

A reflection of the intellectual achievement of Professor Direk Jayanama in his personal book collection donated to the Thammasat University Library

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to make international researchers more aware of resources that clarify the literary inspiration of Direk Jayanama, a key figure in Thai history. This is reflected through his personal library, which consists of 382 volumes on history, political science, diplomacy, spirituality, ethics, and literature.

Students and instructors may benefit from these books which constitute an intellectual portrait of the human ideals that may have inspired Direk's accomplishments as a public servant and statesman. To add to a general understanding of the intellectual motives and achievements of one of the distinguished participants in modern Thai history, future research on Direk Jayanama and his work might consider this documentation now available for scholarly investigation at the Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University Library.

Challenges to preserving and maintaining this collection, as well as a road map for future maximum public benefit, are presented.

Keywords: Direk Jayanama, Direk Jayanama Library, Collection of Direk Jayama Library, Personal collection

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Introduction: A life of public service

A generous gift of books from the personal collection of a Thai statesman, diplomat, and educator, may help researchers today better understand his achievements.

After the death in 1967 at age 62 of Direk Jayanama, his working library of books on history, political science, diplomacy, spirituality (especially Buddhism), ethics, and literature was donated by his family to the Thammasat University Library in Bangkok.³



Fig. 1 Professor Direk Jayanama,
Former Dean of the Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University

His personal collection is now shelved in the Direk Jayanama Library, Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University. Students and instructors may benefit from these books which constitute an intellectual portrait of the ideals that may have motivated Professor Direk's accomplishments as a public servant and statesman.

This article aims to make international researchers more aware of these resources that may potentially add to a general understanding of one of the distinguished

³ Between 1938 and 1941, Direk Jayanama was called to the Bar in 1928, following in the footsteps of his father, a Supreme Court justice; he later joined the Ministry of Justice. Direk Jayanama served as first Deputy and then Foreign Minister of Thailand. In 1942 he was named Thai Ambassador to Tokyo, and after his return to Thailand in 1943, he was Foreign Minister until August 1944, when he retired from public life to work for the Free Thai (Seri Thai) resistance movement. After the war, Direk was named Thailand's Finance Minister, Foreign Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Ambassador to England and later Ambassador to West Germany and to Finland. He also became a law lecturer and later Dean of the Faculty of Political Science at Thammasat University. In addition, he was a noted author of books on Thailand and the Second World War as well as collections of introductory speeches and articles about different aspects of Thai culture.

participants in modern Thai history. Since the collection does not include other informational resources such as documents, letters, or journal articles, the books must speak for themselves.

According to one longtime friend, Direk “cherished and believed in human dignity. It was an affront to his dignity to serve under a military dictatorship” which “constituted a betrayal of the promise of democracy to the people.”⁴

Yet he remained on cordial terms with Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram, known as Phibun in the West, a politician and military officer who served as the 3rd prime minister of Thailand from 1938 to 1944 and again from 1948 to 1957.

Despite repeatedly refusing to be appointed to roles in the Phibun governments, Direk retained the leader’s esteem. It has been alleged that his survival during fraught times of war and dictatorship in Thailand was “because the powers-that-be perceived him as weak and therefore non-threatening. He was always polite and well-mannered. He was a Buddhist gentleman with ample moral courage and inner strength...he valued simplicity, humility, and honesty.”⁵

There is no doubt about Direk’s devotion to Buddhism, the subject of a number of his speeches and articles. As Siamese ambassador, he was elected vice president of the London Buddhist Society. Yet his endurance through many career challenges may have also been partly due to the knowledge and expertise he acquired from an informative group of books on history and political science that are now in the Direk Jayanama Library of Thammasat University.

How these books may have helped furnish the internal fortitude required for his life challenges may be a subject for future researchers.

Collection management and services

Currently, the collection is restricted to in-library use only. To better understand how the books are being utilized, librarians plan to collect usage statistics. These statistics will help guide future services related to the Direk Jayanama Collection, such as promoting it to encourage greater consultation.

⁴ Sulak Sivaraksa, *Conflict, Culture, Change: Engaged Buddhism in a Globalizing World* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2005), 126.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 126-7.

The books are fully catalogued in the Thammasat University Library system, which uses Library of Congress classification as a local classification system.



Fig. 2 Professor Direk Jayanama Library



Fig. 3 Direk Jayanama Collection
at Professor Direk Jayanama Library

One possible future model for dissemination of these texts the Direk Jayanama Collection might be to make digital services accessible exclusively to library users onsite, enhancing access while preserving the integrity of the collection.

This approach would follow the precedent of The National Chengchi University (NCCU) Library in Taiwan, which offers a digital archive website for rare books and special collections housed at NCCU. Users may ask librarians for permission to view the physical books and may access digital files only within the local library network. Remote access outside the NCCU library is not permitted.⁶

Concepts for generalized approaches may be obtained from case studies of other Asian collections of personal libraries in terms of challenges faced by the National Library of Malaysia in acquiring the rare collection and promoting it to the public, in addition to such issues as preserving, managing, and appreciating the delicate items.⁷ Ultimately, the considerable effort required for such collections is worthwhile due to the historical and cultural insights they represent nationally and internationally.

⁶ Librarian of the National Chengchi University Libraries. Interview, 6 November 2024.

⁷ Nordin, Nordiana Mohd, Nasharudin, Nurhidayah and Mohd Zaki, Faddliza, “Rare and personal collections at National Library of Malaysia,” *JENDELA : Buletin Perpustakaan* 8 (2016): 11-19.

Other comparable private collections of books may be found at the Universiti Malaya Library, which houses the Za’ba Collection, Ungku Aziz Collection, Ibrahim Ya’kob Collection, M.G.Swift Collection, and Mohd Taib Collection.⁸

Arguably, these local, mid-sized Asian collections are more representative of the issues involved in successfully exploiting the books once owned by Direk Janayana donated to the Thammasat University Library than vaster, better funded repositories of personal collections farther away, such as the British Library or the Library of Congress in the United States of America.

Setting aside abundant examples of collections of manuscripts and other documents, published and unpublished, of noted authors, which may be seen in the Private Papers Collection of the National University of Singapore or the Mr. Yeh Jung-Chung Special Collection of the National Tsing Hua University Library, personal libraries and book collections offer closer parallels to the Direk Janayama collection.

For example, the University of Tokyo Library System preserves the Gakken Collection, Katei Collection, Nanki Collection, Ogai Collection, Seishu Collection, and Tanaka Yoshio Collection, among many others on diverse subject matter.⁹ These may likewise provide approaches to preserving and publicizing personal book collections of noteworthy Thai scholars and public servants, and should merit further comparative study for organizational and display techniques and strategies. The Special Collections division of Keio University¹⁰ and Waseda University¹¹ offer further examples.

In terms of specific Thammasat University Library regulations, the library's donation policy is available on its website. Donated books should be in good condition, undamaged, with no broken spines, loose pages, mold or mildew, or handwritten annotations that would impose substantial conservation costs (exceptions may be made for rare or unique material)¹². Following the policy, books of historical value are selected for the library's

⁸ Universiti Malaya. **Special Collection**. [Online]. Retrieved 25 May 2025, from: <https://umlib.um.edu.my/special-collection>

⁹ University of Tokyo Library System. **Special Collections**. [Online]. Retrieved 25 May 2025, from: https://www.lib.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/library/contents/about/all_collection.

¹⁰ Keio University Libraries. **Rare Materials / Special Collections**. [Online]. Retrieved 25 May 2025, from: <https://www.lib.keio.ac.jp/en/collection/index.html>

¹¹ Waseda University Library. **Special Collections**. [Online]. Retrieved 25 May 2025, from: <https://www.waseda.jp/library/en/collections/special-collections/>

¹² Thammasat University Library. **Book Donation**. [Online]. Retrieved 25 May 2025, from: https://library.tu.ac.th/bbs/content/94_564

Rare Book Collection. Among personal collections, the library accepts books donated from individuals who have worked to improve the library and the university, except for volumes damaged beyond repair. After the selection process, the books are sent to the Cataloguing Division for classification under the Library of Congress system.

Preserved with respect for the contributions to Thai history of their former owner as well as the intrinsic interest of the books themselves, the physical condition of the Direk Jayanama Collection is deteriorating.

Many books have yellowed pages, and some have insect damage. Currently, librarians in the bookbinding division are repairing these books by creating new covers, rebinding them, and reinforcing torn or insect-damaged pages using mulberry paper. Additionally, the library employs insect extermination methods to prevent further damage.

Most of the books in the collection are long out of print, and would be unobtainable today, or only at high prices that are beyond today's restricted university library acquisition budgets.

The books may be used only in the library due to their deteriorated physical condition. The English-language volumes are not available for digital access due to copyright restrictions, but some Thai-language books have been digitized in the Thammasat University Digital Collection. Downloaded full-text files that are not under the copyright of Thammasat University will be accessible for only 30 days due to copyright issues.¹³

Data on all of the books is available in the university library system. Users may search for books from the Direk Jayanama Collection on the library website, and the system displays the location of the bookshelf where the collection is stored. However, the books are marked as "Not for Loan," so that readers understand that they are for reference use exclusively.

The management of personal collections in the context of modern libraries and archives extends beyond the scope of preservation or physical storage. It should be oriented towards transforming such collections into in-depth information that may be effectively used across academic, social, and cultural domains. The development of a strategic roadmap for integrating this information in contemporary library systems thus represents

¹³ Thammasat University Library. **Policy for full text file service.** [Online]. Retrieved 29 May 2025, from: https://digital.library.tu.ac.th/tu_dc/frontend/index/fulltextService

a critical approach for promoting the relevance of personal collections at both public and inter-institutional levels.

Phase 1: Preservation and digitization. The process should begin with an assessment of the informational value of the collection, followed by a systematic digitization effort. This should employ widely accepted metadata standards, such as Dublin Core or METS. Consideration must also be given to the use of durable long-term file formats and the creation of multiple backup copies to prevent data loss.

Phase 2: Data structuring and access. After digitization, the data should be structured to support efficient retrieval, categorization, and semantic linking. This includes the implementation of authority control, the development of in-depth subject headings, and the consistent assignment of keywords. The collection may then be disseminated through digital repository platforms, such as the Thammasat University Digital Collection, or linked to union catalogs of other institutions to enable broader accessibility and cross-institutional integration.

Phase 3: Integration with contemporary information technologies. To enable personal collections to play an active role in the digital humanities domain, it is essential to integrate the principles of Linked Open Data with existing metadata frameworks. This approach allows for interoperability with external systems such as Wikidata, Virtual International Authority File (VIAF), and cultural research databases, facilitating broader data exchange and semantic connectivity. Moreover, the development of research-support tools - such as interactive timelines, network visualizations, and Artificial Intelligence/ Natural Language Processing (AI/NLP) applications for automatic content extraction - may further enhance the analytical value and usability of the collections in academic and cultural research contexts.

Books in the collection

A number of research studies have documented how the personal book collections of noteworthy public figures may provide insights on their professional activities.¹⁴ While case studies have been published on personal book collections of intellectuals in

¹⁴ The Library. **The Library on Private Libraries**. [Online]. Retrieved 14 November 2024, from: https://academic.oup.com/library/pages/Library_on_Private_Libraries

Thailand, from Chamkad Balankura to Benedict Anderson¹⁵, any speculation on direct, specific influence from previous reading on subsequent activity remains largely moot.¹⁶

Many books that Direk would cherish during an eminent public career were in English. Notably, his collection does not feature volumes in other foreign languages, except for a beginning grammar in French. This largely monolingual approach belies an avid interest in political history and diplomacy in Italy, Germany, and Spain, with several books on each country in English.

Included are volumes on political history, diplomacy, economics, memoirs, biographies, philosophy and ethics, literature, culture, and self-help. There are also a few titles that may be categorized under the heading of humor and entertainment, giving a rare glimpse into light-hearted relaxation in the life of a highly serious public servant.

The largest portion of the Direk Jayanama Collection pertains to world history and history of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, New Zealand. Within this class, the most common subclass is Asia. The second most represented class is political science, followed by history of America – United States.

Mostly, his own personal library reinforced his lifelong beliefs in public service.

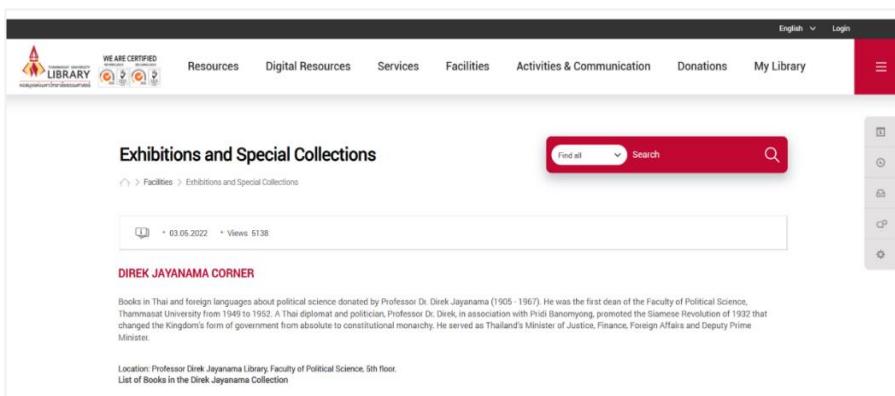


Fig. 4 Exhibitions and Special Collections: Direk Jayanama Corner and List of Books in the Direk Jayanama Collection

Adapted from: https://library.tu.ac.th/bbs/content/94_657

¹⁵ Ivry, Benjamin and Pajongruk Samcharoen, “Donation by the Family of Chamkad Balankura to the Pridi Banomyong Library, Thammasat University,” *Journal of Multidisciplinary Academic Research and Development (JMARD)* 6, 3 (2024): 11–20.

¹⁶ Ivry, Benjamin, and Phimpakwan Thananonparit, “Examining the Personal Library of a Political Scientist and Researcher on Nationalism and the ASEAN Community: Donations by Professor Benedict Anderson to the Charnvit Kasetsiri Room of the Pridi Banomyong Library, Thammasat University,” *Journal of Multidisciplinary Academic Research and Development (JMARD)* 4, 1 (2022): 1–12.

On political science

Dedicated to the notion of societal freedom, Direk titled his essay collection “Thailand the land of the free.”¹⁷ He argued that an informed, involved citizenry is required for democracy to flourish. One critique of American public apathy and ignorance on United States (U.S.) foreign policy owned by Direk identifies U. S. intelligence missteps in Asia.¹⁸

Maintaining ideals of the primacy of human rights is urged in another book owned by Direk, “Human Rights and World Order: The Struggle for Human Rights in the United Nations.”¹⁹ Among numerous books on Asia, Direk clearly prioritized those revealing Western perspectives, as if to better comprehend foreign views.²⁰

Anticipating the policies and actions of foreign governments was especially urgent in the case of potential enemies, and among the Axis Powers of World War II. Direk collected books not just about Japan, where he was stationed, but also Italy.

And so, the diaries of Benito Mussolini’s son-in-law Gian Galeazzo Ciano, who served as Foreign Minister in Mussolini’s government before being executed by firing squad after opposing his father-in-law, are included among Direk’s books. Realizing where political failures went wrong complements meditation on societal ideals.²¹

Thus, Direk also collected “Japan in world politics” by the journalist and propagandist Kiyoshi Kawakami, who would later attempt to whitewash the Japanese military and economic invasion of China and Manchuria, purportedly to save China from chaos and disintegration.²²

Another study in Direk’s collection is by a leading Japanese political scientist, Masamichi Rōyama, an apologist for fascism and Imperialism in Japan during the 1930s.²³

By contrast, there is also a memoir by the Japanese diplomat Mamoru Shigemitsu, who was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs three times during and after World War II

¹⁷ Direk Jayanama, **Thailand: The Land of the Free** (Bonn: Royal Thai Embassy, 1960).

¹⁸ Lederer, William J, **A Nation of Sheep** (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1962).

¹⁹ Moskowitz, Moses, **Human rights and world order the struggle for human rights in the United Nations** (New York: Oceana Publications, 1958).

²⁰ Cheng, Tien-hsi, **China moulded by Confucius: The Chinese way in Western light** (London: Stevens and Sons, 1946).

²¹ Ciano, Galeazzo, conte, **The Ciano diaries, 1939-1943: the complete, unabridged diaries of Count Galeazzo Ciano, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1936-1943** (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1946).

²² Kawakami, Kiyoshi Karl, **Japan in world politics** (New York: Macmillan, 1917).

²³ Royama, Masamichi, **Foreign policy of Japan: 1914-1939** (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1941).

and Deputy Prime Minister. Although Shigemitsu opposed the militarists in his homeland and failed in attempts to avoid the U.S.-Japan conflict through negotiation, he was tried and convicted as a war criminal in the postwar era.

Such vagaries make the ability to evaluate the ups and downs of any political career a matter of survival. Small wonder that Direk also had among his books an account by Edward Turnour, 6th Earl Winterton, an Irish peer and British politician who served as a Member of Parliament for 47 years, being at different times the youngest and oldest member of the House of Commons.²⁴

In his own longevity in the context of Thai politics, Direk retained the esteem of leaders from a wide range of different political factions, from the militarist Phibun to Pridi Banomyong, noted for his socialist ideals.

All valued his acumen and insight, the result of diligent study in addition to innate intelligence and experience.

A master of diplomacy

Even more extensive than Direk's collection of books on history and political science, those on diplomacy were evidently useful for his diplomatic assignments as well as the classes he would later teach at Thammasat University.

As founder of the diplomacy studies program at Thammasat that later expanded into an international relation department, he collected books on many angles and aspects of diplomacy. Many of these are still instructive today for students, although they are long out of print.

The varied trajectories recounted in these volumes imply that as one American diplomat implied, the job requires humane perceptiveness about a variety of people, as much a matter of temperament as of training.²⁵ Sulak Sivaraksa and others who write in homage to Direk Janayama make it clear that he had these qualities as a diplomat and educator.

Diplomacy is at the heart of his book collection, which assembles a multifaceted look at the purpose and activities of diplomats. These included negative examples,

²⁴ Winterton, Earl, *Orders of the day* (London: Cassell, 1953).

²⁵ Dunham, Donald, *Envoy unextraordinary* (London: Hammond, 1943) 128.

possibly presented as warnings to students, of misguided diplomats such as Neville Henderson.²⁶

Considered by later historians to have been excessively enthused about Nazis, from Adolf Hitler to Hermann Göring, Henderson had to admit later that his conciliatory approach had not prevented war in Europe.

Then there were diplomats of whom Direk could at least partly admire, such as Sir Samuel Hoare, who despite some dubious transactions earlier in his career, during wartime helped to arrange the return of thousands of Allied prisoners from Spanish prisons and to dissuade General Francisco Franco, Spain's dictator, from formally joining the Axis powers during the conflict.²⁷

Since modern history is often an account of how diplomacy and diplomats failed, and warfare resulted, being informed about such failures is necessary for any student of international relations. An innate modesty is implied in the wide-ranging acceptance by some of these authors that their efforts might have been in vain, due to human error or other unavoidable causes.

Therefore, the recollections by Sir Hughe Montgomery Knatchbull-Hugessen, a British Ambassador to Turkey best remembered because his secret documents were stolen by his valet and passed on to Nazi Germany, were of interest to Direk and his students.²⁸

In a more forensic style, the historian Lewis Napier's painstaking compilation illuminates how a series of documents during the 1930s aspiring to peace culminated in a world war.²⁹ As noted in other published texts collected by Direk, whether in times of discord or peace, even allied nations engage in diplomatic warfare.³⁰

A full view of the life and work of diplomats on assignment necessarily includes their families, and so the generally more admirable recollections by the wife of United States

²⁶ Henderson, Neville, **Failure of a mission: Berlin 1937-1939** (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940).

²⁷ Hoare, Samuel, **Ambassador on special mission** (London: Collins, 1946).

²⁸ Henderson, Neville, **Failure of a mission: Berlin 1937-1939** (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940).

²⁹ Namier, Lewis Bernstein, **Diplomatic prelude, 1938-1939** (New York: H. Fertig, 1948).

³⁰ Gottlieb, W. W., **Studies in secret diplomacy during the First World War** (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1957)

Chargé d’Affaires in Mexico during the early years of the Mexican Revolution was acquired by Direk.³¹

Although seen by readers today as condescending about non-white people and colonialist in outlook, Edith O’Shaughnessy, as a professional author of reportage, biographies, and film scripts, made some cogent observations about diplomatic service.

Travel, philosophy, and entertainment

In addition to eloquently voiced lives of fellow diplomats and statesmen, Direk also assembled some books recounting solitary, highly individual travels and reflections.

An overview by Peter Townsend, a British Royal Air Force officer and courtier who served as equerry to King George VI and Queen Elizabeth II, explained the essential loneliness of the voyager.³²

Possibly in a profession like diplomacy where state secrets and confidential negotiations are involved, Direk might have felt a comparable isolation at times.

Less isolated in essence is a book by the novelist and biographer Sybille Bedford about trials in England, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and France which she attended as a fascinated spectator.³³

The spare, lucid style of Bedford may have helped Direk to achieve his own admirably concise and unadorned prose in his own speeches, articles, and other writings.

As ever, Direk was intrigued by Western views of Asia, and so acquired books such as an introduction to Buddhism for students by Christmas Humphries, a British judge who was a fellow member of the London Buddhist Society.³⁴

Likewise, Direk possessed introductory texts on Buddhist philosophy³⁵ by an American professor at the University of New Mexico, and on Thai Buddhism by a U.S. Presbyterian missionary.³⁶ These books might have been of interest less for any factual revelations, but in how they presented the material to foreign readers.

³¹ O’Shaughnessy, E., *A diplomat’s wife in Mexico: letters from the American Embassy at Mexico City, covering the dramatic period between October 8th, 1913, and the breaking off of diplomatic relations on April 23rd, 1914, together with an account of the occupation of Vera Cruz* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1916).

³² Townsend, Peter, *Earth, my friend* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1959).

³³ Bedford, Sybille, *The faces of justice: a traveller’s report* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1961).

³⁴ Humphreys, Christmas, *A Buddhist students’ manual* (London: Buddhist Society, 1956).

³⁵ Bahm, Archie J., *Philosophy of the Buddha* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1958).

³⁶ Wells, Kenneth Elmer, *Thai Buddhism, its rites and activities* (Bangkok: The Christian Bookstore, 1960).

Finally, amidst the soberly assembled book collection, Direk found room for some serendipity and humor. This may express something about his personality that drew friends to him throughout his life.

Among the books in his personal collection is *Summer Lightning*, a novel by the popular English humorist P.G. Wodehouse.³⁷ Although catalogued in the Direk Janayama Library as “social problem fiction,” it is a light-hearted romp about a dimwitted nephew of a British lord who plots to steal his uncle’s prize pig in the hopes of returning it later and being proclaimed a hero.

No mere onetime fluke, Direk’s apparent taste for British humor is also documented by another volume by the U.K. comedienne Florence Desmond, famed for her imitations of celebrities of her day.³⁸

Clearly an appreciator of wit, Direk extended his range of interest to America, and collected a book by a friend and correspondent of President Abraham Lincoln that celebrated the U.S. leader’s jocular anecdotes.³⁹

The presence of these books in Direk’s variegated collection imply that a sense of humor may be considered as part of the survival equipment for any diplomat. As in the rest of the books in the Direk Janayama Collection, they provide a model for future generations of readers about how to achieve political and diplomatic goals. Sometimes by considering negative examples to be avoided, these volumes show how Direk acquired the expertise and understanding that was so valued by generations of Thai leaders of different political parties.

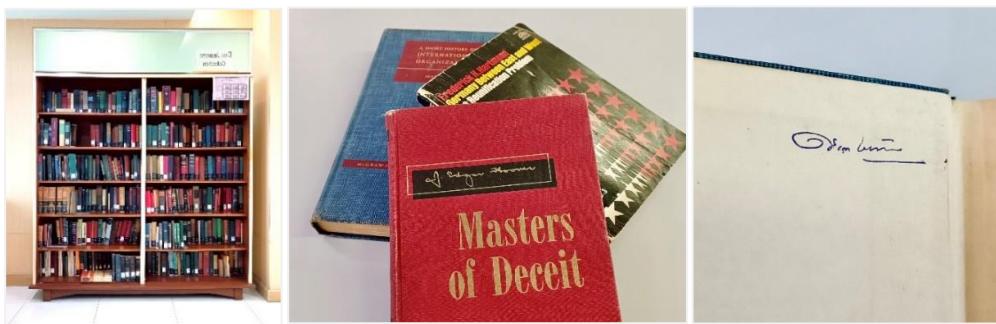


Fig. 5 Some books from the Direk Janayama Collection

³⁷ Wodehouse, Pelham Grenville, *Summer lightning* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1929).

³⁸ Desmond, Florence, *Florence Desmond* (London: Harrap, 1953).

³⁹ McClure, Alexander Kelly, *Lincoln’s yarns and stories: a complete collection of the funny and witty anecdotes that made Abraham Lincoln famous as America’s greatest story teller* (Chicago: Educational Company, 1901).

Results and summary

From a wide range of volumes on political science, international relations, history, literature, and related fields now available at the Thammasat University Library, international researchers may experience some of the intellectual context of the diplomat, statesman, and educator Direk Janayama.

His widespread, thorough interests in related fields show how one Thai public servant negotiated domestic and foreign challenges during perilous eras in world history. Paying close attention to how Thai and other Asian traditions and institutions were described in print by foreigners, Direk heightened his international perspectives to better persuade allies and foes alike.

With a modest awareness of the potential of failure in any diplomatic endeavor, Direk transmitted to his students the importance of nevertheless trying to communicate and negotiate with foreign nations, for the greater benefit of the Thai people.

The assembled books offer a glimpse of Direk's personality, not just his devotion to public service but also penchants for travel and humor. Further research might look in closer detail at the biographical details of Direk's life and how they correspond to the books shelved in the Direk Janayama Collection of the Thammasat University Library.

Additionally, further comparative study of other catalogued private collections in international libraries should lead to technical insights on how to better preserve and display the items in question.

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