

## Nomination form International Memory of the World Register

### 1.0 Checklist

Nominees may find the following checklist useful before sending the nomination form to the International Memory of the World Secretariat. The information provided in italics on the form is there for guidance only and should be deleted once the sections have been completed.

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Summary completed (section 1)   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Nomination and contact details completed (section 2)  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Declaration of Authority signed and dated (section 2)   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | If this is a joint nomination, section 2 appropriately modified, and <b>all</b> Declarations of Authority obtained  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Documentary heritage identified (sections 3.1 – 3.3)  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | History/provenance completed (section 3.4)  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Bibliography completed (section 3.5)  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Names, qualifications and contact details of up to three independent people or organizations recorded (section 3.6)   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Details of owner completed (section 4.1)  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Details of custodian – if different from owner – completed (section 4.2)  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Details of legal status completed (section 4.3)   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Details of accessibility completed (section 4.4)  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Details of copyright status completed (section 4.5)   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Evidence presented to support fulfilment of the criteria? (section 5)   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Additional information provided (section 6)   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Details of consultation with stakeholders completed (section 7)   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Assessment of risk completed (section 8)  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Summary of Preservation and Access Management Plan completed. If there is no formal Plan attach details about current and/or planned access, storage and custody arrangements (section 9) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Any other information provided – if applicable (section 10)   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Suitable reproduction quality photographs identified to illustrate the documentary heritage. (300dpi, jpg format, full-colour preferred).   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Copyright permissions forms signed and attached. Agreement to propose item(s) for inclusion on the World Digital Library if inscribed   |

# Nomination form International Memory of the World Register

**“The Royal Photographic Glass Plate Negatives and Original Prints Collection”**

**ID Code [2016-57]**

## 1.0 Summary (max 200 words)

The Royal Collection being nominated, totaling almost 35,427 glass plate negatives and 50,000 prints, and covering a long and continuous period from 1855-1935, were previously preserved in 3 separate royal libraries of the original owners--: King Chulalongkorn, King Vajiravudh, and Prince Damrongrajnubhab.

In 1977, they were given into the care of National Archive in Bangkok. Here, temperature and humidity are controlled, and full time archivists work to preserve, catalogue, and provide print and digital access to the public. Currently, 24,800 plates have been scanned for digital use, and 4,149 plates have been included in the National database.

Experts from Chulalongkorn University confirmed the authenticity and value of the Collection, and a national committee set up last year has further analyzed the contents, and provided more detailed explanations.

The nominated Collection are important historical evidence featuring social, cultural, political changes and foreign relations activities of Siam, and its relations with the world. The Collection depicts nationally and internationally important personalities, places, and events, from the age of western colonization in Asia which prompted Siam to examine its national identity and to reform its society, -- through the years of the First World War when Siam sided with the Allies and shared the victory, and the aftermath of the war including the worldwide political, social and cultural changes -- affecting Siam and leading to the dawn of its constitutional monarchy.

## 2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

*The Ministry of Culture, Thailand.*

## 2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

*The Ministry of Culture is in charge of the preservation, management, the promotion and the use of the nominated Collections.*

## 2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

*Ms.Savitri Suwansathit  
Committee*

- 1. The Thai National Commission for UNESCO*
- 2. The Cultural Committee of the ThaiNatCom*
- 3. The Thai National Committee on Memory of the World Programme*

## 2.4 Contact details

|  |  |                                       |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Ms.Korapin Taweta<br/>Head of Archives and Services<br/>National Archives of Thailand</i> | <i>Address: National Archives of Thailand<br/>Thavasuki, Samsen Rd., Dusit, Bangkok 10300<br/>THAILAND</i> |                                       |
| <i>Telephone<br/>+662 281 1646<br/>+662 356 5440</i>   | <i>Facsimile<br/>+662 281 5341</i>   | <i>Email<br/>Taweta2001@yahoo.com</i> |

### 3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

#### 3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

3.1.1 "The Royal Photographic Glass Plate Negatives and Original Prints Collection", shortly referred to as "The Royal Collection", comprises 35,427 glass plate negatives and 50,000 prints.

##### 3.1.2 Identification Details

This Royal Collection can be identified in details as follows:

###### A) Images from the 4<sup>th</sup> reign. (Total: 54 glass plates)

King Mongkut, the 4<sup>th</sup> reign of Bangkok, allowed photography into his court in spite of the prevailing mistrust in this new technology by his conservative courtiers at the time. He used photographs as a tool to communicate his own identity and the national Identity to his people and to the leaders of many countries in the world, as revealed in Thai and foreign documents that he sent his photographs to Queen Victoria, Emperor Napoleon III, and the US President.

Some of the images in this group were published In 2005, on the occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of King Mongkut's Birth, and the inclusion of this King in the UNESCO's List of Great personalities and Historic Events of the World. (See "Collection of Historic Pictures from the Reign of Prabat Somdet Pra Chom Kloa Choa Yoo Hua", in Thai, Amarin Printing, Bangkok, 2005).

The oldest images of the 4<sup>th</sup> reign include glass plate negatives and original photographs dated from 1855 to 1868, depicting personalities and events of national and international significance, as follows:--

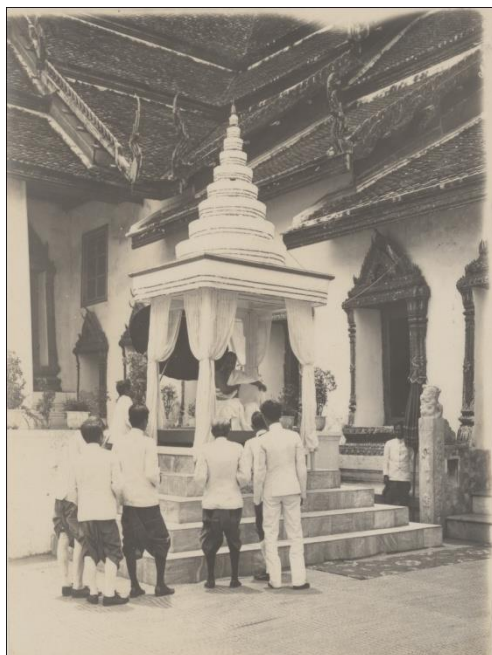
- a) the official portraits of the King in different types of costume including: the full traditional Coronation Regalia; the simple white garment worn on the Buddhist Visaka Puja Day; the French Military uniform with "Legion d' Honneur" Decoration sent to him by Emperor Napoleon III in 1853 via Admiral Bonard; and the Uniform of the United States of America's Naval Commander sent by the US President in 1868,

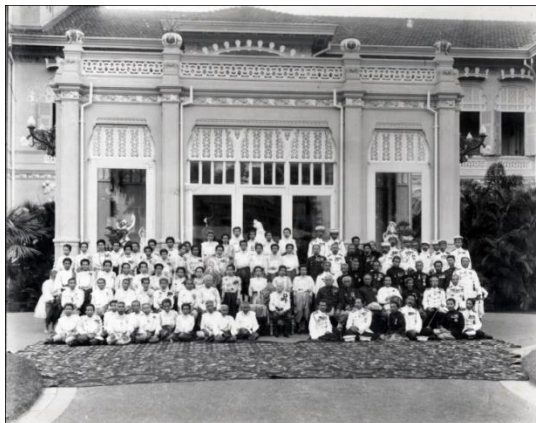


- b) the King's portrait with Queen Thepsirindra, mother of his heir, Prince Chulalongkorn, taken in 1856, and his portrait with Prince Chulalongkorn, both wearing Western military uniform, taken in 1868, printed copies of which were sent to some world leaders to promote cultural and political relations.



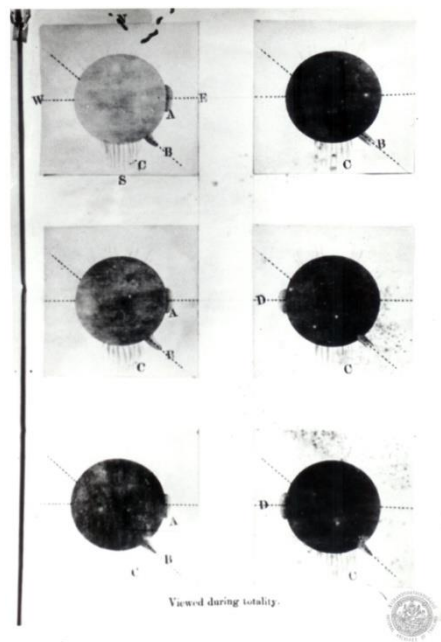
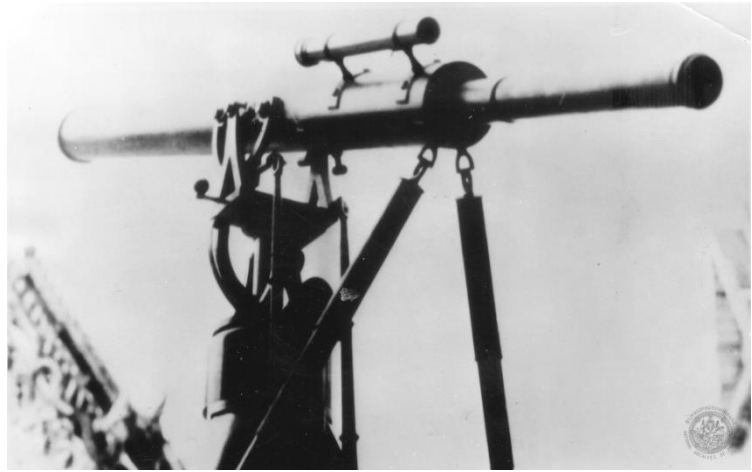
c) the traditional ceremony of Prince Chulalongkorn accepting the royal gold plate (Pra Supanthabat ) in the Grand Palace, in 1861.





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- d) the King during the royal procession for the Kathin- Robe presentation at Wat Pho (Wat Pra Chetupon Wimonmangklaram) in Bangkok, taken in 1866, with the King on the royal palanquin, with Wat Pho in the background and members of his court waiting outside the temple in the foreground
  - e) the glass plates and photographs taken during the historic and international event of King Mongkut observing the total solar eclipse at Wako District, in 1868, including the encampment sites, the equipment used during the observation and the total eclipse. Some images depict the King at the royal observation pavilion surrounded of the British envoy from Singapore and his troop, as well as the French Officer from Indochina with his troop.







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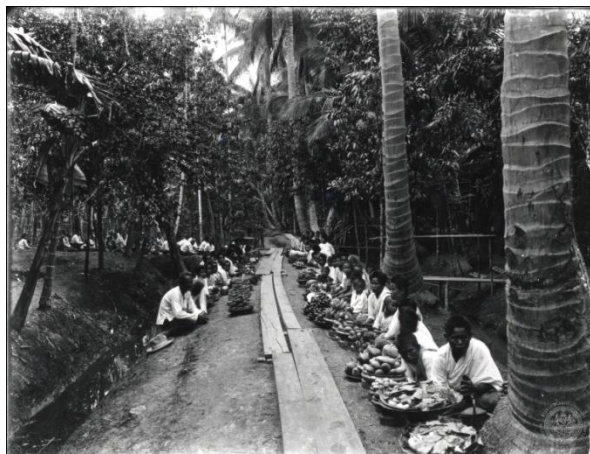
B) Images from King Chulalongkorn's reign (1868–1910)

(Total 13,832 glass.)

Comprising about two thirds of the total Royal Collection being nominated, the images from the 5<sup>th</sup> reign, King Chulalongkorn, can be categorized as follows:

1. *The images taken by King Chulalongkorn himself.*

A keen photographer, he took many photos of his own children, ladies of his court, and the people and places that he visited, especially during his many "incognito travels" to the provinces in Siam, and also during his visits abroad. He had his own glass house photographic studio in the Grand Palace where he worked with other invited photographers, and occasionally let them work without his presence.





## 2. Official photographs taken by Court photographers.

Personalities and events in King Chulalongkorn's reign were extensively documented by professional photographers, Thai and foreign, who were on several occasions engaged to take formal and informal images of the King and his family. The King was known to have sent prints these images as personal mementos to some countries' leaders and the personal friends he made while travelling abroad, to his high officials to express his gratitude for their services, to his consorts to remember him during his absence, and to his children studying abroad. Some of the images in this categories depict various important Siamese and international personalities, captured activities of national reform and development, such as the construction of bridges and the inauguration of railroads.

One distinguished Thai professional photographer engaged by King Chulalongkorn was Francis (his Christian name) Chit. Born to a Siamese soldier in 1830, and introduced to photography at the court of King Mongkut in the 1850s, Chit learned new techniques from John Thompson, the Scottish photographer who came to Siam in 1865 -1866 to photograph King Rama IV and Prince Chulalongkorn, other members of the Royal Family. He was given the title of Luang Akani Naruemitr in 1880, for his distinguished services to the court, but was allowed to open his own studio for the public services next to the Santa Cruz church in Thonburi, and later brought his sons into the business. Many of his glass plate negatives were kept in the "Royal Collection", though a few have been sold to foreign collectors.

A number of foreign photographers based in Singapore and Battavia, came to Siam during this reign and their names are listed in the record of the King's photo contests and exhibitions. Some were engaged by the King to work for the court on appointments, and they used this status to promote their studios, as well as publish their images taken in Siam internationally. These foreign photographers in this reign include:---

- Henry Schuren from Brussel, Paris and London who came to work in Siam for six month in 1874 and received the Royal decoration: the Buspamala Medal for his excellent artistic work from the King in the same year.
- G.R. Lambert from Dresden who opened his studio in Siam in 1879. Some of his photographs of King Chulalongkorn are preserved in the Hague's National Archives.

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- Robert Lenz from Germany who opened his studio in Bangkok in 1894. He successfully documented the King's visit to Singapore in May 1896 and subsequently was allowed to work as a court photographer. He also received the Royal decoration of Buspamala in 1903.



### 3. Photos taken by female court photographers

The ladies of the court of King Chulalongkorn-- his consorts and daughters-- were encouraged by the king to practice photography. They also participated in public photo contests and exhibitions organized by the King. Their numerous glass plates and prints kept in the "Royal Collection" afford the opportunity to appreciate the life and atmosphere of the "Inner Court" of King Chulalongkorn, and the images of female through the female's perspectives, ---female's self-identity at the time. The outstanding female photographers in this reign include the royal consorts from the Bunnag family, known as "Choa Chom Kok Aw"





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C) Images from the reign of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI)

(Total: 5,106 glass plates)

The 6<sup>th</sup> reign was also very well documented and a good number of glass plate's negatives and prints from this short reign form an important part of the Royal Collection.

King Vajiravudh's reign (1910-1925) covered a troubled time in a more inter-connected world, including the WWI, the worldwide economic crisis that followed, and the collapses of monarchies and empires in many countries in the world. The King attempted many swift reforms, such as the change of the calendar system, the introduction of marriage registration, the new style of dress for ladies and gentlemen, the construction of Don Muang Airport, the founding of the Chulalongkorn University, and the establishment of the Wild Tiger Corps. He declared war siding with the Allied Power, sending troops to Europe and in sharing the victory, Siam was able to begin the renegotiations of the unfair treaties that Siam had signed with a number of western countries in the 4th reign. The negotiation successfully concluded after more than 10 years. He wrote and participated in many plays to promote nationalism, change the national flag to tricolor, and travelled to visit many parts of the country.

Keenly interested in photography, he took many photos of the people and places he visited, as well as the plays that he staged. When Siam declared war against the Central Power, the properties of the citizens of the enemy's country were confiscated, including the photographic studios and equipment of the Germans such as the Lenz's studio. It was soon reopened under the new Siamese banner of "Chaya Norasingh Studio".

Many of King Vajiravudh's formal photographs, such as the portrait of the King in full formal uniform, posing with Pranang Choa Suvadhana on their Wedding Day was taken at Chaya Norasingh Studio. At this time, many professional photographers opened their services, and their studios were named with the prefix -term of "Chaya", meaning "image", such as Chaya Laks, Chaya Pratu Mai, Chaya Bang Khunprom.

In this reign, the people in general increasingly had their photos taken for various purposes. Many foreign and Thai owned studios thus opened their services, such as those owned by a number of Japanese men, for example, K Nakatsuka, Asow, and Y. Ebata--photographer at The Prom Photo Studio on New Road, and The Talat Noi Photo Studio on New Road, owned by Nai Sut Chamlong.





D. King Prajadhipok's photographic heritage.

(584 glass plates negatives)

King Prajadhipok, (Reign: 25 November 1925 – 2 March 1935), the youngest son of King Chulalongkorn, came to the throne quite unexpectedly, and strongly recognized the need to change. His reign spanned one of the most turbulent periods in the Thai and the world history, ranging from –

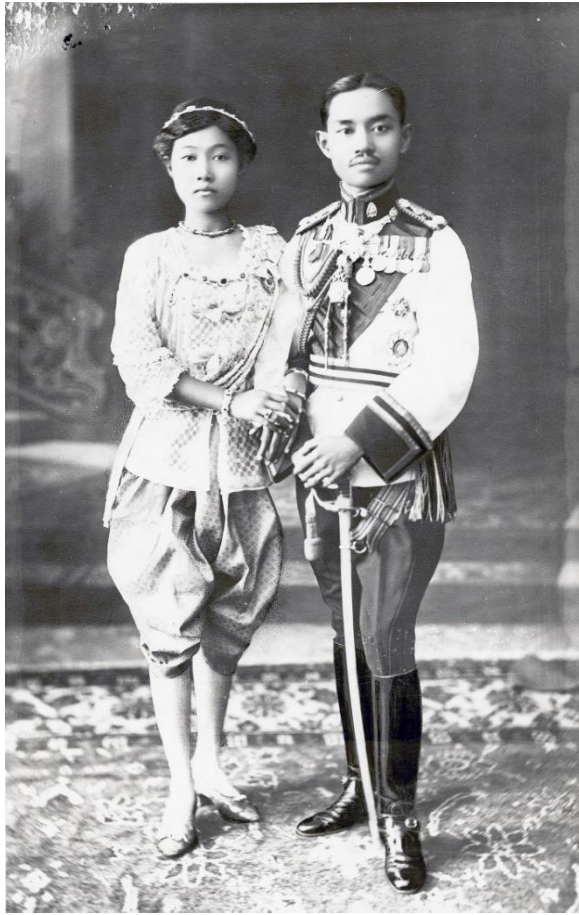
- the continued financial crises after the WWI that turned into the worldwide great depression,
- the spread of revolution ideas and democracy throughout the world,
- a series of international political events that eventually led to the second world war after his reign, and
- the bloodless coup d'etat of his own government that brought the end to the absolute monarchy and the beginning of a constitutional one and a parliamentary government.

His reign was also well documented, and the photographic legacy of his reign constitutes an important section in the "Royal Collection" being nominated.

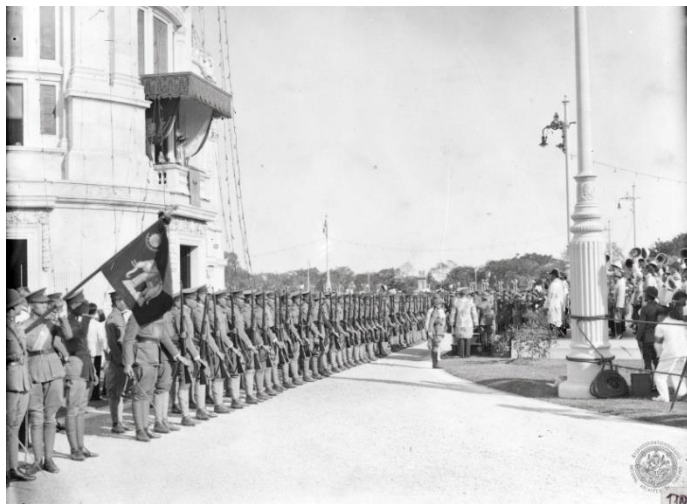
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He took an early interest in Photography at a young age and in 1905, won a bronze medal in the photo contest in Bangkok. He also liked cinematography and the cinema. Always carrying a camera when travelling abroad, he had his own darkroom in his palace and engaged a number of professional assistants, including Nai Sut, a photographer from the Talat Noi Studio, to be his photographers during his official visits to many countries.





Significant glass plate negatives and prints from the 7th reign include his Coronation Ceremony, his official ceremony of granting of the first Constitution, his visits to Indonesia and to Indochina countries depicting especially important monuments which are now listed as UNESCO World Heritage sites, his visits to Europe and his personal contacts with many new democracy leaders at the time.







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### 3.4 History/provenance

#### 3.4.1 History of the Collection being nominated

Previously belonging to three different owners, namely King Chulalongkorn or the 5<sup>th</sup> reign, King Vajiravudh or the 7<sup>th</sup> reign, and Prince Damrongrajanubhab who served as Minister in the 5<sup>th</sup> reign and the 7<sup>th</sup> reign, the Royal Collection had been given to the Royal Vajirayan Library, built earlier by King Mongkut or the 4<sup>th</sup> reign, located within the compound of the Royal Palace, and was under the supervision of Prince Damrongrajanubhab. The Prince had planned to set up a Royal Photographic Museum, but the plan was put to a halt after the 1932 coup d'etat that transform Siam into the constitutional monarchy. In 1976-1977, the Royal Collection was later transferred, in three separate lots, into the care and custodianship of the National Library of Thailand, Bangkok.

#### 3.4.2. History of Photography in Thailand

The modern way of capturing pictures onto glass plates, was first known in Siam (now Thailand) during the reign of King Nangklao (the Third Reign: 21 July 1824 – 2 April 1851), probably introduced by Father Louis Larnaudie, a French priest who entered Siam on 25 July 1845, together with the camera equipment belonging to Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix, Vicar Apostolic of Eastern Siam.

King Mongkut, born 1804, (The fourth Reign: 1 April 1851 – 1 October 1868) was interested in Western knowledge and technology even prior to his ascension. During his 20 years as Buddhist monk, he travelled throughout the kingdom and associated with Thai and foreign scholars to further his studies in Thai traditional knowledge, Latin, English, Western mathematics and astronomy. He was friendly with French Catholic priests and American protestant missionaries, especially Vicar Pallegoix who lived near Wat Bovornnivet where the Monk Mongkut later became the chief Abbot. They had many frequent philosophical and scientific exchanges, including printing and photography.

Coming to the throne at age 46, King Mongkut initiated many social reforms and officially opened the country to modern science and technology, blending them with the popular traditional religious outlook. Photographers were allowed into the court for the first time, and Thai and a few foreign photographers were engaged to take the King's and his family's photos for official use. He encouraged his half-brother and other Thai court officials to learn the technology.

Though a large collection of original prints are kept in the Royal Archives of King Chulalongkorn, most glass plate negatives taken during the 4<sup>th</sup> reign by foreign photographers were taken out of Siam by the photographers. Some were later sold to collectors and museums abroad which preserve and publicize photographic archives of Asia. In February, 2015, an exhibition of 60 images of King Mongkut and his family, places and events in Siam, photographed in 1865 by Scottish photographer John Thomson on glass plate negatives, currently preserved by the Wellcome Library in London, were on display in Thailand for the first time ever, at the National Gallery on Chao Fah Road in Bangkok. Thomson became in 1881, Queen Victoria's photographer.

#### 3.4.3. Historical accounts of the plates and prints from King Mongkut's reign

A number of the earliest images, survived and kept in the "Royal Collection" being nominated, was the original prints of the photographs, copies of some of which were sent by the King of Siam as part of an exchange of gifts to international leaders. Honoring the 1856 Treaty of Amity and Commerce, and Navigation between Thailand and the United States, King Mongkut sent a dignified yet simple portrait of himself with Queen Debsirindra, mother of the crown prince, to President Franklin Pierce. Similar portraits were sent to Pope Pius IX, Napoleon III and Queen Victoria. The following year, Queen Victoria sent King Mongkut a daguerreotype outfit as a gift which is still held in the Thai archives.

In the "Royal Collection" now preserved at the National Archives of the National Library of Thailand, the plates which represent a uniquely important international events include those taken at King Mongkut's observatory area and pavilion at Wako Beach to observe the 1868 solar eclipse.

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The observation of 1868 eclipse had a specially cultural, and international political significance. Culturally, according to the Siamese court astrologists, the sun (representing the high power) passing into the total shadow of the moon causing temporary complete darkness was considered a very bad omen to the reigning monarch. King Mongkut, an astronomer and reformist, was determined to show his entire court entourage that the event should not be feared from superstition, but could be explained scientifically from the point of view of modern astronomy. Moreover, the event could be correctly calculated in advance, as he had already done so himself.

Politically, the solar eclipse of 1868 gave an excuse to the French to display their colonial power in the territory of Siam. According to the report of the French Governor Ohier of Cochin China, the gunboat "Frelon", under the command of Lt. Jean-Jacques Hatt, an engineer-hydrography, was sent to inspect the western coast of the Gulf of Siam to determine the best spot for observation. The King of Siam, wondering why the French could not observe the eclipse from their Headquarters in Vietnam, responded to the situation by ordering the construction of an extensive royal encampment on a sand beach of Wako in Prachuabkirikhan, a spot he had calculated as the best observation site. Announcing his plan to come with his large entourage of family members and court officials and soldiers, he sent a letter of invitation to Governor Harry St. George Ord of Singapore to join him at the observation site. Though recognizing that he could hardly count on the British protection alone to safeguard Siam's autonomy, he did not want think it wise to have a direct confrontation with the French.

Though his scientific calculations were correct as to the place, the time and the type of the eclipse, he and his heir however caught Malaria and became fatally ill. King Mongkut died a few weeks later in his palace in Bangkok, survived and succeeded by his 16 year-old son, Prince Chulalongkorn, enthroned while still gravely ill. (See: Thiphakorawong, *Dynastic Chronicles* 2:532; Stéphan, "Voyage de la commission française;" Chabirand, "Étude sur l'éclipse totale," on 378; and 381-382; Ord, "An Account of the Visit to the Late King of Siam," 118.)

#### 3.4.4. Historic Accounts of the Photographic legacy of King Chulalongkorn

A reformist, modernizer, and enthusiastic photographer, King Chulalongkorn's 50 year-reign from 1868 to 1910, saw many of his father's reform visions materialized.

It was also a golden age for photography in Siam, as the technique became publicly appreciated and very widely practiced and used. During this time, many Thai citizens became professional photographers who opened their studios with public advertisement of their qualification.

Interestingly, this was the pioneering age of female photographers and the popular practice of female portraits in the royal court, mostly taken through the lens of the female's cameras.

Starting in the late 1890s, royal consorts and princesses, gained access to the photographic technologies enjoyed by their male counterparts. They took photos of each other as well as their male relatives within the palace compound. From 1900 on, images of the royal women pursuing a variety of domestic activities, were mostly taken by the royal consorts or the royal princesses themselves. From 1905, their photographs became publicly visible when the ladies of the court sent their entries to compete in the photo contests and public exhibition organized at Wat Benjamabopitr annually by the King. The Bunnag clique of the royal consorts became the best known female photographers of the time, especially Lady Erb and Lady Uen, as well as Lady Ohn's daughters, Princess Oraprapun Ramphai and Princess Adisai Suriyapha.

Quite a large number of Thai royal and official portraits survive from this period, and many glass plates and prints from this category are kept both in Thailand and abroad. However, the "Royal Collection" nominated holds the largest and most complete photographic heritage of this reign.

#### 3.4.5. Historic Account of Photographic legacy of King Vajiravudh's reign

King Vajiravudh continued his father's interest in photography and took a camera with him while travelling to the countryside and to the provinces. He also continued his father's tradition of holding the annual public photographic exhibition in Bangkok, but changed the venue from the Wat (Temple) Benjamabopit to the Royal Sranrom Garden. He also set up his own photographic studio called Rajsathisstan (the Royal Photographic Studio) where he always did the shooting himself. One particular court photographer in this reign has been identified as "Luang Kolkarnjenjit (Pao Vasuvat).

An personal album of the photos King Vajiravudh took both in his studio and during his official journeys has survived, on which his name and the title "My Photos" were inscribed. (See

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photo). In recent years, an exhibition of his photos was on view at the Vimanmek Palace, Bangkok, to raise funds for construction of a royal battleship, "Rua Rop Luang Prasae". During this reign, the royal library was designated as the place where all his photos and glass plate negatives taken in by him and by court photographers in his reign were kept, and in 1925, a freelance photographer, a Chinese descendent called " Chin Ghnee" was employed to work as a photographer at the royal library.

During this reign, many public commercial studios owned by Thais, Chinese descents, and foreigners including a few Japanese photographers, were opened at various locations in Bangkok, such as at Talad Noi and at Khoa Din where Nai Perm Chaiprasert at Khoa Din could shoot and print photos within 3 hours. Studios were opened in big provinces also, such as in Chiangmai.

Important plates and prints from this period include

- a) photo of King Vajiravudh in informal attire shooting from his own camera,
- b) images from the WWI,
- c) photos of his second Coronation Ceremony held after the War and photos of representatives of world leaders and many Thai and foreign dignitaries who attended,
- d) photos the King took of his play productions
- e) his official wedding photo with the King in the formal military uniform and Pranang Suwatana in western style wedding dress carrying a bouquet taken at Norasingh Studio.
- f) photos that he took from his official visits, especially to the Southern provinces, in 1909, 1913, 1915 and the North.

#### 3.4.6. Photographic Legacy of King Prajadhipok

King Prajadipok took an early interest in photography, and as a young prince, won a bronze medal at one of King Chulalongkorn's Public Photo Contests. While studying abroad, he became interested in the cinema and cinematography. During his training in a higher military program in France, he used a Lumiere camera with glass plate negatives, but later changed to Filmo 16mm. In spite of his eye problem for which he had to have 2 operations:--one in the United States and later another one in Europe, he took many Photos during his private and official visits. He preserved all his old cameras and equipment which were on display at the Chakri Mahaprasart in July, 1991 and are now preserved together with old cameras of His Majesty King Bhumibol and Princess Galayani Wattana at the Photographic Technology Museum, Chulalongkorn University.

The Glass plates and prints from King Prajadipok's reign include rarely seen family pictures, and many important images taken during his visits abroad to countries which are now members of ASEAN.. Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam; Japan and many countries in Europe which his father never visited, as well as the United States. The King Prajadipok Museum has recently made copies of prints from this reign from the National Archives and copies of movies taken in this period from the National Film Archives, and keep them for further study and exhibition at the Museum.

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## 4.0 Legal information

### 4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

The Royal Collection being nominated is now owned by the Ministry of Culture on behalf of the nation, under which the National Archives and the National Libraries are administered as an office within the Fine Arts Department.

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|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| The Ministry of Culture | Address  |
|                         | 666, Ministry of Culture, 15 <sup>th</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Borommaratchachonnani Road, Bang Bumru, Khet Bang Phlat, Bangkok, 10700 |

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| Telephone       | Facsimile     | Email |
|-----------------|---------------|-------|
| +662 422 8941-4 | +662 446 8347 |       |
| +662 422 8936   |               |       |

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#### 4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

The custodian of the Royal Collection is the National Archives, Department of Fine Arts, Ministry of Culture, Bangkok, THAILAND.

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|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| <i>National Archives of Thailand</i> | <i>Address:</i> | <i>National Archives of Thailand</i>               |
| Department of Fine Arts              |                 | <i>Thavasuki, Samsen Rd., Dusit, Bangkok 10300</i> |
|                                      |                 | <i>THAILAND</i>                                    |

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| Telephone     | Facsimile     | Email |
|---------------|---------------|-------|
| +662 281 1646 | +662 281 5341 |       |
| +662 356 5440 |               |       |

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#### 4.3 Legal status

Provide details of legal and administrative responsibility for the preservation of the documentary heritage

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#### 4.4 Accessibility

The Royal Collection, according to Prince Damrong Rajanubhab's original plan to establish a Photographic Gallery, was to form an important part of the national documentary heritage, to be accessible for the public viewing.

After its transferral to the National Archives in Bangkok, the Royal Collection has continuously preserved, analyzed and catalogued, and managed the Collection in order that the items that have been analyzed can be accessed by the public.

##### **Digitization.**

Starting in 2003, and up until the present, 9,728 prints have already been developed from the glass plates; also 24,800 images from the glass plates have been scanned, and 4,149 images have been entered into the internet database of the National Archives.

(See photos attached)

Digitization of the items in the collection will continue according to the plan. Financial support has been received from the Damrong Rajanubhab Foundation, His Majesty King Bhumibol's Music Library Foundation, and EGAT.

##### **Access restrictions.**

Access to the glass plate negatives however is restricted to the archivists of the National Archives only, because of its fragile conditions.

All access restrictions should be explicitly stated below:

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#### 4.5 Copyright status

The National Archives of Thailand is an Thai government agency under Fine Arts Department, the Ministry of Culture, established in 1916 (B.E.2459) as a section of Vajirayan National library or the Bangkok National library. It has become and functioned as a division of the Fines Arts department since 1952 (B.E) 2495). The office are located the same area of the National Library at Samsen road, Bangkok. The address is National archives of Thailand, Tha-Vasukree,Samsen Road.,Bangkok,Thailand 10300. Tel 662-2821847,Fax.662-6285172 E-mail : contact@nat.go.th

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The National Archives is responsible for collecting, preserving public and other historical records because of their archival value and make them available for public. We also are advisor for government agencies on records management and records preservation. As the government's national archive, we hold records from the reign of King Rama IV to the present time for everyone to discover and use. The National Archives' collection of over 1 million historical government and public records, our collection includes paper, photographs, posters, maps, videos tapes and sound recordings. As a general rule, government records are transferred to The National Archives when they are 30 years old under the Prime Minister's Regulation on Records Keeping issued in 1983 (B.E.2526 and second and additional version , B.E.2548. Archivists will appraise those records which contain historical values for permanent preservation. Moreover valuable records donated by individuals who are interested in the archives affairs also preserved as archival collections.

## 5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

### 5.1 Authenticity.

The documentary heritage being nominated has been transferred directly to the National Archives of Thailand from the 3 original sources and the original owners. All items described above are authentic and are mostly supported by written/ published historical documents.

### 5.2 World significance

#### 5.2.1 Unique and internationally important

Glass plates were the first base for photographic negatives. In use internationally as well as in Thailand from the 1850s through the 1920s, they were used by both professional and amateur photographers who produced all items in the Collection.

Original prints in the Collection, on the other hand, are valuable documentary heritage of the country, and of the world, and should be preserved for prosperity.

Many museums in the world have glass plate negatives and prints in their collections which they preserve and digitize to make them easily accessible to the wider public. Some have glass plates and prints featuring images of Thailand which they bought or received as donations, depicting the historical personalities and events of Thailand. But in comparison with the nominated Royal Collection, those collections are small, and not covering the continuous length of time as the Royal Collection.

The Royal Collection being nominated comprises, in part, a huge collection of glass plates, and, in part, a very sizeable collections of original prints. They form an important collection of world significance because:--

- a) they depict many world leaders, ex-patriotic and personalities of many nationalities.
- b) they cover diverse important events related to both Thai and the world history which took place during a continuous and a very long time span of almost a century,
- c) they are in good conditions, well catalogued and are partly digitized and accessible on line for international researchers,
- e) they are being further studied by experts to provide more meaningful understanding of their contents which will add to their world significance.

As described earlier, the Collection gives a uniquely important historical images and accounts of what happened in Siam and to Siam from the latter half of the 19th until the mid of the twentieth century which was the time of rapid and widespread changes in the world and in Siam.

- a) It features images of the main actors in the historical accounts, Siamese as well as foreign, what they looked like when posed in formal attires and relaxed in their informal moments with

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their friends and families, how the foreign actors posed when they interacted with the Siamese leaders both on the Thai territories and in their countries.

b) It also depicts people and places in the life of ordinary people in Siam at the time, in Bangkok and in the provinces, how the common men and women in the city and countryside of Siam looked like, often through the camera of the king who are amateur photographers.

c) The Collection additionally contain a large quantity of images of foreign communities of various nationalities, taken in big and small groups, on business and on social occasions, including weddings and funerals. Most of these images have yet to be fully identified.

e) The collection includes people, sceneries, and events of various sorts of many other countries in Asia, Europe, and America, visited by King Chulalongkorn, King Vajiravudh, and King Prajadhipok, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

5.2.2. The Collection is irreplaceable, being the only large and complete set of glass plates and original prints taken by foreign and Siamese photographers who were professional as well as amateur, preserved continuously by the kings and one prince during the time of absolute monarchy, for 4 reigns, before being given into the care of the National Library of Thailand. Additional small collections from old studios in Bangkok have added to the significance.

The disappearance of the Collection will certainly cause impoverishment of the photographic evidence in the Thai and the world history during the time of global rapid changes, and also for humanity.

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### **5.3 Comparative criteria:**

***Does the heritage meet any of the following tests? (It must meet at least one of them.)***

#### **1. Time**

The Collection is certainly evocative of the time in the Thai and the World history when colonial powers quickly expanded into Southeast Asia, and Siam feeling the direct pressures around its borders, struggled to respond peacefully to the situations, by opening the country and exposing its people to modern knowledge, communication and technology of the time, in order to strengthen its cooperation with the international communities and the world.

Glass plate negative photography represented a new discovery in the world at the time, and was quickly and soon widely used in the Siamese communities at many levels as a tool for self-identity and international communication

#### **2. Place**

The Collection contains a great deal of valuable information about the places in Siam and in many other countries visited by the Thai kings during the long period covered in the photographic documents. Many of these places are historical important and have undergone changes due to time and destruction.

#### **3. People**

The Collection contains many international images, i.e. those of world leaders, artists, and other personalities, whom King Chulalongkorn, King Vajiravudh, King Prajadhipok met during their many visits abroad. Numerous images of men and women in Siam are also depicted generously in the Collection, including members of the royal family and officials of the court, visiting foreign dignitaries, expatriates and foreign communities in Siam, and people in the villages.

#### **4. Subject and theme**

The Collection covers many themes and sub themes, including the social and cultural expressions of the people in Siam during the time; the political contacts and international relations of Siam and the world; and the development and the use of photography in Siam.

Moreover, the glass plates and the prints in the collection provide tangible and visual evidence for many aspects of the intangible accounts in the events in the Thai and the world history.

#### **5. Form and style**

The Collection contains photographic heritage in the forms of glass plate negatives and original prints developed from glass plates. Taken from 1855-1935 in photographic studios as well as in natural

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setting, they reflect the popular form and the styles of photography of the time. The glass plate photographic negatives have long gone out of use when film negative came into mode.

#### **6. Social/ spiritual/ community significance:**

In Thailand and in the world, many of the images contained in the Collection contain social and cultural values, especially from the historical perspective. However, there are some communities in Thailand which place spiritual significance to images related to the past kings, especially King Chulalongkorn.

### **6.0 Contextual information**

#### **6.1 Rarity**

The Collection is indeed a rare collection having been kept by the kings and prince of Siam who were the original owners. Though some of the images of Siam taken on glass plates by foreign and Thai photographers have been donated or sold to some museums abroad, they are not as complete as the Collection being nominated.

#### **6.2 Integrity**

The Collection, as important historical documentary heritage, is noteworthy for its integrity, completeness, and continuity, depicting a variety of subject matters during the time of great cultural and political changes in Siam and in the world, covering the time -span of almost a century.

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