Libraries and Librarianship in Thailand

by

Suthilak Ambhanwong

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
Department of Library Science
Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University
Bangkok Thailand
1967
## Contents

| The Role of Books and Libraries in the Development of Thailand | 1 |
| Major Periods in Thai Printing | 8 |
| Education for Librarianship in Thailand | 22 |
| Library Resources in Thailand | 33 |
| Dr. Frances Lander Spain: Founder of Modern Library Service in Thailand | 40 |

สถาบันวิทยบริการ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
The Role of Books and Libraries in the Development of Thailand

Books and other library materials are indispensable tools for all levels of education; they help eradicate illiteracy, enrich educational programs ranging from the elementary classes up to university education and continuing self-education. Through reading children can learn a great many new things and find answers to satisfy their curiosity, while adults avail themselves of information, educational, and research materials suited to their needs.

In developing countries, books and reading materials play an essential role not only in educational programs, but also in social, cultural and economic progress of the nations, since demands for reading materials come from people from all walks of life. The community leader working to improve living conditions in the region calls for several publications which will help communicate his ideas to the region's people. The farmer, through illustrated materials learns even faster how to improve his crops and utilize efficiently new machines for his field. The doctor, by means of current medical journals is well-informed of recent developments in the medical world. The teacher is able to keep abreast of current knowledge in his own field through extensive readings. The statesman feels the need of studying from
exhaustive sources, historical and political aspects of other countries and his own. The scientist has to acquire sound knowledge from many scientific reports before launching new research projects. Everybody, regardless of profession, needs information on the latest developments of his own interest so as to improve his work and enrich his personal life. There is a wide range of publications actually produced for each profession and each individual.

Where do these people obtain all reading materials they need? It is impossible for any one person to collect in his own possession, an adequate well-rounded book collection. Books are in abundance, each type representing different branches of knowledge, they are expensive and are used for various purposes: for education, information, consultation, research, and recreation. Hence, well-organized and well-supported public libraries are most needed to serve all purposes.

In highly developed countries such as the United States where library activities are popular and significant, the early public libraries originated with groups of citizens who willingly taxed themselves to establish and support public libraries. In other words, American public libraries were made available at the request of the people who believed that books enriched their lives and promoted enlightened citizenship. This occurred early in
At the request of The Thai Library Association, she gave a series of lectures on "Bibliographic Control," the most interesting subject in Thai libraries to its members.

Realizing that the lack of a national plan for library development in Thailand retards the growth and progress of libraries throughout the country, Dr. Spain encouraged the setting up of such a plan. She served as consultant to the Ad Hoc Committee, which has been formed by the Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation to draw up a five-year plan for development.

In her spare time, Dr. Spain did extensive travelling to several provinces in Thailand. She went to Penang for a short visit. She also joined the annual convention of the Philippines Library Association held in Manila on June 8-11, 1965.

It was amazing to think of how much Dr. Spain has accomplished in only 11 months' time. One of her suggestions for promoting library service here is "to recruit more men into the library profession." She said "men are often able to work with government officials and will help get recognition for the profession." Dr. Spain worked so closely with Thai librarians that she was fully accepted as one of them. Thai librarians are very proud and happy to have her with them for the second time.
Dr. Spain left Bangkok, Thailand on July 31, 1965 to reassume her work at The Central Florida Junior College Library in the hope shared by all her Thai friends that she would make a return visit again "in the next 7 years," as was said by Dr. Spain herself.

References


Current Biography June 1960.


