

Good vision and dedication were the qualities applied to improve education in Thailand, as **Chularat Saengpassa** reports



He had all the qualities required of a successful top education official. To list a few of his achievements, Pin founded the prestigious Triam Udom Suksa School, Chiang Mai University and Silpakorn University's Sanam Chandra Palace Campus.

He also introduced a fixed class schedule as well as domestic science studies. He introduced training schools with teacher-preparation programmes and foresaw the need to open institutes of higher education in provinces outside Bangkok. Pin's great contributions to education are widely recognised and they earned him various awards.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) posthumously awarded him the Unesco Outstanding Personality on the centenary of his birth.

"He was the perfect role model when it came to teaching and ethical excellence," Triam Udom Suksa School's

former director Sanan Sumit wrote about Pin.

Born to a noble family, Pin enjoyed a comfortable and happy childhood.

His father, MR Pia Malakul, was among the first Thai people to receive an overseas education.

Teacher with vision

Under the blessing of King Rama V, Pia came back from Europe with a plan to open universities in Thailand.

Pia served as the head of the Education Department before he finally climbed to the top post, the equivalent of today's education minister.

In recognition of his great contributions, Pia was named Chao Phraya Phrasadej Surendradhibodi. But hard work took a serious toll on his health.

"He was a man of great discipline. When I was young, I never noticed my father's love for me. He was more like a teacher, but when he was too ill to write or speak, I began to realise how much he loved me. Once a maid brought his food to him and he sat up, but instead of eating the food, he started spoon-feeding me," Pin recalled in his autobiography.

The old saying "Like father, like son" well describes Pia and Pin, as both were responsible for moulding the education system. Pin began taking lessons when he was as young as four. By the time he was 12 he had already completed Grade 11.

When he was about to turn 12, he was recruited as one of the country's first royal-page students under the blessing of King Rama VI.

He was paid a salary, as the

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