

CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENARY OF H.R.H. PRINCE WAN WAITHAYAKORN

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MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL
THE SIAM SOCIETY

H.R.H. Prince Wan Waithayakorn was born in Ban Tanao, Samranrat District of Bangkok, on August 25, 1891. He attended Suan Kularb School and Raj Widyalai School (King's College) for his early education. At the age of fourteen he was granted a King's Scholarship and left Siam to study in England. There he attended the prestigious Marlborough College until 1910. From Marlborough he entered Balliol College, Oxford, graduating with honors and a degree in history.

Following his graduation from Oxford, Prince Wan moved to Paris where he matriculated at the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques studying diplomacy. Again His Royal Highness graduated with honor for his scholastic achievements. Because World War I had not yet ended, the government considered it unsafe for the Prince to travel back to Siam. This was the beginning of his long and distinguished diplomatic career, for in 1917 he was appointed a third secretary at the Royal Thai Embassy in Paris.

In 1922 Prince Wan returned to work in the Foreign Office in Bangkok where he worked under Prince Devawongse. He was also appointed to serve as an advisor to H.M. King Vajiravudh (Rama VI). In 1924, at the age of only 33 years, he was promoted to the rank of Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs. In this position he had the responsibility of negotiating several amendments to treaties with western powers.

Prince Wan returned to Europe in 1926 when he was accredited as Minister to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Belgium. During this period His Royal Highness served also as the head of the Thai Delegation to the League of Nations.

He returned home in 1930 and accepted a professorship in the Faculty of Arts at Chulalongkorn University where he taught both the Thai and English languages. Following the coup d'etat in 1932, Prince Wan was one of the few members of the Royal Family to have an active role in the new government. He was not identified with any particular party — he worked only to serve his country.



H.R.H. Prince Wan was an active member of The Siam Society under Royal Patronage for a great many years. In 1937 he translated the revised rules of The Siam Society into Thai, from the original English draft. By 1943 Prince Wan was serving not only as Senior Vice-President of the Council but concurrently as Chairman of the Finance Committee and Membership Committee. He was elected President of The