



พระรูปสมเด็จพระยาดำรงราชานุภาพ

## IN MEMORIAM.

*His Royal Highness Prince Damrong Rajanuphab.*

The Council of the Thailand Research Society has asked me to write an obituary notice on His Royal Highness Prince Damrong, our Society's late Vice Patron. In acceding to this, for me so highly honourable request, I do so with a deep sense of reverence, high admiration and sincere love for the deceased Prince's eminent personality, so much the more as it has been my privilege to serve under the Prince for many years while in the Provincial Gendarmerie. I may therefore lay a claim to have known His late Royal Highness well.

In the person of Prince Damrong, who, surrounded by his children, passed away peacefully on the 1st December this year, the Thailand Research Society has suffered an irreparable loss. From the founding of our Society in 1904, in which he took a warm interest, His Royal Highness has been our Vice Patron until his death. To the Prince, who already from an early age was intensely interested in the history and archaeology, literature, drama and art, not only of his own country, but also of the neighbouring countries, the honorary position of a Vice Patron was no empty title.

From the very beginning of its existence His Royal Highness took on himself the real patronage of the then Siam Society, and followed ever since then its growth and proceedings with a warm and lively sympathy which, time after time, did manifest itself to the advantage of our Society. This marked interest was also shown by the Prince's many valuable contributions to our Journal. Thus already in 1904 he wrote *The Foundation of Ayuthia*, followed with intervals of years by *A Historical Sketch of Lophburi*, *The Story of the Records of Siamese History*, *Siamese History prior to the founding of Ayuthia*, *The Golden Pavilion at Wat Sai*, *Angkor from a Siamese Point of View*, *The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam* and the very instructive and richly illustrated paper on *Wat Benchamabphit and its Collection of Images of Buddha*, which the Prince himself was instrumental in collecting from many corners of his country. Quite recently His Royal Highness wrote for our

Thai number of the Journal the interesting article *On the Origin of the Names of Meklong and Jetavana*, and the charming *Royal Lullabies*.

The Society's thanks are also due to the Prince for having placed at the disposal of our Journal the intensely interesting documents called *The English Correspondence of King Monkut* (edited by Professor G. Coedès). It ought also to be recalled that after Prince Damrong's Europe tour in 1931, during which he visited His Holiness Pope Pius X, it was due to his suggestion that our Society presented the famous Vatican Library with a complete set of our Journals. Besides what has been mentioned above Prince Damrong has written a truly enormous number of treatises, prefaces to books to be distributed at cremations, and books, books, large and small. The Prince was the first real Thai Historian, who went to the sources and understood how to sift critically his material in a true modern spirit. Of paramount value will always be his *History of Siam*. Unfortunately only the first volume has so far appeared, but this will always remain an invaluable guide to future historical research work in Thailand. Next there are his *Buddhist Monuments in Thailand*, his *Textbook on Classical Dancing*, beautifully illustrated, *The Wars between Us and The Burmese*, the histories of the first and the second reign, his *Geography of Siam*; his *Nirat Nakhon Wat* and many, many more, all, without exception, interesting and instructive right down to his small Railway Guides to the more important provincial towns of the Kingdom. The long serial of *Lathi lae Thamniam* and *Prachum Phongsawadan*, the contents of which are of the greatest importance for the study of local history as well as of Thai culture and folklore, are also due to his initiative. The Prince was in possession of a healthy curiosity in all branches pertaining to human achievements which constitutes such a driving force behind all progress. Though at all times very busy the Prince could always find time to receive visitors, especially us of the younger generation, who came to ask his advice on this or that knotty problem in historical, archaeological or literary matters. And he then showed himself as the kindest and most courteous of hosts.

Prince Damrong was over 81 years of age when he passed away. A great age, true, but spiritually he was not old. We, his devoted friends,

used to admire up to the end, his excellent memory and his lively and balanced comments on the matters we submitted for his wise counsel.

Besides his merits as a research worker in the field of Thai history, archaeology, literature, drama and art, as well as Buddhist iconography, the credit for having practically created the National Library, and also that excellent National Museum the priceless collections of which are almost unique on this side of Suez, will for ever be attached to the Prince's name.

Prince Damrong was equally great as a wise and far-seeing statesman, organizer and civil administrator whom Providence had designated to work, hand in hand, during so many years, with his great brother, King Chulalongkorn, for the true welfare and progress of this fair land of the Thai. However, this side of the late Prince's life, that of a great servant of the state, will not be treated here. To do so would require a whole book. Such a book will no doubt be written in time to come and by a worthier pen than mine.

His Royal Highness Prince Damrong Rajanuphab was a truly great man, and his name will always be remembered, honoured and loved in Thailand. He was a true Thai, a real Royal personage, and a fine and lovable gentleman in the best sense of the word. In him Thailand has lost one of her best and greatest sons.

Honour be to his memory!

Bangkok, 7th December 1943.

ERIK SEIDENFADEN

Past President, Thailand Research Society.