# Thanthawut Taweewarodomkul gets 13 years

Today Thanthawut Taweewarodomkul (??????????????????????????????? ??????????????????????????????????, details on his case are here) learned his unlucky fate: he was sentenced to 13 years for transgressing Thailand's draconian lese majeste law and breaching the Computer Crimes Act. A previous *New Mandala* post on his predicament, with a relevant picture, is available from the archive. And this article highlights the disappointments of the day.

Perhaps Thai authorities have yet to notice that their stern efforts to lock up political opponents come at a price. Hefty sentences for lese majeste provide ample argumentative fodder for those countless Thai citizens who resent the post-coup political landscape and cry foul at their persistent inability to have their voices heard.

I expect that many who would otherwise find little common cause with radical Reds will be deeply perplexed, and even angered, by this decision. If there is a government strategy at play here then, as I have written in the past, it is "...a strategy for criminalising, and thus alienating and radicalising, political discussion".

Do Thai authorities imagine that these years-long sentences go un-noticed?

Of course not. They hope that discussions, both at home and abroad, will be further contrained once everyone digests this latest attack on political speech.

At the same time, and much more significantly, does somebody out there *really* think this will prove the best way to "protect" Thailand's monarchy?