

April is the End of Summer

AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMMISSION INTERTEL DOCUMENTARY

Cover: Three Buddhist monks. Buddhism is a pervasive force in Thai life.



April is the End of Summer



A girl from the Yao people, who live in the north-west hills—Chieng Mai district.

April is the End of Summer a documentary which looks at Thailand today, is ABC-TV's seventh programme for Intertel.

The programme examines the only nation of South-East Asia which has never been colonised, and is thus the only measure of how other countries in the area might have developed without French, British or Dutch rule.

It has 32 million people, increasing at the rate of a million a year. One in four can neither read nor write. Most of its people are Buddhist, and the country, as one of the biggest exporters of rice in the world, is in a leading economic position among the developing nations of Asia.

Thailand is hemmed in by Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos and Burma, and has been proclaimed by Peking as the next target for Communist conquest.



BURMA

NORTH
VIET NAM

LAOS

● Palau
● Chieng Rai

● Chieng Mai

Vientiane

● Ban Muang

Udorn ●

● Sakon Nahkon

● Khon Kaen

THAILAND

● Bangkok

● Pattaya

● U-Tapao

CAMBODIA

GULF
OF
SIAM

SOUTH
VIET NAM

● Towns visited by
the ABC-TV team.

It is separated by a hundred miles of Burma and Laos from China.

Now, after centuries of diplomatic manoeuvre — policies which have been called divide and rule in reverse — the Government in Bangkok has become firmly allied with the United States and is strongly anti-Communist.

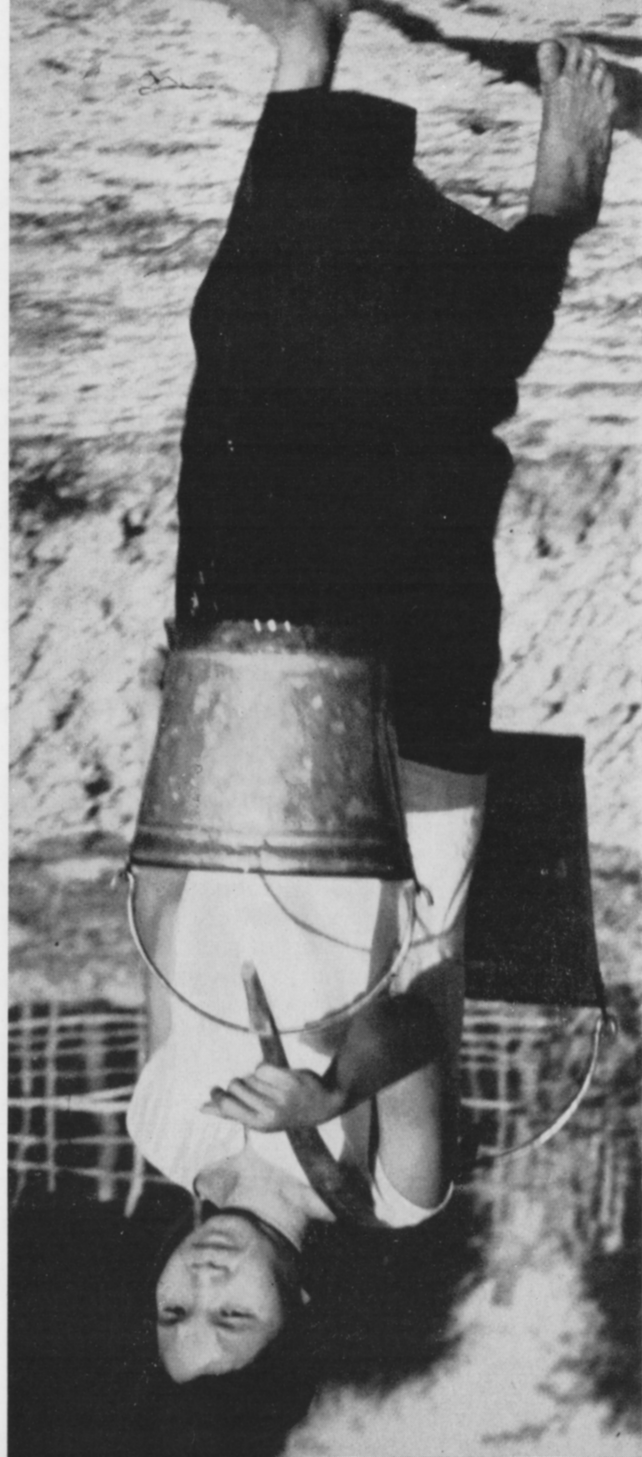
Directing this marked change in outlook is a predominantly military government, headed by Field-Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn. Generals have dominated the political scene since 1932, when a group of officers and young civilians staged a coup d'état, the first of a series which have punctuated recent Thai history. The coup did away with the old absolutist system and replaced it with a constitutional monarchy. However, the constitution has been suspended, abandoned and virtually ignored at various times.

One of the people on whom the film concentrates is Air Chief Marshal Dawee Chullasapya. Trained as a fighter-pilot in Britain, he is now Deputy Defence Minister.

A big difficulty confronting the government is the traditional neglect of remote areas. The north-eastern region contains a third of Thailand's population and is the poorest part of the country. A programme which the Government in Bangkok calls accelerated rural development has been mounted in an effort to ward off Communism. American influence is very strong in Thailand, and with American help roads are being built, agriculture improved and health services introduced in an effort to win back the loyalty of a people who've been ignored and neglected.

Nor is the north-east the only trouble spot. The north is filled with tribesmen who have wandered through the hills of Burma, Thailand and Laos for centuries, though they originally came from China. They grow opium, which they sell to the remnants of the Kuo Min Tang army which was driven out of China with Chiang Kai Shek almost 20 years ago. Their rivals in the opium trade are Shan tribesmen, who are members of a movement which has been waging a civil war with the Burmese government for years. Occasionally there are armed clashes between these two groups.

A villager in Ban Muang fetches water from the well.



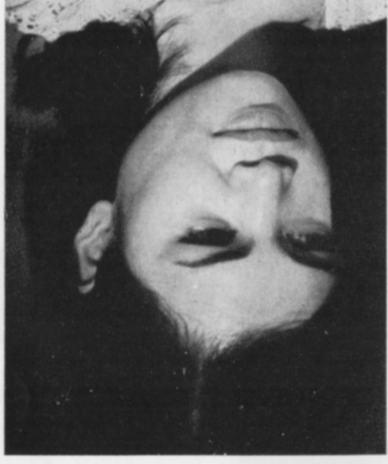
Villagers mourning at a funeral.



The Governor of Sakon-Nakhon with his female militia.



A massage-parlour girl in Bangkok who earns \$2.50 an hour.





**Air Chief Marshal
Dawee Chullasapya,
Deputy Defence Minister,
Chief of Staff.**



**The wife of
Air Chief Marshal
Dawee Chullasapya.**

The ABC in Thailand

April is the End of Summer is the culmination of more than two months' shooting and 3,000 miles of travel through Thailand by an ABC television team.

The task was to show the rest of the world the only nation of South-East Asia which has never been colonised, and the newest target — so proclaimed by Peking—for Communist subversion.

It's a country as big as Spain, shaped like the trunk of an elephant. Its borders are 500 miles and more from the capital, Bangkok.

Getting to remote areas in summer, and particularly in April—which is the hottest month of the year — entails car and truck journeys over dusty, potholed roads and tracks scoured out of the bush by timber jinkers and heavy trucks — sometimes even buffalo carts.

Thailand has four geographical areas—the hills in the northern corner close to Burma, the north-east plateau along the Mekong River, the great central plain which is one of Asia's biggest rice-bowls, and the jungled southern peninsula.

The team concentrated on three personalities—Air Chief Marshal Dawee Chullasapya, one of the leaders of the predominantly military government which rules Thailand; Khun Bu, headman of a village complex in the north-east, where Communist insurgency is strongest; and Latchee, 49-year-old chieftain of an Akha tribe in the hills of the north. The cameras followed Marshal Dawee for days. He was filmed in his office at the Defence Ministry, at the Thai Open Golf Championship, at a youth rally and at several official gatherings.

Khun Bu was filmed at his village some 500 miles from Bangkok, where the crew stayed for two weeks. Here there was none of the formality of Bangkok. The ABC men lived in a schoolhouse, guarded by troops, and took film of such diverse happenings as the hearing of a divorce case and a temple procession.

Latchee's home is among the mountains of Northern Thailand, where much of the opium grown in South-East Asia begins its journey to the addicts of Europe or the United States.

Different races in Thailand

Thailand's government consists solely of Thais, with no place for Chinese or Malays—the two biggest minority groups.

Communist penetration is already serious in the North-Eastern provinces close to Laos and potentially dangerous in the northern hills, where 200,000 primitive tribesmen live. They're now the target of a cautious "hearts and minds" campaign designed to win their support for the government in Bangkok. Just under half the tribesmen grow opium, and they are at the source of the opium trail which spreads out through Burma, Thailand and Laos to Hong Kong and Singapore, and finally, to markets in Europe and the United States.

Engaged in the trade are the Kuo Min Tang army which left China some 20 years ago, but still uniformed and well disciplined, travel through the northern hills and into Burma on opium-buying missions.

The Thai government has set out to suppress the drug traffic, partly because of pressure from the United States, but also because of evidence that young Thais, who were never attracted by opium, have taken to heroin. Two Chinese, found manufacturing heroin in Bangkok, were executed without trial as a demonstration by the generals of their determination to wipe out the drug rings.

In the North-East, the threat of Communist infiltration is very real. Headmen of villages have been murdered and acts of terror are being reported almost daily. Incidents involving Communist bands and government troops and police have doubled in the last 12 months.

Much of the blame for the upsurge of Communism is placed by the Government on the 40,000 Vietnamese who live in the North-Eastern provinces close to the borders of Laos and Cambodia. Many of them came from Indo-China after the Second World War when the Viet Minh rebellion broke out. Ho Chi Minh himself lived there in the '20's. Disguised as a Buddhist monk, he roamed through the area, seeking support for his revolutionary movement.



**Cameraman
John Atkinson
filming at the
American air
base at U-Tapao.**

WILLIAM FITZWATER—Producer-Director. Studied geology at Melbourne University before turning to the theatre, with special emphasis on composing background music. He worked as a confectioner, then joined the ABC in 1959 as a floor manager, becoming a producer in 1961.

From 1963 to 1965 he worked with BBC-2 in England, and since his return has concentrated on documentaries. His programme, *With Gentle Majesty*, won an award in a recent Melbourne Film Festival.

TONY FERGUSON—Writer. Joined ABC News Service in Sydney in 1961, after experience as a Sydney newspaper journalist. He did general reporting, sub-editing, for a time was Acting Chief of Staff for ABC News, and in August, 1964, was posted to the ABC's news staff in Singapore. Since then he has travelled widely throughout Asia on news assignments, including coverage of the Vietnamese war.



Intertel (The International Television Federation) is a non-profit organisation founded in 1960. Its members are the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Rediffusion Television Ltd. (Great Britain), National Educational Television (United States of America) and the Australian Broadcasting Commission. Intertel's object is to produce documentaries on world topics.

Title: **APRIL IS THE END OF SUMMER**
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Associate Producer: **NEIL EDWARDS**
Producer/Director: **WILLIAM FITZWATER**
Writer: **TONY FERGUSON**
Editor: **ERNEST F. WADE**
Cameramen: **JOHN ATKINSON**
ROY MALOUF
Sound Recordist: **RON GREEN**
Unit Manager: **GRAHAME TAYLOR**
Production Assistant: **RUDI CHAKORN**
Dubbing Mixer: **DON CONNOLLY**
Narrator: **KIT DENTON**