

Lecture on

***“His Majesty’s Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy  
And the Royal Development Study Centres”***

By

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For

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**Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies  
and gentlemen,**

It is a great honour to me to be here at the Ministerial Conference on Alternative Development: Sufficiency Economy to address the key concept of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and its relations to the Royal Development Study Centres, some of which you will visit soon.

- **Introduction : The Royal Initiative on  
“Sufficiency Economy”**

“Sufficiency Economy” is a philosophy that His Majesty the King has expressed in his speech as a guideline for the Thai people to lead their lives for more than 25 years before the economic crisis in the late 1990s. This was reflected in an excerpt from His speech given on July 18, 1974. He pointed out the importance of step-by-step development of the nation because once a firm foundation have been laid, the people could have

their basic necessities and then could enjoy higher levels of economic growth.

***(“...Development of the nation must be carried out in stages, starting with the laying of the foundation by ensuring the majority of the people have their basic necessities through the use of economical means and equipment in accordance with theoretical principles. Once a reasonably firm foundation has been laid and in effect, higher levels of economic growth and development should be promoted...”)***

Later, His Majesty the King added in the royal speech given on the occasion of His Birthday Anniversary on December 4, 1974 that it is not important whether Thailand would be accused of being old-fashioned; what is important is the fact that we have enough to live and to eat.

***(“...no matter what others say – whether they will accuse Thailand of being old-fashioned or obscurantist. So long as we have enough to live on and to live for – and***

***this should be the wish and determination of all of us – without aiming for the apex of prosperity, we shall already be considered as the top in comparison with other countries in the present world...”)***

According to the royal speeches given in 1974, it is obvious that His Majesty the King has placed importance on step-by-step development on the basis of self-reliance, having enough to live and to eat, moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity. Also, His Majesty the King’s royal statement significantly raised consciousness of Thai people to be prudent, to realize steps of development which are academically correct, and to adhere to morals for every conduct of life. These all are known as “Sufficiency Economy.”

Sufficiency Economy is a philosophy that stresses appropriate conduct and way of life while incorporating moderation, due consideration in all modes of conduct, and the need for sufficient protection from internal and external shocks. It requires the application of accurate knowledge, care and giving, mutual assistance, and collaboration. The aim is to create bonds which closely link people

from all sectors together and boost positive creative force in order to lead to unity, balanced and sustainable development as well as readiness to cope appropriately with critical challenges occurring as a result of globalization.

It is obvious that the crisis caused by external factors that struck Thailand in the late 1990s had severely affected the way of living of the people of all levels due to a lack of "self-immunity". The people had been obsessed with over-investment while they could not stand on their own securely. Once His Majesty said that to be a tiger is not important. The important thing is to have a self-supporting economy.

***("...to be a tiger is not important. The important thing for us is to have a self-supporting economy. A self-supporting economy means to have enough to survive.")***

The development in accordance with the philosophy of sufficiency economy is thus the development of oneself which extends to the level of the families, communities as well as the level of nation. His Majesty stresses that development must

be done step by step starting from building a good basis for the people to enable them to have enough to live on and enough to eat and then to become self-reliant.

- **Sufficiency Economy: Application**

His Majesty's philosophy of sufficiency economy serves as guidelines for conducting daily life for the people of all levels from the family level, the community level to the national level.

At the family or individual level, each individual must have conscience in their daily conduct, and lead a happy, joyful and moderate life. One should be engaged in a proper career to raise oneself and his family at a sufficient level and refrain from taking advantages of other people while being generous to them.

At the community level, the people must join hands in their activities, participate in the decision-making process in the community, develop mutual learning process, and appropriately apply the uncomplicated technology in the development of the community.

At the national level, a holistic development process should be promoted to create balance. The social, economic, and resource capitals should be taken into consideration. Importantly, all merchandises produced should first meet the demands in the country before being exported. Low risks should be encouraged and we should not over-invest because such act will lead to debts.

The country should also have careful planning, keep pace with changes in the world and be able to use the natural resources in a worthwhile manner while conserving and preserving the environment. In addition, social capitals such as the educational system and the local wisdom should be developed in order to uplift the country's capability in creating innovation and technology which is appropriate to the country as well as cost-saving and simple. The purpose is to reduce imports of technology and dependence on other countries.

To fulfill His Majesty's initiative on development, the National Economic and Social Development Board humbly applies the philosophy of sufficiency economy as the guideline for the development and administration of the country by incorporating it in the Ninth National Economic and

Social Development Plan which covers the period from 2002 to 2006. Based on the concept and principle of sufficiency economy, a balanced development framework in all important aspects: human, social, economic and environmental, is stressed. The middle path is followed as the main guiding light to free the country from crises as well as to ensure its secure, balanced and sustainable development.

- **The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and the Royal Development Study Centres**

During the early period (1946 – 1979), His Majesty the King based his findings and basic information of development from the government research stations and centres. They are scattered and segregated in different disciplines and sectors. It was difficult for farmers to acquire the information, appropriate technology and concepts. Therefore, His Majesty the King initiated the first Royal Development Study Centre, the Khao Hin Sorn Royal Development Study Centre, in Chachoengsao

Province in 1979 which was followed by other five Centres in the next few years.

The main purpose of the Royal Development Study Centres is to improve the living standard of the farmers by means of land development, water resource development, forest rehabilitation and application of techniques in plant and animal production. The Centre's development activities would be carried in an integrated and cooperative spirit.

Each Centre will serve as “the model of success” which transfers the knowledge from the government research centres or successful farmers in the region as well as the findings of the Centre itself for the farmers in the area to follow.

Each Centre is “a place for the exchange of experiences and knowledge” among academics, government research workers, development workers and farmers. They would come to see the research development and demonstration activities which are presented in the form of “Living Natural Museum”. They can obtain all steps of production in one place and one time. In other words, each Centre provides a “one-stop service”.

With regards to the operation, each Centre involves coordination within the government sector on project planning and management among different government agencies and departments in order to render optimum benefits. Therefore, each Centre serves as the model of “innovative administration and management”.

Presently, there are altogether six Royal Development Study Centres situated in all the regions of the country, with each representing the region’s local characteristics and facing different problems according to each geographical condition, as follows:

**1) Khao Hin Sorn Royal Development Study**

**Centre** established in 1979 and situated in Chachoengsao Province which is in the Central Region

**2) Kung Krabaen Bay Royal Development**

**Study Centre** established in 1981 and situated in Chanthaburi Province which is in the eastern part of the Central Region

**3) Pikun Thong Royal Development Study**

**Centre** established in 1982 and situated in Narathiwat Province which is in the Southern Region

**4) Puparn Royal Development Study Centre**

established in 1982 and situated in Sakon Nakhon Province which is in the Northeastern Region

**5) Huai Hong Khrai Royal Development Study Centre**

established in 1982 and situated in Chiang Mai Province which is in the Northern Region

**6) Huai Sai Royal Development Study Centre**

established in 1983 and situated in Phetchaburi Province which is in the western part of the Central Region

Due to time limitation and tight schedule of the study visit programme, the distinguished delegation will have the opportunity to visit only four Centres, namely the Khao Hin Sorn Royal Development Study Centre in the Central Region, the Puparn Royal Development Study Centre in the Northeastern Region, and the Huai Hong Khrai Royal Development Study Centre in the Northern Region. And on the last day, if time is available while waiting for the audience with His Majesty, Your Excellencies may have a chance to visit a selected farmer's house at the Huai

Sai Royal Development Study Centre, also in the Central Region.

- **The New Theory: Translating “Sufficiency Economy” into Practice**

A well-known and practical example of the application of the philosophy of Sufficiency Economy is “integrated farming practice according to the New Theory”. The “New Theory” which was first introduced by His Majesty the King in 1992 promotes step-by-step development, starting from building a good basis for the people at the family level to enable them to become self-reliant to a certain extent without taking advantages of others. Then, the people can join hands in various activities in the form of group, community, or even community enterprise. The aim is to enhance creative force among themselves which in turn helps strengthen the community, reduce the risks of impact from external factors and build connections with large-scale businesses, government agencies as well as organizations. The end result will then be the expansion of various forms of the cooperation scope at the national level.

The complete New Theory agriculture has three stages.

1. First Stage: Sufficiency at the farm level or state of self-reliance.
2. Second Stage: Sufficiency at the community level or cooperation among farmers.
3. Third Stage: Sufficiency at the national level or cooperation among cooperatives and investors.

For the benefit of participants and due to time limitation, only the details of the first step, which is considered the most important, will be discussed.

In order to accomplish the “New Theory” farming practice, the following assumptions of the theory should be considered.

1. The application is suitable for a small farmer who holds land of less than 15 *rai* (2.4 hectares).
2. The application is suitable for the rain-fed areas.
3. The soil texture is suitable for water storage.

4. The average number of farm members is about 5 to 6.
5. The primary objective is self-reliance and self-sufficiency, not mainly for commercial purpose.
6. The application requires the unity and willingness of the farmers to work together and to help one another.

To manage land, soil, water and farm labour effectively, the land should be divided into four parts with the ratio of approximately 30 : 30 : 30 : 10.

Part 1. 30% or 4.5 *rai* (0.72 hectare) is designated for pond which is used to store excessive rain water. The water will be used to supplement rain water during the unusual drought periods and to grow dry season cash crops if the stored water is sufficient.

The size of the pond which includes width, length and depth, could be adjusted. In the relative high precipitation zones and the areas where the irrigation water can be filled, the pond size might be less than 30%.

Vetiver grass is the recommended cover crop to grow at the banks of the pond for soil protection.

Part 2. Approximately 30% or 4.5 *rai* (0.72 hectare) is set aside for rice cultivation in the rainy season which will provide sufficient yield for daily consumption of the whole family all year round.

Basic calculation:

$$4.5 \text{ rai} \times 320 \text{ kg.} = 1,440.00 \text{ kg}$$

$$6 \times 200 \text{ kg/person} = 1,200.00 \text{ kg}$$

The production surplus will be for sale.

The family will be self-reliant and have food security.

Part 3. Approximately 30% or 4.5 *rai* (0.72 hectare) will be used to grow multiple cropping for general purposes i.e. food, daily income, medicinal plants and fuel. The kinds and patterns of cropping will be varied from place to place, season to season, according to different environments and factors.

The pioneer crops should be banana and followed by fruit trees or other trees. While the trees are small, the annual crops such as pepper and eggplant would be suggested as intercrops.

Part 4. The last part, approximately 10% or 1.5 *rai* (0.24 hectare) and the remaining land will be

allocated to residential area, home garden, raising animals and other farm buildings.

Farm animals and fishery. Though the main activities of the “New Theory” Farming System are devoted to crops and plants for daily consumption and income, the land and labour may be available for some extension of animal and fish raising. Animal and fish breeds should be selected to suit the conditions and used as the means to supplement food and income only.

Coincidentally, His Majesty the King officially announced the “New Theory” concept and the result of his finding in 1996, and followed in 1997 at the time of high economic crisis of the nation. As a result of the crisis, several financial institutions, real estate and industrial factories collapsed. Labour force were laid off and had to return home. The government, therefore, accepted the “New Theory” as the national agenda. Accordingly, thousands of the “New Theory” farming system have been demonstrated and practiced nationwide. Ten thousands of successful farmers have been reported at the present time.

During the study visit, Your Excellencies and the distinguished guests would have the

opportunity to observe some of the “New Theory” plots, both at the Centre and at the farmer’s lands.

**Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,**

I hope that my lecture is informative and worth your time. I encourage your Excellencies as well as the distinguished participants to follow His Majesty’s footsteps in pursuing sufficiency economy in the daily conduct so as to ensure the true and long-lasting happiness in your life. I also wish a great success for the Ministerial Conference, as well as a pleasant stay in Thailand and the best of luck to you all.

ณ วันที่ 5 พฤศจิกายน 2547 เวลา 14.00 น.