

THE NEW LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTRE

by

H.H. Prince Prem Purachatra

Saturday, January 13, 1962, was a red-letter day in the annals of the Siam Society, for on that day the new building housing the Society's Library and the headquarters of the Research Centre was opened in the presence of two Kings, three Queens, many distinguished personages of several nationalities, hundreds of members of the Siam Society and their guests.

His Majesty The King, Royal Patron of the Siam Society, together with Her Majesty The Queen and Her Majesty Queen Rambai Barni, were joined by Their Majesties King Frederik IX and Queen Ingrid of Denmark, who had arrived in Bangkok the day before on a state visit. It was particularly appropriate that Their Danish Majesties should have been present on this occasion, for the construction and furnishing of the new building was made possible largely through generous contributions by Danish firms and individuals.

Their Majesties The King and Queen arrived at the Society's home shortly after 2.30 p.m., and members of the Council were presented to Them by the President of the Society, His Highness Prince Dhanivat, Kromamun Bidyalabh, in the entrance lobby of the main building.

Shortly afterwards, Their Danish Majesties arrived. Members of the Council were presented to His Majesty King Frederik by the President of the Society, and to Her Majesty Queen Ingrid by the Senior Vice President, His Highness Prince Prem Purachatra. On this occasion, members of the Thai-Danish Prehistoric Expedition, who had almost completed their exploratory work in the Kwae Noi region, partly under the auspices of the Siam Society, were also presented to Their Majesties by the President and by His Excellency the Danish Ambassador, Monsieur Ebbe Munck, a member of the Council of the Society.

A bouquet of flowers was presented to Her Danish Majesty by Mom Rajawongse Sumal Mongkol Sonakul, and another to Her Majesty The Queen by Miss Marchen Jansen.

Their Majesties, followed by members of the Council, then proceeded through the lecture hall between rows of standing members and guests to the platform where, joined by Her Majesty Queen Rambai Barni, They sat in five chairs facing the assembly.

The President of the Society read an address to Their Majesties, as follows :

May it please your Majesty :

In the name of the Council and members of the Siam Society I beg to voice the pleasure which we feel in having this opportunity to welcome your Majesties among us today in order to declare open our new Library building which is to house also our newly established Research Centre. The pleasure is all the more heightened by the presence of Their Majesties The Queens.

Since its inception over fifty years ago, the Society has enjoyed royal patronage morally as well as materially. The inauguration by His late Majesty King Prajadhipok in 1933 of this home is still within living memory. In the meantime the Society has carried on its work consistently and today our membership has passed the total of seven hundred.

The object of the Society is the investigation of the arts and sciences of this country and her neighbours. In order to realize this, we have been issuing periodical journals and bulletins on cultural and scientific topics; we have organized meetings at which lectures are delivered; we have arranged trips for the study of objects of archaeological, historical and scientific interest; we have been trying to build up a reference library; and we engage in exchanging our publications with other learned bodies all over the world by way of keeping our library up-to-date.

Of late years we have, with the help of the Ford Foundation of New York, established a Research Centre for the use of writers and others who need reference, one of the tangible results of it being the Thai-Danish Prehistoric Expedition jointly sponsored by Danish scientific institutions and the Royal Thai Government with

our Society. It is now in its second year of working in the valley of the Kwae Noi, Kanchanaburi, and has yielded already considerable results of great prehistoric interest.

The achievements of recent years -- the establishment of a Research Centre, the Thai-Danish Prehistoric Expedition, the erection of the new Library building -- seem to have produced greater confidence in our work among the public. To indicate but one example of this confidence I beg to mention that Mr. James Thompson, the well-known pioneer of Thai Silk industry, has willed to the Society his property in Bangkok consisting of a unique Thai house with its interesting collection of objects of art which is a veritable museum.

Turning now to the main objective of Your Majesty's visit, the new Library building, erection commenced in July 1961 and has just been completed within six months by Messrs. Christiani and Nielsen of Bangkok. The construction and furniture have cost some nine hundred thousand baht, drawn from Your Majesty's contribution, from the Society's own funds and largely donated by Thai, Danish and American institutions as well as by members of the Society, leading names of whom may be found on the stone plaque which I hope to beg Your Majesty of Denmark to condescend to unveil as an indication of the long-existing friendship between our two peoples.

As a further mark of the royal patronage may I now invite Your Majesty formally to open our new Library building with the key which the Vice-President will be handing to you."

Upon being invited by His Majesty The King and Royal Patron to open the new building, His Majesty King Frederik led the way across the courtyard to the new building, took the golden key proffered by the Senior Vice President and opened the door with it. Their Majesties entered the building, followed by the President and Council and other distinguished personages. His Danish Majesty then unveiled the marble plaque, which bore the following inscription :

ON THE 13TH DAY OF JANUARY B.E. 2505
 HIS MAJESTY KING BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ
 GRACIOUSLY DECLARED OPEN THIS LIBRARY OF THE
 SIAM SOCIETY IN THE PRESENCE OF
 HIS MAJESTY KING FREDERIK IX OF DENMARK
 THIS LIBRARY WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:
 THE EAST ASIATIC COMPANY LTD.
 MAERSK LINE — A.P. MOLLER
 CHRISTIANI & NIELSEN (THAI) LTD.
 P. BORK & COMPANY
 CARLSBERG BREWERIES
 F.L. SMIDTH & COMPANY A/S
 SCANDINAVIAN AIRLINES SYSTEM
 THE SIAM CEMENT COMPANY LTD.
 THE SIAM FIBRE — CEMENT COMPANY LTD.

THE ASIA FOUNDATION
 DALHOFF LARSEN & HORNEMAN
 DAN BJOERNER
 AAGE MELLENTIN

AND BY DONATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE SIAM SOCIETY
 HEADED BY THE PATRON AND VICE-PATRONS
 PRESIDENT
 DHANINIVAT
 KROMAMUN BIDYALABH

Their Majesties were invited to sign the Book of Honour with a gold pen which was subsequently presented to the Society by its Vice President and Honourary Secretary, His Serene Highness Prince Ajavadis Diskul. While the Queens were appending Their royal signatures, the two Monarchs went into the office of the Director of the Research Centre, Mr. J. J. Boeles, to examine a new wall map of Siam.

Their Majesties then entered the exhibition room next door to inspect the exhibits of dresses and domestic appliances of the

northern hill tribes, which from a new and unique collection on which the Research Centre has been working as one of its major projects. Mr. Kraisi Nimmana-haeminda, a member of the Society responsible for making purchases for the collection, was in attendance.

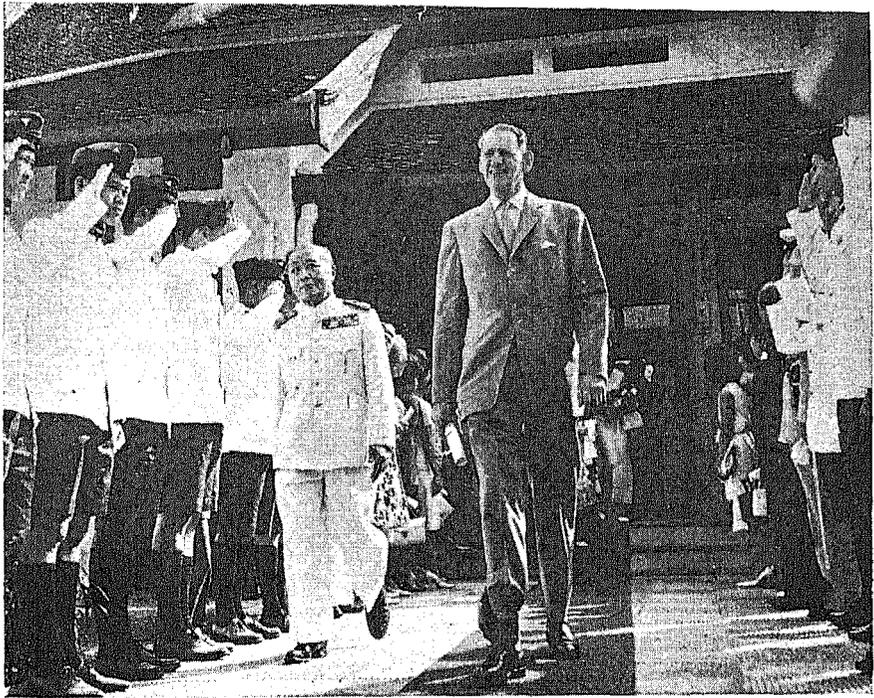
Their Majesties also toured the library, and looked at artifacts which has been unearthed by the Thai-Danish Prehistoric Expedition and at modern Thai art exhibits which were on display.

On this occasion, Their Majesties were each presented with several volumes of the Society's recent publications as well as a copy of the latest issue of the Siam Society Journal.

The royal visit to the Society's home ended at approximately 4 p.m. Members of the Council escorted Their Majesties to the royal cars, which moved off between rows of lined-up members and guests of the Society. Lining the road in front of the Society's premises, girls from the adjacent Wattana Wittaya Academy and the general public, who had gathered in large numbers, cheered Their Majesties as They sped on their way.



H.H. Prince Dhaninivat, Kromamun Bidyalabh, President of the Siam Society (lower right) addressing Their Majesties. Left to right: H.M. The King, H.M. Queen Ingrid of Denmark, H.M. King Frederik IX of Denmark, H.M. The Queen and H.M. Queen Rambai Barni.



H.M. King Frederik IX of Denmark accompanied by H.H. Prince Dhanivat passes between rows of Vajiravudh students enroute to open the new library.



H.M. The Queen accompanies H.M. Queen Ingrid of Denmark to the new library building.



H.M. The Queen signing the Book of Honour.



H.M. King Frederik IX of Denmark signing the Book of Honour.