

Southeast Asian Studies
in the Balance
Reflections from America



Sponsored by the

JOINT COMMITTEE ON SOUTHEAST ASIA of the
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL and the
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED SOCIETIES

and the

SOUTHEAST ASIA COUNCIL of the
ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN STUDIES

Copyright 1992
The Association for Asian Studies
All Rights Reserved
Manufactured in the U.S.A.

I.S.B.N. 0-924304-09-X
L.C.N. 92-53041

THE ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN STUDIES

894953

M
959.0071173

SOU

17 NOV 2001

Perpustakaan Negara
Malaysia

Southeast Asian
Studies
in the Balance
Reflections
from
America

Edited by

Charles Hirschman

Charles F. Keyes

Karl Hutterer

with the assistance of
G. Carter Bentley

The Association for Asian Studies
Ann Arbor, Michigan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very grateful for support from the Ford, Luce, and Johnson Foundations, which made the conference at Wingspread possible. Dr. Terry Lautz, Program Director for Asia at the Luce Foundation, and Dr. Peter Stanley, then Director of the Education and Culture Program at the Ford Foundation, played a catalytic role by convening a small planning meeting in New York which brought together several scholars with Mr. Charles W. Bray, President of the Johnson Foundation. The facilities at Wingspread in Racine, Wisconsin, which were provided by the Johnson Foundation, offered an attractive and stimulating environment for the conference. We also are grateful to Dr. Toby Volkman, Staff Associate at the Social Science Research Council, who provided the staff support for the project. Professor L.A. Peter Gosling, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Association for Asian Studies, provided welcome encouragement as we moved to bring the results of the conference to publications. Finally, we want to thank all of the participants at the conference and ask their understanding for not being able to present all of their insights and reflections within this volume.

CH

CFK

KH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		iv
FOREWORD	by James C. Scott	1
A CONFERENCE AT WINGSPREAD AND RETHINKING SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES	by Charles F. Keyes	9
THE CHANGING ECOLOGY OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES, 1950-1990	by Benedict R. Anderson	25
THE STATE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES	by Charles Hirschman	41
SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES IN AMERICA: REFLECTIONS ON THE HUMANITIES	by Frank E. Reynolds	59
DIMENSIONS OF THE TEACHING OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES	by John U. Wolff	75
PROBLEMS OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION: THE CASE OF THAI	by Robert J. Bickner	93
SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION	by Richard D. Lambert	125
EPILOGUE	by Karl Hutterer	135
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT WINGSPREAD		145

was low, and they had solid pensions to which to look forward. Promotions came slowly but regularly, calibrated largely by seniority. They rarely had what we think of now as "large research grants," but many of their studies were financed out of the colonial budget, the allocating of which was mainly determined by their fellow bureaucrats. It was not of great matter to their employers whether or not they published a great deal, provided the required reports kept steadily coming in. When they did write for publication, it was usually for their own local, colonial journals, such as the *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient* (BEFEO), the *Bijdrage tot de taal-, land en volkenkunde* (Bijdrage), or the *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (JMBRAS). Furthermore, they typically lived for many years, often for their scholarly lifetimes, in the countries they studied. Quite often they married Southeast Asian women, or kept them as mistresses; a few had long relationships with Southeast Asian men. Most of the "greats" were fluent in the contemporary mainstream vernaculars, even if, for reasons to be mentioned below, their linguistic talents were usually oriented elsewhere. "Access" to people and materials was not a big problem because, after all, they were officials of an autocratic state. Life was generally predictable and its pace unhurried.

What were the characteristic contours of the scholarship produced by these people, and how did their "ecology" mold them? We know the fields in which they excelled: precolonial history, archaeology, epigraphy, philology, and linguistics; also, to varying extents, literary studies, ethnology, Buddhist and Islamic studies, economics, demography, and rural sociology.

Much of the work in the latter fields was directly commissioned by the colonial state, for its own policing and developmental purposes. The conditions that led to unexpected peasant uprisings, puzzling resistances by remote mountain tribes, or flashflood riots by religious or ethnic groups, could best—so thought the colonial state after 1900, after several decades of internal and external criticism by savants in the metropole and on the spot—be systematically explored by scholarly methods. The same applied to the problems of rural indebtedness, landlessness, rural-urban migrations, and so forth. In the case of the former fields—what we might call the humanities—the situation was more complex. There was an obvious practical need for good dictionaries, grammars, and language training manuals, since colonial administrations by the later nineteenth century recognized the need for "intellectual access" to peoples they governed but did not intend, in any large way, to

FOREWORD

James C. Scott

Southeast Asianists are hardly the only regional specialists to engage in periodic rituals of self-diagnosis. If we seem to do it less frequently than Africanists or Latin Americanists, it is surely not because we are in more robust health or are more smug. In fact, the reasons why we get together rarely to bemoan our collective condition may simply indicate how dire it is: how scattered and marginal we are within the academy, how the cultural and historical diversity of the region we study divides us--what do the student of rice planting in Ilocos and the student of Burman court poetry have to say to each other--and how Southeast Asia as a field of study has a stronger administrative presence than an intellectual presence.

On the other hand, a decade ago it wasn't clear whether we'd even be here in any recognizable form to take our own temperature in 1990. I credit the institutional presence of SEASSI (Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute) and the farsightedness of the Luce Foundation with the very modest health we now enjoy.

The papers in this volume represent the most detailed, mature, critical, and constructive appraisal of *any* "area studies" enterprise I have read. There is little self-promotion in these assessments and a great deal of careful reflection about the intellectual history of Southeast Asian studies. Above all, the papers by John Wolff, Robert Bickner, and Richard Lambert, when taken together, offer a searching analysis of the core of our specialty: language training. The great diversity of languages in Southeast Asia means that our problems are several orders of magnitude greater than the language problems faced by Latin American or African studies. This, it could be argued, is still our greatest practical problem, despite the achievements of SEASSI. Ben Anderson, Charles Hirschman, Charles Keyes, and Karl Hutterer each examines our intellectual and institutional history in order to portray what we have become, what ails us, and how we might proceed. Finally, Frank Reynolds suggests that what many perceive as our besetting handicap, namely the great linguistic, religious, and cultural diversity of the region, may,

paradoxically, be our greatest strength. The emphasis on syncretism, contact, and mixed genres that so occupies contemporary cultural and literary studies is, after all, the hallmark of Southeast Asian history.

As far as I can tell, some fundamental ailments still afflict us—ailments that it will take more than SEASSI and Luce to cure. What I hope to do in this brief preface is to sketch one view of what's ailing us without much, I'm afraid, in the way of a prescription.

U.S. POLITICS AND THE FIELD

We are all too well aware of how intimately our fortunes have been tied to America's rise and decline as a great power. Most of us at this conference were trained in the heyday of American hegemony. The vicissitudes of state interests not only influenced when we would grow and when we would shrink; they also influenced *how* we would grow.

We are, of course, dominated by the social sciences which themselves were expanding rapidly in American universities during the 1950s and 1960s. Not only was the knowledge of Southeast Asian languages, societies, and cultures deemed essential for America's new global role, but the social sciences were seen as directly germane to understanding economic growth, modernization, and political stability or instability. By European standards, Southeast Asian studies here is something of a freak, relatively overdeveloped when it comes to political science and anthropology, woefully underdeveloped when it comes to literature, arts, music, classical studies, and contemporary popular culture. Lacking a tradition of Orientalism that, for all its prejudices, would have given us something of an anchor against political winds, we moved in the direction the wind blew.

We pay dearly for this gross imbalance. First, it means that we are prone to reproduce the imbalance in the future since we lack the institutional means to correct it for ourselves. Students assume that the options available to them are more-or-less what they see before them, and it is a rare student indeed who would set out to learn something we are unable to introduce. In short, this is a problem we are not likely to solve on our own with our internal resources.

The price we have paid for a one-sided scholarship is enormous. Consider, for example, the *minute* scholarly sediment left behind by American military intervention in Indochina. It truly boggles the mind how little we have to show. Among those who were trained in the midst of the war and immediately after, many have either left the

field altogether or else practice it elsewhere (e.g., David Marr, David Chandler, Alexander Woodside). And if we ask what remains in terms of the study of Vietnamese arts, literature, classical history, and folk culture, the answer: virtually nothing. Hùynh Sanh Thông's remarkable effort to preserve and translate Vietnamese literature is the exception that proves the rule; it is a one-man effort run on a shoestring. The students (some of them Vietnamese-American) who now flock to films and courses on *our* war in Vietnam will look largely in vain for courses that will give them a deep and rich appreciation of Vietnamese history and culture. As a result, the Vietnamese become largely the native backdrop against which the war was fought. Khmer and Laotian studies are barely visible. A combination of our own historical imbalance, the short attention span of the policy-makers and federal funders, and, it must be added, not a little institutional shortsightedness have left us with very little in the way of a foundation on which to build.¹

A final cost of our imbalance as a field bears on our ability to attract and train outstanding students. My vantage point may be unrepresentative, but it seems to me that relatively few students come to Southeast Asian studies because they have been "inspired" by a social science course or even the availability of language training. Most of the students I have trained are either Southeast Asians themselves or Americans who have spent some time in Southeast Asia (American Field Service, accompanying working parents, junior year abroad, tourism) and have fallen in love with a place and a culture. Social science is hardly the stuff of romance, however necessary it may be for other purposes. SEASSI and some of the larger campus programs are getting better at exposing students to dance, literature, music, and cuisine, abetted often by a growing student population from Southeast Asia. What I want to emphasize here is that we, by and large, do not have the kinds of programs that attract students to a whole culture and society. In my

¹ Burmese studies offers, I think, a stark contrast. Since it has been effectively closed to serious western research since 1962 and yet not particularly the target of great power rivalries, it has languished. *What we do have*, however, is concentrated either in the study of classical political systems, art, and architecture, thanks largely to Michael Aung Thwin and Richard Cooler, or, more peripherally, in the study of contemporary political and human rights issues. Here we've got a kind of Orientalism—and a very good one—by default. It will be diagnostic, I think, to see what we create in the wake of the apparent new political opening in Burma.

experience, Russian studies, African studies, and Chinese studies are much more effective along these lines. We, on the other hand, get the students who are already smitten and seek us out and, when we get them, we feed them a thinner gruel than they deserve.

DISCIPLINES AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

Since we *do* lack an institutional base that would intellectually justify Southeast Asian studies we are more hostage to the hegemonic grip of the disciplines than European or Japanese scholarship on Southeast Asia. Faculty are hired, promoted, and rewarded according to how they satisfy the guild requirements of their discipline. Graduate students are evaluated, recommended, and hired according to disciplinary criteria. The esteem of Southeast Asianists for one's work has very little practical market value; as the popular slang would have it, the esteem of other Southeast Asianists and 75¢ will get you a cup of coffee.

It is common to deplore this state of affairs. It has very powerful practical effects. As the student or scholar decides which questions to ask, how much passion to devote to language study and cultural competence, which audience to address, all the incentives argue for keeping both eyes on the discipline. I want to make it clear that the influences of the disciplines are, at least in principle, not wholly deplorable. Surely we do not want to recreate a sealed off Orientalism in which the study of, say, the role of the *sangha* in the Pagan period, the creation of freehold tenure in the Irrawaddy Delta, or the separatist revolts against the contemporary Union of Burma are not linked to what we know analytically and comparatively about the sociology of religion, the comparative study of colonial land tenure, or theories of ethnic identity and mobilization respectively. An attention to what the relevant disciplines can contribute is the necessary (but not sufficient) condition of reflective, provocative work. At its best we would hope that the best work in this spirit would, in turn, play a significant role in reshaping work within the disciplines. This is unarguably the case with the work of Ben Anderson, Clifford Geertz, and Tony Reid, and, if my guess is right, it is likely to become the case for more recent work by John Bowen, Bob Hefner, Ai-hwa Ong, and Ann Stoler. The preponderance of anthropologists, or social scientists heavily influenced by anthropology, is not surprising here. For the study of cultural contact and change, the unparalleled diversity of Southeast Asia makes it the counterpart of what the Galapagos Islands represented to naturalists such as Darwin: a natural laboratory.

What is to be deplored, however, is an excessive attention to what, in retrospect, turn out to be shallow and ephemeral fads. Perhaps my own discipline is particularly subject to this: how many scholarly careers were diverted and damaged in the 1960s by the belief that research consisted in collecting survey data that would advance this or that theory of political modernization? Here it is useful to reflect on the bureaucratic and careerist aspects of the tremendous growth of associations and journals for every conceivable sub-disciplinary specialty. Some recent studies of this phenomenon (itself a new sub-discipline!) suggest that the *total actual readership* for a typical article in a social science journal (including both the most and least distinguished) is *less than two people*. Even allowing for the fact that the number of readers is no reliable guide to the long-run value of an article and generously imagining the readership to be double the reported figure, the implications are sobering. On the worst reading, it suggests that much scholarly activity resembles a self-perpetuating Rube Goldberg machine for scratching our own backs, the purpose of which is to win tenure and promotion for its operators but which may have few other effects. For the distinguished crowd at this conference, such social facts about the rank-and-file of our disciplines are difficult but important to keep in mind: the hegemonic influence of the disciplines on the shape of scholarship does not necessarily reflect their intellectual influence or weight.

As Ben Anderson points out in his essay, disciplinary theory-markets carry an "inbuilt obsolescence." Not unlike the world of fashion, timing is everything and this year's style carries no value next year. For the imported-theory market, the product cycle seems shorter and shorter. Work that is entirely in this spirit may make reputations in the short run, but unless it is very strong indeed, it risks disappearing without a trace when the theory that drove it has fallen out of fashion. This is especially the case with those post-modern modes of analysis in which the smaller the shard of empirical information (a fragment of a folk song, a classificatory term, a vignette from the archives), the greater the interpretive freedom of the author.

SOME HOPEFUL SIGNS

If what ails us originates with the political distortions of our infancy that left us hobbled and with the sway the disciplines have over regional studies, then it would seem that our problems are intractable. Nevertheless, there are a few countervailing influences

which are worth noting, if only because they help mitigate the extremes of North American disciplinary insularity.

First, and most important, we are afforded today a much larger area-oriented audience of readers and critics than ever before. No one writing on the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, or Thailand can fail to learn from the work increasingly produced by a critical mass of indigenous scholars with their own agendas. They may often have been trained to a disciplinary insularity here in the U.S., but they are rarely unaffected by the course of rather autonomous local scholarly debates. If they are distracted from their work it is more often due to administrative, consulting, and political work than by disciplinary pressures. Work done in America, Western Europe, and Japan of interest to these local scholarly communities is quickly disseminated and frequently translated as well. The day has either arrived or is not long off, when *the* major critical audience for work on Southeast Asian societies will be the local audience. When we add to this audience the communities of Southeast Asianists in Australia, Western Europe, and Japan which, if they have disciplinary blinders are likely to have different ones than those prevailing in North America, the parochial world of American social science becomes increasingly untenable. Looking ahead, one can imagine a scholarly training in which American Ph.D. candidates would virtually need a year of *training* at universities or institutes in Southeast Asia in order to carry out their work successfully. It will, hopefully, be a world in which a reputation as, say, an Indonesia specialist will depend basically on the critical reception of one's work locally and on its simultaneous publication in the local language. Becoming merely an Indonesia specialist with an exclusively North American audience may still be possible, but it will represent a second-class citizenship.

Economic development and a modicum of political pluralism are the necessary conditions of effective local intellectual communities. Thus, scholarship about Burma, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, lacking an indigenous critical audience, still partakes of an intellectual atmosphere more reminiscent of the 1960s. On second thought, they more resemble the situation in many African countries (e.g., Tanzania, Ghana, Nigeria) where authoritarianism and economic bankruptcy have nearly succeeded in dismantling once vibrant, if fragile, systems of university education.

Another hopeful sign is the arrival at the university of a first generation of Southeast Asian Americans. The Vietnamese and Filipinos are the most visible, but Burmese, Khmer, Hmong, Indonesians, and Thais are arriving as well. Most of them, following

the standard pattern of the first generation born here, are definitely not interested in Southeast Asian studies. Enough of them, however, are interested, and they can and will make an impact on the university. [Thirty Vietnamese students insisting on classes in Vietnamese are far more persuasive to a Yale Dean than the usual whining by the Council on Southeast Asian Studies.] They will also have a built-in orientation as well as, in many cases, the sort of cultural and linguistic background that would take anyone else years to acquire.

Finally, the very smallness of the field gives us a paradoxical advantage. For any shortcoming we can identify in the depth and breadth of our intellectual programs, the remedy actually consists in recruiting or training a quite small number of people. Four more Burma specialists would virtually double the national stockpile! Six scholars working on the Hinduized states of Southeast Asia would come close to world hegemony!

Two final observations. Perhaps our main goal is to create an intellectual community that can hold its own against the disciplines. As the health food promoters put it, "You are what you eat." So with scholars, "You are what you read and to whom you talk." If we can provide an intellectual sustenance that is rich and critically powerful, it will help promote work that is not just parasitical on the disciplines. The aim is not to ignore the disciplines but to make certain that the dialogue is balanced enough to provide real choices.

My closing, and perhaps parochial, point is that Southeast Asian studies has been far too resolutely centered on the study of states, elites, classical texts, formal religious doctrines, the intelligentsia, cities, and formal political arrangements and far too neglectful of the periphery, the world of non-elites, oral culture, popular religion, the countryside, non-formal practices. Although hardly unique to Southeast Asian studies (it is far more pronounced, for example, in Chinese studies), I believe it predisposes us to emphasize continuity, stasis, and to miss basic sources of tension, difference, and contradiction.



A CONFERENCE AT WINGSPREAD AND RETHINKING SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES¹

Charles F. Keyes

In mid-July 1990 thirty-four people gathered at Wingspread, the conference center of the Johnson Foundation, to consider the relationship of Southeast Asian studies to humanistic and social science disciplines. The effort was spurred by the fact that "Southeast Asia" is little understood outside a small group of specialists. Those who gathered at Wingspread recognized that Southeast Asian studies has been difficult to institutionalize in the United States in part because the premises upon which it was founded made it problematic as an area studies field. The participants undertook to rethink these premises in light of new interests which have emerged in the cultural traditions and political economies found in the region and in light of the very significant contributions which specialists in the region have made to the social and humanistic sciences. The participants also considered a number of specific recommendations for future development of the field.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES AS A PROBLEMATIC FIELD

"Southeast Asia" does not exist as a place. Although the National Geographic Society and others use the term as a label on maps they produce, there is no actual geo-political reality which constitutes Southeast Asia. The places which appear to be real on television or in newspapers or in public discourse are the several countries of Asia which lie between China on the north, India on the west, the Pacific Ocean on the east, and Australia on the south. Even these places are quite recent, their boundaries the product of commissions appointed

¹ I am indebted in preparing this paper to G. Carter Bentley for the summary he made of the conference proceedings. In the following, I make reference to some papers which do not appear in this volume as well as to some comments by participants at the conference. A complete listing of both papers and participants is given at the end of this work.

by colonial powers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The artificiality of boundaries notwithstanding, there is much greater name recognition for Vietnam, Cambodia, Burma, Thailand, the Philippines, and even for Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei,² than there is for "Southeast Asia."

"Southeast Asia" also does not evoke, even for those who identify themselves as specialists in this area of the world, one of the great historic cultural traditions. On the contrary, the dominant cultural traditions of the countries of Southeast Asia--those associated with Hindu cults in ancient Cambodia and Java, with Buddhism in Burma, Thailand, Laos and latter-day Cambodia, with Islam in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, with Confucianism and Taoism in Vietnam, or with Catholicism in the Philippines--are usually presented in books and in classrooms as the traditions of other worlds: India, the Middle East, China, or Europe. Although Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity have undergone distinctive developments in the countries of Southeast Asia, they have not been able, at least until quite recently, to stake a claim for studying these traditions within the framework of Southeast Asian rather than some other area studies field. The absence of a single great tradition has also made it extraordinarily difficult to gain institutional acceptance of linguistic and humanities courses on Southeast Asia.

The cultural diversity of Southeast Asia, a consequence not only of influences from outside the region but also of the variety of indigenous traditions, has attracted many anthropologists. Anthropology has, in fact, become the primary discipline in the United States with which specialists on Southeast Asian societies are affiliated. It is noteworthy, however, that a majority of anthropologists who work in the region are not associated with Southeast Asian studies programs and do not identify as Southeast Asianists. Rather, they are specialists on eastern Indonesia, or one or another of the tribal cultures of the mainland, or on the rural traditions of one or, at best, two countries. Their identity as anthropologists has, moreover, been shaped more by theoretical than areal concerns. In other words, the dominance of anthropologists among those in the United States who work in Southeast Asia has indicated not the strength but the fragmentation of the field.

² It is unlikely, however, that many Americans knew of Brunei before the public hearings on the Iran-contra scandal revealed that the Sultan of Brunei had given money for some of the activities undertaken by Col. Oliver North.

When specialists on the region first began to seek institutional recognition for their field, they could not point to a common place or a common tradition which united them. The first Southeast Asian studies programs created in the United States in the early 1950s were given impetus, as Benedict Anderson observes in this volume, primarily by American national security interests. "Southeast Asia" emerged as a strategic category for the United States during World War II as a theater of operations in the allied struggle against Japan. "Southeast Asia" persisted in the immediate postwar period as a label for that subregion of Asia in which American policy supported anticolonial nationalist movements. This strategic interest soon gave way to concern that postcolonial Southeast Asian societies could become vulnerable to the expansion of communism. Southeast Asia gained its greatest credibility as a label for a region defined by United States national security interests during the American war in Indochina. Yet, despite the intensity of warfare in Cambodia and Laos as well as Vietnam, the American use of bases in Thailand, and the potential "domino" effect of the War on other Southeast Asian countries, the War entered popular consciousness as the "Vietnam War."

It is hardly surprising that Southeast Asian studies, which expanded in the period from the 1950s until the mid-1970s, stagnated after America's withdrawal from Indochina in 1972 and the triumph of Communist regimes in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in 1975. This stagnation is well documented in Charles Hirschman's paper included in this volume. Although there were economic as well as political causes, the American military withdrawal from the region significantly undermined the definition of Southeast Asia in strategic terms and, as a consequence, undermined the then dominant rationale for Southeast Asian studies.

A new search for Southeast Asia³ then began. Although the national security conception of Southeast Asia was discredited, the demand for instruction and research about the histories, societies, and cultures of the region began to grow in the 1980s. Part of the discussion at the conference dealt with the factors which generated this growth in demand and the concomitant change in the constituencies interested in Southeast Asia both inside and outside universities.

³ The phrase, "search for Southeast Asia," is used to invoke the name of one of the most popular texts in the field: *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History*, edited by David J. Steinberg (1971, 2nd ed. 1987).

NEW DEMAND FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

One new source of demand for Southeast Asian studies in the 1980s and 1990s can be traced to the resettlement in the United States of several hundred thousand refugees from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Many of those providing social services, teaching English as a second language, serving as sponsors, or preparing news stories on refugees wished to understand the backgrounds from which the latter had come. Some even decided to pursue studies of Vietnamese, Lao, Hmong, or Khmer societies and traditions. There was a new demand not only for formal course work on Southeast Asia, but also for a variety of outreach activities to bring the knowledge of specialists to more general audiences.

By the late 1980s students whose heritage lay in one of the countries of Southeast Asia but who had been raised mainly in the United States began to comprise a significant proportion of Asian American college students. These students came not only from refugee communities but also from communities of migrants—most notably from the Philippines and Thailand—who came to the United States in increasing numbers following the liberalization of immigration laws in 1965. Like other Asian American students, some of those whose roots lay in Southeast Asia began looking for courses on the languages, cultures, and histories of the societies of their forebears. Most Asian Americans of Southeast Asian descent seek courses on their heritage to enrich their academic programs rather than as the basis for a career or even a major. This new demand has prompted rethinking a field which heretofore comprised primarily professional-oriented graduate programs.

Demand for Southeast Asian studies as part of an undergraduate curriculum also comes from another source. Some undergraduate students have become interested in Southeast Asia not because they are Asian Americans but because they have friends who are, or because they have traveled to Southeast Asia. Others have become interested through a study abroad program or because they wish to work in one of the rapidly expanding number of volunteer programs found in several Southeast Asian countries. Some undergraduates have also been drawn to courses on the Vietnam War because of the numerous allusions to the War in the media and in public discourse. Stimulated by what they have learned, some of these students then seek out other courses on Southeast Asia. In short, there has been a significant growth in the 1980s and 1990s in interest among undergraduates in courses on the cultures, histories, and languages of Southeast Asia.

The reshaping of relationships between the United States and Southeast Asian countries has added yet another source of new interest in Southeast Asian studies. In the late 1980s, American political interests in the region began to be reappraised, prompted in part by the emergence of ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) as a significant regional organization. ASEAN, whose members include Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Brunei, has largely succeeded in shifting the initiative for determining how to address regional security problems from the superpowers, and especially from the United States, to the countries in the region itself.⁴ Understanding ASEAN, and the roles played by its member states, has interested not only certain groups within the American government but also scholars and students of international relations.

Changes in the United States' relations with the former countries of Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) and with the Philippines have also stimulated some new interest in Southeast Asian studies. By the late 1980s, the United States had begun to move away from its policy of isolating Vietnam, the Vietnamese-installed government of Cambodia, and Laos, considered to be a dependency of Vietnam. This change in American policy has stimulated interest among specialists in international relations, while the prospect of normalizing American relations with Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos has interested others in traveling to and studying in these countries. Interest in the Philippines has also increased, ironically, because of a growing awareness that the Philippines is finally emerging from under an American shadow. This awareness has been stimulated by the "People Power" uprising that brought down the Marcos regime in early 1986 and by the negotiations leading to the departure of American bases from the Philippines.

As American military involvement in Southeast Asia has receded, trade between the United States and the more affluent of the

⁴ The difference is especially evident when ASEAN is contrasted with the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) which went out of existence following the end of the Vietnam War. The dominant member of SEATO had been the United States, and its members also included the non-Southeast Asian countries of Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Pakistan (France had become an inactive member well before the end of SEATO). The only Southeast Asian members of SEATO were Thailand and the Philippines.

Southeast Asian countries (Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia) has increased. Increased trade relations are also anticipated with Vietnam following normalization. Expanded trade relations have generated yet other types of demands for Southeast Asian studies. Students at a few universities now combine coursework in Southeast Asian studies with majors in business administration. Research on Southeast Asian economic systems is also in demand by American corporations having investments in Southeast Asia and by government agencies involved in formulating trade policies. International political economists have also begun to recognize Southeast Asia as an important setting for research into both the rapidly growing national economies in the region and the comparative impacts of foreign and domestic investments in those economies.

The loss of the old national security justification for Southeast Asian studies, coupled with the contraction in financial support for universities in the late 1970s and early 1980s, came close to dooming the field. The growth of new constituencies has, however, provided Southeast Asian studies with new rationales. In the past five years a number of universities have been persuaded to add Southeast Asian studies and several foundations, most notably Luce and Ford, have invested significant monies to bolster existing programs and to support new ones.

The Wingspread conference was held in part to rethink the field in light of its changed rationales and to consider a strategy for future development. This strategy entails building on the significant contributions which Southeast Asian studies has made to the social sciences and strengthening the traditions of humanistic scholarship which underlie Southeast Asian studies as an area studies field. Considerable attention was devoted to the problems of institutionalizing language and literature instruction, since knowledge of Southeast Asian languages and literatures is central to both social scientific and humanistic research in and about the countries of the region. In short, the conference at Wingspread served to clear away some of the misconceptions about Southeast Asian studies and to begin shaping a viable strategy for its future development.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

A number of papers presented at Wingspread demonstrated how research carried out by specialists working in some part of the region has influenced the social sciences significantly.

One contribution has centered on the relationship of culture to economic and political action. The roots of this inquiry lie in the work, by J.H. Boeke, J.S. Furnivall, Charles Robequain, W.F. Wertheim, and Pierre Gourou, to name only the best known, on the changes in Southeast Asian societies under colonial rule. This approach was carried forward in the postwar period by scholars who focused on transformations associated with the emergence of new nation-states and with the increased integration of local communities into a global economy.

The work of Clifford Geertz, based on research he carried out in Indonesia in the 1950s, has had a profound impact on the thinking of political scientists, agricultural and development economists, historians (including historians of religion), and sociologists, as well as fellow anthropologists. One of his works, *Agricultural Involution* (Geertz 1963), which draws inspiration in part from the prewar work of Boeke, stimulated a debate, involving dozens of scholars from several disciplines, about the relationship between population densities and economic growth in agrarian societies. Other concepts first proposed by Geertz—for example, "internal conversion" and "theater state," both used to interpret Balinese society and culture—have also entered general social science discourse.

Geertz's interest in the culture of power strongly influenced several political scientists whose studies in Southeast Asia have had a much wider theoretical impact. Most notable in this regard is the work of James Scott and Benedict Anderson. Scott's (1976, 1985) studies of rebellions and other forms of peasant resistance against the states which govern them have contributed significantly to the development of "resistance" studies subfields in several social science disciplines. Anderson might be considered the paradigmatic Southeast Asianist since he commands several Southeast Asian languages. He has worked in several countries, and has headed the preeminent Southeast Asian studies program at Cornell University. Anderson has also moved a line of inquiry previously pursued by Geertz to a more general theoretical level. In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* Anderson (1983) explores how "nations" have been constructed through reinterpretations of traditional cultures and have been made into communities with which people identify strongly even though they

can only imagine their connections with others in the same community.

The work of Scott, Anderson, and others demonstrates how the study of comparative politics has benefited from Southeast Asian studies.⁵ The same cannot be claimed, Donald Emmerson argued, for the study of international relations. Emmerson maintained that the preoccupation of Southeast Asianists with cultural factors in the study of politics has prevented Southeast Asian studies from contributing to the field of international relations. That this has occurred, others observed, is a consequence of a fundamental difference between area studies and the study of international relations. Whether this difference can be bridged remained an open question at the end of the conference.

Richard Doner, in his assessment of the relationship between the study of political economy and Southeast Asian studies, was more positive.⁶ While the discourses of the two fields have had little intersection until quite recently, he argued that "a narrowing of the gap has begun." He concluded: "The field of political economy has generated questions and concepts that, if applied creatively, can only deepen our understanding of the region and help consolidate the institutional position of Southeast Asian studies. Simultaneously, the pace and socio-political features of the region's economic growth challenge the statist emphasis of recent work in political economy."⁷

Several others at the conference pointed to additional areas of social science inquiry which have been or continue to be influenced by research carried out in Southeast Asia. These other areas center on the notion of "identity." In the paper I presented, I pointed out that a number of the seminal works in the study of ethnic identity and of ethnic group relations have been written by Southeast Asia specialists (e.g., J. F. Furnivall, E. R. Leach, Clifford Geertz, and G.

⁵ Robert Taylor, speaking at Wingspread, saw the contribution as coming from a very few works of "exceptional quality." Their quality notwithstanding, their impact, he concluded, has been relatively limited. This conclusion appears to reflect the fact that in many departments of Political Science, including Taylor's own at the London School of Oriental and African Studies, comparative politics is not a highly valued field of study.

⁶ Doner's paper has been published separately--see Doner (1991).

⁷ This quotation is taken from the version of the paper presented at Wingspread rather than in its published form (Doner 1991:839), because it speaks to the issue of the institutionalization of Southeast Asian studies.

William Skinner). This field continues to be one in which Southeast Asianists are making significant contributions because, as Wang Gungwu noted in his paper, cultural pluralism is more characteristic of this region than it is of many others. Both Renato Rosaldo and Anna Tsing showed in their papers how work on Southeast Asia has led to a questioning of prevailing theories about gender identity. In turn, Tsing noted that gender issues have oriented much contemporary research by anthropologists working in Southeast Asia.

In discussion, it was pointed out that Southeast Asianists appear to have influenced several areas of social science inquiry to a degree quite disproportionate to their numbers. The problem between Southeast Asian studies and the social sciences seems to lie not so much in Southeast Asianists addressing concerns marginal to the social science disciplines, as some maintained, but in difficulties in recruiting new social scientists to Southeast Asian studies.⁸

Part of the problem lies in the fact that some social science disciplines do not reward those who have area specialties. In this connection, the Ford Foundation recently made a grant to the Social Science Research Council to fund language and area studies fellowships for graduate students in political science, sociology and economics. This program may begin to help redress disciplinary imbalances in social sciences. Moreover, it was suggested, it might provide a model for supporting area studies retraining for social science faculty. Clearly, if the field is to continue its past influence on the social sciences, more support needs to be directed towards recruiting a new generation of social scientists who are also Southeast Asianists.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES AND THE HUMANITIES

Participants at the Wingspread conference agreed that humanistic scholarship and instruction are markedly undeveloped in Southeast Asian studies programs in the United States. The work of pioneering European scholars on the epigraphy, philology, literature, and cultural history (including art and religious history) of the region has inspired very little work by American scholars working on Southeast Asia. The more recent work in Southeast Asian countries themselves by specialists in these fields and in the fields of drama and art has also had little impact in the United States.

⁸ See Hirschman's paper below.

The first Southeast Asian studies programs set up at Cornell and Yale, for reasons given above, emphasized the social sciences. Those trained in Southeast Asian history in America have almost all become specialists on "modern" post eighteenth century rather than on precolonial or ancient history. Most specialists in Southeast Asian languages are linguists rather than students of literature or philology. The teaching of Southeast Asian languages was shaped at the outset by methods developed in World War II to prepare people to use the language for nonscholarly purposes. This approach to language instruction still remains dominant, and instruction in Southeast Asian literature is almost non-existent at American institutions.

A humanistic thrust in Southeast Asian studies has been confined primarily to anthropology and to the closely allied fields of ethnomusicology and (in the United States) prehistoric archaeology. The concentration of humanistic research in these fields has had some strange consequences. Oral traditions of Southeast Asia are more likely to be discussed in courses at American universities than are the rich literary traditions of the region. Indonesian gamelan music is taught to many students, but the *wayang* shadow plays associated with this music are rarely performed or made the subject of coursework. Southeast Asian prehistory is better studied than the classical archaeology of precolonial Southeast Asian societies.

Those who have had the opportunity to work anywhere in the region realize that the cultural traditions of Southeast Asia are too rich and too dynamic to be afterthoughts in fields devoted to the "great" traditions of the world. On the contrary, these traditions cannot be fully understood without taking into account their historical and contemporary manifestations in Southeast Asia. For example, while Buddhism originated in India, it has developed in unique ways in Southeast Asia and is today a more dynamic living tradition in Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia than it is in its country of origin. Similarly, while Islam arose in the Middle East, the largest Islamic country in the world today is Indonesia and Islam there and in Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines, and Thailand has developed in complex ways that differ considerably from Islam in the Middle East. The extensive literary tradition of Vietnam cannot be studied as a provincial branch of Chinese literature; much of this literature was never written in Chinese characters, and the remainder was often unique to Vietnam in both style and substance. Even Catholic and Protestant Christianity, which were implanted in

Southeast Asia through colonial rule, have assumed distinctive characteristics there.

In Southeast Asia today, the published and oral literatures, the arts, the ceremonies and dramas (live or on film or TV), and the music (performed live or on radio or cassette) approach in quantity and variety those of Europe. These cultural productions offer insights not only into the worlds in which Southeast Asians live but also into Southeast Asian views of gender, human rights, ecology, consumerism, and other issues of major concern in the United States and the West more generally.

Some work has begun on making the literary traditions of Southeast Asia more accessible to students and to the general public. The translations project of the Southeast Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies has recently been given new support. The Joint SSRC/ACLS Committee on Southeast Asia has begun a project on literature in translation, which aims at linking the study of Southeast Asian literatures with the study of translation and literary theory. There is much to be gained by bringing writers and specialists in literature from Southeast Asia to teach at American universities, a suggestion applicable also to authors living in the United States who write in Southeast Asian vernaculars (especially in Vietnamese).

Participants at the conference considered whether an "intellectual anchor," to use a term proposed by both James Scott and Karl Hutterer, could be found for the field in the absence of a common religious or literary tradition. Frank Reynolds suggested that perhaps history of religion could serve this end. He points out, in his paper below, that although the discipline of history of religion has been strongly influenced by the work of certain European scholars of Southeast Asia—Paul Mus's work providing the major case in point—it has developed without much connection to Southeast Asian studies. Archaeology and comparative literature were also suggested as fields which could support the humanistic development of the field. The conference initiated what we hope will be a continuing discussion of how a humanistic base for Southeast Asian studies might best be constructed within American universities.

DEVELOPMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES

Access to the cultural traditions of Southeast Asia, whether past or present, requires, in the first instance, that one know one of the languages of the region. Much time at Wingspread was spent

discussing the problems besetting Southeast Asian language programs. The two papers by John Wolff and Robert Bickner describe some of these problems. Richard Lambert, drawing on his long experience with programs teaching less commonly taught languages, also offered reflections on the problems and suggestions for their solution. Participants at the conference clearly recognized that the problems related to teaching Southeast Asian languages are the most pressing ones facing the field.

The problems which plague instructional programs in Southeast Asian languages stem primarily from the fact that there are eight national languages in Southeast Asia—Burmese, Thai, Lao, Khmer or Cambodian, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Malay, and Pilipino (Tagalog)—rather than just one or two. Of these, only Thai, Indonesian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese are taught regularly at more than two institutions in the United States. Lao, Khmer, and Malay are taught irregularly and Burmese has become established at only one institution, and that quite recently. Demand for these national languages, let alone for regional languages like Javanese or other important languages such as Mon, Ilocano, Cebuano, Balinese, Hmong, and Karen, is so limited that universities find it difficult to establish positions for faculty who could teach these languages.

With only a small number of such positions, very few people have been motivated to acquire the expertise to become teachers. Even some of those employed in permanent positions are distressed at having to devote most of their time to language instruction rather than to the disciplinary research for which they were trained. The limited number of professionals involved has also limited the time devoted to improving the quality of instruction. The participants at Wingspread recognized there are no simple solutions to the problems besetting instructional programs in Southeast Asian languages. Several concrete suggestions did, however, emerge.

National Organization

There is significant aggregate demand from throughout the United States for instruction in at least some Southeast Asian languages (e.g., Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, and Tagalog). This fact alone indicates the importance of having a national organization promoting instruction in Southeast Asia languages. There was agreement at Wingspread that the Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI) is best suited to carry out this function, although other national institutions might also play significant roles. SEASSI offers the only national-level context where all major Southeast

Asian languages are taught on a regular basis. It was noted that SEASSI has recently been reorganized to make it more effective, and that it now has a small executive committee charged with assuring continuity from one summer to the next and with securing the necessary funding.

SEASSI lends itself well to providing training for teachers, to introducing new methods and texts, and to testing guidelines for competency-based language instruction. As SEASSI is also a cooperative endeavor between language and area specialists, it is well suited for shaping language programs which meet both the standards of pedagogical specialists and the substantive needs of scholars working in Southeast Asia. It was recognized that SEASSI can fulfill its promise only if it is articulated with academic-year programs at U.S. institutions and programs for American and other overseas students in Southeast Asian countries. Such articulation will be a primary function of a new language advisory committee for SEASSI.

Institutional Development

Neither SEASSI, nor any other national entity, can replace universities as a secure base for Southeast Asian language instruction. Because of low demand for instruction, there are currently very few permanent tenure-track or even instructor-level positions in Southeast Asian languages at American universities. Even those that exist are situated in diverse departments and are relatively insecure. Two types of suggestions were made for strengthening institutional support for instruction in Southeast Asian languages:

1. Target new constituencies to increase enrollments. Undergraduates who for a variety of reasons have become interested in one or another country in Southeast Asia provide the most obvious source for expanded enrollments. In addition, some new enrollment might be obtained by recruiting non-matriculated students—for instance, government personnel who are to be posted abroad, NGO (non-governmental organization) workers, and business people who work in Southeast Asia.
2. Develop cooperative year-long programs for some languages. If funding were available, students from a number of universities could spend a year at one institution where they could receive instruction not available at their home institutions. For example, one institution might (as Cornell

has done in the FALCON program for Indonesian) offer intensive instruction in a language. Or a university might assume responsibility for instruction in a language for which there is very limited demand (e.g., Burmese or Khmer). This last option would mean that several programs would support a permanent language position at another university.

Articulation with In-country Programs

Some participants at Wingspread noted that an increasing number of Southeast Asian language students receive part of their language instruction in one of the Southeast Asian countries themselves. There are currently at least a half dozen study abroad programs in Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam which take students from universities throughout the United States (and often elsewhere), and at least as many programs for students from one particular college or university. There are likely to be more such programs established over the next few years. Others have studied in organized programs offered by institutions in certain Southeast Asian countries (Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia in particular). Yet others have been trained in Peace Corps programs in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Teachers from some in-country programs have taught at SEASSI and a few also have held temporary or part-time positions in regular year-long programs at American universities.

Given the growing importance of language programs in a number of Southeast Asian countries, there is a strong need to articulate Southeast Asian language instruction in the United States with the in-country programs. SEASSI appears to be the obvious means to do so since it provides a setting where instructors from programs in Southeast Asia come together with instructors from programs in the United States.

Quality of Instruction

Because of the fragmented demand and the very few people involved, instruction in Southeast Asian languages has varied significantly in quality from place to place. Where textbooks exist, they are often outdated. Teachers do not agree on methods. A "hundred flowers" approach to Southeast Asian language instruction is no longer possible because of pressure from the Department of Education to develop proficiency test guidelines as a concomitant of support under Title VI.

Cooperation is obviously needed to improve the quality of instruction, as is financial support to implement decisions reached cooperatively. Instructors of Indonesian and Thai have begun cooperatively developing guidelines for competency-based instruction. Cooperation for teacher training has already begun through SEASSI. It is also possible that the SEASSI language advisory committee could set priorities for production of new textbooks. Ultimately, however, new texts can be produced only if sufficient funding is available and if the people involved can obtain the requisite release time from their regular teaching assignments.

A FIELD IN TRANSITION

The Wingspread conference permitted an assessment of Southeast Asian studies at a time when the field is undergoing significant change. The field has emerged from a period when its status was quite problematic and has come to constitute a distinctive area studies field in American academia. In its new guise, strength can be found in the significant contributions specialists on the area have made to the study of major issues in the social sciences. The field is also justified because it provides the only structure available in America to meet the growing interest among students and others in the histories, cultures, and societies of Southeast Asian countries. A major challenge facing the field today is to adapt to markedly different constituencies than it served in the past. The field can no longer be focused primarily on graduate training for a small number of social scientists. New courses need to be devised to appeal to the growing number of undergraduates who are interested in one or another aspect of Southeast Asia. Such courses center on questions of gender, ethnic, or national identity. Others might be situated within the framework of comparative religion or comparative literature. Yet others might deal with political economy or international relations. These new courses will require new texts. Undergraduate programs also need to be more attentive than in the past to the possibilities for study or volunteer service within Southeast Asia.

The changes in constituencies have occurred not only within colleges and universities but also outside of them. There is a new demand for information about some parts of Southeast Asia among schoolchildren, teachers, and community groups. Outreach in the schools is important because it can stimulate interest which will be carried on by students when they enter undergraduate programs. The discussion at Wingspread of how the field might reach the business community was somewhat inconclusive, but it was

suggested that in the future a meeting might be held to bring together business people interested in Southeast Asia with specialists on the area. Financial support for Southeast Asian studies depends ultimately on public interest because such interest generates both the visibility which bolsters proposals to funding agencies and the motivation for individuals and corporations to make gifts supporting the field.

A second challenge comes from the very productive and provocative work of humanists and social scientists in many Southeast Asian countries. Southeast Asian studies is no longer a colonial enterprise entailing the study of "them" by "us." On the contrary, "they"--the Thai, the Indonesians, the Vietnamese, the Filipinos, the Malays, and so on--are engaged in pursuing research on their own, and sometimes neighboring, societies that is much deeper and richer than any carried out by Americans. Only by undertaking collaborative projects--conferences, training workshops, joint research--and establishing institutional linkages between programs in the United States and centers and institutes in Southeast Asia can the field of Southeast Asian studies in the United States continue to develop. The future of the field lies in transcending its origins and in becoming a process of scholarly exchange flowing both ways across national boundaries.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Doner, Richard F. 1991. "Approaches to the Politics of Economic Growth in Southeast Asia," *Journal of Asian Studies* 50:818-49.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1963. *Agricultural Involution*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Scott, James C. 1976. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in South-east Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- . 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Steinberg, David J. 1971. *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History*. New York: Praeger. [2nd. rev. ed. 1987. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.]

THE CHANGING ECOLOGY OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES, 1950-1990

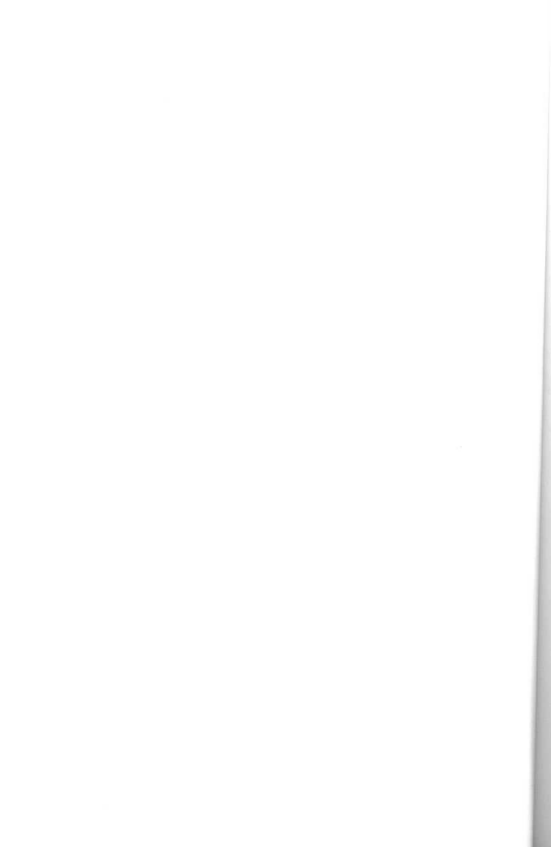
Benedict R. Anderson

Forty years—roughly the span of a single scholar's productive life—is not very long for a complex field of study. But now that a fourth generation of Southeast Asianists is emerging from graduate school, it is long enough for the peculiarities of Southeast Asian studies in the United States to take on an appearance of normalcy. I want here to reflect on the abnormalities of this normalcy, for I think it may be becoming a real, if mostly invisible, obstacle to richer scholarly growth in the future.

The simplest way to grasp the oddity—culturally and historically specific—of Southeast Asian studies in the United States is to remind ourselves of its productive antithesis. Most of us working in the humanities or social sciences find it quite normal to cite respectfully the work of scholars such as Georges Coedès, Paul Mus, John Furnivall, Bertram Schrieke, Theodoor Pigeaud, Richard Winstedt, Ralston Hayden, Roy Barton, Wilhelm Stutterheim, G.L. Luce, or Pierre Gourou—even though most of it was done well over half a century ago.¹ But the "ecology" in which these scholars lived and worked was quite different from the one with which we are experientially familiar.

To start with, very few of them had doctorates, or even M.A.'s, and only a small minority played a substantial role in the mediocre universities the colonial powers began setting up after 1900. They were, first and foremost, civil servants—colonial bureaucrats, if you prefer. They had regular salaried positions in colonial departments of education, finance, native affairs, and general administration; in state archaeological and linguistic institutes; in state museums, and the like. They were not highly paid, but the cost of colonial living

¹ How much of our work will be read respectfully in 2040?



train to speak the metropolitan languages. But there was also--and this is a subject on which research is badly needed--a confluence between a deeper colonial project and the everyday lives of colonial civil servants.

In the absence of television, radio, movies, good libraries and bookshops, it was natural for many intelligent administrators--fighting off boredom and provincial *accidie*--to dabble in local history, antiquities, etc., in a gentlemanly nineteenth century manner. The topics of greatest interest were those that were least contaminated by the colonial presence itself, that is, those pertaining to the precolonial past. The prestige of William Jones's pioneering work on Sanskrit and Jean Champollion's in deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics also encouraged the patient excavatory work done on difficult "dead" languages such as Old Mon, Old Burmese, and Old Javanese. The state itself, for complicated reasons I have tried to address elsewhere (Anderson 1991), found it had an interest in establishing a "noble ancestry" on the tropical spot, and in demonstrating its magnanimity and superiority by supporting the spectacular recovery of "forgotten" local pasts.² Hence the astonishing amount of money spent on archaeological work and museums by typically skinflint colonial regimes. Furthermore--and this was true not merely of archaeology--civil servant scholars could count on the backup of the colonial state's archives (to which they usually had easy access), "free" research assistants among the administration's armies of native clerks, the low-wage labor of masons, and so forth.

Among the drawbacks to this colonial scholarship, however, was an almost complete neglect of political science/government, modern history, and sociology (outside the rural context). Serious scholarly enquiry in these fields would inevitably have called into question the autocratic colonial project itself. Most of the political reporting was done "internally" by the secret polices, the prosecutions, and the territorial administrators. What did appear was mostly of a conservative and conformist cast and is today almost wholly unreadable. Dissenters usually faced administrative sanctions, even forcible removal from the colony. A second drawback was provincialism: except in very specialized fields the scholar bureaucrats rarely knew much of what their counterparts were doing even in the next colony and language over. Imperial rivalries discouraged objective comparative work examining different

² Tourism's financial benefits were not yet very visible on the horizon.

colonial systems within a larger framework. A third drawback, related to the other two, was a general innocence of sociological or political theory. The scholar-bureaucrats' immediate employer was not in the least interested in theory, and their own detachment from universities isolated them from a, shall we say, theory-encouraging environment.

What a contrast the above offers to the ecology of Southeast Asian studies in the United States over the past forty years! Here the white man and woman's scholarly burden is overwhelmingly assumed in metropolitan universities, by people with M.A.'s and Ph.D.'s. The scholar-bureaucrat scarcely exists any more. It is these universities—more than the state as such—that provide, or are supposed to provide, the expensive infrastructure (libraries, computers, research assistants, language labs, and so on) that scholars need. The career patterns of the scholars usually show considerable lateral and vertical mobility. Security is, at least at the start, earned by publication record. Promotions and salaries are as much matters of entrepreneurship as of seniority. The successful scholar needs also to be a shrewd applicant for grants from public and private donors, in a system heavily influenced by quasi-market forces. There is also nothing "automatic" about financial support for work on any particular Southeast Asian country, by contrast to the built-in support the colonial state in any of those countries once offered. Financial survival has required constant lobbying, politicking, and competing with rival scholarly interests.

Furthermore, these universities usually think they are hiring and employing teachers for their students. This viewpoint completely rules out any sustained residence in the country a scholar studies. The pattern is thus one of scattered sabbaticals, one-semester leaves, summer trips, conferences here and there. Marriages and sexual relations with Southeast Asians remain quite common, but the implications are the reverse of those in the colonial era. Rather than the scholar-bureaucrat being creolized by these relationships, out there in the colony, it is the spouse or significant other, moved to California or Massachusetts, who is likely to be Americanized. Language competence in local vernaculars is therefore rarely impressive. Finally, because the old colonies are now independent states, with frequently violent domestic lives, access to them is often difficult, and residence in them far from predictable and unhurried. Local research assistants have to be personally recruited and remunerated.

Analysis of the full range of reasons for the conspicuous antithesis I have sketched out is beyond the scope of my present assignment. But, obviously, far the most important have been the colonies' achievement of sovereignty/legal independence, and the end of old-style imperialism. This change has fundamentally reshaped the contours of Southeast Asian studies in all the old colonial metropolises, as well as the United States.³ For it simply wiped out the deep institutional base for "Orientalism" and old-style scholar-bureaucrats. Yet, because the United States was a rising power in the 1950s and 1960s, while France, England, and Holland were declining, the consequences for scholarship on each side of the Atlantic were quite different. In the European states there was simply a grave generational and intellectual crisis, as the scholar-bureaucrats, who had reluctantly moved back to university slots, aged and died off. Yet the local store of historical documents, and certain more or less vague sentimental ties, meant that when the immediate crisis passed, younger scholars tended to focus on their states' ex-imperial domains (if Dutch on Indonesia, if French on Indochina, if British on Malaysia, Singapore, and, to a lesser extent, Burma). The relative poverty of the metropolises made costly fieldwork more difficult to fund, and encouraged a style of archival work which was in some ways continuous with pre-independence era scholarship. The United States had no substantial archival repositories (it had only been in the Philippines for two generations), it was immensely rich, and its power stretched wider and further than any of its predecessors. Hence it was as interested, depending on immediate circumstances and crises, in Guatemala as in Burma, in the Congo as in Cambodia. How fitful and variable its concerns were is exemplified by the huge interest in Vietnam from 1966 to 1976, and the huge lack of interest thereafter.

The novelty and restlessness of American power, as well as its enormous stretch, encouraged scholarly emphases that in many ways were the reverse of those of the colonial world. It was political science/government, modern history, and current anthropology that came to the fore, at least until the later 1960s.⁴ Ancient history, philology, literature, and archaeology faded out of the limelight. The

³ I suspect that the "extreme" contrast offered by the United States has something to do with the very late professionalization of the American civil service, and its general philistinism.

⁴ In the late 1970s and 1980s the accent shifted partly to business-related themes, for both political and economic reasons.

applied fields, however, held their ground, mainly, I think, because they depended heavily on contract work for the American state or for international agencies substantially funded by that state. Longer-term history--economic, intellectual, cultural--began to develop, I think, only towards the end of the Vietnam War, when reverses the United States suffered in Southeast Asia were, by some influential people, attributed to the superficiality--spurious contemporaneity--of American knowledge about the region.

The larger point is simply that right through the forty years since 1950, Southeast Asian studies has never been able to take itself calmly for granted, but, at the top (institutional) levels, has always had to argue, with varying degrees of plausibility and sincerity, for its contemporary utility and future relevance.

Interlocked with the special internal institutional structures and interests of American postwar universities, these influences produced three striking features in Southeast Asian scholarship which marked it off from that of the colonial period.

AREA STUDIES GASPING FOR AIR

Virtually all colonial scholarship was nonchalant about its disciplinary base.⁵ It could do so because of the exact fit between the political realm of the colonial scholar-bureaucrats and the objects of their studies (say Burma, Burmans). But "area studies" only made powerful political-institutional sense where the scholars were at the same time administrators. Each role reinforced the other. In the postwar United States, there was no real possibility of creating this Utopia. Fine scholars were not substantial bureaucrats, or vice versa. Administrators oriented to Southeast Asia were shuffled from country to country, and back and forth between Southeast Asia and the United States. Virtually none had the leisure or technical skills to do first-class research. On the other hand, the hundreds of American universities saw no powerful institutional, and very few powerful intellectual-pedagogical, reasons for systematizing research and teaching along "area lines." The logic of "professionalization" and of intense interuniversity competition for funds and talents led, contrariwise, toward deepening segmentation by discipline. Nothing shows this more clearly than a look at academic journals. There are literally dozens of high-prestige journals in the fields of political

⁵ Coedès wandered across history, art history, epigraphy, and ethnology; Schrieke did sociology as much as ancient history. How to classify John Furnivall?

science, anthropology, economics, and sociology. But for Southeast Asian studies there is not even one solid "Southeast Asia"-specific journal published in the United States. We have *Vietnam Forum*, *Indonesia*, sundry bulletins, and sections of *Pacific Affairs*, *Asian Survey*, and the *Journal of Asian Studies*. None of these has any very wide circulation or singular prestige.⁶ We can compare this situation with the local authority of the *BEFEO*, the *Bijdrage*, and *JMBRAS* in their colonial heydays.

The point is simply this: there is no "natural" fit between the institutional and intellectual logic of modern American universities and area studies, nor, I think, will there ever be. Furthermore, in the specific case of Southeast Asian studies, the relative unimportance of the region's ten countries to the United States has made implausible the kinds of "policy" legitimations that more or less work for China Studies or Japan Studies; China specialists and scholars of Japan may end as ambassadors to these countries, or as assistant secretaries of state for East Asian Affairs. Nothing comparable awaits the student of Burma or Malaysia. At the same time, no very convincing intellectual case has been made for the field, which continues to rest on visibly shaky foundations.

THE THEORY MARKET

The institutional and intellectual weaknesses of area studies in the postwar United States both contributed to, and were accentuated by, the rising power of the disciplines, in turn the product of a marked professionalization of academic life. Especially from the early 1960s onwards there was a huge expansion of graduate-level education, which encouraged more and more professors to concentrate on training future professors. Concomitant to this expansion was a proliferation of professional associations and professional academic journals. An adequate ecological analysis of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of my discussion here. I would only note that it developed much more slowly and hesitantly across the Atlantic, I think mainly because of the traditional strength and social prestige of "area studies": Classics (Greek and Roman Studies), Orientalism (Asian Studies), and colonial scholarship.

On the intellectual plane, the legitimation of this disciplinary ascendancy came from "theory," which functioned as "Burma" had once done for "Burmese Studies," that is, as the principle externally

⁶ I doubt the situation with South Asian or East Asian studies is that much better.

demarcating and internally unifying a particular range of scholarly enquiry. But the rush to theory drew its social energy from two American peculiarities. One of these was the entrepreneurial character of American academic life, which encouraged intense interuniversity competition and high levels of lateral and vertical mobility among faculty. In this academic marketplace—the word is splendidly apt—"theory" was a peculiarly suitable currency, precisely because of its built-in obsolescence. Nothing shows this characteristic better than the way in which leading scholarly entrepreneurs of the 1960s, who achieved fame and fortune on the basis of their theoretical contributions, found themselves by the late 1970s used simply as bones on which first-year graduate students were trained to cut their intellectual teeth.⁷ But this obsolescence also ensured an open field for the young and ambitious. One can contrast it with old-style area studies, where obsolescence was a slow process, and prestige was attached to lifetime accumulations of knowledge and experience.

The second feature was the link of theory to public policy. The topic is too complex to explore here. Suffice it to say that the expansion of American power, and the huge proliferation (and professionalization) of the American state bureaucracy after World War II created a new demand for at least "midlevel theory." For example, the Cold War and the nuclear competition with the USSR conjured up deterrence theory, rational choice theory, and a variety of theoretical approaches to "world communism." The rapid creation of an informal American empire in the complex, multifarious Third World encouraged the development of competing modernization and development theories to simplify, organize, guide, and legitimize the activities of officials in the state apparatus, international development agencies, foundations, and so on. In this way, theory acquired real political prestige.

From the point of view of area studies in general, and Southeast Asian studies in particular, the powerful pull of the disciplinary theory-markets (with their inbuilt obsolescence and their frequent policy-orientation) has had two general, and one specific, damaging effects. With regard to the former, one notices: (1) a tendency towards excessive and ultimately arbitrary presifting of source material in accordance with the data-presentation rules of specific theories, in consequence of which, when the theory becomes market-obsolete—usually quite quickly—the scholar's work becomes largely

⁷ The heroes of the 1980s will certainly suffer the same fate in the 1990s.

useless to his successors,⁸ and (2) discouragement of the kind of region-specific comparative work which, I believe, is essential for building a serious intellectual base for postcolonial area studies. For Southeast Asia, this situation is especially unfortunate in that the region actually offers a unique field for intelligent comparative work. Consider only the range of religions (Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, etc., in all their variations and syncretic mixtures); of colonial regimes (American, Spanish, British, French, Dutch and Portuguese); or of modern political systems (as it were, from Pol Pot through to Suharto). Consider also the similarities of climate, agriculture, kinship, cuisine, as well as centuries of cultural, political, religious, and economic interaction.

The crucial "specific" damage done to Southeast Asian studies has been in the broad area of language, where the imperious pull of theory has radically fragmented what in colonial days was a reasonably unified field of study. This topic is of such importance that it deserves treatment on its own.

LANGUAGE CHAOS

In colonial times, there was almost always a close interrelationship between the study of languages and of literatures in those languages, precisely because theory-based disciplinary boundaries were unemphasized while "Burma" or "Java" or "Malaya" created their own "natural" fields of operation. The very existence of a colony required state investment in language teaching for its officials; the state's interest in building a local genealogy encouraged additional investments in epigraphy, paleography, philology, and literary studies. For all these efforts dictionaries were essential, and major advances were made in lexicography—so major in fact that many of these colonial dictionaries still remain the best available.⁹ This situation produced, quite naturally, great figures like Winstedt and Pigeaud, who compiled dictionaries, wrote grammars, published histories, and translated/edited major literary works in the ancient local vernaculars.

⁸ Compare the continuing interest and value of the writings of, say, Raffles or Coedès.

⁹ Behind these immediate causes, of course, lay the powerful residues, in Europe, of the Classics, a field in which archaeology, paleography, philology, literary studies, and history had traditionally been closely intertwined.

An essential condition was the ascendancy of the written over the spoken word. It was assumed that long residence in the colony would do much of the training in oral expression, where that was needed. The important things were the study of written documents (subversive pamphlets, ancient inscriptions, judicial reports, and royal chronicles) and the ability, to various extents in different colonies, to write in the local languages.

In the postwar United States everything worked in reverse. The Classics had long been marginalized in higher education. The informal empire was too new, too diffuse, too fluctuating in geographic extent, too ethnolinguistically diverse, to offer a stable base for old-style area studies. And the disciplines were ready to move in. Linguistics, particularly after the Chomskian revolution in theory, determinedly shucked off its antique area rags. Literary studies, guided initially by the professionalism of the New Criticism, and later by the schools of Paris, accentuated their Atlantic base in a field of Comparative Literature which at best stretched only between Moscow and San Francisco. Both disciplines firmly turned their backs on one another, and entrenched themselves behind department walls. What was skeletally left over was "language-teaching," which rapidly lost caste.

Without much in the way of "theory," language-teaching was equally deprived of a solid area studies base. There was, for the political reasons I have underscored earlier, no longer any institutional ground for the study of the "dead" written languages of Old Southeast Asia, the acquisition of which is essential for the study of the ancient literatures of the region.

The colonial languages (French, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese), regarded as useful only for the study of colonial era documents, took the place of Old Burmese and Old Javanese as "dead," written languages. But little effort was devoted to them, because they were "really" the responsibility of departments of Romance and Germanic languages. All this left language teaching with the contemporary national vernaculars in their oral form.

Now it so happened that because of the new pattern of scholarly life (which made long residence in Southeast Asia nearly impossible), and of official careers (frequent transfers within and without Southeast Asia), language teaching found itself a role, albeit a humble one, as a "service" activity. It was more and more organized to help the scholar, the Peace Corps volunteer, the military attaché, and the aid official to handle orally the interview, the market, the post office, and the landlady; and, in print, newspapers,

and contemporary official and unofficial documents.¹⁰ This kind of language learning, utilitarian in the narrowest sense, concentrates energies on the most mundane and trivial facets of a language's real life. Because of the disciplinary fragmentation outlined above, it is also largely cut off from the much richer literary languages, past and present. This segmentation in turn makes almost impossible the serious study of the written language in its most sophisticated manifestations (poetry, prose fiction, academic writings, and so on).

Sometimes figures speak more clearly than words. Nothing better shows the present language mess in Southeast Asian studies than the following data on specialist personnel, drawn from the 1988 *Association for Asian Studies Membership Directory*.

	Linguistics	Language	Literature	Total
Thailand	7	3	-	10
Indonesia	5	1	2	8
SEA [sic]	3	-	1	4
Vietnam	2	1	1	4
Philippines	1	1	1	3
Laos	1	1	-	2
Cambodia	1	-	-	1
Malaysia	-	-	-	-
Burma	-	-	-	-
Total	20	7	5	32

And these thirty-two souls represent barely five percent of the 600-plus listed Southeast Asianists.

Linguists marginal to Linguistics, literary specialists marginal to Comparative Literature, language teachers chained to the most routine and banal features of a language's life; is it any wonder that their numbers are few, and their confidence often low? In this perspective, John Wolff's manifold contributions in the form of many excellent, up-to-date, spoken-language textbooks for Indonesian, Pilipino, and Javanese, as well as his two fine dictionaries, seem rather extraordinary.

The premise behind the previous pages is simply that only honest self-examination will help us to think creatively about invigorating, widening, and deepening Southeast Asian studies. It is true that there are powerful forces shaping the political, institutional, and

¹⁰ Ultimately, this logic led to the painful absurdities of "proficiency testing."

cultural ecology of our work, just as they did the work of our colonial forebears. With the best will in the world, there are many things which are probably impossible for us to achieve. Nonetheless, there are two areas of activity where I think useful steps could be taken.

First, there exists today in Southeast Asia a group of people who did not exist in late colonial times: a substantial indigenous academic and non-academic intelligentsia. In some ways, their structural position resembles that of the old scholar-bureaucrats. Most are civil servants, and all, to different extents, understand their work as most relevant to a specific country (Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines), and, to a lesser degree, its neighbors. In this sense they are area studies people *ipso facto*. They are immersed in the local culture, are fluent in local vernaculars, and have direct access to local religious life, folk traditions, and, often, pre-twentieth century literatures. But they are also, many of them, familiar in differing degrees with the work being published on their countries in the United States, England, Australia, Holland, and Japan.

If one looks, for example, at Nidhi Aeusrivongse's studies of the cultural life of Early Bangkok, and the masterful way he shows its discontinuity with that of Late Ayutthaya by cunning citations from dozens of poets, one realizes that under present circumstances this kind of work is simply beyond the capabilities of scholars in the United States. Nidhi has the rich literature of Old Siam at his fingertips. It would take one of us half a lifetime, if that, to get so far. But perhaps we can take advantage of an inevitable division of labor, working more intelligently than we have done hitherto to interact cooperatively with the world of Southeast Asian scholarship in the humanities and social sciences.¹¹ Yet I am certain that one of the conditions for this kind of cooperation will be a vastly enhanced linguistic capability on our part. The period in which significant Southeast Asian scholarship had to be written in a "metropolitan" language is coming to an end as the result of the very rapid changes in contemporary political, economic, and intellectual power-relationships. I believe that in the coming years it will be increasingly important for American Southeast Asianists to have a more thorough acquaintance with the written languages of the region, including the ability to write elegantly in them, and to understand at least their modern literatures. I emphasize this point because I

¹¹ If we can not institutionalize the study of Old Mon in the United States, perhaps we can help advance it in Bangkok or Rangoon or Moulmein.

foresee an accelerating need for expert translations, if the informed comparative work needed to make Southeast Asian studies a real field is to be carried out.

Over the past hundred years it was widely assumed that scholarly work on the region was done in European vernaculars, because these were the languages of power.¹² Local vernacular texts were primarily "material" for this scholarship, and unlikely to be of great interest for any but specialists on a particular culture. This situation is now changing rapidly. On the one hand, we are watching the rise of sophisticated and highly trained Southeast Asian scholars who write in their own languages. On the other hand, the end of the European empires, and the decline of the United States' world-position since the early 1970s, has significantly changed the status of English, while almost completely marginalizing the other European vernaculars. In some ways like Latin in medieval Europe, and French during the eighteenth century, English is becoming a general *lingua franca* for most types of international exchange, including the academic. It is through English that Swedes and Koreans, Japanese and Danes, Indonesians and Siamese, Burmese and Germans come into contact with each other's Southeast Asian scholarship.

Precisely for these reasons, the quantity and pace of translations in and out of English is crucial. Southeast Asian scholars will obviously do the bulk of the translating out of English into their own vernaculars; non-Anglo-Saxon Europeans, Chinese, Japanese, and other Asians have the burden of turning their own vernacular texts into English. For native English speakers, the main task is rendering Southeast Asian vernacular work of importance into their mother tongue. Only then will we have a fair and generalized system of exchange that will help make Southeast Asian studies a comprehensive, intellectually vital enterprise.

Second, and directly connected to the above, is the possibility of a thoroughgoing reform in the teaching of Southeast Asian languages. We all, in principle, recognize the central importance of learning Southeast Asian languages for the furtherance of our academic work. Nonetheless, no part of the larger enterprise of Southeast Asian studies has been as poorly served.

For political-historical and institutional reasons outlined above, Southeast Asian language study in the United States has been damagingly skewed in a narrowly utilitarian-oral direction. It is

¹² English, the vernacular of the two greatest imperial powers, assumed an especially dominating position.

crucial to recognize why this has happened, and avoid taking it as somehow God-given, and therefore as it should be. The real situation we face is that the contemporary written vernaculars are developing with dizzying speed; the literatures written in them are becoming more complex and sophisticated; and their technical vocabularies in specialized scientific and other fields are proliferating. Furthermore, most sound scholarly work is based on mastery of written materials—that is why we work so hard to build good libraries. But we are not making any really intelligent collective efforts to meet the new situation. The most obvious sign of this is the wretched state of Southeast Asian lexicography. There is only one really adequate, up-to-date English-language dictionary for a Southeast Asian language: the recently published Echols-Wolff-Collins Indonesian-English dictionary. Nothing adequate exists for Vietnamese, Khmer, Burmese, Tagalog, Javanese, or even Thai. With the crying need for energetic lexicography, we should not be wasting time and energy on essentially pointless "proficiency testing."

We are now at the crossroads. There is no question that Southeast Asian studies in the United States has produced some first-class scholarship. The contributions of Clifford Geertz, George Kahin, Jim Scott, and many others, including the distinguished participants in this meeting, are widely admired inside and outside the American Southeast Asian studies community. But, in my judgment, these have primarily been personal achievements, and they have done little to give coherence to Southeast Asian studies as such. They were also (albeit indirectly) the products of an age now past: that post-World War II era in which American power and wealth were completely dominant (Europe was flat on its back, Japan and China struggling from catastrophes, and the new Southeast Asian nation-states weak and poor). It was an era, too, in which, at least at the outset, academic professionalism was only beginning to come into its own. There was, if you like, plenty to go around, and Southeast Asian studies could putter along without much serious introspection—not least because, until the late 1960s, the United States was every Southeast Asianist's mecca: there was little in the way of lively, institutionalized, well-funded research going on anywhere else.

The situation today is completely different. The United States is a declining power with severe economic and social problems besetting it. The professionalization of the academy has meantime developed with great rapidity. Parallel to these trends, the study of Southeast Asia has become a genuinely international affair: ex-colonial

research institutions in Europe have revived; Koreans, Australians, Swedes, Swiss, Chinese, Danes, Canadians, and New Zealanders are pushing ahead; a remarkable new generation of Japanese scholars has emerged; and, as noted above, a modern academic intelligentsia has emerged, to differing extents, in most countries of Southeast Asia itself.

The question then is whether we can creatively adapt to the new conditions. The answer depends on our willingness to face realities and to be less intellectually lackadaisical than we have so far been. What we should do is very much open to debate, but we must have the debate and make it serious.

My personal view is that we have to reflect long and hard about finding an intellectual basis for Southeast Asian studies. Colonial-era Orientalism, for all its virtues, is ecologically obsolete. The disciplines will naturally tend to marginalize area studies. Respect—for the field, not for individual brilliant stars—has to be intellectually earned, and this is a collective enterprise. The basis for this endeavor exists in the very proliferation of Southeast Asian studies, which can no longer simply ride in the baggage-train of American power. Southeast Asians, Japanese, Chinese, Europeans, Australians, and many others have their own experiences and futures to work from, and a plausible base for Southeast Asian studies can not be soundly built without their perspectives and contributions.

At the same time, the kind of international cooperation and interaction I have in mind is virtually impossible without a much wider flow of translations in and out of English than we have had hitherto. It would be both shameful and backward-looking if we did not do our part: our record in the translating area is already embarrassing enough. But to make our contribution will require a thorough rethinking of the role of language and language teaching. Over forty years, American wealth created some first-class libraries on Southeast Asia. But no systematic thought was given to creating the scholars who could really use their Southeast Asian vernacular treasures. Hence the discrepancy between hundreds of thousands of valuable books and newspapers, and a pitiful handful of "language" specialists of one marginalized kind or another.

I believe things would change for the better if we looked ahead and began to put Southeast Asian studies on a real, comparative intellectual basis. If we did this, we would recognize the central role of translation, and make our own post-imperial contribution to an internationalized field. If we did this regularly, we would find ourselves insisting on the production of good dictionaries; we would

lobby for the reunification of language-related study within institutions analogous to Departments of Romance Languages; we would talk seriously to linguists and language teachers; we would want to learn how to read Southeast Asian poetry as well as newspapers; and we would be in a position to benefit from the knowledge of many more able intellects than we are at present in a position to do.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London: Verso.

THE STATE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Charles Hirschman

Given the virtual absence of any academic programs on Southeast Asia in the United States prior to World War II, the development of international and area studies in the 1950s and 1960s increased tremendously the numbers of faculty members, students, and university programs with a focus on the region. By the late 1960s, there were Southeast Asia centers at seven or eight American universities, over 500 Southeast Asia specialists in the United States (Tilman, 1969a), and general optimism about the continued development of the field.¹ This state of affairs was not limited to Southeast Asian studies; two decades of expansion in higher education had led to favorable prospects for academic careers and more funding for graduate study in most areas and disciplines.

Two decades later, all of higher education appears to be in decline. A slowing of the rise of college enrollment, a tight labor market for new Ph.D.'s, a long period of national economic sluggishness, and limited governmental budgets have pinched almost everyone's toes. How bad has it been for Southeast Asian studies? In this paper, I attempt a preliminary assessment of this question, and try to analyze some of the reasons for the hard times experienced by Southeast Asian studies (and more generally, all area studies of peripheral regions) in American universities in the 1970s and 1980s.

THE NUMBER OF SOUTHEAST ASIANISTS

Any count of specialists in Southeast Asia presumes a definition of the qualifications to be counted as a scholar of the region. There is

¹ There was, of course, a national movement against American intervention in Vietnam, which coincided with the expansion of academic programs of Southeast Asian studies. This did create a broader interest in Southeast Asian studies among some students, but the origins of the rapid development of the field predated the late 1960s.

no agreement on this issue. Does authorship of a published article on a country in the region suffice, or must a specialist also know the national language (how much is enough) and teach courses on the area? Most efforts to count scholars have adopted simple criteria that could be measured without too much subjective judgment.

In his 1968 survey of Southeast Asia specialists, Tilman (1969a:viii) sent questionnaires to a large mailing list of "individuals and institutions throughout the world thought to be concerned with Southeast Asia." From those who responded and identified themselves as Southeast Asia specialists, Tilman counted 950 individuals, of whom 504 were from the United States. A different method, but relying on the same principle, is to count the members of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) who identify their region of interest as Southeast Asia or one of the ten countries in the region. Self-identification might contain an overcount by the inclusion of those who have only a slight interest and/or knowledge of the region. There is also certain to be an undercount of those who are not members of the AAS, but are active scholars of the region. Gosling (1991:38) reports that AAS membership includes about 80 percent of Asia specialists in the United States. Perhaps the major limitation of a count based on self-identification or membership lists is that there is not a distinction of relative contribution to the field.

In a rather ambitious effort, Ness (1984:27-28) attempted to count the number of Southeast Asia specialists by their writings. He compiled a list of those who published or presented papers on Southeast Asian topics, as indexed in the Bibliographies of Asian Studies, published by the AAS, and other sources. There is no certainty about the number obtained by this method, however. For example, this method yielded a total number of 959 Southeast Asia specialists in the United States for the period 1975-80. But Ness narrowed this figure by excluding conference papers to get a revised estimate of 595 specialists. Then, this list of names was reviewed by a panel of knowledgeable scholars for the National Council of Foreign Languages and International Studies (Kassof 1981) and reduced to 402 Southeast Asia specialists "who we considered were producing what we could call new information on the region" (Ness 1984:28). With such wide variations in estimates, there is little certainty of any precise number of Southeast Asian scholars in the United States.

What is most useful is the trend in numbers based on a common criterion. To my knowledge, the only really comparable time series data are counts based on membership in the AAS. According to this source, the numbers of Southeast Asia scholars were 713 in 1978, 710

in 1983, and 630 in 1988 (Ness 1984:27; Association for Asian Studies 1988). If the count is limited to those living in the United States, the numbers are 610 in 1978, 539 in 1983, and 528 in 1988. Incidentally, overall membership in the AAS grew from 5046 in 1983 to 6294 in 1988 (Association for Asian Studies 1989). Thus, while overall membership in the AAS has been growing, the number of AAS members with a professed interest in Southeast Asia has been declining.

By almost any standard, these figures are a bit alarming. There is a very thin academic base of scholars in the United States with any interest in or knowledge of Southeast Asia. The minuscule number of Southeast Asianists appears to have declined over the 1980s. Even more alarming are the numbers who claim a specialization for specific Southeast Asian countries. The 1988 AAS directory lists fewer than ten members with primary interest in a number of specific Southeast Asian countries: for example, Singapore (8), Laos (9), Cambodia (9), and Brunei (2). The numbers are only in the low two digits for Burma (31), Malaysia (44), and Vietnam (39), although another 16 identified their interest in Indochina. If additional qualifications of language proficiency and active scholarship were considered, I expect the situation would appear to be even more bleak.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Beginning with the earliest Southeast Asia programs at Yale and Cornell in the 1950s, a number of universities have initiated interdisciplinary programs or centers focused on the region over the last four decades. Until recently, only eight universities maintained a set of courses on Southeast Asia, offered instruction in some of the regional languages, and tried to develop a library collection (University of California-Berkeley, Cornell University, University of Hawaii, University of Michigan, Northern Illinois University, Ohio University, University of Wisconsin, and Yale University). In the last few years, three new university centers have been established at Arizona State University, the University of Oregon, and the University of Washington (the latter two as part of the Northwest Regional Consortium for Southeast Asia Studies, which includes the University of British Columbia in Canada).

A larger base of university interest in the area can be measured through other indicators. The current list of universities which pay a subscription to be affiliated with the Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI) includes the above institutions plus the

University of Illinois/Champaign-Urbana and the University of Kentucky. The 1988 *Association for Asian Studies Membership Directory* includes a listing of Asian studies institutes, programs, and centers. While some university programs may be omitted from this list, self-nomination insures that any program can be included regardless of the level of activity. Under the Southeast Asia heading in the AAS institutional listing (counting only American academic institutions), there are an additional 16 colleges and universities that claim to have Southeast Asia programs (in addition to the 13 noted above). Some of these programs are fairly minor; the list includes Pacific Rim Studies at Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage and the Asia and Asian Studies Department at Laney College in Oakland.

In addition to the 29 colleges and universities with identified programs, dozens of other institutions have faculty members who teach courses on Southeast Asia. In my judgment, a reasonable guess is that 100 institutions of higher education in the United States occasionally offer courses on Southeast Asia. Recall that Ness estimated there were about 400 productive American scholars in the late 1970s. The 1988 AAS Membership Directory included 528 members with Southeast Asian area identification who lived in the United States. Of the approximately 400 to 500 area specialists living in the United States, a fair number are graduate students, retired, or employed in nonacademic institutions. Many others may be on university faculties, but not teach courses on the region (sociologists and economists rarely teach courses on areas of the world). Of course, the eleven major centers have a disproportionate share of the most active Southeast Asia scholars. All in all, I think the estimate of 100 institutions offering courses by Southeast Asia specialists is a fairly generous one.

In 1989, more than 12 million students were enrolled at more than 3,400 institutions of higher education in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1989:149). Even if we double or triple the estimate of 100 institutions offering any courses on Southeast Asia, the conclusion remains the same. At the overwhelming majority--upwards of 90 percent--of universities and colleges, Southeast Asia is completely invisible. Perhaps this is an overstatement. There are books on Southeast Asia in most libraries, and on a growing number of campuses there are courses on the Vietnam War, albeit typically limited to the American experience in Vietnam. Nonetheless, the minimal presence of Southeast Asia specialists and courses at most universities precludes the choice to learn, formally or informally,

about a significant world region that has (or soon will have) the demographic magnitude of Europe.

GRADUATE STUDENTS AND GRADUATE EDUCATION

The growth of Southeast Asian studies in the 1950s and 1960s also led to a parallel expansion in the number of graduate students in the field. Of course, starting from a base of almost zero, any growth seems tremendous. Compilations of the numbers of doctoral dissertations show rapid growth in the 1950s and 1960s, but a leveling off in the late 1970s and 1980s (The and van den Veur 1968; Shulman 1979; Shulman 1984). In the early phase of growth, most Ph.D.'s with a specialization in Southeast Asia were in the traditional liberal arts (history, political science, anthropology) and were recruited to teach on international and Asian subjects in American universities. While undoubtedly exceptional, the early career of Professor Norman Parmer represents the era of growth in Southeast Asian studies. Parmer was one of the very first American academics to specialize in Malaysia (then Malaya). Within a decade after receiving his doctorate in history from Cornell (1957), Parmer founded the Southeast Asia Center at Northern Illinois University, served as country director for the first contingent of Peace Corps volunteers in Malaya, and then founded another Southeast Asia Center at Ohio University.

By the 1970s, university growth had slowed and a Ph.D. was no longer a firm guarantee of an academic career. But graduate programs in Southeast Asian studies had another constituency that was growing as American recruits waned—namely students from Southeast Asia. In fact, the majority of Ph.D. dissertations on Southeast Asia in American universities are now awarded to Southeast Asian students. From 1976 to 1982, there were 200 to 220 dissertations on Southeast Asia produced per year at American universities; only a bit more than one-third were written by Americans (Shulman 1984:78).

An implication of the previous section on the small fraction of American universities with any academic base in Southeast Asia is that few graduate students in the leading research universities are exposed to the possibility of specializing on the area. While it is possible for graduate students to conduct their doctoral research on Southeast Asia in an institution with few resources on the region, this is unlikely except for those with a prior interest in the area (e.g., students from the region). Among leading American universities with Southeast Asia programs, Cornell University is clearly

dominant. Shulman's (1984:79) compilation of doctoral dissertations on Southeast Asia from 1976 to 1982 shows that Cornell University produced more Ph.D.'s on Southeast Asia than any other American university, including ten percent of all Americans who wrote dissertations on Southeast Asia over those years.

Not only has Cornell led in the number of Ph.D.'s produced, but the alumni of Cornell's Southeast Asia Program (SEAP) have played critical roles in starting and leading Southeast Asia centers at other universities in the United States and abroad (Feith 1986), so the changing character of Cornell's graduate program over the last four decades is of special importance. The availability of a SEAP directory of Cornell doctorates with a Southeast Asia specialization from 1951 to 1988 offers an instructive glimpse (Southeast Asia Program 1987) of the development of the field.

Almost 250 Ph.D.'s have been awarded to Cornell graduate students with an interest in Southeast Asia over the years from 1951 to 1988 (based on the data in the directory and the addenda and errata pages). While there are year-to-year fluctuations, there are four relatively distinct eras over the entire period, in terms of the numbers and disciplinary mix of Ph.D.'s.² The first era spanned the 1950s, when Southeast Asian studies was in its infancy, both nationally and at Cornell. About two to three doctorates were awarded per year from 1951 to 1959 (with some year-to-year fluctuations; ten were awarded in 1957—an exceptional year). The largest single number was in anthropology, and most of the rest were in government³ and rural sociology, with a sprinkling in history, sociology, and linguistics. The second era—the first half of the 1960s (1960-66)—saw a major expansion to an average of almost six Ph.D.'s per year. Most of this growth took place in government with anthropology a close second.

The real heyday of Cornell's Southeast Asia Program, as indexed by the number of doctorates, was from the late 1960s to the late 1970s. During the twelve years from 1967 through 1977, an average of ten Ph.D.'s were awarded per year. History became the leading discipline during this era, followed closely by government, anthropology, and linguistics. In the most recent era, from the late

² Eras, defined by the years in which doctorates are awarded, characterize graduate programs years earlier. Thus, the first era from 1951 to 1959 probably reflects the nature of the Southeast Asia Program from the late 1940s to the mid to late 1950s.

³ The discipline of political science is still labelled government at Cornell.

1970s to the late 1980s, the number has fallen to about six to seven Ph.D.'s per year. The greatest declines in Ph.D. production occurred in government, history, and linguistics. Anthropology remains the major discipline for Cornell Ph.D.'s in Southeast Asian studies, followed by rural sociology and history. Throughout the entire period, graduate students from Southeast Asia have comprised a significant component of Cornell's graduate program, but they have come to represent a larger share of the total as the number of Americans receiving doctorates has declined.

The decline of Cornell's graduate program in Southeast Asian studies in the late 1970s and 1980s is part of a national pattern. While my analysis of the causes of the decline will be presented later in this paper, my hunch is that the ultimate reasons have much less to do with Southeast Asian studies as a field of study than with overall trends in higher education and the position of area studies of "peripheral world areas."

AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP ON SOUTHEAST ASIA

Any evaluation of the health of the field should cover not only the numbers of scholars and institutions, but also the quantity and quality of published scholarship. Clearly that task is beyond the scope of my present paper, but I do have some general comments. Perhaps most fundamental is the observation most forcefully expressed by Anderson (1984) that much of the most significant scholarship on Southeast Asia is now being written by Southeast Asian academics often in national languages. While his conclusion was based on the field of political science, the statement probably holds in most fields. American scholars who do not have access to the recent literature published on the region and/or the ability to read the relevant national languages are at a serious disadvantage.

A conspicuous aspect of the field is that there is no major journal on Southeast Asian studies, as a whole, published in the United States. There was a journal entitled *Southeast Asia* which has ceased publication. *Crossroads*, an interdisciplinary journal of Southeast Asian studies, is published by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Northern Illinois University, but its publication schedule has not been continuous in recent years. There are a number of useful journals on specific countries: *The Vietnam Forum* (published by the Council on Southeast Asian Studies at Yale), *Pilipinas* (published by the Philippine Studies Group of the AAS), and *Indonesia* (published by the Southeast Asia Program at Cornell). With the exception of

Indonesia, I do not think any of these journals has had a broad effect on the field as a whole.

The most prestigious interdisciplinary journals for English language scholarship on Southeast Asia are, in my opinion, the *Journal of Asian Studies* (the official journal of the AAS), *Pacific Affairs* (published by the University of British Columbia in Canada), and the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (published by the National University of Singapore). Since the first two journals cover all of Asia, the proportion of articles on Southeast Asia is fairly modest. I examined the number of articles in the *Journal of Asian Studies* (JAS) from 1972 to 1989 by topic and location of author. Over these 17 volumes of JAS, about 17 percent of all articles were on Southeast Asian topics, and the majority of these (12 percent) were written by persons with an academic affiliation in the United States. There was no clear trend in these percentages over this period. Perhaps the location of JAS in the United States gives American-based authors an edge. A better test of the role of American academics might be in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (JSEAS), which is published in Singapore and in which, by definition, all articles focus on the region.

To evaluate the possible change in the role of American academics in the field, I counted all the articles published in the first 20 volumes of JSEAS and the number published by scholars listing an American academic affiliation.⁴ Of the 349 articles published in the 40 issues over 20 years, 29 percent or 102 articles were authored by American academics. While there is wide fluctuation from year to year, there is not a consistent trend over time. Dividing the 20 volumes into four, five-year periods, the percentages of American authorship are 27%, 25%, 34%, and 29%. The higher figures of American authorship for the 1980s may have been inflated by a few special issues, but I do not see any evidence of a marked trend. I had expected a downward trend with the rise in the number of Southeast Asian scholars, and the relative, if not absolute decline of American Southeast Asianists.⁵ Perhaps the many alternative publication

⁴ The institutional affiliation of each author is listed on the back cover of each issue of JSEAS. In the case of jointly authored articles, I assigned the affiliation of the first named author (only rarely did this matter).

⁵ Interestingly, there were almost as many articles by academics in Australia and New Zealand as American scholars (the cumulative numbers were 90 and 102, respectively). Australia and New Zealand have a combined population of less than one-tenth that of the United States, and probably

outlets in Southeast Asia (there are dozens of new scholarly journals in every country) and the relative paucity of Southeast Asian area studies journals in the United States have kept the ratio of American authorship constant.

Another distinctive feature of the current period is the general absence of textbooks on Southeast Asia for university students. A number of books survey individual countries and a small, but growing number of specialized monographs address specific topics (the annual catalog prepared for the Southeast Asian Centers Joint Book Exhibit at the annual meetings of the AAS is an excellent reference). The newly revised edition of the Steinberg et al. (1987; first edition 1971) *In Search of Southeast Asia* is a notable exception. Two decades ago there were anthologies such as Tilman's (1969b) *Man, State, and Society in Contemporary Southeast Asia* and George Kahin's excellent edited collection, *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia* (first edition, 1959; second edition, 1964). While the reduced market for such books may be part of the reason for the decline in the publication of popular texts, I suspect that the real problem lies deeper in the overall weakness of the field.

All of these indicators may suggest a topic that we are loath to confront, namely, the possibility that the field has not only suffered a loss of numbers, but perhaps a decline in quality as well. Again, I do not wish to suggest that Southeast Asia is unique in this regard. The 1970s and 1980s were hard on all academic fields. I suspect that the decline in graduate school enrollments was bound up with a disinclination among the most able and talented students of this era to pursue academic careers.

The works by scholars of our region which seem to have found a wide and appreciative audience outside the area studies community are those by Clifford Geertz, Tony Reid, Ben Anderson, Jim Scott, Stanley Tambiah, and a few others. I worry that the scholarly accomplishments of the next generation of American Southeast Asia scholars will not equal, let alone surpass, the contributions of the pioneers of the field. I hope that I am wrong.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN AN AGE OF DECLINE

Scholars in Southeast Asian studies lament that the field has waxed and waned with American interest in the region, with the United States-Vietnam War being the key experience. According to

proportionally fewer academics. Of course, Southeast Asia is as close to Australia and New Zealand as the Caribbean is to the United States.

this interpretation, the government's policies stimulated the field by pouring dollars into the field and also by raising the consciousness of the college students who were opposed to the war. Both of these factors helped to create a new generation of scholars of Southeast Asian studies who entered graduate school in the 1960s and early 1970s. When the government was no longer interested in the region after 1975, and Vietnam dropped from the front page into obscurity in the eyes of most Americans, the field of Southeast Asian studies went into a tailspin from which it has yet to recover.

For those of us who have lived through the last twenty-five years, this interpretation has the ring of apparent truth. The sequence of events is correct, and the mid-1970s is the turning point from expansion to decline. But I doubt that American policies in Southeast Asia or the war directly caused the American academic base of Southeast Asian studies to decline. I suggest that the causes of the earlier expansion and later decline are far broader and more deeply rooted in the decline of American empire, the funding of higher education, and the position of area studies in the American universities. While Southeast Asian studies has probably suffered more than other areas, this is probably related more to the peripheral or marginal status of the field, even at the high point of its expansion, than to the unique geopolitical history of our field.

While billions of dollars of public funds were expended on the foreign and domestic fronts to prop up the credibility and survival of the South Vietnam regime and associated United States activities in Southeast Asia, my guess is that relatively little of this was spent on building Southeast Asian studies programs at American universities. There may have been attempts to support Southeast Asia scholars to bolster official American political views during this era, but I doubt that such a policy was either widespread or effective. Since most faculty and graduate students with any knowledge of Southeast Asia actively opposed American policy, often in very visible roles in the antiwar movement, this would have been a dubious strategy even for the muddled minds that made official policy during that era. There was, however, a built-in momentum of expansion for higher education, including area studies programs of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The embarrassing lack of domestic knowledge of most of the world, with the exception of Europe, was evident to national leaders in the early post-World War II era. Led by support from the foundations, especially the Rockefeller and Ford foundations, there were efforts to create and strengthen interdisciplinary area studies programs on American campuses in the 1950s. Following the Soviet

Union's successful launch of Sputnik in 1957, the federal government got on the education bandwagon and dramatically expanded funding for science and all sorts of educational programs. Area studies was included as a funding priority for higher education. While the amounts were probably small relative to everything else, they did fuel growth in academic programs for area studies, including Southeast Asian studies. The funding provided for graduate student fellowships and some faculty positions.

During this period of economic and academic expansion, the expectation was that growth would not end. Although economic growth had not been continuous over the postwar era, the overall trend had been upward. By the mid to late 1960s, most liberal economists thought that federal fine-tuning would avoid future recessions, and government spending would be the main resource to cure all society's ills. Across the wide range of political opinions during those times, there was shared optimism that money and resources were not a major restraint on achieving any national goal. This included the continued growth of university area studies programs.

For everyone in higher education, the 1970s was an era of slow growth, if not an actual regression. From the vantage point of 1990, however, the 1970s appear to have been very good relative to what followed in the 1980s. The shared optimism of the 1960s about the prospects for area studies had become unrealistic myopia in the 1980s. What happened? In brief, the American empire ended in the early 1970s, perhaps earlier. A series of recessions in the 1970s and early 1980s left the country, and the federal government, unable to pay for the upward spiral of military and social spending that was promised or expected. In the struggle for the available federal funds, there were a few big winners and many losers. Higher education did not fare well.

From 1970 to 1985, the number of students in higher education grew from 8.5 to 12.2 million, but this growth was disproportionately among students in two-year colleges, part-time students, and most of it occurred prior to 1980 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1989:148). Among the instructional staff of colleges and universities with the rank of instructor or above, the percentage employed full-time declined from 78 to 64 from 1970 to 1985 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1989:148). In constant dollars, the average salary of a full professor in either a public or private university was less in 1987 than it was in 1970 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1989:155, 462). Taking all university revenues as a ratio to the number of

enrolled students, per capita resources (in constant dollars) are up a bit in the 1980s relative to the 1970s, but this is due to higher revenues from tuition and state funding which offset the decline in the federal contribution (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1989:148, 462).

These changes, plus a saturated labor market in academia, lowered the incentives for bright undergraduates to pursue doctoral studies. Over the 1970s and 1980s, the number of students receiving professional degrees increased substantially, while the production of doctorates has held about steady (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1989:157-58). There has been, however, a substantial shift in the composition of graduate students and those receiving doctorates. The proportion of foreign students has certainly increased, although many of these remain in the United States and available for academic positions (the absolute number of foreign students enrolled in American universities doubled from 1976 to 1987 [U.S. Bureau of the Census 1989:152]). Since 1975, there have been sharp declines in the numbers receiving doctorates in some fields, including the social sciences and foreign languages (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1989:157).

When hard times hit any sector, those activities deemed nonessential are likely to go. While universities may be institutions with more inertia than most, the pressures are the same. When deans and other administrators weigh what they consider most important—money, enrollment, or national prestige—area studies are not likely to be on the priority list for expansion. In the current situation, maintenance of current resources is usually the most that can be hoped. From my knowledge of the situation at the leading centers of Southeast Asian studies, even this minimal goal of maintaining the status quo has not always been successful.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE GRIP OF IMPERIAL DISCIPLINES

Southeast Asian studies shares the structural dilemma of all university interdisciplinary programs, including area studies programs. Interdisciplinary programs can take two possible structural forms. One possibility is to give programs autonomy to organize in departmental-like units with their own budgets and the power to hire and promote faculty. There are a few examples in the United States (e.g., the Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington), but these are relatively rare. Far more area studies programs are organized as secondary affiliations among faculty members having their primary appointments in disciplinary departments. The interdisciplinary centers often have teaching

programs, seminar series, and considerable intellectual vitality. As "voluntary" associations, the strength of these interdisciplinary centers is typically dependent on outside (nonuniversity) funding and the energies of individual faculty members. What they lack is the ability to appoint new faculty or to influence directly the promotion of faculty.

The reasons for this structural arrangement are well known. Disciplines are part of national, even international, systems of scholarship. Even with considerable internal diversity, disciplines are usually able to organize a curriculum, measure the "quality" of research, and organize labor markets for graduates. It seems that these attributes are not necessarily inherent in the way that knowledge is currently subdivided, but rather simply a product of the fact that the current set of disciplines is reproduced, more or less, at every university. Academic journals, professional organizations, and peer communities reflect these structural arrangements. Variations in this structural arrangement are hard to maintain. Relatively few joint anthropology-sociology departments still survive, and those that do have divided the internal turf to avoid continuous arguments. Efforts to create new academic units of ethnic and women's studies have experienced extreme difficulty in resolving the basic question of who makes appointments and recommends promotions.

Ideally, the division of labor between interdisciplinary programs and disciplinary departments offers the best of all worlds. Departments serve to define the "basics" of higher education and evaluate appointments according to "universal" criteria, while interdisciplinary programs allow opportunities for innovation and individual specialization. In periods of faculty growth and expanded funding for interdisciplinary programs (as during the 1950s and 1960s), there is usually room for accommodation. My observations and discussions with colleagues involved with area studies suggest that the "problem" has become much more difficult to resolve in recent years. There are two key difficulties. The first is that area studies programs require a minimum critical mass to succeed; the second, that most social science disciplines have become indifferent (sometimes antagonistic) to area studies specialization among faculty and graduate students.

Area studies programs, as interdisciplinary programs, are expected to utilize the interests and energies of available faculty to formulate a teaching or research program. More than most other interdisciplinary programs, area studies centers have a fairly clear

definition of a minimum curriculum. This includes basic language and literature courses (at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels), early and modern history, anthropological surveys of peoples and cultures, and contemporary politics. Other valuable, but usually less critical courses are in sociology, geography, economics, and religion. For some world regions, for instance, European countries and even Latin America, there might well be sufficient qualified faculty members at many large universities to manage the basic area studies curriculum. But for most "peripheral" world regions in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, there are rarely enough faculty members to adequately staff the desired curriculum.

The area studies programs that were constructed at a handful of universities in the era of growth have come under considerable stress in the last two decades. Area studies specialists were often hired with some sort of outside sponsorship or funding, but the "line" was placed in a regular disciplinary department. When such a faculty member retires or moves, the department typically considers the selection of a replacement to be an internal matter guided by disciplinary needs and qualifications. There are many exceptions, of course. Greater student interest in China and Japan in the last fifteen years has created "demand" that many universities have filled by hiring additional area specialists. The Japan Foundation has been particularly effective in sponsoring the creation of university positions for Japan specialists. But the fundamental problem remains. How is it possible to maintain a critical mass of area specialists and at the same time grant full autonomy for disciplinary departments on all personnel matters?

It is important to realize that the present system has many virtues and the alternative of autonomous area studies units may create new problems. One of the great strengths of American universities lies in the flexibility of departments to shift priorities as new lines of inquiry emerge. To freeze each position into a particular specialty forever could lead to a fossilization of academic life. Almost all departments are heterogeneous with many areas of specialization. The struggle to balance continuity and innovation in academic appointments is institutionalized by a shared history within a department, an awareness of developments at other universities (reinforced by the rankings of top departments), and publications in leading disciplinary journals.

Informal conversations with colleagues at universities where area studies have departmental or college status (most of these are in other countries) have led me to doubt that such institutions are

always preferable. For example, an Asia historian in a School of Asian Studies reported isolation from developments in his discipline and the lack of opportunity to discuss his specialty (social history) with colleagues who study other geographical regions of the world. Other colleagues have told me that other divisions appear within area studies departments (e.g., between humanists and social scientists) that reproduce the rivalries in disciplinary departments.

Another fundamental problem is the antipathy toward area studies in many disciplinary departments. While this attitude is most prevalent in economics and sociology, it can be found in many disciplines, including those with long ties to area studies (e.g., political science, linguistics). The attitude is not that scholarship on other countries is unimportant, although it is often considered esoteric, but rather that specialized knowledge of different cultures and societies is not a prerequisite for good scholarship on those countries (or using data from those countries). From this vantage point, the extraordinary time that area scholars invest in language skills and field work is not valued. What is important is the development of the critical theoretical and methodological skills applicable to all times and places on the globe.

In fields as different as archaeology, international relations, and demography, the efforts to formulate comparative models, test general hypotheses, and make broad generalizations across time and space follow a well-defined standard. Research in these fields that does not address these issues is considered simply descriptive and hopelessly old-fashioned. From this perspective, area studies knowledge may be useful (to explain why general models do not fit a particular case), but it is an insufficient base to contribute significantly at the frontiers of modern disciplinary scholarship. It may be asking too much for a scholar to keep up with both an area studies field and the latest disciplinary theories and methods. Given the current structure of universities and the power to hire vested in disciplinary departments, the balance is heavily tilted against area studies.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

A return to national prosperity and public investment in higher education would probably do more good for Southeast Asian studies than any innovative ideas we could dream up. A rising tide lifts all boats and more funds for fellowships and interdisciplinary programs would certainly help to relieve the economic pressures that have constrained the field for the last twenty years. The Luce Foundation

support for Southeast Asian studies over the last few years is fairly modest compared to the budgets in many areas of higher education. Given the state of the field, however, the Luce funding has created a minor boom in the fields of Southeast Asia history and library development. In fact, the full price of the last twenty years of neglect became apparent with the discovery of the very limited pool of Southeast Asia historians. Almost all of the applicants for the new positions had received their Ph.D.'s in the 1970s.

My real fear is that the field may experience increased funding and support in the coming years and we will not have new ideas to use the resources wisely. The intellectual and academic market in the 1990s will be dramatically different from the 1960s, and a replay of old strategies may not be successful. The major challenges of the 1990s are to develop a closer awareness of the scholarship on a global scale (especially in Southeast Asia), and to narrow the area studies-disciplinary gap in American universities.

At present, most American Southeast Asia scholars follow closely only the literature on the region that is written in English. This is rapidly changing. Most scholars who live in Southeast Asia publish both in English and in their national languages. Eventually most ideas and important research findings are translated into English, but this is not guaranteed. Many more academic journals with Southeast Asian content--in every discipline--are published in Indonesian, Thai, and Vietnamese than in English. For most Southeast Asia scholars in the United States, it is difficult to keep up with this literature. Language skills grow rusty unless continually used and expanded. This problem will get worse in the coming years as the balance of published scholarship tilts more to journals in the region. Developing and expanding the language skills of American scholars is imperative. This is a career long process that will be time consuming and expensive.

There is also a growing body of literature on Southeast Asia in Japanese and in various European languages. With the support of the Toyota Foundation and the editorship of Professor Takashi Shiraishi, the Cornell Southeast Asia Program is publishing translations of some recent Japanese scholarship on Southeast Asia. This innovative effort should be only the first step in a broader international effort to translate Southeast Asian texts and scholarship on the region.

I do not think the disciplinary-area studies decision can be resolved without some fundamental changes of vision among area-studies specialists. I believe that area studies scholars will have to

win this battle from inside disciplinary walls. This will require that the next generation of American Southeast Asia scholars learn all the necessary social science theory and methods (from econometrics to multidimensional scaling) with the same passion and commitment that they learn tonal languages and how to interpret cultural nuance. In the past, area studies scholars tended to make their careers on the margins of their disciplines. This is no longer an option given the structure of American universities. Area studies scholars will have to publish in the prestigious disciplinary journals and make their careers in the mainstream. This may mean a somewhat longer period of graduate study or perhaps postdoctoral training to learn area studies content. My guess is that with the right incentives (the recently announced Ford Foundation-Social Science Research Council Fellowship program is an excellent first step), it will be possible to attract the very brightest and most ambitious students with the challenge of mastering disciplinary knowledge and skills and with the thrill of learning about another culture. In the process, I think that the rather parochial mainstream of most disciplines will be transformed.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, Benedict. 1984. "Politics and their study in Southeast Asia." In *Southeast Asian Studies: Options for the Future*. Ronald A. Morse, ed., pp.41-56. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Association for Asian Studies. 1988. *Association for Asian Studies Membership Directory 1988*. Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies.
- . "1989. Membership Report," prepared for the AAS Board of Director's meeting in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on November 17-19, 1989.
- Feith, Herb. 1986. "John Legge and Cornell." In *Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Indonesia: Essays in Honour of Professor J.D. Legge*. David P. Chandler and M.C. Ricklefs, eds., pp.83-95. Clayton, Victoria, Australia: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University.
- Gosling, L. A. Peter. 1991. "Asian Studies: Association for Asian Studies." In *Prospects for Faculty in Area Studies: A Report from the National Council of Area Studies Associations*. Stanford, California.
- Kahin, George McTurnan, ed. 1964. *Government and Politics of Southeast Asia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- Kassof, Allen H., ed. 1981. *Report of the Taskforce on National Manpower Targets for Advanced Research on Foreign Areas*. New York: The National Council for Foreign Language and International Studies.
- Ness, Gayl. 1984. "Assessing U.S. scholarly resources on Southeast Asia." In *Southeast Asian Studies: Options for the Future*. Ronald Morse, ed., pp.25-40. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Shulman, Frank Joseph. 1979. "Doctoral research on Malaya and Malaysia, 1895-1977: a comprehensive bibliography and statistical overview." In *Malaysian Studies: Present Knowledge and Research Trends*. John Lent, ed., pp.250-404. DeKalb: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University.
- . 1984. "American doctoral dissertation research on Southeast Asia, 1976-1982: an initial overview of selected trends and developments." In *Southeast Asian Studies: Options for the Future*. Ronald A. Morse, ed., pp.67-85. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University. 1987. *Southeast Asia Program Directory 1987*. Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program.
- Steinberg, David Joel, et al. 1987. *In Search of Southeast Asia*. 2nd rev. ed. Honolulu: University of Hawaii.
- The, Lian, and Paul W. van der Veur. 1968. *Treasures and Trivia: Doctoral Dissertations on Southeast Asia Accepted by Universities in the United States*. Athens: Southeast Asia Program, Ohio University.
- Tilman, Robert. 1969a. *International Biographical Directory of Southeast Asia Specialists, 1969*. Athens, Ohio: Center for International Studies, Ohio University.
- , ed. 1969b. *Man, State, and Society in Contemporary Southeast Asia*. New York: Praeger.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1989. *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1989*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES IN AMERICA: REFLECTIONS ON THE HUMANITIES

Frank E. Reynolds

In writing this paper, I have faced a dilemma. I have not, over the past decade or so, conceived of my own work primarily in Southeast Asian terms; nor have I made any systematic attempt to keep abreast of intellectual and institutional developments in the broader field of Southeast Asian studies. Nevertheless, I have discovered in the process of writing that certain very strong concerns and convictions about Southeast Asian studies that I have long suppressed are still very much alive. In this situation, I am providing reflections from the field's periphery; but in reporting the reflections themselves, I have not hesitated to put forth some positive suggestions.

In the discussion that follows I propose to take seriously a point that Benedict Anderson makes in his paper, that the modern academy provides the "ecological niche" in which the American expression of Southeast Asian studies is now situated, and will be situated for the foreseeable future. My basic argument will be that by taking this seemingly obvious ecological point more seriously than has been done in the past, we will be better able to ensure that Southeast Asian studies will survive; and that it will survive in such a way that it will make a broader contribution as well.¹

¹ In the discussion that follows I will not raise two matters that I consider basic for the future of Southeast Asian studies in American universities and colleges—namely a major strengthening of the language base for serious research (which at the moment is perhaps the most pressing institutional need that we face), and a concerted effort to forge a distinctive kind of research role and publication strategy for American scholars in a rapidly internationalizing field. These are matters that are well-addressed in the other papers that are included in the present volume.

FORMING AN INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITY

If Southeast Asian studies is to establish itself in the American academy, it must become recognized as an intellectually viable "interpretive community," that is, a community of scholars that generates and disseminates "knowledge" in accordance with the rules of the profession.² In order for this to happen, the academy must be prepared to accord such recognition; and Southeast Asian studies must be prepared to earn it.

A consideration of the prospects for greater openness within the academy raises very broad ranging questions indeed. It is true that in the past the criteria that the academy has used to judge intellectual viability have undercut the legitimacy of area studies, as well as most other kinds of interpretive communities crossing the boundaries of the established disciplines. And there are some indications that this kind of professionalized disciplinary hegemony is becoming increasingly pervasive.³

But there is another, more optimistic aspect of the situation. At least at the more theoretical level, the Enlightenment notion of rationality that undergirded the prestige of the disciplines has presently broken down. In fact, very few scholars at the forefront of any of the social or human sciences would utilize the kind of legitimating arguments that in principle rule out other kinds of interpretive communities. Unfortunately, few interdisciplinary or nontraditional interpretive communities have moved to occupy the intellectual space that has been opened up. However, the possibilities are there, and hopefully Southeast Asianists (in cooperation with others who share similar interests) will begin to exploit them more effectively than they have done in the past.

The future of Southeast Asian studies will depend to a very large extent on the academy's ongoing resolution of these macro-level issues of intellectual openness and institutional flexibility. But that future will also depend on our own ability to cultivate the kind of interpretive community that will deserve the recognition and support that we seek. In this regard, three areas of concern come immediately to mind.

Any intellectually viable interpretive community needs to continually constitute and reconstitute its own history. Thus, as

² For a seminal discussion of the concept of "interpretive community," see Fish (1980). A more general and accessible presentation of this notion may be found in Bonfee (1986).

³ See the relevant comments made elsewhere in this volume.

Southeast Asianists we need to think more carefully than we have done in the past about our own communal genealogy. Who are the scholars who founded and advanced the intellectual tradition which we appropriate, challenge and revise? Who are the scholars of the far and near past whose works provide the basis for a common discourse which enables us to define our identity, to communicate among ourselves, and to advance (both by extension and by critique) a common cause? To put the same question in still another way, who are our scholarly ancestors and contemporaries whose works all members of the community—regardless of their discipline or sub-area—should be expected to read with care? To raise such questions is to invite rather heated controversies and debates that can never be finally resolved. But I would suggest that the kind of intellectual identity that is forged in and through such encounters is both a necessary and an appropriate prerequisite for staking a serious claim to legitimate status within the academy.⁴

In addition to a common concern for a communal genealogy, we also need to identify and highlight a set of indigenous texts that are recognized as classics within the field as a whole. Here we suffer greatly from the lack of an "orientalist" tradition of the kind that provides important support for programs in Middle Eastern studies, South Asian studies, and East Asian studies.⁵ In order to compensate for this very serious lacuna in our own scholarly tradition, we need to place a high priority on translating carefully selected religious and literary texts produced in the long-established religious and literary traditions. In addition, we need to gather and translate "texts" produced in orally transmitted traditions, including both folk traditions and the traditions of so-called hill tribe communities.⁶

⁴ Although many of the issues raised in this paper were discussed at the Wingspread conference, some of them at considerable length, the matter of the intellectual ancestry of the field was consistently avoided. I hope it will remain on the agenda for future consideration.

⁵ The "orientalist" traditions of western scholarship have, in recent years, been subjected to numerous attacks that have highlighted a variety of very serious shortcomings. But despite the distortions and misrepresentations that these traditions have generated, they have left legacies of serious textual and historical scholarship which serve as invaluable resources for postmodernist scholars who approach them with proper discretion.

⁶ The compilation of such orally transmitted "texts" is a delicate task that raises many serious methodological problems. However the dangers of

The availability of translations of such texts would provide some access across the linguistic barriers that inevitably tend to ghettoize Southeast Asianists within the sub-areas in which they specialize. Such availability would also be a major boon to our efforts to convince our humanities oriented colleagues in other fields that Southeast Asian civilizations and cultures are, in fact, worthy of focused academic attention.

A third area that will require further attention if we are to form Southeast Asian studies into a viable interpretive community is the recognition and exploration of common issues. The question that stands out in this regard is whether, in what ways, and to what extent it is possible to give serious intellectual content to the notion of Southeast Asia itself. This means that at least some important segments of our community must explicitly engage in the kind of comparative activity that will identify and explore broadly disseminated patterns of religion, culture, language, polity, and so forth in ways that highlight the common elements that are shared across the region (or reasonably large segments of it) and the differences that characterize particular segments of society, particular localities, and the like.

Broadly based comparative studies can be carried out in a variety of ways. Given the distinctive situation in Southeast Asia, one approach that needs special attention is to identify common patterns of relating to the world which cut across the obvious diversity of historical and contemporary civilizations and cultures. Recent attempts to develop comparative histories that take cognizance of such patterns have been published by Oliver Wolters (1982) and Anthony Reid (1988). With the extensive new evidence being gathered by anthropologists, and the exciting new discoveries being made by archaeologists, more efforts of this kind promise to generate increasingly interesting results.

Without various kinds of broadly envisioned, regionally oriented comparative research, the only justification for Southeast Asian studies will be the ultimately self-defeating one of providing an institutional umbrella for a motley collection of disparate and peripheral special interests. If, on the other hand, various kinds of comparative research are taken up and fostered, we can hope for a new day when we will be in a position to more effectively defend the notion that Southeast Asian studies is an interpretive community

misrepresentation are far outweighed by the inevitable distortions that are created when these types of expression are not represented at all.

that has--like other legitimate segments of the academy--an intellectually viable object of study.⁷

RELATING TO THE DISCIPLINES

If Southeast Asian studies is to be a secure and creative interpretive community in the modern academy, it must cultivate a positive relationship to the disciplines that constitute the social and human sciences, and to the theoretical reflection that is taking place within them. This does not mean that scholars in Southeast Asian studies should become caught up in every new fad that emanates out of Paris (though we certainly should be informed about them, if only for purposes of self-defense). Nor does it mean that scholars in Southeast Asian studies should passively accept the parochialism, the rigidity, and the over-professionalization that characterizes the disciplinary structure in many American universities (though we must inevitably suffer some of the very unfortunate intellectual and institutional results). But it does mean that Southeast Asianists must find ways to engage with a wide range of disciplines and relevant theoretical formulations, both in the social sciences and in the humanities. Here the key is the cultivation of comparative approaches which mesh with the comparative approaches that are being developed within the disciplines themselves. In most disciplines subgroups are exploring the theoretical foundations which are needed to ground and guide cross-cultural research, defending the importance of non-western studies, and formulating the specific kinds of research questions that can be pursued through the use of comparative methods. In some disciplines these subgroups are already strong and can provide a "second home," both intellectually and practically, for Southeast Asianists who join the fray. In other cases they are weak, and will need more assistance than they will be able to provide. Whatever their strengths or weaknesses, these comparatively oriented subgroups provide the only available intellectual space within which the necessary linkages between Southeast Asian studies and the disciplines can effectively be forged.

In the area of the social sciences a great deal of progress in forging the necessary linkages has already been made.

⁷ Since appropriate intellectual constructions necessarily involve an element of authentic discovery, there is always a chance that Southeast Asia will prove not to be a viable object of academic study. This, however, is a risk we cannot avoid.

Anthropology, which originated with the study of non-western cultures and has always had a strong comparativist strand, is obviously leading the way.⁸ Another example of a social science discipline in which Southeast Asianists have established important links with other comparatively oriented scholars is political science.⁹ Notwithstanding the progress that has been made, there is certainly an ongoing need to further encourage discipline-oriented comparative thinking in these areas, and, even more so, to encourage such thinking in sister disciplines such as economics. For those in the social sciences appropriate models exist, and hopes for further progress seem realistic.

In the humanities, however, the situation is very different. Here the hard fact from which we must begin is that American Southeast Asianists who specialize in humanistic disciplines are a rare breed indeed. One or two art historians; one or two literary scholars; three or four ethnomusicologists; one or two historians of religion; and that is about it. Thus we face the problem of creating a whole new component of our interpretive community.¹⁰

My impression is that the situation is not hopeless. In fact I am convinced that some real progress has already been made; and that a unified effort, supported by a rather modest investment of funds, could--within a decade or so--produce some very salutary results. In this regard I have some comments and suggestions to make that focus on my own area of religious studies. However I see no reason why the strategies I propose could not and should not be applied, with appropriate modifications, to the other key humanistic areas such as literary studies and art history.¹¹

⁸ Note, especially, the work of Clifford Geertz and Stanley Tambiah.

⁹ Here the prime examples are found in the work of Benedict Anderson and James Scott.

¹⁰ Elsewhere I have argued that the most exciting work presently being done in the social sciences and the humanities is the kind that operates on the boundary between the two and challenges the often artificial separation between them. This argument, however, assumes a situation in which the two modes of research and teaching are both well established--a situation that obviously does not exist in the American tradition of Southeast Asian studies.

¹¹ My own view is that the history of religions is in the best position to establish an effective humanistic beachhead within Southeast Asian studies. Though this is not the place to defend this view in any detail, four points are worth mentioning: (1) Among the humanistic areas in the American

At first glance, it seems very strange that Southeast Asian studies and religious studies have had so little significant overlap. Certainly if James Scott can say that Southeast Asia is to anthropologists what the Galapagos Islands were to Darwin, the same could be said--potentially at least--for religious studies. Moreover, religious studies has spawned within itself a history of religions discipline that has a long tradition of studying non-western religions, has consistently established creative relationships with area studies programs, and has invested a great deal of energy in exploring (both theoretically and in practice) the problems and possibilities of comparison. However, in stark contrast to the close relationships that have developed between the history of religions discipline and South and East Asian studies, the relationship between it and Southeast Asian studies has been minimal indeed.¹²

When the situation is examined more closely, however, the reasons for the gap are not hard to discern. Certainly one factor has been the strong tendency for the social sciences to perpetuate their domination of Southeast Asian studies. On the one side, their domination has made it impossible to train historians of religions within the area studies context itself. On the other, it has made graduate school teachers in the discipline skeptical concerning the

university setting, religious studies has been the most creative in developing a global perspective and the most encouraging of interdisciplinary research and teaching. (2) Religion has played (and to a lesser extent continues to play) a pervasive role in virtually every aspect of culture and society in Southeast Asia. (3) Historians of religion are methodologically well prepared to study the traditions of religious performances that are central not only to an understanding of Southeast Asian religions, but also to an understanding of much of the literature and the arts of the region as well. (4) Historians of religions are already aware of the importance of Southeast Asian religions, and are anxious to encourage those who wish to work in the area. This is certainly true of Buddhology where considerable work has already been done. And it is increasingly true of Islamic studies where there is a growing recognition of the impoverishment that has resulted from the virtual nonexistence of religio-historical research and teaching on Indonesian and Malaysian Islam.

¹² The extent to which religious studies/history of religions has been marginalized in the Southeast Asianists' world is indicated by the fact that neither its presence nor its absence was noted in the original drafts of any of the other papers that were prepared for the Wingspread conference.

opportunities for their students who might seek to specialize in the study of Southeast Asian traditions.

A second, closely related element that has helped to maintain the gap is the fact that graduate students who aspire to full acceptance in both the history of religions community and the Southeast Asian studies community face a daunting task of language preparation, especially if they intend to focus their attention on one of the two major religious traditions in the area. In addition to the rudiments of their discipline (which requires proficiency in French and German) and the necessary area studies materials, they need to learn at least two (in most cases three) classical and/or local languages. The extra training that this kind of career trajectory requires turns an already expensive five to six year graduate program into an even more expensive program that will take, at minimum, seven to eight years to complete.

A third element that has contributed to the situation is the fact that the major programs of Southeast Asian studies and the major centers of history of religions research and teaching have been situated in widely separated institutions. If there had been a strong history of religions program at Cornell or Yale or Michigan, or if there had been a major Southeast Asia center at Chicago or Harvard or Santa Barbara, more discussions and exchanges might have taken place; and in the process ways might have been found to narrow the gap between Southeast Asianists and historians of religion. Unfortunately, however, that possibility has never been put to the test.¹³

If these characterizations of the problems have merit, they suggest certain rather specific strategies through which the situation could be addressed creatively. Clearly, significant progress has already been made in opening the Southeast Asian studies community to the humanities. The fact that social scientists themselves recognize the "gross imbalance" between the humanities and the social sciences is a very positive factor. More concretely, the recent action by the Luce Foundation to fund, at Southeast Asia centers, a number of new faculty positions that are open to people

¹³ In the mid 1970s an attempt was made to establish a Southeast Asia center at Chicago where the prospects for interaction with the history of religions program were very strong. However the University's application for government support was rejected. When this occurred, the University made a conscious decision to focus its attention on other area studies programs that had been more successful in attracting federal funding.

with religious studies qualifications is, to say the very least, a great leap forward. We can now proceed with greater confidence that, if really good students can be recruited and well trained, there will be a receptive attitude on the part of their prospective colleagues; and also with some assurance that there will be real Southeast Asian studies jobs for which they can compete. Hopefully these developments represent trends that will continue in the future.¹⁴

Given the emergence of these new possibilities, the problems of recruitment and proper training take on added urgency. In order to address these problems parsimoniously, one way to proceed might be to offer a small number of two-year supplementary fellowships that would provide support for carefully selected graduate students willing to undertake the extended training program that I have suggested above. These fellowships would be made available both to discipline-oriented students who want to enhance their Southeast Asia expertise; and to students oriented primarily to Southeast Asia programs who want to develop the linguistic and disciplinary skills they will need to win their spurs in the history of religions community. On the basis of my own experience I would guess that if such fellowships are offered, there will be top-level students who will apply.¹⁵

This kind of strategy could also be adapted to the situations of those who are already established in their academic careers. Here I think especially of fellowships for postdoctoral study that would enable outstanding young historians of religions who specialize in a relevant religion (such as Buddhism or Islam) or type of religion ("tribal," "peasant" or the like) to spend two years in a Southeast Asia center studying the Southeast Asian situation and learning a local language. I also think of similar fellowships that would enable first-

¹⁴ I must confess that my enthusiasm concerning the new Luce-funded positions was mixed with a bit of frustration. If, six or seven years ago, we had any premonition that these positions would become available, the competition to fill them would have been considerably stiffer than it was!

¹⁵ A makeshift version of this kind of exchange has already been employed with excellent results by the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana. Cornelia Kammerer, who was an anthropology student at Chicago specializing in Akha religion, did most of her ethnographic preparation with Frederick Lehman at Illinois, while Mark Woodward (Indonesian Islamic studies) and Juliane Schober (Burmese Buddhist studies) both did considerable discipline-oriented history of religions work at Chicago.

rate Southeast Asianists in disciplines such as anthropology, history, or political science to spend two years in a major history of religions center working to develop the relevant language competence and history of religions skills. Again, my impression is that there are first-rate young scholars on various faculties across the country who would jump at this kind of opportunity.

Finally, in order to facilitate such strategies we need to develop greater institutional cooperation. The establishment of a new Southeast Asia center at Arizona State where there is a strong history of religions presence should generate some very interesting new developments.¹⁶ There have recently been some very preliminary talks about forming a Southeast Asia consortium in Illinois that would facilitate the articulation of resources that are available at the University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana, Northern Illinois University at De Kalb, and the University of Chicago.¹⁷ But what is most interesting is the much more wide-ranging exchange and interaction that would occur if the fellowship program proposed above should actually be established. Clearly its effective operation at the graduate level would involve students dividing their in-residence work between institutions with strong area studies programs and institutions with strong programs in their own

¹⁶ One of the most intriguing facts about the Arizona State situation is that the cooperating faculty includes an historian of religions who specializes in early and Middle Eastern Islam (Richard Martin), and a Southeast Asianist with anthropological and history of religions training who specializes in Indonesian Islam (Mark Woodward). I am very hopeful that the conversations between these two scholars will produce major insights that will have an important impact on classical Islamic studies on the one hand, and on our understanding of Indonesian Islam on the other.

¹⁷ Whether or not a full scale consortium arrangement is worked out, the close proximity of Northern Illinois and Chicago, combined with appointments that the two institutions recently have made, opens up the possibility for a major cooperative effort to advance the study of Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia. The two schools between them have six faculty members working on various Theravada topics related directly or indirectly to Southeast Asia--three at Chicago who consider themselves to be primarily historians of religion, philosophers of religion, or Buddhologists (Reynolds, Griffiths and Collins), and three at Northern Illinois who are more closely involved with area studies (Aung Thwin in history, Cooler in art history and Rhum in anthropology). If cooperative efforts do, in fact, develop, the results should be very positive indeed.

particular disciplines. At the post-doctoral level it would establish new cross-cutting institutional affiliations among scholars of an older generation.

If those who formulate policy and determine funding in Southeast Asian studies pursue these kinds of strategies in the core areas of religious studies, literary studies and art history, the unhealthy dominance of the social sciences over the humanities could be redressed rather quickly. A new configuration could be established that would generate important new issues that would both invigorate and extend the kind of conversations that now take place. At the same time, this new configuration, and the intellectual ferment that it would generate, would greatly facilitate the process of establishing Southeast Asian studies as a viable and contributing community within the academy.¹⁸

ACCEPTING THE PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGE

When leading scholars gather to discuss the condition and needs of their field, questions of undergraduate curriculum and teaching are seldom raised. Thus I was not surprised when, in the series of questions that we were asked to address at the Wingspread conference, such matters were conspicuous by their absence. Nor was I surprised by the fact that only two of the other papers that were written for the conference made any reference to the topic at all. However if we take seriously the fact that as American Southeast Asianists our ecological niche is located in the academy, we must face the reality that the way in which our subject is integrated into the liberal arts context will be central to whatever future we may have.

James Scott has suggested that undergraduate teaching by Southeast Asianists has been conspicuously unsuccessful in attracting bright young students into the field. If his observation is correct (and I have no reason to doubt that it is), our failure to arouse undergraduate interest in the profession should provide considerable stimulus for pedagogical self-reflection. But this problem of recruiting new initiates into our interpretive community

¹⁸ An example of an exciting initiative is the conference on "Law and Society in Southeast Asia" which was held in Chiangmai, Thailand, January 5-10, 1992. At this conference, sponsored jointly by the Law and Society Association and Chiangmai University, the first topic discussed, and one that resonated throughout the entire conference, was the complex of relationships—both historical and contemporary—between religion and law.

is related to a much larger pedagogical problem that we need to tackle. That problem is the radically peripheral position of Southeast Asian studies in relation to the broader patterns and purposes of liberal education.

To some extent, the kind of peripherality that we suffer is inevitable. We share this problem with other area studies communities, and--as one of the smallest--we are in an especially difficult position. However, other area studies communities are making major efforts to improve their situation, and we would be well advised to follow their example. There are at least three available strategies that could generate very positive results.

The first is an effort to incorporate Southeast Asian components into core courses in which a broad range of students are required or expected to enroll. Happily the new Southeast Asia center at Arizona State University has already taken one important initiative in this regard. With substantial support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Juliane Schober has organized a multi-year project that is intended to serve a double purpose. At one level, the project is designed to alert faculty members (affiliated with Southeast Asian studies area and various humanistic disciplines) to the possibilities and advantages of constructing such courses. At the same time, it seeks to identify specific topics, resources and techniques through which these possibilities might be actualized. Hopefully other institutions will initiate similar experiments, not only in the humanistic sphere, but in the social sciences as well.¹⁹

A second strategy that has great promise is to offer courses in Southeast Asian civilization(s) as a part of the general liberal arts curriculum. In the case of universities that have major Southeast Asian centers, such courses could be team-taught efforts that would provide contexts in which the "interpretive community" could pool its resources and work to forge its identity as a community. In the case of universities and colleges having only one or two Southeast Asianists on the faculty, the course(s) would have to be modified to mesh with the interests and expertise of the available personnel. However, if these scholars take Southeast Asia seriously as a viable object of study, and if relevant pedagogical materials developed at the major centers are made available, a very respectable course could be offered.

¹⁹ The only comparable endeavor that has come to my attention is one being implemented at the University of Oregon.

Given the increasing number of American undergraduate students from Southeast Asian backgrounds, a course in Southeast Asian civilization(s) will, in some institutions, serve a particular need and have a natural clientele. Moreover, if appropriate issues are kept to the fore (e.g., the way in which an understanding of Southeast Asia can illuminate our own situation, the sources and impact of western images of the area and of specific countries, etc.), a wider constituency could be attracted, and more general educational purposes could be achieved.²⁰

The third strategy that should be utilized in order to generate a greater Southeast Asian presence in the liberal education process is the establishment of more and better "year abroad" programs situated in various Southeast Asian countries. Given the political turmoil and university situations in many countries in the region, setting up and maintaining such programs will inevitably be a difficult and often very frustrating business. But it is worth noting that in other areas of the world programs of this type have succeeded in stimulating and maintaining interest, not only among students but among associated faculty as well.

If the kind of undergraduate educational agenda that I am suggesting (or anything like it) is to be seriously pursued, funding institutions will need to take some very practical steps in cooperation with scholars who are working in the area. A high priority is the production of first-rate textbooks that could be used in introductory courses. There exist a few such books that deal with particular subregions or countries,²¹ but the fare is limited, almost exclusively social scientific, and focused on recent historical developments. In

²⁰ So far as I am aware the only well established Southeast Asian civilizations courses are those offered by the Southeast Asia Studies Program at Northern Illinois University and by the Department of Religion at Arizona State University. A description of this latter course, which is co-listed with four social science departments, is contained in *Suvannabhumi*, the newsletter of the Southeast Asian Studies Program at Arizona State, Vol. 1, No. 2 (May, 1990), pp. 7-8. I have been told that the faculty of the Southeast Asia Program at Cornell is planning to introduce such a course into the undergraduate curriculum. Hopefully the relevant faculty at these three institutions, working together or separately, will generate teaching materials that can be utilized and adapted to situations at other universities and colleges across the country.

²¹ Here I think especially of Charles Keyes' *The Golden Peninsula* (1977).

addition there is a crying need for usable and decently priced translations of primary texts, including both the classical texts essential to introduce students to the traditional cultures of the region, and also more contemporary texts required to acquaint them with contemporary attitudes and sensitivities.

For some Southeast Asianists, investing valuable time, energy and money in facilitating a serious involvement in the liberal arts may seem an unwise use of precious resources, and a frivolous diversion from their primary research agendas. In the long run, however, such an investment will yield very important dividends. Perhaps the most obvious dividend will be creating student interest that will stimulate greater involvement in language study and generate larger enrollments in advanced courses dealing with more specialized topics. This involvement in language study and more advanced courses might then (in addition to its inherent educational value) lead an occasional student or two to contemplate a serious, long-term commitment to research and teaching in the area.

The major dividend, however, would be our creative participation in another aspect of the academic world within which we must establish our legitimacy and make our way. Within the larger institutions where strong Southeast Asia programs are firmly established, a serious commitment to the liberal arts enterprise is desirable. In other universities and colleges (where the great majority of American Southeast Asia scholars must inevitably find their professional home) this kind of involvement in the educational process will be a *sine qua non* for maintaining and enhancing a Southeast Asian studies presence.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

As I trust the tone of my reflections has already suggested, I am basically optimistic about the future of Southeast Asian studies in America. The pattern of policy-oriented studies that dominated the original growth of Southeast Asian studies in the American academy from the end of World War II through the end of the Vietnam War has long since lost whatever viability it may once have had. The pattern of relative stagnation and decline that characterized the field during the late 1970s and most of the 1980s also seems to be on the wane. If the new dynamism that led up to the Wingspread conference is any indication, a new phase in the development of Southeast Asian studies is well underway. And if the intellectual seriousness and vitality that animated many of the discussions at the

conference itself are any indication, this new phase of development may be very productive indeed.

There are a number of extremely serious problems that must be faced, but none of them is intractable. To be sure, we will need to establish stronger institutional foundations than we have had in the past; and we will need to generate a different and much broader vision of the intellectual role that we seek to assume. We will need to recognize and address our own weaknesses, and to marshal our own strengths; and we will need to attract substantial new resources in order to do what has to be done. But when the situation is viewed from the perspective of the periphery, a creative engagement with all of these needs seems to be a very real possibility.

REFERENCES

- Bonfee, Kenneth. 1986. "Social Construction, Language and the Authority of Knowledge." *College English* 48:773-90.
- Fish, Stanley. 1980. *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Keyes, Charles F. 1977. *The Golden Peninsula: Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia*. New York: Macmillan.
- Reid, Anthony. 1988. *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Wolters, O. W. 1982. *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspective*. Brookfield, Vt.: Gower.



DIMENSIONS OF THE TEACHING OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES

John U. Wolff

INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with the dimensions of organizing instruction in the Southeast Asian languages--the problems which arise, to what extent these are recognized, what strategies have been formulated to solve them. I also venture to pass some judgments on these strategies and propose some new ones in the light of one summer's experience in directing the Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI).

None of the issues can be clearly separated--they are all interdependent in manifold ways--yet we can tease out three overriding dimensions:

1. Issues of logistics, organization, finance: how can we deliver optimum or even adequate language instruction in a large number of important languages which are studied by very small numbers of people? The corollary question to this is what kind of institutions can we build to assure a permanence of needed language instruction and how can we create a cadre of pedagogical linguists and trained language teachers who can build the field and carry on as this generation retires?
2. Issues of content: what should we teach, and the corollary questions, who do we teach and for what purpose?
3. Issues of research: what kind of research is desirable or needed to inform our language programs? This research deals with: (1) the languages themselves; (2) the learners--how they learn, why they learn, what happens to them as they learn as well as after they finish their language study; and (3) the teachers: who are they, what sort of knowledge and skills do they have which they can bring to their teaching?

THE DIMENSION OF CONTENT

Let us start with the dimension of content: what should we teach, who should we teach, and for what purpose? We need to decide these questions before we approach the subsidiary questions of how we teach--what are the methods, what are the books or technologies--and of what kind of teachers we have or can educate?

What Do We Teach?--The Priority Question

The following Southeast Asian languages are being taught or have been taught in past SEASSIs: Indonesian, Malaysian, Javanese, Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Vietnamese, Khmer, Lao, Thai, Hmong, and Burmese. Past institutes have offered instruction in Dutch as well.¹ I might add, all of these need to be given at three levels. In addition we have received requests for Balinese, Sundanese, Kapangpangan, Madurese, Shan; all of these have been taught at some level and in some way in this country within the past ten years. There may be others about which I do not know, and certainly the list can be expanded considerably if we consider all major languages of Southeast Asia. Clearly it is impossible to offer instruction in all of these or even a large portion of them, and which of these should be offered in a given institute has been a source of considerable argument and even recrimination in the community of Southeast Asia specialists.

I submit that the answer to the priority of a given language lies primarily in answers to questions of who the learners are and what their goals are. But social, political, and purely linguistic questions also enter into the decision. For example, in formulating educational priorities one has to take into account that Javanese occupies a special position as the vehicle for an important literature and as the language of the group which plays a decisive cultural and political role in contemporary Indonesia. In a slightly different vein, Dutch as the vehicle of a vast technical literature is unquestionably indispensable for social scientists and humanists specializing in Indonesian studies, and means for training good readers of Dutch

¹ Other non-Southeast Asian languages are needed by scholars in some aspects of Southeast Asian studies: Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, and perhaps others, but instruction in these is widely available. On the other hand instruction in Dutch is limited, and a good case can be made for including instruction in this language among the concerns in the education of scholars in Southeast Asian studies.

must be factored into any list of priorities. Purely linguistic or sociolinguistic considerations must also be taken into account in the case of Malaysian and also Lao or Shan: to what extent can training in Indonesian prepare personnel who need Malaysian and to what extent can Thai instruction meet the needs of Lao or Shan consumers?

It is in the context of these considerations that instructional priorities should be set, and I submit that if we are to transcend happenstance or caprice in setting priorities, these are the questions which we must answer for ourselves as a field. Also I would caution against allowing governmental or other external funding agencies to set our priorities for us.

Whom Do We Teach and For What Purposes?

The majority of graduate students who study Southeast Asian languages are majoring in international aspects of some discipline. However, this view by no means gives a complete profile of people who study Southeast Asian languages. If we look at undergraduate enrollment, we find that students with family connections in Southeast Asia make up a considerable portion of the enrollees, and in the case of Tagalog they are the overwhelming majority. If we look at the applications for the SEASSI and summarize what the students state as their purpose and what we can surmise from the entire application, we get these groups and others as well. In 1990, 80 percent or 115 of the 140 participants came from academia, almost equally divided among Ph.D. candidates, M.A. candidates, and undergraduates. Four of these students were in technical disciplines; the rest came from every major social science and humanities discipline. Of the graduate students, anthropology had the largest enrollment. Of the twenty-five non-academic enrollees, ten were teachers at the pre-university level, seven were social workers, and the rest were military personnel, administrators, journalists and business people.

Heretofore we have assumed that the primary goal of area study programs and language and area institutes is to educate academics who specialize in a discipline with Southeast Asia as an area focus. It is also taken for granted that if we serve the needs of the future academics, we will also have the optimum program for other groups with other aims in their language study. The second proposition is probably not true, but I will assume that the primary goal of our efforts is indeed the training of scholars. This does not mean that other groups do not have a place in our programs nor does it imply

that any allocation of resources to the education of these other groups is a diversion of resources from the primary population. It has been argued persuasively, in fact there are data which support it, that some of these groups are a recruiting ground for scholars. Also, in the case of students oriented to a profession and not to area studies, our programs and institutes very clearly have an important role in their education or training. However, I would say that even though students in the professional schools, undergraduates, people interested in exploring their roots, and other non-academic types are important populations for our programs, the type of teaching we do and the shape of the program we offer should be oriented to future scholars.

What Kind of Program Best Meets the Needs of Scholars?

The population aimed at determines the course content in a very principled way. The cast of a language program, its content and approach, as well as program priorities are determined by the program's primary goal as a training ground for scholars. That means that in the case of the languages to be taught which are spoken in Southeast Asia our programs should aim at developing communicative competence in spoken languages. By communicative competence is meant not only competence in using grammatical forms correctly but also competence in behaving linguistically and extra-linguistically in an appropriate way. In short, we should be developing good grammatically correct speakers who can behave appropriately in the society which speaks the language they are studying. To do this they must be speakers who understand what has been called the "mind-set" of the target population. This is opposed to the aim of a course in Dutch, in which case our students need only develop ability to comprehend written materials. We want to develop this kind of linguistic and cultural competence in Southeast Asian languages because we are tailoring our program to the needs of students who will use the language in its home environment, that is, in interaction with native speakers in their home country. This point has important implications for the type of language teaching we need to offer. In the case of Vietnamese, for example, our course should present the dialect which is currently dominant culturally, and the texts should be authentic representatives of the kind of thing people say, write, and read currently in Vietnam. This is contrasted with the dialect which is predominant in the refugee community (southern Vietnamese, to my understanding) with texts representing overseas context. As

Southeast Asia area specialists we are interested in a course which aims at replicating the situation in the Vietnamese homeland and not the overseas situation, even though it is probably true that the majority of students who enroll in Vietnamese are not area specialists and are interested in overseas Vietnamese.

Aiming a program at potential academics implies that the language course has a function not only of teaching facts but molding behavior. The course should mimic normal discourse in the society which speaks the target language as a way of teaching behavior and bringing the students to understanding mind-set. This emphasis on oral competence in no way implies that the course content need exclusively consist of representations of spoken language. There comes a stage sooner or later, depending on the language, at which written texts of various types become appropriate sources for developing communicative competence in the students, for such texts can be taken as a source of information, or in some cases as a model for imitation, or as a means of observing closely the mind-set of the producer of the text. This view of a written text implies that these texts function as a point of departure on the basis of which the students build their communicative competence. By this reasoning it is entirely appropriate and desirable for language classes at a certain level to be based on literary texts for at least some part of the course, for such texts are the most interesting and richest sources for the type of activity which we need to stimulate. This view of literature in the language classroom contrasts with the study of texts in the comparative literature classroom, where the development of communicative competence is not a goal, but where passive understanding or analysis of literary merits becomes the focus of attention. I bring up this point in order to underscore the fact that studying texts for literary, historical, or anthropological purposes is not the same as use of texts as a departure for activities which enhance communicative competence, for the focus of classroom attention is on quite different matters.

How Do We Teach?

According to what I have said so far we have a pretty good idea of what we want to achieve with language instruction. Our next problem then is to see how we can achieve these goals. At this point I will summarize what has been tried, what has been accomplished, and what sorts of priorities we must set to achieve these goals. We can again tease out the interrelated questions into two main strands:

1. What kind of course set-ups have been tried, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of various arrangements? A corollary to this are questions of teaching organization: who are the teachers; what kind of coordination and oversight can be developed for a given program; is a team approach feasible or desirable?
2. What books and technology exist and what are the top priorities?

Program Set-up

There are four ways in which instruction in Southeast Asian languages has been offered in this country over the past two decades: (1) self-study, (2) university level non-intensive or semi-intensive courses, (3) summer institutes, and (4) intensive (full-time) academic year courses. In addition instruction is also offered in in-country language programs at various levels, which are for the most part intensive.

Self-study Programs

Self-study programs have been introduced most successfully through NASILP, the National Association for Self-Instructional Language Programs. These programs consist of a course of language study in the laboratory with access, for a limited amount of time, to a tutor who speaks the language natively but is not a trained language teacher. For such a program to succeed requires minimally teaching materials geared to self-study and a tutor trained sufficiently to exercise the students and to monitor their work in the language laboratory. Experience with Japanese and Chinese has shown that, given the existence of such materials and carefully supervised programs, a self-instructional program can successfully deliver language instruction at low cost, provided of course we are dealing with highly motivated students. Such a program has been devised for Indonesian and has enjoyed moderate success in providing elementary instruction. At the least, experience with Indonesian has shown that properly guided and well-motivated students, given sufficient time, can achieve as much as students in regularly organized instructional programs. This option should be seriously considered for Khmer, Lao, and Vietnamese where demand for instruction has already built up in a large number of institutions and where there is potential for rapid expansion. In the case of these languages, I would suggest that a high priority should be given to

developing elementary texts suitable for self-instruction which can also be used in regular programs, as can the Indonesian self-instructional texts.

University Level Courses and Summer Institutes

Most of the students who are potential scholars in area studies are enrolled in programs which offer languages in this category. There are two issues which need discussion in connection with these programs: (1) academic, and (2) financial-logistical issues. The latter are considerable and will be discussed later in this paper, although academic issues cannot be discussed without some reference to them.

From the point of view of the learner, the largest disadvantage to this method of developing competence is the lack of concentration and continuity of learning. Academic year programs typically run for twelve or thirteen weeks, five hours a week, with longer or shorter breaks for vacation. There is little chance for immersion, and language courses compete for the students' energy and attention with technical and other academic courses. The level of proficiency which can be achieved in the course of three (or in the best case even four) academic years is far below the level the scholar will need for working in the community which speaks the target language.

A more serious problem is the unavailability of good academic year programs for all except a handful of these languages in a handful of institutions.

The establishment of summer institutes provides a partial solution, or at least a compensation for these shortcomings. The SEASSI has been moderately successful in coming to grips with them and is viewed as a model for other area studies. However, I regard it as a partial solution as there are serious academic problems with institutes as well. The first has to do with continuity. At best the summer institutes can last no longer than ten weeks. Since a very large portion of the students have access to instruction only at the institutes and at best have only three summers for language study, there are only thirty weeks of instruction available to them with hiatuses of nine months between sessions. Typically, students have access to even less time. A second problem is the quality of the program available in the SEASSI. Until we have good textbooks and trained teachers available for all courses at all levels, there is no way that we will be able to offer adequate instruction across the board. This has been a top concern to many of us in the profession of teaching Southeast Asian languages. We are now developing

strategies to address this problem, which is made difficult because there are so many languages, so few good materials, and so few personnel trained to develop materials and to teach.

Intensive (Full-time) Academic Year Courses

Intensive full-time programs in Southeast Asian languages have been offered for the most part under governmental auspices and in nonacademic settings. Such programs rarely provide instruction to future scholars of Southeast Asian studies and often in their content are not appropriate to the training of scholars, but they do have the advantage of being intensive, total immersion programs and are free from the discontinuities and time limitations of our academic programs.

For Indonesian we have at Cornell an intensive program which has trained some hundred people over the past fifteen years. Of these a small percentage have gone on to become scholars in the field. Although the program has been academically successful, in that we have been able to provide optimum language instruction with an optimum level of success, the extraordinary cost and effort entailed in such a program are incommensurate with the modest number of scholars (some twenty) which this program has produced. Certainly from the point of view of language instruction, the intensive full-time program is the optimum delivery system. The problem with a full-time program is, first, in coming up with the resources for providing this sort of instruction and, second, in bringing the future scholars to understand that it takes the time commitment which a full-time program entails to develop competence in a Southeast Asian language and that full-time intensive study is the option which is likely to be most successful in producing results.

In-country Programs

A number of in-country programs have been developed, or are being developed. First, there are the undergraduate programs. There are two good undergraduate programs in place in Southeast Asia and two others which promise to be excellent are being planned to begin within the next two or three years. All of these programs rest on a basis of intensive language training at the elementary level, and these programs are promising as a method for recruiting a new generation of Southeast Asianists. They can build the kind of language competence which can enable students, at an early stage in

their development, to deal with sophisticated texts, much as do their peers in the more commonly taught languages and area studies.

In-country programs for advanced graduate students also have been available for Indonesian for the past fifteen years and on a sporadic basis for Thai. These programs have been a boon in introducing students who have already done their maximum three or four years study of the language to the societies in which they will be working. We have been able to use the Indonesia Abroad Program (the COTI program) as a locus for innovative experimentation in methods of enhancing competence in students who are already at the intermediate or even advanced level of proficiency.

There are pedagogical issues connected with in-country as opposed to stateside programs. There exists a widespread feeling, which I share, that it is far superior to do elementary and intermediate teaching in United States-based programs and advanced work in-country. The basis for this feeling is that in-country programs are typically set up to give the students experience in using what they know, in integrating into the speech community, using the language on a day-by-day level, and studying content courses (physics, history, or whatever) in the target language. What the in-country courses rarely are set up to do is to raise proficiency levels. Although "before" and "after" studies of student proficiency are episodic and not conclusive, one gets the impression that students tend to come into and leave such programs at about the same proficiency level. What they develop is a larger vocabulary, greater ease in using the language at their level, and (if they are in well-designed programs or are themselves sensitive) they show greatly increased cultural awareness and social skills in the host society. They do not usually acquire a wider variety of grammatical forms, or become more accurate speakers, nor are they necessarily able to do a great deal more with language than they could when they came in. This does not mean that in-country programs are worthless; on the contrary, as I mentioned, important abilities are developed in these programs. It is, however, clear that in-country programs normally are designed to address the needs of students who already have beginning and intermediate skills.

Organization of Teaching and Related Issues

Our understanding of whom we aim to train in our language programs and for what purposes has profound implications for organizing them. Our aim of developing communicative competence

(in the broad sense in which we have defined this term) means that teaching must focus on what the scholars of the National Language Center at Johns Hopkins like to call ACT. This is opposed to FACT, which involves lectures about language and culture. To take an example from German: the FACT is that in phrases referring to motion one uses the accusative case and in phrases referring to rest one uses the dative. The ACT is actually using the accusative in one context and dative in another or, to take an example from Indonesian and from the behavioral aspect of communicative competence, the FACT is that in presenting something the body must be in a certain position and only the right hand may be used. The ACT is the actual adoption of the appropriate attitude and the avoidance of the left hand.

A clear understanding of this basic distinction implies organizing instruction so that the FACT and ACT aspects of the teaching process can be clearly separated. The team teaching approach has proven effective for doing this. In such an approach the facts are presented by personnel trained in analysis who are able to understand the students' mind-set. The students are made to ACT by personnel who come from the culture in which the language is spoken. Of the two tasks the portion we have labeled as "act" is the more important in bringing about what we wish to achieve and the more difficult to apply in the classroom. This basic conception of language teaching as the teaching of ACT is not the kind of thing which people understand intuitively based on their past experience—the tendency is to think of language teaching as consisting purely of FACT. This means it is absolutely essential that language teachers be trained in methods of applying ACT in the classroom. I have tried to put developing a cadre of teachers trained in the communicative approach at the top of the agenda for our language teachers associations and for planning various programs in this country and abroad. We devoted considerable resources of the SEASSI in 1990-91 to this endeavor.

Note that this view of team organization is a far cry from the arrangement practiced in the forties and fifties, in which the linguist directed the activities of the native speaker and where the activities were aimed at developing reflex responses. Our approach requires a much higher level of originality and understanding than did the response-conditioning approach of twenty or thirty years ago. We must develop teacher training programs which produce the sophistication needed for teaching in this new format.

Pedagogical Materials

We must produce pedagogical materials which are tailored to optimally achieve the goals of communicative competence desirable for scholars in area studies. At the beginning level we should have materials which are suitable for self-study programs as well as our regular academic programs, both intensive and non-intensive. We are closer or further away from this ideal in our various languages. In some cases the beginning materials are well thought out, and if they do not match the quality of, for example, Eleanor Jordan's materials for Japanese, in the hands of adequately trained teachers these materials can be the basis of satisfactory beginning language programs. In some cases--this is surely the case of Khmer, Lao, and Vietnamese--we are badly off and the main thrust at the beginning level is adapting simple texts to the communicative mode and other temporary expedients.

At the intermediate and advanced levels even fewer pedagogical materials meet the goal of developing communicative competence. Materials at the higher levels should be based on an organized course at the lower levels, and producing lower level materials is certainly the top priority. Still the languages need to be and are being taught at the intermediate and advanced levels, and teacher training efforts there should be adapting texts to the ACT mode of instruction.

Technology

Considering the very basic needs of most of our language programs, it is difficult to support the notion that technological innovations should place a high claim on resources or time. There are, however, well developed technologies applicable to developing communicative competence in Southeast Asian languages; these can enhance considerably the quality of programs which we can offer at various levels. For example, using video clips as an authentic textual source, pioneered by the Ghambirs at the University of Pennsylvania for the teaching of Hindi, is a promising technique for our Southeast Asian languages. Surely there are other technological innovations which have potential applications to our programs. I place a high priority on an authoring system which would enable a teacher to create good materials rapidly for a language rarely taught. In any case we must understand clearly the aims of our technology; whatever technology we develop should contribute directly to developing communicative competence. We must understand how this competence is developed if we are to consider applying new

technology. An example which comes to mind is a hilariously funny Spanish-language training film, which rivets the attention and has enjoyed financial success. This film derives its humor by way of showing totally inappropriate language and inappropriate behavior. As such it cannot be used for classroom activities developing communicative competence, that is, as the basis of ACT sessions. These materials are good for ethnographic discussion of why this or that event in the film depicts inappropriate language or behavior, and they are good as a basis for discussing grammatical forms. In other words, this kind of film conveys FACT and its limitations must be clearly recognized.

It turns out that much technological innovation, such as computer-assisted instruction and laser-disk access, is aimed at the FACT aspect of language teaching, and not at ACT, which is where we really need to concentrate our fire.

THE DIMENSION OF ORGANIZATION

We have a large number of languages, small student populations, and aim to develop a high level of communicative competence in the scholars. I have described four different institutional settings in which these languages are taught and academic problems associated with each: university-level courses, summer institutes, intensive programs in an academic setting, and intensive in-country programs, along with self-instructional programs. Let me describe some of the organizational-logistical issues which these programs involve. We can tease out the interrelated issues into three: staffing, political, and financial.

Staffing Issues

Courses in the Southeast Asian languages have largely been staffed by non-professional personnel working in conjunction with scholars trained in a combination of linguistics, language pedagogy, and area studies. The American academic establishment has in the past done a reasonably good job in producing program managers, innovators, linguists who are capable of presenting the FACT portion of the instructions—that is, we have prepared language teachers who are area study specialists and who can serve the needs of the programs as they are currently established. We are not in a crisis situation, although this may well change as there exists a strong tendency for education in linguistics, anthropology, and literature to become technical and field-oriented as opposed to area-focused. There is an additional problem in that the reward and

tenure system make language program management and innovation an unattractive career choice, and the best students are not choosing this track for their careers. Certainly it is in the interest of Southeast Asian studies as a field to put language pedagogy and area studies back into the linguistics curriculum, devise strategies to attract people into language and area studies, and create the institutional arrangements to make language program development and management a viable option for a young scholar.

Much of the teaching of Southeast Asian languages, however, has been done by nonprofessional personnel, as often working independently as working in conjunction with a qualified program manager. There are two problems with this sort of staffing: (1) they are not necessarily committed professionals and they often have no qualifications for engaging in ACT-oriented instruction and, (2) they often are transitory in the field. We have, in the best case scenario, people who have training in ESL or in literature and have a natural bent for teaching, and, in the worst case, what Eleanor Jordan jocularly called the "wrestling coach's wife syndrome," where a person is asked to teach language X purely on the basis of being able to speak X and possessing the proper immigration documentation.

Native-speaking teachers are absolutely essential for achieving our goals in teaching Southeast Asian languages; the solution to the problem of their non-professional character is to offer them training as professional language teachers. We have made this a top priority for the SEASSI and we believe that one of the proper functions of the SEASSI is to provide teacher training and opportunities for professionalization. We instituted a pilot teacher training program in 1990, which I hope will create a cadre of native-speaking professional language teachers. The cumulative effect of several institutes should yield a sizable number of teachers available to staff Southeast Asian language programs.

Political Issues

I term political issues all those matters which revolve around personal feelings, power constellations (interests or spheres of interest [i.e., turf] either personal or institutional), beliefs and convictions, and other emotional reactions. On the level of the student and, to some extent, the individual faculty member, we still have the problem that many people in the field believe that language competence is not really necessary to do good work in Southeast Asia. The agricultural engineer working on irrigation systems may wonder why he or she has to be competent in Tagalog when

working on technical questions and Filipino technical personnel are all fluent in English. Although this sounds like a problem from the forties, it is still very much a political problem in 1992. Indeed Tagalog provides a good case in point. Of the eight applicants to the SEASSI 1990 for Tagalog who were oriented to area studies and who were offered financial aid, only three showed up. This is a good indication that, at least in the case of Tagalog, there is not all that great a commitment to language learning. There seems to be a fairly deeply ingrained feeling among students of the Philippines that one can talk to the people one needs to talk to in English and there is no reason to take the time and go to the expense, effort, and pain of learning a fairly difficult language. Or perhaps the feeling is that knowing a few phrases to assuage anti-colonialist feelings is enough.

The turf issues, both within a single institution and among institutions, pose problems of a different dimension. To develop Southeast Asian language pedagogy we need graduate programs which produce linguists who are area specialists and we need linguistics departments that are willing to hire area specialists. This problem hardly existed twenty-five years ago. Now this promises to be a major hurdle for language and area studies across the board, in the commonly taught Western European languages as well as in the less commonly taught languages.

Interuniversity rivalry and perceived spheres of interest are other political problems which must be accommodated. In the case of the SEASSI, we have historically followed cumbersome procedures, sometimes to near paralysis, in order to give a say to all concerned parties. Internecine rivalry eternally threatens cooperative enterprises such as SEASSI, COTI, and other language consortia.

Financial Issues

At our latest estimate, the total cost for the SEASSI 1990 for 140 students was \$315,390. Our income from tuition was \$184,800. This means that we had to raise \$130,590 to cover SEASSI 1990. These figures are emblematic of the cost overruns which characterize programs in Southeast Asian languages. There are several reasons our programs are so expensive: (1) many classes are given for only two or three persons; (2) teacher training has to be a big budget item; (3) language instruction needs to be supplemented with other area training activities; and, (4) tuition should be kept low to make the program accessible, for Southeast Asian languages, as contrasted with Japanese or Chinese, are not perceived as opportunities for making money.

THE DIMENSION OF RESEARCH

Research on the languages we teach as well as research on the learners is needed to enable us to develop the language teaching programs for the Southeast Asian languages which we require.

Language Research

For many of the languages which we teach there are great gaps in the grammars needed for pedagogical purposes. My experience in preparing materials for Tagalog, Indonesian, and Javanese is perhaps typical of what is experienced by teachers of other Southeast Asian languages. Although there are fairly voluminous grammars for all of these languages--for Tagalog there is a famous and admirable grammar prepared by Leonard Bloomfield, one of the founding fathers of American linguistics--teachers of these languages find all sorts of common morphological forms and syntactic constructions which are not mentioned in any grammatical description, much less explained in a way which could be relied upon in preparing pedagogical materials. If we are to prepare decent, well-organized materials for presenting these languages step by step at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels, we must have a clear picture of the grammatical forms of the language involved, how they relate to each other, and what sort of complexities their application involves.

My experience in preparing a course of study for Tagalog is a case in point. Although I began the task confident that I could base myself on the very substantial work of Bloomfield and fill in with the numerous other grammars done by Filipinos, I discovered that each and every text I used contained morphological formations which were not discussed in Bloomfield's book, nor in any reference for Tagalog. Fully 20 percent of the formations were totally new--many of them highly productive and quite basic to ordinary conversation. Further, many of the descriptions which I did find failed to communicate an understanding of the forms adequate to enable me to convey these to the students for effective use in their own speech. Further, the available grammars gave me little feeling for what was basic and had to be taught at an early stage, and what was more complicated or rarer and was best left for intermediate or advanced courses. In short, we need a great deal of basic research on the linguistic structure of the Southeast Asian languages in a form meaningful to the language teacher--what are often called "pedagogical grammars."

The Learners

Information on who studies Southeast Asian languages, how they go about the process, and for what purposes is essential in guiding us in the kind of teaching we do. Much research has been done on learner strategies in language learning in general. This can guide broadly the teacher of Southeast Asian languages, but there are also problems peculiar to each of the languages which we teach, and studies of how our students go about learning have the potential of affecting the teaching strategies, textbook content, and program organization significantly.

Close monitoring of the students themselves as they are learning has an important role in informing methods of delivery. This involves not only evaluating students' performance (that is, achievement and competency) but also evaluating the psychological effect of the program on the student—what creates enthusiasm, desire to learn, desire to perform well, and what hinders. We also need to develop instruments to measure the efficacy of various classroom strategies. This particular aspect of Southeast Asian language teaching has been strongly emphasized by the United States Department of Education, and developing guidelines for proficiency testing, which is one of many methods of evaluating competency, has been given a prominence overshadowing other issues in the teaching of Southeast Asian languages.

Studying what happens to the learners after they leave the classroom can also provide important information in shaping the language programs. We need to know what kind of programs produce learners who can continue with the language after leaving, and we also need to know what students of our language programs in fact do after they leave. Further, it would be useful to track the learners through the years to study language retention and attrition: what sorts of programs make for the best retention and what other facts enter into retention and attrition?

Research on Language Teachers

Basic information which we must have concerns the personnel in this country who teach Southeast Asian languages. The National Foreign Language Center at Johns Hopkins University is developing survey instruments which will enable us to find out who is teaching Southeast Asian languages and what sorts of skills they bring to their teaching.

CONCLUSION

There are thus many facets to the problems of delivering instruction in Southeast Asian languages. There are the nonacademic questions of finance and marketing--how to raise money for specialized instruction and how to identify and enlarge the numbers of people buying the instruction to make the programs financially viable. Another set of problems concern academic questions of organization: what format and what venue offers the best instruction in terms of what is known about second-language acquisition and, further, what languages should be taught and what should be the focus of instruction? A different set of problems revolves around the question of personnel. How can we expand the cadre of sophisticated teachers skilled in the principles of pedagogy? Finally, there are questions of research and materials development in the languages themselves and basic research in second-language acquisition, software applications, and the like. Some of these problems are ongoing concerns for which there are no permanent solutions, but which must be addressed continually if optimum instruction in Southeast Asian languages is to be made available. Others are problems amenable to rational solution and for which we specialists in Southeast Asian studies must find solutions for the sake of the future health of our field.



PROBLEMS OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION: THE CASE OF THAI

Robert J. Bickner

OVERVIEW

This paper has been a difficult one to write because the problems of teaching Thai exist on a number of interrelated levels. There are logistical questions concerning teaching loads and course credits, and there are theoretical questions concerning teaching methodology and class make up. There are also political questions regarding individual and institutional prerogatives and responsibilities. All of these questions overlap, and each must be considered in the light of the others.

First let me describe the context in which I work, for that will make obvious some of the problems facing those of us who teach Thai in the United States. Like my colleagues elsewhere, I am the only faculty member hired to teach Thai at the University of Wisconsin, and it is up to me to decide what is to be taught and how. The university does not have a department of Southeast Asian studies, and I am officially assigned to the Department of South Asian Studies. Although my professional training is in linguistics, I have no formal connection with that department.

In the last few years the total number of students in my Thai classes has averaged about two dozen. While the number is small in absolute terms, and may appear minimal in comparison to enrollments in European languages, this figure represents a significant percentage of all students enrolled in Thai in the United States in any given year. Even with these numbers, moreover, I cannot recall a semester in which I could address the needs of all the students who wished to enroll in Thai classes with fewer than four courses, including the standard beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels, plus a class in literature or a seminar covering a variety of language-related topics. This makes for a teaching load

consisting of four separate preparations each week, three required by my appointment, and one known as a "voluntary overload" for which I receive no official credit. Frequently these classes must be subdivided for additional unrecognized hours of instruction. This load contrasts sharply with the normal full-time load of other faculty members, which is two classes, a difference that is justified at least partly by labeling the first three levels of language classes as "skill" classes, whereas other subjects are "content" classes. Those of us who offer both types of classes fail to see a real difference.

During the most recent semester (Winter term 1990), ten students were enrolled in first year Thai; three were enrolled in second year Thai; five in third year; and six in a seminar examining Thai from a linguistic perspective. The enrollments in each class change from year to year without any real pattern, although the numbers have gone up somewhat in recent years, and I would guess that this trend will continue.

During the summer I am responsible for cultural and academic orientation for students in the undergraduate College Year in Thailand (CYIT) program, and under normal circumstances I teach the language class as well. The summer is structured around an intensive ten-week course in beginning Thai for students in the CYIT program. We recruit participants from throughout the United States and Canada, and our eighth group is now in-country. Over the years we have sent more than seventy students for an academic year of study at Chiang Mai University. A good number of them have continued in academic pursuits, a few specializing in Thai studies.

In addition to my teaching responsibilities I direct the College Year in Thailand program, with responsibility for publicity, applicant selection, budget, academic oversight, and so on. For the past several years I have also been responsible for the Advanced Summer Thai (AST) program, an intensive summer language program for advanced students that is sponsored by eight universities, and is held at Chiang Mai University. I have also been asked to respond to federal initiatives by becoming certified in oral-proficiency measurement techniques and by organizing workshops to develop guidelines for measurement of Thai oral proficiency. This combination of teaching and administrative responsibilities—four preparations, two overseas programs, and special training and workshops—makes for a rather full working day. Still, from time to time I am called upon to justify my own position and my need for assistance.

THAI TEACHING IN THE UNITED STATES

Where is Thai Taught and Who Does the Teaching?

Thai is currently being offered formally at nine universities in the United States: Arizona State, University of California-Berkeley, Cornell, Hawaii, Michigan, Northern Illinois, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin.¹ The number of courses offered for credit varies from institution to institution, with some offering only beginning and intermediate instruction. Similarly varied are the administrative arrangements. Depending on the institution, Thai is typically offered within departments of anthropology, modern languages, or area studies. In only one case is the language housed administratively in a department of linguistics, even though all of the currently employed specialists in Thai are trained in that field.

There are presently only a half dozen individuals in the United States who hold tenure-track faculty positions for Thai teaching. All are native speakers of English, and all took their professional training in linguistics. Among this small group are individuals having intensive training and extensive experience as both students and teachers of foreign languages. They also have a thorough grounding in theoretical and descriptive linguistics, and real understanding of Thai culture. We are fortunate to have such well trained individuals in permanent positions, but they are so few in number that their time and talents need to be used more carefully, I believe, than is currently the case.

It has been common for those in tenure-track positions to be assisted by native speakers of Thai who are pursuing graduate studies in the United States. Sometimes the teaching assistants are students of linguistics, and some have had prior experience teaching Thai as a foreign language. Equally often, however, the available individuals have no prior experience as foreign language teachers. Without extensive on-the-job training and supervision their work repeats the same errors that one would expect from all untrained teachers.² Teaching assistant positions are usually part-time and

¹ A few other universities occasionally offer Thai, usually on an "as needed" basis, and in the form of individual tutoring by a Thai graduate student, generally working without supervision. I am sometimes asked to evaluate individuals who study Thai in this way.

² The problem of inadequately trained teachers is not limited to those in TA positions, and I do not think that the members of our Southeast Asian scholarly community are sufficiently aware of the implications of this fact. After I presented this paper one of the senior members of our community

temporary, often filled by those who need to finance training in another discipline. Those who take these positions may devote several years to this work, but their goal generally is to return to Thailand and employment in their chosen fields, and their hard-won experience and insight are usually lost to the profession.

In some institutions Thai teaching is not handled by a tenure-track appointment but by a non-tenured lecturer. Such appointments are often less than full time, and are generally given on a year-by-year basis, with no guarantee of continuity, little job security, and even fewer opportunities for promotions and salary increases than for faculty-level positions. It is also significant for the field, however, since research grants, sabbatical leaves and other financial supports are normally available only to those in tenure-track positions. Currently one native speaker of English and three native speakers of Thai have lecturer appointments, each at least nominally supervised by a linguist, who may or may not be familiar with Thai, and who may or may not be familiar with the problems involved in teaching it. One of these lecturers has professional training in linguistics. One has a Ph.D. degree in a non-related field.

Thus, in discussing how best to plan for the future, we must note first that the field of Thai teaching centers on a few individuals already heavily committed to teaching and administrative responsibilities, and who are caught between the need to develop the field and demands placed on them by the research-oriented universities in which they work. We must also be aware of the fact that these great institutions, which frequently express pride in the diversity of training offered to their students and loudly declare their interest in international education, are often suspicious of, and even

told me, during a private conversation, that I was being "terribly narrow" when I expressed reservations about turning language classes over to teachers with professional training in disciplines not related to language teaching. What my colleague saw as narrowness, I see as appropriate caution.

One cringes at advanced students of Thai using class time to recopy hand-written compositions because of having made spelling mistakes, or of beginning students being required to memorize the Thai alphabet before they have learned to hear or produce the sound distinctions that the symbols encode. Unfortunately, individuals without formal training in the theory and methodology of foreign language teaching often adopt such terribly counterproductive approaches to teaching a language. Thai is no exception.

hostile toward, the needs of teachers of the "much less commonly taught languages."³

Who Elects to Study Thai, and Why?

The student body varies dramatically, both from institution to institution, and also from year to year within one institution. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison more than fifty languages are taught more or less regularly, so students have a wide variety of languages to choose from. As a result, nearly all those who register for Thai have some significant personal or academic interest in Thailand or Thai studies. Of the ten or fifteen University of Wisconsin-Madison students who register for beginning Thai each year, only two or three do so primarily out of curiosity. Even among students with personal connections, however, one can expect

³ We often have a situation in which the right hand seems unaware of the activities of the left. A visiting delegation of rectors from Thai universities was received in Madison not many years ago, partly to facilitate contacts between UW-Madison and the Thai institutions. At the insistence of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies my spouse and I were added to the guest list. When the time came for welcoming remarks, the host named each guest and his or her area of interest. When my spouse and I were introduced, however, it became clear that the host did not know why we were there. No mention was made of the fact that UW is one of the few campuses in the country with interest and resources sufficient to offer Thai instruction, or that we have been fortunate enough to be named a National Resource Center for Southeast Asia, facts that, from the Thai point of view, would have been quite significant. We had to rectify the oversight individually.

UW officials responsible for alumni contacts recently sent me two lengthy documents in Thai, one an account of our chancellor's visit to UW alumni in Bangkok, stressing their importance and asking that I arrange for them to be translated as soon as possible. At the same time, I have been repeatedly asked by my more immediate superiors, and even colleagues in casual conversation, to demonstrate not only that I work a full enough day to warrant a one-third time assistant, but also to show that the work I do is of significance. From conversations that I have had with other Thai teachers I know that my experience is not unique in this regard.

I do not mention these incidents to find fault. The institutions in which we all work are huge, and the administrators face great challenges simply in trying to be aware of all that is going on. I bring up these examples to show why language teachers often feel themselves to be relegated to the periphery, a situation that is not good for any of us.

significant attrition from first year into second. Graduate students often go to the field or to summer institutes and jump into third year classes, and less motivated students turn elsewhere. A drop in enrollment of one-half from year one to year two is normal.

Universities that offer fewer languages may draw larger beginning classes, mainly of undergraduates who wish to fulfill a language requirement. Among these, however, attrition is even greater, leaving very small upper-level classes, often comprising mostly graduate students. Some institutions have smaller classes, and offer only two levels of instruction rather than the three or four offered elsewhere.

Undergraduate students, both those with specific interests in Thai studies and also the simply curious, usually need to fill a language requirement. In some institutions this can be accomplished with a single year of an "exotic" language, but generally a two year sequence of courses is required. These students seldom consider spending a summer at the Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI), and so during the academic year we must offer both first and second year Thai on a continuing basis. Motivation is sometimes very strong among these students; some do quite well, and continue their studies to the point of genuine mastery. For many, however, motivation is weaker; once they fulfill the language requirement, they turn to other matters. Teaching such students seems unproductive given other pressures on our time, but they must be accommodated if only to satisfy legislators that we are responding to the interests of our citizenry.

Graduate students often come to us fairly late in their programs desperate to learn enough Thai to qualify for a research grant. Usually having far too little time to accomplish what they really need to, they spend countless hours in language labs trying to speed their absorption of the language, sometimes with surprising success. Those who attend SEASSI during the summers sometimes reach their goal of qualifying for research support. Because they are so highly motivated, graduate students tend to set class standards, with other students measured against them.

What Preparation Do the Students Bring to Class?

In years past, most of our students, both undergraduate and graduate, were native speakers of English who knew little or no Thai when they arrived at our doors. Such students fit the profile imagined by introductory texts, and it has always been relatively clear how to teach them. They naturally belong in a first-year class.

We have also always had a few students who came to us with prior experience with Thai. Undergraduates who were high school exchange students and graduate students who are former volunteers of one sort or another are fairly common. As these students are generally native speakers of English, their problems are predictable, but they have varying degrees of competence in both spoken and written communication. Placing them in classes with students who have never been to Thailand becomes very difficult because the two groups have conflicting needs. Former exchange students and returned volunteers may be able to speak with fluidity, and perhaps even fluency, but often know little written Thai and, if they lived up-country, they may have significant dialect confusion. University-trained students, in contrast, frequently have far stronger command of writing than of speech, and generally have been exposed only to Central Thai. Grouping such students effectively into classes for credit can be quite difficult; the result is often a fragmented class that meets in multiple small groups, doubling and tripling the preparations required, and adding dramatically to the number of contact hours, neither of which is reflected in the official teaching load.

How Has the Mixture of Students Changed in Recent Years?

Two new groups of students have begun to appear in our classes in the past few years; they represent both an immediate problem and a potential opportunity. The first of these groups comprises students who are themselves Southeast Asians; the second includes native speakers of English who have considerable prior university training in Thai.

Native Speakers of Southeast Asian Languages

Some of the speakers of Southeast Asian languages who are now appearing in Thai classes are adult refugees or the children of refugees. They speak Hmong, Vietnamese, Lao, or Khmer with native fluency, but vary from highly literate to nonliterate in these languages. Their reasons for studying Thai differ, as do their degrees of motivation and their skills as language learners. Their native language background poses a tremendous and frustrating problem since their needs differ greatly from those of the native speakers of English. Even worse, the needs of these new students differ greatly from each other, depending on the language that each speaks natively. These problems cannot be ignored since such students now make up as much as half of the enrollment of beginning Thai classes.

To illustrate the problems involved, imagine a student who is a native speaker of Vietnamese. This person already speaks a contour-tone language, and will have learning problems that differ greatly from those of a native speaker of midwestern American English, who cannot even recognize the presence of tone, much less produce it. While the native speaker of English needs help just to recognize the presence of tone, the native speaker of Vietnamese needs help in expanding his or her own native, generally unarticulated, concepts of tone to encompass the very different sounds used by Thai speakers. The Vietnamese speaker will need special exercises to address the problem, exercises of little or no value for native speakers of English. A Khmer speaker in the same language class, in contrast, will recognize a large number of Thai words since the two languages have borrowed vocabulary from each other extensively. Khmer, however, is not a tonal language, so the Khmer speaker will often need special training in order to master the tone system. Different still are the problems facing native speakers of Hmong, most of whom have an extremely difficult time learning to hear and produce the syllable-final consonant sounds of Thai, since Hmong does not employ consonant sounds in the final position of the syllable. Again, special exercises will be needed for these students, exercises that will mean nothing to the native speakers of other languages in the class, but which will take considerable time to create and to use.

In some ways the most difficult case is the native speaker of Lao. Lao is a sister language of Thai; they share the same underlying grammar and a large stock of lexical items, although they have very different tone systems. Native Lao speakers do need instruction if they are to learn to speak accurate and unaccented Thai, but they find classes designed for native speakers of other languages terribly slow and boring. Finding the time to meet their special needs is nearly impossible since they usually fit into neither beginning nor advanced classes. If a learner is not literate in Lao, he or she will have to begin from scratch learning the complex written system of Thai. Teaching writing is normally handled, however, in small increments over several months, and the student who needs only to study the writing system will find this pace tediously slow. The alternative, meeting with the instructor individually, is always satisfying and proceeds fairly quickly, but it demands even more of the instructor's time. Moreover, in this case the student will need to meet with the class only during those sessions devoted to reading and writing, leaving the rest of the hours unused.

In addition to devising methods to help each of these different groups we have the problem of deciding what classes to place them in. They are unable to converse in Thai, at least at the beginning of the term, and thus cannot be placed with intermediate or advanced students. The introductory class is not much better because some of these students can master the rudiments of spoken Thai very quickly compared to native speakers of English, and thus rapidly outpace most of the class. Either way they do not fit into the normal class structure.

The textbooks that we have are designed for native speakers of English and so do not anticipate any of these problems. It is entirely up to the instructor to analyze the problems encountered by each segment of the class, create appropriate solutions, and somehow find the time to apply those solutions. This becomes an impossible task given the constant demands of four separate preparations as well as multiple administrative assignments.

Among the ethnic Southeast Asians coming to our classes is yet another group that adds to the dilemma of the language teacher, that is, the small but growing number of individuals who have grown up in the United States with Thai-speaking parents. Some of these students cannot speak Thai when they enter our classes but, because they have listened to it spoken at home, they have a relatively easy time in learning it. They may have no real productive facility in Thai but they do have great passive knowledge of contour tone, a tremendous advantage over students who have had no exposure to such languages. These individuals can often be treated as though they were native speakers of English who have a particularly good ear for the language, so to speak, and we need only worry about whether we are challenging them sufficiently to hold their interest. Others have grown up speaking Thai at home. These students represent both a greater opportunity and a greater problem than any other group of students. They have native command of spoken Thai, but since they have not been schooled in the language, they may not be literate in Thai and are often completely uneducated regarding formal use of the language. The opportunity lies in their native command of many aspects of the language, and they can easily contemplate doing an undergraduate degree in, for example, comparative literature, studying Thai and English.

The problem, again, lies in finding the time to teach these students. Their needs are completely different from those of native speakers of English. Teaching such students to read Thai is relatively easy. They can quickly learn to appreciate the complex discourse

structures found in Thai literature, but finding and preparing appropriate materials requires time, time that cannot be used with other students. Such students represent a tremendous gamble. While they are interested in Thai language and culture, their interests often are personal and separate from their career aspirations, which resemble those of the general student population. A few such students, of course, may become intrigued with the study of Southeast Asia and turn to an academic career. With language teaching resources so limited, however, we must be most careful how we allocate them, keeping in mind the pressing need to develop the field.

Native Speakers of English with Extensive Prior University Training

The other newly arrived group in our language classes includes the small but growing number of upper division undergraduate students, and graduate students early in their careers, who received formal training in Thai before going to live and study in Thailand. Some of these students have participated in the College Year in Thailand program offered jointly by UW-Madison and Chiang Mai University in Thailand. Another program, sponsored by a university consortium and known as the Advanced Summer Thai program, offers a shorter, and language-focused experience to advanced students of Thai.⁴ It is designed at least in part as a final round of "skill" training for those who have studied at SEASSI and in regular academic year courses. Students who have participated in these programs already speak Thai well, yet still have ahead of themselves several years of academic work in which to deepen their knowledge and take their appreciation of Thai beyond the mere "skill" level.

These new students, both those who have some native command of Thai or Lao and also those native speakers of English who have already studied Thai extensively, come to us ready to undertake sophisticated study of oral and written Thai. They have the opportunity to truly master Thai as a communicative tool and as an object of study itself. The problem is that they come into a university setting heavily geared toward lower levels of proficiency, and unprepared in staffing and materials to address their needs. We risk losing these individuals to other fields.

⁴ The members of the Consortium for Advanced Summer Thai are: Arizona State, Cornell, Hawaii, Michigan, Northern Illinois, Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin, and Yale.

We still present our standard progression of beginning, intermediate, and advanced classes designed for native speakers of English. That alone is a heavy load, but now we also encounter numerous beginning students with differing needs that cannot be addressed effectively in the old class structure. Our clientele is fragmented into a variety of small groups, and those of us responsible for teaching them cannot find enough hours in the day to work effectively with them all.

Our primary job has always been to introduce graduate students to Thai, and to accommodate any undergraduates who came along. We tried to get prospective researchers going and hoped that, after their initial introduction to Thai, they could make it on their own. The majority of the graduate students did not return to our classes since they went on to complete Ph.D. studies and then found teaching positions elsewhere. At most, they came back for a fitful year or two, spent primarily writing dissertations and with little time to study Thai. That has changed. Along with the groups we are accustomed to, we now also have undergraduates and M.A. students who can converse quite well in Thai. Some students in this group receive FLAS fellowships and are required to continue their language training. They all plan several more years of work, and for those with financial support we are obliged to provide it for them. We are unprepared to teach them, however, because we still focus on beginning students. Those we taught, quite successfully, with our old methods now ask where they should go next, and we aren't ready for them. Our challenge is to develop materials and methods by which to address these new higher level needs.

Whom Should We Teach and What Should We Teach Them?

For Whom Should We Design Our Teaching?

I believe that there is still general agreement among those who teach Thai in the United States as a career, and probably among other specialists as well, that our priority should be the training of potential scholars, both scholars of language and scholars of other disciplines. The "field" of Thai language teaching is far too small as it is, and those of us in it must strive at least to replace ourselves, if not to increase our numbers. Unlike fifteen or twenty years ago, voluntary organizations no longer produce large numbers of individuals who combine skill in Thai with experience and interest in language teaching. We must, therefore, look for replacements among our students and approach their training accordingly.

While seeking our replacements among our students, we must also tailor our teaching for potential scholars from other disciplines, most of whom will not go beyond language "skill" classes. Once they speak well enough to conduct interviews, or perhaps read well enough to work with archives, they will feel pressure to turn to other matters, but there is still much more they ought to know about language. They need an appreciation for the basic insights of comparative and historical linguistics if they are to avoid common conceptual errors, such as the supposed superiority of Central Thai and the imagined significance of differences between educated and uneducated speech. Erroneous views of language both reflect and reinforce similarly erroneous views of culture. Such views detract from research in all fields and our students should be made aware of the facts. They need this awareness even though many of them will not be interested in what we linguists find significant.⁵

Among students, language learning is generally seen as less important than work in their home disciplines, and hard reality makes this so. Course requirements, preliminary examinations, dissertation proposals, and the like, all press on students and they often put off acquiring language skills beyond basic conversation until a more convenient time. Having finally received their degrees, they must struggle first to find jobs and then to win tenure. Further language study is postponed again, this time probably permanently. We all regret the restrictions that limited language study places on the quality of research, yet we still tolerate this situation.

We are moving beyond the era in which one could claim to do good scholarship on Thailand with no command of the language, but one still hears presentations by speakers who cannot pronounce the names of their research subjects, or the villages, towns, and cities in which they have done their work. We hear calls for translations of important source works in various disciplines, but teachers in those disciplines do not invest the time in doing the translations themselves. Nor do they require that their students undertake this important endeavor. Instead they turn to the already overburdened linguists. If the faculty gives this work low priority, can we expect

⁵ This lack of interest is not limited to students. Conference panels on Southeast Asian history or anthropology, for example, always need reasonably large rooms to accommodate their audiences. A panel on language teaching, on the other hand, would fit in a closet with room to spare. Part of the blame may lie with the seemingly arcane nature of our discussions, but that cannot be all that is involved.

anything else from our graduate students? It is far from unusual for a graduate student who is receiving financial assistance that requires language study to chafe visibly at being told that the fourth course I plan to offer in a given semester is one in literature, and that I expect active participation from those who enroll. It is also far from unusual to have graduate students tell me they will miss class because they have an "important paper" due and cannot afford the time for language study. I cannot convince these students that further work on language ought to be seen as desirable instead of as a nuisance; if their advisors do not see it as necessary, the students will never be persuaded. Still, whether our colleagues in other disciplines see our point or not, we must strive to teach our students not only to speak Thai, to use it as a tool, but to develop that tool to its fullest capacity.

While I believe that we all share the goal of producing potential scholars, we language teachers must compromise with members of other disciplines who do not always agree with us concerning proper scholarly training. Also, those of us in state-supported schools must show local legislators and administrators that we are satisfying the needs and interests of the citizens of the state. We must, therefore, respond to undergraduates who are curious about Thai, but no more than that. We are also called upon for help frequently by colleagues, and members of the local community who are interested in Thai only for what they view as "practical" reasons, that is, for talking with development workers or research subjects, or for consulting in export-import arrangements, and so on.⁶

In sum, we are being asked to serve a student population that is rapidly diversifying in both its background and its expectations. We must somehow offer instruction that meets the needs of the potential scholars in this group. We must also engage the average undergraduate who wishes to expand his or her horizons with a class in what one of my youthful students recently referred to as a "neat" language, and also avoid excluding the business community. This is generally done, as I have said, by a single full-time faculty member and a part-time teaching assistant. It is a tall order.

⁶ I get a remarkable number of telephone calls within my own university from faculty members leaving for Thailand in a matter of days or weeks and wanting to know how they can "pick up a little Thai" before departure. I try to be helpful, but also point out that if it were really possible to "pick up a little Thai" in such a short period there would be little need for Thai classes. Many seem not to get my point.

What Should We Teach Our Students?

If we are to teach classes appropriate for potential scholars, what must we do? Answering this question depends largely on two factors: (1) the make-up of the student body; and (2) the nature of the language to be learned. The general assumption has always been that a student has a capacity for language learning already developed in the native language environment, that certain aspects of that capacity ought to be retained, and that it can be supplemented with things specific to the "target" language. I would like to pursue the point for a moment to show the logic of this assumption.

If we assume that our classes will be filled mainly with native speakers of one language--until a few years ago nearly all of our students were native speakers of English--we will know a great deal about the "fit" between the capacity for language learning in the student and the nature of the language to be learned. We will thus be able to predict areas of difficulty and will be able to plan our lessons accordingly. We know, for example, that native speakers of English typically recognize changes in pitch that take place over the length of a complete utterance, because this is the pattern of English intonation. But we can predict that these same students will overlook pitch change within the syllable--the most significant feature of contour tone--because in English such change is not lexically significant. Thus, the student beginning his or her study of Thai will need to learn to listen for pitch change in a new way. Without appropriate instruction the average native speaker of English will unconsciously use English patterns to analyze the stream of speech, and will simply overlook this feature of Thai. The same speaker will also impose English intonation patterns on his or her attempts to produce Thai sentences. For example, we will hear distortions caused by intonation patterns that are used in English to create lists, to ask questions, and to request clarifications, all situations handled in Thai without using intonation.⁷ Thus, we must design activities

⁷ One can see, at this point, how complicated the classroom situation becomes when we must deal with native speakers of several languages simultaneously. All must learn to produce some sound patterns that are unfamiliar, and also learn to stop producing some sound patterns that are familiar. But what is familiar and unfamiliar will differ depending on what native language each individual speaks, and no instructor will be able to learn enough about each mother-tongue spoken by a member of the class to

that help the native speaker of English develop a new appreciation for pitch change, while we need not spend much time on the consonant sounds that appear in the final position in Thai syllables, since English has similar sounds.

We see that many of our decisions are fairly simple ones, at least for beginning-level instruction with homogeneous groups. Thai classes can easily avoid the irrelevancies that plagued foreign language instruction when I was studying French and Spanish as an undergraduate. Thai does not have the kinds of structures that so easily divert attention from the real business of language learning. Thai is a non-inflected language, which means that words do not change form to signal grammatical or syntactic category. There are no "go-went-gone", "book-books", "man-men" patterns to memorize. Thai does not employ the categories of gender, number, case, voice, mood, or tense that are so significant in western languages, and so the student is not called on to memorize great lists of forms. The native speaker of English, in fact, encounters very little of what most of us have learned to think of as "grammar." For a native speaker of English the primary problems to be dealt with in the beginning and even intermediary steps of learning to speak Thai are pronunciation and word order.

Thai is a contour-tone language, which means that changes in pitch-height within the syllable are lexically as significant as are consonants and vowels. Someone who wants to use Thai effectively must either learn to hear and produce these distinctions, or must always depend on the native speakers of Thai to compensate for the omissions.

I would like to offer an example of what omitting tone contours from Thai might be like for a native speaker of that language. I have an acquaintance, a native speaker of English, who has experienced damage to her neurological system. As a result of this damage she cannot produce the consonant sounds that normally appear at the beginnings of words, and produces utterances such as "e ent o ool," while intending to produce "He went to school." I have little difficulty in understanding her speech, probably because of my training and experience with language learning. I have observed that others, however, have a very difficult time understanding this person's speech, and many seem to avoid talking with her. To deal with this problem my acquaintance travels about with a companion

anticipate all of the problems, let alone design appropriate exercises to deal with each.

who is familiar with her speech patterns to act as an interpreter for her. Communication is possible, but even with the help of an interpreter it is difficult, and requires a very patient addressee. I think the same is true when a native speaker of Thai encounters a foreigner who cannot produce tone. Those who are familiar with the problem can deal with it, but those who are not familiar with people who speak in this way are confused and cannot relax in their presence. It seems to me, then, that in teaching Thai it is essential that we help our students to develop the capacity to hear and produce tone contour accurately and consistently. The problem is easily enough described, but it takes time and hard work to solve it.

In this way, many of our initial goals are set for us by the nature of Thai, and the language background of our students. Other goals are set by the fact that we are preparing people to live in Thai culture. In the beginning stages we must, first, teach the students to hear and produce the sounds of Thai correctly and consistently, such that the student will understand native speech outside the classroom, and that native speakers can understand with little difficulty those utterances our students are capable of producing. Second, we must give them a range of vocabulary and sentence patterns broad enough so that they can function in the daily environment that they will face. Third, and most important, we must teach them to be independent of the skilled and well-trained teacher of Thai so that they can continue to develop their skills with only the assistance of willing native speakers.

This last point is most important, and I find that it is often overlooked in discussions of teaching strategy. It seems to me that if we are to meet this need for independence, we must engage their ability to conceptualize, so that after they have left our classes they can ask intelligent questions and gather information for themselves without having to rely on a trained teacher of Thai. They will thus need at least a rudimentary knowledge of linguistic concepts so that they will know what sorts of questions to ask, and what sorts of information to seek in order to continue to develop their mastery of Thai.

Since many of our students will be living in "up-country" areas we must not only teach them "Central Thai"--the language of officialdom--but we must also prepare them to deal with other dialects, in which the consonant and vowel inventories and the tone contours differ from those of Central Thai. This does not mean that they will have to learn two dialects--some will need to do so, and we should teach them how to go about it--but they will have to be able

to distinguish the characteristic sounds of the dialects and recognize the differing tone patterns. It is thus essential that they also learn how to represent orthographically the sounds of different dialects such that they can remember the tone patterns of other dialects as well as their consonant and vowel inventories. This cannot be done with the characters of Central Thai, and must rely on a phonetic romanization.

It is at this point that we encounter strong disagreements over methodology in the teaching of Thai, or at least over the ordering of events in the classroom. There are those who say that the linguistic concepts are too difficult for students, or that introducing them confuses FACT and ACT. My experience with the fifteen or more groups to whom I have taught beginning Thai is that it is counterproductive to ignore the students' capacity for and familiarity with analysis. We do, of course, want to teach Thai and not teach about it, but a proper use of descriptive material helps students focus their attention on the problems that they face, which is particularly important when they are trying to master the language in a short time. We need to give students a conceptual framework so that they learn how to monitor and improve their own production.

Early in my graduate education I enrolled in a survey course that was to deal with the history of art in Southeast Asia. To my surprise, our first exercise was to make a map of the region, showing all the significant topographical features and political boundaries. The instructor went so far as to require that we memorize the map, and even gave a quiz about it. At the time this exercise seemed to me to be out of place, but as time went on its importance became apparent. It would have been impossible to master the material if I had not first had a sure sense of the area. I feel that teaching potential scholars something about language from the point of view of linguistics, the discipline in which I have specialized, enhances their learning of Thai, and prepares them to continue to progress on their own. In effect, they gain a conceptual "map" of the area that they are to study. This enhances their ability to learn, especially when they are working on their own in Thailand.

The use of linguistic concepts and terms also has bearing on the question of how to teach writing. It seems impossible to me to teach the Thai writing system effectively without describing for students the nature of the sound distinctions that the writing system represents. The only terms that can be used for this sort of description are those of linguistics. The student will be unable to remember in any meaningful way, for example, the relationship

between the category of the initial consonant symbol and the tone mark unless he or she can hear different tone contours and knows how to name them. Similarly, vowel length is lexically significant in Thai and the student must be able to hear and produce these distinctions in order to communicate effectively in the language. Using the Thai writing system requires the same skills, plus the ability to specify the length of the vowel that is to be represented in visual form. If we must teach these concepts to the students anyway, we ought to do so in a way that will allow them to master both the sound system and the written system designed to represent it.

Other considerations that are terribly important deal with propriety. Thai culture places great emphasis on interpersonal relationships, and this is reflected in the language. Thus, one must learn to use expressions fitting to the status relationship between speakers if one is to be successful in speaking Thai. Some of this material can be imparted to the students in Thai, but much of it is so abstract that, at least in the initial stages, it is impractical to do anything but explain it in English.

All of this discussion of what we ought to teach our students concerns mainly the beginning and intermediate levels of mastery. It is quite a different story when one gets to advanced levels of work. If a student is to become truly sophisticated in the use of Thai he or she must learn very elaborate discourse strategies that differ considerably from those of English. While we have a great deal of experience in introducing students to Thai, and a reasonable degree of experience in moving them toward respectable proficiency, we have very little experience in working on the higher levels. This discussion also leaves unaddressed the problems of teaching students to deal with the yet more complex realm of literary Thai. We have no published materials at all for doing this, either with spoken or with written Thai, yet the need increases with each passing year. We ought to develop such materials quickly while we have an interested audience, lest they be lost to the field for want of stimulating instruction.

What Materials and Strategies Do We Have for Teaching Thai, and How Can We Improve Upon Them?

If we are to decide how to proceed in the future, we must have a clear picture of where we stand now. Those who are responsible for such things conventionally divide classes into two categories: language classes are called "skill" courses and those that deal with literature are called "content" courses. While I am far from

comfortable with the implications carried by these terms, I will use them in commenting on the materials that we currently have at our disposal for teaching Thai.

"Skill" Courses

The situation here is vastly different from that of the European languages. A teacher of Spanish or French, for example, can sift through an array of published materials in deciding what to use in his or her class. Books, tapes, and film strips are available, many with lesson plans already prepared, as well as such technological wonders as daily satellite broadcasts from overseas. For Thai, despite the burgeoning interest in Thailand, one can count the available texts on the fingers of one hand. As a result teachers of Thai must constantly improvise to meet each different class's needs.

Thai is not morphologically or syntactically complex; it does not have the complex conjugations and declensions that many of us remember so fondly from our studies of Latin or Greek. Thai words are not altered to indicate syntactic role in the utterance, and the notions of tense, voice, mood, case, gender, plurality, and agreement simply do not exist. Thai is often described as having no "grammar" to be learned. This is a misconception, of course. Thai does have its areas of complexity and it is no easy task to develop real skill in using the language, but much of what students find distasteful in learning western languages will not be found in the study of Thai.

The primary problem for introductory instruction, then, lies not in morphology or syntax, but in phonology. The student must learn to hear and produce the sound distinctions of Thai in the context of meaningful language. The student who fails to learn to do this at the beginning will never master the sound system and will always sound distinctly foreign, often incomprehensible to native speakers not accustomed to westerners' mispronunciations of Thai. He or she will also be unable to continue to develop mastery of Thai independent of instructors.

Existing materials for beginning and intermediate instruction are dated but can be used effectively. For beginning work, most universities continue to use the *Spoken Thai Course* produced by J. Marvin Brown at the American University Alumni Association (AUA) in Bangkok in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Dated though the materials may be, I understand that the books and tapes are selling at an unprecedented rate, at least in part due to recent large

orders from Australia.⁸ The series consists of five books of spoken Thai lessons and two additional books addressing the Thai writing system. There is a great deal of material in the dialogue books that accurately, if sometimes uncomfortably, reveals many of the idiosyncrasies of Thai culture.⁹ The spoken Thai lessons are based on a stimulus-response approach¹⁰ and in places are too rigid for today's tastes. Moreover, at the time that the materials were created, the average student of Thai was apparently not expected to live within the Thai culture to the degree that we expect to see in today's students.

Despite these problems, the books present a wide range of vocabulary and sentence patterns that students can use in real-life settings, and the material is presented in a logically consistent manner. Unlike any other text produced for Thai instruction, the books are accompanied by lengthy practice tapes for each lesson. This is particularly helpful in the university setting in that students can gain exposure to authentic Thai speech without waiting until the teacher is present in the classroom. The tapes and books also give students something to hold on to, quite literally in some cases, and to return to repeatedly while learning to hear and produce the sounds of Thai. They require much supplementation and adaptation, but the

⁸ The datedness is clearest in local references: prices quoted have changed since publication; restaurants have moved; traffic circles have been converted to intersections, and so on. But the speech patterns and vocabulary are as current as they ever were, and most of the topics presented remain as appropriate for today's student/scholars as they were for the AUA students who first used the materials.

⁹ The text devoted to teaching students how to pass the time with casual chatting, entitled *Dialog Book A - Small Talk*, by Adrian S. Palmer, is often pointed to as offensive to women both for some of the topics covered and for some of the cartoon pictures used to illustrate the lessons. I have no wish to defend sexist attitudes or practices, but one cannot escape some of these topics. For example, every unmarried man who learns to speak Thai will be asked, over and over again, "Are Thai women pretty?" It is a conversation that cannot be avoided, and our students need to be prepared for it. There seems much less justification for the cartoon illustrations, of course, but we must keep in mind that they represent the sort of thing that our students will encounter daily in the Thai popular press.

¹⁰ In the introduction to the series (in Book 1) Brown refers to the method as one of "focused listening," but current AUA publicity and scheduling materials use the term "structural approach."

texts do work. I would welcome a revision of the series, to bring it up to date and to add spontaneity to it, but students who use the series do learn to speak Thai. That fact has often been overlooked in recent discussions of new directions in Thai teaching.

A controversy now surrounds beginning Thai instruction. J. Marvin Brown himself no longer feels comfortable with his original approach and, while he still offers it at the AUA in Bangkok and in Chiang Mai, he now prefers a system that he calls the "Natural Approach." As I understand this style of teaching, the student is encouraged to observe native speakers of Thai interacting in the classroom as they discuss and demonstrate a variety of activities.¹¹ The students are not to attempt to speak Thai, but are simply to observe and to respond in their native languages when asked a question by the instructors, who only use Thai in their classes. Brown says that, ideally, the student should do this each day, for a full class day, for as long as a year in order to gain what he calls "simple fluency." Brown contends, it seems, that a student who follows this method will simply absorb the Thai phonological system and eventually will be able to produce native-sounding Thai painlessly and without having endured the drills and memorization we are familiar with. One obvious attraction of this approach is that, since it does not take into account the native language of the student, the method would be appropriate for a class composed of students from different language backgrounds.

Whether one greets Brown's new method with enthusiasm or with misgiving, I expect that academic deans will balk at awarding credit to students who only observe classes for extended periods before being given an exam or even being encouraged to speak. In addition, it is impossible to imagine staging this sort of instruction anywhere outside of Thailand. I have also heard some who have attended the classes express great unhappiness at not being allowed to use Thai in class; they left the courses in frustration. In any case, the average student will not be able to devote a full year to this sort

¹¹ My description is based on conversations with J. Marvin Brown and others, on AUA publicity materials, and on brief observations of classes at the AUA. I realize that I am simplifying and if that distorts Brown's thinking, I apologize. I must also point out that I have heard serious questions raised regarding the research (conducted by others, not by Brown himself) upon which Brown has based his new methodology. Questions of my own and of others notwithstanding, I have nothing but admiration and respect for Brown as both a scholar and a teacher.

of study, no matter how theoretically sound it may be, and administrators, who only grudgingly approve even the most meager assistance for instructors, will not consider funding it. Brown himself has told me that those who cannot devote a long enough period of time to following the method will probably leave with a limited mastery of Thai, and will probably speak very poorly.

Far more difficult to deal with are the effects of a decision some fifteen years ago by Peace Corps/Thailand to adopt what has been called the "Silent Way" as its language teaching strategy. As it is most commonly practiced, this method attempts to avoid "teacher dominated" learning. It relies on the students to produce sounds, and to model sounds from each other. A few individuals manage to do quite well by following this strategy, and they and their teachers deserve commendation. My own observations suggest that many volunteers do not make much progress using this method. Many factors come into play, of course, but discussions with many then-current volunteers in Thailand in 1988 and 1989 revealed a surprisingly intense dislike for the method. The primary problem that I see in students who come into my classes after Peace Corps service is that they are unable to advance in their mastery of Thai because they have no conceptual framework for dealing with the language. They do not know how to ask questions, either in Thai or in English, that will give them useful information.

The current policy of the administration of Peace Corps/Thailand is that dependence on the Silent Way alone is inappropriate, but the patterns of fifteen years are hard to break, and many of those who are teaching for the Peace Corps today seem unaware that other techniques exist for foreign language teaching. In 1989 I participated in a training seminar conducted by Peace Corps/Thailand for a group of new teachers of Thai. I found there a group of people every bit as hard working and dedicated as those I met during my own experience as a volunteer. But I was asked a number of questions that left me feeling terribly disheartened. The most basic problems, ones that are easily solved by other methods of presentation, left many of these teachers baffled because they were familiar with only one method. I have no doubt that their students were similarly baffled. Returned Peace Corps volunteers always used to be an important source of potential specialists in Thai language. This is no longer the case, and while much of the change reflects new goals and therefore a shift in programming by the Peace Corps, I am convinced that the method used to teach Thai also is at least partly the reason. More troublesome still, the Peace Corps has always represented the

main source of teaching assistants for university programs, in the form of former Peace Corps language teachers who have come to the United States for graduate education. Unfortunately, many of these teachers are unable to deal with the mixed classes found in American universities, apparently because their view of language teaching and their insight into language learning is too circumscribed to deal with anything other than beginning instruction.

All of this, combined with the surge of excitement surrounding oral proficiency testing, and the federal mandate that we all certify that we offer "competency based language instruction" have led many, I believe, to throw out both the baby and the bath water. We now seem engaged in an anxious search for a better way to do what we were already doing quite well. Certainly, the extant materials are not without flaws, and, of course, I frequently make changes in what I present in class. It seems to me, however, that we have set about inventing a new a method of teaching beginning Thai, when what is really needed is a new curriculum. We could serve our needs quite well by taking existing materials and making them more spontaneous, adding up-to-date cultural references, and adapting them to the student/scholars who make up the bulk of our classes.

This search for new methodologies is, it seems to me, partly a response to the passion for discarding and replacing old theories so common in linguistics today. The old approaches to language teaching may have needed improvement, but there was no need to discard completely the teachers and materials that taught a generation of us to use the language with a more than respectable degree of skill.¹² Moreover, the constant search for new approaches and materials always focuses on the beginning student, and leaves unanswered the question of how to teach students to be truly sophisticated listeners and speakers of Thai. We have literally no materials with which to teach our students what the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL] would call "superior-level skills." The only choice that students now have is to reside in the culture using the language for long periods, picking things up by osmosis. This type of learning may have worked well for previous generations, but, as Ben Anderson points out, we can no longer rely on long-term residence in Southeast Asian countries to produce highly trained speakers. We must find a way in our

¹² One of the most gifted language teachers that I have ever known is today an administrator in Bangkok, her classroom skills judged obsolete by those who embraced the "Silent Way."

classrooms to address the as yet overlooked needs of advanced students who are able to use Thai well, but not yet with true sophistication.

The search for new methods of beginning teaching also diverts time from such important pedagogical issues as teaching reading. Given current methods, students may manage to read modern fiction with a degree of understanding, though with little appreciation of what makes texts interesting to the average Thai reader. While Thai is relatively simple morphologically and syntactically, it is very complex on the level of discourse. This complexity has not yet been addressed adequately, especially for language teaching purposes. Students who wish to follow public debate or to appreciate modern literature have the same problem. They may be able to read a lengthy story, for example, and come to the end knowing who shot whom, so to speak, but not knowing why a native speaker of Thai would bother reading through to the end of the piece. Students all seem to have the same reaction, that is, that Thai prose is dull and lifeless, without power to engage the reader. This is due, I would submit, to the fact that our students are completely unaware of the discourse structures that Thai authors use to create subtlety in their texts.

There are no teaching materials that address verb markers, subordination and coordination of ideas, relativization, topic markers, particle use, and so forth, all of which are used to create subtlety and coherence in sophisticated oral and written texts. It is difficult to teach about Thai discourse structures and coherence devices since many are meaningful only on the paragraph level, and cannot be illustrated with shorter examples. Before a student can understand how coherence is created in a given text he or she must be a facile enough reader to go through the material several times without confusion, while distinguishing between structure and content. I already try to provide some instruction in these "fourth year" topics, at least informally, by dividing my advanced Thai class into two sections. Appropriate materials must be prepared, however, if this type of instruction is to be offered formally, and it is very difficult to imagine finding the time to do so, to say nothing of adding yet another course to the schedule.

"Content" Courses

There is interest in seeing Thai language instruction move beyond the level of "skill" courses, and I think it is important that this be done. For those of us teaching Thai language, it is important to

develop courses that do not simply repeat the most tiresome teaching responsibilities, both for our own intellectual satisfaction and for the possibilities that this would open up for developing publishable material. The most obvious sources to use in enriching our language-oriented offerings are: (1) literature in translation; (2) literature in the vernacular; and (3) linguistics. There are different reasons to support each option.

Literature in Translation

Classes in literature in translation are popular with students, at least in part because they can learn something of the foreign culture without devoting years to studying the language. Because such courses draw large enrollments, they are popular with department heads who need to show administrators that "exotic" languages do have a following. But it is not easy to create such a course. A few English translations of classic Thai literature do exist, but most are very short, of dubious quality, or both. Translations of a few of the classics are now underway, but only two of us in the United States are working in this area in any systematic way, and there is much to be done before a full class can be created. In addition, only a few articles in English give background information for these texts; again, this is not enough for a full class. For modern work, a few collections of short stories have appeared in recent years, and a few book-length pieces have been translated. But that, again, is small fare for an entire term's work. Also, we ought to hold literature in translation classes as a rather low priority for the field, since they attract mainly undergraduates interested in broadening their experience of the world without committing themselves to the area. This desire is praiseworthy, of course, and responding to it constitutes an important part of the mission of the university. But with so few individuals working in the field, we need to see to replacing ourselves as a first priority.

Literature in the Vernacular

For those students capable of reading in the classics or in contemporary literature, a wide array of native Thai texts exists, but analytical material is far more scarce. For classics of poetry there is a small assortment of introductory pieces written in English, with sample passages in Thai. These pieces imitate the format of native instructional materials and are designed to show the student how to begin thinking about Thai poetry. Unfortunately, nearly all repeat the conceptual errors of native scholarship, which was completed

prior to the development of modern linguistic analysis. For modern literature there is a limited amount of native criticism, much of it imitative of western scholarship dealing with western literature. The largest problem here, however, is the gap that exists between the available instructional materials and native literature. We have few students capable of reading vernacular literature partly because we have not tried in any systematic way to bring students to that level of sophistication. We are now seeing students who are ready to be brought to that level, and we need to work at providing them the training that they need to get there. This means devoting effort to that level of training, not to beginning-level instruction.

Linguistics

Most of those teaching Thai in the United States, including all of those with tenure-track positions, are linguists. A few students are interested in pursuing this field, but linguistics departments seem to be moving ever farther away from areal and descriptive material. Despite this trend, I feel that the insights of comparative and descriptive linguistics are very important, and all students doing serious study of Southeast Asia ought to be aware of them. Ideally there would be courses specifically designed to cover this material, but the less attractive option of incorporating it into advanced language classes represents a possible alternative. Further, since we are trained as linguists, our need to publish in order to become tenured and to secure promotions can be satisfied most readily in this field. Add to this the intellectual satisfaction of teaching classes in one's own discipline. Unfortunately, opportunities for such teaching are limited, at least for those of us not housed in linguistics departments. These same structural problems make it impossible for most of us to act as advisors to prospective Ph.D. students. This hampers our efforts to replace ourselves, and also cuts us off from an important source of advancement in our own careers, since every graduate student with whom we work under the present arrangements will eventually complete a degree under the supervision of another faculty member.

What Ought To Be Our Research Agenda?

The course of events has dictated that we take up certain questions, whether it seemed appropriate to us or not. Over the past years, several of us have devoted long hours to being trained in oral proficiency testing, and three of us have devoted additional weeks of work to becoming certified by ACTFL as testers of English. This

training has been preparation both for developing Thai-specific oral proficiency guidelines, and also for certifying a group of testers for Thai. We have also been conducting and analyzing interviews with students of Thai and have made good progress on developing these guidelines. Our involvement with proficiency measurement has not been without benefit, I think, especially for what it has shown us about the pace and progression of mastery of Thai. It has been most helpful for me, for example, in clarifying our need to turn attention to the top rather than the bottom end of the ACTFL scale. On the other hand, the effort has taken us away from other concerns of great significance and that is to be regretted.

I remain convinced that we do not need to abandon wholesale our methods of teaching Thai, though it seems that some have taken the oral proficiency movement to require just that. Instead we need to expand on what we already do well. We need to attend to the part of Thai teaching that has never been addressed before, and that, to use oral proficiency measurement jargon, is the advanced student who needs to be taught how to function at the superior level. As we develop materials to do this we will also be addressing the as yet too little explored question of how to teach students to read and appreciate Thai literature.

In the midst of considering how to set up an appropriate research agenda for the field of Thai teaching, we must not lose sight of the individual needs of the Thai teachers. Each of us has been trained in linguistics, and it is my impression that the others share my desire to continue the linguistic research that first attracted us to graduate school. If we are to avoid "burn out" among our language teachers, we must provide them with at least some time and opportunity for intellectual growth.

ADMINISTRATIVE SITUATION

If we are to meet the needs of the future, we must find resources, both financial and human, to advance the study of Thai. Thai is taught at only nine universities in the United States and of these nine institutions only six have faculty-level tenure-track appointments for the individual involved. Two of these six are responsible for supervising instruction in both Thai and Indonesian, which limits their time even more.

The situation is exacerbated by the conflicts between the increasingly diverse teaching and administrative demands placed on the language teachers, and their need to advance their own careers. The publication record is the single most significant measure of

success in academics; it affects decisions about tenure, promotion, and compensation. But the demands on our time leave little room for publishable research. Those of us who have invested time in becoming certified proficiency testers, for example, have done so not because our research interests led us in that direction, but because our area centers needed to include "competency based language instruction" in applications for federal funding. A cautious faculty member will plan at least some of his or her reading for courses or seminars so that it will coincide with research interests, but the repetitive sequence of first, second, and third year language courses, and an occasional "content" course, does not permit this coordination of teaching and research. Teaching materials, which we so clearly need, are accorded virtually no consideration as publications; translations are given only slightly more respect. Neither serves faculty needs to produce published research.

Only infrequently are the instructors housed in departments that teach the discipline in which they were trained. I am a member of the Department of South Asian Studies and have had little opportunity to teach linguistics. Others are in departments of anthropology, or modern languages, which do not match their training either. One of the standard measures of professional success is the number of graduate students for whom one acts as the Ph.D. advisor. Those of us housed outside our own discipline have no opportunity to attract students, which further limits our access to prestige, promotions, and pay raises. To add insult to injury, when we inquire why language teachers are always offered salaries many thousands of dollars less than the average for their grade, we are told that we ought to get a few competing offers from other universities to show how valuable we are to the field, as though there were frequent turnover in a six-position field.

Language teachers and their work are accorded a curious mixture of interest and casual disdain, which does not create a productive atmosphere. On the one hand, it seems impossible for those who direct area centers to conceive of a fellowships or admissions committee that does not include the language teachers. Responsibility for all aspects of the SEASSI has often been viewed as a natural part of the language teacher's job. On the other hand, one's work load is frequently dismissed as inconsequential with statements such as, "That is a lot of hours. Oh, but you know the language!" Deans constantly evaluate our work load not by the number of levels of instruction we offer, but by the total number of students enrolled. It seems that we must continually justify to

skeptical administrators even the one-third time assistance that we have now. Despite the years of training and experience that we have invested in our careers, teachers of Thai in the United States remain firmly stuck in the most mundane and stifling part of our jobs.¹³ At the same time, we are also constantly urged to "up" our enrollments, as though we had access to students outside of our classes and simply needed to talk more of them into signing up.

It is in this administrative context that my colleagues and I discuss how we will respond to the changing demands of the student population. It is in this context that we greet initiatives from our colleagues—the responsibility for organizing SEASSI, for example—that figure so prominently in grant competitions, but add administrative work to our assignments. It is in the same context that we greet initiatives from outside the field, such as legislation mandating "competency based instruction" and encouraging research in oral proficiency measurement. It is also in this context, and now I must speak personally, that I consider the situation of a colleague who teaches another "much less commonly taught language," one spoken in a different region of the world. This individual has refused to take on "voluntary overload" classes, chooses not to battle for assistance, and lets the students look for advanced training elsewhere. My colleague seems to lead a quieter life than I do, and has a much more impressive publication record. My colleague also seems to have time to read current publications, and shows no signs of approaching "burn out." I no longer wonder who has made the better decisions, but I do still wonder what I will do to rectify my situation.

FUTURE STAFFING

If we are to make progress we must stop counting on language teachers turning up at our doorsteps unbidden. At one time the United States Peace Corps concentrated nearly all of its efforts on language instruction. Many volunteers returned from their service interested in language study and teaching, and having sufficient skill and experience to successfully take up a career in Thai teaching. Many would gladly have taken up careers as teachers of Thai, but there were few positions available and most have now moved on to other careers. Voluntary agencies now concentrate their efforts in

¹³ In searching for an appropriate illustration of how stimulating it can be to look forward to a career of language "skill" classes, I imagine a holder of a Ph.D. in geography working as a tour guide in a state capitol.

development, and former volunteers now show little interest in language study or teaching. This means we must find a way to make language teaching an attractive career option for bright and able students of language.

We must also find a way to incorporate native speakers of Thai in our efforts. There is no logical reason why all the tenure-track positions for Thai instruction ought to be held by native speakers of English. Developing materials for bringing native speakers of English to true sophistication in Thai will require the cooperation of both Thai and English native speakers. This means we must stop relying on a single full-time individual at each institution that offers Thai. Only through cooperative instruction can we give our students sufficient understanding of the complex discourse structures they will encounter in sophisticated Thai literature and public discourse. Only when our students are sophisticated enough to require instruction in Thai literature that is conducted exclusively in Thai will our field have reached maturity; that ought to be our long term goal.

Although I think I can see some of what we must do now as language teachers to move in that direction, I cannot in good conscience advise a student to prepare for a career as a Thai language teacher. I used to advise bright students to consider concentrating in linguistics, a discipline that could keep them close to Thai language teaching but would also make them attractive to a department. Because of the increasing emphasis on theory in departments of linguistics, however, I can no longer offer that advice. Although interest in Thai is growing at present there are insufficient employment opportunities to make landing a teaching position anything more than a fluke. Staffing is so insufficient that opportunities for stimulating collegial relationships within institutions are virtually nonexistent. I am told that the School of Oriental and African Studies (London) employs three people full-time to do what I am asked to do with a one-third time assistant. Yet I am told to get competing offers if I want a salary approaching the average of non-tenured professors. In this respect, as in others, my situation is similar to that in which my colleagues elsewhere find themselves.

If we are to make progress we must stop counting on our meager staff to carry out mundane teaching assignments while simultaneously improving the field. David Buck spoke of proposing a Japanese language program for his home campus and mentioned, almost in passing, the need for hiring "two or three people" to teach

the classes. As far as I can tell, we have never thought this way about Southeast Asian languages. Everyone would quickly see the impossibility of offering a fully creditable Chinese or Japanese language program with only one faculty appointment. The impossibility ought to be equally clear for Thai and Indonesian. The needs of our students are changing; language teaching is getting more complex all the time. We cannot do the job with single individuals working in isolation.

The teachers of the Southeast Asian languages are being pulled in all directions. We see the need to develop more classes in language, in literature, and in linguistics, and we are asked to develop and administer undergraduate and graduate programs overseas. We have been asked to translate important texts in every imaginable discipline, and to consider creating modern dictionaries for the languages we study. We are also supposed to keep publishing, and, despite the fact that we are largely cut off from the disciplines in which we are trained, we are expected to have graduate students coming to us for professional training. The language teachers are a dedicated lot, but we are not without limits.



SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Richard D. Lambert

My assignment is to comment upon the relationship between language instruction and Southeast Asian studies. In doing so I want to discuss seven aspects: (1) status; (2) structure; (3) clientele; (4) skill levels; (5) teacher training; (6) curricula and materials; and (7) testing and evaluation.

STATUS

One of the major intellectual and structural problems in American higher education in general is that foreign language teachers often feel intellectually separated from the rest of the campus. Except for those who have an expertise in the study of literature, foreign language teachers are often viewed by others on the campus as a service discipline--somewhat like statistics--training students in a skill and not part of the intellectual core of the institution. This feeling of separateness is also found in some of the area studies tribes. It is clearest in West European and Latin American studies at the one end of the continuum, less clear in Inner Asian studies where language instruction in large part is the field, of middling strength in East Asian and East European studies, and the separation is great again in Southeast Asian and parts of South Asian studies.

In addition to the enclaving of language training within area studies, the disciplinary base of Southeast Asian language teachers is often problematic. Their disciplinary training tends to be linguistics rather than literature, but formal linguists who dominate most departments see them as too applied to be full members of the profession, and they usually cannot make the traditional claim of language teachers to intellectual status through the study of literature. In addition, the heavy complement of non-professional native speaker teachers on the language teaching staff makes it clear why the language faculty often are accorded a status inferior to, for

example, historians, anthropologists, and political scientists. I do not want to exaggerate the extent or the consequences of this status differential, but I have a message for area specialists: many language specialists in your programs do not feel that they are fully part of the area studies enterprise. They perceive that area specialists treat them as at best service people. Their research on how best to teach languages and their work in the preparation of pedagogical materials are not seen as part of the area studies research enterprise. In the area studies centers I find a feeling among some Southeast Asian language teachers that area specialists direct the programs, control the resources, and dominate the collective aspects of their centers as well as the field as a whole. For instance, I noted throughout the Wingspread meeting how rarely the language specialists participated in the discussions on research, and how in talking to area specialists about the field as a whole, language specialists used the term "you" rather than "we."

In short, I believe that a frontal discussion of the role of language instruction and of the status of language teachers in area studies is long overdue.

STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS

The teaching of Southeast Asian languages in the United States is beset by a number of structural problems that require innovative solutions. First, from the national perspective, yours is a classic organizational problem of how to serve the needs of dispersed student clienteles with concentrated teaching resources, particularly when student demand is spread across a large number of languages and is limited and fluctuating. The current organizational structure of Southeast Asian studies is only partially suited to meeting that demand. The gathering of teaching resources in a few university centers that serve both to create and serve demand reflects our basic style of organizing higher education in the United States, a style reinforced by the rigid way in which Title VI is administered. If one looked at the problem with a fresh eye, it is not at all clear that this is the way we would organize instruction in the Southeast Asian languages in the United States. The problems with the current situation are threefold. First, even with the concentration of language teachers in a few institutions, the numbers of languages are so great and the number of students wanting to study them is so small, that the operations of individual language programs are always fragile, often deficit operations that are marginalized in the university community and constantly fighting for survival. Come tenure time,

the battle for permanence for individual teachers can be bloody. Moreover, the handful of teachers called on to teach multiple languages at multiple levels often carry teaching loads far greater than those of their area studies colleagues. Second, the limitations of the current organizational style lend an overwhelming importance to the SEASSI summer program as a way of righting the mismatch between the distribution of teachers and students by collecting both for a brief period of time in a single site. However, in spite of its importance to the field, SEASSI, since it is outside of the normal framework of single university-based funding and staffing, is a jerry-built miracle that must be reinvented each year.

I suspect that if we really put our minds to it, we might find a way to supplement our national system of instruction in Southeast Asian languages that might add to its effectiveness. For instance, there are various alternative ways to solve the problem of dispersed demand and centralized teaching resources. For instance, NASILP, the National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs, provides an existing mechanism for promoting dispersed instruction based on centralized teaching resources. Second, while I am well aware of most language teachers' negative evaluation of the technology of teledistance language instruction, if that technology were made to work better it could be immensely useful in Southeast Asian language instruction. It is currently being used solely to serve substantial numbers of students assembled in a large number of dispersed high enrollment classroom settings. The structural needs in Southeast Asian languages suggest a very different pattern. Given the small number of learners and the individualized, sporadic, and geographically dispersed demand, a much more personalized, more highly interactive system can be developed that can correct some of the normal impersonality of teledistance learning. It is an unfortunate paradox that the very characteristics that make teledistance learning economically infeasible make it a useful solution to the major structural problem in the field: dispersed, episodic clienteles and centralized teaching resources. Since the short term economics of providing instruction in the less commonly taught languages are unfavorable, the development of such a system would require major federal investments up front. We as a nation have now invested tens of millions of dollars in teaching first-year German, Russian, or Japanese in hundreds of rural high schools. Surely a pilot project could be mounted in which the sophisticated learners of Southeast Asian languages would be taught using teledistance technology.

CLIENTELES

In addition to the problems arising from geography, understaffing, and dependence on semi-trained native speakers, Southeast Asian studies, more than any of the other area studies fields excepting Inner Asian studies, is almost exclusively focused on training graduate level, research-oriented area specialists. This research-focused graduate student clientele is the primary orientation of most of area studies, but it is especially striking in Southeast Asian studies.

While this limited clientele may be all that the existing language faculty can manage, other area studies groups have expanded their teaching to include several other clienteles. The time may now be appropriate for Southeast Asian language teachers to consider serving those clienteles as well. First, almost all of the other area studies groups are trying to reach a substantial number of undergraduates who are either majors specializing in the language or are taking the language as part of their general education. Southeast Asianists might consider whether steps should be taken to explore the possibility of extending language instruction to the undergraduate level, and perhaps eventually to the high school level. Since there is no reason why any American undergraduate should choose one language over another, why should some of them not take a Southeast Asian language?

Some of the reasons for extending Southeast Asian languages into the undergraduate curriculum are clear. There are obvious advantages of having a feeder system in place that would bring into your graduate programs students who have had some prior language training. They would not have to start their language study from scratch at the same time they are trying to master the other disciplines relating to their field as most Southeast Asian studies students do now. Moreover, the political benefits of anchoring the fragile graduate level language teaching enterprise in a durable undergraduate teaching program, the way most other language groups do, could make a major contribution to the security of the field.

Second, you might want to consider non-academic clienteles. I realize that some programs, such as Michigan's, do provide training in several Southeast Asian languages for business students. However, the field as a whole might serve the needs of international business or adult professionals who require a language competence for their occupational use. Other area studies language communities are starting to do that; why not Southeast Asianists?

Third, I get the feeling that Southeast Asianists feel uncomfortable with and resist performing a function that now provides the mainstay of language enrollments in other area studies groups. I refer to the second generation ethnic communities who enroll in college language courses as a kind of Saturday school. On the one hand, it is understandable that professors with scarce teaching time to allocate should be reluctant to devote much of it to this purpose. On the other hand, providing such instruction is a useful function in today's multiethnic society, and as my South Asian colleagues are finding out, ethnics can provide a durable enrollment base when the interest of American students flags.

LEVELS AND ARTICULATION

One of the most startling aspects of foreign language instruction in general in the United States is that almost all of its resources are expended in providing instruction in first or second year courses. In the course of a number of studies of campus-based foreign language instruction in general, I discovered what I call the fifty-percent rule. Roughly half of the students in either high school or college take no foreign language courses whatsoever. Of those who do, half of those who take the first year courses drop out before taking a second year, and half of the second year students drop out before taking a third year, and so on. This "rule" works out with surprising regularity both nationally and in individual schools.

I do not know what the enrollment gradient is in Southeast Asian studies these days—we had such data back in the 1960s—or whether my fifty-percent rule holds true. I think it would be well, however, to collect some fresh data to see how many students stick with each of your languages long enough to master them. As a prior step, you, in collaboration with your area studies colleagues, should attempt to arrive at a general standard of how much language competency different kinds of students ideally should have. Without knowing the precise figures, I would suspect that current levels of language training are too low. The amount of language study that students get is necessarily a compromise between available time and disciplinary degree requirements, and this does not allow enough time for full mastery of one or more Southeast Asian languages. The fact that most students do not start their language training until they begin graduate studies, and then have to fit it into an overcrowded course load along with everything else they are studying, makes the problem even more difficult.

If, as I suspect, the total amount of language training taken by most students is barely minimal and the amount of "intensive" time that can be devoted to such study is small, it may be time for the field to consider more radical structural experimentation. For instance, perhaps greater emphasis could be given to concentrated summer language study, or to the expansion of intensive full year language programs preceding area studies. Or we might work out articulated combinations of language study in the United States and study in the country where the language is spoken.

As an interesting aside it might be noted that if my guess about the low average level of language training among area specialists is correct, then one of the curious incidental costs of limited language training is to make it difficult for the field to develop a substantial number of truly highly trained students who can do original research in either the classical or contemporary literatures.

TEACHER TRAINING

A casual inspection of the corps of language teachers in the Southeast Asian languages reveals a tiny band of permanently employed language specialists who are surrounded by a casual labor force comprising part-time, high turnover, frequently untrained native speakers. This situation is particularly marked in the SEASSI summer program and in the teaching of the "very low density"--to use a government term--languages.

One of the consequences of the heavy preponderance of these "Gastarbeiter" native speakers as language instructors is that a great deal of time must be expended both in SEASSI and in the field as a whole in constantly training and retraining so-called "informants." It also impedes the standardization and institutionalization of the Southeast Asian languages teaching profession. The cost of this imperfect system is borne both by the language professors who must constantly train and retrain native speaker assistants and by the students who try to learn a language from teachers who are based firmly in their own culture and language but have little experience in tailoring instruction to fit the learning styles of American students.

There is no other division of area studies with a greater need to create a more satisfactory system of teacher training and professionalization than Southeast Asian studies. SEASSI does do some of this training now, but its impact on what goes on in academic year programs is limited. There is some hope, however, that this issue is being faced. Effective programs are already in place for Russian and Japanese at Bryn Mawr. In addition, there is a

movement afoot by the National Council of the Less Commonly Taught Languages to improve and coordinate summer teaching training institutes. But no one has addressed the issue for the entire field. I hope that the Southeast Asian language community, where the problem is most severe, will take some leadership in this area.

CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

The creation of durable teaching materials in the less commonly taught languages calls for a heroic undertaking. On the one hand, what a few scholars have been able to produce has been truly remarkable. On the other hand, materials preparation is a cottage industry in Southeast Asian studies, one that is still based almost entirely on the dedication and expertise of the same few individuals who are called on to do all of the teaching. The result is that for most of the Southeast Asian languages, teachers do not have available the wealth of teaching materials routinely available to teachers of Spanish, French, or German who can choose from a wide variety of textbooks, dictionaries, drillbooks, oral tapes, videotapes, annotated collections of authentic materials, and so forth. The teacher's own work in the commonly taught languages is therefore limited to adding a few supplemental things at the margin. On the other hand, it is difficult to talk to a teacher of Southeast Asian languages without getting a sense of the desperate need for even the most basic teaching materials. The existing corpus of teaching materials is sparse; individual teachers often have to create the entire body of teaching material from scratch, often staying just one step ahead of class use.

The result is that teaching programs in most of the less commonly taught languages have accumulated vast stores of undigested remains of the early stages of materials production. As some of you know, I used to be chairman of the University of Pennsylvania's Department of South Asian Studies. At one time or another we taught twelve of the South Asian languages. I cannot tell you how many incomplete sets of dittoed, stenciled, and now Xeroxed teaching materials accumulated over the years. In only three of those languages did these materials ever make it to the textbook stage, and then only the first-year materials were ever completed. I am sure an inventory of available Southeast Asian language teaching materials would show the same ratio of ephemeral to solid, published materials. I am also sure you share the same feeling I used to have that all of that semi-digested material was getting more and more obsolete as the years went by.

I suspect a survey of Southeast Asian language teaching materials would reveal a similar situation. It is time for the field, and I might add, Southeast Asian studies as a whole, to address centrally the issue of materials production. In doing so it might want to consider some organizational steps that may help to ameliorate the ephemeral, cottage industry character of the current materials production system. A first step might be to agree upon an agenda and a set of priorities for the preparation of materials. Second, we need to codify the current system of materials preparation. Now the preparation of teaching materials in the less commonly taught languages has depended almost totally upon the extraordinary effort of a few linguists. Characteristically, while they may have the time and expertise for the initial preparation of teaching materials, they have neither the time nor the interest to complete the long process of seeing those materials through to final publication, even should there be a publisher and a market for them. What is needed is a materials completion industry for Southeast Asian languages, undertaking some of the functions performed by commercial textbook manufacturers in the commonly taught languages. While the market for most of the less commonly taught languages is too small to attract the large commercial publishing houses, it might be possible to create a pool of individuals and facilities that would take teaching materials produced in first draft by the trained linguist/language teacher and turn them into more durable, more generally accessible publications.

Third, even if we expand our capacity to see materials through the publication stage, we must find a way to increase our capacity to create the original text materials. To accomplish this, it may be necessary to shift our tradition of sole individual authorship to a more collaborative style. The special skills necessary for the production of successful language teaching materials need not be invented from scratch by every linguist who decides to prepare such materials. There is an expertise in materials preparation that is independent of the particular language being taught, and it should be possible to extend to authors the expert help of those who possess that skill. Fortunately, steps are being taken to make this possible. One of the projects of the National Council of the Less Commonly Taught Languages is to produce flexible templates for the production of teaching materials that might be used to assist the efforts of individual authors.

Fourth, given the availability of new multi-media technologies, it seems foolish to just produce textbooks as if the printed book is the

only acceptable form for the presentation of teaching materials. In view of the special need in the less commonly taught languages to embed linguistic instruction within an authentic cultural setting, combining print and other media in targeted teaching modules of less than full course length would seem especially appropriate. To return to the structural comments I made earlier, priority should be given to the preparation of materials for individualized learning, particularly learning by adults.

Finally, an interim materials preparation strategy that might be useful for the Southeast Asian languages involves the preparation of general guidelines for the teaching of a language, rather than a formal textbook. The preparation of curricular guidelines is a prior step taken in a situation, such as that in Southeast Asian studies, where pedagogical practices and teaching materials are quite varied and unstandardized. Such guidelines would provide information on timing and sequence, the phasing of skills, when and how to introduce reading and writing, what are core and peripheral lexical items and structures, and pedagogical strategies for particularly difficult teaching tasks. We at the NFLC are helping to develop such guidelines for Japanese and Chinese in preparation for the construction of new College Board Achievement Tests in those languages. The same strategy might also be used in Southeast Asian studies where the teaching materials are scarce or non-existent. Indeed, Southeast Asian studies could take the lead in developing the technology for the creation of just such curricular guidelines.

TESTING

Let me close by adding a few sentences on testing. If I may be forgiven a personal note, one of the many sins of which I am both frequently accused and totally innocent is the foisting of the ACTFL/ILR proficiency guidelines on the less commonly taught languages community. In truth, for the past seven or eight years I have been bemoaning the fact that a single, and in my view, flawed testing technology has, like the shadow of the proverbial banyan tree, prevented the growth of a wider range of testing technologies. So troubled have we at the NFLC been with this phenomenon that we recently held a major international conference whose purpose was to expand the arsenal of tests that might provide information useful to teachers, students, and program administrators seeking to improve their teaching or learning methods. Perhaps the Southeast Asianists, for whom the ACTFL/ILR guidelines are most problematic, might take some leadership in broadening the range of

testing strategies that can assist most effectively in the actual learning of languages.

EPILOGUE

Karl L. Hutterer

When Tomé Pires visited the thriving port city of Brunei in 1512, he described the settlement as consisting of "houses built on scattered poles." The image may well serve as a metaphor for the field of Southeast Asian studies as it emerges from the preceding papers. We perceive numerous busy and productive scholars and students and, though it is smaller than some other area studies fields, ours seems to be a bustling enterprise. Yet, there are deep and abiding apprehensions about the long-term future of the field. Among others, they include concerns over a narrow personnel base, particularly in certain critical areas, insufficient training capability and scholarly tools in the languages, and a shortage of financial resources to address these problems. In the end, however, most of these concerns are linked to a much deeper apprehension: the perception that Southeast Asian studies may lack both a coherent intellectual foundation and a compelling practical rationale for mobilizing the public and private resources needed to sustain and expand its academic practice. Worse still, some feel that the subject we study may itself not be a coherent unit of investigation but instead may be merely a segmented geographical entity inhabited by peoples having diverse cultural and social traditions that only superficially share relatively recently introduced traits in common.

It is not my purpose in this essay to repeat or summarize arguments made by other contributors but rather to highlight certain issues and explore their linkages. In this, the question of the intellectual and practical foundations of our field stands out not only as a common thread but, indeed, as an issue of overriding importance and needs to be examined for its substantive and tactical implications for the future development of Southeast Asian studies.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE BALANCE

There can be little doubt that enormous progress has been made since Southeast Asian studies first entered the American academic scene as a recognizable field about forty years ago. Our empirical

knowledge of countries, societies, and cultures in the region has increased markedly, and Southeast Asia based research has made significant intellectual contributions to several academic disciplines. Admittedly, progress has been uneven. Indonesia and Thailand have received the lion's share of attention, with the Philippines and Malaysia coming in second; the countries of former Indochina remained relatively neglected even during the period of heightened political interest in that part of the region during the Vietnam War, and Burma has been ignored almost entirely. From a disciplinary perspective, our successes have been chiefly in the social sciences, led by anthropology, with other important contributions made in certain areas of political science and history. The humanities, on the other hand, have done very poorly, while in the arts only music has been reasonably successful. Still, for a forty-year-old field, the scholarship produced on Southeast Asia is respectable both in volume and in quality, and its intellectual influence is unmistakable.

Another area of real, though sometimes overlooked, progress is in the field of languages. Since 1950, there has been a dramatic increase in the amount and scope of Southeast Asian language instruction offered at American universities. American graduate students today go to the field with far better language preparation than their counterparts did in the 1950s and 60s. Again, the picture is not one of unmitigated success, however. Among the most critical shortcomings are these: our programs remain far too short-staffed to offer the depth and breadth of language training that are really needed; our language training programs concentrate primarily on oral skills so that few young scholars are literate in Southeast Asian languages; we lack many basic linguistic tools for scholarly work and study, such as good dictionaries; and we lack training programs and opportunities for those interested in language *per se* and thus have almost no capability of reproducing high-level language specialists.

Finally, a similar picture of mixed success presents itself on a more general organizational basis. On the one hand, the field of Southeast Asian studies is today quite firmly entrenched in the American academic enterprise. Admittedly, by comparison with some other area studies fields, ours remains relatively small in terms of numbers of scholars who identify themselves as Southeast Asianists and numbers of centers promoting Southeast Asian studies. Nevertheless, I would judge the academic institutionalization of the field to be quite secure. It is true that, following the end of the Vietnam War, when public interest in Southeast Asia

seemed to evaporate, several centers of Southeast Asian studies suffered a worrisome decline in personnel strength as faculty members retired or otherwise left their positions and sometimes were not replaced. However, it is possible, even likely, that this decline had little to do with Southeast Asian studies as such but was more a reflection of academic retrenchment under conditions of financial pressure experienced by universities across the country. This retrenchment tended to affect all area studies fields but was perhaps more visible in the Southeast Asian case because of its demographic vulnerability, a trait typical of small populations. However, the fact that Southeast Asian studies centers survived, and even some new ones were formed, during a period of academic contraction (when whole departments were eliminated in some universities), indicates that the field has gained academic credibility and is reasonably well institutionalized.

If conditions are tolerable to good, even if not ideal, what are we then worried about? It is, as Anderson suggests, precisely the appearance of normalcy, evolved during forty years of development of the field in the context of American academic, social, and political forces, that prompts concern.

CRITICAL POINTS

From an organizational perspective, it is scant solace that Southeast Asian studies has not suffered significant declines since the mid-1970s. On the contrary, the fact that the field has seen no growth over the past fifteen years is cause for real concern. By lack of growth, I mean both a lack of increase in faculty positions, students, and degrees conferred, and a lack of internal evolution as indicated by the failure of the field to penetrate new realms of intellectual discourse. The absence of humanities scholarship already noted is one aspect of this stasis. Another is that Southeast Asian studies has remained largely limited to graduate student training and faculty research activities, with little expansion into the world of undergraduate education. It is as if Southeast Asian studies as it developed by the late 1960s became an anxiously guarded and protected status quo during the competitive seventies and eighties.

In the early years, fledgling programs of Southeast Asian studies received support primarily from the Ford Foundation and the federal government. Political motivation for government support of area studies was deeply rooted in Cold War ideology and the support mechanism was therefore structured to favor those programs likely be of political and military value. These were social

science programs.¹ In the 1970s, after the Ford Foundation had withdrawn as a major funder, federal government support became even more dominant and access to it more competitive. In this funding environment, a Southeast Asia program could not possibly remain viable for long without a specialist in political science but could survive quite well without a scholar in literature or religion. In other words, the controlling force in the organization of programs was not scholarship as such but political opportunity.

Our failure to become active in the field of undergraduate studies has a similar background. Quite logically, the government sponsor has been interested in producing high-level "expertise" on foreign countries and populations in which the government has strategic or political interests. This need could be met by using scholarships to entice a small number of students into the field of Southeast Asian studies on the graduate level but it did not require setting up undergraduate curricula. There has been relatively little pressure from within the academic world itself to redress this imbalance. In the on-going battle over intellectual control of the undergraduate curriculum, the voices advocating "non-Western content" have been few and relatively unsuccessful. Where they have been successful, the tendency has been, with few exceptions, to direct attention to the "great civilizations" and their literary, philosophical, and artistic traditions.

Keyes points out that in some places, primarily on the West Coast, the children of Southeast Asian immigrant communities have created a natural pool of students for undergraduate courses dealing with the region. Although it is unclear how long this "natural" demand will last, it has created an opportunity for academic expansion into the college curriculum which some universities have successfully begun to exploit. Long-term projections predict continuing increases in the East Asian and Southeast Asian shares of West Coast populations. It is possible that these processes will eventually create the political and social conditions for a broad-scale integration of Southeast Asian subjects into the undergraduate curriculum. Such developments are presently, however, germinative at best, and one must always wonder about the accuracy of long-term trend projections. At present, and viewed nationally, it is clear that Southeast Asian studies has made little progress in gaining access to the undergraduate curriculum. This is a very serious issue,

¹ The intellectual climate of American academe, dominated for much of this century by positivism and behaviorism, reinforced this development.

since limiting the field to training a relatively tiny number of specialized graduate students means that the field has little educational impact and remains in the realm of esoteric subjects.

Finally, even our language training programs bear the stamp of the federal sponsor and its motivation. Government support for language programs both through scholarships—variously called NDFL or FLAS fellowships—and through partial operating subsidies has been enormously important in keeping many of our programs alive and justifying their existence to university administrators. Rules and priorities established by the federal government are such, however, that they intrinsically favor oral skills over literacy and an instrumentalist approach to language pedagogy over approaches that meld language teaching with a conceptual introduction into the foreign culture.

There is nothing surprising or new in the fact that governments spend money for academic programs serving certain political ends and that the rules they establish are motivated by political concerns rather than by intrinsic academic value. Most of the great European scholars of Southeast Asia were, after all, also products of government sponsorship in the service of colonial rule and administration. Yet, while the mundane needs to pay faculty, buy books for our libraries, and support students may force us to accept, and perhaps even seek, help from politically motivated government programs, we must remember that these will inevitably tend to undermine the conceptual integrity of the academic process. It is of greatest importance, therefore, that we seek ways and opportunities to counteract these tendencies. We must regain control over the constitution of our field.

This is not simply a question of intellectual honesty and integrity but may ultimately also be one of survival. Political currents are unpredictable and do not promote long-term stability. The decline of the Cold War mentality has clearly helped to erode the political will for large expenditures in support of area studies. There are, of course, political issues other than national security that can generate support for area studies. Thus, over the past ten years, the economic expansion of ASEAN and its member countries' importance for American trade and industry have undoubtedly been favorable toward Southeast Asian studies. One must wonder, however, whether this too will pass.

CONNECTIONS

The main difficulties facing the academic pursuit of Southeast Asian studies are sometimes seen to lie in the enormous geographic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of the region. It divides an already relatively small student pool into numerous tiny segments. This makes, for instance, maintaining language training programs inordinately expensive and results in stressful overextension among our handful of language teachers.² The region's diversity has also encouraged specialization by country, or sometimes even by parts of countries (e.g., Javanists, specialists of Northeastern Thailand, etc.). Very few Southeast Asianists have done substantive work in more than one country and are fluent in more than one vernacular. As a consequence, relatively little integrative scholarship deals with the region as a unified field of inquiry. Indeed, the diversity in virtually all fields of human expression and environmental manifestation is so strong that Southeast Asianists themselves have often worried whether their part of the world could be considered a coherent geographical region.

Southeast Asia may well be more internally varied and complex than most other world regions. Perhaps more important is that diversity is perceived as less costly in programs dealing with other world regions. For instance, colleges and universities routinely offer simultaneously two or three Romance languages, two or three Germanic languages, and two or more Slavic languages, not to speak of the classical languages of Latin and Greek. This is possible in part because the pool of students predisposed toward taking European languages is much larger than those interested in Southeast Asian languages, but in part also because a broad educational effort in European languages is considered essential for understanding and continuing intellectual traditions that arose in Europe. Indeed, the fact that so many more students are predisposed to take European languages than Asian, and particularly Southeast Asian ones, itself derives from the same preconception: knowledge of European languages is considered important as a link to a civilization with which the majority of Americans identify.

The obverse is true, of course, with regard to Southeast Asia, Southeast Asian cultures, and Southeast Asian languages. There is no public or scholarly perception of a cultural tradition identified as "Southeast Asian civilization" and which, like the civilizations of the ancient Mediterranean, South Asia, or China, has made major

² See Bickner, this volume.

contributions to the intellectual and aesthetic treasury of humankind. The "great civilizations" perspective has obscured the historical depth, internal coherence, and conceptual richness of Southeast Asian traditions and has marked them down as derivative, folk-based, and primitive. Thus, institutions of higher learning maintain programs of Southeast Asian studies almost exclusively for reasons of utility, which includes considerations of student enrollments and available outside support. With this, we have reached what I consider to be a core issue for the further development of Southeast Asian studies.

The most important task we face as scholars of Southeast Asia is to explain to ourselves and to the world what it is that binds us together intellectually. That is, we must define the core of our field by seeking to understand the essence of Southeast Asian civilization. This means that we must refocus our efforts on the study of the literatures, religions, and the arts of the region in their historical development and contemporary contexts. Only after we have come to understand the historical origins and transformations of ideas and symbolic forms can we see contemporary social forms and processes in their proper context and evaluate them adequately in the comparative framework of the social sciences. I have no doubt that such studies will find common themes underlying the Southeast Asian social and cultural mosaic, themes that define the essence of Southeast Asian civilization.

On the one hand, as is pointed out by others in this volume, we are somewhat handicapped in our effort by historical factors. Southeast Asian scholarship, unlike some other fields of Asian studies, cannot build on foundations laid by a long Orientalist tradition. Orientalism created the building blocks for the study of Asian civilizations in the form of philology, epigraphy, religious studies, and so forth. In spite of its Eurocentric aberrations, Orientalism did identify the ancient historical roots of indigenous traditions of thought, literature, and the arts. By contrast, the humanistically oriented early scholars of Southeast Asia emphasized what they saw as the derivative character of the civilizations of "Further India," the "East Indies," and "Indochina." On the other hand, the absence of an Orientalist tradition offers us the freedom to pursue our studies free of an established orthodoxy.³ Indeed, free-

³ In research on the history of Chinese civilization, for instance, the long-established focus on the North China "heartland" has obscured the

ranging research has already registered some exciting successes. For instance, archaeological research over the past three decades has uncovered powerful indigenous developments in the region predating the appearance of Indian and Chinese cultural elements. This new information is essential for understanding the historical processes by which Indian and Chinese (and later European) ideas and forms were introduced, and were transformed into typically Southeast Asian structures.

Although much work needs yet to be done, archaeological research has also gone some way toward identifying distinctive cultural traditions as well as their interactions to produce cultural patterns broadly shared throughout the region.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Discussions at the Wingspread Conference reviewed manifest achievements in Southeast Asian studies and pointed to areas of concern. As we look into the future, we should derive encouragement from our record, but it is even more important that we address vigorously the problems we perceive. In doing so, it is important that we distinguish carefully between goals and strategies, both long-term and short-term.

I have argued that building strength in the humanities should be our highest priority, as it will enable us to explore and explicate the nature of Southeast Asian civilization. An understanding on this level will not only provide an intellectual anchor for the field, but it will also increase its long-term institutional security by supplying the rationale for maintaining and expanding faculty strength across the disciplines, increasing support for language training and development of language tools, and expanding into undergraduate education. All these needs are related and cannot easily be disassociated from each other.

The strategies we pursue towards achieving our goals must recognize that long-range economic forecasts predict continuous financial strain on our systems of higher education throughout the next decade. The ensuing competition for faculty positions and operating support makes it extremely unlikely that we can expect significant gains in net strength of our centers and programs within the foreseeable future. Neither public nor private funding sources are likely to support substantial expansion or the initiation of major

contributions of diverse traditions to what emerged historically as "Chinese civilization."

new programs. This does not mean, however, that we cannot make some incremental progress by competing vigorously for available resources. A series of strategies offer themselves. We can and should take advantage of fields that are "hot" and therefore attract funding--economic development and international trade, peace and security, international relations, natural resources, and demography--and bring them more closely into the purview of area studies. We will also need to continue cultivating our political alliances in the federal and state governments. Finally, we can take advantage within our own institutions of the current upswing in enrollments and build while conditions are favorable. We must not forget, however, that all these conditions, opportunities, and alliances are transitory in nature, and that they will generally not contribute to the building of a coherent field but will, on the contrary, tend to draw attention away from what I am here proposing to be the essential core of Southeast Asian studies.

Given the long-term importance of the humanities in Southeast Asian studies, I believe that we cannot afford to wait until the economics of higher education improve but that we need to act now. One of the options we have is to reconsider priorities within our centers and redirect into the humanities faculty positions that do become available through natural processes of attrition. Another is to approach the issue on a national basis through greater collaboration between institutions. Depending on the nature of a given university, it might make good sense for some centers to specialize more strongly in the social sciences and for others to emphasize the humanities. The first approach would require deft political maneuvering with regard to university administrations and chairs of disciplinary departments. Both approaches would necessitate breaking free from established preconceptions about which "core disciplines" need to be represented in a program of Southeast Asian studies and, most of all, breaking out of the straight jacket established by Department of Education priorities in allocating grants. Most of all, it would require centers to abandon some of the competition and mistrust that have been fostered among them by the cyclical competition for government support.

While significant advances could probably be made, even under conditions of tightly restricted resources, through national-level agreements on division of labor, an even bigger potential for collaborative gain exists beyond our boundaries. The world has changed greatly over the past four decades, and with it has changed the environment within which we pursue Southeast Asian studies.

What were once emerging postcolonial nations, impoverished and backward from the vantage point of the industrialized West, have now become economic competitors in the global arena and are, in some cases, on the verge of joining the club of industrialized countries. Southeast Asian universities have undergone tremendous development since 1950 and many of them are capable of engaging in ambitious collaborative projects. Some Southeast Asian scholars have succeeded admirably in merging indigenous traditions of thought and learning with Western intellectual approaches and are producing innovative and insightful results. It is hardly surprising that some of the finest scholars of Southeast Asia in the humanities are Southeast Asians active at universities in their home countries. Studying traditions with which they personally identify, they have linguistic and conceptual access to their material that Western scholars can rarely match.

It is for many reasons desirable that we should engage our Southeast Asian colleagues in active exchange and dialogue and that we should include them in a larger scheme of division of labor. Many Southeast Asians themselves are interested in such exchanges. At a recent meeting in San Francisco, a Southeast Asian colleague stated that the scholarly community in the region is vitally interested in the state of Southeast Asian studies in the United States and other Western countries. There are a number of reasons for this. For one, Southeast Asians remain interested in theoretical and methodological innovations made in the West, particularly in the social sciences. For another, they look to Western scholars for studies on subjects that are politically too sensitive for Southeast Asians to undertake. By drawing on each other's strengths, we should be able to establish mature partnerships that will help transform our field into a new, richer, and more complete intellectual endeavor, beyond its constitution rooted in colonial and postcolonial conditions.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Benedict R. Anderson, Professor
of Government and Asian
Studies, Cornell University

Randolph Barker, Professor of
Agricultural Economics and
Director, Southeast Asian
Studies Program, Cornell
University

Robert Bickner, Associate
Professor of Thai Language
and Literature, University of
Wisconsin-Madison

James Boon, Professor of
Anthropology, Princeton
University

Charles W. Bray, President, The
Johnson Foundation

David D. Buck, Editor, *Journal of
Asian Studies*, University of
Wisconsin-Milwaukee

David Chiel, Assistant Program
Officer, Asia Programs, The
Ford Foundation

Daniel F. Doepfers, Professor of
Geography and Director,
Center for Southeast Asian
Studies, University of
Wisconsin-Madison

Rick Doner, Assistant Professor
of Political Science, Emory
University

Donald Emmerson, Professor of
Political Science, University of
Wisconsin-Madison

David L. Featherman, President,
Social Science Research
Council

David Feeny, Professor of
Economics, McMaster
University

William Frederick, Associate
Professor of History, Ohio
University

Patricia B. Henry, Associate
Professor of Indonesian
Language and Literature,
Northern Illinois University

Charles Hirschman, Professor of
Sociology, University of
Washington

Karl Hutterer, Director, Burke
Memorial Washington State
Museum, University of
Washington

Ben Kerkvliet, Professor of
Political Science, University of
Hawaii

Charles Keyes, Professor of
Anthropology, University of
Washington and Director,
Northwest Regional
Consortium for Southeast
Asian Studies

- Richard Kinch, Conference
Program Officer, The Johnson
Foundation
- Richard Lambert, Director,
National Foreign Language
Center, The Johns Hopkins
University
- Terrill E. Lautz, Program Director
for Asia, The Luce
Foundation
- Jamie Mackie, Professor Political
Science, Australian National
University
- Michael Peletz, Associate
Professor of Anthropology,
Colgate University
- Frank Reynolds, Professor of
History of Religions and
Buddhist Studies, University
of Chicago
- Renato Rosaldo, Professor of
Anthropology, Stanford
University
- Ann Imlah Schneider, Team
Leader, Center and
Fellowships Programs, Center
for International Education,
U.S. Department of Education
- James C. Scott, Professor of
Political Science and Chair,
Council on Southeast Asian
Studies, Yale University
- Peter Stanley, Director, Education
and Culture Program, The
Ford Foundation
- David Szanton, Staff Associate,
Social Science Research
Council
- Hué-Tam Ho Tai, Associate
Professor of History, Harvard
University
- S. J. Tambiah, Professor of
Anthropology, Harvard
University
- Robert Taylor, Reader in Politics,
London School of Oriental
and African Studies,
University of London
- Anna Tsing, Assistant Professor
of Anthropology, University
of California-Santa Cruz
- Toby A. Volkman, Staff
Associate, Social Science
Research Council
- Wang Gungwu, Emeritus
Professor of History, Hong
Kong University
- John Wolff, Professor of Modern
Languages, Cornell
University