

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 059 143

SO 002 429

AUTHOR Henderson, John W.; And Others  
TITLE Area Handbook for Thailand.  
INSTITUTION American Univ., Washington, D.C. Foreign Area Studies.  
REPORT NO DA Pam-550-53  
PUB DATE 71  
NOTE 411p.; Supersedes DA Pam 550-53, Sept 1969  
AVAILABLE FROM Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (\$3.25)

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC Not Available from EDRS.  
DESCRIPTORS \*Area Studies; Asian History; Communism; Cultural Context; Demography; \*Developing Nations; Economics; \*Foreign Culture; Foreign Relations; Geography; Governmental Structure; Guides; History; Institutions; Military Organizations; Religion; Sino Tibetan Languages; Social Structure; Social Systems; \*Thai; Values

IDENTIFIERS Educational Systems; \*Thailand

ABSTRACT

Changing conditions and events in Thailand required that a third edition of this area handbook incorporating current data be published. It is a compilation of basic facts written with military and other personnel in mind. An analytical appraisal of social, economic, and political aspects is provided with emphasis on the interaction of these societal elements in an attempt to convey to the reader an understanding of people and country. A chapter describing the national defense and internal security is included. Additional features offered are a concise country data summary, glossary, index and an extensive classified bibliography. Related documents are SO 002 053 through SO 002 058, and SO 002 428. (SJM)

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**AREA HANDBOOK**  
**for**  
**THAILAND**

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**Research and writing were completed**

**November 1970**

**Published 1971**

**(This pamphlet supersedes DA Pam 550-53, September 1968)**

**Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 72-611403**

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**For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office  
Washington, D.C. 20402—Price \$3.25**

## FOREWORD

This volume is one of a series of handbooks prepared by Foreign Area Studies (FAS) of The American University, designed to be useful to military and other personnel who need a convenient compilation of basic facts about the social, economic, political, and military institutions and practices of various countries. The emphasis is on objective description of the nation's present society and the kinds of possible or probable changes that might be expected in the future. The handbook seeks to present as full and as balanced an integrated exposition as limitations on space and research time permit. It was compiled from information available in openly published material. An extensive bibliography is provided to permit recourse to other published sources for more detailed information. There has been no attempt to express any specific point of view or to make policy recommendations. The contents of the handbook represent the work of the authors and FAS and do not represent the official view of the United States government.

An effort has been made to make the handbook as comprehensive as possible. It can be expected, however, that the material, interpretations, and conclusions are subject to modification in the light of new information and developments. Such corrections, additions, and suggestions for factual, interpretive, or other change as readers may have will be welcomed for use in future revisions. Comments may be addressed to:

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## PREFACE

Swiftly moving events in Southeast Asia have brought many changes to Thailand within the last few years. This revision of the *Area Handbook for Thailand* has been prepared to take account of the altered scene. Intensification of the war in Indochina, expansion of the country's Communist-led insurgency, a new constitution and a new government, electoral reforms, rising prosperity, and many other developments have occurred largely or entirely since publication of the last edition of this handbook.

This is the third revision since its first publication in 1957. The original handbook was prepared under the chairmanship of Wendell Blanchard by the Washington Branch of Human Relations Area Files (HRAF), predecessor organization of the Foreign Area Studies of The American University. An earlier monograph prepared by HRAF in 1956 was directed by Professor Lauriston Sharp and was edited by Dr. Frank J. Moore and Dr. Walter F. Vella. The 1957 handbook drew upon this beginning. The earlier study in turn drew extensively on the field notes and the first-hand knowledge of the members of the Southeast Asia Program of Cornell University. In 1963 the first revision of the 1957 handbook brought to the study the benefit of research and writing developed during the intervening six-year period. The second revision was published in 1968.

This volume attempts to make the handbook current with 1970. Its purpose is to provide in a compact, convenient, balanced, and objective form an integrated exposition and analysis of the dominant social, political, and economic aspects of Thai society. It is designed to give readers an understanding of the dynamics of the component elements of the society and an insight into the ideas and feelings of its people as well as the role of the country in the world around it.

This revision has drawn heavily upon the 1968 version, which was prepared by a team headed by Harvey H. Smith. Other members were Donald W. Bernier, Frederica M. Bunge, Frances Chadwick Rintz, Rinn-Sup Shinn, and Suzanne Teleki.

Readers will note some inconsistencies in the transliteration of Thai words, particularly names. Thai is written in a script of South Indian origin and has many more symbols than the roman alphabet. It is a tonal language, like Chinese, and it has some vowel and consonant sounds that have no precise equivalent in English. Missionaries and other foreigners have used varying systems to translit-

erate Thai syllables into English, relying on close approximation to represent sounds. Some of these have received wide acceptance among Thai when using English for individual names, place names, and similar words. More recently standard rules for the conversion of Thai script into roman characters have been promulgated by the Thai government. Some ambiguity remains, and Thai official publications sometimes choose to use romanized transcriptions for Thai words that are not in conformity with these rules. The practice in this book has been to follow, in most cases, the spelling used in the *Thai Official Yearbook, 1968* and other Thai official publications.

Spelling of most place names has followed official United States government maps and the *Thailand Gazetteer* of the Board on Geographic Names, United States Department of Interior, April 1966. In some cases romanized spelling in general international use by English publications was used even though in conflict with local Thai usage. Thai has no indicator of the plural, and the practice of rendering the plural of Thai words in English has varied. The word *Thai*, meaning an indigenous Thai language speaker, is here written the same for both singular and plural. The same practice is used for *baht* (the unit of currency) and most Thai words used in this book.

Thai names are often preceded by a title indicating rank. Royal titles are commonly translated into equivalent English terms—for example, *king, queen, prince*. Under the absolute monarchy, until 1932, nonroyal official titles were granted by the king—for instance, Chao Phraya, which is explained in the Glossary of this handbook. These titles are no longer conferred, but persons granted such titles before 1932 retain the use of them. *Nai*, meaning mister, is used by nonofficials. A person with official rank, civil or military, is commonly addressed by his given name prefixed by his title. Family names were introduced in the twentieth century but are often omitted and are never used without the given name.

English usage in the revised edition follows *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (unabridged). English weights and measures are used except that all tons are metric tons unless otherwise noted.

## COUNTRY SUMMARY

1. **COUNTRY:** The Kingdom of Thailand, originally known as Sayam. Name changed in 1850s to Siam and so known until 1939, when title of Thailand (land of the free) was adopted. Name reverted to Siam from 1945 to 1949 then changed back again to Thailand. Capital is Bangkok. A kingdom throughout its history; has never experienced colonial rule.

2. **GOVERNMENT:** A constitutional monarchy, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej exercising nominal power. First constitution adopted in 1932 has been revised eight times; latest and present form adopted 1968. Actual responsibility for public affairs centralized in Council of Ministers, headed in 1970 by Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn. The United Thai People's Party is the ruling political organization.

3. **POPULATION:** Estimated about 37.8 million. Annual growth rate 3.3 percent, expected to reach about 3.6 percent by 1980. Population density averages 177 per square mile but uneven and concentrated in Central Lowland Region. Population 87 percent rural. *Composition.* Predominantly ethnic Thai. Chinese are most important ethnic minority (12 percent). Other minorities include Malays, Khmer (Cambodians), non-Thai hill peoples, and some Vietnamese refugees. *Immigration* Controlled by quota system. *Migration.* Extensive between ethnically related peoples across the Mekong River bordering northeastern Thailand and Laos for 600 miles. Some displacement of rural border residents to towns to protect them from Communist terrorists.

4. **SIZE:** Area, 200,000 square miles. Greatest north-south distance, 1,000 miles; east-west, 500 miles.

5. **TOPOGRAPHY:** Varied landscape of forested mountains, dry plateaus, and fertile river plains. Four natural regions: Northern and Western Mountain Region, Northeastern Khorat Plateau, Central Lowland Region, and Southern Peninsula Region. Mountains in the west average 5,200 feet about sea level and contain nation's highest peak of 8,500 feet; in the east mountains average 2,400 feet and have maximum elevation of about 4,000 feet.

6. **LANGUAGES:** Official national language is the dialect of Thai spoken in central Thailand. Spoken by over 90 percent of the population. Principal other languages are Chinese (4.5 million speakers) and Malay (over 1 million speakers). English dominates Western languages and is a mandatory subject in public schools after fourth

grade. Other languages used by some are various Lao dialects, Vietnamese, and indigenous languages of the hill peoples. Many ethnic minority groups are bilingual in Thai.

7. RELIGION: Official religion is Theravada Buddhism professed by about 97 percent of the population. Other religions include Brahmanism, Islam, and Christianity as well as Confucian teachings; animism is practiced among the hill peoples.

8. EDUCATION: Literacy rate rising with expansion of educational system. Elementary education compulsory for four grades since 1921. Compulsory system to be gradually expanded to seven years or age fifteen. There were 30,097 public and private schools below university level in 1967; with enrollment of about 5 million at the primary level and 350,000 at the secondary level. Growing emphasis on vocational schools, teacher training and technical schools, with enrollment of more than 200,000. Total enrollment in eight government-operated colleges and universities exceeded 45,000 by 1966 and was expanded during subsequent years with addition of several new institutions.

9. HEALTH: Conditions improving but much remains to be achieved. In 1970 death rate was 9.5 per thousand of population and was dropping; birth rate was 42.9 per thousand and rising; infant mortality rate was 37.8 per thousand live births. Major diseases and other causes of death were diseases of early infancy, diarrhea and enteritis, tuberculosis, pneumonia, childbirth, diseases of the stomach and duodenum, and typhoid fever. Official figures reported 203 hospitals of all types and 2,500 health and maternity centers. There were 4,590 physicians and surgeons, 469 dentists, 12,000 nurses, 1,500 pharmacists, and 15,000 traditional medical practitioners.

10. CLIMATE: Tropical and monsoonal. Rainy season from May through September; dry season for remainder of year.

11. JUSTICE: Independent judiciary headed by president of the Supreme Court. Three-level court system: courts of first instance, Court of Appeal, and Supreme Court. Jury system is not used.

12. ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS: *Civil*. Seventy-one provinces, 520 districts, 21 subdistricts, 41,630 villages, and 120 municipalities; all centrally directed from Bangkok. *Military*. Army maintains a series of regional area commands for administrative and tactical purposes.

13. ECONOMY: Primarily based on agriculture and moving toward greater industrialization. Private enterprise predominates. Rice most important economic product. Gross domestic product grew 9.5 percent in 1969.

14. INDUSTRY: Still relatively small by 1970, but of increasing importance, contributing 16 percent to the gross national product (GNP). Confined largely to processing agricultural products and fabricating a few consumer items.



15. LABOR: Labor force in 1970 was about 15 million; 80 percent in farming, fishing, forestry, and related occupations; 8 percent in commerce; 6.8 percent in services; and 4 percent in manufacturing. Organization of the force into unions was prohibited.

16. EXPORTS: Steadily increasing but pattern changing. In 1970 major export products were rice, rubber, corn, tin, and teak. Jute and kenaf also important.

17. IMPORTS: Largely manufactured items, classified as consumer goods, raw materials, capital goods.

18. FINANCE: Consistently stable. The exchange rate in 1970: 20.8 baht equaled approximately US\$1. Rate is permitted to fluctuate within narrow limits. Banks are stringently controlled by government regulation that gives the central Bank of Thailand extensive power over commercial banks.

19. COMMUNICATIONS: *Telephone and Telegraph*. There are 71 exchanges and 98,000 telephones in use, most in the Bangkok area. International service is available through the Commercial Satellite Project of which Thailand is a member. A telecommunications system is under construction. *Radio*. Government controlled. Most of 105 stations operated by or affiliated with government agencies in 1968; receiving sets, over 3 million. *Television*. Virtually a government monopoly. In 1968, 2 major stations in Bangkok area, 3 regional stations and others under construction.

20. TRANSPORTATION: There is a network of rivers and canals providing an interconnected inland waterway over which much commerce and agricultural produce is handled. There are about 2,400 miles of single-track railroad, government owned and operated; 11,000 miles of main and secondary highways, about 3,500 of which are paved. Maintenance generally poor; many impassable in rainy season.

21. PORTS AND PORT FACILITIES: Major port is Bangkok, seventeen miles from the sea on the Chao Phraya River. No deepwater seaports. Five other minor ports.

22. AIRFIELDS: Don Muang near Bangkok adequate for large aircraft. Eighty smaller fields suitable for light planes are generally poorly surfaced, lacking in refuelling facilities, and inoperative during much of the rainy season. Government-owned Thai Airways Company, Limited, is only domestic airline; in addition Thai Airways International, Limited, is joint Thai venture with Scandinavian Airlines System.

23. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES: *Civil*. Two major agreements are with the United States—one for exchange of scholars under the Fulbright Act and the Economic and Technical Assistance Agreement. *Military*. Limited to those inherent in Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).

24. AID PROGRAMS: *Civil*. Many and varied for loans, grants, and technical assistance for specific purposes or projects. Biggest is with

United States through Agency for International Development. Other technical and financial assistance with West Germany, Denmark, and Japan. Member of at least thirteen international organizations, including the United Nations and member agencies, Colombo Plan, and SEATO. *Military.* Assistance mainly from Agency for International Development and United States Military Assistance Program.

25. **INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT:** Admitted to the United Nations in 1946; supports its principles and participates in ten of its subsidiary organizations.

26. **THE ARMED FORCES:** Total strength approximately 155,000: Army, 110,000; Navy, 20,000; and Air Force, 25,000. National Police, strength about 80,000, under Ministry of the Interior. Military budget for 1970 is the equivalent of over US\$130 million.

# THAILAND

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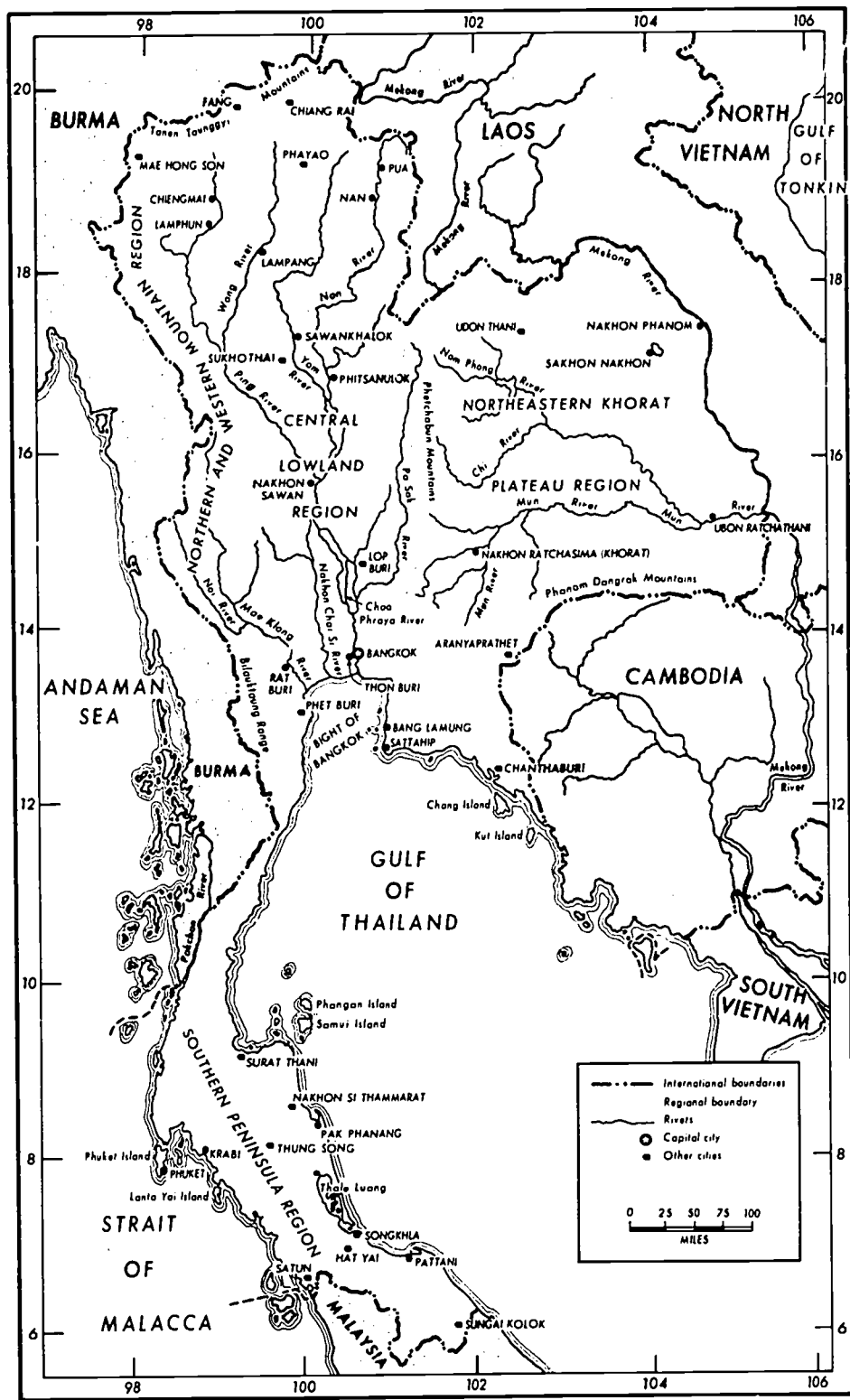


Figure 1. Thailand

## SECTION I. SOCIAL

### CHAPTER 1

#### GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SOCIETY

The Kingdom of Thailand at the close of 1970 was in a process of transition that was rapidly changing the face of many traditional institutions and practices. These changes were more rapid in urban Thailand than among the predominantly rural population at large, where basic values and cherished customs were modified only slowly. The accelerated process of change began in the wake of World War II, gathered momentum gradually in the decade of the 1950s, and increased in speed during the 1960s.

Many factors helped to stimulate change. The rise of communism on the nearby Asian mainland (with a new and growing threat to the security of the kingdom) contributed, as did warfare and insurgency in all of the countries bordering on Thailand—Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Burma. A growing popular awareness of the outside world, accompanied by new aspirations and new discontents, also had an effect. Mass political stirrings, long at a minimum in the orderly Thai society with its Buddhist precepts and agrarian way of life, began to make themselves felt, accompanied by increasing democratic reforms. Industry was assuming much greater importance in what once had been almost entirely an agricultural and mining economy. Technology, communications, and education were sharply stimulated. With some outside assistance, military defenses were strengthened, and the government worked diligently at furthering regional cooperation in all fields while strongly upholding its own independence and freedom of action.

A rising prosperity was one of the concomitants of change during the 1950s and 1960s. The country enjoyed a relatively low rate of tenancy in comparison with some of its neighbors, and the tradition of private ownership and free enterprise was strong. Under the economic and social system there had been little extreme poverty and little political unrest from that source. With new rural development efforts and greater emphasis on industrialization, the country experienced a considerable further gain in economic well being. From 1961 to 1966 the country's gross domestic product expanded at an average rate of 7.2 percent, and this was stepped up to 8.1 percent in the ensuing three years.

The country is located at a strategic crossroads in Southeast Asia, between China, Japan, and India and between those countries and Indonesia to the south. This location has given it a key role in affairs of the entire region. With an area of about 200,000 square miles and a population estimated at about 37.8 million, it is the largest of the nations of Southeast Asia apart from Indonesia. The kingdom extends from the northern tributaries of the Chao Phraya River, across the broad fertile Chao Phraya River plain, into the narrow Malay Peninsula to the Isthmus of Kra on the south, and from Burma on the west to the Indochina peninsula on the east. Much of the country had not been developed by 1970, providing future room for its rapidly increasing population and offering considerable untapped economic potential.

The high fertility of most of the country, notably the central plain where frequent flooding helps to renew the soil, combined with the even climate of the tropical monsoon region to provide surpluses of rice and other grains as well as rubber and raw materials that are available for both industrial development and export trade. These natural facts have to a great degree shaped the nature of the society and economy as well as its political institutions.

Since the origin of the nation, beginning with an immigration under Mongol pressure, from an area in what is now Southern Communist China, the Chinese have been the most feared potential enemy. The country has been able to maintain its independence by a combination of skillful diplomacy and warfare with its immediate neighbors, notably the Burmese, the Khmer (Cambodians), and the Malays. Diplomacy enabled it to resist countervailing pressures from external powers, with minimum resort to armed force. This diplomacy was applied primarily to dealings with Great Britain, the colonial power formerly established to the south and west, and France, formerly the sovereign on Thailand's eastern border.

The government in 1970 was a constitutional monarchy, which it had been since the absolute monarchy of previous times was overthrown by a bloodless coup in 1932. Although a series of further coups took place after the adoption of the first constitution, the basic constitutional form remained unchanged, although during some periods the constitution was not fully implemented. During all of the period following 1932 the government was dominated by an elite group, the makeup and control of which shifted from time to time but which usually centered within the military. There was no serious attempt to overthrow the monarchy.

The most recent constitution was promulgated in 1968, and by 1970 a revival of party politics, previously dormant or rudimentary, was well underway with the encouragement of the national leadership.

The characteristics of an integrated and unified national society



are present to a greater extent in Thailand than in other countries of Southeast Asia. The great majority of the people share a common or related ethnic origin. Their ancestors, after migrating from the Chinese province of Yunnan, absorbed the earlier non-Thai inhabitants they encountered in the area of present-day Thailand. Several non-Thai minority groups are still found, however, in various sections of the country, and some variations also exist between the rural and urban peoples and between the inhabitants of the densely populated Central Lowland Region and those of the northern and northeast regions. These differences relate particularly to the use of nonstandard dialects of Thai, including Lao. These dialects, however, are mutually intelligible, and this fact contributes to the nation's homogeneity. The two largest minority groups are the Chinese, who have migrated to Thailand in comparatively recent times, and the Malays, many of whom live in what once was a part of Malaya.

Another factor aiding national unity is the influence of the Buddhist religion that, except among the minority groups, has prevailed in the country for more than 700 years. Theravada Buddhism is the state religion prescribed by the 1968 Constitution, which also requires the king to profess the Buddhist faith and to uphold religion. Thailand, nevertheless, is a secular society, and there is a clear-cut separation between state and church. Complete religious freedom is guaranteed.

The Thai people, historically accustomed to strong central and paternalistic rule, retain their traditional reverence for their king and are proud that their rulers were able to maintain their country's independence despite pressures from colonial powers. Thailand's historical record of some seven centuries of unbroken independence as a people has been of great significance in conditioning the nation's adjustment to the modern world. In contrast to many former colonial countries, the Thai have felt free to accept, reject, or modify the ideas, practices, and institutions of the West and have not suffered from the feelings of inferiority that have handicapped some former colonial peoples. The processes of change have been presided over by Thai and have never been forced on a reluctant people by alien administrators. The successive dynasties were, therefore, able to maintain Thai traditions while accepting those Western ideas that appealed to them. For a century the elite of Thailand have been obtaining their advanced education in the West. Modern concepts of progressive government are generally promoted in Thailand by the elite, whereas the mass of people are generally less progressive and more traditional, though far from xenophobic.

Throughout history, the Thai have been exposed to, and have borrowed from, the many civilizations with which they came in contact. Nevertheless, they preserved their identity, which is an

indication of pride in their common heritage of ethnic origin, language, and religion. Their Mongoloid physical type indicates they are racially related to the Chinese, but the nature of the relationship has not been clearly established. Their speech also shows Chinese influences. These Chinese connections, which were important among the early Thai, were later overshadowed by direct and indirect borrowings from Indian civilization and from the Indian-influenced cultures of Cambodia and Burma. During this process, which affected almost every sphere of thought and activity, the Thai acquired their religion, their traditional concept of monarchy, an elaborate hierarchy of social status, their writing, the subject matter of their classical literature, and the form and content of much of their art and architecture. The borrowed items, however, underwent a transformation in which they became unmistakably Thai. Buddhism in Thailand, for example, is almost inextricably bound with retained folk beliefs and observances. The absolutist principle in government has usually been tempered by mildness in practice. Some of the formalities of Indian social customs were received along with other Indian influences, but the caste system itself was ignored.

Even before World War II the modern period brought many changes besides the end of royal absolutism in government. These included abolition of slavery, the introduction of commercialization of agriculture, the beginnings of industry, and the dissemination of new knowledge, ideas, and values through the public school system. The elite were no longer a closed circle composed of the royal family and the traditional bureaucracy but grew to include many who had been able to rise to the top in the military and in government, in business and religion, and in other professions. The base of the social structure continues, however, to be formed by the village farmers and a large group of artisans and unskilled laborers. Of great potential importance is a small but growing group of middle level and lower level civil servants, merchants, white-collar employees, and skilled industrial workers. As of 1970 the trend toward a broader political base appeared to be continuing.

In foreign affairs the country's alliances are mainly with the West, as are most trade relationships and its general international political outlook. It has also formed economic and cultural ties with its non-Communist Asian neighbors; the government in 1970 was seeking to reduce tensions with all countries, however, and to reinforce its own self-reliance in world affairs, particularly through Asian cooperation. Simultaneously, it has taken not only military but economic and social measures to combat the Communist-led insurgency, which by 1970 was on the way to becoming the government's most serious immediate problem. The government's goal was to relieve underlying economic and social deprivations exploited by

insurgents with increased emphasis on rural development programs. Greater political latitude for all segments of the population fell within the same framework.

## CHAPTER 2

### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND POPULATION

The Kingdom of Thailand, situated in the heart of Southeast Asia, has an area of about 200,000 square miles and a population that in mid-1970 was estimated to be approximately 37,800,000. The nation has an unusual configuration which, in broad outline, has been likened to the head and trunk of an elephant. The compact landmass on the Asian continent represents the animal's head, with the small bight at the apex of the Gulf of Thailand forming its mouth. This portion is generally referred to as mainland Thailand. The remaining narrow, elongated segment extending southward down the Malay Peninsula is not too unlike an elephant's trunk (see fig. 1).

Thailand has maximum dimensions of about 1,000 miles north to south (including the trunk) and 500 miles east to west. It has approximately 950 miles of coastline on the Gulf of Thailand, where the nation's major harbors are located, and 350 miles along the Strait of Malacca, where the coast is irregular and rugged and lacks adequate harbor facilities. Numerous jungle-covered islands lie off both coasts; the largest and most important of these, Phuket Island, at the northern end of the Strait of Malacca, is the center of the country's tin industry.

The nation's interior boundaries are not well demarcated except for a short stretch of the western border with Burma, marked by the Salween River, and about 550 miles of the northeastern border with Laos, defined by the Mekong River. Boundary lines are generally respected by the population, although certain mountain groups along the border in the north and the Lao people along the Mekong River in the northeast pay little attention to border-crossing formalities and frequently create problems for the Border Patrol Police in those areas (see ch. 15, National Defense and Internal Security). Despite the lack of complete border markings, Thailand in 1970 was free from territorial disputes with all neighboring states except Cambodia. This lone point of contention centered on rival claims to a ruined temple in the eastern section of the Phanom Dongrak mountain range, which separates the two countries south of the Khorat Plateau (see ch. 11, Foreign Relations).

Topographically, Thailand presents a varied landscape of forested

mountains, relatively dry plateaus, and fertile river plains that divide the nation into four natural terrain regions. The four are the Northern and Western Mountain Region, the Northeastern Khorat Plateau Region, the Central Lowland Region, and the Southern Peninsula Region. These terrain regions have little significance in civil or military administration, but their descriptive names are frequently used in presenting various types of information and in defining locations.

Because it is located between the equator and about 20 degrees north latitude, Thailand is warm and rather humid and is classified as a tropical country. The climate is monsoonal, marked by a pronounced rainy season lasting from about May through September and a relatively dry season for the rest of the year. Temperatures are highest in March and April and lowest in December and January.

Rivers and waterways of constant but erratic flow are numerous in all regions except the peninsula and, before 1900, were the principal means of communication throughout the nation. In the twentieth century these traditional routes have been giving way to a limited number of railroads and motor highways, particularly in the metropolitan Bangkok-Thon Buri area and along main routes connecting the largest provincial cities with the capital.

The vast majority of the people are native-born Thai whose ancestors migrated from China in the remote past and who, over the centuries, have developed an independent culture and identity that are uniquely national in character. A few minority communities can be found, but most of their members are well integrated into the dominant Thai social structure. The most important minority is that of the Chinese, whose representatives are found throughout the country. Smaller minorities include the Malays (living in the Southern Peninsula Region), the Vietnamese, the Khmer, the Kui, the Meo, the Akha, and others (see ch. 4, Social Systems and Values; ch. 6 Education, Culture and Public Information).

About 40 percent of the total population is concentrated in the fertile food-producing area of the Central Lowland Region. Lesser concentrations are found along the Gulf of Thailand in the Southern Peninsula Region, in the Ping River valley in the Northern and Western Mountain Region, and in the Chi and Mun river valleys of the Northeastern Khorat Plateau Region.

Settlement patterns for the country as a whole are predominantly agricultural and display only a limited degree of urbanization. The Bangkok-Thon Buri complex in the southern portion of the Central Lowland Region is the single major urban area. Its population, estimated at 2,803,000 in 1970, makes it one of the large metropolitan centers of the world. Chiangmai, in the northern mountains, with an estimated population of about 81,000, is the next largest city.

The only other city with more than 50,000 inhabitants is Nakhon Ratchasima, with 73,000. Most other towns of consequence are the provincial capitals, only nineteen of which have populations exceeding 20,000. The rural village, therefore, is the most common form of settlement. Because waterways were at one time the principal means of transportation, these villages are usually strung out along one or both sides of a river, canal, or roadway. Provincial towns grew out of the larger villages located on a web of waterways, where some of the houses were built on pontoons.

### MAJOR TERRAIN REGIONS

The four natural terrain regions, delineated by the pattern of rivers and mountains, have no official political or administrative significance, but their different physical characteristics and economic capabilities were instrumental in determining how the country was settled and how the quality and nature of its subsequent national life were shaped. Historically, the Thai people, migrating out of southern China along natural routes provided by corridors in the southeastern extensions of the Tibetan mountain complex, reached the Tanen Taungyi highlands of northern Thailand. Gradually, they moved down tributaries of the nation's major river system, the Chao Phraya, and onto the plain of the river itself in the Central Lowland Region, where they established the center of Thai civilization and political power.

#### The Northern and Western Mountain Region

The Northern and Western Mountain Region is an area of broken and deeply dissected ranges that occur as a series of parallel north-south ridges separated by deep, narrow alluvial valleys. These ranges have an average altitude of about 5,200 feet above sea level and contain several peaks that are considerably higher. Doi Intharnon, a pinnacle near the city of Chiangmai, for example, has an altitude of 8,500 feet and is the highest mountain in the country.

South of the provincial capital of Uttaradit, the mountains fall away to the lowlands of the Chao Phraya River basin. A ridge along the eastern border with Laos, however, continues southward, merging with the Phetchabun Mountains that form the western scarp of the Khorat Plateau. Ridges in the western part of the region continue southward to form the backbone of the Malay Peninsula.

The northern mountains are well watered and the source of many streams that support intensive rice cultivation in the dark clays and alluvial deposits of the fertile valleys. Those in the extreme north join the Mekong and those in the northwest join the Salween River.

The majority, however, flow southward to the Gulf of Thailand. Three of the rivers—the Ping and its tributary and the Wang, the Yom, and the Nan—unite in the lowlands near Nakhon Sawan to form the Chao Phraya; a fourth, the Pa Sak, joins the Chao Phraya farther downstream near Ayutthaya.

Except where scarred by clearings of the mountaineers or interrupted by masses of bare limestone outcroppings, the northern and western mountains are thickly covered by forests that yield valuable timber. In general, stands of tropical evergreens are found at all elevations, and some coniferous growth occurs down to altitudes of 2,400 feet. Forests in uncultivated areas at lower levels consist mainly of mixed deciduous trees.

#### **The Northeastern Khorat Plateau Region**

The Northeastern Khorat Plateau Region constitutes about one-third of the country's total land area. Although called a plateau, it is not a high tableland as that term might imply but a large basin less than 1,000 feet above sea level whose rolling surface is marked here and there with a few flattop hills. It is rimmed on the south by the Phanom Dongrak mountain range, which rises 1,000 to 2,400 feet above sea level along the Cambodian border, and on the west by the Phetchabun Mountains, which have a maximum altitude of about 4,000 feet. The whole area is tilted slightly to the north and east from its western scarp to the Mekong River.

The great extent of the plateau consists of sandstone, which produces a rather porous soil of fine, sandy loam that retains little moisture. The soil is low in plant nutrients and in some areas is quite saline. Thus, although the short monsoon season brings heavy rains that cause considerable flooding in river valleys, the dry season is long, and the prevailing vegetation is a sparse grass that provides forage for livestock.

The largest rivers in the region are the Mun and its principal tributary the Chi. These two rivers and their tributaries on the plateau have built up scattered alluvial lands that are the only well-watered areas throughout the year. Rice grown on these lands forms the principal crop of the region. Close to the Mekong River, into which both rivers empty a short distance downstream from their confluence, the land surface is rather swampy and contains many lakes.

The Mekong River, one of the world's greatest streams, marks Thailand's northern and eastern boundaries for some 500 miles. It has never been as important to the country as some of the interior rivers, but it drains all of the northeast. Moreover, its international character and hydroelectric potential give it a special significance in the kingdom's economic planning and its relations with its neighbors (see ch. 12, Character and Structure of the Economy).

### **The Central Lowland Region**

The Central Lowland Region is the basin of the Chao Phraya River, which forms the political and economic heart of the nation. It stretches from the foothills of the northern mountains at Uttaradit to the Gulf of Thailand. The region is flanked on the west along the boundary with Burma by the Bilauktaung Range, which is an extension of the Northern and Western Mountain Region, and in the east by the Khorat Plateau. Bangkok and adjacent Thon Buri constitute the region's largest urban area, but there are other important centers, such as Ayutthaya, Lop Buri, Nakhon Sawan, Phitsanulok, Nakhon Pathom, and Rat Buri.

The northern portion of the lowlands is drained by the three major rivers (the Ping, the Yom, and the Nan) that arise in the northern mountains. These streams unite near Nakhon Sawan to form the Chao Phraya. A short distance below this confluence, a distributary of the Chao Phraya roughly parallels the main river, entering the Gulf of Thailand about twenty-five miles west of the mouth of the parent stream. The amply watered basin, overlaid with the fertile silt deposited by annual flooding, is the richest and most extensive rice-producing area in the country. South of Nakhon Sawan the river falls no more than seventy-five feet so that it flows slowly, and the flat plain on either side is indented with backwaters crossed by tributaries, manmade feeder channels, and irrigation canals. Sedimentation is heavy, extending the plain into the Gulf of Thailand at a rate of about twenty feet annually and requiring constant dredging to permit ships of more than 2,000 tons to cross the bar at the mouth of the Chao Phraya.

The general flatness of the basin is interrupted occasionally by small but abruptly rising hills. Jutting into the southeasterly part of the region is an extension of the Cardamom Mountains of southwestern Cambodia, and southeast and east of Bangkok a small area of hills and mountains, some rising to 3,000 feet, is covered by a dry forest. Most of the natural vegetation has disappeared from the lowlands except along the Gulf of Thailand coast, which is lined with mangrove swamps, trees of various types, and bamboo thickets. Most of the lowlands elsewhere consist of wide expanses that are treeless or sparsely grown with tall palms and clumps of bamboo.

### **The Southern Peninsula Region**

The topography of the Southern Peninsula Region is rolling to mountainous and contains little flatland. The region has no large rivers, but numerous small streams course precipitously down narrow valleys, creating a serious flood hazard on the small coastal plains. The northern portion of the region shares the Malay Penin-



sula with Burma and is a narrow strip that in some places is only about twelve miles wide. It is flanked and bordered on the west by the high Bilaukaung Range, which rises steeply from the coastline on the Gulf of Thailand. South of the Isthmus of Kra, Thailand widens to occupy the full width of the Malay Peninsula down to the border with Malaysia, facing the Strait of Malacca on the west and the Gulf of Thailand on the east. This southern portion is marked by two almost parallel ranges in the longitudinal direction, and the rolling country between the two is studded with isolated peaks rising sheer out of the plain.

Soils in the north are sandy, often saline, and generally unproductive; in the south, however, they are of sand and clay loam, in which rubber trees thrive. This southern area is also rich in tin deposits, and the predominantly Muslim Malay population, with small numbers of Thai and Chinese, engage in tin mining, the production of rubber, and the cultivation of other tropical crops.

### CLIMATE

The climate of the country is one of two regular seasons in which the high- and low-pressure masses that alternate in the interior of continental Asia are governing factors. From late March or early April through September, the low-pressure area over the continent and the corresponding high-pressure area over the Indian Ocean cause warm, moist winds to be drawn across the Bay of Bengal and into Thailand, bringing moisture that precipitates over the land-mass. In the remaining months of the year these pressure systems are reversed; dry, interior, continental winds blow from the northeast toward the lows of the Indian Ocean; and the dry monsoon is dominant. The wet monsoon is the more distinct season because the winds are constant and the precipitation is regular. During the dry monsoon the direction and speed of the winds are not as constant, and the Thai peasant farmer, particularly in the Central Lowland Region, must depend on the local river systems for water.

Climatic conditions are most important in terms of rainfall, about 90 percent of which falls during the wet monsoon. The amount of yearly precipitation varies in different parts of the nation, generally averaging 40 to 60 inches in most of the northern mountains, the central lowlands, and the interior of the Khorat Plateau and 80 to 120 inches in the western mountains and most of the Southern Peninsula Region. Only in a small area of the western peninsula north of Phuket Island does the annual rainfall exceed 120 inches.

Although the dominant rainfall distribution pattern is based upon the monsoon winds and the location of the mountains, some cyclonic variations also occur. In the winter Thailand is influenced by side eddies from the southern Asiatic cyclonic storm belt, which

extends from northeastern India to southwestern mainland China, bringing irregular amounts of additional rain. In the summer the effect of these eddies is felt only in the far northwest.

The slopes of the Northern and Western Mountain Region are crucial to the regulation of the watershed in the central lowlands because they are thickly forested, and usually insignificant amounts of rainfall are effective. Thus, on the western slopes of the Chao Phraya River basin, where showers usually occur about three weeks before the summer monsoon begins, stream levels are raised high enough for the peasant farmer to find water to soften his land in preparation for plowing. Showers occurring during local cyclonic variations have the same effect.

From March to September, the period of the wet monsoon, the mean maximum temperature in the Central Lowland Region and the Khorat Plateau is near 98° F., but there are records of readings above 100° F.; the mean minimum temperature in the same areas is about 80° F. In the dry season the maximum temperature goes above 90° F., although the mean temperature is considerably lower and the minimum temperature is near 57° F.

In the northern and northeastern mountains, temperature variations are much greater. Chiangmai, for example, has a mean annual temperature of 77.8° F. and a mean range of fourteen degrees. The most constant temperature is in the Southern Peninsula Region, where the daily range is rarely more than fourteen degrees and the annual minimum and maximum temperatures are 68° F. and 95° F., respectively.

Thunderstorms in the afternoon and early evening are common between May and October in the northern areas and between March and November in the south. Toward the end of the dry season and again at the end of the rainy season, typhoons of considerable violence sweep across the Indochina peninsula from the South China Sea into Thailand.

### MINERAL RESOURCES

The country has a wide variety of minerals that are exploited annually. Tin is by far the most important, constituting about 16 percent of the non-Communist world's known reserves and forming Thailand's fourth largest earner of foreign exchange, after rice, rubber, and corn. The major tin deposits are located in peninsular Thailand, especially on Phuket Island, but lesser quantities are also found in the northwestern part of the country in a narrow strip along the Burmese border.

Antimony is found primarily in the northern mountains southeast of Chiangmai and near Surat Thani on the eastern coast of the central Southern Peninsula Region. The size of the reserves has not

been established, but they are thought to be small. Sizable quantities of tungsten occur in the extreme northwest near Mae Hong Son and at several places in the Bilaukaung Range. Some tungsten is also found on the islands of Phangan and Samui off the eastern coast of the central Southern Peninsula Region.

Copper reserves are located mainly in the northern mountains west and southwest of Lampang, and small amounts of gold have been reported in twenty-six provinces. The best known gold deposits are at Kabin Buri about seventy miles east of Bangkok, at To Mo on the Malaysian border, and in the area east of Nakhon Sawan in the Central Lowland Region. Ilmenite, a source of titanium, is found in beach deposits along both coasts of the peninsula, and lead and zinc are mined in the mountains near Lampang.

Manganese is found in several deposits at Chanthaburi in the extreme southeast near Cambodia, on the peninsula just north of the Malaysian border, and in the upper reaches of the Mae Klong River in the Bilaukaung Range. Gemstones of excellent quality, including rubies, sapphires, topazes, and zircons, are mined from several deposits in the Cardamom Mountains along the Cambodian border and in the Bilaukaung Range north of Kanchanaburi in western Thailand.

Molybdenum occurs in the extreme southeast near Cambodia. Monazite, a source of phosphates, is found on the western coast of the peninsula north of Phuket Island and at several places along the Gulf of Thailand, near Phet Buri and Songkhla.

Coal deposits, some with a high sulfur content, exist in eight different provinces. The most important are on the peninsula near Surat Thani and on the western coastline close to Krabi. Important deposits are also found in the north near Lampang and Chiangmai. Lignite, or brown coal, is mined in the Lampang area, and total reserves are estimated to be about 15 million metric tons.

Oil shale is present in substantial quantity, probably exceeding 2 million tons, in the northwest highlands around Mae Sot. Oil content in this material ranges roughly between seven and seventy gallons per metric ton of shale. Petroleum with a naphthalene base has been found in tar seeps and in shallow wells in the northernmost tip of the northwestern highlands, where reserves are believed to be about 22 million barrels. The same tar seeps yield considerable amounts of asphaltic sand used for highway surfacing.

Good-quality iron ore, some of which is exported to Japan, is mined in the Central Lowland Region at one location southeast of Nakhon Sawan and at another northeast of Kanchanaburi. Other fields exist at Loei, west of Udon Thani in the Khorat Plateau, on Samui Island, and in a small area just north of Bangkok.

Asbestos and barite are known to be present in the area of Uttaradit in the northern portion of the central lowlands. Barite, sometimes called heavy spar and a source of barium sulfate, is also found

near Mae Sot along the Burmese border. Known gypsum reserves estimated at more than 10 million tons are located at Phichit in the lowlands about 200 miles north of Bangkok; other deposits have been reported in several localities, including some in the peninsula.

Although the evaporation of sea water from saltponds at the head of the Gulf of Thailand is the major source of salt, a number of salt springs are scattered throughout the northern mountains and in the Khorat Plateau. The most important springs are those east of Lampang in the north and near Udon Thani on the plateau.

#### FLORA AND FAUNA

Thick forests containing many varieties of tropical evergreen and deciduous trees cover about 60 percent of the total area of Thailand and provide the natural habitat for a rich and varied fauna. In general, tropical evergreen forests are found at elevations above 3,200 feet and deciduous forests in uncultivated areas at lower levels. Some coniferous growth occurs down to an altitude of 2,400 feet in the northern and northeastern portions of the country. Thorn, bamboo, several kinds of palm, mangrove, and rattan grow in all regions except the north.

For many centuries Thailand was known as a land of abundant wild animal life. In recent years, however, indiscriminate sport hunters, using modern equipment and firearms, have exacted a huge toll among the native animals. One Thai conservationist has estimated that, since the end of World War II, 75 percent of all big game has been destroyed and many species are on the verge of extinction. The kooprey (a wild ox) and the wild buffalo, for example, which once were numerous, have already disappeared. Accordingly, the government in 1970 was in the process of drafting new game laws to protect most of the species that still remain.

#### Flora

In the Northern and Western Mountain Region are the major evergreen forests, which provide the bulk of the nation's large harvest of teak, pine, and redwood timber. In this area also are large stands of mixed deciduous trees in great variety. The teak has been cut three times as much as the yield permits and, like the animals, may be facing extinction. The most conservative estimate indicates that, at the rate of harvest, teak wood will be completely gone by the year 2000. Conservation programs have been instituted, however, to check the depletion of these forests.

In the northeast, evergreen forests blanket the low mountains fringing the Khorat Plateau. The rest of the plateau is covered mainly with thorny shrubs, stunted trees, bamboo, and sparse grass.

The Central Lowland Region has very little natural vegetation except along the Gulf of Thailand coast, which is lined with man-

grove swamps, trees of various types, betel and coconut palms, and rattans. Most of the peninsula is covered with tropical evergreens.

### Fauna

Wild elephants, long a symbol of Thailand, still roam the limestone hills of the north and the woodlands of the peninsula but have been wiped out in many other parts of the country. These huge animals can be tamed for work in timber areas and are now protected by law so that hunting them is illegal. Both the single- and the double-horned rhinoceros existed on the peninsula until the early part of the twentieth century, at which time the double-horned variety appears to have become extinct. The single-horned rhinoceros can still be found occasionally but in diminishing numbers. The tapir also is sometimes seen in the forests along the Malaysian border, and the wild hog and several types of deer are common in the wooded areas.

Other forest dwellers are the big cats—tigers, leopards and panthers—and many small predators. The large Himalayan black bear and the smaller Malayan bear are found in the mountain ranges. Gibbons and several varieties of monkeys are widely distributed. Of the fifty kinds of snakes, about a dozen are poisonous, including cobras, coral snakes, kraits, and vipers. Sea snakes and lizards abound; crocodiles and several species of turtles are also present.

The country has about 1,000 varieties of native birds, the most common being martins, babblers, and drongos. Other birds include three varieties of storks, two kinds of ibis, cranes, pelicans, and peafowl, many of which are said to be almost extinct.

The waters of the area, fresh and salt, are rich in fish, although the fresh-water types are limited because of the erratic flow of most rivers. Some of the fresh-water fish bury themselves in the mud and live through the dry season. Offshore fishing is a developing industry, and farmers raise and catch fish in artificial ponds and flooded ricefields.

### POPULATION

The 1970 official estimate of Thailand's population as 37,800,000 persons was based on the last census, taken in 1960 (26,258,000), and projected upward at the annual growth rate of 3.3 percent. Because of improvements in the standard of living and advances in medical services and public hygiene, the growth rate is constantly increasing and is expected to reach 3.6 percent before 1980. This could cause some pressure on the land, although there are still large tracts of unoccupied arable land that are available for food production. Nevertheless, the government has approved a vol-

untary family planning program that, if effective, is designed to lower the growth rate to an estimated 2.4 percent by 1985.

About 85 percent of the people are of Thai ethnic origin, and another 12 percent are of Chinese descent. The remaining 3 percent consist of Malays, concentrated in the south near the Malaysian border, a variety of so-called hill people along the borders with Burma and Laos, and a sizable group of Vietnamese refugees in the northeast along the Mekong River.

#### Structure

Age distribution within the population is marked by a high ratio of children to adults, largely due to a rising birth rate and a drop in the infant mortality rate. Latest estimates indicate that 45.7 percent of the population is under fifteen years of age, 49.54 percent is between fifteen and sixty, and only 4.76 percent is over sixty years of age.

Distribution among the sexes is uniformly well balanced in all regions of the country. Among persons sixty-five years of age and over, women outnumber men in the ratio of 79.9 men to every 100 women. In other age groups, however, there is a slight preponderance of males.

Only about 11 percent of the people live in areas that are classed as urban, whereas 89 percent are rural dwellers. These figures, however, do not give an accurate picture of the urban-rural ratio. All municipalities have some characteristics generally recognized as urban, but many include so much of the surrounding territory that their populations are more rural than urban.

Average population density in 1970 was 177 persons per square mile. The lowest density was in the mountainous provinces of the north, where it did not exceed 83 per square mile, and highest in the Central Lowland Region, where 40 percent of the total national population was concentrated. Since only about 20 percent of the total area is cultivated, figures for the average density per cultivated square mile are more significant. The Chao Phraya valley, in this respect, has more than 700 persons per square mile, and some sections of the narrow peninsular coast have as many as 3,000.

As the largest minority ethnic group, the Chinese are found in all regions of the country, but there is a major concentration in the Thon Buri sector of the Bangkok metropolitan area. Another major Chinese concentration is in the central part of the Southern Peninsula Region, where many are employed in the tin mines and on the rubber plantations. The Muslim Malays, as distinguished from the predominantly Buddhist Thai majority, are found chiefly in the southern peninsula area. The other nationalities live mainly in the capital area and in the provinces bordering Burma and Laos.

### Dynamics

Estimates based on incomplete data suggest that the birth rate in 1970 was 42.9 per 1,000 and rising, and the death rate in the same year was 9.5 per 1,000 and falling. The infant mortality rate of 37.8 per 1,000 live births has remained fairly constant since 1960. The birth and death rates were lower than those reported for neighboring Laos and Burma. This favorable trend reflects improved conditions of public health programs which, since 1957, have emphasized the utilization of modern pharmaceuticals and insecticides and the greater availability of medical care to the rural population.

### Mobility

There is some movement back and forth across the boundaries with Laos and Cambodia by Thai in search of temporary employment but, in general, the native population is fairly sedentary. This is borne out by figures of the 1960 census which showed that 87.3 percent of the population were born in the province in which they were enumerated and only about 10 percent were born in another province. The Chinese are a possible exception. Willing to go to any part of the country in pursuit of work or business enterprise, they have been relatively mobile. The slight trend toward urbanization was not yet great enough by 1970 to cause any significant change in the situation. Except for a rather large movement of people from all over the country to Bangkok, where approximately 40 percent of the residents were not locally born, most of those moving to urban centers prefer to settle in their nearby provincial capital.

The government, nevertheless, has given some impetus to internal migration since about 1965, both for security reasons and to improve economic opportunities for residents in some of the more congested areas. Five thousand persons, for instance, were moved from remote villages in Nakhon Phanom Province in the extreme northeast to localities closer to major towns in order to protect them from Communist terrorists operating out of Laos. Other families in overcrowded provinces of the Central Lowland Region were given small plots of land and some financial assistance to start new farms in the Southern Peninsula Region.

### Settlement Patterns

Thailand is predominantly an agricultural nation; almost 90 percent of the people live in rural areas in small, long-established, self-sustaining hamlets and villages. These villages fall roughly into three types: strip villages, cluster villages, and dispersed villages.

The strip village, typically stretching along one or both sides of a river, canal or roadway, is the most common. The arrangement of

houses within the strip village shows no particular pattern. The larger strip villages may be several miles in length, with ricefields lying behind the single line of dwelling compounds. In densely settled areas, villages may form a continuous line with no apparent demarcation between them. In such cases, administrative units may not coincide with social community units, which are generally based on the position of the local *wat* (Buddhist temple complex).

Cluster villages, prevalent in the valleys of the Northern and Western Mountain Region, are usually set back several hundred yards from the main thoroughfare—a river, canal, railroad line, branch road, or main highway. Villages of this type are ordinarily situated in and around a grove of fruit trees and coconut palms.

Villages of the third, or dispersed, type are relatively few and can be found only in the delta region around Bangkok. In this area, isolated farms or groups of several households, each widely separated from its neighbors on its own small piece of high ground, appear in conjunction with the development of intensive commercialized rice cultivation on relatively large landholdings. Between ten and fifty of these separated farmsteads are grouped together for administrative purposes as a village, each with an elected headman.

About one-half of the total number of Thai who can be classed as urban dwellers reside in the country's one great metropolitan center around Bangkok. This area had a population in 1970 estimated at 2,803,000, of whom 80 to 85 percent lived in Bangkok proper on the east bank of the Chao Phraya River and most of the remainder in Thon Buri, a major suburb on the west bank. The two settlements were joined by several bridges, which effectively gave them the appearance of a single city.

Both segments are located on low, level ground laced with canals that carry much traffic and give the metropolis a distinctively aquatic character. Throughout the city the canals are lined with elegant palaces, colorful temples, and shrines of great interest to tourists.

Each of the city's districts and quarters, with its own temples and markets, functions almost as a self-contained town. The Chinese Sampang district is the only minority quarter. Almost everywhere thatched houses and rice paddies are in close proximity to shops, Western-style houses, and government buildings. There is relatively little formal separation of industrial, commercial, and residential areas; the only exceptions are a few newer residential areas immediately north and east of Bangkok proper. Whereas it once offered little more than temples and picturesque floating markets, Bangkok in recent years has become a shopping and amusement center, complete with modern hotels, new restaurants, and other tourist attractions.

No other urban area even approaches metropolitan Bangkok-Thon



Buri in size. Only two cities, Chiangmai in the northern mountains and Nakhon Ratchasima on the Khorat Plateau, have populations exceeding 50,000. About thirty others have populations ranging between 20,000 and 50,000, but the vast majority are small settlements with fewer than 20,000 residents.

Chiangmai, with a population estimated at 81,000, is the second largest city in Thailand. Located about 500 miles north of Bangkok, it had been a city-state for centuries and remained virtually independent until about 1870. Situated in the Ping River valley near Doi Suthep, a peak rising over 5,000 feet, it is visited by Buddhist pilgrims from all over the world who come to worship at the famous Temple of Wat Doi Suthep on the nearby mountainside.

Nakhon Ratchasima (sometimes called Khorat) is the third largest urban center in the country, with a population of 73,000. It is located about 145 miles northeast of Bangkok in a saucer-shaped area at the edge of the Khorat Plateau. During the rainy season large parts of the city and the surrounding area are flooded because of the low relief and slow ground-water drainage. The city is rapidly expanding and has outgrown its ancient walls so that the old main gate now stands in the center of the town. Nakhon Ratchasima is the distribution center of the Northeastern Khorat Plateau Region, and its railway workshops service the rail lines running east to Ubon Ratchathani and north to Nong Khai.

Hat Yai, with an estimated population of 49,000, is situated 475 miles southwest of Bangkok about 20 miles inland from the port of Songkhla in peninsular Thailand. It is a major division point on the Southern Line of the State Railways and the headquarters of wealthy rubber and tin traders. The general aspect of the town is more Malay than Thai.

## CHAPTER 3

### HISTORICAL SETTING

The Thai were preceded by other ethnic groups in migrating to Thailand. Some of the earlier groups established sophisticated courts that were centers of Southeast Asian art and culture three or more centuries before their coming. The Thai set up their first kingdoms in Thailand during the thirteenth century and soon became the overwhelmingly dominant group.

The first Thai state within the borders of modern Thailand was founded in the thirteenth century and had its capital at Sukhothai in the north. During the next 500 years Sukhothai, and the kingdom of Ayutthaya that succeeded it, struggled against neighboring states in Southeast Asia to maintain and expand sovereignty. Wars were fought against other Thai states, against the Khmer of Cambodia, against the Malays in the south and, most importantly, against Burma.

The destruction of Ayutthaya by the Burmese in 1767 was soon countered by military victories of the Thai, which resulted in the unification of all of Thailand and parts of what are now neighboring countries under the sovereignty of a new dynasty in Bangkok in 1782. The new Chakkri dynasty retained absolute rule of the country (then known as Siam) until 1932. The ninth king of that line was on the throne in 1970.

Certain traits have been characteristic of the country's society and history through the centuries. From the time of Nanchao, the earliest known Thai state (in Yunnan, China), the Thai have been primarily rice cultivators, have believed in a type of Buddhism that does not exclude certain animistic practices, have been predominantly rural in residence, and have been willing to leave government in the hands of an elite educated to rule. Although the kings had virtually absolute power over their subjects from the fourteenth to the early twentieth centuries, the people have suffered little from oppression. There have been no instances of class warfare or mass revolt.

Wars with neighboring states have been frequent. The result has been that Thailand frequently has expanded and contracted in size as the result of changes in the strength of the kingdom and that of its neighbors. The territory included within the 1970 borders seldom has been subject to foreign rule, and then only for brief pe-

riods. The country has, however, at all times been heavily influenced by foreign cultures. The people have borrowed consciously and liberally those foreign ideas and techniques that they found suitable.

Takeover by one of the Western powers during the nineteenth century period of colonial expansion was avoided by the policies of two extraordinarily able Thai kings who reigned between 1851 and 1910. The modernization of Thailand's governmental, legal, and social institutions was begun by these kings. These royal initiatives enabled the kingdom to command the respect of the Western powers without the conservative Thai society being unduly disrupted. The skillful diplomacy of the kings preserved independence at a time when colonial powers dominated the surrounding area.

In 1932 members of a small Western-educated group that had recently developed staged a successful coup d'etat. The result of this coup was that the king was transformed from an absolute to a constitutional monarch. Power shifted from the throne to a cabinet composed of Western-educated leaders of various factions in the armed and civil services. Although there have been numerous changes of government since 1932, through coups d'etat and new constitutions, power has remained with the cabinet, and elections and political parties have played a relatively minor role (see ch. 10, Political Dynamics).

Under the various post-World War II regimes, Thailand has been allied unequivocally with the non-Communist world. Thailand has also been actively involved in promoting regional cooperation with non-Communist neighbors and was an active supporter of United States policies in Southeast Asia throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

#### EARLY SETTLEMENT

Thailand lies along the path of migration out of southern China that most scholars now believe resulted, over the course of thousands of years, in the peopling of Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific. Ethnic groups descended from some of the earliest migrants can be found in Thailand. For example, the Semang Negritos continue an aboriginal way of life in the jungles near the Malaysian border. Tools have been found in abundance that indicate the existence of a Paleolithic culture in Thailand. A corpse from the Mesolithic period and many corpses from the Neolithic period also have been found.

Traces of the existence of a later group of migrants who probably appeared between 1500 B.C. and A.D. 300 include ten magnificent bronze objects, shaped like large kettledrums, that have been unearthed in various parts of the country. Each drum has the same distinctive ornamentation that connects it stylistically to the ar-

archaeological site of Dong-son in North Vietnam, where sizable remains of this metal-working culture were first discovered.

The Dong-son culture was carried south by migrants, possibly of Malay stock, who left a trail of these drums from Indochina, down the Chao Phraya valley, the length of the Malay Peninsula, and out to the eastern islands of Indonesia. The drums found in Thailand are thought to date from the first or second century B.C. A similar drum, found in neighboring Malaysia, however, was radiocarbon-tested in 1965, with results indicating a date several centuries earlier.

### The Peninsula

Peninsular Thailand, a narrow ribbon of land separating the Bay of Bengal from the Gulf of Thailand, has been inhabited by Malays at least as early as the beginning of the Christian Era. Across the peninsula were several portage routes traversed in the early centuries A.D. by traders and other travelers journeying between India and Funan. Funan, the first known Southeast Asian empire, was located in what is now Cambodia.

By the tenth century A.D. Tambralinga, one of the states that grew up along the India-Indochina portage routes and believed to be located on the site of modern Nakhon Si Thammarat (sometimes called Ligor) had gained control of all portage traffic across the isthmus. During much of its existence Tambralinga was a part of the maritime empire of Srivijaya, the great Malay confederation of coastal city-states that, from its capital on the coast of Sumatra, was able for most of the time between A.D. 600 and 1200 to exact tolls from all traffic through the Strait of Malacca and across the Isthmus of Kra from west of Sumatra to the South China Sea. Srivijaya, like Funan before it, was influential in introducing Indian court culture and Indian religions into maritime Southeast Asia, including the city-states of peninsular Thailand. These states adopted Mahayana Buddhism (see Glossary) during the period of Srivijaya's dominance (see ch. 8, Religion).

As the Srivijaya Empire weakened, however, Tambralinga turned to Theravada Buddhism (see Glossary), a sect of Buddhism that had begun in Ceylon and was being spread to much of mainland Southeast Asia during this time by the Mons, an ethnic group that dwelt to the north and west of the isthmus. South of Tambralinga, many of the Malay city-states of the peninsula chose instead to adopt Islam. By the fifteenth century an enduring religious boundary had been delineated part way along the isthmus between Buddhist mainland Southeast Asia and Muslim Malaysia and Indonesia.

Although the states of the isthmus were conquered by the Thai in the thirteenth century and the Thai have continued to hold sover-

eighty over them in 1970 (as well as exacting tribute from what is now northern Malaysia until the early twentieth century), the Malays of the peninsula have never been culturally absorbed into the mainstream of Thai society. The differences in religion, language, and ethnic origin have resulted in social and political strains in relations between the central government and the southern provinces that have persisted to modern times.

#### **The Mons and the Khmer**

Just north of the peninsula lived the Mons, an ethnic group that arrived in Thailand and Burma before the Christian Era. The Mons established the kingdom of Dvaravati with its capital in the area of modern Nakhon Pathom, thirty miles west of Bangkok. Dvaravati lasted from the sixth to the eleventh century A.D. and was in contact with Ceylon from early times. Through this contact, Dvaravati was responsible for the spread to the incoming Thai of the principles of Theravada Buddhism (see ch. 8, Religion).

The Mons of Dvaravati were notably receptive to the art and literature of India and Ceylon and were important as disseminators of Indian civilization to the courts of mainland Southeast Asia. The ruins at Nakhon Pathom contain many early examples of Hindu and Buddhist artistic motifs and religious symbols. Other Mon kingdoms grew up at Lavo (modern Lop Buri) and at Haripunjaya (modern Lamphun).

The cultural dominance of the Mons over the Indochina peninsula was great. They are thought to have been the source of artistic, literary, and governmental features for the Khmer (the progenitors of the modern Cambodians), the Burmese, and the Thai. Their political control was seldom extensive, however, and they repeatedly fell under the domination of stronger neighbors.

By the end of the tenth century Dvaravati and the whole of the Chao Phraya valley had come under the control of the Khmer Empire, which had grown up on the site of ancient Funan, in Cambodia, during the late ninth century. The Mon kingdom of Haripunjaya remained outside the Khmer Empire but fell to the incoming Thai in the thirteenth century.

#### **Thai Migration into Southeast Asia**

The Thai, one of the ethnic groups dwelling south of the Yangtze River, established the kingdom of Nanchao (Mandarin Chinese for South of the Clouds) in northwest Yunnan, possibly as early as the middle of the seventh century A.D. Successfully resisting Chinese efforts at conquest in the eighth century, Nanchao slowly spread its domain southward and eastward. By the ninth century it had invaded Tonkin in what is now North Vietnam.

Nanchao fell to Mongol armies in 1253 when Kublai Khan was conquering China. Considerably before Nanchao's fall, however, bands of Thai had already moved into the Shan states of Burma and into parts of North Vietnam, Laos, and northern Thailand. The Thai of Burma later came to be called Shans; those of Laos were called Lao; and those of Vietnam were called Thai Dam (Black Thai) and Thai Deng (Red Thai). The Thai of the Chao Phraya valley were known to outsiders as Siamese (see Glossary) until 1939. Thai settlements were also established eventually as far west as Assam and as far east as Hainan Island off the southeast coast of China.

By the early twelfth century Thai states dotted the upper Chao Phraya valley, and by the thirteenth century the stream of Thai migration into the valley had become a flood, released by the Mongol conquest of Nanchao in the north and the simultaneous weakening of Khmer power in the south. The Khmer lost control over the old Mon kingdom of Dvaravati in Lavo to the Thai, and the independent Mon state of Haripunjaya in the north fell to another band of Thai conquerors.

In 1238 a powerful Thai warrior-chief named Phra Ruang defeated the Khmer at Sukhothai in northern Thailand and established there a mighty and vigorous, although short-lived, Thai kingdom. Another Thai kingdom was founded shortly thereafter by a Thai warrior-chief named Mangrai after he had conquered the old Mon state of Haripunjaya. In about 1296 Mangrai established Chiangmai as the capital of his kingdom. The Chiangmai kingdom was never as powerful or as large as the Sukhothai kingdom, but it maintained its independence as a separate Thai polity, with brief interruptions under Ayutthayan, Burmese, and Lao control, until the eighteenth century. Conquered by forces sent by King Taksin in 1775, Chiangmai was absorbed by the Bangkok kingdom in 1782.

#### Sukhothai, 1253—1378

The defeat of the Khmer that led to the founding of Sukhothai was followed by the gradual removal of Khmer control from all of modern Thailand, including the peninsular area. Sukhothai is regarded by the Thai as having paved the way for the creation of the kingdoms at Ayutthaya and Bangkok that resulted, by the eighteenth century, in the formation of the modern state of Thailand.

Although the first king of Sukhothai, Phra Ruang (whose name means Glorious Prince), is a great hero celebrated in Thai legend and credited with superhuman powers, the Sukhothai king of whom the fullest historical record survives is the third of the dynasty, King Rama Khamhaeng (Rama the Great), who reigned from 1277 to 1317.

Chinese records indicate that during Rama Khamhaeng's reign diplomatic relations were established between Sukhothai and China. From then until the mid-nineteenth century the Thai kings sent frequent missions to the Chinese emperors, acknowledging China's overlordship over the kingdom of the Thai. During Rama Khamhaeng's reign Chinese artisans were imported to establish the famous pottery works at Sawankhalok, some twenty-five miles north of Sukhothai. The king also maintained friendly relations with other Thai kings in the area, including Mangrai, king of Chiangmai.

Rama Khamhaeng was a noted warrior before he came to the throne, and his success in war continued after he became king, with the result that Sukhothai's sovereignty was extended over parts of Laos, Burma, and the Malay Peninsula. His cultural contributions to the kingdom were also great. After conquering the Theravada Buddhist kingdom of Nakhon Si Thammarat, a peninsular state on the site of ancient Tambralinga, he established its chief abbot as the chief prelate of the Sukhothai kingdom and declared Theravada Buddhism the official religion. He is credited by a contemporary inscription (dated 1292) with having created the first Thai alphabet, adapting Mon and Khmer scripts, derived in turn from a South Indian script, to his purpose.

During Rama Khamhaeng's reign the kingship was the font of paternal justice and magnanimity. Accessible to hear the complaints of any subject who would ring the bell at the palace gate, King Rama Khamhaeng saw his role as that of moral leader, supreme magistrate, and protector of his subjects. Although his power was absolute, he chose not to exert it over the economy of his country. The 1292 inscription boasts of the latitude given the Thai by their king: "The lord of the country levies no tolls on his subjects. . . . Whoever desires to trade elephants, does so; whoever desires to trade horses, does so; whoever desires to trade silver and gold, does so."

The kingdom of Sukhothai weakened after Rama Khamhaeng's death, and in 1378 it was absorbed into the new southern kingdom established in 1350 by a prince from Uthong at Ayutthaya, forty miles north of Bangkok. Sukhothai continued to struggle against its new Thai overlords during the first century of the new regime.

#### AYUTTHAYA, 1350—1767

The new capital was established on an island in the middle of the Chao Phraya River. Its location in the midst of a fertile agricultural area accessible to Angkor, the Gulf of Thailand, and the southern peninsula was to prove advantageous. It helped Ayutthaya maintain its existence through numerous wars during the 400-year period that it was the capital of the Thai kingdom.

The founder of Ayutthaya took the kingly name of Rama Thibodi I and ruled for two decades until 1369. During his reign the borders of the Thai kingdom, which had shrunk under Sukhothai's last two kings, stretched again, southward to include peninsular Malaya and Burma and eastward into Khmer territory. Attempts were also made to take and keep Angkor, the Khmer capital (near modern Siem Reap) famous for the colossal Hindu-Buddhist monuments of Angkor Wat. These efforts were not immediately successful because of frequent rebellions of Sukhothai, abetted by independent Chiangmai, that diverted Rama Thibodi's attention from the eastern campaign.

Although the Khmer continually lost ground to Rama Thibodi I, they exercised a great cultural influence upon his kingdom. From the Khmer the Thai court adopted the elaborate court etiquette, language, and politicoreligious regalia and rituals that had made the Khmer ruler not merely the chief magistrate and father of his people but a *devaraja* (Sanskrit for divine king), whose powers were more than mortal, who in his person provided the essential link between the kingdom and the sacred order of the universe (see ch. 8, Religion). As a result of the acquisition of these semidivine attributes from the Khmer tradition, the Thai monarch in the Ayutthaya period became sacred and remote behind a wall of taboos and sumptuary rituals and was no longer accessible to his subjects as the Sukhothai kings had been.

In Rama Thibodi's reign the government services became more functionally organized than they had been during the Sukhothai era. Four great offices of state were created: the ministry of Wieng (town or city, also country or land), which was, in effect, in charge of the internal affairs of the kingdom; the ministry of Klang (the treasury); the ministry of Wang (the king's household); and the ministry of Na (agriculture). The king also examined the laws and customs of the Thai from the time of Nanchao to his own day, discarded some, and compiled the remainder into a legal code for his kingdom.

In 1370, the year after Rama Thibodi I died, an official emissary arrived in Ayutthaya from the Ming emperor. This visit led to the prompt recognition of Ayutthaya as the legitimate successor to China's former vassal, Sukhothai. This recognition by the major power in Asia was worth the cost in tribute and nominal vassalage of the Thai kingdom to the Chinese throne.

In the early fifteenth century, shortly after the great Malay trading port of Malacca was founded on the western coast of the Malay Peninsula, attempts were made by Malacca's ruler to bypass the Thai throne, which claimed sovereignty over the entire Malay Peninsula, and to establish direct relations as a vassal of China. The Thai, however, insisted on tribute from Malacca and, when it was



refused, sent armed forces against the new port by land and sea between 1440 and 1460.

The court of Malacca had been converted to Islam by 1409. Malacca resisted the Thai invasions, and Islam served thereafter as a symbol of Malay solidarity against the Thai. This sentiment spread with Islam to the northernmost Malay states in the isthmian region of southern Thailand.

Throughout the fifteenth century Ayutthaya's wars with neighboring Thai states continued, first with Sukhothai, which lost its last rebellion against Ayutthaya in 1438, and then with Sukhothai's former ally, the northern Thai kingdom of Chiangmai. A decisive victory for Ayutthaya against the Khmer Empire, which had waned as Ayutthaya waxed, came in 1431 when the Ayutthayan king, Boromoraja II, so devastated Angkor that the Khmer abandoned it as a capital.

By the mid-fifteenth century, in their rivalry with the Malay states, which were at the time the bases for trade between the West and the Far East, the Thai had lost the battle to make a vassal of Malacca. Malacca controlled the trade through the Strait of Malacca, but Ayutthaya continued to control the substantial trade on the isthmus. The isthmian ports were attracting Chinese traders who were seeking at the source the various Southeast Asian specialty goods that had been introduced to the Chinese court by tribute missions and were in growing demand in the luxury markets of China.

The greatest ruler of the Ayutthaya dynasty during the fifteenth century was King Trailok (1448-88). His contributions to Thai governmental institutions were numerous and enduring. One of his innovations was the creation of the position of *uparaja* (deputy king or heir apparent—see Glossary) as part of an attempt to prevent the violent scrambles for the kingship that had marred earlier reigns of the dynasty. Another enduring institution that was reorganized during King Trailok's reign was the *sakdi na* (see Glossary) system of granting irrigated ricefields to persons holding positions in the government. The granting of ricefields to persons of rank predated his reign, but King Trailok established for the first time definite allotments for each title. For example, the governor of a first-class town, who held the title of Chao Phraya, could have 4,000 acres, and the acreage of other officials tapered off according to rank; the ordinary free farmer was entitled to 10 acres.

During the reign of Rama Thibodi II (1491-1529), Ayutthaya received its first European envoys. Affonso d'Albuquerque, viceroy of Portuguese India, conquered Malacca in 1511 and in the same year sent an envoy to Ayutthaya. This envoy was probably the first European to visit the country. A treaty between Ayutthaya and Portugal was concluded in 1516 granting the Portuguese permission

to live and trade in the kingdom. Two Dominican missionaries from Malacca arrived in 1555. In the seventeenth century Portuguese influence declined as that of the Dutch, English, and French grew.

Foreigners were cordially received, and missions were sent from Ayutthaya to some European capitals. The Thai court skillfully played off one power against another—the French against the British and the Dutch against the French—thus avoiding excessive influence by any single foreign power. Pretexts for European takeovers were avoided by promptly granting the European demands for extraterritorial rights. The first such grant was given to the Dutch East India Company, making its employees subject only to Dutch courts.

Toward the end of the reign of King Narai (1657–88), the attitude toward Westerners became less tolerant. In their competition for special advantage, the trading companies had not hesitated to intervene in domestic politics, and fear of European military power (that of the French in particular) was growing.

In his conduct of foreign relations, King Narai was greatly influenced by a Greek adventurer, Constantine Phaulkon, who was one of his more powerful advisers. Phaulkon was a senior officer in the ministry of Klang (treasury), which was also responsible for the conduct of foreign relations. Through Phaulkon, French traders and Jesuit priests were able to enlarge their influence in the kingdom, but they aroused the suspicions and resentment of the Thai aristocracy and Buddhist clergy. The situation came to a crisis in 1688 when King Narai fell ill. Phaulkon, isolated from his royal patron, was arrested by his enemies and put to death. Ruthless persecution of Westerners followed. Only a few Dutch and Portuguese remained after this incident. For nearly a century and a half thereafter the Thai cut themselves off from the West.

Throughout the Ayutthaya era relations with China continued, in the form of tribute missions to the Chinese throne once every five to ten years, and the number of Chinese living and working in Thailand grew. In the early sixteenth century a Chinese source reports that Ayutthaya already had "a street where the Chinese live," and sixteenth-century Portuguese accounts state that Chinese merchants were found everywhere the Portuguese went. The takeover of Malacca by the Portuguese had led to a shift of indigenous Asian trade away from that port to the isthmian town of Pattani, a Malay city-state that had been under Thai domination for centuries. In the early seventeenth century a Chinese wrote of Ayutthaya that "the inhabitants accept the Chinese very cordially, much better than do the natives of other countries; therefore Siam is a country that is really friendly to the Chinese."

Shortly after this was written, however, King Prasat Thong in 1629 introduced royal trade monopolies. All traders thereafter had to receive permits from the king. Tin and lead mined in the king-

dom had to be delivered to the king's warehouse in Ayutthaya before it could be exported. This setback to the Chinese business community in Thailand was soon overcome as Chinese traders found employment as hired factors of the royal monopolies in trade and industry.

After the revulsion against the Europeans in 1688 by the Thai court, the Chinese fell heir to the European trade with Ayutthaya. A similar revulsion against Japanese traders in the 1630s had resulted in the Chinese inheritance of the substantial trade with Japan. Chinese came to the country in increasing numbers throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and their favorable position as compared to other foreigners continued to the end of the Ayutthaya era in the mid-eighteenth century.

Frequent wars with neighboring states plagued Ayutthaya from its earliest reigns to its end. The most dangerous enemy was Burma, which subjugated the Thai kingdom for a fifteen-year period in the sixteenth century. In 1584 the Thai regained their independence, led by Thailand's greatest military hero, Prince (later King) Naresuan, who had been absent from Ayutthaya at the time of the Burmese conquest. During King Naresuan's reign (1590-1605) the Thai kingdom came to include Chiangmai, much of modern Cambodia, and southern and peninsular Burma. Most of these territorial gains, however, were lost during subsequent reigns.

The Laotian kingdom of Lan Chang broke up after 1697 into three segments. Two of these, Luang Prabang in the north and Champassak in the south, became nominal vassals to Ayutthaya.

In the eighteenth century the Burmese returned to the Thai kingdom in strength. In 1767 they sacked and destroyed Ayutthaya, bringing to a close the era that bears its name.

#### **EARLY BANGKOK PERIOD, 1767-1851**

As had been the case after the earlier conquest by Burma in the sixteenth century, the Thai made a rapid recovery under a new military leader called Phya Taksin, a man of mixed Thai-Chinese extraction. In 1767, after the fall of Ayutthaya, Taksin established a new capital in Thon Buri across the river from modern Bangkok and was proclaimed king the following year. By 1776 King Taksin had reunited the Thai kingdom, which had fragmented into small states after Ayutthaya was destroyed, and had also conquered Chiangmai.

King Taksin eventually developed delusions of personal divinity and, as a result, his ministers had him executed in what they believed were the interests of the state. His accomplishment, however, won him a secure place among Thailand's national heroes.

### Chakkri Dynasty Founded

King Taksin was succeeded by General Chakkri, also of mixed Thai-Chinese extraction, who had taken a leading part in the struggle against Burma. As Rama I (1782—1809), he founded the present dynasty of Thailand and established its capital, Bangkok, at its modern-day site.

### Foreign Relations

During the reign of Rama I the Thai successfully resisted repeated invasions by Burma. They were unsuccessful in recovering the Burmese states of Tenasserim but were able to expand their control over parts of Indochina. In 1795 the Thai extracted five Cambodian provinces, including Battambang, Siem Reap (Angkor), and parts of Khorat, from the Cambodian king in payment for earlier support. After 1802 the Cambodian ruler acknowledged both the Thai and the Vietnamese as overlords; the Laotian kingdom of Vientiane had done the same since 1778.

The expansionist tendencies of the new Chakkri dynasty caused anxiety among some of the Thai throne's nominal vassals on the Malay Peninsula. In 1786 the sultan of Kedah, a Malay vassal whose holdings included modern Perlis, Kedah, Penang Island, and Province Wellesley in Malaysia, ceded Penang Island to the British. Penang Island became the first British acquisition along the Malay Peninsula. The sultan's reason for ceding the territory was his hope, later proved to have been unfounded, that the British would help Kedah protect itself from anticipated Thai attempts to bind the state closer to Bangkok.

Under Rama II (1809—24) an invasion of Kedah by Thai forces under the command of the *raja* of Ligor (as the Malays called Bangkok's viceroy at Nakhon Si Thammarat) took place in 1821. The sultan of Kedah fled to Penang Island, where the British had built a commercial center and fort. Later that year the British sent a mission headed by John Crawford to see if the sultan of Kedah could be restored to his throne and also to attempt to negotiate a trade agreement with the Thai king. In neither effort was Crawford successful, although a few Western traders, including one Englishman named Hunter, had been permitted to live in Bangkok after 1818.

Under Rama III (1824—51) more substantive relations with Western powers were established. In 1824 the first Anglo-Burmese war broke out. The war ended two years later with the cession by the Burmese of Arakan (along the northeast coast of the Bay of Bengal) and Tenasserim to Great Britain. A stronger power thus gained provinces that the Thai and Burmese had disputed for centuries.

In the wake of this victory, the British were finally able to negotiate a trade agreement with Bangkok that granted the British the right to trade in accordance with local custom but with no special privileges. The agreement forbade the exporting of rice and the importing of opium. A slightly more generous trade agreement with the United States followed in 1833. It contained permission for the United States to establish a consulate and allowed American Protestant missionaries from the United States to live and proselytize in the kingdom.

The Anglo-Thai treaty of 1826, negotiated by Captain Burney from the Penang headquarters of the British East India Company, also contained vague provisions concerning the relationship of the Malay states to the Thai throne. By these provisions the British tried to commit the Thai to recognizing the southern border of Kedah as the southern limit of the Thai sphere of influence.

Much of Rama III's reign was devoted to maintaining Bangkok's authority in Indochina against rebellions in Laos and Vietnamese incursions into Cambodia. In this he was successful, but the outermost limits of Thai authority had been reached. The expansionism of the Chakkri dynasty had been halted in all directions by the end of Rama III's reign.

After 1840 the king sought more revenue from his foreign trade monopoly. More Chinese tax collectors were employed, and the government increased the charges and restrictions upon foreign traders. The king also ordered the construction of a number of trading ships, for royal use, that would be duty-free. The number of British and other Western ships visiting Bangkok was greatly reduced. Efforts by British and other Westerners in the last years of Rama III's reign to get these restrictions removed met with determined resistance at the Thai court.

#### Political and Social Conditions

The first three Chakkri kings, by succeeding each other without bloodshed, brought the kingdom a degree of political stability that had been lacking in the Ayutthaya period. There was, however, no automatic rule governing succession to the throne. If no *uparaja* was alive at the time of the king's death—and this was frequently the case—the choice of the succeeding monarch from among the royal family was left to the Senabodi, the council of senior ministers, princes, and prelates that assembled at the death of a reigning monarch.

The power of the kings, although in theory absolute, was in practice limited by the looseness of civil administration. Provincial officials were independent of the central treasury. The most senior

ministerial positions in the central government, those of minister of defense, minister of interior, and minister of finance and foreign affairs, had become more or less inherited positions dominated by an influential family, the Bunnags, who had been connected by marriage with Rama I, founder of the Chakkri dynasty. (Connections through marriage were often used by the Thai kings as the means of maintaining alliances with powerful families. The king's wives, as a result of this policy, usually numbered in the dozens.)

The influence of the central government on the kingdom was not great during this period. Aside from providing a source of protection against foreign invasion, the central government gave little to its subjects. The elders of the village had to make their own arrangements to deal with local civil and criminal cases. The government revenues came from monopolies, customs dues, and taxes collected on items of foreign trade. Government officials' salaries came from what could be extracted from the land and labor granted to each titleholder according to his rank.

As the land was assigned to local officials, so were the able-bodied freemen. At the age of eighteen, men had to be registered as laborers for service in the military, public works, and other projects undertaken by the officials to whom they were assigned. The freemen were obliged to serve between four and six months a year without pay, food, or clothing. If they were wealthy, the obligation could be met by money payments or such valuables as saltpeter, ivory, and sandalwood. If they were poor, but found the forced labor demanded of them excessive or repugnant, they could sell themselves into slavery to a more attractive patron, who then paid a fee to the government in lieu of his slave's labor.

By the early nineteenth century approximately one-third of the people of the kingdom were slaves. There were also prisoners of war who served as slave troops of the king. They usually lived separate from the Thai in their own ethnic enclaves, with few less privileges than Thai freemen, except for their military obligation to the throne.

Aside from the enclaves of alien prisoner-slaves, the Chinese were the only large alien group resident in the kingdom. Their control of foreign trade and of the commercial operations of the king was such that Bangkok, the center of commerce, gave the appearance of a Chinese city. China was the major trading partner with the Thai crown during the early Chakkri period. Between 1782 and 1854, the last year of royal monopoly of trade, there were thirty-five tribute missions sent to China. The tribute missions, often 300 men strong, were permitted to sell goods in China duty-free and were permitted to buy whatever they wanted, except for a few strategic goods. Such generous trading privileges in China were not granted to the Europeans until the 1840s.

## SIAM MODERNIZED, 1851-1925

### King Mongkut and the Missionaries

Rama IV, known as King Mongkut (1851-68), is the Thai monarch best known in the West as a result of reportedly colored and distorted accounts of life at his court written by Anna Leonowens, a widowed lady employed by King Mongkut between the years 1862 and 1867 to teach English to the royal family. Incidents from Mrs. Leonowens' books were subsequently fictionalized and romanticized by Margaret Landon in a 1944 novel, *Anna and the King of Siam*, from which the popular musical play and film *The King and I* was derived. The Thai have continued to find it unfortunate that King Mongkut should be popularly portrayed in front of Western audiences as a sensual and childish man leaning on the supposed wisdom of Anna Leonowens when the facts are at considerable variance.

An ascetic who spent most of his adult life as chief abbot of a Buddhist monastery, King Mongkut knew more of Western civilization and languages than any Oriental monarch of his day. His knowledge of the West dated in fact from long before he took the throne.

King Mongkut had many Western mentors and friends, especially among the missionaries that his elder half-brother, King Rama III, permitted into the country after 1828. During his twenty-seven years as a monk, Mongkut's chief interest was in establishing a reform movement to purify Thai Buddhist practice (see ch. 8, Religion). During these years the future king also studied with several Christian missionaries, extracting what he thought would be useful from Western thought and technology without absorbing the accompanying religious doctrines. He is alleged to have said, "What you [Christians] teach us to do is admirable, but what you teach us to believe is foolish." From a French Catholic bishop the future king learned Latin and science; from a Protestant missionary from the United States, he learned English and science. Another Protestant missionary from the United States, Dan B. Bradley, became Mongkut's personal physician, lifelong friend, and intellectual adversary.

The contributions of the missionaries to the intellectual development and public welfare of the Thai court and kingdom were many, although their converts were few. Bradley, the most famous of the missionaries, was personally responsible for numerous contributions. He introduced smallpox vaccinations and vaccinated many thousands of Thai, including the king and royal family. He performed the first surgical operation in the kingdom and many others to follow, all without charge. He had brought a Thai-lettered print-

ing press with him when he came in 1835 and in 1844 produced the first Thai newspaper, the *Bangkok Recorder*. He introduced modern obstetrical practices into the royal harem and was on call day and night to advise the king on various matters.

King Mongkut's experience with Westerners greatly affected his policies after he assumed the throne in 1851. The year before Mongkut was chosen king, Rama III had spurned requests by British and United States diplomats for more generous trade privileges, such as the Western powers were then enjoying in China. When Mongkut came to the throne his superior knowledge concerning the power and motives of the Westerners led him to take a more conciliatory policy and thus avoid the humiliations to his kingdom that China had recently undergone. In 1855 the state trading monopolies were abolished. The same year a treaty of friendship and commerce, known as the Bowring Treaty, was concluded between Great Britain and Siam (Siam by that time had become the official name of the kingdom). Similar treaties were signed the following year with the United States and with France. The new treaties provided not only for freedom to trade but also limited the Siamese government's power to levy duties and trade taxes on foreigners' enterprises. In addition, nationals of the treaty powers were granted extraterritoriality.

These treaties were to greatly affect the future of the kingdom. The elimination of the high taxes on foreign trade that had been exacted by the royal customs officials led to a great increase in Western trade. This in turn revolutionized the Thai economy, connecting it to the Western monetary system for the first time. Instead of the virtual absence of Western commerce in Bangkok of the 1840s—5 British ships visited Bangkok during the year 1849—there were 60 Western vessels counted in the harbor on a single day in 1859, and more than 100 counted on another day in 1864.

The Chinese turned from foreign trade and the operation of various royal monopolies and foreign trade tax collection to the sale and distribution of opium and domestic tax collection. Wars were fought between rival Chinese secret societies for the tax concessions.

The extraterritorial privileges granted the foreigners by the new treaties were also eventually to have a great effect on the kingdom since the demand for these privileges served as proof to the king and his ministers that Siam would never receive respect from the powerful Western countries unless its legal and governmental systems were overhauled. Western experts were brought in to advise King Mongkut on modernization in various fields. Canal building, road construction, and shipbuilding were among the major projects undertaken during his reign, and many Western techniques, such as



a Western-style system of coinage, were introduced into the kingdom.

Towards the end of his reign, King Mongkut was obliged to apply his conciliatory policy toward Western powers to the demands for territorial concessions. In 1867 he relinquished to France Siam's claim to the remainder of Cambodia in exchange for French recognition of Thai sovereignty over two western Cambodian provinces, Battambang and Siem Reap.

#### King Chulalongkorn's Reforms

At the time of King Mongkut's death in 1868 there was no *uparaja*. The Second King (see Glossary), Mongkut's younger brother, had died in 1866, and Mongkut's eldest son, Chulalongkorn, was only fifteen. The Senabodi, nevertheless, chose the young prince to succeed his father and, until his majority, appointed as regent a close friend and adviser of King Mongkut and member of the powerful Bunnag family, Chao Phraya Sri Suriyawongse. Sri Suriyawongse had been a friend and patron of the missionaries and was able to continue the trend toward Westernization of the kingdom. During the regency period the young king traveled to Singapore, Java, and India, the first Chakkri king ever to leave his kingdom.

At the coronation ceremony that marked the end of the regency in 1873, King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) began the transformation of the Thai political and social systems that was his explicit goal. The new king's first act was to read a decree abolishing the ancient practice of prostration before the king on the grounds that it was an act unsuitable in a modern state. Other social reforms soon followed, of which the most important were the abolition of slavery and an end to the forced labor system.

King Chulalongkorn also reorganized the government. The local rulers of distant regions were replaced by royally appointed governors, and the central government was reorganized into twelve functional ministries along European lines. Communications between Bangkok and the rest of the kingdom were improved by the building of postal and telegraph systems and railroads. An efficient army under a unified command, manned by conscription, and a central treasury, which took charge of all state sources of revenue (including a head tax, introduced at this time), replaced the inefficient, decentralized, and oppressive forced labor and tax collection systems that had enriched various government officials in the past at the expense of both the crown and the general public.

King Chulalongkorn was convinced that modernization was essential if the kingdom was to survive as an independent state in the era of Western colonization of Southeast Asia. He also believed that

such modernization could only be achieved if it were planned and led by the king. Since he felt that only a strong king could modernize Siam, King Chulalongkorn's social and governmental reforms were carefully formulated in ways that increased the power of the king at the expense of the nobility. The result was that, as the kingdom became more modern, the king grew more powerful.

The young king's supporters in his struggle against the older generation of nobles and princes of the Senabodi included members of the court who, as the result of King Mongkut's policies, had received the benefits of Western education. These younger westernized courtiers, known as the Young Siam Party, gained some official status when King Chulalongkorn drew upon them to man two new governmental bodies, the Council of State and the original Privy Council. These bodies were created in 1874 to advise the king on legislation.

In recognition of the need for more educated personnel to administer his reforms, the king set up schools for children of officials. He later established the Suan Khularb (Rose Garden School), the forerunner of Thai government secondary schools and the first to be open to nonofficials (see ch. 6, Education, Culture, and Public Information). At the opening ceremony, the king voiced his wish that "All children from my own to the poorest should have an equal chance of education." He sent most of his own sons to Europe for their advanced education and encouraged officials and others to do so also. This practice resulted in the birth of a Western-educated group of royal and commoner stock that has led the kingdom socially and politically in modern times.

King Chulalongkorn's relations with reigning monarchs in Europe were extremely cordial, partly as a result of his lifelong friendship with Prince Waldemar of Denmark, youngest son of King Christian IX and brother of the consorts of the king of England and the czar of Russia. Prince Waldemar came to Bangkok acting as the agent of the Danish East Asiatic Company, which had teak concessions as well as considerable other business in the kingdom.

Although relations with Western royal houses were cordial, the political and territorial encroachments of the Western powers upon Siam continued throughout King Chulalongkorn's long reign. In the 1880s and 1890s the Western powers arbitrarily extended the privilege of extraterritoriality within Siam to foreign Asians—Vietnamese, Cambodians, Chinese, Indonesians, and others—whom they claimed as their protégés. The king's response was to arrange for the revision of the civil and criminal law to bring it into conformity with Western standards as a first step toward restoring Thai sovereignty over all persons residing in the kingdom.

In dealing with the territorial encroachments, the policy of King Chulalongkorn was to yield to Western demands when necessary

but to make the French and British aware of the advantages to them of Siam's being a strong, pacific, and neutral buffer state between their two empires. Siam relinquished to France its claims to some territories in Laos and Cambodia in the 1890s. These cessions brought Great Britain, which was firmly established in Burma by the end of the 1880s, into direct confrontation with France in upper Burma and upper Laos. The vagueness of the new frontier between the two Western powers constituted a potentially dangerous situation. To avoid conflict, therefore, Great Britain and France agreed in 1896 to neutralize Siam as a buffer state. This agreement did not affect either the Khorat Plateau, Siam's Cambodian provinces (Battambang and Siem Reap), or the Malay Peninsula. Although Siam was not consulted by the two Western powers, the 1896 Anglo-French agreement was an important factor in ensuring the continued independence of the Thai.

In the last years of his reign, King Chulalongkorn traded border territories to the Western powers in return for increased legal jurisdiction over their resident protégés within Siam. By 1907 France had received all of Siam's Indochinese provinces in exchange for legal jurisdiction over French protégés, and in 1909 a similar exchange was made with Great Britain, relinquishing all claims to the four Malay provinces of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, and Trengganu in exchange for sovereignty over Great Britain's Asian protégés in Siam.

### Beginning of Thai Nationalism

King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, 1910–25), son of King Chulalongkorn and *uparaja* from 1895, was the first Thai king to be educated abroad. His entire education was in England and included study at Oxford University and Sandhurst military academy. He was also the first Thai nationalist and wrote under various pen names in the local press on the subject of love of country. He organized a supplementary volunteer military group, modeled on the lines of the British Territorial Army, called the Wild Tiger Corps. Its junior branch, the Tiger Cubs, was the forerunner of the Thai Boy Scout movement. The king paid for the Wild Tiger Corps out of his Privy Purse and looked upon the organization as contributing to Thai nationalism.

King Vajiravudh's own nationalism had in it an element of anti-Chinese sentiment that has continued to color some Thai nationalist attitudes to modern days (see ch. 4, Social Systems and Values). The Chinese had been displaced in foreign trade by the Westerners during the middle of the nineteenth century and had shifted to the opium traffic and domestic tax-farming concessions as their chief enterprises. Bribing of high officials, wars between rival Chinese secret societies, and oppressive practices to extract taxes from the general public contributed in the late nineteenth century to increas-

ing Thai disfavor with the Chinese community at a time when that community was expanding rapidly as a result of marked increases in the numbers of migrants from southern China.

Although the secret societies began to decline with the abolition of the monopoly-concession method of collecting tax revenue, the Thai continued to be irritated by those segments of the resident Chinese community that had not become assimilated into Thai culture and society. Chinese nationalism had begun to develop in the first decade of the twentieth century with the encouragement of Sun Yat-sen the leader of the Chinese revolution, who visited Siam in 1907. In 1910, months before King Vajiravudh assumed the throne, Chinese merchants had paralyzed Bangkok with a three-day general strike to protest new taxes. Anonymously published documents written by the king accused the Chinese of not assimilating themselves into the kingdom and of putting monetary interests ahead of loyalty to their adopted home.

In addition to introducing Thai nationalism, King Vajiravudh's reign is noted for the return of virtually complete sovereignty over all persons and businesses in the kingdom. This was accomplished as an indirect result of the anglophile king's decision to send a small expeditionary force to serve on the Allied side in World War I. This entitled Siam to participate in the Versailles peace conference and led by 1925 to the signing of new treaties with the Western powers. Siam also became a founding member of the League of Nations. The kingdom's international prestige was higher than ever before.

Another contribution of King Vajiravudh's reign was the introduction in 1924 of the first law in Thai history to regularize the succession to the throne, by male primogeniture. Another enduring innovation of his reign was the introduction of a legal requirement that Thai persons have surnames (although these have seldom been used in ordinary social intercourse). The king also founded Chulalongkorn University as a memorial to his father. When King Vajiravudh died without a son in 1925, the kingdom passed to his younger brother Prajadhipok (1925-35), who became the last absolute monarch of the Thai.

### BEGINNING OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL ERA

The new king, the youngest of his line, had never expected to assume the throne. He was a diffident and retiring person and, like King Vajiravudh, was Western-educated. He was the first Thai king to have only one wife. Early in his reign he showed his preference for sharing governmental responsibility with others rather than holding all the reins of power himself. He investigated the possibility of granting the kingdom a constitution and, in the meantime, set up an advisory Supreme Council of five princes and the Committee

of Privy Councillors, composed of forty distinguished persons chosen by himself, to represent the intellectual, commercial, and professional interests in the country.

The king did not demonstrate the same political astuteness that had characterized his father, King Chulalongkorn. Neither he nor his advisers appeared to realize a need for haste in granting a constitution and, accordingly, they decided in April 1932 to postpone its promulgation. The king was faced with great discontent among the public caused by the world depression that began in 1929 and with the extreme unhappiness among members of the political elite caused by drastic retrenchments in government spending. These retrenchments involved the forced removal from government service of large numbers of civil and military personnel and the demotion of others.

#### The 1932 Coup

The long era of absolute monarchy came to a sudden end on June 24, 1932, with a coup d'etat led by a group of civilian officials and army officers with the support of military units in the Bangkok area. Three days later the military junta headed by three colonels announced that a provisional constitution was in effect and that the kingdom had become a constitutional one. The coup, like most of the others that have followed it in rapid succession, was bloodless and had little public participation.

The king, who with his queen had spent several months in the United States during 1931 for an eye operation, had only recently returned to Thailand at the time of the coup. He was away from the capital when it occurred and, when he returned two days later, he readily accepted the provisional constitution, although he was held prisoner by the coup leaders for a brief period. The provisional constitution had been drafted by the group's leading intellectual, Pridi Banomyong, a holder of a French doctor of law degree and professor of law at Chulalongkorn University.

The key figures in this coup, who are often called the "promoters," included several men who had been educated in Europe in the 1920s. The promoters continued to be major figures in Thai politics for the ensuing three decades. Pridi, a man in his early thirties, son of a wealthy Chinese merchant and his Thai wife but who had been brought up as a Thai, was the most influential civilian promoter. There were also several military promoters, of whom Colonel Phya Phahol Pholphayahasena was the senior representative of the disaffected old-line military officers and Phibul Songgram was the most important of the young, ambitious army officers.

These three men were the most influential members of the cabinet or Commissariat of the People elected by the new seventy-member National Assembly. The National Assembly had been appointed

by the coup leaders immediately upon their assumption of control. It met for the first time on June 28, four days after the coup. The prime minister, called the President of the Commissariat of the People, was a former high court judge, Phya Manopakorn, who had not participated in the coup but was chosen by the promoters to assuage conservative opinion.

A permanent constitution was promulgated on December 10, 1932, to replace the provisional one of June 27, 1932. The new constitution maintained the status of the government as it had been since the June coup—no longer under the control of the king but not yet in the hands of the people. The promoters and their supporters, who called themselves the People's Party, held the power.

Under the terms of the new Constitution of December 1932, the legislature was to have half its members chosen by adult suffrage and half appointed. The constitution stated that the entire legislature would be elected after half the electorate had received four years of schooling or ten years had elapsed, whichever came sooner.

The assumption underlying this provision was that constitutionalism should be a gradual development and time would be needed before the people would be ready to benefit from unalloyed democracy. The promise of eventual rule by a popularly elected government, made for the first time in this 1932 Constitution, remained substantially unfulfilled in 1970. Although there have been various constitutions in force in the intervening period, almost all reserved a sizable proportion of legislative seats for appointed members.

Conflict between civilians and members of the military in the cabinet developed. Pridi proposed an economic plan in 1933 that involved nationalization of all natural and industrial resources, including land. This proved intolerable to the more conservative military group and to the conservative civilian prime minister, Manopakorn. The prime minister closed the National Assembly and ruled by decree. A law against communism was proclaimed, and Pridi, accused of being a Communist, fled into exile. The military leaders of the coup group, disapproving of the policies of Pridi and the methods of Manopakorn, seized power by staging a coup d'état on June 20, 1933, less than a year after the first coup. The government was now headed by the conservative military promoter of the previous year Phya Phahol, who maintained the government's anti-Communist stance but recalled the National Assembly.

In addition to factionalism within the cabinet, the government also faced in October 1933 a serious revolt of military troops led by the king's cousin, Prince Bovaradej, who had been minister of defense. Although the king gave no support to the prince, who demanded the resignation of Phya Phahol and his cabinet, relations between the king and the political leaders deteriorated thereafter, according to historians of the period.

Public sentiment in favor of Pridi, the promoter least tolerant of royal or aristocratic interference in government, became widespread. Pridi had been permitted to return to Bangkok a month before Prince Bovaradej's revolt, and in March 1934 a government commission cleared him of charges of Communist activities.

During the mid-1930s, in addition to the decline in popularity and influence of the conservative civilian elements, particularly those with royalist leanings, and the rise in popularity of Pridi, the left-wing intellectual, there also developed a faction within the military led by Phibul Songgram. Phibul was an army officer of obscure origin who had won national acclaim for his role in the first coup of June 24, 1932, and the coup of June 20, 1933, and in the successful suppression of Prince Bovaradej's revolt.

In 1934 Phibul became minister of defense and proceeded to build the Thai army into a powerful political instrument. He launched a campaign to show the need for a strong military organization to keep the country from being controlled by outsiders. He also took every opportunity to assert the superior efficiency of his military administration to the rival civil administration, in which Pridi was the most influential cabinet member, although the prime minister from 1933 to 1938 remained Phya Phahol.

Thailand's first election, held in November 1933, confirmed Pridi's popularity with the voters, although fewer than one-tenth of eligible voters cast their ballots. Prime Minister Phya Phahol maintained a balance between Pridi and Phibul factions.

The king's prestige continued to fall after the October 1933 rebellion by his cousin. He left the country in 1934, saying that he needed medical help for his worsening eye condition. In March 1935 he abdicated without naming a successor and went into retirement in England. The ten-year-old son of the king's deceased younger brother was chosen. King Ananda Mahidol (1935-1946) was at the time still attending primary school in Switzerland. Pending attainment of his majority, a regency council of three members was appointed to carry out those limited functions of the monarchy that were retained under the constitutional system. The new king did not return to his country until 1945.

The uneasy balance between the Pridi civilian and Phibul military factions in the government gradually deteriorated as more civil offices came under the control of military personnel. The process was slowed but not halted by the National Assembly election in 1937. In December 1938 the prime minister retired, and Phibul took office, with Pridi as minister of finance.

#### Nationalism and War Under Phibul

The three years before the outbreak of the Pacific phase of World War II were marked by a wave of Thai nationalism, led by Phibul

with support from Pridi. A new revenue code, passed in March 1939, involved relatively heavy taxes for businesses, most of which were owned by Chinese or, more rarely, by Europeans. Other regulations followed, designed to check immigration of Chinese and to reserve for Thai numerous occupations that had formerly been predominantly non-Thai. Many Chinese schools and newspapers were closed, and Chinese opium addicts were deported.

Efforts to improve the ethnic Thai's social and economic position nationally included state subsidies for Thai private enterprise, the founding of technical schools, and the sending overseas of large numbers of Thai for technical training. Phibul's government decreed that Thai must adopt certain Western social practices, such as the wearing of shoes and hats in public. Betel chewing was prohibited. The motivation was nationalist rather than pro-Western. Aspersions were cast in government circles on Thai who had become Christians. The clear inference of many government statements of the period was that only Buddhists could be true Thai patriots. The kingdom, which had been officially called Siam since King Mongkut's reign, was in 1939 changed to Muang Thai (literally, the Land of the Free), or Thailand in English. A decree announced that foreigners were in the future to use the name Muang Thai or its equivalent in their language.

The new wave of nationalism contained irredentist elements. There was much anti-French sentiment for the restoration of the former Thai possessions in Laos and Cambodia. In harmony with these irredentist and anti-Chinese feelings, closer relations developed between Phibul's government and Japan.

Phibul's enthusiasm for the Japanese was markedly greater than that of Pridi. In December 1941 Phibul acceded to a Japanese request (virtually an ultimatum) for permission to go through Thailand on the way to conquer Burma, Malaya, and Singapore; whereupon Pridi resigned from the cabinet and tried to establish a noncollaborationist government in the north. When this failed, Pridi accepted the relatively nonpolitical job of regent and, while in this office, organized a clandestine movement that maintained contact with anti-Japanese Thai groups and intelligence services in the United States and Great Britain.

Within months of the initial agreement with Japan, the apparent success of the Japanese convinced Phibul that close cooperation with them would be Thailand's wisest course. Thailand was rewarded by the Japanese with the restoration of various territories that had at one time been under Bangkok's control: portions of Laos, Cambodia, the Burmese Shan states, and the four northernmost states of Malaya. Japan meanwhile established what was, in effect, an occupation force.

Phibul declared war on the Allies in 1942, but his ambassador to the United States, Seni Pramoj, a civilian aristocrat and a man of



less radical views than Pridi but firmly anti-Japanese, refused to deliver the declaration of war to the government of the United States. (The Thai ambassador's behavior, coupled with the work of Pridi's underground organization, which maintained contact after 1944 with the Southeast Asia Command at Kandy, Ceylon, led the United States not to deal with Thailand as an enemy country in the postwar peace negotiations.)

As the war dragged on and Japan began to lose, the Japanese presence in Thailand grew more irksome. Trade came to a stop, and the Japanese military personnel stationed in the country confiscated whatever they needed, as if Thailand were a conquered territory rather than an ally. The infamous "death railway" being built between Burma and Thailand by Allied prisoners of war imported from Malaya and elsewhere helped to make the Thai public sympathetic to Pridi's underground movement. In July 1944 Phibul's government fell and was replaced by the first predominantly civilian government since the 1932 coup.

#### Pridi and the Civilian Regime, 1944-47

The new government was headed by a civilian, Khuang Aphaiwong, who had no known commitment to either side in the world war and was associated with Seni Pramoj and the conservative civilian elements domestically. The most influential political figure of the regime, however, was Pridi, whose anti-Japanese views were increasingly attractive to the Thai. Under the new government, United States military intelligence agents were given tacitly the freedom of Bangkok. At the end of the war Khuang and Pridi disagreed; since Pridi was more powerful, the prime minister was replaced by the Pridi nominee, Seni Pramoj.

In the early postwar period the United States had the most cordial relations with Thailand of all the Allies as a result of the United States refusal to recognize the 1942 Thai declaration of war. Great Britain demanded war reparations from the Thai in the form of rice for British Malaya and insisted on the return of the four northern Malay states. France refused to permit Thailand to participate in the newly formed United Nations organization until the Indochinese territories, annexed during the war, were returned. The Soviet Union insisted that Thailand repeal its anti-communism law or face a veto of its admission to the United Nations. These various demands by the Allies were acceded to.

The Seni regime lasted only until an agreement was signed with Great Britain in January 1946. Then Pridi restored Khuang as prime minister, but he was obliged to take over the post himself in March 1946. The discontent of the Thai public was growing at this time, the result of inflation, the reparation payments of rice to British

Malaya, the relinquishment of all the wartime territorial gains, and the high level of mismanagement at all levels of government.

Pridi, who felt that his political strength and that of any civilian regime depended upon there being a more important role for parliamentary and civilian politics, worked with his cabinet and the parliamentarians to draft a new constitution to achieve that purpose. The new basic law, promulgated on May 9, 1946, changed the parliamentary structure from a single house with half its members appointed by the government into a bicameral form with the members of a fully elected lower house voting for members of the upper house.

The members of the new lower house had been elected the previous January in the first general election in which political parties took part. The Constitutional Front and the Cooperation Party were two political parties that combined to support Pridi's men in the election to the lower house, and these, in turn, saw that Pridi supporters were elected to the upper house on May 24 after the new constitution came into effect. Parliamentary opposition was led by the Democrat Party, headed by Khuang Aphaiwong and Seni Pramoj.

As a result of the 1946 elections Pridi became the first prime minister to have a popularly elected Parliament supporting him. Pridi's prestige and popularity suffered severe and permanent damage two weeks after the election of the upper house, however, when King Ananda Mahidol, who had just returned in December 1945 from Switzerland, was found dead in his bed at the palace, a bullet wound through his head.

The successor to the throne, the nineteen-year-old King Bhumibol Adulyadej (1946— ), was the younger brother of the dead king. King Bhumibol Adulyadej was born in the United States and spent his childhood years with King Ananda Mahidol and their mother in Switzerland. He had come back to Bangkok with his brother in December 1945. The new king returned to Switzerland to complete his education after his brother's death and did not come back to Bangkok to take up his royal duties until 1951.

The country was shocked by the death of King Ananda Mahidol. Although the official account attributed it to an accident, there were widespread expressions of doubt since few facts were made public. Many of the rumors circulating in Bangkok at that time mentioned Pridi in connection with the tragedy. In August, two months after the king's death, Pridi resigned on grounds of ill health and left the country to take a world tour.

#### RETURN OF PHIBUL AND THE MILITARY

For a few months after Pridi's resignation the government continued with a new prime minister, Thamrong Nawasawat. This period

was notable for economic difficulties and widespread discontent with the way in which the regime had handled the investigation of the king's death.

#### Coup d'Etat of November 8, 1947

By November the military faction had regained some of the morale and popularity that had been lost as the result of its association with the Japanese defeat. Phibul had been arrested as a war criminal in the early postwar period but had been released by the courts soon afterward. A strong and efficient leader, renowned for his anti-Communist stance, Phibul became increasingly attractive to the Thai politically elite group as a candidate for political power. Governmental mismanagement, concern over possible regicide, and economic disorder were threatening domestic stability, and communism threatened the kingdom's neighbors—Burma, Malaya, Vietnam, and China.

On November 8, 1947, a group called the Khana Rathaprahan (Coup d'Etat Group), led by two retired army generals with support from Phibul, seized power in a bloodless coup. Pridi, who had returned from his world tour, fled the country. Thamrong and other Pridi supporters went into hiding.

An interim government was appointed by the coup leaders under Khuang Aphaiwong, making this his third time as prime minister. A provisional constitution was promulgated by the coup leaders on November 9, and the promise of a new permanent constitution was made. General elections held the following January confirmed the coup leaders' control of the government, although they retained Khuang as prime minister in an effort to placate Khuang's conservative civilian supporters.

In April 1948 Phibul, by then a field marshal, took over as prime minister, removing Khuang by force. (With the exception of a three month interim government in 1957 under Pote Sarasin, then Secretary General of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), no Thai government was headed by a civilian after 1948. As of mid-1970 the government remained in military hands.)

For the next three years Phibul worked successfully to maintain his government against numerous attempted coups and revolts. Disaffected political factions included Khuang's conservative civilians of the Democrat Party, some of whom participated in drafting the new permanent constitution that had been promised by the coup group in November 1947 and that was promulgated in March 1949.

The military group, too, had serious fissures. An anti-Phibul army group was arrested in October 1948. Supporters of former prime ministers Pridi, Thamrong, and Khuang could be found in the navy and the marines. In February 1949 a revolt that is commonly al-

leged to have been sponsored by Pridi supporters in the marines was attempted and failed. This revolt was followed by a violent purge by the government of senior politicians and officials. In June 1951 troops of marines and navy men took part in a rebellion and abducted Phibul. The rebellion was suppressed in a three-day war between the rebels and loyal troops of the army and air force.

Phibul's policies during this period were similar to those he had initiated in the late 1930s. The use of the name Thailand was restored in 1949. (There had been a reversion to the name Siam in 1946 with the defeat of Japan.) The regulation of Thai social behavior by legislation to make it conform to modern standards, begun by Phibul before the war, was continued. Secondary education was improved, and the military organizations were given large sums to improve themselves in quantity and quality. The harassment of Chinese and the tendency to regard resident Chinese as likely to be disloyal and, after 1949, Communist were notable features of the Phibul regime. Communist revolts in Laos, Malaya, Burma, and Vietnam and the fall of China to the Communists helped to make Phibul's policies popular with the Thai.

Phibul's anti-Communist position had great influence on his foreign policy. Thailand refused to recognize Communist China, supported the United Nations against North Korea in 1950, and became the most loyal supporter of United States foreign policy in mainland Southeast Asia.

#### Silent Coup of November 29, 1951

By the time of the rebellion of the navy and marines in June 1951, Phibul had begun to share political power with two associates who had participated with him in the 1947 coup that overthrew the civilian regime of Pridi. One of these was General Phao Siyanon, director general of police and a close associate of Phibul since the original coup of 1932. The other man, more junior, was General Sarit Thanarat, commander of the Bangkok army.

As time passed, the two associates grew more powerful than Phibul, who was able to retain the prime ministership because of the rivalry of Phao and Sarit for the succession. All three, however, were in opposition to the 1949 Constitution, a basic law that had been formulated by a committee with a civilian bias.

On November 29, 1951, military and police officers announced over the radio that the 1949 Constitution was suspended and the December 10, 1932, Constitution was in force. The reason given for restoring a unicameral parliament with half its membership appointed by the government was the danger of Communist aggression.

Shortly after this radio announcement, King Bhumibol Adulyadej

returned to Thailand, having completed his Swiss education, and for the first time since 1935 an adult monarch was on duty in the palace in Bangkok. His first governmental action was to insist that certain revisions be made before the December 1932 Constitution was adopted. The cabinet agreed to this. The revised constitution was promulgated on February 26, 1952, and an election was held on that day for seats in the new, half-appointed single house. Nearly all the appointed parliamentary members were army officers.

From 1952 to 1955 the three-man regime continued along the policy lines of the previous five years. In November 1952 the police announced the discovery of a Communist plot against the government and began a series of arrests of Chinese. Many Chinese schools and associations were closed. The campaign against Communists, with its anti-Chinese emphasis, gathered momentum throughout the following year.

In 1954 Thailand participated in the Manila meeting that resulted in the formation of SEATO and accepted the responsibility of making Bangkok its headquarters. In 1955 SEATO was offered the use of military bases in Thailand. Relations with the United States were very cordial during this period; substantial amounts of American economic, technical, and military aid were provided.

#### Phibul's Experiment with Democracy

Phibul toured the United States and Great Britain in 1955 and, upon his return to Thailand, introduced a policy of political permissiveness that marked a notable change from his previous policies. The anti-Chinese campaign was halted. Plans were made to increase the responsibilities of local government at the expense of the central power. Political parties, formerly forbidden, were permitted to exist and be legally registered. Criticism of the government, in and out of parliament, was permitted. A portion of a central park near the royal palace in Bangkok was given over by the government to public debate, and the press was given full rein in covering this informal debate. Public criticism, especially as it appeared in the press, was outspoken and often extreme in its attacks on the government.

The government party, called the Seri Manangkhasila Party, which was headed by General Phao, the director general of the police and General Sarit's rival for power, was the largest and richest of the twenty-five parties that sprang up in 1955. General Phao and Field Marshal Phibul devoted much effort to assuring a government party victory in the general election due to take place in February 1957. Sarit kept out of the campaign and, after the election, disassociated himself from the disappointing results.

The government party had barely maintained a majority, and at least half the incumbent party members had been defeated. Sarit

and others questioned even this result and accused the government party of ballot stuffing. Sarit described the elections as "filthy." University students protested against the elections, claiming that they were crooked. Phibul declared a state of emergency and appointed Sarit commander in chief of the armed services.

### THAILAND UNDER SARIT

In September 1957 Field Marshal Sarit displaced Phibul and Phao in a bloodless coup d'etat. New elections were held in December 1957 under an interim government headed by Pote Sarasin, who was then the secretary general of SEATO. The election gave no single political party a working parliamentary majority. Sarit organized a new ruling party, the National Socialist Party, that was a coalition of parties and individuals.

The new government, which was formed under General Thanom Kittikachorn, Sarit's deputy in the armed forces, proved to be unstable because of intraparty wranglings over political and economic spoils. The inclusion of leftist politicians in the ruling party further complicated the situation because of their opposition to the government's pro-Western foreign policies (see ch. 11, Foreign Relations).

### Abrogation of the Constitution, October 1958

In October 1958 Field Marshal Sarit, newly returned from the United States where he had sought medical treatment, took over personal control of the government. The takeover was accomplished with the consent of General Thanom Kittikachorn, who resigned as prime minister.

Political parties were outlawed, and the more outspoken government critics in and out of Parliament were put in jail. A dozen or more newspapers were closed.

In January 1959 Sarit decreed an interim constitution that provided for an appointed assembly to function both as the legislative body and as a constituent assembly to draft Thailand's eighth constitution (see ch. 9, Political System and Values). The Interim Constitution of January 1959, which was to remain in effect for nearly a decade, provided for a prime minister. Field Marshal Sarit assumed that office in February 1959 and kept it until his death in December 1963.

### Accomplishments of the Sarit Regime

Sarit's government was more dynamic than the previous regimes of the constitutional era. In 1960 major national economic and educational development plans were inaugurated. Major electrification and irrigation projects were begun. Military officers were

frequently appointed as directors of various state and quasi-governmental economic enterprises, but gradually a considerable share in implementing government policies was given to civilian personnel. Foreign investment was welcomed and given assurances of government protection.

Under Sarit's guidance Thailand's anti-Communist policy was continued. Communist activities in neighboring countries had already begun to affect the domestic situation in Thailand. In the southernmost provinces, in the jungle area north of Malaya, Communist guerrillas (mostly ethnic Chinese) were present in numbers sufficient to frighten the local residents. These remained from the Malayan "Emergency" that formally ended in 1960 but was still simmering in the Thai-Malayan border area a decade later. In northwestern Thailand many thousands of North Vietnamese refugees from the 1946-54 Franco-Viet Minh war had established themselves. Many of these refugees were thought to be loyal to the Vietnamese Communist cause. Beginning in 1959 (although this was not discovered until much later) dissident Meo hill tribesmen in the north of Thailand were receiving Communist insurgency training.

Relations with Cambodia deteriorated in the late 1950s and early 1960s. A dispute over the ownership of an ancient temple along the Thai-Cambodian border grew bitter. In June 1962 the World Court awarded the temple to Cambodia.

Sarit throughout his prime ministership sought closer ties with Thailand's anti-Communist neighbors and with the United States (see ch. 11, Foreign Relations). In 1961 Thailand and another SEATO member, the Philippines, joined with newly independent Malaya to form the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA). In March 1962, after the Pathet Lao moved into northwestern Laos, United States Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman agreed that, from then on, their countries would interpret the Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty of 1954 as binding the United States to come to the aid of Thailand in time of need, with or without the agreement of the other signers of the SEATO pact. Two months after the foreign ministers' agreement, in response to the deteriorating situation in Laos, President John F. Kennedy stationed United States troops in Thailand. The arrival of the troops in May 1962 was seen by the Thai government as evidence of the United States intention of preserving Thailand's independence and integrity against Communist expansion.

In December 1963 Field Marshal Sarit died and was peacefully succeeded in the office of prime minister by his deputy, General Thanom Kittikachorn. The policies and form of government continued for some years thereafter along the lines established by Sarit (see ch. 10, Political Dynamics).

In June 1968 the constitution drafted by the committee Sarit had

appointed nearly ten years before was finally promulgated (see ch. 9, Political System and Values). The return to some form of representative popular government had begun. Parties were permitted. Elections for a partly elected National Assembly took place in 1969, resulting in the retention of General Thanom as prime minister.



## CHAPTER 4

### SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND VALUES

As of the end of 1970, 89 percent of the people lived in rural areas where society has had relatively few organizational bonds as compared to urban society. The rural Thai feels primary responsibility to his immediate family, and the only other important focuses for social life are the local *wat* (see Glossary) and, recently, the village school.

Rural social structure and values are in large measure shaped by the interaction of the laity and the Buddhist clergy of the local *wat*. The Sangha (brotherhood of Buddhist monks—see Glossary) resides in the *wat* and, by its total dependence upon the laity for the necessities of life, provides the best and most convenient opportunities to do good deeds that enhance the doer's social status.

The Sangha plays a major role in providing social mobility for Thai men. By joining the Sangha, Thai men are able to gain temporary or permanent release from their secular occupations, usually farming, and to achieve an immediate advance in social status. The daily offering of food by the lay public to the Sangha and the availability of the *wat* as free lodging make it possible for men of the Sangha, who could not afford the expense of traveling as laymen, to travel to the towns and other villages. The clergy takes advantage of these opportunities and, except during Phansa (the Buddhist three-month holy season) when travel overnight is forbidden them, the members of the clergy are frequently away from their own *wat*.

Although as of 1970 the urban population was only a minority—about 11 percent, including a disproportionate number of non-Thai—indications were that the attraction of the urban areas was increasing. Demographers estimated in the late 1960s that the proportion of urban residents to the total population will have more than doubled by 1980 as a result of internal migration. This surge in urban residence is partly the result of the expansion of the educational system. Unprecedented numbers of Thai received secondary and advanced education in the 1960s, and most of them sought urban residence and employment (see ch. 6, Education, Culture, and Public Information).

The Thai who live in urban areas include members of the civil and military bureaucracy and the traditional and modern political

leaders, Bangkok, the only large city, also has a large proportion of the country's Chinese population and more than half of the resident Indians, Pakistanis, Ceylonese, Europeans, Australians, and Americans.

Urban society, unlike that of the rural areas, has been heavily influenced by Chinese and Western cultures. For centuries the economy has been predominantly in the hands of ethnic Chinese, and political control has been in the hands of a Westernized ethnic Thai ruling group. The beginnings of a class structure have been discerned by one scholar of the area who notes the existence in the 1960s of a self-perpetuating class of officials with access to special educational opportunities at universities overseas and at Thailand's select military academies.

Thai society has not in the past had self-perpetuating social groups or inherited ranks. With the exception of the very small group with royal titles (whose ranks and titles diminished with each generation of distance from the king), social status has always been determined primarily by nonhereditary factors, such as function, behavior, wealth, and age.

Although there were traditionally no rigid barriers to upward social mobility, until recently few Thai tried to attain the higher status levels, which were accessible only in urban areas. The vast majority chose to remain in the rural areas, where they farmed their own land. The clergy provided a temporary respite from farming for many and a new career for a few. Still fewer aspired to government bureaucratic careers for which educational opportunities were lacking.

Because of the increase in educational opportunities, however, the rural population was showing in 1970 an unprecedented interest in acquiring government jobs. Not all educated Thai were seeking official positions, however, since the indifference with which Thai men had always regarded private business had begun to change.

In April 1967 a Bangkok newspaper observed that jobs with private companies for the first time seemed to be more appealing to local graduates than the more secure, but lower paying, jobs with the government. By 1970 considerable evidence had accumulated that indicated that the prestige of wealth and the style of life that money can buy had become greater than the prestige attached to lower- and middle-ranking official status. Thai women, furthermore, have traditionally tended to participate in small trade, although Chinese and other nonindigenous groups have always controlled the larger businesses.

The country was relatively homogeneous in ethnic composition, with 85 percent ethnic Thai in 1970. There exists, however, a Chinese minority that is important—numerically, socially, and politically. Until the twentieth century the ethnic Chinese community

had for centuries been welcomed by the Thai and had been assimilated into Thai society with comparative ease. During the first half of the twentieth century, as the Chinese migrant community grew in size and in ethnocentrism and as nationalism arose among the Thai, Sino-Thai social relations deteriorated (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

During the 1960s, however, Chinese assimilation was again accelerating, partly as the result of a cutoff in new migration of Chinese and partly because of the possibility of full participation in all aspects of national life for those ethnic Chinese whose parents chose to become part of Thai society. The chief distinguishing features of the Chinese ethnic group in the country have remained their predominantly urban location and their domination of the nonagricultural sectors of the economy.

The next largest minority ethnic group is the Malay community of the Southern Peninsula Region, which has not yet been successfully assimilated in spite of having spent many centuries under Thai political control. Programs designed to improve conditions and increase identity with, and loyalty to, the Thai nation have been carried out in the Malay area.

In the mountainous areas bordering Burma and Laos, there are various groups of hill peoples differentiated from each other and from the Thai by customs and language. All these hill groups have close ethnic ties with groups in countries across the border, as do the Malays. Although numerically insignificant, the hill peoples are of importance as unassimilated groups who are susceptible to exploitation by subversive or insurrectionary forces. The Meo tribesmen, in particular, have been targets of Communist subversive activity during the 1960s.

Unassimilated bands of Negrito aborigines live in the jungles of the southern region. They were utilized as jungle scouts by both sides during the Communist insurgency against the government of Malaya (now Malaysia) from 1948 to 1960.

#### TRADITIONAL SETTING

The basic features of society persisted with only slight modification from ancient times until well into the nineteenth century. The villagers were connected to the kingdom by a bureaucratic network emanating from the capital. At the head of the kingdom was the king, and directly below him were the senior courtiers, who were usually of royal blood or related to the king by marriage.

Below these courtiers were officials appointed to serve at the pleasure of the king in various capacities in the capital and in the provinces. They were ranked by the *sakdi na* system (see Glossary). The *sakdi na* rank of an individual determined his social status and

his sources of income. A minister in charge of an important department or the governor of a major provincial town received the maximum rank of 10,000 dignity marks. With this rank went the title of Chao Phraya, the right to certain sumptuary symbols, and access to 4,000 acres of irrigated riceland. Below the Chao Phraya, three other titles were given to royal appointees of lesser rank—in descending order, Phya, Phra, and Luang. These titles have been discontinued in the constitutional era, but those who received their titles before 1932 have continued to use them.

Certain freemen were also allocated to each official's protection and service. They could be called upon by their official patron for military duty and for work on civil projects. An official patron might have clients scattered over several villages, and most villages had more than one patron. The patron-client bond was not connected with ownership of land in a particular locality. A cultivator could keep his patron and move to a new land or stay on the same land and, with official approval, have his patron changed.

The most junior appointees of the king held ranks entitling them to 400 dignity marks and 160 acres of riceland. Below this grade were a host of civil servants who were appointed by more important government officials. The lowest ranking freemen each received 25 dignity marks and were entitled to 10 acres of riceland. They might spend as much as a third of their time, however, working for various officials who had rights to their labor under the *sakdi na* system.

Many freemen chose to gain exemption from the forced labor system by relinquishing their freedom and becoming the slaves of patrons. The new patrons would then have to compensate the appropriate official for the loss of the slave's labor. By the mid-nineteenth century slaves of this type were numerous, perhaps equal to one-third the freeman population. No stigma apparently was attached to slavery of this type. If a freeman was wealthy, he might avoid the compulsory labor or military service by payments of cash or of valuable commodities in lieu of service.

As it evolved, the *sakdi na* system, features of which survived as part of the civil service organization until 1928, when a civil service law was promulgated, supplied the basic framework for the social system. The system was hierarchical but permitted considerable mobility. Although each person held an explicit rank, it could be changed by a government appointment or its termination. Descendants of the king, whose titles diminished with each generation reverting to commoner status by the fifth generation from the throne, were the only persons to have inherited titles of any kind. Some property was inheritable, but the large landholdings were constantly being fragmented as the result of inheritance arrangements that gave all family members a share in the family wealth. Population density was low, and a man was free to leave his home area and pioneer new land if he chose.

The chief functions of the *sakdi na* system were to provide income for the otherwise unpaid government servants and to provide labor for the public works and armed forces of the kingdom. Such functions were taken over by the reorganized civil and military administrations in King Chulalongkorn's reign (1868-1910), when slavery was also abolished. There remained, however, from the time of the *sakdi na* system, the prevailing concept of the kingdom as a functionally graded society in which a person's status was determined by his present occupation and by other personal, noninherited attributes, many of which were subject to change.

The second half of the nineteenth century was a time of great change in the social structure. The reorganization of the government administration and the concomitant initiation of large-scale public works projects to improve the transportation and communication systems led to a great expansion in the bureaucracy. The number of government employees in the 1880s was approximately 12,000, but by the 1920s there were some 80,000. The increase in job opportunities far exceeded the manpower of the families with a tradition of civil service, and many of the new jobs were filled by sons of ordinary farmers who had received some schooling from the Buddhist monks. The Buddhist monasteries at that time provided the only formal schooling available to the children of nonofficial commoners.

In addition to offering new opportunities for upward mobility to the people at large, the royal policies of the late nineteenth century profoundly affected the social arrangements in the villages. The abolition of the forced labor system and slavery freed the villager to use his labor for his own profit. Such labor was used to expand rice production greatly. Rice surpluses found a new and expanding market throughout Southeast Asia.

The longest enduring and most important social institution in the country is the Buddhist Sangha, with its range of ecclesiastical titles and ranks, for which a man becomes eligible by passing examinations and by indicating willingness to endure the various disciplines and austerities imposed in accordance with ancient monastic regulations that still govern the order (see ch. 8, Religion). The permanent priesthood in 1966 numbered slightly over 2 percent of the adult male Buddhist population of the country, and an additional 42,000 temporary monks and 88,000 novices were also in residence in the nation's monasteries during the holy season that year.

Any man who wishes to attain high social prestige and receive immediately the utmost deference from the entire secular community is able to do so with relative ease by joining the Sangha. This ever-present alternative eases the strain of secular social life with its great concern over social status differences.

The Sangha also serves the laity as a means of improving social position through the operation of the Buddhist principle of merit.

Although in the 1960s some urbanized and Westernized Thai have expressed the belief that any activity that results in benefits to the community earns merit, most Thai tend to associate merit-making with the Sangha. When a layman bows in deference to a monk, he is not only acknowledging the monk's social superiority but also earning merit by having shown deference to a member of the Sangha. The great majority of Thai Buddhists regard merit-making as a practical way of achieving higher social status. For them the tie to the local *wat* is the strongest social bond beyond the household.

#### URBAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In 1970 the urban population was small, with less than 10 percent of the nation living in communities that were genuinely urban in character. Bangkok, the capital, was the only city of substantial size. It was more than three times as populous as the next largest city, Chiangmai, and four times as populous as Nakhon Ratchasima, the only other city with a population exceeding 50,000 (see ch. 2, Physical Environment and Population).

Bangkok is a connecting link between the Thai and the people of other nations. It is the location of the offices and residences of the foreign businessmen and diplomats and the headquarters of various international organizations. The royal palace is located there, as are the central offices of the government and of the hierarchy of the Buddhist clergy. Several major universities, most indigenous industrial and commercial organizations of more than local importance, and the studios and presses of the mass media are in Bangkok.

The tendency of the people to look to their king for guidance in all fields and, since 1932, to the national political leaders has helped Bangkok maintain great influence throughout the nation on standards of behavior, dress, outlook, and living conditions. Urban examples, which usually are regarded as more modern and socially superior, are imitated in different degrees by rural inhabitants throughout the country. Universal elementary education with a uniform national curriculum has contributed to the spread of Bangkok's influence in rural areas. The impact of Bangkok on the rural countryside has greatly increased in recent years with the popularity of transistor radios, which broadcast Bangkok news, fashions, and ideas. By 1970 few rural Thai lacked ready access to radio listening. Television, available in many provincial towns and in the *wat* of some rural villages, promotes nationwide familiarity with Bangkok sights and events (see ch. 6, Education, Culture, and Public Information).

Most of the Thai of Bangkok are in the upper and lower levels of society. The middle group is composed largely of minority groups and aliens.

Because the Chinese community is essentially urban, much of Bangkok's population is Chinese or partly Chinese. Acculturation to Thai behavior patterns is widespread among the second- and third-generation Chinese. Such persons typically use Thai personal and family names and are fluent in both Thai and the minority language. Chinese dominate the commercial sector of the economy; hence, most business leaders are of Chinese extraction. Ethnic Chinese are liberally represented in the medical, legal, and journalistic professions and on the faculties of the major universities.

Some persons of Chinese or partial Chinese ancestry are found in the bureaucracy, although most administrative and political positions are held by ethnic Thai. Both Thai and Chinese are represented, however, in other forms of urban employment, including clerical occupations, shopkeeping, and skilled and unskilled work in factories, workshops, and service occupations.

The Thai tend to think of status differences as existing between individuals rather than between corporate groupings with collective interests and goals. In the strictest sense there are no social classes. Groups of persons in the same occupations and with relatively equal incomes, however, tend to form clusters at certain points on the status ladder.

### The Ruling Group

The ruling group is distinguished by its control of political authority and capital resources and its access to such status symbols as a degree from a foreign university. It consists primarily of top-ranking government officials, many of whom have military backgrounds. The elite also includes the most powerful commercial leaders, key figures of the aristocracy, and a small number of professional men. A single individual may fill several of these roles simultaneously. Consequently, the group probably comprised no more than 1 percent of the total population in 1970 (see ch. 9, Political System and Values).

The kings and persons connected by blood or marriage to the king or to other royal lines have the highest social positions. Pride and interest in the country's ancient cultural heritage are strong among the aristocrats and royalty, many of whom have received a Western education outside the country.

Members of the royalty constitute the traditional ruling group, but since 1932 a new, more powerful, but less prestigious, group has ruled. A degree from a foreign university has been perhaps the most important single asset for a prospective entrant to this new group, which occupies the highest echelons of government service, civil and military. King Mongkut (1851-68) began the practice, followed by his successors, of giving the royal children a Western

education. Gradually wealthy civil servants, professional people, and businessmen began to send their children overseas to school. It became virtually automatic for foreign-degree holders to enter the higher ranks of the civil service. The foreign-educated group has tended to perpetuate itself in the civil service. The children of parents educated in England, France, and the United States have been more able to make high scores on the competitive civil service examinations for overseas scholarships than have persons from less Westernized households.

During the 1960s thousands of young men and women were sent abroad to study each year, sponsored by the Thai Civil Service Commission. The path to senior status in the civil bureaucracy has been difficult for persons lacking foreign university educational experience. A study of a sample group in the civil service in the mid-1960s showed that the 20 percent of the civil servants who had studied abroad included all those who had risen to the top of the bureaucracy since World War II. Most had studied in the United States or Great Britain.

The senior military leadership has been less dependent upon foreign degrees as a status symbol than the civil leadership. Nevertheless, advanced training in the United States has been a source of prestige for many officers since the start of the United States Military Assistance Program in 1950.

Entry to the highest ranks has become limited almost exclusively in recent years to men who have attended the premilitary and military educational institutions run by and for the armed forces (see ch. 15, National Defense and Internal Security). Entry into the officer training educational system is from the age of fifteen to nineteen. Since the decision to apply for entry must be made when the candidate is not yet an adult, there is a tendency for the military academies to have a high proportion of sons of military officers.

For several decades the leading Chinese entrepreneurs and the Thai bureaucratic elite have maintained cooperative arrangements that have linked the political and economic leadership of Thai urban society. Participation in business has been granted to Thai officials by Chinese merchants in exchange for the protection and assistance of these influential men in government.

Assimilation of the most influential and prominent Chinese leaders into the ranks of the Thai elite proceeded rapidly in the 1960s. As the result of the restriction of Chinese migration, which began before World War II and had effectively stopped the influx of Chinese by 1950, an unprecedented number of the resident Chinese in 1970 were Thai citizens whose fathers were also Thai citizens. These third-generation residents, second-generation citizens, were growing up in a society in which the path to advancement was open



to those who chose Thai cultural assimilation in preference to retaining their Chinese ethnic identity.

The first generation to have Thai citizenship has not been permitted to vote or hold public office, but children of Thai citizen fathers, regardless of their ethnic origin, were eligible as of 1970 to participate in all aspects of society open to Thai nationals, including voting and membership in the civil and armed services. Thailand's history of frequent intermarriage between ethnic Thai of the elite group, including royalty, and wealthy Chinese has contributed to the assimilation of socially prominent Chinese into the upper echelons of Thai society.

### The Middle Group

Just below the group of senior civil and military officials and the wealthiest Chinese merchants, there exists in Bangkok an upper-middle group of diverse makeup. This group contains the bulk of the middle-ranking Chinese business community and the Thai middle-ranking government employees and professional people.

The middle-ranking Chinese are substantially more ethnocentric than their social and financial superiors. They form the rank and file of various private voluntary associations with which urban Chinese society abounds, although they often choose members of the wealthy group to preside over them. The most important social organizations are the dialect associations and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, which is an organization intended to promote Chinese business interests. The dialect associations are composed of persons who speak one or another of the several Chinese dialects spoken in Thailand.

The ethnic Thai members of the upper-middle urban group are government clerks, secretaries, teachers, and newspapermen. They form the base of the politically active urban group whose loyalty has been sought by the various coup groups that have made up the national political leadership since 1932.

Also part of the politically active urban group is the student body of Thai universities (see ch. 6, Education, Culture, and Public Information). The 1960 census, the latest held before 1970, showed 30,000 Thai men and women as having completed university and 100,000 as having had some college training. Almost all of the men who attend university, and many of the women, do so in the expectation of finding a place in the government service. The university-educated population has increased rapidly during the 1960s, and the failure of suitable job opportunities to keep pace was leading to the development of an acute social problem, according to experienced observers.

University students have often acted in concert to exert pressure

on Bangkok's ruling group, such as in the case of the 1932 coup. University students have on several occasions since 1932 united to protest specific government policies. In 1968 students put up a slate of their own candidates in the Bangkok municipal elections, and in 1969 they backed the opposition party candidates for the National Assembly (see ch. 10, Political Dynamics).

The urban middle group also includes a lower segment of skilled laborers, artisans of various types, personnel employed in service industries, and the lowest paid government employees. All but the government employees are predominantly Chinese in ethnic origin.

#### Rural Migrants

Below the middle group, at the base of urban society, are the unskilled laborers and street vendors, many of whom are recent Thai migrants from the countryside. The migrants have helped to make the population of Bangkok increase at a much faster rate than elsewhere in the country. The capital's rate of growth has also been substantially higher than has that of Chiangmai or any other urban center. A demographic study of Thailand written in the mid-1960s asserts that Bangkok can expect to quadruple in population by 1980. The same study predicts that by 1980, at which time the total population is expected to be double the 1960 figure, 25 percent of Thailand's people will live in urban areas, as compared with 11 percent in 1970.

The attraction of the capital and other urban centers as the arenas for social and economic advancement has increased recently. Before World War II there was a far greater reluctance among the Thai to abandon their farms and their rural way of life. Many of those who have come to the capital and to other urban centers since 1950 are the first of their families to have attended secondary school. They often look to a government job as the ultimate goal after completing their schooling.

Another cause of urban immigration has been poverty and overcrowding in some rural areas, especially the northeast. The young and the poor have come to Bangkok seeking to earn money to take back with them to their home villages.

#### Minor Urban Groups

##### Westerners

Westerners form a minute but important portion of the population. Most Western diplomats, businessmen, technicians, and educators live and work in Bangkok, remaining for several years and then returning to their own countries. Chiangmai also has a sizable Western community. In the 1960s United States troops were stationed

in Thailand, the first sizable group of Westerners to reside outside the main urban centers. There were some 40,000 in late 1969.

The presence of United States troops in the country has brought employment to large numbers of Thai. The governor of the Bank of Thailand, Puey Ungphakorn, said in August 1969 that, upon the ultimate withdrawal of these forces, Thailand could expect a loss of the equivalent of US\$150 million a year and 50,000 unemployed.

The Eurasian population is small. Some Western men who have lived in Thailand for a long period have married Thai women, and a few Thai who have studied abroad have brought back Western wives. Thai parents tend to disapprove of a daughter marrying a Westerner because they fear that she might be abandoned when he goes home and that it would be difficult for her to remarry. There is no such fear regarding sons. The Eurasian children of such marriages have no difficulty in being accepted as fully Thai if they so identify themselves. In fact, Eurasians are often admired for their physical appearance because Western standards of physical attractiveness have been combined with the older ideal of beauty, which is described in the *Ramayana* and other literary works of Indian origin.

#### Indians, Pakistanis, and Ceylonese

Indians, Pakistanis, and Ceylonese engage in commercial and service activities in Bangkok and the larger towns. Many are retail merchants who specialize in textiles, jewelry, precious metalwork, or specialty foods. Another group, most of whom belong to the Chettyar caste of Madras, consists of moneylenders and money-changers. A large number of Indians are employed as chauffeurs. The traditional occupations of the Sikhs are those of night watchmen and bank guards. A low-caste group living on the outskirts of Bangkok supplies the milk for the large quantity of ice cream consumed in the city.

In all of these economic activities except dairying, the Indians are in competition with the Chinese and often with the Thai. They perform no economic function that urban Thai feel they could not perform equally well; hence, their competition may at times be somewhat resented. Because they are conspicuously different from the Thai in physical type, migrants from the Indian subcontinent are considered a transient group. This attitude is expressed in the common and mildly derogatory reference to the Indians as "guests."

#### Urban Social Values and Loyalties

The basic Thai social attitudes and values evolved in a rural setting

and have changed little over the centuries. The urban centers, particularly Bangkok, however, have been greatly influenced by foreign values, especially those of Westerners.

The adoption of some Western values by the urban elite has been the result less of the influence of the small group of resident Westerners than of a policy begun a century ago by King Mongkut to give the ruling group a Western education and adopt whatever was useful from Western civilization (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

Western living conditions are admired. Most urban men and many urban women have adopted Western dress. To speak a Western language, especially English, and to show familiarity with Western food and manners are skills indicative of superior social status. Wealth, an important source of status in urban centers, is often indicated by the display of expensive Western-style consumer durables, such as automobiles and refrigerators.

The civil service administration and the organizational structure of the armed forces were built in conscious imitation of Western models and with the help of Western advisers. The British civil service, with its competitive written examinations and system of granting promotions on the basis of ability, was the model King Chulalongkorn used in reorganizing the bureaucracy. Nonetheless, a survey of attitudes of senior government officials undertaken in the 1960s indicated that the values of civil servants, many of whom were educated overseas, were basically the same as those of the rest of the Thai population.

The survey results indicated that members of the bureaucracy put a higher value on traditional Thai virtues—being benevolent, calm, self-assured, and authoritative toward subordinates and respectful, attentive, and compliant toward superiors—than they did on Westernized bureaucratic attributes, such as technical competence, intelligence, and skill in decisionmaking.

Urban people, especially the ruling group, have many more formal social bonds than do the rural people. They are more likely to be members of the civil and administrative hierarchies, to participate in political parties, and to join golf and social clubs.

The Thai view all social interaction as taking place between superiors and subordinates. They are uncomfortable if they cannot tell easily into which category to fit a newcomer so that they can behave appropriately. The ever-present concern with status in the social hierarchy makes a formal organization with explicit status marks, such as uniform insignia and titles, a convenient device permitting large groups of strangers to work together comfortably.

Informal social relationships are also of great importance among the elite. They sometimes coincide with, but often delineate different patterns from, those expressed in the formal bureaucratic organizational charts. Social scientists have asserted that these informal

social groupings show a common pattern involving clusters of followers, each connected to a leader.

The leader has usually emerged not so much propelled by his own ambition as pushed forward by the expectations of his followers that he will advance in power and prestige and will bring forward his followers with him. Each follower is primarily concerned with maintaining a close connection with his immediate superior in the group—either the leader or someone in an intermediary position between himself and the leader. Relations between members of the group not linked hierarchically to the leader are not generally close. Rivalry often exists between such persons, especially between followers equally distant from the leader. The size and loyalty of his following increase with each proof of the leader's success in improving his own situation and diminish as the leader's fortune declines. If the leader neglects to maintain personally the loyalty of his immediate subordinates in the group, the entire following may drop away.

The common informal social pattern helps explain the shifts in the allegiances within the ruling group that have resulted in numerous coups d'état since 1932. A similar pattern of factionalism, rendered inconspicuous by the Thai avoidance of open display of hostility, has been discerned in rural social relations.

The Chinese of Thailand are less concerned with hierarchy and status. Their interest in voluntary organizations is in part a result of their role as members of a minority group who have sought protection and mutual help from other Chinese sharing dialect, occupation, and interests. Many of the private Chinese organizations fulfill benevolent and welfare functions that were formerly executed in southern China by the now-defunct patrilineal kin group organizations that united, for welfare and other purposes, those persons of a given locality who shared the family name.

The Chinese still reckon descent and inheritance solely through the male line. Veneration of paternal ancestors is practiced at the time of the Chinese New Year, but few Chinese families in Thailand maintain the traditional ancestral shrines or tablets in their homes. The status of the husband is superior to that of the wife. Sons bring their wives into the parental home whenever possible. Kinship within the family continues to regulate a person's responsibilities, rights, and expectations on the basis of generation, age, and sex, just as it had in China. Conditions of urban life, however, prevent frequent realization of the traditional ideal of "five generations under one roof." The Chinese tend to value wealth, intelligence, and business acumen more highly and place a lower value on interpersonal harmony than do the Thai.

Thai of the lower income urban group tend to retain their rural values and find the city lonely and callous. Most lack any formal

bonds to urban institutions. Although single men often share a room together, the social ties among them are for the most part weak and are based on shared rural origins. The strongest social tie an urban Thai worker has is often to a monk from the home area residing in an urban temple. Many regard the urban area solely as a place to make money to bring back to the village. The city may be *sanuk* (glamorous, interesting, and entertaining), but the home village is *sabai* (comfortable, secure, and familiar).

#### RURAL THAI SOCIETY

The rural Thai comprise several regional groupings of varying size that correspond roughly to former political divisions and that possess minor differences in language, diet, dress, and custom. The Central Thai, formerly called Siamese, are the dominant group—culturally, politically, and numerically. Other important groups are: the Thai Isan of the northeastern region, who speak the Laotian dialect; the Thai Yuan of the area around Chiangmai; the Shan people, who live along the Thailand-Burma border; and the Thai Pak Tai, who live in the extreme south.

The dominance of Central Thai social patterns has increased with the development of modern means of communication, the expansion of the national school system with a uniform curriculum, and the increasing contact of urban personnel sent out by the central government to assist rural areas with community development projects. To an increasing degree Central Thai social patterns have been becoming patterns for society generally.

As is the case with other Thai groups, the Central Thai are more than 90 percent rural. The basic unit of their rural society is the family household, composed of a man, his wife and children and, frequently, other relatives living in the same house or household compound.

Beyond the household and the extended family, the principal social focuses are the local temple and the village school, both of which have provided opportunities for social advancement to the young. Joining the Sangha, even for a short period, has been a path to good moral and social standing in the community for the ordinary village boy. Before the establishment of a nationwide secular school system, the Sangha was also the only source of formal education, enabling an ambitious farmer's son to acquire the skills needed to move up the bureaucratic ladder.

Since the 1920s the government school has provided villagers with an alternate path to higher social status. Schoolteachers, especially headmasters, have prestigious and influential positions in the rural villages.

Rural settlement patterns vary. In some cases hamlets are strung

out along a road or waterway. In others, households are dispersed, each located in the midst of its riceland. Settlement clusters in which the houses of the village are situated close together are less common among the Central Thai than in the northern and northeastern regions. Among the Central Thai there is often no clearly defined village area or community. The families who share the same *wat* or school are the closest approximation to a village community.

The formal political and administrative hierarchy of the nation and province is connected to the village people through the office of the village headman. The prestige of the village headman is considerable, but his influence on village behavior is diminished by the fact that the political entity that he heads is an arbitrarily determined geographic area that does not usually coincide with settlement groupings or with the clientele of the local *wat* and school.

In remote villages where few have education and experience in dealing with the supra-village society, the headman has been the essential middleman for the villagers. He has helped them process their requests for government services and has helped them in all ways to cope with the outside world. In the northern and northeastern regions, where village solidarity is greater than among the Central Thai, headmen often complain of finding themselves caught between competing obligations—to the district and national officials and to the villagers, who seek to avoid government taxes and other demands. As one headman from the north stated the problem in the 1960s: "One is neither a villager nor an official. One is in the middle. It's hard and the money is small."

## The Family

### The Household

The nuclear family is the ideal and most often encountered form of family life. Larger groups of kinsmen cooperate for such activities as the ceremonial observance of transitional events in the life cycle or for planting and harvesting rice, but such arrangements are temporary. For most purposes, the nuclear family can function independently, and it constitutes the basic economic and social unit of Thai society. A common alternative to separate residences for nuclear families is the presence of two or more nuclear families, usually connected through the female line, either in the same building or in another structure within the same household compound.

The tendency for couples to live with or next to the wife's parents is more common in the north and northeast than among the Central Thai. In one Central Thai village studied in the 1950s it was common for the newly married couple to spend one or more years with the wife's family before settling permanently near the bride-

groom's family. Land is inherited through both parents but can easily be bought or sold. This has meant that the young couple has not been obliged by economic reasons to choose a particular place to live.

Family connections beyond the immediate household have less meaning than in the past; they nonetheless have significance in special circumstances. Kin connections are often the first to be exploited in cases of financial distress. Parents or wealthier brothers and sisters are often the first persons to whom an individual turns when in need of money; if they are unable to help, aunts, uncles, or cousins may be approached. A particularly strong bond of loyalty and dependence exists between brothers and between sisters. Kin ties, if activated by visits and shared participation at family observances, such as cremations and the conferring of holy orders, can bind together family members separated by great distances. Rural families often choose to maintain close ties with family members who have moved to Bangkok.

The fragmentation or dissolution of the nuclear family group is not uncommon. This phenomenon is accounted for in part by patterns of seasonal labor. In villages of the central region, many heads of households leave home for four or five months at a time to take temporary jobs in Bangkok. In addition, families with large numbers of children may send one or more children to stay with relatives, neighbors or, in the case of boys, to the *wat*, where, in return for their exposure to righteous ways of behaving, they act as servants to the monks.

*Pai thiw* (going around) is a tradition of unstructured travel by which young men in their twenties leave their home villages for unspecified periods of time, partly to earn cash from trade or wage labor but also motivated by a desire to see the world and have adventures. The youths usually go to urban centers.

Divorce is a fairly common cause of household fragmentation; older children follow their preferences in choosing the parent to accompany, although younger children usually remain with the mother. Still other families, too poor to be able to remain together as an economic unit, simply disperse, the young children often being taken in by kinsmen or other villagers.

Family allegiance is to those living members of the family whom one knows rather than to the ancestors. Relative age is a matter of critical importance in the internal regulation of family life. The guiding principle for all relationships within the family circle is that the elder member has authority over, and is responsible for, the younger member, even in the case of siblings only a year or two apart. Terms of address reflect the age of the speaker in comparison to that of the person to whom he is speaking.

Basic to the family system is the concept of a mutual exchange of



loving care for loving obedience between older and younger, the reciprocal nature of the relationship being reinforced by the right of either person to withdraw from the arrangement if unsatisfied with it. This concept of mutual obligations between superiors and subordinates, with freedom of either side to terminate the relationship, can be seen in operation throughout Thai society.

In general, family obligations are recognized and met. Parents are able to fulfill their roles as generous patrons of their children by giving them land. Children acknowledge their debt to parents and elder siblings for their care and protection and look after aged relatives.

#### Relations Between the Sexes

Persons who take meals around the same hearth are considered a family, and marriage within this group is forbidden. First cousins living in different households, however, may marry, although many parents disapprove of such marriages. In such cases where the match is encouraged, it is favored as a means of keeping property within the same family. In contrast with the ethnic Malays in the southern region, who almost invariably marry a partner from a different village than their own, the ethnic Thai have no strong tendency either way. In one village in the central region studied in the 1960s, the ratio of marriages between persons from the same village and between persons from different villages was about equal.

With few exceptions, Thai select their own spouses and marry when they choose. During courtship it is considered proper for a boy to talk about his love for a girl, to sing songs to her, or to flirt with her. Physical demonstrativeness, even handholding in public, is strongly deprecated, however.

The relations between husband and wife are the most egalitarian of any Thai social relations. A wife's duties to her children, husband, and his family are matched by equivalent duties of her husband to the children, to her, and to her family. Promiscuity or adultery in either sex is disapproved but is especially condemned in women. An illegitimate child, however, is not blamed for the behavior of his parents and will be reared by relatives as one of their own.

Buddhist nuptial ceremonies are elaborate in the case of well-to-do families of the Central Lowland Region. They culminate in the formal installation of the newly wedded couple in their new residence. Elopement—usually with the parents' tacit consent—has become a common means of avoiding the expense of a formal ceremony and wedding feast. In the northern region elaborate Buddhist marriage rituals are rare. Instead, marriage is signaled by a relatively simple ceremony to placate the spirits of the wife's house who, it is alleged, would otherwise be angered by the intrusion of nonkinsmen into the sleeping area of the house.

Divorce and remarriage are common. In some villages it has been noted that women are usually the initiators of divorce, but in others men are. Marriage bonds are dissolved with relative ease, especially before a child is born, and in the villages many persons have been married several times. Most separated partners remain on friendly terms, particularly when there are children. Unless the marriage had been registered, a formal divorce is not necessary, mutual agreement by husband and wife being sufficient. Abandonment is also equivalent to divorce. Upon separating by mutual agreement or by formal divorce, each takes the property he or she brought to the marriage, whereas joint property is divided equally.

Although the overwhelming majority of Thai always have been monogamous, polygamy has been, and in the form of concubinage still is, practiced by some wealthy men as a symbol of status. The government discourages polygamy by refusing the second wife legal status and by requiring the husband to recognize formally his children by the concubine if they are to be included among the legitimate heirs. It also propagandizes to persuade women to reject the status of concubine.

Theravada Buddhism provides, in theory, an inferior status for women. Women are regarded as potential defilers of the Sangha, and no monk may on any account have physical contact with a woman. Any offerings given by a woman to a monk must be placed in his cloth, which he touches in acknowledgment of acceptance. Nonetheless, women are more frequent contributors of food and other items of daily charity to the Sangha than men, and their moral prestige is high. In one village of central Thailand it was noted that women are regarded as morally superior to men as a result of the presumption that women have a greater motivation to achieve merit so that they can be reincarnated in their next life as men.

The secular educational system has provided women for the first time with the opportunity to advance socially by their own efforts. Women have eagerly accepted this opportunity to enter the professions. For example, in the field of medicine, the demand of women for training was so great that the government was obliged to fix a quota for female medical students of 33 percent. The quota was imposed because it was believed that the medical schools would otherwise graduate too high a percentage of doctors who were likely to give up their professional practice during the childbearing years.

#### Growth and Development

An infant is officially recognized as a member of the community when he is several months old, at which time he receives a name and

is registered in the headman's records. The name is usually selected by the village abbot after an analysis of astrological conditions. Previously the baby may have been called by a diminutive, such as "little one," "little pig," or "little mouse," and these names may be used by close relatives until the individual reaches maturity.

At about two years of age, usually after the birth of another infant, the child is brought to realize that he is no longer the baby of the family. By the age of three or four, deliberately naughty acts are punished, although severe corporal punishment is rare. The child also begins to learn the proper forms of address for older and younger brothers and sisters, older and young cousins, and older and younger aunts and uncles and to accept his place in the family hierarchy. The basic gesture of obeisance is taught; later the different degrees in which it may be extended—clasped palms raised to the forehead for monks and the Buddha; to the nose, for village elders—are inculcated. The basic respect-prestige pattern of Thai culture, based on age differentiation, is instilled at this time.

Until his third or fourth year the Thai child stays entirely with the family, playing nude in the family compound. After the age of three the girls begin to wear skirts; the boys may run naked in the house and yard until they are five or six. At about the age of four the children begin to play with their age-mates in the village. They soon segregate into sex groups and roam freely through the village. In general, childhood is a carefree, happy time, and until they are seven or eight years old children have no regular chores except caring for their baby brothers and sisters.

At this age girls must begin to help around the house, and boys are given such tasks as watching the family buffaloes. At the age of seven the child enters the government primary school and attends classes until he has completed the required primary course or reaches fourteen years of age (see ch. 6, Education, Culture, and Public Information).

Children are frequently adopted, especially by childless couples. Adopted children are usually treated by their foster parents in the same manner that natural progeny are in matters relating to marriage and inheritance. The adopted child does not inherit from his real parents in such cases. Sometimes an older boy or girl will be adopted to help a man and his wife manage their farm when their own children are too young to help. In return for this assistance the foster parents, or patrons, guarantee eventual support in establishing the young person's own household.

As the children approach the end of the primary schooling, the pressure to assume an adult workload becomes progressively greater; by the age of fifteen or sixteen most have taken on a full load. Along with this greater involvement in adult economic activities, adolescents begin flirtations, which eventually lead to the selec-

tion of potential marriage partners. Marriage usually occurs in the boy's early or middle twenties. Before marriage he may wish to enter the Sangha as a novice or, if he is over twenty years of age, he may prefer to become a monk. If he is able to do so, the experience will bring him special respect and deference throughout his life and qualify him to take a place of leadership in the religious affairs of the community.

To have a son enter the Sangha often involves considerable economic sacrifice for the family, for he has only recently been able to do an adult's work; in return, however, this brings the family much merit. The most auspicious time for a boy to enter the Sangha is during Phansa, which covers the three-month rainy season when the crops are growing. Membership at this season brings more merit than an equivalent period at other times of the year, for service during Phansa counts as an entire year. Whether a man decides to remain in the Sangha for a few days, during the whole of Phansa, or for a much longer time depends on his personal choice and other circumstances (see ch. 8, Religion).

At the age of eighteen all men must register for military service, and they generally are called for service at age twenty-one. For many of those who are drafted, the period of military service is the only time they are away from their home districts and in extensive contact with urban life. At the end of the training period, recruits return to their villages and soon resume the rural routine, since probably most continue to regard themselves as farmers and expect to remain as such.

For a village girl, entry into adolescence and adulthood comes in more gradual and less marked steps, but certain significant transitional phases can be observed, such as being allowed to mill rice with a girl friend at night in the compound, to go by herself to market, to have a permanent wave when she is fifteen or sixteen, and to receive suitors unchaperoned on the veranda of her parent's house. Courtship is also carried on at dusk around the rice mill, when the girls are pounding rice for the family meals, in the work groups at planting and harvesttime, and at the festivals.

The full responsibilities of adulthood begin with the establishment of a new household, and most young couples begin to prepare for the event after marriage while they are living with the parents of one or the other. In the case of a couple that is to reside in the wife's family house or compound until she inherits the property, the new household is not established until after the death or retirement of her father.

The wife does most of the buying for the family in the local markets. Through the sale of eggs, fruits, vegetables, and small livestock, she produces a sizable portion of the family cash income. She always has an important voice in the handling of the family's

finances and not infrequently holds the purse strings. In the commercialized delta area, however, where large amounts of money are brought in by the sale of rice, the husband seems to keep control of the income. In most families income earned by the teenage children remains their own property, though they may turn it over to the mother for safekeeping.

The period of active adulthood continues through the years of rearing children. The government has officially set the age of sixty as the final year for retirement from office, and this seems to correspond with the Thai understanding of the beginning of old age.

#### The Wat

All members of the Buddhist clergy, both permanent and temporary, stand apart from secular Thai society and enjoy a special status position. Uniformly and distinctively attired in saffron robes, they are regarded as exemplars and transmitters of the *dharma* (the truth taught by the Buddha). Members of the Sangha receive deference and signs of respect even from the king, whose secular rank exceeds all others. The Sangha is considered to be outside the secular affairs of the community, but its rural members tend to be involved to a considerable degree in the worldly affairs of the village.

In the villages the line between sacred and secular activities is not usually sharply drawn, although it is becoming more so. The *wat* is both the social center of the community and the site of most religious observances. Association with the *wat* lends an aura of supernatural meritoriousness, which helps ensure the success of the project at hand. When money is being raised to finance a local project, such as a bridge or a village road, the contributions may be kept at the *wat*; thus secular contributions to the project are linked with the merit-earning contributions to the *wat* itself.

Monks are at the top of the village prestige scale, and their potentiality as instigators or guides of social action and change is considerable, provided that they do not overstep the bounds of what is generally acknowledged as the religious sphere. Their support in political and other purely secular fields is not solicited by the villager; if offered, it would be thought of as inappropriate to the unworldly role of the monk. The opposition of the Sangha, however, would doom any project.

The role of the *wat* as a window on the world beyond the village has increased in some ways and diminished in others during the 1960s. The *wat* is usually the first, and sometimes the only, place in a rural village to have indoor plumbing, a radio, a television set, and various other modern amenities. These amenities are often contributed by wealthy patrons from urban centers who choose the rural

*wat* as a convenient recipient for merit-making charity. Although the daily sustenance and maintenance of the village *wat* come largely from local sources, in recent years the larger projects and capital improvements of the *wat* have almost always been the result of contributions of people in the urban centers. Improved communications have thus brought the rural *wat* and its clientele into closer ties with urban, modern society.

The importance of the *wat* as an educational institution and as virtually the only instrument able to transform a rural peasant's child into a socially mobile, literate government official has been greatly diminished by the development in the twentieth century of a public, secular education system. In the 1960s the monks and those educated by them were no longer the only educated rural people. The schoolteacher and the headman, both secularly educated government officials, have come to share some of the prestige that formerly accrued solely to the clergy.

Since the removal of the field of education from the Sangha's monopolistic control, the domination of religious values and concerns over rural society has diminished. Secular education, commerce, and ready access to urban life and living styles have opened up new paths for upward social mobility.

### Thai Regional Differences

Although the differences among Thai-speaking peoples from various regions in the country are much less noticeable than are the similarities, these differences continued to exist in 1970. They had received more attention and emphasis during the 1960s as a result of the increase in social contact between Thai of different regions. In particular, the concern of the central government, with its predominantly Central Thai orientation, to improve welfare and security in the northeastern region in response to the threat of insurgency there tended to call nationwide attention to the regional traits that characterize northeasterners and distinguish them from Central Thai.

#### Thai Isan

Members of the dominant Thai-speaking group in the northeastern region are generally referred to as Thai Isan or Lao. The category sometimes includes the Thai-speaking population in the northern region around Chiangmai and Chiang Rai, although locally these northerners are known as Thai Yuan. Thai Isan are distinguished from the Central Thai by: a preference for glutinous, rather than ordinary nonglutinous, rice as the staple cereal; the use of Lao (the Laotian dialect of Thai) as opposed to the Central Thai dialect in

speaking; a distinctive script; and a regional style of music, drama, and religious architecture.

The area inhabited by persons speaking the Laotian dialect of Thai extends from the Khorat Plateau across the border into Laos. There has been a constant flow of population back and forth across the Mekong River, which marks the frontier between Thailand and Laos.

Although Laos shares the culture of the Thai Isan, a survey of ethnic identity and loyalty of Thai Isan conducted in the mid-1960s indicated that, although the Thai Isan in recent years have acquired a heightened awareness of their regional distinctiveness vis á vis the Central Thai, they regard themselves as Thai citizens and feel no national identity with neighboring Laos. It was suggested that this lack of identification with Laos was partly the result of the fact that the vast majority of the Lao speakers—approximately 8 million—live in Thailand, and only 1 million live in Laos. The fact that the Thai Isan had never been subject to colonial rule, whereas the Laotians had, may also have contributed to the expressed loyalty of the Thai Isan to Thailand.

#### Thai Yuan

The term *Thai Yuan* is generally used to refer to the major Thai-speaking group in the northern region, particularly in the Chiangmai area. Although similar to the Thai Isan or Lao and often called Lao by foreigners, the Thai Yuan are distinguishable from other Thai groups by their history of centuries of independence from Central Thai control and slight differences in language and culture existing between this area and the Lao area to the east. The Thai Yuan area includes the modern provinces of Chiangmai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae, and Nan.

#### Thai Pak Tai

The Thai Pak Tai, a group of Thai speakers living in the southern region along the Isthmus of Kra, numbered more than 1.5 million in 1970. They have racial features believed to be indicative of intermixture with non-Thai inhabitants of the area, including Malays and Negritos. Like the Malays of the area, the Thai Pak Tai engage in rubber planting and tapping and commercial fishing, as well as cultivating irrigated rice and raising cattle. They speak a dialect called *tamprue*.

#### Shan, Phuthai, and Lu

The Shan of Thailand, who numbered under 50,000 in 1970, are

ethnically part of the more numerous and important group living in the Shan states of Burma. At one time the Shan (also called Thai Yai, Thai Long, or Great Thai) controlled much of Burma and large parts of northern Thailand. In modern times they have been a minority group in both countries.

In Thailand, the Shan, whom the Central Thai call Ngio (Ngiaw), reside principally in the area northwest of Chiangmai. Their customs are similar to those of other Thai speakers, but the men's costumes are distinctive. They actively engage in trade in many parts of the country.

Phuthai are found in extreme northeastern Thailand, near the Laotian border, and probably number about 100,000. They came into Thailand in the nineteenth century from Laos and settled in compact communities, primary in the provinces of Nakhon Phanom, Sakon Nakhon, Kalasin, Udon Thani, and Sisaket. In dress, agricultural techniques, and domestic architecture they are much like the neighboring Lao.

Other lesser known Thai peoples in the country include the Lu, or Lue, who have emigrated from Yunnan Province in China into nearby areas of Burma, Thailand, and Laos. In Thailand estimates of their numbers are in the range upwards of 50,000. The Lu are found principally in Chiang Rai and Nan provinces of the northern region. Until recently some Lu in northern Thailand lived in multi-family longhouses. This practice perhaps reflected an adaptation to pioneer conditions of the Lu walled-fortress towns in Yunnan. The Lu, who live in the plains, have a tradition of trade with various hill peoples in the region and serve as intermediaries between the hill peoples and the dominant society of the plains.

The persistence of tribal names in use by the people themselves to identify various small groups of Thai speakers in northern and northeastern Thailand is probably more the result of shared political history, such as past membership in one or another of the ancient city-states of Yunnan, Indochina, northern Thailand, and northern Burma, than it is the result of significant distinctions in language and culture.

#### Social Values

The basic values of Thai culture were developed in a predominantly rural society, but in their essentials they have been upheld by townsmen and villagers alike. Western influences and domestically generated social, economic, and political change are altering the concepts of good and evil and of virtue and vice. The traditional terms, however, still remain as basic reference points on the list, and there is no indication that they will soon be displaced. These key values may be considered as falling into three categories: spiritual



development and the attainment of merit, individual responsibility, and status ranking and authority. From them may be derived the image of the ideal person as conceptualized by the Thai.

Men and women should be moderate in demeanor, respectful to elders and social superiors, self-reliant, generous, honest, and self-disciplined. Traditionally, the ideal man was, and generally remains, the Buddhist monk—an individual devoting himself to the attainment of ultimate perfection by personal discipline, meditation, and virtuous behavior. On a more practical level he is depicted as one who has served in the Buddhist temple for some months or years, has attained merit from this and other activities, is a good provider for his family, and is an active leader in his community. The ideal woman is pictured as a good wife and mother, respectful, obedient and helpful to her husband, a wise manager of the family purse, and a devout Buddhist.

A major goal is the attainment and accumulation of merit, achieved by serving at least temporarily as a monk, by conforming to the Buddhist moral code, and by performing meritorious acts. Of the values associated with merit-making, one of the most important is generosity. Any act of giving, regardless of whether the recipient is a temple, an individual monk, a relative, or a friend, brings the donor some degree of merit and the expectation that he will be rewarded. Certain kinds of generosity are more virtuous than others. Contributing money for the construction of a temple, for example, is one of the most meritorious acts one can perform, second only to becoming a monk. The Thai say that to gain merit by generosity a person must sincerely want to give and must not later mar the act with regrets.

One of the fundamental values is individualism, expressed in the feeling that, within wide limits, each person is and should be responsible only to himself and that his actions are no one else's concern. Individual freedom of action is highly prized.

Living in a society in which social relationships are all patterned after the basic patron and client model, the individual has great latitude for the expression of idiosyncrasies. Deviant behavior may not be condoned, but it is considered the concern of the individual, and he will not be interfered with except in extreme cases. There is also a strong disposition to avoid face-to-face conflict. If a villager becomes too deviant in his behavior, negative sanctions of noncooperation and ultimately social ostracism may be imposed by his fellows. In the city there is more opportunity than in the villages to deviate from accepted standards of conduct and more likelihood of intervention by the agencies of the law. Everywhere, however, the range of permissive social behavior is relatively wide, provided that face-to-face politeness and decorum are maintained.

The individualistic nature of the culture, placing responsibility for

self squarely on the individual, is reflected in the pattern of status ranking and authority. Society is an elaborate hierarchy of status in which each individual sees himself as above or below, but seldom precisely equal to, those around him. A feature of this pattern is a system of highly formalized respect usages that are expressed in language, gesture, and posture. Perhaps the first social act a child learns is the gesture of respect (*wai*), which is made by pressing the palms together as in prayer. The gesture is used in a variety of ways, from simple salutations, particularly between persons of different status, to veneration of Buddha. Similarly, there are prescribed ways of sitting in the presence of superiors and of handing items to them or receiving items from them.

Instructions in morality given to public school children stress the desirability of behaving properly toward superiors and subordinates. In a lesson summarizing desirable personal characteristics children are cautioned to show proper deference to their superiors, not to be concerned with their own comfort before the comfort of superiors and, if they become superiors, to look after the comfort of their inferiors.

The hierarchical system stratifies individuals rather than social groups and, although the authority of persons in high places is readily accepted, individualistic values work against the dictatorial exercise of authority. The reciprocal nature of the obligations of superior and subordinate is always borne in mind. A superior must act with tact and some delicacy if he wishes to retain the acceptance of his position by subordinates. Only where compliance to the demands of authority can be compelled, as by the state through its legal machinery, is more direct application of authority feasible.

The government has found it better to persuade and lead the people than to command them. The prime minister has instructed district officers to respect the tradition of the society and administer their districts paternalistically rather than autocratically. In the village the headman leads by persuasion and by guiding villagers to a consensus in the village meetings rather than by decree.

The Thai expect leaders to exercise authority, however, and the concept of what constitutes the legitimate exercise of authority is broad. If authority is exercised discreetly and in conformity with Buddhist concepts of virtue and righteousness, the people are willing to accept it over a wide range of activities and interests.

Although the basic loyalty of the individual is to the family group forming his household, the strength of kinship bonds outside the household depends largely on proximity and personal preference. Among the people generally, kinsmen may maintain warm personal relations with one another throughout their lives, but only the nearest relatives have binding claims, and the ties between friends and neighbors are often as close as those between all but immediate kinsmen.

Friendships play an important role, particularly among the men. Friends are often described as "die friends" or "eating friends." The "die friendship" is an ideal not often realized, for it requires a willingness to sacrifice even life itself, if necessary, for the sake of the friend. In the past members of bandit gangs sometimes made such formal pacts with each other. Now such friendships are most often the means of maintaining bonds between young men who live at some distance from each other and have shared an experience or adventure, such as having spent time together in Bangkok. Less binding but often close "eating friendships" are formed between men of about the same age. Formalized friendships between adolescent boys involving reciprocal duties and privileges on the pattern of "blood brotherhood" can be found in the northern and north-eastern regions.

The concern with polite deference and hesitancy to bother or disturb another person is great and is sometimes expressed by the term *kreng chai*. The term is usually used in reference to one's attitude toward superiors. *Kreng chai* involves the desire to be self-effacing, respectful, humble, and extremely considerate, as well as the wish to avoid embarrassing other people or intruding or imposing upon them.

Such attitudes help explain why the Thai like to use a middleman in negotiations or in other relationships where the principals might risk embarrassment if they dealt with each other directly. The middleman can cushion, absorb, or cover up aggression, lack of generosity, and fear.

Moderation and serenity are among the most important social values. Moderation is thought of as a means to good health and the keynote of successful social relationships. One should be friendly, pleasant, and polite to other people—not too involved, yet not too distant—and moderation should be maintained even in the closest relationships. Children are taught to show respect and deference to parents, but they are not expected to be compulsively dutiful or obedient. Serenity, mildness, and nonaggression are frequently named as the most important of all personal values. A man may be educated, industrious, and generous, but if he is not self-controlled, he cannot be considered a really good man.

Most statements of praise or admiration will include references to a person's ability to refrain from showing his feelings. In the Thai view men who never show their feelings help everyone to live more happily together. They are thoughtful, serious persons who do not want to cause trouble. Similarly, most statements of condemnation include comments on the offender's belligerence and aggression. Persons who lie, use rude or insulting language, or persistently irritate or threaten others are almost universally disliked.

People tend not only to avoid unhappy or emotionally charged situations but to take whatever pleasure they can in the passing

moment. As a consequence some observers have characterized the Thai as fun-loving, carefree, and endowed with a delightful sense of humor. Others, however, assert that all these manifestations of affability, politeness, and apparent gaiety may not be expressions of carefree lightheartedness but techniques of implementing the main rule of social intercourse, which is to avoid face-to-face conflict. Such traits permit the individual to keep most persons at a distance by confining their social intercourse to the entertaining, jovial, and inconsequential. The only way to establish greater intimacy is to establish oneself as a superior or an inferior in the basic patron-client relationship.

Although impulsiveness, impatience, quick temper, and oversensitiveness are to be avoided, hostility and aggressive feelings are often expressed indirectly. This may be done by insulting an animal or child in the hearing of the person at whom the feelings are directed or, vicariously, as by watching aggressive sports, such as boxing, soccer, or cockfights. Gossip and backbiting, although disapproved of, provide indirect release of such feelings.

To feel that things are not intrinsically important, to be cool hearted, and to be as uninvolved as possible, are, if not carried too far, general Thai values. Contrasting but not conflicting with the value of detachment are the three other chief virtues of Buddhism: compassion for others (*karuna*), loving kindness or benevolence (*metta*), and empathy for the joy and sorrows of others (*mudita*).

The Thai place a high value on neatness in dress and bodily gracefulness. It is not considered vain to be meticulous about one's physical appearance but rather indicates a meritorious desire to please others.

Graceful and inconspicuous bodily movement is approved as indicative of self-control. For the Sangha, there are detailed regulations governing physical movement, including prohibitions on eating or walking noisily or conspicuously. Prohibitions of this type apply only slightly less strictly to the laity. Loud talk and abrupt movements are deprecated.

## NON-THAI RURAL COMMUNITIES

### Malays

The Malays in Thailand represent a fairly homogeneous minority that has been highly resistant to assimilation into the national culture. Except at the official level, they have little contact with their Thai neighbors. Brigandage and ethnic isolationism, which are complicated by Communist terrorism along the Thai-Malaysian border initiated by ethnic Chinese from Malaysia, add to the gap between ethnic Malay and Thai that already exists because of language and religion.

The Malay family resembles that of the Thai in a number of ways. Among both peoples kinship is reckoned bilaterally. Among both, the nuclear family, housed in its own separate dwelling, is the basic social unit. Frequently the youngest child will bring his or her spouse to live in the parental home, and the young couple will eventually inherit the parental home and farm. The primary relationships are those between members of the nuclear family. More distant kinship, however, does permit individuals to establish a friendly relationship more easily than if they were not kinsmen.

Until recently bride and bridegroom always were expected to come from different villages, and the couple would live alternately in each village until they made a final choice. In 1970, however, young men in fishing villages tended to rely heavily on fishing for their income and were therefore less willing to move if their brides came from inland villages where the husbands would be unable to pursue their means of livelihood.

One of the chief bars to assimilation between Malays and Thai is that both groups are deeply attached to their own religion, language, and culture. For the Malays, being a Malay means being a Muslim, speaking Malay, and living in the Malay style. For both groups behavior, rather than race, is the chief criterion of ethnic identity. Thus cultural compromises are difficult to achieve.

The Malays share many social values with the Thai. The desire to please those around one, create a harmonious social atmosphere, and avoid face-to-face conflict or hostility is as great among the Malays as among the Thai. Courtship behavior and child rearing are similar, as well as the concern with neatness and attractiveness in appearance and dress. The Malay concern with hierarchy and social status is as great as the Thai, but the social mobility offered by the Buddhist religious institutions and the freedom for the subordinate to dissolve his tie to his superior-patron, so characteristic of the Thai value system, are notably absent among Malays. Racial and religious considerations have tended to inhibit intermarriage between Thai and Malays to a far greater extent than in the case of Sino-Thai intermarriage.

#### Hill Tribes

Between 200,000 and 400,000 persons of non-Thai-speaking ethnic groups were included in the hill tribes category in 1970. The most important were the Karen, Akha, Lisu, and Lahu, who have ethnic ties with hill tribes in Burma, and the Meo (Miao) and Yao, whose origins are in southern China. The Karen were the most numerous group, numbering about 75,000. The next largest group consisted of 50,000 Meo. The Akha probably numbered under 30,000, and other hill tribes had populations of under 20,000.

In 1970 the central government was concerned about problems of

security in the hill area occupied by the Meo tribesmen. In 1968 a Communist-inspired uprising broke out among the Meo; the Thai government learned that Communist agents had been recruiting among the Meo since 1959.

A new program of the Ministry of the Interior announced in October 1969, attempted to gain the loyalty of the hill people by facilitating their assimilation into Thai national society. The program was to include instruction in Thai history, culture, and citizenship. Training in better farming techniques and resettlement on other land was also to be undertaken in order to reduce sources of friction with the central government arising from agricultural practice of the hill tribes (see ch. 13, Agriculture and Industry).

Among the major hill peoples it is customary for newlyweds to live with or near the family of the husband rather than that of the wife. A new household, however, is not usually established until some time after the recognition of the marriage. Among the Meo, for example, a married son usually continues to live in a section of his father's house until he has reached the age of thirty. Among the Lisu the eldest son generally continues to live with his parents, but younger sons may set up independent households or, in exceptional instances, live briefly with the wife's family until the bride-price has been paid.

The composition of the average household among various tribes ranges from three persons to twenty or more. Large households, sheltering an extended family, include a man and his wife together with their children, married and single, and their children's children. Polygamy is permitted, so that second wives and their children may also be present, although this occurs relatively seldom, as only the wealthy can afford to have several wives. Polygamy has some economic advantages, since the labor of an additional wife can contribute to the wealth of the household.

The family is the basic social and economic unit. The eldest male has supreme authority in the household. Family members comprise a production unit, working together to clear fields and raise crops. Religious worship, as well as recreational and educational activity, is also a family function.

### Mon-Khmer Speakers

Another grouping of minority peoples includes those who speak Mon-Khmer languages. Among these communities are the Mon, whose origins are Burmese; the Khmer (Cambodians) and the Kui, with whom they have intermarried; the Lawa, who are found in the northern hills; such small groups as the Kaleung, Kha Brao, So, and Sek, who are immigrants who crossed the Mekong from the mountains of Laos; and the aboriginal Negritos of the southern region.

Although the early inhabitants of the Chao Phraya valley and much of the northern region were Mon, they were completely assimilated by the incoming Thai (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). The present Mon group in Thailand is descended either from prisoners of war or from relatively recent refugees from Burma in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. All of the Mon group are alleged to understand Thai, and some know only Thai. Most of them live near Bangkok and elsewhere in the central region, but some are scattered along the valley of the Khwae Noi (a tributary of the Mae Klong) up to the Burmese border. Estimates of their number in 1970 ranged from 60,000 to 100,000.

The Khmer, or Cambodian, minority resides principally in the provinces east and southeast of Bangkok and in the southern Khorat Plateau along the border with Cambodia—territory that was once Cambodian and later became Thai. A few communities west of Bangkok are composed of the descendants of Khmer prisoners of war. The Khmer differ only slightly from the Thai in both their manner of life and their Buddhist religion. Their language, however, belongs to a different stock than Thai. Estimates of the size of the Khmer minority in 1970 varied from 160,000 to 400,000.

The Kui, or Soai, are found in the hills along both sides of the Thailand-Cambodia border. Most of them are in the provinces of Roi Et, Surin, Ubon Ratchathani, and Sisaket. The estimated size of the group in 1970 was over 100,000. They are small-scale farmers, like their Lao and Khmer neighbors, from whom they have adopted the practice of permanent wet-rice cultivation.

Small bands of Negritos, thought to be the last remnants of the earliest population of the Malay Peninsula, live in the jungles north of the Thailand-Malaysia border. The number of Negritos living in Thailand in 1961 was estimated to be approximately 300; another 2,000 or more lived in Malaysia. Their appearance is distinctive; they have dark skin and wooly hair, and adult males are usually under four feet, ten inches in height. The term *Semang* is used to identify these people in both Malaysia and Thailand. Other terms used in Thailand include the Thai terms *Ngoh Paa* (meaning rambutan fruit people—in reference to their hair), which has derogatory connotations, and *Khon Paa* (forest people). The Negritos sometimes refer to themselves as Moni, Monik, and Menik. These terms mean “people” in the Mon-Khmer dialects that the Negritos have adopted as their languages.

The Negritos are very retiring and avoid contact with outsiders. Their material possessions are few: blowpipes and poison darts for hunting, pandanus leaf baskets, monkey-bone necklaces, split bamboo combs, and Jew's harps. Until recently they did not farm and wandered the jungle gathering wild foods. They were nomads without any but the most temporary makeshift shelters.

By 1960 many bands had learned to clear jungle areas and plant corn, tapioca, or rice. Since the Communist insurgency in Malaysia from 1948 to 1960, Negritos have moved out of the interior jungle and have settled semipermanently near roads and police posts. Acculturation to Thai patterns has begun. Many wear clothing that has been given them by villagers. Most of the men have some fluency in the southern Thai dialect or in Malay; they have adopted the Thai greeting gesture. Some earn cash working for Thai and Malay farmers during rice planting and harvesting seasons.



## CHAPTER 5

### LIVING CONDITIONS

By Southeast Asian standards living conditions are relatively high. Nearly everyone is adequately fed, clothed, and housed. Unemployment is not a serious problem in the relatively small wage-earning segment of the population, and a tolerable level of living can be achieved by nearly everyone willing to work. The same is true in agricultural areas where rich natural resources and a gentle climate offer relatively comfortable living conditions to the farming majority.

Individual incomes are low by Western standards, but there is little stress because of a lack of cash. The average annual per capital income is the equivalent of about US\$170. But the Consumer Price Index is comparably low and most Thai are able to spend small cash surpluses on the few luxury goods they desire. Moreover, the idea of accumulating wealth for its own sake has been alien to the Thai outlook historically, and only certain types of goods, held in esteem for their status value as much as for the contribution they make to personal comfort, are considered really important. There are indications that in some of the larger urban centers a desire for wealth may be assuming importance, but generally most people are content with their lot.

In the fields of public health and welfare, the Thai traditionally have turned to close relatives, friends, and neighbors or have relied on the local Buddhist temple for help in time of need. Since the end of World War II, however, systematic government activities and programs conducted by the Ministry of Public Health and by the Department of Public Welfare in the Ministry of the Interior have assumed the greater part of the load. Operations of these agencies are included in official plans for economic and social development and are allotted about 14 percent of the annual national budget. In the area of public health they involve the construction of new hospitals and medical facilities, programs to control communicable diseases, the establishment of health centers to bring medical services to rural regions, the expansion of institutions to train medical personnel and technicians of all types, and the institution of a nationwide program of health education at all levels of society. In the area of public welfare the government is active in the provision of housing for low-income families, the development and improve-

ment of potable water supplies, the construction of sewage and sanitation projects, and the operation of a number of programs catering to the aged, young, disabled, destitute, underprivileged, handicapped, and other needy citizens (see ch. 12, Character and Structure of the Economy).

The health and welfare activities of the Thai government are supplemented by more than fifty private charitable organizations and by various international welfare organizations, particularly by local branches of the specialized agencies of the United Nations. Many of the domestic nongovernment efforts are not completely self-supporting and have to be helped by subsidies provided by the ministries of public health and the interior.

Despite the considerable advances that have been made, much remains to be done in the fields of public health, sanitation, and welfare. Many parts of the country, especially the Northeast Khorat Plateau Region, suffer from chronic water shortages, and sewage disposal is inadequate in most areas. Diseases caused by poor sanitation remain leading causes of illness and death. In addition, because most of the country's hospitals and Western-trained physicians are found in and around Bangkok, the mass of the people lack modern medical care and continue to rely on traditional remedies and on practitioners of Chinese medicine.

### STANDARDS OF LIVING

Standards of living are not uniform throughout Thailand so that sharp contrasts exist between life in urban and rural areas and among the various geographic regions of the country. The disparity between urban and rural life is the result of growing industrialization and the impact of Western influences on recreation and the pace of living; that among geographic regions stems from environmental factors that make the basic necessities of life cheaper or more available in some areas than in others.

The highest standards are found in the metropolitan area of Bangkok, where there are more jobs, goods, and services available and the people operate almost exclusively on a money economy. The same is true to a lesser degree in other urban centers throughout the nation. Some rural residents, in fact, assert that conditions in the cities are better than in the countryside; but, in general, they do not seem to envy the city dweller's way of life with its traffic congestion, crowded housing, bars, restaurants, and many establishments of amusement.

Among the regions, living standards are lowest in the Northeast Khorat Plateau, where agricultural production is handicapped by a long dry season and sandy soil, roads and highways are inadequate,

the incidence of disease is most prevalent, villages lack health and community services, and per capita income is about one-half the national average.

Nevertheless, the people everywhere feel relatively secure in their basic ways of life. They have all the primary needs, such as food, housing, and clothing, and show few signs of frustration arising from unfulfilled wants.

#### Diet and Nutrition

The supply of food, except in some areas of the Northeast Khorat Plateau Region, is abundant, and most Thai appear to have enough to eat. The daily per capita intake in 1970 was estimated to be about 2,100 calories, which is superior to that in many other countries of Southeast Asia. The variety of foodstuffs, nevertheless, is sometimes limited, and the reliance on a practically all-rice diet provides inadequate protein, vitamins, and calcium so that nutritional diseases are prevalent in many areas.

Rice, which supplies about 80 percent of the daily caloric intake, is the basis of all meals at every income level. Traditionally, the grain was home pounded and retained a good deal of the bran; consequently, much of the vitamin B-1, without which beriberi, a vitamin-deficiency disease, results. In more modern times, however, machine-milled, polished rice has become customary. In Bangkok rice is sold only in this form, and even in rural areas farmers usually send their rice to local mills for processing. In order to retain nutritional value, rice is sometimes parboiled to drive the vitamins into the kernels before milling; at other times, special grains containing concentrated thiamin, niacin, riboflavin, and other vitamins and minerals are added to enrich ordinary rice. People object to the odor and color of parboiled rice and to the cost of enriched grain, however, so the vast majority persist in eating the less nutritious polished form.

To the maximum extent the family budget will allow, the basic rice diet is supplemented by fish, meat, eggs, poultry, vegetables, and a variety of fruits. Fish is the major source of protein, although it is often unavailable in the Northern and Western Mountain and the Northeast Khorat Plateau regions. It is salted, dried, pickled, fermented, boiled, and eaten raw. Often small bits are combined with saffron and added to fried rice. Pork, beef, and poultry are available in limited amounts and are eaten, particularly in urban areas, as often as they can be afforded. To save costs, poorer people eat the meat of aged draft animals as a substitute. Most common garden vegetables are plentiful and are eaten separately or in salads. There is an abundance of fruits, including apples, bananas, papayas,

pineapples, limes, *rambutans* (a pulpy fruit like litchi nuts), mango-  
teens, and *pomelos* (grapefruit), and they form important items in  
the diet.

Cooking has traditionally been an art, and Thai women take pride  
in their skill in preparing sauces, savories, curries, condiments,  
sweets, and desserts and in serving foods in an attractive manner.  
Exquisite flowers are carved out of vegetables as garnishes for  
dishes, and a flower petal or bright condiment is usually added as a  
final touch.

Typical Thai dishes include *gang tom yam*, a hot broth made from  
lemon grass garnished with prawns and served with a dash of lime  
juice. Chicken, stuffed with grated coconut and roasted on a spit, is  
a favorite. The coconut is used only for flavoring and is removed  
before the chicken is eaten. Curry paste and soy sauce are used with  
makroot for curry, and a salad of cucumbers and tiny leeks with a  
soy sauce dressing is common. Many types of spices are used in the  
preparation of meat dishes. Desserts are usually fruit or sweets  
made with coconut. Milk and dairy products are rarely consumed.

Eating habits vary slightly between urban and rural areas. In  
urban areas more vegetables and meat products are eaten, and  
canned goods are more in demand. In the countryside peasants  
usually eat two meals a day but have frequent snacks. Meal hours  
are irregular; the family eats when it gets hungry, except when the  
work of the planting and harvesting seasons demands breakfast at  
dawn and supper at dusk. In cities most upper class families have  
adopted the Western pattern of three meals a day. In the cities also  
there has been an increase in the number of restaurants because of  
the growth of a salaried, middle income group. Restaurants serving  
Thai food are less popular than those specializing in Chinese, West-  
ern, and Malay foods, in that order.

### Clothing

A gradual revolution in dress has been occurring as the people  
increasingly come to adopt Western clothing or Asian variations of  
Western fashions. Traditional Thai dress is rapidly disappearing ex-  
cept in the interior and among the elderly peasants. Outside the  
urban areas both men and women wear the *phanung*, a length of  
material wrapped around the waist in the manner of a skirt. The  
men draw one end of the piece between their legs and tuck it into  
the belt line, causing the *phanung* to cling to their legs and appear  
to be breeches. The *phasin*, a skirt-like garment popular among  
northern women, is worn with a blouse or a scarf wrapped around  
the bosom or the shoulders. Whenever possible, however, rural  
people wear Western clothes for more formal occasions.

In the cities and larger-towns, members of the upper and middle

income groups wear Western clothes regularly but return to traditional Thai attire on formal or special occasions. Members of the lower class ordinarily wear a combination of Thai and Western garments or, among the older segment, strictly Thai apparel. Both sexes wear Western-style clothing for special occasions if possible.

Middle and upper class men wear their hair cut in Western fashion; lower class men continue to crop theirs close to the head. Western hair styles are popular with younger women, and cosmetics are used even in remote villages.

### Housing

The climate is so mild that elaborate shelter is not required and heating is necessary only at high elevations. Houses are usually built of wood, but since World War II many of the better woods have become scarce and expensive. Teak, for example, has become too costly for all except the very wealthy, and many other hardwoods have become less available as they have acquired export value. Even bamboo and palm matting have risen in price. Housing costs have increased also because of a change in methods of construction. In the past, especially in rural areas, houses were built by the cooperative effort of relatives and neighbors, but in 1970 more and more construction was being done by hired professional carpenters.

In rural areas the most common type of house is a rectangular structure with palm matting walls, a thatched roof, and a bamboo or wood-slat floor. Supported on posts that may be two to ten feet above the ground, houses are entered by climbing a ladder. The space beneath the more elevated houses provides shelter for livestock and a storage area. The finest rural houses are built entirely of teak and may be roofed with tile, but they are increasingly rare, even in the teak-growing northern regions; elsewhere a new teak house is a mark of wealth.

Whatever the material used, the basic rural house style is the same. It consists of a single rectangular room and, in large dwellings, several sleeping rooms. Cooking is done in the main room or in a space partitioned off as a kitchen; more prosperous families may have separate kitchens built away from the main dwelling. Furniture and household goods include a low table or two, a brick or earth-and-box stove, earthenware pots and water jars, porcelain or brass bowls and pots, bamboo baskets, kapok mattresses for sitting and sleeping, wooden chests, a Buddha statue, and perhaps a loom. In the houses of the well-to-do, these items are the same but are of finer quality. The better homes also usually contain some pieces of Western-style furniture.

The size of the farm compound and the number and variety of buildings in it, such as granaries, animal sheds, storage huts, a bath-

ing shed, houses for domestic servants, a kitchen, a privy, and possibly a house for married children living at home, are also indicators of wealth. Rich families sometimes invest in additional farm animals, which are rented to neighboring farmers. Radios, engines for irrigation use, farm implements, kerosine lanterns, gasoline generators and pumps, sewing machines, motor-driven boats, and bicycles are also within the reach of some farmers.

In urban areas housing problems are complicated by overcrowding and a proliferation of substandard accommodations. This situation is prevalent throughout the country but is most clearly evident in Bangkok, where there has been a greater influx of people from rural areas in search of profitable, if temporary, occupations.

Housing standards in the capital present extremes of poverty and luxury. Thousands of families live in the restricted quarters of houseboats. The poorest people rent space in structures built from bamboo scrap lumber, packing boxes, and tin salvaged from oilcans. Many of the shacks in the lower sections of the city are swept away periodically by the floods of the Chao Phraya River or are destroyed by fire, but landlords quickly replace them as a profitable investment. There are no sanitation facilities, and water is obtained from public taps. The canals serve as the sewage disposal system and constitute a serious health hazard during the dry season.

The typical house of the middle income family is a small two-storied structure with wooden walls and a tile roof. A large veranda or room at the entrance, generally Western in style, is used for receiving guests. It may contain a table, some chairs and framed pictures, a cane rack, and a raised platform with mats and pillows for lounging. There may also be one or two private rooms on the ground floor. The kitchen invariably is apart from the house but is connected to it by a covered passageway. The family rooms are upstairs and are generally furnished in Thai style with a low table, mats, and chests.

The houses of the elite, scattered about the city and its suburbs, are set in walled compounds, which also contain quarters for servants. Most compounds have their own water tanks and electric generators.

In order to alleviate housing shortages, a modest government-financed building program in urban areas is included as a part of the Second National Economic and Social Development Plan (1967-71). The program, carried out by the Department of Public Welfare, the Housing Project Fund, and the Government Housing Bank, envisages the construction of 3,800 new public housing units in apartment buildings and separate houses for families by the end of the program period. In addition to renting or selling these units on a rental-purchase plan, the agencies also make loans available to private persons to build or improve their own dwellings and encour-

age private investment to construct housing projects for low-income groups.

Supplemental to the official housing program but not funded as part of it, the National Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior, the Royal Irrigation Department in the Ministry of National Development, and several other government agencies have carried out small housing projects for their own workers. Despite these activities, however, housing remains short, and much of the population lives in crowded and dilapidated dwellings.

#### Consumption Levels

Consumption levels among the Thai are high by Asian standards. Many families in all income categories feel little restraint about spending, and there seems to be a preference for accumulating goods rather than for saving money. Considerable amounts of available family money are also expended on marriages and funerals, which are made as elaborate as possible because the more ostentatious they are, the more they add to the prestige of the sponsors. Similarly, generous contributions to the local Buddhist temple enhance the donors' prestige among friends and neighbors. The richer families endow new temples because it is considered more advantageous to endow a new temple than merely to support an old one. Finally, people generally spend liberally on the education of their children, which not only helps the children's chances for social and economic advancement but also contributes to the family's prestige.

Consumer commodities are available in quantity and variety, even in the most remote villages. Every village has at least one shop, and stores are augmented by itinerant Chinese peddlers who carry their merchandise by boat, cart, or pack pony into markets and village fairs. From the peddlers, the villager gets needles, cloth, tobacco, salt, cooking utensils, sweets and condiments, hardware and simple tools, cosmetics, jewelry, and many other items. In 1970 transistor radios were within the reach of almost everyone, and peasants could often be seen carrying them on the way to work in the fields.

The costs of virtually all consumer goods and services have been rising steadily, but personal incomes have generally managed to keep pace. Accordingly, consumption levels expressed in terms of percentages of family income have remained relatively stable. In 1970 it was estimated that the average Thai family spent 45 percent of its annual income on food; 16 percent on housing; 9 percent on clothing; 7 percent on medical and personal services; 6 percent on transport; 4 percent on gifts and taxes; and 13 percent on education, amusements, alcoholic beverages, and other miscellaneous living costs.

## PUBLIC HEALTH

In matters of public health and sanitation, the people in 1970 were still in a transitional stage between traditional and modern medical practices. The government formed an active vanguard in introducing modern, scientific medical concepts and techniques and was highly successful in developing and expanding medical facilities and institutions, in improving environmental sanitation, and in promoting general medical education among the population, especially children in the schools. As a result, many diseases that formerly caused hundreds of deaths each year were brought under control, medical care and treatment were made available to everyone in all parts of the country, and the state of public health was at the highest level in history. Nevertheless, large segments of the population still relied on traditional ideas and methods, including the use of charms, magical formulas, and ritualistic ceremonies, to deal with disease and misfortune. Even among the more educated Thai who understood and accepted medicine as a science, there were those who consulted a qualified doctor but also visited traditional practitioners.

### Traditional Medical Practices and Beliefs

Traditional Thai medicine is a mixture of Chinese and Indian theories, Buddhist and animistic beliefs, and techniques developed through trial and error. Many common afflictions are recognized and easily diagnosed as being of physical origin. Others are thought to be the work of evil spirits that, from whim or malice, enter the body. Sorcerers are frequently thought to be responsible for getting rid of them.

Little attention is given to the prevention of illness, although Buddhist or animistic amulets and charms are used as protection against specific ailments and misfortune in general. Among the talismans most frequently worn are images of Buddha, metal cylinders containing slips of paper inscribed with magic spells, and cotton strings tied around the wrists or ankles or made into necklaces. The use of tattooing as insurance against disease is widespread among the hill people of the north.

Some villagers, particularly those in the Central Lowland Region, believe that young children can be assured good health by cutting their hair in a particular way. Several clay dolls, each with a different hairdo, are made and placed in front of a youngster. The child's hair is then arranged like that of the doll he reaches for in the belief that he will thus avoid the children's diseases that might otherwise plague him.

House spirits are believed by many to be the most important protection against sickness or other misfortune. Accordingly, spirit



dwellings are built on the occasion of a housewarming, and the spirit is propitiated frequently to ensure good health.

Traditional methods of therapy include many home remedies and favored food and herbal mixtures that may be known generally or only by a single family. They are usually prepared by the person who is ill or by a member of his family and are taken without ritual or thought of spiritual intervention. Medicines of the Chinese pharmacist, if there is one in the community, or those purchased from itinerant peddlers are also popular. They include traditional Chinese medicaments; modern patent medicines; and a few modern drugs, such as aspirin, quinine, and sulfanilamide.

In cases of more serious illness attempts are made to propitiate the house spirit or to seek the help of a local practitioner. The practitioner may be certified in traditional medicine, or he may be an unregistered nonprofessional who engages in the art as an avocation. Usually, he is a man reputed to have magical curing abilities or one who has devoted himself to the study of herbal medicines. Whether the cure prescribed is primarily medical or ritualistic depends on the diagnosis and, to a large extent, on the specialty of the practitioner. If the difficulty seems to be primarily with an evil spirit, offerings may be made to cool the spirit's anger, or elaborate gifts may be promised in the event of a speedy recovery. In more stubborn cases exorcism may be deemed necessary. This is accomplished by incantations; sprinkling with lustral water; offerings of incense, candles, and flowers; or even by beating the patient.

During childbirth, which usually takes place at home, most village women are still attended by midwives employing traditional methods. In the absence of a midwife, the pregnant woman's mother or some other relative will aid in the delivery. Traditional postnatal care consists of the mother's staying indoors for six to eight weeks, lying near an open fire.

#### Medical Organization

All matters concerning the health of the nation are controlled by, and are the sole responsibility of, the Ministry of Public Health. This agency operates through four major divisions: the Office of the Under Secretary of State for Health, the Department of Health, the Department of Medical Services, and the Department of Medical Science. In addition to these divisions, the ministry also contains a number of separate committees that are concerned with specialized health problems and activities. The most important ones are the Government Pharmaceutical Organization Committee, the National Nutrition Committee, the School Health Committee, the Health Coordination Committee, the National Committee on Health Problems, the National Cholera Research Committee, and the Organizing Committee for the National Cancer Institute.

The Office of the Under Secretary of State for Health, in addition to administering and coordinating the work of the various departments of the ministry, also registers and licenses doctors, dentists, nurses, medical and sanitation personnel, hospitals, and clinics of all kinds; supervises the production, processing, sale, and distribution of food and drugs; controls programs for the reduction or eradication of tuberculosis, filariasis, and malaria; and maintains records on vital statistics.

The Department of Health deals with the prevention and control of diseases and promotion of the health of the nation. It carries out the rural health and school health programs; operates and maintains health centers throughout the country; directs activities of field units concerned with sanitary projects and control programs for infectious diseases; imposes and enforces quarantines; operates specialized hospitals for tuberculosis, infectious diseases and leprosy; and conducts a nationwide program of health education through public mass media.

The Department of Medical Services provides medical and nursing care for the physically and mentally sick in all general and mental hospitals owned and operated by the government. These services are provided free of charge to the indigent. Those who can afford to pay are charged minimal fees for the actual cost of drugs, personal services, and laboratory examinations.

The Department of Medical Science is responsible for research in medical sciences and for providing modern diagnostic procedures in the treatment and prevention of diseases. It studies all forms of human diseases to determine their causes, prevention, and cure, making its findings available to the medical profession. It develops and manufactures vaccines and toxoids for smallpox, rabies, pertussis, cholera, typhoid, diphtheria, and tetanus. Its laboratories analyze food consumed by the Thai people to ensure its purity and serve as a national center for examining blood, stool, and urine specimens for diagnostic purposes.

Below the national level, each province has a provincial health office. The provincial health officer is assisted and guided by officials in the Department of Health, but he is directly answerable only to the governor of his province.

#### Diseases

Available published statistics do not completely reflect the incidence of diseases in the country. In most areas only major epidemic diseases are required to be reported to the authorities, and lesser illnesses can only be estimated. The major causes of death are also obscure because in rural areas, where about 80 percent of the people live, headmen and lay practitioners who are not qualified to

make accurate diagnoses determine and report the diseases involved. Nevertheless, official figures released by the Ministry of Public Health indicate that in 1970 the ten major causes of death in descending order of frequency were: diseases of early infancy; diarrhea and enteritis; pulmonary tuberculosis; pneumonia; diseases of the heart; dysentery; malaria; complications of pregnancy, childbirth, and postchildbirth, diseases of the stomach and duodenum; and typhoid fever.

Among major diseases, the most prevalent are diarrhea, dysentery, and a variety of other enteric ailments, such as helminthiasis and typhoid fever. Reportedly, they affect as much as 80 percent of the population in any one year and are responsible for over 19,000 deaths, or about 1 death for each 2,000 population. The primary causes of these afflictions are contaminated water supplies and generally poor sanitary conditions. Garbage and trash are disposed of indiscriminately with little thought of the consequences. There are few latrines, and in rural areas most people simply use available streams and fields.

In the cities many of the larger buildings have septic tanks, but there are no public sewage systems. Instead, open sewage drains are used to discharge garbage and untreated sewage into rivers and canals, which are the primary sources of water for household use. In some of the larger urban areas river water is treated chemically before being piped to public water taps and private dwellings, but the pipes are often polluted by seepage.

In the countryside rainwater for cooking and drinking is stored in large jars in season, but ponds, streams, rivers, and shallow wells have to be used during the dry monsoon. A further health hazard is created, and pollution of basic water supply sources is compounded, by the fact that people regularly use the same rivers, canals, streams, and ponds for drinking, bathing, laundering, and swimming.

Tuberculosis, nearly always of the respiratory tract, is one of the principal infectious diseases in the country and ranks third among fatal diseases. In some of the more crowded and congested areas it is estimated that about 7 percent of the population is infected. In order to control and reduce the incidence of the disease, the Ministry of Public Health has engaged in a vigorous antituberculosis campaign since 1953, concentrating mainly on schoolchildren and active carriers in the general population. Schoolchildren are X-rayed and given tuberculin tests every year in addition to regular and repeated vaccination. Ultimately, it is hoped that every child will be immunized. Among the general public, mass vaccinations are scheduled, and detection, vaccination, and control centers have been established throughout the nation. Many of these centers are equipped with mobile units that constantly tour the countryside

serving people in remote areas. As a result of this effort, the incidence of tuberculosis is gradually dropping, but in 1969 about 8,000 persons died from the disease.

Malaria has long been a major health problem. As recently as 1955 it debilitated and killed more persons than any other disease, causing some 40,000 deaths annually—among them 14,000 children under four years of age. Since then the Malaria Eradication Project of the Ministry of Public Health has been active in controlling the disease. For purposes of the project the country was divided into thirty zones. The zones were subdivided into eight to twelve sectors, and these, in turn, into five squad areas, each with about 16,000 inhabitants. Three or four technicians were assigned to each squad. Entire villages were sprayed with dichloro-diphenyl-trichloro-ethane (DDT) in the weeks before and immediately after the rainy season in May. Malaria control teams inspected houses and streams for the presence of mosquitoes, examined villagers to determine whether or not they were infected, and distributed drugs for treatment. An important part of the program was a large-scale public education campaign carried out through lectures, posters, mobile exhibits, and motion picture units. By 1970 deaths from malaria had fallen from 40,000 per year to only about 4,500, reducing it to fifth place on the list of major killers. The campaign is continuing, and authorities anticipate that by 1975 malaria will be looked upon as a pestilence of the past.

In addition to the most prevalent diseases, a number of others are still matters of significant concern. Cholera, plague, and smallpox, which once occurred in great epidemics, are now encountered rarely if at all. Yaws, formerly endemic in rural regions, has been brought down to an incidence less than 0.002 percent in most areas. Filariasis is prevalent in southern Thailand, but its incidence has been reduced. Leprosy is widespread, particularly in the northern and eastern sections of the country. It was estimated that about 200,000 cases were under surveillance and treatment at the beginning of 1970. Venereal diseases, especially syphilis, have been major health problems for years. They occur less frequently in rural areas, but the rate of incidence is high in the cities. Although prostitution is forbidden by law, the fifty-odd venereal disease clinics throughout the country report that about 5 percent of the population have contracted the disease. The actual percentage may be even higher since many cases are not reported.

Among the lesser diseases, common colds, influenza, and other respiratory ailments are rife during the peak of the rainy season. Diabetes, hypertension, and cerebrovascular diseases have become increasingly prevalent. Gallstones are endemic in certain parts of the northeast, and patients with carcinoma of the liver are frequently

reported. Diphtheria and poliomyelitis are encountered occasionally.

#### Medical Facilities

Thailand is fairly well served by a number of modern hospitals and other medical institutions capable of administering to virtually every bodily or mental illness. According to figures available in 1970, the country had 203 active hospitals providing a combined total of approximately 22,000 beds. Ninety-eight of these institutions were owned and operated by the Department of Medical Services in the Ministry of Public Health; nineteen were run by other government agencies, such as the police, the military, and large municipalities; and eighty-six were facilities of private charitable and religious organizations. In addition to these formal hospitals, the Ministry of Public Health administered about 2,500 health and maternity centers in rural areas and many private doctors in urban areas had their own small clinics, some with a few beds for patients needing hospitalization.

Institutions of the Department of Medical Services included eighty-eight general hospitals and ten devoted to mental and neurological disorders. The largest and best general hospitals were in Bangkok and its environs, but there was at least one in each of the nation's seventy-one provinces. All were permanently, if somewhat inadequately, staffed, and each was equipped with full facilities for modern medical treatment, including operating theaters, X-ray machines, blood banks, and diagnostic laboratories. The other institutions included six regular mental hospitals, two neurological hospitals, one hospital for feebleminded children, and one for the care and rehabilitation of narcotics addicts.

Generally, medical services, both inpatient and outpatient, at all government hospitals are provided free of charge to the indigent. Those who can afford to pay something are billed at rates based on the cost of production for drugs, medicines, special laboratory examinations, and personal medical services. All general hospitals also have special wards for patients who can afford to pay full costs for room, drugs, meals, surgery, laboratory fees, and special nursing care; even these fees, however, are considerably less than those charged for comparable services in private hospitals. Primary financial support for government hospitals is provided in the annual budget of the Ministry of Public Health, but most also receive private donations to pay for new building additions or a piece of specialized equipment.

The most prominent and noteworthy hospitals are those operated by the government in the metropolitan Bangkok area. The largest

are the Siriraj Hospital and the Women and Children's Hospital, each of which can accommodate 1,500 bed patients. The Siriraj Hospital, established in 1888, is one of the oldest in the country. In addition to full general medical services, it is the site of Thailand's major school of medicine. The Women and Children's Hospital was established in 1951 primarily to serve expectant mothers. Its services expanded rapidly to treat all maladies of women and children, and in 1970 it was a favorite institution for young doctors serving their internships.

The Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital is also the site of a major medical school. Its 1,132 beds accommodate about 60,000 inpatients a year, and its outpatient clinic serves over 300,000 annually. The Lerd-Sinn General Hospital, with 500 beds, not only provides basic care and treatment similar to other general hospitals but also serves as an emergency hospital for accident cases and injuries. Its well-equipped laboratories produce a wide variety of pharmaceuticals, and its cytology laboratory has become important in the detection of cancer. The Buddhist Priests' Hospital is relatively small (250 beds) but is unique in that it is reserved exclusively for monks and novices and is administered strictly in accordance with sacred Buddhist disciplines. It is especially noted for the skill of its surgeons in thoracic operations.

Among the nongovernment hospitals, the Bangkok Sanitarium and Hospital of Seventh Day Adventists is perhaps the best known. Commonly referred to simply as the mission hospital this institution has only about 200 beds but is the one most often used by Americans and other foreigners resident in Bangkok. The St. Louis Hospital is a small general hospital operated by the Roman Catholic Church and traditionally staffed by French doctors.

Supplementing the services performed by the hospitals are the increasing number of health and maternity centers established and operated by the Department of Health in the Ministry of Public Health. These facilities, located in rural areas throughout the nation, are classified into three types, depending on their size and the type of services they offer. Class I centers are staffed with a minimum of one doctor, one qualified nurse-midwife, two junior health workers, and one auxiliary midwife. Each is equipped with ten to twenty-five beds for emergency cases and provides all basic health services and medical care for the 30,000 people in the standardized districts assigned to them. Class II centers, sometimes called health subcenters, are smaller and are designed to serve area units containing 5,000 persons. Their staffs usually consist of one junior health worker and one nurse-midwife, although occasionally they are assigned one extra midwife. The services they perform are limited to maternal and child welfare, environmental sanitation, control of communicable diseases, health education, medical care of

minor ailments, and the sale of simple remedies. Class III centers are known as midwifery stations and serve about 1,000 people at the hamlet level. They are staffed with only one midwife, who is responsible for maternal and child health and vaccination.

At the beginning of 1970 there were 241 Class I, 944 Class II, and 1,494 Class III centers in the country. Plans call for the establishment of about 200 new centers of all classes annually.

Full and excellent professional education for physicians, surgeons, dentists, and medical technicians of various sorts is provided by four medical schools, each of which is affiliated with one of the country's major general hospitals. These four institutions are supervised and considered to be a part of the University of Medical Sciences, a division of the Ministry of Public Health. The oldest medical school is the Siriraj Hospital Medical School, associated with the Bangkok hospital of the same name. When it became evident that the Siriraj school could not produce enough doctors to meet growing needs, a second school was established in 1947 at the Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital after which it was named. In 1957 the third medical school was established at Chiangmai in conjunction with the Chiangmai General Hospital. It is the only medical school outside Bangkok. Finally, a fourth medical school was opened in 1969 at the Ramathibhodi Hospital. Its first class is expected to graduate in 1971.

Courses leading to medical degrees in these four schools follow the same general curriculum. After completing two years of pre-medical training, student doctors undergo four years of rigorous training in all medical subjects and then are required to serve an internship of two more years before being admitted to full practice as doctors. Dental courses and those for nurses and nurse-midwives also take four years, but there is no requirement for intern service.

#### Medical Personnel

The government requires the registration of physicians, dentists, nurses, and other medical personnel, including practitioners of traditional medicine. A vast number of the latter—herbalists, spirit doctors, self-taught dentists, and part-time healers—remain unregistered; also in this category are numerous Buddhist monks to whom villagers often turn for medical as well as spiritual advice.

According to official figures released by the Ministry of Public Health, the country had 4,590 physicians with modern medical training at the beginning of 1970. This is about 1 qualified doctor for every 6,700 persons, which is not nearly enough to provide adequate medical care for the population. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that about two-thirds of all doctors are in the Bangkok area and show little inclination to move to the country-

side, where the ratio is about 1 doctor to every 20,000 persons. About one-third of all registered doctors are employed by the Ministry of Public Health in its many hospitals, health centers, staffs, and laboratories; the rest are in private practice or perform permanent staff duty in nongovernment hospitals.

Also at the beginning of 1970 there were only 469 registered dentists, 12,359 graduate nurses and nurse-midwives, about 15,000 pharmacists and almost 15,000 practitioners of traditional medicine.

The prestige enjoyed by traditional practitioners is gradually being transferred to doctors, nurses, dental technicians, and sanitation professionals, although the process is a slow one in the countryside, where most of the people rarely come in contact with the thin scattering of modern professional health workers. Wherever they are available, however, the new health services are eagerly sought out.

## WELFARE

Traditionally, welfare activities were considered to be the responsibility of individual families or of kinship and community groups. Nearly everyone had some relative to whom he could turn in an emergency or who would feed and shelter him should he be unable to provide for himself. When family resources proved insufficient, assistance was often provided by wealthy residents of the village or by the local temple. Buddhist monks were always ready to supply food and shelter to vagrants, disabled persons, the mentally ill, and the infirm who had no families or whose families could not help them. Often the temple committee also provided financial assistance to families that were temporarily in difficulty. Much of this sense of family and community obligation remains and is evident everywhere but, increasingly, as needs have become greater and the task surpasses the capability of traditional efforts to fulfill, more and more welfare activities have been assumed by the government and by charitable and religious organizations on a more orderly and organized basis.

### Government Welfare Organization

Social welfare activities of the government are distributed unevenly among a number of government agencies but are primarily administered by the Department of Public Welfare in the Ministry of the Interior. This agency formulates and implements social welfare programs for the country as a whole and provides major services in the fields of child welfare, care for the aged and handicapped, services for special groups, socioeconomic measures, and community welfare. Other government agencies involved in welfare



work are the Ministry of Public Health, which cares for children and administers mental hospitals; the Ministry of Education, which operates schools for handicapped children; the Ministry of Defense, which cares for the families of servicemen and for war veterans; and the Central Juvenile Court of the Ministry of Justice, which is responsible for the treatment of juvenile delinquents.

The Department of Public Welfare, under the office of its director, is divided into eleven divisions: the Child Welfare Division, the Occupational Assistance Division, the Housing Assistance Division, the Social Studies Division, the Finance Division, the Welfare Assistance Division, the Disaster Relief Division, the Community Service Division, the Social Security Division, the Self-Help Land Settlement Division, and the Housing Division. Each of these divisions has functional responsibilities in areas indicated by its name.

Below the national level the department has established welfare offices in the provinces and has set up five labor offices in large provincial urban areas. At this level also, provincial and municipal administrations play an important role in welfare activities. In cooperation with the Department of Public Welfare, they are concerned with maternal and child welfare, youth activities, and community development programs.

In order to coordinate welfare activities throughout the country, including those of private groups, the Department of Public Welfare has set up a number of specialized boards and committees. The Central Tribal Welfare Committee, for example, concerns itself with programs for the welfare and development of hill tribes in the north. The National Research Council studies contemporary social problems and conditions relating to the social structure of, and changes in, the country. The Crime Prevention Board develops data for the maintenance of peace and order and advises the government on methods and techniques for preventing crime. The Committee for the Promotion and Coordination of Youth Activities helps develop programs of youth recreation and encourages the establishment of youth centers in as many communities as possible. The Social Welfare Board coordinates all social welfare programs. The Labor Advisory Committee advises the government on labor policy and the implementation of labor programs. The National Community Development Committee formulates and coordinates community development programs.

#### **Government Institutions and Services**

The proper care and welfare of children has long been a matter of primary concern to the government. In this area public welfare authorities maintain twelve homes of various kinds for children under eighteen years of age. Among them are four orphanages for

those who have lost their parents or whose homes have been broken up by the death, disability, incompetence, or illness of one or both of their parents. Two other homes have been established for delinquents who require special care or treatment and who have been ordered to the Juvenile Court. The six others comprise a school for boys, a school for girls, and four schools for handicapped children. These institutions provide domiciliary care and environment for a total of about 4,000 children a year.

Noninstitutional care for children includes a comprehensive program of financial assistance to families when the need for it concerns a child, a program providing foster homes for dependent children, an adoption service, counseling and guidance clinics, and a variety of recreation services and facilities. Financial assistance is usually available when it is required to keep a child in school and may be in the form of food, clothing, medical care, school necessities, or minor repairs to a house. The foster home program gives dependent children an opportunity to grow up in a family atmosphere while relieving their own parents of the financial burden of caring for them. If foster parents are under thirty years of age and the child's natural parents agree, the government will arrange for their legal adoption.

Counseling and guidance service is available to help needy families understand the proper approach to child care and to prevent children from leaving their homes. Much of this is performed by social workers of the Department of Public Welfare during the course of their daily work. When more extensive services, including psychological testing and treatment of children who are suffering mental or emotional difficulties, are required, several hospitals of the Ministry of Public Health have established child guidance clinics for the purpose.

Recreational activities for children and young people have become a major program of the Department of Public Welfare. In addition to providing and equipping playgrounds in villages and urban communities, authorities in Bangkok have vigorously promoted and encouraged the formation of youth clubs in all sections of the country. These clubs arrange recreational programs of games, sports, arts, and crafts, cooking, and camping for youngsters from seven to fifteen years of age. In 1970 the government was supporting twenty municipal youth centers, at least one of which was in every geographic region of the nation.

Government assistance and facilities for needy persons include disaster relief; homes for the aged, disabled, beggars, drug addicts, and prostitutes; and an important program to enable the landless, homeless, or unemployed to settle down in new and fertile land. The latter program, known officially as Self-Help Land Settlement, provides a small piece of virgin land and a financial loan for seeds,

livestock, building construction, and equipment to any Thai willing to work the land. If after five years the land has been made productive, the settler is given title to his land. In connection with this program, the government arranges for the provision of community services, such as electricity, stores, and water supplies, for the communities thus created.

Apart from the Self-Help Land Settlement program, the government in rural areas is engaged in a concerted program of public works, rural health service, school welfare, and community development. Public works are projects by which the government funds are used to help needy persons obtain employment. The rural health program involves demonstrations to assist villagers in improving their living conditions through better personal hygiene and environmental sanitation. The school welfare program provides free lodging and facilities for children who live far away from home. The community development effort aims at getting villagers to improve their lot through their own attempts. They are encouraged and guided in the construction of roads, wells, bridges, sewage systems, and irrigation measures; in improving agricultural and handicraft practices; and in developing cultural and recreational facilities.

#### **Private Welfare Agencies and Services**

Although government welfare services are extensive, they are not adequate to fulfill all needs of the people. Accordingly, official encouragement is given to promote the establishment of private, voluntary groups, organizations, and foundations, even though the successful operation of some of them often requires occasional or partial subsidy from government funds. In 1970 there was a myriad of these welfare agencies engaged in providing educational services for the blind, the crippled, and the deaf; custodial care for orphans and dependent children; youth services; and general emergency relief. With the exception of some medical care facilities throughout the nation supported by religious organizations and the Thai Red Cross Society and limited assistance provided by women's clubs in every province, about one-half of the existing voluntary agencies were located in Bangkok.

Without any form of centralized guidance, the activities of so many private groups would be overlapping, confusing, and inefficient, so in 1960 the Council of Social Welfare of Thailand was formed to provide this service. The council is a nongovernment organization that serves as a central coordinating body for a majority of private welfare agencies. In addition to providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences among its 167 members, the council conducts research on social problems and raises funds for general welfare work. It has nine committees drawn from member

organizations that consider problems and solutions concerning activities in family welfare, child welfare, youth activities, community service, volunteer service, and rehabilitation and occupational promotion of the disabled. Its findings are then turned over to member organizations for implementation. The council does not render services directly to the public, but sometimes it develops pilot projects and tests them in the field before they are permanently assigned to an appropriate member agency.

The National Council of Women of Thailand is a second coordinating agency designed to unify and improve welfare activities of women's organizations. Its members are primarily professional, social, and philanthropic associations of women or of those engaged in work among females. Most of its work consists of sponsoring conferences, seminars, and workshops where members meet and exchange ideas and experiences concerning social problems and services.

The Thai Red Cross Society is the oldest and best known private welfare agency in the country. Organized in 1883 to provide medical service, food, clothing, and other necessities to the armed forces, it affiliated with the International Red Cross in 1921 and adopted the full program of the world organization. It now has a chapter or a unit in each of the nation's seventy-one provinces. These elements provide health education and services, medicines, medical treatment, and other emergency needs to the people of their areas. The society owns and operates two hospitals, one convalescent home, and nine local health centers and is responsible for the production of vaccines and serums for general hospital use. Its volunteers serve a variety of duties in hospitals and make and distribute clothes and food to victims of natural disasters.

The Hua Kiaw Poh Teck Sieng Tung Foundation is another non-government welfare agency of long standing. It was established in 1936 for social work within the Chinese community. It is particularly well known for its disaster relief services where it makes assistance in the form of cash and kind available to victims. The foundation also maintains a hospital in Bangkok for the poor, provides funeral services for the indigent, and contributes money to a number of other private organizations.

Other major private welfare organizations, representing a cross section of those in Thailand, are the Foundation for the Welfare of the Crippled, the Foundation for the Welfare of the Blind, the Foundation for the Salesian Society of Thailand, the Poor Children's Home Foundation, Pierra's Foundation, the Foundation for the Welfare of Needy School Children, the Young Women's Christian Association day care centers, and the Rajaprajanugroh Foundation.

The Foundation for the Welfare of the Crippled provides advice,

care, and aid to crippled children. It provides braces, crutches, artificial limbs, and splints when needed; transports crippled youngsters to hospitals for treatment; and supplies teachers for those undergoing prolonged treatment in hospitals. In Bangkok it operates a hostel where physical therapy is available and the Srisangwan School, which offers primary education and vocational training for children who are severely handicapped. The foundation also conducts educational sessions for parents and guardians of crippled children.

The Foundation for the Welfare of the Blind operates two schools for blind children between six and fourteen years of age—one in Bangkok and the other in Chiangmai. It also runs the Vocational Training Center for blind youngsters and young adults at Pak Kret, near Bangkok.

The Poor Children's Home Foundation maintains a home for children up to ten years of age. Regardless of nationality or religious affiliation, any child who is an orphan or lacks proper care is eligible for admission.

Pierra's Foundation also operates a home for children, but its facilities are designed primarily for those born to unmarried mothers. The home usually has about seventy residents ranging in age from birth to as old as sixteen.

The Foundation for the Welfare of Needy School Children concentrates on aiding those who are in the compulsory education age group. It provides school uniforms, textbooks, and other necessities, including noontime meals, to those who otherwise might not be able to receive an education.

The Young Women's Christian Association operates two day care centers in Bangkok. These facilities provide full day care for about 150 children of working mothers.

The Rajaprajanugroh Foundation was formed as an ad hoc agency after the violent tropical storm that caused such damage in southern Thailand in 1962. When that disaster was over, it used excess contributions to continue its disaster work. The foundation in 1970 provided educational assistance to children of aid victims of any natural catastrophe in Thailand.

## CHAPTER 6

### EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

Overall government policies, such as strengthening national unity, integrating the rural population and non-Thai ethnic groups into the national life, and modernizing society, had strong influences on Thailand's educational, cultural, and public information activities in 1970. Such traditions as reverence for royalty, acceptance of government authority, and the widespread belief and practice of Theravada Buddhism contributed to the homogeneity of Thai culture. Following the tradition of centuries, Thai have accepted freely, but selectively, those aspects of foreign cultures that they considered compatible with their own. In 1970 the urban population, about 10 percent of the total, was adopting Western values and life style at a faster pace than ever before.

The advancement of education was a principal concern of the government during the 1960s. Substantial public investment, supplemented by foreign assistance, improved educational programs at all levels, but the goal of full implementation of a seven-year compulsory education plan by 1971 was, by all indications in 1970, not likely to be met. Some success was achieved in making education functional and practical, but there was still widespread emphasis on such traditional methods as memorization and rote learning. Learning and knowledge, and the attendant acquisition of Buddhist merit, are respected for their religious value. Traditionally, secular education was valued mainly for the social prestige it provided, but in 1970 more importance was being given to its value for professional advancement.

The arts and sciences have emerged from a synthesis of various foreign influences and native creativity. Before the middle of the nineteenth century the predominant foreign influences came from Asian neighbors, especially China and India. The impact of Western civilizations became increasingly greater in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By 1970 Western influences were the primary forces modifying Thai culture.

After a long period of stagnation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in nearly every aspect of cultural activity, a renewed vigor became apparent after World War II and still was being felt in 1970. This rejuvenation brought forth new art works,

sculpture, and architecture reflecting a combination of traditional and modern influences. Most artistic expression as reflected in Thai classical forms has been, and continues to be, confined to a relatively small element of the population, including royalty and the urban elite. The rural and working population tended to follow other long-established patterns. Among these are various forms of folk dance drama and declamations sung to musical accompaniment.

Largely as a result of the government's efforts to expand international cultural contacts, the appreciation and influence of Thai culture have expanded considerably throughout the world.

The public information media in 1970 served the primary purpose of publicizing government policies and the support of government programs for political unity and economic development. Radio and television were largely in the hands of the government, despite limited private ownership; the press, mostly privately operated, was, in accordance with custom, subject to government controls. The trend in 1970 appeared to be toward a greater regulation of the press, as well as other media, under the stress of the external and internal Communist threat.

Programs, many of them begun in the 1960s or earlier, placed special emphasis on increasing the dissemination of public information to more remote areas of the northern, northeastern, and southern regions. In 1970 substantial progress was being made in extending radio and television coverages, films, and periodicals to the countryside, but most of the rural population depended on word-of-mouth sources for the news.

## EDUCATION

### Background of Modern Education

The beginnings of modern education are found in the efforts of King Mongkut (1851-68) and King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) to train people to deal with Western nations and to better perform government tasks. Western teachers were engaged to teach officials, and English tutors were appointed for the royal children. Traditionally the bulk of formal education was provided by the Buddhist monks in the *wat* (Buddhist temple complex) schools. During the customary period of temple service, most young men received some learning by memorizing or copying scripture. Other children, with the exception of the sons of wealthy persons, had little or no formal schooling. Those who had the advantage of training in the *wat* school were accorded respect for the rest of their lives in their communities, reflecting the widespread deference customarily shown to persons who had superior knowledge.

The government began to take a wider interest in education in the late 1880s. The Ministry of Education, founded in 1892, took the lead in developing schools patterned largely after those of England. The Japanese system was studied, and from it came the concept of relating moral training and the duties of citizenship. Compulsory education was initiated in 1921, but it was not until the mid-1930s that serious attempts were made to implement the requirement.

Another major step to encourage a minimum level of popular education was included in the Constitution of 1932. Provision was made that the parliament would be fully elected, instead of appointed, when half the population had completed four years of elementary education or within ten years, whichever was sooner. Despite some progress, after ten years the national leaders made the determination against popular elections. In 1957 fourteen of the seventy-one provinces had reached the level where 50 percent of their populations had had four years of education. Provisions of the 1952 amended Constitution, calling for popular elections after five years in provinces where educational requirements had been met, were not fully implemented by the time Sarit Thanarat placed the nation under martial law in 1958. Nevertheless, Sarit increased the allocation for education and promoted programs to improve schools, particularly at the elementary level. By the mid-1960s over 50 percent of persons above fifteen years of age had had four or more years of schooling, and by 1970 the literacy rate among persons over ten years of age was about 70 percent.

A national scheme of education developed in 1960 set the basic pattern and objectives for the Six-Year Plan in Educational Development, 1967-71. In general, the scheme gave greater recognition to child development and the principle of equality of opportunity, setting as its fundamental goal the full implementation of seven years of compulsory education within ten years. The Regional Education Development Plan Including Higher Education (REDPHE), a comprehensive program for all educational operations adopted in 1958, was continued under the plans that implemented the 1960 scheme.

A fundamental aim of educational programs was to increase patriotism and thereby strengthen national unity and counteract Communist insurgency and propaganda. A concomitant objective was to develop the skills required to modernize the economy and thereby increase national strength. Special emphasis was given in the 1960s to the training of people in the outlying regions in order to integrate them more closely into the national life.

Educational rights and obligations in 1970 were based on various sections of the 1968 Constitution. These included the following: every person enjoys full liberty of education in consonance with his civic duties and the laws on education; attendance at an elementary



school is compulsory for every child until the age of fourteen, unless the seventh-year level or equivalent credit is achieved before that age; the state is to promote and advance education and control and supervise all educational institutions; the Ministry of Education has the authority to control all schools and hold examinations at all levels except those under the Office of the Prime Minister; and the state is to permit institutions at the higher education level to manage their own affairs within the limits provided by law.

#### Control and Administration

Control over education is highly centralized, and the trend after the mid-1930s was toward greater responsibility and authority for the national government. Direction comes primarily from the Ministry of Education, but the Office of the Prime Minister exercises direct supervision over the National Education Council and nine of the institutions of higher learning. Separate departments of the Ministry of Education exercised control over: elementary and adult education, secondary education and private schools, vocational education, teacher training, physical education, educational techniques, religious affairs, and fine arts. Ministry authority over academic matters extended downward through the twelve regions to the provinces, districts, communes, and villages. In October 1966 the Provincial Administration Authority of the Ministry of the Interior received responsibility for certain nonacademic operations—personnel administration, finance, and physical plants and equipment of elementary schools throughout the country.

Communist control of mainland China and subversive activity by Communists were major factors that led to restrictions placed on Chinese schools in Thailand after World War II. Chinese education was limited to four years of elementary school; a ban was placed on Chinese-language instruction in secondary schools, and subjects and activities that tended to stimulate Chinese patriotism were restricted. These actions were taken despite the fact that persons of Chinese ethnic origin, numbering in 1970 about 4.5 million, were in most respects more fully integrated into the national life than the Chinese of other Southeast Asian countries. In 1967 the ban on Chinese-language instruction in secondary schools was lifted. In 1970 government officials continued to maintain close scrutiny over instruction in Chinese schools, which were maintained largely by funds contributed by private Chinese voluntary associations in Thailand (see ch. 4, Social Systems and Values).

A substantial percentage of the national budget was allocated to educational services in the 1960s, but the total resources available, including foreign assistance, were not adequate to meet rapidly increasing demands. Rapid population growth in the 1960s and the

low level of development when the 1960 scheme of education was initiated were basic factors. Planned expenditure for education as a percentage of the national budget for the late 1960s was 17.2 percent, and for 1971 it was 18 percent. Actual expenditure in 1967, the latest year for which detailed data were available, was 2,798.6 million baht (20.8 baht equal approximately US\$1—see Glossary), or 15.2 percent of the total budget. The approximate percentages of this amount spent on the various facets of education were: administration, 6.6; elementary, 51.78; secondary, 10.0; technical, 14.5; higher, 15.5; adult education, libraries, and museums, 1.0; and educational services, 0.1.

Resources for educational use were contributed also by local communities and private sources in addition to those included in the national budget. Data on these contributions were not available in published form.

### System of Education

The great bulk of schools are under the authority of the central government (see table 1). In 1967 over one-sixth of the students in regular elementary and secondary classes were in private schools (see table 2).

Kindergarten and preschool education was noncompulsory and largely in private hands. In order to improve the quality of preschool education, one state-owned kindergarten, to serve as a model, was authorized for each province.

Elementary school consists of grades one through seven and is subdivided into lower grades—one through four—and upper grades—five through seven. Attention was focused in the 1960s on expanding facilities and obtaining a sufficient number of properly qualified teachers, but in 1970 there were still shortages.

Of 24,000 government and municipal elementary schools in 1966, 42.78 percent were in permanent buildings, 10.62 percent were in semipermanent structures, and 46.6 percent were in temporary facilities.

In the mid-1960s less than two-thirds of all teachers held certificates or diplomas. Poor teacher qualification, in part, accounted for the failure of from 20 to 25 percent of students at the lower elementary level to pass to the next grade each year. Authorities acknowledged that quality of education was still low despite efforts to introduce new teaching methods and make education more functional. The practice of lumping grades together and repeating the same material in successive years was often followed, even up to the tenth grade level. Attendance in many areas was poor, and the dropout rate was high, as was evidenced by the disproportion between enrollment in the lower level and higher level in 1967.

Table 1. Number of Schools and Teachers in Thailand by Type of School, 1967

Type of school	Number of schools	Number of teachers
Kindergarten* . . . . .	64	819
Lower elementary* . . . . .	23,048	84,685
Upper elementary* . . . . .	2,090	26,196
Municipal (elementary and below)	478	7,550
Secondary* . . . . .	478	10,285
Private (secondary and below) . . . .	2,356	39,316
Vocational . . . . .	238	7,643
Teacher training . . . . .	32	2,098
Private special . . . . .	932	3,694
Adult education . . . . .	381	1,019
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>30,097</b>	<b>183,305</b>

\*Statistics for central government schools only.

Source: Adapted from *Statistical Yearbook: Thailand, 1967-1969* (No. 28), Bangkok, 1970, p. 107.

Table 2. Enrollment in Government and Private Schools of Thailand, 1967

School	Enrollment
Kindergarten and preschool . . . . .	90,199
Government . . . . .	( 34,123
Private . . . . .	( 56,076
Lower elementary . . . . .	4,380,335
Government . . . . .	(3,935,707
Private . . . . .	( 444,628
Upper elementary . . . . .	602,758
Government . . . . .	( 334,108
Private . . . . .	( 268,650
Secondary . . . . .	358,221
Government . . . . .	( 171,175
Private . . . . .	( 187,046
<b>Total (secondary and below) . . . . .</b>	<b>5,431,513</b>
Vocational . . . . .	70,647
Teacher training . . . . .	27,810
Private special . . . . .	99,549
Adult education . . . . .	21,477

Source: Adapted from *Statistical Yearbook: Thailand, 1967-1969* (No. 28), Bangkok, 1970, pp. 108-110.

The first three years of secondary school, grades eight to ten, considered as lower secondary, are a foundation for students who plan to enter the academic or general stream at the next higher level, as well as for those who will enter the vocational stream. At the higher secondary level the academic or general course of study

consists of grades eleven and twelve and the vocational alternative, grades eleven to thirteen.

The growing demand for secondary education as an increasingly necessary step to more advanced training and education greatly intensified competition for admission to the limited facilities available. Many adolescents also could not attend secondary schools because they did not have adequate finances to pay for books and supplies or, in some instances, tuition or room and board.

Despite improvements in the quality of secondary education during the 1960s, those who completed the training were in most cases not yet qualified for the positions they sought to fill. Further education could be obtained, resources permitting, at an advanced vocational school, such as a technical institute or a teacher-training establishment, or at a college or university.

The advancement of vocational education in schools required that the strong traditional emphasis on academic studies be decreased. In the 1960s special attention was given to expanding vocational education at all levels, particularly to the training of teachers. Advanced training, beyond the secondary level, is offered at several technical institutes. Usually programs require one to three years. The Bangkok Technical Institute, with branches at Songkhla, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Chiangmai, is among the best and has the widest course offerings. Programs in the domestic arts, mechanics, business, commerce, and vocational teaching are available. Other technical institutes are the Thon Buri Technical Institute, the College of Design and Construction, the Nonthaburi Institute of Telecommunications, the Thai-German Technical Institute at Bang Sawn, the Thai-German Technical Institute at Khon Kaen, and the Thewes Vocational School.

Facilities for college- and university-level education in 1970 were inadequate to fulfill the demands for admission. Only about 2 percent of all students were enrolled at this level. A large percentage of secondary graduates (more than 40 percent in the late 1960s) were not admitted to colleges and universities because applicants were not adequately prepared.

Government support for higher education began in earnest with the founding of Chulalongkorn University in 1917, the first of several state institutions of higher learning. Although the government has in most instances supported private schools at the elementary and secondary levels, it has not favored their establishment at the college or university level. With the exception of two Buddhist ecclesiastical colleges under royal patronage but religious supervision, the government administered all institutions at this level.

Of the ten institutions of higher education in 1970, one (the College of Education) was under the Ministry of Education, and

nine were under the Office of the Prime Minister. The latter included: Chulalongkorn University, reportedly the highest in academic standards; Thammasart University, also called the University of Moral and Political Sciences, with the largest enrollment; the University of Medical Sciences, with its schools of medicine, dentistry, and public health; Kasetsart University, or the University of Agriculture; Silpakorn University, or University of Fine Arts; the National Institute of Development Administration; Chiangmai University; Khon Kaen University; and Songkhla University. The last four of these, all founded in the 1960s, were begun largely to further regional development and national unity. Total enrollment in eight government-operated colleges and universities in 1966 was 45,465, and 4,531 degrees were granted that year. Data were not available for enrollment in the several new colleges and universities established in the late 1960s.

Other institutions frequently worked closely with schools for advanced learning. The National Research Council coordinated and encouraged research in many fields, and the Bangkok Institute for Child Study sponsored various educational programs, working with the College of Education on matters pertaining to training.

### Teacher Training and Supply

The provision of adequate numbers and of properly qualified teachers at all levels was a continuing problem in 1970. The government's efforts to exploit all possible sources, including the employment of monks, and to increase enrollment in teacher-training institutions did not keep pace with requirements. In 1961 there were 14,367 students in teacher-training schools; in 1967 enrollment had increased to 27,810.

The failure of teachers' salaries to keep up with the rising cost of living in the 1960s was also a handicap. The shortage of qualified teachers was especially critical in rural areas. Most teachers were trained in Bangkok, where they learned to appreciate the amenities of city life. Many had strong preferences for employment in the larger cities, which tended to perpetuate a condition that found the quality of rural education considerably below that of the cities.

There are several programs and activities to aid teachers and to improve the quality of instruction. The College of Education, established in 1954, serves as a model for other teacher-training schools. Inservice courses are offered in every province, and self-improvement is encouraged and stimulated by a system of examinations sponsored by the Department of Teacher Training. The Teachers' Institute, a government-sponsored organization to which all teachers must belong, handles personnel actions, selects persons for study opportunities, and holds special classes for teachers. Hun-

dreds of persons in the field of education went abroad for training in the 1960s, principally to the United States.

### International Cooperation

Educational assistance in the form of aid, grants, and cooperation from international agencies and individual foreign countries was substantial and covered nearly every facet of education, including planning, research, evaluation, instruction, museum development, book production, scholarships, and nutrition. Extensive programs were carried on by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The contributions of governmental and private organizations of the United States were on a considerably larger scale than those of the several other countries participating, including Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. Thousands of students and officials, some aided by foreign scholarships and grants, studied abroad in the 1960s. Most persons studying abroad were subsidized, many through the civil service career development programs. In 1966 there were approximately 4,000 Thai students abroad, of whom about 1,700 were in the United States.

## ARTISTIC AND INTELLECTUAL EXPRESSION

### Origins and Stages of Development

The predominant sources of modern Thai culture—Hinduism, and Buddhism—came originally from India and were transmitted mainly through Burma, Ceylon, and Cambodia. Chinese influence, also considerable, was derived from direct contacts, including a substantial Chinese ethnic minority, as well as indirectly through neighboring countries (see ch. 3, Historical Setting; ch. 8, Religion).

The golden age of Thai arts, when the best examples of architecture, sculpture, and painting were created, was from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries. From the middle of the eighteenth to the early twentieth century, Thai cultural activity was generally stagnant. The art of the period was characterized by prolific ornamentation. Western influences became important in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The rejuvenation in most fields of Thai art after World War II strongly reflected not only modern Western influences but also renewed native creativity. Patronage of the arts before the 1930s came primarily from the royal family. After constitutional rule was instituted, government agencies and the elite played a major role. The royal house, however, continued to be active in cultural affairs.

For purposes of historical study, Thai artistic expression may be

divided into six schools or stages of development: Chiengsaen (or Chiangmai) 1050–1550; Sukhothai, 1250–1450; Uthong, 1250–1450; Ayutthaya, 1350–1767; Ratanakosin (National or Bangkok), 1782–1868; and Modern Revival, twentieth century. Some of these were identified with particular areas or kingdoms, and therefore before 1550 some schools ran concurrently.

The period of synthesis in Thai culture extended from 1350 to the mid-eighteenth century. The linear elegance of Thai architecture, painting, and sculpture was at its height from 1550 to 1650 and then after 1700 declined rapidly.

The Chiengsaen school spans the period from the migration out of southern China into the area of the kingdom of Chiangmai. The works of this school are frequently described as "northern art" (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). In the eleventh and twelfth centuries Chiengsaen pottery and metalwork were closely akin to Chinese Nanchao art. Thai of the northern area accepted some features of the Dvaravati art of the Mon and also of the art of the Khmers, but the Chinese influence predominated until 1250. In the Chiengsaen period the first efforts toward a uniquely Thai cultural expression became apparent.

The Sukhothai school (1250–1450), taking its name from the kingdom of Sukhothai (antecedent of Thailand), developed uniquely Thai styles and concepts of expression that became largely the patterns of later Thai artistic development. Ceylonese, Chinese, Indian, and Khmer influences were utilized, but a distinctly Thai character was developed in art, sculpture, and architecture. The Buddha image, the most commonly depicted object of sculpture in all periods, became elongated, graceful, and contemplative, with an oval face and aquiline features.

The Uthong school (1250–1450), of the lower Chao Phraya valley, was greatly affected by Khmer influences. It was essentially a Thai phase of Khmer art.

The Ayutthaya school (1350–1767) takes its name from the city that was the capital of the Thai kingdom at that time. It represented a synthesis of the whole of Thai artistic expression. The sacking and destruction of the city by Burmese conquerors in 1767 was a setback to Thai art.

The Ratanakosin school (1782–1868) constituted little or nothing new, and the period was generally one of relative inertia in the world of the arts. Nevertheless, a few fine pieces of art and architecture, largely modifications of previously developed types, were produced.

The Modern Revival school in the twentieth century reflected a combination of Western influences and classical Thai concepts. Art works, especially after World War II, showed greater originality and individuality than had been demonstrated for more than a century.

## Sculpture

Buddhism has been the dominant influence in sculpture, and the Thai gained wide recognition for their depictions of Buddha, especially those produced in the period from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. Buddha images of the Sukhothai school, in bronze, are considered the finest examples of pure Thai sculpture. The most common Buddha images were of stucco; stone, popular in neighboring countries, was not commonly used. Poses were fairly standard: seated, with legs folded and in a mood of contemplation, reclining, or walking. Because Buddha was sacred, he was usually represented in idealized form. The only realistic statues are those that show him in search of enlightenment through asceticism and fasting. The idealized and contemplative conception characteristic of Thai representations of Buddha distinguish their works from the more realistic and humanized Khmer versions. There are strict Buddhist rules for depiction of religious subjects, which explains why images of Buddha, although produced in great numbers, are confined to a relatively few highly conventionalized portrayals.

What many critics consider to be a decline in the quality of Thai Buddhist sculpture came later than it did in other art forms. The critics' evaluation resulted from the great interest in adornment, reaching a point where unrefined sculptures were completely encrusted with gems and colored glass.

The period after World War II brought renewed interest in sculpture and experimentation with traditional concepts and modern media and techniques. The best known sculptors of the postwar period were: Paitum Muangsomboon, who gained much acclaim in Europe and Bangkok for his work in which he used Western forms, methods, and media; Sitthidet Sanghiran, Sawang Songmangree, and Khien Yimsiri, all of whom used Western media; and Piman Moolpramook and Vichitr Chaosanket, who experimented with Buddha images and religious works.

Silpakorn University and the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Education are training personnel and supporting efforts to develop new concepts in the field of sculpture.

## Architecture

Thai architecture shows evidences of Indian and Chinese influences, as well as modifications of these basic types derived by other neighboring countries, but it nevertheless has a distinctive style. For example, the stupa, of which there are several types, was given new perspectives; one, a rounded type called the *phra chedi*, is considered the most inspired Thai architectural achievement.

The basic forms of architecture, except the stupa, remained virtu-



ally unchanged after the thirteenth century. Buildings usually followed the pattern of the rural wooden, thatched-roof house. The earlier structures, rectangular in pattern, had rigid horizontal lines, with the walls low in relation to length. A step-like progression of roofs, usually three, was superimposed, but the number depended upon the length of the building. The attempt to achieve ideal linear contrast in the arrangement of a group of buildings was clearly evident, particularly in the buildings of the *wat*. The Chakkri Grand Palace in Bangkok, finished about 1840, is generally regarded as one of the finest examples of Thai style.

Architecture, like other arts, went through a period of deterioration, caused mainly by excessive embellishment. In the early period ornamentation was used effectively to give contrast and gracefulness, but in the eighteenth century it became more gaudy.

Until reinforced concrete structures and Western architectural styles came into wide use in the twentieth century, especially in urban areas, nearly all buildings were made of wood. Efforts to harmonize traditional Thai and modern Western architecture, begun in the 1930s, were continuing in 1970. Thai architectural concepts were being experimented with constantly. In order to avert excesses, characteristic of the nineteenth century, builders were giving attention to overall appearance and to the combination of basic structures, furnishings, and appended art objects.

### Painting

Painting in Thailand was usually for religious purposes, to decorate temples and sacred manuscripts, particularly before the twentieth century. Classical works reflect a predominant Ceylonese influence.

The paintings of the early period included monochrome linear compositions, which relied upon the location and size of figures to give perspective. Although forms and techniques were borrowed from other cultures, these early examples have some distinctive Thai characteristics. A further development in Thai painting came in the late Ayutthaya period, when a subtle polychromatic effect was achieved by the careful blending of earth colors and natural pigments and gold leaf was discreetly applied to provide vivid contrast.

The classical style prevalent in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries reflected the distinctive features of the Chiengsaen and Sukhothai periods. Paintings of the classical period combined idealized and realistic representations. Episodes from the life of Buddha and other religious scenes, royalty, and the daily life of the people were most commonly portrayed. Gestures, similar to those in the classi-

cal dance, were used to indicate emotions and moods of subjects. Royal persons and celestial beings were given conventionalized forms and gestures, with tranquil and expressionless countenances and great refinement of line and harmony of color.

The destruction of many art objects in 1767 in the sacking of Ayutthaya and the loss by deterioration of earth-colored murals from the Sukhothai period led to a scarcity of examples of traditional art and contributed to a decline in painting in the eighteenth century that was felt for two centuries. In the late 1940s a revival began. After that time there was also a strong Western influence. Chitr Buabusaya became one of the best known of the postwar Western-oriented artists; others included Amnat Puang Samniang, Samit Distaphundu, and Chalerm Makeerah. Apai Saratani was one of the few who attempted to revive subdued colors and linear composition. Silpakorn University and the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Education have been attempting to develop interest in painting through the sponsorship of programs and by offering instruction. In the 1960s there was increased interest in traditional painting and drawing. A relatively new form, multicolored rubbings of ancient stone bas-reliefs, also became popular in the 1960s. These found a widespread market among foreign visitors and art collectors.

### Drama and Dance

The dance drama in various forms has enjoyed wide popularity. Some of the more elaborate traditional dramas, before 1932 performed only for the court, are costly and survive only because of the efforts of interested students, the elite, and the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Education. The most formalized of all Thai dance dramas, the *khon*, based on the Sanskrit epic poem, the *Ramayana*, is narrated in verse and includes choral singing. Early versions took as many as twenty hours, but contemporary adapters have cut performances to as few as three hours. A less formalized and more popular dance drama is the *lakhornram*, or *lakhorn*. A third traditional type, *nang*, the shadow play, is performed by casting the shadows of cowhide figures on a screen. The figures dance the roles, and the narration is provided by the chorus and orchestral background. The classic marionette show, the *hun*, has given way to the *hun krabok*, a less elaborate, lighter, and more humorous show.

The most popular form of the dance drama, the *liké*, is usually performed in the villages and provincial towns. The plot is mainly historical, and the dialogue is spontaneous, witty, and risqué, with emphasis on word play. Its appeal in the 1960s was mainly to the

older generation and lower income groups. Since the mid-1950s the government has encouraged the use of anti-Communist material in the *liké*. Versions of the *liké* have also been televised.

Other popular entertainment includes the *molam*, a declamation sung to accompaniment of an oversized, seven-tone panpipe. Performances are improvised and may cover any subject; national events and local gossip are frequently included. The *molam* is a popular entertainment for the rural people in the central, northern, and northeastern regions. The circle dance, *ram wong*, a modified folk dance, is widely performed. It places primary emphasis on hand and arm movements, and the steps are simple and repetitious. Large groups join in as couples, but the couples touch only fingertips. The *fon lep*, the temple dance of the north, retains its popularity and is performed frequently, particularly in Chiangmai. The *manohra*, the popular dance in the south, reflects Malayan and Indonesian influences. In Bangkok and other large urban areas Western-style dancing is popular, especially among the younger generation.

### Music

Thai music before the nineteenth century had several distinctive characteristics, some of which have been retained or modified. The scale of seven notes has the same spread as the Western octave. Harmony was unknown; a certain variation was achieved by counterpoint. No compound meters existed; all music was either two-four or four-four time.

Melodies were passed from generation to generation by wandering minstrels and were not written down. About 1,200 songs, all by anonymous composers, have been preserved. They are categorized according to the emotion they express.

There are perhaps fifty kinds of musical instruments, and many Thai play one or more of them. The most commonly found are flutes of various types, stringed instruments, drums, percussion-melody pieces, and gongs. The *piphat*, an ensemble comprising wind and percussion instruments, provides accompaniment for the *khon* and *nang* dance dramas.

Song festivals and folk dancing are common in the rural areas. Songs frequently are *risqué* and humorous and make use of plays on words. Itinerant minstrel troupes visit the *wat* and village and family festivals, providing entertainment in the form of narrative dance and song.

Since the late nineteenth century, Western music has gained rapidly in popularity. The Western musical notation has been used to record Thai music, both traditional and modern. Thai and Western melodies are sometimes blended, and harmony has been introduced.

Popular tunes were made a part of plays, particularly after 1920, when Wichit Watthakan, the playwright, was active and his productions were being performed all over the country. In 1970 Western music enjoyed considerable popularity in urban areas, and music produced in Thailand strongly reflected Western influences.

The Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Education has been instrumental in preserving and reviving traditional music. It sponsors programs that feature native music and trains and supports a *piphat* orchestra, to record and to play in concerts of traditional music.

#### Crafts

Excellence in handicrafts is revealed in several media. Of the Thai crafts, perhaps the best known abroad is the etched patterns on nielloware or silver hollowware. The craftsmen of Chiangmai are famous for their Buddha images, bells, and dragons cast in brass. Painted lacquer works and carved teakwood are popular and reflect excellent workmanship.

Weaving and embroidery by hand methods are still practiced in rural areas and in some aristocratic households. Silk weaving was revived on a commercial scale in the 1950s, and silk material, frequently imprinted with typical Thai designs, has been in great demand, particularly by foreign purchasers.

#### Literature

Thai literature for the most part consists of tales depicting the life of the people and the nation's history. Tales have been passed from generation to generation orally; consequently, different versions of a story are common. Modern scholarly and popular literature has drawn heavily on oral narratives. The appreciation of wit and humor and the love of life and nature have had an important place in all periods. Written literature did not develop until the thirteenth century, when King Rama Thibodi I created a distinctively Thai script.

Thai literature, particularly its classical form, reflects the Mon and Khmer cultures, as well as the basic influences of Buddhism and Hinduism. Sacred Buddhist texts in Pali, the *Jataka* tales, the *Ramayana*, and several secular Sanskrit writings were the basis for early Thai works and much of the later literature.

Royalty played an important role during the long period of classical literature (1293-1850) by providing the subject matter for many historical tales and also by fostering literary efforts. Several rulers, notably King Narai (1657-88) and Rama II (1809-24), were themselves noted poets. It was during the reign of King Narai that Siprat, recognized for his wit, scintillating humor, and pene-

trating observations, wrote his long poem *Kamsuan* (Lamentation), which is considered a masterpiece.

The first major Thai work in prose, a book entitled *Sam Kok*, appeared in 1802. It was adapted from the Chinese classic *San Cuo Chih Yen I* (Romance of the Three Kingdoms).

Western literary forms have exerted a strong influence since the early 1900s, and prose became the main means of literary expression in the twentieth century. King Rama VI (1910–25), a prolific writer, translated *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *As You Like It* into poetic Thai. His greatest works include the dramatic poems *Phra Ruang*, *Matthanapatha*, and *Huachai Nakrop*. Other writers in the early twentieth century transcribed Thai classical works into simple prose, and translations of Western literary works became increasingly popular. In 1970 many books and periodicals in foreign languages were available, particularly in Bangkok, and the press regularly published translations of Western stories and books in Thai-language newspapers. Although prose was the favorite style of most readers in the 1960s, some classical forms were being revived.

Works by Thai writers after World War II for the most part dealt with themes pertinent to modern life. Among the better known works published after 1940 is *Yellow Race, White Race*, by Prince Akat Damakoeng. It deals with problems of a European-educated Thai who returns to his country. Other writers who wrote on realistic subjects were Dokmai Sot, Kukrit Pramoj, Luang Vichitr Vadhakarn, and Chot Phraphan.

### Recent Trends

Elements of Western art, science, and technology have brought modifications to every aspect of Thai intellectual expression. Nevertheless, artistic works continue to reflect primary concern with everyday life and contentment and the enjoyment and appreciation of life by the individual. In artistic works the system of merit and the doctrine of *karma* (see Glossary) serve as basic guidelines for depicting moral values. Buddhist religious and philosophical concepts are being reexamined with a view to applying them to contemporary life.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION

### Media and Their Control

The channels that provide the broadest dissemination of information are radio, films, and the informal network of person-to-person contacts. Newspapers, books, magazines, and television were before the late 1960s confined to the central region and principally to the

educated elite of the urban areas. Improvements in transportation and the expansion of television networks in the late 1960s were beginning to extend the influence of the press and television to the larger towns of the northern, northeastern, and southern regions.

Wide latitude is permitted in reporting public information of a nonpolitical nature, and within the framework established by law there is lively criticism of government policies. Heavy reliance is placed on the media to follow established guidelines, and generally there is no prepublication censorship of information released by privately owned media. Laws and regulations providing restrictions on the media are vigorously enforced.

Regulation of the press, initiated during the reign of King Chulalongkorn, rests on the provisions of the Printing Act of 1941, the Anti-Communist Act of 1952, Announcement Number 17 of the Revolutionary Party (1958), and Section 33 of the 1968 Constitution. The Printing Act, sometimes called the Press Act, includes provisions to silence criticism of the government. Announcement Number 17 is more specific and severe; it provides punishment for statements that offend the king, discredit the government, or contribute to the growth of communism and subversion and others relating to morals and national security. The 1968 Constitution provides that every person enjoys full liberty of speech, writing, printing, and publication. Restrictions on these rights may only be imposed by specific laws enacted to safeguard individual liberties, to avoid creation of emergencies, and to meet various other contingencies. The Constitution forbids subsidies to private newspapers. In mid-1970 the government's proposed revision of the Printing Act was strongly opposed by representatives of the press who claimed that it would result in even greater restrictions. The Public Relations Department in the Office of the Prime Minister has responsibility for the enforcement of regulations pertaining to public information, both domestic and foreign.

### The Press

The press, largely privately owned and read mostly by a relatively small percentage of the population, the better educated element, is influential in political and economic affairs. Major daily newspapers were printed in Thai, Chinese, and English. Distribution of newspapers was primarily through sales outlets rather than subscription. Circulation fluctuated greatly, the demand for a particular day often depending on the competing headlines. The lottery, a sporting event, or unusual happening can result in heavy sales. Intense competition for readers has contributed to a marked editorial preference for sensational news, often with reliability in reporting being a lesser consideration for some newspapers. Estimates of newspaper

circulation are known to be imprecise partly because of fluctuating sales, making it difficult to establish a meaningful average, and also because such data are considered to be a trade secret. There were, in addition to the dailies, a number of newspapers that appeared less frequently. Periodicals covering a wide variety of subjects are published by government, church, professional, and other organizations.

In 1968 only two daily newspapers were published outside of Bangkok. These were in Chiangmai and Hat Yai and developed from less frequently published provincial newspapers. The leading Bangkok dailies in 1968 included eleven in the Thai language, three in English, and eight in Chinese. All but one were privately owned, and total circulation was estimated at about 700,000 (see table 3).

Of the nondailies published in the Bangkok-Thon Buri area, the *Weekly Bangkok Times*, concerned mainly with religious and Thai culture, is one of the most widely read. Most of the magazines have relatively small circulations.

Provincial newspapers, numbering forty-nine in 1968, were usually published every ten days to coincide with lottery results and relied heavily on reprints from the metropolitan press or broadcasts from Bangkok. In the 1960s there was increased emphasis on local and regional events in the provincial papers because Bangkok publications were reaching the provincial towns over new or improved transportation networks.

The composition of newspapers varies, but the average journal usually gives a large proportion of space to current exciting events, human interest stories, and serialized fiction, such as translated stories of the Old West of the United States. Routine items of national and local political or civic interest are given less attention. International news usually occupies no more than one page. The attention to entertainment and sports differs considerably. Advertisements may take from 30 to 50 percent of total space.

The number of mechanical typesetters in 1970 was small because the complexity of the Thai alphabet made equipment costs high. Only the largest publishers could afford to purchase mechanical typesetters. A large number of skilled workmen were required. For example, an eight-page daily in Bangkok with a press run estimated to average 20,000 in the late 1960s employed a staff of about 400 typesetters. The importation of technical equipment, including rotary presses, from Japan markedly improved the printing industry in Bangkok in the 1960s. Improvements were slow in coming to other areas.

There are no Thai press agencies comparable to the state or private news services of many large countries. A host of foreign news agencies or organizations, public and private, are represented in Bangkok. Among the countries represented in 1968 were the

United States, the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, the Soviet Union, India, Japan, and Nationalist China. Some Bangkok newspapers subscribe to the sources of foreign organizations, and sometimes items are adapted from foreign sources. Coverage of current foreign events in the Thai press is generally scanty, and there is small loss of prestige in printing such items a few days late.

#### Radio

Executive authority over all radio broadcasting is vested in an agency under the Office of the Prime Minister, which in 1967 was called the Executive Committee for Coordination of Radio Broadcasting. Control over frequencies is exercised by the Post and Telegraph Department under the Radio Communications Act. Some stations are government owned and operated; others are privately owned and independently operated; and others are privately owned but affiliated with a government station. Authority over broadcast programs is vested in the Public Relations Department under the Radio Broadcasting Act. Radio broadcasting is implicitly regarded as subserving the policy of the government.

The Public Relations Department directs Radio Thailand-National Broadcasting Service. Other agencies that operate stations are: the Post and Telegraph Department, the army, the navy, the air force, the police, Kasetsart University, Chulalongkorn University, the Royal Household Bureau, and the Ministry of Education. With the exception of the Royal Household Bureau and the Ministry of Education, all had affiliated privately owned stations. Before 1966 many government stations had a large percentage of programs sponsored by paid advertising as a means of financing their operations. Action was initiated in October 1966 by the prime minister to ban commercial advertising. Some government stations in the late 1960s, nevertheless, were continuing the practice.

Radio Thailand-National Broadcasting Service, operating under the Public Relations Department, is a major network for dissemination of information and education as well as entertainment. In 1969 there were twenty-five AM (amplitude modulation) stations in Bangkok and in several outlying towns (see table 4). Over thirty VHF-FM (very high frequency-frequency modulation) radio stations were operating in 1968. Two FM stations operated by the Thai Television Company and one operated by Chulalongkorn University were especially popular with the cultural elite in Bangkok.

Radio Thailand has several services, including domestic, overseas, and rural broadcasting. Its facilities included eight studios and seven experimental stations.

Many of the radio stations in the Bangkok area and in the northern areas operate during the day until midnight or later; others



Table 3. Major Daily Newspapers in Thailand, 1968\*

Name of newspaper	Owner	Average number of pages per copy	Estimated circulation
<b>Thai Language:</b>			
<i>Thai Rath</i> .....	Kampol Vacharapol .....	16	120,000-160,000
<i>Pim Thai</i> .....	Thai Commercial Company, Ltd. ....	18	63,000-82,000
<i>Kiattisak</i> .....	Kuradit Srichawala .....	16	35,000-40,000
<i>Siam Rath</i> .....	Siam Rath Company, Ltd. ....	16	30,000
<i>Siam Nikorn</i> .....	Thai Commercial Company, Ltd. ....	8	20,000
<i>Lak Muang</i> .....	Kamol Chantrason .....	12	12,000
<i>Khao Panit</i> .....	Department of Commercial Intelligence, Ministry of Economic Affairs .....	12	10,000
<i>Chao Thai</i> .....	Thai Samakki Company, Ltd. ....	12	9,600-10,000
<b>Thai Language with non-Thai Title:</b>			
<i>Daily News</i> .....	Sipaya Karpim Publishing Company, Ltd. ....	16	100,000
<i>Le Démocrates</i> .....	Upakorn Karpim Company, Ltd. ....	16	12,000
<i>Siam Times</i> .....	Siamkit Patthana Company, Ltd. ....	16	9,600-10,000
<b>English Language:</b>			
<i>Bangkok Post</i> .....	Post Publishing Company, Ltd. ....	26	15,000
(morning)			
<i>Bangkok Post</i> .....	...do .....	16	15,000
(afternoon supplement)			
<i>Bangkok World</i> .....	The World Press Company, Ltd. ....	24	13,000-14,000
<b>Chinese Language:</b>			
<i>Hsing-Hsien Yit Pao</i> .....	Sing Poo Amalgamated (Thai) Company .....	16	45,000-46,000
<i>Hsing Thai Wan-Pao Sakon</i> .....	...do .....	4	45,000-46,000
<b>Chinese Language with non-Chinese Title:</b>			
<i>Siri Nakorn</i> .....	Prasit Wareewes .....	32	35,000-36,000
(morning)			

<i>Siri Nakorn</i> (afternoon)	..... do .....	4	35,000—36,000
<i>Tong Hua Daily News</i> (morning)	..... Sakorn Kyawatnakit .....	16	20,000
<i>Tong Hua Evening News</i> (afternoon)	..... do .....	4	20,000
<i>Daily News</i> (morning)	..... Universal Press Company, Ltd. ....	16	10,000
<i>Daily News</i> (afternoon)	..... do .....	4	10,000

\*All published in Bangkok.

Source: Adapted from Thailand, *Thailand Official Yearbook*, 1968, Bangkok, 1968, pp. 459—460.

operate on briefer schedules. There is great variation in programs. On the average, about 8 percent of broadcasting time is devoted to news. Daytime serialized dramas are highly popular. Most of the Chinese in the Bangkok area receive piped programs in their language through the facilities of the Thai Rediffusion Company, which operates on two channels—one in Thai and one in Chinese. Ownership of this company is shared by the Thai government and private Chinese interests. Selected Chinese programs are rebroadcast over the Chinese channel.

In 1968 the number of radio sets was estimated to be over 3 million. The number was increasing at an accelerated rate in the late 1960s; domestic production of transistor sets was initiated, and foreign grants to purchase radios needed for schools and villages were received.

Table 4. Radio Broadcasting Stations of Thailand, 1969\*

Location	Power (in kilowatts)	Frequency (in kilocycles)
<b>Radio Thailand-National Broadcasting</b>		
<b>Service Stations:</b>		
Khon Kaen .....	10	810
Bangkok .....	100	830
Bangkok .....	10	856
Bangkok .....	10	923
<b>Regional Stations:</b>		
Khon Kaen .....	55	660
Nakhon Ratchasima .....	55	725
Salaya .....	100	830
Sabon Nakhon .....	50	843
Ban Tak .....	10	880
Bangkok .....	1	910
Chiangmai .....	10	1130
Surat Thani .....	10	1210
Muang Ubon .....	10	1345
<b>Shortwave Stations:</b>		
Bangkok .....	5	4830
Bangkok .....	1	6070
Bangkok .....	1	6160
Bangkok .....	2.5	7115
Bangkok .....	2.5	7303
<b>Ministry of Education Stations:</b>		
Bangkok .....	10	1180
Bangkok .....	2	3202
Bangkok .....	2	6062
<b>Thai Television Company Stations:</b>		
Bangkok .....	10	1146
Bangkok .....	10	1500
Bangkok .....	10	6010
Bangkok .....	1	7105

\*All AM (amplitude modulation) stations. Call-sign allocations for Thailand were HSA through HSZ.

## Television

The Thai Television Company (Thai TV), which is under Television of Thailand and the Public Relations Department, and Army Television (Army TV) operate stations in the Bangkok area known as Channel 4 and Channel 7, respectively. In 1968 Thai TV and Army TV, with the use of relay stations, reached thirty-two of the seventy-one provinces; they were available to about half the total population. Thai TV in 1970 was developing a national network that would establish sixteen transmitting stations. In addition to Bangkok, there were stations in operation at Chiangmai, Khon Kaen, Hat Yai, and Nakhon Ratchasima. Army TV also was extending its services and had a station at Sara Buri, in addition to Bangkok. At the end of 1967 it was estimated that there were at least 350,000 television sets in operation.

Broadcasts from the Bangkok stations usually ran from 5:00 P.M. to 11:30 P.M. on Monday through Friday and from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday. A majority of the programs are live, but extensive use is made of videotapes, especially those from the United States, depicting Western and crime themes. Almost all foreign programs have instantaneous dubbing by Thai speakers. A variety of programs is offered. Sporting events and scenes featuring the royal family are especially popular.

Telephones and telegraph services were used extensively in support of television, the press, and radio. The number of telephones in 1968 exceeded 98,000, and the total length of telegraph lines was about 13,250 miles.

## Films

Films, particularly foreign motion pictures, are popular and attract increasingly large audiences as equipment and facilities become available in the countryside. In the late 1960s over two-thirds of the people in Bangkok and half the provincial population attended motion picture shows at least once a week. The influence of foreign films is evident in the modes of dress and behavior of urban youth and in the wide interest in literature dealing with European and United States screen stars.

Most films are imported, the majority coming from the United States. The domestic film production industry was still in a fledgling state in 1970.

Foreign films, except Chinese, are seldom dubbed. In rural areas commentary is frequently provided after the film is completed or during intermissions. For performances in the cities and in the provincial towns one or two professional performers accompany the film and provide simultaneous translation of selected scenes after turning off the sound track. Slapstick and action pictures are most

popular, especially in the rural areas, partly because they are more fully understood by visual interpretation. About six of the motion picture theaters in Bangkok regularly show Chinese motion pictures filmed in Hong Kong and Singapore. Most of the films are dubbed in Teochiu, the dialect spoken by most Chinese in Bangkok.

#### Informal Methods of Communication

Person-to-person contacts, especially in the rural areas, in 1970 continued to be the most important means for disseminating and exchanging information. The farmer, through long-established custom, learns much of what he knows about secular affairs through the village headman, local teachers, and peddlers. In 1970 the distribution of radios, especially battery-powered transistor sets, the wider distribution of newspapers, made possible by improved transportation, and the expansion of government field services were breaking down the barriers that traditionally isolated the villager.

#### Government Information Activities

Public information activities, both domestic and foreign, are centered in the Public Relations Department. Its service includes daily news bulletins and briefings in Thai and English. The various government agencies also provide a mass of information relating to their functions that is of interest to particular elements of the general public.

Government publications include the Royal Thai *Government Gazette*, periodicals issued by the various ministries, posters and pamphlets on cultural or educational subjects, and textbooks published by the Ministry of Education. Except for school textbooks, the publications contain domestic and international news and policy statements by various government officials, and all stress themes concerning anticommunism, Thai national interest, and current economic and social developments.

Since 1963 the government has published a number of bilingual (Thai-English) books and pamphlets. The most comprehensive of these is the *Thailand Official Yearbook*, published in English by the Office of the Prime Minister. A publication of some 700 pages, it contains sections on Thai history, government, economics, communications, living conditions, education, religion, sports, and tourism.

There are various programs designed to counter Communist subversion, particularly in the northeastern region. These have placed heavy emphasis on information and education. Mobile information teams use films and various forms of popular entertainment to gain and maintain loyalty, and many other aspects of national development programs, which aim to further economic growth, also pro-

vide information. The response, especially when information programs are linked to entertainment, has been good.

The Overseas Broadcasting Division of Radio Thailand-National Broadcasting Service broadcasts programs to foreign audiences in English, French, Cambodian, Chinese, Laotian, Malay, and Vietnamese. In 1968 these broadcasts included programs broadcast twice daily and beamed to the United States and Europe.

#### **Foreign Government Information Activities**

Information programs by foreign governments include those of the non-Communist countries, operating mainly within Thailand and through international broadcasts, and those of Communist countries, relying on clandestine means within Thailand or broadcasts from outside. The United States, Great Britain, France, West Germany, Japan, India, and Nationalist China maintained offices and provided information services in Thailand in 1970.

The most active foreign information programs were conducted by the United States Information Service (USIS) and its radio branch, the Voice of America (VOA). USIS programs included the operation of fixed and mobile lending libraries, the distribution of news and feature material about the United States, the showing of documentary films, educational exchange activities, and the broadcasts of VOA. Branch offices of various other United States organizations in Bangkok provided information services through USIS.

Broadcasts designed to further communism and subvert Thai unity, begun in 1962 by a clandestine station, came from mainland China in 1970. These programs and the propaganda disseminated by Communist agents and small bands of armed guerrillas in the north-eastern and northern regions stressed the theme of a "national liberation war" against the United States and in the late 1960s the "guilt of the Thai government" in its support of the South Vietnamese.

## CHAPTER 7

### LANGUAGES

In 1970 more than 90 percent of the population spoke either Thai or the Lao dialect of Thai. Both have many dialects and sub-dialects; some are similar, but others vary enough so that persons from different sectors of the country find it difficult at first to understand one another. Notwithstanding distinctive variations between Thai and Lao, they are closely related, and mutual understanding between native speakers of the two tongues is possible. Central Thai, the variant spoken by the inhabitants of Bangkok and the Central Region, is the official national language.

Thai or Lao speakers include not only the more than 32 million ethnic Thai but also large numbers of ethnic Chinese, most of the Vietnamese, and a few representatives of other ethnolinguistic minorities. The Chinese-speaking community comprises more than 4.5 million persons, concentrated in the Central Lowland Region and in the peninsula. Malay, with more than 1 million speakers, is the next most important language. Other minority languages are encountered among the hill peoples along the borders with Burma and Laos, the scattered Mon communities of the central region, the Khmer communities of the northeast, and the several small linguistic groups in the peninsula. Many of these languages are themselves divided into dialects spoken by groups of various sizes.

English predominates among the Western languages spoken by transient alien residents, and it has long been taught in the government school system as a required or optional subject. The languages of neighboring Southeast Asian countries and of the Indian subcontinent are spoken by immigrant communities, many of whose members are in trade and service occupations. The 40,000 to 45,000 Vietnamese concentrated in the northeast continue to use their native language.

The government is actively promoting the spread of Thai in all sections of the country through the compulsory education law that makes Central Thai the language of instruction in all schools, public or private. Central Thai is also employed by government officials in dealing with each other and, when possible, with ordinary citizens. Earlier efforts to end instruction in the language of the ethnic minorities met with considerable resistance from the Malays and Chinese; compromise has permitted instruction in their languages for a

certain number of hours a week in the schools of these two minority groups. Thus, although the various minorities may continue to use their own languages among themselves, the government is ensuring that present and future generations of schoolchildren will be at least nominally bilingual.

### THAI

Not all linguists agree as to where Thai should be assigned among language families. Some assign it to a Chinese-Tai branch of the larger Sino-Tibetan language family. One recent study, however, places it in a family of Tai-Kadai languages.

Central Thai, spoken in Bangkok and in the central region and used in official communications throughout the country, is the standard spoken and literary language. It is spoken with distinct mannerisms among the Thai Khorat around Nakhon Ratchasima. Indigenous Thai speakers of the northern region, particularly in the Chiangmai area, are known locally as Thai Yuan (or Thai Nuea) and by the Central Thai as Lanatai. Scholars generally associated Yuan with a dialect cluster made up of such groups as the Lu and Khua and sometimes extended to include the Lao. These groups are distributed within the Mekong River valley, from southern Yunnan Province to southwestern China, through northern Burma and northwestern Laos, and into northeastern Thailand. The Thai Pak Tai, Thai speakers in the extreme southern provinces, use a patois termed *tamprue*.

Central Thai is the language of government, education, the press, motion pictures, and radio. The influence of Central Thai, as it is spoken in Bangkok, has increased significantly in all of the dialect areas outside the central region. Although in these areas its common use is still largely restricted to official and semiofficial situations or to conversations with foreigners and persons from other dialect areas, words from Central Thai are frequently borrowed to express concepts for which the local dialect has no satisfactory words. The dialects are mutually intelligible for the most part, and young people in all parts of the country have received instruction in Central Thai and can understand and speak it with varying degrees of fluency. In other dialect areas, real fluency is more common among urban dwellers than it is among the rural villagers, who have less exposure to Central Thai and also less need to know it well. Although regional and local dialects are by no means vanishing, more and more persons are becoming acquainted with Central Thai.

Thai (Tai), in various forms, has more speakers than any other language of mainland Southeast Asia and is spoken over an extensive geographical area, including Assam in India, Burma, Laos, North Vietnam, and parts of Southern China. This linguistic affinity with



peoples outside the borders of the country has been an element in irredentist movements, such as that sponsored during the first administration of Phibul Songgram (1934-38) with respect to portions of Laos and Cambodia. Since the early 1950s another such movement has been sponsored by Communist China.

The Thai language is tonal, uninflected and predominantly monosyllabic. Each syllable has an inherent tone that, no less than the consonants and vowels, determines the meaning of the syllable or word. In Central Thai there are five tones. Many Thai dialects are distinguished primarily by the number and distribution of tones they possess and secondarily by vocabulary differences. Thus, the word *rice* (*khaw*) is pronounced with a rising tone in Central Thai and with a high tone in northern Thai. Even within a single dialect many words are distinguished only by their tone; thus *ma* may mean *horse*, *dog*, or *come*, depending on the tone used.

Since Thai words are uninflected (that is, do not indicate grammatical function by changes in the word itself as in many European languages), grammatical functions are shown by the word order of the sentence, much as in English, and by words whose meanings are primarily or solely grammatical. Most of the multisyllabic words in the vocabulary either are compounds of simpler one-syllable words or have been borrowed from Khmer, Sanskrit, or Pali, along with the elements of culture they identify. The government has also coined words from these languages to translate concepts and innovations borrowed from other cultures for which the Thai language had no terms, rather than to make new compounds of the simpler monosyllabic words.

#### Status Usages

In all dialects a complex vocabulary is used to express the fine gradations of deference, intimacy, condescension, or humility appropriate to conversations between persons of differing status. Personal pronouns indicate the relative status of the speaker, the person spoken to, or the person spoken about. Status particles of varying degrees of formality, corresponding somewhat to "yes sir" or "no ma'am" are added at the end of sentences to indicate varying degrees of courtesy and respect. There are synonyms for many common nouns and verbs; the particular synonym used depends on the relative ranks of the person involved in the conversation. Thus, *kin* (to eat) is used by common people among themselves or by an upper class person in speaking to or referring to his servant; *rap-prathan* (also meaning to eat) is more formal and polite and is generally used by, and in reference to, people of higher social rank. In writing, even for a popular audience, and in public speaking, formal language is invariably used, so that a foreigner with a good

knowledge of colloquial Thai may have difficulty in understanding publications or radio broadcasts. When there are two or more synonyms, the one of Khmer or Sanskrit origin usually has more prestige than the word of Thai origin.

A still more formal vocabulary is used in addressing members of the Buddhist priesthood. For royalty, what almost amounts to a different language is used; this royal language is used when speaking to or, to a lesser degree, about the king and the highest nobility. In ordinary conversations, commoners would use respect terms in referring to royalty rather than speak entirely in the royal language, which they would probably know only imperfectly. This royal language is based on Sanskrit with strong Khmer and Pali influences. It was never formally taught but was acquired through study of the literary classics dealing with royalty and through use in court circles. Today, most people learn some of the forms and vocabulary from reading the classics, or stories derived from them, at school and from newspaper articles about royalty, but the royal language is spoken only on very formal occasions and within the king's household. The imperfect knowledge of the royal language leads to circumlocutions and sometimes to improvisations when the use of ordinary polite Thai might be considered inappropriate or disrespectful.

Respect and affection may be expressed in colloquial Thai by the use of kinship terms in speaking to nonrelatives. For example, someone may address an elderly man as "uncle" or "grandfather," or friends may call each other *phi* and *nong*, the terms for older and younger sibling. These terms illustrate another feature of Thai social relations: the emphasis on age rather than on sex.

#### Foreign Influences

The earliest historic mention of the Thai language occurs in the Chinese annals of more than 2,000 years ago which preserve a few words, mainly names and titles of kings, that are still recognizably Thai. During the second millennium B.C. eight words of the language of the Pang people were recorded, of which five are recognizably Thai. In A.D. 1172 a Chinese scholar gave a list of nine words, three of which are recognizable as Shan, three as Annamite, and three as Thai. Another scholar lists nineteen words, of which twelve are found to be Thai and the remainder Annamite. Little else is known of the language until the Thai kingdom of Sukhothai arose in the area of present-day Thailand. Earlier they had settled in the Mon and Khmer kingdoms, and the Thai language was influenced by this association (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

The Indian character of Mon-Khmer culture accounts for the fact

that many of the words taken over by the Thai were of Sanskrit origin and were borrowed along with Mahayana Buddhism. Pali words were introduced with the conversion of the Thai, during the Sukhothai era to Theravada Buddhism. Later direct contact with Ceylon and India by religious missions further facilitated the introduction of Pali and Sanskrit words.

More recently, when contact with the West and other Asian countries increased, the introduction of new concepts and objects led to the incorporation of Chinese, Malay, and European words into Thai. This tendency was particularly strong during the latter half of the nineteenth century, when Western educational, scientific, and administrative methods were being accepted enthusiastically in Thailand.

The upsurge of nationalism that marked the reign of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, 1910–25) led to attempts to replace Western terms with Thai equivalents formed either from native Thai elements or from Sanskrit or Pali roots. Again during the Phibul administration, Western terms were in disfavor, and Thai, Pali, or Sanskrit translations were found for many European scientific and technical expressions. Language purity has become less of an issue, although committees are maintained in certain government ministries to find words for new concepts, usually taking them from Pali or Sanskrit.

Foreign words taken into Thai conform to the Thai language structure. The inflectional endings of words adopted from Pali or Sanskrit have often been dropped or, if retained, do not serve the grammatical function they had in their original language. Many foreign polysyllabic words are abbreviated in pronunciation in order to make them conform more closely to the monosyllabic pattern of Thai. Pronunciation of foreign words, moreover, is adapted to Thai sound patterns, which vary in a number of ways from the sound patterns of Indo-European languages. Thus, *hotel* becomes *hoten*; *tennis*, *tennit*; *whiskey*, *witsake*; and *beer*, *bia*.

#### Writing Systems

Although the origin of the Thai script is not clear, its characteristics definitely align it with early Mon or Khmer scripts of South Indian origin, which were used extensively throughout the mainland of Southeast Asia. The first known instances of the use of such a script for Thai are in inscriptions dating from the reign of King Rama Khamhaeng (1277–1317), to whom the adaptation of the Mon-Khmer script to the Thai language is attributed. This alphabet was further modified in the reign of King Lu Thai, the son of King Rama Khamhaeng, and it is this modification that is used today.

The modern alphabet consists of forty-four consonant symbols

and twenty-eight vowel and diphthong forms. The vowel and diphthong symbols are written as in other Indian-derived scripts—that is, above, below, before, or after the consonants that, in pronunciation, they follow. Vowel symbols indicate both short and long vowels as well as diphthongs. The number of consonant symbols in the Thai alphabet is greater than the number of consonant sounds, some being paired duplicates for a set of consonant sounds. Although these duplicate symbols have the same consonant sounds, each symbol has its own effect on the tone of the syllable in which it occurs, thus creating another element of difficulty for the foreigner in learning to read and write the language.

Tones are also indicated by special tone markers, or diacritics, in some but not all cases. There are four of these tone markers, and the absence of a diacritic or one of the paired duplicate consonants also indicates a tone. In addition, there is a special diacritical mark to indicate that a written syllable should not be pronounced. This is used frequently in writing words of Sanskrit or Pali origin, which are shortened in spoken Thai.

In writing Thai, words are not separated by spaces, which serve instead to indicate the ends of phrases and sentences. The use of question marks, exclamation points, and quotation marks has been borrowed from Western languages, probably from English, and their use is now common, although not absolutely essential for understanding.

Most of the early writing was religious and was used principally in monasteries. Except for some inscriptions on stone, writing was usually incised on palm leaves with a sharp instrument; ink was applied to the leaf and then rubbed off, leaving the scratches filled; the leaves were then strung together to make a kind of book. These early writing materials, as well as the first printing press, set up early in the nineteenth century, and the Thai typewriter, developed by missionaries from the United States in 1891, have been important in determining the evolution of Thai letters to their present form.

Aside from the transcription of the actual sounds of spoken Thai, the method used by linguists and authors of modern textbooks on spoken Thai, there are two main systems for writing Thai in Roman letters. In one, each Thai letter is replaced with a Roman alphabet equivalent. Unlike Thai notation, this method does not indicate which syllables are not pronounced. Moreover, since Thai has some sounds not indicated by special symbols in Western languages, their representation in this method is often somewhat ambiguous. The other method ignores both Thai spelling and pronunciation and transliterates the borrowed Sanskrit and Pali words in their original form, as found in those languages. In transliterating words of purely Thai origin, this method is not different from the other.

These factors have created considerable confusion in the use of Thai words in foreign languages. Place names, which vary in English spelling from map to map, for example, have not been entirely standardized. The Royal Institute of the government has a special committee that is responsible for standardizing and romanizing the spelling of geographic names in accordance with official transcription rules. The purpose of the standardization is to enable speakers of foreign languages to pronounce the names as closely as possible to the Thai sound.

#### Names and Naming Patterns

Family names have come into use only since 1916, when King Vajiravudh decreed that every family must have a name. He bestowed surnames on the minor royalty and officials, but villagers were obligated to choose a surname from a list prepared by the king. In some cases surnames indicate the district of origin of the family or past connections with royalty (see ch. 4, Social Systems and Values). It is not uncommon to find several families in a small village bearing the same surname, although they may disclaim blood relationship. In other villages, however, the lack of family records and the disinterest in tracing ancestry (unless the family is descended from nobility) have resulted in the possession of a common surname being considered sufficient evidence for putative if untraceable kinship.

Within the family, infants are sometimes not given proper names until they are several months old; in the meantime, they are referred to as "little one," the sex being indicated by the use of modifiers. In the Central Lowland Region they may be given animal nicknames, for example, "little pig" or "little mouse," or they may be called "Red," a word implying rawness. Originally, this was an attempt to confuse malicious spirits that were believed to cause the deaths of very young children. Proper names are selected by the village abbot after careful considerations of the astrological portents, although some younger parents may choose the name themselves. In either case, care is taken to ensure that the name be auspicious. Proper names sometimes reflect the parents' hopes for the child's future, although they are usually just "lucky" names. Boys' names are not distinguished from those of girls by grammatical endings (which are lacking in Thai) but can be distinguished only, if at all, by common usage. In the schools the use of terms corresponding roughly to "Miss" and "Mister" must be used in the records in order to distinguish the sex of some students, who have names that may be given to either sex. Children are often named on an alliterative basis; that is, the names of all the brothers and sisters may begin with the same syllable, often the same one with which a parent's name begins.

### Conventions and Proverbs

The people have always been fond of using poetry to express their thoughts and emotions in speech and writing. The simplest of all poetical forms is the *liké* (see Glossary) poem, which even the illiterate know how to compose. Poetry, however, is not limited to this formal expression. Even in everyday conversation poetic language is frequently used (see ch. 6, Education, Culture, and Public Information). Thai lends itself well to alliteration, and words are frequently chosen to obtain a pleasing and rhythmic sound pattern; syllables may be repeated, changing the vowel on repetition, partly for emphasis and partly to make the words more pleasant to the ear. People who speak well in rhyme and rhythm are much admired and are called "masters of poetry." Similes are frequently used in both the spoken and written language, and parables are popular, especially in the training of children.

The Thai have a great appreciation for the humor in subtleties of language. Play on words and puns are achieved by exchanging vowels or consonants between two words or shifting tones. Double meaning and vulgarity are often expressed in this way, particularly by the clowns of the *liké* drama, and are regarded as extremely funny. Skill at puns and other word games is rated highly; clumsiness brings ridicule. Mispronunciations by announcers and public speakers bring considerable laughter, even when the result is meaningless.

Proverbs are common, and their generally cautionary character suggests that the Thai are less carefree and ingenuous than might appear from superficial observation of their outward behavior. Some proverbs are: "Face like a doe—heart like a tiger"; "Pretty outside but not inside"; "The ancients said, if someone tells you of a fortune in a faraway land you should not go according to his word"; and "He who spits toward the sky gets it back in his own face."

### LAO

Lao dialects are more similar to each other than to Central Thai, which has borrowed more heavily from Khmer, Pali, and Sanskrit. The Lao dialects and Central Thai remain mutually intelligible, however; although the Khmer, Pali, and Sanskrit borrowings in Central Thai have greater prestige than the original Thai terms they replaced, the older words for the most part are still known and are only dialectally different from modern Lao usages.

The scripts of the Lao of the northeast and of the north are somewhat different from that used by the Central Thai, but all seem to derive from the same Indian sources. The script of the

northern Thai dialect, showing some Burmese influence, has forty-five consonants plus a letter sometimes classed as a nasal vowel and vowel and diphthong symbols. Only half the consonant letters are needed to represent all the consonant sounds; the others, as in the northeast, are paired duplicates that indicate different tones. The northeastern Thai script appears to be identical with, or very similar to, that used in Laos; at least northeasterners who know this script have no difficulty in reading Laotian.

Neither of the local scripts is taught in the schools. They are still taught in the local *wat* (temple complex), which usually has collections of the Buddhist scriptures, the *Jataka* stories (legends of previous incarnations of Buddha that teach a moral lesson as well as provide entertainment), and other works in these scripts. As a result, only men with extensive temple service are able to read these scripts with any fluency. Laymen who have learned one of them in the course of temple service enjoy special prestige as learned men.

## CHINESE

Several dialects of southern China, reflecting the places of origin of the Chinese immigrants, are spoken. Like Thai, they are monosyllabic and tonal, but they and Thai are mutually unintelligible. The Chinese system of ideographs is also completely different from the alphabetic writing system of the Thai. Although Teochiu, Hakka, Hainanese, Hokkien, and Cantonese, the main dialects found in Thailand, use substantially the same system of writing, the spoken forms are as different from one another as are European languages, and the community tends to be compartmentalized along dialect lines. Since the Chinese have virtually preempted the role of the trading middle class and since business is dominated by speakers of Teochiu, this dialect has become the language of trade and the lingua franca of the Chinese minority.

Although many of the Chinese, especially those born and raised in Thailand, know Thai well and use it outside their own ethnic community, Thai businessmen find it expedient to have at least some knowledge of Teochiu if their business dealings bring them in frequent contact with Chinese businessmen. In areas of heavy Chinese concentration, such as Bangkok, most Thai pick up a few words of Teochiu—enough to bargain with Chinese peddlers and merchants—and many of the common Teochiu expressions tend to become absorbed into the Thai language as slang.

Mandarin, officially the national language of China, is increasingly used for communication among educated Chinese of different dialect groups and, as the national language, is taught in all Chinese schools. The regional languages, however, retain their importance as

the primary means of communication within the Chinese community and as a major basis for social and occupational alignments. Each major dialect group maintains a regional association for social purposes and for mutual aid. The regional associations maintain private schools and aid members in time of crisis; they may publish newspapers and provide recreational facilities. Above all, they serve as official representatives in dealings with the authorities. For the majority of the Chinese, who have no occasion for close contact with the Thai, these linguistic associations, rather than the family, the labor union, or the nation in which they live, are the largest functional unit of the social community.

In the Chinese community there is also a distinct correlation between speech group and occupation. Thus, Teochiu speakers dominate banking, the rice trade, insurance, rubber manufacture, and many other occupations. The great majority of tobacco manufacturers and leather workshop proprietors are Hakka; sawmill operators are chiefly Hainanese; Hokkien dominate the tea and rubber trades; Cantonese are prominent as restaurant owners. This traditional occupational specialization on the basis of regional and linguistic origin has begun to break down, however. The Teochiu, especially, are gradually expanding into other occupations, and the more successful find it possible to become associated with and assimilated to the Westernized Thai of the Bangkok elite.

## MALAY

The Malay language is spoken mostly by Thai nationals living in the southernmost provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala, and Satun. Malay, the native tongue of about 70 percent of the population in these provinces, belongs to the Malayo-Polynesian language family. It is a nontonal language and different in structure from Thai and Chinese. The Malay spoken in Thailand differs little from that of Malaysia. There is some admixture of Thai words, but the people on both sides of the border can readily communicate. In Thailand, Malay is written in Arabic script.

Although Thai is used by the provincial and local governments, by the courts of law in most types of disputes, and in the schools, many Malays have only a slight knowledge of it. This largely reflects the opposition among the Malay-speaking Islamic people to learning a language that they consider to be associated with Buddhism—a religion other than their own. Malay is still the predominant language of trade in the southern region, and Chinese and Thai businessmen in that area need a basic knowledge of it in their daily work. Area specialists estimate that as of late 1965 no more than 25 percent of the Malay population as a whole spoke Thai, and in the



same group, no more than 40 percent of those in the ten to nineteen-year-old bracket.

### ENGLISH

English is the only European language widely known. In many private schools it is taught from the elementary grades on; in public secondary schools it is usually chosen to fulfill the compulsory foreign-language requirement. In practice, English is often the only foreign language taught, especially in government schools. Almost all high school graduates have had at least six years of English language courses. Since aptitude and motivation vary from student to student, however, this does not mean that most of them know English well.

English is used particularly in Thai elite circles; it is the language of cosmopolitan Bangkok society and of Thai international trade. Well-educated Thai, both in Bangkok and the provinces, know English and use it with foreigners. In the provinces even people without a secondary-school education may know a few words of English, acquired from friends and advertisements of United States and British products. The lack of adequate modern technical terminology in the Thai language and the limited number of textbooks in Thai have made the use of English almost unavoidable in the universities, especially for higher technical education. The opportunities for students to receive part of their education in the United States or Great Britain have brought about an increasing awareness among students of the desirability for fluency in English.

There is thus an increased demand for training in English at all levels of society because of its prestige value and its importance as a channel to modern ideas and techniques, and this demand is shown in the enthusiastic response to the opportunities that are available for learning English. The classes in English offered by the American University Alumni Association Binational Language Center and by the British Information Service are crowded, and waiting lists for enrollment are long.

Although English is, and long has been, the most widely known foreign language, the government, for a period before and during World War II, when it was pursuing a strongly nationalistic course, attempted to purify the language of European influences. Official publications were no longer printed in both Thai and English, and Thai numerals were used in preference to Arabic numerals. Since then, English has returned to favor as the principal second language, and the government is actively promoting knowledge of it among teachers and students. Many official documents are again being published in Thai and in English versions, which may be bound

separately or as one volume. The Ministry of Education publishes *Public Education*, a magazine for schoolteachers that contains brief readings, questions, and exercises in English.

#### OTHER LANGUAGES

Pali, related to Vedic Sanskrit, is not a spoken language, but it is important in Thailand (as it is in Burma and Cambodia) as the written medium of Theravada Buddhism, which all ordained monks must study. Along with Sanskrit, Pali is the source of many linguistic borrowings and innovations, especially in Central Thai. Borrowed words in common speech dealing with religion generally derive from Pali, whereas those referring to the secular realm are apt to be of Sanskrit origin.

The Karen, the largest group of Thailand's mountain peoples, speak a Sino-Tibetan language whose position among the language families of the world is still uncertain. Some linguists say that it is closely related to the Tibeto-Burman group of languages, whereas others assert that it constitutes a separate major division (Karenic) within the Sino-Tibetan group. Thailand had about 75,000 Karen, among a total of approximately 1.5 million in southeastern Asia as a whole in 1970. The most important of the Karen dialects in Thailand are Skaw and P'wo.

The Miao-Yao peoples, numbering collectively about 60,000 in Thailand in 1970, have close Chinese affinities. Scholars have not agreed on the linguistic position of their languages, but they are sometimes represented as a separate major division within the Sino-Tibetan group. Rather wide linguistic differences distinguish Thailand's main groups of Miao: the White Meo (Meo Khao) and the Blue Meo, who in turn subdivide themselves into Black Meo (Meo Dam), the Striped Meo (Meo Lai), and the Flowery Meo (Meo Dawk). These dialects are to some extent mutually intelligible, but Lao, the language of the northeast, is used as a lingua franca, and some of the older men speak Yunnanese. The Yao, whose tongue is closely related to that of the Miao, are a far smaller group and are concentrated in Chiangmai Province.

The Lisu, Lahu, and Akha mountain peoples, the bulk of whom still live in southern Yunnan Province of mainland China, speak languages belonging to the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan family. The Lisu and Akha each constitute a single dialect group, but the Lahu are subdivided into two major and two minor subgroups. Lahu, a monosyllabic language with three tonal variations, has similarities with Akha and Lisu, with additional borrowings from Chinese, Burmese, and Thai.

Other small linguistic groups found in Thailand include the Lawa, a Mon-Khmer-speaking group long established in the area, and the

Haw, recent Chinese immigrants who live in the border areas of the northern region. In addition, small but significant groups speaking Mon, Khmer, and Vietnamese are represented in the lowlands.

### LINGUISTIC POLICY

The government's linguistic policy is twofold. It promotes the knowledge of English as a technical and scientific tool in the development of Thailand, and it is attempting to establish Central Thai as the standard national language used by all citizens. In both cases, concern for the nation and its development and unification is at the basis of the policy. The objective of the government's policy is to eliminate minority problems by absorbing the minority populations into the national culture.

Education is viewed as an important instrument in the assimilation process. Schooling is both free and compulsory for seven years, though in many rural areas the children in fact attend for only four years (see ch. 6, Education, Culture, and Public Information). The law requires that this education be given in the Thai language in all schools, regardless of the ethnic background of the children enrolled. In Chinese schools, this requirement is relaxed to the extent that ten hours of a thirty-hour weekly curriculum may be taught in the Chinese medium.

Among the Chinese, the education process provides scant impediment to assimilation. Not only is instruction in Chinese limited to a few hours per week, but no child may attend a Chinese school for more than four years beyond kindergarten. Thus, secondary education is exclusively Thai. Overall, more than 95 percent of ethnic Chinese children attend Thai government schools rather than those operated by their own community.

Among the Malays, completion of the basic course of religious instruction offered at the local mosque is expected of every village child, but only a minority attend the village schools. In these schools some teachers comply with government regulations requiring that instruction be in Thai, but others, recognizing the difficulties this presents to the Malay-speaking children, continue to teach in Malay. The Thai government is trying to develop better language instruction programs in the Malay-speaking area. Efforts toward this goal include the introduction of experimental programs in which Malay teachers are given intensive seminar courses in the national language, with prizes for the outstanding students offered as incentives. Despite this and other endeavors in the direction of meeting the special needs of the Malays, there is still strong resistance to government education.

The government maintains two types of schools for children from remote areas who cannot attend the regular government schools in

the villages and towns. One type of school is established locally and staffed by the Border Patrol Police in the areas they patrol. The other type is composed of several boarding schools to which certain young people from the ethnic minorities are brought to study. In either type the objective is to introduce the Thai language and culture and other useful information to the ethnic minorities in order to increase their participation in national life and to encourage their assimilation. The government hopes to accomplish much through these students, who are expected to become of increased importance in their home communities as contact between the minorities and the Thai increases.

## CHAPTER 8

### RELIGION

Theravada Buddhism is the established religion of Thailand and in 1970 was professed by almost 94 percent of the country's populace. Similar to the forms of Buddhism found in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Ceylon, it is sometimes called Hinayana (Exclusive Way or Lesser Vehicle) Buddhism. According to the Constitution, the king is the protector of all faiths, and he participates in the ceremonies of different religions. The Constitution does, however, require that he be a Buddhist, and the involvement of the throne in Buddhist affairs extends to his appointment of the supreme patriarch of the Buddhist order.

Buddhism is a vital force permeating the daily lives of the people, and the number of omnipresent Buddhist monks in the country has led to its description as the "land of the yellow robes." Instruction in Buddhist morals must be given in all schools except those in Muslim areas, where local officials may exercise an option to omit it. Buddhist observances usually accompany the celebration of national holidays and other official occasions.

The importance of the *wat* (Buddhist temple complex—see Glossary) in the life of the people is suggested by the magnitude of contributions in cash, gifts, and volunteer labor. In addition to private contributions, villages are called upon at irregular intervals to make sizable offerings of money or labor for repairs or for erecting new buildings. When the support needed is greater than the community's resources, word is sent to neighboring villages, which usually send help. People do not feel imposed upon when asked to contribute to the building fund of a *wat* in another village because this gives them an opportunity to acquire spiritual merit, essential to the Buddhist belief, and the assurance of reciprocated help in the future.

Buddhism in Thailand has absorbed many beliefs and practices from other religious systems. Pre-Buddhist Hindu philosophies held that the universe was eternal, self-creating, cyclical, and in a constant state of change. Life itself was seen as an expression of this transitory reality. The individual was born and reborn in a series of incarnations that were higher or lower, depending upon the moral quality of his actions in his previous existences. Buddha neither denied nor affirmed these concepts because his primary concern

was winning freedom from frustration and pain rather than offering metaphysical explanations of the universe.

Like other scriptural religions, Buddhism's formal doctrine is intertwined with customs, attitudes, traditions, and daily actions that are not sanctioned in writing. Some of these derive from the Indian milieu in which Buddhism developed; others were added after Buddhism reached the mainland of Southeast Asia. The result has been a complex of belief and practice that is in many ways uniquely Thai and that penetrates virtually every phase of the nation's life. Cosmological and astrological concepts influence not only religious ritual but also many aspects of political and economic life. Popular religious beliefs and institutions are changing, but in a society that has taken so much of its character from them they do so slowly. Beliefs about the supernatural continue to affect human relations, work, recreation, and the arts.

Buddhist tolerance for the expression of other forms of religion has led to coexistence rather than conversion to other religious traditions. Many Thai hold the precepts of other religions along with their practice of Buddhism. Few have become total converts, and most associate the Buddhist faith not only with their cultural tradition but also with their national identity. Other Thai religious groups, constituting an estimated 7 percent of the population in the late 1960s, include Brahminism, Christianity, Confucian ethical teaching, and animism. None of these groups has shown any sign of rapid expansion. Separatist movements among some of the Chinese and Malay minorities are in part reflective of religious exclusiveness by some of the adherents, but deeper political and social roots are also involved.

Besides its formal division between laymen and religious officials, Buddhism in Thailand has an elaborate ecclesiastical structure. The structure comprises a hierarchical organization of the Sangha (brotherhood of Buddhist monks—see Glossary) and a large number of *wats*, some of which are subsidized or maintained by the state. Ideally, every man aspires to enter the Sangha, at least temporarily, sometime during his life. The ordinary rural *wat* is both the religious and social focus of the village. The urban *wat* occupies an important but less central position in the community.

The special role played by the government in Buddhist affairs in accordance with constitutional and legislative provisions concerns certain areas of administrative as well as financial support. The most recent official government statistics available in 1970 for religious groups were in most cases projections based on the 1960 census or on partial surveys in the early and middle 1960s.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Thai Buddhism is based on the religious movement founded in the sixth century B.C. by Buddha in the city of Benares, India, later

renamed Varanasi. Buddha, who had been born Siddhartha Gautama Sakyamuni, gave up royal status to admonish the world to give up the opposite extremes of sensuality and self-mortification and to follow the enlightened Middle Way. By following the eightfold provisions of Buddha's Middle Way, one could achieve the realization of the Four Noble Truths. Knowledge of, and action in accordance with, these truths would lead the practitioner first to insight, then knowledge, tranquility, higher knowledge, enlightenment and, finally, *nirvana* (release from the cycle of reincarnation—see Glossary).

During the reign of Asoka (ca. 269—232 B.C.), Buddhism spread throughout India and Ceylon. Under Asoka's son, religious centers were established in Ceylon that, during the first century B.C., committed to final written form the teachings of Buddha, which previously had been only partially written or transmitted orally. Written in Pali, these writings were called the Three Baskets (Tipitaka—see Glossary) after the three baskets in which were stored the palm leaves on which the text was written.

The Pali canon was composed of three parts. The Vinaya Pitaka provided a list of 227 rules of discipline to be followed by all monks. The Sutta Pitaka contained five doctrinal discourses. The Abhidamma Pitaka was a deeper doctrinal discussion of the first two sections. It seems to have been a later tradition than the others and reflected the Ceylonese Buddhist interpretation of the teaching of Buddha. Fragmentary forms of other Buddhist versions of Buddha's teachings transcribed by other sects exist, but the Pali canon is the only complete version and is recognized as the authoritative scripture of Theravada Buddhism.

The exact time in history when Buddhism first arrived in Thailand is uncertain. Some scholars maintain that the introduction of Buddhism occurred during the reign of Asoka. Archaeological findings of the Wheel of Law and figures of deer, both used by Buddhists between 300 and 100 B.C. before the use of Buddha's image became acceptable, as well as religious tradition would support this claim. The evidence is inconclusive, however, and the best that can be said on the basis of the oldest Pali texts found in the country is that by the sixth century A.D. Buddhism had been established under the Dvaravati Kingdom of the Mons.

Within 100 years after the death of Buddha, divergent interpretations of his teachings in India had led to the establishment of several sects. By the first century A.D., Mahayana Buddhism (see Glossary), whose adherents followed texts written in Sanskrit, had become one of the dominant sects. Mahayana Buddhists revised the basic teachings of Buddha on two points. Instead of upholding individual salvation through individual effort, the new form declared that the moral ideal was the happiness of all living creatures and that living beings as a whole are aided in their struggle

toward *nirvana* by the actions of the individuals who have achieved enlightenment but have deferred entering into *nirvana* in order to help others achieve the same goal. Such a redeemer is called a *bodhisattva*.

To the followers of the Mahayana school Gautama was one of many buddhas (persons who have reached enlightenment) who had been, and were to be, incarnated. Moreover, buddhas and some of the *bodhisattvas* acquired the status of supernatural beings, who were conscious of human needs and responsive to prayers and offerings. Salvation was not restricted to the few who could maintain the strict Eightfold Path of the Theravada doctrine; it was available to many through devotion to a buddha or a *bodhisattva*.

Mahayana Buddhism was brought to the peninsular south region of Thailand with the expansion of the Srivijaya Empire of Sumatra. Contact with the Khmer Empire of twentieth-century Cambodia also brought Mahayana Buddhism to the eastern and central sections of Thailand. After the establishment of the Thai kingdom of Sukothai in about 1238, Theravada Buddhism was made the state religion. The subsequent fall of the Khmer and Srivijaya empires resulted in the final erosion of Mahayana Buddhism and led the way for the intrusion of Islam into the peninsular section of the country.

The history of Buddhism between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries is obscure. Few historical records or religious texts survived the sacking and burning of the capital city of Ayutthaya in the mid-eighteenth century. Since few records were inscribed on stone, the most that is definitely known about the period before that of contemporary Buddhism in Thailand is that Buddhism entered the nineteenth century with limited resources, a depleted clergy, and few sacred scriptures intact.

Before ascending the Thai throne in 1851, King Mongkut had served for nearly thirty years as a member of the Buddhist order. In 1837 he had been named abbot of a new monastery founded by his brother, Rama III, who was then king (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). Having achieved a proficient knowledge of Pali, Mongkut read the original Pali texts and began a reform movement that later became the Dhammayuttika sect. All practices having no authority other than custom were to be abandoned. Canonical regulations were to be followed not merely mechanically but in spirit as well, and meaningless acts of merit having no social value were also rejected. In 1970 only about 5 percent of all monasteries in the country followed the Dhammayuttika tradition, but the influence of the sect extended beyond itself to the other monasteries, which belonged to the Mahanikaya sect. The Dhammayuttika is the more intellectual and conservative of the two sects.



### KARMA, SOUL, AND REINCARNATION

Central to the structure of Buddhist beliefs is the doctrine of *karma*, which asserts that every act, word, and thought has its consequences. These consequences are the result not of the intervention by any supernatural being but of the operation of cosmic principle. Evil acts have evil consequences for the doer, such as suffering misfortune in this world or being reincarnated in hell or as an animal in some future existence. Good acts yield good consequences, such as prosperity in this world, birth in heaven, or a high position in the world in some future life. The concept was accepted with little question by Buddha's early disciples and became a central doctrine of all schools of Buddhism.

Each higher incarnation brings one closer to *nirvana*, but probably most persons aspire to a less elevated reward, such as rebirth in this world with happiness, wealth, or honors, or rebirth in a lower heaven with the luxury of many wives and retainers.

A concomitant of the belief in *karma* is the view that all forms of existence are related because every form originates in a previous one. The entity that undergoes reincarnation is not, however, the soul in the sense of personality minus body but an involving complex of attributes, merits, and demerits. It is this complex that seeks and may achieve perfection as it passes from existence to existence.

The three components of a human being are *kai* (a material body), *khwan* (the body-spirit or life-soul), and *winyan* (an "ego" soul). The two souls are often not distinguished. The *khwan* can reside either inside or outside the body. When it is inside it acts as a life-soul bestowing life, health, success, wealth, and prosperity. Usually, it resides in the head, but it may reside in other parts of the body. If it leaves the body, wanders away, or becomes lost or injured, the individual sickens or dies. A timid and easily frightened person is said to have a tender and delicate *khwan*. Gifts are things for *khwan*. When one is greatly frightened, he says his *khwan* is lost. When a baby cries out in sleep or fright, the mother pats its breast gently saying, "Oh dear *khwan*, please stay with the body." Sick children have their wrists tied with a piece of unspun thread to "bind in the *khwan*."

The *winyan*, which is a more abstract concept, is the soul that endows an individual with thought, will, perception, and consciousness. It represents the individual's share of the universal or cosmic intelligence.

The Thai theory of the soul plays an important part in the beliefs about disease and the afterlife. Disease is believed to be the loss of the *khwan*, the intrusion of a foreign spirit in the victim's body or

an imbalance of the body's components. A foreign spirit can enter the body either by its own volition or by being projected into it by a witch; the common treatment in either case is exorcism. In the imbalance of the body's components, the element that most commonly causes difficulty is "wind" (see ch. 5, Living Conditions).

### THE PATH TO NIRVANA

*Nirvana* is the ultimate and complete state of contentment and fulfillment. It can be achieved at the end of a final incarnation by recognizing the Four Noble Truths and by following the Eightfold Path.

The Four Noble Truths are that all life is sorrow, sorrow is the result of desire, cessation of desire ends sorrow, and cessation of desire is attained by following the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path, which is known as the Middle Way, comprises right understanding, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right attentiveness, and right concentration.

Those seeking perfection must abstain from eight actions: taking a life, taking what is not given, indulging in improper sexual pleasure, speaking a falsehood, drinking intoxicants, eating after the noon hour, attending entertainments and using bodily adornments, and sleeping or lying on a comfortable, cotton-filled mattress. The first five are commonly accepted as the minimal requisites of social ethics and religious morality. People may explicitly promise to keep all eight on *Wan Phra*, which is the Buddhist "duty day" that occurs forty-eight times in the lunar year. Monks observe all these precepts as part of the 227 rules of the *Patimokkha*, which is translated as "that which should be made binding." For the monks, however, the third rule requires chastity and not merely the avoidance of improper pleasures.

### THE SANGHA

Membership in the Sangha offers the best way for a devout man to follow the Eightfold Path to *nirvana*. It does not guarantee his success, but it provides him the best environment in which to seek his salvation. Women may not join the Sangha, but a son who belongs may earn merit for his mother. Women may also acquire merit by following the precepts, attending religious services, and giving offerings and donations. The more devout may become nuns in order to observe greater moral and spiritual discipline than would be possible in a secular environment. Buddhist nuns numbering about 30,000 in the late 1960s were found largely in urban areas.

The head of the Sangha is the supreme patriarch, who is officially known as *sakala sanghaporinayaka somdech phra sangharaja* and who is appointed by the king in consultation with the leaders of the

order of monks. Until the Sangha Act of 1962, which came into effect in January 1963, Sangha organization was a tripartite system composed of the executive council, legislature, and the judiciary. Members of the executive council were appointed by the supreme patriarch and were subject to government approval. Members of the legislative branch, which had a maximum of forty-five members were appointed by the supreme patriarch on the basis of seniority and eligibility. This group was chiefly concerned with administrative regulations and monastic duties and discipline, but it also made recommendations to the supreme patriarch about appointments to the judiciary.

After the reorganization of the Sangha in January 1963, the tripartite system was replaced by a single administrative body, the Supreme Council, which was presided over by the supreme patriarch. The council includes all dignitaries in the Sangha holding the rank of *somdech phra raja gana*, which is next in order to the supreme patriarch, and selected officials holding the next lower rank of *phra raja gana*. Those whom the supreme patriarch appoints have a two-year term of office, but they may be reappointed. The Supreme Council has legislative and judicial powers and functions because it enacts laws governing the Sangha; it is empowered to reorganize the national administration of the Sangha; and it is authorized to prescribe punishments and try infractions of ecclesiastical law.

Below the Supreme Council the organization of the Sangha corresponds to the major administrative units of the national government. In the late 1960s there were regional, provincial, district, and precinct levels of ecclesiastical administration. The more than 24,000 monasteries are the basis for this hierarchical system. In the late 1960s only about half of these monasteries had *uposatha* (halls of ecclesiastical rites) in which ordination ceremonies could be held. In the remainder only ordinary religious services were conducted for the monks and laity. All but 18 of these monasteries followed the Theravada tradition. About 23,000 were monasteries of the Mahanikaya sect, and 161 were royal monasteries. Estimates placed the total number of monks in residence at these monasteries between 250,000 and 280,000. At least 87,000 of these were novices. An exact figure varies from week to week since many of those included in these figures return to their secular lives after a few months or years in the Sangha.

The organizational structure of the Sangha is important to the strength of Buddhism. Its hierarchical system permits the maintenance of close supervision and good discipline according to the rules of the Vinaya Pitaka, one of the books of the Buddhist scriptures. It also facilitates the flow of information and instruction between the levels of the hierarchy.

Authority within the Sangha is not excessively heavyhanded and,

within the limits of monastic discipline, monks and novices enjoy a freedom of choice in the exercise of their vocation. Some may specialize in certain non-Buddhist activities, such as spirit healing or fortunetelling; others may devote themselves to personal projects, such as raising money to build a road. If a monk wants to go to another *wat*, he tells his abbot and leaves. Villagers whose *wat* has no monk may invite a man of their choice without consulting his abbot.

Many villages have no resident monks and depend upon the services of monks from *wats* in neighboring communities. Others have only one or two monks or novices in their *wat* compound. Such *wats* are supervised by the abbot of the nearest residential *wat* in the community. When a full complement is required for certain ceremonies and religious functions, other monks come from a nearby *wat*.

## CEREMONIES

### State Ceremonies

Both before and after the establishment of constitutional rule in 1932, some of the traditional state ceremonies, in which Theravada Buddhism played a permanent part, fell into disuse. After World War II, however, official interest in the old observances revived, and some new ones have been instituted. Among the most important celebrations are the memorial day of the Chakkri dynasty (April 6); Chatra Mongkhon, or Coronation Anniversary (May 5); Pued Mongkhon, or Plowing Day (May 11); the Queen's Birthday (August 12); King Chulalongkorn Memorial Day (October 23); the King's Birthday and National Day (December 5); and Constitution Day (December 10).

In the past, state ceremonial occasions were confined to Bangkok, but the government has now extended their observance to provincial capitals, district seats, and village schools. Every program follows a common pattern. Schools within a short distance of the administrative centers must send their classes to the observances. A government officer reads the proclamation of the day, which is followed by speeches, a brief religious service, and the singing of patriotic songs. Schools some distance from a town hold their own observances and report on them to the district office. On some holidays commune headmen (*kamnan*) and village headmen (*phu yai ban*) as well as schoolchildren, are required to attend the ceremonies at the district headquarters. These official holidays are designed to increase national consciousness and patriotism.

### Agricultural Ceremonies

The farmer traditionally marks the growth of the rice crop by ceremonies propitiating the spirits of the grain and the soil and any

other supernatural beings that may be involved. Only remnants of these elaborate rites remain, but most peasants still make simple offerings to the spirits during seeding, transplanting, and threshing. The government has revived some of the old Brahmanic ceremonies and sponsors a Buddhist ceremony of blessing seed rice.

An important rural celebration is the winter fair, which opens around December 5 and lasts for approximately a week. These fairs were originally local agricultural festivals held at the village *wat* after the harvest season. The authorities have adopted the idea and have inaugurated annual provincial fairs. Each district is invited to display its agricultural produce and handicrafts. Prizes are awarded for the best stalls and for the best displays of rice by individual farmers. Patriotism and national unity are stressed in the ceremonies.

#### Family-Centered Ceremonies

Buddha prescribed no ceremonies for birth, death, and marriage; but the Hindu rites, which were retained and adopted by the people, involve the participation of Buddhist monks. The resulting ceremonies, which are held in the house rather than in the *wat*, have no scriptural sanction. The monks participate only to chant the appropriate Buddhist *sutras* (scriptural texts) or to provide holy water.

The propitiation of an individual's *khwan* is a basic feature of Thai family rites. Any ceremony for the welfare of a person, animal, or plant is referred to as the making of *khwan*. On important occasions, such as birth, ordination into the priesthood, marriage, return from a long journey, or the reception of an honored guest, a *khwan* ceremony is performed.

Of all the life-cycle and family-centered ceremonies, funeral rites are the most elaborate. When a person is dying he is made to fix his mind upon the Buddhist scriptures or to repeat some of the names of Buddha. If the last thoughts of the dying person are directed toward Buddha and his precepts, the fruits of this meritorious act will be reaped by the deceased in the next incarnation. After death other meritorious acts are performed for his benefit, such as attendance at the wake and giving food to the officiating monks. Every effort is made to banish sorrow, loneliness, and the fear of spirits by means of music and fellowship.

Confirmation is a modern ceremony first introduced by King Chulalongkorn, who feared that boys going to Europe for an education before they had entered the Sangha might be lost to Buddhism. The ceremony involves taking an oath of reverence to Buddhism, and it includes rites derived from those performed at the ordination of novices.

### Wat-Centered Ceremonies

The *wat* is a walled compound containing both small and large buildings. Its principal axis runs east to west, and the entrance is on the east. The number and arrangement of the buildings vary. A large *wat* may have a temple for lay worshippers (*vihara*); a temple for monks (*bot*); a dormitory for monks, novices, and temple boys; a library; a number of public halls (*sala*); a stupa (*chedi*—see Glossary); and, frequently, the local public primary school. Separated from the rest of the village by tall coconut palms and fruit trees, the *wat* is surrounded by a grove and is shaded by coconut, betel palm, and sacred bodhi trees. *Wats* are usually situated on the edge of the larger villages and towns, but in small villages the *wat* is adjacent to the center of the village.

Ceremonies in the *wat* consist of those that benefit the entire community and those that primarily affect the Sangha. The first type includes the rites held on such occasions as Nakha Buja (an important February holiday that marks the beginning of the season for making pilgrimages to Phra Buddha Baht, or Buddha's Footprint Shrine), Wisakha Bucha (a festival commemorating Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death), Khao Phansa (the holiday marking the beginning of a three-month Buddhist Lent), and Thot Kathin (a festival during which robes and other items are given to the monks by the laity). Ceremonies of the second type include ordination, confession, recitation of the 227 monastic rules, and distribution of new robes after Thot Kathin.

Of all the ceremonies affecting the Sangha, ordination is the one that most involves the laity, in both physical participation and spiritual benefit. Frequently, before a young man makes his initial entry into the Sangha a ceremony is held in the home of the aspirant (*naga*) that prepares him for the ordination. His *khwan* is invited to enter the Sangha with him; otherwise, evil and illness may befall him. He is informed of his parents' happiness with his decision, of the sacrifices they have made for him, and of the life of austerity and discipline he is to begin. At this ceremony the *naga* is dressed in clothing that symbolizes the garments of Siddhartha Gautama Sakyamuni, who became the Buddha. After receiving a blessing he is led on horseback to the temple as a royal prince wearing a crown, shaded by an umbrella and escorted by flag-bearers, musicians, and others. The escort carries the gifts of flowers, cloth, candles, incense, and food for the *naga* and for the monks who will ordain him. In the villages this phase of the ceremony, although still colorful, is abbreviated and simplified in comparison to its elaborate urban version.

At the *wat* the procession circles the hall of ecclesiastical rites, three times in clockwise direction, which symbolizes a joyous

occasion. The aspirant is presented to the monks, exchanges his princely garments for simple white ones, and takes his place before a validating quorum of monks for the ordination. The aspirant asks three times in Pali to take refuge in the Buddha, in his teachings, and in the Sangha. After a brief sermon the officiating monk hands him the yellow robes. Having donned them, the aspirant bows and presents gifts to two monks (*achan*, or instructors); he then asks again for refuge and to be given the precepts. An instructor leads him in the proper Pali responses, which include recitation of the ten precepts that govern novices. The ceremony ends at this point if the novice expects to remain only for a few days in the Sangha; if he wishes to become a regular novice he bows to the officiating monk and asks him to become his mentor. His acknowledgment of his acceptance ends the ceremony, unless he is ordained as a monk on the same day.

If a youth, after a period of service as a novice, wishes to become a monk, his ordination will be marked only with simple festivities by friends and relatives of the family. Before the day of ordination villagers will assemble to prepare the personal items needed by a monk and the offerings of candles, flowers, and money. Food is provided by the novice's family, and work is accompanied by conversation and pleasantries. On the day of ordination relatives and friends travel by foot or bus to the hall of ecclesiastical rites of the *wat*, where the ceremony is held.

The ordination ceremony is a simple one. The novice is questioned about his eligibility by one of the monks, after which the novice asks to be admitted to the Sangha. His mentor then formally sponsors him and invites further interrogation of the novice, who is questioned twice more by the assembled monks. They are asked three times to voice any objections they may have to admitting the novice or to show their consent by silence, and the ceremony is concluded.

### COSMOLOGY

Traditional Thai beliefs about the cosmos were derived from ancient Indian sources and were acquired primarily from the Khmer. Among them was the belief that mankind was constantly influenced by forces that emanated from the stars and planets and that could produce either prosperity or havoc. It was necessary, therefore, that individuals, social groups and, especially, the state act in harmony with these astral forces. Individuals followed the signs offered by astrology, the lore of lucky and unlucky days, and many other rules. Harmony between the kingdom and the universe was achieved by organizing the state as a microimage of the universe. Brahman priests or astrologers were the intermediaries

between the court and the forces of the cosmos. An essential component of traditional belief was this concept of the kingdom as the image of the universe.

#### The Kingdom as the Image of the Universe

The royal palace formed the magical center of the traditional Thai kingdom. Around the palace lay the city that was known as the Heavenly Royal City or the City of the Thewa and that in its physical plan both copied and symbolized the universe. The palace was the residence of the sacrosanct Thai monarch, his queens, and court officials, who bore titles that corresponded to those of their celestial counterparts. The king was regarded as an incarnation of one or sometimes two gods—usually Siva or Vishnu—who flew down from their heavens at the time of his coronation and entered his body. After the death of the king his corpse was covered by a cloth that symbolized Siva's death shroud.

The king's throne faced the east, and a division arose between right-hand (southern) and left-hand (northern) positions. There were queens, administrative divisions, departments and offices, and provinces of the right and left. During the Sukhothai and the early Ayutthaya periods the kingdom had five divisions: the capital city and four principalities of the north, south, east, and west. When the kingdom expanded, the system of organization became more complex, but the division of the country into right-hand and left-hand sections continued.

King Mongkut was the first monarch to critically examine the Thai concept of the monarchy. It was during the reign of his son King Chulalongkorn (1868–1910), however, that the monarchy was secularized. The state was modernized and remodeled upon a European pattern (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). Many of the ancient ceremonies and festivals were maintained for a number of years, and the government has recently revived a number of these festivals and rituals in a reaffirmation of the values and continuity of Thai civilization. The popular conception of the monarchy is difficult to measure but still contains many traditional elements.

#### Astrology

In modern Thai society the harmony desired between the individual and the cosmos is still sought through the use of astrology. The timing of many important occasions, such as housewarmings, marriages, and cremations, is seldom set without consulting an astrologer or a monk who will make lunar calculations to ensure an auspicious date. Lucky and unlucky dates vary according to the year, month, and birthday of each person. In November, March, and July, Tuesday is considered an unlucky day



on which to start an important undertaking. Certain specific dates, such as the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth of every lunar month, are lucky or auspicious. Most religious ceremonies are held on the eighth day of the waxing moon, the day of the full moon, or the eighth and fifteenth days of the waning moon. Much of this old belief is declining, but elements of it, especially in the villages, still persist.

### Supernatural Beings

Supernatural beings are also subject to the laws of *karma*. Their attributes and relative positions are determined by their merits or demerits in previous incarnations. They can be categorized as *thewada* (gods of various grades who inhabit the heavens), *chao* (guardian spirits), and *phi* (goblins and ghosts), which may be good or evil. Most of the deities of the Hindu pantheon have declined in importance among the whole population, although Indra (Phra In, in Thai), believed to be the protector of the earth and everything on it, and a few others are sometimes invoked in fortunetelling and prayers.

The abode of the *thewada* is in the heavens above Phra Meru. They are beings who may at one time have been human and who have risen to their exalted state through accumulated merit. Each of the six heavens inhabited by ordinary *thewada* and the nine heavens inhabited by Brahmanic *thewada* is ruled by a king. The most important kings are versions of the Indian deities Siva, Brahma, Vishnu and, particularly, Indra. Other deities include the Master of Heavenly Spirits and the Lord of Death, who, assisted by minor demons, presides over hell. Active belief in this pantheon appears to be dying out, and young people are increasingly vague in their knowledge of it.

The most important *chao* are those of the house compounds. Fixed on a post in the compound of most houses in the central region is a small spirit dwelling. Food offerings are made to the *phra phum* (the spirit of the place) on the anniversary of his installation in the house, New Year's Day, and other special days. The spirit is told of the arrival of guests who are to stay any length of time, of projected journeys by members of the family, and of births and deaths. Its help is also sought during illness and misfortune.

Other spirits protect gardens, the ricefields, and the *wats*. The spirit of the ricefield is worshiped only once a year at the beginning of the rice planting; the Rice Goddess receives offerings when the seedbed is to be prepared and when the harvest is due. The Mother Earth Goddess often receives offerings at transplanting time.

The Lao villagers of the northeastern and northern regions do not have *phra phum* shrines in their house compounds, but they may

have a community spirit house where the spirits of the founders of the village are honored annually in the sixth lunar month. Each family in the village and the representatives of any offshoot hamlets take an offering, which is usually a parboiled chicken, to the village shrine in the sacred grove. There the ancestral spirits are informed of births, deaths, animals owned, trips planned, and other matters; and the spirits' protection from illness, ghosts, and evil spirits and their help in bringing on the rains are sought. The ancestral spirits are remembered only as a group, and it is not clear whether any other spirits besides the actual "founding fathers" are included. The spirit house, which is big enough to hold a seated man, is made in the form of a dwelling rather than in the form of a Buddhist temple like the *phra phum* shrines. Most of these spirit houses are quite old; and they will probably not be rebuilt. Many villages have already discontinued the custom and have cut down the sacred grove to make additional farmland.

One class of *phi*—mostly jungle dwellers—consist of such malevolent beings as vampires and weretigers as well as benevolent beings such as tree spirits. A very large tree is thought to harbor a powerful spirit, and passers-by will make token offerings. River and mountain spirits are important locally. The river spirits often receive elaborate offerings during Loi Kathong, the Festival of Floating Lights.

The ghosts of persons who died violently under mysterious circumstances or whose funeral rites were improperly performed are another class of *phi*; almost all of these spirits are malevolent. In contrast, the ghosts of notable people, who reside in small shrines along the roads and who are referred to as "spirit lords," are often petitioned in prayers and can enter and possess the bodies of mediums to give oracles. Among the more important of the spirits and ghosts is the *phi bop* (ghoul spirit), which is a disembodied evil spirit that may enter human beings at the instigation of a witch and consume their internal organs. Although it is usually regarded as having a human collaborator, it is believed to be found sometimes roaming loose near slaughterhouses.

Although the government actively seeks to discredit belief in spirits and refuses to hear sorcery cases in the law courts, most farmers apparently still partially believe in them. The spirits provide an explanation for illness, accidents, and bad luck, and the rituals designed to placate them give the farmer the feeling that he is taking active steps against troubles with which he could not otherwise be able to cope.

### BUDDHISM AND SOCIETY

As would be expected in a society in which the majority of people live in rural areas and follow traditional social patterns, the

role of religion in the legitimization of social structure and values and as a base from which individual existence acquires meaning cannot be discounted. Although it is difficult to project the exact dimensions and extent Buddhism plays in the practical lives of the laity, the social role of members of the Buddhist order can be more clearly seen.

In the country the social life of the community revolves around the *wat*, which is in contrast to the situation in urban areas, where the *wat* is only one among many institutions. Besides its religious activities, a village *wat* may function as a charitable agency, recreation center, dispensary, school, community center, place of safe deposit, community warehouse, home for the psychotic and the aged, employment agency, news agency, public guesthouse, and information center.

Monks and novices play a major role in both the religious life and the secular affairs of the village. Their services are indispensable to the observation of marriage and funeral rites. In addition, they help to preserve the social stability of the community by their example of patience and serenity. They may give free medical diagnosis and treatment, act as arbiters in personal quarrels, or serve as bankers in the safekeeping of a villager's savings. Many monks and novices participate actively in construction works around the village, such as helping to build a bridge or a primary school. Many of the more progressive and successful attempts at modernization, especially in the area of health, would not have been possible without the support and aid of the Sangha.

Members of the Sangha are denied structured political roles or activity by both tradition and legislation. Secularization of the bureaucracy in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries has also reduced the direct effect Buddhism has on policy formation and administration. Although some authorities would maintain that bureaucratic reluctance to accept responsibility or other attributes is reflective of lay Buddhist values of tolerance and merit, insufficient research exists for any conclusive comments.

The concept of merit held by the laity does have certain economic consequences. It seldom serves as an incentive for the accumulation of productive wealth, but its greatest consequence is in the way in which income is dispersed. Traditionally, religious expenditures have consumed 5 to 10 percent of the annual cash income of the average rural family. Daily food offerings have also been one of the contributions of most rural families to the support of the local *wat* and its residents. The financing of meritorious acts still continues to be an important item in the family budget, but there is an increasingly greater emphasis on material comfort and consumptive satisfaction from commercially produced goods and services (see ch. 14, Trade and Transportation).

The Buddhist Association of Thailand, formed in 1934, is a lay group originally organized to advance the cause of Buddhism mainly within the country. During the mid-1960's this group demonstrated a growing interest in the propagation of the Buddhist faith abroad. Aided by government funds, it set about training missionaries and was arranging for the establishment of a few temple sites abroad. The total membership of the organization in the late 1960s was estimated at just under 3,000.

#### THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The government has demonstrated a longstanding interest in the country's religious affairs. Since the mid-nineteenth century the monarchy itself has advanced, or given support to, the purification of Buddhism and has sought progressive involvement of the Sangha in national development. Starting with the Buddhist Order Act of 1902 and including other acts as recent as the Sangha Act of 1962, alternately called the Buddhist Order Act of 1962, the government has placed various dimensions of religious activity under its direct jurisdiction. Heretical and dysfunctional dissent by members of the Sangha is controlled through the state's requirement that all monks be registered with a monastery and through the state's administration of religious examinations determining one's eligibility for classification as a monk. Legislation also exists for the Christian and Islamic faiths. Government control of the Sangha is further strengthened by the fact that, although private contributions still play an important role, the present financial solvency of Buddhism is largely dependent upon state support.

The government is the legal owner, in the name of the Sangha, of all *wat* lands. *Wat* grounds are considered sacred and cannot be used for secular purposes unless a ceremonial act of annulment is performed. The *wats* control nonsacred income-earning land, which is administered for the Sangha by a government agency. Public schools in which monks teach are operated with *wat* grounds. *Wat* aid to the indigent is an important channel for public welfare.

The major point of liaison between the government and the Sangha is maintained through the Department of Religious Affairs in the Ministry of Education. The department keeps records of such matters as ecclesiastical property and membership. It also operates a large publishing office that prints textbooks, which are written by monks, and books about Buddhism for the general public. Through the department the government supervises the 115 royal *wats*, which it has supported since the inauguration of the constitutional government in 1932. There are two ecclesiastical colleges, under royal patronage in Bangkok, that grant an equivalent of the bachelor of arts degree and that train monks in languages, comparative

religions, philosophy, science, and Buddhist studies. Graduates are expected to become teachers in the *wat* schools.

Government involvement in religious affairs is one of the interests of certain other ministries as well. The Ministry of the Interior is concerned with the administration of government, religious policy, and the registration of religious shrines and centers of worship. The Ministry of Public Health runs the Buddhist hospital in Bangkok and also provides health services for Buddhist monks.

#### RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

The religious affiliation of the large ethnic Chinese minority, which in 1970 represented about 12 percent of the population, is difficult to identify. Some have adopted the Theravada beliefs of the Thai, and many participate in the activities of the local *wats*. Most Chinese, however, consciously retain the mixture of Confucian social ethics, formal veneration of ancestors, Mahayana Buddhist doctrines, and Taoist supernaturalism that is characteristic of the popular religious tradition in China. To the Chinese community as a whole, neither organized religion nor theological speculation has a strong appeal. Besides the monks, most large Chinese temples have lay associations attached to them.

Chinese monks are distinct in many respects from Thai Buddhist monks, who dress in saffron-colored robes, beg for their food each morning, are free to leave the Buddhist order at any time they choose, and participate fully in the lives of those around them. In contrast, Chinese monks wear loose-fitting, long-sleeved jackets and trousers; receive their food from the temples to which they are attached; and, upon entering the priesthood, must take a vow of celibacy and lifetime service. Chinese monks play a minor role in the lives of those who attend *wat* services and are usually consulted only at times of misfortune or death.

The influence of Islam is confined chiefly to the southernmost provinces, where the vast majority of the country's Muslim believers are found. Numbering about 1 million persons in 1970, they are predominantly ethnic Malay. The remainder are Pakistani immigrants in the urban centers and ethnic Thai in the rural areas of the central region. Education and maintenance of cultural traditions not indigenous to the country are vital interests of these groups.

Except in the small circle of theologically trained believers, the Islamic faith in Thailand, like Buddhism, has become integrated with many elements of Brahman and animistic beliefs and practices. It would be impossible to draw a line between the shamanistic superstitions that are found in the Malay culture and those elements that are Islamic. Shamanistic exercises, which are intended to drive

off evil spirits, exhibit many Islamic influences, and Islamic ceremonies invariably contain aspects of superstitious belief.

In the mid-1960s the country had over 1,400 mosques, and the national Islamic Center was being built. All but 5 of the mosques were associated with the Sunni branch of Islam; the remainder were of the Shia branch. These mosques were attended by 20,000 religious dignitaries. Each mosque had three formally appointed officials: the *imam* (vicar), its chief figure; the *katib* (preacher); and the *muezzin* or *bilal* (the Muslim crier).

One of the duties of the *imam* is to provide religious instruction to the Muslim children of the village. The instruction is available early in the morning before classes begin in the village school. Those who want to continue their religious education may attend a *pondok* (religious secondary school), of which there were about 190 officially listed in 1968, with an enrollment of about 10,800 students.

The Hindu population of the country reflecting various nationalities was estimated in the mid-1960s at 7,000. There were three centers of worship, which were located in Bangkok and which had a combined attendance on religious holy days of about 200 persons. Hindus also maintained a public library, a cemetery of their own, and a school for over 200 pupils.

The Sikh population of the country in the mid-1960s was estimated at about 10,000. The two religious centers in Bangkok, representing two different sects, provided services for a total of about 250 to 300 persons on holy days. The Sikhs maintain a coeducational secondary school with about 700 students as well as a health center.

Christian missions have had only modest success in winning converts among the Thai, and the Christian community in 1970, which estimates based on projections from the early 1960s placed at 150,000 or less, was the smallest of any Asian country in proportion to population. The missions have, however, played an important role as agents for the transmission of Western ideas to the Thai. They have opened hospitals, introduced Western medical knowledge, and sponsored some excellent private elementary and secondary schools. Through their schools, the missions have been able to reach many of the Thai urban elite who plan to have their children complete their studies abroad in English or American universities.

A high percentage of the Christian community is Chinese, although there are several Catholic Lao as well as Catholic Vietnamese communities in southeastern Thailand. About half the total Christian population lives in the central region of the country, the remainder being almost equally located in the northern and northeastern regions.

Christianity was first introduced to Thailand by Portuguese

Roman Catholic priests in about 1511 during the Ayutthaya period (1350–1767). Catholics in the country in the late 1960s represented over half of the total Christian community. The Catholic church operated six hospitals and about 125 schools. There were seven major official Catholic organizations, and four periodicals were being published by the Roman Catholic Church in Thailand.

Protestant missionaries first arrived in the early nineteenth century. One of the more prominent early missionaries, Dan B. Bradley, was an important source of Western influence during the reign of King Mongkut (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). In 1934 several Protestant groups joined together to form the Church of Christ in Thailand, which in the late 1960s had 134 congregations. Congregations affiliated with independent Protestant groups numbered more than 180. The Church of Christ in Thailand operated five hospitals, thirty-six schools, and six special education centers. It also published a monthly periodical.

## **SECTION II. POLITICAL**

### **CHAPTER 9**

#### **POLITICAL SYSTEM AND VALUES**

The 1970 form of Thailand's government was established by the Constitution of 1968. Under it there is executive primacy, popular participation in a bicameral legislature, and a king designated as head of state. The king constitutes a strong and unifying national symbol but exercises only limited powers through the executive, legislative, and judicial branches into which the government is divided. In practice, the executive branch dominated all levels of the government, made and administered policy, dominated the legislature, and exercised considerable power over the judiciary. The prime minister heads the executive branch, assisted by the bureaucratic elite, which in 1970 was composed mainly of military and police officers and a cadre of professional civil servants.

Traditionally a unitary state with a highly centralized government, the country has not yet developed a tradition of strong local government institutions. All important agencies of power and policy are concentrated in Bangkok. Government direction has flowed from the center outward and from the top down through an established network of officials in the provinces, districts, communes, and villages. These territorial divisions are subordinate to the central government, but efforts to stimulate the development of local self-government, however, have also been initiated.

Although active participation in the political process is limited, in comparison with countries having a background of parliamentary democracy, there is a high degree of popular agreement with decisions of the government. This is largely the product of the powerful Buddhist faith and traditional culture, with its respect for authority and strong sense of national identity, as well as traditional political apathy and socioeconomic complacency rooted in at least tolerable economic conditions.

There has been selective adoption of Western political and legal institutions and practices, but the Thai political system is oriented primarily toward stability and preservation of traditional values. The government, for its part, continues to regard its mission as a paternal one of leading the people and generally attempts to exer-



cise its authority without being oppressive and without seriously disturbing the traditional basis for stability.

### THE TRADITIONAL PATTERN OF RULE

Ancient Siam was ruled by a paternalistic monarch called *pho khun*, which means father-lord or father-ruler. During the fifteenth century Khmer influence in the Thai monarchy brought with it the Khmer doctrine of the divinity or near-divinity of the king, and he was thereafter regarded as *cakravartin* (universal sovereign) and *bodhisattva* (one destined to become Buddha). He personified all virtue as well as being the symbol of authority, and his actions or commands were not questioned (see ch. 8, Religion).

The king, who was both sacred and remote, stood alone above the law. He appointed all officials and held the power of life and death over all his subjects. In theory, he owned all land and was the recipient of all state revenues; there was no distinction between his personal and public funds.

Certain theoretical limitations, however, were inherent in the concept of the kingship. Under the ancient Hindu-Buddhist code of law, called the *Thammasat*, the king was bound to uphold the four principles of justice: to assess the right and wrong of all services or disservice rendered to him, to uphold the righteous and the truthful, to acquire riches only through just means, and to maintain the prosperity of the state only through just means. In addition, the *Thammasat* required him to abide by the ten "kingly" virtues (alms-giving, morality, liberality, straightforwardness, gentleness, self-restriction, nonanger, nonviolence, forbearance, and rectitude) as well as the five moral precepts (not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to tell an untruth, and not to take intoxicating drinks). If the king did not rule justly, tradition sanctioned his overthrow.

In the nineteenth century the old absolutist rule was altered in form by the impact of Western ideas, particularly after the reign of King Mongkut (1851-68). Missionaries, traders, journalists, and advisers to the government had gradually introduced new concepts of freedom and equality. Furthermore, young Thai who had been sent abroad in increasing numbers to learn the ways of the West brought back European concepts of parliamentary democracy. King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) modified a number of the more extreme features of monarchical rule, but the old system itself remained untouched. Although there were few indications of popular dissatisfaction with the prevailing order, it was not until the early 1930s that a small group of European-educated officials and intellectuals began to seriously question the absolute monarchical rule (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

## EVOLUTION OF CONSTITUTIONALISM

Since the coup of 1932, which replaced the absolute monarchy with a bureaucratic regime, Thailand has had eight constitutions, the most recent having been promulgated in June 1968. Under the first constitution, promulgated in June 1932, sovereign power theoretically was vested in the people and was to be exercised on their behalf by the king and by the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the government. In practice, all effective power was retained and exercised by the small group of coup leaders. Exercise of power by a ruling group outside the constitutional framework has continued as part of the political system.

The Constitution of June 1932 was succeeded within two decades by five other versions: December 1932, May 1946, November 1947, March 1949, and March 1952. In 1959 the Interim Constitution, which was promulgated in that year, abrogated the 1952 Constitution and remained the fundamental basis of the structure of the government until it was replaced by the 1968 Constitution. Although there were variations in defining the structure of the government and in prescribing the powers and responsibilities of governmental agencies, certain themes remained unchanged. The king was placed "above politics" and was vested with only nominal powers. The principle of a separation of powers was upheld, but the government was dominated by an oligarchical, executive leadership. Although the coup of 1932 introduced forms of constitutionalism, much of the spirit and many of the techniques of absolute rule continued to underlie subsequent governments.

### The 1968 Constitution

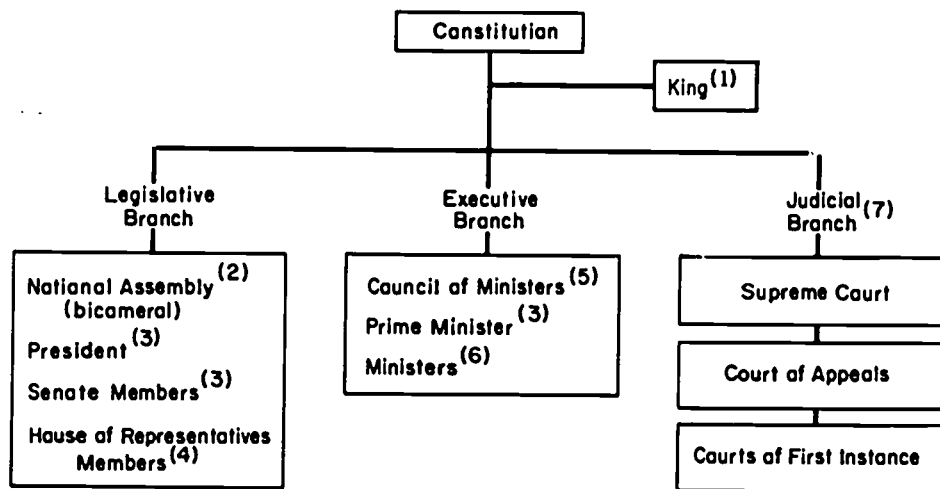
The 1968 Constitution was drafted by the government-appointed Constituent Assembly over a period of seven years. The instability of previous regimes, the need for a centralized government to promote development, and the threat from external and indigenous communism were reasons offered by the government for the delay in drafting the new constitution.

Unlike the Interim Constitution of 1959, which is a short document containing only 20 articles, the 1968 Constitution was made up of 183 articles. Under it the executive branch is led by the chairman of the Council of Ministers, who is appointed by the king, who also appoints other members of the cabinet, or Council of Ministers (see fig. 2).

The legislative branch, consisting of a bicameral National Assembly, is similar to the one provided in the 1949 Constitution. The upper house, which is the Senate, is composed of approximately three-fourths of the number of the popularly elected lower house—the House of Representatives—and is appointed by the king on the

recommendation of the government in power. As a means of separating the executive from the legislative body, the prime minister and other ministers are barred from membership in either house.

The legislature, vested with broad but somewhat imprecisely defined supervisory powers over the Council of Ministers, may hold the latter collectively responsible to the National Assembly. The Constitution contains no provision, however, for the removal of the prime minister. Moreover, although the executive branch is given no express power to dissolve the lower house of the National Assembly, it could presumably act through the king, who is vested with such authority. Because of the extraordinary discretionary powers that are conferred upon the king, the legislature may also be counterbalanced by the executive branch exercising a broad range of emergency powers in the name of the king.



- (1) The king is nominal head of state. Legislative, executive and judicial powers are exercised in the name of the king.
- (2) Legislative body. President of the National Assembly is also president of the Senate.
- (3) Appointed by the king.
- (4) Directly elected by popular franchise.
- (5) The Council of Ministers is also the cabinet, which is independent of the legislative branch, and its members are enjoined from concurrently being a member of the National Assembly. All laws, royal rescripts, and royal commands must be countersigned by the prime minister.
- (6) Chosen by the prime minister and appointed by the king.
- (7) Judges chosen by the Judicial Service Commission and appointed by the king.

Figure 2. Constitutional Structure of Thailand in 1970

In the chapter of the Constitution dealing with the "Rights and Liberties of the Thai," as many as twenty provisions have been incorporated asserting the basic liberties of the citizens of the country, their equality before the law, and their freedom of speech, writing, printing, and publication. These rights can be qualified, however, by a special law to safeguard good morals and public order. The freedom of assembly can be restricted only by a special law governing the right of access to public places or maintaining

public order during a time of national emergency. The freedom of association and the right to organize political parties are governed by law.

The Political Parties Act, which came into force on October 15, 1968, required a difficult legal process for the organization of political parties. Thirteen parties that were not known for Communist sympathies, however, were eventually registered. The right of habeas corpus has been guaranteed, and Article 28 says: "In all criminal cases, the accused or defendant shall be presumed to be innocent." The chapter, however, concludes with Article 44, which may be open to different interpretations: "Persons may not exercise the rights and liberties under this Constitution adversely against the Nation, Religion, King and Constitution."

The Constitution may be amended by votes of at least two-thirds of the total number of members of both houses and by a simple majority of votes in a popular referendum. Since the adoption of the Constitution, the political opposition has demanded revision but has not been able to muster the necessary two-thirds vote in the lower house or the majority vote in the upper house.

### The Legal System

The legal system in 1970 was an amalgam of the traditional and the modern. The traditional system evolved throughout a ten-century period embracing various legal systems with varying degrees of absolutism. The increasing impact of Western influence has radically changed many legal concepts and practices of the past, but some elements of the traditional practices have remained unchanged.

The impact of treaties with the Western nations, Western advisers, and Thai legal specialists educated in the West were the major force altering the traditional legal system toward modern concepts and practices. A major part of the modern legal system consists of code laws. These are the criminal, civil, commercial, and special codes, which were adopted from the British and European legal systems with minor borrowings from India, Japan, China, and the United States. In addition to code laws, there is a vast system of administrative law consisting of royal decrees, executive orders, and ministerial regulations.

Although Thailand is essentially a civil law country, the common law also has a strong influence, particularly over several branches of Thai commercial law. Traditional laws and custom, however, form a large part of the Thai law concerning family and succession. Moreover, Islamic laws and usages are still applicable to matrimonial and inheritance matters among the Muslim minority in the southern provinces.

## THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The government does not adhere to the principle of separation of powers. Nevertheless, executive, legislative, and judicial establishments are distinguishable. These three divisions, together with the constitutional monarch, compose the central government.

### The Monarchy

Although all power is exercised in the name of the king, he has very little real power in his own right. Since the 1932 coup the monarch has generally been restricted to exerting limited influence behind the scenes, usually not decisive (see ch. 10, Political Dynamics). Since the coronation in 1950 of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who reigned as the ninth in the Chakkri line of Thai monarchs, the prestige of the throne has been greatly enhanced. The relationship between the king and the government has also been most cordial. The real significance of the monarchy in national politics, nevertheless, has been in the king's symbolic representation of national unity and the need of the ruling group in any given period for the king to legitimize its rule through royal appointment to the major ministerial offices of the state.

The king is aided by three agencies: the Privy Council, which advises the monarch and, under certain conditions, appoints a regency to exercise royal powers; the Office of the Royal Household, which organizes ceremonial functions and administers the finances and housekeeping of the royal court; and the Office of His Majesty's Private Secretariat, which performs clerical and secretarial tasks for the king.

### The Executive Establishment

The executive branch makes and implements policy and supervises the operation of the judiciary. The branch is organized into twelve ministries, whose chiefs, known as ministers of state, collectively form the Council of Ministers. Their work is supervised and coordinated by the prime minister (see fig. 3). In addition to the Council of Ministers, there are a number of quasi-autonomous bodies that perform certain specialized functions under ministerial supervision.

The Council of Ministers formulates policy, devises laws, directs and coordinates administration, and is the center around which the entire political system revolves. Besides the heads of the twelve ministries, it contains their under secretaries, the prime minister, and two deputy prime ministers. Ministers are chosen by the prime minister on the basis of loyalty and competence.

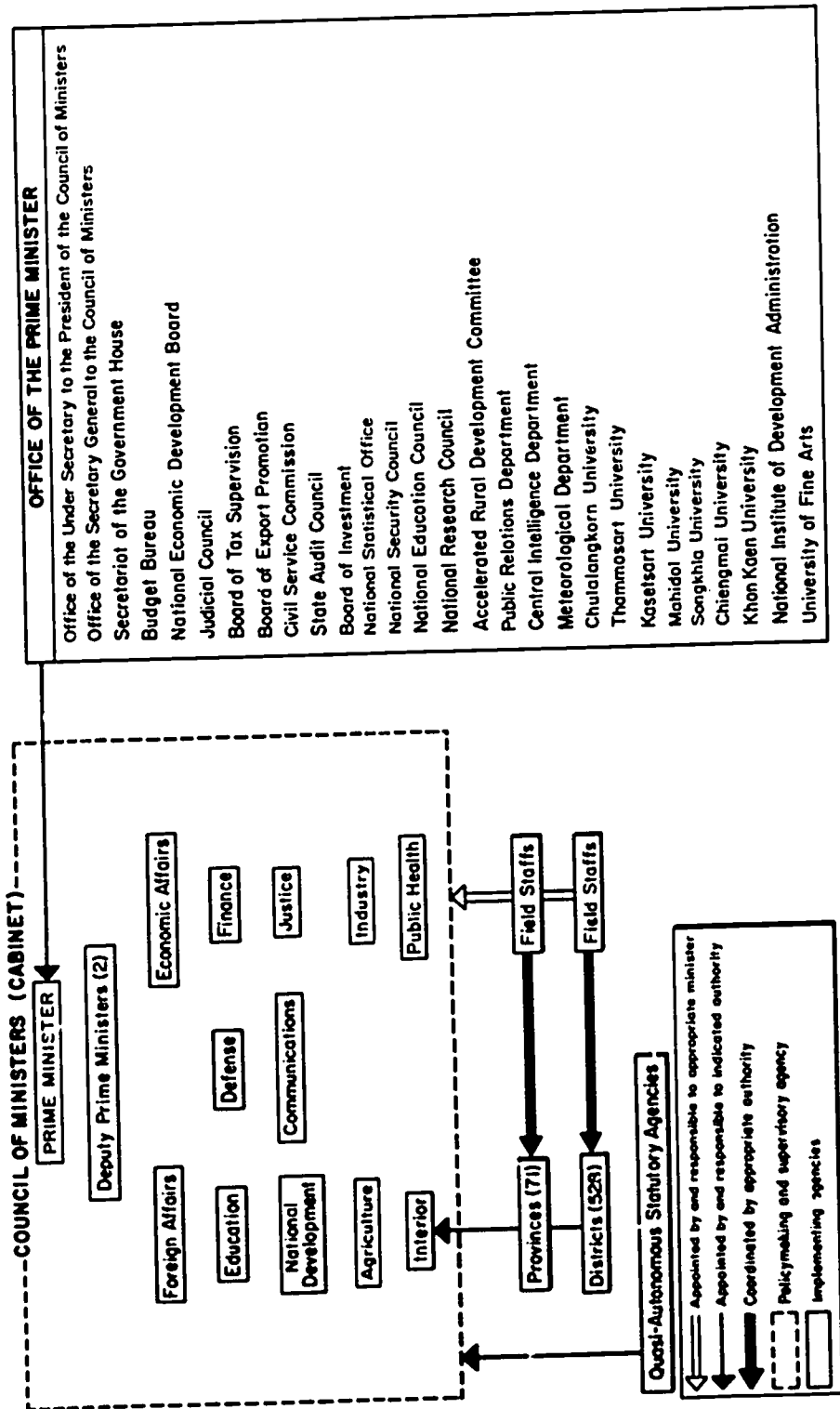


Figure 3. The Executive Establishment of Thailand, 1970

Source: Adapted from Fred Riggs, Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity, Honolulu, 1966, p. 206; Bangkok, Post January 26, 1967, and Royal Thai Government Gazette, February 20-March 1, 1969, pp. 157-158.

There is no legal requirement for the monarch to choose as prime minister the leader of the party that has the majority in the elected House of Representatives. As a practical matter, the prime minister needs the support of the so-called coup group, as well as the Senate, and must be certain to be able to win a vote of confidence in a joint session of the National Assembly (see ch. 10, Political Dynamics).

#### Office of the Prime Minister

The prime minister has been more than first among equals. He also has been the leader of the ruling group and the government. As the most important member of the Council of Ministers, he holds the ultimate powers of appointment, investigation, and review. He countersigns all royal decrees and appoints and dismisses other ministers and civil servants holding the ranks of permanent under secretary and head of department. He presides over cabinet meetings and controls their agenda.

By virtue of the doctrine of emergency powers, which was promulgated in 1959 and retained in 1970, the prime minister may take all steps necessary to maintain security and to aid economic progress in a national emergency. He must inform the legislature of such measures, and the latter may approve or disapprove any emergency decree. The prime minister supervises the Office of the Royal Household and heads the National Economic Development Board, the National Security Council, and the National Research Council. In 1970 the incumbent prime minister, Thanom Kittikachorn, who was also the supreme commander of the armed forces, announced plans to retire at the end of his term in 1972.

Other duties and functions of the Office of the Prime Minister are complex and extensive. The concept of the prime minister as chief executive rather than as first minister has reinforced these qualities. Under the prime minister are various administrative units headed by a secretary general, who serves as the prime minister's administrative assistant. Vested with responsibilities of policy formulation, coordination, and supervision, the office has become a major instrument through which the prime minister controls and supervises the national administrative system.

#### Administrative Agencies

Administrative bodies fall into two categories—ministries and quasi-autonomous agencies that are created by statute. All ministries are organized within the same basic pattern (see fig. 4). In 1970 there were twelve ministries: interior, defense, foreign affairs, national development, finance, industry, economic affairs, communications, public health, justice, education, and agriculture. The Ministry of the Interior, which includes the two extremely powerful

departments of local administration and police, is politically the most powerful ministry after the Ministry of Defense. These two ministries, in addition to the prime ministership, have always been held by leaders of the ruling group, except for times when the ruling group was not in the cabinet. Such cabinets have been brief and, for the most part, unsuccessful.

Each minister of state represents his ministry in the cabinet and transmits to the ministry the policy decisions and directives of the prime minister and the cabinet. He is responsible to the prime minister for the execution of such policy.

Immediately below the minister and directly responsible to him is the permanent under secretary of state, who is the highest ranking career officer in the ministry. Aided by one or two deputy under

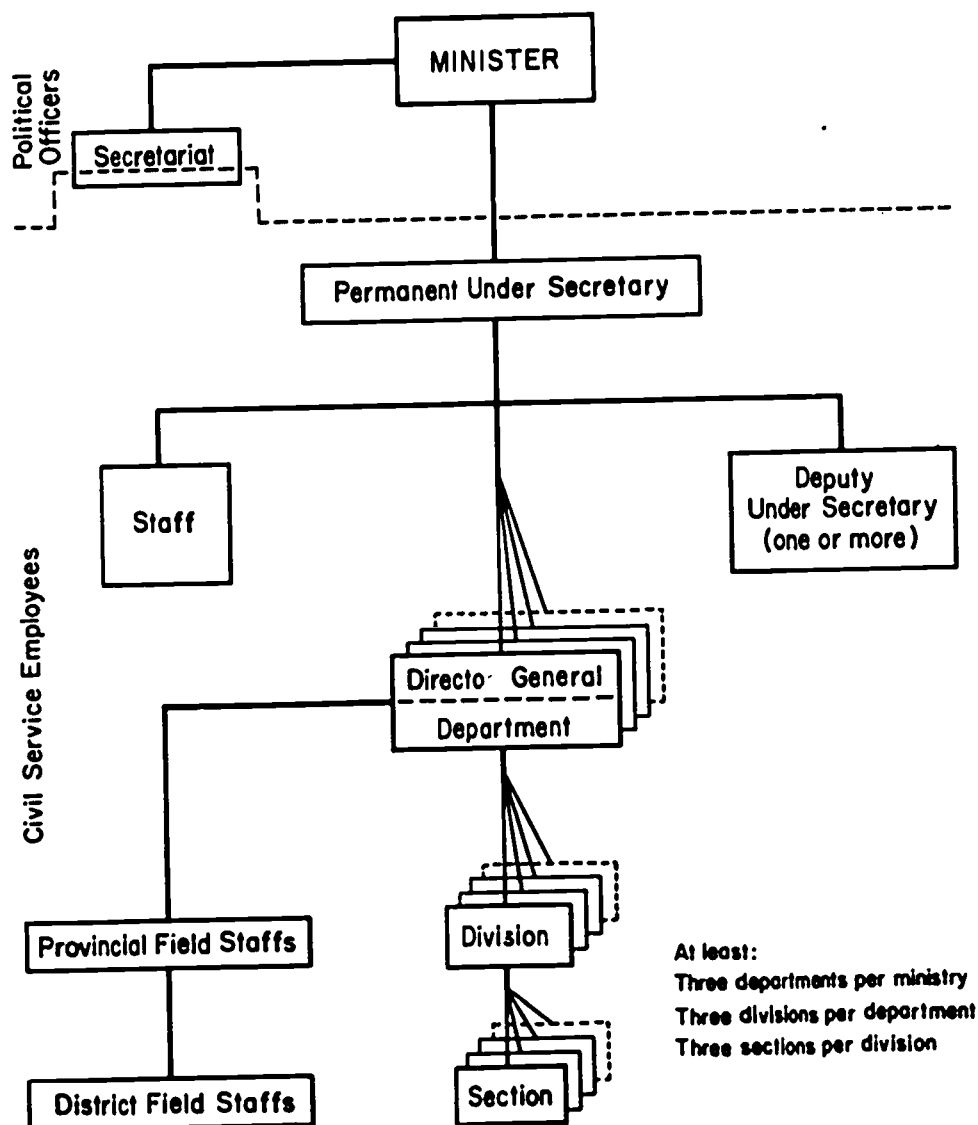


Figure 4. Structure of a Typical Thai Ministry



secretaries and a small staff, he advises the minister, handles non-political matters—largely administrative supervision—and represents the ministry on many boards and committees. Below the permanent under secretary are some sixty departments, usually three or more in each ministry.

Each department is headed by a director general and one or more deputy directors general. The director general is appointed by the king with the approval of the prime minister. Although vested with specialized functions, many of the departments have no specification of their powers other than the act that created them and the granting of their annual budget. Departments with countrywide responsibilities often maintain provincial and district staffs. Within each department are three or more divisions. Each division consists of several sections.

Deputy ministers, under secretaries, and the directors general who head the departments assist the minister of state in the coordination of ministerial activities. The cabinet's collective functions of administrative coordination, control, and supervision have tended, however, to be assumed increasingly by the Office of the Prime Minister. This tendency has in part been facilitated by the extent to which the ministries function as sub-bureaucracies within the system. Ministers tend to promote the special interests and programs of their respective ministries. As a result, the cabinet serves primarily as a senior committee for the reconciliation and compromising of administrative differences as well as for the formulation of national policy.

Because cabinet posts, other than key ones, are not necessarily held by members of the ruling group, meetings are occasionally held by the latter outside the cabinet, either to formulate national policy or to consider possible challenges to the group's ruling position. After such a meeting, those members of the group who hold ministerial positions participate in an official cabinet meeting and transmit the ruling group's wishes, which generally are implemented.

Despite the fact that they are barred from membership in the National Assembly, ministers of state are permitted to participate, without vote, in debates and discussions of either house. The prime minister and individual cabinet members are, in principle, responsible to the National Assembly for the performance of their functions and collectively responsible for the general policy of the Council of Ministers.

In practice, the executive branch has not been held responsible to the legislature. Whatever political responsibility exists has been to the civil and military bureaucracies, which in practical terms were regarded as the primary constituents of members of the legislature. Moreover, because of the constitutional provision that all votes of confidence must be passed by a majority of the joint houses of the

National Assembly, the executive branch can be assured of nearly unanimous support from the Senate and only needs the vote of a small minority of the House of Representatives to preclude a vote of no confidence. In addition, the prime minister has nearly unlimited authority to declare martial law whenever he deems it necessary to maintain national security.

#### Civil Service

Employment in the civil service has traditionally been one of the major outlets for most ambitious and educated citizens. The other major outlet is to become a career officer in the military service (see ch. 15, National Defense and Internal Security). Thai culture emphasizes government service rather than private commercial and industrial employment. Furthermore, the modern private enterprise economy has been inadequate to absorb the labor force. Since they are considered to be in a prestigious occupation, civil servants are accorded great deference. This status is enhanced by the need of the ruling group to obtain the cooperation of the civil service in the administration of the country, and the absorption of the educated elite into the public service has contributed to the country's political stability.

The theory and practice of Western-style civil service were first introduced under the Civil Service Act of 1928 and have since been continually modified and improved. Western forms frequently were made to function on the basis of Thai custom and traditional behavior. The number of regular civil servants in 1968 was at least 260,000. The civil service system covers the personnel of all ministries, provincial and district government officials, schoolteachers and university professors, members of the police establishment, and foreign service officials. The military personnel, judges, public prosecutors, municipal employees, and officials of local administrative units in communes and villages are not included in the system. Most civil servants are administered by the Civil Service Commission, which is a statutory body headed by the prime minister and placed directly under him. Schoolteachers and university professors, however, are administered separately by the National Education Council and by the University Personnel Commission, respectively (see ch. 6, Education, Culture, and Public Information). In actual practice, the Civil Service Commission provides general guidance and supervision rather than active leadership and control.

Since its creation in 1929, the Civil Service Commission has worked to build a modern, standardized personnel system. Although employment and promotion are based on public examination, there is limited political patronage by members of the ruling group. The ministries and departments have civil service subcommittees, which are responsible for personnel administration, in-

cluding the preparation and administration of entrance examinations. The senior officers on the subcommittee determine the final selection of new entrants into the service, assign duties, recommend promotions and pay increases, handle disciplinary matters, and transfer their subordinate personnel. Administrative officials within the Ministry of Defense, on the other hand, are officers under discipline, and political control has always been in the hands of a high-ranking military officer. In general, within the civil service sphere it is possible for a man to rise to a position of prominence and power from which he may be drawn into the top level.

Officials are divided into five main grades: fourth grade, administrative-clerical; third grade, administrative, including senior officers in districts or sections; second grade, executive, including the most important district officers, governors of small provinces, and division chiefs; first grade, executive, including governors of larger provinces and officials who have held second-grade offices for at least three years; and special grade, only the very highest officials, including directors general and under secretaries and their deputies.

Under the provisions of the Civil Service Act of 1969, civil servants may be transferred from one ministry to another in the class, grade, and salary step not higher than the one occupied at the time of transfer by ministerial agreement between the ministries, public bodies, or departments concerned.

Although 70 percent of the annual national budget goes to pay the civil service alone, government income has been sufficient to provide only relatively low wages and salaries. In 1967, however, the Civil Service Act that amended the one enacted in 1959 provided substantial salary increases for career and politically appointed officials. A similar act was also passed that provided similar benefits to judicial officials and public prosecution officials.

Because the civil service has traditionally been barred from participating in politics, the bureaucracy, except for a handful of high-ranking officials, has been little affected by the internal shifts in power relations in Bangkok. Moreover, the common practice of appointing a senior civilian official (who is chosen for his expertise) to serve as deputy to the political minister provides for administrative effectiveness and stability of the government.

#### The Legislative Establishment

The legislature in 1970 had in part sprung from the Council of State, a quasi-legislative assembly created in 1874 and succeeded by the Assembly of State Councilors in 1894 and by the Privy Council in 1928. The major characteristic of the legislature since 1932, when it was established in its contemporary form, has been its weakness vis à vis the executive establishment. This is partly a result

of national political culture and tradition, which clearly define political leadership in executive rather than legislative terms, and partly because of the bureaucratization of Thai politics (see ch. 10. Political Dynamics).

Some elements of the society, principally the conservative ruling elite, maintain that the political traditions of the people call for something other than Western political democracy and that the critical nature of the current Communist threat to the country makes inadvisable experimentation that may produce political instability and chaos. This philosophy has been reflected in most of the changes in the structure and composition of the legislature that have been instituted by successive governments since 1932.

Except from 1946 to 1949, the executive branch has always had the power to appoint at least half the legislature or to appoint all the members of the upper house, during the years when it was a bicameral body. The executive branch, therefore, has usually been assured of a parliamentary majority; hence, the legislature has been largely underdeveloped and without established authority as an effective participant in the decisionmaking process. It has served mainly as an instrument of cabinet rule with little influence on the political process.

Between 1934 and 1939 the National Assembly showed a considerable degree of independence. More than one cabinet was dissolved by a vote of no confidence, and even during World War II the legislature occasionally refused to bow to the executive. After World War II the National Assembly found it difficult to preserve the initiative it had developed before the war. The return to power of the military faction in the November 1947 coup further weakened it as an active force in the nation's politics and government and eventually resulted in its secondary position in relation to the executive branch.

The 1968 Constitution provided for a bicameral legislature that comprised the Senate, the upper house, and the House of Representatives, the lower house. The Senate is composed of 164 members. In 1970, 128 were army, navy, air force, and police officers, and the remaining 36 were civilians; all were chosen by Prime Minister Thanom and appointed for a six-year term by the king. Sharing legislative powers with the House of Representatives, the Senate enjoys far more power than the upper chamber of most other countries. The president of the Senate, who is concurrently the president of the National Assembly, countersigns the king's appointment of the prime minister. During the interim between the enforcement of the Constitution and the elections for the lower house, the Senate had the powers and duties of both houses of the bicameral National Assembly and was given the responsibility of drafting the Election

Law and the Political Parties Act. The Senate has occasionally displayed its independence vis à vis the government.

The House of Representatives consists of 219 members who are elected for a four-year term by citizens twenty years of age or over. Each province forms an electoral constituency; larger provinces elect one member for every 150,000 inhabitants. The House may be dissolved by royal decree. The president of the House of Representatives is the vice president of the National Assembly and is also appointed by the king on the advice of the prime minister. The first session of the National Assembly was opened by the king on February 27, 1968.

There are many provisions for joint sittings of the two houses, but one-third of the total membership of either house constitutes a quorum, of which a simple majority is required for the passage of most bills. Joint sittings of the two houses are required in the passage of money bills, important legislation, and no-confidence motions against the Council of Ministers. In the no-confidence motions, members of both houses jointly or members of either house, constituting at least one-fifth of the total number of members of both houses (seventy-seven) may move to debate the passing of a vote of no confidence against an individual minister of state or against the Council of Ministers. After the debate, except when a resolution has been adopted to pass over the general debate, the National Assembly takes a vote of confidence or of no confidence.

Although bills may be initiated by either house, most bills, especially important ones, are drafted in the ministries or in the Office of the Prime Minister. Money bills initiated by either house need the approval of the prime minister. Bills initiated by the Council of Ministers and those proposed by members of the House of Representatives are submitted to the House of Representatives. The latter refers the bill to the appropriate committee for its consideration. Unfavorable actions of the committee can be overruled by the government so long as it remains in command of the majority in the house. For instance, in 1970 the House Budget Scrutiny Committee, the majority of whose members were from the opposition parties, attempted to slash the government-proposed budget. When one house has passed a bill, it is submitted to the other for final passage or rejection. Either house ordinarily has sixty days to consider a bill, but consideration of a money bill must be completed within thirty days.

#### The Judicial System

The Law for the Organization of Courts of Justice, which was promulgated in 1934, continues in its amended form to provide for three levels of courts: the courts of first instance, the Court of Appeal, and the Supreme Court. The independence of judges in

conducting trials and giving judgment is protected by the amended Judicial Service Act of 1954 and Article 161 of the 1968 Constitution.

The courts are supervised by two separate bodies, the Ministry of Justice and the Judicial Service Commission, which was established in 1954. The ministry appoints and supervises the administrative personnel of the courts and is responsible for reform in judicial practice and procedures. The commission is responsible for ensuring the independence of the court system. It appoints, removes, and transfers judges on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers, usually on the recommendation of the minister of justice. Judges may be removed only on grounds of misconduct or incapacity determined by a board of discipline and the Judicial Service Commission. The compulsory retirement age is sixty, but it may be extended to sixty-five.

The Judicial Service Commission is an independent statutory body and is composed of eleven members. Three are *ex officio*, namely the president of the Supreme Court, who presides over its sessions, the chief judge of the Court of Appeal, and the under secretary of state for justice; four are elected from among the senior judges of the Supreme Court; and the remaining four are selected from a list of retired judges.

In 1970 there were 108 courts of first instance located in nine judicial regions. Eighty-three of these are provincial courts with unlimited jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters. Twenty are magistrates' courts, which are situated at the district level in some of the larger provinces and deal with petty civil and criminal offenses to relieve the burden on the provincial courts.

All provincial and magistrates' courts within the region are placed under administrative control of the chief judge of the region. Of the five remaining courts, three are located in Bangkok: the Central Juvenile Court, the Civil Court, and the Criminal Court. The last two have unlimited original jurisdiction in their respective spheres of competence for Bangkok and the provinces. Criminal offenses committed on the high seas and outside the country by Thai citizens are tried by the Criminal Court. Two additional courts—the juvenile courts—are in Songkhla and Nakhon Ratchasima, respectively.

In each of the five provincial courts in the south, where the great majority of the population are Muslims—that is, in Pattani, Yala, Betong, Satun, and Narathiwat—there are two Muslim judges (*kadis*). The Muslim judge is to sit with two trial judges in order to administer Islamic laws and usages in civil cases in matters involving family or inheritance where all parties concerned are Muslims. Questions of Islamic laws and usages, which are interpreted by a Muslim judge, are final.

The Court of Appeal (Uthorn Court), which is composed of a chief judge and fifty-one other judges, sits in Bangkok and hears appeals from all the courts of first instance throughout the country. It is divided into seventeen divisions dealing with civil, criminal, and bankruptcy matters. At least two judges must sit at each hearing. Cases of exceptional importance must be heard by the plenary sessions of the court. This court considers appeals on questions of both law and fact, and it may reverse, revise, or remand lower court decisions.

The Supreme Court (Dika Court), which is also located in Bangkok, is the highest court of appeal in all civil, criminal, and bankruptcy cases. In addition, it has jurisdiction over election disputes. This court consists of the president and twenty-one judges, and the appeals are heard by three judges. Although decisions of the court are final, the king may be petitioned for clemency in criminal cases.

Cases can be initiated either by the public prosecutors, who are officials of the Ministry of the Interior, or by the injured person. There is no provision for trial by jury. The judiciary as a whole enjoys a reputation for honesty and competence.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The local government comprises administrative units at provincial, district, commune, and village levels, as well as at the municipal level. Although self-governing powers are exercised through elective bodies by some of these units, they are quite nominal. The local government bodies constitute an integral part of the national administrative system as instruments of policy and control for the central government. The government hierarchy, however, extends only to the district level, and the central government has no regular civil service officials working below that level. The Department of Local Administration in the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the control and supervision of all field administrative affairs.

In 1970 there were 71 provinces (*changwat*), 528 districts (*amphur*), 21 subdistricts (*king amphur*), 4,961 communes (*tambon*), 42,021 villages (*muban*), and 120 municipalities (*tesaban*). The division of the country into nine administrative regions (*phak*) was discontinued in 1956.

#### Province

Each province, consisting of from six to eight districts, is headed by a governor (*phuwarachakan* or *kha luang*), who is appointed by, and responsible to, the minister of the interior. The governor carries out the policies of the central government, supervises the overall administration of the province, coordinates the work of the various ministry representatives from Bangkok, and maintains law and or-

der within his jurisdiction. He reviews the reports of district officers and gives final approval to the election of commune headmen. The Municipal Act of 1955 also empowers him with a supervisory responsibility over municipal government.

The governor's staff consists of officials representing the Department of Local Administration under the Ministry of the Interior, who are concerned with the general administration of the province; a deputy governor; a public prosecutor; a chief of police; a provincial clerk; a personnel and procurement officer; a local government inspector; and a private secretary. In addition, there are senior officers from the central ministries, such as finance, education, agriculture, and public health, who are legal'y responsible to their respective ministries in Bangkok but are required to coordinate their activities with the provincial governor.

The governor also presides over a provincial board composed of the senior civil servants under his administration. The board has only advisory functions, and it serves as a channel for the transmission of policy directives from the central government to the district administrations and for coordinative purposes among the various ministry representatives. Formal meetings of the board are usually held once a month and are attended by the district officers.

In the provinces self-governing powers are vested in an elective council, which is composed of a minimum of twenty-four popularly chosen representatives. The council elects its president from among its members. It exercises only a limited power of check and balance in relation to the provincial executive authority. The budget and the police of the provinces are directly controlled by the Ministry of the Interior. Similarly, provincial councils may be dissolved by the ministry.

### District

The district is a subdivision of the province and has no corporate status. Consisting of eight to twelve communes, it is under the general charge of a district officer (*nai amphur*), who is appointed by the minister of the interior and who reports directly to the governor of the province. The district officer stands on the lowest level of central government authority; hence, he is the most important link between the government and the people. Larger districts may be divided into two or more subdistricts, each of which is headed by an assistant district officer.

The duties of the district officer are varied and extensive. He is the chief executive and chief magistrate in his district and is responsible for ensuring that the laws and policies of the central government are carried out. Assisted by three to ten officials, he supervises the collection of taxes; issues certificates of birth, marriage, divorce,



and death; registers schoolchildren, aliens, and buffaloes; arbitrates land disputes; and administers local elections.

The district officer also convenes monthly meetings of the headmen of the communes and villages to inform them of government policies and to instruct them in the implementation of these policies. At these meetings commune and village leaders may discuss their various problems and exchange views.

Because of the importance of these officials in effecting social changes at the village level, the Ministry of the Interior has instituted a periodic training program in techniques of community development and human relations. In the early 1960s the central government attempted to bring the government to the people and to improve public attitudes toward local authorities by enrolling district officers and some provincial governors in a short-term training program dealing with government policy, human relations, national security, techniques of Communist insurgency, the organization of civil defense, and the responsibilities of leadership.

### Commune

Each commune is headed by a chief called the *kamnan*, who has quasi-official status. He is chosen by, and from among, the headmen of the villages that constitute the commune and is confirmed in office by the provincial governor. The duties of the *kamnan* are few, but his prestige is considerable. He is in charge of recording vital statistics, assists the district officer in maintaining public peace, and helps him collect taxes. He supervises and coordinates the activities of village headmen and convenes a monthly meeting of the headmen before his monthly meeting with the district officer; thus, the *kamnan* serves as an intermediary between the district officer and village chiefs.

The *kamnan* is not a civil service official but, in addition to the right to wear an official uniform, he is paid a small monthly stipend by the central government. He is assisted by a small staff, a commune executive committee, which he heads, and by the commune council. The committee is composed of the commune doctor, all the village headmen, the irrigation headman, and from one to five other locally influential persons appointed by the district officer. The council consists of popularly elected members from each village and the village headmen, who are members *ex officio*. The council is vested with very limited self-governing powers, but in the mid-1960s fifty-nine councils were given official recognition as legitimate self-governing bodies.

### Village

For administrative purposes the government defines a village as consisting of at least 5 households. Villages, however, usually vary

in size from 50 to 200 households. In 1968 there was a total of 42,021 villages; each was in the charge of a headman, or *phu yai ban* (literally, the elder man of the village).

The *phu yai ban*, who has traditionally been chosen by villagers, is elected by every resident at least twenty years of age (eighteen if married). The term of office is formally fixed at five years, but the headman tends to remain in office until death or retirement. Like the *kamnan*, he is entitled to wear an official uniform although he is not a regular government official; he also receives a small stipend for services rendered.

Although there are some formal prerequisites for the office—for example, the age qualification and a literacy requirement—village mores often impose other requirements. The office of the headman is declining in importance and, with the expansion of the power of the central government, he is becoming little more than an appendage of the district office.

### Municipality

Before 1932 all towns and cities were governed by appointed officials. In 1933, however, the Municipality Act was passed that provided for self-government in urban areas. The act, which was amended in 1953, establishes three classes of municipalities: the commune, which consists of a group of contiguous villages; the town, which includes the capitals of provincial governments and towns where the population exceeds 10,000 with an average density of not less than 3,000 people per square kilometer (1 square kilometer equals approximately 0.3861 square miles); and the city, which must have a population exceeding 50,000. There are thirty-five commune, eighty-two town and three city municipalities.

Theoretically, municipal governments have legislative as well as executive functions, which are carried out through municipal councils and municipal executive committees. In practice, the executive organs have usually dominated the elective councils. Municipal council members are all popularly elected, and the councils range in size from twelve to twenty-four, depending on the class of the municipality.

The municipal executive committee headed by the mayor consists of two to four members, who are appointed by the provincial governor and subject to approval by the elected council; thus, in theory, the committee is responsible to the municipal council. The committee is required to resign collectively if the council rejects the annual budget proposal submitted by the mayor. The execution of this responsibility is often hampered by the intervention of the provincial and central authorities.

Local taxation does not produce sufficient revenue to meet the expenses of the municipalities, and all of them rely on the central

government for budgetary support. Accordingly, the central government exercises considerable control over municipal finances and administration through the Department of Local Administration, the Ministry of the Interior, and the various provincial administrations. The Ministry of the Interior reviews public works proposals, checks financial reports, and conducts field inspections. The provincial governor has the authority to review municipal budgets, appoint and impeach municipal officials and, under certain circumstances, dissolve municipal councils and assemblies. Because the powers of the Ministry of the Interior have usually been exercised through the provincial authorities, this dual jurisdiction over municipal affairs has occasionally produced administrative confusion and delay.

### ELECTIONS

Between 1932 and 1969 nine general elections were held. Elections in 1948, 1952, and 1957 were held immediately after a coup d'état to legitimize the new government. Elections also were held when the dominant political group needed support for its position.

The concept of election is rooted in the ancient practice of choosing village headmen, who acted as the villagers' spokesman. Other than the numerous elections for provincial and municipal assemblies, however, a relatively small proportion of the people have participated in elections of any kind above the village level. The passage by the Senate in 1968 of the Electoral Law of 1969 and the Political Parties Act was the most recent in a series of electoral reforms that sought to secure broader popular participation in the electoral process. The new law liberalized the requirement for candidates for seats in the lower house and reduced the minimum voting age from twenty-one years to twenty.

Accordingly, in the general elections held on February 10, 1969, which spokesmen for both government and opposition parties conceded to be the freest in Thai history, 49 percent, or 7,285,832 of the 14,820,180 eligible voters, cast ballots for representatives in the National Assembly. The highest turnout was in Rangong and Phuket in the south with 73 and 71 percent, respectively, whereas those of the urban provinces of Bangkok and Thon Buri were only 34 and 36 percent, respectively.

National elections have not so far presented to the electorate choices of leadership or decisions on major issues, but they have provided leaders a limited outlet for their political ambition and the opportunity to bind the nation into a closer political system. Most voters seemed guided in their choice by personal and local concerns—a feeling of obligation to a candidate, requests from local leaders, or the dictates of status or position.

### DETERMINANTS OF VALUES AND ATTITUDES

The great emotional attachment to the doctrines and rites of Buddhism that characterizes most Thai people influences their attitudes toward authority. Religious devotion and the attainment of merit are the central values and themes in Thai culture. The individual's concept of religious merit is closely connected with his attitudes toward government and hierarchy. The people regard the entire universe as a hierarchy of living beings who are ranked within it according to the amount of merit they have acquired through the quality of their actions in this existence or in previous ones. They regard those holding positions of power and influence as deserving such positions because of their individual merit. Deference is accorded to anyone who holds an accepted position of authority, whether he is a village elder, a monk, or a government official.

On the other hand, the Thai also believe that a person elevated in a social hierarchy should behave in a manner befitting his high position. He is expected to be more benevolent, more benign, more honest, and more just than his subordinates if he wishes to maintain their acceptance of his superior status.

The Thai also realize, however, that through the workings of secular power a person may acquire a status or position that is greater than is justified by the amount of merit he has accumulated. This imperfection in the justice of the universe permits evasion of the demands of authority and, in extreme cases, even rebellion against it. If a person in a high position acts tyrannically or abusively, such action allows others to evade him or to transfer their allegiance to someone else whose conduct is more in line with Buddhist precepts.

Much of the respect for authority and status that features Thai political values has its roots in the Thai tradition of an absolute king. To their own early paternalistic concept of the king as a father-lord (*pho khun*), the Thai added the Khmer concept of divine king (*devaraja*), which supplied the rationale for the absolutist rule of the kings of Ayutthaya (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). The king stood at the apex of the human pyramid of merit and, thus, of status. This status provided him with supreme civil and military authority and gave him an aura of the supernatural. He not only symbolized the order of society but also justified it. This heritage accounts in large measure for the continued popularity of the king as the most enduring symbol of national unity.

Although nationalism is most developed among the ruling class, it has also reached all levels of society as a result of decades of national education and widespread military service. That nationalism is for the most part neither militant nor revolutionary but conservative, often taking the form of appeals for peace and tranquillity for

the sake of the nation. An attitude drawn from this concept is that Thailand is one of the civilized nations, "up-to-date," able to handle its own affairs, and the equal of all nations. In addition, where nationalistic appeals have been made by the government, they have been directed mainly to the Thai majority.

#### ATTITUDES TOWARD THE GOVERNMENT

In the past few questioned the authority or actions of government officials. The notion of popular government did not extend beyond the district level, and many Thai had only a limited knowledge of events in Bangkok. The people did not feel that affairs of state were the concern of anyone other than public officials, and they unquestioningly accepted official decrees. They were indifferent to events that had no immediate bearing on their personal affairs. If any law or obligation was excessively abusive or demanding, it was simply ignored or evaded. Only in extreme cases have the people rebelled against the authorities.

In general, the legitimate role of government is conceived to be very limited. At the same time, government is expected to function without the people's assistance, participation, or involvement. In seeking benefit from the government, the ordinary Thai does not approach it as an institution with procedures established for his use. Instead, he is more likely to approach an influential individual with whom he can establish a personal relationship of obligation.

All governments since 1932 have acted on the assumption that their mission was to lead and guide the people. Those who govern, however, are expected under the traditional custom to behave righteously and to reflect that moral virtue with which rulers are presumably endowed and to justify their dominance by effective performance of the political functions required.

#### ATTITUDES TOWARD POLITICS

Politics has been monopolized by a limited number of public officials and career politicians in Bangkok, just as the functions of government before 1932 were the exclusive domain of the king and court officials. Most of the people in late 1970 continued to be indifferent to the manner in which major political decisions were made in the capital as well as to organized politics, or the lack of it, within the country. This mass political apathy results partly from the failure of modern mass communications and political education to reach the two-thirds of the people who are primarily engaged in agricultural and rural occupations (see ch. 10, Political Dynamics). This communication gap was temporarily bridged during the 1969 National Assembly elections. District officials, National Assembly candidates, commune leaders, members of the village elite, cam-

paign managers, schoolteachers, and ordinary citizens interacted around the common election phenomenon. A far higher percentage of votes was cast in the rural than in the urban areas.

The Western concept of political representation or accountability that the coup group of 1932 introduced into the country was alien to traditional Thai culture. The concept of equality or popular sovereignty was little understood by the people, who continued to believe that a person's access to power was determined essentially by his moral or ethical excellence. Consequently, subject to the vagaries of politicians and aspirants to power, the new political concepts were not firmly institutionalized.

The Thai are generally inclined to act less as joiners than as independents. This predisposition is based on the Buddhist precept that an individual is answerable only to himself for his personal conduct. Many Thai are likely to see the path to self-perfection in individual rather than group action. Because of this cultural orientation, organized political activities or official efforts to mobilize the people on the basis of abstract ideology or issues far removed from any given locality, have failed to enlist much popular response. The government itself has continued to maintain that the people were not yet fully prepared for participation in the Western form of democratic political processes.

#### ATTITUDES OF MINORITY GROUPS

Mounting concern for national security in the face of Communist revolutionary warfare throughout Southeast Asia has produced a new Thai interest in minorities. The government has been faced with a continuing problem of integrating these minorities into the body politic of the nation.

The attitudes of the minority groups differ somewhat from those of the ethnic Thai. The Chinese have been under the most pressure and have had the most reason to feel that they were being discriminated against and that their problems were not receiving adequate attention. By and large, however, for a number of practical reasons, they have not expressed serious opposition to the government. First, the majority of ethnic Chinese are Thai nationals and thus are not directly affected by the government's anti-Chinese measures. Second, even those Chinese who are not Thai citizens have been able, for the most part, to evade Thai restrictive actions by one means or another. Third, increasing numbers of Thai-born Chinese are able to seek careers not only in business but also in government service.

Politically, the majority of the Chinese tend to stay unattached to any outside political groupings. They are primarily concerned with keeping their shops open, maintaining their trades, avoiding govern-

ment officials, and evading official decrees. Their allegiance to the king and to Thailand has never become a serious political issue despite continuing reports of Chinese Communist infiltration into the Thai-Chinese community, particularly among urban workers, and despite the fact that many Chinese have a great emotional and romantic attachment to mainland China.

Malays in the Southern Peninsula Region express concern about Bangkok's insufficient consideration for their religious, linguistic, and cultural characteristics. Since World War II the Malays, through their religious leaders, have loudly voiced their complaints against the policies of the central government. Some concessions have been made to them, and their dissatisfaction appears to have lessened. In mid-1970, however, there was continued friction over some issues.

The Northeastern Khorat Plateau Region has a long history of regional dissent. Regional identity was more firmly established after the creation of the National Assembly in 1932, which gave the region a voice in national politics. In recent years the region has become the focus of numerous accelerated rural development programs (see ch. 10, Political Dynamics).

The Northern and Western Mountain Region is inhabited by people culturally distinct from the Central Lowland Region and Bangkok who share a feeling of fellowship with the Shan peoples of Burma. Among the most important northern groups are those from Chiangmai Province. Although identifying themselves with the Thai nation, they have nevertheless sought to retain regional control of local affairs and to resist the political and cultural homogenization of Thai government policy. Five of the six winning candidates in the 1969 election for the National Assembly from that province were either opposition or independents.

There are also many Meo groups in the north who maintain relatively close and frequent contact with the government officials, but the subversive elements among them have damaged their liaison with the government. Government attempts, on the other hand, to suppress the growing of opium and to limit the slash-and-burn agriculture have generated some antagonism on the part of the affected Meo toward the central authorities (see ch. 4, Social Systems and Values).

## NATIONAL SYMBOLS

### The King

For centuries one of the important functions of the government was to conduct elaborate ceremonies, rituals, and acts of religious merit that were regarded as efficacious in bringing to the people not only spiritual benefits but also a host of material benefits. These

ceremonies, as well as other displays of power and wealth by the state, made it possible for the people to see in their king the living symbol of the hierarchy of respect that was operative throughout Thai society. The court and the capital represented to the people the highest realization of their cultural values.

Before 1932 the monarch had held power and prestige by virtue of his representing both political powers and religious sanctions. When the 1932 coup separated the power from the absolute monarch, it failed to diminish the traditional royal prestige. Although the king was reduced to the position of being merely one of a number of national symbols, the people continued to respect their monarch much more than any other leader or emblem of the state.

Popular respect for the king is enhanced in part through the playing of the royal anthem ("Sanrasorn Phra Barami"—literally, Anthem Eulogizing His Majesty) at all public functions attended by the king or the queen; it is also played at the end of public entertainments. Adopted in 1872, the royal anthem is translated into English roughly as follows:

We, Your Majesty's loyal subjects,  
With deep, heart-felt reverence,  
To the supreme Protector of the Land,  
The Highest of the House of Chakkri,  
Under his benevolent rule, we his subjects,  
Receive protection and happiness,  
Prosperity and peace;  
And we pray that whatsoever He may wish,  
The same may be fulfilled;  
Thus we offer Him our Cha Yo [hurrah, cheer, or victory].

#### Other Symbols

The official flag is a three-by five-foot rectangle. In the center is a dark-blue horizontal stripe that runs throughout its length and that is flanked on each side by white horizontal stripes, outside of which are red horizontal stripes. The flag is referred to as the Trairang (Tri-Color): the dark blue signifying kingship; the white, religion and purity; and the red, the nation.

The state emblem is an immortal mythological bird with the features of a man. Known as the Garuda, this bird served as the mount of Phra Narai (Vishnu), who in reincarnation became Phra Ram, the heroic king and conqueror in the *Ramayana*, the famous Hindu religious epic.

The national anthem, adopted in 1934, is played on all ceremonial occasions of national importance and while the national flag is being raised or lowered. Its music was composed shortly after the 1932 coup; its words, as presently constituted, were written by Colonel Luang Saranuprabhandh (Nual Pacheenpyak) in 1939. The literally translated text of the anthem is roughly as follows:

Thailand is the unity of Thai blood and body.  
The whole country belongs to the Thai people,



maintaining thus far for the Thai.  
All the Thai intend to unite together.  
The Thai love peacefulness, but will not fear to fight.  
They will never let anyone tyrannize their independence.  
They will sacrifice every drop of their blood to  
contribute to the nation, will serve their country  
with pride and prestige—full of victory. Cha Yo.

Most national holidays and festivals are of a religious nature. They serve to evoke the sense of devotion to the king, Buddhism, and the nation. Some are celebrated by the lunar calendar, and hence their dates vary from year to year. Others are observed by the solar calendar (see ch. 8, Religion).

Important holidays celebrated in accordance with the lunar calendar include Nakha Buja (usually in February), the first day of the season for making pilgrimages to Phra Buddha Baht (Buddha's Footprint Shrine), Phra Chai (Buddha's Shadow on the Side of the Hill), Phra Tan Sila, and Phra Tan Dong Rang (both translated as the Shrine Where Buddha Reclines); Chatra Mongkhon (Coronation Anniversary, in May); Pued Mongkhon (Plowing Day, in May), signaling the start of the cultivation season; Visaka Buja (a three-day festival, usually in May), commemorating the triple episode of the birth, enlightenment, and the passing into *nirvana* of the Lord Buddha; Asalaha Buja (in July), celebrating the delivery of the first sermon of the Lord Buddha; and Khao Phansa (in July), marking the beginning of a three-month Buddhist holy period. During this period, which coincides with the rainy season, monks are not permitted to pass the night outside the *wat* (temple complex).

## CHAPTER 10

### POLITICAL DYNAMICS

In 1970 the country was in its third year of revived party politics. Leaders were seeking to broaden the area of partisan competition and to stimulate active popular involvement in the political processes. The revival of mass politics resulted from the promulgation in June 1968 of a new constitution—the eighth since 1932—that had been prepared by the Constituent Assembly, first appointed in 1959. In March 1969 a new cabinet was formed under the premiership of Thanom Kittikachorn as a result of the general elections held two months earlier. Its spokesman stated that the new government would strive to establish a stable political party system and to achieve further progress toward the establishment of a democratic society.

The dominant political organization that emerged from the 1969 elections was the United Thai People's Party (Saha Pracha Thai), which had been led from its inception in 1968 by the prime minister and many of his associates. Some of these men attained key positions in the years after the military seized power in a coup in 1958. By law, the four-year mandate of the party was to expire in January 1973, and the organization was expected to be challenged at the polls by an array of opposition parties.

The first to be held in more than a decade, the general elections of 1969 gave the nation a working National Assembly and helped enlarge the ruling hierarchy by adding a new kind of popularly chosen leader accountable to provincial constituencies. The emergence of these leaders as legislators did not, however, materially alter the composition of the power structure that had existed before 1969, nor did it affect the manner in which power and influence were used at the political center in Bangkok. In 1970, as in the past, the effective base of power remained rooted firmly in the military and, to a lesser degree, in the civil bureaucracy.

Many observers agreed that the elections performed the useful functions of, among other things, legitimizing the military complexion of the existing government, making government leaders more attentive to the needs and problems of villagers and urbanites alike, broadening the political horizons of the mass of voters, and invigorating the people's ingrained loyalties to the monarchy and Buddhism.

In 1970 foremost among official concerns was the delicate problem of maintaining the balance between two major political objectives: on the one hand, ensuring internal stability in the face of Communist insurgency and, on the other, encouraging free expression of popular views on national and local issues through constitutional channels. The government expressed itself as generally of the view that both of these objectives should be pursued without overriding each other and without disrupting a decades-old pattern of orderly and gradual political movement.

The concern of the authorities for a stable political development was heightened by the fact that after the mid-1960s the state of internal security had been deteriorating. The government in 1970 was continuing to step up its counterinsurgency operations in frontier regions on both civic and military levels. These operations were being undertaken to counteract what the security authorities regarded as growing evidence of outside aid to Thai rebels and the increasing instances of Communist attacks on villages and government security forces. As a result, in late 1967 the government decided to send troops to the north and northeastern regions, which were long considered centers of dissident and subversive activities; two years later, it was taking the same measure to aid civil police in the troubled southern border areas facing Malaysia (see ch. 11, Foreign Relations).

On the civic level, the authorities were engaged in extensive developmental activities in security-sensitive areas in an attempt to improve living conditions, thus denying the Communist guerrillas issues that they could exploit. Indications in 1970 were that the civic programs helped win over many of the previously apathetic residents of the northeastern region; on the other hand, security situations in the northern tier of provinces and, to a lesser degree, in the southern provinces in the peninsula were taking on what the authorities described as serious proportions.

Despite its belief that the Communist internal and external threat to national security was growing, the government was encouraging the people to take a more active interest in various issues affecting the country. Partly as a result, a growing number of urbanites were becoming more conscious of government leaders' intentions, policies, and achievements; in the process, they were also coming to expect more economic benefits from the government and less restricted political expression. The manner in which the urban dwellers were becoming more politicized was indicated in part by the tendency of urban voters to support opposition rather than government-endorsed candidates. By contrast, the rural people, who make up nearly 85 percent of the total population, remained less active politically.

Except in limited areas, the overwhelming majority of the people

continued to express political opinions peacefully through the established channels of communication, formal and informal. Political differences on individual and party levels were not wide on major internal and external issues but nonetheless were distinct enough to offer the electorate a degree of selectivity.

#### THAI POLITICS, 1963-68

In the years after General Thanom Kittikachorn peacefully succeeded the late Prime Minister Sarit Thanarat in December 1963, the new government continued to follow without major modifications the policies of its predecessor. Retaining the cabinet that he inherited, Prime Minister Thanom focused his efforts on seeking to maintain political stability; promote economic development, especially in security-sensitive border areas; raise the standard of living; and safeguard the country from the Communist threat posed at home and from abroad.

A notable exception was the policy of the government to shorten the timetable for the country's transition from the hitherto primarily military-dominated leadership structure to a popularly elected government. Thus the prime minister urged the Constituent Assembly, meeting from 1959 onward, to complete the drafting of a constitution as soon as practicable. The initial draft had been completed by the end of 1964 but was held up for further deliberation and amendments. The new leadership also moved to relax stringent official controls on the press, an attempt that the authorities said was aimed at creating a new, relatively liberalized political climate.

There were indications that, although the leaders agreed on the desirability of establishing what they described as a more democratic political system in tune with the country's heritage, they disagreed on the pace at which the projected change was to be attained. Some leading officials expressed the view that an early resumption of political activities would do much to broaden the base of politics and further strengthen popular identification with the government, the monarchy, and Buddhism. Others argued that the restoration of party politics at a time when the country was confronted with serious internal problems was likely to aid the Communists in their efforts to infiltrate civic, labor, student, and political organizations.

The Constitution was finally proclaimed in June 1968, but martial law, which had been imposed in 1958, was still in effect in 1970. Party politics was legalized and resumed shortly after mid-1968. More than ten political parties participated in the general elections held in February 1969.

## CHARACTER OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Since 1968 a growing number of Thai have voiced their views on national and local matters of varying significance and have involved themselves in the process through which policy issues and options are debated and candidates to public office are presented to the electorate for approval or rejection. On the whole, however, a large number of the people, especially in rural areas, have remained politically inactive, believing, in line with tradition, that political matters are the concern properly of professional politicians and government officials. Their inclination has been to accept their inactive role as a natural condition of their existence and of their cultural heritage.

The generally apolitical attitude of the people derives from historical, social, and economic conditions, some of which are unique to the country. Independent since the thirteenth century, the Thai have not been subjected to the bitterness, humiliation, or socio-political dislocations of colonial rule as have neighboring countries. They have not been forced by external circumstances to question the rationale of their traditional institutions and values and to seek more effective alternatives. As a result, the indigenous authority and deference structures have remained uneroded by any crisis of cultural conflict or incompatibility, and the centuries-old pattern of allegiance to monarchy and of adherence to Buddhism has continued to provide the people with a stable base of social cohesion.

As a consequence, in the process of emerging as a modern nation-state, the country has been without the potent force of antiforeign nationalism. In modern Thailand there has not been any serious countrywide mass convulsions against the established order and, until the early 1960s there had not been any serious recognition on the part of national leaders of the need to hasten the pace of transition from bureaucratic to popular rule.

What some observers have described as the Thai indifference to politics is explained in part by the absence of critical socioeconomic tensions that can be exploited. With few exceptions, notably in the northeast, poverty in its direct form is relatively unknown in the country. Ethnic Thai society is relatively free of social or political barriers that might lead to a permanent alienation of any particular group. To illustrate, the lack of serious socioeconomic tensions tended to inhibit the spread of local insurgency on a massive scale, and thus the Communist terrorist activities had to be led and supported by outside forces.

Characteristic of Thai politics has also been the absence of any significant organized group protest activity in urban areas. Many observers have attributed this calmness to the weakness of the union movement, the special role that the numerically small, but economically powerful, Chinese play in cities, and the precarious and superficial status of party politics in the past.

In recent decades the authorities have kept labor unions under close surveillance in an effort to prevent leftist trends and because of evidence that limited numbers of pro-Peking Chinese were active in unions. Moreover, the labor unions have been unable to assert themselves politically not only because of an ethnic split between Chinese and Thai members but also because of the tendency of the rural-origin Thai members to regard their stay in cities as temporary. This attitude has generated a reluctance to get involved deeply in the protest-oriented politics of labor unions.

Except for a small number of pro-Peking activists, the Chinese have generally refrained from involvement in local politics. They have neither organized their own political parties nor supported their own candidates in national elections. For pragmatic reasons most of the Chinese, who constitute the mainstay of middle class structure in the Bangkok-Thon Buri region, have relied on their own community associations or have used personal connections with Thai officials in seeking to promote their commercial pursuits. They often have cultivated mutually beneficial personal or business relationships with senior Thai government officials. These informal channels of mutual accommodations have been generally regarded as satisfactory by the Chinese and, as a result, they have not seen the necessity to resort to formal party channels.

In addition to these circumstances, the elitist nature of Thai politics traditionally has tended to confine political activities to a limited circle of personalities. With rare exceptions, ideology and party labels are not significant factors. Furthermore, during the two decades preceding 1970, the government tendency to link dissent with communism and to emphasize stability above free political association has had the cumulative effect of delaying the development of political consciousness.

Although these inherent factors have tended to limit mass political activities, the resumption of party politics in 1968 made it possible, nevertheless, for various segments of the population to express themselves at the polls. The previously voiceless farmers emerged as the single largest group with the numerical potential to sway the course of national politics. Nearly 50 percent of the villagers over the age of twenty voted in 1969. Other politically relevant groups include urban workers, university students, businessmen, intellectuals, Buddhist monks, and the military. Except for the military, none of these groups has been able to assert itself as an effective organized force, singly or in combination.

The Buddhist monks play an important role as leaders and confidants in the life of villagers but have not exerted themselves politically in an organized way as a result of secular and monastic regulations that provide for separation of church and state. By provisions of electoral laws, for example, the monks did not vote in the February 1969 general elections.

Nevertheless, because monks are generally held in high esteem in the country, since 1967 the authorities have sought their cooperation and assistance in efforts to befriend villagers in remote areas known to be under varying degrees of Communist influence. Hundreds of monks and nuns have been given a short period of basic training in political subjects and community development program courses so that they could be sent to frontier areas, especially the northeast. Conversely, the Communists have also sought to use Buddhist themes in their attempts to infiltrate and influence the population.

In 1970 some 50,000 university students continued to follow, for the most part, their pattern of acquiescence in matters relating to national politics. There were some indications, however, that some of them, especially in Bangkok, were becoming activists, as in the summer of 1968 when more than 1,000 students from Thammasart University took to the streets to dramatize their opposition to the government's decision to retain martial law and other political restriction measures; in the September 1968 municipal elections held in Bangkok, the students ran unsuccessfully their own candidates on a platform of "clean hands and incorruptibility"—an unprecedented affair.

Since the late 1960s some observers have suggested that the level of student protest activities might gradually increase in the years ahead. They have pointed out that the prospect of job scarcity for university graduates in the near future might result in an increase of students' questioning of governmental priorities on major developmental programs.

### THE POWER STRUCTURE

After the absolute monarchy was ended in 1932 the military, the army in particular, had been the principal power group during most of the years up to 1970 (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). During much of this period the usual means of access to power and of shifts in control of the government from one rival military faction to another were coups and countercoups. Gradually, however, military leaders expressed themselves increasingly as favoring changes in government through constitutional means and also as recognizing a need to deemphasize their role at the highest levels of the decision-making process.

Observers have suggested that the growing complexity of governing a nation might have prompted leaders in Bangkok to seek talent from all walks of life and active popular cooperation in political and economic developmental fields. They noted that the authorities were also increasing efforts to narrow the longstanding communications gap between Bangkok and villagers.

During the 1960s the government took on, although gradually, a greater degree of civilian participation. An increasing number of civilian officials were brought into important positions below the cabinet level, and civilian ministers accounted for at least half the cabinet membership. Civil service cadres also played an important role as a stabilizing force by providing administrative expertise and continuity. Nevertheless, the army, particularly the capital garrison command stationed in Bangkok, continued to be the single most potent source of power.

Political leadership has also been broadened as a result of the 1969 general elections. From nearly 1,260 candidates, 219 were popularly elected as members of the House of Representatives, the lower house of the bicameral National Assembly. More than two-thirds of the total had no previous experience as legislators, and about one-third had received a university education. By occupation, the three leading groups were businessmen with 41 percent, lawyers with 20 percent, and former government officials with 13 percent.

Another significant group in Bangkok is found in the Senate, which is empowered under the Constitution to decide major legislative bills in joint session with the lower house (see ch. 9, Political System and Values). In 1970, of the 164 senators appointed by the king for a six-year term on the recommendation of the prime minister, military officers of the three services and police officers accounted for 128, and civilians, the remainder. Initially, the Senate membership was fixed at 120, of which 91 seats were assigned to military and police officers and 29 to civilians.

Still another center of power in 1970 was the ruling United Thai People's Party. The party had been organized in 1968 under the aegis of Prime Minister Thanom and others, including: General Praphas Charusathira, minister of the interior, deputy prime minister, and commander in chief of the army; Pote Sarasin, minister of national development; Police General Prasert Ruchirawong; Air Chief Marshal and Deputy Minister of Defense Dawee Chullasapya; Air Force Commander in Chief Bonchoo Chandrubeksa; and Naval Commander in Chief Charoon Chalermtiarana.

### POLITICAL PARTIES

In 1970 the two principal political parties were the ruling United Thai People's Party, commonly known in Bangkok as the UTPP, and the opposition Democrat Party (Prachatipat). In the general elections of 1969 the UTPP had returned 75 seats to the 219-member lower house, as compared with the Democrat's 57; eleven other parties won a combined total of 15, and the remaining 72 seats were captured by independents. By early 1970 enough inde-



pendents and members of small parties had allied themselves with the UTPP to give it an effective majority in the lower house.

Other parties winning one or more seats in 1969 were the Democratic Front Party, with seven; the Economist United Front, four; the People's Party, two; the Joint Aid for Farmers Party, one; and the Free Democratic Party, one. Those failing to win any included the Farmers Party, the New Siam Party, the Free Moral Party, and the Liberal Party.

### Background

The term *political party* was first introduced to the country by the promoters of the 1932 coup, who formed the People's Party. As an elitist political club and, for all practical purposes, an extension of the government, this organization served as an experiment in controlling various government agencies and providing the people with tutorial instruction in the fundamentals of popular politics. It eventually faded from the scene.

It was not until late 1945 that political parties in the modern sense made their presence known in the country. Many of those who had been active in the anti-Japanese Free Thai movement of World War II years formed the Cooperation Party, and a more broadly based coalition of former Prime Minister Pridi Panomyong's old and new associates organized the Constitutional Front. To counteract these two left-of-center groups, a rival group of conservatives, including royalists, established the Progressive Party under Kukrit Pramòj. In the elections of January 1946 the leftists won a decisive majority.

Personal differences between Pridi and his associate, Khuang Aphaiwong, resulted in the formation in early 1946 of a new organization called the Democrat Party. Led by Khuang, the party absorbed the Progressive Party. In November 1947 Phibul Songgram ousted the pro-Pridi parties and, after the brief civilian government of Khuang Aphaiwong, his United Party gained full control of power in April 1948. Renamed the Legislative Study Committee in 1951, this organization in 1955 constituted the nucleus of the ruling Seri Manangkhasila Party (named after the villa where its founders frequently met to debate political strategy). A conservative party, it was the only one with branches in all seventy-one provinces; its members held all of the appointed and more than half of the elected seats in the National Assembly. Thus its complete disintegration after Phibul was overthrown by Sarit Thanarat in the coup of September 1957 served to illustrate the signal importance of personality in Thai politics and the tenuous character of party politics in the country.

After the general elections of December 1957, Field Marshal Sarit organized his own National Socialist Party with the aim of achieving

what he called "50 percent nationalism and 50 percent socialism." He opened the party to all those who were willing to work for these objectives. The ambiguity of the party objectives and the existence of fissures among rank and file members soon led to a state of paralysis, contributing to Sarit's decision in October 1958 to abolish political parties and assume personal control of the government. Thereafter, until 1968 when political parties were revived, the country had no party activities.

#### Resumption of Party Politics

In October 1968 a new political parties act, superseding that of 1955, was passed by the Senate and put into force. In an attempt to avert the possibility of parties being used as legal fronts for disruptive or antistate activities, the act made it mandatory for would-be party organizers to obtain official permission before actually soliciting party membership. The organizers were required to inform the authorities of their intention to form a party and provide them with necessary information on the background of at least fifteen key leaders. As a minimum, the objectives and policies of a given party had to be consonant with the "democratic form of government with the King as head." A minimum of 500 signed members was needed to set up a party. These legal stipulations made it difficult for pro-Communists or Communists to form their own organization.

Of the thirteen parties permitted to register, only two, the UTPP and the Democrat, approached the status of national parties. The UTPP, chaired in 1970 by Prime Minister Thanom, had as its three vice chairmen, Praphas, Pote Sarasin, and Prasert; its secretary general was Dawee. Its policies were the establishment of a democratic society, promotion of national unity, suppression of Communist insurgency, support of free enterprises, promotion of efficiency in government service, and cooperation with both regional and outside powers. In the elections of 1969 the party ran candidates in all seventy-one provincial constituencies, appealing to all regions and every segment of the population.

From its inception, indications persisted that the UTPP had internal differences. The most prominent bloc of UTPP members was known as the Free People League of Thailand. A major intraparty crisis was averted in early 1969 when this bloc consented to Thanom's continuing as prime minister. In August 1970 several distinct blocs vied for advantage, in the wake of an opposition victory (aided considerably by a revolt of a large number of UTPP members) in a parliamentary maneuver in the House of Representatives. The Free People League of Thailand, now calling itself the Democratic Bloc, demanded the immediate "democratization" of the Constitution and a cabinet reform that would permit only

elected National Assembly members to become cabinet ministers; it asserted that the cabinet reform would make the government more responsive to the problems and aspirations of the electorate.

Opposing the Democratic faction was a bloc called The Young Ones, composed mostly of party members in their forties and fifties. This group was known to favor also a revised constitution and a reorganized cabinet. Instead of an immediate action, it wanted to have these proposed changes brought about at the discretion of the prime minister.

In October 1970 the Central Committee of the UTPP stated that the party would remain united. This statement was made to deny reports that a certain bloc was planning to secede in an attempt to form a new party and support the candidacy of Praphas to succeed Prime Minister Thanom, who had previously indicated his intention to retire from government and politics in 1972. The statement also stressed that Praphas himself had made a number of proposals to strengthen the party unity and had not identified himself with or supported any power bloc within the organization.

The Democrat Party was the oldest political organization in the country, the only party in continuous existence between 1946 and 1958. Despite the 1958 ban on party politics, the Democrat Party managed to maintain its basic structure through 1968. Led in 1970 by former Prime Minister Seni Pramoj, it drew support from the educated middle income group and was popular especially in the Bangkok-Thon Buri area. The party has consistently supported policies calling for an efficient government; a government based on popular consent; political, economic, and social reforms; and the government's disassociation from what the party called the "chain of corruptive practices."

The Democratic Front Party and the Economist United Front were two of the better known left-of-center organizations. Both parties stood for a neutralist and nonaligned foreign policy and a diplomatic recognition of Communist China. The Economist United Front also favored trade with mainland China, reportedly had the financial backing of some Chinese merchants and Thai of Chinese origin, and was active especially in the northeast. The Democratic Front Party drew its support mostly from young intellectuals who opposed a government controlled by the military.

#### RESULTS OF THE 1969 ELECTIONS

The general elections of February 1969 were described by most observers as the fairest in Thai history. Except for a few isolated Communist attempts at disruption, the elections were orderly and drew about 49 percent, or nearly 7,286,000, of the country's 14,820,000 eligible voters over the age of twenty. The voter participation in 1969 represented a considerable increase over the 30

percent recorded in the elections of December 1957. Previously, only 10 percent of the electorate had voted in the country's first general elections in 1933; 20 percent, in 1937; 30 percent, in 1946; about 16 percent, in 1948; and some 37 percent, in February 1957.

The 1969 elections were contested by 1,252 candidates, of whom 587 ran as independents without party affiliation. Sixty percent of the candidates endorsed by thirteen political parties belonged to the UTPP and the Democrat Party, with 219 and 192 entries, respectively.

The returns indicated that, on the basis of aggregate number of seats won by various parties, the UTPP showed its main strength in the northeastern and central regions, capturing 66 percent of its total seventy-five seats in these two areas. In the northern region, the party was roughly on even terms with the opposition Democrat Party. Independents did well especially in the northeastern region, where many of them tended to support the government, and to a lesser degree in the northern and central regions.

By contrast, neither the UTPP nor the independents fared well in the populous Bangkok-Thon Buri area, where the Democrat Party returned all of its twenty-one seats by wide margins. The Democrat victory there had been predicted by most observers, especially in view of the fact that in the municipal elections of September 1968 the Democrat Party had captured twenty-two of the twenty-four seats contested in Bangkok and eleven out of twenty-four seats in the twin city of Thon Buri. As a result, the party became a part of the power establishment in that it controlled the Bangkok municipal government.

Taking the country as a whole, the UTPP and independent politicians drew their electoral strength mainly from the rural areas, whereas the Democrat Party was strong in the urban areas. Another significant result was that the Economist United Front, which had been expected to capitalize heavily on the traditional antigovernment popular sentiments in the northeastern region, was unable to attract much support; most of the voters there supported the UTPP and progovernment independents. Some observers attributed the voting pattern to what they called the success of the government's intensive developmental undertakings in the northeastern region after the mid-1960s; others suggested that the UTPP owed its success to its well-financed, well-organized campaigns.

Despite its electoral success, however, the UTPP failed to win a clear-cut majority of seats in the House of Representatives. Thus after the elections it had to seek additional strength from the group of independent representatives. Eventually, 34 independents joined the UTPP, boosting its strength to 109 of the 219-member house. Seventeen independents joined the Liberal Party rather than the UTPP but tended to support the government party on major policy issues in the lower house. The Democrat Party retained the same

number, whereas the Democratic Front Party picked up 1 additional member, as did the Free Moral Party. The number of independent members was reduced to 19.

## COMMUNIST-LED INSURGENCY

### Background

The Thai Communist movement dates back to the late 1920s but until the mid-1960s had little impact on the political scene. Unable to draw much indigenous following, it had no alternative but to appeal to the country's ethnic minorities, such as the Chinese, Malays, and Vietnamese. The ethnically divided Communist groups, small in number and supported by parties operating in their respective homelands, merged in December 1942 into a single organization called the Communist Party of Thailand, under predominantly Chinese leadership.

The party emerged into the open in December 1946 after the Anti-Communist Act of 1933 was rescinded in October 1946, but it was outlawed again in 1952 under a newly enacted anti-Communist act (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). Also banned at the time was the Communist-controlled Central Labor Union, the bulk of whose 50,000 members were Chinese. The party suffered even more after Sarit, assuming the premiership in 1958, declared martial law and intensified anti-Communist drives. Nevertheless, it continued its clandestine activities in Chinese schools and associations and among villagers in certain border regions. In 1959 it began recruiting and training limited numbers of Meo hill tribesmen in the north for use as cadres in antigovernmental activities.

The Communists appealed especially to the people of the northeastern and southern regions. With promises of a better future in return for villagers' support, they approached the northeasterners, many of whom regarded their region not only as historically neglected by the government but also as the poorest in the country. They also sought to exploit the legacy of antigovernment leftist sentiments in the area, which had for decades been the center of political dissidence and where gangs of bandits prey on and terrorized local residents. Until the mid-1960s it had also been a common practice for the government to exile to this region certain officials for either political or punitive reasons.

Separatist tendencies of ethnic, cultural, and political origin, as often demonstrated by some of the northeastern people, were another target of Communist agitation (see ch. 4, Social Systems and Values). Before his death in 1952, for example, Tiang Serikhan, a leftist, had advocated independence for the northeastern region; many of his followers later joined a secessionist group led by Krong Chandawong but left the group once Krong's Communist affiliation was exposed.

Krong's hard-core secessionists joined forces with the Communist Party shortly before or after their leader's arrest and execution in May 1961. At that time the authorities identified Krong as the ringleader of an international Communist conspiracy aimed at breaking off the fifteen northeastern provinces, with the support of the Pathet Lao.

In the peninsular provinces adjoining the Malaysian border, the Communists sought to capitalize on the long history of neglect of the Thai Muslims by Bangkok and on the Muslim's latent sentiments for either a separate state or a union with Malaysia. They also attempted to foster disaffection among the overseas Chinese who worked on the rubber plantations along the Thai-Malaysian border and elsewhere in the peninsula; some of these workers were known to have provided sanctuary for Malaysian Communist terrorists operating across the border.

Despite these countrywide efforts, the Communists were ineffective in gaining any significant popular support and sympathy. Factors working against the spread of communism included the country's long history of national independence and thus the difficulty for the Communists to present their cause to the people in the guise of an anticolonial, nationalist movement; the absence of the extremes of poverty, which in many other nations has created conditions for political violence; and the illegal status of the movement, coupled with the popular tendency to identify the movement with the ethnic Chinese and Communist China. In addition, a strong sense of national identity, buttressed by common language, customs, and traditions, and an ingrained attachment to unifying influences of the king and the Buddhist faith have also acted as psychological barriers to communism.

In these circumstances the principal energizing force for the Thai Communists came from external sources. As early as 1959 and especially since the early 1960s, Communist China and North Vietnam have begun providing the Thai followers with training and financial and material support for insurgency, subversion, and terrorism. Training camps were set up in North Vietnam south of Hanoi; in the Pathet Lao-controlled areas of Laos; and in Yunnan Province of Communist China, less than 100 miles from the Thai border. In early 1962 the clandestine radio station called Voice of the People of Thailand began broadcasts from Yunnan, offering Thai-language propaganda broadcasts, as did Radio Hanoi and Radio Peking.

#### Counterinsurgency

In view of growing evidence that Communists were building a support structure among villagers in the northeastern region, the government began a counteraction, adopting measures to improve

both villagers' living conditions and village defense. In 1962 it began sending mobile information teams and mobile development units to vulnerable areas in an attempt to implant Bangkok's presence and image among isolated villagers. The information teams sought to identify villagers' problems and needs and establish better means of communication between local residences and local authorities. The development units, on the other hand, were designed to bring what the government called "happiness to the rural population"; their main purpose was to stimulate village self-help and satisfy immediate health, educational, and economic needs of villagers by furnishing guidance, materials, and tools.

Since the Communists were resorting to an intensified harassment campaign in 1964, the authorities also stepped up their counter-measures. As a followup to the mobile development unit scheme, they initiated an accelerated rural development program in security-sensitive areas; specifically, this program supported projects for the construction of roads, wells, marketplaces, health clinics, and schools and for the provision of agricultural credit and electricity to rural homes. Through these projects, the government hoped to improve its image, strengthen local government, and help provide support for village defense forces. By late 1969 the government had twenty-five mobile development units operating in disturbed areas throughout the country, and the accelerated rural development program was active in twenty-four provinces threatened by insurgency.

Armed insurgency first occurred openly in the northeastern region in August 1965; armed attacks on the government security forces and assassinations of villagers loyal to the government increased noticeably. Indications were that the insurgency was being directed by the pro-Peking Communist Party of Thailand, but ideological and strategic guidance and material support were coming mainly from Communist China. The dominant role of Peking was confirmed by the existence of the Peking-based Thailand Independence Movement and the Thailand Patriotic Front, established in November 1964 and January 1965, respectively. Thai authorities had additional cause to be wary of its northern neighbor because Peking's foreign minister, Chen Yi, made a statement in January 1965 implying that Thailand would be the next target of the so-called war of national liberation and that a guerrilla war would be launched in the country by the end of the year.

By the end of 1965 the insurgency became serious enough for the Thai government to recognize that it was no longer a "police affair"; in December the government established the Communist Suppression Operations Command at Sakon Nakhon in the Northeastern region in an attempt to coordinate civic action programs with military operations. This command was jointly operated by civil, police, and military men.

In 1966 and 1967 the Communists steadily escalated their subversive warfare activities. As a result, in October 1967 the government announced a measure under which the counterinsurgency operations would be placed under full military control. For whatever reasons, by 1968 armed ambushes and attacks on villages had declined considerably in the northeastern region.

In 1968 the government shifted its focus of counterinsurgency operations from the relatively stable northeastern region to the northern region, where the Communists had opened a new front. Beginning in November 1967, armed insurgents attacked lowland villages and the paramilitary border patrol police in the inhospitable mountainous provinces of Chiang Rai and Nan, to the south and east of the intersection of the Thai, Burmese, and Laotian borders.

Most of the insurgents were warlike Meo hill tribesmen, led by Thai Communists, both trained in mainland China, North Vietnam, and Laos. The relationship between the Meo and lowland Thai, historically strained, was aggravated during the 1960s when the government outlawed the tribesmen's profitable business of opium growing and trade as well as their slash-and-burn farming technique that was denuding the forests of the north. The Communists moved in to exploit the Meo grievances with these government measures, promising to establish the so-called Meo kingdom in return for their active participation in insurgency. In 1970 Meo insurgents continued to harass the government security forces, carrying their forays also into the three provinces of Phitsanulok, Loei, and Phetchabun, where the Meo had the same grievances with the authorities as their northern counterpart.

The insurgents were also active in the southern region, especially after the summer of 1968, when they renewed the staging of ambushes and held propaganda meetings in isolated villages along the Thai-Malaysian border. Many of these rebels were remnants of the clandestine Malaysian Communist terrorist organization that had been driven across the border into the jungles of southern Thailand by the British in the late 1950s. Roving groups of bandits, without Communist affiliation, also compounded the situation in the area by engaging in criminal activities.

Taking the country as a whole, the strength of the Communist Party of Thailand was estimated by various sources to be between 1,000 and 2,000 hard-core members. This figure did not include armed insurgents, many of whom were not actual party members. According to various estimates, the total number of insurgents in late 1969 was between 3,600 and 5,500. Of these, approximately 1,200 to 1,800 insurgents were active in the northeastern region; 1,300 to 1,900, in the northern region; 100 to 400, in the central region; and 1,000 to 1,400 in the southern region. Of these regions, the sharpest increase occurred in the northern region, where, ac-



According to Thai authorities, only about 100 insurgents had been operating in mid-1967.

Communist China and North Vietnam continued to support the Thai insurgency in 1970. Indications were that Communist China was less than satisfied with the state of insurgency; Peking was continuing to exhort the Thai insurgents to "expand people's war, win greater victory," acknowledging at the same time that there were still "many hardships and difficulties in the Thai people's struggle." That the concept of national liberation was not appealing to the Thai was partly indicated by Peking's *People's Daily*, which in January 1969 reported that the so-called Thai People's Liberation Army, the Communist name for the Thai insurgents, was renamed the People's Armed Forces on January 1, 1969.

Meanwhile, the government not only continued to accelerate its rural development programs but also increased allocation of resources for the expansion of internal security forces. The role of army troops was also expanding, notably in the northern and southern regions.

By late 1969 overall police manpower had been increased to an estimated 80,000, an increase of 45 percent since 1965; the size of the provincial police, a major component of the national police system, had increased 60 percent during the same period. Substantial increases also occurred in the Volunteer Defense Corps and the Border Patrol Police. In an attempt to enhance its effectiveness along the border areas, the border police created mobile reserve platoons, civic action platoons, and over 120 line platoons.

The government also increased the number of commune (*tambon*) police stations. Between 1965 and late 1969, 750 new stations were constructed, and another 254 were planned to be constructed by the end of fiscal year 1972. Most of these new stations were located in the northern and northeastern regions. In addition, it was expanding the number of Special Action Forces as a mobile back-up force to the provincial police.

## CHAPTER 11

### FOREIGN RELATIONS

In 1970 the country's foreign policy derived from two major objectives. On the one hand, the government was actively pursuing militant anti-Communist policies at home and abroad. On the other hand, it was seeking to restore peace and stability in Southeast Asia in general and South Vietnam in particular through political settlements acceptable to all concerned. These two policies, which appeared at times to conflict in some respects, were followed both because of the continued Communist threat posed by North Vietnam and Communist China in the region and because of a growing Thai belief that peace could be achieved as much by political as by military means.

Although this belief led to exploratory probings into the political avenue to peace, the government's foremost concern in the conduct of its foreign relations continued to be Communist activities both in neighboring countries and within its own domain as well. As a result, the country was still closely allied with the United States and the West, multilaterally through the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). It continued to support the free world viewpoints in international forums.

As expressed by its leaders, the country's concern about the Communist threat to its security was heightened sharply in the late 1960s. The leadership expressed concern that Communist China would fill a possible vacuum after the United States completed the gradual process of lowering its military profile in Asia. Other contributing factors for an expressed Thai sense of insecurity were the recognition that a political settlement in South Vietnam might result in a power structure in which the Viet Cong would have a legitimized role; the presence of North Vietnamese troops on Laotian soil; the continuing internal turmoil in that country, which Thailand continued to regard as a protective buffer against the Communist nations; and, barely three hours' drive from Bangkok, North Vietnamese military actions against the Cambodian government of General Lon Nol in the months after Prince Norodom Sihanouk was deposed in early 1970.

While pursuing its two main lines of policy, the government was at the same time reportedly reassessing the premises and direction of its foreign relations. Leaders' statements, at the beginning of the

1970s, made it clear that the reassessment was aimed at reemphasizing the country's traditional flexibility in dealing with foreign powers and redefining its role in the emerging context of Asian power relationships, in which the Thai suspected Communist China would play a role much more influential than in the past.

The government's efforts to restructure its foreign relations without weakening its resolve to resist Communist expansion were manifest particularly in its quest for broader international contacts and regional cooperation among its neighbors. In 1968, for example, Thailand and Romania agreed on a long-term trade pact, and in the following year a Thai trade mission toured the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to explore the possibility of establishing mutually beneficial relationships.

Also in 1969 the Thai government for the first time publicly indicated its willingness to open channels of communication with Communist China, North Vietnam, and North Korea. The Thai foreign minister, Thanat Khoman, in February of that year described this willingness as an attempt to "find ways and means of solving difficulties and achieving peaceful coexistence." More recently, the influential English-language daily *Bangkok Post* quoted a senior Thai government official as stating that diplomatic relations between Thailand and Communist China were possible in the future when the Peking regime abandoned its anti-Thai policy.

For many years Thailand played a key role as mediator of disputes among its neighbors and as promoter of nonmilitary regional cooperation in Asia. In 1970 it was active in regional groups, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC). It continued to express the hope that these bodies would eventually evolve into a broader cooperative framework in which the Asian Communist nations could also meaningfully participate.

## FRAMEWORK OF FOREIGN RELATIONS

### Origins of Policy

Thai leaders long have prided themselves on their pragmatic and supple ability to utilize diplomacy as a means of preserving independence and freedom. They have avoided quarrels with powerful nations and have sometimes sought the protection of one power as a shield against another. Many Thai as well as foreign observers have singled out this flexibility in external relations as a major reason for Thailand's remaining free when its neighbors were yielding to European pressures (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

The Thai alignment with the West, particularly the United States, after the emergence of Communist China in late 1949 was in tune

with this Buddhist kingdom's realistic attitude toward foreign powers. Separated from China by about seventy miles of Laotian and Burmese territories, Thailand had begun to feel increasingly insecure because of its traditional view of China as an expansionist power and because of its tendency to associate the Chinese community in Bangkok with the Communist-directed subversive movement dating back to the 1920s. The Chinese intervention in the Korean conflict in 1950 also confirmed the Thai anxiety about the Communist neighbor to the north (see ch. 10, Political Dynamics; ch. 15, National Defense and Internal Security).

This sense of insecurity was heightened after mid-1954 with the partitioning of Vietnam into two halves, and it hastened Thai participation in September 1954 in SEATO, the regional collective security arrangement. In addition, the prolonged political instability in neighboring Laos, the intensification of Communist insurgency in South Vietnam after the mid-1960s, and the mounting indications of Communist terrorist activities within its own borders combined not only to reinforce Thailand's anti-Communist policies at home and abroad but also to solidify its friendly and cooperative relationship with the United States.

In late 1970 Thailand remained steadfast in its goal of containing communism in Asia. There were indications, however, that, given some assurance of reciprocity, Thailand would be willing and prepared to inaugurate a policy of cooperation and peaceful coexistence with Communist nations as an alternative to the more militant anti-Communist commitments of the present.

Foreign observers agreed that the changed mood in Bangkok resulted mainly from the United States decision to lower its military profile in Asia. Among other suggested reasons for a changing Thai outlook were the British disclosure in January 1968 of the plan to phase out its military units east of Suez by the end of 1971; the growing sentiments in other Southeast Asian capitals for a more balanced structure of relations with both Communist and Western powers; and the Thai assumption that the strength of nationalism and regional solidarity would prove to be resilient enough to resist outside interference.

A review of Thai foreign policy statements indicates, however, that the Thai efforts to seek peaceful cooperation among all Asian nations and rely on internal resources to cope with varied problems of nation building began in the early 1960s, when Minister of Foreign Affairs Thanat Khoman declared that his country was prepared to work for better understanding and relationship even with "those who do not share our views on many world issues . . . ." In August 1969 the Thai minister stated that Thailand's Asian policy was "not new for us, not just because somebody has coined a new phrase that there is a new [Thai] Asian policy." In August 1970 the Thai prime

minister and minister of defense, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, declared that Thailand had been practicing the Nixon doctrine of Asian self-help for six years.

As a result, during the 1960s and in 1970 Thailand's foreign relations increasingly involved regional cooperation. The country played a major role in the formation of various intraregional cooperative organizations and actively contributed toward the working of these bodies.

The country was, however, under no illusion about the difficulty of achieving regional peace without the cooperation of, and guarantee by, major international powers. Thus in his speech before the United Nations General Assembly in September 1970, Thanat Khoman proposed that, as an attempt to hasten the pace of the Paris peace talks and stabilize Southeast Asian situations, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, Communist China, and even the East European "suppliers" of North Vietnam be invited to the peace talks.

#### Conduct of Foreign Relations

The conduct of foreign relations is the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1970 the ministry was composed of the Office of the Secretary to the Minister; Office of the Undersecretary of State; and six functional departments: political—consisting of three geographical divisions (Europe and America; Southeast Asia, and South Asia and Near and Far East); protocol; economic; treaty and legal; information; and international organization.

In conducting its external relations, the ministry acted independently of the National Assembly and drew little public criticism. Foreign policy as a public issue remained almost exclusively a function of the executive branch of government. Disagreements over the direction of foreign policy, if any, were confined to the circle of cabinet ministers.

Apart from the minister of foreign affairs, Thanat Khoman (in office since 1959), influential personalities that were engaged, directly and indirectly, in the formulation and execution of foreign policies included: the prime minister; deputy prime minister; minister of the interior and commander in chief of the Royal Thai Army, Praphas Charusathiara (also spelled as Praphat Charusathien); Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development, Pote Sarasin; and Minister of Economic Affairs and former Thai Ambassador to the United States, Bunchana Attakorn.

#### RELATIONS WITH INDIVIDUAL NATIONS

In 1970 Thailand had diplomatic relations with fifty-seven nations (of which thirty-eight were served by resident missions) and

consular establishments in twenty-six nations. Thirty-nine foreign diplomatic missions as well as twenty-one foreign consular officer were located in Bangkok. Formal relations were maintained with only three Communist-bloc countries: the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Cuba. In terms of political, economic, and military significance, the Thai relations with Asian neighbors and the United States were most important.

#### Cambodia

In September 1970 Thailand's first ambassador to Cambodia in more than nine years assumed his post in Phnom Penh. Four months earlier Thailand and Cambodia had announced the resumption of their diplomatic relations, which had been severed by the government of Prince Norodom Sihanouk in 1961. Despite the improved relations, however, Thailand remained seriously concerned over the situation in Cambodia.

Relations between the two countries had been generally strained since 1953, when Cambodia became independent. Among the sources of tension were the recurrence of border clashes and mutual suspicion toward each other's position in relation to the East-West conflict. There had been strife between the Thai and Khmer peoples dating back at least to the thirteenth century, including a series of territorial disputes (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

Their modern differences stemmed initially from a dispute over the possession of an ancient Buddhist temple called Phra Viharn. The issue was whether the temple was situated in the Thai province of Sisaket or the Cambodian province of Kompong Thom. Bilateral efforts to settle the dispute through negotiations became more complicated in August 1958 when, much to the dismay of Thailand, Cambodia recognized Communist China. Mutual recriminations led to Cambodia's suspension of diplomatic ties three months later, but formal relations were restored in early 1959 through the good offices of the United Nations.

The situation deteriorated rapidly after October 1959 when Cambodia referred the temple dispute unilaterally to the International Court of Justice, petitioning the court to affirm its sovereignty over the temple. When in June 1962 the world court decided the case in Cambodia's favor, the Thai government described the judgment as "political," asserting that the president of the court at the time was a national of Communist Poland and that some of the judges were from countries that had been imperialist powers in Asia.

Nevertheless, the Thai government announced its intention to abide by the decision, although under protest, to maintain its good reputation and to prevent the dispute from being exploited by the Communists. Later, it proposed a Thai-Cambodian condominium

over the temple (still in Cambodian possession in late 1970), but this issue became gradually overshadowed by other pressing events.

Starting in 1965, coincident with the enlarging Vietnam war and growing evidence of North Vietnamese participation in the Communist insurgency in South Vietnam, border incidents along the Thai-Cambodian frontier increased, thus heightening the Thai suspicion that Cambodians and the Vietnamese Communists were colluding against Thailand. In February 1966 before the United Nations, Thailand charged Cambodia with permitting its territory to be used as sanctuary for the Vietnamese Communists and with allowing them to pass through its territory into Thailand. Cambodia rejected the allegation.

Four months later Thailand appealed to the United Nations to help restore the diplomatic relations. The United Nations peacemaker, Herbert de Ribbing, visited both Bangkok and Phnom Penh; but by November of that year his mission had failed, partly because of Cambodian insistence that Thailand renounce whatever territorial claims it had. In June 1967 Prince Sihanouk asserted that he would discuss the border issue instead with the so-called Thailand Patriotic Front, the Communist-directed rebel organization (see ch. 10, Political Dynamics; ch. 15, National Defense and Internal Security).

Charges and countercharges concerning border violations continued into early 1970. In August 1968, for example, Thailand accused Cambodia of sending armed infiltrators and of fortifying border outposts. For its part, Cambodia, in May 1969, formally informed the United Nations Security Council of an alleged Thai plot to establish an anti-Cambodian rebel government inside Cambodia.

Thai-Cambodian divergencies on communism also added to the strain between the two countries. For many years Thailand was disturbed by what it regarded as Cambodia's policy of appeasing Communist China and North Vietnam. Cambodia broke off diplomatic relations in October 1961 because of a Thai allegation that Cambodia had become a springboard for Chinese Communist aggression against Thailand and South Vietnam. This allegation was made in response to an earlier public statement by Prince Sihanouk that he would rather fight Thailand than Communists. In 1966 Thailand proclaimed that it was prepared to normalize relations with Cambodia if the latter were "freed from Communist influence and possesses full discretion and liberty to decide for itself."

Thai-Cambodian relations entered a new phase in April 1970 when Prince Sihanouk was dethroned in a coup d'etat and was succeeded by Premier Lon Nol. In late May Thailand announced the resumption of full diplomatic relations with Cambodia and its deci-

sion to supply the latter with Thai-made gunboats, uniforms, shoes, and medical supplies. In the Djarkarta Conference of eleven Asian nations (Australia, Cambodia, Japan, South Korea, Laos, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and South Vietnam), held in the same month, Thailand expressed its desire for a political settlement of Cambodia's problems.

In late July 1970 Premier Lon Nol and his foreign minister, Koun Wick, paid an official visit to Bangkok, the first by a Cambodian head of government in twenty years, the premier declaring, "We want Thailand to realize that the danger to Cambodia is also a danger to Thailand." The leaders of the two nations discussed, among other things, the Cambodian request for aid, including communications equipment, arms and ammunition, and Thai troops.

In an effort to strengthen amity with its neighbor, Thailand in July and August 1970 seriously considered the question of whether to send about 5,000 volunteers of Cambodian descent for service in Cambodia. Meanwhile, in August Praphas Charusathira revealed that the Lon Nol government had permitted Thailand to deploy its troops into Cambodian territories at any time it felt its own security was threatened by military actions of North Vietnamese or Viet Cong forces.

In September 1970 Thailand decided against the sending of any of its troops to Cambodia, stating that it wanted to explore diplomatic and political means in seeking to stabilize the Cambodian situation before resorting to any military means and, then, only when its own security was directly endangered. The Thai position was also in agreement with the Cambodian stand that the Thai troops were not then needed because of an improved situation. The leaders of the two countries also shared the view that the presence of Thai troops in Cambodia might provoke counteractions from the Communist countries, thus enlarging the Cambodian conflict. Nevertheless, the Thai government did not rule out the possibility of giving air support whenever the Cambodian government requested and needed it.

### Laos

Despite an earlier history of territorial disputes, relations with Laos were cordial in 1970. Thai policy toward the country was to ensure that Laos remained neutral and free from outside control so that it could serve as a protective buffer against North Vietnam and Communist China.

Modern Thai-Laotian relations, friendly until mid-1960, changed in August 1960 when the rightist ruling group was overthrown in Vientiane and was replaced by neutralist leadership under Prince



Souvanna Phouma. The Thai government viewed the situation as a prelude to an eventual communization of Laos and thus a threat to itself. It became more apprehensive during the Laotian civil war of 1960-61, during which the pro-Communist Pathet Lao forces gradually asserted themselves at the expense of both the rightist and neutralist forces.

As a result, Thailand tightened its border security in the relatively undernourished northeastern provinces in an effort to prevent Communist infiltration into the region. A traditional seat of antigovernment activities, the northeast posed a major security problem to Bangkok, partly because of the difficulty in policing the rugged terrain along the border and partly because many of the frontier people are ethnic Lao, sharing generations of kinship and economic ties with those across the Mekong River (see ch. 15, National Defense and Internal Security).

Thailand took part in the fourteen-nation Geneva conference, which in July 1962 ended the civil war and agreed on the neutralization of Laos. It reacted favorably to the Geneva settlement, although it not only had misgivings about the durability of the troika coalition government formed after the conference but also took note of the fact that the Geneva accord left the Pathet Lao in control of the Laotian borders with both North Vietnam and Communist China.

After the mid-1960s the Thai voiced their increasing apprehension over the growing evidence that the North Vietnamese were stepping up their aid of the Pathet Lao, who had withdrawn from the coalition government and had attempted to crush the forces supporting the non-Communist government in Vientiane. The Thai pointed out that the North Vietnamese had been using the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos to send men and equipment into South Vietnam. They complained also that the Communists had kept a considerable number of military personnel in Laos in violation of the 1962 Geneva accord and that thousands of Chinese Communists had been in northern Laos for road construction purposes.

Accordingly, Thailand accelerated its efforts to help Laos in non-military matters. In the 1960s it was cooperating with that country through the multinational Mekong River basin development project; it also was contributing a quantity of free rice and assorted consumer goods.

In October 1967 Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn stated his government's readiness to send troops to Laos if so requested. In the late 1960s, although Thai government officials denied reports that a limited number of Thai troops were serving with the Laotian government troops, it did not rule out the possibility that under certain circumstances individual "volunteers" might be taking part in Laotian operations in what it called "a private capacity."

### South Vietnam

In 1970 Thailand continued to support the military and political efforts of South Vietnam and of its allies to bring about a settlement that would not only protect the Saigon government's right of self-determination but also prevent North Vietnam from pursuing its designs of expansion and conquest in Laos and Cambodia. The Thai policy was premised on the assumption that the struggle against Communist aggression in South Vietnam had a close bearing on its own defense against such danger from neighboring countries. The importance of Thai-Vietnamese solidarity had been stressed as early as 1959 when the Thai foreign minister, Thanat, visited Saigon.

Relations with Saigon became markedly closer after the intensification in the mid-1960s of Communist operations in South Vietnam. In July 1964 Thailand first decided to assist the Saigon government by sending aviation crews and construction materials. In August 1965 it also approved other measures designed to train South Vietnamese pilots, provide medical units, and send crews for anti-infiltration and transport operations in South Vietnamese waters.

In late 1966 the Thai leaders discussed the possibility of sending ground combat units to South Vietnam. The decision to dispatch a 1,000-man infantry battalion, at the request of South Vietnam, was first announced in January 1967; at that time, Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn declared: "Thailand is situated near Vietnam and it will be the next target of the Communists as they have already proclaimed. This is why Thailand realizes the necessity to send military units to help oppose Communist aggression in Vietnam when it is still at a distance from our country." By February 1969 the Thai contribution had reached a total of more than 12,000 officers and men, plus small air and naval units.

In August 1970 the prime minister indicated that his government was planning to withdraw "as many as possible—if not all" of the 12,000 Thai troops from Vietnam to deploy them near the Laotian and Cambodian borders. The prime minister also states that consultations had been conducted with South Vietnam on the planned withdrawal.

### North Vietnam

In 1970 Thailand and North Vietnam were in a state of undeclared war because of the latter's involvement in Thailand and in neighboring Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam as well. The Thai position was that peace could not be restored in Southeast Asia so long as North Vietnam had not renounced its expansionist designs on its non-Communist neighbors.

During the previous decade, the two countries had limited unofficial contacts through their respective Red Cross societies. These contacts were made to facilitate the repatriation of some 70,000 Vietnamese nationals living mostly in northeastern Thailand; most of these Vietnamese came to Thailand as refugees during the French Indochina War of the 1950s.

After the mid-1950s, despite Thai proddings, the South Vietnamese government refused to receive these refugees, claiming that they were infiltrated by North Vietnamese agents. For its part, Thailand suspected that the Vietnamese community might be exploited as the fifth column in the North Vietnamese efforts to foment subversive activities. Thus in 1959 Thailand negotiated, over South Vietnamese protest, an agreement with North Vietnam through their respective Red Cross societies. Under this agreement, renewed in 1962, about 45,000 Vietnamese had been shipped to North Vietnam by July 1964.

The reception of refugees was suspended by North Vietnam in August 1964 when the Hanoi regime alleged that the initiation of American aerial attacks made repatriation difficult and hazardous. The Red Cross societies agreed, however, to reconsider the issue as soon as the situation warranted it. Meanwhile, because of the growing Thai suspicion that some of the Vietnamese refugees were behind the North Vietnamese-instigated anti-Thai activities, the Thai government stated in October 1967 that it had decided to ship most of the remaining 40,000 refugees to South Vietnam and that the first group of repatriates would consist of volunteers and "troublemakers." A limited number of the refugees were subsequently sent back to South Vietnam.

In late September 1970 the refugee issue again became an active concern of the two countries after a North Vietnamese Red Cross delegation arrived in Bangkok to resume negotiations on the suspended repatriation. This was the first time that a North Vietnamese mission was ever received officially in Bangkok. On arriving, the delegation called for "friendly relations" between the peoples of the two countries and for "a good implementation" of the 1959 repatriation agreement. The renewed North Vietnamese interest in the evacuation of the refugees coincided with the Thai readiness to expand contacts with Communist countries under reciprocal conditions. In October 1970 the Thai-North Vietnamese negotiators announced that both sides agreed in principle on measures to repatriate a total of 37,000 Vietnamese refugees to North Vietnam in January 1971.

#### Burma

Thai relations with Burma were generally friendly in the years after the two countries signed a treaty of friendship in 1956. Shar-

ing a 1,000-mile border with Burma, Thailand cooperated with the Burmese authorities in the latter's attempt to suppress separatist insurgency in the Shan State of Burma, where the Shans straddle the Thai northwestern border and speak a dialect of the Thai language. Although the presence on Thai soil of some of the Shan rebels is a centuries-old geographical accident and the Thai government disclaimed any connection with the Shan movement, this issue has sometimes become a source of misunderstanding between the two nations. The tendency of Burmese political refugees to seek sanctuary in Thailand and the Thai willingness to grant a temporary stay, out of humanitarian consideration, also continued to be a source of minor irritation between the two countries.

In 1963 Thailand signed an agreement with Burma, providing for the establishment of a bilateral ministerial-level committee. This committee was assigned the responsibility of devising measures for the improvement of border security and for economic and cultural cooperation between the two nations. In a continuing effort to promote friendly ties, Prime Minister Thanom paid a state visit to Rangoon in November 1966 at the invitation of the Burmese chief of state, General Ne Win.

In October 1969 Thailand made public the fact that it had granted political asylum to the former Burmese premier, U Nu; at the same time it assured the Burmese government of General Ne Win that U Nu would not be permitted to engage in any political activity against Burma while he remained in Thailand. Two months later the government of Ne Win, in a formal note delivered to Thailand, accused U Nu of plotting an anti-Burmese conspiracy but did not ask for any action by the Thai government.

#### Malaysia

Thai-Malaysian relations were friendly after Malaysia (called Malaya until September 1963) became independent in 1957. Friendship between the two nations was expressed especially in the common efforts to promote bilateral as well as regional cooperation in a wide range of national endeavors. In 1970 Thailand remained one of Malaysia's principal trading partners, and tourist traffic between the two countries was quite active (see ch. 14, Trade and Transportation).

For many years the two countries cooperated closely in their joint drive against Communist guerrillas operating along their common border. In 1969 they announced a decision by which the security forces of either country could cross the border into the other's territory up to a limited distance in pursuit of the Communist terrorists. In March 1970 a new agreement was signed, providing for the use of regular troops in addition to police units and allowing the armed forces of either side to be deployed in the

territory of the other for as long as seventy-two hours. The agreement also established a combined border headquarters to coordinate the anti-Communist operations of both countries.

After Malaysia suspended diplomatic relations with both Indochina and the Philippines in September 1963, Thailand played an active mediating role in seeking to restore normal relations. The Thai effort contributed significantly toward the general improvement of relations between these countries, thus enabling them to participate in regional cooperative organizations.

#### Communist China

After Communist China emerged in 1949 as the most formidable Asian power, Thai policies toward the Chinese neighbor were affected by the geographical proximity of the two countries and by fear of the Peking regime as the principal source of threat to peace and security. In 1970 the Thai suspicion of the Chinese remained undiminished, but at the same time there were indications that Thailand was willing and ready to approach the Communist regime on a pragmatic and relatively more flexible basis than before.

The Thai became conscious of the Chinese threat beginning in 1950 when the Communist regime occupied Tibet and intervened in the Korean conflict. Their apprehension was heightened in 1953 when Peking announced the creation of an autonomous local government for the Thai minority in Yunnan. The Thai government viewed this move as a preparatory step toward the subverting of Thailand; this view was reinforced in 1954 when, from his place of exile in mainland China, former Thai Prime Minister Pridi Phanomyong broadcast appeals to the Thai people to overthrow their government in Bangkok.

The Thai government blamed both the Peking and Hanoi governments for the intensified Communist action in South Vietnam. Its anti-Chinese attitude was further stiffened in January 1965, when the Peking regime hinted that Thailand would be the next target of the so-called war of national liberation and that there would be a guerrilla war in the country by the end of 1965.

In the late 1960s the Thai government began to soften its attitude somewhat. In February 1969 Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman revealed in Bangkok that some Thai officials in Geneva had attempted to contact Chinese officials there to probe the possibility of opening a dialogue with Communist China. He also expressed his willingness to have "serious talks" with leaders not only of the Communist neighbor but also of North Vietnam and North Korea concerning problems of Asian peace and security. He went on to declare, "We have nothing against these countries, we just want to be left alone, to develop our own country and to cooperate with our neighbors for our own mutual benefit."

While on an official visit to Tokyo, several days after his Bangkok statement, the Thai minister reaffirmed his government's hope for a meaningful dialogue with Peking. In September 1970 the *Bangkok Post* quoted the Thai foreign minister as saying that, although he had made "several appeals" for an open dialogue with Peking, Communist China was more inclined to have "secret talks."

#### Other Asian Nations

Thai relations with the Republic of China have been friendly since 1946, when the two countries for the first time exchanged diplomatic envoys. The only source of irritation between the two nations concerned the status of some Chinese irregulars stationed in parts of the Thai-Burmese border areas; this issue was, however, not serious enough to affect the amicable relations between Bangkok and Taipei.

These irregulars were remnants of the Nationalist Chinese troops that moved into the Burmese-Thai border areas after the Communist Chinese forces completed the seizure of the mainland in late 1949. Some of the irregulars sometimes illegally entered the Thai territory. Several large-scale evacuations of these troops and their families were carried out, but not all were willing to leave, and the Thai government insisted that Nationalist China should evacuate the rest of the irregulars. The Taiwan government contended, however, that it was already hard pressed by increasing population and the shortage of arable land on Formosa. In May 1969 the two countries agreed that this issue should in no way affect otherwise cordial relations.

Thailand and Japan maintained friendly relations, especially in trade and economic cooperation (see ch. 14, Trade and Transportation). Long admired for its economic, technological, and cultural achievements, Japan won the good will of Thailand in 1955 by agreeing to settle a World War II debt it incurred in connection with its stationing of troops in the country; the settlement was finalized in 1962.

The Thai-Japanese ties were cemented by frequent exchanges of visits by government leaders and by Japan's granting of credits. In 1967 Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku Sato visited Bangkok, and his Thai counterpart repaid the visit in May 1968, at which time the two countries agreed to establish a bilateral committee on trade. The Thai prime minister was again in Tokyo in June 1968 to discuss matters on bilateral as well as regional cooperation.

In February 1969 Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman paid a visit to Tokyo and discussed with his Japanese counterpart matters relating to trade imbalance, the prospects of the Paris peace talks, Japan's policy toward mainland China, and the post-Vietnam situation in Asia. The Thai leader also used the occasion to reiterate his

country's willingness to sit for "a meaningful dialogue" with Communist China.

The mutuality of anti-Communist commitments brought Thailand and South Korea ever closer after 1950. After the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, Thailand announced its support of United Nations intervention and sent combat troops to the aid of South Korea. The Thai troops were withdrawn shortly after the armistice in 1953, but in 1966 Thailand dispatched to Korea an infantry company as a contingent of the United Nations forces. As of February 1970 Thailand still maintained the company.

Thailand and South Korea reaffirmed their common anti-Communist commitments by sending combat troops to South Vietnam. The two countries also played a major part in founding the regional organization ASPAC.

Relations with India have been cordial since World War II. India is a major buyer of Thai rice (see ch. 14, Trade and Transportation). When India's Vice President Zakir Hussain paid a visit to Bangkok in 1966, Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn reaffirmed the traditional amity between the two countries as well as their common dedication to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. In 1967 India's Minister of External Affairs M.C. Chagla was in Bangkok to discuss, among other things, the problem of the Chinese Communist threat in South and Southeast Asia and the question of war and peace relating to Vietnam.

#### United States

Thailand and the United States pursued in 1970 a longstanding policy of friendship and cooperation that dated back to the early nineteenth century (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). In the post-World War II years this policy was based on three agreements: the Economic and Technical Assistance Agreement, signed in September 1950; and the SEATO treaty of September 1954. Under the first pact, the United States agreed to furnish economic and technical assistance to Thailand; the second provided for the American supply of arms and equipment and assistance in training the Thai armed forces in the use of weapons so furnished; and the third formed the legal basis of Thai-American military cooperation in Thailand (see ch. 15, National Defense and Internal Security).

After the mid-1950s Thai-American cooperation was enhanced especially through SEATO. With the deterioration of the Laotian situation in the spring of 1961, Thailand requested a SEATO action to check the Pathet Lao advances toward its own border. Thai reactions were bitter when SEATO failed to respond immediately. It was against this background that, in March 1962, Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman issued a

joint statement in Washington, declaring that the obligation of each party under the SEATO treaty was "individual as well as collective." In this statement Secretary of State Rusk reassured the Thai minister that, in the event of a Communist armed attack on Thailand, "the United States intends to give full effect to its obligations under the treaty . . . in accordance with its constitutional processes" without depending upon the prior agreement of all other parties in the treaty.

In May 1962 when the strategic Laotian town of Nam Thai (in northern Laos within about 15 miles of the Chinese border) fell to the Pathet Lao forces, the United States military forces were ordered into Thailand after United States-Thai consultations in order to help ensure the territorial integrity of Thailand. Most of these forces had been withdrawn from the country by the end of 1962.

When situations in Laos and South Vietnam became increasingly threatening in 1964, Thailand and the United States began to undertake joint developmental programs in the border areas adjoining Laos in an attempt to forestall Communist insurgency there. In a related effort to strengthen Thai defense capability and internal security situations, the two countries agreed on certain measures by which American combat aircraft could be deployed to Thai bases. The Thai government also allowed the United States to station troops in the country and to build and use military bases for the purpose of prosecuting the Vietnam conflict from Thai bases. In March 1967 Thai and American officials in Bangkok jointly stated that American planes were using Thai bases to bomb North Vietnam. By 1969 the American military strength in the country had reached a peak of 48,000 officers and men.

In July 1969 President Richard Nixon paid a three-day visit to Bangkok, where he and Thai leaders exchanged views on the future role of the United States in Thailand and Asia relating to the defense and economic development of the region. The president reaffirmed the United States determination to "honor its present commitments in Southeast Asia" without undertaking any new obligation. He assured the Thai government that the United States would continue to support Thai efforts in the fields of national security and economic development.

The presidential visit was followed by bilateral talks on a gradual withdrawal of American troops from Thailand. Based on an agreement reached in September 1969, some 6,000 of the American troops had been withdrawn by the end of June 1970. In September 1970 the two countries agreed on the second-phase withdrawal of nearly 10,000 men to be completed by the end of June 1971.

The United States policy of phased reductions was consistent with the Thai position that the main burden of defending the



country from external threat should be borne by the Thai. This position was enunciated in the early 1960s and reaffirmed in later years.

### INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

Cooperation through the United Nations constitutes an important part of Thai foreign relations. On the significance of this organization, a Thai leader once declared, "our foreign policy is anchored on the United Nations, not only for idealistic reasons but particularly for practical reasons. Thailand sees in the World Organization a custodian of the rights and freedom of the smaller nations and a forum where their voice can be heard."

Since it was admitted to the world organization in December 1946, Thailand has consistently supported the United Nations varied activities. It was the first Asian country to back the United Nations military intervention in Korea by furnishing a contingent of combat troops to serve under the flag of the United Nations command. In later years it also supported the United Nations peace-keeping missions in other parts of the world. In 1970 the Thai government was of the view that the United Nations should assert a greater role in seeking to reconcile the conflicting positions of the great powers.

Thailand holds membership in the following specialized agencies of the United Nations: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Development Association (IDA), International Finance Corporation (IFC), International Labor Organization (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Universal Postal Union (UPU), World Health Organization (WHO), and World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Of these organizations, FAO, IBRD, ICAO, ILO, UNESCO, and WHO maintain regional representatives or missions in Bangkok. In addition, the twenty-seven-nation Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), a regional commission of the United Nations, has its secretariat in Bangkok.

At the regional level the country has played a key role in promoting various forms of cooperation among its neighbors. In July 1961 it joined Malaya and the Philippines in forming the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) as a nonpolitical and nonmilitary mechanism for regional consultation and mutual assistance in the economic, cultural, scientific, and administrative fields. Burma,

Cambodia, Ceylon, and Indonesia refused to join ASA on the ground that Thailand and the Philippines were members of SEATO.

The ASA was unable to achieve intended results, mainly because of previously strained relations between Malaysia and the Philippines. For all practical purposes, ASA was absorbed by ASEAN, a new regional body that was set up in August 1967 by Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Singapore. As of late 1970, despite standing invitations for membership, Burma, Cambodia, and Ceylon had yet to accede to the organization. The ASEAN members agreed to cooperate in the fields of food production, commerce and industry, civil aviation, tourism, communications, meteorology, and shipping. The ASEAN cooperation was especially active in tourism and, to a lesser degree, in shipping. In August 1970 ASEAN's permanent committee on shipping met in Bangkok to discuss measures aimed at coordinating shipping policies, reducing dependence on non-ASEAN vessels, and lowering freight rates.

The inauguration of ASEAN as a broader cooperative machinery was made possible by the change of Indonesian political leadership in late 1965 and the subsequent normalization of relations between Malaysia and Indonesia. Another major contributing factor was Thailand's generally successful mediatory role in reconciling differences among its close neighbors. Nevertheless, the territorial dispute between Malaysia and the Philippines over the state of Sabah (in northern Borneo) hampered the progress of ASEAN. In 1969 Thailand offered Bangkok as the site for Malaysian-Philippine negotiations, but mutual recriminations continued to impede settlement efforts.

As a member of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Secretariat (SEAMES), Thailand is also collaborating in the fields of education and research. The SEAMES, set up in 1965, is engaged in cooperative research on agriculture, tropical biology, tropical medicine and public health, education in science and mathematics, language study, and educational innovation and technology. Other SEAMES members are Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, and South Vietnam.

Regional collaboration is also promoted through other organizations, notably ASPAC. Formed in 1966, ASPAC aims at greater mutual assistance and solidarity among the free Asian and Pacific countries in their endeavor to safeguard independence from the Communist threat and to develop their respective economies. ASPAC's member nations are: Australia, Nationalist China, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, and South Vietnam. Thailand has consistently stressed the view that ASPAC should remain nonmilitary and nonideological, whereas

some other members have sought to transform the organization as an anti-Communist military alliance. It has also held the view that ASPAC and ASEAN are complementing each other and that neither hampers the work of the other.

Other cooperative efforts in which Thailand participates include the annual Ministerial Conference for the Economic Development of Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and South Vietnam) that was organized in 1966; the thirty-three member Asian Development Bank (ADB), inaugurated in 1966 under United Nations auspices, of which twenty are regional members; the twenty-four-member Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia (more commonly known as the Colombo Plan—see Glossary), initiated in 1950; and the Mekong River Development Project (Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and the Republic of Vietnam), set up in 1957 to develop the water resources of the lower Mekong Basin.

For regional defense Thailand has participated in SEATO, consisting of Australia, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, and the United States. The Bangkok-based SEATO has not only provided a forum for mutual consultations but has also sponsored joint land, sea, and air exercises (see ch. 15, National Defense and Internal Security). The initial enthusiasm toward this organization has cooled somewhat since the early 1960s when SEATO failed to act on the deteriorating Laotian situation.

The Thai disappointment with SEATO as a collective security body was voiced in May 1969 by Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman: "SEATO has no military structure, only a military framework. It has no combined forces like NATO. There has been no instance of collective defense action; there has only been individual action by individual members." He also expressed the view that this organization should shift its emphasis from a military to a political role in seeking to preserve peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

In September 1970, in marking the sixteenth anniversary of the signing of the SEATO treaty, Secretary of State William Rogers stated that the rapid development of the Southeast Asia region in the years after 1954 owed much to "the protective shield provided by SEATO" and that the United States would continue to give the organization its strong support and encouragement. The secretary also reaffirmed that the Nixon administration would continue to support the efforts of its Asian allies to preserve peace and security within their own borders.

#### FOREIGN AID AND LOANS

The United States and some other countries and international organizations have granted aid and loans to Thailand. From 1946

through June 30, 1969, American economic contributions reached a total of US\$598.4 million, of which US\$472.8 million were grants and US\$125.6 million were loans. According to 1969 testimony before a congressional subcommittee, United States military assistance totaled more than US\$800 million from fiscal year 1951 through fiscal 1969.

Economic assistance has been provided also by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, commonly known as the World Bank), which from 1946 through June 30, 1969, gave a total of US\$311.9 million. West Germany and Japan have contributed the equivalents of US\$54.2 million and US\$27 million, respectively, in calendar years 1960 through 1968.

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development chairs a consultative group on Thailand, which participates in studies of Thailand's economic development and foreign assistance needs. Members of the group, having last met in 1966, assembled in Paris on September 29 and 30, 1970, representing Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, the International Monetary Fund, and the United Nations Development Program. Observers from the Asian Development Bank, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development also attended the 1970 meeting.

In 1962 Thailand and Japan signed a special agreement on technical assistance; Japan agreed to repay the remainder of a special wartime loan amounting to 570 million baht (20.8 baht equal approximately US\$1—see Glossary) in installments over eight years, from 1962 to 1969, inclusive. The agreement also provided that the payments were to be used for procurement in Japan of capital goods, equipment, and the services of technicians. In October 1966 Japan extended a credit loan to Thailand equivalent to US\$60 million for construction of a new bridge across the Chao Phraya.

In January 1968 Japan agreed to help Thailand carry out its second economic and social development plan (1967-71) with a loan totaling the equivalent of US\$3 million. Under this agreement, Japan's Export-Import Bank in 1969 granted a loan of US\$2.78 million for improvement of coastal waterways.

Between 1950 and June 1969 the IBRD granted loans for railroad improvement, irrigation works, highway construction, port development, construction of the Yanhee multipurpose project, and expansion of vocational education for the agricultural industry. In 1969 the IFC, an affiliate of IBRD, committed US\$22.1 million to help finance expansion of Thailand's construction-materials industry.

Technical assistance has been also provided by the various United Nations organizations. Since 1947 the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has provided equipment and drugs for disease con-

trol, health services, and improved nutrition. WHO has been helping Thai medical authorities to fight malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, and yaws and to train nurses and public health technicians. FAO has given assistance in the development of agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and cattle breeding. ICAO, with the help of the United Nations Special Fund, has established a Civil Aviation Training Center in Bangkok. UNESCO has given important help in the development of rural education and teacher training. ILO has been giving aid in industrial training and productivity; and IAEA has helped train Thai scientists in the use of radioisotopes in agriculture at Kasetsart University (the major agricultural institution) and in medicine at Siriraj and Chulalongkorn hospitals.

ECAFE, one of the four regional commissions established by the United Nations, has its headquarters in Bangkok. It holds international meetings throughout the year on such topics as the development of industry and natural resources, trade promotion, economic research and planning, inland transport, flood control, and agricultural progress. It has provided the government of Thailand with advisory services on such questions as railways, bridges, inland waterways, irrigation projects, and population statistics. ECAFE has located its Asian Institute of Economic Planning in Bangkok, and Thailand stands to benefit from two of ECAFE's main regional projects, the Asian Highway, which runs through Thailand, and the Mekong development projects, which are designed to exploit the potentials of the great river and some of its tributaries in the fields of irrigation, navigation, flood control, and hydropower.

SEATO established in Bangkok a graduate engineering school (reorganized in 1967 as the independent Asian Institute of Technology); sent Thai graduates abroad for advanced study; and brought specialists to Thailand to teach and conduct research in geology, economics, and veterinary medicine. SEATO operates two skilled labor projects in Thailand, one for training civilians and the other for military personnel. Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States have cooperated in setting up eighteen vocational schools for civilians in provincial towns and the Teacher Development Center in Bangkok for industrial teacher training. Thailand and Australia have jointly sponsored the establishment in Bangkok of a military technical training school for military personnel that provides skilled workmen or instructors for the armed forces' workshops or schools. In 1962 the Thai-SEATO Community Development Technical Assistance Center was established at Ubon Ratchathani, a project designed to decentralize community development by having a regional center engage in analyzing the actual conditions and training experts to meet specific needs of the people in the area. The SEATO Cholera Research Project, founded in 1959, later converted into the SEATO Medical Research Laboratory, has

proved useful to Thai doctors and students of medical sciences. Thailand also benefits from the SEATO meteorological telecommunications project linking Bangkok with Manila and from SEATO's scholarship and fellowship programs for study abroad.

Thailand has also participated in the Colombo Plan. It has benefited from the Colombo Plan scholarship program and from economic development projects, such as the feeder roads being built in the Northeast by Australia, which has also provided equipment for the telecommunications link between Thailand and Malaysia. In addition, Japan assisted Thailand in setting up the Virus Research Center and the Telecommunications Research Center as well as sending a group of roadbuilding specialists with appropriate equipment into the Southern Region to construct road outlets from villages to markets. The United Kingdom, under the Colombo Plan, established a cotton-ginning factory and has assisted in the expansion of the Faculty of Engineering at Chulalongkorn University. Canada and New Zealand also contributed substantially through the Colombo Plan.

## **SECTION III. ECONOMIC**

### **CHAPTER 12**

#### **CHARACTER AND STRUCTURE OF THE ECONOMY**

The economic system is essentially based on private enterprise. The government plays an important, though in most areas a less direct, role through the provision of services that are essential for the successful functioning of the private system, such as power production, maintenance of the transportation system, and provision of educational services and by the passage of laws designed to promote the growth of private industry. The government also supplements the credit supply of the private banking system by four financial institutions owned and managed by the government.

Rather than by direct controls the government influences the economy through the allocation of funds to the various sectors in the annual budget and through the formulation of economic and social development plans. Because, however, of the place of private enterprise in the economy, plans essentially are confined to programs for public development expenditures.

Production tends to be carried on in small units. Most farms are small and owner operated. Most manufacturing establishments also are small, employing less than 100 persons and operating without a highly sophisticated technology. In the late 1960s, however, there was some trend toward larger plant size.

#### **STRUCTURE OF THE ECONOMY**

Agriculture is by far the most important sector of the economy. In 1969 it contributed 39,165.7 million baht (20.8 baht equal approximately US\$ 1—see Glossary), or 31 percent of the gross domestic product, which was 127,161.3 million baht (see table 5). Trade was the second most important sector of the economy, contributing 22,126.1 million baht, or 17.4 percent to the gross domestic product. Manufacturing ranked third with 19,074.2 million baht, or 15 percent of the total.

From 1965 to 1969 there were changes in the structure of the economy, the most important of which was the decline in the share contributed by agriculture, which had been 35.5 percent in 1965.

Table 5. Gross Domestic Product of Thailand by Industrial Sectors, 1965 and 1969  
(in millions of baht)\*

	1965	Percent	1969	Percent
Agriculture .....	29,744.8	35.5	39,165.7	31.0
Mining and quarrying .....	1,758.2	2.1	2,238.9	1.7
Manufacturing .....	11,712.7	14.0	19,074.2	15.0
Construction .....	4,573.3	5.5	8,901.3	7.0
Electricity and water supply .....	672.6	0.8	1,525.9	1.1
Transportation and communications .....	5,977.4	7.1	8,138.3	6.4
Trade .....	13,528.0	16.2	22,126.1	17.4
Services .....	7,851.6	9.4	12,970.5	10.2
Miscellaneous .....	7,865.0	9.4	12,970.4	10.2
Total .....	83,683.6	100.0	127,161.3	100.0

\*20.8 baht equal approximately US\$1—see Glossary.

Source: Adapted from Bank of Thailand, Annual Economic Report, 1969, Bangkok, 1969, p. 85.

Trade, manufacturing, construction, and electricity and water supply rose in the share contributed, as did the services and miscellaneous sectors. The changes in structure were largely the result of an effort to diversify the economy and eliminate the excessive dependence on rice culture. During the period, there had also been considerable diversification in agricultural production; maize (corn) had increased in importance, and the cultivation of other products had been encouraged to broaden the agricultural base (see ch. 13, Agriculture and Industry). Manufacturing increased in absolute value and in the share contributed, mainly as a result of incentives offered to private enterprise to reduce the dependence of manufacturing on government participation.

## ECONOMIC PLANNING

Economic planning on an organized basis was initiated with the implementation of the First National Economic and Social Development Plan covering 1961 to 1966. Since 1959 the planning function has been centered in the National Economic Development Board, under the Office of the Prime Minister. Responsibility for carrying out the plan of the government rested with various agencies or ministries, a situation that sometimes impeded the desired degree of developmental progress. To eliminate this problem, the Ministry of National Development was created in 1963. The ministry is charged with coordinating and executing economic and social programs through its various departments and offices. In executing planned programs and working with foreign governments in the administration of aid, the ministry is assisted by the staff of its Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation.



The first and second national economic and social development plans fixed growth targets for the economy as a whole. They were comprehensive in character, covering all geographic areas and all economic sectors. Plans estimated expenditures necessary to achieve the desired growth target and provided for allocation of funds to the various sectors. They also included estimates of the sources of financing, including foreign loans and grants. In order to achieve the growth objective, it was recognized that participation by private enterprise would be needed, and representatives of the private sector were consulted in formulating plans.

The overall objectives of development planning have been the acceleration of economic development and an improvement of the standard of living. The Second National Economic and Social Development Plan (1967-71) incorporated the major objectives of the first plan and expanded them, carrying them forward in greater detail. The four major objectives were: the most efficient use of human, natural, and financial resources to expand productive capacity and national income as well as distributing the benefits of growth to all classes of people; the promotion of social justice and preservation of social stability, national institutions, customs, and culture; the maintenance of economic and financial stability as a basis for long-term growth; and the preservation of national security, which depends, in some measure, on economic and social strength.

Policies to achieve these ideals included emphasis on development of rural areas to increase income in that sector, expansion of employment opportunities and the upgrading of skills, encouragement of accelerated private industrial investments through governmental inducements, an increase in agricultural productivity, and enhancement in the role of science and technology. The government accepted as its major functions the implementation of economic and social infrastructural programs and the provision and maintenance of a climate conducive to increased private investment, both domestic and foreign.

The Second Development Plan set the target for growth of the gross domestic product at an annual average rate of 8.5 percent. This was in excess of the achieved average annual growth rate of 7.2 percent during the period of the first plan. During the first three years of the plan, the average annual growth rate of the gross domestic product was 8.1 percent. Although the rate achieved in 1967 was 6 percent, thus falling short of the desired rate, it increased to 8.8 percent in 1968 and to 9.5 percent in 1969. In terms of 1962 prices, however, growth achieved was only 7.5 percent because of rising prices. Based on an expected 3.3 percent rate of population growth, the desired per capita increase of the domestic product during the plan was fixed at slightly more than 5 percent.

Expenditures of 150,328 million baht were estimated as the sum

required to attain the desired development goals of the second plan, which was expected to provide a base for continued growth in the next ten years, to be covered by the prospective third and fourth plans. The total amount required from 1967 to 1971 was composed of planned public expenditures of 57,520 million baht and investment of 92,800 million baht by the private sector. Public expenditures constituted 38 percent of the projected total. About 73 percent of public development expenditures were expected to be financed by domestic resources, including budget allocations of the central government and funds generated by state enterprises and local governments; the remainder was to be derived from foreign loans and grants. Loans were earmarked for agriculture, transportation and communications, energy, community facilities and social welfare, and education. Almost half of foreign loan commitments of 10,607 million baht was channeled to transportation and communications. Grants from the United States, the United Nations Special Fund, Colombo Plan (see Glossary) countries, and members of the Consultative Group for Thailand were directed to rural development programs and road construction.

About 90 percent of private investment was expected to come from domestic sources. Individual and business savings were expected to generate 73.8 million baht for private capital formation; other domestic sources of funds were financial institutions, including commercial banks and specialized types of financial organizations, such as insurance companies, the Government Housing Bank, and the stock market.

Of the planned public development expenditures for 1967 to 1971, the transportation and communications sector was scheduled to receive about 30 percent of the total, followed by agriculture, to which 20 percent was assigned. Other sectors, ranked according to the size of their allocations, were community facilities and social welfare, education, energy, and public health. Smaller sums were allocated to industry and mining, commerce, and various regional and rural development programs. This ranking represented some change from the priorities of the first plan when sectors ranked in the following order: transportation and communications, community facilities and social welfare, energy, agriculture, industry and mining, education, public health, and special area programs. The budget of the central government was the major source of public development funds.

The Second Development Plan also recognized the social, political, and cultural, as well as economic, importance of the development and utilization of manpower. The plan's estimate of the potential size of the labor force was based on the expected rate of population growth and past participation of the population in the labor force. Goals of the plan were the provision of jobs for the

annual increment to the labor force and for the unemployed; the promotion of employment opportunities in rural areas; and the improvement of skills to meet all levels of requirement, including managerial and technical. The plan also recognized the need for employment exchanges and occupational information to meet the problem of migration from rural to urban areas.

#### GOVERNMENT FINANCE

Government finance has assumed an increasingly important role in the economy since the inauguration of the First Development Plan. Both government expenditures and revenues increased annually from 1961 to 1969, although not at an even pace. Revenues of the budgetary accounts increased from 7,449 million baht in 1961 to 18,302 million baht in 1969. Expenditures, which rose from 7,727 million baht in 1961 to a preliminary estimate of 21,555 million baht in 1969, increased more rapidly than revenues, however, resulting in an annual deficit that was financed from both domestic and foreign sources. Because of the initiation of the Second Development Plan, actual expenditures rose rapidly from 14,028 million baht in 1966 to 17,333 million baht in 1967, an increase of almost 24 percent. At the same time, realized revenues rose from 12,901 million baht to 14,780 million baht, an increase of only 11.5 percent, resulting in a larger deficit. Budget-financed development expenditures for 1967 were fixed at 6,088.8 million baht.

The budget appropriation for 1970, which was 27,300 million baht as originally passed by the House of Representatives, represented a sizable increase from estimated expenditures of 21,555 million baht in 1969. On August 14, 1970, the budget for fiscal 1971 was presented to the House of Representatives. The bill consisted of a proposed appropriation of 28,645 million baht with estimated revenues of 21,800 million baht, leaving a deficit of 6,845 million baht, which was the result of the promotion of national economic and social development and a proposed increase in appropriations for external security. The bill proposed sources of finance for the deficit.

The proposed budget was referred for review to the committee appointed by the National Assembly. On October 1, the first day of fiscal 1971, the bill was still under consideration by the committee, which proposed reductions in specific requests and changes in the system of preparing and administering government finances.

#### Evolution of the State Financial System

Until 1892 state finances included only those of the royal household and the provincial administrations, which had a large measure

of financial autonomy. Before the administrative reforms that were introduced by King Chulalongkorn at the end of the nineteenth century, most of the revenue was spent on the maintenance of the court, the staging of elaborate ceremonies, the construction and upkeep of temples, and the military. The government did, however, promote some public works. In the mid-nineteenth century it initiated and financially supported the construction of some canals for transport and irrigation, and in the last few years of the century it began some railroad construction.

When the Bowring Treaty with Great Britain came into effect in 1856, official revenues included taxes on land, gardens, and orchards; a capitation tax; customs duties; inland transit duties; and income from certain monopolies. The collection of taxes and monopoly revenue was given to Chinese agents; this system readily lent itself to abuse. The Bowring Treaty, which was followed by similar accords with fourteen other countries between 1856 and 1900, imposed limitations on the rates at which certain taxes could be levied and on the government's monopoly powers.

The treaty restrictions did not prevent the government from obtaining enough revenue during the time they were enforced. After the reform of the public finance system introduced in 1892, there was a large increase in revenues, although no new taxes were imposed and some old taxes were rescinded. The increases were the result of direct tax collection by the government, the subsequent improvement in tax administration, and the steady growth of the economy. Because of changing economic conditions, however, the government wished to be free not only to raise more revenue but to change the revenue structure, including the revision of customs, excise, and inland transit duties. The government, therefore, steadily pressed for treaty revision through diplomatic channels; success came in 1926 with the restoration of fiscal autonomy. The government had abandoned its gambling monopoly in 1918. After obtaining fiscal independence in 1926, it raised the general level of import duties and abolished inland transit duties. In 1938 the land tax was revised and was renamed the local development contribution. The capitation tax developed from the ancient obligation to perform personal service. It was abolished completely in 1938.

Revision of the land tax and abolition of the capitation tax were both part of a general reform of the system of direct taxation. It was designed to lighten the farmers' tax burden and to increase the contributions of the urban businessmen and the wealthier sections of the community. A beginning was made in 1932 with the establishment of an income tax, which was revised in the comprehensive Revenue Code of 1938. Up to 1970, although there had been changes in rates, no further fundamental changes had been made in the system of state finances.

### **The National Budget**

For the most part, the budget is prepared according to the proceedings set forth in the Interim Constitution of 1959. The constitution promulgated in June 1968 merely noted in chapter VI, delineating the functions of the legislative body, that, if the annual budget was not passed by the National Assembly, the budget of the preceding year remained in force. Additional expenditures of the government required the sanction of the legislative body.

The preparation of the budget was transferred in 1959 from the Ministry of Finance to the Bureau of the Budget, a separate office directly responsible to the prime minister. In 1970 there was some public discussion of the possibility of reversing the process, transferring the Bureau of the Budget from the Office of the Prime Minister to the Ministry of Finance, but no decision had been made at the end of the fiscal year, which, since 1961, had extended from October 1 to September 30, instead of coinciding with the calendar year.

Preparation of the budget, which is the responsibility of the executive branch of the government, begins in January when all government agencies are asked to present to the Bureau of the Budget preliminary estimates of the cost of their proposed programs and projects for the coming year. Development expenditures are based on the guidelines of the National Economic and Social Development Plan; ordinary expenditures are based on past trends or direct government instruction.

The bureau reviews estimates in the light of possible revenue and borrowing. Consultations on the feasibility of proposals are held with the Ministry of Finance, the National Economic Development Board, and the Bank of Thailand, and, in the first week of April, the program for the coming year with consolidated estimates of expenditures is presented to the cabinet. Upon approval by the cabinet, the program for the coming year is worked out in detail. Near the end of July the prime minister presents the finished document to the National Assembly as the annual appropriations bill. The introduction of the bill is preceded by the budget speech in which the prime minister outlines and explains government policies and plans.

Approval of the annual appropriation bill by the National Assembly proceeds in three steps, each accompanied by a reading of the bill. In the first step the assembly studies and questions the general aspects of the total appropriation and policies of the budget as set forth in its original form. After approving the general pattern of the budget, the assembly appoints the National Assembly Budget Committee for detailed scrutiny of the composition of the budget. The committee may recommend revision in appropriations provided

the changes do not exceed the expenditure ceilings established in the first reading. In this step the budget committee presents the revised bill to the National Assembly with explanations of the changes made, and, upon a third reading, the National Assembly enacts the bill. The annual appropriations bill is passed in this manner. If, however, the changes made by the budget committee are unacceptable, according to Article 121 of the Constitution, the House of Representatives may reaffirm the bill in its draft form.

After the annual appropriation act is promulgated, government agencies and state enterprises are required to secure an allotment authorization from the Budget Bureau before they can withdraw funds from the Bank of Thailand. To secure money for disbursement, government agencies and state enterprises must submit payment petitions to the Comptroller General's Department in the Ministry of Finance, which checks whether the petitions are in accordance with authorized allotments. If they are correct, disbursement by the Bank of Thailand is permitted.

Vouchers and other authenticated documents for budgeted expenditures by government agencies and state enterprises must be submitted to the National Audit Council secretariat. The council, upon completion of its audit of the vouchers and other documents, prepares and submits an annual report to the cabinet and the Constituent Assembly at the end of the fiscal year. The expenditures account is not closed until three months after the end of the fiscal year.

Besides the annual appropriation the government may submit a supplementary appropriation to the National Assembly whenever the government finds it necessary to spend in excess of the amount authorized in the annual appropriation bill. The preparation of the supplement is not governed by the same procedure as the annual appropriation; the director of the budget bureau is authorized to set the terms and the procedure. The disbursement of funds and the audit of payments made under the supplementary appropriation are governed, however, by the same rules and regulations as those applied to the annual appropriation.

The budget is classified under two main headings, expenditures and revenues. In the official budget document, each category is broken down into its component parts.

#### **Expenditures**

During most of the period of the First Development Plan, social services, including education, public health, and social welfare, accounted for the largest category of actual expenditures of the government, reaching slightly more than 29 percent of the total in 1964 and 1965 (see table 6). In 1966, however, expenditures on economic services, including transportation, electric power, tele-

communications, agricultural and forestry services, irrigation, and industry and mining, exceeded those on social services, accounting for 29.6 percent of total spending. With the inauguration of the second plan, spending on economic services rose to 5,528 million baht, constituting almost 32 percent of the total of 17,333 million baht in 1967. Despite a drop to 5,157 million baht in 1968, economic services continued to be the major budgetary category. From 1964 to 1968, defense expenditures fluctuated from a high of 16.4 percent in 1964 to a low of 15.4 percent in 1968. Spending on general administration and services rose in absolute terms from 2,195 million baht in 1964 to 3,028 million baht in 1968; relatively, however, the share dropped from 20.4 percent in 1964 to 15.4 percent in 1968. Miscellaneous expenditures, mostly consisting of grants-in-aid to local administrations, rose significantly from 9.2 percent of the total in 1964 to 18.8 percent in 1968. At the beginning of fiscal 1970, no information was available concerning the actual expenditures by functional classification for 1969 to 1970. The share of government expenditures devoted to capital accumulation varied from year to year, rising from 24.1 percent in 1964 to 33.4 percent in 1967. In 1968, however, the share of capital formation dropped to 25.7 percent of total spending.

At the time of the first reading of the budget for fiscal 1971, 8,422.1 million baht, or 29.4 percent of proposed expenditures of 28,645 million baht, were allocated to social services, a considerable increase over the share of 23.8 percent in 1968. Economic services claimed 7,898.6 million baht, or 27.6 percent of the projected total, slightly more than the share of expenditures in 1968, which was 26.5 percent. The increased share of the budget allocated to defense, which was 18.9 percent in 1971 in contrast to 15.4 percent in 1968, was based on the felt need for improvement of the armed forces to defend the national sovereignty against threats of external aggression. Other budgetary categories, including general administration, internal peace maintenance, debt service, and miscellaneous expenditures, accounted for 34.3 percent of the budget as originally proposed in contrast to 23.8 percent of actual expenditures in 1968. Because the first draft of the budget was the subject of prolonged deliberation in the Parliament, a revised version had not been presented for second reading on September 30, the end of fiscal 1970.

#### Revenue Sources

The Budget Procedure Act of 1959 provided that all funds payable to the government were to be paid to the Treasury and administered by the Ministry of Finance through three departments—customs, revenue, and excise. The Customs Department collects import and export duties; the Revenue Department collects income

Table 6. Expenditures of Government of Thailand by Functional Classification, 1964-68  
(in millions of baht)\*

	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Economic services .....	2,678	3,382	4,155	5,528	5,157
Percent .....	24.9	27.2	29.6	31.9	26.5
Social services .....	3,135	3,635	3,766	4,446	4,635
Percent .....	29.1	29.2	26.8	25.7	23.8
Defense .....	1,767	1,979	2,225	2,694	2,998
Percent .....	16.4	15.9	15.9	15.5	15.4
General administration and services .....	2,195	2,195	2,694	2,752	3,028
Percent .....	20.4	17.6	19.2	15.9	15.5
Miscellaneous .....	1,000	1,258	1,188	1,913	3,667
Percent .....	9.2	10.1	8.5	11.0	18.8
Total .....	10,775	12,449	14,028	17,333	19,485

\*20.8 baht equal approximately US\$1—see Glossary.

Source: Adapted from Bank of Thailand, Monthly Bulletin, X, No. 6, June 1970.



taxes, business taxes, stamp duties, and entertainment taxes; and the Excise Department collects taxes on nonalcoholic beverages, liquor, matches, lighters, tobacco, snuff, playing cards, cement, and domestic petroleum products. Payments are made in keeping with the allocations in the appropriations act for the fiscal year. In 1970 these procedures had not been changed.

Taxation provides the bulk of government revenue; nontax revenue—composed of sales and charges by the central government, contributions from government enterprises, dividends, and miscellaneous income—constitutes a minor part of revenue. There had, however, been a slight change in relationship between the two sources from 1964 to 1969. In 1964 taxes constituted 93.4 percent of revenue; and nontax revenue, 6.6 percent of the total; whereas in 1969, tax revenue constituted 91.7 percent of the total; and nontax revenue, 8.3 percent (see table 7).

Indirect taxes, of which customs duties and business taxes are the most important, have accounted for more than 80 percent of total revenues annually from 1964 to 1969. Import duties are the major single source of revenue, providing slightly less than 30 percent of the total in 1969. Duty is imposed on almost all goods at varying rates, the highest of which, in 1969, was 80 percent applied to commodities considered luxuries or goods produced by protected domestic industries. For the most part, rates are less than 30 percent ad valorem, although some items are the subject of specific duties. Export duties are levied on only a few items; from 1964 to 1969, this revenue, which included premiums on rice, declined both absolutely and relatively.

Rice premiums have been an important element in national income. These derived from a system whereby the government diverted to the national revenues a portion of the sale price of rice. These premiums accounted at one time for more than twice the revenues produced by individual income tax, for example, but in the latter part of the 1960s there was a movement toward elimination of the premiums. By 1970 they had been sharply reduced as a means to stimulate lagging exports.

The business tax, which is the second most important source of revenue and which rose absolutely and relatively from 1964 to 1969, is based on the monthly gross receipts of specified categories of business. The tax, which is applied a differential rates based on the social and economic character of commodities, is collected at the point of origin to avoid evasion and lessen administrative problems. Other indirect tax revenues are derived from selective sales taxes and taxes on fiscal monopolies, royalties, licenses and fees, and miscellaneous sources.

Revenues from direct taxes rose absolutely and relatively from 1964 to 1969, although they still constitute a minor share of the

Table 7. Revenues of Government of Thailand by Major Sources, 1964-69  
(in millions of baht)\*

	1964	Per- cent	1965	Per- cent	1966	Per- cent	1967	Per- cent	1968	Per- cent	1969	Per- cent
<b>Direct Taxes:</b>												
Personal income .....	537	5.4	642	5.7	702	5.4	845	5.7	979	5.8	1,181	6.5
Corporation income ...	357	3.6	492	4.3	591	4.6	649	4.4	776	4.6	850	4.6
Subtotal .....	894	9.0	1,134	10.0	1,293	10.0	1,494	10.1	1,755	10.4	2,031	11.1
<b>Indirect Taxes:</b>												
Import duties .....	2,840	28.5	2,830	25.0	3,496	27.1	4,285	29.9	4,974	29.4	5,437	29.7
Export duties .....	1,609	16.2	1,570	13.8	1,361	10.6	1,318	9.0	1,568	9.3	1,506	8.2
Business taxes .....	1,795	18.0	2,039	18.0	2,505	19.4	2,918	19.7	3,155	18.7	3,450	18.9
Other taxes .....	2,159	21.7	2,814	24.8	3,189	24.7	3,554	24.0	3,953	23.4	4,360	23.8
Subtotal .....	8,403	84.4	9,253	81.6	10,551	81.8	12,075	81.7	13,650	80.8	14,753	80.6
Total .....	9,297	93.4	10,387	91.6	11,844	91.8	13,569	91.8	15,405	91.2	16,784	91.7
<b>Nontax revenues .....</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>1,211</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>1,484</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>1,518</b>	<b>8.3</b>
<b>Grand Total .....</b>	<b>9,957</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>11,344</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>12,901</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14,780</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>16,889</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>18,302</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*20.8 baht equal approximately US\$1—see Glossary.

Source: Adapted from Bank of Thailand, *Monthly Bulletin*, X, No. 6, June 1970.

total. The personal income tax is levied on income from employment, property, the professions, or business and includes as assessable income any benefits that may be evaluated in terms of money. It applies to individuals who are present in Thailand for 180 days or more in any tax year and is levied on income brought into the country. Employers are required to deduct the tax each time income is paid; returns must be filed and taxes fully paid before the last day of February each year.

In determining the tax base there are standard deductions, differing according to the source of income, that may be taken. Personal exemptions are allowable for the taxpayer and his spouse, for partners in an unregistered partnership, and for undivided estates. Rates in 1969 ranged from 10 percent on net income of less than 10,000 baht to 50 percent on net income of more than 400,000 baht.

Corporations and registered partnerships are taxed on net profits of income earned internally and externally; those organized under foreign law are taxed only on income earned within Thailand. Standard procedures are established for determining net profits. Annual returns, including a balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement, must be filed and the tax paid within 150 days of the close of the accounting period. Rates range from 15 percent on net profits not exceeding 500,000 baht to 25 percent on those exceeding 1 million baht. From 1964 to 1969 there was a gradual increase, absolutely and relatively, in revenue from the corporation income tax. At the end of fiscal 1970 an investigation of tax evasion by corporations was being conducted.

### The Public Debt

At the end of 1969 total internal and external debt, including government direct loans and government guaranteed debts, was 26,616 million baht. Outstanding internal debt at that time was 20,440 million baht, or about 77 percent of the total. Public debt had increased steeply from 861.4 million baht in 1945 because of the need for rehabilitation at the end of World War II and the expenditures involved in financing economic and social development.

Internal direct debt consisted of long-term bonds and medium- and short-term debt evidences, mostly treasury bills. The Bank of Thailand, the Government Savings Bank, and commercial banks are the major holders of government debt. At the end of 1969 the Government Savings Bank held long-term bonds valued at 5,474 million baht, followed by the Bank of Thailand with 5,158 million baht, commercial banks with 4,978 million baht, and other domestic creditors with 1,765 million baht. The Bank of Thailand, however, was the only significant market for short- and medium-

term government obligations, accounting for 1,665 million baht of the total 2,200 million baht outstanding.

Total foreign debt outstanding was 6,176 million baht, of which 3,147 million baht was direct government debt and 3,029 million baht was government-guaranteed debt. Direct government debt had been incurred to finance various public works programs, including projects for irrigation, water supply, telecommunications, expansion of the metropolitan telephone system, highways, and expansion of the educational system. The central government also guaranteed loans to government agencies for improvement of the railroad, electric-generating capacity, and port systems. Lenders were various foreign governments and their agencies and international financial agencies. All but a small part of the external debt is repayable in foreign currencies.

### THE FINANCIAL SYSTEM

The financial system is composed of a central bank, a group of commercial banks, and a few specialized credit institutions, supplemented by insurance companies and a stock exchange organized in 1962. Although banking facilities tend to be concentrated in the Bangkok-Thon Buri metropolitan area, there are institutions in rural areas, and the policy has been toward expansion in nonmetropolitan areas. The banking system operates under the provisions of the Commercial Bank Act, as amended in 1962, the Savings Account Law of 1946, the Currency Act of 1958, and special regulatory actions announced from time to time. Thailand is a member of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, commonly known as the World Bank), the International Monetary Fund, and the Asian Development Bank.

#### The Central Bank

The Bank of Thailand, which is the central bank, was established in December 1942. It received its original capital of 20 million baht from the government and assumed the net assets of the Thai National Banking Bureau, which had been organized in 1939. The bank is managed by a governor, deputy governor, and board of directors. The governor and deputy governor are appointed by the crown and advised by the cabinet, and the members of the board of directors are appointed by the cabinet on the advice of the Ministry of Finance. At the end of 1969 there were three branches of the bank—one at Hat Yai providing central banking services in the south, one at Lampang serving the northwest, and one at Khon Kaen providing services for the eastern provinces. In September 1969 the Surawongse office was established to provide additional services to commercial banks in downtown Bangkok.

The Bank of Thailand functions as the sole note-issuing institution, as banker to the government, and as its fiscal agent. It also functions as banker to, and regulator of, the banking system.

As banker to the government, the central bank accepts deposits of the government and government organizations and is a source of government credit. Although it is authorized to make unsecured short-term loans to the government up to 25 percent of annual ordinary expenditure, this course has not been pursued since 1960, and credit is extended to the government through the purchase of treasury bills or long-term bonds. The bank has been authorized by the Ministry of Finance to manage the public debt, control foreign exchange, and serve as fiscal agent of the government in transactions with international financial institutions.

As banker to, and regulator of, the commercial banking system, the Bank of Thailand is holder of the legal reserves, which are partly in the form of bank balances and partly in the form of government securities. The bank determines the standard rate of interest on loans to commercial banks against government securities, the ratio of commercial bank loans to capital funds, and the ratio of cash reserve to total deposits. It serves as a clearinghouse for checks of the banking system, regulates the opening of new banks and branch banks, and conducts commercial bank examinations.

The central bank provides credit to commercial banks in the form of short-term loans based on government securities and in the form of rediscount of eligible types of promissory notes. At the end of 1969 rediscounting operations were confined to promissory notes arising from export activities, from agricultural production, and from the operating expenses of manufacturing firms. Previously, promissory notes arising from the purchase of raw materials for industrial use and from sales on credit of industrial products had been eligible for rediscount.

#### Commercial Banks

In 1968 there were twenty-nine commercial banks; sixteen were incorporated domestically, and thirteen were branches of foreign banks. At the end of 1969 the total number of bank offices was 604, an increase of 36 offices during the year. Of the total, 214 offices were established in the metropolitan area, whereas 390 offices served the rest of the country. Thirteen branches of Thai banks were established abroad.

Total deposits of the commercial banking system at the end of 1969 were 27,666.6 million baht, more than double the amount at the end of 1965, when the total was 13,722.1 million baht. The relative composition of deposits changed from 1965 to 1969, although all categories rose in absolute value. In 1965 the composi-

tion of deposits was as follows: demand deposits of 5,123 million baht constituted 37 percent of the total; savings deposits of 1,377 million baht, 10 percent; time deposits of 6,936.8 million baht, 51 percent; and other deposits of 285.3 million baht, 2 percent of the total. In contrast, in 1969, demand deposits of 7,103.4 million baht constituted 26 percent of the total; savings deposits of 2,793.7 million 10 percent; time deposits of 17,283.2 million baht, 63 percent; and other deposits of 485.7 million baht, 1 percent. The increase in time deposits, which are deposits remaining one year or longer and earn interest throughout the period, indicated an important increase in potential medium- or long-term investment funds of commercial banks. The increase was partly the result of the opening of more banking offices and partly the result of a campaign by the government to increase savings of the private sector as a source of capital formation.

The commercial banking system provided credit, in varying amounts, for every sector of the economy. Short-term loans to wholesale and retail trade constituted the most important sector in 1969, accounting for 3,576.5 million baht of total credit extended, which was 17,776.6 million baht. Loans to wholesale and retail trade were followed by credit of 2,988.4 million baht for import transactions and 2,808.4 million baht for manufacturing. Commercial banks extended relatively little credit to agriculture, which received only 615 million baht in 1969.

#### Specialized Financial Institutions

Among the specialized financial institutions providing services to various sectors of the economy are the Government Savings Bank, the government-owned Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives, the Government Housing Bank, the Industrial Finance Corporation of Thailand (a privately organized but publicly assisted institution), the Small Industry Finance Office, a stock exchange, life insurance companies, and two investment companies.

The Government Savings Bank was established in 1947 by the Government Savings Bank Act of 1946; it assumed the assets and functions of the Postal Savings Bank system, established in 1913. At the end of 1969 the bank maintained 337 facilities for the public, 264 of which were branches that provided services but did not make policy or administrative decisions. The bank is managed by a board of directors appointed by the Ministry of Finance. Loan applications must be approved by the head office.

Although the main purposes are the collection of savings and the purchase and sale of government bonds, the Government Savings Bank also performs broader functions. There is a banking department that accepts current deposits, makes loans to government enterprises, rediscounts bills presented by commercial banks, and per-

forms various other financial functions. Deposits earn interest according to the method of withdrawal; those that may be withdrawn at any time earn a lower rate of interest than fixed or time deposits. Most of the funds of the Government Savings Bank are invested in long-term government bonds.

The Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives was established in 1966 as a successor to the Bank for Cooperatives, organized in 1947. The bank is a state enterprise, under the management of a board of directors appointed by the cabinet. The authorized capital of the bank was 1,000 million baht; the major stockholder was the Ministry of Finance (see ch. 13, Agriculture and Industry). The functions of the bank are the provision of agricultural credit to farmers and agricultural cooperatives, the supplying of information on agricultural credit, and the conduct of research on agricultural problems. It is authorized to accept savings and time deposits from the public but not to handle checking accounts.

The Government Housing Bank, which also provides specialized financial services, was initiated in 1953. It is under the direction and control of the minister of finance and is managed by a board of directors. Initial capital for the bank was provided by the government, and funds have been supplemented by advances and loans from the Ministry of Finance and the Government Savings Bank.

The Government Housing Bank sells houses and land on installment payments and makes loans for the purchase of land or houses, as well as building or remodeling. It accepts mortgages on the property involved. In 1968 it had provided 450 houses to homeless families on long-term installment credit and had granted more than 300 loans for other housing purposes. In addition, it had provided long-term installment credit for land purchase by a large group of people.

The Industrial Finance Corporation of Thailand was organized in 1959 to provide medium- and long-term loans to assist in the establishment, expansion, or modernization of private enterprise and to encourage the participation of foreign and domestic private capital. The corporation was organized as a private institution with capital provided by domestic and foreign individuals and firms. Since its initiation, funds have been increased by loans from the government of Thailand, from agencies of foreign governments, and from international financial institutions.

In 1969 the capital of the corporation was increased by the sale of debenture bonds redeemable in ten years and guaranteed by the Ministry of Finance. During the year the corporation added to its available funds by loans from an agency of the Federal Republic of Germany and from the Asian Development Bank. From 1959 to 1969, the Industrial Finance Corporation of Thailand approved 160 loans, amounting to 578.1 million baht. Manufacturing accounted

for 75 percent of the total; the hotel business, for 14 percent; storage, for 7 percent; mining, for 2 percent; and road construction, for the remaining 2 percent of the total.

Further financial facilities for industry are provided by the Small Industry Finance Office, set up by the government in 1964 as the Loan Office for Small Industries Development within the Department of Industrial Promotion of the Ministry of Industry. The name was changed at the beginning of fiscal 1970. The purpose of the facility is to furnish financial aid at a low rate of interest as well as technical assistance to small enterprises, including cottage and handicraft industries. From 1964 to 1969 the office granted 437 long-term loans (up to ten years with a one- to two-year grace period) for purchasing machinery and equipment, for working capital, for factory building, for purchasing and improving lands, and for other purposes. Total loans granted during the period amounted to 113.8 million baht. Loanable funds of the office are deposited at a commercial bank, which contributes a like sum to the fund and shares in risk bearing.

Other institutions that gather personal savings and make them available for capital formation are the stock exchange, life insurance companies, and two investment firms. The stock exchange was organized in 1962 by a group of businessmen as a limited partnership; it converted to a corporate form in 1963. Its purpose is to provide a market for the purchase and sale of securities. Up to 1970 it had had relatively little influence as a factor for mobilizing savings, partly because of the continued preference for retention of shares rather than trading and for investment in real estate and jewelry.

Life insurance companies as an avenue for savings and a source of capital formation had existed in Thailand before World War II. In 1970 information concerning their numbers and activities was incomplete. In planning for private capital formation during the period of the Second Development Plan, however, life insurance companies were considered an important but minor source of funds. In 1963 the number of active companies was fourteen. The Thai Investment and Securities Company and the Bangkok First Investment and Trust, Limited, were established by private domestic and foreign capital in 1969. Their purpose is to provide both short- and long-term money markets.

#### CURRENCY SYSTEM

The currency unit is the baht, which is divided into 100 stang. Notes in circulation are of 50 stang and 1, 5, 10, 20 and 100 baht denominations. Coins in circulation are of 1, 5, 10, 20, 25, and 50 stang and 1 baht denominations. The par value of the baht is 0.0427245 gram of fine gold, or 20.8 baht equal US\$1.

Coins and notes are issued under the regulations of the Currency



Act of 1958, and the Bank of Thailand was given the responsibility of issuing banknotes. In May 1969 it was given the power to print notes approved by the Ministry of Finance as well as to issue and manage notes.

## CHAPTER 13

### AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY

Agriculture traditionally has been the mainstay of economic life and, for the foreseeable future, will continue to be by far the economy's most important single element. This is true despite the fact that since World War II, particularly in the 1960s, there has been a steady increase in the value of the industrial component of the economy with a corresponding decrease in the nation's dependence on agriculture, particularly rice, for economic growth and development. The relative decrease in the agricultural sector has occurred despite a generally upward trend in agricultural production. This is because the industrial growth rate has been much more rapid than that of agriculture as a result of government efforts to bring about diversification in the economy.

In large measure, the more rapid expansion of industry has been made possible by gearing it to the existing agricultural base. Many of the country's new industries of the 1960s were planned to utilize agricultural and mineral resources that previously had been mostly exported. In consequence, at the beginning of the 1970s agriculture and industry were developing an interdependence and were providing a reciprocal growth stimulus that had not existed on a significant scale a decade earlier. Emphasis has been placed on such industries as canning and food processing and on industrial infrastructure, such as the power and construction industries.

The dramatic shift in the relative weight of agriculture and industry during the 1960s can be illustrated by the fact that, whereas agriculture accounted for 37.9 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 1959, this had dropped to an estimated 29.5 percent by 1969, while manufacturing rose in the same period from 11.9 percent of GDP to 16 percent and construction doubled from 3.5 percent to 7 percent. Under the government's Second National Economic and Social Development Plan (1967-71), also known as the Second Development Plan, the agricultural segment was expected to drop still more in proportion to the rest of the economy so that by 1971 it would constitute no more than 26.2 percent of GDP. Although mineral production increased in absolute terms during the decade, mining and quarrying were targeted for a slight relative decline in the 1967-71 period, from 2.1 percent to 2 percent of GDP.

About 80 percent of the Thai working population is engaged in agriculture—about 75 percent in the cultivation of rice, which is by far the largest and most important crop. Some 80 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings were derived from agriculture in 1969, about half of this being rice, with rubber, corn, and kenaf (similar to jute) the principal agricultural exports apart from rice. Although rice exports were declining in the latter part of the 1960s, they continued to be the largest export crop. Until 1967 Thailand was the world's largest exporter of rice, but the country dropped back at that time to second place behind the United States. Nevertheless, the country's exportable rice surplus has contributed importantly to feeding many other parts of Asia. In 1968 Thailand contributed about 18 percent of the world's rice exports.

The fastest expanding crop in recent years has been corn, which is produced almost entirely for export. In the years 1957–59 corn accounted for about 2.35 percent of the value of major crops, but by 1969 this percentage had risen to 12 percent, compared with 22 percent for rice.

Agricultural production suffered a severe setback in 1967 and 1968 owing to drought conditions that covered much of the farming area, but preliminary estimates for 1969 showed recovery to the point where rice production was again almost at the 1966–67 level. In the face of declining exports and lower world prices in recent years, it has been the policy of the government to encourage increased agricultural production by investment in such infrastructure items as roads, dams, and irrigation facilities. This has been made necessary by the requirements of a rapidly expanding population and need for revenue.

Of the total land area of 126.9 million acres, about half was forest and grazing land in 1970. The area under cultivation amounted to about 28 million acres, or 22 percent of the total, with 19 million acres of this planted to rice in 1969. It was officially estimated that another 12 million acres could be brought under cultivation within the next twenty years. At the outset of the Second Development Plan, about 4.68 million acres were under irrigation, and a goal of 6 million acres was set for the end of 1971.

In 1970 there was official concern over a rise in tenancy, brought on by increased rural indebtedness and continued fragmentation of land resulting from inheritance. Although an official census published in 1963 showed individual ownership of land by 80 percent of the population, many of these owned only small plots and were in fact tenants or employees on other lands as well.

The average size of individual landholdings varied in the 1960s from about 6.4 acres in the north to about 10.7 acres in the Central Lowland Region, with an average of 8.6 acres for the country as a whole. A government survey conducted in 1967 and 1968 in one

area of the Central Plains, where about two-thirds of the country's rice is produced, showed that in some localities about half the families were tenants and that 95 percent of tenant farmers were deeply in debt. To combat tenancy, the Department of Land Development in 1970 was formulating a program to purchase land for redistribution to landless farmers. The plan under consideration would provide for the purchase of any holdings in excess of about 400 acres for reselling on a hire-purchase system. It was planned to initiate the program in six provinces in the Central Plains.

Production of most industries was expanding during the 1960s, although tin production declined in 1969 (see table 8). Tin production was cut back to meet International Tin Council quota restrictions. The drop in agricultural production in 1967 and 1968 was followed by lowered production also in the food-processing industries.

The principal manufacturing industries in Thailand—gunny bags, cotton textiles, sugar, cement, paper, tobacco products, beer, and petroleum products—continued to expand through 1969, with the exception of gunny bags (see table 9). Gunny bag production was cut back to correspond to reduced exports of rice and tapioca. Overall, the industrial growth rate was expected to be about 11 percent in 1969, compared with 4.5 percent for agriculture. The average growth rate sought in the Second Development Plan period was 4.3 percent for agriculture, 8 percent for mining and quarrying, 12 percent for manufacturing, and 12 percent for construction.

Governmental policy has been generally to encourage private enterprise in both agriculture and industry and to welcome foreign

Table 8. Mineral Production in Thailand, 1964-69  
(in thousand metric tons)

Mineral	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969*
Tin ore .....	21.6	26.4	31.3	31.2	32.7	29.5
Wolfram ore .....	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.9	1.5
Iron Ore .....	191.0	750.5	691.7	549.2	499.5	520.0
Lead ore .....	8.1	12.4	14.9	8.2	6.5	4.4
Antimony:						
Ore .....	2.8	2.5	2.4	2.3	0.4	0.4
Metal .....	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.2
Manganese Ore:						
Battery grade .....	3.1	4.1	7.5	9.1	5.8	4.8
Metallurgical and chemical grades .....	7.9	29.4	63.1	70.0	35.2	36.0
Gypsum .....	41.9	11.2	39.6	61.7	128.1	87.0
Lignite .....	103.6	125.0	171.1	335.3	305.3	345.6
Fluorite ore .....	63.5	51.8	48.0	133.2	245.1	323.0

\*Estimates

capital with a minimum of restrictions. The economy is relatively free of controls, but the government has taken an active role in planning programs to spur economic development. Besides participation of private capital from abroad, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) has played a major role in financing irrigation and hydroelectric projects. Assistance also has been furnished by individual countries, notably the United States (see ch. 11, Foreign Relations).

The government estimated the total labor force at about 15 million persons, some 54 percent being female, and forecast an increase to more than 17 million by the end of 1971. On the basis of a 1966-67 survey, the Labor Department estimated the unemployment rate at 2 percent for males and 2.3 percent for females in Bangkok and Thon Buri municipalities, with even lower rates ascribed to other urban areas. Unemployment in rural areas is calculated at 1 percent, but this does not take account of extensive underemployment of farmworkers. A sample survey conducted for the northeastern provinces in 1968 and 1969 showed that the underemployment rate depends also on definition; under one government system of classification, the urban rate would more than double.

In 1970 the government was considering new labor legislation that would permit the formation of workers' associations and would legalize strikes except in certain industries. Unions were outlawed in 1958, although strikes and other labor disturbances had taken place with the growth of industrialization.

## AGRICULTURE

Farming, forestry, animal husbandry, and fishing are the major agricultural activities. Of these, farming, in which rice cultivation predominates, is the most important. About two-thirds of the nation's cultivated area is planted in rice, with the majority of the rest in upland crops, such as corn, beans, and sugarcane. The remainder is in rubber, other tree crops, and field crops, including coconuts. In 1968 corn, production of which was negligible a decade earlier, accounted for about 5 percent of all agricultural production. Rubber accounted for 4 percent of the value of agricultural output in the same year.

Pigs and poultry are numerous everywhere. Buffalo and cattle are used as draft animals on the farm, elephants serve to haul logs in the forests, and horses and mules are used as pack carriers in the mountains. Logging has long been well developed but has been hampered since World War II by the previous overcutting of valuable woods, principally teak. More recently, production has been held down.

Table 9. Production of Selected Industries in Thailand, 1964-69

Industry	Unit	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969 <sup>1</sup>
Gunny bags	thousand pieces	33,511	40,361	46,807	54,661	55,284	44,894
Cotton textiles	million square yards	171	228	276	286	317	340
Sugar	thousand metric tons	168	320	269	232	189	318
Cement	Do.	1,059	1,248	1,483	1,736	2,168	2,403
Paper	metric tons	13,577	18,126	17,942	21,041	23,950	29,101
Tobacco products	Do.	10,409	10,057	11,123	12,393	13,535	14,419
Beer	thousand liters <sup>2</sup>	11,509	14,373	25,348	31,398	35,838	39,242
Petroleum products	million liters <sup>2</sup>	471	1,802	2,110	2,433	2,884	3,607

<sup>1</sup> Preliminary estimates.

<sup>2</sup> 1 liter equals 1.057 quarts.

### Land Utilization and Tenure

Between 1960 and the end of 1970 total farmland was expanded by over 6 million acres, or more than 27 percent, largely in the Central Lowland Region and the peninsula, reflecting the success attending the government's programs for land reclamation and the extension of the irrigated area. About 2.5 million of the newly cultivated acres were in rice paddies, the balance being devoted mainly to rubber, coconut palms, and upland crops.

The pattern of land utilization varies from one region to another. In the mountainous north the stands of teak and other valuable trees constitute the Northern and Western Mountain Region's main contribution to the national economy. Only about 8 percent of the total land of the region is in farmholdings, but most of it is irrigated and can be cropped year-round. In the Northeastern Khorat Plateau Region about 19 percent of the land is cultivated, but poor soil, infertility, and water scarcity severely limit farm production. The Central Lowland Region, with its rich alluvial soils, on the other hand, produces a large percentage of the country's rice crop. Over 26 percent of the region is under cultivation, most of it in rice paddies. On the peninsula 27.3 percent of the land area is under cultivation, the greater portion of it planted to rubber, coconut, and fruit trees, which are favored by the region's sandy soil and frequent rainfall.

Most agricultural land is owned and cultivated by peasant farmers operating on a small scale. Behind this circumstance lies a traditional system of land distribution that survived until the reign of King Chulalongkorn (also known as Rama V, 1868-1910). Under this system the king, who in theory owned all land, dispensed holdings to officials, nobles, and other free subjects. The grants, which were determined according to the *sakdi na* system (see Glossary), ranged from 10 acres for commoners to 4,000 acres for officials of the highest grade. Although land thus allotted was subject to recall by the crown if it was left uncultivated for three years, the beneficiaries could transmit their holdings to their heirs or sell or mortgage them.

The operation of the *sakdi na* and the plentifulness of land made it possible for the freeholding peasants to survive and to increase their holdings alongside the huge estates that the notables were able to maintain through the use of slaves. Since the abolition of slavery and the abandonment of the system of *corvée* (unpaid labor due from a vassal to his lord), the number and size of the large estates have steadily declined. The system of inheritance has also militated against land accumulation. Children, both sons and daughters, inherit land equally through the father, the family head. The house and house compound, however, are usually inherited by the daugh-

ter, or son if there is no daughter, who remains with the parents. Some of the children, particularly daughters, are endowed with land at the time they establish separate households with their spouses.

Slash-and-burn shifting cultivation is practiced by most of the hill tribes. This method involves cutting down the trees and shrubs on the land to be cultivated, allowing them to dry, and burning them just before the rainy season. In the cleared field a few seeds are dropped into holes made at intervals with a dibble stick. The seeds germinate with the first rain, and growth depends on rainfall and humidity. Rice and perhaps some vegetables are planted in these burned-over fields for two or three years or until the soil loses its fertility and yields diminish, after which the cultivator shifts to a new piece of land. Many hill groups still plant the opium poppies despite the ban on this crop.

The average farmer owns or rents at least one water buffalo. Buffaloes are used for plowing, harrowing, threshing, and sometimes hauling, although bullocks are more frequently used for hauling. Buffaloes must be registered with the district officer and identified by some distinguishable feature. When a buffalo dies, the farmer, out of a sense of indebtedness to the animal for its services to him, in many cases does not eat the meat himself but gives it away. The bones are buried; the skin is used for making rope, although a part may be sold to a musician for a drumhead; and the horns are sold to a Chinese for making combs or used by the farmer as hooks for clothing or harness.

Renting land is more common in the fertile area of the Central Lowland Region, within easy access to a large city, where population pressure and land values are relatively high, and in the Northern and Western Mountain Region, where the hilly character of the country limits the land area and irrigation increases land values by making double cropping possible.

The usual term of tenancy is the one-year verbal contract (which may be renewed), with rent payable either in cash or in kind. Payment in kind amounts to about 50 percent of the crop, with the tenant furnishing work animals and implements. Rent payments in cash are highest in the north, where double cropping increases the productivity of farms.

### Crop Production

#### Rice

Both glutinous and nonglutinous rice in literally thousands of local varieties are grown, glutinous mainly in the north and northeast and nonglutinous chiefly in the central region and on the peninsula. Glutinous rice is preferred for home consumption in the



north and northeast and for candy and cakes in the rest of the country, whereas nonglutinous rice is produced principally for export. Thai rice is highly prized among Asian nations, and the government has long taken the position that it is more interested in quality, as a means of attracting export buyers, than it is in increasing yields at the expense of quality through new hybrid strains. Pressures for higher production, however, have resulted in a program of experimentation with new, high-yield strains. The program lacks stimulus, nevertheless, so long as there are additional lands available for production.

Annual production of milled rice from crop years 1929/30 to 1947/48 fluctuated between 2.4 million and 3.5 million metric tons. Beginning in 1949, production steadily increased until in 1958 a serious drought cut production back to about 5.6 million tons. Recovery required several years, but by 1966 production had climbed to an alltime peak of 13.5 million tons. With recovery from the serious setbacks caused by drought in 1967 and 1968, production was expected to resume its upward climb before 1970 (see table 10). The area planted in rice increased from 7 million acres shortly before World War II to an estimated 19 million acres in the 1969/70 crop year (April 1 to March 31).

Agricultural techniques have not changed greatly from those of a century ago. Methods of cultivation vary locally with climate, terrain, and the nature of the soil. There are two main categories: wetland and dryland cultivation. Wetland rice is cultivated either by

Table 10. Agricultural Production in Thailand, 1964-69  
(in thousand metric tons)

Crop	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969*
<i>Food Crops:</i>						
Rice	9,558	9,218	13,500	11,200	12,510	13,410
Corn	935	1,021	1,122	1,250	1,500	1,700
Groundnuts	120	131	220	128	131	135
Sugarcane	5,074	4,480	3,827	3,500	4,399	5,064
Cassava root	1,557	1,475	1,892	2,063	2,200	2,400
Coconuts	1,097	1,170	1,069	1,000	1,000	1,000
Mung beans	110	125	132	120	124	128
Castor beans	39	32	42	32	28	24
Soybeans	31	19	38	42	49	67
Sesame	13	18	20	23	19	21
<i>Nonfood Crops:</i>						
Rubber	211	217	218	220	259	285
Kenaf and jute	310	537	672	360	183	330
Tobacco	63	76	88	78	84	80
Cotton	49	60	89	78	72	60

\*Preliminary estimates.

transplanting or broadcast-planting; dryland rice, which constitutes only a small part of total production, is planted by dibbling, which involves using a pointed stick to make a hole in the ground into which a few seeds are dropped. The hole is then closed with the foot. All three techniques are traditional in Thailand and other parts of Asia.

Among other factors, the large number of small, individually owned tracts has inhibited development of machine cultivation. Use of machinery has been on the rise throughout the country, however, and from 1957 to 1968 the average annual increase in tractor imports was 32 percent. In 1968, 5,000 tractors were imported, but published data did not show what number of these went into rice cultivation. Qualified observers believed, however, that a relatively small number were consigned for this purpose.

From planting to harvest, the rice crop requires little work. Reaping of the grain is done by hand with knives and sickles. The stalks are tied into sheaves and brought to the threshing floor, where they are beaten against a large bamboo basket or trampled by buffalo or cattle. In more recent years small mechanical threshers have come into use on many farms.

The tools used in rice cultivation are simple: a wooden plow with an iron share, a wooden harrow, and a wooden-handled steel sickle. Except for the steel and iron parts, which are purchased in the market towns or from traveling vendors, most farm tools are made by the farmer himself or by the village carpenter.

#### Corn

Until 1950 corn was not considered an important crop, and in that year no more than about 87,200 acres in the entire country were used to grow it. By 1968 this had expanded to an estimated 1.48 million acres producing 1.5 million tons, almost entirely for export and with prospects of a record 1.7-million-ton crop in 1969. By 1968 the crop already had surpassed tin in the ranking of foreign exchange earners to take third place behind rice and rubber.

Before 1950 little corn was exported, and farmers did not often use it for animal feed because rice was cheaper and more plentiful. Corn was used at that time primarily for chicken feed.

The principal corn-producing areas occur in a broad belt just north of the Central Plains, nine *changwat* (provinces) producing together about 88 percent of the total national production. Of these, Lop Buri, Nakhon Sawan, and Sara Buri produce 70 percent.

As corn production has increased with introduction of new, high-yield seed and the rise of foreign demand, mechanization has also increased to some extent. Corn farms generally are considerably larger than rice farms, and production of corn accounted for much of the tractor imports of the 1960s.

### Rubber

The production of commercial rubber, started in the Southern Peninsula Region in 1908, did not exceed 50,000 tons annually until the boom that followed World War II. Annual postwar production ranged from 98,000 tons in 1953 to an estimated 285,000 to 290,000 tons in 1969. Almost the entire output has been exported.

By 1964 the area planted to rubber, mainly on the peninsula where climate, soil, and rainfall are most favorable, totaled about 1.8 million acres, double the acreage planted in 1955. Government policy has been directed at encouraging the small Thai producer and restricting the growth of large plantations, traditionally owned by the Chinese. Accordingly, about 90 percent of the rubber acreage was in holdings of 20 acres or less. Only six estates were in the 1,000-acre range, and only one was foreign owned.

The estimated capital required to become a small rubber grower is small, until recently only a little over 100 baht (20.8 baht equal approximately US\$1—see Glossary). This included a nominal fee to the government for unoccupied land (available to Thai nationals only), the outlay for seedlings from selected stock (supplied at nominal cost by the Department of Agriculture), and the cost of tools. The smaller grower may process the rubber into sheets or sell it in liquid form. Seedlings require about six years to become tappable, and during this time the new grower usually works as a tapper for one of the larger holders.

The rubber grower sells his product to a merchant, who is nearly always Chinese. The smaller growers sell raw sheets; the larger growers usually operate their own smokehouses and sell smoked sheets. The rubber merchant does the sorting, grading, packing, and exporting.

Before World War II the government encouraged the production of rubber by exemption from taxes, licenses, and export duties and by giving technical assistance to growers. Since World War II a small duty on rubber exports has been used among other things to maintain a fund for furnishing growers with seedlings to replace old trees. Land is still available for rubber planting, so expansion of production can continue. The future of the rubber industry in Thailand, however, is uncertain. Such an industry, resulting from external demand and consequently depending primarily on export for its market, is at the mercy of world prices. The same high prices that encouraged rubber production also stimulated the development of synthetic rubber. It is not likely that Thai industrialization at its present rate of development will result in a substantial increase in domestic consumption in the immediate future, and the ability of Thai rubber to compete with synthetics in the world market is uncertain.

The Rubber Replanting Aid Fund Act of 1960 established the

export tax on rubber to provide revenue not only for replanting inducement programs but also to help growers meet competition from more efficient producers of natural rubber in other countries and from synthetic rubber. During 1968 and 1969, 133 million baht were collected. It was officially estimated that, from the start of the replanting program in 1961 to the end of 1968, about 129,000 acres had been replanted, with an additional 33,337 acres approved for replanting in 1969. The rate of replanting had slackened during the late 1960s as rubber prices fell and, although the government increased its assistance to planters, relatively few small holders were taking advantage of the plan in later years. The government plans to intensify replanting efforts in coming years in order to reach by 1977 a target of 600,000 acres, or about half the total acreage under rubber cultivation in 1970. Meanwhile current production had outstripped the volume target of 250,000 tons set for 1971 by the Second Development Plan.

#### Other Crops

Fruit is one of the most important crops, although it is not an important factor in the country's export trade. Precise statistics for recent years have not been available, but after rice, fiber crops, and upland crops, of which corn was the most important, fruits were the most valuable crop in 1966. They accounted for about 680,000 acres of cultivated land, compared with about 600,000 for coconuts, the most important of the oilseed crops, and about 1.68 million acres for fiber crops, of which kenaf was the most important.

Fruits are of numerous varieties and excellent quality; included are durians, mangosteens, mangoes, pineapples, oranges, pomegranates, jackfruit, tamarinds, guavas, a great variety of bananas, and many others. They are grown supplementary to other crops in all parts of the country where climate permits. Orchards are well kept, and more care seems to be given to fruitgrowing than in many other tropical countries. After the end of World War II production increased steadily, rising from 436,490 tons valued at 400 million baht in 1951 to 1.9 million tons valued at 2.4 billion baht in 1966. Most fruit is consumed locally, but expanding markets have developed also in Singapore and Hong Kong.

Coconuts are the next most important crop after fruits, having contributed more than 500 million baht annually to the national income since 1956. Mostly grown on plantations on the peninsula, coconuts supply food, sugar, and wine. The meat yields a fatty oil used for cooking, lighting, and soapmaking, and the husk provides a fiber that can be made into mats and rope. Some copra is exported.

Vegetables, such as onions and various kinds of peas and beans, are sometimes grown as field crops but are more often raised in small garden patches. The betel vine, a climbing species of pepper,

the leaf of which is chewed with the nut of the betel (areca) palm, is also grown in gardens. Consumption of this mild stimulant has been declining, however. Cardamoms are grown and exported, and nutmeg is cultivated in the south. Yams, gourds of many kinds, chili peppers, eggplant, and cassava (tapioca) are found in garden patches in most villages. In the southeast cassava is grown commercially to be processed into tapioca flour for export.

During the first half of the nineteenth century sugar was the principal export to Europe, but by 1899 export of cane sugar had ceased, and sugar factories, unable to compete with the foreign product, were deserted. Coconut and palm sugar continued to be made as before, and cane sugar was produced on a small scale for family use.

Sugarcane in the 1960s was grown commercially in some districts of the northern, northeastern, and southeastern parts of the country but mainly in the central region. In 1965, because of depressed prices for sugar in the world markets, production, which had reached a peak of more than 5 million tons, was markedly reduced. The government planned to confine its use to home consumption, with the level of production to remain at the 1965 level or below through 1971. Nevertheless, the estimated production for 1969 already had returned to the 1964 level of more than 5 million tons.

Tobacco has long been grown in various parts of the country, principally in the north and the northeast. In some localities it is cultivated as a second crop in the ricefields during the dry season. The best crops, however, are grown in the light, rich, alluvial soil of the banks and islands of the upper Chao Phraya River and its tributaries. In the north tobacco has been the principal agricultural product after rice.

Production of oilseeds other than coconut increased substantially during the 1960s, and it is expected that the trend will be maintained. Oilseed crops, especially peanuts and soybeans, have been prospering as a result of the new irrigation projects. In many places oilseeds are sown as a second crop after the rice harvest.

Sesame oil, extracted by means of rough wooden presses, is used for cooking, especially where coconut oil is not easily obtainable. Residue from the extraction is used for feeding cattle or as a fertilizer.

#### **Animal Husbandry**

Almost every farmer raises some livestock. The most important are buffaloes, cattle, pigs, and poultry. The forests and grasslands could support a great increase in the number, and expansion of livestock raising for export is an essential part of the plan to improve economic conditions in the northeast. The problems of breeding, feeding, credit, and transportation, however, must be overcome.

The main buffalo- and cattle-raising area is in the northeast. The animals are used for draft—buffaloes in the rice paddies and cattle on drier farms. Cattle are also raised for meat and provide about half of that consumed. The government planned to increase production of water buffaloes to 550,000 head by 1971, compared with 410,810 in 1965. Cattle production was expected to rise from 846,500 head to 1,134,000 head in the same period. Increases were also planned for swine (3.3 million to 4.4 million) and poultry (93.5 million to 129.4 million).

Pigs are raised everywhere, some for sale in Bangkok and other urban markets. Many farmers buy small pigs, fatten them, and sell them to the Chinese in the markets. Chickens, ducks, geese, and other poultry are raised even more widely than pigs. With the exception of some commercial duck farms on the outskirts of Bangkok, most poultry is raised for family use.

Elephants play an important role in the logging industry and are found mostly in the northern region. Those in captivity decreased from more than 13,000 in 1950 to about 11,000 in 1964. More recent figures are not available, but a further decline has occurred. The horse—the small yunnan pony—is used as a pack animal by the mountain peoples of the north. Their numbers have also declined in recent years.

### Forestry

The country's tree cover varies from the dense growth of the peninsula and the mountains of the north to the open forests of the northeast. In central Thailand the forest area is small compared with open land; in the other three regions of the country the presence of man is marked by little more than patches and narrow belts of cleared land along banks of streams and over favorable spots. Except for minor private holdings, the forest area is all public land.

Beginning in 1940, five major European companies obtained leases allowing them to work one-third of the available timber concessions; a few domestic firms worked another third, and the remainder was reserved by the government. Leases were not renewed in 1955. The government decided to divide the industry between the government-owned Forest Industry Organization and a new company, in which the government held 20 percent of the share capital and the five foreign companies held 80 percent.

The teak forests are the most valuable and important government property in the country. The nation's teak is considered the finest timber in existence and the best in the world for shipbuilding. The teak zone extends over the entire northern portion of the country. Within it, the teak tree grows only in certain localities where general conditions, especially the soil, are suitable. The whole area is tra-

versed by a vast number of waterways, which provide the principal means to transport the teak to market.

Trees to be felled are selected and girdled by a forest officer. Girdling consists of cutting a ring around the trunk through to the heartwood in order to kill the tree and season the wood slowly. This must be done two years before the tree is felled in order that it will have dried enough to float. Felling operations take place during the rainy season. One or two elephants are harnessed to each log, which is then dragged to the nearest stream to be carried down by the flooding waters. The logs have to be floated singly until they pass the many rapids, below which are rafting points.

Production has varied considerably since 1950. A major reason for yearly variations is the dependence on rainfall to raise the water level in the rivers high enough to float the logs. Demand and price also influence output, and their effect is complicated by the three- to four-year lag between the time of felling and the time the log reaches Bangkok. Estimates indicate that teak production reached a high of about 480,000 cubic yards in 1954 and dropped to a low of approximately 170,000 cubic yards in 1961. The 1961 low was followed by a rise each subsequent year to nearly 400,000 cubic yards in 1969, well above 1971 planning goals.

The Forest Department was established in 1896, and a system of controls was inaugurated that kept the leasing of timberland in the hands of the government, set standards for felling, and reserved certain areas for research or for exploitation by the department. Leases were given for a period of fifteen years, restrictions were changed from time to time, and the number of concessionaires was steadily reduced.

Forest products are important in the economy, both for their utility locally and for the value of teak in foreign trade. The forests contain many woods other than teak that make good timber; among them are rosewood, ebony, sappanwood, and box. Other trees are valued for their oils, resins, and gums. Other primary products important in domestic consumption include saw logs, pulpwood, charcoal, and firewood. The cutting of rattan canes is a recognized business in some areas, and the demand for bamboo for temporary buildings, fishing poles, traps, and numerous other domestic uses creates employment for a number of woodsmen. The government plans to increase its reforestation efforts with an annual target by 1971 of 6,000 acres of teak and 4,000 acres of other kinds of timber.

#### Fishing

Fishing activities have received added stimulus since 1951, when a program, aided by United States funds and technical advice, was

started to explore and develop new fishing grounds in and around Thailand, to improve fishing methods, to promote new fishing industries, and to expand marketing operations. This program has had significant success. Imported trap nets bring in a catch two to seven times greater than indigenous traditional types. Culture of pondfish, including *talapia*, a South African importation, has greatly increased. Modern wholesale fish markets, with freezer and cold storage plants and at least one connecting technical laboratory, are in operation. A marine station has been established on the outer Gulf of Thailand for experimental and exploratory fishing. A small-scale, village-level operation to produce fishmeal and oil has been started and has developed into a new village industry to supply feed to farm animals.

The catch in 1969 was estimated at more than 1 million tons, compared with 300,000 tons in 1961. In the opinion of a United States fisheries expert, the country has only begun to produce what it is capable of in fish and fish products.

Commercial fishing, both marine and fresh water, centers around Bangkok and the fish markets there. Approximately 14 percent of the farm families derive income from fish, a part of which also goes to the Bangkok market. Most of the fish marketed in Bangkok is sold fresh to the consumer; the remainder is smoked, dried, pickled, or made into sauce or paste. Two groups of selling agents—usually Chinese—handle these commodities in Bangkok; one group specializes in fresh fish, the other in cured or processed fish. Selling is only one of the activities of a selling agent. He also grants short-term loans or otherwise finances ventures of his clients, the fishermen; he retails all supplies the fishermen need.

Prices fluctuate according to supply, and quick delivery by the fisherman is essential since he has a greater chance of securing a good price if his fish reach the market first. To the fisherman with small capital and only sailing boats, uncertain prices mean: involuntary idleness; having to dump the catch into the sea; salt curing, which ties up capital; or selling to salt curers at a lower price. The expansion of refrigeration and storage capacity, one of the projects advanced with United States financial and technical aid, has improved the situation. A surplus can be stored one day to meet shortages of other days, thus minimizing price fluctuations and saving the fishermen unnecessary risks.

### Cooperatives and Credit

A farm credit cooperative movement began under government sponsorship in the 1920s, but early progress was slow. The government established the Bank for Cooperatives in 1947 with a capital of 10 million baht, and this was incorporated in 1966 into the Bank



for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives. It was estimated in the mid-1960s that government loans covered about 10 percent of the farmer's credit needs, the rest being provided mainly by private sources at much higher interest rates. About 2 percent came from commercial banks.

The bank had granted loans to farmers totaling about 562 million baht in 1969, compared with 380 million baht in 1968. More than 100,000 families were among the recipients. The loans were in the form of short-term advances for rice, tapioca, tobacco, and bean cultivation and for pig breeding. Medium-term loans went for the purchase of land, livestock, and pulp equipment, as well as for the improvement of land.

By the end of 1969 the bank had paid-up capital, reserves, and undivided profits of about 512 million baht, and plans were made to increase total capital to 1 billion baht, of which at least half would be subscribed by the Ministry of Finance. During the year the bank opened ten branches in various parts of the country, bringing the total number to thirty-five. It plans to open ten new branches each year until a target of fifty-five is reached.

The bank extends unsecured small production loans to individual farmers for major crops. It also lends against mortgages, government bonds, or deposits up to 60 percent of the value of such collateral. Short-term loans are repayable in twelve months, and medium-term loans are payable in installments within three years. The interest rate for direct loans to farmers is 12 percent. The bank grants loans to agricultural cooperatives at 9 percent, and these funds are then lent to individual farmers at 12 percent.

Under the Accelerated Rural Development Program, a special arrangement was made in 1966 with five commercial banks whereby the government would guarantee bank credits to farmers. The amount of credit extended up to 1970 under this plan, however, had been relatively small.

Outside the banking system, rates are known to be high compared with Western standards, but a system of repayment in kind makes it impossible to determine interest rates with any exactness. While the legal maximum interest is 15 percent, private loans carry much higher rates, and loans involving payment in kind are said to run as high as 60 to 120 percent. Many loans, however, are obtained interest-free from friends or relatives.

### Irrigation and Flood Control

Despite the completion of several large-scale irrigation projects, which brought the total irrigated area to over 5 million acres, in 1970 crop cultivation continued to depend heavily on the regularity of rainfall. This is owing to delays in constructing feeder canals

from the reservoirs to the farmlands because of insufficient funds. Consequently, most of the cultivated area remained outside the irrigation network, limiting the capability of the country to further increase its agricultural production or to maintain it at a stable level.

Major irrigation and flood control projects planned for completion by the end of 1971 included the Pasom Dam project at Uttaradit, the Uttaradit and Phitsanulok Diversion dams, the Greater Mae Klong project in the Central Plains, the Pran project at Prachuap Khiri Khan, and the Kud Dam Project at Chiangmai. Several storage dams were to be built in the northeast, and small irrigation works were underway in a number of areas not covered by the major projects.

The most extensive single irrigated area lies in the central region, which is crisscrossed with canals, both ancient and modern. Many of the modern canal projects follow old canals dug by the Thai peasants. The first large-scale water control project, which involved the drainage of a vast swamp located between the lower reaches of the Nakhon Nayok and Pa Sak rivers to the northeast of Bangkok, was initiated in the late nineteenth century. On the peninsula, with its heavy, year-round rainfall, there is less need for irrigation than in the rest of the country, but the problem of flood control and drainage is greater.

### The Role of Government

Primary responsibility in the government for the promotion and improvement of agriculture (including animal husbandry), forestry, and fishing rests with the Ministry of Agriculture, which was established as an independent ministry in 1934. Among the duties of the ministry are conserving and developing natural resources, regulating agricultural production, engaging in research and experimentation, giving demonstrations and providing advice and information on subjects within its purview, distributing improved seeds, and combating agricultural diseases and pests.

Within the ministry are the departments of agriculture, rice, fisheries, livestock development, and forestry. Under the ministry's general supervision are the Rubber Estate Organization (the staff of which operates the government-owned rubber plantations), the Office of the Rubber Replanting Aid Fund, and the Fish Marketing Organization.

Offices acting as field agents of the various departments within the ministry are located in the provinces. These offices are part of the provincial administration and generally report to their respective departments in the Ministry of Agriculture through the governor of the provinces.

The rice offices are concerned solely with rice cultivation; other-

wise their functions are similar to those of the agricultural offices. Both offices give advice and information to farmers; help distribute seeds and combat crop pests; and collect statistics on land under cultivation, on crop yields, and on the economic status of farm families. The veterinary offices give technical advice on livestock breeding and care, help distribute forage, administer the giving of vaccine and serum to livestock, check livestock for disease, and collect statistics on stock and on the economic status of stockbreeders. The forest offices give technical advice to those engaged in forest industries; assist in reforestation; license and inspect the operations of loggers, sawmill operators, and charcoal burners; help collect fees and duties; and collect statistics on forest timber and on timber cut. The fisheries offices advise fish breeders and fishermen, issue licenses, collect taxes from fishermen, and collect statistics on the fish catch and on the economic status of fishermen.

Extensive research has been carried out since the 1930s by various institutions within the Ministry of Agriculture. The Research and Experiment Station Division of the Department of Agriculture operates experimental stations located throughout the country. These stations, which numbered seventeen in the mid-1960s, undertake experimental research relating to upland field crops, fiber crops, and fruits in order to develop improved seeds, to determine the proper growing and harvesting season, and to learn the most efficient methods of planting, cultivating, and harvesting these crops. Other divisions in the Department of Agriculture that engage in research are the Rubber Division, the Plant Industry Division (research on insect pests and plant diseases), and the Agricultural Chemistry Division (research on soil analysis and utilization of fertilizers).

The Rice Breeding Division of the Department of Rice conducts research in the development of better rice seeds and operates some sixteen experimental stations. Research into all other aspects of rice cultivation—soils, water, climate, fertilizers, mechanization, and standardization—is under the jurisdiction of the Technical Division of the Department of Rice.

Three divisions of the Department of Livestock Development are engaged in research. The Animal Husbandry Division operates livestock stations to carry out improved breeding experiments; the Animal Nutrition and Forage Crops Division seeks to improve animal nutrition and forage crops; and the Veterinary Research and Education Division undertakes to improve the quality and production of vaccine and serum used in the prevention and treatment of animal diseases.

The Division of Fisheries Investigation is the research division of the Department of Fisheries. It operates a technological laboratory and, in the mid-1960s, had fourteen experimental stations: eleven

inland, two near brackish water, and one on the seacoast. All stations were equipped with hatchery facilities and laboratory equipment for conducting research experiments. The Royal Forest Department includes the Silviculture Division, which carries out research on the care and protection of forests, and the Forest Products Research Division, which is in charge of research and development in the utilization of timber and minor forest products.

The research divisions of the ministry have received equipment and technical assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, and the Colombo Plan (see Glossary). Advisers from these organizations are training some technicians on the job, while other technicians are receiving training abroad financed by these agencies.

The leading institution for agricultural education is Kasetsart University, located at Bang Khe, just northwest of Bangkok. It was founded in 1943, amalgamating previous schools of agriculture and forestry. Faculties include agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, fisheries, a college of veterinary science, and a school of irrigation engineering. The university is a government department under the Office of the Prime Minister and is entirely dependent on the government for budgetary support. It has received financial assistance, technical aid, and scholarships for its graduates from FAO, USAID, the Rockefeller Foundation, and various private firms. Most United States assistance has been given through contracts with Oregon State College and, since July 1962, with the University of Hawaii. The contracts provided professors, established research and extension projects, and assisted in the development of the curricula and the improvement of teaching methods. Under the project, large quantities of laboratory and plant equipment and teaching aids have been imported, and fourteen buildings have been constructed. The United States has also assisted in the establishment of sixteen vocational agriculture schools located throughout the country.

#### Agricultural Extension

In order to carry to the individual farmer the knowledge gained through research and experiment, eight regional agricultural centers have been established with United States assistance. Since the beginning of the program in 1951, more than 1,000 Thai have received at least six months' preservice training and been assigned to the field. The broad objectives are to increase farm production through extensive methods that teach and encourage the adoption of improved cultural practices and to strengthen local self-help through the development of farm organizations.

Plans called for training 100 new district (*amphur*) officers a year

in order to provide a ratio of 1 agricultural officer for every 2,000 farm families in the northeast. The Northeast Regional Extension Headquarters was established at Khon Kaen to coordinate area extension and research activities and serve as an extension training center. The center is equipped with facilities to accommodate classes of 100 students and a production workshop for extension information activities. Farmers' extension clubs have been organized by extension officers with United States assistance and serve as channels through which new agricultural practices are introduced to farmers.

#### Rural Development Planning

The Thai government and the United States have launched the Accelerated Rural Development Program in six of the northeastern provinces. It is designed to counter the threat of insurgency and to strengthen links between the central government and rural communities. Specific targets are to coordinate the planning and accelerate the rural development programs in the provinces of Ubon Ratchathani, Nakhon Phanom, Sakon Nakhon, Udon Thani, Loei, and Nong Khai; to create, train, and equip an organization in each of these provinces that will be able with local initiative to plan, design, and construct rural roads, water facilities, and other small-scale public works; to develop a Thai regional technical assistance center that can provide the necessary facilities, such as training and other specialized services, for the six provinces. Projects are expected to reflect village needs and are planned to stimulate local participation in their implementation and maintenance.

### INDUSTRY

Although most of the country's industry produces goods for domestic production, only the processing of agricultural products and the production of cement have achieved sufficient volume to satisfy the country's needs. On the whole, the country must continue to depend on imports for its manufactured goods. There is little heavy industry, although the Second Development Plan calls for an increase in this sector. Mining production is almost entirely for export.

Although the government has increased its efforts to encourage the establishment of new industries and to modernize existing ones, the rate of industrial development will depend on ability to further overcome deficiencies in transportation, power, and communications; to increase the supply of domestic capital, which generally prefers short-term investment rather than long-term industrial ventures; and to train technicians and managerial personnel essential to profitable operation. Adequate natural resources for considerable

industrial expansion are available in the form of agricultural products and minerals.

### Mining

Mining of tin and other minerals is of great antiquity. The country is one of the world's major producers of tin. The richest sources, from which 80 percent of the country's annual production is derived, are located in the south, and most of the concessions are operated by British, Australians, and Chinese. Mining methods vary from highly mechanized operations on a large scale to traditional practices utilizing the labor of thousands of Chinese coolies and Thai. Half of the tin produced is by dredging the sea bottom, and 40 percent is obtained by gravel pumps and hydraulic mines.

Thai tin used to be smelted in either Penang Island, Malaysia, or Singapore, but the country has had its own smelter since August 1965, when the plant of the Thailand Smelting and Refining Company, Limited (THAISARCO), started to operate. Phuket Island, at the northern end of the Strait of Malacca, was chosen as the site because the major part of the tin ore produced is obtained from the nearby seabed. The plant has an annual capacity of well above 20,000 tons of tin ingots and had a statutory monopoly for smelting all tin concentrates in Thailand until 1970. Export of tin ore was prohibited by the government after the new smelter opened. Export of ore had been replaced entirely by export of metal by 1966. Union Carbide Corporation of the United States owns 70 percent of the outstanding stock of the smelter, and the largest part of the plant's output is sold to the United States, the second largest buyer being the Netherlands.

Iron has been mined in many parts of the country for many centuries and smelted in simple charcoal furnaces to make the few implements needed by the farmers. From 1951 through 1960 annual production of iron ore fluctuated between a low of 2,756 tons in 1954 to a high of 14,750 tons in 1958. With the increased industrialization of the 1960s, both domestic production of ore and imports of iron and steel products expanded rapidly (see ch. 14, Trade and Transportation).

Before 1967 most steel-producing facilities were scrap iron smelters with limited capacity. In the late 1960s two new steel mills were built to increase total production to 400,000 tons, compared with 1965 production of about 100,000 tons, and anticipated total demand of 600,000 tons by 1971.

### Manufacturing

Manufacturing, other than metals and oil refining, is chiefly confined to the processing of agricultural products and the manufac-

ture of building materials and some consumer goods. Next to rice milling, cement and cement products constituted the largest segment of manufacturing in 1970, followed by cotton weaving and spinning and sugar refining. Beer, tobacco, and paper were other important suppliers of the domestic market.

A plant for the manufacture of cement, built in 1913, was one of the first modern industrial establishments to be introduced. Before World War II production averaged about 100,000 tons a year. After World War II capacity was rapidly expanded. Production reached 1.25 million tons in 1965 and was expected to more than double by 1971.

Many small units and medium-sized establishments for metalworking have been started since the early 1960s. Additional plants assemble sewing machines, motorcycles, automobiles, trucks, and tractors; others produce glass, pharmaceuticals, electric light bulbs, flashlight batteries, and miscellaneous consumer goods.

As a result of a construction boom, the building materials industries have registered many new gains. There has been a rapid change to bricks and cement as construction materials for houses and buildings because of the timber shortage and the high cost of timber products. Local production of bricks, as well as cement, has increased greatly. Apart from ordinary bricks, decorative bricks, decorative concrete blocks, and earthen and concrete tiles have been produced for some time. A recent addition in this group is lightweight hollow bricks, which permit economical multistory building projects. Precast concrete products, such as plain and steel-reinforced cement pipes, and prestressed concrete products, such as foundation piles, telegraph and electric poles, fenceposts, bridge girders, and flat slabs, have been manufactured during the late 1960s. Plywood, veneer boards, galvanized roofing sheets, teak parquet flooring, metal doors, and windows are also produced in the country, and the demand has been rising faster than the expansion of production facilities.

### Construction

A vast upswing in construction accompanied Thailand's economic expansion of the 1960s. Dams, factories, powerplants, highways, and airfields were built at an ever-increasing rate. Many of these large projects were carried out by foreign engineering firms using Thai labor. Simultaneously, an indigenous building boom—new hotels, shops, business centers, apartment houses, and both brick and wooden houses—got underway in Bangkok and other urban areas.

### Power and Fuel

In 1969 the country's three power authorities—Yanhee Electricity Authority, Northeast Electricity Authority, and Lignite Electricity

Authority—were merged into a single agency, the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT). Under the new setup, EGAT will produce electricity from the use of water, oil, and other forms of energy for supply to the Metropolitan Electricity Authority and the Provincial Electricity Authority, which would be charged with distribution. Chon Buri Province has been selected as the site of Thailand's first atomic power plant, to be built with United States assistance at an estimated cost of 2,500 million baht. Construction was due to begin in 1971, with 1977 scheduled as the year of completion.

The government allocated 1.3 billion baht for power projects in 1969. During the year expansion projects were completed at the Bhumbol and North Bangkok plants. Fifteen-megawatt gas turbines also were installed at Amphoe Hat Yai, Songkhla Province, and in Udon Thani Province. New projects initiated during the year included the Lam Dom Noi, Nam Prom, Phasom (Sirikit), Pa Mong, and Kwae Yai hydroelectric projects, and the South Bangkok Thermal Plant. The Second Development Plan called for an increase of one-third in generating capacity between 1967 and 1971.

The country's hydroelectric potential in the Mekong and other rivers was estimated to be 2.6 million kilowatts, but by 1967 only small quantities of hydroelectric power were in use, generated by two installations completed in 1965 and 1966, respectively. In 1950 generating capacity was 32,334 kilowatts for the entire country. By 1964 it had increased more than ten times to 376,508 kilowatts as a result of the completion of a new power station in Bangkok, three generating plants at the Khuan Pumiphon (dam) in the Yanhee Project on the Ping River in northwest Thailand, and the Krabi Power Plant in the south.

The Yanhee was a major multipurpose development project of the 1960s. It is expected that eight generators to be installed at the Yanhee Project will ultimately have a capacity of about 560,000 kilowatts, which it is calculated will supply Bangkok and the central region with sufficient electricity to meet their needs until 1975 or 1980. A dam, three generators, and transmission lines to Bangkok were completed by 1963. The additional capacity was to be completed by 1971. The cost of the Yanhee Project, estimated at the equivalent of US\$100 million, has been financed in part by a loan of US\$66 million from IBRD.

The Krabi Power Plant, with a capacity of about 40,000 kilowatts, came into operation in 1963, and within two years demand had increased to such an extent that its capacity was doubled by 1968. The plant uses lignite from the Ban Pu Dam deposit. The Krabi Power Plant is a government undertaking, financed in part with foreign funds; Austrian government credits enabled two Austrian firms to provide not only technical personnel but also most of the electrical equipment.



Generating plants at dams on the Mae Nam Songkhram and Phong rivers, the first installations in the Mekong Development Project, went into operation in 1965 and 1966, respectively. The Nam Pung Hydroelectric Plant on the Mae Nam Songkhram, northeast of Udon Thani, has a capacity of about 6,300 kilowatts; the Nam Phong Hydroelectric Plant on the Phong River, southwest of Udon Thani, has a capacity of about 25,000 kilowatts. They are expected to meet the requirements of the people in at least six provinces, which previously had only 1,000 kilowatts of power capacity available.

A complete oil refinery, including a catalytic cracking plant capable of producing a range of refined products totaling about 1.5 million tons, opened in late 1964 at Au Udom in Si Racha District, about eighty miles southeast of Bangkok on the Gulf of Thailand. The refinery is capable of producing gasoline and aviation jet fuels, as well as fuel oil, kerosine, and bitumen. It had a capacity of almost 36,000 barrels per day, and in 1969 the government authorized expansion to a capacity of 65,000 barrels per day, an amount expected to meet domestic demand. It supplements the products of three other smaller refineries, including the refinery at Ban Bang Chak, some sixty miles southwest of Bangkok, operated by the Ministry of Defense. In 1968 the government signed contracts with a number of foreign corporations to give them rights of surveying and producing petroleum in designated areas within the Gulf of Thailand.

The Si Racha refinery is owned and operated by a Thai company, the Thai Oil Refinery Company (TORC), with financial and technical support from British, French, American, and West German companies. The TORC will operate the refinery for ten years, after which the refinery will be handed over to the Thai government. In the intervening period 25 percent of the net profits are to be paid to the government.

### The Role of Government

Despite a shift to greater emphasis on private enterprise, the government continued a substantial participation in industry in 1970. Besides operating several kinds of factories, the government has monopolies on the manufacturing of tobacco products, alcohol, and playing cards and the processing of opium. It also operated all the public utilities, public transportation, and a national lottery. By the late 1960s the relative proportion of government industrial output had declined to something less than 15 percent.

A number of government-owned industries, as well as the utilities, are quasi-autonomous organizations under the general supervision of the Government Enterprise Division in the Budget Bureau of the Office of the Prime Minister. The tobacco and alcohol monopolies

are operated by the Ministry of Finance. Other government enterprises are under the jurisdiction of the ministries of defense, agriculture, and industry. The Ministry of Industry includes the Department of Industrial Works, which manages several factories, and the Ministry of National Development has the Department of Mineral Resources, which is authorized to promote and control mining activities. The Board of Investment reports directly to the Council of Ministers.

The government's efforts to promote domestic and foreign investment in medium- and large-scale industries in the private sector are carried on under the revised Industrial Investment Act of 1962, under the administration of the Board of Investment. Under the act, industries to be promoted are given import duty, business tax, and income tax concessions. Joint ventures in which foreign and domestic investors participate are given favorable consideration, and emphasis is placed on the promotion of industries that process domestic raw materials. To promote foreign investment, international investment seminars are organized, investment missions are sent to developed countries, and information is disseminated through business magazines, special publications, and newspaper supplements. Thai commercial attachés in important financial centers of the world emphasize their government's liberal policies toward foreign investors and provide pertinent information on investment opportunities in Thailand.

There are a number of government agencies that contribute to industrial promotion. These include the Industrial Finance Corporation of Thailand, which makes industrial loans over 500,000 baht, and the Small Industry Loan Program, which provides smaller loans. The Small Industry Service Institute serves as a center for providing technical knowledge, training, research, and machinery for interested businessmen. An industrial productivity center established with the assistance of the United Nations Special Fund has provided management and technical training. The Technological Research Institute of the Department of Science carried on research in four industrial fields during the late 1960s: chemicals, minerals and metals, woven products, and construction materials.

## LABOR

Government planners anticipated that the promotion of the total labor force engaged in agriculture would decline from 80 percent in 1967 to 70 percent by 1981, reaching about 75 percent by 1971. Other major segments projected for 1971 were: commerce, 8 percent; services, including government workers, 6.8 percent; and manufacturing, 5.8 percent. The proportion employed in manufacturing in 1967 was approximately 4.7 percent.

With the rapid pace of industrialization, severe shortages developed in the 1960s in skilled professional, managerial, and administrative personnel and in the supply of skilled craftsmen. The government was carrying on a number of training programs in 1970 to help meet these deficiencies.

Relatively few agricultural workers were employed for wages, although this did not hold true to the same extent on the peninsula, where there was extensive wage employment on the rubber plantations. Some farmers in other areas supplemented their earnings by working for wages, mainly in the rice mills during the slack season between harvesting and planting. Handicrafts, employing the help of wives, children, and other family members, represented an important supplemental activity in rural areas.

The farm household of five or six persons (husband, wife, children, and sometimes a grandparent or a son-in-law or daughter-in-law) can cultivate as much as six acres of paddy fields without hiring or borrowing additional labor except for transplanting and harvesting.

At about the age of six, children are given such tasks as feeding chickens, caring for the animals, and helping to grind rice. By the age of fifteen they are doing full-time work along with the adults. Women take care of the house and the house compound. They participate in planting the rice seedlings and do most of the transplanting. They also help with the threshing and grinding but usually do not plow or harrow.

Although the basic economic unit in the village is the household, certain forms of economic cooperation—nowadays less often than formerly—augment the household's labor resources for heavy tasks, such as housebuilding, and urgent ones, such as transplanting and harvesting. Assistance may be reciprocal, as when a villager agrees to help in a neighbor's fields in return for an equal amount of work later in his own; or assistance may be given without expectation of direct and immediate return, as when people gather to do the heavy work on a neighbor's new house or when a tenant or debtor responds to a request for aid by his landlord or creditor. Increasingly, these traditional practices, particularly in regard to agricultural tasks, are being replaced by wage labor.

Whereas Thai have traditionally preferred to work in agriculture, more than half of the nonagricultural labor force and the skilled laborers were ethnic Chinese. Other minority groups in the labor force were Indians, Malays, and Vietnamese, most of whom were self-employed in business, farming, or fishing.

#### Labor Relations

The country had no labor legislation until 1956, when the first Labor Act was approved. It limited hours of work; regulated work-

ing conditions for women and children; provided for sick leave, workmen's compensation, and severance pay; and established standards for industrial hygiene. The act took effect in January 1957 and was repealed the next year with the establishment of a military government. Some provisions were replaced or reinstated by directives of the Revolutionary Party and the Ministry of the Interior.

Although trade unions were outlawed by the new government in 1958, the Industrial Disputes Settlement Act, which became effective in 1966, legalized strikes, provided that they were preceded by attempts at settlement through arbitration or mediation and that a thirty-day cooling-off period had been observed. The right to strike did not apply to government employees; to railway, telecommunications, and public utility workers; or to workers engaged in the production of fuel oil.

The 1968 Constitution opened the door for greater Thai participation in international labor advancement. Thailand had ratified only 3 of the 128 ground rules of the International Labor Organization (ILO), but in 1968 the government agreed to 3 more concerning weekly rest, equality of treatment, and minimum age for mining work. Since the new constitution prohibited forced labor except in the case of public calamity, a state of war, or a state of emergency, the government was expected to ratify additional ILO conventions. Still others may be ratified as the result of the approval in principle by the cabinet in 1969 of further labor legislation. A draft bill provided for, among other things, the establishment of workers' associations, secret ballot for strike votes, prohibition of strikes and lockouts and compulsory arbitration of labor disputes in specified public services and enterprises, and governmental cancellation of strikes adversely affecting the economy. In 1970 the Judicial Council was considering the legal aspects of the measure before submitting it to Parliament.

Although traditionally there have been few strikes, the growth of industrialization was increasing the tensions between employees and employers. In 1969 there were major strikes at the Firestone Tire Manufacturing Company, the Yazaki Electrical Wire Manufacturing Company, and the Thai Plywood factory, where 1,400 workers walked off the job twice and issued a total of fourteen demands.

These strikes were markedly foreign to Thai tradition. Traditionally, the employer has been considered responsible for his employees' welfare and was expected to treat his workers with courtesy and with respect for their human dignity. Subordination to the employer, on the other hand, is regarded as a natural relationship. Reprimands to the worker are issued in strict privacy to prevent loss of face in front of fellow employees. Public loss of face represents a great personal calamity, although a reprimand given in private is accepted by the worker as a matter of course. In the small, family-

run enterprises and craft shops employer paternalism manifests itself in courteous speech by the employer and by his avoidance of brusqueness and loud commands when dealing with workers. Many employers also grant token material favors on the occasion of family celebrations and religious holidays. Considerate treatment of the workers, however, is not incompatible with substandard working conditions and low wages. The majority of small enterprises, in fact, fail to comply with existing legal provisions regarding workers' welfare.

In modern enterprises, many of which are foreign owned, a personnel officer or industrial relations officer is sometimes appointed to handle employee relations. Some of these enterprises follow detailed procedures in settling grievances and other employee problems, but in many cases the employers have adjusted their personnel policies to Thai traditions.

#### Hiring and Dismissal

Employers and jobseekers usually make their arrangements through personal contacts and individual intermediaries. Some groups, including the Chinese benevolent associations and the Organization for the Assistance of Ex-Servicemen, offer informal employment services.

Legal provisions in force in 1966 provide that permanent workers and employees who have worked for more than 180 days must be given a reason for dismissal and may not be dismissed without cause. If dismissed, he must be given severance pay. Offenses justifying dismissal without compensation include willful acts of damage, negligence, or violation of company regulations causing damage to the employer; unjustified absence for more than seven days; dishonesty; and imprisonment because of criminal offenses.

#### Hours of Work and Wages

The maximum workweek, as established by law since the 1950s, is forty-eight hours. Persons in hazardous occupations have a forty-two hour workweek. In some commercial establishments, on the other hand, employees work sixty-four hours a week. The workweek in modern Thai urban enterprises varies between thirty and forty-nine hours. Women and children are forbidden to do night-work. Children under twelve may not work, and those between twelve and sixteen years of age may work for only thirty-six hours a week. Regulations provide for a weekly day of rest and for daily rest periods. Employees and workers are entitled to at least six days of paid vacation, a minimum of twelve days of paid public holidays, and thirty days of sick leave each year.

Wages vary considerably according to geographical area. Women

are generally paid less than men in comparable occupations. Foreign companies generally pay higher wages than Thai concerns, a circumstance that reflects both the special demands of the foreign concerns in respect to language abilities and other skills and the salary levels of those on their managerial staffs, many of whom are non-Thai. Chinese skilled laborers generally receive double the wages paid to Thai workers. In 1970 daily rates for skilled workers ranged upward from 30 baht, while unskilled workers earned from 15 to 25 baht.

In large modern enterprises employees and workers receive low-cost housing and limited medical care. In some cases they also may buy food at cost in factory commissaries. Civil servants enjoy similar benefits. Although wages in rural areas are lower than in the capital, the purchasing power of the baht is greater in the provinces. On rubber and fruit plantations on the peninsula, pay scales are similar to those of unskilled workers in the Bangkok-Thon Buri area. There is no minimum wage legislation. Employers, however, must pay the basic wages plus time-and-a-half for overtime work and double time for work on holidays.

The responsibility for the administration of labor laws is vested in the Department of Labor and the Department of Public Welfare, both under the Ministry of the Interior. In 1970 the Department of Labor consisted of the Office of the Secretary, the Labor Studies and Research Bureau, the Labor Protection and Labor Relations Division, the Occupational Promotion and Skill Development Division, the Employment Service Division, and the Central Employment Service. One of the department's important functions was to provide statistical and research data for government policies affecting the distribution of manpower and worker training. Manpower planning is carried out by the Manpower Planning Division in the National Economic Development Board.

## CHAPTER 14

### TRADE AND TRANSPORTATION

The importance of trade and transportation is indicated by the substantial contribution of each to the gross domestic product and to government revenue and by the number of persons employed in these activities. In 1969 the wholesale and retail sector and the transportation and communication sector contributed 23.8 percent to the gross domestic product, which was 127,161.3 million baht (20.8 baht equal approximately US\$1—see Glossary). Foreign trade, in the form of import and export duties, contributed almost 38 percent of total government revenue, which was 18,322 million baht. Employment in trade and transportation, which was 1.26 million persons in 1966, was expected to increase to 1.69 million persons, or 10 percent of the labor force, in 1971.

To a greater degree than most newly developing countries, Thailand has been able to exploit trade and transportation to promote economic and social development. This has been the case because the country has been a source not only of two major raw materials—tin and rubber—but of a food surplus as well. These factors led to giving high priority to export trade, both as a source of government revenues and as a means of paying for finished manufactured goods acquired abroad. These circumstances have resulted in the monetization of a large sector of the economy, compared with the subsistence agricultural economies of some developing countries. This in turn has stimulated a domestic market for imported goods and a demand for capital goods with which to manufacture import substitutes.

Thailand is favored with waterways as a natural system of transportation. The development of other means—railroads, highways, and air transportation—has, however, added importantly to the growth of the economy by making accessible many remote areas not easily reached by water, thus enlarging the market.

#### ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN TRADE

The government plays a vital role through the supervision and planning of trade and trading organizations, the provision of information as a basis for trade, and the establishment and promotion of

favorable commercial relations with other countries. It is the policy of the government to avoid competition with private enterprise in the field of trade. Rather, the government provides support services to assist private enterprise, including the generation and distribution of electric power and the construction and maintenance of transportation and communications facilities, such as railroads, airlines and airports, highways, ports, telephones, radio and television, and telegraph and postal services.

All agencies relating to the regulation and promotion of trade are lodged in the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The Department of Foreign Trade has charge of the regulation of external trade and the formulation of policies pertaining to trade through the Import Division, Export Division, Standards Division, Export and Import Control Division, and Foreign Trade Policy Division.

The Department of Internal Trade and the Department of Commercial Registration oversee the conduct and organization of domestic trade. The Department of Internal Trade consists of the Rice Control Division, which establishes procedures for the marketing of rice, the Division of the Stores, Retail Shop Promotion Division, Companies' Promotion Division, Trade Control Division, and Market Division. Persons organizing establishments involved in trade or the provision of services are required to register with the Department of Commercial Registration.

Among the persons required to register with the Department of Commercial Registration are: those engaged in rice milling or sawmilling by machinery; commission agents or brokers with sales exceeding a stated minimum; persons engaged in the sale of, or possession of, goods for sale with fixed value; and those engaged in transportation who use a fixed route or real estate or who deal in foreign currency, moneylending or pawnshop operation. Foreign firms wishing to do business in Thailand must present documents containing basic information concerning the enterprise when application for registration is made. The documents must be notarized by the local Thai consulate when presented.

Both foreign and domestic trade enterprises receive information and assistance from the Department of Commercial Intelligence, which consists of the Trade Information Division, the Technical and Commercial Statistics Division, the Commodities Division, and the Commercial Training Center Division. Another agency of importance to the conduct of trade is the Department of Economic Relations, which, through the Trade Promotion and Exhibition Division, is responsible for planning and participation in trade fairs and exhibits. The department also serves the needs of trade through the Economic Research and Survey Division. The central government is responsible for the negotiation of trade agreements.



## FOREIGN TRADE

In 1969 total foreign trade reached a peak of 40,865 million baht, an increase of 8.2 percent over 1968 when it was valued at 37,782 million baht. From 1957 to 1969 the value of trade more than doubled, rising from 16,077 million baht in 1957. Although both exports and imports increased in value and quantity during the period, demand for capital goods to make possible the accelerated economic activity that was a goal of the economic development plans, and demand for consumer goods to fill the needs of an increasing population with a rising standard of living resulted in a more rapid increase of imports than of exports, and the balance of trade was consistently adverse. Despite the fact that, based on 1958 prices, the terms of trade tended to be favorable, with the unit value of exports rising whereas that of imports declined in all years except 1960 and 1961, the quantity of goods imported more than compensated for the lower prices. Consequently, the country's trade deficit mounted to slightly more than 27 percent of total value in 1969 in contrast to 6 percent in 1957.

### Background of Trade

Trade relations with foreign countries, which are important to the economy of Thailand and the standard of living of the people, developed early. Trade with bordering countries and with China and India was well established by the fourteenth century and was conducted both by overland routes and by water. In the early sixteenth century Portuguese traders arrived, and in the seventeenth century trade was initiated with merchants from several other European countries and with the Japanese.

Dutch ships arrived in 1605 and were followed by Japanese ships in 1606. In 1612 British vessels arrived, and during the year the British East India Company opened two trading posts, one at Pattani and one at Ayutthaya. The French sent a trading mission late in the century.

From early times trade was closely controlled by the king, and foreign traders competed vigorously for his favor. The Dutch gained royal favor to the detriment of Portuguese and British trade, which declined steadily until the end of the century. Furthermore, because of a court rebellion reputedly instigated by the French, Siamese kings discouraged all trade and diplomatic relations with Western nations from the end of the seventeenth century until well into the nineteenth century. In the interim a flourishing trade was carried on with the Chinese.

Early in the nineteenth century trade was resumed with the British East India Company through a treaty that was signed in

1826. Trade was extended to the United States by a similar agreement signed in 1833. Despite the expansion of commerce with the West and the increase in trade with Indian merchants, the Chinese maintained a favored position. They were exempt from tonnage dues charged other foreign ships and could engage in many activities forbidden to other foreigners; they could build ships, occupy houses and land, export rice, and travel in the interior.

Later the Bowring Treaty, which was executed by Great Britain and Siam in 1855, contained terms favorable to Great Britain. For the first time Siam granted extraterritorial privileges, and British subjects were exempt from the jurisdiction of Siamese authorities. In addition to the privilege of extraterritoriality, they were given the privileges of trade, residence, property ownership, and travel. Import and export policies and duties were fixed also. The Bowring Treaty remained in effect for about seventy years and formed the basis of the agreements that were negotiated with the United States, Japan, Russia, France, Denmark, Portugal, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Spain by 1900. In the 1920s and 1930s treaties were revised on a basis of the principles of sovereign equality and full reciprocity, giving the country greater control over its own trade. After World War II previously existing agreements were renegotiated and new ones initiated.

Thailand is not a member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade but nevertheless accords most-favored-nation treatment to all trading partners. Trade treaties in 1970 were in an indefinite state. The Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations, signed at Bangkok on May 29, 1966, was in effect between the United States and Thailand. Trade agreements with Romania, Bulgaria, Iran, and Canada were also in effect. On February 27, 1970, however, Thailand abrogated treaties of friendship, commerce, and maritime navigation with seventeen countries in Asia and Europe. The list included treaties with Burma, Taiwan (Nationalist China), Japan, India, Indonesia, Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, Italy, West Germany (the Federal Republic of Germany), the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and Great Britain. The act was scheduled to become effective on February 27, 1971. New treaties were expected to follow the basic pattern of the treaty with the United States and to better the trading position of Thailand.

For the most part foreign trade policies are liberal. Most articles may be imported freely. A small list of commodities, however, requires an import license, and the import of a few specific articles is prohibited. In 1969 imports from Communist China were prohibited, and those from Southern Rhodesia required a license from the minister of economic affairs. Gold importation is regulated by

the government, which granted a license to a private business firm in 1970 and fixed a quota of 240,000 troy ounces for the year.

All exports to Rhodesia require licensing, and certain others, including gold, platinum, precious stones, certain fertilizers, live cattle and other specified animals, sorghum, maize (corn), rice and rice products, raw sugar, brass and copper in certain forms, radioactive materials, and Deva and Buddha images, require licenses, regardless of destination. Thailand uses the Brussels nomenclature in classifying commodities in foreign trade.

Bangkok is the country's major port, particularly for imports. In 1969 slightly more than 98 percent of imports were unloaded in Bangkok, and the same port was the point of departure for 65 percent of exports. Songkhla and Phuket also serve as international ports for South Thailand.

The lack of a natural deepwater port and the inadequate facilities of Bangkok, which is located on the Chao Phraya River seventeen miles from the ocean, tend to restrict the free movement of foreign trade. Incoming vessels sometimes have to wait as much as fourteen days for a berth for discharging cargo; furthermore, the lack of warehouse space and of port equipment hampers the efficient movement of goods.

The alleviation of congested overseas shipping conditions was an important objective of the Second National Economic and Social Development Plan (1967-71). To relieve the immediate problem of congestion, three new warehouses were under construction in 1967. Plans for a long-term solution of the shipping problem were more extensive, involving the enlargement of the main wharf at Bangkok to accommodate fifteen vessels instead of nine, and the construction of thirty buoys for mooring vessels in midstream. Progress on these plans was slow. In 1970 the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (commonly known as the World Bank) made a loan of US\$12.5 million to Thailand to help with the construction of the port of Bangkok. For further expansion of shipping facilities, in late 1968 the government signed an agreement with the Netherlands Engineering Consultants for the study and design of a new port at Lam Chabang. Final decision on the project had not been announced in mid-1970.

### Composition of Trade

#### Exports

In 1969 the total value of exports, including reexported commodities, was 14,890 million baht, an increase of almost 9 percent over 1968, when the value was 13,679 million baht. From 1957 to 1969 exports almost doubled in value, rising from 7,540 million

baht. During the period an increase in value from the previous year was recorded in every year except 1958 and 1968, when exports registered a slight decline in value.

Commodities exported are mainly agricultural and mineral products, exported either as raw materials or as slightly processed products. For the most part, the composition of exports has not changed since the early 1950s, although the absolute and relative value of individual commodities has fluctuated and dependence on the principal export commodities has decreased slightly. In 1969 seven major commodities accounted for 73.3 percent of total export value in contrast to 1957, when the same commodities accounted for 80.7 percent of the total. Ranked by value, the major commodities in 1969 were rice, rubber, maize, tin, tapioca products, kenaf (a fiber used for cordage and canvas manufacture), and teak. There was no change in rank from the previous year. All commodities rose in absolute value except rice and teak (see table 11).

Since early times rice has been a major export commodity. Although it has fluctuated in value and quantity exported, it has steadily maintained its place at the head of the export list. From 1957 to 1969, however, the general tendency was a decline in both absolute and relative terms. In absolute value rice exports declined from 3,622 million baht in 1957 to 3,193 million baht in 1969. The quantity exported also declined from 1,570,237 tons to 1,030,000 tons. The relative share of export earnings dropped from 48 percent of the total in 1957 to slightly more than 21 percent in 1969. The change in relative position was a result not only of the decline in value and quantity but also of the increasing value of other exports.

Table 11. Value of Principal Exports of Thailand, 1968 and 1969 (in millions of baht)\*

Commodity	1968	1969
Rice .....	3,774	3,192
Rubber .....	1,815	2,599
Maize (corn) .....	1,556	1,710
Tin .....	1,509	1,658
Tapioca products .....	773	868
Kenaf .....	673	733
Teak .....	168	160

\*20.8 baht equal approximately US\$1—see Glossary.

Source: Adapted from Bank of Thailand, *Annual Economic Report, 1969*, Bangkok, 1969, pp. 92-93.

Rice earnings, which dropped materially from 1967 to 1969, were affected by a drop in world prices stemming from good harvests in

many countries and by the decreased demand from large rice-consuming countries that were becoming increasingly self-sufficient in production. Increased domestic demand also influenced the quantity of rice available for export.

From 1957 to 1969 all other major exports, except teak, increased in earnings and most of them increased in quantity exported. Teak exports declined in both earnings and quantity. Rubber, tin, maize, tapioca products, and kenaf all increased significantly in export value during the period. Maize made the most rapid advance of any commodity, rising from 74 million baht and 64,337 tons in 1957 to 1,710 million baht and 1,480,841 tons in 1969. Japan is the major market for maize. Since 1965, when the first tin smelter was completed, all tin ore has been refined domestically and exported as metal according to export regulations. Thailand, which is one of the major tin exporters of the world, is a member of the International Tin Council and is subject to the export restrictions of the council.

Other commodities exported include kapok fiber, castor bean seeds, cattle, yang wood, mung beans (the source of bean sprouts used in Chinese cookery), peanuts, shrimp, cement, hides and skins, tobacco leaves, stick lac for lacquer, fresh eggs, and sorghum. Precious stones also add to export earnings. The importance of individual commodities changed from 1957 to 1969, although there were few changes in the overall composition of minor exports. During that period kapok fibers, mung beans, and tobacco leaves increased appreciably in quantity shipped and in value. Cement doubled in quantity and value. Shrimp, which were the most valuable secondary export in 1968 when they provided 276 million baht in earnings, were first exported in 1958. Sorghum, which joined the export list in 1964, fluctuated widely in quantity shipped from 1964 to 1968. The peak year was 1966, with shipments of slightly more than 93,000 tons valued at 108.2 million baht. In 1968 quantity and value had declined to 54 thousand tons with a value of 56.3 million baht. Information covering the complete calendar year for 1969 was not available in September 1970.

Foreign exchange provided by sugar exports was important from 1963 to 1965. In 1964, because of favorable world prices, sugar earnings reached a peak of 211.1 million baht. In the following year, however, because of low world prices, the value of exports dropped to 100.5 million baht. Since that time sugar production has been mainly for domestic use. In 1970 a small surplus of about 35,000 tons was expected to develop. Disposal of the surplus was not expected to present a problem, however, because Thailand had been allotted an export quota of about that size under the International Sugar Agreement.

## Imports

Imports—classified as consumer goods, intermediate goods and raw materials, capital goods, and other commodities not included in these three categories—were valued at 25,975 million baht in 1969, an increase of almost 7.8 percent over 1968 when they were valued at 24,103 million baht. From 1957 to 1969 they tripled in value rising from 8,537 million baht. Military goods were not included in import totals.

Capital goods, including fertilizers and pesticides, cement, construction materials, tubes and pipes, glass and other mineral manufactures, rubber manufactures, metal manufactures, electrical and nonelectrical machinery and parts, scientific instruments, aircraft, ships, locomotives, and rolling stock, were the most valuable category in 1969, with a value of 9,677 million baht. These exhibited a significant rise of 16 percent over 1968 when they were valued at 8,339 million baht, reflecting the accelerating economic activity (see table 12).

Consumer goods imports (including such nondurable commodities as food and beverages, tobacco manufactures, clothing and footwear, and medicinals) and durable goods (including household goods and furniture, electrical appliances, motorcycles and bicycles) were valued at 5,457 million baht, an increase of 2.5 percent over the 5,323 million baht of 1968. In share of the total, however, consumer goods declined from 22 percent in 1968 to 21 percent in 1969. Intermediate products and raw materials, imported for further processing for both consumer goods and for capital goods, also increased 2.5 percent in value from 1968 to 1969, but declined from 21 percent to 20 percent of total value. Imports of paper, paperboard, and textile fibers increased during the year.

Table 12. Imports of Thailand by Economic Classification, 1968 and 1969  
(in millions of baht)\*

Imports	1968	1969	Percent increase 1968-69
Consumer goods . . . . .	5,323	5,457	2.5
Raw materials and intermediate goods . . . .	5,086	5,212	2.5
Capital goods . . . . .	8,339	9,677	16.0
Other . . . . .	5,355	5,629	5.1
Total . . . . .	24,103	25,975	7.8

\*20.8 baht equal approximately US\$1—see Glossary.

Source: Adapted from Bank of Thailand, *Annual Economic Report, 1969*, Bangkok, 1969, pp. 18.

Automobiles of all types, automotive equipment, fuels and lubricants, miscellaneous articles, and gold bullion—all of which may be classified as consumer goods or capital goods, according to their end use—composed the second most valuable group of imports in 1969. They represented an increase in absolute value of 5 percent from 1968 to 1969 but also a slight decline in relative share.

From 1957 to 1968, the latest year for which detailed information was available in mid-1970, imports exhibited changes in composition and value that reflected economic and social trends of the period, as well as a general increase in quantity and value accompanying population growth.

The value of capital goods imported in 1968 was slightly more than four times the value in 1957. The increase in capital goods imports resulted from the accelerated industrial and agricultural activity initiated during the First National Economic and Social Development Plan (1961–66) and the first year of the Second Development Plan (see ch. 12, Character and Structure of the Economy; ch. 13, Agriculture and Industry). The building of new manufacturing plants and the expansion of economic infrastructure projects during the period called for the importation of cement, tubes and pipes, machinery, and other commodities related to the construction of plants, other buildings, and public works. Imports of tractors and other agricultural machinery also increased significantly during the period.

The import value of intermediate products and raw materials for further processing more than tripled during the period, an increase that exceeded the rate of increase of total import value during the period. Because of the growing manufacture of consumer goods, imports of crude animal and vegetable materials, wood and textile materials, paper and paperboard, and chemicals increased more rapidly than imports of crude minerals and base metals for capital goods.

Consumer goods did not double in value during the period, rising only from 3,177 million baht in 1957 to 5,323 million baht in 1968. Although imports of nondurable goods consistently out-ranked durable goods in value, increasing personal income, urbanization, and growing sophistication of living in both urban and rural areas resulted in a significant increase in importation of household goods, furniture, electric appliances, motorcycles, and other durable consumer goods (see ch. 5, Living Conditions).

#### Direction of Trade

Thailand carries on trade with more than a hundred countries distributed on all continents. Japan, however, is the foremost trading partner by a wide margin, a position it has held over a long period of time. As a market for food and raw materials for process-

ing, Japan accounted for 21 percent of all export value in 1968 and, as a source of manufactured goods, for 34 percent of the value of all imports. The United States which ranked second as a trading partner, was the destination of 13 percent of exports by value and the source of 19 percent of imports (see table 13).

The neighboring rice consuming countries are the destination of most of the rice exported by Thailand. The quantity shipped has fluctuated from year to year, partly in response to the annual harvests. In 1968 the major markets, ranked by value of shipments, were Malaysia, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Ceylon, and Indonesia. Small shipments were made to the United Kingdom and Aden. Preliminary information for 1969 indicated no change in the composition of the most important markets, but a slight change in rank, as Hong Kong headed the list.

The industrialized countries provide the markets for rubber exports. In 1968 Japan was the outstanding market, followed by the United States. The value of rubber exports to Japan was 572 million baht, more than double the value of those to the United States, which was 264 million baht. The United Kingdom, West Germany, and Italy were European markets, and other Asian markets were Malaysia and Singapore, both of which supplied rubber to Communist China and to the Soviet Union.

Asian countries, notably Japan, have been the destination of maize exports since the mid-1950s. In 1968 Japan accounted for exports valued at 685 million baht, or 44 percent of the total;

Table 13. Most Valuable Trading Partners of Thailand, 1968  
(by percentage of total)

Exports		Imports	
Country	Percent	Country	Percent
Japan .....	21	Japan .....	34
United States ...	13	United States ...	19
Singapore .....	9	West Germany ..	8
Malaysia .....	8	United Kingdom	7
Hong Kong .....	7	Hong Kong .....	2
Netherlands .....	7	Netherlands .....	2
India .....	6	Italy .....	2
West Germany ..	4	Saudi Arabia ...	2
United Kingdom	3	Malaysia .....	1
Saudi Arabia ...	2	Indonesia .....	1
Indonesia .....	1	Singapore .....	1
Italy .....	1	India .....	1
Others .....	18	Others .....	20
Total .....	100	Total .....	100

Source: Adapted from Bank of Thailand, *Monthly Bulletin*, X, No. 5, May 1970, p. 35.



Taiwan, as the second most important buyer, accounted for 424 million baht, or 27 percent of the total. Other Asian markets were Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. Italy, an exception to the regional trade, purchased small amounts of maize from 1963 through the first half of 1967. After making no purchases in 1968, it resumed in 1969, and Spain purchased Thai maize for the first time in that year.

The United States, West Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Japan are the destination of tapioca products. In 1968 the Netherlands was the most valuable customer for the first time since 1957. West Germany and the United States ranked second and third as purchasers. European countries purchased tapioca products for livestock feed, and the United States and Japan purchased tapioca flour for cooking purposes.

Although Japan is the outstanding customer for jute and kenaf, a similar fiber, customers for these products are widely distributed throughout Europe and Asia, and include the United States. Other major markets are Belgium, the United Kingdom, India, France, and Italy; minor markets include Hong Kong, the United States, West Germany, Portugal, and Spain.

Teak is exported to industrialized areas. The United States, followed by the United Kingdom, Denmark, West Germany, and Italy constitute the principal markets, and Japan, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Hong Kong have purchased small amounts. Teak exports have been declining in quantity since the 1950s because of the scarcity of trees desirable for cutting.

The sources of imports are highly concentrated. In 1968 Japan and the United States, together, accounted for 53 percent of all import value. Japan accounted for 34 percent and the United States for 19 percent of the total. West Germany and the United Kingdom accounted for 8 percent and 7 percent, respectively, of import value, and Italy for a smaller share. Information for the first nine months of 1969 indicated the share of Japan, West Germany, and Italy had increased slightly, whereas the share of the United States had remained stable.

Japan, which dominates the supply market, is a source of textiles, light manufactures, iron and steel, chemicals, machinery, and transport equipment. The United States provides machinery, motor vehicles and transport equipment, chemicals, and related products. West Germany, the United Kingdom, and Italy provide steel manufactures, chemicals, and machinery.

Toward the end of the 1960s Japan was the most important supplier of materials-handling equipment and electric power machinery, and the second most important supplier of bulldozers and power shovels, air-conditioning machinery, pumps and centri-

fuges, and telecommunications equipment. It shared second place with the United Kingdom as the source of business machines.

In the provision of bulldozers, power shovels, and air-conditioning machinery the United States dominated the market by a wide margin. It was also the largest supplier of agricultural machinery, pumps and centrifuges, and telecommunications equipment and the second largest supplier of materials-handling equipment and electric power machinery. West Germany led all other countries in providing business machines, with a 36.5 percent share of the import value. The rest of the market was shared by the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States, and Italy.

#### BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

The country's balance of payments has followed the pattern characteristic of many developing countries. The trend has been toward a deficit on the merchandise and service account, accompanied by an inflow of transfer and capital payments, which in many years has been more than compensatory and has left a surplus of foreign exchange of varying size for the conduct of international economic activities.

In each of the eight years from 1961 to 1968, Thailand enjoyed a favorable balance on international accounts that rose to a peak of 3,287 million baht in 1966. After that year, however, the surplus declined sharply to 447 million baht in 1968 and moved into a deficit of 998 million baht in 1969.

From 1968 to 1969 the gap between export receipts and import payments widened at the same time that the net surplus in the services account—which includes expenditures and receipts for freight and insurance, incomes from transportation, foreign travel, and investment, government expenditures, and miscellaneous services—declined from 6,149 million baht to 5,970 million baht.

The drop in foreign exchange surplus on the services account resulted from a sharp decline in the net receipts from governmental expenditures that dropped from 5,094 million baht in 1968 to 4,600 million baht, a drop of 11 percent. The change largely represented a decline in United States government military expenditures in Thailand. The net foreign exchange from freight and insurance also declined slightly. All other items in the services category enjoyed an increasing surplus during the year, but this was not of sufficient size to compensate for the decline in receipts from foreign governments. Foreign exchange derived from the expenditures of businessmen and tourists, including United States troops on rest and recreation leave in Thailand, rose from 1,418 million baht in 1968 to 1,600 million baht in 1969, whereas payments for Thai abroad, mostly students, increased only from 1,036 million baht to

1,080 million baht. During the year, receipts from official reserves deposited abroad also increased more than remittances of profits and dividends by foreign companies and interest payments on foreign loans.

The net surplus in private and official transfer payments also declined from 1,668 million baht in 1968 to 1,308 million baht in 1969. Official transfer payments, which exceeded private transfers from persons and institutions by a wide margin, included aid from the United States under development programs, aid under the Colombo Plan (see Glossary), aid from the United Nations specialized agencies, and a Japanese yen reparations payment.

The net inflow on the capital account dropped by a moderate amount, from 2,439 million baht to 2,302 million baht. The net receipts of private capital, which include working capital supplied by foreign firms to branches in Thailand, funds for construction and expansion of plants and buildings, and various loans and credits, increased from 1,837 million baht to 2,178 million baht; net receipts of official capital, including long-term loans, dropped precipitously from 602 million baht to 124 million baht.

As a result of the increasing deficit on current account and the declining inflow of funds on the transfer and capital accounts, Thailand's reserves of gold and foreign exchange dropped from 19,172 million baht at the end of 1968 to 18,178 million baht at the end of 1969. The amount of reserves at that time was about sufficient to pay for imports for slightly more than eight months.

#### DOMESTIC TRADE

Because agriculture, forestry, hunting, and fishing provide occupation and the means of living for a high proportion of the population—in 1960, 89 percent of the economically active population was engaged in agriculture and kindred pursuits—many essential commodities are grown and consumed by the producer or distributed only locally. Increasing production of a surplus for export, however, has provided money for the purchase of other articles, most of which are imported and enjoy a reasonable measure of countrywide distribution (see ch. 5, Living Conditions). Both distribution and collection of commodities that enter into trade are centered in Bangkok, with the exception of a few export commodities, such as rubber, tin, and glutinous rice, which are exported from points near production.

Domestic trade is mostly carried on by private enterprise. According to the 1966 Census of Business Trade and Services the predominant form of legal organization was the individual proprietorship. Of the 290,487 commercial establishments registered in the whole kingdom at that time, 282,744 establishments, or 97 percent of the

total, were individual proprietorships. Establishments tend to be small in size of employment; almost two-thirds of the total employed from two to four people, whereas only 98 establishments employed one hundred persons or more. About 30 percent of all commercial enterprises had gross annual receipts ranging from 10,000 baht to just under 50,000 baht. There were, however, about 33,000 with gross receipts of 1 million baht or more. Both men and women participate in domestic trade, women providing about 53 percent of the commercial labor force.

Although diverse ethnic groups have long been active in commerce, in the late 1960s about 81 percent of all establishments were Thai in ownership. No information concerning the capital or gross receipts of establishments by nationality was available, however, and it was not possible to measure accurately the impact of other nationalities. The Chinese, who are the most important non-Thai group, were prominent in commerce before the middle of the nineteenth century, and Chinese immigrants continued to turn to trade, partly because other occupations were closed to them and partly because of the lack of interest of the Thai.

The Chinese are active in the export trade and are shopowners and street vendors; among other occupations, as shopowners, they sometimes act as private moneylenders also. The Chinese are of particular importance in Bangkok, where, according to a survey made in 1966, they constituted slightly more than 50 percent of the business population. Although some moves have been made to restrict the role of the Chinese in trade, in general, they are well accepted, and business relations are good. Indians and Japanese, as well as some Americans and Europeans, also participate in domestic trade in a small way.

### Structure of Trade

Trade is carried on by a wide variety of commercial organizations; some are devoted exclusively to wholesale trade; others, exclusively to retail trade; and still others engaged in both wholesale and retail trade. Wholesale and retail enterprises also are combined with service organizations and, in some instances, retail outlets are connected with production centers.

#### Wholesale Trade

Of the total number of commercial establishments (slightly more than 290,000 were registered in the 1966 Census of Business Trade and Services), slightly less than 5,000 engaged in wholesale trade only. Other enterprises served dual distribution purposes.

Wholesale firms located in the Bangkok and Thon Buri areas are agents for the sale of imported goods and, in some instances, im-

porting firms themselves serve as wholesalers. Domestically manufactured goods are usually distributed through wholesalers, although they are sometimes marketed directly by the manufacturer.

Commodities collected in the provinces for transportation to Bangkok or other urban areas are mostly agricultural. Their collection from the producer is carried on by middlemen who send them to commission merchants in the urban center where they are sold to exporters or processors. Middlemen usually sell rice directly to rice millers or exporters because commission merchants do not have adequate storage facilities. Some perishable foods are sold at auction in Bangkok.

#### Retail Trade

Retail goods are distributed by outlets that vary from highly sophisticated and modernized urban establishments to small general stores, itinerant peddlers, and door-to-door traders selling food. Rural needs are usually met by small general stores or by traveling salesmen.

Almost every kind of retail outlet, ranging from modern supermarkets to the traditional floating market, was represented in Bangkok. In addition to the ubiquitous small general store, about forty department stores served Bangkok and suburban areas in 1970. Consumer needs were also filled by almost every kind of specialty shop, including dress shops, florists, jewelers, shoe dealers, furniture shops, electric equipment shops, and many others. Several supermarkets had been opened in the area, and shops were increasing in suburban centers. Personal, technological, and professional services also were available in the metropolitan area.

The floating market is a distinctive and picturesque feature of Bangkok. Very early in the morning, several hundred sampans, filled with fruits, flowers, and vegetables, congregate in one of the numerous canals to sell their produce to potential customers, both on the canal and on its bank. When the produce is sold, the sampans disperse, to return the following morning.

#### Trade Promotion

Trade is encouraged, and information concerning markets and products is spread by several means. Among them advertising is an important channel. Advertising is carried on through the press, radio, motion pictures, and outdoor highway signs. In 1970 about thirty general advertising agencies, some of them branches of foreign firms, were located in Bangkok or vicinity. Agencies specializing in outdoor advertising and in screen and television advertising were also in operation.

Chambers of commerce organized along national lines provide

information and seek to promote the interest of their members by publication of trade letters, trade directories, and articles of interest. Associations of this nature consisted of the following: the American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, the British Chamber of Commerce, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the Franco-Thai Chamber of Commerce, the German-Thai Chamber of Commerce, and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, Bangkok. The Board of Trade of Thailand the the Thai Chamber of Commerce also promoted the interests of trade. In addition, associations, such as the Rice Exporters Association, were established along trade lines. Trade is also promoted by exhibits and fairs.

### TRANSPORTATION

The transportation system consists of railroad, highway, water, and air facilities. The growth of production for the market and for processing industries, as well as the increasing mobility of the population, resulted in a need for expansion and modernization of all types of transportation facilities, a need that was recognized and incorporated as a goal of the Second Development Plan. Traditionally, the various sectors of transportation have developed independently. The government was aware of the need for coordination in the development of the fields of transportation to meet the demands of a changing economy efficiently and undertook a transport coordination study in mid-1968. No recommendation had been made available by the end of 1970, however.

#### Waterways

The inland waterways, concentrated mostly on the plains of the Chao Phraya River, north of Bangkok, constitute an interconnected network of rivers, canals, and branch streams that are navigable for shallow-draft craft. Historically, these waterways have formed the backbone of the country's transportation system, but in the twentieth century they have become secondary in importance to railroads; many of the canals have been filled in to permit the construction and expansion of highways. Nevertheless, nearly 80 percent of the rice crop is still moved to the mills via water, although the great fluctuation of water levels in the rainy and dry seasons handicap much of the river traffic.

In the Central Lowland Region the Chao Phraya River, its tributaries, and a network of connecting canals are used by boats of all sizes throughout the year. In Bangkok the canals, locally called *klongs*, are so numerous that the city is often referred to as the Venice of the East. On the plains just north and northeast of the capital and in the city itself, much of the local trading activity takes place on shop-boats, which display their wares as they float down

the many watercourses. Ayutthaya, a city about fifty miles north of Bangkok, is a well-known center of these floating markets.

Farther north in the Chao Phraya River basin much rice is moved by water, although this area has fewer canals and the rivers are less suitable for water transport. During the fall harvest time empty boats are towed upstream from Bangkok by tugs, loaded with rice, and then floated downstream to mills in the capital whenever high water conditions prevail.

On the Khorat Plateau the Chi River and its tributaries are used for boat transport in similar manner. Traffic in this region, however, is largely limited to the flood season in September and October.

In the Northern and Western Mountain Region, river travel is very limited. Short boat trips are possible during the rainy season, although streams and creeks tend to flow in torrents. Virtually no river traffic is possible in the Southern Peninsula Region because of the short, precipitous nature of its streams.

River traffic is exceedingly difficult on the Mekong River despite its great size and heavy flow. Passengers and goods are carried by river steamers from Nong Khai to Nakhon Phanom about 300 miles downstream. Below Nakhon Phanom, however, there are numerous dangerous rapids that are passable only to small boats during the period from May to August.

Despite the long-time importance of waterways to the movement of goods and people in Thailand, up to 1970 little effort had been expended on their systematic development or maintenance, and facilities had been allowed to deteriorate. Investigation of the place of water transportation and the investment needed to improve facilities was included in the study of the transportation system.

### Railroads

The railroads of Thailand are owned and operated by the State Railways of Thailand and consist of four main lines—the Northern Line, the Northeastern Line, the Eastern Line, and the Southern Line. All lines, except a small part of the Northern Line out of Bangkok, which has a dual track, are single-tracked.

The Northern Line runs from Bangkok northward through the heart of the Central Lowland Region to Den Chai in the northern mountains. It then veers northwestward through Lampang and Lamphun to its terminus at Chiangmai. The Northeastern Line proceeds northeast out of Bangkok to Nakhon Ratchasima in the Khorat Plateau. It then divides into two sections, one continuing east to Ubon Ratchathani near the Laotian border and the other crossing the plateau northward to Nong Khai on the Laotian border near Vientiane. A third section of this line branches off the basic system at Kaeng Khol about midway between Bangkok and Nakhon

Ratchisima. It goes northward to Ban Lam Narai then turns north-east and joins the main branch to Nong Khai at Bua Yai. The Eastern Line runs due east from Bangkok through Kabin Buri to Aranyaprathet on the Cambodian border. At this point it connects with the Cambodian system, providing a direct rail connection with Phnom Penh.

The Southern Line is the country's longest and most complex rail facility. It goes west out of Bangkok to Ban Pong, then turns southward and traverses the entire length of the Southern Peninsula Region to Sungai Kolok on the Malaysian border. At its terminus it connects with the Malaysian system, affording through service all the way to Singapore. The Southern Line also contains several other elements. From Ban Pong a fairly new spur branches off northward to Suphan Buri, and another runs westward through Kanchanaburi to Nam Tok in the Bilaukaung Range. A third short spur runs from Bangkok to the coastal city of Samut Songkhram. In the southern part of the peninsula three lateral branches carry traffic across the peninsula. One of them runs from Surat Thani on the Gulf of Thailand to Phuket Island in the west; another goes from Nakhon Si Thammarat in the east, crosses the main line at Thung Song and continues on to Kantang on the Strait of Malacca. The third originates at the gulf port of Songkhla, crosses the main line at Hat Yai, and then goes on to the Malaysian border near Sadao where it connects with the western Malaysian line and provides an alternate route to Singapore.

In spite of the growing importance of the highway system, railroad transportation remains important. Both passenger and freight loads increased from 1964 to 1967. The passenger load increased from slightly less than 44 million to 48 million, and freight from 4 million tons to 5 million tons. In 1967 railroad lines with a total of approximately 2,353 miles were in operation.

A plan for improvement of the railroad system is incorporated in the second Development Plan. The program calls for investment in rolling stock, the relaying of tracks, the replacement of buildings, and the improvement of maintenance equipment.

### Highways

The highway system is influenced by the configuration of the land, the location of population centers, and the direction of trade. Since mountain ranges and rivers run north and south and Bangkok is the center of trade and population, major highways tend to run in a northerly or southerly direction from Bangkok, with secondary roads feeding into them laterally.

The highway network is composed of three classes of roads, primary, secondary, and tertiary roads, which are provincial, or feeder,



roads. The Highway Department of the Ministry of National Development is responsible for the construction, improvement, and maintenance of all roads. Before 1963 each province was responsible for the construction and maintenance of its own roads but received financial assistance from the central government and technical assistance from the Department of Public Works. In 1964, however, a reorganization took place with the purpose of improving coordination of investment and construction in the road system.

An increase in the share of goods and people carried by highways characterized the change in structure of transportation in the 1960s. The increase in motor vehicle registrations from 1962 to 1966, the latest year for which comprehensive information was available in 1970, indicated the growing importance of highways, although little quantitative information on the volume of passenger and freight cargo carried was to be had. Registration of passenger cars for personal use almost doubled from 1962 to 1966, rising from about 41,000 to 77,000. The number of private vans and trucks registered more than doubled during the period, rising from 36,000 to 75,000; motorcycle registration more than quadrupled, rising from 38,000 to 159,000. The number of buses and taxis registered also increased, although not so significantly. Fragmentary information on registration of motor vehicles since 1966 indicated a continuing rise.

In 1966 there were: about 2,938 miles of primary roads, of which about 66 percent were paved; about 3,500 miles of secondary roads, of which 40 percent were paved; and of about 4,375 miles of feeder roads, very few of which were paved. Although improvement of highways had been an important object of the First Development Plan and considerable progress had been made during the period, the road network was inadequate to handle the growing volume of traffic; highway improvement was therefore accorded priority of investment in the Second Development Plan.

The program projected for the period of the Second Development Plan included the construction of about 2,813 miles of roads. Priority was given to provision of an adequate network of all-weather primary and secondary roads. The improvement of feeder roads was given serious but secondary consideration. The heart of the program consisted of the improvement or construction of three primary highways as part of the system linking Bangkok with the northern, northeastern, and southern regions of the country. To finance this part of the program, the government requested a loan from the World Bank. The loan, which was acted upon favorably in 1969, was the fourth loan from the World Bank for improvement of the highway system. Other loans had been granted in 1963, 1966, and 1968.

### Air Transportation

Thailand, a well-established crossroad in the international air-lane has a well-established air service provided by state-owned enterprises. Domestic service is provided by the Thai Airways Company, Limited, and international service, by Thai Airways International, Limited (a joint venture with Scandinavian Airline System). A private airline, Varan Air-Siam Air Company, was granted organizational privileges with tax-exemption inducements in 1968. This airline has since acquired a DC-4 for cargo operation on the Bangkok-Hong Kong route and has obtained a permit to commence service to Honolulu and Los Angeles. This service is to be provided with aircraft and crew leased from Overseas National Airways.

In 1968 there were more than twenty domestic airports including fields in all major cities in the country. Not more than half of the airports had paved runways or were equipped to receive the most modern planes. Because of the need for improved facilities to meet the need of increased passenger and freight traffic and technological changes, the Civil Aviation Department inaugurated a large-scale program for the construction of new provincial airports and the modernization of existing ones. The program included the construction of an airport at Hat Yai in the southern province of Songkhla, the extension and improvement of the runways at Trang and Loei airports, and the building of a traffic control tower at Khon Kaen Airport. Additional provincial airports were in the planning stage.

Thai Airways International, Limited, in 1970 reached eighteen destinations in thirteen countries. Within the general area more than one flight weekly is scheduled for Dacca, Bali, Seoul, New Delhi, Hong Kong, Taipei, Tokyo, Saigon, Manila, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Djakarta, Rangoon, and Calcutta. Flights to Hong Kong are scheduled twice daily; there are ten flights weekly to Taipei and Singapore and daily flights to Tokyo and Saigon. Bangkok is a scheduled stop for many international lines. In 1970 thirty-six international companies had landing rights at Bangkok; twenty-eight were using the airport facilities.

The only international airport is located at Don Muang, just north of Bangkok. Don Muang airport belongs to the Royal Thai Air Force and is used for commercial purposes with its consent. Because of the increasing volume of international passengers and freight, the civil aviation authority is planning a new international airport just east of Bangkok for civil air transportation only. The new facility is planned to accommodate the expected supersonic jets. In the meantime the Don Muang airport is being improved to take care of the large jets until such time as the new airport is constructed.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Trade is facilitated by a postal system of longstanding and by an organized telephone and telegraph system. Information provided by radio and television stations also contributed to the growth and conduct of trade (see ch. 6, Education, Culture, and Public Information).

Postal service was established in 1883. In 1968 there were 1,177 post offices with about 9,000 employees. Of the total number of offices, it was estimated that at least 1,000 were inadequately staffed and equipped, and their improvement over a period of twenty years was part of the general program for improvement of postal service. In 1968 a system of decentralization was being adopted in metropolitan areas to provide better service.

In addition to provision of the usual services of mailing letters and packages and selling stamps, the postal system sells money orders, which may be sent overseas, and handles international telegrams and cablegrams for most countries. At least 300 offices provide combined postal and telegraph services.

Telephone service is provided by the Telephone Organization of Thailand. In 1965 there were sixty-six telephone exchanges, and about 78,000 telephones were in use. In 1967 there were seventy-four telephone exchanges and slightly more than 98,000 telephones in use. The Telephone Organization planned to increase facilities from 1967 to 1971, particularly in metropolitan areas. Local services are provided, and long distance service is available on a limited basis. With the completion of the telecommunications system, which was underway in 1967, long distance service will be available on a nationwide basis. In addition to other forms of communication, international service is available through the International Telecommunication Satellite Consortium, of which Thailand is a member.

## **SECTION IV. NATIONAL SECURITY**

### **CHAPTER 15**

#### **NATIONAL DEFENSE AND INTERNAL SECURITY**

Conditions both of national security and of internal order were generally good and under control in mid-1970. No foreign power posed a direct threat to national existence, although the overthrow of Prince Norodom Sihanouk in Cambodia and subsequent Communist armed attacks on the new government there created fears that the disturbances might spread into Thailand. This was looked upon as a real possibility because Communist subversive activity within the country was a problem of long standing that had been growing increasingly serious during the 1960s.

Three major areas, all of which were along or near the borders, were involved: the Northeastern Khorat Plateau Region, especially in the more remote districts of provinces facing Laos; the Southern Peninsula Region in areas near Malaysia; and the northern tier of provinces adjacent to Burma. The Communist problem was not generally considered to be an indigenous one but, rather, was believed to be an externally directed effort and part of the overall Communist aggression in Southeast Asia. The movement was predominantly controlled by Communist China, extensively assisted by North Vietnam and the Pathet Lao in Laos.

Elsewhere in the country the people were generally law abiding and orderly. Habits of obedience and respect for authority were inculcated in the Thai by centuries of rule under monarchs whose authority was both secular and religious. The moral sanctions of Buddhism and the pressures for conformity in village communities where most of the people lived further reinforced traditional values placed on personal restraint and public harmony. Political coups, although frequent in the past, involved relatively little bloodshed; riots and public disturbances requiring large-scale police action were rare occurrences.

The maintenance of public law and order was the primary responsibility of the National Police Department, a subdivision of the Ministry of the Interior. This agency was also charged with supporting the armed forces in any national emergency. The department controlled all police activity and exercised strong influence in prose-

cutions in the courts and, therefore, in the application of the law. In 1970 the overall strength of police forces was estimated to be about 80,000 most of which were located in the metropolitan Bangkok area and in the northeastern sections of the country, where the threat or subversion was strongest.

Laws governing criminal behavior are contained in the Penal Code of 1956 as revised. The code is based mainly on French and British legal concepts but contains a trace of traditional Thai elements. The influence of Thai tradition is notably apparent in the character of the moral propositions and the general definition of public order set forth in the code. In addition to the formal criminal code, Thai citizens who are Muslims are held accountable to Islamic rules and usages.

The administration of justice is carried out through courts of the Ministry of Justice. These courts are organized in a graded hierarchy, whose original jurisdictions are predicated on the seriousness of the alleged offenses they are called upon to adjudicate (see ch. 9, Political System and Values). Jury trials do not exist, and decisions are rendered by judges of the courts without assistance. Convicted offenders may appeal judgments against them, if desired, to the Supreme Court, which is the highest court in the land and whose determinations are final.

The country's military establishment consists of the Royal Thai Army (RTA); the Royal Thai Navy (RTN), including a corps of marines; and the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF). The combined strength of these forces in 1970 was estimated to be approximately 180,000. The RTA numbered almost 120,000, the RTN just over 30,000, and the RTAF about 30,000 officers and men. All components were equipped with arms and matériel supplied by the United States and were trained in accordance with United States military concepts and practice.

#### NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE FORCES

For a people regarded by themselves and others as peaceable, the Thai have had much experience in warfare. From early times, with few exceptions, the country's kings were military leaders, and the history of their reigns is replete with accounts of armed conflicts (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

Thailand's history, in fact, has been an almost constant struggle to maintain freedom and national identity, and emphasis has been placed on teaching this history as a basis for developing patriotism and a strong national spirit. This historical emphasis, coupled with the time-honored value of respect for authority, inculcated basic social attitudes in Thai youths that enable them to accept military life and become well-disciplined members of the armed forces. De-

spite this background, however, no military cult or warrior class had developed. Between wars the peasants went back to the land, and the few retainers and mercenaries who made up the permanent military establishment enjoyed no special privileges or prestige and exercised no particular influence in national life.

Little was done to improve the professional quality or capabilities of the military establishment until after 1950, when the Thai entered into various assistance agreements with the United States, including a Military Assistance Program (MAP). Under MAP a comprehensive modernization program was initiated based on United States advice, matériel assistance, and training. By 1970 these measures had transformed the Thai armed forces into a modern establishment with greatly improved capabilities for national defense and internal security.

The acceptance of Western influences by the rulers of Thailand at the outset of the twentieth century significantly affected the role of the military. By the 1930s many officers had attended European military schools, where they learned not only military techniques but also new social and political patterns and concepts.

Similarly, considerable numbers of civilians had studied abroad and were concerning themselves with liberalizing the governmental system. The civilian leaders enlisted support among some of the military, and the combination, in a coup d'état in June 1932, brought about the transformation of the absolute monarchy into a constitutional institution. The military leaders were soon at odds with the new civilian prime minister. Ultimately, in June 1933 they seized power in a second coup.

The pattern established by these events persisted with subsequent coups. All these shifts of power were carried out by military leaders assisted the the armed forces. Rather than being inspired by a wish to change the system of government, these appeared to be caused by rivalry between military leaders. A feature of these contests was that the achievement of high political office by an officer in some cases tended to weaken his personal connections and his influence within the military establishment. In the last coup (1958), Field Marshal Phibul Songgram was overthrown by a military group led by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, who died in 1963 and was succeeded by his deputy, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, who has continued the military regime ever since.

Military leaders have exercised their authority in the name of the king and, while some have suspended, modified, or redrafted the constitution, they have not formally challenged the constitutional principle. They have shown little disposition to alter the basic political and economic order and have tended to work through existing governmental institutions. Civilian career officials appear to have

accepted without resentment the dominance of military men in the major executive positions of control.

By 1967 the two most powerful men in the government were Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn and General Praphas Charusathira. In addition to occupying the principal political post of prime minister, Marshal Thanom was also supreme commander of the armed forces and minister of defense. General Praphas was deputy prime minister and concurrently deputy supreme commander of the armed forces, commander in chief of the Royal Thai Army, and minister of the interior.

The armed forces, together with the National Police Department, have the threefold missions of maintaining internal security, guarding the life and property of the citizenry, and guarding the country against external aggression. The most urgent of these missions in 1970 was defense of the country against Communist-led insurgency. Thailand has also assumed limited military obligations as a result of membership in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the United Nations.

The army is responsible primarily for planning and directing military operations to oppose any threat to national security and with training and equipping the ground forces in accordance with these plans. The navy's basic mission is to protect the seaward approaches to the country and to assist in the suppression of subversive activity in the maintenance of internal security. The air force is charged with providing tactical air support to ground and naval forces and to counterinsurgency units. It also coordinates civil and military aviation and provides technical training for civil air specialists.

### Armed Forces Organization

#### High Command

The 1968 Constitution declares that the king is the head of the Thai armed forces, but actually he has little direct military authority. Functional control instead was exercised in 1970 by Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn in his triple role of prime minister, minister of defense, and supreme commander of the armed forces. In carrying out his duties, Marshal Thanom is advised by the Council of Ministers (the cabinet) and the National Security Council and is assisted by one deputy supreme commander (see fig. 5).

The National Security Council advises the prime minister on subjects that pertain to national security and require cabinet approval or action. It consists of the prime minister as chairman; his deputy; the secretary general of the National Security Council; the ministers of defense, foreign affairs, the interior, communications, and finance; and the supreme commander of the armed forces. The prime minister dominates the council, holding three of its authorized seats.

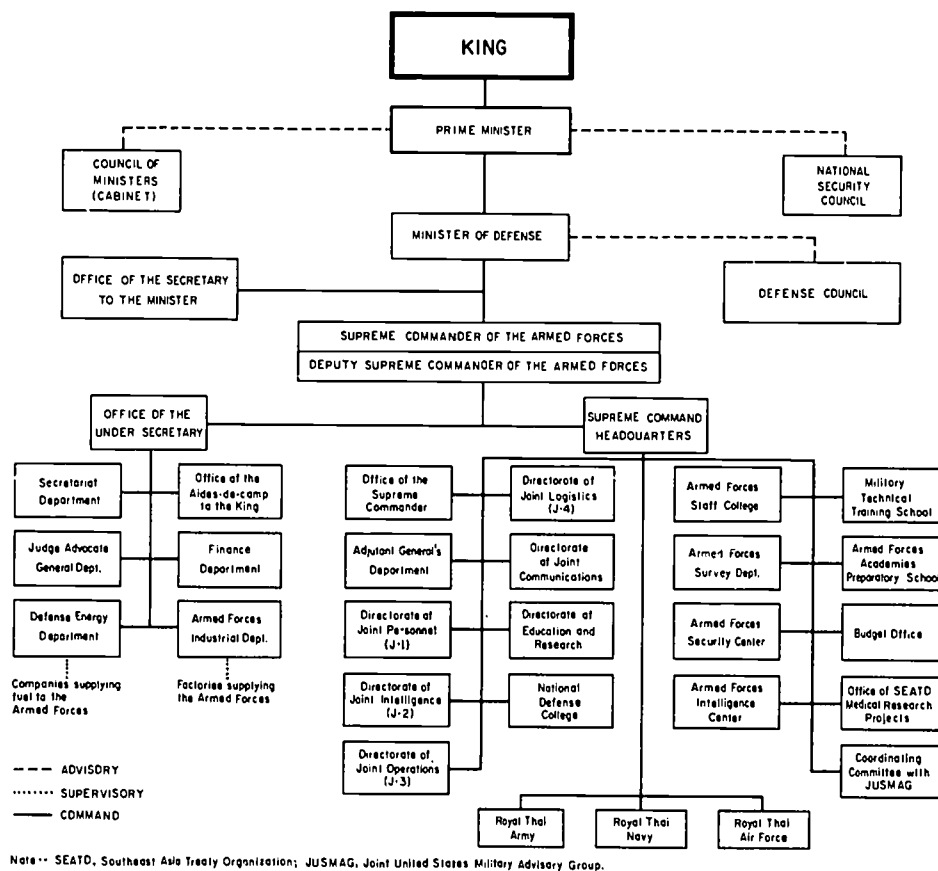


Figure 5. High Command of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, 1970

The Ministry of Defense is charged with supervising the operation and administration of the army, the navy, and the air force and coordinates their policies with those of other governmental agencies concerned with national security. It is organized into the Office of the Secretary to the Minister, the Office of the Under Secretary, and the Supreme Command Headquarters. The Office of the Secretary to the Minister is concerned primarily with political affairs and with the preparation of matters to be considered by the Council of Ministers. The Office of the Under Secretary is responsible for functions not allocated to other offices in the ministry.

The Supreme Command Headquarters is the most important in the military command structure and is responsible for maintaining the armed forces in a state of combat readiness. It is provided with administrative and general staff sections for exercising command over the three military services and also supervises certain special activities, projects, and schools (see fig. 6).

The defense Council within the ministry advises the minister of defense on military matters, particularly those pertaining to draft laws, budget allocations, and the mobilization, training, and deployment of the armed forces. It is composed of the minister (chairman), the under secretary of defense and his deputy, the supreme



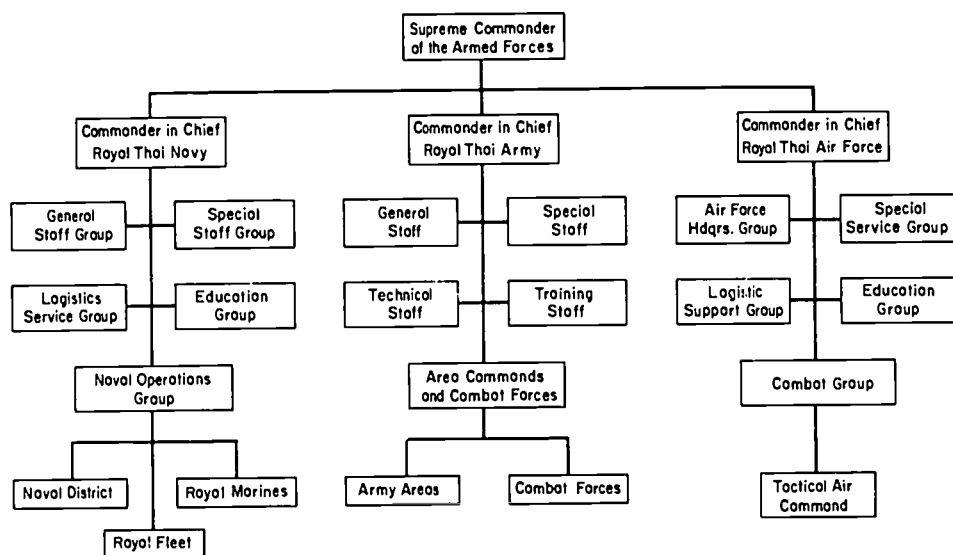


Figure 6. Field Command of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, 1970

commander of the armed forces, the chief of staff of the supreme command, the commanders in chief of the three military services and their deputies, the chiefs of staff of the three services, and not more than three additional general officers selected by the minister.

Each of the three armed services is headed by a commander who is directly responsible to the supreme commander of the armed forces. Their functions are similar to those of their counterparts in the United States armed forces: the army chief of staff, the chief of naval operations, and the chief of the air force staff. Although the three services are equal under existing laws, the army in fact is the dominant component, and key positions in both the armed forces structure and other parts of the government are held by senior army officers.

#### The Royal Thai Army

The commander in chief of the Royal Thai Army (RTA) is charged with carrying out the directives and missions issued to him by the minister of defense. He is assisted by one deputy and two assistant commanders in chief, a chief of staff, and members of the army headquarters organization. Headquarters is formed into five general sections: general staff, special staff, technical staff, training staff, and area commands and combat forces. The functions and procedures of the general, special, and technical staffs are similar to those employed by the United States Army.

The training staff is concerned with the overall educational and training activities of the RTA and the army reserve personnel. It is composed of four groups: the Army Field Forces, comparable to the United States Continental Army Command; the Army War Col-

lege; the Command and General Staff College; and the Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy.

In addition to these groups, there is the Territorial Defense Department of the ministry, which plans and supervises the training of reserve personnel. Since organized reserve units are lacking, this department is concerned chiefly with supervising the military training courses in schools and universities.

Territorially, the RTA operates through regional area commands for both tactical and administrative purposes. Each area is divided into military circles, which are subdivided into military districts and provinces in which varying numbers of tactical and service units are stationed. The chain of command proceeds from the basic unit upward through military district and military circle headquarters to the area command headquarters and from them to the commander in chief of the army.

Tactically, the RTA is organized into three infantry divisions and one regimental combat team supported by appropriate engineer, antiaircraft artillery, signal, and transportation battalions. The overall strength of the RTA, including headquarters personnel, is about 120,000 officers and men.

#### The Royal Thai Navy

The commander in chief of the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) is assisted by a deputy commander in chief and the chief of the naval general staff. His highly centralized naval headquarters is divided into five groups: general staff, special staff, logistics service, education, and naval operations. The functions of the first four of these groups are roughly similar to those of corresponding groups in the RTA command structure.

The Naval Operations Group includes the Royal Fleet, the Royal Marines, and the Naval District. The commander in chief of the Royal Fleet is responsible for the training, employment, and administration of the naval operating forces and for maintaining them in a state of combat readiness. The commander of the Royal Marines is responsible for training and equipping the naval landing forces. The commander of the Naval District is responsible for administration and discipline at both the naval base of Bangkok and the one at Sattahip, about seventy-five miles southeast of the capital.

The RTN has a total complement of about sixty vessels, the major ones of which are frigates, transports, armed gunboats, and patrol craft. Other vessels include minesweepers, minelayers, landing ships and craft, oilers, and a variety of small craft. Including headquarters personnel and about 7,000 in the Royal Marines, the RTN has a total strength of approximately 30,000 officers and men. There are no submarines, no naval air arms, and no aircraft carriers, but there is a Royal Naval College at Paknam.

### **The Royal Thai Air Force**

The Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF), under its own commander in chief, is a separate and coequal component of the defense establishment. The commander in chief, aided by a vice commander in chief and a deputy commander in chief, is responsible for organizing, training, and equipping the RTAF and for coordinating its operations with those of the army and the navy to attain a united defense of the kingdom. The command structure consists of five groups: RTAF headquarters, special service, logistic support, education, and combat.

The RTAF Headquarters Group consists of the Office of the Commander, the Don Muang Air Base, and seven directorates that perform the usual general staff functions. The Special Service Group is composed of two directorates, welfare and civil aviation, the latter being concerned with coordinating the activities of civil and military aviation. The Logistics Support Group and the Education Group carry out the normal supply and training missions common to a service headquarters.

### **The Defense Forces and National Economy**

#### **Manpower**

The main source of personnel for the armed forces is conscription, which is administered for all services by the army in accordance with provisions of the Military Service Act of 1954. The main source of manpower is basically the ethnic Thai, who constitute close to 90 percent of the total population; but all ethnic groups are equally liable to service. Most inductees come from rural areas and are reliable, hardy, physically fit, adaptable, and capable of performing military duties in a creditable manner. They are accustomed to working outdoors in tropical heat, humid climate, and monsoonal rains; are predominantly Buddhist; and possess a keen interest in learning and developing new skills. The average conscript accepts his military obligations as a patriotic duty.

Under the law all male Thais must register when they become eighteen years of age but are not liable for compulsory service until they reach twenty-one. At that time they are notified to report for a physical examination to determine whether or not they are fit for military duty. On the basis of this examination they are divided into four categories: those who are fully qualified to service in combat units; those who are partially disabled and eligible for duty in service units only; those with minor correctable defects deferred until the next callup; and those who are physically disqualified and exempt.

In addition to exemption for physical reasons, priests and monks,

career teachers, cadets attending the military academies, persons undergoing military training (men of draft age may enlist before being called up), students in certain technical courses, and persons convicted of a crime with a penalty of ten years' imprisonment are also freed from draft obligations. Waivers are also granted under the law in cases of personal hardship, such as to men who are the sole support of parents or minor children and to students in the later stages of their education.

The total induction each year averages about 30,000 men, far less than the total available. Because the supply does outstrip the need, exemptions and waivers are granted liberally, and only men in the best physical condition are selected for service. Those who are selected are customarily sent to the nearest army, navy, or air force installation where the need is greatest. At these places they are assigned to units for training and then to appropriate elements for duty.

Active duty in one of these services is for two years, after which the individual is released and goes into unassigned reserve status for an additional twenty-three years. During this period of reserve service he is liable to recall at any time the need arises. The priority of recall is based on age, the youngest reserves being reinducted first.

Noncommissioned officers (NCO) are, in most cases, former conscripts who have reenlisted to make the military service a career. On the basis of efficient performance they are selected to attend an NCO school and upon graduation are returned to their units in their new status. A limited number of NCOs also are procured by placing graduates of the reserve training programs conducted by the Territorial Defense Department of the Ministry of Defense on active duty.

The officer corps of the armed forces is generally composed of graduates of the service academies and of officer candidate schools. It also includes a small number of reserve officers who have completed courses given to Reserve Officer Training Corps students in colleges and universities and decide to make a career in one of the armed forces. A few officers with special qualifications have been commissioned directly from civilian life.

The grade and rank structures of the three armed services are similar to those of comparable components of the United States forces. The king grants all commissions, and appointments to non-commissioned grades are authorized by the minister of defense.

#### **Military Budget**

Steps taken by the government to strengthen the Thai military posture are reflected in the steady rise of the military budget. Between 1962 and 1965 it rose an average of more than 8 percent to the equivalent of about US\$92.5 million. In 1966 the rise was more

than 12 percent to US\$104.4 million. Since 1966 it has continued its upward trend until in 1970 the budget reached a value estimated to be over US\$235 million. The army's share of the budget has generally exceeded that of the navy and the air force combined.

### Training

Training of the Thai armed forces has increased in scope and intensity since the implementation of the United States Military Assistance Program (MAP) in 1950. With MAP support and the guidance of the United States Military Advisory Group, weapons were replaced by modern armament, and increased fund outlays were made for training purposes. Training facilities were expanded, military instruction courses in the United States were made available to Thai officers, and conventional training was augmented by intensified programs dealing with counterinsurgency.

In the army new conscripts customarily undergo a sixteen-week recruiting program. The first eight weeks are devoted to basic training and the second eight weeks to more advanced branch and specialist training. This is followed by an annual unit training cycle that lasts the rest of the year.

The annual unit training cycle proceeds in three phases. About two months are allocated for training and testing in squad, section, and platoon tactics. The second phase of company- and battalion-level exercises follows progressively, and the cycle usually ends with some form of regimental or combined maneuver.

In the navy basic training lasts for eight to eleven weeks, depending on the ultimate assignment of the individual. The course is devoted to the elementary aspects of seamanship, navigation, ordnance and gunnery, and damage control. Recruits in the Royal Marines also attend the normal naval basic training course, but those selected for advanced training receive an additional eight weeks of training in special amphibious warfare along counterinsurgency lines.

Naval unit training is generally conducted at the naval squadron level. Shipboard drills, including team gunnery and other underway training, take place throughout the entire training cycle. Underway training for fleet units is also maintained throughout the training year. Unit and advanced training in the Royal Marines encompasses a thirty-six week cycle and is considered to be excellent, particularly with respect to special operations and counterinsurgency techniques.

Air force training is basically the same as that of the United States Air Force. Upon completion of their basic training, recruits are selected for more advanced programs. Flight training (primary and advanced) was conducted at the Nakhon Ratchasima airbase in the northeast but in 1970 was being transferred to a new facility in

Nakhon Pathom Province. The predominant portion of air technical training takes place at the school complex situated at Don Muang Air Base.

More advanced and specialized individual training is provided by the many formal schools of the armed forces. No single command or staff agency exercises general supervision over all the various schools, as this function is decentralized to the commanders in chiefs for the schools in their services. Matters affecting the whole system of military education and problems of coordination between schools, however, are usually resolved within the Directorate of Education and Research at Supreme Command Headquarters. This directorate also supervises the operation of the combined and special service schools, such as the National Defense College, the Armed Forces Staff College, the Military Technical Training School, sponsored by the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), and the Armed Forces Academies Preparatory School.

The National Defense College at Bangkok is the highest level military school in the country. Its ten-week course, conducted for about forty high-ranking civilian officials and senior military police officers each year, covers military, political, and economic subjects. Its principal objective is to encourage understanding between military and civilian officials in planning and directing national security interests.

The Armed Forces Staff College, also at Bangkok, is the second highest military school. It has an annual enrollment of about thirty-five senior officers selected from the three armed services. The school's aim is to produce senior general staff officers qualified to serve on joint or combined staffs.

The SEATO-sponsored Military Technical Training School offers a three-year course designed to provide NCOs with specialty training in technical fields. Its subjects include automobile mechanics, engineering and construction, radio and telecommunications maintenance, and electronics.

The Armed Forces Academies Preparatory School in Bangkok provides two years of premilitary instruction to selected youths expecting to enter one of the service academies or the National Police Academy. Candidates for admission must be between the ages of fifteen and nineteen and possess a secondary school education or its equivalent. They are chosen in competitive examination, and usually there are more than fifteen applicants for each of the 250 vacancies that are available each year.

Each of the three armed services operates its own service academy, of which the army's Chulachomkiao Royal Military Academy is the largest and oldest. These service academies serve as the principal sources of junior officers for the three services. The course of instruction in each is five years, and graduating classes are fairly uniform at about 175 each.

The army, the navy, and the air force also maintain separate command and general staff colleges to train selected officers of the rank of major or its equivalent in advanced military tactics and general staff techniques. For certain officers of the army and navy, generally colonels and captains, respectively, provision is made for advanced study and preparation for higher command at their separate war colleges.

NCO schools exist throughout the armed forces to provide technical specialists as required. These schools are oriented primarily toward career enlisted men and offer courses of varying length in vocational specialties. In all three services some academic instruction along technical lines is made available to junior officers before certain assignments.

A sizable number of selected officers from all armed forces are sent abroad to the United States each year to attend special courses and to receive advanced technical training. Others are assigned to United States units operating in the Pacific area for observer training under operational conditions.

### Logistics

The focal point for all armed forces logistics matters is the Directorate of Joint Logistics (J-4) within Supreme Command Headquarters. This office acts as a planning and coordinating staff for the three services and as the principal liaison channel for all contacts with foreign aid missions. Actual procurement and allocation of arms, equipment, and supplies, however, rest with the individual service commanders who control the facilities and support units within their forces.

A very heavy percentage of the armed forces matériel requirements must be acquired from outside sources. The bulk is furnished by the United States and flows through MAP channels. In each military service a senior staff element has overall responsibility for logistic services, but most of the actual functions are carried out by the technical services (quartermaster, ordnance, signal, transportation) or their equivalents.

### Awards and Decorations

Formal honors and symbols of merit occupy an important place in the Thai tradition, and all military personnel receive and wear awards and decorations with great pride. The Thai government grants numerous awards, and outstanding acts of heroism, courage, and meritorious service receive quick recognition by superiors (see table 14). There are no awards or decorations for Thai military personnel that are peculiar to any one of the three services.

### Military Justice

The military justice system of the Thai armed forces is administered by the minister of defense through his Judge Advocate General Department, which supervises the various military courts of the army, navy, and air force. In structure and procedures the system follows United States practice.

All serious cases are tried by the appropriate courts, which are divided into three categories: the courts of first instance, including those operated by military units as well as the formal courts within the various regions, provinces, and at Bangkok; the Military Appeal Court; and the Military Supreme Court. The last two courts are located in the capital, and their judges are appointed by royal decree. The authority to appoint judges of the various military courts, however, is delegated to the minister of defense and the appropriate military commanders. In time of war a military court may be established when necessary by any ranking commanding officer who has at least one army battalion or an equivalent naval or air force element under his command.

The types of punishment meted out to convicted officers and men alike may range from reprimand to death. In time of war desertion, surrender to the enemy, treason, and murder usually carry the death penalty. All sentences, however, are subject to possible reduction by the reviewing authority, and death sentences are automatically postponed for sixty days to permit petitioning for clemency to the king, who is empowered to pardon any convicted person.

Thailand is a signer of the 1949 Geneva Convention dealing with prisoners of war. In keeping with this obligation, the government enacted a law in 1955 providing in effect that all rules and regulations of the convention would take precedence over any conflicting Thai laws concerning prisoners.

### THE POLICE SYSTEM

The National Police Department is a unitary agency having exclusive responsibility for performing all police missions for the entire country. Its components include the National Police Department headquarters at Bangkok, the Provincial Police, the Metropolitan Police, the Criminal Investigation Bureau, and the Education Bureau. The organization is quasi-military in character, and all ranks except the lowest (constable) correspond to military ranks. The annual police budget has been increasing steadily, rising from the equivalent of about US\$45 million in 1967 to a value estimated to approach US\$60 million in 1970.

In addition to the regular components and still within the Minis-



Table 14. Thai Military Awards and Decorations  
(in accepted order of precedence)

Title	Estab- lished	Remarks
The Most Illustrious Order of the Royal House of Chakkri	1882	Awarded for meritorious service to members of the family and heads of state.
The Ancient and Auspicious Order of the Nine Gems	1869	Awarded to high government officials of the Buddhist religion.
The Most Illustrious Order of Chula Chom Klao	1873	Awarded for meritorious service to the sovereign. Given in three classes.
The Ratana Varabhorn	1911	An order of merit.
The Honorable Order of Rama	1918	Awarded for military and naval services to the state. Given in four classes.
The Most Exalted Order of the White Elephant	1861	Awarded for meritorious service to the state. Given in eight classes.
The Most Noble Order of the Crown of Thailand	1869	Awarded for meritorious service to the state. Given in eight classes.
The Vallabhabhorn Order	1919	Awarded for personal services to the king.
The Vajira Mala Order	1911	Do.
The Rama Medal	1918	Awarded for gallantry in action.
The Dushdi Mala Medal	1882	Awarded as token of royal appreciation.
The Chakrabarti Mala Medal	1873	Awarded to military personnel for twenty-five years' honorable service.
The Chakra Mala Medal	1873	Awarded to military personnel for fifteen years' honorable service.
The Rajaruchi Medal	1897	Awarded to officers and warrant officers of His Majesty's Guard Regiment.
The Rajaniyom Medal	1912	Awarded for lifesaving.
The Chai Smorabhum Medal	1941	Awarded for service in the Indochina conflict.

The Medal of Bravery .....	1941	Awarded to members of the defense and police forces for courageous actions during the Indochina conflict.
The Border Service Medal .....	1941	Awarded for courageous and honorable service in a frontier area.
The Home Front Service Medal .....	1941	Awarded to those who performed auxiliary war duties in support of the fighting forces during the Indochin conflict.

try of the Interior but outside the National Police Department, there is a Volunteer Defense Corps under the supervision of the Department of Local Administration. This completely volunteer organization is a part-time militia, which functions as an auxiliary police force to supplement security measures at the village level. In time of full emergency, this force of over 20,000 men would be expanded and mobilized as a reserve force to serve under the Ministry of Defense.

The formal functions of the National Police Department include more than the enforcement of laws and the apprehension and investigation of offenders. The department also bears responsibility for the internal security of the country under conditions of less than full insurgency. In case of invasion all components of the police system, except the Metropolitan Police, are expected to mobilize and bear the brunt of fighting until the army can deploy its forces to the field. In case of war, the mobilized police units would be placed under the Ministry of Defense and would serve with, but would not be incorporated into, military formations.

Because the counterinsurgency role of the police has become increasingly important, conventional police missions have been modified to include greater cooperation with representatives of other government agencies. Realizing that the betterment of local conditions reduces dissatisfaction and the subversive potential in depressed areas, the usual police security efforts have been augmented by assigning teams of economic and sociological specialists to operate and improve living standards in rural areas.

#### **National Police Department Headquarters**

The National Police Department headquarters administers all components of the police system. It is headed by a director general, who holds the rank of general and who is aided by two deputy directors general and one assistant director general, all of whom are lieutenant generals. The comprehensive scope of the functions performed by the headquarters is indicated by its numerous divisions, bureaus, and offices. In addition to the usual headquarters administrative sections, it includes divisions dealing with legal affairs, prosecution, finance, supplies, research and planning, immigration, alien registration, tax controls, communications, technical services, medical services, welfare, crime detection, and matters affecting foreign nationals. It also has an inspector general's office directly responsible to the director general.

#### **Provincial Police**

The Provincial Police, which includes the Border Patrol Police, constitutes the largest component of the National Police Department.

ment in terms of both manpower and geographic responsibility. The forces are charged with providing police services and protection to every city and town in Thailand except the metropolitan Bangkok area and to every rural area. Rural areas contiguous to national land borders are the unique responsibilities of the Border Patrol Police. The Provincial Police bear the brunt of law enforcement activities and in many cases are the principal representatives of the central government's authority.

The Provincial Police are headed by a commissioner who reports directly to the director general of the National Police Department. The country is divided administratively into nine police regions of varying size, ranging from six to eleven provinces each. Each region is headed by a commander who operates out of his own regional headquarters to control the administration, operation, and training of forces in his territory. Each province in a region is in charge of a police superintendent who supervises the operation of all police units and of all district police stations and substations in his area.

Since 1966 two new types of specialized forces have been developed to improve village security and to suppress insurgency. At the village level, units of twelve to fifteen men, selected from the village at large or from members of the Volunteer Defense Corps, are formed to augment police security operations. The units function under the regular Provincial Police, from whom they receive their training and equipment. The second type of specialized force involves larger units of about fifty men assigned to, and controlled by, each regional police headquarters. After receiving special counterinsurgency training, they are stationed at headquarters as highly mobile, quick-reaction forces to reinforce police units in trouble areas.

The Border Patrol Police, although an integral part of the Provincial Police, operate with a great deal of autonomy, usually maintaining a separate headquarters, in the region to which they are assigned. They are responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the protection of the borders against smuggling, illegal entry, infiltration of subversive elements, and banditry. They are also charged with the support of civic action projects and counterinsurgency programs.

The basic operating unit is the line platoon of thirty men deployed to the field and supported by one or more heavy weapons platoons stationed at area headquarters as a mobile reserve support force. There is also a special police aerial reinforcement unit to transport these units where needed.

In support of civic action programs the Border Patrol Police operate over 150 schools in remote areas and construct many others for civilian operation. They have built small airstrips for communications and the movement of supplies, established medical aid sta-

tions, and dispensed limited assistance in agricultural projects. Working among ethnic minorities, they have created development centers complete with dispensaries, trading facilities, and schools.

#### **Metropolitan Police**

The Metropolitan Police are assigned the responsibility of providing all police service for the capital city of Bangkok and its immediately surrounding area. Organizationally, the Metropolitan Police Force is divided into three areas, which are the northern Bangkok, the southern Bangkok and the Thon Buri divisions. Together they are manned by some 6,000 officers and men in about forty precincts, which are patrolled on a twenty-four-hour basis.

Other elements of the Metropolitan Police are in the Traffic Police Division; the Police Fire Brigade; and mobile patrol, police dog, juvenile aid, and building safeguard components. The Traffic Police Division, in addition to traffic control, provides mounted escorts and guards of honor for the king and serves as a riot control force to prevent unlawful demonstrations and disperse unruly crowds.

#### **The Criminal Investigation Bureau**

The Criminal Investigation Bureau is charged with helping local police, both provincial and metropolitan, in preventing and suppressing crimes and in minimizing activities that threaten national security. It also controls most of the specialized units, such as the Railway Police, the Marine Police, the Highway Patrol, and the Forestry Police. It has jurisdiction over the whole country, including the capital area.

In addition to directing the special police forces (railway, marine, highway, and forestry), which enforce laws in areas indicated by their names, the bureau has five other divisions and offices for modern police work. The Crime Suppression Division conducts investigations of criminal offenses everywhere and has an emergency unit to take care of disorders, sabotage, counterfeiting, cheating and fraud, gambling, narcotics use, secret societies, and criminal associations. The Special Branch Division carries out activities that are obscure because they deal with classified information and are not publicized. The Criminal Record Office collects and maintains records, including dossiers and fingerprints of known criminals and persons suspected of wrongdoing. The Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory is a well-equipped facility capable of performing all forms of chemical and physical analysis required for scientific crime detection work. The Licenses Division registers and licenses fire-arms, vehicles, gambling, hotels, and various other shops and enterprises as required by law.

### The Education Bureau

The Education Bureau is responsible for police education and training and for improving the efficiency of all police personnel. It discharges its mission through the operation of the Police Officers' Cadet Academy at Sam Phran, the Detective Training School in Bangkok, the Noncommissioned Officers' Training School at Bang Khen, the Metropolitan Police Training School at Bang Khen, and four provincial police training schools at Nakhon Pathom, Lampang, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Yala.

In addition to these schools, the Education Bureau also supervises a training center operated by the Border Patrol Police at Phitsarulok to retrain its line platoons in countersubversive techniques and in the conduct of counterinsurgency operations in jungle areas. It further supervises four *chaiya* (victory) centers established by the Provincial Police at Chiangmai, Udon Thani, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Pattani to familiarize and train regular provincial police personnel in modern counterinsurgency concepts.

## CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE

### The Penal Code

The Criminal Code of 1956 is the basic body of laws governing criminal behavior and how to deal with it. Its provisions incorporate features taken from French, English, Italian, Japanese, and Indian sources but retain a trace of traditional Thai elements.

The code begins by defining numerous terms, such as *fraudulent*, *assault*, and *official documents*, and then provides instructions for the application of the criminal law, including explanations regarding penalties, criminal liability, principals, accessories, and judgments. The code also specifies the actions to be taken in the case of repeated offenses and of offenses that involve violations of more than one provision of the law.

Twelve types of felonies are listed. The first category consists of crimes against the security of the kingdom, including crimes against the royal family, against the internal and external security of the state, and against maintaining friendly relations with foreign states. Crimes relating to public administration, such as malfeasance in office and crimes against public officials, form a second category. Crimes relating to justice, such as perjury or crimes against the police or the judiciary, constitute a third major group. Other felonies include crimes against religion; crimes against public peace and security; crimes relating to false money and counterfeiting seals, stamps, and documents; crimes against trade, including the use of false weights and measures and misrepresentations of goods; sexual

offenses; crimes against the person; crimes against liberty and reputation, such as false imprisonment, kidnapping, and libel; crimes against property; and such offenses as misappropriation and the receipt of stolen property.

The code also lists a wide assortment of petty offenses that are classed as misdemeanors. Misdemeanors are officially defined as violations punishable by imprisonment for not more than one month or a fine not exceeding the equivalent of US\$50 or both.

Five penalties are recognized by the code: death, imprisonment, detention (restricted residence), fines, and forfeiture of property to the state. The death sentence is mandatory for murder or attempted murder of any member of the royal family or for any offense likely to endanger the life of the king, murder of a public official or anyone assisting a public official in the performance of his duty, murder committed in perpetrating another offense or to escape punishment, matricide or patricide, premeditated murder, or murder accompanied by torture. Other murders may be punishable by death but usually involve only imprisonment. Execution is by firing squad; sentences to life imprisonment normally expire in twenty years, which is the maximum prison term.

Children under eight years of age are not subject to criminal penalties; juveniles between the ages of seven and fifteen are not subject to fine or imprisonment but may be restricted to their homes, placed on probation, or sent to a vocational training school. Such juvenile delinquents may simply be admonished by the court and released, or the parents may be required to show that they have taken measures to ensure against repeated violations for as much as three years and to pay a sum not exceeding the equivalent of US\$50 in compensation for damages caused by the delinquent within this period. Offenses committed by minors over fourteen but not over seventeen years of age may be penalized by fines or periods of confinement, the length of which is one-half of those prescribed for adults committing the same crimes.

### Criminal Courts

Criminal cases or points of criminal law come before three types of courts: any of the various types of courts of the first instance in the provinces, the Court of Appeals in Bangkok, and the Supreme Court, also in Bangkok (see ch. 9, Political System and Values).

None of these courts employ the jury system; criminal trials are heard by one or more judges, the number depending on the gravity of the charge. Subject to juridical regulations established by the Supreme Court, trial procedure is left to the discretion of the presiding judges.

The independence of the judiciary is prescribed by the Constitu-

tion, but there are limiting factors. Actually, the executive branch may establish or abolish courts on the recommendation of the Department of Justice. Moreover, the Judicial Service Commission appointed by the king is charged with recruiting, appointing, transferring, or removing judges. Also, judges salaries are included in the budget of the Ministry of Justice, which is voted annually by the National Assembly.

Judges are recruited through competitive examinations held annually. Successful candidates are placed on probationary status and receive judicial training for one year before they are eligible for appointment to full judgeships. There is a progressive system of promotion until retirement at age sixty. Judges are not regarded as civil servants and are not subject to civil service controls.

#### Criminal Procedures

Responsibility for the administration of criminal law is divided between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice. The National Police Department in the Ministry of the Interior is charged with detecting and investigating crimes, with collecting evidence, and with bringing the accused before the court. The Public Prosecution Department, also in the Ministry of the Interior, represents the state in criminal proceedings and conducts the prosecution. The Ministry of Justice supervises the operation of the courts.

The first step in a criminal case is a preliminary investigation carried out by a police officer. Searches of the houses or persons of suspects and others thought to be implicated may be made. Warrants for these searches are required and to be valid must state the reason for the search, the identity of the person or place to be searched, the name and official position of the officer making the search, and the nature of the offense charged.

Similar procedures apply for arrest warrants, but a senior police officer may make an arrest without a warrant when the offense is of a serious nature, when the violator is taken in flagrante delicto, or when he is found in possession of a weapon or instrument commonly used for criminal purposes. Private citizens may arrest without warrant anyone caught in the act of committing a serious crime.

An arrested person must be taken promptly to a police station, where the arrest warrant is read and explained to him. He may then be held or released on bail. The provisions for bail and security are defined by law.

Following an arrest, a further and more detailed investigation of the case is made, but it may not begin until the complainant—the state or a private individual—has submitted and signed a full bill of particulars. At the beginning of this phase the accused must be warned that any statement he makes may be used against him in



court. Threats, promises, or coercion may not be used by the investigator to induce the accused to make self-incriminating statements.

When the investigation has been completed, a report is filed with the public prosecutor, who then prepares an indictment, a copy of which must be given to the accused or to his counsel. The alleged violator is then haled into court to enter his plea of guilty or not guilty. Based on this plea and the evidence that has been developed, the decision to accept the case for trial or to dismiss all charges lies with the judge.

Trials are normally held in open court, and the accused is presumed to be innocent until proved guilty. If the defendant has no counsel and wishes to be represented, the court will appoint a defense attorney. During the trial the accused or his counsel may cross-examine prosecution witnesses and reexamine defense witnesses. He may also refuse to answer questions or to give evidence that might be incriminating. At the conclusion of the argument the court is usually recessed while the judge arrives at his decision; it must, however, be reconvened within three days and the judgment read to the accused in open court. The presiding judge, after announcing the sentence, frequently cancels half of it if the accused has confessed to his crimes. If the convicted person wishes to appeal, he must do so within fifteen days. The case is then transferred to the Court of Appeals, which may reverse or reduce the sentence but cannot increase the penalty imposed by the original trial court.

### THE INCIDENCE OF CRIME

Published crime statistics are virtually nonexistent because the National Police Department, which is responsible for computing annual crime rates and indices in each province, does not release its findings. The Ministry of Justice, however, publishes yearly summaries of convictions in the courts of first instance, which provide indication of the relative number and types of crimes committed. From them it appears that the most common offenses are those against public administration, those against public justice, those involving riot and general violence, libel and slander, murder and assault, theft and armed robbery, and a variety of petty offenses.

The most serious, although not the most numerous, crimes are offenses against the royal family or against the state (particularly those directly affecting national security), assassination of a public official, or any murder involving cruelty or torture. The most prevalent, after violations of the antigambling laws, are thefts and contraventions of the narcotics and excise laws.

In general, organized crime is rare except for the illicit trade in opium, which persists in spite of the progress of police reforms. In

Bangkok and some of the larger towns, the activity of gangs, mostly youths, seems to be giving the authorities increasing concern. Mounting insurgency has also given rise to offenses against the state and those involving general violence.

The highest incidence of crime appears to be in the group under twenty-five years of age, whose members constitute almost half of all persons committed to prison. Most of these young offenders come from the tenement districts of Bangkok and include a high proportion classed as hooligans.

#### Insurgency

Insurgency is one of the most pressing problems facing law and order authorities in Thailand. It occurs primarily in the remote provinces of the Northeastern Khorat Plateau Region, in the Southern Peninsula Region adjacent to Malaysia, and in the northern tier of provinces facing Burma. The problem is more extensive in the northeast than in the other two areas. This region is the poorest part of the nation; cut off from Bangkok by rough terrain and poor communications, it has long evidenced discontent and dissatisfaction with the lack of interest shown by earlier Thai governments. Also, the people there have a strong ethnic link with the neighboring Laotians and have developed a fairly extensive and homogeneous river culture with them. Furthermore, about 40,000 refugees who fled from Vietnam during the Indochina War (1946-54) are located in the region and have remained unassimilated.

The Communists have attempted to exploit these dissatisfactions by all means possible. Propaganda broadcasts have been constant, agents have been infiltrated from Laos, Thai natives have been sent to Hanoi and Peking for guerrilla training, revolutionary movements have been fostered, and small bands of armed dissidents have been organized in scattered jungle areas. These have gradually increased their activities, and many incidents of terrorism, assassinations, and armed clashes with Thai security forces have taken place. In 1970, especially after the coup in Cambodia that deposed Prince Norodom Sihanouk and after Communist forces launched open war against the new government, these incidents increased. Estimates of the number of armed dissidents in northeast Thailand vary greatly, but there are probably only 1,500 that are fully organized, with support from several times that number of followers and sympathizers.

In the south the problem of active subversion is smaller but of nearly equal intensity. The insurgents number 600 to 800 and are in part ethnic survivors of the 1958-60 guerrilla war in Malaysia who sought sanctuary on the Thai side of the border. Their effort is fostered and controlled by the rather small Communist Party of

Malaysia, which is linked with the Communist activity in the north-east. The actual number of sympathizers and supporters is unknown but may be as high as 25,000. The Malaysian government is cooperating with the Thai police in launching joint counterinsurgency operations and improving the security of the area.

Communist agitation, recruiting, and organization in northern Thailand are associated with the 250,000 rather primitive, staunchly independent hill peoples, who have little loyalty to, or contact with, the central government. Most of these peoples are involved in the illegal growing and marketing of opium and in illicit cutting of teakwood. Shan and Karen tribesmen in rebellion against the Burmese government also move back and forth across the border and add to the problem.

There are also more than 3,000 organized Chinese Nationalist exile troops which operate rather freely in the northern area. Pushed out of southern China when the Communists took over in 1949, they have refused repatriation to Taiwan, which was arranged earlier for a larger number. Their principal income reportedly comes from serving as armed escort units for the opium caravans moving southward.

### Smuggling and Black Marketing

Smuggling and black marketing deprive the government of much-needed revenue, and the cost of controlling these activities is a considerable loss to the national economy. The principal clandestine trade is in opium, heroin, and other narcotics. Thailand is a source of some opium, but much larger quantities are brought in from Southern China, Burma, and Laos. Thai authorities are greatly concerned about the traffic, and periodic drives are undertaken to suppress it. Most of the opium is seized in transit from northern Thailand, whence it is carried by foot, motor vehicle, railway, and airplane to Bangkok. At Bangkok some of the drug is sold to local dealers, but a greater portion is shipped to Singapore and Hong Kong. With the rise in insurgency, the smuggling of guns has increased sharply, and a sizable amount of opium-for-guns trade is known to exist.

The smuggling of other items is generally limited to small-scale operations by persons seeking quick profits despite the risk of fines and confiscation. The trade, some of which is into and some out of the country, involves a few food products and various items of consumer goods. Rice reportedly is smuggled out of Laos, Burma, and Southern China. Gem stones, mainly from Burma, are traded clandestinely in Bangkok. Thai customs officials occasionally arrest agents attempting to smuggle in wristwatches and platinum jewelry

from Hong Kong. Some illicit gold traffic is carried on between Thailand and Laos. Other items of interest to smugglers include transistor radios, alcoholic beverages, and miscellaneous drugs, such as antibiotics.

### THE PENAL SYSTEM

The penal system is administered by the Department of Corrections within the Ministry of the Interior. The government's policy in operating the system is to use its facilities to reduce crime by correcting and rehabilitating offenders rather than by punishing them. The system contains forty-six special institutions, including seven central and five regional prisons, twenty-three prison camps, seven correctional institutions, one detention home, and three reformatories. In addition, the eighty-four provincial and district and the forty-five metropolitan police stations are used as places of confinement for offenders whose sentences are for terms not exceeding one year.

The seven central and five regional prisons house the bulk of prisoners with relatively long-term sentences. Khlong Prem Central Prison in Bangkok is one of the oldest and largest and is designed to have a capacity of over 6,000 inmates. One of the twenty-three prison camps, located at Pulau Terutao on an island in the Strait of Malacca, is isolated and administered separately; all other camps are integral parts of the main prisons with which they are collocated. The size of the camps varies, as does the number of inmates they can accommodate. The average inmate population is about fifty selected good-conduct prisoners, who engage principally in agricultural pursuits to prepare them for productive lives after release.

Among the seven correctional institutions, one at Ayutthaya and one in Bangkok deal primarily with youthful offenders of eighteen to twenty-five years of age serving terms up to five years in duration. The Women's Correctional Institution is also located in Bangkok, and the specialized Medical Correctional Institution for drug addicts and other prisoners requiring medical attention is located in Pathum Thani Province northwest of the capital. Two minimum security correctional centers are located at Rayong and at Phitsanulok. The Maximum Security Institution for Habitual Criminals is operated at Nakhon Pathom.

Of the three reformatories, the Ban Lat Yao (sometimes called Lard Yao) facility, just north of Bangkok, receives the bulk of the more recalcitrant juvenile delinquents and has a capacity of about 2,000. Extensive rehabilitation activities are undertaken there; those who fail to respond are sent to a second reformatory near Rayong, which is operated on the prison farm principle. A third

reformatory at Prachuap Khiri Khan, about 125 miles southwest of Bangkok, is used only to accommodate the overflow from the other two institutions.

Additional special facilities for juvenile offenders, called observation and protection centers, are administered by the Central Juvenile Court and the Central Observation and Protection Center of the Department of Justice. Three of these centers are operated in Bangkok, Songkhla, and Nakhon Ratchasima.

A center is attached to each juvenile court and assists it in caring for and supervising delinquent children charged with criminal offenses, both before and after trial. Probation officers, social workers, physicians, psychiatrists, and teachers are assigned to the centers. They help the court collect information on the background and home environment of offenders and take them in custody pending trial. They then accompany the children into court and report to the court on their mental and physical conditions.

Health conditions in all types of penal institutions have improved, but more hospital facilities are needed. Since most prisoners are relatively uneducated, each facility operates extensive special instruction classes. On the average, over 20,000 illiterate prisoners are enrolled each year, of whom about one-half become reasonably literate. Vocational training and workshops also have been established in most prisons. Products from prison labor are sold, and 35 percent of the net profit is returned to the prisoners. A small portion, credited outright to the individual prisoner, may be spent during his incarceration; the greater part is put into a savings fund to afford the prisoner a basis for a new start when he is released.

Prisoners are graded or classified as to conduct into six classes: excellent, very good, good, fair, bad, and very bad. Those in the first three categories are considered eligible for parole and may be released when they have completed two-thirds, three-fourths, and four-fifths, respectively, of their terms.

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## GLOSSARY

- amphur*—District; administrative subdivision of a *changwat* (*q.v.*).
- baht*—Thai monetary unit. The par value established on October 20, 1963, was fixed at 0.0427245 grams of fine gold, or an exchange rate of 20.8 baht to 1 United States dollar.
- bodhisattva*—One destined to become buddha; a person who has achieved enlightenment but defers achieving *nirvana* (*q.v.*) in order to help others achieve it.
- Brussels nomenclature—System of classifying commodities in international trade.
- cakravartin*—Universal sovereign; the highest form of terrestrial kingship according to Hindu-Buddhist thought.
- changwat*—Province.
- chao*—Guardian spirit(s).
- Chao Phraya—Traditional title given to holder of the highest rank in the civil government under the now defunct *sakdi na* system (*q.v.*); also is name of the main river in Thailand.
- chedi*—A religious memorial, often a bell-shaped tower; a stupa.
- Colombo Plan—The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia. An international cooperative effort to assist countries of the area to raise their living standards. In 1970 member nations of the plan included: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Iran, the Republic of Korea, Laos, Malaysia, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the Republic of Vietnam, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- Hinayana (Exclusive Way or Lesser Vehicle) Buddhism—Another name by which Theravada Buddhism (*q.v.*) is known.
- kamnan*—Commune headman.
- karma*—Fate or destiny. Also, religious doctrine upholding the belief that the ethical consequences of one's acts determine one's lot in future incarnations or rebirths.
- khwan*—The body-spirit or life-soul, generally thought to reside in the head, that activates the body and maintains it during life. Illness and eventual death follow upon loss of *khwan*.
- king amphur*—Subdistrict; administrative unit into which some large *amphur* (*q.v.*) are divided.

- liké*—Popular drama combining music, storytelling, singing, and dancing.
- Mahayana Buddhism—Sect established in the first century A.D., formerly widespread throughout Asia but eventually replaced in much of Southeast Asia by Theravada Buddhism or Islam.
- muban*—Village; administrative unit headed by a *phu yai ban* (*q.v.*).
- nirvana*—Buddhist equivalent of heaven. Reunion with the ultimate cosmic reality that comes with enlightenment and release from all desire; release from the cycle of reincarnation.
- Pali canon—See Tipitaka.
- phi*—Goblin(s), ghost(s), or spirit(s).
- Phra—Title given to holder of rank in the civil administrative hierarchy below Phya (*q.v.*). A general honorific term for monks or persons and objects having religious association.
- Phraya—See Phya.
- phu yai ban*—Headman in charge of a *muban* (*q.v.*).
- Phya (also Phraya)—Traditional title given to a holder of second highest rank in civil government (below Chao Phraya [*q.v.*]).
- sakdi na* system—Traditional Thai social ranking system reflecting the functional status as well as rank of all members of the kingdom. It was used as a guide to the allotment of irrigated ricefields by royal decree, the size of allotment varying according to the rank of the recipient. Before the introduction of salaries in the mid-nineteenth century, the *sakdi na* land grants constituted the main source of income of government officials.
- Sangha—The brotherhood of Buddhist monks; a hierarchical ecclesiastical organization, into which all Thai males ideally aspire to enter for some period during their lives.
- Sanskrit—Indian language in which religious texts of Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism (*q.v.*) were written.
- Second King—Title, first used in King Trailok's reign, granted by reigning monarch; holder was second in status only to the king. The title was seldom used. It involved more substantive duties than did the *uparaja* (*q.v.*) appointment but did not necessarily imply that the holder was the heir apparent. King Mongkut in 1851 was the only king of the Chakkrī dynasty to appoint a Second King.
- Siamese—Until 1939 the name by which the Thai people of the Chao Phraya valley were known. This distinguished them from the Thai of Laos, northern Vietnam, southwestern China, and northern Burma. Between 1939 and 1946 and since 1949 preferred usage has been to employ *Thai* and not *Siamese* to describe the dominant ethnic group of Thailand and *Central Thai* to denote the Thai of the Chao Phraya valley.
- Songkran Day—National holiday that marks the New Year according to the archaic Maha Sakaraj calendar.

*tambon*—Commune; an administrative unit comprising a group of villages and headed by a *kamnan* (*q.v.*).

**Theravada Buddhism**—The established religion of Thailand; practiced by the ethnic Thai and also practiced by the indigenous people of Ceylon, Burma, Laos, and Cambodia.

**Thot Kathin**—Thai Buddhist festival during which robes and other items are given to the monks by the laity.

**Tipitaka (Three Baskets)**—Three-part Pali scriptures recording the teachings of Buddha. Written in Ceylon in the first century B.C., they are held as the sacred canon of Theravada Buddhism (*q.v.*). Known as Tripitaka in Sanskrit (*q.v.*).

**uparaja**—Heir apparent or deputy king. Title created by King Trailok in the fifteenth century in attempt to make smoother the operation of royal succession. Appointed by reigning monarch, he was usually the eldest son of king's senior queen or king's full brother. Title became defunct after royal succession act in 1924. Office of *uparaja* is often confused in Western historical accounts with the much less common title *Second King* (*q.v.*).

**wat**—Group of Thai Buddhist religious buildings enclosed by a wall with gateways; Buddhist temple complex.

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