

## 2. THE ROYAL GRANT OF THE SURNAME NA POMBEJRA

King Vajiravudh granted a surname to Phra Samutburanurak (Kham) (later he was given the ranks progressively as Phraya Warunritthi Sisamutprakan, Phraya Phetchada, Phraya Chaiwichit Wisitthammathada) while he was residing at a royal pavilion in Ang Sila in Chonburi province between June and July 1913. Later, officials gathered together several surnames granted by the king and published them as the third round of royally granted surnames in the Royal Gazette on 14 July 1913.

The Chaokhun who received this grant of a surname told me that at the time when the king came to reside in Ang Sila, he was the muang governor (later changed to provincial governor) of Samut Prakan which is adjacent to Chonburi. He had an audience with the king. He had not thought of requesting a surname, because he had not yet consulted his relatives descended from the same ancestors on this matter. But when he entered the audience, the king said: "Perhaps you have come to ask for a surname?" (At the time the king was enjoying thinking up surnames for close royal retainers). Thus the Chaokhun took the opportunity to respond to the king's suggestion.

Then the king said in front of many people attending the audience, for instance Phraya Boranratchathanin, the monthon commissioner (*samuha thesaphiban*) of monthon Krung Kao (later Ayutthaya), that he knew the history of the ancestors of Phra Samut (Kham). The king was familiar with Phraya Chaiwichit Sitthisattra (Nak), previously governor of Ayutthaya, the father of Phra Samut. The king, as heir to the throne, had gone to beg for alms at his house at the time the king entered the monkhood at Wat Bowonniwet. The king was also familiar with Thanphuying Yommarat (Talap Sukhum), the elder sister of Phra Samut, from the time the king was studying in Britain. The king stated that an ancestor of Phra Samut had been in the household of Somdet Phrapathom (the father of King Rama I). This ancestor had set up house in the vicinity of Pom Phet [Fort Diamond]. King Rama I donated most of the land of this house to build Wat Suwanthararam, and later gave the remainder to "old royal retainers" (*khaluang*

*doem*) to settle around Pomphet. The king set up some of their descendants as assistants to the garrison commander of the city, and some as garrison commanders in later times for many generations. Then the king said: "it is not possible to grant 'na Ayutthaya' because 'Ayutthaya' is mine". The king was alluding to the fact that he himself had previously held the title of Kromluang Thepthawarawadi Siayutthaya. It should be noticed that initially after the Surname Act of 1913, the king allowed descendants of the royal family to append the words "na Krungthep", but later on 24 March 1924 the king changed this to "na Ayutthaya" to be used from Mahachakri day, 6 April 1925. Then the king commanded the royal secretary in attendance to write out a card, which the king signed as "Vajiravudh Po. Ro." [Po. Ro. is the equivalent of "rex"], to grant to Phra Samutburanurak (Kham) the surname na Pomphet, written in roman characters as "na Pombejra".

Phra Samut thus informed relatives descended from this ancestor that those who wished could use this surname. But there were some lines which received royal grant of other surnames.

Later around April–May of 1919, when the king was residing at the Bang Pa-in palace, it was announced that the king would go to stay at Pom Phet. The officials of monthon Krung Kao built a royal pavilion to receive the king at Pom Phet. The king stayed there one night, and invited those with the surname na Pombejra to attend in audience. He maintained they were descendants of "old royal retainers" and granted an insignia with "Vajiravudh Po. Ro." to those attending in audience according to their status.

It should be remarked that at that time people used the word "na" in front of a surname without royal permission. Hence a royal command was issued, which thereafter was considered part of the Surname Act of 1913, as follows:

By this royal command of 15 December 1915, "na" shall not be used as prefix of a surname. Those who have used it before this announcement, must remove the "na". Anyone who wishes to use it, must first request royal permission.

Because the Chaokhun had many titles, and today's new generation might be interested in the grant of titles in the old times, let me explain further about them. Previously it was stated in the Three Seals Law concerning military and civilian sakkina, that anyone who held a government post received a title associated with that post. But the king had the power to invent new titles for specific persons who had done good deeds which attracted royal favour. After the government service had expanded greatly, from the Fifth Reign [1868–1910] onwards, the titles under the old rules were not sufficient, so the king granted many new titles for the expansion in posts.

According to the old rules, a provincial governor who had sufficient royal favour was promoted from Phra to Phraya. Hence, the title for the post of governor of Samut Prakan would be Phraya Samutburanurak. But Phra Samut (Kham) was specially given a new title by King Vajiravudh as Phraya Warunritthi Sisamutprakan. I have written about this once already in the preface of the book distributed at the funeral of Chaokhun Chaiwichit (Kham). The essence as I can remember from what the Chaokhun told me, was that around 1914 King Vajiravudh came to reside in a pavilion at Samut Prakan (at that time there were no resorts at Hua Hin, Bang Saen, Pattaya, and so on). By chance there was a heavy storm. Phra Samut, along with officials from that place, directed operations through the storm to prevent rain getting into the royal pavilion. King Vajiravudh saw how Phra Samut worked hard throughout which pleased him a great deal. In the morning the king summoned Phra Samut to be granted a new title which the king invented outside the old rules. Phraya Warunritthi Sisamutprakan means a person who has power like rain and who is auspicious to Samut Prakan. From then on, this title has been granted to governors of Samut Prakan.

When Phraya Warun (Kham) moved to the post of director-general of the penitentiary department, he received a new title as Phraya Phetchada, which was a title under the old rules for the Department of the Capital in old times. The father of Phraya Wichit (Kham) once held this title before he became Phraya Chaiwichit Sitthisattra, governor of Ayutthaya.

When the penitentiary department moved out of the Ministry of the Capital to be under the Justice Ministry, a new title was conferred, taking the title of Chaokhun's father and adding a title appropriate for the Justice Ministry on the end.



โอรส ๗

ขอให้กรมวังฯ ทูลเชิญฯ มหาวัง  
ฯ (ข) ตามที่ขอมา มีว่า "ขอชื่อมเหศวร"  
[เขียนให้เพิ่มอีกว่า ให้มีชื่อว่า "na Pombejra"]  
อันเป็นมงคลนาม

ขอให้วังฯ ขอชื่อมเหศวร มีนาม  
เจริญรุ่งเรือง มีมอญ อยู่ ในกรุงสยาม ชั่ว  
กาลนาน

อ่างศิลา

คัมภีร์ กรมวังฯ พ.ศ. ๒๔๕๖

Facsimile of the royal grant

Vajiravudh Po. Ro.

I grant to Phra Samutburanurak (Kham) as requested the surname "na Pomphet", written in roman characters as na Pombejra. This is an auspicious name.

May the na Pomphet family progress, flourish, and endure in Thailand for ever.

Ang Sila  
2 July 1913

THE BANOMYONG FAMILY'S CONNECTION WITH THE NA POMBEJRA FAMILY

