

The ongoing transformation of thailand the last 100 years

[Finance](#)



The Ongoing Transformation of Thailand - The Last 100 Years A hundred years ago, Thailand was a struggling third world nation. Aside from the patriot's claim that they were the only nation that was never colonized by a foreign power, there is nothing else to boast about. In the years after the Second World War Danny Unger (1998), quoting a World Bank source has this to say about the economic state of Thailand:

In a report on Thai public sector developmental roles, the World Bank argued in the late 1950's that Thai government agencies worked without a guiding vision, and that as a result state initiatives were uncoordinated and ineffective. The administrative apparatus was hobbled by tradition, hamstrung by status concerns, and short on personnel with technical skills; it lacked cooperation across departments and suffered from diffuse authority and responsibility (p. 1).

Thus, in order for the country formerly known as Siam to go forward, major changes has to be made, and just changing its name would not cut it.

Thailand's did not forever remained mediocre. The same institution that lambasted her, suddenly heaped praises upon this Asian nation, again Unger states, " Thirty-five years later the World Bank was reporting that Thailand had registered the most rapid economic expansion in the world between 1984 and 1994." In the same book Unger records what he discovered in the course of his research:

The abilities of Thai public officials and the performance of Thai State institutions, for example, did improve during the 1960's and thereafter. Nonetheless, the more important story in Thailand is the willingness and ability of Thai state officials, beginning in the late 1950s, to encourage

private investment. (p. 1)

It can be said that from three major changes were made that contributed to Thailand's economic boom: 1) Improved governance; 2) Improved Education for its citizens; and 3) a change of perspective or letting go of the past.

With regards to the third aspect mentioned by the authors as part of a national overhaul of Thailand's government policies, O'Reilly and Habegger (1993) explain the change of perspective concerning Thailand's Buddhist roots:

[] one of the Thai's singular trait is that they don't let religion disturb their lightheartedness and love of life. If eating meat conflicts with the Buddhist tenet proscribing the killing of any creature, never mind, the animal is already dead when the Thai obtains it (p. xix).

These major developments are the forces that shaped present day Thailand. The result is a booming tourism industry, a much improved economy as compared to fifty years ago and finally a conflicting social structure that is still coming to grips with the rapid transformation from a deeply religious nation with a laid back disposition into a competitive economic tiger.

Prostitution is the most shameful thing that is tearing the fabric of society apart. (Sorajakool, 2003, p. 67.).

Again, O'Reilly and Habegger made an astute observation:

It is a country with a deep respect for family and monarchy, and a country with a huge prostitution industry and a corrupt military. It is a thriving place for business, but has serious problems with international copyright and trademark piracy. It is a physically lovely country that is, like many others, being degraded by logging, wildlife exploitation, and overdevelopment. (p.

xix)

There is much work to be done in this beautiful nation of Buddhist monks and enchanted elephants. May Thailand always work its charm; in the same way that it has never been conquered by foreign invaders. May their many industries including the tourism sector continue to thrive, in that way there will be plenty of opportunities to say, " Sawatdee Khrab!", for that is how they say hello in Thai.

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