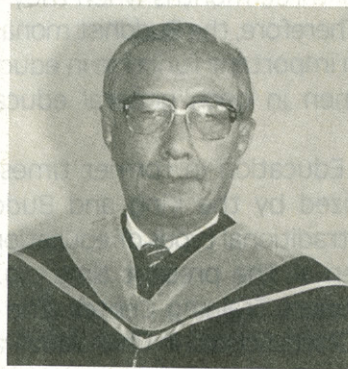




EDUCATION IN THAILAND



***Dr. Sawai Sudhipitak**

It has been more than 709 years since the Thai alphabet was created by King Ramkhamhaeng the Great of Sukhothai, the capital of Thailand at the time. His Majesty King Ramkhamhaeng recorded the way of life of his people in the stone inscription of 1292 A.D. Education, as described in his inscription, included education offered in Buddhist monasteries or temples and in the palace. The King himself also taught his people once a week on the Buddhist Lent Days.

History of education in brief

From the Sukhothai Period (A.D. 1238-1378) to the Ayuthaya Period (A.D. 1350-1767) education offered to the common people was of a similar pattern. However, it is worth mentioning that during the reign of King Narai the Great (1656-1688), a book of the Thai Language entitled "Chindamani" was written and became a popular text-book in due time. It is generally accepted as the first text book of the Thai language and was in use up to king Rama V

***President of Dhurakijpundit University: D.B.A. Pacific State University, U.S.A.**

(1868-1910) of Bangkok. Prior to that, in the Reign of King Trai Loknat (1448-1488) there was a code of Law called the Three Royal Seal Code of Law. It was hand-written. The provision of education before modernization in the Bangkok Period (1782 onwards) especially in the reign of King Rama V (1868-1910) included :

1. The Royal School. Education was provided for princes and the sons of nobles in mathematics, science, language, literature, political science, culture, law and civil administration.

2. Buddhist monastery. Since the Buddhist monastery was the cultural center of the Thai community where Thai people attended religious, cultural and social services. Besides, it was customary that most Thai men entered the monkhood for three months when they were 20 years old. Therefore, the Buddhist monastery performed an important function in educating young Thai men in both general education and morality.

In brief, Education in former times was mainly organized by the King and Buddhist monks. These traditional types of education are still to be seen at the present time e.g. the Chitralada Support Training Center (The Thai Folk Arts and Crafts School) in Chitralada Palace under H.M. the Queen's Patronage, and the Buddhist Sunday Schools.

Systems of Education

During the reign of King Rama IV, the influence of western civilization had reached out to Thailand. The king introduced western knowledge to the Royal Academic School. European teachers were employed to teach English and western knowledge.

In 1871, the first school was established by king Rama V (1868-1910) to educate young princes and the children of nobles and at the same time "The Royal Command Declaration on Schooling" was announced. This encouraged Thai children to attend primary education school throughout the country.

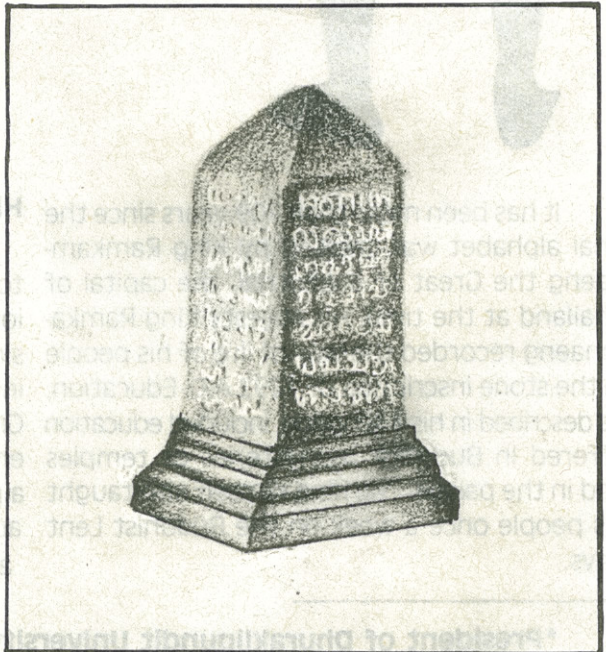
Later on, in 1921, the Compulsory Primary Education Act was proclaimed, in the reign of King Rama VI (1910 to 1925). All Thai children between the age of 7 to 14 had to attend free education for four years up to grade 4.

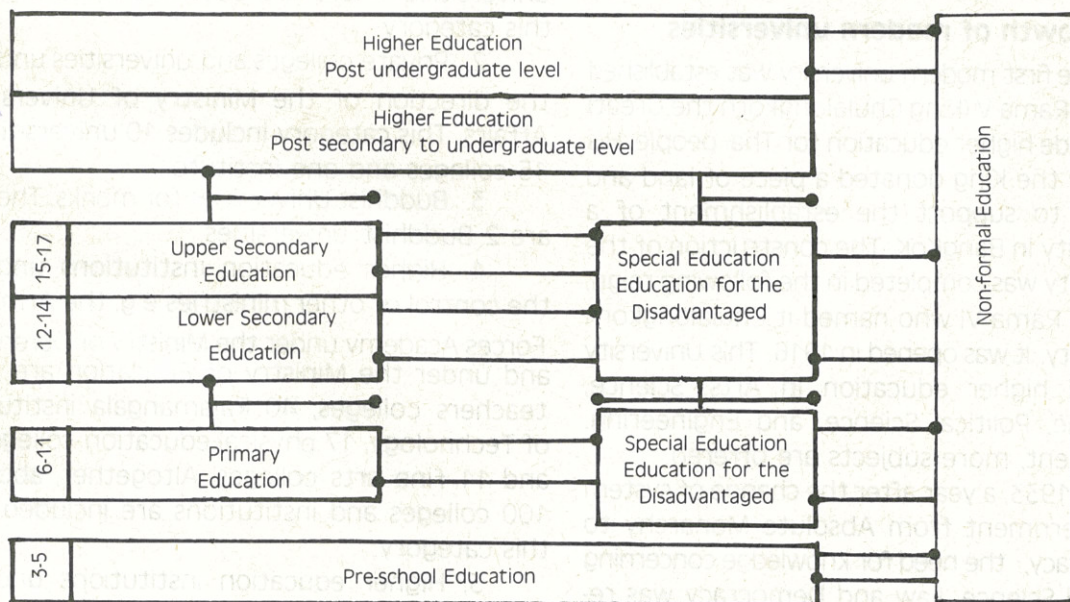
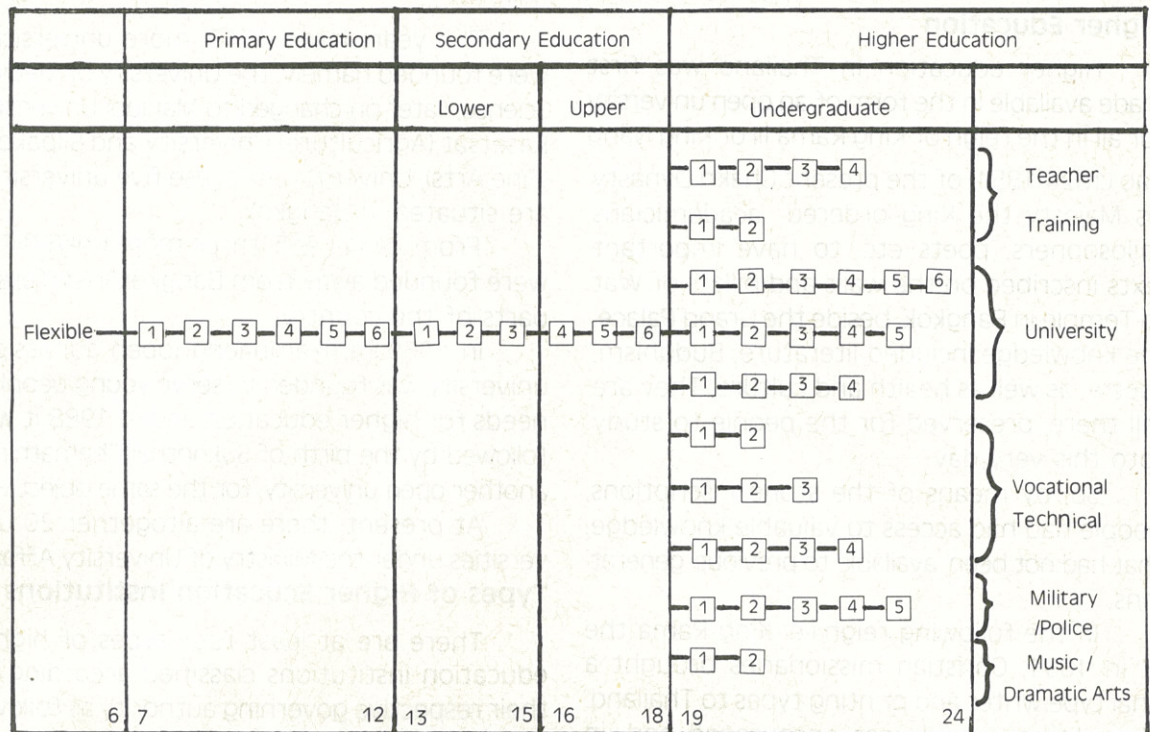
In 1898, the first "Education Plan" was launched. The plan included educational organization from pre-primary through primary, secondary, technical, to higher education.

There are 3 levels of education as follows :

1. Primary education grade 1 to 6 (Prathomsuksa one to six)
2. Secondary education grade 7 to 12
 - 2.1 Lower secondary education grade 7 to 9 (Mathayomsuksa one to three)
 - 2.2 Upper secondary education grade 10 to 12 (Mathayomsuksa four to six)
3. Higher education
 - 3.1 Bachelor's degree 4 to 6 years
 - 3.2 Master's degree 2 years
 - 3.3 Doctor's degree 3 years

Levels of education and age range are as follows.





Higher Education

Higher education in Thailand was first made available in the form of an open university for all in the reign of King Rama III or King Nang Klao (1824-1851) of the present Chakri Dynasty. His Majesty the King ordered academicians, philosophers, poets etc. to have important texts inscribed on the walls and pillars of Wat Po Temple in Bangkok, beside the Grand Palace. The knowledge included literature, Buddhism, poetry, as well as health and culture. They are still there, preserved for the people to study up to this very day.

So, by means of the stone inscriptions, people had had access to valuable knowledge, that had not been available to previous generations.

In the following reign-i.e. King Rama the IV in 1891, Christian missionaries brought a Thai type-writer and printing types to Thailand. Thus, literary work was encouraged and, in general, people became more eager to increase their knowledge.

The Growth of modern universities

The first modern university was established by King Rama V (King Chulalongkorn the Great) to provide higher education for Thai people. His Majesty the King donated a piece of land and money to support the establishment of a university in Bangkok. The construction of the university was completed in the following reign, by King Rama VI who named it Chulalongkorn University. It was opened in 1916. This University offered higher education in Arts, Science, Medicine, Political Science, and Engineering. At present, more subjects are offered.

In 1933, a year after the change of system of government from Absolute Monarchy to Democracy, the need for knowledge concerning Political Science, Law and Democracy was recognized. Thammasat University was eventually established to serve this need in 1933 as a second University.

The years later (1943) more universities were founded namely, the University of Medical Science, (later on changed to Mahidol University), Kasetsart (Agriculture) University and Silpakorn (Fine Arts), University. All these five universities are situated in Bangkok.

From 1964-1965, three more universities were founded away from Bangkok in different parts of the country.

In 1969, Ramkhamhaeng (open admission) university was founded to serve young people's needs for higher education and in 1988 it was followed by the birth of Sukhothai Thamathirath, another open university, for the same objectives.

At present, there are altogether 20 universities under the Ministry of University Affairs.

Types of Higher Education Institutions

There are at least four types of higher education institutions classified according to their respective governing authority as follows.

1. Higher Education Institutions under Ministry of University Affairs or government universities. There are 20 universities under this category.

2. Private colleges and universities under the direction of the Ministry of University Affairs. This category includes 10 universities, 15 colleges and one institute.

3. Buddhist Universities for monks. There are 2 Buddhist universities.

4. Higher education institutions under the control of other ministries e.g. the Armed Forces Academy under the Ministry of Defense, and under the Ministry of Education are 59 teachers colleges, 40 Rajamangala institute of Technology, 17 physical education colleges, and 11 fine arts colleges. Altogether, about 100 colleges and institutions are included in this category.

5. Higher education institutions under the control of cooperative organization, such as the regional Asian Institute of Technology (AIT).

Private Higher Education Institutions in Thailand

The needs for man-power in the business sector caused the growth of private higher education before 1941 and after the end of World War II, Thailand needed more qualified personnel in business fields. The private sector led by the Thai Chamber of Commerce, then established a private institution to provide business knowledge for young people. In 1969 the Private Education Institution Act was proclaimed. Since then, the fast growth of private higher education institutions has been most remarkable.

At present, there are 25 private higher education institutions which include 10 universities, 14 colleges and 1 institute. Nine institutions are situated in different parts of the country and the rest are in the Bangkok area. About 120,000 students attend the private higher education institutions.

Different areas of education are offered, such as nursing science, social science, medical science, and also engineering at both bachelor's degree and master's degree levels. However, the private higher education institutions are not allowed to teach educational courses. In some programs, the English language is used as the medium of teaching but most of the programs are offered in Thai.

Standards of education of private higher education institutions are controlled by the Ministry of University Affairs. No financial support is provided either by the government or the Ministry of University Affairs. However, some small grants are given to support research projects and student activities each year. It must be noted that after the issue of IAUP Guadalajara Conference (June-1987) resolution No. 14, the resolution was submitted by the speaker to the Ministry of University Affairs for consideration and, in addition to other efforts. In April 1990 the Ministry of University Affairs set up a Private University Development Fund

of Baht 500 million for private higher education institutions to be borrowed at a low lending rate (of interest) and long terms of payment for their development programs.

According to the Ministry of University Affairs annual report of September 1991, the numbers of new students enrolled in 1990 are as follows:

Levels of Education	Comprehensive Univ.	Open Univ.	Private Univ. or Colleges	Total
1. Diploma	3,235	1,229	4,174	8,641
2. Bachelors	29,013	119,303	33,826	182,142
3. Graduate Diploma	1,103	-	-	1,103
4. Master's	7,018	92	876	7,986
5. Doctor's	145	-	-	145
	40,514	120,623	38,896	199,941

Total students in 1990 : Comprehensive 129,522 (17.63%)
Open Universities 512,303 (69.75%)
Private Universities 92,689 (12.62%)

Trends of Higher Education in Thailand

1. Internationalization of higher education : there is evidence of Thai universities increasing their international cooperation. This cooperation extends to both students and Faculty members for research facilities and educational development.

2. University autonomy. Government universities have tried to reduce the level of government control. Some new universities have achieved greater autonomy with new systems of organization.

3. The roles of the Ministry of University Affairs are to be changed in the future into the university coordinating organization.

4. Most universities have moved away from the traditional curriculum to a new style of curriculum especially in the area of new technology in order to meet the growth of industries in the country.

As the 7th National Education plan of Thailand has been in effect since June 10, 1992, Educational development in the important and necessary fields of knowledge and know-how

are stressed in most levels of education.

Last but not least is that Thailand has been looking forward to establishing UNITY in her national education administration.



การเลือกตั้งนั้บคะแนนนที่อำเภอดีหรือไม่

สิทธิเพียงอย่างเดียว ใช้เสร็จก็กลับบ้าน ไม่อาจเดินทางไปดูผลการนับคะแนนที่อำเภอได้ทุกคนแน่นอน ความผูกพันในกระบวนการมีสิทธิเลือกตั้งของตนจึงลดลง

ส่วนด้านบริหารการเลือกตั้ง ที่หนักใจก็คือ ปัญหาการขนส่งหีบบัตรเลือกตั้งกลับอำเภอ อาจก่อให้เกิดการทุจริตการเลือกตั้งได้ง่าย คืออาจมีการสับเปลี่ยนระหว่างการนำหีบบัตรส่งอำเภอ โดยมีการซื้อตัวเจ้าหน้าที่ เพราะจะมีคนควบคุมไม่กี่คน ยิ่งบางอำเภอเส้นทางทุรกันดาร ยิ่งลำบากใหญ่ ผิดกับระบบเดิมที่มีประชาชนคอยสอดส่องดูแลมาก

นอกจากนั้น การนับคะแนน ระยะเวลาการนับคงจะเสร็จช้า อาจข้ามวันข้ามคืน โดยเฉพาะอำเภอใหญ่ ๆ แคมข้อผิดพลาดการนับคะแนนก็อาจเกิดขึ้นได้ง่าย และเมื่อเกิดขึ้นแล้ว ก็คงยากแก่การตรวจสอบว่าผิดพลาดจุดใด ซึ่งจะทำให้มีผลต่อการเลือกตั้งใหม่ทั้งอำเภอได้มาก ซึ่งระบบเดิมหากผิดพลาดก็อาจเลือกเฉพาะบางหน่วยที่มีปัญหาเท่านั้น

อย่างไรก็ตาม หากมีการพิจารณาให้มีการนับคะแนน ณ ที่ว่าการอำเภอในขณะนี้แล้ว คงจะต้องมีการแก้ไขข้อกฎหมายและข้อปฏิบัติมากมายหลายประการ เพื่อให้สอดคล้องต้องกัน แต่สิ่งหนึ่งที่นาพิจารณาเกี่ยวกับความพร้อมและอุปสรรคอื่น ๆ ก็คือ

1) สถานที่บริเวณอำเภอกับแคบ ไม่สะดวกต่อการใช้เป็นสถานที่นับคะแนนรวมของอำเภอ ซึ่งจะมีประชาชนมาชุมนุมกันมาก รวมถึงการจัดการรักษาความปลอดภัยในระหว่างการนับคะแนนด้วย

2) การนับคะแนนที่ว่าการอำเภอ เป็นช่องทางหนึ่งที่ทำให้ผู้สมัครรับเลือกตั้งที่เห็นว่า อาจแพ้การเลือกตั้ง อาจดำเนินการกระทำการทุจริต เพื่อให้การเลือกตั้งเป็นโมฆะและจัดการเลือกตั้งใหม่ได้

3) เจตนารมณ์สำคัญของการจัดเลือกตั้ง ของกระทรวงมหาดไทยประการหนึ่ง ก็คือ การรายงานผลการนับคะแนนและการประกาศผลการเลือกตั้งที่รวดเร็ว ซึ่งจะสอดคล้องกับความต้องการของประชาชน ดังนั้น หากมีการนับคะแนนที่อำเภอแล้วจะทำให้การรายงานผลการนับคะแนนและการประกาศผลการเลือกตั้งล่าช้า ไม่สามารถสนองต่อความต้องการของประชาชนได้

4) ระบบการนับคะแนนที่หน่วยเลือกตั้งนั้น เป็นวิธีการที่ประเทศไทยปฏิบัติเรื่อยมา นับตั้งแต่การเลือกตั้งครั้งแรก ตั้งแต่ปี 2476 จนถึงปัจจุบัน ถือได้ว่าเป็นระบบการนับคะแนนที่เหมาะสมคืออยู่แล้ว

ครบ ก็ถือโอกาส เล่าสู่กันฟัง เพื่อพิจารณากันต่อไป ■■■