



วิกฤตจราจรในกรุงเทพมหานคร

# Resolving Bangkok's Road Traffic Crisis: Is It Possible?

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**H**eavy road traffic is a common problem in many big cities worldwide; the volume of traffic in Bangkok during peak periods called “rush hours” has been getting rapidly worse over the past 10 years. Such periods of peak traffic cause inconvenience for travelers and increase the likelihood of road accidents. Metropolitan Bangkok has been among the worst examples of a city where the situation is progressively worsening without showing signs of real improvement. Efforts to correct the problem have mostly involved the expansion of the areas devoted to roads, the construction of new routes and the provision of alternative means of transport using high-technology, such as the electrically powered “sky train” and underground train. Resolving this problem logically and sustainably means that people’s habits must be changed, the discipline expected of the driving public must be heightened, especially from childhood, and the traffic rules must be reviewed with a view to better enforcement and more restrictions on the number of cars allowed on the road.

Regarding the discipline of drivers, those in Bangkok are considered the worst in the nation. The lack of discipline is made worse by the laxity of traffic police who do not enforce the law. Instilling good habits during childhood would help the next generation of drivers to enjoy a better driving experience. As previously mentioned, strict enforcement of the law would also be a major help; a previous survey<sup>1</sup> by the present author and others proved the effectiveness of such measures. Pedestrians must also have discipline by crossing roads only at designated “zebra crossings” or by using bridges designed for this purpose at particularly busy intersections and the like. The provision of escalators on such bridges would increase their use.

As mentioned, limitations on the number of cars allowed on the road would be another useful means of relieving traffic problems. This should be done by controlling the purchase of cars and vehicles that can be put into use. If any car owner wants to purchase a new car, he or she should return the old car for the

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<sup>1</sup>Bovornkitti S, Petcharoen N, Nathviriyakul N. *Implanting traffic discipline in children, with lessons from the street. Siriraj Hosp Gaz* 1998;50:210-21.



purpose of recycling it as scrap or, if the car is still usable, trading it in as a used car for purchase by a new owner.

Road plans and traffic rules are essential for easing traffic woes. Because the parking of cars on the road obstructs the flow of traffic, the rule against such parking should be strictly enforced. If cars park on roads that have been widened to accommodate more traffic, the extra lane or lanes gained lose their purpose. When a new road is planned, parking signs should be erected along both sides of the road before houses or shops are built. Where such buildings are planned, sufficient space should be allocated to allow parking in front of the buildings for their owners or

customers so that the main street surface is left unhindered. An even better solution would be to make space behind the buildings for parking cars. Toll parking should not be on the street but in designated and appropriate parking areas behind the buildings concerned, or in specially constructed high-rise buildings designed for the purpose.

All the above-mentioned measures would provide a certain level of traffic improvement and driver satisfaction, but the most important measure would be enforcement of the traffic laws, as this must be done before any other remedial measures are initiated.