

DEDICATION

by

Leonard Unger

I regard it as an honor of the highest order, but also a responsibility at once awesome and enviable, to be invited to offer a preface to this issue of the Siam Society *Journal* dedicated to His Royal Highness Prince Wan Waithayakon, Kromamun Naradhip Bongsprabandh. On the occasion of Prince Wan's 80th birthday, we of the Society join with countless persons within Thailand and throughout the world in honoring him for a life of public service which has assured him a place of distinction in the history of our time. I am delighted to be able to add that he continues to render that service with his proverbial geniality up to the present day.

Prince Wan's remarkable career is known throughout the world. His contributions to Thailand, to Asia, and to the world span more than half a century. He has served the Royal Thai Government as Deputy Prime Minister and as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and he has represented Thailand abroad in diplomatic missions, at international conferences and in meetings of international organizations as far back as the negotiations for the Treaty of Versailles in Paris in 1919. He served Thailand with distinction at the United Nations for thirteen years as its Permanent Representative and his election as President of the General Assembly in 1956 brought signal honor to his native land.

Further, Prince Wan has made an outstanding contribution to Thailand's constitutional development and is today one of the foremost authorities in this field. He founded a newspaper for a time and used that means to set forth his political ideals and principles of social welfare. He later gave his support and inspiration to the establishment of a Thai Press Association, set up to improve the quality of journalism in Thailand.

As an educator, he has helped to shape two generations of students at Chulalongkorn and Thammasat Universities and his influence has extended to young people throughout Thailand. To promote the study of political science through the free exchange of ideas Prince Wan lent his aid to the development of the Social Science Association of Thailand in 1956. As rector of Thammasat he continued to add distinction to his record of service,

A special word is in order concerning one of Prince Wan's particular loves, through which he has made a unique personal contribution to his nation and its culture—the coining of new words for the Thai language. Indeed, one may suspect that among the most enjoyable aspects of his public service to him personally have been the hours spent in the intricacies of Pali or Sanskrit, following some thread of thought to the right solution to facilitate communication in today's ever more complex world.

Prince Wan's interest in this field, I understand, dates from his return to Thailand from Europe in 1919 at a time when the Thai version of the Civil and Commercial Code was being prepared from an English draft. Since then, modern Thai has been enriched with countless words for which the knowledge and imagination of Prince Wan are responsible, including the word for my own country—สหรัฐอเมริกาน *saharat amerika*. The words for nation, republic, union, federation, masses, revolution, reform, regime and constitution; the words for mass media, mass communications, and television; the words for development, population, efficiency, corporation and system are all his linguistic “children”.

Prince Wan has written that “the rhythm of the word coined must conform to that required by the genius of the language”. It can also be said that the life of Prince Wan conforms to the genius of the Thai heritage and provides a model for the finest manifestation of what it means to be Thai. His life has been one of service and perhaps no word better exemplifies his career, his contributions, and his humanity than บริการ—“service”, one of his best known contributions to the Thai language.

Some years ago Prince Wan counseled journalists to observe the following rule: “Observe your obligations, develop good will, study for knowledge, and work for peace”. What better guide for living in a troubled world . . . what better ideal for a civilized man!

Those of us who have had the good fortune of finding ourselves in company with Prince Wan from time to time over the years know what a privilege it is to enjoy his amusing and instructive anecdotes drawn from his rich personal experiences and to hear his wise observations on events of yesterday and today. Most of all we are won by the very warm and human qualities of this man of calm and dignity, patience and good humor. It is my honor, on behalf of countless persons who know, love and respect Prince Wan, and as one of them myself, to dedicate this issue of the *Journal* to the President of the Siam Society, His Royal Highness Prince Wan Waithayakorn, Kromamun Naradhip Bongsprabandh.