

The kings contributions to development of thailand history essay



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With the constitutional monarchy belonging to the country, on 9 June, 1946 at the tender age of 18, King Bhumibol Adulyadej ascended the throne in the name head of state by not involving to political activities for leading country after the death of his brother, King Ananda. Due to the law of constitution, the king was restricted into a narrow role and segregated from the reign of power; however, with the purpose of developing nation and being capable, the king establish his base of support among Thai people which was the step of his mission. The absence of government support had made the king face to harsh reality in his initial phase of his development effort, but the king still was able to continue his efforts. For over 6 decades of reign, King Bumibol Adulyadej has contributed a number of developments in social, economic and political field to his nation and got more respects from his people constantly.

His Majesty's contributions to social and economic development

The first decade of king's contributions (1946-1955): Mainly focusing on rural development, the king had set up thousands of development projects aiming to promote potential consumption among the Thai rural poor. For instance, in early 1950s, the severe epidemics ravaged the Thai population and caused people loss of life, physical impairment and chronic suffering, as the consequence, the king personally set up the project of promotion of large scale disease control by contributing over 2, 000, 000 baths, and more importantly, from this project, many constructions of rural hospitals were established to serve public. Besides this project, many agricultural projects were established at the same time in order to accelerate the rural poor's

living standard. From this flying in northeastern Thailand over Phuphan Mountain in 1955, the king notice the inadequate rainfall to the arable land belonging to farmers; as the result, from this understanding over the facts farmer faced, the king started to set up project of water irrigation to help poor farmer for their cultivation. From this project, the idea of artificial rain introduced by His Majesty was facilitated by technological advances; moreover, fresh water for public consumption was also introduced under this water management project. In the educational sector, His Majesty set up the scholarship fund in 1955 under the name of Ananda Mahidol to enable outstanding students to gain more academic knowledge abroad to serve the nation.

The second decade of king's contributions (1956-1965): In this second decade of reign, His Majesty still continued to take many actions to broaden his rural development mission. At this time, His Majesty, moreover, started to strengthen the diplomatic tie with other nations with the belief that it is a key to stabilize Thailand's security and continue Thailand's prosperity. For second decade of his reign, His Majesty had spent most of his time abroad with long-version mission for his country. By mid-1960, His Majesty had embarked on a whirlwind tour of 15 nations in North America and Europe. Between 1961 and 1967, His Majesty visited 13 other countries in Asia, Australia, and made similar visits to Germany, Austria and the US (Bangkok Post, 2006). The visits of His Majesty aimed to establish international diplomatic relationships between Thailand and the globe, and more importantly to express Thailand's image on the international stage in order to gain country's international credibility. Furthermore, seeking Western

support in countering the spread of communism which was a threat to Thai national security was considered as the underlining objective of the visit of His Majesty who wanted to strengthen the democratic system in his country for making prosperous living for his Thai people. From this state visiting of His Majesty, Thailand did get huge recognition and acknowledgement from international community; as the result of His Majesty's diplomatic efforts, Thailand was considered as the significant actor in the arena of foreign affairs which contributed a significant role in helping to creating ASEAN. In the internal affair of Thailand in 1960, Thailand faced the worst national disaster which a severe typhoon devastated the thirteen provinces in southern of country, and at the same through his Au Sau Radio program, His Majesty raised 11 million baht from the donations of public to emergency help victims affected by natural disasters. Later on, in 1963 many foundations were established under the effort of His Majesty with purpose of emergency help and rebuild some infrastructure after getting natural disaster. Besides, His Majesty continued his effort on the agricultural section by conducting many research and experimentation to explore new methods of rice cultivation and dairy farming for his poor farmers and to see his Thai people with fuller stomach. From his hard-working on social development, His Majesty earned and organized his broad-base public support.

The third decade of king's contributions (1966-1975): In 1971, artificial rain services were officially offered to the farmer by The Royal Rain-Making Research and Development Project. From this artificial rain services, the serious effects of the dry season to the farmers were reduced and people were able do their cultivation with other water management project

efficiently; moreover, His Majesty still contribute his active involvement in this operation of the project till the present day. With the free charge of the Royal Rain provided by His Majesty, Thai farming enjoyed the significant benefit in cultivation even though the highly developed technological base was introduced in country by government. Moreover, from this royal rain services, His Majesty is remained in the heart of Thai people mostly Thai farmers up to nowadays. During the second decade of his reign, many complex problems were faced by Thai society; for this reason, His Majesty set up the approach to every issue with way of wisdom and sensitivity. His Majesty Bhumibol Adulyadej (December 15, 1970) delivered the speech to public that “ I don't wish to see anybody succumb to anybody else. I am for democracy. But we must create genuine and appropriate democracy. Democracy without wisdom will turn in chaos. And that Chaos will develop into anarchy... we must respect the dignity of humans, the dignity of individuals. We should think of how to promote people's dignity.” From this valued approach, His Majesty won the hearts of minority group in the Northern Thailand, and His Majesty could hold the hands of both side -the minority group and the government- to a solution over the problem of opium production done by minority group. Later on, His Majesty could convince the minority group to give up their traditional cultivation by planting opium, and to adopt the cash crops cultivation introduced under the royal project set up by His Majesty. Following this new cultivation, the minority group was able to enhance their standard of living with the higher income contributed to their budget. As a consequence, the illegal supply of opium from the northern part of country was extremely reduced, and that was considered as a great sign

for Thailand to adopt legal market in the country with best obvious approaches to solution contributed by His Majesty.

The fourth decade of king's contributions (1976-1985): For this decade of his reign, His Majesty still set up his commitment to rural development. The royal co-operative project was established for the purpose to teach farmer to rely on themselves by cooperating with each other and to help them from the exploitation of middleman merchants, capitalists, and the capital investment; moreover, from this project, His Majesty initiated the first Rice Bank in 1975 and the Cow and Buffalo Bank in 1979. At Thammasat University when visiting for musical performance, His Majesty (March 6, 1971) delivered a speech to farmers over the problem of exploitation from the middleman that "...if one wants to solve this problem, the starting point is to coalesce in groups, as a group of consumers have contact with the group of producers. Agreements should be made and there should probably be an establishment of a mill house or negotiations with the mill owner in order to prevent the middleman process. If all rice consumers set up groups, buying paddies and milling paddies themselves or having them milled by an agreed operator, passing through one channel, the producers, the millers and the consumers could solve the question of the middleman." As the result, The Rice Bank was the part of the royal co-operative project and guideline to ensure that the project would get success. From the Rice Bank, farmers have to join together and keep their rice into the bank barn which means that it is the source of reserved food; moreover, the Rice Bank had its committee which practiced as the keeper and decided to give loan with minimum interest rate to farmers for consumption or to be used in their

cultivation. From this policy, it helped the poor farmers from exploitation of outsiders. Cows and buffalos were the essential element for farmers to do their cultivation; however, some poor farmers were not able to own cow or buffalo for their cultivation. By understanding this issue, His Majesty initiated the Cow and Buffalo Bank to his poor farmer. From the Cow and Buffalo Bank, poor farmers were able to borrow cow or buffalo from the bank to use in any beneficial ways according to the agreement of the bank; moreover, poor farmers could also do long-term purchase installment for cow or buffalo with agricultural purposes. More importantly, the research and development centre was established in 1979 to guarantee that many new development methods and projects would provide to rural development. His Majesty's actions were more recognized by public and the government. Shortly after this establishment of centre, in 1981, understanding the sustainable actions of His Majesty to rural development, the government discovered the office of the Royal Development Projects Board (RDPB) matched to His Majesty's Royal projects by contributing professional and financial assistance from the appropriate agencies within the government; therefore, from this discovery, it led to have the increase of floating fund to the budget, so many other His Majesty's initiated projects have increased in number as well.

The fifth decade of king's contributions (1986-1995): Again and again, His Majesty showed his commitment in social development which started in the first decade of his reign without support from the government till the fifth decade of his reign with a number of supports from public and the government. Many projects related to water irrigation, preventing soil erosion, building canal, etc were continued with contributions of His Majesty.

From 50-year experience engaging in the development practice, His Majesty had revolutionized a new approach called “ The New Theory” which was outlined into three parts to serve as guideline for farmer to get self-sufficient in their life. From this new approach, the farmers have firstly to empower themselves by starting with their individual level, and then they have to strengthen the entire community in order to effectively collaborate with the outside, and the last point is to envision fair and equal partnership between their community and the private sectors. His Majesty strongly believed that if the farmers can adopt this approach, it is clearly sure that they will improve their living standard.

The six decade of king’s contributions (1996-2006): In the six decade of His Majesty’s reign, Thailand faced the unexpected and dramatic collapse of its economy caused by financial crisis in 1997. This crisis caused millions of Thai people jobless and seriously affected to the whole country and region. Soon, His Majesty introduced the new approach or theory called “ Self-Sufficiency Economy” to his country. (This point is going to be discussed in economic His Majesty’s contributions part.)

His Majesty’s contributions to economic crisis

There are many causes of the economic crisis in Thailand in 1997; however, one of those causes was the too much expansion of production with no buyer. For Thailand, from this crisis, it is the costly lesson of unbalance and unstable growth which partly due to the situation of economic and social process depending heavily on foreign capital flow and external market. With the understanding of the source of causes of crisis, His Majesty introduced

the Self-Sufficiency Economy philosophy to his nation by giving an
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interesting speech to his people that “ In fact, I have often said... to be a tiger is not important. The important thing is for us to have a self-supporting economy. A self-supporting economy means to have enough to survive.”

From this speech, His Majesty convinced that it was not too much important for Thailand to hold the position as an “ economic tiger,” or be recognized as a newly industrialized country, but what much important is the living in moderation and being self-reliant in order to prevent ourselves from the destabilization caused by the external actors in the globe. The main concept of the Sufficiency Economy is to enable Thailand to remain self-reliant, staying in middle path between society at the local level and the market in the global context, reserve of richness of the ecosystems and survival without the necessity of intervention from external factors. From this concept, the government now commonly include in many development project for the country.