

Thai Printing Press

Although printing in Thailand can be traced back to westerners who imported printing presses into the country during the Ayutthaya Period, Dr. Dan Beach Bradley is credited with popularizing Thai typography. In 1836, Dr. Bradley set up a printing press that belonged to missionaries. However, locally owned Thai printing presses were established during the Rattanakosin Period, when King Rama IV was still a prince and ordained as a monk at Wat Bowonniwet. He established a printing press in the temple in order to publish Buddhist textbooks. The printing press was manned by monks and novices as well as laymen. Rama was considered the pioneer of Thai printing. When he ascended the throne, he established a printing press within the grounds of the Grand Palace. Rong Aksorn Phimphakan, the first royal printing press in Thailand, mostly published official government documents. Dr. Samuel Smith also set up a printing press in the Bang Kho Laem subdistrict in order to print various books for sale. Subsequently, more and more printing presses were established to publish newspapers and books.

During the reign of King Chulalongkorn, Rama V, printing expanded considerably. In 1896, the king ordered the Government Printing Office to be created in order to replace the Aksorn Phimphakan press. This was followed by both government and private printers such as Mahantatot Printing; Phra Thep Phlu Printing; Post and Telegraph Office Printing; Aksornit Printing; and Chino Siamese Daily News Printing. The printers were scattered throughout various communities but have mostly gone out of business and been replaced by new operations.