



The 6th Cycle (72nd) Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and National Day of Thailand



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

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The Great King of Thailand

This year, 1999, is an auspicious occasion for Thai people as it marks the 6th cycle (or 72nd) birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the longest-reigning monarch in the world.

DURING the past half century the world has witnessed tremendous changes in science, technology, economics, society and environment. Thailand itself has gone through unprecedented changes to its way of life, both good and bad.

Through out this turbulent period, the Thai people have had one person in whom they were able to place their trust, love and respect: His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the great sovereign of the Thai nation.

Not only has he weathered the changes alongside his subjects during the past fifty-three years, but His Majesty the King has also brought prosperity to the country and happiness to the people, no matter where they live or how they earn their living.

Thailand is indeed fortunate that its reigning monarch is fully committed to developing his country, with the aim of improving the people's livelihood and wellbeing. His Majesty is not required by tradition nor by law to take such a heavy burden upon himself. He considers it as his duty to the nation.

In April 1959, Their Majesties the King and Queen began making private visits to the people in areas around the Summer Palace in Prachuab Khiri Khan Province, southwest of Bangkok, while in residence during the hot season. Shocked by the hard condition they saw, Their Majesties decided to help. True to their characters as real development workers and leaders, innumerable royal projects were initiated to provide solutions to long-running problems in all parts of the country. The process has been accelerated with the establishment of royal residences in the north, north-east and the south, which became the private headquarters for development projects closely supervised by Their Majesties themselves. Each year The King and Queen spend up to eight months in the provinces to follow their projects.

From his continuous visits to all areas of the country in the years that followed, His Majesty realized that the deterioration of natural resources has become a national problem. He recognized the urgent need to solve the grave problems faced by farmers of soil degradation and the shortage of

agricultural land, which he proposed to do through two main methods—water and soil conservation, and land redistribution and reform, endeavoring to create models for farmer to follow, so that they can implement each project by themselves.

Of over 2,000 royally-initiated projects, 31.9 percent involve water resources development. This reflects His Majesty's recognition of the importance of water to the Thai people as highlighted in his royal speech delivered in 1986:

"... Most importantly, we must have water to drink, use and cultivate, because life is here. If there is water, we can survive. If there is no electricity, we can survive. But if there is electricity and no water, we can not survive..."

The King's great ingenuity and perception has created such worthy programmes as the Royal Rain-making Project, seeding rain clouds to ease drought and increase water in the river basins for electricity generation and agriculture, the "New Theory" on land management and development of small water source as integrated and full-cycle agriculture projects, and the Chai-Pattana Aerator for waste water treatment, patented under His Majesty the King's name in Thailand and internationally, the first such invention by a monarch.

In his endeavors, the King made clear to all concerned that his ultimate aim in agricultural development is farmers' self-sufficiency in food items, such as rice, vegetables, fruits and livestock, diversification of income sources, so that farmers are not reliant on cash crops alone. On the other hand, natural resources and environmental conservation has to be conducted at the same time.

The principles of self-reliance, invention and economical living are personal traits that His Majesty the King has inherited from his beloved mother, Her Royal Highness the late Princess Mother.

His Majesty encourages the reduction of expenditure or production costs in agriculture, through the harnessing and full utilization of natural resources. He promotes the use of cows and buffaloes in place of machinery, the use of crop rotation systems for soil improvement, the use of organic fertilizers and natural sub-

stances in improving productivity as well as pest and insect eradication, the production of bio-gas, and the use of natural products to earn extra income for the people. Such an inventory is collectively known as sustainable agriculture.

His Majesty's ideas in agricultural development have been implemented in earnest and on a wide-scale, from royally-initiated projects, royal projects and projects under the royal patronage to projects under the jurisdiction of various ministries and government agencies, and in recent times.

Over the past fifty-three years, His Majesty the King has dedicated himself to relieving the hardship and poverty of the nation's farmers. Each and everyday has been a working day for His Majesty, no matter where he stays, at Chitralada Villa in Bangkok or the various provincial palaces. For him, the main task has always been the happiness and well-being of the people.

His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej was born on 5 December 1927 and ascended to the throne of Thailand on 9 June 1946.

A qualified engineer, His Majesty has also excelled many other fields as well. For example, he is both an accomplished photographer and artist of repute. As a sportsman, he is a master sailor who won a gold medal in the 1969 Southeast Asian Games. He is also a superb musician who has played the clarinet with some of the world best musicians. Besides playing numerous musical instruments, His Majesty is furthermore renowned composer with more than 40 compositions to his credit.

Most of all, the King has excelled in raising the quality of life of his people from all walks of life, bringing hope where there was once despair. For giving so much of himself to help the nation, he was bestowed with the title "The Great".

His Majesty the King's 72nd birthday anniversary, which fall on December 5th this year, is regarded as the most auspicious occasion according to the Thai tradition as His Majesty will have completed a sixth cycle of his birth. Such occasion only comes once in all Thais throughout the Kingdom and abroad to join together to celebrate His Majesty's Birthday.



His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej



The 6th Cycle Birthday Project

THE Pa Sak River originates in the Phetchabun Mountains in Dan Sai District in the south of Loei Province. It flows through Lopburi, Saraburi and joins the Chao Phraya River in Ayudhya. The total length of the Pa Sak River is about 513 kilometers.

The Pa Sak River Basin has the characteristic of a long, narrow feather. This makes it hard for the area to retain and absorb water. As a result, water shortages for agriculture, industry and general consumption are becoming more and more serious each year. With an increase in population and the extensive expansion of agricultural areas, the amount of water demanded is continuing to grow.

His Majesty the King's Kindness Resolves the Problem

On February 19, 1989 at Phuping Royal Palace in Chinag Mai Province, His Majesty the King graciously asked the Office of the Royal Development Projects Board (RDPB) and the Royal Irrigation Department to seriously and urgently study the feasibility of the Pa Sak River Dam Project. The purposes of the Dam are to solve the water problems and benefit the agricultural areas of the Pa Sak River Basin, as well as to reduce flooding

which normally occurs in the Pa Sak River Basin, Bangkok and metropolitan areas.

Following this Royal initiation, the Royal Irrigation Department undertook a preliminary study and prepared a summary for submission to the Cabinet. The Cabinet passed a resolution on January 9, 1990 on the feasibility study of the Pa Sak River Dam Project with the RDPB acting as a coordination centre until its completion.

The Royal Irrigation Department has tried very hard to develop various water resources on the Pa Sak River Basin to respond to the demand for water by agriculture, industry and consumers. However, most projects involve the development of river branches and not much water from the Chao Phraya Project, but it is not enough to meet their needs. If there is a lot of water in the Pa Sak River Basin, it will flood the villagers' agricultural areas, including those in the lower Chao Phraya River Basin, Bangkok and metropolitan areas.

In addition, the demand for water is now increasing as a result of the growth in population, communities and industrial plants. Consequently, water resources in the Pa Sak River Basin

and the Chao Phraya River Basin must be developed for maximum benefit and the fertility of the Thai Kingdom.

His Majesty the King's interest and planning for the Pa Sak River Basin Project against bears the testimony of His Majesty's never-ending kindness and concern for all of his subjects to overcome the various problems they encounter, and for all of them to be able to live in happiness.

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Royal Rain Making Project

THROUGHOUT his life, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej has been committed to the nation's agricultural development, for which he has earned the title, "Agriculturist King". He has traveled to every corner of the kingdom, visiting his subjects and learning about their problems. The sight of the King in the countryside, with a camera around his neck and holding a map, is familiar to all Thais.

During these visits, His Majesty has come to understand how poor rural folk are, and how basic are their farming techniques, lacking both knowledge and appropriate technology to improve their lot. Determined to give the millions of Thai farmers a better standard of living, the King has devoted a great deal of time and energy to solving their problems and helping them. More than 2,000 royal projects have been set in motion in all parts of the country, 30% of which have to do with the development.

His Majesty recognizes the importance of water to agriculture and the farmers' dependence on rainwater and natural water sources. In a speech delivered at Chitralada Villa on March 17, 1986, His Majesty emphasized the essential nature of water this way:

"... Most crucially, there has to be water; water for drinking, farming and household use. Life depends on water. If there is water, people can survive without electricity; but people can not survive if there is no water..."

However, his comments in 1986 were not the first instance in which His Majesty has recognized the importance of water. Indeed, for more than 40 years, His Majesty has acknowledged the importance of rain to Thai farmers in artificial rainmaking to assist the poor farmers that are so dependent upon it.

His Majesty began to study about artificial rainmaking techniques in other countries. In 1956, he has undertaken research into rainmaking. The Royal Rain Making Division, Bureau of Royal Rain Making and Agricultural Aviation has been conducted intensive research and experimentation over several years. The first successful attempt at artificial rainmaking took place in Nakhon Ratchasima Province in 1969. By 1971, the division was ready to begin offering rainmaking services to farmers.

Chanthaburi Province (a province famous for its fruit) was the first place in which such technique was tried. After it proved successful over a period of time, Chanthaburi residents came to Bangkok to present fruits of His Majesty as testimony of the success of the rainmaking.

The King pays the great deal of attention to rain making operations, occasionally using his private funds to finance such projects. The Royal Rain Making Division has reported its rainmaking activities to His Majesty by radio every afternoon. His Majesty frequently offered technical suggestion in return. In some case when the operations failed, he usually gave further guidelines which resulted in eventual solving of the problem.

Such is the King's intense interest that he sometimes becomes preoccupied with rainmaking operations. In 1972, he

demonstrated the rainmaking process for a Singaporean delegation at Kaeng Krachan Dam in Petchaburi Province. Thanks to his experience, rain came within five hours, creating a great deal of excitement and certainly impressing the Singaporeans.

His Majesty possesses a great deal of knowledge about rainmaking. He continually has to up-to-date information from various sources, including the internet, aerial photographs and satellite images. As demand for the rainmaking project has increased over the years, its importance within the government has improved. In the initial stages, it was part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. In 1975, the project was upgraded to be The Office of Rain Making Operations under the supervision of the Office of the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture and Cooperatives. As the workload increased, and to provide greater flexibility, the cabinet in 1992 approved the merger of the Office of Rain Making Operations and the Agricultural Aviation Division into the Bureau of Royal Rain Making and Agricultural Aviation.

The rainmaking project was registered as a member of the World Meteorological Organization in 1982. Since then, Thai and foreign experts continually exchange views and experiences on its techniques and technology, while other ASEAN neighbours send representatives to study rainmaking techniques in Thailand. The rainmaking operations have proven to be a great success and they serve as a model for Asia. Indonesia has sent a team to work in Thailand several times. The Philippines, Singapore, China and Sri Lanka have also sent officials to learn from Thailand.

To create greater efficiency in rainmaking in Thailand, His Majesty in 1986 invited a group of American experts to conduct a feasibility study of a development programme. Impressed by the King's initiative, the experts came up with the Applied Atmosphere Resources Research Programme in a joint cooperative effort between the governments of Thailand and the United States from 1988-1999. An essential part of the programme was the transfer of US technology to the royal rainmaking operations.

His Majesty the King continues to closely follow and monitor rainmaking operations, giving advice and guidelines to the officials involved. He recently discovered a new technique known as "Super Sandwich", to attack clouds at both upper and lower levels. The royal rainmaking team has already tried out the new technique, which is proving to be a very efficient way of inducing rain. For more than 30 years, royal rainmaking operations have greatly benefited farmers throughout the country, easing water shortages and increasing agricultural output, and thereby improving the livelihood of these farmers. The development of artificial rainmaking in Thailand was solely a result of an initiative by a Thai King who is dedicated to the well-being of his subjects. He continues to demonstrate his love for Thai people through repeated precious gifts such as the artificial rainmaking project.



The Great Developer King

Development according to steps, necessity and economy

Selected quotations of His Majesty the King regarding the importance of development work:

"...The development of the country must be based on steps and foundation which is to enable the majority of the population to attain sufficient means of livelihood. The method and materials used should be economical and appropriate according to the technically sound principles. Once the foundation is securely established, economic development can proceed step by step. If we focus on only rapid economic development regardless of the consistency between the master plan and real conditions of the country, there will be an imbalance in various matters leading to complication and failure. We

can see this example in many civilised countries which are presently facing severe economic problems.

Providing occupational assistance to farmers to enable them to be self-supporting is crucial because once they become self-supporting, they will certainly be able build up a higher level of development. In undertaking the approach of step-by-step development, is significant to promote caution and economy to protect against failure and ensure full success."

Self-supporting
"...Understanding of the situation facing those whom we want to help is most important. Helping them to acquire the basic needs of life is the most effective means of assistance. Therefore, before giving assistance in each case each time, we must take account of their wants and needs. We must un-

derstand the situation they are encountering and decide the means and extent to which they can be helped. Another thing, we should adhere to the important principle that we help them in order to enable them to help themselves..."

The achievements of the Royal Development Projects place the importance on the development of human resources in order to enable people to be self-supporting based on the principles of sustainable development. His Majesty's initiatives have been instrumental in gradual improvement of the community and environmental conditions as well as a higher standard of living. After 51 years of selfless dedication to the upgrading of the lives of His subjects, His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand has been recognised by the Thai people as "The Great Developer King of the Present Time."