CHAPTER III

SOME BASIC POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF THE THAI PEOPLE

Introduction:

In the first chapter a brief political history of Thailand has been stressed. This overview has revealed that the beginning of Thai nation dates back to the beginning of thirteenth century. During this period first kingdom under the name of Sukhothai was established. In the course of political development of Thai nation the people underwent political socialization since then, resulting into development of certain attitudes in their political life. These political attitudes developed from time to time are the basic guidelines of political behaviour of the Thai people. In the monarchical period the attitudes they developed towards their monarch and monarchy are still relevant today. Later on in period of democracy they developed certain attitudes towards democracy as a form of government, the functionaries in the Thai democratic set-up; viz. politicians, political parties, the ideology like Communism etc. In the present study of political socialization in Thailand, understanding of these basic tenets of Thai polity is important. In this chapter, therefore, an attempt has been made to present in brief the picture of Thai polity in
this regard. The discussion is confined to certain basic attitudes of Thai people towards (i) Monarch and Monarchy, (ii) Democracy, (iii) Constitution and Constitutionalism and (iv) Communism.

I Monarch and Monarchy:

The Thai people have been accustomed to their monarchs and the monarchical system of government for more than 750 years from Sukhothai period to the present time. Even though the system was absolute monarchy the kings in all the four periods have ruled their subjects in the system of paternalism. They ruled with the ten virtuous royal principles viz. (1) Donation, (2) The five precepts; not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to lie and not to drink intoxicating drinks; (3) Sacrifice (4) Justice (5) Gentleness, (6) Perserverance to right the wrong (7) Not to be furious (8) Non-violence (9) Patience (10) Not to misbehave. With these ten principles, there is a saying 'King can do no wrong' which can be interpreted in Thai context as 'king is not expected to do anything wrong' and accordingly the Thais have been deeply bound with all their kings and with the institution of Monarchy.

Therefore, the Thais can never be seperated from their kings. The present monarch is also regarded as a benevolent; and loved by all Thai people. Thus as a result of historical developments the Royal institution has emerged
as one of the highest institutions of the country, which are known as the "Tripod" of the kingdom i.e. Nation, Religion and King.

Another feature of Monarchy as an institution is that it has been in continuous existence over a period of last eight centuries. Though the dynasties changed, the capitals were shifted, some battles were lost, kingship remained intact. Thai kings have led their subjects successfully through thick and thins of foreign invasions, wars and political uncertainties of different kinds. Therefore, Thais held their Monarchs in high esteem and treat monarchy as the highest political institution of Thai nation. For nearly seven centuries, from 1237 in which the Sukhothai Kingdom was founded until the 1932 revolution Thailand remained under absolute monarchy in which the king was regarded as the father of all his subjects. Loyalty was the attitude of the subjects towards the king. They had a good faith in him and did not challenge his ruling power as they believed the legitimacy of Royal Governance.

II Democracy:

Political Modernization in Thailand started in the reign of king Rama IV of Ratanakosindra period and was subsequently strengthened by King Rama V or King Chulalongkorn the Great. The process of modernization was further consolidated in the reign of King Rama VI or King Vajiravudh
and continued even during the reign of King Rama VII or King Prajadhipok. An important aspect of this change over from absolute monarchy to democracy was that the kings themselves have taken initiative in this regard. All these kings were western educated and were well-aware of western system of democracy and therefore were its strong supporters.

After the change over to democratic set up in 1932, Thailand adopted system of Constitutional Monarchy. Thus, despite introduction of democracy, 'Monarchy' still remained in the system of governance in Thailand. Thus the historical connection with royalty remained intact and a feeling among Thai people that democracy is compatible to their system created positive attitude towards democracy amongst them. However, in the course of development of Thai people in general developed certain attitude towards politicians, political parties and their own political participation etc. Besides, this large section of silent majority; the Thai elites viz. military officers and intellectuals had their own perceptions about the democratic system which have been discussed in the following pages.

*Attitudes of Thai Masses:*

Eighty per cent of the population of Thailand are Agriculturalists who are regarded as the 'Back-Bone' of the nation. They are the majority of the Thai people whose
interests are more in their agricultural works. They think that they have nothing to do with politics and that politics is the business of the government and the government officials. According to their idea, they have no concern with political activities and their participation in political activities is not necessary. Such an action is the duty and responsibility of the government. This silent majority of the Thai people believe that all the political institutions have been functioning well. They are more concerned with their mouth-and-stomach problems rather than political interests.

Such attitudes have stemmed from "Traditional Thai Principles of Legitimacy", which has been and is still the feature Thai political culture. That was the cultural pattern by which the Thai people have been accustomed to individualism, i.e. each and everyone is to mind his own business and to feel considerate of other persons. This is the typical mentality of the Thai people and this explains why political participation by the majority of the Thai people is hard. With such a characteristic, the Thai individual "prefers to depend on himself and does not like others to interfere in his business". The government's work is regarded as a noble duty and ordinary
people do not dare criticize it and with this attitude
the majority of the Thai people are individually voiceless

to political issues. This is the tradition that has been
handed down since the Sukhothai period and remains
extremely influential in the mind of the silent majority
in the Thai polity which is really a problem of the
democratic political system. Besides, they are also
inclined to believe that they were not born to rule and
"only particular groups are qualified and deserve the right
to govern". Another element that is held truly influential
in the mind of the Thais is charismatic virtue resulted
from good deed acquired in the past life by the elites and
that is why they were born and blessed to rule. This is
doubtlessly the concept influenced by Buddhism in which
95 per cent of the Thai population profess as their prin-
ciple of life.

Apathetic Attitude Towards Politics:

The silent majority are accustomed to the thought
that political activities are the business of the political
leaders as David A. Wilson has observed, "There is a deep
consistency of political outlook throughout the Thai ruling
class which has an overplay of various more or less alien
ideologies to be manipulated in the power struggle. The indication by this is that the political movement is the business carried out among the members of the ruling class. Any political ideologies as adopted and mobilized by the members of the ruling class in the process of their power struggle are not the interest and concern of the silent majority. To them any form of government; authoritarian totalitarian, liberal, socialist or democracy, would be all right; for, they are not interested in any kind of political activities. In other words, they do not mind being ruled with any type of political ideology; absolute monarchy, aristocracy or democracy as they believe that to rule is the direct duty of the ruling class members.

If the question is asked: Why are they keeping up with such a silent attitude towards political affairs? The answer, besides their political culture—they are acquainted with— is lack of political education. Why has a proper political education not been given to the majority of population? The answer is that: Political apathy paves the way for easy exploitation of the silent majority by the elites and as such the apathetic attitude should be perpetuated as it is a helpful instrument by
which the political elites can get to themselves the state power of ruling power in order to protect their interests that is a political phenomenon in this country. The people are accordingly induced to believe that political participation is not a regular responsibility they are bound to take. As a result the silent majority has developed apathetic attitude towards politics.

**Unquestionable obedience:**

Another feature of political attitude prevalent in the silent majority of Thai masses is their uncritical obedience to governmental authority. With the system of administration being divided into two namely; central administration and local administration, based on political culture of paternalism, after each general election villagers, the labourers i.e. common man feels that his political responsibility is over. They feel that at national level the legislature, the executive and the judiciary will look after their interest.

At the level of the local administration they feel that it is the duty of the village Chief or Phuyai Barn to rule and in his ruling procedure he is to report to the Headman or Kamnan of a sub-District who is to report
to the District Officer. The District Officer reports to the Provincial Governor who is to report to the central government. The silent majority are not in the attitude to air their voice to challenge the legitimacy of all the local administrators. Of course, individually they articulate their grievances to the officers concerned in order to get their problems solved. Concerted articulation to be mobilized among them is usually very hard or impossible as they deeply feel considerate of those local administrators, the Phuyai Barns and Kannans, who are very close to them. These administrators come to local ruling power by elections and are regarded as fathers or mothers as the case may be by the villagers and labourers. Consequently, they are obedient to these local rulers are not accustomed to do or say anything in opposition to their ruling. With this mentality of the silent majority, these local rulers, "While benevolent, are not willing to recognize any kind of self-government, and would certainly not submit to control by the people as envisioned under democracy". This is still true in the Thai polity at the local level and remains a problem of democracy in Thailand. These local rulers seem to recognize democratic rule only with the election to get them into power, but do not appreciate the
democratic aspect by which the self-government is to be realized by the people and accordingly enjoy their power to dominate the ruled. The indication by this condition is that if such a paternalistic concept still remains, Prof. Thinapan Nakata has observed, "Opposition to and participation in policy-making decisions, let alone popular control by the people, are obviously slow in developing in the face of such traditional attitudes".

The way of life, the value-orientations developed since the Royal Dynasty of Ayudhaya period and the dominance of bureaucracy over the social order of the Thai people, still remain in the Thai society by which "the traditional rationale political legitimacy continues to be recognized and to influence the behaviour of Thais today". This is actually one of the basic problems that have caused the development of democracy in Thailand to have moved at a snail's pace. Democracy goes slow in Thailand because: "Generally, most Thais tend to tolerate and recognize the right to govern of any governing elite occupying top power positions". The rationale accepted by most of the Thais is their unquestionable faith in the ruling elites, i.e. whoever can acquire and wield ruling power is regarded as
eligible and entitled to rule. Prof. Thinapan has pointed out, "Once a person reaches the perennial powerful spot, no matter who he is or how legitimate the means be actually used to get there, he is automatically bound to receive recognition, obedience, respect and loyalty". With this mentality the silent majority hold the view that the political change is the business of the rulers.

**General Cultural traits:**

In addition, the Thai culture is another factor by which the Thais are expected to be modest, generous and respectful to the elders, priests, teachers, government officials and political leaders. The general attitudes of the Thais towards political affairs are submissive - oriented as they do not question or challenge the bureaucrats and the political leaders whose actions the Thai masses can always tolerate. The Thais, especially the peasants, are passive-oriented towards political affairs with which they constantly remain patient. Thus, the Thais are accustomed to the concept that they should not practise criticism against the political leaders as they are afraid of embarrassing the superiors and accordingly the majority of the Thais "react to leadership problem not with open resistance, but with passive evasion".
In general, in a typical Thai family children are brought up to be humble, polite, not to be aggressive, feel considerate of others and to respect elders. These are the social manners and cultural qualities by which the Thai children as well as adults are accustomed to take very good care of their etiquette and always keep in mind that they must not hurt others' feelings. The children especially in the rural areas, are taught to be frightened of the police and to be obedient to all the government officials. That means the Thai children in upcountry have been socialized to be scared of men in uniforms, particularly their parents always warn them that if they do anything wrong, the police will arrest them and then they will be put into the jail. Though, that may be a means to teach them and frighten them not to misbehave, but psychologically they will remain so socialized even in their adulthood and accordingly they are voiceless in political activities, which is the known fact in the Thai polity. Therefore, "the Thai family stresses respect, obedience, politeness, and individual responsibility in personal relations among family members, the father is the centre of authority - a sort of autocratic rule". This is the way the Thai children have been socialized particularly in the rural areas which
is a behavior contradictory to democratic attitudes. Since the majority of the population are the people who live in upcountry and have been traditionally socialized in such practice, "democratic attitudes and practices such as equality, political participation, and discussion of political issues are not usually evident in most families". By this attitude, the silent majority felt that politics could not do much for their happiness, and thus believe in their hard work to earn their living. They would rather care for their concerned work than pay attention to politics and political institutions. What the silent majority felt about the political institutions was that those institutions only did exist for the benefits of certain interest groups and politicians and thus they preferred to keep themselves away from the political institutions.

Participation and opportunities for the silent majority to take part in political activities, actually for their own better welfare, are available, not only to cast their votes in the general elections, but also to participate in many other political issues concerning them all. In the democratic rule, the opportunities are theirs to actively take part in the political affairs of state in order
to achieve political legitimacy. Why do they remain quiet or apathetic towards political affairs? The answer would be: because they have not been really socialized in the process of democratic socialization by the political elites and especially, by the bureaucrats, who have been preserving political power for their own interests and accordingly the silent majority have socialized to the attitude that politics is not their business, but it is the concern of the elites. If the silent majority have not been motivated as well as socialized to the democratic political culture, democracy in Thailand shall not be any better than a half-leaf democracy as it is today.

Attitude towards Politicians:

As Thailand has adopted multi-party system, political parties have been established and thus politicians do exist to seek and exercise their political power. However, the general picture of number of politicians, as many as 75% of them, is not favourable to the people for the reason that those politicians have been seeking political power only to protect and perpetuate their own interests, not for the welfare and happiness of the masses. This is the known fact in the Thai polity and is held responsible for slow development of democracy in Thailand. Moreover, some of
those politicians have been notorious for corruption that is the reason and pretext by which military force often stages a coup d'état. This is a major problem in the Thai politics the country has been facing for quite a long time. However, with much democratic education given to the people especially in upcountry, rate of corruption by politicians, has been slightly reduced and political corruption in the capital is now impossible, because the people are strongly opposed to such political malpractice.

13 According to Apichart Halumjieak, a young TV actor and politician, expressed the view that Thai politicians must be both, good and rich. Goodness alone is not sufficient for a politician to win the major votes in a general election, richness with a lot of money is also required to win a parliamentary seat in the general election. His popularity as a TV star won him a seat in the Parliament in the general election held on March 22, 1992. He lost in the general election held in September 13, 1992 when he left Samakke Dharm Party to join Chartphatthana, a new political party formed by General Chatichai Choonhavan, a former prime minister. While he was with Samakkee Dharm, Apichart Halumjieak served the party as the Spokesman, he had to leave the party, because the party had supported General Suchinda Kraprayoon to form the government which
was not accepted by the majority of the people and was the political event that led to May massacre. Apichart Halumjiek was fielded as a candidate in Srisaket Province in the latest general election. He said he lost the election because he lacked richness of money. This means that malpractice between candidates and voters still remains among certain groups of people, in particular the uneducated or low-educated people and this poses as an obstacle to the Thai democratic development. He pointed out that only one possible way to solve this problem is grow more democratic mind among the masses so that each and everyone will realize how important their right to vote is in the democratic political system.

The Attitudes of the Military Elites:

In any form of government military establishment does exist with the main purpose which is to guard sovereignty and integrity of the land. In the kingdom of Thailand army has been perpetuated and functioning since the early period without which Thailand may not be what she is today. Therefore, the Thai Military is an institutionalized power to defend the country's independence. Since the Military—the Army in particular— is a well organized and a well-disciplined institution in the Thai Society, many people
have held the armed forces in a high respect and have
good faith in the military rule. This is a clear indicator
that the military elites have enjoyed a good support from
quite a number of people that was true even with the 1932
revolution, the first revolution in the Thai polity, and
as a result, "The Royal elite had been replaced by a new
ruling elite whose declared aim was to lead the nation
towards complete political democracy". The promoters of
the June Revolution of 1932 consisted of three main facti-
ions as follows:

1) The Army Faction led by Colonel Phya Bahol
Bolbayuhasena and other 30 army officers.

2) The Navy Faction led by Luang Sindhu Songkramchi
and other 18 Navy officers.

3) The Civil Service Official Faction led by Pridi
Banomyong and other 65 persons.

Obviously, the largest faction included in the People's
Party that carried out the first revolution was from the
civilian side, supporting the military elites who were in
the leading role. This is also an indicator that the
military elites have been interested in the process of
democratic development. But the question arising here is:
Why so far democracy in Thailand has not yet been properly developed? The answer to this question is another question which is: How much, how far and how sincere these men have been towards democracy? Or in the words of Thawatt Mokarapong, "It was also due to the fact that these men, being typical soldiers, were more interested in the problems of struggle for power than in policy issues". However, those men were Western-Style educated whose intention could be well regarded as the will for the better welfare for the people who were ruled by their own power as was the case with the Western World. But this estimation is not possible with the military group that ruled during 1957 to 1973, because the rule by the said military group was, but the Military Dictatorship Rule.

Such a military dictatorship rule was quite a stumbling block to the Thai democracy that lasted "for sixteen years, from September 1957 to October 1973, during which Thailand was ruled by a single group of men; the military officers who rose to power in Sarit's coup". This group was known in Thai as "Kana Thaharn" which simply means a military group and the founder of which was Field Marshal Sarit Thanasarirat who seized power from Field Marshal Bibulsongkram in 1957 and whose rule was different from other leaders since the political change in 1932. Professor Charles F. Keyes observed that, "Sarit represented a new type of leader in Thailand, for unlike Bibul (Phibun) and
many others who participated in the 1932 Revolution, he had not studied abroad and did not share the ideals of those people who sought to transform Thailand into a Western-style parliamentary democracy. That means Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat "looked for his political models, not to the democratic West, but to the patriarchal system of premodern Siam."

Sarit opted for the ruling form which was more of a despotic paternalism by which he abolished all political parties and governed without a parliament. Even though a constituent assembly was set up in 1958, but its main function was only to write a constitution, not to function as a parliament. After his death in 1963, his protege, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn, Field Marshal Prapas Charusathien and Colonel Narong Kittikhachorn, continued the same ruling pattern till October 1973. During the period of 16 years of the military rule democracy introduced in 1932 was not much talked about among the people, in schools, colleges and universities particularly in the first six years when all political activities were prohibited. From the exploration as carried out in this study, it has been observed that, as far as the attitudes of the military elite towards democracy are concerned, they are two-fold; (i) the pro-democracy attitudes for the sake of democracy and (ii) the pro-democracy attitudes for self-interests.
The first group of the military elite that started the 1932 revolution to substitute absolute monarchy with democracy can be cited as the pro-democracy military elite, because the leader of the group did not become the First Prime Minister in the democratic political system of the country. A civilian officer who had been the Chief Justice, Phya Manopakornnitidhada, also a nobleman, was selected to the first premiership that clearly means Colonel Phya Bohalbolbayuhasena had no desire to take the post himself. Had he wanted to, it would not have been difficult at all, but he must have thought that had he taken the premiership, it would not look as a good start for democracy. It is also the fact that those military officers had been educated in the West where democracy was strongly supported and they had imbibed in the political ideology being the most appropriate political system for Siam that had been ruled by absolute monarchy for a long time and therefore the 1932 Revolution took place.

But with the second group, what entailed was quite different the result turned out to be: they had seized power for the sake of their interests. The pretext by which Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat seized power from Field Marshal Bibulsongkram government was that the latter had totally failed to tackle social, economic and political problems of the country and the people had to endure
such a hardship of life that he and his men had to take over the ruling power from the former Prime Minister. This group mostly consisted of the new praetorian elite of army generals and their bureaucratic allies who were termed by Chai-anan Samudavanija as "The Commercial Soldiers".

In the process of political development based on westernization the materialistic-orientation was also developed in the Thai society that was the motive by which the commercial soldiers originated. Those military men, seeing that state power being the forceful tool with which they could control business transaction of the country, became deeply involved in seeking ruling power in order to manage their commercial activities. Thus, they built up their economic base by setting up their own business firms, secured control over state enterprises and semi-government companies, and gained free shares from private firms owned mainly by Chinese merchants. The commercial soldiers, comprising members of the 1947 Coup Group led by Field Marshal Phin Choonhavan, later on became rivals and were divided into two competing cliques, popularly known as the Soi Rajkru and the Sisao Deves cliques. The former controlled, between 1948 and 1957, ten companies in the banking and financial sector, fifteen in the industrial sector, and seven in the commercial sector. The latter had in its control twelve companies in the
banking and financial sector, fifteen in the industrial sector, and ten in the commercial sector.

Consequently, during the period of 1947 and 1957 the professional army officers were politico-economic interest groups "whose companies gained privileges in trading as agents or compradores of government organizations". With such involvement in business transaction by the military officers who had seized the ruling power for their own interests and not to promote and develop the popular rule, growth of democracy was the main casualty. Even after Sarit's death in December 1963, the military-political and commercial interlocking relationship did not decline. By 1969 General Krit Sivara, General Prabhas Charusathien and General Prasert Ruchirawongs, who belonged to the Sisao Deves Clique of which Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat was the leader, were on the executive boards of 50, 44 and 33 companies respectively. Meanwhile, members of the Soi Rajkru Clique continued to successfully run their business firms. With the state power in their hands, they ruled for their own interests and also because of power of their weapons, resistance to such an abuse of political power was rather difficult, but that does not mean it was absolutely impossible. Resentment in silence was felt by and large, because number of the Thai people, especially the well-educated ones, who had already tasted democracy,
found it quite impossible to tolerate such a despotism and exploitation enjoyed by the two cliques. But what they could do for the time being was just to wait for the right time and thus were in the condition of the pot ready to simmer. The pro-democracy people were helpless for the "major political institutions such as parliament and political parties were ineffective due to their discontinuity and the constraints placed upon them by the military-inspired constitutions". The pro-democracy activities in any form was impossible as Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat staged another coup in 1959 to consolidate the political power of his group, and he abrogated the constitution, abolished political parties, arrested politicians, intellectuals and journalists, and ruled the country by martial law and military court.

After Sarit's death in 1963, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, became the Prime Minister and continued the military rule till October 14, 1973 during which Field Marshal Prabhas Charusathien was the Deputy Prime Minister and Colonel Narong Kittichachorn, Thanom's son and Prabhas' son-in-law, was Commander of the 11th Regiment of the Army. The three strong men were toppled by the political uprising in October 1973. This political event shall be discussed in details in Chapter 5 of this thesis.
From this discussion, it can be epitomized that among the two groups of the Armed Forces, the pro-democracy military officers have been outnumbering those military officers who are supporters of military dictatorship. Had the latter been more in number, the three strong men would have won the political uprising in October 1973. The Thanom-Prabhas-Narong clique alienated a large number of army officers who felt that the Army had ceased to be the National Army but was being turned to a family affair. This statement can be an evidence to prove that the majority of the military officers have positive attitude towards democracy; but were helpless during the then existing political environment in the country.

The attitudes of academicians and intellectuals:

In the wake of the student uprising in October 1973, an army captain, Ronnachai Srisuvaranan, together with intellectuals, politicians and students signed a petition demanding a new and more democratic institution. This is an assertion to signify the role of academicians in 61 years (1932-1993) of democracy in Thailand. Pro-democracy academicians, school teachers, college and university lecturers have been educating their students in democracy at different levels. Basic principles of democracy at schools and advanced level discussion about democracy at college and universities, for all these years created favourable attitude
towards democracy and as a result number of democratic-oriented intellectuals came up in the present Thai society. These academicians and intellectuals have been doing their best to democratize the Thai political culture in order to appropriately institutionalize democracy to perpetually stabilize the democratic form of government. Academicians in the past and at present have written number of books on democracy in Thai as well as in English for students' education. Because of their academic contribution, democratic mind has been cultivated and is continuously growing. According to Professor Dr. Banphot Virasai of Faculty of Political Science, Ramkhamhaeng University, text-books with thousands of volumes and articles on Thai politics fulfil the objective of introducing democracy to Thai students. He estimates approximately 900,000 students of undergraduate level have been benefited in this regard and about 6,000,000 students of primary and secondary schools have also been introduced to basic tenets of the concept. Thus there has not been any shortage of contribution by academicians since the political change in 1932. However, he has also pointed out that despite the efforts by academicians, democratic culture has not yet grown to the level expected, due to the lack of proper democratic minded political leaders like George Washington and Jawaharlal Nehru etc. As seen all these years many Thai political leaders do not step down even after they have been in political power for more than 8
years. Professor Banphot has observed that units of analysis do not exist and in the context of democracy political dimension has been overemphasized and as a result social democracy lags behind. That is because there was a wrong view and discrepancy of democracy at the beginning by which democracy has been mobilized and utilized by the elites.

Another important aspect of the democratization of Thai society is that, it is an urban phenomena. Though democratic mind has been cultivated and is continually growing, but mainly at the urban areas, especially Bangkok, not much at the rural areas as observed by Dr. Asdakorn 32 Ekasaensri. According to him, the reason for this state of affairs is that even after six decades of the political change, because democratic awareness has not been sufficiently broadened among the majority of the people who live at the rural areas or up-country. He has further stated that poverty is one of the factors that has kept the people away from being interested in political consciousness, and another factor is the different socio-economic status in which the rich elites guard their interests by means of manipulation of political power with the pretext of democratic mobilization whereas the mainstream of political thought does not exist among the mass and thus they have been exploited by the rich elites. Next is the problem of qualification of both, the representatives and
the voters which still prevails in the Thai polity. The unqualified voters who are usually money-oriented can be easily motivated to elect the rich unqualified candidates into parliament.

Obviously, even if much efforts have been made by academicians, the base for democracy is not yet strong enough and hence another coup has been predicted by academic Kraisak Choonhavan, the son and adviser to former prime minister Chatichai Choonhavan, and according to whom, the return of a military prime minister is possible because the armed forces are just waiting for people to forget the May tragedy and for politicians to make a bungle of things.

So long as the democratic base remains weak and the rich elites are struggling for political or state power to safeguard their interests not only one, but many more coups can be predicted, and each coup is, of course, a terrible set back to democracy which has been promoted and supported by number of academicians and intellectuals who have been doing their best to grow and widen democratic awareness. Professor Amphorn Vichitpunt is one of those intellectuals who have contributed a lot for the growth of democracy in the Thai society. Professor Amphorn was interested in democracy during his primary, secondary and college education and deeply imbibed in democracy while he
was studying for his Master's Degree in economics in the United States of America in 1957. During his service at Ramkhamhaeng University Professor Amphorn wrote number of textbooks on economics such as Macro-Micro Economics, History of Economics Thought and Economics of Education and Manpower Planning etc., and he has also written number of articles for daily newspapers and given talks on radio and television, in all of which he has emphasized the importance of democratic political system. This is an indicator that points to the fact that the majority of intellectuals have adopted positive attitudes towards democracy.

Democratic form of government necessitates democratic base from the people for "We presently have a government that has long lost its base". Thammasat law lecturer Kaewsan Atipho pointed out at a panel discussion on "The Future of Democracy after the May Events" held at Thammasat University on May 21, 1993. He also emphasized that Thai politics had lost its way since "The Democrat Party won the largest number of seats in Parliament after the country had been governed by the military, but they invited General Prem Tinsulanonda to lead the government". That indicates the problems of wielding political power to run the government on the military base and hence, in order to let the government function on democratic base, democratic mind has to be developed more and more by means of democratic socialization.
Democratic socialization is thus the means to create democratic base on which the democratic form of government can stand and stabilized as is the case with India, U.S.A. and England wherein their long history of democratic rule, military usurpation has not been beard. With such a realization number of intellectuals in the Thai society have been trying their best to cultivate democratic awareness among the masses and one of those is Dr. Chavalit Meenmunch, as an administrator of a private university, when asked about his contribution to create democratic mind, pointed out that, "I always emphasize the importance of democracy to my 150 subordinates, I have been telling them that democracy is not only a political form of government, but it is also the way of life". In order to deeply educate them with democracy he regularly inculcates participation administration in which he urges everyone of his subordinates to participate in expressing their relevant opinion that will lead to the most appropriate decision for the effective administration as required. He has been practising the democratic method since he joined the Administrative Department of the University for which he has served for more than 19 years.

Therefore, It can be said that by and large the majority of the Thai intellectuals have positive attitudes towards democracy and both; the academicians as well as the intellectuals have been contributing their best efforts
in growing democratic mind among students and the people mostly in urbanized areas where people have good education, but they are not the majority of the people in the country. Thus, the problem remains that the democratic mind has not yet been grown with the majority of the population. However, with positive attitudes of the academicians and the intellectuals, the majority of the population will gradually absorb the same from the two former groups and will thereby turn their mind away from apathetic attitudes towards politics.

III Communism:

Communism emerged as an important ideology in the first quarter of 20th century. After Russian revolution in 1917; the intellectuals world over got influenced by it. Apart from its economic contains politically the ideology emerged as an alternative to democratic system of the western nations. With consolidation of communist rule in Soviet Union, systematic attempts were made by the Communists to spread their thought in rest of the world. South Asian and South East Asian nations under colonial yoke were fertile soil for the spread of communist ideas during 30s and 40s. Thailand was not an exception to this.

Communism crept into Siam before the political change in 1932 and was surfaced later on as it was included in the economic plan prepared and presented to the Council of State
by Dr. Pridi Banomyong, who was a cabinet member. His Communi
sm-oriented economic plan was not accepted because, the State Council at that time was, "divided into two groups holding divergent and irreconcilable views. The majority deems such policy contrary to all the traditions of the Siamese people and certain to bring disaster to the people and menace the security of the State". However, communism continued its mission by means of secret opera-
tion and psychological warfare to win popular support.

Anti-Communist Stance of Thai Governments:

On April 2, 1933 the ACT CONCERNING COMMUNISM was
passed by the State Council in which communism was declared unacceptable to the Thai society as it was the doctrine that implied the advocacy of nationalization of land, industry, capital and labour. By the same Act, "whoever by words or writing or printed documents or by any means whatever advocates communism or any communistic doctrine shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding ten years and fine not exceeding five thousand ticals". Communism was made a fearful thing as it would destroy the most important institutes namely, nation, religion and the King, of the country. Even though the anti-communism Act was passed and enforced by the government, that did not and could not entirely stop underground operation by the communists that became more threatening to the three most important institutes of Thailand. The communists
went ahead with their activities to propagate their doctrine in order to change political system of the country from democracy to communism.

With the intention to strengthen their activities in a better organized campaign, the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) was founded in 1942. The Communist Party of Thailand was not legally accepted and was treated as the Outlaw Political Party and therefore, the activities of which had to be carried out in a covert manner. Their network operation was expanded mostly in the Northeastern Region of the country and in the forest areas at the borders around the Kingdom. The majority of the Thai people had found communism incompatible with their culture and was opposed to their way of life and hence rendered no support to the communities. Only some groups of people had accepted the communist doctrine and joined the campaign.

On November 13, 1952 ANTI COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES ACT was passed by the Assembly of the People's Representatives and was proclaimed as the law to suppress communist activities. The law was regarded as a reflection of a negative attitude from the mass towards communism. The Act contained 11 Sections and the 4th Section of which was, "Whoever is engaged in Communist activities shall be punished with imprisonment from ten years up to life imprisonment". The communists did not give up their
activities even though repressive actions were taken against them by the government, especially during the premiership of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat (1957-1963) the punishment given to a communist activist was intensified from 10 years or life imprisonment to execution. Consequently, the communists turned to armed insurgency and as a result number of Thais - the suppressors who were government officials, and the suppressed, the communist insurgents - lost their lives during the period of 1960 and 1983.

During 1983 General Prem Tinsulanonda, the Prime Minister, introduced the policy "which placed politics ahead of military action in combating communist insurgency". According to this policy, the government treated all the Thai communist insurgents as Thai citizens who should be given amnesty, should be democratically convinced and encouraged to return to democracy. The effect of the policy was positive as many of the communist terrorists changed their mind and returned to democracy that marked the failure of communism.

Throughout the period of 1970s the communist movement was also encountered by the resistance that could be termed "the People Force" in which more than 5 million people all over the country undertook the training programme of "Village Scouts" who were taught and trained to combat communist danger and how to protect democracy
and how to do away with the unwanted political ideology. With all kinds of campaigns carried out under the policy of "Politics Ahead of Military Action" implemented by the government and the people, the Communist Party of Thailand gradually began to lose its ground.

**Attitude of Thai Masses:**

Why communism has not been successful in Thailand? The answer is that communism was considered to be entirely different from the Thai political culture, social norms and way of life the people have long been accustomed to. With such a deeply rooted and unshakable faith in their own social structure, the communists could not mobilized required support to effect social change. Even though, a great deal of efforts had been put forth by the communists that had led to an untold sorrow in which number of Thais had been killed by Thais, communism could not find its place in the Thai society, simply because communism was not accepted by the majority of the Thai people as a doctrine contrary to democracy.

**Negative Attitude of Thai Masses:**

The anti-communist stance of ruling elites during the major part of post 1932 period is mainly responsible for developing anti-communist feeling among the people of Thailand. Communism was considered to be entirely different from the Thai political culture, social norms and way of
life of Thais.

Even though, a great deal of efforts had been put up by Thai communists; during two decades between sixtees and eightees the communist simply failed to find support in Thai society, due to the violence and killing as the method of establishing their dominance.

Apart from the undemocratic method of communist the majority of Thai people developed negative attitude towards communism because they felt that the communist ideology of the one party system goes against the competitive politics of a democratic state; and therefore, is an anti democratic doctrine. Besides, Thai political set up believes in religious freedom; respect for monarch and monarchy; and anti religions, anti monarchical stance of communists resulted in antagonising large section of Thai people from this thought. In addition to these factor, closer ties with U.S. during post second World War period and communist revolution in China in 1949 also contributed to anti communist feelings in Thailand.

Number of factors had their cumulative effect on anti communist attitude of Thai people. Thus communism goes against two very fundamental tenets of Thai politics viz.
king and religion therefore, Thai people have developed negative attitude towards communism. How this process has taken place has been discussed in the next chapter.

IV Constitution and Constitutionalism:

Constitution is very important factor in the democratic governance. It functions as the Mother-Law of the land which many other relevant acts can be passed. In this sense "Constitution" as defined by James Bryce, is "a frame of political society, organized through and by law, that is to say one in which law has established permanent institutions with recognised functions and definite rights". In short "Constitution be said to be a collection of principles according to which the powers of the government the rights of the governed and the relationship between the two are adjusted".

Thus idea of effective restraints by diving power is the core of constitutionalism - ancient or modern. Though "the roots of political constitutionalism lie deep in the history of the Western World" observes strong, "... modern constitutional state is necessarily nationalist in background and democratic in tendency". The course of political development in Thailand in post 1932 period underline the tendency towards these factors.
As a result of the change from absolute monarchy to democracy that took place in 1932, Thailand adopted her first written democratic Constitution to facilitate the smooth flow of the democratic administration. Thus, in this regard, constitution and constitutionalism are indispensable for the democratic political set up of Thailand. In the history of 61 years of democracy Thailand has had already 15 written constitutions including the present one. The majority of the Thai people realize that in the political system of Constitutional Monarchy, constitution is very important for it functions as the Mother-Law of the land by which many other relevant acts to govern can be passed. Thus, the Thai masses believe in constitutionalism as the significant basic law to guarantee all the fundamental rights of the citizens and that constitution is the rule of the people or in other words the ruling powers of the people in the democratic system of government are represented in the national constitution. However the question still remains why there are so frequent changes of constitutions in Thailand.

Reasons for frequent Changes:

In the history of 61 years of democracy in Thailand
since 1932 to 1993, the country has used a new constitution every 4 years. According to number of academicians, a change of constitution as also caused a slow-down in the national development, socially, economically and politically. In regard to the causes of change, Sukhum Nualsakul and Visith Thaweeseth have pointed out as follows:

(i) Concept and principles of constitution were not accepted by some elites whose own interests and interests of their group's members could not be increased as the principles of the constitution did not facilitate self-seeking interests. Therefore, such a constitution was annulled and a new constitution was made to enhance pursuance of their self interests.

(ii) Lack of "Constitutionalism" or acquaintance with absolute power, especially among military elites were also held responsible for the often change of constitutions as they were used to absolute power in their command to their subordinate. Those military elites believed that constitutional method was a slow procedure to solve the national problems which required a compromise of different ideas that took a long time and caused a lot of confusion and thus they decided to annual the constitutions.
(iii) Disunion among political leaders regarding their different political ideas and self interests was another reason that led to annulment of the constitutions in order to change structure of power for a new constitution that would be helpful to their own interests and the interests of their group's members.

Moreover, the change and amendments of the constitution that had been enforced were meant for more democratic nature and to make the national constitutions suitable to the changes of social, economic and political conditions and situations in each phase.

**Summary:**

(1) The Thai people have been accustomed to their monarchs and the monarchical system of government for more than 750 years since Sukhothai period to the present time. Even though the system was absolute monarchy, the Kings in all the four periods, have ruled their subjects in the system of paternalism. Therefore, the Thais can never be separated from their Kings.

(2) Democracy was adopted in 1932 and acceptable to the Thai people for democracy was compatible with the Royal
Institution the Thai people upheld whereas communism found no sufficient support and no place of acceptance in the Thai society, because communism was incompatible with the Royal Institution and the Institution of Religion.

(3) In order to develop democracy, the attitudes of the Thais towards politicians and political parties were positive right from the beginning, though full political participation was rather hard, but the Thais did not raise any objection for they realized that without politicians and political parties, it would be impossible to develop democracy. More details pertaining to politicians and political parties will be discussed in Chapter 4.

(4) As far as attitude of the elites is concerned, it can be said that the attitude of military elites towards democracy is not favourable. However, the attitude of academicians and intellectuals towards democracy is positive as they are supporters of and have a good faith in democracy and because of their continuous efforts democracy has been mobilized and perpetuated to the stance as it is today. Their contribution has sparkled and thrown the light of democracy, not only to their students or the groups of personnel directly concerned, but also to all other people.
It can be said that academicians and intellectuals have played an important role in the efforts to develop democracy in Thailand.

(5) Though the Thais embraced democracy in 1932, the political involvement or political participation among the majority has been hard to mobilize owing to their apathetic attitudes towards politics influenced by their traditional practice. By and large the Thais, since their childhood, have been accustomed to feel considerate of leaders by which they do not like to bother them and thus, political participation is considered improper as they have been brought up to believe that political issues are directly the concern of the leaders. However, not that democracy has been functioning for already 61 years and with the contribution by the academicians and intellectuals more people from the silent majority have been motivated to believe that their participation in the country's political issues is necessary and are well aware that the opportunities for them to participate in the political affairs are available.

(6) As Thailand has been ruled with the Constitutional Monarchy for over 60 years, the constitution is the highest
law of the nation and as Thailand has adopted the system of written and flexible constitution, the country has had already 15 constitutions and the change of which has often taken place due to different reasons, mainly, self interests and confusion of political opinions including the efforts to make the supreme law of the nation more democratic. This is the indication that democracy in the real sense of the term has not yet been realized in the Thai polity and therefore, more efforts must be put forth to relevantly mobilize and institutionalize democracy to its best level by waking up the silent majority from their sleep with their belief that the political leaders and bureaucrats are their masters and to be vigorously vigilant so that their masters will not engage themselves in corruption that often leads to military coup d'etat, overthrowing of government and annulment of constitution.

Thus the major attitudes of Thai people discussed in this chapter are the product of process of political socialization that is going on for last Sixty Years. Number of factors are responsible for this kind of development and number of agencies have helped the process. The speed of democratization of Thai polity increased after seventies and during this period three major socializing agents
contributed to it. The next chapter deals with the emergence and impact of Educational institutions, Mass Media and Political parties as major socializing agents of this period.
2. Ibid., p.188.
3. Ibid., p.172.
4. David A. Wilson, Government and Politics in South East Asia, ed. George Mcturnan Ka'in, p.39
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p.170.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p.171.
10. Ibid., p.182.
11. Ibid., p.184.
12. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p.217.
16. Ibid.
18. Charles F. Keyes, Thailand Buddhist Kingdom as a Modern-Nation State, p.76.
19. Ibid.
21. Ibid.

22. The Business Companies under the control of Military Officers who were members of the Soi Rajkru Clique during 1906-1956 were:

(i) 10 on Banking and Financial Sector
(ii) 15 on Industrial Sector
(iii) 7 on Commercial Sector


23. The Business Companies Controlled by Military Officers who were members of the Siao Deves Clique during 1939-1960 were:

(i) 12 on Banking and Financial Sector
(ii) 15 on Industrial Sector
(iii) 10 on Commercial Sector.


27. Ibid., p. 21.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p. 22

30. Ibid.

31. Prof. Dr Banphot Virasai, is a former Dean of Faculty of Political Science, Ramkamhaeng University, interviewed on May 11, 1993.

32. Dr Asdakorn Eksaengsri, is a Lecturer in Political Science, Faculty of Political Science, Ramkamhaeng University, interviewed on May 11, 1993.

34. Prof. Amphorn Vichitpunt, is a former Dean of Faculty of Economics, Ramkamhaeng University, interviewed on May 11, 1993.


36. Ibid.

37. Dr Chavalit Meenuch, is the Vice-President for Administrative Affairs, Assumption University, Bangkok, interviewed on May 25, 1993.


39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p.252.


43. Ibid., p.820.


46. Ibid., p.12.

47. Ibid.
