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FEEDING THE MACHINE

Take a front line seat at world events and be part of the buzz in the region by joining the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand.

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Dateline magazine looks at the stories behind the stories. All offerings will be considered, from articles and photo essays to letters, essays, haiku or sonnets. How you covered a story, what you think about how journalism works, or even some gossip for the Soi Whispers column – send it all in, to editor Patrick Barta (Patrick.Barta@wsj.com) or deputy editor Azhar Sukri (azharhsukri@yahoo.co.uk). Submissions are paid for with glory and bar coupons.

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From the President...

By Ian Williams, President

I was one of the many Bangkok-based correspondents and photo-journalists who witnessed the political upheaval in Nepal in April. It was an exhilarating story to cover: hundreds of thousands of people on the streets, demanding – and eventually achieving – the restoration of democracy.

A little over a year earlier, Nepal's King Gyanendra had seized absolute power, blaming the incompetence and corruption of the mountain Kingdom's elected politicians. At that time, many people were fed up with their politicians, and the King had a lot of popular support, though that rapidly disappeared in the face of his own repressive misrule and an escalating Maoist insurgency.

Now Gyanendra's back in his Palace, the restored Parliament demanding he be stripped of most of his powers.

A day after he agreed to give up power, I found myself in the middle of an animated discussion among Nepali colleagues about the role of the monarchy – though as I listened further I discovered they weren't talking about Gyanendra, but Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

King Bhumibol had just appeared on Thai television addressing his Kingdom's top judges, telling them to exercise some judicial oversight in order to sort out what he called Thailand's political "mess". He said it was not right to call – as many had – on the King to intervene. In effect, he'd told them to do their job and sort it out themselves. "You cannot think in haste and pass the buck to the King," he said, remarks that were widely watched and applauded in Nepal.

"Now that's what a King should do," said one of my Nepali colleagues.

This determination to keep above the fray (while displaying a very deft political touch) is, perhaps, one reason why the world's longest-serving monarch has retained such authority and respect in Thailand and abroad. Kings, queens and other representatives from 26 of the world's monarchies were recently in Bangkok to celebrate his 60th year on the throne.

It's only fitting, then, that this edition of *Dateline* is dedicated to His Majesty the King.

The FCCT recently hosted an exhibition, the King Abroad



1950-1962, a special retrospective of rarely-seen photographs of His Majesty's many journeys abroad during that period. Many of those photos are reproduced in this *Dateline*.

In conjunction with this, we have an essay from Sumet Jumsai about how the media should view the Thai monarchy, as well as an article from Owen Wrigley about the Club's plans to reprint and update our book, the King of Thailand in World Focus, a collection of articles written about him over the years.

In addition, we have a photo essay on Nepal from photographer David Longstreath, who recorded those April events for Associated Press.

On behalf of all our members, I'd like to send our very best wishes to His Majesty the King in this auspicious year.



EVENTS

July: "Eyes of Wisdom -- The Spiritual Face of Religions" photo exhibition



Is there a way into the heart of the world's religions that opens up intuitively, without much having to be said? That is, through the human face, at first sight? Photographer Ralf Tooten and editor Bernhard Strathmann journeyed thousands of kilometres over four years to answer this question. Their answer

can be found in an extraordinary collection of portrait photographs on display at the FCCT in July entitled: "The Eyes of Wisdom."

They include the eyes of an ascetic Indian yogi, who has not left his temple in 40 years; the eyes of an eight-

year-old girl from Kathmandu, regarded as a saint in her Nepalese homeland; and the eyes of the Dalai Lama, that know the entire world and yet regard each human being with the same alertness and devotion. These are photos that prove eyes speak more than a thousand words.



August: "Life in 70 Rai" photo exhibition

Earlier this year, Korean photographer Yoonki Kim decided to begin photographing life in the 70 Rai slum in the Klongtoey area. The result

is "70 Rai," a show that focuses not on the poverty or despair of the slum but the "wealth" of its people and their minds. These black-and-white images capture a side of Bangkok that most correspondents never see.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The King of Thailand in World Focus (1927-2006) – An Appeal for New Articles and Photographs: In 1987, the FCCT produced *The King of Thailand in World Focus*, a collection of articles and photographs concerning His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Rama IX, as seen through the often-exacting lens of the international media. This much-admired book, produced to coincide with King Bhumibol's 60th birthday, has long since been out of print, but remains one of the most insightful and readable works on Thailand's monarch. It goes right back to his birth in the United States and upbringing in Switzerland, and takes in his accession, family life, state visits abroad in the 1950s and 1960s, his numerous hobbies, and also surveys his lifelong work for the political, economic and social development of Thailand in good times and bad.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of King Bhumibol's accession to the throne, and next year will see nationwide celebrations of his 80th birthday. At a much more modest level, the FCCT is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. One of the FCCT activities being undertaken to mark these happy anniversaries is an updating of the 1987 royal book.

Completely redesigned and reformatted, the new book will include foreign coverage of the intervening years during which King Bhumibol has become the world's longest-reigning monarch. It has not been plain sailing by any means – the dramatic royal intervention in May 1992 to end political chaos and bloodshed is still etched on the world's collective imagination, particularly in these tense political days.

From time to time, members will be kept abreast of the

project and how it is progressing. In the meantime, we are appealing to all members to think long and hard about any articles, photographs or illustrations they can recall which might be suitable for inclusion. We are particularly keen to secure non-English material for translation that might have been overlooked in the past and which would be of interest to a wider audience.

Time is of the essence, so if you have any suggestions please do not hesitate to get in touch or send this on to somebody you think can help. Remember that to qualify for inclusion, the material must first have appeared in foreign publications produced outside Thailand. The writers and photographers may of course be foreign or Thai.

Editorial submissions may either be left at the FCCT office addressed to Denis Gray and Dominic Faulder or e-mailed to them directly.

Sprucing Up Your Club: At long last, FCCT is looking to make some much-needed improvements to the Clubhouse – inside and out. Board member Craig Knowles is heading up an effort to enhance the outdoor deck, with better tables and chairs and more space. If you have ideas or suggestions, email Craig at cknowles@asiaworks.com.

Board member Amy Kazmin of *Financial Times* fame is heading up the indoor effort. As she and many others see it, the interior of FCCT could use a sprucing up – and more space to relax. If you have ideas, track Amy down and pass them along.

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- Tesco Lotus Superstores, Star Alliance, and Natural Ville Bangkok for support of the FCCT Hackers Golf Team.

For the past several years, Riche Monde (Bangkok) Ltd., has been a generous sponsor of the FCCT, providing an annual grant sufficient to fund half our popular Friday Night Jazz series. After a personal appeal to the company's

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president, Khun Voratthep "Ted" Rangchaikul, the firm's top management agreed to continue their sponsorship arrangement with the Club and to work together with us on projects and programs of mutual interest and benefit. Riche Monde (Bangkok) is part of the London-based Diageo group, the parent company of which, Diageo Plc, was formed in 1997 from the merger of Guinness and GrandMet. In Thailand, Riche Monde is the exclusive importer and distributor of such premium products as Johnnie Walker, Hennessy, Moët et Chandon, Tanqueray, Smirnoff and Bailey's Irish Cream.

We would also like to thank our great sponsors for last year's successful Christmas Party.



SOI WHISPERS

The Press or The Man?: The BBC fielded a large team of journalists in Nepal to cover the political upheaval there in April. You could tell who they were, since they all wore orange tabards, presumably so that the riot police could distinguish them from rock-throwing rioters. Other reporters soon christened them "municipal workers", since there seemed to be so many of them, going round in large groups. As one rival broadcaster commented, "if they get bored with the story, they can always fill the potholes". **Comings and goings:** Australian SBS video journalist **Ginny Stein** holds the world record for leaving parties from Bangkok, having left and returned more times than anybody can now recall. Not that anybody's complaining because the parties are always great. • Not to be outdone, the BBC's **Kylie Morris** pulled off the amazing stunt of inviting everybody to her leaving party – and then not leaving. Actually, that is not quite right. She ended up leaving the BBC, but not Bangkok, where she will be the new Asia correspondent for Britain's ITN Channel 4 News. • **Vaudine England** and her husband **Kees Metselaar**, meanwhile, decided to leave Bangkok for Hong Kong without any leaving parties or fanfare whatsoever. Their logic is that they expect to be back so often, it will seem as if they have never really left... And Newsweek's **Joe Cochrane**, after wondering for months whether he was coming or going, has now finally departed for Jakarta. • **Jonathan Head**, another old FCCT hand, is back in town, now at BBC. **Another new TV hand is here:** Welcome **Dan Rivers**, the new Bangkok correspondent for CNN. **More departures:** **Paris Lord** of Agence France Presse (and the FCCT board) has returned to Australia, where he'll be looking for new opportunities in the world of journalism. Nick Jonsson, another FCCT board member and a local P.R. bigwig, is heading to England for a new job. Good luck to both of you!



BBC reporter Charles Haviland – sporting tabard

The King Abroad

In honor of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Rama IX, The Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand marked the 60th Anniversary of The King's Accession to the Throne with a special retrospective exhibition of rarely-seen photographs. The exhibition, **The King Abroad: 1950-1962**, showcased specially selected photographs from His Majesty's journeys abroad during the 1950s and 1960s. They included photos from trips to neighboring countries, Europe and the U.S., and were drawn from a classic magazine of the day, *Thailand Illustrated*. It was truly a great honor for the FCCT to take part in such a special exhibition. This edition of *Dateline* features many of the highlights of the show – as well as a few extras that didn't make it to the FCCT's walls.



▲
▲
His Majesty plays with the "King of Swing" Benny Goodman in July 1960.

His Majesty the King, accompanied by Her Majesty the Queen, visited many countries in the earlier days of their reign to become better acquainted with other countries and improve relations with heads of state and other people around the world.

For example, His Majesty visited the Republic of Vietnam in December 1959, Indonesia in February 1960, and the Union of Burma in March 1960. He paid a visit to the United States from June to July 1960, where he met President Dwight D. Eisenhower and several celebrities, such as Elvis Presley, Walt Disney, and the jazz legend Benny Goodman. After the United States, His Majesty visited 13 countries in Europe between July and November in

►►
His Majesty the King waves to New Yorkers while proceeding along Broadway during the same trip.



DATeline BANGKOK • SECOND QUARTER 2010

the same year. Two years later, he paid a visit to Pakistan, the Federation of Malaya, New Zealand, and Australia. In 1963, His Majesty visited Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines.

Grand Chamberlain Khwankeo Vajarodaya, who spoke at FCCT to launch the expedition, accompanied His Majesty on several royal trips abroad as his personal photographer, especially from 1959 to 1963. He currently serves as Chairman of the Rajapranugroh Foundation and the Distance Learning Foundation.

Many of these photographs appeared in Thailand Illustrated. The magazine is published by the Public Relations Department of the Thai government (PRD) to enhance understanding between Thailand and the international

▶▶
Their Majesties the King and Queen of Thailand give an interview to Los Angeles reporters at Paramount Studios



◀◀
Walt Disney presents H.R.H Prince Vajiralongkorn and H.R.H. Princess Ubol Ratana with official Mickey Mouse flags.

community by presenting to non-Thai readers important aspects of Thai culture, customs, and lifestyle. Fifty years ago, this magazine was available at eight baht a copy, and the Government Lottery Office provided financial support for production.

Photographs published in the magazine in those days came mainly from photographers who worked for the PRD, which was established in 1933 following the change of the country's administrative system from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy in 1932. The PRD press section served as a medium between the Government and the press. PRD photographers were allowed to join royal trips to foreign countries to bring back photographs to be distributed to PRD publications and to other media.



▲ Their Majesties the King and Queen of Thailand visit the Shwedagon with Burmese President U Win Maung during a state visit in March 1960.



▲ On a film set, an informal chat between scenes with Elvis Presley.

"The King Abroad" was made possible through the kind assistance of the Broadcasting Museum of the Public Relations Department. Located at 9 Soi Areespamhan Rama VI Road (Tel. 02-618-2323 ext. 2212), the museum is an under-appreciated resource for anyone interested in the history of Thailand and the mass media. The museum includes a wide collection of historic media paraphernalia, including vintage radios and broadcasting equipment, microphones from the 1930s and even an antique Thai-language typewriter.



▲ Their Majesties the King and Queen of Thailand are greeted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh at Victoria Station in July 1960.



▲ Their Majesties were received by Pope John XXIII at the Vatican in October 1960.



▲ Their Majesties the King and Queen are greeted at Kuala Lumpur Airport by His Majesty Yangdi-Pertuan Agong and Her Majesty Raja Permaisuri Agong in June 1962.

Some reporters might dismiss the activities of monarchs as inconsequential, but in the case of Thailand, His Majesty has had an enormous impact on the lives of his subjects, writes **Dr. Sumet Jumsai**, a noted artist and architect whose work includes the Robot Building, Nation Tower and most recently the new Privy Council Building facing Wat Phra Keo at the Grand Palace.

Thailand's Working Monarch



▲ Who says the King never smiles? HM King Bhumibol being welcomed to a royal project near Chiang Mai by MC Bhisadej Rajani, January 1987.

King Rama IX is a working monarch who should be recognized for his exceptional achievement. Working for the past fifty years under the limits of a constitutional monarchy, the King has initiated, planned and monitored well over 4,000 projects in the agricultural, health, scientific, environmental and social fields. Because the projects and programmes are so numerous, I will list headings under which they can be grouped, and highlight some of them as examples.

- Total eradication of opium and cannabis growing with provision of substitution crops accompanied by social and educational programmes.
- Experimental farming leading to new farming methods based on self-reliance.

- Water management mostly on a micro level and hence community-based.
- Environmental conservation using nature or low technology.
- Artificial rain-making.
- Reforestation.
- Health care for marginalized communities, including the eradication of leprosy.
- Infrastructure in very poor areas of the country.
- Mechanical aerators to help clean polluted water. Several models were invented by the King and patented in 1979.

Under the heading of opium and cannabis eradication were a multitude of projects run by the Royal Project Foundation which was established in northern Thailand in

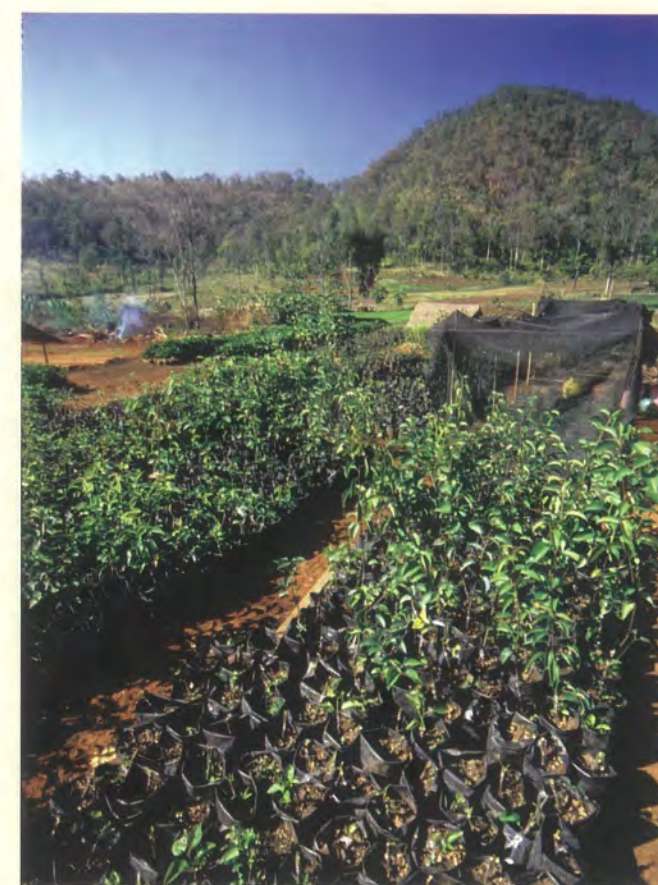
1969. The total disappearance of opium growing, itself a feat and a role model for UN agencies, led the British Government to recruit an expert in crop substitution from the programme to go to Afghanistan after the regime change there. Today, substituted crops in north Thailand include non-indigenous vegetables and fruits such as strawberries, apples, lichees and grapes, spurring wine-making and a range of agro industries previously thought to be impossible. Other programmes supported by the Foundation include soil conservation, rain forest conservation, medicinal plant research and farming, new agro technologies, agro management and marketing, and educational and health programmes for the highland tribesmen.

In 1988, the King founded another milestone foundation, the Chaipattana Foundation. The latter was to handle projects which could spread to other parts of the country besides the north. The main objective of the Foundation was to help accelerate rural development and it soon resulted in the doubling or even trebling of income for agricultural workers while, at the same time, conserving the environment. It also helped the government to circumvent budgetary problems by using startup funds from public donations.

Reciprocation by the government resulted in the setting up of the Office of the Royal Development Projects Board (ORDPB) with government funding. Since the King's projects were invariably community-based, projects undertaken by ORDPB provided critical links between the marginalized population and government agencies. Project planning in this instance was no longer top-down but was instead formulated together with people at the grass roots level.



▲ Badly deforested valley after clearing by lowlanders, northern Thailand.



▲ A royal project in northern Thailand that included cultivation of saplings for reforestation.

Under the Chaipattana Foundation, many community research projects were instituted. Research covered scientific and engineering aspects and it resulted, for example, in artificial rain-making now adopted in neighbouring countries, and aerators which today are put to use all over the country as well as abroad including, recently, Belgium.

A total of 3,724 projects was initiated by the King under the Chaipattana Foundation from its inception through to 2005. Adding programmes under the Royal Project Foundation, which numbered 626 in 2003, the number comes to 4,350. This total does not include hundreds more health care projects and research programmes affiliated with or outsourced to universities and other institutions.

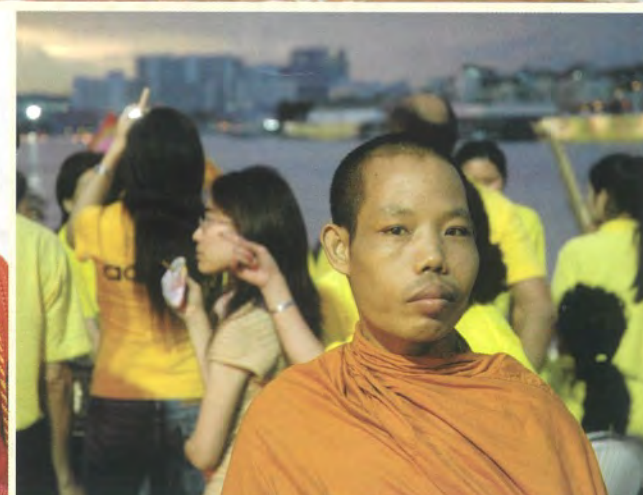
Today some may dismiss activities of monarchs as being noblesse oblige. But the 4,350 projects referred to, and more, go well beyond the limits and bounds of normal royal obligation. Some may think that the King has the authority to make anything happen. Yet with whatever prerogatives he may have, the King's actions have to be constitutional and in line with government policy. In this respect the King's authority is purely moral.

The King works relatively in low profile. We have glimpses of him on television traveling in the countryside. Little do we know that these are the tip of an iceberg of work undertaken with consistency and on a superhuman scale. And little do we realize that our monarch has been spending more than half the year away from the affluence of Bangkok to institute programmes in rural communities, that is, until in recent years when his doctors curbed his activities due to the state of his health.

The Royal Barge Procession



For many photographers, the royal barge procession for His Majesty's 60th anniversary was a unique opportunity to see Thailand at its most colorful and exotic. Yet much of the activity wasn't on the river – it was in the crowded walkways that snake up and down the Chao Phraya, where tens of thousands of Thais gathered to pay homage to the King. **Patrick Barta** from *The Wall Street Journal* wandered the crowds near Santa Cruz church in Thonburi – a forgotten community of narrow side streets and old wooden homes that somehow never got paved over when developers carved up the banks of the great river.



A small FCCT team is pushing ahead with a project to update the club's much praised 1988 volume, *The King of Thailand in World Focus*. Dr. Owen Wrigley, one of the key original editors, looks back here upon a labour of love that took him to giddy aristocratic peaks and the verge of physical collapse.

A Great Job Recognized: *King of Thailand in World Focus*



The original edition of *King of Thailand in World Focus*.

It was Denis Gray, the Associated Press's veteran bureau chief in Bangkok, who first floated the idea in early 1987 of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand publishing a book about His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Rama IX, as seen through the eyes of the foreign press. I was sitting on the club's board at the time, and it seemed a pretty good idea to all of us. Little did we know what we were getting ourselves into.

The desktop publishing revolution we now all take for granted was in its infancy. In my day job, I was working on a major dictionary project

documenting Thailand's unique sign language. The first volume had been done by cut and paste. The second volume was going to be three times larger, and I was therefore keen to familiarise myself with the intricacies of page layout. Given this ulterior motive, I immediately volunteered for the royal book project.

If that was not foolhardy enough, and almost as an afterthought, I also volunteered to produce an update of the last known House of Chakri genealogy chart, which had been published in HRH Prince Chula Chakrabongse's 1961 book, *Lords of Life*. Over the months to come, I often



The launch dinner for the original *The King of Thailand in World Focus* was presided over by former Prime Minister MR Kukrit Pramoj. He is seen here with FCCT Past President Yuli Ismartono (1988-9), and Owen Wrigley.

regretted being so easy with my suggestions.

The FCCT's thrifty board and management were pleased by the savings they expected to reap from doing the primary input and layout work on club members' own computers. The hardware and software we used were all early versions that today seem incredibly primitive. Text was entered on a Macintosh SE using Microsoft Word 3.01a. It was then placed into a page layout program, PageMaker 2.0a, which was used to create the columns, text sidebars, and photo blocks. Photo credits and other graphic items were developed in Illustrator 1.0.

The final layout and actual production were done by Blake & Associates at George Mann's CompuPrint, which later moved to an upstairs office in Patpong Road of all places. His was the first desktop publishing company in Thailand. For the technically and historically minded, the FCCT book was set on what was then state-of-the-art equipment, using Macintosh II computers.

Photo paste-up was done by the artists at John Everingham's Artasia Press, and then returned for final plate productions at CompuPrint.

When checks were recently made to see what survived from that time in the way of backups and plates, the present editors drew a complete blank. Everything relating to the actual production of the book had been scrapped or lost. All that survives are copies of the book itself, which has become quite a collector's item, sometimes retailing online for over US\$ 60. All the text from the original book will have

to be re-entered in one way or another for the new volume, which will be titled *The King of Thailand in World Focus 1927-2006*.

The actual work required for the original book was divided into three parts. The first was the raw collection of articles and features, old and new, for review. Denis Gray led this fearless excavation of media morgues around the world. He and his dedicated team used all means at their disposal to badger news agencies, archives, embassies, friends and acquaintances for copies or leads on stories for the FCCT's unique collection. An enormous number of people, most notably James Di Crocco and Rosemary Whitcraft, helped in these efforts, collecting, reviewing and winnowing articles that brought fresh outside insights to the Thai kingdom's most revered institution.

The photo hunt was led by John Everingham, and required equal resourcefulness. Some photos were even borrowed off the living room walls of long-suffering members of the Royal Family and prominent officials. Fortunately, much of that material has been securely stored down the years. Given the amazing advances in technology, and the much higher quality paper being used in the new book, the few pictures which can only be recovered by being lifted from the original book will actually look better in reproduction.

The third phase was translation, giving foreign-language articles a new and larger audience in English for the first time. Convincing those who helped uncover non-English text to actually translate them often involved considerably more

The launch of the original *The King of Thailand in World Focus* on 22 June 1988 included a panel discussion with, from left, Editor In Chief Denis Gray; former Prime Minister MR Kukrit Pramoj; FCCT President Yuli Ismartono; and Editor Owen Wrigley.



Photo: Dominic Faulder

work than the initial research.

After winnowing the mountain of material down to a representative, non-repetitive selection, everything had to be manually keyed, or "typed" as we used to say. My secretary, Khun Patra Vanij-Vongse, and I hammered out the entire manuscript on my office Mac SE, carefully saving our work on diskettes.

Then came the really hard graft of endless proof-reading and corrections. Most people are spoilt by never having to handle this arduous aspect of publishing. There were no spell-checkers in those ancient days. The hours spent correcting ellipses, quotation marks and spellings, not to mention selecting fonts and sizes, italics, underlines and various other print specifications, grew into interminable weeks of late nights and weekends.

The updating of the genealogy chart, which seemed such an inspired idea at the outset, turned out to be extremely complicated. Certain issues were considered highly sensitive. When the final work was presented, the Deputy Principal Private Secretary turned to me and said: "So, you're the one who has done this chart. You're very brave." I was told that I blanched a whiter shade of pale at the comment. Of course, the same issues may remain just as sensitive going into the revised edition, but they are not new.

One of the most vexing problems concerned the use of standardized spelling. At first I used Royal Institute transliterations, but the Royal Household seemed to prefer the older, original spellings. Needless to say, we changed to reflect the latter. There were a number of lesser royals

on my list who would have been interesting to include. They were ultimately left off in order to be equal in treatment, balancing the chart across the lower listings included, and to keep it from expanding over any more pages. Even in this 'reduced' size, which covered only the main lines of descent, the checking and quadruple rechecking of the smallest details ensured that the chart of the Chakri family tree was the very last item completed in the project.

I have to say that all the hours spent were more than justified by the finished product. The book has always been highly regarded, and was frequently included among items presented as gifts from the Royal Thai Government to dignitaries ranging from Margaret Thatcher and Miss Universe to the Emperor of Japan. The chart that was the source of so much angst proved to be a particularly hot item. Several thousand copies were purchased by the armed forces and can still be found mounted on military walls throughout the country.

A very large number of people contributed richly and freely to the original *The King of Thailand in World Focus*, and its acknowledgement pages could only ever hint at the effort involved. That said, I do believe we were all very happy with the final result. The new volume will be even better, both in content and print quality.

On a personal note, I cannot tell you how very, very pleased I was to learn that we will be having the layout done professionally this time!



Even as His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej has helped preserve democracy in Thailand, another monarchy has steered Nepal in another direction. Many Bangkok-based journalists covered the story – including FCCT president **Ian Williams**, the Asia correspondent for ITN Channel 4 News. Here's his report.

Reporters on the front lines in Kathmandu.

Another Kind of Kingdom

The great unsung heroes of television news are often the men and women we call "fixers". The name makes them sound like some kind of less-than-glamorous functionary or odd-job person. Yet these are the people who make all the difference when it comes to covering a breaking story like the political upheaval in Nepal.

They are, quite literally, your eyes and ears, your guide. They are the people who fix things for you, and are indispensable, however well you think you know the lay of the land. I've never appreciated them as much as I did in Nepal, when, having vaulted over our hotel wall during a curfew, we were led through the narrow deserted back-streets of Kathmandu



▲
The protests in Nepal
attracted everyone – men,
women, whole families

by a tenacious local journalist and fixer called Alok.

I was with my cameraman, Julian Hadden, his small camera hidden in a backpack, together with CNN's new Bangkok Correspondent Dan Rivers and his cameraman and long-time Bangkok hand, Kit Swartz. This was a few days before the King threw in the towel, and the authorities had refused to give curfew passes to the media, saying that anyone breaking the curfew would be shot on sight. Huge protests – the biggest so far – were planned by the opposition, and it seemed the government didn't want journalists to witness them, or the inevitable violence.

So it was with some trepidation that we met our first group of heavily-armed police at a junction in Thamel, the usually bustling tourist quarter, now shuttered and eerily quiet. There was no way of sneaking around them, so an unflappable Alok told them we were foreign tourists – a stupid, ignorant bunch – and that he was our guide, taking us to the monkey temple near the ring-road, which we'd insisted on visiting.

Police and fixer exchanged knowing smiles – silly, foreign tourists – and we were waved on. It was a scene repeated several times until we actually reached the temple, where the monkeys made a more concerted effort at confiscating our equipment than the police.

Beyond the temple there were fewer checkpoints and we soon reached the ring road. There was no curfew beyond this road, where thousands of angry young protesters were gathering and had vowed to try and break into the city. Our destination was a town called

Kalanki, which we reached four hours after leaving our hotel, and where fierce clashes between protesters and the police had left three people dead. They'd been shot at close range, pools of blood still glistening on the ground, as skirmishes continued and chanting protesters taunted the riot police.

We stayed long enough to record the scene, shoot a stand-up, and talk to witnesses, before running the gauntlet back into the city to file our reports.

With hindsight, that was probably the turning point for King Gyanendra. The killings further inflamed the anger against him, and over the coming days hundreds of thousands took to the streets demanding he step down and restore democracy. The pace was being set from the streets. The protests – initiated by the political parties – now had a momentum of their own, attracting people – men, women, children, whole families – who had never taken to the streets before. Four days after those Kalanki killings, the King went on television to announce that he was restoring parliament.

It was an exhilarating story to cover, but a challenging one for television. That might sound odd. After all, the pictures couldn't have been stronger. Nothing like a good riot. But that was the challenge: to put those pictures in some sort of context. The easiest thing



▲ Our fearless correspondents: Ian Williams and
▲ Julian Hadden



▲
What will be the
role of the army?

was to cruise the streets looking for the next confrontation, the harder part was to explain the complexities of it.

A day or so after the Kalanki killings, we spotted a group of protesters confronting riot police in a side street off the ring road. We ran up the road see what was going on. The protesters were burning some tyres, but it all seemed to be over. On seeing us and our camera, they began to re-group and prepared to throw stones at the police. We quickly pulled out because if it had turned violent, that would have been a direct result of our presence. Sometimes it's a fine line, but the presence of television cameras can often inflame or create a situation that otherwise would not happen.

Behind the rocks and tear-gas, it was – and is – a complicated story: the politicians, now trying to fashion Nepal's future, are a pretty motley bunch. Their previous efforts were plagued by corruption and incompetence (indeed, for this reason, the King's seizure of absolute power last year was initially welcomed by many Nepalese people).

The Maoists, who supported the protests,

and who have announced a ceasefire, say they will enter negotiations to end their insurgency. But they aren't a particularly cuddly bunch either, with a record of extortion and extreme violence, and they clearly have their own agenda. They could well out-manoeuvre the weak politicians. And were does that leave the army? Parliament recently stripped the King of control of the army, but the soldiers retain a loyalty to the Palace, and are unlikely to stand idly by if the Maoists appear to be taking power through the back door.

Perhaps one of the most encouraging things we witnessed was the renaissance of the Nepalese media. They'd faced heavy censorship under the King; many journalists were jailed. But by the time the King stepped down they had recovered their voice – sometimes with a slight, if understandable touch of hyperbole. As one paper said, describing one curfew-breaking protest: "About ten thousand protesters yesterday held a torch-lit parade in broad daylight." Now that was audacious.



Associated Press photographer **David Longstreath** was also on the scene in April when protests spilled into the streets in Nepal, captivating a world audience. He shares a diary of his experience – and some of his photos – with *Dateline*.



I arrived late in Kathmandu, coming in on Sunday, April 23, 2006 on the noon flight. As I flew in, I could see demonstrations near the airport. Streets were filled with people, and at intersections I could clearly see burning tyres.

Nothing was mentioned as we made our way through immigration. At the curbside, there were no taxis and I was left to find my own way to the Hyatt hotel, which was outside the curfew zone.

The bus of course was packed, and as it chugged along, it was clear that the streets, except for demonstrators, were empty. Shops were closed and sacred cows were left to wander aimlessly.

Manish Swarup, a fellow shooter from India – and wearing a riot helmet – stopped the bus, got me off and

walked me to the Hyatt.

One hour later I was in the middle of a mob of almost 5,000 people who had strangely turned on one another and were fighting with each other as the Kathmandu police just watched. The result was images of men being beaten by the mob who were thought to be police informers.

I filed the images through the business center of the Hyatt but I had also brought a satellite dish with me. Curfew became a problem when trying to move around. When the King announced a peace proposal two days later, the big standoff seemed over and I spent the next five days working street features with Delhi bureau chief Tim Sullivan and also taking a trip into the mountains east of Kathmandu.



Raymond Eaton, R.I.P.

By MR Usnisa Sukhsvasti

Bangkok will fondly remember Raymond Eaton, who passed away on 14 April as a result of a massive heart attack at the age of 64. A stalwart among an older generation of FCCT members, Ray delighted in playing to the gallery at question time.

Ray was on his way to Phuket on 12 April when he collapsed while checking in at the airport. He was transferred in a coma to a hospital where, in the presence of his family from Australia and close, long-serving staff, he died peacefully two days later without regaining consciousness.

His heart had always given him trouble – in more ways than one.

After two major open-heart surgeries, Ray bounced back, taking life a little slower, but remaining a steady fixture on the social circuit. He was always upbeat about his condition, despite the occasional bouts with pneumonia. Ray was perfectly aware of his precarious condition, but never really let on how bad he was in public.

"I think I'll just put a zip in this time," he joked when confronted with the prospect of a third operation. "The doctor can open me up whenever he wants!" Joking aside, he knew the chances of recovery were slim.

The valve wasn't the only thing wrong with his heart. He suffered from a weakness for beautiful women. He once admitted he wasn't so successful with wives, and even described his second divorce as "financially ruinous". Yet he was the perfect gentleman, with never a bad word about any of his past relationships. He never learned from his past mistakes either.

Ray truly had a heart of gold. Close friends know how supportive he was of Father Joe Maier's Mercy Centre for the children of Klong Toey. The annual Christmas party at Ray's Nichada Thani home was a day when the kids took over the spectacular modern glass sculpture of a home that he was so proud of, with its swimming pool, home theatre and modern art collection.

Born in Melbourne and educated at the University of New South Wales, Ray started out in the retail business as a merchandise manager



Photo: Bureau Bangkok

for a Sydney department store. He arrived in Bangkok from Australia in 1973, intent on doing business in Southeast Asia. Not long afterwards, he teamed up with Paul Sithi-Amnuay during the heyday of the latter's vast business empire, PSA Group.

When the company disintegrated in 1987, Ray set up his own company dealing in various investments, and imports and exports, particularly of garments. He was active with the American Chamber of Commerce, and was one of the first foreign businessmen to attempt to break into the Vietnamese market in the 1990s – a venture which proved unsuccessful in the long-run. In fact, Ray probably coined the joke that to become a millionaire in Vietnam, it was best to arrive as a billionaire.

Ray's funeral at Wat Makut Kasatriyaram followed his detailed instructions. These included a lone bagpiper playing "Amazing Grace" at the cremation. The piper turned out to be a beautiful young blonde woman from Ireland. Ray would have approved.

As a parting gift, friends attending the cremation were given a souvenir "heart" pillow on which were embroidered the words "Take good care of your heart". That was so much like Ray.



During a special cultural evening in October 1996, club stalwart Ray Eaton went down literally on bended knee beside HRH Princess Bopha Devi, the daughter of HM King Norodom Sihanouk and one of Cambodia's most highly respected classical dancers.

Eating as the Romans Eat

By Bangkok Chowhound

Adventurous eaters are made, not born. For every parent who claims that their little darling simply loves artichokes, sashimi and Trippa alla Romana, there are at least 20 more little children out there who survive on peanut butter, cereal, potato chips, raisins, and apple juice.

As someone who prides herself as willing to give every edible object a nibble or two, I have to admit that I was not a courageous, daring eater as a child. Despite my parents' omnivorous palates, I was quite dogmatic about what was acceptable as sustenance. Milk had to be chilly and seafood could not be overly fishy or chewy. Black was not a natural color for food. And anything that was eaten purely for the "texture" had to be avoided at all costs.

During the occasional family pilgrimage to Taiwan, these rules meant moments of complete and irreversible loss of face for my parents. Our relatives would proudly produce dish after dish of rare and costly ingredients: dried scallops, shitake mushrooms, and sea cucumbers. I would then spend half the meal meticulously plucking out the most expensive thing in a dish, forming a rejected little heap on the edge of the plate and blithely ignoring my parents' half-disapproving, half-pleading looks. At least I was a bit better than my brother, who spent the first four years of his life alternating between chocolate milk and McDonald's French fries.

It wasn't until I went on a high school trip to Moscow that I learned the many advantages of discarding your culinary principles and phobias, and digging in as the natives do. On the night of our arrival, school officials hosted the most lavish banquet they could muster. This was during the days of the former Soviet Union, so while food wasn't scarce, it was unrelenting in its monotony and utterly mysterious in its provenance. That first night, we were given what was recognizably Chicken Kiev, accompanied by barely defrosted peas and bottles of Russian champagne. One of my fellow students, however, insisted on sticking to her vegetarian principles and demanded the meat-less option. After



The AWSJ's Stan Sesser is not Bangkok Chowhound, but still knows a thing or two about deep fried insects.

half an hour of translation and debate over whether vegetarianism was a sign of bourgeois corruption, a waiter took away her plate, and returned, with the maligned Chicken Kiev gone and an extra serving of icy peas in its place. "Great peas," she kept muttering during the otherwise convivial meal, angrily stabbing the withered, grey-green, semi-frozen blobs.

Three weeks later, she developed a probable case of anemia, a reputation for fussiness, and, I now suspect, an eating disorder. The rest of us emerged more or less intact, having only acquired the slightly greenish hue of one who has been eating nothing but meat and potatoes for 21 days in a sunless, frigid climate.

This is not a rant against vegetarians, vegans, and their ilk, but rather a paean to going native in an epicurean sense. After months of earnestly studying Russian literature, I learned more about Russian culture, history and national psychology by eating what they ate, especially when I went back to Moscow for an entire school term. Three months of shoveling down meat and potatoes at least twice a day taught me more about Dostoyevsky's bleak view on life and hunger for spiritual transcendence than

reading reams of critical essays. Mixing cherry preserves into black tea – Russian-style – while sitting huddled with six other students around an old space heater gave a real insight into Chekhov's humane, tolerant irony.

Since then, I've been eagerly devouring almost everything that has been proffered to me in foreign lands. Sometimes it's against my better judgment. In Bhutan, it was salted, dried yak's cheese that lasted for hours and sucked all the moisture from my mouth more efficiently than any equipment at the dentist's office. Once in Taiwan, friends insisted that I try what I thought were slices of rather gamey dried beef. Not wanting to offend, I swallowed at least three slices before they triumphantly told me it was bull's testicles. In the Philippines, I politely consumed a plate of seaweed that still had sand clinging to it.

A friend asked once whether there was anything that I didn't, or rather, wouldn't eat. It took a while for me to answer, but I do maintain some boundaries that shall not be crossed: no pets, no endangered species, nothing that still shows signs of life, and no cinnamon raisin or blueberry bagels (goy-ish inventions, bagels are meant to be savory). Oh, and I'd rather not eat anything that's had close contact with excreta. Somewhere in China, they allegedly eat pigs' sphincters. I'd probably give that one a miss.

Still, being of open mind gastronomically has rewards beyond cultural anthropology. Usually, adventure eating leads one to the best food, and acceptance by the locals. Recently, in Isaan, an NGO worker reproached me for not being fluent in Thai, and entirely ignorant of the local dialect. But after lunch, he said admiringly, "If someone were to judge you by the way that you eat, they'd think you were from Isaan."



Want to test your culinary boundaries? Try Ja Roeng Restaurant, which serves up a variety of snake, crocodile, deer and ostrich dishes. The restaurant is most famous for cobra, including "tom yum" cobra, spicy cobra salad, black pepper-fried cobra and cobra fried in a garlic-pepper mix. Ja Roeng Restaurant is located in Rangsit, Pathumthanee, on the in-bound road side of Phaholothin Rd, a few minutes beyond The Future Park Mall. Tel. 02 516 9274

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