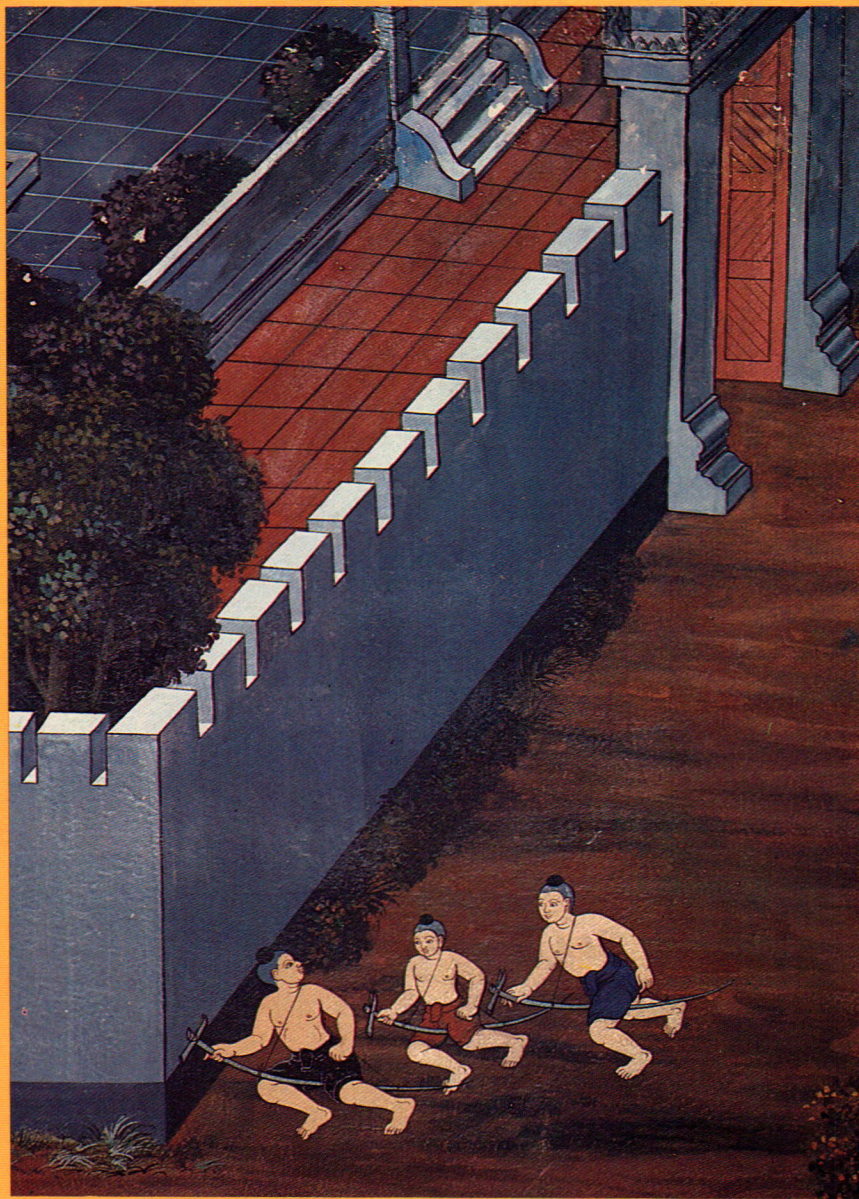


ThaiLife

Children of Thailand



Children of Thailand

ThaiLife

*Published by The National Identity Board,
Prime Minister's Office; Bangkok, Thailand.*

1983



Foreword

Like other developing countries, Thailand has been the subject of much discussion in the foreign press on account of her children's plight. Amongst all the ills cited, the problems of malnutrition, child labour and slum children have been highlighted. These problems have neither been ignored nor neglected by society. On the contrary, efforts are continually being made both by the public and private sectors to tackle the problems at their roots.

The National Identity Board feels that interested overseas readers should be presented with a broader view of the subject through a collection of articles, describing various aspects of the children themselves -- their life, aspirations and achievements. Their plight is also discussed in the context of a society which, despite its limited resources, has been doing what it can to help their growth and development. We hope that readers will acquire a better understanding of the status of Thai children as it is.

*National Identity Board
September, 1983*



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Royal Message of His Majesty The King

Children are naturally in need of compassion and tender care of grown-ups and need to be equipped with appropriate education and training in all necessary aspects which befit each of them individually, so that they will be fully prepared to discharge whatever burdens might come to them in the future with a true sense of responsibility. Consequently, it is assumed that every grown-up should deem it as one of his most essential duties to support and provide the young people with the opportunities to possess healthy bodies along with cultivated minds which are adequately and righteously informed on technical as well as moral grounds. These two factors would then become the bases on which each child could progress in life with stability and happiness.

Chitralada Villa,
January the first, B.E. 2525 (1982)



National Youth Policy

Notification of the Office of the Prime Minister Re : National Youth Policy

Whereas young people, being very important resources of the country, will inherit the national culture, and whereas approximately two-thirds of the population are twenty-five years of age or under, it is expedient to develop the national youth extensively in accordance with the provision of section 62 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2521, which provides that "the State should support and promote national youth development so that they may be physically, mentally and intellectually sound for the purpose of economic and social development and for the security of the State".

Therefore, the Council of Ministers hereby lays down the National Youth Policy so as to be the principle and guideline to assist government and private organizations in formulating their national youth development plans with a clear and coordinated objective as follows.

(1) To instil into young people the awareness of the national security, the belief in democracy having the King as Head, the nationalism and pride of being Thai, including the preservation and promotion of culture which is a unique characteristic of the nation.

(2) To intensify the sincere desire of young people to participate and accept responsibility in developing the society in order to effect the greatest benefit to the public, to usefully employ free time and to reduce conflict among various groups of young people so as to enable them to live together in the society, to respect the opinions and not to violate the honour and dignity of others and to solve problems peacefully through reasoning by adhering to the principles of the middle path and for mutual benefit.

(3) To promote health whether physical, mental or intellectual so as to be in readiness for the development of ability, attitude, behavior, value and morality of young people so that they will become good citizens.

(4) To instil into young people good personality, strong determination, constructive initiatives, belief in reason, discipline and unity, sporting spirit, perseverance, unselfishness, being helpful to each other, knowledge to work with others, diligence, thrift, awareness of right, duty and responsibility towards the society, respect for and obedience to the laws.

(5) To promote the daily way of life of young people to be within the moral principle, ethics according to their religion, to be honest and impartial and to behave in such a way as to be suitable to their age, which will be the foundation for happiness, peace and prosperity of society.

(6) To urge young people to continue acquiring further knowledge, to promote vocational training especially in agriculture and home industry, to acquaint young people with the use and conservation of natural resources, to recognize and arrange self-economy and take up occupation suitable to the local conditions.

(7) To encourage young people to learn to protect themselves from vices and environments which are not suitable for life and harmful to society, to be ready to confront social problems as well as to create appropriate environment so as to reduce mental stress, as well as to promote research concerning ways and means of solving various problems of young people.



The flag-raising ceremony to instil national pride is diligently observed by school children from an early age.



The National Youth Bureau runs a successful annual "Ship for Southeast Asian Youth" programme, made possible by Japanese sponsorship.



(8) To give aid, treatment and protection to young people who are disabled, incompetent or quasi-incompetent, invalid, orphan, indigent, homeless, drug addicted, so as to enable them to take care of themselves and become good citizens. To give instruction, aid and support concerning the basic necessities in life to needy young people, to provide effective measures for regulating the employment of children, and young women.

(9) To promote friendship and understanding between young people in Thailand and those in foreign countries in accordance with the State policy for the regional security and progress as well as the promotion of world peace.

In order to attain the objectives stated in this policy, the National Youth Promotion and Coordination Committee shall be responsible for the supervision and coordination of the support and development of the youth policies of various Ministries, Sub-Ministries, Departments and private organizations concerned.

Given on the 11th day of May B.E. 2522 (1979)

Kchomanan

(General Kriangsak Chomanan)
Prime Minister of Thailand





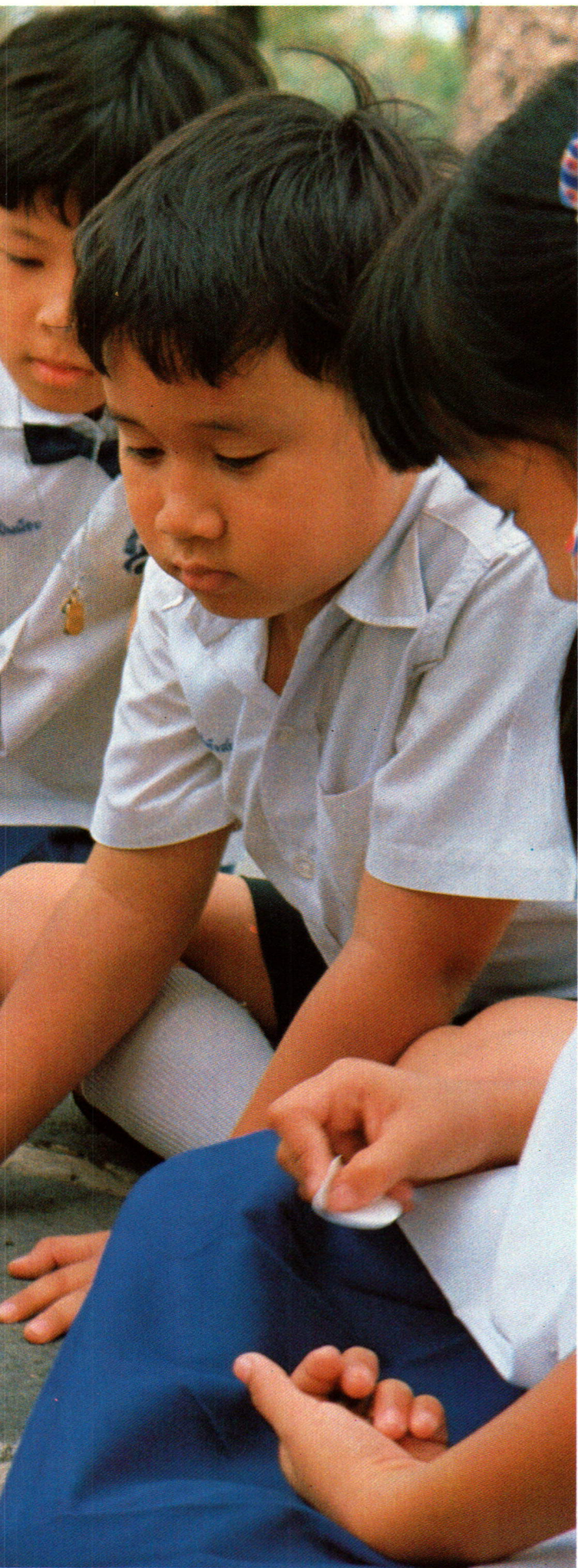
Children, Children, Children...

The Thai people are determined that their children will not know privation or despair.



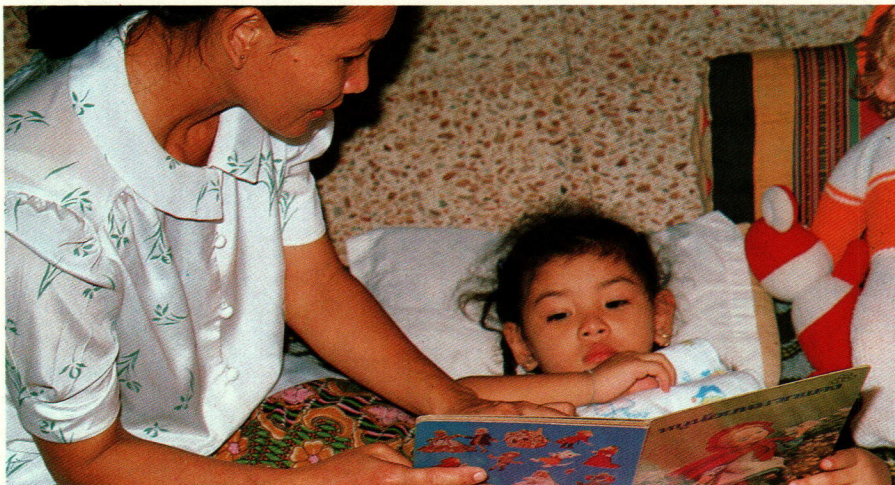
Traditional games are enjoyed by children of either sex. The colourful costumes are put on for the occasion and are not part of the games.



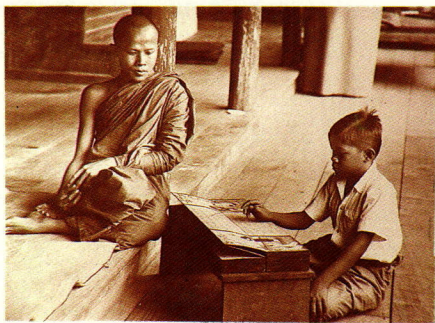


Games Thai children enjoy include 'I-tak' (left) and 'Siso' (middle right).

Women usually take care of the upbringing of small children. As the children grow older, the father provides guidance and leadership. In looking after the children, the mother is apt to delegate her duties to the elder children, if there are any. Children very early learn that "senior must care for junior."

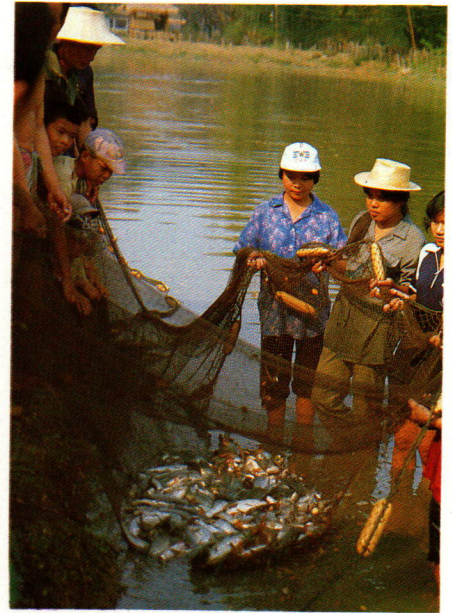






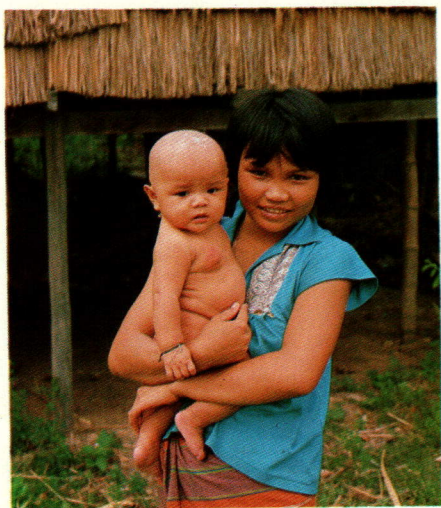
Formerly in Thailand, formal education was supremely important. Education was the key to government employment, and a government appointment was considered the highest attainment for well-born young men.





Now vocational education has become popular among young people. Jobs with a promising future and better remuneration than government appointments are more readily available.

It is common to see a little girl carrying around her infant brother, for example, while the mother is working in the fields





A child is punished when he has done something wrong, in the conviction that the child will be "chastened and remember" when he has received pain. The Thais have a saying in connection with this concept: "If you love your oxen, tie them up. If you love your children, spank them."



With rapid changes in the social and economic environment, children are nowadays in a new society, one which has methods and a philosophy of caring for children that are different from those of former times in many ways. Caring for children now usually relies on principles developed by psychologists and social welfare workers more than on caring for them by using methods that seemed natural in the past.

It was formerly believed that father or mother and the teacher were able to "mould" the child in any way they wanted. Children were not encouraged to express ideas of their own. They were to be seen but not heard.

In the present society young people receive encouragement to express their own ideas, and adults are no longer able to "mould" them in a preconceived pattern.







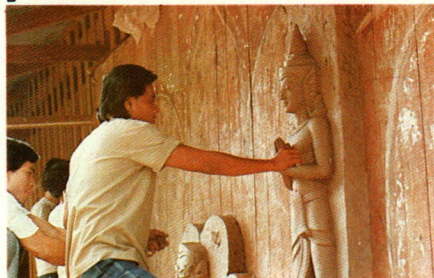
Thailand entered a new era as part of a wider world society beginning in the middle of the 19th century. Women started to have a greater role in society outside the home than in the past. Children were therefore left to the care of other people who might or might not be their relatives. Nurseries and schools for small children thus became of greater importance. This is, however, mostly confined to urban societies. In developing rural areas the old-fashioned lifestyle is still being observed.



Sudchai Charoensook proved herself as a folk sculpture artist when she was only 12 years old. At present, at the age of 24, her work is well-known among Thai and foreign art lovers.

She studies everyday folk life very carefully. Her themes are various aspects of Thai life, concentrating on children.





5



1. The Ceremony of Paying Homage to the Arts teachers: the Gods of Drama and Spirits of departed teachers are invited to come and accept offerings.
2. Students from the College of Dramatic Arts participate in the Ceremony of Paying Homage to the teachers.
3. Students from the College of Fine Arts are working on the Renovation of Wat Phra That Phanom in commemoration of the Rattanakosin Bicentennial Celebrations.
4. Teachers and students of the College of Fine Arts are reconstructing the Buddha statues.



6



5. Young persons are practicing Thai classical dances.

6. Young people are practicing Thai classical music.

7. Floral designs training.

8. Thai youths are enjoying a cooking lesson

7



8



Thai Youth and National Heritage

The Thai nation has been blessed with a sophisticated and time-honoured cultural tradition. Our ancestors' artistic creation has been preserved as national treasures and a source for the study of history and archaeology. This invaluable heritage ranges from temples, palaces, Buddha images and mural paintings, to pottery, gilded bookcases, wood-engravings etc., most of which was dedicated to Buddhism. It is in Buddhist art that the Thai national identity distinctly reveals itself.

Efforts have been made to preserve our national heritage and perpetuate it from generation to generation. Young people are provided with a basic education in the traditional arts and crafts. They are taught to appreciate, to conserve and hence to promote this aspect of the Thai culture. Studies of the traditional arts and crafts have become an essential part of their educational activities. With the support and active encouragement from both the public and private sectors, young students are able to display their artistic works to the public. Cultural exhibitions and fairs are regularly arranged in schools and other educational institutions to enable the public to come and appreciate the works of the young generation. Handicrafts displays, classical music and dance performances are expressions of the young people's abilities and efforts to promote national art. Their artistic works are recognized internationally. On many occasions, Thai children have won top prizes in international drawing competitions. Often, groups of young Thais are invited to perform classical dance or music abroad. To the pride of the Thai people, Thai youths have amply demonstrated their abilities to conserve and recreate our precious national heritage.





In the World of the Slum Children

Malai Timdee

Prathom 3

WHAT I EAT WITH MY RICE

I eat rice with *nam prik* (chili paste) because it is very delicious.
At home my mother makes very delicious *nam prik*.

I see mother cook food with nam prik everyday. I see father,

[illegible]

mother, brother, and sister all like nam prik.

Sometimes mother brings home some fish, so I eat *pla thu* (steamed mackerel) with nam prik. It is more delicious than eating plain nam prik.

ผมช่วยยายพับถุง
 ทุกวันผมช่วยยายพับถุง
 บางวันผมก็เกียจขี้เกียจช่วย
 แต่... ผมอยากทำผม

Saravuth Charoennavy

Prathom 4

I help my granny fold paper bags. I help granny every day.
 Sometimes I'm lazy, so I don't help. But when I want to help, I work
 until I get very tired.

But when I take a rest, my granny sometimes scolds me badly.
 If I get angry too, she just ignores it. And I go on folding paper bags.

I like folding paper bags very much. When they come to get our
 paper bags, I get my 10 baht.

ถ้าผมเป็นโดราเอมอน ผมจะ
 วิเศษ มาช่วยชาวสลัม ถ้าผมช่วย
 ได้สำเร็จ ผมคง จะมีความสุข ถ้า
 ผมได้ช่วยชาวสลัม บ้านผมแล้ว
 ถ้าผมเห็นคนผิด ผมจะไม่บอก
 พ่อแม่ แต่ถ้า... ๑๕

Thawatchai Sudprasert

Prathom 5

IF I WERE DORAEMON

If I were Doraemon, I would use my magic power to help my fellow
 slum people.

I would be very happy if I could help the people in Pattana Village.

If I happened to find a drug addict, I wouldn't report him to the
 police but would instead use my magic power to cure him.

I would certainly be happy if I could really be Doraemon.





บ้านของหนูอยู่ในสลัมมีน้ำคร่ำมาก
 พวกเขาดูถูกคนในสลัมแต่คนในสลัมก็
 ไม่ทำอะไรเพราะ พวกเราต้องทำเข็ญ
 ถูก คนในสลัม

Taweerat Suksom

Prathom 2

My house is in the slum, full of smelly water.

They look down upon slum people. But slum people say nothing in return.

Because we are darker than they are, they then look down upon us slum people.

ท่าเรือจะรื้อบ้านฉันแล้ว
 ท่าเรือจะรื้อบ้านหนูแล้วหนูรู้สึก
 เสียใจเป็นอย่างมากเลยคะเพราะถ้าทำ
 เรือจะรื้อบ้านหนูแล้วแล้วหนูจะไปอยู่
 ที่ไหนกันละคะ พ่อแม่ของหนูก็ตัดง

Urai Samransook

Prathom 4

THE PORT AUTHORITY OF THAILAND IS TEARING DOWN MY HOUSE.

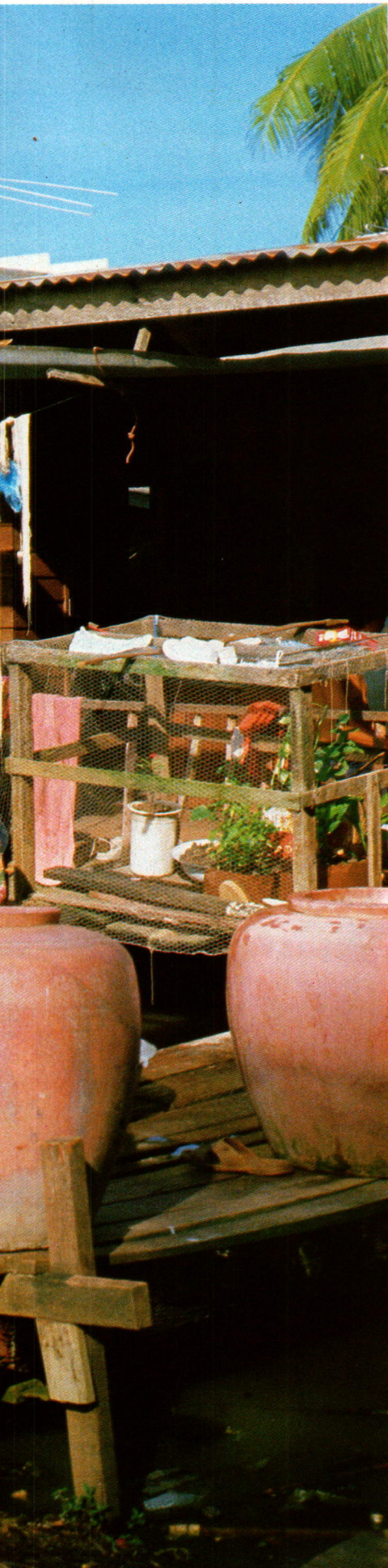
The Port is going to tear down my house. The Port is going to tear down my house and I feel very sad about it. Because if the Port tears down my house, I will have nowhere to go.

My parents will have to move back and forth. My school will also be torn down and everyone will have to evacuate.

The Port is very cruel to tear down my house. I will have to leave all my friends and the teachers who taught me how to read and write.

I will have to leave soon. And some of the teachers will have to leave, too. I am very sad to leave my room.





เรือนานมองฉัน

บ้านของฉันมีพ่อแม่พี่น้องและตัวฉันฉันมีพี่เจ็ดคนมีน้อง
เจ็ดคนตัวฉันเป็นคนก็ 4 รวมทั้งหมด 9 คน ส่วนแม่มอง
ฉันเป็นแม่ค้าขายของที่ตลาดทุกวัน ส่วนพ่อก็ไปช่วย
แม่ขายของที่ตลาดทุกวัน ส่วนพี่คนโตเป็นผู้ชาย 3 คน

Somkid Singto

Prathom 6

MY HOME.

In my home there are father, mother, brothers, sisters and me. Three are older than I am and three are younger. I am the fourth in a family of nine.

My mother is a vendor selling goods at the market every day. And father also helps mother sell goods at the market every day.

The elder ones are two brothers and a sister. Brothers work outside while Sis does the household work. The younger ones sell ice-cream at school. That means during the school's holidays we have enough to eat each day.

My home is in this slum. My home is not quiet because father and mother sometimes quarrel and fight with each other till all the younger ones cry. But I don't cry because when they fight, they will be on good terms again shortly.

And when they quarrel again, they will be on good terms in the morning. Father is a hot-tempered and self-centred man. And my home is full of confusion.

When father gets drunk, he likes to quarrel with mother. Father drinks every day and he complains about not having enough money. But he still drinks because he feels depressed.

When mother complains that we don't have money, father yells at her. Sometimes when father gets very drunk, he bullies and beats me and the younger ones.

My home has a television set but it is out of order. We want to go to see TV at the neighbour's house but father wouldn't let us go. Sometimes when father is drunk, we sneak out to see the movie. When the movie is finished, we go home. But if we are noisy, we all get three spanks.

My home is really chaotic.

เราคงเคย/เริ่มอาหารกลางวัน
อาหารของโรงเรียนฉันกินอาหารที่โรงเรียน

Anchalee Baopetch

Prathom 3

Lunch is food at school. I eat lunch at school at noon.

Some days I don't have food to eat. Some days I do. Some days I don't have money to buy it.

At noon we queue up for free lunch. Some children overtake me. But I have food to eat.

Food at school is really delicious. I like fried beans with squid very much. I want to eat more often at school.

I want our school to start again quickly. So that I can eat at school again.



The centre is a place where children and young people can relax and enjoy themselves.



The Bangkok Metropolis Youth Centre (Thai-Japan)

In answer to the need for a well-equipped youth centre, the Thai Government has decided to set up the Bangkok Metropolis Youth Centre with the cooperation of the Japanese Government. On 18 April 1980, the foundation stone of the centre was laid in a ceremony presided over by Thai Deputy Prime Minister Thanat Khoman.

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration together with the Social Welfare Department were designated by the Cabinet to oversee the project. The total cost of this project amounted to 13 million US dollars of which about 11 million US dollars was contributed by the Japanese Government.

Located on a 29-acre piece of land in Din Daeng, the centre can serve a large number of Thai youths, especially those living in the nearby Public Welfare housing estate. Completed in October 1981, the centre comprises a three-storey building housing a gymnasium with athletic equipment, rooms for vocational training, meeting halls, an auditorium for exhibitions, practice rooms for games, a dining room and offices for officials, a stadium with athletic tracks and seating for 8,000 people, soccer fields, tennis courts, a swimming pool with seating for 800 spectators, a library, a cinema with seating for 200 persons, and a large dormitory.

The centre aims to serve Thai youth in sports, recreation and vocational activities. It can respond to the youths' needs in terms of sports facilities and activities as well as becoming the focal point of their association and affiliation. Sports activities, under the supervision of experienced officials and volunteers, will promote physical training as well as the correct attitude of sportsmanship and team spirit. The recreational activities including games, classical dancing, music, arts, educational trips and civic activities will train the youths to develop desirable physical and mental health, while the vocational activities will provide basic vocational training with the emphasis on helping handicapped or retarded minors who can not acquire or follow a normal course of study.



*Modern sports and recreational facilities
are made available for disad-
vantaged children at the centre.*





Rural children are expected to help their parents with daily chores from an early age.



Child Labour

The problems of child labour exist universally, but with varying degrees of severity. Those who have read the story of Oliver Twist may well recall the problems of child abuse in the early stage of industrialization against a background of over-population. However, as a country grows richer, it is better able to afford an elaborate social welfare system as well as compulsory education to increase the living standards of its people.

In Thailand, the plight of children is not much different from that in other developing countries. Rural poverty, lack of education facilities, release from compulsory education at an early age, inadequate or inaccessible training institutions all have been compelling reasons for children to enter the labour market prematurely. The traditional custom of rural people to have a large number of children and thus ensure a supply of cheap and readily available family labour has accelerated the population growth by leaps and bounds. However, persistent efforts by the Thai authorities have succeeded in reducing the birth rate from over 3% per annum a decade ago to just over 2%. In 1971, minors below the age of 18 accounted for over 56% of the total population. In 1976 this figure declined to about 55%. The trend of decreasing child population is expected to continue, thereby reducing the size of the child labour force.

It has always been Thailand's national policy to improve the standards of living and well-being of the Thai people through economic development. Recently, Thailand's Fifth Five-Year Plan has been announced in Parliament by the present government. This plan will give priority to the eradication of rural poverty which will further decrease the size of the child labour force and mitigate the need of migration into urban areas in search of employment. Additionally, through regional cooperation in economic, social and cultural fields under the framework of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand has been able over the past decade to achieve and maintain an average economic growth of 6-7% per annum. Such growth has considerably raised the standard of



Children in urban areas often supplement meagre family incomes by working in service stations and small backstreet factories.



living of the Thai people as a whole. As the benefits of this growth are distributed and reach the rural areas, the underlying cause for child labour will vanish.

The Penal Code of Thailand specifically prohibits enslavement of any person or the taking of minors away from their parents against their free will, with severe penalties prescribed and meted out. Thai children who work are safeguarded under the Child Labour Protection Act, which specifies ages and types of work allowable for youths. Forced employment is, of course, illegal. The Department of Labour of Thailand is charged with the responsibility of seeing that the above-mentioned law is strictly observed as well as running employment services and courses on vocational training for Thai youths. As an added protection against child abuse, the Cabinet in December 1982 set up the Committee for Prevention and Suppression of Unjust Forced Child Labour, with participation of both government officials and private organizations.

Despite Thailand's determined efforts to prevent child abuse, there have been occasional violations of the law and some of these have been disseminated by members of the foreign press, giving a highly misleading impression. Thailand, with its many centuries of freedom and its display of humanitarian concern for hundreds of thousands of Indochinese refugees within its borders, would never knowingly tolerate such abuse of children and is doing everything possible to eliminate it altogether.



Foundation for Children

It is estimated that one-fourth of the population in present-day Thailand comprises children under 6 years of age. These children are, by any criteria, the hope of the nation. The future of Thailand depends to a great extent upon them. Without proper care and good education for these children, our hope to proudly develop the country will fizzle out.

Unfortunately, a great number of children in Thailand are presently living under poor conditions. They lack not only nutritious food and proper shelter but also affection, care, proper education and aspirations. It is quite simple to put the blame on the government and parents for not taking good care of these children, but it is felt that everyone of us is responsible for them and can offer a helping hand. With this conviction, the Foundation finally came into existence. It was officially founded on December 24, 1979.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE FOUNDATION

1. To support and protect the rights of children according to The UN "Declaration of the Rights of the Child."
2. To help provide opportunity for the poor and deserted children to fully develop their mental and physical health. (The provision of the opportunity and assistance is based on the belief in equity and justice rather than pity.)
3. To seek better alternatives for education and child-rearing practices.
4. To help bridge the gap between the older and the younger generations.
5. To assist and cooperate with individuals and/or organizations whose work is concerned with the education and welfare of children.

CURRENT PROJECTS UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE FOUNDATION

Ban Thantawan: Nutrition Centre for Children

This project was initiated in 1978 by a group of young people who are concerned with the problem of malnutrition among children in Thailand. It was reported by the Ministry of Public Health that approximately 55,000 children die each year from malnutrition.

Ban Thantawan has organized the following activities:

1. A nursing home for malnourished children. The centre admits children under 2 years of age upon the recommendation of medical authorities from public hospitals, for a period of three months. The children admitted into the centre are fed and treated properly.
2. A mobile informal education unit. The unit aims at educating two important groups of people—parents and children, whether they come from slum areas or major built-up sites. Educational activities are provided through such means as slides, pictures, puppets, and drama in order to improve life styles and child-rearing practices.

Pre-school Children Mobile Daycare Centre

The construction industry in Bangkok has been expanding considerably, but the living conditions of construction workers and their pre-school children still leave much to be desired. These children are left playing unattended while their parents are busy working on the high buildings. They are exposed to dangers resulting from accidents in the area. Also these children have serious health problems, physically and mentally.

The Foundation for Children's pre-school children mobile daycare centres of Ban Thantawan have been set up to help solve these problems by seeking the cooperation of both construction companies and workers. The Foundation has set up centres in several construction areas in Bangkok. At each centre there is a teacher and a local babysitter to help organize appropriate activities for pre-school age children and also to provide lunches to decrease malnutrition among these pre-school age children.

The mobile centres for pre-school age children were set up in 1980. At present, there are more than 12 mobile centres in Bangkok. A preliminary evaluation of the project indicates that such activities are seriously needed. The Foundation hopes to expand the project further to cover a much wider area.

Children Village School

Based on evidence that today a great number of children in Thailand are poorly tended and educated by their families and society at large, the school was founded in 1979 in Kanchanaburi. It takes in children from poor and broken-home families and provides them with free boarding and education. The philosophy of education prevailing at this school is a combination of Buddhist and Summerhillian principles. Conscious attempts are made to provide the children with full freedom, love and responsibility.

So far some 60 children have been admitted to the school. These children live and learn with adults who help them to develop their potential. New alternative child-rearing practices are employed at this school.

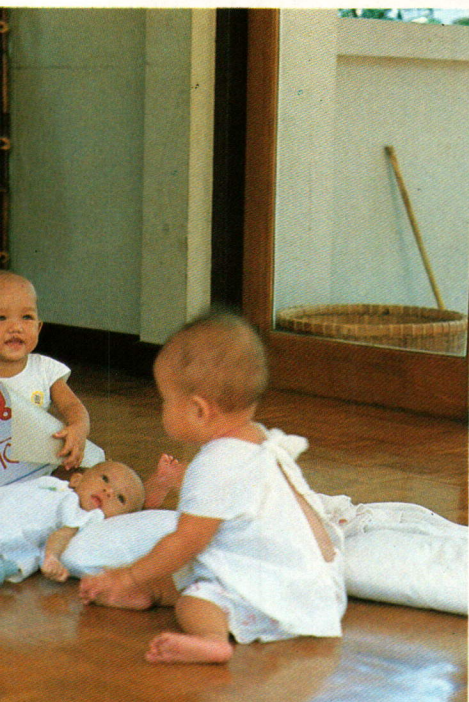
The Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights

The Office of National Statistics reported in 1976 that more than a million Thai children were working at extremely low wages in ill-conditioned factories. A large number of them have to struggle for the survival of their own families.

With full realisation of this problem, the Centre was set up to help protect the children from being exploited and to provide an opportunity for them to grow up both physically and mentally healthy.



*An effective nutrition programme
includes warm personal affection.
The result is happier children.*



HIS NAME IS TODAY

*We are guilty of many errors and many faults but our worst crime is
abandoning the children, neglecting the fountain of life.
Many of the things we need can wait; the child cannot.
Right now is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being
made and his senses are being developed.
To him, we cannot answer "Tomorrow",
His name is "Today."*

*Garbriela Mistral
Nobel Prize Winning Poet
From Chile*





A New Method of Learning

The Children's Community School at Tambon Thasao, Amphoe Sai Yok in Kanchanaburi Province is probably the only school in Thailand where children are left to learn at their own pace. Its 66 pupils and 15 teachers are cut off from civilization but they have created their own world of love and learning, self-rule and freedom.

Established in 1979 with the support of *Terres Des Hommes*, the Children's Community School is for orphans and poor children from Khlong Toej slum. Under a five-year project the children, often dubbed as "problem children" will be modelled into responsible citizens.

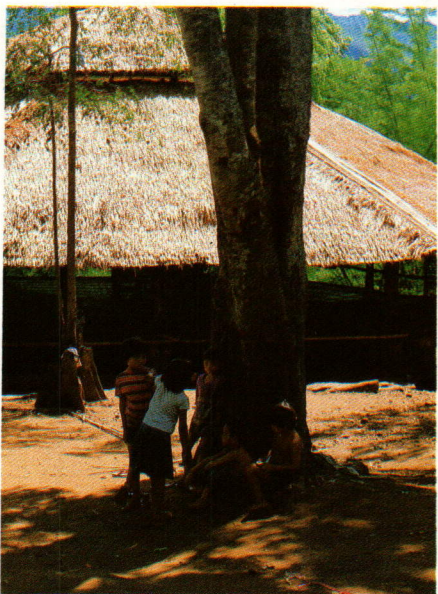
Teaching takes place according to the Education Ministry's syllabus of the primary school level, but the method is different. The emphasis is on emotions and feelings and readiness to learn. For instance, some of the students have never attended a class since they came here two years ago, but they acquire a lot of knowledge through the use of the school's library.

Classes are held from 9 a.m. to noon when basic subjects are taught. In the afternoon the students are able to choose carpentry, weaving,





Children assemble daily for morning prayers, the flag-raising ceremony and national anthem; afterwards, they serve their own meal and play during breaks in front of the school's multi-purpose hall.



or one of the arts for their vocational subject. Some Fridays the children perform a play at night and every full moon they read poetry together.

The role of the teachers at the Children's Community School is important. They have to perform both as the teachers in the day and also as the parents in the night. In most cases, two teachers get to take care of about seven children and take turn in cooking for the pupils.

Thus, the effect the Children's Community School has had on its pupils and teachers is almost tangible. The children take to their new parents and new environment in no time and are able to lose their aggressiveness after three months at the school.

Although the Children's Community School is scheduled to end next year, it is unlikely the school will close because results have been achieved by mere devotion of the teachers. In fact, a new career community project has been drawn up which intends to absorb the students who will finish from the Children's Community School. At the moment, the school is looking for a new supporter to continue the good work when the first project ends.

(From "Where children learn at their own pace" by Poonsri Varakukul, Bangkok Post, 29 April 1983)



วิวัฒนาการของสัตว์
EVOLUTION OF ANIMALS

TYRANNOSAURUS
REX
The largest land-dwelling dinosaur that ever lived, Tyrannosaurus Rex was a fearsome predator. It had a powerful jaw and sharp teeth, and it was able to run at high speeds. It is estimated that it could weigh up to 7,000 kg and reach a length of 12 meters.

ไทแรนโนซอรัส
TYRANNOSAURUS
เป็นสัตว์ที่อาศัยอยู่ในทวีปอเมริกาเหนือและอเมริกาใต้ในช่วงปลายยุคครีเทเชียสถึงยุคเทอร์เชียรี (ประมาณ 65-22 ล้านปีก่อน) มีลักษณะเด่นคือมีลำตัวยาวและหนัก มีขาหลังที่แข็งแรงและสามารถวิ่งได้เร็ว มีปากที่กว้างและเต็มไปด้วยฟันที่แหลมคม มีสมองที่เล็กเมื่อเทียบกับขนาดลำตัว มีผิวหนังที่หยาบและขรุขระ มีหางที่ยาวและหนัก มีหูที่เล็กและมีรูปร่างเหมือนถ้วย มีตาที่มองเห็นได้ดีในเวลากลางคืน มีกลิ่นที่แรงและมีอายุขัยประมาณ 20-30 ปี มีลูกที่อ่อนแอและต้องได้รับการดูแลจากผู้ปกครอง มีพฤติกรรมที่ดุร้ายและล่าเหยื่อขนาดใหญ่ เช่น ไดโนเสาร์เทราปซอสเทอซอรัส และไดโนเสาร์สเตเกอซอรัส มีชื่อเสียงมากที่สุดจากภาพยนตร์เรื่อง Jurassic Park



Bangkok's Science Museum

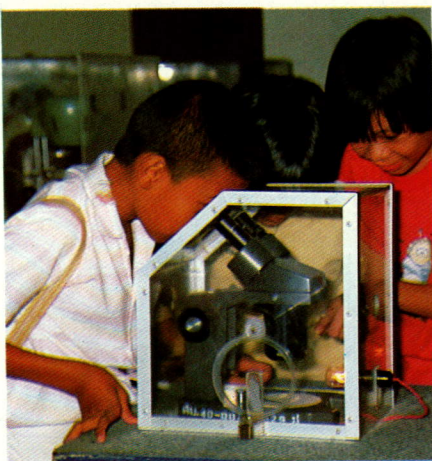
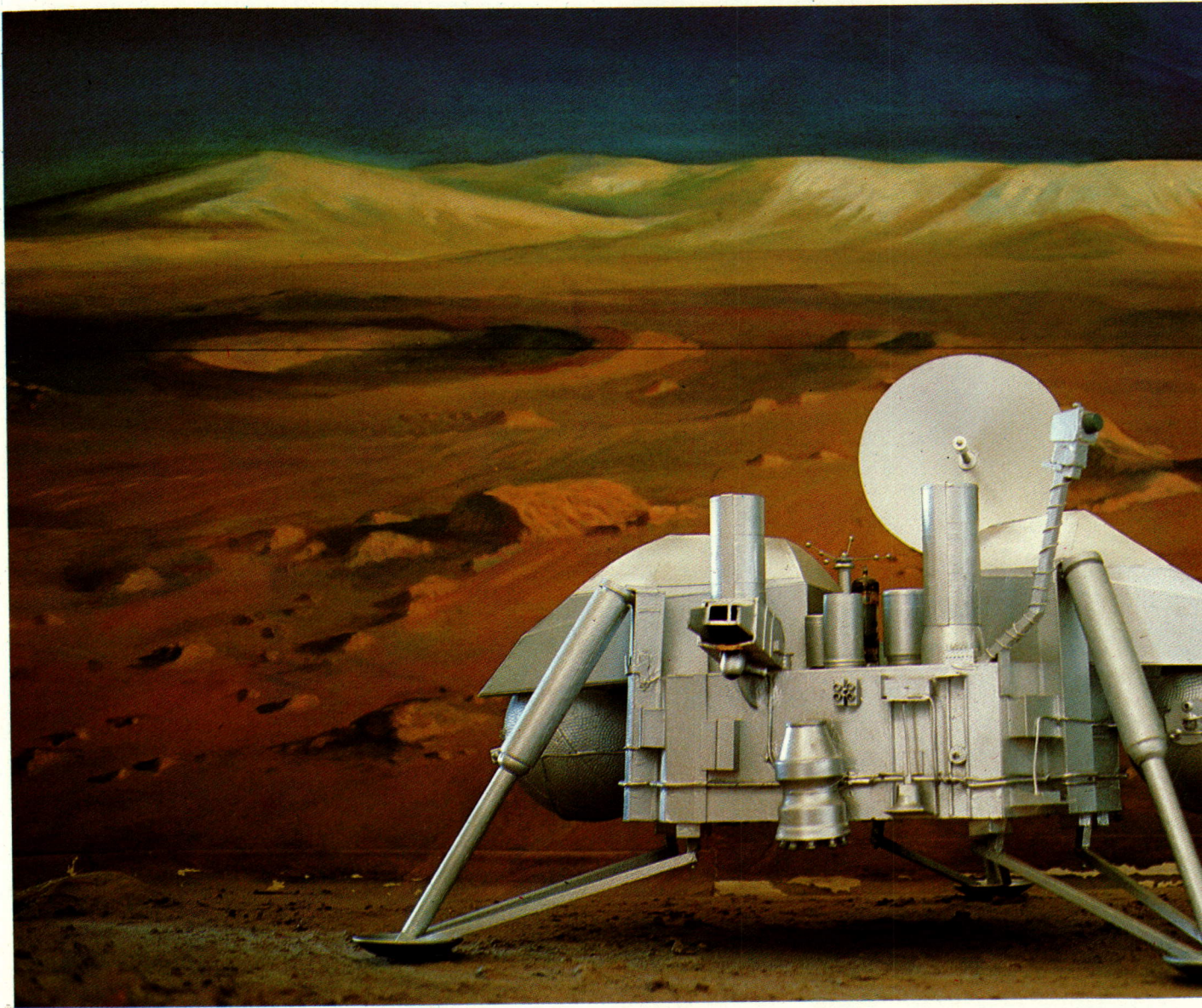


Children running to and fro, pushing this button, cranking that lever, peering through glass panes, observing dials moving and lights going on and off. This scenario is taking place not in some modernistic children's playground but in Bangkok's very own Science Museum.

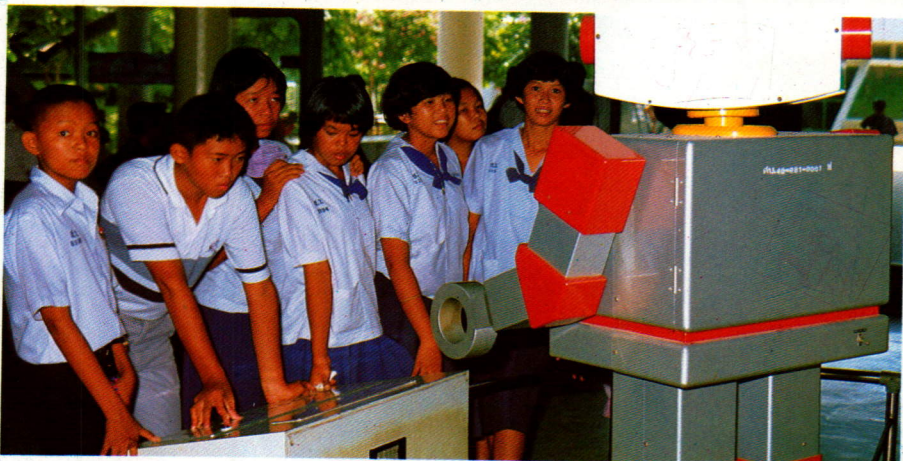
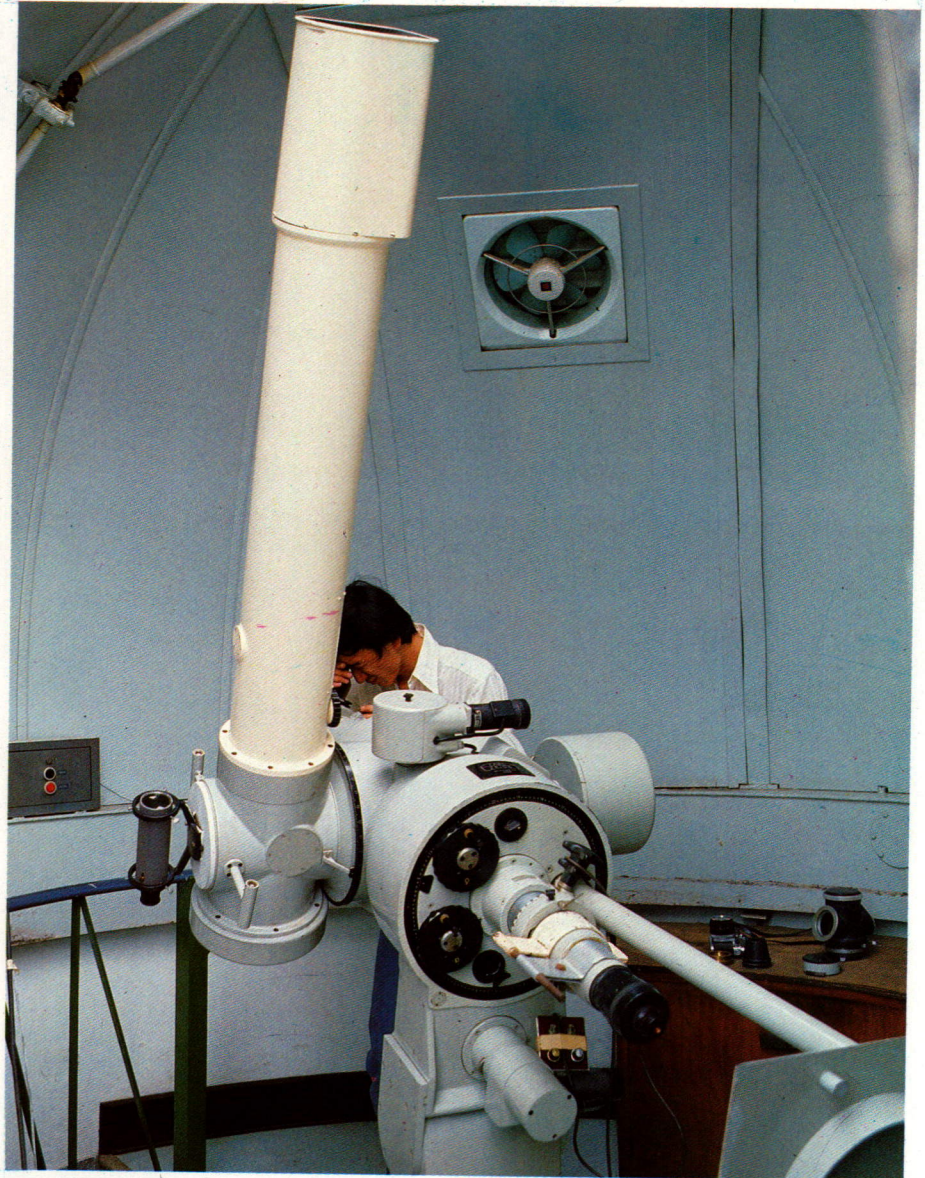
Many people believe that to educate children they have to be given the freedom to establish facts, so that they can get the ideas by themselves. The Science Museum provides this form of education whereby the children come in and learn by themselves what they feel is important to them. Like a giant laboratory, the Science Museum provides the educational means with simple instructions and explanations.

Situated on Sukhumvit Road, the Science Museum is a part of the Centre for Educational Museums which comprises three other museums, namely the Planetarium, the Museum for Natural History and the Museum for Thai History.

The Science Museum opened only four years ago, its aim being to serve both adults and students of all levels, helping them to understand scientific theories through simple exhibits and demonstration lectures with the aid of slides and films. Most of the displays are permanent and demonstrate simple theories like Newton's Law of Gravity, the simple pulley and other simple machines, waves, atoms and substances, magnets and electricity, mathematics, energy conversion, and sound plus exhibits demonstrating how to save energy at home, to name just a few. The museum also acts as a place for recreation and study for students.



*Learning by doing is the key
concept at the Science Museum
where modern space technology
is on full display.*





Libraries range in size and scope from Bangkok's National Library to travelling libraries and exhibitions.



Libraries in Thailand

As a very important part of the educational system in Thailand, libraries are in great demand both in and out of school.

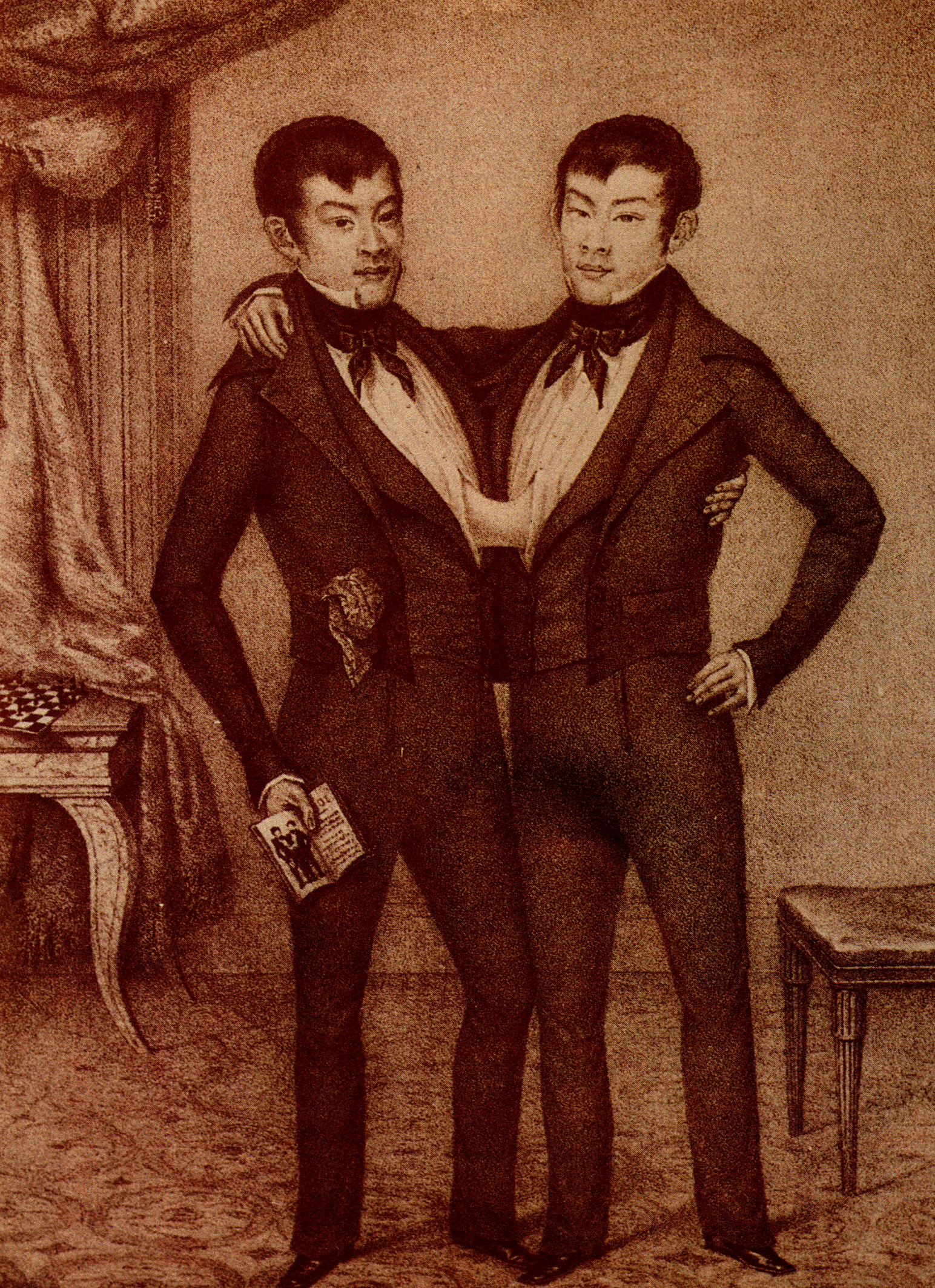
Libraries have served the functions of reference for research and study for centuries, but the systematization and expansion of the library system gained impetus markedly with the establishment of The National Library in Bangkok in 1905. Set up as the result of the initiative of King Rama VI of the present Chakri dynasty, The National Library has served as the centre, model, and main source of reference for other libraries. Since then successive governments have striven to build more libraries all over the country to keep up with the felt needs of the growing population, now numbering almost 50 million.

Aside from privately owned and specialized office libraries, there are nationwide only some 4,820 common reference and reading rooms in schools, colleges, municipalities and provinces available for public use. Thus the need for more educational libraries is indeed a very pressing one.

While private organizations and institutions have been building more libraries and often opening them to public use, government organizations such as the Ministry of Education, the Office of the Prime Minister, and state universities have also seriously attempted to set up more libraries that provide books and other educational materials for the people, especially for youths. Mobile libraries have been organized to tour the countryside; and more recent types of service have been provided by the portable library and the Children's Literature Show Case conceived in 1979 by Khon Kaen University and Srinakharinrawit University, both of which projects are aimed at providing rural children (among whom the need for books and other educational materials is greatest) with useful information and literature in the most attractive ways possible.

Limited as they are by scarce economic resources, libraries in Thailand have been used to the fullest possible extent. Most of them serve not only as regular reference centers for study and research, but also as classrooms and performing stages for puppetry, plays, and the like.

For decades, educators from both the private and public sectors have striven to improve the quality and increase the quantity of libraries in Thailand to help raise the literacy rate (presently about 84%) and to serve as educational extension centres for young and old alike. At the same time children and youths in and out of school are being advised on how to make optimal use of the library in their search for more knowledge in order to build for themselves and for their communities a better future.





The Original Siamese Twins

Undoubtedly the most famous of all Thai children, at least as far as the Western world is concerned, were the original Siamese twins, who in the 19th century became celebrities throughout America and most of Europe.

Born in 1811 to a hard-working peasant family, the twins were discovered one afternoon in 1824 by an English trader named Robert Hunter, then living on the river in Bangkok. "His eye was caught by a strange object moving through the water," says one account by the American missionary, Dan Beach Bradley. "It was a creature that appeared to have two heads, four arms, and four legs, all of which were moving in perfect harmony. As Mr. Hunter watched, the object climbed into a nearby boat, and to his amazement he realized that he had been looking at two small boys who were joined together at the chest."

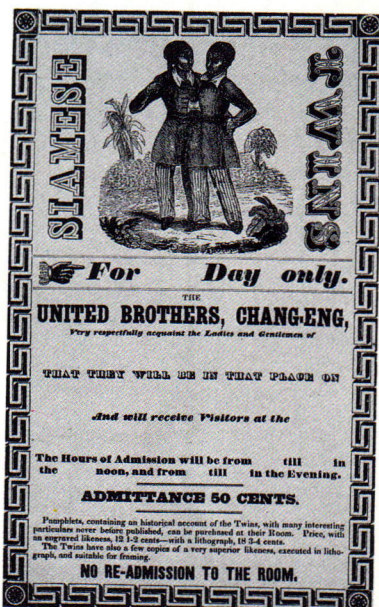
Hunter saw the commercial possibilities of exhibiting Eng and Chang, as the twins were named, and eventually persuaded both their mother and the Thai authorities to let them be taken abroad. They left on April 1, 1829 and never returned to their native land, though it was because of them that millions of Westerners first learned of the distant kingdom known as Siam.

Over the next 45 years the boys travelled extensively, appearing before enthusiastic crowds under various managements, including that of the great showman P. T. Barnum. During this time they learned to speak and write English fluently and generally impressed all who met them with their charm and intelligence, not to mention the extraordinary co-ordination with which they performed athletic tricks. Medical studies were made, and several proposals were made to sever the thick band of flesh that joined them, but these were never attempted because of the unknown dangers involved.

The twins eventually became American citizens and, settling in North Carolina, married two sisters, Sarah and Adelaide Yates. The unconventional marriages were, by all accounts, happy; Chang and Adelaide had ten children in all, while Eng and Sarah had twelve. They lived in separate houses, a mile apart, and for 25 years alternated between the two, with the twins spending three days at each.

Chang developed severe bronchitis in January of 1874 and died five days later. Eng succumbed a few hours afterwards, before a planned operation to separate the twins could be performed. They were buried in the Baptist cemetery in White Plains, North Carolina, later to be joined there by their wives. One source estimates that the twins have about a thousand descendants still living in the United States, some of them in the same district where Eng and Chang spent their last years.

At the time the Siamese twins died, it was generally agreed that any attempt to separate them would have been fatal. Today, thanks to advanced medical knowledge, it would probably be possible; several Siamese twins have been separated in Bangkok, the most recent two years ago, and are now enjoying normal lives.





Special Education

Thailand is relatively a late starter in the field of special education. Considering that the Compulsory Education Act, aimed at providing universal education, was promulgated as far back as 1921, the first institution for the disabled was established 17 years later in 1938. The initiative came from the private sector- the Foundation for the Blind in Thailand- whose school for the blind in Bangkok was until recently the only school for blind children in the whole country. The public sector followed suit by establishing an experimental unit for the deaf at a municipal school in Bangkok in 1941. Over the years the unit became the first school for the deaf in the country. There are now 8 state schools for the deaf, 3 of which are in Bangkok, while the rest spread out in the provinces. These schools are run by the Special Education Division, created in 1952 within the Department of General Education of the Ministry of Education. The division is also responsible for a school for the blind and a school for multi-handicapped children, both located in the northern city of Chiang Mai.

Special education for the disabled, including the blind, the deaf, the hard-of-hearing, the partially sighted, the physically handicapped, the mentally retarded and the chronically hospitalized children, is limited only to the junior high school level or grade 9. Disabled children are exempted from the Compulsory Education Act which normally requires all children from 7-15 to attend primary schools, provided free of charge by the State. There is as yet no official census on the disabled population, but given the fact that this population constitutes about 1% of the total population in any country, out of the 12 million school-age population (7-15), there should be approximately 120,000 disabled children in Thailand. According to the latest statistics of 1983, there are 3,692 disabled children enrolled in 14 special schools and 16 other regular schools through mainstreaming



*Top Left :
A blind student is practising
speed-reading.*

*Top Right :
A physical therapy class for
handicapped children.*

*Below :
Handicapped children study
with their teacher.*



*Top Left :
Handicapped children are
working diligently in their vocational
training.*

*Top Right :
Vocational training on offer for the
handicapped children's future
careers.*

*Below :
Retarded children enjoy
themselves during class.*

programmes. This number represents only .031% of the total school-age population. In a country where over 70% of its school-age population receives formal schooling and as much as 96.7% complete the primary level, clearly, there is still room for improvement and expansion.

Like any other developing countries, Thailand's effort to organize education for children with special needs are plagued with constraints in terms of resources and personnel. But the major obstacle to the success of special education organization is our cultural background. By tradition and temperament, the Thais have been noted for their humanitarian action. Our religious beliefs reinforce this national characteristic to the extent that we have always stoically accepted disabilities in our children as manifestation of our own wrongful deeds, either in this life or in the previous cycles of incarnation. Our sense of compassion, responsibility and guilt compels us, however poor we are, to shelter our disabled children as much as possible from any interference from the outside world. Such an attitude makes it very difficult for the State to extend a helping hand to the disabled.

This situation is further complicated by the stigma attached to institutionalized life. Even the poorest peasants shy away from hand-out, let alone the better-off and educated classes, who could provide impetus to the development of special education. In the absence of an effective information system, it is extremely difficult for the authorities to map out long-term educational plans for the disabled.

Despite these constraints, Thailand has plans to expand special education organization in its Fifth National Development Plan (1982-1986). Three more boarding schools for the blind will be set up in the Northeast, the South and the Central region. The North and the East will be allotted one school each for the hard-of-hearing. Mainstreaming programmes for the hard-of-hearing and the blind, and programmes for the slow-learners and the chronically hospitalized children will be expanded to the rural areas. Finally, further emphasis will be placed on vocational training and rehabilitation programmes on a nationwide basis.



The Blue and White Uniform

The stories about Thai children written in the English language have mostly been written by foreign writers who present Thailand as an exotic but impersonal far-off land. Their themes-- a young boy who lost his kite or a girl who cannot find the rice vendor-- are merely excuses for fancy illustrations which resemble Bali or the South Seas more than Thailand.

The Blue and White Uniform is written by Promporn Pramualratana, a writer who is well versed in the Thai culture and lifestyle. It is about a little girl who, like many other village children in Thailand, cannot attend school because their parents are too poor.

Nevertheless for Thai village children, this is no tragedy. They are able to pass away the time constructively, taking care of younger children, helping to herd the water buffaloes, weaving baskets and mats.

The artist, Winai Prabreepoo, depicts northern Thailand with finesse for he is a native of Nan province, in the north of Thailand. He paints the very utensils in the northern home with an amazing accuracy. In his illustrations, water jars and pots and pans are placed in their traditional locations.

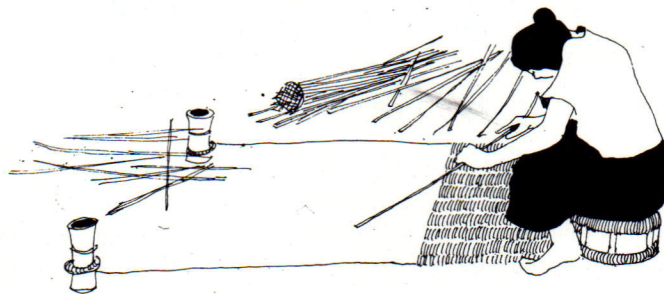
The Blue and White Uniform is a charming story about the simple life in a northern village of rural Thailand.

The sun peeked its head from the distant coconut trees turning the dark sky into a soft rosy colour. The sleeping water buffalo's ears began to wiggle and the cock crowed. Then all the sleepy little girls and boys in Baan Noi, a little village in the north of Thailand, crawled out of their mosquito nets, down the wooden steps of their houses and splashed themselves with bowls of water. All the little girls and boys of Baan Noi dressed themselves in blue and white uniforms, rushed through breakfast and off to school. That is, all the little girls and boys except for one, a little girl whose name is Tanya.

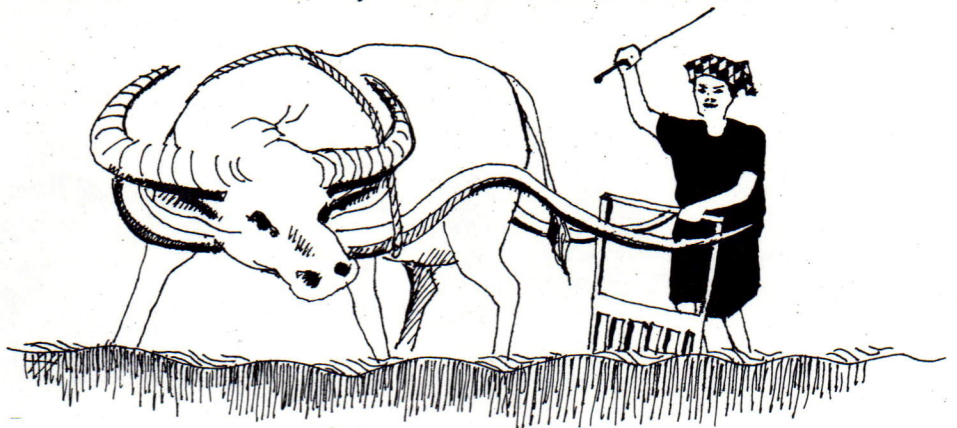




Tanya sat by the wooden steps of her house watching the other children walk briskly by with their school bags and lunch containers. At first she was very happy because all the children looked so happy but then she became sad, very, very sad. All the children her age went to school but she had to stay at home and help look after baby brother while mother wove



mats out of dried grass stems and father worked in the paddy fields. Tanya's parents were poor and could not afford to buy her a blue and white school uniform. Besides, they themselves never went to school.





When the other children came home from school Tanya rushed to play with them.

"We will not play with you," they said, "you cannot even write your name for you are as stupid as the water buffalo." And they chased her away from their play circle. Large tears fell from Tanya's eyes and melted into her blouse. At that moment she decided that she must learn how to write her name.





Tanya carried baby brother on her waist and walked to grandmother's house.

"Sawaddi ka," said Tanya greeting the old lady.

"Sawaddi Ja," replied grandmother. "You are here just in time. I've just finished making coconut custard pudding and I want you and baby brother to taste it."

"Hmm... Aroy!" said the children. It was the best pudding they had ever tasted. Grandmother was delighted.

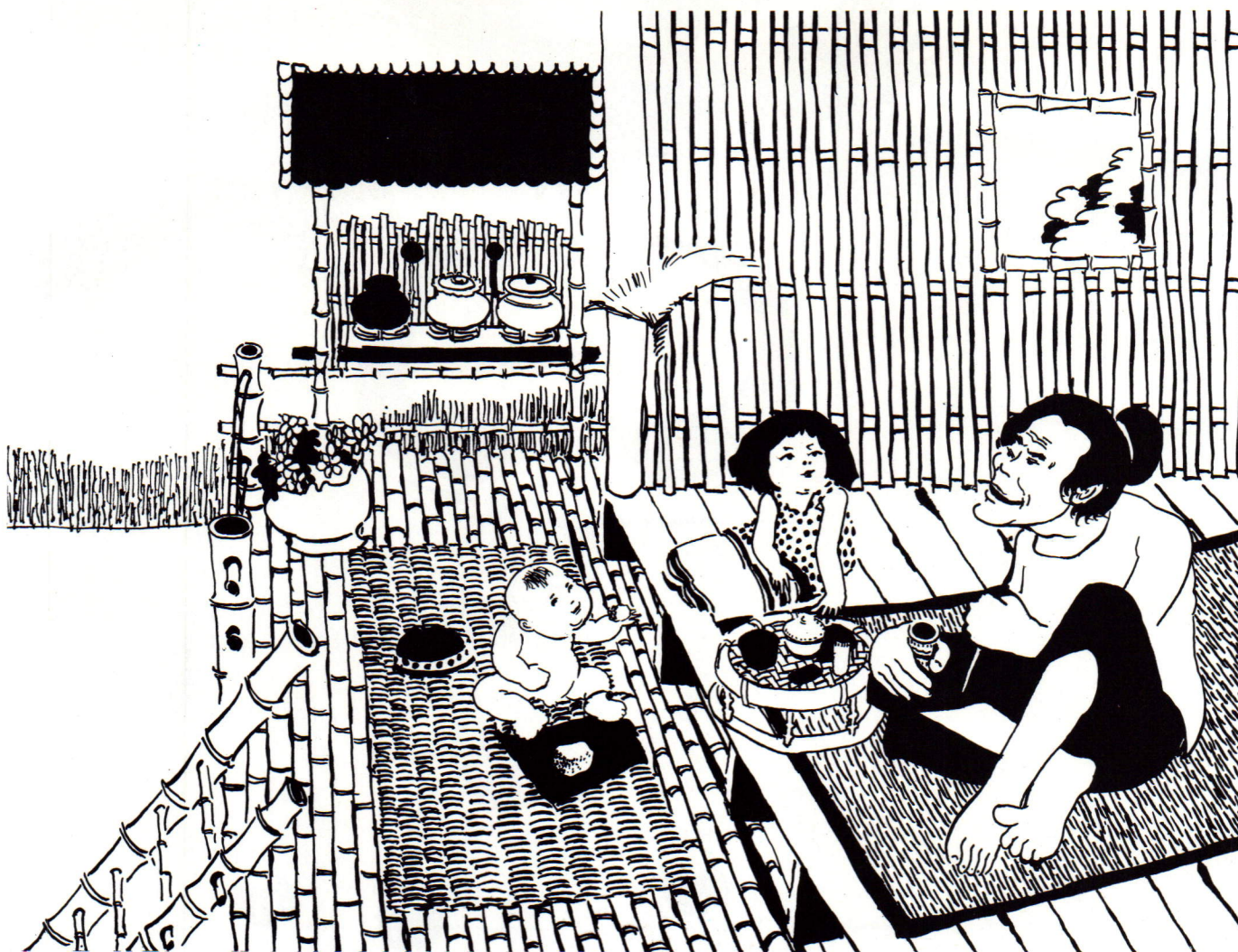
"I will teach you how to make coconut custard pudding," she said, "and one day you can sell it at the marketplace. I am too old to set up stall there."

"Oh grandmother," cried Tanya, "I would love to learn how to make coconut custard pudding but there is something that I want to learn before that."

"What is it child?" asked grandmother.

"I want to learn how to write my name."

"Tch, tch, tch..." sighed the old lady. "Alas, dear child, I myself do not know how to write my own name for I never went to school. In my time girls didn't have to go to school."



“Grandmother, when you were young, did the other children call you names? Did they say that you were as stupid as the water buffalo?” asked Tanya. “Oh no, they never did. They all liked me very much. I was smart for my age. I could cook many dishes at the age of ten. And I could sew when the other little girls couldn’t even thread their needles.” Talking to grandmother always made Tanya feel good but this time her problem was not solved. Who would teach her how to write her name?



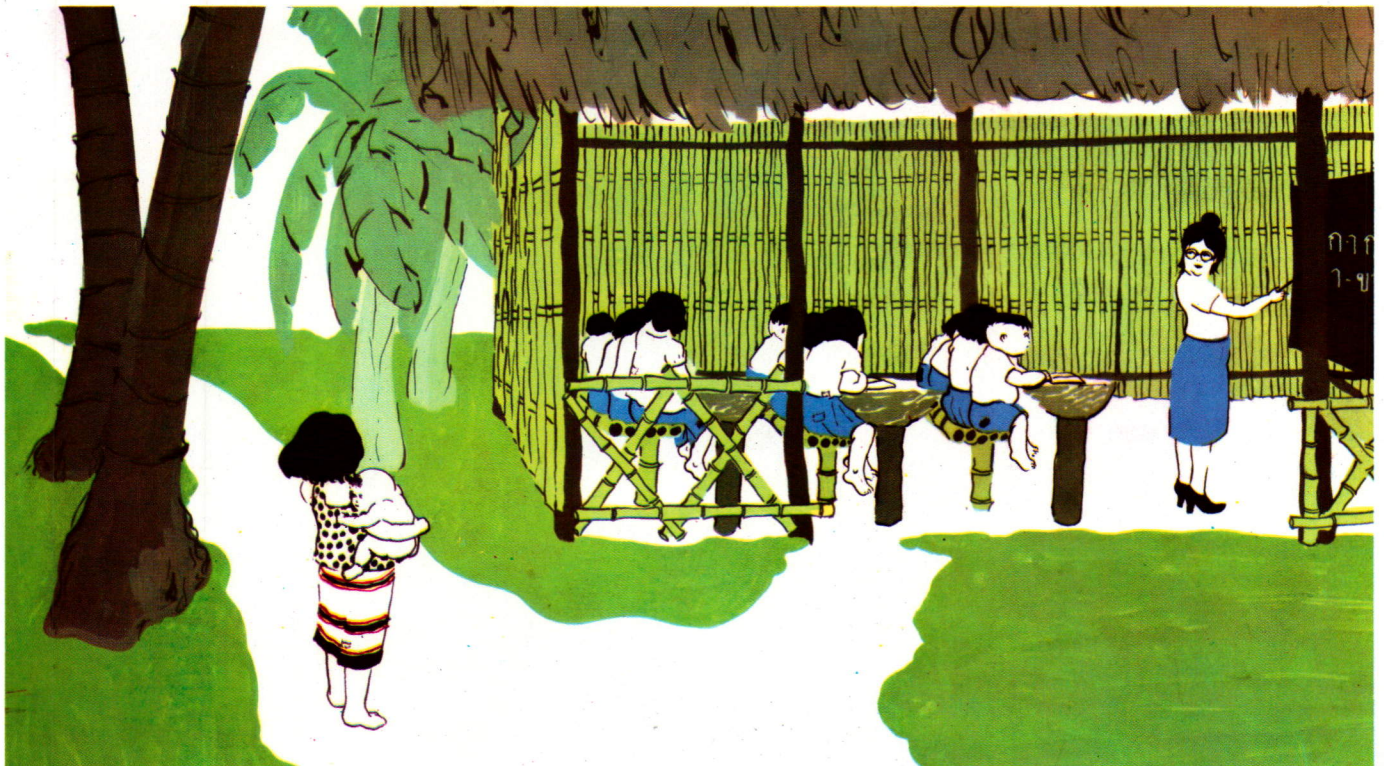


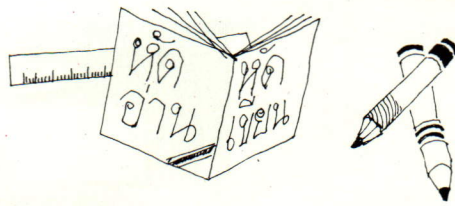
Tanya wandered along the dusty road carrying baby brother on her waist.

"Today," said she to herself, "I must learn to write my name."

She heard the faraway sound of children's voices—they were singing a song. As she walked closer the voices became louder. Finally she came to a clearing. There in front of her was the handsome bamboo school house.

She could smell the fresh bamboo. Suddenly the singing stopped. Tanya peered inside the classroom. She recognized some of the faces of the children who lived in her neighbourhood. The teacher wore spectacles and herself had on a blue and white uniform. Tanya's heart skipped a beat. How she longed to be in that classroom with pencil in hand and notebook in front.





"Gok, gok, gok," went the teacher's cane.
"Tch, tch, tch," said the teacher. "Children, do not chatter. You must all learn to obey grown-ups."

Tanya pressed her ear against the bamboo slats and so did baby brother. The teacher continued, "All good children from Baan Noi Village must listen to their mothers and fathers and their mothers and fathers must listen to Phoo Yai Boon for he is like the big father of our village. He is the headman and his duty is to take care of every one in Baan Noi."

"Oh," said Tanya, "if Phoo Yai Boon's duty is to take care of everyone, then I'm sure he will teach me to write my name."

And off she went to Phoo Yai Boon's house.





Tanya did not know where the headman's house was but it was not hard to find at all. Just about everyone in the village knew where he lived. His house was the largest in the village. Phoo Yai Boon's voice was very loud and Tanya could hear it even at the gate. A maid led Tanya to Phoo Yai Boon.

The man was playing cards with some of the other grown-ups. "What do you want little girl?" thundered the voice of the headman.

"Please sir," came the frightened voice of little Tanya, "I-I-I- Please sir, I want to learn how to write my name."

Phoo Yai Boon wrinkled his brow. "Hmm..." he growled, "so you want to learn how to write your name. Where is your pencil and paper?"

"Please sir," said Tanya, "I have none."

At this Phoo Yai Boon and all his friends roared with laughter. Then the man beside him remarked, "This little girl wants to write her name but she owns neither pencil nor paper!"

"Pai! Pai! Away with you little girl! We have no time for you." And they went on with their card game.

Fighting back her tears, Tanya rushed out of the headman's house and, with baby brother hoisted onto her waist, hurried home. A few minutes later she heard the sound of running feet. It was Phoo Yai Boon's maid.

"Little girl, little girl," called the maid quite breathless. "I heard everything that you said to Phoo Yai Boon and I know just how it feels not to know how to read and write. Phoo Yai Boon is the headman but he does not act like a father to the people of this village."

"Do you know how to read and write?" asked a wide-eyed Tanya.

"Yes, but I only learnt it recently. Last year I worked as a maid at the village school and every time there were classes I would sit in the classroom. By and by I learned to read and write."

"Will you teach me how to write my name?"

"Yes, and much more," said the maid, "But I must finish off my errand now. Meet me here at this spot tomorrow at eight o'clock in the morning."

And quickly she ran towards the market place.

"Wait," called Tanya, "I don't know your name."

"It's Nitnoy," she called back, smiling a very big smile.





Early the next morning the water buffalo snorted and wiggled his ears and the cock began his early morning crow. Tanya got up, splashed water over herself with the water bowl and, leaving baby brother at home with mother, she ran straight to the spot where she last saw Nitnoy. The school bell rang and soon Nitnoy came.

She was carrying a large red umbrella and a shopping basket. Sunlight shone through the umbrella and Tanya thought of how Nitnoy looked like the morning sun when it peeks out of the treetops.

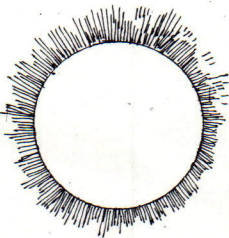
"Sawaddi ja," said Nitnoy to her anxious pupil.

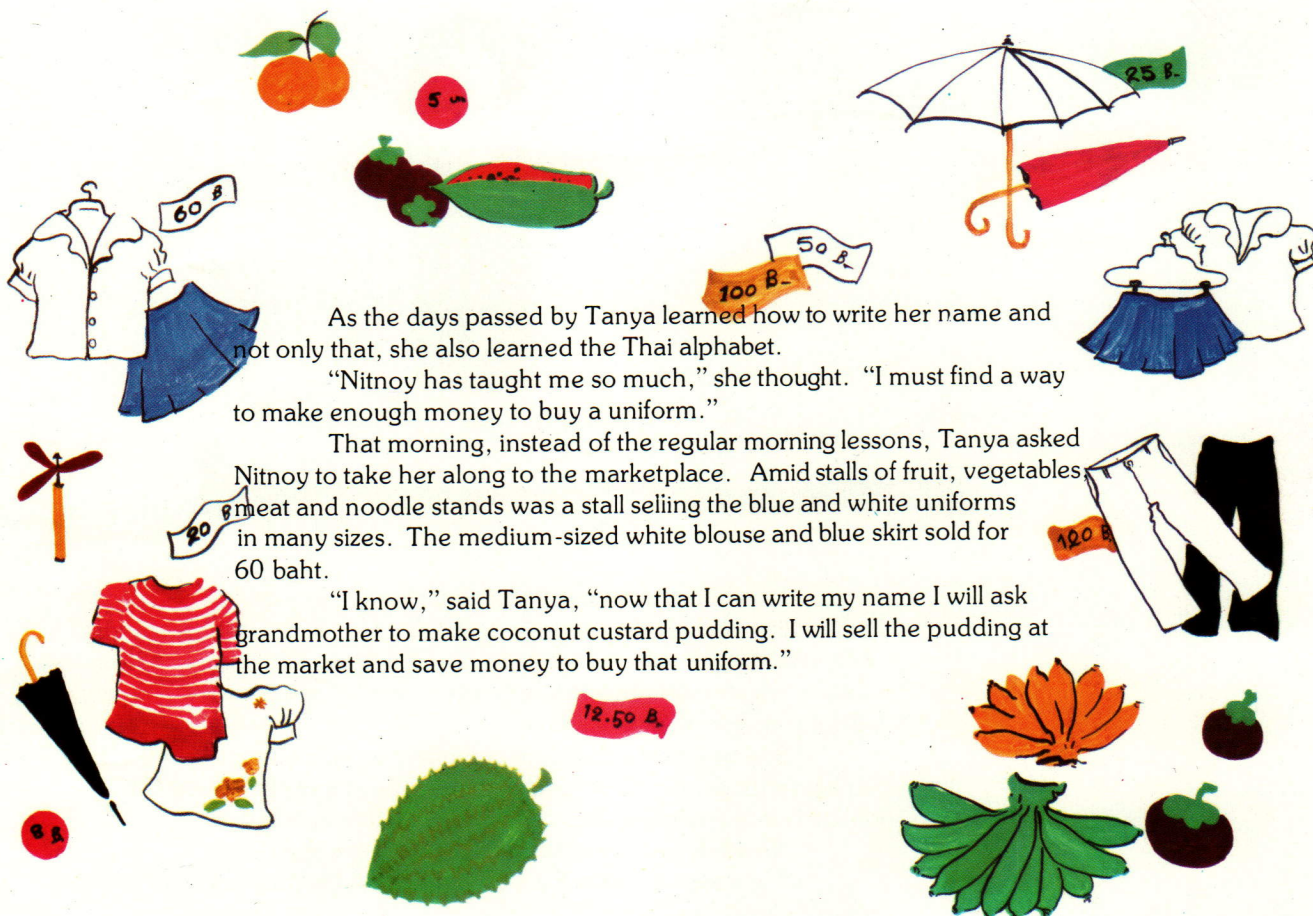
"Sawaddi ja," said Tanya, "Please don't laugh at me but I did not bring any pencil or paper."

Nitnoy broke into a smile which grew larger and larger and finally burst into peals of laughter. "You don't need to have pencil or paper to write your name," said Nitnoy. "Come I will show you."

She got a stick from nearby and scratched out Tanya's name on the dusty ground. "T-A-N-Y-A. **တနွယ်** That's your name."

Tanya got another stick and traced Nitnoy's lines on the ground.





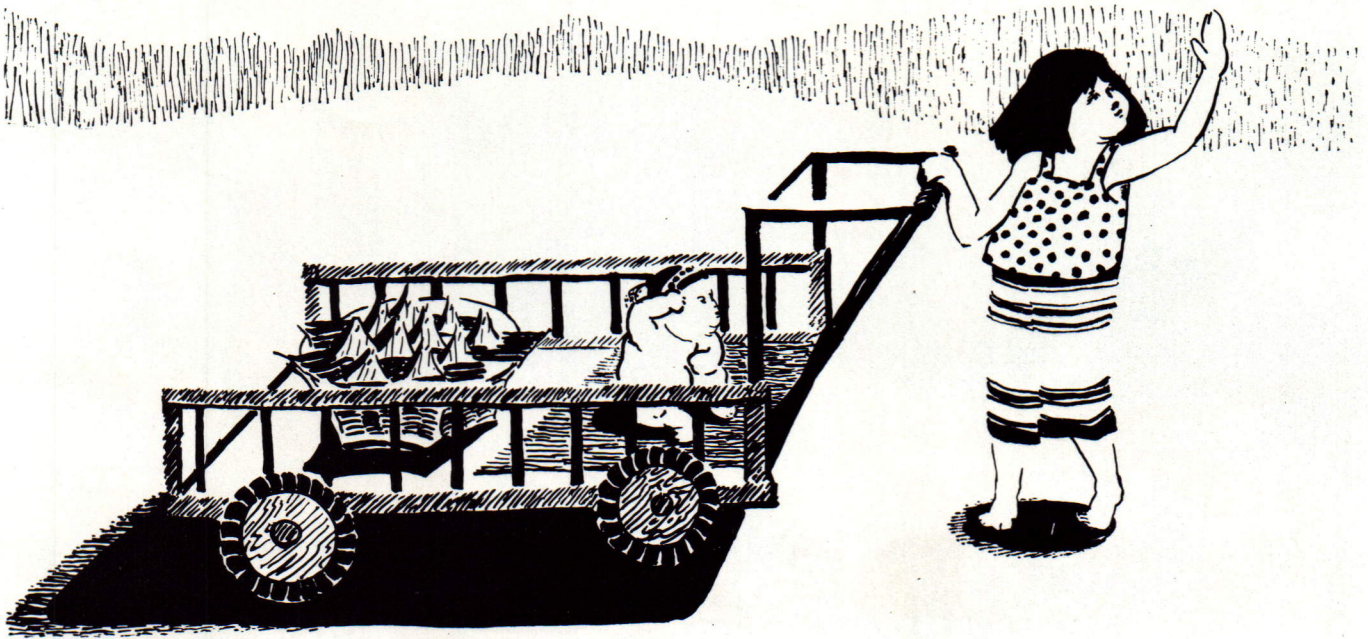
As the days passed by Tanya learned how to write her name and not only that, she also learned the Thai alphabet.

"Nitnoy has taught me so much," she thought. "I must find a way to make enough money to buy a uniform."

That morning, instead of the regular morning lessons, Tanya asked Nitnoy to take her along to the marketplace. Amid stalls of fruit, vegetables, meat and noodle stands was a stall selling the blue and white uniforms in many sizes. The medium-sized white blouse and blue skirt sold for 60 baht.

"I know," said Tanya, "now that I can write my name I will ask grandmother to make coconut custard pudding. I will sell the pudding at the market and save money to buy that uniform."





Helping grandmother make coconut pudding was fun. Tanya fetched duck eggs from the coop. Grandmother beat the eggs up in a bowl, added brown sugar and coconut milk and poured the mixture into banana leaf pads. She folded the pads up into little boats and put them in a large pot to be steamed. Half an hour later the pudding smelled good. It tasted good. It was ready to be sold.

Tanya put the pudding into a basket, the basket onto a cart, and then she put baby brother in as well. Waving goodbye to grandmother, she pushed away towards the marketplace.

"Gok gak, gok gak, gok gak," went the cart on its wooden wheels. Baby brother clapped and laughed for he enjoyed the ride very much. When they arrived at the marketplace Tanya set up her basket beneath a shady tree. At first only two puddings were sold. Tanya waited for a long time but people only passed by without looking at her. Then baby brother suddenly called out "Custard pudding, custard pudding—good, good custard pudding!" The passersby stopped to listen to the baby boy, and very soon all the custard puddings were sold. Many days passed by and one day Tanya found that she had saved enough to buy the school uniform. On that day she stopped by at the clothes stall and with sixty baht she finally bought the blue and white school uniform.



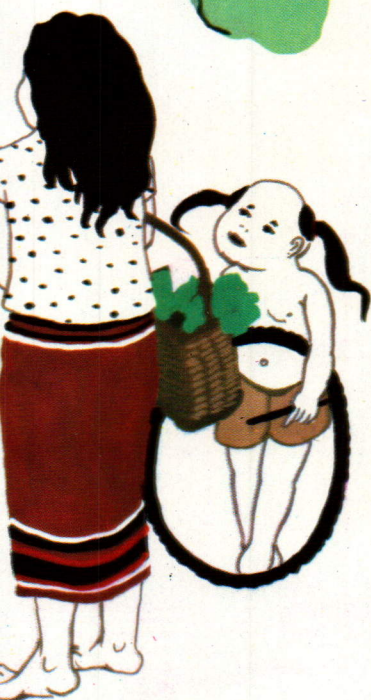


The next morning Tanya splashed water over herself with the water bowl and quickly put on her new uniform. Mother and baby brother walked with her to the little village school. The school bell rang and out came the teacher with the spectacles.

"Sawaddi ka," she greeted Tanya. "Welcome to our school."

"Sawaddi ka," said Tanya, "I'm so glad to be here."

How happy Tanya was to be wearing the blue and white uniform. How happy she was to sit in the classroom of the village school. But most of all, how happy she was to be with all the other children from the little village of Baan Noi.







Happy Buffalo-Boy of Thailand

In the eyes of many visitors to the provinces, the most enviable person in Thailand is the buffalo-boy.

In a careworn world, he alone appears to live a carefree life, rolling on the broad back of his charge, his slingshot bulging from his *Pa Khaoma* waistband. If he is a northeasterner, he will have a crossbow in his hand. The tanned barefoot-boy always looks happy. But his day is a long one.

The country folk visualize the water-buffalo to be made of clay, while the ox is made of wax. The ox adapts easily, but the water-buffalo grows fat if kept wet and cracks under long exposure to the sun. To remain happy and healthy, the water-buffalo must be able to wallow in water or mud at least twice a day. If there is no *khlong* or mudhole, he must be wetted down with water from the nearby well.

Formerly, the water-buffalo was brought in from the wild. It may look happy as a domesticated animal, but it must be pampered and watched or it will escape back to its jungle home.

Occasionally, on the edge of the forest, young buffaloes are still caught in the wild and trained to plough. But most of the water-buffaloes today are many generations removed from the jungle. However, given half a chance, without someone to scratch their ears, slap their backs, and generally treat them like members of the family, they are likely to listen to the dim call of the wild, go berserk, and return to the jungle.

It may be the duty of the head of the family to gentle the beast, scratching him behind the ears and offering him by hand an occasional mouthful of his favorite grass; but it is up to either the youngest member, or younger members of the family, to see that the beast does not wander off too far. Thus, after the harvest, when the "Ya Luk Nok" or "Birdling Grass" begins to spring up after the rice stubble has been burned off and when "Rattan Grass" is particularly sweet, the buffalo-boy is up at 4 or 5 a.m. to drive his buffaloes into the fields to graze. There he stretches out on the animal's back, lies on his neck, or slips to the ground and escapes the sun in the shade of the nearby tree.





At about 11 a.m., signalled by the sound of the temple bell or drum announcing the hour when the priests take their last meal of the day, he knows it is time to drive the buffaloes into the khlong or wallow hole for a wash or dipping in the wet mud. After this routine is over, the boy drives his animal into the shade of a tree or the stilted house, where he will be tied up until the afternoon heat dissipates. After throwing down a little straw to occupy the buffalo during the heat-break, the boy runs home for his brunch.

When the heat begins to wane, at perhaps 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the buffalo-boy is up again, driving his animals into the field to graze until sunset. Then the animal is driven into the khlong for another dip while his keeper joins him for an evening bath. When both of them have had their fill of the refreshing water, they return to home and pen.

The buffalo-boy then builds a fire of freshly cut wood creating a smudge to keep mosquitoes off the sleeping buffaloes and only then retires to dinner with his family. Such is the working day of a buffalo-boy during the dormant season.

During the working season, when the plough must be driven into the heavy damp earth, the buffalo-boy and his charge must both rise early. Sometimes, if there is a full moon, he may have to rise as early as 1 a.m. in order to get the buffalo into the field and ready for his father to begin the ploughing.

The boy may be able to nap then, if the mosquitoes are not biting; or he may spend his time in whatever way he wishes, until his father begins to feel hungry. While the father is home for his breakfast, the boy must unhitch the buffalo from the ploughs, take him to the khlong to bathe, and let him enter fallow land to graze for an hour until his father returns to work.

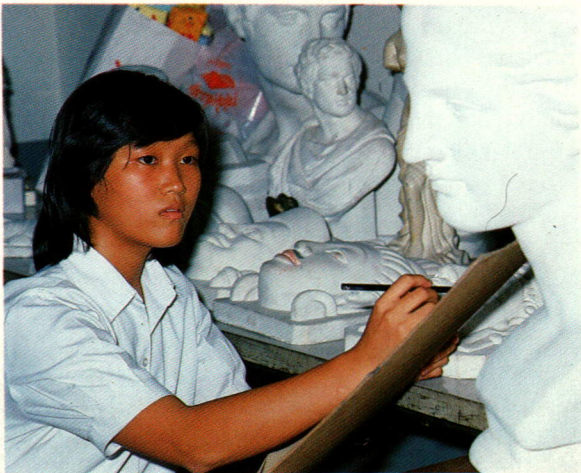
During the ploughing season, the buffalo works until the sun grows too strong, after which he is turned over to the boy for the rest of the day. During this period, the buffalo may be kept tethered to keep him away from the growing rice. It is the buffalo-boy's duty to keep him fed with hay or straw and grass and to drive him out twice a day for baths.

While the buffalo grazes or sinks up to his nostrils in the muddy khlong, the boy may join forces with his friends in the field nearby for cricket fighting or fish fighting, or, perhaps, he and his friends may wage mock war against each other with twigs of the "Sanoh" plant.

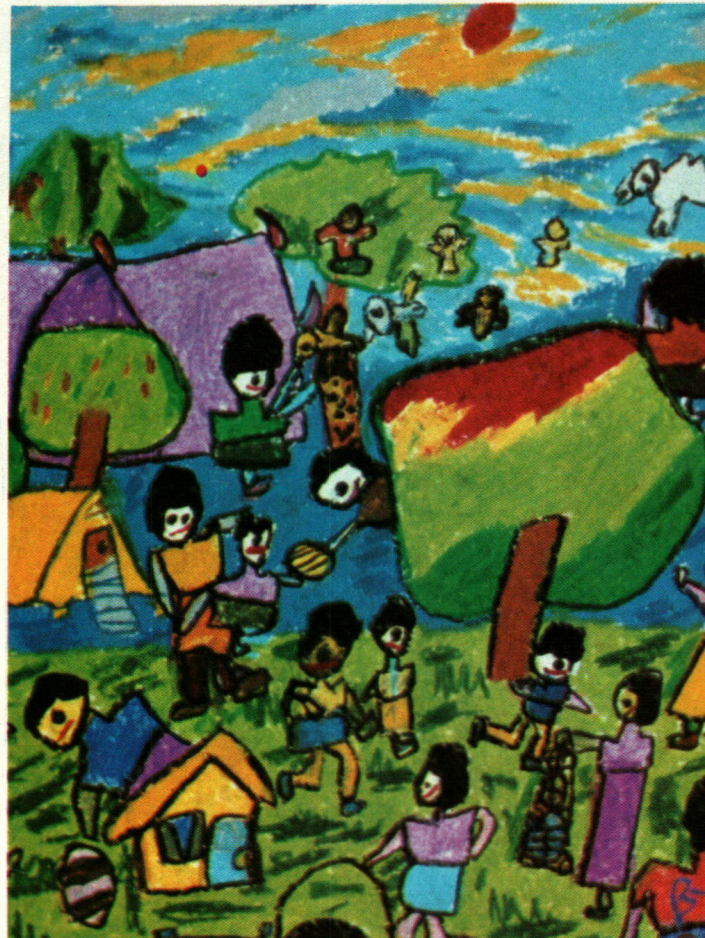
When the time arrives for the boys to separate their respective animals and drive them home, the task of differentiating the animals seems hopeless. In a herd of 100 or more water-buffaloes, each looks exactly like the others. But each buffalo-boy knows his beasts by characteristics, hidden to the untrained eye, and he sorts them out with only a light staff and the help of his two feet. (To the stranger, this accomplishment seems comparable to singling out certain ants from an ant-hill.) While still not mounted on his animal, he drives it by tapping staffs with an unerring aim at the back of the horn on the side opposite the direction he wishes the animal to go.

The buffalo-boy graduates to higher duty the day he enters the priesthood. After his return from the Wat, he is ready for the ploughing; and his younger brother or, later, his son will replace him as the buffalo-boy of the family. And thus the tradition continues to live.

The prolific Nipa Sae Lim's works include the prize-winning "My Life in the Year 2000".



"Funny Children" is the best known of the many prize-winning works by the precocious Pakon Supinanon.





Talented Thai Children

A number of Thai children have demonstrated remarkable artistic talent from an early age, as shown by three whose prize-winning works have been admired abroad.

Nipa Sae Lim was twelve years old when she won a painting contest sponsored by UNESCO on the theme "My Life in the Year 2000." Her work in oils showed herself as a full-grown artist at work in her studio, surrounded by admiring parents, brothers and sisters, and friends.

Young Nipa's talent actually manifested itself much earlier when, lacking toys as a small child, she began to create an imaginative world through charcoal drawings. When she was in the first grade, she submitted a picture of a bird eating a fish in a contest sponsored by a Bangkok movie theatre and won two free tickets with it.

A perceptive teacher at Wat Sabua School encouraged her work, and in the second grade she won first prize in an Italian contest with a picture of a colourful Thai market. She began to work in oils the next year, and by the time she was in the sixth grade had produced 36 paintings of exceptional quality. Her ambition, as reflected in the UNESCO self-portrait, is to be an artist when she grows up.

Even more precocious is little **Pakon Supinanon**, who at the age of five won the top Gold Award in the 12th International Children's Art Exhibition, sponsored by the Nippon Television Network Cultural Society in Japan. His painting, in bright, bold colors, was entitled "Funny Children."

Pakon, who says he likes to draw "pictures of my life" has won a total of seven prizes so far. His success may be explained in part by the unusual encouragement he and other budding artists have received at Wat Phai-ngoenchotanaram School, 16 of whom also won prizes in the Japanese contest. In a previous contest to honor King Taksin, who restored Thai independence after the fall of Ayutthaya, 12 students from the school were among the 20 winners, with Pakon coming first.

His future hopes? Perhaps inspired by his latest prize, he says he wants to go to Japan and teach painting.

The musical world was astonished by the talent of a young Thai girl named **Intuon Sriganon** when her song entitled "Happiness" won the Best Song Award in the World Popular Song Festival held in Japan. Moreover, it was a great surprise to everyone to learn that Intuon composed this winning song when she was just ten years old.

Intuon attributed this success mainly to the help and encouragement given by her parents, especially her father, who is himself one of the best-known song composers in Thailand. She also praised the assistance given to her by the Siam Konlakarn Musical School, as well as the musical instructor from The Trinity College of Music in London.

Not only a talented song composer, Intuon also is a gifted swimmer who has participated in various competitions and won many gold and silver medals. Her ambition, of course, is to be a musical instructor when she grows up.

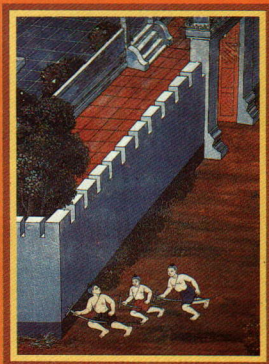
*Intuon Sriganon composing
at the family piano.*



The world famous Wat Sutthi Wararam Secondary School Band which won the second prize in the World School Band Contest held in the Netherlands in 1981.



ThaiLife
**Children
of Thailand**



Published by The National Identity Board,
Prime Minister's Office, Phitsanulok Road,
Bangkok 10300, Thailand. Tel. 2816706
1983

ISSN 0125 - 6637

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*Cover: A mural from the cloister of the Temple
of the Emerald Buddha, Bangkok Period,
depicting a favourite traditional game still
enjoyed by present-day Thai children — the
hobby-horse.*

