

**THE DAY THE SKY  
TREMBLED:**

**10 AUG**

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**A CALL TO  
TRANSFORM THE MONARCHY**

**PANUPONG JADNOK**

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**ARNON NAMPHA**

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**The Day the Sky  
Trembled:  
A Call to Transform the  
Monarchy**

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# Table of Contents

Introduction to the English Translation	1
Introduction to the Thai Edition	14
An Appropriate Place for the Thai King Panupong Jadnok	17
No One Is Born Higher: Everyone Stands on the Same Ground Panusaya Sithijirawattanakul	23
The Demand Between the Lines: The King Above Politics and Under the Constitution Arnon Nampha	29
Down With Feudalism, Long Live the People Parit Chiwarak	38
Appendix: UFTD Declaration No. 1	51

# Introduction to the English Translation



Boxes and boxes of a thin, compact booklet with *The Day The Sky Trembled* emblazoned across the red cover were seized by the police on the morning of 19 September 2020 from a student share house close to the Rangsit campus of Thammasat University.<sup>1</sup> Bound for the #ReturnPowerToThePeople protest organized by the United Front of Tham-

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<sup>1</sup> iLaw, “หนังสือ ‘ปรากฏการณ์สะท้านฟ้า’ กับปฏิบัติการ ‘ปิดแผ่นฟ้าด้วยฝ่ามือ’” [“The booklet ‘The Day the Sky Trembled’ and the operation to cover it up”], 6 October 2020, <https://freedom.ilaw.or.th/node/854>.

masat and Demonstration (UFTD) at Sanam Luang, the booklet contained the text of speeches given the month prior by Panupong (Mike) Jadnok, Arnon Nampha and Panusaya (Rung) Sithijirawattanakul at the inaugural protest of the UFTD on 10 August; the speech of Parit (Penguin) Chiwarak at a subsequent protest in Khon Kaen; and the UFTD's first declaration. Over 45,000 copies of the seized booklet of speeches filled three trucks and were taken to the Region 1 Headquarters of the Border Patrol Police (BPP) to be used as evidence in both existing and future criminal cases.<sup>2</sup>

At a protest one week prior to the inauguration of the UFTD, Arnon, dressed as Harry Potter, made the first call to speak openly about the monarchy and its role in Thai society.<sup>3</sup> The UFTD built on Ar-

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<sup>2</sup> On 11 January 2021, Natchanon Phairoj, a member of the UFTD and a student in the Faculty of Political Science at Thammasat University, was summoned to the Khlong Luang Police Station and formally accused of violation of Article 112 and the Printing Recordation Act. He was charged because he was with the books when the police came to seize them from the student share house. For details, see Thai Lawyers for Human Rights, “แจ้งข้อหา ม.112-พ.ร.บ.การพิมพ์ ‘ณัฐชนน’ นศ. มธ. เหตุนั่งมาที่รถขนหนังสือ ‘ปรากฏการณ์สะท้านฟ้า’” [“Natchanon, Thammasat University student, informed of charges under Article 112-Computer Crimes Act due to sitting in the same vehicle with the copies of the ‘The Day the Sky Trembled’ book”], 11 January 2021, <https://tlhr2014.com/archives/24934>.

<sup>3</sup> Following convention, Thais are referred to by given name

non's call and fundamentally expanded the horizon of political expression and shifted the framework of protests calling for democracy that began in earnest in Thailand in June 2020. At the end of the UFTD protest, Panusaya read out the group's first declaration, a ten-point manifesto for reform of the monarchy, which put into words fundamental questions about the place of the monarchy in the Thai polity. The demands of the UFTD included a call for Article 112 of the Criminal Code, the law that describes the crime and sets the punishment for *lèse majesté*, to be revoked; for the king to cease endorsing coups; for investigations to be carried out in the cases of murdered and disappeared republican exiles; and for the division between the king's private assets and those of the crown to be clarified.<sup>4</sup> The immediate response to the declaration was that the youth had gone too far and transgressed both the law and social norms. Their crime was not to infringe upon the monarch, but to make audible the questions usually limited to whispered gossip and private conver-

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rather than surname.

<sup>4</sup> Article 112 stipulates that, "Whoever defames, insults or threatens the king, queen, heir-apparent or regent, shall be punished with imprisonment of three to fifteen years." On Article 112, see David Streckfuss, *Truth on Trial in Thailand: Defamation, Treason, and Lèse Majesté* (London: Routledge, 2010).

sation.<sup>5</sup> Once made public, the questions could no longer be avoided and the pact of enforced silence guaranteeing the primacy of the institution of the monarchy and related organs, including the military and judiciary, began to fall away.

Activists responded to the seizure of the paper copies of *The Day The Sky Trembled* by immediately releasing it as a free PDF download.<sup>6</sup> The #ReturnPowerToThePeople demonstration on 19 September, held on the fourteenth anniversary of the 2006 coup, went smoothly, with the people taking over Sanam Luang, the Royal Ground, which they renamed Sanam Ratsadorn, the People's Ground, until the morning of 20 September. Protestors spread out mats and slept through the night after the afternoon and evening speeches and musical performances came to an end. At dawn, UFTD leaders placed a plaque in the ground commemorating the protest, affirming that the country belongs to the people, and recalling the similar plaque embedded in the road by the People's Party to mark the end of the

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<sup>5</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, "A Hypocritical Nation Is Not What The Youth Want," translated by Tyrell Haberkorn, *Prachatai English*, 17 August 2020, <https://prachatai.com/english/node/8728>.

<sup>6</sup> The original Thai-language version can be downloaded here: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IWelfUGt98ruXXMwE-CuLTC09mZFNgkyU/view?fbclid=IwAR36uYo944oWqRay-Vxc9MzR9bb0MR\\_yWCDoEaur0vcrULshxlmwfZkNs6NI](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IWelfUGt98ruXXMwE-CuLTC09mZFNgkyU/view?fbclid=IwAR36uYo944oWqRay-Vxc9MzR9bb0MR_yWCDoEaur0vcrULshxlmwfZkNs6NI)

absolute monarchy on 24 June 1932.<sup>7</sup> The protest concluded with Panusaya leading a march to the Privy Council and handing a letter addressed to the current king, Maha Vajiralongkorn, or Rama 10, with the 10 demands of the UFTD to a senior police officer stationed outside.<sup>8</sup>

Resonant with the disappearance of the People's Party plaque in March 2017, the plaque placed by the UFTD disappeared within a day.<sup>9</sup> Yet while the plaque disappeared, and the king has yet to respond to the UFTD's letter, the protests continued. Throughout October, November and December 2020, the UFTD as well as other youth organizations,

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<sup>7</sup> The current ruling dynasty in Thailand is the Chakri dynasty, which began in 1782 with the reign of Rama 1. The Chakri kings ruled as absolute monarchs until the People's Party, a coalition of civilian and military leaders, fomented a transition from absolute to constitutional monarchy in June 1932 during the reign of Rama 7. The People's Party allowed Rama 7 to remain king, as long as he consented to being placed under a constitution.

<sup>8</sup> Rung's speech has been published in the original Thai: ปณัสยา สิทธิจิรวัฒนกุล [Panusaya Sitthijirawattanakul], "คำประกาศราษฎรที่เป็นมนุษย์ มิใช่ฝุ่นละอองธุลีพระบาท จดหมายถึง ร. 10" ["Declaration of the People as Human, Not the King's Dust: A Letter to Rama 10"], *ฟ้าเดียวกัน* [*Fa Diew Kan*] 18.2 (July-December 2563 [2020]), 183-187.

<sup>9</sup> Anna Lawannatrakul, "Uprooting Democracy: The War of Memory and the Lost Legacy of the People's Party," *Prachatai English*, 19 December 2019, <https://prachatai.com/english/node/8312>.



including Free People, Bad Student, 24 June and those specific to various secondary schools and universities and provinces, organized flash mobs at mass transit stations, street festivals of protests, seminars, and many other activities. Despite the warnings of their opponents, and even the use of tear gas, chemical-laced high-pressure water cannons and rubber bullets, the number of those in the streets in Bangkok and the provinces grew, rather than shrank. Protest leaders began to face arrest and short stints of detention on protest-related charges of sedition and violation of the Public Assembly Act. In December, the use of Article 112, which had ceased for a time, returned. According to Thai Lawyers for Human Rights, by June 2021, at least 101 people are facing accusations of violation of Article 112 stemming from the protests that began in mid-2020.<sup>10</sup> As each accusation makes its way from the stage of police investigation to formal indictment by the prosecutor and then to acceptance of the indictment by the Criminal Court, each accused activist must apply for bail. The Criminal Court's initial response to requests for bail has often been denial, and the explanation given is that Article 112 is a grave crime against national security that carries a heavy penalty, and so if

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<sup>10</sup> Thai Lawyers for Human Rights, “สถิติผู้ถูกดำเนินคดีมาตรา 112 ‘หมิ่นประมาทกษัตริย์’ ปี 2563-64” [“Statistics of Prosecutions for Article 112 ‘Lèse Majesté’ Cases, 2020-2021”], 24 June 2021, <https://tlhr2014.com/archives/23983>.

released, those accused are likely to flee.

The four activists whose speeches are collected here are also those with the highest number of pending cases. Parit has 20 cases, Arnon has 12, Panusaya has 9, and Panupong has 8. The #ReturnPowerToThePeople protest on 19 September 2020, where the original Thai-language booklet of speeches was to be distributed, is the first case in which the four are accused in which has a prosecution order has been issued by the Criminal Court. Parit was remanded on 9 February 2021 and released on 11 May after 92 days of detention and a hunger strike of 57 days. Panusaya was remanded on 8 March and released on 6 May after 60 days of detention and a hunger strike of 39 days. Parit and Panusaya were denied bail nine and five times, respectively, before release. Their release came with conditions that included refraining from doing anything to offend the monarchy. Arnon, who was remanded since 9 February, and Mike, remanded since 8 March, were released in early June.

The use of Article 112 did not cease the protests, but instead changed their form. Beginning in late 2020, demonstrations sprouted up outside the police stations where the accused went to respond to the initial accusations.<sup>11</sup> Then, once activists be-

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<sup>11</sup> The translator was present at one of these demonstrations and was moved by the concluding chant of "Revoke Article 112." As those present yelled out this phrase, the police

gan to be remanded in February 2021, protests were held outside the court each time a bail hearing was held. In addition, following the remand of Parit and Arnon, daily silent vigils for 112 minutes, in reference to the lèse majesté law, began outside the Supreme Court in Bangkok and in central locations in the provinces. The mothers of those detained organized similar protests in front of the prison complex where their children were being held each Saturday afternoon. The organizers of these protests, too, are beginning to face criminal charges for daring to support those detained and accused of insulting the monarchy.

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The contents of *The Day the Sky Trembled* are translated into English here for reasons of both history and advocacy. Despite the extensive English-language news coverage of these protests, the best source of the ideals and goals of the protestors remains their own words. Simultaneously, journalists and scholars working in English have often been as cautious, if not more, than those working in Thai with respect to critical analysis of the monarchy. This means that the most rigorous questioning -- and the most exciting discussions, analytically and politically

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helped to direct traffic and waited for the protest to end. The existence of such an event, unthinkable before 10 August 2020, is evidence of the transformation that has already taken place in Thailand.

-- of the place of the monarchy in the Thai polity only happens in Thai and does not travel into English. One of the key assertions made by the protestors, and one that the four activists whose speeches are translated here emphasize, is that the monarchy is an issue that can, and must be discussed in an open and straightforward manner. This translation of *The Day the Sky Trembled* aims to contribute to this effort.

The speeches and the broader movement are about the toxic intersection of monarchy, military, judiciary, and capital and the damage to the country done by the extended regime of Prayuth Chan-ocha. By July 2021, Prayuth has been prime minister for over seven years since first coming to power in the 22 May 2014 coup. For the first five years, he held the role as the head of the junta he led, the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO). Domestic and international pressure led to a national election on 24 March 2019 that was neither free nor fair.<sup>12</sup> Constraints put in place by the junta-authored 2017 Constitution gave military-aligned political parties and former members of the NCPO a significant advantage. In particular, when it was time for parliament to elect the prime minister, General Prayuth's victory was guaranteed by the 250 upper-house senators appointed by the NCPO, despite the significant wins

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<sup>12</sup> Prajak Kongkirati, "Overview: Political Earthquakes," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 41.2 (August 2019), 163-169.

by opposition parties in the election for the 500 lower-house members. Constant across both the NCPO regime and the semi-democracy, semi-dictatorship that he has led since March 2019, General Prayuth presents himself as a defender of the monarchy. In practice, this has meant extensive prosecution of Article 112 cases under the NCPO, managing the transition from Rama 9 to Rama 10 following the former's death on 13 October 2016, assent to the changes to the 2017 Constitution requested by Rama 10 after the draft passed a referendum, and assent to the extraparliamentary actions taken by the king.

The daring of the basic call of all four speakers — that the monarchy is an issue that can be discussed — is itself diagnostic of the kinds of problems facing Thai society. The most immediate impetus for this movement is therefore the 22 May 2014 coup, but nearly all four speakers reference the 24 June 1932 end of the absolute monarchy. They position themselves as part of a long genealogy of activists working to make the promise of constitutional monarchy real. In the first speech, Panupong, a student at Ramkhamhaeng University, expresses his overwhelming faith in the people. He analyzes the shifting sovereignty of the king and what this means for the Thai people and the polity. Then, Panusaya, a student in the Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology at Thammasat University, stresses the importance of equality of birth and the impossibility of any given human being born to a higher position than an-

other. She links existing inequality between the king and the people to violence visited upon those who think differently. Pointing to the direct relations between such inequality and violence, she calls for accountability for disappeared and murdered exiled dissidents.<sup>13</sup> Next, Arnon discusses the trajectory of the struggle for democracy. Arnon is the only one among the four speakers whose speeches are reprinted here who is not a student — he is a poet and human rights lawyer. He was moved to action by the courage of younger students. Arnon honors the courage of youth, yet his own courage, signaled by his willingness to sacrifice his freedom in the service of struggle, is equally palpable.

The final speech is one that was given in Khon Kaen by Parit, a student in the Faculty of Political Science at Thammasat University. Parit begins by locating Khon Kaen, the largest city in northeastern Thailand, and its residents in a history of struggle. He then unpacks the relationship between the monarchy and coups by reflecting comparatively across time in Thailand and beyond Thailand's borders. There have been thirteen 'successful' (meaning that

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<sup>13</sup> Since June 2016, the following exiled dissidents living in Laos and Cambodia have been disappeared or murdered: Ittiphol Sukphaen, Wuthipong Kachathamakal, Surachai Sae Daen, Chatcharn Buppawan, Kraidej Luelert, Chucheep Chivasut, Sayam Theerawut, Krisna Thapthai, and Wanchalearn Satsaksit. To date (July 2021), none of the perpetrators have been apprehended.

power was seized) coups in Thailand since 1932. Parit dares to imagine the actions that an anti-coup constitutional monarch might take, which would break the military-monarchical hold on the polity. He concludes by warning those present that he may be imprisoned, attacked or killed: "Finally, as we are well aware of how our country works, I don't know that I will have another opportunity to say the things that I have said here in Khon Kaen. I don't know what will happen to me when I come down from the stage and leave. For those who do not think well of me, who think of using methods outside the law to harm me, do whatever you are going to do. But we have unmasked our struggle. If you do anything to us, if you do anything to me, we have only one enemy. We will all know who ordered it. Let me take this opportunity, before I do not have any more opportunities, to affirm to my brothers and sisters that as long as I am still breathing, I will struggle with you for our enduring ideals. If I have blundered, been careless, erred, or ever been offensive, I ask for forgiveness here." The mounting cases that he and the other three face and the disappearances and deaths of the exiled dissidents for whom Panusaya calls for justice mean that Parit's concern is starkly real. The daring to imagine a different Thai future and the risk that articulating this carries so eloquently articulated by Parit is why these four speeches must be urgently read.

*A note on the translation:* Footnotes and supplemental information have been added to the text in [ ] where necessary for an international audience that may be unfamiliar with Thai politics and history. Otherwise, the translation has hewn as close to the original as possible to retain the quality of speech.



# Introduction to the Thai Edition

Six years ago, during the 22 May 2014 coup, King Rama 9 issued a royal command that appointed General Prayuth Chan-ocha as the head of the junta.

Since then, General Prayuth and his gang have led Thailand backwards in a retrogressive, reactionary direction extending beyond even the past.

- Rights and freedoms have been destroyed. A large number of people have been imprisoned, exiled, or disappeared. Those who remained inside the country have had to struggle under constraints placed because the junta has used the judiciary to prop up their power.
- The economic system has collapsed into a wreck. Wealth is clustered in the hands of capital close to the junta. The majority of people are more impoverished than ever, and their poverty has been intensified by COVID-19. The fundamental programs of prior governments have been dismantled and replaced with increased debt without any tangible accomplishments.
- Education has been guided by the 12 Core Values and extreme conservatism.<sup>14</sup> Memory and

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<sup>14</sup> Shortly after the coup, the NCPO announced twelve na-

history have been destroyed, particularly that of the People's Party.<sup>15</sup>

- The future of the country is constrained by the junta's 20-Year National Strategy.<sup>16</sup>
- The power of the king has been restored to be almost equivalent to what it was under absolute monarchy, including in terms of the transfer of assets held by the institution to be the personal assets of the king and the arbitrary revision of the constitution.

Throughout the past 6 years, the people have been engaged in an ongoing struggle with illegitimate power. The junta's power has remained uninterrupted and it has whitewashed itself [from a dictatorship to a nominal democracy] via the 2017 Constitution, written to facilitate its succession.

But unwillingness to put up with the junta and its continued power arose and spread.

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tionalist, royalist, and militarist "core values" to guide governance and public life. See "Education ministry to integrate junta's 12 Thai values into curriculum," *Prachatai English*, 13 June 2014, <https://prachatai.com/english/node/4215>.

<sup>15</sup> Anna Lawannatrakul, "Uprooting Democracy: The War of Memory and the Lost Legacy of the People's Party," *Prachatai English*, 19 December 2019, <https://prachatai.com/english/node/8312>.

<sup>16</sup> Office of the National Social and Economic Development Board, "National Strategy, 2018-2037 (Unofficial translation)," 2018, <http://nscr.nesdb.go.th/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/National-Strategy-Eng-Final-25-OCT-2019.pdf>.

Students and people formed into groups around the country. As for us, the United Front of Thammasat and Demonstration, we proclaimed #ThammasatWontStandForIt and called for a demonstration on 10 August 2020 at Phaya Nak Field at the Rangsit campus of Thammasat University.

A large number of students and people joined this demonstration and it became the largest to be held since 22 May 2014.

But it was not only the size of the protest that mattered. The speeches during #ThammasatWontStandForIt were part of getting at the roots of the conundrum of Thai politics. The conundrum consists of the royal prerogative and what the king's position should be in a democracy in which the people form the majority.

This small booklet contains a portion of the speeches from 10 August 2020, the 10-point proposal to reform the institution of the monarchy unveiled on that day, and Parit Chiwarak's speech from the 20 August 2020 protest in Khon Kaen province organized by Khon Kaen Has Had Enough.

We very much hope that this will be the first step into a new era of Thai democracy.

An era in which the people are the true rulers of the land.

United Front of Thammasat and Demonstration  
September 2020

# An Appropriate Place for the Thai King

## Panupong Jadnok

Greetings to everyone at Thammasat University. Greetings to the fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters who fight for democracy. Today I am pleased that all of the fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters have awakened and will no longer be the servants of dictatorship. Two days ago, I went to sleep content in prison.<sup>17</sup> I knew that the power of the people was much greater than that of the government. That day, we [Panupong Jadnok and Arnon Nampha] decided to rescind our request for bail because we were confident in the masses. We knew that even if we were not there, the masses would win. During the first demonstration we joined upon getting out, we didn't know if our bail would be revoked the next day. But we were uninterested, because we knew that the officials' exercise of power to oppress and persecute the people was the behavior of those who like to lick the boots of soldiers.

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<sup>17</sup> Panupong and Arnon spent the night of 7 August in detention in relation to accusations of sedition and violation of the Emergency Decree related to their participation in a peaceful protest organized by Free Youth on 18 July 2020.

Before I started talking about this issue, people would ask me, wasn't it like trying to dig in the earth with my bare hands? Or trying to pull out the roots of a large tree with only the strength of a single person?

But today is proof that I am not excavating the roots or pulling out the stump by myself. Let me offer an example.

Suppose we are paving a road in the service of the country's progress and development and a large tree happens to be in the way? Do you know who that big tree is? Many may think that there is nothing difficult about constructing a road in such circumstances. One simply builds the road around the tree, right?

But as for me, I think that we should relocate this tree to an appropriate place. Then we should construct a paved road that is strong and complete.

I am drawing a comparison to the institution of the monarchy. The institution is a matter that we can talk about.

Once I move that tree, and build a road that is strong and complete, the tree will be in its appropriate place and the road will still be strong. We can draw a comparison to today and how we are creating a country in which progress can occur by placing the king in an appropriate location.

You are familiar with absolute monarchy, right? Today I am going to talk about the absolute monarchy that has not died. This system has been around

since Rama 5 and is the centralization of the power of the nobles and bureaucrats in the service of the king. This is a system in which the king has absolute power and one in which it can be said that the king rules directly.

Absolute monarchy was in effect for three reigns: Rama 5, Rama 6, and Rama 7. But on 24 June 1932, the People's Party was born with Professor Pridi Banomyong and Phraya Phahonphayusena.<sup>18</sup> A revolution changed Siam from an absolute monarchy into a democracy and the king was placed under the constitution.

I think that absolute monarchy has extended into the present reign. The king is above the sovereign power of all three branches: judiciary, executive and legislative.

Let me ask, why do we have to speak like this? Are you aware of what is at the end of Article 6, in the second section of the 2017 Constitution? It says that, "No person shall expose the King to any sort of accusation or action."

This is as if to demonstrate that the king is above the sovereign power that belongs to the people.

My intention in speaking is that I want the king

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<sup>18</sup> Pridi Banomyong was the civilian head and Phraya Phahonphayusena was the military head of the People's Party that fomented the transformation from absolute to constitutional monarchy on 24 June 1932.

to be placed in an appropriate location where he is able to co-exist with the Thai people. When I say that he is above the sovereign power, it means that he is above the power of the people. The people are unable to touch him. Anyone who does will be hit with an Article 112 charge.

What is most important is to make it possible for the king to be able to adjust himself to co-exist with the people and return to Thailand to be their protector. I want him to return to Thailand in order to not waste the taxes paid by the people.

I think that my arrest and that of Older Brother Arnon — taking us into custody, locking us up — is the Prayuth government testing the waters. What will happen if the two of us, or any of the leaders, are arrested?

But I have to thank all of the brothers and sisters who came out in front of the Bang Khen police station, who were present at the Criminal Court, and who are here at Thammasat University today. We will walk forward to victory together. Our victory does not rest with me. Our victory does not rest with Older Brother Arnon. Our victory does not rest with the leaders. But it is the power of the people, all of the people, that will lead us to victory.

I hold fast to our three demands. The first is the most important and is to stop threatening the people. They still cannot do it, or they could do it, but choose not to do so. They continue to follow people to their homes. They take photographs and

look for personal information about us. Let me offer a message to General Prayuth Chan-ocha: if you are a true soldier, resign for the people. Or if you do not resign, then announce the dissolution of parliament and hold new elections. You can run against me. And let's see who the people will choose: General Prayuth Chan-ocha, who says that many people love him a great deal and who says that he has led the country to progress and develop, or me, an ordinary guy.

To the various officers who are trying to arouse a mob to come and clash with the people: my message to you is to stop being bullies. Remember that you are the fence around the country, not the owners of the country. You should protect the people, not your own bosses.

Our struggle right here, right now, has the power of the greatest sincerity I have ever seen, because everyone stands fast to our three demands. To these three we have added another: reduce the power of the king.

I felt very touched as I drove into Thammasat today as part of the people's car procession. I have never seen such a procession flow with the love of democracy. The people's car procession is more impressive than other processions.

Finally, I want to tell everyone that from today forward, if the government or those who serve dictators still claim that they are going to arrest the leaders, if they do so, on that day they will have to



face all of the people of the country.

Whenever they arrest youth or harm your children and grandchildren, I ask you to exchange your life for those students and the safety of all the younger people.

Finally, really my final point this time, I promise that I am prepared to exchange my life to protect the country's democracy.

May all the mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters get ready. On the 16<sup>th</sup> [August], there will not be enough room for us to stand and we will overflow around the Democracy Monument. And no matter what happens, no matter if they point a gun in any of our faces, no way will we retreat. We have to protect the country so that it can become a full, complete democracy. This is because this country is of the people, not of the king as they have deceived us.

Thank you.

# No One Is Born Higher: Everyone Stands on the Same Ground

Panusaya Sithijirawattanakul

Hello, everyone who has come to Thammasat Won't Wait. Today I have come to speak openly about the institution of the monarchy.

The other day, Lawyer Arnon [Nampha] and Older Brother Mike Panupong [Jadnok] were arrested. No need to wonder about why. Lawyer Arnon spoke openly about the institution of the monarchy. Those who arrested him possessed a warrant with "In the name of the king" written across the top.

Wherever there is a noble, look and in truth you will find a serf. — Rajani Chamcharas

Today, I have come to speak about the natural process of birth. Suppose that two babies are born at the same time. To put it simply, it may be normal that one is luckier than the other. Let me repeat: it is a matter of luck for one to be born with a silver spoon in his mouth. No matter how much he eats, no matter how much he consumes, it never runs out. This is possible. But what is impossible and should not be possible but turns out to be the case now is that one child merely opens his eyes and turns into

a noble. He is higher than the other child who was also just born. Further, the other child has the duty to bow down at the feet of that child-noble in the future.

In the past, there was a word that tricked us into thinking that people who were born into the royal family were living gods. With the greatest respect, ask yourself in your heart of hearts, are you sure about this? Is it right that gods are moody and behave like this?

Nature did not make anyone higher than anyone else.

It is us alone who have created this assumption.

Or perhaps we were not those who created it. But who are they? Who are they who created this? Who created this assumption in order to oppress, persecute, and take pleasure in the misery of the people?

Every one of us, we are all humans whose blood flows the same red.

No one on this earth is born with blue blood.  
Some people may be born luckier than others.  
But no one is born higher than anyone else.  
Everyone lives under the same sky.  
Everyone stands on the same earth.  
Everyone has equal dignity and rights as a human.  
No one is higher than anyone else. No one.

The second issue that I am going to talk about

today regards those who think differently who are being disappeared and killed. Wanchalearm (Satsaksit) is not the first. In the past, the security forces of the Thai state dealt with people who were accused of being communists by throwing them out of helicopters to fall to their deaths. Some were tossed into metal barrels of 200 liters, doused in oil, and burned in their entirety.<sup>19</sup> Isn't that right?

Everyone, isn't that right?

Not only that. At the end of 2018, two corpses were found floating in the Mekhong River. The corpses were handcuffed, disemboweled, and then filled with cement pillars to sink in the water. When their blood and DNA was tested it was determined that they were the bodies of Kasalong (Kraidej Luelert) and Phuchana (Chatcharn Buppawan), two political exiles who were in the People's Republic of Laos along with Surachai Sae Dan.

As for Surachai, everyone concurs that he is already dead.

Where are those who are holding signs for Surachai, Kasalong, and Phuchana? Hold them up.

Who are they to be able to come and do this to us? To be able to come and do this to our comrades? Who are they? And the last one was Wanchalearm. This case is unusual because a not in-

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<sup>19</sup> Sarayut Tangprasert, "Songs, tales, tears: state violence in the periphery from past to present," *Prachatai English*, 13 April 2020, <https://prachatai.com/english/node/8459>.

significant number of people have whispered and gossiped that there is a soldier at the rank of general who is close to the monarchy who flew back from Germany to take out Wanchalearm.

At that time, it was during the first wave of the spread of COVID. No airlines could go in and out of Thailand. But it turned out there was a Thai Airways Boeing 777 that left Suvarnabhumi Airport on 21 May 2020 and went straight to Munich. That plane then left Munich and returned to Bangkok. It landed and parked at Suvarnabhumi Airport at 12:47 am on 22 May 2020. Think about what they went to do. But we may be unable to conclude with any certainty whether this story is true or false.

But what we can say is that this ambiguity has caused people to gossip. It is unavoidable that this disgraces the institution of the monarchy.

We may be unable to forbid people from thinking or gossiping. But wouldn't it be better if the government clarified what happened instead of letting such ambiguity cloud the air? If they are really sincere, wouldn't it be better if they did so?

This issue can be easily resolved. Very easily. All the government has to do is investigate whether or not the aforementioned flight from Thailand to Munich took place, and whether or not a general flew back on it.

True or not, the government could present evidence to the people. Rather than being silent and leaving people to gossip that a person close to the

monarchy was involved with the disappearance of Wanchalearm.

If you are truly sincere, you people have to tell us what happened. What did that flight go to do and who did it? The government should know that love and faith cannot be born from a command. Try to preserve the faith of the people in the institution of the monarchy so that it can remain an inseparable part of Thailand. This is my recommendation.

Today I may speak slightly too briefly. But I have something else I want to tell you.

Let me put this to everyone here, everyone who is watching live, everyone who is in parliament, and everyone who is in the government: democracy rests on the key principle of freedom of expression.

If this country was really a democracy, one could say anything. One could even say that one does not want the institution of the monarchy. This must be sayable.

It is time for the institution of the monarch to be spoken about openly, no matter who one is. It must be able to be spoken about like it is no big deal.

That I came out to speak today, that Mike [Panupong Jadnok] came out to speak, and other people are coming out to speak, we want to open the way for everyone to be able to speak. We know that everyone is frustrated. Wherever I go, whatever demonstration I attend, people come up to me and thank me for speaking about this issue. We are

beyond frustrated. Shouldn't Thailand be a place where we are happy? Shouldn't it be a place where everyone can speak about whomever without having to worry that they will come and kill us?

Where we do not have to be afraid that someone will come and threaten us?

Where we do not have to be afraid that the police will follow us?

This should be a land of freedom. We should be able to say anything that we want to say. We should be able to express our political views in whatever way we wish.

This is the principle of democracy. Let me leave you with just this.

Thank you.

# The Demand Between the Lines: The King Above Politics and Under the Constitution

## Arnon Nampha

As I listened to the 3-4 people who spoke prior to me, I knew that Professor Pridi Banomyong can sleep peacefully tonight. Professors Pavin Chachavalpongpun and Somsak Jeamteerasakul can smile in pride.<sup>20</sup>

This is the first time since the 2014 coup that there is a demonstration with more than 10,000 protestors. Give yourselves a round of applause.

This is no longer a rag-tag protest. This is a focused protest and there will no longer be a way for anyone to line their pockets without lifting a finger. When I spoke about the monarchy before, many news outlets were ordered to cut the broadcast as

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<sup>20</sup> Professors Pavin Chachavalpongpun and Somsak Jeamteerasakul are two outspoken critics of abuses of power of the monarchy and military who went into exile following the 22 May 2014 coup and were stripped of their Thai citizenship. Both remain in close contact with dissident activists in Thailand through social media.



they were reporting.

Today I am very pleased that you cannot cut it in time. In front of me is the truth. Let me put it to the older brother and sister journalists: you have to choose a side. Today, are you going to be on the side of the people or the side of dictatorship? You should think of your ancestors, think of Kulap Saipradit, Isara Amantakul, and Seni Saowaphong, journalists and reporters who were on the side of democracy who sacrificed their freedom.<sup>21</sup> You all should

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<sup>21</sup> All three were writers who were committed to articulating and disseminating the truth, and in the case of Kulap Saipradit and Isara Amantakul, were targeted by the state and placed behind bars for doing so. Kulap Saipradit (1905-1974) was a prolific leftist novelist and journalist. He was arrested as part of the Peace Rebellion for protesting Thai involvement in the Korean War on 10 November 1952 and originally sentenced to over thirteen years in prison for alleged treason before being released as part of an amnesty in 1957. While he was in China the following year, the ruling dictator, Field Marshal Sarit launched a coup against himself to consolidate his power on 20 October 1958. Fearing arrest upon return to Thailand, Kulap chose to live the rest of his life in exile in China. On 21 October 1958, one day after Field Marshal Sarit's coup, Isara Amantakul (1921-1969), journalist and newspaper editor, was arrested and accused of violating the Anti-Communist Activities Act. He was detained for five years and ten months without ever being formally charged. Seni Saowaphong (1918-2014) was a diplomat and writer who authored *Ghosts* (ปีศาจ), a novel first serialized in 1953 about cross-class romance that inspired activists in the 1970s, and was one of the first proponents of the "literature for life" movement that worked to create art in the service of social

perform your duties as they did.

Give a round of applause to call for the media to return to be on the people's side once again, brothers and sisters. Don't even mention the *Nation*.

We assembled here today in order to assert that in addition to the three proposals that we talk about at each demonstration, in truth, there is a proposal between the lines that is the most important of them all. This proposal is to solve the problem of the expansion of the power of the monarchy.

And I assert, once again, that this is not a mob to topple the monarchy. It is not a mob to impinge upon the monarchy. It is a mob that is speaking the truth about the problems of the country.

Thammasat University was established by Professor Pridi Banomyong. Today, we, each one of us, have taken the baton from the People's Party.

We have taken the baton from our ancestors to clear up all of the problems, right?

We, each one of us, are the offspring of the People's Party who have come to act in their place. Give yourselves a round of applause.

The important point I have come to speak about today is our demand between the lines. A democracy with the king as head of state is a system in which the king is above politics and under the constitution.

From now on, whatever royal duties cause

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and political transformation.

the monarchy to become involved in politics will be loudly questioned in public. We want to see the institution of the monarchy adjust itself to speak with the people, rather than us having to adjust ourselves to speak with the monarchy. Being under the constitution is a key aspect of the kind of rule that we have. But problems arose when the monarchy attempted to expand its power through the junta that emerged in 2014 with a leader named Prayuth Chan-ocha. I have spoken about and stressed this issue many times in many places other than public demonstrations, including on Facebook and in academic seminars.

The final straw that caused me to stand up and speak on 3 August 2020 dressed in a Harry Potter gown were the images of the brother and sister secondary and university students below the demonstration stages holding up signs questioning the institution of the monarchy. But those up on the stage did not dare to speak. After that, the younger brother and sister secondary school students and university students were all threatened. This was the last straw,

Society has to accept the truth. The signs held up by the students, aunties and uncles referring to the institution of the monarchy referred to none other than the king. No need to speak in code. It will be of more use to speak directly.

This was my thinking and so I chose to speak frankly out of respect for the human dignity of those

listening, my own human dignity, and respect for the institution of the monarchy. If we don't speak frankly, there is no chance of any understanding. In addition to leaving the problem unresolved, it will result in our brothers and sisters who speak the truth down below [the stage] having to bear the risk. From now on, we will question the institution of the monarchy out of respect for it as a primary institution that must be spoken of rigorously and publicly. And from now on, no one is going to be threatened because they speak about the problems of the institution of the monarchy. Let's have a bit of applause, please.

They belittled our demonstration and said that there was no way that those on Twitter and Facebook would go up on the demonstration stage or into the streets again. But haven't we shown today that we have put our hashtags on the street? They belittled the younger brother and sister secondary school students and said that they were tricked into coming. Do you remember, many months earlier, the offering trays of the secondary students who raised political issues during the Wai Khru ceremonies?<sup>22</sup> I

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<sup>22</sup> Wai Khru is a ceremony in which students honor teachers at the beginning of each school year by presenting them with trays holding flowers and other offerings. In June 2019, dissident secondary school students replaced the typical offerings with artwork criticizing General Prayuth Chan-ocha's continued tenure as prime minister following the March 2019 election. They were then targeted by the police. See Tappanai Boonbandit, "Police visit students behind anti-junta teacher

went to speak in the provinces and in every province, 80% of those who came to protest were secondary school students. Let's have a round of applause for the younger brother and sister secondary school students.

This afternoon, in my home province, which is Roi Et, a secondary school student from Satri Suk-sa School came out and held up a sign opposing the dictatorship and was threatened. She was summoned into the principal's office. She's not going to be alone. From now on, the secondary school students are going to be the primary force of this struggle. Brothers, sisters, aunties and uncles, I believe that we are ready to come and stand next to the younger brother and sister secondary school and university students. There are no divisions among us. From now on, there will be no vanguard or rear guard. We will struggle shoulder-to-shoulder until the finish line.

My proposal is not an impossible one. The proposals raised at every demonstration are not impossible. With a demonstration, it is unnecessary to go outside the system. A coup is not necessary. The constitution can be amended by parliament. The amendment of the constitution to remove the

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appreciation day stunt," *Khao Sod English*, 14 June 2019, <https://www.khaosodenglish.com/culture/net/2019/06/14/police-visit-students-behind-anti-junta-teacher-appreciation-day-stunt/>.

senators who are the servants of dictatorship can be done by parliament. Let's work together to reach our deadline of 1 December this year to get the senators, servants of dictatorship, out of Thai politics. Let's revise the constitution to remove the senators and their the power to select the prime minister. The three rounds of examination [of the bill] can be completed within September.<sup>23</sup> Next, let's revise the laws to compel [action], diminish [the extra powers], and tune up the institution of the monarchy to be an institution under the constitution. This can also be done by parliament. Let's call for our representatives in parliament to amend or revoke the Crown Property Act, the Royal Decree on Transfer of Troops and Budget. Let out some applause if you agree.

The representatives of the people must grow more of a spine. There can be no struggling [for democracy] and concomitant prostrating oneself [before the king]. When the people dare to rise up and stand up with their backs straight, we cannot choose parliamentary representatives who attempt to struggle while prostrating themselves. There are

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<sup>23</sup> All draft bills examined by parliament in Thailand must go through three stages. The first stage is an examination of the principles of a draft bill voted on by the entire parliament. The second stage is a close reading of the draft by a committee — either the entire parliament or a smaller selection of members — who also make any necessary amendments or changes. The third and final stage is a vote by the entire parliament on whether or not to make the draft bill law.

not many ways out for the dictatorship. If they do not listen to our voices, we will choose another option. We don't want a unity government that is set up in order to trick us, isn't that right? If there is a coup, we will come out and struggle against it together, isn't that right? If the king remains a king in a democracy with the king as head of state, he must not sign to endorse a coup. If a coup takes place, the institution of the monarchy must stand only on the side of democracy. What is important is to not let the struggle of our brother and sister university students and the people be in the service of anyone else. History will cease to hold the images of the fruits of one person's labor going to another who did not expend it.

Thank you to everyone who has come to stand and assert that the decision to start talking about the institution of the monarchy was not in vain. Thank you for making the younger brother and sister university students who are the leaders and organized the event feel that they are not alone in struggle.

From now on our struggle will be direct. We promise that we will fight together, isn't that right? If yes, let me ask for everyone to promise by raising three fingers. We are making a promise to each other that we will fight together until the true victory line of the people. Brothers and sisters, it will not be long until our victory.

Finally, really finally, I want everyone to give encouragement to themselves. Our struggle demands our courage. As for myself, I promise that I will strug-

gle to my fullest. If they take me away and detain or imprison me, I won't regret it at all.

Finally, I want to give a special thank you to my family. They are farmers who created a son who today is a lawyer of the people. They don't have a lot of education but they love democracy. My mother came to listen to me speak today. Give her a round of applause.

We are going to struggle together because we are a family of democracy. Thank you and goodbye.



# **Down With Feudalism, Long Live the People<sup>24</sup>**

## **Parit Chiwarak**

Today, I am very happy to have returned to Khon Kaen once again. I can say in all truth that this gathering in Khon Kaen is big, even bigger than the one we organized at Thammasat on 10 August. As a leader of the United Front of Thammasat and Demonstration, I ask you to applaud for the brothers and sisters of Khon Kaen.

I am happy every time I visit Khon Kaen because this is a city of fighters. When I open up the map of Khon Kaen province and look in any direction, I see only fighters. In 2014 in Khon Kaen, university student leaders courageously dared to take action and it gave tremendous encouragement to me. They went to stand and raise three fingers in front of the tyrant Prayuth Chan-ocha. Give Dao Din a round of applause.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Speech given in Khon Kaen at a demonstration organized by Khon Kaen Has Had Enough on 20 August 2020.

<sup>25</sup> Dao Din, which means “Stars on Earth,” is a Khon Kaen-based student group that has been active around human rights and environmental justice for over two decades. On 19 November 2014, when General Prayuth Chan-ocha spoke

And importantly, now let's talk about pushing up the ceiling, moving the ceiling, a frequent topic in the movement. At the demonstration at Thammasat on 10 August, we lifted the ceiling of what can be said to its highest point. But I have to say that the first person, the first province, and the first time that we talked about lifting that ceiling was not at Thammasat. It was here in Khon Kaen.

Khon Kaen province, Khon Kaen people. There is an alumnus of the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts at Khon Kaen University who performed in a political satire play. For this alone, he was hit with violation of Article 112 and imprisoned for two-and-a-half years. Give a round of applause for Moh Lam Bank Patiphon Luecha [Patiwat Saraiyaem].<sup>26</sup> There is also a nurse in Khon Kaen, a nurse who is also a mother, who worked at Srinakarin Hospital, who merely

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to an assembled group of civil servants in Khon Kaen, five members of Dao Din, clad in t-shirts that spelled out "No to the Coup" in large vinyl letters, walked in front of the stage and raised three fingers inspired by the Hunger Games and signifying fraternity, liberty, and equality. They were immediately taken into custody by the military. The students were released after being interrogated but their t-shirts were seized.

<sup>26</sup> Patiwat Saraiyaem was arrested along with Prontip Mankhong in August 2014 and accused of defaming the monarchy while performing in a satirical play, "The Wolf Bride," in October 2013. They were charged with one count of violation of Article 112 and opted to plead guilty. They were both sentenced to two years and four months in prison and were let out a few months early following a pardon in August 2016.

put on a black shirt, the same as we are wearing today, and went to raise three fingers on 5 December. For this alone, she was slapped with Article 112.<sup>27</sup> Give her a round of applause. And most important, there is an alumnus of the Faculty of Law at Khon Kaen University who was locked up in prison for nearly three years for merely sharing an article from BBC Thai. One article. Give a round of applause for Older Brother Pai Dao Din.<sup>28</sup> What we cannot not talk about is that one Khon Kaen engineer simply wore a t-shirt that read, "We are out of faith in the in-

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<sup>27</sup> On 5 December 2014, Rama 9's birthday, a nurse in Khon Kaen posted a photograph of herself wearing a black t-shirt and holding up three fingers in support of democracy. In response, royalists called for her to be fired. She resigned in January 2015 and later faced an Article 112 charge.

<sup>28</sup> Pai Dao Din, or Jatupat Boonpattaraksa, a prominent student activist who opposed the NCPO from the beginning and was one of the five to protest Prayuth Chan-ocha on 19 November 2014, was in his final year of student in the Faculty of Law at Khon Kaen University when he was arrested in December 2016. He was accused of violation of Article 112 after posting a link on Facebook to a BBC Thai biography of Rama 10, Maha Vajiralongkorn, who had recently become king following his father's death on 13 October 2016. Although over 2600 other people also shared the article on Facebook, Pai was the only one to be arrested, which suggested that he was targeted for his outspoken opposition to the military dictatorship. After the Khon Kaen court decided to close the trial proceedings to the public in August 2017, Pai opted to plead guilty and was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison. He was released in May 2019.

stitution of the monarchy,” and for this alone he was accused of being crazy.<sup>29</sup> Give a round of applause for Older Brother Tiwagorn (Withithon).

Everyone whose names I said, whose names I uttered a moment ago, serve as inspiration. They are my seniors whom I respect a great deal. If they did not have the courage to exchange their freedom to assert that this country is unhinged to this degree, neither I nor anyone else would be able to stand here and speak the truth about political problems. Therefore, today I have come to carry on the sacrifices of those I just spoke of. I have come to speak frankly about the problems of the institution of the monarchy.

We must succeed today in lifting up the ceiling [of what can be spoken]. Why is this a key part of our struggle? Everyone knows, look down from Mars and you will know, you can ask anyone. Everyone knows the problems that have arisen with the institution of the monarchy. The institution of the monarchy is unwell and out of place to a degree that it may obstruct our country’s democratic process.

More than eighty years have passed since the People’s Party, Professor Pridi Banomyong and

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<sup>29</sup> On 9 July 2020, Tiwagorn Withithon, a 47-year-old engineer in Khon Kaen was committed against his will to a psychiatric hospital after he posted a photograph of himself wearing the t-shirt. He was released on 22 July 2020 after a significant public outcry.

Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram, fomented the 1932 revolution. In the time of the People's Party, their intention was to bring the institution of the monarchy under the constitution. Eighty years have passed since then. Let me ask, is the institution of the monarchy really under the constitution? Ever since I was a child in primary school, I have learned in social studies textbooks that Thailand is a democracy with the king as head of state. This means that he is not involved in politics. I have a great many doubts about this. If the institution of the monarchy is really and truly under the constitution, then where did the power come from for the king to sign to endorse the soldiers tearing up the constitution more than ten times?

Some people say that the king is forced to sign to endorse coups. Some say that coups are carried out by soldiers and the institution of the monarchy is not involved. But let me offer examples from political history both inside the country and internationally. In 2524 BE [1981 CE], Spain was under a long-standing dictatorship.<sup>30</sup> When they transitioned to a democracy, one group of soldiers was dissatisfied. So they used force to take over parliament, to take over government house, to arrest the parliamentary representatives and take the prime minister as a hostage. But their king, King Juan Carlos, set up a table and issued a statement that the king had to protect

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<sup>30</sup> Buddhist Era (BE) is Common Era (CE) plus 543 years.

democracy. He said that the institution of the monarchy was on the side of the people. He announced that the institution of the monarchy did not endorse that group of soldiers and that it was therefore a rebellion. Let me ask, why was their king able to do this? Why have we never had such a situation arise with the institution of the monarchy in Thailand?

In the case of Thailand, there is the example of the Young Turk revolt in 2524 BE [1981 CE]. They were going to topple the government of General Prem Tinsulanond and seize power. This was the attempted seizure of power that used the largest number of forces in Thai history — more than 40 units of soldiers, which was more than half the army. They entered and were able to completely take over Bangkok. Usually, when they seized power in the past, taking over Government House, Parliament, and the media was enough to win. But this time, the person who was to sign in endorsement fled with the prime minister to Korat. The king did not assent to sign for the coup and appoint the junta that tried to seize power. Instead, he fled for protection with General Prem to Sunari Base. The soldiers took over all of Bangkok, but were unable to win because they did not have the signature. This is the evidence of why the signature [of endorsement] is important.

Brothers and sisters, if the soldiers seize power on their own, they cannot succeed if the monarch does not sign and endorse the coup. This is because the signing and endorsing, the signing of

the royal appointment of the head of the junta, is the endorsement of the coup as legal. Anything that the king signs his name to becomes law. But let me ask why, in more than ten previous instances, has the king nearly never refused to endorse the coup? Why doesn't he refuse to endorse the plunder of power by the bandit-in-chief? Whoever shares my doubts, let's have some applause.

When we say that we don't want a coup, a coup must not take place. Ordinarily, we will call on the army, which is the entity that carries out coups, the entity that lifts their hands to do it, to not foment a coup. But I think that from today on out, in addition to calling on the army not to do it, we have to call on the person who endorses it to not do so. Like with the rumor of the smelly hint of a coup that Professor Pavin [Chachavalpongpun] shared today, I will say flat out that if the institution of the monarchy takes a clear position on the side of the people and the side of democracy, the coup will fail because he will not endorse it. Unless he takes a different position and endorses it.

Before we put this issue aside, let me close with a short sentence. If there is no signature for a coup, no signature for the seizure of power, the soldiers become traitors. But if there is a signature, it is the person who signs who is the traitor of the people.

I think that all of us here can see clearly that there is a problem with the role of the institution

of the monarchy in history. How do we know that there are problems? Compare the Thai monarchy with monarchies in other countries. Can Queen Elizabeth of England sign to endorse coups? Can the Japanese emperor come out to direct politics? Can the Dutch king abandon his country and go live in a far away place for a year at a time? Can the King of Sweden promulgate laws to arrest and imprison people who criticize him? Why must it occur in Thailand alone when it does not occur anywhere else in the world? If we allow this phenomenon to continue, we can fight to the death and there will be no way for sustainable democracy to arise. That is why our hashtag is #LetItEndWithOurGeneration. We have to fight to the roots, to the core, for it to end in our generation. We must resolve the problem at its source. Therefore, it is time for us to speak about the problem of the institution of the monarchy. It is time for us to speak about the reform of the institution of the monarchy. I repeat that it is reform. Reform is to find remedies for it to continue to exist. We have to speak about the issue of the reform of the institution of the monarchy in a straightforward, serious, and open manner. They will know that we are well-intentioned. We see the problems and so we speak out about them so that they will be remedied. If you agree that speaking about this problem frankly is better than quietly gossiping, let's have some applause.

Brothers and sisters, the Thai institution of the



monarchy is not on the right track. It is putting itself above the constitution and above the people. As the people, we have to come out to warn it to adjust itself urgently. The institution of the monarchy will be able to happily and peacefully coexist with the institution of the people in a democracy. Neither one side nor the other has to die or disappear.

Let me go over the 10-point proposal. These are the 10 points that were announced at the UFTD Thammasat Can't Wait demonstration.

1. Revoke Article 6 of the 2017 Constitution that does not allow anyone to make any accusation against the king. Add an article to allow parliament to examine the wrongdoing of the king, as had been stipulated in the constitution promulgated by the People's Party. This is to prove that everyone must be under the same law, no matter who one is, no matter one's class, and no matter with what color blood one is born.
2. Revoke Article 112 of the Criminal Code, as well as allow people to exercise freedom of expression to analyze and criticize the monarchy. Provide an amnesty and clear the names of all those prosecuted and exiled simply because they did so.
3. Revoke the Crown Property Act of 2018 and make a clear division between the assets of the king under the control of the Ministry of Finance and his personal assets. This is so that the people's tax money will not be used hap-

hazardly.

4. Reduce the amount of the national budget allocated to the king to be in line with the economic conditions of the country.
5. Abolish the Royal Offices. Units with a clear duty, for example, the Royal Security Command, should be transferred and placed under other agencies. Unnecessary units, such as the Privy Council, should be disbanded.
6. Cease all giving and receiving of donations by royal charity funds. This is so that all of the assets of the monarchy will be auditable and so that the institution of the monarchy will not have to accept bribes from capitalists.
7. Cease the exercise of royal prerogative over expression of political opinions in public.
8. Cease all public relations and education that excessively and one-sidedly glorify the monarchy.
9. Search for the facts about the murder of those who criticized or had some kind of relation with the monarchy. Press for justice for Wanchalearm [Satsaksit].

10. The king must not endorse any further coups. I am not going to go into greater detail about this 10-point proposal because these are not new or complicated issues. These are ordinary principles of countries that have both a king and a democracy. I see Japan and it is like this. I see Scandinavia and it is like this. The United Kingdom is like this. I cannot

think at all of why our Thailand cannot be like this. This is what we have been fighting for since 24 June 1932, fighting for since 14 October 1973, fighting for since 6 October 1976, fighting for since May 1992, and fighting for up until the dispersal of protests in 2010.<sup>31</sup> We are face-to-face with our historic duty. We have a duty to take the baton of struggle from the previous generations and make it succeed in our generation. We have a duty to end it in this generation. Here, today, in this year, this 10-point proposal is an ultimatum. This is an ultimatum yelled out by the people who were born and whose feet are on the ground like us for those people who poop clouds to hear. It does not matter if anyone says that

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<sup>31</sup> One way to view modern Thai history since the transformation from absolute to constitutional monarchy in 1932 up until the present is an ongoing struggle to make the promise of democracy real. On 14 October 1973, a mass uprising of students and people forced an end to fifteen years of military dictatorship and a transition to democracy. This period was short-lived, and a massacre and coup on 6 October 1976 returned Thailand to dictatorship. In May 1992, people again went into the streets to protest military involvement in politics and call for democracy; they succeeded and secured what became the 1997 "People's Constitution," so called because it was drafted through a consultative process with civil society. This constitution was then abrogated by the 19 September 2006 coup. In April-May 2010, people went into the streets to call for elections and a return to democracy, and were suppressed in a brutal crackdown. Here, Parit places himself and the movement of which he is a part within this long trajectory of struggle.

we are only dust. Today, all of the dust is coming together to be the earth. Today, the dust is able to drown out anything that does not listen to the voice of the dust.

Finally, before I leave the stage, let me thank everyone. Let me thank the people who sacrificed before me. Let me thank the people who are steadfast with me here. Let me thank the people who will come to join the struggle in the future and will help push up the ceiling. We will not retreat. The war of the people has started. In addition, let me thank the teachers and professors who persist in the struggle to speak the truth. You are inspiration for the subsequent generations to be able to continue speaking the truth. Let me thank the two big professors of the internet world, Professor Somsak [Jeamteerasakul] and Professor Pavin [Chachavalpongpun]. I am fairly certain that if we are determined to fight and persist in our struggle until we win and have real democratic rule with the king under a constitution and under the people, we will be able to hear their lectures without it having to be live via the internet.

Finally, as we are well aware of how our country works, I don't know that I will have another opportunity to say the things that I have said here in Khon Kaen. I don't know what will happen to me when I come down from the stage and leave. For those who do not think well of me, who think of using methods outside the law to harm me, do whatever you are going to do. But we have unmasked our struggle. If

you do anything to us, if you do anything to me, we have only one enemy. We will all know who ordered it. Let me take this opportunity, before I do not have any more opportunities, to affirm to my brothers and sisters that as long as I am still breathing, I will struggle with you for our enduring ideals. If I have blundered, been careless, erred, or ever been offensive, I ask for forgiveness here. If there is anyone who disagrees, if there is anyone who thinks that what I spoke about is not a real issue, you don't have to come and arrest me. If you are really smart, you will set up a table and make a declaration. Declare and respond with how it is not real. If it happens that you are not available to come to make a declaration in Thailand, you can videoconference in from a far away land. I am referring to Dubai.<sup>32</sup> Finally, if you agree with me, please raise three fingers and utter these words:

Down with feudalism, long live the people.

Down with feudalism, long live the people.

Down with feudalism, long live the people.

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<sup>32</sup> A moment of humor. Former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, ousted in the 19 September 2006 coup, lives in Dubai.

# Appendix

## United Front of Thammasat and Demonstration Declaration No. 1<sup>33</sup>

To the people:

Since the People's Party fomented a revolutionary transformation, the people have hoped that our country would be a democracy with the king as head of state who is truly above politics. But it has not been as such as the king has exercised power to intervene in politics from above. For example, whenever a coup topples a government that has arisen from a real democratic process, the king has signed to appoint the head of the junta. This constitutes the endorsement of each and every coup as legal.

Moreover, the king has moved troops and also transferred a significant amount of the national budget to belong to the king himself personally. He has exercised extralegal royal authority to amend

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<sup>33</sup> This translation was originally published by Prachatai English a few hours after the demonstration on 10 August 2020: <https://prachatai.com/english/node/8709>.

the constitution, which had already passed a referendum, to allow him to reside outside the kingdom without having to appoint a regent.

This could be done because the dictatorship government bowed down under the shadow of the king and continues to claim the monarchy for its own benefit. It can be seen that they mutually benefit. Such a situation constitutes an enemy to the principles of a democracy with the king as head of state. There is no democratic country in which such actions take place.

The people ought to know that the king of our country is not above politics. This has consistently been the root of political problems. He has neglected his duties of being the head of state that binds him to the hearts of the people and uses the people's taxes to seek pleasure and reside outside the country. This takes place while the people are experiencing hardship from economic downturn. He also has close relationships with the rebels who foment coups to topple democratic rule.

It is therefore evident that if there are no adjustments made for the monarchy to co-exist with the institutions of the people, the people will necessarily lose faith in the monarchy.

The United Front of Thammasat and Demonstration

therefore makes the following demands in order to resolve the problems with the monarchy:

1. Revoke Article 6 of the 2017 Constitution that does not allow anyone to make any accusation against the king. And add an article to allow parliament to examine the wrongdoing of the king, as had been stipulated in the constitution promulgated by the People's Party.
2. Revoke Article 112 of the Criminal Code, as well as allowing the people to exercise freedom of expression about the monarchy and giving an amnesty to all those prosecuted for criticizing the monarchy.
3. Revoke the Crown Property Act of 2018 and make a clear division between the assets of the king under the control of the Ministry of Finance and his personal assets.
4. Reduce the amount of the national budget allocated to the king to be in line with the economic conditions of the country.
5. Abolish the Royal Offices. Units with a clear duty, for example, the Royal Security Command, should be transferred and placed under other agencies. Unnecessary units, such as the Privy Council, should be disbanded.
6. Cease all giving and receiving of donations by royal charity funds in order for all of the assets of the monarchy to be auditable.
7. Cease the exercise of royal prerogative over



- expression of political opinions in public.
8. Cease all public relations and education that excessively and one-sidedly glorify the monarchy.
  9. Search for the facts about the murder of those who criticized or had some kind of relation with the monarchy.
  10. The king must not endorse any further coups.

These demands are not a proposal to topple the monarchy. They are a good-faith proposal made for the monarchy to be able to continue to be esteemed by the people within a democracy.

Therefore, for the monarchy to be secure in the present-day world, it must not hold power related to politics. It should be able to be controlled, audited, and criticized and it should not be a burden on the people. Then it will be able to be held as a monarchy that is dignified in line with a universal meaning of democracy.