

**ROLE OF MONARCHY IN THAI POLITICAL  
AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KING BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ**

**A Ph.D. Thesis Presented to His Majesty  
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## ABSTRACT

The objectives of the thesis: “ROLE OF MONARCHY IN THAI POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KING BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ” are: 1) to examine how the Thai monarchy has been a unifying symbol and a factor for continuity in Thai society, 2) to study the suitability of the constitutional monarchy in Thai polity and society, 3) to clarify the role of King Bhumibol Adulyadej in Thai political and social development during the years 1946-86, and 4) to examine how the Thai monarchical institution has been able to maintain its stability in the contemporary period.

The data used for the preparation of the thesis were collected from Thai and English documents which are available both inside and outside the country. The fundamental data of historical background were traced from Sukhothai Dynasty to the present regime, but the data about the role of the King which is emphatically focused in the area of the political and social development was collected from 1946, the first year of his coronation up to 1986.

The thesis is carried out and composed in the form of a descriptive and analytical research work which is mainly based on primary and the secondary sources.

The research is divided into five chapters. The first two chapters: Historical Background, and the Thai Society and Political Tradition, are written to clarify the fundamental information about the people and their country. They are also about the Thai race and their kingdoms with special reference to the Ayudhya Empire. Political transition from paternalism efficiently practiced in the thirteenth century to absolute monarchy during the fourteenth and fifteenth century, is discussed in detail, including the competence of the Thai government to uphold independence during the colonial era, and the Thai polity in contemporary period. The organization of the Thai society, the way of living of Thai people, the political tradition, and the Kings' efforts at modernization are included in the Chapter II. In the last part of this chapter, the development of the constitutional monarchy is traced since the beginning of the constitutional era.

The roles of the first two constitutional monarchs are described in Chapter III. The importance of the monarchical institution in the early days is also discussed in this chapter.

In the Chapter IV, the role of King Bhumibol Adulyadej in Thai political and social development is discussed in detail including the importance of the monarchy in the contemporary period.

The last chapter summarizes the discussion about the monarchical institution in Thailand, the role of the present King, and prospects for the monarchical institution.

The findings of the research enhance information about the Thai people, their heads of the nation, their country, and the role of the present King in political and social development. It also ensures the facts that the monarchical institution will be able to maintain its significance, particularly in the contemporary democratic era.

## **PREFACE**

Owing to the Democratic Revolution in 1932, such luxurious and privileged authority of autocratic monarchy as in the former time of the Thai history has been limited, and the governmental authority is no longer vested in the hands of kings. The monarchy has been ended his absolute power which once was held in his autonomous hand. The political authorization has been promptly changed by a small group of highly progressive and western-educated enthusiasts, thenceforward the legislative and administrative powers have been outcast from the complete control of the throne.

Despite roles and functions having been absolutely trammled by the limitation of the constitutions and laws, for the majority of Thai people, every constitutional monarch remains its essential as the supreme institution and a triad of National Pillars, the most important and revered symbol of the national unity.

Frequently some foreigners enthusiastically require to know how different the Thai monarchy is from those of other countries, how the present King carries out his functions within such a limited framework of constitutions, and how the Thai monarchical institution has been able to maintain its stability in times of crisis. These questions strongly pushed up the author to work on the role of the Thai monarchy both in ancient time and in contemporary period. The work will be basically aimed at making the world perceive more clearly the essential of the Thai monarchical institution.

The specific objectives of the thesis are as followings.

- 1) To examine whether the Thai monarchy has been a unifying symbol and a factor for continuity in the Thai society.
- 2) To study the suitability of the constitutional monarchy in the politics and society.
- 3) To clarify the role of King Bhumibol Adulyadej in Thai political and social development during the years 1946-86.
- 4) To examine how the Thai monarchical institution has been able to maintain its stability in the contemporary period.

These objectives have been proved and provided their explanation by a great number of reliable data throughout the thesis.

Finally, the thesis concludes that the Institution of Monarchy would be able to maintain its significance and stability, so far the monarch still presumes the Ten Royal Virtues, and keeps on working for the benefit of the people.

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Incidentally, I am very grateful to the authors listed in the bibliography, whose books and articles are evidential in support of my thesis. Without these works my study would not have been possible.

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