



KING BHUMIBOL
Strength of the Land

KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land

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With the Compliments of the Office of the Prime Minister



His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej



(Unofficial Translation)

The Royal Emblem

in Commemoration of the Celebrations on the

Auspicious Occasion of His Majesty the King's

Eightieth Birthday Anniversary

5th December 2007

The Royal Emblem depicts the Privy Seal of the Ninth Reign, which is composed of the Octagonal Throne, the Discus (Chakra), in the middle of which is the symbolic letter "Unalome" insignia. Around the Chakra Discus, there are rays radiating all round. Above the Chakra Discus is the Seven-Tiered Umbrella over the Octagonal Throne meaning that His Majesty the King has sovereign power in the realm, for at the Coronation Ceremony His Majesty sat upon the Octagonal Throne and received consecrated water from the eight cardinal points in accordance with ancient royal custom which for the first time was presented by Members of Parliament instead of royal pundits. As for the platform on which rests the Octagonal Throne, it is strewn with nine silver and golden "Bikul" flowers.

The Privy Seal is encircled by eighty diamonds meaning the 80th Birthday Anniversary. On top of the Seal is the Great Crown of Victory which signifies the Royal Dignity of the Sovereign and symbolizes supreme Kingship. Within the Great Crown of Victory is the Thai numeral 9 meaning the Ninth Reign. The Great Crown of Victory is in front of the Great White Umbrella of State, which is in the centre and flanked by two Seven-Tiered Umbrellas, marking the great rank of the Sovereign. Beneath the Privy Seal is the Thai number 80 meaning that His Majesty the King has reached His Eightieth year. Under the number 80 is the silk ribbon bearing the words The Celebrations on the Auspicious Occasion of His Majesty the King's 80th Birthday Anniversary. The silk ribbon also supports the two Seven-Tiered Umbrellas.

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Preface to the Second Edition

On the occasion of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 72nd birthday anniversary, 5 December 1999, the National Identity Board published 20,000 copies of **KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land**. The purpose of the publication was to familiarize foreign readers with His Majesty's life and activities in alleviating the plights of the poor and disadvantaged, and helping to guide remote rural communities toward sustainable development since the King's accession to the throne on 9 June 1946. The book received so much interest world-wide that copies ran out in a very short period of time after publication.

On the auspicious occasion of the Sixtieth Anniversary of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne on 9 June 2006, the Publication Committee under the National Identity Board arranged to have **KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land** translated into seven languages, namely, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish to accommodate those readers less familiar with the English language.

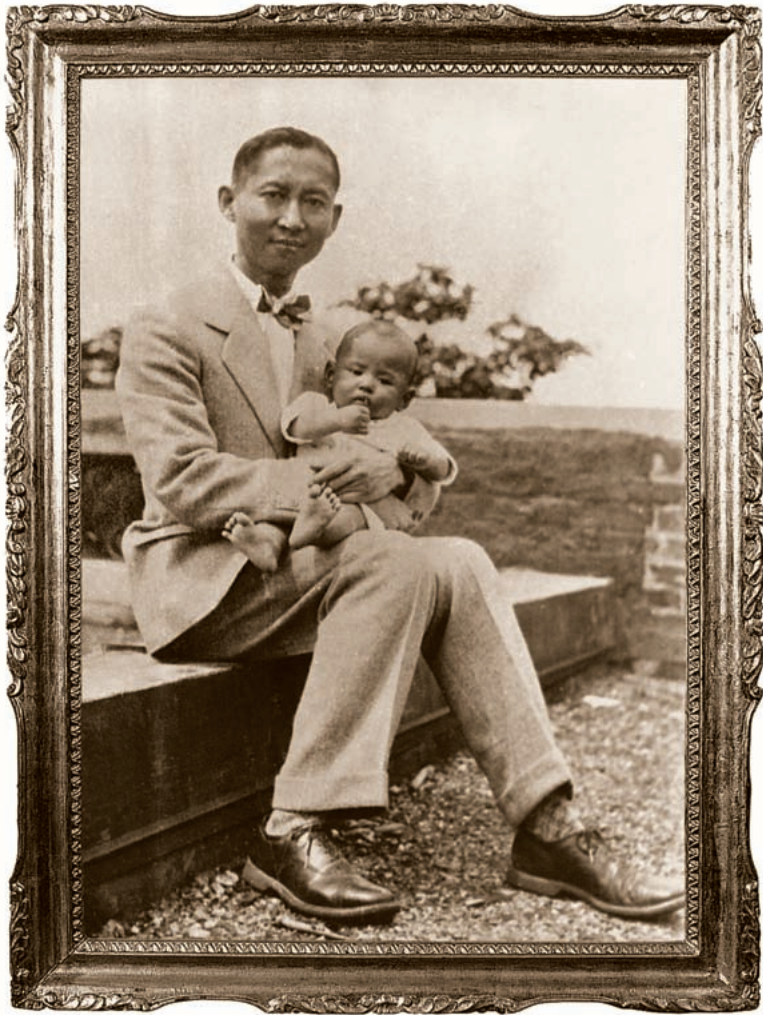
By the year 2009, many of the royal-initiated projects have yielded outstanding results, while the King's theory of Sufficiency Economy has served as an effective guideline on how to live and make a living for people of all walks of life, especially during the world economic troubles. Moreover, some countries have adapted the approaches and techniques of the Royal-initiated projects for use in problem solving and development of their respective countries. The Publications Committee has, therefore, resolved to launch a revised and updated edition of **KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land** to make the book more current and complete.

The National Identity Board hopes that the book will enable more readers to learn about the royal activities and projects which have been invaluable to Thailand and the Thai people throughout over six decades of His Majesty's reign which have brought happiness, hope and inspiration to all of us.

The National Identity Board
Office of the Prime Minister



KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
Birth of a King



*His Royal Highness Prince Mahidol of Songkla
with the young King Bhumibol.*



Birth of a King

On Monday, 5 December, 1927 at 8:45 in the morning a rather wonderful thing happened in Massachusetts, U.S.A....

If you had *happened* to be in the Fiske Building at Mt. Auburn Hospital (formerly Cambridge Hospital), Cambridge, Massachusetts that morning, you might not have realized this, of course. Dr. W. Stewart Whittemore, an experienced doctor, was there at the time, assisting in the birth of a new life, a wonderful event on any occasion. No doubt, Dr. Whittemore and his nurses would have been as surprised as anyone else in the building had they been informed that they had brought into the world the only monarch ever to have been born in the United States of America. The good doctor stood there that chilly Monday morning watching the assisting nurse wash the newborn baby boy and place him on the breast of his smiling mother, Mrs. Sangwan Songkla.

The cherubic infant gave no trouble to his nurses. Over the 21 days of his residence at Mt. Auburn, his nurses Mesdames Leighton, Fay, Weldon and Harrington, remember the baby as a “quiet little thing” who caused them no trouble. Known affectionately by the four busy nurses who



KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
Birth of a King



*Their Majesties with Dr. W. Stewart Whittemore,
the doctor who delivered His Majesty, 1960.*



*Their Majesties at Mt. Auburn Hospital in 1960,
pictured with the staff who assisted at His Majesty's birth.*



*His Royal Highness Prince Mahidol
of Songkla.*



The Princess Mother.

took care of his daily needs as **Baby Songkla**, he was the third child of H.R.H. Prince Mahidol of Songkla, a member of the Thai, then called Siamese, Royal Family. At the time, the prince was attending Harvard Medical School. While not in direct line to the throne, the baby boy was auspiciously named at birth *Phra Vorawongse Ther Phra Ong Chao*, His Highness Prince Bhumibol Aduldej¹ (**Bhumibol** means **Strength of the Land**), a name that perhaps hinted at the significance he was to have for ordinary Thai people eighteen years later, when in June 1946 he would succeed to the throne of Thailand as His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Rama IX.

¹ *Later the spelling was changed to "Adulyadej".*



The nurses would have been unable to foresee that the child would become the only reigning monarch ever to win a gold medal — or any medal for that matter — at an international sporting event. This was a medal for sailing in the 4th Southeast Asian Peninsular Games (SEAP Games). Nor could they have guessed that King Bhumibol would be chosen as an honorary member of the Academy for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, the Republic of Austria, on 5 October, 1964. He was the 23rd member — Yehudi Menuhin, the famous violinist, is another — and the first Asian ever to be so honoured for his music. His composition, *Blue Night*,¹ had

The Princess Mother with her children, from left, King Ananda, King Bhumibol and Princess Galyani, photographed in Lausanne, Switzerland, 1928.

¹ His Majesty had named it *Blue Day*, but it was changed by Mike Todd for the production of *Peep Show*, October 1973.



King Ananda Mahidol, Rama VIII (left), with King Bhumibol.



already been featured in a 1950 Broadway production of *Peep Show*. Royal biographers have highlighted His Majesty the King's interest in jazz. Coincidentally, cool jazz saxophonist, Stan Getz, was born in the same year as His Majesty.

And they certainly would not have imagined that the baby sleeping peacefully in his cot would join the ranks of inventors and scientists, becoming in 1993 the world's first reigning monarch to apply for, and be granted, a patent for his own invention. The invention was a simple one, a buoy-type, low-speed air jet which is an aerator used to add oxygen to ponds and other still waters, and one that has contributed much over the years to the improvement of the environment wherever it has been used. In doing this His Majesty showed to the world that a monarch can be practical in his approach to national development. He also showed to the ordinary people of his country that in all of his waking thoughts and actions, their monarch was thinking of them and how to improve their lives and conditions.

If you happen to take a stroll along the leafy streets of Cambridge, Massachusetts and walk around a certain corner, you might be surprised to enter King Bhumibol Adulyadej Square. The naming of this square reflects the pride that the town takes in its status as the only place in the U.S.A. to have had a king born in its midst. There has always been a keen interest in His Majesty's activities. The campaign to



*H.R.H. Princess Chulabhorn
at the inauguration of
King Bhumibol Adulyadej
Square, 8 April 1990.*

commemorate the royal association with the town bore fruit with the inauguration, by His Majesty's youngest daughter, H.R.H. Princess Chulabhorn, in April 1990 of the square which commemorates his birthplace.



Interior of the Central Throne Hall of the Chakri Maha Prasat, the Phuttanthom Throne, made of wood and silver, covered with gold foil. A nine-tiered symbolic umbrella (or chakra) stands over the throne, depicting royalty. The emblem of the Royal House of Chakri is portrayed on the wall behind the throne.



The Royal House of Chakri

The Royal House of Chakri is a family line that has remained unbroken since 1782, the year of the founding of Bangkok as the capital of what was then Siam, following the destruction of the previous capital of Ayutthaya in 1767. On Saturday, 2 July, 1988 his loyal subjects celebrated King Bhumibol's marvellous achievement of being Thailand's longest reigning monarch ever. One year later His Majesty also became the world's longest reigning, living monarch following the passing away of H.S.H. Prince Franz Joseph II of Liechtenstein.¹ H.S.H. Prince Rainier III of Monaco, who ascended the throne in 1949, remains a close second. In 1996, the 50th anniversary of his accession to the throne, King Bhumibol's reign was set to take its place among other well known, long reigning monarchs of history — Britain's Queen Victoria, who reigned for 64 years, and Emperor Hirohito of Japan, who reigned for 62 years.

¹ 13 November, 1989.



His Majesty has always been visiting villages in impoverished areas since the beginning of his reign.

While eschewing a political role himself, King Bhumibol has established his role both as a statesman and as a unifying figure in a country often afflicted by political confusion. This has been an extremely arduous task, but His Majesty has always relied on hard work, rather than wealth, power and position, to gain the respect of others. Willing to play whatever role his subjects felt suitable for him, he has turned towards the people who needed him the most: the poor, the uneducated, the sick. This has affected not only the nation's development, but indirectly its political colour.



Beloved by his people and perhaps the world's hardest working monarch, King Bhumibol has actively pursued many interests as a sportsman and artist while balancing his civic and royal duties. Not content to play the role of a figurehead, His Majesty has assisted national development through the alleviation of poverty and the improvement of the quality of life of his people. Unafraid of getting his boots dirty he has tramped over many a hill in the isolated areas of Thailand to meet excited subjects waiting to show off their new coffee shrub, peach tree or asparagus to him. An observer cannot help but be struck by his style of getting things done by taking the initiative. This does not merely mean issuing an order to one of his subjects to draw up a plan or getting projects implemented by someone else. It is often His Majesty's own funds that are used. Every project is planned thoroughly before any advice or assistance is offered. Who would believe that the decorative moat and iron-railed fence surrounding the royal residence in Bangkok, Chitralada Villa, shield a fully-operational experimental farm with rice fields, cows, and laboratories?

Whereas the succession of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej to the throne could not have been foreseen, he was not altogether unprepared for the job at hand. Leadership was in the family blood. His father, Prince Mahidol of Songkla, was, after all, the son of a king, as was his father before him.¹

¹ See Appendices.



The line of the Chakri kings may be traced back to the founder of the city, an Ayutthaya-born, army general named *Thong Duang*. Moving swiftly up the ranks, he had become a field commander of King Taksin of Thon Buri (1767-1782) and is recorded to have fought eleven military campaigns before being given the title of *Chao Phraya Chakri*, the equivalent of a modern Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. When this famed military leader accepted the throne following a political crisis in 1782, the title Chakri was applied to the family line and remains the name of the Royal House to which the present sovereign belongs.

*“Chao Phraya Chakri”
who became King Rama I,
detail of a fresco on the
ceiling of the marble
Anantasamakom Throne
Hall.*



King Rama I.

The first king of the Royal House of Chakri, commonly referred to as King Rama I, was already 46 years old and a six-year veteran of the ongoing wars with Burma (Myanmar) and with rebellious provinces in the kingdom. Imbued with a deep sense of Thai tradition, he had perceived that a strong sense of nationalism was needed by the people to pull them together after many years of division and turmoil. His ambition was literally to rebuild his beloved Ayutthaya at a new site called *Krung Thep*, the City of Angels. Visitors to *Krung Thep*, now more familiar to foreigners as Bangkok,



will discover that many of the oldest temples and palace buildings have namesakes in the ancient capital of Ayutthaya, a little further to the north of Bangkok.

Although his predecessor, King Taksin, had established a new capital at Thon Buri, across the west bank of the Chao Phraya River, the first ruler of the Royal House of Chakri decided in 1782 that this site, as a capital, would be difficult to defend. He thus established a new centre on the opposite bank of the river, at a spot where the Grand Palace now stands. The capital expanded far beyond its walls and again took on the cosmopolitan air of the great city of Ayutthaya.¹ Ships from around the world sailed into its harbour and traders from the East and West met there to conduct their business. It became an important and sophisticated city at the crossroads of trade with the Far East.

By the end of the 18th century, Siam under King Rama I was becoming a stable kingdom, prospering as a result of the trade with China. The kingdom consisted of many centres of power, some more subservient to Bangkok than others. His son, taken along by his father, the king, on his various campaigns, had virtually grown up on the battlefields of Thailand. When King Rama I

¹ *It is believed that Ayutthaya in the seventeenth century had a cosmopolitan population of two million, making it larger than the London or Paris of the time.*



“Krung Thep, the City of Angels.”

passed away in 1809, he was succeeded to the throne by his eldest son, Prince Isarasunthon. King Rama II was then 41 years old.

Times have indeed changed in the intervening 200 years, making it difficult to imagine a characteristic connection with the present monarch. Initially, one imagines these two kingly warriors, Rama I and Rama II, battling against continued incursions into their lands — their minds hardened to death and mass destruction, although the reign of



King Rama II.

Rama II was relatively peaceful compared with that of his father's. It is even more intriguing to find that both kings were accomplished poets. The period of King Rama I heralded in a renaissance of Thai culture and the arts and the king himself rewrote two of the classics of Thai literature, the verse form *Ramakien* and *Inao*, which had been feared lost in the destruction of the old capital. His son, King Rama II, was perhaps a keener poet and enjoyed the company of other literati. One of the best-known of these was *Sunthon Phu*, commemorated by UNESCO in 1986-1987 as one of the world's great poets.



Indeed, it appears that this blend of warrior-artist is the enigma of the Chakri line. The sharp-edged image of battle-hardened warrior is softened and rounded by traits which one finds delightfully unexpected. The current monarch, while studious and intent on developing his country and creating unity among his people, is also an accomplished artist, musician, photographer, and yachtsman. He is also the person once idiomatically described as “the coolest king in the land.”¹ While times have certainly changed since the days when uprisings and revolts were a regular occurrence, the Royal House of Chakri is still keeping up with its tradition of producing monarchs who cannot be typecast.



Sunthon Phu (1786-1855), one of the world's great poets.

¹ Lionel Hampton, quoted by Harry Rolnick in *Sawasdee* magazine, March, 1987.



*The Princess Mother and her third child,
King Bhumibol, Rama IX.*



Developing Wisdom



The Princess Mother as a teenager.

The most stalwart influence in the young Prince Bhumibol's early life was his mother, who unfortunately passed away on 18 July, 1995. This remarkable woman, born at the turn of the century, was no stranger to personal loss, having been orphaned at the age of nine. The daughter of a goldsmith, in a family which did not encourage the open expression of feelings, we know from the memoirs of her daughter¹ that she was quiet and yet thoughtful. When her parents passed away, she moved first to live with an aunt in a royal palace and next to the home of a high-ranking government official, moves which must have prepared her somewhat for the philosophical life of the traveller.

As a child she was a thoughtful, practical girl. She chose to study nursing at the early age of thirteen. In just three years, she had graduated in 1916 as a midwife, the youngest of her class, from Siriraj Hospital. By this time, the First World War was raging and Miss Sangwan Talapat was granted a royal scholarship to the United States by Queen Savang Vadhana, the mother of her future husband.

¹ Galyani Vadhana, H.R.H. Princess, *Mae Lao Hai Fang, (Mother Told Me)*, Bangkok : Ministry of Education, 1982.



*The Princess Mother
(third from left) and
her friends in Berkeley,
California.*

She set out by sea toward the end of August 1917 and headed for the west coast of America. She stayed in Berkeley, California for almost a year and spent another year with the “Strong” family in Hartford, Connecticut studying English before entering Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts. She tasted the life there in all its aspects, even attending a Methodist Church and Sunday school. She enjoyed reading biblical stories and later when she travelled across to Boston, Massachusetts by train to stay first with another family (Williston), and then to enter Simmons College, she began to attend a Congregational Church. Mindful of her Thai upbringing, her interest in Buddhism was aroused and she was to devote much time later to its study.

While studying Nursing and Economics at Simmons, the now beautiful nursing student fell in love with H.R.H. Prince



*(left) The Princess Mother
in London after marriage.
(right) H.R.H. Prince
Mahidol.*

Mahidol. A graduate of Harrow School in England, holding the rank and bearing of a lieutenant in both the Royal Thai Navy and the Imperial German Navy, he had enrolled at Harvard University in 1916 with the intention of becoming a doctor, to which end he had resigned his commission in the Thai Navy and received permission to go to America. After a two-year courtship, the deep love they felt for each other blossomed into a proposal of marriage. The excited couple were given wholehearted permission to wed by the prince's half-brother, King Vajiravudh, the reigning monarch. They sailed to Thailand in 1920, Prince Mahidol having completed the requirements for a Certificate of Public Health at Harvard, and were married at Sapathum Palace. It was



*The Princess Mother
with her children,
Princess Galyani
Vadhana (right) and
King Ananda Mahidol.*

also to serve as the venue for the wedding of King Bhumibol many years later. Upon marriage to a prince of royal blood, the young bride was given the title of *Mom*.

The newlyweds were never in one place for too long and it was to be three years before they were settled enough to begin a family. One May Sunday in 1923 in London, the happy couple were given a delightful gift with the birth of their first child, Her Serene Highness Princess Galyani Vadhana. Two years later, again on a Sunday, they were blessed by the birth of a son, His Serene Highness Prince Ananda Mahidol, while in Heidelberg, Germany.

Another two years were to pass before the family returned to the United States.



They moved into Longwood Avenue, Brookline, where their third child, His Highness Prince Bhumibol Aduldej was born in 1927. Following the graduation of Prince Mahidol as a doctor of Medicine, cum laude, in 1928, the family moved back to Thailand. Dr. Mahidol took up a resident post at the McCormick Hospital in Chiang Mai, which was the target he had set for himself several years earlier. Unfortunately, the already frail doctor knew that he was dying of kidney disease even as he saved the lives of others. His untimely demise in 1929 left his wife as head of a family of three children, just two years after the birth of their third child.

One can only contemplate the tremendous emotional impact her husband's sudden death would have had on the twenty-nine year old Mom Sangwan. It must have been an arduous task to bring up the children in Switzerland and later to have the responsibility of being the mother of two kings. The wisdom she gained over the years held her in good stead and her legacy continues in the words and deeds of her sons and daughter.

Switzerland's verdant green meadows and blue lakes are relaxing to the eye. A sense of peace pervades each rolling hill and valley, the fresh, crisp air clearing the head and sharpening the brain. Young Prince Bhumibol's family resided in Switzerland from 1933 onwards.



His Majesty's thirst for knowledge, like his parents', has become almost legendary. His former teacher, Mother Marie Xavier, at Mater Dei, a Catholic school in Bangkok where the prince had studied briefly, noted that Prince Bhumibol had an exceptional gift for music and showed a keen interest and understanding for everything around him. The Prince on one occasion desired an electric train and so set about making one himself where other lads would have rushed down to the toy store. He gathered odds and ends from around the home, coat hangers and bits of wire and was able to put together a toy train, even laboriously winding copper wire around a magnetic core to make his own electric motor. This patience and dedication to the job at hand became His Majesty's most clearly defined character traits, reflected in his dedication to the poor in later life.

After the family arrived in Switzerland, the Prince was duly enrolled in the Miremont elementary school at Lausanne in southwestern Switzerland until 1935, when he moved to a nearby secondary boarding school called Ecole Nouvelle de la Suisse Romande at Chailly as a day student. Bordering the crescent-shaped Lac Léman, more famous, perhaps, as Lake Geneva, Lausanne rests on the southern slope of Mount Jorat and is home to a 13th century castle, a bishop's palace and a cathedral. A relatively quiet town by European



The royal brothers going on an outing in Lausanne.

standards, it was home to small-scale manufacturing industries — beer, chemicals, clothes, leather, radio, wine and wood-working.

While His Majesty was attending school in 1935, King Prajadhipok, Rama VII had taken the unprecedented step of abdicating on 2 March whilst at his residence in England.

Although King Rama VII had officially declined the right to name his successor, it was rumoured in 1935 that he had suggested young Prince Ananda, Prince Bhumibol's elder brother, as heir apparent. The abdication now meant that Chao Phraya Woraphongphiphat, the Court Minister, was directly responsible for finding a suitable heir to the throne. He presented a list of



*His Majesty King
Ananda Mahidol,
Rama VIII, aged nine.*

possibilities to Prince Naris, the Regent during the period of King Rama VII's residence in the United Kingdom, and His Royal Highness Prince Ananda Mahidol duly succeeded to the throne as the eighth king of the Royal House of Chakri.

At that time young Prince Ananda, the future King Rama VIII, was still a student in Switzerland. His mother wisely decided that he should stay and complete his studies, while a Council of Regents was appointed in Thailand to represent him. The family then found it necessary to move



out of their modest flat in Tissot Road and rent larger accommodation in Pully, a small town near Lausanne.

The family rented a three-storey building for use as a royal residence. Called the *Villa Vadhana*, it was indeed conducive to rest and study after a very fragile period in the life of the Royal Family. The nearby Lake Geneva was a particularly attractive backdrop. The villa rested on about 32,000 square metres of land. Standing at attention at the end were some pine trees followed by a small orchard and a little vegetable garden that the green-fingered Princess Mother had



"Villa Vadhana."



planted herself to supplement their diet. This last point is one worth keeping in mind when one reads of His Majesty's careful introduction of much the same idea to the poor of Thailand throughout his reign.

In the cold Swiss winters, their mother took the children to Arosa for some skiing. Looking at pictures of the boys laughing and slip-sliding around on the snow and ice, we are fortunate today that a photographic record was kept by the Princess Mother herself as there were few, if any, official pictures taken in Lausanne. Between 1937 to 1938, Prince Bhumibol became extremely close to King Ananda. The Princess Mother always appeared pleased when they had time together during school vacations so that the boys could play together.

During their first visit as a family in 1938 to their historical home in Thailand, King Ananda bestowed upon his mother the rank of *Somdech Phra Rajajonani Sri Sangwalya*, or *Her Royal Highness Princess Sri Sangwalya the Princess Mother*. Unfortunately, a second trip to their motherland did not take place until December, 1945. King Ananda died on 9 June, 1946 and the crown



The royal brothers enjoyed skiing and other winter sports. This photograph was taken at Arosa in 1939.



King Ananda Mahidol and his younger brother returning to Thailand in 1945.

passed to his younger brother, Prince Bhumibol.



*KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
Dream of Love*





Dream of Love

Fontainebleau, the sixteenth-century former palace of King Francis I, situated thirty-seven miles southwest of Paris, has been the site of many noble, perhaps even romantic episodes throughout its long history. In 1947, a chance meeting there with the daughter of His Serene Highness Prince Nakkhatra Mangala Kitiyakara, the Thai Ambassador to Paris, was to have the most profound effect on King Bhumibol.



A sweet and unassuming young lady of fifteen, Mom Rajawongse¹ Sirikit Kitiyakara was in Paris studying music and French. As a second cousin to the monarch, it may not have been unusual for her to have been presented while His Majesty was in Paris. However, no one could have foreseen that this lively, diplomat's daughter would so quickly and completely capture the heart of the Thai king. Both were undoubtedly in the grip of what is to every young couple a

¹ Mom Rajawongse, usually abbreviated as M.R., signifies that the person is a greatgrandchild of a king, though not a prince or princess. In Thailand, each successive generation of the royal family drops down one rank in the royal hierarchy until the fifth generation, who are born commoners.



new and exciting experience, which M.R. Sirikit expressed in so many words herself. Their mutual love of music was one common pursuit and a natural form of expression in such cases since time immemorial. A composer himself, the monarch did not find it difficult to write a romantic tune and it was around this time in his life that His Majesty composed a waltz — *Dream of Love* *Dream of You* — that includes lyrics perhaps reflecting the feelings of most people in love:

*Each day, I dream of love, I dream of you.
You're like an angel, dear,
For heaven sends you here.*

Yet their courtship almost came to a dramatic end before it could really begin. On Monday, 4 October, 1948, a small roadster came roaring along a road at Morges on the way to Geneva. Crouched behind the wheel,

*His Majesty the King
taking a ride with
Her Majesty the Queen
when she was still
M.R. Sirikit.*



*Their Majesties in
Switzerland.*

the driver was unable to foresee that the truck in front would stop to avoid hitting two cyclists on the road. Slamming on the brakes suddenly did little to help and with a sickening screech the car

slammed into the back of the truck. The driver, King Bhumibol, badly injured his right eye and his passenger, brother-in-law Aram Rattanakul, suffered a fractured skull. News reports flashed around the world, and when they reached Thailand, thousands began to hang on to every word of every news report to hear of the king's condition. Being so far away, they had no real idea of how serious it was or was not. Like most people around the world on occasions like this, they feared the worst.

Upon hearing of the accident, Mom Luang Bua Kitiyakara hurriedly called her two daughters, M.R. Sirikit and her younger sister M.R. Bushba, to her and tried calmly to inform her eldest daughter of the news as best she could. They soon arrived to help take care of their sovereign. Although the damage was serious, it was not to prove life-threatening. Eye specialists in Geneva worked hard to save His Majesty's sight and when the patient saw who his volunteer nurse was, the recovery came quickly



Their Majesties prior to the royal engagement.

afterwards. Recovery was to take some time and King Bhumibol's mother requested that M.R. Sirikit be kind enough to stay on when her own mother returned home. This was one of those times when family friends could be asked to pitch in. M.R. Sirikit was enrolled at the Pensionnat Riante Rive Boarding School in Lausanne and given special permission to leave school every afternoon for tea with King Bhumibol at Villa Vadhana.



Their Majesties giving an audience on a balcony of Villa Vadhana to foreign correspondents.

On Friday, 12 August, 1949, at the Royal Thai Embassy in London on the occasion of M.R. Sirikit's seventeenth birthday, a very special party had been planned. It was the

summer holidays. Both His Majesty and M.R. Sirikit would be able to gather their friends to announce their engagement.

News of the engagement caused a sensation. The whole of Thailand held its breath waiting for the promised return and wedding of their gifted king and his beautiful bride-to-be. The latter was quite unsure of how to react.

"I'm still too young and have never been in love before", were the only words she could think of to reply to the numerous questions, then she hesitantly added, *"it also excites me..."*



KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
Return to Thailand





Return to Thailand



His Majesty entering the Gulf of Thailand on board H.T.M.S. Sri Ayudhya.

It was March, 1950 and the white-hulled East Asiatic Company steamship *Selandia* was puffing its way through the Red Sea on its journey to the Far East. A studious, relaxed young man with round-rimmed spectacles stood at its rail near a vivacious, dark-haired beauty, looking at the passing scenery. The young King of Thailand and his seventeen-year-old fiancée were enjoying the cruise as they made the journey back to their country and future home. The month before they had left Lausanne by train for the French town of Villefranche, and from there to take a ship to pastures that, whilst not new, were still not familiar. At their departure, the smiles that the young couple exchanged as they boarded the *Selandia* were perhaps thoughtful also — they were, after all, not merely returning to be married, they were returning to an unknown future and the heavy burden of monarchical responsibility.

As the rocky walls of the Suez Canal slid past the ship's rail, any apprehensions that the couple felt were probably subdued by the beauty of the voyage scenery. Passing El Quesir and the Arabian Desert down to Port Sudan, the ship sailed through the Bab el Mandeb and out into the Gulf of Aden for the crossing to and around Singapore. From



there, it was a short journey up the east coast of the Malay Peninsula to the mouth of the Chao Phraya River, the river upon which Bangkok stands.

His Majesty and his fiancée on the deck of the "Selandia".

The Thai warship H.T.M.S. *Sri Ayudhya* was waiting at the mouth of the Chao Phraya River. The *Selandia's* royal passengers were then transferred by P.T. boat. In the early morning of 25 March, 1950, thousands upon thousands of Thais lined the river banks and paddled sampans for a glimpse of their king, as if to welcome home a hero. Every square inch of anchored boat space, every jetty and river bank was filled with vibrancy. At 3:00 p.m. a jetty at the Memorial Bridge collapsed and its occupants took an early bath, all in good spirits. Thousands of flashing smiles broadened as the launch came into view.



Their beloved monarch had returned and with a veritable beauty as his fiancée! High above, three small aeroplanes flew about, as the king stepped ashore, and sprayed popped rice — a very propitious and ancient custom, but rarely from an aeroplane — over the crowds, as if substituting for a New York ticker-tape parade.

For the young king, this journey was in part a vindication of his reply to a man in a crowd four years previously.

In 1946, inheriting the crown on the death of his elder brother, King Ananda Mahidol, from a mysterious gunshot on the morning of 9 June, Prince Bhumibol, the heir apparent, had made the decision to complete his university education first. The subject of his studies was changed from his much-beloved science to a more practical programme of law and political science, in view of his future responsibilities. His revered uncle, Prince Rangsit of Jainad, by then the last surviving son of King Chulalongkorn, was appointed Prince Regent on 16 June, 1946 and was to serve in that capacity until the young king's coronation in 1950.

His Majesty's car was slowly making its way to the airport through a packed crowd of well-wishers eager to catch a glimpse of their new monarch, having heard that he was to leave the kingdom again to continue his studies at the University of Lausanne. From out of the mass of human bodies



crowded around his vehicle a lone voice caught the attention of the young king as he sat gazing out at his subjects.

“Don’t forsake the people, Your Majesty!”

The voice prompted what was to be an almost legendary but silent reply from within the car:

“If the people do not forsake me, how can I forsake them?”

That must have been quite an extraordinary moment for the young king who could not have expected that plea, containing as it did much of the people’s hopes and aspirations for their young sovereign. Those words shouted out from a crowd affirmed the Thai people’s love for and trust in their monarchy. The reply, as

The royal motorcade is engulfed by crowds as it makes its way to the airport, where His Majesty would fly back to Switzerland to continue his studies.



always from His Majesty, was concise and to the point; he would certainly return when the time came.

The morning following His Majesty's arrival he offered alms, in the form of food, to a chapter of monks. He then proceeded to the Chapel Royal¹ of the Emerald Buddha at the Grand Palace to receive a blessing. The way to the Chapel Royal, the only temple in Thailand with no resident monks, was lined with nobles and officers. The men wore the white suits used at royal ceremonial occasions by officials. A group of noblewomen stood in a square behind the altar, separated from the men by a symbolic fence broached by a small gap. Three Brahmins followed the king into the temple, as royal ceremonies are usually a blend of ancient Hindu ritual together with Buddhist teaching. A small table topped by incense pots and candles was set up for the Brahmin. At a signal, they blew conch shells in a thin, wailing blast. The king knelt to offer his deep respect to the symbol of his country's religious beliefs, the Emerald Buddha, lighting candles before the image.

The chanting Brahmins lit fifteen candles after him and passed them clockwise through the gap in the fence, with a dramatic drum roll after each successful circuit of the room. After all had gone around three times, they were passed back to the Brahmins.

¹ *The Chapel Royal is commonly referred to as the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.*



Their Majesties making an offering to Queen Savang Vadhana, His Majesty's grandmother.

During this period, M.R. Sirikit stayed at Deves mansion, her father's home, until the day of her wedding. The Royal Wedding Ceremony itself was simple, held at Sapathum Palace at 10:24 a.m. on Friday, 28 April, 1950, presided over by the king's grandmother, the Dowager Queen Savang Vadhana, who anointed their foreheads with three spots of paste perfumed with sandalwood. His Majesty the King bestowed upon his bride with royal decorations and regalia. The royal couple consisted of family and close friends, then proceeded to receive their select group of wedding guests, who came to offer their congratulations. The royal wedding was complete when His Majesty the King and M.R. Sirikit duly signed the wedding registration. His Majesty then announced a royal proclamation establishing M.R. Sirikit as Her Majesty Queen Sirikit. Wedding gifts were





Their Majesties on their wedding day at the Chitralada Villa.



presented, among them were those laid out for the happy couple to admire. President Truman and his wife, for instance, sent a radio-record player and their best wishes. King George VI of Great Britain and Queen Elizabeth, the late Queen Mother, sent some Worcester porcelain and their regrets for not being able to attend. His Majesty followed another family tradition in presenting each of his guests with a souvenir of the occasion, a small cigarette box engraved with the royal insignia *Phor Or*, His Majesty's initials in the Thai language, together with the initials of M.R. Sirikit Kitiyakara, *Sor Kor*.

The next morning, the royal couple left Bangkok by train for a private stay at Klai Kangwol (Sans Souci) Palace, Hua Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, as was traditional.



KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
The Coronation



His Majesty pouring holy water into a chalice, one of the many symbolic rites performed during the coronation ceremony.



The Coronation

Although the king succeeded to the throne in June 1946, his coronation did not take place until Friday, 5 May, 1950, one week after his marriage, when he was 22 years of age. The festivities began in the morning, with a ceremonial bath inside the courtyard of the Amarindra Hall at the Grand Palace. His Majesty was dressed in a white robe and sat facing east. Sacred water was poured over his shoulders. The court astrologer struck the Gong of Victory and a military band played the Royal Anthem.¹

His Majesty put on his full Coronation Robes, symbolizing a divine being. With full regal authority, he graciously consented to an audience in the reception hall for representatives of the government and members of the National Assembly. They paid homage to him and offered holy water from eight compass points of the country, asking him if he desired to be their king. Two officers then knelt to offer the water of the sky and the earth from two silver bowls while the chief Brahmin presented a nine-tiered umbrella as the first symbol of sovereignty.

¹ *Phleng Sansoen Phra Barami in Thai.*



His Majesty the King seated on the octagonal throne during his coronation.

The white-robed, chanting Brahmins then invited the Hindu gods to join the festivities and to bear witness to the coronation. Pages wearing uniforms that date back centuries brought in the 26 items of royal regalia, symbols of the king's power.

Seated on Bhatharabit Throne beneath a nine-tiered White Umbrella of State, His Majesty placed the gold crown, mounted with several diamonds and other precious stones and weighing 7.3 kilogrammes, on his own head. With fanfares and drum rolls, the chief Brahmin placed in his hands the royal regalia. At the end of this part of the ceremony, 221 cannon shots were fired and all the bells in the nation's temples were struck simultaneously to signify the official assumption of the throne. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej then uttered his first royal words:



His Majesty giving a grand audience at the Amarindra Winichaya Throne Hall on the day of his coronation.

“We shall reign with righteousness for the benefits and happiness of the Siamese people.”

The coronation ceremony was followed by an official audience in the afternoon of the same day for diplomats and high-ranking officials. Official audiences in Thailand are interesting since the monarch will never be seen mounting the throne. For hundreds of years, this spectacle has been viewed by a handful of foreigners — usually the representatives of foreign monarchs. His

Majesty the King sits behind a gold-embroidered brocade curtain, invisible to the eyes of his visitors. When everyone has gathered, the curtain is slowly drawn back to reveal His Majesty the King in all his resplendent garments. The audience ends by the simple method of closing the curtain again.

By the time that memorable Friday had drawn to a close the king had completed two more ceremonies. One was to elevate the Queen to be Her Majesty Queen Sirikit. In Thailand this is not an automatic right. The idea of “queenship” as such was only about eighty years old, having been introduced by His Majesty’s grandfather, King Chulalongkorn the Great. The term was first recorded in reference to that king’s beloved wife, Queen Sunantha.



The bride of only eight days knelt in front of her husband and a court official read out the royal decree elevating her to the title *Somdech Phra Nang Chao (Sirikit) Phra Baromma Rajini*, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit. His Majesty the King presented her with royal regalia and poured lustral water on her head. Now they were tied by a special, unbreakable bond.

For the final ceremony of that day His Majesty the King was borne on a royal palanquin to the Chapel Royal of the Emerald Buddha accompanied by officials and soldiers in ceremonial uniforms. He himself wore traditional royal robes, with a leather hat and Persian-style buckled leather shoes. In the Chapel, the Supreme Patriarch, the head of the Buddhist clergy, read the five precepts. His Majesty subsequently took a vow to protect the religion as Patron of Buddhism and, indeed, of all religions in the land.



His Majesty in full traditional royal attire upon a royal palanquin on his way to the Chapel Royal during the coronation.



His Majesty conferring the title of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit on his royal consort.



Their Majesties the King and Queen giving a public audience from a palace balcony after the coronation.



More ceremonies were held on Saturday for a smaller group of palace officials. On Sunday the 7th, Their Majesties the King and Queen granted an audience to ambassadors and their spouses and staff so that they could receive the congratulations of the Dean of the diplomatic corps. During the afternoon of that Sunday, delegations of foreigners, including representatives of different churches and religions, presented their congratulations to Their Majesties. Later, Their Majesties appeared on a balcony of the Sutthaisawan Prasat Throne Hall to a thrilling reception by the eagerly-awaiting crowds, thousands strong.

With this last custom, the reply of the youthful king to the words of a young subject in 1946 was at last vindicated. He had not forsaken his people and had returned to reign over them with righteousness and love.



KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
A Modern Monarch



His Majesty in full traditional royal attire.



A Modern Monarch

His Majesty had returned to Thailand, to the excitement of the populace, for that official coronation as king on 5 May, 1950, amid a blaze of regal pomp and splendour. It was four years after he had succeeded to the throne. The time had now arrived for the young king to define his new role as a constitutional monarch. He wasted no time in throwing himself into the work energetically and free of any self-consciousness. He had vowed to himself not to forsake the people when he returned to continue his studies in Switzerland in 1946, and had kept his word. It was now time to address the faith the people held in him.

The dilemma for the new monarch became a question of how best to serve the people when he lacked both government resources and many of the absolute powers that his royal predecessors could have wielded to produce the results they desired. On the other side of the world, King Baudouin of the Belgians was faced with much the same question when his father, King Leopold III, abdicated. In the face of cultural and economic diversity and the austerity of the post-war years both chose to pay more attention to the people rather than to politics, and to trust in their own integrity.

Accepting the role of a constitutional monarch, His Majesty was the first to



acknowledge that his elder brother, King Ananda Mahidol, contributed much to his own concept of a modern monarchy: a monarchy more in touch with the people than had been the case in the past.

“The eighth reign, my brother, had no time to do so many things — during and after World War II, a difficult time. But he set up, perhaps without knowing, the new kingship. The people had somebody to look on as a symbol. When he died he was 20, a young man with a good future. A new thing, because in the past kings were perhaps more sheltered. He was like raising a flag. But he also was cut short.”¹

The late King Ananda and his disarmingly friendly, down-to-earth manner had brought, for an all-too-brief period, a sense of hope to the people that a new age was dawning. Described in August 1946 by Alexander MacDonald, the founder of the *Bangkok Post*, as having finely-chiseled features “though taut with strain,”² the youthful twenty-one-year-old king expressed genuine interest in his subjects. On one memorable occasion, King Ananda, accompanied by his younger brother, Prince

¹ “Thailand’s Working Royalty,” *National Geographic*, October 1982, pp. 486-533. The word “also” here refers to His Majesty’s uncle, King Rama VII, who, His Majesty felt, had been cut short before implementing democratic reform.

² Alexander MacDonald, 1949.



King Ananda, accompanied by his younger brother, Prince Bhumibol, took a stroll through Yaowarat, the Chinatown of old Bangkok.

Bhumibol, took a stroll through Yaowarat, the Chinatown of old Bangkok. The Yaowarat Chinese enthusiastically welcomed this sign that the monarch regarded them as equal citizens of the Thai community. This went a great way to easing the racial tensions that had arisen during and after the war. They went to great lengths to prove their loyalty to the throne, with people even brushing away the dust from the streets in the king's path and offering food and drink to the two very hot and exuberant royal visitors. Though King Ananda was noticeably shy on formal occasions — remembering the relative informality of his childhood — he was never averse to visiting his subjects outside the palace to see what they were doing and to hear their



opinions and grievances. His younger brother remained close at his side, an objective observer and silent student.

For His Majesty King Bhumibol, the fifties were a period of adjustment to this new role and his growing enthusiasm for the work to which he was soon to dedicate his life. His return to Thailand at this time was not without a sense of caution, which His Majesty revealed in a letter to an American confidante, Francis B. Sayre.¹

*"I shall try not to get discouraged, although sometimes, I nearly got discouraged even in Switzerland... But I know I must hold on [to] what I think is the right thing to do, and I can assure you I shall try my best."*²

For a Thai monarch, the challenges faced in carrying out one's duties have, indeed, uniquely Thai characteristics and responsibilities different in many respects from the constitutional or legal roles given

¹ Sayre was a former influential adviser to King Vajiravudh and King Prajadhipok and a son-in-law of President Wilson, who came to Thailand to adjust territorial rights between the two countries. His integrity led to his employment by the Thai government in performing much the same duties on its behalf in Europe and he was eventually honoured with the title Phraya Kalayanamaitri. The road between the old Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense in Bangkok was named "Kalayanamaitri Road" in memory of his services to the kingdom.

² Letter from King Bhumibol to Francis B. Sayre, 21 March, 1950 from Joseph J. Wright, *The Balancing Act*.



to European monarchs. The Thai monarchy had for hundreds of years been absolutist in its government and semi-divine in its perception by the people. The idea of the semi-divinity of Thai monarchs developed gradually over the seven-hundred-year history of the country. It is doubtful whether the Thais viewed the 13th century Sukhothai rulers as divine. However, the basis for the great respect shown to Thai sovereigns was laid with the loving paternalistic nature ascribed to the great monarch of the period, Pho Khun Ramkhamhaeng.

Coupled with the filial sense of respect and gratitude shown to the Sukhothai rulers, the superstitions and mix of ancient religious beliefs from the fifteenth century onwards led to the glorification of warrior kings. Occult power was believed to be as much a part of military strategy in ancient Southeast Asia as good generalship. The occult and other superstitions were an integral part of Thai life and were seen as influencing human events. Hence, the ruler who was victorious was assumed to have had some sort of divine assistance. In the epic poem "*King Naresuan's Victory over the Burmese*,"¹ the near-legendary monarch, King Naresuan, who led his people to freedom from foreign occupation in the sixteenth century, is heard at one point to

¹ *In Thai, Lilit Taleng Phai, by His Holiness Prince Paramanuchitchinorot (1790-1853).*



call on the gods to witness his royal battle with the Burmese Crown Prince so that the victor might be honoured. This relationship between Thai rulers and divine recognition developed into an established part of the national consciousness.

At one point in the coronation, the chief Brahmin calls upon the Hindu gods to come to earth and to witness the young monarch's ascension to the throne. For the Thai people, the mysticism of the ceremony encapsulates their hopes for their leader to act with divine grace. He is not born of a Sun Goddess, as the Japanese Emperor is, and does not rule with the divine right of kings, as practised by absolutist European monarchs, but is rather a sovereign governed by clear moral rules of kingship. As former Prime Minister, the late M.R. Kukrit Pramoj explained:

*"The king must be both God and human. It is the burden of the king to consider where the dividing line between the two is. To be more God than human, or more human than God — the ratio must be correctly set. If the ratio is wrong a lot of damage could result."*¹

Outsiders have little understanding of the tremendous strain this can have on the monarch at times. It is really impossible to escape from the true state of conditions in the country and the people's eternal hope

¹ Vilas Manivat, *Kukrit Pramoj: His Wit and Wisdom, Writings, Speeches and Interviews.*



that the king can solve all their problems. His Majesty has had to stand alone for several reasons. For the king of Thailand every decision must be weighed carefully for its possible impact. As a monarch, he is duty-bound to avoid causing offence to the government, to his subjects or to foreigners in case it should reflect badly on the institution of the monarchy. Under the Constitution there is a sentence that says the king shall be enthroned in a position of revered worship and shall not be violated. No person shall expose the king to any sort of accusation or action. *“That’s the burden of being king,”* explains a senior member of his staff whose wish for anonymity has been respected.

“He is the first monarch really under the new system of democracy. That’s why all the burdens weigh very much upon him. I think it’s a very hard life — I don’t think it’s a very enjoyable life. He relaxes, but final decisions have to be made by him in all things. Even in small matters like the lettering in a telegram.”

As a monarch living under a democratic system, His Majesty naturally has duties and responsibilities defined under the constitution. He is the rightful Head of State and symbolic leader of the Thais. But the Thai king also has duties and responsibilities laid down by tradition evolved over the centuries and deep-seated beliefs. He must follow the tradition and



duty of caring for his people and providing them with a decent life. He cannot escape from this fact of kingship in Thailand.

Like every Thai monarch, His Majesty is guided by the Tenfold Moral Principles of the Sovereign,¹ ancient teachings dating from the same period as the Lord Buddha, about 2,500 years ago. These teachings serve to guide the monarch on the correct course to be taken by the leader of the country and by one who sets an example for all men. As the famous American writer Henry Miller said, "*The real leader has no need to lead — he is content to point the way.*"²

The **Ten Commandments of Kingship**, as His Majesty has called them, advise that a king should help those who need it when, where and how needed; that he needs to actively offer assistance in times of trouble, or to effectively relieve troubles and suffering, habits which are reflected in his lifelong commitment to the poor and underprivileged. In 1995, he focused on the effects of flooding on the poorest sections of the outskirts of Bangkok and brought the attention of the government to bear on its long-term solution. This came as no surprise to the Thai people, merely solidifying their trust in his compassion for them.

¹ See the interview in *Leaders* magazine, Volume 5, Number 2, April-June, 1982.

² Henry Miller.



He has reinvigorated the monarchy by taking an interest in the everyday needs of the populace. He changed his field of study in Switzerland from Engineering to Political Science and Law so that he could understand how to rule with justice and help his people in times of need.

A king should be a person of moral integrity, says the ancient scripture. He should be willing to sacrifice his private interests for the sake of the greater public interest; grasping the means to do right at all times. During the period of His Majesty's early childhood, the Princess Mother had instilled humanitarian principles, teaching him to give all his time to others. She would tax the royal children ten percent of their pocket money every week, putting the contribution into a box in the centre of their apartment. Then at the end of the month, she would gather all the children together to decide where the money would go: a foundation, a blind school or other charitable activities. All the time, His Majesty was trained to work for others, to sacrifice one part of what he had for the people. *"That's why when he got on the throne he started working immediately,"*¹ turning over a large area of his grounds at Chitralada Villa to researchers and long-term experiments in the fifties, giving land in Hua Hin District for the Hat

¹ *Interview with Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul, Secretary-General, Royal Development Projects Board, March, 1994.*



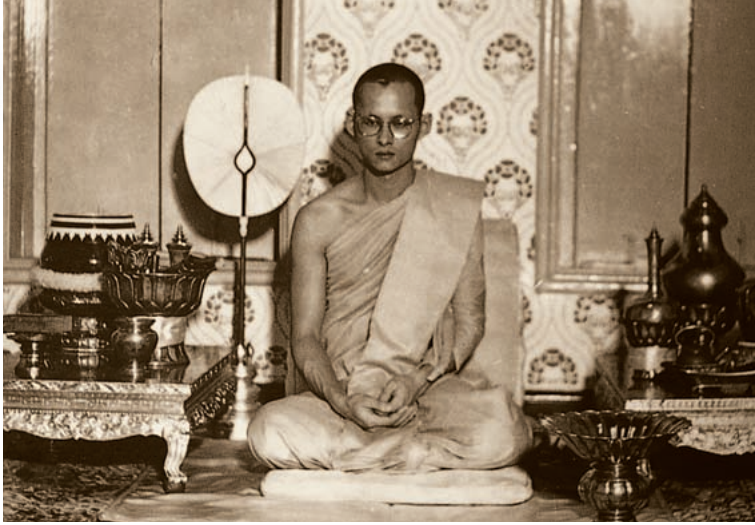
Sai Yai Farm in the mid-sixties and implementing a land reform programme in 1975 in which royal land was donated to landless peasants.

A king needs to be faithful to his ideals, sincere in working for the public and honest, while being modest and gentle; unassertive and pleasant of manner, refraining from anger or the display of displeasure, avoiding bothering others and promoting peace and non-violent action. His Majesty took an early interest in the practice of meditation following a period as a Buddhist monk in 1956.

Finally, a leader should be diligent and hard-working in all tasks, leading a simple life full of self-control; forbearing all; and not obstructing the will of the people. In Thailand's case democracy has been a long, hard road and more than anyone it has been the monarch who is looked to by people and the government alike for advice on important matters of national importance. The king's support for democracy has been wholehearted.

"We Thais need not follow any kind of foreign democracy and should try instead to create our own Thai style of democracy, for we have our own national culture and outlook and we are capable of following our own reasonings."¹

¹ Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary, *A Memoir of His Majesty King Bhumibol of Thailand*.



*His Majesty the King ordained into the
Buddhist monkhood, October, 1956.*



On a historical note, one may now look back on the far-reaching events of the democratic revolution of 1932 with a new insight into the evolution of the current reign and His Majesty's desire for a peaceful and democratic nation united in both spirit and deed. Few Thais would wonder at the fact that even this coup, which withdrew absolute power from the monarchy, never once considered any system other than a constitutional monarchy. Though the democratic revolution did not reach the hearts and minds of the people at large, the transfer of power came as a half-expected surprise to the incumbent monarch, King Rama VII, who had been leading the nation toward a gradual transfer of power himself. The king's words in his letter of abdication in 1935 mirror the thoughts of a democratically-minded monarch:

*King Rama VII
conferring the first
constitution.*



“I am willing to surrender the powers I formerly exercised to the people as a whole, but I am not willing to turn them over to any individual or any group to use in an autocratic manner without heeding the voice of the people.”¹

As in any democracy, national leaders have to keep pace with the times. His Majesty King Bhumibol enjoys a singular linguistic position among the world’s monarchs. Having grown up in Switzerland, His Majesty is fluent in French and German. However, obviously aware of trends around the world, it was His Majesty’s own initiative to learn English, not the least to keep up with information technology. His Majesty has a good grasp of the fundamentals of language because he understands phonetics and has used them to assist him in his private studies.

Today English is used as the second language of palace correspondence and His Majesty’s familiarity with it has developed to extraordinary levels. His Majesty is known to translate and write in his spare time, especially articles which he reads in foreign journals. Many of the most famous were completed during the mid-seventies and focused on different political views.

The year nineteen ninety-four saw the publication of His Majesty’s translation of William Stevenson’s book **A Man Called**

¹ Benjamin A. Batson, *Siam’s Political Future: Documents from the End of the Absolute Monarchy*.



"A Man Called Intrepid".



"Tito".

Intrepid¹ and in 1995 a biography of Marshal Tito² called **Tito** by Phyllis Auty. **A Man Called Intrepid** was chosen by the king for translation as it gives the reader an account of individual determination and low-key heroism by allied spies during the Second World War. Looked at another way, it is a glimpse of the power of unity, the unity of the allies, and the self sacrifice of individuals to create that unity. His Majesty also used part of the material in the book **Small Is Beautiful** by E.F. Schumacher for a Thai discourse on **Buddhist Economics**.

Mahajanaka is a story of one of the incarnations of Buddha mentioned in the **Tri Pitaka** (Suttantapitaka Khuddakanikaya Jataka volume four, part two). In 1977, after listening to a sermon by the Reverend Somdej Phra Mahavirawongs (Vin Dhammasaro) of Wat Rajphatikaram about King Mahajanaka and the mango trees which demonstrated that good things of

¹ "Intrepid" was the codename of Sir William Stephenson (1896-1989).

² "Tito" was the codename of Josip Broz (1892-1980).



An illustration from Mahajanaka.

good quality will be the target of greed and will stand in danger, His Majesty became interested and translated the story from the beginning straight from the Thai text into English, with some minor modifications for the sake of easier understanding of the text.

King Mahajanaka practised ultimate perseverance without the desire for reward which resulted in his gaining the throne and bringing wealth and prosperity to the city of Mithila by the strength of his qualities.

Upon arriving at the text concerning the mango trees, His Majesty was of the opinion that King Mahajanaka's desire to leave the city on a quest for supreme tranquility was not yet opportune nor timely because Mithila's prosperity had not yet reached an appropriate peak, because everyone from the viceroy down to the



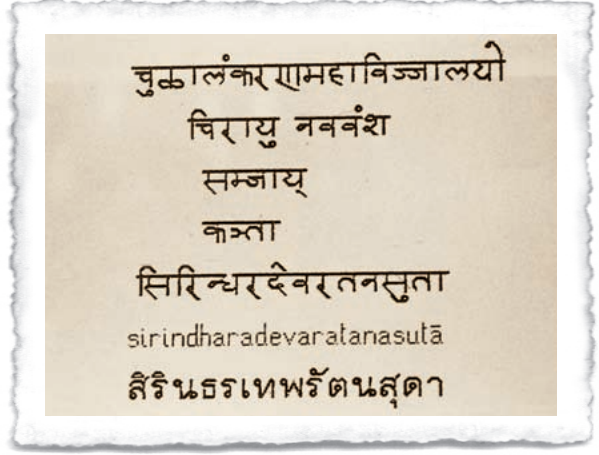
elephant mahouts and the horse handlers, and up from the horse handlers to the viceroy, and especially the courtiers all lived in the state of ignorance. They lacked wisdom as well as knowledge in technology; they did not see the essence of what was beneficial, even for their own good. Therefore, an institution of universal learning must be established. Moreover, King Mahajanaka also had to advance his thoughts on how to revive the mango tree with nine novel methods.

For these reasons, His Majesty the King modified the original story in the Mahajanaka Jataka to suit modern society, with the view that King Mahajanaka would have been able to achieve supreme tranquility more readily if he had completely fulfilled his worldly duties first.

The translation was completed in 1988 and His Majesty the King signified his desire to publish **Mahajanaka** on the auspicious occasion of the Golden Jubilee of his reign, so that this story might become an object of constructive contemplation for all well-meaning people. Moreover, the readers might be blessed with pure perseverance, sharp wisdom and complete physical health.

His facility with languages is amazing — he has even learnt Sanskrit, the ancient and sacred language of Indian Hindus.

With the accelerating creation of a global village via electronic media, His Majesty has been quick to experiment with computers. He first used a computer



Devanagari font.

around December, 1986 to write song lyrics and music notation for various instruments, a time-consuming task. In 1987 he began to use a programme called **Fontastic**¹ to design Thai and Roman fonts of different sizes. He then studied the font called **Devanagari** and consulted experts in Pali and Sanskrit, such as H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn and Privy Counsellor Mom Luang Chirayu Napavong, who helped to check the fonts that he soon designed. The name **Devanagari** has been translated as **Script of the City of the Gods** and is used to write Sanskrit, Prakrit, Hindi and Marathi. It can be confusing for beginners as the actual number of letters in the alphabet is disagreed on even by the experts! His Majesty has also created two Thai-Roman fonts called *Bhubing* and *Daksin* for the Macintosh computer.

¹ Kanda Thammongkol, Khun, in *Paritasana Magazine*, Vol.8 No.2, 1987. (in Thai).



*KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
At Leisure*





At Leisure

For His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, any subject which is the least bit interesting has received his total concentration. He has pursued his private interests in much the same way as he has pursued his public ones — that is, fully mastering them to develop a true understanding of their application. Many have wondered at His Majesty's marvellous concentration on the task at hand, whatever it may be.

At Villa Vadhana, the young Prince Bhumibol had developed a sense of detail and a love of construction. Whether winding his own electric motors or carving wooden gliders, the young prince continued to try to achieve the best that he could. If one should wonder how His Majesty was able to invent a machine which floats on water and churns oxygen into it cheaply and efficiently, one could point to his attention to detail and use of available materials in his hobbies as a child.

The favourite pursuits of the Royal Family in the early days were often fostered and shared by their loving and ever-watchful mother. The two royal brothers had built a radio together at one time. Favourite sports, such as badminton, were



originally a part of their mother's exercise regime. Earlier in his reign, when he was free from royal duties, His Majesty was accustomed to taking members of the Royal Family to Klai Kangwol Palace. There they enjoyed sports such as sailing, water-skiing and badminton. It was not unusual for officials accompanying the Royal Family to be asked to join in.

His Majesty the King playing badminton with Mr. Wong Peng Soon, a former men's singles world champion at Phakabhirom Hall, Chitralada Villa.

It was also his mother's amateur photography and cinematography that stimulated H.R.H. Prince Bhumibol to take up photography when he was eight years old, purchasing a black-speckled green Coronet Midget, an old-fashioned box camera which cost 2 Swiss Francs. The first



His Majesty has been interested in taking photographs since his childhood. Whenever he visits the people in different parts of the country he always has his camera with him.

film cost 25 centimes and admittedly produced disastrous results. Only one of the photos came out and that had been taken by someone else! However, the event teaches us much about King Bhumibol Adulyadej's character because, much to his credit, the young Prince Bhumibol became so determined to do it right that he learned everything he could about photography and eventually conquered its mysteries, mastering the art and technology together.

As his early cameras were without exposure metres, His Majesty learned to employ his own judgment of light conditions to achieve the correct exposure. He even created some of his own filters at a time



His Majesty takes pleasure in taking photographs of Her Majesty the Queen.

when the ones he desired were not commercially available. Today his preferred medium remains black and white. Though his cameras are modern, they are not usually the top-of-the-range professional models. His Majesty has stated that it is only correct that he use the most readily available models that any ordinary person can buy in Thailand.

The focus on the immediate that distinguishes His Majesty's development work is also revealed in his photography, which tends to focus on a single object or action. This technique, called by photographers the involvement style,¹ discloses the deep interest of the photographer in the photographed subject. Needless to say, Her Majesty the Queen has figured for many years as a favourite model in both His

¹ *The Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary, A Memoir of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand.*



"Her Majesty the Queen", taken by His Majesty.

Majesty's photography and painting. However, there are several of his photographs that particularly stand out in the memory. One is a fish-eye shot taken in the Thai Embassy in Austria where His Majesty's hands are seen encircling the picture of embassy staff and courtiers as if holding everyone in them. **Winter Time** is a portrait of Her Majesty in winter clothes, bringing out the best features of the queen. The main light highlights her face and a spotlight brings out her hair giving one a sense of focus on the face and particularly the eyes. The photograph entitled **Peace** is also low-key with what is called **Rembrandt** lighting, that is, the face is partially lit and its smoked borders accentuate the centre of interest — the face. If one were to analyze His Majesty's photographs, it would appear that the photographer is trying to search out the heart or hard core of the matter and reveals a steady purpose which is reflected in all his activities.

His Majesty was quick to introduce his pastimes as an accompaniment to his royal work. Although photography had been known in Thailand since the middle of the nineteenth century and was later one of the favourite hobbies of King Chulalongkorn, it was King Bhumibol who really introduced wide-angle cinematography to Thailand about thirty years ago. The cine-camera was an integral part of His Majesty's travels



(left) The people of Washington D.C., U.S.A., lined the streets to catch a glimpse of Their Majesties as their motorcade passed through on their arrival in the city, 1960.

for several years. When Their Majesties visited the USA in 1960, His Majesty was captured by one news photographer filming the crowds from his limousine. He was also seen taking pictures from the Royal Barge, Suphannahongs, in 1982 during the riverine procession which became the highlight of the Bangkok bicentenary celebrations. When the time did come for His Majesty to raise funds for charities such as the Thai Red Cross and the Ananda Mahidol Foundation, he graciously agreed to allow his films to be shown at the Siam Society and the Sala Chalerm Krung Theatre. This practice proved to be very successful and continued for several years.

(right) His Majesty taking photographs of the crowd waiting to greet him.

One of the most easily recognized symbols of His Majesty, however, remains the 35 mm still camera that seems to be constantly around his neck on visits to rural areas. It is not there simply to take snaps of





His Majesty always carries a camera and a map with him on his visits to the countryside to meet the people.

the local people and countryside. His Majesty has used photography as a means of recording royal-initiated projects since the projects' inception. Furthermore, floods, droughts and the signs of pollution are recorded for future reference when new plans and recommendations are made. His Majesty has photographs of the physical conditions in different regions where royal projects are located and these pictures are used in his study of the areas in cooperation with various agencies. To take one example, His Majesty took photos of Bacho Drainage Canal, Narathiwat Province, to show the work underway as such illustrations would prove to be useful in future discussions with local officials and villagers. His projects there assisted the local people to grow crops in the acidic soil left over when the swampy



area had been drained. Elsewhere, his pictures of floods were used to help local officials understand the problems faced by many people who had to put up with hazardous, unhealthy conditions caused by flooding. They truly act as illustrations and materials for future project planning.

His Majesty once spoke to trailing news photographers on the difference between their photography style and his, graciously explaining to them that they took his picture from the point of view of subjects to their monarch, while he saw things from a very different point of view. He therefore needed to take pictures himself when visiting rural areas in order to take the type of pictures he would need to meet his requirements.¹ His Majesty is a serious photographer who truly understands the power of the medium. He has even urged the Photographic Society of Thailand not to take pictures for the sake of beauty or fun alone, but to use them to help society. In that way, he stated, art would be another factor to help develop the country.²

His Majesty's hobby has not gone unrecognized by the public and a selection of his photographs of the murals in the Chapel Royal has been published and

¹ *The Photographic Society of Thailand under Royal Patronage of H.M. the King, His Majesty the King's Photographs in the Development of the Country.*

² *Ibid.*



exhibitions of his work organized on several occasions. Originally he catalogued his own photographs for future reference, but, with the huge workload he has these days, he has delegated this task to his staff.

Her Majesty posing for His Majesty's oil painting.

Closely following photography, His Majesty became interested in painting at the age of ten in Switzerland. As in all things, His Majesty entered into this new adventure with his hallmark of excellent preparation and in-depth study. He did a lot of background reading first and visited studios to ask artists about their techniques.¹ He then began to paint in Thailand in 1959.² He

¹ Chulathat Phayakharanon "The King and Thai Art", *Our King*, 1987.

² Bonnie Davis, "Paintings by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej", 1989.



painted mainly in the evenings, often the only time available, experimenting with artificial lighting, though there have been some daylight paintings also. His Majesty experimented a great deal in his painting, creating a body of work covering the realm of realism, expressionism and abstractionism. It was especially in his later work that he began to depart from surface reality. His abstract and expressionist paintings on small to medium-sized canvasses are dominated by vivid colours and bold brush strokes. Among the most well-known works is a simple rendition of an old woman with a strong, character-lined face, painted in 1964. Its bold brush strokes and strong colour reflect age and deprivation better than any photograph. Also notable because of the number of times they have been reproduced locally are a colourful portrait of his father in military dress and one of Her Majesty the Queen's mother in a realistic style which he completed in 1961.

After taking up this hobby, like all his other hobbies, His Majesty was quick to involve others so that they might also benefit from his acquired knowledge. He formed an art workshop for courtiers at Chitralada Villa and staged friendly competitions such as painting court staff in any medium in the fastest time. Well-known artists were occasionally invited to visit and discuss painting and techniques. The hobby developed into a passion few outside the palace knew of until, in 1966, some of His



Majesty's work were exhibited in the 14th National Art Exhibition. These impressed the people, who began to wonder at His Majesty's abilities in so many fields of interest. So much so that his contribution to Thai art became in itself a way of promoting art among the people. In recognition of this, in 1965 Silpakorn University presented him with an Honorary Doctorate in Art. The public's knowledge and interest were by that time aroused and over the years His Majesty received numerous enquiries requesting him to exhibit once again. The moment arrived in 1982 when forty-seven of his paintings were permitted to be shown at the National Art Gallery. That event was probably the first solo exhibition of works by a reigning monarch in any country of the world.

(left) A portrait of Her Majesty the Queen, one of His Majesty's paintings.

(right) A portrait of Her Majesty painted by His Majesty in cubist style.



His Majesty playing jazz with famous musicians such as Benny Goodman, New York, 1960.

Ask any Thai what hobby he or she most associates with the name of His Majesty, however, and the answer will come bouncing back: “*Music!*” Without doubt, His Majesty’s greatest leisure interest is music. As a composer, musician and arranger, His Majesty has revealed that same dedication that he applies to the royal projects. As a boy, he used to cycle to his music teacher’s house for his daily music lessons, beginning with woodwinds — his first instrument was the clarinet bought with pocket money at the age of ten — and later learning the piano. Although he admired classical works, it soon became obvious that His Majesty preferred the popular music of his period — jazz. His Majesty soon found his niche in the big band sound, typified by Duke Ellington.



He would often be found in his youth practising the saxophone to the strains of the gramophone recordings of the soprano sax of Sidney Bachet and the alto sax of Johnny Hodges in the Duke Ellington Band.

His Majesty first began to compose when he was 18 years old while visiting Bangkok in 1945. Encouraged by his elder brother to explore the blues, he wrote *Candlelight Blues* in 1946, though its publication came after his more famous works *Love at Sundown* and *Falling Rain*.



Those who knew him in his early years remember an unassuming youth. His attendants in Switzerland and in Thailand were greatly impressed by the practical training given to His Majesty by the Princess Mother. This included cleaning his own musical instruments.

One of His Majesty's hobbies is composing songs, the first of which is "Candlelight Blues," composed when he was eighteen.

*"He would take care of them at every step," recalled one observer. "These days musicians have others to carry their instruments and do the cleaning and assembling ready for use. In His Majesty's case he sets a good example for others to follow, whether they are 'house' bands or visitors like the navy or army cadets, university or police bands; they can all see His Majesty carrying his own instruments and taking care of them"*¹

¹ *Interviews with Mr. Khwankeo Vajarodaya, 1994-5.*



His Majesty performing at the invitation of a varsity musical band.

The contributions His Majesty’s music has made to Thai society are now so prevalent that they perhaps sink into the unconscious. With His Majesty’s support of education revealed in the construction of schools, the granting of scholarships and support for research centres, it is sometimes forgotten that His Majesty was also the composer of music written especially for some of the most prestigious universities in Thailand — Chulalongkorn, Thammasat and Kasetsart. These give students a sense of identity and pride in their alma mater, stimulating their sense of unity.

The versatility that His Majesty reveals in his music has also shown itself in the wide range of instruments he has mastered, from wind instruments to the piano. His



love of music, and most especially jazz, is indomitable. Once, when His Majesty had been requested by his doctors to refrain from playing the saxophone for a while because of a bad back, he taught himself to play the classical guitar because it was light and could be played sitting down! Such is the deep involvement in music that His Majesty would at one time rarely let the opportunity pass to play with the best in the world. Les Brown was practically an annual visitor and 'legends' such as Benny Goodman, Lionel Hampton and Stan Getz all lay claim to having received impromptu invitations to jam with the King of Thailand. His Majesty also revealed one day to a group of musicians, composers and performing artists that the secret of success in the performing arts, no matter which one, was the expression of individuality in the created work, stressing the need not to be a slave to fashion or other people's views.

For His Majesty, Friday night was music night and he appeared to find that the strain of the working week could be dissipated by an evening of music with his own 'house band'. This group of courtiers and well-known Thai musicians, such as Phra Chen Duriyang, was called the **Aw Saw Band**, coming from the initials in Thai of the Ambara Villa where the king had earlier set up a radio broadcasting station. The band was useful for it not only allowed the king to relax but also played a part in His Majesty's various campaigns. Their



His Majesty choosing records for broadcasting on “Radio Azw Saw” in 1952.

sessions were usually broadcast to a large audience by His Majesty’s own radio broadcasting station, for the king is also a ham radio enthusiast with a plethora of radio equipment inside Chitralada Villa. The radio programmes could be punctuated now and then by announcements about vaccinations against polio and other diseases.

His Majesty has played an important role in preserving the music of Thailand’s past — its musical heritage. On 6 April, 1966, His Majesty received a large number of Thai composers and musicians in audience and recommended they establish a music society. Following this advice,



(above and right) Their Majesties the King and Queen at the Vienna Concert Hall on 3 October, 1964.



The President of the famous Institute of Music and Arts of the City of Vienna acclaimed His Majesty for linking eastern and western music, and for setting an outstanding example to the people of Austria by composing music with great talent. His Majesty was the first Asian to receive the institute's Honorary Membership.



some of the musicians formed a club which eventually developed into the Music Association of Thailand under Royal Patronage. His Majesty's cousin, and sometime lyricist, the late H.R.H. Prince Chakrabandhu Bensiri, became its first prestigious president.

Rivalling music, perhaps His Majesty's most internationally renowned diversion is sailing. Sailing did not draw His Majesty to it from an early age. Though he was fond of the water, and swimming has long been one of His Majesty's favourite exercises, it was first of all as a rower that His Majesty found himself in a boat. One sailing companion, H.S.H. Prince Bhisadej

His Majesty the King (2nd from left), Prince Bhisadej (far right), and the royal attendants taking a boat to sea.

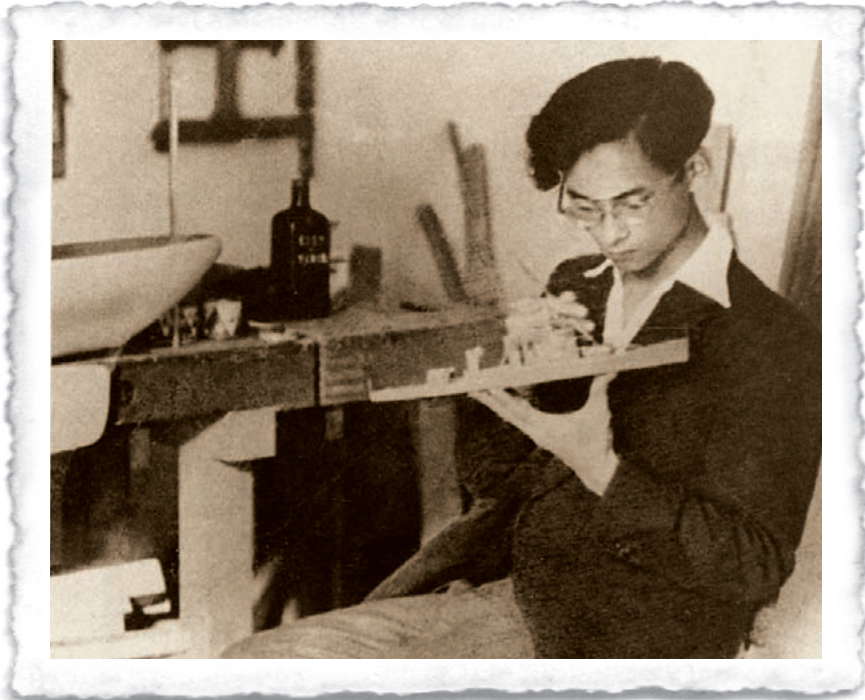




Rajani, who is now the Director of the Royal Project in Chiang Mai, recalled that His Majesty had never expressed interest in sailing in the early days. Indeed, it was only by accident that, while out rowing a little off Klai Kangwol Palace at Hua Hin, His Majesty noticed Prince Bhisadej struggling to move in a dinghy in a very light wind. He began to take a casual interest in the fact that he was able to row faster than the sailboat. He was not immediately impressed and it was some time before he came up with the idea of building a vessel which would be faster than the one that Prince Bhisadej had used.

His Majesty was already quite a good carpenter by the time he made up his mind to build his own sailing vessel. While living at Villa Vadhana he had made models of every kind. His gliders were practical, in that they were for flying rather than only for show. Their wooden struts and members were carved by hand and were carefully streamlined. He also turned his attention to model boats and ships. His Majesty's vessels were hand-crafted and went into great detail.

There is one model of the Thai warship, *H.T.M.S. Sri Ayudhya*, which is worth mentioning as it is a splendid example of the time and patience His Majesty would put into his model-making. Complete with cables and guns, it is a remarkably close copy of the original, yet only about two feet long. It is interesting to note that His Majesty



His Majesty making a model of H.T.M.S. Sri Ayudhya.



*The finished model
of H.T.M.S.
Sri Ayudhya.*

has among his personal documents a fine collection of data regarding the *Selandia*, the vessel upon which he sailed to Thailand in 1950. Unfortunately, there is no record of whether he ever intended to construct a model of it.

What His Majesty did begin to construct on Monday, 7 December, 1964, two days following his birthday, was a real sailing vessel. This was an international Enterprise Class boat which he named the *Rajpataen*, or Royal Pattern. He was aided in his efforts by Prince Bhisadej, who knew



something about the subject of sailing, and helped out in the design and construction. They set about work in His Majesty's carpentry workshop at the back of Chitralada Villa.

After finishing his royal duties each day, the king would stroll over to his workshop to continue the work. Bent over the work-in-progress, sockless in leather mules, white short-sleeved shirt rising up as he bent this way and that to take measurements, cutting a little here, sawing the lengths which the blueprint required, the two boat-builders were soon inundated with wood shavings. With typical good humour, the only difficulty His Majesty thought they



*His Majesty
constructing his first
boat, named Rajpataen,
at Chitralada Villa
in 1964.*



Applying the finishing touches.

faced as the project progressed was: “Would it fit through the door?”

Eventually, the big day came. The *Rajpataen* was ready. Given the designation number 11111 — because it was number one from every point of view! — the king, the prince and some handy staff members were able, with a wiggle here and there, to manhandle the proud vessel, on its side, out through the door. Then came the big moment, the ‘sea trial’. As it turned out, there was no ‘sea’ in Bangkok that year, though flooding is a seasonal hazard, so the *Rajpataen* was given its baptism in the moat which surrounds Chitralada Villa.



His Majesty the King and his entourage taking a boat to sea.

The sight of His Majesty carefully negotiating what is not a particularly broad moat in his boat might have caused a stir had it happened today. It did appear to inspire him to perfect his skills at boat-making. The next year, he went on to build another vessel, the first ever international OK Class boat in Thailand, which was christened the *Navaruek*. Here we can begin to notice the process of His Majesty's complete involvement in his new hobby, for a flurry of boat-building reveals that he had become quite enthusiastic about it.



*Single-handed boating
in the Gulf of Thailand.*

His Majesty went on to build more OK Class boats, the Vega I, Vega II and Vega III and between 1966 to 1967, he built three Moth Class boats: the *Mod* was an eleven



His Majesty in the Micro Mod, one of the three dinghies he designed himself. All three boats, Mod, Super Mod and Micro Mod, have been officially registered in the International Moth Class in England.

foot boat, four feet seven inches across at the beam with a sail area of seventy-two square feet. This was followed by the *Super Mod*, which was four inches wider, and the *Micro Mod*, which was a mere seven feet nine inches long by three feet four inches wide. Eventually, however, His Majesty decided to concentrate more on the sailing than on the building.

It is as a yachtsman, perhaps, that His Majesty is better known to his countrymen and to others around the world. A hint of His Majesty's competitive spirit revealed itself to H.R.H. the Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh — a career naval man — whom he challenged, whilst the Duke was on holiday in Thailand, to a race from Pattaya,



on Thailand's east coast, to Lan Island. Accompanied by his regular crew member, Prince Bhisadej, His Majesty led from the start at the Royal Varuna Yacht Club, around the island and back again. The Duke of Edinburgh was extremely impressed and left the country with most pleasant memories of his stay in Thailand. A little while later, His Majesty received a 'thank you' from Prince Philip in the form of a catamaran — the first in Thailand — which His Majesty, in a bout of playfulness, named the *Pladuk*, which means catfish in Thai; the *duk* in memory of his friendly competitor, the Duke of Edinburgh. This type of wordplay is rather indicative of His Majesty's sense of humour.

It was in 1967, before His Majesty gave up boat building, that he faced his moment of greatest sporting challenge. Back in 1965, Police General Luang Chart Trakarnkosol had proposed at a meeting of the Southeast Asian Peninsular Games (SEAP Games) Federation Council that Cambodia host the Fourth SEAP Games in December 1967. This was accepted, but in February 1967, a mere ten months before the games, Cambodia wrote that it would withdraw from the SEAP Games Federation completely. The five member countries regretted that they were unable to put on the games at such short notice. It was left to Thailand to pick up the gauntlet as it had the year previously, when it hosted the Fifth Asian Games. Most of the sports facilities were therefore already prepared.



The games were organized in the time available. One week before the opening ceremony His Majesty the King lit the SEAP Games flame using the sun's rays in the grounds of Chitralada Villa. He then honoured the two hundred and ninety Thai competitors and fifty-eight officials present by cautioning them:

"The honour of the nation will be on test over the next week when Thailand discharges, through her athletes, officials and spectators, the great honour and responsibility of staging the Fourth SEAP Games... Let us not be unworthy of the high honour bestowed upon us..."

The games themselves were most unusual in many aspects. There was no games village ready for the athletes, so the teams were put up in various hotels — much to the delight of the Burmese who drew the penthouse of the Asia Hotel!

But it was on Pattaya Bay that the Thai people focused their collective attention. There were four classes of sailing events: the Flying Dutchman, Enterprise, OK and Super Mod. Yet it was the OK class which was the highlight of the entire games that year, for in vessels numbers TH27 and TH18 were... His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and his eldest daughter, H.R.H. Princess Ubol Ratana, respectively.

Both of them won three races and came second in two — making them arch rivals for the gold. After missing the second buoy marker in the penultimate race, His



His Majesty and H.R.H. Princess Ubol Ratana both winning the gold medal in the OK boat race during the 4th SEAP Games held in Thailand.

Majesty retired, handing the race to his daughter. Now he had to win the last race with the princess coming in third if he was to take the gold.

It was a squally day when the Thai monarch faced off against his eldest daughter in Pattaya Bay. She had great difficulty keeping her dinghy upright in the choppy waters. Things went more smoothly for His Majesty and he built up a comfortable lead over his nearest rival, Malaysia's Razali Luzin, on the home stretch. Suddenly, in a daring move, the princess, who was in third place, tacked quickly on an unexpected change in the wind and crossed in front of the Malaysian to cross the finish in second place. The one-two victory brought cheers from around Thailand. It was a marvellous moment in Thai sport which few will ever forget. His Majesty took the podium. Royal protocol did not permit a commoner to place the medal around the Thai monarch's neck,



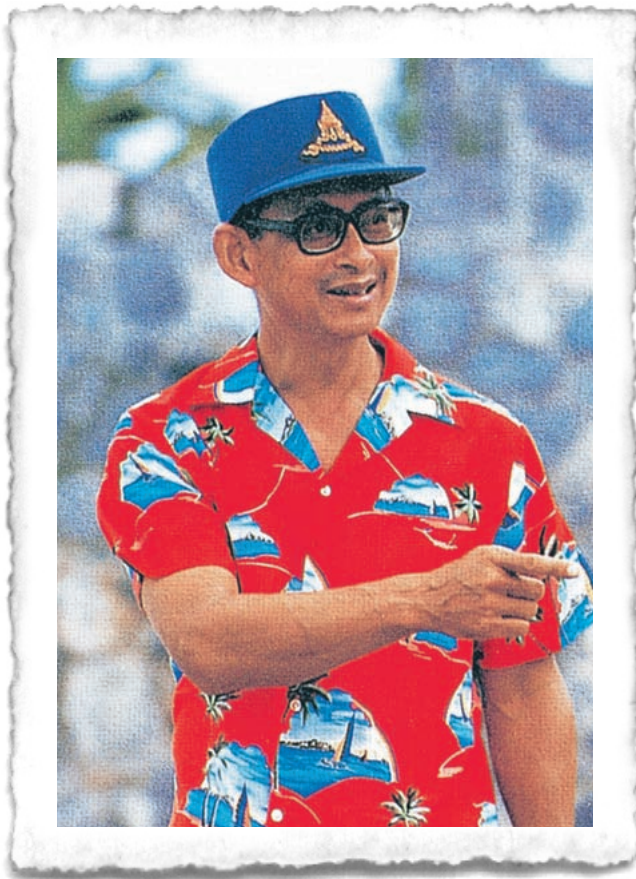
Her Majesty Queen Sirikit presenting His Majesty with the Gold Medal at the National Stadium on 16 December, 1967.



so Her Majesty the Queen was asked to present the gold medal to her husband, who obligingly stooped to pick it up and place it around his own neck.

His Majesty's sportsmanship on the sea or on land is a part of his own mental preparedness for the rigours of the sport. In his view, sport is an integral component of education, *"It is a way of teaching children endurance, courage, knowledge of defeat, of victory, health and strength, competence of mind and body. The result is good citizens. That is my wish..."*¹ Furthermore, His Majesty

¹ See Dr. Boonsom Martin's article on "Our King and Sport", in *Our King*.



His Majesty, a keen sailor.

has put his beliefs about the benefits of sporting activities into practice, not only by competing himself, but in encouraging others to participate. His Majesty pointed out that sport *“promotes the strength of mind and body and gives one a way of measuring the results of one’s progress.”*¹

¹ *Our King*, page 86.



His Majesty is aware of the international aspect of sport and its inherent abilities to break down barriers and create friendships between people of different nationalities. He noted early on that the Thai art of boxing had become an international attraction and commented that, *“Boxing in Thailand is interesting in many ways as we have our own Thai-style boxing, which is believed to be highly efficient and holds the interest of foreigners.”*¹ However, it was a reflection of His Majesty’s concern for the country as a whole that he expounded on the theme of Thai boxing and its meaning for Thais.

*“It is a fact that boxing, stability and the development of the country have a close relationship. This is because boxing is about protecting oneself. It is a method of protecting oneself used by Thai soldiers since time immemorial. At present also, one must defend oneself by fighting on one part and by a method that will develop the country on the other part.... It has helped to build the country’s stability in the present.”*²

It is this persistent concern for the country and its people which endears him to his subjects. His Majesty’s concept of sports playing a role in national development is obviously only one aspect of the role he plays himself in ensuring the stability of the country.

¹ Royal speech given at Chitralada Villa, 3 July, 1973.

² Royal speech given to the Ananda Mahidol Foundation at Chitralada Villa, 29 October, 1970.



KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
Lord of the Land



An old lady presenting His Majesty with a wilted lotus due to the long wait to greet him during the early part of his nation-wide visits.



Lord of the Land

Among the titles bestowed upon the King of Thailand is that of *Phra Chao Phaen Din*, meaning **Lord of the Land**. It is his role to ensure that the land is protected and this goes some way to explain the dedication of the present monarch to the environment and agriculture for the benefit of the Thai people. Former Prime Minister M.R. Kukrit Pramoj once said,

“The present king plays this role in all seriousness and with complete dedication, as evidenced by his pilot projects in cooperatives, the preservation of mountains and forests from the deprivations of hill tribes and his successful organization in producing artificial rainfall.”¹

If one were to put a date on the beginning of royal development efforts, it would be 1952. In that year, His Majesty initiated the construction of a road, followed by a reservoir, at Huai Mongkhol Village, Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.

The king’s rural development projects were first begun in 1952 as basic research

¹ Steve Van Beek (ed.), *M.R. Kukrit Pramoj: His Wit and Wisdom, Writings, Speeches and Interviews*. (Bangkok : Duang Kamol, 1983).





into ideas that could help farmers develop their livelihood. When His Majesty began studying data regarding rural development and carrying out experiments both in Chitralada Villa, the royal residence at Dusit Palace in Bangkok, and elsewhere, he began to achieve success in a very short time. Successful experiments were applied to development work around the country and subsequently the number of development work projects grew.

While most of these programmes were instituted within the environs of Bangkok and Klai Kangwol Palace at Hua Hin, royal field visits outside Bangkok began with successful tours of Suphan Buri, Ang Thong and Sing Buri provinces in the central region between 1953-1954. The king and queen travelled together and stopped frequently to meet the people, His Majesty snapping pictures on his new Contax II¹ camera of his beloved country and people and of his beautiful young queen. The white-shirted monarch asked his loyal subjects questions about their daily lives and proved genuinely interested in their replies, rarely objecting to accepting petitions in the style of his revered grandfather, King Chulalongkorn. That monarch had also taken trips into the

¹ *This camera is on display at the Rama IX Gardens, Bangkok.*



countryside, often incognito however, to hear about the problems of his subjects without the burden of formality. However, it is King Bhumibol who, besides being Thailand's longest-reigning monarch, is also the first monarch to have visited every province in the country, and the first to have driven himself to Chiang Mai, more than 700 kilometres to the north of Bangkok.

In 1955, while America was celebrating the opening of the ultimate theme park called Disneyland, Their Majesties visited the northeast of Thailand — the poorest and least developed part of the country even today — to find out about conditions there at first-hand. The majority of Thai people were, and still are, farmers. Whenever asked why he was expending such great energy and time on looking after the welfare of this large but powerless section of the Thai community, he was quick to point out that, "*It is the peasant, the farmer, who is the backbone of Thailand,*"¹ though they are much poorer than their city-dwelling cousins. Consequently, His Majesty has placed emphasis on solutions to agricultural development problems. In trying to improve the lives and health of his subjects, the approach of His Majesty has not been to throw money at them or to offer charity in its basic sense. He is a true advocate of

¹ *His Majesty talking to Gereon Zimmerman in Look, 27 June, 1967.*



*Their Majesties visiting villagers in the central and northeastern regions
in the early phase of the present reign.*



the need to empower them, to find suitable development methods that they could employ themselves and carry on without outside assistance.

One of the king's early projects involved fish breeding. In 1952 His Majesty invited the Department of Fisheries to use ponds in Chitralada Villa for fish farming. The most prominent breed at that time was the *Tilapia mosambica*, known in Thai as *Pla Mo Thet*. Interestingly, the first fish were initially raised in a pond at Ambara Villa, where His Majesty was living at the time. The *Tilapia* were chosen as a breed that had particular advantages for the Thai people in that the fingerlings are easily raised and breed rather rapidly.

The Department of Fisheries managed to get several *Tilapia* from Penang and breeding went ahead with notable results. The next year His Majesty donated adult *Tilapia* to sub-district officials and villagers all over Thailand, which effectively established *Tilapia* in Thailand.

His Majesty's interest did not go unnoticed abroad and, surprisingly perhaps, he was not the only member of an Asian Royal Family to take such an interest in fish breeding, for Japan also has its own royal expert on ichthyology. In March 1965, Japan's Crown Prince Akihito, later to become the Emperor of Japan, gave His Majesty fifty *Tilapia nilotica*, a breed that he believed would be of better nutritional value and taste. The grateful king was



Their Majesties on a private excursion to release the “Tilapia mosambica” from His Majesty’s pond into the Department of Fisheries’ hatchery, and to present breeds of fish to government officials and farmers on 7 November, 1953.



more than happy to receive such an unusual gift and let them feed in cement wells in palace grounds. He later had them transferred to ponds of 100 m², with adequate volume for the fish. Breeding was very successful. His Majesty later commissioned the construction of six more ponds of 70 m² each to meet the demands of his precious little guests.

*His Majesty releasing
genera of *Tilapia nilotica*
into the 9th hatchery
on 7 December, 1969.*



*The Department of
Fisheries in coordination
with the Royal Chitralada
Projects on fish breeds,
carries out an experimental
breeding of *Tilapia
nilotica* to be distributed
to farmers.*



Almost exactly one year later His Majesty was able to present 10,000 fish fry, of three to five centimetres in length, to the Department of Fisheries, and from there to every fishery station throughout the country for further breeding. The offspring of these were given to farmers. Now these Tilapia were not of course a native of Thailand and, like rural people throughout the world, Thai farmers were a little wary of the introduction into their ponds and diet of a foreign fish. His Majesty surmounted this problem by coining for these tiny Japanese settlers a decent Thai name, *Pla Nil*, which actually means *black fish*.

A year later, in 1967, every fishery station throughout the nation began giving the “new” Thai fish, *Pla Nil*, to interested farmers. Every month His Majesty donated *Pla Nil* grown in the eight ponds at Chitralada Villa. Demand became so high that eventually in 1969 His Majesty had another larger pond dug in the grounds of his royal residence. During this trial period, His Majesty personally supervised the raising of 300 specimens of *Pla Nil*. In appearance the *Pla Nil* resembles the common Tilapia superficially, but the flesh is more like the snakehead mullet which is very popular in Thailand as *Pla Chon*. It has very few bones and is a hardy species which can survive in almost any environment. It breeds very fast.



His Majesty believed that fisheries should be integrated into the development of projects aimed at the poor. He stated that,

“Fisheries development should be appropriate to the local area and should aim to develop natural water resources, such as rivers and marshes, both as breeding locations and in order to encourage the local inhabitants to derive benefit from such places. In addition, vegetables and crops can be cultivated in the surrounding areas. In comparison, newly-dug ponds often encounter problems of water shortages and in the event of flooding, the fish will escape.”¹

This approach was implemented at Hup Kaphong where His Majesty established a cooperative village in 1966.

It was because of his intense study of fisheries also, that His Majesty was able to notice that certain types of fish could live in polluted water, but other types that lived in clean water could enter the polluted water for a short period. He went on to hypothesize that these fish were eating organic substances in the polluted water and then leaving. Experiments later proved him correct and this knowledge has gone some way to reducing the amount of polluted water. However, simply breeding fish and releasing them into ponds and

¹ *Secretariat Office of the Coordinating Committee for Royal Development Projects, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and His Development Work, (Bangkok : 1987), p.52.*



*Their Majesties and Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn
releasing various kinds of fish into a pond.*



*Their Majesties releasing various kinds of fish into a pond during a visit to
Huai Sai Royal Development Study Centre,
Cha-am District, Phetchaburi Province.*



rivers was not sufficient. It was found that those who got rich from catching the fish were not the local villagers but outsiders, particularly merchants. The king therefore suggested that in order to put the nation's fishery resources to better use, it would be necessary to register them. In addition, His Majesty noted the significance of fishing controls. At that time fish breeding was in the hands of fishery stations. His Majesty advised the stations to help farmers to benefit from such studies and to learn to stand on their own feet. Furthermore, the farmers should form themselves into groups to improve their marketing capability and protect themselves from unfair practices as well as maintaining fish levels. In this way, the people would gain long-term benefits and enable them to take control of their own lives.

The most satisfying addendum to this story is that the king's work was almost immediately given a value far beyond any which he could have originally planned. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UN-FAO) approached His Majesty and requested some of these protein-rich fish as a donation to alleviate famine in Bangladesh in the late sixties. His Majesty immediately donated 500,000 Pla Nil to the People's Republic of Bangladesh through the Food for Hunger Campaign of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Perhaps today there are still some descendants of Japanese-Thai settlers in the rivers and ponds of Bangladesh.



While the Royal Chitralada Projects for the breeding of fish may appear to be more directly concerned with answering the needs of the Thai farmer's diet, His Majesty was no less concerned about the land. Between 1960-1961, His Majesty's immense interest in forest conservation began to take shape with the creation of a forest within the grounds of Chitralada Villa. This contains species of trees from all over Thailand and is used to demonstrate forest conservation methods and environment studies. It also acts as a kind of museum of the wide variety of tree species that Thailand is home to. His Majesty noticed that the species *Dipterocarpus alatus* Roxb., known as *Mai Yang Na* in Thai, was being increasingly cut down by Thai people while its economic value was rising steadily each year. There was at the time a real danger of it disappearing completely from the countryside and His Majesty became concerned that its destruction could be detrimental to sustainable use. This type of hypothesis setting and observation is typical of His Majesty's approach. Projects are nevertheless initiated by the king who accepts the uncertainties that arise from any new venture as a necessary risk, much as any other venture where the results cannot be guaranteed.

His Majesty asked Kasetsart University to assist in planting the species on land set aside in the Chitralada Villa gardens and to conduct research on the tree



Their Majesties planting a Yang Na tree in an experimental plot in the compound of Chitralada Villa on 28 July, 1961, H.R.H. Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn's birthday.



The Crown Prince and his classmates at Chitralada School help prepare the experimental plots for planting saplings.



A demonstration forest was grown by royal command in the compound of Chitralada Villa with His Majesty himself planting the Yang Na trees.

with the assistance of the Forestry Faculty of Kasetsart University. Over thirty years ago, His Majesty was the only person ever to have had the idea of raising a tropical forest, whereas one notes the urgency with which non-governmental organizations now advocate such action. To view this impressive collection, interested parties, even school groups, are allowed to visit the arboretum on the grounds of Chitralada Villa as part of their natural heritage and as a significant scientific research centre.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn was among the first to



arrive for the first planting of a tree in this tropical forest. The tree-planting ceremony was to be performed as part of the royal birthday celebrations of the Crown Prince. The young prince was accompanied by a hardy band of helpers from the nearby Chitralada School that his father had established in the grounds so that his own children would have the opportunity to mix with ordinary people of their own age, many of whom were the children of the palace staff. Together they lifted their tools and began to break the ground in preparation for the seedlings. Their average age was nine years.

For the Crown Prince the event was to be among his first public roles in the conservation of the environment, following in the footsteps of his father for the eventual benefit of the people. At present, the forest could be better described as a wood, though the coolness of its inner sanctum is an inviting hodge-podge of trees and bushes representing the whole country in its diversity. Criss-crossed by narrow, rattan-strewn paths and often quite muddy in places, it is a peaceful, green-canopied retreat from the hurly-burly of the capital city that surrounds it.

Another Royal Chitralada Project was the Rice Cultivation Project initiated in 1961 by the Department of Agriculture at His Majesty's request in the grounds of Chitralada Villa in order to experiment in rice cultivation and crop rotation. Data were collected and analyzed in order to utilize the best methods that would benefit Thai farmers. Throughout the early stages



*His Majesty and the Crown Prince driving the "iron buffalo"
in the demonstration field at Chitralada Villa.*



His Majesty and the Crown Prince sowing rice in the experimental field of the Royal Chitralada Projects, 16 July, 1961.

of the project, His Majesty was personally involved in many aspects of the work, for instance, deciding which formulae were to be used in both chemical and organic fertilizers and overseeing the various stages of the rice farming, from the seeding to harvesting and threshing. He even tried his hand at using the “iron buffalo”, a Thai invention that looks similar to a tractor and serves as a modern-day plough. Students of Chitralada School even today are given practical training on the transplanting of rice seedlings into irrigated fields, which over the years have contributed much knowledge about the suitability of certain



His Majesty and the Crown Prince observing the transplanting of rice sprouts.



His Majesty observing the harvesting of rice in the demonstration field.



crops to conditions in various parts of the country. These days, genetic cross-breeding is performed in the laboratories in the grounds of Chitralada Villa to help strengthen crops brought from foreign countries for the rigours of the Thai climate.

In 1962, the year following the rice project, His Majesty used his own funds and six dairy cows of native and foreign breeding supplied by both government and private businesses to start a dairy farm in the grounds of Chitralada which he called the *Suan Chitralada Dairy Farm Project*. This promoted correct methods of raising milk-yielding cattle by providing demonstrations for farmers. A refrigerator was purchased to store the milk produced each day. The milk was sold in the Dusit Palace area and brought in a small income in the first year. As demand increased, it was sold outside also, first using bicycles and then motorcycles, and lorries to make the deliveries.

With the income from the sale of milk, His Majesty was able to inaugurate the Suan Dusit Dairy Plant on 7 December, 1969. In his address to guests at the inauguration, His Majesty said,

“This plant will be a model and will provide demonstrations for the farmers and those who are interested in dairy production. This is the first dairy plant in Thailand and it is something to be proud of, since it has been designed and built by the Thai people only. Those who need any information and who want to run such a business for their own prosperity and thereby for the country’s



*economic stability, can observe the activities in this factory at any time. Speak up if there are any problems or suggestions. For perhaps some may have constructive ideas which can benefit the community. Such ideas will be invaluable suggestions for progress in Thailand's dairy product activities."*¹

The dairy plant, which is still in operation today, began production of both sweetened and unsweetened powdered milk. Between 1970 and 1979 prices rose according to the market conditions. His Majesty had initiated the construction of the *Suan Chitralada Milk Collection Centre* to assist cooperatives that lacked financial resources by purchasing farmers' surplus milk and selling it to the *Suan Dusit Dairy Plant* for processing. This was an important step in the development of the dairy industry as it taught many people about the economics and business administration involved in setting up and managing such businesses. Furthermore, the profits made by the Milk Collection Centre and the Dairy plant were used to finance other royal-initiated projects for the benefit of a wider range of people. When opened in June 1973, the Milk Collection Centre had installed a Swiss-made machine for separating butter fat from milk, processing about 2,000 litres per hour. A centrifuger then made the butter fat into fresh butter which was sold publicly at the annual Red Cross Fair in 1974. So great was the

¹ *Royal address at the inauguration of the Suan Dusit Dairy Plant in 1969.*



Suan Chitralada Milk Collection Centre.



Suan Chitralada pasteurized milk goes through quality check before being bottled for distribution.



demand for this innovative product that the centrifuger was worn out and had to be replaced within a year. Presently, Chitralada milk and other dairy products can be bought in Bangkok and major cities.

Besides the afore mentioned Suan Chitralada Dairy farm Project and the Suan Dusit Dairy Plant, some outstanding projects include Organic Fertilizer Production, Wind Turbine, Solar Houses I and II, Paddy Storage, Plant Genetic Conservation, Vegetable Production, Sa Mulberry Paper Production, Mushroom Culturing, and Tissue Culture. By 2009, the Royal Chitralada Projects had reached 36 in number. Many of these were designed not only for research and demonstration purposes, but were also aimed at helping small communities and farmers who supplied such perishable produce as milk,



fruits and vegetables by quickly buying the latter from the farmers. Any profits received would be ploughed back to support further agricultural, fuel and energy research for the benefit of the people.



Dairy and bakery products.



Cheese.



Longan honey, a famous product of the Chitralada Royal Projects.



With the Harvest Lord.

His Majesty repeatedly emphasized to the government the importance of rural farmers to the economy and the social structure of the nation. In 1960 he suggested the re-introduction of the annual Ploughing Ceremony which was largely symbolic and acted as an encouragement for farmers to try harder. This absorbing ceremony, which is held in May, is divided into two parts, and marks the end of the dry season and the beginning of the new rice planting season. In the first part of the ceremony, the rice seeds and accessories to be used in the ploughing process are blessed during religious rites presided over by His Majesty the King, or a representative, and held in the Chapel Royal in front of *Sanam Luang*. The ploughing of the field, which is the second and essential part of the Royal Ploughing



Ceremony, is carried out in the traditional manner with a pair of oxen specially selected to draw the plough. A high-ranking government official concerned with agriculture, such as the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives or the Director-General of the Department of Agricultural Extension of the same ministry, is appointed to be the Harvest Lord, while four unmarried female officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives act as his assistants. These Celestial Maidens, as they are termed, carry the seeds in baskets suspended from slender yokes carried across their shoulders.

At the commencement of the ceremony, the Harvest Lord draws at random one of three pieces of scarlet cloth of varying lengths. His choice serves as a



The Ploughing Ceremony organized yearly in May at Sanam Luang.



His Majesty anointing the forehead of the Celestial Maiden before the Ploughing Ceremony.

prediction for the amount of rainfall that year.

According to the tradition, the area to be ploughed is, then, tilled in three rounds of ritual circumambulating, thus creating three furrows each lengthwise and crosswise. The seeds, which have been blessed, are scattered in the furrows to be gathered later by joyous and eager farmers who regard them as auspicious and keep them to mix with the grain they use in their own farming.

At the completion of the ploughing, the oxen drawing the plough are led to troughs containing food and refreshments such as paddy, corn, legumes, sesame,



liquor, water and grass. The animals' first choices again serve as a means of predicting the harvest for the forthcoming season. This is an ancient Brahmanic rite which is supposed to ensure an abundant harvest and sufficient rain while avoiding pestilence and flood. From 1962 onwards, the seeds that are scattered on Sanam Luang have been those developed at Chitralada Villa experimental rice field. It is also an occasion for honouring outstanding farmers from each region, and His Majesty presents awards and certificates to those farmers who have produced the highest yields for the previous year.



*The Harvest Lord sowing rice seeds
in the experimental field in the compound of Chitralada Villa
after the ceremony at Sanam Luang.*



*KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
Helping People to Help Themselves*



His Majesty visiting villagers in the countryside and giving them advice on agriculture and irrigation.



Helping People to Help Themselves

When His Majesty initiated the implementation of his own projects, commencing with the road and reservoir built at Hua Hin District in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province in 1952 and the experiments conducted at Chitralada Villa mentioned earlier, his actions were those of a modern monarch operating within the framework of the constitution. At that period in Thailand's history, the government had begun to turn its attention to the economic development of the country. However, these efforts were naturally limited by economic conditions prevailing at the time; and those conditions were not sufficient to allow full-blown development work in all corners of the nation simultaneously. The emergence of His Majesty's own projects was viewed as a social welfare undertaking that in no way overlapped the state's own responsibility as having the principal role in national development. The reason for this was that the king's projects were largely conducted in areas where the state was at the time unable or unprepared to undertake large-scale projects. The royal-initiated projects were therefore much appreciated in their development of the country's poorest areas where they were to prove most beneficial to



*KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
Helping People to Help Themselves*



Klai Kangwol Palace.



those who were desperate for immediate action. It is these projects which have played a dramatic part in national development and made His Majesty the focal point of national stability.

Hua Hin, the venue of some of His Majesty's earliest work in the fifties, was still considered remote from Bangkok, although a comfortable train ride can cover the 230-kilometre distance in four-and-a-half-hours. It was here that the state was concentrating its efforts to develop the economy. Its pleasant and pristine beaches have afforded the Royal Family respite from Bangkok's relentless heat since King Rama VII built the Klai Kangwol Palace there in the 1920s.

However, though time has seen many changes take place in the area, the people there have retained their local identity and many still lead a simple life, working on the land or the sea as farmers and fishermen, as did their fathers and grandfathers. As with all villagers in Thailand at the time, the people of Hua Hin District were poor. Even after the construction of a reservoir and a road which His Majesty had built to assist the people of Hua Hin District at the start of his reign, these people were never far from his heart and continued to receive practical help to raise their standards of living. The living standards of his people were always of great concern to His Majesty. We know this largely through his own



words, such as the time of his visit to the United States of America in 1960, when His Majesty was invited to address the US Congress, a visit which is still considered one of his earliest triumphs in international relations. Addressing the legislature in a calm and cordial manner, His Majesty noted that:

“The average income of a Thai is only about \$100 a year. One will understand what urgent need there is to increase the income and raise the living standard of my people.”¹

Four years later, an important step forward was made in the development of royal projects with the royal initiative to establish the Thai-Israel Rural Development Project in Phetchaburi Province, adjacent to Hua Hin in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province. This gained the cooperation and support of the government of Israel, which was willing to lend its experience to such a worthy goal. Together with the Thai Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, research into many aspects of agriculture, including marketing, was conducted on 200 acres of land at *Hup Kaphong*, Phetchaburi Province. The reason was straightforward enough,

¹ *Royal address on the occasion of His Majesty’s visit to the United States Congress, Washington D.C., Thursday, 29 June, 1960.*



Their Majesties visiting vegetable farmers at Hup Kaphong, Phetchaburi Province.

“To succeed in farming, we must acquire knowledge of agriculture, marketing and elementary economics,”¹

said His Majesty in 1969.

This research project later gave birth to a land development project covering 4,000 acres, in which 120 farm households were given 10 acres each with the *Hup Kaphong Co-operative Community* owning the land jointly. It was a remarkable breakthrough in creating a bond among the people in the community, with His Majesty acting as the unifying factor. It was also His Majesty’s

¹ *Royal address delivered to members of the Thai-Israeli Demonstration and Experimental Centre, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Wednesday, 14 May, 1969.*



idea to establish in Hup Kaphong, a long-lasting self-help philosophy that would be undisturbed should individuals be forced into selling the land to pay off debts, thereby making their family landless forever after. A new type of land document was issued which gave the families no right to sell the land, though it may be passed on to members of the family as their heritage. This astute concept was a most practical solution to the problem which afflicts the poor in rural areas. It is a concern often voiced during his visits to upcountry, most recently Nakhon Nayok Province, where His Majesty has exhorted the villagers to stay and not sell their land to Bangkok investors.

The type of self-help project begun in Hup Kaphong, His Majesty has explained, is crucial to the principle of helping people to help themselves.

“...it is highly important to encourage and help people to earn their living and support themselves with adequate means, because those who are gainfully employed and self-supporting are capable of contributing positively towards higher levels of development.”¹

One area of Thailand where the plight of the people considerably moved Their Majesties on their first official visit in 1955 was the impoverished northeast of Thailand, which is simply referred to as Isan.

¹ Royal address delivered at Kasetsart University Auditorium, Friday, 19 July, 1974.



His Majesty visiting people in various northeastern provinces such as Udon Thani and Ubon Ratchathani in 1955.



The Isan people took the royal couple to their hearts with affection and hospitality which could hardly have been expected under such frugal conditions.

Certainly, conditions in Isan in the fifties were extremely rudimentary compared to the present. The necessities that we now take for granted, such as piped water and household electricity, were unheard of. However, as we may gather from Her Majesty's memory of the simple



His Majesty visiting hill tribe people in the North.



pleasures offered by a village dance, the traditional Thai ways of life flourished. The villagers harvested rice at some time in November or December and lived off the land in many respects — catching the fish and frogs in flooded rice paddies and tending vegetable gardens to supplement their meagre diet. Salt, sequestered from the soil itself, played a part in many areas of Isan as cash or a barter item and the forests were fully utilized as food sources and as natural pharmacies of tropical medicines. Realizing that the land played such a vital role in sustaining these people, and that the Northeast is an area prone to severe drought, His Majesty not surprisingly launched some of his earliest projects there on water resource development. No less than eight reservoirs were constructed in the Northeast in 1977 alone, and a further eight ponds and waterways were dredged of sediment to provide more reliable sources of water.

About ten years later, Their Majesties turned their attention to another part of the kingdom. This time the people turned out to be somewhat more mysterious than the typical Thai villagers of the Northeast. It was in the far North that His Majesty encountered people whose lives existed far from the supervision of the government. The so-called hill tribes of this region lived in the remotest and most inaccessible parts of the country. They rarely came down



from the hills to mix with lowlanders and moved easily across Thailand's border with Myanmar without citizenship of either country. Nowadays, their tribal names have become more widely-known because of the attraction they hold for tourists. The Karen, the Hmong and the Akha are some of the numerous ethnic groups.

In the fifties, and in areas still unaffected by development, the hill tribes favoured various methods of shifting cultivation, especially slash-and-burn farming. This destructive farming technique usually involves clearing an area in the forest in which to plant crops. After harvesting,



His Majesty visiting the Hmong hill tribe village of Mae Tao, Hot District, Chiang Mai Province, 15 December, 1971. He is seen inspecting a kidney bean field whose market value commands a much higher price than opium.



the stubble left in the field is burned and left to mulch while those working that area moved on to clear another area in order to continue planting and harvesting. When His Majesty visited the region in the late sixties, he was no doubt interested to see a whole new culture living without any contact with the outside world. Government agencies and officials were often unable to enter these areas, which were controlled by communist forces, hence the hill tribes lived in obscurity and abject poverty.

Such was the concern of His Majesty for these people and others living in the North that, out of the first one hundred projects initiated by His Majesty between 1952 and 1977, eighty-five were undertaken in the north of Thailand, and most of these in the farthest reaches of the kingdom, like Chiang Rai, Nan and Chiang Mai, parts of which were inaccessible at the time. Even today, many areas covered by His Majesty's projects require a four-wheel drive vehicle and nerves of steel to drive up what sometimes looks like almost vertical inclines! Over thirty years ago even this was not possible in the tried-and-trusted Willys Jeeps used by the royal party and His Majesty's explorations usually required a long, hot journey on foot to reach his destination. It is no surprise then that the pictures of His Majesty at that time reveal a wiry, suntanned king, radiating energy and physical power. A few hours of walking across leech-infested streams, through dank,



humid jungles to look at coffee plants or fruit trees might have exhausted any ordinary man, but this King of Thailand appears to have thrived in such adverse conditions in his desire to bring some hope to his people. In His Majesty's words:-

*"In working out a programme to help people, it is necessary that you know the people that you intended to help."*¹

Fortunately, the hill tribes' abject conditions have been more or less eliminated, largely due to the part His Majesty and the Royal Family have played in caring for them, his remotest subjects. His Majesty's initiation of what is now known simply as the **Royal Project** (*whereas other projects are called "royal-initiated projects"*) in the region in 1969 was aimed at developing a sense of unity, self-help and a realization that they were always in the heart of their king. Perhaps His Majesty's success can be measured by the great affection in which he is still held by the hill tribes, who commonly refer to His Majesty as "Royal Father". His efforts, however, have not been made with the purpose of making these people lose their own ethnic identity and develop any of the characteristics of their fellow lowlanders. Rather it is that a great effort has been made to ensure that any new ideas that are introduced are

¹ *Royal address at the Gala Dinner of the Rotary Clubs of Thailand at the Napalai Ball Room, Dusit Thani Hotel, Monday, 9 November, 1970.*



His Majesty giving advice to the hill tribes on irrigation and on growing temperate climate crops instead of opium poppies.



compatible with their way of life. In the North, and in every region where His Majesty's beneficence has touched, emphasis has been placed on keeping things as simple and low-cost as possible. This has meant utilizing local materials whenever possible. It would naturally be a wasted effort if resources and materials had to be imported to an area, for at the end of the project it would be highly unlikely that the local people would be able to afford to continue independently thus defeating the purpose of the project!

His Majesty was able to take a more active part in development amongst the hill tribes than elsewhere largely because the region was not on the path of development being provided by governments of the day. Perceiving their dire straits, His Majesty appears to have been motivated by an overwhelming compassion for these tribal people in his desire to conduct experimental projects and social work on a grand scale



His Majesty inspecting the hill tribes' produce under the Royal Project.



*Their Majesties, accompanied by Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince
Maha Vajiralongkorn and Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn,
inspect areas which have been set aside for the cultivation of apple
and other temperate climate fruit trees of
the Royal Project's Ang Khang Agricultural Research Station, Chiang Mai Province.*



His Majesty in discussions with the villagers.

and with a passion rarely seen in a modern monarch. Even today, though the efforts of both Their Majesties and the government have improved conditions to a measurable degree, poverty, unfortunately, still exists in Thailand's northern and northeastern rural



areas and many people still earn little more than enough to feed their families.

Faced with the seemingly insurmountable problems encountered in so many parts of the country at that time, His Majesty could have simply made note of the conditions of his subjects and withdrawn back to the comfort and shelter of the palace walls, leaving the task wholly in the government's hands. And yet he did not. To look at the reasons underlying the current monarch's move to thrust himself so deeply into the work of national development, it is necessary to consider the historical and cultural role of the Thai kings. Until 1932, Thailand existed under a system which placed the onus on the throne for conducting any type of national-level work. This, however, is only part of the explanation. Pre-democratic Thailand was hierarchical with the king at the top of the pyramid. Below him were his subjects. The history of Thailand is a history of its kings, and it is they who are the major force behind the country's development. National development is in the blood of the Thai monarchy and one can therefore glimpse the reasons for His Majesty's involvement in this work as having a historical precedent.

Undeniably, the mould for the king's involvement in development has been enhanced during his reign. Time has proven His Majesty to be the pre-eminent Thai monarch who has thoroughly



embraced his subjects at all levels and in all parts of the country, much to the admiration of many local and foreign observers. And yet, His Majesty himself has gone to great lengths to expound his motivation and ideas to the people themselves at every step, with the most intimate of paternal contact, so that they might understand and make use of them.

In dealing directly with his people, His Majesty has neatly sidestepped the fanfare and publicity which would arise had he simply patronized the many local and international charities, letting them use his name but with them doing the actual work. Instead he has given freely of himself and has expended all his efforts in helping his people. His Majesty typifies the attitude expressed in: *“Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.”*¹ Rather than leaving the job to others, he has never hesitated to lead from the front.

The next question to ask is why His Majesty has sought to assist the poorest and most neglected of his subjects without asking for anything in return? His Majesty touched on this point when he said:

“Why do it? This is a point to ponder. Generally speaking, for those of us responsible for the administration and development of the country, the “why”

¹ *President Kennedy’s Inaugural Address on 20 January, 1961.*



should not cause much difficulty, but still there are some problems all the same, because there are various reasons why progress must be brought to the rural areas, meaning to the people in the countryside. First and foremost is the humanitarian consideration. If we are to be kind to fellow human beings who live in the same country, and are thus fellow countrymen, and are known to be in dire need, it is necessary for the authorities who are better endowed both in knowledge and in wealth to go to their assistance. But humanity alone is not enough and may be too high an ideal. It is simply impossible to expect everyone to do everything solely out of humanitarian consideration.”¹

With these words, then, it is easy to grasp the outstanding intellect and compassion of a king who realized early on that,

“If the country is faced with difficulties and people in the remote areas are suffering, we cannot simply stay put in this paradise of a capital.”²

His Majesty has encouraged the gradual development of the country through direct assistance. When characterizing his

¹ Royal address to Accelerated Rural Development administrators at the provincial governor’s level at Ambara Villa, Friday, 13 June, 1969.

² His Majesty’s address to a team of doctors in the mobile health and medical units under the Accelerated Rural Development Programme, Ambara Villa, Tuesday, 3 June, 1969.



own reign in a magazine interview in 1982, he emphasized that his philosophy was to rely greatly on tradition:

“Evolution. Looking for the good things of the past. Traditions perpetuated and transformed. That is the lesson: we take old traditions and reconstruct them to be used in the present time and in the future.”¹

This is reflected in the way His Majesty seeks out simple methods of achieving his objectives. He is the first to promote the use of a shovel if he feels that a tractor is economically unrealistic for a particular area. Simplicity, based on tradition and gradual change, has consistently been applied to his work in sustainable development. The notion of quick and easy change is never proposed. The dangers inherent in transforming a largely rural population into a developed, industrialized nation at a stroke have been acknowledged.

“Development of the nation must be carried out in stages, starting with the laying of the foundation by ensuring the majority of the people have their basic necessities through the use of economical means and equipment in accordance with theoretical principles. Once a reasonably firm foundation has been laid and in effect, higher levels of economic growth and development should be promoted. If we were to concentrate

¹ Interview given to Denis Gray and Bart McDowell in *National Geographic*, Vol. 162, No. 4., October, 1982.



*From the hill tribes of the North to Muslims in the South,
His Majesty is revered by all his subjects.*



only on fast economic progress without allowing the plan of operation to harmonize with the conditions of the country and the people, an imbalance in various aspects would be caused and may bring about failure in the end, as we witness the serious economic crises currently faced by many a developed country.”¹

His Majesty insists that his approach is but a suggestion or idea to be examined, analyzed and tested by the government if it so pleases.

“A royal project is a royal opinion. If a royal opinion cannot be touched, it would mean that Thailand cannot progress.”²

If it proves feasible or appropriate, the decision to begin is a government one and the government is free to abandon projects as it sees fit.

The reasons underlying the king’s involvement in development can also be found in his place as a modern monarch in a democratic society. When His Majesty succeeded to the throne in 1946, democracy had already been installed and His Majesty himself had never lived in the country under absolute monarchy for any length of time. His experience had been in Europe, the birthplace of democratic thought. More credible then, that far from wishing any return to the administrative

¹ His Majesty addressing students at Kasetsart University, Thursday, 18 July, 1974.

² Royal address given at Chitralada Villa, 4 December, 1993.



structure of the past, he would be as in tune with the trends of the day as any of the leaders of the 1932 revolution. His more immediate concern at that time would have been to find a place for himself in Thai society; a place which would be acceptable within the bounds set for him under the constitution. It is under the constitution that the king is expressly named as Head of State, the leader of his people.

To understand how the Thai monarchy has reached the point where, without being involved in the administration of the country, it can have a direct effect on the people, one should also be aware of the spiritual and moral strength that the people derive from the king. In spite of recent political changes, these have largely not affected the institution of the monarchy itself.

It is worthwhile to consider in more detail His Majesty's approach to the implementation of royal projects. In the first place he stresses the importance of encouraging rural communities to be self-sufficient. At present, they lack awareness of how to conserve their environment. A major problem is the basic lack of knowledge in agricultural techniques and skills. For this reason His Majesty puts much emphasis on education and information. His Majesty has also emphasized small-scale development in two important areas: the establishment of strong, secure, rural communities and the basic facilities such as water supply and management needed for agricultural production. In the past,



economic backwardness, low standards of living, and poverty were common problems in rural areas. To a much reduced extent, they have remained and are being tackled, at present.

His Majesty has always stressed the need for a successful demonstration model in self-sufficiency. The preparation of rural communities for planned integration into the outside world has been called “the explosion from within outwards” by His Majesty.

In principle, His Majesty suggests that demonstration projects be spread throughout different regions after they have been tested for some time at research facilities and experimental stations in the grounds of Chitralada Villa. He maintains certain criteria. Firstly, the introduction of any new technology must concern production and be easy for the villagers to use.

A central theme of His Majesty’s sustainable development is the necessity of using natural resources efficiently and without waste. One of his earliest ideas for promoting this was germinated on the drive from Klai Kangwol Palace through Phetchaburi Province. His Majesty, looking out of his automobile at the rain trees lining the Phetchkasem Highway, developed the idea of using the sticky sap that could be collected from them as sealing wax.



His Majesty the King seeking information from local villagers in the South.



“My scheme arose from the idea that the rain tree could give employment to the local people.”¹

In all the royal-initiated projects His Majesty insists on production costs being kept to minimum. He encourages farmers to use buffaloes instead of machinery to plough their fields and supports the use of natural fertilizers rather than chemicals which are expensive and destroy the quality of the soil. This back-to-basics attitude could not have developed instantly the day he became king. His Majesty's early training as a child in Switzerland probably contributed something to his keen sense of “making do”.

However, His Majesty has made it clear that success cannot be achieved without the complete confidence and contribution of the people whom the projects are to affect.

Throughout his reign, His Majesty has used the tools at his disposal to ensure that the job got done. In the fifties, this involved a lot of private expense: in an early instance, 500,000 baht (equivalent to US\$ 25,000 in 1950) was provided out of the Privy Purse in 1950 to construct the Mahidol Wongsanuson Building. This personal sacrifice enabled research to be conducted into combating tuberculosis and a BCG vaccine to be produced.

¹ *His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and His Development Work, 1987.*



The Mahidol Wongsanuson Building, at the Thai Red Cross Society.



Outside of Bangkok and its environs during those early days of the fifties and sixties, His Majesty was faced with a situation where it would have proven impossible for long-term gains to be made whilst relying on his own limited resources and staff. In retrospect, it was necessary to create a sense of unity to attract human resources to the implementation of his ideas outside the palace walls. Agriculturists, irrigation experts and local government officials were to pass on their skills and to establish a basis for future development which the villagers could then carry forward themselves. This is amply illustrated by the establishment of cooperatives such as at the village of Hup Kaphong where the people were given the tools to help themselves.

Education was a primary objective of His Majesty, acknowledged by the fact that thirteen of the first twenty projects were for



the construction of schools. An educated people would, after all, be in a stronger position to fend for themselves. Later, this concept of self-help was expanded with the establishment of Royal development Study Centres which play a significant role in rural development.

Of the king's earliest projects, that is the period from 1952 to 1970, a considerable number involved education. His Majesty established eight Chao Pho Luang Upatham schools in Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Chiang Rai and Nan provinces and four welfare schools for needy children in Samut Prakan, Ratchaburi, Nakhon Phanom and Nan. The welfare schools, for primary and



Their Majesties visited Romklao School, Na Kae District, Nakhon Phanom Province on 30 October, 1963. This secondary school was initially funded by His Majesty's Privy Purse.



secondary education, were all situated in local temples which traditionally served as centres of learning in Thailand. From 1972, His Majesty began to establish Romklat schools, beginning with the one at Na Kae District in Nakhon Phanom Province in the Northeast. Most were situated in sensitive areas during the late seventies and early eighties when events in neighbouring countries to the north and the east threatened to spill over and disrupt Thailand's tranquillity and unity. In the remote areas bordering Laos, the conditions were often dangerous and civilian teachers were replaced by military of Border Patrol Police (BPP), a well-equipped security force which patrols the fringes of the kingdom. The cooperation thus generated between the security services and the local people contributed much to the stability of remote parts of Thailand at that time and still continue to serve the people up to the present.

During the battles to protect the nation against outside forces, many good men and women gave their lives and many others were permanently scarred or crippled. His Majesty looked compassionately on those who had served their country and had fallen on hard times. He set up the Phra Dabot School in 1976 to accept poor students who could not afford to attend other occupational training schools due to poverty



The recipients of the Ananda Mahidol Scholarship being granted an audience with His Majesty before furthering their studies abroad.



Phra Dabot School offers courses in mechanics and technology to people so that they can use their knowledge to earn a living.

and being crippled war veterans. The trainers are all volunteers who give their time to assist those who have given so much for their country. The first course the school conducted provided training in radio and



electronics and was attended by nine trainees. The name *Phra Dabot* comes from the legendary hermits who taught people skills to earn a living.

The building of schools, the training of teachers, and educational administration training all need time, careful planning and investment. His Majesty realized that as the school children's population grew, the need for education became more pressing. In 1995 His Majesty initiated the distance learning via satellite project and a year later set up the distance learning foundation to provide the project with financial sustainability, as public contributions followed the King's initial seed funds.

The Hua-Hin based Wang Klai Kangwol School under His Majesty's patronage became the centre of operations which involved secondary school level education, teaching Thai, English, Chinese, Mathematics and Science—Chemistry and Physics. Several years later the Wang Klai Kangwol School offered courses at the primary level, selecting the most competent and experienced teachers of the subjects at both academic levels. And more recently vocational education was offered for those who could not continue into the tertiary or college level. Learning has been natural and interactive.



Within a period of 10 years, under the dedicated and competent leadership of the Director of School and Chairman of the Executive Board Distance Learning Foundation, Mr. Khwankeo Vajarodaya, the project has been able to expand in broadcasting through both educational and instructive television covering 3,000 secondary and 7,000 primary schools nationwide. The past four years have seen constant extension so that, not only does the number of beneficiary schools and students constantly increase, but also the high standard of teaching and substance of knowledge and information has been kept uniform for all recipient schools and students. Indeed, systematic follow-up show over 90 percent of graduates of Rajaprajanugroh Schools

His Majesty presenting a plaque to H.E. Mr. Yan Ting Ai, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, in appreciation of the Chinese Government's support to the Distance Learning Foundation, 21 November 2002.



His Majesty teaching students of Wang Klai Kangwol School in the programme "Quest for Knowledge".

up to grade 12 were able to enter colleges and universities, especially Kasem Bundit University, and that many graduates of the latter received first and second class honours.

The Klai Kangwol Distance Learning Foundation has established links with schools in neighbouring countries of Lao PDR, Vietnam and Southern regions of China such as Yunan. Schools and institutions linked to the parent Klai Kangwol Distance Learning School can receive broadcast programmes, for example, teaching of English and Chinese. The 14-year old school has collaborated with Oregon State University in the USA and several other



universities in neighbouring countries. On 3 February 2006 Ambassador Christopher S. Mero of Papua New Guinea who had visited Wang Klai Kangwol School wrote:

“We watched with great interest and admiration the telecast by satellite from Wang Klai Kangwol School. The Distance Learning Foundation’s rural distance education programme indeed is an exemplary model that should be highly recommended to many developing countries... .

With our own Telecom management involvement in this visit we hope that Papua New Guinea in future can adopt similar rural distance education with the provision of satellite system which our Prime Minister is very keen to provide for the country... ”

On another occasion, Mr. Frans Poptie, member of the Dutch Photo-journalist Organization and of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) wrote after visiting the Klai Kangwol Distance Learning School :

“...I was surprised and impressed in what I saw. Surprised because I saw children being filmed in a classroom, and being themselves, and not acting. Impressed because of the way this school contributed to the education programme here in Thailand.

I think this project of His Majesty the King is unique in all its form...”



His Majesty's early support to higher level, or tertiary education, has been by way of presiding over and personally presenting degrees to undergraduates and graduates of universities in the 1960's. However, more recently, due to the rapid growth and increasing numbers of courses and universities, other members of the Royal Family have taken up the task to honour and encourage the new course graduates.

In 1965, His Majesty King Bhumibol revitalized the tradition of the King's Scholarship. The original King's Scholarship had been set up by King Chulalongkorn as a means of sending bright people to Western countries to study so that when they returned they would be able to help modernize the country. Once the scholarship committee chooses a recipient, he or she can rest assured of being among the elite of Thailand's high school graduates. The selection committee is charged with finding quality candidates who, it is hoped, will work for the country upon their graduation from university and thus assist in the development of the nation as a whole.

The King's scholarships continue to be provided to the country's top students, who although not obligated to return home to become a government official, like those who have won government scholarships, tend to return home and assist in the research and development work for the



A children's encyclopedia set.

country. Graduates from top universities in the USA, UK, and European universities, the King's scholarship awardees have held important academic and administrative positions in the country.

There are very few scholarship recipients studying abroad or studying in Thailand at the undergraduate level in any one year, and this makes them a very privileged group. Rich or poor may win a scholarship, depending on their academic quality. The King's scholarships are offered in nine fields of study, namely, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics, Engineering, Language and Literature, Law, Mathematics, and Political Science. Moreover, His Majesty has also introduced the Ananda Mahidol Scholarships in various fields at the graduate level.

In 1968, His Majesty invited the nation's top educators to an audience at which he outlined his idea for a new type of



children's encyclopedia to be funded by the Privy Purse. Until then Thailand had really lacked a comprehensive source of knowledge to which all ages could turn. His Majesty expressed the concept of an encyclopedia which could be read and understood at three levels. A multi-leveled encyclopedia was at the time a unique idea. The first level was for children up to ten years of age and was in large type. It was to offer children of primary school age a simple and concise explanation. The second level, for ages ten to fifteen years, was to be in smaller type and contain more details, while the third level, for advanced students, was in normal type and as complete as possible. The idea of this multi-level approach was that children would be stimulated to teach their younger siblings what they had read and could use the larger text for simplified explanations. Another unique aspect was that science and technology were linked to Thai culture and traditional values. One typical subject, an eclipse, is explained in scientific terms and with a diagram, while the alternate picture is of the god Rahu swallowing up the moon, which was the traditional explanation. In this way, His Majesty wished to accelerate society's progress through education. His Majesty expanded on his concept of this children's encyclopedia in 1969.

"An encyclopedia should be accurate and informative, without the



need for biased judgement. It should be clear and lucid and, in subjects of law, be easily understood by children, without facts which may unintentionally confuse or mislead them.”¹

Above and beyond the practical aspect of providing information and knowledge to children in this manner, His Majesty demonstrated once again his perceptive insight regarding the integration and interrelationship of all things in life. On the same occasion, he added,

“Our main objective, however, is not in giving knowledge, but that all branches of knowledge form the basis of unity and strength of a nation and even of all mankind. Economics, for example, is related to science, history, linguistics and geography. Our foremost objective is for encyclopedia users to realize the indivisibility of our world and the interdependence among nations. Our life forms part of the common entity and we must act for the common good. Most people do not realize that arts and music are related to science; they will do so upon reading the encyclopedia.”²

His Majesty’s projects were designed to assist villagers to earn a decent liveli-

¹ Royal speech given to the Board of Directors of Lions International District 310 (Thailand and Laos), at Chitralada Villa, Thursday 25 September, 1969.

² Ibid.



His Majesty conversing with the villagers of Ban Jobakong while observing the topography on his visit to Ban Jobakong, Su-ngai Kolok, Narathiwat Province.



hood and to allow them the confidence to practise their rural occupations with dignity, and escape from poverty. “We are not fighting against people. We are fighting against hunger,” he noted when asked about an insurgency.¹ Law-keeping forces, the military and the police for instance, were soon to discover that development was a much cheaper and long-lasting defence against insurgency than jungle patrols and firefights, leading them to throw their support behind His Majesty’s work. It was as if a dam had been breached. What had begun as a trickle of hope in remote provinces such as Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son and Nan, which received 66, or 79.5 percent, of the 83 royal-initiated projects between 1952 and 1976, burst forth into a torrent of large and small activities aimed especially at those disadvantaged and often dispossessed people, with 181 projects being implemented in 1977 and 1978 alone.

To get things to snowball in the manner they did must have required a great deal of hard work and the support of many people. His Majesty was quick to acknowledge this on many occasions:

“Everyone must know that there are others also who have their own duties and that each individual must also depend on the work of other individuals.”²

¹ From the BBC documentary *Soul of a Nation*, 1979.

² Royal address at Chitralada Villa, 4 December, 1989.



His Majesty was tireless in immersing himself in the study of subjects related to potential projects down to the last detail. His thorough understanding of sustainable development issues, water and soil management, assisted him in convincing many observers of the pragmatism of his plans, providing the people with the technical information they would need to achieve the objectives of his plans.

With 490 projects already in place by 1981, it is a little difficult to grasp the tremendous struggle which must have gone into the organization of so many activities in areas of the country which were considered inaccessible at the time. On consideration, one would probably surmise that His Majesty is indeed a “Superman”, and indeed he once remarked that he had read that famous comic strip and readily understood the perils of being a superman,¹ wryly noting that having been raised to that level, people immediately hope that one will prove fallible. More familiar to the ordinary reader, though, is the idea that His Majesty is a natural leader of men: one to whom others look toward as a trusted guide and a human being who commands respect.

The trend towards closer cooperation with government agencies can be seen by close examination of the list of projects which were initiated and implemented over the

¹ *Leaders* magazine interview, April-June, 1982.



first thirty years of His Majesty's reign. Initial experimentation within or near to royal residences, beginning with the projects inside Chitralada Villa or in the vicinity of Klai Kangwol Palace in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, during the fifties and sixties, evolved into greater assistance from government departments, eventually culminating in the establishment of a state agency, the Royal Development Projects Board, in 1981 to conduct the coordination work and monitor implementation.

From early on, His Majesty was able to secure the assistance of the Border Patrol Police. It was the BPP that lent its bulldozers to the job of constructing a road to Huai Mongkhon Village, His Majesty's first rural development project. This division of the Police Department played an important role in the development of inaccessible regions in His Majesty's name. They assisted in constructing many schools in such areas with donations from His Majesty's Privy Purse. In the Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai areas, where part of their official responsibility is narcotics suppression, the BPP also take part in the drug rehabilitation programmes of the Royal Project. The Princess Mother visited their camps on several occasions to show her support for the tough and dangerous work they undertake.



His Majesty views the impounding dam for irrigation purpose.

Another department that supported the king's development projects was the Royal Irrigation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives which contributed a lot to the safe and practical implementation of many of His Majesty's suggestions whenever water conservation or collection was to be planned and implemented. The heads of the department over the years have attended on His Majesty's visits to rural areas and helped to provide needed data. Indeed His Majesty has become one of





Thailand's leading exponents in the field of irrigation and sustainable rural development.

Prior to the establishment of a state agency to coordinate and assist in royal-initiated projects, much of the administrative support for His Majesty's projects came from a section in the Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary, located in the environs of the Grand Palace.

This section was the subject of a reorganization by the government of M.R. Kukrit Pramoj in 1975, when His Majesty's Personal Affairs Division was given a new section to deal exclusively with the king's projects.

The projects undertaken by the Royal Initiative Section, now a division, play a very important role in supporting His Majesty's work. This division coordinates the placement of various types of donation made directly to His Majesty, among other duties, and these donations can often run into millions of baht. Besides cash and cheques, donors offer to His Majesty land and property that they wish to be utilized for the benefit of royal development work or projects. The range of such projects is broad indeed, covering agricultural improvement, animal husbandry, irrigation, soil management, fishery, occupational training and education, rice banks and even buffalo banks. Naturally, national development is too much for any one man, no matter how hard-working, or even for a division in the palace administration, however willing.



His Majesty going over the details with the irrigation engineers.

Eventually, this was acknowledged by the Prem Tinsulanonda Government which fully realized the significance of His Majesty's project for the development of the nation. In 1981, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of a special committee to coordinate royal projects with the relevant agencies. This highly respected former Prime Minister and current President of the Privy Council recalls that he was simply following His Majesty's lead in setting up the Royal Development Projects Board¹, but without doubt, it was a crucial step forward in the establishment of continuing rural development in the country.

¹ Taken from an interview with General Prem Tinsulanonda, August, 1994.



The board could not have been as productive as it has been without some rather influential members, and General Prem's choice includes a startlingly concise collection of *ex officio* members specially selected for their ability to generate action. With the Prime Minister as its chairman, the Board includes His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary and other top palace personnel, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries of Finance, Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Interior, Science, Technology and Environment; the Secretaries-General of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) and the Royal Development Projects Board.¹

The board encompasses a wide range of state assistance for the royal projects, in effect taking over once the experimentation or testing has proven successful. As the coordinating agency which employs state technical and human resources, the board supervises project implementation to ensure plans are followed and resources utilized effectively. During 1994-1996, the board's secretary-general, Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul, held the concurrent position of Secretary-General of the NESDB, further cementing the relationship between the projects and state planning.

¹ *Office of the Royal Development Projects Board, His Majesty the King Reigning in the Hearts of His Subjects. Bangkok, 1995.*



In establishing the royal-initiated projects, His Majesty had the support of the other members of the Royal Family. In his childhood, his parents set a great example of sacrifice and dedication to the sick and poor. Throughout her lifetime, the Princess Mother initiated many of her own projects



to assist the hilltribesmen who lived by her northern residence at Doi Tung and elsewhere. Such was her impact on the development of health care for them that, having introduced a Volunteer Flying Doctors' Service in 1964 to reach these people so far from civilization, Her Royal Highness was lovingly referred to ever after as "the Royal Mother from the Sky".

By 1973 alone, the service had made 700 flights and treated about 250,000 people. Many people who lived in remote areas and rarely saw outsiders were surprised, to say the least, when a helicopter descended and out bounded the Princess Mother in trousers, sunglasses and often a beret, to see things



The Princess Mother visiting and distributing gifts to villagers.

for herself. Public sentiment plays a great part in such work. At one time paid for solely from her own pocket, the project work is now coordinated by a central committee set up in 1969 to receive donations from many private and public resources. The State Lottery Office, for instance, provides about one million baht per annum for the Princess Mother's Charities Fund of Thailand. By her hard work and self-sacrifice, the Princess Mother has endeared herself to the whole nation. Later in life, she stood as an example to people of ageless gentility. Her calm, down-to-earth demeanour has gained the trust and respect of millions. Little wonder, then, that her passing away in July 1995 was mourned by the entire nation.



Her Majesty Queen Sirikit.

If “behind every successful man there is a woman”, without doubt Her Majesty the Queen is the most devoted admirer and supporter of His Majesty’s work. She has accompanied the king on all of his visits abroad and most of his visits to the provinces since their wedding. Her moral support for his work is reflected in the many photographs and television programmes that describe her own contributions to Thailand’s prosperity. She has helped tremendously in



*Their Majesties on a tour
of a SUPPORT project.*

supporting His Majesty's work, especially in reforestation and supplementing the villagers' income through training for the production of Thai handicrafts made from indigenous raw materials.

The start came in 1972, on a visit accompanying the king to Nakhon Phanom Province in the far northeastern corner of Thailand on the banks of the mighty Mekong River. This has always been a particularly impoverished area of the country, but one that has a flourishing and distinctive regional culture. Her Majesty became aware that the locally made tie-dyed silk, called *mudmee*, was a beautiful village product that had fallen from grace in urban fashion. Realizing that farming villagers could derive extra income from cloth production if interest could once again be stirred in the minds of city-dwellers, Her Majesty decided to fund a project to start silk production on a larger



*Her Majesty
observing local
weaving under
the SUPPORT
Foundation.*



scale than previously, even supporting silkworm farms to ensure a supply of raw material.

While the initial response from some villagers was skeptical, their attitude changed when people noted the improvement in the income of those who had participated. Today, literally thousands of villagers now weave mudmee and other silks under the auspices of Her Majesty's initiative. Her Majesty had discovered a new vocation as a crafts revivalist. In the south of Thailand, Her Majesty was attracted to the delicate basketry made of a local vine called *Yan Lipao*, and to the north near Myanmar and Laos, she admired the silver and gold articles produced by local artisans. In 1974, Her Majesty initiated a Yan Lipao weaving group in Narathiwat



Province. Things were accelerating rapidly and in 1976, the Foundation for the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques, or SUPPORT, was set up.

A royal handbag made of Yan Lipao.

Since the founding of the SUPPORT Foundation, Her Majesty has personally helped to promote the exquisite Thai handicrafts abroad to Europe, Japan, and the United States, winning even more markets and demands for them than the local villagers' ability to produce them in time. Perhaps the best-known centre of crafts training in Thailand is an offshoot of SUPPORT, the Bangsai Folk Arts and Crafts Centre, founded in 1980, near Ayutthaya,



Some handicrafts of the SUPPORT Foundation.

which gives poor families the chance to learn supplementary occupations and train others in the same techniques. Her Majesty's reflection on her chosen work is an indicator of the Royal Family's drive to help the people:

"I feel proud that Thais can still make such beautiful things and that doing it will enable our people to stand on their own feet. This is our real purpose, to help them help themselves."¹

¹ William Warren, "A Queen's Gift," *Reader's Digest*, June, 1984.



*H.R.H. Crown Prince
Maha Vajiralongkorn.*

Yet this is a Royal Family with a difference. Its members try to contribute to the national weal. The royal children are no exception to this and each has his or her own projects to follow and encourage. Their Majesties' son, H.R.H. Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn, was conferred the title of *Somdech Phra Boroma Orasadhiraj Chao Fah Maha Vajiralongkorn Sayam Makutrajakuman* by His Majesty the King on 28 December, 1972, making him the heir to the throne. His Royal Highness was educated in England



The Crown Prince observing the activities of the Special Task Force in Swanbourne, Australia on 28 April, 1999.

and Australia, graduating from the Royal Military College, Duntroon, Australia, on 9 December, 1975. He has served in the Royal Thai Army since then, first holding the position of Commanding General of the King's Own Bodyguard Regiment and in 1992 taking up the position of Commanding General, Royal Security Command at the Office of the Supreme Command. Besides holding the rank of General in the Royal Thai Army, the Crown Prince is an Admiral of the Royal Thai Navy and an Air Chief Marshal of the Royal Thai Air Force.

Though a career soldier, H.R.H. Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn has taken a keen interest in the welfare of the Thai people.



The Crown Prince visits patients at Sakon Maha Sangkha Parinayok III Building at Somdej Phra Yuppharat (Crown Prince) Hospital, Chom Bueng, Ratchaburi Province.

Having once assisted in counter-insurgency programmes in the distant provinces of the country like Trat, he is all too aware of the shortages in health care and other benefits that affect the lives of these people and set up several hospitals in 1977. The Chawang Crown Prince Hospital in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Yaha Crown Prince Hospital in Yala, Saiburi Crown Prince Hospital in Pattani and others in Kalasin, Ubon Ratchathani and Udon Thani were established specifically to fulfill the need in remote areas of the country. His Royal Highness followed up their establishment with personal visits to ensure that the patients are well looked after. He is familiar with the workings of several of His Majesty's projects, having observed the Royal Medical Unit in action in Narathiwat and visited the Pikun Thong Royal Development Study Centre there.

Perhaps the most significant role of the Crown Prince in recent years has been



*H.R.H. Crown Prince
Maha Vajiralongkorn,
accompanied by Their
Royal Highnesses Princess
Srirasm, the Royal Consort,
Princess Bajrakitiyabha,
Princess Sirivannavaree
Nariratana and Prince
Dipangkorn Rasmijoti.*



a representative of his father, a duty that he increasingly takes on as he immerses himself more deeply into the mechanics of being the heir apparent to the Thai throne. He is now familiar with many of the world's heads of state and royal families, having met, among others, Queen Elizabeth II in October 1996 and Bill Clinton, President of the United States and his wife Hillary in November of the same year. One may say that the Crown Prince is now Thailand's foremost ambassador, a role that he enthusiastically undertakes, from visiting the Holy See in Rome for an audience with Pope John Paul II in 1985 to the heart of China for meetings with its former leader Deng Xiaoping in 1987.

Even with his many duties on behalf of his king and country, the Crown Prince has often accompanied his royal father on visits overseas.



*H.R.H. Princess Maha
Chakri Sirindhorn.*

Their Majesties second eldest daughter, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn has supported her father in every aspect of his work. Her insights, therefore, are authoritative and invariably truthful.

“One cannot distinguish one project from the other, cannot say this is the king’s, this is the queen’s. Somehow, they are all interlocked,”

she pointed out in 1984, and the same could be said for the projects of the royal children.

H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn pays special attention to the education and health of school children.



*Her Majesty the Queen
and H.R.H. Princess
Maha Chakri Sirindhorn
visiting the Lisu School,
Sam Ngao District,
Tak Province.*

Whereas free school lunches for all children is still a dream, H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, popularly known as ***Somdech Phra Thep***, introduced the idea of school vegetable plots to subsidize the diets of school children. The vegetables grown by the children themselves are a valuable source of vitamins for their daily diet. For all her efforts, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn is characteristically modest about her own contribution, preferring instead to frame her work within the context of her father's example,

“Wherever His Majesty passes will in the succeeding years show a great improvement: the people's health is better; the environment is better; the economic situation is better. Such improvement makes all our exhausting work and the financial support that has



been provided completely worthwhile.”¹

And how exhausting it is! Besides the day-to-day duties of all the royal children, closely followed each day in televised evening news from the Royal Household, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn tirelessly travels around the kingdom visiting all regions, Central Plains, South, North, Northeast, representing Their Majesties. Even beyond Thai borders to neighbouring Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the Princess has visited several times the Agricultural Development and Service Centre in Vientiane, based on His Majesty’s

H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn during a visit to the 11th Border Patrol Police Patronage School, Mae Suai District, Chiang Rai Province.

¹ *Secretariat Office of the Coordinating Committee for Royal Development Projects, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and His Development Work, (1987). Bangkok : p. 25.*



Rural students in impoverished region being given royal-sponsored lunch.





*H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn harvesting Rice
at the Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy*

Royal Development Study Centres in Thailand. She has also visited the Orphanage Cultural School about forty kilometres from Vientiane.

Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn is a writer and linguist, speaking several European languages as well as Chinese. She is rarely seen without a notebook and her observations during her travels abroad have appeared in print in Thai over the years.



H.R.H. Princess Chulabhorn.

Their Majesties' youngest daughter, H.R.H. Princess Chulabhorn, is a renowned research chemist who runs her own Chulabhorn Foundation, established in 1986, and the Chulabhorn Research Institute, established in 1987, not far from Bangkok International Airport. She graduated from the Faculty of Science and



Arts at Kasetsart University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Organic Chemistry, First Class Honours, in 1979. Her Royal Highness completed her doctorate work in Organic Chemistry in 1985, and received her Doctor of Philosophy Degree from Mahidol University in July of the same year.

H.R.H. Princess Chulabhorn receiving the Einstein Gold Medal from Dr. M. Bow of UNESCO, France, 24 October, 1976.

Her Royal Highness has taken a serious interest in the conservation of the environment and the use of natural products. To this end she established the Princess Chulabhorn Science Congress Programme which brought together noted experts who were provided a forum to exchange ideas and notes on various issues. The First Congress for instance, held in Bangkok in December 1987 took as its subject natural



H.R.H. Princess Chulabhorn presenting His Majesty with a book on the 4th Princess Chulabhorn Science Congress, 1999, organized in honour of His Majesty on his 72nd birthday anniversary.

products while the Second Congress, in 1992, approached the subjects of the environment, science and technology. Through diligence and an obvious devotion to the development of the sciences in Thailand, the Princess has built up a considerable reputation in scientific circles. She has been recognized internationally by such organizations as the United Nations Environment Programme, to which she was appointed special advisor from 1993 to 1995, the World Health Organization, which made her its Ambassador of Goodwill between 1993 and 1994, the Heritage Trust in England, which made her its Honorary President from 1988 to 1990 and the UN Scientific and Technical Committee for the International Decade for Natural Disaster



H.R.H. Princess Chulabhorn at the University of Illinois, U.S.A. where she was invited as a special lecturer.

Reduction, to which she was invited to be a member in 1990.

Due to her international scientific stature, Princess Chulabhorn is often invited to perform professional duties overseas, that is when she is not attending lectures and seminars in order to increase her own knowledge. From 1988 to 1989 she was Visiting Professor of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacognosy at the University of Illinois, U.S.A. following a one year stint as Visiting Professor at Tokyo University of Agriculture, returning to Japan in 1989 as Visiting Professor at Ehime University. She has also lectured at Stanford, Northwestern and Utah universities in the U.S.A. and Alberta and Montreal universities in Canada, and attended symposia and seminars in her own right as a professor of chemistry many times.

All the while she has devoted herself to scientific study, this royal princess has also ensured that her work will be of benefit



*H.R.H. Princess Chulabhorn
lecturing at Alberta
University, Canada.*

to the people of her country. Following the devastation by floods of several southern provinces in 1989 for instance, she taught the local people the need to plant trees with deep roots to bind the soil through her Programme on Restoration and Integrated Development of the Flood Affected Areas in Southern Thailand. Several of her special projects are closely linked to those of her father, though under her direct control, like the Saltwater Irrigation for Cultivation of Economic Marine Species and Preservation of Mangrove Forest, and the Special Project for Accelerated Immunization in Five Southern Provinces of Thailand.

Like all children of Their Majesties, Princess Chulabhorn gives herself freely to charitable events, sometimes offering her voice or her expertise, for instance, leading the Royal Medical Unit into Battambang in Cambodia in 1993 on a medical mercy mission. Princess Chulabhorn is indeed no exception to the rule that Thailand's Royal Family is a very hard working family.



KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
Our Loss is Our Gain



*Local wisdom plays an important part in His Majesty's
project planning and implementation.*



Our Loss is Our Gain

In the 1950's the economic situation following the Second World War had not improved sufficiently for central regional development work to reach many of the outlying parts of the countryside. Nevertheless, the monarch was quick to point out that the only way to gain in the long term was to accept personal financial losses in the short term. His Majesty has dubbed this homemade philosophical outlook *Our Loss is Our Gain*. Later, in 1991, His Majesty explained his principle thus:

“In any venture, we are willing to put in money and effort which may seem useless, but in the end we may be able to reap the fruits directly or indirectly. This is the very duty of the government. If we want the people to be prosperous, we have to invest in development projects which will involve budgets of hundreds or many thousands of millions. This means a loss of money, a deficit, a debit using the government's money; that is the government will have to ask for a budget, which, in fact, comes from the people's money. However, if the project is a good one, the people will very soon get benefit from it, the result of it.”



Nevertheless, if we look closer, we will see that if the people enjoy a better standard of living, have a good income, the government will be able to levy more taxes more easily; there will be less tax evasion. People who have a better income will be able to pay more taxes.”¹

His Majesty is acutely aware of the importance of farmers to the economy of Thailand:

“Our economy has traditionally been based upon agriculture. The national income which has contributed to creating

¹ *Royal speech on the occasion of the Royal Birthday Anniversary, Wednesday, 4 December, 1991.*



prosperity to the country has been derived mainly from agricultural productivity. It can therefore be said that the nation's prosperity relies to a large extent on ensuring the prosperity of agriculture.”¹

The king has taken great pains to explain on several occasions the need to work together for economic progress to ensure the stability and unity of the country. His Majesty brought this home in 1968, when he said, “one should remember that it is necessary to assist each other to improve stability and progress for the nation.”² With this statement, His Majesty appeared to be quite explicit that he did not believe he should, or even could, attempt to save the country single-handedly as some might have believed. This obviously took on more urgency with the threat posed by insurgents in the 1970's to the health of the state as a whole.

The border provinces of Nan and Loei were remote, and mountain areas therein were difficult to access. On many occasions during the communist insurgency in the 1960's and 1970's, the helicopter was the only way in and out of many of the villages

¹ *The Secretariat Office of the Coordinating Committee for Royal Development Projects. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and His Development Work, Bangkok : 1987. p. 26.*

² *Royal speech at the garden party, Sivalai Garden, Sunday, 8 December, 1968.*



located in mountainous jungle areas. If that period was a battle for the hearts and minds of the people, it was done so with a great deal of compassion on behalf of the king. Practical education on how to grow enough food to live peacefully, was a key point of the early projects. Throughout the Kingdom during this time of peace, education is a gift received with gratitude. The people of Thailand are still largely farmers. Their lives are afflicted by ignorance, poverty and disease. Solving such afflictions is, therefore, a supreme sacrifice considering the amount of work it entails. Yet, His Majesty is always at the forefront of solving such problems because he has a sense of purpose rooted in an understanding of the true situation of his people.

The approach used by His Majesty in initiating agricultural projects is not just to throw money at the rural communities in Thailand. He is most careful to conduct the necessary research and tests before putting ideas into practice.

Although the development of agriculture has always been an aim of national development, a major problem is low productivity. The areas that the king visits are still using old-fashioned methods and grow only one crop per year. Farmers often cannot feed themselves and some areas are not capable of commercial production. If they do not work as a group or cooperative they are in a weak position



Their Majesties harvest rice in the demonstration field in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province.

to deal with merchants and buyers. There is inadequate support from the government for research and experimentation. His Majesty's interest in cash crops such as mulberry trees, rubber trees and herbs, and new breeds of livestock such as buffaloes, sheep, goats and fowl, has forced him to take the necessary action to see that at least some studies are conducted.

Many factors are considered in research, such as whether a crop is suitable, whether the soil is suitable or which plants can grow in which soil. His Majesty emphasizes that farmers must grow what the market demands. Research must show whether a crop is appropriate for the market and whether it is of good quality. Farmers are given basic knowledge of agricultural marketing and book-keeping because, as His Majesty says, *"To succeed in farming,*



H.R.H. the Crown Prince broadcasting rice seeds in a Suphan Buri paddy field.

we must acquire knowledge of agriculture, marketing and elementary economics.”¹

Nevertheless, His Majesty has been the first to really understand that his projects would do no one any good if they remained at the drawing-board stage, as it were. He notes that, *“Agriculture or the agricultural way of life has to be actually put into practice or lived. One cannot only rely on academic books and studies.”²* His Majesty rarely wastes time in implementing a project.

¹ *Royal speech delivered to members of the Thai-Israeli Demonstration and Experimental Centre, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Wednesday, 14 May, 1972.*

² *Secretariat Office of the Coordinating Committee for Royal Development Projects, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and His Development work. (Bangkok : 1987). p. 38.*



H.R.H. Princess
Maha Chakri Sirindhorn
ploughing a field in the
Vacant Land Development
Project, initiated by her at
Chulachomklao Royal
Military Academy,
Nakhon Nayok Province.



“Some people say that the royal projects are not done according to the rules and regulations. Still, we consider that wherever a project is possible, we must promptly implement that project, even though there has not been a bid for a contract or even if the cost factor seems to be slightly higher than what it should be.”¹

Accordingly, His Majesty’s projects in the sixties began to increase at an exponential rate with some support from government agencies. In reaction to this growth, the projects were systematized and rationalized so as to complement the government’s work, at the same time guided by His Majesty’s principle that the development projects should be directly beneficial to the people and consistent with the local physical, climatic and socio-environmental conditions. Furthermore, the royal-initiated projects have had as their primary objective that the rural

¹ Royal address given at Chitralada Villa, 4 December, 1991.



population should be encouraged to be self-reliant; that in the end, state support will decrease as the people learn how to improve their own lot.

While the number of projects now stands at more than three thousand, one may classify them generally as encompassing education, the environment, public health and welfare, soil, water resources and irrigation. It is difficult to categorize them as being wholly one type or another. This is because of His Majesty's concept of integration.

Water-related projects are a case in point. Water is essential for drinking purposes and for the propagation of agriculture. In many of the areas of Thailand affected by drought this can have great importance. But the reasons for the lack of water cannot be seen solely as a lack of rainfall. There are other reasons, for instance, sandy soil absorbs the rainfall as soon as the water meets it. Thus, one is left asking the question: do projects dedicated to soil research and the use of various plants to bind the soil and hence keep water in, count as "*water projects*"? A similar conundrum exists in the case of dairy herds. In order to create the necessary pasture for the herds, water and watersheds have to be preserved as integral segments of the project. It becomes difficult to tell which takes precedence, the dairy farm or the water resource.



His Majesty inspecting the progress of the construction of water sources development project.



His Majesty is extremely conscious of the fact that rice is the staple diet of Thai people and, even though other foodstuffs are introduced whenever possible to vary sources of income, it is with rice that many of the projects are either directly or indirectly concerned, whether by the introduction of irrigation methods, soil management or symbiotic relations with other plants. Rice is an essential part of life in Thailand, underpinning the rural way of life. While people in the urban areas now enjoy a more varied diet than in the past, His Majesty is careful to work in harmony with the social and cultural environment, initiating simple projects which dictate that rice production and its development remain an important focus point for many years to come in rural development efforts.

As mentioned earlier, His Majesty favours the face-to-face approach when gathering information regarding local conditions in preparation for a new project.



Always equipped with a map to help in his development work, His Majesty, accompanied by H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, conversing with villagers.

His meticulously collected data will be compared with local conditions and discussed with the villagers themselves. Usually a small group of villagers and local government officials will gather around a map prepared by the king. Newspapers frequently feature this set-up in their pictures. His Majesty's ability to read a map with deep understanding — from the depths of hilly depressions to the direction of the nearest forested watershed — is crucial to his visit. If one were to look closer at these maps, one would be surprised to see that they are sometimes a patchwork of several satellite photographs stuck together by the king himself. As often as not, they are also dotted with extra details in coloured



pencil, pointing out significant topographical features. A skilful cartographer, His Majesty prepares his own maps and may be seen referring to them consistently throughout a visit to the countryside. Having a solid comprehension of the terrain before arrival, His Majesty wastes little time in familiarizing himself with the area. This considerably accelerates the decision-making process when it is included with the on-site inspection, a technique recognized nowadays by planners and referred to as “Rapid Rural Appraisal.”

If His Majesty can gather all the statistical and topographical information from Bangkok, why go all the way to a remote village to see it first-hand?

“Development must take account of the local environment in terms of the physical environment, the sociological environment and the cultural environment. By the local sociological environment, we mean certain characteristics and ways of thinking which we cannot force people to change. We can only suggest. We cannot go in to help people by trying to make them the same as us. However, if we go in and find out what the people really want and then fully explain how they can best achieve their aims, the principles of development can be successfully applied.”¹

¹ *Ibid.*



To understand His Majesty's philosophy about the purpose of the royal-initiated projects one must bear in mind that one of the main principles is that a project must utilize local resources. Each project should be integrated, with several agencies cooperating on the same spot. Methods and technology should be simple and inexpensive for the local people. It is then easy to understand that there is no urgency in introducing urban-level standards of living in one bold step to rural communities as this would obviously have a negative impact on the local people's traditional way of life. His Majesty's idea behind many of the royal projects has been that the first step in rural development must come before the second step: that is, the basic needs and standard of living must be established before any radical improvement can possibly be considered.

It stands to reason that giving the people the means of producing their own income — of taking care of themselves and warding off hunger and sickness — is a practical solution that can be achieved in the here and now. It has been an arduous — though far from thankless — task, of course, but by advocating that the people earn their own living so that they can sustain themselves with adequate means, His Majesty ensures that those who are gainfully employed and self supporting are capable of contributing positively towards higher levels of development. Therefore, one finds that projects are



His Majesty gathering information from the villagers for his development projects.



implemented for the purpose of acting as models for the people to visit and learn from: a form of “see and do.”

Finding supplementary incomes for the people has also been high on His Majesty’s list of priorities. Farming or fishing can provide food, but in many cases is not sufficient to raise the living standards of the people by a substantial degree. The schools that His Majesty sponsors and the training available at many of the development study centres established around the country not only give more knowledge of rice farming but also try to introduce new crops which can vary the diet of the people and give them enough excess produce to sell and earn cash. For those who wish to go into other forms of business, arts and crafts are encouraged to promote extra incomes and keep alive the traditions and culture of the people.



*KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
For the Love of the People*



His subjects' well-being is always uppermost in His Majesty's mind.



For the Love of the People

As a leader in the field of national development for over sixty years, His Majesty has demonstrated his intrinsic ability to work closely with other people and agencies and to bring these people together for a common purpose. When His Majesty embarked on small projects within the grounds of Chitralada Villa, he was the driving force behind the experiments into fish breeding and forest preservation. However, as we have seen, these experiments grew from modest proposals into a full-blown vocation, requiring greater involvement by other individuals and groups.

In order to make his ideas work, therefore, His Majesty has to gather people around him. He has to get opinions and find the people to carry out the ground-work. Such has been the enthusiasm of the people to participate and give their support that the work gets off to a very quick start. Maybe one can also attribute this to the absence, in His Majesty's initiatives, of any complex procedure or "red tape" and the flexibility in project implementation. An illustration of the speed with which people are able to get things going if they are



*On each of his visits to people in the countryside,
His Majesty initiates thought on water sources development.*



unified was given by His Majesty himself during an audience on 4 December, 1993. During this audience reference was made to the reservoir that now exists at Huai Lan, San Kamphaeng District, in the north of Thailand. The local villagers had requested a reservoir, and His Majesty turned to the engineers who accompany him on such visits to ask whether the idea was feasible. They affirmed it was. After the initial conversation on 26 February, 1987, work was able to begin by the first of March, three days later, and the project concluded one year later. The reason, His Majesty explained, is that *“we must all assist each other, cooperate with one another without too much quarrelling.”*¹ another reason is the swift, “no nonsense” attitude of the monarch himself,

*“Some people say that the royal projects are not done according to the rules and regulations. That is true.”*²

The fact that he has managed to do that with wholehearted support for over sixty years suggests a unique authority as a natural leader of men. A foreign observer may hazard a guess that His Majesty is in a singular position to demand assistance and break the rules. This is not really the case, however, since under the Constitution the monarch has a well-defined role and accompanying rights — none of which legally gives him the right to demand

¹ *Royal speech, Chitralada Villa, 4 December, 1993.*

² *Royal speech, Chitralada Villa, 4 December, 1991.*



assistance for private projects. Also, this cannot adequately explain how, amidst the merry-go-round of political life in the country, he has been able to rely on continual, even growing, support from many people from all walks of life.

Much more credible is the intellectual stimulation and challenges His Majesty has offered to those who support his work. Often, one may be bold enough to believe that it has been the logic and appealing simplicity of his ideas which have attracted the imagination of politicians, government officials, farmers and university professors. His Majesty's approach has always emphasized that a project should be affordable enough for the people to implement themselves. This does not mean that project cost is the deciding criterion in the initial stage. Sometimes a project will be implemented *"even if the cost of that project seems to be slightly higher than what it should be."*¹ When experimental stations have to be set up and scientists paid to look into the possibility of, for instance, growing peach trees in Chiang Rai to the far north, one cannot expect discount prices for top quality work. Nevertheless, the part which is passed on to the local people is the result of those experiments — the peach tree — and these are affordable for the people to acquire and thus make a reasonable profit. The cumulative effect is that the Thai economy

¹ *Ibid.*



One of the main objectives of the Royal Project in the North is to provide a permanent, sustainable lifestyle for Thailand's hill tribes, promoting the cultivation of temperate climate fruits, vegetables and flowers as a substitute for opium poppy growing and shifting cultivation.



His Majesty gathering information from the local people to be used as a factor in selecting the appropriate type of project.



benefits in that the poor have a better income while certain products which were once wholly imported can often be grown on the high slopes of the far north. Several luxury hotels in Bangkok can attest to the convenience of purchasing temperate fruits and vegetables from royal-initiated projects — and their guests are apt to agree that there is no difference in taste from their European counterparts at all!

His Majesty's effect on those who carry out the work initiated by him verges on the miraculous yet is largely the result of the wonderful challenge of assisting the people in a practical manner. For all the historical, semi-divine beliefs which envelop the Royal Family, we have already mentioned that His Majesty's unifying effect on many people can be explained in Western terms as charisma — though even this is a word which hardly encompasses its full meaning in Thai. Neither magnetism nor personal charm truly defines His Majesty's natural ability to command respect and faith. The faith of his subjects in him is unwavering and unquestioning.

How does one describe the people's eagerness to welcome their king: the crowds' early gathering in great anticipation, their almost religious fervour, in blazing sunshine or drizzling rain, that accompany His Majesty's sojourns in far-flung areas of the kingdom? How does one explain in modern terms people laying down handkerchiefs and pieces of cloth for him to walk on in passing — except perhaps



as a uniquely Thai form of requesting a rather unusual royal autograph? Why do villagers who barely know the direction in which Bangkok lies, see in him a guide to the development of their lives for the better — without question and with absolute trust?

The tremendous fidelity and joy of ordinary people throughout Thailand during celebrations marking His Majesty's 60th Jubilee of his accession to the throne in 2006 may be interpreted as a warm, all-pervading emotion reflecting the love of the people for a man who has devoted himself completely to their well-being. The reason for their faith lies in the king's unspoken contract with the people, which materializes in the form of development projects in areas where they are most desperately needed. It is the people's wish to put their faith in His Majesty. There can never be, has never been, any coercion by the current monarch for people to engage in his projects. Had it not been for the royal-initiated projects started by His Majesty, who else would have been able to reach the most remote of the rural communities.

Looking back now at the first thirty years of projects initiated by His Majesty, we feel it is a little short of a miracle that he has been able to establish so many of them under the prevailing conditions. National political events were then moving at a whirlwind pace with the governments being characteristically unstable and appearing unable to rally the country, with five coups



His Majesty among his loyal subjects.

d'état between 1952 and 1976 alone. A national development plan did eventually appear in 1961, although various governments had approached the job piecemeal up until that point. Average per capita income was then a little over US\$100 per annum. In surrounding countries there has been continuous fighting over the past 40 years. This was to have an effect on Thailand. Whenever the effect was negative, His Majesty's projects can be seen to have had a part to play in counteracting the threat of insurgency at the grassroots level.

Threats, however, are not always manmade. Nature is perhaps a more destructive force than man, and its victims often even more helpless against its vagaries. His Majesty's efforts in this area have covered disaster relief, medical assistance, communications and education through a variety of specialized organizations that to a large extent rely on voluntary donations of time and money. In this respect, His Majesty's success has been in bringing people together to help one another and themselves.



*KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
Royal Concern for Public Health and Welfare*



*The mobile medical unit given by His Majesty to the Ministry of
Public Health.*



Royal Concern for Public Health and Welfare

His Majesty has been taking an active interest in health affairs for most of his reign. He attends medical meetings and has for many years graced the graduation ceremonies of medical students at various universities around the country. On his frequent trips to the countryside, he has always been accompanied by the Royal Medical Unit which tends to the sick in every village that His Majesty visits. If anyone requires surgery, he or she will be sent for treatment in provincial hospitals, and if necessary for treatment in Bangkok hospitals under royal sponsorship. If the patient is a breadwinner, His Majesty will also take care of transportation, the medical bills and household expenses.

His Majesty is also concerned over the fact that poorly educated villagers cannot understand the correct dosage of the medicines prescribed by doctors. He can often be seen giving further explanations and helping to write clear instructions for future reference whenever he is pictured in a village far from the city. Their Majesties' visits to the provinces also enable them to present the local people with items which



protect their health, such as mosquito nets in malaria-infested areas, salt in areas which lack iodine in the natural diet and warm clothing for those who live at high elevations. His Majesty once stated that the distribution of fundamental medical supplies to the military and government officials in remote areas should be shared with the local people if they require preliminary treatment before contact is made with the proper health authorities. These medical supplies are bought with funds from the Privy Purse and the Government Pharmaceutical Organization, as well as from private contributions.

In 1955, His Majesty commanded the Royal Medical Unit, which is permanently attached to the palace, to accompany him on his visits to the underprivileged in order to offer their medical services where needed. This is one of the first forms of health care assistance the monarch has provided for the people outside of his residences. Other innovations include the provision of mobile treatment on the Red Cross vessel *Vejapah* for people who live on the many canals and rivers that criss-cross the Thai countryside.

His Majesty's personal resources are often employed extensively at the beginning of his work. In his approach to the blight of cholera which affected the population in the fifties, His Majesty would have been



The Red Cross vessel “Vejapah” afloat along the waterways to offer medical services to the people.

hard-pressed to render direct assistance to the people individually; it was simply too widespread a problem. However, the dehydration caused by vibrio cholera entailed purchasing massive amounts of saline solution from abroad. His Majesty initiated research into the production of this vital resource in Thailand, thus establishing the means to fight the disease with an affordable home-made remedy. Anyone who has read of the devastating effects of cholera can imagine for themselves the impact of the production of saline solution in the country for the first time.



His Majesty observing the production of a vaccine against cholera at the Institute of Pathology, Phra Mongkutklao Hospital, during an epidemic of cholera.

Over the years His Majesty has been able to nip various problems in the bud or to reach out for long-term settlements of serious national issues. In this way, His Majesty acted as a lightning rod for the countless men and women who wished to use their energy and skills for the development of their country. They gathered around him and through him were able to find a conduit for their abilities. His Majesty's role in this respect did not go unrecognized by international agencies working toward similar goals in the field of health care in Thailand. On 22 December, 1992, His Majesty graciously accepted the **Health-for-All Gold Medal** awarded by the World Health Organization (WHO) for services ensuring the nation's good health,¹ a worthy accolade for a devout monarch whose prime concern has been the welfare of others.

¹ 22 December, 1992.



*His Majesty observing
the operation of the
volunteer medical unit
under royal patronage.*



Clinics have been established at the entrance to most of His Majesty's provincial residences, such as Bhuphan Palace in the Northeast and Daksin Palace in the South. All of these clinics are free. They are usually staffed by the royal physicians or other Royal Medical Division personnel as well as medical staff from various branches of the armed services and the Ministry of Public Health stationed in the area. Experienced medical doctors of the Royal College of Surgeons volunteer their services to patients under royal sponsorship in provincial hospitals for the duration of the Royal Family's visits.

When it was discovered that many villagers suffered from dental problems, His Majesty arranged for the establishment of the Royal Mobile Dental Unit on 18 April, 1970, entrusting his personal dentist, Dr. Si Sirisingha, who had just retired



to undertake this mission. The doctor recalled His Majesty's order,

"...I would like you to look after the dental care of the students who live in remote areas. I will take care of all the necessary expenses and will provide you with a mobile dental unit to go out to isolated villages and hamlets..."¹

His Majesty fulfilled his own promise by providing a large van fitted out with a dental chair and all the necessary equipment for the dentists and nurses to perform their work.

His Majesty anointing the vehicle he has donated to the Mobile Dental Unit.

¹ Pranee Bunchum, "His Majesty the King's Concern for Thai Youth", *Sor Khor Chor News*, December, (1988), p. 18.



*His Majesty visiting
soldiers wounded in
the Korean War at
Phra Mongkutklao
Hospital in November,
1952.*

When His Majesty goes to a village, his physician and a medical team who form part of his entourage will check villagers while His Majesty will be busy on other matters concerning sustainable development. Often, the team stays on to complete its work after the royal party has moved on. The Royal Medical Team consists of members of the Royal Medical Division and the Bureau of the Royal Household as well as other officials.

Royally sponsored volunteer medical teams consisting of medical doctors of the Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand, Phra Mongkutklao Hospital, Siriraj Hospital, the Royal Thai Army and an ophthalmic medical team, an ear, nose and throat team and an allergy team follow His Majesty to assist local doctors in provincial hospitals.



Whenever villagers are hospitalized in provincial hospitals under royal sponsorship, they are visited regularly by members of Her Majesty the Queen's Personal Affairs Division until they are fit enough to go home. This division effectively takes over administrative matters concerning patients after admission. If the patient is the head of a family and needs to be sent to Bangkok for treatment, the Division will arrange for someone to take care of the family or for local officials to pay a visit to them occasionally. They are usually given money to tide them over until the head of the family is well enough to work. Should the patient be unable to take care of his or her dependants, being crippled or dead, those of school age will receive royal assistance for their educational needs.

His Majesty and the Crown Prince on a visit to the special vocational training centre for military personnel at Phra Mongkutklao Hospital in 1968.



Civilian and military officials are treated with special respect by His Majesty if they become sick or are injured in the service of their country. Concerned that their handicaps will prevent them from earning a livelihood in the future, in 1968 His Majesty provided funds for an Artificial Limb and Vocational Workshop to be set up at Phra Mongkutklao Hospital. In addition, His Majesty has often held parties at Dusidalai Hall in the grounds of Chitralada Villa for wounded officials and for the volunteers who treat them, presenting each with a gift on every occasion.

In 1982, His Majesty launched a project to create village health personnel. These are volunteer villagers who receive basic medical training at village level and pass on their knowledge to others in the village. Training covers basic health care like first aid, simple preventative medicine, nutrition and methods of referral to local government health officials. This project operates in provincial hospitals and covers villagers across the country. People who have received treatment under royal sponsorship now number in the hundreds of thousands. By aiding farmers, the backbone of the country, to resume work after prompt medical treatment, His Majesty's medical teams have contributed greatly to the economy, enabling people to go on earning a living even after serious illnesses.



His Majesty, accompanied by the Princess Mother, inaugurating the Raj Pracha Samasai Foundation, 16 January, 1960.

Raj Pracha Samasai Foundation

Assisting people in emergencies is a relatively short-term solution to a serious concern of His Majesty regarding the health of his people. One of the factors causing problems in the logistics of health care throughout his reign, up until relatively recent years, has been the lack of infrastructure in areas beginning just outside Bangkok. For the first thirty years, people were often far from health services and relatively cut off from urban centres. Once sick, it was difficult for them to reach a clinic



His Majesty and the Princess Mother viewing the model of Raj Pracha Samasai Institute and Phra Pradaeng Hospital at the inauguration of the institute, 16 January, 1960.

or hospital. His Majesty had no hesitation in addressing this issue.

The Raj Pracha Samasai Research Institute is another example of His Majesty's deliberate use of his own funds to get things started to solve a pressing dilemma. Established in 1957 with a donation of 1,000,000 baht (US\$50,000) to the Ministry of Public Health from the Privy Purse, the Institute conducts research and assists in the diagnosis, prevention, treatment and control of leprosy (Hansen's Disease). Furthermore, it coordinates with international organizations in research and development for the relief of leprosy, acting as a liaison centre for the



collection and dissemination of information on the eradication of leprosy. The Institute's research has now been shared with colleagues around the world. Seminars are held there once or twice a year to encourage the exchange of information on a perfidious disease whose name alone can send cold shivers down one's spine. Training courses on prevention and treatment of the disease are held for medical and public health personnel from Thailand and other countries. In this case the king's attention was focused not only on the Thai people, but on people of all nationalities who suffer from leprosy.

*His Majesty on a visit to
the Leprosy Hospital,
Phra Pradaeng District.*

The Raj Pracha Samasai Research Institute rapidly became very successful in its research endeavours and managed to gain



His Majesty presenting seed money to Phra Bamrasnaradoon, then Minister of Public Health, for the establishment of the Raj Pracha Samasai Foundation, 16 January, 1960.

the support of the general public in their compassion for the sufferers of the disease.

Following the success of the Research Institute, in 1960 His Majesty established the Raj Pracha Samasai Foundation with an initial working capital of 400,000 baht (US\$20,000), which he himself donated. The foundation promotes research and development for the relief of leprosy conducted by the Research Institute. It also provides accommodation and advice for lepers who have problems in society, caring for their children and providing special medical treatment, education, employment as well as teaching handicrafts and other occupational skills.

Such has been the response of the world community to such a worthy cause



His Majesty presiding over the inauguration of the Cultural Hall and Suan Chitr Building at Raj Pracha Samasai School, 28 March, 1981.

that the foundation is now largely supported by the public as well as by private charities and foreign voluntary organizations, especially those in Japan, Germany and the USA. The foundation has a research and relief station at Phra Pradaeng, near Bangkok, with a boarding school for the children of lepers. In Chiang Rai Province, the foundation has set up ten residential homes for lepers in order to alleviate their misfortune by giving them occupational training. About 3,000 doctors, nurses, medical students and public health officers are trained there annually. Naturally, His Majesty continues to follow the activities of the institute and the found-



His Majesty, accompanied by H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, attending the opening of the Raj Pracha Samasai Research Institute building, 6 July, 1979.

ation, once donating building materials and money for the construction of some new buildings in the School for Lepers' Children at Phra Pradaeng District. Of the 2,000 children attending the school in the first few years, 150 were lepers' children who received free education financed by the foundation. Since 1962, the number of lepers' children has risen to 255. All are provided with free board and lodging, books, equipment, clothing and personal allowances in an atmosphere of care and the paternal love of their king.



Rajaprajanugroh Foundation

Due to their dedication to sustainable development, the royal-initiated projects are not well-suited to rapidly-changing local conditions or emergencies. They are usually localized and established in an area where medium to long-term development is required. Most often, they are meant to act as permanent model projects for villagers nationwide and every aspect of them is carefully considered before being put into effect so as to ensure their suitability and efficacy. On occasion, more rapid, flexible action is required in situations where to delay would cause unnecessary suffering.



In 1962, the nation was shocked by reports of terrible destruction caused by a tropical storm Harriot which had struck twelve coastal provinces in the South of Thailand. Government services in the area were wrecked. Six hundred people lost their lives and there were hundreds more casualties with hardly any medical services within reach. When news of the catastrophe reached the attention of His Majesty, he was among the first to move into action. He immediately made a nationwide appeal through His Majesty's Dusit Palace Radio Station "radio Aw Saw", and later through other mass media for the relief of the storm's victims, thousands of whom had become homeless. Once again in their hour of need, the people's faces turned toward the nation's highest institution for unity and guidance. The appeal for public assistance met with tremendous response and donations flowed in to Chitralada Villa. His Majesty was able to focus the attention of the country on disaster relief. So much money was given that there was enough left over at the end to form working capital for a relief foundation, named the Rajaprajanugroh Foundation.

The Rajaprajanugroh Foundation was established to relieve victims of natural or man-made disasters, such as storms, floods, extreme cold spells, fires or major accidents. It relies on volunteers who have been trained in first aid, child care, accident prevention, disaster relief and proactive planning. There are more than 1,500 trained workers stationed in many parts of the country in order to assist the government in



emergency rescue operations. Between 1962 and 1982 alone, the foundation was called upon to help in 2,390 incidents resulting in the rescue of 3,914,608 people. As royal patron of the foundation, the king takes great interest in its work,

“The Rajaprajanugroh Foundation is similar to a large insurance company for the nation. Those who meet with misfortune receive timely and expeditious assistance from others who are not as unfortunate, pooling their financial and material assistance through the foundation. The foundation has undertaken this work for several years already. It has utilized government officials to relieve the distress of people in trouble.”¹

¹ His Majesty's televised speech on Thai T.V. Channel 3, 19 November, 1970.



His Majesty presenting educational material to pupils in impoverished areas.

This concern for the needy and the distressed among his people was not an isolated case, nor was it caused simply by a disaster that could not be ignored. Indeed, two years earlier, in 1960, the Social Welfare Department and private organizations had independently founded the Social Welfare Council of Thailand to look after the welfare of those in distress, to help solve social problems, develop human resources, society and the economy through close cooperation with the government, state agencies, educational institutions, private organizations and the private business sector. The year before, in 1961, His Majesty had agreed to bring the council under royal patronage with Her Majesty the Queen as its Honorary Chairperson. His Majesty has ceaselessly



pursued the rationale of the interrelationship and interdependence of mankind. As he emphasized in a speech given in 1974,

“No one can exist alone. Should one fall, all the others would likewise fall.”

Even so, the needs of the people seem to be never-ending and the work of the monarch cannot cease for a moment.

Just one year following that speech, and in response to civilian, military and police officials, as well as volunteers, who were wounded or maimed in action while conducting internal security operations during a period of insurgency problems, His Majesty was moved to establish the Sai Jai Thai Foundation. While the foundation is under royal



patronage, the foundation itself is supported by the general public who put their faith in the fact that anything the king launches must be good for the people themselves. Its original purpose was to provide emergency funds before assistance from the relevant government agencies could be provided. However, when security personnel are killed on duty, the foundation assists the families of the deceased also.



*One of the 44
Rajaprachanugroh
Schools built by the
Rajaprachanugroh
Foundation in
cooperation with the
Ministry of Education.*

Besides search, rescue, and relief operations after disasters, whether natural or humanly caused, His Majesty saw the need to provide longer range assistance to the victim's families, particularly the children. With his own private funds and the public contributions, His Majesty had the Rajaprajanugroh Foundation look after orphans of all ages and build schools, called Rajaprajanugroh Schools which currently number 44. The relevant government agencies helped to construct schools for thousands of these children since 1962. The schools provided for primary, secondary and vocational education and training. Royal scholarships have been extended also to university level education.

Almost 3 decades later, on morning of 26 December 2004, The most destructive of



natural disasters in Thai history, the Indian Ocean Tsunami devastated Thailand's Andaman coastal areas of the Southern Provinces of Satun, Trang, Krabi, Phuket, Phang-nga and Ranong. Their Majesties the King and Queen and the Royal Family dispatched immediate assistance of medical supplies, drinking water, food stuff and blankets to the afflicted areas.

The Rajaprajanugroh Foundation, together with the Thai Red Cross, the Chaipattana Foundation and several other foundations and agencies also under Royal Patronage, packed and distributed 'survival kits' to victims in the South. Rescue missions were sent out immediately, followed by construction of temporary shelters. In all, 5,910 lives-Thais and foreigners were lost and 5,597 suffered injuries. Of survivors, the number of people displaced by the Tsunami amounted to 58,550 from 12,480 households.



*The Chaipattana
- Thai Red Cross fiberglass
fishing boats.*



Following rescue and relief missions, Their Majesties the King and Queen and the Royal Family through the Chaipattana Foundation provided 2,627 fiber-glass fishing boats to replace those destroyed by the giant Tsunami waves, so that fishermen's families could continue to make their living. The Rajaprajanugroh Foundation helped to build five primary and secondary schools in Krabi, Phang-nga Ranong, Phuket, and Songhla provinces and provided scholarships up to bachelor's degree for more than 2,000 children of victims. Thus, through the Rajaprajanugroh, Thai Red Cross, Chaipattana and other foundations under Royal Patronage, His Majesty provided immediate, intermediate, and long-term assistance to the victims of this major disaster, so that they would, after some time, be able to stand on their own feet, in accordance with His Majesty's philosophy and principle.

Nor is the concern, kindness, and assistance confined to only the Thai people in distress. Whenever natural disasters strike other countries in the region in need of external help, their Majesties and other members of the Royal Family, through the Thai Red Cross and other foundations under Royal Patronage, have been fast in extending timely help to the victims in the afflicted countries. Rice, food stuff, and relief supplies have been shipped to these



countries hit by disasters of smaller scale. However, in cases of major disasters such as cyclone Nargis which struck Myanmar in 2008 Their Majesties and the Royal Family extended assistance immediately and continued to the second and third weeks of May, in accordance to the need of the victim communities.

Cyclone Nargis wiped out more than 100 villages and communities, killed more than 133,000 while another 55,917 people were lost, and injured some 2000. For those victims who survived, 2.5 million needed relief by way of shelter, blankets, food, drinking water, clothing, medicine, sanitation facilities, and the like. Their Majesties the King and Queen, H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn and H.R.H. Princess Soamsawali had dispatched to Yangon, Myanmar altogether 79 tons of “Survival Kits”, tents--large and small--food stuff, drinking water, clothing, medicine, as well as electricity generating machines, water purifiers, children’s milk, and other necessities, all of which were transported by several C-130 aircrafts to Yangon, to be distributed to the afflicted areas.

Finally, H.R.H. Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn sent a team of 32 royal volunteer medical doctors, nurses, psychologists and health technicians to Yangon during the second and third weeks of May, the first team of foreign doctors to



enter Myanmar to help the victims. According to their Majesties and the Crown Prince, this team had three missions to accomplish which were : first, to give the best treatment to the injured; secondly, to prevent epidemics from occurring in the aftermath of this major disaster; and thirdly, to help mitigate mental trauma on the part of the victims of Nargis.

Medical assistance extended by their Majesties and the Royal Family to distressed foreigners is by no means limited to disasters victims. Other humanitarian aid, for example, the production and gift of artificial limbs for those who have had accidents, have had congenital defects, or diabetes and the like, have been extended to them through the volunteer doctors working at the Prosthesis Foundation which H.R.H. the late Princess Mother set up over two decades ago. Artificial limbs, mostly legs and feet have been made and fitted for thousands in need, regardless of nationality, gender, or religious affiliation. The Foundation *provides such aid to all free of charge*, giving those disabled new hope.



KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
The Chaipattana Foundation



His Majesty's on-site inspection includes close consultation of his own special map which he always has at hand.



The Chaipattana Foundation



In 1988, celebrations were begun for His Majesty's Rajamangklabhisek in July when His Majesty became Thailand's longest reigning monarch, two years longer than King Chulalongkorn's 41 years on the throne. In the same year, His Majesty founded the Chaipattana Foundation, which has its office in Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace.

Registered on 14 June, 1988, the main objective of the Chaipattana Foundation is to help accelerate rural development through various forms of activities that are restricted by constraints such as budget and procedural problems. In some cases, it does this by offering much-needed funds quickly to certain agricultural projects. His Majesty directed the foundation to become involved when the government was unable to do so, coordinating assistance to relocated villagers for the loss of agricultural produce caused by urgent government projects and providing support in accelerating the completion of government-subsidized projects. The work of the foundation, however, must not overlap that of the government, rather should be in line with government policy at all times. It also assists needy villagers when they are unable to help themselves, and by so doing, helps to strengthen national security, that is *"losing (money) in order to win (development)."*¹

¹ Paraphrased from His Majesty's oft-quoted maxim of *"Our loss is our gain"*, first recorded in his birthday address of 4 December, 1991.



The Chaipattana Foundation emblem.

On his visits to the development projects, His Majesty always wears a jacket with the Chaipattana Foundation emblem.

The foundation is fortunate in that it has remained in the forefront of His Majesty's interest since its establishment. His Majesty the King graciously consented to act as its Honorary President, and H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn accepted the position of Executive Chairperson. The name Chaipattana means "Victory of Development" and can be thought of as His Majesty's brain-child. He not only laid out its purpose, but also designed the foundation's emblem, adding a deft touch of symbolism to it. At the top, a shield is surmounted by a royal crown, the shield being divided into four sections. The **Chaisri**



Royal Sword in the upper left quadrant signifies royal authority, augustness and the nation's strength to overcome difficulties in the implementation of projects, resulting in the security of the kingdom, while the **Krabi Tuj Flag** in the upper right quadrant symbolizes leading in to battle to achieve victory in the struggle to protect the kingdom and the people from all dangers and misfortunes. To the lower left of the shield, the **lotus blossom** signifies dignity, beauty, coolness and prosperity, that lead to the well-being, peace and happiness of all the Thais. The **royal conch** at the lower right symbolizes water that freshens the land and bestows upon it fertility, peacefulness and an abundance in natural resources and agricultural produce.



His Majesty chairing an executive board meeting of the Chaipattana Foundation.

One of the first acts of the foundation was to purchase 6.33 acres of land near Wat Mongkhol Chaipattana, a temple at Chaloem Phrakiat District, Saraburi Province. This was made into an agricultural development centre called the Royal-initiated Wat Mongkhol Chaipattana Area Development Project. There, farmers and officials exchange ideas and experience



about the area's irrigation. They build ponds and wells to keep fish and to maintain an adequate supply of water throughout the year. The role of the local temple is very important in this project. His Majesty wanted the temple to be "a centre for Thai people in all regards: religion, life and occupational development."¹ A similar idea was earlier initiated at the Royal Yanasangvararam Voramahavihan Monastery in Chon Buri Province in 1982. The monks have a great deal of moral authority at the centre and are an essential asset in persuading the people to try something new. The success of the project can also be measured in terms of money, because nearly all of the local farmers have had their income raised two or three times following the introduction of new crops and a year-round water supply.

The Chaipattana Aerator invented by His Majesty and mentioned earlier is utilized by the foundation as a practical way to ensure fish stocks in once-polluted waterways. The project studied, researched and carried out further development of the aerator to provide oxygen and clean water supplies in the most efficient manner. Experimental machines can be seen in many places in and around Bangkok, including Dusit Zoo, Phra Mongkutklao Hospital, Wat Bovornives, Wat Benchamabophit, the beautiful Marble Temple, and within the grounds of Chitralada Villa. Similar projects are underway or being studied at other places like Wat Thepsirin,



The Chaipattana Aerator in action at Phra Mongkutklao Hospital, Bangkok.

¹ *Royal speech given at the opening ceremony of Wat Mongkhon Chaipattana Area Development Project, 1988.*



and Wat Chakrawat Rachawat in Bangkok, Khlong Mae Kha Waste Water Treatment Project in Chiang Mai Province.

Chaipattana will often give interest-free loans to projects considered to be a part of occupational development and rural education. The Royal-initiated Dairy Farm Project in Sakhon Nakhon Province began in 1990 in order to hold training courses for dairy farmers. Eighteen farmers took part in the project whose success can be measured in practical terms, for their individual income had gone up by 1,068 baht by 1994. The highest income earner can make as much as 6,193 baht a month, which is considered more than adequate by most rural people in

Granting an audience to His Excellency Mr Pierre Vaesen, Ambassador of Belgium to Thailand, and party, and presenting the Chaipattana Low Speed Surface Aerator Model RX-2 for installation at a park in Brussels, the Kingdom of Belgium, at Piamsuk Villa of Klai Kangwol Palace, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, 27 September 2002.



*Huai Ongkhot,
Kanchanaburi Province.*

Thailand. The loans granted by the foundation early in the 1990's were paid back by February 1994.

*"To take back the forests, the government must invest,"*¹ is the opinion of the Secretary-General of the Chaipattana Foundation, and it is not only the government which contributes to this work. In Kanchanaburi Province, the Chaipattana Foundation currently undertakes to solve the problems that arise with reforestation. At the same time it contributes to the well-being of the local people by cooperating with the private sector, especially in areas where the govern-

¹ *Interview with Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul, March, 1994.*



ment cannot reach or is unable to provide adequate funds. A village-level development project led by a local monk to improve the standard of living of the people in Kanchanaburi Province attracted the foundation's attention in 1991. The problem was that local people had for many years, encroached on the forests of Kanchanaburi, a province which borders Myanmar. The government's attempts to reclaim the forest meant that many would be left with nowhere to live, or else that they would be forced to encroach on other areas of forest out of reach of the government. Huai Ongkhot Royal Development Project, in the area of the local temple, Wat Tham Wang Hin, was, therefore, launched to provide these people with a suitable place to live, in harmony with nature. The target group comprised 300 families. They were given protein-rich chicken, pigs, legumes, fruit trees, prawns or fish and a reasonable-sized plot of land. A small village community with temple and school to cover primary to secondary levels was set up to give the people the necessities for rebuilding their lives. The children of the poor farmers were given free education. Occupational training was provided and everything learnt by other royal-initiated projects was taught, ranging from growing crops to rearing animals to constructing small factories in the communities. This project served to provide steady jobs and stability in the lives of the people.

A recent innovation sponsored in part by the foundation under His Majesty's



initiative was to take factory work to the countryside without the need for companies to relocate or construct branches. A clothing manufacturer was invited to join the Foundation in supplying sewing machines to housewives who make clothes as piecework. They can then work at home. This allows the local people the freedom to work at their own pace in familiar surroundings, while keeping the community traditions alive.

“If you want to earn much money,” many of the women at the village project willingly confirm, *“you do ten suits a day, or twenty. If you are lazy, do five or six.”*¹ In the evening, a truck arrives and collects the suits. The cloth itself is not made at the village but is cut in Bangkok and transported there by the company. Patterns, training and know-how are supplied by the company and by the foundation for the benefit of the villagers working at home. There is no real factory, just a storehouse. The suits are collected, packed by local labour, then sent to nearby Chai Nat Province or elsewhere, as required for the next stages. Few people now want to work in Bangkok if there is a way to survive and earn money near their homes. His Majesty has been proven correct in acknowledging that for some people survival cannot be ensured by agriculture alone, or by only one type of agriculture. Additional methods

¹ *Interview in situ, 1994.*



of supplementing their income are growing fruit trees and rearing chicken. The relationship with the private business sector, particularly large agroindustrial firms such as Charoen Phokhaphan, is an essential step in His Majesty's process of sustainable development. When the fruit is ripe, or the chicken are fully-grown, the company will use guaranteed prices to purchase the produce, which are then sold through outlets such as 7-11 in Bangkok and other major cities. This leads to a reduction in the problems caused by labour migration.

The work of the foundation, as shown, relies a lot on the cooperation of the people in the projects and of people outside the projects. This internal-external relationship extends to the matter of fund-raising also. The Chaipattana Foundation is governed by His Majesty's principle that it receives money from donations only. There is no direct fund-raising by the foundation because this might be misinterpreted as a money-making venture. It is not. The foundation survives by the goodwill of the Thai people. Although it can now authorize others to make a campaign on its behalf, the foundation is an attempt to bring the people together under one banner. Contributions flood in continuously because people believe that an agency founded by the king must be for the benefit of the people. There is a great deal of trust in this and the staff of Chaipattana always try to be worthy of the people's trust in His Majesty.



Knowledge of the work of the Thai king is not limited only to the Thai people. The foundation receives donations every day from foreigners also. Among the most significant, Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul, Chaipattana Secretary-General, is apt to recount having once received a cheque for \$1,000 from the Vice-Rector of Virginia University. How he got to hear of the work of the foundation as far afield as Virginia is a bit of a mystery! There is also one American lady resident in Bangkok who donates five thousand baht every month without fail, covering her absences from the country with two cheques upon her return. Such remarkable generosity never fails to amaze the staff of Chaipattana.



*His Majesty visiting a royal development project at Khao Cha-ngum,
Ratchaburi Province.*



“Last year, I received a cheque for one million baht from an old man in Phetchaburi,”

Dr. Sumet recalled in an interview in 1994. His curiosity aroused, he decided to go to Phetchaburi to see who had donated this considerable amount of money. After a little bit of detective work in the town, Dr. Sumet tracked the donor down to a temple near the town. There was only an old man sweeping the temple courtyard dressed in old clothes. Somewhat disbelieving, Dr. Sumet approached him.

“Is it you who sent the money to His Majesty’s Foundation?”

“Yes, have you received it?” replied the old man brusquely without stopping his sweeping.

Apparently, this whole scenario was not what the Secretary-General had anticipated and he could only confirm with one word,

“Yes.”

“And you gave it to His Majesty already?”

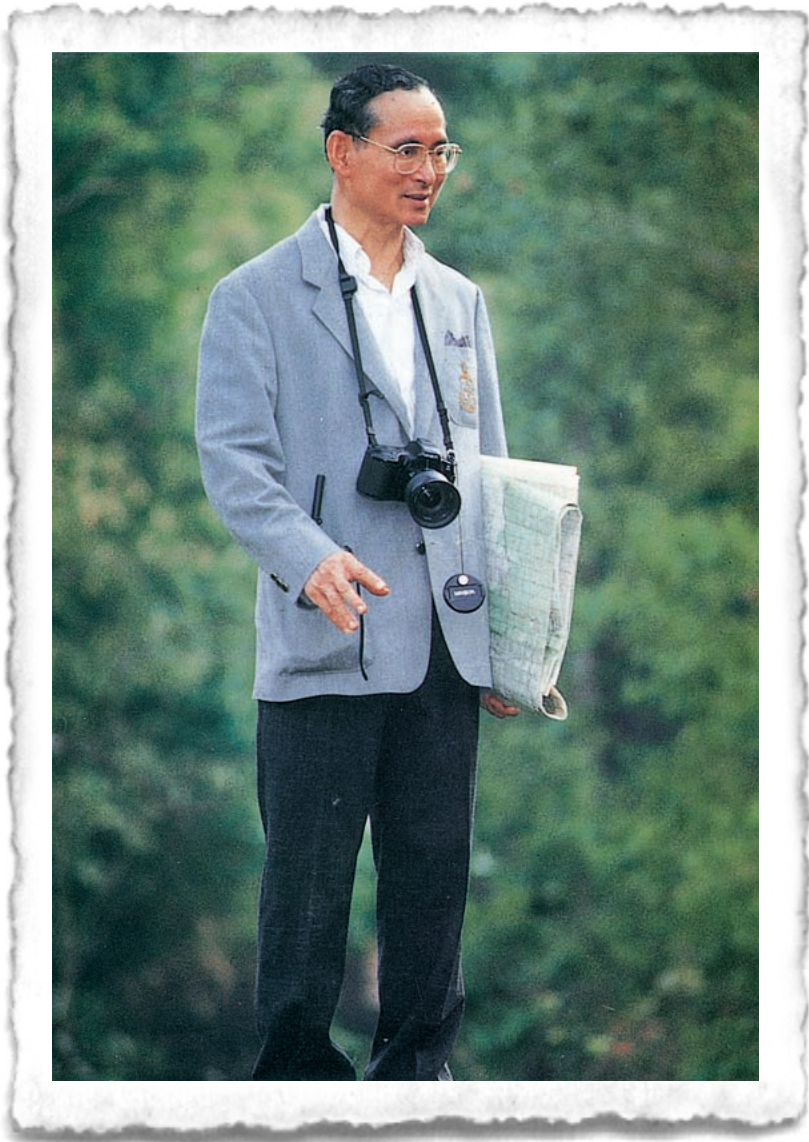
“Yes?”

“Okay. Next time, if I have more money, I’ll send it to you. Goodbye.”

And then he turned back to his humble task.



*KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
His Majesty and the Environment*





His Majesty and the Environment

The environment is a prime concern of His Majesty. It is his belief that:

“Environmental problems will cause the world to change. The problem will be something that everyone will experience but not everyone will know. It is thus our duty as citizens of the world to have knowledge and a clear understanding in order for us to find the way to solve the problem correctly”¹

In striving to play a part in improving the environment in Thailand, His Majesty has expressed concern about the proper atmospheric balance of oxygen, nitrogen and carbon dioxide and recommended that forest researchers first investigate plant species which emit high levels of oxygen and then plan to use these plants in the royal projects around the country. He has also stressed that farmers should learn how to conserve the environment and the land themselves.

¹ Office of the Special Committee to Coordinate Royal Initiated Projects, Royal Activities Concerning the Environment, *Cassia fistula Science*.



*“In reforestation it is important to let the trees grow on their own;
do not interfere or abuse them.”*



Reforestation

Since the 1970's deforestation has become a serious problem in Thailand. In the first half of the 80's the average rate of deforestation was about 1.5 million rai (1 rai = 1,600 square metres) per year. The majority of this took place in the Northeast, the North, the East and the upper central plain. Deforestation was caused partly by wholesale slash-and-burn farming-cutting and burning trees in order to make way for crop cultivation. Naturally, when the rains come, the nutrient-rich top soil is washed away and often flows into rivers and streams, causing them to silt up. By 1990, it was estimated that Thailand was losing 20 billion baht's worth of top-soil each year from this type of erosion, which requires soil and water conservation to control it. As a result, deforestation causes economic and financial losses to the people and to the country as a whole. It is a vicious cycle. The natural balance of nature is altered as nutrients flow into rivers and canals compelling farmers to use chemical fertilizers to make up for the losses in nature, thereby polluting the land and harming the environment.

Forestry experts say that the proportion of forest to other types of land should be 50:50 in order to be in balance. In Thailand, the proportion has already fallen to dangerously low levels and several governments have stated their intention



“Reforestation must be done urgently to protect waterways and help them spread moisture throughout the forest.”

of preserving the forests from further degradation. However, forested areas now cover less than 30 percent of the country. To assist in this area, His Majesty has introduced the idea of reforestation, beginning with the planting of a forest in Chitralada Villa grounds. In 1980, His Majesty expounded further on the sort of forests he envisioned under the government’s reforestation schemes:

“...reforestation can loosely be defined as being the provision of timber trees, fruit trees, and trees for charcoal. However, the important thing is that in order to preserve water sources and streams, it doesn’t matter whether it is a forest of fruit trees or a forest for charcoal. Just let there be a forest of trees which fulfill their role as a natural resource capable of giving benefit to the population...”¹

¹ *Coordinating Committee for Royal Development Projects, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and His Development Work, (Bangkok : 1987). p. 103.*



His Majesty and H.R.H. the Crown Prince inspecting the topography in the area of Ban Nong Pla Duk, Sakon Nakhon Province.

This remark has roused reforestation personnel to heed what is now called the “three types of trees for four uses” concept to provide a sustainable environment for the people’s daily lives without destroying the very resources they need.

It is a mark of his wisdom also that His Majesty has been flexible in his attitude towards reforestation, perceiving that there is a right way of achieving it and a wrong way. His Majesty advised the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives not to develop forests in areas where farmers had already begun to cultivate crops, explaining that,

“If the government develops forests in these areas, it will face a problem as this



action will force the farmers affected by this move to destroy forests in other areas.”¹

As always, His Majesty saw that forestry, soil conservation and water resources were interrelated. One of his most famous successes acknowledged the need to think of the whole rather than just one part of the environmental problem. Called the “wet forest” theory, His Majesty noted the preponderance of fires in the dry season, an event which can have serious degrading effects on the forest condition. To combat this, he suggested that water from forest resources be channelled through

His Majesty’s “wet forest” idea : a forest development theory optimizing water use to make wet firebreaks.

¹ *Ibid.*



His Majesty and H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn inspecting the Royal Forest Department's forest plantation.

the soil to keep the surface moist. Deeper down, the roots of the trees and plants could then receive nourishment from such irrigation. Not only does the forest's humidity then rise in the dry season, keeping plants and leaves green, but it also acts as a buffer zone in forest protection. To ensure that the problem receives long-term attention, the king also stressed the importance of continual research to reduce dehydration in watershed areas, as these are essential to the lives of farmers and urban dwellers further downstream.

Coastal forests, or mangroves, are also a valuable natural resource that His Majesty has investigated in order to seek a balance of exploitation and sustainable forest



management. Khung Kraben, a bay located in Tha Mai District, Chanthaburi Province on the southeastern coast of the Gulf of Thailand is home to a royal development study centre, founded in late 1981. The centre was established because inshore fishermen had begun to overfish and stocks were being depleted. In order to make up for their losses at sea, many families, and outsiders as well, were converting the reserve mangrove forest in the area into shrimp farms. This led to saline water intrusions into the farm areas nearby. His Majesty's initiative was to try to seek an integrated approach to resource development in harmony with the environment. Since 1986, a large area has been devoted to the rearing of black tiger prawns. About 164 hectares have been allocated by the Royal Forest Department to develop shrimp culture with 109 farmers taking part in the project.

By 1993, 170.62 hectares of land were occupied by shrimp ponds, almost half of which were in the hands of private individuals and the remainder being run by the development study centre. A band of mangrove forest has, however, been preserved between the shrimp ponds and the mudflats beyond. The Royal Forest Department has set up a nursery there for the propagation of commercial stocks of mangrove trees and associated species. Khung Kraben Bay now not only minimizes



soil erosion in the area but also provides nutrients and shelter to many aquatic organisms. The mangrove trees also act as a natural water treatment plant, trapping suspended sediment within their tangled roots and absorbing the dissolved nutrients discharged from shrimp ponds.

Bandit Fighting Bandit

People who have worked with His Majesty are often surprised at his approach — using the simplest method possible to solve even the most complex problems. The first royal initiatives to treat waste water took place between 1984-1987. This involved using “good water to drive out bad”, that is, flushing out canals and rivers to purify them. Since 1988, His Majesty began to employ an integrated system of natural mechanisms combined with the

application of modern technology. The aerators used by the Chaipattana Foundation employ a cost-effective but technological method of adding oxygen to the water. His Majesty’s water treatment project is, conversely, an example of utmost simplicity. Realizing how large a budget was needed to start a water treatment plant, His

Majesty thought that something should be done immediately. He suggested to the



Water hyacinth.



*KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
His Majesty and the Environment*





His Majesty and H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn inspecting the Makkasan Swamp improvement work, a royal-initiated project jointly undertaken by several agencies to make it a filter through the use of water hyacinth to reduce water pollution in Samsen Canal, 8 June, 1987.

Royal Irrigation Department that Makkasan Swamp be used as Bangkok's "kidney", by using the controlled cultivation of water hyacinth — otherwise known as Java Weed — to filter waste water entering the swamp, and the outflow into Saen Saep Canal. This canal, which is used by water taxis and has people living on both sides, would thus be a little cleaner. When this idea was first introduced, His Majesty caught a few people by surprise. It was His Majesty's sense of humour once again which explains his straightforward thinking.



“He told me one day that we were going to play some games,” Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul recalled in an interview in 1994.

“What games, Your Majesty?” Dr. Sumet asked.

“Bandit fighting bandit.”

“What, Your Majesty?”

Dr. Sumet immediately thought of the Chinese: that is, Chinese films.

“No,” said His Majesty. *“We don’t want waste water. It is a bandit. It is a bad guy. And water hyacinth is the same thing. Let them fight against each other.”*

His Majesty further introduced the idea of harvesting water hyacinth and using it as a compost fertilizer. This can be made in sixteen to seventeen weeks and used on trees and flowering plants, though not on food crops. About thirty tons of water hyacinth are required to make 5.5 tons of compost. The water hyacinth crop can reproduce five-fold in forty days and that is the period when it is usually harvested. It can also be used as a fuel since compacted water hyacinth burns at 87° Celsius.

Water hyacinth has the capability of absorbing heavy metals. This is the origin of the ‘fighting’ now taking place at Makkaswan Swamp. Its water is not as clean as the end-product of proper waste water treatment, but plants and fish can live in it. This is in accordance with His Majesty’s ethos, “Our loss is our gain.” Moreover, the people in the area of the swamp have received other help in the form of occupational



training in cottage industries, on how to utilize the water hyacinth as a material for making baskets, placemats, purses and others. This helps the families to earn additional income.

Climatic changes also have a huge impact on the environment in Thailand. The monsoon season brings flooding to all areas which are low-lying or adjacent to rivers and waterways. This badly affects the economy and the pace of development and brings with it other water-related health problems. In 1980, His Majesty drew up a project to stop the flooding of Bangkok's eastern suburbs, aiming to direct floodwaters from the North to canals in Pathumthani Province, the East and Samut Prakan Province, as well as directly to the sea. This was a long-term plan to dredge 19 canals, 174 kilometres long in total, setting up 43 pumping stations to regulate the flow, probably the most well-thought-out plan ever presented to the government on this issue. By 1983 the Cabinet had allocated 375 million baht for the Royal Irrigation Department to implement the plan in conjunction with the State Railway of Thailand (SRT) and the Highway Department.

That year, 574 mm of rain fell between 31 August-1 September, which is the highest ever recorded in Thailand. Heavy flooding occurred in the districts of Bangkapi, Phra Khanong, Huai Khwang, Min Buri and Thon Buri, The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration was unable to cope, and some areas were left flooded for rather a long time. The estimated losses caused by the flooding were put at US\$ 264



His Majesty inspecting flood areas in Bangkok to find a way to solve the flood problem, 7 November, 1983.

million. On 7 November, 1983, His Majesty went on an inspection visit to see the effects of the flooding in Phra Khanong and the Lat Phrao areas, which had then been flooded for two months. His Majesty advised dredging some of the natural canals and fixing waterworks along the roads together with drainage under the roads to facilitate the water flow. He also advised that a barrier be built as soon as possible in the Saen Saep Canal at the juncture of Bangkokapi Canal, a suggestion which the local authorities undertook to do.

His Majesty has continued to follow up on what is being done and has taken the lead through initiatives designed to lessen



*His Majesty studying flooded areas on the map in
Phra Khanong District, Bangkok.*

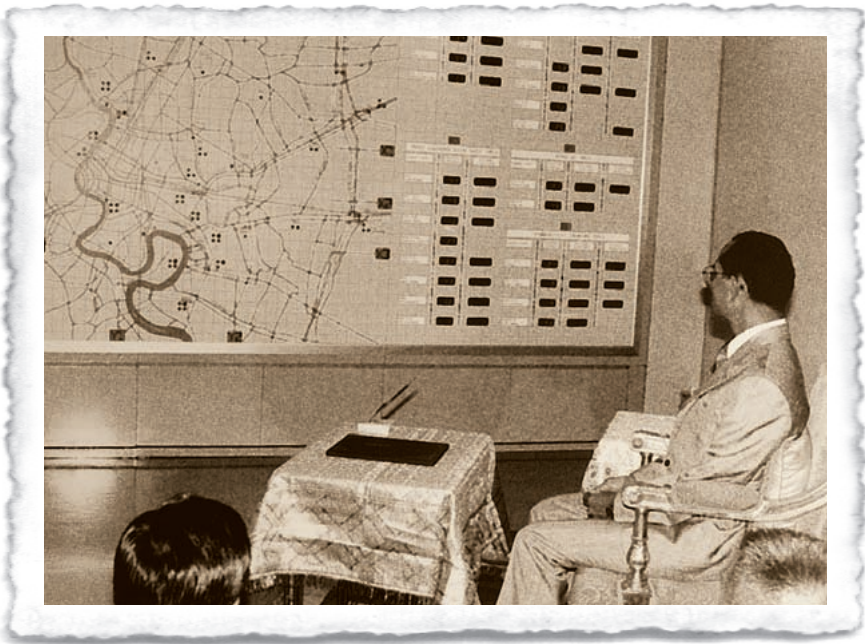
the flood-related damage. However, he is always careful that the problem is solved without waste of resources. A technician once advised construction of a huge channel to divert water and avoid flooding in the rainy season. This channel would entail high cost. His Majesty pointed out that the channel would remain dry for most of the summer and that a smaller canal with roads on either side and a green space in between would serve the same purpose and at a much lower cost.

His Majesty is also not averse to getting his feet wet in flooded lanes and streets when gathering information. On 14 November, 1983, His Majesty went to



*KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
His Majesty and the Environment*





*His Majesty opening
the Bangkok Metropolitan
Flood Prevention Control
System Centre,
7 August, 1980.*

Bang Na to inspect the progress of the Royal-initiated Flood Relief Projects. On the Dindaeng-Bang Na Expressway, he stopped at Sukhumvit 62 to inspect drainage work and to take some photographs. He then waded through bumpy Sanphawut-Bang Na Road to inspect four of the twelve flood outlets built by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. Later in the same month he visited Bang Khun Thian District, Thon Buri, and spent four hours inspecting the watergate at Rajmontri Canal off Thon Buri-Paktho Highway. He waded over one kilometre through floodwater to observe the pumping operation, much to the surprise and joy of the residents who had suffered for so long. The king suggested to the representatives of



the Royal Irrigation Department that more tunnels be built under the Mae Klong railway line and a bypass canal be dug to speed up drainage. He then spent considerable time talking with flood victims before returning home at 7 p.m. Residents of Soi Udomsuk, off Sukhumvit Road, were happy that they had received royal attention in their time of suffering. As one bystander said later:

“Although we have suffered from heavy flooding for more than two months, we are really happy to know that His Majesty the King always cares about our well-being.”

In one of his annual speeches delivered on 4th December one day before the Royal Birthday Anniversary, 5th December 1989, the King warned all Thai people about climate change causing flooding, more and new tropical diseases and limitations on farming and food production. He explained the causes of climate change as not only due to deforestation, but also due to the burning of fossil fuel such as coal and petrol. His Majesty advised people to conserve energy and to reduce burning of fossil fuel, as well as planting and looking after trees and forests.

Following the Royal speech, and starting in 1991, the then government declared every December 4th to be Thai Environment Day during which the Thai



people could re-invigorate efforts to protect the environment by various campaigns nation-wide every year.

Traffic Problems Alleviation

An environmental hazard of a different sort, and one which attracts a lot of attention in Bangkok these days, is the motorcar. Anyone who has visited the capital in the last ten years will have seen for themselves the endless traffic jams which clutter the streets from morning till night. His Majesty has rightly taken an interest in this matter and has initiated ideas to speed up the flow of traffic. On rare occasions, His Majesty has felt the need to express himself on subjects of grave national importance. With billions of baht being lost each year because traffic problems deter foreign investors and



His Majesty giving advice on Boromarajonani Flyover Project, Pin Klao segment.



Their Majesties the King and Queen inspecting the operation control centre of the Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand in the Huai Khwang area, at the Opening Ceremony of the Mass Rapid Transit Chaloem Ratchamongkhon Line (Hua Lamphong - Bang Sue Section) Bangkok 3 July 2004.



Industrial Ringroad Project.



tourists, he has exercised his constitutional right as a Thai citizen to speak out on this subject. Addressing a gathering of Thai ambassadors and consuls-general on 17 August, 1995, His Majesty commented that people now had to spend two to ten hours on the streets. He explained that, although he mostly stayed in his royal residence, he always kept in touch with the traffic situation through information technology as well as from the radio, aerial survey reports, newspapers and the people themselves. He went on to recommend that the Ministers in charge of traffic problems work together to address them, adding,

*“No matter how politics is reformed,
that cannot help. We need to join hands
in solving the problems.”*

The construction of some roads at strategic points in Bangkok began since 1971 at His Majesty’s suggestion, which have proven to help relieve the often unbearable traffic congestion; the Boromrajonani Flyover, for instance, was designed to facilitate the flow of traffic out of Bangkok to the west, and the new bridges that run parallel to the Makhawan Bridge on the busy Ratchadamnoen Avenue relieve what was a bottleneck for traffic during rush hours.



His Majesty anointing the TRANSAVIA PL-12 AIRTRUCK bought through the combined effort of the people of Kanchanaburi Province and presented to His Majesty to be used in the study and research activities at Bo Fai Air Field, Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province in 1971.



His Majesty inspecting the Cessna 180 aircraft equipped with liquid chemical sprayer at Bo Fai Air Field, Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province in 1969.



The Rainmaker

The United Nations has reported that over 1.5 million children under the age of five die every year from water-borne diseases. People who drink water from wells risk drinking groundwater made toxic by agricultural pesticides and industrial poisons. Waste dumps, landfills and old underground pipes all contribute towards the poor environment. Through the Chaipattana Foundation, His Majesty has made funds available to the University of Khon Kaen in the northeast for technical experiments to find ways to combat water pollution. The simplest method of storing water is to keep it in an area where chemical fertilizers are not used. Water storage ponds, like the one in the Rama IX Pond Royal Development Project at Pathum Thani, not only store water for agricultural purposes but also serve as parks and green areas for recreational use.

One of the biggest headaches for farmers is water — or rather the lack of it — particularly having a consistent flow at essential times. During the seventies, there was a flurry of irrigation and water resource conservation projects beginning with two Royal Watershed Development Projects in Chiang Mai in 1974 and the Bacho Drainage Canal Project in Narathiwat Province the same year.



The twenty watershed projects implemented during the 1970's were aimed at conserving existing resources by the proper management of the forests which covered them. His Majesty was able to enlist the aid of the Royal Forest Department in these activities. His Majesty's incisive thinking led to the development of a pattern in the evolution of the royal projects. After a most concentrated period of watershed conservation and development work accomplished between 1974 to 1976, there followed, between 1977 and 1978, a concentrated period of water resource creation in the form of reservoirs and irrigation canals.

In the early 1960s, His Majesty King Bhumibol became interested in attempting to make rain to alleviate drought in various parts of Thailand. The problem lay in the seasonal domination of Thailand's climate by monsoons which produce distinct wet and dry seasons in Asia. The southwest monsoon alone accounts for sixty percent of the rainfall in the South and eighty percent of the rainfall in the North of Thailand. However, this rainfall is rather inconsistent and uneven across the whole of the country, producing extreme dry spells in several areas, particularly in the Northeastern Region. The supply of surface water is crucial to Thailand. Water has become closely related to the needs of the expanding population to meet energy and drinking demands.



Royal advice provided as guidelines for discovering technique or scientific methodologies to modify the climate to induce cloud formation and rainfall.



The Royal Rain Radar Station, Om Koi District, Chiang Mai Province.



A vehicle equipped with radar for the artificial rainmaking operation.



Upon his return from a State Visit to the United States and Europe, His Majesty spurred various government agencies to undertake a study of rain-making in Thailand. In 1964 an agricultural engineering expert, the late M.R. Debriddhi Devakul



of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, became interested in this concept and with his assistant, Metha Rajatapiti, started preparatory studies of feasible cloud seeding techniques. His Majesty believed that *“Weather modification is a very useful tool to combat weather change.”*¹

The Royal Rain Radar Station in Phimai District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province.

In 1969, the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture requested M.R. Debriddhi to create a task force to conduct field studies in the seeding of clouds. These introductory studies were carried out over a mountain barrier, 1,300 m high, over the period 18-21 July, 1969 at the Khao Yai National Park, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. The operation used a Cessna 180 and seeded with dry ice. After two afternoons of cloudtop seeding flights, the clouds were reported to have turned grey and moved downwind, but no one was able to see if it rained from the seeded clouds. During the period 5-31 August, 1969 the studies were moved to Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan, and two aircrafts were used to seed at cloud tops and bases with dry ice, water spray, salt in

¹ Royal address given at Chitralada Villa, 30 July, 1986.



His Majesty, accompanied by H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, visiting the Royal Rain Operation Base to observe the royal rainmaking and lay out the plan of operation himself at Bo Fai Air Field, Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province in 1979.

solution, and mixtures of the three. Seeding was performed in the lee of the mountains. There were ten days of seeding with eyewitnesses reporting that on two days there was rain in the target areas; on four days there was rain near the target areas; on two days there was rain far away from the target areas; and on two days there was no rain at all. His Majesty did not find this disappointing and learned that a key factor in rainmaking was to “target” a site much like naval artillery does.

“Rainmaking is like a warship; one fires the missile far, then close in order to properly hit the target. Since there are facilities for rainmaking, they should be sure to use it properly to get rain in the right places.”¹

¹ Royal address given at Chitralada Villa, 30 July, 1986.



Chemicals are ground and mixed.



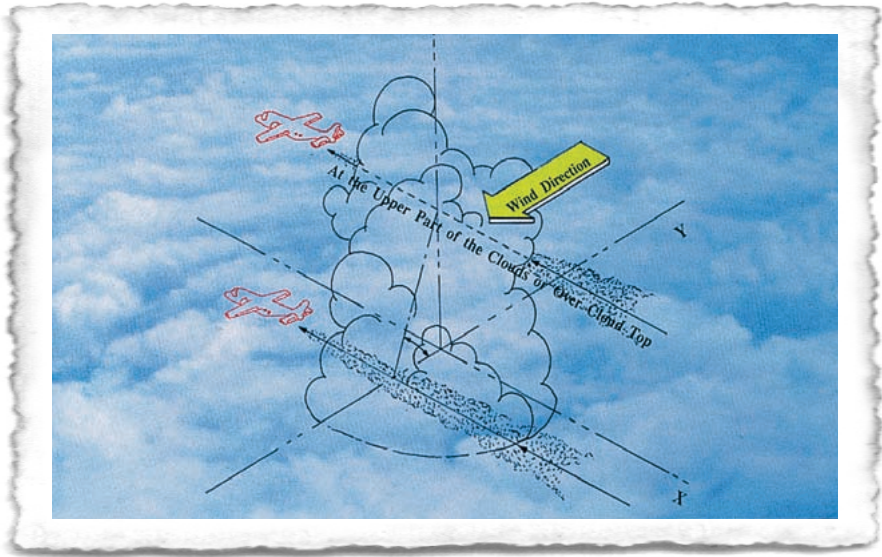
*The Super King Air 350 used in the Super Sandwich
technique of bombarding the rain clouds.*



The two targets had been a rice area of about 1,000 Rai. in the Thai-Israel Project and the Khao Tao village reservoir, one kilometre from the east coast. Two additional investigation days were completed on 14-15 January, 1970, in the Hua Hin District over two targets with the same seeding agents. Observations indicated that heavy rain fell over both targets on the second day.

Following the preliminary tests, a report and proposal were submitted in February 1970 to Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, the then Prime Minister, requesting temporary funding for a "Rainmaking Project." The Prime Minister formed an intergovernmental committee to develop and recommend a policy. In March 1971, the intergovernmental committee agreed to the proposal that the "rainmaking efforts" should be viewed as research and be conducted in the catchment areas of Bhumibol and Ubolratana Reservoirs. These recommendations resulted in the establishment of the "Artificial Rainmaking Research and Development Project" within the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

Later the same year rice farmers in Phichit Province submitted a request to the king for "rainmaking" in their central plains areas. The king agreed and during August and part of September clouds were seeded in a number of provinces in the central plains. Farmers even flew in the seeding aircraft assisting with targeting. During September and October, the rainmaking team conducted a number of flights in the Southern Region



and, from late October to early November, the team conducted seeding in Nakhon Sawan Province in the central region. These activities provided the basis for launching an ongoing seeding programme after 1971.

Illustration of the Sandwich Flying Technique.

In September 1975, Prime Minister M.R. Kukrit Pramoj signed a royal decree reorganizing the Office of the Under-Secretary, later called the Permanent Secretary, of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. In the special Royal Gazette published to announce the reorganization, the Prime Minister was pleased to note that the reason for the decree was the assistance the Royal Rainmaking Project had given farmers since 1971. In order to provide more extensive and effective assistance to the farmers, it was considered important to establish the Royal Rainmaking Research and Development Institute.



First step : Agitation.



Second step : Fattening.



Third step : Bombardment.

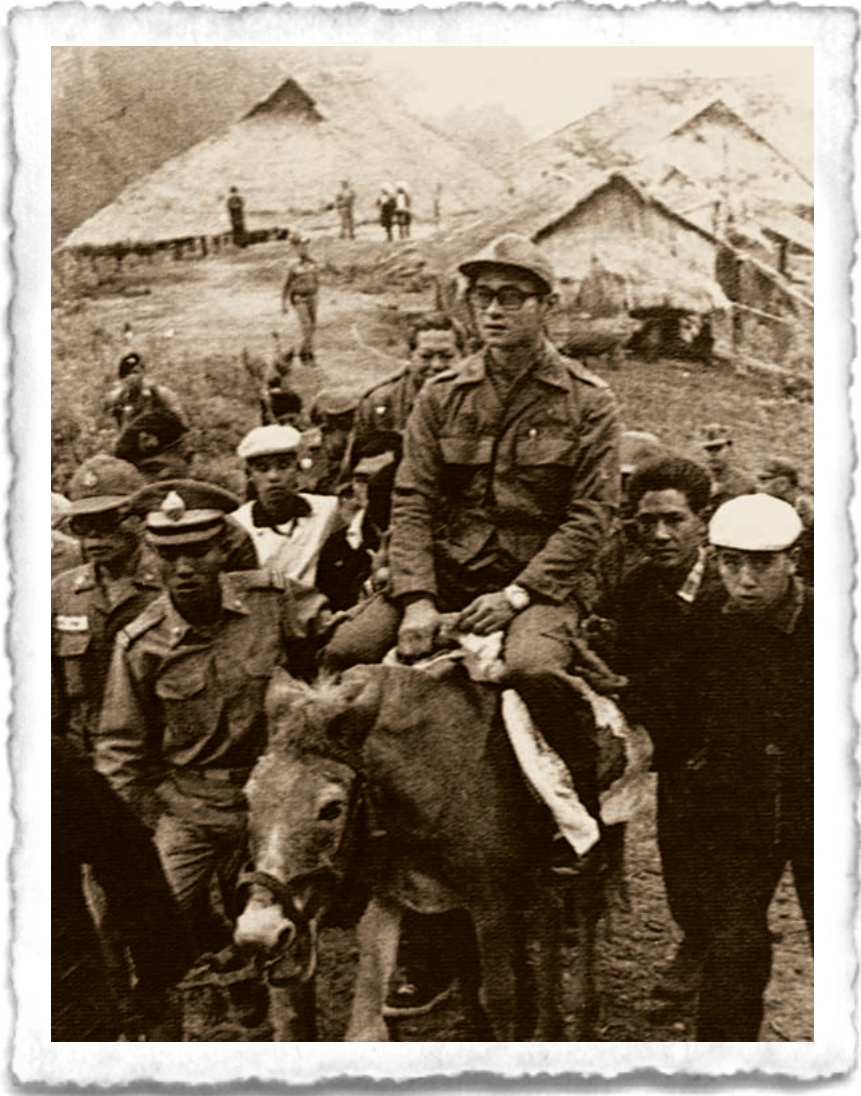
The Super Sandwich technique of attacking the rain clouds.

This is the bombardment step of the royal rain operation that combines the techniques of warm clouds and cool clouds attacks simultaneously to increase the amount and extent of rainfall. His Majesty calls this technique "Super Sandwich" which is another technique in the step of attacking the rain clouds.

After the first and second steps of agitating and fattening the clouds which are steps in making rain from warm clouds, and when the cloud mass increases in size with the top higher than 20,000 feet and the temperature within it lower than -0° C which is called "cool cloud," the Super Sandwich technique of attacking is employed. This technique combines the making of rain from warm clouds using an aircraft without internal pressure control system to seed dry ice at the cloud base while another aircraft of the same type attacks the cloud mass at the shoulder at an altitude of approximately 10,000 feet, while the Physics Research Aircraft (Super King Air 350) equipped with an internal pressure control system attacks the cool clouds by launching silvernitrate iodide at the cloud top at an altitude of 21,500 feet, with the temperature in the cloud top being -8° to -12° C. This is a technique of rainmaking from warm clouds and cool clouds from aircrafts that fly the three different altitudes and attack the same cloud mass simultaneously.



KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
The Royal Development Projects





The Royal Development Projects

For a monarch to pay polite attention to the plight of the people is common enough in many regions of the world. It may be considered a gracious sign of royal interest, and fills the recipients of such attention with understandable pride. One can easily picture the sight most people are familiar with, whether the personage is king, leader or president: a rural village — the people are attired in their Sunday best and gathered in the centre of the village. Children carry sticks to which are attached miniatures of the national flag. Old people sit patiently, awaiting the arrival of the VIP. There is a light, festive air about the occasion. They have been informed in advance, through all the correct channels, that their ruler will come to visit.

The important moment arrives. A stately procession of sleek Mercedes Benzes, or more stately Rolls Royces, approaches the village. People have been assembled from near and far to enhance the turnout. After all, the mountain villages in the surrounding areas are inaccessible to even the venerable Rolls Royce. The procession halts and there is a flurry of bodyguards and secret servicemen. The one they have



all been waiting for descends, dressed smartly for the occasion. The party approaches the awaiting crowd who are now in a high state of excitement and a cheer goes up spontaneously. The national symbol speaks with the crowd; pays polite attention to their requests. There may be an inspection of the local produce. A gift is offered and graciously accepted. After fifteen more minutes an aide conspicuously glances at his watch and with a polite word ushers the figure back to the limousine. With a few encouraging words of farewell, the doors close and the cavalcade of vehicles drives off, leaving behind the warmth of knowing someone so respected truly cares about their lives.

While that familiar image is still fresh in the mind, pause for a moment and transpose the setting to Thailand. Imagine, if you will, the most inaccessible village in the back of beyond. It is high on a mountain, across a river, through a tropical jungle, an hour's walk from the nearest road. The sound of jeeps halting in the distance far below may have been heard by some of the villagers, though it may not have. Suddenly a strange sight approaches. Trudging upward, with a grim look of determination, face dripping with perspiration, spectacles silvered with steam, rises a figure in light grey slacks, a casual open-necked shirt and a jacket that can be bought at any cheap shops. Around his neck bounces a black Canon camera, and under



Whenever His Majesty visits people in different regions, a camera and a map are always at his side.



his arm a sheaf of large maps dotted with scribbled notes and possibly stuck together with sticky tape from a mass of smaller area maps. Pencils and other writing paraphernalia threaten to pop out of his breast pocket. Struggling to keep up is a small retinue of retainers. Only the youngest and toughest of the accompanying paramilitary Border Patrol Police and official bodyguards can keep pace.

The waiting people smile broadly. Many fall to their knees in a traditional



show of respect. The King of Thailand has arrived; the Father has come to visit his children. Upon seeing them, His Majesty's face breaks into a smile. It is rather a struggle but ultimately worth it. He approaches the throng for a few words. The village headman and senior villagers lead the way to a plantation. The crop is visibly wilting due to the lack of water. "Sure it rains," they assure the king. But the water runs straight down the hill, carrying most of the soil's nutrients along with it. They can barely make enough to survive.

With perspiration still trickling down his face, the King of Thailand, traditional Lord of Life in ancient Siam, bends down to look at the soil and the plants. He inspects the terrain and compares it to the maps

*Their Majesties and
H.R.H. Princess Maha
Chakri Sirindhorn
among the people.*



in his possession and the notes he has prepared.

Why don't you try to catch the water as it goes down the hill and use the runoff to feed fruit trees? The trees will strengthen the soil and prevent further erosion. If you were to build some dykes here, here and here, you could collect the water in small reservoirs and keep it for when you need it...



His Majesty's car bogged down on a path leading to Huai Mongkhon Village in 1952.

These and other suggestions will come flowing out of His Majesty depending on the local conditions. He is a proponent of self-sufficiency for the rural poor and stresses the need for community-wide mutual support on visits to remote areas. This personal touch has endeared him to the Thais and made him the most-travelled monarch in Thai history having covered every province in the kingdom. Knowledge about the people's problems has sometimes come unexpectedly. Looking back at that



first project when His Majesty's car got bogged down on a path leading to Huai Mongkhol Village, Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province in 1952, some villagers came to help push the car. Learning that though the village was only 20 kilometres away from Hua Hin it took the villagers a whole day to take their produce to Hua Hin market, His Majesty then initiated cooperation between the Border Patrol Police and other government agencies to build a road to facilitate the transportation of agricultural produce from that time on. Huai Mongkhol Road was thus considered the first of the royal-initiated development projects.



Their Majesties meeting with the hill tribe people during the early rounds of visits to the Northern Region of Thailand.

The Royal Project

For more than five decades, the rural areas of northern provinces such as Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Mae Hong Son were home to many wandering peoples who migrated there from Myanmar, Laos, and Southern China. The Akha, Hmong, Karen, Lahu, Lisu, and Yao constituted the majority of the hill tribes although a significant number of the defeated Kuomintang of China also fled into the northern hills of Thailand.



The hill tribes themselves kept aloof. They had their own languages, their own ethnic cultures, but they lacked one vital thing — government assistance to bring them out of their poverty. Living in seclusion, the hill tribes and other settlers practised swidden farming, otherwise called by the more descriptive name “slash-and-burn.” The once self-supporting hill tribe farmers found that the soil they had helped to degrade through swidden farming and the encroachment on their forests by Thai lowlanders began to take its toll. The tribes began to turn to growing poppies as a cash crop — poppies, probably from China where a large market had existed in the nineteenth century.



Accompanied by his staff, the king visits a hill tribe village to promote planting of temperate climate crops instead of slash-and-burn farming or opium cultivation.



The Royal Project originates from His Majesty's wish to enable the hill tribes to cease growing opium and to find suitable crop replacements.



In 1959, the government enacted a law banning opium cultivation. But it was extremely difficult to enforce the ban, as there was no alternative crop to replace that which the hill tribe people had come to depend upon. In 1969 His Majesty went to Phuping Palace in Chiang Mai, whence he visited and talked to the villagers. He had a keen interest in their lives so they were very frank with him. On one particular day, he asked the Hmong what their source of income was apart from opium. They said peach — the small native peach — and they told him that the income from opium and peach was just about the same! That was how the Royal Project started. The man who accompanied His Majesty at the time was His Serene Highness Prince Bhisadej Rajani who recalled the beginning quite clearly. *“He wanted us to graft big peaches onto the stalk of the small ones, so that the income would be higher than opium.”*

“Opium,” said the king, *“seemed to be the centre of the problem.”*¹ After setting up the Royal Hill Tribe Assistance Project, which changed its name to the Royal Project in 1980, with some 200,000 baht (\$10,000) of his own money, His Majesty accepted from the Rotary Club of Bangkok a contribution of 306,700 baht (US\$15,335) from the Rotary Club of Bangkok shortly afterward. In the

¹ *Interview with H.S.H. Prince Bhisadej Rajani, Chiang Mai Province, 1994.*



first year, the project set up village schools, cooperative stores and rice banks. It also financed a special course at Chiang Mai University to train Border Patrol Policemen to be teachers. Meanwhile, at Suan Song Saen, 1,220 metres above sea level outside of Chiang Mai, plant specialists from Kasetsart University were busy grafting Australian peaches on to local root stock.

There are now four research stations and 38 development centres on the hill at Ang Khang, Pang Da, Mae Lod, Inthanon, Doi Pui, under the directorship of Kasetsart University, and Khun Wang under the directorship of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. Crops include temperate fruits, vegetables, flowers, ferns, coffee, tea, Shiitake mushrooms, strawberries, passion fruit, guava, herbs, potatoes, legumes, cereals and fast-growing forest trees. Fishes such as rainbow trouts and sturgeons are also bred for local markets.

Opium cultivated by hill tribe people in the Northern part of Thailand.





*His Majesty visiting the Royal Ang Khang Agricultural Station,
Fang District, Chiang Mai Province.*



The Royal Project Foundation holds a fair in Chiang Mai Province every year.





“We have marketing both here and in Bangkok. Cold transport and lorries. Our market is mostly Thailand, but we have one unit for food processing at Chiang Mai University here. I think they are doing guava juice now. There is one in Chiang Rai on a farm. They export frozen strawberries and baby corn. This year, we won a prize for our baby corn.”¹

The king’s charisma is such that promotion is hardly necessary. Again, Prince Bhisadej related that, *“We have a fair in Chiang Mai every year and people come to donate money to the king. These people don’t ask for an audience. Sometimes he goes to visit a village and people hand over money to him.”*

The reason for the tremendous esteem in which the king is held can be revealed in the following scene. There was a meeting with some villagers and they came along and sat on the ground. In front of them there were chairs. They were for His Majesty and his entourage to sit on, which is normal. But the king would not sit on the chair. He sat on the ground with the villagers.

The villagers knew that the Royal Project staff were working for the king and they received them quite well. They knew the king’s men were not government officials and that made it easier. Government officials would try to stop them from growing opium.

Prince Bhisadej continued:

¹ *Ibid.*



“We thought that strawberries would be a good crop because they produce money very soon, maybe three months after planting. So we selected three Hmongs to try planting the strawberries. It was not too difficult because the Hmong knew we were from the king’s project and the king would like to help them to make some more money. And they accepted it. At the beginning of the harvest money went into their pockets straight away. We took it to the market for them and they got the money. The next season a lot of people wanted to grow strawberries. We just asked them to try. We supplied the plants and the fertilizer. We used mostly natural fertilizer, but some elements had to be put back into the soil.”



*His Majesty and His
Serene Highness Prince
Bhisadej Rajani.*

The Prince also told the story of one man who grafted three peach trees, and the king walked for one hour to see the trees.

“Everyone said that it was very tough on the king, to walk for one hour to see three plants. But the king understood that if he went there it would show that he was interested. That is good promotion for the plants.”

That the Royal Project has genuine achievements can be proven by asking any of the villagers. A common success story in the hills is:

“I make about 5 baht per kilo by selling vegetables. The 300 kilos of vegetables here today will bring me about one thousand baht. Before the Royal Project was begun here, the situation was



pretty bad. It has got better now. Before the project, I would never have seen one thousand baht at all. At present, I can expect about 3,000 baht. His Majesty's Project has helped me with credit for fertilizer and chemicals. There has also been education with teachers coming to the village. I am currently studying at lower secondary level to improve myself. I plan to stay here all my life. In fact, I am satisfied to stay here rather than enter the city in search of other work as the situation here at present is quite good."

The Royal Project now administers 38 development centres and four research stations in Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Mae Hong Son, Lamphun, Phayao and Nan provinces. More than 300 vilages are covered, comprising over 30,000 families.

Having successfully developed new plant and seed strains, the Royal Project is still faced with the aftermath of years of opium addiction among the hill tribes. One wonders why the proud hill tribes take opium still, but to them it is a habit, like smoking. It is also medicinal. *"For a bad stomach, smoke opium — a very common reason for smoking it"* — repeats a villager at Nong Hoi, outside Chiang Mai, where a drug rehabilitation course is being run by the Royal Project.

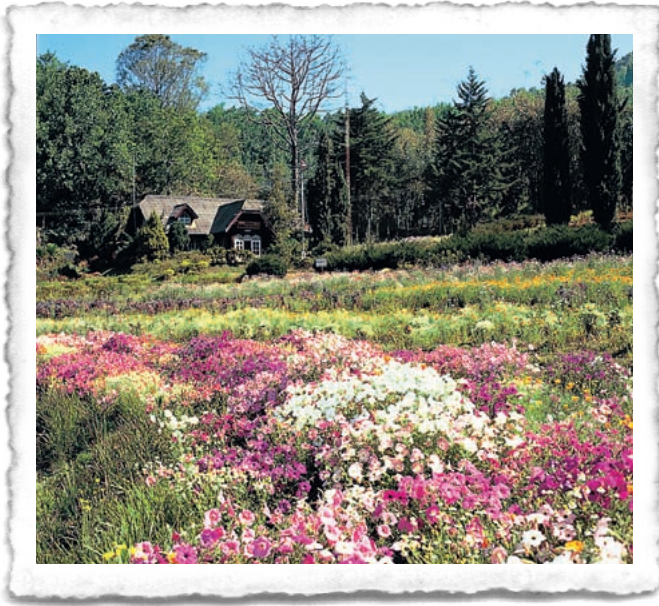
"I have been an addict for only a year or two, though it was never my intention to become one. I started when I was sick. I went to see a doctor, but it didn't hlep so I took opium for relief."



His Majesty and H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn visiting a temperate climate vegetable garden at the Royal Ang Khang Agricultural Station, Chiang Mai Province.



His Majesty observes the work of the research project to collect species of grapes used in wine-making and as table grapes, and also the project to study species of seedless grapes at the Royal Inthanon Development Centre, Chom Thong District, Chiang Mai Province.



Royal Ang Khang Agricultural Station, Fang District, Chiang Mai Province.



Khun Wang Agricultural Station, Chiang Mai Province.



Inthanon Royal Project Research Station, Chom Thong District, Chiang Mai Province.



Because of stories like this, Her Majesty the Queen has donated a medicine bank to the Project. *His Majesty visiting a vegetable farm.*

There are about 10 areas covered by the Royal Project for its drug rehabilitation campaign. Nong Hoi was chosen to begin as other areas already had a lot of heroin addiction and the staff hoped to create a measure of protection against it entering Nong Hoi. The treatment is not carried out in hospitals but in the villages so that the people will nurse the addicts. It is successful because people from all sections of the community help -- the police, the Border Patrol Police, the health people, doctors and nurses -- all work together. They all join forces to cooperate. If it were an official campaign, it would be handled by only one

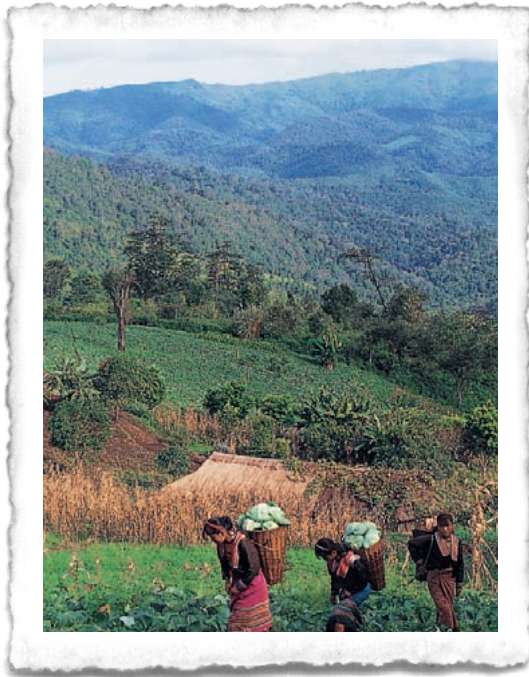


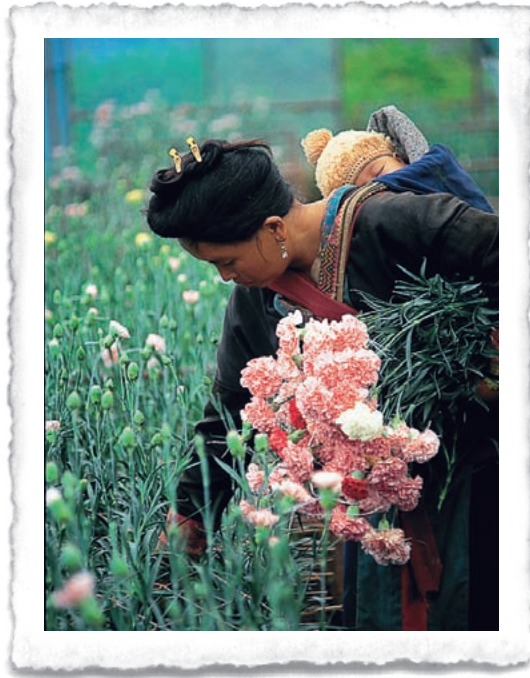
His Majesty, escorted by Prince Bhisadej Rajani, observing the vegetable farm at the Royal Ang Khang Agricultural Station.

section. The addicts would be sent to hospital. But when they returned to the village they would pick up the habit again. The Project has an organization in the village, so the people will supervise them.

Schools have been established in cooperation with the Border Patrol Police and primary education authorities. Doctors and nurses from Chiang Mai University Hospital visit those in need of medical health care, nutrition and family-planning advice.

The hill tribes in the project area are encouraged to form self-help organizations, particularly rice banks, production groups and cooperatives. Rice banks have been set up in several villages. Rice may be borrowed for immediate consumption while awaiting harvest time. At the end of





The high altitude temperate climate crops research project has proven that the hill tribes can grow temperate climate crops and flowers.



His Majesty and H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn visiting the Royal Khun Wang Agricultural Station at Mae Wang District, Chiang Mai Province.



His Majesty and H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn visiting a temperate climate cereal farm at Pang Da High Altitude Agricultural Research Station.

the season, the borrowers must replace the rice they borrowed.

Several small-scale canning plants were set up in Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai provinces to process the agricultural products of the hill tribes. In 1985 the Royal Project set up its marketing organization to help the farmers to sell their produce. The food marketing is done under the Doi Kham and Royal Project brands. The marketing team buys about one-third of the produce from the project areas and then sells the goods to major customers in urban areas. Thus, each day the fruits, vegetables, and flowers are gathered from the hillsides



and transported to the packing houses in Chiang Mai. The produce makes its way to the ten Doi Kham stores in Thailand, and to 'up-market' food retailers. The produce also ends up in several four and five-star hotels and resorts in Bangkok and other large cities.

Thai Airways International is one of the Royal Project's largest and most important customers. Its catering department is responsible for the preparation of 75,000 in-flight meals on a daily basis for 48 customer airlines. Thus, by 2008 the Royal Project's annual revenue from its hill tribe farmers amounted to as much as 13 million US dollars.

The Royal Project, often referred to as crop substitution or crop replacement project, serves at least three important purposes, namely poverty alleviation for hill tribe people in the remotest areas of the country; reduction and eventually eradication of opium cultivation and supply from Thai soil in the northern region, thus assisting in reducing opium-heroin supply on a regional scale; and environmental conservation, by eliminating the slash-and-burn cultivation which destroy the soil and the environment, and replacing the swidden cultivation by planting of fruit trees and vegetables which, not only bring for the hill tribe farmers many times more



income than opium growing, but also brought about community development and reforestation. Finally, a very significant result of the Royal Project has been sustainable development for the hundreds of thousands of hill tribes who had migrated illegally across the Thai northern borders and whose livelihood had been dependent almost totally on illegal opium cultivation. In 2009 several hill tribe families interviewed by an Australian media company, Capital T.V, filming a documentary in the Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Mae Hong Son provinces, said that they enjoyed the peace, and relative well-being, and very proud to have been accepted as a part of Thai Society.





The Colombo Plan Award.

The Royal Project was the recipient of the acclaimed Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1988, and the Colombo Plan Award in 2003 which identified it as the world's most outstanding opium replacement project and the only scheme to successfully get rid of opium through positive means. The United Nations has recognized the project as a model for sustainable development for countries with similar problems in the Asian and Latin America regions.

Royal Development Study Centres

Once His Majesty had commenced his agricultural studies with the experimental farm in the grounds of Chitralada Villa, it became increasingly obvious that one site could not emulate the conditions that exist in all parts of Thailand. Geographically, the country is rather varied, with deep jungles in many areas, temperate climates in the hilly regions to the north, hot, dry plains that border on being desert to the northeast, and swampy ground in parts of the south of Thailand. What was required was regional centres that could conduct research and experimentation in situ.

Royal development study centres were conceived as places where several government departments could work together and coordinate their work with experiments and exchange ideas for the integrated development of rural areas.



Most of them are geographically located in an area with a specific natural feature, such as sandy soil, mangroves, hills or degraded forest; and sometimes a combination of several of these features. Many of them include a village or villages within their boundaries as they are intended to have a definite impact on the lives of the local people, who are the first to feel the impact of a new idea or technique developed at the local centre, *"...for the demonstration of all the little aspects of development."*¹ Furthermore, individuals and groups from around the country are invited to visit any of the centres to attend training courses and orientation programmes regarding that centre's work and to receive advice and assist-

¹ *Sustainable Development of Natural Resources, UNDP, December, 1988, p. 31.*



ance on how to solve their own indigenous problems. In this way the centres function as living museums and serve as a one-stop service, that is, they “conclude the results of the study into models of development which people can take as examples and apply in their daily lives.”¹

In every area near a royal project His Majesty has encouraged the formation of groups to solve their own problems and enable the community to lay the foundations for being self-sufficient. Cooperative groups within royal-initiated projects have often enjoyed the greatest success.

An alternative is to find among the villagers their natural leaders, or encourage community leaders, who are then respected and trusted in their dissemination of the knowledge which will improve the lives of the local people. Such leaders are carefully chosen with special emphasis on their moral character and kindness. This closely follows the structure of traditional Thai society, which usually follows a family-like pattern in its leadership; that is, the leader is the patron or father figure of the community, who are in turn his own family. His moral duty is therefore to do whatever is necessary to keep them in good health and prosperity and in return he will receive their respect and gratitude. The support of community leaders is then used to stimulate

¹ *Ibid.*



prosperity and growth in a particular region.

Above all, there must be a realistic approach to the goals of each royal initiative. His Majesty insists that instant prosperity cannot be expected. The first step in any form of local development is for the community to be self-supporting in food. Everything else is, naturally, of secondary importance. In order to achieve this, His Majesty wants villagers to learn the proper marketing approach to being farmers. Basic agricultural business skills involve selling the produce to markets or middlemen after harvest. It is often in this area that rural people are prey to the entrepreneurial skills of their urban brothers.

An in-depth analysis of royal development projects clearly reveals that His Majesty has been using public hearings for decades, long before the practice became widespread elsewhere.



The development study centres can be compared to living natural museums, which reduce the number of steps in the coordination of management that conventionally involves agencies operating separately on their own.

His Majesty clearly understands the need to integrate all the activities connected with agricultural production. One simply cannot say that an area needs to grow fruit, for instance, without research into the type of soil needed at the project site, the amount of water available, the amount of rainfall, and what other plants can be grown in harmony with the fruit trees in order to allow farmers year-long income.

The six Royal Development Study Centres which grew from His Majesty's original concept in 1979 are named after the areas where they are located: *Khao Hin Son*, established on 8 August, 1979, is in Chachoengsao Province; *Khung Kraben Bay*, established on 28 December, 1981 in Chanthaburi Province; *Phikun Thong*, established on 6 January, 1982 in



Their Majesties inspecting the progress of the rural farmers' agricultural production.



Narathiwat Province; *Bhuphan*, established on 25 November, 1982 in Sakon Nakhon Province; *Huai Hong Khrai*, established on 11 December, 1982 in Chiang Mai Province and *Huai Sai* established on 5 April, 1983 in Phetchaburi Province. They conduct field work for economical and unpretentious sustainable development projects which can be genuinely utilized around the country. The purpose of the centres themselves is:

“...to develop farmers’ land by means of water resources development, forest rehabilitation and application of production techniques in agriculture and animal husbandry and to use the donated funds as the operation cost of the centre. The centres will also serve as a central office to conduct development activities to improve



*Huai Hong Khrai
Royal Development
Study Centre.*

the well-being of the people in the surrounding areas. Once the farmers have upgraded their living standard, they might consider setting up a rice mill and rice bank in each village to get an opportunity to train themselves, to finally become self-supporting...”

In 1979, the Office of Accelerated Rural Development built a reservoir on a hill in *Huai Hong Khrai*, which fitted into His Majesty’s concept of the establishment of the area as one which could integrate the



In the compound of Huai Hong Khrai Royal Development Study Centre.

use of water resources. He saw from his maps that this type of area was not so far from the edges of current urban development and was likely to be more heavily populated in the future. This would probably lead to quite serious environmental consequences.

His Majesty thus suggested building a reservoir high up on the side of the valley in order to store rainwater with the intention that a watershed forest could be created. This is in accordance with his concept of a wet forest area acting as a useful fire-break. Forest fires are still an ongoing nightmare for people who live far from the concrete jungle. Secondary to that, the people downstream would benefit from the drinking water which would then become available, for at the time govern-



ment water supplies had not entered the area.

The land is divided into three major sections: the part above the reservoir being mainly for the watershed forest, the middle section for livestock and agriculture and the bottom for fisheries development. The Royal Irrigation Department was able to construct six reservoirs with storage capacities from 7,500 m³ to 900,000 m³. Water for potable use comes from three of the reservoirs. The one with the highest capacity of 250,000 m³ provides water for the moist forest and for consumption by the people in the nearby study centre. The second reservoir, with 900,000 m³, is for general agricultural use, upland crop research and livestock. The third reservoir provides water for the experimental plots of the Department of Agriculture. The mid-range section is served by a five-



A check dam at Huai Hong Khrai, Chiang Mai Province.



kilometre pipeline. Water resources are conserved by the use of check dams at carefully planned intervals.

Due to His Majesty's ability to pull in the interest of outside parties, eight government agencies are represented at Huai Hong Khrai. The Royal Irrigation Department, the Royal Forest Department, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Agriculture Extension, the Department of Fisheries, the Department of Livestock Development, the Land Development Department and Chiang Mai University joined hands to assist the royal initiative, testing integrated agro-forestry models and looking at the integration of fruit trees in timber forests and the rearing of cattle in open forests, which His Majesty believes allows the farmer more opportunity to produce year-round crops and protein sources.

Because the land in the area slopes quite steeply, experiments are now being conducted to find the best types of crops for this type of hilly land as it is typical of the land elsewhere in other parts of the country. There are also studies of erosion, of what happens to the water supply depending on the use to which the land is put and on crop systems to conserve soil and water.

Soil erosion is a serious problem for farmers. Experiments initiated by His Majesty include planting fruit trees interspersed with appropriate upland crops to



bind the soil, the planting of upland rice across the slopes — rather than down the slopes as many farmers prefer — and crop rotation. Tamarind trees are favoured fruit trees as they fulfil requirements regarding their ability to bind the soil. The background focus of all these studies is, of course, soil conservation. His Majesty suggested a brilliant innovation in 1987. Instead of trying only to stop run-off and erosion, a radically different approach would be to take advantage of such run-off as it contains valuable nutrients. To do this, a slope is divided into shallow diamond-shaped “polders” which control the direction of the run-off straight to a fruit tree planted at the nexus of the diamond. The small dykes look similar to a fishbone pattern. A second model has terraces at certain intervals down the slope on which fruit trees are planted just below upland rice in order to catch the run-off. Drainage channels lead the water off at a reasonable speed to avoid erosion and the space between trees is covered with different crops, usually short-term and often legumes. The final crop of the year is not ploughed up after harvest but is left to rot and acts as a natural fertilizer.

This method tries to reproduce a natural forest environment, and the plants in the lines of earth dykes below receive whatever drops from the trees above as a form of organic fertilizer, just as they would in a natural forest. As a result, the Land Development Department now demonstrates



soil and water conservation methods and advocates mixing upland crops with fruit trees. Orchard development is seen as a way of enhancing the watershed capabilities of the area.

In 1984, the king called for regulatory measures to protect fish stocks. The centre has three fishery projects; two involve a few farmers rearing *Tilapia nilotica*, striped catfish and common silver barb in pens in the reservoir and red *Tilapia*, common carp and giant Mekong catfish (*Pla Buek*) in concrete tanks below the main reservoir. There are some problems about maintenance of the pens and low dry-season water levels, but on the whole the experiments are encouraging for future development.

The third experiment follows His Majesty's suggestion and is organized by a management group of local farmers who have made regulations to specify the number of days in a month when the reservoir may be fished, the type of methods which may be used and the size of the mesh of fishing nets. By charging for fishing rights, the group was able to make 9,000 baht by 1988 for use in restocking the reservoir. This idea is now being used at other reservoirs around the country, notably in Chiang Mai.

The Department of Agriculture has been experimenting with upland rice, soybean, peanut and asparagus at various heights and is rather pleased with the success of such research as these crops allow the farmers a better rate of return on their investment in seeds. Chiang Mai Univer-



sity introduced low-cost intensive cropping systems for low-income farmers, testing fruits for suitability in the poor soil, including lemon, jujube, kaffir lime, hog plum and carambola among others. Demonstrating how His Majesty's initiatives can really take off in other directions, the Department of Livestock Development introduced a herd of 104 Holstein-Friesian dairy cows, deciding that Ruzi grass was most suitable for grazing purposes, taking into consideration the sandiness of the soil and the run-off from the upper slopes. The nearby Sankamphaeng Village began dairy farming using these animals and it has met with much success.

Similarly, at *Bhuphan Royal Development Study Centre*, problems in the area were tackled by an integrated approach. The centre itself lies on 368 hectares of land with 1,760 hectares of forest next to it and the forest is an important watershed area that needs to be preserved. By introducing irrigation systems, economic crops could be planted in preparation for the introduction of agro-industry. The soil surface, which was prone to run-off, had to have a binder in the form of vetiver grass. This hardy plant is a known warrior in the fight against erosion. Planted amongst fruit trees on the slopes of hills, it assists in retaining water that would otherwise drain off very quickly.



Located in the northeast of Thailand, Bhuphan Royal Development Study Centre has not only to face solid development and forestry issues; development of the land is secondary to the principle of development of the people's livelihood and standard of living. Therefore, new agricultural techniques, new crops and social support are all absolutely necessary to the success of the experiments there. Integrated experiments offer farmers an opportunity to derive an income from activities besides rice, thus field crops like hybrid baby corns can be grown together with cassava, and silk worms bred in the back garden. Cottage industries and animal husbandry now offer more than just rice for farmers.

*Rice fields at Bhuphan,
Sakon Nakhon
Province.*



Mulberry bushes grown to feed silk worms at Bhuphan, Sakon Nakhon Province.

The Royal Development Study Centres are naturally always located in areas with their own typical problems. Khao Hin Son, in Chachoengsao Province was chosen because the soil there had deteriorated to the extent that the only crops the farmers could grow were sweet potatoes, arguably holding the lowest market price of any vegetable in the country. One of the important aims of the project would be to maintain the balance of nature and develop the soil to sustain various other types of crops to increase farmers' income and serve as a training centre for agricultural technology and handicraft skills. Again, the studies are conducted intersectorally among many agencies. Experiments include developing natural replacements for chemical pesticides and the cultivation of plants resistant to common diseases.



*His Majesty visiting the Khao Hin Son Royal Development Study Centre,
3 August 1981.*



A soil development study at Khao Hin Son.



Vegetable plots at Khao Hin Son.



Mango trees are an extension project at Khao Hin Son.



At *Huai Sai*, in Cha-am District, Phetchaburi, the sandy soil required a good water distribution system to support agriculture throughout the year. Consequently four reservoirs were constructed and a system developed to plant trees as part of the area's reforestation and conservation of trees. One third of the land currently grows cashews on a contour system and can conserve up to eighty-five percent of the soil and water that would normally have been lost to run-off and erosion.

Consider this in contrast with the land in the far south, which, far from being dry and sandy and therefore unable to hold moisture, is composed of water-sodden peat soil. The deeper marine clay contains pyrites which becomes very acidic when exposed to oxygen. As Narathiwat Province has over 41,897 hectares of this swampy, rather "un-agricultural" land, His Majesty saw that a centre there would bring ideas to bear on the solution to soil acidity.

The problem was attacked by the *Pikun Thong Royal Development Study Centre* both head-on and with a little lateral thinking. The direct answer was to lessen the soil acidity, and limestone dust worked



Vetiver grass study using economical water sources, at Huai Sai, Phetchaburi Province.



Irrigation at Phikun Thong Royal Development Study Centre.

into the soil certainly achieved some success. However, this alone could not solve the plight of farmers (imagine how many tons would be required for the whole province) in the short term so canals and an irrigation system were used to flush the acidity from the soil, perhaps in line with an old Thai adage that the good water will always flush out the bad.

A lot of experiments were then conducted to see which plants were actually most suitable for this wet, boggy, peat soil and para rubber was found to thrive with some intercropping of other plants like sweet zalacca. Irrigation canals were then dug to feed these experimental plantations



His Majesty visiting the royal-initiated local reservoir project and the Phikun Thong Royal Development Study Centre, Narathiwat Province.

and provide water for other crops to be grown in combination. With so much water around, agriculture would seem like an obvious introduction. Here the limestone dust could prove effective as it was required to lower acidity in fish ponds, as opposed to whole swathes of farmland.

One innovation was to promote animal husbandry, especially animals that could adapt to the wet conditions, such as poultry, goats, sheep and cattle. Much of the success relied heavily on management techniques, knowing what was possible under the conditions and managing to achieve that end.



His Majesty visiting a rice field at Phikun Thong Royal Development Study Centre.





The result of this effort is that rice yields have increased four-fold and income has increased from 8,918 baht in 1982 to 91,537 baht in 2004. Child malnutrition in the area decreased from 45.59 per cent to 19.14 per cent from 1994-1995, largely due to the economic and social development activities that accompanied the soil development of the area surrounding the centre. The promotion of agro-industrial production, better organization of the community and the cultivation of cash crops assisted the people in improving their lives. Childcare Development Centres, for instance, were instrumental in lowering child malnutrition.

Development “off the land” also held the people’s interest when His Majesty opened the *Khung Kraben Bay Royal Development Study Centre* in Chanthaburi Province. Inclined towards environmental conservation, the centre studies and researches the problems and potential of coastal zone resources and their management. This entails the culture of tiger prawns, shrimps, oysters, cockles, mussels and fish.

The centre also set up a fishery co-operative to undertake the production work of the community. Mangrove restoration is destined to assist villagers in the long term while agricultural extension activities allow them to plant cashews, groundnuts, rubber trees, vegetables and herbs. Much of the activities of the centre are also



*The Shoreline Marine
Animal Breeding
Demonstration Unit
(Sea Farm Project)
Khung Kraben Bay
Royal Development
Study Centre,
Chanthaburi Province.*



concerned with training and educating the farmers to use safe pest control methods, better fertilizers and how to conduct supplementary jobs to ensure sustainable development with the least impact on the environment. Designating 1,040 rai of shrimp farms in deteriorated mangrove areas to 104 households has met with some success. Shrimp farmers have achieved an average income per household of 150,000 baht per annum, which is about three times that of 1994.

Another of His Majesty's innovative ideas, the "natural forest park" was established at Huai Sai. This area has a genuine "back-to-nature" atmosphere, but is a controlled area where hunting is forbidden. Wild animals such as deer are bred here and released onto the mountain to live in harmony with the communities living close by. One of its guests is a baby elephant which was found by the Border Patrol Police near the Myanmar border, its parents apparently killed by poachers. Another of



the most interesting of the developments taking place here is the series of experiments on vetiver grass also carried out at almost all of the Royal Development Study Centres. This hardy grass has some unusual characteristics useful for areas suffering from erosion — it binds sandy soil and helps in breaking down hard, compacted soil where nothing would grow previously.

Close to the study centre, the Mae Ping Watersheds Project was begun as an adjunct to the centre's work. This project stresses water resources development in an integrated framework for commercial purposes, encouraging rural people to participate in maintenance and management so that they learn how to work together as a community. Up to 1986 the project built reservoirs, of which there are now eight. The upper reservoirs are rarely utilized for commercial purposes as they are meant to feed the lower ones. Dykes have been made from earth all the way down the slopes to catch eroded materials which usually plummet downwards after heavy rainfall. The Department of Agriculture has been promoting wheat cultivation in the area, as well as soybean, garlic, onion, passion fruit and asparagus, as a way of increasing the commercial benefits of the effort to conserve and develop water resources here.

The farmers' income has now increased to the level that they can support



Their Majesties planting vetiver grass.



*His Majesty observes the rows of vetiver grass at Huai Sai
Royal Development Study Centre, Cha-am District, Phetchaburi Province.*



Their Majesties and H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn observing the experiment plots where vetiver grass is grown to conserve soil and water at Zone 6 Land Development Office, Chiang Mai Province.



themselves comfortably by Thai standards. They have a sense of their own value as part of the effort to develop the lives of other communities around the countries and feel fortunate in the knowledge that their sovereign was the initiator of this development.

During just two decades from 1983, the average income of the communities of the royal-initiative areas have increased ten folds.

The New Theory

Throughout the boom years of the eighties and early nineties, the Thai government promoted export-orientated agricultural systems in an effort to increase the country's growth rate. Poor agricultural management led to increasing soil erosion and exhaustion and became a cause for concern not only within the government but to His Majesty, who could see the link between farmers' prosperity and the land and whose attempts to promote better use of resources was aimed squarely at alleviating the socio-economic and environmental plight that faces the rural majority.

While members of the government and the business sector revelled in what was to be called in hindsight a bubble economy, His Majesty was among the first to note that the effort the country put into becoming one of the "Asian Tigers", among the group of thriving Asian economies like Singapore



and South Korea, was beginning to miss the point.

“In fact, I have often said ... to be a tiger is not important. The important thing is for us to have a self-supporting economy. A self-supporting economy means to have enough to survive.”¹

Moreover, conventional farming, once touted as Asia’s “Green Revolution”, has been shown to be unsustainable, and the cause of increasing ecological degradation and worsening rural socio-economic conditions. The reason in part is that conventional agriculture was developed in the west taking into account western resources and infrastructure availability. In Thailand, the national infrastructure that could in theory promote the agricultural sector is by and large either unavailable or haphazard. The problem is exacerbated by the practice of monoculture, whereby farmers grow a single cash crop, such as high-quality rice. By depending on the cash gained from the sale of this crop, the farmer is totally reliant on the sales for his own food supply. A poor harvest, or a rise in fertilizer prices, can almost wipe out his ability to purchase food and necessities for the family.

¹ Royal speech given at Dusidalai Hall, Chitralada Villa, 4 December, 1997.



“Concerning the growing of rice, I have encouraged the people to grow it for their own consumption. Each family would keep their rice in small silos, and the surplus can be sold,”¹

His Majesty noted during the economic crunch of 1997 that put into cold storage any dreams the country had of long-lasting economic strength.

His Majesty went on to question the conventional wisdom of the day, that emphasized export-oriented agricultural production, by calling for a more practical solution to the needs of Thai farmers. His example of the basic requirement for consumer rice, that is, rice the farmers themselves would consume, is typical of his forthright manner of approaching a problem.

“... the experts say that ‘fragrant rice’ (Jasmine Rice) should be cultivated for sale. This is true; fragrant rice sells well, but once it is sold, the farmer must buy rice for his own consumption. From where would it be bought? Everyone cultivates fragrant rice. In the northeast, the people usually prefer consuming glutinous rice, and who would cultivate glutinous rice as it is publicised that those who cultivate glutinous rice are dumb people? This is an important point. That

¹ *Ibid.*



*is why I have encouraged the people to cultivate their own consumer rice. They like glutinous rice, so let them cultivate glutinous rice. Whatever kind of rice they prefer, let them cultivate that kind of rice and keep it for the whole year's consumption. If there is a possibility of making off-season cultivation or if they already have enough to consume for the whole year, they can plant fragrant rice for sale."*¹

Besides the perils of fluctuating prices, His Majesty has emphasized that water is the cardinal resource that has historically assisted society and agriculture to flourish, and whenever it is mismanaged causes the most severe results.

If water can be considered the fulcrum upon which sustainable development balances, then the truth has been borne out by the ancient civilizations in Central America, the Mediterranean region, Mesopotamia and the Pre-Columbian southwest of the United States where the deterioration of natural resource from non-sustainable farming and forestry practices is believed to have been a strong influence on their decline. *"There can be no prosperity without water,"*² announced His Majesty pointedly in 1993.

¹ Royal speech given at Dusidalai Hall, Chitralada Villa, 4 December, 1997.

² Royal speech given at Dusidalai Hall, Chitralada Villa, 4 December, 1993.



*His Majesty stresses the significance of water sources development because
“Water is life.”*

“...The main principle is that there must be water for consumption and agricultural purposes since life is there. With water, man can survive. Without water, he cannot. Without electricity, man can survive. But without electricity and water, man cannot survive...”

However, controlling the effects of nature, that could provide water or not, in great or small quantities, was the key to solving much of the problem, and His Majesty was well aware of the natural forces that made farmers the prisoners of fate.

“The hard fact is that in a country like this country, water is plentiful or even excessive at some periods that it sometimes creates flood that bring miseries, destroys the cultivated plants, causing them to die and rot. After all that water is drained



out at the cost of great efforts and expenses, drought will set in, so no cultivation is possible. Then, famine and poverty will prevail.”¹

Any water shortages that occur can have a severe impact on agriculture, directly on the farmers who depend on their next crop for the cash required to survive. Forest land over the past thirty years has been cleared to make way for agricultural land and destroyed valuable watershed areas. Between 1961 and 1989 the area of forest land decreased from 187.5 million rai



*Permanent water resources are an intrinsic part of soil development
at Wat Mongkhol Chaipattana.*

¹ Royal speech given at Dusidalai Hall, Chitralada Villa,
4 December, 1995.



to 85 million rai.¹ Irrigation in Thailand lags some way behind more developed nations, such as Japan. A mere 22 per cent of Thailand's agricultural land is irrigated compared to 62 per cent in Japan.² It became obvious that if Thai farmers were to survive they would have to explore avenues other than conventional monocultural approaches.

His Majesty King Bhumibol has had many years of research and experimentation to establish a series of guidelines for sustainable agriculture. His efforts to evolve a method experimentation of integrated and sustainable agriculture based on an adequate water supply were hinted at in 1992. Referring to an experiment in Khao Wong District in the northeast of Thailand, His Majesty explained:

"We must save the rain water that comes down. An idea came to me; we must do an experiment using ten rai of land typical of that place. Three rai will be used for making a pond that would keep the rain water; if it is necessary to use plastic sheets to prevent seepage, we will use plastic sheets; we must try. And a further six rai will be used to plant rice. As for the remaining rai, it will be used as a service area, that is for

¹ Office of Agricultural Economics, 1992. (1 rai = 1,600 square metres)

² FAO Report, 1993.



paths, huts or other things. To sum up: water, thirty per cent, paddyland sixty per cent."¹

The Royal Development Study Centres, such as the ones at Khao Hin Son and Wat Mongkhon Chaipattana, also show his attempts to develop a systematic method to make farmers more self-sufficient so that they could become more or less immune to external fluctuations in prices or a dependence on a single crop.

Integrated agriculture is one avenue that His Majesty has explored with the most success, and many of these experiments incorporated organic farming methodology, using natural vegetable and organic waste to make compost so that the soil would be fertile. While the royal-initiated projects are not absolute in their support of organic farming – much depends on which method can assist the farmer to be self-sufficient – the need for fertile soils as a necessary pre-condition for the production of healthy crops, which in turn would benefit human health, was a facet of these experiments. Unfortunately, only a small number of Thai farmers engage in organic farming. In 1993, pesticide-free vegetables were grown on only 5,000 rai of land, about

¹ *Royal speech given at Dusidalai Hall, Chitralada Villa, 4 December, 1992.*



0.0031% of the total land area used to produce vegetables in Thailand.¹

Over the years, His Majesty managed to create models of sustainable development that integrated the requirements of the farmers with their environmental surroundings. Through combined efforts with government agencies, 51 per cent of farms in the central region, or approximately 3,000,000 rai farmed using forms of integrated agriculture by 1980. By putting his ideas into practice, His Majesty was able to develop a systematic theory that proposes guidelines for the proper management of land and water resources, commonly known as the **New Theory**.

It has been estimated that only 0.4 per cent of Thai farm households were practising some form of sustainable farming in 1993. The main purpose of the New Theory is to make farmers more self-reliant and self-sufficient. The benefits resulting from the New Theory create self-sufficiency:

“... I devised the New Theory so that the people will be in a position of self-sufficiency in agriculture. In any year, when water is adequate, they will be able to plant their usual crops or have – what is called – their annual rice crop. If, after that, in the dry season, water becomes scarce, they will still be able to use the

¹ *Agriculture Extension and Co-operatives Department, 1993.*



water that has been saved in the pond in their own plot of land to cultivate any crop or even a second rice crop. They will not have to depend too heavily on the main irrigation system because they have their own supply. Moreover, they may be able to plant vegetables or raise fish, or do other things.”¹

Following the success of His Majesty’s promotion of the New Theory, government agencies have been able to encourage farmers to convert to an integrated farm system by stressing the potential increase in income and the decreased risk involved with the production of a variety of produce instead of a single crop under a monoculture system.

The New Theory in essence seeks to counter the problem of water shortages. While digging ponds has been a standard method of easing shortages, it has also been rather unpredictable. Ponds need to be able to store an optimal volume of water and require a sustainable source of water from which each pond can be replenished. So as to regulate the use of water, His Majesty recommends rice be cultivated only in the regular season. The dry season should be for other suitable crops, especially those that do not require much water, such as beans. The appropriate size for water resources depends on the area of land that is to receive their benefit, and up to recently this subject received very little research.

¹ *Royal speech given at Dusidalai Hall, Chitralada Villa, 4 December, 1995.*



Soil development at Wat Mongkhol Chaipattana, Saraburi Province.



A “New Theory” impounding pond at Wat Mongkhol Chaipattana, Saraburi Province.



Other factors have aggravated the problem. The size of the land determines the size of pond required, achieved by a series of calculations. Any decision made about the size of the pond is contingent on local geographical and environmental conditions. For instance, on a plot of land that is totally dependent on rain for water, the pond needs to be deeper to prevent evaporation, whereas if the plot has an irrigation system the pond size can be more flexible. When put into practice, the resulting pond provides sufficient water for a year's cultivation.

An example of how this works is the Wat Mongkhon Chaipattana Project in Saraburi Province. Here, a large reservoir, behind the Pa Sak Jolasid Dam, feeds three smaller reservoirs like the Huai Hin Khao Reservoir, which in turn feeds the ponds through a water system. To manage the resources correctly, water delivery pipelines have been laid down from the reservoirs to the ponds, increasing the supply by three times the average.

In order to formulate the New Theory, His Majesty calculated that the average area of land owned by farmers is 10 acres. Using this area as the standard, the theory thus sets aside 3 acres for rice cultivation, 3 acres for field and garden crops, 3 acres for a 4 metre-deep pond with a storage capacity of 19,000 cubic metres. The remaining 1 acre are for housing and other activities. As long as the ratio is used, the size of the land is rather immaterial. According to His Majesty's calculations,



Their Majesties and H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn observing a "New Theory" agricultural system at Huai Sai Royal Development Study Centre, 6 July, 1996.



1,600 square metres requires about 1,000 cubic metres of water to be sufficient for one year.

All approaches to increase the sustainability of farming systems involve utilizing management practices that have multiple benefits. Among these practices is exploiting interrelationships like insect and weed control, water and soil management, integrating livestock and crop production operations, and the use of non-crop species of plants for nutrient cycling and soil protection.

The New Theory is divided into three phases. The first phase requires the land to be 'zoned', or divided into four parts with a ratio of 30:30:30:10. The first 30 per cent is designated for the pond. The pond is the most essential part of the theory and must be of the appropriate dimensions. It is used to store rainwater during the monsoon while during the dry season it serves as a catchment to supply crops and raise aquatic





creatures and plants. The purpose of the pond is simply to ensure an all-year-round water supply so that crops can be cultivated out of season without relying on irrigation or unseasonable rainfall, as water is stored in the farm pond. If there is sufficient rainfall, however, the New Theory generates higher than average income and can create proportionate wealth for farmers.

However, the New Theory is not a panacea for all ills. *"The New Theory must be implemented in places where it is suitable,"* His Majesty has stressed. *"Where it is possible, like it has been done in Khao Wong District, Kalasin Province."*

Digging the pond can have beneficial secondary results. When the topsoil is removed, for instance, it can be spread over any infertile areas of land for later cultivation of other crops. It can also be used to raise the beds of crops along the edges of ponds or fields to ensure they do not get inundated should any flooding occur in the monsoon period. Again, farmers have to be patient and realize that,

"In some places, a pond is dug, but there is no water. Even if there is rain, in some cases, the pond cannot retain water because it leaks; or sometimes it is a place where water cannot be obtained."

Multiple crops are an important feature of the theory. Even if rice is to be the primary crop, vegetables, fruit and other crops are required as secondary crops. Fishery and animal husbandry are



Demonstration plot for land allocation under the principles of the New Theory.

also needed to allow the farmer continual income throughout the year. A healthy, well-integrated agriculture includes animal life. Optimum diversity is obtained by integrating both crops and livestock in the same farming operation. This was the common practice for centuries in Thailand until the demands of the global market introduced monoculture. Mixed crop and livestock operations have several advantages. Growing crops on level land and pasture or forages on steeper slopes reduces soil erosion while pasture and forage crops in rotation enhances soil quality and reduces erosion. Livestock manure is of course a well-known source of natural fertilizer that improves soil fertility. Livestock also serves to cushion the negative



effects of dry periods by consuming crop residue that previously would have been considered crop failures. Moreover, by keeping livestock, farmers can hedge against trade and price fluctuations for their crops, having an alternative income-generating product besides plants.

Trees, an integral part of the New Theory, were once seen by farmers to block sunlight to other crops below and hence reduce crop growth. In addition, the small size of Thai farms means that trees were perceived as taking up too much farm space and were often cleared. Of course, this makes the placing of crops even more important. Eucalyptus, for instance, should



The site of the “New Theory” Royal-initiated Project.



not be planted next to a pond as they absorb a lot of water, though fruit trees are believed to assist in preventing soil erosion on the banks. His Majesty recommends that suitable fruit trees and perennial plants be grown to nourish the soil. Some trees and plants, such as pigeon pea, Caribbean stylo, African sesbania, sunhemp, sword bean and green peas can be ploughed back into the soil after harvest to add nutrients while perennials provide shade and moisture. His Majesty also recommends certain trees like bamboo, coconut, palm, camachile, eucalyptus, pterocarpus and dip-terocarpus alatus for construction materials and firewood.

Vegetables and flowers are to be grown for several interrelated reasons. Farmers require not only vegetables like sweet potato, taro, long beans, eggplant, and jasmine to augment their diet, but also as herbal remedies and as supplementary income. Herbs and spices such as areca, betel, pepper, ebony vetiver, holy basil, mint and lemon grass fulfil most of these functions.

To implement the theory successfully, farmers are encouraged to consult the relevant government officials. Certain soils such as peat and saline soils are unsuitable for farming generally and thus official advice can prevent the unnecessary loss



of an investment. A “healthy” soil is a key component of sustainability; that is, a healthy soil will produce healthy crop plants that have optimum vigour and are less susceptible to pests. Local soil is therefore a serious consideration and must be suitable for agriculture.

The second thirty per cent of the plot of land is set aside for rice cultivation during the wet months and is essentially for consumption throughout the year. Natural disasters, especially flooding, should have less impact on farmers who would then not need to call for government assistance as much and therefore would save the government’s budget. The theory estimates that if rice is cultivated on 3 acres of land, the produce should feed a family for one year. This enables the family to avoid having to purchase rice during the off-season when the price rises. Another 30 per cent of the total area is used for growing fruit and perennial trees, vegetables, other crops and herbs. The last ten per cent of the land 1 acre is set aside for accommodation, animal husbandry and other activities. If the New Theory is followed, 3 acres is set aside for rice and another 3 acres for fruit, then approximately 10,000 cubic metres of water is required annually. The farm should also provide enough reward to cover expenses for food and clothing.



Diversified farms are usually more economically and ecologically resilient to natural and economic oscillations, while monoculture farming has advantages in terms of efficiency and ease of management. However, the loss of the crop in any one year could put a farm out of business or seriously disrupt the stability of a community dependent on that crop. By growing a variety of crops, farmers spread economic risk and are less susceptible to the radical price fluctuations associated with changes in supply and demand.

The theory reverts to the strengths of the Thai community, calling on the tradition of mutual assistance within communities, known as *long khaek* (known in the US as “bee”), which promotes unity in the community and reduces costs normally incurred by hiring labour. The community should also act as a tool for social and moral development and His Majesty promotes using religion as the cement to bind these things. An example again exists at the project as Wat Mongkhon Chaipattana, where the community has been reconstructed around the temple and monks play an active part in promoting His Majesty the King’s agricultural theories while tending to the more spiritual and moral needs of their community.

“A careful step backwards must be taken,” His Majesty has said. “A return to less sophisticated methods must be made with less advance instruments. However,



The “New Theory” at the Phikun Thong Royal Development Study Centre.

it is a step backwards in order to make further progress.”¹

Under the second phase of the New Theory, farmers who implement phase one successfully are encouraged to join with others to market and sell their products, preferably in a cooperative. The cooperative would jointly assist in the production process, from crop selection to soil preparation and irrigation. They would also have to do their own marketing, storing rice in a

¹ Royal speech given at Dusidalai Hall, Chitralada Villa, 4 December, 1997.



communal silo, operating a rice mill and other activities. The theory states that the community should have a public health centre and funds that can provide loans to allow the community to pursue activities. Communal funds should then be used to ensure adequate education for children.

An ideal New Theory site, complete with housing, pond, various crops and vegetables, perennial trees and rice field.

If phase two can be completed successfully, the next step, phase three, involves making the contacts necessary to assist in all other activities. This would mean either setting up a communal fund to provide the money needed or to ensure funding from outside sources, such as banks or co-operative companies. Sources of such credit would allow farmers to sell their rice at a higher price by purchasing from them directly at a lower price than normal and milling it



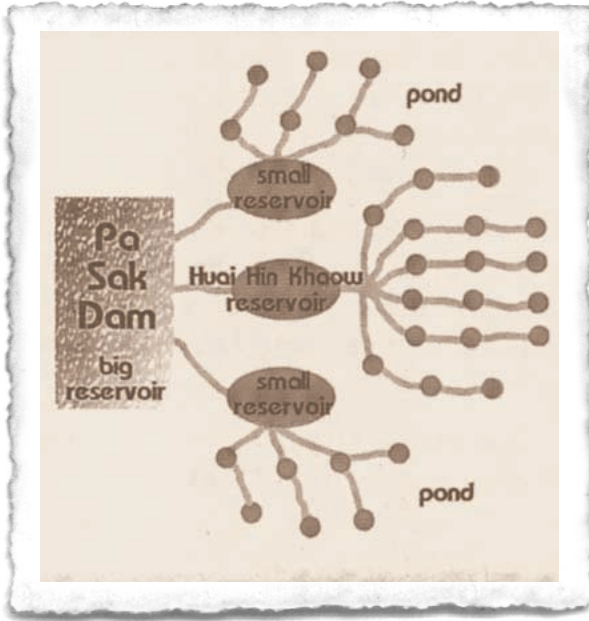
themselves. Farmers would then have the cash to purchase consumer goods at wholesale prices. Not only are household expenses decreased but also the family can derive supplementary income.

While the land area required for the New Theory to work has been calculated, the proportions and land area required are flexible to accommodate larger or smaller plots of land.

His Majesty has not been unaware of the problems that may occur in implementing the New Theory. On the eve of his birthday in 1995 he said,

“...the application of the New Theory is not a simple thing. It depends on the location, on the situation and on the funds available. The people at large are now aware of the existence of the New Theory and everyone wants to benefit from it; they all want the government to help them by digging ponds for them and help them in many other ways. But that is not such an easy thing to do.”

Taken at face value, the New Theory has promoted in one package a lifetime of agricultural study and experience. Whereas many agriculturists in Japan, Australia and the United States had made the effort to induce the notion of integrated agriculture as the alternative to what is now regarded as a global problem, what many lacked until recently was a worked-out solution phrased in practical terms. By couching integrated



agriculture in terms the layman could immediately grasp, based on a systematically proven thesis, His Majesty's New Theory has garnered the interest of farmers, politicians, businessmen and the general public. The economic crisis that hit Thailand badly in 1997-1998 had the immediate impact of forcing people to look more closely at how to survive with a restricted amount of financial resources, and for the rural poor the theory held the prospect of eking out a living with what was available. Such was the enthusiasm to embrace something that offered a way out from the crisis, that the philosophy was also adopted by urbanites who interpreted the theory as "making do with less."



Sufficiency Economy

“**Sufficiency Economy**” is a philosophy that His Majesty the King has expressed in his speech as a guideline for the Thai people to lead their lives for more than 25 years before the economic crisis. Even after that His Majesty has emphasized a way to get through the crisis in order to maintain a stable and durable existence under the currents of globalization and changes.

The Philosophy of sufficiency economy

Sufficiency economy is a philosophy that serves as a guideline on how to live and behave for people at all levels from the family, the community, to the governmental level both in developing and administering the country, to follow the *middle path*, specially in developing the economy to keep up with the world in this globalized age. Sufficiency means moderation, reasonableness, including the necessity of having an adequate internal immune system against any impact caused by both external and internal changes. Intelligence, utmost thoroughness and carefulness are needed in bringing the various fields of knowledge to



be used in every step of planning and executing the work to be done. At the same time the basic mentality of the people must be strengthened, especially that of government officials at all levels, theorists, and also businessmen, to make them have an awareness of virtue and honesty. They must have a proper knowledge and lead their lives with perseverance, endurance, consciousness, wisdom, and carefulness so that they will be well-balanced and ready to cope with rapid and widespread material, social, environmental, and cultural changes from the external world.

Recent Royal-initiated Development Projects

Whatever belt tightening was done by the population in the late nineties, all of their plans and efforts were often to come to nought when the monsoon hit and floods washed away agricultural produce and disrupted transportation. Environmental hazards and disasters whether natural or man-made have affected the whole world. Peculiar to Thailand is the cycle of drought in the summer and flood in the monsoon season. As we have seen, water resources have always been a significant concern of His Majesty to alleviate the effects of the droughts, and he has shown no less concern



The Pak Phanang River meanders through various districts south of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province.

for those who suffer through flooding each year. There have been many thousands of royal-initiated projects, but some are rather notable as His Majesty wished them completed to alleviate suffering caused by environmental problems in every region of the country. The Pak Phanang River Basin Project that His Majesty initiated in 1988, and which received state support in 1993, comes quickly to mind as it was once a famous trading port in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province but salination of its lands through sea water flooding began to cause great misery to its inhabitants. Since completion of this huge project covering 1.9 million rai in 2002, it has supplied 72 million cubic metres of fresh water, stored behind a water gate that keeps the encroaching sea water at bay.

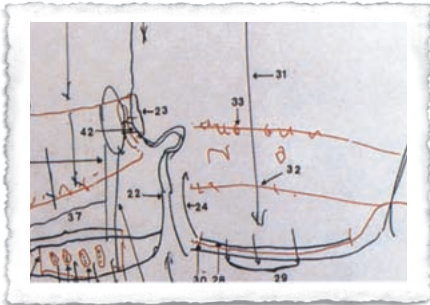
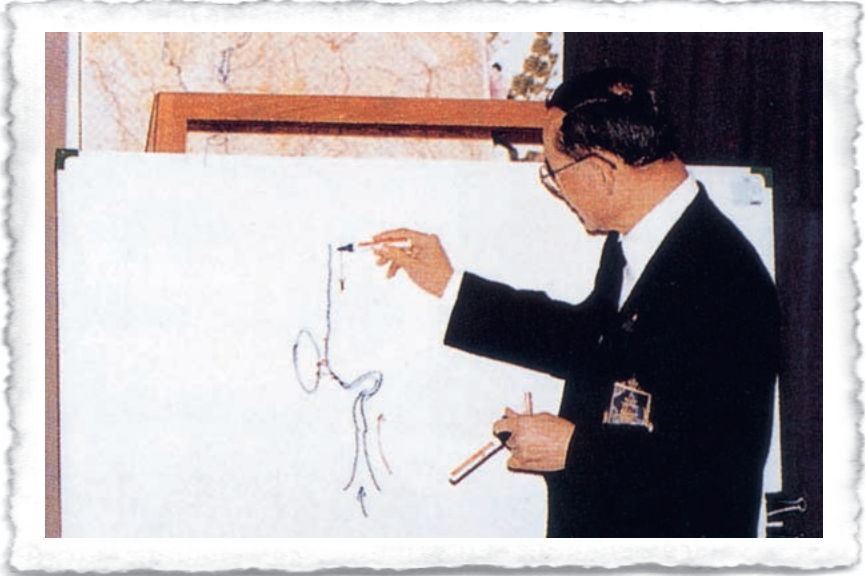


In 1995, while most of the world's eyes were on military developments in the Persian Gulf following an invasion of Kuwait by the Iraqis, Thailand was hit by some of the most severe flooding ever. Most of the central region was under water and in many other regions people were suffering the effects of this natural disaster. In a speech given on his 68th birthday to an audience of well-wishers at Chitralada Villa on 4 December, 1995, His Majesty recalled an event from his childhood.



"I remember that when I was five years old, we had monkeys and we gave them bananas. They would munch, munch, munch, and then kept the food in their cheeks. It follows that my "Monkey Cheek Project" actually originated way back when I was five years old, that is 63 years ago.

His Majesty giving a lecture on "Monkey Cheek Project" at Dusidalai Hall.



*His Majesty's
handwriting on
"Monkey Cheek Project"*

His Majesty went on to explain about how water could be stored when it was in plentiful supply and used when there was drought. His "Monkey Cheek Project" (in Thai, *Kaem Ling*) was to be, he said,

"...a retention area to keep that water when the sea water surges up and we cannot evacuate the floodwater... we must [therefore] have a "Monkey Cheek" and let the water out whenever it is possible."

In the weeks after the project was implemented, Bangkokians and their rural cousins were pleased and grateful to see their roads and fields once more appear



*The emblem of
"Monkey Cheek."*

from out of the swirling waters. The many water gates and pumping stations that were put into place at the eastern and western ends of canals along the western bank of the Chao Phraya River, the draining and dredging and canal expansion that they witnessed, proved His Majesty correct as the canals were successfully used to store and regulate excess water. From Rangsit, north of Bangkok, to Khlong Dan in the east, canals were deepened and debris or water plants removed so as to enhance the water's flow to the sea. The Monkey Cheek Project included projects at the lower end of the Tha Chin River, the Mahachai-Sanamchai Canals and the Sunak Hon Canal in Samut Sakhon, to the west of Bangkok, and in Saraburi, Ayutthaya, Pathum Thani, Samut Prakan and Nonthaburi to the east. The ancient capital at Ayutthaya, dating back to the fourteenth century, was of great concern as it is constructed on a shallow basin and parti-



*The feature of
"Monkey Cheek."*



The Mahachai water gate and pumping station.



The eastern Kaem Ling (Monkey Cheek) Project.



The Pa Sak Jolasid Dam.



cularly prone therefore to flooding. His Majesty saw that canals were not the only solution but that new ponds and an ornamental reservoir could be constructed to do the job without spoiling the historical beauty of the area.

The Pa Sak Jolasid Dam, initiated in 1989, was one of His Majesty's favoured projects and one that he felt strongly would bring great relief from flooding to the people. It was not until 1994, however, that the government was able to provide a budget to construct what is Thailand's longest earthen dam, 4,880 metres long, 187 metres wide and 36.50 metres high and holding 960 million cubic metres of water. Together with the Upper Nakhon Nayok Watershed Development Project which holds 245 million cubic metres of water, the Pa Sak Jolasid Dam collects the floods of the monsoon and stores the water for later use. As His Majesty pointed out in a royal speech given on the eve of his birthday on 4 December, 1994 in the Dusidalai Hall.

"People numbering in the hundreds of thousands will be happier as a result of the Pasak and Nakhon Nayok Projects. And I have to commend the people and officials... who have been instrumental in helping the people understand and co-operate in these projects."



KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
In Time of Crisis



Their Majesties informally granting audience to students seeking royal protection during 14 October, 1973 uprising.



In Times of Crisis

There is an interesting anomaly in Thailand in that the king himself does not appear to desire a political role for himself, but the government will always turn to His Majesty in times of crisis. Perhaps it is because they do not know to whom else to turn.

It is not only the government that turns to the king in times of crisis. It is among the ordinary people that His Majesty has a unifying effect. This can be clearly seen in the two major national crises of 1973 and 1992. It was at these times that the people turned to the king for leadership. In the early seventies, people were becoming frustrated by the slow pace of democratic reform in the country. The government's arrest of the 13 student activists led, on 6 October, 1973, to large scale demonstrations at Thammasat University. Demonstrators demanded the release of those arrested, and speedy completion of a new constitution currently being drafted. Tensions rose. On 10 October, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, the then Prime Minister, sought an audience with His Majesty to inform him of the latest developments and to seek his advice. The king expressed his wish that the authorities



avoid the use of force, and urged the government to seek a peaceful resolution of the conflict at any cost. The demonstrations continued to grow outside Thammasat University. On 13 October, with demonstrations spreading to the areas around the palace, the government conceded to all the demonstrators' demands, but the situation was not to be so easily resolved. Emotions had been roused and many people mistrusted the government's promises. Now it was the turn of the student leaders to seek the king's advice. His Majesty advised them to be satisfied with their gains, and to peacefully disperse. As a result, an agreement was signed by both sides. The king had played his role as father of the people, moderator and wise counsellor superbly. But a tragedy lay ahead.

In the early morning of 14 October, as the demonstrators started to make their way home, a fight erupted between a group of demonstrators and some policemen who did not want the crowd to move close to the palace. During the melee the police used their batons and tear gas. The police charge succeeded in driving back the frightened crowd which found their way into the palace grounds. It was at this moment that His Majesty the King ordered his guards to open the gate to accommodate the fleeing crowd. Some, 2,000 found shelter in the palace, many injured or shocked. Meanwhile, rumours quickly spread all over Bangkok that



the army and the police had attacked and killed the demonstrators. Thus, the 14 October uprising began. By the following day the two leaders of the government, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn and Field Marshal Prapas Charusathien, having failed to keep the peace, resigned and left the country.

In a highly charged and unstable atmosphere, it was the king who stepped in to restore order to the country by nominating the widely-respected and non-partisan Rector of Thammasat University, Professor Sanya Dharmasakdi, as an interim Prime Minister in order that the country could return to normalcy as soon as possible. This was an unprecedented step during Thailand's democratic period, and the only time His Majesty has taken a direct role in the political process. During the swearing-in ceremony of the new Prime Minister and Council of Ministers two days later, His Majesty pointed to the situation with cautious optimism:

“Events of the past week have brought about real and substantial changes. A model form of government is desired, so that all can reside here with dignity, safety and pride. The present, however, is not in keeping with this natural longing. Now that democracy has been won through struggle, it is hoped that this government will give us a truly



*democratic representation and that a constitution will be promulgated within six months. Simultaneously, the machinery of government has fallen into disarray. Peace-keeping, the cleansing of the spirit and body, has passed from the government to the public. It is therefore this government's special responsibility to see that all its normal functions revert to it. Official functions must be discharged by the government, if the government's objectives are to be fulfilled: a democratic government which will achieve prosperity and the greatest good for the majority in the nation. Through democracy, we elect members of Parliament who, in turn, elect members of the government responsible to them. At this juncture, however, the Council of Ministers is not elected by the people. I nominate them, as befitting the situation at present."*¹

The task of national building in this situation was most definitely in the hands of the king. Demonstrations still kept occurring but the situation was beginning to come under the control of the new government. His Majesty worked closely with the Council of Ministers to return democracy to the people. To this end, it was decided to establish a convention of people representing every level of society.

¹ Royal speech given at Chitralada Villa, 16 October, 1973.



His Majesty called on them to “bring about a National Legislative Assembly which shall truly represent interests, occupations, professions as well as the spectrum of views and opinions in our country.”¹

By 28 December, 1973, the National Legislative Assembly had been chosen. Its first session was opened by His Majesty. In his address, His Majesty declared his wish for a democratic state for the benefit of the people:

*“I am most gratified to have seen that the election result has brought together into the present Assembly people from various groups and walks of life who normally conduct their business quite far apart. They will now have come together in this Assembly Session in order to exchange and listen to one another’s points of view, and to derive decisions which will be beneficial to our beloved country...”*²

With the above words, His Majesty once again stepped back and let the people decide for themselves their own future.

Busy as His Majesty was with the affairs of his projects and foundations, he still enacted the constitutional role written for him. His right to consult and advise was exercised whenever a law was presented for

¹ Royal address given at the Royal Turf Club, 18 December, 1973

² Ibid.



his signature. Over the years of his reign, the political ups and downs of democracy have left him as the sole stable institution that can be relied on to perform credibly and persuasively at all times of national emergency. Whenever the people feel at their lowest ebb, they turn to the king to come to their rescue.

In 1991, just as the Thai people began to believe that military coups were a thing of the past, a group of senior army officers seized power from the democratically elected government, and installed a civilian prime minister. A year later parliamentary elections were held and the leading party invited General Suchinda Kraprayoon to be Prime Minister. The urban middle class saw the democratic advances of the past twenty years under threat, and large demonstrations took place once more in Bangkok demanding the Prime Minister's resignation. At this time the king's ability to bring all sides together rescued the country from the brink of civil war. The situation had deteriorated to the point that a mass of people move from Sanam Luang, the field in front of the Grand Palace, on 15 May 1992, and headed for the National Assembly, where they intended to make demands for political reform. Soldiers at the end of Ratchadamnoen Avenue, apparently believing the crowd were trying to approach the royal residence at Dusit Palace, opened up on the unarmed crowd with small firearms. Thousands of people



tried to flee; many were killed, many were injured as they fled. The country faced its potentially biggest catastrophe. The military declared martial law and it was reported that anarchy ruled the streets. It was an anxious moment for the millions of people who were receiving contradictory reports from the mass media at home and abroad. Things looked like they would deteriorate even further when the country's television broadcasting system linked all channels for a special live broadcast.

Imagine the relief of the people when they witnessed the scene which unfolded on the screen. Inside a room at Chitralada Villa, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, sat patiently on a sofa while the opposing political leaders, with whom the conflict outside had begun, edged slowly into the room on their knees. He began to speak in calm and rational tones.

*"It may not be a surprise as to why
I asked you to come to this meeting."¹*

His Majesty calmly explained to the two of them that while it had been clear at the beginning what the reasons for their confrontation had been, *"There has been an unfathomable loss of public confidence and morale, as well as of credibility in the nation's*

¹ *From royal advice provided by His Majesty to General Suchinda Kraprayoon and Major General Chamlong Srimuang, 20 May, 1992.*



His Majesty granting an audience to Prime Minister General Suchinda Kraprayoon and pro-democracy leader Major General Chamlong Srimuang in a televised audience, seen throughout the nation, 20 May 1992.



economy,” due to the loss of life and damage to property in the city.

He went on to state that,

“Nowadays, people everywhere are apprehensive that there will be a catastrophe, that the nation is headed towards a complete collapse and it will be most difficult to stop things from going that way.”

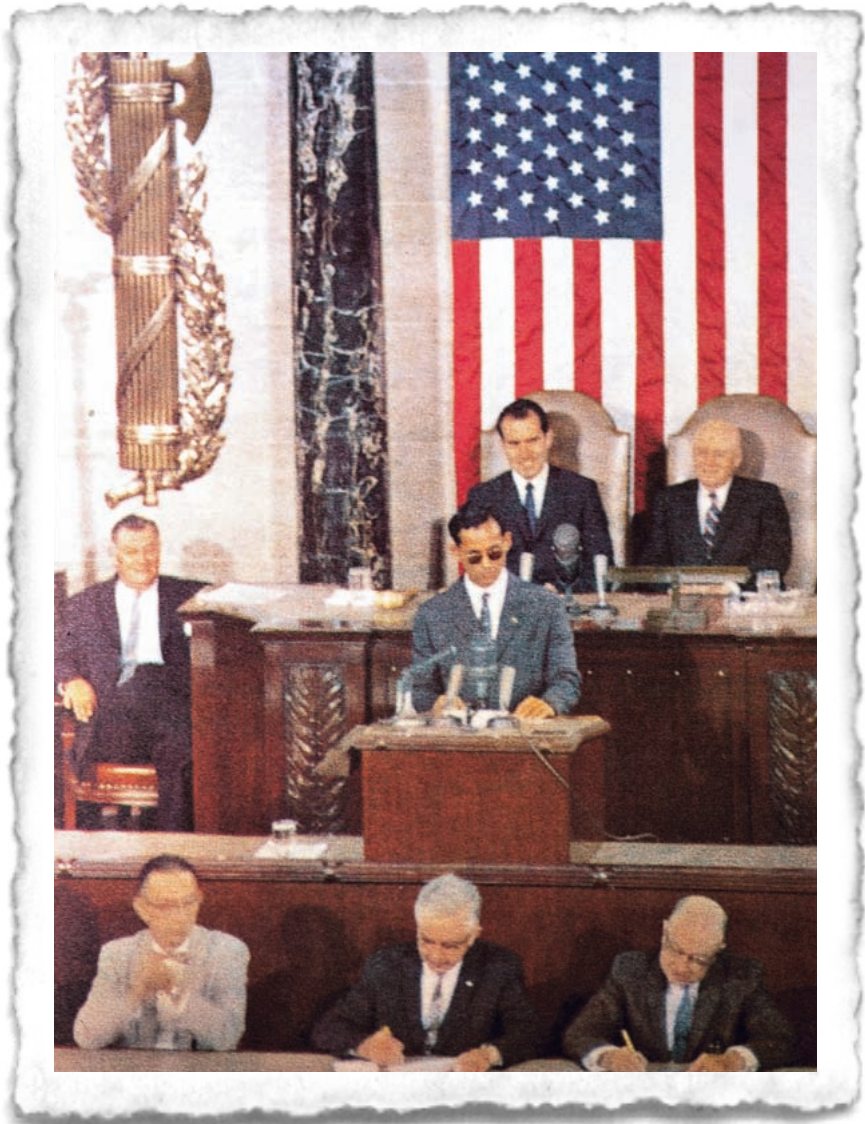
His Majesty then asked the two fallen leaders a rhetorical question which had the whole nation nodding its communal head in absolute agreement:

*“Can there ever be a winner? Of course not. It is so very dangerous... .”
There will only be losers. That’s it.
Everyone is a loser. Each side in the confrontation is a loser.”¹*

His Majesty’s request for conciliation was met with agreement by both sides. The violence which had torn the country apart ended just as abruptly as it had begun. The Thai people were filled with pride at the wisdom and courage of their king, who once again had saved them in their hour of need.

His Majesty turned back to his lifelong task of national development.

¹ *Ibid.*



*His Majesty addresses a joint session of Congress
in the House of Chamber on 29 June, 1960. Seated behind him are
Vice President Nixon and the Speaker of the House, Sam Rayburn.*



International Relations

More than ever following the 1992 live television broadcast, which was seen by millions of people around the globe, His Majesty came to the attention of a world fascinated by the mystique of the Thai king as the centre of the nation's spiritual and moral authority. In June, 1995, the respected periodical **Asiaweek** praised him at the top of their list of 20 great Asians. **Asiaweek** said that His Majesty *"has continued to look out for the good of even the lowest in the kingdom. He influences politics without being political. In doing so, he has transformed an ancient monarchy into a crucial component of a progressive and prosperous democracy."*¹ **Asiaweek** also described how since the 1950s, His Majesty had worked tirelessly, travelling throughout the kingdom launching rural development and public welfare projects. Reforestation and irrigation are his special concerns, it said, noting that His Majesty preferred Thai people to politics, *"But when [the king] feels a steadying hand is needed, [he] moves subtly yet powerfully; a signal has more than once altered Thai history."*²

¹ *Asiaweek*, June, 1995.

² *Ibid.*



An internationally recognized figure, His Majesty has gained attention because of his rural development activities in Thailand. Projects with the support of the Israeli, Japanese, Taiwanese and other governments over the years have shown him to be a leader in sustainable development. Yet, only once in almost thirty years has His Majesty gone abroad and then only to the nearby Lao People's Democratic Republic. Her Majesty the Queen once explained that

*"His Majesty does not go abroad because he knows that Thailand is heading for danger. He would like to stay close to his subjects to help the poor."*¹

In the sixties Their Majesties travelled abroad together on goodwill state visits to Europe and the USA, and since then have also received many of the world's leaders and royalty in Thailand. His Majesty was able to state clearly his own reasons for going abroad in 1960.

"This overseas visit is undertaken to serve the country. It is my duty as Head of State. It is common knowledge that during this period every country, big or small, must depend on one another. The peoples of every nationality are related. We should therefore know each other's characters and create mutual understanding. Normally, relatives will go to visit each other to keep in touch, but in Thailand it is difficult for millions of people



¹ Thongthong Chantarangsu, "State Visits", *Sor Khor Chor News*.



Their Majesties being greeted at the Washington National Airport by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 28 June, 1960.



The City of New York giving a ticker-tape parade for His Majesty, 5 July, 1960.

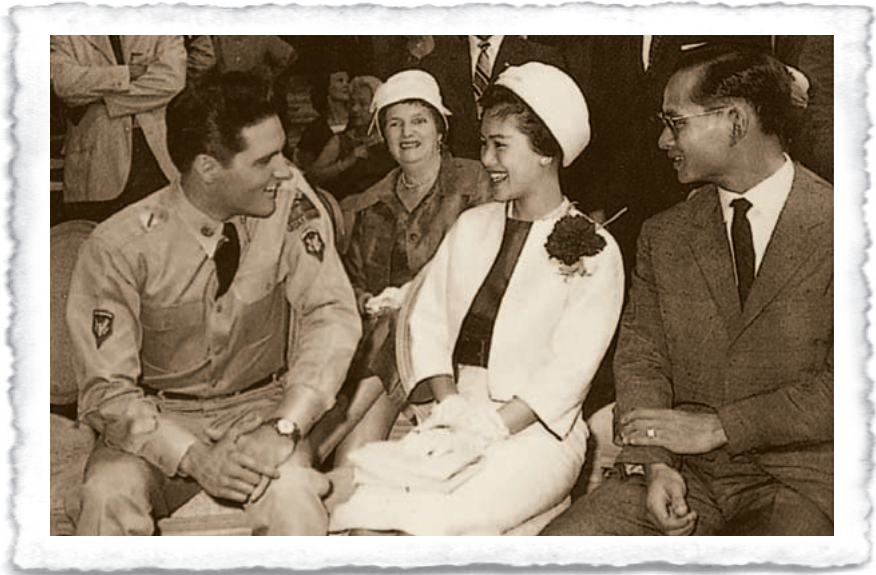


Their Majesties, accompanied by Princess Ubol Ratana and the Crown Prince, are welcomed by Mr. Walt Disney to Disneyland.

to go to visit, so it is up to the Head of State to visit various countries. I shall show the people of those countries that the Thai people feel friendship for them. I shall try my utmost to let them know about Thailand and create goodwill towards Thai people.”¹

True to his word, the State Visit to the USA during 14 June – 15 July, 1960 was an unreserved success. From an address to a joint session of Congress to meeting Elvis Presley on the set of *G.I. Blues* the royal couple were impressed by the American people’s vigour and sincerity. To President Eisenhower His Majesty was able to

¹ *Ibid.*



In Hollywood, Their Majesties visit the set of Elvis Presley's film "G.I. Blues".

establish a point of contact with President Eisenhower immediately,

"I was born here in this country, so I can say that the United States is half my motherland. This visit is somewhat of a sentimental journey and I feel a quite genuine emotion in coming back here."¹

Music was His Majesty's trump card. The king had dinner with Benny Goodman at the home of New York Governor, Nelson Rockefeller, on 4 July, 1960. After dinner he joined Goodman for a 90-minute jam session and the next day he joined Goodman again for about two hours on the latter's 22nd floor roof garden of his Manhattan House apartment. With His Majesty on the

¹ Taken from His Majesty's response speech to President Eisenhower in the USA, July, 1960.



saxophone, Goodman on the clarinet, Gene Krupa on the drums, Teddy Wilson on the piano, Urbie Green on the trombone, Red Novo on the Vibes, the *Sheik of Araby*, *Honeysuckle Rose* and *On the Sunny Side of the Street* were all given a thorough work over. At the end of the session, Goodman presented His Majesty the King with a Selmer saxophone as a gift. Through his music His Majesty made many friends over the years, such as on the occasion of his state visit to Malaya (Malaysia) in 1962 when, at the request of Tengku Abdul Rahman, he joined a jam session with the Radio Malaya Orchestra at the hillside resort, Tanah Rata.

His Majesty's wish to show the people of other countries the friendship of the Thai people was also the desire of several of his royal ancestors, who had carried on royal diplomacy with other countries hundreds of years previously. When His Majesty visited the United Kingdom during 19-23 July, 1960, he was aware that historical ties existed between the two countries. The first Englishman had come to Thailand in 1587, while the first Thai embassy to England was in 1684. Queen Victoria sent an embassy headed by Sir John Bowring to conclude a Treaty of Commerce with King Rama IV, and English thereafter became the first foreign language to be taught in schools and universities.

Their Majesties were welcomed by the British with full honours. Arriving at Gatwick Airport from Switzerland, having been escorted from the French coast by



His Majesty joins a music session with Benny Goodman and several other musicians at Mr. Goodman's apartment.



On their arrival at Victoria Station, London, Their Majesties are welcomed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh.



His Majesty rides with Queen Elizabeth II in the royal carriage to Buckingham Palace.



*Their Majesties, Queen Elizabeth II,
and the Duke of Edinburgh.*

six RAF Javelin fighters. With Princess Alexandra, with whom they were already acquainted, they travelled to Victoria Railway Station by train. King Bhumibol was then invited to review the troops in Thai language by the commanding officer of the guard of honour. His Majesty joined Queen Elizabeth II in an open carriage for the procession to Buckingham Palace and this allowed the young Thai king an opportunity to see thousands of excited people lining the Mall to catch a glimpse of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand. His Majesty was honoured by Queen Elizabeth II with the Royal Victorian Chain and in return presented Queen Elizabeth II with the Knight of the Most Illustrious Order of the Royal House of Chakri. On this occasion, His Majesty the King presented Queen Elizabeth II with a teak elephant with ivory tusks, receiving in turn a silver-gilt coffee set with salver.



Thailand has enjoyed hundreds of years of contact with the French also. The royal couple were treated with great honour on the occasion of the State Visit to France in October, 1960. On arrival they were met by President Charles de Gaulle and entertained with a banquet at the Elysée Palace. The highlight of that visit to France was probably the performance at the Paris Opera. In front of an audience of 1,200 people, Queen Sirikit, wearing a white evening gown studded with jewels and a diamond diadem, was escorted by General de Gaulle up the grand staircase of the Palais Garnier.¹ The National Anthems were followed by a performance of *Les Sylphides* by Chopin. Witnesses say that

*His Majesty reviews
the French mounted
Honour Guard.*

¹ *L'Aurore*, 14 October, 1960.



Their Majesties host a dinner party in honour of President and Madame Charles de Gaulle.

most of the audience missed the first half of the performance completely as they were all craning around to catch a glimpse of the queen. After the intermission, there was a *pas de deux* written by George Gershwin and choreographed by Gene Kelly.

Europe was a bold success, and the royal couple made many lifelong friends for themselves and for Thailand as a result. They both appeared to have the common touch and this proved to be a very impressive characteristic to many people.

After visiting the USA and 14 European countries, Their Majesties returned to Thailand in triumph on 18 January, 1961. As the plane touched down, Radio Thailand announced their safe arrival and monks chanted prayers while bells pealed through-



His Majesty with King Baudouin in Belgium, 1960.



*Their Majesties welcomed
by President Max Petitpierre of the Swiss Confederation in Bern, Switzerland, 1960.*



*Their Majesties welcomed to the Vatican
where they met with His Holiness Pope John XXIII, October, 1960.*



*Their Majesties with Emperor Hirohito
and Empress Nagako during a state visit to Japan, 1963.*



Returning from their lengthy royal tour in January 1961, Their Majesties are given a festive welcome home by thousands lining the streets of Bangkok.

out the land. His Majesty wore the uniform of an Air Marshal and Queen Sirikit was dressed in a mauve silk Thai costume. As they stepped onto the ground a band played the Royal Anthem and there was a 21-gun salute. They drove directly to the Chapel Royal in the Grand Palace to pay homage to the Emerald Buddha.

The following day, 19 January, the then Prime Minister, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, said,

“The people know well that the trip was not a sightseeing tour for your personal enjoyment, but was a task to bring Thai-



Their Majesties on the balcony of Anantasamakhom Throne Hall after their return to the kingdom.

land into the good understanding of the world, to strengthen friendly relations, and to increase the country's prestige. It was realized that Your Majesties were carrying a great burden. In all State Visits... official reception does not always guarantee popularity; it needs charm and wit judiciously expended. It is fortunate for our country to have such a marvellous monarch."¹

¹ Davis, Bonnie. "The King Abroad: Early State Visits of His Majesty the King."



*KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
A Most Respected Colleague*





A Most Respected Colleague

His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's initiatives and support to the disadvantaged and disabled throughout the country and often beyond Thailand's borders, have won him the highest respect from those familiar with his work.

Throughout the intervening years since His Majesty's historic State Visits abroad, he has continued to receive guests in Thailand on both state and unofficial visits. The King's devotion to state duties and continuation of the friendships made over the years with foreign monarchs and heads of state have made significant contributions to Thailand's standing in the international community.

Over time, His Majesty has been recognized for his hard work and dedication to his people. As His Majesty approached the sixtieth anniversary of his accession to the throne in June 2006, and his eightieth birthday anniversary in December 2007, he has not only stood out from his peers in terms of years but also in the accrued respect gained from those who were in a position to best understand the burdens and solitude of kingship.



In reaching the sixtieth year of his reign, His Majesty had surpassed in length the reign of many of the monarchs with whom he had developed cordial relations over the years, such as Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom and those from European royal houses such as King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and King Juan Carlos I of Spain. It was no surprise, therefore, that they were pleased to either attend the celebrations in person or send royal representatives to participate on their behalf.

The main focus of the world was on the events that were organized between 12 and 13 June 2006, when an assembly of 25 of the world's monarchs and royal representatives, such as His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah of Brunei Darussalam, His Majesty King Karl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, His Majesty King Mswati III of Swaziland, Emperor Akihito of Japan, Prince Albert II of Monaco, Her Majesty Queen Sofia of Spain and Britain's Prince Andrew, attended festivities, including a royal barge procession, that the government and Thai people had been preparing for over a year.

Prior to the arrival of foreign royalty, however, there were a series of ceremonies and rites that were all part of the important traditions and culture of Thailand with respect to its monarchy. Commencing on 8 June, Their Majesties the King and Queen



Merit-making dedicated to His Majesty's august ancestors at the Amarindra Vinichaya Throne Hall, 8 June 2006.

went to perform a series of religious rites in honour of the previous kings of the Royal House of Chakri who had sacrificed themselves for the peace, progress and prosperity of the country. Within the Amarindra Vinichaya Throne Hall, Their Majesties lit candles to pay homage to the Buddha images on the Busabok Mala Maha Phiman Throne that symbolize the birth day of each Chakri king and lit candles and incense in paying respect to former kings and queens of the Royal House of Chakri and His Majesty's parents. To the gathering of 26 clerics and senior monks, His Majesty offered commemorative prayer fans. This was followed by Buddhist prayers and, later, a sermon.



Sacrificial offerings dedicated to former Thai kings at the ceremonial pavilion in front of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, 9 June 2006.

As is the custom, His Majesty presented new robes to the monks who then chanted prayers dedicated to his royal ancestors. After the pouring of consecrated water, dedicating merits to his royal ancestors, Their Majesties took their leave following the departure of the assembled monks.

On the next day, 9 June, after a series of traditional ceremonies, dedicated to all monarchs in Thai history, Their Majesties proceeded to make symbolic sacrificial offerings to former Thai kings at the ceremonial pavilion in front of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall.



Their Majesties' appearance on the south balcony was announced by a drum roll and fanfare accompanied by the booming sound of a 21-gun salute given by each of the armed forces and police. While the view of His Majesty sent a loud roar from the tens of thousands of people gathered and awaiting this special audience with their sovereign. The sight from the balcony of a sea of yellow shirted people, yellow being the symbolic colour of His Majesty's birth day on a Monday, stretching along the length of the street was truly memorable.

With His Majesty's appearance, Buddhist monks nationwide, together with members of other religious groups, simultaneously began to chant blessings amid the sound of gongs and bells.

At the end of the Royal Anthem, HRH Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn delivered a speech on behalf of the Royal Family congratulating His Majesty and expressing its best wishes. This was followed by speeches by the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Cabinet, civil servants, officials of the armed forces and the general public, the Parliament President on behalf of Members of Parliament and, finally, by the President of the Supreme Court on behalf of the judiciary.



The sea of yellow shirted, flag-waving well-wishers displaying an outpouring of adoration and jubilation.





*Granting a grand audience
to the populace at the balcony
of the Ananta Samakhom
Throne Hall, 9 June 2006.*

His Majesty then graciously thanked everyone for their good wishes, commenting that,

“All of you are assembled here to express your genuine and heart-felt greetings and inspiration, for which I thank you. Witnessing the goodwill and unity among all sides and parties gives me great moral support.”¹

At the conclusion, the Royal Anthem was played again and cries of Long Live the King thundered up from the streets.

¹ *With Love and Loyalty, Bangkok: Bangkok Bank, 2006, p.60*



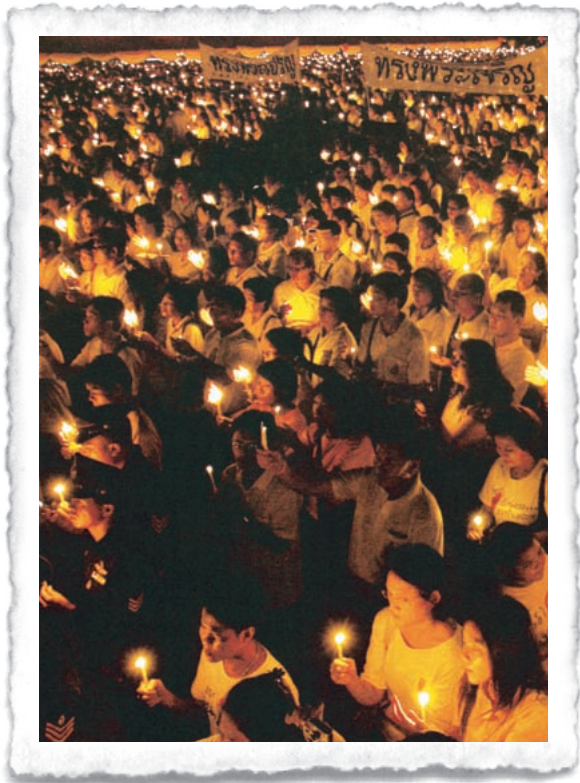
Obviously touched, His Majesty gently waved to acknowledge their cheering and smiled. Television cameras captured the moment from every angle as His Majesty stood on the balcony resplendent in golden robes. The sea of yellow-shirted, flag-waving well-wishers displaying an outpouring of adoration and jubilation.

By one o'clock the audience was over and the royal procession left the throne hall. Despite the blazing sun, thousands of people were still there to shout Long Live the King as the procession swept past.

Evening celebrations saw the first firework display by the lake at Benchakitti Park by the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre.

The fireworks, which were a gift of the People's Republic of China, were high tech, smoke free and relatively quiet by normal standards. With musical accompaniment using His Majesty's works, the show had five segments entitled The Ruler of Siam, The Royal Accession to the Throne, The Reign of Peace and Security, The Glory of the House of Chakri and Tribute to the Great King. In all the celebrations on 9 June, the government, private sector, and people nationwide participated whole-heartedly.

In the afternoon on the twelfth of June, Their Majesties the King and Queen



*People from all walks of life
lighting candles to well-wish
His Majesty at Sanam Luang
Grounds, 9 June 2006.*



KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
A Most Respected Colleague







arrived at the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall to receive their guests. After brief exchanges of greeting, the royal guests were shown into the throne hall by HRH Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn and HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn and other members of the Royal Family for an historic group photograph, the likes of which will unlikely be seen again, as members of the world's 26 Royal Families proudly posed together in one place at one time. For many months after, the photos became collectors' items among the Thai public, proud as they were that so many royals had shown such respect to their beloved sovereign.

*Their Majesties
welcoming His Majesty
Sultan Haji Hassanal
Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin
Waddaulah and Her
Majesty Raja Isteri
Pengiran Anak Hajah
Saleha of Brunei
Darussalam, 12 June
2006.*



*The Royal Barge Suphannahongs gliding in front of the Grand Palace,
12 June 2006.*



After the photo session and the Prime Minister's speech on behalf of the Thai people, His Majesty the King delivered a brief address, informing them how pleased he was that they could attend.

"I am happy to be in the midst of this gathering of important people from every institution of the country as well as to be among monarchs and members of the Royal Families from all over the world who have graciously come to participate in the celebration on this special occasion..."

By evening, the 52-strong fleet of glittering red, blue and gold royal barges



Floatilla of Krathong, 12 June 2006.



The Royal Ceremonial Emblem in Commemoration of the Sixtieth Anniversary of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne depicted on a water mist, 12 June 2006.



sailed majestically down the **River of Kings**, as the Chao Phraya River is sometimes called. Thousands of Thais lined the riverbanks to witness this rare yet spectacular show of royal tradition.

As on other occasions when His Majesty had been in full state, rainclouds that had been threatening all day cleared before the procession commenced. To the delight of all visitors, the ceremony ended with hundreds of paper lanterns released into the night sky and thousands of candle-lit offerings, called *kratong sai*, set afloat on the river.

For many, the royal ceremonies and rituals that preceded the Royal Banquet on 13 June 2006 at the Borom Racha Sathit Maholan Throne Hall may well have represented the traditions of ancient Siam and the mystique of Thailand's monarchy. For others, the Royal Banquet became the focus of the world's acknowledgement of Thailand's modern monarchy.

This was best expressed by the words of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hussanal Bolkiah Mu'izzadin Waddaulah of Brunei Darussalam, who spoke on behalf of all the royal guests, when he informed His Majesty the King that, while congratulating him for becoming the world's longest reigning monarch,



“We are not here to celebrate mere records... We are here to honour the substance of that reign.”

As the address went on to mention His Majesty’s personal qualities and achievements, it became clear that the recognition of the attendant royal guests was based on a true understanding of what His Majesty had been doing for his people throughout the reign, and that they respected him for it. The Sultan then informed the King that he was an inspiration to all of the assembled peers and admirers, calling His Majesty,

“Our friend and our most respected colleague.”



The celebrations for the King's sixtieth anniversary of his accession to the throne may never be surpassed. Besides lighting up Bangkok's major thoroughfares with lights and decorative arches, free entertainments and a party atmosphere for five days, this was one of the few truly national occasions when people from all walks of life in every geographical region of the country were able to join together, unified in their common love of the King. For example, one of the major events to mark this occasion was the Royal Flora Ratchaphruek 2006 or the International Horticultural Exposition held as a tribute to His Majesty the King. This world-class event during 1 November 2006 and 31 January 2007 in Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand, was to perform a dual function, to celebrate both the 60th anniversary of His Majesty's accession to the throne and his 80th birthday anniversary.



KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
His Majesty's 80th Birthday Anniversary Celebrations





His Majesty's 80th Birthday Anniversary Celebrations

Royal ceremonies to mark the king's birthday were initiated in the reign of King Rama IV in the nineteenth century. These ceremonies consisted of two distinct parts, paying homage to a Buddha image and the merit-making at both the Royal Palace and the Chapel Royal in the Grand Palace. Besides these royal and state ceremonies, the public and private sectors usually arrange activities in support of charities.

The Government announced year-long celebrations to commemorate the auspicious occasion of His Majesty's 80th birthday anniversary and set up the National Commission on the Celebrations of His Majesty the King's Eightieth Birthday Anniversary to plan royal ceremonies during 4-8 December 2007.

As part of the normal range of official activities that take place every year on the occasion of His Majesty's birthday, His Majesty's 80th birthday celebrations began with the traditional trooping of the colour and swearing of allegiance by the Armed Forces on 2 December.



However, in order to prepare for the rites that would take place shortly after, which was to include the pouring of sacred lustral water, water to be consecrated would have to be gathered from the major rivers of Thailand. In this sense, they were very similar to the Coronation rites and rituals described earlier in this book. The actual consecration of the water in the various regions would take place simultaneously on Monday, 26 November.

While the rites of water collection and consecration for royal ceremonies were mostly similar to those at the Coronation and for His Majesty's 60th and 72nd birthday anniversary celebrations, the ceremonies to



celebrate his 80th birthday were slightly updated to provide greater public participation. Thus, while the water was taken from Thailand's major rivers, the prime sources were in keeping with ancient traditions while the secondary ones were the same as those at the time of the Coronation in 1950. However, the third sources of water were rivers considered commercially important to the people in all 76 provinces of the Kingdom. In this aspect, the ceremony had evolved. The water from Bangkok, however, came from Satrakhom Hall in the Grand Palace.

Throughout the country, water from each source was consecrated simultaneously in every province.

After consecration, the lustral water from each province was poured into a vessel made of pottery, 35cm tall and 24cm in diameter. On one side was a display of the emblem representing His Majesty's 80th birthday anniversary and on the opposite the logo of each province. The vessel was then included in a further consecration rite at a royal temple in Bangkok. The temple chosen for this was Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimonmangkalaram, commonly known as Wat Pho or the Temple of the Reclining Buddha.

Wat Phra Chetuphon was chosen as it was a royal temple that had been restored



The Royal Ceremony to present the lustral water to His Majesty the King at the Grand Palace, 5 December 2007.



The three vessels containing lustral water from 76 provinces of the Kingdom.



by the founder of the Royal House of Chakri, King Rama I, and was almost adjacent to the Grand Palace. The 76 vessels containing the lustral water from 76 provinces were delivered to the chapel of Wat Phra Chetuphon in a stately procession. The actual consecration rite in Bangkok took place between the auspicious times on 3 December 2007.

Early evening of the next day, His Majesty presided over a royal merit-making ceremony to pay homage to his royal ancestors at the Amarindra Vinichaya Throne Hall. The fourth of December is also the date when His Majesty normally grants an audience to senior members of the government as well as representatives of various groups in the public and private sectors.

In the morning of 5 December, His Majesty's birthday, the royal ceremony to present the lustral water to him was held at the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall. The lustral water contained in three vessels was taken in a procession from the chapel of Wat Phra Chetuphon to the Maha Samakhom Throne Hall. At the Grand Palace, the three vessels were placed at the front of the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall where His Majesty the King was to receive them from the Prime Minister, the Parliament President and the Supreme Court President on behalf of the Thai people.



Once more, His Majesty granted the people a mass Royal Audience that attracted thousands of yellow-clad people waving flags and shouting Long Live the King!

After 62 years on the throne, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej has secured a position in the hearts of his people and won repeated recognitions from the international community as a man to be respected not only for his position but also for his lifetime achievements. Nothing could better encapsulate this feeling in the sixtieth year of his reign than the recognition of the whole world through the auspices of the United Nations. The then



Thousands of yellow clad people waving flags and shouting “Long live the King”



Granting a grand audience to the populace at the balcony of the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, 5 December 2007.



The diplomatic corps well-wishing His Majesty the King at Dusidalai Hall, Chitralada Villa, 5 December 2007



Granting an audience to Mr Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, who presented His Majesty with the “UNDP Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award” at Klai Kangwol Palace, Hua-Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, 26 May 2006.



Secretary General Kofi Annan flew to Thailand to present His Majesty with the first ever Lifetime Achievement Award in an audience at Klai Kangwol Palace on 26 May 2006.

“Your Majesty has made an extraordinary contribution to human development. As the world’s ‘Development King,’ Your Majesty has reached out to the poorest and the most vulnerable people of Thailand – regardless of their status, ethnicity or religion – listened to their problems, and empowered them to take their lives in their own hands,”

Mr. Annan told the King at the award ceremony.

With the world’s attention focusing on Thailand, His Majesty graciously received the award, the ultimate global accolade of a life of work and self-sacrifice. As succinctly expressed in Mr. Annan’s talk with some high-ranking officials from His Majesty’s royal-initiated projects,

“After all, if human development is about putting people first, there can no better advocate for it than His Majesty. [sic]”



KING BHUMIBOL : Strength of the Land
In Conclusion





In Conclusion

Many non-Thais who pick up this book will have known something of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej already. The celebration for the anniversary of His Majesty's 80th birthday have been witnessed on many internet home pages by thousands across the world.

As people learn and begin to understand more of Thailand and its monarch on an electronic page, a long-held belief of His Majesty, expressed to the then Vice President Richard Nixon in 1953 during his tour of Asia, is becoming a reality.

As President, Nixon himself recalled in July 1969 having asked 18 Asian leaders sixteen years previously which single factor they held to be more important than all others as the essential ingredient for progress. Many named military strength with which to solve their internal problems, others stressed economic development. To Nixon, the most revealing factor was offered by the king who said, *"What we need, what we need in Asia, and what we need in the world, is understanding above everything else."*¹

¹ Speech given by President Richard M. Nixon in Thailand, 28 July, 1969.





His Majesty takes a special interest in information technology as a tool for developing the country.

The then 26 year-old sovereign had perhaps put his finger on the essential ingredient for progress, but one that was lacking a medium that would allow individuals to communicate freely and immediately. For most of his reign, His Majesty has communicated the needs of his people not only to his government but also to the world. His Majesty's enduring achievement may in some part be attributed to his skill as a communicator, one who is receptive to the needs of his subjects, interprets those needs and provides for them in the ways he knows best. The image of the working monarch with radio and computer is the key to understanding the purpose of his communicating with the people. Listening to him speak gently in clear, everyday Thai is to glimpse the father talking to his children. Communication needs precise and simple language, so he



communicates with others in this way. His words tell us of his earnest endeavour to understand, and therefore allow us to understand him in return.

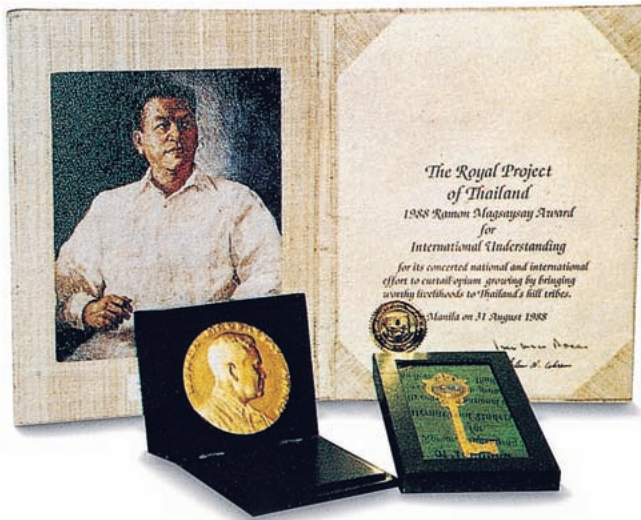
His Majesty seeks information from local people in order to develop that specific area.

His Majesty has insight into the root of problems, and in this he has remained unparalleled. While others lowered their eyes and concentrated on the development of the capital city and its environs, His Majesty was the first to recognize the importance of farmers in Thailand, and the first to understand the problems of the hill tribes. He was the first to listen to the needs of his people and to take action. He has now visited every province in Thailand and suggests where to build roads, helps develop a decent standard of living, and brings water



and electricity to people whose lives were hopeless and despairing before.

An environmentalist before the term became fashionable, His Majesty's personal efforts to end slash-and-burn farming and replace it with proven agricultural techniques have only been surmounted by success in decreasing opium cultivation by crop substitution programmes. International recognition followed when His Majesty's Royal Project was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award, the Asian equivalent of the Nobel Prize in 1988 and the Colombo Plan Award in 2003. Currently, more than 300 upland villages benefit from the Royal Project, working from 38 development centres and four reserch stations, affecting the lives of at least 30,000 households. The King has been the linchpin in all these



The Royal Project, winner of the Magsaysay Award for International Understanding in 1988.



Water resources development takes first priority in His Majesty's agricultural development projects.



efforts. For years, the government at the time had been unable to convince the hill tribes to cease opium cultivation, mainly perhaps because they were unable to offer a viable option. It was His Majesty's foresight and vision which allowed him to see that to take something away meant one had to replace with equal or greater quantity. Opium cultivation in the north has been replaced by growing of temperate climate flowers, vegetables, fruit and coffee on the part of the hill tribes.

Had His Majesty been content to offer advice or hand out seeds, this attempt to examine his life might have been a lot less substantive. The king has addressed many of the farmers' problems at their source by looking at each detail personally. It has been this effort that has led His Majesty to understand the importance of the land to his people. His Majesty's experience is both practical and symbolic, having once created soil from sand through the patient cultivation of plants on a balcony of his villa, he was able to examine the effects of soil erosion directly.

"After creating my own soil from the sand, I put it in water and swirled it. After it settled, I found only sand remaining; the soil had gone."¹

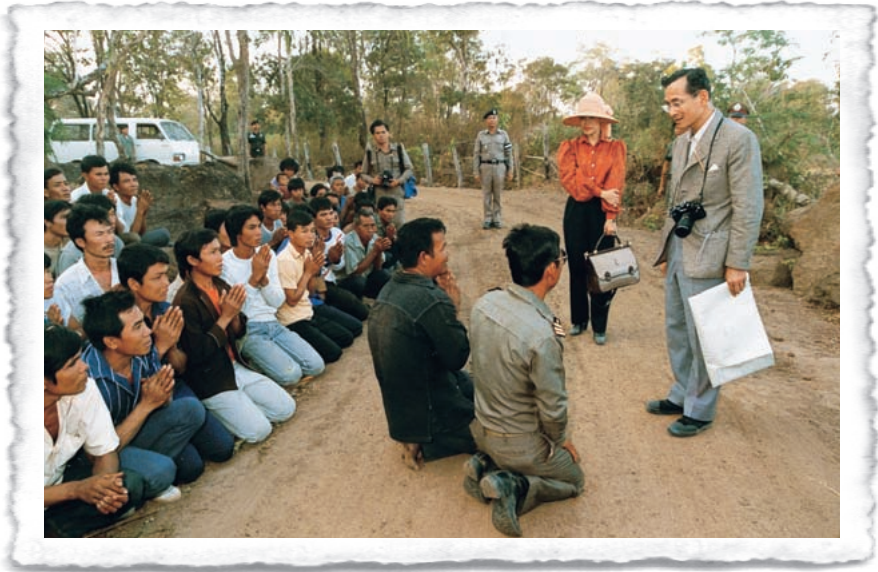
¹ Audience granted to a team of representatives from Scientific American and the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA).



As touched upon earlier, His Majesty's selfless devotion to the needs of his people has created an image of him in the minds of people outside of the country too. Besides the honorary awards presented to the king by various overseas institutions each year, there are also much simpler rewards in the spoken words of admirers. Addressing the United States Senate in 1995, Senator Max Baucus captured the essence of His Majesty's hard work:

His Majesty seeks information from local people even in their homes.

"Today, Thailand is one of the anchors of the modern, prosperous Southeast Asia. Bangkok has become one of the world's great cities and commercial centres... Much of this extraordinary success is due to the wise guidance of King Bhumibol. The king has led by example. He has embodied the ten



Another source of information for His Majesty for development projects comes from local leaders.

traditional moral principles of Buddhist kings: charity toward the poor; morality; sacrifice of personal interest; honesty; courtesy; self-restraint; tranquillity of temperament; non-violence; patience; and impartiality in settling disputes. And he has led by action. Together, King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit have devoted decades to improving the lives of Thai people in rural and impoverished regions. They constantly travel the country's 73 provinces,¹ meeting with villagers and staying close to the people. The results are obvious in improved public health, the spread of education to all Thai children and the renewal of traditional crafts and textiles."²

¹ There are now 76 provinces in Thailand.

² Max Baucus, Senator, "**Tribute to King Rama IX of Thailand**", 9 June, 1995.





His Majesty can work everywhere in all kinds of weather no matter how late it is.

This concise observation does not, however, explain how His Majesty has been able to achieve results working even as he does deep into the night. He is, after all, a constitutional monarch with no political nor military power. No one has to do what he suggests. Read the letters pages of an English language newspaper in Thailand and one is flooded with suggestions by people who hope to solve the nation's problems in a few paragraphs. His Majesty has succeeded by tackling one of Thailand's paradoxes: this is a country that yearns for a knight on a white horse to solve all its problems, but the problems are too great for one man to solve. Since the change to democracy in 1932, there are many individuals who demand attention from the people as political leaders, but a leader is required to whom all other leaders would listen.





His Majesty explains the difficulties of communicating in this society by noting that:

“It is no use to talk if one individual has one viewpoint and the other has an entirely different view and there is no attempt to conciliate nor any effort to find a happy medium. The more one talks, the more inextricable it will be, resulting in the demoralization of the hapless and innocent onlookers. These days, there are arguments that demoralize the public. They don’t know what is being argued about; the basis of thinking is completely different. These talks lead to nowhere since they are incoherent and incompatible. It is what is called ‘talking at crossed purposes.’ This talking at crossed purposes looks as if it is about the same subject, but in fact, one is talking about a different subject. This is fruitless and leads to no positive result.”¹ Rather, stresses His Majesty, “What is most important is the consensus that the development of the country or of oneself requires cooperation”² and “must be done reasonably.”³

His Majesty has therefore realized that to act alone is not enough. Everyone must communicate ideas in a clear and precise way so that others can see the logic and desirability of proceeding.

¹ Royal address, Dusidalai Hall, 4 December, 1993.

² Royal address, 26 July, 1973.

³ Royal address, Dusidalai Hall, 4 December, 1990.



“Bureaucrats, businessmen, the people at large, or everyone who considers himself a Thai, should develop a little clear, sharp thinking. Just stop and ponder a little is enough. That is, when a problem arises, instead of immediately opening the mouth to speak, we should stop to think a moment. And with practice, just one second will suffice. And we will not make a mistake. If we don’t make a mistake, that problem will not lead to a detrimental action; it will always be a beneficial action.”¹

The King of Thailand who graces the television every evening on the news or in documentaries is a communicator who remains flexible — never rigidly pursuing a plan if it meets with objections, and yes, some have come up against technical or local obstacles and have been dropped accordingly. His visits to various provinces leave him open to the ideas of others around Thailand. When His Majesty talks of thinking before speaking, it is not an exhortation to the uneducated masses to be quiet. His Majesty has already made quite clear that by stopping to think, he means

“Constructive thinking (which) means thinking honestly, with understanding, with a cool head and without too much self-interest. It must be done in the interest of the nation, or at least for the community.”²

¹ Royal address, Dusidalai Hall, 4 December, 1992.

² *Ibid.*





How does His Majesty reconcile working for the community with the needs of the individual? Everyone has his own problems and wants to achieve as much as he can for himself and his family in his life, but what His Majesty appears to want people to understand is that they can have both.

“To act for the common good does not mean that everyone must make sacrifices to the extent of denuding oneself. Far from it. It, however, means that one should sacrifice what can be sacrificed in order for the whole to survive,” stresses His Majesty.¹

¹ *Ibid.*



Unfortunately, to use the word “sacrifice” constantly leads to some familiarity on the part of the listener. His Majesty is well aware of the effect of such words on people. “*Perhaps one is fed up with the word sacrifice,*” he once mentioned to an audience of government leaders.¹

“We must know the word ‘unity’. Perhaps one is fed up with the word unity. Unity here, unity there; compassion here, compassion there.”

Mere words, perhaps. However, there are many ways in which one may put this into practice. Besides the countless times that His Majesty has spent his own money to get a project started, he has also shown that avoiding unnecessary public expense on his behalf is a secondary way in which a king may sacrifice for his people. One is reminded of His Majesty’s frequent requests in the 70s and 80s to the police to avoid preventing other traffic from moving whilst his motorcade was crossing Bangkok. His Majesty once had a conversation with a ranking official in November, 1971 regarding preparations for the

¹ *Royal address, Dusidalai Hall, 4 December, 1992.*



anniversary of his coronation. When he was told that a monument would be built to commemorate the event, he remarked,

“It would be better to build a road than a monument, a ring road, because it had always been my dream.”¹

¹ Royal address, Dusitalai Hall, 4 December, 1993.



It may seem like a little matter, but highlights that the King of Thailand is constantly thinking of how his position affects the community. The sacrifice of a privilege can appear to be insignificant, but within the confines of the nation's highest and most respected institution — the Royal Family — His Majesty has been successfully communicating his concepts of sacrifice to the Thai people, and to the world, by words and deeds.

The picture painted within these pages of the physical endurance of the man is counterpoint to the mental vigour he has sustained for over sixty years of his reign. For most of the world, however, people have become fads and fashions. The attention of the masses lingers on the fashionable and controversial for a brief moment and then moves on to other matters; but in Thailand, His Majesty continues to reside in the hearts and minds of his people, a monarch whose deeds have determined him for his people as he has determined his deeds.





*His Majesty King Bhumibol
Adulyadej has, indeed, lived
up to his name as
the Strength of the Land.*



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Appendices



*Honorary Memberships, Global Awards and Medals
Presented to His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej
(1964-2009)*

1. **Honorary Membership**, awarded by the Academy for Music and the Performing Arts in Vienna, the Republic of Austria, in recognition of His Majesty's outstanding musical skills and his contribution to the enhancement of cultural exchange and relationship between the two countries, 5 October 1964, at the Academy.
2. **Special Medal of the European Parliament**, awarded by the European Parliament, Brussels, the Kingdom of Belgium, 19 July 1975, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
3. **Honorary Fellowship**, awarded by the Royal College of Surgeons of England, in recognition of His Majesty's, at the supreme level, work for the good of humanity, and his great encouragement and help to surgeons, anaesthetists and dentists, 16 October 1984, at Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, Grand Palace, Bangkok.
4. **IAUP World Great Peace Award**, presented by the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), Seoul, the Republic of Korea, in recognition of His Majesty's dedication to higher education and the promotion of peace in Southeast Asia, 8 September 1986, (His Majesty designated the Thai Ambassador to the Republic of Korea as his representative to receive the Award at Kyung Hee University, Seoul.)
5. **The First AIT Gold Medal Award for Outstanding Leadership in Rural Development**, presented by Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Pathum Thani Province, 21 July 1987, at the Institute.
6. **William J. Donovan Medal Award of Friendship**, presented by President of the Veterans of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the William J. Donovan Memorial Foundation, New York, the United States of America, as a token of appreciation and friendship for the reunion of the veterans, their families and friends in Thailand, 29 October 1987, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.



7. **Gold Medal to Commemorate the Occasion of the Joint Academic Meeting between the Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand and the Royal College of Surgeons of England**, presented by the Royal College of Surgeons of England, London, the United Kingdom, 3 October 1989, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
8. **Rotary International Award of Honour**, presented by Rotary International, Illinois, the United States of America, in recognition of His Majesty's dedication for the country's development and the promotion of international understanding, 17 August 1991, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
9. **Honorary Excellence FIAP Membership**, awarded by Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique (FIAP), Bern, the Swiss Confederation, in recognition of His Majesty's activities in promoting and encouraging the ideals and objectives of FIAP, 12 November 1991, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
10. **Philae Medal**, awarded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Paris, the French Republic, in recognition of His Majesty's exemplary achievements in rural development and his dedication for the improvement of his people's standards of living, 2 December 1991, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
11. **UNEP Gold Medal of Distinction**, awarded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi, the Republic of Kenya, in recognition of His Majesty's long dedicated, eminent and exemplary contributions to the improvement of environment and nature conservation, 4 November 1992, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
12. **Health-for-All Gold Medal**, awarded by World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva, the Swiss Confederation, in recognition of His Majesty's outstanding contributions to achievement of the social goal of health for all by the year 2000, 24 November 1992, at Bhuban Palace, Sakon Nakhon Province.
13. **Natura Pro Futura Medal for the Conservation of Biodiversity**, awarded by the International Society of Chemical Ecology (ISCE),



Florida, the United States of America, in recognition of His Majesty's efforts in the protection of natural ecosystems and reforestation programmes in Thailand, 26 January 1993, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.

14. **International Merit Award**, presented by the International Erosion Control Association (IECA), Colorado, the United States of America, in recognition of His Majesty's contributions to the use of vetiver for soil conservation and environmental improvement, 25 February 1993. (His Majesty designated the Thai Ambassador to the United States of America as his representative to receive the Award at Westin Hotel, Indiana, the United States of America.)
15. **Bronze-plated Vetiver Award**, presented by the World Bank, Washington D.C., the United States of America, in recognition of His Majesty's technical and development accomplishment in the promotion of the vetiver technology internationally, 30 October 1993, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
16. **Award of Appreciation**, presented by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), Vienna, the Republic of Austria, in recognition of His Majesty's pioneering and outstanding contributions to drug control efforts in Thailand, 12 December 1994 , at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
17. **Agricola Medal**, presented by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Rome, the Republic of Italy, in recognition of His Majesty's devotion to the well-being and happiness of all people in Thailand, particularly those who till the soil, tend the waters and nurture the forests, 6 December 1995, at the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, Grand Palace, Bangkok.
18. **Honorary Fellowship**, awarded by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Sydney, the Commonwealth of Australia, in recognition of His Majesty's outstanding contributions to the health and social needs of the Thai people as well as the establishment of the links between Thailand, Australia and New Zealand, 29 April 1996, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.



19. **International Rice Award Medal**, presented by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Laguna, the Republic of the Philippines, in recognition of His Majesty's outstanding devotion to the betterment of the lives of rice farmers and consumers, and his contributions to the improvement of rice production and rice research throughout the kingdom, 5 June 1996, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
20. **Presidential Award for Humanitarian Service**, presented by Rotary International, Illinois, the United States of America, in recognition of His Majesty's dedication for the good of humanity, 24 October 1996, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
21. **Partnering for World Health Award**, presented by the American College of Chest Physicians, Illinois, the United States of America, in recognition of His Majesty's efforts to promote the prevention and cure of chest diseases in Thailand, 13 November 1996, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
22. **Award of Appreciation**, presented by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Geneva, the Swiss Confederation, in recognition of His Majesty's leadership and valuable contributions to the promotion of meteorology and operational hydrology, his continued support to WMO and the meteorological community as well as Meteorological Service of Thailand, 18 February 1997, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
23. **ICCIDD Gold Medal**, awarded by the International Council for the Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (ICCIDD), Ottawa, Canada, in recognition of His Majesty's leadership, guidance and direction provided to the National IDD Control Project for the achievement of universal salt iodization and establishing the process for sustaining the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders, 25 June 1997, at Klai Kangwol Palace, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.
24. **SEA Write Awards**, presented by the Organizing Committee of the Southeast Asian Writers Awards (the SEA Write Awards), in recognition of His Majesty's literary works, 8 July 1997, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.



25. **Gold Medal Award**, presented by the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases (IUATLD), Paris, the French Republic, in recognition of His Majesty's long dedication for lung health of the Thai people and global lung health, 24 November 1998, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
26. **Lions Humanitarian Award**, presented by the International Association of Lions Clubs, Illinois, the United States of America, in recognition of His Majesty's dedication for the betterment of the livelihood of the Thai people, especially in the areas of health and education, 3 March 1999, Dusidalai Hall on the grounds of Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
27. **TeleFood Medal**, awarded by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Rome, the Republic of Italy, in recognition of His Majesty's support in the battle against hunger and poverty to ensure food security and his dedication to the happiness of the rural people, 8 December 1999, at the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, Grand Palace, Bangkok.
28. **Sanford Medal**, presented by Yale University School of Music, Connecticut, the United States of America, in recognition of His Majesty's extraordinary musical accomplishments that have deeply influenced cultural values throughout the world, 18 January 2000, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
29. **Lalaounis Cup**, presented by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Lausanne, the Swiss Confederation, in recognition of His Majesty's outstanding merit in the cause of athleticism and his contributions to national as well as international games, 19 February 2000, at Klai Kangwol Palace, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.
30. **WHO Award of Appreciation**, presented by the World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva, the Swiss Confederation, in recognition of His Majesty's constant commitment to improving the welfare of the Thai people, especially in public health development including the battle against tobacco, 31 May 2000, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.



31. **“Merit of Invention” Award as “Grand Officier”**, presented by the Belgian Chamber of Inventors and Chancellor of the Merit of the Invention, in recognition of His Majesty’s outstanding services to the cause of progress and his assistance to the inventors, craftsmen and innovative companies of Thailand, and his devotion to the rural development, the people’s health and improvement of daily life, 5 June 2000, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
32. **Honorary Fellowship**, awarded by the Institution of Civil Engineers of the United Kingdom, in recognition of His Majesty’s strong support for fundamental engineering education and contributions to Civil Engineering, 4 October 2000, at Klai Kangwol Palace, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.
33. **Berkeley Medal**, awarded by the University of California, Berkeley, the United States of America, in recognition of His Majesty’s devotion to the Thai people and the great contributions toward political stability and economic vitality of Thailand, 2 November 2000, at Klai Kangwol Palace, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.
34. **Five Awards of Distinctive Invention: 49th World Exhibition of Innovation, Research and New Technology**, presented by Brussels Eureka Organization of the Kingdom of Belgium, in recognition of His Majesty’s outstanding accomplishments as Best Inventor for the invention of the Chaipattana low speed surface aerator of immense benefits to the Thai people, 16 February 2001, at Klai Kangwol Palace, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.
35. **Honorary Fellowship**, awarded by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, in recognition of His Majesty’s concern for the healthcare of the people and his sponsorship for the research and healthcare, education as well as his support for the handicapped, 9 July 2001, at Klai Kangwol Palace, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.
36. **Golden Shining Symbol of World Leadership Award**, presented by the World Boxing Council, Mexico City, the United Mexican States, in recognition of the eminent and exalted leadership displayed by His Majesty over the past 56 years, and for all that he has done for sports, especially boxing, 26 November 2001, at Klai Kangwol Palace, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.



37. **Five Awards from the Brussels Eureka 2001 : 50th World Exhibition of Innovation, research and New Technology**, presented by Brussels Eureka Organization of the Kingdom of Belgium, in recognition of His Majesty's invention and research in using pure palm oil as bio-diesel fuel and as lubricant, the "New Theory" and artificial rainmaking, 27 March 2002, at Klai Kangwol Palace, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.
38. **UN-HABITAT Scroll of Honour Award**, presented by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), Nairobi, the Republic of Kenya, in recognition of His Majesty's outstanding contributions to sustaining habitats and improving the quality of life of people in cities and communities in Thailand, 25 February 2004, at Klai Kangwol Palace, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.
39. **Golden Ear of Paddy Award**, presented by the Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA), Bangkok, in recognition of His Majesty's devotion to a life of service for rural and agricultural development which is sustainable and efficient, and his policy of ensuring the cultivation of crops that are a staple food for all Thais, 23 May 2005, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
40. **The UNDP's First Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award**, presented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New York, the United States of America, in recognition of His Majesty's extraordinary contributions to a people-centered and sustainable path of human development, 26 May 2006, at Klai Kangwol Palace, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.
41. **The Bronze Wolf Award**, presented by the World Organization of the Scout Movement, Geneva, the Swiss Confederation, in recognition of His Majesty's inspirational leadership to the Scout Association in a wide range of activities in support of national development, 20 June 2006, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
42. **TIME Asian Hero Award**, presented by TIME Asia, Hong Kong, hailing His Majesty as "Hero King Bhumibol Adulyadej for Shaping the Asia of Our Times", 29 November 2006; His Majesty



designated the Thai Consul-General to Hong Kong as his representative to receive the Award at the R-Carlton Hong Kong.

43. **UAE Prize for Weather Modification**, presented by the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Geneva, the Swiss Confederation, in recognition of His Majesty's successful initiation of "Artificial Rainmaking Research and Development Project" which has benefited millions of farmers throughout the country, increased agricultural production and thereby improved the livelihood of the people, 16 May 2007, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
44. **The First Dr. Norman E. Borlaug World Food Prize Medallion**, presented by the World Food Prize Foundation, Iowa, the United States of America, in recognition of His Majesty's dedication to the well-being and proper nutrition of the Thai people, 23 July 2007, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
45. **Special Prize**, presented by Korea Invention Promotion Association (KIPA), the Republic of Korea, in recognition of His Majesty's commending excellent efforts to create inventions. (His Majesty the King designated Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn as his representative to receive the prize, 12 November 2007, at Chaipattana Building, Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.)
46. **IFIA Cup 2007 for the Best Thai Invention**, presented by International Federation of Inventors' Association (IFIA), Republic of Hungary. (His Majesty the King designated Her Royal Highness Maha Chakri Sirindhorn as his representative to receive the IFIA Cup at Chaipattana Building, Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok, 12 November 2007.)
47. **Genius Prize for the Invention: New Theory and Sufficiency Economy**, presented by the Association of Hungarian Inventors, Republic of Hungary. (His Majesty the King designated her Royal Highness Maha Chakri Sirindhorn as his representative to receive the Genius Prize at Chaipattana Building, Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok, 12 November 2007.)



48. **The Decoration “SEA Games Federation Merit Award**, presented by the Southeast Asian Games Federation (SEAGF), Bangkok, in recognition of His Majesty’s outstanding skill in athletics, 8 December 2007, at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.
49. **The East-West Center Asia Pacific Community Building Award**, presented by the East–West Center, Hawaii, the United State of America, in recognition of His Majesty’ s dedicated work for the welfare of the People of Thailand. (Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn received the Award on behalf of His Majesty the King at the East–West Center, Hawaii, United States of America, 29 February 2008.)
50. **Golden Plaque Commemorating “Sustainable Development for a Secure Future”** presented by Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association-APRACA, Confédération Internationale du Crédit Agricole-CICA, Asociacion Latinoamericana de Instituciones Financieras para el Desarrollo-ALIDE, African Rural and Agricultural Credit Association-AFRACA, North-East Africa Regional Agricultural Credit Association-NENARACA. (His Majesty the King designated Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn as his representative to receive the Golden Plaque, 11 June 2008, at Chaipattana Building, Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok.)
51. **WIPO Global Leader Award**, presented by the World Intellectual Property Organization-WIPO, Geneva, the Swiss Confederation, in recognition of His Majesty’s outstanding leadership and committed patronage in promoting intellectual property as well as for his exceptional contributions in innovation and creativity for the benefit of society, 14 January 2009, Klai Kangwol Palace, Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand.
52. **The Golden Eye of Russia Award**, presented by International Professional Media Photographers Guild of Russia,the Russian Confederation, in recognition of His Majesty’s distinguished photographic skills.(The Award was presented through the Office of His Majesty’s Principal Private Secretary, 25 March 2009.)



Foreign Monarchs and Royalties Attending the Sixtieth Anniversary of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne



His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah and Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha of Brunei Darussalam.



His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf and Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden.



His Majesty King Mswati III of Swaziland and Queen Ladube.



His Majesty Emperor Akihito and Her Majesty Empress Michiko of Japan.



His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar and Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned, the Royal Consort.



His Majesty King Letsie III and Her Majesty Queen Masenate Mohato Seeiso of Lesotho.



His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.



His Royal Highness Grand Duke Henri of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.



His Majesty Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Ibni Al-Marhum Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail, the Yang di-pertuan Agong and Her Majesty Tuanku Fauziah binti Al-Marhum Tengku Abdul Rashid, the Raja Permaisuri Agong of Malaysia.



His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni of the Royal Kingdom of Cambodia.



His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of the Principality of Monaco.



His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister, Representative of His Majesty the King of Bahrain.



His Serene Highness Hereditary Prince Alois of the Principality of Liechtenstein.



His Royal Highness Prince Henrik, the Prince Consort of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark.



Her Majesty Queen Sofia of Spain.



Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Salma Bennani, the Royal Consort of His Majesty the King of Morocco.



*His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al Jaber Al-Sabah,
the Amir of the State of Kuwait.*



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Tupouto'a of Tonga.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck of Bhutan.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Willem-Alexander and Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Maxima of the Netherlands.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haakon and Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mette-Marit of Norway.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Philippe and Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mathilde of Belgium.



His Royal Highness the Duke of York of the United Kingdom.



His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq Taimour Al-Said, Representative of His Majesty the Sultan of Oman.



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