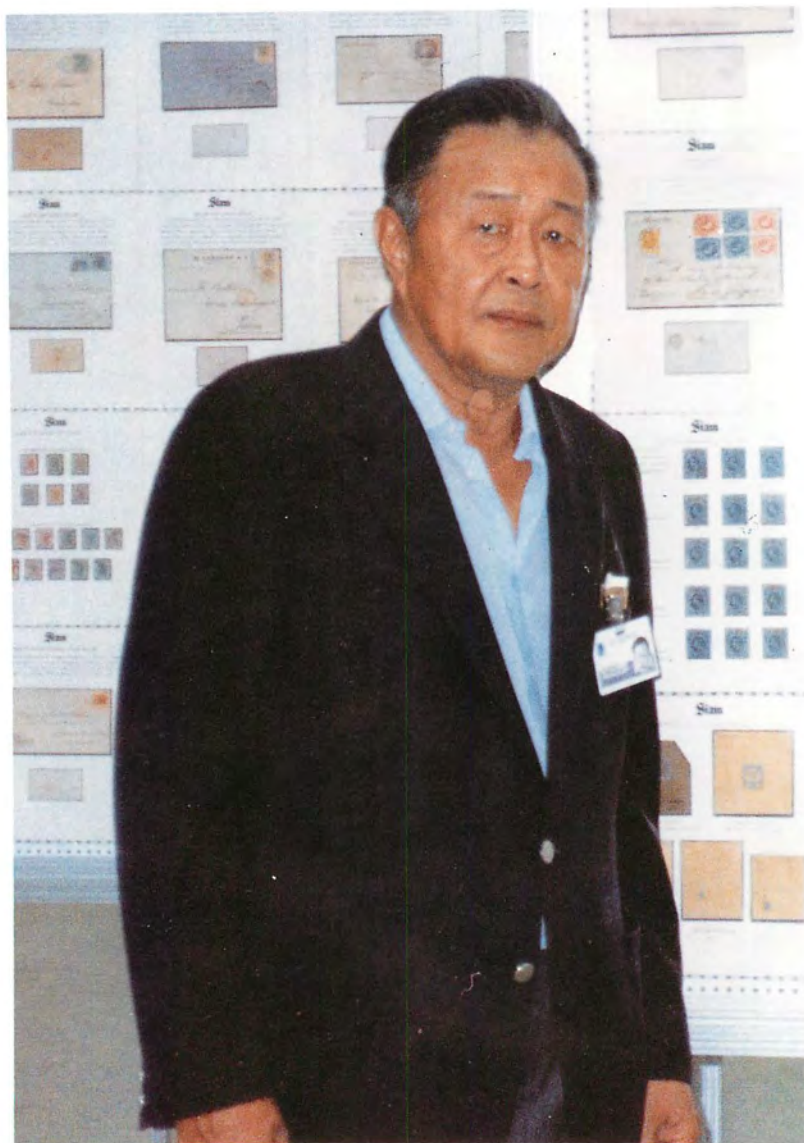




Mrs. Boonkrong Indhusophon
(Photograph by Noppadol Suwanveerakorn)

This issue of the *Journal of the Siam Society* has been made possible by the most kind generosity of Mrs. Boonkrong Indhusophon, Life Member. This special tribute by the *JSS* to Her Majesty the Queen in honor of her Fifth Cycle Birthday features the first publication anywhere of a contemporary letter about the Crisis of 1688 in Siam from the collection of Mrs. Boonkrong's late husband, Mr. Prakaipet Indhusophon. Mr. Prakaipet was Thailand's most renowned philatelist and one of the most distinguished and honored in the world. The letter that Mrs. Boonkrong has made available to the *JSS* sets the theme for the articles in this issue. The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage and the *JSS* join in expressing their warmest thanks to Mrs. Boonkrong, who in memory of her distinguished husband and in her own right continues to hold the Thai flag high at philatelic gatherings world wide.



Mr. Prakaipet Indhusophon

PRAKAIPET INDHUSOPHON

BONNIE DAVIS

MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL
THE SIAM SOCIETY

With the premature death of Prakaipet Indhusophon in April, 1991, Thailand lost perhaps the greatest philatelist she has ever claimed as her own. There are many stamp collectors among Thai people but far fewer philatelists. Until "Pet" began making his genial presence known at international shows, foreigners totally dominated the scene of Thai stamp collecting exhibits outside of Thailand.

Stamp collections have been described as "bits of colored paper having little or no use beyond post office doors." In 1840, when the handset stamps of England were first seen, they were derided as "bits of paper with glutinous wash at the back."

A Frenchman, Georges Herpin, is credited with originating the word philately. In his *Le collectionneur de timbres-poste* published in 1864 he combined two words from the Greek language, *philo* (love of) and *ateles* (free from payment). The latter word was accepted as equivalent to "free" or *franco*, as had formerly been stamped on pre-paid letters.

Prakaipet was a man who stood out in any group—and Pet never stood alone. He was a gregarious gentleman who not only volunteered himself—he volunteered others as well. Several times I received unexpected letters from editors of stamp journals in other countries asking the whereabouts of a promised article; only after calling Pet would I learn he had once again promised an article from me for the journal and had then forgotten to tell me. After knowing him for close to a decade, it became almost routine and there was nothing for it but to get busy and produce the promised article as quickly as possible! It was impossible to refuse Pet. Try telling him you hadn't planned to attend a meeting, or whatever—he was charming but persistent in telling you that his car and driver were on their way to pick you up.

Prakaipet Indhusophon was born on 16 January 1929 to Nai Chamnan and Mrs. Kian Indhusophon. His father was a former Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Communications. Prakaipet served in the military service as a Squadron Leader in the Royal Thai Air Force. He also served the country as a Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Industry, and as

Secretary General to former Prime Minister M.R. Kukrit Pramoj.

Pet began collecting stamps when he was about ten years old and continued throughout his school and university years. It was not until 1979, however, that he became an active member of the Philatelic Association of Thailand (PAT). He became President of PAT in 1984 and remained so until his untimely death.

In 1981 he exhibited in an international stamp exhibition for the first time, at PHILATokyo in Japan. At Thailand's first international stamp exhibition in August, 1983, held to commemorate the centenary of the Royal Siamese Postal Service, Pet's exhibit won the *Grand Prix*. The *Grand Prix d'Honneur* was awarded for his exhibit entitled *Siam 19th Century and Siamese Post Offices Abroad* at the international exhibition in India in January 1989. This is the most prestigious of all awards in philatelic competitive exhibits and Pet was the first Thai ever to achieve this honor. Following this award he was invited to attend the World Stamp Expo 1989 in Washington, D.C. together with other World Grand Prix awardees.

In March 1989 Pet was invited by the British Philatelic Federation Limited to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists, regarded internationally as the world's pre-eminent philatelic honor. Pet was the first Thai elected to sign the roll. Initiated at the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain in 1920, it had as its first signator King George V in 1921, followed by thirty-nine other leading philatelists of the world at that time. Since its inception a few over 221 philatelists have been elected.

Stamp collecting, or philately, to use the more elegant term, is governed by the 66-year-old *Fédération Internationale de Philatélie* (FIP). It is this body which oversees the organization of international stamp exhibitions in the more than one hundred member countries. The rules are strict—not only on what can or cannot be shown in an international exhibition, but also how items are displayed and described. Only recently revenue (tax) stamps have been accepted as being a legitimate part of philately, but unfortunately none of the



Mao Zedong and Mr. Prakaipet exchange greetings as Prime Minister M.R. Kukrit Pramroj looks on.



Mr. Prakaipet signs the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists in March 1989 at the invitation of the British Philatelic Federation with Mrs. Boonkrong at his side.

rules as to size of exhibition sheets and numbers shown in a frame have been adapted to the special needs of revenue collecting. Before his death, however, Pet was quick to get a representative from Thailand accepted by the revenue committee.

In his voluntary work to promote stamp collecting throughout the Asian region, Pet was always on the go. He regularly attended meetings of the Inter-Asia Philatelic Federation (FIAP), and exhibited, judged, or served as country commissioner in shows from Singapore to India to Australia. Pet undoubtedly did more for Thai philately, both at home and abroad, than any other collector ever has. Others have won awards, become well known and had grand, award-winning collections, but none of them was Thai. Pet proudly collected and represented his own country as an "Ambassador with Stamps" for Thailand.

Pet is also to be applauded and remembered for

bringing back to Thailand many things of national and historical value including royal letters and letters written by other personalities who figure in Thai history such as John Bush and Dr. Dan Bradley, and the letter about the Revolution in Siam of 1688 featured in this issue of the *JSS*. For that fact alone, apart from his many awards, Khun Prakaipet Indhusophon deserved high praise and recognition. This praise can now deservedly be passed to Khun Boonkrong Indhusophon, Pet's charming wife. Khun "Ad" has kept the now famous collection intact and has herself taken the exhibit, by invitation, to several international exhibitions since Pet's death.

To Pet philately was more than a hobby; it became a mission he served with dedication. Collectors who knew him, miss him. I sometimes even miss the letters from disgruntled editors telling me that once again, Pet had "volunteered" my services and forgotten to tell me.



Mr. Prakaipet with a galaxy of top-ranking leaders of the People's Republic of China and Thailand at the time of Prime Minister M.R. Kukrit Pramoj's visit to China in 1975. Mr. Prakaipet is fourth from the left in the second row, behind and to the left of M.R. Kukrit (fifth from the left, first row), and just to the right of ACM Siddhi Savetsila. Three prime ministers of Thailand appear in this photograph: Maj Gen. M.R. Kukrit, Gen. Chatichai Choonhavan (fourth from the right, first row), and Mr. Anand Panyarachun (second from the right, first row). Others among the luminaries are Deng Xiaoping, (to the left of M.R. Kukrit), Mr. Amnuay Viravan (third from the left, first row), and Zhou Enlai (to the right of M.R. Kukrit).