

**Thaksin Shinawatra, leader of Thai Rak Thai Party,
speech at Sanam Luang, 4 February 2005¹**

(translated by Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit)

Hello, brothers and sisters.² My family is always a very close family and spends all its time together, but over the past four years, they have been very understanding. I told them I would not have much time because I had to work for the country and would not have time to be with them. My two daughters would phone to ask me when I would go to eat dinner with them. My son now has his business, so we both have little time, but he's always asking me when we can eat together. As for their mother, no need to talk about it. Today she came to reaffirm that she will make the sacrifice for me to work for the people for another four years.

Brothers and sisters. Today I don't need anything else in life because I already have lots of money, my children have all grown up, I have a wife, and don't look for more. But I would still like to die with my eyes closed and a smile on my face. I saw many thousand bodies at the tsunami. I have the feeling I'd like to imagine what my dying day would be like. I'd like to imagine that when I lay down to die, I'll die with eyes closed and a sweet smile as well. If I have been able to lead the Thai people out of poverty over the whole country, then I'm confident I can do that.

Brothers and sisters. Have you ever heard any party say it would bring people out of poverty? President Kennedy once said that in any democratic society which cannot help the majority of its people, who are in poverty or have to struggle greatly in life, to overcome their difficulties, the minority of society made up of well-off people cannot survive either

The recent economic crisis shows clearly that the country collapsed because we thought that we were well-off already, even though that was not generally the case.

Good³ brothers and sisters. I have traveled to meet people all over the country and have received a good welcome everywhere, because you put your hope in me and the Thai Rak Thai party to solve the problems for the nation for another four years. Now, people of Bangkok, do you think the same as the others? The people of Bangkok include people who have come from all over the country. Let me ask you, who has come from the north? Raise your hands. Quite a few. Who have come from the northeast, raise your hands.⁴ Southerners, raise your hands. Central region. True Bangkokians. Good brothers and sisters. Bangkok is the capital to which people come from all over the country, migrating to seek opportunities in education and work for the future. Most achieve

¹ Translated by Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit from a transcript, presumably from an audio recording. We have compressed very slightly where there is repetition, and deviated slightly in two places where we think the transcription is probably wrong. Thanks to Pairin Phlaikaeo for acquiring the transcript.

² *Phi nong*, terms of address for elder and younger relatives.

³ *Phi nong thi kharop*, literally 'Respected...'

⁴ He uses a little northeastern dialect for 'raise'.

success because there are many opportunities in Bangkok.

Brothers and sisters. Up to now, the government has done a lot of work to solve economic problems. You can see clearly that in the past four years the government has created 4.8 million additional jobs, per capita income increased 30 percent, the national economy grew by 1.7 trillion, from 4.8 before I came in to 6.5 today. 1.7 trillion. Good brothers and sisters, exports increased, that is, we are better at selling by 1 trillion baht. Over the four past years, the stock market index was 296 on the day I came in and 717 today, a rise of 420. Today, 717. A rise of 420. All investors can remember that four years ago, on the election of 6 January, Thai Rak Thai then was number 7, wasn't it? Today, what is the number? I don't know what number it will be four years from now. But if you choose number 4,⁵ it's up to you. Brothers and sisters, if you want to choose number 4, they still don't know where they are, yet they want to be the government. When they go to the provinces, they say they will be the government. But when they come back to Bangkok, they ask for 201 to be in opposition.⁶ As soon as they say 201, they start to have confidence they can be the government. When Banyat offers himself as prime minister, then Aphisit also wants to be. So I said, go and play tic-tac-toe. Brothers and sisters. The Democrat Party has never had any direction for leading the country. It just talks politics. All the 50-plus years of the Democrats it has only politics, and politics, and politics. Brothers and sisters, politics are just a tool for leading the Thai people to a happy life. But politics are not politics to make a living. A country is not a simple thing that anyone can manage. If we are hiring an employee, a manager, for a company, we have to examine his qualifications – what education, working experience – because we fear he'll make our company go bankrupt. But right now, anybody wants to be prime minister. Is it so easy to manage a country?

Good brothers and sisters, the country still needs strength and security in the future. It needs security in politics so that decision-making can be decisive. What do you think? If politics are weak, can we crack down on drugs? Do you know that when I was cracking down on drugs, they made a fuss because they were worried about the drug traders themselves. They were not worried about people getting addicted to drugs, but worried about the drug traders. That mob had gradually killed how many thousand of our children already? If politics were not strong, this place would be finished already. Where do strong politics come from? From the faith of the people.

Brothers and sisters, this guy has just stood up, only just been born, and suddenly the Democrats say he shouldn't have been born. They want 201 so they can be big. Good brothers and sisters. Before, the Democrats had 128.⁷ I ask you, what good have they done in the past four years to ask for an increase from 128 to 201? Isn't that too much? To ask for an increase from 128 to 201, they must have done something specially good. Thai Rak Thai has 321. It doesn't ask for much, for a lot less than the Democrats, but it has done a certain amount of good.

Over the past four years, according to the democratic constitution, there could not be

⁵ The code number for the Democrat Party on ballot papers.

⁶ The Democrats asked voters to give them 201 seats, the minimum needed to call a no-confidence debate against the prime minister.

⁷ The number of seats the Democrats won at the 2001 election.

a no-confidence debate on the prime minister.⁸ But the Democrats debated me every time,⁹ because they're skilful at politics. And when they debated me, it was all indirect attacks and half truths. They said I created special benefits for my own people. But, the stock market rose from 290 to over 700, a rise of almost 200 percent. Any stock in the market had that kind of result. But they attacked only my shares. I want to ask whether the Sophonpanich of Khunying Kalaya,¹⁰ did their stock go up? And the Lamsam of Kasikorn Thai [Bank], Photiphong,¹¹ did theirs go up? And Ucom of Khun Prakob,¹² did it go up? So why criticize only me or only those in Thai Rak Thai? Everything has to be wrong, doesn't it? This is the standard of the political party of over 50 years. If their politics are like this I'd like to suggest that rather than the 201 they are asking for, I'd like to tell you to please stop using the services of the Democrats until they have examined themselves and know where they are. Hmm, this figure of 201, with the figures 2, 0, and 1, if they made it 102, people would show more interest. They got the figures in the wrong order.

Brothers and sisters. The Thai economy in the four years ahead, I can confirm – whatever others say – that I will make the Thai economy improve. I have already raised the GDP from 4.8 to 6.5, and now I will take it from 6.5 to 9 trillion. I will increase exports. I will expand the markets. So you don't need to worry about the economy being no good. The economy will be good for sure. I will fix the economy by fixing the problem of poverty. Good brothers and sisters. Four years ahead, there will be no poor people. Won't that be neat?¹³ In these four years I will change the status of the country, from a country which chases around borrowing money. At first [when prime minister], I told the foreign minister I was going to visit this country and that country, and before agreeing that I should go, he asked me whether I was going to ask for anything from them, because they look on us as beggars. After that, I changed. I said I wouldn't beg anything from anybody. I ended the IMF loan. I changed the status of the country from one which chases around borrowing money to one which lends.

Brothers and sisters. These past four years, this kind of change was not by chance or *fluke*,¹⁴ but because of the power of your belief in me. I work hard, don't I? If I work hard, but you don't believe in me, there could be no trust. But when you believe, then when I speak people listen, bureaucrats are not stubborn, because they listen to the people. This is democracy. Democracy does not mean the Democrats. Don't have the

⁸ Under the constitution, the opposition needs 200 signatories to call a no-confidence debate on the prime minister.

⁹ Meaning they called a no-confidence debate on other Cabinet ministers but found ways to allude to the prime minister.

¹⁰ The Sophonpanich family manages Bangkok Bank, the largest commercial bank. Khunying Kalaya Sophonpanich, an in-law of the Sophonpanich family, was a Democrat party-list MP and organizer of the Democrat Party's election campaign in Bangkok.

¹¹ The Lamsam family manages Kasikorn Bank. Photiphong Lamsam was a Democrat party-list MP.

¹² Prakob Jirakitti, executive of Ucom, a telecom company and competitor with Shin, is a member of the Democrat Party.

¹³ Here and later, he uses the hip colloquialism *เท่* (*the*), originally meaning good-looking or stylish, but more generally used as a term of approval, hence 'neat'.

¹⁴ Throughout this translation, words he spoke in English are italicized.

misunderstanding that this party founded long ago is an example of democracy. The Democrat Party was of service when the military made coups. Now it has no use. Put it away for the time being. Let them find themselves first.

Brothers and sisters. In running the country over the four years ahead, what will you see? You will see bureaucrats totally change the way of giving service. Before, bureaucrats sat in their offices, and you had to go to them. When you got there, they didn't want to answer you. Now they have changed. They changed to *one stop service*, wholehearted service, open counter service. When you go, there's a computer ready. 'My [ID] card is lost.' There's a policeman there to take a report of the loss; take a new photo; done. This will be extended all over Thailand.

There are poor people, aren't there? The poverty caravan is going to their homes. 'Why are you still poor? It can be overcome. Come here quick How much debt do you have? Restructure it. Do you have land to work on? No? Go and rent from others. Fix up the land documents. And what income do you have? Why are you unemployed? No work? Go for labor training. Get a job. Why are your kids not studying? No cash? Oh! Send them to school. Let's see, if you have more income than expenditure, will you be poor? No!' I don't want to see people poor. Enough. There's lots of poor already.

Good brothers and sisters. People need a house, don't they? Even a sparrow makes a nest. And Thai people must have houses. I created *ua-athorn*¹⁵ houses by the method of giving a government subsidy of 80,000 baht per house. Over 80,000 houses have been built and there will be more. We will create 'Secure Housing',¹⁶ meaning we will change the slums. In four years, the word slum will have disappeared, changed to Secure Housing. People won't sleep in fear that someone will come to burn them down, or evict them and demolish the house. No more. In future, there will be Secure Housing with ownership documents.

I was very taken by the tsunami houses. Just two days ago, I went to do a ceremony giving tsunami houses to people whose houses had been swept away. 100,000 baht a house and – oho! – really handsome! With two bedrooms; space-under-the-house; a kitchen downstairs; and room for parents and kids to sleep separately. Otherwise, parents and kids have to sleep together, and when kids begin to grow up, that's not good, they'll see everything. These tsunami houses look really good, and only 100,000. Suppose there are 500,000 homeless and we build 500,000 houses, that's only 50 billion. Peanuts! You have a prime minister who's said to be a capitalist because the guy knows how to find capital. If you don't know how to find capital, how can you do anything? Spend your life begging for money? If such a person were prime minister, what would he do? Enough! I find the money myself.

So, brothers and sisters, this is peanuts. 500 billion for the skytrain. Peanuts! And don't worry about those people who sit chanting the mantra: "Debt burden. National debt". That lot can just leave it to me to fix it myself. I can look after it myself. I want my people to go everywhere conveniently. Bangkok and outskirts all connected together. And not expensive fares. 15 baht is enough, 15 baht the whole route. Those expressways

¹⁵ A name attached to several of the TRT government's schemes, and often translated as 'care.' It has the connotation of helping a relative, friend, or neighbor.

¹⁶ *Ban mankhong*.

went up and up to 40 [baht]. Reorganize it, so the cost is lower. Oho! Middle class people who drive to work are paying 200 baht a day. Damn! Brothers and sisters, in the next four years, I guarantee. Give me the power to fix problems in a quick, speedy way. Don't let the Democrats come and trip me up.¹⁷ The more of them elected, the more they'll trip me up. I'm not an eloquent speaker. I'm not good at that. And I don't have a tricky brain. I like working, just getting things done. Do it!

Brothers and sisters. They're saying, 'Don't let him get power drunk. This government is power drunk.' Where does power come from? Power comes from the people, doesn't it? Since the people choose me, what are you going to do? Are you fed up because the people didn't choose you, or what? I have the same power as prime minister as every person who is prime minister. But I have special power more than the others because I do what I say I will do. People put faith and belief in me, don't they? Have you ever before heard of someone who gets up on a platform making speeches and then does what he says? There's someone in Surin, aged over 80, who told my MP that he'd been listening to people speaking for decades, time and again, but never in his life had they done anything. Now he had just heard this guy speaking and then doing everything – lots of policies, this is free, that's free. When I propose a policy, it's 'populist.' 'The cost of populism will ruin the country.' But then why do they draw up policies just like mine? They are copies, but really they are fakes, not like the real thing. The genuine article has to have the shopowner's seal, that's important. The genuine article for sure. Speak, and then do it too. If you can't do it, don't talk about it. Think everything out before doing it: how much; how to do it all. A railway of over 300 kilometers is over 500 billion. If those people never had to find money, will they know how to think? And then, brothers and sisters, the budget, the capital budget for the whole country is only between 100 and 200 billion. Not enough. So, brothers and sisters, Bangkok will improve for sure. For the traffic system, I'll invest a lot.

Brothers and sisters. They say that this government is corrupt. I'll tell you, corruption is a matter of people and systems. If you make the system good, it disappears. I'll give you an example. There's the mobile phone project of the Communications Authority, called CDMA. At first, officials proposed to lease, to have a company install and lease for 12 years, for 35 billion. I said, no way! Too expensive. I sent it the Council of State for appraisal. They said, impossible, impossible. Then I, said, purchase is better. They made a new proposal, it came down from 35 billion for leasing to 13.4 for purchase. I said, it's still expensive. It's better to have bidding by computer. It turned out five entered the bidding. Two of them were not qualified, leaving three to compete, all from big countries that is Sweden, America, and China. They competed via computer screen, and I went to watch. The median price was 13.4. You know what the winner bid? Only 7.2. A big saving of 6.2 billion, just through the system I created. So I ordered that from now on all bidding must be done this way. This is a true story. And from now on, just wait and see, in the next four years the government will save a lot on construction costs and other costs with this system. We know already what the costs are. Now there are two other stories to tell you about these fakes who accuse others of corruption.

First is the electric train, of over 120 kilometers. When the Democrat Party came in, it ordered bidding within seven days. It turned out one company proposed 10 billion.

¹⁷ Literally, pull his legs, meaning slow him down.

There was no median price. Where in the world do you have bidding with no median price? It turned out that they set a median price after the event, and only at 6-plus billion. How come then the bid was 10 billion? So they did it again. Another committee was appointed, and they pumped the [median] price up to 8 billion. But they were not prepared to annul the bidding. Where else does a median price get set after the event? Still, it went to Khun Chuan's cabinet. This clean fellow, Khun Chuan. The result was that the company which had bid 10 billion in the first place now bid 9.2 billion – with a median price at 6. What is this called?

One another story. The Suwannaphum or Nong Ngu Hao airport. Did you know that, during the election the first time I came in, I heard news there was a bidding. After I came in, I saw it. Did you know that the bid for the cost of the passenger terminal building and the aircraft hangar was 54 billion plus another miscellaneous sum of 7-plus billion, together making 61 billion – cheating by billions. When I came in, I cancelled this and ordered another bidding. It turned out a foreigner came and told me I couldn't cancel it, as he wouldn't give the loan. I said I would cancel it, and if there was no loan I'd borrow elsewhere. So I announced the bidding, and you know what was bid? 36.6 billion. Coming down like this from 610, what is this called? If you're going to criticize others, examine yourself a bit. So, about corruption, you don't have to worry. I'll see to it. I'll fix it. I told all my ministers that after this election is over, whoever is ready to be a minister and work straightforwardly, then come along. If you're not ready, then don't come. If you're kicked out, don't complain because I can't accept it. I'd like to leave politics looking neat. I don't want to leave with a lot of wounds in my back. I want to be looking neat. I've reached this point in life, why shouldn't I want to look neat? I want to look neat two ways.

First, bring the Thai people out of poverty. Second, create good systems so the country looks good and wins acceptance from other countries. That's it. Just neat like this.

Good brothers and sisters. Do you know that the CEO governor system is effective, really effective? In the past, did you know, there was no boss¹⁸, nobody taking responsibility. Everybody was big. Something was ordered but nobody took responsibility. First, I made the governor take responsibility, and second, I made people work together, think together, and have a common strategy with targets that can be evaluated. Thus, the CEO governor system. Khun Banyat, coming from nowhere, said he would get rid of the CEO governors. Go and ask the governors. They would probably laugh. And wait a bit. The overground lottery. He would get rid of that too. I think he's punch-drunk. When are the Thai people going to stop playing the lottery? I ask you, who can give up playing the lottery? Sometimes I ask people, 'Can you give up the lottery.' They reply, 'Give up the lottery? I'd rather give up my husband.' The Thai people won't agree to give up the lottery. What would you have me do? When Khun Banyat was in opposition, he said he would suppress it. When he was Minister of Interior, he forgot about it. He said he would keep the underground lottery and get rid of the overground one. Soon it will go underground again. I'm confused! He wants to 'take back Thailand.'¹⁹ Why? He doesn't yet know what he is going to be. He's party leader, but he still has to

¹⁸ *jao phap*, host.

¹⁹ A Democrat campaign slogan.

have people to prop him up – Khun Chuan propping on top and Aphisit propping underneath. He can't stand up. And in the suburbs, there's also Khunying Kalaya as another prop. Taking picture together with the candidates. I don't know what they're selling. At first they were full of policies. This is free, and that is free, and this is free. Later it turned out they didn't talk policy, but changed to 201. They're punch-drunk. For now, do without their services for the time being. Let the Democrats have a rest. Thai Rak Thai is still *fit*. When it's exhausted, I'll tell you. So for now, let them reexamine themselves.

Over the four years ahead, social problems are something I have to give special attention. Last time, I did a bit here, a bit there. This time I have to take care of our children. This cannot be left unattended. Did you know that we are going to look after children from birth? From 28 July onwards, every Thai child born in Thailand will receive a gift sack from the prime minister, containing four things. First, lullabies. They have meanings, brothers and sisters. New-born babies can take in beautiful things easily. Some parents don't have time to look after their children; before, there used to be old relatives around, grannies and grandpas, and they would sing to them, but today they don't exist, they have to make a living. If kids have lullabies, they will grow up with a good mind, will look on the world optimistically, and not be aggressive. Nowadays there are teenagers who are aggressive, so we have to do something about raising our children now. Second, we will give them toys for developing their senses so the kids are not slow-witted, and grow up to be *active*, hard-working like me. Third, a child-raising manual for the mother so she can raise her child well; and fourth, cartoons for mother to teach the child to learn enjoyably. These four things will be sent to every house where a child is born from 28 July onwards.

After that, I will take care of kids by developing their brains. I'll use the principle of brain development to reform the educational curriculum, so at any stage what they learn is consistent with their brain development, what the brain can accept. I can guarantee that Thai kids of the new *generation* will be clever kids. We must make kids have a high IQ. And that's not enough. The government's overground lottery has a profit of 10 billion. Before, this was in the hands of the people running the underground lottery. The government will not keep a single saleung of this 10 billion, but will give it all as study scholarships for the poor. So you have to tell Khun Banyat, by and by, don't give this back to the underground lottery hosts, let it be study scholarships for poor kids. But he probably won't give it back, because he probably won't be prime minister for a long time yet.

Good brothers and sisters. Now about university education. I will change the way of giving financial support to universities. All universities must adjust. I won't give the budget to the universities, but to the kids. When the kids go to study, the universities will collect money from the kids. So the universities will have to adjust, will have to develop themselves. This is known in English as *student empowerment*, that is, giving the kids power in the management, power of choice. The kids won't have to do much. They'll have a personal card called a smartcard, like I have here, gold color. This card has all the data. Every kid will have this. 'You want to study at Thammasat, right? What faculty? How much is the cost of studying? Sign your name and take it.' The children of the poor and of millionaires will sign in the same way. No need to pay the tuition fees in advance, but later by installment. No interest, no worry. When they've finished and have a salary,

then they gradually pay it off. If they're not earning any interest or salary, no need to pay, no worry. If they're unemployed, no matter, no payments. When they have work and enter the tax system, then it will be deducted bit by bit. I want all children to study. Later I'll extend this to other systems of education. For example, there's a bakery shop in Ekkamai which does very delicious bakery because he went to study at an institute that does excellent standard bakery from France. He came back, opened a shop and got rich. So today, if anyone wants to do like this, they can go to study and pay installments later. It doesn't matter, everyone will be clever. Study anything. Whatever you want to study, study that. Soon we will use the system known as *income contingent loan*, that is borrowing to study and paying back gradually on return. If you want to study about beauty salons, do it. When the shop is open, gradually pay it off. Because, you see don't you, opportunity is opportunity. I will perform the duty of opening up opportunities, first for all Thai people to escape from the poverty line, then in future creating other opportunities for people to seize. But first get rid of poverty. This is the direction for managing the economy. In the future era, we will manage by emphasizing the supply side. Why? Thailand has a lot of land, a lot of people, and a lot of water, but lacks the correct management systems. We must reorganize things. We say we have lots of beautiful places, lots of nature, so we will manage these in a new way to create a good economy.

Good brothers and sisters, enough yet? Do you want to go home? Hey, do you believe, this last government was the first to have a foreign policy with a strategy to make Thailand look more neat on the world stage. Before, we didn't look neat. When we went onto the world stage, we just sat and listened. Today, we say we cannot just listen, we must propose things too. We proposed a scheme called the *Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)*. Do you believe, in Europe they cooperate together but in Asia we all quarrel – this one against that, and that one against this. We used to quarrel with our neighbors all the time. I said, enough! Put these quarrels behind us. We should rather sit and think how we can cooperate. Do you know that the *Asia Cooperation Dialogue* has more than half of the world? In the same way, Asia has more than half of all the reserves in the world, deposited in America and Europe, but we still get lost in quarrels and have not united our potential.

So I united the potential. It turns out more than 26 countries joined in. Here, little Thailand can propose something and 26 countries with over half the population and over half the money join in. This today was Thailand's initiative.

Brothers and sisters, it was me who saw the way rubber was being sold and got angry. Oho! Why is it sold so cheap? I brought together the leaders of rubber producing countries, that is Megawati of Indonesia, prime minister Mahathir of Malaysia, and Thailand. These three countries joined hands, and talked to the buyers. The final result was that rubber went up 100 percent and stayed up for over a year, two years now, without coming down. Brothers and sisters, do you know, all they were doing was 'eating' [i.e., being corrupt] to their heart's content. You can't eat rubber but still they tried to. Rice is the same. My god! We're number one producer in the world but the price for villagers gets squeezed so they die. We negotiated again. Now we determine the price of rice. We went to negotiate with our neighbor Vietnam, the number 2 exporter in the world (we are number 1). We two countries joined hands, and some other countries came along, and now rice commands a good price. Villagers get a good price for their rice. Today I guarantee, those of you who have relatives upcountry find they ask for less

money now because rice has a good price.

Brothers and sisters. Do you remember the last APEC meeting? Was it neat? Thailand today uses the international platform to the full. Do you know that in four years I traveled overseas 73 times? I only just thought about this and asked a minister to put the figures together about how many times I went. 73. And how many times did foreign leaders visit Thailand? 99 times. See, I do the duty of a *salesman*. If I don't go off like this, how will I find new markets? I have to preserve the old markets, and find new ones all the time by foreign policy.

Good brothers and sisters. Let's come back to Bangkok a little. Let's talk about Bangkok a little. It looks like Bangkok is not much work. See how the governor²⁰ goes off to help electioneer for all the people upcountry, one after another? He's free, so he goes to campaign for votes in Chiang Mai. He's free, so he goes to campaign for votes in Trang. I pity Bangkok. Probably he has nothing to do. There's no traffic jam, no problems at all. So he's got nothing to do. Good brothers and sisters, you have problems over traffic and travel. If there's no skytrain, it will be difficult. So we are investing 500 billion to expand the skytrain by 300-plus kilometers. Soon in the centre of the city, turn left and walk no more than 500 meters, there's a skytrain station; turn right and walk no more than 500 meters, there's a skytrain station; walk ahead no more than 500 meters, there's a skytrain station; walk back no more than 500 meters, there's a skytrain station. As convenient as that, and just 15 baht, It's ok, huh? My god, on that day you'll be rolling in money. 15 baht is dirt cheap.

Brothers and sisters. We will negotiate with the expressways and introduce computer systems to help, so paying the toll will be quick, just easily deducted from a bank account, not collecting 40 baht each time which is annoying and expensive. We'll make the expressway tolls very cheap.

I will build more sport stadiums and more parks. There will be places to exercise in the morning everywhere. Wherever there's a public space, let me know. I've done it everywhere under the expressway already. Bangkok municipality didn't do it, I did it myself. No matter, I can find the money myself. And schools will be turned into good schools, and all close to home, so there's no need to travel a long way.

Brothers and sisters, today I read Kennedy's speech and found another thing. Do you know what Kennedy said? (Another thing, just now I mentioned about poverty.) Kennedy said that every mother – American, that is (soon they'll come and twist my words) – wants every one of their children to grow up to be the president of America, yet every mother does not want their children to go through the political process. That's because politicians quarrel all the time. It's tiring, a headache, destructive. This shows that this destructive political system was brought from the west, and has existed for a long time. But today Thailand wants to get rid of it, isn't that true? We want politics with meaning, don't we? We want politics which have something for the people, don't we? And this politics which is just destructive, can we get rid of it yet?

Brothers and sisters, I hope that when the result of this coming election comes out the day after tomorrow, I won't hear people saying 'The media was bought, votes were bought, MPs were bought,' I won't hear the words 'The ECT [Election Commission] is

²⁰ Apirak Kosayodhin, a Democrat elected in 2004.

not fair.’ Yesterday the ECT settled a case quickly and the high court gave a judgment quickly. Karun²¹ is out. I don’t see anyone come to praise the ECT for being able to slash the government. But if they didn’t slash the government, people would say the ECT is biased. I hope I won’t hear this. Let’s have some spirit, like sportsmen together.

Today is close to the election according to the democratic rules. I’m like a car. After running some distance, it needs to fill up with petrol. I can keep going until tomorrow but then the petrol runs out. On the 6th, can you give me a full tank? If you give me a full tank, I can run another full four years. If you share some with the Democrats, it won’t be a full four years, because soon they’ll be cobras again. So, give me a full tank. The fuller it is, the faster I’ll go. No rest stops, no fatigue. Full, please, brothers and sisters.

Brothers and sisters. This Sunday, victory for me and victory for the Thai Rak Thai Party will be victory for the people, especially for the poor, and victory for Thailand which will have strong politics again. It will not be a victory by Thai Rak Thai but a victory because you put your confidence in me to work for another four years.

Good brothers and sisters. I’ll take responsibility for everything that happens in the country in the four years ahead. So please give me your confidence. If anything is not good, I’ll take care of it myself, everything. If someone is not good and takes advantage of the whole country, I’ll not keep them for the future.²²

Good brothers and sisters. All government officials who are over 65, listen to this. I’ll free all officials who are retired and over 65 from paying income tax. Now if you’re old and getting only a little income to raise your grandkids, you still have to pay tax. I’ll stop this. For all officials who had not had a salary adjustment in 10 years, I already gave an adjustment in 2002, and I’ll give another. That’s still not enough. In 2008 I’ll give another adjustment when I’m looking after the poor. I’ll provide opportunities for people to study at university level without their parents having to open their wallets. Officials were saying, if we have to work hard like this you must give us enough to survive and to have some dignity, isn’t that right? Now I’ve given, you must work at giving service to the people, right? If you don’t work, can you judge me in four years’ time? We have been fair to one another, and when we are fair and kind to one another, everyone must know the rules about helping one another.

Brothers and sisters, the day after tomorrow. As I go on talking, my fever has gone away because I have the feeling you want me to be prime minister again. Today, I went to Nakhon Pathom. There we are competing against Khun Banharn because it’s next to Suphan. I went to tell the villagers, even though you’re next to Suphan don’t defer to Khun Banharn, because recently he’s changed. He’s not the same as before. He’s changed. So it’s best to choose number 9. Go and tell the whole country, number 9.

Brothers and sisters, when people are boyfriend-girlfriend, they shouldn’t have a flirt and a fling.²³ We’re boyfriend-girlfriend already, so don’t have a flirt and a fling. Only number 9. Don’t spread it around. Don’t choose one number on this ballot paper and

²¹ Karun Hosakul, a Thai Rak Thai candidate in Bangkok, was disqualified by the Election Commission for using a forged high-school certificate to gain entrance to the university course by which he obtained the BA needed to qualify as an MP.

²² Literally as seed.

²³ In Thai, *kak* and *kik*, from ‘gig’, a fashionable term for a secondary affair.

another number on that ballot paper.²⁴ Two-timing is not good. It's not good, not cute, not sincere. Number 9 on both ballot papers, both party and person. Send a message to the whole country, and you'll have a Thai Rak Thai that is secure and strong.

Brothers and sisters, today I can tell you that Thai Rak Thai has 14 million members. Do you know that, among our members, there are 1,854 with doctorates, over 6,000 with MAs, and over 400,000 with BAs. So we're going to use the members to make the party strong. This will be the first time in Thai political history. Some say that I don't know democracy. Me! I'm the fount²⁵ of democracy! At the next election, the members of the Thai Rak Thai Party will select the MP [candidates]. In English it's called a *primary*. This will be the first time in Thailand. I'll do it myself, not because the law says so. The most important thing about us is the heart, isn't it. So the next lot of MPs will be chosen by the members. For the first time, there will be a soft election by the members, so that the MPs will be close to the people, so they don't abandon the people. They can't run to *wai* and ask for votes just once every four years. That won't do. They must be with the people for the full four years.

This is developing democracy. This isn't being done by having a professor draw up the plan and tell us what way is good. That lot only have theories, no action. Just look, how impolite! The other day, they wanted me to go and *debate*. I didn't go. So they set up a picture of me. And some mad idiot offered me a cup of coffee. Where's their manners? I'm not a debater. I'm a debater on a different platform. Let each party propose its policies. The people are able to choose. Why sit and argue for people to listen? I'm the prime minister, not some unemployed person. I have to go here and go there, and to do some work, and help campaign for votes. Soon party members will complain because their leader didn't go somewhere. I have to do everything today. My wife and children hardly see my face. It's good my children have grown up. If not, they'd probably ask whether I know how tall they are, or just know how long they are because I only see them when they're asleep.

Brothers and sisters. Today we are meeting in a good atmosphere, a casual atmosphere, but most important of all, we are standing in front of a sacred thing,²⁶ so everything is the truth and I will do what I have said. Go home and write what I have said on the wall, and then come back and meet again in four years. The things shouted out loud today, write them all down. We've prepared to do all of them. Brothers and sisters, after the election, get ready, pull it down, build it up. Especially the skytrain, pull it down and redo it quickly.

Brothers and sisters. The election on the 6th, they say sometimes there are shootings. Good brothers and sisters, for the sake of the people, officials and police, listen to me. Here, today, now, please catch the people who buy votes. If you can catch them, I'll pay double for other parties, meaning if you catch someone with a million, I'll give two million as a reward. And if you catch one million from Thai Rak Thai, I'll give four million, because I don't want to see this sort of politics. We have to stop it. Some people have just come in [to politics] a few years ago and they try to bargain, so they get shot.

²⁴ Meaning the ballot papers for the constituency candidate and the party list respectively.

²⁵ *Kotra*, meaning clan, patriarch, origin.

²⁶ They are in Sanam Luang, in front of the Grand Palace.

The more this goes on, the more it is a cost and burden for the people in the long term. Whenever politics needs a lot of money, the cost must fall on the people for sure. As it happens, I've now founded a big party. I have enough money, enough to do it. I can sponge a little off my wife and my kids. I can manage it. The income is enough for me to work. So let me make politics good for another term, make the country systematic, logical, with principles. Many rounds. At least two rounds, eight years. I won't be old, just 59, not old. I went to look in the mirror, and looked so old. But every time I go to the northeast, I get young again. Northeasterners say I'm handsome. I came back today and went to Nakhon Pathom.

Brothers and sisters, look at me! My ribs are all cracked, because when they hug me, they hug me tight, solid, humph! Today, I was hugged a bit too heavily. My arms are starting to be different lengths. Today, I was pinched all over. But I'm happy because people have the feeling that I care for them. I want to see them escape poverty. They have placed their hope in me. I know that I'm taking heavy burdens on my shoulders with the things I'm saying here. But I'm confident I can do them. Someone born in the year of the ox in the middle of the day likes working hard. They have to plow the field before they can eat the straw. So I really like to work. There's no work I run away from. When I'm at home, my wife says I'm like a lost chicken. When I stop work, I go home feeling energetic because I like working. So you should know that as long as I have strength, I'll continue to work for you. For these four years, I certainly have the strength. But whether it's a little strength or a lot depends on the 6th, on that day, give me a full tank, every house, number 9, both ballot papers. Let me invite everyone all over the country, all of you, on 6th February, to exercise your right, all of you, and get other people to go along, neighbors and relatives, all of them. And when you exercise your right, choose the right party. If you choose the wrong one, then it's everyone for himself. If you choose wrongly, what I've been saying is irrelevant. But if you choose right, I'll take the responsibility myself. So if you want me to take responsibility, number 9, both ballot papers. If a lot of you choose number 4, then that is nothing to do with me. Me and number 4 don't see eye to eye. On the 6th, you go to work for me for just one hour, just one hour, in some places in Bangkok there may be a traffic jam so one-hour-and-a-half. But I'll work for you for four full years. I don't like dissolving the parliament. I like continuity in administration. If politics have continuity for eight years, the country will prosper greatly. But believe me people think Thai Rak Thai will stay for several more years, will be the government for many more years for sure. If you want to give the Democrat Party an opportunity, you must stop using their services temporarily at the moment. Let them have time to overhaul the party. Right now, they're closed down for repairs.

Brothers and sisters, I have to thank you in advance for going out to *vote*, giving your vote to the Thai Rak Thai Party, number 9, both ballot papers. Thank you in advance. Those of you who choose number 9, both ballot papers, what you will get later is that the poor will disappear, the homeless will have homes, Bangkokians will have the skytrain, upcountry people will have a water system, children will have somewhere to study, the 30-baht health scheme will continue, and drugs will be further eradicated. If around your house there are people still selling drugs, tell them not to choose number 9, don't choose it, because if they choose it, they'll be arrested and have their property seized. They'll want to get their property back afterwards. You whisper to them straight away: if they sell drugs, don't choose number 9, because you'll be got for sure.

Brothers and sisters. Thank you for always giving me encouragement. That's the power that keeps me going every day. Thank you again for giving your votes fully and overwhelmingly all over the country. Thank you. Goodbye.