

Jakrapop: Alright, thank you Jonathan. Distinguished members and friends. Well I just want to be more specific on what I had just been through so you understand my situation.

I just got out of Khun Prem's jail. It's not a General jail. It's Khun Prem's jail. It's Khun Prem's direct way of communicating to the public that he is not to be touched.

Who is Khun Prem, whom he represents, whether or not he represents him, would be a part of what we can discuss tonight because it involves the current and future of Thailand's democracy as you know because most of you here have been already quite knowledgeable about Thailand and its complex and unnecessary headache situation in Thai politics.

Jonathan gave me a huge issue on Democracy and Patronage system of Thailand as a part of a discussion on Thailand's democratization. I'll try to handle it in the best possible way.

In fact eh considering the current situation of Thailand no topic can be more relevant to Thailand these days. Current political crisis in my opinion is the clash between Democracy and Patronage system directly. It's a head on clash. And this would change Thailand and its foundations.

The stake is very high for both sides, I mean Democracy and Patronage; and if you take the result of the August 19th referendum seriously, you are observing the clash between the 56% and the 41% of the entire population.

Never before has such a high number of people come out to say that we no longer need your Patronage.

It's simply Democracy that we want not someone to pat in the back, not someone to say that well I'll make your life a little better, but you should feel more grateful to it.

It's the time of real changes should be the natural right of the people of Thailand no less than most people in a more developed land. I believe we can see this in a life time, the complete change that has started at this very moment.

Well, however we have started off as a country in Patronage system. Most of you who read about Thailand and its brief history, because we decided to count our history 700 years ago and disregard the 300 years before that because it involved the Southern complexity.

That's why the history was chosen to start 700 years ago in Sukothai period where Sukothai was the capital city of what would become Thailand. In Sukothai at least in one of the reigns of the Sukothai long history, we were led to know and believe that one of the Kings during Sukothai period, King Ramkamheang at the time to be more precisely.

Great brother oh I'm sorry Great Father Ramkamheang at the time because the idea of God like monarch hasn't arrived in this land yet during the Sukothai period. So he was or they were observed and regarded as the Great Fathers who could be benevolent to their people and gave the people what the people needed at the time.

One of the noted examples was that Great Father Ramkamheang or King Ramkamheang just to be short proposed to have a bell hung in front of his palace and anybody with specific problems could come and ring that bell and he or his people would come out and handle the problems. That was one of the first lessons the Thai students learnt about Thai political regime that you have someone to depend upon.

When you have a problem turn to someone who can help you, so before we know it, we are led into the Patronage system because we asked about dependency before our own capability to do things.

These are the very basic concept that makes Thai people different from many peoples around the world. So we started of like that, during the Sukothai period we had Kings that did things like that. So people had duty to be loyal, people had duty to have faith in the system bestowed on them because that was the working system at that time and there was no competing system. In other words, there was not there was no better idea on how a kingdom could be run so that it was the best system at the time.

Later on in Ayuthaya period, that was the capital city of a land for 400 and some years, the God like idea of monarch had been introduced with the Khmer civilization's influence. The idea of a King as a Demi-God as a representative from the Hindu Gods and the Gods beyond these Hindu Gods had arrived in our land at that time.

So the Patronage system of helping people or being dependable for people had been changed into the state of protection. If you have loyalty to the King, unquestionable loyalty to the King, you would be protected, in order to show this protection more clearly, people who do otherwise must be punished.

So the very system in Ayuthaya period shows or showed that there was an evolution of the system, some people might call it regressive, some people would call it progressive. Whatever it might be in your opinion, it was a combination between the benevolence of the Great Fathers model and the Great Leaders model. In other words, the Kings of Ayuthaya were powerful and the concept of power were realized at the time that if people in power could be benevolent, you could benefit from that power as well. In other words Ayuthaya period taught Thai people to live with power, how to live with it. How to survived in it, and how not to be destroyed by it. But Ayuthaya period also triggered the new relationships in a land, the master slave relationship, the noble and commoners relationship. That was Ayuthaya.

Then came Rattanakosin period, I would eh bypass the 12 years of Thonburi period. In Rattanakosin

period, in which we are now.

The Chakri Dynasty was the starter of this so called Rattanakorin Rattanakosin period. What it is? It's a combination of Ayuthaya and the new skills of what I would like to call knowledge management. In other words, the glory of the chief father is combined with the power of Ayuthaya period and the Demi-God stature of the monarchs has been added during Rattanakosin period with the so-called knowledge management.

Knowledge is power at that time, it was perceived so. That's why King Mongkut spoke English in his court and he introduced science and probably technologies, inventions, foreign goods that were completely unknown to Thai people at that time. As one of the sources of his powers King Mongkut was seen not as a benevolent King, not as the best of the chief Father King but as the Father of science and technology. He's still regarded that way.

So in other words, the system in Thailand has been to the point that leaders and rulers have been finding the best way possible at that time to convince people that they are dependable. The sources of their being dependable varies over time, like I described to you.

And then here we are in the reign of current King, King Bhumipol or Rama the 9th. We have all of that combined and because he reigns for so long of a time, 60 some years now. His being in Thailand has been promoted to the state of myth. People don't know whether or not they are talking about the realities or believe about him because he reigns long enough that he could be all of those combined, the traditional King, the scientific King, the developing King., the working monarch. And now so, he can still be the guardian of the new invention to Thailand - democracy.

So all of that have been in front of us, that we have all these variables that we have to rearrange and put in a new order.

We missed some opportunities in the past like when Pridi Panomyong, the civilian leader of the revolution of 1932, 2475 for Thai people that the system was turned from absolute monarchy into constitutional monarchy that was during the reign of King Rama 7th or King Prachatipok, Pridi said later on he seized power when he was 32 years old and at the age of nearly 50 he was out of power completely and resided in Beijing for 10 years and then for the rest of his life in France, he never returned to Thailand, only his address did. He said at the time that "When I had power, I don't know what to do with it, when I grew up and know what to do with it, I no longer had power"

The idea of having things at the wrong time has been reminding us that we probably need a leader to rearrange all of that for us. You see all of that that I have said to you from the beginning. It leads to a strong belief among Thai people still that with a benevolent reign like this we don't actually need democracy. We are led into believing that the best form of government is guided democracy or democracy with His Majesty's gracious guidance. It has a continual development of ideas and beliefs into the current situation in which I see as a clash or the clash between democracy and patronage system.

In other words, Thais are made to be comfortable with the patronage system. We start to invent terms like "Mai Pen Rai" or it doesn't matter or it's alright because there is no other way to say it. We invented the system of eh smiling anyway, no matter what happens because smiles are the way out of a problem.

There's simply no other ways at that time; and we invented some saying some belief like "ค่าของคน คือคนของใคร" a person's values is based on whom he belongs something like that. So the ideas and that the terms like this have been based on a feeling or the feeling that to be patronized is alright.

I went to the United States as a student in 1992, and I could never understand at the time why people could be angered by being patronized. Some friends of mine responded angrily to me and to the people that I saw them talking to, they said don't patronize me! I never understood that because the state of being patronized is alright! The state of being flattered is fine because your life depends on others anyway. So to be patronized is not a sin is not evil but all that are coming to a big change that is why we are clashing now because there are enough people who came out and say that No, we don't want anymore of your damn patronage!

The 41% that said "No" to the constitution drafted by the dictators and the dictators' followers has been the result of huge lobbying in the bureaucracy of heavy budget investments to turn the whole country to a "Yes" country, you remember that, it just a week ago. And some even believe that there some irregularities involved in the process of you know campaigning for the constitution or the counting of the votes.

But with all of that big brothers tactics combined they got only 56% and that includes the big billboards around Bangkok and probably outside Bangkok too but I haven't seen any. But saw a lot of them along the Don Muang toll way from the old airport, Don Muang, that say something like "well we the Thai people have to join the same boat. We have the same fate, we join the same boat; but what's remarkable is the name there was put at the end of the statement it says Yellow Shirt People.

In other words, the Yellow Shirt People combine with all those tactics, you got only 56%! That is your

big problem. Thailand is on the verge of change if so. So what we are talking about between Democracy and Patronage system is that people are coming out of age, I think.

I myself grew up in patronage system. I was pampered too. My father served in the Air Force and he later on became a commercial airline captain of Thai Airways when it first started. The first bunch of local pilots. So he was paid in quite a high salary enough to feed his family, and I wouldn't have to go through the misery of life that he went through. So I grew up in patronage system too. I treat my dinners; I mean I treat my dinners for granted that it would always come to the table. I wouldn't know the feeling of having a dinner tonight and probably there is nothing for tomorrow but my father did experience all that. I grew up in that kind of system comfortably so.

I start questioning the notion of patronage system later on when I became a full time journalist in television and started to probe Thailand and its society more seriously. I found that something is wrong. It took me years and some experience in the Thaksin administration's government to understand all this.

Patronage system is problematic because it encourages inequality among individuals. And that's a direct conflict to Democracy. It encourages one person into thinking of depending on the other or others. It breeds endless number of slaves with a very limited number of masters. It prevents Thailand from coming out of age.

That's why having been educated for so long of a time having braved the World for so long of a time never had any direct discrimination against any foreign cultures for so long of a time. Many of us remain children. You can observe the political fight in Thai politics and you would find most of them petty. It's a child's game, the way that they play of each other or against each other because in a patronage system, you would remain children. You would remain somebody who depends on others.

So no wonder pettiness is everywhere in Thailand.

You see one of the latest examples happened to the former Thai Rak Thai party. You may have read the news that the Election Commission had a problem with the name of the new Thai Rak Thai party. Eh at that time Thai Rak Thai was not transformed eh transforming into a new party which is called People's Power Party or PPP. It was tried to play a trick of changing name or modifying the name. So people would know that it remains Thai Rak Thai. So they changed the name and the name was approved by Election Commission. Then when they found out that the new modified name was abbreviated as TRT just like Thai Rak Thai, they withdrew that endorsement. They said that "no, you no longer use that name it's TRT again, my nightmare is returning. So in other words, this pettiness is a sample of how we play of

each other in the 20th and 21st century.

So Thaksin as Prime Minister that I came to work with and grew to like him personally. He came in and changed all that.

Sleepwalkingly Thaksin has removed power of patronage from the powers that be and turn it into a public policies most people can benefit. I was with him so I knew that he didn't launch those policies philosophically. He simply wanted to do his job. He wants to be liked. He wants to be loved. He wants to be a useful rich man. That's simply the way he operates his mind.

But then his easy going way has been in conflict with the patronage system because it undid most of that, fast in only 5 years.

People of grass roots started to feel that they have rights. They have the right to feel that they could be must better off instead of being a little better than last year. In other words they simply were given a new choice. And Thaksin didn't do it to challenge anyone. But some people felt challenged by what he did and what he has done.

When he won the election for the 2nd time with the 377 seats in a Parliament of 500 it was never before an absolute majority.

I could tell you behind the scene and of the microphones in future times that the private observation that I am sorry couldn't reveal tonight, show that, there are some intimidation in the air right after the election result was known that Thaksin won 377 seats among 500 in parliament, in other words Thaksin was not to be trust because Thaksin had violated has violated the rules of being depending on others. He started to be a Prime Minister that doesn't have to depend on anyone and that is a sin in a Patronage system.

Thaksin did right or wrong it's up to the history to judge. You can drag him to court or international court of justice, doesn't matter. What matters is what he has put and imprinted in Thailand. It's something that people never felt before.

He almost did not do anything for the Bangkok people because he felt that they didn't need him that much. If you asked Bangkok people or urbanized people what Thaksin had done to them, it could take them two weeks and they couldn't come up with anything.

But when you ask people at the grass root ,they can cite 10 items that they felt they were given under

Thaksin new system. Was Thaksin patronizing them in doing that? probably so. But he didn't mean doing that way and I could tell you out of my personal observation of how he came out with that kind of policies.

You know that he had planned that in the last 2 years of his second term, he would be in Thailand only one third of the whole time. He would spend two thirds of the second, the last 2 years of his administration traveling the world. According to his work he would be playing the role a salesman for the country in the last 2 years but he was deprived from that he was overthrown while waiting to speak in a general assembly of the United Nations.

Right after the coup of the 19th of September 2006, we planned to eh launch a government in exile but a telephone call from Bangkok changed all that. According...well in my own opinion that was a mistake, we should have gone with it. We should have made the CNS, the Surayuth government and the rest of them illegal. We should have made them illegitimate like the Hangsumrin Hunsen regime of Cambodia years ago we should have made that; but the telephone call changed all that. So what could we do?

I am a small person in this vast entourage. I was at the time Deputy Secretary General to the Prime Minister and equivalent to the Deputy Chief of Staff in the President system of the United States. But it was a small place. So if I could press for it, I would have pressed for a government in exile. And if there would be a clash, a physical clash in Thailand so be it.

So we are talking in historical sense that even a Prime Minister who was put in power by the people, what he did was to release people from patronage system. But when the most crucial decision comes, even him made the decision out of patronage system.

So the deep root of the patronage system is here and that is in direct conflict with democratization, we have to undo it, we have to personalize the patronage system by saying that well who keeps patronizing people?

And I believe the time is near to do that; once you were put in jail, it's alright you can do more time to realize your goal. It's fine really. The thing is that I was waiting for the second case that I'm charged with the so called wire tapping case.

On the 22nd of June during our daily Sanam Luang broadcast stage I was revealing a conversation of 3 people, a phone conversation, 2 of them were judges, one in the Supreme court and the other one is in the Appeals court. One was known to have a close relationship, presumably homosexual relationship, with

the powers that be.

And they were talking to the sense that how we could manipulate the King's statement to punish the Thaksin's administration and the Election Commissioners that whom they believed to be siding with Thaksin and the rest of that is history if you follow the details in Thai news. In other words, they were forced to face the reality of how this Patronage system which is the main element of the aristocracy system of Thailand had been operated, how they buddy each other and use the personal relationship to change things around, how they insult people by not endorsing the majority of the people, how they think that Democracy has to be guided still. So the tape itself, eh, would be a big case from now on.

The police charged me and some of my colleagues of illegally wire tapping, it's not the case, it was intentionally taped by the third person in the conversation that he would be coming out soon. He is then Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's office. So the case would be brought to court.

My intention is not to prove whether or not I wired tapped it but I want to bring Khun Prem or General Prem and the 2 Justices to the court, that would be my intention and then I could be facing Khun Prem in Court and ask him why such a great leader like yourself decided to downgrade Democracy like this. You were a Great Leader, Your Excellency but you changed.

So a once in dispensable leader is now a leader at a very long time in history. So Khun Prem symbolizes so many things. We learned from Khun Prem that a good person when he gets real old and is not the age that matters here, it's the state of feeling old, in the, in the state of mind of not being adventurous anymore of reversing to the old times. The good old times that he is comfortable with, is no longer suitable to be influential in the country.

So well I'm sorry I have used so much of the time but I just want to say that the what I found lately in jail and out of jail that Democracy and Patronage system are, direct, are in direct conflict and the election which is up coming on December 23rd would not resolve anything.

The situation would be worse after the election because all of the tactics and the covers would have been used up and the real intention would be revealed why you couldn't allow Democracy in this country. When you went to Sanam Luang, if you did, you would the same feeling that I have. That people in Thailand are no longer children. They are adults being forced into eh children's eh costumes. They feel frustrated, physically and mentally, and they are struggling themselves to get themselves out of that.

I don't know how it would come about but it would come.

So I would end here, I hope that my opinion would attract some questions and some discussion after that I would to hear your opinions and your question so much. I want to know how you perceive Thailand cause many of you have been in Thailand for so long of a time. Some of you are real Thailand lovers and I don't want to shatter that feeling. So I need to know what you actually feel about it at this point.

Thank you very much.

Jonathan:

Before we take questions, can I just ask Khun Ajarn Worapol you had I think eh some points to add to that. Do you? Is there anything you like to say now? Or it's entirely up to you. Do you want to speak now or shall we take questions.

Worapol:

Later - you can ask Khun Jakrapob

Jonathan:

Then the floor is open for any body who'd like to ask throw questions to Khun Jakrapop and if there are things he can't answer then Ajarn Worapol will be happy to fill in as well.

If you are not all racing to the microphones now cause you are all stunned at the content of Khun Jakrapop's speech I will exert the privilege of being the moderator Khun Jakrapop and throw you em the first question.

One of the, things, points you said in there, Thailand needed a leader to rearrange the current institutions at one point. I mean you talk about the patronage system being unacceptable and yet you seem to think that Thailand can only sorted it out by a powerful leader presumably you are referring to somebody like Khun Thaksin who you worked underneath. You know, doesn't eh wasn't there just as much patronage under Thaksin Shinawatra and didn't he allow patronage to bring people on board as well?

Jakrapop:

It might not be him, the leader I'm talking about. Actually I should be referring to that as leadership instead of leader. Eh what I meant to say that things have been rearranged and put in the right order by the, the force of the patronage system. But when people start to refuse that. They need a different kind of leadership to help them seeing all this through.

I don't know anymore than you do, on what the new leadership would look like, but if you ask me if I have to, to presume that I know and say something about it, I would say that the new leadership has to continue reducing the inequality of rights that people in urbanized areas and the rest of the country have been put upon. In other words the so called populist policies have to be the key to start making people believe that they have rights.

And Khun Thaksin he is reaching 60 now you know, and he is quite happy man and now he's now happier than ever with the Man City. So I'm not even sure that Khun Thaksin would want to take that role. He enjoys himself being a famous politician in Thailand, but according to him, if eh according to him, if eh, if eh, if the owners don't like what he did, a professional manager like him could be working for other companies.

That kind of attitude is not very revolutionary so the new leadership that I'm talking about needs to be more revolutionary.

Jonathan:

But I, Just pick up on that. You're talking about a leader being necessary. Isn't it a better thing if Thailand has fairly weak national leaders but starts having some much more dynamic politics at a local level if you start waiting for a savior, a leader to come along you're surely thinking in the same terms of patronage that have always existed.

Jakrapop:

Oh no no. I'm not waiting for the white knight to come and save all of us... no no no. What I'm saying is that, this the state of no white knight. I'm saying the opposite. This is the state of no white knight. This political situation will not end like the May incident of 1992. There is no one to end it because everyone is involved. You see that there is no referee.

So what would be happening from now on is very unknown, but I guess it would take, it would take some peoples, heavy hands if you will, for example, to put it in a more tangible and touchable samples, appoint General Saprang as Army Chief, appoint General Seripisuth as Police Chief and you will see something. Actually you should have done that, they should have done that. They should appoint the most dictatorial figures into a positions that need to be democratized, and then we may see something that happens.

When there was a revolution, the leaders of such incident is always unknown, so I don't know who would lead that.

Jonathan:

Thank you, Khun Jakrapop. Can we have the next question please Marwaan

Marwaan:

Marwaan Marcar Interpress Service

Khun Jakrapop something you said about there was an attempt by Thaksin to form the government in exile, I'm just curious could you walk us through when he was planning to do so and when this call came from Thailand to ask him not to and who gave this call?

Jakrapop:

Well eh I went to jail one time, I eh would try to refrain myself from doing the same thing again. Well what I could say here is, it was not him who came up with the idea of a government exile. It's from some of us me included and we informally approach certain countries, I don't want to name countries but not less than 10 countries on that same night whether or not they would endorse our government exile and they said they would. In other words, if he would have gone ahead with that government in exile, I think he would be he would have succeeded but that's an if clause, that an if, what you call it, if situation. Eh .Who made that call, I'm sorry, I couldn't reveal right now but I'll be....

Jonathan:

Would his name begins with "P"?

Jakrapop:

Well it is very much in style actually. Well ah ..that call change the ... Eh, he was considering it at that time. That was the time before he issued that emergency decree on MCOT TV on channel 9 the time if you remember about 9.20 pm. That was shortly before that, I was in Bangkok. Because we kind of knew that something could happen, but he had to go anyway. So he flew from New York to London, and it would be harder to form government exile in London, as opposed to the United Nations, you see. So I realize that he put an end to the idea, but it did not come from him. That is all I could answer.

Peter:

Peter Janssen DPA

Khun Jakrapop I've forgotten what you, the word exactly, but you said something like "sleep walkingness", that eh, describing Thaksin's eh, eh what em, evolution as a hero of democracy. Em can you elaborate on that? Do you, do you feel that he really had eh, I mean, was he really interested in promoting democracy in Thailand? I mean wasn't he as Jonathan said, just monopolizing the patronage system and if he did just sort of sleep walk into this hero of democracy eh eh image that you're portraying here I mean is he really a democratic person? Is he a democratic politician really? I don't know. And wasn't this just a very accidental hero we've got here that you that are promoting at the moment?

Jakrapop:

He, he was a product, he is a product of patronage system and autocracy who try to be more democratic than he might ever be. He battles all the time between being a liberal business person and a police officer. It is his internal conflict and you need to talk to his shrink about that not me. But the thing is that he is good enough for me to work with because I need someone, we need someone to lead our way to eh the light at the end of the tunnel.

If Thailand is deep in patronage system the way that the old timers had brought Thailand about, there is no need for education why do we need to go to school, I mean just find some masters and you'll do fine. Because you wouldn't be allowed to show your education and your knowledge anyway. If you want to have a country full of people with energy and people who want to change things, you have to provide them with an equal time. I mean of yourself to express yourself in that society.

To answer Peter's question, I believe that Khun Thaksin has been trying to democratic. People of his generations is hardly democratic, even democratic fighters turn out to be very dictatorial when you work with them closely. Some democratic fighters in Thailand beat their wives. That's terrible. What kind of democracy is that? So it is a battling between democracy and autocracy that he, along with the rest of this generation has to do. I don't presume to say what he is, but eh I am saying that when I said he is sleep walking into changing policies, what I mean is that, he did not intend to grab power from the old patronage system, he did not know that the war was on going, he did not know that poor people have been owned by somebody else. That's why he blurt out some words without knowing how hurt it might be to people who heard it.

He said at one point before I became spokesman. He said it, he said that "I'm tired of this poor man's brokers." People who talk about poor people and poverty all the time and didn't do a damn thing about it. You know you couldn't give people spirit instead of better life. You cannot give them projects? They need results. So that's how he operates his mind.

That's why I think that sometimes he is sleep walking in the sense that he didn't know the impact of what he did but he realized the impact of what he did later on. So what we talking about is a collective leadership actually. Thaksin was not dictatorial. I was working with him, I would be the one who will step away from him if he was. But he's merely a person who stick to the gun and try to get the job done no leaders of Thai ever like that so it was dictatorial of mind of people because you stuck to your gun.

You insisted that it had to be done under your leadership and that could be construed by some people have been dictatorial. But if you met him in person you spent sometimes with him, you would know that he is, he doesn't have that grain in his body. So I'm not saying that he is a superman, but he is better than the old leaders that I was told eh to respect. I would rather work underneath a half good commoner than an empty noble. You see.

Jonathan:

Thank you Khun Jakrapop. Simon

Simon:

Simon Montlake from the Christian Science Monitor. Khun Jakrapop, will you be eh contesting the upcoming elections on December 23rd, if so, you know, which party you will be joining and can tell you us anything about what that party stands for or may do for Thailand? And if you decide that will you not be joining this election since you campaigned against the constitution, will you be doing any other kind of action whether on the streets or whatever to, you know, to make your political point?

Jakrapop:

Well thank you Simon, eh we had 377 seats in parliament and we was, we were overthrown. So maybe the victory in an election might not be the whole thing or the whole point. So eh, all of us, some of us, who were campaigning at Sanam Luang are now considering whether or not we should be joining the election if you would join the election it means that we need a new forum to reveal even more.

The election campaign for us would be another Sanam Luang stage, if we would join the election, but if we would not join the election, it would mean that we would find something outside the electoral process to do; in order to protect the system itself if we can, the best way we can. We are not priding of ourselves of being, you know the guardian of anything, but we tried, or we would die trying.

The party which I eh we would belong; anything Thai Rak Thai, anything Thai Rak Thai, it could be

called, you know, Thai Love Chinese, you know, that's fine, you know, I would belong to that party.

Jonathan:

Haha Next question Peter

Peter Collins:

Hello, Peter Collins from The Economist and maybe I could through a couple, a a split question to both of you. Em from what we read the PPP has lots of eh former TRT MPs and I guess enters the election campaign unless something happens as a front runner, em so a 2 part question: eh 1 what do you think that what will be done to stop the PPP from winning? and 2 what do you both think about a government or a governing party led by Samak?

Jakrapop:

Eh let me make sure that I got your question right, the first question: what would stop PPP from winning?

Peter Collins:

What, what what is going to stop. What is going to be done to stop them winning?

Jakrapop:

The tactics of the other side

[transcription abruptly ends here]