



Towards the 21st Century

by
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IN THIS WEEK'S HBP-POST CO-OPERATION COLUMN, Dr. Chira laments the death of HBT the Princess Mother and calls on everyone to follow her example of working towards the greater good of all.

Last week Thai citizens around the world received the sad news of the passing away of our Somdej Yaa. We would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest sorrow as well as our hopes that the example of her many excellent virtues will inspire Thai people to follow her legacy.

The Princess Mother exemplified the predicament and potential of mankind. On the one hand, one person can do so much for her country and its 60 million people, but on the other hand so much important work has to concern itself with remedying the negative side effects of progress, which push the country backwards and create problems for other people to solve later on.

A period of mourning such as this is a good time to reflect on the broader role of the monarchy in Thailand, beyond its ceremonial and institutional aspects, and how it is really a unifying force in our society. As we move towards a world without borders, with all the differences of our history from the rest of the world, Thailand continues to stand out because of the unique role and contribution of our monarchy.

If one were to carry out a poll tomorrow to find out how the world has come to learn about Thailand, I am sure that most people would say it is because of the role of the monarchy over the past several hundred years.

In my personal opinion the Princess Mother left us with a philosophy for life based on the idea that while a life belongs to the individual it can be used to make a great contribution to the rest of one's fellows, and even in this case an entire country.

A public interest is something you have to believe in, because only then will your life be geared towards work which benefits the rest of society. Somdej Yaa did this, and for the dedication, patience, consistency and quality of her work there is no rival.

The Princess Mother always seemed to clearly understand that Thailand is a country which needs to close the gap between the haves and have-nots, and in her work towards this end she travelled to many places which even the regular government officials do not dare to visit.

A good question to ask is where she got her inspiration from. Was it from her family background, or other factors? The question is worth asking because if we can learn from her example, then I'm sure that many more people will make a contribution to the public interest, and Thailand will become much better off. I hope that her passing away will prompt us all to seriously think about how each of us can make a contribution to the public at large.

I hope that in the coming months the public will learn more about her achievements in many fields, including education, human resources development and the environment. School children and the younger generation in general should have the opportunity to reach a profound understanding of the commitment of this one person who did so many things for the country because she believed in and was deeply committed to her work.

And more than that, I also hope that several of the examples set by the Princess Mother will carry on through other groups in society, especially the idea of helping the unfortunate in Thailand.

In conclusion, her death was one of the saddest days in Thai history. For myself I hope to continue to follow the Princess Mother's philosophy and the example of her achievements in order to help those who have trouble surviving. I also hope that the media will continue to do the same.

I would like to challenge the readers of this column, all those successful companies and individuals who have the luxury of substantial resources, knowledge and management to make a contribution to our society. All you have to do is think about and understand the determined example of the philosophy, work and life of the Princess Mother. If 1000 companies in Thailand were to do just one project each to benefit their fellows then society as a whole would gain much.

May the Princess Mother's philosophy and inspiring example live with us forever!

Structure of employment in rural by economic sector, Vietnam.

