

MESSAGE

His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 72nd Birthday Anniversary which falls on December 5, this year has a special significance in respect to the Thai tradition as it constitutes the sixth cycle of His Majesty's Birthday, each cycle comprising 12 years. This auspicious occasion, which only comes once in one's lifetime, is a source of joy and happiness for all Thais living in the Kingdom as well as abroad, many of whom owe their improved livelihood and well-being to the monarch's generosity and ingenuity as manifested in many Royal initiated development projects such as rain-making project, agricultural self-sufficiency, environmental conservation, flood prevention measures, and proper land utilization, to name a few.

This auspicious occasion marking His Majesty's Birthday Anniversary also affords me the opportunity to highlight some salient features of the Thai-Bangladesh relations, which, in just a short span of time, has taken a quantum leap in all fronts. It is a source of gratification to witness that, during the past year, many high-level visits by officials of both countries had taken place which contributed to further expansion and deepening of bilateral cooperation in many areas based on the commonality of our interest and complementary nature of our two economies. The surge in bilateral trade volume and the strong business presence of Thai entrepreneurs in Bangladesh in the areas of agro-industry, energy, construction, designing and manufacturing bear a testimony to active interactions between our two business communities which are instrumental in bringing our economic and commercial relations to new heights.

On the sub-regional level, Bangladesh and Thailand have been actively involved in promoting economic and trade relations under the framework of BIMST-EC. It is also significant to note that business leaders, academicians and representatives of the mass media of BIMST-EC members countries recognize the potential of this sub-regional grouping and are being engaged in their respective fields to translate BIMST-EC programme and sectoral economic cooperation into concrete benefits.

I firmly believe that, from this new plateau of Thai-Bangladesh relationship, immense opportunities abound and many more courses to

wards greater mutual benefit can be charted. Towards this end, our two countries can draw upon a large reservoir of goodwill and strong bonds of cordial friendship existing between our two peoples. Such endearing friendship and close cooperation will undoubtedly propel the Thai-Bangladesh relationship into the next millennium which will witness a new age of Thai-Bangladesh partnership in many endeavours which will yield mutual benefits.



Pithaya Pookaman
Ambassador of Thailand
to Bangladesh

His Majesty the King, Mahajanaka of the Thai Nation

"Any individual who practises perseverance, even in the face of death, will not be in any debt to relatives or goods or father or mother. Furthermore, any individual who does his duty like a man, will enjoy ultimate peace in the future." From the story of Mahajanaka, Chapter 23 written by His Majesty the King of Thailand

MAHAJANAKA by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej was the number one national best seller in 1998. The book is bilingual, written entirely by His Majesty, with illustrations warmly rendered by ten famous Thai artists. The story is about pure perseverance, which will bring success to the lives of those who practice it.

In the book, His Majesty refers to Mahajanaka in the Holy Tripitaka (the teachings of the Lord Buddha), who kept swimming in the midst of the ocean waves through seven days and seven nights though the coast was nowhere to be seen.

The moral of the story of Mahajanaka, that of perseverance, reminds the readers of the royal attributes of their King, who also does everything with perseverance.

Since His Majesty's accession to the throne 52 years ago, not once have the sufferings of the Thai people been unknown to him, nor ignored. The royal initiatives in over 4,000 projects reflect His Majesty's concerns over the well being of his subjects, especially the farmers who are the majority and yet

poorest. Whether the project is agriculture, irrigation, forestry, the environment, etc., His Majesty's love for the Thai people is abundant and readily apparent. The purpose of his projects has been to teach people the essentials of technical, self-sufficient and environmentally friendly farming. His Majesty's wishes to help the people in the remote areas has reached no greater success then with the support of Her Majesty the Queen's project on the "Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques" (SUPPORT). Under the SUPPORT Project, the farmers families are trained in craftsmanship so they can spend time making handcrafted products for sale. By making handicrafts, in stead of playing and gambling, the family's income is raised and the individual's self-esteem is improved. The SUPPORT Project has become so successful that these products are not only popular for domestic use, but also provide a welcome source of exports for Thailand.

His Majesty has shown remarkable perseverance in an

Continued on page 19

The Royal Crest Commemorating the Sixth-Cycle (72nd) Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej on 5th December 1999



His Majesty the King's initials — the Thai letter Phor Por Ror — placed at the centre of the crest, under the Royal Crown and above the Royal Throne of the Eight Compass Points, signify that His Majesty is the focus of the entire nation, binding the people's hearts and loyalty. The yellow colour of the letters is the colour of His Majesty's day of birth, and the blue colour of the background that of the monarchy. The surrounding discus (Chakra) with the Thai number 9 means that King Bhumibol Adulyadej is the ninth monarch of the Chakri Dynasty. The crest is flanked by two seven-tiered umbrellas and topped by a nine-tiered umbrella, both types symbols of kingship. The four-point border represents the four regions of the country, in which the people live in peace and tranquility under the King's supreme protection, as expressed by the green colour, which is a symbol of peace and abundance. Each of the four points of the border has a lotus, an offering to His Majesty on the occasion of his Sixth-Cycle Birthday Anniversary. The golden rays around the crest signify His Majesty's grace and benevolence, which pervade the Kingdom and beyond and bring pride and joy to the people in the entire land. Beneath the crest a blue silk banner bears the inscription of the Royal Occasion of His Majesty's Sixth-Cycle Birthday on 5th December 1999.

His Majesty the King's Views on Human Resources Development

TO assist the country in its social and economic advancement, human development must be placed as the first priority. It is difficult to bring about progress and stability if the people who form the majority have not received the benefits that make them quality, productive citizens. The sole factor to achieve human development is education. Education is divided into two parts; one involves academic

learning and the other spiritual development. Human development must comprise both parts of education. This is to produce personnel with the intellect and moral standards to keep all practices on the right track and achieve objectives that are desirable and benefit the entire society.

In the context of social and economic advancement in developing countries, human resources development means the

process of producing quality citizens. Quality in this sense involves the quality of skills, the quality of health, and the quality of attitudes. Quality of skills is directly related to improved educational opportunities in a modern, challenging educational environment. The quality of health has to do with the healthiness and vitality of the people as well as their access to good health care. The

Continued on page 19

Self-sufficient Economy — a Royal Initiated Concept

THE term "self-sufficient economy," today is such a common term in Thailand that anyone unfamiliar with it appears to be an out touch. "Self-sufficient economy" is an academic term, with an important meaning in economic terms, since it refers to a lifestyle championing as much self-reliance as possible.

On December 4, 1997, His Majesty the King, out of concern for his subjects, offered the nation his theory of a "Self-sufficient economy." He recognized that Thailand was the first country in the Asia to suffer a severe economic downturn that

later spread to other countries. His Majesty discovered that "... in the first place, money that was borrowed, was not used in really productive sectors." His Majesty explained: "It is a critical fact that the money borrowed was not invested in really productive sectors. Had the borrowed money been used to generate revenues, then it follows that the loans would have been repaid and we would no longer be in debt. We would not have to suffer and or integrity would be intact." Secondly, when borrowing money, it should be spent in productive ways rather than being spent

uselessly. Again, he offered his opinion that any borrower might find helpful: "... If the loan is used without any tangible benefit, for example being wasted away without any real benefit to the borrower in terms of generating further income, the loan only serves to help corrupt that borrower." His Majesty the King offered more elaboration and example on how money could benefit people if used in viable business: "There was a time, some four decades ago, when a man applied for a 30,000 baht loan to start up a dressmaking business for his wife. Once the dressmak-

ing business was established, he began to repay faithfully the debt every month until the loan was paid in full. Clearly, with wisdom and honesty, he knew that his business could generate income and he would be able to repay his loan. The reminder was profit. This man deserved praise."

During the two decades, when Thailand was urged to adopt a development approach to turn the country into a newly industrialised country, the lifestyle of the Thai people became totally influenced by this trend. Soon, the Thai people expected that Thailand would

subsequently become a super-power similar to some major industrialised nations in ASEAN. In short, it was hoped that Thailand would become another "Asian Tiger," ready to leap into the wide world business.

On that point, His Majesty said that: "To become a tiger is insignificant and unimportant. The important thing is to be self-sufficient, living in a self-sufficient economy. By 'self-sufficient' economy we mean living in a sustainable manner." His Majesty the King's profound statement prompted people to pay attention to the distress being suffered by our compatriots. Academics conducted research in the hope of finding the right approach to "self-sufficiency" following His Majesty's initiative.

Dr Sumet Tantivejakul, Secretary-General of the Chaipattana Foundation, is among those who elaborated on His Majesty the King's initiative, by giving speeches on the theory to help people understand the concept. "A self-sufficient economy, refers to an economic system based on self-reliance. In an academic sense, this relates to the ability of any urban community, state, country, or even a region, to produce different kinds of merchandise and services in order to sustain that society. In other words, self-reliance without having to rely on people outside of the country."

Such is a self-sufficient economy at a national level or in a big community. However, self-sufficiency viewed at an individual level, most certainly refers to the ability to live comfortable within one's means. More importantly, it is a style of living that is free from the influence of a materialism. As an individual, one has the freedom — free from any attraction or temptation — to return to the middle path of making a living, about which His Majesty the King said: "... Self-sufficiency, as defined by foreigners, refers to living free from troubles by living in a self-sufficient economy wherever we are, and whatever we do..."

In fact, the road to a "self-sufficient economy" in something very close to our hearts but was, unfortunately, overlooked until its virtues were revisited by His Majesty the King. "Products that are required by the Thai people and can be produced in Thailand should be produced in Thailand. Any surpluses that can be exported will be beneficial," said His Majesty.

His Majesty urges his people to find ways to make use of vacant land. Particularly for agricultural purposes, a subject to which His Majesty the King has always paid special attention, especially rice growing, which constitutes an important direction in realising the self-sufficiency theory. Of this, His Majesty said: "When growing rice, I used to encourage our people to grow rice for self-sufficiency and keep the produce in the family's small barn; selling the excess."

As studies into the theory were conducted, His Majesty the King again offered additional insight: "... Some contend that this approach may be inappropriate, especially in the north-east of Thailand. It is the case that the farmers used to grow jasmine rice for sale, and jasmine rice certainly enjoys a good market. However, the important point is that after they sell all their product, they themselves have to buy rice from other people. However, from whom? Everybody grows jasmine rice, but the people from the north-east eat glutinous rice as their staple diet. Therefore, if we encourage

Continued on page 19

Our heartfelt felicitations to the people of Thailand on the occasion of
His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Birthday and
The National Day of Thailand

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