



Chira Ratanarat, Dipl.-Ing., Thailand

**"I'm a Genuine Product from Swabia, the
German Southwest"**

**A Thai Engineer and the Story of a Big
Success**

He came to Stuttgart, the capital of Baden-Württemberg, in 1959 and there was no place else where he wanted to go. His father had studied at the university in Jena, East Germany, in the 1920's, so Chira Ratanarat maybe already had it in his genes. Mr Ratanarat, a Thai engineer and entrepreneur, now 65 years old, calls himself a "Genuine Product from Swabia, the German Southwest". The President of one of the three biggest Commercial Groups in Thailand owes much to the people from Baden-Württemberg. "The German precision and discipline, the Swabian ambition and the way the people worked in groups impressed me very much," says Chira with a warm smile. It is obvious, that he likes to think back to his Engineering Studies at the Technical Universität Stuttgart.

He enjoyed what he was able to learn, he enjoyed living in the student housing where he met students from all over the world (50 percent of the students there were from foreign countries) and of course he liked dancing at the "Ball der Nationen", carried out still today by the Universität Stuttgart. But fun was not the main part over the nine years Mr. Ratanarat had spent in Baden-Württemberg. "I only went home once during my studies, there was so much work to do", he recalls. All the lectures and exams, internships in a paper factory on the Swabian Alb and then the final year project at the Bosch GmbH ...

Foreign students didn't have a bonus in these days and it took young Chira Ratanarat quite some time to learn the complicated German language, which he still speaks fluently.

Back home in 1968, he entered his father's small chemical business and over the years made it one of the biggest companies in his country. Today he is President of eight enterprises, producing and trading oil and other chemicals such as oxygen, sulphur, fertilizer. But not enough, his ambition made him go much further: gas stations, ship- and helicopter-lines, oil platforms and even a complete industrial port he built and operates. altogether with a business volume of over 200 Million Euros per year. His latest project is a seawater desalination plant – it seems as if there were no limits for him.

For his merits Ratanarat received the highest German decoration, the "Bundesverdienstkreuz Erster Klasse" and many other honours such as the decoration as "Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Morocco". He got these distinctions not only for his economic success but because he did so much good for his own and other countries. "When we had the Asian crises, not the loss of money made me sleepless,

the workers and their families worried me most. I had to work even harder to save the companies, for the people's sake", he says.

Today Chira Ratanarat doesn't even think about retiring. He still has close business ties to big German Companies. He buys his machines there and hires German engineers. "The German degree "Dipl.-Ing." (Diplom-Ingenieur) still counts more than any other engineering degree in the world", he claims. "The precision and the forward-looking, systematic mode of operation of German engineers is pathbreaking."

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Baden-Württemberg

The German Southwest.