

Thai Women: Changing Status and Roles During the Course of Thai Modernization (III)¹

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V. THE PERIOD OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC PLAN (1957-1973)

Sarit, the leader of the coup, did not become the Prime Minister until a year later. Pote Sarasin, a civilian and general secretary of SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), was asked to be Prime Minister in September but for only a few months. After the election in December, General Thanom Kittikachorn, an intimate colleague of Sarit was chosen to head the government while Sarit was hospitalized abroad. However, in October 1958 Thanom resigned for Sarit, who quietly returned to Thailand, to seize power. Sarit set up the Revolutionary Council, which held absolute power under his control. The constitution was abolished, martial law was declared, and many government critics and persons who had been to China in the previous regime were all arrested. Newspapers and the mass media were strictly controlled.

Sarit's five-year regime was characterized by extreme anti-communism and economic development. After Sarit's death in 1963, Thanom succeeded the position until October 1973 when a student uprising called for constitutional democracy. Thanom and his military colleague General Prapass Charusathien had to temporarily leave the country, and never returned to power. Since Sarit's and Thanom's regimes shared a lot of common characteristics in major political and economic policies, they can be studied as single period of social and economic development. Sarit's regime contrasted with Phibun's in ideology and practice. In stead of the abstract concept of national ideology (ratta-niyom) and the practice of nation building (sang chart), Sarit turned to the traditional ideology of monarchical institution and the practice of national development. As Wyatt analyzes Sarit's ideology that,

“Instead of placing primary emphasis on loyalty to abstract state or constitution... Sarit focused primary attention upon the monarch as both the focus of loyalty for the citizen and the source of legitimacy for the government. Government, in turn, became the secular arm of the semi-sacral kingship and was worthy of respect and obedience by virtue of that connection.” (Wyatt 1982:281)

It can be said that the sacredness of the monarch and the honor of the royal families had been recovered and revitalized in Sarit's regime and later on. Wyatt well describes the relationship between Sarit and King Rama IX that,

“Sarit restored the monarchy to an active role in Thai society, reviving public ceremonies that had been neglected since 1932, encouraging the king to appear in public, and making the public show of

allegiance to King Phumiphol Adulyadej... The government gained authority by this association.”
(Wyatt 1982:281)

Since it had not been too long after the 1932 revolution, the Thai people's mentality was still loyal to the royalty. The sympathetic mood and memory of the assassination of the beloved King Rama VIII in 1946 was still around. Therefore the young King Rama IX and his Queen suddenly gained loyalty, attention, and love from the majority. Sarit was successful in reading and leading the Thai mass psychology.

Another contrast between Sarit and Phibun was the policy concerning family and women. Sarit totally ignored the issues on family value and women's social activities. Phibun emphasized monogamy by showing his own happy family as a role model, but Sarit remarried his maternal niece who was also entitled Tan-pu-ying, with whom he had no children. He had more than fifty mistresses, some with whom he had children. The only women's activity he supported was the beauty pageant contest from which he could get girls for his harem. Obviously, the official organizations for women's issues were terminated and changed.

Economic Development and Occupational Structure

Social and economic changes in Thai society after the revolution of 1932 depended solely on the political stability. The Thai political situation under Sarit's and Thanom's governments can be considered one of the most stable periods in Thai modern history. Under the martial law and a specially issued Chapter 17 (mart-tra sip-chet) which provided a supreme power to the Prime Minister and his cabinet in administration as well as jurisdiction. The execution verdict was eventually issued under the martial law Chapter 17, to any person who was considered harmful to the nation's stability, such as a cruel criminal, arsonist, and including the communist party member or a person accused of being a communist. Consequently, the nation was calm and more disciplined than in any regime. The opponent politicians, political protests, and laborers' movements almost disappeared. Until 1968, the year that the constitution had been promulgated in Thanom's regime, the Thai political situation was very stable under Sarit's and Thanom's control.

It can be said that Thai economic development in the period of modern politics after 1932 started in Sarit's regime. National development was the focused policy of Sarit's government. Unlike the previous governments, intellectuals and expertise in many fields were gathered to advise and work for the government. The foreign-trained personnel were welcomed to bureaucracy. Ministry of National Development was established. The first six-year National Economic Development Plan (pan pattana settakit haeng chart) was issued by the National Economic Development Board. In addition, the Board of Investment, Board of Export Promotion, and Board of Tax Supervision were founded to assist the development administration. The national economic plans have been issued consecutively every five years until now, with precise aim and policy in each plan. The emphasis of each plan was mostly in economic growth,

education, population planning, and other social aspects. Women's status issues were not in the government's substantial consideration until the fourth plan (1977-1981) in the late 1970's. It was in order to respond to the Women's Decade Policy guided by the United Nations. As it was reported by the National Committee for International Cooperation that,

"The First Plan (1961-1966) aimed at 7.2% per annum growth rate and was oriented towards infrastructural development with no specific mention of women's development... The Second Plan (1967-1971) was very much the continuation of the First Plan but provided more Leeway for region specific development. It aimed at 8.5% per annum growth rate as its target. Subsequently, the Third Plan emphasized a 7% growth rate...The Third Plan mentioned to help women and children especially in relation to health and labor protection. It is with the Fourth Plan (1977-1981) that women's development started to appear as an important concern for national planning" (Thailand National Commission on Women's Affairs 1985:19-20).

The above mentioned concerns were the high illiteracy rate among women and the discrimination against women in terms of professional advancement and salaries (Ibid. p.20). It should be noted that the 1960's were the period during which the American government was highly involved in politics in this region due to the Vietnam War. Undoubtedly, Thailand had fallen into the American anti-Communist zone. Since the Cold War period in 1950's, Thai government had annually received aid for economic, military, and other programs from the U.S. government. The following table showed the amount of aid Thailand received for economic and military development.

Table VII². U.S. Economic and Military Assistance to Thailand
(U.S. fiscal years, millions of dollars)

	Economic	Military	Economic & Military
1951-57	149.2	221.6	370.8
1958	25.9	19.7	45.6
1959	58.9	18.0	76.9
1960	25.9	24.7	50.6
1961	24.3	23.9	48.2
1962	47.6	39.1	86.7
1963	21.9	68.5	90.4
1964	15.1	52.7	67.8
1965	41.4	36.4	77.8
1966	60.4	40.7	101.1
1967	37.0	46.9	83.9

Source: Statistics and Reports Division. Office of Program and Policy Co-ordination, Agency for International Development, U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants and Assistance from International Organizations, Obligations and Loan Authorization, July 1, 1945 - June 30, 1967 (March 29, 1968), p.73, in Wilson 1970:144

Beside the economic and military aids shown in the above table, other annual aids in the form of loans, grants and human resources such as consultants and peace corps were also generously contributed by the U.S. They were in exchange for utilizing Thai territory as army and air bases for war in Vietnam. Both Sarit's and Thanom's governments' foreign policies in the 1960's were closely attached to the U.S.'s foreign policy. This fact guaranteed Thailand's political stability, which was a key condition for economic investment. Beside the strong control over the people's political movements, the Thai government also issued an Investment Promotion Act which provided privileges for industrial investors in terms of tax exemptions for the investment's machinery and the export, ownership of land, and working visas for foreign specialists. The laborers' unions were under government's strict control in wages and movements. At the same time the educational system was re-modified and expanded to produce personnel and skilled labor for the job market in the modern sector.

Undoubtedly, Thailand in the 1960's was an attractive place for industrial investment for both domestic and foreign investors. Within a decade the number of factories increased more than three times in Bangkok and provincial cities, as shown in the following table:

Table VIII. Number of Factories Expanded During 1958-1968

Year	Bangkok-Thonburi	Provincial	Total
1958	5,740	6,291	11,761
1959	6,634	6,669	13,303
1960	7,018	8,989	16,007
1961	7,740	15,322	23,026
1962	8,305	16,252	24,557
1963	8,857	18,479	27,336
1964	9,513	19,917	29,430
1968	12,001	32,257	44,258

(Chandravithun 1968:42)

From the above table, the drastic increase of factories in 1961 was the result of the Investment Promotion Act. The rapid increase created a great demand for laborers. In order to examine types of laborers, the factories are classified in the following table:

Table IX. Numbers of Factories Classified by Types of Industries in 1968

Industries	Bangkok- Thonburi	Other Provinces	Total
Mining	2	2	4
Quarry	5	164	169
Food Industry including Rice Mills	1,155	27,022	28,177
Drink	53	103	156
Tobacco & Associated	86	156	242
Weaving & Textile	1,036	305	1,341
Clothing and Shoes	79	79	158
Wooden Industry excluding Furniture	1,039	827	1,866
Total	12,001	32,257	44,258

(Ministry of Industry, in Ramakomut 1976, Table 2, p.33)

As can be seen in above table, in 1968 at the beginning period of the second economic development plan (1967-1971), the food industry including rice mills was the major industry of the country. Ninety percent of them were in the provincial areas. The second largest was the weaving and textile industry. Most of them were located in Bangkok-Thonburi. Thonburi (an old capital during 1767-1782, a city on the other side of Chao Phraya River), was known as the textile factories area in the 1960's. It was studied that after the textile industry boom in the beginning of the 1970's, ninety-five percent of the textile firms were located in the six provinces that comprised the Greater Bangkok Metropolitan Area (Mabry 1979:139). Some were in the North and northeast where silk was a native product. The wooden industry was the third in number.

The expansion of these factories created a great number of jobs at the low level. The occupational class of factory laborers arose in this period. The agricultural laborers were the source of these industrial laborers. It can be said that the migration of laborers from rural areas to the industrial areas in urban towns was also a recent phenomenon that started in this period.

While the urban 's job opportunities were the pull factors to these labor migrants, the population density due to the high birth rate (3.2%) was a push. The locations of factories determined the migrants' terminal.

It should be mentioned that according to the strong control of the government and the lack of organized labor unions, the laborers were badly exploited, especially the women and child laborers. Labor laws were usually violated. The wages were low without any welfare, and the work places were in a low-sanitary condition. Nikom Chandravithun who was Head of Labor Department for many years describes the working condition of female industrial workers in the small- and middle- sized factories that,

“... workers use half of their working space as combined bedroom and kitchen. This makes it very un-hygienetic and creates fire hazard. Some women, who have small children, bring them into the work place. Sometimes, the whole family works in the same place and the children’s ages range from 10-14 years. ...In textile, candy and bakery factories women work about 12 hours per day when orders are urgent and there is no overtime pay. In Construction work and road building, women work as diggers, cement mixers, gravel and sand carriers, iron cutters, floor polishers and some also work in high and dangerous places” (Chandravithun 1968, Labor Problems in the Industrialization of Thailand, translated by, in Mabry 1979:94).

As I have mentioned that the location of the factories determined the terminal place of rural migrants. From Table IX, as much as one quarter of all factories (12,001) was located in Bangkok-Thonburi. About three-quarters of the factories (32,257) were indicated located in provincial areas, in fact most of them were in the provinces around Bangkok. In other words, Bangkok and its satellite cities were industrial center to absorb rural laborers both men and women for various kinds of factories.

During the 1960’s through the end of the 1970’s, Bangkok was a center of every aspect of life, politics, economics, education, religion and recreation. The rural-urban migration, especially from the countryside to Bangkok, was outstandingly high. The population growth of Bangkok could be estimated from the report by the United Nations that,

“During the 1960’s, the growth rate of the urban population was 6.5 per cent per annum. Investments in economic development, including the rapid expansion of the country’s infrastructure and to a certain extent, military investment, help to accelerate the growth of a number of urban centers...

Most of the urban population is concentrated in a single metropolitan center., 1974 estimated population of the Bangkok Metropolis amounting to about 4 million was nearly 40 times the population (98,300) of the second largest city, Chiangmai. The hierarchy of urban places in Thailand provides a good example of ‘Primate City’ phenomenon” (United Nations 1976:13)

It can be said that the centralization of industrial factories in the central region around Bangkok was caused primarily by inefficient infrastructure in other regional areas. Sarit seemed to realize the problem, and planned to decentralize education and industry to the North and especially the Northeast, where his hometown was. He started building up infrastructure such as roads, telecommunications and electricity, and had a plan to establish universities at Chiangmai in the North and at Khonkhaen in the Northeast, but his plans were not all pursued after his death in 1963.

The Economic Development Plans yielded a satisfactory outcome in terms of general economic growth. The country’s growth rate was steadily high and increased during the 1960’s and 1970’s as shown below:

Table X. Economic Growth Performance, 1960-1978

(at 1962 price)							
Year	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
GNP	4.4	5.3	8.1	8.5	6.5	8.0	12.2
(at 1962 price)							
Year	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	
GNP	7.9	8.6	7.8	7.4	7.3	4.0	
(at 1972 price)							
Year	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	
GNP	9.3	9.4	6.1	7.0	8.0	6.7	

(Wilson 1982, Table XXIV-3, p.336)

The growth performance of the Thai economy in the above table was very impressive in that it was more than 5% every year except for 1972. However, due to the uneven distribution of income between rural and urban areas, the more the economy grew the wider the income gap between them. The imbalance of development in rural and urban areas seemed to have a root from the early 1960's. On this issue, Pongpaichit had an explanation for it in terms of national strategy that,

“The major sources of capital were derived from agriculture and foreign loans and investments. The surplus, however, was not reinvested in the rural agricultural sector. Instead, it was channeled into urban expansion by offering incentives (such as modern infrastructure, tax relief, an unlimited pool of cheap labor) to ensure high returns on urban investment” (Pongpaichit 1982, From Peasant Girls to Bangkok Masseuses, in Tantiwiranond and Pandey 1991:17-18).

In Tantiwiranond and Pandey 's study, it is found that since the period of the 1950's Bangkok was the one dominant major city that was a center of opportunity, education, and employment essential for upward socioeconomic mobility, it drew people from the countryside like a magnet. According to the 1977 survey conducted by the National Statistic Office on reasons to migrate, it was reported that 70 per cent of migrant women came to Bangkok to find jobs, 22 per cent to accompany their heads of households, and 8 per cent to continue schooling (Piampiti 1982:126). Women coming from the poorer regions of the North and the Northeast outnumbered men by the ratios of 5:4 and 4:3 respectively. It was also found that in 1970, about 68 per cent of unmarried female migrants under the age of 25, were employed as service workers—maids, cooks, and waitresses — while a further 17 per cent were engaged as production workers and laborers (Smith and Crockett 1980, referred in Tantiwiranond and Pandey 1991:18-19). It was known that certain types of jobs in urban areas especially Bangkok were done by the rural women migrants. For example the housemaid market was taken by the young girls from the Northeast.

However, the general occupation structures of 1960 and 1970 should be examined. They are in the following tables:

Table XI. Occupations and Percentages of Employed Persons, 1960

Total number	13,772,104	persons
Male	7,106,612	
Female	6,665,492	

	Per Cent (of Total) female(%)	
1. Professional, Technical, and Related Workers	1.3	33.9
2. Administrative, Executive and Managerial Workers	0.2	9.7
3. Clerical	1.1	13.3
4. Sales	5.3	55.8
5. Agriculture, Fishing, Hunting, Logging and Forestry	82.3	50.8
6. Mining, Quarrying, & Related Fields	0.2	26.3
7. Transportation, Equipment Operators, and Related Fields	1.1	4.5
8. Craftsmen, Production Process Workers, & Laborers	5.8	33.0
9. Service Workers	1.9	43.3
10. Unknown	0.7	14.5

(Percentages calculated from Wilson 1983: Table VI-I, pp.86-87)

Table XII. Occupations and Percentages of Employed Persons, 1970

Total number	16,652,267	persons
Male	8,784,804	
Female	7,867,463	

	Per Cent of Total	Female(%)
1. Professional, Technical, and Related Workers	1.7	41.2
2. Administrative, Executive, and Managerial Workers	1.5	7.1
3. Clerical	1.1	32.8
4. Sales	5.0	55.3
5. Agriculture, Fishing, Hunting, Logging, and Forestry	79.4	49.7
8. Craftsmen, Production Process Workers, & Laborers	33.0	34.2
9. Service Workers	2.8	48.9
10. Unknown	0.2	32.3

(Percentages calculated from Wilson 1983: Table VI-I, pp.86-87)

The changes in occupational structure during the 1960's are clearly seen by comparing the figures in Table XI and Table XII. The percentage of persons in Agriculture, Fishing, Hunting, Logging and Forestry decreased from 82.3 in 1960, to 79.4 in 1970. At the same time persons in Craftsmen, Product Process Workers & Laborers increased from 5.8 per cent in 1960 to 6.7 per cent in 1970. Another group that increased was the Service Workers, from 1.9 per cent in 1960 to 2.8 per cent in 1970.

It seems that workers in the Crafts and Production Process or the secondary industries increased, accompanied by the workers in the Services or the tertiary industry, while the workers in Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry or the primary industry, decreased. It can be said that this initial change in occupational structure in this period represents the early stage of industrialization in Thai society.

For women workers, there was an outstanding increase in percentage among some occupational groups. I would like to show the percentage change in the following table:

Table XIII. Percentage of Women Workers in Selected Groups of Occupations, in 1960 and 1970

	1960(%)	1970(%)	difference
Professional, Technical, and Related Workers	33.9	41.2	+ 7.3
Clerical	13.3	32.8	+19.5
Sales	55.8	55.3	- 0.5
Agriculture, Fishing, Hunting, Logging and Forestry	50.8	49.7	- 0.9
Transportation, Equipment Operators, and Related Fields	2.8	3.1	- 0.3
Craftsmen, Production Process Workers, & Laborers	33.0	34.2	+1.2
Service Workers	44.3	48.9	+ 4.6

(Source: From combination of the above Table XI & XII)

From the above table, there are three groups of occupations in which the percentages of women workers outstandingly increased. The increased percentages among them were:

- the Professional group 7.3%,
- the Clerical group 19.5%, and
- the Services group 4.6%.

It was interesting to find that these three groups of occupations represent women in high, middle, and low socioeconomic status. Since the work in Professional and the Clerical groups require a certain level of education, the increased percentages indicate the more accessibility of women to education of the high and middle levels. Surprisingly, the group of Craftsmen, Production Process Workers & Laborers is the group most expected to increase in the changing

stage into industrial society, but the difference was only +1.2 %. I think that it can be explained by the nature of the seasonal labor market in the 1960's and the first half of the 1970's. In the case study of labor relations by Mabry, he reports that, "*As recently as 1972, employment tended to be seasonal, as workers left their factory jobs and returned to the farm to assist in planting and harvesting*" (Mabry 1979:140).

Owing to the fact that laborers were available by season, there was a tendency that actually factory laborers were counted in the category of agricultural laborers and possibly vice versa.

Educational Development

Education had long been a major problem of Thai society from the early periods of modernization. In the period of economic development plan, problems of Thai education can be viewed from two different ends, the top and the bottom.

The Top

At the top level in urban areas especially in Bangkok, there was a high demand for institutions of higher education. Until the early 1960's, the entrance exams to all five governmental universities were very competitive, as well the entrance exam to the high schools that provided a high percentage of university enrollment. The demand for higher education in this period was noted by Sampan in his study of financing of Thai university that,

"... a large sum of money is being spent on the education of Thai student overseas because the higher education system in Thailand is not capable for providing enough seats of these students. Not including those who obtain fellowships through foreign technical assistance, it has been estimated that there are over 5,000...in the United States and over 10,000 in Europe, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. The sum of money is at least 25 million U.S. dollars per year..." (Wootirat 1977:25)

Sarit's government realized the demand for higher education. The university establishment in the provincial areas was planned in the second period of the first economic development plan (1964-1966). The demand was steadily increasing that the government went on supplying by increasing enrollment and establishing new institutions through out the 1960's. At the end of the decade there were eleven institutions of higher education. In 1969, the Private College Act was issued and within five years ten private colleges were established. Moreover, in 1973 Ramkamhaeng University was founded in Bangkok with the "open" admission system. In the first three years the enrollment to this open university was as high as 38,364 (Office of State University 1975:57).

The Bottom

At the bottom level of education in Thai society in the 1960's through the 1970's, the people's illiteracy was the major problem. The literacy rates of the 1960 and 1970 are shown below:

Table XIV. Literacy of Population Aged 10 Years and Over by Sex, 1960 and 1970

	Both Sexes	Male	Female
1960			
Total Population	18,026,404	9,004,412	9,021,992
Percent literate	70.8	80.6	61.0
(percent illiterate)	(29.2)	(19.4)	(39.0)
1970			
Total Population	23,453,313	11,581,756	11,871,557
Percent literate	81.8	88.9	74.8
(percent illiterate) ³	(18.2)	(11.1)	(25.2)

(United Nations 1976:132)

From the above table, it can be seen that when the first national economic plan (1961-66) was issued, the literacy rate among the whole population was only 70.8 per cent. Only 61.0 per cent of women were literate, in other word 39 per cent of women were illiterate. In 1970, almost 20 per cent of the population were illiterate while among women it was about 25 per cent.

The condition of education in this period was well described in the United Nations' study, as the following:

"The system of education consists of a basic 4-3-3-2 structure with the first seven years comprising the lower and upper elementary levels and the last five the lower and the upper secondary levels..."

The legal age at which children in Thailand start primary school is seven. Theoretically, seven years primary education is compulsory for all children in Thailand. In actual fact, however, enforcement of this standard is quite impracticable because there are not nearly enough schools and teachers to go round...." (United Nations 1976:120)

The seven year compulsory education was mentioned in the second period of the first plan as a prospective plan "within a proper time" (*pai-nai wela un moa-som*) because the government realized the fact that the four-year compulsory plan was not fully accomplished. Most schools in rural area were similar to what de Young describes in his research work:

"Many of the government's primary schools are located within the wat (temple) compound, and since not every village has school, children of three or four small villages may attend a centrally located school..."

The school buildings range from crude open-air structures to standardized wooden building... These schools operate under tremendous financial handicaps with the government supplying only the teachers' salaries and a minimum of equipment... Children's desks and benches are apt to be home made...." (de Young 1966:56)

The lack of educational facilities resulted in the small proportion of students continuing on to the advanced education. Even though there was a high demand for higher education in the urban center, Bangkok, from the view of the total population, only a small percentage of people could attain a level beyond secondary school education. This is shown in the following table:

Table XV. Percentage of Students Attending School per Age Group Population, 1969-1974

Level	Age	Percentage per age group population					
		1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
Pre-school	4-6	3.6	3.7	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.6
Low Primary (grades 1-4)	7-10	116.1	118.0	118.1	117.9	117.7	114.3
Upper Primary (grades 5-7)	11-13	29.3	34.8	36.1	39.1	43.0	45.0
Lower Secondary (grades 8-10)	14-16	16.6	18.5	20.4	23.2	25.7	28.1
Upper Secondary (grades 11-12)	17-18	7.3	7.5	8.1	9.3	9.8	10.5
University (Graduate level included)	19-24	1.5	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.4
Total	4-24	32.8	34.8	34.1	35.9	38.5	38.5

(United Nations 1976, Table 115, p.128)

From the above table, it is clear that up to 1973, less than 10 per cent of children could attend grades 11-12, and even less at the university level. The crucial differences are between the low and upper primary, the low and upper secondary, and the secondary and the university. The interesting percentage is that of the low primary age group. The percentage of “wastage” of all four years was as high as almost 120 per cent. Theoretically, the wastage can arise for two reasons, firstly, “...while a large number of pupils start schooling late, there are many children who enter the primary school system very early ...Secondly, repetition of grades also results in a large number of over-age and under-age pupils” (United Nations 1976: 124).

From other statistical data of 1973 (United Nations 1976, Figure 13, p.123), the percentage of

wastage was shown per single grade. It was found that the percentage of attendance in grade 1-7 is as the following:

Grade 1	137.23 %	Grade 5	50.31 %
2	117.68 %	6	42.07 %
3	113.61 %	7	35.57 %
4	100.42 %		

From the above percentage, the high percentage of wastage starts from grade 1 and decreases when the grade goes higher, respectively. This can be assumed that the cause of the wastage was likely to be the repetition of grades. The repetition was caused by a common practice in agricultural areas. In labor-intensive farm work, child labor was usually needed during some working season, so that frequently children could not attend school for the full academic year. The repetition occurred when they could not pass the final exam. The grade repetition was so common that some children repeated grades until they reached the age of fifteen and left school without finishing the compulsory education.

Obviously, the Thai education system during the 1960's and the beginning of the 1970's hardly provided chances for the rural people. On the contrary, urban people and people in the higher socioeconomic level could gain the most from education system.

Upper Class Women and Social Roles

In the period of national economic development in the 1960's and 1970's, women in the upper level were the group, which benefited the most from the socioeconomic situation. The government work was continually popular among educated women. Even though there was no particular policy promoting women's occupations, there was also no official policy to discourage or discriminate against them. It had been about two decades since the first regime of Phibun in the 1940's. In the 1960's a certain number of women in the upper level already occupied certain types of careers in the government organizations such as professorships in various fields. Some women in the early generation were promoted to higher positions and ranks and became models for the younger generation.

In the 1960's and 1970's, industrialization tremendously expanded jobs in modern and international sectors since many investors were foreigners and many industries were export-oriented. Manpower of the high level with foreign language skills was greatly needed. Rather than specifying gender of applicants, many high-level jobs in modern sector would specify the level of education and language skill (English and Chinese were the most preferred) or a foreign degree. This category of qualification could be achieved only by people of the upper socioeconomic status, regardless of sex.

It should be noted that the Thai higher education system in the 1960's was not closed to women, and women saw opportunities provided through the educational channel as well. As a

result of the fair entrance exams, the level of women's enrollment was quite high. Obviously, high education for women in Thai society was not for the status quo or for the hypergamy as in some other Asian countries, but for a practical use in the labor force market. Women graduates were thus in abundant supply competing with men graduates in the work market.

Anyhow, I would like to examine the male and female enrollment in all higher education institutions in the country. The statistics available are those of 1973.

Table XVI. Enrollment by Institutions, Academic Year 1973

Higher Institutions	Male	Female	Total
1. Chiangmai University	3,650	3,116	6,766
2. Chulalongkorn University	8,045	7,810	15,855
3. Kasetsart University	3,975	2,110	6,085
4. Khonkhaen University	1,304	513	1,817
5. King Mongkut Institute of Technology	3,197	92	3,289
6. Mahidol University	1,960	2,404	4,364
7. The National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA, only graduate school)	472	201	673
8. Prince of Songkla University	634	253	887
9. Silapakorn University	587	864	1,451
10. Sri Nakharinwirot University	10,564	9,028	19,592
11. Thammasart University	6,575	4,676	11,251
12. Ram-khamhaeng University	26,028	12,336	38,364
(State universities Total)	66,991	43,403	110,394)
13. Private Colleges	5,751	4,354	10,105
Grand Total	72,742	47,757	120,499

(Source: Office of State Universities, General Information of the Office of State Universities, 1975:59, in Wootirat 1977, Table 1, p.21)

From the above table, even though the fields of study are not shown, it is evident that women were attending the four-year universities at a fairly great proportion to men. It should be noted that there was no women's university in Thailand. The statistics on women's attendance in higher education in Thailand always means the attendance at the four-year universities.

Tantiwiranond and Pandey have a good conclusion about upper class Thai women's roles during the period of industrialization, that,

“For the Privileged few, equal access to modern education and employment enabled them to take advantage of the ever-expanding job opportunities in the modern sector. Many elite women were educated abroad and occupied higher position ranging from leadership in various modern sectors to ambassadors. Many of them were wives of high-level bureaucrats or military men. These well-educated urban women saw their career aspirations fulfilled and worked to keep abreast of a changing world” (Tantiwiranond and Pandey 1991:18).

The military government under Thanom's leadership was compelled to issue the constitution in 1968 and bring about the general election. Thanom's political party earned the majority seats, which made him a Prime Minister again. However in November 1971, with his colleague General Prapass, Thanom did a coup d' etat against his own government. The constitution was abolished and martial law was declared. Again the country was under the dictatorship led by Thanom and Prapass. There were much political protest by university students and some interest groups such as factory laborers in Bangkok-Thonburi. The protest in October 1973 by large number of students calling for the constitution turned into a bloody fight with the government's military force. The protest resulted in a number of student's deaths and the exile of Thanom, Prapass, and Thanom's eldest son. After this riot, Thai politics stepped into the chaotic democracy phase and many other phases in the two later decades. However, the national economic growth steadily increased, and Thai society has become one of the Westernized countries in Asia.

CONCLUSION

Through out history during the course of modernization of Thai society, Thai women's changes in status and roles can be viewed as a continual process of change which had been strongly affected by the political ideology and economic development. The change in women's lives in this study can be divided in three stages.

The Initiation Period (1910-1938)

King Rama VI (1910-1925) initiated the revolutionary concept of women's status and roles to his royal court and the upper class. He made clear his model of “modern women” in many of his writings and plays. Rama VI wished to see Thai women preserve their traditional roles as good wives and mothers, to be educated and knowledgeable, to appear in Western fashion, and to have

Western manners. Rama VI's ideology was so liberated as to equalize social status of husband and wife by legislating the monogamous marriage registration. The legislation was not carried out due to the lack of support from the male officials who were royal and nobles. Even though Rama VI's mandatory idea and practice were limited among the people of the royalty and nobility, these people were the most important group who were culturally leading the society. They positively responded to the king's intention for women's changes, especially in education. The school attendance of the upper class women in the 1910's and 1920's rapidly expanded, and women were inspired to receive advanced and higher education in order to work as career women.

The political and socioeconomic changes, the fall of the absolute monarchy, and the abolishment of the *sakdina* system degraded the political and social status of the old upper class. It was their period of great change in ways of life and ways to earn living. While some were still wealthy, many had to begin economic activities by working or starting some business. The growth of the national economy under the modern bureaucracy expanded the domestic market and brought in new culture and events that continued activating the women's social and economic roles.

The Establishment Period (1938-1957)

The second stage of change in women's status and roles was during Phibun's regime (1938-1946, 1948-1957). In fact, Phibun's strong campaign in women's status and roles was mostly during his first regime while militarism ideology was at its foremost. The characteristics of Phibun's policy on women can be called the imitation and the enlarged version of Rama VI's policy. Phibun's application of the policy was not limited to the upper class but was extended to common people in the entire country. Also his methodology and approaches were identical to those of Rama VI but more urging and enforcing. Similar to Rama VI's idea, Phibun viewed women's status as a symbol of the nation's modernity, so Thai women were encouraged to participate in social activities as much as they could.

However, the most significant change that Phibun initiated that greatly affected Thai women's lives in the later period was the encouraging of women to work as government officers. Since high education was required for government work, in the first period the work was almost exclusively for women in the upper socioeconomic class. As being a government officer was traditionally a prestigious career for men, this initiation of Phibun's can be called a revolution in careers for Thai women.

Since Phibun's regime covered almost two decades in the 1940's and 1950's, it was long enough for career women in the upper level to cultivate their fields, establish their life styles, gain better recognition from the society, and expand in number. It should be noted that the voluntary opening of high-level careers to women in Thai society was a unique phenomenon in women's history in the non-colonial countries.

The Growing Up Period (1958-1973)

The third stage was during the period of industrialization and economic development. There was no policy about women since the government concentrated on social and economic development. However, there was also no policy to suppress women in particular; therefore women in the upper socioeconomic level continued their lives and careers as they had been in the previous government. It can be said that they became role models for the middle class women. The expansion of higher education provided chances to women in the middle and low level to obtain a good education which enabled them to compete in the job market. Since the jobs that expanded in modern sectors required workers with modern skills in many new fields such as public relations, management, and tourism, the qualification of the worker was the most important, female applicants were able to compete and were hired in a wide range of occupations. Along with the steady increase of economic growth, women were more active and aggressive in their economic roles.

The special characteristic found in this study of Thai women's change in status and roles during the process of modernization was that women in the upper socioeconomic class engaged in the job market and were active in economic roles before the starting of industrialization. When industrialization occurred, women had already been in high positions in various careers and occupations. Continually, women in the middle and low levels were inspired to receive education and entered the expanded job market in both traditional and modern sectors.

Notes

- ¹ This is the last part of the paper. Its bibliographies are supposed to be combined.
- ² Numbering of tables continued from the previous part II.
- ³ Percent of illiterate is of my own.

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