

“Church Welcomes Thai Royalty,” *Ensign*, January 1982, pg. 78–79

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On the first leg of their three-week tour of the United States, the Queen of Thailand and her daughter were guests of the Church during their October 25–28 visit to Salt Lake City.

Her Majesty Queen Sirikit and Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn were warmly welcomed to Salt Lake City by President Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency and David M. Kennedy, special representative of the First Presidency. Graciously receiving the floral bouquet presented to her, the queen in turn sent flowers to President Spencer W. Kimball, who was still recovering from surgery.

A highlight of the queen’s visit was her attendance at a command performance by the Tabernacle Choir. Although the choir has often performed for Presidents of the United States and other dignitaries, this occasion was believed to be its first royal command performance and the first such performance in Utah. One of the evening’s featured numbers was “The King’s Anthem,” a song composed by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the husband of Queen Sirikit.

Other events during the queen’s four-day visit included a luncheon hosted by women leaders of the Church; a reception where the queen and princess were greeted by nearly 300 members of Salt Lake’s Thai community; a tour of BYU which featured a performance by the Lamanite Generation and a presentation by the Ezra Taft Benson Institute on its agricultural program; a visit to the Osmond Studios in Orem, complete with a performance by the Osmonds, who, according to the princess, are very popular in Thailand; and an evening banquet attended by some 250 Church and civic leaders.

Both Queen Sirikit and Princess Chulabhorn are involved in the economic and humanitarian interests of their country. The queen, educated in Bangkok, France (where she met her husband, then a student in Switzerland), Denmark, and England, has served for many years as president of the Thai Red Cross Society and honorary president of the Council of Social Welfare of Thailand, an organization of 150 private and public social welfare units throughout the nation. In 1979 she was awarded the Ceres Medal by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which acknowledged her “far-sighted efforts to advance the status of women,” enabling “women to improve their economic and social heritage.” Tufts University in 1980 awarded her an honorary doctoral degree in Humane Letters in recognition of her work for the rural poor of Thailand. One of the purposes of the queen’s visit to the United States was to promote the sale of Thai handicrafts to relieve poverty and improve health in her country.

Princess Chulabhorn, youngest of the royal couple’s four children, was graduated with first-class honors from Kasetsart University with a bachelor of science degree in organic chemistry; she then obtained her doctorate at the graduate school of Mahidol University,

where she is now a research chemist. She has also been a lecturer in chemistry at Kasetsart University and the Royal Thai Air Force Academy.