

# EDUCATION DURING THE TIME WHEN HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE DHANINIVAT WAS MINISTER OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION\*

by

M.L. Pin Malakul

## **Your Highnesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen :**

It was with the greatest of pleasure that I accepted the invitation to come and give a talk today. To be asked to speak at the Siam Society at all is a great honour, and as the talk today is for a special occasion, I can't help feeling that I must be of some importance or I wouldn't have been asked in the first place.

Before I start on the subject, let me make one or two points clear. The first point concerns the title of the talk. At the time when I was asked by a Council member of the Siam Society to speak the title of the talk had not yet been written down. Then, when it appeared, there had to be some modification and as a result it may seem a little puzzling to some of you. I must apologise for the confusion and assure you that although the title of the talk may have changed, the substance has not been affected, and if it had been my job to choose the title, I would have called it "Education during the time when His Highness Prince Dhaninivat was Minister of Public Instruction."

---

\* This paper was originally delivered as a lecture in Thai at the Siam Society on 4 November 1969. It was translated By Miss Napa Bhonghibhat of the Department of Educational Techniques, Ministry of Education, and published by the Ministry of Education, together with the Thai text, to mark the occasion of the cremation of His Highness Prince Dhaninivat, Kromamun Bidyalabh Brdihyakorn, on 14 December 1974, in grateful memory of His Highness's great contribution to the development of the national educational system.

The Siam Society wishes to thank the author for giving permission to reprint the paper in the Journal and hopes that it will be of interest not only to those who knew and admired His Highness as a person and a scholar, but also to students of the history of educational development in Thailand.

Secondly, I should like to point out that the events of forty years ago can be said to have almost become history, and what I am going to relate today may be inaccurate, due to my own ignorance. You see, except for the last eight months of the whole period of five years and ten months when His Highness Prince Dhaninivat was Minister I was studying abroad. I must, therefore, apologise for any mistaken notions I may have given about events of those far-off days.

The last point I wish to make clear is that the responsibilities of the Ministry of Public Instruction (Dharmakarn) in those days included religious affairs as well as education, but I intend to limit today's talk to education—that is to say education from the primary to the university level, which is a vast enough subject.

Education is often compared to the growth of a tree. At one time we had a national scheme of education, and to illustrate it, we depicted a picture of the 'tree of education.' I myself once wrote :

"Not unlike cultivating a plant is the business of education. One must begin with a seedling in a pot, giving it care and attention until it is strong enough to be planted on firm ground.

Pursuing this simile we can say that the pot in which the seedling of our national education grew was in the Royal Palace, and the gardener who tended it was King Chulalongkorn. In time the seedling grew and became strong enough to be planted out, and this was when schools, such as Wat Mahanaparam School, were established outside the palace precincts.

Professor Rong Sayamanond, our eminent historian, divided the history of our education up to the present time into four periods :

1. The Period before the Establishment of the Ministry of Public Instruction;
2. The Beginning Period;
3. The Expansion Period;
- and 4. The Constitutional Regime Period.

The Expansion period which coincided with the reigns of King Vajiravudh and King Prajadhipok is sub-divided into three phases ;

First Phase — B.E. 2453—2458

Second Phase — B.E. 2459—2469

Third Phase — B.E. 2469—2475.

I hope I am right in assuming that in sub-dividing the third period in the history of our educational development into three phases, Professor Rong took as his basis the consecutive periods when *Chao Praya* Prasadej Surentaradhibodi, *Chao Praya* Dharmasakdi Montri and His Highness Prince Dhaninivat were Ministers of Education or Public Instruction. The substance of my talk today, then, is the expansion of education during the years between 2469 and 2475. This was the time after we had planted out our tree of education. How it would turn out depended on the climate and the care given to it.

Let us look back to the time of King Vajiravudh. I am sure you all know that the two most important land-marks in the development of education during that time was the establishment of Chulalongkorn University in 2459 and the promulgation of the Primary Education Act in 2464. Also about that time the Religious Affairs Department was made an independent department and became amalgamated with the Ministry of Royal Household. The Ministry of Public Instruction (Dharmakarn) changed its name to the Ministry of Education (Suk-sadhikarn). Later, during the reign of King Prajadhipok, His Majesty decreed that the Religious Affairs Department be transferred back to the Ministry of Education, the reason given being that "education should not be separated from the Wat", and the name of the Ministry was changed back to the Ministry of Public Instruction (Dharmakarn) early in the year 2469.

The time when His Highness Prince Dhaninivat was Minister of Public Instruction was, to my mind, the most luckless period in the whole history of our education. We could say that the tree which had been planted out was now suffering from a drought. At the beginning of the year 2469, the Ministry of Finance by way of sending New Year's greetings to the people made the following public announcement :

"As is generally known, the economic situation of our country in the past three or four years has given great concern to His Majesty's government. In His speech given on His birthday before members

of the Royal Family and others, His Majesty King Prajadhipok referred to the country's financial difficulties . . . . If there is a deficit for many consecutive years, as there has been in the last four years . . . . This is a most worrying situation . . . . His Majesty's government has decided that it is necessary to appeal to the people to make sacrifices."

And the announcement, which appeared in the Royal Gazette of April 4th 2469 ended with the words : "thus enabling a balanced budget to be achieved for the year 2469."

The term "balanced budget" (*doolphap*) or simply "balanced" (*dool*) had a special meaning from that time. "He is balanced" would then mean "He is given the sack". What really happened was that the services of a number of civil servants were terminated. Certain posts, such as the Monton (Circle) Finance Officers, Deputy Provincial Governors (Palad Changwad) of 35 provinces were dissolved. Some governmental departments, such as the Department of Fine Arts, were done away with. Others were amalgamated such as the different law courts. The Royal Pages College and the Rajvidhyalai College became one new College, Vajiravudh Vidhyalai. Four Circles, Maharaj, Suraj, Roi-ed, Ubolrajdhani, and Krabinburi Province were dissolved, and so forth. Three Ministers terminated their services, one after another, namely *Chao Praya* Abhairaja Mahayutidhamdhorn, Minister of Justice; *Chao Praya* Dhar-madhikornadhibodi, Minister of the Royal Household, and *Chao Praya* Dhammasakdi Montri, Minister of Public Instruction. It was then that King Prajadhipok decreed that "Prince Dhaninivat be in charge of the Ministry of Public Instruction" as from August 3rd 2469. I believe that the prince who was "to be in charge" of the Ministry was at that time on board the *Hakusan Maru* sailing from Singapore to Hongkong.

The reason why His Majesty King Prajadhipok changed the Minister of Public Instruction could not possibly have been because he considered education an easy job. The country at the time was suffering from an economic crisis. The overall government budget was bound to decrease, and it would have been considered a stroke of luck if the Ministry of Public Instruction was allocated the same amount as in the previous year. In actual fact the budget for the Ministry of Public

Instruction for the year 2470 was reduced by only 189 baht, and for the following year, 2471, it was increased by 250,403 baht. The appointment of Prince Dhaninivat as Minister was totally unexpected and as no-one knew what exactly the King had in mind it was generally assumed that Prince Dhani was appointed to this important position because he was familiar with and clearly understood His Majesty's policy, having held key positions, at various times, of Assistant Royal Secretary, Royal Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Secretary-General to the Privy Council and Secretary to the Council of Ministers; and His Majesty trusted that he would be able to develop the country's educational system at such a difficult time reasonably well. The compulsory education aspect was not so critical. The rate of expansion could be adjusted according to the availability of resources. What was more worrying was the fate of Chulalongkorn University which was beginning to take shape. Prince Dhani was educated at the famous Rugby School and later at Merton College, Oxford. As Merton College, Prince Dhani's old college, is generally considered a model college, it was thought that the Prince was well equipped to direct the development of Chulalongkorn University successfully.

At the time of the change of Ministers I was still an undergraduate in England. Though I was a Ministry of Public Instruction scholar I did not keep in close touch with the Ministry, and just concentrated on my studies. Then, one day in mid August 2471 *Chao Praya* Ramrakop invited me to his residence, Westbury Court, near Gloucester, a lovely place, with beautiful gardens, where tourists often stopped to admire. I went there by train and was given a warm welcome by the *Chaokhun*. He gave me permission to pick plums in the garden and to play tennis, and asked me to accompany *Khunying* to the cinema. I couldn't help wondering why *Chaokhun* had asked me to his house and entertained me. Finally I learnt that the Minister of Public Instruction wanted to find out if there was any truth in the rumours which had reached his ears that I was planning to desert the Ministry. I told the *Chaokhun* that it was not true, and there was no reason whatever why I should entertain such an idea. For me this little episode had a two-fold benefit. First, I learnt that we had a Minister who took an interest in young, unimpor-

tant people like myself. Secondly, after the three-day stay, *Chaokhuñ* took me to the station and gave me three pounds, which meant that after deducting the train fares and the cost of the cinema tickets I still went home richer by over one pound which was very useful indeed. On my return home I wrote to His Highness the Minister assuring him that I had no desire to leave the Ministry, thanking him for his concern, and promising to return to serve the Ministry. I kept that promise for over 40 years.

I will now talk about the organisation and administration of education during the time when Prince Dhaninivat was Minister. You probably would like to know, before I begin, what the situation regarding education was like in 2469. Let me give you some basic data. The population of Siam then was 9,940,000. The country was divided into 14 Circles (*Monton*), and 79 provinces. The Ministry of Public Instruction was situated on Chakrapetch Road, on the bank of Klong Ong-Ang, where the Department of Agriculture is now. The Ministry was divided into three major Departments : Dharmakarn Department, Education Department and University Department. In those days, however, major Departments were divided in sub-departments. For example, under the Department of Education were the Elementary Education Sub-Department and the Secondary Education Sub-Department. The annual budget for the whole Ministry was 2,976,499 baht, to which was added the direct tax for Education totalling 2,565,295 baht collected in the areas where the Compulsory Education Act was enforced. The Compulsory Education Law was effective in 3817 out of 4982 *tambols*. The total number of schools of all types was 5903; the number of pupils, 590,395; and the number of teachers, 13,522. There were altogether 305 students in Matayom VIII. Chulalongkorn University was offering diploma courses and had 36 students taking the Public Administration Course, 30 engineering students, 67 arts and science students, 82 medical students and 11 pharmacology students—making a total enrolment of 226. In addition there were 72 nursing students. Apart from Siriraj Hospital, the University had the present Faculty of Arts building and the now demolished “Wang Mai”, where the National Stadium now stands.

Primary education was considered to be of supreme importance. The Compulsory Education Act had been promulgated *tambol* by *tambol* for the past five years and the Minister carried on with the policy, with the result that in the six years when he was in office 446 more *tambols* were added, bringing up the percentage of *tambols* with compulsory education from 76.61 to 88.70, and the total enrolment from 524,678 to 695,954. This was indeed a great achievement considering the economic circumstances of the time. I know, however, that His Highness was not at all satisfied with the situation. During his first year as Minister he found out that in the *tambols* where the Compulsory Education Law was enforced the authorities were able to put only 51.12% of those required by law into schools. The rest of the children had to be exempted for various reasons, for example, because the nearest school was still too far away. Great efforts were made to increase the attendance rate and in two years it went up to 53.47%, but in the provinces where the majority of the population were Muslims the figure was still low. In Pattani, for instance, only 15.57% of the children of compulsory education age-group were in school. The problems of primary education were really great and numerous.

What cannot be shown in figures is the quality of education which was expanding at a high rate. In 2471 in the *tambols* where Compulsory Education Act was enforced there was an average of 1.32 schools per *tambol*. On an average the elementary school teacher earned 14.06 baht per month and taught 49 pupils. As only 10.19% of those teachers had teacher-training qualification, the Minister took the following measures to upgrade the quality of teachers :—

1. Teacher-training schools for "Kru Mool" teachers were set up at the Circle (*Monton*) level. Those Circles without sufficient resources to set up such a programme had to implement another teacher-training programme, the syllabus and regulations for which were left to be determined by the Circle.

2. New regulations concerning the training of male primary school teachers were drawn up, making the course equivalent in status to Matayom VIII.

3. Courses in teaching methods were offered at the Teachers' Association (Samaggayacharn Samakom).

4. A teacher-training programme for Secondary School teachers was initiated at Chulalongkorn University. (I will come back and speak more on this topic).

Those measures taken by the Minister of Public Instruction clearly showed that the top administrators in the Ministry understood the problems perfectly. Education was expanding too fast for the available supply of teachers, and it was necessary to resort to poorly qualified teachers. I am most certain that the Minister clearly understood the problems of primary education because on his inspection tour of schools he came in very close contact with teachers, students and the people. His contribution to the improvement of the educational system was quite considerable. Let me give you an account of one episode which took place during his time at the Ministry.

In November 2474, scarcely a month after I had been back from abroad to serve at the Ministry, I was included in the Minister's party on one of his inspection tours. It was a most tortuous trip, making for Amphoe Sena via Lad Loom Keo and returning via Kratoombaen. The party set off on 19th November 2474, taking the ferry across the river at Rajvithi Road jetty at 6.50 a.m. We then went by *Chaokhun* Vora-phongs' train and later by rail car to Lad Loom Keo. The inspection team was then split into two groups, one led by His Highness himself, one by *Praya* Padoong Vidhyaserm, a senior official, and the two groups undertook the inspection of schools simultaneously so as to cover as many schools as possible. It was carefully worked out beforehand which group was to inspect which schools, where and when the groups were to join up, etc. One or two small things, however, went wrong during the exercise. The school at Wat Bang Sai Nok, on Klong Chao Jed, for example, was inspected twice, by the Minister first, then again by the *Chaokhun*. His Highness the Minister's method of school inspection was very simple and completely without fuss. At Wat Chao Jed on Klong Chao Jed, for instance, as soon as the boat stopped His Highness just got off and went straight to the school all by himself without giving anyone prior notice. The whole tour that time took seven days and a



great number of schools were covered. Apart from schools, His Highness went to visit *wats*, markets, villages, rice-mills, farmsteads, knife-producing factories, and even opium-dens. In short, he made it impossible for anyone to say that the Minister only sat at his office in the Ministry giving orders, he really saw with his own eyes how the people lived and thus understood the various problems of education in rural areas. Whenever he saw a monk on his rounds with a begging bowl near where his boat was moored, he would immediately ask for food to be prepared, so he could join the villagers in presenting food to the monk, and if we met with a Kathin ceremony, such as at Bang Pa-in, he would join in. If a great number of teachers turned out to welcome him he would call a meeting and give a talk. The substance of the talk would be the role and duties of teachers. He would urge the teachers to relay his message to the people that agriculture was of utmost importance, and that the people should not forsake their farmland for white-collar jobs in town. Being a junior official, he said, would not have such good prospects as might be supposed. There were many other rewarding occupations, he would say, and emphasised his point by drawing his audience's attention to the way foreigners did well for themselves in our land. Finally, he would try to impress upon his audience that to have been to school should help villagers, when returning to their land, to be more successful as farmers. After each tour of inspection he would write a letter to the Regional Lieutenant (*Samuhatesapibal*) and I was given the job of making a copy of such letters. This was a most effective method of working. As for me personally, I felt I was being educated by the most up-to-date method, and was learning things which my university could not have taught me.

There was a funny episode—funny but not really amusing—during that particular inspection tour. Most schools did not know beforehand that the Minister would be coming, so usually no prior preparations were made. A few, however, did know, and one of them got ready a special room to receive His Highness, with a carpet, a special chair and everything. As soon as he sat down His Highness said he wanted to inspect the school. "Where's the school?" he asked. "This is the school, Sir" was the reply. "Where are your teachers and your students, then?"

His Highness asked. The reply was, "We closed the school to prepare the place for Your Highness's reception." I could feel his displeasure, but His Highness simply said : "In that case, just bring me the three books". (The three books were the register, the students' roll, and the daily record book.) It turned out that the headmaster had taken all these books home, which was a considerable distance away. I was surprised to see how patient the Minister was. He merely said he had come to inspect the school, so it was the school that he wished to see.

The account I have just given should have made clear the importance attached to public elementary education. In those days a direct tax for education ("Sukia plee"—literally "sacrifice to the cause of education") of one to three baht annually according to level of income was levied from the male population between the ages of eighteen and sixty. Among those exempted from paying this tax were Buddhist monks, soldiers and policemen. This was a good way to achieve decentralisation. The money collected in one region was used solely for that region, and the central government contributed only about 31% of the educational budget. In fact it was rather similar to the systems used in England and the United States. In 2468 the education tax levied totalled 2,230,460 baht, which was 63% of what should have been collected. After His Highness Prince Dhaninivat became Minister, the figure went up to 67%, 71% and 78%. The schools were divided into two types, the elementary schools established by the community and the elementary schools established by the District Officer (*Nai Amphoe*). The report of the Ministry of Education to His Majesty the King for the year 2469 included the following paragraph :—

"Concerning the establishment of elementary schools, necessary for the implementation of the Compulsory Education Act, the intention was that the people in the *tambol* themselves should help to establish schools by setting up a council to be in charge of collecting and administering the funds from public contributions for the construction and maintenance of schools, and providing schools with the necessary equipment. The council could function as a company or an association or a co-operative. If it was apparent that the community was not willing to set up their

own schools, then the responsibility should fall on the District Officer. Because the idea of having a council to take the responsibility of local affairs was a new one for our country, only 41 out of a total of 4799 elementary schools in the Compulsory Education areas, were set up by public contributions. It is hoped that when the principle is better understood, the number of such schools will increase."

The principle of encouraging the community to establish their own schools, as well as the collection of local education tax, was a first step towards future decentralisation. Both measures had the effect of making the people feel that the schools belonged to them and that it was their direct duty to maintain those schools for the sake of their own children. This sound principle was later destroyed by economic pressures. In 2473 the following sentence appeared in an official document "His Majesty the King in his great kindness to his subjects, seeing that great numbers of the people are not able to pay the education tax, decreed that this tax be abolished, and that the Treasury allocate an annual sum of 3 million to the Ministry of Public Instruction instead."

If the Treasury had been able to allocate an annual budget of 3 million baht and increase it proportionately in subsequent years, I do not suppose the Ministry of Public Instruction would have been too unduly worried. But what happened was that the Treasury paid 3 million baht for two years and then reduced the amount to 1.5 million in 2475, which caused intense hardship to the Ministry. It was, for instance, necessary to close down some schools. However, during that latter period of economic depression, other Ministries also suffered. The Ministry of Interior had to dissolve 4 more Circles, reducing the total number to 10, and 9 more provinces were dissolved, leaving a total of 70. The Circles dissolved at that time were Pattani, Chandaburi, Nakorn Chaisri, and Nakorn Sawan. The provinces dissolved were Sukhotai, Lomsak, Tanyaburi, Kalasin, Langsuan, Takua Pa, Saiburi, Phrapradaeng and Minburi. (Later the Province of Swankaloke changed its name to Sukhotai and the Province of Kalasin was re-established.) On 2 March 2474 the Ministry of Public Instruction announced its decision to dissolve the Sub-Department of Elementary Education and the sub-Department of Secondary Education, so that all activities came directly under the

Department of Education. At that time I had already joined the Ministry, and I remembered the situation very well because 20 baht a month was deducted from my salary. It was called "National Assistance" fund, and everyone had to pay proportionately to his salary. I must say that the spirit of civil servants of those days was very fine. There were no complaints. So different from the time after World War II when in spite of the "special increase" people complained far and wide and still complain today.

With the abrogation of the education tax at that time perished the hope of the Ministry to encourage the people to be responsible for their own education as expressed in the Minister's report. It was not the two or three million baht from the people that I regret, but the opportunity to instil into the people the feeling that elementary education, the education of their own children, was their responsibility, that it was something which needed their care and their supervision to be successful. People now take the attitude that it is entirely the Government's responsibility. If a tile on the roof is broken, the school waits for money from the government before getting it repaired. When Field Marshal Sarit Tanaraj decided to transfer all elementary schools to the Department of Local Administration the aim was to make the people take over the responsibility of organising education for themselves as the Minister had once hoped to do. Unfortunately the step was taken without sufficiently careful preparation as in the time of King Vajiravudh and King Prajadhipok; and also the people had already lost the conviction that it was their own duty to make sacrifices for their own community. As a result the Ministry of Finance has to provide over a thousand million baht per year to finance elementary education of the whole country. For the Department of Local Administration alone—not including the municipalities—the budget for the year 2512 was 1,875,648,800 baht, or roughly five million baht per day.

I have dwelt for quite a while on the subject of elementary education, simply because of its importance and its order of magnitude. It is something which concerns people in the whole kingdom. The most severe problem facing the Ministry of Public Instruction at that time was the great shortage of financial resources. All the same the Ministry

took all possible measures to develop the educational system. For example, a decision was taken to stop prescribing all text books, in order to encourage more text books to be written and to give teachers a wider choice. The Secondary Education curriculum was revised and the new curriculum offered three secondary education courses: the General Course, the Science Course and the Arts Course, to cater for children with different aptitudes, and to make further studies easier. Also the Ministry put much more emphasis on the Thai language. In the Annual Educational Report of 2470 appeared the following sentence: "Candidates taking the Secondary Education School-leaving examination shall sit for the Thai language examination first. Only those who have passed the Thai Language paper will be allowed to take examinations in other subjects."

This was a matter of great controversy and I shall have more to say about it later.

Among other activities worth mentioning were the Boy Scouts and the Junior Red Cross which were given a great deal of attention. In 2471 the first National Boy Scout meeting was held, and the second followed in 2473. The School Health Programme, a project which the Prince of Songkla, His Majesty the King's father, initiated and implemented on an experimental basis for a year, was expanded. A new division, called the School Health Division, was established to promote the standard of school children's health and also to encourage research in this area.

Physical education, which flourished at this period, is another topic I must not neglect. Considering physical training an important aspect of education and convinced that it helped to promote courage, unity and endurance, the Ministry of Public Instruction paid no less attention to it than to academic and moral education. An annual schools' sports contest was held and it was a grand, magnificently organised event, graced by the presence of His Majesty the King.

I said earlier on that the Ministry made great efforts to train teachers. In addition to the training of teachers undertaken within the country it was thought necessary to send people for training abroad.

Two King's scholarships were awarded regularly every year but the Ministry's own scholarships were stopped during the economic crisis. In 2470 the Ministry started to award scholarships again; in 2469 *Nai* Sanan Sumitra won a King's Scholarship, and the two scholarships offered by the Ministry of Public Instruction were awarded to *Nai* Abhai Chandavimol and *Nai* Chang Ratanarat. You can judge for yourselves how sound the selection process must have been. All the three scholars I have named became Under-Secretaries of State.

The Teachers' Association, called in those days Samaggayacharn Samakom, was not only an important teacher-training institution but also a venue for frequent talks and lectures. To my mind that period was the Teachers' Association's hey-day. In July 2470 the Minister himself gave a lecture on "Educational objectives of our Neighbours", and according to a contemporary report the hall was packed. His Majesty King Prajadhipok, accompanied by the Queen, attended three lectures at the Samaggayacharn Samakom.

That His Majesty King Prajadhipok took a great interest in the educational development of the country was quite evident. In 2470 His Majesty paid four visits to the so-called Chinese Schools, thus giving school committees, teachers and students opportunities to greet and show their allegiance to their King. According to a report, at Chin Tek School His Majesty gave a "most impressive and moving address".

When His Highness Prince Dhani became the Minister of Public Instruction the Ministry had three Departments—Dharmakarn (Religious Affairs) Department, Suksadhikarn (Education) Department, and University Department. Later a new department, Wichadhikarn (Later changed to Wichakarn) Department or the Department of Educational Techniques was created and it was in this department that I served on my return from abroad.

I can remember a rather amusing episode which occurred during the time when I served in the Department of Educational Techniques. As the story illustrates some aspects of His Highness the Minister's character, I should like to tell it, but I shall leave you to deduce from the story yourselves what kind of man he is. Soon after I joined the

service the Minister ordered me to go and teach at Chulalongkorn University on a part-time basis. The University asked me to teach mathematics to Arts students, Thai language to Political Science students, and English to Pre-medical students. As a result of that assignment, years later I found myself former teacher of a number of prominent people—principals of colleges, directors of hospitals, governors, and even famous people in public administration such as *Nai Puang Suwanarat*, *Nai Chamnan Yuvaboon* and *Nai Sanit Vilaichitr*. Then one day the Minister asked me if Chulalongkorn University gave me any honorarium and I replied that they did not. I was teaching twelve hours a week, shuttling back and forth between the University and the Ministry. After four months had passed the Minister told me he had decided that the Ministry should give me a travel allowance, but before ordering the Finance Division to do so, His Highness asked an official to investigate and make a list of all the people in the Ministry who like myself taught part-time without getting an allowance. After a quick investigation, the official concerned submitted a list to His Highness. It was a very short list, containing only one name—that of his brother, Prince Rajdapisek Sonakul. The Minister, having seen the list, said nothing for a while. Then he said he would like to think it over. I never received my travel allowance.

The functions of the Department of Educational Techniques where I served, were to collect educational statistics, conduct research, organise examinations, and deal with text books. It was not very exciting. I found the University a rather more interesting scene. As I said earlier, Chulalongkorn University was at its formative stage and it needed special attention and supervision.

During the time when His Highness Prince Dhani was Minister, Chulalongkorn University enrolment doubled itself. To the only one building of the then University compound, the Arts Faculty building, was added a new one called the "Scientific Experiment Hall", commonly called "The White Building" which later became the Faculty of Science. At Siriraj, however, a number of new buildings, including the Administrative Building for the Medical Sciences Faculty, were constructed. The University continued to receive financial support from the Rockefeller

Foundation for the development of our medical education, which, with a good, solid foundation, has been making steady progress until today.

On our part, the Ministry's main goal was to upgrade the status of teachers and to improve the quality of education. I am sure I am right in thinking that that idea originated from the Minister himself. His Highness was concerned that the teaching profession should be equal in status to other professions such as medicine. The University already had the Faculty of Arts and Science, but up until that time the role of the Faculty was limited to the preparation of students for further courses in medicine, pharmacology and engineering. The time had come for the Faculty to produce teachers, by offering a one-year-training course to those undergraduates who had had two years of science or arts. This programme started in 2471 and the first crop of "Diploma in Secondary Education" teachers graduated in 2473. I am sure many of us can still remember how much in demand teachers with "Paw Maw"—or Diploma in Secondary Education (Chula) were. This step upgraded the status of teachers and the quality of education as well as having many other good side effects.

First of all, a teacher-training institution such as Chulalongkorn University must have a school for teaching practice, just as a medical school needs a hospital for practical training. The Ministry of Public Instruction, therefore, transferred Wat Hua Lampong Primary School to Chulalongkorn University in 2473, for teaching practice purposes, and the name of the school was changed to "Haw Wang Secondary School". I should like to point out that that was the first demonstration school in our country, although it was not then called as such, and that the demonstration school system in Thailand was conceived as long ago as that.

Secondly, when the teacher-training course became available at the Faculty of Arts and Science, more girl students entered the university, and thus university education quite rapidly became popular among women. As you all know, eastern countries are often criticised for discriminating against women in the field of education, and the point is often raised by Unesco. The measure taken by the Ministry of Public Instruction at that time enables us proudly to refute that criticism as far as our country is concerned.



Another policy which the Ministry of Public Instruction laid down and carried out successfully during that period concerned the required standard for university entrance, which was the completion of Matayom VIII. It was during His Highness Prince Dhani's time as Minister that degrees were granted to graduates for the first time. On 25th October 2473 His Majesty King Prajadhipok granted degrees to medical school graduates who successfully completed their course at the end of the year 2472. The decision of the Ministry to make the degree granting a significant occasion and to ask His Majesty the King to preside over the ceremony was a wise one and has proved to be of long-term beneficial results. The tradition has been carried on until today and on "Chulalongkorn Day" this year the President of Chulalongkorn Old Students Association in his address delivered before His Majesty said "We are all deeply grateful to Your Majesty for coming each year to grant degrees to our graduates. The long hours that it takes and the stifling atmosphere of the hall cannot discourage Your Majesty from expressing your great bounty to the graduates by allowing them to be presented personally to Your Majesty, and as a result of this there has been no unrest in our university as there has been lately in so many parts of the world."

Ladies and Gentlemen, I said a while ago that the opening of the teacher-training course in the Faculty of Arts and Science had had many side effects and I have described a few. There is still one other which I have neglected to mention. As a result of the Teacher Training programme, Thai language and Thai history became for the first time subjects for systematic and serious study. Careful, solid groundwork was undertaken with a view to expanding the curriculum to bachelor and master degree levels. As I said earlier on, the Minister made the passing of the Thai language paper a pre-condition for taking examinations in other subjects at Matayom VIII level, and also increased the teaching hours. This was a controversial topic. Those who disagreed with the Minister's view argued that Thai students already knew their own language, therefore there was no more to learn. They would do better to spend their time learning a foreign language. Let me quote a passage from a lecture given by His Highness the Minister on 24 September 2474 at Chulalongkorn University:

"Having talked about the nature of languages, I would like to go back to the original point—that is to say I want to answer the critical comments made on the Ministry's decision to increase Thai language teaching hours at the upper secondary level, and also to show how this is related to the university. I have heard people express the opinion that at the upper secondary level there should be no more for students to learn in the Thai language, and that English should be used as the medium of instruction for other subjects so as to allow students to familiarise themselves with English, which would be useful in their study of that language. Now, I totally disagree with both points. On the first point made, I disagree on factual grounds. There is more to be learned, even for four more years at the University level, and I shall elaborate on this later on. On the second point—which amounts to "killing two birds with one stone", I suspect that if we tried we would only get two very thin birds. No fat birds would sit around for us to kill off two at a time, I'm sure. I agree entirely that a good knowledge of the English language is a very desirable thing. Nowadays anyone who knows no English or any other European language is at a great disadvantage. However, in educating children we are not solely concerned with languages, we want them to learn mathematics in order to develop accuracy, to learn science to foster a scientific thinking habit, to learn history and geography etc. . . . . . Thus, although the English language is a good thing to learn, we must admit that other subjects are also beneficial. If we try to lump two good things and make children learn both simultaneously, I fear that it would be beyond their ability. It would be "trying to catch two fish with both hands". For example, to make clear a scientific principle, you will agree, needs considerable understanding and intelligence. I'm sure if you explained it in Thai the children would have a better chance of understanding it than if you explained it in English. It is a fact that most teachers have studied their subjects from English texts and therefore it is easier to repeat from the text books than to transfer it into Thai, especially as the Thai language has not developed sufficiently, both as regards vocabulary and phraseology. But is it right that we should be dictated by the convenience of the teachers? Surely we should consider the convenience of the majority—

namely the students. For these reasons I consider it beyond question that the Thai language is a very important subject for study, and it is necessary to increase the teaching hours for it."

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Minister has often said he is not a teacher. But if he could say such things, surely he is a teacher of teachers.

Where would be a better place to promote the study of and research in the Thai language than at our own university? Other subjects can be studied abroad, and if we study them at our own university, the best we could do would be to reach standards comparable to those achieved by universities abroad. Not so with the Thai language. If we make great progress in our study and research, the achievement will be something unique, something which cannot be found elsewhere. With something of value of our own achieved by ourselves, we continue to preserve our identity.

I should like to end this talk by quoting a short passage from the lecture on "Sayam Pak" (literally "The Siamese Language") given by His Royal Highness Prince Naradhip Bongsprabandh at Samagayacharn Club House on 13 December 2475.

"When His Majesty the King granted me the opportunity to teach at the university, His Highness Prince Dhaninivat suggested that I should study the Thai language in order to find ways of improving it. His Highness took the view that developing the language was a way of developing civilization."

What I have described has, I hope, shown how significant His Highness Prince Dhaninivat's contribution was, as Minister of Public Instruction, to the progress of education and national development.