the kingdom of Siam was one of the Eastern countries like India and Ceylon. This speech text indicated that the term ‘the Far East’ was also used as a sub-region under ‘the East.’ Even though Prince Damrong’s speech was made after the king’s demise, the regional consciousness in this period was the same as during the reign of Mongkut. Thus, it would not be too much to say that there was already common consciousness during the reign of King Chulalongkorn. It is natural to assume that the king recognised not only Asia and East Asia, but also the Indian Archipelago, Further India, and Indochina as sub-regional names through various English books and newspapers published in Bangkok and Singapore.

King Chulalongkorn made domestic reforms towards Siam’s modernisation and put an end to Siam’s traditional ways. His foreign policy was, similarly with Mongkut's policy, focused on preserving Siam’s independence without giving in to pressure from the British and French. At the same time the king also followed the same regional concept in the Western manner as his predecessor. This was not because of his English commander, but partly because Siam made all effort to keep its independence and did

---

not seek more than that and partly because it took defensive measures by following the Western ways in terms of international politics.

The League of Nations and realisation of a region

After the demise of King Chulalongkorn, Prince Vajiravudh ascended to the throne as Rama VI in 1910. As he had studied in Oxford during his teens, he was the first king to be trained in the western manner. Despite his pro-British background, his foreign policy steered towards a neutral course and he took a wait-and-see policy at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. When the United States joined forces with the Allies, i.e., the United Kingdom, France, and Russia in April 1917, the king decided to declare war against Germany and Austria-Hungary in July the same year. The decision was made due to his belief that the war had become more favourable to the Allies. Siam as a member of the Allies collected military volunteers and sent a small number of soldiers to France in 1918. With the Allies’ victory, Siam was able to become the original member of the League of Nations which was established in 1920. Siam was the sole independent country among colonies of Western powers in Southeast Asia.

As a member of the League of Nations, Siam attended various meetings to debate global issues, especially issues in the Far East. As can be seen from the above, the Siam government had had a common regional consciousness with the West since the nineteenth century, and their regional consciousness was strengthened through this global organisation.

The Opium Committee within the League of Nations was set up in 1920 in order to control the use of opium and dangerous drugs around the world. Opium was largely produced in the Asian region and used by the locals. Thus, it was natural that great attention was paid to the Asian region. The fifth session was held in 1923 and Prince
Charoon as the representative of Siam was elected as vice-chairman for this session. Discussions during the session focused on the Far East to control the drugs. Among others, in proposals of the British government regarding the consumption of opium for smoking in the Far East, the Siam vice-chairman used the term ‘Far Eastern Possessions.’ 71 In the discussion, this phrase was mentioned by many delegates. However, the British representative, Malcolm Delevingne, pointed out that the term ‘Far Eastern Possessions’ should be replaced with ‘Far Eastern territories’ because Siam ‘was not a Possession.’ This suggestion was adopted immediately. 72 It is noteworthy to highlight that, naturally enough, all members of the global organisation recognised that Siam belonged to the Far East and the Siam representative, Prince Charoon, also had a clear understanding of the regional concept at least from Delevingne’s statement. The term and definition of ‘Far East’ was already well-known by this time.

Subsequently in 1925, the League of Nations set up a Health Organisation Eastern Bureau in Singapore to implement the mandate of epidemiological surveys and to assist each government in the region in combating infectious diseases, 73 with the members being British India, British North Borneo, Ceylon, China, Federated Malay States, French Indochina, Hong Kong, Japan, the Netherlands Indies, Siam, and the Straits Settlements. The Philippines also joined as an observer. 74 The establishment of the Bureau had led to the creation of an official regional conference of the Far East where all the regional members met annually. This was not a regional co-operation because there was no co-operation between the countries. However, the annual gatherings of the governments in the Far East formed much clearer regional imaginings and ‘embodied’ the imaginings of the region, as the governments, though some members were the

72 Ibid., p. 103.
74 Ibid., p. 158.
colonial powers, never met in a regional conference before. The annual conference sponsored by the League of Nations was a regional meeting at the earlier stage and it was a place for the Siamese to identify the region that Siam belonged to.

The Bandung Conference on Traffic in Women and Children was held in 1937. Interestingly enough, the report clearly defined the regional term ‘Far East’ as being Japan, China, Hong Kong, Macao, the Philippine Islands, Indo-China, the Netherlands Indies, the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States, the Unfederated Malay States, and Siam. This demarcation shows that it is a geographical space combining the current East Asia and Southeast Asia. In this period, it was common to know this regional term and the definition. As an evidence, the book published in 1923 shows that it had already described the same concept of the Far East. Thus, the international consensus had been reached at least since the turn of the twentieth century. The Siam government was also well aware of this and recognised that Siam belonged to the region.

On the other hand, based on the Siam-related documents of the League, it should be noted that the League members seldom used the term ‘Asia.’ The term ‘Asia’ itself was rarely used as a single word, but often as ‘Asia Minor’ to refer to the current Turkey. In most cases, the term ‘East’ or ‘Eastern’ as an adjective were substituted for the term ‘Asia.’ Even Mongkut, other Siam kings and the then Siam representatives to the League employed terms such as ‘the East’ or ‘the Eastern countries’ to indicate either Asian countries or the entire Asia.

King Vajiravudh’s writings had also mainly used the term ‘East.’ Domestically, Siam had faced an issue with the Chinese since the turn of the twentieth century. During the reign of the King Vajiravudh, this issue inspired the rise of Siam nationalism. The

---

75 The League of Nations, Traffic in women and children: Work of the Bandung Conference, C.516.M.357.1937.IV., Geneve, December 20th, 1937, p. 15. This document also defined the Middle East and Near East. The former is India, Ceylon, and Persia only, and the latter is Iraq, Levant under French Mandate, and Palestine. As the world organisation had no use of ‘South Asia,’ the then regional concepts were quite different from the current.

king himself wrote newspaper articles to raise level of nationalism of the public. Among them are ‘Wake up, Siam,’ ‘The Jews of the Orient,’ and ‘Education and Unrest in the East,’ being famous articles written in Thai. It merits significant attention here that even some of the titles used the terms ‘Orient’ and ‘East,’ and not ‘Asia.’ As discussed above, it has been noted that the Siam kings and the officials of both Siam and the Western countries seldom used the term ‘Asia,’ and in fact seem to have avoided this term. Hay argued that the term ‘Asia’ was closely associated with concepts of lavish splendour, vulgarity, and arbitrary authority by the fifth century. Montesquieu, a French political philosopher in the eighteenth century, also believed that Europe represented progress and Asia represented stagnation. Later on, K. M. Panikkar said that ‘[b]y the nineteenth century, Europe ... represented indeed a civilisation on the march. It challenged the basis of Asian societies.’ Conversely, Asia was viewed as uncivilised and discriminated. It is likely that the Siam kings and the government officials would well understand the implications of the term used in a derogatory manner. The king would have learnt the regional term ‘Asia’ in the United Kingdom. Usage of the term ‘East,’ not only by the king but also by Siam royal family and government officials, was common and presumably neutral. The regional consciousness of the Siamese was the same as the Western concept: ‘The East’ indicated the entire of Asia. On the other hand, the Siamese had learnt a new regional term in the 1930s. As mentioned in the chapter one, in 1931 a Dutch archaeologist, Dr. Stein van Callenfels, had an audience with King Prajadhipok and had talked about ‘the Pre-history of South Eastern Asia.’ The definition remains unknown but significantly enough, the King of Siam and other related officials (including Prince Damrong who was present) had learnt the regional term ‘South Eastern Asia.’

---

78 Ibid., p. 122.
Nevertheless, the regional term was not used by the Siamese largely because the Western governments did not use it officially before the Second World War. In addition, more importantly, as above mentioned, the term included ‘Asia,’ a word which implied a discriminatory element. It can be deemed premature to build up the regional consciousness because of colonised neighbours surrounding Thailand. Though Thailand was a member of the global organisation as an independent state, there was possibility that the country would be colonised in the future. Siamese, even though the major powers used the term ‘South Eastern Asia,’ hesitated to form the sub-region which grouped together with the major colonial powers in this time and had not developed the regional consciousness. In addition, even if the neighbours were not colonised by the West, Siamese would not have a single regional consciousness of the mainland of Southeast Asia. According to Thongchai Winichakul, the Siam kings from Ayutthaya to Bangkok had ego-centric views of countries surrounding Siam. They always perceived their neighbours either as rivals and competitors for supremacy, or as inferior vassals, dependencies and lesser kingdoms.81

Though the political system was changed to a constitutional monarch after the coup d’attat in 1932, Thailand’s foreign policy, which greatest purpose was to secure Thailand’s independence, remained constant. The Thai government maintained its neutral position at the early stages of the Second World War, but in 1941 it became an ally of the Japanese military government which invaded the entire Southeast Asia. As a consequence, Japan became the new neighbour for Thailand, taking the place of the British and the French. Thailand was incorporated into the Japanese imperialistic regional concept, Greater East Asia, which was originally established in the 1930s.

---

81 Thongchai Winichakul, ‘Trying to locate Southeast Asia from its naval: Where is Southeast Asian studies in Thailand?,’ in Paul H. Kratoska et al., Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of knowledge and politics of space, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005, p. 117.
The Greater East Asia Conference was held in Tokyo in December 1943 for the purpose of holding frank discussions regarding the construction of a New Order in Greater East Asia. Six heads of ‘countries’ were invited: Zhang Jinghui (Prime Minister of Manchukuo), Wang Jingwei (President of the Reorganised National Government of China) Ba Maw (Head of Burma State), Subhas Chandra Bose (Head of State of Provisional Government of Free India), José P. Laurel (President of the Philippine Republic), and Prince Wan Waithayakon (envoy from the Kingdom of Thailand). The Japanese military government had invited Phibun Songkhram, the Prime Minister of Thailand, but he declined to attend due to his ‘health problems’ and the premier sent the Prince in his place. In his speech at the conference, he expressed the intention to help the Japanese successfully establish the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and also recognised it as a regional space by using ‘the Greater East Asian region.’ However, it is difficult to say that the Thai government built up or had seriously developed the consciousness of the ‘Greater East Asian region.’ Although Phibun had friendly relations with Japan at the early stage and signed an alliance treaty with Japan in 1941, hence abandoning Thailand’s neutral foreign policy, he secretly supported an anti-Japanese movement to contact the Allied Powers, in particular the British and the United States, because the Japanese had displayed bad behaviour in Thailand and had put in place an unfair economic policy. By the time of the conference in Tokyo in 1943, the Thai prime minister was already fed up with the Japanese. This was the real reason why he was absent from the conference and affected the development of a regional consciousness. The Prince’s speech used Japanese-coined term, but the Thai government might have much preferred to use the term ‘the Far East’ which has been used in the West for a long

---

82 This is the then Prime Minister, Tojo Hideki’s opening speech in the conference. Joyce C. Lebra (ed.), Japan’s Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in World War II: Selected readings and documents, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975. p. 89.
83 Daitoushou (Ministry of Greater East Asia Affairs), Daitoua kaigi enzetsushu (Speech collection of the Greater East Asia Conference), 1943, p. 17.
84 Ibid, p. 17 and p. 23.
time. In fact, the scope of the Greater East Asia/Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere had almost the same definition as the one of the Far East. According to the then Foreign Minister of Japan, Yosuke Matsuoka, the scope of the sphere was Japan, Manchuria, China, the Dutch Indies, French Indo-China, and other Southern areas.\(^\text{86}\) However, with the defeat of Japan in August 1945, the regional name ‘Greater East Asia’ disappeared and at the same time the other regional term, ‘Eastern/East Asia’ got a negative image since then.\(^\text{87}\)

On the other hand, South-East Asia Command (SEAC), established in 1943 for the purpose of driving away the Japanese, caused the Thai people to develop other regional consciousness. While they had much wider regional consciousness, i.e., the Far East and the East, Thailand, as the discussion is made in Chapter Four, played an active part to establish regional co-operation within the smaller region at quite an early stage after the Second World War. This was mainly in order to survive with the presence of new neighbours in the region.

Thailand secured its independence without being colonised. The kings and princes since King Mongkut learnt foreign languages, among others English and adopted the Western culture and ways for Siam’s modernisation. This greatly influenced their regional consciousness. Owing to their foreign knowledge, they voraciously read books and newspaper articles, especially on Siam. Through these media they learnt regional terms such as ‘East’ and ‘the Far East.’ The participation of the League of Nations had caused the kings and the Siam government to be aware of the regional consciousness in a more concreate fashion through international issues. Since the 1930s with the invasion of the Asian region, the Japanese-coined regional term ‘Greater East Asia’ had been used,


\(^{87}\) See detail discussions for these regional terms in Toshitaka Kishi, Yasunori Arano, Hideo Okaze (eds.), *Higashi Ajia no ‘jidadei’ (Timeness of ‘East Asia’)*, Tokyo: Keisuisha, 2005.
which brings almost the same concept as the Western-coined term, the Far East. Whatever regional names would change under any strong dominant powers in Asia, however, the Siamese elites had retained regional consciousness to which Siam belonged: the geographical space equal to the Far East or the East. Because of the wide acceptance of the Western culture in the nineteenth century, the Siamese followed the Western regional concept.

The Philippines

Historical background

The Republic of the Philippines is an archipelagic country located on the Western Pacific Ocean. Luzon and Mindanao are the two largest islands in the country, and there are numerous islands and islets between the two. There exist over 7,000 islands that stretch for over 1,150 miles\textsuperscript{88}, with a total population of 93 million (2010).\textsuperscript{89} The Philippines derived its name from King Philip II of Spain in the sixteenth century during the time the Spanish conquered the country.\textsuperscript{90}

Filipinos have various ethnic groups and races, including Negritos, Malays, Chinese, Mestizos and others. Amazingly, there are over 100 languages spoken in the country. Nevertheless, only nine of them (i.e., Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon, Bicol, Waray, Pampango, Pangasinan and Maranao) are spoken by about 90 percent of the island people.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{89} The government of the Philippines website: https://psa.gov.ph/content/highlights-2010-census-based-population-projections (Accessed on 1 Sept. 2016.)
Religion in the Philippines is predominantly Christianity, which was propagated during the colonial era of Spain. The religion deeply penetrated into their culture, and is reflected in the country’s politics as well. Muslims form only five percent of the total population, who live in the southern part of the country on Mindanao and its adjacent islands. In the pre-colonial period, most local people practised animist beliefs in the archipelago. However, Mindanao and its adjacent islands were Islamised through Borneo island. Islam gradually reached Manila and other towns on Luzon Island. But with the arrival of Spain, Christianity spread throughout the archipelago, except at the southern parts. As such, Islam was confined to the south. Renato Constantino pointed out that if Spaniards had not arrived, the Philippines would have been Islamised and thoroughly exposed to the great Asian traditions. The two religions had to a greater or lesser degree impacted their sense of regional consciousness.

The historical development of its pre-colonial era is quite different from Java and the Malay Peninsula due to different influences over local identity at the time of the emergence of nationalism in the nineteenth century. According to Chinese records, there were small polities in the archipelago in the tenth century, but they did not have powerful and centralised kingdoms, unlike other countries in Southeast Asia. Moreover, no nation-states existed during the arrival of the Spanish. This can be seen from a small local community called the baranganic society, which was a human settlement on a boat (barangay) before the Spanish colonial era. According to Filipino archaeologists, there are a few archaeological evidences of the society as a small political unit in the island country.

---

92 D. G. E. Hall, ibid., p. 249.
93 Ibid., p. 254.
96 Luis H. Francia, ibid., p. 27.
To seek Asian trading routes that made large profits with spice products, the then Spanish king ordered a Portuguese explorer by the name of Ferdinand Magellan to sail over and reached one of the Philippines islands in 1521, but was killed by locals in the same year. Subsequently, Spain dispatched a vessel to control the Philippines archipelago several times, but to no avail. It was in 1565 that Miguel Lopez de Legazpi successfully established a foothold in Eastern Visayas. He launched several military campaigns to conquer settlements along the coasts of Luzon, and afterwards, Spanish reinforcements from Mexico conquered Cebu and other islands, but uprisings sporadically occurred from 1596 to 1764.98

The Spanish empire attempted to seize the islands in the southern area, in particular Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago, but failed to conquer the entire group of islands. Mindanao and Sulu were already Islamised and had a strong army at the time of the Spanish arrival, which meant that the empire was not able to be subdued.99 While the Spaniards attempted to control Muslim territories numerous times, the Sulu kingdom also attacked the Spanish side and demonstrated its strength. In the end, the Spanish government was not able to govern the Islamised areas for over 300 years. The Spanish labelled the natives who converted to Christianity after the arrival of Spain as ‘Indios,’ while Muslims were derogatorily labelled ‘Moros.’100

The emergence of nationalism led to the creation of national associations, which resulted in the Philippine Revolution. While Jose Rizal was a prominent member of the ‘Propaganda Movement’ to reform the Spanish colony from within, not for independence, Andres Bonifacio and others founded a secret society, Kataastaasan Kagalang-galangang Katipunan nang manga Anak nang Bayan (Katipunan), in 1892. The purpose of this society was to gain independence from Spain by force, and to unite the islands

100 The Spanish colonisers called the Muslims in the south ‘Moros’ in derogatory sense. It derived from ‘Moors’ who occupied Spain for a few centuries. M. C. Ricklefs (ed.), ibid., pp. 162-163.
under a ‘Filipino’ nation-state. The members of the society came into contact with Rizal in 1896 in Dapitan, Mindanao, where he was deported in 1892. But Rizal turned down the plans to resort to arms because of premature preparation. With the discovery of the secret society by the colonial power, members of Katipunan began to fight against the colonial regime. Unfortunately, the armed uprisings led to Rizal’s death. Although Rizal was not a member of Katipunan and declined the plans of the uprising by the organisation, he was accused of being a ringleader and was executed on 30 December, 1896. His execution enraged the locals.

The Spanish military forces regained its territory and subsequently Emilio Aguinaldo, the leader of Katipunan, was forced to retreat to the northern side. However, during the period a revolutionary assembly held in Tejeros (Cavite) elected Aguinaldo as President of the Philippine Republic in March, 1897. A new government was established through the promulgation of the constitution on 1 November, 1897. Though the Spanish army continued to prevail over the rebellion, the Spanish force lost many soldiers in a series of clashes, and sought a peace agreement with the rebels. In December of the same year, a peace agreement was concluded between the colonial and revolutionary governments with the terms of voluntary exile to Hong Kong, and the payment of three million Mexican dollars. The nationalists left Manila after the conclusion of fighting.

The U.S. government engaged in war in Cuba, which was then under the Spanish, in order to drive them away from the Pacific. Although the Philippines under Spain was far from America, the U.S. government was interested in seizing the islands because it wanted to expand trading. Aguinaldo was approached by an American officer to assist

101 D. G. E. Hall, ibid., p. 723.  
102 Ibid.  
104 See details in D. R. SarDesai, ibid., pp. 144-145.
in removing Spain as a colonial power, and he and other Filipino nationalists landed in Manila in a U.S. battleship, the following year. They successfully seized the Spanish territories one after another, which finally led the Spaniards to surrender. On December, 1898, the two countries, i.e., Spain and the U.S., signed an agreement to end the war and cede the territory from Spain to the U.S. An officer of the U.S. promised the Filipino leader independence when approaching Aguinaldo, but the officer rejected it after seizing the Philippines. Aguinaldo and other fighters began to fight against the U.S. The war continued until 1905, which sacrificed the lives of over a million people. Even after the Philippine Assembly was established and the general elections were held in 1907, the Filipino nationalists repeatedly demanded the independence from the U.S., and complained of the slow progress in power sharing. Hit by the Great Depression, the U.S. government and the Congress granted the Philippines independence by enacting the Philippine Independence Act in 1934, which gave a ten year transition period. The Philippines gained independence from the U.S. in 1946 after the Japanese occupation for three years, in which the Japanese promised independence.

It is important here to see how the U.S. government perceived the territory of the Philippines since it took it over from Spain, because the recognition of the territory by Americans influenced Filipino intellectuals later. When the U.S. defeated Spain and signed the Treaty of Paris in 1898, all the territories of Spain, i.e., Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and others, were relinquished to the U.S. The treaty defined the territory of the Philippines in detail. The territory definition of the Philippines had to be made because there were lots of scattered islands with unclear limits under the Netherlands and Britain, and the Spaniards attempted to ‘hide’ some islands. However, this treaty did...

---

105 D. G. E. Hall, ibid., p. 767.
107 See details in Raphael Perpetuo M. Lotilla (ed.), The Philippine National Territory: A Collection of Related Documents, Diliman, Quezon City: Institute of International Legal Studies, University of the Philippines Law Center and Manila: Foreign Service Institute, Department of Foreign Affairs, 1995, p. 33.
not include the Sulu archipelago and Sibutu Island in the southern part of the current Philippines, which bordered the British North Borneo. Thus, the U.S. concluded another agreement in 1900 to contain the islands within American territory. Certainly, the treaties created the fundamental territory of the Philippines, but this was the territory created by the colonial regimes, without any local opinion taken into account when Christian nationalists of the northern islands in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries developed a movement demanding independence. On the other hand, Muslims, or Moros, who lived in Mindanao, the Sulu archipelago and their adjacent islands had strongly believed that they kept their independence since before the arrival of Spain and, never recognised the dominion of Spain and the U.S. There was a perception gap between the Christians and Muslims.

The differences resulted from suppressing Muslims by Spain and the U.S. The Spanish colonial government was unable to control the southern areas, despite the fact that it sent an expeditionary force many times. Spaniards considered Muslims as enemies because Muslims were considered uncivilised. Thus, they had a ‘mission’ to force them to convert to Christianity. Spanish conquerors created a strong sense of animosity between Christians and Muslims. On the other hand, it would seem that Muslims had little sense of their own identity before the arrival of the Spanish, but with its domination over the southern parts, there emerged an identity that distinguished Muslims from Christians. At the same attempt to conquer, the Spanish attempted to transform Muslims through education, but failed because Muslims strongly resisted the establishment of schools.

Nevertheless, the defeated Spanish Empire ceded Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago to the U.S. At the time when the two colonial rulers signed in 1898, it would seem that the U.S. government did not notice that Spain had not controlled the islands for over three centuries, and based on the 1878 treaty between Spain and the Sultan of
Sulu,\textsuperscript{109} they concluded a new treaty called the Bates Agreement, with the Sultan in 1899. Peter Gordon Gowing analysed the 1899 treaty and made the two parties misunderstood:\textsuperscript{110} The U.S. government was ‘to get Moro acknowledgement of the fact that the U.S. had succeeded to the status of sovereign in Moroland’; but the Sultan of Sulu believed that the 1899 treaty was an extension of the 1878 treaty and a modus vivendi. The Sultan’s emolument given by the Spanish was regarded as just a tribute in exchange for his co-operation in keeping the Sulu peaceful.\textsuperscript{111} The U.S. government succeeded in ruling over the southern parts after fierce battles after 1913, and urged the Christians to settle in Mindanao by providing land with a loan. This settlement fundamentally changed Muslim lifestyles and the demographic landscape in Mindanao. The government also carried out ‘Filipinization’ in the south islands through the set-up of a Moro province and brought many non-Muslims as administrators into the province.\textsuperscript{112} These programmes arose discontent in the community and strengthened their own identity, as not Filipino, but Moro.

The Philippines today consists of Christian and Islamic cultures. The colonial powers attempted to govern the Muslim islands, and at the same time discriminated against its inhabitants and suppressed them. The Spaniards made the Indios\textsuperscript{113} believe that they controlled the areas. Some Christian nationalists in the era sought to assert a ‘Malay identity’ to supersede their differences in religion.


\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p. 32.


\textsuperscript{113} Indios discriminatorily meant the natives in the era of Spain.
The Malay consciousness and regional awareness

Filipino consciousness emerged in the nineteenth century. The term Filipino originally indicated the Spaniards who were born in the Philippine archipelago. This term was synonymous with another term, *Insulares*. In the middle of the nineteenth century the meaning of Filipino included the Spanish mestizo and the local intellectuals. Subsequently, the term embraced all the people who lived in the archipelago. In the process of the emergence of nationalism, the term Filipino became a concept on an equal level with Spaniards who were born on the Iberian Peninsula.\(^{114}\)

However, it cannot be ignored that at the same time their racial consciousness as Malays existed. They were also aware of terms coined by the West in the nineteenth century for the region they live in, namely, the Indian Archipelago and Malay Archipelago. There was increased consciousness of Filipinos as belonging to an ethnologic or cultural single area where the Malays dwelt, and Filipino intellectuals in the period came to consider the area as both a geographic and political area. This section focuses on how they became aware of this matter.

Filipino nationalists in the nineteenth and twenties century evolved a consciousness as being Malays and Filipinos. At the early stages of their consciousness, Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera, who was a medical doctor, had enrolled in the *Ecole nationale des langues orientales vivantes* in France where he studied the Malay language and earned a diploma.\(^{115}\) It would seem that he attempted to establish the Malay consciousness through the language, but, like other Filipino nationalists in the nineteenth century, he also had an identity as a Filipino. Nevertheless, his article, *The Filipino Soul*,\(^ {116}\) focused only on Filipino identity without writing anything about Malay identity, which probably

---


means that at that point in time, his Filipino consciousness was perhaps much stronger than his Malay consciousness. Isabelo de los Reyes, a prominent politician, asserted that the origin of Filipinos were indubitably the Malays, after studying history, ethnography and folklore.\footnote{Resil Mojares, ibid., p. 300.} Though he wondered about the emigration from the Philippines to Sumatra, i.e. diffusion of the Malays from the Filipino islands, the politician accepted the then general opinion that Filipinos descended from Sumatra.\footnote{Ibid., p. 301.} In spite of the fact that there were various languages in the Philippines, he believed that the people in the islands shared a common Malay base.\footnote{Rommel A. Curaming, ‘Filipinos as Malay: Historicizing an Identity,’ in Maznah Mohammad and Muhd. Khainadin Aljunied (eds.), Melayu: The Politics, Poetic and Paradoxes of Malayness, Singapore: NUS Press, 2011, p. 247.}

Jose Rizal was not exceptional. The key leader of nationalists in the Philippines studied in the University of Santo Thomas and subsequently went to Spain to earn degrees in medicine and classical literature. In Spain, he advocated for political reform to students from the Philippines and began the Propaganda Movement. After returning to his hometown, he organised a demonstration against the raising of farm rent. Not to be arrested by the authorities, he escaped. During his time there, he devoted to write for the awakening of their Filipino consciousness. A series of his writings show his two racial consciousness as being a ‘double tracked nationalist’\footnote{Zeus A. Salazar, ‘The Malay World: Bahasa Melayu in the Philippines,’ in The Malayan Connection: Ang Pilipinas sa Dunia Melayu, Lamsod Quezon: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 1998, p. 101.}: he had the consciousness of being both Filipino and Malay. One of his popular articles, The Philippines a Century Hence, used the term ‘Malayan Filipino’\footnote{Jose Rizal, The Philippines a Century Hence, Manila: Philippine Education Company, 1912, p. 46.} and at the same time espoused the idea that ‘The Philippine races, like all the Malays, do not succumb before the foreigner like the Australians, the Polynesians and the Indians of the New World.’\footnote{Ibid., pp. 59-60.} This shows that the author considered the Filipinos as one of the races. Other article, The Indolence of the Filipinos, which explained the key causes of Filipino indolence and concluded that
sufficient education and liberty would be the key factors to cure the local indolence. The 
single word, ‘Malays’ was also used but this article focuses mainly on the Filipinos.

Rizal attempted to trace the origins of the Malays through Western-published 
books and journals, and also discussed a prerequisite element of the Malays. He authored 
two memos on this. His two memos were written about the books on the archipelago. 
One of the memos was titled ‘The People of the Archipelago’ which reviewed books and 
discussed the origins of the Malays. He clearly read books by Crawford and Marsden, 
but no book titles were mentioned. Quoted from the passage of Marsden, he said that ‘the 
name “Malay” is now often used loosely in such a way that it is applied solely to the 
Muslim population of the archipelago without considering its language.’ He also 
pointed out that other scholars did not call the Malays Christians and Pagans who speak 
Malay language, and he did not agree this. The nationalist complained that the Annals of 
the Malays (Sejarah Melayu) translated into English did not discuss any language 
matters, and placed emphasis on the significance of the Malay language as a 
fundamental element of the Malays. It would seem that his requirement to be Malay 
was to speak the Malay language. Probably for this, Rizal studied the language very hard 
and commented after studying: ‘I am becoming more and more convinced that Tagalog 
could not have been derived from Malay... However, there is no doubt that they have 
many common words.’ He attempted to find a commonality between Tagalog and 
Malay and further to share a Malay identity. Also, he might have had concerns that the 
people of the Christian areas did not speak the language, while the Muslims in the south

123 Jose Rizal, Jose Rizal’s Political Writings, Manila: The National Historical Institute, 2007, p. 233 and p. 241.
124 Ibid., ‘The People of the Indian Archipelago’ and ‘Notes on Melanesia, Malaysia and Polynesia,’ pp. 364-382. Unfortunately it is not sure when the memos were written.
125 Ibid., p. 367.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
128 In a letter to Blumentritt on 10 April, 1895. In The Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence, Part Two, 1890-1896, Manila: Jose Rizal National Centennial Commission, 1961, p. 504.
could do because the Muslims had close relations with other Malay areas. Thus, he had great concern that the term ‘Malay’ applied only to Muslims.

On the other hand, in his tracing the origins through the Western publications, he also acquired the knowledge of a frame of a region in the Pacific and did not object to the Western-coined regional concept. Other memos of his described a region of the Pacific: Melanesia, Polynesia and Malaysia. It would seem that this division was brought into the mainstream in the period after a French explorer, Dumond d’Urville officially framed the regions as such. Rizal followed the regional framework possibly based on Dumond d’Urville’s book and others.129 Interestingly enough, Rizal’s memo employed the regional name ‘Malaysia’ as a more proper expression than the East Indies.130 Probably Rizal much preferred to use ‘Malaysia’ partly because the term ‘Malaysia’ contains the meaning of the region that the Malays inhabited and partly because Rizal had discovered a consciousness of the Malays. It is significantly important here that he used the term ‘Malaysia’ due to the fact that he might have sought a nation based on this regional concept in the long term. He wrote in a letter to his European friend:

Formerly I had not reflected on your observation that ‘Those peoples would better be assimilated by a greater Malayan nation than by a Spanish one ... ’ I admit now that this is true. I have never thought of it ... 131

Another case shows that he had the same idea in his own organization. The Filipino association, the Indios Bravos formed in Paris in 1889 had a secret inner group. Although

129 In a correspondence letter to Bluementritt on 17 April, 1890, Rizal mentioned book titles which he read. Among them are Marsden, History of Sumatra, Dumont d’Urville, Picturesque Voyage around the World, Rienzi, Malaysia (The Universe), and others. While the books of Dumont d’Urville likely included Voyages Pittoresque Autour de Monde published in Paris in 1834, Rienzi’s book might be G. L. Domeny de Rienzi, Occeanie ou cinquieme partie du monde. Revenue Geographique et ethnographique de la malaise, de la Micronesie, de la polynesie et de la Melanesie; offrant les resulatats des voyages et des decouvertes de l’auteur et de ses devanciers, ainsi que ses nouvelles classifications et divisions de ces contrees, Paris: Firmin Didot Freres, 1837. See other book titles on The Rizal-Bluementritt Correspondence, p. 349. The d’Urville’s regional concept will be discussed in the next chapter of Malaysia.
130 Jose Rizal’s Political Writings, p. 372.
131 In the letter dated 20 July, 1890, The Rizal-Bluementritt Correspondence, p. 374.
this association aimed at keeping the Spanish colony of the Philippines united, the secret
group members pledged to liberate the Malay peoples from colonial rule. Their plan was
to release the burdens in the Philippines first, ‘later to be extended to the inhabitants of
Borneo, Indonesia and Malaya.’ Thus, it can be said that Rizal considered the Malay
region to be a single entity. Although there are no records of the secret group, ‘liberation’
might have meant gaining independence from the colonisers and integrating all the
islands under a single nation.

Interestingly enough, Rizal visited Sandakan city of North Borneo to settle his
family and others in 1892 because of harsh environment pressed by Spain. He was
negotiating with an officer of the North Borneo Company to lease a large piece of land.
The officer offered 100,000 acres with a 999-year lease to Rizal and the nationalist agreed
to obtain it jubilantly. However, unfortunately, the agreement was rejected by the head
of the Company after a while. The nationalist might have had a long term plan to bring
together all the Malays who were suppressed by the colonial powers. As Austin Coates
also argued, should Rizal’s colony succeed, it would be a great step to unify all the Malay
people from Borneo, the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaya.

In the context of ‘regional consciousness,’ what is important is that Rizal had learnt
of the term ‘Malaysia’ quite early as compared to other Southeast Asian intellectuals and
he also had rough ideas to demarcate a national framework, even though he advocated to
politically reform within the Spanish colony. His philosophy and political ideas were
taken over by Filipino nationalists after his execution.

132 Austin Coates, *Rizal: Philippine Nationalist and Martyr*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 175. It is interesting that
Rizal had learnt the term ‘Indonesia’ delimiting the territory of the Dutch colony because the term originally had the synonym with
the term ‘Malaysia.’ See the next chapter.

550-551.

134 Ibid., p. 553.
Apolinario Mabini, one of the key revolutionary leaders, became a member of *La Liga Filipina* (The Philippine League) which Rizal established in 1892. After Rizal was arrested immediately after the formation, Mabini became a secretary of the new Supreme Council and at the same time followed Rizal’s dream. He, as well as, Rizal had a wide political vision of the Philippines. This would be not unrelated to his Malay consciousness. Mabini said that the Philippine Revolution had ‘its sole and final end to maintain alive and resplendent the torch of liberty and civilization in Oceania, to illuminate the gloomy night in which the vilified and degraded Malay race find itself, in order that it may be led to the road of social emancipation.’ Furthermore, he also wished to have future co-operation with ‘the different peoples of Malaysia … if not unity.’ The nationalist hoped that ‘the Philippines were ready to become part of a confederation of Asian states.’ However, when he produced a draft of the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines in 1898, he chartered a realistic course and clearly defined the territory of the nation.

The Republic of the Philippines is the union of all Filipinos residing within the territory comprised of the Islands of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, the Jolo Archipelago and other adjacent islands found within the region formerly known by the name of Islas Filipinas.

The territory was based on the one of Spain and included in Mindanao and Sulu Archipelago. The draft further mentioned:

---

137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
The Marianas Islands, the Carolinas, and other territories which were subject to the Spanish government in the Oceania region, will become an integral part of the Philippine Republic, if they voluntarily take up the cause of the Filipinos to secure independence.140

This view was the same as Andres Bonifacio in this period who formed the secret society, ‘Katipunan’ for the purpose of achieving independence from Spain and led to the Philippine Revolution. Bonifacio wished to gain independence for the Philippines archipelago and had much stronger consciousness of Filipino, not of Malay.141 While Rizal and Mabini wished to co-operate with other Malays in the Pacific, Bonifacio and Emilio Aguinaldo, the first president of the nation, did not consider to do so.

The frame of the nation has been perceived since then, but it was not until in the 1930s that the proposal of the Malay based nation came up. Wenceslao Vinzons, a later politician and leader of guerrillas against Japanese army, argued for a united Malay nation. For this purpose, he formed ‘Perhempoean Orang Malayoe’ which was organised for Filipinos and students in Manila from Southern Siam, the Malay Peninsula, the current Indonesia and Polynesia.142 It is notable that Filipinos themselves set up the association in solidarity with the Malays in this period, and it is interesting that the proposal was made at quite an early stage among Southeast Asian nationalists. Then, Wenceslao who was still a student in the University of the Philippines delivered a speech titled ‘Malayan Irredenta’ in February 1932.143 The speaker argued that ‘a political

140 Ibid.
141 Ikehata Setsuho, Filipin Kakumei to Katorishizumu (The Philippine Revolution and Catholicism), Tokyo: Keisou Shobou, 1987, pp. 111-112. As a matter of fact, Bonifacio used ‘Tagalog,’ not Filipino. According to Ikehata, ‘Tagalog’ was the same meaning as Filipino.
142 Rommel A. Curaming, Ibid., p. 251.
143 See the full text on Ismail Hussein, Antara Dunia Melayu dengan Dunia Kebangsaan, Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 1990, Lampiran 1, pp. 47-52. He titled ‘Malaysian Irredenta.’ (p. 47), but it would seem that the correct title was ‘Malayan Irredenta.’ Associate Professor, Augusto V. de Viana, Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Letters, University of Santo Tomas informed me on 26 July, 2017.
outlook that was confined to national boundaries circumscribed the struggle against colonial yoke.\textsuperscript{144} It is noteworthy here that Filipinos themselves considered the unified or integrated territory of the Malay Archipelago as a political unit. The student strongly asserted the formation of a ‘Republic of Malaysia.’ He did not use the word ‘Malay World’ or \textit{Alam Melayu},\textsuperscript{145} but his ‘Malaysia’ was synonymous with the term. He mentioned that the origin of ‘Malaysia’ was from Srivijaya and Majapahit, and said that Srivijaya ranged from Formosa (Taiwan) to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and south Java and the Maluku.\textsuperscript{146} Furthermore, he argued for the following scope for Malaysia: ‘A unified Malaysia extending from the northern extremity of the Malay Peninsula to the shores of New Guinea, from Madagascar to the Philippines and to the remotest islands of Polynesia.’\textsuperscript{147} His vision was to form a single nation ‘redeemed Malaysia … beyond … territorial boundaries,’ but it follows that the national territory of ‘Malaysia’ was quite large area. He wished to establish the nation by giving ‘birth to a new nationalism’ for Malaysia. This nation was for him to make salvation of Filipinos’ prosperity.\textsuperscript{148} Unfortunately, the political leader was killed by the Japanese army in 1942. His goal was not achieved, but Diosdado Macapagal, the ninth president of the Philippines inherited this vision.

While Manuel Quezon and Claro Recto had a dream of unifying the Malay people before the Second World War,\textsuperscript{149} Macapagal managed seemingly to do so in the 1960s under MAPHILINDO (the loose confederation of Malaya, the Philippines and Indonesia). Macapagal proposed the formation of ‘a Confederation of Greater Malaysia’ including the Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, Brunei, and Sabah in July 1962.\textsuperscript{150} He did not include Indonesia for the first time, but the President of the Philippines referred to

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., p. 47.
\textsuperscript{145} The term ‘Malay World’ will be discussed in the next chapter.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., p. 50.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., p. 51.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., pp. 51-52.
\textsuperscript{149} Rommel, ibid., p. 252 and Diosdado Macapagal, \textit{The Philippines Turns East}, Quezon City: Mac Publishing House, 1966, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{150} \textit{The Straits Times}, 28 July, 1962, p. 1.
the inclusion of Indonesia by March 1963. He said that ‘the establishment of MAPHILINDO will remove the barriers that have been built artificially to divide the peoples of the Malay race’ and he also looked forward to the rebirth of a region as the house of free Malay peoples. Macapagal emphasised that MAPHILINDO was ‘a voluntary association’ of three independent nations and was not a single super-state. As a matter of fact, it was too late to dissolve three countries with strong nationalisms and form a single super-state by the time. After the Philippines and Indonesia gained independence, it was impossible to establish a Malay super-state. Instead, the loose confederation was the best way to pursue the Vinzons’ dream. However, if the three countries combined into one nation, disruption similar to that of Yugoslavia would inevitably occur. There also might have been a serious political conflict between Tunku Abdul Rahman and Sukarno.

MAPHILINDO was a legacy of Rizal and Vinzons’ dreams. The predecessors wished to have a single Malay nation but unfortunately MAPHILINDO was not a nation, but ‘a new region.’ The president, who joined Vinzons’ association before the Second World War, found it almost impossible to establish a new nation that combined all the Malay races. As such, he attempted to unite the region ‘based on natural and ... permanent and indestructible affinities’ by forming the regional organization to reflect the predecessors’ dreams. Macapagal might have wished that the name of the organisation and the region would have been ‘Malaysia’ following Vinzons’ proposal. As discussed above, since the nineteenth century Filipinos have dreamt of their own polity based on the Malay race, this term was quite natural to apply to the whole area for Filipinos. However, as the Federation of Malaya re-named its own territory as ‘Malaysia’ in 1963. Filipinos had no choice but to term the region and the organization as...

153 Ibid., p. 40 and p. 42.
154 Ibid., p. 57.
MAPHILINDO as a last resort. Macapagal and other Filipino politicians must have felt uncomfortable for the new country’s name, the Federation of Malaysia, because only a small part of the archipelago was termed ‘Malaysia,’ in spite of the fact that the original meaning was the appellation of the whole Malay Archipelago. Unfortunately, the region and the organization disappeared in a few months due to little interest shown by Sukarno and the Tunku.

Evolving regional consciousness

The Philippines was historically an isolated area, and this has had a significant impact on the formation of the ‘Filipino’ identity. The small communities, or barangays, spread throughout the archipelago prior to the arrival of Spain. Unfortunately, these communities were not centralised; an empire in the area was inexistent before the arrival of Spain. Consequently, the Philippines hardly possess any myths, historical relics, or ancient documents. Filipinos cannot share any historical past. This was the reason for their isolation from the Malay World.

Christianity was the major religion in the northern area of the Philippines after the Spanish empire propagated it, and this caused Filipinos to remain isolated from the Malay World. In the Malay Archipelago, the northern Philippines was, and remains to be, exceptionally dominated by Christians, while major parts of the Archipelago were Islamised. The southern parts of the Philippines, i.e. Mindanao, Sulu Archipelago and their adjacent islands, were predominated by Islam prior to the invasion of the Spaniards. The Islamised areas had close trading relations with other Muslim-dominated islands.

155 Usha Mahajani, an Indian political science scholar, mentioned Vinzons’ idea as ‘Malaya Irredenta’ in the time of period of Sabah Claim dispute with Malaysia. She might have used the actual title of Vinzons’ speech ‘Malaysia Irredenta’ purposely. See in her article, ‘The Development of Philippine Asianism,’ Asian Studies, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1965).
156 For details on MAPHILINDO, see the chapter 5.
such as Borneo, Java and Sulawesi. Through these relations, Muslims in the south shared an Islamic culture and history each other. Meanwhile, the Christians in the north were not close to the Muslims because of the policy of cracking down on Muslims by Spain. This policy later arose a deep hatred towards the Christians by the southern Muslims. Due to a series of long term tragedies, the Northern Philippines became minor, and was isolated from the Malay World. This religious isolation tormented the nineteenth century nationalists.

Subsequently, the nationalists sought to find their identity, the Malay race. This is the reason Rizal researched the history of Java and Sumatra, and at the same time studied the Malay language. It is noteworthy that his documents referred to the two terms: Malay and Filipino Malay, or simply, Malay. He acknowledged two different two identities. It would seem that the reason why he sought to establish the Malay identity was because he may have sought to unify the Malay World that was divided by the colonial powers.

However, the Philippine Revolution made it impossible to unify the Malay World, since the nationalists attempted to regain independence within the Spanish colonial territory after the death of Rizal. The nationalists, Bonafacio and Aguinaldo, did not pursue the Malay identity as a national fundamental element. This is probably due to three reasons. First of all, they had to fight against three colonial regimes, namely, Spain/the U.S., the British and the Dutch, in order to unify and collaborate, hence become liberated from the powers. In particular, the British power was the strongest in the world at this period of time. As the Filipinos spent a great deal of energy and time to remove the Spaniards from the islands with the help of the U.S. forces, it was physically difficult to engage in wars with other colonial powers at the same time. Second, it was difficult for Christian Filipinos to have contact and relations with intellectuals or nationalists in other areas of the Malay Archipelago. This was due to the non-emergence of nationalists.

---

at the time. Filipino nationalism emerged and developed for the first time in Southeast Asia, so that in this sense the nationalists were also in isolation. Finally, the last reason they nationalists did not pursue to unify the Malay World was due to the difficulty of communication between Filipinos and the people in other areas of the Archipelago. Most of Christian Filipino intellectuals in the nineteenth century had learnt the Spanish language, and English at a later period (Rizal was an exceptional multi-European language speaker); they were unable to speak the Malay language, which was a *lingua franca* throughout the Malay Archipelago. This was partly because of the historical background, and the fact that the Northern Philippines had no historical empires. Thus, even if the above two factors were clear, Christian Filipino nationalists/intellectuals would have faced communication problems. In order to overcome this issue in the future, Rizal and other nationalists may have studied the language. This point cannot be overlooked. These factors led to a struggle by the nationalists for independence within the territory of the Spanish empire, during, and after, the Philippine Revolution.

From a broad perspective, the Philippine Revolution led the nationalists to give up attempting to unify the Malay World, and to choose their own path to independence. As previously mentioned, a politician had a dream to establish ‘the Republic of Malaysia’ in the 1930s, but this never developed in the political mainstream in the Philippines. The territory of the Philippines, which was basic compared to that of the Spain and the US, was self-evident among the nationalists at the time. Consequently, the territory was stipulated in the 1935 Constitution. This meant that for Filipinos, the Malay World was a forgotten region until the short-lived confederation, MAPHILINDO, was formed in 1963. Alternatively, Filipinos looked at the region of Asia.
Although the Japanese military government formed its coined region, the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere in the 1940s, Filipinos never welcomed the Japanese like the Thai government, and nominally used the Japanese-created term. After the war they also followed the Western-coined regional concept. The European and American powers, and later Filipino politicians, seldom used the regional terms, ‘the Malay Archipelago,’ ‘Indian Archipelago,’ ‘Malaysia’ or ‘Indonesia,’ after the war, and instead relied on the terms ‘Asia,’ ‘the Far East’ and ‘South East Asia.’ The Philippine foreign policy between the 1946 independence and 1950 was directed towards Europe and the U.S., since the new country was greatly influenced by these regions. Russell Fifield observed that even after independence, ‘it was difficult to adjust to the concept of Asian neighbours.’ Interestingly enough, the fifth President of the Philippines, Manuel Roxas, perceived that the island country belonged to a part of the Western world in international politics.

However, it was Elpidio Quirino, the next President, who proactively developed to deepen diplomatic relations with neighbours in Asia with the expansion of communism surrounding the country. He stated that ‘In the light of political developments in Southeast Asia, and the turbulent conditions in our immediate vicinity, the Philippines should further strengthen its position.’ As Quirino expressed the term ‘Southeast Asia’ in his 1949 speech, he had perceived that his country belonged to the region. When President of Indonesia, Sukarno, paid an official visit to Manila in 1951, Quirino mentioned that his visit was ‘a historic moment in the life of the peoples of Southeast

---

159 The terms, ‘Malaysia’ and ‘Indonesia’ will be discussed in the next chapter.
Asia,’ but Quirino did not place emphasis on their racial ties.\textsuperscript{163} When Quirino visited Jakarta in 1952, he mentioned that the two countries had ‘the consciousness of a common racial origin’, and had been under Srivijaya and Majapahit,\textsuperscript{164} but he focused more on the diplomatic relations in Southeast Asia, than on the racial ties, and also recognised that the two countries belonged to the members of Southeast Asia. In order to prevent the threat of communism in Asia, the Filipino leader took the initiative to hold the Baguio Conference in 1950, and sought to establish regional cooperation on security, but failed to forma regional organization which the Philippines wished. The Philippine government joined SEATO in 1954,\textsuperscript{165} which the U.S. organised, and this further strengthened its security. Therefore, the Filipinos’ regional consciousness based on the Malay race had not been formulated. With the world order imposed by Europe and the U.S., the Philippines strengthened its regional consciousness of Southeast Asia in terms of security\textsuperscript{166} starting from the 1940s. This consciousness among Filipinos was developed to establish ASEAN in 1967.

**Conclusion**

As is well known, Thailand was never colonised politically. However, in terms of foreign policy and regional awareness in the nineteenth and twentieth century, it adhered to the regional concepts designed by the West. The Thai elites began creating a Southeast Asian regional consciousness after the Second World War. Unlike Siam, Burma, Cambodia and Vietnam were colonised by the British and the French. Thus, the borders of Siam were drawn not by its people, but through colonial force and request. The kings


\textsuperscript{165} The conference and SEATO will be discussed in the chapter 5.

of Siam, who were at the centre of political power, struggled to maintain independence by using their diplomatic skills.

Regional awareness and consciousness were the result of interaction with Westerners. At the end of Rama III’s reign in 1850, a U.S. mission was sent to Bangkok using the term ‘Southeast Asia.’ The royal court most likely noticed the regional term used and this was one of the earliest recorded uses of the term in the country.

King Mongkut, who spoke English and promoted Western civilisation, had a regional consciousness through contact with the British and the U.S. Although it seems that he learnt the terms such as ‘Indian Archipelago’ and ‘South-East Asia’ through English books and newspapers, his documents show that he used ‘East Asia’ and simply ‘Asia.’ Thus, the king had a broad regional consciousness. His successor, King Chulalongkorn, travelled to Asian and European countries a few times, and had a solid understanding of international politics. He often discussed with European officers and read English newspapers and books, as well as learnt regional terms surrounding Siam. His brother, Prince Damrong, also occasionally used the term ‘East’ in his documents. Thus, the royal family shared similar perspectives on the region.

After Siam was accepted as a single independent country and became a member of the League of Nations, the Siamese had been aware of other regional concepts such as ‘Far East’ and ‘Malaysia.’ Up to the time, the kings had an awareness of only ‘East’ and ‘East Asia,’ but Siam’s delegates, mainly princes, followed the concepts coined by the West. Interestingly enough, the son of King Chulalongkorn, King Vajiravudh, the first king who studied overseas, seemed to know regional concepts quite well, but he seldom used ‘Asia,’ and consistently used ‘East’ or ‘Far East’ when he indicated the Asian region and East Asia. It can be said that he might have tried to avoid using the term ‘Asia’ that Europeans had long used as a discriminatory term.
During the Second World War, Siam’s elites, who governed after the 1932 Revolution, were forced to follow the Japanese regional concept, ‘Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity’ to survive in a turbulent era and sustain Thailand’s independence. The regional concept was almost synonymous with the Far East created by the West, but the Siamese remained the sense of regional consciousness that Thailand belonged to. The formation and operation of SEAC during the war led to change Thai people’s regional consciousness. Some Siamese were aware of the term ‘South East Asia,’ but Thai people quickly followed the regional concept after the term became an international political word. For that reason, Thai elites, as we will discuss in later chapter, sought to co-operate with surrounding small countries.

To conclude, Thai people always followed the regional concepts coined by the West before and after the World War. Their consciousness was only over a broad region prior to the Second World War. The Siamese had no consciousness and recognition of the region of the present-day mainland Southeast Asia with the maritime one until the end of the world war.

The Philippines is a unique country in that nationalists attempted to embrace Malay identity and merge it into their national consciousness. Some Filipino nationalists also perceived a ‘region’ in which Malay race lived as their national frame. This was due to the development of Christianity, a religion to which the majority of Filipino subscribe to.

With the development of nationalism, Filipino nationalists sought to establish their own identity. At the early stage they attempted to pursue the two identities, namely both Malay and Filipino identities. For example, Jose Rizal first embraced a consciousness of the Malay race and traced it back to its origins in European works. For him the most important requirement to be a Malay was the Malay language. Nevertheless, the Christian islanders had no knowledge to understand it, because the Philippines had no centralised and powerful polities in the past before the arrival of Spaniard and further because they
were isolated regionally, except for the people in the parts of the southern islands. On the other hand, the Muslims in the south, who had already come to believe in Islam before the arrival, had shared Islam with the present-day Indonesia and Malaysia through trading. Thus, they had knowledge to speak the Malay language as a *lingua franca*. In this respect, the Christians and Muslims had a gap in their Malay race consciousness. Rizal and other nationalists, who learnt the ‘regional’ terms, ‘the Malay Archipelago’ and ‘Malaysia,’ felt from the ‘Malay world’ because of the lack of the language knowledge.

On the other hand, Rizal also pursued the creation of a Filipino consciousness. His expression, ‘Malay Filipino,’ is evidence of this. It can be said that he had a ‘Double Identity.’ This double identity was taken over by nationalists after his death, such as Bonifacio and Mabini. Mabini, who prepared a constitutional draft in 1898, had a Malay consciousness and wished to unify the area that the Malays lived into a single political entity. However, the draft took a realistic stance that the national borders were delimited within the Spanish territory. This stance was inherited during independence after the Second World War. Further, Emilio Aguinaldo, the first President of the Philippines, sought to gain independence within the Spanish/American territory. Subsequently, the nationalists insisted on their territory for their new independence country. This request became their main stream up to the time when the Philippines achieved independence after the Second World War. Thus, it can be said that the Philippine Revolution caused them to focus on only the colonial territory and to abandon the unification of the Malays’ dwelling areas. However, some nationalists did not give up the establishment of the country based on the Malay race. Although Manuel Quezon and Claro Recto shared the same dream, Wesceslao Vinzons seriously considered the formation of a new country called ‘Malaysia’ to include all the Malays in the entire archipelago. He was killed by Japanese invaders during the World War, and his political idea was aborted.
By gaining independence, newly-emerged states such as the Philippines and Indonesia were divided with borders. At the same time Europeans and Americans seldom used the regional terms based on the Malay race. This resulted in the Filipinos ‘losing’ a sense of consciousness of the region. As the Europeans introduced the new regional concept, South East Asia, the Philippines also followed the concept.

The President, Magapacal, formed MAPHILINDO in 1963, but the loose confederation was brought to an end after a few months. By the time it was impossible to form any polities based on the Malay race. The Filipinos have seldom felt racial consciousness and began making consciousness of ‘Southeast Asians’ based not on any races.