

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

“The Minute Books of the Council of the Siam Society”
100 years of recording international cooperation in research and the dissemination of
knowledge in the arts and sciences.
(Thailand)

2012-82

1. Summary

The Siam Society Council Minute Books contain the official records of the Council meetings and the General Meetings of the Siam Society, from 1904 to 2004 and beyond.

The Minute Books were continuously added to, and moved from place to place during the early years of the Society without a permanent home, and are now kept in the Library of the Society, Asoke Montri Road, Sukhumvit 21, Bangkok.

The Siam Society is a private, non-profit international organization, under Royal Patronage, formed in 1904 by the international and Siamese communities in Siam, with the aim of promoting research and cooperation through the sharing of knowledge and research findings.

The Minute Books reflect the Society's system, process, and outcome of work, its obstacles and challenges, the personalities and organizations contributing to its success, and the scope of its work in a century of great international changes and development.

2. Nominator

2.1 Name of nominator: The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage, in cooperation with the National Committee on the Memory of the World Programme of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO.

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

The Siam Society is the owner and custodian of the nominated documentary heritage.

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3 . Details of the Nominated Documentary Heritage

3.1 Title of documentary heritage : "A century of Siam Society Council Minutes Books".

3.2 Catalogue or registration details

A Century of Siam Society Council Minutes Books, comprising 16 volumes as follows:

Volume 1: dated March 1904-January 1925

Volume 2: dated February 1925-August 1928

Volume 3: dated September 1928-February 1932

Volume 4: dated March 1932-December 1934

Volume 5: dated January 1935-March 1938

Volume 6: dated May 1938-November 1943

Volume 7: dated December 1943-January 1950

Volume 8: dated February 1950-December 1955

Volume 9: dated January 1956-December 1963

Volume 10: dated January 1964-September 1972

Volume 11: dated October 1972-October 1982

Volume 12: dated November 1982-September 1989

Volume 13: dated October 1989-December 1993

Volume 14: dated January 1994-April 1997

Volume 15: dated May 1997-May 2004

Volume 16: dated Jun 2004-2010

3.4 History/Origin/Background/Provenance

3.4.1 The Context

The Siam Society was formed six years before the end of King Chulalongkorn's reign.

During that period, men of diverse nationalities came to live in Bangkok, either engaged by the King to work as advisors in the Siamese ministries, or employed by private foreign firms, or other foreign organizations. For various reasons, some stayed only for a short period, while many remained as long-term residents; a good number never left.

Bangkok, founded in 1782, was then a city being visibly transformed and rapidly modernized in terms of trade, architecture and communications. Many foreign governments set up consulates, and trading companies opened offices; modern hotels were constructed; electrified tramline and road systems were built. It is estimated that there were about 1,600 people of European and American nationalities residing in Bangkok, and they employed more than ten times that number of Chinese and other Asian aliens who were subject to consular jurisdiction (see Yoneo Ishii, 1987). Outside Bangkok, two railroads were built to open communication with the North and the Northeast of the country, but life in general remained traditional and a great deal seemed to await development, exploitation, or mere exploration.

Western colonization spread ever more to Asia, and relations between Siam and some European powers were not always smooth, though diplomacy was always maintained. The influences of the British and its forward policy in Burma and the Malay provinces to the south of Siam gave rise to concern in Bangkok. The French protectorates in the Indochinese states and the left bank of the Mekong River posed a direct threat to Bangkok.

In 1893, Siam suffered badly from the Franco-Siamese crisis, but King Chulalongkorn's

Government continued to struggle for national sovereignty. In 1897, King Chulalongkorn paid his first visit to Europe.

Before 1904, young, educated Siamese--nobles and commoners--including the Crown Prince, earlier sent for training abroad, had returned home and joined the government and the new civil service of King Chulalongkorn. Privately-sponsored students had also come back and worked in private firms and companies. Keen to be a part of the modernization process of the kingdom, they expressed a vibrant interest in increasing and promoting the knowledge of the arts and sciences, and in social economic development of their country, as evident in the printed media. This interest was very much shared by many foreign scholars in Bangkok (see David K. Wyatt, 1984).

Following the example of the British in India and the Dutch in Java, the foreign residents of Bangkok, particularly Westerners, were anxious to hold meetings or activities to exchange knowledge and information about Siam and neighboring countries in the areas relevant to their interests. Clubs and associations seemed to be the fashion. The Oriental Hotel, the St. Andrew's Club, the German Club, the United Club were patronized by those who socially belonged. A Gymkhana Association, which later grew into the Royal Bangkok Sports Club, was founded in 1889. A Ladies' Library Association, the genesis of the Neilson Hays Library, came into being about the same time. The Siamese Medical Association and the Engineering Society were also founded in the early 1900s (B. Davis, the Siam Society, 1989).

3.4.2. The Formation of the Siam Society

On 26 February 1904, a notice was printed in the Bangkok Times (one of the three English language newspapers published in Bangkok), as a reminder, that the meeting of the proposed Siam Society was to take place the next day at six p.m.

The meeting took place as scheduled at the Oriental Hotel, chaired by Mr. Hamilton King, with Dr. O Frankfurter acting as Secretary and Librarian. Among those present were Messrs. A. d'Abaza, W.R.D. Beckett, Dr. H. Cambell Highet, Dr. T. Masao, Dr G. B. McFarland, Rev. Canon Greenstock, Col. G.E. Gerini, H.E. Mr. Inagaki, Phya Prajakish (Cham Bunnag, A. Cecil Carter, F.H. Giles, J. Homan Van der Heide and Mr. L. Petithuguenin.

Those attending the general meeting, as reported in the Bangkok Times the following day, resolved to form themselves into a society for research and investigation in matters appertaining to Siam. With Mr. Hamilton King declining the nomination, Mr. Beckett was appointed as President of the Society, and Dr. Frankfurter as Honorary Secretary and Librarian. Vice-Presidents were Messers Gerini, Giles, and Reytter; Assistant Hon. Secretary was Mr. Mundie; Hon Treasurer Williamson, and Council members were Messers d'Abaza, J. Ferrando, Homan van der Heide, Dr. Masao, Phya Prachakitkorachak (Chaem Bunnag) and Rev. Fr. Schmidt. Rules were drawn up and passed by the provisional committee.

3.4.3. The Minute Books: An Analytical Description

3.4.3.1. Volume No. 1: The formative years and early development (1904-1925)

The Minute books, starting from Volume 1, immediately introduce the readers to the place, the people, the time and the topics of interest of the Council Meetings and the Council members of the

Society. The minutes particularly reflect not only the common interests of the members, but how they conducted their business and promoted their interests.

The first 135 pages of Volume 1 were hand-written, in ink, on the pages of the book with running numbers stamped on the top right of the pages (see photos). The minutes gave business-like accounts as to how decisions were made on all items listed in a Meeting's agenda. These 135 pages cover the accounts of 85 Council Meetings and a number of the Annual General Meetings, held over the first 18 years since the Society's inception, from 10 March 1904 to June 1922.

The minutes inform us that meetings were held at different venues, such as the residences of the President or any member of the Council, the United Club, the office of the Bangkok Times, the Engineering Society, the Oriental Hotel, and the Hotel Royal. The General Meetings were usually held at the Oriental Hotel.

From page 136 on, the minutes were typed on standard typing paper that was later pasted onto the pages of the Minute Book (see photo).

The record of the first Council Meeting of the Society, on Thursday 10 March 1904, is written on the first four pages of vol. I with two signatures at the end, presumably that of the President on the right and that of the Secretary on the left. The contents of the minutes can be very revealing. For example, the first meeting was held at the residence of the President, Mr. Beckett. The minutes read as follows:--

Present at the meeting were:

Colonel Gerini, Mr. Francis G Giles, Dr. Reytter, Vice-Presidents, Mr. A. d' Abaza, Mr. Ferrnado, Mr. J. Homan Van de Heide, T Masao, Phya Prachakitkorachak (Chaem Bunnag) and Dr. Frankfurter.

The Agenda as laid before the meeting was as follows :

1. Enrolment of additional members
2. To recommend for appointment honorary corresponding members
3. The date of the first General Meeting
4. Calendar of the Journal and other publications
5. Formation of a Library

It is interesting to note that Items 4 and 5 of the agenda were particularly important to the academic development and credibility of the Society in the long run. To this day, the Journal of the Siam Society, first published in April 1905, together with the Library of the Siam Society (with the collection of more than 25,000 volumes including some rare old books from many countries, as well as periodicals, photographs, maps, and other materials) remain the two most important assets of the Society perhaps the most widely known, the most academically popular, and among the proudest legacies of the Society's founding members.

Under item 2 of the same agenda, it was recorded that the Honorary Secretary was instructed to draft a letter to the Crown Prince (Prince Vajiravudh) "stating that the Council would be very glad if His Royal Highness would accept the position of Patron of the Society", and "on the suggestion of

Col. Gerini and after further discussion, the President moved that Their Royal Highnesses Krom Hmun Vajirayan, Chao Fa Krom Khun Naris Krom Luang Devavongsa, and Krom Luang Damrong be invited to become Vice Patrons of the Society.

On Royal Patronage, it should be noted that the kind and continued support and encouragement of the Royal Patrons was sustained throughout the life and development of the Siam Society.

The minutes continue to inform us that "The President then recommended for the Honorary Membership of the Society: Chao Phya Bhaskarawongse, Right Reverend Bishop Vey, Sir Ernest Satow, Sir George Scott, Mr. W.J. Archer, Mr. Targeose, Prof. A.J Bastian and Mr. A. Pavie. The list was approved.

"The Meeting then considered and approved the names of the corresponding members: James Mc Carthy, H. Warrington Smyth, and G. C.B. Stinleng. The Meeting then fixed the date for the General Meeting of the Society on Thursday 7 April."

Further interesting examples are the Minutes of the General Meeting of the Society, held at the United Club on 1 March 1905, which reflected some broad interests of the Society. At that meeting, Dr. H. Campbell Highet showed the bacillus of the bubonic plague, taken from a local case, under a powerful microscope, and a paper was read by Mr. Petithuguenin entitled "A propos des origines et de histoire ancienne du Siam" with a résumé of theories by a French scholar M. Etienne Aymonier in his work "Le Cambodge, le Groupe d Angkor et l' histoire".

In August 1905, the General Meeting of the Siam Society chaired by Col. G.E. Gerini agreed that Count F.L. Pulle (Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Languages at the University of Bologna) and Professor L. Rocentius (Professor of Chinese at the University of Rome) were appointed Corresponding Members of the Society. A paper was read by Mr. W. Walter Bourke on 'Some Archaeological Notes on Monthon Puket'.

The minutes of the meetings during the time of the First World War (1914-1918) and the years that followed are interesting, both for what was written down in the records, as well as what was conspicuously absent.

(see more analysis in Part 5.3. A: -- (Global significance--Time)

3.4.3.2. Volume 2. Expansion and challenges (1926-1928)

In 1926, the Society marked a milestone in its development with the adoption of its own emblem: an elephant's head, representing Ganesh, the Hindhu God of Knowledge, holding a flower garland. It was one of three designs proposed by a noted Siamese artist Prince Narisa Nuwattiwongse, and this one was chosen and approved by the meeting. The motto of the Society was also decided upon, composed by Prince Dhani Nivat in the Siamese language: "Knowledge gives rise to Friendship". It now appears inside the garland around the elephant's head and is part of the Society's emblem.

3.4.3.3. The Permanent Home

The Siam Society was able to meet and conduct its business continuously for almost 30 years, despite the fact that it did not have a permanent 'home' of its own then.

In 1932, one of the most turbulent years of Siam's modern history under King Prajadhipok, the first permanent office and library was built on a prime location, on a piece of land donated by Mr. A.E. Nana, Thai businessman of Indian descent who had worked for the Royal Palace. Funds were raised for the construction costs, and Royal Patrons and members donated generously. In 1962 a separate office and library building was opened in the presence of three Queens and two Kings, and in 1998 the Chalerm Prakiat building was opened housing the library, office and meeting room. An ethnological museum, called the Kamthieng House, consists of two fine examples of traditional Thai teakwood house, in the traditional northern architecture. These constitute an important landmark of the Society in the present location.

3.4.3.4. The Change of Name

When the Siam Society was formed, the country where the members gathered together into Society was known, by her own recognition and to the world, as "Siam".

In 1939, the government under the regime of Prime Minister Pibun (1938-1944) under the leadership of Major-General (later Field Marshal) Pibun Songkram, Prime Minister launched a series of policies and guidelines for nationalistic practices, aiming at "nation building". One particular announcement was issued on 24 June 1939, after a lengthy debate at a cabinet meeting, resulting in the amendment to the constitution changing the country's name from "Siam" to "Thailand".

Following this announcement, the Council of the Siam Society, met on 6 September 1939, and decided unanimously to change the name of the Society to "The Thailand Research Society"; the decision was subsequently approved at the General Meeting on 17 November 1939. The name of the Society in Thai was also changed from "Sayam Samakom" to "Samakom Khon Vicha Prathet Thai" (see Minute book, Volume 6)

After the war, the name of the country was changed back to Siam in 1945 until 1949 when it was changed to Thailand again. The Society changed its name back to "The Siam Society" and so remains today.

3.4.3.5. Long and difficult years

In 1935, following King Prajadhipok's abdication on 2 March, Prince Ananda, aged 10 and in school in Switzerland, was invited by the National Assembly to ascend to the throne. The Siam Society then invited the new King to be the Patron, which he accepted by letter in 1940.

In December 1941, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and the Second World War engulfed both West and East. Thailand received an ultimatum to grant passage for the Japanese armies, and when the Foreign Affairs Minister refused, the country was promptly invaded in nine places. Prime Minister Pibun announced a cease-fire agreeing to the Japanese rights to passage through Thailand in return for Japanese assurances of respect for Thailand's independence. This passage through Thailand contributed to rapid Japanese expansion in Asia and their military success.

In January 1942, the Pibun government of Thailand declared war on the United States and Great Britain. Those who opposed this declaration were forced to resign from the government; among them were Pridi Phanomyong and Direk Chaiyanam. The Thai minister in Washington D.C., Seni

Pramoj, disregarded the government's war declaration, and together with colleagues in Europe, organized a "Free Thai Movement" which played an important role in Thai history in the Second World War.

The Siamese leadership: 1940-present

At the Siam Society, this was a time of historic change. Since its inception in 1904 until 1940, seven men of European nationalities had been elected President of the Council of the Siam Society. Many of them had worked in positions in the service of the Siamese Government, and were respected for their knowledge and publications on specific aspects of Siam. In 1940, H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, was elected President. After that, twelve Thais were subsequently elected to the Presidency of the Society. Prince Dhani who served as President during the difficult years from 1940-1944, and again from 1947-1965, declining serving after 1965 because of his advanced age. H.R.H. Prince Wan Waithayakorn, who was President from 1944-1947, was again elected President from 1969-1976. Since then until today, the Presidency of the Society has continued to be held by Thai nationals.

The Society during and after the Second World War

The Siam Society was faced with a number of setbacks during the Second World War years. All funds of the Society deposited in the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Corporation were frozen, and membership fell. Furthermore, lectures and meetings were cancelled because of unprecedented floods in 1942 which affected the livelihood, transportation, and many historical places popular for excursions among members.

During this time the Society mourned the death of many distinguished members and the Royal Patron, King Prajadhipok, died in England in 1941 after his abdication; Dr. George McFarland, a former Vice- President, was restricted to his home as an enemy alien during the war, and died in 1942; Prince Paribatra of Nakon Sawan, a dedicated Member, died in exile in Java in 1943; Prince Damrong a long-time supporter and patron, died in the same year; H.H. Prince Bidyalankarana, a Vice-President and a distinguished writer, also passed away.

At the General Meeting of the Society on 28 February 1943, the President, H.H. Prince Dhani, informed the meeting "The Society had been facing a very difficult year in various aspects for unavoidable reasons, but managed to survive...". It was also on the record that "Japanese members continued to buy the Society's publications and the Journal which helped save the financial situation. However, shortage of paper and the closure of the printing house affected the publication plan temporarily. In that year, the Council had 11 meetings mostly at the President's house on Petchburi Road. The Natural History Section, previously the most active section, held only one meeting that year.

In 1944, it was recorded that "the Council met 12 times at the Siam Society in spite of frequent air raids. No meeting was held of the Natural History Section. The research activities of the Society continued quietly led by H.H. Prince Prem Purachatra and the Journals of the Siam Society were produced though publication costs increased 100%".

3.4.3.6. The Society and the contemporary world

After the Second World War, the Siam Society saw its membership rise steadily with the participation of a new generation of scholars from many countries, especially Denmark, the United

States and Australia, many of whom specialized in Asian studies, including Alexander B. Griswold and William Klausner. The younger Thai scholars such as Prince Prem Purachatra, Prince Subhadradis Diskul and Dr. Prasert Na Nagara also joined the Society and were soon elected to the Council, contributing substantively to the activities of the Society.

The Society enjoyed the support of King Bhumibol who succeeded his brother King Ananda to the throne in 1947. Accompanied by Queen Sirikit, the King attended the Society's Golden Jubilee Gala banquet in 1954 and expressed appreciation for the Society's work in making knowledge the means of disseminating friendship among mankind. He also presented a donation to the Siam Society Research Center and was joined by the Princess Mother and Prince Dhani who added to the contribution. Princess Galayani Vadhana, the King's elder sister, accepted the invitation to be Honorary President of the Society and played an active role in many of the Society's projects including the International Symposium on "Culture and Environment in Thailand: Dynamics of a Complex Relationship", held in Bangkok and Chiang Mai in 1992. The Crown Prince and Princess Sirindhorn showed their support and accepted invitations to attend some of the Society's special events.

One of the most exciting projects during this period was funded by the Society's Research Center to undertake a Thai- Danish Expedition to Kanchanaburi's prehistoric site at Ban Kao. The expedition was inspired by a paper, written in 1948 by Van Heekeren, a Dutch prehistorian who was a prisoner-of-war working on the Burma-Thailand Railway along the River Kwae from 1943-44, based on his discoveries of burial sites with stone tools and bracelets, and the display of his specimens at the Peabody Museum at Harvard University. H.E. Mr. Munck, Danish Ambassador to Thailand, was instrumental in raising funds to support a group of paleontologists and prehistorians from Copenhagen, led by Dr. Eigil Nielson, and three Thai archaeologists, together with some students, led by Chin You-di, a prehistoric archaeologist at the Archaeological Division, Fine Arts Department of Bangkok. Van Heekeren was also invited to join the group. This expedition was followed by a larger expedition and extensive excavations by Nielson, Heekeren and Chin You-di in 1961-62, after which Nielson reported that Ban Kao was the richest neolithic site in Southeast Asia and suggested links with the Lungshan culture in North China. This report inspired more international prehistoric scholars to come to Thailand, such as Wilhelm G. Solheim from the University of Hawaii, and Chester Gorman who researched other prehistoric sites at the Spirit Cave, Non Nok Tha and Ban Chiang in north and northeast Thailand. Among the Thais, Princess Panthip Chumpot of Nagara Svarga and Pisit Charoenwongsa emerged as distinguished supporters and experts in prehistoric archaeology.

3.4.3. 9. Conclusion

Throughout the century of its history and development, the Siam Society Under Royal Patronage, as testified by the 16-volumes of minutes of Council meetings, held regular meetings and conducted continuous important scholarly activities of international significance in accordance with its declared objective, even during some nationally and globally turbulent years.

Though many new faces appeared and disappeared over the years at the Council and the General Meetings, the Society can be said to have continued to enjoy the leadership of distinguished personalities of different nationalities, and the dedicated participation of many generations of scholars in various fields, as well as the friendly associations and exchanges with many academic

associations, universities, and other interested organizations both in Thailand and abroad. The Society has also received generous support, both in cash and in kind, from many individuals and organizations, both Thai and foreign.

The Society's motto, "Knowledge gives rise to Friendship", a fore-runner of the current concept of many regional and global organizations, sums up the idealism with which members joined their efforts in launching various projects in the past as well as in the present. This idealism is reflected in the records of their transactions, meeting after meeting, year after year in the past century. The minutes show that, over 100 years and more, the knowledge promoted and generated by the Society has expanded to cover diverse fields of interests, such as language and literature, law, history and archaeology, cultural expressions of ethnic groups including textiles, music, beliefs and indigenous knowledge, natural science and medicine, conservation and tourism. The friendship, through the Society's networks under its various sections, has also grown in quantity and quality, as well as in diversity, in terms of nationality, age groups, and fields of interest.

4 Legal information

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Name: The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage
Address: 131 Asoke Montri Road, Sukhumvit 21, Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Telephone: +662-661-6470-7
Facsimile: +662-258-3491
Email: info@siam-society.org
Website: www.siam-society.org

4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

4.3 Legal Status

The Siam Society legally owns the documentary heritage.

Details of legal and administrative powers for the preservation of the documentary heritage
The Siam Society, together with the National Committee for the Memory of the World, Thailand; and the National Archives, Ministry of Culture, will undertake scientific and technical preservation procedure of the documentary heritage, as planned.

4.4 Accessibility

The documentary heritage is accessible upon request.

Describe how the item(s) / collection may be accessed

In the future, digital versions will be made for documentary heritage and can be accessed by internet

All access restrictions should be explicitly stated below:

None

4.5 Copyright status

The Siam Society has the copyright of the documentary heritage.

Describe the copyright status of the item(s) / collection

5 Assessment against the selection criteria

5.1 First criterion: Authenticity

The documentary heritage: the Minute Book of the Siam Society, in 16 volumes, proposed under this nomination, is indeed an authentic set of the original documents, having been written at first in long hand, and later typed, signed by the Honorary Secretary and the President of the Council of the Society, approved at the subsequent next Council meeting. The Minute Books, having been kept by the many generations of Honorary Secretaries of the Society, were moved from one meeting place or office to another, and are now kept in the Reference Section of the Society's library, within the Siam Society's complex, Asoke Montri Road , Sukhumvit 21, Bangkok.

The documents testify to the active participation, over a very long time, in a great number of activities of a national, regional and international nature, by distinguished personalities of various nationalities. During the time covered by the Minutes, many turbulent chains of events and unprecedented developments took place and spread across the different regions of the world. The documents, kept and preserved in the original form, have been used as primary sources of reference for many researchers of many nationalities and for many studies in various disciplines. The validity and great detail of the contents can be cross-checked with the relevant issues of the Journal of the Society, historical, cultural and scientific publications about Siam in the past century, and newspapers, including English language newspapers printed in Bangkok at that time.

5.2 Second criterion: World Significance

5.2.1. Unique and irreplaceable: The Minute Books of the Council of the Siam Society are indeed a documentary heritage of world significance which is unique and irreplaceable, being the original hand-written records with signatures of the Secretary and the President at the time of each meeting, and which were later typed and approved at the subsequent meetings.

The documents are also unique and irreplaceable in the sense that they testify to the continuous transactions and cooperation, of an international and intellectual nature, among the many generations of people, elected to carry out the work of the Siam Society, over the long and eventful century.

The Minutes are a unique and irreplaceable set of documents because:

- (a) they reflect the meeting of minds of exceptional quality, and diversity, the minds of men from various nationalities who came to reside in Bangkok at various stages of the Society's development;
- (b) they show a very broad scope of interest, and very exceptional quality of scholarship in various disciplines, of the scholars and important personalities who were involved in the

work of the Society, both foreign and Thai, even though they had different professional backgrounds, some from an academic background, some religious, and some political;

(c) they are the testimony to the cooperation among people of different nationalities and of different cultural backgrounds but residing in Thailand at the time, who could form and continue a society as a vehicle of cooperating in the exchange of knowledge among like-minded people in the country and abroad;

(d) they show how and to what extent Thai intellectuals were involved in the formation, development and in the leadership of the Society, and how mutual respect and common courtesy were shown among the members of various nationalities in the conduct of the Society's activities;

(e) they reflect how the products or the outcome of the Society's cooperation and exchange led to the Society's having been recognized worldwide by scholars and academic organizations and institutions;

(f) they recorded the names of international scholars, scientists and dignitaries from many parts of the world who visited the Society and the topic of their presentations as well as the date and place where they shared their knowledge with members and guests of the Society in Siam.

5.2.2. The Impact:

a) Impact through viability

The minutes of the meetings of the Council and the General Assembly, over the span of 100 years and more, testify to the viability of the Society whose objectives, as set out by the founders, have been kept alive throughout the long and changing times, and carried over the years by successive generations of the Council Members of the Society.

b) The academic impacts

The quality of the work of the Council of the Society in the past can be appreciated through the academic and scientific papers presented at public gatherings, and printed in the Journal of the Society as well as in book form. These publications which first came out in 1905 have been exchanged with journals of institutions and universities around the world, and subscribed to by individuals of various nationalities. The impacts of the work of the Society can also be discerned in the ways the Society's activities continue to inspire later generations of members to revisit some of the intellectual and academic issues discussed in the past, and to further pursue the projects and activities of the Society to suit changing or new interests.

c) The impact of significance of issues debated in the past and revisited in recent times. An example can be cited on the issue of the transliteration of the Siamese language using roman letters, an issue of great significance to Siamese intellectual and literary leaders at the time when language was also beginning to be recognized as part of national identity. This was also a question of great interest to some of the Siam Society's Members at the time, given the fact that Siamese did not have a standard system of romanization.

The minutes of the Council Meeting held at the Bangkok United Club on 7 January 1913, written in long-hand in ink on paper which appears on pages 70-71 of Siam Society Minute Book No.1, read as follows:

The Meeting presided by Dr. Frankfurter, with R. Beckett, R. Belhomme, J. Crosby, Dr. K. Dohring, A. J. Irwin, T. Petithuguenin, C. Sandrsezki, W. Maudie in attendance. The meeting was called to criticize His Majesty's paper [by King Vajiravudh] on the reorganization of Siamese, copies of which had been sent to members.

The President said His Majesty's suggestions involve a system, and the Siam Society must discuss and criticize it at a general meeting.

Mr. Beckett proposed that these suggestions be taken one by one. After further discussion, Mr. Beckett moved that a sub-committee consisting of Dr. Frankfurter, Mr. Petithuguenin and Mr. Crosby be appointed in order to bring the various proposals that had been laid before the Society into definite and proper shape and to lay the results of their deliberations before a further meeting of the Council. He added "We have to evolve a system to be known as the Siam Society System". Mr. Irwin seconded and the proposal was adopted.

It was agreed to publish His Majesty's paper as soon as possible.

A remark should be made concerning the transliteration or romanization of Thai words. To this day, the issue remains a subject of much discussion among international linguists, and the topic has been revisited many times in academic papers by both Thai and foreign experts. (see for example, A. B. Griswold, "Afterthought on the Romanization of Siamese", 1960; and Kanchanawan N. , "How to write Thai with Roman Letters?", Matichon Weekly, 1999). In fact, King Vajiravudh's system of transliteration is probably preferred by those with a knowledge of Sanskrit and scholars of etymology, while the system similar to the proposal of the Siam Society is used by those who want to see Thai words simplified when written in Roman letters so that they sound as closely as possible to how the words are pronounced in Thai. This question also has a particular relevancy in the present age of digitization and internet communication where writing in many complex languages is faced with the risk of oversimplification, and further research and debate on this question should be more widely encouraged in the future.

5.3. World significance in terms of time (evocative, critical, with significant social or cultural change, representing a new discovery or a new first of its kind)

The century covered in the Minute Books was unprecedented in terms of social, political and economic transformation and change in most regions of the world. It was also a century of the expansion of knowledge and international cooperation, especially in research and dissemination of research findings in various fields. Though it was probably fashionable at the time to form a society of a similar nature in many parts of the world, the way the Siam Society was formulated in Bangkok in 1904, the foreign and Siamese actors involved in its formation, and the way it was carried on in against all odds during a century of tumultuous change and continuous development, make it an instrument of "new discovery" in the world.

Furthermore, the Minute Books reflect the work done over the years by many successive generations of Council and ordinary members, in compliance with the basic rules laid out and the objectives set out by the founders of the Society.

Though the Council Members in the early years were mostly foreigners, yet the unique role of Thai intellectuals, together with the long and continuous support of the Royal Patrons in many different ways as reflected in the contents of the 16 volumes of the Minute Books of the Council of the Siam

Society, make the century of international cooperation and exchange more viable and fruitful. The Society's ability to continue its work in spite of the political changes and fluctuations in membership at different periods, as reflected in the Minute Books of the Siam Society, is evocative and represents a contribution "unique among its kind" in the world.

To provide tangible evidence to support the world significance in terms of time, the century covered in the Siam Society's Council Minute Books should be broken down into significant periods as follows:

The year when the Siam Society was formed, 1904, was also the year when the "Entente Cordiale " was finally reached between France and Britain that seemed to secure a peaceful period and sharing of power while boosting their expansionist policies in Asia and some other regions.

The period between 1904 to the 1930s should be noted for many national, regional and global changes, especially a) a change of power structures in the world, b) the threat of expansionism and colonialism from major Western powers in Southeast Asia, c) Siam's attempts at self-reform and modernization to maintain its identity and sovereignty in the face of real threats from colonialism, d) the First World War and its economic and political aftermath, e) global recession and significant overall developments and changes in Thailand, in Southeast Asia and as well as in the world.

The pre-and post-First World War period was a difficult and eventful time. In spite of many great changes, the Siam Society, as an international, private and nonprofit organization, struggled to survive but was able to remain vital and productive. This period can be divided into

a.i) 1904-1917: The Society's formative years:

This period must be viewed against the backdrop of events, both in the world and in Siam. Siam was an absolute monarchy ruled by King Chulalongkorn, the longest reigning and a most popular king of the time. His administration showed many signs of commitment to progressive reform and modernization. The King, together with his half-brother, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, both fluent in English because of the educational policy of their father, King Mongkut, were known to follow closely the news of developments in the world. Wanting to observe and benefit from the modern scientific and technological advancement of the West, the King traveled abroad a few times and employed a great number of foreign experts to advise his ministers.

The Siam Society was founded six years before the end of the reign of King Chulalongkorn and the first ten years of the Society's existence seemed to be the time of exciting developments in having a multi national Society to be a vehicle for research, exchange of knowledge and cooperation. Foreign residents of diverse nationalities, and the presence of one Thai noble and scholar gathered together and formed themselves into "The Siam Society". The foreign founders of the Society were either those engaged, or formerly engaged by the King; others were those working with foreign embassies and other missions.

Once formed, the Council of the Siam Society held frequent meetings, though the venue for the meeting changed constantly for lack of a permanent home. The members seemed, perhaps for different reasons, to have a genuine interest in seeking and exchanging information and knowledge about the arts and culture of Siam and neighboring countries, the history of places and the

economies of the people, especially outside Bangkok; the concern about medicine and healthcare problems was also a serious one. These common interests led to the encouragement of scientific and cultural of papers readings by members both foreign and Thai, and the publication of those papers in the Society's Journal, later known as the JSS.

The Journal of the Siam Society proved to be an important and long-lasting legacy of the founders. The first issue came out in August 1905. At this time, Corresponding Members from some universities abroad were recommended by some members and accepted at the General Meetings. The minutes in this period also show that the Society had some friendly academic exchanges with other scientific and cultural organizations and publications, such as The Asiatic Quarterly Review, and the Natural History Society.

In 1907, the Minutes show that there were no Siamese members of the Society. In that year, King Chulalongkorn, long suffering from poor health, went to Europe after having appointed the Crown Prince to be Regent in his absence. He arrived in Italy in May, 1907 and was met by Col. Gerini, an Italian, previously engaged in the Military Section of the Siamese Government, also a founding member of the Siam Society and contributor of some important papers on the history and traditions of Siam.

On 24 October 1910, King Chulalongkorn died. He was succeeded by his son, the Crown Prince Vajiravudh, educated in his youth in England and having represented his father at various important functions in Europe.

Since the founding of the Society, King Vajiravudh, when Crown Prince, had been invited to be its First Patron. He took a serious interest in the academic exchanges through the publication of papers in the Journal, and, being an accomplished writer, contributed papers to it. In 1913, he sent his paper on the transliteration of the Siamese language and invited the Council to criticize it.

The new King decreed many changes along the line with his father's reform agenda, but added new interests. He established many new institutions including the Royal Page Corps which later became the all-boy Vajiravudh College. The Chulalongkorn Academy of Civil Servants was transformed into Chulalongkorn University, the Boy Scouts and the Wild Tiger Corps were founded to train for national unity and defence.

a. ii) 1917-1918: Siam and the First World War

The minutes show that there was no meeting of the Siam Society Council for many months from the later part of 1914 until June 1915 when the Council met to approve the list of papers to be presented and included in the next volume of the Journal.

The years of the First World War (1914-1918) did not seem to have a great impact on Siam in general, or the Siam Society in particular, until July 1917, when King Vajiravudh declared war, siding with the Allied Powers.

German nationals working and living in Bangkok including some members of the Siam Society had to leave Siam, including, in particular, Dr. Oscar Frankfurter, a founding member who had worked for the Society in various positions, and was elected President in 1907.

After the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, the Society's Council, comprising members of diverse nationalities, had met less often and attendance was low. After the declaration of war by King Vajiravudh, some members of the Council moved to initiate adjustments. The Minutes (on page 90 of Book 1) of the 59th Council Meeting held at the Bangkok Times Office on 4 October 1917, chaired by one member Mr. H Campbell Highet, read

"Re: question of the Enemy membership, raised by Mr. Petithuguenin, Dr Highet proposed and Mr. Gile seconded:-

That the Siam Society remain dormant during the duration of the war and no steps of any sort be taken at present, and no subscriptions be collected and the balance in the Society's favor at the bank be allowed to remain at interest" (carried)

Proposed by Mr. Belhomme, seconded by Mr. Irwin "that the said Bank balance be kept on fixed deposit at six months' notice". (carried)

Two months later, the Council met again on 14 December 1917 when it was proposed and accepted that Mr. Highet act as President interim and the General Meeting be held on 15 January. Mr. Petithuguenin's resignation was presented and accepted and a new member was elected, Major Eric Seidenfaden.

The Minutes of the General Committee, held on 15 January 1918 (as seen on pages 92, 93,94 and 95 of Book1) show that business was conducted as usual: the report of the Council was submitted; the Statement of Accounts as of December 1917 was read and adopted; nominations for the office of the President were requested, then a ballot was taken for the offices of the Vice-Presidents, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, and members of the Council.

It should be noted that at this Meeting, the first woman member was elected: Miss Edna Cole to the Council.

In March 1918, the Council met at the Bangkok Times Office to elect members and decided to have the two complete sets of the Journal bound for the use of the Library. The Council also conveyed its thanks to Prince Damrong for his kind offer to show the members of the Society the Royal Library.

On 12 November 1918, the news of the signing of the Armistice was received and King Vajiravudh, happy to have been on the winning side, declared Monday 2 December as a National Holiday in Siam.

a. iii) 1919-1932: the return of strength to the Siam Society

Though King Vajiravudh brought Siam into the First World War very late, he sent some Siamese troops to Europe who joined a public Victory Parade as the only troops from Southeast Asia in the European military theatre. This enhanced the sense of nation and nationalism at home, especially among the Siamese elites. Siding with the winning side also earned Siam a place at the Versailles Peace Conference and in subsequent, though prolonged, renegotiations of some unequal treaties between Siam and some Western powers, the results of which were finally agreed by France and Britain in 1925-1926.

After the war, the great depression hit Europe. Thailand suffered from a bad drought as well as a financial crisis, resulting in the King having to make some adjustments in his governmental bureaucracy and in delaying certain projects, amidst growing political concerns.

In the Siam Society, 1919 saw signs of slow recovery from the previous dormant years, with more members elected and four meetings of the Council convened, again at the Bangkok Times Office. The Council approved the list and the selling price of the papers of the sub-committee on the Journal agreed on a trip to Lopburi in March; and the election of new members. It was also agreed to temporarily house the library at the Bangkok Times Office.

Personalities in the Council changed over the years. News was received of the death and funerals of some founding members, such as Dr. Tokichi Masao, an advisor engaged by King Chulalongkorn to help at the Ministry of Justice, also a member of the first Council of the Siam Society, and Japanese Ambassador in the reign of King Vajiravudh. The King graciously lit his funeral pyre at Wat Saket on 24 August 1921.

The ethnography sub-committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Coedès, a French scholar of Southeast Asia became more active and was sent a questionnaire concerning ethnographic information to Siamese offices and personalities, with a letter to inform the King about the project.

In the 1920s, the Siam Society seemed to gain more momentum with the Council holding nine meetings in 1920 and the ordinary membership increased to 187, of which about 120 had been elected during 1921. More Siamese began to take interest in the Society with Siamese members reaching thirteen.

In 1921, the Society seemed to have revived, with more members, and with five Study Sections established: 1. Technology and Fine Art; 2. Sociology; 3. Physical Anthropology and Archaeology; 4. History, Literature and Comparative Philology; and 5. Agriculture, Transport and Travel.

The Society, still unable to find a permanent home, rented the first floor of the Falk & Beidek Building to be used as the library and a conference room. The library, though moved from place to place in the course of time, turned out to be a tangible legacy of the Society's original objective. The Society, however, had to move again in 1924 and rented the Poh Yome House, owned by the Bombay Burma Trading Company, on Sathorn Road,

In 1922, membership of the Society exceeded 100, and a relatively large income was made from the sale of the Journal. At the end of 1922, total membership was 228, and more academic papers were read by members and published in the Journal. In view of his valuable contributions to the Journal, Professor Coedès was appointed its Editor.

On 2 July 1923, after almost two decades of the Society's life, the Council met for its 100th Meeting. In that year, the Siam Philatelic Society requested to become a section of the Siam Society and H.R.H. the Prince of Nakorn Sawan accepted the invitation to become an Honorary President of the Society. An additional 13 members were elected in 1924.

The year saw, among its notable activities, (a) the amalgamation of the Natural History Society

with the Siam Society, (b) as many as 11 Council Meetings with the average attendance of 8-9 members, and (c) a guided excursion organized by the Travel and Transport Section to Ayutthaya with 73 people participating.

Mr. B.O. Cartwright presented an interesting paper on "The Huay Lottery", a local gambling syndicate which was popular in Siam then, and even now.

In 1925, Prince Damrong, an important Minister in King Chulalongkorn's reign and Vice Patron of the Society since its inception, honored the Society by giving a lecture on 28 July, on "Angkor from the Siamese Points of View". He earlier received the Society's Council and general members at his palace on his 60th birthday.

This period, though not an active one in many ways, saw the Society growing on a firmer foundation.

The end of 1925 marks an important turning point in the history of Siam. The untimely death, on 26 November 1925, at the age of 44, of King Vajiravudh, First Patron of the Society and an enthusiastic contributor to JSS, prompted the General Meeting of the Society to convene a special meeting in the evening of 4 December 1925 to propose and adopt four resolutions of condolence on the occasion of King Vajiravudh's death, and to congratulate the new King.

The late King's youngest brother, the 32-year old Prince Prajadhipok succeeded, quite unexpectedly, to the throne. Educated at Eton College and graduated from Woolwich Military Academy in England in 1913, the new King, though trained in military science, showed an immense interest in the scholarly exchanges of the Siam Society, attending a number of lectures and donating to the funds raised by the Society. His reign however came at a very unfortunate time, with the Great Depression deepening in Europe and other parts of the world, and the economic and political crises worsening in Thailand. His reign also came at the time of political movements and the mobilization of public opinion via the popular press. There were seven Siamese, three English, three Chinese daily newspapers in Bangkok in 1925 which were increasingly forceful. The situation finally led to the coup d'état in 1932.

At the Siam Society, Professor G. Coedès, a French specialist in Southeast Asian archaeology and history, had been elected President since 1926, replacing Mr. W. A. Graham. Professor Coedès had previously served in many other capacities. As President, he presented several important papers on the archaeology of Thailand, including a report presented in the audience of King Prajadhipok and the Queen, on the excavations at Pong Tuk in Rathburi Province conducted by The Royal Institute where ancient skeletons, silver and gold Buddhas were found. Four years later, he resigned when he was appointed Director of Ecole Française d' Extrême Orient in France, in 1929. In view of his great contributions in the past, he was elected an Honorary Member of the Siam Society at the Annual General Meeting on 19 February 1930. Francis Giles, who held a Thai title of Phya Indra Montri, was then elected President.

The Annual Report for 1925 stated that H.M. King Prajadhipok graciously accepted to extend his Royal Patronage to the Siam Society and presented his portrait to be hung in the Council Room.

At this stage, members of the Siamese Royalty apparently became more engaged in the Society's activities. In 1926, at the 126th Meeting of the Council, held on 22 January, the meeting was informed by the President, Mr. Graham that "he had asked H.R.H. Prince Narisra to provide the Society with a design for an emblem". Narisra Nuvativongse was a very senior prince, being a son of King Mongkut and younger brother of King Chulalongkorn, and a grand guru in the art and culture of Siam. At the 130th Meeting, the President informed the Council that several designs were made by the Prince and the Council selected the one with the representation of Ganesh (an elephant head) with a flower garland held in its trunk. To enhance the value of the Society's objective, it was decided that an appropriate motto be inscribed in Siamese on the emblem but the motto would need to be submitted for approval by the Council.

The appropriate motto turned out to be the one composed in Thai by H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, meaning "Knowledge gives rise to Friendship". It was duly accepted and inscribed on the emblem which is still used today.

The report of 1926 states that H.M. King Prajadhipok had presented "copies of 120 works from the pen of King Rama VI (Vajiravudh) and a handsome writing table and a bookcase designed to contain the Tripitaka when published as a memorial to the sixth King." In that year, Prince Dhani Nivat was elected to the Council of the Siam Society. His involvement with the Siam Society in the years to come proved to be a long and very fruitful one.

The year 1927 saw many activities of the Natural History Section which held three meetings, and at one of the meetings, a paper on "The Microscopic Inhabitants of the Canals in Bangkok" was read. At another general meeting held at the Royal Institute with the King and the Queen in attendance, several short papers were read and the King joined in the discussions afterwards. An excursion to Prabod (the Buddha 's Footprints at Saraburi Province) was also organized with the support of the Royal State Railways in March of that year.

The year 1927 seemed to be very successful for the Society as membership rose to 253, and the Council held as many as 13 meetings. Notably, the limited Siamese presence, lamented during the earlier years, changed significantly.

At the Siam Society, the Natural History Section continued to be active for many years, A Danish exploration ship visited Siam in April 1929, and the leader of the expedition, Dr. Johannes Shmidt, gave a fascinating lecture on "The Migration of the Eel", with illustrations. In May of the same year, a total eclipse of the sun was watched by the members of the Natural History Section and was joined by the British Eclipse Expedition members. The leader of the Expedition, Professor Col. J.M.F. Stratton, lectured on "The Sun" before the General Meeting of the Society and in the presence of HM the King and Queen as well as several members of the Royal Family.

In 1931, the Siam Society was invited to send a representative to the 18th Congress International des Orientalists, in Leyden, and Mr. Homan van der Heide, resident in Holland with long-standing associations with the Siam Society, agreed to attend on the Society's behalf.

The 25th anniversary of the Society, in 1929, marked the beginning of a series of events of significance. First, the membership agreed to build a permanent home as a celebration. Funds

were raised with generous contributions from royalty including the King, Patron of the Society. In 1931, Mr. A.E. Nana, a Thai businessman of Indian descent, donated three rai of land on what is now Soi Aske, the present site of the Society. The new building costing Baht 31,000, was completed in 1933; the inaugural ceremony was scheduled for 28 February 1933.

The timing was not convenient for the King, who was invited to preside over the Inauguration. Ill, and resting at the Hua Hin Palace three months after having granted the Constitution to the people, the King was unable to attend, but later sent, "in sympathy with the noble aim and achievements of this institution", a letter of goodwill which was read to the 215th Meeting of the Council of the Siam Society, on 15 March 1933, and was subsequently sent to all members as well as to the press. The letter reads as follows:

"Let not my absence mark the interest of the occasion. Although not with you in person, I know that goodwill like mine pervades the whole assembly, and the Queen joins me in sending our best wishes... I do hereby solemnly declare this building open as the new home of the Siam Society...".

History records that on 24 June 1932, Siam changed from being absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. Indeed changes had swept across Europe in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, particularly with the collapse of the last monarch of the Russian Empire in 1917, followed by the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the autumn of 1918. King Vajiravudh, and later his successor, King Prajadhipok who had been a member of the Privy Council in his brother's reign, both recognized the pressure for constitutional reform. King Prajadhipok in particular had studied on the constitutional change best suited to Thailand, wrote a paper on "Democracy in Siam" for the deliberations of the Advisory Council, and together with his Siamese and foreign advisors, had prepared a draft constitution. However, the King failed to gain the support of the Supreme Council of State for his draft constitution, and eleven weeks later a coup d'etat occurred and took control of the capital.

The coup d'etat had in fact been planned in France since 1927, when a group of young civilians and military officers studying there had met and planned to seize power to end the absolute monarchy. Upon their return to Bangkok, they rallied a small group of supporters among the senior military commanders, and calling themselves the People's Party, carried out the plan very quietly and abruptly in the early morning of 24 June 1932. The first constitution was officially promulgated on 10 December by the King who had publicly acknowledged the change following the coup d'etat, and had declared that "for the sake of peace and in order to save useless bloodshed; to avoid confusion and loss to the country; and, more because I have already considered the change myself, I am willing to cooperate in the establishment of a constitution under which I am willing to serve".

But the general political situation in Siam since then has been far from calm.

b) The period between 1932 and 1957

The period before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 was a turbulent time in many parts of the world.

In Asia, Japan seized Manchuria in 1931, later invaded China and captured Beijing in 1937. In Europe, in 1933, Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany.

In 1934, as relations with the new Siamese government became more strained, King Prajadhipok went abroad for medical treatment. From England, he continued to carry on a correspondence with the government on how, in his view, the service of the King under the constitution could be most appropriately carried out.

The King abdicated on 2 March 1935, issuing a brief public statement:

“I am willing to surrender the powers I formerly exercised to the people as a whole, but I am not willing to turn them over to any individual or any group to use in an autocratic manner without heeding the voice of the people...”

The Siamese National Assembly, on accepting his abdication, agreed to invite Prince Ananda, the ten-year-old son of the late Prince Mahidol, a son of King Chulalongkorn and Queen Sawang Watana, to ascend the throne. The young King was still a schoolboy in Switzerland and was under the care of his mother, Mom Sangwan Mahidol. Amid a wave of international and regional political turmoil after the Second World War, King Ananda's untimely death in 1946 brought further confusion and chaos within the country. His younger brother, Prince Bhumibol, born in the United States where his parents were both completing their education, was invited to ascend the throne, but he went back to continue his studies in Switzerland, leaving the duties of the constitutional monarchy to the Regent. At home rivalries among various political groups continued, resulting in many coups, cabinet and ministerial changes, and military regimes.

Place: Does it contain crucial information about a locality important in the history of the region and its cultures? Or did the location have an important influence on the events or phenomena represented by the documentary heritage? Or is it descriptive of physical environments, cities or institutions since vanished?

Though the "place" where the Meetings actually took place was Bangkok, Thailand, the activities of the Society, particularly the cooperation between and exchanges with individuals and organizations sharing the same interests as recorded in the Minutes, extend, to a very great extent, to Southeast Asia and other parts of the world. Moreover, many of the events that took place in Bangkok during the period covered were very much related to the events of historic significance of the world.

People: Is it related to people in a social and cultural context that reflects significant aspects of human behaviors, or social, industrial, artistic or political development. It may reflect the important roles and impact of key or certain individuals or groups.

The people who played important roles, as were significantly reflected in the Minute Books, were indeed people of various nationalities who came to live and work in Siam during the period covered in the documents. Their behavior must have been influenced by their professional backgrounds, and their social, political and cultural interests, as well as their national affiliation or allegiance. Below is some relevant information about some of the personalities who played significant role in the Society as recorded in the Minutes.

Founders:

Mr. Hamilton King, Dr. O Frankfurter, A. d' Abaza, W.R.D. Beckett, Dr. H. Cambell Highet, Dr. T. Masao, Dr. G.B. McFarland, Rev. Canon Highet, Col. G. E. Gerini, H.E. Mr. Inagaki, Phya

Prachakitkorachak, A. Cecil Carter, F.H. Giles, J. Homan Van der Heide, L. Petithuemin, Major Erik Seidenfaden

Thai intellectuals/ foreign intellectuals such as:

King Vajiravudh, Prince Damrong, Prof. Georges Coedès, Prince Dhani Nivat, Prince Wan Waithayakon, Prince Prem Purachatrakon, Prince Subhadradis Diskul, Phya Anuman Rajadhon, Mr. Sulak Sivalak, Prof. Dr. Piriya Krairiksh, Prof. Michael Smithies, Dr. Christopher Baker, Prof. Dr. Sumet Jumsai, Dr. Tej Bunnag, Prof. Dr. Prasert na Nakorn, Dr. Puey Ungpakorn, Mr. Kraisi Nimanhaemindra, Prof. Dr. William Klausner, Prof. Dr. Pierre Pichard, Dr. Hans Penth, H.E. Mr. Anand Panyarachun, Prof. Prawase Wasi, Phra Dhammapitaka, Dr. Chetana Nagavajara, Dr. Peter Skilling etc.

Note: Details about these intellectuals and Founders can be obtained through any search engine such as:

- Major Erik Seidenfaden (1881–1958) was a Danish ethnologist and anthropologist who researched and authored books, on the history, culture and languages of the Thai peoples. As an expatriate major serving in the Siamese military, Seidenfaden lived in Thailand from 1906 to 1947. He served as part of the Provincial Gendarmerie where his role was to assist with the modernization of the Siamese military. He played an active role in the Siam Society. Seidenfaden was born in 1881 in Denmark.^[1] In 1906 he moved to Thailand (at the time known as Siam) to serve as a Major in the The Royal Siamese Gendarmerie, the provincial military police force. His role was to assist with the modernization of the Siamese military. In 1927 Seidenfaden wrote a Guide to Bangkok for the Royal State Railway Department.

Seidenfaden was a Past President and Honorary Member of the Siam Society and he wrote a large number of articles, papers and reviews for the Society's Journal. In 1937, he organized an exhibition of ethnic dress in the lecture hall of the Siam Society. The exhibition sought to include all the traditional, national costumes of the many branches of the Thai people which Seidenfaden noticed were fast disappearing often to be replaced by more modern fashions.

Despite having no formal scholarly training he was an "enthusiastic amateur ethnographer" and a pioneer of Thai Studies which saw him examine and document national and regional ethnicity as well as work to preserve these disappearing cultures. He saw material objects as a primary cause for the loss of ethnic diversity and in his writing discussed the negative and "corrupting" affects of objects such as radios, movies, cinematograph, gramophones, and trucks. In particular, he blamed radio for the vanishing of age-old dialects, manners and cultural traditions.

In 1939, he was the first person to study the Lao Ti people, an ethnic group in Ratchaburi Province.

- Georges Coedès (10 August 1886 – 2 October 1969) was a 20th century scholar of southeast Asian archaeology and history. Coedès was born in Paris to a family of supposed Hungarian-Jewish emigres. In fact, the family was known as having settled in the region of Strasbourg (France) before 1740. His ancestors were working for the royal Treasury. His grandfather, Louis Eugène Coedès was a painter, pupil of Léon Coignet. His father Hyppolite worked as a banker.

Coedès became director of the National Library of Thailand in 1918, and in 1929 became director of L'École française d'Extrême-Orient, where he remained until 1946. Thereafter he lived in Paris until he died in 1969. He wrote two seminal texts in the field, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (1968, 1975) and *The Making of South East Asia* (1966), as well as innumerable articles, in which he developed the concept of the Indianized kingdom. However, the modern consensus is that the Indianization was less complete than Coedès had believed, with many indigenous practices surviving underneath the Indian surface.

Georges Coedès is credited with rediscovering the former kingdom of Srivijaya, centred around the modern-day Indonesian city of Palembang, but with influence extending from Sumatra through to the Malay Peninsula and Java. Some Indonesians, including those of the Palembang area, had not heard of Srivijaya until the 1920s, when Coedès published his discoveries and interpretations in Dutch and Indonesian-language newspapers., however amongst the educated elite and nobility the history of successive kingdoms and their fates and royal lineage were well known

- Wan Waithayakon (full title: His Royal Highness Prince Vanna Vaidhayakara, the Prince Naradhip Bhongseprabhan), known in the West as Wan Waithayakon (1891-1976), was a Thai diplomat. He was elected President of the Eleventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly, while serving as Thailand's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. He was a grandson of King Mongkut.

He is a graduate of Oxford University and the Paris Institute of Political Studies (best known as Sciences Po), and began his vocational career as a foreign service officer in 1917. He was appointed advisor to King Rama VI in 1922. In 1924, he was promoted to the rank of Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and was responsible for negotiating several important amendments to political and commercial treaties with Western powers.

He was sent to Europe again in 1926 as Minister accredited to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Belgium. During that period, he also served as head of the Thai delegation to the League of Nations, where he was active in a number of important commissions as member, vice-president and president. Prince Wan returned to Thailand in 1930, to accept a professorial chair at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University.

For the next 30 years, Prince Wan continued to serve his country in a number of important diplomatic missions, some of the notable milestones being negotiations with Japan in 1943 during World War II, representing Thailand at the Greater East Asia Conference, participation in the SEATO Council and the Bandung Conference, where he was elected Rapporteur, and negotiations leading to Thailand's admission to the United Nations.

In 1947, Prince Wan was appointed Ambassador to the United States and served concurrently as Ambassador to the United Nations. In 1956, he was the president of the Eleventh Session of the United Nations' General Assembly^[2]. He also served as Thailand's foreign minister from 1952 to 1957 and again in 1958^[3]. He is regarded as one of the founding fathers of philology criticism in Thailand.

- Peter Skilling

2009 University Buddhist Education Foundation Visiting Professor

School of Languages and Cultures, University of Sydney

Peter Skilling is a Canadian citizen (born 1949). He has been a resident of Thailand for 30 years. He received a PhD with honours and a Habilitation in Paris (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes). His main field of research is the archaeology, history, and literature of Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia. Other interests include the early history of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Pali literature of Southeast Asia, and the history of the Buddhist order of nuns. He has travelled extensively in South and Southeast Asia, and been a visiting professor at Harvard University (2000), Oxford University (2002), and the University of California at Berkeley (2005). At present he is Maître de Conférences with the École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) and Head of the Buddhist Studies Group of the EFEO. He is also a special lecturer at Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok).

Peter's publications include numerous articles and several books, the most recent being *Mahāsātras: Great Discourses of the Buddha* (2 vols., Oxford, The Pali Text Society, 1994 and 1997) and the edited volume *Wat Si Chum, Sukhothai: Art, Architecture and Inscriptions* (River Books, Bangkok, 2008).

Peter was in residence from the 29th March to the 5th June 2009, during which time he conducted numerous lectures and workshops. Follow this link to a poster detailing Peter's lectures and workshops given during his residency.

Subject and theme: The subject matter may represent particular historical or intellectual developments in natural, social and human sciences, politics, ideology, sports and the arts. Southeast Asian Studies, Prehistoric archaeology, History, Natural Science, Conservation and preservation, Tourism and sustainability

Form and style: The item(s) may have outstanding aesthetic, stylistic or linguistic value, be a typical or key exemplar of a type or presentation, custom or medium, or of a disappeared or disappearing carrier or format.

The Form and style of the Minutes of the Siam Society's Council Meetings of 100 years are indeed the form and style internationally accepted and used during the time those minutes were made. All the essential elements were noted down, such as: the type of meeting, the date, time and venue, the names of the chair, the members present, and the Secretary, the items on the agenda, the proposals made and seconded, the decision and resolutions.

The language used for all meetings recorded in the Minutes is English.

6 Other matters taken into account: rarity, integrity and threat

Rarity: Does the content or physical nature of the documentary heritage make it a rare surviving example of its type or time?

Yes, since on other organizations in Thailand have to same kinds of documentary heritage.

Integrity: Within the natural physical limitations of carrier survival, is the documentary heritage complete or partial? Has it been altered or damaged?

The 16 -volume Minute Books of the Siam Society, as ocumentary heritage submitted under this nomination, is a complete and unaltered heritage. Though damaged by natural elements and time, the Minute Books possess the quality of integrity.

Threat: Is its survival in danger? If it is secure, must vigilance be applied to maintain that security? Detail the nature and scope of threats.

Natural elements as well as the effect of time continue to be a threat to this particular heritage. However, this threat has been minimized by preliminary preservation techniques such as fumigation of all the volumes, the photocopying of damaged pages, and plans to establish a future better management plan as soon as possible.