

## Duang Prateep Foundation Monthly News for July 2006

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### News from the Duang Prateep Foundation

#### Klong Toey celebrates King's Diamond Jubilee

In June the Duang Prateep Foundation coordinated with other local organisations and community groups a special celebration to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of **King Bhumibol Adulyadej's accession to the throne**.

The event began in the 70 Rai community of Klong Toey Slum with speeches by Duang Prateep Foundation Chairman Dr. Sumet Jumsai Na Ayudhya and Secretary General Prateep Ungsongtham Hata, as well as the former president of the Stock Exchange of Thailand, Kittiratt Na Ranong.

From the 70 Rai area, there was a parade to Wat Saphan, where 108 Klong Toey residents entered the monkhood.

Many of the men who entered the monkhood were reformed addicts and there was also a forum on living with addicts and other community problems.



*The photo shows front from the left Prateep Ungsongtham Hata, Kitiratt Na Ranong and Dr. Sumet Jumsai Na Ayudhya.*

The Bangkok Post provided the following report on the occasion in the issue of June 12:

Ex-addicts pay tribute to the monarch  
Slum residents hold ordination ceremony  
KULTIDA SAMABUDDHI

As fireworks displays and the arrival of foreign monarchs capture the nation's attention during celebrations for His Majesty the King's Diamond Jubilee, a slum community of Klong Toey yesterday quietly organised its own small event to join the festivity.

The activity to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the King's accession to the throne was not as extravagant as those held elsewhere. It was simple but meaningful.

It not only allowed residents to express their love for the King, but also marked a fresh start in the community's campaign against drugs.

The highlights of the event, held at Wat Saphan, were the mass ordination of 108 monks, many of them former drug addicts, and a forum for parents living with young drug users.



"We hope the moral example set by His Majesty will give slum dwellers the strength to struggle with their hardship and create a drug-free community," said outgoing Bangkok senator Prateep Ungsongtham Hata, who has worked on development of the slum community for decades.

Mrs Prateep said the drug situation in the Klong Toey community had become worse in recent months. State agencies were no longer as interested in combating drugs as when the government waged its anti-drug campaign a few years ago.

Suchai Samarn, 56, father of a drug addict, said many small-scale players had grown in influence, replacing major drug dealers killed during the war on drugs.

He was referring to extrajudicial killings under the government's anti-drug campaign, which killed more than 1,000 people.

Mr Suchai, however, said affected families should not depend too much on state agencies to fight the drugs menace.

"The power comes from within. It's the close relations among family members and community unity that help protect our children from drugs," he said.

Naruemol Srijaruay, whose 25-year-old son, Anat, also took part in the mass ordination, said she hoped her son would stay clear of drugs after he left the monkhood next month.

"My son has tried to kick the habit several times, but failed. However, he has vowed to stop using drugs permanently after joining the ordination," said Mrs Naruemol.

"It is easy for Klong Toey youth to become drug addicts. The environment in our community is bad. It has turned into a meeting ground for gangsters and drug agents," said Nawin Saenwichai.

Her 21-year-old daughter, Joy, is a former drug addict. Joy was able to kick the habit with support from her mother, who took care of her for three years while she was a heavy user.

"Our children become rude when they are under the influence. They steal money, and take off for days. We have to be patient.

"Try not to hurt their feelings and try to show how much we love and care for them," Mrs Nawin of the Christian Charity Foundation, told the forum.

She urged parents to talk with their children's friends because "they know about our kids much better than us".

She also pleaded for understanding from the public. People outside the slum community tended to treat Klong Toey youngsters as social garbage, which made the situation worse.

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In addition to the big diamond jubilee celebration, foundation staff and local residents also came together in a big **clean up action**, in honour of the King, throughout Klong Toey Slum.

Prateep and her husband Tatsuya also got a taste of the glamour of the official celebrations, as they had the opportunity to attend a reception in honour of the **Emperor and Empress of Japan**.

Also in tsunami hit **Phang Nga Province** there were celebrations for the King's Diamond Jubilee. DPF staff organised some one hundred children to attend a beautiful celebratory event hosted by the Takua Pa District chief.

#### Prateep and Nithan Caravan help launch anti-drugs event

'**Drugs are not Child's Play**' was the theme chosen by the United Nations Organisation on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for this year's International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, on June 26.

In Bangkok the UNODC regional office arranged a special event for the occasion at Thailand Knowledge Park in Central World Plaza. DPF Secretary General Prateep, Nithan Caravan puppet troupe and some fifty sponsored students all attended the event.

**Prateep** was one of the key note speakers for the occasion Prateep thanked the UNODC for



the manner in which the organisation has worked to build relationships with people's organisations. Prateep also talked about how people in Klong Toey were taking to heart the King's teachings about living sustainably and being diligent.

**Nithan Caravan** performed a puppet show with an anti-drugs message. The event also had other performances and youngsters taking part in a panel discussion about how illicit drugs had affected their lives.

*The photo shows Prateep, front left, with other guests at the opening of the 'Drugs are not child's play' campaign.*

The anti-drugs message was also stressed at a special concert at Impact Arena last month. Twenty-five Klong Toey youths attended the concert which was organised by Princess Ubolratana's **To Be Number One** anti-drugs organisation and LG Electronics Thailand.

#### Building for tsunami orphans finished

The Duang Prateep Foundation **building at Phru Teaw** in Phang Nga Province is now finished and will be formally opened at a ceremony in August. The building will be a home for tsunami orphans and a night refuge for children who need somewhere safe while their parents are

working at nights. The building will also be a centre for a wide range of activities for people of all ages from the local community (*see photo below*).

In June foundation staff based in Phang Nga joined with thirty-one other organisations at a three-day **workshop** on work with tsunami affected children and future plans. DPF staff were surprised to see several



organisations attend the event, many of them were active in the months after the December 2004 disaster, but have long since ceased to have any presence in the area, despite claiming to still be helping tsunami victims.

Meanwhile, the Phang Nga based **Nithan Caravan** puppet troupe concluded their UNICEF sponsored performances in Krabi Province with a tour taking in visits to 10 schools in the province as well as a training session for teachers. The troupe still has schools in Phang Nga Province to visit under the UNICEF backed programme. Phang Nga has deliberately been left to last by Nithan Caravan, due to being the area worst affected by the tsunami, there were many special events taking place at Phang Nga schools in the months immediately following the disaster.

#### Kindergarten children *Wai Khru*



The ceremony of **paying respects to teachers 'Wai Khru'** is an important tradition at all Thai schools, which traditionally takes place on a Thursday early in each school year.

The excitement started first with the children making the offerings to present to their teachers (*see photo*).

The ceremony was presided over by Prateep and Mingpun Ungsongtham. After Prateep had spoken to the children, they lined up to *wai* their teachers in the traditional Thai show of greetings and respect.

Also in June, kindergarten students enjoyed a concert by the **Japanese band Hozumi Kai**. The group from Aichi Province performed for both kindergarten children and members of the Duang Prateep Foundation's senior citizens group.

#### Nestle staff help plant palm trees

Last month more than 100 Nestle employees under the **Nestle Volunteer Team** went to the New Life Project at Kanchanaburi for a weekend of activities. The Nestle employees were busy planting oil palm trees at the project, but they also had plenty of time for fun activities with the abused and disadvantaged youngsters at the project.

Also visiting the Kanchanaburi Project last month were two executives from **Mitsui Oil** in Japan.

The visitors were able to inspect a reservoir which had been built with financial support from Mitsui Oil in 1999.

The Japanese also met the children at the project and gave them all gifts of school supplies (see photo right).

Meanwhile, at the New Life Project at Chumphon, residents welcomed family members for the annual **Wan Sai Yai festival**. This is the occasion when families with youngsters at the project travel to Chumphon for a weekend of activities with the residents. The youngsters at the project had a *Wai Khru* ceremony before emotionally embracing family members who had travelled to be with them. In the evening there was a party and the following day it was time for 'Goodbyes' with the visitors returning to Bangkok.



#### Fun for children with KPMG

Last month large numbers of staff from the Bangkok office of **KPMG International** descended on the Duang Prateep Kindergarten and the Chumchon Moo Baan Patana School (next to the DPF) for a KPMG community day.

The staff from the international accounting firm were in many classrooms in the two schools, organising craft activities, arranging games, telling stories, teaching and generally having fun with the children. Children at the Duang Prateep Kindergarten also got to watch a video arranged by the visitors.

The KPMG group was led by senior executive John Sims, who had a large supply of lollipops to give to the children (see photo top).

Also last month, **Austrian Airlines** hosted a trip by forty students to the Ocean World aquarium at Siam Paragon. The group of students, which was led by Mingpun Ungsongtham, were thrilled by the marine life on display at Thailand's largest aquarium (see photo bottom).



Klong Toey youths joined with a **Japanese housewives group** to make paper mobiles together. The activity, which was enjoyed by both the youngsters and the Japanese visitors, took place at the Locks 1 2 3 community centre in Klong Toey Slum

**Students living in rural areas** receiving educational sponsorship from the Duang Prateep Foundation were visited by Duang Prateep Foundation Sponsorship Section staff last month. Three hundred students studying at five schools in Loei, Khon Kaen, Buriram, Nakhon Ratchasima and Kanchanaburi received sponsorship money, and were in discussions with foundation staff as well as being photographed.

#### AIDS event attracts 500

Last month Duang Prateep Foundation Aids Control Project staff organised an Aids awareness event as part of the programme of activities for the King's Diamond Jubilee. The event was jointly planned with community groups from Yannawa, Klong Toey and Prakhanong districts. The venue was a sports field in Yannawa District, where various community groups prepared their own information displays and organised games and quizzes on the topic of Aids and related health and lifestyle topics. In addition there were stage performances from different community groups throughout the afternoon and evening.

#### International school students donate

At the end of their school year, the Lower Secondary Student Council at the **New International School of Thailand** visited the Duang Prateep Foundation, accompanied by their coordinating teacher Ms. Christine Killilea, to donate money to DPF Secretary General Prateep Ungsongtham Hata (*see photo*).

During the first half of the year, the international students arranged activities for sponsored students at the DPF and at their school and are hoping to arrange further activities once their new school year begins in August.



Also last month, three representatives of **Airline Ambassadors International** visited the Duang Prateep Foundation to discuss possible areas of support with Prateep. Airline Ambassadors International is a volunteer organisation with over 4,000 members who are mostly airline employees. The organisation has provided humanitarian assistance to people in over forty countries.

Visiting the Duang Prateep Foundation were Humanitarian Missions Director Marie Rivard, SFO Regional Director Corlene Horan and Project Manager for Thailand John Moretti. Further contacts are anticipated with Airline Ambassadors International in the coming months.

### NEWS FROM THAILAND

#### No clear direction in new development plan

A clear direction is needed for the country as it embarks on a new, five-year national economic and social development plan in October, according to caretaker Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. In an opening address at the National Economic and Social Development Board's annual meeting last month, Mr Thaksin urged the agency to spell out "exactly where we [Thailand] stand in the global society and how much time and budget is needed for all sectors to move forward".

Called "society with sustainable happiness," the 10th plan borrows heavily from the philosophy of self-sufficiency promoted by His Majesty the King, with sustainable development its key element. But to fulfil that goal, Mr Thaksin demanded clarity in several areas, including a clear definition of happiness.

Society was full of ideas and comments but often these ended up as never-ending debates.

Every sector must move forward to make the country competitive. "We cannot carry the poor in our arms in an attempt to keep up with the globalised and capitalist world," he said.

Laws and regulations must be revamped to help the poor and encourage more public participation in national development.

He also suggested that with the diversification of society, efforts to solve problems must also take into account different social contexts. The development plan lacked ideas on how to improve the agricultural and service sectors, he said.

Monopoly and cronyism must be tackled by the National Economic and Social Development Board if Thailand is to avoid another financial crisis, an experienced economist warned.

Negligence could induce another crisis intensifying in seriousness in line with the wave of globalised capitalism, said Bangkok Bank executive chairman Kosit Panpiemras.

He said economic fairness was not equivalent to income distribution and warned of the dangers of monopoly, cronyism, unfair trade practices and insider trading.

The four major side-effects of capitalism are economic instability, uneven income distribution, economic unfairness and environmental exploitation, Kosit said at the annual seminar hosted by the NESDB.

"Thais might be OK with these issues, but under capitalism these are serious crimes. The government therefore must determine what is capitalism and what are its adversaries," he said.

"There must be a regulatory philosophy to ensure economic fairness. If we are to move along with globalised capitalism and if society wants to avoid another crisis, it is extremely necessary to address the issues."

Kosit said a sufficiency economy must be used in the right way and constantly.

Paiboon Wattanasiritham, a prominent social activist, threw his support behind Kosit's warning. He said that though the philosophy of a sufficiency economy had been integrated in the plan, it could render little benefit if there was no mechanism to turn the philosophy into action.

"This guidance should be implemented at all levels, from policy-making to communities," he said.

"Political leaders, senior officials, business leaders and community leaders should set a benchmark,"

### Teens' unsafe sex biggest Aids threat

Because they are having unsafe sex, teens are now among the groups most at risk of infection with the virus that causes Aids, the Thai Women on Aids task force warned last month.

The social trend towards "free sex" has not been accompanied by education about "responsible sex", a spokesperson said. "The problem is that their attitudes about sex could lead to risky behaviour."

As many as 700,000 Thais are living with HIV/Aids, but most do not know they are infected, experts say. Some experts believe that only about 200,000 know of their HIV infection. About half of those infected have access to Aids medicines, which include drugs to prevent opportunistic infections, drugs to treat physical and mental discomfort and the anti-retroviral medicines that prevent HIV from destroying the immune system and block transmission from a pregnant mother to her foetus.

### Extended families no longer the norm

Most Thai homes now comprise only parents and children. Thai families have become more "nuclear" in character, while the high divorce rate has resulted in three million broken families, an official said last month.

Capitalism, increased competition, and the transformation from an agricultural to an industrial society had created changes to the Thai family structure, including making it more like the nuclear-age families of the west - limited to parents and children - rather than extended, a Social

Development and Human Security Ministry Inspector told a "Family Empowerment" seminar.

Currently, about 55 per cent of families, or about 16 million, are categorised as being "nuclear-age", while 32 per cent are extended families, according to a study entitled, "Thai children nurtured in the four years of the new government".

The study also found that as the marriage registration rate had declined, the number of out-of-wedlock couples had increased, Ubol said. The high divorce rate had now affected three million families in Thailand, especially in Bangkok and nearby provinces. About 1.3 million families were found to be single-parent families.

The problems most encountered by Thai families included poverty-related issues such as increasing debt, domestic violence, lack of land and drug abuse.

A professor speaking at the seminar said government assistance for Thai family problems was negligible, as agencies still regard this area as a matter for the individuals involved to cope with.

### Corruption remains endemic

A study conducted jointly by the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) and the World Bank, released last month, confirmed that public-sector procurement of goods and services continues to be plagued by corruption.

The TDRI said the Thai government and state enterprises failed to make the grade in nine key categories, including honesty and transparency, management and control, access to information, complaints-handling and dispute settlement. One example was the lacklustre performance of the National Counter Corruption Commission (NCCC) as an illustration of the country's lack of political will to combat graft.

From 2000-2003, a total of 800 cases of alleged corruption were submitted to the NCCC, 183 of which were rejected because of a lack of hard evidence. At the end of that period, 616 cases remained pending while only one had been prosecuted and tried in a court of law.

Furthermore, the use of arbitration to resolve business disputes in a timely manner was not widespread, due to a lack of confidence in that method's ability to deliver justice, particularly when parties to conflicts include government agencies or state firms. As a result, business disputes involving the Thai public sector and foreign companies tended to go through the court system, which was costly and time-consuming.

Government failure to ensure transparency in public-sector procurement spawns corruption, poses an impediment to foreign investment and generally adds to the cost of doing business in this country.