

THAILAND

PART TWO

Monday, December 03, 2007

Celebrating the development King



Born the youngest child of Their Royal Highnesses Prince and Princess Mahidol of Songkla in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1927, King Bhumibol Adulyadej began his life's work almost by default. The grandson of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn, Rama V, the great reformer who modernized Thai institutions and son of Prince Mahidol, who dedicated his life to medical science - leading to his widely acknowledged role as the 'father of the modern Thai medical profession' - King Bhumibol has inherited the reformist zeal of both his grandfather and his father. Ascending the throne on June 19, 1946, King Bhumibol wasted no time in applying his skills to the advancement of the Thai people. Educated in Switzerland, the King holds a doctorate in political sci-



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Their Majesties King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit at the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall

ence and law and exudes a natural talent for problem-solving that he has tirelessly employed across the country. The Royal Projects are the King's lasting legacy to his nation, with some 3,600 ventures in the fields of education, the environment, health, welfare, social development, and water and irrigation in operation across Thailand.

This dedication to the Thai people and a diffident demeanor have made King Bhumibol hugely popular in Thailand, where he is revered as semi-divine and is the country's guiding light. Although a constitutional monarch, King Bhumibol holds considerable sway in matters of politics and has often mediated at times of unrest, most recently during the 2006 coup d'état that removed Thaksin Shinawatra from office. The world's longest serving head of state, King Bhumibol's knowledge and experience generate a considerable level of trust.

This year the king celebrates his 80th birthday, and 61 years on the throne, two landmark occasions that are set to transform Bangkok into a sea of yellow - the Royal color. King Bhumibol will appear on the balcony of the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall at the Grand Palace to greet well-wishers on December 5.

Other events surrounding the celebrations include city-wide fireworks displays, a ceremony at the Sanam Luang ceremonial site where

throng of yellow-shirted Bangkokians will assemble to sing the 'Father of the Land'. The event will be televised in 176 countries. The annual Trooping of the Color in the Royal Plaza will be amplified in honor of the occasion, and a national campaign of tree-planting will add bloom to the celebrations. Seeds of the *ratchaphruek* plant, the national flower and yellow in color, are being planted nationwide in honor of the King as a mark of the esteem in which Thais hold him and his work on their behalf.

The King's 80th birthday anniversary celebrations will see Bangkok transformed into a sea of yellow — the Royal color

'The King has earned respect'

► 'HIS MAJESTY's achievements have been recognized internationally. The King last year received an award from the United Nations for his work in the field of sustainable development. Kofi Annan personally made the trip to Thailand to present His Majesty with the award'

► 'THE KING's moral influence is tremendous. This cannot be achieved simply by being King, it is down to the communication between the King and his people that has been built up over so many years. The King has worked ceaselessly to educate and further the development of the Thai people. He has earned their respect'

► 'WE HAVE had close links with the American people for years. We hope the two countries remain friends for a very long time to come'



ARSA SARASIN
Principal Private Secretary to King Bhumibol Adulyadej

THAILAND

The Royal Initiative Discovery Projects

2007 sees the 80th birthday of His Highness King Bhumibol Adulyadej, a time to reflect on his concept and theories on development



The Royal Initiative Development Projects are the most concise reference point for the life's work of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. For the entirety of his 61-year reign, King Bhumibol has worked in conjunction with the Thai people to improve the economic, social and educational mosaic of Thailand. A bachelor of political science and law, the monarch also studied science at Lausanne University before his Royal duties compelled him to return to Thailand to assume the role of King. The guiding principles of the Royal Initiative

are based on sound theories of gradual development, supported by intensive studies regarding climate, topography and social circumstances. By adhering to these basic criteria and approaching each project individually, King Bhumibol has achieved an astounding level of success, recognised by the award of the first United Nations Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award in May, 2006. Indications of the King's dedication to his calling are evident. Many of his development initiatives are funded personally. As well as seeking the counsel of his advisors, King Bhumibol also takes heed of his subjects and consults with them before embarking on specific projects, thus ensuring that a broad opinion base is canvassed and a carefully structured project geared towards maximum



King Bhumibol is the world's longest serving monarch, his legacy one of service to his people. Revered as semi-divine by Thais, the King is nevertheless a man of the people and has used his private wealth to forge development projects across the kingdom. In Thai, his name means 'strength of the land'

benefit for the people is realized. As His Majesty stated during a Royal address to the students of Chulalongkorn University, "In bringing prosperity and progress to the country, one should build gradually, in stages. Implement the pro-

gram carefully, review the operation and improve it all the while, not in haste and not for the sake of novelty. In fact, nothing new really exists. All novelties evolve from old things, and will in time become old."



ROYAL AGRICULTURAL STATION

Research and cultivation flower

The Royal Agricultural Station is a vast complex encompassing displays of Thailand's diverse flora and fauna, carved into the majestic hills of the Chiang Mai province in the North of the country. In addition to the stunningly crafted display structures, the center dedicates its facilities to plant research and the creation of hybrids for local agriculture.



MAE FAH LUANG ART & CULTURAL PARK

The center of cultural learning

The history of the tea and opium trades are revisited at Mae Fah Luang in the northern city of Chiang Rai. The award-winning Hall of Opium museum charts the opium wars in China and the ongoing effects of British involvement in the opium trade in the 19th century. Set in stunning grounds in the mountainous Golden Triangle area, the museum is unique and inspiring.



DOI TUNG DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Putting the children first

Located in the Golden Triangle region, Doi Tung is the personal project of Her Royal Highness the Princess Mother. Devoted to the eradication of opium supply through education, sustainable alternative development and ecotourism, 16 years after the initiation of the project, the poppy has been replaced as a cash crop by coffee, fruits and nuts, flowers and vegetables.



WAT YANSANGWARARAM

An international achievement

Constructed by foreign nations in honor of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Wat Yansangwararam is a unique structure that includes a Chinese temple, a Swiss Chalet and a functioning Thai Buddhist temple. Verdant tropical gardens surround the wat, and into a nearby hill is carved an immense image of Lord Buddha. The wat is famous for its meditation courses.

THAILAND

Giving elephants the voice to blow their own trumpets

THAILAND is home to some 4,000 Asian elephants (*elephas maximus*). Of lesser size than its African kin, it is estimated that there are fewer than 35,000 Asian elephants remaining in the wild across India, Indochina and Indonesia – earning the species an ill-starred spot on the World Conservation Union's red list.

The work of the Thai Elephant Conservation Center (TECC) is integral to the survival of the Asian elephant. A 500-hectare sanctuary located an hour from Chiang Mai, TECC is a full-service elephant hospital treating sick and wounded elephants, a rehabilitation center for errant pachyderms, and a retirement home for domesticated animals. The center exercises a hands-on policy, including training programs for tourists to learn the craft of the mahouts, or elephant handlers. A

homestay program is also available, affording visitors the opportunity to live with the mahouts, their families and their charges, while experiencing Thai culture.



Asian elephants in captivity can live up to 20 years longer than their feral counterparts

50 elephants are resident at the center - in addition to 70 others under TECC's care elsewhere - including the newest arrival, Asia's first successful IVF baby elephant.

The youngster was born in March this year, a giant step towards the preservation of the species. Sitthidej Mahasawangkul, the head of the hospital, explains, 'We hope

that this will help increase the Asian elephant population in Thailand, which has been declining for several decades.'

This decline is not due to ivory

poaching, as with their African cousins, but as a result of loss of habitat. In 1950, 60% of Thailand was forest. Today, roughly 15% of Thailand's forests remain, maintaining a population of 1,000 to 1,500 Asian elephants.

TECC also cares for the King's famous white elephants, a traditional symbol of monarchical power and a metaphor in the modern English vernacular. Sacred and unable to work or be sold, white elephants were given as 'gifts' in antiquity – the recipient facing bankruptcy for the animal's upkeep.

The primary aim of TECC is to safeguard the future of the elephant population while caring for those requiring rehabilitation. They say an elephant never forgets. The dedication of organizations like TECC is designed to ensure that Asian elephants exist in more than just memory.



BAN KUDNAKHAM CRAFTS CENTER

A hands-on experience

At the Royal Folk Art and Craft Training Centers around Thailand the King's poverty eradication and health and education mantra is applied at local level and tailored to the needs of the people in the area. Reviving lost arts and passing on knowledge to new generations, Ban Kudnakham provides a steady income to its participants and keeps traditional Thai crafts alive.



BANGSAI ARTS

The Queen's touch in Bangkok

Through the initiative of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit, 800 underprivileged students receive free training in a second occupation, obtaining additional skills and enhancing their earning potential. Located a short distance north of Bangkok, the center also encompasses a bird and fish sanctuary, a Thai martial arts center and a demonstration village.



COLLEGE IN THE COURT

An integrated learning center

A Royal Folk Art and Craft Training Center, the College in the Court in Nakhon Pathom was conceived a decade ago to showcase traditional ancient Siamese native skills, which are presented in the form of live demonstrations and displayed for the public. Also of interest are the Khon Thai masked drama puppets and the mother-of-pearl showcase.



MRIGADYAVAN PALACE

A view of Thai architecture

King Rama VI's summer palace at the beach resort of Cha-Am is a vast wooden structure that has recently been restored to its former glory and now operates as a museum charting Thai culture and the history of the Royal family. Panoramic vistas of the Gulf of Thailand complement the majesty of the palace and give visitors an insight into the art of Thai architecture.

THAILAND

The legacy of 'Royal Mother from the sky'

The late Princess Mother, Princess Srinagarindra, was a tireless humanitarian and named one of UNESCO's 'World's Great Personalities'

At an age when many women would be considering retirement, the late Princess Srinagarindra, the mother of King Bhumibol, embarked on a campaign to address the problems faced by Thailand's rural poor, in particular the ethnic minority tribes in the northernmost reaches of the country.

Her concern for the plight of these people, lacking access to healthcare and education and living in precarious conditions, prompted her to establish and fund the Thai Hillcrafts Foundation as a means for each tribe to promote and market its own traditional ornamental ware. Her personal visits by helicopter to the more remote areas earned her the sobriquet of 'Mae Fah Luang', which means Royal Mother from the sky.

By 1985, the original foundation had grown to encompass development activities in other areas,



The late Princess Mother one of her many visits to the northern regions of Thailand

including cultural preservation, environmental improvement in deteriorated communities, education projects and aid. In honour and recognition of the Princess Mother's work and personality, the foundation was renamed the Mae Fah Luang Foundation under the Royal Patronage of HRH the Princess Mother. After her death in 1995, King Bhumibol assumed patronage of the Foundation.

One of the flagship projects of the foundation is Rai Mae Fah Luang, an art and cultural park. Originally

a youth development center, in its current phase it functions as a center for the study and conservation of Lan Na (Northern Thai) arts and heritage. But the most ambitious and far-reaching project, which arose from a need to tackle the problem of opium cultivation in the Golden Triangle area of Thailand bordering Lao PDR and Myanmar, is the Doi Tung Development Project, established in 1988.

The philosophy behind this project, prompted by both the King and

his mother's interest in the welfare of the hill tribes, is that the first step must always be to attend to people's health, then livelihood, then education. At Doi Tung, the introduction of healthcare stations followed by alternatives to opium cultivation and then schools has made the project a standard bearer for rural improvement, to the extent that an international cooperation program is now in place both in neighboring Myanmar and in Afghanistan, major opium cultivation areas.

Today, the Foundation, still centered in Chiang Rai, Thailand's most northern province, works to alleviate poverty in rural areas and to eradicate drug use and cultivation, as well as continuing to tackle environmental issues with crop substitution and reforestation programs. The main concern remains to improve the quality of life of all Thailand's poor, whether hill tribes or lowlanders, by helping to provide new ways of earning their living, and to promote education and learning while conserving local ways and traditions.

Turning the tide of the opium trade

THE DOI TUNG Development Project covers a mountainous area in the north of Thailand. It is here that the Mae Fah Luang Foundation's Sustainable Alternative Development Program (SADP) is located.

Within the 150 sq km project there are 26 hill tribe villages with a population of 11,000. Cut off from the rest of the country, the locals relied substantially on the opium trade, destroying forests and exposing the hillsides to erosion to grow poppies. The determination of HRH the Princess Mother to remedy this situation led to her moving to the area and taking a personal interest in the health, education and livelihood opportunities of the local people. Since the project began in 1988,



The production of opium has been all but eradicated

life for the Doi Tung people has improved exponentially. The introduction of such essentials as clean running water and access to sanitation and health care have increased life ex-

pectation, with a marked rise in the number of over 65s; revenue from agriculture, in the form of coffee and macadamia nut crops, has more than doubled despite a reduction of arable land and the cessation of poppy production. Reforestation policies have doubled the existing forest cover, while eight schools providing secondary education and 13 day-care centers mean that work prospects have also increased: more than 1,200 formal jobs had been created by 2003.

Such is the success of this project that an international cooperation program has been set up to apply the model SADP across the border in Myanmar, which faces similar problems of poverty and drug cultivation.

THAILAND

Thailand's northern heritage in focus

The complex and vibrant history of Chiang Mai has been captured in a museum complex that rivals any in the country in its comprehensiveness

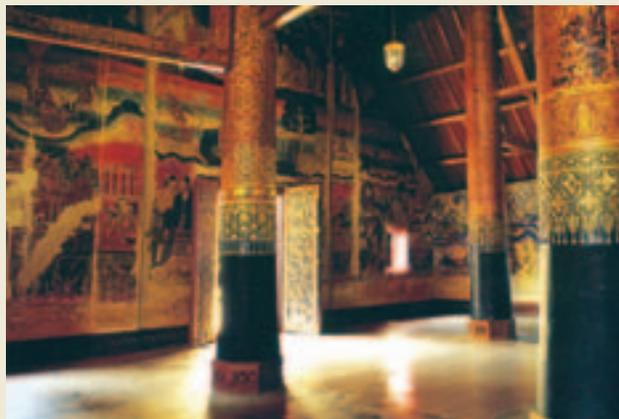
The northern province of Chiang Mai has long been a place of mysticism and spirituality that has drawn generations of travelers to its mist-shrouded hills and ancient wats. The ancestral home of the Chao Khao – the famous hill tribes – and derivatives of the Khon Mueang and Ethnic Tai (or ancient Siamese) civilizations, Chiang Mai is northern Thailand's largest city, with a metropolitan area population of around 700,000, roughly half the amount of people in the province.

Although a venerable city – Chiang Mai was founded in 1296, and means 'new city' – modern Chiang Mai blends the traditions

and architecture of ancient Thai civilization with the trappings of western societies, forming a perfect draw for tourists, foreign workers and Thai nationals alike.

The rich cultural biography of Chiang Mai has been encapsulated in the Chiang Mai City Arts and Cultural Center, which opened to the public in 2003. The museum charts the long history of Chiang Mai from its founding and the rise of the ancient kingdom of Lan Na to the present day.

The permanent exhibition is housed in 15 themed rooms, each dedicated to an aspect of the city's history. There is also a courtyard for temporary exhibits and cul-



The Chiang Mai City Arts and Cultural Center houses many national treasures

tural events including dance and music. The Historical Museum of Chiang Mai shares exhibition space at the center, the former city hall, and is interconnected to the

Lan Na Art Museum, presenting visitors with a complete and authoritative panorama of the history of the peoples of Thailand's northern regions.

MICE THAILAND

THAILAND IS WIDELY RECOGNIZED AS A favorite top tourism destination. With the reputation of Thailand's world-renowned hospitality, few countries are so well-placed. The country is also rapidly emerging as a destination of choice for international events and meetings. In 2004, the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) was established to promote and coordinate corporate meetings, incentive events, conventions and exhibitions – collectively referred to as "MICE Thailand". Boasting modern convention centers with the capacity to host the largest exhibitions in the world, Thailand is the right destination for the sustainable success of any business and tourism event, and the sophistication of TCEB's services is paralleled only by the beauty of the land and the charm of Thai people.

The Right Destination for Sustainable Success

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THAILAND

A digital view of a lifetime of hands-on achievement

A STUDENT OF LAW and political science, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej has followed in the footsteps of his forebears as a leader for the people. The first central Thai state, Sukhothai, was founded in the thirteenth century, with an elected king as head of state. Assuming the throne in 1946, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej swore to 'reign with righteousness for the benefit and happiness of the Siamese people.' Of this promise was born what would define the Monarch's reign and become his lifelong work – the Royal Projects.

Decades of traveling the country, meeting people and examining agricultural methods gave the King the knowledge-base to implement thousands of schemes, from irrigation to conservation, land development to education



and environmental protection to healthcare. So successful have these ventures been that the model Sufficiency Economy Philosophy has been adopted by the United Nations Development Program. The longest reigning living monarch in the world, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej has a remarkable understanding of constitutional rule and a keen sense

of commitment to the Thai people that has characterised his reign and earned him the sobriquet 'The People's King'.

As the nation prepares to celebrate the King's 80th anniversary on December 5, 2007, the Software Industry Promotion Agency (SIPA) has been assigned by the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology to wrap

an ambitious gift for the occasion. The Royal Digital Archives comprise 60,000 documents relating to the King's lifelong work and will be open to the public. The archives will chart the King's tireless efforts to eradicate poverty and promote self-sustainability. SIPA will make accessible all Royal speeches and addresses since 1950, all Royal activities since 1934 and a comprehensive database of unreleased news clippings, handing over the completed archives to the Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary in November, 2007.

LONG LIVE THE KING



Ministry of Communications and Information Technology

Taking self-finance to the grassroots

FOR MORE THAN 90 years, the Government Savings Bank (GSB) of Thailand has been helping to create a society that is independent and self-sufficient by promoting savings, providing loans, and, most importantly, instilling

an awareness of financial and business practices among the population.

The concept of savings is introduced early on with a national 'Piggy Bank' scheme for children, while a savings-bank project for

schools now has 120 participating institutions. In addition, the GSB is one of the leading lending banks in the country in terms of local currency. "We try to give people more access to money through the formal banking system," explains Goanpot Asvinvichit, GSB's president and CEO.



GOANPOT ASVINVICHIT
President and CEO of The
Government Savings Bank

come the major drivers of the country's growth." The GSB has also established a Community Bank, owned and operated by the local community. It is now planning a community learning center for local youth to provide education services ranging from reading to business

and IT studies.

By providing professional training, the bank is encouraging the entrepreneurial spirit among the lower-income segment of the population, helping them to maximise the potential of their loans and teaching them new skills at the same time. "People with their own businesses and incomes can be-

GSB's ultimate objective is to provide full banking services, including international banking, to its clients. "We want to be the one-stop banking center offering a comprehensive range of financial services to our 30 million account holders," says Mr Asvinvichit.

THAILAND

Taking on nature to protect a traditional way of life

The march of the sea has advanced so far inland that livelihoods and entire communities are under threat

The Pak Phanang – meaning ‘Sheltered Mouth’ – River Basin is a fertile area where the Phanang River meets the sea in a wide bay protected by a natural, elongated peninsula. Traditionally a rich rice-growing area, a combination of causes ranging from steady population growth to an increase in shrimp farming has affected the quality of the water and the susceptibility of the land to seasonal flooding, threatening people’s livelihoods as well as the environment.

Pak Phanang River is characterized by a gentle slope and a bed below the mean sea level, making it possible for sea water to advance as much as 100 km upstream. As a result, the rice-growing area that once exceeded 200,000 acres has now shrunk by more than half, with a resulting reduction of jobs. Shrimp farming has emerged as an alternative for some; however, this has contributed to the problem as wastewater from the farms increases the salinity levels of the river and surrounding soil, and has led to conflicts between the two camps.

His Majesty King Bhumibol, aware of the critical nature of the changes affecting the area, undertook an in-depth study of the situation and conceived the building a water regulator that would prevent the intrusion of saline water upstream and retain sufficient fresh water for agricultural and domestic use throughout the year, while protecting the district from season-



The Pak Phanang Basin Project is designed to reverse the degradation of the area and safeguard its inhabitants

al flooding with the construction of drainage canals discharging into the sea.

With the collaboration of the Royal Irrigation Department (RID) and the Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE), the Utokvipahprasit regulator, meaning ‘the separation of fresh water from saline’, was put into operation on October 1, 1999. The station has the capacity to retain 72 million square meters of fresh water upstream and to discharge 1,246 square meters per second through a set of ten gates.

Since then, the Royally-initiated Pak Phanang River Basin Development Project has evolved as an integrated development of the resources of the entire basin, tackling not just drainage and irrigation problems but also the welfare of the local people and the rehabilitation and conservation of the local environment.

Turning waste into broad-based solutions

THE ROYALLY-INITIATED Laem Phak Bia Environmental Study, Research and Development Project, established in 1991 to tackle the issues of solid waste and wastewater treatment along with mangrove forest deterioration, has taken as its basic premise the use of natural means to restore natural resources with remarkable success.

The project, set up in 160 hectares of former farmlands and deteriorated mangroves in Petchaburi Province, applies four different technologies to the treatment of wastewater from the neighboring municipality. The lagoon treatment filters the water through a series of large, shallow ponds, which progressively purify it to accepted standards. The grass filtration and constructed wetland systems obtain additional benefits from the vegetation grown, while the mangrove forest treatment system helps to prevent further deterioration of this particular resource. Solid wastes are composted in concrete boxes, with the resulting product used for fertilizer in agriculture and for restoration of the mangrove forests.

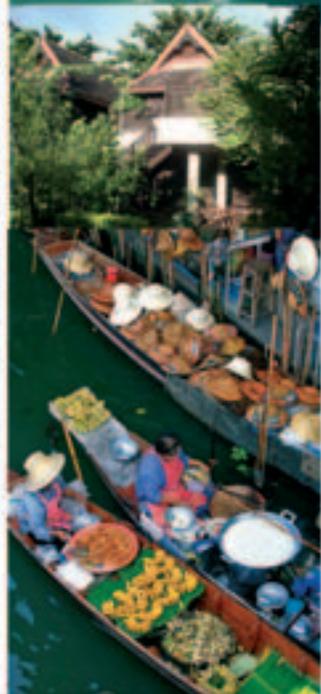
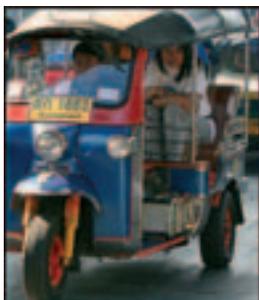
The project’s research also encompasses socio-economic, public relations, and environmental education aspects; results are being used to develop models of ecological management that can be applied across the country.

THE CROWN PROPERTY BUREAU OF THAILAND is proudly upholding the Royal Prestige and Kindness of the Monarchy through supporting Royal Projects and the sustainable development of communities in need.



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Come to Thailand and explore unspoiled regions, experience the ancient festivals and traditions, and meet some of the most hospitable people in the world. Eco-tourism and community-based tourism are ways to contribute to the sustainable development of the country while enjoying an exciting, fascinating and beautiful vacation.

2007 is also the perfect time to visit as His Majesty the King's 80th birthday and celebrations will be in full swing.

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