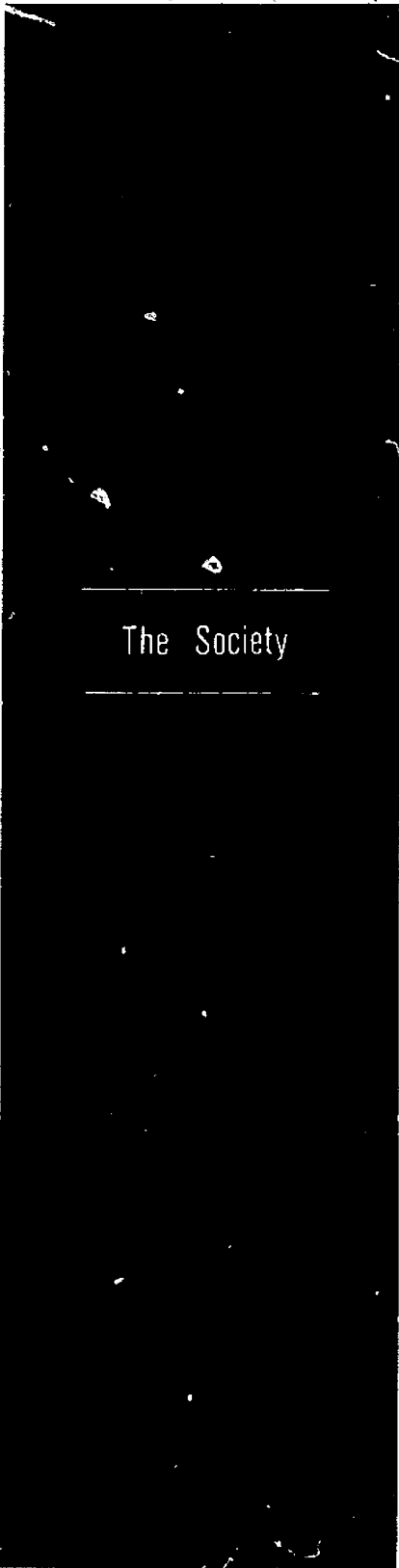


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The Society

Thailand

April 1974

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY

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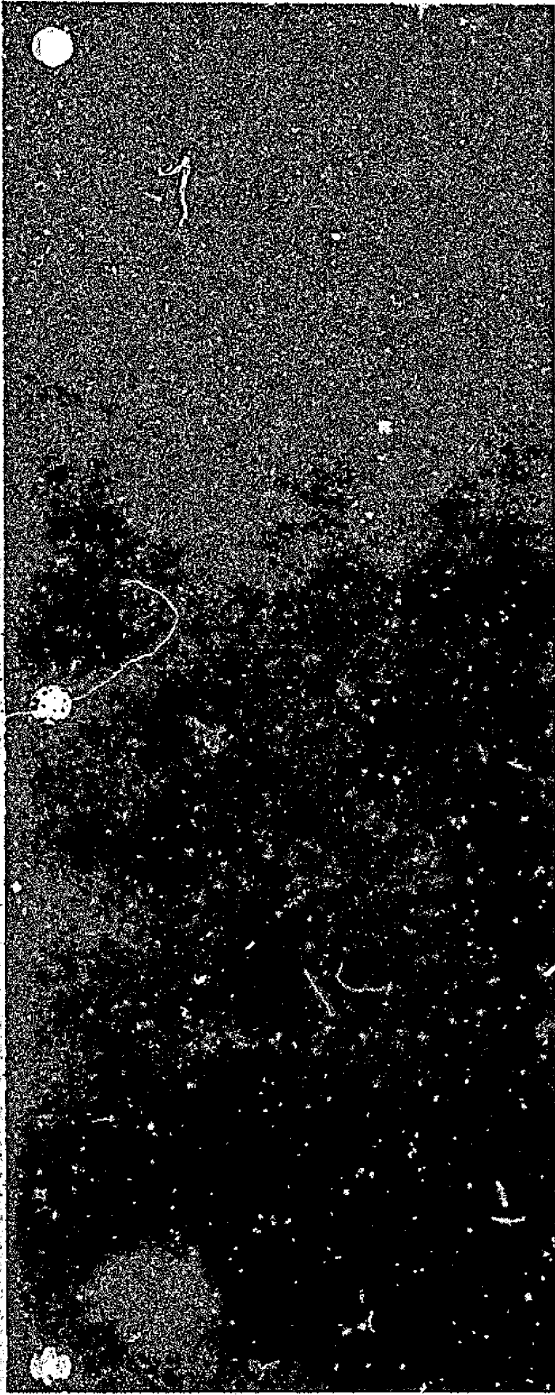
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Thailand

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The Society

A. Introduction (U/OU)

Generally adequate natural resources, a long history of national independence, and a sense of national unity have served in Thailand to promote stability and to alleviate many of the social and economic pressures that have plagued other Southeast Asian countries. There is a fairly high degree of cultural homogeneity, with most of the population professing Buddhism and most speaking Thai as a mother tongue or a second language. Many of the ethnic minority groups in the country are undergoing assimilation to national cultural patterns emanating outward from Bangkok. Moreover, in marked contrast to other Southeast Asian countries, Thailand emerged from World War II without serious impairment of its economy or its social structure. Furthermore, an essentially stable pattern of authoritarian political control had been maintained by the nation's military leaders since they assumed power in November 1947. Despite all of these factors, however, the grip of the army generals and their police services was broken by a student revolt in October 1973, and a civilian government was established.

The Thai economy, with external assistance primarily from the United States, has developed impressively since World War II, despite a rapid rate of population growth that has absorbed a significant proportion of the country's economic development. Normally there is an annual surplus of rice, and seldom have the demands for food outstripped the available supply. Over 85% of all Thai farmers cultivate their own small plots of land. Consequently, neither poverty nor socioeconomic discontent among the peasants have been widespread. Most of the improvement in average per capita real income during

the postwar years, however, has been concentrated in the urban areas, resulting in increased disparity in income and levels of living between the urban and rural populations, a potential source of social unrest. Insurgencies, some of them fostered by foreign Communist agents, have been conducted in depressed rural areas, especially those inhabited by ethnic minorities. Even among the Thai themselves, there is some degree of dissatisfaction with the apportionment of the nation's wealth, particularly in the northeast, a region economically retarded by poor soils, alternate periods of drought and flood, and inadequate transportation. Nonetheless, although growing political unrest has created internal security problems in the northern, northeastern, and southern frontier regions, it has not yet seriously affected the social stability of the kingdom.

The student revolt of 1973 apparently was caused primarily by student discontent over both academic issues and police repression of student and other opposition elements in Bangkok. Many politically conscious Thai on all levels of Bangkok society—including the King himself—sympathized with the students' demands for release of jailed oppositionists and for promulgation of a new constitution establishing democratic government. The leadership of the armed forces appears to be supporting the new government appointed by the King, which is headed by a university rector, Professor Sanya Thammasak, as prime minister, and which has promised to promulgate a new constitution within 6 months. However, it remains to be seen whether these unprecedented political changes will actually affect the social composition of the military and civilian elite groups which have governed Thailand for over four decades.

B. Structure and characteristics of society (C)

The homogeneity of Thailand's population provides the basis for a stable social structure. An estimated 85% of the population speak the Thai language as their native tongue, profess Theravada (Hinayana) Buddhism, and adhere to a common set of values and shared patterns of behavior. The Thai are conscious of broad national values which they share as a people—the monarchy, Buddhism, and the tradition of national independence. Because the Kingdom of Thailand was never dominated by a colonial power, its society escaped the disruptive sequence of conquest, occupation, and struggle for independence. Thai awareness of the national heritage often is expressed in resistance to elements that seek to alter the traditional way of life. Some dissatisfaction with the distribution of national wealth, however, has arisen among residents of the less economically developed areas of the country, and the Thai and ethnic minorities who reside in such areas have been vulnerable to the pressures exerted by pro-Communist subversive elements.

1. Ethnic composition

Peoples of Thai ethnic stock constitute the dominant element within Thailand. Although the 1976 census did not enumerate the population by ethnic background, it is generally agreed that the Thai constitute about 85% of the total population, the Chinese make up approximately 10%, and the Malays comprise about 2.5%. No other ethnic community accounts for as much as 1% of the population (Figure 1). The Thai are found in all parts of the country, but they are concentrated in the densely populated central plains, the Khorat Plateau, and in areas of northern and southern Thailand (Figure 2). With the exception of the Chinese, who are primarily an urban people found in many cities and towns of Thailand, the minority peoples live on the periphery of the kingdom and usually represent extensions of larger ethnic communities in countries neighboring Thailand.

Although in general a homogeneous community sharing a common language, religion, and cultural history, the Thai are divided into a number of regional subgroups that are distinguished primarily by differences in dialect, historical experience, and minor cultural variations. The principal regional subgroups are the Thai of the central plains, the Thai in the north (often called the Thai Yuan), the Thai of the Isthmus of Kra, and the northeastern Thai (frequently called the Thai-Lao). Other smaller groupings include the

FIGURE 1. Estimated composition of the population, by ethnic group, 1970 (U/OU)
(Absolute number in thousands)

ETHNIC GROUP	NUMBER	PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION
Thai.....	29,327	85.1
Chinese.....	3,445	10.9
Malay.....	880	2.5
Cambodian (Khmer).....	240	0.7
Kui.....	130	0.4
Vietnamese.....	70	0.2
Karen.....	70	0.2
Nomadic tribespeople.....	300	0.9
Total.....	*34,452	100.0

*Census total of 34,152,000 plus an estimated 300,000 nomadic tribespeople.

Shan (or Thai Yai), who are concentrated in Mae Hong Son Province near the Burma border; the Phouthai, who occupy the extreme northeastern corner of the country; and the Lu, who dwell in parts of Chiang Rai and Nan provinces. The Thai of the central plains historically have been the dominant group politically, socially, and economically, and they are also the largest of the regional subgroups. However, distinctions among the subgroups are diminishing as each is being affected by influences stemming from Bangkok.

While racial differences are fairly unimportant within the indigenous population of Thailand, differing cultural norms serve to identify the various non-Thai ethnic communities of the kingdom. Individual members of minority ethnic communities are regarded as Thai by the Thai majority if they hold Thai citizenship and so identify themselves, speak a Thai dialect well, and conform to conventional Thai patterns of living. Since 1932 it has been the policy of the Thai Government to attempt to assimilate minority peoples into the dominant culture. Compulsory schooling in the Thai language and legal reservation of certain types of economic endeavor to Thai citizens have been the principal means used in fostering this assimilation. Such methods have proved partially successful among the Chinese and such other groups that share a common religion with the Thai, but they have been much less successful among the Muslim Malays, who have steadfastly resisted the assimilation process.

The Chinese are the largest single ethnic minority. Like other overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, most of the Chinese in Thailand are descendants of emigrants from South China. About half of the Chinese in the

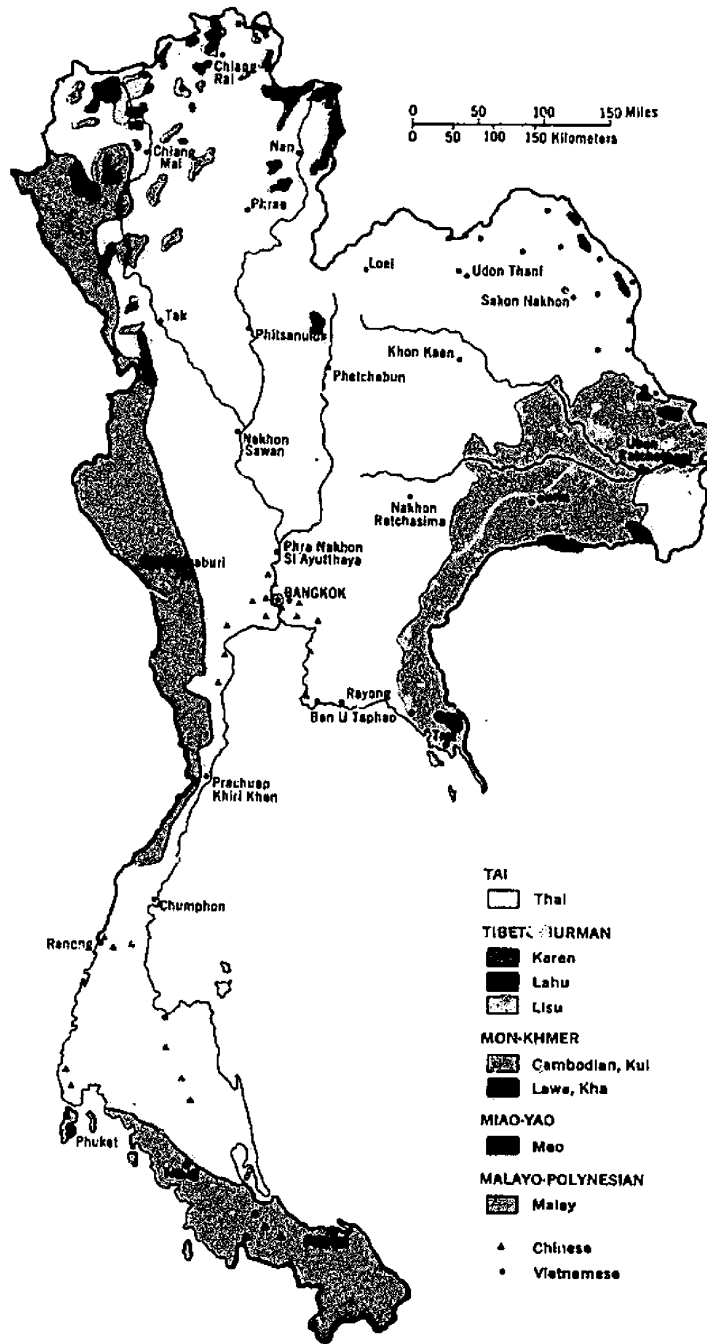


FIGURE 2. Location of principal ethnolinguistic groups (U/OU)

country are concentrated in the densely populated Chao Phraya delta, within a 50-mile radius of Bangkok, where they engage primarily in commercial or industrial activity. Another 500,000 Chinese live near the tin mines and rubber plantations of peninsular Thailand, and the remainder live in urban centers and the larger villages scattered throughout the kingdom.

Chinese migration into Thailand in significant numbers began during the 17th century and increased sharply during the 19th and early 20th centuries when the kingdom welcomed them for their skills. As their numbers increased, however, and as they took over certain areas of economic endeavor, the Thai Government sought to encourage their assimilation into the dominant culture and to limit the growth of their economic power. At the same time, because of the widespread Thai disinterest in commercial and industrial activities, the Thai Government has generally been aware of its economic dependence in these fields on the industrious, commercially minded Chinese. Nonetheless, during the prewar years, successive Thai governments restricted Chinese immigration, instituted the compulsory teaching of Thai in all public and private schools (including those operated by the Chinese community), and excluded all aliens from certain occupations, including the ownership of rice lands. During World War II the government adopted more rigid anti-Chinese measures and abandoned the policy of assimilation, discouraging the naturalization of Chinese and intermarriage between Thai and Chinese.

With the emergence of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Thai concern over the subversive potential of the Chinese community served to revive efforts to assimilate the Chinese into Thai society. Chinese secondary schools, closed during World War II, have not been permitted to reopen; Chinese primary schools are strictly regulated in their curriculums, with periodic restrictions on the teaching of the Chinese language; and Chinese students entering universities are required to take Thai names. Furthermore, new categories of occupations have been added to those previously reserved for citizens, and legislation has provided that at least half of all employees in certain types of concerns be Thai nationals. Immigration of Chinese into Thailand has been restricted to a quota of 200 each year. While these legal restrictions have induced Chinese aliens to opt for the benefits of Thai citizenship, assimilation has also been facilitated by the ease with which Chinese and other alien residents may obtain citizenship. In addition, assimilation is being effected

by an increasing incidence of intermarriage between Chinese and Thai (many prominent Thai families have some Chinese blood), by the more extensive use of the Thai language in preference to Chinese, and by closer social and economic relations between the two groups. Nevertheless, even those second or third generation Chinese who have adopted Thai names and become Thai citizens are still apt to consider themselves Chinese, speak Chinese at home, and participate in traditional Chinese social affairs.

In effect, the Chinese minority of Thailand is becoming more of a cultural community than an ethnic group. The extent of assimilation to Thai culture is greatest in the Bangkok area and other larger cities, particularly Chiang Mai in the north; the Chinese in southern peninsular communities tend to be less assimilated. Indirectly, the increasing Westernization of Thailand's urban communities has encouraged a merger of the Thai and overseas Chinese cultures by providing a new milieu acceptable to both and accordingly blurring the distinctions between the two.

Almost all the Malays of Thailand—who are officially called Thai Islam by the government—are Muslims. Ethnically and culturally, they are identical with their compatriots in Malaysia. Over 90% live in the southern peninsular region, particularly in the southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala, Satun, and Narathiwat, where they form about 80% of the population. From the 1930's until the end of World War II, the Thai Government attempted forcibly to assimilate the Malay population by drastic legal measures, including compulsory instruction in Buddhist religious precepts and the Thai language in the schools of the southern provinces, adoption of Thai names, wearing of Thai-style clothing, and elimination of the heretofore legal recognition of polygyny. Except for the discouragement of polygyny, these regulations were relaxed or repealed following the 1945 royal decree guaranteeing freedom of religion. Since about 1948 the official emphasis has been on integration rather than assimilation, based on the dual principles of freedom of religion and of improved education with stress on the standard Thai curriculum. The Thai Government has also permitted the teaching of the Malay language and of Muslim religious precepts in the schools of the four southernmost provinces and the adjudication of family and inheritance questions involving Muslims by Islamic courts. In addition, the government has provided small subsidies for Islamic religious and educational activities throughout the kingdom. However, the Malays of southern Thailand still feel a

stronger sense of cultural affinity with their fellow Muslims, particularly the Malays across the border, than they do with Thai peoples. Although extremist sentiment has abated somewhat since the suppression of an armed revolt by Malay separatist extremists in 1947-48, underground extremists reportedly have managed to survive. Bandit gangs and the predominantly Malayan Chinese Communist guerrillas in the border area have tried to exploit separatist sentiment to their advantage.

Between 50,000 to 75,000 Malays live in Bangkok and nearby areas. Most of these individuals are descended from slaves captured by Thai raiding expeditions in the Malay peninsula between the 13th and early 19th centuries. In contrast to the southern Malays, the Malays of central Thailand are well integrated into Thai society, but they remain Muslims.

Although numbering only an estimated 70,000 to 80,000, the Vietnamese residents of Thailand have posed internal security problems for the Thai Government because of the influence of pro-Communist element among them. Almost all are either refugees from Vietnam or descendants of Vietnamese refugees. An estimated 20,000 of them, called "Old Vietnamese," are descended from Vietnamese who fled to Thailand to escape the wars of the 18th century or the anti-Catholic persecutions of the Annamite emperors during the 19th century. These immigrants were industrious farmers, fishermen, and artisans; their descendants still reside mainly in farming communities in Chanthaburi Province in southeastern Thailand, while a few have settled in the urban Bangkok area. During the Indochina war of 1946-54, an estimated 75,000 Vietnamese refugees entered Thailand via Laos. Beginning in 1949, the Thai Government for security reasons restricted these refugees to certain provinces along the Mekong river and withheld resident alien status from them. During 1959, Thai and North Vietnamese officials concluded agreements providing for the voluntary repatriation of these postwar refugees. By the late summer of 1964, when repatriation was halted at North Vietnam's request, an estimated 38,000 had departed from Thailand for North Vietnam. By late 1970, North Vietnamese interest in the evacuation of the refugees was renewed, coinciding with Thai readiness to expand reciprocal contacts with Communist countries. In October 1970, the two countries agreed in principle on the repatriation of a total of 37,000 Vietnamese refugees to North Vietnam during the following year; however, information is not available on the implementation of this agreement. Together, the

Chinese, the "Old Vietnamese," most of whom have acquired Thai citizenship, and the postwar Vietnamese refugee families virtually monopolize commerce in some of the northeastern urban centers.

The Cambodian minority is located in the provinces near the Cambodian border, in an area which once was part of the Khmer Empire. The Cambodians are Theravada Buddhists like the Thai, but they cling to their own language. There has been considerable ill feeling between the two peoples, based largely on the Cambodians' resentment of their inferior political and economic status, but little open conflict.

Of much lesser significance, largely because of their increasing assimilation into Thai society, are the Kui (or Soai) and the Mons. These people practice the same forms of Theravada Buddhism as the Thai, and most of them are regarded as culturally Thai by the Thai Government. The Kui of northeastern Thailand, who are closely related to the Cambodians, are being assimilated culturally by either the Thai or the Cambodians, depending on the proximity. Most of the Mons, who are descended from prisoners-of-war or immigrants who entered Thailand from Burma during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, live in small communities in central Thailand and are rapidly being assimilated by the Thai.

Except for some alien Indians, Bengalis, and Pakistanis residing in the urban centers, the remaining inhabitants of Thailand are tribespeople. The censuses of 1960 and 1970 did not enumerate them, primarily because of their geographic remoteness and because of insurgency in some tribal areas. Most tribespeople practice animism, only a few having been converted to Buddhism by their Thai neighbors or to Christianity by Western missionaries. An estimated 370,000 tribespeople, using languages generally classified within the Tibeto-Burmese category, inhabit the forested regions of Thailand bordering on Burma and northwestern Laos. The most numerous and culturally advanced of all tribespeople in Thailand are the Karens, who are located in the valleys and the lower altitude uplands of western and northwestern Thailand. Far more backward than the Karens are the smaller Tibeto-Burman tribal groups of the remote mountainous regions in the north. These include approximately 15,000 Lahu, about 11,000 Lisu, and lesser numbers of Akha. In addition, an estimated 22,200 Kha and about 9,000 Lawa tribespeople, who speak languages of the Mon-Khmer stock, dwell in the upland border regions. The Kha are widely dispersed along the northern, northeastern, and eastern borders, while the Lawa live principally in the northwest. Some 54,000 Meo and approximately 16,000 Yao also reside

in the forested and mountainous regions of the north and northeast, the Meo usually at altitudes above 5,000 feet. The Meo and Yao speak related languages and have long been influenced by cultural contacts with China. Like most other upland-dwelling tribespeople, the Meo and Yao practice slash-and-burn cultivation.

In general, the Thai Government has made little effort to further the assimilation of the tribespeople of the more remote border regions. Except for the Meo, whose propensities for trading bring them into the towns, only those tribespeople living at the lower altitudes are likely to have frequent contact with the Thai. However, increased problems of internal security in the north and northeast and the government's efforts to discourage the cultivation and smuggling of opium and the deforestation caused by slash-and-burn type of agriculture have brought about closer Thai contacts with all tribal groups in recent decades. When confronted with Communist-instigated insurgency among the Meo in 1967, the government began to resettle the hill peoples in locations relatively free from insurgent activity. In these new settlements, tribespeople were encouraged to cultivate crops other than opium. These policies and the occasionally harsh counter-subversive measures taken in the area by the Thai Armed Forces aroused Meo tribal resentment against the government. Beginning in early 1970, the government encouraged the Meo to remain in their own villages rather than to flee when the insurgents entered their areas. Pro-Communist elements also have had some influence on the Yao, Lahu, and Kha tribes (particularly the Tin and Khmu subgroups of the Kha). As of late 1972, Communist-oriented tribal insurgents were active along the eastern border of Chiang Rai and Nan provinces, in the area where Phitsanulok, Phetchabun, and Loei provinces meet, and in Tak Province along the Burma border.

While most of the indigenous population of Thailand are of the Mongoloid racial strain, the Thai and the principal minority peoples represent the intermingling of many substrains throughout the centuries. Consequently, it is often difficult to identify the ethnic origins of the inhabitants on the basis of physical traits alone. Most of the ethnic Thai (Figure 3) are brown-skinned and display such other conventional "Southern Mongoloid" traits as a broad head, a broad nose, and a slight epicanthic eye-fold. Hair color is black or dark brown. The Thai are less hirsute than most Europeans or Japanese and rarely grow heavy beards or mustaches. The physical traits of Thailand's Chinese resemble those of the inhabitants

of South China. Those Thai who are partly Chinese in descent often display such typically Chinese characteristics as yellowish skin and the pronounced epicanthic eye-fold. Within Thailand's cities, the Thai and Chinese are often indistinguishable from each other, particularly if both wear Western-style clothes, as is usually the case with the men. While the Tibeto-Burman and Meo-Yao tribespeople have common Mongoloid characteristics (Figure 4), the Kha, like the other Indonesian tribespeople on the Indochina Peninsula, possess such typical tribal Indonesian features as a very dark skin, sloping foreheads, and tightly curled hair (Figure 5). Generally speaking, members of differing ethnic groups, particularly the tribespeople, can best be distinguished by their traditional style of dress and ornamentation.

The Thai language is the official language of the kingdom and a second language for most of the country's minority groups. In 1970, over 90% of the population had a working knowledge of Thai. A speaking knowledge of Thai is lacking only among the Malays of the southernmost provinces, the more remote tribal peoples in the northern border regions, and among some of the Cambodians. The Thai language is tonal and uninflected, with a tendency toward monosyllabism, and the script is derived from ancient Indic forms. Outside Thailand, the language is the mother tongue of minority peoples in Burma, North Vietnam, and China, and is spoken by a majority of the inhabitants of Laos. A remarkably high degree of mutual intelligibility prevails among Thai dialects; in fact, it is said that a Tho tribesman from North Vietnam would be able to make himself understood in Bangkok.

Within Thailand the Thai language is divided into four main dialects and a number of minor dialects. The principal dialects are central Thai, or Siamese; a southern peninsular dialect; northern, or Thai Yuan; and a northeastern dialect (Thai Lao) which is almost identical with the speech of the inhabitants of Vientiane, Laos. The Siamese dialect is the official language of Thailand. It is the language taught in the public schools, used over the radio, and employed in domestically produced motion pictures. Outside the central plains, knowledge of Siamese is more common among urban residents than among villagers, although ambitious individuals throughout the kingdom voluntarily learn Siamese in order to achieve higher social status.

The Chinese of Thailand speak the dialect of the area in South China from which their forebears emigrated. Teochiu, the vernacular of the Swatow region of Kwangtung province, is spoken by about

56% of the Chinese in Thailand. Approximately 16% speak the Hakka dialect of north Kwangtung and southwest Fukien, 12% the Hainanese dialect, 7% the Cantonese, and 7% the Hokkienese. Only an estimated 2% speak other dialects. Inasmuch as most spoken Chinese dialects are mutually unintelligible, there is a tendency for Chinese speaking the same dialect to congregate in certain areas of Thailand, to engage in specific occupations, and to form their own regional associations. Because commerce and industry within the Chinese community are dominated by the Teochiu, the Teochiu dialect, along with the Thai language, has become a lingua franca of domestic commerce. According to estimates in the mid-1960's, 60% to 80% of the Chinese in Thailand have a working knowledge of Teochiu. Because of their success in business, the Teochiu are becoming more closely associated with, and culturally assimilated to, the Westernized Thai elite in Bangkok than are the other Chinese groups. Since written Chinese is uniform, Chinese-language newspapers and other publications serve as a common media of communications for those Chinese who are literate in their own language. The Chinese language is taught in all the private Chinese primary schools in Thailand. However, the majority of Chinese in Thailand are literate in Thai rather than in Chinese, since most have attended Thai-language rather than Chinese-language schools.

The Malays of southern Thailand use the same basic spoken vernacular as their compatriots in Malaysia. In contrast to Thai, the Malay language is atonal and mainly disyllabic, and its grammar is unusually simple. While the official Malay languages of Malaysia and Indonesia use Romanized scripts, the traditional Jawi script derived from Arabic is still utilized by the Malays of Thailand. In general, Malays residing in urban centers are more familiar with the Thai language than rural Malays, because the latter are relatively isolated from contacts with the Thai and because facilities for primary education in such areas have lagged far behind those in the cities. The government has taken steps to develop a working knowledge of the Malay language among Thai officials in the south as part of its development programs for that region.

As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the Mon-Khmer languages spoken in Thailand have been gradually falling into disuse, with the notable exception of Cambodian. The Kui have all but discarded their vernacular in favor of Cambodian or Thai, and the Mons, the Lawa, and those Kha tribespeople in close contact with the Thai are gradually adopting Thai in

place of their own vernaculars. Large numbers of Cambodians, however, do not know Thai. The Vietnamese in Thailand use their own language and, although they have remained largely unassimilated, most can also speak Thai.

The Tibeto-Burmese languages spoken in Thailand include Karen and Lolo-No-Su. As in Burma, the Karens of Thailand speak two mutually unintelligible dialects, P'wo and Sgaw. The Lahu, Lisu, and Akha use closely related dialects of the Lolo-No-Su language. The tonal and monosyllabic languages of the Meo and Yao together comprise the Miao-Yao stock. None of the Tibeto-Burman and Miao-Yao tongues used in Thailand appear to have developed written forms, although missionaries have devised Romanized scripts for local Meo, Lahu, and other tribespeople. Knowledge of secondary languages varies according to tribal group and region. A substantial number of the northern tribespeople understand simple Thai, and they also frequently learn the vernaculars of neighboring tribal communities.

English, the second official language, is the only Western language widely used; its usage has increased rapidly in Bangkok and other urban centers since the end of World War II. Many government documents and official bulletins are printed in English as well as in Thai. The expansion of secondary and higher education facilities has necessitated greater knowledge of English, owing to the lack of scientific and technical terminology in the Thai language and the limited number of textbooks in Thai. Most high school graduates in Thailand have had at least 6 years of instruction in English. A desire to obtain grants for a higher education abroad in the United States or Commonwealth countries has given students incentive to acquire fluency in English. English is the language of international trade in Thailand, and it is also used extensively among the Westernized Thai elite, as well as among university teachers and students. Moreover, the great increase in the number of U.S. nationals in Thailand since the 1950's has stimulated the demand at all levels of society to learn English. A good speaking and reading knowledge of English facilitates employment in upper echelon government and commercial positions, particularly in the technical and scientific fields. In the cities of Thailand, there are long waiting lists for enrollment in the English-language classes offered by the U.S. language centers.

2. Class structure

The Thai social system is loosely structured, making possible a considerable degree of individual mobility.

FIGURE 3. Representative Thai (U/OU)



In a sense, the twofold division of traditional Thai society between a governing elite and the great rural peasant majority still exists. With the exception of the population of the northeastern region, villagers in general comprise a socially static group with limited expectations and demands. Urbanization and the increasing impact of Western political, cultural, and economic institutions, particularly during the post-World War II years, however, have led to the formation of new classes in urban society. Progress in cultural assimilation has been gradually reducing the differences between Thai society and that of the



Chinese and some of the other ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, unassimilated Chinese, Malays, Vietnamese, and tribespeople still maintain their traditional social structures and community organizations under the superimposed administration of the central government.

A considerable degree of individualism prevails in Thai society. Personal relationships are freely entered into and terminated, and role behavior is not rigidly enforced. Nevertheless, an elaborate hierarchy of status exists in Thai society, based on such factors as age, acquisition of Buddhist merit, or official rank in the government bureaucracy. A system of formalized usages denoting respect is expressed through language, gesture, or posture. Almost the first thing that any Thai learns about any other Thai is the latter's status. This hierarchy of rank and status stratifies individuals, however, rather than social classes. Each individual tends to see himself as above or below but seldom precisely equal to those around him. Thus, individuals hold the status of superiors or "patrons" in some of their personal relationships while remaining inferiors or "clients" in others. Although authority is readily accepted, superiors must handle their subordinates with tact in order to obtain their cooperation. Village headmen and local government officials, for example, administer their bailiwicks more through persuasion and guidance than decree.

The society has been in transition since the early 20th century, and social change has been accelerated by the increased impact of Western cultural influence during the decades following World War II. Before the early 20th century, the structure of traditional Thai society was geared to the political system of the absolute monarchy. Society was divided into a small ruling class, whose rank and status were dependent upon the desires of royalty, and a large peasant lower class, with slaves occupying the lowest stratum of society. Western influence gradually led to changes in traditional class stratification and in the determinants of social status and to increases in individual mobility in the social scale. While royalty is still supported by the ruling class and revered by the common people, it no longer serves as an instrument for the creation of status. In Thailand's urban society, moreover, loosely structured class strata have emerged within both the Thai and Chinese communities.

Within the greater Bangkok area and other urban centers, five socioeconomic class divisions, defined principally on the basis of income, political power, education, and family background, are clearly identified: the traditional aristocracy, a "new elite," the upper and lower middle classes, and the lower

class. Except for the aristocracy and, to a lesser extent, the new elite, who are extremely conscious of social status, little class consciousness exists within these groupings. This is due largely to the Thai tendency to view society in terms of status differences between individuals rather than between groups.

Since the constitutional monarchy was established by the "Revolution of 1932," wealth, military rank, and a Western education rather than royally conferred titles have provided the basis for membership in what is termed the new elite. During the 1930's, political power and the high social and economic status accompanying it were gradually transferred from the aristocracy to predominantly upper middle class elements. Concomitantly, the aristocracy has rapidly diminished in size and influence, although it retains considerable social prestige. The core of the new elite consists of high-ranking armed forces officers and civil officials. Since 1948 armed forces officers have served as prime ministers, cabinet members, and other high-ranking officials in the governments dominated by the military, along with civilian officials on the same and subordinate levels. Outside the government, those wealthy Chinese entrepreneurs who have close business connections with Thai officials, and Thai professional men and intellectuals are also considered members of the new elite. Although professors in the Thai universities are paid approximately the same salaries as senior civil officials, the prestige of the professors is often higher. A considerable degree of cultural Westernization prevails among all these

elements, many of whom have been educated at universities or military schools abroad. Wealthy army officers and business entrepreneurs often live in ostentatious style and provide lavish entertainment for their guests; the expensive U.S. automobile is an important status symbol among them.

In urban society, high-ranking government officials, both military and civilian, have enriched themselves

FIGURE 4. Representative tribespeople



Meo woman and child (U/OU)



Akha tribesman (U/OU)



Lisu tribeswomen (U/OU)



Akha children (C)



Karen youth (C)



FIGURE 5. Akha tribesman (U/OU)

in both government and private commercial enterprise, often by exploiting their positions. Government officials originally entered the business world by directing state-operated commercial and industrial monopolies, many of them created during the late 1940's and early 1950's. Not a few officials have awarded government contracts to private firms in return for kickbacks or have participated in the smuggling of arms or opium. Early in 1972, the most powerful leaders in the government and their chief lieutenants were active owners and directors of some of the largest firms in the country. On the other hand, few Thai have obtained high government office solely as the result of success in private business.

A growing number of business alliances have been established between Thai Government officials and Chinese entrepreneurs. Thai military leaders, for example, or members of their families, are often invited to join the boards of directors of Chinese companies in order to "protect" the firms from governmental discrimination. Conversely, Chinese are sometimes hired as managers of private concerns established and owned by Thai officials. In addition to buttressing the economic position of the Thai elite, these Thai-Chinese commercial alliances, which are sometimes accompanied by intermarriage, have

contributed to the assimilation of the Chinese to Thai culture. Assimilation has progressed much further among the Chinese business elite than among middle and lower class Chinese.

Ranking just below the new elite is a sizable and growing urban upper middle class, at which level the cultural differences between the Thai and the unassimilated Chinese are the most distinct. The leaders of the local Chinese community associations, for example, are drawn mostly from upper middle class Chinese entrepreneurs, who tend to be more conscious of their separate ethnic and cultural identity than are other Chinese. It is this class which has supported the Chinese private schools, provided them with teachers, maintained close ties with other Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, and in general, attempted to resist assimilative pressures. The Thai upper middle class is comprised largely of army officers, junior civil officials, senior commercial clerks, schoolteachers and university instructors, and a few small businessmen. Most upper middle class Thai aspire to the status of the new elite, upon whose favors their careers often depend. In contrast to their hardworking and relatively frugal Chinese counterparts, many upper middle class Thai attempt to follow the example of the new elite by the pursuit of pleasure and an ostentatious style of life. However, upward mobility into the ranks of the new elite is difficult, except perhaps through promotions within the military services. A degree from a foreign university has become almost a prerequisite for a higher civil service position, and the expense of higher education abroad tends to exclude from upper level positions those who lack financial resources. Consequently, those positions tend to remain in the hands of families of the new elite who can afford to finance such an education for their children. Moreover, a good knowledge of English is considered decisive in the competitive examinations for scholarships abroad, with the result that applicants from families of the elite tend to have an advantage over those from other groups.

The urban lower middle class, predominantly Chinese in composition, encompasses small shopkeepers, artisans, craftsmen, mechanics, and other skilled workers. Status is attached primarily to occupational skills and to the accumulation of sufficient savings to facilitate mobility into the Chinese upper middle class. Consciousness of Chinese culture and nationalist sentiment tends to be lacking among this class of Chinese, most of whom have limited access to Chinese primary schools because of the expense involved. Lower middle class Thai include

low-ranking government clerks and those in occupations reserved by law for Thai nationals, such as taxi drivers and barbers.

The urban lower class consists mostly of unskilled laborers and domestic servants. Because of the Thai aversion to manual labor, many of the unskilled industrial workers and day laborers in Bangkok are Chinese. However, as a result of the restrictions on alien immigration and the increasing migration of lower class rural Thai laborers into the urban centers, primarily Bangkok, a small but growing class of urban Thai laborers has been developing.

In contrast to the urban centers, there are few class distinctions in most Thai villages. Almost all inhabitants of a typical village are farmers, and only relatively minor differences in land or cash resources exist among them. Other villagers usually include one or two Buddhist monks, one or two primary school teachers, a shopkeeper, and sometimes a rice-miller; the latter two generally are Chinese. An exception to this general pattern prevails in the fertile Chao Phraya delta region of central Thailand, where the development of large-scale commercial rice farming for the export trade has been accompanied by a trend toward class stratification. This trend has involved both upward and downward social mobility, in that a new rural lower class of landless laborers and a small rural middle class of prosperous farmers has come into existence on a localized basis. Class consciousness has been notably lacking, however. There is no evidence that landlessness has been a source of unrest, probably because of the ample availability of food and of cheap materials for housing in the delta region.

Within the individualized hierarchy of status, considerable deference is often accorded to the village headman. This official is usually elected from among the elder and more prosperous farmers, except in the northeastern and southernmost provinces, where he is commonly appointed by the officer in charge of the district, the basic administrative unit of government within the province. Monks and schoolteachers, who are sometimes the only educated individuals in the village, also possess high prestige. Although a well-to-do farmer may exercise considerable influence within the rural community because of the favors he can extend, he may be accorded less respect than those who have shown their devotion to monastic or lay Buddhist activities. A villager who has spent many years as a monk is expected to become a community leader when he leaves the monastery regardless of his economic position. As it did in traditional Thai society, moreover, the Buddhist order remains a

channel for social mobility, its members ranging from the princely nobility to the humblest peasants.

The roles of the headmen, monks, and schoolteachers in village society vary to some extent according to region. In central Thailand, village society tends to be more loosely structured than elsewhere in the kingdom. There is often no clearly defined village area or community; instead, the families sharing the same temple or primary school are the closest approximation to a village community. The influence exerted by the headman on village behavior is lessened by the fact that his bailiwick is an arbitrarily determined geographic area which may not coincide with settlement groupings or with the clientele of the local temple and school. Only four basic units conduct significant group activities within the village community: the nuclear family and other kinship groups, the government (represented by the headman and superior local government officials), the monastery, and the local school. There are no castes, age-grade societies, occupational groups, neighborhood associations, or village councils. Villagers are not required to contribute their labor to the community, serve as village guards, or respond to the dictates of village elders.

In the fairly isolated communities of the north and northeast, village solidarity is greater than in central Thailand and group activities are highly structured. For example, village sentries are required in crisis situations, a community notable is charged with the construction and maintenance of local water and crop irrigation facilities, and judicial hearings are sometimes convened by the village elders over minor offenses against both civil and criminal law. Such group activities are not normally organized on a local basis in central Thai villages, where those functions described above are preempted by the government.

Class stratification among unassimilated Malays of the southernmost Thai provinces resembles that in Malaysia. There is a distinction based on birth between a small hereditary aristocratic class and the great majority of Malay commoners, most of whom belong to a large lower class consisting almost entirely of farmers and fishermen. Within the Malay communities, political and religious leadership is drawn from a small educated elite, which includes the better educated imams, local civil officials, and teachers. Among Malay commoners, social status appears to be determined mainly by religious considerations, educational qualifications, official position, and age. The honorific title of hadji given to those who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca is an important status symbol.

Most of the unassimilated Vietnamese refugees in Thailand may be roughly categorized as middle or lower middle class. Before arrival in Thailand, a large proportion had been semiskilled construction laborers, minor government functionaries, small businessmen, mechanics, or artisans. After their arrival in the northeast, most became retail shopkeepers or electricians, mechanics, or carpenters.

The primary determinants of social status and leadership within most tribal communities are age and wealth. The village chief and elders usually are the most prosperous in terms of livestock, land, or other personal property. An education in a Thai Government or a Christian mission school confers prestige on those relatively few younger members of the tribal communities who have had such an opportunity. Sorcerers are also accorded high status within most tribal villages.

3. Family and kinship groups

The nuclear family is the basic social unit in Thai society. It usually becomes a small extended family through the temporary residence of a married older child and spouse and the permanent inclusion of the spouse and children of the youngest child. The bilateral kinship system defining relationships through both the mother and the father is common. Considerable equality between the sexes prevails in marriages, and in urban society women enjoy nearly equal status with men. Relations between parents and children and among kinsmen in general reflect the patron-client pattern long characteristic of Thai society. The family and kinship patterns of Thailand's principal minority groups vary from those of the Thai according to degree of cultural distinctiveness and extent of assimilation.

Traditionally, a newly married couple resides with the family of the bride and establishes its own household only after the birth of the first child or when the wife's next younger sister marries and introduces her husband into the household. Occupational circumstances, however, often compel a couple either to live with the groom's family or to move to a community distant from both parental villages. Strong ties of kinship customarily extend beyond the nuclear family to uncles and aunts and first cousins. Family loyalties constrain the wealthier members to provide food and shelter to orphaned, disabled, or impoverished relatives, although such obligations normally do not extend to more distant relatives, such as second and third cousins. In Bangkok, however, constricted living space, low incomes, and the high cost of living sometimes prevent lower class families

from forming extended households, even on a temporary basis.

Among villagers, and among most urban Thai as well, the authority of husband and wife over children, household, and other matters of common concern is virtually equal, although the husband is considered the head of the house. The wife normally holds the family purse strings. In the Chao Phraya delta, however where large amounts of cash are derived from the sale of rice, the husband usually keeps control of the family income. Thai couples make indulgent parents and to a considerable extent share the responsibilities of child care and discipline. For the most part, Thai children are subject to little restraint except in social behavior. Permissively reared until about the age of 3 or 4, children are then disciplined and instructed in the proper relationships with their parents, older and younger siblings, other relatives, and elders in general. Thai boys receive their religious education either in the public primary school or during novitiatehood in the monasteries, where they are often subjected to disciplinary controls for the first time in their lives. Some educated urban Thai are adopting modern Western patterns of child care from imported child care manuals. According to traditional practice in most areas of Thailand, property is divided equally among surviving sons and daughters. The only exception occurs in northeastern Thailand, where only daughters inherit among the Thai-Lao, and sons either have to acquire new land or manage the properties of their wives.

Young men in Thailand generally select their own marriage partners subject to the approval of their parents or guardians. Young couples meet each other through school activities and at markets, temple fairs, and festivals, and thus become acquainted before seeking parental approval for their betrothal.¹ Endowments are presented to the couple by both families (as advance portions of their inheritance), and the groom's parents may make a gift of money or jewelry to the girl's family. Marriage is regarded as a civil contract only. Strictly speaking, there is no Buddhist marriage rite, and monks usually do not attend the wedding ceremony, which is a simple function of ancient Brahmanic origin. Because registration of the marriage virtually compels the bride's family to provide a wedding party in order to keep up appearances, the poorer families often prefer not to register but simply to negotiate the settlement and allow the couple to cohabit.

¹The northeasterners are much more permissive in their attitudes toward courtship than the other Thai peoples of the kingdom; premarital sexual relations are common in the rural northeast, and no serious stigma is attached to birth outside wedlock.

In urban society a distinct trend away from the traditional practices of courtship has been evident since the 1960's. To an increasing degree, young men, especially those educated in the West, are courting Thai girls in the modern Western manner without chaperonage. This is particularly true in Bangkok's higher education institutions, where students are free from parental control and unsupervised in their personal lives outside the dormitories.

A Thai marriage may be informally terminated by either party, and a legal divorce is required only in the case of a registered marriage. The most common cause of divorce probably is conflict over property. Legally, a husband can obtain a divorce if his wife commits adultery, but a wife does not have the same right. Nevertheless, the growing independence of upper middle and upper class Thai women has been reflected in an increased number of divorces initiated by wives. Although most Thai marriages have always been monogamous, polygyny was considered socially acceptable until the mid-1930's. At that time the government discouraged polygyny by withholding legal status from any wife other than the first. Since that time, a second wife has been regarded as no more than a concubine who may be abandoned by her husband at any time.

The family and kinship patterns of the unassimilated Chinese and Vietnamese differ markedly from those of the Thai. As in pre-Communist South China, the overseas Chinese family is patriarchal and, whenever possible, extended, with authority vested in the senior male. Emphasis is placed on descent and inheritance through the male line. Those overseas Chinese families which can trace descent from a common male ancestor are grouped together in clans, which enforce exogamy among the member families. Within the Chinese family, the individual's rights and responsibilities are dependent on generation, age, and sex. Children are reared with the customary emphasis on obedience and respect for parents and elders, and they are expected to submit to their parents' wishes in education, choice of vocation, and marriage. When a bride enters her husband's home, she is expected to live under the domination of an often unsympathetic mother-in-law until the birth of her first child. Polygyny is still prevalent among the wealthier Chinese families despite the Thai law granting legal status to only one wife. Intermarriage with Chinese is unpopular with Thai women because of the inferior status accorded the wife in the Chinese home. In many cases, Sino-Thai couples live apart from their Chinese in-laws. The Vietnamese family structure strongly resembles the traditional Chinese, except that the basic social unit is the nuclear family.

The Malay family is similar in many respects to the Thai, despite some differences in marriage practices. The kinship pattern is bilateral, and the nuclear family is the basic social unit, although the family is frequently extended by the inclusion of the youngest child and his or her spouse. An individual enjoys some latitude in questions of marriage, education, and occupation. Marriage is considered a sacred religious contract, but it can be abrogated by males without much difficulty. Malay women enjoy great freedom, especially in economic matters, often acting as family bankers and engaging in independent enterprises. They are not veiled. The Malay family is usually monogamous, although Islamic law permits polygyny.

Among the unassimilated tribespeople—primarily the Tibeto-Burman people and the Meo and Yao—many family and kinship patterns are shared in common. Tribal groups are divided into patrilineal clans, some of which are coterminous with village communities while others extend into neighboring villages. Most tribal groups are exogamous by either clan or village. Most groups also sanction free courtship by the males and premarital sexual relations, followed by payment of a bride price to the girl's family. On the other hand, most Karen tribespeople require parental approval of courtship, observe strict sexual mores, and have bilateral kinship patterns.

4. Basic values and attitudes

The basic values and patterns of behavior of the Thai have been conditioned by the Buddhist concept of karma or fate, whereby actions in past and present existences have chains of consequences extending to future existences. Other central values derive from the centuries of rule by absolute monarchs and local princes subservient to them. In urban society, however, these traditional values are being altered by the impact of Westernization and by domestically generated social, economic, and political changes.

In particular, Buddhism has molded those values related to morality, time, and individualism. The ideal man is exemplified by the Buddhist monk who has renounced a worldly life to attain enlightenment through self-denial, meditation, and virtuous behavior. By good deeds one "makes merit" and these counterbalance bad deeds. Contributing money for the construction of a temple is the most effective form of generosity, but any act of giving—whether to a monk, relative, or friend—confers some merit upon the donor. Charity for the needy is an important merit-making activity.

Fatalism and apathy have always pervaded the Thai national temperament, largely because of belief

in the karmic concept of the transitory character of earthly life and its abnegation of worldly ambition. Apathy and political opportunism are widespread in public affairs. The elite has rarely been willing to sacrifice for causes which seem unlikely to succeed. Whether in warfare or political intrigue, the desire is to be identified with the winning side. In most instances the Thai have little admiration or sympathy for the underdog who shows temerity and poor judgment in trying to make a stand against superior odds. Although the Thai respect religious faith, almost everyone relies on the advice of astrologers for making decisions about future undertakings.

Individual responsibility for one's actions is one of the fundamental values of Thai culture. It is related to the concept of karma through the belief that each adult person is responsible only to himself and that his actions are of no concern to those unaffected by them. Consequently, there is a wide range of permissive social behavior in Thailand. The Thai attitude is symbolized by the old Siamese proverb "to follow your own heart is to be a true Thai." While deviant behavior is not condoned, it is generally considered to be an individual's own affair. If a villager makes himself obnoxious to the community, sanctions such as noncooperation and social ostracism may be informally imposed by his neighbors. Expulsion from the village is the ultimate sanction, and it is a punishment usually reserved for persons believed to be possessed by evil spirits.

The Thai consciousness of status and authority can be attributed in part to the karmic concept of according status to individuals based on their merit. A more basic cause is the strongly ingrained Thai respect for the symbolic authority of the throne and for its representatives in the administrative hierarchy extending from the top level down to the local level. The success of the 1973 student revolt can be attributed largely to the personal intervention of the King on behalf of the moderate elements within the student leadership. Originating in the Indic tradition of divine kingship, this respect for royal authority is based on recognition of personal power rather than on concern for law. The Thai feel that laws, regulations, and contracts may be flexibly interpreted or enforced by high officials as they see fit. Moreover, government administration at all levels moves slowly because of personal factors and deference to authority. Minor officials tend to refer all new questions to their superiors, knowing that their own advancement may depend more upon the goodwill of the higher officials than upon displays of initiative and industry.

Face-consciousness among the Thai is manifested in the importance attached to formalized courtesy.

While deference is shown superiors, at the same time the Thai avoid embarrassing, intruding, or imposing upon their social inferiors. They feel that bad manners cause loss of face both to the offender and to the person he offends. Closely related to consciousness of face is the Thai propensity to judge morality—or more correctly, propriety—in terms of external behavior. A capable or clever person avoids being caught in an embarrassing situation; if he does find himself in such straits, he tries to maintain a calm and serene demeanor. A person with these attributes is said to have a "cool heart" (*chai yen*), a term roughly equivalent to equanimity. A person should not show anger in response to an insult, for example, but through his cool manner he should cause his antagonist to appear foolish.

Official corruption on all levels of government has long been endemic. Its prevalence can be attributed partly to the importance attached to cleverness and the maintenance of face and partly to the traditional respect for personalized authority rather than laws. Observers of Thai rural society have noted that villagers openly admire the cleverness of government leaders in amassing illicit wealth. Nevertheless, exposures of large-scale corruption have evoked adverse reactions from Thai of all classes. The relatively few high military and civilian officials who have won a reputation for honesty are respected.

In urban society, cultural values are changing, primarily as a result of the increasing contacts with Westerners and a general desire to emulate the West. Traditional nonmaterialistic values are being modified as the accelerated pace of economic development provides new opportunities for the middle class and the elite to participate in private enterprise. Since the arrival of U.S. military and civilian personnel in the 1960's, unprecedented opportunities for profitmaking have developed through the establishment of hotels, restaurants, stores, bars, and entertainment facilities. Moreover, the traditional respect for authority has been diminishing to some extent among Westernized middle class Thai outside the government services. In particular, Western democratic ideals have influenced a number of journalists, writers, and students who have been critical of the elite for the prevalence of official corruption, the ineffectiveness of parliamentary institutions, and the restrictive police measures occasionally employed against opposition elements.

The desire to emulate Western mores is strongest among middle and upper class youth. Many urban young people are preoccupied with the latest dress, popular music, motion pictures, dances, and other fads current among youth in the United States. The older Thai generally are opposed to these trends, and

the government has frequently banned foreign films and television programs for "setting a bad example to youth." Largely because of the permissive behavioral patterns of traditional society and the absence of widespread socioeconomic discontent, the generation gap has been much less significant in Thailand than in some other Southeast Asian countries and in India.

Until recently, Thai youth normally tended to be politically apathetic, seldom showing tendencies to launch crusades or engage in extreme actions like the bloody student revolt of 1973, which directly involved at least 75,000 students and temporarily paralyzed the city of Bangkok. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that some of the most conservative, traditionalist elements in Thai society sympathized with the revolting students, while the latter, except for a few extremist elements, looked to support from the King and expressed no desire for revolutionary changes in the social system.

The social values of the unassimilated minorities differ in varying degrees from those of the Thai. Chinese values tend to be materialistic and predominantly secular oriented. Most Chinese are concerned principally with the acquisition of wealth; frugality and industry are extolled. The Chinese commercial classes, particularly those elements who have been at least partially assimilated, have been more receptive to Westernization than any other group in the kingdom. Their consciousness of the value of hard work, commercial skills, sense of contractual obligations, and relative fluency in English and Thai, as well as Chinese, make them more adaptable than the Thai to Western business practices. Many Chinese youth in Thailand are almost entirely Westernized in their dress and in their interest in popular music, dancing, films, fashions, and fads; conversely, older Chinese are often critical of such Western influences on grounds that they weaken the traditional family discipline.

The value system of the Malays is conditioned to a considerable extent by Islamic precepts combined with traditional animistic beliefs. The Malays attach considerable importance to charity, which is considered a major Islamic virtue. Fatalism, face consciousness, and love of pleasure are traits which the Malays have in common with the Thai. However, in contrast to the Thai, the Malays also have a reputation for belligerence and a hot temper.

The values and traits of the unassimilated tribal peoples are determined largely by the precepts and taboos of their animistic beliefs. Dependence on the dictates of the spirit world is considerably stronger among the tribespeople than among the Thai and the other lowland peoples. Some of the more remote tribal

groups, particularly the Meo and the Lahu, have long been reputed for their independent spirit and warlike qualities. Those tribespeople who dwell in the lower altitudes, especially the Lawa and the Kha, are much less independent in spirit and less likely to be hostile to or suspicious of strangers.

The monarchy and the Buddhist state religion are the main forces serving to unify the Thai people. The close relationship between the throne and the Buddhist order is reflected by the direct participation of the king and the monks in the celebration of the national holidays. Almost all Thai political groups profess allegiance to the throne as the primary symbol of national unity; even Thai Communists have rarely, if ever, attacked the throne as an institution. The king's role as a constitutional monarch who reigns but does not rule further enhances his prestige with the population.

Even in modern times, the attitude of many Thai toward their government has been influenced by Buddhist considerations of merit and status. There has long been a tendency among the Thai to regard high official status as a manifestation of personal merit, although it is recognized that a person may attain a status totally disproportionate to the merit which he has acquired. While superior official status may command respect and compliance, it has not prohibited shifts in allegiance, and the various military factions have rarely felt the need to justify the many transfers of political power. The military groups have used the need for combating pro-Communist subversion as a pretext for police measures against the civilian opposition, including nonleftist as well as leftist elements. In general, however, the Thai tend to be pragmatic rather than speculative in their attitudes toward political issues, a characteristic which has conditioned them to avoid extremes in both social and political behavior. The uneducated rural masses still accept the tradition, dating from the era of the absolute monarch, that political change should be initiated from above by the nation's elite. Even during the brief periods of parliamentary government in Thailand, no popular movement was organized to press for reforms. For their part, the governing elite have evinced paternalistic attitudes toward the people.

Among the Thai of the fairly isolated and underdeveloped northeastern region, there has developed a strong distrust of the central government. This attitude has been caused by the economic depression of the northeast, the government's longstanding neglect of the region, and the attitude of superiority of the central Thai. Local Communists have sought to exploit this discontent by organizing

small-scale guerrilla operations. The government has belatedly reacted to this challenge by conducting U.S.-assisted development programs in the northeast, in addition to repressive measures against the local insurgent bands.

Despite the existence of controversial issues and innate prejudices, amicable relations are generally maintained between the Thai and the minority peoples with whom they come in everyday contact. Progress in the assimilation of the Chinese notwithstanding, anti-Chinese prejudice still exists among the Thai, based largely on the popular stereotype of the Chinese as excessively materialistic and avaricious. This attitude has been encouraged by propaganda stemming from the government and the Thai press directed against Chinese economic power. Some middle and upper class Thai have been frustrated in their desire to engage in commerce by the economic predominance of the Chinese. Thai urban laborers who have had to compete with the Chinese in the labor market have a natural grievance against them. On the other hand, the average Thai peasant welcomes the services offered by the Chinese middlemen as beneficial.

The Chinese are also prejudiced against the Thai, although Chinese community leaders and Chinese-language newspapers seldom publicly express derogatory opinions. Among many Chinese, the Thai are regarded as indolent, untrustworthy, irresponsible, and naive in their business dealings. While the government's restrictions on Chinese economic activities have not seriously affected most Chinese merchants, many nevertheless feel that they are being exploited by government officials, local police officers, and Thai landlords. Since the 1960's, anti-Thai feeling has gradually declined, largely because of the adoption of more conciliatory government policies in education and alien registration affecting the Chinese. However, these conciliatory policies have been accompanied by firmer countersubversive policies providing for legal action against local pro-Communist Chinese. The admission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations in 1971 aggravated Thai concern over the loyalties of the Chinese minority. Although Thailand continues to recognize the Republic of China on Taiwan and does not permit any overt pro-Communist political activities by the local Chinese, the desire for more trade and more personal contacts with the mainland, coupled with ethnic pride, has motivated local Chinese newspapers to express implicit approval of the PRC.

In the southernmost provinces, problems in Thai-Malay relations have arisen principally over Malay

irredentism and the backward socioeconomic conditions of that region. The collaboration of Malay extremist elements with bands of Chinese Communist guerrillas across the border during recent years has revealed the subversive potential of Malay separatism.

Relations between the governing elite and the Vietnamese residents have been determined almost entirely by political considerations. The Vietnamese refugees have offered passive and sometimes violent resistance to the Thai Government's efforts—often in collaboration with the South Vietnamese Embassy—to round up and jail Vietnamese nationals who are alleged to be Communist agents and, in some cases, to deport them to South Vietnam. However, the Thai and Vietnamese seem to maintain amicable daily relations, despite some localized Thai jealousy of the Vietnamese for their economic competition in certain trades.

The primary loyalty of Thailand's tribespeople is toward their own villages. Many lack a consciousness not only of their Thai nationality but also of their own tribal ethnic stock as well, and there has been little, if any, feeling of intertribal solidarity. Thai civil officials, police, and schoolteachers have resented assignment in the primitive frontier regions and have frequently alienated the local tribespeople by their attitudes of superiority and attempts to force conformity to Thai customs. The tribespeople, particularly those in the more remote mountainous regions, tend to regard the provincial and local government officials, especially the police, with fear and suspicion. Such feelings have been increasingly aggravated by the government's resettlement policies since the late 1950's and, in recent years, by the occasionally harsh countermeasures against villages suspected of involvement in the Communist-led insurgency. It is not yet possible to assess the impact of tribal attitudes toward the educational, medical, and other civic action programs conducted by the Thai Armed Forces in the tribal region.

Since most Thai have only a limited knowledge of foreign nations, popular attitudes toward foreigners and foreign societies are largely determined by the ruling elite. National feeling has rarely evinced the hypersensitivity or defensive aggressiveness so characteristic of nationalistic movements in other Southeast Asian countries. Thai national consciousness, moreover, has seldom been characterized by attitudes of chauvinism or racial superiority. The Thai have freely adopted the products, technology, and culture of the West without feelings of cultural inferiority. Individual Westerners have largely been accepted as equals; in fact, the instinctive and normal

Thai attitude toward foreigners is one of respect if not friendliness.

The Thai people in general have been favorably disposed toward the United States for many years, and a tradition of cordial relations has long been maintained. The basis for this persistent friendship has been the absence of political friction between the two countries, the small size of U.S. investments in Thailand, the U.S. renunciation of extraterritoriality in 1921 without exaction of compensation from Thailand, and the record of disinterested public service on the part of U.S. citizens in the kingdom. After World War II, the United States treated Thailand as a country occupied by the enemy rather than as a defeated enemy, and U.S. diplomatic efforts were instrumental in inducing the European Allies to relinquish some of their reparations claims from Thailand as a defeated ally of the Axis powers. U.S. influence in Thailand rapidly supplanted that exercised by the British during the prewar era, when British economic interests and political influence had predominated. Since the early 1950's, when Thailand became aligned with the United States in the Korean conflict and began to receive U.S. military and economic assistance, Thai foreign policy has been based on close ties with the United States in order to check the advance of communism. Both urban and rural Thai appear to be greatly impressed with U.S. technological achievements as revealed by the U.S. technical assistance programs. During the intensification of the Vietnam war, most politically conscious Thai became increasingly aware of their country's dependence on the United States for military protection. Moreover, most Thai students seeking higher education desire to study in the United States.

At the same time, however, there have been growing Thai reactions against the onslaught of materialistic Western influences, especially those associated with the U.S. presence. This trend has been particularly prevalent among the urban upper classes and intellectual elements. The older generation has always disapproved of the tendency of Thai youth to emulate U.S. customs and concepts of propriety, as reflected in Hollywood films. Also, many Thai have objected to the apparent indifference of Americans to Thailand's cultural heritage and traditional values; in particular, they have always resented the flippancy with which U.S. movies and publications have treated the royal family, as exemplified by the book *Anna and the King of Siam*. The augmentation of the U.S. presence in Thailand during 1962-70 was accompanied by the growth of anti-U.S. feeling in urban communities. Barroom and street brawls involving U.S. troops in

Bangkok and other urban centers near U.S. bases have led to indignant reactions from Thai officials and the press. There is a strong tendency, particularly among students and journalists, to blame the U.S. presence for the price inflation and deteriorating morale among the urban population.

For many years the Thai governing elite and a large sector of the politically conscious public as well have regarded the PRC as the primary danger to Thailand. A longstanding fear of Chinese domination has undoubtedly contributed to the relative lack of appeal of communism to educated Thai, including those elements critical of the government. Since about late 1972, however, the Thai Government has been cautiously attempting to initiate a dialogue with the PRC which would lead to commercial and cultural relations between the two countries. At the same time, the Thai Government has become less inclined to maintain close ties with Nationalist China because of its desire for a *rapprochement* with Peking. The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia are the only Communist countries with which Thailand maintains diplomatic relations. Few Thai have a clear impression of either the Soviet Union or individual Russians.

Thai relations with neighboring countries have generally been amicable during recent years. The only exception has occurred in the case of Cambodia under the rule of Prince Sihanouk, when sporadic border clashes and Thai-supported subversive activities within Cambodia contributed to ill feeling between the two peoples. Since the deposition of Sihanouk in 1970, the Thai Government has ceased to regard Cambodia as a major antagonist, and relations between the two countries have improved. Thai relations with Laos have been amicable except during periods when the Lao Government was dominated by left-leaning neutralist factions. Historic warfare between Thailand and Burma has left a legacy of traditional Thai distrust of the Burmese. Nevertheless, much of the Thai hostility toward Burma has diminished, despite marked differences in the foreign policies of the two countries and occasional border problems caused by the presence in Thailand of insurgent guerrilla bands opposed to the Burmese Government. Friendly relations are maintained with Malaysia, the problems of the Malay minority notwithstanding.

Thai opinion regarding Japan has generally been favorable. During their wartime occupation of Thailand, the Japanese did not incur the enmity of the Thai people largely because they left the internal administration of the kingdom in the hands of the collaborationist Thai Government and thus did not

have occasion to employ the harsh police measures and forced labor conscription used elsewhere in Southeast Asia. However, there is widespread resentment among the Thai of the alleged growing Japanese economic domination of Thailand and a feeling that Japanese business firms do not contribute as much as they should to local needs.

Thai attitudes toward war and international conflict in general have been conditioned by Buddhist fatalism. Whatever their losses from war, the Thai people have evinced a tendency to accept their lot with indifference. The Thai are essentially an unwarlike people despite their strong national consciousness, the predominance of military elements in the government, and a historic background of warfare with neighboring states. Nevertheless, Thai soldiers have shown themselves to be loyal, well disciplined, and courageous in battle when properly trained and led, as witnessed by the effective performance of Thai contingents in the Korean conflict and Vietnam war. Military service is widely accepted as a patriotic duty, and the traditional Thai respect for authority facilitates adjustment to military discipline.

C. Population (U/OU)

Throughout the 20th century, phenomenal growth has been characteristic of the population of Thailand, which as of midyear 1973 numbered an estimated 37,837,000. Between 1911, when the first census was taken, and 1970, the year of the most recent enumeration, the population more than quadrupled. During the 1960-70 intercensal decade alone, the population rose by 7.9 million, an increment roughly matching the total population in 1911 and approximating the entire population of such countries as Austria, Cambodia, or Sweden. Since 1970, the population has continued to increase rapidly, growing at an estimated average annual rate of 3.2%. If such a growth rate persists, the 1973 population will double in 22 years; the population will reach 50 million in 1981 and 60 million in 1987.

Until well into the 1950's, the official policy on population, reflecting both the popular desire for large families and the chauvinism of nationalist leaders, was pronatalist. As early as 1906, when public health services were inaugurated, justification for such services was based in part on the fact that by lowering the death rate the services would promote an increase in the size of the population. During World War II, the incumbent Prime Minister declared that "100 million people [were necessary] to make our nation a

real power," and he subsequently promoted early marriages to "make the nation prosper." Bonuses for large families were authorized. Although official promotion of early marriage was abandoned in 1944, the bonuses were paid as late as 1956.

Prompted by warnings in the late 1950's and in the 1960's about the adverse effects of rapid population growth upon socioeconomic development, Thailand, in 1970, instituted a National Family Planning Program (NFPP) which has as its aims: 1) the reduction of the annual growth rate to 2.5% by the end of 1976; 2) the establishment of family planning services throughout the country and their integration with overall maternal and child health programs, and 3) the education of the population in family planning concepts. Despite a lack of high priority for family planning at the top government level and a temporary setback early in 1972 when the brand of oral contraceptives was changed, some progress has been made. An infrastructure has been established and personnel trained. Moreover, surveys have revealed that the proportion of married, fertile women aged 15 to 44 who were sterilized or practicing contraception rose from 11% in mid-1969 to 22% in mid-1972. Nonetheless, age-specific marital fertility declined only slightly during the period, probably a reflection of the time-lag needed between increased acceptance of contraception and a decrease in fertility.

The NFPP, utilizing a variety of indoctrinational and informational channels, has sought to induce Thai women to accept the intrauterine device or oral contraceptives or to undergo sterilization. Oral contraceptives are by far the most popular among those desiring to limit family size. Pilot studies designed to assess the acceptability of condoms as a means of family planning have also been undertaken, but the condom appears to be culturally unacceptable to many Thai. Abortion is not a part of the NFPP program. It is illegal in Thailand except in certain instances; moreover, because of the Buddhist injunction against the taking of life, many physicians are reluctant to perform such operations even in those instances where it is legal, e.g., to save the life of the mother. There is no similar taboo about sterilization; the number of female sterilization procedures increased from about 23,000 in 1971 to 31,000 in 1972.

Thailand's family planning program, whose goals and practices are held to be compatible with Buddhist teachings, receives assistance from a number of foreign and international entities, including the Agency for International Development (AID).

Population growth in Thailand is almost wholly the result of natural increase. Immigration was an

important factor in such growth during the latter half of the 19th century, but it is insignificant today, the volume amounting to about 2,000 persons per year during the decade of the 1960's. Emigration is also negligible.

Because the death rate has declined more rapidly than the birth rate in the post-World War II period, the rate of natural increase has been rising. Although Thailand instituted the compulsory registration of births and deaths in 1917, the recording of such vital events is still deficient. Accordingly, it is not possible to determine birth and death rates precisely. For the decades of the 1950's and 1960's, the U.N. has estimated the following vital rates:

	BIRTH RATE	DEATH RATE	RATE OF NATURAL INCREASE
1950-55	45.4	15.8	29.6
1955-60	45.3	15.7	29.6
1960-65	44.2	13.7	30.5
1965-70	42.8	10.4	32.4

As the U.N. figures indicate, the birth rate dropped by about 6% during the 20-year period, whereas the death rate decreased by 34%. The rate of natural increase rose by over 9% during the period, culminating in a 3.2% annual rate in 1965-70, a rate which is believed to have since remained fairly stable.

There is evidence of some fertility differential in Thailand along regional lines. For the urban and rural population as a whole, the birth rate is highest in the northeast and lowest in peninsular Thailand. The birth rate in Bangkok is lower than that elsewhere in the country, perhaps by as much as 20%, according to Thai estimates. Studies also indicate one striking aspect of fertility behavior in Thailand, namely the persistence of births through the older childbearing ages. Age-specific birth rates for women are fairly high at all ages, but the greatest contrast to other countries is found in the 35-49 age groups. About one-half of all babies are born to women over age 30, and the birth rate for Thai women ages 45-49 is nearly identical to that for U.S. women ages 35-39; the Thai rates for ages 35-39 and 40-44 are both higher than the U.S. rates for ages 25-29 and 30-34.

The death rate in Thailand has responded to improved health conditions and to increased health services. One facet in the declining level of mortality has been the fewer number of deaths of children under age 1. Although the 1970 rate of 85 deaths of such children per 1,000 live births is still quite high compared with infant mortality rates in Western nations, it represents substantial improvement over those prevailing in the early post-World War II years.

As the death rate has declined, life expectancy at birth has risen. It rose from about 35 years in 1937 to 59 years in 1965-70, and is forecast at 62 years for the period 1970-75. Females outlive males on the average by about 3 years.

1. Size and distribution

According to the preliminary results of the census of 1 April 1970, Thailand had a population of 34,152,000, a 30% increase over the 26,257,916 enumerated 10 years earlier.² By midyear 1973, the population had risen to an estimated 37,837,000. Thailand is thus the most populous nation of mainland Southeast Asia. It has 28% more inhabitants than Burma and from 3 to 12 times the population of its other neighbors—Malaysia, Cambodia, and Laos.

With an average of 191 persons per square mile at midyear 1973, Thailand is more than three times as densely populated as the United States. It is also one of the most densely settled nations of mainland Southeast Asia. The national average, however, masks the uneven distribution of the population. Population density varies markedly among the 71 provinces, having ranged in 1970 from a low of 20 persons per square mile in Mae Hong Son Province to a high of more than 5,000 in each of the two provinces encompassing the Bangkok-Thon Buri metropolitan complex (Figure 6). A majority of provinces had densities ranging from 100 to 250 persons per square mile; 20 had densities exceeding 250 inhabitants per square mile, while 14 had fewer than 100 residents per square mile. Urban centers excepted, the region of densest settlement is the central plains area, especially the southern portions of the Chao Phraya and Mae Klong river valleys (Figure 7). Areas of secondary concentration include scattered regions in the north and northeast, particularly the major river valleys, and those regions surrounding tin mining centers in southern Thailand. The mountainous regions along the Thailand-Burma border and in northern Thailand are sparsely inhabited.

Thailand is a predominantly rural country, the typical resident living in a small, long-established, self-sustaining hamlet or village. The proportion of the population classified as urban rose from about 12% in 1960 to approximately 14% in 1970, but the trend toward urbanization is not strong. Moreover, the twin cities of Bangkok and Thon Buri, with a combined

²Nonindie tribespeople in the hills of northern Thailand were not enumerated in either the 1960 or the 1970 censuses. They are estimated to number about 300,000. Population data in this section are based on census results and therefore exclude the tribespeople.

FIGURE 6. Population, area, and population density, by province, 1 April 1970 (U/OU)
(Population in thousands; area in square miles)

PROVINCE	POPULATION	PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION	AREA	PERCENT OF TOTAL AREA	PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE
Central Region:					
Ang Thong.....	217	0.0	370	0.2	573
Chachoeng Sao.....	338	1.0	2,093	1.0	161
Chainat.....	258	0.7	1,018	0.5	251
Chanthaburi.....	211	0.6	2,337	1.2	90
Chon Buri.....	542	1.6	1,732	0.9	313
Kanchanaburi.....	321	0.9	7,524	3.8	43
Lop Buri.....	433	1.3	2,544	1.3	170
Nakhon Nayok.....	161	0.5	932	0.5	173
Nakhon Pathom.....	411	1.2	841	0.4	489
Nonthaburi.....	254	0.7	241	0.1	1,054
Pathum Thani.....	233	0.7	548	0.3	425
Phra Nakhon.....	2,132	6.2	424	0.2	5,028
Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya.....	501	1.5	958	0.5	523
Phet Buri.....	278	0.8	2,454	1.2	113
Prachin Buri.....	421	1.2	4,554	2.3	92
Prachunp Khiri Khan.....	240	0.7	2,401	1.2	101
Rat Buri.....	464	1.4	1,977	1.0	235
Rayong.....	230	0.7	1,277	0.6	196
Samut Prakan.....	325	1.0	361	0.2	900
Samut Sakhon.....	158	0.5	321	0.2	488
Samut Songkhram.....	159	0.5	154	0.1	1,032
Sarn Buri.....	342	1.0	1,144	0.6	299
Sing Buri.....	162	0.5	325	0.2	498
Suphan Buri.....	501	1.6	2,061	1.0	272
Thon Buri.....	919	2.7	174	0.1	5,282
Trat.....	91	0.3	1,127	0.5	83
Total, Central Region.....	10,392	30.4	39,994	20.1	260
Northeast Region:					
Buriram.....	797	2.3	4,159	2.1	192
Chaiyaphum.....	920	1.8	4,165	2.1	150
Kalasin.....	573	1.7	2,954	1.5	194
Khan Kaen.....	1,025	3.0	5,175	2.6	198
Loei.....	326	1.0	4,221	2.1	77
Maha Sarakham.....	613	1.8	2,224	1.1	276
Nakhon Phanom.....	561	1.6	3,764	1.9	140
Nakhon Ratchasima.....	1,547	4.5	7,504	3.8	205
Nong Khai.....	442	1.3	2,780	1.4	158
Roi Et.....	690	2.1	3,032	1.5	257
Sakhon Nakhon.....	598	1.8	3,683	1.9	162
Sisaket.....	790	2.3	3,403	1.7	232
Surin.....	747	2.2	3,392	1.7	220
Ubon Ratchathani.....	1,480	4.3	8,787	4.4	168
Udon Thani.....	1,118	3.3	6,411	3.3	174
Total, Northeast Region.....	12,023	35.2	65,727	33.1	183
North Region:					
Chiang Mai.....	1,024	3.0	8,878	4.5	115
Chiang Rai.....	1,086	3.2	7,260	3.6	150
Kamphaeng Phet.....	333	1.0	3,450	1.7	96
Lampang.....	616	1.8	4,833	2.4	127
Lamphun.....	318	0.9	1,702	0.8	187
Mae Hong Son.....	104	0.3	5,105	2.6	20
Nakhon Sawan.....	753	2.2	3,736	1.9	203
Nan.....	310	0.9	4,515	2.3	69

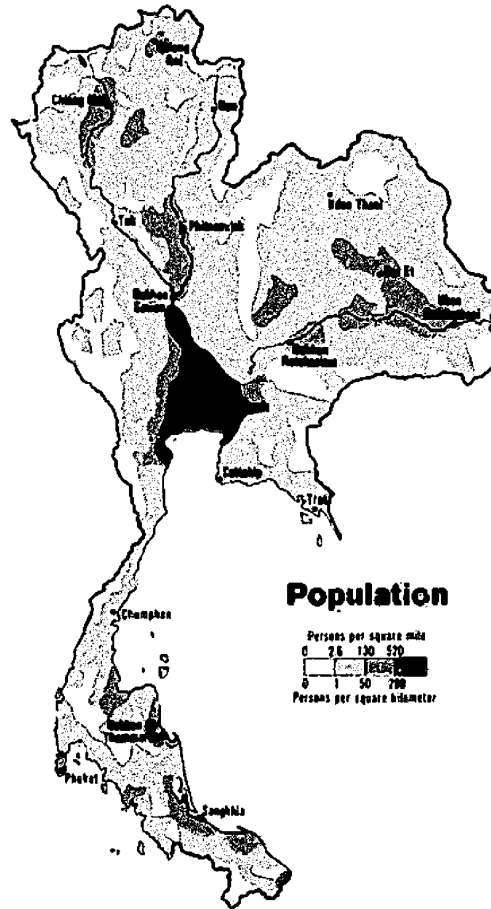
FIGURE 6. Population, area, and population density, by province, 1 April 1970 (U/OU) (Continued)

PROVINCE	POPULATION	PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION	AREA	PERCENT OF TOTAL AREA	PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE
North Region (Continued)					
Phetchabun.....	513	1.5	4,311	2.2	119
Phichit.....	440	1.3	1,749	0.9	252
Phitsanulok.....	492	1.5	3,729	1.9	132
Phrae.....	305	1.1	2,268	1.1	102
Sukhothai.....	304	1.2	2,641	1.3	149
Trak.....	217	0.6	6,927	3.0	36
Uthai Thani.....	177	0.5	2,499	1.3	71
Uttaradit.....	321	0.9	2,940	1.5	109
Total, North Region.....	7,468	21.9	65,630	33.1	114
South Region:					
Chumphon.....	235	0.7	2,219	1.1	106
Krabi.....	148	0.4	1,785	0.9	83
Nakhon Si Thammarat.....	927	2.7	3,920	2.0	230
Narathiwat.....	320	0.9	1,932	0.8	200
Pattani.....	330	1.0	777	0.4	125
Phangnga.....	135	0.4	1,583	0.8	85
Phatthalung.....	298	0.9	1,262	0.5	236
Phuket.....	100	0.3	300	0.2	324
Ranong.....	59	0.2	1,323	0.7	45
Satun.....	131	0.4	1,031	0.5	127
Songkhla.....	921	1.8	2,576	1.3	241
Surat Thani.....	434	1.3	4,940	2.5	88
Trang.....	326	0.9	1,909	1.0	171
Yala.....	199	0.6	1,821	0.9	109
Total, South Region.....	4,269	12.5	27,000	13.7	138
Total, Thailand.....	34,152	100.0	198,475	100.0	172

population in 1970 of about 2.9 million, make up well over half of the total urban population and accounted for almost all of the increase in the urban population during the intercensal decade. Of the combined population of the twin cities, between 70% and 75% live in Bangkok proper, on the east bank of the Chao Phraya, and the rest live in Thon Buri, a major suburb on the west bank. Only three other cities, Chiang Mai in the northern mountains, Nakhon Ratchasima on the Korat Plateau, and Hat Yai in the south, have populations exceeding 50,000. As estimated by the Thai Government in 1968, the 120 urban centers were distributed by size as follows:

50,000 and over	5
40,000-50,000	7
30,000-40,000	11
20,000-30,000	14
10,000-20,000	42
Under 10,000	41

As ascertained by the 1960 census, 11% of the population lived in a province other than the one of their birth and, according to Thai authorities, the proportion probably will be significantly higher when the final results of the 1970 census are released. Except for movement to Bangkok, however, the Thai show little inclination to move great distances. Thus, most internal migration is within regions, often to an adjacent province where economic opportunities may be viewed as better. Although no measurement of the volume of internal migration during the 1960-70 decade is yet available, a comparison of growth rates of the provinces shows some indication of direction (Figure 8). Presumably those provinces registering increases above the national average have gained population as the result of in-migration, while those showing decreases or increases below the national average have lost population through out-migration. The sluggish growth rates in the provinces surrounding



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FIGURE 7. Population density (U/OU)

Bangkok and extending northward reflect the limited capacity of these heavily settled areas to provide additional residents with opportunities for social advancement. Overcrowding in the region has already brought about extensive fragmentation of landholdings and encouraged many to move to less crowded areas.

2. Age-sex structure

Thailand's population has been steadily growing younger, the result of a continuing high birth rate. With an ever increasing proportion of children in the population, the median age fell from 18.6 years in

1960 to 17.2 years in 1970 and is expected to decline further, as the age structure of the population is highly conducive to accelerated growth in the future.

The population pyramid for 1970 (Figure 9), typical of those for countries with rapidly growing populations, has a broad base, representing the large birth cohorts since 1960. Each subsequent age group tapers off slightly, reflecting both the smaller cohorts of births in the past, when the population was smaller, and attrition by death. Of the total population in 1970, 45.2% were under age 15 and 56.2% were under age 20. At the other extreme, only 3.1% were age 65 and older, and only 10.3% were age 50 and older. All together, 48.3% of the population were in the

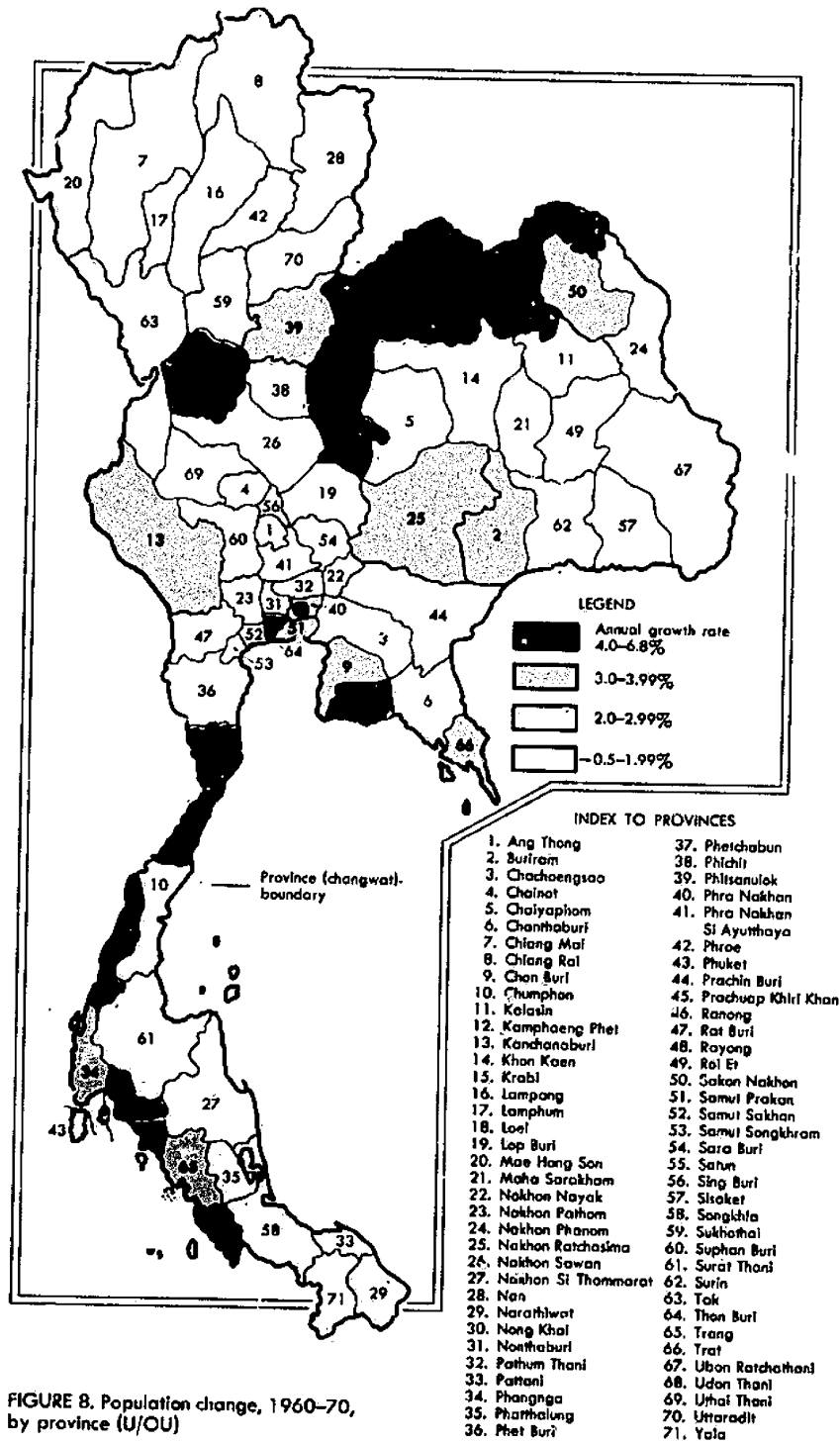


FIGURE 8. Population change, 1960-70, by province (U/OU)

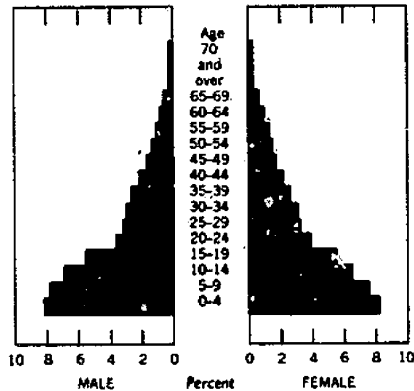


FIGURE 9. Age-sex structure, 1970 (U/OU)

dependent ages (0-14 and 65 and older), compared with 51.7% in the working ages (15-64). The resulting ratio of 934 persons of dependent age per 1,000 of working age was not only 11% higher than the ratio in 1960 but also more than 50% higher than the ratio in the United States in 1970. In such countries as Thailand, however, the formal dependency ratio overstates the actual degree of dependency, as many children under age 15, especially in rural areas, are engaged in some form of work endeavor, and many persons age 65 and over continue to work out of economic necessity.

In 1970, the population of Thailand comprised 17,002,000 males and 17,150,000 females, or 99.1 males per 100 females. Sex ratios varied markedly from province to province, ranging from a low of 92.9 in Kulsin to a high of 123.8 in Chumphon, the site of several important tin mines. In general, low sex ratios were registered in those provinces whose rate of intercensal growth was below the national average, suggesting some out-migration of males from these provinces. On the other hand, most of those provinces recording high sex ratios had grown more rapidly than the nation as a whole during the intercensal period and, implicitly, were areas of male in-migration. Although data from the 1970 census with respect to the age-sex structure of the population of Bangkok are not yet available, a 1968 survey of the twin cities of Bangkok and Thon Buri reported 105.4 males per 100 females, thus indicating a preponderance of males among the migrants to this large metropolitan area.

D. Living and working conditions

I. Health and sanitation (C)

Health services and facilities in Thailand, expanded to a considerable degree since the end of World War II, are superior to those found in neighboring Burma, Cambodia, and Laos. Nevertheless, the general level of health of the majority of the population remains low, and there is a high incidence of preventable disease. The spread of communicable disease is furthered by inadequate waste disposal facilities, contaminated food and water supplies, and, in the urban areas, overcrowded housing. Despite considerable progress in recent decades, shortages of medical equipment, facilities, and professional personnel persist, particularly in rural areas. Rapid population growth, moreover, is outstripping available health resources and impeding health programs.

The continuous heat and humidity in Thailand further the propagation of numerous insect vectors of disease, in addition to many human and animal disease organisms. At least five species of mosquitoes are known to be vectors of malaria; seven species, of filariasis; and two, of dengue fever. Flies are carriers of enteric diseases, yaws, and trachoma; lice, fleas, and insect-infested rats transmit typhus and the plague. Additional threats to health and safety are caused by larger forms of animal life, including approximately 25 different species of poisonous or otherwise dangerous sea and land reptiles. As of 1972 the recorded incidence of rabies in Thailand was one of the highest in the world, with fatalities from rabies numbering between 200 and 300 annually. Although Thailand has one of Southeast Asia's largest and best veterinary services, the attention given to the health of livestock continues to be inadequate.

According to official statistics, respiratory diseases are a leading cause of mortality among all age groups. Tuberculosis is particularly prevalent in the more congested and crowded urban areas, although its incidence has been decreasing as the result of mass prevention and treatment programs conducted by the government (Figure 10). Common colds, influenza, pneumonia, and other respiratory ailments are widespread during the peak of the rainy season. Many deaths also result from dysentery, typhoid fever, and helminthiasis. Morbidity rates for gastroenteric ailments are high, with as many as 80% of the population being afflicted during the course of a year. Malaria has long constituted a major health problem, although an eradication program initiated in 1949 has greatly reduced the incidence of the disease. Cholera,



FIGURE 10. Mobile tuberculosis team used in the government's campaign to prevent and treat the disease. Despite official campaigns, tuberculosis is still a serious health problem. (C)

plague, and smallpox, which once occurred in epidemic form, have become increasingly subject to effective controls. Although no recent cases of plague have been reported, cholera continues to be a health problem throughout the country. Venereal diseases reportedly infect about 5% of the population; the incidence has been particularly high in the cities. Leprosy is also widespread, particularly in the north and east.

In 1970, the infant mortality rate stood at 85 deaths of infants under age 1 per 1,000 live births. Malnutrition is still sufficiently widespread in Thailand to contribute indirectly to children's deaths from diseases such as gastroenteritis and pneumonia, although, according to official Thai statistics, it directly accounts annually for less than 1% of all infant fatalities.

The number of medical personnel in Thailand is insufficient to provide medical care for the population. In 1970 there were 4,590 physicians with modern medical training, providing a ratio of approximately one physician for every 7,440 persons. Most physicians, however, are concentrated in cities and towns, almost two-thirds of them located in the Bangkok area alone. In 1970 the physician-to-population ratio in the countryside was 1:20,000.

Approximately one-third of all registered physicians³ are employed by the Ministry of Public Health, while the remainder are private practitioners. In most instances, physicians in the more remote provincial towns and in villages are government employees assigned to their posts by the Ministry of Public Health.

In early 1970 there were 469 registered dentists, 12,359 graduate nurses and nurse-technicians, about 15,000 pharmacists, and almost 15,000 practitioners of traditional medicine. There is an extreme shortage of qualified nurses and midwives in rural areas, as well as an almost total lack of dentists.

Facilities for medical training in Thailand are inadequate to provide a sufficient number of physicians to meet the country's needs. The quality of medical schooling, however, is superior to that in most other Southeast Asian countries. The country's six medical schools, each of them affiliated with one of the country's major general hospitals, offer professional training for physicians, surgeons, dentists, and medical technicians that is rated good by Western standards. Thai medical students, however, eagerly

³The government requires the registration of all physicians, dentists, and other medical personnel, including practitioners of traditional medicine; however, large numbers of the traditional healers remain unregistered.

seek opportunities for study abroad, particularly in the United States, because a medical degree from a U.S. school affords them better opportunities for more remunerative employment at home.

In rural areas, especially in the more remote regions, many villagers still rely on traditional medicine. Traditional healing practices encompass a wide range of activities, the most important of which are the dispensation of herbal remedies and the exorcism of animistic spirits. It is widely believed that certain malevolent spirits are responsible for causing illness and death and therefore must be propitiated before a patient can recover. Local village healers are often hired to counteract the influence of these spirits through animal sacrifices and other rituals. The prestige enjoyed by these healers, however, gradually is being transferred to modern doctors, nurses, and health technicians. Where modern health services are available, villagers are generally eager to make use of them. The acceptance of modern medicine has not necessarily been accompanied by the abandonment of traditional medicine, and a village healer often practices his art in the same community with a Public Health Service physician.

Hospitals and other medical facilities in Thailand are well developed for an Asian country, although, as elsewhere, the best facilities are confined principally to urban centers. According to Thai Government statistics there were 203 hospitals in the country in 1970, providing a combined total of approximately 22,000 beds, or a bed-to-population ratio of 15 per 10,000. Of all hospitals, 98 were operated by the Ministry of Public Health; 88 of these were general hospitals and 10 were facilities for treatment of neurological or mental disorders. Nineteen hospitals were operated by other government agencies, such as the armed forces, the police, and the larger municipalities, and 86 were run by private organizations, chiefly religious or charitable associations. Special hospitals are maintained for the treatment of leprosy, eye diseases, children's ailments, and tropical diseases. Although the largest and best general hospitals are located in greater Bangkok (Figure 11), there is at least one public general hospital in each of the nation's provinces. Except for a few small Christian mission hospitals located in rural areas, private hospitals are concentrated in the urban centers. All public general hospitals are equipped with full facilities for modern medical treatment, including operating theaters, X-ray machines, blood banks, and diagnostic laboratories. The provincial hospitals, however, suffer from a severe shortage of medical staff.

In rural areas, most health services are provided by health and maternity centers (in 1970 there were over

4,000) operated by the Ministry of Public Health. These centers are grouped according to three classes, depending upon their size and the services they offer. Primary health centers (Class I) are staffed with a minimum of one physician, one qualified nurse-midwife, one auxiliary midwife, two junior health workers, and, occasionally, a dentist. Each center is equipped with 10 to 15 beds for emergency cases and theoretically provides basic health services for about 30,000 persons (Figure 12). Health subcenters (Class II) are staffed by at least one nurse-midwife and one junior health worker and normally serve about 5,000 persons. These units offer only maternal and child care services, instruction in environmental sanitation, and medical care for minor ailments. Midwifery centers (Class III) serve about 1,000 people at the hamlet level and are staffed by one midwife. In 1969 there were 241 Class I, 944 Class II, and 1,494 Class III centers in Thailand.

In most cases, medical care at all government hospitals and health centers is free of charge to the indigent. Patients who can afford to pay are billed at rates based on the cost of drugs, special laboratory fees, and personal medical services. These charges, however, are considerably less than those charged for comparable service in private hospitals.

While progress in epidemic control and the increased availability of medical services have reduced mortality rates, morbidity rates for many diseases have continued to be high because improvements in environmental sanitation have lagged behind population growth. Virtually all water supplies are considered contaminated and require treatment before drinking. The government estimated in 1970 that potable water was available to only 3% of the population. Moreover, less than 10% of the population had access to water conveyed by metal pipes, although local bamboo-type water systems are often utilized in the villages (Figure 13). Wells in both urban and rural areas are apt to be shallow, unprotected from surface drainage, and subject to inundation and contamination during the rainy season. Residents of many rural communities normally obtain water for drinking and washing from the same polluted rivers, streams, or canals in which they bathe. The government encourages the use of stored rainwater through the construction of cisterns and by making earthenware jars widely accessible to the public at low prices (Figure 14). However, rainwater is often allowed to stand in uncovered containers which may harbor the larvae of malarial mosquitoes and other noxious insects. In the relatively undeveloped regions of the north and northeast, particularly the arid northeast, the government has undertaken



FIGURE 11. Bangkok hospitals. Children's Hospital (top) and Bangkok Christian Hospital (bottom) (C)



FIGURE 12. Class I public health center, Mae Chan (C)

well-drilling projects and constructed reservoirs in collaboration with AID.

Only greater Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and eight other urban centers have partial piped water systems. Bangkok's water system serves about 80% of the city's area and 65% of its population. Even though treated, Bangkok's water is often recontaminated in the distribution system before it reaches the consumer. Persons living in those sections of the city not provided with piped water depend upon supplies from hydrants, artesian wells, stored rainwater, or canals, or they buy water from vendors. Bottled water, although safe in Bangkok, is too expensive to be widely used.

Waste disposal methods in Thailand are primitive and contribute to pollution of the country's water supplies and to contamination of its soil. In rural areas, inhabitants usually lack proper facilities for waste disposal, except in those relatively modernized communities where privies have been constructed. Indiscriminate defecation is common, and rivers and canals often serve as depositories of human waste. Moreover, the cities do not have sewage treatment plants or effective modern sewerage systems. Many of the larger buildings and upper class homes, however, are equipped with cesspools or septic tanks.



FIGURE 13. Bamboo-pipe water system often utilized in rural areas (C)

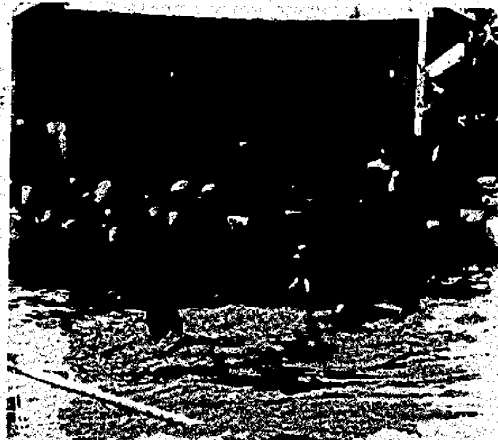


FIGURE 14. Earthenware urns used to store water (U/OU)

In the cities and larger towns, municipal administrations collect garbage and trash, although not in all sections nor on regular schedules. In those sections where there is no regular collection service, homeowners often bury their refuse in pits. Hut dwellers alongside the canals simply dump their trash into the water. Trash and garbage are allowed to accumulate beneath houses, serving as breeding grounds for rats, flies, mosquitoes, and other pests. The government has periodically conducted nationwide cleanliness campaigns, in which villagers are directed to collect the debris around their homes and burn it. In greater Bangkok, both air pollution—caused mainly by motor traffic on the congested streets (Figure 15)—and water pollution—caused by the factors described above, as well as by the dumping of industrial wastes—are developing into major problems. In recent years, the city of Bangkok has filled in many of the old canals in order to meet the increasing need for new roads to relieve traffic congestion. However, this process has interrupted the natural flow of the tides through the interconnected canals which formerly carried much of the wastes out to sea.

Sanitary precautions followed in food handling practices are inadequate. Except for a few cold storage facilities in Bangkok, there is a general lack of

refrigeration. Most markets and vendors in urban and rural communities alike display fish, meat, vegetables, and fruits in the open where they are exposed to heat, flies, and dust (Figure 16). Slaughterhouses and restaurants are subject to government inspection for sanitary conditions, but regulations are irregularly and ineffectively enforced.

2. Diet and nutrition (U/OU)

Thailand is normally a food surplus country, with rice important both as a staple food and as the largest single source of foreign exchange. In addition to rice, Thailand's food crops include corn and other vegetables, sugarcane, and coconuts and other fruits. The only significant food imports have been dairy products, wheat flour, and coffee, destined primarily for the Bangkok market. However, the fluctuating demand for rice in the world market and droughts and floods within Thailand have contributed to a reduction in recent years of the amount of rice available for export. The resultant shortages of rice have led to local hoarding of stocks and speculating over price trends. To curtail hoarding and speculating and to insure adequate domestic supplies at acceptable prices, the government has maintained consumer price controls on rice, and in mid-1973 it imposed restrictions on rice exports. By August 1973 there were indications that a favorable rice crop in 1973 would alleviate the pressures on domestic supplies and prices and lead to removal of the export restrictions. Nonetheless, in the long run, population growth is likely to intensify domestic demand for rice and thereby reduce the export surplus further, thus affecting not only export earnings but also components of real income dependent on imports or on nonagricultural economic growth.

Malnutrition is common in Thailand, particularly in the northern and northeastern regions, but starvation is rarely if ever encountered. The average diet tends to be high in carbohydrates but deficient in protein, vitamins, and minerals. There is evidence of a considerable thiamine deficiency in the diet, primarily because of the popular preference for polished rice over the more nutritious unmilled rice. The diet also shows a deficit of riboflavin, but niacin and vitamin C levels are adequate. Iodine deficiencies are widespread, being especially acute in the north and northeast. As in many other Southeast Asian countries, beriberi is a fairly common disease.

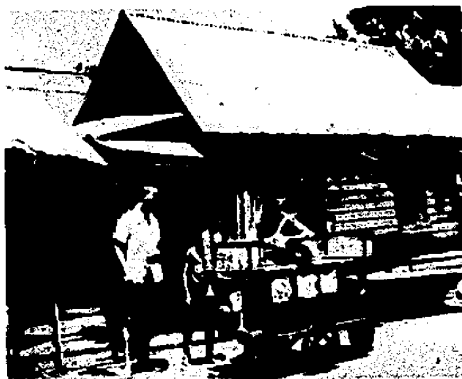
The basic Thai diet consists of rice, fish, vegetables, and fruits. This diet is high in starches, due to the consumption of cassava, sweet potato, and corn in addition to rice. Common vegetables consumed



FIGURE 15. Rush-hour traffic in Bangkok. Exhaust-laden haze blankets the area. (U/OU)



Women in small boats peddling fruits and vegetables to householders along a canal in Bangkok. The larger boats bring agricultural produce to the city.



Man peddling prepared food in the Bangkok area. The average city family is reported to spend 10% of its food budget for meals sold by such vendors.



Woman selling produce in a marketplace

FIGURE 16. Food vending (U/OU)

include beans, spinach, peas, and onions; the principal fruits eaten are coconuts, bananas, papayas, and mangoes. Fish is consumed more regularly than meat, partly because it is less expensive and more readily available, except in the mountainous north and arid northeast. Moreover, the Buddhist reluctance to take animal life discourages consumption of beef, poultry, and pork, and the Malays observe the Islamic injunction against pork. Sugar reaches the average Thai mainly in the form of soft drinks. While water is the principal Thai beverage, coffee, soft drinks, and milk are becoming more popular in urban areas. Most Chinese in Thailand have a better balanced diet than the Thai, their diet containing greater amounts of meat and fat. Furthermore, by drinking tea made from boiling water, the Chinese largely avoid the effects of using polluted water.

In 1964-66, the most recent date for which comprehensive and fairly reliable information is available, the daily per capita consumption of calories amounted to 2,208. Although this figure is lower than the 2,400 calories recommended by FAO, it is relatively high when judged by Southeast Asian standards. Grains, particularly rice, accounted for about three-quarters of the total caloric intake. Foods high in carbohydrates comprised well over four-fifths of the total calories consumed. Protein intake—less than one-quarter of which was of animal origin—was very low. Diets of urban upper and middle class Thai are much more nutritious than those of the rural villagers; protein intake is much higher, apparently because of the consumption of imported canned meats. In metropolitan Bangkok, many varieties of foods, particularly imported commodities, are available in modern supermarkets patronized by affluent Thai and Chinese.

The nutritional deficiencies in the Thai diet are aggravated by certain traditional dietary practices. The Thai custom of overcooking rice, for example, leads to a considerable loss of vitamins and minerals. Pregnant or lactating women shun eggs; nursing mothers are not permitted by tradition to eat anything but rice and milk. The resulting nutritional deficiencies are thus passed on to their offspring. Rice is often included in a child's diet within a few days of birth. Young children are more seriously affected by protein malnutrition and deficiencies of vitamins and minerals than are older members of the population.

The Thai Government has received advice and assistance from WHO, AID, and a number of U.S. voluntary organizations in its efforts to raise nutritional standards. An Anemia and Malnutrition Research Center, testablished at Chiang Mai

University under U.S. sponsorship, serves as the leading nutrition research laboratory in Thailand. Health centers throughout the country instruct women in nutrition and food preservation techniques. Some school lunch programs furnish milk in one form or another. In 1972, moreover, there were 30 special nutrition centers in the northern and northeastern provinces which offered food to the children of the tribespeople and provided education in nutrition to the local adults.

3. Housing (U/OU)

Housing in Thailand reflects the wide variations in living conditions between the upper and lower classes and between the urban and rural sectors of society. Housing normally is not a pressing problem in rural areas, where local materials for the construction of huts are cheap and abundant. In urban centers, however, the housing situation is critical, being marked by overcrowding caused both by normal population growth and by the continuing rural to urban migration. This is particularly true of Bangkok, where the sizable numbers of rural migrants in search of employment have created a major housing shortage. In 1971, the housing shortage in metropolitan Bangkok was estimated to approximate 100,000 units.

The most common type of rural house is a rectangular structure with palm matting walls, a thatched roof, and a bamboo or wood-slat floor. Such houses usually are built on 2 foot to 10 foot pilings for protection against flood, mud, snakes, and rodents. The space beneath provides shelter for livestock and serves as a storage area. A typical rural house consists of a living room, often containing a small space partitioned off as a kitchen, and one or two bedrooms. Homes of fairly well-to-do rural residents may be built of teak and roofed with tile. However, such houses are becoming increasingly rare, even in the teak-growing northern regions, as teak, like other hardwoods in Thailand, has become very expensive because of its export value. Tribal inhabitants of the mountainous regions of Thailand customarily live in raised huts. Dwellings of the Meo differ from those of the other tribal groups; their huts are usually not built on stilts. Typical rural homes are shown in Figure 17.

Urban homes include both the traditional type of wooden house and modern residences constructed partially or totally of brick or concrete. Some middle and upper class elements in Bangkok live in Western-style homes with concrete floors, cement block walls, and tile roofs. Nonetheless, the typical house of a middle income family is a small two-storied structure

with wooden walls and a tile roof. The kitchen is usually separated from the house but connected to it by a covered passageway. As of 1962, 54% of all dwellings in the Bangkok-Thon Buri area were detached houses, 36% were row houses, and the remainder were either apartments or were in buildings which also served as shops. In areas of major Chinese concentration in Bangkok, most streets are lined with two- to three-story house and shop buildings which are overcrowded and are in poor physical condition. Middle class Chinese, however, have been rapidly moving out of these ghetto-like central enclaves into suburban zones that are populated predominantly by middle class Thai. In these areas, housing conditions are fairly good. Homes of wealthy Bangkok residents often are Western in style, with masonry walls and surrounded by fenced or walled compounds (Figure 18).

The growth of slum conditions has become an acute problem in Bangkok. By mid-1971 there were an estimated 100,000 families in the capital area living in slums. On the waterfront, migrant laborers live in squalor on sampans or in shacks built on stilts over the mud flats. Many of these shacks, which are constructed of bamboo and scrap materials, are periodically swept away by floods or are destroyed by fire. Other squatters live under bridges, in buildings under construction, or wherever shelter can be found.

Because of uncontrolled land speculation by developers, inflation, and inadequate financing mechanisms for the purchase of homes, the availability of new urban units in recent years has been restricted largely to upper income groups and to those benefiting from the limited government-subsidized housing programs. As of early 1972, low income families could not afford to buy houses; the cost of a house of 50 square meters, for example, amounted to 50,000 *baht* (20.8 *baht* = US\$1). Rent for such a dwelling amounted to 600 to 1,000 *baht* a month, sums roughly equal to total monthly income of a lower class family. In the absence of ready cash, middle income Thai rely on banks and insurance corporations for longterm loans to purchase houses which usually cost from about 150,000 to 500,000 *baht*. However, the financing requirements of most Thai banks frequently are too high for the average middle income family. As of mid-1971, private enterprise was supplying only an estimated one-half of the 40,000 new homes required annually by middle income Thai. Moreover, the demand for housing for both middle and low income groups has been aggravated by the rise in rents caused by the removal of rent controls late in 1969.

Since 1949, the central government has provided some rental housing for low income families, as well as having built some units for sale to middle income families under a rental-purchase plan. Government projects have included apartment buildings, two-story duplex units, row houses, and detached house units (Figure 19). During the period 1949-71, about 90% of all government-sponsored housing was confined to greater Bangkok. All together, some 9,000 families were aided, 84% of whom rented units. It was announced in March 1973 that the government would



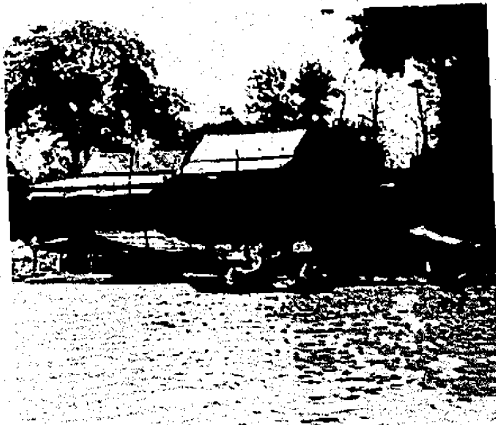
Dwellings in a Mea village (C)



Dwelling in Klong Sra, a tiny village deep in the rain forests of southern Thailand (U,OU)



Dwellings in a Lahu village (C)



Typical housing along the Chao Phraya River (C)



Lahu house (C)

FIGURE 17. Representative rural housing



FIGURE 18. Home of a relatively well-to-do urban family (C)

build about 64,000 units for low income groups in Bangkok during 1974-78 and give special attention to improving the waterfront slum area.

In contrast to generally inadequate water and sanitation services, homes in metropolitan Bangkok are supplied with electricity by municipal authorities. Even squatters' shacks have access to at least rudimentary electric lighting. In 1970, however, electric power still reached only an approximate 15% of the kingdom's population; nearly half of those with electric lighting were in the capital area, and the other half were located in other urban areas.

4. Work opportunities and conditions (C)

Adequate work opportunities are available to the Thai work force because of the traditional abundance of the yield of the country's natural resources, chiefly its rich rice-bearing cropland, and because of the still fairly favorable ratio between land and man. This abundance together with relative accord among the various social groupings has invested the Thai with a balanced attitude toward their work. There is a general absence of the symptoms of fear and frustration that often degrades the meaning of work for peoples living in a marginal economy and an appreciation of the necessity to work as a means of maintaining an adequate level of living. A customary increment of national product beyond a mere subsistence level has provided resources which the government, in recent decades, has allocated to education and training programs conducive to the

development of a work force with at least some of the modern occupational skills. Simultaneously, the availability of capital resources from agricultural output, reinforced by technical assistance from outside countries, has facilitated the development of an infrastructure to diversify the economy in the direction of modern manufactures.

This basically favorable job opportunity situation is flawed by problems, some national and some regional. Perhaps the most difficult is the accommodation of the large numbers of surviving persons after World War II who will continue to enter the work force during the 1970's, many with job ambitions commensurate with the fairly high level of education they have achieved. The inevitable disappointment in store for many first-time job seekers is likely to have adverse effects on social stability. These effects could be aggravated by the expected rapid diminution in the supply of unworked agricultural lands, which have traditionally provided an outlet for the incremental work force. Another major problem is the income gap between the fairly small power elite, concentrated chiefly in Bangkok, and the other sectors of the work force. The stability and efficiency of the nonagricultural work force will be increasingly tested if, as expected, the labor movement progressively expands its demands upon the traditionally paternalistic owners of large enterprises. Failure to achieve an accommodation between the two forces could mobilize the sympathies of the working class in support of the small but chronic insurgency movements which have existed for some



FIGURE 19. Government housing project in the greater Bangkok area. These detached dwellings are for middle income families. (U/OU)

years and which have fed on the frustrations locally generated by weak administration and by lags in development and incomes. Unemployment, while relatively minor in the context of the total work force, tends to be chronic in the Bangkok area. A lag in job training programs impedes the rate of skill development needed to accommodate the optimum rate of industrial growth.

Although the Chinese have overcome most class barriers in Thai society, their tendency to concentrate in commercial fields and their failure to develop adequate representation in politics combine to perpetuate significant remnants of Thai bias against them. Although isolated from the national culture as a whole, the hill tribes in the north and west devote their work efforts chiefly to growing an opium crop that continues to be the source of one of Thailand's major national and international problems; efforts to revamp the tribal economy have been focused on the introduction of improved agriculture and handicraft methods.

The long-run impact of these problems on stability may be determined by the success of innovative policy and program elements incorporated in the Third National Economic and Social Development Plan (1971-1976) with respect to income disparities. An

important objective inherent in the plan is to reduce income disparities between urban and rural areas and between the central plains and the other regions. The plan calls for the establishment of industries outside the Bangkok area and increased development expenditures for agricultural modernization, education, and services. The plan also provides for a steady rise in the national level of educational attainment as a necessary prerequisite for improving the competence of the labor force.

a. The people and work

The Thai social environment is conducive to development with stability, and the Thai people are well endowed with the capabilities and motivations for economic success. There are few restraints of tradition and class which impede the pursuit of economic opportunity and few social limitations on the mobility and adaptability of labor. There is a strong national preference for a framework of economic regulations sufficiently liberal to encourage individual initiative. Substantive reductions in the structural imbalances in the economy made during the early 1970's have demonstrated that Thai society possesses human resources and social organization conducive to an economic flexibility that enables it to

take sharp changes of economic fortunes in stride. The labor force, which is expanding rapidly, has shown that it can adjust to new techniques of production in agriculture and industry.

In a country where four out of five inhabitants live in a farm household and where food raising continues to hold out the promise of an adequate, socially satisfying livelihood, the average Thai conforms his work ambitions to the opportunities inherent in agricultural activities. Most new entrants into the labor force still become farmers because sectors other than agriculture are limited in size and job opportunities. Despite a marked growth in nonagricultural jobs during the period 1960-70, agriculture absorbed 62% of the total labor increment of 4.9 million persons. This broad pattern of job distribution will continue at least until the supply of new cultivatable land is exhausted.

The decade of the 1960's witnessed a significant degree of economic diversification and a concomitant increase in the proportion of nonagricultural to agricultural jobs. The buildup of the nonagricultural work force in the 1960's was primarily in the metropolitan area of Bangkok. During the period 1960-71, total employment in agriculture rose by 25% and in nonagricultural occupations by 78%. As a proportion of the total work force the nonagricultural sectors increased from 17% to 23% (Figure 20). Among the nonagricultural sectors employing at least 200,000 persons in 1960, the greatest increase in employment was experienced in services (94%) and commerce (68%). In the first half of the 1960's, the growth rate in manufacturing employment had exceeded that of services and commerce; however, it declined towards the end of the decade, and recorded an aggregate 55% increase for the whole 11-year period.² The brisk pickup in industrial exports and investments that marked the country's economic performance in 1972

FIGURE 20. Sectoral composition of employment (U/OU)
(Percent of total employed)

SECTOR	1960	1968	1971
Agriculture.....	82.0	79.9	77.4
Mining, quarrying.....	0.2	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing.....	3.4	4.7	4.2
Construction.....	0.6	0.7	0.9
Electricity, water.....	0.1	0.2	0.2
Transportation.....	1.3	1.4	1.9
Commerce.....	6.0	7.1	7.6
Other services.....	5.6	5.5	7.5
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0

could signal a resumption of a high rate of new job creation in the manufacturing sector. According to estimates based on Third Plan targets, however, annual employment growth in the nonagricultural sectors during the 1971-76 period would be greatest in services (about 7%) and least in manufacturing (about 2%).

Work opportunities for the urbanized sector of the population, which in many ways constitutes a culture distinct from that of the rural Thai, tend to vary along class lines similar to those delineating the social strata in Western societies. The fairly high levels of education and the social advantages accruing to the upper class and to the upper middle class provide fairly easy access to employment in the professions, managerial roles, or prosperous entrepreneurships. The middle stratum of the middle class obtains job security and moderate living levels in the civil service, in shopkeeping, and in skilled crafts. A survey of education attainment taken in 1968, which showed that 17.6% had no formal education, and 56.6% had terminated their education during or upon the completion of primary school. Of the workers with secondary education or higher, 16.5% had attended academic secondary schools and 4.9% had attended teacher training colleges or universities; only 3.1% had attended technical schools.⁴

In Thailand's overwhelmingly nonmechanized agriculture-based work force, there is a very short supply of skilled workers. An estimated 10%, or approximately 80,000 to 90,000, of the workers in the 1971 industrial labor force could be classified as skilled. Even the approximate numbers of skilled workers in other occupational sectors are not known but are undoubtedly comparably small. In recent years, the Thai Government has expanded its program of providing technical, vocational, and management training with the assistance of various international and U.S. agencies. Aside from graduates of vocational and technical schools, a prime source for recruitment of skilled workers with both training and experience is among former Thai employees of U.S. military establishments. Such persons have acquired English-language ability and one or more modern occupational skills. Another growing source of skill development is the number of large foreign firms doing business in Thailand.

The unskilled work force employed in nonagricultural occupations is recruited informally, frequently through the addition of relatives of persons already in the existing work force. The pool of such job

⁴The educational attainment of 1.3% of the urban work force was labelled "niter" or "unknown."

candidates is drawn largely from migrants from rural areas. For many, however, the village remains the source of their basic security, and employers of rural-urban migrants frequently find that they return home in the planting and harvesting seasons or on the occasion of family and village festivals.

A 1968 sample survey of households in the rural areas indicated an unemployment rate of only three-tenths of one percent—a proportion which appears to corroborate the conventional assumption that unemployment is virtually nonexistent in the agricultural sector of the labor force. Underemployment, however, is widely and chronically prevalent in the rural areas, where most of the labor force consists of unpaid family workers. On the basis of a survey covering the period of June 1967 to May 1968, some 35% of the labor force was estimated to be underemployed. Farmers who worked exclusively in agriculture—who constituted the majority—were found to be underemployed 62% of the time during the slack season of February-April. Some farmers—estimated at about 10%—engage in the off-season in such local nonfarming activities as brickmaking, petty commerce, carpentry, and basketmaking. These activities sometimes involve internal migration. The introduction of the tractor in the central plains in recent years has increased the average amount of underemployment in that area.

Unemployment, which is concentrated largely in major urban areas, has not been a serious problem in Thailand during the post-World War II period. In 1966-67 unemployment averaged just under 3% of the labor force of the Bangkok-Thon Buri metropolitan area, or about two-tenths of one percent of the country's total labor force. The highest incidence occurred among young persons in the 15-24 age group. For the August-October 1968 period, an estimated 1.5% of the combined work force of all municipal areas was unemployed. An economic slowdown and reduction of U.S. military expenditures beginning in the late 1960's brought unemployment in Bangkok up to about 100,000 workers—approximately a fourfold increase over 1968. The number amounted to less than 1% of the country's total labor force of 17 million, but it represented a rate of about 5% to 6% of all urban workers and about 8% to 9% of the workers in the Bangkok metropolitan area. By mid-1972, favorable export demands had forced the unemployment rate back towards traditional levels. In the nonagricultural sector underemployment is common in the service and commercial sectors.

There is very little data available on wages and salaries in Thailand. Only about 18% of the work

force—5% are civil servants—receives regular wages or salaries. Rates of pay in all but the most progressive establishments are less closely related to efficiency than to such traditionally valued factors as age, status, seniority, and blood ties. Prior to 1972 there were no legal provisions for a minimum wage.

The most modern income system in Thailand is that provided for members of the civil service. Even in the context of fairly advanced fringe benefits, however, civil service salaries are low in relationship both to qualifications and to expectations. Effective 1 June 1973, a new monthly salary schedule increased the lowest grade in the civil service by almost 10%, up to 600 *baht*, and other grades by lower amounts. A study released in June 1973 by the National Research Council of Thailand found that on the average the expenditures of a civil servant in the lowest grade exceeded his income, including fringe benefits and spouse's salary, by about 22% and that 860 *baht* were needed if he were to maintain the essential basis of the living standard customarily associated with his occupation.

In the private sector, incomes display a rational gradation based on qualification differentials among broad occupational categories, but are characterized by wide disparities within the lower paid categories, as well as by marked regional differentials. During the 1960's average hourly wages for all workers in manufacturing industries throughout the country, including salaried employees, averaged 3.49 *baht* (US\$0.17), equivalent to about US\$35 per month. In 1970, hourly wage rates for a 48-hour week in Bangkok and Thon Buri ranged from 3.20 *baht* (US\$0.16) for an unskilled manual worker to 84.20 *baht* (US\$4.21) for a professional person (Figure 21). A 1971 National Occupational Wage Sample Survey covering private

FIGURE 21. Hourly wage rates for a 48-hour week, Bangkok, 1970 (1/OU)

TYPE OF WORKER	HOURLY WAGE RATE	
	In <i>baht</i>	In U.S. dollars
Manual nonsupervisory:		
Unskilled.....	3.20-5.20	0.16-0.26
Semiskilled.....	4.60-7.80	0.23-0.39
Skilled.....	6.40-10.60	0.32-0.53
Manual supervisory:		
Manual leaders.....	3.60-11.80	0.18-0.59
Foremen.....	4.00-13.20	0.20-0.66
Superintendents.....	6.00-14.80	0.29-0.74
Clerical.....	4.60-14.80	0.23-0.74
Subprofessional.....	12.80-20.80	0.64-1.04
Professional.....	18.00-84.20	0.90-4.21

sector establishments employing 50 or more employees showed that the average daily wage rate for laborers doing comparable work in different types of industries ranged from 8 to 25 *baht*. The smaller firms tended to pay somewhat less than the above average while larger firms tended to pay more. A 1970 survey of 76 large firms showed that, on the average, the hourly wage for laborers was 4.70 *baht*, or the equivalent of the daily wage in firms of less than 50 employees. Skilled laborers generally receive from two to four times as much as unskilled laborers. Findings of a government survey of the money wages earned by some 3,000 unskilled workers in the metropolitan area during September 1972 revealed that fully 65% of the sample received less than 450 *baht* (US\$22.50) per month and that 61% were forced to borrow money to make up the gap between their wages and their expenditures. Discrimination against women is widespread, as exemplified by the practice of a weaving factory surveyed where the starting pay for men was 10 *baht* a day and for women 8 *baht* a day. Regional differentials in the incomes of workers with identical skills vary by as much as 70%; in 1968 the average monthly earnings were 400 *baht* in the Northeast Region and 600 *baht* in the South Region. In large measure, these anomalies are attributable to the almost unlimited discretion enjoyed by the employer in fixing wages and to the absence of influential labor unions.

Fringe benefits supplementing basic wages are fairly common in the nonagricultural sector, but their scope and kind vary considerably among employers. Although not obligatory, it is customary for an employer to grant his employees a yearend bonus, calculated to equal 1 month's basic pay but in some firms further differentiated by the amount of total profits, by type of worker, or by length of service. Attendance bonuses to reduce absenteeism are common in small private firms. A few firms pay cost-of-living allowance mainly to enable employees working away from their home area to maintain a second domicile. The most widespread forms of supplemental payment, however, are housing, food, and transportation. Even small firms generally provide family housing of some sort. Facilities vary with size and location of the firm but more often than not consist of a corrugated tin shed or comparably modest accommodation. Food supplied by the plant is usually at low cost to the employee but in itself is usually dietarily insufficient. Supplemental payments for such contingencies as cost of tools, work-related hardships, and number of dependents are not widely granted, although one or another may be provided by a

particular firm. Only a few of the most progressive firms (mostly the foreign and modern Thai enterprises) provide such social security benefits as family allowances, overtime and severance pay, and retirement pensions. Some of these benefits, such as overtime and severance pay, are legally required but are generally ignored. Although Thailand has had workmen's compensation legislation for some time, the failure of many smaller companies to observe the law and of the government to enforce it has worked in effect to nullify it for most workers. Only a few private firms have established pension and health insurance plans. Similarly, most health and safety regulations have been customarily ignored to the obvious detriment of the well-being of the worker.

Working conditions in most Thai enterprises are poor with the exception of government establishments and some large private firms. Women and children under the legal minimum age of 12 can be found doing heavy and dangerous work despite legal provisions intended to protect their interests. Safety and health provisions are generally inadequate or completely lacking. Frequent violations of health and safety regulations for workers are due largely to the unwillingness of employers to assume the cost of implementing these regulations. Inspections of plants outside the Bangkok-Thon Buri area are largely nonexistent. In general, inattention to even the simplest measures to promote favorable working conditions is frequent and must be ascribed to a lack of social responsibility on the part of the employer, weak enforcement activities by the government, and lack of pressure from the employees, who often are not aware of their legal rights.

Women comprise about 48% of the total work force and are heavily concentrated in the agricultural sector. Women work alongside their husbands in the rice fields as unpaid family workers, outnumber men in working the nets in fishing areas, and carry on most of the village handicraft operations. Since traditional restraints on female activity still prevalent in some countries never have been a part of Thai culture, women have developed a high degree of sociability and a capability to relate to all kinds of people in all sorts of situations in the world of work and hence occupy places of importance in the business world in professional, administrative, and clerical positions. Women are reported to be as numerous as men in the professions. On the other hand, women are sometimes discriminated against in terms of wages and working conditions. Despite legal restrictions against the practice, many women engage in night work, usually at no extra pay.

In spite of regulations against child labor, the most recent being the law of 16 April 1972, which in fact identifies a few specific occupations considered safe for children between the ages of 12-15, the practice of putting children to work as early as age 5 is widespread throughout the country. The practice is prevalent both in rural areas, where boys work in the fields and girls in various home industries, such as weaving, and in the cities, where children work in the factories at simple repetitive tasks and in the streets at hawking.

b. Labor law and practice

Until 1972, traditional laissez-faire concepts and deep-seated government suspicions of mass organizations had successfully blocked the systematic development of modern labor legislation. As already indicated, most existing regulations to control working and welfare conditions in the factories—embodied mainly in a decree of 20 December 1958—generally have been overlooked except in a few modern establishments in Bangkok, and most fringe benefits are granted as a gratuity from management. A law passed in 1957 recognizing the rights of labor to organize was abrogated after 1 year in the wake of a proliferation of unions and a wave of strikes, slowdowns, and lockouts. Subsequently, workers were reluctant to become identified as leaders or spokesmen in labor-management disagreements. Observers noted that employee distrust of employers impeded negotiations in nearly every case where the Settlement of Disputes Act of 1965, now repealed, was invoked. Neither side requested government mediation until disputes were already beyond compromise, with the result that strikes were frequent. Against this background a comprehensive Labor Relations Act, passed on 16 March 1972 and subsequently gradually effected through a series of implementation acts, has represented an important step toward raising standards of working conditions for the laboring class.

Among the most important features of the act was the establishment of a minimum wage at 12 *baht* (US\$0.60) a day and 312 *baht* (US\$15.60) a month, effective 17 April 1973 for about 100,000 workers in the Bangkok area. In addition, there were understandings that efforts would be made to increase the minimum daily wage to 15 *baht* in 1974 and to extend the minimum wage to other areas during that year. A second measure requires that firms in the Bangkok-Thon Buri area with 20 or more employees begin to contribute as of 1 January 1974 an average of 0.6% of payroll to a workman's compensation fund and that on that date disbursements from the fund be paid to eligible employees. A Labor Relations

Committee—another major component of the revamped labor relations code—was set up to hear complaints from employers and employees and to arbitrate strikes. The initial efficacy of this function was signaled by the marked reduction of wildcat strikes during 1972 as compared with the previous year. Obviously correlated to the rapid coalescence of strength of the newly sanctioned labor union movement, however, the number of strikes increased from only one during the first half of 1973 to 11 during the period of 30 June to 15 August 1973. There is little doubt that the success of these legislative measures, as well as others, is predicated on the degree to which the evolution of the union movement meshes with overall social and political goals.

c. Labor and management

During the late 1960's, a number of informal labor organizations had taken shape among rice mill, transport, and railway workers with some degree of toleration by and even assistance from the government, and a number of other largely underground associations of laborers undoubtedly existed. During this period, the most influential force promoting labor interests was the Bangkok office of the Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists, which reportedly was able to wield some pressure in the development of the series of labor laws finally passed in 1972. The new Labor Relations Act authorized the establishment of local workers' "associations," which in many ways are similar to Western-style unions, except that they are forbidden to federate at the national level. Moreover, the act makes no provision for collective bargaining but compels both employers and employees to go before the Labor Relations Committee to have their grievances arbitrated. This committee is composed of a chairman and from five to nine members nominated by the Minister of Interior; at least one member represents the interests of employees and one the interests of employers.

As of 1 August 1973, a total of 17 employees associations had registered in accordance with the requirements of the new law; all together, they claimed a total of 10,000 members. From analysis of their early posture, it was apparent that the leaders of the newly legitimized and rapidly multiplying labor associations preferred to concentrate on building an independent power base, stressing recruitment and worker education, and to give higher priority to better working conditions than to wage increases. However, pressures from members to confront the government over the issue of higher wages and unease over reports of an underground labor group and over a rash of

illegal strikes appeared as of mid-1973 to indicate an early confrontation with the government.

Management in Thailand is not organized to deal with labor. A number of business groups, such as the Thai Board of Trade, the Thai Chamber of Commerce, and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, have traditionally concerned themselves with government restrictions, taxation, export quotas, import duties, and trade negotiations, but not with labor relations. In the absence of labor organizations and an established system of industrial relations, most firms have dealt with labor on an individual basis. Although employers' associations are also authorized under the new Labor Relation Act to organize along the same lines as employees, no applications had been filed as of mid-1973. At that juncture the Thailand Management Association appeared to be the clearinghouse and point of reference for what was undoubtedly an increasing interest on the part of businessmen in the organizational activities of employees.

5. Social welfare (C)

Most Thai live in rural areas and earn sufficient income from farming their own land to obtain the essentials of food, clothing, and shelter, and often to purchase some luxuries. The rapid pace of economic development in the post-World War II period and the expansion of public services have prevented the emergence of strong social or economic grievances among most of the population. Although the government has initiated modest social welfare programs based on Western concepts, the family, with some assistance from Buddhist and other private organizations, has retained its traditional responsibilities for the care of its sick, elderly, orphaned, or unemployed members. Since the early 1960's, however, the government has become concerned with the lack of economic and social progress in areas outside of central Thailand which are potential or actual targets for Communist controlled insurgencies, and it has moved to improve living conditions in the northeast, and, to a lesser extent, in the north and in the southern peninsula. The rapid growth of the Bangkok-Thon Buri metropolitan area has strained existing welfare services there and created some housing and unemployment problems. Although the government has embarked on a few projects to improve public facilities in this area, top priority has been given to socioeconomic development programs in the rural regions. The First National Economic and Social Development Plan (1961-66) provided an estimated 20% of its funds for community facilities

and social welfare programs, and about 18% of the total outlay of the Second National Economic and Social Development Plan (1967-71) was earmarked the same way.

Welfare responsibilities are distributed among several governmental departments, but the principal agency is the Department of Public Welfare within the Ministry of Interior. Other governmental bodies involved in welfare or development programs include the Ministries of Public Health and of Education and the armed forces. Private organizations which offer medical and welfare services include Christian mission groups, Buddhist lay organizations, civic bodies, and mutual assistance societies. The government provides financial support for many of these private organizations, some of which, like the Thai Red Cross Society, are semi-official bodies administered jointly by Thai officials and philanthropic private citizens. The Council of Social Welfare serves as the central coordinating body for public and welfare activities; in 1968 it had a membership of 167 organizations, 157 of which were private and the remainder public.

Since World War II the government has instituted social security programs which provide pensions, survivor benefits, and unemployment insurance for career civil servants, personnel of the armed forces, and other employees of the government. Regulations governing working conditions for industrial laborers have been enacted in the postwar years but implemented on an extremely small scale.

The development of institutional care for the needy as a government function has lagged behind the establishment of modern medical and public health facilities. In 1968 the Department of Public Welfare operated the following institutions: 12 orphanages; three homes for the aged, with one under construction; one institution for the disabled; one rehabilitation and residence facility for destitute adults; two homes for the treatment and rehabilitation of prostitutes; and two rehabilitation centers for opium addicts.

The government has achieved some success in modernizing rural communities which have lagged far behind the pace of social and economic development found in Bangkok and its suburbs. However, implementation of programs, designed to prevent rural stagnation from becoming a major source of inertia in the overall modernization of the kingdom, has been hindered by poor administration and inadequate interdepartmental coordination, shortages of funds and technically competent personnel, and the often patronizing attitude of government officials which alienate the villagers. Economic retardation is particularly apparent in northeastern Thailand, which

contains about one-third of the nation's population. There, economic and social development has been impeded by poor soil, an unreliable water supply, an insufficiency of irrigation facilities, inadequate roads and communications, and a shortage of health and educational facilities. The government had generally ignored the hill tribes in the mountainous north until 1959, when it prohibited opium poppy cultivation, their traditional livelihood, and moved to stop slash-and-burn agricultural practices which were destroying significant areas of forest. These actions exacerbated traditional antipathies between the hill peoples and those of the lowland, and the Meo and other tribes have been attracted to Communist-controlled insurgencies in increasing numbers. Another economically backward area is the predominantly Muslim-populated area below the Isthmus of Kra.

Both the civilian ministries and the military operate several, sometimes overlapping programs in rural development, but the most important include community development, a major target of the Second Development Plan; the military's Mobile Development Units; the civic action functions of Border Patrol Police; and the Accelerated Rural Development program. All receive substantial aid from the United States. The community development programs seek to mobilize local resources to improve living conditions through small-scale, cooperative projects as well as training in vocational skills and leadership, to strengthen local self-government, and to improve communications between villagers and government officials. Progress in establishing such programs at the village level has been slow. The mobile development units are supervised by the Thai National Security Command and consist primarily of army personnel. Each unit has about 120 members and is responsible for inaugurating a wide range of civic action projects, such as health education, agricultural improvement, and public works, in an area that usually covers three or more districts with approximately 100 villages. The mobile development units have been effective in their initial programs, but insufficient funds and personnel have resulted in deficiencies in following up or maintaining established programs and facilities. The Border Patrol Police have been active in remote areas in building and operating schools, small-scale construction projects, medical aid, and the dissemination of improved agricultural techniques. The Accelerated Rural Development program, which was launched in 1964, is the largest joint U.S.-Thai assault on underdevelopment in areas where vulnerability to insurgency is greatest. Working through the provincial administration, resources are

ultimately to be allotted to meet a wide range of rural needs, but in the first years of the program the emphasis has been on road construction and waterworks.

6. Social problems (U/OU)

Crime and juvenile delinquency have become major social problems in Bangkok and other urban centers during the past three decades and especially since the end of World War II. The incidence of crime in Bangkok and throughout Thailand is comparable with other cities and countries in Southeast Asia, but it is not as high as in the United States and the Western world. Lured to urban areas by aspirations for a higher level of living, migrants from rural Thailand instead often find no work or only marginal employment. At the same time, they are confronted with a higher cost of living and are usually forced to live in overcrowded squalid slum quarters. No longer surrounded by the traditional control of the family, migrants often become rootless persons who resort to petty thievery and robbery to subsist.

The most prevalent crimes in Bangkok and throughout Thailand are robbery, burglary, assault, handity on the highways, and cattle rustling. The incidence of theft, robbery, and crimes of violence is highest among lower class residents of urban areas. Petty thievery from stores and homes is a common offense committed by juvenile delinquents. Armed robbery staged by small gangs in both urban and rural areas is not infrequent.

Prostitution, long accepted in traditional Thai society, was outlawed by the government in 1960, primarily to create a more favorable impression on foreigners in the country and at the recommendation of the specialized agencies of the United Nations. As a result, prostitutes are seldom seen on the streets of Bangkok, although many continue their activity covertly, often with the connivance of bribed officials. Most prostitutes are girls from rural areas lured to the cities by Thai and Chinese procurers with promises of employment, education, or marriage. The Law for the Suppression of Prostitution makes procurement for immoral purposes a penal offense and provides for court commitment of prostitutes to special homes under official jurisdiction of private social service agencies.

Among middle and upper class groups, the consumption of imported alcoholic beverages has increased since World War II. In rural areas, locally made rice whiskey is sometimes drunk. Alcoholism is not a serious social problem, however, and public drunkenness is not often observed. The relatively few

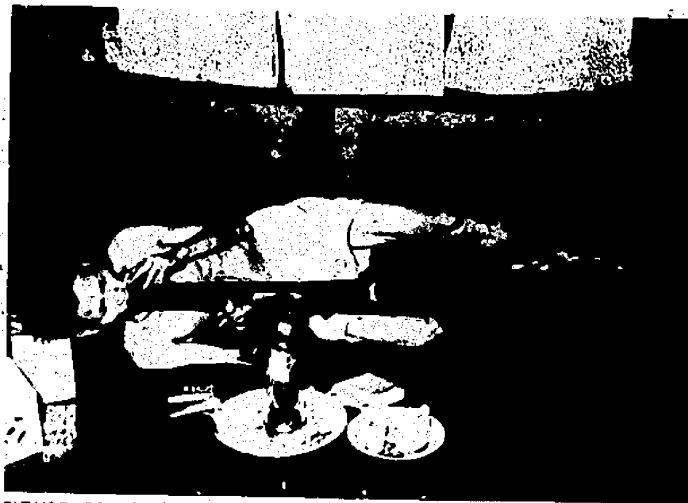


FIGURE 22. Opium smoker in a Bangkok den (C)

alcoholics in Thailand generally belong to urban middle and upper class segments of society.

Addiction to narcotics has long been widespread, and in 1971 there were an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 addicts. Opium smoking is the principal addiction and is practiced either in private homes or in opium dens run by Chinese proprietors, although the sale and smoking of opium is illegal in Thailand (Figure 22).

The Opium Smoking Act, enacted in 1959, provides criminal penalties for the sale of opium other than for medical purposes and the commitment of addicts to hospitals and special clinics for rehabilitation. There has been highly publicized accounts of periodic police seizure of opium and the arrest, and even execution, of opium smugglers. Thai enforcement efforts have disrupted the movement of opium by caravan from Burma into Thailand and by trawler from Thailand to international markets. However, opium smuggling within Thailand is facilitated by both the difficulty in patrolling Thailand's long border with Burma and the frequent connivance of low-level Thai officials in the illegal traffic.

E. Religion (U/OU)

Theravada (Hinayana) Buddhism, the state religion, governs the daily lives of most of the Thai people and plays a key role in maintaining national solidarity and identity. Being a Thai often is equated

with being a Buddhist, and the nation has been described as the "land of yellow robes," a metaphor alluding to the great number of novices and monks, attired in saffron-colored robes, who inhabit the country. Instruction in the precepts of Buddhism is mandatory in all state supported schools, except for those which serve Muslim communities, where local officials may opt for its omission. Buddhist ceremonies almost invariably attend civic holidays and other public observances. Besides marking such major personal events as birth, marriage, and death, Buddhist rites customarily are performed in conjunction with such varied occasions as the breaking of ground for a house, the installation of new factory equipment, and the inauguration of a bowling alley. Most buildings, whether they be private homes, workplaces, or public facilities, are equipped with a Buddhist altar, which normally is located indoors, and with a small spirit house (Figure 23), which usually is elevated on a pedestal outside the main entranceway.

According to preliminary results of the 1970 census, approximately 95% of the population adheres to Buddhism. There exists, however, a cleavage among Buddhists, as the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Mon-Khmer minorities profess the Mahayana rather than the Hinayana school of the faith. Adding to the doctrinal distinctions of the two Buddhist communities, the religious practices of the Chinese embrace Confucian social ethics, Taoist supernaturalism, and the veneration of ancestors. The Chinese,

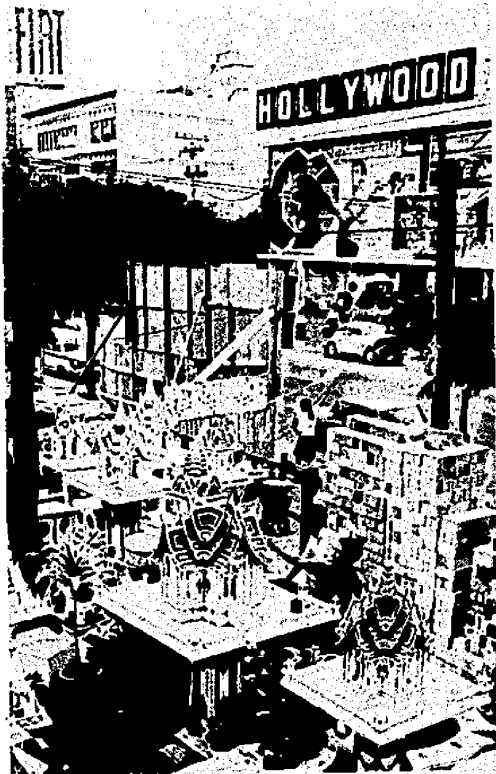


FIGURE 23. Spirit houses for sale in Bangkok. At these ornate miniature shrines, housekeepers propitiate spirits believed to inhabit a variety of natural objects. (U/OU)

who worship in separate temples (Figure 24), attach far less importance to organized religion and theology than do the Thai.

Muslims comprise nearly 4% of the population and are concentrated in the four southern provinces bordering on Malaysia. Most Muslims, who practice a diluted form of Islam, display little interest in Thai education, speak Malay, and are culturally oriented toward Malaysia. Over the years, Muslim leaders generally have resisted efforts by Thai regimes at achieving the cultural and political assimilation of the Islamic believers; accommodating to this resistance, the government has granted Muslims special consideration with respect to religious observances, law, and education.

The bulk of the remaining inhabitants, cumulatively accounting for less than 1% of the population, profess Christian faiths, are animists, or are adherents of Hinduism or Sikhism. The Christians are located

principally in the greater Bangkok area, in the larger eastern communities, and in the northern provinces of Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai. Roman Catholics, who totaled about 150,000 during the early 1970's, outnumber Protestants by roughly 3 to 1. Catholicism and Protestantism alike have won converts among the Thai, Chinese, and tribespeople in the north, but only Catholicism has made inroads among the Vietnamese of eastern Thailand. Although some of their number also have embraced Buddhism, most of the tribespeople have remained animists.

Notwithstanding the predominance of Buddhism, the national Constitution guarantees freedom of worship. While the document specifies that the King be a Buddhist, he is required to serve as protector of all faiths. Religious tolerance is traditional, and Christian missionaries in the past have formed close relationships with Thai kings. In fact, Christian educational and humanitarian institutions have influenced the Thai, the elite in particular, to a degree not adequately measured in terms of converts. The lack of serious friction among persons of differing faiths, however, can be ascribed at least in part to the strong hold which Buddhism has maintained over the people; with the exception of an insignificant minority, the Thai have remained impervious to proselytizing by non-Buddhists.

To the typical Thai Buddhist, the interrelated concepts of reincarnation and merit provide a means



FIGURE 24. Chinese Buddhist temple. Decorated with dragons, plaques, and inscriptions, the temple is frequented mainly during fixed religious observances; at other times, the resident monks are consulted only during times of misfortune. A small spirit house stands to the left of the entranceway. (U/OU)

for interpreting life and a standard for guiding personal behavior. The present life is regarded merely as a transitional phase in the individual's progress toward Nirvana, where all worldly desires and pleasures, whether material or physical, are eliminated. It is believed that the prospect for a better life in the next incarnation is enhanced by "making merit" (*tham bun*), one of the most frequently uttered phrases in the nation. Merit can be acquired through a variety of means, notably by giving alms to members of the clergy (Figure 25) and through exemplary personal behavior. A generous measure of merit is believed to accrue to families having sons ordained in the monkhood. Membership in the clergy (*sangkha*), moreover, is regarded as man's surest path toward Nirvana. Although there would appear to be less incentive, or opportunity, for the formation of organizations for female Buddhists, the more devout women become nuns so as to place themselves under greater moral and spiritual discipline than is possible in a secular environment. In the late 1960's there were an estimated 250,000 to 280,000 male religious, at least one-third of them novices; this compared with about 30,000 nuns, most of them concentrated in the cities. Lesser amounts of merit accrue to those who are charitable to the poor, listen to sermons, recite the scriptures, worship regularly, or gild Buddha images.



FIGURE 25. Novices accepting food from a villager. When receiving an offering, the male religious must avoid touching a woman, even his own mother. In rural districts, the celibates are almost totally dependent on almsgivers for their sustenance. (U/OU)

Traditionally, Thai kings have acquired merit by sponsoring the construction and renovation of *iwats*. Wealth, prestige, and good health are considered rewards for individuals who attain merit.

Among the Buddhist peasantry, the faith is intermixed with numerous animistic beliefs and practices which, perhaps because they complement Buddhist teachings, are condoned by the clergy. Villagers typically believe in nature spirits, ghosts, and sorcerers who are totally capricious and usually bring misfortune. While these mystical, magical forces are believed to have no influence over incarnation or personal fortune, they are thought to be capable of disrupting the *status quo*, a development that can be avoided by propitiating the spirits through a recitation of incantations and the wearing of amulets, or by receiving blessings from monks. The peasant has no abiding faith in individual spirits; rather, the animistic practices either are adapted or replaced so as to better cope with changing situations.

Having been exposed to Western philosophical and scientific thought for more than a century, certain educated members of urban society have critically examined the precepts and practices of Buddhism; as a result, some among their number have come to challenge Buddhist beliefs, while others have reaffirmed their faith. Attitudes concerning Buddhist teachings among individuals in the former group range from skeptical indifference to complete disbelief. Persons in the latter group, on the other hand, have garnered support for Buddhist beliefs and teachings, stripping from Buddhism the accumulation of centuries-old superstitions through the application of scientific tests and logic. Nonetheless, the overall influence of the Buddhist clergy gradually has declined throughout the nation, a trend that appears to have attended the expansion in public education.

By means of the administrative assistance and substantial financial aid which it furnishes to the *sangkha*, the Department of Religious Affairs, an entity of the Ministry of Education, exercises some control over the organizational structure of the faith. Headed by a supreme patriarch, the well organized *sangkha* has several echelons of authority corresponding to the national political subdivisions. The supreme patriarch is selected by the King from among members of the clergy's national council of elders. At the local level, the temple abbot is the ranking authority of the *sangkha*. At all levels, officials of the Department of Religious Affairs serve as counterparts to *sangkha* administrators.

In terms of its membership, the *sangkha* is the nation's largest nongovernmental organization. At

some point in their lives, most Buddhist men serve in the clergy, usually as novices, although many eventually are ordained and remain in the *sangkha* for long periods, perhaps a lifetime. The *sangkha*, a spiritual brotherhood, is apolitical in its intent and program; frequently, however, it assists in the implementation of governmental objectives. Lay leaders at the national level call upon members of the *sangkha* to participate in state ceremonies, direct the ethical formation of children, upgrade public morality, and assist in the preservation of national unity. In conjunction with a program of the Department of Religious Affairs, since the mid-1960's missionary monks (Figure 26) have been dispatched to remote rural districts, where, in addition to proselytizing, they conduct literacy training and engage in certain community development activities. Nonetheless, the conservatism and intense preoccupation with spiritual matters which characterize the clergy generally have precluded its deeper involvement in temporal affairs.



FIGURE 26. Missionary monk among Meo children. Seeking to uproot tribal superstitions and implant Buddhist ideals, the monk, who is fluent in the tribal tongue, undertook his mission voluntarily. Other monks work among the Karen, Yao, Lisu, and Akha. (U/OU)

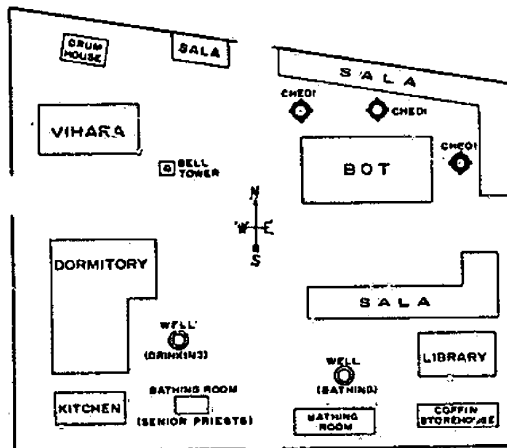
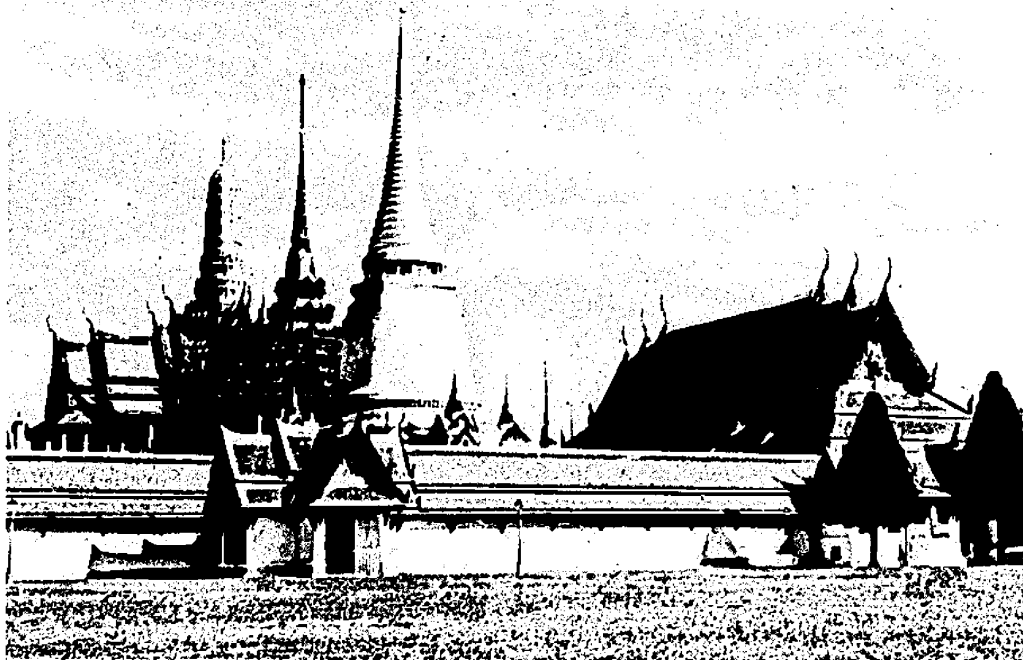


FIGURE 27. Plan of a village wat. The layout and type of structures are typical of those prevailing in moderately prosperous rural communities. (U/OU)

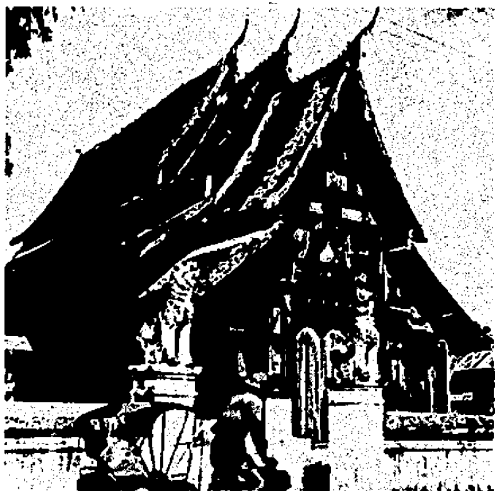
Even the most humble of villages has a Buddhist temple, but irrespective of locality, most believers have access to a *wat* (Figure 27), an enclosed compound embracing several structures, including a *bot* (temple for the monks), a *vihara* (temple for lay worshippers), a *sala* (pavilion-styled rest house), and one or more *chedi* or *stupa* (memorials to Buddha, oftentimes enclosing vaults for the storage of religious relics). Bangkok has nearly 400 *wats*, many of which contain ornate temples and numerous resplendent halls, pagodas, and pavilions, their precincts filled with hundreds of Buddha images and demon gatekeepers. Fewer than 1% of the nation's 24,000 temples are royal establishments, built and maintained by the crown. The majority are supported voluntarily by the faithful, many of whom regularly contribute as much as one-tenth of their income for the purpose (Figure 28).

In villages having a *wat*, the facility is the nerve center of community life. Indicative of the wide array of activities, both secular and religious, carried out within its confines, it has been observed that the *wat* serves as

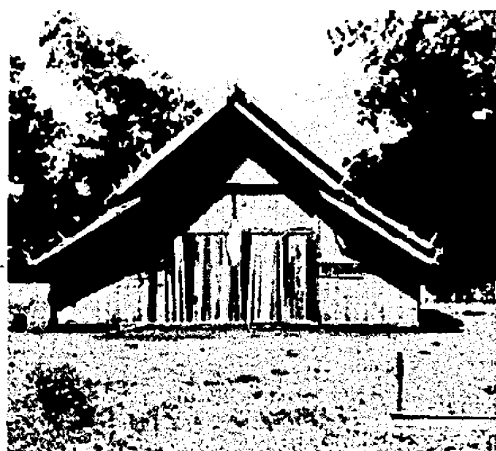
... a meeting place where news and gossip are exchanged, a counselling center, a hospital, a school for religious training, a community chest and store-room, a free hotel, a news agency for the district office, a charity employer, a bank, the dock, a sports center, the morgue, the poorhouse, a landlord, a home for the aged, a reliable water reservoir, an asylum for the psychotic, a music school, and a refuge for criminals.



The great enclosure of Wat Phra Keo, built in 1785 by King Rama I, is surrounded by a roofed pavilion. The gates lead into a courtyard containing the central vihara, in which is enthroned the Emerald Buddha, the most sacred Buddhist image in Thailand. The Buddha's robes are changed ceremoniously by the king three times a year. (U/OU)



Temple at Wat Yadee Luang, in Chiang Mai (U/OU)



Contrasting markedly to those in the main urban areas, most village temples, such as the one depicted within the wat at Ben Sop Rouk, are simple structures. (C)

FIGURE 28. Representative wats.

In the cities, where governmental and private secular institutions play a more active part in attending to the welfare and other social needs of the people, the activities of the *wat* are more closely confined to the realm of religion.

F. Education (U/OU)

In traditional Thai society little demand for formal schooling existed. Such training as was offered was provided by Buddhist monks in *wat* schools, where young men received some learning by memorizing or copying scripture. In the latter half of the 19th century, King Mongkut (1851-68) and King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), in efforts to train their subjects to deal with Western nations and to better perform official tasks, hired Western instructors to teach officials, as well as children of the royal family. Subsequently, other students were sent abroad for advanced training. The initiative for the establishment of a comprehensive, modern school system grew from this beginning, engendered by the Thai elite who, as a result of steadily increasing contacts with the West, sought to develop the kingdom into a modern nation. Since the 1932 revolution, when political power was transferred from the nobility to the predominantly Western-trained, upper middle class element, a Western-style education has been virtually indispensable for the attainment of high social status and for holding public office. Moreover, as in other traditional Asian cultures undergoing gradual socioeconomic development, the aspirations of many lower class Thai for higher levels of living and enhanced social standing have been whetted and have been reflected in a growing popular demand for extensive and improved educational facilities. Despite a very substantial expansion in the educational system since the end of World War II, the Thai Government, confronted by increasing demand for schooling from a population growing more rapidly than the increase in funds available for education, has been forced to limit educational development to a few key objectives tailored to provide an adequate supply of trained manpower for the country's economic needs. As a result, the government has thus far been unable to implement compulsory primary training, decreed in 1921; it has also been hindered in its attempts to enlarge technical and vocational training by the persisting predilection of most Thai students for the academic-type studies that are viewed as a prerequisite for a career in government.

As educational opportunity has been expanded in the years since the end of World War II, the

proportion of the population age 10 and over claiming literacy has risen, as shown in the following tabulation:

	PERCENT
1937	31
1947	54
1960	71
1970	82

In 1970, literacy varied markedly by age and by sex. Males in the 10-14 age group registered the highest level of literacy (97%), while females age 65 and over registered the lowest (10%). Urban residents were far more likely to be literate than their rural counterparts. Overall, the rate for 1970 ranked Thailand among the most literate nations of Asia. However, because sizable numbers of Thai, particularly those in rural areas, do not attend school long enough to acquire permanent literacy and because they subsequently have little exposure to the printed word, functional literacy is much lower than the figure ascertained by the 1970 census. The United States Information Agency has estimated that about 40% of the population age 10 and over are functionally literate. The remaining 42% who claimed literacy in 1970 can write their names and read very simple texts, but most are illiterate in the sense that reading and writing are not part of their everyday life; many have lost much of their ability to do either.

The 1960 census determined that 48.1% of the population age 25 and over had no schooling, 12.5% had attended but failed to complete the primary level, 33.9% terminated their schooling after finishing the primary grades, 4.9% had some secondary training, and 0.6% had postsecondary education. While data from the 1970 census with respect to educational attainment are not yet available, they are expected to show both a decline in the proportion of those without schooling and an increase in the average number of years of school attended.

During the 1950-70 period, enrollment at the primary level more than doubled, as additional facilities were opened and as new teachers were trained. The nearly 5.7 million children enrolled in the primary grades in 1970 represented, according to Thai educational authorities, 80% of the relevant age group. The bulk of the students, however, were concentrated in the lower primary cycle (Grades 1-4), such students accounting for 84% of total primary enrollment in 1970. Normally, most students terminate their formal schooling at the end of the lower primary cycle despite official stipulation that the full 7-year primary cycle is compulsory. In most rural areas, primary schools offer only the lower cycle;

thus rural children wishing to pursue their schooling must transfer to a school also offering the upper primary cycle (Grades 5-7). Few families can afford the additional expense of boarding their children at such schools, which are located mainly in cities and towns. According to Thai sources, no more than 32% of the relevant age group was attending the upper primary cycle in 1970.

Enrollment gains have been even more spectacular at the level of secondary education, which encompasses general or academic studies, technical education, and teacher training. Total enrollment in all types of secondary schools increased almost fivefold between 1950 and 1970, reaching about 600,000 in the latter year. The bulk of the enrollment is centered in academic schools. Students must pay fees to attend secondary schools, although numerous government scholarships or grants are available on a competitive basis. In 1970, about 12% of secondary school-age children actually were attending a secondary institution; with ever increasing numbers of children reaching the relevant age annually, the government has been hard pressed to increase that proportion.

Because it has not had sufficient funds to build and staff schools for all its school-age children, the Thai Government has welcomed private endeavor in the educational field. Accordingly, the number of private schools has increased, with such institutions accommodating between 18% and 20% of total enrollment in recent years. Most private schools are in urban areas, and many receive some form of government assistance. Although seven out of every 10 private school pupils are enrolled in the primary cycle, private schools are especially important at the level of secondary education. In 1970, for example, private secondary schools accounted for 48% of the total secondary enrollment; the proportion for primary enrollment was 14%. Private facilities also constitute the bulk of preprimary institutions, which to date are not widespread in Thailand.

Education is primarily a responsibility of the national government. Although the government is still concerned with expanding primary school facilities in order to achieve compulsory primary training, the emphasis in educational policy has begun to shift toward improvement of technical schools, secondary schools, and universities. Policies concerning all levels of the educational system below the universities are formulated by the Ministry of Education in Bangkok and implemented by administrative units on the regional and local levels. Beginning in 1966, the administration of primary schools throughout the country was placed under the jurisdiction of the

Provincial Administration Authority, responsible to the Minister of Interior. This change was represented and justified as an attempt to introduce a modest degree of decentralization into the school system, but in reality it has resulted in simply transferring central control from one ministry to another. In addition to its role in the public schools, the Ministry of Education exercises control over all private schools by prescribing curriculums and textbooks, as well as setting standards for teachers. Both public and private schools are required to provide instruction in the Thai language and to teach civic courses stressing loyalty to the country. Failure to do so may result in the withholding of official subsidies for private schools. In particular, these stipulations have served to promote the assimilation of Chinese youth, the majority of whom attend non-Chinese schools along with Thai children. In 1967, the government banned the establishment of any new Chinese-language private schools, and it increased its supervision over the 170 such schools then existing. Chinese-language schools are allowed only at the primary level; they may use the Chinese language for a maximum of 10 hours a week in the first four primary grades. Less than 10% of the Chinese youth attend such schools, whose quality of instruction reportedly is poor.

The first 3 years of secondary education is standardized for all students. Thereafter, students opt for the 2-year academic stream, the 3-year technical course, or teacher training. Because of its traditional prestige and because it is a prerequisite for most university training, the academic stream is chosen by almost nine out of every 10 secondary students. Despite the existence of several good technical schools in the Bangkok area which offer courses in such diversified subjects as business management, radio and television, and modern plumbing, few Thai are attracted to these schools. Nonetheless, enrollment in technical schools in 1970 (nearly 13,000) was more than double that in 1960.

Thailand has upgraded and expanded its facilities for training teachers, but the supply of qualified teachers is still inadequate to meet the demands imposed by the growing student population. The shortage is particularly serious at the secondary and university levels, but even qualified primary school teachers are in short supply. In 1970, the government operated 33 teacher training schools; these schools award a Primary Teaching Certificate after a 2-year program and a Secondary Teaching Certificate after a 4-year program. Courses for both certificates include principles of education, principles of teaching, methods of teaching, and, for the secondary

certificate, a concentration in general studies, sciences, or linguistics. A Bachelor of Education degree is offered by the College of Education at Bangkok, the Faculty of Education at Chulalongkorn University, and four other universities. The program consists of 4 years of study after completing academic secondary school or 2 years if the student has a Secondary Teaching Certificate. An additional 2-year program leading to a Master of Education degree is offered by the College of Education. In 1970, some 45,000 students were attending teacher training programs in pursuit of certification, and another 16,000 were studying for a degree in education. Total enrollment in 1970 surpassed that of any previous year and gave indication of concerted effort to ameliorate the teacher shortage. Nonetheless, as of 1970 there was but one teacher for every 34 pupils in the public schools. Moreover, perhaps as many as one-fifth of all teachers at the primary level in 1970 lacked certification. Noncertified teachers are found chiefly in rural areas.

The demand for higher education has increased rapidly, but facilities, despite expansion, still are inadequate, and not all who seek admission to an institution of higher learning are able to gain entrance. In addition to higher level Buddhist institutes, the Thai Government recognizes some 15 universities, colleges, and institutes as operating at the level of higher education. Recognized universities include Chulalongkorn, Thammasart (also known as the University of Moral and Political Science), Kasetsart (University of Agriculture), Mahidol (University of Medical Sciences), and Silpakorn (University of Fine Arts), all in Bangkok; Chiang Mai in Chiang Mai; Khon Kaen in Khon Kaen; and Prince of Songkhla in Songkhla. All are administratively under the Office of the Prime Minister. The College of Education in Bangkok is operated by the Ministry of Education. Other schools and institutes considered at the level of higher education early in 1973 were the National Institute of Development Administration, Thon Buri Technical Institute, Thai-German Technical Institute, Nonthaburi Institute of Telecommunications, the Military and Police Academy, and the Asian Institute of Technology, the only private facility in the country.

Most Thai universities are organized on the European pattern, with separate autonomous faculties for the various general fields of study and with each faculty, headed by one professor as "dean," maintaining its own scholastic standards. Although some experimentation in teaching methods has occurred, success for most students depends upon accurate reproduction of memorized lecture notes at examination time. Many courses are conducted in

English, in part because of the lack of Thai texts in scientific and technical fields. Undergraduate programs in the universities leading to a bachelor's degree usually cover 4 years, although some scientific or technical subjects require 5 years. Facilities for research by graduate students and professors (a substantial minority of whom are part-time staff members) are extremely limited because of the inadequacy of library and laboratory facilities. Chulalongkorn University, founded in 1917, is the most prestigious school in Thailand, and its bachelor's degree is recognized as meeting the requirements for admission to graduate work in a majority of U.S. universities.

Although technical and managerial skills are urgently needed in Thailand to direct the country's economic development, most undergraduates still prefer to follow programs in education, medicine, the humanities, the social sciences, or the fine arts. Despite a dramatic increase in enrollment at the level of higher education, from about 34,000 in 1967 to approximately 55,000 in 1970, there was little change in U.S. enrollment patterns in the universities. Nearly half of all university graduates in the 1967-71 period had followed courses of study in the social sciences; about one-fifth majored in education.

Until recently student organizations were less influential in Thailand than in many other Asian countries, partly because of government restrictions and partly because of political apathy. After 1958, when the government imposed a ban on the university student unions because of their allegedly leftist political orientation, such campus activities as intramural sports, debating, drama, and newspaper publication were conducted mainly by informally organized student clubs. By late 1972, however, the growing political discontent with the military leadership among educated urban Thai was manifested on the university campuses by revived student agitation. In November of that year the students staged a campaign for boycott of Japanese goods, and in mid-1973 large numbers of students demonstrated in protests relating to academic issues alone; after the government raised the issue of Communist complicity in the demonstrations, the students countered with demands for a new democratic constitution. By mid-October 1973 the government's arrests of leftwing political activists from among students, faculty members, and former parliamentary deputies had aroused considerable student resentment. In the 2 days of rioting which followed, over 300 were killed and 1,000 wounded. Order was restored only after the resignation of the

military cabinet. The organization of the revolt (and of the demonstrations of 1972-73 preceding it) was apparently coordinated by a National Student Center of Thailand in Bangkok. The politically moderate student leadership within this body conducted negotiations with the new Prime Minister for the restoration of public order. Today, the university students represent a new political force of considerable import in Thailand.

G. Cultural expression (U/OU)

Over the past 17 centuries the Thai people have selected and blended elements from several foreign cultures into a uniquely Thai synthesis. The major sources of traditional Thai culture are Hinduism and Buddhism, originally from India, and transmitted primarily through Burma, Ceylon, and Cambodia. Considerable Chinese influence has also been felt indirectly through neighboring countries and directly through contact with a sizable Chinese minority. After a golden age in architecture, sculpture, and painting from about the 14th to the 18th centuries, Thai culture from the mid-18th to the early 20th century was generally stagnant, the original linear elegance of Thai art forms smothered by excessive ornamentation. The quickening pace of activity in most fields of Thai art since World War II stems mostly from Western influences. Indeed, often only the subjects of modern artistic creations are Thai; the forms and techniques are Western. For many contemporary Thai artists, the Western concept of creative expression has superseded the transcription method of traditional Thai art, and many artists are groping for a meaningful artistic fusion between the two art forms. Although several notable paintings and pieces of sculpture have been created since 1945, developments within each field are uneven and range from mediocre imitations of Western art and decadent copies of traditional forms to an occasional encouraging synthesis of modern and traditional forms.

Most Thai artists are still traditionalists, who strive to duplicate the linear simplicity of the Sukkothai era (A.D. 1250-1450). The following description of the traditional Thai artist suggests his non-Western approach:

The traditional artist of Thailand is anonymous, for his aim is to glorify the Buddha, not himself, and to make merit, not money. He may be a scholarly monk, a devout layman, or a professional craftsman. He is deliberately unoriginal, for he sees the perfection of a time-honored mode of expression rather than the innovation of something unique. However, even confined within the bounds of tradition, he sometimes—perhaps unwittingly—manages to stamp his work with marks of individual creativity.

This perception of traditional Thai art differs from the viewpoint of some Western critics who tend to equate artistic transcription with intellectual stagnation and lack of creativity. Most traditional arts, however, remain in an extended period of decline, notwithstanding government efforts at revival. The onslaught of Western influence in the 19th century was largely responsible for this decline, especially after increasing numbers of Thai students became acquainted with Western art while pursuing their education abroad. In addition, the novelty of Western machine-made products led to the destruction of many indigenous handicrafts. A number of crafts, however, particularly handweaving, pottery, wood-carving, and the renowned lacquer-and-gold work, have been revived through government efforts.

Many traditionalists, as well as protagonists of modern Thai art, aware of the historic Thai process of grafting foreign elements into the corpus of their cultural heritage, are increasingly concerned with what they view as the overly rapid pace of modernization. Thai leaders, who do not dislike new influences *per se*, are disturbed because they fear that the influx of new ideas, attitudes, and Western forms will reach uncontrollable levels; they sense that for the modern Thai artist to succumb unthinkingly to the tenets of Western art and intellectualism would be as unnatural as to be enslaved to the stereotyped approach of his traditionalist progenitors. The effects of American-style advertising and juke boxes and the violence of imported television serials of the "have-gun-will-travel" school are debated in intellectual circles in Bangkok. One of the cultural side effects of the tourist boom has been the deliberate debasement of native art forms to supply the tourist trade. Many of the commercial galleries in Bangkok, as well as displays in tourist hotels, contain what one observer labels "tourist art"—mediocre paintings of temples, rice fields, buffaloes, and views of the Floating Market repeated over and over again for quick sale to the uninitiated. In addition to such incongruities as automobiles appearing in temple murals, the restoration of older temple paintings dating back to the 18th century have sometimes been vulgarized through destruction of the 2-dimensional aspect of traditional Thai painting and through the use of bright chemical pigments.

Several museums in Bangkok exhibit a profusion of promising contemporary Thai sculpture and painting ranging from the realistic to the impressionistic, from abstract modern to Siamese primitive. Many Thai artists, however, who wish to experiment with new techniques are unable to obtain assistance from art patrons who willingly support traditional Buddhist art

as a way to earn merit. Thus, many of Thailand's leading modern artists, who have received international recognition, live and work abroad.

Some assistance to the arts is proffered by official agencies of the Thai Government which, since the revolution of 1932, have replaced royal patronage in the support and encouragement of cultural endeavors. Before the revolution the only government-sponsored institution was a small school of arts and crafts, established in 1913 under the Ministry of Education to revive traditional handicrafts, such as pottery, weaving, and silver and lacquer work. In 1934 a School of Fine Arts was founded by the Ministry which in 1943 became the University of Fine Arts (Silpakorn University). The purpose of both the university and its Department of Fine Arts, both administered by the Ministry, is to stimulate interest in traditional art and culture and to encourage the development of modern Thai forms. The university offers 4-year curriculums in both traditional and modern literature, painting, sculpture, decorative arts, and archaeology. Many of its instructors, however, mainly trained in traditional art, are unable to give adequate instruction in contemporary forms.

Instruction in Western classical music is offered by the Department of Fine Arts, but it concentrates primarily on training courses for performers in traditional Thai drama, music, and dancing. The department sponsors performances by classical dancers at the government's official Silpakorn Theater in Bangkok, at official functions, and on television. Performances by Silpakorn Theater artists are a major tourist attraction and an important part of the government's cultural presentations abroad.

The Department of Fine Arts also conducts excavation of historic sites and restores royal palaces and national temples. Under its jurisdiction are the National Museum, founded in Bangkok in 1926; various provincial museums; and the National Archives and the National Library, both in Bangkok. The department and the National Library recommend historical works for publication by private individuals or publish jointly themselves. Together with other government agencies, the department sponsors annual exhibits of Thai arts and crafts and special art and literary contests.

1. Literature

Traditional Thai literature is derived partly from Indian religious works and semireligious legends and partly from historical incidents, local folklore, and folk legends. The folktales and legends have been passed orally from generation to generation and have served

as sources of inspiration for Thai classical literature and popular folklore alike. Written literature in the Thai language was not fully developed until the so-called Ayutthayan era, which lasted from approximately 1550 to 1767. By the middle of this period, the court poets had developed a body of literature which was distinctively Thai in character.

The Indian works that most influenced Thai classical literature fall into three principal categories: 1) the monumental Buddhist *Tripitaka* and accompanying noncanonical books; 2) the *Ramayana* epic, which determined Thai poetic and dramatic forms and influenced Thai religious art; and 3) Brahmanical treatises on law, ceremonies, and cosmology. Indian works, consciously imitated by court literati, contributed literary themes and poetic forms to the developing Thai idioms and changed the structure of the Thai language.

Only portions of the voluminous *Tripitaka* have been translated from Pali into Thai. One of the oldest and most important religious documents is the Thai version of the *Pathomna Sompothayan* on Buddhist philosophy and cosmology, produced in the middle of the 14th century. Of the *Jataka Tales* recounting the 550 previous existences of the Buddha, the most popular in Thailand has been the *Mahachat* (Great Birth). As the 13 cantos of this prose poem are studied in schools and read annually in special temple services, they are widely known among the peasantry. The *Jataka Tales* have furnished the plots for many subsequent Thai literary works and folk tales.

The Thai adaptation of the *Ramayana* is the longest and perhaps the oldest tale of romance and adventure in Thai literature. The epic struggle of the mythical Hindu King Rama to recover his wife from her abductor with the aid of the monkey-god Hanuman runs into many volumes. Selected scenes from the *Ramayana* are used in Thai theatrical performances and also appear in mural paintings in Buddhist temples. The present standard version of the *Ramayana*—known as the *Ramakien*—was written by Thailand's King Rama II early in the 19th century. Numerous other fabulous tales involving celestial beings, princesses, monsters, and demons have also been written for the Thai stage.

Poets enjoyed high prestige in Thai court circles. King Trailok, who reigned from 1448 to 1488, and King Narai, who reigned from 1656 to 1688, are honored today for both their own literary contributions and their patronage of other poets, as well as for their leadership qualities. The reign of Narai has become known as the "Golden Age" of Thai classical literature. The king maintained a circle of poets who

produced both extemporaneous satirical verses and more serious lengthy works. Another brilliant period in Thai classical literature was from 1805 to 1824 during the reign of Rama II, who was himself a noted poet. Since 1824, however, classical literature has declined greatly in quantity and quality.

During the first three decades of the 20th century, Western literary concepts and techniques gradually became predominant in Thai literature. This was the period of a literary renaissance and the beginning of modern literature. Western forms of prose, such as the drama, the essay, and the short story, became primary modes of literary expression.

The Western style of prose was first introduced through the efforts of King Chulalongkorn. Indeed, prior to World War II the leading writers and poets were members of the royal family and a literary coterie of young officials who had been educated in England. After 1932, when royal patronage ceased, Thai writers began to produce works in response to the limited but growing demand from the literate public at large. Much Thai classical literature was rendered into modern prose, and the novel was developed as a literary form. The first contemporary Thai novel, published in 1940, is *Yellow Race, White Race* by Prince Akat-Damkoeng, which deals with the problems faced by a European-educated Thai after returning to Thailand.

Prince Akat was followed by a new school of authors producing realistic novels and plays, some concerned with social conditions, although a few writers continued to adapt Thai classics. The principal writers of the realist school include Kukrit Pramoj, Prince Prem Purachatra, and Wichit Watlakarn.

Among the younger novelists, Malai Chupimit, Sirat Sathapanat, and Nittaya Nittayasunthon have written novels and short stories that protest political and socioeconomic conditions. The struggle of the poor farmer against the capitalists or the government bureaucrats, for example, has been a common theme. Many of the young writers are leftist-oriented journalists who use fiction as their medium for social protest largely because it is acceptable to the government, while nonfiction dealing with political subjects encounters heavy censorship. Much contemporary writing, however, consists of sensational novels published in paperback editions and magazine fiction, both of which appeal to the less educated elements of the literate public.

2. Performing arts

Thailand possesses a rich heritage of music, drama, and dance. To a considerable extent, these three

traditional arts have been inseparable as distinct forms. Largely because of government programs initiated in the 1930's and 1940's to encourage a cultural revival, they have been preserved in both classic and folk forms.

The Thai musical scale has seven equal intervals, but in contrast to the Western scale the half-tone intervals are not used, and the fourth and seventh notes are frequently avoided. Harmony is unknown, although some variation is achieved by counterpoint. Classical music accompanying drama has 36 categories, each of which indicates a particular mood, such as anger, sorrow, contemplation, and elation. The music is so well known that Thai can tell what kind of scene is being portrayed on the stage merely by hearing the orchestra.

There are perhaps 50 kinds of musical instruments, including indigenous types of stringed instruments, drums, percussion pieces, and woodwinds. The *mahori* orchestra for indoor concerts normally uses five kinds of instruments—violins, guitars, a flageolet or oboe, and two types of drums. The guitars, or *ju-ke* (crocodile), are over 3 feet long and rest on the floor on ivory legs; some have an image of a crocodile's head at one end. The *piphat* orchestra is used to accompany classical drama and for open-air performances in general. It has no stringed instruments, only one woodwind (the oboe), and a large percussion section, including several instruments similar to the xylophone and a number of drums, gongs, and cymbals. The *piphat* band may use from five to 20 or more instruments. Thai orchestras sometimes combine the instruments of *mahori*, *piphat*, and Western orchestras.

Western popular and semiclassical music has made a strong impact on Thai culture. As early as the 1890's, some traditional Thai melodies were transcribed for a royal marching band using Western instruments. Thai educated abroad have often acquired a taste for U.S. jazz. King Plumiphon Adundej is an accomplished amateur saxophonist and a composer of Western-style popular music. The primary factor behind the popularity of Western music in Thailand, however, has been its dissemination through U.S. motion pictures and Thai radio and television programs. The radio and television offer programs in Western and Thai music, classical and popular alike. Modern popular music uses Western scales, harmony, and techniques along with Thai themes and melodies. Another popular form involves the imposition of Thai lyrics on purely Western melodies.

Thai classical drama, presented in dance form with choral narration and orchestral music, is elaborate and



FIGURE 29. Classical dancer with an elaborate headdress representing the *meru* spire and a richly ornamented costume similar to ancient court apparel. (U/OU)

highly stylized. While the stage setting is kept to a minimum, Thai admiration for decoration is expressed in the splendor of the dancers' costumes and ornaments (Figure 29).

The principal dramatic form is the *khon*, which portrays scenes from the *Ramakien*. This vast Rama epic, which has over 2,000 characters, supplies hundreds of dramatic episodes. Because all male characters in the *khon* are masked, the dialogue is spoken by concealed reciters supported by a chorus. Silent actors portray the slow moving events and emotional scenes by means of interpretive dancing, accompanied by the music of the *piphat* orchestra. All male casts were originally considered necessary because of the strenuous posturing and leaping required in the roles of demons, monkey-warriors, human rivals, and royal contestants. Since about the early 19th century, however, female dancers have also participated.

Less formal and more popular is the *lakhon rum* dance drama. It differs from the *khon* in that masks are usually worn by the animal and demonic characters as well as the male performers, scenes are

not limited to the Rama epic, actors speak some of the lines, and action is characterized by grace rather than vigor. The *lakhon* is usually acted by an all female cast, although the monkey, demon, and comic parts are sometimes played by male dancers. The costumes are elaborate reproductions of ancient court apparel. Only a few *lakhon rum* dramas exist because of the difficulty of composing poetry that must fit traditional stage music and dance postures. The principal productions are derived from the classical epics.

Simpler in form and less serious are semiclassical *lakhon* productions which are treated as comedies. These may be staged by amateur rather than professional dancers. The names and plots of this type of drama vary from region to region; the *lakhon chatri* of central Thailand, which is based on folk tales from the *Pannasa Jataka*, is fairly typical. To show gratitude for recovery from an illness a person will sometimes hire a troupe of *chatri* players to give this type of *lakhon* for the benefit of his neighborhood.

The interpretive dancing in all of these dramas is a highly developed art, passed on from generation to generation. Over a hundred prescribed steps and postures portray different moods and ideas, and the long heavy costumes are as varied as the roles of the players. The male roles of monarch and general require the portrayal of dignity, rage, and arrogance; demon and monkey-warrior roles call for exhibitions of cunning, ferocity, and mischief and for skill in swordplay. Vulgarity of gesture is strictly avoided.

The most popular form of folk drama is the *likay*, which is often performed at village festivals and temple fairs. It stresses clowning and buffoonery and is usually accompanied by a small but strident *piphat* orchestra. Unlike other dramatic forms employing gods and demons, all *likay* characters are human, the lines being spoken and sung by the actor-dancers themselves. The dialogue is improvised. The plays loosely follow plots drawn from historical romances and adventure stories based on Sanskrit and Chinese literature, although more recent tales drawn from Thai history are used as well. The plays, most often presented in short scenes following one another in rapid succession, are usually comedies and often bawdy.

3. Architecture and the fine arts

Classical Thai architecture, originally reflecting an adaptation of Indian and, to a lesser extent, Chinese influences, remained largely unchanged after the close of the 19th century except for the subsequent introduction of the Khmer tower. Starting in the 18th century a period of deterioration set in, caused mainly

by excessive ornamentation. Attempts to renovate traditional architecture in the late 19th century were frustrated by the adoption of Western-style concrete and steel structures. Since the 1930's efforts to harmonize traditional Thai and modern Western architecture, as exemplified by the buildings of the University of Moral and Political Sciences in Bangkok and by a few hotels and restaurants, have had only limited success. Most hotels, commercial buildings, and large residences, moreover, are now constructed in the Western style because it is better adapted to modern living, and construction costs are relatively low. Classical Thai architecture is limited to temples, palaces, pavilions, and a few public buildings.

The most distinctive features of classical Thai buildings are their roofs of glazed tile and slender *meru* spires. Most temples and palaces have multiple roofs; there are five, for example, on Wat Benchamabophit. The roofs of provincial temples are covered with ordinary tile, but on many of the royal temples and palaces each roof covering consists of glazed tile of contrasting colors, such as yellow or red bordered by bands of green or blue. The gables of each roof rise to a serpent's tail, which looks much like a horn or crest. The body of the serpent undulates downward along the edge of the roof to the eave where it ends in an upreared head. Sometimes the ridge of the roof is adorned with geometric figures or a row of birds. Small brass bells hang from the eaves and tinkle in the wind. Gable ends and facades have ornate panels of carved teak or of molded plaster covered with gold paint. Intricate figures in bas-relief depict Indra on his three-headed elephant, the half-human *garuda* bird, the peacock, and mythological creatures; foliage in the background is arranged in elaborate designs. Glass mosaics in different colors are often interspersed with the raised designs of the facade and also decorate the serpents forming the edge of the roof.

The slender golden spire on the top of many royal and religious edifices is a kind of crown, adorned with serpents and other embellishments. It represents Mount Meru, the center of the Hindu cosmos, and thus symbolizes honor and high aspirations. The Grand Palace at Bangkok has these spires on the roofs of most of the component buildings, such as the Dusit Maha Prasad and the Chakri Palace; it is also found above the gateways, pavilions, library, and bell tower, and over many windows and doors (Figure 30). The Chakri Palace itself, completed in 1840, is considered one of the finest examples of classical Thai architecture.

Stupas, the most numerous of all religious edifices in Thailand, can be found on hilltops, on the sites of old



FIGURE 30. Grand Palace enclosure, Bangkok, showing the gateway's multiple roofs and meru spire (C)

settlements, and on the grounds of every temple. Most are memorials to Buddha. Although directly inspired by the Ceylonese stupa and its Indian prototype, the classical Thai stupa, called the *phra chedi*, is a distinctive Thai architectural achievement. It consists of a drumlike base supporting a bell-shaped dome, above which is a cubicle enclosing the throne of the Buddha and a slender pinnacle symbolic of a many-tiered umbrella. In northern Thailand stupas sometimes have gems or religious or royal relics cached within the spire near the top and larger objects in a sealed chamber inside the base. Isolated stupas usually have been plundered by thieves. Some small stupas within temple grounds contain the ashes of men made famous by their rank or piety.

Stupas range in size from tiny miniatures to the 375-foot structure at Nakhon Pathom, which is taller than the celebrated Shwe Dagon Pagoda of Rangoon and has a surface of glazed yellow tile (Figure 31). The original stupa at Nakhon Pathom was a small one built by the Mons in Ceylonese style and later transformed into a Khmer tower. Within the last century Thai kings encased the tower in the present



FIGURE 31. The Phra Patom Stupa at Nakhon Pathom. The surface is covered with glazed yellow tile. (U/OU)



FIGURE 33. The famous pavilion at Bang Pa-In, the former royal summer residence. A replica of the pavilion was shown at the Brussels Fair in 1958. (U/OU)

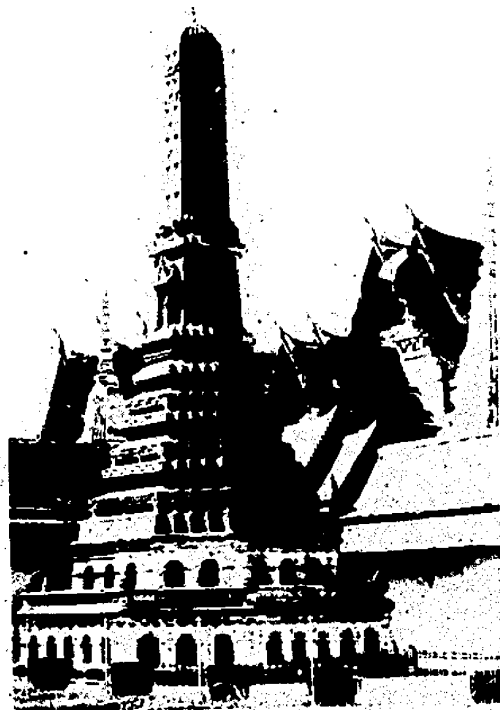


FIGURE 32. One of the eight Khmer towers in the compound of the temple of the Emerald Buddha, Bangkok (C)

great stupa. Distinguished for its sanctity, it is the object of annual pilgrimages and of respectful bows from passengers on passing trains.

Another type of stupa is the more massive *prang*, or Khmer tower, shaped somewhat like a cornucob at the top, as exemplified by the corner towers of Angkor Wat and the eight towers of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok (Figure 32). The best known and most monumental *prang* in Thailand is the 243-foot tower of Wat Arun (Temple of the Dawn). Overlooking the Chao Phraya river in Thon Buri, this porcelain-encrusted, pyramid-like structure is a prominent feature of the Bangkok horizon.

Salas (roofed corridors, or pavilions) are common in temple and cremation grounds, at boat landings, and where people congregate and need shelter from rain and sun. Twelve *salas* adjoin the main buildings of Wat Phra Keo are of the usual rectangular type with pillars supporting the temple-style roof. Royal *salas* are sometimes cruciform in shape or are covered by multiple roofs decorated with colored tile (Figure 33). In villages, *salas* often are simple thatched structures of wood with roofs of corrugated iron.

Thailand's sculpture is impressive because of its age, variety, and quality. Not all of it is old and good, but some of the oldest is among the best. The most ancient examples of stone and bronze sculptures are found in southern and central Thailand, particularly at Nakhon Si Thammarat, Chaiya, Nakhon Pathom,

Lop Buri, and Sukhothai. Excavations at Nakhon Pathom revealed stone sculptures of deer and of wheels, representing Buddha and the law, which date possibly from the third century. Over a period of 15 centuries, Mon, Khmer, and Thai artists have produced hundreds of thousands of sculptured figures. The National Museum in Bangkok has one of the finest collections of Brahman deities. Images of Vishnu, Indra, and Ganesha adorn many temple walls, and a bronze fountain figure of the goddess Thorani graces Bangkok's central plaza. Buddhist temples in northern Thailand are especially rich in sculptured and bas-relief figures of angels, mythological beings, men, lions, serpents, birds, and flowers. A few sculptured forms, chiefly dragons and lions, were adopted from China.

A discussion of Thai sculpture inevitably centers upon figures of the Buddha because of their prevalence and importance (Figure 34). The principal Buddha in the average Thai temple is several times life size, and gold-covered figures of disciples in attitudes of worship, as well as smaller figures of the Buddha, may be grouped around it. The many gradations of size include images suitable for use on tables in public buildings or homes, lesser ones for niches or shelves, and very small ones for use as amulets. Wat Benchamabophit in Bangkok has over 60 Buddhist

images chosen for their different postures and for the styles and periods which they represent. Among these stone and bronze figures are examples of early types from Ceylon, Indonesia, and Burma, as well as those made in Thailand before A.D. 1000.

After a period of excessive ornamentation beginning about 1750, Thai sculpture remained stagnant from the mid-19th century until the early post-World War II period, when Pailun Muangsomboon, a Thai sculptor educated in France, introduced Western styles in marble and granite. Although most postwar Thai sculptors have also used Western forms and media, a few have sought to revive the casting of bronze, producing images of the Buddha and other religious subjects.

In general, Thai paintings in the classical tradition have themes drawn from the Buddhist scriptures and from the *Ramayana*. Of the classical paintings on these subjects, the most extensive and artistic are the murals on temple and palace walls. Typical of these murals are those of Wat Phra Keo (Figure 35), Wat Phra Chetuphon, and Wat Arun. A few old paintings depicting historical battles or famous personages are



FIGURE 34. Bronze sculptures of the Buddha, showing two of many facial expressions (U/OU)



FIGURE 35. Mural painted on the inner wall of one of the galleries, of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. It belongs to the Bangkok style of painting which synthesizes all other Thai styles and is today considered classical. The picture portrays one of the scenes from the *Ramakien* and is part of a very long mural illustrating this epic adapted from the Hindu *Ramayana*. (U/OU)

found in the homes of the aristocracy. The portrayal of persons is governed by status distinctions. Like celestial beings, royal personages are classically conventionalized in form and gesture and serenely expressionless. The common people, on the other hand, are portrayed more realistically. Traditional Thai painting tends to be 2-dimensional and to have almost no perspective.

Since 1945, painting has been the most prolific of the rejuvenated Thai arts. The leading contemporary painter is Chitr Bhabusaya, former director of the School of Arts and Crafts, who has encouraged the development of a school of Western-oriented Thai artists. A few books on traditional drawing and painting have been published by the University of Fine Arts and the Ministry of Education to encourage artists to create works in the classical tradition. These texts, however, show the influence of Western style and technique, particularly in the material on color application and 3-dimensional form.

4. Handicrafts

The most outstanding Thai contributions to the decorative arts have been lacquer and goldwork and mother-of-pearl inlays. Among other notable forms of the lesser arts are work in gold and silver, handweaving, pottery, and woodcarving. At about the beginning of the present century Thai craftsmanship nearly succumbed to the onslaught of the machine-made products of Western culture and to competition from Chinese artisans producing cheaper products. Beautiful handweaving in particular appeared doomed. Many arts and crafts, however, have been revived with assistance from the Thai Government. Local and foreign markets, moreover, have been found for handmade products of attractive design and workmanship.

The best examples of lacquer and gold art appear on temple doors and window shutters, on wall plaster, and on bookcases, book covers, and musical instruments, among other objects. The delicacy, grace, symmetry, and vigor of the designs on temple doors can scarcely be excelled. Some panels have diamond-shaped and circular designs using jasmine and other flowers as motifs. The most distinctive design is the *kanok* which combines what looks like leaping flames with acanthus leaves but is said to be derived from the rice blossom. Large panels portray gods, angels, monsters, heroes, and royalty against a background of celestial palaces and of forests massed with lacy foliage.

The temple doors of Wat Phra Keo and Wat Phra Chetuphon in Bangkok are of black lacquer inlaid

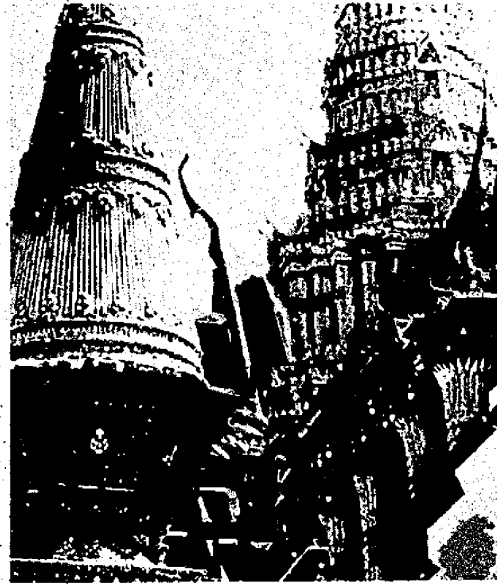


FIGURE 36. Religious edifices in a temple compound showing their ornate decoration (U/CU)

with mother-of-pearl designs similar in style and delicacy to the best lacquer and goldwork. A coarser variant of this art is found in mosaics common to temple facades, pillars, and altars (Figure 36). The Golden Stupa at Wat Phra Keo is entirely surfaced with a mosaic of small squares of glass underlaid with gold leaf.

Of the lesser arts and crafts, silver bowls and boxes in repoussé are produced in large numbers in the shops of Bangkok and Chiang Mai. Niello work is a variation of silverwork in which the traditional designs of the god Indra, angels, dancers, the *garuda* bird, elephants, and floral patterns appear in silver repoussé against a polished background of black fused-metal sulfides. Traditional jewelry is also notable. The two most characteristic examples are wide lace-like brooches studded with rubies, and gold filigree buttons worn on clothing or as earrings. Thai jewelers produce some pieces decorated with enamels in red, blue, and other colors. Traditionally, jewels were polished rather than cut.

The finest handwoven silks produced around Nakhon Ratchasima and Lamphun can be classed as works of art. High officials continued to wear the *pa-nung* made of this silk until about 1954. The women still wear a kind of sarong called *pa-sin*, which is entirely covered with designs woven of gold, silver, or colored thread. The immense variety of designs

include minute diamond-shaped figures, borders of intricate points and spires, and delicate butterflies or stars of gold set off by broad expanses of light blue and turquoise.

Two types of Thai porcelain have sufficient merit to be considered museum pieces. Sawankhalok ware, produced from about 1300 to 1500, has a blue or grey-green glaze under which appear figures either incised or drawn in black, brown, or blue pigment. The second type, dating roughly from 1700, consists of rice bowls and larger vessels made to order from Thai designs by artisans in Canton (China). Some of the designs portray figures of worshipping angels and creatures half-angel and half-beast; these are laid on in thick enamel, with pink, dark blue, or black backgrounds and are surrounded by the flame-like *kanok* design or by conventional clouds.

Most wood carving has been devoted to teak panels and scroll work decorating the doors and facades of temples. Chiang Mai Province has produced thousands of carved teak elephants and elephant plaques for the Thai market, but in general the workmanship does not compare with that of Ceylon or China. Plaster molding is largely confined to temple ornamentation, where it appears on altars, facades, and pillars in the form of images of Buddha and of mythological creatures.

H. Public information (C)

In relation to many other Asian countries, Thailand's mass communications media are well developed. In the past decade, moreover, press circulation and the number of radio and television stations have increased substantially. Although the principal media remain concentrated in urban areas, especially in Bangkok and Thon Buri, the nationwide distribution of Bangkok newspapers has improved markedly, the use of the transistor radio is widespread, and a number of powerful radio and television transmitters have been constructed to strengthen reception outside the central region and to enable Thai broadcasts to compete with those from neighboring countries. The provincial press, moreover, continues to grow in response to the preference of the small town and rural population for local news. Because of the traditional belief that information obtained face to face is more reliable than that disseminated by the mass media, word-of-mouth communication remains an important channel of information, particularly in rural areas where news is conveyed by local officials, schoolteachers, or Buddhist monks, or through facts and rumors circulated in the marketplace.

All mass media must be licensed by the government. Almost all newspapers and periodicals are privately owned commercial enterprises, but most radio and television outlets are operated or controlled by the government. Although press censorship has long been practiced in modern Thailand, under recent administrations the press has been allowed an increasing degree of freedom with the tacit understanding that journalists restrain their comments on subjects that would seriously embarrass the government, such as attacks on foreign policy or on high officials. Lively criticism of specific government programs, however, is tolerated.

Regulation of the press rests on the Printing Act of 1941, sometimes called the Press Act, which includes provisions to silence criticism of the government; on Announcement No. 17 of the Revolutionary Party, promulgated in 1958, which details punishment for statements that offend the King, discredit the government, or contribute to the growth of communism and subversion; and on the 1968 constitution, which provides for freedom of speech and of the press but stipulates that these rights can be restricted by specific laws "enacted for the purpose of safeguarding liberties of other persons, averting a state of emergency, maintaining public order or good morals, or protecting youths against moral degeneration." However, the interim constitution, promulgated 15 December 1972 and in force until a new permanent constitution is formulated, makes no mention of basic freedoms. Thus, as of mid-1973, the legal basis of limitations on freedom of speech and of the press was unclear.

Enforcement of press regulations is vested with the National Police within the Ministry of Interior. Since 1965, however, no newspaper has been permanently closed by government order, although occasionally a journal may be temporarily suspended or "warned" for criticizing sensitive policies, notably Thailand's relationship with the United States. A stringent revision of the Printing Act proposed by the government in 1970 was dropped because of strong opposition from the press.

The Public Relations Department of the Office of the Prime Minister is charged with preventing the broadcast of offensive news reports over radio and television. All stations, moreover, are required to carry at least the local portion of daily newscasts prepared by the department. Television films are reviewed by a special censorship group. Motion pictures, both domestic and foreign, are censored by the Police Department. Productions from Communist countries are banned, as are those believed to reflect unfavorably on the monarchy, the people, or Thai culture.

Early in 1973, 17 daily newspapers were published in Bangkok—nine in Thai, five in Chinese, and three in English. Most Bangkok dailies are sold nationwide and have a total daily circulation averaging about 900,000—a sharp increase over the estimated total of 250,000 in 1963. Circulation of the 60 or so provincial newspapers, most of which are published weekly or fortnightly, is estimated at 300,000, although readership is believed to total 2 million. In fact, according to a UNESCO survey, an average of 13 people read each copy of all newspapers, resulting in a total exposure substantially larger than estimated circulation. Because newspapers are sold chiefly through sales outlets rather than by subscription, circulation fluctuates sharply, often depending on competing headlines. Publication of lottery winners or news of a sports event or an unusual happening frequently stimulates heavy sales.

Intense competition for readers has spurred a strong preference for sensational news reports which often highlight violence and venal attacks on public figures not in positions of political power. Thai journalists have long evidenced a fondness for rumor and conjecture, and reporting is often inaccurate, lacking in detail, and occasionally indiscriminate in its use of sources. Another tactic, especially indulged in by the local press in towns near U.S. military bases, is featuring real or fancied incidents involving resident U.S. military personnel. Largely because of low pay rates, some journalists supplement their meager income by blackmail and by bribes from politicians and others, including pro-Communist elements. However, a small stream of graduates from the journalism and communications departments of Chulalongkorn, Chiang Mai, and Thammasat universities, have infused a measure of responsibility into the press field in recent years.

Thai Rath, with estimated sales of 250,000 early in 1973, has the highest circulation of Thai-language morning dailies, all of which are published in Bangkok. Almost identical to its competitors in format and features, *Thai Rath* is aimed at a wide audience, ranging from working-class people to government officials and intellectuals. The paper includes a daily editorial, foreign news, municipal and provincial news, sports and entertainment features, gossip and social columns, medical and scientific news, women's and fashion columns, service news, and comic strips. As with all newspapers, advertising is an indispensable source of revenue, consuming from 30% to 50% of total space. Written in simple, easily understandable Thai, the paper usually features sensational stories and is scridently critical of the secondary effects of the U.S.

presence in Thailand. It is printed on a Japanese-manufactured rotary press which produces high quality print, including the use of four colors on the supplement covers of the Wednesday and Sunday editions. Like other morning newspapers, *Thai Rath* averages 16 pages in length.

Two morning dailies, *Siam* and *Baan Muang*, began operations in 1972. *Siam*, staffed by a number of people formerly with *Thai Rath*, gained wide popularity almost overnight, its circulation climbing within a few months to about 150,000. *Baan Muang*, with a circulation of 70,000, is also managed by competent personnel formerly with other Thai newspapers. It is particularly popular with the younger generation.

The *Daily News*, with a circulation averaging 150,000, is considered superior to its competitors in layout, printing quality, and color work and contains the same array of features. Within the limits of current press restrictions, its editorial stance is considered leftist or "progressive." Another morning daily with a substantial circulation (60,000) is *Phim Thai*. The 40-year old newspaper, *Prachathipatai*, traditionally an afternoon paper, appeared under new management in March 1973 as a serious morning newspaper. Partially owned by Somet Piamphongsat, Deputy Finance Minister, and Prince Chanubhan Yukol, heir to the throne after the Crown Prince, the newspaper is aimed at a readership among government and business leaders and the educated elite. Because of its economic-political slant, the newspaper has been likened to *The Wall Street Journal*. Although 18,000 copies are printed daily, the paper's future is uncertain as a result of poor distribution, an unorganized format, and insufficient advertising income.

The less sensational and more conservative group of afternoon dailies focus upon a smaller, established readership concentrated in the intellectual and political elite. Longer editorials, more detailed news coverage, less emphasis on front-page layouts, rare use of color, and more defined political views also characterize the afternoon press. *Siam Rath*, with an estimated circulation of 80,000, is by far the leading afternoon daily; it is also the nation's most influential newspaper, almost solely because of the prestige of its editor-publisher, Kukrit Pramo, one of Thailand's leading intellectuals, who enjoys a large following among students, professors, and government workers. Extremely articulate, Kukrit Pramo has been sharply critical of the U.S. presence in Thailand. Two other afternoon dailies—*Chao Thai* and *Siam Nikorn*—each have a small circulation, variously estimated at between 8,000 and 10,000.

Five major Chinese-language dailies are printed in Bangkok for distribution to Chinese communities throughout Thailand. Published in both morning and afternoon editions, these newspapers had a combined circulation in 1969 of about 65,000. Partly because of the vulnerable position of the Chinese community, Chinese newspapers avoid political controversy, support the government's position on virtually every issue, and are scrupulously accurate in reporting. News coverage is primarily devoted to international news and local stories pertinent to the Chinese.

With the exception of the World War II period, Thailand has had at least one English-language newspaper since 1864. Of the three English-language daily newspapers currently published in Bangkok, the *Bangkok Post* and the *Bangkok World*, each with circulations hovering between 12,000 and 14,000, are owned by the Thompson (Lord Fleet) newspaper syndicate. Persistent attempts since 1963 by the Thompson group, which already owned the *Bangkok Post*, to acquire control of the *Bangkok World* were finally successful in April 1971. The third English-language daily, *The Nation*, which first appeared on 1 July 1971, was established primarily through the efforts of Suthichai Yoon and Thannoon Mahapatroya, two former city editors with the *Bangkok Post* who were incensed by the merger. In terms of Western-oriented style and content, the *Post* and the *World* are probably the best newspapers in Thailand, but their audience is almost exclusively the large European and U.S. communities concentrated in Bangkok. The *World*, shifted to afternoon publication, has a pro-American coloration while the *Post*, a morning newspaper, reflects a British orientation. Both newspapers maintain high reporting standards, consistent editorial policies, and heavy coverage of foreign news. *The Nation*, the only Thai-owned English language daily is more nationalist in tone than the *Post* and *World*, although it hopes to gain a readership in the foreign community in addition to its Thai patrons.

Thailand has no national news agency, but international agencies and foreign information services are numerous. The Public Relations Department is a major source of information.

About 500 periodicals are published, many of which are directed toward specialized audiences, such as professional people, women, youth, or sports enthusiasts. Some popular magazines which focus on entertainment have circulations as high as 300,000. The most influential periodicals, however, have a considerably smaller circulation and a readership concentrated in the intelligentsia and in the middle

and upper classes. Among the more prestigious magazines are the following:

	CIRCULATION
<i>Bangkok Readers</i> (monthly)	50,000
<i>Satri Sarn</i> (weekly)	50,000
<i>Siam Rath Weekly Review</i>	40,000
<i>Vithayasarn</i> (weekly)	25,000
<i>Social Science Review</i> (monthly)	15,000

Bangkok Readers, now in its second year, has a format similar to the defunct *Life* magazine and is intended for families in the younger age group with higher than average income and education. The U.S. Government produces a monthly Thai-language magazine, *Scriptarb*, which is disseminated to a selected readership of 20,000.

As in most of Asia, the demand for books in Thailand is largely confined to textbooks, while fiction is marketed largely to tourists and Western expatriates. Most Thai prefer to read periodicals or the serialized fiction carried in many of the Bangkok daily newspapers.

High operating costs are a serious problem that continues to plague not only Thai newspapers but also the entire publishing industry. In addition to a high import tax on newsprint, the complicated characteristics of written Thai, which include 44 consonants, 14 forms for the nine vowels, and vowel and tonal marks both above and below the line, have blocked the development of an inexpensive typesetter. Thus, most type is set by hand. In the late 1960's an eight-page daily with a press run of 20,000 employed a staff of about 400 typesetters. Newspaper plants attempt to hold down costs by doing a large amount of commercial printing in addition to the daily press run. Production costs have also been lowered through the installation of new rotary and offset presses from Japan.

Early in 1973, 157 radio stations were broadcasting, about 4 million radios were in use, and the average weekly audience numbered some 15 million. About half of the Thai stations are operated by the armed forces and most of the remainder by various agencies of the government. Advertising revenues, however, cover most operating expenses. The most influential stations are the 25 under the direct supervision of the Public Relations Department, known as the Radio Thailand National Broadcasting Service. The National Security Command of the Royal Thai Army operates stations 909 in the northeast and 912 in the south which are aimed at countering Communist propaganda and generating defectors among insurgents. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs formally operates the Voice of Free Asia, but most of the

international broadcasting from this station is produced by the Voice of America. International programs in Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malay, Chinese, Laotian, English, and French are broadcast by the General Overseas Service of *Radio Thailand*, operated by the Public Relations Department. Regional stations under the department's control include the Hill Tribe Station in Chiang Mai, which transmits daily broadcasts in major tribal languages, including Karen, Meo, Yao, Lahu, and Lisu, in order to reinforce links between the tribal groups and the government, counter Communist subversion, and discourage opium growing.

Partly because of the excellent reception and popularity of foreign broadcasts in the north, northeast, and south, the number and transmission strength of Thai radio stations in these regions were significantly expanded in the early 1970's. In addition to army stations 909 and 912 and the increasing number of outlets broadcasting programs in tribal languages, new radio stations were built in 1971 in the provinces of Surin, Nakhon Ratchasima, Chiang Mai, Tak, Lop Buri, Songkhla, and Surat Thani. Early in 1973, new stations in the provinces of Trang, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Mae Hong Son, and Nan began broadcasting, the last named partly in response to the effectiveness of *Radio Peking's* broadcasts in the area. However, the quality of Thai radio broadcasting remains poor. According to a survey conducted in January 1973 by the Public Relations Department, Thai as well as the Malays in the south, for example, continue to prefer to listen to Malaysian radio stations.

Radio programming is oriented toward entertainment. Stations operated by the Public Relations Department, for instance, program about 60% of broadcast time for entertainment, 15% to 20% for news, and 15% to 20% for educational and other features. Radio listener surveys clearly indicate a preference for entertainment, although tastes vary between city and country dwellers. Bangkok residents prefer Western-type music, while Thai folk songs are more popular in the rural areas. Foreign news and sports have a large audience in Bangkok, whereas religious programs are favored in the countryside. The Chulalongkorn University FM station in Bangkok, which broadcasts classical music, is especially popular with the Westernized elite. Daytime serialized dramas appeal to both urban and rural audiences.

Most of the Chinese in the Bangkok area receive programs in the Chinese dialects through the facilities of the Thai Rediffusion Company, which operates a channel in Thai in addition to the one in Chinese. Rediffusion broadcasts are inexpensive and popular

among the Chinese. It is not unusual for several households in the Chinese quarter in Bangkok to share the cost of renting a rediffusion set, which is often placed outside so that it can be heard by the whole street. Although foreign broadcasts in Mandarin and other Chinese dialects can be received from numerous sources, the audience for these programs is believed to be negligible among Communists and non-Communists alike.

Thailand has had television since June 1955, when HST-TV in Bangkok began the first regular television broadcast schedule on the Asian mainland. As with radio, television stations are controlled by the government but operate as commercial enterprises. At the beginning of 1973, Thailand had 10 television stations—five in Bangkok and five in the provinces—along with numerous relay stations throughout the country. The number of receivers is estimated to range between 420,000 and 650,000 with an average weekly audience of about 3.5 million. In marked contrast to the distribution of radio receivers, which are owned by a high proportion of rural households, television sets are concentrated in urban areas.

Two networks own or control eight of the television stations: the Thai Television Company, a state enterprise controlled by the Public Relations Department, which operates two stations in Bangkok and four elsewhere, in Khon Kaen in the northeast, Lampang in the north, and Surat Thani and Hat Yai in the south; and army television which has two stations in Bangkok. Two Bangkok outlets televising in color are operated under license by commercial interests.

Television programming is even more heavily oriented toward entertainment than radio. According to a U.S. survey in September 1970, entertainment accounted for approximately 78% of broadcast time on the Bangkok stations, news and information for 20%, and educational and religious programs for 2%. Television entertainment programming includes films and plays, music, variety shows, and sports features. Thai television has borrowed heavily from U.S. television, broadcasting a number of popular series, such as "Mod Squad" and "Marcus Welby, M.D." Japanese television, because of greater accessibility and lower cost, has been making inroads into the Thai market with their own series programs. Occasionally, government telecasts are mandatory. A National Executive Council order of 2 December 1971, for example, required all television stations to carry film clips of the public execution of a murderer.

On 27 December 1972 the Thai Government approved a 3-year television expansion program which

will eventually allow nationwide viewing, including all outlying provinces. A total of 17 television stations will be constructed in the north and south regions, while stations in Lampang and Surat Thani will be improved to permit the transmission of a 625-line system. In addition, a television system control center will be set up in Bangkok to select programs for transmission to regional pilot stations in Lampang, Surat Thani, and Hat Yai.

The growth of the motion picture audience since 1955 has been rapid. In the mid-1950's the country contained 120 theaters with a seating capacity of 60,000 persons, and in 1972 there were 450 theaters with a seating capacity of 500,000 (Figure 57). In addition, 120 commercial mobile units catered in 1972 to the needs of a burgeoning rural audience. In the same year, an estimated annual audience of over 100 million viewed 730 films, 200 of which were produced in the United States, 100 in Thailand, with the remainder imported from Europe, India, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the Republic of China. About six of the theaters in Bangkok regularly show Chinese films made in Hong Kong and Singapore. Most of these films are dubbed in Teochui, the principal dialect of the Chinese community in Bangkok. Other foreign films are shown with the original soundtrack and subtitles in both Thai and Chinese or are dubbed in Thai only. Sometimes selected scenes are translated after turning off the soundtrack, or commentary is provided during intermission or after completion of the film. Hence, slapstick comedies and action pictures containing simple plots, such as the U.S. Westerns, are especially popular, partly because they are more readily understood through visual means alone. Spy films and pictures with war themes are also popular.

The fledgling Thai film industry, although mainly characterized by productions of poor quality and bedeviled by high taxes on ticket sales and processed film, is beginning to exhibit technical proficiency. Aided by a cut of 80% on the import duty of raw film, more productions are being filmed in 35-mm. Some low-cost financing is reportedly available to filmmakers through the Industrial Finance Corporation. Also, the infusion of new blood could mark a turning point for the industry. However, continuing difficulties in securing adequate financing for producing high quality 35-mm. films have forced Thai film producers to limit the number of such productions. In contrast, a growing number of independent movie producers with a ready story line culled from radio soap operas, a cameraman or two, professional actors, and a minimum of equipment are

turning out quantities of the cheaper 16-mm. films. While Thai films retain their popularity in rural areas, they are rarely patronized by the educated and Westernized Thai in the cities.

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Theater advertisement for a Bangkok theater (U OU)



Theater near the center of Sakon Nakhon (C)

FIGURE 37. Typical motion picture theaters. Films now attract the crowds that formerly flocked to the old shadow-plays, now no longer seen. Foreign films are shown all over the country, and Thailand has an active film industry of its own.

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