

Concepts and Theories of His Majesty the King on Development

THE Royal Development Projects Board (RDPB) under the Office of the Prime Minister, which also serves as the Secretariat for the Chaipattana Foundation, is directly responsible for work concerning Royal Development

Projects. It is the agency most closely involved with His Majesty's development initiatives, having taken cognizance of and responded to them. Because the RDPB coordinates royal development projects from design to completion, it has had the opportunity to familiarize itself with His Majesty's diverse concepts from the start of the process of development in various fields. The ultimate aim of these projects is the people's improved welfare and quality of life as well as national security, wealth and stability.

In the course of its performance of duties, and having learned directly from His Majesty himself, the RDPB has acquired a deep understanding of the royal approach to development and His Majesty's development principles, concepts and theories that have brought success to his initiatives.

Special Qualities of His Majesty's Development Concepts and Theories

These concepts and theories were developed, adapted and improved by His Majesty to make the implementation of Royal Development Projects simple and appropriate to the local conditions and the ecology of the community as a whole, as well as to the social conditions of its members.

This results in projects of unprecedented simplicity. Technical experts often have found that His Majesty's ways to solve problems are so simple that nobody has thought of them before. There is a consensus in the development community that his Majesty favours simplifying complex situations, making confusing issues comprehensible, and using commonsense to solve problems. Turning complication into simplicity is difficult, just as complicating simplicity is easy. "Make it simple" is His Majesty's frequent advice. Simplicity underlies most of his development initiatives.

Two other major working principles are to rely on true knowledge of nature and its laws in solving problems and to resolve abnormal conditions. This is shown in royal initiatives such as using fresh water to flush out polluted water in canals or to dilute it with the help of natural tidal fluctuations. Another example is the utilization of water hyacinth, a common aquatic weed, to absorb pollutants and mitigate water pollution. His Majesty compares this process to using "adharma" (evil) to fight evil, meaning that both pollutants and weed are undesirable but one can be used against the other to get "dharma", or virtue, i.e. desirable, clean water. Such concepts and philosophy in working reveal the use of knowledge combined with "sati" (consciousness) and "panya" (intellect), forming the word "satipanya", or wisdom in managing conditions and factors, whether negative or positive, in the environment to create benefits. This is a true sign of His Majesty's management ability.

Another interesting feature of His Majesty's development philosophy is that, first, the results of the activities have to reach the people directly. This is to help them face immediate problems, or to have "enough to live, enough to eat", while laying the foundations for enabling them eventually to live

well and eat well". His Majesty stresses activities that are "worthwhile" rather than those that yield "high return on the investment". As His Majesty says simply, "our loss is our gain." This gain is the prosperity and happiness of the Thai people for which investments must be made. These investments are "worthwhile", though the return on such investments is not necessarily the financial profit that, for most people, defines "return on investment".

"Don't be glued to the textbook" is another important element of His Majesty's philosophy. This means that developers should compromise and come to terms with the natural social environment of the community rather than adhering to rigid academic or technical principles that might be inappropriate locally. Doing so can prevent the full attainment of the project's goals.

Yet another royal development concept is to promote unity and to carry out projects in the spirit of cooperation. Participating agencies are encouraged to be united in action and in mind, to sublimate their egos and not, as is all-too-common, to engage in the practice of unilaterally trying to dominate and undertake. Instead, agencies should work together for the people's good with no agency usurping control of the project. Example can be found in the Royal Development Study Centres, where a new type of management is practised providing "One Stop Service Centres for the farmers." This is the first time such a concept has been introduced in the Thai Government service.

Essence of His Majesty's Concepts and Theories on Development

The over two thousand Royal Development Projects deal with diverse fields and have varied purposes. Most of these Projects mainly aim to help the people make a better living. Since the majority of the Thai population still depends on agriculture for its living, the Projects usually involve the improvement of production inputs, such as soil, water, farmland, capital and agricultural knowledge, the conservation of natural resources and environment. Regardless of its scope, the heart of each Project is simplicity. His Majesty stresses the absence of complexity in both concept and technology, which have to be reasonable, take a short time to apply and solve problems effectively, as well as be conducive to sustainable development.

After an in-depth study and thorough deliberation, His Majesty makes known his concepts and theories in short, catchy titles, for use as working guidelines. These titles carry deep meaning as well as hint some times at the mode of operation, for example: "Good Water Chases Bad", "4 Waters, 3 Tastes", "3 forests, 4 Benefits", "Reforestation without Planting", "Monkey's Check", "The New Theory", "Our Loss is Our Gain", "Tackling the Soil", "The Salt Roads".

Concepts and Theories on Water

His Majesty the King has won wide acceptance as Thailand's pundit in matters pertaining to water. Over long years of work, His Majesty's most important development activities have concerned water. His achievements in the development and identification of water sources, water storage, drainage and control, treatment of polluted water, solving the problem of flooding, all go to prove how difficult it would be to find anyone whose genius and sagacity can match His Majesty's. Only a few of his concepts and theories concerning water will be discussed here.

One is the "Good Water Chases Bad" concept for solving water pollution. His Majesty suggested the use of water from the Chao Praya River to flush out and dilute polluted water in Bangkok's canals, such as the Bang Khen, Bang Sue, Saen Saeb, Thevet, and Bang Lamphu, which are water sources for many communities. The gates of water regulating structures are opened and closed to allow entry of water from the Chao Praya when the tide is high and to drain the water out a low tide. This circulates the water, forcing stagnant, polluted water out to be replaced by

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ble, the office of the Royal Development Projects Board (RDPB) will coordinate with various agencies and assign to them the task of drafting the details of the plans and projects. Afterwards, the office will study and analyze the proposed plan and budget for use in the operation and to make sure that they will be implemented effectively and in line with the objectives of the plan according to His Majesty's initiatives. In some cases, a central organization which consists of officials from the concerned agencies is established to be in charge of the task.

5. Monitoring and evaluation: After a period of project implementation by the agency, the Office of the RDPB will periodically monitor and evaluate the work. In addition, His Majesty the King will return to the project site every time he has the chance, in order to monitor and observe the progress. If he encounters any problems or obstacles, he will give suggestions for the solutions.

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