

Rethinking the Substantive Economy in Southeast Asia

Rethinking the Substantive Economy in Southeast Asia

On the Margins between
Utilities and Meanings

Takashi Tomosugi

Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo

Institute of Oriental Culture Special Series, 12

(東洋文化研究所 叢刊第12輯)

© 1991, INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL CULTURE,
UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

All Rights Reserved

Printed in Japan

Rethinking the Substantive Economy in Southeast Asia
On the Margins between Utilities and Meanings
Takashi Tomosugi

1991年2月14日 発行
非売品

著者 友 杉 孝

発行者 東京大学東洋文化研究所
東京都文京区本郷7-3-1

印刷所 株式会社 三 秀 舎
東京都千代田区内神田1-12-2

©東京大学東洋文化研究所 1991



1. Grand Royal Palace The palace is the centre of Bangkok as well as of the state of Thailand, and within it, the shining golden Phra Prang Temple, the centripetal point of authority, bestows blessings on both the royal family and the state.



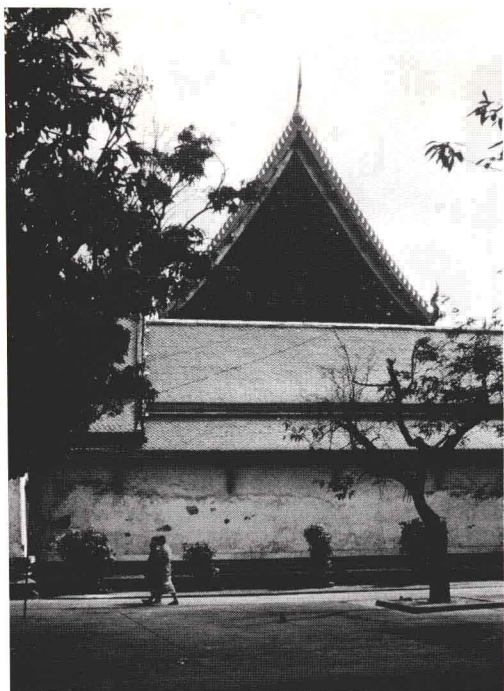
2. Lak Muang (The City Pillar) This phallic symbol is worshipped for happiness and fortune in Thai folk religion, and has represented the land guardian of Bangkok since the city's construction.



3. The Freeing of Birds This practice is believed to be merit-making. In the precinct of the City Pillar Shrine people buy a bird, and free it from a cage to pray for their happiness and fertility.



4. The Hall of Chethupon Temple Buddhism is still the foundation of the cosmology which possesses even the young. This temple also is a treasury of Thai fine arts that are delicate and beautiful.



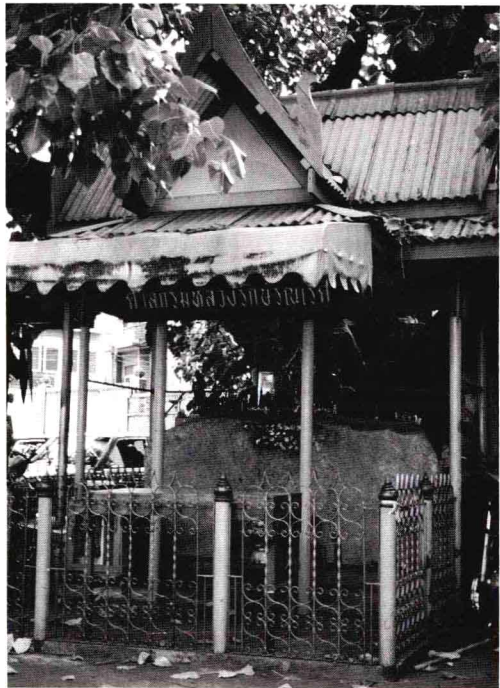
5. The Precinct of Mahatat Temple (1) This temple is in a different province from the secular world. In the sinking sunlight, the monks walk about talking to each other as tranquility dominates the atmosphere.



6. The Precinct of Mahatat Temple (2) This precinct is also a place of pleasure. Many sell talismans for protection, entertain themselves and chat with friends, and fortune tellers thrive.



7. Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Road The remains of the old stronghold and the city wall represent the boundary of Bangkok before the mid-nineteenth century. Golden Mountain behind them is a landmark located just outside the city.



8. The Precinct of Pathum Khongka Temple This temple is located at the southern edge of Sampeng, a periphery of Bangkok before the mid-nineteenth century, and the big stone shown was a scaffold for the nobility.



9. The Canal in Thon Buri This canal is not only for transportation, but is still for a way of life. Almost all houses face the canal and familiar itinerant tradespeople visit by paddling boat. Bathing is also done here.



10. Asadan Road The Road, running parallel to Lot Canal, is one of the old roads in Bangkok. The buildings constructed in pre-War times retain their old appearances and represent the European influence on the modernisation of Thai society.



11. Sampeng The quarter is full of chaotic energy, dealing in both retail and wholesale commercial transactions, frequently through one or another Chinese dialect. Narrow streets and lanes constitute an attractive labyrinth on a human scale.



12. Yawarat The area is inseparably adjacent to Sampeng, and also a trade centre, especially in gold ornament transactions. They have something above the economic value so as to fascinate people now as well as in olden days.



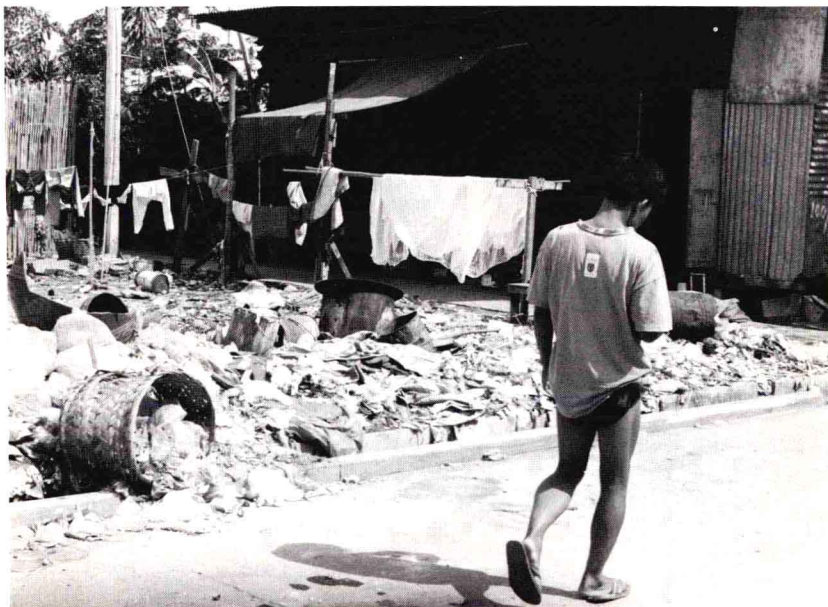
13. A Lane There are lots of stalls selling food to passers-by along both lanes and streets, and almost all are very cheap, the “eating paradise” that is one of the great pleasures of the residents in Bangkok.



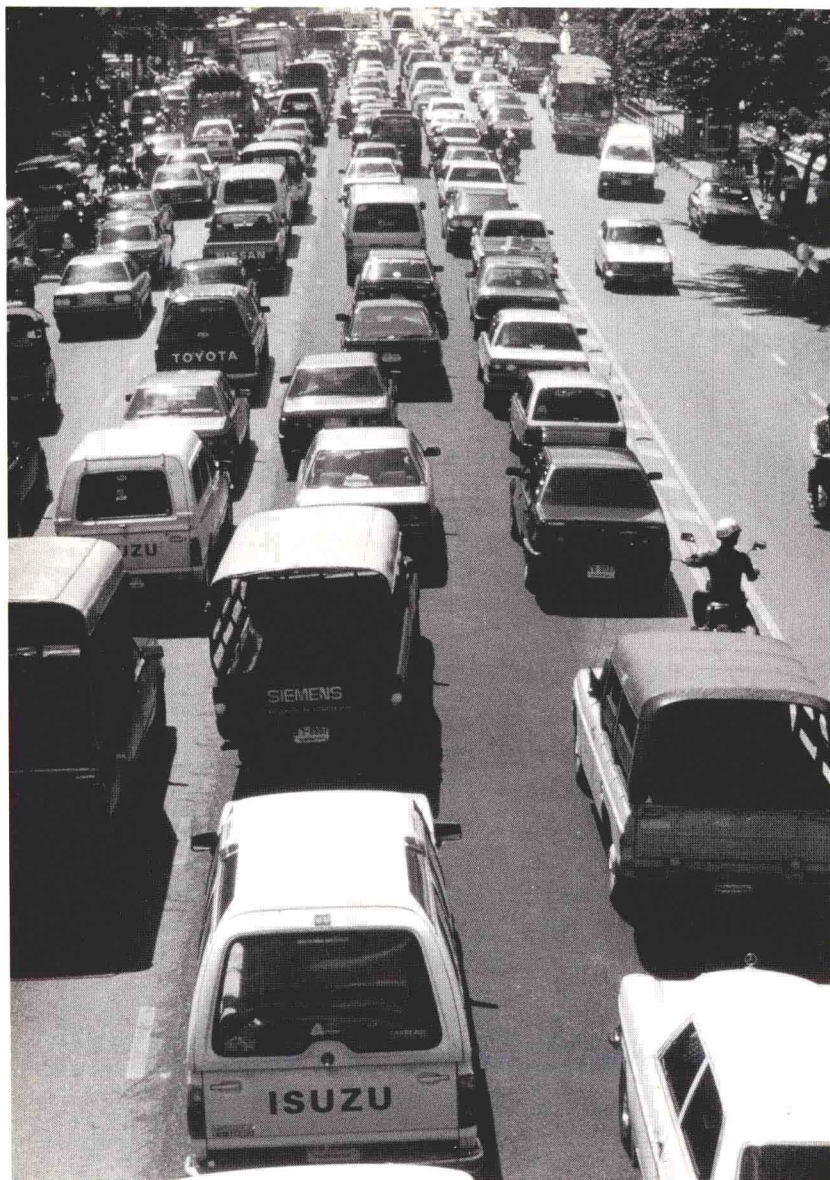
14. A Department Store A food corner in a department store is an extension of food stalls along the streets and lanes. Here, people, especially the young, enjoy modern fast food and traditional Thai.



15. Silom Road This road is a modern business centre quite different from Sampeng and Yawarat. Businesses including banks have their headquarters here, and competitively construct conspicuously huge buildings.



16. Khlong Toei The area is located at Bangkok Port and is known for its shanty houses. But the inhabitants' labour force has greatly contributed to the Bangkok economic development, that is, Silom.



17. Rama IV Road The increase of cars has been much faster than the road construction in Bangkok. The canal located along this road is already filled in in order to widen the road, which results in regular flooding every year.

Acknowledgements

These essays were all written in Japanese at different times independently from each other, and have been translated into English especially for this book. In compiling them I have tried to make revisions for connected ideas, but have not changed my point of view in which economy must be analysed from the stand-points of both its utilities and meanings. The Introduction is newly written for the book to explain the ideas behind each essay and my intention to develop Karl Polanyi's thoughts on the market economy in history through symbolic studies of different economies. In most cases, these essays are based on the field works of area studies I have undertaken over a long period of time in Thailand, Sri Lanka and Japan.

In doing my field research I was very much indebted to many people, both villagers and urban residents alike. For area studies in Thailand, the National Research Council of Thailand furnished me with very generous research arrangements. I am full of gratitude to them all.

Also, in preparing to write the essay about the landscapes of Bangkok I had lots of stimulating discussions on the historical identity of the city at research meetings held by the "Urbanism in Islam Project" supported financially by the Ministry of Education, Japan.

Some of these essays have been previously published by the Shibundo Press, the University of Tokyo Press and the University of the United Nations. I would like to express my appreciation for their kind permission to include them in the book.

I am also grateful for the Institute of Oriental Culture at the University of Tokyo for providing me with the opportunity to publish this book as part

of research series. The Japan Society for Promotion of Science extended me the opportunity to make area studies in Bangkok.

Finally, I deeply appreciate the editorial work of Mr. Genzo Kimura and Ms Akiko Naito. A friend took much pains to revise my English. Without their considerable efforts this book could not have been published.

T Tomosugi
Bangkok
September 1990

The essays included in this book were previously published as follows.

1. The Symbolic Value of Ancient and Primitive Monies in *Shocho Jinruigaku* (in Japanese, *Symbolic Anthropology*) ed. Tamotsu Aoki, Shibundo, 1984.
2. On the Genealogy of Commodities in *Girei* (in Japanese, *Rituals*) ed. T. Aoki and E. Kuroda, Univ. of Tokyo Press, 1988.
3. Festivals, Merchants and Community Formation in *Toyobunka Kenkyusho Kiyo* No. 108, 1989. (Bulletin of Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo)
4. The Reconstruction of the Substantive Economy in Rural Thailand in *Toyobunka* No. 63, 1983. (Annual Journal of Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo)
5. A Historical Perspective of Urbanism in Bangkok in *Toyobunka* No. 69, 1989 (Annual Journal of Institute of Oriental Culture) also in *The Proceedings of the international conference on Urbanism in Islam* Vol. 3 pp. 1-63. under another title, "Approach to Comparative Studies of Urbanism : a case study of Bangkok."

Japan Wet Rice Society in *Suiri no Shakai Kozo* (In Japanese, *Social Structure of Irrigation*) ed. Tamaki, Hatade and Imamura, Univ. of the United Nations, 1983. The Japanese version was published in 1983, but its English version has not been published yet.