CHAPTER II

THAILAND: THE LAND, PEOPLE AND POLITY

Introduction:

In order to understand the process of political socialization the knowledge about the polity concerned is very useful. It helps us to understand various characteristics inherent in that state. The natural boundaries, geography, topography, natural resources, economy, including the history of political development are some of the factors that attract our attention in this regard. Astute scholars often find that factual information and a nation's historical background are the mainstay of research. Likewise, the deeper understanding derived from this chapter shall be a necessary part of the critical study pertaining to the role and impact of major socializing agents on political behaviour in the Thai society.

If the scope of this study, therefore, is to find out how political socialization has taken place for over a period of 60 years since 1932, when the change from
absolute monarchy to democracy, took place it is necessary to look at the political behaviour of the Thai people as a whole, from the early past to the present. In this regard the highlights of Thai history are significant indicator to the political behaviour of the nation.

Historically, the period begins when after the first coup d'etat the then ruling king, Rama VII ended the Absolute Monarchy in 1932, and gave the country its first constitution which established the constitutional monarchy. The official name was later changed from "Kingdom of Siam" to "Kingdom of Thailand."

Through diplomatic adroitness as well as a great number of friendship and trade contract with Europe's colonial powers and the rest of the world, Thailand's Kings were able to save the country from the fate of colonial dependence which other neighbouring countries had to suffer. In 1946 the officiating King Bhumibol (Rama IX) ascended the throne. Today he is the longest ruling monarch of the Chakri Dynasty (of the Rattanakosinendra or Bangkok period). The king, besided Buddhism and Nation signifies the tripod of the country.
Thailand is, indeed, best described by a strong legacy to tradition, despite the modern changes as will become evident in this account of Thailand's history. Together with the demographic details of the country which are, to some extent, a relevant source and guide to the traditional behaviour that shaped the nation.

Therefore, this chapter briefly presents with the geographical features, areas, details of geographical and topographical divisions, natural resources and the economy, the people, and the historical development of Thai polity.

**The Land:**

**Location:** Geographically, Thailand, which was known as "Siam" before 1939, is located in Southeast Asia, almost equidistant from China and India. Thailand, literally translated, means "Land of the Free", and is situated on the Peninsula of Indo-China approximately between 5 and 20 degrees of Latitude North, 97 and 105 degrees of Longitudes East and shares borders with Burma in the West, Malaysia in the South, Laos in the northeast and Cambodia in the east.
Area and the regions: According to local administration bureau's map the area of the country is approximately 1,538,820 Square Kilometers and is divided into five regions as follows:

1) The Central Region: This region consisting of 30 provinces covers the most areas of Thailand, which is the low and fertile land and is drained by the Chao Phraya River. This region serves as the geographic and economic heart of the kingdom and is rich in alluvium which is watered by an extensive network of canals and irrigation projects. The central region, therefore, is regarded as Thailand's rich bowl.

ii) The Northern Region: The Northern Region consists of mountains and valleys which comprises one quarter of the nation with 8 provinces in it. The mountains running north and south through the Northern Region are densely covered with forests, the river valleys cut through them are narrow but fertile.

iii) The Northeastern Region: This region is a large sandstone plateau rising about a thousand feet above the central plain in the central part, and sloping
gently towards the Mekhong River, and Laos. It covers about one third of the total area of the country spread over in 17 provinces. A great deal of the land has poor soil and suffers from droughts or floods, depending on the season. The topography of the plateau makes irrigation difficult. Thus, both irrigation and flood control projects have provided to improve agricultural potential.

iv) The Southern Region: The Southern Region consisting of 14 provinces is a long sliver of land extending from the Central Region southwards to Malaysia and is covered in great part with rain forests. The mountains in the southern portion and their continuation, of the west coast, are jagged in outline and heavily forested, and are often thought to be the most scenic part of Thailand.

v) The Eastern Region: The area of the Eastern Region of Thailand, especially in the four provinces, Cholburi, Rayong, Chanthaburi and Trat, is the country's Eastern Sea Coast that consists of number of islands, beaches and mountains with Chacherngsao Provinces located on both of the banks of Pangpakong River flowing down to the Gulf of Thailand through Bangpakong District of Cholburi provinces. The Eastern Region is also rich in natural
natural Resources such as gems, natural gas, tropical fruits and many other kinds of agricultural produce.

Weather and Natural Resources: Thailand has two distinct climates; a tropical savana climate from the gulf of Thailand to the North and a tropical monsoon to the South. But in general, there are three seasons in Thailand; the hot season or summer from March to May, the rainy season from June to October and the cool season or winter from November to February. Average temperatures range from 17°C (62°F) in December to 35.5°C (96°F) in April.

Thailand is blessed with abundant natural resources and accordingly, agricultural produce such as rice, maize, rubber, tapioca and tropical fruits constitutes the bulk of Thai exports each year. Mineral treasures have further aided the national development. Tin, precious gems, natural gas and numerous other minerals are found in both land and sea. Since Thailand is an agricultural nation, the national economy depends on agricultural produce, though in general, the national income is earned from other sources such as tourism, export of Thai labour and of some industrial products, for example, electronics and electric goods apart from exports of agricultural produce to various parts of the world. Per capita income of the Thai population is US$ 1000 per annum.
The People

The origin of the Thai People: The origin of the Thai people as pointed out by the two groups of historians is not the same. The first group led by an outstanding historian, His Royal Highness Prince Damrongrajanaubh, a younger half brother of King Chialongkorn, has theorized that originally the Thai people lived along the Altai mountain range in the southern region of China. The Chinese rulers called the Thais as 'Tai', meaning 'Free', because the Thais were not obedient to them. Owing to the continual encroachment by the Chinese militants, the Thais, who were peace-loving people, began to migrate southwards to the present area where we are today. Thus, "The Thais are one of the ancient races in Asia and the history of their civilization can be traced back to the early seventh century A.D.".

Accordingly, the Thais moved away from China to the South, but when they arrived at the place which is Shan State of Burma at present, the Thais were split into 3 groups; first group went westwards to Assam of India, second group remained at Shan and third group went further down south and settled down in the present Thailand.
Those Thai who went to Assam were called Thai Ahom and those who remained at Shan were called Thai Yai and the Thai people who moved to the present Thailand were called Thai Noi. The Thai Yai and the Thai people in the Northern Region of Thailand today speak the same dialect which is also spoken by the Thai Ahom in Assam. The prominent historian Phraya Prachaksakichkorachakra supported the containment of HRH Prince Damrongrajajanubhab about the origin of Thai people. Professor Wolfram Eberhard also shared this view and Professor Whilh Kredner has concluded from his research that, "The Origin of the Thai people was in the southern part of China."

Another group of historians has theorized that the original homeland of the Thai people was here, has been and is here at the present Thailand. This view has been supported by Professor Paul Benedict, an American historian. Who has given his view that the homeland of the Thai people was at this golden peninsula only. However, later on the about 1000 – 1500 years before the Buddhist Era the Ramanya people and Khmer people who lived in India had been attacked by the Aryan people and thus they fled into the golden peninsula areas and chased away the Thai people who were scattered into three groups.
The first group migrated towards Kwangchow, Kwangsi, Tonkin and Hinam island and settled down in those regions that are in China. This group has been called "Kadia" by Professor Benedict and at present their spoken language is quite similar to the Thai language spoken in Thailand. The second group moved to Indonesia and Indian peninsula and these are the Indonesians at present. The third group is the group of the present - Thai whose ancestors had migrated into the regions of Zchechuan, Chensi, Hupei, Anhui, and later on had been attracted by the Chinese and hence migrated towards the South and eventually moved into settle down at the present Thailand. Professor Sood Saengwichian, a Thai expert in archaeology, has also advocated the theory that the Thai people were here, have been here and are here at the present Thailand. Professor Sood has summarized that, "The Thai people had originally been living in Thailand for 4000 years already before the present Thailand was established". W.A.R. Wood, who has written a book on the Thai history, has mentioned in his book that the original people who lived in Thailand belonged to three different races viz., Nigrito, Indonesian and Lawa people.

Thus, the controversy continues. Without entering
further into this controversy, it can be said that Thailand has gently absorbed immigrants who are the people inhabiting the Kingdom of Thailand today and share rich ethnic diversity mainly; Thai, Mon or Ramanya, Khmer, Laotina, Chinese, Malay, Persian and Indian stock and as a result there are Thais of different varieties.

The Demography: The latest population of Kingdom of Thailand is 58482000, in which female with 29259000 out number male who are 29223000. Like all other nations in south east Asia, Thailand is largely a rural country as out of total population of 58482000, number of people living in rural area is 40515000 i.e. 67.3%. The north eastern region is more populated with 19715000 compared to other region of the country. Avarage density of population in 1991 was 111 per Sq. Kilometer.

Historical Development of Thai Polity:

The historical development of the Thai polity shall be traced in accordance with the political systems of the four periods namely, Sukhothai period, Sir Ayudhaya period, Dhonburi period, the Bangkok period which is further divided into two periods, i.e. Ratanakosinendra period or early Bangkok period before 1932 and the present Bangkok period after 1932.
I Sukhothai Period:

Sukhothai is regarded the first capital of the premodern age of Thailand. The word "Sukhothai" is the combination of two words namely, 'Sukha', meaning happiness, and 'Uthai' or Uday', meaning the dawn. Thus, the word "Sukhothai" which literally means "the Dawn of Happiness" is the name of the first historical kingdom of Thailand were the history of Thai polity begins.

The Kingdom of Sukhothai was ruled by nine kings. The first King, the founder of Phra Ruang Dynasty, was called King Phor Khun Sri Indraditaya and after whose region that lasted for 19 years, the kingdom was continuously ruled by the next 8 kings. The most important king of Sukhothai was King Ramkamhaeng the Great (1279-1299); the third king. During his reign for 20 years in which the ruling system paternalism that allowed the subjects to be close to their king like father and sons. Regarding the country's administration, the Sukhothai society was divided into family which was the smallest unit, then village, town, city and country which was the centre of the kingdom's administration. The heads of each unit were called according to their authorized responsibilities by which the head of a family
was called "Phor Ruan", meaning, "Father of the house", the head of a village was called "Phor Barn", meaning "Father of the village, the head of the town or city was called "Phor Muang", meaning, "Father of the town or city" and the head of the state was called "Phor khun", meaning thereby, "Father of the Kingdom". In that system of administration welfare for the people was closely taken care of by the king himself. The message on the first side of the Inscription Stone, inscribed by King Ramkamhaeng himself, which is now installed in the National Museum, reads, "The bell is hung down the lintel of the door, so if anybody has a complaint or grievance, he can come to ring the bell to see his king". Decentralization was introduced by King Ramkamhaeng the Great to facilitate administration in the vast kingdom, i.e. the king did not keep the supreme power with him alone, but he delegated the power to others as well as thus, it can be said that democracy was already known in Sukhothai period.

King Ramkamhaeng has also earned a special place in the Thai history as he devised in 1283 the first writing system for a Thai language. His famous stone inscription of 1292 is also taken today to be the first work of Thai literature. Hence, King Ramkamhaeng the Great of
Sukhothai is regarded "the Father of the Thai Writing System".

During Sukhothai period, defence capability was emphasized to ensure stability. Therefore, every man had to be a soldier, even the King had to be a warrior in order to have a well established army with the king in the top command to defend and protect integrity and sovereignty.

King Ramkamhaeng was a valiant warrior. As when he was only 19 years of age he went with his father to fight the war on elephants' backs and defeated Prince Samchon of Chod, a petty kingdom in the west of Sukhothai, who tried his best to secure the leadership of the Thai people. The young prince was thus name "Ramkamhaeng" by his father, King Khun Sir Indraditaya, and was also appointed Maha Uparaja or Deputy King to rule Sir. Satchanalai City that became the second capital of Sukhothai.

Apart from being a valiant warrior, King Ramkamhaeng was also a wise statesman, a far-sighted scholar and brilliant diplomat who actually had been busy enlarging his dominion long before his accession to the throne.
During his reign Sukhothai was an extensive kingdom bordering in the north to the Kingdom of Lan Na, in the northeast to Lung Prabang, in the east to Vientiane, in the south to Malay peninsula and in the west to Tenasserim, Tavoy, Martaban and Pegu (Hangswati) up to the Bay of Bengal, all of which were either directly subject or tributary to him. His army was under his command and was organised in accordance with the hierarchical order of which the king was the head and followed in the diminishing ranks were: general, colonel, captain, sergeant, corporal and private. His civil administration was organized in a similar order regarding the ranks and positions of the officials in the centre and the outer parts of the capital. In peace time both military and civil officials engaged themselves in various occupations as civilians, but in war time they all were drafted in the army under the king's command.

King Ramkamhaeng followed the policy to govern with justice his own people as well as foreigners who lived in his kingdom. Accordingly, the people from all walks of life were very happy. Most of the Thai people in Sukhothai kingdom engaged themselves in agricultural work, cultivating rice, vegetables and fruit plants.
King Ramkamhaeng was succeeded by his son, Prince Loethai, who became the fourth king of Sukhothai. He was a weak king, so many of vassal states took the opportunity to liberate themselves from the yoke of Sukhothai. Prince Ngua Namthom became king, but he ruled Sukhothai very shortly and the Deputy King Lithai eventually came to the throne in 1347 with the title of King Dhammaraja I and ruled Sukhothai till 1374. He was a capable ruler who made Sukhothai rich in arts and literature apart from his efficiency in ruling the Kingdom. After his death Sukhothai was ruled by the next three kings namely, King Dhammaraja II, King Dhammaraja III and King Dhammaraja IV till 1438. But these three kings were not strong as king Ramkamhaeng and king Lithai were especially, King Dhammaraja IV turned to show subservience to Sir Ayudhaya and that brought the end to Phra Ruang Dynasty of Sukhothai Kingdom.

II Sri Ayudhaya Period:

As Sri Ayudhaya was ruled by 33 kings of 5 dynasties and lasted for 417 years. This period broadly shall be further divided into 3 periods viz. (i) The Early Period (ii) The Middle Period and (iii) the Late Period as follows.

(i) The Early Period: King Uthong founded Sir Ayudhaya the second capital of the nation in 1350 and he himself became
King Ramadhibodi I and ruled the kingdom until 1369. In 417 years (1350–1767) 44 wars were fought: out of which 20 wars were against Cambodia, Chiang Mai and other vassal 14 states and 24 wars with Burma.

The form of government in Sri Ayudhya was Absolute Monarchy in which the king was regarded "Lord of Life" and whatever the King said was the law. The political entity of Sri Ayudhaya was in fact influenced by Indian culture that had flourished all over the regions of South-east Asia as "Indian culture influenced these states via two sources: Hinduism and Buddhism". From Hindu influence the concept of "Devaraja" or "Divine King" was adopted in the Sri Ayudhayan politico-administrative system in which kings were masters of the land and lords of life of the people. Thus, in the political system of Sri Ayudhaya in the form of absolute monarchy, the sources of names; royal traditions, custom, functions and ceremonies - all were influenced by Brahminism in Ancient India that was known to the Thais as Chomphu Thaweepp (Jumbu Deep). From Buddhist influence, the concept of "Dasbikh Rajdhamma" or "Ten Kingly Duties" was adopted as virtuous principles to be followed by the kings which include: (i) liberality, (ii) piety (iii) charity, (iv) freedom from wrath, (v) mercy, (vi) patience, (vii) rectitude, (viii) mindfulness, (ix) devotion and (x) freedom from enmity. According
to Professor Chai-anan Samudavaniya, a Thai political scientist, what distinguished from other principalities in the region was its adoption of a Hindu-Brahmanical ideology and political administrative pattern of government right from the start, and its ability to maintain and utilize these structures to institutionalize the ruler's legitimacy over a long period.

In this regard, Sri Ayudhaya was based upon the principle by which the capital city was regarded the centre of the universe that corresponds to the concept of the "Universal Ruler" or "Chakravati". This ideological orientation emphasized the role and duties of the ruler as a warrior-king that had been adopted before the founding of Sri Ayudhaya by Khmer or Cambodian kings. The concept of building up an empire was the basic goal of the kings in the neighbouring states, especially Burma and that is why many wars were fought in order to dominate one another. In order to prevent herself from Burmese aggression, Sri Ayudhaya was built up to be a powerful state, politically, economically, socially and militarily in particular. In order to achieve the goal as set for the centralized bureaucratic system was introduced by King Uthong or King Ramadhlobodi I. The system was known in short as Wiang, Wang, Klang and Na that was known in Thai as "Chatusadombha". It is the combination of two words; Chatu, meaning four and Sadombha, meaning ministries which are: Ministry of the
Interior (Wiang), Ministry of the Royal Household (Wang), Ministry of Finance (Klang) and Ministry of Agriculture (Na). For better administration, the King also appointed four senior officers for the four ministries.

At the beginning the Laws in Sri Ayudhaya were not well written. However, with the advent of some Indian Brahmans who came to Sri Ayudhaya after the fall of Khmer Empire, then the Sri Ayudhayan Laws were improved with the advice given by them. Consequently, the Sri Ayudhayan Laws were based on the pattern of Manuashastra, the source of laws introduced by the Brahmans, which was the principle of laying down laws in ancient India.

Before the end of the Early Sri Ayudhaya Period, there was one of the important events in the Thai history that the Thais never forget and that was the first war with Burma which was fought in the reign of King Mahachakraphat (1549-1569) of Sri Ayudhaya. From the first war Sri Ayudhaya suffered a great loss. Then again in 1553 and 1568 the Thai kingdom was invaded and defeated by Burma that was a draw-back to the process of national development of Sri Ayudhay.

(11) The Middle Period: This period saw the Thai Kingdom in the efforts put forth by the young prince who was taken to Burma after the war in 1568. Prince Naresuan was a strong nationalist, spent 6 years in Burma for the
brainwashing programme planned by King Bayingnaung, but the operation was totally in vain. The Thai prince was absolutely determined to emancipate Sri Ayudhay from Burmese vassalage and to bring back morale to the Thai people to continue the national development. In 1590 Prince Naresuan became king at the age of 35 after the death of his father, King Maha Dhammaraja. In January 1593, the Burmese Crown Prince, Maha Maung Kayawchawa, along with his army came to invade Sri Ayudhaya and on January 25, 1593, "the climax of the subsequent invasion came in a duel on elephants, in which King Naresuan slew the Burmese Crown Prince. King Naresuan proved that not only Burmese troops could attack Sri Ayudhaya, Thai troops also could attack Burma and so in 1596 and in 1599 he along with his army invaded and besieged Hanthawadi for three months and Taungu for two months.

Therefore, King Naresuan deserved the honour of being one of the Thai Great Kings, because of his great success to restore the national independence and made Sri Ayudhaya such a powerful kingdom that she was not invaded again for the period of 173 years which is an act of a great leader and his day of the Great Victory, January 25 is now the Thai Army Day.

King Naresuan the Great passed away in May 16, 1605 at the age of 50 and was succeeded by his younger brother,
Prince Ekathosaroth who became 19th King of Sri Ayudhaya. King Ekathosaroth devoted more time to the reorganization of the kingdom's finances, not to the pursuit of wars. Consequently, Western merchants began to trade with the Thai Kingdom and the first group of them came to hold and to trade with the Thais in Sri Ayudhaya in 1608. So that was the beginning of the Thai Kingdom's relations with the Western World.

(iii) The Later Period: The later period of Sri Ayudhaya began in the region of King Narain the Great (1656–1688). King Narain deserved the title of a great king because of his great achievements; in March 1663 victory in the war with Burma in Chiang Mai, in the same year defeated the Burmese troops in Kanchanaburi and in the following year Pegan or Pukam, Burma, was besieged by the Thai troops under the Royal Command or King Narain.

In the field of foreign relations, Diplomatic and trade relations between Sri Ayudhaya and France were promoted. The exchange of envoys between France and Sri Ayudhaya was followed by until a treaty between King Louis XIV of France and King Narain of Sri Ayudhaya in which French expressed their desire to propagate the Roman Catholic Faith in Siam and to promote commercial relations between Siam and France.
Looking at the terms and conditions of the treaty, it is quite obvious that Siam or Sri Ayudhaya was put to the disadvantages, but King Narain had the policy to use French influence "to counteract the Dutch influence in Siam", which was a wise step for the Dutch influence in Siam was very strong in his reign. King Narain's contribution to the Thai studies was also great as in his reign the first Thai Text Book, Chindamani, was written to encourage the studies of the Thai language and the Thai prosody.

After King Narain the Great, Sri Ayudhaya was ruled by another 6 kings in 79 years and the last one was King Ekadashna (1758-1767). He was a weak king in whose reign Burmese troops marched to Sri Ayudhaya and inflicted a catastrophe on her and brought her the end of untold sorrow. The last scene of Sri Ayudhaya was thus summarized by Prof. Rong Syamanonda, "The Burmese sack of Ayudhaya in 1767, which ended its existence as the Thai metropolis, was the most terrible blow to Siam, as most of her treasures both, material and cultural, were lost for ever".

That was the end of Sri Ayudhaya, but not the end of Siam. Hence, the end of Sri Ayudhaya was not the end of the Thai nation. Though Burma destroyed the whole city of Sri Ayudhaya, but Burmese could not destroy the Thai people and their Thai spirit, at least of the two great men who were considered valuable products of Sri Ayudhaya.
by whom Dhonburi City and Bangkok City were built up respectively. Thus, the end of Sri Ayudhaya period gave birth to the beginning of the new period namely, Dhonburi Period.

III Dhonburi Period:

During the last war fought with the Burmese army, a strong warrior nobleman by name Phaya Taksin, realizing that Sri Ayudhaya was going to fall, took with him about a thousand men, broke through the enemy's encirclement and went to Chandaburi and Trad provinces in the east of Siam. Within 7 months Phaya Taksin could recruit more than 5000 strong men to form his army and navy, then moved his forces via Rayong and Cholburi provinces along the east coast to attack and defeated the enemy at Dhonburi and Sri Ayudhaya and chased them out of Siam. With his charisma and the victory over the enemy, he was invited by the people to become king and rule Siam and then he became King Taksin according to the invitation by the people.

King Taksin (1767-1782) established Dhonburi the Third Capital of Siam and ruled for only 15 years during which he did a great work to develop the Thai nation, socially, economically and politically. The political system and the administrative pattern were similar to those of Sri Ayudhaya period namely, Absolute Monarchy and the 4 ministries that were modified as Ministry of City Affairs,
Ministry of Palace Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Agriculture or in short the ruling system in Dhonburi Period was categorized into two viz. Central Administration and Regional Administration.

King Taksin passed away when he was only 48 years of age and with great achievement as mentioned above, especially, his victory over the enemy, he was also gratefully honoured by the Thai people who have presented to him the title of a Great King of Thailand.

Another great man as mentioned before, who was a close friend of king Taksin when they both served in the reign of the last king of Sri Ayudhaya, was Thongduang, who was also a nobleman. Both of them were ordained as Buddhist monks for sometime.

Among the group of the thousand men who broke through the enemy's clutches and went along with Phay Taksin were two great brothers namely, Thongduang and Boonma, his younger brother. Both of them served in the army of King Taksin the Great; Thongduang was promoted to the highest rank of nobleman, i.e. Somdej Chao Phraya Borom Maha Kasatsuek and the younger brother was promoted to the second top rank namely, Chao Phaya Surasiha.
IV Ratanakosindra Period (1782-1932)

After King Taksin the Great had passed away, Somdej Chao Phraya Borom Maha Kasatsuek, who was in the supreme command of the army, was invited by the people to become king to rule Siam. Therefore, Thongduang became King Rama I (1782-1809), the founder of the present Chakri Dynasty. Thus, monk Sin (Sin was the original name of Phaya Taksin and King Taksin the Great) and monk Thongduang of Sri Ayudhaya both became kings of Siam as predicted by the Chinese fortune-teller. King Rama I appointed his younger brother, Chao Phraya Surasiha Maha Uparaja or Deputy King and made Bangkok or Krungthep the new capital of Siam, the fourth capital of the Thai Kingdom after Sri Ayudhaya and Dhuburi being the second and third respectively.

At the beginning of the first reign, the king and the people were busy building up the Grand Palace and the new capital. Therefore, Burma took the opportunity to invade Siam again, thinking that Siam would not be prepared for war, then marched her forces of 150,000 troops with 9 divisions, hoping to occupy the Thai Kingdom. King Rama I and the Deputy King could recruit only 30,000 men to fight against the large Burmese troops to defend Siam's sovereignty. The Burmese troops were defeated and since then they have never come to attack Siam any more.

The victory over the last battle fought against Burma
has marked a very important point in the Thai history; Had Thailand been defeated by Burma, then doubtlessly Thailand would have been Burma's satellite state and as later on Burma was taken over by the British in the middle of 19th century.

King Rama I was succeeded by his son who became King Rama II and ruled Siam for 15 years (1809–1824) during which he continued his father's works to restore and develop Thai arts and literature in the efforts to build up Siam a strong nation that went very well with the saying, "No arts, no culture, no nation". King Rama II was succeeded by his son, Prince Jessadabodindra as King Rama III who was highly experienced in state affairs concerning military, palace police, justice, treasure, foreign trade and foreign relations. He ruled for 27 years (1824–1851) during which he devotedly worked for the growth of the Thai nation. His death in 1851 marked the end the first three reigns of the Chakri Kings in which the political system remained unchanged with Absolute Monarchy as a form of government.

The Beginning of Modernization:

King Rama III was succeeded by his younger brother, Prince Mongkut, who became King Rama IV, but known to foreigners as King Mongkut. A Buddhist monk for 27 years. King Rama IV was a great scholar. He seriously studied Pali,
Sanskrit, English and astronomy. Because of his good command of English, Siam's relations with the West was improved a great deal. King Rama IV appointed his younger brother, Prince Chuthamani, the Maha Uparaja in the position of the Second King with the title of King Pinkalo who had also studied English with great enthusiasm and thus, he also could speak the language fluently.

Hence, the fourth reign of the Ratanakosindra period was also known as the reign of the Twin Kings in which the period of modernization of the Kingdom began. In the reign of King Mongkut treaties based on friendship and commerce were signed with Britain, France, the United States of America, Sweden, Norway, Belgium and Italy. Modern roads were constructed in Bangkok, many canals were dug to serve as water ways for local transportation in connection of the capital with its surrounding provinces.

With his realization of the importance of education and the English language, King Mongkut engaged wives of American missionaries to teach English to the Royal children, especially, Prince Chulalongkorn studied Thai, Pali, Royal Customs and Ceremonies, Arcaeology, Government, Horsemanship, Musketry and Self-Defence methods. King
Pinklao or the Second King died in 1866 and therefore, Prince Chulalongkorn, the eldest son of King Rama IV, became the Heir Apparent. King Rama IV had ruled Siam in the dawn of modernization by means of education for 17 years and after his death in 1868 was succeeded by Prince Chulalongkorn who became King Rama V (1868-1910). Thus, the importance of education was enlightened in the reign of the scholarly king and was realized that without education, modernization of state, socially, economically and in particular, politically, would be impossible.

The Period of Enlightenment:

In the fifth reign, the light of democracy was beginning to shine in Siam. Prince Chulalongkorn, who was born on September 29, 1853, "succeeded to the throne with the full consent of the Accession Council, even though when he was only 16 years old. Therefore, Chao Phraya Srisuriyawongse (Chuang) was appointed Regent for the young King for the period of 5 years during which the young Monarch had the opportunity to visit, make observation and educational tours to Singapore, Java and India. After determination of his tenure, the ex-Regent was promoted to the highest title of nobility, which was
Somdech Chao Phraya Borom Maha Srisuriyawongse, as a token of the King's appreciation for his loyal and helpful services.

Later on in order to continue the process of modernization as initiated by King Mongkut, King Chulalongkorn sent 6 princes, his sons, to study military science, Law, English, French and German in Europe and Russia. After their graduation, all the princes returned home and were appointed to hold ministerial positions. Among the 6 princes, Prince Vajiravudh, who was educated in history, military science and literature, was created Crown Prince by the King. King Chulalongkorn's policy in the efforts to maintain Siam's independence and save her from being colonized by the British and French imperial powers was by all means Westernization. Also, as part of his policy, the King travelled extensively in the neighbouring countries as well as countries of Europe in 1896, 1901 and 1902. One of the important trips the King made to the West was his friendship tours in 1897 to visit the Prince of Wales who was 4 years later crowned as King Edward VII of Great Britain, President Loubet of France, the Emperor William II of Germany and the
Tsar Nicholas II of Russia. Again in 1907 the King made another friendship trip to visit Emperors, Kings, Princes and Statesmen in Europe to strengthen relations with those Heads of States. King Chulalongkorn was determined to uplift the social status of his people in terms of quality and fraternity. Therefore, slavery that had existed in the Thai Society since the Sukhothai period was abolished by King Chulalongkorn to whom the people of Siam gave the title of Piya Maharaj or the Beloved Great King. Thus, the important achievements of King Chulalongkorn can be summarized as follows:

(1) Abolition of Slavery and prostration: The law for abolition was issued in 1905 by which prostration that had been practised by those to whom the audience before King was granted was also abolished. The officials received in audience by the King were allowed to sit on chairs instead of prostration.

(ii) Reorganization of Administrative Machinery: With a view to improve administration of state two councils were set up. They were Council of State and the Privy Council on August 15, 1874. They were advisory bodies to give advice to the King directly.
However, both of the councils had not functioned as the King's expectation and therefore, on April 1, 1892 a new administrative system was introduced which consisted of 12 ministers for Defence, Foreign Affairs, Interior Local Government, Royal Household, Finance, Agriculture, Justice, Public instruction, Public Work, war and Ministry for Privy Seal. Each ministry had a minister as its head and all were directly responsible to the King.

Regarding the provincial administration, the Kingdom was divided into regions, provinces, districts, sub-districts and villages. In this system, Regional Governors, Provincial Governors and District Officers were sent from the capital whereas heads of the sub-Districts and of the villages were locally elected and all were under the control of the Ministry of Interior of which the first Minister was Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, King Chulalongkorn's half brother who remained in the position for twenty three years and is regarded the father of the Ministry of Interior.

(iii) Educational development: King Rama V realized that educated men were needed to staff the newly set up Ministers. Consequently, the first secular school was founded in the Grant Palace in 1871, for modern education of sons of princes and officials to learn
Thai language and other important subjects. Before this period, Siam's education was conducted only by Buddhist temples with rather a narrow scope in the provided curricula that included Thai language studies, Pali and Buddhist scriptures. The first national scheme of education was based on the English system, and the elementary and secondary educational level with a total of 11 years of schooling was adopted. As for the higher education, the Military College was founded in 1887 and the Royal Pages' School was started in 1902.

(iv) Improvements in other fields: Military and Court improvement was also carried out in the reign of King Chulalongkorn. More roads and bridges were constructed to facilitate public transportation including instalment of railways to link major towns with the capital and trams in Bangkok. Postal Service and Telegraph were set up and in 1885 the Thai delegates attended the Universal Postal Union at Berne, Switzerland for the first time and thereafter Siam signed the Postal Union Convention. Regarding renumeration, salary was introduced and implemented in order to encourage and give morale to the government officials and those who on their retirement were
given pensions as awards for their long services. A budget system with a regular audit was introduced in the national financial system in the process of the King's reorganization to increase the national revenue to meet with the fiscal demand.

The Greatness of King Chulalongkorn:

The most significant achievement during his reign of forty two years is that King Chulalongkorn could save Siam from being victimized by the British and French colonization. Another importance included in his contribution to Siam was introduction of democracy. With such a great success in the modernization by means of Westernization through education secularized and all the schemes of welfare and happiness he had brought to the people of Siam apart from abolition of slavery, King Chulalongkorn, who passed away on October 23, 1910, most appropriately deserves the title of "Beloved Great King" or "Piya Maharaj" as humbly offered to him by all the people of the Thai nation.

Period of Promotion of Nationalism:

King Chulalongkorn the Great was succeeded by his son, Crown Prince Vajiravudh who became King Rama IV
(1910–1925), who was born on January 1, 1881 and "was named Crown Prince in 1895". At the age of 14, the Crown Prince was sent to study in England; he studied military science and undertook military training at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. He also studied literature, history, political economy and geography at Christchurch college, Oxford. In 1897 he represented Siam at the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. It was the great opportunity for him to get to know the British Royal Family. The well educated Crown Prince returned to Thailand on January 29, 1903 and was assigned to work in the army and later on rose to the rank of general. During King Chulalongkorn's second visit to Europe in 1907, the Crown Prince was appointed Regent which was the period in which he could acquire the actual practical experience in the administration of the Kingdom.

King Vajiravudh, "in furtherance of the policy of modernizing Siam along the Western line as initiated by his enlightened grandfather and systematically implemented by his august father", took the active part in the internal and foreign affairs. The first step he gave the most important emphasis to was to strengthen the spirit of nationalism among the people of Siam as "he was already
convinced that Siam's first requirement was the development of national spirit. As King Vajiravudh was a prolific writer, thus, he wrote in his campaign on nationalism number of articles, poems, songs, plays and books under his pen names such as vajirabahu and Vajirapani which were meant for encouragement of nationalism. Walter F. Vella wrote: "King Vajiravudh realized that the Thai nation to be Thai must stress its unique values. The Thai people must understand what being Thai meant, what being a nation meant. Promotion of nationalism depended on comprehension of nationality".

Regarding political improvement, as he was educated in the West, King Vajiravudh had a strong intention to democratize the firm of the government. By that time there were already number of graduates, both; princes and commoners including sons of noblemen, who had been educated in the West. 1911, only at the beginning of his reign, a plot to overthrow the government, hatched by a party of army and navy officers, civil servants and civilians, was discovered. His dexterity was evident; they all were arrested and imprisoned, but no one was awarded a severe punishment. Quick steps were taken to safeguard the throne and simultaneously the wild Tigers' Corps and the Boy Scouts' Corps were set up by the King to promote nationalism.
The administration of the country was also improved by means of re-organizing a few ministers; Ministry of Local Government and Ministry of the Interior were combined into one and became the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Marine and the Ministry of Commerce were created, the Ministry of Privy Seal was revived, the Ministry of Public Works was changed to the Ministry of Communications and the Ministry of Public Instruction was improved by which each Governor or Viceroy of the regions was directly responsible to the King instead of their accountability to the Ministers concerned as was practised in the reign of King Chulalongkorn the Great.

Dusit Thani: Experiment in Democracy:

In order to concentrate how democratic political system functioned, the King set up a town called "Dusit Thani Town" in 1910 which was a miniature city at Dusit Palace in Bangkok. According to M.L. Pin Malakul, one of the former Ministers of Education, "King Rama VI wanted to know how democracy would work with Thais so he built an entire town to test the system". Thus, the town was established on experimental basis. Within the town the King set up the Government House, consisting of 8 Governmental units or Ministries and the House of Representatives.
The town was populated by 300 citizens made up both of employees of the Royal Court and the volunteers from the general public. M.L. Pin himself, who at that time was only 14 years old, was also a citizen of Dusit Thani Town.

The Town's Government was made up of two political parties which were the Red Bow Party and the Blue Bow Party. The Town ran on a constitution that was adapted from the constitutions of Western countries. M.L. Pin stressed that, "King Rama VI was a genius. Before launching the Dusit Thani project, he had spent 6 months for considering and researching democracy. Although Siam at that time was an absolute monarchy, the King himself was a proponent of democracy". According to M.L. Pin, prior to the experiment, the King had asked to some officials about their opinions on democracy. They answered that they agreed to whatever the King wanted. The King explained to them that their idea was democratic and with the realization that many Thais did not understand democracy, he was determined to demonstrate to them how democracy functioned. Dusit Thani Town existed for seven years during which there were two elections and one House dissolution. Each term of government lasted three months. From the first
election, the Blue Bow party formed the government and the Red Bow party formed the opposition. After some time the government proved incapable and could govern for only a short period and thus the Red Bow party took over. The experimental elections in Dusit Thani Town were taken seriously, for each time, 99% of the voters went to poll and those who had not exercised their right to vote were questioned by the government officials. King Rama VI did want to reform the country with some of his ideas he had that were the result of his education in Europe. The king had written many books and novels with democracy as the main theme and had always thought that Siam would some day become a democratic country. Later on the King's prediction became true.

After the experiment with democracy in Dusit Thani Town for some years, King Vajiravudh realized that one of the main obstacles was illiteracy which was widespread at the time. In order to solve this basic problem and the growth of democracy, "King Rama VI, the first democrat of Siam, decreed compulsory education in the country and that has led ultimately to the constitution as it stands today". 
Achievements in other fields during the King Rama IV:

In the social field, the use of surnames was introduced and great numbers of surnames were invented by the King himself. Seeing that a lot of people were seeking their fortune from gambling and consequently they did not wish to engage themselves in any kind of works, King Rama VI issued a law by which gamblings were prohibited with the exception to the Government's Lottery House. Thai ladies were welcome to dress like those of Western countries. Football and Western dances were also introduced to the people of Siam, especially in Bangkok.

In the field of education, with the King's realization that more educated people were needed in the process of nationalism and modernization of the country, a new national plan of education was proclaimed in 1913.

With regard to the external affairs, King Rama VI's achievements will never vanish from the Thais' memory. Some of his accomplishments are as follows:

(1) Siam entered the first World War on the side of the Allies on July 22, 1917. In November 1918 the war ended and the Thai contingents participated in the
Victory marches in London, Paris and Brussel that made Siam known to the world more than before.

(2) President Woodrow Wilson of the United States of America supported Siam's claim that the peace Conference of Versailles Treaties was not fair to Siam. In the revision of the treaty, extraterritoriality with Germany and Austria-Hungary was abolished and thus, Siam recovered court jurisdiction over German, Austrian and Hungarian subjects.

(3) Siam signed the Treaty of Versailles and was one of the founder members of the League of Nations.

During his reign of fifteen years, in the process of nationalism campaign, the importance of "Nation", "Religion" and "King" was emphasized as the most significant and highest institutions of the realm. The Royal Thai Army, Navy and Air-Force were strengthened to keep Siam strong and to defend her from being colonized by the Western Imperial powers. The Thai National Flag of three colours; Red, White and Blue, representing nation, religion and King, respectively, was also designed by King Rama VI.

King Rama VII (1925-1935): King Rama VI or King Vajiravudh died on November 25, 1925 and as he had only a daughter,
born on November 24, just one day before the King's death, and not a son to be an heir to the throne. Therefore, his younger brother, Prince Sukhothai, ascended the throne as King Prajadhipok or King Rama VII. Born on November 8, 1893, Prince Sukhothai had his education in Siam and in England where he studied military science at Eton College, Windsor. He returned from England and join the Army for sometime and then left for France to further his studies of Military science at the Ecole Superieure de Guerre. After he had finished his studies in France, he came back and held the post of the commander of the second Army Division. Prince Prajadhipok did not expect to ascend the throne, but due to the untimely death of King Vajiravudh and all other princes who were elder brother had predeceased, he had to accept the throne. Initially he appointed his advisory body, the Supreme Council of State that consisted of five princes but due to the criticism that no commoner is included in council he reorganised the Privy council with 49 members which included 13 princes and 36 high ranking officials.

When King Rama VII came to the throne, Western Political ideas had already been spread widely among the educated class. The King himself also took the initiative
in preparing the people for self-government, because "he was a benevolent monarch who wished for the prosperity and modernization of his nation more than the preservation of his power". He really wanted to be convinced that the people were ready for democracy. The King disclosed his intention to the press during his trip to the United States of America in 1931 that, "He was planning to introduced self-government gradually to his people, first granting limited suffrage and then increasing the voice of his people in their government as they become trained to take part in government affairs". According to the King's opinion, "Popular suffrage would be tried first in elections for municipal councillors". Consequently, the King tried the best to introduce democracy step by step to the country by which "municipal Self-government would be a school of democracy and a basis for complete popular rule".

After his return from the United States, "He ordered a prince and high-ranking officials to draft a law and programme to this effect". Mean while a press criticism of the absolute regime was intensified and the rumours of a revolution became wide spread and "in fact the King felt the urgent need to grant the constitution in order to ward off the danger of revolution early in 1932 and planned
to inaugurate representative government on April 6, 1932". Unfortunately, the King's plan was not materialized as his advisors did not agree to his idea. In early 1931 Sir Edward Cook, a financial adviser made a remark that, "Siam is not yet propitious ground for a revolution".

About a year later, Mr. Raymond B. Stevens, American Counsellor to the Foreign Office also gave his opinion that, "The hour for reformation has not yet sounded". Even Phya Sir Wisarn Waja, a nobleman and a Western educated Thai official agreed with both the foreign advisers. "That was a great mistake", because the current of movement for the change of political system became stronger as it had been motivated by the role of modernization by means of political socialization based on modern education.

Towards Democratic Revolution:

Another serious problem King Rama VII faced was the imbalance of the national budget which was caused by extravagant expenditure in the reign of King Vajiravudh. To solve the problem, the King did not wish to borrow money from foreign country for he was afraid that would bring a foreign interference in the national affairs, neither did he command to increase the tax, but he resorted to retrenchment as advised by Sir Edward Cook, the King's
Financial Adviser. In order to reduce expenditure, the Ministry of Privy Seal was abolished and combined with the Royal Secretariat-General and the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Communications were merged. The provincial administration was also dominated and on the whole the retrenchment was effected on hundreds of government officials and as a result, the financial situation of the country was improved. However, the retrenchment could be effective only for some time as the world economic depression started in 1929 also did severe impact to the economic situation of Siam. The price of rice which was the main export was considerably dropped and as such the national income was badly effected. The King had to reduce more government officials and salaries of those who were in the service. Number of the retrenched officials were unhappy, because they could not find new employment and their unemployment caused them a hardship and thus became disgruntled.

Ultimately, the revolution broke out on 24th June, 1932 that marked the end of absolute monarchy and the beginning of democracy in Siam. Then a letter, signed by Colonel Phay Bohol Bolbayuhasena Phya Song Suradej and Phya Riddhi Aganey, was sent to King Rama VII at Hua Hin Summer Palace on the same date, stating that the People's Party has taken over power and have taken members of Royal
family as hostages. But at the same time assuring the king that "The People's Party have no desire to make a seizure of Royal possessions in any way. Their principal aim is to have a Constitutional Monarchy", and requesting him "to return to the capital to reign again as King under the Constitutional Monarch as established by the People's Party". However, the letter further warned King that, "If Your Majesty refuses to accept the offer or refrains from replying within an hour after the receipt of this message, the People's Party will proclaim a Constitutional Monarchical Government by appointing another Prince whom they consider to be efficient to act as King."

V The Present Bangkok Period:

The Revolution by the People's Party which took place at five O'clock on June 24, 1932 brought the political change to Siam from absolute monarchy - that had lasted 582 years (1350-1932) - to democracy. Thus, the new era of Thai polity started in accordance with the political system that is similar to the British form of government.

In response to the letter of ultimatum the King Rama VII accepted the change as the fait accompli and sent his reply from Hua Hin. He stated that -
"For the sake of peace; and in order to save useless bloodshed; to avoid confusion and loss to the country; and, more, because I have already considered making this change myself, I am willing to co-operate in the establishment of a constitution under which I am willing to serve". Pointing out the problems for future government the King stated that, "I have no desire for position or for personal aggrandizement. My ability to advance the progress of the race along constrains me. Accept this sincere expression of my feelings".

On the same date the King returned to the capital and on June 27, 1932, King Rama VII granted a provisional constitution that set up the National Assembly of seventy appointed members and vested the government of the country in the Executive Committee of the People's Party. Phaya Manopakornnitithada, who had been Chief Judge of the Court of Appeal, was the Chairman of the Executive Committee which later on declared the following 6 principles:

1. Independence in all respects
2. Peace and Security
3. Promotion of people's happiness through a national economic plan
4. Equality of all
5. Freedom and Liberty, not in conflict with the first four principles
6. Education for all.
The government also appointed a committee to draft a permanent constitution, based on the above mentioned six principles. After the draft and its completion, King Rama VII promulgated the permanent constitution which contained the following salient features:

1. The King was the Head of the State and enjoyed certain prerogatives. He was the head of the national armed forces and the upholder of religions. He could issue Royal decrees, proclaim martial law, declare war, make peace, conclude treaties with foreign states and was vested with the right to consider and grant amnesty. He could convocate and prorogue regular sessions of the National Assembly and he also had the right to dissolve it.

2. The King appointed the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the National Assembly and the Prime Minister formed the cabinet.

3. The National Assembly consisted of two houses; the Upper House and the Lower House or the House of Representatives who were elected by the people and the House of Senators appointed by the King recommended by the cabinet. The tenure of their office was limited to 10 years.

4. Members of the Royal Family, holding the princely titles of His Serene Highness upwards were not barred from politics.
5. All the citizens enjoyed the equality before the law, freedom of religion, full liberty, abode, property, speech, writing, publication, education, public meeting, vocation and association.

With implementation of the constitution, King Rama VII gave amnesty to all those who took part in the revolution. Then Phya Manopakornnitidhada was appointed the first Prime Minister to head the cabinet to rule the country according to the 6 principles as announced by the People's Party. On April 1, 1933, Luang Pradit Manudharm submitted a national economic plan to which the cabinet could not agree and as a result the Prime Minister ordered the prorogation of the National Assembly and suspension of some articles of the permanent constitution. The cabinet disagreed with the economic plan because it "smacked of communist tendencies". Consequently, Luangpradit Manudharm resigned from the cabinet and left for France.

Period of Political Uncertainty:

The Prime Minister's action was dissatisfactory to most members of the People's Party for it had caused diminishing the constitution and threatening to the national security. Therefore, on June 20, 1933, a successful coup d'état, led by Colonel Phya Bahol Bolbaya hasena and supported by Lieutenant Colonel Luang Pibulsongkram who
was in charge of the navy and Luang Naruebesmanit who was in charge of the civilians, was carried out and forced the government of Phya Manopakornnitidhada to resign. The ex-Prime Minister went to Penang, Malauy (Malaysia) where he lived until the end of his life. Later on the National Assembly was reopened and Colonel Phya Bahol Bolbayahasena was appointed the Prime Minister, the second Prime Minister of Thailand (still Siam at that time).

After the new government had ruled for just a few months, there was a reaction that soon developed into a revolt led by Prince Bovorndej, former Minister of Defence, supported by some retired high-ranking officers, against the government to an extent that fighting broke out on October 11, 1933, around the areas of Bangkhen, Laksi and Don Muang, north of Bangkok. The fighting ended on October 24, 1933, and the government won the battle. The army under the command of Colonel Luang Pibulsongkram successfully suppressed the rebels who were punished according to the nature of their crimes. On October 10, 1933, the general election was held in which 78 members were elected to sit in the House of Representatives and an equal number of senators was appointed. Chao Phya Dharmasakdimontri, former Minister of Education, was elected to be the first President of the National Assembly.
King Rama VII's Abdication:

With such a political movement, King Rama VII did not feel happy, so he left for England on the ground that he needed proper treatment for his eye trouble. During his stay in England, the King did not agree with the government of Phay Bahol Bolbayuhasena on many matters, for example, the bill for the amendment of the criminal law and the inheritance bill etc. A special committee consisting of President of the National Assembly, Secretary-General of the Cabinet and Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was sent to London to invite the King to return to the country. The King refused to return, because he could not agree with the government on many important issues and therefore, King Rama VII abdicated the throne on March 2, 1935. King Rama VII in his Abdication Announcement stated that he could no longer serve the people of Siam as their king, because the government and its party had employed the methods of administration incompatible with the personal liberty of the subjects and the principles of equity according to his conception and belief. Furthermore, he said that he had given the ruling power of the country, he inherited from his predecessors, to all the people of Siam, not to any individual or party so that power can be wielded in an autocratic way without people having any voice.
After his Abdication Announcement King Rama VII continued to live in England till his death at the age of 48 on May 30, 1941.

**King Rama VIII (1935-1946)**

According to the Law of Succession of 1924 laid down by King Rama VI with Article 9 of the Constitution regarding the heir to the throne, the National Assembly proclaimed His Royal Highness Prince Ananda Mahidol as King Rama VIII who was only of 10 years age and was living with his mother, brother and sister at Lausanne, Switzerland. Therefore, the National Assembly appointed a Council of Regency to act on behalf of the young King.

On October 16, 1938, by the Council of Regency Colonel Luang Pibulsongkram was appointed the Prime Minister whose main policy was to make Siam a progressive country. He urged the people to work hard and to be more active in joining hands with the government for the country's reconstruction. Number of new roads were constructed to connect the capital with cities and towns throughout the country. Agriculture was institutionalized and the cooperative movement was promoted and expanded to help farmers. In the field of business and industry, the people were encouraged to engage in trading and banking which had long been in the hands of foreign businessmen. The Ministry of Industry was established in 1942 to control
the work of the factories such as paper and sugar factories etc.

Wartime Problems:

In 1937 the Royal Thai Air Force was set up, and thereafter arms and ammunition, tanks, warships and airplanes were purchased in order to strengthen and develop the armed forces of the country. When World War II broke out in Europe, Thailand declared her neutral policy, but Japan pressed her demand for free passage through Thailand to get to Burma and India. The Thai soldiers fought bravely against Japanese troops who landed on the beaches of Prachuab Kirkhan, Nakorn Sridhammaraj and Songkhla provinces in the Southern Region of Thailand. Sir Winston Churchill advised Thailand to freely defend herself. The Thai government under the premiership of Field Marshal Pibulsongkram accepted the Japanese demand. Thus, on December 8, 1941, all the resistance put up by the Thai soldiers against the Japanese troops collapsed. The Japanese troops then moved toward Northwest to enter Burma. On October 21, 1941, Japan and Thailand signed an alliance by which Japan agreed to get back to Thailand all the territories lost to Britain and Thailand agreed to help Japan fighting the war against Britain and the United States of America. In January 1942 British and American planes began bombing Bangkok and many other provincial towns and on January 25, 1942 Thailand declared war against Britain and the United States of America.
Meanwhile M.R. Seni Pramoj, the Thai Ambassador to the United States of America, refused to obey orders from Field Marshal Pibulsongkram. He did not accept the move as undertaken by the government in Bangkok and set up a Free Thai Movement in Washington which was joined by many Thai students studying in the United States. Simultaneously, the same movement was formed in the United Kingdom headed by His Serene Highness Supasvat Savasdivat and number of Thai students joined hands to strengthen the movement. Soon the majority of the Thai people, at home and abroad, condemned the Japanese occupation of Thailand. The impact of the war brought about deteriorated economic conditions to Thailand.

Dr. Pridi Banomyong, a Regent, organized an underground resistance movement against the Japanese inside Thailand. Later on the movement was strongly supported by the Free Thai Movements in the United States and the United Kingdom. In July 1944, the Field Marshal Pibulsongkram government was toppled and Mr. Kuang Abhaiwongse was chosen Prime Minister by the National Assembly. H.R. H. Prince Adityadipya-Abha did not sign the appointment of the New Prime Minister and after resigned from the post of presidency of the Council of Regency. The Prince did not do so as he did not want to create displeasure among members of the former Prime Minister's Party. Consequently, Dr. Pridi Banomyong became the sole Regent of King Ananda Mahidol who was still studying in Switzerland.
In August 1944, the new Prime Minister made a statement of his government's policy to the National Assembly that he would strengthen the country's administration, prevent the Japanese troops from encroaching upon the rights of the Thai people, abolish the dress reform. On August 16, 1945, the Regent issued a proclamation approved on the same day by the National Assembly, repudiating the declaration of war against the United States of America and Great Britain. In the proclamation, it was stated that, "Thailand had no desire for the territories in Burma and Malaya which Japan entrusted on her and was ready to arrange for their delivery as soon as Great Britain was ready to take delivery thereof". At the end of World War II the United States of America ignored the declaration of war against herself and the United Kingdom by Field Marshal Pibulsongkram government and recognized the Free Thai Movement. Accordingly, James Byrnes, the then Secretary of State, declared that the government of the United States of America considered Thai declaration of war null and void.

**Post-Second World War Development:**

Mr. Kuang Abhaiwongse resigned from the premiership on the ground that he had fulfilled his duties as wartime Prime Minister. Then Mr. Tawee Bunyaket became the new Prime Minister for the shortest period as he was the
Prime Minister of Thailand for only 17 days. On September 19, 1945 M.R. Seni Pramoj became the new Prime Minister who sought and received endorsement of the National Assembly regarding the policy of his government, of which the most important one was to cooperate and promote friendly relations to the fullest extent with the United Nations Organization. Thailand was admitted as the 55th member of the United Nations Organization in December 1946. Afterward, Thailand also joined the UNO Specialized Agencies such as UNESCO, WHO, FAO and ICAO etc., and has been actively participating in the UNO activities up till now.

After the end of World War II, Britain felt that Thailand should be treated as a defeated country as a country member of the Axis. However, with the strong support by the United States of America, negotiations for the resumption of the diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and Thailand were made possible. Finally, on January 1, 1946 a formal agreement for the termination of the state of war between Great Britain and Thailand was signed in Singapore. Thailand also signed peace agreements with Australia on April 3, 1946, with France on November 17, 1946 and with the Netherlands on January 30, 1947.
The diplomatic relations between Thailand and Japan were resumed after the treaty of San Francisco signed in 1951. Prime Minister M.R. Seni Pramoj left his office and was succeeded by Mr. Kuang Abhaiwongse who became the Prime Minister again in February 1946. But before the end of March in the same year Mr. Kuang Abhaiwongse was defeated in the National Assembly because of his refusal to accept a bill for the reduction of the public expenses. Dr. Pridi Banomyong, with the support of Sahaveev Party and other political parties, became the new Prime Minister.

On May 10, 1946 King Anand Mahidol along with his mother, sister and brother returned from Switzerland, a new constitution, providing for a Two-Chamber Assembly, was proclaimed. On June 9, 1946, the whole Thai nation was in the state of great shock and deep sorrow as the young King of 20 years of age was found shot dead in bed in the Grand Palace in the morning. The later King was about to leave for Switzerland to complete his studies.

**King Rama IX (1946):** At night of the same day (June 9, 1946) National Assembly proclaimed Prince Bhumibol Adulyadej, the late King’s younger brother, as the new King. After some time in the kingdom, the new monarch left for Switzerland to continue his studies. Prince Rangsit of Chainat, the King’s uncle, was appointed the Regent. In August 1946, Real Admiral Thawal Dhamronglawaswasthi relieved Pridi Banomyong of his onerous duties in order
to enable him to proceed on a world tour as a Elder
50
Statesman. During the period Real Admiral Thawal
Dhamrongnawasawasti was the Prime Minister, the economic
conditions of the country deteriorated and the cost of
living was so high from which the people suffered a great
deal. The government could not solve the problems to
do away with the people's grievance. Due to excessive
smuggling of rice to be sold abroad, scarcity of rice,
the staple food of the nation, arose and caused a severe
hardship to the people. All these were the causes that
led to the bloodless coup d'état of November 8, 1947, which
was headed by Lieutenant General Phin Chunhawan and
supported by Group Captain Kach Kachongsakram, Colonel
Phao Sriyananda. Mr. Kuang Abhaiwongse was invited to
be the Prime Minister, so he assumed to premiership for
the third time. A new provisional constitution was
proclaimed on November 9, 1947, providing for a bicameral
system. Field Marshal Pibulsongkram was appointed the
Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Both former Prime
Ministers; Pridi Banomyong Real Admiral Thawal
Dhamrongnawasawasti fled the country. The high cost of
living still prevailed that was the national problem
the Kuang Government could not solve. As he had failed
to tackle the country's economic problem, Mr. Kuang was
succeeded by Field Marshal Pibulsongkram.

The new government was not altogether safe as coup d'état seemed to be a regular practice in the Thai polity after the political change. During the premiership of Field Marshal Pibulsongkram two coups d'état were staged; one on February 26, 1949 and the other on June 29, 1951, and both the coups were staged by the Navy. However, both the coups were suppressed by the Army, the Police and the Air Force. The coup on June 29, 1951 which was unsuccessful was known as "Manhattan Revolt". Manhattan was a name of a dredger, the Government of the United States of America transferred in an official ceremony to field Marshal Pibulsongkram under the Military Assistance Programme. While the ceremony, held at the Rajvoradit Landing in front of the Grand Palace and within the Navy Headquarters, was going on, Field Marshal Pibulsongkram was arrested and guarded on board H.M.S. Sri Ayudhaya. Fighting broke out and went on for three days. Prime Minister Pibulsongkram was later on free and safe.

The third permanent constituiion to replace the provisional constitution of November 9, 1947 was promulgated on March 23, 1949. The permanent constitution
provided for a nominated Senate and an elected House of Representatives. This constitution lasted for over two years and a half as it was annulled by a silent coup d'état that was engineered by the military group which formed the government on November 29, 1951. It was known that the aim of this bloodless coup was to eliminate the pro-communist ministers from the cabinet and the National Assembly. The permanent Constitution of December 10, 1932 was brought back for implementation. Field Marshal Pibulsongkram continued the premiership, Field Marshal Phin Chunhawan was the Deputy Prime Minister, General Sarit Thanarat was Deputy Minister of Defence and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and police General Phao Sriyananda was the Deputy Minister of the Interior and the Director-General of the Police Department.

In 1955 Field Marshal Pibulsongkram, the Prime Minister, went on a world tour, especially to England. After his return, unlimited numbers of political parties were permitted and consequently, a political organization of free meetings in the style of "Hyde Park" was introduced. His idea was to encourage public opinion regarding "Right to Speech" in the course of democratic practice by which many speakers came out to deliver their fiery
speeches, criticising the government and the bureaucratic attitudes of the civil servants, posing themselves as masters of the people. A public procession motivated by the Hyde-Park-Style speakers moved on to the Government House in protest against the general election of February 1957 which, according to many of the political activists, was not free and fair. The political situation was so much deteriorated that the Military party led by General Sarit Thanarat seized power from the government on September 16, 1957. Field Marshal Pibulsongkram fled the country for Cambodia and police General Phao Sriyanada fled the country for Switzerland. Mr. Pote Sarasin who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the government of Field Marshal Pibulsongkram, was invited to the Prime Minister.

A general election was held in January 1958 and after which General Thanom Kittikachorn became the Prime Minister. The new Prime Minister was confronted with political and financial problems to which he could not give acceptable solution. As a result, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat decided on a revolution as a means to tackle the said problems. The Thanom Kittikachorn
government resigned on October 20, 1958 and the revolution was successfully carried out on the same day. Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat was the leader of the Revolution Party declared Martial Law and ruled by 57 orders issued by the Party that was the force of law. Order No. 3 of the Revolution Party abolished the constitution and all the political parties. On January 28, 1959, the Interim Constitution was proclaimed by the Revolution Party to create the National Assembly and Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat was the new Prime Minister. The Most important policy of the Government of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat was the national development plan and thereby the First Six Year National Economic Development Plan (1961-1966) was announced and implemented.

Before the economic development plan as mentioned above, the national income had been increased at the rate of 5 per cent per annum and an annual rise in per capita income was about 2 per cent only, but after the implementation of the plan, the gross national product satisfactorily increased from Baht 55,717 million in 1960 to Baht 81,274 million in 1965 and in 1966 it rose to 96,802 million of Baht. During the Government of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, National Economic Development Council, the National Research Council and the National Education Council set up numerous
schools, colleges and universities in the provinces. The Board of Investment (BOI) was set up to offer privileges to foreign capitalists for their industrial investment in Thailand and the aim of which was also to create jobs for Thai workers. Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat took decisive measures against communist leaders in the country. If they had been found and convicted with the relevant evidence of pursuing their nefarious propaganda, their punishment was execution.

Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat died on December 8, 1963 and His Majesty the King appointed Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn the new Prime Minister. Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn was one of the Deputy Prime Ministers in Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat and he, therefore, in his statement of policy to the National Assembly on December 19, 1963, confirmed that he would follow the same policy of previous government. The new constitution was presented to the King for his signature after it had drafted for five years. The King signed upon it and the new constitution was proclaimed on June 20, 1968. According to the new constitution, the National Parliament consisted of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Prime Minister was responsible to the Parliament for the administration of the country.
After the law, allowing the formation of political parties, had been passed, the general election was held on February 10, 1969. The Saha Praja Thai Party or the United Thai People's Party of which Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn was the leader, won the majority of votes. Thus, he formed the government and was the Prime Minister for the third time on March 7, 1969. His policy that was stated to the Parliament emphasized the importance of national stability and socio-economic development. However, the government had not been able to function as expected because at that time members of parliament was divided in three groups. viz.; the United Thai People's Party - 76 seats, the Independent Group - 71 seats and the Prajadhipatya or the Democratic Party - 57 seats. Had the Group of Independents and the Democrats joined hands, they would pose a formidable opposition to the government of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn. Even though, the government could finally win support from the Group of Independents, but many of them put forward their individual demands for personal interests that were absolutely impossible on the part of the government to comply with. Mean while the situation inside the country and in the neighbouring countries caused more concern to the government than before. Communist terrorists in the
North, Northeast and in the South, with clandestine support in money and weapons from abroad increased their operation in attacking the police and soldiers.

Because of such a threatening situation, Prime Minister Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn made a decision to take over control of the country on November 17, 1971 by which the constitution was abrogated, parliament was dissolved, the cabinet was disbanded and the Martial Law was proclaimed. A provisional constitution was promulgated on December 15, 1972 and Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn was entrusted by the Legislative Assembly, formed by the provisional constitution, with the task of forming a new cabinet. Therefore, he became the Prime Minister for the fourth time. Even with the absolute power of control, the Government was not free from facing serious problems. Having realized that the country had been ruled without a permanent constitution for a very long time, those people with their democratically oriented mind could no longer tolerate it and thus, they were out to press their demand for a permanent constitution that led to the political event on October 1973 which was described by the King as "The Day of Great Sorrow". Consequently, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn government was ousted and in the
evening of October 14, 1973, His Majesty the King issued a Royal proclamation, appointing Prof. Sanya Dharmasakdi as the Prime Minister. The New Prime minister assured the people over the broadcasting and television networks that there would be constitution and general election would be held within 6 months. Two days later the National Legislative Assembly was dissolved and the National Convention with 2346 members was established. Its sole function was to elect a new National Legislative Assembly. The National Convention was opened by the King on December 18, 1973 and 299 members were elected to form the new National Legislative Assembly. The new National Legislative Assembly met on March 7, 1974 to draft the permanent constitution. On August 15, 1974 the new permanent constitution was passed by the absolute majority vote of 280. The New Permanent Constitution which was the 10th constitution of the country, signed by the King, went into force on October 7, 1974. With the enforcement of the new permanent constitution, the general election was held on January 26, 1975 in which 22 political parties tried to win the maximum seats. The result of the general election was out as follows:
**Result of the General Elections:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Srl.</th>
<th>Name of the Party</th>
<th>Seats Won</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The Parjadhipatya Party</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The Social Justice Party</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The Chart Thai Party</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Social Agricultural Party</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The Social Action Party</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The Social Nationalist Party</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M.R. Seni Pramoj, Leader of the Parjadhipatya Party, had the right to form the cabinet, but he could not secure the confidence vote of the House of Representatives due to various reasons. Therefore, his younger brother, M.R. Kukrit Pramoj, Leader of the Social Action Party, formed the coalition government. After he had ruled for the same time, the political unrest was expanded to such an extent that the Prime Minister could no longer tolerate it. Therefore, he dissolved the House on January 12, 1976 and ordered a new general election to be held on April 4, 1976. The result of the said general election came out as follows:-
1. The Prajadhipatya Party won 114 seats
2. The Chart Thai Party won 56 seats
3. The Social Justice Party won 28 seats
4. The Social Nationalist Party won 8 seats.

The four parties formed a new coalition government on April 20, 1976 with M.R. Seni Pramoj as the Prime Minister. The new government was expected to rule and last at least to complete the term of 4 years. However, disappointment could not be avoided when General Krit Sivara, the then Commander-in-Chief of the Army and a strong supporter of democracy, suddenly passed away on April 29, 1976. Political academicians predicted that democracy would not last long and the military power would seize power again.

Such a political phenomenon goes well in conformity with Samuel Huntington's political theory of Political Development and Political Decay, according to which, if the rate of political modernization is high, i.e. the political agitation in terms of political development will also be high. But if the political development is low, then the political decay is unavoidable.

Another political event broke out on October 6, 1976 of which the government control and by which the M.R. Seni Pramoj Government was overthrown. In the evening of the
same day Admiral Sa-ngag Chaloryu and his party staged a coup d'état by which the House was dissolved and 1974 Constitution was abrogated. A new Ruling Military Junta under the name of "The National Revolutionary Council" (NRC) was set up with Admiral Sa-ngag Chaloryu as the leader. Mr. Thanin Karivixien, a former judge of the Supreme Court, was appointed the new Prime Minister by the National Revolutionary Council. One of the most important polities of the Thanin Kraivixien Government was to socialize the Thai people into democratic society. However, his government did not be run smoothly as on March 26, 1977 an unsuccessful coup d'état was staged. It was led by General Chalard Hiranyakiri, but it turned out to an abortive coup and resulted in the arrest of the coup leader who was eventually executed.

Again on October 20, 1977, General Kriangsakdi Chamanan staged a coup d'état and the Thanin Kraivixien Government was overthrown. General Kriangsakdi Chamanan became the Prime Minister and ruled till February 29, 1980. Due to many political and economic problems his government had not been able to solve, the Prime Minister announced his resignation in the Parliament on February 29, 1980. Consequently, a new Prime Minister had to be
Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Deputy Chairman of the National Peace Keeping Council, was invited to become the Prime Minister. His nomination sparked off indignation among many people that led to the political event that was called "May Massacre" in the Thai political history. Prime Minister General Suchinda Kraprayoon stepped down on May 25, 1992 after he had ruled for 48 days. Again Mr. Anand Panyarachun was invited to head the Care-Taker Government in order to facilitate the general election that was scheduled to be held on September 13, 1992. From the result of the general election, Mr. Chuan Leepai, Leader of the Prajadhipatya Party, became the Prime Minister on September 23, 1992 and formed the present Government.

Thus this profile of Thailand present before us certain characteristic features of Thai society and polity. They can be sum up as follows:

1) Despite the controversy about the origin of Thais it can certainly be said that different groups of the Thais could have been migrated into the area where present Thailand is located.

2) By nature the Thais are peace loving, law abiding people and utmost loyalty and respect for the King is the basic tenet of their behaviour.

3) Historians generally consider 13th century as the beginning of Thai nation when the first kingdom under the name of Sukhothia was established.
4) Thailand has a long history of approximately seven centuries when five dynasties ruled the nation. Absolute Monarchy was the well-established form of governance, and religion also has a very prominent place in Thai society. Thus in the course of historical development the Thai people have inculcated values like respect for king, nation and religion. This kind of political socialization is the result of influence of traditions and ups and downs in Thai history of her relationship with neighbouring nations.

5) Over a period of time a well knit administrative structure was developed by Thai kings but the contribution of King Rama towards inculcating modern values of nationalism and democracy is noteworthy.

The cumulative effect of all these historical developments have resulted in formulating basic attitudes and values of Thai people which is reflected in their behaviour. While studying process of political socialization in Thailand of recent times; it is necessary to understand the basic attitudes of Thai people i.e. elites as well as masses. The next chapter presents the position in this regard.


5. Ibid., p. 8.


7. Ibid., p. 12.


9. Ibid.


17. Ibid., p. 5.

18. Ibid., p. 33. Note: The four Ministers appointed by King Uthong, the Founder of Uthong Dynasty and the First King of Sri Ayudhaya were:

1. **Khun Muang** was the Minister whose duties included the maintenance of peace and order and the punishment of criminals.

2. **Khun Wang** was the Minister whose duties
included the Royal Household and Court of Justice.

3. Khung Klang was the Minister of Finance. Not only was he the collector of taxes, but he was also a custodian of state properties.

4. Khun Na was the Minister of Agriculture whose extra duty was to store up food for capital.

19. Ibid., p.60.
20. Ibid., p.76.
21. Ibid., p.91.
22. Ibid., p.20.
24. Ibid., p.124.
26. Ibid., p.146.
28. Ibid., p.177.
29. M.L. is a short form of Mom Luang. The last title for a member of the Royal Family, sons and daughters of Mom Luang became commoners. At present M.L. Pin Malakul is the chairman of the King Vajiravudh Memorial Hall.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.


