

Siam Society.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1924.

The Siam Society again has to record the completion of a successful year in this, their 16th. Annual Report. Both from the increase in membership, and the general interest displayed in its various activities, it may be said that the Society now occupies a position of greater importance than it has ever done hitherto.

His Majesty the King, our Royal Patron, continues to show his unabated interest in the Society's labours, and our thanks are again due to H. R. H. Prince Damrong, the Vice Patron, for his unwearied interest and assistance throughout the year.

It is satisfactory to note that the new members elected last year have included more Siamese than before, and the Society is glad to acknowledge the practical help contributed by several of these gentlemen, both in exhibits and information, to the various exhibitions and lectures that have been held.

The "Ordinary Members" now number over 200—most of whom are resident in Bangkok—and it is hoped that the coming year may see a further increase to this number.

There is a wide opportunity within the various activities of the Society—such as the Study Sections, the Journal, or by papers to be read before the Society—for a far larger number of the members to participate than do at present. The Council trust that in preparing a programme for the coming year they may have the assistance of the "new blood" coming into the Society, which is necessary for its continued health and vigour.

MEMBERSHIP.

During the year 53 "ordinary" members have been elected to the Society.

Prof. Finot of Hanoi, the distinguished founder of the "Ecole Française de l'Extrême Orient," who for many years had been a "Corresponding Member" of the Society, was elected an "Honorary

Member", and Messrs. B. O. Cartwright and W. Nunn, on leaving Siam, were elected "Corresponding Members".

There have been 15 resignations during the year, and 2 members have died.

The membership at the 31st. December 1924 was as follows:—

Life	Honorary	Corresponding	Ordinary
1	16	10	211

making a grand total of 238, an increase of 36 over the figures of last year.

In addition to the above, some 30 members of the late Natural History Society (now amalgamated with the Siam Society) have the option of joining the latter, but this will be dealt with in a future report.

THE COUNCIL.

On the retirement of Mr. B. O. Cartwright, Major Erik Seidenfaden was appointed to the position of Vice-President. At the end of the year Mr. C. A. Seymour Sewell resigned from the Council because he was leaving the country. Mr. Sewell joined the Society in 1907, was elected to the Council in 1910 and has since held various offices in the Society. The Council desires to record its great regret at his departure and proposes that he be elected a "Corresponding Member" as a mark of recognition of his long and valuable association with the Society.

Mr. Michell, the Hon. Secretary, returned from Europe in March and took over his duties from Mr. le May who had been acting during Mr. Michell's absence.

Eleven Council meetings were held during the year at which the average attendance was between 8 and 9.

REMOVAL TO NEW QUARTERS.

In August the Society removed from the room it had occupied over the old Falck & Beidek building in Chartered Bank Lane to more suitable and commodious quarters in Poh Yome House, Sathorn Road, which Messrs. the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation Ltd.

very kindly placed at its disposal at a very moderate rent. It was felt that the single room formerly occupied—although large enough by itself—was not enough for the Society's requirements. The approach to the building was also inconvenient, and the rent paid was a heavy tax on the resources of the Society.

The accomodation in the new premises comprises three rooms—one of them about 60 feet long being admirably suited for a lecture Hall, and a smaller one for the Library and Hon. Secretary. The third room has been sub-let to the Danish Society, which had also shared part of the room in Chartered Bank Lane.

THE JOURNAL.

Two parts of the Journal were published during 1924, comprising Vol. XVIII parts 1 & 2, whilst part 3 of this Volume was in the press at the end of the year.

Professor Cœdès continued to edit the journal throughout the year.

The valuable work on the "Flora of Siam" which the Society is publishing for Prof. Craib of Aberdeen University is now in hand, and the first instalment is in the press. It will probably take 2 or 3 years to produce complete.

THE RULES OF THE SOCIETY.

Owing to the large number of amendments and additions made to the rules since they were last printed, a sub-committee was appointed to examine and revise them. The draft of the rules thus revised will be submitted for adoption at the Annual General Meeting.

NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY.

The Natural History Society, which had pursued an independent career for some 10 years, decided towards the end of the year to seek amalgamation with the Siam Society. Negotiations took place which resulted in the amalgamation being agreed to, as from January 1st. 1925. The former Natural History Society therefore becomes from that date the "Natural History Section of the Siam Society." To preserve the identity of its valuable journal—which

for many years has enjoyed a world-wide reputation amongst naturalists—this will be published from time to time as a “Supplement” to the Siam Society Journal with its serial number and pagination as before.

The Section will appoint its own Leader and Secretary, and the “Supplement” will be produced by its own assistant Editors—under the supervision of the Editor of the Society’s journal. It is hoped that the activities and usefulness of the former Natural History Society will not suffer by its fusion with the Siam Society, while the new members, the stock of Journals, and other assets of the Natural History Society will surely prove a valuable addition to the latter.

ORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS.

There have been three Ordinary General Meetings held during the year.

The first was on January 4th. when Mr. B. O. Cartwright read an interesting paper on the late “Huey Lottery”, and there was a good attendance.

On May 20th. Mr. le May read a paper on “The coins of the Bangkok Dynasty,” illustrated by a display of coins from the collection of H. S. H. Mom Chao Piya Bhakdinarth, who kindly lent them for the occasion, and some from Mr. le May’s own collection.

About 40 members and their friends attended, including the Vice Patron.

The third meeting was held at the new rooms in Poh Yome House on August 27th. when Dr. A. F. G. Kerr gave a lecture on a “Visit to Doi Angka (Intanon), the highest mountain in Siam”. The lecture was illustrated by a number of excellent lantern slides, and the Society is indebted to the Alliance Française for the kind loan of their lantern for exhibiting the pictures. The attendance numbered about 90.

STUDY SECTIONS.

Three study sections were active during the year.

The "Travel and Transport" Section organised a very successful excursion to Ayudhya on February 24th., which was much enjoyed by the 73 members and friends who took part. H. E. the Viceroy of Ayuthia personally conducted the party round the ruins, the Museum and the temples visited, assisted by Mr. Graham, the leader of the Section. All the arrangements were ably carried out by Mr. Wyon Smith, the Section Secretary.

The Section of Archaeology, History, Literature and Philology held four meetings—the first on February 26th. when Mr. C. A. S. Sewell read a paper on "The possible relationship between the Thai and Indo-European languages", and the second was held on March 12th. at which Monsieur R. Nicolas gave a causerie on "The Siamese Court language". Early in July Major Seidenfaden read an interesting paper on the subject of his visit to an old city site called "Khū Muang" in the Lopburi region. In October Mr. le May lectured on a visit he had recently made to Sawankalok, with special reference to the ancient ruins of Wat Mahā Tāt and the pottery kilns in that region.

The Section of Technology and Fine Arts held 4 meetings during the year. On March 4th. Mr. Sebastian, the Section Secretary, gave a short resumé of his studies of "Sawankalok Ware," illustrated with various specimens kindly lent by H. R. H. Prince Damrong, H. E. The British Minister and other leading collectors.

On May 13th. a meeting was held at the National Library when Professor Coedès spoke on the subject of "Lacquer Gilding," and a demonstration of the Art was given by the draughtsman of the Library. There was a large and distinguished attendance.

In August the section held a meeting at the Arts and Crafts School (by kind permission of the Director-General), when a very instructive demonstration of the making of Siamese "Niello" work was given in the workshops of the school. Tea was provided, and afterwards Phra Anusasna Baniyyakar, the Assist. Director-General, described in an able and most interesting lecture the history and manufacture of Siamese Niello.

About 100 members and their friends were present.

On December 20th. the Section held a meeting at the new rooms in Poh Yome House on the subject of Siamese Porcelain, when Mr. Graham, the President, spoke. There was an exhibition of valuable and rare specimens of "Bencharong" and other wares kindly lent by H. S. H. Prince Piya, Phya Vichit Narong, Phya Sukhum Naivinit, Phra Sophol, and Luang Ritthi.

About 40 members attended.

Thus there were in all nine Sectional meetings during the year, a very satisfactory evidence of the continued vitality of the Study Section movement. It is to be hoped that, with the addition of the Natural History Section, and the revival of that on Philately, the year 1925 may prove an even more successful one for the movement than the past year.

FINANCES.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

Receipts during the year have not been so high as in 1923 for the reason that during 1923 a large sum due on account of long-standing arrears was collected.

The increase in the membership during the year 1924 is indicated by the sum of Tcs. 4,000, due for subscriptions, which is greater than ever before. The sales of the various publications of the Society are less than in 1923, whilst the profit from sub-renting the room of the Danish Society is slightly greater.

The receipts would have been considerably greater if all the members had been more prompt in paying their subscriptions, there being a sum of Tcs. 1,500. in arrears on this account.

By far the greater part of this amount is due for the year 1924, but there are many subscriptions for 1922 and 1923 still unpaid. Members are again reminded of their obligation to send their subscriptions, if possible when due, and of the fact that the Society, being without any other source of income, must depend on the prompt receipt of subscriptions to carry on the work.

Expenditure has not been so high as last year — largely due to the fact that the liability for producing the Môn Dictionary was discharged in 1923. Rent is an item in which an economy has been affected, but the cost of printing the Journal, blocks and plates for same, and wrapping and despatching, is slightly higher.

The balance carried forward to the new year is Tcs. 389.41.

J. MICHELL.

Hon. Secretary.
