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PREFACE

It is my high privilege, as President of the Siam Society, to write the Preface to this In Memoriam number of JSS, dedicated to the memory of His late Highness Prince Dhaninivat Kromamun Bidyalabh Brdiyakorn, President of the Privy Council, Honorary President of the Siam Society.

With the passing away of His Highness, the King and country have lost a great officer of State.

His Highness had risen to the highest position of Regent and was well qualified to serve the Sovereign. He took his honours degree at Oxford in Oriental Languages and Culture and continued his study and research on the subject of historical Thai polity. He found that our traditional concept of kingship as set forth in the Dharmasastra was that of a King of Righteousness.

He started his career in the Ministry of Interior and in the provinces too, because he wanted to get to know the Thai people and their needs.

Imbued with the knowledge of Thai traditions and of the Thai people, he served as His Majesty’s Private Secretary in the Sixth Reign, as Minister of Education in the Seventh Reign, and as Regent and President of the Privy Council in the present Reign.

So far as the Siam Society is concerned His Highness was President for many, many years, so that he may be said to be the life and soul of our Society.

The articles he contributed to the Journal were, as I stated in His Highness’ 84th Anniversary number, very substantial, comprehensive, informative, and scholarly, showing His Highness to be the great authority that he was on Thai history and culture.

I wish once again to pay a tribute to His Highness’ reasonable attitude. Referring to “The Date and Authorship of the Romance of Phra Lo”, Prince Dhani dealing with Prince Damrong’s theory comments: “From the point of view of strict historical criticism such a conclusion sounds a little arbitrary and yet there is no other suggestion……and thereby the theory of the Prince must needs remain unchallenged.”
I can give another instance within my own experience. His Highness wanted a word for “Journal”. As I had given the word Warasan (Varasarasasra) for Journalism to Thammasat University, I suggested Warasan (Varasara) for Journal. Characteristically of him, His Highness told me that he was not altogether satisfied with the word but as he could not think of anything better, he would use it.

This shows how fast-minded he was. He was indeed a very honorable man, with simple taste and a great sense of humanity. He was well liked and respected by a wide circle of friends. His classification in Rotary was gardening and it was in the garden, close to Nature, that he liked to spend his leisure time.

He was mild and modest but was decided and determined, with a mind of his own. He would not hesitate to go about, wearing the planning, alone. He was not self-conscious about it but did it in all sincerity, with the full conviction of its appropriateness. We respect him for the courage of his opinion.

On behalf of the Siam Society, I extend to His Highness’ family our deep sympathy and profound condolences on their irreparable bereavement.


Narasiputturn
Kramasnan Naradhip Sangaprabandh
President, Siam Society
At a nai, in the traditional Siamese dress we usually wore.
Escorting H.M. The King at the banquet to celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Siam Society in 1954.

Delivering the speech in honour of that occasion.
Visiting President John F. Kennedy at the White House, with his sister, Princess Sibpan Sonakul in 1963. He is reading a letter written to President Abraham Lincoln from his Grandfather, H.M. King Mongkut, Rama IV.

Newly elected Council members of the Siam Society paying respect to him at his palace in early 1969.
Opening an exhibition at the Siam Society arranged in honour of his eighty-fourth birthday in 1969.

Receiving gifts from members of the Thai Wathana T. Suwan Foundation, which organized the exhibition.
H.R.H. the President of the Siam Society presenting him with the Key to open the Prince Dhani Room at the Siam Society in late 1973.

With H.R.H. the President and his sister, Princess Sibpan Sonakul, in the Prince Dhani Room.