

CHAPTER TWELVE

CONCLUSIONS

This volume has covered a great variety of topics and a number of time periods. However, when a volume has a large scope, it is often more difficult to draw simple and clear sets of conclusions. However, it does appear obvious that entrepreneurial activity in Thailand was a function of both internal developments and external conditions in almost all of the situation that were examined.

In early historical periods, local farmers, artisans, and even political rulers responded to external and internal opportunities. In some cases the combination of internal and external opportunities combined to create opportunities. In other cases external or internal conditions were sufficient by themselves to create sufficient demand and encourage entrepreneurs to begin businesses.

The various studies also seem to indicate that Thailand has a thread that runs through and holds together its entrepreneurial history. Yes, there are discontinuities, but the evolution from small trading entrepreneurs to modern corporate entrepreneurs runs through the country's history. This means it is very likely that each new generation of entrepreneurs was able to build on the base of entrepreneurial knowledge that preceded it.

Historical links are important, even when a new class of ethnic entrepreneurs appears. This is true whether it was Chinese who came to work in menial jobs and then started businesses or Vietnamese traveling peddlers who sold their goods in the Northeast region of the country. There has to be both a commercial and entrepreneurial environment for this type of activity to occur.

What is also apparent from this research is that the population base for entrepreneurial behavior continues to broaden. This broadening is really a regional one, with various countries in the region placing increased emphasis on small and medium businesses.

Political leaders realize that economic growth can no longer just be fueled by attracting large foreign firms to set up operations or through the expansion activities of larger firms. Since economic growth will be linked to small and medium sized firms, it is important for potential entrepreneurs to feel that the system is being modified to support these types of businesses. If this does not happen large numbers of potential entrepreneurs will not emerge.

Finally, the results show that there are a large numbers of paths available to entrepreneurs in Thailand, and this has been true during various historical periods. Environmental conditions may make certain entrepreneurial paths more lucrative or easier to achieve success, but the range of opportunities is and has been quite broad. This means that the wide variety of characteristics that characterize Thai entrepreneurs reflect this variety in opportunities.

Entrepreneurial environments appear to need a wide variety of opportunities because of human variety in both temperament and skill. The broader the scope for entrepreneurial opportunities the larger the potential population of entrepreneurs. This is probably one of the reasons for the dramatic growth in entrepreneurial opportunities in Thailand during recent years. The country abounds with entrepreneurial opportunities for individuals at all levels of education, all ages, and all resource levels. However, it still requires the ability to identify opportunities and the willingness to risk one's resources and spend their energy in exploiting these opportunities.