

ACCES TO DISSERTATIONS IN AND ON SOUTHEAST ASIA*

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper, the term dissertation is used to refer to all written treatises required by colleges and universities as partial fulfillment of the requirements for degrees at graduate and post-graduate levels, originating either from Southeast Asia or elsewhere and pertaining to Southeast Asia. Some of these materials, regardless of the degree levels, regardless of the languages being used and also regardless of whether they are wholly or partially related to Southeast Asia, expound certain theoretical models developed in the west by using data collected from Southeast Asia, while others are interdisciplinary, cross-cultural and comparative studies covering one or more countries in the region in both historical or contemporary times. These materials, whether they are original researches on a topic or mere reviews of researches done previously, can add significantly to our knowledge of the region besides pointing the direction for further research in the future.

No attempt is made to differentiate a first degree 'academic exercise' from a post-graduate dissertation as the standard of a dissertation (the preferred term used henceforth) is dependent on the academic background of the writer, his depth of knowledge of the subject and the years of experience and the degree of specialization of his/her supervisor(s). The best first degree dissertations have been found to be up to the standard of masters dissertations and the best masters dissertations to the standard of Ph.D. dissertations. Even the worst dissertation may contain some information valuable to other researchers, particularly the recording of provincial folklore, local history and so forth, which are unavailable elsewhere.

As very little is known about Burma, Brunei, Kampuchea, Laos and Vietnam, discussion in this paper is limited to the Asean

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countries namely Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES IN GENERAL

Southeast Asian studies all over the world have achieved tremendous success in the past two decades.¹ Looking back at past achievements, an estimated 5,000 dissertations at Ph.D. level, 6,500 at Masters level and another 20,000 at first degree level have been produced by institutions of higher learning in Australia, Asia particularly Southeast Asia,* Europe and the continent of North America. Of the estimated 5,000 Ph.D. dissertations in and on Southeast Asia, 2,976 titles have been listed in *Current Research on Southeast Asia*, and of this, 1,617 titles (54.33%) are contributed by scholars from Southeast Asia. It is noted that the largest number of Ph.D. dissertations on Southeast Asia comes from the United States of America because of the vast researches conducted there in the past two decades.

With the continuing interests of students and scholars who view the region as a most challenging focus of research, the future of Southeast Asian studies is promising, despite pessimistic views, shared by Miller and Herbert,⁸ and doubt about its viability as an area studies with the shift of interest from Southeast Asia to other regions of the world, following the American withdrawal from Vietnam in the 1970s and the recent global economic recession. This is largely because Southeast Asia, as Sandhu had said, has continued to be a region of considerable significance to the whole world as it has a tremendous developmental potential to be one of the fastest growing regions of the world in the 1980s and 1990s.¹ But, it is a pity to note that most people in Southeast Asia do not know much about their neighbouring countries, although they may have some knowledge of their country. Sandhu commented further that "despite decades of independence, we are still in a situation where we know more about Europe or the United States of America than our own areas, or continue to know our areas largely through the eyes of 'foreigners'. Such ignorance and

*There are 2 universities with 19,000 students in Burma; 53 universities with 221,909 students in Indonesia; 1 university with 1,600 students in Laos; 5 universities with 27,875 students in Malaysia; 46 universities with 575,655 students in the Philippines; 1 university with 11,000 students in Singapore; 11 universities with 352,404 students in Thailand and 1 university with 1,500 students in Vietnam. (Source: *The World Of Learning*, 1982-83 edition. London: Europa Publications, 1982). In most of these universities, students in final year of their first degree courses have to write a academic graduation exercise.

neglect is particularly tragic when viewed in the light of the fact that we are fast approaching an era of crucial interdependence, where rapid changes in both the internal and external relations of the region make our business our neighbours' business and our neighbours' business our business. It is essential that the more we know our neighbours and the more our neighbours know us, the better for all Southeast Asians. Nobody can hope to share fully in the opportunities or participate meaningfully in the life of the region without a proper appreciation and understanding of the region's complexities and its peoples and their aspirations."

Following the current trend for a closer transnational relationship, fostered through ASAIHL, RIHED, SEAMEO* and others, researches and publications have been encouraged to incline more towards a regional approach to regional problems. But, multiplicity of languages used in the region constitute an obstacle to effective communication to students, scholars and librarians alike. This language barrier is increasing in view of the stepping up of the use of the national language as the medium of instruction in education in the respective countries.

There is a large and increasing number of dissertations at all levels from Southeast Asia, produced in typescript on poor quality paper in limited copies especially for the board of examiners or the department/university libraries. Though printing on paper is no longer the only multiplication technology in the publishing world, as long as the demand is not there, publication in other media like microform, facsimile or even video transmission is not made easier. Apart from compulsory deposition most libraries in the region acquire dissertations in a rather ad hoc way, i.e. in response to demand only, chiefly because they are difficult to be acquired. Standing orders used to acquire comprehensively dissertations desired from UMI (University Microfilm International) cannot be applied. In years to come, the demand from one university for another university's dissertations, and from one country for another country's dissertations will grow due to the need to look at the region from within, instead of through the models developed in the West. Increased demand generated by such a need would exert more pressure on local libraries to improve their collection of these locally and regionally produced documents. This will require cooperation among libraries, nationally and regionally, as these unpublished documents will be available only in the libraries where they are deposited. But, the objective of

*ASAIHL (Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning), RIHED (Regional Institute of Higher Education and Development), SEAMEO (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization).

availability of materials cannot be achieved without accessibility of bibliographic information of what exist, where, in what form how to gain access and so forth.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC CONTROL

Many professional organizations, commercial enterprises and dedicated individuals have compiled and published various lists and bibliographies on dissertations in and on Southeast Asia. As can be seen from the appendix, some repositories have produced only one list while others have come up with several lists of dissertations, each improving on the earlier ones. These lists vary from mere listings of authors, titles and 'imprint' to bibliographies with detailed bibliographical information like the call number, format of the material and critical annotations. All these guides are important as they introduce to the scholarly community the existence of various dissertations. They are useful for suggesting scholars and researchers the fields of study which are worthy of further research, for guiding students in their choice of a subject to write on for helping them to avoid duplicating something which has been sufficiently worked out in other institutions. These functions have been so effectively performed by UMI through DAI (*Dissertation Abstracts International*, started in 1938 and known as *Abstracts International*) and MA (*Masters Abstracts*, started in 1962) that we not only know more but also use more dissertations produced in the USA than those produced in Southeast Asia. Without proper and up-to-date documentation, many unpublished dissertations will always remain unknown and unutilized. This defeats the primary purpose of the expensive scholarly research made to improve and disseminate knowledge in the hope of promoting a better understanding of the topic researched.

These reference guides, by pointing out the gaps and the strength of the respective library collections, are also vitally important to librarians in locating dissertations in servicing ILL (interlibrary loans) and collection development.

In order to keep abreast of the current development of dissertations completed or in progress in various institutions all over the world, constant vigilance is necessary because of the inadequate depository legislation and its ineffective implementation with regard to unpublished materials in many countries. The existing Preservation of Books Act now in force in Malaysia, for instance, requests the deposit of 'published' works by the respective publishers concerned. This has resulted in a widerange of

non-book and semi-published materials escaping the net²⁰ Thus, in order to discover what dissertations have been completed and so forth, as Lim Pui Huen has noted librarians will have to spend a great deal of time poring over each other's accessions lists, scan countless footnotes, read piles of annual reports, write innumerable letters and tax the forbearance of their friends,¹ despite the fact that only a few titles are listed occasionally. Similarly, various library newsletters and bulletins on Southeast Asia* will have to be subscribed to and procured, in order to know what is going on in other libraries, near and far.

No matter what the function of a bibliography is, the necessity of adhering to international standard as expressed for example in the Conference on Universal Bibliographic Control on Southeast Asia, in processing bibliographic records must be taken into serious account,¹⁷ if a library (also a country) is to make meaningful contribution to national (also international) bibliographic control of these materials.

It is a pity that bibliographic activity is taking place in an uncoordinated manner and by a laborious method in most of the countries in the region. Though there exists in Malaysia and Singapore a Joint Standing Committee for Bibliography and Library Cooperation (BILCO), bibliographic projects initiated and undertaken by the various institutions in these two countries do not refer to this committee.²⁰ As a result, while there is duplication of efforts on one hand, there are still many gaps in information coverage on the other hand. Serious attention should thus be given to co-ordinate and improve bibliographic activity at national level. This task can more easily be accomplished if the respective repositories can accept full responsibility to report from

*Among the important newsletters and bulletins on Southeast Asian studies, in alphabetical order, are (1) *Antara Kita*, published by the Indonesian Studies Group, USA; (2) *Asian Studies Association of Australia Review (ASAAR)*, Australia; (3) *Berita*, published by the Malaysia/Singapore/Brunei Studies Group, USA; (4) *Borneo Research Bulletin*, USA; (5) *Bulletin Maklumat Pertanian Malaysia*, published by Universiti Pertanian Malaysia; (6) *Burma Studies Group Bulletin*, USA; (7) *Center for Southeast Asian Studies Newsletter*, published by Northern Illinois University, USA; (8) *CORMOSEA Bulletin* published by the Committee on Research Materials on Southeast Asia, USA; (9) *Indonesia Circle*, published by SOAS, London; (10) *International Association of Oriental Librarians Bulletin*, USA; (11) *Jambatan*, the Netherlands; (12) *Kekal Abadi*, published by Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur; (13) *Khosana*, published by the Thailand/Laos/Cambodia Studies Group, USA; (14) *Southeast Asian Library Group (SEALG) Newsletter*, United Kingdom; (15) *Southeast Asian Research Materials Group (SEARMG) Newsletter*, Australia; (16) *Vietnam Studies Bulletin*, published by the Committee on Research Materials on Southeast Asia, USA.

time to time the acquisition of every single dissertation to a central unit, preferably the national library of each country. This central unit, can then undertake to produce a national union catalogue of dissertations which will facilitate effective exchange of bibliographic information and ILL at national, regional and international levels. This is the spirit of UBC (Universal Bibliographical Control). Alternatively, the programmes of DAI (*Dissertations Abstracts International*) and MA (*Masters Abstracts*) by UMI have provided a framework within which it is possible to create a plan for co-ordinated action, if institutions in Southeast Asia do not intend to contribute to either DAI or MA. In the Philippines, Rydings reported that PAARL, (the Philippine Academic and Research Libraries) with the co-operation of 30 institutions had compiled a *Union List of Philippine Theses* for the academic years 1975-1977. This list has also been used as an acquisition tool for the microfilming project of selected Philippine dissertations and research reports on education to be included in the ERIC (Educational Resource Information Center) data bank in the USA. This project is undertaken in the Ateneo de Manila University Microform Center.¹⁴ In other words, effective co-ordination at local level is a prerequisite for co-operation at national level and effective co-ordination at national level a prerequisite for co-operation at regional or international levels. With the creation of a national union catalogue of national dissertations, we can confidently look forward to the union catalogue of dissertations in the region as proposed by Lim Huck-Tee and Marina G. Dayrit in CONSAL IV in Bangkok.¹³ With equal zeal, we also look forward to the SEA-PRINT (Southeast Asian Imprints) project, a programme of the NLDSEA Consortium (Consortium of National Libraries and Documentation Centers, Southeast Asia).^{2, 8} Some of the numerous potential benefits in developing this regional data base are:

1. Southeast Asian imprints will be made known not only to countries within the region, but also to countries outside the region,
2. It will serve as a useful aid in cataloguing Southeast Asian materials,
3. It will facilitate information retrieval.

It is hoped that an up-to-date and regionally comprehensive list comparable to DAI or ASLIB *Index to Theses* covering countries in Southeast Asia as a region will materialize in the near future. Without this, it is not only most time-consuming out also nerve-racking to scan through the various individual lists arranged in different formats.

Improvements in bibliographic control would inevitably lead to a greater knowledge and demand for documents. But, unless dissertations produced in Southeast Asia are also made accessible to everyone wherever he may be and whenever he wants them, to record them and to distribute the records worldwide could lead to more frustrations.

PROBLEMS OF AVAILABILITY

So far, very little attention has been paid to making dissertations produced in Southeast Asia easily available outside the confines of the various libraries where these materials are deposited. To ensure an effective system of availability of dissertations for loans or photocopy, it is essential that there should exist a comprehensive collection of such materials that are well organized and preserved so that they can be supplied as and when they are required. This involves acquisition policy and lending systems. Some libraries may automatically receive one or two copies of all dissertations submitted to the universities, some may receive all the dissertations at post-graduate levels but only a few at first degree level while other may receive dissertations from certain faculties/departments. Apart from compulsory deposition, acquisition of dissertations from other universities often takes place in a haphazard manner, in response to demand only and mainly through interlibrary loans. As they are unpublished and unavailable through gift and exchange programmes, acquisition of these materials is difficult. One reason why the majority of dissertations are never published as books, as explained by Eugene Power, in 1938, is the increasing decline in the potential market for them following the greater specialization of scholarship. They are written, as mentioned earlier, as partial fulfillment of academic degrees, for a specific audience consisting of a committee of specialists sitting on the board of examination. Even the university press, a non-profit publisher which advocates that importance of academic work shall take priority over its commercial appeal cannot ignore the potential market for an academic work. Power commented further that:

What scholarly publishing need is a method of distribution which gives sufficient and adequate publicity to a title or list of titles so that the information regarding what is offered is readily available to prospective users; combined with a means of production which can produce single copies, as demand materializes, at an economical and uniform rate. *

*Source: Introduction to Masters Abstracts or Dissertation Abstracts International

Both UMI and BLLD (British Library Lending Division) have taken the lead in providing easy access to dissertations in the United States of America/Canada and the United Kingdom respectively through their on-demand publishing systems supported by various guides and abstracts. On-demand publishing, in essence, means simply the supply of copies of a work in response to demand, one by one or perhaps a few at a time, rather than supply from a pre-produced stock. This new reprographic technique can also ensure that titles in demand will never go out of print.¹⁵ Unfortunately, such a scheme is not available in Southeast Asia.

Dissertations which are deemed to be of scholarly merit but not financially remunerative to be published can only hope for the respective governments in Southeast Asia to be interested in publishing them. Musa Hitam, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, had in fact proposed in 1982 to Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (translated as Language and Literature Agency) to publish dissertations completed in local universities. Increased literacy in Southeast Asia has resulted in a shortage of reading materials published in the national languages that are being used as media of instruction in schools and universities. As books in these languages are only published in the countries concerned, publication of worthy locally produced dissertations would provide the people with more reading materials and at the same time make dissertations easily available for use. Whether such a proposal could be implemented effectively has yet to be seen. Nevertheless, librarians in charge, as Lim Pui Huen, has noted can only acquire what is available while aspiring to do what is desirable.¹

Due to various factors mentioned earlier, it is generally assumed that the university where the dissertations are deposited is the natural source of supply. There may, however, be exceptions to this generalization, even though most universities have been able to supply copies of most of their dissertations, provided they are willing and not prohibited by regulations from doing so. Another major reason why some university libraries cannot supply copies of their dissertations is that not all the dissertations submitted to the university are deposited in the main library. Due to strong local tradition that gives the academic faculties/departments autonomy in managing their own faculty/departmental libraries, many dissertations are deposited only in these 'smaller' libraries scattered all over the campus. The erratic opening hours, the incapability of the clerical staff who are designated to manage these libraries and organize the materials and the difficulty in participating interlending schemes, have reduced the accessibility of the dissertations to general students and teaching staff. This decentralised library sys-

tem, though it is difficult to justify in a small university where the total collection is both small and weak and not only inadequate to meet the needs of the undergraduate education, but also to support the increasing numbers of post-graduate courses, is also taking place in Indonesia.⁴ Hermana, as quoted by Rydings, reported in 1970, that "there is no university library in the western sense; the collections are fragmented into libraries serving different faculties. There is no university librarian, no union catalogue and little co-ordination or no co-ordination between the librarians of the faculty libraries."¹⁴

In discussing the deficiencies of departmental libraries, Lee advocated that the university library should consist of all the collections of library materials in the possession of the university, wherever located, so that they will be more responsive to the total needs of the university community particularly, and other persons from outside the university generally, as these library resources are national assets. It is important that library resources scattered in various departmental libraries should be pooled together for better use through effective co-ordination. To do that, the position of university administrators should stand firmly behind the librarian and give whatever support is necessary to work out an effective system of co-ordination between the central library and the various library units.¹⁴ The use of a well-stocked central library will offer more advantages than a faculty library for it will provide students with wider educational experience and exposure.

To gain recognition as an economic and sensible means of making all the locally produced dissertations available throughout the country, each library should accept that the resources of all the libraries funded by the nation be considered as national assets and that the co-ordination of such resources for a network system must overrule the autonomy of individual libraries and their authority.³ Such a system is a prerequisite for all the libraries in a nation to draw on the resources of other libraries and to develop cooperation at regional or international levels. As the problems in the relationship between the national and university libraries in a network have been well documented,^{3, 10} it is not necessary to elaborate on them. The national library, by virtue of its neutral position of having to serve the whole nation and because of its responsibility to perform both national archival and supply functions, must collect as comprehensively as possible all the documents produced within the country. By so doing, it can supplement the provision of low-used materials which may be needed by university students and researchers but not justifiable for acquisition by university libraries. This is equally essential to cater for the potential demand for dissertations produced in other

universities (also other countries) which will grow hand-in-hand with the expansion of research interests and teaching programmes into areas and subjects previously ignored (following the expansion of regional co-operation). But, as mentioned earlier, the legal deposit act either does not exist or exist ineffective by in most developing countries, thus making it difficult for the national library to perform its functions properly. A means to bringing about more effective deposition of local materials in the national library, Wijasuriya proposed that the Copyright Act 1969 now in force in Malaysia could be linked more advantageously to legal deposit provision, on lines similar to that of the Library of Congress where copyright protection comes only after deposition and registration.²⁰ In formulating plans for the national library network in acquiring and supplying dissertations, we could also follow the example of BLLD. In the United Kingdom, universities are invited to lend their dissertations to be microfilmed at BLLD. Some 40,000 British doctoral dissertations are now available from BLLD. Dissertations microfilmed are recorded in *British Reports, Translations and Theses*. Upon receipt of a request for a dissertation held on film, a duplicate film is made for lending. Duplicate films or paper copies are available for purchase too. This method of acquisition should pose no problem in Southeast Asia as all the national libraries and documentation centers in the region have adequate production facilities, the necessary man-power and know-how.⁵ Alternatively, university libraries which have already microfilmed their dissertations for internal reference and preservation, should accept the responsibility to deposit at least two microfilm copies in the national library, besides venturing into selling them to or exchanging them with other libraries. By doing so, they not only help to improve scholarly communication, but also foster interlibrary co-operation in sharing the library resources. Similarly, by undertaking microfilming projects co-operatively, as demonstrated by the Microfilm Center of Ateneo de Manila University,¹⁴ libraries within a country or region, will be drawn closer in the spirit of co-operation to materialize the concept of UAP (Universal Availability of 'Publications'). Alternatively, both the individuals and the institutions of higher learning in Southeast Asia could make contributions to UMI.

Even though no libraries can be self-sufficient, a minimum level of self-sufficiency with regard to materials produced in the country or region should be achieved. And, even though inadequate resources in the library can be supplemented by ILL services, one cannot rely too heavily on such services. Inefficient ILL with long delays and with no guarantee of ultimate satisfac-

tion will diminish the advantages of ILL as all requests from students and researchers must preferably be fulfilled within the shortest time possible, usually a week. So far, many libraries in the region have been unable to develop an efficient ILL system and they perform such services as an added responsibility only after the primary responsibility of serving local clientele is fulfilled. Otherwise, ILL would impose further strains on the already inadequate pool of man-power and funds. To achieve a certain level of self-sufficiency in library resources, duplication which has been regarded as wastage is absolutely essential because the undergraduate courses in many universities in the region are more or less the same and also because of the distances separating one university from the next. Even if universities are in close proximity (there are four universities in Kuala Lumpur, seven in Bangkok, twelve in Jakarta and seventeen in Manila), *it is too inconvenient for individual readers to travel to the respective libraries to consult the materials. Duplication of library materials, by photocopying and microfilming, as comprehensively as financially possible is not an alternative, but a form of mutual support. By doing so, the libraries are in fact helping one another in relieving as much ILL demand as possible, thus reducing the conflicts of need between the ILL and the local clientele. But, it is a fact that some libraries may not be willing to help one another. This attitude of unwillingness may be caused by a certain amount of possessiveness on the part of the librarians about sharing their materials as it requires a lot of effort made over a long period to build up even a limited stock. 6.7

Access to dissertations deposited in the libraries is possible only after they have been processed, catalogued and preserved. But, practically all locally produced dissertations have no CIP (Cataloguing In Publication), and no readily available machine-readable records, (i.e. MARC records) and therefore require original cataloguing which is both difficult and time-consuming. These dissertations are, as a result, left in the work area to gather dust, or kept separately in a corner in the library sometimes without any system of organization in some libraries. This too has resulted in inaccessibility and unutilization of these hard-to-get materials. Soltani pointed out that the other reason why these materials are not catalogued/classified is the inadequacy of cataloguing rules and classification schedules which make cataloguers helpless in dealing with native literature, languages, history, geo-

*Source: *The World of Learning*, 1982-83 edition. London: Europa Publications, 1982.

graphy, philosophy, religion etc relating specifically to the national heritage of the developing countries.¹⁴ Even though LCMARC and British MARC are of little help in the cataloguing of dissertations produced in Southeast Asia, and AACRs (Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules) are inadequate too, all libraries within a nation and the region should be able to conform to ISBD (International Standard for Bibliographic Description) to ensure consistency and quality. The practice of devising local modifications to the cataloguing schedules as done in some of the libraries should be discontinued. Otherwise, a user going through the union catalogue will not be able to find anything simply because the documents are catalogued according to different sets of standards. It is very difficult for general users to interpret and to establish links between different cataloguing standards.

Since the various Southeast Asian national bibliographies, which contain only a few entries on locally produced dissertations, cannot be used as a tool in cataloguing these materials, it should be the responsibility of the librarians in the respective countries to initiate co-operatively a processing center to promote shared cataloguing, which will minimise wasteful duplication of efforts. Libraries in Southeast Asia should also investigate the possibility of using other libraries' catalogue records instead of cataloguing materials that have already been catalogued by other libraries (and also other countries because cataloguers of the respective countries should be best qualified to catalogue documents produced in their countries). It is through its Shared Cataloguing Programme, started in the early 1960s, that the Library of Congress is able to provide more materials with catalogue records for the big research libraries in the United States of America.

Besides cataloguing, reader education, production of library guides and a good reader advisor can contribute to the accessibility of library. As it is almost impossible to fulfill user demands for dissertations produced in other countries, some librarians tend to concentrate on promoting reader referral services — a complimentary means of sharing resources of other libraries, rather than fulfilling user demand for dissertations. Undoubtedly, large (central university) libraries with good reference collections will be better able to provide this service than the small (departmental/faculty) libraries. It is hoped that the bibliographic works cited in the appendix will be useful for reference work.

Access to dissertations is also governed by the rules of the university to which they are deposited. In some universities two copies of each dissertation submitted to the university are deposited in the main library. Permission for use is granted by the

Library Committee while the copyright belongs to the writer. In other universities, dissertations deposited in the library are available for consultation, unless the Board of Graduate Studies decides otherwise. They can only be copied with the written consent of the writers. In some other institutions, one of the two copies of the dissertation deposited is available for loans to other institutions of higher learning for consultation within the borrowing library only. In exceptional cases, access to individual dissertations may be withheld for a period not exceeding five years. In other institutions, a candidate must sign a form authorizing general access to the deposited copy of the dissertations at the librarian's discretion. Contrary to that, heads of departments in some institutions may withhold permission for the loans of individual dissertations indefinitely. In the ANU (the Australian National University), most dissertations may be consulted and borrowed on both internal and interlibrary loans within Australia. Overseas loans may be permitted in exceptional cases. In some cases, access is restricted to staff and students at the university for a period of five years. Scu dissertations may be consulted and borrowed by others only if the authors give their permission which will be pursued by the library on request.

For dissertations on loan to another library no dissertations may be copied without the author's permission or the permission of the ANU. Provided that the author grants permission, copies are supplied at a cost direct to the institutions requesting them, and not to the individuals. According to Helan Cordell, dissertations of the University of London are treated more like manuscripts. Two copies of every dissertation are deposited, one at the University Library and the other at the respective colleges. The second copy may not leave the premises of the library, while the first is the one available for loan or photocopy and is handled by the University Library or BLLD. Photocopies are supplied only after a copyright declaration for fair dealing has been completed and returned. Rules governing the use of dissertations in other institutions in United Kingdom can be found in *Aslib Index to Thesis*. While dissertations should be made as widely available as possible, this must be done with respect to the legitimate rights of the authors. Some dissertations may contain sensitive issues to certain governments while others, confidential matters. This 'sensitivity' and 'confidentiality' must be respected and the safety of the authors must be safeguarded. As not all dissertations are loanable on ILL, it is ideal then that all outside readers should be admitted to consult the materials in person in the library. But, this is not so in many libraries. Catalina A. Nemenzo wrote in 1974, in

her introduction to *Graduate theses in the Philippine universities and colleges, 1908-1969: an annotated bibliography* that the University of the Philippines had adopted a policy of not allowing users, including researchers, free access to the Filipiniana Collection which contain dissertations. Is the situation the same today? I hope not. Anyway, from the various rules mentioned, there seem to be a problem in the use of dissertation, to find a happy medium between protecting the copyright of the authors and achieving a free flow of academic communication.¹⁹ How to solve the copyright issues is everybody guess.

CONCLUSION

Many proposals for resource sharing networks for Southeast Asia had been made at various regional and international meetings of librarians.^{8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17} But, as Rydings said, there is little account of successful ones,¹⁴ with the exception of the union catalogue, like the *Materlist of Southeast Asian Microforms*. Though a tremendous growth has been recorded in the number and size of machine-readable data-bases like MALMARC, PHILMARC, SINGMARC and THAIMARC in Southeast Asia, it should be noted that these data-bases contain mainly current foreign publications easily available in libraries all over the world, and very little locally produced documents, particularly dissertations, that are difficult to procure and catalogue. And, these are the materials that are increasingly being sought after by students and researchers pursuing national and regional studies. There are also an increasing number of international information systems, like AGRIS (International Information System for the Agricultural Sciences and Technology), CA Search (Chemical Abstracts Search), FSTA (Food Science and Technology Abstracts) and etc being introduced in Southeast Asia, but whether these systems involving the use of complicated and expensive computer technology are beneficial to as many countries in the region has yet to be seen, because of the following reasons:

1. the different levels of library development in the respective countries of Southeast Asia,
2. doubt may arise in certain countries in the region about the need for resource sharing with other countries if the majority of their people read only in the vernaculars or the national languages,
3. the question of whether participation in any resource sharing network will provide a solution to the problems of inade-

quacy in local libraries when the local library provision is so inadequate that even a minimum level of self-sufficiency cannot be achieved, because of lack of funds and manpower.

4. many libraries may feel that the demand generated by the presently small number of research workers is too small to make such co-operative systems economical, especially when there is a shortage of funds and manpower.

In these circumstances, one should be more concerned with improving the library stocks of locally produced materials co-operatively with other libraries for their common purposes, while relying on ILL to supply other materials. A good ILL system will generate more demand and thereby put more pressure on local libraries to improve their stocks. Without efficient library systems at both local and national levels, it would be difficult to achieve the objective of UAP, as the latter depends on the individual libraries to supply their own documents, including unpublished dissertations in this case. So, third world countries, as pointed out by Soosai, should first be encouraged to streamline and review their national systems of availability of materials in order to ensure optimum utilization of the combined library resources available within the country, before they proceed to use resources beyond national frontiers.¹⁶

While computer technology should be used as and when appropriate as housekeeping tools to relieve librarians of much of the drudgery of librarianship, they are unlikely to provide instant solution to long standing problems in information provision and document delivery.^{6, 7} I wish to conclude this paper by quoting Miller who said that:

It is trendy for most .. libraries to place great emphasis in developing computer information networks. They rarely plan to have an efficient system of document delivery in support of local libraries despite the fact that no library can achieve self-sufficiency. In developing countries, document delivery should be given higher priority than computer networks, especially the latter require advanced technology and considerable expenditure and any information system is critically dependent on access to documents. Without access to documents when and where they are wanted, the library system of any country is of little use.⁸

In the nature of things, the immediate future will be more or less the continuation of the present, with no easy solution to increase availability of locally produced dissertations in and on Southeast Asia.

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