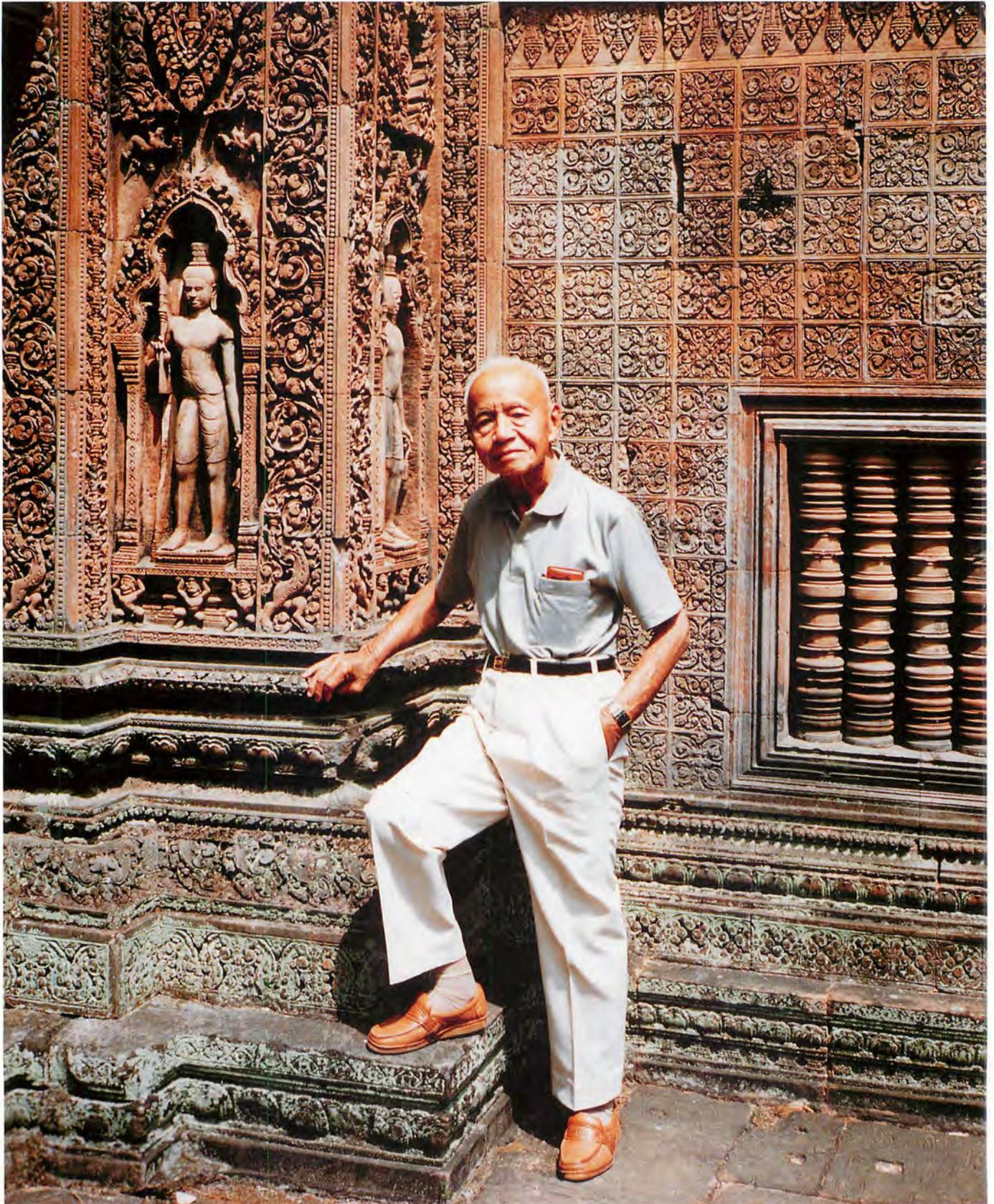
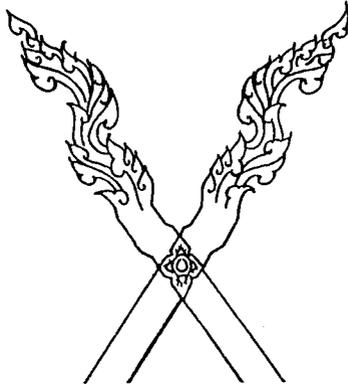


SECTION IX

IN MEMORIAM



Acharn Kraisi Nimmanahaeminda at Banteay Srei, Angkor (Cambodia)  
The last photograph of Acharn Kraisi, taken on 29 February 1992



# ACHARN KRAISRI NIMMANAHAEMINDA

12 DECEMBER 1912  
27 MAY 1992

## IN MEMORIAM

The death of Acharn Kraisri Nimmanahaeminda on 27 May 1992 has deprived the academic world of its most erudite authority on the Lanna Thai culture. It has taken from Thailand a scholar of tremendous vigor, versatility and devotion, and from me a dear, long-time friend.

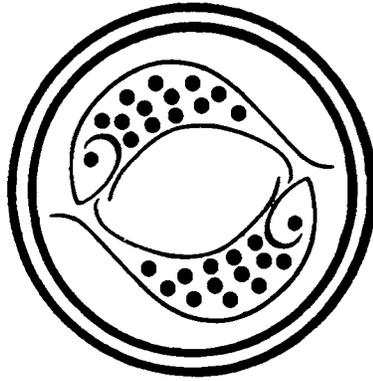
Many are the colleagues—Thai and foreign—who mourn his passing. For those of us who were fortunate enough to be included in his circle of close friends, his death is supremely saddening. But certainly not as much as to his family. Acharn Kraisri was as loving a husband to Khun Chanya, and as solicitous a father to his sons, Khun Tarrin and Khun Sirin, as he was a warm and generous friend to all his many colleagues.

The Siam Society under Royal Patronage was a special beneficiary of his generosity, for it was at Acharn Kraisri's recommendation that his mother, Mrs. Kimhaw, donated the Kamthieng House to the Siam Society—a treasure for which the Society will be forever grateful. This was not philanthropy of the ordinary kind, for the Kamthieng House was the Nimmanahaeminda Family's ancestral home—one that had stood along the Ping River in Chiangmai. Moved in its entirety from the North and reconstructed in faithful detail on the Society's grounds in the heart of Bangkok, the Kamthieng House is now a permanent museum of Northern Thai architecture and a permanent testimony of the Nimmanahaeminda Family's largess for all to visit and appreciate.

In attempting to write this brief commemorative piece, I have come to realize in greater detail how great is the loss of the Society—as well as my own—with the passing of this extraordinary man. When I listed just the headings of his major accomplishments and contributions to Thai society and the world of learning, the inventory grew so long as to be almost unmanageable. Like the Renaissance figures of history, Acharn Kraisri had wide-ranging cultural and scholarly interests in addition to pursuing a successful career in business and banking.

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The roof beams at the front and rear of the Kamthieng House, donated to the Siam Society by Acharn Kraisri Nimmanahaeminda's mother, extend beyond the ridgepole to form a V-shaped design called *kalae*, "glancing crows," by the Thai Yuan people of Lanna, now Northern Thailand, and *kaelae*, "glancing pigeons," by the Thai Yuan of Ratchaburi. Although the real meaning of this design has not been fully ascertained, it is thought that it represents a pair of buffalo horns rather than birds. It has become symbolic of both the Nimmanahaeminda Family and the Siam Society.



Acharn Kraisri was a person who was also active in Sipsongpanna and gave much help in the rebuilding of Buddhist monasteries. Khun Kraisri Nimmanahaeminda served on the Government's Committee for Thai History in the Office of the Prime Minister. He "discovered" and assisted various hilltribe people, campaigned successfully for the establishment of Chiangmai University, revived the making of green glazed ceramics and the carving of wood, popularized the tradition of the *kantoke* dinner, and was a distinguished Honourary Member of the Siam Society. In recognition of his scholarly accomplishments, Acharn Kraisri Nimmanahaeminda was awarded a Doctorate (*h.c.*) by the University of Chiangmai which was graciously conferred by His Majesty the King in 1982.

Besides the emotion I feel in composing a signed farewell to a personal friend, our fellow member and benefactor, and one of modern Thailand's most important figures, I am tormented by self-doubt about whether I am adequately doing justice to the expression of our collective grief. If only I had Acharn Kraisri's gift for composing an appropriate *chia*, a poetic Northern Thai folk-tale which he revived—yet another of his many accomplishments! *Chia* are recited after a funeral or cremation ceremony as a way of assuaging the sadness of mourners.

Although that is what I would like to do, and what he would do for me if our roles were reversed, I must turn instead to my own cultural tradition for inspiration in concluding this fond farewell. The most moving expression of bereavement that I can conjure from my memory is that of Catullus, the Roman poet, who penned these poignant words on the death of a loved one: *In perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale*. In eternity, brother, hail and farewell.

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