

Prominent Thai Political Thinkers

A Study of Political Ideas

Thanapol (Lamduan) Chadchaidee M.A., Ph.D.



*Is it not the question of who the Thai political
thinkers are that have been used to judge them.....*



About the author

Born in Suphan Buri Province in 1959 to a family of farmers, Mr Thanapol Chadchaidee, more commonly known under his pen-name of Lamduan Chadchaidee, grew up and received a secondary education in Bangkok, then pursued his higher education in India. After completing his Master degree in Politics and Public Administration with honours in 1986, he returned to Thailand the same year.

After a brief stay with THE NATION newspaper, he then changed jobs to work with a private school as an English teacher for one year. He later joined a Japanese television company, NHK's Bangkok office, as a news translator and moved to the position of Satellite Broadcasting News Chief before his resignation to run his own business in 1998. Later in 2002 he received a Ph. D. in Political Science from the Nehru Institute of Social Sciences (India) after two years of intensive study.

Mr Thanapol has been developing his writing skills since his student days when he wrote many essays that won several awards from an English newspaper, The Student Weekly. Even during his studies in India, he was selected to work on the Editorial Team for the university's magazine.

At present, he takes on five types of work, namely; managing his own publishing company, part-time writing of specialist books, part-time lecturing at Assumption University (ABAC) and full-time Managing Director and Principal of Thanapol Vittaya Language School. He is also a guest speaker for various institutions.

His motto in life is, "I was born a poor child, but I will never die a poor man."



PRIDI-PHOONSUK
ปริดี - ฟูนซุค พมยงค์

www.pridi-phoonsuk.org



ChangeFusion OPENBASE.in.th



เนื้อหาทั้งหมดใน OpenBase ถูกเผยแพร่ภายใต้สัญญาอนุญาต Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike BY NC SA 3.0 Unported License ท่านสามารถนำเนื้อหาทุกชิ้นไปใช้และเผยแพร่ต่อได้ โดยต้องอ้างอิงแหล่งที่มา นำมาไปใช้เพื่อการค้า และต้องใช้สัญญาอนุญาตชนิดเดียวกันนี้เมื่อเผยแพร่ผลงานที่ดัดแปลง เว้นแต่จะระบุเป็นอย่างอื่น

Prominent Thai Political Thinkers

by

Thanapol Chadchaidee M.A., Ph.D.

Published by



Thanapol Vittayakarn Co., Ltd.

Tel. 0-2373-5135, 0-2372-0076

Prominent Thai Political Thinkers

© 2002 by Thanapol Chadchaidee

ISBN 974-7469-80-4

First published in 2002

Distributed by

DK Today Co., Ltd.

90/20-25 Rajaprarob Rd., Rajthevi, Bangkok 10400, Thailand

Tel. 0-2245-5586, 0-2247-1030

Fax. 0-2247-1033, 0-2642-4242

e-mail: tkeeree@mozart.inet.co.th

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission in writing of the author.

Printed at Thai Chareon Press

64-70 Soi Ladprow 107, Ladprow Rd., Klongchan, Bangkok 10240

Tel/Fax : 731-0154-8

Publisher: Mr Smith Prapatsaratit

Foreward

This work of Dr Thanapol Chadchaidee is a revised version of his Ph.D. Thesis entitled “Thai Political Thinkers from 1932-1998” submitted to Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth (Nehru Institute of Social Sciences), Pune, India.

The year 1932 is very important in the history of Thailand. It opened the gates for the democratic political process. The royal courtiers and then existing elite were replaced by a new structure consisting of civil service and military officers. They had a new zeal and set of ideas about the development of Thailand.

Dr Thanapol Chadchaidee has selected to study the process of political change since 1932. He has made the case studies of: 1) the late Dr Pridi Banomyong (1900-1983), 2) the late Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj (1911-1995), 3) Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija (1944-) and 4) former Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai (1938-). These are the key figures in this period. They have made decisive impact on the Thai political system in order to make it more democratic. Dr Thanapol has explained their role in changing the nature of the Thai political process. Dr Thanapol's work is unique and original and perhaps the first of its kind in the academic field of Thailand.

Dr Thanapol has tried his best to give justice to these four key politicians and made an important contribution in this field. I hope that this book will be useful to students and academicians in Thailand as well as abroad. It seems that Dr Thanapol has become a very useful bridge between India and Thailand.

Prof Dr S.R. Kakade

Department of Political Science

Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune

13-2-2002

Preface

The book which you are holding is originally titled “Thai Political Thinkers from 1932-1998”. It is an adapted version of my Ph.D. thesis, submitted to the Nehru Institute of Social Sciences (India) in 2002. The book is aimed at bringing a new dimension of study on the political development in Thailand as a whole. I was aware that it was not easy to do research on a topic which was not familiar to Thai people, but I found it interesting and intriguing.

The study was conducted under the guidance of Prof Dr S.R. Kakade, who was kind enough to devote his attention to my work even at odd hours as many times I rang him from Thailand at night just to consult him about a matter in doubt. Without his kindness and warm support, my research work would have never been completed. I owe him much more than I can render in words. I am greatly indebted to him for writing a Foreword for this book.

At the same time, I am greatly indebted to Dr R. B. Kolhe, Officiating Director of Nehru Institute of Social Sciences, who kindly accepted me as a research student of this prestigious institution and who helped recommend such a well-respected scholar as Prof Dr S.R. Kakade to be my teacher.

I would like to acknowledge my special thanks and appreciation to former Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai for his kindness in permitting me to interview him at Government House though he had a tight schedule, and to Prof Dr Chai-Anan Smudavanija as well as Mr Sala Likitkul for their full cooperation and kindness in allowing me to interview them. Above all, they even gave me a lot of supporting materials for my research work. My personal discussion and *interviews with these three distinguished personalities were of tremendous help as some points had never been raised for discussion before.*

I would like to give my sincere thanks to Dr Chamnong Wongkhong who acted as my coordinator while I was away from India as most of the time of undertaking this research I had to stay in Thailand due to my teaching commitment at Assumption University in Bangkok.

My special thanks are also due to my parents, my wife and my children who always gave me moral support and affectionate encouragement during my research studies. Without their encouragement and patience, my work would remain incomplete.

I sincerely acknowledge the courtesy of the authorities of Libraries such as Library of Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Library of Assumption University, Library of Mahachula Buddhist University and the DK Books centre for their permission to consult the literature.

I remember with particular gratitude my junior friends: Dr Detchat Treesap, Dr Wites Muakdhaisong, Dr Thongpae Chaitontuang and Dr Surat Karaket. Indeed, I am thankful to them all for their constant assistance.

Finally, my special thanks go to Mr Roger Aslin who kindly helped check the English context and to my teaching colleagues at Assumption University for their help in searching for the materials essential for this research work.

Thanapol Chadchaidee

April 2002

Bangkok

THAILAND

Dedicated to
my parents and teachers
whose inspiration has
nurtured my life and
knowledge

Contents

Foreword	I
Preface	II
Abbreviations.....	IX
List of Tables	X
List of Photographs.....	XI
Map of Thailand.....	XII
CHAPTER I: Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER II: Dr Pridi Banomyong	
- Introduction.....	7
- A Brief Biography of Dr Pridi Banomyong.....	7
- The Beginning of his Political Life.....	8
- Pridi's contributions to the country.....	9
- Pridi in exile.....	11
- Conducive Factors for Revolutionary Aspiration.....	13
- Pridi as the ideological leader of the revolutionary group.....	16
- Sun Yat-sen's influence on Pridi.....	19
- Pridi's National Economic Plan.....	22
- Some Observations and Criticism on Pridi's Economic Plan.....	32
- Pridi and his Asian contemporaries.....	39
- Causes of the Revolution of 1932 as conceived by various writers.....	39
- Pridi's Political Ideas.....	41
- Most Thais are unaware of Pridi's Work.....	43
- Latest Development on Pridi.....	44

- Pridi's books become an important part of history of the Thai Kingdom.....	45
- Last Interview of Dr Pridi.....	47

CHAPTER III: M.R. Kukrit Pramoj

- Introduction.....	52
- A Brief Biography of M.R. Kukrit Pramoj.....	53
- The Beginning of his career.....	54
- M.R. Kukrit's Political Career.....	56
- M.R. Kukrit as the Grand guru of Politics.....	62
- M.R. Kukrit as the Pillar of the Thai Democracy.....	65
- Kukrit as a Visionary Leader.....	72
- Some Observations and Criticism on Kukrit's Ideas.....	78
- Kukrit's literary Contribution.....	81
- Thai Politics in Kukrit's View.....	83
- Latest Developments on M.R. Kukrit Pramoj.....	89

CHAPTER IV: Prof Dr Chi-Anan Samudavanija

- Introduction.....	100
- A Brief Biography of Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija.....	101
- His early career.....	102
- Dr Chai-Anan's Contributions and Achievements.....	103
- Chai-Anan's Theory of Three-Dimensional State.....	107
- Mode of Relations between State and Society.....	110
- Type of Relationship.....	111
- Area of Relations.....	117
- Three-Dimensional State.....	117

- Three-Dimensional State in Western Society.....	119
- Theoretical Conclusion.....	120
- Dual Political Situations.....	122
- Three-Dimensional State Analytical Framework.....	123
- Definition of Three-Dimensional State.....	123
- Salient Features of State and Thai Society.....	124
- Three-Dimensional Thai State.....	125
- The Summary of Thai Political Condition in a Democratic Period....	137
- Conclusion of Chai-Anan's Political Theory.....	139
- Chai-Anan as Prophet of Politics.....	140
- Some Observations on Prof Chai-Anan's Political Concept.....	143
- Prof Chai-Anan's Theory of the Vicious Cycle of Thai politics.....	145
- Conclusion.....	148

CHAPTER V: Mr Chuan Leekpai

- Introduction.....	151
- A Brief Biography of Mr Chuan Leekpai.....	154
- Chuan's Political Life and the Democrat Party.....	155
- Chuan's Political Ideas.....	157
- Chuan's Contribution for the Public.....	168
- Chuan is a Prime Minister out of the mainstream.....	176
- Chuan rises to Prime Minister and the Downfall of his first Government.....	182
- Thailand's Economic Crash of 1997.....	185
- The Collapse of Chavalit's Government.....	187

- Chuan's Second Term as Prime Minister.....	188
- Economic and Social Development Policy.....	188
- Chuan's Economic Measures with the IMF's Blessing.....	192
- The year 1999 is a period of hope and a stimulating time for the Thai economy.....	198
- The year 2000 is a period of stability that provides a recovery platform.....	201
- How far has the Chuan II administration succeeded in tackling the economic crisis?.....	203
- Prime Minister Chuan is second in global Cabinet dream team.....	206
- Books that bring troubles to the writers.....	207
- Conclusion.....	209
CHAPTER VI: Conclusion.....	212
References.....	219
Appendix.....	232
Bibliography.....	249

ABBREVIATIONS

AFTA	=	Asean Free Trade Area
CPP	=	Chart Pattana Party
CPT	=	Communist Party of Thailand
DTEC	=	Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation
IMF	=	International Monetary Fund
ISOC	=	Internal Security Operations Command
M.R.	=	Mom Rachawongse (a royal title)
NICS	=	Newly Industrialized Countries
NIDA	=	National Institute of Development Administration
NPKC	=	National Peace Keeping Council
NAP	=	New Aspiration Party
NPLs	=	Non-Performing Loans
SAP	=	Social Action Party
UNESCO	=	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
USAID	=	United States Agency for International Development
USIS	=	United States Information Service
TURA	=	Thai University Research Association

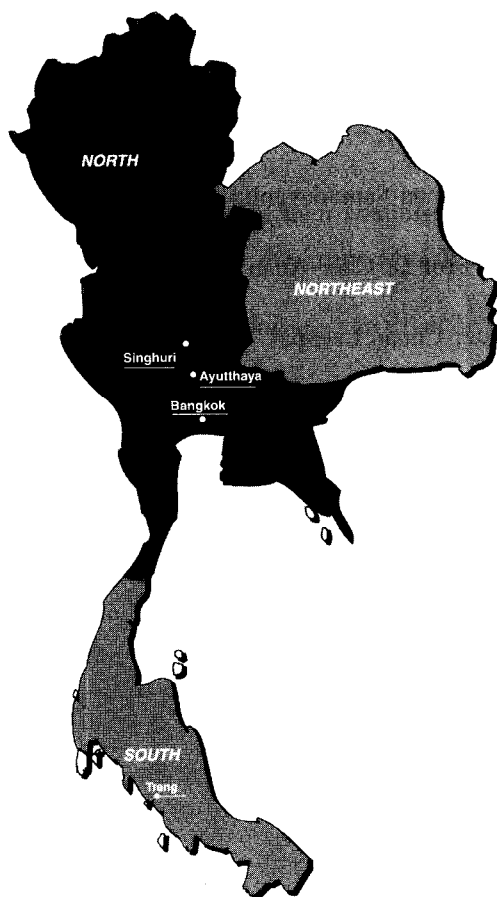
List of Tables

Table No.	Page
1. Number of Prime Ministers classified according to their education	179
2. Number of Prime Ministers classified according to their studies	180
3. Number of Prime Ministers classified according to their age on appointment	180
4. Number of Cabinets and duration of their administration classified according to the political status of the Prime Ministers	181
5. Number of Cabinets and Prime Ministers classified according to their background	181
6. Key 1998 economic targets	197
7. Economic outlook	197
8. 1998 external balance	198
9. Capacity utilisation	202

List of Photographs

Number of Photographs	Page
No.1 : Dr Pridi Banomyong	6
No.2 : M.R. Kukrit Pramoj	50
No.3 : Interviewing Mr Sala Likitkul	51
No.4 : Prof Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija	98
No.5 : Interviewing Prof Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija	99
No.6 : Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai	149
No.7 : Interviewing Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai	150

Thailand



- *Birthplace of four political thinkers*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The politics of Thailand took a very significant turn on 24 June 1932 when a group of young intellectuals, educated abroad and inspired by the concept of Western democracy, staged a bloodless coup, demanding a change from absolute to constitutional monarchy. Determined to avoid any bloodshed, King Rama VII agreed to transfer power to the constitutional-based system of government.

The shift in power marked a watershed in Thai political development. The royal courtiers and existing elite were replaced by a new structure composed of civil service officials and military officers imbued with a new zeal and set of ideas about the directions the country should take¹.

The year 1932 also marked a change in political philosophy that led to the emergence of many prominent political thinkers and four of the thinkers who have made great contributions to the political development in Thailand from 1932 to the present day include the late **Dr Pridi Banomyong (1900–1983)**, the late **former Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj (1911–1995)**, **Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija (1944–Present)** and **former Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai (1938–Present)**. Indeed, they are strong advocates of the democratic system. Their achievement and contributions have helped stimulate political awareness among Thai people to a great extent.

Since the bloodless revolution of 1932, Thailand has been a constitutional monarchy * with the king as the Head of State, and “although the Revolution of 1938 brought an end to Thailand’s many centuries of absolute monarchy, the reverence felt by the Thai people toward their king has been in no way diminished by the curtailments of his political power.”²

It is to be noted that the 1932 constitution, like the current sixteenth, recognised the king as Head of State, Head of the Armed Forces, Upholder of the Buddhist Religion and Upholder of All Religions and sacred and inviolable

**Please see Appendix to Chapter One*

in his person. All constitutions also recognise that the king's sovereign power emanates from the people and is exercised in three ways: legislative power through the National Assembly, executive power through the Cabinet and judicial power through the law courts.³

It is evident that for more than six decades (from 1932 to the present-day), the Thai government has been variously described as a military dictatorship, a quasi-democracy, a military regime and a full democratic government. In fact, prior to the 1996 election, Thailand, under certain administrations, enjoyed a period of unprecedented popular participation in government, but it was just a short period of time as most governments were short-lived and hardly survived a full 4-year term of office.

Since the introduction of constitutional monarchy in 1932, the people have been slowly adapting to the parliamentary system of government. Thus, since 1932 to the present-day, Thailand has had 16 constitutions, 54 governments, 20 elections and 23 Prime Ministers with the latest general election being held on 6 January 2001 and the Thai Rak Thai Party in power. It is to be noted that General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh became Prime Minister in 1996, but he could not survive a four-year term. Due to the public outcry for the change of the administration and the mounting pressure because of the worsening economic crisis, Gen Chavalit stepped down to make way for the second largest party, the Democrats, to form the new government. As a result, Mr Chuan Leekpai again became a Prime Minister to serve the remaining parliamentary term left vacant by Gen Chavalit in 1997. This is the second turn of Mr Chuan as a Prime Minister. He became prime minister for the first time when his party won the election held on 13 September 1992.

At present Thailand is on the right path of democracy and is one of the democratic countries of the world. "Prior to 1932, the king and his privy councillors make all decisions, now the Cabinet, with the Prime Minister as its chairman, fashions national policy though it is subject to approval by the National Assembly. All legislation passed requires the king's approval and signature.

Once done, the act is published in the Royal Gazette, whereupon it becomes law.”⁴

Meanwhile, the discussion is based on the role of the four thinkers and their contributions to the political development in Thailand since 1932 onwards. However, it is quite interesting to note that the first two thinkers, Dr Pridi and M.R. Kukrit, were contemporaries, but while Dr Pridi opposed the absolute monarchy and overthrew it, M.R. Kukrit opposed the military dictators and he succeeded in upholding democracy that was installed by Dr Pridi and his colleagues. Currently, Prof Dr Chai-Anan is a contemporary of Mr Chuan, both of them opposed the military dictators and the authoritarian rulers. Their struggle against the rulers put them in trouble, but they continue to uphold democracy. However, while Prof Chai-Anan has never entered politics, he mostly plays an advisory role to the public, Mr Chuan plays politics and he was successful in preventing the military from political involvement.

To be frank, before the introduction of this topic, nobody in Thailand had ever realised that some Thai academics could be definitely categorised as political thinkers. Thus, the topic seems to be very new to them. As a result of this research it now draws public attention, especially in academic circles in Thailand, to the need to pay greater heed to these political thinkers.

At the same time, it is to be observed that while in India and many other countries there are many political thinkers, in the case of Thailand it is very difficult to point out who deserves such a classification. Besides, it is very interesting to note that while the Indian political thinkers were mostly the freedom fighters who had a strong determination to throw away the foreign yoke, their Thai counterparts struggled to turn the ruling system from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy, and after achieving the desired result they again had to confront the military dictators who controlled the political power for several decades.

However, it is to be noted that all political thinkers discussed in this study are civilians while those who have a military background have been left

out. The reason is that though they deserve the credit, their struggle to power has not been made through democratic channels.

During the period of my intensive study, I have experienced various problems as my topic is a new area of study in Thailand. Thus, it may be right to say that I am the first research student who ventured to proclaim that Thailand has political thinkers similar to that of other countries, but the political concept and the ways and means of their struggle may be different in one way or another.

As a result, problems quite naturally cropped up, for example, shortage of materials for study as in Thailand the number of books and other reading materials is not large in both quality and quantity like India where academic information is easily accessible in both English and Indian languages. In the case of Thailand even though reading materials on specific areas are available, they are mostly written in Thai, and even the thinkers themselves opted to express their thoughts in Thai. This means I had to spend a lot of time on translating their work into English so that further discussions on the topic can be made in a constructive manner.

In addition, it is extremely difficult to have a personal interview with the political thinkers who are still alive as they are very important personalities. Obviously, one of them is the prime minister whom I was fortunate to have an opportunity to interview at Government House. However, in the end I received full cooperation from all of them. Thus, the study has been completed with informative and intriguing information. Difficult though it was, I found the study interesting, encouraging and stimulating to complete within reasonable time.

Hopefully, the research will bring a new dimension of study on Thai political development as a whole. More importantly, it will throw light on the question of who are the Thai political thinkers and what criteria have been used to judge them.

An attempt has been made to explain the political concept and role of Thai political thinkers on the development of political system in Thailand in the following pages.

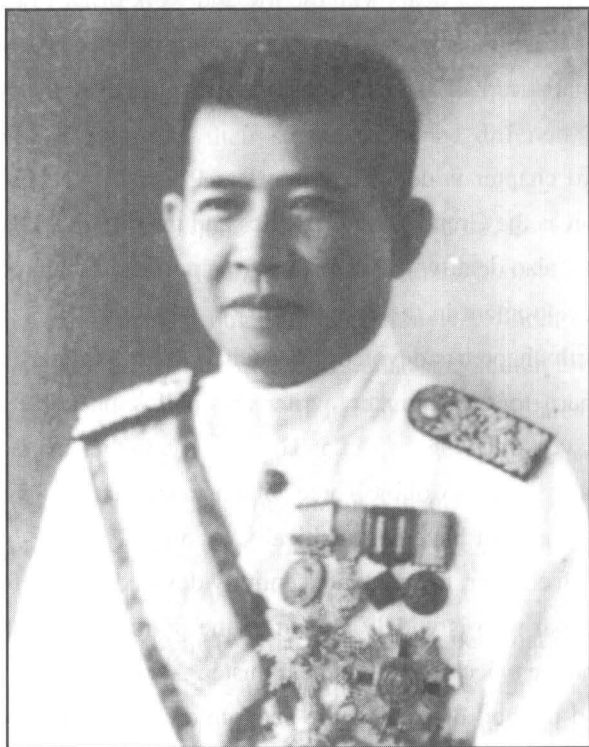
The second chapter deals with the life and work of Dr Pridi Banomyong who dominated Thai politics after the 1932 coup with special emphasis on his innovative socialistic plan for economic development and the well-being of Thai people.

The third chapter is devoted to the late Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj who was known as the Grand guru of politics and the pillar of Thai democracy. This chapter has also dealt with his leading role and significant contribution to the political development in the country.

The fourth chapter is devoted to Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija who is a reputed and sharp-tongued thinker, writer and philosopher. He is one of the thinkers who have earned the respect of Thai society. In the chapter, his political concept especially his theory of the Three Dimensional-State and his contribution to political development have been critically examined.

In the fifth chapter, the content is entirely devoted to the life and work of Mr Chuan Leekpai who is widely known as the politician with honey-coated razor tongue and the twice-elected prime minister. Also mentioned in the chapter are his role and method of solving the economic crisis in his second term of office. At the same time, we will find that his humble background is not an obstacle to his political achievement.

The last chapter is the conclusion of the entire study and it aptly provides the summary of the entire research work and also dwells upon the political concept and the role being played by Thai political thinkers for the development of political system in Thailand as a whole. Meanwhile, a comparison between Indian and Thai political thinkers has been made so that it will help pave the way for further research and studies in this field.



Pridi Banomyong as a Regent
during 1941-1945

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

DR PRIDI BANOMYONG (1900–1983)

Dr Pridi Banomyong or known under his official title granted by the King as “Luang Pradist Manudharm” was the 7th Prime Minister of Thailand and one of the great political thinkers of the country as he was the one who formed the group of intellectuals that staged Thailand’s first modern coup in 1932, creating a constitutional monarchy in the Thai kingdom without bloodshed.

Today Dr Pridi is known among the Thais as **“the late revolutionary statesman”, “The Father of Thai Democracy”, and “a three-time Prime Minister.”** Above all, recently his name has been included in UNESCO’s list of anniversaries of Great Personalities and Historic Events for the year 2000. The late prime minister and senior statesman was recognised for his struggle to bring about democracy and promote freedom, human rights and peace.

A Brief Biography of Dr Pridi Banomyong

His early life

Pridi Banomyong was born on 11 May 1900 in Ayutthaya Province, the former capital of Thailand. He was the eldest son of a farming family. His father was Siang and his mother was Lukchan. “He went to normal Thai schools and finally studied law at the Law School which was under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice. After his graduation with the degree of Barrister-at-Law, he practised law and finally entered the Ministry of the Interior as a junior official in the Department of Penitentiaries. In 1920 he won a government scholarship given by the Ministry of Justice to further his studies in France, where he received the degree of Doctor of Law and a high degree in Economics.”¹ Pridi was the first Thai to earn this appellation. In November 1928, a year after returning to Thailand, Pridi married Miss Phoonsuk Na Pombejra. They had six children.

The Beginning of his Political Life

At the time of his studies abroad, Pridi was very popular among Thai students who studied in France and other European countries. In February 1927, Pridi and six other Thai students and civil servants: namely, Prayoon Phamonmontri, Lt. Luang Pibul Songkram, Lt. Luang Tasnai Niyomseuk, Mr Tua Laphanukrom, Mr Nab Phaholyothin and Luang Siri Rajmaitri, who all later became the core of the People's Party, and held a historic meeting in France. "They vowed to transform the Thai system of governance from absolute monarchy to a constitutional one." The group elected Pridi as the temporary leader of the revolutionary group which later adopted the name of "The People's Party". As their guiding stars, the People's Party laid down the so-called "Six Principles" to put Thailand on the road to spiritual and material progress:

1. To maintain absolute national independence in all aspects,
including political, judicial and economic;
2. To maintain national cohesion and security;
3. To promote economic well being by creating full employment
and by launching a national economic plan;
4. To guarantee equality to all;
5. To grant complete liberty and freedom to the people, provided
that this does not contradict the aforementioned principles; and
6. To provide education to the people.³

Later in 1927, Pridi returned to Thailand and joined the Ministry of Justice where he served as judge and subsequently as assistant secretary to the Juridical Department. Indeed, the 1932 Revolution opened the avenue for him to realise his vision of a better and more just society.

At dawn on 24 June 1932, the People's Party, consisting of government officials, military officers, and ordinary civilians rapidly and bloodlessly took control of the government, changing it from absolute to democratic, constitutional monarchy and installing the 1932 provisional constitution as the supreme law of the land. Pridi, the civilian leader of the People's Party, was the progenitor of this provisional constitution.⁴

It can be said that the 1932 provisional constitution helped to plant the seeds of the Thai democracy as it served as a solid and fertile foundation for the growth and development of democracy in the country. "It introduced two fundamental, hitherto unknown ingredients to Thai society and culture: 1. the supreme power rests with all Thai people; and 2 there must be a clear separation of legislative, executive, and judicial powers."⁵

It is often said that the Revolution of 1932 was born in France but nurtured in Thailand. This statement is true in the sense that the idea to carry out the revolution came first from the Thai students who were studying in France during the 1920's and who later constituted the junior faction of the revolutionary group. It is to be noted that the real formation of the revolutionary group did not take shape until late in 1931 when the young officers in the military and civil services were able to persuade the senior officers in the army to join the plot.⁶ Thus, the formation and composition of the Revolutionary Group comprised the junior faction led by Pridi Banomyong and the senior faction led by Phya Phahol Pholpayuha Sena (Pote Phaholyothin).

PRIDI'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COUNTRY

Between 1933 and 1947 Pridi held many significant positions, including Minister of Interior, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Finance, Regent of the King and the Prime Minister for three consecutive times. King Prajadhipok (Rama VIII) officially appointed him "Senior Statesman" for life. "Among his notable accomplishments, some of them having long-term impacts, are:

1. the drafting of the nation's first economic plan, a radical scheme for the reorganisation of the economic system;
2. the founding of the University of Moral and Political Science (Thammasat University);
3. The 1933 Municipality Act which allowed the people to elect their own local governments;

4. the revocation of unequal treaties that Thailand had been forced to sign with foreign powers;
5. the reformation of the unfair tax system;
6. the compilation of the country's first revenue code; and
7. the founding of what ultimately became the Bank of Thailand.”⁷

In addition, Pridi has been credited with writing the provisional constitution of June 1932. He also worked on the drafting of the “permanent” Constitution of 1932 (It came into force on 10 December 1932.) Again, Pridi was the architect of the 1946 constitution which has been considered as one of the most democratic in Thai history.

During the Second World War and during the administration of the Pibulsongkram Government, once the Japanese had invaded and briefly occupied Thailand, even as Regent, Pridi clandestinely led the Free Thai Movement to resist such action. In recognition of the brave cooperation and assistance rendered by this movement, the US government subsequently recognised Thailand as an independent country.⁸

Pridi's own courageous contribution was generously acknowledged by the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia Command, Lord Louis Mountbatten. Pridi's stand for freedom was an example of great moral courage, both in the face of a cruel enemy and in the teeth of political opposition within his own country.⁹ Thus, on 16 August 1945, on the advice of Lord Louis Mountbatten, as Regent and Leader of the Free Thai Movement, Pridi declared the Pibulsongkram Government's declaration of war null and void on the Allies reasoning that it was against the will of the Thai people.

Pridi in exile

It is to be noted that Pridi's political involvement took a heavy toll on his life and family. His life often went up and down as can be seen from his political career which was marked by two periods of exile. The first followed the unveiling of the economic plan for the country in 1933 as Pridi sought to resolve Thailand's crisis with an economic plan which included proposals for nationalising all agriculture and commerce. Pridi himself called his most controversial masterpiece as "Scientific Democratic Socialism" which will be critically assessed at the end of this chapter.

As a result of unveiling his economic plan, he was branded as anti-monarchist and a communist by the right-wing military men then in power. He left for France at the Government's request, but came back the next year to face an inquiry into his alleged communism. He was exonerated and, shortly after, as the new Interior Minister, he introduced a law banning communism in the country.

Then followed his permanent exile as a result of a tragic event that suddenly stung the country. The event thus led to his second period of exile which never permitted him to return to his motherland alive. Meanwhile, a local newspaper described what happened in the following words.

"On 9 June 1946 a bullet from a Colt. 45 pistol ended the life of His Majesty King Ananda Mahidol. That same bullet was to start a controversy which finally drove Pridi Banomyong from Thailand, to which he was never to return alive."¹⁰

The fact is that on 9 June 1946, the young King Ananda Mahidol (Rama VIII) was found mysteriously dead in his chamber with a bullet in his forehead. After visiting the palace and the scene and having consulted with the leading members of the Royal Family, as Prime Minister, Pridi publicly declared this an "accident". Intending to undermine his popularity and power, Pridi's political opponents opportunistically trumpeted that the King was murdered and that Pridi was involved in the regicide.¹¹

On the night of 8 November 1947, a group of military leaders and civilians staged a coup d'état, using the regicide as one of the pretexts to destroy Pridi. (Numerous court decisions have since proven Pridi innocent.) Their tanks stormed Pridi's residence in Bangkok, forcing him to flee to Singapore. On 26 February 1949, Pridi, aided by a number of naval officers and Thais who favoured a democratic government, unsuccessfully staged a counter-coup. Once again, he was banished from Thailand—this time never to return. Between 1949 and 1970, Pridi resided in China. He then lived an ordinary life joined by his wife and daughters in the suburbs of Paris. There he died peacefully on 2 May 1983 of heart failure.¹² Following nearly 40 years of political exile, his ashes returned home 3 years after his death on 7 May 1986. His death was an irreparable loss to the nation.

Prior to his death, Pridi often expressed the desire to “go back and die in Thailand.” But he said that before coming back to Thailand he would have to “wait for circumstances when the majority of the people understand that I am innocent.” Now, only nine days before his 83rd birthday, this last wish has been denied him.¹³

Today Pridi is always remembered as:

- a progressive political leader of the 1932 Revolution,
- leader of the Free Thai Movement,
- former Prime Minister,
- a member of the Council of Regents,
- a visionary thinker,
- the founder of Thammasat University and
- the architect of the 1946 Constitution.

While in exile, Pridi wrote profusely and gave numerous speeches, continuing to share with later generations his conceptions of democracy, peace and social justice. The seeds of democracy that Pridi planted in Thailand more than six decades ago are beginning to sprout. Whether or not his tree of liberty will continue to grow and branch out, to some extent, depends on how the

Thais apply and learn from his visions.¹⁴

It might be possible that time was not ripe at that time for most Thais to accept Pridi's visionary ideas which later have been applied to the country's administration. In this way, Pridi has made a tremendously valuable sacrifice for the betterment of the country, though such contributions took a heavy toll on his life and his family members who bore no grudges against their fellow countrymen.

Conducive Factors for Revolutionary Aspiration

Before analysing Pridi's economic plan, it would be appropriate to study the root causes of the 1932 Revolution first. One of the first and foremost factors is the impact of Westernization in various forms. Thus, it is said, "the absolute regime itself had long been paving the way for its own destruction",¹⁵ as numerous works regarding basic changes were made during the reign of King Mongkut or Rama IV (1851-1868), for example, education by Western teachers was introduced, Western experts and advisers were employed at the court and in the administration.

As a result, even the princes and sons of high officials who learned foreign history and languages were able to comprehend the political and social implications of Western-type modernisation.¹⁶ Therefore, it is right to say that the King's far-sighted concept had laid the essential groundwork for a successful bloodless coup, without which it might take many more years to accomplish or, otherwise, bring a bloody revolution that dragged on for a long time as experienced in some other countries.

The impelling need for modernisation became apparent in the reign of King Chulalongkorn or Rama V (1868-1910), who initiated a sweeping administrative reorganisation, the abolition of slavery, a new system of communications and education, and other reforms.¹⁷ Through these periods, efforts had been made to move the country along Western lines, as the wave of the democratic tide and popular revolution in China and Russia might pose a danger to the absolute regime.

During the first decade of the 20th century a group of military officers in Thailand under King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) also became aware of the political and social implications of such a revolution and the anachronistic nature of the Thai absolute monarchy. Resenting the luxury of the Court and some high officials who rose to powerful positions because of their genius for flattery or dancing talent, a group of 91 men, mostly junior army and navy officers together with one civilian in the Ministry of Justice, plotted to overthrow the then absolute government. Their plot was revealed to the government because of the treachery of one member, and all of them were arrested on 27 February 1912, before they had a chance to act.¹⁸

Meanwhile, another major factor inspiring the June Revolution stemmed from the economic crisis and financial difficulties of the absolute government. King Prajadhipok or Rama VII began his reign at an unenviable juncture of both Thai and world history. The global economic depression of the late 1920's and early 1930's forced the Thai government to make economies, measures which led to some discontent.¹⁹ It is to be noted that under King Vajiravudh, the country had for the first time, as a result of his lavish spending, experienced deficits in the national budget. From 1913 to 1925, annual expenditures increased over 50%, while revenues gained by only 25%; and from 1922 to 1926, the government had successive deficits in the budgets.²⁰

The world depression, however, had little impact upon the masses of the people. While the country had embarked upon an exchange economy, the actual commercial transactions centered mainly in major cities and towns. The bulk of the country people were more or less economically self-sufficient, and they satisfied most of their wants from their farms and neighbouring forests.²¹

Though many people put the blame on the world depression as one of the major factors contributing to the unrest amongst the intellectual circles that soon led to the overthrow of the absolute monarchy in June 1932, some people urged that the retrenchment scheme imposed by the absolute government was not the main cause of the revolution. As we have seen, the idea of carrying out

the revolution had been conceived by the revolutionary leaders long before the economic crisis. Nor were the status and the security of the promoters of the revolution in the least affected by retrenchment, because all enjoyed secure positions. It merely had a bearing on the timing of their action. When the world depression hit the country, their golden opportunity came.²²

Last but not least, the significant favourable factor which inspired the revolutionary aspiration can be said of the cooperative spirit and kind-hearted nature of King Prajadhipok. Pridi himself seemed to know about this very well as can be seen from the appeal his father made to the King when he was in conflict with Prince Charoonsakdi, the Thai Minister to Paris, who advised the government to call Pridi back home before he could even complete his doctorate degree. At first, the King agreed to the request, but on second thoughts changed his mind.

It was thought that the revolutionary group which staged the 1932 coup might face an uphill task or even fail if it were not because of the King's peaceful nature and his inclination towards constitutional government. He was a benevolent monarch who wished for the prosperity and modernisation of his nation more than the preservation of his own power. His reluctance to become an absolute monarch was clearly shown after his accession to the Throne. He said that he was not well prepared to be King.²³ The untimely death of King Vajiravudh in 1925 left no alternative for him but to succeed his brother to the throne since King Vajiravudh had no male heir.

In fact, prior to the 1932 Revolution the King planned to inaugurate representative government by handing the people a constitution on 6 April 1932, the date on which the country would celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Chakri dynasty. Unfortunately his plan was strongly opposed by his advisors and the ruling elite especially Prince Boripat who expected to become the next absolute monarch. As it turned out, to postpone the constitution was a great mistake for the absolute regime as it intensified the resentment among the counter-elite against the royal monopoly of power.

For several reasons, tired of the whole state of affairs throughout his reign as a constitutional monarch, he decided to abdicate on 2 March 1935 at his residence in England where he went to receive an eye operation and lived in self-imposed exile there until his death in 1941. Some sources said, “his abdication is due to the feeling that he could no longer cooperate with the People’s Party in a constructive way.”²⁴

Pridi as the ideological leader of the revolutionary group

“Pridi Banomyong began life with no gifts from the gods. In his early childhood, he struggled for education and it was by sheer hard work alone that he won a scholarship to study law in Paris. As one of the leaders in the original coup of June 1932, he is responsible for the unbelievable progress attained by modern Thailand.”²⁵

Pridi, a bright young student, was politically aware from the age of only 12. As his son, Sookprida Banomyong, once recounted: “He(Pridi) told me he was listening to a group of soldiers in Ayutthaya (Pridi’s native town) discussing plans and ideas against the existing authorities, and suddenly he thought that what they were talking about really made sense.”²⁶

Though he was politically aware from the very beginning, Pridi always held the King in high respect and was loyal to him. Thus, at the time of consolidating his political ideas, among various types of the governing system, Pridi advocated a constitutional monarchy as he wanted to maintain “the King as the symbol of the country.”²⁷

Meanwhile, the living conditions of Thai people had hardly changed, though the 20th century had already begun. People still had no right to vote or any share in the administration of the country. They remained poor, backward and were illiterate. Majority of them had to rely on a primitive type of agriculture. Dissatisfied with the existing situation, a group of junior army and navy officers with one civilian plotted to overthrow the absolute government of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI). Unfortunately, the plot ended in a disaster due to the

treachery of one member. All of them were arrested and punished. They did fail, but it set an inspiring model for the new group which inclined towards democracy to follow suit and it succeeded, but twenty years later (June 1932).

Pridi himself was grown up amidst changing situations in the country and he experienced with the real life situation of poor farmers whose problem became an uphill task for the absolute government to solve. Pridi once recounted the problem of farmers he saw at his young age “even though the farmers have to suffer from natural calamities such as diseases, drought, floods as well as illness and cattle theft, the land owners still have no sympathy on them, they collected land rental fees as fixed, thus farmers face hardship, the land owners seized their property including their remaining rice to eat and the rice seeds for planting in the next season.”²⁸

It cannot be denied that being aware of this age-old problem at young age, Pridi was inspired to change Thai society for the better. But first he had to equip himself with good education before launching his big plan which cast some doubts in the mind of some people as to why he had to initiate the revolution. Some accused Pridi that, “he initiated the revolution because of his hatred of the royal class, this hatred stemming from his bitter experience with a royal prince during his studies in Paris”. An examination of the fact reveals that Pridi had determined to carry out the revolution long before his quarrel with Prince Charoonsakdi, the unpopular minister in Paris who attempted to maintain strict control over the Thai students. Impatient with the anachronistic rule in his home country, Pridi had planned in Paris with a few of his friends to overthrow the absolute regime. As evidence of his preparation for this task, he is said to have associated with many Annamese students in France who also sought to overthrow the French yoke in their land.²⁹

It is evident that Pridi had had his first taste of political activity since studying in France, and “he played an increasing role when he was elected as president of the association of the Thai students in France. This position, of course, gave him an excellent opportunity to spread his revolutionary ideas

and to instil political awareness into his Thai friends who later played a part in the June 1932 Revolution.”³⁰

It can be said that Pridi was also influenced by his French professors who taught him the administrative system particularly about the “State” and the “Duty of the State” which gave new ideas to him. Pridi himself was interested not only in Law but in Economics as well. While studying in France, he kept himself informed of the situations in Thailand and he even took some cases taking place in Thailand to compare with that of some other countries which had already changed the political and economic system. If he had some doubts about it, he frequently consulted his professors.³¹

Meanwhile, some made an observation that Pridi’s analysis of the revolution reflects some Marxist tenets, especially his acceptance of Marxist historical materialism as Pridi maintained that the major aim of the revolution was to effect a change in productive relations. To him, under the new regime the people were recognised by the Constitution as the source of sovereignty, and thereby they became the owners of all lands. Pridi further said that the change of productive relations between the landlords and the peasants in the sense that it changed the old system from one resembling serfdom in a feudal society to one based on landlord-tenant relationships in capitalist societies.³²

Pridi, however, denied that he was a dogmatic Marxist as his idea was to combine all good elements of every philosophy. This claim was supported by his son who wrote in the preface of a book he published, “My father prefers a mixture of different theories which can be applied to the real conditions of Thai society. He refuses to adopt the whole set of principles of any particular theory.”³³

Certainly, Pridi had a brilliant mind, but the 1932 Revolution cannot be regarded as achieving the desired result envisaged by Pridi since it was merely a political revolution which was not followed by the economic and social revolution. Even before the revolution, Pridi made known to his revolutionary partners that he wanted to change the system so as to bring about a change in

the economic and social life of the nation and if there was no such change, the revolution “would just only replace the system of one king with a system of many kings.”³⁴ Though his ideas became the dogma of many members of the coup, especially among the civilian colleagues, it was opposed by the army. They took part in the revolution because they were frustrated by the old regime and they wanted the country to progress. This issue of ideological differences will be discussed later while dealing with the issue on Pridi’s Economic Plan.

Sun Yat-sen’s influence on Pridi

It is noteworthy that in order to analyse Pridi’s Economic Plan in depth, we should, first of all, find out whose ideas influenced Pridi. Indeed, “Although Pridi has never revealed the origin of his idea as embodied in the Provisional Constitution, it cannot be denied that his idea was, in fact, a modified version of Sun Yat-sen’s theory of a three-stage revolution. One of the most striking similarities between their ideas lies in the fact that both emphasised the necessity of political tutelage by the party, or, to be exact, party dictatorship.”³⁵

Brilliant as he was, Pridi as the author of the 1932 Provisional Constitution and later the author of a radical economic plan, was under the influence of Dr Sun Yat-sen of China and some other revolutionary ideas which will be discussed later. As a matter of fact, during the early days before the revolution, Pridi must have learnt lessons from the Chinese Revolution of 1911 and the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Therefore, soon after the 1932 Revolution Pridi assured foreign countries through diplomatic channels that the new revolutionary government would protect the lives and interests of foreign nationals and would continue to respect existing treaties with foreign powers and other international obligations. This indicates that Pridi had kept himself well informed of political development around him and at the same time took some ideas of foreign revolutionary leaders to be applied to suit situations in Thailand. Of course, Pridi never revealed the origin of his ideas, but he was ready to combine good elements of many philosophies as mentioned earlier.

Meanwhile, Pridi's idea of a three-stage political development can be classified as; a period of military rule, a period of political tutelage, and a period of constitutional government respectively. His idea as such seems to be parallel to Sun's theory of a three-stage revolution that emphasised party dictatorship which in turn "appears to be similar to that of Lenin, it cannot be claimed, however, that Sun borrowed the idea from Lenin, since Sun had already envisaged such a system as early as 1905 in the manifesto of T'ung Meng Hui. Sun's idea was at best a modified version of the Marxist dictatorship of the proletariat. Again, even Marx himself had never explicitly set down the idea of party dictatorship. It is Lenin who gave a new interpretation of Marxist dictatorship of the proletariat. Hence, it can be concluded that Pridi's idea of party political tutelage was a borrowing from Sun's theory rather than from Marxist-Leninist political philosophy."³⁶

It is apparent that after the successful revolution of 1932, the new regime as outlined in the Provisional Constitution was far from being a facsimile of any particular foreign system. It was composed by borrowing of concepts from many different sources, such as its goal of a Western-type political democracy, its theory of three-stage development, including the idea of indirect voting, examination of political aspirants, and the emphasis on popular education, as a replica of Sun Yat-sen's idea, and its organisational structure as a modified version of some Soviet and Chinese organisations.³⁷ Though Pridi was educated in Europe, his ideas were influenced by sources outside Europe as well. Even then Dr Nakharin Mektrairat, a historian, praised Pridi Banomyong as a prime example of a visionary leader in Asia, putting him among the likes of Mahatma Gandhi and Ho Chi Minh. Pridi appeared on the political scene and promoted some revolutionary ideas. He was a leader that Thailand could be proud of.³⁸

It is to be noted that Pridi's educational background—he spent a number of years studying in France—has led others to assume his political ideology was a product of Western thinking. However, Mr Santisukh Sophonsiri, a well-respected Buddhist scholar, disagrees, saying that in Pridi's book, *Pridi*

Banomyong and the Thai Mode of Intellectual Creativity, a lot of evidence indicates the young Pridi had demonstrated his yearning for equality for all right from his youth in the Kingdom of Siam. Pridi was only 19 when he successfully intervened in a case in which a civilian was charged with destruction of royal property. Mr Santisukh added that the culture of democracy has long been part and parcel of Buddhism and the Thai way of life. Take, for example, the tradition of rural villagers voting for their own temple abbot, or the systematic rotation of labour to help one another during harvesting season. Pridi, as a farmer's son, would have long witnessed democratic rural life, and state suppression, as he grew up in Ayutthaya Province, his hometown and also part of the rice belt of Thailand.

At the same time, another scholar, Mrs Sudjai said the more she has researched Pridi's works, the greater her remorse has been—until recently, Pridi was a figure shrouded in a mist of accusations, be they the regicide charge, or that of communist inclinations. Would Thailand have seen its greater days were Pridi able to implement his visionary ideas? In an interview he gave in exile, the statesman conceded his lack of experience when in power. Understanding of the treacherous world of politics, however, only came when he was pushed out from the seat of authority, forever.

But there is still more Thai society could learn from him. Mr Santisukh cited several ideas Pridi proposed years ago. Many are starting to materialise, such as the election of the senate, decentralisation of administration, and social insurance system.³⁹

Pridi's National Economic Plan

After a period of peaceful political transformation and the stability of the new regime, Pridi's hope for progressive economy of the country had never faded from his mind. To him, the June 1932 Revolution was not a coup d'état, but an economic revolution. This indicates that Pridi gave top priority to the revolution on the management of the economic system of the country and his commitment towards the promise made in the third of the Six Principles in the manifesto of the People's Party declared on 24 June 1932, "We must improve the economic well-being of the people. The new government will find employment for everyone and will devise a new economic framework whereby the people will not be left to starve or go hungry."

"The National Economic Policy written by Pridi was Thailand's first real attempt to come up with a comprehensive national socio-economic plan. It reflects Pridi's visionary political insights and firm understanding of democracy: the liberty and equality promised by political democracy are meaningless without first achieving some sort of economic democracy; that is, economic democracy is a prerequisite for realising the rule by the ordinary people. In other words, without economic democracy the rich and the powerful—a handful of individuals—will dominate the political scene and society."⁴⁰

At the same time, before looking into the essence of the economic plan we should first understand that after the "Permanent" Constitution came into force on 10 December 1932, the members of the People's Committee resigned to allow for the formation of the State Council (The Cabinet) and Phya Manopakorn was elected as Prime Minister to head the 19 Cabinet members. Thus, a period from June 1932 to March 1933, the government was under the leadership of Phya Manopakorn Nitithada whose government was more conservative than revolutionary in its outlook and policy. Pridi, the brain of the revolution, reminded the government of the promise made in the Six Principles. As a result, Pridi was assigned to draw up an economic plan which, as told by

Pridi, was to be based on a mixture of different theories, such as socialism, liberalism and the idea of cooperatives.

The members of the National Assembly were full of expectations, and even King Prajadhipok himself was eager to see such an economic programme. Late in February 1933, Pridi finished his draft of the economic plan which was composed of 11 parts⁴¹ which can be summed up as follows; in **the Preamble** itself Pridi stated, "My conclusion is not the result of my adherence to any particular social philosophy. I have borrowed elements of value from various systems whenever I found in them something appropriate to Thailand. These ideas I have organised into a co-ordinated policy." Then in **Part I (The original proclamation of the People's Party)**, Pridi further said, "The new government promises to promote the economic welfare of its citizens by providing remunerative employment for everyone and by promulgating a national economic policy designed to end poverty. My one paramount aim and purpose in furthering the revolution was to promote the welfare of our people. Essentially my concern was not to replace a single monarch with a multiplicity of monarchs, which constitutes the external semblance of a democracy. I was resolved above all else to do just this one thing: "to advance the welfare of our people." In **Part II (Instability of the present economic system)**, Pridi said, "The uncertainties of existence are not confined to the poor alone. The people of the middle and wealthy classes are subject to the same uncertainties. There are many examples of families of wealth who in a generation became poor. The inheritance left to a son melts away and is gone, and the once rich heir becomes poor." This indicates Pridi did not trust in the then economic system which was full of uncertainties.

To bring about certainty to the people, Pridi proposed social insurance in **Part III (Social Insurance)** which stated, "... all persons who are citizens by birth are to be insured by the government so that from birth to death, regardless of whether they are children, are ill or crippled, or incapacitated for work, they will have food, clothing, and shelter, in other words, the necessities of life."

To Pridi, it was beyond the scope of privately operated companies to issue such insurance as this. Or if they did so people had to pay a heavy premium for the protection. Meanwhile, in **Part IV (Labour waste and social parasites)**, Pridi pointed out that the Thai peasants worked in the field not more than six months out of the year while the remaining period was wasted. So if there was a way to utilise the wasted six months in productive activity, the prosperity of the people would be increased. Pridi also cited several reasons of labour waste, e.g. labour was wasted because of unsatisfactory economic administration, because each worked for himself, not in a co-operative method, and above all, machinery was not used. To him, machinery was necessary as Thai people were slight in body, not as strong as Chinese and foreigners, but again machinery was a curse if it was not under the control of the government since it would lead to unemployment because in the competitive methods of private enterprise, it was customary for factories which needed only a hundred employees to release the nine hundred unneeded workers. In contrast to the government control, the extra nine hundred people laid off after the installation of machinery would be reemployed immediately in a new project such as a sugar mill, silk factory or road construction etc. If machinery was not used we would lag farther and farther behind other nations. Again Pridi added, "when the government administers the whole economic system by establishing co-operative societies, aside from solving the labour question it makes it easier to secure capital to buy machinery from foreign countries by imposing indirect tax which will be collected in amount not affecting the poor." At that of Part IV, Pridi said, "Labour is wasted because of social parasites. In Thailand some people are born social parasites, dependent upon other people for support. They do not engage in any economic enterprise even though they are well able to work. They depend upon others for food, clothing, and shelter." To Pridi, there was no method better than government control of the economic system, because the government could require all people to work and could make social parasites become producers for the good of the nation.

Part V deals with the method by which the government secures land, labour and capital, here Pridi maintained that the government had to use legal methods and in addition had to depend upon the co-operation of both the poor and the rich to accomplish its aim. The government had to take care of the wealthy class also. To him, at present landowners received inadequate returns since they could not collect the full rent from those to whom they leased their lands, and actually paid out more in taxes than they received. Thus, if the government were to offer to buy the land at a fair price, the farmers, the landowners, and the creditors would be delighted. But the method to be used in purchasing the land was far different from the communistic one of expropriation. To Pridi, at present the government did not have in its possession sufficient reserve funds to purchase the land, but the government could issue bonds to the landowners to the amount of the value of their land. The kind of land to be purchased included all productive areas such as fields and gardens, and no need to buy residential sections unless the owners wished to exchange their property for government bonds.

As a result, when the government bought all the land it was equivalent to saying that all of the citizens were landowners, because they became shareholders in the great corporation which was the government. In finding employment, Pridi suggested that it was the nature of the Thai people to like to work for the government, that was to desire to exchange their services for a regular government salary. This characteristic was obvious to everyone, then **there would be no difficulty in enlisting the entire nation as government employees.** But this did not mean that such employees would merely sit at desk keeping books and giving orders. All economic projects under government control would be called government service. The government would next decree that all persons between the ages of 18 and 55 were to be employed in various projects according to their education, strength, and abilities. Beyond the age of 55 they would be eligible for pensions for the rest of their lives. Before the age of 18 they would be expected to attend school and do such light work as they

were able. All employees would be entitled to receive salaries from the government or the co-operative societies. These salaries would necessarily vary according to education, strength and abilities. But the minimum salary would be adequate for the purchase of the necessities of life such as food, clothing, and shelter, etc.

At the same time, Pridi pointed out that it would not be necessary for the government to compel everyone to become a government employee. There would probably be exceptions made for well-to-do people and others who objected to entering government employ, preferring to earn an independent living; provided, of course, they could prove their ability to so do even in sickness and old age as well as to assure their children of proper education and support. To him, an individual could successfully engage in certain types of private enterprise, as, for instance, the independent professions of author, doctor, lawyer, special teacher, etc. Again, in the case of factories already operating under private ownership, permission would be granted to continue to do so, if the owners did not wish to enter government service, they could exchange their properties for interest-bearing bonds issued by the government, the interest from which would yield them a living. Or again, persons engaged in certain types of trade and agriculture might be granted permission to engage in private enterprise when it had been shown that they could support themselves satisfactorily. Thus, when all of the people were in government employ, the government could require them to study the arts and crafts in their spare time, or could drill them as soldiers, thus lessening the time they had to normally spend as conscripts in the army.

Regarding the raising of Capital, Pridi proposed that the government would need two kinds of capital for administering the economic system; namely:

1. Capital to be invested in machinery and manufactured products which the government could not as yet produce.
2. Capital for the payment of wages.

The government were to establish a national bank where the government employees would bring their money to the bank for deposit. That was, the people would become the creditors of the government to the amount deposited.

As he himself opposed to the expropriation of property, thus, in securing the needed capital, Pridi suggested the following ways:

(1) Through the collection of such taxes as inheritance taxes, income taxes, or indirect taxes which took only an infinitesimal sum per day from each citizen. Other indirect taxes were the sugar tax, tobacco tax, and match tax, etc.

(2) Through lotteries, although lotteries were a form of gambling. To Pridi, they had no moral implications.

(3) Borrowing within the country. Internal loans could in all probability be raised by co-operation within the wealthy class.

(4) Or, if the government could not float loans abroad, it might be able to arrange to buy machinery abroad on the instalment plan, as other nations had been able to do.

Part VI deals with the balancing of the government budget, and in balancing the budget within the nation, Pridi proposed the system of compensation, saying that the wages of the people were to be debited for the amounts spent on the necessities of life purchased from the government. That meant that the government would have to provide these necessities in abundance, in order that the people in turn might purchase them from the government. If month by month and year by year the people saved their money, they would save it in order to spend it in the future for things which they still had to buy from the government. So the balance of the financial system of the money was assured.

Regarding the balance of foreign trade, Pridi said that the government would inevitably have to contract debts abroad to finance purchase of machinery and other manufactured products which could not be produced here. Thus, every effort had to be made to increase the native products so that there would

be a surplus, beyond what was required for internal consumption, which could be exported for sale abroad. To him, it was unnecessary to import, only necessities were to be imported, for instance, we imported food, sugar, cloth, etc. The government was to produce all articles now imported which could be manufactured here. The money derived from our foreign trade could be applied on purchases of machinery which we could not yet produce. Above all, Pridi stressed, "The administration must not reduce mankind to the level of animals. I want man to be more of a man than he is at present, harassed by the worries and anxieties implicit in the competitive system of private enterprise. I reverence the family. I do not make women common property. I honour very deeply the ties of kinship which exist between grandfathers and grandmothers, fathers and mothers, and their descendants. The marriage laws will not be repealed. The people are to continue to have their own homes, the only difference being that the homes will be better homes." Pridi also assured his critics that scientists would be encouraged to continue their programmes of research by rewards offered by the government.

Part VII deals with the establishment of co-operative societies.

According to Pridi, it was impossible for the central government to oversee and direct every individual project. Thailand was a great nation with a population of more than 11 millions of people. It thus would be necessary to sub-divide the administration of the economic system into units for co-operative societies. Each co-operative society would accept members who would be entitled to receive monthly wages according to the established wage scale, in turn for which they would be expected to work for the society to the best of their ability. If they were incapacitated by illness, old age, or physical disfigurement, they would be entitled to pensions. The co-operative societies would administer the units of the national economic plan. Thus the agricultural societies would be responsible for farming and gardening, cattle raising, etc. The size of the society would be determined by the size of the trade.

Pridi maintained that the members ~~of the co-operative~~ societies would be expected to unite to accomplish their share of the sum total of economic endeavour, as follows:

1. The government would supply land and capital. The members of the society would supply the labour and assume responsibility for production.
2. The members of the societies were to assume responsibility for the merchandising and distribution of the products which they produce, under the guidance and direction of the central government.
3. The societies were to assume the responsibility of providing food and drink to their members.
4. The societies would be responsible for the construction of housing for the members under the supervision of the government.

To Pridi, after the day's work was over the society could, if it wished, require its members to study in order to improve their knowledge. This indicated that Pridi did not want people to waste their time and gave significance to education as it was a means to achieve the desired result, especially his Outline Economic Plan to be proposed to the National Assembly.

Part VIII begins with "What lines of economic endeavour shall the government undertake?"

In Pridi's view, the country should be entirely independent of all foreign nations. This should be done to protect the country from dangers arising from trade restrictions of various sorts. When we were entirely self-sufficient, trade restrictions and embargoes would not unduly disturb us. Pridi discarded **Adam Smith's** idea which taught that the work of the world should be divided up among the nations, each nation becoming a specialist in one thing, for instance, an agricultural nation should engage only in agriculture and never in industry. To him, this theory would be excellent in a world where nations were

absolutely honorable in their treatment of each other, and did not erect trade barriers or artificially lower prices. But at present this was hardly the case. We should rather proceed along lines laid down by the German economist, **Friedrich List**. Pridi supported **Hitler** who was a strong believer in the theory that the government should exercise complete control of the economic system. At the same time, he also advocated the ideas of **Ramsay MacDonald** in England and **Edouard Daladier** in France as both of them believed in the system of co-operation between government and citizens in the field of economics, and in social assurance.

Part IX deals with the solution of the capital and labour question

Here Pridi made an observation that Thai people who had studied in Europe were well aware of the fact that the industrial situation there with its quarrels and hatreds between employer and employee had often resulted in lockouts on the one side, or strikes on the other, because of disagreement over wages, or hours of work, or vacations, or insurance. To Pridi, when the government administered the entire economic system it would not matter whether the people were labourers or other kinds of government employees. The employee of any type would be equitably rewarded for his services on a basis of achievement. In this regard, the people themselves would own everything in the nation. When the profits of their joint enterprise were greatly multiplied, labourers and other government employees would share this prosperity equally.

Part X (National Economic Plan)

To Pridi, in order that the administration of the economic system should be both well-regulated and beneficial the government had to promulgate a national economic plan which had to rest on:

1. It would be necessary to investigate carefully and prepare estimates of the necessities of life required by the average citizen of a civilised nation in order to assure him a happy and prosperous existence. Estimates should not be so low as to leave the people in a state of poverty.

2. When these various estimates and investigations had been completed, further estimates would be necessary to determine how much land, labour, and capital would be necessary to produce them.

3. When all the estimates as discussed above had been prepared, it would be necessary to make further estimates of the land, labour, and capital now available to the government either potentially or actually as a basis for the proposed economic system.

While inaugurating the plan, Pridi stated that people could decide in what section of the country to inaugurate the national economic plan, and also what particular economic project was to be the initial one. And so starting in this comparatively modest manner people could gradually extend the plan until it embraced the entire country.

Part XI, Pridi foresaw the successful realisation of the Six-Point Platform.

To him, there would be Independence in the Courts, Independence in the Field of Economics, and Independence in Politics. In addition, there would be an Internal Order as he observed crimes were committed for two reasons; either because the nature of the criminal predisposed him to crime or because economic pressure drove otherwise honest citizens to theft, burglary, armed robbery, etc. Regarding Economics, Pridi stated that the government would undertake to guarantee the economic welfare of the people by providing remunerative employment for everyone, promulgating a national economic plan designed to terminate poverty. For Equality of Rights, Pridi maintained that the plan would bring about the equality of all the people, not a paper equality but actual equality of opportunity by which all could become employees of the government. In connection with Liberty, Pridi assured his critics, who thought that when all the people were employees of a government which administered the entire economic system, there would be less personal freedom than there was now. To Pridi, it was true that there would be less freedom of a sort, but the loss in personal liberty would be more than compensated for by the

general increase in the happiness and prosperity of the people as a whole. The government would not interfere with personal liberty in any other way. The people would continue to enjoy freedom of speech, of person, of home, of wealth, of education, and of assembly. Pridi thus raised the question, “Do you think that they will prefer personal liberty secured at the cost of starvation?” For Education, Pridi stated even citizens who were between the ages of 20 and 55, adults in other words, could be required under the new order to continue their education.

Conclusion

After lengthy discussion of the plan, Pridi concluded that when the administration of the economic system by the government brought about the final consummation of the aims set forth by the People’s Party in their six-point platform, that state of prosperity and felicity which was the laudable desire of every heart and which, in classical language, was called “Sriaraya (Utopia)” would have dawned. “Shall we, who have opened the door of opportunity to the people, now hem and haw and fumble and hesitate to lead them on to the place where they can gather the fruits of the tree of life?,” asked Pridi.

Some Observations and Criticism on Pridi’s Economic Plan

Pridi’s Economic Plan was both praised and denounced by many people and some writers of Thai history. Some denounced him as a communist who intended to lead the nation to disaster, and others praised him as a democratic nationalist who wanted to lead the people toward happiness and prosperity. Whatever it may be, Pridi called himself a socialist who opposed capitalism but favoured democracy.⁴²

Another critic has interestingly pointed out that, if implemented, it would lead to the creation of a bureaucratic dictatorship because the state would be granted immense power in organising the productive forces of the country such as land, capital, and even labour.⁴³ Pridi thus defended his plan by explaining

that the new government was merely acting as the peaceful organiser of productive forces similar to what the royal family members and aristocrats had traditionally been doing.⁴⁴ To lessen the antagonism of powerful landowners, Pridi used the royal-organiser analogy in which the King was the owner of all lands and he was the one who allocated lands, but only to royal officials and aristocrats.

It is to be observed that in an important meeting of a committee to consider the National Economic Policy, Pridi earned the majority of support for his economic policy from its members. But it proved to be a Pyrrhic victory because the head of the government was a member of the old guard and a staunch conservative who ultimately derailed the passing of the Policy by denouncing it as communistic.⁴⁵

It cannot be denied that Pridi's Economic Policy, if successfully and effectively implemented, would have brought about prosperity and happiness to Thai nation as a whole. But there was an observation that Pridi's plan also contained certain contradictions, for instance, "The word 'social parasites' referred only to the lazy poor who did not work hard enough to improve their own status and whose subsistence depended largely on the charity or patronage of other people whereas he did not consider the wealthy class as social parasites."⁴⁶ Moreover, he made an exception for them not to enter government employment.

Another inconsistency in Pridi's plan lies in the fact that Pridi believed that the country needed a strong self-sufficient economy against foreign economic domination or any possible sanctions in the future. But he recognised that in building up such an economy the nation needed the assistance and cooperation of foreign countries in the form of foreign loans, investments, and the import of machinery from abroad.⁴⁷

In addition, to Pridi, Thai people like to work for the government, thus there would be no difficulty in enlisting the entire nation as government employees. But who knows some may not like the government service as well?

Above all, who will guarantee that there will not be a bureaucratic red-tape and a large scale of corruption as prevailing in the government circles? It is apparent that most of the government agencies suffer loss, that is why the privatization plan is often introduced as the best remedy.

Regarding Dr Pridi's economic ideas, Dr Preecha Piampongsarn said in a seminar held on 22 June 1983 at Thammasat University that what Dr Pridi wanted from the Outline Economic Plan were as follows:

1. He wanted the Thai economy to have independence, sovereignty, self-reliance and to be able to expand and protect itself from an external economic intrusion.
2. He wanted it to be the project and the model that aimed at reducing the economic elimination of one another as a result of selfish competition, and
3. He wanted to give social security so that people would have work, economic equality and social freedom.

Dr Preecha then offered his own observation on several inconsistencies of Pridi's Outline Economic Plan. To him, firstly Dr Pridi proposed to have the cooperatives in the small communities at local level and mentioned freedom of the individual in those small communities as having independence, the balance of production and distribution and living in group. Dr Pridi himself said, "I am careful not to reduce mankind to the level of animals. I want humans to be superhuman without doing anyone any harm as a result of the economy." Family life still existed and private life also existed, but at the same time, among those independent small communities, Dr Pridi proposed in the Outline Economic Plan to have a complete plan set by the central authority.

As a result, Dr Preecha was of the view that freedom in such a model would turn to be freedom that was set by the society which had a type of solidarity, it was a society arising from the plan and power of the above authority. Thus, the huge bureaucratic system in these plans would inevitably arise alongside the cooperatives and the independent communities. This was a contradiction in the Outline Economic Plan. Thus, in discussing the economic ideology of Dr Pridi,

it became inevitable to mention the equality and problem of freedom in the economic model of Dr Pridi.

Secondly, the main principle of this model as already mentioned was to combine the capital, land and labour together, but would it be possible for the people to work in the cooperative and to have democracy at the same time? Would it be a contradiction between the individual's power and the power of the society? How could the concept of solidarity combine the freedom and the cooperative life set by the above authority? The danger that might not have been seen by Dr Pridi was that in the Utopian state there was no guarantee that when the government managed the economy completely, human life would not be completely managed, and eventually whether would it turn to be a monopolistic socialism or not?

Finally, Dr Pridi did not visualise the possible danger if a model of the Outline Economic Plan was put into practice seriously as amidst the development process, there might be a trend that one group of people had power to take decisions on the economic problems whereas another group of the majority people had no such power. Such development resulted in inequality or the difference of their status and the way of life. Thus, when the entire country became a cooperative, it would certainly be the administrative class in the cooperative whose status and the way of life would be different from other members of the cooperative. From this point of view, the model of Dr Pridi also contained the principles that led to inequality of the development process in history, and in fact the two groups of people, namely; the administrators of the cooperative and ordinary members of the cooperative were actually the common people.

As a result, Dr Preecha preferred to call Dr Pridi's economic system as the "Socialist System by the Government". Indeed, Dr Preecha's observation helped pave the way for future studies on Dr Pridi's economic vision which was unsuccessfully introduced several decades ago.

Meanwhile, Prof Dr Saneh Chamarik made an interesting observation in

a seminar on Dr Pridi Banomyong held on the same occasion. Prof Saneh quoted Mr Prasert Trapsunthorn as saying, "Not all doctors deserve admiration. The doctor who can cure his patient should be praised while the doctor who cannot and causes his patient to die should be blamed, except in case of a critical condition as in such a case even a divine doctor cannot cure. I criticised him (Pridi) mainly on the problem of the principle of the democratic revolution. I compared him with the doctor who could not cure his patient and let him die. Pridi himself was the most important democratic revolutionary of the People's Party and it can be said that he was a real leader of the People's Party, but instead of leading the democratic revolution to success, he turned out to be the cause of its collapse and the collapse has lasted till the day of his death and it will continue into the many more years to come."⁴⁸

Prof Saneh then quoted another person, Mr Thammakiat Kan-Ari, as saying, "If we really intend to criticise (Pridi), we will find drawbacks not only in the Revolution of 1932, but also in his Outline of the Economic Plan, including some of his political activities, but why should this senior citizen alone be responsible for that? As it is normal for any initiative to have its own weakness and its implementation is not a matter of the ideology alone, but it is the ideology that must be combined with action. Thus, many factors are involved, for example, condition, variable, limitation and even development."⁴⁹

To throw some light on the issue, Prof Saneh made his own observation when he said, "If we consider Dr Pridi's political status and role in the group of the Revolutionary Party of 1932, we will find that he was just a leader of the intellectual group who had no power base of change, thus this becomes a condition and a variable to which Mr Thammakiat referred."⁵⁰ To Prof Saneh, Dr Pridi was just only in the position of the brains and the intelligentsia of the 1932 Revolutionary Party and the type of his idea was that of the ideology. Above all, his means, policy and the outline as appeared in his Outline Economic Plan were rather isolated since members of the 1932 Revolutionary

Party themselves were not satisfied much with these principles. Thus, after releasing his economic plan, Pridi was branded a communist and expelled to live in France, and after that the Revolutionary Party never talked about his economic plan again.

Prof Saneh then raised another issue for consideration. To him, there was an attempt by the conservative right wing to distance King Prajadhipok from the People's Party especially Dr Pridi Banomyong. The attempts by various groups to separate the progressive forces resulted in the reduction of an opportunity for smooth political development as the contradiction escalated so widely that King Prajadhipok abdicated in 1935 and this is our great loss for the future and the prosperity of the democratic system in Thai society.⁵¹

Prof Saneh then concluded that Pridi himself admitted that there were considerable opportunities to get things done at that time as he had a majority support in the Assembly. In 1932 if he was able to propose his Outline Economic Plan in the Assembly, the majority of members would have supported him, but he could not do so as the plan was objected to by some of his colleagues in the government. Again in 1946 (the controversy over the death of King Ananda Mahidol), he had a majority support in the Assembly, but due to the political condition and variability of Thailand, majority support in the Assembly would become meaningless, if there were no opportunity and the ability to reconcile the rift with the military group. Thus, this is the probe that majority support in the Assembly cannot do everything in the Thai political condition.

Finally, Prof Saneh pointed out that due to those various conditions and limitations, Dr Pridi could not achieve his desired results especially his Outline Economic Plan, though it had certain drawbacks, two factors should be considered.

Firstly, it aimed at raising the standard of living of the majority of the people. This was very essential, but it was apparent that Thai political condition never permitted such an attempt, and it had been obstructed all along.

Secondly, the development made on the principle of self-reliance should be used as a good lesson. Though it might have some weakness, it aimed at assisting people in rural areas to stand on their own feet in the form of the cooperatives. Obviously, it is in contrast with the current situation in which people are encouraged to get support from others, to secure foreign loans and to seek foreign technological support.⁵²

Even though Pridi's Economic Plan cannot be considered as the best panacea to kill poverty of the entire mass, "all things considered, it is valuable not simply because it is historical text on political economy written by an important Thai political leader and visionary thinker but also because many of its ideas—if properly selected, understood, and modified—can serve as a basis for an alternative economic development policy in the circumstances that the country's present mainstream socio-economic development paradigm flops disastrously in the next century."⁵³

Pridi Banomyong was one of the greatest Thais of this century. Great, that is, in strength of character, vision, achievement, and nobility of purposes. Like all great personalities in history, Pridi continues to live posthumously. Many of his ideas, because they are embedded in universal values, are still very relevant today, inspiring many in the younger generation. The Thais often find themselves returning to or rediscovering Pridi's ideas and vision of a better society, especially when they had initially rejected them.⁵⁴

PRIDI AND HIS ASIAN CONTEMPORARIES

It is very interesting to note that Pridi belonged to the same political generation as Jawaharlal Nehru, Soekarno, Ho Chi Minh, Aung San, and other anti-colonial nationalists of the inter-war period. They all emerged in the same political and intellectual context. They shared many of the same ideas on law, constitution, parliament, education, and the potential of the state. But the career and political legacy of Pridi differ from these other figures in an important way. The others were all pitted against colonialism. Colonialism crumbled away. They either became martyrs in the victorious struggle, or founders and builders of a post-colonial future. At around the same time these others gained power or immortality, but Pridi went into exile⁵⁵ and he never returned. This is a sharp contrast between Pridi and those prominent political figures who were his contemporaries in other Asian countries.

Causes of the Revolution of 1932 as conceived by various writers

Before we end our discussion on Dr Pridi, it is essential to know what other people think about the causes of the revolution of 1932. Many writers offered various views on the issue, for example, Luang Vichitr Vadhakarn, a well-known author and respected scholar, who suggested three reasons for the overthrow of the absolute monarchy. First, the extensive changes in government positions made by King Prajadhipok when he ascended the throne caused dissatisfaction. In the reign of King Vajiravudh the more important positions had been in the hands of the **Khun Nang** class (the commoners of high rank) who had risen to high ranks by their own ability. This shift of power made many commoners feel that they were being ruled without adequate representation. The second reason for the change in government, as cited by Luang Vichitr, was the secretive methods employed by the administration. The third cause for the change in government was two-fold; it included the dismissal of many officials and the levying of a new salary tax.⁵⁶

According to David A. Wilson, the Revolution of 1932 ended the control of the royal family over the government and established a quasi-parliamentary constitution. To him, the origins of this event lay in three converging trends. First was the diminishing respect for monarchy. This was a result of democratic ideas from the West, the softening of the more extravagant claims by the dynasty itself, and the diffident personality of King Rama VII. The second trend came from the increased professional expertise among officials—especially those who had been educated in Europe—which aroused resentment against the growing royal monopoly of power. Third was the worsening state of finances in which the government found itself as a result of the developing world depression and previous extravagance.⁵⁷

It is to be noted that though the world depression had little impact upon most Thai people and prior to 1932 all promoters of the revolution enjoyed secure positions and it was cited as one of the causes of the Revolution of 1932. This was supported by B. J. Terwiel who said that dissatisfaction with royal government and the privileges of the princes was widespread among the Thai intelligentsia, and particularly rife among Thai commoners who had been educated abroad. This resentment was further exacerbated by damages wreaked by the global economic depression. Government cutbacks, reductions in salaries, and other financial sacrifices were felt hardest among those people who could least afford it, while the princes ostensibly continued to enjoy great wealth.⁵⁸

However, whatever the causes of the Revolution of 1932 may be, Pridi always insisted that the 1932 revolution was not an attack on the institution of monarchy but on the society of the privileged and exclusivity which blocked opportunities for Siam to progress. Pridi himself advocated a constitutional monarchy as mentioned earlier because he wanted to maintain the king as the symbol of the country.

Pridi's Political Ideas

Obviously, our discussion on Dr Pridi would remain incomplete without touching on the issue of his political ideas and regarding this, Dr Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker offered very interesting observations. According to them, a study of the People's Party's manifesto, the outline economic plan and the provisional constitution show that the ideas behind Pridi's political convictions can be seen at the outset of his seventeen-year political career (1932-1946).

The first of these ideas was simply the importance of establishing law based on rights as the foundation of an equitable and efficient society. Pridi grasped onto the power of the idealised Roman law in the French republican tradition. Pridi offered this meaning of law as a challenge to a social and legal order grounded on the supremacy of the ruler's will.⁵⁹ Thus, Dr Pasuk and Chris Baker seemed to be right in saying so because Pridi realised the significance of law that is why he opted to study law in France, although he was already a barrister in Siam.

Second, Pridi saw the constitution as the foundation of all other laws, and as the political weapon to fight against the concept of the supremacy of the ruler's will, and against the privileges and exclusions which resulted.⁶⁰ Dr Pasuk and Chris Baker then cited the opening clause of the charter which Pridi and the other People's Party leaders presented to the king after the 1932 revolution as saying, "The supreme power in the country belongs to the people." In fact, it was obvious that the aim of the June Revolution was to transform the absolute monarchy into a constitutional one and as a result we have to accept that the constitution is part and parcel of democracy. Thus, there is nothing new in this connection.

Third, Pridi believed the bureaucratic state had the potential to be the motor of "progress" in all forms through its ability to contrive a more rational organisation of society. To Pridi, in the past this progress had not been realised because of colonial restrictions (the unequal treaties) and because

of the absolutist state's dedication to the protection of privilege. The progress which the state could achieve was outlined in the "six principles."⁶¹ Indeed, what Dr Pasuk and Chris Baker said was right as immediately after assuming the post of Foreign Minister in 1936, Pridi began to negotiate with the foreign Powers for the revocation of unequal treaties that Thailand had been forced to sign with them. As a result, Thailand recovered full sovereignty in all matters affecting the country on 24 June 1936 and fixed that date as the National Day at that time (At present, the National Day is replaced by King's birthday which falls on 5 December of every year).

Dr Pasuk and Chris Baker further said that the outline economic plan was the clearest and most extreme expression of where this faith in the bureaucratic state might lead. Pridi's idea of economic planning was obviously influenced by the Russian experiment.⁶² However, so far as we know, Pridi never revealed the origin of his ideas, but it appears that he was inspired by the Kuomintang and the Chinese revolution of 1911.

Fourth, Pridi believed in the importance of an elective parliament. Thus, in his constitutional draft for June 1932, almost three-fifths of the length was devoted to the house of representatives.⁶³ Pridi always wanted to create a fully elective and properly sovereign parliament.

Fifth, Pridi had absorbed the Enlightenment belief in the perfectibility of human beings. Pridi believed so strongly in education that he suggested people should be forced into education in contravention of his usual devotion to human liberties.⁶⁴ Obviously, what Dr Pasuk and Chris Baker said was right as Pridi said in Part XI of his Outline Economic Plan, "Even citizens who are between the ages of 20 and 55, adults in other words, can be required under the new order to continue their education". Above all, the People's Party's manifesto also stated that education would be provided to the people. Thus, within less than two years of the revolution, he founded Thammasat University to equip the people with education to pave the way for political development in the country.

Finally, Pridi had an overriding belief in the nation. Time and again, he called on “those who love the nation” to pool their forces.⁶⁵ This is true as Pridi always urged for the public support and cooperation from his colleagues especially his Outline Economic Plan which could not be implemented successfully.

The above six-points indicate that Pridi’s political ideas came from various sources which eventually inspired him to push for implementation and it can be said that most of the factors stemming from his far-sighted concepts have already been materialised.

Most Thais are unaware of Pridi’s Work

Surprisingly, few people understand Pridi Banomyong’s contribution to the country’s democratisation process.

According to Mr Yutthana Poonthong, who in May 2000 completed a survey on how aware Thai people are of Pridi’s contributions, even people from his home town of Ayutthaya know little about his work.

Mr Yutthana, who is head of the Department of Political Science and Law at the Ayutthaya Rajabhat Institute, distributed questionnaires to 1,118 people from various professions and ages in the province. The findings showed that only 22.22 per cent, or 448 out of all respondents, knew that the late statesman had been head of People’s Party and only 21.48 per cent knew him as the leader of the Free Thai Movement.

An even smaller number knew Pridi was the founder of Thammasat University.

Of those who had heard of him, only 8.49 per cent or 118 were aware of him from textbooks while the majority, 41.04 per cent, knew of him from their teachers or lecturers.

To the question “How can we best commemorate Pridi’s good deeds?” 35.71 per cent said a memorial should be built by the government. 25 per cent

said a museum would be most appropriate, while 12.77 per cent said his enormous contribution to the country should be recorded in school textbooks.

Mr Yutthana's intention in conducting the surveys had been to discover what people in Ayutthaya knew about Pridi. He said it was clear from his finding that Thai school textbooks still failed to recognise Pridi.⁶⁶

Latest Development on Pridi

It is interesting to note that during a ceremony to celebrate a week-long centennial of the late Dr Pridi Banomyong, held in the second week of May 2000, Dr Prawase Wasi, a senior Thai citizen and social advocate, offered quite a different argument that the introduction of a constitution in 1932 orchestrated by Dr Pridi did not weaken the Thai monarchy but enabled it to survive and strengthen. He went on, "There have been people intent on creating an image that he (Pridi) was an enemy of the monarchy. But researching the various documentary records shows that the truth was quite the opposite. He was someone who tried to uphold the monarchy both through changing the system of government at the time he had political power and at the time when he no longer had power through to the very end of his life."⁶⁷

Meanwhile, prior to the public understanding and recognition of Pridi's contribution, there was a positive sign indicating a lesser hostile attitude towards Pridi as "once he had moved to Paris in May 1970, Pridi became accessible both as an icon and a source of learning and inspiration. Many academics, intellectuals, and journalists made the pilgrimage to Paris to see him. Thai student groups in Europe began to ask him for speeches, articles, and messages."⁶⁸ Since then Pridi's publications began to appear and to be followed by many more sympathetic English language studies of Pridi and the 1932 revolution.

Indeed, the centennial has marked the first official acknowledgement in Thailand of Pridi's achievements.⁶⁹ Among the high dignitaries presented in the centennial ceremony to honour the Father of Thai democracy was former

President Abdulrahman Wahid of Indonesia who was invited to give a keynote speech at the ceremony by a social critic and social activist, Mr Sulak Sivaraksa. Mr Sulak himself is a personal friend of the former president.

Pridi's books become an important part of history of the Thai Kingdom

Dr Pridi, a life-long champion of democracy, is one of the few Thai politicians to have made a mark in local literary circles and his prolificacy second only to that of the late M.R. Kukrit Pramoj, another ex-prime minister. While Kukrit wrote several classic novels during his lifetime, Pridi produced only one, *The King of the White Elephant*; it was first published in 1939.

His best-known piece of non-fiction is Khwam Pen Anitjang Khong Sangkhom Thai (The Transience of Thai Society). The book was written during his first period of exile in China in 1949, it is a collection of essays describing the struggle between the old royalist guard and pro-democracy factions which culminated in the revolution of 1932 and the shift from absolute to constitutional monarchy.⁷⁰

Pridi wrote following the books:

A. Non-fiction

1. Nai Pridi Tob Khamtham (Pridi Answers Questions)
2. Anakhot Khong Thai (What Future for Thailand?)
3. Khum Panya (Source of Wisdom)
4. Khwam Pen Anitjang Khong Sangkhom Thai (The Transience of Thai Society)
5. Jodmai Khong Pridi Thueng Phra Phisarn (Letters from Pridi to Phra Phisarn Sukhumvit about Seri Thai Movement)
6. Cheewit Phanphan Khong Khaphachao (The Twists and Turns of My Life)
7. Satsana Buddha Nai Tang Prathet (Buddhism Abroad)

8. Important Documents Concerning Thailand's War Status
During World War II (Part I)
9. Future for Thailand and the Situation in Neighbouring
Countries

B. Fiction

The King of the White Elephant

**Last Interview of Dr Pridi by Chatthip Nartsupha and his colleagues
on 10 April 1982 in Paris**

The following are excerpts of the last interview of the late former Prime Minister Pridi Banomyong. It is considered as the last interview as he never gave one again after this and he died in the following year (2 May 1983). Actually, I intended to interview his wife, Thanpuying Phoonsuk Banomyong (Thanpuying is the highest title for woman commoners), unfortunately, her poor health did not permit me to do so as she is now 88 years old (2000), but her private secretary permitted me to use whatever resources available for the full benefit of our discussion on Dr Pridi, a “Senior Statesman” for life.

- 1. Question: Sir, what are the weak points of the 1932 Revolution that have prevented the Thai democratic system from becoming a reality till now?**

Answer: Actually, the 1932 Revolution has two weak points, namely:

1. The common weak points that appear in every political process i.e. the internal conflict in the process. The political party that won the race through parliamentary means still experiences conflict in itself, even though it has already gained state power, the conflict in the party still exists. Thus, it appears that the party has split up into several factions or it may eventually cease to exist altogether while the party that resorts to an armed struggle will also face similar fate.

2. The weak point in the People’s Party itself. Its weak point actually stemmed from two reasons as follows;

(1). There was a lack of studies on the conflict in the political process and on the various examples in history. Thus, most of the members were unaware that some of their colleagues would restore the carcass of dictatorship and feudalism to be used as a counter-revolution.

(2). They thought only of the victory through strategic means in seizing the state power without careful consideration of how to maintain their victory so that it would not be replaced by a counter-revolution. This is very important. The People's Party aimed only at seizing the state power and it finally succeeded, but its weak point is its inability to maintain the state power as such.

2. Question: Sir, can you elaborate the salient features of Thai revolution? Is it strong or weak and how much is the reaction against it?

Answer: Well! There were two types of reactions, that is to say, the reaction within the People's Party itself as the People's Party comprised people from various sides, not from one side, but they shared the common objective, that was to transform the absolute monarchy into the constitutional monarchy. However, the class and ideology that they inherited could come to life again. Thus, it led to an internal struggle within the party itself. (It is to be noted that another reaction was not mentioned in this interview.)

3. Question: Sir, did you ever talk about the change of the economic system before staging a revolution?

Answer: Yes, of course. In fact, my thinking that Siam (Thailand) should have an economic plan of her own did not arise suddenly in my mind and was not based on guesswork without referring to any economic theory. I have already referred to the state of Thai society and how I found from my own experience that the people faced economic hardship, lacked political right, freedom and equality, and were under the power and influence of several capitalist countries. Before I went to study in France I had the idea to study and searched further on how to improve the situation of the people. So I studied many parts of the economic system including the socialist economic system about

economic planning. So the consciousness arose in me that Siam should have an economic plan which followed the science of socialist theory and which took into account the local situation and contemporary state of Siam as I had experienced it and as it was changing further during the time I was studying. Therefore, I drafted the economic plan and then presented it to the meeting of my colleagues who took part in the creation of the People's Party in Paris.



M.R. Kukrit Pramoj in full royal uniform (1911-1995)



Picture taken on the occasion of interviewing Mr Sala Likitkul, co-founder of Siam Rath newspaper with M.R. Kukrit Pramroj, at Siam Rath's office on 14 July 2000 at 11.00 a.m.

CHAPTER THREE

Introduction

M.R. KUKRIT PRAMOJ (1911–1995)

In Chapter Two, we have seen numerous contributions made by Dr Pridi. In this chapter we will see that M.R. Kukrit has also played a significant role in upholding democracy in the Thai kingdom. Even so it is interesting to note that when asked by a Bangkok Post journalist to comment on Dr Pridi, M.R. Kukrit didn't have much to say about him. "We just didn't share the same views on issues. This doesn't mean we were enemies." He said that the Seri Thai movement under Dr Pridi's leadership had done much for Thailand during and after World War II. "He knew I had a great admiration for him." M.R. Kukrit said he had always wished Dr Pridi well despite their differences. "I prayed for his speedy recovery when he was sick," he said, adding philosophically: "For me, it was all over a long time ago. The Chao Phraya River is still flowing, and people living on both sides of the river are Thai." The differences of their views will be discussed later at the end of the chapter.

Kukrit Pramoj, the 13th prime minister of Thailand, was born with the royal title of "**Mom Rachawongse**" (M.R.), and the initials are regularly used to indicate he was born into a royal family. M.R. Kukrit is praised as one of the great political thinkers for his entire life has been dedicated to the enhancement of the Thai democracy.

M.R. Kukrit, the pillar of Thai democracy, was surely a quintessential politician. A grand guru of politicians, he is remembered as an incomparable public figure imbued with political ideals and for his lifelong commitment to politics, journalism and royalty. Although divided by ideologies and political goals, allies and foes can look to him for wisdom, knowledge and inspiration.¹

A Brief Biography of M.R. Kukrit Pramoj

His early life

M.R. Kukrit Pramoj was born on 20 April 1911 in a boat in Indra-Buri District of Singh Buri Province (Central Thailand) while his family was on the way to Phitsanulok Province where his father was to serve in a new military post.

The name of Kukrit, literally meaning “bold supernatural power” was given to him by Her Majesty Queen Saovabha Bongsri, consort of King Rama V and the mother of King Rama VI (King Vajiravudh). Kukrit was the fifth and last child of H.R.H. Prince Khamrob and Mom Daeng whose daughters included M.R. Boonrob Pinitchonkadi (married) and M.R. Uraiwan, and the sons were M.R. Seni (also former prime minister) and M.R. Tuantaonuek. Kukrit’s father, H.R.H. Prince Khamrob, had been the 7th and youngest child of Prince Pramoj, a son of King Rama II, and M.R. Duangjai. Prince Khamrob served in several posts and later became Thailand’s first Police Department Director-General.

Kukrit’s early boyhood was spent at the family home on Phra Athit Road in Bangkok where he was taught to read by his elder sister, M.R. Boonrob. He could read simple textbooks by the age of four. At the age of six he was sent to study with Miss Edwinda Cole, an American lady, at Mam Cole’s School, also known as Wang Lang School which was the first women’s school in Thailand. Then at the age of eight, he was sent to study at Suan Kulab College and he remained there until completing from Grade 7th of the Secondary School level at 14 years of age. Because he was too young to finish Mathayom (Secondary) level and start his career, his father thus decided to send him to England where he began his pre-university studies at Trent College. He later on went to Queen’s College of Oxford University where he received his B.A. (Honours) in the Modern Greats (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) at the age of 22.

Kukrit returned to Thailand in 1933 only to know that the country had already been changed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional one by the 1932 Revolution spearheaded by Dr Pridi Banomyong. Here M.R. Kukrit himself wrote in his short autobiography, "During my stay in England, I think it was during my last term at school, I heard that the Absolute Monarchy had been substituted by a Constitutional Monarchy, with a House of Parliament, elections, a constitution and all the works. As a true aristocrat, I rejoiced at the news. I came back home in 1933, eager to share in the spoils of Democracy, only to find that instead of one Absolute Monarch as before, the country had over a hundred absolute monarchs, each one more absolute than the Absolute Monarch himself, for the defence of Democracy. I found out that nothing had been changed in the administrations; the Civil and Military Service remained as they were in the beginning of Ayutthaya (Period). The new absolute monarchs were making themselves rich in a hurry, again for the sake of Democracy. Everyone was regarding Democracy as a new thing, like TV, which would create new jobs and new fortunes for people in the know. No one was seriously thinking what he had to contribute to Democracy. To me, the whole thing was a farce. I began to giggle when comic political figures or situations arose."²

The Beginning of his career

M.R. Kukrit began his career by joining the Revenue Department of the Ministry of Finance and due to his excellent command of English, he was transferred to serve as a secretary to Mr James Baxter, the Financial Adviser to the Thai government. Three years later, after tiring of the government service, he resigned to join the Siam Commercial Bank. In 1938 at the age of 27, he met his future wife, M.R. Pakpring Thongyai and after marriage, the couple moved to Lampang Province (the North of Thailand) where M.R. Kukrit took up the post of manager of the local branch of the Siam Commercial Bank and worked with the bank until 1942. Kukrit then left the Siam Commercial Bank to become one of the founding members of the Bank of Thailand.

While living in Lampang Province, his first child, a son, M.L. (Mom Luang—the hereditary royal title conferred on a son or a daughter of M.R.) Rongrit was born and then followed by a daughter, M.L. Visumitra.

“His marriage lasted seven years but Kukrit’s continual absence from home upset his wife and finally the couple decided to divorce. M.R. Pakpring married a foreigner but Kukrit chose to remain single.”³

Kukrit remained in Lampang for 8 years and while living and working with the bank there, he was a conscripted soldier twice, firstly he was sent to take part in the Indochina Incident of 1941 which was fought along the borders of Laos and Cambodia against the French occupiers of Indochina and again during the Second World War, he was conscripted but was put in a reserve unit and was assigned to work at the newly-established Bank of Thailand, serving as officer at the Governor’s Office. Later he was promoted to Chief of the Banknote Section and he was responsible for the printing of paper money and monitoring the use of banknotes for the Thai Government during World War II. Kukrit held this position until he resigned to enter politics in 1946.

While serving at the Bank of Thailand, he also found time to be a special lecturer teaching banking at Thammasat University between 1942 and 1948 and at Chulalongkorn University 1942-1952.

M.R. Kukrit's Political Career

Kukrit's political career began when his elder brother, M.R. Seni Pramoj, became the 6th Prime Minister of Thailand on 17 September 1945 and in the same year, he founded his own political party called Kao Naa (Progressive Party). Kukrit ran in the election under his party banner on 6 January 1946 and was elected to become a Member of Parliament at the age of 35.

On 26 February 1946, M.R. Kukrit was elected to become one of the 15 members of the Constitutional Drafting Committee chaired by Dr Pridi Banomyong and Kukrit was appointed Secretary to the committee.

On 5 April 1946, Kukrit founded the Democrat Party by combining his Progressive Party with the Prajathipathai Party, and Mr Khuang Aphaiwong, who had already been Prime Minister twice (1944-5 and January 1946-March 1946), was made party leader while M.R. Seni Pramoj and M.R. Kukrit became the deputy leader and the secretary-general respectively.

"M.R. Kukrit was then very famous for his debates in Parliament, which were always creative and primarily aimed at strengthening the reliability and stability of democracy."⁴

On 8 November 1947, Field Marshal P. Pibulsongkram staged a coup against the civilian government of Luang Thamrong Nava Sawat and took the mantle of Prime Minister for himself. He began a campaign of defamation linking Dr Pridi Banomyong with the tragic death of King Ananda Mahidol in 1946 and Pridi was forced to leave the country. Mr Khuang Aphaiwong, for the third time, became the Prime Minister. On 10 November 1947, Khuang announced the formation of a 21-minister Cabinet, and among the 21, Kukrit was appointed Deputy Finance Minister at the age of 36.⁵

On 29 January 1948, the Democrat Party won a majority in a general election which brought Kukrit, Khuang and Seni into Parliament. Khuang was selected Prime Minister and again Kukrit was given a ministerial post, this time he was named Deputy Commerce Minister at the age of 37.

The Khuang government, however, was forced to step down five months later by another coup to make way for Field Marshal P. Pibulsongkram to become Prime Minister. The coup did not dissolve the house but the Democrat Party became the Opposition. In 1949, during the budget debate in Parliament, the government proposed to increase the MPs' salary by 1,000 baht. M.R. Kukrit expressed his strong opposition to both the government and his own party, which agreed heartily to increase their own salaries. Disappointed with the government and especially the Democrat Party, Kukrit thus resigned from both Parliament and the Democrat Party and even declared, "I'll never enter this Parliament again so far as these members of the house, which proposed to increase their own salaries, are still in office."⁶ His resignation was highly lauded by most newspapers and praised by many supporters.

But two months later, Kukrit again stunned the public by joining the Pibulsongkram government which appointed him as the Deputy Commerce Minister. It is said that the appointment was made due to Kukrit's economic expertise and to distance Kukrit from the Democrat Party. At the same time, Kukrit accepted the invitation with the hope that some day he could persuade Prime Minister P. Pibulsongkram to dissolve the House which had made him disappointed during the budget debate. However, Kukrit could not fulfill his hope, he thus resigned in just one month. "This time he announced that he would neither run for election nor join any political party. He believed the country was sliding from democracy to semi-dictatorship, and decided to use his pen to right the wrong. This he did through his articles in the '*Kiatiskak*' daily. Then came a national tragedy: the death of King Ananda Mahidol. M.R. Kukrit entered the monkhood (as a way to make merit for the dead king) at Borvorn Nives Temple and attended the royal cremation on 27 March 1950. He stayed in the monkhood for 50 days. It was during this time that M.R. Kukrit and Mr Sala Likitkul collaborated to set up a new newspaper, *Siam Rath*, to fight emerging dictatorship in the country. The Siam Rath daily was launched on 25 June 1950. Kukrit was the managing director and Mr Sala assumed the post of editor."⁷

While serving as managing director of Siam Rath, M.R. Kurit began what would eventually be his prolific writing career. All of his books began as daily serialisations in the pages of the newspaper and were later bound into single editions. His most famous works included *Phai Daeng* (Red Bamboo) and *Si Phaen Din* (Four Reigns).⁸

Siam Rath became not only a watchdog on society but a political soapbox, a valuable tool for commenting on how the realm was being governed and offering suggestions for improving it. At the same time, it was establishing Kukrit as a man to be reckoned with in the political arena, a man of ideas who might be able to shape national policy.⁹

In the general election of 26 February 1957, P. Pibulsongkram won the election, but he was accused of ballot box stuffing and other underhanded ploys to win the seat. Siam Rath launched the attack with Kukrit at the forefront. He called it a “crooked election”. Kukrit was then arrested for libelling the American ambassador and put in court on 12 March 1957. The arrest was made in connection with a quotation made by P. Pibulsongkram who said, “crooked elections are normal, the American ambassador told me so.” Kukrit subsequently commented that since the Prime Minister is consorting with American gangsters, what can you expect from Thai election. His comment was regarded by the Thai government as an insult to all ambassadors. But the court let him off with a fine of 500 baht.

It is to be noted that the impact of his speeches from the defence box, however, reverberated far and wide. On 16 September 1957, P. Pibulsongkram’s political coinage thoroughly debased, Sarit Thanarat staged a coup and P. Pibulsongkram was forced to depart to Japan and later to California where he died.¹⁰

During the period 1958-1973, Kukrit spent most of his time on social work and arts. In 1963, he took a brief but memorable career as a movie star in “The Ugly American.” He travelled to Hollywood to star as the Prime Minister of the Asian nation of Sarkhan. He became friends with Marlon Brando,

a fellow actor in the film. Surprisingly, 12 years later in real life, he became Prime Minister of Thailand.¹¹

In 1966, Kukrit founded the Thammasat University Khon (Masks Dance) troupe and made it well-known throughout the kingdom and once was invited to perform in Hong Kong's Art Festival. In 1969, he founded the Thai Studies Institute at the same university and was lecturing there for four years. As a result of his numerous contributions, he was later awarded the title of "National Artist" in the field of Writing and Literary Work in 1985.

From 1969 onwards, Kukrit was slowly being drawn back into politics after a long break. During the period of Prime Minister Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, Kukrit was twice appointed as senator; on 4 July 1968 and on 4 July 1971. After the departure of the Thanom regime as a consequence of the Students' Uprising of October 1973, Prof Sanya Dharmasakti was appointed by King Bhumibol as the new Prime Minister. The newly-appointed Prime Minister then selected 18 persons to draft a new constitution immediately and Kukrit was the most prominent.

On 23 December 1973, His Majesty the King appointed 2,347 people from all walks of life to be members of the National Convention. Of that number, 299 were selected as voting members of a National Assembly. On 28 December 1973, M.R. Kukrit was chosen Speaker of the House and was effectively propelled back into serious politics.¹² The drafting of the Constitution was a time-consuming process lasting for nine months. It contained 238 sections. It was the longest and was considered as the most comprehensive in Thai history. On 8 October 1974, Kukrit as Speaker of the National Assembly countersigned the Constitution under the signature of His Majesty the King and it was put into effect. Two days later he resigned his position as head of the legislature in order to form his own political party.

After the Political Party Law came into effect on 15 October 1974, Kukrit formed the Social Action Party (SAP) headed by himself with Mr Boonchu Rojanasathien as the Secretary-General of the party. The party

launched the political campaign for the 26 January 1975 election under the slogan "We can do it." As the election result came out, the Democrat won 72 seats, Thamma Sangkhom won 45 and Chart Thai 28. The SAP of Kukrit could manage to secure only 18 seats. The Democrat leader, M.R. Seni Pramoj, therefore, formed his cabinet, but for various reasons, he failed to secure the confidence vote of the House of Representatives. The difficult task of forming a new cabinet then devolved on M.R. Kukrit, his younger brother, who was the leader of the Social Action Party. Through his extremely skilful and clever negotiations, Kukrit successfully tackled his task, and, at the age of 64, he became the 13th Prime Minister of Thailand on 14 March 1975 enjoying the confidence of the House of Representatives. He referred to his Government as a coalition one, composed of four main parties, his own party, the Social Justice, the Thai Nation (Chart Thai), the Social Nationalist parties plus ten small parties.¹³

M.R. Kukrit remained Prime Minister for one year, one month and 4 days or 400 days. As a result of political in-fighting for the cabinet seats, he could no longer tolerate them. He therefore dissolved the House on 12 January 1976. Kukrit chose to run in the next election in his district but failed to win the seat as the district was dominated by conservative military men who were not happy with his brand of politics and could manage to block him from securing the House seat.

After that he remained on the sidelines sniping with unerring accuracy at policies of successive governments, continuing to serve as leader of an increasingly fractious party. His SAP party participated in the coalition that made up the first government of Gen Prem Tinsulanonda and later in the Prem 3 government but to a lesser degree.¹⁴

His accomplishments during his year as Prime Minister are considerable. He created the highly-successful Tambon (Sub-district) Council Fund which distributed 2.5 billion baht as direct assistance to villages to build roads, canals, ponds, schools, health centres and other infrastructure to better their lives.

Remarkably, little of the money went astray but was used for projects the villagers themselves had determined as vital to improving their standards of living. He also made the first visit to the People's Republic of China as the Thai head of government since the declaration of Communist rule in China in 1949. On 30 June 1975, he stepped off the plane in Beijing and was greeted by Deng Xiaoping. He had a highly-successful meeting with Chairman Mao Tse-tung and Prime Minister Chou En-lai.¹⁵ As a result of his historic visit, diplomatic relations between the two countries were again resumed.

Kukrit's government was hailed for its far-reaching policies but eventually was swept away by bickering among the coalition partners. On his resignation on 20 April 1979, Kukrit was replaced by his elder brother, M.R. Seni Pramoj.¹⁶

Thais owe a lot to M.R. Kukrit who has in various ways inspired them to appreciate and to be proud of their cultural, religious and literary legacy. What the former prime minister has done for the kingdom is far greater than any title or rank bestowed on him. Will Thais be ever blessed once again with someone as great as M.R. Kukrit Pramoj?¹⁷

M.R. Kukrit died on 9 October 1995 at the age of 84. To Thai people, his death is a great loss that cannot be replaced.

M.R. Kukrit as the Grand guru of Politics

M.R. Kukrit has always been held in high esteem as a great teacher of Thai politics. It has become apparent that his vast knowledge in various fields enabled him to contribute a great deal to the development of political awareness among the Thai public. He set a good example for the Thai politicians to follow by not clinging to powerful political posts and entering the House through a democratic means. While serving the House, he performed his duties with great responsibility. He was praised as a shining star of the House. Out of the House he was regarded as a respectable teacher whose comments and ideas were the most sought-after by all journalists till the last day of his life.

“This renaissance man is also the politician other politicians would rather have on their side.”¹⁸ Should all of M.R. Kukrit’s political comments and interviews be written down, the prolific writer’s words of wisdom could stretch from the northern-most town of Mae Sai to the southern-most city of Betong.

Reporters, young and old, always dreamed of being given an opportunity to meet with the grand guru of Suan Plu (the road of his residence), to elicit his views on various hot topics and to get him to respond to their questions. Whenever the great politician spoke, the whole of Thailand listened to him.¹⁹

A journalist of great perception and profound vision, M.R. Kukrit was known for his hospitality and friendliness with young reporters. He was prepared to exchange views with them. Having a crystal clear mind, the former co-founder of Democrat Party indeed had a lot to advise young reporters. The understanding and appreciation of the profundity of the grand guru would depend on the maturity of those talking with him.²⁰

Whenever there was a significant event in the country, a herd of journalists would go to him to seek his comments and ideas and sometimes even at his sickbed. It is to be noted that his comments could sometimes send a strong signal to the persons in power to take into account. In the later part of his life, several would-be prime ministers went to pay respect to him and sought his advice before taking office as well.

Kukrit advised the journalists:

“Think of yourself as a social compass. But to serve as the compass of society, you must be righteous, merciful and kind to the person in the news. Try to present an impartial view. Have the best interests of society at heart. Don’t bend or break the compass’s needle. You’ll be called a good journalist if you try to do this.”²¹

He also urged that reporters do their homework well and know what they stand for. “A good reporter must know how to analyse. He must take notes of certain items in his heart. Don’t you know that you register Thailand’s historical facts daily?”²²

His peace formula is: “Society will be peaceful if all men develop worthy spirits in their hearts.”

Asked to comment on his friends and foes, the wise man of Suan Plu was more than willing to describe the nature of his relationships with them and how they had influenced his life.²³

The key persons said to have had some bearing on the boss of Suan Plu’s life include former Prime Minister Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, former Prime Minister Gen Prem Tinsulanonda and the late Dr Pridi Banomyong. His strong comment on Gen Chavalit who was the Army Chief at that time caused dissatisfaction among the army rangers. They raided his house and damaged his property. Kukrit later said, “I hold no grudge against Gen Chavalit.” The Grand guru of politics contended he had had no conflict with Gen Prem. He was impressed with Gen Prem’s honesty and integrity. What bothered him was not Gen Prem, but his aides who were said to lobby MPs not to sign up for a no-confidence motion against the Prime Minister. To Kukrit, “It was a shameful move on the part of Gen Prem’s allies. Such an action was bad for a democratic system, which was already ailing.”

Sensing his eroding support, Gen Prem refused to accept the post of Prime Minister following the 1988 election. It is to be noted that Gen Prem’s eight-year term of office was possible due to the support of the major political

parties, he himself never contested the election and the Constitution allowed an outsider to be the Prime Minister provided he gained enough support to form the government.

Kukrit had not much to say about Dr Pridi as mentioned at the beginning. Both men shared different views. **From my interview with Mr Sala Likitkul on 28 January 2000, he offered very interesting comments which will be discussed right away.** Mr Sala is now 85 years old and still works for Siam Rath. He uses his pen-name “The Old Soldier.” Mr Sala is a long-time colleague of Kukrit and the Siam Rath co-founder.

To Mr Sala, M.R. Kukrit did not share the same views with Dr Pridi on three main issues, namely:

1. Kukrit disagreed with Pridi who was the architect of the June 1932 Revolution as King Rama VII had already planned to hand the Constitution to his people. Thus, there was no need to be in a hurry to stage a coup against the King. Kukrit was of the opinion that even after the revolution, nothing had been changed in the administrations; the Civil and Military service remained as they were in the beginning of the Ayutthaya Period.

2. Kukrit was not satisfied with the explanation of the government under the leadership of Pridi in connection with the tragic death of King Ananda Mahidol. To Kukrit, the government could not reveal the truth behind the incident as people all over the country wanted to know what had exactly happened to their beloved king. Pridi eventually resigned and lived in exile.

3. Kukrit thought that Pridi’s influence led to the fall of the Khuang government whose work was still in progress and at that time Kukrit was the Secretary-General of the Democrat Party.

It is, however, to be noted that though Kukrit held different views from Pridi. He said that he had a great admiration for the senior statesman whose contributions to the country were immense.

Regarding the June 1932 Revolution, Kukrit thought that it should be done when Thai people throughout the country received higher education and better understanding of democracy. It is said that even after the June Revolution some people even asked if the democracy was the name of Phya Phahol's son. (Phya Phahol was the senior leader of the June Revolution.) But, to Pridi, time was ripe and appropriate to stage the revolution as there were several conducive factors which have already been mentioned in the chapter on Dr Pridi. Therefore, the two great men had their own reasons for belief and we should have a balanced judgement on this issue.

M.R. Kukrit as the Pillar of the Thai Democracy

Indeed, M.R. Kukrit was a staunch advocate of democracy and at the same time he was a fierce opponent of the dictators. Kukrit was a man of compromise but not with the dictators as he was ready to fight tooth and nail to uphold democracy in the country.

His (Kukrit's) determination to promote democracy apparently stemmed from his disappointment with the way the country was run. "No one seriously thinks about what they have to contribute to democracy," he said, referring to what he saw upon his return home from England in 1933.²⁴

After launching the first issue of Siam Rath on 25 June 1950, Kukrit used Siam Rath as a tool to oppose dictatorship and as a result it sometimes put him in trouble as we shall see later that he was sued for defamation twice; first by Field Marshal P. Pibulsongkram and second by Dr Pridi Banomyong.

No one can deny that, "In those crusading years, Siam Rath played an influencing role in moulding public opinion. Its political cartoons made even Field Marshal Sarit, the most powerful leader during military dictatorship, tremble."²⁵

Kukrit's tactic in his war against military supremacy seems to have been: "Don't attack them directly and obviously. But try to make fun of the whole gang. Encourage people to laugh at them. Laugh them down. Kick them

with your laughter. We could not conquer them with guns (We have only small knives—you know that better than me ...), but try to ridicule them. When the people laugh, they will lose face and lose everything. They will be as naked as chickens, running away from us.”²⁶

Before making further discussion, it is essential to know as to how Kukrit viewed democracy. To Kukrit, Democracy means rights, liberties and equality. But rights in the democratic system must always be accompanied by duties. Liberties in the democratic system mean individual liberties that shall not affect liberties of other people in any way. At the same time, equality in the democratic system means equality of opportunities in all types of profession, including the equality of advancement in their career.

The constitution not only gives rights to the people but also sets duties for the people to uphold. The constitution gives liberties to the Thai people and at the same time, it protects liberties of people from being threatened or violated, and the constitution shall guarantee the equality of opportunity and of law which is the most significant one.

It is to be remembered that the Constitution and the Democratic system will not be able to solve the problems of high prices of goods, theft and robbery, corruption and others. If anyone thinks that after the promulgation of the constitution, such problems will be automatically solved, he or she will be disappointed. Meanwhile, the constitution, if strictly followed by the people who have democratic minds, will open an opportunity for everyone to solve those problems in accordance with their duties, knowledge and abilities, and this will give us a government which feels that the hardship of the people is also their own problem.²⁷

To uphold democracy in the country, Kukrit adopted all tactics to encounter the military dictatorship as previously mentioned. “It can be said that Kukrit is a real fighter for democracy. His writing in Siam Rath reveals that he is ready to fight by every possible means to have a real democracy that belongs to the people, not to any individual or any groups of people. His struggle for

democracy sometimes affects the interest of some people or causes dissatisfaction to some people. By nature, Kukrit does not like to use violent means or aggressive methods. He prefers to face the situation with a stable mind and calmness.”²⁸

Indeed, Kukrit is a journalist whose integrity and media etiquette are unquestioned. This can be seen when he launched his newspaper, *Siam Rath*, he used the Buddha’s saying as the slogan of his newspaper and it is still used as a guideline. The slogan says, **“Praise the person who should be praised and blame the person who should be blamed.”**

The year 1951 was a critical period for the Thai media as a whole since the attempted coup of June 1951 against the Pibulsongkram Government, also known as the “Manhattan Revolt”, ended in failure. Prime Minister Field Marshal P. Pibulsongkram introduced strict measures to control the press. He issued a censorship order on all newspapers and there was no exception for *Siam Rath*. Kukrit thus countered the government censorship by using different strategy, that is to say, he would present news in a nonsensical manner which was aimed at making sarcastic comment about the government. At the same time, he wanted to make everyone realise of the fact that the job of the journalist was to present a reliable and informative news to the public, if the freedom of the press was curtailed, their expression would be nonsensical as it appeared to the masses.

During the period of censorship, most of the news headlines of *Siam Rath* would run as follows;

“Urgent report from Kukrit says that the sun at Hua Hin (a seaside district of Prachuap Khiri Khan Province) rises in different direction from the sun in Sri Racha (a seaside district of Chon Buri Province). This indicates that there may be two suns and the world is still round.”²⁹

Other headlines would go in similar manner such as the one below:

“The sparrows are engaged in a gang fight, it is suspected to be due to a love affair between a husband and a wife.”³⁰

The above are the examples of news headlines of Siam Rath during the critical period, not only the headlines which ran in such a manner, even the content of the news itself gave nothing to enlighten the masses. They were kept in darkness without knowing what had actually happened in the country.

Kukrit himself attacked the government through his writing both directly and indirectly especially on the corruption charge and the prevailing dark influences in the country.

In fact, Prime Minister P. Pibulsongkram did not want to touch on Siam Rath as he knew fully well that the newspaper was under the leadership of Kukrit and the aim of Siam Rath itself was only to correct the wrong, it was not his personal enemy. However, he became intolerant of the way Kukrit wrote in the paper, particularly Kukrit's attack on the general election held on 26 February 1957 as “dirty election”. Thus, he filed a defamation suit against Kukrit in 1957, but the court let him free with a fine of 500 baht as mentioned earlier.³¹

It is very interesting to note that Dr Pridi Banomyong also filed a defamation suit against Kukrit in 1970 in connection with the issue of Siam Rath which linked Dr Pridi with the tragic death of King Ananda Mahidol. Even though Kukrit was not directly responsible for the article in the paper, he had to take responsibility in his capacity as the Managing Director of the newspaper. The case, however, had been settled by printing an apology statement on page 5 for seven-consecutive days in Siam Rath which was named as defendant and the loser in the court case.³²

Meanwhile, with the lapse of time, Field Marshal P. Pibulsongkram gradually lost popularity with the armed forces, especially the army which was headed by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat who had later overthrown the Pibulsongkram regime in 1957 by staging a bloodless coup.

It is to be noted that the journalists in Siam Rath were free to write as there is no "party line" to follow. Kukrit never gave instructions to anyone to write, he gave only valuable advice. Even as prime minister, he often said that Siam Rath had to be free to criticise him and his government, there was no exception.

Mr Vilas Manivat, who had known M.R. Kukrit for three decades and used to serve on the Editorial Board of Siam Rath in 1952-53, recounted the situation during the censorship period at Siam Rath in his book, KUKRIT PRAMOJ: HIS WIT AND WISDOM, "The readers enjoyed Kukrit's humour in his daily column Let Me Answer Your Questions. Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat did not, however. One morning I arrived at the office and was told that all the papers were now under censorship. The battle had begun! All the staff were waiting anxiously for the lunch hour. (At Siam Rath there was no formal daily meeting, they used Office Lunch as a meeting time). What would be our boss's next move be? "The authorities will certainly enjoy their censorship, let them throw away the news that they don't want to appear in the paper," said M.R. Kukrit at the lunch table. "Other papers will suffer. No-sir, not us. We at the Siam Rath will still enjoy ourselves. But how can we-? I could not keep silent. This afternoon please send one of our reporters to the Ministry of Defence and count all the windows and doors. We will report to the people how many windows there are at the Ministry of Defence. The readers will enjoy reading this and our reporter will certainly enjoy writing such news. Imagine all those experts on censorship. They will get headaches and stomachaches every morning when they have to decode and try to read between the lines to find out the real meaning of the news, of which there is NONE! We made history by reporting such nonsensical information. I am sure there will be a record of this in a future *History of World Journalism*."³³

After the death of Field Marshal Sarit in 1963, he was replaced by his chief deputy, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn and during the Thanom administration that Kukrit was invited to speak at Chulalongkorn University

where he criticised, "The political situation of Thailand at that time was not a new phenomenon, but it had happened long ago, i.e. the political power was in the hands of one group of people and that group were the "military." Though there were frequent changes of the government, the power had never been changed hands. The change which could be seen were only the new face of the general who was going to be the new prime minister. Thus, the power was still in the hands of the same group of people. To be frank, there was no change at all."³⁴

It is to be noted that after the military forces led by Admiral Sa-ngad Chaloryu staging a coup, Thailand again returned to authoritarian rule in 1976 with the installation of the right-wing Supreme Court Judge Thanin Kraivixien as prime minister. "Though a civilian lawyer and former high court justice, he proved more repressive than any of his military predecessors. Press censorship was reimposed, labour unions banned, and student dissidents purged from the universities. Thanin even ordered the public burning of such books as Thomas Moore's *Utopia* and the novels of George Orwell."³⁵ Thus, the Thanin administration was criticised for bringing the Dark Period to the Thai politics. Kukrit launched a fierce attack on the civilian government all the time until Mr Thanin was dismissed by the military in October 1977. He was replaced by General Kriangsak Chamanand who initiated a more moderate and conciliatory policy. The political exiles were encouraged to return home.

During the Kriangsak administration, Kukrit also played an advisory role for the government. Prime Minister Kriangsak even followed the footsteps of the Social Action Party (SAP) by distributing the money to rural areas as direct assistance to the villages. Besides, Kukrit even sent Mr Boonchu Rojanasathien, the Deputy Leader of the SAP, to help Prime Minister Kriangsak in the field of economics. Mr Boonchu then used team work from the Bangkok Bank to help him laying down an economic plan so that they could solve several economic problems such as the problem of trade deficit etc.

Kukrit again took an active role in politics and he contested the general

election held in April 1979. Out of 301 seats, his SAP Party won 82 seats, but it was not enough to form the government. Above all, most of the elected MPs from other parties preferred to have a military man as their Prime Minister. Thus, Gen Kriangsak again became PM while Kukrit took up the post of the opposition leader. The government under Gen Kriangsak administered the country under pressure from various sources, including public dissatisfaction over the government's announcement on the price increase of oil, tap water and the electricity etc. Kriangsak thus resigned his post in February 1980 and he was replaced by General Prem Tinsulanonda who gained a majority support from most of the MPs and the Senators.

During the Prem administration from 1980-1988, the SAP Party under Kukrit's leadership had played the role of both of a government coalition partner and an opposition party. He supported Prime Minister Prem by sending his economic team to help the government administer the country. The general election of 18 April 1983 again saw Gen Prem as prime minister, though he had never contested the election.

Being fed up with Thai politics, as it still moved in the same direction he decided to turn his back to politics at the end of the year 1985 when he was 74 years old. He then assumed the role of political critic. It is said that Kukrit was a man of ideas whose comments might shape national policy or even the government as well. To correct the wrong, he was ready to criticise even Gen Chatichai Choonhavan who became PM in 1988-1991. In fact, Gen Chatichai used to hold a cabinet post during Kukrit's administration and he was one of the close allies of Kukrit. Kukrit said that he was easily fed up with things, so the Prime Minister should not make him bored. He added that at the beginning he would take side of the PM and supported him, but if the PM stayed in power longer than usual, he might turn to be a strong opponent of him as well.

It is to be noted that Kukrit's life time was mostly dominated by the influence of dictatorial clout, so the way he did or expressed might jeopardise

his career or even his life. If he was not a real advocate of democracy, he would not risk his life standing in the way of military dictators. Though he felt being humiliated sometimes, he never lost courage to uphold democracy and this issue will be discussed in the following topic.

Kukrit as a Visionary Leader

M.R. Kukrit was hailed for his far-reaching concepts especially his policy of distributing money into the rural areas and the Sino-Thai diplomatic rapprochement initiated by his government.

As a visionary leader, Kukrit was a dedicated and knowledgeable Buddhist scholar who put the Buddhist teachings and precepts into practice in his daily life. He was kind and merciful to those around him. To him, "To be happy in line with Lord Buddha's teaching, one needs to regulate one's mind and heart in a democratic system."³⁶

It cannot be denied that under Buddhist influence, Kukrit had great sympathy towards the poor, particularly the farmers who were the backbone of the country. In 1975, Kukrit told Mr Vilas Manivat, "I was born on a riverbank near a village up north, so we knew these people. I knew exactly their problems and their aspirations, what they would be satisfied with. All that knowledge, that close affinity with the farmers and the people in the countryside makes my present job very easy really, because I think I can understand more what they really want, what they would be really satisfied with and what should be done for them in the future."³⁷

It is said that one of the most notable achievements of M.R. Kukrit was the focus on the farmers as the keystone of national development policy. His government's Tambon (Sub-District) Council Fund poured an unprecedented 2.5 billion baht into rural development in less than a year. Surprising was the fact that most of the money ended up where it was supposed to go and had visible and valuable impact in enabling farmers to better their lives. Irrigation ponds and canals, bridges and other infrastructure identified by

the villagers themselves as necessary, were built. Roads were improved, health centres established and livestock improved. The programme was enormously popular and demonstrated to the farmers the government's concern for their welfare. The most notable effect was the official recognition of debt owed to the farming population for making the country strong and of the nation's dependence upon agriculture as the foundation of the national economy.³⁸

Kukrit wanted to distribute income to rural areas so as to lift up the standard of living of rural people by enabling them to have work and at the same time, by setting up the Tambon Council, it would pave the way for democracy in the long run and when asked to comment on this policy, he said, "Thai farmers are always poor because they don't have knowledge and are not expert on the world situation. This puts them in a disadvantageous position. Besides, they don't know how to manage their own income and expenses for the security of their future. These things must be done by means of education in various ways e.g. making them well-informed of the world situation and giving them technical knowledge about agriculture as well as learning how to use the machinery for the benefit of agriculture."³⁹

To sum up, his economic plan aimed at raising up the standard of living of the rural poor to enable them to stand on their own feet. Thus, his economic plan can be summed up in the following slogan, "Money distribution to rural areas guarantees the prices of agricultural produce, builds a house for the poor and gives them medical aid."

It is to be remembered that though Kukrit was born into a royal family, he spent a great deal of time in the countryside as branch manager of the Bangkok Commercial Bank. Even in his childhood days, his parents had a lot of friends from the farming class. Thus, he naturally understood the problems of poor farmers and decided to allocate money to the rural areas and at the same time to set up the Tambon Council.

When asked by the Asiaweek Magazine for its 22 October 1976 issue, "Isn't it true that there was some embezzlement of the money that you recycled into the rural areas?"

Kukrit said, “Of course, it happened. One village chief went to the District Office and asked for the money, which he had a legal right to do. Then he just ran away with it. Things like that happen everywhere. You must have this sort of mistake in a national scheme. But out of 26,000 projects all over the country, we had only 72 complaints. And out of those 72 complaints, 70 were due to misunderstandings. Only two were real.”⁴⁰

When he was further asked, “What percentage of the money that you sent out to the countryside actually found its way to the projects?”

Kukrit said, “One hundred percent! I would say this: 70% of the whole amount of money went to the people as wages during the dry season. That’s what we wanted it to be. And the other 30% went to the cost of raw materials like cement, wood, nails, iron.”

Again when asked, “None of it was siphoned off in corruption?”

Kukrit answered, “A certain amount of this 30% might have been, you know, shifted off through corruption into sinful hands. But not very much. Because the people were there looking at it.”

Whatever achievement of his policy may be, the criticism on its part becomes inevitable especially by certain newspapers and the Opposition Parties. To them, Kukrit’s policy caused a waste of money as corruption stopped money from reaching the hands of the people in rural areas. He was criticised as bringing popularity to the SAP Party and to himself. It is said that till today his initiative project has become a popular saying as “Kukrit roads,” “Kukrit bridges” and “Kukrit canals.” Kukrit’s name was immediately listed in a historical record of Thailand.

To Kukrit, the project of distributing funds into rural areas was similar to that of **“extinguishing a bush fire arising from poverty before it spread into the city”**. It helped create jobs for rural masses and expand prosperity to rural regions. As a result, the governments of Gen Kriangsak and Gen Prem followed the SAP’s footsteps but they changed the name of the project to suit their own administration.⁴⁰

Immediately after his resignation as Prime Minister, Kukrit said, "The criticism on the corruption of the project is always heard, but the money was directly sent to the Tambon Council, not through the governor or the District Chief as it used to be. Even though there was corruption, it was the first time that the rural people of Thailand got a chance to be corrupt. It was like a truck delivering water, though there was some leakage, it happened in the areas of the house where the soil got soaked and the plants would look green."⁴²

To Kukrit, "If we are afraid of the problem of corruption, we will not be able to initiate any project at all. Corruption arises everywhere, so what we can do is to punish the wrong-doers."

It is to be observed that apart from distributing the money amounting to 2.5 billion baht into the rural areas, Kukrit set up the Tambon Council which helped pave the way for democracy in the long run. This enabled the local leaders to be able to play a part in the local administration as local people knew their own problems better. So, the credit should go to Kukrit for his far-sighted concept.

Another achievement of Kukrit which won the most admiration was his historic visit to China in 1975.

Kukrit became prime minister during a period of gloom surrounding the country. This was attributed to the worldwide economic and financial turmoil due to the oil price rise, worldwide recession, the political changes in Indo-China originating from the fall of Phnom Penh to the Khmer Rouge on April 17, the capture of Saigon by the North Vietnamese troops on April 30, and the establishment of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos by the Pathet Lao on 2 December 1975.

In the wake of Indo-China's fall in Spring 1975, there were fearful rumours that it was only a matter of time before Thailand was overrun by the Communists. The fears were fueled by the theory postulated in the 1960s by American politicians that the Communists were bent on domination of the

entire Southeast Asian peninsula. The argument ran that once Vietnam fell the rest of the countries would topple like dominoes before the Vietnamese-led Communist onslaught. The fears were exacerbated by the general atmosphere of lawlessness in Thailand with violence and bombings a daily occurrence and labour strikes and walkouts being called seemingly more on whim than on justifiable grounds.⁴³

To dispel the Communist threat, Kukrit consulted his Foreign Minister Chatichai Choonhavan (later he was also the prime minister of Thailand) and both agreed to send Mr Anand Panyarachun (later he was also the prime minister) to China to help pave the way for his official visit to the Chinese mainland.

In fact, Kukrit's visit to China was not a direct result of the Communist threat alone. He was a visionary leader as described, the plan to visit China was already included in his policy statement which stated, "The foreign relations target will be: To conduct an independent foreign policy through the inauguration of friendly relations with countries which reveal a good intention to Thailand, irrespective of their political ideologies and systems of government by focussing special attention on such a super power as the People's Republic of China and the Indo-Chinese countries. Cordial negotiations would be opened for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Thai soil within one year."⁴⁴

Later General Chatichai Choonhavan commented on Kukrit's historic visit to China, "After careful consideration, I don't think we have other alternative in lessening the Indo-Chinese crisis, it is better to normalise relations with China. So, Prime Minister Kukrit's decisive decision has rescued Thailand from the Communist invasion narrowly."⁴⁵

The night before his departure to China, Kukrit gave the press interview in Hong Kong, "The Hong Kong press had asked me why I am going to China at all since the Chinese were aiding our communist insurgents in Thailand. I said, well, I don't see any connection. I represent the Thai government and I was merely going to China to make friends with the government of a sovereign state.

Communist aid to our insurgents I regarded as party affairs, I didn't regard it as a government affair so I had nothing against the Chinese government." And he (Chairman Mao) liked that.⁴⁶

It is interesting to note that Chairman Mao even told him how to deal with the Thai Communists as follows:

"First of all, don't issue any propaganda against them to tell the people they are bad, they are wrong and all the sort of thing. They won't listen to you, they are thick-skinned, these people.

Secondly, don't kill them all because they like being heroes. Killing them off would be equal to calling more people to be killed. They'll come to get killed; they like to be killed.

Thirdly, don't send any soldiers against them because you'll be wasting time and a lot of money. The Communists are in the jungle. If you send soldiers against them they will just run away. Or if you come to combat, they can't stand up against the government soldiers. But what happens after, when you get rid of the Communists in the jungle, the soldiers can't stay there forever, they've got to come back into the towns, to their barracks. And when they do, the Communists come back again. There's no use. You waste time and money.

Finally, he said the only thing to get rid of your Communists, the only way to defeat them is to see that your people are happy. See that they are well fed, that they have work to do, they are satisfied with their work and their station. Then the Communists cannot do anything."⁴⁷

However, when asked by the Asiaweek Magazine, "So you don't think Thailand is in any real danger of being the subject of a communist takeover?"

Kukrit replied, "No, Never. I never felt that at all. I'm living in fear of other dangers—of economic collapse, of peasant uprisings, of all that sort of thing ... of the prevalence of crime and banditry and of sheer starvation."

It is evident that M.R. Kukrit should deserve credit for the successful establishment of bilateral relations between Thailand and the People's Republic of China. The visit has helped lessen political tension in the region. Thus, it is

very appropriate to praise him as a visionary leader who initiated beneficial steps to bring about prosperity to the country as a whole.

Some Observations and Criticism on Kukrit's Ideas

We cannot deny that M.R. Kukrit has attained several achievements in upholding democracy and bringing about prosperity to the country. Among them can be listed as follows;

1. The setting up of the Tambon Councils which has helped pave the way for democracy in the long term,
2. The establishment of diplomatic relations with China so as to lessen the Communist threat on the territorial sovereignty of the country,
3. The successful launch of Siam Rath newspaper which became his effective tool in countering the influence of the military dictatorship,
4. Implanting political spirit for others to follow by tendering his resignation from his Parliamentary seat in protest against the proposal to increase MPs' salaries,
5. The successful allocation of 2.5 billion baht to the rural areas as a direct assistance to be managed by the Tambon Councils initiated by him.

The above are the major achievements of Kukrit who, at the same time, committed political blunders pinpointed by Mr Sala Likitkul, Kukrit's close friend. It is very fortunate that on **29 February 2000, I again had an opportunity to interview Mr Sala** who was very cooperative and revealed some useful information which had never been exposed to anyone before, even in the book written by Mr Sala himself.

To Mr Sala (I preferred to call him Ajarn Sala as a Thai way of expressing respect to a senior and learned person), "Kukrit's government had always been fragile due to his alignment with the parties that always struggled for Cabinet seats."

Mr Sala offered another comment, “Kukrit committed a great mistake in joining the unpopular government as a Deputy Commerce Minister under the P. Pibulsongkram government in 1949. I disagreed with him and even tried to persuade him to drop the plan. I never knew about the appointment before. On the day of Kukrit’s appointment I was on the way home and listened to the news from the radio. I at once went to meet Kukrit at home and urged him to drop the idea, but Kukrit insisted that the appointment was a royal command and as you know, Kukrit has great loyalty toward the monarchy. I told him that was a trick of the government to damage your rising popularity, and as it turned out Kukrit had to resign in just one month as a result of the pressure put on him by the government party’s members.”

Mr Sala added, “But I told the public that Kukrit joined the Pibulsongkram government with an intention of persuading Prime Minister P. Pibulsongkram to dissolve the House which earlier proposed to increase MPs’ salaries. Actually, I never told anyone about this before, since Kukrit has already died and I’m very old now (85). To be frank, I said so because I wanted to save the reputation of my friend, and I considered this matter as a political blunder committed by my friend.”

On the same occasion, Mr Sala added, “During the Prem administration, I urged him to accept the invitation extended to him by Prime Minister Gen Prem who wanted to appoint Kukrit as Deputy Prime Minister as Gen Prem had high respect on Kukrit. But Kukrit refused, giving the reason that he did not want to be second to anyone as he used to be prime minister, it seemed to be a matter of prestige. I insisted that if you accepted the post, you could do a lot of things for the country. Kukrit sent his friend, Mr Boontheng Thongsawat, to take the post instead and later Mr Boontheng lost the post of Deputy Prime Minister to Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila in a Cabinet reshuffle which brought great disappointment to Kukrit. Since that day, Kukrit has never held a positive attitude toward Gen Prem and sometimes launched a (written) attack on Gen Prem (who seemed to stay in power longer than usual

because Gen Prem took the post of PM by the majority support of the political parties, he was not an elected MP and not a leader of any party, he was an outsider). I considered this matter as a political blunder committed by my friend again.”

Mr Kasem Sirisamphan, however, had great admiration for Kukrit’s achievements especially Kukrit’s articles in Siam Rath which were described by Mr Kasem as “the voice of reason” and “the voice of admonition.”

Mr Kasem said that without Kukrit’s standing the articles could never have been so powerful in teaching the public and influencing those at the top in politics.

That quality was built up from Kukrit’s genius, shrewdness, good knowledge of various fields, vision and, most important, his bravery in doing things few would dare to do, Mr Kasem said.

Mr Kasem further said M.R. Kukrit’s strong belief was to protect the country and the monarchy. In politics, M.R. Kukrit’s was not an idealist but a pragmatist who put national interests above everything including his regard for particular individuals. M.R. Kukrit supported some prime ministers through his articles. But if he considered there was something wrong in the way they administered the country, he did not hesitate to say so. Gen Prem, for example, was widely known to have received a lot of support from M.R. Kukrit when he first became the prime minister. But it was M.R. Kukrit who started criticising Gen Prem strongly out of dissatisfaction with the government’s belt-tightening policy on the economy. In the end, there seemed no love lost between them.⁴⁸

Whatever it may be, Kukrit was one of Thai political thinkers who has done a lot for the country. As a human being he might commit some mistakes but that is his personal political mistakes that have never caused any harm or damage to anyone or any party at all. But as a learner of politics we should have some observations on what the great man has done and help throw some light on the dark side of the matter as well.

Kukrit's literary contribution

It is estimated that over 40 years M.R. Kukrit wrote about 150 books which are classified into five main categories, namely; Fiction (short stories), Historical tips, Religion, Articles on Politics and Miscellaneous Documentaries. Some of his best-known books, which are mostly written in Thai, are as follows:

1. Phai Daeng (Red Bamboo)
2. Si Phaen Din (Four Reigns)
3. Sam Kok (The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, sub-titled "Jo Sho: The Eternal Prime Minister")
4. Muang Thai Kab Kukrit (Thailand and Kukrit)
5. Pajjuban Lae Anakot Khong Sangkom Thai (Present and Future of Thai Society)
6. Kukrit Lae Naksuksa (Kukrit and Students)
7. Lok Kab Kon (World and People)
8. Prapeni Karntai (Ceremonies for the Death)
9. Phrarajapithi Tue Nampipatsataya (Royal Ceremony for taking an Oath of Allegiance)
10. Kukrit Kab Buddhasasana (Kukrit and Buddhism)
11. Sangkom Samai Ayutthaya (Society in Ayutthaya Period)
12. Phama Sear Muang (The Defeat of Burmese City)
13. Sam Nakorn (Three Cities)
14. Muang Maya (City of Pretending)
15. Thok Khamen (Narration of Cambodia)
16. Muangnai-Muangnok (Inner City-Outer City)
17. Khamen Sihanouk, Java Soekarno (Khmer Sihanouk, Javanese Soekarno)
18. Kon Khong Lok (People of the World)
19. Kukrit Kab Sangkom Muang Thai (Kukrit and Thai Society)

20. Chak Yipun (The Japanese Scene)
21. Thord Hua Khon (Removing of Khon Masks)
22. Prajathipatai Khong Chao Ban (Democracy of the Villagers)
23. Peesat Karn Muang (The Evils of Politics)
24. Song Kram Phiew (The War of Race)
25. Song Kram Yen (Cold War)
26. America Nai Asia Arkane (American in Southeast Asia)
27. Karn Muang Nai Pajjuban Lae Anakot Khong Sangkom Thai (Politics at Present and in Future of Thai Society)
28. Kwarm Samphan Rawang Thai Kab Pratet Kommunist (Relations between Thai and Communist Countries)
29. Songkram Park (Verbal War)
30. Songkram Vietnam (Vietnamese War)
31. Farang Sakdina (Foreign Nobleman)
32. Kawow Ti Bang Pleng (The Koel at Bang Pleng)
33. Sai Fon (Falling Rain)
34. Khun Chang, Khun Phaen (Literature about a Love Triangle)

etc.

Thai Politics in Kukrit's View

It is quite interesting to observe what Kukrit thinks about Thai politics and the following are some excerpts from his speeches. In 1971, M.R. Kukrit was invited to give a talk in the academic seminar on the "Current Thai Politics and the Future of Thai Society" at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok.

To Kukrit, it can be said that the current condition of Thai politics is not a new occurrence as it has happened for a long time and it may date back to several hundred years in Thai history. That particular condition is that political power is in the hands of a group of people, and that group of people is the military. Since the transformation of the political system on 24 June 1932, there have been several coups and revolutions to change the government and up to now, it can be said that in Thailand the revolution or a coup becomes only one alternative to change the government, but in the past whenever there was a change of the government, it changed only the persons who formed the government i.e. the persons who became prime minister or ministers responsible for the administration. In reality, political power has never been changed from a group of people who hold power to another groups of people. Simply speaking, the political power is still in the hands of the same group of people who are the military and that means there is no change at all, the only change that can be seen is the new face of the a general who becomes a prime minister. We now have a new constitution, the provision of the constitution is apparently different from other constitutions as its provision clearly indicates that it will exactly protect the power of a group of the military and it will remain like that as long as possible. It can be seen that the constitution of 1971 does not open an opportunity for Members of Parliament (MPs) to take up the Cabinet posts on the one hand, and on the other hand, the current constitution permits the senators who are appointed by the military group or are trusted by the military group to take part in casting their vote at the time of a no-confidence motion against the government or a censure debate against the government and when the senators

have their voting-right and when we compare the number of senators and the MPs, the result will be in favour of the government at last, there can hardly be anything else.

When conditions go on like this, other problems of Thai politics are likely to come entirely from the real condition that currently exists. Before touching on another problem further, we should consider why Thai political conditions still remain like this, and if we look at our recent and older history, we will see that in Thai political history there was only the military group who were able to set up themselves as the influential power group that were capable of exerting influence for the fulfilment of their objectives and we call this group in English the “Pressure Group”. Thus, when the military group arises, another groups will also emerge, they are the civilian group, the farmers group, the traders group, the workers group and other groups and all of these interest groups have different ideals. In the political system, these interest groups will carefully watch each other and will never let anyone of them take advantage, they will always compete for their own interests and their groups. However, in Thailand there is no such a situation i.e. there is no other group or interest group which forms themselves to be “Pressure Group” and as the military group are aware of themselves and form themselves to be the “Pressure Group.” Actually, to be frank, other groups are really of no use as we can see that among government officials, there are many people who are good, honest and knowledgeable, but still they have no idea of forming themselves into pressure group, they never think of pushing anything for the fulfilment of their objectives. The government officials only think that if they want to do good for the sake of the country, or want to use their knowledge or intelligence for the benefit of the country, they must seek help from the military group and use the pressure of the military group to bring about benefit to the country as desired. This is a good idea or a good way of the civil servants as they have good intents towards the country, and they are able to achieve their aims, but there are also some civil servants who think only of their self-interest, thus

they seek help from the military group so that the military group will help protect their official positions, and this is another way to be realised.⁴⁹

Now we come to another group, known as the “Private Sector”, this signifies a group of businessmen, industrialists and the bankers, who can be considered as a “Pressure Group,” and they are a very powerful group because they have money, they have a lot of financial power, the economy of the country is in their hands. Again this group has no desire to form itself or find out any means to enable them to be able to form themselves as “Pressure Group,” they follow the footsteps of another groups i.e. they seek help from the military group who have political power and then push for the success of their objectives. Thus, the private sector invites military men who hold political power to be the Board Chairman of a bank or a company, including inviting members of the royal family who are the followers of the persons in power to be a Board Member or a Chairman of their companies. So, some persons hold the position of company chairman in so many companies that they cannot remember the names of those companies and whenever there is bad news about those companies, they will say with startled voice that they themselves don’t know that they are the chairmen of the companies mentioned. So, even the private sector itself revealed what they did was similar to that of other groups, as a result, many problems arise. If we really want democracy, I’m sure we’ll succeed. Suppose we want democracy, then democracy will occur only through the voice of protest and different opinions. Our country still faces one problem, that is, the civil service are still the largest industry of the country. A majority of new graduates will enter the government services. Actually, considering knowledge, intelligence and position, these new graduates are more suitable to have political right than any other groups of people as they have knowledge and intelligence to understand the reasons. However, after graduation and joining the civil service, they do not want to form a “Pressure Group” of their own, but prefer to stay under the command of the military group. So, the voice of protest and the different opinions which are considered as a part of

Latest Developments on M.R. Kukrit Pramoj

The introduction to the latest publication to celebrate a centennial commemoration of the late Dr Pridi Banomyong in May 2000, a book, PRIDI BY PRIDI, by Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, quoted Morakot Jewachinda's M.A. thesis on "The Images of Pridi Banomyong and Thai Politics 1932-83" as saying, "Three people were especially important in building up a public conception that Pridi had somehow been responsible for the young king's death. The first two who contributed to the public case against Pridi were the Pramoj brothers, Seni and Kukrit. The third architect of Pridi's demonization was Phra Phinitchonkhadi, a police officer, (who) was a brother-in-law of the Pramoj brothers". The situation prompted me to approach Mr Sala Likitkul, Kukrit's long-time colleague and Siam Rath co-founder, for a third interview with him so as to have a clear picture of the related events, and the following is the interview with Mr Sala held at a hotel adjacent to Siam Rath's head office on 24 July 2000, at 11.00 a.m.

1. Question: In your opinion, from where has M.R. Kukrit mostly been influenced? Or what influenced him most?

Answer: Well, talking about the influence on his concepts, I think the knowledge he used either in working or writing came from the long period of his studies at Oxford University. As you know, he began his studies at Oxford at an early age and remained in England for about 10 years. So, he gained a lot of knowledge and experience especially when he met fellow students who later became great personalities in their own countries. Thus, it was very important, when he returned to Thailand, that he could use English skillfully. To be frank, very few Thais have an excellent command of English. Kukrit could even compose sweet English poems. As I can remember, once an Englishman sent a letter to him, he helped correct English for the man as well, even Prince Wan Waithayakorn (Thai Adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1936) admired Kukrit for his excellent command of the language.

Meanwhile, the conceptual inspiration that enabled him to play an ideal role in Thailand stemmed from his loyalty and great respect for the monarch. Indeed, his strong loyalty to the monarch is beyond words, no one will ever really understand this, but I know fully well how deeply he respected the monarch, especially when he was young, he was said to be close to King Rama VI (Vajiravudh) as he grew up in the palace and King Rama VI was very kind to him and even jokingly asked him how many wives his father had. So, I think he was tremendously inspired by the monarch. By the time of the reign of King Rama VII (Prajadhipok), he had already reached an adult age when the political crisis that led to the transformation of the ruling system took place in the kingdom, so he thought that we were not actually ready to have democracy, but when we had it, he wanted it to be full democracy as he realised that the administration seemed to be undemocratic. To Kukrit, even after the 1932 Revolution of the People's Party, the system was still unlikely to be full democracy. Kukrit himself had seen the model of the democratic system in England for a long time, and when he compared it with that of Thailand, he thought that Thai democracy was of no use. So, he tried hard to push Thailand to have a democracy having the king as the Head of State, and this was the ultimate aim of his life. Actually, he had strong determination to do this since the very beginning of his task.

2. Question: Can you point out what type of contributions indicate M.R. Kukrit was a real democrat and a real fighter for democracy?

Answer: Actually, his prominent contributions have been made through the setting up of Siam Rath newspaper and his expression in the paper itself. Do you know why I said so? This is because when we launched Siam Rath in 1950, Kukrit and I were working during a period of pseudo-dictatorial rule as the rulers were not yet real dictators, but they tried to be ones. The rulers who were going to be dictators were Field Marshal P. Pibulsongkram and

Police General Phao Sriyanonda. To be frank, we launched Siam Rath to oppose dictatorship. Kukrit himself used the knowledge and experience he gained from England to fight with the dictators through his writing in Siam Rath. He once said to me, "We have no weapon, even a single catapult (slingshot for US) we don't have, so we have to fight them with the pens." So, we had fought with the dictators from 1950 until 1957 then the dictatorial rule of Pibulsongkram and Phao was overthrown by the Military Party led by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat. In fact, Pibulsongkram and Sarit were different in the sense that the latter was a dictator who was a strong upholder of the monarchy above everything else. So, Kukrit was naturally quite satisfied with new development, even then he still opposed the new ruler at all times as he did not want dictatorial rule. Sarit himself knew fully well about Kukrit's displeasure of his rule, but he was very clever. When he knew that Kukrit protested against him, he took Kukrit to his side by appointing him as either a Senator or Committee Member in his government. As a result, Kukrit's protest against him subsided for quite some time. That was a period of our journalistic work which had a policy and determination to oppose dictatorship, and eventually, dictatorship faded away from the political scenario for whatever reason, but Kukrit's Siam Rath and his writing in it certainly played a part in the disappearance of dictatorship in Thailand.

3. Question: Some people are of the view that the Pramroj brothers, Seni and Kukrit, contributed to the public case against Dr Pridi by linking him to the death of King Ananda Mahidol. Is this true or not? What do you think about this issue?

Answer: About this issue, first of all, we have to understand that these two brothers are the upholders of the monarchy with their hearts and souls. Thus, whatever happened to their beloved monarch, they would certainly worry about it. Now the conflict between Dr Pridi and M.R. Seni stemmed

from the fact that after the end of the Second World War, Dr Pridi Banomyong, in his capacity as the Regent, called back M.R. Seni, who was then Thai Minister to Washington D.C., from the US in order to take up the post of Prime Minister (1945) so as to negotiate with the US government as Pridi thought that if a Thai Minister to Washington who was also a member of a Free Thai Movement (Seri Thai was formed to oppose Japan) negotiated with the US to clear the country of war guilt, the negotiation would be fruitful and as it turned out, Pridi was quite right. But one issue that put M.R. Seni into conflict with Pridi was due to the fact that Dr Pridi urged M.R. Seni to sign a **“Formal Agreement for the Termination of the State of War between Siam and Great Britian and India”** with Great Britian as soon as possible, but M.R. Seni gave the reason that the agreement would put Thailand in a disadvantageous position, and after signing it Thailand would become a British colony immediately. So, he refused to sign and delayed it while Pridi wanted it to be signed quickly reasoning that the amendment could be made later. Thus, that was the first conflict between the two men. Then came the second conflict that involved the issue of war crimes. M.R. Seni said that all of them had to be arrested as they posed danger to the national security while Pridi disagreed with it, but Pridi did not say so directly, he revealed to Dr Thongplaew (who is also a friend of mine) that he disagreed with the legislation of the law on war crimes, but when the Assembly deemed it appropriate, he could not oppose it. Then the third conflict surfaced when they competed for the post of Prime Minister. After the resignation of Major Khuang Aphaiwong over the issue of the glutinous rice law, Seni thus wanted to become prime minister with the support of the Sahacheep Party. Khuang himself did not want to take up the post again as he did not want it to cause displeasure to Dr Pridi who was his revolutionary partner, but Seni insisted that in the democratic system there had to be a competition and he competed for the post (in 1946), but he was defeated, though he knew fully well that he had but a slim chance to win, he just stood for the competition. That is all. In the case of the death of King

Ananda Mahidol, in fact, M.R. Seni never put the blame on Dr Pridi. The only thing that he did not like was due to the fact that as prime minister when the king suddenly died, Pridi should take decisive action swiftly, he should not let the situation drag on so long that it brought public indignation against him. Now we move on to the conflict between M.R. Kukrit and Dr Pridi. It was due to the fact that Kukrit did not want Pridi to take up the post of Prime Minister as he thought that it would bring a bad name to Pridi himself since Pridi was already the Regent. To Kukrit, it seemed like the descent from a high place to a lower level. So, Kukrit went to protest to Pridi and I also accompanied him on that day. Kukrit staged a sit-in protest against Pridi at the latter's office, but Pridi stood firm in his decision. Kukrit thus declared in front of Pridi that if Pridi took up the post, he would be the first person to oppose Pridi in Parliament, and he did it as he pledged, he did not raise his hand in support of Pridi. Pridi got angry at the protest of Kukrit, and Kukrit's general debate in Parliament strongly attacked Pridi. Kukrit, however, did not believe that Pridi was involved in the mysterious death of the young king, but Kukrit was very much convinced that though Pridi knew fully well what it was, he refused to tell the truth to the public. Of course, Kukrit knew that the tragic event had no connection with Pridi at all as Pridi himself was a strong advocate of the monarchy, but Pridi never exposed the truth, just kept silent and even called it either "suicide" or an "accident". Kukrit then thought that Pridi was telling lies and he should not do that. So, they were not on good terms as a result of that matter. Later a mounting conflict emerged when Kukrit took sides with Major Khuang. Actually, Khuang and Pridi were good friends, but their friendship soon went sour when Pridi founded the Sahacheep Party and Khuang founded the Democrat Party. Thus, when the parties were fighting, friendship of their leaders automatically deteriorated. Anyway, I am very much convinced that regarding the death of the young king, both M.R. Seni and M.R. Kukrit never put the blame on Pridi, both of them believed in Pridi's innocence, but Pridi himself was afraid of being blamed on the incident, so things turned out as you know.

4. Question: In what way were you impressed by M.R. Kukrit the most?

Answer: My impression of M.R. Kukrit is of our eternal friendship that had developed since 1938, that is about 62 years now. We knew each other since we were army privates, but Kukrit was posted as an instructor; teaching finance to high-ranking officers. I was assigned to stand guard at the main conference room where he taught. Then, when Kukrit worked at the Bank of Thailand in the position of Chief of the Banknotes Section. He produced 50-satang banknotes (half a baht) which looked shabby and blurred (as a result of using old machine and printing difficulties during the war). So, I went to interview him and criticised him for producing “Kong Tek banknotes” (Kong Tek is false paper money which Chinese or Annamese burn at ceremonies in the belief that it will be used by their dead relatives in Heaven). Kukrit got very angry at being criticised, but we became better acquainted. Later I worked with Sri Krung daily in the position of editor-in-chief and the owner of the daily then decided to launch an English-language newspaper, *The Liberty*. We then had a meeting at the area called “Chalerm Krung.” We even became closer, and when Kukrit became an MP, (I established a new daily called “Kiatisak”) I invited him to write for my paper. Indeed, his writing was very popular. I think he was a genius and a man of culture. He could use beautiful language in his writing. Above all, he had a great wit while answering questions and I used to test him as I was an editor-in-chief of Kiatisak, that is why I know about this. When I asked him to write in my paper, he once wrote verses while sitting in Parliament, I don’t remember how many of them, and he sent them to me for publication. Kukrit wrote for my paper for a long time. His writing carried weight as the government would pay attention to whatever he wrote in his column. His writing sometimes caused confusion as well, for example, in his story of Si Phaen Din (Four Reigns), when arriving at an episode of a lady named “Mae Ploi” who was affected by morning sickness, the readers then sent in so many pickled mangoes to the office that we could not eat them all, and sometimes the readers were infatuated with Kukrit as a result of his writing as well.

5. Question: Did you have any position when M.R. Kukrit was prime minister and did the former prime minister ever consult you on any issue?

Answer: No, I did not have any position at all, and the former prime minister never consulted me officially, but I myself intruded to give him advice. As he knew that I was a straightforward person and used harsh words, he did not consult me. It was only sometimes that when we drank together, he would indirectly ask whether the appointment of the person named so-and-so to his cabinet was suitable, I then argued that he appeared to be distrustful, but don't ask me who he is, and as it turned out he dropped that man from his Cabinet list. Later he appointed one person to a Cabinet post, I then warned him that the person would make trouble as he was corrupt. Kukrit then asked what should be done as he had contributed five million baht as financial support to the party already, and later it was true the man was really corrupt. Apparently, Kukrit often raised indirect questions to me, so I gave him indirect and unofficial answers in response. To be very frank, Kukrit was a man of humour, as I remember, once I went to eat at his home, I said that when Kukrit became prime minister, the price of birdchilli was expensive, about 20 baht per kilogramme. Kukrit promptly retorted as to how much chilli I ate a day. I said, "quite a lot." Later he went to buy chilli grown in pot and put it on our eating-table and then invited me to eat. So, I was cajoled to eat his chilli. Actually, when he was prime minister, he also wanted to appoint me as either a Senator or his adviser, but I refused to accept them as I knew my nature when I got drunk, I would have quarrelled with people. That's all.

6. Question: Now we come to the last question, what do you want to do for M.R. Kukrit's memory most?

Answer: In fact, I used to talk with Kukrit even before his death about Siam Rath. At that time, he called me to his sickbed and asked me who would die first. I told him I did not know as I may die that day or the next.

Kukrit then told me that I could no longer carry on with Siam Rath as the paper needed a lot of money to keep it going, he himself had to mortgage his land and house just to keep the paper alive, and at that time he did it, not for business gain but for the sake of protecting democracy, opposing dictatorship and, above all, upholding the monarchy. Then I asked him why he did not let his son carry on the work, he said his son did not want to do it. (As a result, the paper was later sold to a construction business tycoon named “Chatchawan Kong Udom” or better-known as “Chat Tao Poon”.) Kukrit further asked where the mortuary urn of his body should be placed after his death. He then suggested it to be kept here or there. So, I asked why he had to worry about it as he would never know what people would do about his body. I told him that His Majesty the King would never let it be like that, he would, of course, sponsor the ceremonies of his death, and it was true, the ceremonies of his death were performed under royal patronage. I also told him before his death that I wanted to build two statues of him, one to be installed in front of Siam Rath’s head office with another one at the Social Action Party. So, Kukrit asked me when it would be built, I told him after his death, and then after his death I approached a lady named “Khai Mukh Xuto” who was also Kukrit’s student and a well-known sculptor for help. I gave her Kukrit’s picture and told her that I had no money. Luckily, she promised to do the work free of charge. But it was very unfortunate that she died before the work got off the ground. Now I still have no idea what to do about it. I have already discussed the issue with Siam Rath’s new owner, but he told me to wait as Siam Rath’s new office is going to be built with many storeys. But I think I will die before the thing gets done. The second thing I want to do for him is to turn his home in Soi Suan Plu into a museum of Kukrit, but I don’t know what his son will do about it. Since the death of Kukrit, I have never stepped in as his son doesn’t like me. (Up to now nothing has happened). To be frank, (immediately after his death) it was

possible to set up his museum as I kept a lot of things about him, e.g. his cassettes of speeches and the original handwriting of his column and so on. But now most of them have gone somewhere else. At present, there is nothing about Kukrit, except the promise of building his statue by Mr Chat. I hope to see these things done for Kukrit.

The interview ended here, I expressed my deep thanks to him for his kind cooperation. In fact, I could see the disappointment on his face. Indeed, at the age of 85, he still looks very strong both physically and mentally. I hope the interview will help throw some light on the matter.



Prof Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija (1944–Present)



Interviewing Prof Dr Chai-Anan on 12 May 2000 at Vajiravudh College

CHAPTER FOUR

Introduction

PROF DR CHAI-ANAN SAMUDAVANIJA (1944-Present)

Prof Dr Chai-Anan is known as the “Prophet of Politics” and a “Sharp-tongued thinker” whose advice is constantly sought after by many leading politicians, top brass, top journalists and reportedly the Young Turks.¹

He was a strong opponent of the military dictatorship especially during the administration of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachon whose rule had lasted from 1963 to 1973. Dr Chai-Anan played an active role during the Students’ Uprising of 6 October 1973 which led to the collapse of the Thanom regime. He said that he was different from other academics who mostly preferred to serve the military dictators, but he opposed the military rulers through peaceful means. Sometimes his life was put in danger, even then Dr Chai-Anan was still committed to his strong determination to uphold democracy in the country. His strong loyalty towards the institution of Nation, Religion and the Monarch was condemned by the leftists. At the same time, the rightists often branded him a “communist.” He argued that those who condemned him were likely to be communists much more than him.

Dr Chai-Anan’s most notable academic achievement which has been widely accepted both in the country and abroad is the theory of “Tri-State Character” which has three components, namely; S (Security), D (Development) and P (Participation). The three components play significant roles, each taking turns to emerge in a pre-eminent position.

To Dr Chai-Anan, Thai politics cannot be viewed from just two dimensions—a la Aristotle who liked to dichotomise. The dynamics of change don’t apply to only be this. It could also be the coexistence of heterogeneous properties like the Yin and Yang.

In order to avoid the fallacy of Western theory, the dynamic academic (Dr Chai-Anan) proposed a brand-new theory which he called the “Tri-State Character,”² and this theory will be discussed in greater detail later.

A Brief Biography of Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija

Dr Chai-Anan was born on 23 February 1944 into a well-to-do family. He grew up in a warm atmosphere of love and tenderness provided by his parents and senior relatives who had a noble background. At the age of five, his parents sent him to study at a boarding school owned by his relative for a few months and in the same year (1950) he began his formal education at Vajiravudh College, a boarding school for boys modelled upon the English public school founded by King Vajiravudh (In 1996, he was appointed by King Bhumibol as Director of this college). However, in 1957 his father sent him to study at St. Augustine's school in Kalimpong, India, near Tibet, but he was called back in just a few months due to the Chinese invasion of Tibet and his father thought that the influx of refugees to India might bring danger to his son.

Chai-Anan then resumed his studies at Vajiravudh College, completing his high school education in 1960. He did not think that he was an outstanding student as his adolescence was spent mostly on sports and other recreational activities. In any case, he came second in the entrance examination to study Law at Chulalongkorn University where he studied only one year before leaving on a Colombo Scholarship to study Political Science at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand and earned a bachelor degree in 1966.

Dr Chai-Anan became a political scientist "by default"³ as he had no idea what he actually wanted to be except "a judge in the world court" knowing not at that time whether such a thing existed or not. But his interest in politics undoubtedly was formed since his father, then Police Lieutenant Chana, was arrested on charge of being a conspirator in the abortive "Chief-of-Staff Coup" in October 1948. Fortunately, his father was released by General Pao Sriyanond who did the investigation and who thought that he might be able to use his father later. His father was later promoted to the rank of Police Major General and became the first Thai ambassador to Cambodia after the Thai-Cambodian normalisation of diplomatic relationship.

His early career

Chai-Anan began his career life by joining government service in the Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation (DTEC) in 1967 but he worked there only for a short period of time before receiving a scholarship (Ford Fellowship) to take his Masters and later Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin in the United States of America.

After completing his Master Degree in 12 months in 1968, he returned to Thailand and began his teaching career as a lecturer at the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) on 6 October 1969 and in the same year, his wife, Mrs Supatorn (Sakornbutra), gave birth to boy and girl twins. Chai-Anan then left Thailand for his Ph.D. studies in the US at the same university. He returned to Thailand on 19 August 1971 with a Ph.D. Degree at the age of 27. The young academic then resumed his teaching job at the same institute (NIDA). A few months later, 17 November 1971, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachon staged a coup against his own government citing the reason of the failure of the democratic system in solving the country's problems and Thailand returned to military rule again.

Dr Chai-Anan strongly opposed the dictatorial rule of Field Marshal Thanom and was in a group of the young academics who wanted to sign their names in protest against the military rulers, but decided to drop the idea later.⁴ Included in the group were Dr Varin Wongharnchao and Mr Arkorn Hoontrakul (then prominent hotel businessman and former Bangkok MP who died of cancer on 4 March 2000 at the age of 55).

In 1971, Dr Chai-Anan along with Dr Varin Wongharnchao and Mr David Morell (a Ph.D. student from Princeton University doing research in Thailand) set up the TURA (Thai University Research Association) as recommended by Prof Dr Puey Ungpakorn, a leading and respectable academic who suggested that it was time to have an independent research association out of the control of the university, as during the Thanom regime

the military rulers also took key positions in the universities to ensure their smooth governing of the country. Dr Chai-Anan became the first secretary of the TURA and then he co-authored “Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction, Revolution (1981)” with David Morell.

It is to be noted that apart from a group of young academics who played an active role in opposing the Thanom regime, M.R. Kukrit Pramoj also played an important part that was well-recognised by the people, including Dr Chai-Anan who praised Kukrit in his book.⁵ While struggling against the military rule of Field Marshal Thanom, Chai-Anan became exhausted and many times wanted to give up, but he suddenly gained moral strength when Prof Dr Puey Ungpakorn wrote an open-letter to Field Marshal Thanom to remind him of the necessity of restoring democracy in the country. The situation later developed into a mass demonstration leading to the collapse of the Thanom regime in October 1973 as previously mentioned.

Dr Chai-Anan also criticised the military leaders who staged a bloodless coup against the government of Gen Chatichai Choonhavan whose party won the general election in 1988. The 1991 coup leaders called themselves “The National Peace Keeping Council (NPKC)” dissolved the government, imposed martial law and then abolished the 1978 constitution.

Dr Chai-Anan’s Contributions and Achievements

He is both an academician as well as an activist. Considering nearly 100 books he has had published, both in Thai and English, and countless articles and reports, and the active pace at which he moves through the Thai political world.⁶ In 1986, he was selected “National Outstanding Researcher in Political Science and Public Administration.”

Since his first job as a lecturer at NIDA in 1969 until the present, Dr Chai-Anan has held several significant positions. His most important tasks included being:

- an advisor to Prime Minister Prem on Administrative and Foreign Affairs (1980-1981),
- a member of the Constitutional Drafting Committee (1973-1974),
- Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Constitutional Hearing of which M.R. Kukrit Pramoj was the Chairman (1973-1974),
- Secretary of the National Assembly's Legislative Reorganisation Committee (1974),
- a professor in the Faculty of Political Science at Chulalongkorn University (October 1978-28 February 1995),
- President of the Social Science Association of Thailand (1989-1991),
- Programme Planner of Regional Studies Programme, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore (1980-1990),
- Senator (1990-1991),
- an advisory member of the Policy Advising Team of Prime Minister Gen Chatichai Choonhavan in 1991,
- a judge of the Constitutional Court (11 April 1997-30 June 2000),
- He is currently a Member of the Royal Institute, Chairman of Thai Airways International Plc, the Director of Vajiravudh College and the President of the Institute of Public Policy Studies.

Dr Chai-Anan said that some of his students complained that he was strange. While many people praised Dr Pridi Banomyong, Dr Chai-Anan wrote to criticise some of Pridi's ideas. But he argued that it was his responsibility to point out what should be criticised and he personally had a great admiration for Dr Pridi and his criticism of Pridi's ideas will be discussed later in the chapter in which his personal interview is included.

Prof Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija's writings in English

1. **Political Conflict in Thailand** (Boston: O, G&H., 1980, with David Morell)
2. **The Thai Young Turks** (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982)
3. **Leadership Perception and Security in Southeast Asia** edited with Mohammed Ayoob (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, 1989)
4. "The Military in Thai Politics" (with Suchit Bunbongkarn) in Zagaria Ahmad & Harold Crouch (eds.), **The Military in Southeast Asia** (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1985)
5. "Factors behind Armed Separatism: A Framework for Analysis" (with Sukhumbhand Paribatra) in Lim Joo-Jock and Vani S. (eds.), **Armed Separatism in Southeast Asia** (Singapore: ISEAS, 1984)
6. "Implications of A Prolonged Conflict on Internal Thai Politics" in William Turley (ed.), **Confrontation or Coexistence: The Future of ASEAN-Vietnam Relations** (Bangkok: Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1985)
7. "Political Institutionalization in Thailand" in Scalapino, Sato and Wanandi (eds.) **Asian Political Institutionalization** (Berkeley Institute of East Asian Studies, 1980)
8. "Internal Dimensions of Regional Security in Southeast Asia" (with Sukhumbhand Paribatra) in Mohammed Ayoob (ed.) **Regional Security in the Third World** (London: Croom Helm, 1986)

9. "The Bureaucracy of Thailand" Somsakdi Xuto (ed.)
Thailand (Singapore: Oxford University Press 1987)
10. "Thailand Political History" in Somsakdi Xuto (ed.)
Thailand (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987)
11. "Thailand" in Philip G. Altbach (ed.) **Student Political Activism: An International Reference Book** (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989)
12. Thailand: A stable Semi-democracy in Diamond, Linz and Lipset (eds.), **Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy** (Boulder: Lynn Rienner Publishers, 1990)
13. "The Three-Dimensional State" in James Manor (ed.), **Rethinking Third World Politics** (London: Longmans, 1991)
14. The Military and Politics in Thailand in **Democratic Institutions** Vol. 1 1992
15. "Political Contestation in Thailand" in Norma Mahmood and Zakaria Haji Ahmad (ed.) **Political Contestation: Cases Studies from Asia**
16. "Promoting Democracy and Building Institutions in Thailand" in L. Diamond (ed.) **The Democratic Revolution: Struggles for Freedom and Pluralism in the Developing World** (New York: Freedom House, 1992)
17. "The New Military and Democracy in Thailand" in L. Diamond (ed.) **Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries** (Boulder & London: Lynn Rienner Publishers, 1993)
18. "Thailand: Liberalization Without Democracy" (with Sukhumbhand Paribatra) in Morley, Jame (ed.), 1993, **Driven by Growth: Political Change in the Asia-Pacific Region**, M.E. Sharpe, New York, p. 119

19. "Bypassing the State", **New Perspective Quarterly** (Winter, 1995)
20. "Economic Development and Democracy" in Medhi Krongkaew (ed.) **Thailand's Industrialization and its Consequences** (London: Macmillan, 1995)
21. "Old Soldiers never die, they are just bypassed: The Military, Bureaucracy and Globalization" in Kevin Hewison (ed.) **Political Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation** (London: Routledge, 1997)

Chai-Anan's Theory of Three-Dimensional State

Tri-State Character or the three-dimensional state analytical framework focuses on the relationship of the state and other sectors of the society as manifest in three dimensions: security, development and participation.

Since Prof Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija presented his three dimensional state theory in the late 1980s, this analytical framework has been used extensively in Thailand and in the international academic communities. Lately, he added dynamism to this concept by linking the three-dimensional state with forces of change that prevail at different historical periods—internationalization, westernization and globalization.

More importantly, this concept has been accepted within the Thai policy-making circle as it helps reconcile what seems to be a confusing reality about the relationship between the state and the society; whether the state is growing stronger or weaker vis-a-vis the society. The distinction between the private sector and the public sector offers policy-oriented insights of this enigma.⁷

To Chai-Anan, by nature there are three forces which push human beings to live together in a society under the power which is above the family and community. The three forces have come into existence since the first

institution was established by human beings and continued to the present time regardless of the differences of society, economy or political system.

The three forces are;

1. Fear,
2. Desire to live a happy life, and
3. Desire to live with dignity.

These three forces are the significant basis for the state to survive and the state takes them as a reason in exercising its power. At the same time, the three forces are taken to be the expectation of the people who need the state's response.⁸

1. FEAR: Human beings are constantly occupied by fear through all periods, i.e. in a period in which natural occurrences were unknown to them and they were still unable to control nature, or even in a period of scientific and technological advancement. Human beings have a fearful feeling in all levels, they are even afraid of themselves (uncertainty feeling), of death, missing the loved ones or property, the aggression from others and being retaliated against as a result of his previous aggression on the others.

Having been occupied by constant fear, human beings thus seek security at least at a basic level e.g. the security of life, occupation and assets, including security in society as well as non-aggression from external forces.

The need for security due to the fearful feeling of invisible phenomena led to the emergence of faith, idealism, doctrine and various religions.

Meanwhile, physical and mental stability leads to the occurrence and development of two structures or mechanisms in society, namely; the mechanism of force and the mechanism of idealism.⁹

2. DESIRE TO LIVE A HAPPY LIFE: When human beings are able to survive and have basic security of life, occupation, residence and assets, they will naturally seek happiness in life which consequently leads to accumulation for tomorrow, next year and the next century for their offspring. A happy life

in this sense is taken to mean living under a just ruling power, free from oppression. Thus, if it is a ruling power that is able to provide “peace”, life under the state’s control will be “happy”. The first and foremost condition which guarantees happiness in life in the long run is the guarantee of the right to personal assets.

In this connection, peace and happiness thus take place due to the cooperation in a proportional manner between the state power and other sectors of society.

Our social history reveals that peace-happiness did not exist at all times, some periods were in a stage of hardship as living conditions were either affected by poverty or food shortage. Besides, the society which is considered as “peaceful-happy” must be a society in which peace-happiness cover wide areas, not limited to any particular group. The more the peace-happiness is given, the greater “legitimacy and justice” will prevail.¹⁰

3. DESIRE TO LIVE WITH DIGNITY: Human beings are considered to be a type of animal with dignity. So, they have not only their own languages, but also songs, play, sports and recreation etc. From childhood to old age, their desire to live with dignity can be seen from their desire to participate in activities such as dancing, singing and playing sports, and those who take part in such activities will then use these activities as the stage and the process of participation.

There are various types and levels of participation, in some cases, there is an overlap among them, so we should not pinpoint their exact type or level without considering other factors. We must consider them through multi-dimensions and various levels of participation in social, cultural, economic and political activities.

Thus, the three forces which link together and push one another have resulted in the emergence of the three factors of the state’s reason as the relations between the state and the society arise from the reason of these three forces and each reason helps implement one another.

To sum up, they are as follows;

Fear————→ the desire for stability and security,
Happiness————→ the development of the quality of life,
Dignity————→ the desire to participate.

Mode of Relations between State and Society

According to Chai-Anan, the study and analysis of the mode of relations between the state and society can be made only when three related issues have been considered and the three issues are as follows;

(1). **What is the structure of the state and society?** What are the tasks of the state and what are the main tasks and the secondary tasks of the state? Among the main tasks what are the prominent ones at what time and period? What natural resources (both material and human workforce) have been allocated most?

(2). **The structure of the state and the social structure, particularly how the economic structure is interrelated.** What is the structure that carries more weight in determining type, role-function and the change of another structure, and how each structure is affected by the forces outside the society?

(3). **The direction of change of the society has been pushed by what factor?** Whether it is by the “class-struggle” or by a force of various types, and this may not necessarily stem from the class-struggle alone, but it may arise from the attempt of the state to intervene in society and the interaction countered by many social forces, including class hierarchy and other groups of people who may have a mixed character of class hierarchy, region-local area, religion or faith and way of life.¹²

Type of Relationship

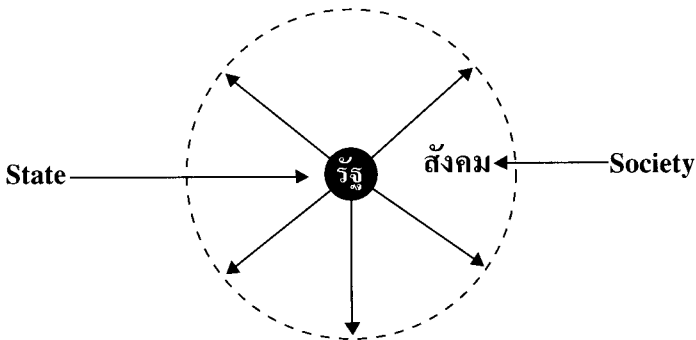
There are three main types of relationship between the state and society, namely:

- (1). State encircled society,
- (2). Society encircled state, and
- (3). Society-state cooperation.

Determining what type of relationship is prominent depends on three factors, namely:

- (A). The ability to control, to determine the direction of change and to maintain the status quo of such a relationship as to what direction it takes,
- (B). The decentralisation of structure and function,
- (C). The autonomy and the capability of self-adjustment and to utilise that autonomy to determine the type and the direction of the relationship, both the relations between the state's mechanism-the mechanism outside the state's control and the relationship between the mechanisms outside the state's control themselves.¹³

(1). State encircled society



In this picture, the circle represents the power of state and the state's mechanism which have four distinct characters and they still do not exist in the society, or even if they do exist, only unsystematically.

The four characters include the following;

(A). The centre of power has its own reasons to exist clearly and it also has the three factors of reason to exist permanently, that is to say, it has a desire to carry on the reason of such an existence.

(B). It has a centre of power which is strong and distinct and that power includes social-cultural, economic and political powers.

(C). At least, such a centre of power has a distinct area to protect, though the area of the boundary of influence and of the social-cultural, economic and political-military power is still uncertain.

(D). A centre of power has a mechanism of commanding power and idealism distinctly. It has been established systematically and there is a search for new resources to feed such a mechanism constantly and continuously.

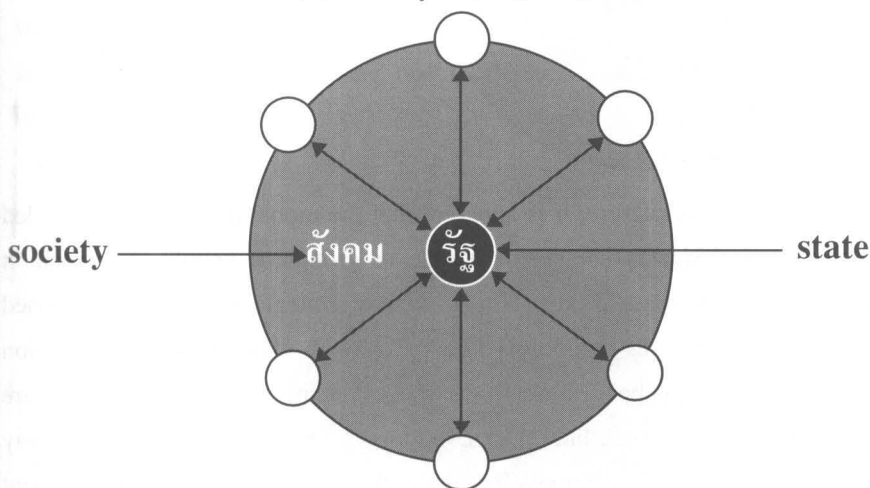
This simple model indicates that while a centre or axis of state's power has four characters as mentioned, the periphery still only just needs to survive without any danger. It is unorganised or it may be organised but is unsystematic and weak. Its resources and capability to mobilise or increase resources are little. It has less capability to protect-take care of itself and its own property. Its system of thought-faith is simple, not complicated. The important thing is that its existence does not systematically involve much of the community within the boundary of influence and the power of the centre.

The type of relations between the centre of central power and the community outside this society can be summed up as that of a type of relations which is called "State encircled society". Thus, the power of the centre and the centre itself are not only the axis of politics-administration, but the axis of the society as well. The collapse of the centre means the collapse of the society. A situation like this is the last case of state encircled society. Under this situation, the power from the centre will be responsible for determining the role of people

from all walks of life in the society e.g. caste and feudalism etc., and also determining the value and forms of goodness.

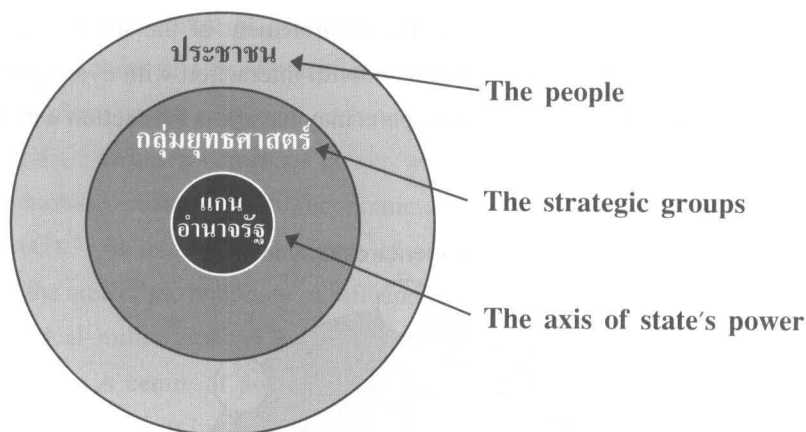
This does not mean that in a state encircled society; all parts of the society will communicate with the power of state constantly or there will be pressure from the centre at all times. The encirclement of the society by the state is not necessary to be the encirclement with interaction with every part of the society all the time since the remote parts may have less interaction with the power of state.¹⁴

(2). Society encircled state



In this picture, though there is a state mechanism, it is not a mechanism which has power above the society. It is, in fact, under the power of the centre of economic, political and cultural powers which are able to push the state to turn its reason and initial structure to be the reason and structure which are facilitating to the objective and the demand of various groups in society. In this case, it is called a "Society encircled state" which denotes a force outside state mechanism turning into a force that leads to change within society and eventually a certain part of the force that pushes for such changes seize the state's power for its own sake by forming an alliance with the group of various societies

which have transformed into strategic groups with objectives, policy and/or manifest interest. Here a systematic organisation has been set up and there are resources beneficial for the acquisition of influence and political power, and there is also a good communication system among them and their people.



In the above picture, it is apparent that the model of “society encircled state” does not signify society or people or groups of people in general, it actually signifies some groups similar to the strategic groups as mentioned earlier. These strategic groups may be a type with class or classless division (e.g. a group of businessmen with the rank of manager or executive who are not the owner of the fund, but manage the fund). The said strategic groups may be professional, racial, religious, linguistic, thought-faith, academic or student groups.

The strategic groups which are strong enough to “encircle the state” signify the groups with an ability to resist the pressure and controlling-absorbing power of the state’s mechanism as they will be able to exert an influence and power that are capable of dictating the state’s mechanism to perform in response to various objectives of these groups.

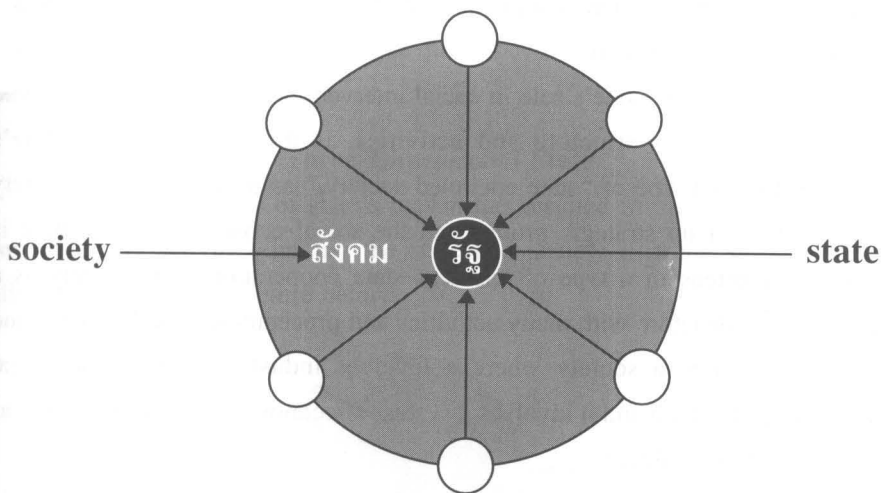
The encirclement of state by the social force is thus taken to mean certain strategic groups or an alliance of several groups are able to use the state’s mechanism directly or indirectly for the benefit of their own objectives.

The direct use of the state's mechanism can be illustrated as the strategic groups which are capable of controlling political power and have sufficient capabilities to use the bureaucratic systems of both civil and military as their tool, not to be the tool of state's mechanism.

In case of political power falling into the hands of several strategic groups, there must be an agreement and negotiation about the main objectives which will reflect the desire and benefit of those allies.

To sum up, a “society encircled state”, turns the state and its mechanism to be neutral or to be the tool of the society rather than that of the state and its mechanism as the initiator and performer. However, this does not mean that the state and its mechanism will have no role at all, they still have a role, but a secondary role, not the leading one in the relations between the state and society.¹⁵

(3). Society-state cooperation



This model explains the situation after the society has already developed to a certain level, in other words, after the strategic groups occurred in the society and have passed the stage of “society encircled state”. The emerging problem is the polyarchy in which the powerful strategic groups bring about a

problem to the democratic system that is based on participation and the ability of accessibility to the power of decision-making on policies. As time went by, the democratic system abandoned certain groups of people who had no influence and power, and were far away from a circle of power and did not really play a part in society and the economy. Even though they took part in political activities through voting rights and a full political right-freedom, they lacked the economic and social participation as polyarchy resulted in the establishment of institute and the cultural type of corporate favouritism as the public had no part in the ownership of such a corporation (both domestic and trans-national) at all. Thus, right and freedom in the democratic system based on the capitalist economic system are mainly the right and freedom in politics.

Such a problem leads to the demand by strategic groups and the people with less power and influence for the state to play a greater role in solving the problems of social-economic injustice, including the problem of degradation of resources, the environment and the quality of life. Thus, the state's intervention in the society is increasing.

However, the state's role in social intervention, if it is to be considered in the angle of its structure and activities, is different from the state's intervention in a type of "state encircled society," as in the first type, society has not yet set up strategic groups and the social-economic development is still low whereas in a type of "society-state cooperation," the society as a complicated structure with many activities and procedures, including laws and regulations. It is a society where a level of industrial and technological advancement is high and it involves a system of economy, society and global as well as regional politics.

When the state takes the role of social intervention, the society is thus in a strong position equal to the state's power, and hence it is called "society-state cooperation", that is to say, there is feedback from society (both from strategic groups with power and the powerless strategic groups and the affected people).

This is due to the fact that the state's intervention has taken place in a situation that has already passed the level of social, economic and political development in a type of "society encircled state."¹⁶

Area of Relations

The relationship between state and society has three types, namely;

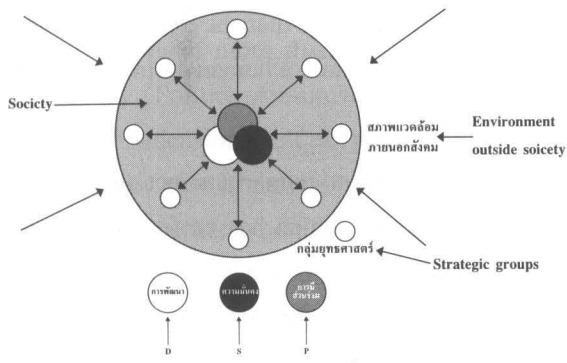
- Development,
- Security, and
- Participation.

Even though we have separated the three areas in order to visualise each dimension, in reality the three areas are actually interrelated and overlapping.

When we mention the area of each dimension, we thus mean the activities which may indicate in what dimension such major activities are, in other words, the minor activities may have one or two dimensions that link together more or less proportionally, but to mention that Activity A is in the dimension of security, that means most of such activities have been performed by the structure belonging to security.

Three-Dimensional State

The three factors of state's reason has resulted in the establishment of structure and activities linking the state and society in three sides or three dimensions as in the picture below.



The structure and activities of state in these three dimensions occur as a result of the three reasons of state as already mentioned. At present, we know the three characters of state as Development, Participation and Security respectively.

DEVELOPMENT is a new word, but it indicates the main and initial reason, that is the search for happiness through development for the best quality of life. For most people, what the level and the mode of development will be depend on the historical development of each society, internal and external environment of the society and other characters of the society such as the character of natural resources and human beings, including the social-cultural, economic and political systems as well as the change of the response to a change. To Chai-Anan, Development (D) would occur only when people had happiness. Thus, they related to each other as Chai-Anan thought that if people wanted to have the best-quality of life, they needed Development (D) to enable them to achieve the desired result.

PARTICIPATION, in this case, is a general term, it does not mean any particular type of democracy. It actually means having the right-duty-participation of all types, namely; social-economic and political participation. To Chai-Anan, since human beings considered themselves as a type of animal with dignity, they wanted to participate at various levels of participation e.g. social, cultural, economic and political activities. Above all, by nature human beings had a desire to participate so that they could live with dignity. Thus, Participation (P) took place as a result of human desire for dignity and democracy seemed to suit this category.

SECURITY is very close to human instinct and is the initial reason for the state to establish a structure which has performed activities continuously and for a long time. Thus, security is an essential foundation of state and society.¹⁷ To Chai-Anan, human's fear led to the search for Security (S) and

without Security (S) human life would be constantly occupied by fear through all periods. Thus, to live without fear, they adopted two mechanisms, namely; the mechanism of force and the mechanism of idealism. Examples of this could easily be seen, for example, in the military pact or alliance at regional and global levels.

Three-Dimensional State in Western Society

According to Prof Dr Chai-Anan, every society has a structure which performs duties in response to the basic needs of these three dimensions. In Western society, the economic and social changes, which resulted in the adjustment of the economic system based on the producing factor together with technology, have created prosperity for their people. Actually, in such a society there is also a simultaneous adjustment of the structure of political and administrative power in order to respond to the social-economic change. The most important development is that the force which helps accelerate the enlargement of the Development Dimension is actually the one differing from the force in the structure of the Security Dimension. Therefore, a centre of the economic power has clearly been separated from a centre of old power which included the bureaucratic system and the security system (The Armed Forces).

The Participation Dimension is thus the essential part that coordinates and creates continuity for the economic and industrial development emphasising fund, labour and technology so as to bring about political legitimacy. The democratic system has thus occurred as a result of the pushing force of the Development (Economy) much more than that of the pushing force or the adjustment of the Security (Politics-Administration).

The Development Dimension itself put pressure for the structural change of the Security Dimension, that is to say, the structure of the old Security Dimension which was the political-administrative tool of the old group of leaders has been transformed into the political structure of the Development Dimension (Economic structure) as well as being the tool of the Development

Dimension. Meanwhile, the old structure of the Security Dimension has been used for protection or adding greater security for the society. In some cases, it turns out to be the tool for seeking and protecting its colonies.

The Participation Dimension in Western society, after the initial period of social-economic change, was just an open door for the participation of the strategic groups only. Later, when this system remained until there was an institute responsible for coordinating interests between the old strategic groups and the new strategic groups, and after the institute had been firmly established, the expansion of the Participation Dimension was then made to cover the people at large.¹⁸

Theoretical Conclusion

To Prof Dr Chai-Anan, it is apparent that the current Western society e.g. England, the US and the Scandinavian countries is a society in which the Dimensions of Security, Development and Participation are overlapping almost completely as there is a link between the state's reason and the target of force outside state's mechanism. The change in idealism, structure and the duties of the agent to be that of the representative of the highest political institution has brought about legitimacy and the ability to proceed with its idealism-organisation of the political system which has separated from the bureaucratic system. On the contrary, it is to be observed that in an agricultural society which is going to transform into a semi-industrial society, the three dimensions have their own separated areas with a specific structure and they would rather compete-contradict than cooperate-coordinate. Their specific idealism is in contrast to one another and they still search for a specific legitimacy much more than that of the overall legitimacy. The important thing is that state's mechanism has acted as the agent of the society for a long time prior to the emergence of the mechanism of a new political system. Above all, the newly-emerged system happened to originate from the advanced state's mechanism rather than the backward state's mechanism in the old system, but

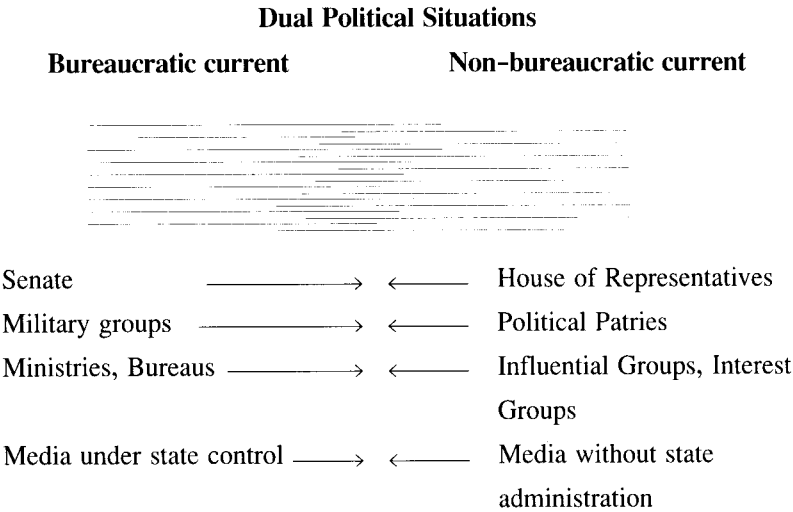
it did not originate from the social force outside the bureaucratic system. The political dual situations thus have an eminent character of political relations in the society in which the three dimensions are still separated, and this has resulted in a conflicting dispersion rather than the consensual dispersion. The symptom of this disease can be seen from the frequent changes of the principal rule (The constitution) and there is still no consensus between the strategic groups and the state's mechanism, and this can be seen in the events as; the revolution, the coup, violence political uncertainty, several critical situations especially the legitimacy in every level (system and the administrative rule, the government and the leaders, the confidence in the bureaucratic system and the officials) and the succession of power.

As a result, what the Western academics called "Institution" has hardly occurred in a sector outside the state's mechanism. At the same time, the bureaucratic system is unable to claim its legitimacy without any conditions. Therefore, the bureaucratic system itself is unable to transform itself from being an agent into a representative, but the force outside the bureaucratic system still lacked the continuity and it takes democratic rule to cover the social structure which has a historical development as in a type of "State encircled society." This has resulted in confusion and competition over becoming an agent and a representative in a manner that the state's mechanism (the civil and military bureaucratic system) will claim to be an agent of the national interests and accuse the political institutions such as the House of Representatives, Political Parties, the Influential and Interest Groups of being only the agent of a partial interest, not in entirety, thus they cannot claim legitimacy in their capacity as the real representatives of the people.

The emergence of dual situations is that two political currents compete to be the agent and representative of the national interests and the national interests do not originate from one side of the reasons, they actually originate from three reasons and have objectives, structure and activities in three areas of the three dimensions; namely, Development, Security and Participation. These

three dimensions, both the bureaucratic current and non-bureaucratic current, are competing-struggling for support from the strategic groups and the people and each system has its own agent and representative.

Consequently, the fact of the matter is that each system is unable to have an absolute legitimacy without having the existence of another system and current, the system of semi-bureaucracy or semi-dictatorship-semi-democracy is thus the reflecting scenario of conflict-collision of the two-system-the two-currents in the picture below.



The above picture presents the mixture of the two-systems-the two-currents which have their own reasons, objectives of existence, structures, activities and their own resources. These things are in conflict and collision.

Prof Dr Chai-Anan, meanwhile, made main theoretical observations as follows;

(1). To bring the three dimensions relationship between the state and society to become the focus for the creation of a model of the political system. How is this different from the model of the Western political system which is the main current?

(2). Can this model be used to study other political systems apart from the Thai political system? How?

(3). Is this model of the Three-Dimensional State the structural model as already analysed by others or the model which is a mixture of the model of idealism, structure-duty and the social, economic and political changes?¹⁹

Three-Dimensional State Analytical Framework

To Prof Dr Chai-Anan, the significance of the Three Dimensions or the Tri-Characters is that each side must interrelate to one another inseparably, and each side is pushing one another and moves together simultaneously. Even though in some situations, one dimension may be the major side and the others are the minor, the minor sides still exist and are not eliminated or obscured completely. These three dimensions of state occurred as a result of a long development and did not derive only from the force within the society, but also the external influence. The three-dimensional state is the product of Thai society in a new era after 1932 and has become more eminent after the beginning of the era of development. It occurred alongside the challenge to the state power by the use of violent force by the Communist Party of Thailand, including the reform force of a certain group of people who had gained the political awakening.²⁰

Definition of Three-Dimensional State

Before further discussion on the Three-Dimensional State of Thailand, it is essential to conceive the definition of the Three-Dimensional State as given by Prof Dr Chai-Anan in his own terms. The Three-Dimensional State means the state that combines the purpose of state in three sides together, namely; Security, Development and Democracy (Participation) and there is a structure to support these intangible three dimensions. Security is the major aim of the nation-state and its main structure is the state apparatus (mechanism) to be used for exercising coercion power and there is a law to support the use

of legitimate violence. Development is the new reason of state that enables the old state apparatus to be able to adjust itself and its role, including its excellent continuity of the capitalist system. At the same time, the continuity of the capitalist system through “the social and economic development” enables the state apparatus to expand itself wider and intervene in all parts of the society vertically and horizontally as well as becoming a pin fastening together the system of economy-society-global politics and the major system of economy-society-Thai politics. Democracy is the political dimension that better coordinates with Security and Development in the capitalist type in the end or in the long run, but in the beginning Democracy would be the dimension of the three-dimensional state which challenged the first dimension (Security) and brought about conflict in the society as the power groups were affected by too much emphasis on the first two dimensions.

A great problem of Thai society is how these three dimensions of state will have equilibrium and suitable proportions that are capable of pushing for social change for the greatest benefit of the majority of people and enabling the state to be able to face the changes in the world effectively.

Salient Features of State and Thai Society

Prof Dr Chai-Anan has made an interesting observation on the salient features of state and Thai society as follows;

(1). State and Thai society are of diverse sub-structure in themselves, in terms of political power, economic character, social character (race, tribe, language and culture) and there is the irregularity in their sub-structural development as said.

(2). The mentioned diversity and irregularity have existed continuously for a long time and received impacts from forces outside society at a certain point until there was a mixture among the three dimensions, namely; Security, Development and the Democracy. The diversity and irregularity in

sub-structure of the state and Thai society have thus been reduced, but do not cease to exist completely.

(3). The relations between state and society are in the form of “state above society” rather than “society above state.” In other words, in general and in the historical social development, state and its apparatus, both in using coercion power and idealism, dominate and determine the direction of social change much more than the social force dominating and determining the direction of change. Thus, the state has greater autonomy. As a result, in social change the force which has an effect on pushing for changes in either economy, politics or cultural-thought-social belief derive from the superstructure (state-state apparatus) which is the major side whereas the other forces outside state apparatus are the minor sides.²¹

Three-Dimensional Thai State

According to Prof Dr Chai-Anan, the study on the relations between state and society needs to take into account the character of the state resulting from the change within society and the pressure outside society. The state which leads a society such as the Thai state is thus a state with high capacity for adaptation and it is an activist state which actually means the state with high capability of movement and it is an actor rather than a receiver.

The adaptation of state is taken to mean;

(A). The adaptation of “state’s reason” which leads to the adaptation of the main idealism of political-economic social system,

(B). The adaptation of apparatus both the apparatus of using coercion force and the apparatus of moulding the society in order to serve the growth of the organisation of the new power within the society,

(C). The combination of force between state apparatus in order to face the crisis both within and outside the country.

Prof Dr Chai-Anan further says that up to the present time, the Thai social-economic-political development has enabled the Thai state to have a character relating to one another inseparably i.e. the three dimensions of Security, Development and Democracy. Thus, I call the current Thai state a “Three-Dimensional State.”

The three-dimensional state is an activist state that coordinates the reason of existence on three sides inseparably as Security alone will result in the ruling class being isolated from the social force, however, Development without the dimension of Security will again make the social force lack stability and continued security which is the protector of the economic system especially the capitalist economic system. At the same time, emphasis only on the dimension of Democracy without taking into consideration Security and Development will inevitably lead to dissatisfaction among the people of political importance e.g. officials in state apparatus as they are controlled by the social force so much so that it leads to the overthrow of the political institution in a democratic system.

(1). Security Dimension

Security Dimension has been the main purpose of the Thai state for a long time and is the first step of functioning of the nation-state in modern times in line with the preservation and the continuity of all types of political-administrative system. The structure of Security Dimension is the state apparatus of using coercion force (the Armed Forces and the Police). Security is the condition of maintaining peace in society and preventing external aggression. As a result, this structure of state has occurred before any other structures of state. Therefore, this state apparatus is significant with a long historical development and has always been improved to be up-to-date and strong. Keeping this in mind, the armed forces and the military thus mainly have a political character as the armed forces are the main state apparatus in using violent power supported by law. Security Dimension will become more significant

than any other dimensions when the state gets challenged from either within or outside the society and in case the power that challenges the state power in the society gets support from external power, it will add more significance to this state apparatus in having a greater role than any other apparatus and a top priority will be given to the Security Dimension in allocating resources from the state as well as citing the reason of state's survival to be of more vital important than any other reasons e.g. Development and Democracy.

Even though the Security Dimension was the significant character of sustaining the state from an ancient time, in a period before the communist challenge the Security Dimension did not bring about any adaptation-enlargement of the state apparatus in all sides as it happened in a period of a tangible fight with communism.

It is to be noted that the Security Dimension of state was put under direct pressure from the external forces of a friendly superpower which gave strategic protection to this region. Thus, the adaptation of state apparatus in Security Dimension was the starting point of the adjustment of state apparatus in other sides to follow suit. The armed forces and the police which were the state apparatus for the use of coercion force had been added with sub-structure to counter the threat on state through the recommendation of the United States. The establishment of the Border Petrol Policeman, the Special Task Forces' Centre and the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) was made possible by the US recommendation, not the Thai government's own initiative as in the initial period the major state apparatus (the Armed Forces) could not adapt itself to counter a new threat. Above all, a majority of leaders in the armed forces were mainly educated-trained in the fighting of a conventional war.

Faced with the challenge from the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), the Security Dimension thus became more multifarious than the Security Dimension before such a challenge as in the past national security was equal to that of the sovereignty and being free from external aggression, or having the

capacity to counter external aggression-threat. As a result, state apparatus (the Armed Forces) had only one reason to exist, that was to engage in a military warfare with the foreign forces, or in some cases there was the use of military forces to suppress internal turmoil, but in general it could be said that state apparatus (the Armed Forces) had a more military character than a political one. Up to the regime of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat (1959-1963), the armed forces then had gradually a more political character.

Even though the military group had played a part in the Revolution of June 1932 and several coups during 1932-1951, the military group did not completely abolish the democratic system of government. Apparently, the Democratic Dimension stayed alongside the Security Dimension for a considerable period of time, though it might lack the continuity (The interval was the result of Field Marshal Sarit's coup in 1958.), after which the democratic process was eventually restored.

To Prof Dr Chai-Anan, the state's reason relating to the Development which eventually becomes the new reason of the Thai state is actually the direct result of a strategy adopted to counter communism as the US had a policy to fight communism through speedy rural development and the creation of economic growth. This coordinated Security Dimension and Development Dimension effectively. Actually, the acceleration of rural restoration through the building of roads and other basic structures had always been concealed by the strategic dimension of security.

The acceptance of new strategic Security and Development has affected the character of the Thai state in its reason-new idealism which brings the economic development to replace democracy and reduces the Democratic Dimension and political participation, then establishes new structure and state apparatus in development at all levels from the central level (The Economic Development Council, the Budget Bureau and the Board of Investment), ministerial, departmental, divisional and regional levels to the district and village levels, increasing the role and duties-a number of bureaucratic personnel,

including extending cooperations between several major institutes in Thai society for a greater development much more than in the past.

(2). Development Dimension

Development Dimension is the new reason of state. It is very powerful and is the power that leads to the adjustment of the structure of the state in all levels and the adjustment of relations between state and society as well as causing the complicated relations between the force within the society and a global economic system.

The Development is new idealism which is, theoretically speaking, quite general in its character and attractive to various parts of the forces of either state apparatus or the private force as development is the abstract idea which has a positive character rather than the negative one, that is to say, an integrative character rather than the disintegrative one. It coordinates with the Security Dimension rather than contradict each other since the two dimensions emphasise the value of stability and the continuity. It also encourages the role of state apparatus rather than reduces or limits the power of state.

More importantly, the existence of Development Dimension in the Thai state enables the Thai ancient major institutions such as the Monarchy, Religion and the Bureaucratic Institute (both the military and civilian) which are the sources of social and political power to gradually have a greater role and participation in the development process since Development is not the abstract thing which indicates a symbol or activity of "politics." On the contrary, the Democratic Dimension is an abstract one that indicates a symbol or activity of politics. Its concept-theory and the arrangement of its structure of institution, organisation and relations of various powers emphasise on the significance and the role of private force in the society more than that of the significance and the role of state and state apparatus.

In another area, it can be also said that Development is the idealism and the activity which facilitate the state and its apparatus to adjust their role—to expand their control—to lead the society. It also enables the state to enlarge its

encirclement of the society wider in order to prevent itself from being encircled by social force, leading to the limitation of state power. Therefore, Development is the major dimension in the three-dimensional state as it is the most essential tool for the continuation of the Thai political-economic-social system under changes both within and outside the society.

Meanwhile, in the Democracy it is to be considered that its idealism, the structure of the institute-the arrangement of the relations of power, including the process-various activities involving the Democracy are all entirely for the support of only the social force, that is the capitalist force in the capitalist economic system and it is the force of both the foreign capital and the Chinese-descendant capital which has gradually grown under the shadow of open political-economic system.

To Prof Dr Chai-Anan, the reason of why Development and Security are the major dimensions in the three-dimensional state is due to the fact that both dimensions are more supportive rather than limiting the real source of power of the Thai society. However, the “political nature” of the Democratic Dimension prevents the monarchical institution from having a part in political activities as its status is above politics while Buddhist clergymen are also excluded from political participation as it is not considered part of their religious duties. It is to be noted that under the Development Dimension Buddhist monks have played a large part in community development and mobilised people’s support for the elimination of rural poverty. In addition, under the Democratic Dimension the armed forces and the military group are also excluded from the share of exercising power or they have to be only the tool or the mechanism of the people who have political power and in a democratic system, this is taken to mean the political party or an ally of the political party which has a power base stemming from economic strength. However, its legitimacy depends entirely on the people who have a voting-right, thus the civilian government employees have been inevitably put under the power and control of the politicians.

Besides, the Democratic Dimension still has a long term effect on the

creation of social force to encircle the state, limit power-role of the state, increase the power and role of private individuals and emphasises social-economic change which depends on the market mechanism and market forces rather than on the policy, the recommendation and the intervention of state-state apparatus.

The Security Dimension and Development Dimension thus closely cooperate and they have idealism—structure of institute—process-activities that are consistent and not contradictory. The cooperation of these two dimensions enables the state apparatus to use coercion force and the state apparatus for idealism—socialising society to be able to adapt—expand its role. The cooperation of these two dimensions is also the cooperation of state interests or public interests with the self-interest of state apparatus.

Regarding the apparatus concerning idealism and socialization, the Development Dimension has not only become idealism and the way of life of state officials, but also penetrated deep down to the people at large vertically and horizontally whereas the Democratic Dimension is unable to penetrate to the people at a lowest level. The dissemination of the idealism of development has been made rapidly and extensively in the state apparatus (the bureaucratic system of military-civilian) and in other parts of the society in which the people at the lowest level get benefits from various projects of the state.

As a result, the Thai state during a period of Development is a state which has the dimension of controlling, enforcing and providing services to the society as it is essential for the creation of legitimacy for bureaucratic officials—the powers that be.

It can be said that the state has used its resources in main activities which are different from the past, i.e. the Development Dimension has given the role to the sub-apparatus of state in other sides as well, apart from the use of coercion force. Obviously, the state has adequate money to meet more expense for other activities such as education and public health because some of the military expenditure has been shouldered by the US.

Huge investments of state by securing overseas loans in the basic economic

structures help the leading urban residents of rural areas to gain advantage from the state investment in setting up and expanding businesses at the provincial and regional levels. With the US role in this region, the construction and transportation businesses have been expanded and the accumulation of capital has occurred quickly and this becomes one of the significant factors that lead to the emergence of people of leading economic class in the cities of several provinces, and it has become one of the significant characters of the change from economic power to political power in the district, provincial and regional levels. As a result, it has developed into the setting up of the political parties to compete for election to Parliament.

(3). Democratic Dimension

The Democratic Dimension (later changed to Participation Dimension, see Interview of Dr Chai-Anan in the appendix to chapter four) is, in essence, a type of politics that relies on the foundation of various forces in the society. Thus, in analysing the link of the Democratic Dimension and the dimensions of Security and Development, we have to distinguish Democratic Dimension from the viewpoint of idealism which is the consciousness relating to the way of life of various groups of people in society, and from the viewpoint of structure and the apparatus undertaking political work responsible for the control of power, the use of coercion force and the control of idealism, as well as the Democratic Dimension from the viewpoint of political system that builds the environment for business operation especially the capital accumulation.

The origin of the Democratic Dimension is an important factor for the development of various sub-dimensions of democracy as mentioned earlier as it is a critical point of the change of power that should have an effect on the social and economic system.

The origin of Thai democracy has mainly arisen out of the conflict within the superstructure of the state i.e. it arises from the conflict between the succession power of the political-administrative method and the relationship of power between the leading class which holds the political power and the

bureaucratic class which is the apparatus—the tool of such a power. In this connection, the transformation of June 1932 is the change that took place due to the conflict within the ruling class, that is to say, between state power which has the king as the centre of power and state apparatus which comprises the military and the civil service.

Such a conflict occurred as a result of the change of consciousness of the bureaucratic class which has more consciousness of serving the state than that of serving the monarchy. For several reasons, for example, the interests of the bureaucratic class relying on the progress of the state; the expansion of the bureaucratic system (the military-civilian) and the desire to overthrow the old political system to safeguard the state for its indefinite survival in order to face economic change; the political system, established after the administrative transformation of June 1932, thus had the political structure which did not reflect any type of class at all, apart from reflecting the interests of the bureaucratic system of the military and the civilian rather than reflecting the interests of capital accumulation. This is due to the fact that the People's Party aimed to curtail the power and influence of the old system, and while limiting the power and influence of the economic force which, in general, was partially owned by or tied to the leading class in the old system and of the Chinese descendants, (thus, it was not recognised as the "national capital," the government then tried to set up its own national capital by setting up state enterprises using the method similar to that of the leading class in the old system, i.e. cooperation with the merchants of Chinese descent.)

For the survival of democracy, there must be the apparatus responsible for the succession of idealism and consciousness, the apparatus responsible for the mobilisation of the supporting power from the people, and the apparatus responsible for reflecting the interests and the resolution of various groups, including the apparatus responsible for drawing up the policies in response to the demand and interests of various groups of people. Thus, democracy, in its form as the political system, is actually the arrangement of relations between

various groups to co-exist. Apparently, democracy is an alternative of the middle path which compromises conflicts between the capitalists and the labourers.

Since democracy has been established by civil servants, the civil servants are the ones who set the rules, mechanism and the democratic process in various levels, and thus one side of democracy is a bureaucratic type while the other is the democracy of non-bureaucratic force. The bureaucratic democracy is represented by the administrative leader (the Prime Minister) and is supported by all sub-apparatus of the bureaucratic system both military and civilian. It has the representative of sub-apparatus and the capitalists under its support in the Senate. The succession of the bureaucratic democracy has been carried out without interruption. It also has a sub-apparatus in the bureaucratic system of civilian and the military responsible for the "promotion of democracy." In addition, there has been the establishment of groups of people e.g. the professional group (the agriculturist group), the idealist group and the armed group. Besides, there is also an ideological apparatus responsible for political socialisation e.g. the radio and television stations under its control. The programmes designed to give advice and to arouse public awareness to fight with what the state called the "state adversary" have been broadcast.

During the past three decades, there has been rapid social-economic change, education has been expanded at various levels, there has been the expansion of telecommunication and mass media of various branches, for example, the newspaper, the journal, the book, the radio and television (including the change of quality as a result of programme competition). Meanwhile, the telecommunication system that links Thai society and global society has resulted in social-economic change. Due to the emergence of a number of various groups, Western academics are of the view that Thai politics has already developed into the political system of "Bourgeois Polity."

To Prof Chai-Anan, we have to look at the essence of the change, not from its outside layer, but we have to consider the dynamism of change in the three-dimensional Thai state. As a result of an earlier analysis, I came to the

conclusion that the three-dimensional Thai state, apart from its relations with one another and the overlap of one another and having an interaction adapted due to the change of the external structure, still responds to external change as well. This can be seen from the US government's policy of supporting democracy, 13 years ago organisations such as the USAID (United States Agency for International Development), the USIS (United States Information Service) and the Asian Foundation, which are policy arms of the US government, had a project to support the expansion of the private sector (A research grant on the issue of privatisation and the support of businessmen at provincial level by the USAID), the information support for the Thai parliament by the USIS and the attempt to have a project to train the Thai Members of Parliament in drafting laws by the Asian Foundation etc.

To Prof Chai-Anan, the three-dimensional Thai state will certainly change after a period of people war. When the threat from the Communist Party of Thailand had been reduced to a level that it almost lost the potential to make an effective movement, the Security Dimension in terms of the military thus adapted to combine with the Development Dimension so much so that it almost became the same thing. Once an Army Commander-in-Chief (Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh) said, "but the top priority of the royal-initiated projects is how to enable the military to play a leading role in development..... apart from the development for economic benefit, there is still the benefit reflecting in the form of national defence or the security as well.... the armed forces have a big plot of land, water resources and disciplined workforce and we also have the machinery and the know-how.....". When the Thai army chief said that, this indicates a new trend, that is to say, the armed forces are not only the military-political apparatus, but the producing apparatus in the capitalist system as well, and such a change certainly has an effect on the capitalism in Thailand.

While one side of the Democratic Dimension encounters conflict, competition, power struggle, uncertainty and indiscipline, the other side of the Democratic Dimension in the bureaucratic democracy has united and strengthened

its forces, especially after the solution of unresolved internal conflict within the armed forces, and the lingering conflict has lasted since the situation of 1 April 1980 (during the Prem administration).

The “defuse the time bomb” in the armed forces indicates the need for greater unity in the armed forces in preparation for the implementation of the three-dimensional state. Thus, it is predicted that the armed forces will become the apparatus that leads to the social, economic and political change in this decade by adapting their new concept, structure and role, and this will result in the expansion of capitalism but remaining under the shadow of state.

To Prof Dr Chai-Anan, the understanding of the dynamism of the three-dimensional state will enable us to have a compass showing the way of change in relations between state and Thai society in the future. The problem of studying the state and Thai society is not the answer to the question of in which period Thai capitalism was established, but it depends on the type of Thai capitalism and its relations to state apparatus, and we have to always remember that the three-dimensional Thai state is the activist state of which the three dimensions, namely; Security, Development and Democracy, coordinate to be the force pushing the three-dimensional state to have a high adaptive capacity especially the selection of using the repressive apparatus and the ideological apparatus simultaneously and interchangeably. In addition, the laying down of the focussing point is in line with the development of the force that challenges state power and the power of the apparatus, it has a big assimilative capacity, in conclusion, the encirclement of state by the social force can hardly be done.

However, the three-dimensional Thai state is a state that encounters several problems similar to the state in the “peripheral societies” as well. But the three-dimensional Thai state has state apparatus at many levels and each apparatus has a long historical development, it gained experience through fighting with the imperialism and it is alert to foreign intervention which should not be excessive, or attempts to adopt several policies as an alternative, thus, it is adaptable to the rapid change of the situation.

According to Prof Dr Chai-Anan, the most important point which he would like to conclude here is that in each dimension of the three-dimensional state, it is still diverse and there is the struggling and contradictory consciousness in itself. Above all, there are many sub-apparatus, laws, rules, procedures and regulations to support the use of excessive and complicated powers, because the three-dimensional Thai state has developed from an ancient state which has never been formally colonised, thus the relations between state and society has a special character which differs from other states and societies in some other issues. As a result of this peculiar difference, the three-dimensional Thai state is unstable and ineffective in the level of political system and the government, but the state itself is extremely secure and stable.²²

The Summary of Thai Political Condition in a Democratic Period

Prof Dr Chai-Anan summarised Thai political condition in a democratic period as follows:

(1). Current Thai politics is the politics that competes for its own destruction, it is a moth-eaten system that reduces the strength of every side starting from the people to the candidates for the seats in the Lower House, political party, the bureaucratic system and the social culture. It can be concluded that it is a condition in which everyone aims at the competition to destroy, not to create or unit force-increase the strength.

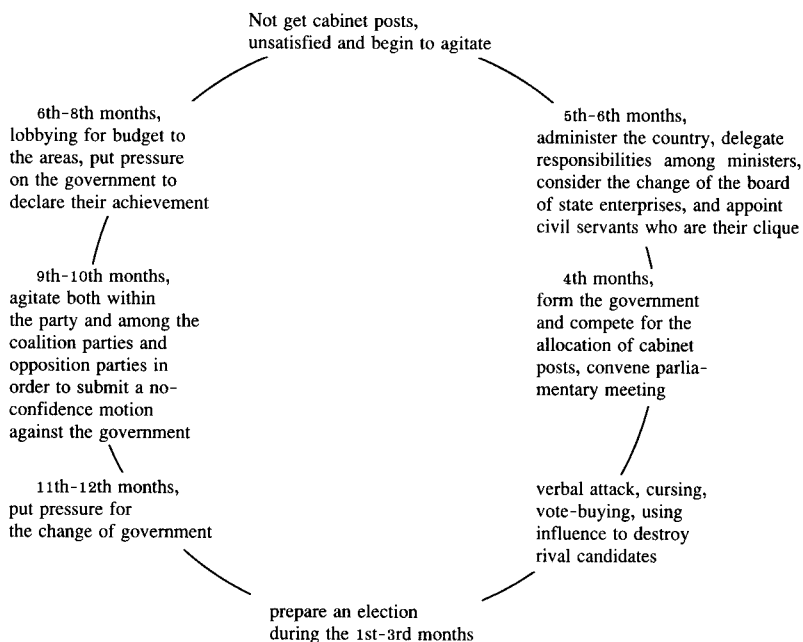
(2). The current Thai politics becomes the coalition for regression, it is not a coalition for progress and it is going to bring about a division between a part of big cities-rich and modern-binding with global wave and a part of rural areas or the poor in big cities-poor-backward-binding with the region of agricultural sector which has poor production capacity.

(3). The current Thai politics is heading in the wrong direction on the political reform as it only aims to eliminate or to reduce vote-buying, including the creation of legal systems and measures to control political corruption, but it does not find out the method to solve the problem of legitimate power, the

decentralisation of power and, more importantly, to seek a coalition of power and interests in a manner that every side has played a part and gained benefit, it should not turn into a coalition government that does not respect the rules of the game or basic agreements on the distribution of power and benefits in an obsolete manner.

(4). The emergence of a new vicious cycle of Thai politics as in the following picture.

New Vicious Cycle of Thai Politics



From now on and for several years to come, if there is still no new design of the political system, a chance to see a two-party system will hardly be possible and there will be a situation of unstable and ineffective coalition government, and consequently politics will become a factor that damages the economy, damages and reduces national capacity to compete with other countries, as well as the capacity-swiftness of the government in tackling the problems of difficulties and hardship of the underprivileged and the disadvantaged, including causing social and cultural deterioration to a great extent.²³

Conclusion of Chai-Anan's Political Theory

At the end of his explanation of the political theory, Prof Dr Chai-Anan has offered a forecast that he foresees for Thai politics in the following statement; a great problem that Thai society-politics has to face at present is the succession of political power and the main issue of the succession of political power does not rest on any individual, but on the guarantee of what major forces want to have in order to make sure that a change of leadership will not cause disequilibrium of a semi-democratic system, i.e. it will not lead to the social-economic-political change which is so "progressive" that the major forces will lose their significance and roles, but it will not be "backward" that it will turn to be confusion, conflict-disunity.

It is difficult to predict the type and direction of the political change, but a storm of change and the international social-economic pressure on the system of "Security-Development" will be so powerful and continuous that the system is pushed to confront one another and to adapt itself into a system of "Participation-Development-Security," and it is certain that dimension of Development and Security will be directed by the Participation Dimension at the above level (among the groups of social-economic force which is the private sector) and at a low level which is the public sector.

Thai society in the next decade will be a society of the middle class and of young people who live in urban areas and rural cities. Whether the middle class people will have an autonomy and participate in the use of political power or not depends on the capacity of the apparatus in each political current, i.e. between the bureaucratic current and the non-bureaucratic current which one has the readiness, the establishment-the arrangement system of relations between the apparatus and other sections of the society, the resources, the determination and the war strategy-the strategy which are more effective in absorbing and mobilising the potential of the force of the middle class people in modern times to push for the change, this means that the force of the middle class in the cities

will be the main variable of politics under the free capitalist economic system, but it cannot abandon the significance of the people's force in rural areas where they have been mobilised-established by the military group and some civilians in the bureaucratic system, and in case of conflict, the strategic group in the level above the people group in a low level both in the cities and in rural areas may become the major complicated variables in political change as well.²⁴

Chai-Anan as Prophet of Politics

Widely known in Thailand the "Prophet of Politics," Prof Dr Chai-Anan has offered an interesting observation. To him, the meaning of state and nation-state comprises the territory, population, government and the sovereignty above the territory-population, including the freedom of effective formulation of national policies.

It is to be noted that, at present, the territory as a type of boundary which has been ratified by international law is going to lose its significance or reduce the intensity of central control of state. Apart from a long-time border trade both in the system and out of the system, the inter-city contact among nation-states bypassing the state's central authority has rapidly occurred, and due to the economic competition, in the future transportation costs will be a major variable. Trade cooperation between the regions of various states in neighbouring areas will become increasingly important.

The maritime territory of nation-state such as the sea or the ocean will become increasingly important not only in military strategy but also transportation strategy, as well as the extraction of underwater resources for economic benefit.

Meanwhile, the ancient community force which has been dominated by the central authority of nation-state for 100 consecutive years will rapidly recover and come to life again as it is activated by economic accelerating force of the cities which used to be the centre of an ancient trade in the past, and it will again become a central network of trade directed by geographical circumstances.

Along with the revitalisation of the ancient community force, there are rapid revival and combination of forces of the tradition. The local languages will become the main economic languages needed to be learnt by the centre. The community feeling in a new chapter will be reflected in the form of regionalism, there will be more frequent and regular contact between cities in the nation-states such as the three townships in northern Thailand (Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Chiang Tung) and Luang Prabang of Laos. This will result in the natural boundary, which is above the sovereignty of the unitary state, becoming narrower.

The territory which is the essential part of a nation-state will become less significant due to the development of telecommunications, a rapid transmission of news and information which has reduced the communication problem extensively.

Touching on the issue of population, Prof Dr Chai-Anan is of the view that apart from cross-border contact in each state especially along the borders, there is also the issue of international migration due to either civil war or starvation, or the desire to seek employment in foreign countries which offer better payment. However, whatever the reason may be, the alien workers will likely be confronted with protest from local workers especially during a period of economic slump.

Prof Chai-Anan further says that due to the pressure outside the state and in the society as a result of the international change and the economic growth in some sectors of the society, in the major cities or the central capital, the government has to face two major problems; the first one is the overgrown capital, and the other is inadequate infrastructure as well as the slow growth of the cities in various regions. The central government thus becomes a weak government as they have to simultaneously encounter the force of the private enterprises on the one hand and the demand and the difficulties of public forces on the other.

Previously, the unitary state of the Thai nation-state used to be a factor

facilitating the consolidation of the nation-state during the past 100 years, but it is going to become an obstacle to the adaptation of the role of state apparatus to catch up with the revival of diversity and the contact between the people across the state as mentioned.

To Chai-Anan, there will be a mounting serious conflict between the government and the social forces especially in a situation where there is no acceleration of the decentralisation of power or the return of all economic, political, social-cultural powers to the local community.

In connection with the sovereignty, Prof Chai-Anan says that democratisation will put pressure on the nation-state to have less “sovereignty” as there will be many new issues such as disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, global environment protection and a joint peace treaty in the Middle East, Somalia, Cambodia and Bosnia and so on. All of these issues focus on authority above the nation-state entirely, thus the governments of the nation-state attempt to maintain the old democratic authority especially in the form of the reaction to the democratisation that emphasises human rights and the acceleration of democratic development. However, the factors that greatly reduce the efficiency of the democratic authority of the nation-state are the infiltration of information, the universality of the capital and the requirements of foreign investment.²⁹

In addition, Prof Dr Chai-Anan predicts that Thailand in the next ten years will be the land of “Uncivilised Politics” as there has never been any serious search for the adjustment of the political system and the bureaucratic system. We are short of thinkers and have no chance to stimulate brainstorming in order to mobilise the efforts to counter with what is going to happen in the future. To him, it is needless to mention the global change as we have already known, but he would like to emphasise that in the next ten years Thailand will experience violence both in the cities and in rural areas that we have never seen before if we do not prepare measures to counter the situation early.

Obviously, in just a few years Bangkok has become a mega city which has difficult problems that cannot be solved by the municipal system. Traffic jams suddenly become a problem at national level, and it is a major cause that puts Thailand in a disadvantageous position in the international competition such as being a centre of international organisations in the region or an international financial hub etc.

Nowadays we say that the world becomes smaller, but how effective is the capacity of the system and the government in utilising the change of the information technology for the benefit of the private sector and the people? A long accumulated problem can explode as mentioned, and this will result in the state, the system and the government in the next ten years having greater responsibilities.²⁶

Some Observations on Prof Chai-Anan's Political Concept

It is to be noted that what Prof Chai-Anan said about the future role of the Thai military has proved to be absolutely true as we can see now the military are increasingly engaged in the Development and Participation dimensions, for example, they are now taking part in various royal-initiated projects, the suppression of drug and car theft along the borders, the construction of public facilities by military engineers and the monitoring of the general election, and most recently they were requested to help train juvenile offenders to be disciplined and give up their old habits. Since the end of cold war and the disappearance of the communist threat, the military gradually have attempted to create a good image and restore public confidence in their determination to uphold the democratic system in the kingdom. Above all, military conscription will be abolished in the very near future as the armed forces will need only volunteers to join the defence service while the size of the armed forces will be reduced to be a compact one with high efficiency and fighting capability.

A positive trend to be noted here is that the current Defence Minister is a civilian (Prime Minister Chuan himself as he holds dual positions) whereas

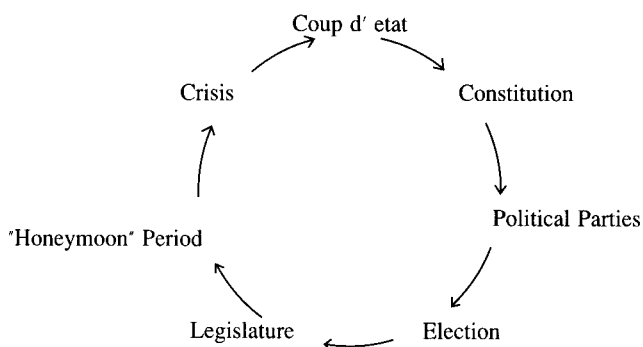
in the past the top defence post was usually held by the military. Even though the military are playing an active part in the two dimensions, the Security Dimension is still the major task of the military. Whenever national security is threatened the military will immediately put a greater emphasis on the Security Dimension. Thus, Prof Chai-Anan is very right in saying, “Each side must interrelate to one another inseparably. Even though in some situations, one dimension may be the major side and the others are minor, the minor sides still exist and are not eliminated or obscured completely.”

However, as to the issue of whether the central authority and the capital will lose their significance and their role is still questionable. Prof Chai-Anan has his own reason to say so, but it is to be noted that in the case of Thailand several factors need to be considered before jumping to a definite conclusion, for example, the top executive, administrative and legislative offices are all located in Bangkok and other highest institutions such as the monarch and the Supreme Patriarch also reside in the capital. Thus, we often hear the saying, “Bangkok is Thailand,” this indicates that we can find the best in Bangkok only, for example, education, employment, medical treatment, know-how and financial institutions etc. So, it is hardly possible for the rural cities to bypass the state’s central authority as most rural cities still have poor basic infrastructure, and above all, Thailand has little problem with distance since the country’s longest north-to-south distance is about 1,860 kms. only, thus travelling to and fro will take only one or two days. Evidently, it is entirely different from big countries such as the USA, India, China or Canada where state capitals are considered as the lifeline of all communication and public services. Except in small countries, Prof Chai-Anan’s view is very much relevant to the political context and up-to-date.

Prof Chai-Anan's Theory of the Vicious Cycle of Thai Politics

According to Prof Chai-Anan, during the half century from 1932 to 1982, Thailand has had 13 constitutions, 14 elections, 14 coups, and 42 cabinets. There have been 15 Prime Ministers, of whom six were military officers and nine civilians. During this period, army Prime Ministers were in power for a total of almost 37 years while their civilian counterparts were in office for a total of only 11 years. Moreover, some civilian Prime Ministers were simply fronts for the military.

Figure of The Vicious Cycle of Thai Politics



Successful military interventions usually resulted in the abrogation of constitutions, abolishment of parliaments, and suspension of participants' political activity. Each time, however, the military re-established parliamentary institutions of some kind. While they often claimed that they had taken power from the elected representatives "in order to save democracy", paradoxically, in their view parliament had to be abolished because the people were not yet ready for democracy. From time to time, they established what they called "Thai-style democracy" with an appointed legislature designed to legitimise their own power. Soon, however, another crisis would set in, leading once again to a coup situation.

The vicious cycle of Thai politics as depicted in the figure illustrates the broader pattern of competing forces chasing one another, each producing a reaction and leading with inevitability, it seems, to the next step in the process. In recent years, each swing of the pendulum has been more violent than that which preceded it. As forces demanding access to the political system arose but were denied entry, they pressed their demands more vigorously. In response, elements in society determined to restrict participation by previously excluded groups—farmers, labourers, students, in particular—escalated the force of their resistance, convinced that they and they alone were defending the nation's critical political symbols. So polarisation intensified.

To Chai-Anan, at the core of the modern Thai political dilemma is the search for an effective and stable political system. Lack of consensus among the elite concerning the rules of the game is reflected in the numerous constitutions Thailand has had during the past 48 years, yet only a few effective political leaders, military or civilian, have emerged. The crisis of political leadership is particularly significant because personalism remains the preferred mode of political action.²⁷

It is to be noted that Thailand ranks very high in military coup frequency compared with other states in the world. From 1932 to 1981 there have been nine successful coups and six unsuccessful ones in Thailand, a total of fifteen coups in a period of 48 years, or an average of one coup in every three and a half years. Indeed, the occurrence of military coups in Thailand is as frequent as parliamentary elections, and military participation in the Legislative Assemblies has been as prominent as that of the elected Members of Parliament.²⁸

While elaborating his theory of the vicious cycle of Thai politics, Chai-Anan has commented that the coup of June 1932 replaced rule by the princes with rule by generals. Ever since, Thai politics has been characterised by the dynamics of military dominance, punctuated by the occasional elected legislature in the military-bureaucratic polity, with only a short life-span.

The June 1932 coup was carried out by the Bangkok-based military and

civilian group which called itself the People's Party. This group was composed of members from three bureaucratic groups: 23 of them in the Army, 14 in the Navy, and 24 in the civilian bureaucracy. It executed the coup without any mass support and was essentially a counter-elite group against that of the princes and senior bureaucratic elite which ruled old Siam under the absolute monarchical system. Thus, the coup merely brought about a significant shift in the alignment of power within the urban-based elite group without the radical changes in class relations that are normally associated with revolutions in Western history.²⁹

Prof Chai-Anan adds that Thai bureaucrats have expected politicians to be interested solely in passing laws, and not in mass mobilisation, grievance articulation, or interest-aggregation. When the politicians pursue these latter functions, "causing too much trouble," another military intervention occurs, turning the clock back again. Politics in Thailand since 1932 have thus been characterised by factional struggles for power among military and civilian bureaucrats, with the former clearly dominant over the latter.³⁰

CONCLUSION

Due to his numerous accomplishments, Prof Dr Chai-Anan is recognised as an architect of Thailand's constitutional democracy, and as a courageous defender of democracy in Southeast Asia. Since earning his doctorate degree from the US in 1971, Chai-Anan has become a major public figure in Thailand, distinguishing himself as a scholar, intellectual and activist.

As a scholar, Chai-Anan is recognised as a most distinguished and most respected political scientist in Thailand. During his academic career, he has published nearly 100 books in both Thai and English, dozens of articles and has many unpublished reports and essays. But he is far more than an ivory tower scholar; he is a public intellectual in the finest sense. He brings scholarly knowledge into the public arena through frequent contributions to journals of commentary read by the public community, professional elite, and the intelligentsia. His ideas have influenced the most fundamental debates engaging Thai society: What kinds of institutions are best for Thailand? How can democratic values be combined with Thai historical traditions and cultural heritage to create political institutions that genuinely work for Thailand?

Prof Chai-Anan has played a key role as a constitutional craftsman, helping to draft democratic constitutions in 1974 and 1997. In 1997, he was the "engineer" of the constitution writing process, orchestrating participatory processes in the wider community, helping to identify the core values to be reflected in the constitution, and helping to deflect political and social elements whose interests were challenged by democratic institutions. None of this is surprising given the staunch democratic position he has taken throughout his public and professional life in Thailand (he has been a steadfast opponent of the military dictatorships which have periodically interrupted constitutional rule during much of the 20th century).

Even today Chai-Anan still plays an active role in advocating democracy. His advice is always sought after by academics, journalists and the public at large.



Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai (1938-Present)



Exclusive interview with Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai at
Government House on 20 September 2000 at 1.30 p.m.

CHAPTER FIVE

Introduction

MR CHUAN LEEKPAI (1938–Present)

Mr Chuan Leekpai, the 20th Prime Minister of Thailand, is well-known as a politician with a honey-coated razor tongue and a modest lifestyle. While meeting the press in Khon Kaen Province on 8 April 2000, he said that he might be the richest among the poorest, but he was the poorest Thai prime minister.

Widely admired for his honesty, Mr Chuan said the people could always help clean up politics by supporting politicians who put national interest above everything else.¹

It is to be noted that the 1990s have been an intense period of political debate in Thailand, focused first around the coup of 1991 (The coup was staged by the National Peace Keeping Council (NPKC) and its popular overthrow in 1992, Gen Suchinda thus stepped down from Prime Minister disgracefully as a result of the Black May Event), and then around the political fall-out of the 1997 economic crisis. This debate has centred on constitutional reform, extension of the rule of law, strengthening of parliament, bureaucratic reform, educational reform, human rights, decentralisation, social welfare, economic policy—all issues which were part of Pridi's vision of Thailand's progress sixty year earlier.²

Further, in the transition from the 1980s to the 1990s, Thailand has passed imperceptibly from an era in which political leaders needed the extra magic provided by a title, whether traditional or military, to an era in which such top-dressing seems almost an impediment. However imperfect Thai democracy may still be, this transition indicates an important sea change of popular attitude. Chuan Leekpai, who has fronted this transition, is in many ways a total contrast to Pridi—one determinately cautious and self-effacing, the other brilliantly adventurous and mercurial. But the two share some interesting parallels. Both are descendants of mixed Thai-Chinese families which earned

their living by selling food in the market of a provincial town. The ascent of Chuan provides some retrospective legitimacy for what Pridi stood for as political sociology. The energies devoted to the constitutional reform of 1997 provide some retrospective legitimacy for what Pridi stood for as political ideology.³

Another interesting incident to be observed further is that when the committee to organise the centenary of the late Dr Pridi Banomyong was formed, the prime minister was Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh. As a result of the economic crisis of 1997, Gen Chavalit voluntarily stepped down to show his political spirit and he was succeeded by Mr Chuan Leekpai, head of the Democrat Party “which had been founded in 1946 specifically to oppose Pridi, his allies, and his ideas.”⁴ Even then Chuan strongly supported the committee and helped push for the success of its idea, and Pridi’s name is now in the UNESCO’s list of Great Personalities and Historic Events for the year 2000.

Even though Mr Chuan may not be as great a thinker as the three mentioned earlier and he is not an overseas graduate, yet he is a strong advocate of democracy and his countless contributions to political development of the country is something to be reckoned with. Throughout his political career, he has chosen only democratic means to achieve his political aspirations.

In addition, Mr Chuan is the first non-military prime minister whose government is the longest-serving and he is Thailand’s second civilian defence minister (the first, M.R. Seni Pramoj, also doubled as prime minister). Above all, the military top brass is very impressed with his working style as it has helped bestow a sense of harmony and prestige on the armed forces.⁵

Mr Chuan is the twice-elected leader whose first government collapsed in July 1995 in the midst of a scandal over a government land-reform programme. The controversy stemmed from the discovery that several rich families on the Phuket island had benefited from a government programme intended to redistribute land to poor families. To avoid a no-confidence motion against his government, Mr Chuan opted to dissolve Parliament.

It is to be noted that despite military support and public admiration, his government quickly faced serious problems. Chuan was assailed almost from the start by his political allies and coalition partners, who railed against his lack of direction, indecisive nature, love of reconciliation, and inability to maintain cohesion among the five governing political parties.⁶

Indeed, Mr Chuan surprisingly took the second term as Prime Minister as his party was not a majority party that won the election held on 17 November 1996. The right to form the government went to the majority party, the New Aspiration Party (NAP), but the party could survive in power only just over a year (25 November 1996-7 November 1997), it was stung by the economic crisis, the party leader, Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, stepped down to show his political spirit, and a chance to serve the remaining Parliamentary term went to the Democrat Party, the second majority party in the November 1996 election. Mr Chuan, in his capacity as the leader of the Democrat Party, was again elected as prime minister. However, the second term for Mr Chuan is not easy as it should be since the country has already been hit by the economic meltdown, thus what are the strategies to overcome the crisis adopted by Mr Chuan will be discussed later in the chapter.

A Brief Biography of Mr Chuan Leekpai

Mr Chuan Leekpai was born on 28 July 1938 in Trang Province to a simple family. His father, Niyom, was a local public school teacher and his mother, Tuan, was a vendor. His parents have nine children and he is the third child of the family.

He obtained his bachelor's degree from the Faculty of Law at Thammasat University, and later graduated as a barrister from the Institute of Legal Education in Bangkok.

He has been a Member of Parliament under the Democrat Party banner since 1969, elected 11 consecutive times: 1969, 1975, 1976, 1979, 1983, 1986, 1988, twice in 1992, 1995 and in 1996.

Mr Chuan won each election in a landslide victory. In the 1995 election, he obtained 113,819 votes, far and above the second runner up's 3,523 votes.

He was appointed Deputy Minister of Justice in 1975; to the Office of the Prime Minister in 1976; Minister of Justice in 1980; Minister of Commerce in 1981; Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives in 1982; Minister of Education in 1983; Speaker of the House from 1986 to 1988; Minister of Public Health in 1988; and Deputy Prime Minister in 1989 and in August of 1990.

Chuan is married to Pakdeeporn and they have a son, Surabot.

He was named leader of the Democrat Party following the resignation of Mr Bhisai Rattakul in August 1990; and elected Prime Minister in September of 1992, the first civilian holder of that office since the mid-1970s; and again elected Prime Minister in 1997 in the wake of the economic crisis of 1997 and the resignation of Prime Minister Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, leader of the New Aspiration Party.⁷

Chuan's Political Life and the Democrat Party

The Democrat Party was founded in 1946 as a pro-royalist grouping. It declined in the 1950s but then reformed when military rule faltered in the 1970s. Its new incarnation retained some of its royalist heritage. But the party now included a much larger group of businessmen and professionals from the city and from the old, established port towns of the south. One of these was the lawyer, Mr Chuan Leekpai, from the province of Trang.⁸

It is to be noted that when Chuan studied at Thammasat University, the students could not get much involved in political activities since the year 1960-1962 was during the period of the dictatorial rule of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat and Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn who was also a director of Thammasat University.

After graduation, Chuan went straight to apply for membership of the Democrat Party, but when the party found that he came from a simple family background and had insufficient voting support, his application was rejected on the ground that he was still young and small, but later on the party decided to accept him as some candidates withdrew from the election race and the party could not find a candidate to field in the constituency in Trang Province.⁹

To help her son win the election, Mrs Tuan Leekpai tried by every possible means to get voting support in her native town, for example, attending all types of ceremonies such as wedding or funeral rites, thus Mr Chuan had his mother as a real canvasser in his election campaign.

On 10 February 1969, a general election was held in the country and no party really wanted to confront the United Thai People's Party of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn as it was very strong and popular at that time. Thus, no candidate wanted to challenge the United Thai People's Party, except Mr Chuan who was still a young and inexperienced candidate. As it turned out, Mr Chuan won the election for the first time under the banner of the Democrat Party and he was the youngest MP who won an election at the age of 31 while

the constitutional requirement stipulated that the MP candidates had to be over 30 years of age. Apart from Mr Chuan, Mr Uthai Pimchaichon also fell in this category and he was also an MP from the Democrat Party.

It is said that M.R. Seni Pramoj, the Democrat's leader, was very kind to him and once even said, "Mr Chuan is a small man whom I can trust and he is the core of the Democrat Party." What the former party's leader said has proved to be true as since Chuan has won the 1969 general election, he subsequently represented Trang Province 11 consecutive times, including the 1996 election, and due to his excellent debates in Parliament, he was given a reputation of the "Commander of the South" as well.

In the aftermath of 6 October 1976, he suffered a severe political set-back, when he was one of the three Democrat's ministers who were arbitrarily tarred with the 'communist' brush.¹⁰

His two fellow ministers were the late Mr Surin Masdit and the late Mr Damrong Latthipipat. The event took place almost the same time in which Mr Anand Panyarachun (the 18th Prime Minister of Thailand) faced the same charge, but at that time, Mr Anand was the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It is said that on 6 October 1976, having been incited by a certain radio station a mad crowd of people who were mostly village scouts and housewives' groups stormed into Government House with the aim of dragging the three ministers out of the office building. When urged to escape the unruly crowd by his bodyguard, Mr Chuan shrugged off the suggestion, saying that he wanted to face them with reason as he did not commit any mistake. Chuan felt sad to see the country slipping into the hands of an authoritarian ruler once again, and this became his bitter experience that he can seldom forget as described in his book, *Yen Lom Paa* (Cool of the Forest Wind) which will be mentioned later in the chapter. Some people even persuaded him to escape into the jungle for an armed struggle against the 'state authority', but he completely rejected

the idea because he had full confidence in a struggle through the democratic process and he was very much convinced that it was the only means to help the country survive the crisis.

As the dust settled, Mr Chuan again returned to Parliament after winning the election held on 22 April 1979, and in the same year M.R. Seni Pramoj resigned from the post of party leader and was succeeded by Colonel Thanat Khoman who was an outsider. Subsequently after Col Thanat completed his term of leadership, Mr Chuan then supported Mr Bhichai Rattakul to take the party's helm. Then after the resignation of Mr Bhichai Rattakul in 1990, Chuan held the party's top job since then.¹¹

Chuan's Political Ideas

During his election campaign, Mr Chuan frequently said, "Ideas have never been changed", and in this connection, he explains, "Ideas will never be changed, i.e. my mind has a firm commitment, but responsibilities have been changed a lot, for instance, earlier I only thought of myself and my friends in the province, so I took responsibility only for myself and my friends, later I had to take responsibilities for my team, then for my region (the South), and now I have to take responsibilities for the entire nation. I realise that we cannot achieve our desired result alone, we need cooperation from others as well. Sometimes some policies cannot be achieved so quickly as we wanted, we must have patience and wait for the change to take place."¹²

To know more about Mr Chuan's attitude, political ideas and experience, it is worthy to refer to his interview given to the *Hi-Class* magazine in Thai (volume No. 94 for the February 1992 issue, pages 36-46.) However, before giving the interview, Mr Chuan stressed, "I never think of cheating the nation, even of a single baht (Thai currency) I never think." The following are the excerpts of Mr Chuan's interview.

- 1. Question:** Sir, so far you have never changed party, you still stay with the Democrats while some politicians switched to other parties and there is a frequent change of political ideas. Why is it so?

Answer: I think there are two reasons; firstly, it is the nature of the people who are from rural areas, as once they are attached to something, they will stick to it forever, even in making friends, when they have already become friends, they are even ready to die for their friends. Thus, it is the nature and character of rural people who feel that once they are admitted to a party, when their party is prosperous, they will stay with the party, but when their party has collapsed, they will quit politics. They never think of switching to other parties, this indicates that they do not want to escape just only to make themselves survive. Secondly, I think there is a political reason, as I think that politics will progress only when politicians themselves have their own ideas, i.e. they must be ready to share happiness and troubles with the party and they should not only seek benefit from the party. When the party declines, the members must help salvage its reputation and this is very important. We have seen this weak point for more than five decades, we have seen politicians changing parties as often as the clothes they wear. This make us feel that our politicians are not firm with their political ideas, and they change the party each time mostly due to their personal reasons, for instance, what benefit or how much money they will get, or the party has already declined, or they want to reach high positions quickly, so they have to set up a new party for this particular purpose. For me, I do not have that nature, I am ready to be a member of a single party throughout my life. I never think that if there is someone who is more suitable than me, I will compete with him. I never think so.

- 2. Question:** Throughout the time of your struggle for democracy, what do you think is the most difficult thing, sir?

Answer: Frankly speaking, to become an MP is very difficult

indeed, everybody who stands for election will know about this, whether they are the commanders of any of the three armed forces, when they decide to enter politics, they will realise that to win an election each time is very difficult indeed. To me, I think to be able to become an MP each time is the most difficult task, starting from the very beginning up to now. In the past, I was unknown to the people, so it was difficult to make them know me. Now, I am widely known, but again I have to compete with new things which in turn become a problem, such as vote-buying which is mushrooming day by day. Thus, to survive in each election is very difficult indeed.

- 3. Question: Sir, people say that politics begins to enter business more and more, the candidates struggle to win an election and use money for this purpose, can this be considered as the enemy of the political system or not?**

Answer: Do you mean the MPs who use money to win the House seat? I used to call this thing the “Politico-business”. In fact, it is good to have businessmen joining politics so that we will have people from various professions in the political cycle. However, the worrying thing is that they use politics as business, these politico-businessmen enter politics with the aim of using politics as their stepping-stone to achieve their business purposes. Thus, this is the most worrying thing, especially these people will use money to buy votes and after winning the election, they get posts, then take part in the promulgation of rules and regulations or act in whatever means to seek advantages for their own interests. This is the critical point of politics.

- 4. Question: Sir, possibly your character is polite and modest, and you are a politician who prefers compromise, that is why it helps you a lot or what do you think?**

Answer: Actually, when it is time to be decisive, we must be decisive. Some issues cannot be compromised and I will not compromise, but I am not

aggressive, that's all. If I disagree with anyone, I will disagree politely and take a resolute decision politely. I will not be aggressive so that he or she will not be disappointed. I will try to make him understand, and I am convinced that everybody has reason, but who is more reasonable than the other? Which is likely to be more correct than the other? They will be persuaded to accept the common truth. We also have a problem now, it is about the individual, but we must try to find a common point to reach mutual understanding and find out the real cause of the problem, then evaluate it before taking a definite decision. Sometimes some people accept our decision, though they disagree with us. If we have good reason, then they can accept us as well and this helps reduce violence to a certain extent.

5. Question: In Thai society, majority of the people, about 70%, visualise a party's leader as the most significant issue in politics, thus, if the party's leader is competent, he will be able to help many members of the party win the election, and we must accept that it is true in Thailand. Do you agree, sir?

Answer: Well! It is a phenomenon. I do not wholly agree with them, but I consider it as a real phenomenon occurring in Thailand, that is to say, when the party leader has risen to prominence and gains popularity, the party members will win many House seats. This is quite true as previously seen. I, however, quite disagree with it, thus I remind the party members that if we follow such an example, one day when the party leader loses power, completes his term of leadership or passes away, the party will vanish along with its leader. Thus, we must try to uphold the policies of the party rather than the leaders of the party. However, what I am saying is based on principle, in actual practice it may be less acceptable, but I am following this principle. In my address, given on the occasion of assuming the party leadership, to all members of the party, I stressed this principle. I said that though the party leader was important, we should not uphold him much more than that of a clear principle

of the party as I had to leave the party in the future, a new person had to be selected and the next leader would replace me similar to the way in which I was elected to head the party. As you see, four leaders of the party have already completed their term of leadership, but the party still exists. So we must adhere to this principle.

6. Question: Sir, I have seen the poster in front of the party office, stating, “If you love democracy, support Chuan as prime minister.” You quite disagree with it, do you?

Answer: Well, that’s the way to indicate that we support democracy of the entire masses as we respect the rule of the majority. Thus, to support me as prime minister indicates that they support a prime minister who comes from an election. If we win a majority, we will form the government and there is no reason why we have to bring an outsider to be prime minister. They must choose me to be prime minister. That means we recognise the voice of the people. At the same time, how can it be another person? When they are members of the Democrats, they have to support their own party leader.

7. Question: Now you are ready to become the leader of the country, aren’t you?

Answer: Actually, such a question was put to me before, and I used to suggest that the question like this should have disappeared on the day I accepted the post of party leader as it means from that day if the party wins the majority of votes, the party’s leader will become the prime minister, that means I am ready and if I am not ready, I will not accept it. Thus, previously I refused to accept the post when Mr Bhichai had a problem with members of the party, then a group of 10 January (a group of rebel MPs) approached me and urged me to accept the top job. If I was selfish and wanted to be leader of the party, Mr Bhichai would have fallen in disgrace from that time, but I didn’t want to rise at the expense of another, I wanted to rise through the proper

channels. Simply speaking, I prefer to use my ability to pass the test rather than asking someone to help. Thus, I waited for the time when I was ready and the situation in the party was ready to accept me without having to pull anyone down.

8. Question: In the area of your province (Trang), we often hear the villagers say that if they don't choose Mr Chuan, there is no one else to be chosen. How do you feel about this, sir?

Answer: In fact, I have been attached to the villagers for more than 20 years. They know my grandparents and parents, though they are not great personalities, but relatives of my father and mother are in the area. My great-grandfather was the village headman during the absolute monarchy as well. The feeling of attachment of the people towards my family is quite considerable. I myself have launched a door-to-door election campaign for over 20 years, the older people will call me "son", the younger ones will call me "brother" while the children will call "Mr Chuan." Thus, the attachment has been continuous, during the election I won the votes, though it was not high as a hundred thousand in the country, considering the average voter turn out, I got the highest, and sometimes I got about 80% of the vote, it was quite high, actually. The people supported me, because I laid down the rule of abstaining from giving liquor or distributing gift items, and it took time to make them understand that I was not stingy (Laugh). However, when they understood me, they were pleased with what we did. In addition, though I have already entered politics, I have never abandoned local areas. Whatever I can help develop, I will do it. Whatever becomes a person's problem, I will help, If I can.

9. Question: Can you disclose in each election in the past how much money you spend for the election campaign?

Answer: In the early elections, it was about 10,000 baht, I bought a jeep and I also used motorcycles in the campaign, but lately it reached 100,000

baht. Earlier I did not have to use many cars only one jeep was enough and it was not necessary to use a loudspeaker. When we use cars, we have to pay for petrol, so, the cost is high. However in Trang Province, the constitution permits only three House seats (in proportion to its population). Thus, the amount of 300,000 baht for three candidates is still low comparing with other provinces, but my expense for the election campaign may not be lower than that of some MPs in Songkhla Province or in some other provinces. Some people use money for the campaign in the right manner, but again the amount is still high, as they have to pay for posters and petrol, the cars used in the campaign procession are similar to that of a movie advertisement. At present, the campaign is different from the past, but this is not a definite rule, it depends on us, and how good relations do we keep with the people? I would like to tell you that some politicians are widely known in the newspapers, but if we closely look at them, we will know that they distance themselves from the villagers. They are well-known only in the papers which publish them every day, but they hardly keep in touch with the villagers. This is very risky as they will easily lose the House seats in the next elections. So, if we know that we have less money, we have to do our political work and should not abandon the villagers. Simply speaking, we have to dedicate ourselves in order to compete with the persons who have more money. I think there are still many dedicated MPs especially in the South and some other parts of the country, but in the South some MPs have already won the elections for five or six times, they still have no house of their own or a car, or their economic status has not been changed much. I still see this type of MPs, but in the future their number may be less.

10. Question: In the past, the Democrat Party comprised of many prominent members, now they have scattered. Do you still keep contact with them?

Answer: This is considered a normal thing as each person had his or her own reason, and as I said earlier, some people could not wait, because they

also wanted to be party leaders quickly, but there were still some people waiting for their turn ahead of them, or some might want to have their own freedom, while some thought that the party was going to collapse, it was difficult for the party to grow, so they set up a new party as they thought that their old party ceased to exist.

- 11. Question:** During a difficult time or decline of the Democrat Party, it lacked unity among its members, but under your leadership, there is again unity, the party has become strong, it is being trusted and widely accepted. At this point, when you become party leader, what did you use as a support?

Answer: I have been in the party for more than 20 years, and this can be considered as the party leader who spent the longest time to climb up to the top job, but I have a lot of experience in the party, so I understand what my colleagues think. My only weak point is that I have no money to contribute to the party everybody knows about my weak point. Thus, they hesitated to choose me as their leader. So, I told them that the poorest leader was the one who could collect more money for the party because the persons who wanted to contribute money to the party would have no hesitation as they knew that the party really had no money, so they volunteered to help. I, however, think that none of the party leaders are able to bring about unity and discipline to members of the party one hundred percentage, and I am in the same position, but I may be the best to solve this problem.

- 12. Question:** Sir, one point that the villagers complain about the Democrat Party is that it does not create any tangible objects for them to see, but the party is only interested in the amendment of laws or the collective work for various organisations while other parties will show

the results of their successful construction. (What do you think?)

Answer: The method of the party's election campaign does not stress the creation of objects in exchange for the votes whereas our policies will aim at creating opportunities for the people and bringing about justice, including the reformation of laws relating to the ministries for which the party was responsible, and it is hardly involved with the allocation of funds to build this or that in the amount of ten thousand or a hundred thousand million baht. So, it seems the party does not build any tangible objects.

13. Question: Are you afraid of your safety while travelling on an election campaign?

Answer: No, I am not afraid of it, though I used to be ambushed, have things thrown and other types of attack. This is because I am familiar with the area where I grew up. I have seen a lot of things before.

14. Question: You have been the minister of almost every ministry and even the deputy prime minister as well. Up to now, can you evaluate as to what ministries are the most significant ones? And the type of Thai politics is usually a form of a coalition government, so what is the significant factor to be considered while distributing the ministerial quota among the coalition partners?

Answer: Frankly speaking, we are thinking about this as well. Some parties will grade the ministries on the basis of the rewards that they will get e.g. the Ministry of Transport and Communications will give a lot of rewards, this includes other ministries such as the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. For me, I never think that, and I am not pretending in saying so.

15. Question: But you used to be the Minister of Commerce and the Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives?

Answer: (Laugh.....) When the assets of the politicians were seized, you will know that honesty is very important indeed. I used to be the ministers of both ministries, but I never thought of any reward even of a quarter of a baht (twenty-five satang), I never used my positions to seek benefit as my wish to enter politics is to work for the people and the country as a whole, and I never entered politics in accordance with the situation of the country i.e. after a peaceful situation of the country. In fact, when I entered politics over 20 years ago, it was a period in which the future of democracy and the politicians was in a total darkness, it was a completely dictatorial period, but I have already made a decision. Therefore, my decision at that time was made even before the current period in which I can now become prime minister. I thought of entering politics at a time when I had no hope. Thus, it has been a resolute decision since then. As a result, when I am in any position, such decisiveness will not affect my decision. In connection with the significance of each ministry, I think there is no difference among them, for example, the Ministry of Education may not give much benefit in term of a financial reward to the people who seek it, but its work is extremely important as it is the future of the nation, i.e. the opportunity of the national youth, for example, we are from rural provinces, so our chance is so limited and people like us can be seen throughout the country. Thus, how can we create an opportunity for this group of people? As I said, there was no difference in each ministry because all ministries are unable to work alone, there must be cooperation.

16. Question: There are some senior military officers who play a part in political parties similar to that of a stage director. In your opinion, will this type of thing facilitate the democracy in the next 4-5 years or not? Or will it

weaken or hinder the smooth functioning of the democratic system?

Answer: I think that such movements are only temporary, the parties set up by those movements are the ad hoc or the interim parties as they have been set up to serve the need of their boss. Thus, if their wish is not successful, the parties will be dissolved. Moreover, the parties will cease to exist as a result of either the departure from politics of their boss or the death of the party leader.

17. Question: Sir, have you decided when you will retire from politics?

Answer: Of course, when the time comes, I will, that means when it is time to stop, we must stop and we must try to create a new generation. While I am in the party, I am trying to do this, good candidates are accepted so that they will carry on the party's task as long as possible. I can assure you that my party will never lack good leaders.

18. Question: After writing the book, entitled "Yen Lom Paa", which was released long ago, are you writing anything more, sir?

Answer: Well, I'm now collecting more information for the same book which is expected to be completed in January (1992). I enlarged its contents. Since its debut many more things have happened even as a result of this book as well. Many things have taken place and there have been many more deaths. So, I have to continue writing.

Chuan's Contribution for the Public

During over three decades of his political career, Mr Chuan has done a lot for the benefit of the country and for the people in particular. The following is the list of his contributions.

1. Justice Procedure

He initiated the framework for the systematic development of the courts and the Ministry of Justice by drafting the master plan for the development of the courts and the Ministry of Justice for both short-term and long-term implementation. Such a plan was also included in the 5th National Economic and Social Development Plan and it was the first time that the set plan and project were officially accepted for the development of national justice procedure and it has been followed since then.

2. Economic and Commercial Initiative

(1). He initiated the Asian Promotion Centre on Trade, Investment and Tourism by seeking assistance from the Japanese government.

(2). For the benefit of the farmers nationwide, he proposed the reduction of the export tariff on agricultural produce, for example, he proposed the reduction of the export tariff on rubber to be two baht per kilogramme on 28 July 1981 and as a result of his initiative, farmers have gained benefit since then.

3. Education and Culture

(1). He initiated and supported educational expansion at the secondary level in order to raise the basic education of the people.

(2). He initiated and encouraged the Ministry of Education to launch a rural kindergarten project to open an opportunity for rural children to receive education similar to that of children in the city. The Cabinet approved the project in 1981 and this introduced a new dimension of educational management at the kindergarten level for the first time in 40 years.

(3). He supported the literacy campaign project starting in September 1983 by mobilising personnel from the public and private sectors as well as volunteers from the charity foundations to teach illiterate people without pay for their work. The objective of the campaign was to reduce the illiteracy rate from 14.5% to 10.5% in 1986. The project was able to increase the literacy rate of one million people. It was successful and praised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

(4). He supported the free lunch project for rural students by seeking and pushing for funding to be increased 100% annually. As a result, the primary schools nationwide had the money to arrange free lunch for all students for the first time.

(5). He supported the Development and Promotion Project to encourage the persons who had special ability in science and technology. He asked the Cabinet for approval of the potential development project for those who had special ability in science starting from their studenthood to adult age and they used such an ability to create scientific and technological work. During 1984-1985, the number of students who took part in the project was divided into three levels, namely; 73 high school students, 59 undergraduates and 8 post-graduates respectively.

(6). He initiated the setting up of a fund to help needy students in rural areas by instructing each provincial administration to raise money through various activities such as a charity sports competition. As a result, many provinces had such a fund which has been very useful for needy students in their respective areas.

(7). He set a policy to hold democratic activities in various schools so as to teach democracy in a practical way to the students in order to instil into children to adopt democracy in their life by stressing on three moral principles; respectfulness, unity and knowledge, and to emphasise activities and educational institutions as much as possible drawn from real life experience.

(8). He supported the adjustment of the monthly food allowance for monks who held honorific ranks or administrative positions by asking the

Cabinet for approval of an increase starting from 1 April 1984 onwards. As a result, the monthly food allowance of monks has been increased in line with the economic situation, thus it not only reduced the burden of monks' expenditure but also boosted their mental strength for the studies of the Buddhist Doctrine.

(9). In his capacity as Education Minister, he supported a project for a general convocation of Buddhist clergy in order to settle questions of doctrine and to fix the text of the Scriptures. It was the 10th General Convocation of Buddhism and the third time ever held in Thailand.

(10). He initiated a vocational project to eradicate rural poverty by increasing opportunities for students, who had already completed their studies in primary school at grade 6 or equivalent and worked in rural farming as they got no chance to pursue their education. The project enabled them to further their studies in the field of agriculture in the agricultural colleges under the supervision of the Department of Vocational Education. Thus, the students would spend their time out of farming season to study in colleges or other educational institutions. The project would help them spend less for educational fees and, at the same time, they could carry on their farming work simultaneously.

(11). He initiated the project of "Book Presentation Ceremony" to promote the arrangement of reading places in the temples by using temples as a sources of information for monks and novices to increase their knowledge and, at the same time, the temples would be again turned into centres of learning for the public as in the past.

(12). Mr Chuan, in his capacity as Education Minister, supported a Thai Cultural Heritage Day in order to campaign for creating understanding, love and appreciation of Thai cultural heritage and also to encourage people to participate in the protection of Thai cultural heritage more. Thus, he proposed this issue to the Cabinet and the Cabinet passed a resolution on 26 February 1985 to declare that the second of April of every year, which is the birthday anniversary of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, as the "Thai Cultural Heritage Day."

(13). Mr Chuan, while holding the same post, realised the significance of all kinds of artists who are the creators of valuable national art which is an invaluable cultural heritage. Thus, he thought that it was appropriate to promote national artists for the first time and consequently there is now an annual promotion. In this connection, he instructed the Office of the National Culture Commission to implement the policy and tabled the issue to the Cabinet for consideration. Subsequently, the Cabinet passed a resolution to approve the proposal on 26 February 1985 by setting the 24th of February of every year, which is the birthday anniversary of King Rama II (Phra Buddha Loethlalnaphalai), to be the "National Artists' Day."

(14). He proposed that Teachers' Training Colleges be able to provide other vocational subjects.

(15). He proposed the amendment of law to officially recognise the status of village scouts in 1985.

(16). He initiated the project to cast a Buddha statute to be installed in every school so that the students' mind would be attached to Buddhism. The project was scheduled to be implemented between 1985-1987.

4. Agriculture and Forestry

(1). He supported the management of national agricultural development especially at the provincial level in being more effective and independent so that it would bring benefit to farmers directly. In this connection, he approved in principle that the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives set up the "Provincial Agriculture and Cooperatives' Office" so that it would be a central unit responsible for supervising all official divisions that came under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives at a provincial level. In the first phase, offices of agriculture and cooperatives would be set up in four provinces, namely; Chiang Mai, Khon Khaen, Chainat and Songkhla and it would expand to cover all provinces in the future.

(2). Accelerate land reform for agricultural use for the benefit of farmers.

(3). In his capacity as Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Mr Chuan proposed to increase the rubber assistance fund for farmers who planted a new breed of rubber trees or grew other perennial plants to replace old rubber trees.

(4). He supported the preservation of forest and wild animals by supporting more national parks and preservation areas for wild animals' species in the country.

(5). He supported the preservation of coastal resources, the mangrove forest and coral reefs by asking Cabinet for approval of appropriate measures. Responsible units would be able to use the measures as guidelines while performing their duties.

(6). He realised the significance of the development of water resources for consumption by villagers. In this connection, he assigned the Irrigation Department to expedite the plan for the development of water resources in 14 southern provinces which have been neglected for a long time by making a pilot plan for the development of water resources in the south and accelerating the implementation of the urgent plans.

5. Public Health

(1). Activities for old people

He instructed the Ministry of Public Health to provide free medical services to old people who had no access to free medical treatment. The project was launched in January 1990 and planned to cover every group of old people in the fiscal budget of 1991, and it was carried on by the succeeding government. Now everyone whose age is 60 years old onwards will be entitled to receive free medical treatment since 17 April 1992.

(2). Free medical treatment for primary school students

The concept was initiated when Mr Chuan, who used to be Education Minister, was the Minister of Public Health. He sought cooperation from the two ministries to provide medical treatment for primary school students.

To enable the project to begin, the Ministry of Education began to arrange the transfer of money to the Ministry of Public Health for its medical expenses while giving free treatment to primary school students especially the students who were under the supervision of the Office of the National Primary Education Commission nationwide, covering 4.1 million students starting from 1990 onwards. The cost was set at 30 baht per head and the Ministry of Education would deduct three baht for its travelling expenses and other expenses of the school, while the remaining 27 baht would be transferred to the office of the provincial public health which in turn would distribute the amount to various medical units. The medical services have been provided by public medical units at all levels starting from the health centre to public hospitals and other hospitals.

(3). The campaign on AIDS control and protection

He expedited the policy to educate the public on how to control and prevent AIDS. Even though the campaign was opposed by some group of people, he was able to set the year 1992 to be the “Year of Anti-AIDS Campaign.

(4). The control and protection of local diseases

As local diseases had been a problem that remained unresolved for a long time, though the methods and activities to solve the problem have been included in the 6th Public Health Development Plan, concrete action had not yet been taken, thus, when he served as the Minister of Public Health, Mr Chuan accelerated the launch of a campaign on the protection and control of local diseases through the following means;

1. The lack of iodine had become a prevailing problem in the North leading to the deformity of the brain in children, thus he expedited action to provide iodine to the people in 14 northern provinces and Loei Province in the Northeast by every possible means. He also pushed the project to national level so that every agency which included the Ministry of Public Health, Interior Ministry and Education Ministry would closely cooperate. As a result, the succeeding government set up a national committee on the provision of iodine, chaired by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

2. He supported the control of hookworm disease which was a local problem in the South. Serious attempts were made to stimulate the expansion of control of hookworm disease. Initially, it covered two provinces, namely; Trang and Krabi and later it expanded to cover 14 provinces.

3. He supported the control of liver fluke disease which was a serious problem for northeastern people who had the habit of eating raw fish. Thus, he accelerated a project to launch a campaign on giving up eating raw fish in order to change the eating habits of people. The government realised the significance of this issue, and sought cooperation from the German government for financial support of the campaign which yielded a satisfactory result. Now people begin to realise the ill effects of eating raw fish. It is expected that the problems of liver fluke disease will be reduced rapidly.

(5). Consumer protection on public health

1. As a result of Chuan's initiative, the use of tetracycline for children was abolished as it was unsuitable for children and it was harmful to their teeth.

2. He discouraged the use of painkiller that was mixed with caffeine as rural people became addicted to this drug which caused many people to suffer from peptic ulcers and peptic perforations. Besides, as a result of an addiction to the drug, people often wasted their money on buying it. However, his initiative was implemented during the period of Minister Pairot Ningsanondha.

3. He tried to push for the enforcement of a regulation to prevent the use of vapour addictive substances on 17 January 1990. The regulation specified the procedures and the penalty for the producers, importers, sellers, buyers or the users of these substances, including the authority of officers in charge of investigation. Addicts over 17 years old will be both imprisoned and fined and sent to a rehabilitation centre. It is expected that the measure will help reduce drug addicted problems or eradicate it entirely.

* Source: Roengsak Kamthorn, *Biography of Chuan Leekpai: The 20th Prime Minister*, pp. 61-64.

Chuan is a Prime Minister out of the mainstream

A well-known Thai political economist, Mr Rangsan Thanapornpan, gave a very interesting observation on Mr Chuan Leekpai after the latter's appointment as the 20th prime minister of Thailand on 23 September 1992.

To Mr Rangsan, if we consider the qualification and background of the 19 former prime ministers, Mr Chuan is a prime minister out of the mainstream for the following three reasons, namely;

(1). Mr Chuan is the first Thai prime minister who has never joined the civil service whereas all former prime ministers used to serve in the civil service prior to their appointment as prime ministers, for example, Mr Phot Sarasin, M.R. Seni Pramoj, M.R. Kukrit Pramoj and Mr Anand Panyarachun. Moreover, some prime ministers still served as public servants while holding the top post as well, for example, Field Marshal P. Pibulsongkram, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat and Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachon. Apparently, the bureaucratic system monopolised the production of 19 former prime ministers, but the monopoly has been broken for the first time by Mr Chuan.¹³

(2). Mr Chuan Leekpai became prime minister through an election, though it was not a direct election. Previously only 6 prime ministers were elected to be Members of the House of Representatives. In Thai political history, those who rose to the position of prime minister were mostly non-MPs. Thus, Mr Chuan is the 7th MP who also holds the post of prime minister next in line to the following; Dr Pridi Banomyong (an MP from Ayutthaya Province, 1946), Rear Admiral Thawan Thamrongnawasawat (also an MP from Ayutthaya Province, 1946), Field Marshal P. Pibulsongkram (an MP from Bangkok, 1957), M.R. Seni Pramoj (an MP from Bangkok, 1975), M.R. Kukrit Pramoj (also an MP from Bangkok, 1975) and General Chatichai Choonhavan (an MP from Nakhon Ratchasima Province, 1988).¹⁴

(3). Mr Chuan Leekpai is the first Thai Prime Minister who never received an education abroad. Previously, all 10 civilians who became prime ministers received an education abroad while 9 military officers who became prime ministers all received military education or training courses from foreign countries (See Table No. 1).¹⁵

From another point of view, some qualifications and background of Mr Chuan Leekpai are also in line with the mainstream of Thai prime ministers in the following ways;

(1). Mr Chuan is a civilian prime minister. Out of 19 former prime ministers, he is the 11th civilian prime minister. Previously, 10 prime ministers were the civilians.

(2). Mr Chuan graduated in the field of Law. Among the 19 former prime ministers, nine completed their education in the Military while seven in Law and one each in Agriculture, Engineering and PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) respectively. Thus, the prime minister has been mainly military officers and lawyers. In fact, Rear Admiral Thawan Thamrongnawasawat was the only military one who also graduated in Law (See Table No. 2). Mr Chuan is the 8th lawyer who has become prime minister.

(3). Considering the age of 19 former prime ministers at the time of appointment, over half of them assumed the post for the first time when they were less than 50 years of age (See Table No. 3). Mr Chuan became prime minister at the age of 54, and this is considered average.¹⁶

At the same time, the qualifications and background of the prime minister also bear certain connections with the length of ruling period of the government, and the following factors are to be taken into account, namely;

(1). Thai political history indicates that the prime ministers who were Members of Parliament usually stayed in power for a short period of time, on

average 11.5 months each or each administration lasted for only 6.9 months (See Table No. 4). On the contrary, the prime ministers who were non-MPs seemed to stay in power longer, on average 37.6 months or each administration lasted for 15.2 months (See Table No. 4).

(2). Thai political history also indicates that the prime ministers who were civilians also tended to stay in power for a short period of time, on average 10.5 months each or each administration lasted for 5.0 months (See Table No.5). On the contrary, the prime ministers who were the military officers with the cavalry background tended to stay in power longer, on average 67 months each or each administration lasted for 19.5 months (See Table No. 5).

(3). Out of seven former prime ministers who graduated in Law, three of them relinquished their post due to a coup, they were Phraya Manopakonnitithada (The third Cabinet, 3 June 1933), M.R. Seni Pramoj (The 38th Cabinet, 6 October 1976) and Dr Tanin Kraivixian (The 39th Cabinet, 20 October 1977), those who were not forced to step down by a coup included Mr Phot Sarasin, Prof Sanya Dharmasakti and Mr Anand Panyarachun. Even though Dr Pridi Banomyong did not step down as a result of a coup, the September 1947 coup resulted in the total ruin of the left wing of the People's Party.¹⁷

According to Mr Rangsang, as Mr Chuan Leekpai is the leader of the Democrat Party, it is appropriate to consider the background of the Democrat Party as well. In Thai political history, Mr Khuang Aphaiwong was the first Democrat leader who became prime minister, but his term brought a dark spot to the party as he made an alliance with the military group who staged the September 1947 coup, but then in less than five months, he was forced to step down by the military leader. Meanwhile, M.R. Seni Pramoj who was the next party leader ended his political career in a similar fashion, a military coup.¹⁸

However, at the end of his observation, Mr Rangsan pointed out that he had no intention of spreading the news that Mr Chuan would end his political career as his predecessors, on the contrary, he wanted to point out that Mr Chuan Leekpai is a prime minister out of the mainstream. Thus, a significant role of Mr Chuan is to lead the Thai nation out of the military coup at this critical juncture. Mr Rangsan then urged the public to play a part in pushing Thai society and politics out of the “Vicious Cycle of Thai Politics”, and if it is successful, this will enable Mr Chuan to be the prime minister out of the mainstream completely. Finally, Mr Rangsan gave this guidance, “We must push the old mainstream of politics aside and transform politics that are out of the mainstream to become the new mainstream”.¹⁹

To give a clear picture of his observation, Mr Rangsan Thanapornpan then gave the following tables to illustrate level of education, studies, age, length of administration and background of Thai prime ministers.

Table 1: Number of Prime Ministers classified according to their education

(June 1932–September 1992)

Education	Number
Lower than bachelor level	-
Military education	9
Bachelor level	10
Educated in the country	-
Overseas graduates	10
Total	19

Table 2: Number of Prime Ministers classified according to their studies
(June 1932–September 1992)

Studies	Number
Military	9
Law	7
Agriculture	1
Engineering	1
PPE	1
Total	19

NOTE: PPE = Philosophy, Politics and Economics

Table 3: Number of Prime Ministers classified according to their age on appointment.

(June 1932–September 1992)

Age average	Number	Percentage
Below 40	–	–
40–44	4	21.1
45–49	6	31.6
50–54	2	10.5
55–59	2	10.5
60–64	3	15.8
65–69	2	10.5
Total	19	100.0

Table 4: Number of Cabinets and duration of their administration classified according to the political status of the prime ministers

(June 1932–September 1992)

Status of Prime Ministers	Number of Cabinets	Number of Prime Ministers	Duration of Administration
1. MPs	10	6	5 years and 9 months
2. Non-MPs	42	17	53 years and 3 months
3. Total	52	19	59 years

NOTE: Some Prime Ministers took the posts more than once and sometimes they were MPs while at other times they were non-MPs.

Table 5: Number of Cabinets and Prime Ministers classified according to their background

(June 1932–September 1992)

Status of Prime Ministers	Number of Cabinets	Number of Prime Ministers	Duration of Administration
1. MPs	31	9	5 years and 3 months
2. Non-MPs	21	10	8 years and 9 months
3. Total	52	19	59 years

NOTE: Military Prime Ministers comprise all those who used to be military officers including Rear Admiral Thawan Thamrongnawasawat and General Chatichai Choonhavan.

Chuan rises to Prime Minister and the Downfall of his first Government

Chuan rose to national leadership under a social atmosphere that refused political leaders who have not been elected and had gained illegitimate power through a coup.¹⁹

Following the downfall of the government of General Suchinda Kraprayoon as a result of a large scale public protest, notoriously known as the “Black May Event 1992”. The event signalled that, “Fifty years of military domination had come to an end. Parliament could now rule. After May 1992, many businessmen and intellectuals talked about entering politics. Many hoped Thai politics would now progress and modernise, rather as the economy had already done. Indeed, the ending of the 1991-2 crisis was a moment of hope. The military had been retired from the political state. Thailand’s democracy could now flourish”.²⁰ People are now looking for a new leadership who can fulfil their need and aspiration and Mr Chuan seems to fit this category best.

It is to be noted that during the election campaign in September 1992, Mr Chuan gained broad support from several Thai leading newspapers. Many of them joined force to orchestrate that Mr Chuan was much more qualified than his rivals, pointing out that he had been known as “Mr Clean hands”. Mr Chuan’s slogan, “Holding on to Democratic Principles” also accorded to public expectation.²¹

After his victory, some of the newspapers even praised Mr Chuan as a role model of Thai politicians who brought light to Thai society, in terms of democratic development. But he did not have to wait for too long for his relationship with the newspapers to turn sour. (The issue of Non-transferable Land Deeds known as “SPK 4-01” opened an opportunity for the opposition to stage a dramatic no-confidence debate. Thus, the SPK 4-01 land scandal gave Mr Chuan no alternative, but to resign in May 1995 and called a fresh election rather than face a parliamentary vote.) They (the newspapers) criticised him and his ministers of their administrative failures. Ironically, his once praised qualifications, later became his much criticised drawbacks.²²

Prior to the September 1992 election, in the eyes of the Thai press, Mr Chuan was the most suitable candidate who showed the following four distinctive characters, namely;

- (1). His long political record was praised as honest and clean.
- (2). Compromising and non-aggressive nature,
- (3). Upholding the parliamentary system,
- (4). Upholding the principles and the rule of law.

In the wake of the decline of his popularity, Mr Chuan's once-praised qualifications turned into drawbacks in the following ways;

(1). His honest and clean record has been tainted as a result of issuing land title deeds, SPK 4-01, to poor families in violation of the mentioned rule of law. (Instead of benefiting poor families, many of the rich got advantage from the programme.)

(2). His compromising and non-aggressive nature has been translated to mean indecisive and slow to catch up with events.

(3). His holding on to the parliamentary system was criticised when he refused to amend the constitution as requested by Sub. Lt. Chalad Vorachatra. However, at the initial stage, Mr Chuan gained an advantage from his character as the journalists thought that the solution to political problems had to be done in the framework of the parliamentary system only, judging from the fact that the government came from an election, thus, it should not be politically pressured by political groups outside Parliament, and the situation should not be compared with the Suchinda government which rose to power by means of a coup, thus, political groups outside Parliament protested against his government.

(4). His holding on to the principles and the rule of law was criticised as a result of his refusal to a request put forward by Sub. Lt. Chalad Vorachatra (who staged a sit-in hunger protest to press the Chuan government to amend the constitution to be more democratic as the existing one appears to be in favour of dictatorial rule), and this turned out to be a weak point that was used by the newspapers to attack his government especially on the issue of

SPK 4-01 as it appeared that many people who were not eligible to benefit from the land distribution programme had their names included in the eligible list. In spite of the fact that the land set aside for free distribution was reserved only for “farmers” as officially-mentioned in the definition.²³

Whatever the criticism may be, Mr Chuan Leekpai is still being praised as the most suitable leader whose reputation still impressed the public, and that is why he was warmly welcomed when he took second term following the resignation of General Chavalit in November 1997, and this issue will be discussed in the proceeding topics.

Thailand's Economic Crash of 1997

Thai people are puzzled as to what happened to their national economy which suddenly collapsed without any warning at all. They don't even know what the IMF is meant for. What has actually happened seems to be in total contrast to their imagination, indeed, it is a stark contrast as they always think that;

(1). Globalisation and Information Technology (IT) will bring about prosperity and superiority to human race.

(2). The 21st century is the century of East Asia.

(3). Thailand will undoubtedly become a new tiger in the short term future as Thailand used to have the highest economic growth rate in the world.

(4). Thai leaders always tell their country folk that Thai economy will prosper in the 21st century without any doubt, though there may be some problem, it is a political problem only. Thus, if political reform is successful, everything will be fine.

During his election campaign, Gen Chavalit even announced with great confidence that during his administration Thai people would have a better livelihood. Gen Chavalit really thought so, because prior to the economic crisis, there was no mainstream economists, including the economic institutes in this country and abroad, that ever ventured to think that Thailand would be stung by such a devastating economic crisis.

Now the truth turns out to be opposite to what Thai people have ever thought. Today Thailand is facing economic, political and cultural destruction. Now many people begin to accept that this crisis is much more severe than those of the past.²⁴

It is to be noted that from 1986 to 1992, Thailand's boom had been based on growth of export industries promoted by domestic entrepreneurs and direct investment from East Asia. The growth was real. Indeed, Thailand seemed especially attractive. The pegged currency removed any currency risk. Interest

rates were high. Everybody was predicting a bright future. Even on the eve of the bust (1997), the IMF (International Monetary Fund) praised Thailand's "remarkable economic performance" and "consistent record of sound macro-economic performance".²⁵

Indeed, Thailand's bust in 1997 came as a surprise. However, it was no surprise that the boom came to an end. Only a few were mesmerised into believing that Thailand would escape the business cycle. Many had predicted that Thailand's engine of export growth would falter because of rising wages, increased competition, and the strain on infrastructure and human resources. From 1994 on, export growth had faltered and the current account deficit widened. The severity of the bust wiped away the memory of the boom. Some outside bankers and analysts claimed the boom had always been an illusion based on easy money. Others exulted that the crash proved the whole "Asian model" of rapid export-led growth was fundamentally flawed. Many in the West had become bored by the enthusiasm for Asian "miracles".²⁶

When the bubble imploded, capital fled, liquidity disappeared, asset values lurched downwards, and the financial industry caved in. The IMF prescribed the medicine it had developed to cope with crashes caused by profligate government borrowing. It stamped hard on the economic brake. In late 1997, the economy shrank at frightening speed. The bath's value halved. The value of foreign debt rose higher than total GDP. While the benefits of boom were rather unequally distributed, the impact of the bust was indiscriminate. From the top conglomerates to the smallest family concern, businesses built up over one, two, three, and four decades faced annihilation.²⁷

The Collapse of Chavalit's Government

During his administration, Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh faced an uphill task especially the corruption scandals emerging around several ministers with tainted records and the problem of the economic crisis which took more of his government's attention.

"As the economy lurched through the finance crisis, the unpegging of the baht, and the IMF bailout, businessmen called on him to quit. Chavalit argued that the problems had been inherited from previous governments and he has been let down by the technocrats. But these excuses did not appeal to businessmen who saw the economy as the government's priority".²⁸

Prime Minister Chavalit even faced a tough time when the press demanded his resignation for mismanagement of the economy and his dependence on corrupt and conservative politicians. In late October, Chavalit agreed to step down to show his political spirit.

Immediately after the resignation of Chavalit, The Chart Pattana Party (CPP) tried to maintain the coalition with former Prime Minister General Chatichai Choonhavan replacing Gen Chavalit as Prime Minister. But the cartoons, protests, and press critiques indicated a popular rejection not just of Gen Chavalit but also of other old-guard politicians. In four parties (of the former coalition), younger MPs staged a revolt against their leaders (especially from the Thai Citizen Party known as the "Cobra Group") to bring in a new coalition headed by Chuan Leekpai and the Democrat Party.²⁹

It is said that the Democrats had come to power because the urban lobby wanted its strong economic team led by Mr Tarrin Nimmanahaeminda and Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi to manage the crisis. Many of the old-guard politicians who had dominated the parliamentary scene for the last decade were pushed aside, and others discreetly withdrew.³⁰

Chuan's Second Term as Prime Minister

Immediately after assuming the post of Prime Minister for the second time, Mr Chuan Leekpai then delivered a policy statement in Parliament on 20 November 1997 and at the end of his introduction, Prime Minister Chuan said, "My government has formulated a policy to rehabilitate all sectors of the national economy and stands ready to be a motivating force for full-capacity development in the future. The Government is well aware that this undertaking is fraught with difficulty and falls under the conditions of a stringent deadline and tight fiscal limitations. The Government is nevertheless confident that the whole-hearted cooperation of the entire populace of the nation, and the Government's principles of efficient, swift, honest, and transparent administration should enable the solution of the economic problems currently facing the nation and the people."

It is to be noted that his government has formulated its policy in two parts. Part I consists of policy on the political system, governance, civil service administration, security, and foreign affairs while Part II consists of policy on economic and social development, comprising two time frames—the immediate and intermediate terms. However, our discussion will focus on Section II (Economic and Social Development Policy) as it is more relevant to our studies on Prime Minister Chuan's strategy of tackling the economic crisis in his second term of prime minister.

Economic and Social Development Policy

To Prime Minister Chuan, as Thailand's economy is now in critical condition, beset all around by financial, fiscal, trade, investment, and cost of living problems, the floating of the exchange rate which caused substantial devaluation of the baht has contributed to higher commodity prices. Furthermore, efforts to resolve the economic problems with assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have not yet restored confidence in the Thai economy, which is in period of severe stagnation. This has brought about unemployment

and social problems, compounding the crisis and affect people's livelihood even more severely. Recognising the severity of this economic crisis, the Government has established urgent plans of action to attack the problems on all fronts to see the economy through this crisis. The policies to be implemented may be classified into two phases, i.e., the immediate term, with measures to be taken within the shortest period of time, and the medium term, with measures to be taken within 6 months to one year. The policies aim to bring about continuous improvement and the restoration of the Thai economy to normalcy within a reasonable period, as follows:

Immediate-term Policy: strengthening stability and confidence in the economic system which can be mentioned in brief as follows;

- (1). Solving the problems of the financial sector and boosting liquidity
- (2). Sustaining international reserves at a level sufficient to build confidence
- (3). Increasing foreign exchange revenues
- (4). National Budget Management
- (5). Promoting thrift
- (6). Creating unity and efficiency in overall economic policy management

Alleviation of economic impact

- (1). Alleviating the unemployment problem
- (2). Alleviating the cost of living problem
- (3). Alleviating social problems

Medium-term policy: structural adjustment and social development

Regarding the medium-term policy, Prime Minister Chuan states that the Government aims to lay the foundation for fostering economic strength and increasing competitiveness as well as promoting economic stability in continuation from the immediate phase, by emphasising economic restructuring and social

development in every aspect to cope with rapid changes, and continue with the policy of thorough distribution of income and progress to rural areas. Nonetheless, due to budget constraints, the government is required to set priorities and a clear direction for implementation, which can be mentioned in brief as follows:

- 1. Strengthening sources of funds for economic restructuring**
- 2. Restructuring the production system**
 - (1). restructuring the agricultural sector
 - (2). restructuring the industrial sector
 - (3). restructuring the service sector
- 3. Increasing the potential of Special Economic Zones to enhance competitiveness**
- 4. Infrastructural Adjustment**
 - (1). Transportation
 - (2). Communications
 - (3). Public utilities
- 5. Development of Science and Technology**
- 6. Human and Social Development**
 - (1). Labour
 - (2). Education
 - (3). Religion, Art and Culture
 - (4). Sports policy
 - (5). Public Health Policy
 - (6). Policy on Security and Safety of Life and Property
 - (7). Policy and Consumer Protection
 - (8). Other Policies.

At the end of his policy statement, Prime Minister Chuan states that aside from the aforementioned political circumstances, the Cabinet is also about to enter office at a time of economic difficulty. This is another reason it is

being closely watched both from within and outside the country, because Thailand's economic actions henceforth will inevitably affect the region and the international community. "I wish to assure you that the Government will use its existing preparedness, cooperation from all sectors and the lessons of the past to mobilise every resource for the maximum benefit, and to use the time wisely to overcome the nation's economic crisis according to the aforesaid policies and measures, with fortitude, integrity, prudence, swiftness and decisiveness," said Prime Minister Chuan.

Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai then appealed for public support by saying that, "resolving political and economic problems, as well as carrying out the tasks according to the policy just stated and action plans to be drawn up, will be accomplished only with the understanding and co-operation of the people, especially the representatives of the Thai populace present in this Parliament. I and the Government therefore wholeheartedly hope to receive your support and are confident that we shall enjoy your good cooperation."

Source: Internet address: <http://www.thaigov.go.th/general/policy/policy.htm>

Chuan's Economic Measures with the IMF's Blessing

It is to be noted that the economic reform programme under the International Monetary Fund (IMF), started five months earlier in August 1997 during the Chavalit administration, had failed to rebuild investor confidence as initially expected. Meanwhile, the economic policies at the beginning of 1998 under the Chuan II administration maintained a priority on restoring external balance, plugging capital outflows and reviving confidence in the baht.

Analysts welcomed the return of Chuan Leekpai and the Democrats' respected economic team to power, even then few expected a rapid turnaround, given the extent of the economic damage wrought over a decade of imprudent growth, public mismanagement and weak corporate governance.³¹

Capital outflows continued unchecked in the first quarter, as international investors and financial institutions called back loans and sought to limit country and regional exposures. Growing political and economic uncertainty in the region also boded ill for the Thai economy in the early part of the year. Tensions in Indonesia (especially in East Timor) led many investors to pull out of the region, helping to propel the baht over 50 to the US dollar in late January and early February of 1998.³²

Monetary and fiscal policies were kept tight to foster external adjustment. **The IMF second letter of intent** revised the 1998 projected current account deficit to 3.8% of gross domestic product from 5%. In addition, rebuilding the country's foreign reserves was a priority to help regain investor confidence.

Fiscal policies in the beginning of the year also emphasised prudence and discipline. The IMF had called for a budget surplus of 1% gross domestic product for fiscal 1998, following a deficit of 1.6 of GDP in the previous fiscal year.³³

It is to be noted that the surplus target thus forced the government to slash spending by 180 billion baht from the previous spending plan of 982 billion for fiscal 1998 which ended on 30 September 1998. Meanwhile, tight

fiscal and monetary policies, while helping restore some balance in external accounts, wrought havoc with the domestic economy. Unforeseen local and external factors, coupled with the IMF's stringent restructuring prescription, touched off a liquidity squeeze throughout the economy. Short-term interest rates jumped sharply higher. Companies with state contracts and concessions also fell into liquidity difficulties as public agencies held back payments in a bid to remain within the government's austerity guidelines.³⁴

Leading economists criticised the IMF as prescribing the wrong medicine to the Thai ailing economy, and among the best-known critics against the IMF's approach was Dr Virabhongse Ramangkura who had been an adviser to Prime Minister Prem in the mid-1980s and served briefly as Finance Minister under Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan.

Meanwhile, the situation in Indonesia became intensified as the country was wracked by public protests against food shortages and higher prices. Regional turmoil seemed to dash the hopes that Thailand would achieve a rapid rebound. "As a result, policy makers and the IMF agreed to relax fiscal policies for **the third letter of intent**, effective from February through May 1998, and instead of a 1% surplus target, the 1998 budget would instead aim at a deficit of no more than 2% of GDP."³⁵

It is to be noted that in the third letter of intent no real stimulus programmes were outlined. At the same time, the eased fiscal target actually revealed that public revenues would be sharply lower because of falling tax collection from the private sector. Above all, tight monetary policies under the third letter were still maintained as the IMF was adamant that monetary discipline was necessary to restrain outflows and stabilise the currency, at least for the remaining first half.

Considering growing market volatility in Asia and other emerging markets, the Democrat-led government thus preferred a conservative approach. "But high interest rates and only a slight easing in fiscal policies did little to prevent the slide in domestic economic activity. Production and manufacturing

indices slid to historical lows. Non-performing loans (NPLs) in the banking sector, meanwhile, jumped sharply as corporate borrowers were squeezed between higher debt-servicing costs and expenses and shrinking markets. Imports all but collapsed, falling nearly 40% in US dollar terms in April and May compared with the year before. Consumers, wary of growing job insecurity, cut back sharply on new purchases of electronic goods, automobiles and household appliances.”³⁶

In another development, the current account jumped sharply, with net inflows averaging \$1 billion per month over the first half. The inflows helped stabilise the baht in the range of 40-42 to the dollar for the second quarter, while falling demand and depressed world commodities prices helped restrain inflation. Toward the end of the first half, policy makers could point to several promising signs that the economic collapse, if not over, was at least easing.³⁷

Combined with successive current account surpluses, the inflows helped the bath stabilise around 40 to the dollar. Currency stability allowed the government to push for eased monetary and fiscal policies in the next IMF review.

Under **the fourth letter of intent**, signed in late May 1998 and running through August 1998, the fiscal deficit target was increased to 3% of GDP from 2%. Money supply growth for the year was increased to 9% from the 5.1% target set out previously.

It is to be noted that corporate debt restructuring was a key element in the fourth letter of intent. While liquidity was gradually returning to the system, the vast majority of corporate Thailand remained all but insolvent. Debt-to-equity ratios for listed companies soared to 4-5 times.³⁸

“And although the stronger baht would mitigate some of the losses taken following the float in July 1997, borrowers still faced 30% higher costs on their unhedged foreign debt. At the same time, the central bank established a committee to help coordinate debt restructuring for the largest companies in

Thailand. The committee included representatives of local and foreign banks, the Federation of Thai Industries and the Board of Trade.”³⁹

Meanwhile, the highlight of **the fifth letter of intent**, running from August 1998 to November 1998, was the government’s financial restructuring programme, announced by the authorities on August 14. As a result, regulators seized five finance companies and two small banks, Union Bank and Laem Thong Bank. Siam City Bank and Bangkok Metropolitan Bank, nationalised earlier in the year, were to be privatised by mid-1999. First Bangkok City Bank and the performing assets of the Bangkok Bank of Commerce then would be merged with state-owned Krung Thai Bank, which would be recapitalised in return by the central bank. But of greatest interest was a 300-billion-baht recapitalisation programme for the remaining banks and finance companies.⁴⁰

However, it became increasingly evident over the third quarter that the 3% fiscal deficit target of the fourth letter to the IMF was insufficient to stem the recession. The fifth letter then projected an economic contraction for 1998 of 8% of GDP, versus 5.5% forecast in the previous letter. But the programme called for no increase in fiscal spending. The IMF maintained that the economy would bottom out by the end of 1998, based on increasingly stable inflation, production and investment figures. Even then the fifth letter did allow considerable easing of monetary policies, and regulators urged commercial banks to lower lending rates to close the spread with deposit rates, which had fallen sharply since the beginning of the year.⁴¹

But while interbank rates had fallen to as low as 3% by the third quarter, the role of banks and finance companies as financial intermediaries remained significantly distorted. Non-performing loans had jumped to around 40% of total outstanding credit in the system. With the pace of recapitalisation lagging, most institutions had frozen new loans or were scaling down their portfolios to minimise the costs of setting aside loan-loss provisions.⁴²

In **the sixth letter of intent**, the government and the IMF acknowledged

that recovery would likely be delayed until mid-1999 at the earliest. The IMF review covering December to February forecast an increase in the fiscal deficit target, to 5% of GDP from 3% earlier.

“Aimed at improving social welfare and economic-stimulus programmes, the deficit spending was hoped to result in economic growth in 1999 of 1%. But in implementing stimulus measures, the government had to be wary of stoking inflationary pressure.”⁴³

“For fiscal 1999, the government will focus on small projects to create employment, with speedy implementation. The Finance Ministry expects disbursement for the fiscal year to reach 90% of planned expenditures, compared with typical rates of 80% in previous years. To ease the social impact of the downturn, the government has borrowed \$150 million to provide grants and loans to community development projects and investment programmes. Another change in fiscal policies has been a reduction in tied-over budget projects, for which spending commitments span several years. The Finance Ministry says it will fund the deficit through existing treasury reserves, foreign loans and the issue of treasury bills and bonds in the local market.”⁴⁴

It is to be noted that since taking the post of Prime Minister, Mr Chuan, assisted by his strong economic team, has tried his best to put the economy on the right track. The year 1998 can be described as a tough time for him and his government, even then he managed to ease the crisis to a certain extent, and in the year 1999 he will still have to work harder as more measures have to be implemented such as the privatisation of state enterprises which often draws in a strong protest.

Table 6:

Key 1998 economic targets

	LoI 1	LoI 2	LoI 3	LoI 4	LoI 5
Economic growth (% change)	3.5	0	-3.5	-5.5	-7.0
Consumption (% change)	0.8	-1.1	-5.0	-8.0	-10.7
Investment (% change)	-0.8	-6.5	-21.0	-24.0	-30.4
Govt balance (% of GDP)	1.0	1.0	-2.0	-3.0	-3.0
Money supply (% change)	11.0	6.8	5.1	9.0	7.0

Source: Bank of Thailand

Note: LoI = Letter of Intent

Table 7:

Economic outlook

	1998	1999
Growth (%)	-7.8	0.8
Per capita income		
■ Baht	79,819	84,419
■ Dollars	1,933	2,345
Inflation rate (%)	8.5	5.3
Consumption (% change year on year)		
■ Private	-15.0	-2.0
■ Public	-4.9	-2.0
Investment (% change year on year)		
■ Private	-45.8	1.0
■ Public	-29.6	12.7
Exports (US\$bn)	53.0	55.7
■ Growth (%)	-6.4	5
Imports (US\$bn)	39.5	41.7
■ Growth (%)	-35.5	5.6
Trade account (US\$bn)	13.5	14
■ Growth (%)	11.4	9.6
Current account (US\$bn)	16.0	16.3
■ Growth (%)	13.6	11.2
GDP (trillion baht)	4.9	5.2

Source: Naional Economic and Social Development Board

Table 8:**1998 external balance**

	Letter of intent				
	1	2	3	4	5
Exports	61.1	60.9	60.1	57.5	54.8
Imports	67.6	64.3	56.8	50.5	45.4
Current account	-5.3	-2.5	4.4	8.5	11.5
Capital flow	1.8	0.3	-14.0	-16.0	-17.1
Foreign reserves	24.5	24.8	23.0	26.0	27.0

Source: Bank of Thailand Unit: US\$billion

The year 1999 is a period of hope and a stimulating time for the Thai economy

After two years of financial turmoil and hardship, the Thai economy finally began to show clear signs of recovery in 1999. People begin to see some hope, but they are sceptical, whether graphs charting economic growth will show a “U” shape or a “W” shape.

However, many key indicators suggested the worst for the economy was over. The manufacturing production index turned upwards in February 1999, showing 2.6% growth from the year before, following 17 straight months of declines. By June, the index was up 12% from the year before, and 14.4% in October. Meanwhile, the private investment index had reached its lowest point in October 1998. From -23% year-on-year in January, the index improved to -23.4% in June and -11% in October.⁴⁵ Now we shall look at the government’s measures.

It is to be noted that as a result of the increased stability in exchange, interest and inflation rates in the second half of 1998, the government could turn its attention toward spurring the domestic economy by fiscal stimulus

measures as the situation is favourable to introduce various measures which can be raised for discussion as follows.

On March 30, the government unveiled a 130-billion-baht package of new spending programmes, tax cuts and measures to reduce energy prices.

Some 53 billion baht, borrowed from Japan under the Miyazawa fund, were earmarked for creating 486,000 new jobs, largely in rural communities, through small-scale infrastructure and public works programmes.

Another 54 billion baht was freed up by tax cuts to help boost consumer purchasing power and reduce business costs.

Value-added tax was cut to 7% from 10% until March 2001. A personal tax exemption on the first 50,000 baht of net income was announced, equal to an additional 2,500 baht per year per person. The 1.5% VAT for small businesses was eliminated.

Then, another 23.8-billion-baht worth of energy tax cuts were made; electricity prices were reduced by 0.2587 baht per unit; prices for liquified petroleum gas were cut; and excise tax on fuel oil was cut to 5% from 17.5%.⁴⁶

Indeed, the programme was aimed at easing the social impact of the crisis by expanding welfare benefits, spurring new investment and job creation and expanding public health, education and environmental protection programmes. Technology development, industrial restructuring and public sector reform were other key goals of the March programme.

Four months later, the Finance Ministry followed with new measures to boost private investment, promote recovery in the property sector and support small-and medium-sized enterprises. The programme introduced on 10 August featured tariff cuts on nearly 500 categories of capital goods and raw materials, aimed at reducing production costs.⁴⁷

To support the property sector, the August package approved 50-billion-baht worth of bond issues through the Government Housing Bank and the Secondary Mortgage corporation to help provide long-term, fixed-rate credit for new homebuyers. In addition, real estate transfer fees were cut, estimated to

cost the government 2.5 billion baht in revenue until the end of 2000. The August investment programme also approved new capital increases for the Small Industry Finance Corporation and the Small Industry Credit Guarantee Corporation to support business expansion. Then another 100 million baht was allocated for the establishment of financial advisory centres for small-and medium-sized enterprises.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, a major task for the government to tackle for the speedy recovery of the economy is to go ahead with its privatisation plan. In fact, government efforts to privatise state enterprises took a step forward in 1999 after parliamentary approval of the Corporatisation Act.

The new law will allow state enterprises to be transformed into limited or public limited companies. However, the implementation of the law is still slow due to several reasons. As a result, progress toward privatisation slowed throughout the year. Political sensitivities and resistance among state enterprise employees was one key factor. Improved market and economic conditions also reduced the urgency of privatisation, highlighted in the early stages of the crisis as key towards restoring investor confidence. Even then policy makers say they remain dedicated towards state enterprise privatisation and the goal of boosting economic efficiency, improving public services at lower costs.⁴⁹

The agencies that move ahead to prepare for future changes include;

- The National Energy Policy Office
- The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand
- The Telephone Organisation of Thailand
- The Metropolitan Waterworks Authority and the Provincial Waterworks Authority
- Thai Airways International Ltd.
- The Airports Authority of Thailand, and
- The State Railways of Thailand

Along with the privatisation plan, a trade liberalisation policy has also been implemented. It is expected that efforts to spur regional trade will take a

giant step forward starting January 1, when members of the Asean Free Trade Area (AFTA) will slash import tariffs to between 0-5% for 85% of all trade lines. Meanwhile, tariffs for the remaining trade products will be cut by 2003. Economists and policy makers hope the reductions will help boost regional trade and investment flows to Asean countries.⁵⁰

The year 2000 is a period of stability that provides a recovery platform.

After three years of economic meltdown, Thailand entered the 21st century on track for economic recovery, with broad stability in interest, exchange and inflation rates. Manufacturing production showed gains, bolstered by strong exports in the first half. Domestic consumption and private investment also showed moderate improvement, helped by low interest rates maintained by the Bank of Thailand.⁵¹

In fact, exports remained a bright star in the economy, growing 30.4% in US dollar terms in the first quarter year-on-year. Manufacturing also grew across the board with rising exports and stronger domestic demand. At the same time, strong global demand for computers helped put integrated circuits and electronic parts at the top of Thai exports. Gains were also shown in the auto, petrochemicals, steel, jewellery and textile industries.⁵²

Meanwhile, low interest rates, continued fiscal stimulus programmes and slight gains in consumer confidence helped boost domestic consumption, with department store, car and motorcycle sales, and value-added tax collection all posting gains. Auto sales grew 62.1% in the first quarter from the year before due to strong domestic demand. Private investment also posted positive gains on higher car sales, capital goods imports and cement sales. However, the property sector, the biggest recipient of credit from the financial sector, remained weak, as increased demand remained insufficient to absorb the supply.⁵³

It is to be noted that despite the brighter macroeconomic picture, economists agree that authorities will face increasing challenges ahead to sustain

growth momentum amid increasing fiscal constraints. Meanwhile, implementing structural reform to promote long-term industrial competitiveness will also be a major task. Besides, while debt restructuring has made significant progress under the Corporate Debt Restructuring Advisory Committee, officials agree that future gains will rest with the courts. Debts topping one trillion baht will have to be settled in court.⁵⁴

Whatever the situation may be, Thailand has formally ended the three-year reform programme under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in June 2000. Fund officials said the economy was on track for up to 5% growth in 2000, although noted that corporate debt restructuring remained a major task for the Thai government to handle.

Thailand entered a \$17.2 billion standby credit programme in mid-1997 after the central bank exhausted the country's foreign reserves in a failed effort to defend the baht. A number of central bank officials now face prosecution over the losses. A total of \$13.5 billion has been drawn down, with the last disbursement made in June 1999.

Since the Chuan II administration has come to an end, questions remain

Table 9:

Capacity utilisation

Sector	1996	1997	1998	1Q99	2Q99	3Q99	4Q99	1Q00
Foods	37.20	37.40	33.30	66.90	33.40	30.40	39.00	7.40
Beverages	83.00	79.10	77.20	79.30	103.80	108.10	116.60	36.20
Tobacco	84.20	75.80	60.40	59.80	56.80	49.90	51.20	64.70
Construction materials	76.70	72.90	44.60	50.60	51.30	55.80	41.50	51.10
Iron and steel	65.10	51.90	35.60	34.90	37.70	42.00	42.30	44.40
Transportation	67.70	48.60	23.40	28.50	31.90	39.90	41.30	41.80
Petroleum products	85.70	90.10	84.00	86.80	89.40	85.50	81.30	82.30
Others	72.40	66.40	54.30	51.70	54.40	60.90	63.70	65.50
Total	72.40	65.50	52.00	56.20	58.50	61.90	63.30	57.70

Source: Bank of Thailand

Unit: Percent

about whether reform policies would remain on track under a new coalition government. What the new government will have to face include hard decisions on public debt management, state enterprise privatisation and fiscal stimulus policies amid tighter budget constraints.

How far has the Chuan II administration succeeded in tackling the economic crisis?

After more than three years of introducing various measures to remedy the country's ailing economy, the government has also auctioned the assets of defunct finance companies, trimmed the government's budget, imposed the downsizing of the number of state employees and encouraged their early retirement, encouraged and promoted domestic tourism and export-oriented industries etc., even then it is still difficult to point out as to what extent the government has achieved its policy targets. However, on 16 June 2000 IMF officials assured the country that there would be no second financial crisis as there are many positive factors indicating that Thailand is on the road to recovery, though non-performing loans still pose a big problem for the country.

Government policy makers themselves express confidence in Thailand's economic recovery. Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai himself said, "Overall the economy was on track for strong growth this year (2000). The government was determined to pass the 2001 fiscal budget to maintain momentum for recovery."⁵⁵

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Supachai Panitchpakdi said there was little risk of a second crisis, with the current account expected to remain in surplus until 2002. He was convinced that strong economic growth in Japan and Europe, coupled with signs of a soft landing for the US economy, would also help Thailand's recovery.

At the same time, Mr Pakorn Malakul Na Ayudhya, a central bank deputy governor, said, "The Thai economy is definitely recovering well. But for sustainable growth, what do we need to do? One message is that the private

sector cannot stay still, but needs to work for continual improvement of their products to survive.”⁵⁶

At the same time, there have been mixed reactions among Thai politicians and members of the public since the country joined the IMF programme in May 1997. Supporters of the programme say the country had no choice but to accept IMF conditions which included, among other things, strict control on government expenditure and reform of the bankruptcy law. Meanwhile, opponents believe that the IMF measures were too strict and out of touch with reality. They are particularly opposed to the privatisation of state enterprises and tough regulations on commercial banks. As a result of IMF measures, they say, Thai banks have weakened and some have been taken over by foreign banks. Critics say that the economic bubble burst in 1997 because of our own weaknesses. We relied too much on foreign countries and cherished the illusion about our economic greatness.⁵⁷ Some people get annoyed with the argument so much so that they have asked if we did not ask for the IMF’s assistance, would the opponents have helped then? But to be frank, it is a waste of time to judge who is right or wrong. What is urgently needed is to know how our economy can be rebuilt after the end of the IMF programme.

Now after a lengthy discussion on the government’s economic measures and its degree of success, we shall look at a poll made by **Abac-KSC Internet Poll** which was published in the Bangkok Post on 3 July 2000. The article runs as follows;

“The government’s economic policies to bring about a sound recovery have not paid off and the people should not be too optimistic. This was reflected in an Abac-KSC Internet Poll survey between 15 June and 1 July 2000, of 2,000 heads of families in the provinces of Chiang Mai, Tak, Phetchabun and Phichit in the North; Bangkok, Nonthaburi, Samut Prakan, Chai Nat, Chachoengsao, Phetchaburi and Nakhon Pathom in the Central Region; Khon Kaen, Si Sa Ket, Nakhon Ratchasima and Nong Khai in the Northeast; and Songkhla, Phatthalung and Surat Thani in the South.

The survey mainly concentrated on the “household economy of the people throughout the country” in the second quarter of the year, to detect signs, if any, of further economic threats.

The majority, or 68.9%, of the household heads, said their income was at a standstill and 12% said their income had dropped. Only 19% said their income had increased.

As many as 56.8% of the respondents said the country’s economy was in a negative trend and 25.7% saw no signs of improvement. Only 15% believed the economy was on a road to recovery.

Prime Minister Chuan is second in global Cabinet dream team

Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai was named runner-up to Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok as chief executive of the World Dream Cabinet by the World Economic Forum.

WEF's Worldlink magazine this year (1999) voted Kok as the world's best chief executive because of the way he gets his job done. He has managed to keep the economy efficient and lean, and at the same time continues to nurture a strong social market system.

As a runner-up in the Dream Cabinet, the magazine said Chuan has been able to cobble together a seven-party coalition that is still together after two years. It said Chuan has been able to redirect the country along the path of reform, establishing an effective bankruptcy court among other measures, though "it has caused his popularity to take a tumble, but the measures are widely seen as long overdue."

The magazine, which is read by government top leaders and business executives, pointed out that the past two years have taught Chuan to be tough. "He will need every inch of that strength to move reforms ahead in the face of an unconvinced Thai population," concluded the magazine.

* Source: *THE NATION*, 20 NOVEMBER 1999.

Books that bring troubles to the writers

Since Mr Chuan Leekpai is our final thinker, so it is better to discuss his writing after mentioning the work of the thinkers placed before him in our analysis.

It is very interesting to note that the four thinkers are all writers whose work brought troubles to themselves at least once in their life time, and while the first two have passed away, the latter two are alive and still play an active role in political activities. Though Dr Chai-Anan is not a politician and has never been the prime minister, he is a political scientist whose political comment is always sought after by all.

As we know, **Dr Pridi Banomyong** wrote almost a dozen books, but the one that put him in trouble is known as the “Yellow Book” or his radical economic plan released in 1933, and as a result of this writing, he was expelled from Thailand. The book had him branded a communist and earned him a “red” label.

Now we come to our second thinker, **M.R. Kukrit Pramoj**, whose writings are countless in number as already mentioned in Chapter 3. In fact, even though his numerous books never brought any trouble to him, his comment on the general election published in Siam Rath in 1957 made him to face a libel charge and as a result, he was fined 500 baht. Though the punishment is light, his disappointment in the military ruler was immeasurable.

Then we move on to **Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija** whose writing was once considered as a threat to national security. In fact, among over 100 of his books in both Thai and English, only Udomkarn Thang Karnmueng in Thai or Political Ideologies in English, was prohibited in Thailand by the order of the Revolution Council Announcement of 21 October 1976 on the grounds of containing sensitive stories. In fact, back to the 1970s the reading, buying or selling of certain books could lead to a heavy prison term or even death. These publications, so-called “tools of communist propaganda”, were once deemed a

threat to national security by the military regime and were officially banned.⁵⁸

Chai-Anan's book, in fact, offers an eye-opening, and comprehensive description of the important political ideologies of the time and illustrates those of exemplary thinkers and social critics, Pridi Banomyong and "Thien Wan."⁵⁹ Chai-Anan himself considered Thien Wan as an important philosopher of Siam (Thailand) before the 1932 Revolution. Ironically, while his book was banned, Ruenruthai Satjaphan, a lecturer in Thai literature and a respected literary critic, is of the view that the book offers useful lessons. She believes it makes a quality textbook and it should be reprinted as it is no longer a threat to national security.⁶⁰ During that time over 200 titles were banned, only recently can the books be freely read as they have been released after years in chains.

Indeed, the ban may not affect Chai-Anan much as the book does not bring any trouble to him directly, but it creates a lot of controversy in academic circles since it is a useful textbook rather than being a tool of communist propaganda or a threat to national security.

Meanwhile, **Mr Chuan** whose book, *Yen Lom Paa* (Cool of the Forest Wind), the second edition of which was published in 1992, suffered a major setback resulting from his writing as in the aftermath of 6 October 1976, it provided an opportunity for the authoritarian ruler to brand him a communist.

It is to be noted that among the four thinkers, Mr Chuan is the only one who has written only one book and it is the book that put him in real trouble.

"One reason that leads to the charge of him of being a communist may be due to the collection of his short stories in *Yen Lom Paa*. The book relates the pain of people in the South of Thailand especially in Trang Province where many people were harassed by the authorities in various ways. As a result, many people escaped into the jungle resorting to an armed struggle against the authorities. In fact, the reflection of people's problems to enlighten the public is a direct responsibility of every politician, and Mr Chuan opted to write a book as an alternative. Unfortunately, the political wave had already

blown the democratic system away and, at the same time, brought in a fascist system to replace it. Thus, the communist brush has been dusted off to paint one another again and Mr Chuan was painted red for a short period of time.”⁶¹ Now the sky is clear and Mr Chuan is going to add many more chapters to his book as new events come up and new development is expected to be included.

Conclusion

It cannot be denied that the coalition government led by Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai has played a significant part in salvaging the sinking economy of the country. The national currency has now been stabilised and the economy is on the right track to recovery. A few months prior to the end of his second term in office, some people predict that he will certainly return to resume a third term while some disagree. To have a clear picture of Chuan’s political future, we would better take a look at what the Thai journalists say about him in the following paragraphs.

“Politicians of considerable stature, like Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, who are widely respected by people of all parties, will retain their integrity, despite barbs and senseless attacks against them.”⁶²

Opinion polls show that despite the opposition leader’s remarks belittling him, Prime Minister Chuan remains the voters’ favourite national leader with no close rivals. History has it that the Democrat leaders abide by the right principles with the coalition and opposition alike. But one cannot expect Mr Chuan to deal with MPs from both political blocs as if they were unified under a national government. As a rule, the government is responsible for running the country as best it can. The opposition meanwhile is supposed to check on the government performance to ensure the best interests of the country and, possibly, to try to reverse their respective roles sooner than later.⁶³

It is to be noted that the Democrat Party remains the favourite to lead

the next government despite its dented image, badly bruised heavyweights and slow progress. All parties are marred in varying degrees by power struggles, conflicts and shortcomings. But amid controversies, credibility crises, and political uncertainties, Thai voters have no choice but to continue to support—though not unreservedly—the Democrats. After all, it is the oldest, best-established party with the most reliable leadership.⁶⁴

Unquestionably, the Democrats will continue to grow in strength, unity and solidarity with Chuan Leekpai at the helm. Though criticised for his unfaltering support for scandal—Democrats and allies alike—Prime Minister Chuan remains well respected and, relatively, the most reliable politician due to his honesty and integrity.⁶⁵

To curtail Chuan's popularity, the Opposition and their allies have thus tried all means to discredit his integrity, for example, by accusing him of being unworthy of his office for being a salaried man and not owing a house.⁶⁶ However, this only helps to accentuate his integrity and incorruptibility. The Opposition even went further by using a mocking gimmick to make him the laughing-stock of the general public by claiming that his mother changed her name from Tuan to Panika to help her son win a third term in office. Mr Chuan denied the claim (made by Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh) and said that his mother may have little education but she has never been “nonsensical.”⁶⁷

Mr Chuan said, “Mae (Mother) Tuan is still Mae Tuan.” It was reported that at Mr Chuan's home in Trang Province yesterday (2 August 2000), the phone rang all day. Kij Leekpai, Chuan's brother, said his mother was initially shocked but quickly regained her composure and now regards the slur as unimportant.⁶⁸

Even though Mr Chuan may not be the best politician, his integrity, reliability and sincerity in solving the economic turmoil are something to be reckoned with. Throughout over three decades of his political career, Mr Chuan

has never been charged of any irregularities while dealing with the public money, even while holding Cabinet posts. Mr Chuan always had a clean record. He is a politician who had proved that a humble background is not an obstacle to achieve his political aspirations. Above all, he is a strong advocate of democracy. But whatever may be, some people like him and praise him while some dislike him and thus criticise him. But there should not be any prejudice against him. That is all.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

As she is situated in the heart of South-East Asian Region's mainland, Thailand is regarded as a gateway to the Indochinese countries. While all of its South-East Asian neighbours have undergone European colonisation at one time or another, Thailand (or Siam at that time) has suffered only periodic invasions from its immediate neighbours and the Japanese (during the Second World War). "Traditionally Thailand is predominantly an agricultural economy with rice as its main crop. However, of late it is fast turning to industrialisation."¹

From an early kingdom established in the 7th century to the year 1932, Thailand had been ruled by the system of absolute monarchy, but the politics of Thailand then took a very significant turn on 24 June 1932 when a group of young intellectuals, educated abroad and inspired by the concept of Western democracy, staged a bloodless revolution to transform the ruling system from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy. The shift in power thus marked a watershed in Thai political development. The year 1932 also marked a change in political philosophy that led to the emergence of many political thinkers. But out of these, only four prominent ones have been raised for discussion as previously mentioned.

However, it is to be noted that even though the June 1932 revolution was praised as marking a change in political philosophy and representing an awakening to economic realities in the country that would form the basis for government nationalistic economic policies until the late 1950s (as prior to 1932 the economy was dominated by the Chinese community), critics in a later period pointed out its various shortcomings.

Former Prime Minister General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh was one of the reactionary commentators who claimed that it would have been better to wait until the King decided that Thai society was "ready" for democracy. He blamed the "premature" nature of the revolution as a cause for the long periods of dictatorship which followed.²

Many authors, such as David Wilson, were of the view that the 1932 revolution was “little more than a minor social disturbance.” Wilson claimed that there was no popular interest in the event, and as a result, politics became a matter of competition between various cliques in the ruling bureaucracy. In a similar analysis, David Morell and Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija said that the 1932 revolution was just a “replacement of rule by princes with rule by generals.”³ Whatever may be, the June revolution was a stepping-stone to the development of democracy in Thailand.

In the end, it is worth mentioning the distinct contribution of the four thinkers again. It is to be noted that while Dr Pridi Banomyong contributed a remarkable and the most controversial National Economic Plan, M.R. Kukrit Pramoj used his newspaper, *Siam Rath*, as an effective tool to encounter the dictatorial rulers for several decades. Meanwhile, Dr Chai-Anan, the prominent political scientist, is the architect of the theory of the three-dimensional state in the late 1980s and this analytical framework has been used extensively in the country and in international academic communities, at the same time, he is a strong opponent of dictatorship. Last but not least, Mr Chuan Leekpai can be said to have achieved considerable success in tackling the 1997 economic crisis and, above all, he is also a strong advocate of democracy. He himself entered his political career through democratic means.

At the same time, credit should go to Mr Chuan whose government helped serve the remaining parliamentary term left vacant by the Chavalit administration almost to its expiry date as it was dissolved on 9 November 2000 which was just one week short of its full four-year term, but it was the longest-serving House in the history of Thai democracy and it passed the largest number of laws in history. Elected with 393 members on 17 November 1996, the House passed a record of 287 pieces of legislation.⁴

Again at the time of writing this conclusion, the Kukrit museum was already unveiled by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn on 16 October 2000 at the home of the late M.R. Kukrit Pramoj. The Princess

herself made a donation to establish a fund used to renovate the late prime minister's house and the total cost came to six million baht.⁵ Thus, Mr Sala's desire to see the establishment of a Kukrit museum as mentioned in his interview given in Chapter Three was fulfilled. Mr Sala was very happy indeed when I rang him to enquire about this issue.

In addition, it is quite interesting to note that in these four thinkers, we will find some similarities and differences which will be discussed simultaneously. Obviously, all four thinkers are writers who suffered more or less from their writing, but M.R. Kukrit wrote more than everyone else while Mr Chuan wrote only one book. At the same time, while Dr Pridi and M.R. Kukrit received their education in the West, Dr Chai-Anan received his education in New Zealand and the US whereas Mr Chuan never studied abroad. While Dr Pridi opposed the absolute monarchy, the rest of them opposed military dictatorship and authoritarian rule. Above all, among the four thinkers, Dr Pridi seemed to suffer most as he had to live in exile and died there. In addition, all thinkers, except Dr Chai-Anan, were prime ministers of Thailand. However, the four thinkers shared the common objective, that is to bring about democracy and fight for its perpetual survival. Thus, it cannot be denied that the four thinkers have played a vital role in the development of Thai democracy and in the prosperity of the Thai nation as a whole.

It is to be noted that among the three prime ministers, Mr Chuan stayed in office longer than his predecessors as he was a two-time prime minister whose term in office was more than six years (23 September 1992-13 July 1995 and 9 November 1997-9 November 2000), whereas Dr Pridi Banomyong was the shortest-serving prime minister whose term in office was in total less than six months, though he was a three-time prime minister; namely, from 24 March 1946 to 3 June 1946, from 8 June 1946 to 10 June 1946 and from 11 June 1946 to 21 August 1946. Thus, it is obvious that within one year he became prime minister three consecutive times. M.R. Kukrit, however, stayed in office for one year, one month and 4 days or 400 days.

Indeed, what has been mentioned previously is not intended to make any comparison of who is better as all of them have made great sacrifice in one way or another for the democratic development in the Kingdom. Thus, even though Dr Chai-Anan has never become prime minister, his political concept and comment have helped shape public opinion on the right path of democracy which, otherwise, will be in a slow phase of development.

At the moment, Thai people enjoy greater freedom under the latest constitution which came into effect in October 1997. The changes since 1932, when absolute monarchy was replaced by parliamentary democracy, are remarkable. Indeed, Thailand spent a shorter time attaining democracy than other countries. But the road was not always smooth. Military-led governments ruled the country for more than 40 years after the historic events of 1932. A brief period of civilian rule followed, only to be overthrown by military leaders who reasserted their power. The third phase of Thai democratic transformation was characterised by military-civilian coalition government—"half-leaf" democracy. This period lasted for over a decade before full democracy was attained. But the birth of democracy came with heavy loss of life. Hundreds of people who fought for democracy died in three historic events: the 14 October 1973 student uprising, the 6 October 1976 massacre of university students, and the 18-21 May 1992 (The Black May Event) brutal suppression of democracy demonstrators.⁶

After a long period of debate and several public hearings, a "people's constitution" was promulgated in October 1997. It provides greater freedom for the people and provides new measures to curb the abuse of political power. Under the charter, 50,000 people may sign a petition asking the Senate Speaker to initiate impeachment procedures against any office holder suspected of corruption or abuse of power.⁷

This process is laudable as it is a stepping-stone on the path to full democracy. Above all, it encourages people to unite and form a strong movement to protect their rights and the interests of the country.

A Comparative Study on Indian and Thai Political Thinkers

Before ending our discussion, it is significant to make a comparative study of the thinkers of the two friendly nations.

It is to be noted that while Thai political thinkers struggled to oppose the absolute regime and the military dictatorship, their Indian counterparts struggled to throw away the foreign yoke— the British Empire. During the period of the British rule, Indian thinkers were united in fighting for the independence of their homeland. “Under colonial rule, in spite of their cultural differences, the people made a common cause to throw off the foreign yoke”.⁸ As a result, it can be said that in this continent India alone produced many dozens of political thinkers to the field of political science.

Meanwhile, it was obvious that western education is a blessing for both Thai and Indian political thinkers. While Thai political thinkers were inspired by the western concept of democracy that led them to overthrow the absolute regime in 1932, their Indian counterparts have also benefited from western education to a great extent.

“The introduction of British political rule also led to the growth of western education in India and the policy of the “occidental” school under Macaulay’s leadership triumphed in the field of education. Western education laid the foundation of a new type of intellectual and political life in India. It is significant that most, if not all, of the makers of modern Maharashtra had been trained in western educational institutions. Bhandarkar, Ranade, Chiploonkar, Tilak, Agarkar and Gokhale, all had high academic degrees. In Bengal, the Tagores, Aurobindo, Vivekananda, J.C. Bose and P.C. Ray were the products of English education. For all his fulminations against western education even the great Gandhi had a London degree in Law.”⁹

But western education alone may be inadequate to motivate the political thinkers of both countries to call for a change of the ruling system in their respective nations. It can be said that the Thai thinkers have seen their countryfolks

suffering from economic hardship and the abuse of power by the state authorities for such a long time that they became blind to seeing a thing as it was. At the same time, Buddhism has played a part in influencing the mind of the Thai thinkers to call for the realisation of the “Sriaraya” or Utopian state. Meanwhile, for the Indian thinkers, besides being exposed to western education, a feeling of patriotism also stimulated them to call for the end of the imperialist rule. “The growth of Hindi language and literature has also been a fundamental factor in modern Indian renaissance and nationalism. The growth of Hindi prose has been a vital vehicle for the commucation of national and patriotic sentiments.”¹⁰

It is to be noted that after gaining independence in 1947 and a democratic system had been installed in India, the country has enjoyed full democracy as a military coup has never occured in India—the world’s largest democracy, while its Thai counterparts experienced what we called “military rule,” “half-leaf” democracy, “quasi-democracy” and now “full democracy.” Even though the ultimate aim of Indian political thinkers was to throw off the British yoke and to bring about prosperity to India, their Thai counterparts aimed to replace the absolute monarchy and military dictatorship with parliamentary democracy, thinkers of the two countries shared similar objectives, that is to uphold democracy and to safeguard against undesirable elements from jeopardising their democratic environment.

Suggestions

After the transition of the ruling system in 1932, Thai political system now seems to have gained a permanent ground, but a military threat in the future is still possible, though the current military leaders seem to be more inclined towards democracy as anything can happen in a country where the integrity of the military cannot be touched. In fact, "Democracy is something more than a mere political device and formula. It is an outlook. It is a philosophy of social and moral existence. It is thus believed that for the success of democracy we need a type of citizen who is sober and intelligent, has subtlety in types of social adjustments, has a wide and comprehensive interest in the affairs of the world, and is not apathetic and fatalistic but has intense and dynamic initiative for works of spontaneous group activities."¹¹ But whatever may be, probably Thailand could learn a lot from its Indian counterparts as the two countries are democratic nations. It is to be remembered that though India is largely predominated by cultural, social, religious and racial differences, these elements never become a hindrance to the democratic spirit of the Indian population. A positive trend is that Thailand and India have initiated closer cooperation and high level officials of the two countries exchange frequent visits. Thus, Indian democracy should be used as a role model for Thailand as the two countries are in the Asian continent. Obviously, in the past Thailand gave too much emphasis to the democratic models of the western countries and the US, that is why the democratic governments were short-lived. Thus, if the Indian model is adapted to be used in Thailand, probably Thai democracy will be more successful than in the past.

REFERENCES

CHAPTER ONE

1. The National Identity office, THAILAND in the 80s (Bangkok: Muang Boran Publishing House, 1984), Revised edition 1984, p. 157.
2. Ibid., p. 121.
3. Ibid., p. 141.
4. Ibid., p. 144.

REFERENCES

CHAPTER TWO

1. Thawatt Mokarapong, History of the Thai Revolution, a study in Political Behaviour, (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Co., Ltd., 1983), Second Printing 1983. pp. 5-6.
2. Kenneth Perry Landon, National Economic Policy of Luang Pradist Manudharm, adapted from Siam in Transition, (Bangkok: Committees on the Project for the National Celebration on the Occasion of the Centennial Anniversary of Pridi Banomyong's Senior Statesman, 1999). Appendix p. 3.
3. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
4. Ibid., p. 5.
5. Ibid.,
6. Thawatt, No. 1, p. 4.
7. Kenneth, No. 2, p. 4.
8. Ibid.,
9. Donald F. Cooper, THAILAND: Dictatorship or Democracy? (UK: MINERVA PRESS, 1995), p. 76.
10. Bangkok World, Death of a Legend, Tuesday 3 May 1983.
11. Kenneth, No. 2, p. 9.
12. Ibid.,
13. Bangkok World, No. 10.
14. Kenneth, No. 2, p. 9.
15. Thawatt, No. 1, p. 1.
16. Ibid.,
17. Ibid., p. 2.
18. Ibid., pp. 2-3.
19. The National Identity Board, THAILAND in the 90s, (Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister), Revised Edition 1995, p. 43.
20. Thawatt, No. 1, p. 97.
21. Ibid., p. 103.

22. Ibid., pp. 103-104.
23. Ibid., p. 92.
24. The National Identity Board, No. 19, p. 44.
25. Thai Pictorial, 24 June 1941 issue.
26. Bangkok Post, Outlook Columne, 7 May 1986.
27. Swai Sutthipitak, Dr Pridi Banomyong, (Bangkok: Bopitkarnpim Co., Ltd.), Second edition 1983, p. 28.
28. Santisukh Sophonsiri, The Centennial Anniversary of Pridi Banomyong, (Bangkok: Pridi Banomyong Institute), First edition, 24 June 1997, p. 4.
29. Thawatt, No. 1, pp. 79-80.
30. Swai, No. 27, pp. 28-29.
31. Ibid., p. 25.
32. Thawatt, No. 1, p. 83.
33. Ibid., p. 84.
34. Ibid., p. 85.
35. Ibid., p. 119.
36. Ibid.,
37. Ibid., p. 122.
38. Bangkok Post, Outlook, 28 January 1999.
39. Bangkok Post, Outlook, 8 May 2000.
40. Kenneth, No. 2, Publisher's note.
41. Thawatt, No. 1, p. 145.
42. Ibid., p. 149.
43. Kenneth, No. 2 , Publisher's note.
44. Ibid.,
45. Ibid.,
46. Thawatt, No. 1, p. 151.
47. Ibid., p. 152.
48. Prof Dr Saneh Chamarik, Pridi Parithat Ruam Thasana Nak Vijakarn Tor Pridi Banomyong (The Criticism on Pridi: The

Collection of the Academics' Views on Pridi Banomyong, (Bangkok: Pridi Banomyong Institute, 1999), First edition 1999, p. 28.

49. Ibid.,
50. Ibid., p. 36.
51. Ibid., pp. 38-39.
52. Ibid., p. 45.
53. Kenneth, No. 2, Publisher's note.
54. Ibid., Appendix, p. 3.
55. Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, PRIDI BY PRIDI, (Chiang Mai Province: Silkworm Books, 2000), First edition 2000.
Introduction Page XIV.
56. Sawai Sangkaraksa, Democratic Process in Thailand, Ph.D. thesis, Marathwada University, Aurangabad, pp. 43-44.
57. David A. Wilson, Politics in Thailand, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 11-12.
58. B. J. Terwiel, A Window on Thai History, (Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol, 1991), Second Edition 1991, p. 86.
59. Chris Baker, No. 55, Introduction Page XII.
60. Ibid., p. XIII.
61. Ibid.,
62. Ibid.,
63. Ibid.,
64. Ibid., p. XIV.
65. Ibid.,
66. THE NATION, English Language Newspaper, 7 May 2000.
Written by Pravit Rojanaphruk.
67. Chris Baker, No. 55, Introduction Page XXI.
68. Ibid., Introduction Page 67.
69. Bangkok Post, 10 May 2000.
70. THE NATION, No. 66, General Features, 7 May 2000.

REFERENCES

CHAPTER THREE

1. Bangkok Post, Sunday Post, 15 October 1995.
2. Bangkok Post, Outlook, 20 April 1988.
3. Vilas Manivat, KUKRIT PRAMOJ: His Wit and Wisdom, Writings, Speeches and Interviews, (Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol, 1983), First edition 1983, p. 17.
4. Bangkok Post, No. 1.
5. Vilas Manivat, No. 3, p.17.
6. Plerng Phupha, Throughout the Life of Kukrit Pramoj, (Bangkok: Chat Chalerms Press, 1996), pp. 63-64.
7. Bangkok Post, No. 1.
8. Ibid.,
9. Vilas Manivat, No. 3, p. 21.
10. Ibid., p. 22.
11. Ibid.,
12. Ibid., p. 23.
13. Rong Syamananda, A HISTORY OF THAILAND, (Bangkok: THAI WATTANA PANICH CO., LTD., 1990), Seventh edition, 1990, pp. 188-189.
14. Vilas Manivat, No. 3, p. 25.
15. Ibid.,
16. Ibid.,
17. Bangkok Post, No. 1.
18. Bangkok Post, No. 2.
19. Bangkok Post, No. 1.
20. Ibid.,
21. Ibid.,
22. Ibid.,
23. Ibid.,

24. Ibid.,
25. Vilas Manivat, No. 3, p. 42.
26. Ibid.,
27. Sala Likitkul, Kukrit as Prime Minister; His Life and Work, (Bangkok: P.G. Publishing,1985), pp. 29-30.
28. Thongthaem Natchamnong and Sirivan Sukhviset, Great Guru Kukrit, (Bangkok: Bai Bua Press,1995), First edition 1995, pp. 86-87.
29. Ibid., pp. 87-88.
30. Ibid.,
31. Plerng Phupha, No. 6, p. 82.
32. Arun Vetsuvan, Senior Statesman Dr Pridi Banomyong, (Bangkok: Arunvittaya Press, 1983), First edition May 1983, pp. 142-143.
33. Vilas Manivat, No. 3, p. 44.
34. Plerng Phupha, No. 6, pp. 86-87.
35. Carl Parkes, THAILAND HANDBOOK, (USA: Moon Publications, Inc.,1997), Second edition, p. 51.
36. Bangkok Post, No. 1.
37. Vilas Manivat, No. 3, p. 118.
38. Ibid., p. 117.
39. Thongthaem, No. 28, pp. 26-27.
40. Vilas Manivat, No. 3. pp. 133-134.
41. Plerng Phupha, No. 6, p.114.
42. Ibid., p. 115.
43. Vilas Manivat, No. 3, p. 169.
44. Thongthaem, No. 28, p. 25.
45. Plerng Phupha, No. 6, p. 119.
46. Vilas Manivat, No. 3, pp. 153-154.
47. Ibid.,
48. 50 THAIS WHO HELPED SHAPE THAILAND, (Special Edition of the Bangkok Post, 1 August 1996), p. 23.

49. Vilas Manivat, Sanuk Kab Kukrit (Amusing with Kukrit),
(Bangkok: Amarin Printing & Publication Co., Ltd.,1995), Third
edition 1995, pp. 89-92.
50. Ibid., pp. 94-98.
51. Ibid., p. 100.
52. Ibid., pp. 105-106.

REFERENCES

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Bangkok Post, 20 May 1988. In Character by Kanjana Spindler.
2. Ibid.,
3. Ibid.,
4. Chai-Anan Samudavanija, Cheevit Ti Leuag Dai (Life can be chosen), (Bangkok: The Manager Press, 1997), Second edition 1997, p. 339.
5. Ibid., p. 353.
6. Bangkok Post, No. 1.
7. Chai-Anan Samudavanija, Three-Dimensional State and Thai Politics, (Bangkok: Institute of Public Policy Studies, 1665), Abstract Page.
8. Ibid., p. 1.
9. Ibid., p. 2.
10. Ibid.,
11. Ibid., p. 3.
12. Ibid.,
13. Ibid., p. 4.
14. Ibid., p. 5.
15. Ibid., p. 8.
16. Ibid., p. 9.
17. Ibid., p. 11.
18. Ibid., p. 12.
19. Chai-Anan Samudavanija, Prajathipathai Kab Anakot Karnmuang Thai (Democracy and Future of Thai Politics),(Bangkok: Manager Media Group Ltd. (Public Company), 1995), First edition 1995, pp. 41-42.
20. Chai-Anan, No. 7, p. 39.
21. Ibid., pp. 38-40.

22. Chai-Anan Samudavanija, *Rath (The State)*, (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1996), Fourth edition 1996, pp. 235-277.
23. Chai-Anan, No. 7, pp. 134-135.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
25. Chai-Anan Samudavanija, *Siam Su Satavat Ti 21 (Siam to the 21st Century)*, (Bangkok: Institute of Public Policy Studies, 1994), Second edition 1994, pp. 5-9.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 54-55.
27. Chai-Ana Samudavanija, *THE THAI YOUN TURKS*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982), pp. 1-2.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
29. *Ibid.*, P. 6.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

REFERENCES

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Bangkok Post, 9 April 2000.
2. Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, PRIDI BY PRIDI, (Chiang Mai Province: Silkworm Books, 2000), First edition 2000, p. xx.
3. Ibid., P. XXI.
4. Ibid., P. XXIV.
5. Bangkok Post, 13 January 2000.
6. Carl Parkes, THAILAND HANDBOOK (USA: Moon Publication Inc., 1997), Second edition 1997, p. 54.
7. Bangkok Post, Perspective Section, p. 4, 1992.
8. Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, THAILAND's BOOM AND BUST, (Chiang Mai Province: Silkworm Books, 1999), Reprinted edition 1999, p. 223.
9. Roengsak Kamthorn, Biography of Chuan Leekpai: The 20th Prime Minister, (Bangkok: Bang Luang Press, 1995), 6th edition 1995, pp. 23-24.
10. THE NATION, 11 October 1992.
11. Roengsak, No. 9, pp. 27-34.
12. Ibid., p. 51.
13. Rangsak Thanapornpan, Settakit Karn Muang Yook Ratthaban Chuan Leekpai (Economy and Politics during the Government of Chuan Leekpai), (Bangkok: The Manager Press, 1995), First edition 1995, pp. 17-18.
14. Ibid., p.18.
15. Ibid.,
16. Ibid., p. 19.
17. Ibid., p. 20.
18. Ibid.,
19. Bookori Yeehama, Chuan Leekpai Nai Kammeu Nangseupimthai

- (Chuan Leekpai in the Hands of the Thai Press), (Bangkok: Tang Dern Press,1998), First edition 1998, p. 244.
20. Pasuk Phongpaichit, No. 8, p. 244.
 21. Bookori, No. 19, p. 21.
 22. Ibid.,
 23. Ibid., pp. 160-161.
 24. Yuk Sriariya, Kamprakas Isarapab Chak IMF (The Declaration of Independence From the IMF), (Bangkok: The Office of the Research Supporting Fund,1997), First edition 1997, p. 6.
 25. Pasuk Phongpaichit, No. 8, pp. 315-316.
 26. Ibid., p. 315.
 27. Ibid., p. 318.
 28. Ibid., p. 269.
 29. Ibid., p. 272.
 30. Ibid., p. 273.
 31. Soonruth Bunyamanee and Wichit Sirithaveeporn, Economic Review, Year end 1998, Bangkok Post, pp. 8-9.
 32. Ibid.,
 33. Ibid.,
 34. Ibid.,
 35. Ibid.,
 36. Ibid.,
 37. Ibid.,
 38. Ibid.,
 39. Ibid.,
 40. Ibid.,
 41. Ibid.,
 42. Ibid.,
 43. Ibid.,
 44. Ibid.,

45. Soonruth Bunyamanee, 1999 Economic Review, YEAR-END EDITION, Bangkok Post, 4 January 2000, p. 6.
46. Wichit Sirithaveeporn, 1999 Economic Review, YEAR-END EDITION, Bangkok Post, 4 January 2000, p. 8.
47. Ibid.,
48. Ibid.,
49. Ibid.,
50. Ibid.,
51. Parista Yuthamanop, Economic Review, 2000 MID-YEAR EDITION, Bangkok Post, 30 June 2000, p. 7.
52. Ibid.,
53. Ibid.,
54. Ibid.,
55. Bangkok Post, Business Section, 1 July 2000.
56. Ibid.,
57. Ibid.,
58. The Sunday Nation, 16 April 2000.
59. Ibid.,
60. Ibid.,
61. Yeunyad Jaisamut, Trang, (Bangkok: Matichon Press, 1996), First edition 1996, p. 125.
62. Bangkok Post, Inprint, 9 January 2000.
63. Ibid.,
64. Bangkok Post, Inprint, 6 February 2000.
65. Ibid.,
66. Ibid.,
67. Bangkok Post, Inprint, 3 August 2000.
68. Ibid.,

REFERENCES

CHAPTER SIX

1. Sawai Sangkaraksa, Democratic Process in Thailand, (Ph.D. thesis, Marathwada University, Aurangabad, 1998), p. 221.
2. Ji Ungpakorn, The Struggle for Democracy and Social Justice in Thailand, (Bangkok: Arom Pongpagan Foundation, 1997), First edition 1997, p. 48.
3. Ibid.,
4. Bangkok Post, 9 November 2000.
5. Bangkok Post, 17 October 2000.
6. Bangkok Post, Dateline Bangkok, 9 June 2000.
7. Ibid.,
8. Dr S.R. Kakade, Scheduled Castes and National Integration: A case study of Marathwada, (New Delhi: RADIANT PUBLISHERS, 1990), First edition 1990, p. 14.
9. Dr V.P. Varma, Modern Indian Political Thought, (Delhi: Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHERS, 1985), Eighth edition 1985, p. 9.
10. Ibid., pp. 11-12.
11. Ibid., pp. 644-645.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER ONE

Table 1: The Constitutions and The Prime Ministers

Constitution	Cabinet	Prime Minister	Period
1	1	Phraya Manopakonnitithada	28 June 1932 - 10 December 1932
2	2	Phraya Manopakonnitithada	10 December 1932 - 1 April 1933
	3	Phraya Manopakonnitithada	1 April 1933 - 20 June 1933
	4	Colonel Phraya Phahonphonphayuhasena	21 June 1933 - 16 December 1933
	5	Colonel Phraya Phahonphonphayuhasena	16 December 1933 - 22 September 1934
	6	Colonel Phraya Phahonphonphayuhasena	22 September 1934 - 9 August 1937
	7	Colonel Phraya Phahonphonphayuhasena	9 August 1937 - 21 December 1937
	8	Colonel Phraya Phahonphonphayuhasena	21 December 1937 - 16 December 1938
	9	Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsongkram	16 December 1938 - 7 March 1942
	10	Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsongkram	7 March 1942 - 1 August 1944
	11	Major Khuang Aphaiwong	1 August 1944 - 31 August 1945
	12	Mr Thawi Bunyaket	31 August 1945 - 17 September 1945
	13	M. R. Seni Pramoj	17 September 1945 - 31 January 1946
	14	Major Khuang Aphaiwong	31 January 1946 - 24 March 1946
	15	Dr Pridi Banomyong	24 March 1946 - 11 June 1946
3	16	Dr Pridi Banomyong	11 June 1946 - 23 August 1946
	17	Rear Admiral Thawan Thamrongnawasawat	23 August 1946 - 30 May 1947
	18	Rear Admiral Thawan Thamrongnawasawat	30 May 1947 - 8 November 1947
	19	Major Khuang Aphaiwong	10 November 1947 - 21 February 1948

Constitution	Cabinet	Prime Minister	Period
4	20	Major Khuang Aphaiwong	21 February 1948 - 8 April 1948
	21	Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsongkram	8 April 1948 - 25 June 1949
5	22	Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsongkram	25 June 1949 - 29 November 1951
	23	Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsongkram	29 November 1951 - 6 December 1951
	24	Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsongkram	6 December 1951 - 24 March 1952
6	25	Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsongkram	24 March 1952 - 21 March 1957
	26	Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsongkram	21 March 1957 - 16 September 1957
	27	Mr Phot Sarasin	21 September 1957 - 1 January 1958
	28	Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn	1 January 1958 - 20 October 1958
7	29	Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat	9 February 1959 - 9 December 1963
	30	Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn	9 December 1963 - 7 March 1967
8	31	Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn	7 March 1967 - 17 November 1971
9	32	Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn	18 December 1972 - 14 October 1973
	33	Mr Sanya Dharmasak	14 October 1973 - 22 May 1974
	34	Mr Sanya Dharmasak	27 May 1974 - 15 February 1975
10	35	M. R. Seni Pramoj	15 February 1975 - 14 March 1975
	36	M. R. Kukrit Pramoj	14 March 1975 - 20 April 1976
	37	M. R. Seni Pramoj	20 April 1976 - 25 April 1976
	38	M. R. Seni Pramoj	25 September 1976 - 6 October 1976
11	39	Mr Thanin Kraivixien	8 October 1976 - 20 October 1977
12	40	General Kriangsak Chamanand	11 November 1977 - 12 May 1979

Constitution	Cabinet	Prime Minister	Period
13	41	General Kriangsak Chamanand	12 May 1979 - 3 March 1980
	42	General Prem Tinsulanonda	3 March 1980 - 30 April 1983
	43	General Prem Tinsulanonda	30 April 1983 - 5 August 1986
	44	General Prem Tinsulanonda	5 August 1986 - 4 August 1988
	45	General Chatichai Choonhavan	4 August 1988 - 9 December 1990
	46	General Chatichai Choonhavan	9 December 1990 - 23 February 1991
14	47	Mr Anand Panyarachun	2 March 1991 - 7 April 1992
15	48	General Suchinda Kraprayoon	7 April 1992 - 10 June 1992
	49	Mr Anand Panyarachun	10 June 1992 - 23 September 1992
	50	Mr Chuan Leekpai	23 September 1992 - 13 July 1995
	51	Mr Banharn Silpa-Archa	13 July 1995 - 25 November 1996
	52	General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh	25 November 1996 - 9 November 1997
16	53	Mr Chuan Leekpai	9 November 1997 - 8 February 2001
	54	Mr Thaksin Shinawatra	9 February 2001 - Present

* Source: Thai Constitution in brief, Institute of Public Policy Studies.

Table 2: Elections held in Thailand

<u>Number</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Year</u>
1	15	November	1933
2	7	November	1937
3	12	November	1938
4	6	January	1946
5	29	January	1948
6	26	February	1952
7	26	February	1957
8	15	December	1957
9	10	February	1969
10	26	January	1975
11	4	April	1976
12	22	April	1979
13	18	April	1983
14	27	July	1986
15	24	July	1988
16	20	March	1992
17	13	September	1992
18	2	July	1995
19	17	November	1996
20	6	January	2001

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER FOUR

Interview of Prof Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija

at Vajiravudh College at 3.00-4.00 pm. on 12 May 2000

- 1. Question: Sir, have you been influenced by the political ideology of anyone? If yes, who are they?**

Answer: It may be a matter of reading books and the studies of the Buddhist and Hindu concepts and sometimes it may be a concept of Taoism as well. I myself studied political philosophy from a bachelor to doctoral level, I was exposed to the Western concept in the Greek period. Therefore, I do not have a direct influence, but there has been a synthesis of reading and sometimes it happened as I wanted to explain political phenomena especially when I had different concepts from Western academics who attempted to explain political development in developing countries about democracy directly. As I think that it has different evolution and the interpretation of its meaning may be entirely wrong. So, I don't like to use the word "democracy" and I prefer to use "participation" instead, and it is due to the fact that the concept of development is a type of idealism which Thai society has synthesised, obtained from the concept of the World Bank of America, including the concept of the economists who attempted to explain the meaning of development. So, I have reconsidered this issue and think that if we explain only what it is called "two types of relations", i.e. if it isn't this, it will be that, then this explanation is not possible. Actually, the Western academics usually conceive that if there is a high growth of economy, it will be easier to be democratic. I came to realise that there were some contradictory forces which could possibly be combined and its entire result might not be conclusive as Aristotle called it a "qualitative change" similar to that of the chrysalis or the butterfly, but if we compare it with an ancient Thai story, it will be similar to that of Matchanu (a son of Hanuman, the king of monkeys, and a female fish in the Ramayana epic, so his body has a combination of monkey and fish). So, I used to say that the political system might be similar to that of Matchanu,

that is to say, it is not a radical change, it is a mixture that is able to co-exist, though it may pull or contradict each other. So, it leads to the conclusion that it is heterogeneous similar to that of Taoism, or the Yin and Yang.

2. Question: Sir, in what way did you criticise the work of the late Dr Pridi Banomyong? As in your book, “Political Ideologies”, in a certain part, you mentioned that Dr Pridi was not a political ideologist, only Thien Wan, is that true?

Answer: Well! That’s not really so. In fact, at that time I helped draft the Constitution of 1974 and then Dr Pridi criticised it. For me, I criticised the work of Dr Pridi, not him personally. I myself criticised some of his actions which involved the use of power when he was in power. Then, I criticised his Outline of the Economic Plan, firstly I think in the year 1969-1970 I criticised the book on his Outline of the Economic Plan. In fact, though his idealism is excellent, he has so much confidence in state power. So, he wanted people to work for the state, he used the bureaucratic system to push for national development, i.e. everybody had to be a government employee as Thai people preferred to be government officials. I argued that in reality the bureaucratic system was not so good as such. In addition, during a period of my criticism on his work, I criticised him when he had power. I, sometimes, disagreed with the People’s Party in issuing the legislation act to protect the constitution. I disagreed with the People’s Party which banished their political adversaries. By using the authorities of the Interior Ministry, people were banished to Mae Hong Son Province which, at that time, was considered as Siberia of Thailand. I criticised him in such a way, but when I went to visit him in Paris, he didn’t say anything, that’s all. So, I was criticised as swimming against the tide, but I think that if we respect someone, we must be able to criticise his work as well.

3. Question: When you were young, you wanted to be a judge in the World Court, and now you have become a judge of the Constitutional Court. Do you think your dream has come true?

Answer: Oh ! Really? I didn't know that I let you decide then.

4. Question: In the three-dimensional state, there are Security, Development and Participation, but in your earlier book on "The State", you used the word "Democracy" instead of "Participation". Sir, I would like to know if it is the same thing?

Answer: Well, the thing is that in a later period, the word "Democracy" has been extremely taken to mean the "official institutional process", so citizen politics is abandoned. As you see, politics in the democratic system such as the USA, there is a presidential election which is the official system. Thus, it abandons the Participation Dimension especially of the people directly. When they have difficulties, they have problems such as the (protest) issue of the Assembly of the Poor etc. then there is an argument that as we have already had democracy, why don't you go to ask the politicians? The parliament has already passed such a law, why do you still protest? It has passed by the majority vote already? In fact, our constitution still doesn't open an opportunity for the holding of referendum and our local government is still weak. So, I turn to use the word "Participation" in order to substantiate that in reality Thailand still has a considerable problem of participation.

5. Question: In another development, you visualise democracy as preventing the institutions of Buddhist monks and monarchy from participation while in actual practice, at present monks have played a part in community development, is this true, sir?

Answer: Yes, it is. It is too narrow, and again if you refer to democracy

officially, you may say that the monarchy is above politics and Buddhist monks are not allowed by ecclesiastic rules to get involved with politics. But if you use the word “Participation”, it can cover the role of both Buddhist monks and the monarchy who are able to participate in (not in political activities) public welfare. Did you see? Thus, if we look forward from 1932, what actually happened all along were acts of obstruction to the institution of culture i.e. the monarchy. However, the institution of monarchy in the absolute monarchical system has lost the political power, it was excluded from the political system. Religion itself faced similar fate, when the state expanded itself, it tried to separate Buddhist monks, if you look at the Ecclesiastic Regulation Act of 1941 which encouraged the setting up of the Ecclesiastic Council and the Chief of the Ecclesiastic Council. Evidently it tried to imitate the democratic system as it opened an opportunity for monks to have greater participation, but now it has not been so.

6. Question: As a result, you have changed from the word “D” to “P”, is this right, sir?

Answer: Of course, you’re right.

7. Question: As I noticed in your written work, you don’t like to use the word “Thailand”, but prefer to use the old name of “Siam”, this indicates that you want to preserve the old word, am I right, sir?

Answer: In fact, it isn’t really so. Actually, I try to say that the word “Siam” includes people of all races and languages. I want to point out the strong point of our society which is of diversity. I think that it can bring about strength. So, the word “Siam” was used in the past and if we look at the word “Siammind” which means “Great person” and again if we look at the royal seal of King Rama V, we will see that there is an elephant which represents the North of the country or the dagger (which represents Malayu in the South). Therefore, the word “Siam” symbolically signifies the

positive meaning of what we called “harmony” whereas the word “Thai” seems to have an aggradisement as it indicates that only the Thai will be great, it is like a Chinese concept of Ta Han or we have in Thai “Ta Thai”, and as a result, we now have Northern Thai and Southern Thai, something like that.

8. Question: Sir! In your opinion, what will be the future role of the military? I mean what dimension the military will take, S, D or P?

Answer: At present, the military are adjusting themselves, as now the security reason has already been changed, previously there was a cold war and many situations surrounded our country and there was an internal war. Thus, the meaning of security has now been changed into the security of the people. In the future, we may have to talk about the necessity of having a social safety net, it is rather a matter of poverty, or we may have “a non-military security threat.” As a result of the change of the surrounding situations, the military begin to reduce the size of the armed forces and adjust their role prudently. So, the future role of the military will be more in the dimensions of D (Development) and P (Participation) as you can see now. So, in my theory of the Three-Dimensional State, I think that if we use this concept to explain the situations of Thailand and Indonesia, it will be easier to understand than the use of the word “Democracy” only, since you will see how the structure or organisation of each dimension has now been changed. You can take a look at the budget or you can measure from the budget, now the budget on education is about 25% of the total expenditures while the military budget has been reduced. Previously, the ministries of Defence and Interior obtained 20% of the budget. Thus, this can be used to measure as well.

9. Question: Sir! Do you think the Vicious Cycle of Thai Politics will remain forever?

Answer: The vicious cycle may change from a round shape to the spiral shape as well. I think it will change in term of a “qualitative change”,

the question is where the power is now? So, if I get a chance to draw a new vicious cycle, I will suppose that there is a military, then a coup, then to be followed by an election instead of a coup. The election itself has now been expanded as now we begin to see a Senate election (which was held in the year 2000 and the first time in Thai history, the senators come from an election) which was held for several rounds due to fraud. We have to understand that the vicious cycle was used to describe political situations since 1932 to 1980 and to 1992.

10. Question: Have you seen any loopholes in your theory of the Three-Dimensional State ? If any, in what way, sir?

Answer: It is quite normal as it is a model, so, the model is unable to give detail. Thus, a loophole may be that we have to add a concept of Development which has now been changed, as I keep P(Participation), it is quite useful. In this concept, we have to see whether the technology of development has been challenged or not. Now if we take a close look at it, we will find that there is a challenge in either of the UN or any others. So, it will be more on a “sustainable matter.” We have to revise its detail, by and large it is still useful, though we may have to elaborate it.

11. Question: In one of your books, you said that in the future the capital would loose its significance to the rural cities, and the border problem would turn into an advantage for the population in the future, how do you visualise development?

Answer: It will be an advantage in the sense that when the cold war comes to an end, there will be more border trade and frequent visits of the people. Actually, the border trade has already been a non-formal economy. Now you can see this along the border, when the war ends, trade will be active. In the past, the border was a matter of danger, now it turns to be an opportunity, you can see this along the Thai-Cambodian border and the border with Myanmar as well.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER FIVE

Exclusive interview of His Excellency Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai by Mr Thanapol Chadchaidee at Government House on 20 September 2000, at 1.30 pm.

- 1. Question: Mr Prime Minister, have you been influenced by the political ideology of anyone or not?**

Answer: In fact, my interest in politics begun when I was young as my father was a public school teacher who was interested in politics. He would talk with his friends who visited him at home about politics. So, I often heard about it unintentionally. I heard it so often that I knew some politicians. Actually, in those days we did not have a television or radio, but I knew some politicians from the conversation of my father with his friends. As a result, my interest developed and there was an election in Trang Province when I was young so I went to see the election. This can be considered as the beginning of my interest, but if you ask by which politician I have been influenced, (I would say), as a matter of fact, in those days there were no real politicians in the democratic process, there were a few indeed, only some of them have been heard of such as Major Khuang Aphaiwong and M.R. Seni Pramroj who could be considered as politicians elected by the people through the democratic process. Apart from this, we often hear of politicians who mostly came from the bureaucratic line such as the military. Thus, to be frank, those people had very little influence on me. This also means the politicians who came from other lines, have had less influence on me as I already had an interest in politics from the very beginning. Thus, when I had an opportunity to study law, it was similar to that of study in fields relating to society, justice and politics. This can be considered as one factor that helped increase my interest in politics considerably.

1. **Question (cont.):** How far have you succeeded in implementing this political influence while serving as prime minister?

Answer:

I think the influence of my interest in politics inspired me to become a politician, and when I became a politician I was interested in undertaking political work seriously. It is called “seriously” as it automatically became the main work of my life, for example, taking care of people’s problems, the disparity among the people and the issue of growth which is concentrated only in the central region. As a result, I have the idea of distributing growth to the rural regions and the idea of creating social justice, and this will be done through the democratic method by means of distributing growth through the distribution of opportunities, power and income. All of these become the foundation of my idea of seeing politics as a driving force of growth into rural areas. To be frank, it is due to the influence of rural people or up-country people who live in a social condition which, if comparing with the central region, is considered as secondary. Therefore, what should be done to enable rural people to have an opportunity similar to those people in central cities. I have had this idea all along. So, when I had an opportunity to enter politics and to hold various positions, I think of these issues and have tried my best to push for their advancement since the very beginning.

NOTE: *The first question to ask the prime minister was recommended by my research guide, Prof Dr S.R. Kakade.*

2. Question: **Sir, how do you visualise the political development of Thailand after the revolution by the People's Party up to now?**

Answer: I think the 68-years from the 1932's revolution to transform the absolute monarchy to a democratic system, actually, does not really change the basic feeling of the majority of people and make them excited much as during the ruling period of the absolute monarchy, the Thai kings did not use the dictatorial power to harass the people. Therefore, the transformation of the ruling system did not signify a change of power from black to white, in fact, it was only a change in its form of ruling. However, the 68-year transformation of the ruling system did not begin from bloodshed, it actually began with an understanding by all sides, even the authoritative side, the monarchy at that time, also agreed with it, and in fact, if we look back on the situation and are fair to the monarchical institution, we will find that the royal initiative has already begun for several reigns as they saw from the models of foreign countries or the ruling model of the European countries. Thus, these ideas actually have long been attached to the Thai kings up to the reign of King Rama VII who always thought of transforming the country into a democratic nation. Therefore, I think that when the change really took place, the entire population was not ready for a sudden change. As a result, whoever aimed at the desired outcome after the revolution of 24 June 1932, that the country would start a real democratic system within a short period of time, would be disappointed as this could not happen in a real life situation, everything takes time. It eventually resulted in the crumbling of the system for all along as the military in power themselves did not want to surrender their power, they refused to accept the people's power as they considered people of having inadequate knowledge to exercise such power. Thus, the system faced uncertainty as there were several coups that took control of power for many years. I think it lasted for several decades before it entered a path more acceptable in the democratic process. But all these things took place at the same time with the expansion of education

among the people and they have more understanding of the democratic process, they know more about their rights and duties. As a result, readiness has been gradually accumulated. I think the past 68-years has been a period of accumulation of experience, but the accumulation of such experience has definitely muddled the right thing and the wrong thing, the success and failure until these days, it is considered as gaining more strength, but it does not mean it will be entirely perfect.

Thank you very much Mr Prime Minister !

3. Question: Sir, in your capacity as the Minister of Defence, how far do you think the military have a perception of democracy?

Answer: There is a change in every organisation and every group of people in various institutions. The military are a group of Thai people who undertake occupation in the line of military and in the past we looked at the military as the line that wanted power, the line that used the authority, the line that rejected democracy and the line that toppled democracy. This is the past experience, but a change in a later period, I think, revealed that the military have accepted the democratic process more and also accepted a change through democratic method, but whether they are satisfied or not, they have accepted this rule or condition as people in other groups or occupations.

To save time of Your Excellency, I will skip to question number six.

6. Question: What do you think are your shortcomings that need to be solved?

Answer: I am an ordinary person. (Laugh !) As I am an ordinary man. I think I am similar to other people. I cannot satisfy all people. So, as a politician I will think what is best for the people, and I will do it as this is always in my heart, but after doing it, some people may like it while some may not, that is the common thing. But deep in my heart, what I think is that I have no shortcomings at all and I am not in the least is my commitment and my

gratitude to the people who are always kind to me. It is a commitment that I will do everything for the benefit of the country and the people.

7. Question: Up to this point, what else do you want to do, but you still cannot do, sir?

Answer: (Laugh !) I am not the type of person who, after ending one's own responsibilities, will say it should be this or it should be that. Thus, while I am in power or have responsibilities, I will do whatever I can for the benefit of the country and the people, I will try to do it. I think there are still many more things to be done, but such things may be limited by time or other conditions. I think the most important thing is to achieve a result, but to reach every objective is not always possible. The objective will never come to us without our effort to reach it. Now I am going toward every objective, but whether I will be able to reach it or not, that is another issue.

8. Question: Are you impressed by any particular Thai Prime Minister and which foreign leader has impressed you most?

Answer: Actually, I think it is quite difficult to be specific about any particular individual as I said earlier Thailand is under the process of having prime ministers through a real democratic process for only in a short period of time. Thus, it is only in the period of 2-3 prime ministers which the prime ministers come from an election. Previously, it was another process, even if there was an election, but it was not a process that opened an opportunity for the people or the political party that won the majority of the House seats to form the government in accordance with a real democratic method. It was only half-democracy. But at present there is an increasing trend for democracy. So, please give us more opportunities to work and to use the democratic process to work. Then, I think when we have many more politicians who come from the democratic system, only then we will be able to visualise

their performance and who deserves admiration. So, during this time, I think we should not hurry to conclude who is better than who. But I am convinced that every prime minister who takes up the post has good intention and good objective, but their style of work may be different. At the same time, the limitation and condition on each of them may also be different. Under the democratic process, it is (Laugh) quite confusing whereas under the process in which the military are in power, it is easier. A matter of simplicity or difficulty is entirely different under each process. To me, who has worked with several prime ministers, I think that everyone of them had his own weak points and strong points, good points and questionable points,(including me). Laugh ! Excellent answer, Sir ! really “honey-coated razor tongue”

Question (Cont.): Which foreign leader who you admire most?

Answer: (I don’t have) a really deep understanding as I think mostly the foreign leaders rise to power through different systems, but for the leaders who come from a democratic process, I admire them as I think that if any of them comes from the legitimate method in accordance with democratic principles and the people support them with their heart and soul, not through vote-buying method, I certainly admire them.

9. Question: May I ask you a last question? How do you visualise the revolution of the People’s Party led by Dr Pridi Banomyong? Is there any advantage or disadvantage?

Answer: The People’s Party comprised various groups of people, not Dr Pridi Banomyong alone, there were other people in the party, thus they were called the “People’s Party”. So, we should not be specific about any particular person, a party is a party. The People’s Party at that time was really a party, it was not Dr Pridi alone. I think these people had good intentions as they wanted to see the country become a democratic nation, but at the same time, as I have already said, we must be fair to the monarch at that time, King Rama VII. The king grew up in a democratic environment in England, he had

good knowledge as we can see from his biography or any other records, it was apparent that he was the king who had great faith in the democratic system and in the people's power. His abdication from the throne indicated that he really wanted to give power to the people. He opposed all groups who wanted to use such power for the benefit of their own group.

Thank you very much Your Excellency !

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Akin Rabibhadana, *The Organisation of Thai Society in the Early Bangkok Period*, 1782-1873. Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University, Southeast Asia Programme, Data Paper No. 74, 1969.
- Amorn Raksasatya, *Thai Government*, Bangkok: Bannasarn Printing, 1991.
- Anuman Rajadhon, Phya, *Introducing Cultural Thailand in Outline*, The Fine Arts Department, Bangkok: 1973.
- Amuman Rajadhon, Phya, *ESSAYS ON THAI FOLKLORE*, Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol, 1968.
- Arun Vetsuvan, *Senior Statesman Dr Pridi Banomyong*, Bangkok: Arunvittaya Press, 1993.
- Batson, Benjamin, *Siam's Political Future: Documents from the End of the Absolute Monarchy*. Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University, Southeast Asia Programme, Data Paper No. 96, July 1974.
- Blanchard, Wedell, et, al: *Thailand: its people, its society, its culture*, Human Relations Area Files, New Haven, 1958.
- Bookori Yeehama, *Chuan Leekpai in the Hands of the Thai Press* (in Thai), Bangkok: Tang Dern Press, 1998.
- Carl Parkes, *THAILAND HANDBOOK*, USA: Moon Publications Inc., 1997.
- Carter. A, Cecil, *The Kingdom of Siam*, London and New York; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904.
- Chai-Anan Samudavanija (1982), *The Thai Young Turks*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- _____, *Cheevit Ti Leuag Dai* (Life can be chosen), Bangkok: The Manager Press, 1997.
- _____, *Three-dimensional State and Thai Politics*, Bangkok: Institute of Public Policy Studies, 1995.

- _____, ***Prajathipatai Kab Anakot Karnmuang Thai***
(Democracy and Future of Thai Politics), Bangkok: Manager
Media Group Ltd., 1995.
- _____, ***Rath*** (The State), Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University
Press, 1996.
- _____, ***Siam Su Satavat Ti 21*** (Siam to the 21st Century),
Bangkok: Institute of Public Policy Studies, 1994.
- _____, ***"The Military in Thai Politics"***, Paper presented at a
conference on "Political Systems and Development",
New Delhi, India, February 25- March 1, 1980.
- Chatthip Nartsupha, ***The Economic Development of Thailand, 1956-1965***,
Bangkok: Prae Pittaya Ltd., 1970.
- Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, ***PRIDI BY PRIDI***, Chiang Mai:
Silkworm Books, 2000.
- Chuan Leekpai, ***Yen Lom Paa*** (Cool of the Forest Wind), Bangkok: Dok
Bia Press, 1992.
- David A. Wilson, ***Politics in Thailand***, Cornell University Press, New York,
1962.
- David Easton, ***The Political System; An Inquiry into the State of Political
Science***, New York, Knopf, 1967.
- David K. Wyatt, ***The Politics of Reform in Thailand, Education in the
Reign of King Chulalongkorn***, Bangkok, 1969.
- Deyong, John E., ***Village Life in Modern Thailand***, USA: University
of California Press, 1955.
- Donald F. Cooper, ***THAILAND: Dictatorship or Democracy?*** UK:
MINERVA PRESS, 1995.
- Fred W. Riggs, ***Thailand and Modernisation of a Bureaucratic Polity***,
Honolulu; East-west Centre Press, 1966.
- Giiling, John L.S. (1981), ***Thailand: Society and Politics***, Ithaca:
Cornell University Press.

- Gohlert, W., *Power and Culture; The Struggle Against Poverty in Thailand*, Bangkok: White Lotus, 1991.
- Hirsch, Philip (1990), *Development Dilemmas in rural Thailand*, Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Ingram, James C. (1971), *Economic Change in Thailand, 1850-1970*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Insor, D., *Thailand: A Political, Social and Economic Analysis*, New York: Praeger, 1963.
- Jin Vibhatakarasa. *"The military in Politics: A Study of Military Leadership in Thailand"*, Ph.D. diss., University of Oregon, 1966.
- John L.S. Gialing, *Thailand, Society and Politics*, Cornell University Press, London, 1981.
- John Hoskin, *A Guide to THAILAND*, Bangkok: Asia Books Co., Ltd., 1992.
- Joe Cummings, *Thailand- a travel survival kit*, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 1992.
- Kamol Somvichian, *Political Development in Thailand*, Bangkok: Social Society Printing, 1970.
- Kakade, S.R., *Scheduled Castes and National Integration: A case study of Marathwada*, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1985.
- Kenneth Perry Landon, *Siam in Transition*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1939.
- Kramol Tongdhammachart, *Thai's Politics and Administration*, Thai Wattana Panich, Bangkok, 1987.
- Likhit Dhiravegin, *Politics and Government of Thailand*, Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 1985.
- Manich Jumsai, *Popular History of Thailand*, Chalermnit, 1-2 Erawan Arcade, Bangkok, 1972.
- Michael Buckley, *Bangkok Handbook*, USA: Moon Publications, Inc., 1992.
- Morell, David and Chai-Anan Samudavanija (1981), *Political Conflict in*

- Thailand: Reform, Reaction, Revolution***, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Oelgeschlager, Gunn and Hain.
- National Identity Board, ***THAILAND in the 90s***, Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister, 1995.
- National Identity Office, ***THAILAND in the 80s***, Bangkok: Muang Boran Publishing House, 1984.
- Niels Mulder, ***Inside Thai Society***, Duang Kamol, Bangkok, 1994.
- Parista Yuthamanop, ***Economic Review, 2000***, MID-YEAR EDITION, Bangkok Post, 2000.
- Pasuk Phongpaichit (1978), ***"Economic and Social Transformation in Thailand 1957-1973"***, Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge.
- Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, ***Thailand's BOOM AND BUST***, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 1999.
- Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker (1995), ***Thailand: Economy and Politics***, Oxford University Press.
- Plerng Phupha, ***Throughout the Life of Kukrit Pramoj*** (in Thai), Bangkok: Chat Chalerms Press, 1996.
- Pridi Banomyong, ***Khwa Pen Anitjang Khong Sangkhom Thai*** (The Transiency of Thai Society), Bangkok: Kwian Thong Press, 1958.
- Prudhisan Jumbala (1992), ***Nation-building and Democratization in Thailand: A Political History***, Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute.
- Rajaretnam, M., and Lim So Jean, eds. ***Trends in Thailand***, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1973.
- Rangsan Thanapornpan, ***Settakit Karn Muang Yook Rattaban Chuan Leekpai*** (Economy and Politics during the Government of Chuan Leekpai), Bangkok: The Manager Press, 1995.

- Ray, Jayanta K., *Portraits of Thai Politics*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1972.
- Roengsak Kamthorn, *Biography of Chuan Leekpai: The 20th Prime Minister* (in Thai), Bangkok: Thai Wattana Panich Co., Ltd., 1990.
- Sala Likitkul, *Kukrit as Prime Minister; His Life and Work* (in Thai), Bangkok: P.G. Publishing, 1985.
- Saneh Chamarik, *The Criticism on Pridi: The Collection of the Academics' Views on Pridi Banomyong* (in Thai), Bangkok: Pridi Banomyong Institute, 1999.
- Santisukh Sophonsiri, *The Centennial Anniversary of Pridi Banomyong*, Bangkok: Pridi Banomyong Institute, 1997.
- Sawai Suthipitak, *Dr Pridi Banomyong*, Bangkok: Bopitkampim Co.,Ltd., 1983.
- Sawai Sangkaraksa, *Democratic Process in Thailand*, Ph.D. diss., Marathwada University, Aurangabad, 1998.
- Somsakdi Xuto, *Government and Politics of Thailand*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1987.
- Soonruth Bunyamanee and Wichit Sirithaveeporn, *Economic Review, Year-end 1998*, Bangkok Post.
- Suchit Bunbongkarn (1987), *The Military in Thai Politics 1981-86*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Terwiel, B. J., *A Window on Thai History*, Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol. 1991.
- Thawatt Mekarapong (1972), *History of the Thai Revolution: A Study in Political Behaviour*, Bangkok: Thai Wattana Panich. (1962), "The June Revolution of 1932 in Thailand: A Study in Political Behaviour", Ph.D. diss., Indiana University.
- Thongthaem Natchamnong and Sirivan Sukhviset, *Great guru Kukrit*, Bangkok: Bai Bua Press, 1995.
- Van Vliet, Jeremy, *The Short History of the King of Siam*. Leonard Andaya, trans. Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1975.

- Varma,V.P., ***Modern Indian Political Thought***, Delhi: Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Educational Publishers, 1985.
- Vella, Walter F., ***The Impact of the West on Government in Thailand***, Berkley: University of California Press, 1955.
- Vilas Manivat, ***KUKRIT PRAMOJ: His Wit and Wisdom, Writing, Speeches and Interviews***, Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol, 1983.
- Wichit Sirithaveeporn, ***1999 Economic Review, YEAR-END EDITION***, Bangkok Post, 2000.
- Wood W.A.R., ***A History of Siam***, Bangkok: Siam Bannakich Press, 1933.
- Yeunyad Jaisamut, ***Trang*** (in Thai), Bangkok: Matichon Press, 1996.
- Yuk Sriariya, ***Kamprakas Isarapab Chak IMF*** (The Declaration of Independence From the IMF), Bangkok: The Office of the Research Supporting Fund, 1997.

Journals

- Constitutionalism and Elections in Thailand**, Pacific Affairs, 43 (2).
- Reflections on the Collapse of Democracy in Thailand**, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Occasional Papers Series No. 50, 1978.
- Students “Revolution” in Thailand: “The End of the Bureaucratic Polity”**, Asian Survey 14(6): 509-529 (1974).
- Thailand in 1977: The Search for Stability and Progress**, Asian Survey 18 (2): 153-163 (1978).
- Thailand: Military checkmate**, Asian Survey, 12 (2).

Newspapers

- Bangkok Post**, May 7, 1986; April 20, 1988; May 20,1988; January 28, 1999; November 17, 1999; January 9, 2000; January 13, 2000; February 6, 2000; April 9, 2000; May 8, 2000; August 3, 2000. 17 October 2000; 9 November 2000.

THE NATION, October 11, 1992; April 16, 2000; May 7, 2000.

Bangkok World, May 3, 1983.

Thai Pictorial, June 24, 1941.

Internet

E-mai Address: <http://www.thaigov.th/general/policy/policy.htm>

"Dr Thanapol Chadchaidee has selected to study the process of political change since 1932. He has made the case studies of: 1) the late Dr Pridi Banomyong (1900-1983), 2) the late Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj (1911-1995), 3) Dr Chai-Anan Samudavanija (1944-) and 4) former Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai (1938-). These are the key figures in this period. They have made decisive impact on the Thai political system in order to make it more democratic. Dr Thanapol has explained their role in changing the nature of the Thai political process. Dr Thanapol's work is unique and original and perhaps the first of its kind in the academic field of Thailand."

Prof Dr S.R. Kakade