

Some Thoughts about Thailand

In Thailand the poorest people are generally the kindest.

Monks in Thailand are ranked in terms of popularity not unlike the way athletes are ranked in other countries.

In a nation with over 200,000 Buddhist monks, why are Buddhist nuns so rare?

In a nation where 5% of the people own over 70% of the wealth, any semblance of a democracy is likely to be superficial.

If a nation has more coup d'états than constitutional changes, any talk of democracy should be regarded with skepticism.

In many parts of Thailand, the police are simply uniformed gangsters.

I concur with Amnesty International that Thailand's lèse majesté laws have a chilling effect on the legitimate exercise of natural human rights. Those laws are too often abused as a vehicle for systematic repression.

Ironically, in 2005 King Bhumibol Adulyadej himself remarked that any human should be open to criticism and the monarch, too, is human.

The Buddhist Church in Thailand serves a role not unlike the Church of England in the U.K.: cementing orthodoxy, empowering the royalty, and offering perfunctory services for the poor.

Les, bi, trans, or gay seem perfectly okay
if you learn to smile in a wonderful Thai way.

One measure of the wealth of a nation is the ability of its people to smile.
In this sense, many Thais appear to be rich.

The elite of Bangkok are not unlike Boston brahmins who regard the rest of their nation as a bunch of primitive hillbillies.

Buddhism is a jewel, but is valuable only to those who acknowledge it. The non-Buddhists in Thailand would be better off if the Thai church and state were separate. Come to think of it, this is a good idea in general. Let people pray untainted by any political or worldly ambitions.

Torture, capital punishment, and forced slavery should have no place in a country that is truly Buddhist.

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