

สารนิพนธ์

THESIS ABSTRACTS

The Establishment of the University of Moral and Political Sciences as An Instrument for Encouragement of Democratization in Thailand

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Whether the revolution in Thailand of 1932 was premature is one of the most controversial issues of Thai democracy. To understand this we have to look back through the political history of Thailand. Thailand, or Siam, was under an absolute monarchy for centuries, and the King's powers, which at first had been very strong, declined as time went on. It must be realized that under the absolute monarchy the real politician was the King who carried out all political activities with the assistances of his relatives and his servants (Kharajakarn). The people as the King's subjects had no role or participation in governing the country, nor did they have opportunity to study it. Although some institutions for the study of government were set up during the reigns of King Rama V, VI, and VII, their purpose was to train the King's servants; consequently most of the students of these institutions were the children of the King's officials. The common people had very few chances to attend the schools.

The motive behind the Revolution of 1932, as expressed by its leaders in the peoples' party, was to bring about democracy in Thailand. Therefore, the King's power was suspended, and sovereign powers theoretically passed into the hands of the people. But, the people knew little about politics and government as their standard of education was very low. The people who had been acquainted with the old regime viewed the new regime with hesitancy and lack of understanding. Since the

education of the people was the crucial factor [in democratic maturity the Revolutionary Government had to take some grass-roots action to educate people especially in politics. In order to accomplish this aim a National Education Plan was promulgated, deconcentration and decentralization of administration took place, and the people were given greater opportunity to participate in politics on the national and local levels, but there were very few people who had academic training at that time.

So it was deemed necessary and expedient to establish a new institution for the study of government. The University of Moral and Political Sciences was established in 1933 with a specific purpose : to encourage the growth of democratic ideas among the Thai people. The University allowed persons of various educational background throughout the country to attend its classes and provided them with conveniences for the study in many ways. New subject matter concerning democracy was put into the curriculum. The course of study were expanded to the doctoral level. The university was sponsored by the government which collected most of the qualified instructors and professors of the country to teach the courses.

The university operated in this manner for 20 years until it was reorganized and changed both in name and in the principle and method of study. It was given the present name - Thammasat University.

Graduates of the University of Moral and Political Sciences during the first 20 years included : 5,427 persons with the Bachelor of Law degree, 31 with the Master of Law, 38 with the Master of Political Sciences, 32 with the Master of Economics, and 3 with the Master of Diplomacy.

The graduates of this Institution are widely distributed in politics and administration, in public and private sectors. So we can say that the University of Moral and Political Sciences has played an important role in the encouragement of democracy in Thailand.

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