

Thesis Title        An Evaluation of Thai Rare Book Collection of the  
                         Siam Society Library

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#### ABSTRACT

This research work aims at the study of the contents, categories, characteristics, time span and sources of publications for 769 items of Thai rare books belonging to the Siam Society Library; it excludes manuscripts, pamphlets, newspapers, journals, magazines, maps and printed ephemera, except the Royal Gazette during its first period of publication i.e. B.E. 2417-2451. Procedures followed criterion for evaluating rare books are based on documents and under guidances of the learned personnel. The results are represented in percentage of which may sum up as follows:

The Siam Society Library's rare books are classified by Dewey Decimal Classification System. The main content of which is 23.93 percent literature: Thai Literature. Next in line are Social Science Group: Thai culture, customs and traditions, folk performance, The History's Group concerning Thailand, Religious Group: Thai culture, customs and tradition relating to religion and the Applied Science and Science Group respectively.

The outcome of the research is compatible with the assumption that the Siam Society Library's rare book are mainly relevant to the

aim of the Society in that "to promote and encourage the arts and science in Siam and in the neighboring countries."

Having evaluated the Thai rare books according to those four categories, it is found that 94.80 percent are books belonging to perfect condition, in other words, deluxe edition. Next are those related to the history of printing in Thailand, provenance books and reputation books.

From 16 characteristic criteria, it is found that 93.11 percent are in good conditioned rare books. Next come the limited edition or those were printed within the period 50-90 years - the years of printing development in Thailand (B.E. 2379-2468), books reprinted from the MSS kept at Vajirañana National Library, Royal Institute and Fine Arts Department.

It is found, in view of the period of publication, that the largest publication (52.15 percent) were printed during B.E. 2454-2468. Next are those undated publication, during B.E. 2469-2484 onward.

Most rare books during B.E. 2412-2453 were printed at the Royal Printing Press, Bamrung Nukulkit Press, Vacharind Press, Division for Petty Offences Prison's Press and Aksoranit Press respectively. The majority of rare books published during B.E. 2454-2468 and B.E. 2469-2484 were printed at Sophon Pipatanakorn Press. Subsequently since B.E. 2485-2487 and B.E. 2488 onward rare books have been printed at Phra Chandra Press; for the undated were printed at Sophon Pipatanakorn Press.

The outcome of this research work may possibly served as a guide for the Siam Society Library on the preservation of rare books in the improving of acquisition, and providing efficient research services concerning Thailand and neighboring countries.