

THAILAND

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF THAILAND

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The National Library is under the Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Culture. It was established by King Rama V in 1905 AD. At first, the Library was situated in the Grand Palace. Eleven years later, King Rama VI, the son of King Rama V, transferred the Library to the building outside the Palace wall to serve the public at large. Ten years later King Rama VII donated all the valuable legacy of the former king to the Library. Over the years there had been the ever increasing appreciation on the role of National Library in education, culture and national development. The main modern building was built in 1962 AD and opened to public in 1966 AD.

FUNCTION

1. The acquisition, processing, analysis, preservation and collection of national intellectual and cultural heritage materials in the form of stone inscriptions, manuscripts, Thai traditional books, palm-leaves, printed publications, audio-visual materials and electronic media from Thailand and abroad.
2. Survey, research and development on library management and service.
3. Render service of materials mentioned in 1. to the public all over the country.
4. Control of the national information system and library cooperation network through computerisation.
5. Preparation and standardisation of bibliographies and management of the ISBN and ISSN systems.
6. Management and preservation of the complete collection of domestic materials and materials relating to the country.
7. Leadership and advice to libraries and information units.

ORGANISATION

The National Library is divided into subdivisions as following:

1. General Administration section
2. Library Resource Development Group
3. Reference and Research Services Group
4. Audio - Visual Materials and Library Activities Group
5. Manuscripts and Inscription Group
6. Library Information Centre
7. Library Standard and Research Group
8. National Library Branch

MANPOWER

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| ○ Librarian | 73 |
| ○ Assistant Librarian | 36 |
| ○ Oriental Language Specialist | 15 |
| ○ Others | 137 |
| ○ Total | 261 |

COLLECTIONS

The National Library of Thailand is only one deposit Library in the country. Collections consist of manuscripts, rare books, printed materials both journal, newspaper and monograph, audio-visual materials as well as modern information materials for example CD-Rom and databases. Altogether there are about 2.8 million. Although at present there is no legal deposit law in Thailand. National Library acquires publications by the provision of the Press Act 1941 AD, by government resolution to enforce ministries, state enterprises to send their publications to the National Library, by purchase, by exchange and by gifts.

One of the main functions of the National Library is the national collection building. The collection is strong in humanities and social sciences. Policy of acquisition is to collect all publications in Thailand, publications about Thailand and by Thai authors published abroad, publications about Southeast Asia and general knowledge of all subjects. Regarding the development of preservation laboratory is being made. Rare books, newspapers and manuscripts, are microfilming and digitising as well as physical conservation treatments not yet covered all materials.

Material Collection

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------|---------|
| ○ Monographs | 2,801,280 | volumes |
| ○ Periodicals | 2,650 | titles |
| ○ Newspapers | 150 | titles |
| ○ Rare books | 150,000 | volumes |
| ○ Manuscripts | 352,000 | items |
| ○ Non-book materials | 94,732 | items |

Digital Collection

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|-------|---------|--------|
| ○ Inscriptions | 27 | items | 420 | images |
| ○ Thai traditional books | 341 | items | 13,000 | images |
| ○ Palm-leaves | 49 | items | 13,000 | images |
| ○ Rare books | 680 | items | 53,218 | pages |
| ○ Audio-visuals | 328 | items | | |
| ○ Microfilms | 137 | items | 150,880 | images |

SERVICES

The National Library is opened everyday, except national holidays from 9.00 am to 7.30 pm. People at all levels, all races, all religions can get into library to receive services. Books, periodicals, newspapers and other tools can be used within the library.

Users can get access to information provided by directly using the main library or the special collections. Users outside Bangkok can make inter-library loan. Searching for materials wanted, they can use OPAC (online public access catalogue) at the main library in Bangkok or through the library network. The network of the main library and the branch libraries will give rapid access for users in upcountry areas. Documents needed are supplied by various methods, such as, facsimile service, postal service, e-mail and file transfer service.

The National Library has been linked database into Internet system. Bibliographic records in the NLT database have reached 1,123,076 items. Users who stay at any places of the country or of the world can access to NLT database via <http://www.nlt.go.th>. The website of the National Library contains general information about the library and provides access to online catalogues. Users can search books, journals, manuscripts and other documents via the internet.

READING PROMOTION

The National Library has a prominent role in the promotion of reading habits in Thailand.

Reading Promotion Programs for Children

The Program of reading promotion emphasises communication skills: reading, listening, viewing and participating.

"Funny time on May" has been designed in particular to serve school children during the school summer vacation by the cooperation of professional cartoonists, graphic designer and amateur dramatists from government and private sectors.

Reading promotion programs for young people and adult

The variety of programs emphasising narration and demonstration consist of the following:

- **Talk and panel discussion.** The activity provides general information to students, librarians, lecturers, teachers and parents. Various topics are held monthly attracted, to the public. Those are: Thai literatures, personality development, teenager's psychology, travelling both local and abroad or some topics involved with a school curriculum.
- **Exhibition: Window display and grand Exhibition.** Exhibition is the activity which is attractive to visitors not only in the library but also outsiders and has been an effective device of promotion reading. *Window display*, lasted only for one to two weeks, implies on a fairly small and modest scale.
- **Meeting S.E.A Write Awardees** - The panel discussion program. Every year, the 10 South East ASEAN Awardees of the year sponsored by the Oriental Hotel and several private agencies travel for one week to Bangkok for joining the grand session of S.E.A. - Write, A ward Reception Ceremony presided over by the Crown Prince. Those awardees will also share and exchange their points of view on creative writing and visions of literary works of ASEAN writers in the above discussion program at the National Library. This attractive program is attended by writers, publishers, university lecturers, and students, mass media personalities and general public.
- **Warm Family Day Programs** for every weekend. National Library provides various activities for family members through objectives of encouraging family members to spend some time together in the National Library.

LIBRARY COOPERATION

The National Library co-operates with other libraries in the country:

- Exchange and Interlibrary loan
- Thai National Information System (THAINATIS)
- Humanities Information Network Center
- Library Training
- Book Production Promotion
- Thai Library Association

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION

Library materials of the National Library of Thailand as mentioned earlier are very rich, both type and content of materials. Since some of them are very old plus facing the problem of the hot and humid climate of tropical Thailand, bio-deterioration is a very serious problem. To prolong the life of materials the National Library is therefore paying much attention on preventive and curative preservation as well as conservation by the provision of better environmental conditions, physical treatment, repairing, photocopy, microfilming and digitisation.

To make Thai people appreciate these valuable materials is one important way to preserve national heritage. To create public awareness, the National Library has to cooperate with many government offices, private agencies, cultural institutions, monasteries, religious administrative offices, schools and universities. The National Library usually sends expert teams to schools, universities, monasteries in Bangkok and provinces to promote learning, studying of very old and much valuable material.

MAIN DEVELOPMENT

The National Library has set up the important tasks as follows:

- Planning to open the **King Chulalongkorn Library**. They will be only the publications and other library media concerning his life and works.
- Moving the whole collection of the legal deposit publications to the New Building.
- The first floor of the main building is under renovation.

EVENTS

1. The project on "Ancient Manuscript Preservation Training in the Regions of Thailand" managed by Manuscripts and Inscription Group, four times per year.
2. The project on "Ancient Manuscripts and Inscriptions Surveying" managed by Manuscripts and Inscription Group, ten times per year.
3. The National Library with the cooperation of ISSN International Centre organized "The Virtua Client Training" on 13-15 February 2006. Participants of the workshop are librarians from National Library and representatives from Indonesia, The Philippines, Vietnam altogether 30 persons.
4. The Workshop on "International Standard Book Number (ISBN) Service" held on 14-15 March 2006 at National Library. Participants of the Workshop are librarians and representatives from Thai publishers altogether 70 persons.
5. "Meeting S.E.A. Write Awardees" S.E.A. Write Awardees from ASEAN countries will spend the time for one week in Bangkok to join the S.E.A. Write Awards presentation ceremony, sponsored by the Oriental Hotel. For this occasion, NLT organised the reception ceremony at NLT on 5 October 2006. Those awardees can share and exchange their points of view on creative writing and vision on literary works of ASEAN writers in the panel discussion. This attractive program is attended by writers, publishers, university lecturers, mass media personalities and the public.
6. "Warm Family Day Programs" for every weekend, National Library provides various activities for family members through objectives of encouraging family members to spend some time together in the National Library, such as: *fun with stamp collection*, in cooperation with Philatelic Department, book quizzes by volunteering bookstores, some concerts or musical performed, dancing and singing both in traditional and western styles.

THAILAND'S LIBRARIES TODAY

| Name | Number |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| The National Library of Thailand | 1 |
| The National Library Branches | 17 |
| Public libraries | 928 |
| Academic libraries | 118 |
| School library | 38,739 |
| Special library | 157 |
| Thai Library Association | 1 |
| Total | 39,961 |

NEW LIBRARIES

Thailand Knowledge Park (TKpark)

Thailand Knowledge Park was created according to the policy of the government to be a "dynamic living library, a provider of good books that is constantly being updated and improved, as opposed to something that remains lifeless and inactive since the beginning." Most importantly, TK Park was to take a major role in encouraging Thais to read and to learn. TK Park also functions as a cultural hub for youths and a recreational space for a variety of activities. Now situated at the World Trade Centre on the eighth floor.

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Library

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration managed the development plan for the Public Library in Bangkok. At present two Public Libraries have been renovated for learning centers.

The Department of Correction Library

Ministry of Justice with the cooperation of Thai Library Association created the Department of Correction Library special for the prisoner. The first place was opened on 20th April 2007.

The Intellectual Development Library

The Thai Library Association and the Stock Exchange of Thailand mutually gave co-operation to the renovated office of TLA "The Intellectual Development Library" which was opened on 7 May 2006.

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