

Thailand: Memorial To Communist Revolutionary Unveiled

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A group of academics officially unveiled a memorial dedicated to Jitr Bhumisak, the Communist writer who was killed 47 years ago and later became a symbol of youthful rebellion and activism for generations of progressives in Thailand.

Mr. Jitr was shot dead by members of local anti-Communist paramilitary on 5 May 1966 at the edge of a forest in Nong Goong village, Sakol Nakorn province, and a memorial was built upon the site of his death. Mr. Jitr was 36 when he met his demise.

The focal point of the memorial is the statue of Mr. Jitr. Mr. Charnvit Kasetsiri, chairman of Jitr Bhumisak Foundation, which spearheaded the project, hosted the ceremony to unveil the statue. Around 600 people, including academics, students, local officials, and former fighters of the Communist Party of Thailand attended the event.

The ceremony consists of many activities: making merit to Mr. Jitr's soul (which raised the eyebrows of some attendees, considering the atheistic ideals Mr. Jitr lived by), performances of songs Mr. Jitr wrote, laying down wreaths at the spot he was killed, and giving out education funds to local students.

Mr. Charnvit, who taught history at Thammasart University, said life and works of Mr. Jitr have been a light of wisdom and inspiration for those who sought a better world for the people. He hoped the monument would inform locals and visitors about the late revolutionary's contributions to Thai society.

Mr. Chai Promvichai, who fought for the Communists under his alias Sahai Sawan (Comrade Heaven) and witnessed Mr. Jitr's death from nearby hideout, told reporters that he was glad the monument was finally completed because Mr. Jitr had done a lot of good things.

Everything he did, he did it for the benefit of the people. He wanted the people to eat well, live well, and stay free from the authorities' exploitation, Mr. Chai said.

Mr. Jitr Bhumisak was prolific author, having written dozens of books, essays, and songs dedicated to the cause of Communism. His radical ideas were developed during his years at Chulalongkorn University. Afterwards, he was imprisoned for some years alongside members of the Communist Party.

Shortly after he was released in 1965, he joined the armed struggle against Thai authorities, joining one of the Communist strongholds in Sakol Nakorn's wooded mountains, and was killed a year later.

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