

Good Governance (?) in Phitsanulok Municipality

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As the moment in the ceremony arrived at which the emcee was about to announce the municipality that would receive the 2007 "Good Governance" (GG) award, the hundreds of mayors in the audience appeared to be holding their collective breaths. Many had arrived at the ceremony at Royal Thai Government House in hopeful anticipation that *this* year the new initiatives of various types that they had undertaken in their respective cities and towns would receive due recognition from King Prajadhipok Institute, the organization making the GG award. *Surely*, some appeared to think to themselves, their endeavors and results would have captured the judges' attention this time around. Surely, 2007 would be the year in which one of *their* municipalities would be deemed meritorious and receive the prestigious award, thus at long last breaking the long monopoly enjoyed by a particular northern municipality.

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Alas, a nearly audible gasp arose from the audience when the announcer intoned, *"And, so it is with great pleasure that I present the 2007 the King Prajadhipok 'Good Governance Award' to . . . [pausing for effect] . . . The Honorable Premrudee Champhunod, Mayor of the City of Phitsanulok -- the longest-serving mayor in all of Thailand! Please join me in welcoming Mayor Premrudee to the podium."*

The ensuing applause was vigorous enough. But, an observer would not have had much difficulty discerning the visible signs of disappointment on mayoral faces across the room. How could it be, many seemed to wonder, that Khun Premrudee of Phitsanulok should, *for the ninth consecutive year*, be adjudged to merit the coveted Award? Many could be forgiven for wondering, as they exited upon the close of the ceremony, *what* Phitsanulok was doing so well as to receive the prize year after year, *for nearly a decade*. Clearly, if they ever expected to replace Mayor Premrudee at the podium at some future *Good Governance* awards ceremony, they would need to find a way to surpass her in *whatever might be the secret to her extraordinary success in winning these awards*.

Overview of the Evolution of Local Governance Policies

Until the mid-1990s, a major characteristic of politics and administration in Thailand was its pronounced centralization. Policy initiatives, budget allocations, and personnel administration were determined at the ministerial level in Bangkok, with implementation effected through the ministries' provincial and district offices. Local government bodies lacked appreciable measures of authority, funding, and personnel.

Thailand as a Centralized State: The Longstanding Local Governance Modality

The operations of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) typified the centralized administrative system that had long been the central thrust of Thai politics and administration. The provincial governors appointed by the Ministry were not only the most senior executive officials of the MOI in each of the Thailand's 75 provinces, but also presided over most of the branch offices and agencies of *other* ministries located in their respective provinces. (See Figure 1.) In addition, most other ministries and departments devolved power to the provincial governors to supervise and control their particular field offices in the provinces. Further strengthening administrative centralization, the provincial governors and other MOI bureaucrats also held *ex officio* positions in local government, enabling them to exert significant control over these bodies.

Some observers allowed that the absence of real local self-government flourished for so long because politicians and bureaucrats benefited from the existing system of a centralized state. Societal forces in Thailand were deemed to have been too weak and insignificant to make demands for local self-government.¹ Consequently, until 1994, all forms of local administration originated from and were closely controlled by the central government.

Cases in point were the municipalities (*thesaban*), the capital city administrative structure, and the Provincial Administrative Organization (*ongkan borihan suan changwad, Or. Bor.Jor, PAO*). In the case of the municipalities, which were first established in 1933, the councilors and the chairmen were elected, but the councils' scope of activity was limited to providing services such as rubbish disposal, water supply, slaughterhouses, markets, and the like. Moreover, their limited budgets proved perennially inadequate even for this narrow range of activity. Semi-urbanized

areas, designated as “sanitary districts (*sukhaphiban*), were governed by a council presided over by the chief district officer (*nai amphoe*) as *ex officio* head. In rural areas, tambon councils were created as a local government body at the sub-district (*tambon*) level in 1972. But, these bodies never acquired the status of juristic persons and hence were very limited in their scope of activity, functioning mainly as advisory bodies for the provincial governor and district officers.

In the case of capital city, Bangkok, and the resort city of Pattaya, a more complex local administrative structure was created, in 1975 and 1978, respectively. However, the scope of authority of these municipal governments was still rather limited. In the case of the Provincial Administrative Organization, created in 1955, appointment of the provincial governor as *ex officio* chairman (and other provincial officials as *ex officio* incumbents to other posts) enabled centralized control to continue until 1997, despite the fact that the councils were partially constituted by direct election. (See Tables 1 and 2.)

Thus, in general, the forms of local government that existed in Thailand before 1994 did not correspond to the five key principles of local self-government advocated in the 1950s and 1960s as the blueprint for newly-independent countries.² According to these principles, a local government body should: be a local body that is constitutionally separate from the central government and responsible for a range of significant local services; have its own treasury, budget and accounts along with substantial authority to raise its own revenue; employ its own competent staff whom it can hire, fire, and promote; have a majority-elected council, operating along party lines, that decides policy and determines internal procedures; and, have central government administrators serving purely as external advisors and inspectors, having no role within the local authority.

Against this background, surprise was the order of the day when, beginning in the 1990s, centralization began to give way to decentralization. Slowly arose a new dawn with respect to the ability of local people and their leaders to shape the administration of their own local affairs.

Thailand as a Decentralized State: The Shift toward Democracy at the Local Level

Many trace the beginnings of decentralization to the student-led, anti-government incidents of May 1992, and the government's eventual violent crackdown on the dissidents. Members of three groups in particular who had been advocating for decentralization – i.e., scholars, bureaucrats, and select politicians – emerged from the events of May 1992 with broader support for the devolution of decision-making authority away from the central government and to the provinces, local councils, and the like.

Some scholars have postulated that the Ministry of Interior played a decisive role in the initial small step toward decentralization, the passage of the Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Organization Act of 1994 ("TAO"), as a tactic to stall the movement towards election of provincial governors.³ In this view, MOI bureaucrats who disliked decentralization supported the TAO in the expectation that decentralization at the tambon level would be less of a threat to their authority than the election of provincial governors.

However, with the TAO came not only the establishment of the newest and smallest unit of local government (the tambon), but also greater popular interest in decentralization, as many local people began paying attention to government organizations located near their home and how their way of life would be affected by various governmental decisions and actions. Indeed, with the implementation of the TAO, many local leaders began making greater efforts to please and serve their

constituents for the sake of personal popularity; regional bureaucrats began gradually losing authority to new local politicians; and, local people and leaders began experiencing greater affinity for local self-government organizations that worked for the sake of their own communities' development.

Hence, notwithstanding the earlier gambit of some MOI bureaucrats, the enactment of the Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Organization Act of 1994 ("TAO"), inexorably ushered in a process of decentralization that gradually, but steadily the strengthened the principle of local self-government in ways that would substantially affect the powers of the even those provincial officials who continued to serve via appointment. The 1997 Constitution⁴ further championed decentralization,⁵ including the provision – earlier blocked by the MOI in 1994 – that all members of local government should be elective.⁶ The Decentralization Plan and Process Act of 1999 implemented this provision, removing village and tambon heads from the TAOs, and transferring significant authority, budget, and personnel from central to local government. In December 2003, the TAO law was amended to stipulate direct election of all TAO executives and councilors. As mentioned below, all heads of local government organizations ("LGOs") subsequently came to be chosen via direct popular election. (See Tables 3 and 4 for a list of the principal local government acts *before* and *after* 1994.)

Not even a concerted effort by the Thaksin government (2000-06) could slow or reverse the momentum created by these initial forays into administrative decentralization. Opposing Prime Minister Thaksin's effort to resurrect central (Bangkok) control through the scheme of "CEO Governors" was an energetic web of vested interests -- new interest groups, organizations and federations of local politicians – who emerged to campaign and lobby against any attempts to reverse the trend toward local self-government.⁷ These groups became the vanguard of the ultimately successful drive for direct election of the heads of local government bodies,⁸ and were vigilant in opposing any moves to rescind or otherwise attenuate any powers already transferred to local government.

Decentralization as the Genesis of Municipal “Good Governance” Recognition

The initiation of the “Good Governance Award” recognition was an outgrowth of the inexorable move toward decentralization that began in 1994. Specifically, such an award could only be conceived in earnest when municipalities had the authority, budget, and personnel to manage their own local affairs *and* when they were administered by popularly *elected* mayors who were accountable to their local constituents.

However, it was only with the passage of the Municipal Act (No. 11) of 2000, sanctioning direct mayoral elections (upon approval by the constituency in a local referendum), that the way was fully prepared for a concerted push for good governance. With this Act, and the later TAO Amendment Act of 2003, providing for the direct election of mayors of TAOs, the stage was set for interested persons to vie for support to win election to office, and then undertake the kinds of endeavors that would garner continued constituent support and perhaps wider recognition as exemplars of “good governance.”

The concept of “good governance” first arose in the aftermath of the 1997 economic crisis and was aimed at assuring the delivery of quality services -- particularly by *public* services -- throughout the country. With the burgeoning increase in local authorities, local fiscal resources, and local administrative personnel that had developed since the 1994 launch of decentralization, higher-level oversight authorities and other interested bodies in both the public and private sectors discerned the need to take steps to try to ensure the standardized quality of services by the new local authorities. Absent the kind of centralized control that once pertained, there was concern that, left to their own devices, the thousands of administrative units at the local level, might turn in sub-par and widely divergent performances in terms of

delivery of services to their constituencies. The good governance decree of 2002 was considered the enabling progenitor of awards recognizing outstanding local governance. Hence, a number of awards and other forms of recognition were instituted over the years, based on criteria established by the particular oversight and/or award bodies. (See Exhibit 2 for a partial listing of some of these awards, as gleaned from an account of the honors bestowed upon Phitsanulok during Mayor Premrudee's administrations.)

In this connection, the Municipality of Phitsanulok and the powerful local Champhunod family were particularly noteworthy illustrations of the kind of dynamics that arose at the intersection where the progression toward local self-government encountered the realities of long-established political power and influence structures at the local level.

Phitsanulok City: The Place and the Local “First Family”

Phitsanulok City – The Place

Located in Phitsanulok Province, 337 km. north of Bangkok, Phitsanulok City was comprised (as of the 2006 Census) of nearly 29,000 households or 90,386 people, with an average annual income of approximately Baht 43,000. The city administration was mainly under responsibility of Phitsanulok Municipality whose jurisdiction extended to 18.26 sq.km. The city periphery, however, extended far beyond the municipal boundary in all directions due to rapid urbanization and economic growth in the 1990s. There were six adjacent local government authorities called Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs).

The city was very much a hub of Thailand's Lower-North Region in a number of ways. As an educational center, it was the home base of three leading higher-educational institutes -- namely, Naresuan University, Rajabhat University

Pibulsongkarm, Rachamongkol Technical University. These institutions attracted thousands of students, staffs, and their families, both from within and outside the region. The corresponding demand effect on goods and services from in-migrants was evidenced in sectors ranging from housing and apartments, to various kinds of commercial shops, to regional government offices (inclusive of the military bases). Bustling and expanding activity in these and other fields continued to attract an increasing influx of number of highly-educated people. Additionally, Phitsanulok was also a major transportation center linking the nearby provinces and the center (Bangkok) with the Upper-North provinces (Lampang, Chiang Mai, and Nan) by national highway, railway, and air transportation grids. All in all, it was in every sense of the phrase a vibrant medium-size municipality “on the move.”

Municipal administration was under the political auspices of 24 Municipal Councilors and a mayor who all are directly elected from people. The permanent officials comprise of a city clerk, municipal officials, and employees. There are municipality officials and is divided into eight divisions:

1. Office of City Clerk Office
2. Public Work Bureau
3. Education Bureau
4. Technical services and planning division
5. Public Health and Environment Division
6. Finance Division
7. Water Supply Division
8. Social Welfare Division

There were 235 common municipal official civil servants, 148 permanent employees, and 569 temporary employees. In addition, the City administered five municipal schools, enrolling nearly 3,600 students and employing about 156 teachers.

The Phitsanulok City comprises of 90,386 people. Among these population numbers, there are 59,946 voters. The density of population is about 4,949 persons/Square kilometers which reflects an urban society. The settlers who dwelling in the middle of the city are largely earning in small-and medium-size businesses, small- and medium- size enterprises, companies, stores, commerce etc.

Phitsanulok – The Champhunod Family

Few would dispute the fact of the preeminence of the Champhunod family in Phitsanulok Province in general and in Phitsanulok Municipality in particular. With roots in the Province stretching about 40 years ago with the arrival of an early progenitor, Sakchai Champhunod (or well-known in Chinese name as Hang Yuai), who was the first Champhunod to settle in the Province, by the early-1990s the family had lived and worked in the Province for more than four generation. Initially, the family engaged in commerce and small-scaled industry; i.e. grocery, Thai-siwalak ice factory, and Charoen Panit Rice Mill; eventually amassing considerable personal wealth, along with an ever-expanding network of social, business, and political connections and alliances, particularly Sukchai was elected as many social organizations in Phitsanulok; for example, a president of the Chinese association of Phitsanulok, a president of committees of Sin-ming Chinese school, a president of committees of Chinese cemetery in Phitsanulok. This far-reaching network of alliances and connections, in conjunction with the family's expanding economic clout, eventually led to the Champhunod's well-deserved reputation as the "go-to" family when local residents needed something to be done, whether it was intervention in settling a dispute with some government agency, assistance in having a road built in a certain area of town, help in gaining school admission for a relative, or virtually any other matter in which the reality of the Champhunod's personal interest might prove invaluable.

Particularly under Suchon Champhunod, a son of Sukchai, who is the family's power and influence grew steadily and deepened, to the point where it could be said that the family enjoyed the most widespread patronage network in the Province and Municipality. Suchon was elected as councilors of Phitsanulok City, and then he was selected by among elected councilors to be a mayor of Phitsanulok City. A successful businessman with a variety of business interests ranging from a real estate and land developer (shop houses in front of provincial bus terminal and Khokmatoom Market, a private vocational school (Business administration and Technology School) to two cinemas (Phitsanulok Rama 1 and 2) to a hotel with night club (Ammarin Nakhon Hotel), which was the first and the biggest cinemas and hotel in Phitsanulok at that time⁹. Suchon eventually decided, in 1979, to diversify his endeavors into the national political arena. First elected as a Member of Parliament representing Phitsanulok in 1979, he easily won re-election multiple times thereafter – i.e., 1983, 1986, 1988, September 1992, 1995, 1996, and 2006. With his solid political base in Phitsanulok, he also was tapped on a number of occasions to serve in the Prime Minister's cabinets, variously holding – among other posts -- the portfolios of deputy minister of finance in one administration, minister of university affairs in another government, and minister of the Prime Minister's Office in another. Thus, at both the local and national political levels, Suchon made the Champhunod family a force to be reckoned with.

Even as Suchon devoted his time and energies to the demands of representing Phitsanulok's interests at the national level and to serving in the cabinet-level positions in several different governments, he endeavored to maintain and further cement the family's dominance of the local political scene in his home province. In this connection, the Government's implementation of a policy of decentralization in 1994 afforded him a serendipitous opportunity to pass his legacy to another family member, his wife, thus ensuring that the increased local authority and budget that Phitsanulok would receive from the decentralization thrusts remained within the sphere of influence

of the Champhunod family as a whole. Thus began the extraordinary, 12-year-long mayoral rein of Premrudee Champhunod, who first ran for mayor in 1995 and was thereafter re-elected to three, 4-year terms in office.

A Bachelor's graduate in General Management of Rajabhat University of Uttaradit, with an MA degree in Public Administration from the National Institute of Public Administration, Premrudee was perhaps the epitome of the bright, ambitious, and energetic local citizens elected to mayoral posts during the first wave of decentralization during the mid-1990s. Active in the wider civic and political arena, in addition to serving a mayor, Premrudee was involved in a number of local and national organizations -- including serving as chair of the Cultural Council of Phitsanulok, president of the National Municipality League of Thailand, advisor to the Environmental Affairs Committee of the National Assembly's House of Representatives, and a member of the National Decentralization Committee. Over the years, she had been the recipient of an array of honors: Honorary doctorates (in *Environmental Science*, Rajabhat University of Phitsanulok, (2000), and in *Public Administration*, Kensington University, USA (2001); award as the *The Most Distinguished Woman Mayor in the Asia Pacific* (2001); and recognition by the Thai Ministry of Interior as *The Most Distinguished Mayor in Educational Affairs* (2004).

Further, especially in the aftermath of the Thai government's 1999 focus on promoting the concept of good governance to local authorities, Phitsanulok Municipality, under Mayor Premrudee's stewardship, had *consecutively* received a plethora of national GG awards -- awards bestowed by, and based on evaluative criteria established by, different national public organizations. For example, GG awards organized by the Department of Local Administration, by the King Prajadhipok's Institute (including the *Golden KPI Award*, awarded exclusively to the already-awarded local authorities), by the Commission of Decentralization -- all these awards were among the many honors to which the Mayor Premrudee and her

administrative team could proudly point. Further, Phitsanulok had also received honors and recognition conferred by other public organizations, such as Ministry of Health, the Office of Public Service Development Commission, among others. (See Exhibit 2 for a more complete list of the awards bestowed upon the Municipality of Phitsanulok under Mayor Premrudee's administrations.)

Thus, by outset of her fourth term in office (2007-2011), Mayor Premrudee had developed a local, national, and even international reputation as a "mayor-on-the-move" – a public official who had demonstrated the ability to address the needs of her municipality and *get things done*. Indeed, in terms of local administration and government, there were those who deemed Mayor Premrudee to be one of the best and greatest local executives in the current era of decentralized government in the Kingdom of Thailand.

"Good Governance" in Phitsanulok: Philosophy, Strategies, Tactics, and Reactions

Mrs. Premrudee's 13-year-long tenure as Thailand's longest-serving mayor began toward the end of 1994, when she and a group of similarly minded friends, who shared here disquiet about the state of local politics, gathered to establish the *Luk Naraesuan Group* and stand together as candidates for election to the Phitsanulok Municipal Council. At the time, Phitsanulok's municipal politics were in a state of flux - - with no councilor able to command sufficient support from within the Municipal Council to serve a full four-year term in the mayor's post. The mayoralty post was being negotiated among shifting alliances within the Council, with incumbents rarely lasting for more than a year or two. Explained Premrudee,

Once I decided to set my political group for the municipal election, I therefore selected only the [most] promising candidates – [those who] seriously intend[ed] and [were] ready to work industriously for the Municipality. I . . . tried my best to select members of my political team [who brought the] three [desired] backgrounds – namely, family, knowledge, and public minds.¹⁰

The Group's platform focused on basic problem solving and a commitment to "three coordinated" undertakings for an all-out effort to fully develop the city – i.e., coordination for unity among the municipal councilors; coordination for collaborative endeavors with members of Parliament; and, coordination for the individual communities, and other local organizations. The combination of its platform and the Champhunod family's longstanding preeminence within the Municipality resulted in the 1995 landslide election of all members of the Group, giving the Group a popular mandate to push through a number of projects would dramatically transform the city from the sleepy, provincial town of yore into a livable, beautified, environmentally friendly city with a vibrant economy and a better quality of life for its residents. With this electoral mandate, Premrudee, as convener and leader of the Group, was then appointed by her supporters on the Council, the dominant force on the Council, to her first term as Municipal Mayor under the newly implemented decentralization of authority, budget, and personnel from the central government to the local governments.

Premrudee's Governing Philosophies and Techniques

As Mayor, Mrs. Premrudee's main duties were those of determining policies, executing municipal activities, responding to issues concerning the Municipal Council and its individual members, and serving as the Municipality's "voice" to the central Government. Recalling the heady challenges confronting her at the outset of her first term in office, Mayor Premrudee hinted at the thinking that would presage her approach to governing the city:

[In] my first term as mayor, my image as a female politician and the wife of the provincial member of Parliament was not so good in the perception of the people. Therefore, I [had] to prove myself – [show] that I seriously and sincerely intended to develop my hometown, which still lagged behind, compared to other municipalities. One important thing, among many other ways to prove my capability and intentions, was the award system [initiated by] outside organizations that could [lead to] grants valuable enough to [enable us] to make a great impact [in terms of] promot[ing] speedy municipal development and my team's capabilities concurrently.¹¹

Premrudee allowed that, as team leader and the person with “the strongest leadership [skills] among the 18 Municipal councilors, she had to “think in a different way to utilize all of [her] business managerial skills to develop new innovations and to apply them to municipal administration.”¹² From the outset of her first administration, and continuing into her two successive administrations, a certain philosophy of governance informed her approach to the oftentimes daunting task of leading a city government and getting things done. She explained:

. . . In taking care of all 51 communities' leaders within the municipal area, I always realize that it is . . . most important to make them pleased and . . . dedicated to the work and activities of the municipality. Honestly speaking, sometimes I have to invest some of my [own] money to treat the people to a feast, and to apply some of my prominence and social connections to take good care of them – which in my opinion I do not think . . . is wrong-doing at all. Ideally, local politicians in [the] decentralization era must be broad-minded [and] dedicate their own happiness to the people. I am open-minded enough [such that] if there will be other local politicians with high potential who sincerely take good care of the communities' leaders

*and vote canvassers as effectively and efficiently as I do, . . . [or] can serve the communities' leaders better than me – [then] I am strongly sure that they also could be elected to sit in the mayor's post without difficulty. Then, I [would be] ready to retire myself from local politics right away.*¹³

To some interested observers, Mayor Premrudee seemed to be a practitioner of the *quid pro quo* style of governance, making sure that communities loyal to her were rewarded with official assistance, while perhaps being less attentive to the entreaties of those whose loyalty lay elsewhere. This approach to governance not only enabled her to accomplish many of her first-term objectives, but also won her widespread accolades from a majority of the voters who, regarding her as an exceptionally responsive and generous politician, returned her *Luk Naraesuan Group* to office for a second, third, and fourth 4-year terms in 1999, 2003, and 2007, respectively. And, the Group, in turn, dutifully, re-appointed Mrs. Premrudee as mayor on each occasion.

Some Views of the Disaffected. Amidst the general public satisfaction with, and support for, the Mayor, there were, however, those with a decidedly different point of view. In the main, these centered around their discomfort with the Mayor's near-total dominance of Municipal administration, perceived conflicts of interest between the Mayor and her governing allies as between their responsibilities as public officials and their connections with local business cliques, and (in one instance) the belief that the Mayor had overstated her business acumen and used it as a ploy to gain support for election to office.

A leader of *Luk Phraphuttachinnarat*, a rival party in the Municipality, Mr. Chaiwat Khonsrichai was among the Mayor's most vocal critics. A successful local businessman with interests in rice milling, automobile dealerships, and securities trading, Mr. Chaiwat had once been served as municipal counselor under the umbrella

of Mayor Premrudee's *Luk Naraesuan Group* until his regular and strenuous objections at Council meetings to what he considered to be "wrongdoing" by the Mayor and her political cohorts led to his severing political ties and forming his own group under the *Luk Phraphuttachinnarat* banner. Explaining the nature of his disaffection with the Mayor, Mr. Chaiwat stated:

. . . My father [served as] mayor of Phitsanulok before decentralization periods in the 1990s. At that time, my father had to work under limited budgets, personnel, and authority [levels]. He always [taught] me how to utilize the limited resources of the Municipality. I, therefore, think carefully [how] to spend the municipal budgets. As you may see when I [was] a councilor of Phitsanulok under the administration of Mayor Premrudee, I encouraged the councilors to pay attention to almost all the Mayor's projects, to assure the [proper] utilization of the budget. [This] might be the reason why the Mayor dislikes me, even though [she] was the one who suggested that I join her political group in the past. However, I also dislike the Mayor's absolute administration and the conflicts of interest between the municipal [officials] and the business of the Mayor's cliques.¹⁴

Other political opponents raised similar objections to Mayor Premrudee's personal character and methods of governance. As seen by another member of *Luk Phraphuttachinnarat*, Mr. Thanakorn [last name withheld at interviewee's request], the Mayor's faults extended to her tendency to over-embellish her success in business prior to turning to politics. He elaborated as follows:

Before becoming an elected mayor of Phitsanulok, Ms. Premrudee's hotel business was not profitable. Many Phitsanulok people know that Ms. Premrudee [had] announced to sell her hotel business

*[before running for political office, so that] she might be richer after [winning] the mayor's post. After receiving the post, Mayor Premrudee often organizes "study tours" for her local communities' leaders – [leaders who are her vote canvassers] – in order to make them loyal to her. Consequently, her network with leaders of the local communities is very strong.*¹⁵

Concurring in Mr. Thanakorn's assessment of how Mayor Premrudee maintained the loyalty of community leaders, Mr. Sanit Sanit, another member of the opposition *Luk Phraphuttachinnarat* group, claimed that "[the Mayor] spends lots of money from the municipal budgets on projects to take care of her networks."¹⁶ Further, he noted, as the wife of Phitsanulok's veteran MP and as a long-time incumbent in the post, Mrs. Premrudee had a close relationship with almost all of provincial election commission members in the Province. (See Exhibit 3 for a discussion of how decentralization led to the enhanced role of *provincial* election commissions, and some unanticipated consequences thereof.)

Criticisms extended to what some called a "lack of transparency" in Mrs. Premrudee's administration. Mr. Worayut Bussabong, an assistant professor at Naresuan University and a former candidate for municipal councilor, cited several construction projects – e.g., the Naresuan Bridge, a recreation center adjacent to the Nan River, and the Ganesh statue located in front of Chom Nan public park near Akatossarot Bridge – as examples of what he termed "inefficiencies in the municipal budget spending."¹⁷ Mr. Worayut further pointed to a particular member of the Mayor's administrative team, Mr. Adithep, who was involved in a local construction company that frequently received various kinds of public works projects from the Municipality. Finally, stated Mr. Sanit Sowanna and Mr. Thanat Khuhachit, almost all of the trees for a municipal public park project had been bought from a company owned by Mr. Suchon Champhunod, Phitsanulok's long-serving MP and the husband of the Mayor.¹⁸

Premrudee's Governing Strategies and Tactics

The aforementioned criticisms struck Mayor Premrudee and her many supporters as simply political sniping by long out-of-power politicians who, despite their attempts, had been unable to best her at the polls and break her longstanding incumbency in the mayoral post. A case in point, noted one fervent Premrudee supporter, was the fact that all 24 members of Mr. Chaiwat's *Luk Phraphuttachinnarat* group who contested councilor seats in the 2007 election lost *decisively* to Mayor Premrudee's *Luk Nareasuan* group.

From far crediting her electoral victories and long string of municipal improvements to any monopolization of power or unsavory electoral or administrative practices, Mrs. Premrudee attributed her successes to the strength of her vision for Phitsanulok upon assuming office in 1995, as well as to her attentiveness to the needs and aspirations of the city and its residents.

Returning to her earlier observations concerning the initial skepticism that *she*, a female and the wife of Phitsanulok's veteran MP, could possibly be serious about her stated intentions to develop Phitsanulok, Mayor Premrudee noted that:

*. . . Women's concerns and priorities about urban local government and urban issues generally differ from those of men, in that women are more careful in city development planning. Women are not only concerned with infrastructure, but also value quality of life, health, environment, and culture and art.*¹⁹

It was, she averred, her unshakable commitment to the "total quality of life" in Phitsanulok that informed Mayor Premrudee's developmental agenda in 1995, and in each successive four-year term in office. But, this commitment was not enough. She realized that she also needed some means by which to both energize her

municipal administrative team and convince an initially skeptical citizenry that she could indeed *get the job done*. Without an equally committed and hardworking administrative team, she knew that her vision for Phitsanulok would ultimately come to naught. And, absent tangible developmental results, she also knew that she might not long command the support of the citizenry.

Hence, the increased focus of the Thai government on “good governance” in 1997 (mid-way through her first term in office) was a serendipitous event for Mrs. Premrudee. With the establishment of a number of “good governance” awards by both governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations, she spied a strategy for both energizing her team *and* sustaining public support. She explained:

. . . I realized that each award has its specific criteria for judging of award. My strategies and tactics for winning the awards consist of three steps of so-called “award-hunting policy”. Firstly, I, as a chief of the municipality, carefully study those criteria for finding all of possible means to winning the awards. This step is not difficult at all if the chief of the organization paid attention to do. Secondly, I brainstorm all of municipal councilors, my vice-mayors and all of municipal staffs for setting an action plan for award contests together. For incentives, I announce to give them extra (money) bonus from the municipal revenue if the municipality wins award.

Thirdly, I do monitor and follow-up on a step-by-step basis for the action plans of my award-hunter policy regularly until success to win the awards. Fourthly, I publicize all of municipal projects and activities which serve a good understanding to both people (also my vote bases) and a panel of awards at the same time. Unquestionably, public relations of performance are very essential for all organizations. I decide to invest some municipal budgets in

*pictorial annual reports, colorful leaflet and brochure to promote our unique activities and projects. Fiftly, [when the visiting committee of the award] arrives, a warm welcome and on-site visiting at the project should be organized to show how we work hard. . . .*²⁰

Although not launched in pursuit of any “good governance” award, the development of Phitsanulok’s waste management system was a vivid illustration of Mayor Premrudee’s problem-solving approach to municipal needs and the innovativeness of her tactics for addressing them.

The Growing Mound of Garbage: Bury or Be Buried? Planet-wide, burgeoning populations during the latter half of the 20th century put a serious and growing strain on municipal landfills and other traditional forms of waste disposal. As the volume of garbage grew by leaps and bounds, existing municipal landfills became filled to capacity – with few economically viable alternatives, as land prices and community opposition made new landfills virtually impossible.

Upon taking office in 1995, Mayor Premrudee soon found that Phitsanulok was no exception. Municipal garbage, which was then being either burned or dumped at the municipal landfill had grown from 49 tonnes in 1993 to 140 tonnes per day in 1995, with no diminishment in sight due to an expanding population and growing consumerism. Also, there was an increase in cases of improper and open dumping of garbage soon after she took charge. She noted:

*A system of management was totally absent. Considering Phitsanulok's size, I knew that there would be problems if we did not have a proper waste management system, and I began searching for a comprehensive waste management system the municipality could adopt. Soon I realised that no other provincial municipality across the nation, not even the BMA, could provide us with a comprehensive waste management approach.*²¹

The search for the elusive solution continued to percolate in the Mayor's mind until one day, in 1998, she read a newspaper article describing German advancements in the field of environmentally friendly technology. *"Why not partner with the German government for technical assistance?,"* she thought to herself. She followed up with a request to the German government, and a year later, in 1999, the two parties, along with GTZ, a non-profit, international cooperation enterprise for sustainable development, signed a Memorandum of Understanding that led to the development of the Solid Waste Management System of Phitsanulok.²²

Another Option: "Trash as Treasure". The cooperative effort started from scratch, with no data on the types of wastes generated in the province. However, an analysis of Phitsanulok's waste by GTZ soon revealed that fully 41% of the waste was saleable (i.e., recyclable) and 40% degradable, leaving just 18% for landfills. The key to the whole endeavor lay in convincing residents that they could earn extra income from their gar-bage bins. Households had to be convinced to sort their garbage, thus enabling them to sell the recyclables to scrap companies or *"saleng"* (scrap dealers on tricycles). Municipal garbage collectors would also do some sorting before taking the rubbish to the landfill, where local scavengers would perform the final sorting. Food scraps were to be com-posted and then distributed as fertiliser to the 30 communities in the province.

A campaign was launched to encourage residents to help manage the garbage they generated. In its immediate aftermath, about one-third of the 30 communities in the city began participating in separating garbage into recyclable and organic waste. Explained Deputy Mayor Suthi Hantrakul:

We went on a door-to-door campaign, explaining to residents how they can benefit from reducing and separating waste, as well as making them more aware of the need for environmental protection.

The amount of trash at the city's sanitary landfill decreased from 40 tonnes to 30 tonnes, and most of it is the 'garbage of the garbage'.²³

Additionally, once the program got fully underway, the city's garbage trucks were able to reduce their collection trips from *once a day* to twice a week.

According to Mayor Premrudee, the daily income for a scrap dealer was about Baht 100 to 200, while a scavenger earned about Baht 100 a day. *"We could do a lot more to reduce garbage even further, if we try,"* allowed the Mayor. *"But I don't want to push the townspeople too much."²⁴* She was confident; however, the volume of garbage was likely to go down even further once an organic fertilizer plant began full-scale operation.

Thus, over the span of several years of research, planning, and implementation, the system developed into a non-complicated and financially feasible waste management model for the entire province, and indeed for the nation as a whole. By 2001, the Municipality's efforts in waste management had reduced waste generation to about *half* of its 1995 level – achieved without the purchase of land for additional landfills and no fights with community neighbors. In consequence, Phitsanulok Municipality received *Solid Waste Management* awards from the Pollution Control Department in 2001 and, again, in 2003.

As earlier stated, the Solid Waste Management System was not launched for the purpose of placing Phitsanulok in competition for the several awards that it subsequently received. However, its success did have the effect of convincing Mayor Premrudee of the value of pursuing her vision for the Municipality project-by-project and in such a manner that the results would win what she believed was due recognition as examples of the nature of "good governance."

“What the World Needs Now” . . . More Women Mayors?

Looking back over nearly 13 years of developmental initiatives under her leadership, Mayor Premrudee could not help but take great satisfaction that her tenure in office had been characterized by what she described as “dedicated and creative development.” These efforts and their results had won her *Luk Nareasuan* group reelection to a second term in 1999, based on her policy of developing Phitsanulok into the “Healthy City.” A third term had been granted by the voters in the election of 2003, based on her and her team’s continued infrastructural improvements. And, as she set out on her fourth – and presumably, final – four-year term in 2007, she was pleased that the community had been established into 40 communities, which plans to increase at the rate of ten communities per year. Each community was making admirable progress in developing and serving the fundamental public health, life quality, environmental protection needs of the residents.

Thus, she felt as pleased as she had back in 2001, when as host of the first-ever Asia-Pacific Summit of Women Mayors and Councilors, she was one of several women mayors to receive an award for her distinguished service. There, in the presence of more than 250 participants from some 24 countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region assembled to discuss barriers to women entering politics at the local level and devise solutions, Mayor Premrudee stated, *“Initially I did face some resistance when I began my political career. However, now people look at me as a human being doing a public service for the good of all. . . .”*

She went on to point out that increased female representation in urban local government would have a direct effect on the status of woman, as more local woman leaders would result in greater acceptance of women. Then, in a speech at a plenary session of the Conference in which she laid out the continuing challenges confronting women in local government across the Region, she exhorted the delegates:

*. . . Among dramatic changes in several aspects of the present world, such as the financial crisis in Asia, the political changes in many countries, and the current of globalization, these changes multiply obstructions for women, besides the old ones. . . . We have to be alert, collaborate, support and improve abilities and roles of women in every level of political organizations. We have to cooperate in developing channels and mechanics - both in national level and regional level - which are necessary for promoting women's roles. I and all Thai women are ready to cooperate with every country, I intend to fully utilize this stage in order to achieve this goal. This conference serves not only as a stage where participants can exchange opinions and experiences, but also a stimulation to make every woman in Phitsanulok aware of her ability, potential and role in community, society and country. . . .*²⁵

It was well known in Phitsanulok Municipality that Mayor Premrudee was a strong supporter of endeavors and initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life of poor women. In particular, she had an affinity for programs in women's career development, medical care, social activities for housewives, environment and community development. But, at the Conference, she also intimated that the support that she gave women in her community was also reciprocated in ways that contributed greatly to her own electoral successes. She revealed that:

*. . . I realized that women are one of the strongest vote-canvassers in the province because, once women give a loyalty to any politicians, it is very difficult to make them change their minds to support others. In addition, women in Thai rural society trend to be a head of the family as a beloved wife and mother which she can convince their family members to vote as her thought easily. . . .*²⁶

In reaction, one observer wrote, *"It is apparent that what mayor Premrudee did for groups of women at both [the] local and national level significantly supports her recognition and [widespread] popularity."*²⁷

Good Governance or What?

Others, however, remained unsure, if not outright skeptical, that the manner in which self-governance had developed in Phitsanulok was a particularly healthy development, let alone deserving of "good governance" honors. Some wondered whether the ability of one family in a province to use their extensive power networks to monopolize local government was truly what the Thai government had in mind when it decentralized authority, budgets, and personnel to the municipalities throughout Thailand.

Others questioned whether the manner in which the Mayor wielded her influence (and that of her family) and "strategized" for winning these honors year after year was what in the full spirit of the important objective of local "good governance." Still others worried that the model that Premrudee represented could become a local political dynasty, should she (after serving the maximum 16 years in office) elect to "bequeath" her legacy to her children, as her husband had done for *her*. Who else in the Province, they asked, would willing, to go up against this family's political juggernaut to contest the post, given the Mayor's legacy *and* her husband's prominence as an MP at the national level.

Above all, many wondered whether the Phitsanulok situation was a healthy example of municipal "good governance" and political decentralization. How, they asked, could the replacement of central government control with the perpetuation of the traditional influence and control of provincial "dynasties" be congruent with the presumed intention of governmental decentralization to extend and deepen democracy and political participation at the local level of society?

Figure 1: Structure of Thai administrative system prior to 1992: Centralization of Ministry of Interior

Central Administration

Office of Prime Minister

Ministry -Minister —————> Ministry of Interior (MOI)

Department -DG Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA)

Other ministries and departments
also have their own field officials
in provinces and districts.



Regional Administration

Local Administration

(Special forms – in Bangkok and Pattaya)

Province - Provincial Governor -----> **Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO)**



District - District Chief Officer -----> **Municipality** (Urban)



-----> **Sanitary District** (Rural)

Sub-district or "*tambon*" - Headman

Village - Headman

Arrow meaning:

Direct command —————>

Control (ex officio) ----->

Table 1: Provincial officials' ex officio posts in PAOs (before decentralization)

Official position	Ex officio post in PAO
Governor	Mayor
Assistant Governor	Assistant Mayor
Chief District Officer	Head of District Sectors
Senior Assistant Chief District Officer	Head of Finance Division
Assistant District Officer	Head of Administrative Division
Assistant District Officer	Head of Development and Civil Engineering
Local Affairs General Inspector	Secretary of Provincial Council

Source : Provincial Administration Organization Act of 1955.

Table 2: Provincial officials' ex officio posts in the sanitary district (before decentralization)

Official position	Ex officio posts in sanitary district
Chief District Officer	President of Committee
Senior Assistant Chief District Officer	Assistant of Sanitary District
Assistant District Officer	Head of Finance Division
Fiscal Clerk of District Officer	Fiscal Officer
Chief of Inspectors (Chief of District Police Officer)	Head of Peace-keeping Division
Public Health District Officer	Head of Public Health Division
Livestock District Officer	Animal Disease Diagnosis Officer

Source: Sanitary District Act of 1952.

Table 3: History of key local government acts before 1994

Year of enactment	Local government organizations	Structure of administration
1952	Sanitary district	Commission (government officers are assigned as ex officio officials)
1953	Municipality	Council (direct election); Mayor (indirect election from municipalities' council members)
1955	Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO)	Council (direct election); Mayor (Governor in each province)
1975	Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA)	Bangkok Council (direct election); Governor (direct election)
1978	Pattaya City	Pattaya Council (direct election); Manager of Pattaya City (contract by consent of Council, and City Mayor)

Source: Thai Local Government Acts

Table 4: Development of decentralization during the period 1994–2003

Year	Major measures of decentralization in Thailand
1994	<p>1) The <i>Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Organization Act of 1994</i> was enacted.</p> <p>2) There was a movement to amend sections 198 and 199 of the <i>Constitution of 1991</i> for electing local government administrators for every level of local government. However, the amendment was not approved by Parliament because NAP MPs voted to retain appointed local administrators in ex officio posts. This demand caused a rift between two major political parties, the DP and NAP, which has continued to the present.</p>
1997	<p>1) The <i>Constitution of 1997</i> was an important proponent of decentralization; it contained seven articles concerning local self-government. This Constitution explicitly prohibits any local-government positions from being held by appointed members,²⁸ and also sets the foundation for local government autonomy.²⁹ Therefore, it seems that almost all of the issues related to the movement from 1992 to 1994 were settled by the Constitution, including the election of local administrators at every level of local government. The exception was the election of the provincial governor, which is still regarded as being a central government issue, not a local government issue.</p> <p>2) The <i>PAO Act of 1997</i> introduced indirect election of mayors of PAOs instead of them being ex officio posts of provincial governors.</p>

Year	Major measures of decentralization in Thailand
1999	<p>1) The <i>TAO Act of 1994</i> was amended to allow TAOs indirectly to elect one president and two members of the board of directors from among members of the TAO councils.</p> <p>2) The <i>Act Changing the Status of the Sanitary District to Municipality of 1999</i> was enacted. The law changed the status of all 981 sanitary districts into Municipalities in February.</p> <p>3) The <i>Plan and Procedure of Decentralization Act of 1999</i> was enacted as an organic law according to the promulgated Constitution.</p> <p>4) The <i>Pattaya City Act of 1999</i> introduced direct election of administrators, instead of the city manager system.</p>
2000	<p>The <i>Municipality Act (No. 11) of 2000</i> was enacted to allow municipalities that were ready for the direct election of mayors to conduct such elections. The readiness of the municipalities would be decided by a referendum of the people in the constituency.</p>
2001	<p>A pilot project of CEO-type governors³⁰ was introduced in five provinces by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. However, some criticized this policy as a move towards centralization.</p>
2003	<p>1) The pilot project of CEO-type governors was proclaimed a success, and generalized to all 75 provinces.</p> <p>2) The <i>PAO Act of 2003</i> was enacted in October of that year to allow for direct election of all PAO Mayors by February 2004.</p> <p>3) The <i>TAO Amendment Act of 2003</i> was enacted in November to allow for the direct election of Mayors of every TAO.</p>

Exhibit 1**Exposition of the Effects of Decentralization on Electioneering at the Provincial Level³¹**

Powerful local politicians generally have considerable experience in elections and are well-versed in election campaigning. They know how to cope with the electorate and vote-canvassers. Although the rules and the institution regulating elections were changed by the 1997 Constitution, established MPs still have an edge over newcomers because they have been able to adapt to the new system because of their ample experience and knowledge. This ability to adapt to new conditions can be seen by examining how established politicians dealt with the Election Commission introduced under the 1997 Constitution. Before this time, the management of elections was a duty of the Ministry of Interior. The 1997 Constitution established a new Election Commission of Thailand as an independent body at the centre. A subsequent order established a Provincial Election Commission consisting of five members in each province.³² To select these five members, a local subcommittee is formed with eight representatives from business, academia, law, labor, agriculture, LGOs and other private organizations. This subcommittee compiles a list of fifteen names which is sent to the central Election Commission, and the Election Commission chooses the final five.³³

This process is not immune to the interference of powerful MPs. To start with, the powerful MPs are likely to have some relationship with several of the eight representatives on the subcommittee. Next they attempt to pack the shortlist by finding at least fifteen candidates to be nominated as candidates. Finally, they issue orders to their clients on the subcommittee to vote systematically for their slate of candidates. By this method they ensure that all or most of the fifteen-member shortlist sent to the Election Commission are from their own faction. The central Election Commission's final selection is therefore of little import. The control of the Provincial Election

Commission can be important for the outcome of local elections. For example, the commissioners applied the election law on vote buying with double standards. The commissioners asked the provincial police force to act as watchdogs over the candidates opposed to the dominant local clique, preventing them from buying votes. In contrast, the commissioners allowed the powerful MPs to buy votes more easily. In return, the commissioners, who are provincial officials, have been promoted to higher positions within the province, while the commissioners who are businessmen will be repaid with other suitable rewards.³⁴

According to an official of the central Election Commission, the provincial election commissions play a significant role in all elections in the province. When there are complaints and objections regarding the election, it is not the central Election Commission but rather the provincial one that investigates the cases. The provincial election commission will submit an investigation report to the central Election Commission, which will base the final judgment on this report. Thus, the investigation by the provincial election commission is critically important in any dispute concerning elections.³⁵ Therefore a provincial election commission is another strong weapon that powerful MPs can use against their enemies at the expense of neutrality.

Under the pre-1994 centralized political power structure, MPs could boast of having support from a wide array of groups—from vote canvassers (including monks and teachers) to the people. MPs have political capital, i.e., influence, prestige, cliques, friends, subordinates, staff, local leaders and patronage networks within the area. This political capital creates the chance to become widely accepted in a province. Once they have accumulated this political capital, it becomes easier for them to prepare for the next election. The mayor of Phitsanulok municipality with influence in both local and national politics said in interview: "...The vote base is most important for electoral politics. Victory in elections requires money and prestige. We can't do without the funds for continuous political activities in the area. To fulfill the demand of

the people, local politicians, like LGO heads and councilors, must take good care of them. In addition to the ordinary people, there are local leaders at the grassroots level and politicians who must be given due importance. These include local public health volunteers (Ministry of Public Health), the Housewives Group and the Craftsmen Group (Department of Community Development). The tambon headman, village headman and medical trainers attached to tambons (Ministry of Interior) are particularly important because they spend most of their time with people in the tambon and village....”³⁶

Local-level political capital is accumulated over a long period. This can be seen from the experience of one of Thailand’s most powerful provincial political clans, the Silapa-archa family from Suphanburi. Chamsai Silapa-archa, wife of former Prime Minister, Banhan Silapa-archa, revealed that prestige enhancement was essential before her family ran for election as it enabled them to win the hearts of people in the province. She said, “....From 1957 onwards, Banhan and I began to take part in the development of the province, starting with the establishment of the Banhan-Chamsai School. At that time, Kanchana [Chamsai’s daughter, who is currently a deputy leader of the Chart Thai Party], my relatives and I would have to go out to ask for votes from the people. We went out of the house at 3 or 4 a.m. to meet a lot of people. We incessantly did merit making. In 1975, Banhan ran in the general election and was elected MP with the highest vote in Thailand. Later he became the 21st prime minister of Thailand in 1995....”³⁷ Once a family has established a powerful position in a province, it is difficult for newcomers to establish themselves other than through attaching themselves to the established group.

Exhibit 2

A partial listing of some of awards, as gleaned from an account of the honors bestowed upon Phitsanulok during Mayor Premrudee's administrations³⁸

Awards in a field of administration and management

1. "Good Governance Awards for of Local Authority" granted by the Department of Local Administration and the Commission of Decentralization (1994, 1995, 1996)
 2. "King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI) awards (or KPI awards)" granted by King Prajadhipok's Institute (1992, 1994, 1996)
 3. "A golden KPI Award" which is exclusively granted to the already-awarded local authorities for three consecutive years (1996)
 4. "Sustainable Lively municipality Award" which contested among the biggest municipalities throughout Thailand (2005)
 5. Good Image for the quality of the services (2006)
- etc

Awards in a field of Environment

1. "PCD award for solid waste management" granted by Department of Pollution Controls, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (2001, 2003)
2. "Clean fresh market award" and "Lively Municipality Award" granted by Department of Hygiene, Ministry of Public Health (2001, 2003)
3. "Cleanness and tidiness award" granted by Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interiors and the municipality league of Thailand (2002)

4. "An award for a contest of energy saving campaign" granted by Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interiors and the municipality league of Thailand (2003)
5. An award of excellence in environment management from municipal slaughterhouse granted by Bureau of Energy Policy and the Government Saving Bank's city development fund. (2004)
6. A cleanliness award of public toilets granted by Department of Hygiene, Ministry of Public Health
7. An award for local authority with excellent environment management granted by Thai Health Promotion Foundation etc

Awards in a field of education

1. An award for excellent municipal school granted by the Teacher's council of Thailand and the office of provincial public health
2. An award for excellent municipal school granted by the department of local administration
3. An award for a municipal school's a pilot project for a child-centered teaching system
4. An bestowed award by the King of Thailand for a small-sized secondary municipal school

Awards in a field of disaster prevention and mitigation

1. An award for disaster prevention and mitigation project contest granted by the municipal league of Thailand in cooperation with department of provincial administration (1997, 1998, 1999, 2000)
2. An excellence in flood prevention project from the Government Saving Bank's city development fund (2004)

Awards in a field of Finance

1. Local authorities with excellent attempting in tax collection (Prize money amount 16.62 million baht) (2003)
2. Local authorities with excellent attempting in tax collection (2004, 2005)

Note: the municipality also received other specific awards evaluated by other public organizations; such as Ministry of Health, the Office of Public Service Development Commission, which excludes a large number of awards at the regional, provincial and local awards organized by different public and private sectors. Thus, in terms of local administration and government the mayor is undoubtedly one of great local executives.

Exhibit 3**Oversea Support to Phitsanulok Municipality during Premrudee' s administration**

Organization	Issue Support
MOCI (Ministry of Construction of Japan) And World Bank	Development strategies
GTZ (German Technical Cooperation Agency)	Solid Waste Management
UN-ESCAP	Environment Management
LOGODEF (Local Government Development Foundation) and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung	Information Management and System Development
UNICEF	Education
FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities)	Municipal development

Source: Division of Technical Services, Phitsanulok Municipality (2005)

Endnotes

- ¹ Decentralization in Thailand could be classified as having occurred in four eras: (1) King Rama V established the sanitary district (*sukhaphiban*) in 1897 but it was abolished after the King's death. (2) The coup leaders in 1932 (known as the "People's Party") established the municipality in 1933. (3) Field Marshal P. Phibulsongkram established the sanitary district, provincial administrative organization, tambon administrative organization, and tambon councils in 1952, 1955, 1956, and 1956, respectively. (4) The category of special city was established for Bangkok in 1975 and Pattaya in 1978. (Amorn, Raksasat (1995). "*Kankrajai amnat ti pidplad lae samsak kong mahadthai lae nakkanmuang*" *Warasarn Sukhothai thammathirat* Vol. 8, No. 2 (May-August), pp.18-21).
- ² Mawhood, Philip (1993). *Local Government in the Third World: The Experience of Decentralization in Tropical Africa*, 2nd ed., Africa Institute of South Africa., p. 12.
- ³ Achakorn Wongpreedee. (2003). "Political Process of Decentralization Policy in Thailand: The Formation of the Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Organization Act of 1994" M.A. thesis, Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University.
- ⁴ The 1997 Constitution is referred to as "The People's Constitution" for two main reasons. First, during the formulation process, a variety of groups had the opportunity to take part in the committee drafting the Constitution, while others not on the committee proposed ideas for the consideration of the Committee. Second, it is generally accepted that the 1997 Constitution fostered the highest degree of democracy ever witnessed in Thai political history.
- ⁵ For example, the Constitution of 1997 obliged Parliament and government to draft the Plan and Procedure of a Decentralization Law within two years. This led to the formation of the Decentralization Commission and its office. It also led to the re-enactment of the "Provincial Administrative Organization Act of 1997," which enabled the direct election of mayors; the re-enactment of the "Municipality Act of 1999," enabling direct election of mayors in city and town municipalities from May 2000, and in tambon municipalities from 2007. In addition, it led to the upgrading of all 900 sanitary districts as tambon municipalities in February 1999, and to the re-enactment of the "Pattaya City Act of 1999," providing for the direct election of mayors.
- ⁶ This principle was proposed earlier as part of constitutional reforms discussed during the 1992-4 Chuan government, but was rejected in 1993 because of opposition from the NAP.
- ⁷ *The Nation*, February 26, 2001: p. 2, February 4, 2004: p. 4 in which this attempt have been terminated because of the resistance from the headmen of Tambon and villages which formed an Association and submitted their proposal to the Government directly, which occurred with the resistance from general public and academics through various forms of mass media. In addition, members of the Thai Rak Thai Party (Wang Nam Yen Group) and other coalition government party all disagreed.

- ⁸ *Siam rath* April 4, 2003 p. 22, May 2003, p. 22, May 27, 2003, p. 37, June 7, 2003, p. 1,14 and June 13, 2003 p. 21.
- ⁹ Interview with Suchon Champhunod (telephone interview) on September 20, 2008.
- ¹⁰ Interview with the mayor Premrudee Champhunod at her residence in Phitsanulok on December 23, 2007
- ¹¹ Interview with the mayor Premrudee Champhunod at her residence in Phitsanulok on December 23, 2007
- ¹² Interview with the mayor Premrudee Champhunod at her residence in Phitsanulok on December 23, 2007
- ¹³ Interview with the mayor Premrudee Champhunod at her residence in Phitsanulok on December 23, 2007
- ¹⁴ *Siang Mahachon (local newspapers sold in Phitsanulok Province)* (July 2007) page 8-9.
- ¹⁵ Interview with Mr.Thanakorn at a Rattana Hotel in Phitsanulok province on March 20, 2008
- ¹⁶ Interview with Mr.Sanit at his office in Phitsanulok on March 21, 2008
- ¹⁷ Interview with Mr.Worayut at his house in Phitsanulok on March 21, 2008
- ¹⁸ Interview with Mr.Sanit and Mr. Thanat at his office in Phitsanulok on March 21, 2008
- ¹⁹ Interview with the mayor Premrudee Champhunod at her residence in Phitsanulok on December 23, 2007
- ²⁰ Interview with the mayor Premrudee Champhunod at her residence in Phitsanulok on December 23, 2007
- ²¹ Interview with the mayor Premrudee Champhunod at her residence in Phitsanulok on December 23, 2007
- ²² Bangkok Post (Sunday, November 18, 2007) "Making Waste a Priority"
- ²³ Bangkok Post (Thursday, September 28, 2000) "Locals make short work of garbage"
- ²⁴ Bangkok Post (Sunday, July 02, 2000) "Refuse worries wiped out by recycling scheme"
- ²⁵ *Statement of the Honourable Mrs. Premrudee Champhunod, Mayor of the Municipality of Phitsanulok at the opening ceremony of Asia-Pacific Summit of Women Mayors and Councillors on 19-22 June 2001 at Phitsanulok, Thailand available at http://www.unescap.org/huset/women/summit/Opening_session%5COA_Premrudee.htm (June 15, 2008)*
- ²⁶ Interview with the mayor Premrudee Champhunod at her residence in Phitsanulok on December 23, 2007
- ²⁷ Press Release (Monday, June 25, 2001) "Women Call For Equality In Local Government, Campaign Spending Caps, Election Reform"
- ²⁸ Section 285 of the Constitution of 1997.
- ²⁹ Section 282, 284 of the Constitution of 1997.

³⁰ The term “chief executive officer” has been borrowed from the business sector; it refers to a top administrative executive. Thus, a CEO-type provincial governor was assumed to possess more consolidated power than other governors. Such a governor would be the leading executive among other bureaucrats in the province.

³¹ Achakorn Wongpreedee. (2007). “Decentralization in Thailand, 1992-2006: Its Effects on Local Politics and Administration” Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University.

³² Commissioners serve for a five-year, non-renewable term.

³³ The process is a little more complicated. A sub-committee is set up consisting of representatives from various groups in a province, specifically 1) public enterprises and governmental offices, (2) business associations (the provincial chamber of commerce, the provincial federation of industry, the provincial bankers' association, and the provincial mining association), (3) academic institutions, (4) legal professions (senior judge, senior prosecutor or lawyers), (5) labor unions, (6) agricultural organizations, (7) local self-government organizations, and (8) other private organizations. [1998 *Election Commission Ordinance dealing with Provincial Election Commissions and the Directors of Provincial Election Offices*, Section 17] Each member has the right to propose a maximum of three candidates; the general public can also nominate candidates. The sub-committee then selects 15 candidates from among the nominees. Each member may vote for ten people at a time. To be selected, a candidate must receive the support of over half of the 15 sub-committee members. If voting does not result in 15 winning candidates, further rounds of voting are conducted until 15 winners are found. The names of the 15 candidates are then sent to the central Election Commission, which selects five of them to constitute the Provincial Election Commission.

³⁴ Interview with Police Colonel Phairot Lertwilai on March 20, 2006 at his residence in Buri Ram.

³⁵ Interview with Prakrit Phromayon, director of election information section, on September 7, 2005 at the Office of the Election Commission.

³⁶ Interview with Premruedee Champhunot, a mayor of Phitsanulok municipal and a wife of a famous Phitsanulok MP, on 6 September 2005 at Government House in Bangkok.

³⁷ *Matichon*, June 4, 2006: 11.

³⁸ http://www.phsmun.go.th/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=89&Itemid=170 (June 16,2008)