EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR
LIBRARIANSHIP IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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LIBRARY EDUCATION IN THAILAND - AN EVALUATION

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Library education and training in Thailand and in other South-east Asian countries has been the subject for discussion in several seminars which have taken place in this region. I will not repeat details of what has been said. I will only update some data and merely correct some errors which are due either to a misunderstanding or to an incorrect interpretation of the sources used in the paper on the same subject presented to the first CONSAL.

My contribution to the present CONSAL will be limited to library education at the university and the college of education levels. The main concern of this paper is to do an evaluation of the curriculum, the faculty, library resources and student recruitment.

LIBRARY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

The first library training program in Thailand was introduced by Chulalongkorn University under the auspices of the Fulbright Foundation in 1951 as the university extension program, comprising six basic courses conducted by five American professors of library science during 1951-1956. Seventy-seven librarians completed their studies and were awarded certificates of library science.

Morris A. Gelfand, Unesco expert, said in his evaluation of the program "...these lecturers performed a valuable service. They prepared the way for the introduction of librarianship and gave very useful training to many librarians who are today occupying responsible positions in Thailand."

The Department of Library Science, the first library school in Thailand, was inaugurated in 1955 at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University with authority to grant a Diploma in Library Science. The diploma program lasted until 1967. Since 1968 it has been superseded by the graduate diploma program.

At present there are four library schools at the following universities: Chulalongkorn, Thammasat, Chiangmai and Ramkamhaeng, and the library school of the College of Education, Prasarnmit. Chiangmai University is in Chiangmai, the northern province of Thailand; the rest are in Bangkok. All library science programs with beginning dates and type of degrees awarded are presented in Table 1.

It is evident that the undergraduate program prevails in Thai library schools since it is offered by three library schools; only two schools offer graduate programs. The diploma program of Chulalongkorn University and the Specialist program of the College of Education, Prasarnmit were suspended: other degree programs at these schools are continuing.

Requirements for admission to the undergraduate programs of the library schools at Thammasat, Chiangmai and Ramkamhaeng universities are on the same basis. Students majoring in library science take library science courses of 45-48 credit hours in their second, third and fourth years of study. At Chulalongkorn University, students choose their majors in their third and fourth years of study and take only 32 credit hours.

For admission to a one-year graduate diploma program, a student must have a Bachelor's degree. Chulalongkorn University requires a Bachelor's degree in library science with at least a B average, while the College of Education, Prasarnmit accepts a Bachelor's...
degree in education with the same grade average.

CURRICULA

The statements of purposes adopted by library schools focus on their contribution to knowledge in librarianship by means of the production of well-trained librarians to serve the Thai community through the various types of libraries. Despite the difference in the scope and the depth of training in library schools, each school is aware of the needs of the country in varying aspects which reflect in their curricula.

Since library education in Thailand is of American origin, the American influence is strong in courses of study. The undergraduate programs in library schools include Libraries and Society; Classification and Cataloguing of Books; Reference Materials and Services; Selection of Library Materials; and Library Administration. In addition, a course in Cataloguing and Classification of Thai Books is offered, whereas knowledge on the various aspects of Thai librarianship form an integral part of most courses. The traditional bibliography courses comprise Bibliography of the Humanities, Bibliography of the Social Sciences, and Bibliography of the Sciences; at least one of which is required of each student. Field work is made compulsory in all schools.

All library schools have elective courses in the undergraduate programs; the number of courses and the emphasis vary. Chulalongkorn University offers also courses on Bibliography of Southeast Asia and Bibliography of Special Subjects. In view of the need for trained archivists to work in the National Archives, two courses were initiated, namely, Administration of Archival Materials and Rare Books and Manuscripts. A course in Mechanization of Library Information Services was recently included to acquaint students with the new development of library technology.

Elective courses of the undergraduate programs that library schools have in common comprise courses on History of Books and Printing; Children's Literature; and School Libraries. Thammasat and Ramkamhaeng universities also offer courses on other types of libraries: special, public and university, whereas Chulalongkorn University includes these courses in its graduate program.

The curriculum of the Master's program of Chulalongkorn University is extensive in its scope. Within this program, students acquire not only advanced knowledge of library skills and theory, but also the ability to view a specific library in world context.
libraries, our graduates cannot contribute to public libraries due to the lack of positions for qualified librarians.

Ban Som Dej Teachers' College

Mention should be made here of another library science program lower than the university level offered by Ban Som Dej Teachers' College. It is a one-year course formerly offered by those holding certificates from secondary schools. Certificates in Education are awarded upon the completion of the courses. The purpose of the program is to train people to work as library assistants in elementary and secondary schools.

Since 1972 the course has been upgraded, a Higher Certificate in Education is awarded. Forty credit hours of library science courses are required. Courses offered are similar to those at the university level, but the scope and content of each course are limited. Field work is also required of each student. The program has not been very popular among students; only 22 students are enrolled this year.

CONCLUSION

The curricula of library schools in Thailand have been built up on a sound basis to respond to the needs of the country. Although there is no official standard for library education in Thailand, the curriculum of each library school has to be approved by the university council and National Education Council. Problems of library schools in Thailand are more or less the same as what has been reported to the first CONSAL. The shortage of lecturers and of professional literature especially publications in the Thai language, is acute. The small production of trained librarians fails to meet the demands of libraries to fill in their posts throughout the country. The needs of lecturers to do graduate work or take refresher courses in library schools of Western countries have not been fulfilled. It is hoped that cooperation among library schools in the region will help promote the development of library education in Thailand and result in the exchange of lecturers and library resources.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


