



# H.R.H. THE PRINCESS MOTHER CELEBRATES HER 90TH BIRTHDAY

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H.R.H. The Princess Mother of Thailand is one of the most beloved people in the entire Kingdom. She celebrates her 90th birthday on 21 October 1990, an occasion for happiness and rejoicing by Thai people everywhere and by all interested in Thailand.

Her only daughter, H.R.H. Princess Galyani Vadhana, once described her Mother's life as a "fairy tale," and indeed it has been. Orphaned before she was nine years old, a student nurse at thirteen, married to a Royal Prince before she was quite 20 years old, the Mother of two Kings (His late Majesty King Ananda Mahidol and our present revered King, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej) and a Princess, having travelled to many far-flung countries of the world — these are the things of which fairy tales are made. Not all fairy-tale Princesses live "happily every after," however; and while it seems that many times Her Royal Highness has been given more than a fair share of sorrow and adversity, she has never spent her time in feeling sorry for herself.

Her mother taught her to read when she was still quite young and this is one of her favorite pastimes still. Her reading tastes range from astronomy to Aristotle to Agatha Christie. All of her life she has studied and wanted to know new things and about things. From a delightfully mischievous little girl who liked to run and climb trees, to the indomitable lady of 65 plus, who climbed the highest mountain in Thailand, and who reluctantly gave up skiing at the age of 80, Her Royal Highness savors life to the fullest.

Since her children became adults she has devoted her life to less fortunate people, granting her Royal Patronage to many worthy charities. Foundations have been established to handle funding for her charity projects. One of her best known endeavors is probably The Princess Mother's Volunteer Flying Doctor Foundation. Carrying on the planned work of her late husband, Dr. H.R.H. Prince Mahidol of Songkhla, she is known as the "Mother of Rural Medicine in Thailand." Beginning in 1987, in recognition of her many years of work in the health care field, the Princess Mother's birthday on 21 October has been designated "National Social Welfare Day."

The Princess Mother is a devout Buddhist who, several years ago, initiated the writing of a simple pamphlet on the understanding of Buddhism called "What Did the Buddha Teach?" In 1966 she served as Regent of the Kingdom when Their Majesties the King and Queen were on State Visits abroad. Whatever she does has a well thought out meaning behind it. Whatever she creates — whether ceramics, needlepoint, or pictures made with wild flowers she has gathered and dried herself — each has a meaning or reason for its creation.

At the age of 90 years there is no thought of retirement in the Princess Mother's mind — only a gradual slowing down. She will continue tending her flowers, will visit people in different parts of Thailand as her strength permits, and, not least of all, will continue her Doi Tung Project of reforestation and crop substitution and sustainable agriculture in Chiang Rai Province.

H.R.H. the Princess Mother has graciously served as a Royal Vice-Patron of The Siam Society for over 30 years. It is with great pride and affection that the President, Council and Members of the Society humbly wish Her Royal Highness a very Happy Birthday and continued good health and happiness.