THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF A PRIVATE THAI UNIVERSITY

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Martha Butt first went to Thailand in 1964 as a Fifth Year Travel Service Scholar from ASIANetwork member Grinnell College. The program sent graduates to teach overseas for one year upon graduation from the college. She and her husband, John Butt, have spent over 18 of the past 35 years working and living in Thailand. They directed the Japan Study Program at Waseda University in 1978-79 while working at Macalester College, also an ASIANetwork member.

With a long time commitment to international education, Martha Butt oversees international programs at ASIANetwork member Payap University. She was the first academic director of the School for International Training's College Semester Abroad program at Payap. For the past seven years, she has coordinated study tours in Thailand for the United States Elderhostel program. In addition, she conducts cross-cultural orientation programs for foreign students and faculty coming to Thailand to study and/or work.

Payap University, a twenty-five year old, private institution with over 9,000 students, has offered educational programs for non-Thai students for over eleven years. As the curriculum has developed and been refined, Payap has internationalized its curriculum and student body. The following story of Payap's internationalization is also an invitation for ASIANetwork members to participate in the university's many programs.

Students interested in Asia, but seeking a focus other than China or Japan, find that Payap University offers a number of immersion programs that introduces them to Southeast Asia, an area that combines the rich cultural heritages of India and East Asia.

American students are drawn to study in Thailand for many reasons. They can acquire good survival Thai language skills after about 100 hours of instruction and hard work. Thai is a tonal language written in a script derived from Sanskrit. In addition, the Thai political system is fascinating to foreign learners. As a constitutional monarchy and one of the few countries in this region that was never colonized, Thailand is unique. Studying Thailand's new constitution gives insight into the culture. Economics and business-oriented students may examine the recent financial crisis that hit Thailand and consequently all of Asia. For ten years, Thailand experienced double-digit economic growth, and then the bubble burst. This newly industrialized country, praised by the International Monetary Fund for recovering quickly and "doing the right thing," is an exemplary case study. Finally, traditional music and dance is appealing to students, as is the study of Thai religion, predominantly Theravada Buddhism and folk religion. In many disciplines, Thai Studies offer a challenge and an adventure for international students.

Language of instruction

Setting up an international program in Thailand has presented unique challenges. The instruction at Payap is in Thai, a language that few foreign students know. Therefore, courses are offered in English, and Thai professors with English language teaching skills must be identified, recruited, and trained.

Furthermore, the teaching style in Asia is different from what Western students are accustomed to, for it is more formal and lecture oriented without discussion. (In the Asian tradition, Thai students do not question their teachers who traditionally have been obeyed and revered.) Our international program instructors are cross-culturally aware and practice a more informal seminar style of teaching. Most of our initial instructors received their Ph.D. abroad and have mastered this type of teaching, and we have launched a major faculty development effort to train more faculty so that we can increase our international course offerings.

Smorgasbord of programs

International persons have differing objectives and time frames for learning. Some want short-term language instruction, others one to two-term for-credit programs, and some plan to earn degrees. A growing number of students seek internships or service-learning programs. Payap has developed a smorgas-
bord of programs from which foreign students can choose. Some of the options are described below.

Intensive language programs

Payap's Thai language instruction is well received by students of all ages. For eleven years, the teachers have used a modified version of the teaching method developed by the Peace Corps. Reading, writing, and speaking are taught together from the beginning of the course. Students are also given opportunities to use their language through homestays and varied cultural experiences.

Intensive Thai Language: Payap offers six week, non-credit, courses in speaking, reading, and writing Thai, designed for those needing the language for research, travel, or living/working in Thailand. The courses are taught throughout the year at beginning to advanced levels. Classes are small, and students progress rapidly.

Intensive English Language; The American Language and Culture Center offers English instruction at all levels by native English instructors. All students at PYU are required to study two years of English language, and the center provides support to PYU faculty who plan to study abroad and/or teach in the university's international programs.

Thai Studies Certificate Program

This one or two-term program offers Thai language and elective courses related to Thai Studies. Courses offered in 1999-2000 include:

Term I: Basic Thai for Foreigners I; Asian Music; Buddhist Traditions; Cultural Foundations of Thai Society; Contemporary Issues of Thai History; The Mekong Economic Corridor: Past and Present; and Independent Study.

Term II: Basic Thai for Foreigners I and II; Ethnomusicology; Peoples, Society, and Culture of Lanna Thai; Culture of Ethnic Groups in Thailand; Community and Natural Resources Management in Northern Thailand; History of Modern Southeast Asia; Introduction to Thai Religious Traditions; and Independent Study.

The courses are taught for credit during the Thai academic year (June-March) so international students will have an opportunity to mix with Thai students. Thai students with sufficient English can enroll in the elective courses.

The courses are also offered in Thai through the regular degree curriculum. Some students in the Thai certificate program wish to continue on for a Payap degree. They take their first year of course work in English and then move into the Thai curriculum. It is our plan to offer one section of most regular Thai courses in English so students will have the option to study in Thai or in English.

Short courses or study tours

Payap assists institutions or organizations in organizing short courses or study tours related to Thai history and culture. Next year we will provide short courses for the University of Puget Sound and for a consortium in Minnesota. Annually, we offer about ten Elderhostel programs and a number of work camps for students from Japan. The university's Institute for the Study of Religion and Culture also prepares month-long courses on Southeast Asian religion for groups from abroad.

Cross-cultural and language training programs

Payap organizes an eight-week program for the Australian Volunteer Overseas Program, as well as training for the United States Consulate in Chiang Mai, World Learning (USA), and visiting church groups.

Graduate study

Although not administered by the Office of International Programs, but indirectly affiliated through foreign student support services, there are several graduate programs taught in English. These include an M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language, an M.A. in Linguistics, and an International M.B.A. (to be offered in 2000). Students in these programs currently come from Burma, China, Nepal, India, Singapore, the United States, England, and Thailand.

International Student Club

Last year, when Payap's international student enrollment reached 40, the students organized an international student club for Thai and non-Thai students. In the next few years, Payap will have an International House (dormitory) for international and Thai students to reside together. All of these activities promote cultural understanding.

Payap University seeks active partnerships, with universities and colleges abroad that facilitate mutual student and faculty exchanges and research. We have agreements with approximately 20 institutions or consortia giving us relationships with over 100 institutions, including Northern Illinois University, the Oregon System of Higher Education, the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities, and San Francisco State University; Deakin University in Australia; International Christian University and Keisen Gakuen in Japan; and Yunnan Academy of Social Science in China.

PYU business faculty members are participating in a three-year USIA grant with the University of Oregon,
Oregon State University, and Vang Lang University in Vietnam to develop an international M.B.A. program. Faculty and students are being recruited for this new program.

Other international students whom Payap strives to serve are from Southeast Asia, including Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Southern China. These students have few options for higher education in their own countries. Payap has received scholarships for Burmese and Chinese students through the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. We are continually seeking to increase our scholarship aid for students from neighboring countries.

We invite ASIANetwork students and faculty to check out the programs at Payap University. We also welcome the opportunity to send our students and faculty for exchanges abroad.

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JAPAN INFORMATION ACCESS PROJECT
THE ASIA SCHOLAR'S ACCESS TO POLICY

Mindy Kotler
Director, Japan Information Access Project

Mindy Kotler studied Chinese culture and language at Smith College and received an M.A. in International Studies at Yale University. She was a member of a 1999 ASIANetwork Conference panel, "ASIANetwork and Public Policy Debate."

The Japan Information Access Project is a non-profit research center strengthening understanding of Japanese and Northeast Asian science, technology, finance, security, and public policy. Established in 1991, the project educates its members, policymakers, and the public to use knowledge of Japan and Asia to increase national strategic competitiveness and security. The goal is to expand the intellectual infrastructure of the policy community.

Never has the need for good information and analysis of Asian politics, economies, and cultures been greater among Washington's policymakers. Unfortunately, the range of expertise and opinion available to officials and journalists is limited. Washington relies on a handful of think tank scholars, journalists, and consultants with a narrow range of specialties.

To expand the policy community's knowledge of Asia, the Japan Information Access Project seeks to introduce the best of American Asian scholarship to our