



## Towards the 21st Century

by  
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Last week, I moved between Bangkok, Hong Kong and Pattaya. Life has been particularly interesting over the last 7 days.

First, Hong Kong. I went there to discuss the conclusions drawn from the questionnaires which we conducted together with Thomas Leung at the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). I always learn a lot from the way famous consultants like Thomas Leung look at data. I am happy to say that the TAT Board will also be present in Hua Hin when the results of the organizational climate survey will be discussed. Organizational climate surveys (OCS) are undertaken because organizations do not usually manage to change or improve their management systems simply by relying on scientific data. Such a survey is aimed at measuring the feelings and attitudes of people in relation to their work within a particular organisation. Specifically, an OCS aims to compare the actual situation, with the desired situation. If the comparison shows that the gap between what is and what ought to be is large, then improvements must be undertaken, or the situation will deteriorate.

In my experience, many private sector companies understand the value of monitoring and tuning the "climate" of their organisations. I have personally been involved in such a project with the famous architectural firm Design 103, whose chairman Mr. Chuchawal Pring-pungkeo told me resulted in substantial improvements being made to the organisation.

Also in Hong Kong, I met my old friend Professor K.C. Mun from the Chinese University there. Prof. Mun is a very senior professor who graduated in Germany. He was quite critical of many traditional MBA courses in Asia, which he said tended to copy the American model. Actually, he invited me to teach his MBA graduates about how to do business in Thailand. I accepted the invitation and will be going over there in March next year. I also hope to take some of Thailand's senior HR managers to attend classes in Hong Kong so that they can learn about the real situation in relation to doing business in China.

As the gateway to China, Hong Kong is continuing to grow rapidly. Rents for good offices are already 6 times higher than in Bangkok. Prof. Mun also said that he was a bit worried about the long term prospects for China, especially in terms of unemployment and inflation. Inflation is running at over 20% per annum there, and yet the Chinese currency is still appreciating in value, which is quite strange.

As for last week's events in Pattaya, I was very surprised to be invited to address the 1995 export target seminar organized by the Ministry of Commerce. If Permanent Secretary, Dr. Chare Chutharatkul, and Director-General, Mr. Kirk-Krai Jirapaet read this column, I would like to express my thanks to them for allowing me to speak on this occasion. When such a Ministry starts considering human resources development as an important strategy, my mission will have been accomplished!

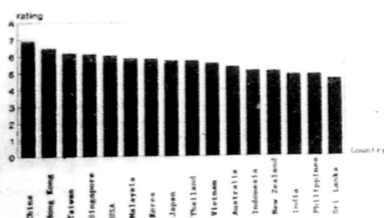
Also surprisingly, the main topic under discussion in regard to achieving the export target of 2.6 million million baht for the year 2000, was technology. Technological developments depend on many factors, including intellectual property laws, infrastructure, taxation etc., but the most important factor of all is human resources. The key to consistent exports growth without the rise and fall syndrome, is to develop both human resources and technology. I would like to propose to these gentlemen that the Ministry should play a key role similar to that of Japan's Ministry of Industries and Trade (MITI). I would also like to warn them that HR and technology must be accompanied by what we call "T and M", with "T" standing for the ability to transfer technology from abroad, and "M" being the management systems necessary to apply the technology, particularly with regard to human resources. We want engineers who can perform the engineering function, not engineers who are crazy about becoming some other kind of manager. We have too many engineers who want to become finance or marketing managers.

And finally, back in Bangkok, I am happy to inform you about VISION II which will be held in March 1995. I'll let you know more as the details are finalised, but I can tell you that so far I have received many requests to conduct another "vision workshop", including from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Public Bus Company. And if both those organizations have a vision for serving the people, I am sure my life will be happy indeed!

If you have any suggestions for improving our column, please let me know. Many people have sent me articles, and I hope that we will soon include most of them in a book in both Thai and English.

See you next week!

### Rating of Economic Performance in the coming 12 Months.



Source: Asian Business Nov, 1994.