

OBITUARIES

SAO SAIMÖNG

With the death of Sao Saimöng in July 1987, the Siam Society not only lost a corresponding member, but the world of learning was also deprived of a gentle scholar, who knew so much on shan culture. Yet he was so unassuming that people might not ever notice that he was an aristocrat, whose ruling family dated far back into history.

Sao Saimöng was born on the 13th November 1913. He was a son of Sao Kornkaew Intaleng of Iengtung (Sao Saimöng's preferred way of spelling the name of his state). His mother's name was Daeng. She had only two children, the eldest being Sao Saimöng and the other, a daughter, called Sao Chanfong.

The "Chaofa" (or *Sawbwa*) of Kengtung (the official English spelling) had five other wives, of which the highest ranking was Chaonang Pathuma, of Müang Singh, whose children were Chaonang Thipakaisan and Chao Promlue, who was, however, not the eldest son.

The eldest son was born to one of the Sawbwa's other wives, called Nang Fong. This son became Sao Saenmöng, the heir apparent.

The fact that the eldest son was not born to the chief wife, i.e. a wife who was a Chao, led to complications: according to old custom the eldest son was the heir apparent. Therefore, in order to clear the way for his eldest brother to succeed their father as Sawbwa, Sao Promlue went into exile in Chieng Mai where he died after the 1939-1945 war. His younger brother, by the same mother, Sao Khunsuek, now still lives in Chieng Mai.

It was Sao Khunsuek who was, along with Sao Saimöng, selected by their father to be sent to Bangkok. They had been novices (*Samanera*) in Kengtung for two years when the Sawbwa thought of sending them to Bangkok for further education, as had been suggested by Prince Damrong on one occasion when the Sawbwa visited Bangkok. The two brothers were entrusted to the abbot of Wat Thepsirind, Phra Sasnasobhon, who later became Somdet Phra Buddhaghosacharn, whom Prince Damrong greatly venerated. At Wat Thepsirind they remained Samanera for four years during which period they became acquainted with many members of the Thai royal family, in particular with the Voravarn family. This was because during those years Prince (Mom Chao) Sivakorn Voravarn, the brother, by the same mother, of Prince Varnvaidyakorn, Krom Muen Naradhip Bongprabandh, went into priesthood for 2 years at Wat Thepsirind. Prince Sivakorn, like his brother, was a scholar and taught Sao Saimöng English, in which language the young novice was to become enormously proficient. Thus started a friendship with the Voravarn family, and through Princess Vibhavadi Rangsit, whose mother was a Voravarn princess, with Mom Chao Piya

Rangsit. A life-long friendship developed into such a strong bond that wherever Sao Saimöng was he was in his thoughts attached to his Thai friends.

To return to the question of Sao Saimöng's education, his father seemed to have thought the old-style method of acquiring basic knowledge as a novice in a Wat the most suitable. But after a period of two years as novices in Kengtung, and four years in Bangkok, the Sawbwa recalled his sons back to Kengtung in 1929. By that time the prince had realized that with changing times an English type of education was absolutely essential. Sao Saimöng was enrolled in the government-run English High School in Maymio. But it was too late for the 16 years old boy to learn and play with 10-12 years old, mostly Eurasian, classmates. He was therefore transferred to Taunggyi and placed in a school which was specially reserved for sons of Shan Chiefs. There Saimöng was always at the top of the Honours Class, and won several prizes. In 1936 he entered Rangoon University and soon won a State-scholarship which enabled him to further his education at London University where he graduated with a D.T. (Diploma in Teaching) in 1940.

Just about that time he was called upon to act as guardian to his 12 years old nephew Sao Sailong ("Shorty") who had succeeded his father on the throne of Kengtung. As "Shorty" was a minor he was not called Sawbwa (*Chaofah*) but Kye Möng (*Chao Müang*).

When the war broke out in Asia at the end of 1941 "Shorty" and his guardian Saimöng were recalled to Burma, "Shorty" to Kengtung, and Sai Möng to Taunggyi where he taught English at his former school. His future wife, Mi Mi Khaing, who had also been a State-scholar at London University and received a B.A.(Hon.) and a B.Sc., also returned to Burma to teach at the Rangoon Teachers College.

When the Japanese army started to invade Burma, Mi Mi, along with many others, was evacuated to Delhi where she was assigned an important job at the Ministry of Information. Sao Saimöng followed later to Delhi and was attached to the Thai language department where his task was broadcasting news and propaganda in the Thai language programmes. As military officer he belonged to the Shan Battalion of the Burma Rifles. Later in the course of the war his unit was posted to Assam, from where the operations for the reconquest of Burma were directed.

His experiences during and after the war make interesting reading. They had been described by his widow Mi Mi Khaing in January 1988, six months after the death of Saimöng. The following are excerpts from her description.

The main job on the Assam border was the preparation to the finish of the Shan section of the newspaper called '*Laynatha*' (spirit from the skies). This gave news of the course of the war.

The allied push into Burma began when the Japanese forces failed to take the allied strongholds of Kohima and Imphal on the

Indo-Burmese border in 1943 beginning '44. Sao Saimöng went in with the allied armies which now pushed hard into northern Burma. His British superiors assigned him to the task of escorting to India the widowed Mahadevi of Kengtung with her two youngest children. He brought them out, deposited them in the care of his wife and returned to duties alongside the civil affairs services officers of Burma, who were almost all British. His work with them was most valuable in the northern Shan States. Next, he came further south and was sent to Kengtung State with a senior British Frontier service man S.C. Pollard. Part of the long journey was made on foot. Thus, news of their coming reached Kengtung ahead of their arrival.

Kengtung, together with another trans-Salween state called Mõngpan, had been given to Thailand to administer. The senior State Officials of Kengtung greeted Pollard and Sao Saimöng with great joy and complaints of sufferings during the previous three years. Pollard now took over the administration of Kengtung State with Sao Saimöng as his unofficial assistant. He was unofficial in the sense that he had as yet no civilian appointment. Urged by Pollard, the rest of his own Kengtung family whom he met again now, and most keenly by all the State officials, he decided to apply for a post in the frontier service, by which he might be assigned for duty to any of the hill frontier regions, such as Chin, Kachin and Shan.

He went down to Rangoon, appeared before the selection board and won an appointment in the Burma Frontier Service, which was among the best paid services in Burma. Moreover, unlike usual British policy, he was posted to his own home-State of Kengtung as Senior Assistant Resident. A junior assistant resident chosen from applicants in England was later sent up to work with him. His minor nephew had nearly completed his schooling in Australia by now, but he was still underage to be appointed as Sawbwa. In his place, a British officer from the frontier service, Col. Robert was appointed administrator of Kengtung State until such time as the Sawbwa reached maturity.

Sao Saimöng fetched his wife from Rangoon where she had come from India by the earliest ship available. They settled in Loikaw, the British hill station which was double the altitude of Kengtung town and where the senior house was quickly repaired for them by British orders. His work in Loikaw was administration of the surrounding area as well as detailed reports on the affairs of Kengtung State as administered by Col. Robert. During the next few months he made a

motor journey into northern Thailand to resume his contacts with the country of his educational nurture. Meanwhile political events in Burma proper moved fast. By February 1947, the momentous Panglong Conference was held. Aung San who by now headed the Cabinet of a new Governor, Sir Reginald Dorman Smith, spoke eloquently enough and convinced the Shan leaders together with guest leaders from the other Frontier regions that they should join hands with the majority people of Burma Proper who had already decided during Aung San's recent visit to London to take Burma out of the British Empire and out of the British Commonwealth.

By this time Sao Saimong himself had changed his job. The chief Education Officer of the Shan State and of its neighbour Kerreni State had retired with strong urging that Sao Saimong be offered his post and be based in the capital town of Taunggyi to rehabilitate and develop further the State Schools of both Shan and Kayah States.

By January the 4th 1948, the British possession of Burma ended, and the Republic of the Union of Burma began. Sao Saimong was greatly appreciated as the Principal Education Officer of Shan and Kayah States. Without racial discrimination he appointed Shans, Burmans, Indians or Anglo-Indians as Heads of Schools. These heads often expressed their gratitude in the free hand he gave them for running their schools with as little interference from him as possible. The system worked out well, and, serving as a member of the Fulbright Board in Rangoon, he was able to win grants to send the heads of schools in the most remote areas for observation tours, in USA.

During the initial period of insurrection by certain minority groups against the central government, large sections of the country were occupied by the chief rebel armies, consisting of defecting units of Karens and Kachins who had formed so big a part of the original Burma Army raised by the British. During this time, Sao Saimong evacuated his family and himself from Taunggyi as rumours circulated that the invading Karens admired him enough to appoint him their head of the Shan State. There was no question of Sao Saimong joining hands with any such rebel admirers. He went to Rangoon after driving from Taunggyi to Lashio on the pretext of placing his wife with her first small infant in the care of older relatives. While waiting in Rangoon for government troops to reoccupy Taunggyi he took his wife and her sisters to Bangkok to introduce them to all the Thai connections which he treasured so much since his

young days as a novice.

Sao Saimōng's chief efforts in his education job were towards raising interest in rural education. Having found that most teachers did not want to be posted to the Shan towns which to others appeared only as villages, he could see the idea of bringing villagers from among outstanding people, in those very rural areas and giving them a course in Taunggyi, which would not only improve their educational work, but would also increase their general knowledge so that they could become leaders of village improvements in spheres beyond the school. Thus was born the capital VTTS, the village teachers training school in Taunggyi for which he found a suitable, sympathetic and most able Shan head who got the co-operation of Sao Saimōng's wife herself in writing special texts to widen the curriculum of the training. This also included the services of an American teacher, an agricultural extension officer who worked demonstration plots attached to the school to give the trainees more potential for rural leadership. This VTTS Programme is still operating.

Another project nearest the heart of Sao Saimong as Education Officer was the setting up of vocational schools. This he felt keenly was a necessity because master mason carpenters and mechanics were far more often Chinese and Indians rather than Burmese or Shan. He worked hard and obtained the help of the Asia Foundation, Colombo Plan and other foreign agencies help start such a training school in Taunggyi. By the time his scheme started to function, however, the Revolution of 1962 claimed him as a victim, because although there had been no doubt about his loyalty to the Union of Burma, and his freedom from separatist Shan ideas, the new appointees to the ruling Shan State Council convinced the Army that he was a separatist Shan and the potential leader of Shans, so he was under political detention for six years. Freed from imprisonment in 1968, he spent time improving his house, developing his gardens, and then re-entering the education world again by getting offers of work in the University of Michigan in the USA and Cambridge University of England.

He produced two scholarly works : *The Shan States and the British Annexation*, published by Cornell University, August 1965, with the financial help from the Rockefeller Foundation, and *The Wat Padaeng Chronicle* brought out by the University of Michigan 1981, having been written while he worked there. Sao Saimōng was an accomplished musician, playing classical Burmese and Thai music,

even while in Michigan. He was a gifted artist as his students saw. He made furniture and taught Burmese master carpenters the use of instruction books from the west. He was also a clever handy man himself, wiring the house he lived in, for electricity; he laid bricks, sawed wood, planted flowering trees, and used his beautiful hands as only princes and aristocrats can do happily.

As can be seen from the foregoing, Daw Mi Mi Khaing restricted herself in her remarks on her husband's works to just a few words "...he produced two scholarly works". Indeed, to truly appreciate the two works would be beyond the competency of anyone but a scholar specialized in South-East Asian History and Archaeology. Therefore, the final tribute to Sao Saimöng, one of South East Asia's great scholars and a scion of an old aristocratic Shan ruling family, might be best left to the pens of two well-known authorities on Burmese and Shan history, Prof. G.H. Luce and Prof. D.G.E. Hall.

Prof. G.H. Luce writes in the introduction to *"The Shan States and the British Annexation"*: "...this task is the biggest and most important historical job still to be done in South East Asia. I know of no one more competent to do it than you (Sao Saimöng) are." And in the Preface to the same work, Prof. D.G.E. Hall writes while he was a visiting professor at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York: "During his year's furlough from Burma when Sao Saimöng was researching in London, he and I had regular weekly discussions, and I read each section of his work as it came hot from his pen. His intelligence, urbanity and wit made these meetings delightful and memorable; they displayed themselves repeatedly in this book. More than that, the author's ability to stand above the fray and assess situations fairly with nevertheless the occasional touch of amusement.....gives this book what to me is its special quality."

That Sao Saimöng was a devout Theravada Buddhist was well-known. His attainments and the knowledge of the Pali canon surpassed that of many Bhikkhus who spend years studying Pali. As a Samanera he was too young to acquire much Pali proficiency, so he pursued the study of Pali in his later life as a layman. Upon his being released from political captivity in 1968 he did become a Bhikkhu for a brief period in his native Kengtung, at Wat Hōkhōng. But he still retained one desire: to be ordained a Bhikkhu in Bangkok, at Wat Thepsirind, where he had spent four years as Samanera. This wish, very dear to his heart, was fulfilled in 1982, when, after spending many years in the U.S.A. he was on his way back to Burma. He stopped in Bangkok and stayed with Mom Chao Piya Rangsit whom he asked to support his ordination at Wat Thepsirind. The support was gladly given and the ordination took place on the 25th October 1982. His Upajānya was Phra Dharmasobhon (Yai) who, as Maha Yai, had been his tutor in his boyhood days as novice, and who once took him to worship the Phra Pathom Chedi.

After once more making a trip to Nakhorn Pathom to pay homage to the great

Stupa, he left priesthood on 25th November 1982 and returned to Burma.

Another fervent wish of Sao Saimõng was to accept an offer to work and teach in Japan in the summer of 1988. This wish could not be fulfilled, as in 1987 he was afflicted with an incurable disease and died on the 14th July 1987.

KLAUS ROSENBERG

On January 23rd, 1988 Klaus Rosenberg, Dr. Phil., Professor at Hamburg University, died after a long and serious illness at the age of but forty-four years. This indeed means a heavy loss to the field of Orientalistics, and to his own special area of scholarly research "*Languages and Cultures of South East Asia*" in particular.

Born in Breslau, Germany (now under Polish administration) in 1943, Klaus Rosenberg together with his parents was dislodged by the vicissitudes of war into the neighbourhood of the city of Hamburg, and there he was to remain till the end of his life. From 1964 on he studied Thai philology, Indology and phonetics at the university there, concluding his studies with a thesis for his doctor's degree in 1969 on "*Die traditionellen Theaterformen Thailands von den Anfängen bis in die Regierungszeit Rama VI*" (The Traditional Forms of the Theatre in Thailand from Its Beginnings to the Reign of Rama VI). Already this book, so far unfortunately available only in German, will remain a standard work. The subsequent years were spent by Rosenberg mainly in Bangkok, researching a voluminous and philologically difficult material at the National Library in preparation of his thesis of habilitation as a docent. A series of papers meticulously worked out, each one on a different topic, accompanied the process of writing this thesis which was completed in 1974, carrying the title "*Die epischen chan-Dichtungen in der Literatur Thailands mit einer vollständigen Übersetzung des Anirut kham chan*" (The Epic chan-Poems in the Literature of Thailand, with a Complete Translation of the Anirut kham chan, 486 pp.).

Up to his premature death Professor Rosenberg still published three further important, voluminous monographies "*Nation und Fortschritt; Der Publizist Thien Wan und die Modernisierung Thailands unter König Chulalongkon*" (Nation and Progress; the Publicist Thien Wan and the Modernization of Thailand under King Chulalongkorn, 146 pp.); "*Die Geschichte der Kaki; Ein Jatakastoff und seine literarische Bearbeitung in Thailand und Kambodscha*" (The Story of Kaki; a Jataka Theme and Its Literary Treatment in Thailand and Cambodia, 103 pp.); and "*Sozial-kritische Literatur in Thailand*" (Literature of Social Critique in Thailand, 360 pp.). Articles and papers, usually quite extensive, were additional byproducts. All of these publications, without exception, so I dare contend, will remain among the lasting contributions to the history of Thai literature, a field as yet to such a large extent unexplored.

Rosenberg did not limit his studies to the Thai language and literature but also acquired a thorough knowledge of the Vietnamese and Cambodian languages, to such a profound degree as to be able to come up with scholarly publications also in these cultural domains.

During his last years, already marked by critical illness, Klaus Rosenberg turned his attention more and more towards Laotian sources available in Thailand which, both philologically and by content, may belong to the most difficult material of research for any scholar of Southeast Asian culture. It is an exceedingly great loss in this field, and for Professor Rosenberg himself part of his personal tragedy, that fate did not permit him to complete these studies concerning "*Die Himmelsgötter — thaen — in der laotischen Literature*" (The Heavenly Deities — thaen — in Laotian Literature) initiated by him with such painstaking application. Up to the very last, a few weeks only prior to his decease, he was still labouring on this project, although with gradually increasing resignation in the awareness that death would overtake him.

Klaus Rosenberg was a scholar with a width of interest and application such as the oncoming generations seem no longer able to bring forth. In the domain "*Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia*" he is irreplaceable. As a man, a teacher, and a friend he was always unassuming and reticent in his ways. He liked to give himself as moderate and sober, not inclined towards big words. If one knew him better, however, he would open up revealing his ironic wit and deep sense of humour. Being himself tormented and in great pain he would still take to heart the worries of others. He would so much have wished to live for some more years in order to, among other things, complete some of the projects he had initiated, but death, almost literally, took the pen out of his hand.

The Department of Southeast Asian Studies of Hamburg University have lost a scholar of rank, and those who were close to him, a friend.

Klaus Wenk

PHYA ANUMAN RAJADHON

Memorial Lecture

Mr. President,
Distinguished Participants to the Symposium,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Three and a half months ago, an auspicious occasion arose, prompting me to become a Buddhist monk and I was ordained at Wat Umong, here in Chiang Mai, with the firm belief that the merit derived from this meritorious act of mine, together with the merit derived from the construction of a "kuti" (a monk's house) as my gift to Wat Umong, would be transferred to my parents, Phya and Khunying Anuman Rajadhon, wherever they may be.

Had they witnessed my ordination ceremony at Wat Umong last May, I am quite sure that they would have been deeply moved and their hearts filled with great joy and happiness in seeing their eldest son become a Buddhist monk in accordance with Thai Buddhist tradition, even though quite late in life.

The fact that my ordination could take place in face of some obstacles, thus enabling me to enter this forest sanctuary of peace and quiet and to live the life of a Buddhist monk for two months, was to me a miracle.

I consider my being here to speak about Phya Anuman Rajadhon this evening constitutes yet another link in the chain of thought of Phya Anuman Rajadhon which was constantly with me during my residence at Wat Umong.

Therefore it gives me great pleasure and I feel highly honoured to be able to speak about Phya Anuman Rajadhon to such a distinguished audience on this occasion.

I must apologise for appearing to be a bit sentimental when it comes to speaking about Phya Anuman Rajadhon and now, let me get on with the job in front of me.

As a retired diplomat I was taking life leisurely and enjoyed my well-earned rest after many years of service. I thought to myself with relief that from now on there would be no speeches, no handshakes, no champagne and caviar, no vin d'honneur, and no black and white tie functions.

I was literally submerged in a happy state of sweet doing-nothings and occupied myself by doing only the daily household chores to help my wife, and nothing of any significance.

All of a sudden one fine day, like a bolt out of the blue, a telephone call from an old friend informing me of the invitation of the Siam Society to deliver a Phya Anuman Rajadhon Memorial Lecture on the occasion of a Symposium to be arranged by the Siam Society in August 1987 in Chiang Mai.

I was jolted from my daydreams and the bubble of a life of tranquility and ease burst, and at that moment I found myself in a predicament: whether to accept or to decline this invitation. My immediate reaction was to accept it. I had no other choice, although at that moment I had no idea what-so-ever of what the lecture would be like.

It would be unthinkable for me, being the eldest son of Phya Anuman Rajadhon to decline the invitation so cordially extended to me by the Siam Society of which Phya Anuman Rajadhon had the honour once to be its President. There was not a single reason or excuse for not accepting. I also asked myself who would be in a better position to speak about Phya Anuman Rajadhon as I have myself lived with him for almost half a century.

Much as I appreciated receiving this rare opportunity of speaking about my father, I realised that it was not going to be easy speaking about one's father, and I rather wished that someone else and not myself would undertake this task. But as it was willed that I would be the person to make this speech, I accepted the invitation without hesitation but with a heavy heart.

Ever since receiving the invitation of the Siam Society a year ago, I was determined to make this speech, come what may, and I am glad that I could make it here this evening.

Let me take you back some years to when I first received news on Phya Anuman Rajadhon's death. I was at the time in Egypt.

The flight which brought me from Cairo to Bangkok was delayed en route but I arrived at the house just in time to attend the Bathing Ceremony performed by H.R.H. Krom Muen Naradhip Phongseprabandh. In the final rites of this ceremony and as the eldest son, I combed Father's hair downward three times, then broke the wooden comb in half before placing the two pieces on his chest in the coffin. For a long time I had not found out the significance of this particular rite. I thought that if Phya Anuman was still around, I could have asked him about it and would have received the required explanation because he was an authority on Thai customs. However, I eventually had to look it up in his book *Customs Pertaining to Birth and Death* to find the desired explanation.

While combing his hair I noticed an *incision* all around the back of his head. I learned to my great surprise that the doctors of the hospital had requested and received permission to remove the brain of Phya Anuman Rajadhon for further study and examination to find out more about the brain which had made Phya Anuman Rajadhon such a great scholar. Even in death he could still be useful to others as he always was during his lifetime.

In compliance with his wish, his lifeless body was placed in a simple white coffin instead of a Royal Urn, which remained in the house until the time of cremation, thus reflecting his plain and simple way of life.

In his last instructions to his children, he said he would be satisfied if a crema-

tion could be arranged befitting his status of an ordinary person. Instead, Their Majesties the King and Queen, H.R.H. the Princess Mother, and other members of the Royal Family attended the royally-sponsored cremation. Thus, a great honour was bestowed upon an ordinary person of humble origin.

Writing about Phya Anuman Rajadhon, I had to dig deep into the vast store of memories of my life with him and my heart ached with nostalgia. Scene after scene of my life with him passed through my mind and in my mind's eye, I could see him and even hear his voice talking to me as if it were yesterday.

Thus I found out unintentionally that fond memories not only die hard, but also last a lifetime.

The task of speaking about Phya Anuman Rajadhon and his works was indeed challenging and it would not be possible to relate everything in a speech of limited time. However, I shall do my best to give substance and glimpses of his personal life rarely known to others.

From the outset I would like to present some facts about three persons who made a great impact on Phya Anuman Rajadhon's life. Fate played an important role in bringing these three persons to meet with him in the early part of his life, thus shaping his future.

The first person was a young girl named "Lamai" who he later married after only one encounter (according to the words of my mother). He was only 20 years old and his bride was 17. It was a case of "love at first sight" which was to endure for more than half a century. Throughout their married life, the constant inspiring companionship of Khunying Lamai to her husband contributed much in guiding her husband's future career on its course towards great achievements. Phya Anuman Rajadhon and Khunying Lamai celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary not long before they left each other for good. They were blessed with nine children.

The second person was an Englishman named "Mr. Norman Maxwell", a Section Chief at the Customs Department. Soon after entering the Customs Department, the young Phya Anuman Rajadhon became his assistant and it was Mr. Maxwell who offered to teach English to Phya Anuman Rajadhon as well as to give him English books to read. Mr. Maxwell, figuratively speaking, presented Phya Anuman Rajadhon with the golden key to unlock the Door of Knowledge through which young Phya Anuman Rajadhon entered with determination to acquire, with his newly-found instrument of the English language, the abundant knowledge confronting him. And for the next sixty years he did just that.

The third person was a young Buddhist monk named "Maha Tri" who later became Phra Saraprasert, his close friend and co-author of many fine literary works under the pen name of "Sathirakoses-Nakaprateep", which were their surnames. Although they were not as close as the first Siamese twins, Eng and Chan, I remember seeing them at my house working together and playing chess hours on end. Certainly,

to produce the book *Kamanita* alone would require the two authors to work together not days but months.

From his autobiography, Phya Anuman Rajadhon said that his great-grandparent was a Chinese immigrant who came to Thailand from China. As a boy, I remember hearing my grandparents conversing in Chinese, which later was identified as the Tae Chiew dialect of South China. It is interesting to note that the only Chinese characteristic which Phya Anuman Rajadhon retained to the end of his life was the use of chopsticks in having meals at home.

As a child, Phya Anuman Rajadhon was given the Chinese name of "Lee Kwang Yong" by a Chinese Sinsae, a learned person. "Lee" was the family name and "Kwang Yong" means "constant bright light". The name was indeed prophetic as if to foretell the future of the boy who would one day become, as the Cornell University Research Center called him, "one of Thailand's most versatile and accomplished scholars", whose entire life was dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge.

He was known as "Kwang Yong" until he entered the Customs Department at the age of 18 years when he changed his name to "Yong". He later used the surname of "Sathirakoses" which was graciously given to him by H.M. King Rama VI who wrote it in His Majesty's own handwriting. "Sathirakoses" became his pen name.

The early life of Phya Anuman Rajadhon was one of continual struggle against poverty and hardship. My grandmother told me that her son had to study in the evening by the light of a kerosene lamp because the house had no electricity.

The only formal education at a school was when at the age of 9 he entered the Assumption College where he stayed only four years. Apparently, his parents had to scrape to send him to school and could only manage to keep him there 4 years, only to complete Grade IV of the Assumption College. However, he was taught English and Thai literature by his father before entering school.

It is interesting to note that his classmates and friends at the Assumption College included boys who later became high Government officials of distinction. They were : Phya Manavarajsevi, Phya Srisena Sombatsiri, Phya Prichanusas, Phya Mahaisawan, Phya Acharas Songsiri, Phya Saraphai Pipat and Phya Pipaksa Satayati-pathai. Another contemporary was Chao Phya Sridharmadhibes.

After leaving school he sought a job and became a pharmacist—apprentice at a Government Pharmaceutical Department somewhere in town. In order to save the *tram fare* to augment his meager lunch allowance, he walked to the Department and back home everyday. And thus began his fondness of walking which to him was responsible for his good health. Later he would walk from the Department of Fine Arts or the Royal Institute back to the house not for the purpose of saving tram fare, but for exercise. His daily morning walk started at 5 a.m. He would join a group of friends and they would all walk in and around Lumpini Park for nearly 2 hours before they broke up and went home. He said that the morning walk of forty years helped him physically

as well as mentally as he found out that he could solve many problems and remember many things while walking. To sharpen the power of his memory he would *recite* the names of all the capital cities and states of the U.S.A. and names of all the provinces of Thailand.

At his death, Phya Manavarajsevi wrote "I have been a friend of Phya Anuman Rajadhon since boyhood days and we walked together in the morning for twenty years. I am sad that now he is gone and I shall miss my walking companion"

His fondness for walking was quite well known and when someone asked him why he would not like to ride in a motorcar like his children, he replied : "I am the son of an ordinary person while they are the children of a Phya". When I bought my first car, he asked my wife jokingly, so we thought, whether we had lost the use of our legs. The remark, though in jest, made both of us feel somewhat ashamed, although we knew that for us the purchase of a motorcar was a case of necessity and not of frivolous spending.

After a short stay at the Government Pharmaceutical Department, he left for a better job at the Oriental Hotel where he became a clerk. His duty was to write menus in English and he did all sorts of odd jobs such as receiving guests upon their arrival. He was quite satisfied with his job at the hotel and reminisced the one year he spent at the Oriental Hotel in his autobiography : "Looking back at my work at the Oriental Hotel when I was only 17 years old, I believe the experience gained helped me to withstand and endure the hardships and deprivations facing me in my future life "

One year later he left the Oriental Hotel and entered the Customs Department which was to change his whole life. He became an assistant to the afore-mentioned Mr. Norman Maxwell and later, because of his good knowledge of English, he became private secretary to another Englishman, Mr. William Nunn, an Advisor of the Department. His self-taught English became more proficient as he read more English books loaned to him by Mr. Norman Maxwell, mostly novels by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Walter Scott, and Charles Dickens. He began writing articles, mostly translated from English, and were published in a magazine of "The Thai Printing Press" owned by his friend Khun Sophit Aksarakarn and in another magazine of the "Thai Kasem Printing Press" owned by another friend, Luang Sansarakit.

He wrote under four pen names but eventually settled for "Sathirakoses" as the only pen name. The first work of his literary career was the translation of Ingersoll's *The Moustache of the Patriarch* and was followed by many others, among which was "*Zorida - Queen of the Desert*", translated from the book by Sir H. Rider Haggard, the *Virgin of the Sun*. It was well received as a book of romantic adventure by many young readers such as myself. "Zorida..." was typical of his early works while works of a later period dealt with more serious subjects.

Later in life his books and articles in English also made their appearances, the latter being published in the *Journal of the Siam Society*.

His reading of English books widened when, during a visit to the Kiam Hua Seng Bookstore in Nakorn Kasem Trade Centre, he found a catalogue of "Foyles" of London. He would then save money to order books from "Foyles" and later from "Blackwells" of Oxford.

He had by now acquired the skill of translating English into Thai which he described as "rendering the Thai text without the smell of milk and butter". Those who read his books and articles never suspected that they were translations from English, as evidenced by the book *Kamanita*.

Then Phya Anuman Rajadhon met Phra Saraprasert and the two young men struck a chord of close friendship and understanding which lasted many years. They combined their talents, one well versed in English and the other in Sanskrit, to produce many literary works. Three books of this co-authorship period were outstanding : *The Bengali Tales* won first prize of the Literary Society which was founded by H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajānupharḥ in the Seventh Reign, *Hitopades* brought the authors to the notice of two famous royal scholars of Thailand, H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupharḥ and H.R.H. Prince Narisaranuvativongs, and Phya Anuman Rajadhon was later introduced to the two Princes.

H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupharḥ tried unsuccessfully to have Phya Anuman Rajadhon transferred from the Customs Department to be his assistant at the National Library. However, despite his disappointment, H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupharḥ predicted to H.R.H. Prince Narisaranuvativongs that one day the young Phya Anuman Rajadhon would become a great scholar.

The introduction of Phya Anuman Rajadhon to H.R.H. Prince Narisaranuvativongs led to an important consequence. H.R.H. visited Phya Anuman Rajadhon at his house and referred to him as his "fellow scholar". During the next few years the two scholars exchanged notes on various academic topics which S. Sivaraksa called "Thaiology" or "Thai Vidhaya" by analogy to the term "China Vidhaya" and "Bharat Vidhaya", first used by Phya Anuman Rajadhon. These notes were eventually published in five volumes under the title of *Notes on Knowledge* and have become the richest source of information on "Thai Vidhaya". S. Sivaraksa wrote : "Within this decade there has been no book published which would give wider or deeper knowledge on Thaiology than *Notes on Knowledge* by the two authors".

Coming back to the three outstanding books, the third book *Kamanita* was probably the most outstanding and was considered a "chef d'oeuvre" of the two authors. Professor Sukit Nimmanhaeminda wrote about the book *Kamanita* as follows : "The authors were first class diamond cutters. With translation from English into Thai in the capable hands of Phya Anuman Rajadhon the two authors combined their talents in remodeling and refining it into a gem of unsurpassed brilliancy to satisfy readers of every class and age. It is readable as a new Buddhist sutra. If people prefer reading a romantic novel of immortal love, *Kamanita* would be considered one of the

great love stories. For those who have high taste for the Thai language, it can be considered a literary work of exquisite Thai prose of high linguistic quality”.

For many years it was a textbook in Government schools and that is why it is widely known and read. Apart from this, the book was reprinted innumerable times for distribution as gifts at various social functions. It was also made into a film and a television series.

Meanwhile at the height of his career as Assistant Director-General of the Customs Department, Phya Anuman Rajadhon became a victim of the *vagaries* of politics resulting from the 1932 Revolution and was pensioned off. Professor Sukit Nimmanhaeminda wrote about this sad and unjustified *episode* in the life of Phya Anuman Rajadhon as follows : “The chickens knew only the rice and insects they ate but kicked away the diamond whose value they knew not.”

Fate again had a hand in arranging things into their proper places, for not long after, Phya Anuman Rajadhon was re-instated into the Department of Fine Arts where his talents and knowledge were fully utilized. He eventually became the Department’s Director-General followed by his election as a member and later President of the Royal Institute.

The only entertainment which gave Phya Anuman Rajadhon relaxation from his work was listening to Thai Classical music from the radio especially before retiring at night. I can see him in my mind’s eye, *clad* in his sarong, lying on his favorite reclining chair which is now among his memorabilia in the Anuman Rajadhon Library at the National Library, listening to the music with absorption. If it happened to be his favorite song such as “Sarathee” or “Khmer Saiyoke”, he would hum the lyrics to accompany the music. Another form of relaxation was gardening. He could be seen pottering around his garden among his plants and orchids. One day a visitor came to the house and asked the “old gardener” whether Phya Anuman Rajadhon was in. The “gardener” promptly *ushered* the visitor into the drawing room. A few minutes later the “gardener”, properly attired, walked into the drawing room to the surprise of the visitor, for the “gardener” was in fact Phya Anuman Rajadhon himself.

He had no time to pay attention to his food and clothes. He ate whatever was offered to him, without *fuss* or fancy, although he enjoyed one or two favorite dishes prepared by his wife. As to his clothes, the children had to call the tailor to the house to see him, buy *him* shirts, socks and shoes, and take turns (and later his grandchildren too) in taking off his shoes on his return to the house, cleaning them, and shining them. To his children, outwardly Father seemed to be a stern looking person, a *disciplinarian* and a man of few words. Instead of calling us to face a scolding for our misbehaviour, he wrote us letters in his beautiful handwriting, describing what we did wrong and what we should do to atone for our mistakes. The tone of the letter was always kind and sympathetic and no harsh words were used. After having read his letter there was not a single dry eye among us. Needless to say I also received one such letter which unfor-

tunately has been lost.

The reason for writing such letters, I suppose, was to avoid making us feel ashamed and embarrassed and at the same time to give us ample time to ruminate over our mistakes. There was no doubt that we all behaved better and Father never had to utter one word of reprimand.

He was fond of travelling and had travelled extensively in Thailand. In fact, a few weeks before his death he came to Chiang Mai to visit Mae Sariang. He also visited several countries in Asia and Europe, but I think his visit to his family in New York was probably the most enjoyable and it was his last trip abroad. While in New York he had the opportunity of pursuing his favorite hobby in visiting bookstores, especially "Barnes and Noble" at 14th Street. He also had the occasion to address the Asia Society and gave lectures on Thai culture at two universities.

After having seen the many sights of New York, including a Broadway musical play "My Fair Lady", I took him by car to visit Canada. Our trip passed through the beautiful Adirondacks region north of New York State into Canada. He was visibly charmed by the natural beauty of the countryside all the way. Then as a finale of this interesting trip, he saw the Niagara Falls. As he stood gazing silently at the green water cascading down into the misty cauldron below, there was no way of knowing what went through his mind, but I suspected that the sight of this renowned and awe-inspiring wonder gave him immense satisfaction. One of his boyhood dreams had been fulfilled.

Although he belonged to the old generation always striving to preserve ancient Thai culture and tradition, yet his outlook was modern. He was indeed a bridge linking Old Siam with New Thailand, thus ensuring that ancient Thai culture and tradition would never fade away in face of progress and development, but would continue to flourish alongside with new ones of Modern Thailand. Dr. Sumet Choomsai, a noted architect, wrote in this connection: "Grandfather (i.e. Phya Anuman Rajadhon) fully supported new projects and new ideas of the young people of the new generation so that he became their "hero". His motto: The Old and the New must not be disconnected".

On the occasion of the Second Centenary of the Recapture of Ayudhya, he spoke these words among the ruins of this ancient city: "Those who hope to achieve civilization should look back as far as they look forward. It is not only in the realm of the Present that our duties and responsibilities lie, but also towards the Past and the Future".

When he reached the age of 80 years, seven months prior to his death, three events relating to his name took place. First, he had the honour to be elected President of the Siam Society. Second, the Anuman Rajadhon Library was opened at the National Library in which are kept all his books, manuscripts, and memorabilia of his life and works. And third, the establishment of the Sathirakoses-Nakaprateeep

Foundation to which Phya Anuman Rajadhon bequeathed the copyrights of his entire works. The royalties deriving from subsequent publication of these books have since been used to help needy writers and authors in accordance with his wish.

At his death, glowing eulogies from all quarters were showered upon him as being a great scholar of Thailand and more importantly still, as being a good and virtuous person.

As Mark Anthony said at Caesar's funeral : "I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him". By analogy, I would say that I have come here today to present briefly the life story of Phya Anuman Rajadhon and not for the purpose of extolling his achievements and virtues. Therefore, it is not necessary to bring all these eulogies to your attention.

However, I would ask your indulgence in bringing remarks on Phya Anuman Rajadhon by three personalities who knew him quite well.

First:

H.R.H. Prince Naradhip Pongseprabhand wrote : "Whenever foreign academics come to Thailand, they would go to see Phya Anuman Rajadhon, or, if not, they would rely on his works for reference. Phya Anuman Rajadhon was an exemplary person of the nation he had served with his own efforts, industry, and diligence. He was steadfast in his observance of the Thai Code of Morality, learned in the Thai language, Thai history and culture : a person worthy of praise and admiration"

Second:

S. Sivaraksa said : "Phya Anuman Rajadhon's life was a life devoted entirely to work, most of which was the kind of work he loved and was happy to do. It was a life full of goodwill. In brief, it was the life of a cultured man and an ordinary man who was at the same time a genius".

Third:

Professor William J. Gedney of the University of Michigan wrote : "Phya Anuman Rajadhon occupies, or rather has created for himself, a position in the field of Thai Letters and Scholarship which is unique and paradoxical. Though he is not an academician by training, his scholarly attainments have made him one of Thailand's most highly respected University professors. Though he is not primarily a student of language and literature, no one can proceed very far in Thai Philological or Literary studies before he has to seek enlightenment from the contributions which Phya Anuman Rajadhon has made in these fields. Though he is not a product of western education, hardly anyone has done more than he to introduce and popularize western learning among the Thai. Though he is much more than a popular author, one could hardly find a professional writer in Thailand who can match the grace and wit of his prose style. Most astonishing of all, although he is not a Thai by ancestry, no student of Thai culture, history, literature and language, has displayed greater devotion to these fields."

Realising that he did not have much time left to be with his children, he wrote the last letter telling them how much property he had left them, telling them to look after their mother well, giving them his last advice with instructions for his cremation and bidding farewell to them all.

Much has been told about Phya Anuman Rajadhon this evening, but much more has been omitted for lack of time. Perhaps that is not a bad idea at all, for too much of anything can cause boredom. As we say in Thai : "It is sufficient to give aroma to the mouth and throat".

To be born is to die. Birth is followed by Old Age, Sickness and Death which is inevitable; and so Phya Anuman Rajadhon passed away in accordance with this Buddhist doctrine.

He has gone, without doubt, to the Land as described in his book *Kamanita*, where souls of people of virtue and purity of heart were received and enthroned on lotus flowers of red, blue, and white colours, floating in the middle of a huge pond; where fragrances exhaled by many varieties of flowers which sparkled like diamonds on Earth and blended with the pungent perfume of the crimson flowers of the wonderful "Parichart" tree, more powerful than the most splendid essence ever enclosed in crystal, permeated the air; and lovely Apsaras, reclining on cloudlets, drew from their musical instruments the magic strains of rapturous melodies that filled the whole space. The soft perfume-laden warmth of this enchanting atmosphere was freshened by the constant breath of the crystal clear waters and the inhaling of this air alone was a pleasure which nothing on Earth could equal.

This Land was called "Sukhavadi"
the Abode of Bliss - Paradise.

Thank you for your attention.

Somchai Anuman Rajadhon

(Full text of the address before the gathering of participants attending the Siam Society Symposium on Culture and Environment in Thailand on 17 August 1987 at Suriwongse Hotel, Chiang Mai. Abridge version published in the Siam Society Newsletter Vol.3, Nr.4, December 1987.)