

SILK MAN'S HOME TO KEEP HIS ART

Thompson's Collection Will Remain in Thailand

The famous Bangkok art collection of James H. W. Thompson, missing silk manufacturer, will be perpetuated in his home in the Thai capital as a museum.

This was agreed upon at a meeting last Monday, in Oyster Bay, L.I., between the missing man's nephew, Henry B. Thompson 3d, of Oyster Bay, and Prince Achavadit Diskul, president of the Siam Society, of Bangkok.

The agreement, made known yesterday, averted the possibility of a bitter court struggle for ownership of the collection. Both the Siam Society and the missing man's nephew had filed applications for interim administration with the Civil Court in Bangkok.

The court will appoint a conservator in August to administer the estate for the next six years. Under Thai law, a missing person's estate must be administered by a court appointee for seven years after the owner's disappearance.

"The house and the art will be perpetuated as a museum," Mr. Thompson said. "The Siam Society and I will operate it as a sort of trust for the next six years. We will agree on the conservator to be appointed in August. The proceeds from the museum will continue to go to the Blind Society of Bangkok."

He said the Siam Society was justifiably worried that the art collection, "most of it irreplaceable," might be broken up and somehow find its way out of the country.

Mr. Thompson, a securities dealer who once spent a month in Bangkok, said he had never had any intention of moving the collection from his uncle's home.

Tentatively, Mr. Thompson and the Siam Society have also agreed that the museum be open to the public four days a week instead of two, as it has been. The museum guides are volunteers, Mr. Thompson said.

James Thompson first visited Thailand during World War II as an officer of the Office of Strategic Services, a predecessor

of the Central Intelligence Agency, and stayed to revitalize the silk industry. He disappeared without a trace in the Malaysian jungle a year ago last March.

Mr. Thompson's reputation as a man of many talents and many connections gave rise to speculation that he had dropped out of sight on an undercover mission connected either with the war in Vietnam or with a much-feared Thai politician now living in Communist China. But no shred of evidence has been unearthed.

Five months after Mr. Thompson vanished, his sister, Katherine Wilson Wood, was beaten to death in her home near Wilmington, Del. The

case, considered by some a coincidence, remains unsolved.

Witnesses here who say they saw Mr. Thompson draw up a will in favor of his nephew are unable to find it. Readily available, however, is a previous will, which the witnesses say he canceled, that leaves his estate in Thailand to the Siam Society.

Witnesses say Mr. Thompson drew up the new will in anger after the Thai Government had confiscated five costly Buddha heads he said he had purchased "to keep in the country."

The estate, valued at \$5-million to \$6-million, is considered one of the world's best assemblages of Thai art.