

# THE LIBRARY PROGRAM AT TUFEC

by

Mary Anglemyer

Thai Librarians who participated in the workshop held at Ubol during the month of will remember the changwad very well. But something now has been added. A few kilometers out of town on the road to the north is a sign which reads "Thai—Unesco Fundamental Education Center." This is TUFEC. Enter the white gate and you will see on either side rice fields, as everywhere in Thailand, but stretching ahead is a broad tree-lined road which winds between gardens and by a pond to a big white building. Continuing your tour before you enter this building, you can make a circle of the grounds, passing neat white dormitories with flower-bordered walks; attractive Thai-style wooden houses for the staff, each with its own garden filled with roses, cannas, hibiscus, and other native and foreign flowers according to the taste of the occupant; the Students' Union and dining-room invitingly open on all sides; a farmer's house and vegetable gardens; a model village cottage; and, returning toward the big building, the carpentry shop, a new infirmary and a new audio-visual studio. Now enter the big building. Here are offices, classrooms and the



Library. What is the purpose of this institution? It is to train fundamental education specialists and field workers so they may go out into the country and help villagers to help themselves to raise their standard of living, improve their health, increase their knowledge through books and reading to insure their rightful place in the economy of the nation.

The function of the library and its staff at TUFEC is twofold. On the campus it provides staff and students with printed resources needed for their work. It keeps the staff up to date on current developments in each of the subject fields which are taught here-health, education, home-making, village craftsmanship and social welfare. It provides instruction in the use of the library so the students can make the best possible use of its facilities during their stay at TUFEC. It provides general informational and recreational reading for all. In the villages where TUFEC students are working it supplies reading material for the villagers. This is done by means of newspapers and magazines which are freely distributed and by travelling libraries, boxes of fifty to sixty books each, from which the villagers can borrow books. The library is really only in its initial stages but it has aroused the interest and enthusiasm of staff and students.

In the brief time that I have been here. We have concentrated on two main points. guidance in the use of the library and in reading, and improvement in the use of travelling libraries in the villages. How has this program been conducted?



First, the reading program. The technical staff felt the second year students needed additional background reading. To help meet this need, students were assigned one hour each morning to the library for a reading period. To supply material, staff members examined the library's collection and selected books, periodicals or pamphlets which they felt would improve the student's grasp of his subject. Selections ranged all the way from brief leaflets in Thai such as "Intestinal parasites" to difficult texts in English such as "School and community programs." These materials were placed on a special shelf and were not allowed to be borrowed during the reading period. Very few students were absent during these periods, many returned on free afternoons to read more of the same or similar material, many discussed the things they were reading, asking us to explain the more difficult passages.

The other part of the program for second year students was instruction in the use of library materials. This consisted of a review of basic reference books such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, yearbooks and directories and a lesson on the care and repair of books. Each of the reference books was discussed, then the students were assigned questions to look up in the particular type of book being discussed. A reading list of materials on library science was prepared. The list consisted of the three manuals of the Thai Library Association, UNESCO library manuals and various library



handbooks in English. The students were asked to read four items from the list and write a paragraph summarizing what they had learned and how it could be applied to their future work. Marks for the second year students were based on this small essay.

Since the first year students have been in the villages most of the time, the only help they could be given was in the use of the travelling libraries. These travelling libraries have been in operation over a year under the name of "book-boxes". I changed the name because to me the word book-box means a group of books put in a box and kept there and this was too often what happened. The students were instructed on the procedures and suggestions given how to appeal to the villagers such as placing the box in a more prominent place, keeping it open so all could see the contents, studying the collection to find books of particular value, setting reading hours for adults and asking villagers to let them know what other books they would like to find in the travelling libraries.

What has been accomplished? From a personal point of view the results of these programs have been most gratifying. Seeing the students at work first hand has greatly increased my respect for them. I was impressed, and must confess, a little surprised to see the eagerness with which they read more than the assignments set for them and the thoroughness with which they searched for information in library tools. And, I must note that it was gratifying to



read in at least a few students' opinion "we have learned it is not easy to be a librarian" and "librarians work very hard." Most important is that they have acquired a philosophy of service and learned the value of books in the daily life of the villagers. I think this is best illustrated by quotations from the students' papers. I have left these quotations in the original language of the students because it express their own ideas, Thus,

Sopon Sukumpha of Mahasarakam; "In former time, some educators said that there are two places for education, one is school and another is home. But now I should like to say that another one more is library. The library is part of social life, center of information, center of printing material to serve the peoples' needs, center of learned man, it can help social improvement. In fact, it is "The University of the people" both young and grown up people. The library will be more useful if it is the library of people, by people and for people. Some difficulties about library service in Thailand are Thai books is not enough, especially books for children; a half of all Thais are illiterate and a lot of literate are not fond of knowledge."

Virut Verasarn of Songkla: "We eat many kinds of foods such as carbohydrates, fats, proteins, minerals, etc. These kind of food are essential for growth and strength. How did they know to grow food? They learned some experience from the older farmers who wrote in books. There are many subjects written for the better ways of doing things, for the better living. So it is



not only foods but books are also essential for life. Particular Fundamental Education Organizers who try to improve and find the better ways to raise the standard of living of the rural people must know and learn from many kinds of books, get some information or ideas to carry on a good job. Where do we find the information? The answer is that we can find the information in libraries."

Kanniga Patarapal of Bangkok: "The people in the villages have little knowledge because they had been four years in the elementary school when they were children, and they lacked the background knowledge from reading or writing for a long time when they became adults. If a rural library settles down in each village, it will be successful. If the villagers are taught how to use the library and how to read books and how to select books which they need by the FEO'S they could learn more because in the communities lives are changing, books from the library enlarge a man's horizon. FEO'S should try to get along with villagers and use books as the instruments to fight the ignorance of the villagers. The library is a good means of communication between villagers and FEO's. It assists community development."

Bornrawd Chansomvong of Kanchanaburi: "Generally there are many libraries in the city but in the village, villagers cannot have books for reading at all. Therefore, FEO's should set up the library in the village. Although we may have few books in book-boxes but we may collect more and more.



The big problems are where shall we get books from? Who is carrying on the project? In the first step, we may have few money for buying newspapers and interesting books for motivating in reading. Secondly, when villagers like to read books, we may get them pay some money for the books that they are interested in. Their, we may have help from well-to-do man in giving many kinds of books. This is a brief saying. If we shall do in the village, many difficulties may take place. However, we can solve many problems."

As soon as this year's class graduates twenty teams will be working in twenty different changwads in all parts of Thailand. They will be a strong force for the development of rural library service. It is for us librarians to make the most of this demand, help meet their needs, and build up truly national library system.

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