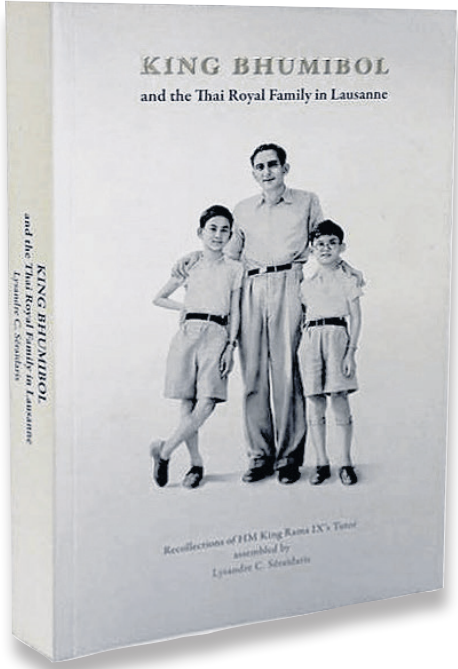


LIFE

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The two kings with Cleon Seraidaris at Champex, Switzerland, in 1937.



The English version of the book *King Bhumibol And The Thai Royal Family In Lausanne* is available for 999 baht, only at Asia Books' booth at the National Book Fair, which ends today at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre. For information about the availability of the English version and the Thai version (699 baht) in the future, email information@asiabooks.com or contact Asia Books Customer Service at 02-251-8571.

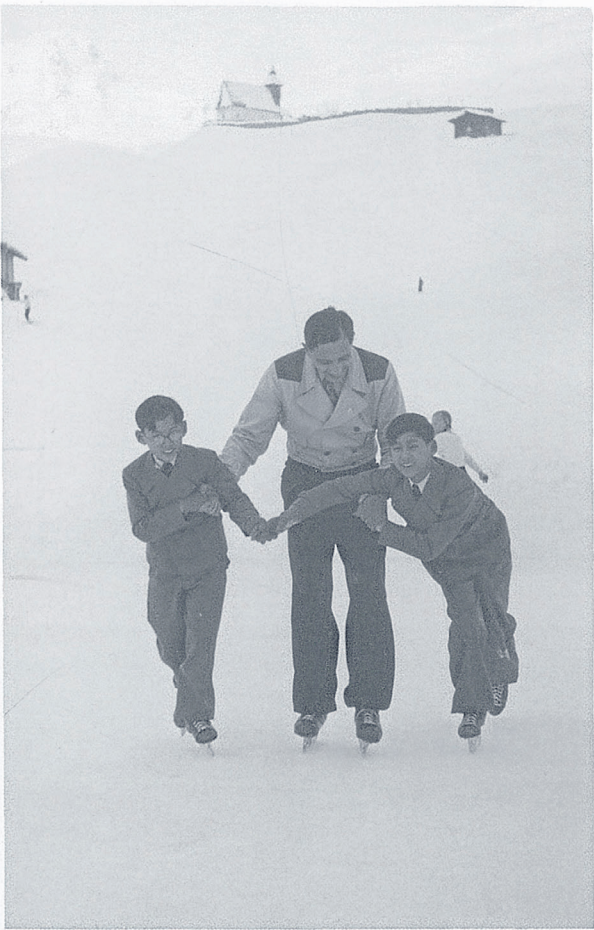
The CONFIDANT of KINGS

A new book sheds light on life for King Rama VIII and HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej in Europe and the two brothers' fondness for their Swiss tutor

STORY: PICHAYA SVASTI



His Majesty the King and his tutor Cleon Seraidaris met again in Bangkok in 1988.



Tutor Cleon Seraidaris taught ice-skating to the young King Rama VIII and Prince Bhumibol, who would later be HM the King.

He was the sole tutor of two Thai monarchs — King Ananda Mahidol, Rama VIII, and HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej. In Switzerland in 1936, Cleon Seraidaris, a lawyer, started guiding the young King Rama VIII and Prince Bhumibol towards their educational goals. Up until his death in 1997, his close ties and devotion to HM the King and the royal family of Thailand remained strong.

"My father said his career was like a dream because the two kings were perfect about everything. The kings had to be perfect in every way to rule the country. This could be seen from their behaviour and understanding of their duties," said Lysandre C. Seraidaris, the youngest son of Cleon.

"They behaved like kings. They were good students. They were dream students to my father. They were enthusiastic to learn."

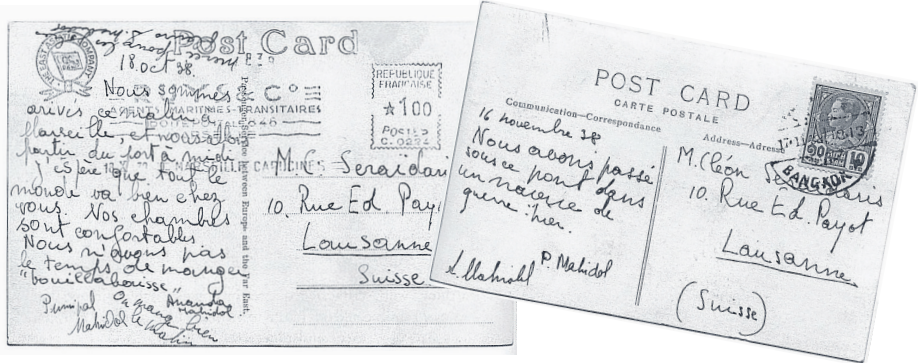
The honorary trade adviser to Thailand's Ministry of Commerce was talking about both kings during last week's visit to Thailand to launch his book, *King Bhumibol And The Thai Royal Family In Lausanne*, which has been translated from French to both English and Thai.

Using a narrative technique that traces the chronology of events in his father's life, Seraidaris interweaves the story of his father's teaching days and his esteemed work as the tutor of two kings. His father's rare photos, personal letters and documents also complement the text and give the book a sense of historical weight. Simple yet beautiful writing makes it easy for readers to learn more about Thai history, incorporated well in a foreigner's biography. The book reflects the lives of the two monarchs and the royal family after the 1932 revolution and during and after World War II.

"It was a reason to write about what was not known in history before. His Majesty suggested that I write about my father. This book focuses on the royal family, but I started by introducing my father," the author said. "He [the King] knows he can trust me. I'm like my father." From this book, readers will learn new aspects of both kings' childhoods, education and viewpoints, especially how they coped with the dramatic changes of their youth and prepared themselves to become monarchs.

"They had only one tutor. When they first met, the children liked my father very much and understood the meaning of education. He was educating them," said Seraidaris.

When Cleon first met the Siamese king and prince in 1936 in Lausanne, King Rama VIII was 11 years old and Prince Bhumibol was nine.



"The Princess Mother had the vision and passed it to her children through education. They [the Princess Mother and my father] spoke in the same language in terms of education. My father understood immediately and they appreciated it," the author said.

According to Seraidaris, the philosophy of his father is that you should learn at least one thing every day and education is the key to the future.

The author wrote about the two kings' childhood, education and hobbies in the book:

"Cleon's duties were especially gratifying as both his charges were bright in their studies and, despite their youth, behaved responsibly beyond their age. They were conscientious students, while fully aware of the often heavy future responsibility of kingdom and leadership inescapably assigned to them. Both boys, king and prince, had shared talents, unaware that fate's hand would write for each a different history."

"Outside school, king and prince were encouraged into sports: cycling, tennis, table tennis, ice-skating ... Ananda was invincible at table tennis and difficult to keep pace with at cycling. In winter the entire family, staying in the mountains, took pleasure in skiing."

In September 1938, the young king and the prince temporarily returned to the Kingdom and sent letters to Cleon regularly.

One of these letters proves both kings' sense of humour and good ties with Cleon. In the letter dated Nov 27, 1938, King Ananda Mahidol wrote: "We are not suffering from heat, but from mosquitoes. Here is a specimen killed by The Monkey [The Monkey is a member of their imaginary "Patapoum Club"]... BE CAREFUL INSIDE THERE IS AN ANIMAL. DO NOT LET IT FALL ..."

Seventy-five years later, there is still a mosquito squashed between the two pages, with a warning in red ink and in capital letters.

• Continued on page 4

The royal family's postcards sent from Bangkok to tutor Cleon Seraidaris.

OLD PHOTOS AND DOCUMENTS COURTESY OF LYSANDRE C. SERAIDARIS