



*Mrigadayavan Palace mixes traditional Thai and European architecture. It consists of 16 buildings connected with balconies and 23 staircases. It was built using gold teak wood and a few other kinds, and has 1,080 pillars. It is a complex of open-space buildings with empty space under them. It has a hip (panya in Thai) roof covered with kite-shaped tiles, which is excellent for sunlight and rain proof. It has a high ceiling and ventilation space between the roof and ceiling, as well as casement windows. With a total length of 399m, the palace's main building comprises Samosorn Sevakamart Throne Hall, the living quarters of the king called Samutthaphimarn Hall and the living quarters of his wives called Phisarnsakhon Hall.*

## A palace to remember

### **Mrigadayavan Palace in Phetchaburi aims at becoming a hub of art, architecture and education**

Mrigadayavan Palace, the summer palace of King Rama VI located on a beach between Cha-am district, Phetchaburi, and Hua Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan, is a popular cultural attraction. Although it attracts 350,000-400,000 visitors a year, it holds more significance than just being a tourist spot. It serves as a learning centre for the arts and sciences.



‘The late HRH Princess Bejaratana, the only daughter of King Rama VI, hoped this palace would serve as a learning centre for the people and a means to express gratitude towards His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and King Rama VI,’ said Klaomard Yipintsoi, director of the Office of Mrigadayavan Palace Foundation.

According to her, the palace’s architecture and art allows the public to learn Thai history during the Sixth Reign (1910-1925) and about Thai culture, traditions and norms from the palace’s regular activities, such as classical music, traditional costumes, literature and food, and from the Archive

Room. King Rama VI had keen interest in and was very supportive of all fields of art, including traditional Thai music and performing arts.

Since 1965, the compound of Mrigadayavan Palace has served as barracks for the border patrol police. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej allowed border patrol police to use the land, under the care of the Crown Property Bureau. He also commanded the establishment of Huay Sai Educational Development Centre as a royal initiative project for the police and locals to conserve the natural environment around Savoey Kapi and Sam Phraya mountains.

During the Sixth Reign, King Rama VI stayed in Mrigadayavan Palace twice -- three months from late April-July 1924, and about two months from April 12-June 20, 1925.

The establishment of this palace was inspired by advice from King Rama VI's doctor Phraya Phaetpongsawisuthathibodi (Soon Sundaravej) for the ailing king to rest at a seaside place with fresh air. The king suffered from rheumatism.

Even at that time, Hua Hin was a popular resort town. The memo, 'The Beachside Palace of King Rama VI', written by senior official Chamuen Amorndarunrak (Cham Sundaravej), quoted the king's remark saying: 'That place was popular among the general public. I do not want to interrupt their fun and comfort.' The old tradition forbids the public from approaching and entering palaces where a king was staying.

The palace was designed by a team of architects led by Italian Mario Tamagno and a team of engineers led by Italian E.G. Gollo. The construction by workers, mostly Chinese, was supervised by then interior minister Chao Phraya Yommarat (Pun Sukhum).

Construction started in 1923 and was completed the following year when King Rama VI came to stay and named it Mrigadayavan after Huay Sai, which was full of deer. He declared the palace compound a no-hunting zone.

King Rama VI wanted his summer palace to look simple and focus on open-spaced design to suit the geography and climate. The palace stretches from north to south and faces the sea. Therefore, dwellers enjoyed the sea breeze during the day and winds from the mountains at night. Even now, visitors can feel a sea breeze kissing their face while strolling towards the residence of the king's close aide Chao Phraya Ramrakhop. Visitors have the opportunity to enjoy stunning views of a flower field and forest, which was once a beach forest.

Visitors can enjoy afternoon tea with sandwiches and scones at the residence of Chao Phraya Ramrakhop or shop for Thai sweets and souvenirs at the palace's museum shop.





*Samosorn Sevakamart Throne Hall is a two-storey open-space hall without walls. The ceiling is painted with colourful floral motifs and decorated with chandeliers. The upper floor of this hall was the venue for King Rama VI to meet officials, greet royal visitors, bless royally-hosted wedding couples and perform ceremonies, including celebrating the birthday of the then Queen Indrasaksajee on June 10, 1924, and the 20th birthday of one of his consorts Chao Chom Suvadhana on April 15, 1925. On a few occasions, the king played sports like badminton on the ground floor of this hall in the afternoon and rehearsed and performed plays in the evening.*



*The four corners of Samosorn Sevakamart Throne Hall on both floors had lighting control rooms and changing rooms for performers. Each play was staged in the northern part of the elevated stage. Royals would be seated on the upper floors during the Sixth Reign. King Rama VI played Mun Puenyao, a commoner, in Phra Ruang The Musical on June 10, 1924, and played Midas in the play Viva Phra Samut (The Wedding Of Phra Samut) on May 23 and 25, 1925 — the last year of his reign.*





*The office has a writing table and chair facing the sea. King Rama VI liked to work at night and sometimes went to bed at 3am. He liked to use writing pads, well-sharpened pencils with an eraser at*



*one end, as well as ballpoint pens with black and red ink. He loved to write literature and poems even at the times of illness.*



*Samutthaphimarn Hall is the living quarters of King Rama VI, some princes and male palace officials. The hall comprises the First Part of Samutthaphimarn Hall; the Second Part of Samutthaphimarn Hall; the bathing area and dining area for the king; and the living quarters of Chao Phraya Ramrakhop (ML Fua Phungbun) and Phraya Anirutdeva (ML Fuen Phungbun), the king's close aides. Chao Phraya Ramrakhop also had a residence on the beach north of the palace. Opposite to the Samutthaphimarn Hall is the dining area for the king. King Rama VI liked to have and host European-style dinners, prepared by foreign chefs, there at about 9pm. He donned a white shirt, white jacket, black suit with a long tail, black trousers and a white bow tie during dinner. The bathing pavilion was for King Rama VI to use prior to swimming in the sea at around 5pm. The king liked to wear red clothes for swimming since the red colour was reserved for royals while his officials would wear grey, black or brown pants and white shirts. On the roof, lanterns would be installed as a signal for royals and officials to know what the king was doing. The yellow one meant the king was changing his attire and about to have dinner and the green one meant the king was working. Photo courtesy of Mrigadayavan Palace Foundation*







*The Residence of Chao Phraya Ramrakhop is a half-brick, half-wooden house on concrete pillars with an empty space under it. It has connected balconies around it. Its floor, doors and windows are made of teak wood. Chao Phraya Ramrakhop contacted King Rama VI through the use of lanterns in different colours on the roof of the palace since no telephone existed at that time.*



(Bron: *Bangkok Post*. 27 oktober 2016)