

**PROGRESS AND POVERTY NOW
TRANSLATED AND PRINTED IN THAI**

by Dr. William Batt, Albany, NY

The beginning of 2003 saw the publication of a translation of Henry George's Progress and Poverty into Thai by retired Thai Vice Admiral Suthon Hinjiranon. He also wrote his own book, *The Unjust Poverty*, which applies these ideas to Thailand. Both volumes have now been printed, 1,000 copies each, and have been distributed to various government ministries, to university libraries, and to selected government and organization officials that have shown interest in the Georgist approach. With my recent trip back to Thailand, there came opportunity to introduce both books to the Ministry of Finance, to university audiences, and to professional appraisers in Thailand.

Admiral Suthon originally read P&P while taking a course through the Henry George School in New York City, and he translated it into Thai in order to better understanding its message. He was so taken with the philosophy that he then proceeded in 1978 to write his own interpretation as it applied to Thai society. It was published in modest numbers as an inexpensive paperback volume, and has long been out of print. I owe the connection with Admiral Suthon to Alanna Hartzok who learned of his interest in a trip to Thailand in 1999. She'd heard mention of Admiral Suthon's name and that he had written the book years earlier. Naturally she passed his name on to me upon returning to the US, even though it would be three years more before I would have a chance to get back to Thailand and meet him myself. Through student intermediaries and then finally by email, I learned that Admiral Suthon was agreeable to recheck his translation and see to the republication of the books, the cost paid for by a grant from the Schalkenbach Foundation. At the cost of \$3,635 we were able to see to a full printing production of both books; Admiral Suthon's time and effort was totally without charge.

I was able during my month-long visit to Thailand in February 2003 to meet Admiral Suthon after communicating with him by email for three years. We were able to meet together on three occasions, first for dinner together and then twice when I spoke before audiences of fiscal experts. Now in his 70s and with a remarkable career as a Royal Thai Naval Officer behind him, he lives quietly at home with his family. I regard his accomplishment and contribution as the capstone of a long career in the service to his country. He told me that there were two guiding philosophies in his life, Buddhism and Georgism. I asked then whether they were related in any way: "Very much," he answered. "Both respect the dignity and equality of all people." He later added that there is an even more profound connection: in both philosophies, a central tenet is that "Thou Shalt Not Steal."

(Dr. William Batt's visit to Thailand was to celebrate his 1962 Peace Corps service anniversary. He had lived there three years and is fluent in Thai. He may be emailed at hwbatt@yahoo.com.)□