

Story of the Thai Library Association under the Royal Patronage of H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn

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Background

Libraries in Thailand were originated in Buddhist monasteries, in Sukhothai period, more than 700 years ago. When King Rama I established Bangkok in A.D. 1782, apart from various prominent success to put law and order into the country, he ordered to collect documentary heritage of older Ayuthaya period into Ho Luang or royal library. King Rama III ordered to collect branches of knowledge and then inscribed it on wall of buildings in Wat Pho (Pho Monastery) as first modern university or library for people education. Recognized on the importance of main library for the country, King Rama V or King Chulalongkorn ordered to merge three royal libraries into one main library which was the starting point of the National Library of Thailand. New types of libraries have been established day by day by parent bodies. At present libraries are not administered under one single administrative body. In this situation the Thai Library Association under the Patronage of H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn is the only professional coordinating body on library matter in Thailand.

Thai Library Association (TLA), the only national library association in Thailand, was established formally on October 11, 1954 by a group Thai librarians who attended library science courses organized at Chulalongkorn University under the Fulbright programme starting in 1950-1952. After continuously performing the duties, H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn has graciously accepted the Thai Library Association be under her Royal Patronage. As ever before, at present, the Association performs duties to win recognition for the profession as well as to upgrade the status of librarians in Thai society.

Objectives

1. To support unity and encourage professional assistance among members;
2. To support and promote librarianship, information science education and cultural activities;
3. To support library institutions all around the country for the growth and professional development;
4. To share and exchange professional knowledge, ideas and experience among colleagues, and with other local and international library associations;

5. To safeguard the welfare and the status of library and information personnel;
6. To act, upon request, as consultant, supervising library organization and operation of individual corporate bodies, agencies and other institutions;
7. To perform as a central agency for supportive assistance from individual, organizational, or institutional sources, in order to achieve Association goal;
8. To be free from any political involvement.

Organization Structure

The Thai library Association is governed through an Executive Committee of 25 members elected from among the regular and associate membership at large at the annual convention usually in December or March, to hold the office for the period of two years. Monthly meeting are held to plan Association activities and to form general policy on office procedures, with president or vice president acting as chair of the meeting.

At the time of writing, the positions are

President

Vice Presidents(two persons);

Treasurers (two persons);

Chairperson of membership registration;

Chairperson of international relations;

Chairperson of research and development;

Chairperson of profession development and training (two persons);

Chairperson of T. L. A. bulletin and technical media (two persons)

Chairperson of library standards (two persons);

Chairperson of public relations;

Chairperson of fund raising;

Librarian;

Hospitality;

Secretary.

And there are 8 library affiliated groups of Thai Library Association namely:

The Academic Librarians Group;

The Library and Information Science Instructors Group;

The School Librarians Group;

The Special Library Group;

The Public Librarians Group;

The National Library Group;

The International Librarians and Information Specialists Group.

Membership

Members of the Association consist of five categories namely:

1. Regular membership

These memberships are practicing or former librarians of government agencies or former organizations of, with at least a third-grade appointment or bachelor's degree; person who have completed library and information science courses from recognized education institutions and persons who have been Association's associate member for at least five years; and have shown evidence of their interest in the field or submitted their scholarly works in librarianship and information to the Association;

2. Associate membership

These memberships are persons who are interested in library work; practicing or former librarians without qualifications for regular membership; or library and information science students;

3. Honorary membership

These memberships are those who become member at the invitation of the Executive Board;

4. Contributing membership

These memberships are those who give the helping hands to the Association and become members at the invitation of the Executive Board;

5. Institutional membership

These memberships are institutions, organizations and corporate bodies. These groups are interested in library and information work and are accepted by the Executive Board.

At present there are about 2,000 professional librarians. Among this numbers there are about 1,500 registered membership of the Thai Library Association.

Activities and Projects

Thai Library Association is involved in most national activities pertaining to library and information in Thailand. In the same time, Sections are also performed their duties e.g. Special Library Group Organized meetings, workshops and special library study tours e. g. the annual meeting on "Branding Identity of Library and Information Services" 6th-7th September 2012. The Academic Librarians Group organized the meeting "Technology of Cloud Computing for Libraries" 24th August 2012.

Some of TLA major activities are as following:

1. Professional Conference, Seminars, Workshop and Training Programmes:

(1) Organizing of various form of Continuing education programmes,

e.g. workshop for school librarians, workshop on classification technique for librarians, workshop on school library knowledge management, workshop on Thai library report writing, workshop on book repairing and preservation etc.;

(2) TLA Annual Conference

Beginning in 1960 Annual Conference has been the most outstanding achievement and of preponderant concern for members, librarians and those interested in professional librarianship. The objectives are: to provide an opportunity for all library professionals around the country to meet and exchange their knowledge; ideas and

experiences among themselves; to gain insight into new developments and advanced techniques in the profession; to provide a channel to voice their complaints, their grievances; to seek ways and means to solve professional problems. Apart from lectures, panel discussions, presentation of the result of research topics, the visits to libraries, learning centers and cultural institutions are also provided. The yearly Conference is usually graciously presided over by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn the Patronage of the Association. During the Conference there will be the announcement of yearly outstanding library awards, yearly outstanding librarian awards and yearly outstanding personage in library and information circle awards.

(3) Library promotion week

To promote library activities, reading and preparing of exhibition, Thai Library Association organizes annual library promotion week e.g. this year programme on "Reading Promotion for Self Development" starting 30th July 2012 at the National Library of Thailand;

(4) Eminent Persons in Enhancing Society Project

Part of a main project of the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET), Thai Library Association with the cooperation of the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) organizes the Yearly Prof. Khunying Maenmas Chavalit Good Persons (Librarians) in Society Enhancement Project. This year two librarians will be announced the eminent persons in enhancing society at the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) on 14th September 2012.

(5) Library & Librarian Profession: Knowledge Management Project

Part of Yearly Prof. Khunying Maenmas Chavalit Eminent Persons (Librarians) in Enhancing Society Project, this project aims at the publications on guideline of up to date knowledge, promotion and training on: 1. the establishment and the running of library ; 2. the library technique ; 3. the library services and library activities ; 4. the technology for library ; 5. Thai author cutter ; 6. The story of Thai libraries and Thai Library Association ; 7. the model library: best practice.

2. Professional knowledge dissemination

- (1) Organizing of broadcast programmes for the promotion of readership, book promotion and library development;
- (2) Publication of quarterly *TLA bulletin* (v.1 no. 1, 1957 to date) ;
- (3) Publication of *TLA research journal* (Thai Library Association) v. 1 no. 1, 2008 to date;
- (4) Publication of books on library and information science, manuals, related fields, etc.

3. Professional cooperation

- (1) Cooperation with the Outstanding Book Awards Committee, Ministry of Education;
- (2) Cooperation with the Publishers and Booksellers Association ;
- (3) Cooperation National Book Fair Committee ;
- (4) Cooperation with Bangkok Book Fair Committee;
- (5) Cooperation with The Bangkok Metropolis Administration on the development of libraries, the promotion of reading and especially on the organizing of UNESCO "Bangkok World Book Capital 2013"
- (6) Cooperation with the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) in improving of 8 flood damaged school libraries in Central Thailand.

4. Consultation of the establishment of new libraries

as well as the development of existed libraries

5. Maintaining of library standards

Establishment and maintaining of library standards e.g. public library standard, school library standard, special library standard.

International Cooperation and Activities

TLA cooperates with international organizations on library and information programmes. Some programmes and projects are as following;

1. Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL)

Thailand was one of the founding member of the Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL). President of the Thai Library Association, Director of the National Library of Thailand and one TLA Executive Board member of Thai Library Association are the CONSAL Executive members. TLA and the National Library of Thailand hosted the memorable 4thCONSAL in 1978 and 9th CONSAL in 1993. Again in 2015 Thai Library Association and the National Library of Thailand will host the 16th CONSAL;

2. International Federation of Library Association and Institution(IFLA)

Thai Library Association is the first Thailand IFLA member. The Association is an active current member of IFLA and cooperated with IFLA in many sections e.g. ALP, National Libraries, Academic libraries. In 1999 Thai Library Association had successfully hosted 65th IFLA 1999;

3. Seeking support of foreign libraries and organizations to improve libraries in Thailand

To improve libraries in Thailand TLA seeking the cooperation and support of foreign libraries and organizations e.g. "The Recovering Flood Damaged libraries in Thailand Project" submitted to the Japanese Library Association and libraries through the courtesy of Mr. Gaku Yamaguchi of The National Diet Library on 23rd February 2012 for the kind support;

4. Study visits to foreign libraries

for example the visits to Library of Alexandria in Egypt, libraries in United Kingdom, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Australia and Malaysia etc;

5. Technical cooperation

TLA is able provide technical support to libraries in the region on specific projects.

TLA Section's Activities

Some very active TLA Sections organizes meeting, workshop and visit to library and learning centre in Thailand and foreign countries for example Academic Librarian Group organized the meeting on Technology of Cloud Computing on 24th August 2012 at the Center of Academic Resources Chulalongkorn University, the Special Library Group will organize the meeting on Branding Identity of Library and Information Services 6th-7th September 2012.

Future Plans

1. Preparing of 2015 16th CONSAL ;
2. Annual Conference, other meeting and workshops;
3. Restoration and improving of flood damaged libraries;
4. Cooperation with other organizations in Thailand and abroad e.g. the Thai National Committee on UNESCO Memory of the World, National Library, National Archives etc. in the conservation and preservation of national documentary heritage;
5. The consideration of library and information professional status in Thailand;
6. Update of library standards;
7. Re- thinking on reading promotion.

Code of Ethics for Thai Library Professionals

Preamble

The library is a highly respected and important institution that imparts knowledge to society. In order to further develop the library system, to promote firm ethical standards, and to evoke the recognition of society the Thai Library Association under the Royal Patronage of H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Siridhorn herewith sets forth the following Code of Ethics to be strictly observed by the library professionals.

Section I : Ethics Towards the Users

In order to perpetuate the good relationship between the library and its users, the library must:

1. Give highest priority to convenient services for users;
2. Optimize professional knowledge, skills and competencies for the benefits of library users;
3. Provide equitable library access and services without discrimination, to users of all status, nationality and race.

Section II : Ethics Towards Profession

In order to ensure the responsibility for the development of the profession, to promote excellence among library professionals the librarian must:

1. Avoid of any kind of action which will damage the reputation of the profession;
2. Commit on life- long learning and knowledge development in order to meet professional standards, and always seek out the opportunity to develop skill and new approaches to vitalize library services;
3. Cooperate in performing functions to ensure quality and development of the profession;
4. Avoid ambition to increase wealth and personal financial status; such ambition may decrease the services and damage the profession.

Section III : Ethics Towards the Colleagues

In order to strengthen the co-operation among library professionals, and to increase good relationship with colleagues and other members of the profession, the librarian must:

1. Recognize and respect the colleagues at all levels of education and positions;
2. Recognized and respect resolutions of the meeting;

3. Maintain and seek alliances with other library staff and other profession colleagues;
4. As a supervisor, treat those under the supervision with fairness and good faith, advocate no prejudice in the promotion or punishment of staff members.

Section IV : Ethics Towards the Organization

The Library is the integral of the organization or the institution which should be upheld and give due respect, therefore, the librarian must:

1. Maintain the reputation and avoid any action that might lower the reputation of the organization in which the library operates;
2. Co-operate and perform functions in response to the policies and for the progress of the organization as a whole;
3. Avoid actions in which personal interest might be served to financial benefits gained at the expense of the organization.

Section V : Ethics Towards the Society

In order to affirm library status and roles in providing information for the advancement of the society, the librarian must:

1. Take a strong leadership role and responsibility in the community and the nation;
2. Devote efforts for the benefit of the community without interfering with professional duties;
3. Make efforts to maintain social stability and security.

<Note>

The Code of Ethic was proclaimed on 30th April 1978.

The proclamation ceremony took place at the auditorium of the Department of Public Relations, Prime Minister's Office, presided over by Mr. Kasem Suwannakul, the former Minister of University Affairs.

Translated from Thai by Dr. Navanit Intarama.

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<Website>

www.tla.or.th