



Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

Annual Report

1968

INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES, SINGAPORE

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1968

The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies was formally established by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Act, 1968, which was passed by the Parliament of the Republic of Singapore and came into operation on 7th June 1968. The object of the Institute was defined as "the promotion of research on Southeast Asia and on all matters appertaining to Southeast Asia."

The Institute is governed by a Board of Trustees comprising the following:-

Tuan Haji Dr. Ahmad bin Mohd. Ibrahim (Chairman)
Dr. Aw Cheng Chye (Dy Chairman)
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Dr. Ang Kok Ping (Nanyang University)
Prof. Harry J. Benda (Director) (ex-officio)
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Mr. Lum Choong Wah (Ministry of Finance)
Mr. David Marshall
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Prof. K.J. Ratnam (University of Singapore)
Mr. D.D. Sachdev (Indian Chamber of Commerce)
Mr. Shaw Vee Meng (Shaw Foundation)
Mr. Tan Yeok Seong (South Seas Society)

Mrs. Ann Wee (University of Singapore)

Mr. Wee Mon Cheng (Chinese Chamber of Commerce)

The Secretary of the Board of Trustees is Mr. Lim Phai Som, who is the Executive Secretary of the Institute.

The inaugural meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on 18th November, 1968. The Minister for Education, the Honourable Mr. Ong Pang Boon, addressed the meeting, and a copy of his address is at Appendix I.

The management of the Institute is carried out by the Executive Committee, headed by the Director, Professor Harry J. Benda, who is on leave from Yale University where he is Professor of History and Associate Director of Southeast Asia Studies. The other members of the Executive Committee are as follows:-

Tuan Haji Dr. Ahmad bin Mohd. Ibrahim

Dr. Chiang Hai Ding

Professor K.R. Chou

Mr. Kwan Sai Kheong

Mr. Lim Phai Som

Mr. Wee Mon Cheng

Professor Wong Lin Ken

The Executive Committee was assisted by the following standing sub-committees:-

Fellowship Selection Committee

Prof. Harry J. Benda (Chairman)

Tuan Haji Dr. Ahmad bin Mohd. Ibrahim

Professor K.R. Chou

Professor K.J. Ratnam

Professor Wong Lin Ken (alternate: Dr. Chiang Hai Ding)

Scholarship Selection Committee

Prof. Harry J. Benda (Chairman)

Professor K.R. Chou

/Mr. Lim ... p. 3

Mr. Lim Phai Som
Secretary, Public Service Commission
Professor Wong Lin Ken (alternate: Dr. Chiang Hai Ding)

Finance Committee

Prof. Harry J. Benda (Chairman)
Mr. Kwan Sai Kheong
Mr. Lim Phai Som
Mr. Wee Mon Cheng
Mr. Michael Yeo Chee Wee

The year under review was one of preparation and planning as well as publicizing the Institute both locally and abroad. A small building in its campus was loaned from the University of Singapore and reconstructed and renovated to house the Institute offices and library. Administrative and library staff were recruited, equipment, books and other materials purchased, and basic administrative and library procedures were laid down. A brochure setting out the Institute's objectives and activities was widely distributed among academic circles both locally and abroad, with especial emphasis on the Southeast Asian region. Soon after his arrival in early July, the Director attended the Fourth International Conference of Historians of Asia held at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur in early August. Later in the month, the Director and the Executive Secretary participated in the first regional meeting of Asian Studies Centres in Southeast Asia, convened under the auspices of Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. In mid-October, the Director spent two weeks in Australia at the invitation of the Australian National University, which also shared in the expenses. In the course of the trip the Director also visited Monash and Sydney Universities. In late November and early December, the Director spent two weeks in Indonesia, in the course of which he had extensive discussions

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at the University of Indonesia, Djakarta and Gadjah Mada University, Jogjakarta. The main purposes of these personal contacts were to "put the Institute on the map" of Southeast Asia, so to speak, and to recruit would-be research fellows and discuss procedural aspects with academic and other authorities in the countries concerned.

Research

The Institute announced as its main research interest "the many-faceted problems of modernization and social change in Southeast Asia." In the initial period, special attention is to be paid to Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, the countries of mainland Southeast Asia to be added when personnel and resources would permit such expansion. At the outset, too, the Institute will not originate and/or sponsor specific research topics of its own but invite proposals from qualified research scholars. It is the intention to assemble on the Institute's premises concurrently scholars with common, or at least similar, research interests. In due course, the permanent research staff may initiate longer-term projects under the Institute's auspices.

Staff Training

With a view to providing itself with a permanent research staff, a staff training programme was inaugurated even before the Institute commenced its activities proper. The two first trainees enrolled in Yale University's Master's programme in Southeast Asia Studies in 1968. The Scholarship Selection Committee was established by the Executive Committee in order to screen and interview future trainees. Area training is planned in American, British, and Australian universities, in a variety of academic disciplines and with language training in different Southeast Asian national languages.

/Library ... p. 5

Library

An Assistant Librarian was hired and despatched for a brief training period to Cornell University; on her return trip, she visited libraries and book dealers in Europe and the Philippines. The Institute has embarked on a rapid acquisitions programme designed to equip its library with up-to-date holdings of reference and monographic works in the major Western languages (including Dutch), as well as with magazines, newspapers, government documents and ephemera in the national languages of Island Southeast Asia. Some two thousand volumes were acquired during the year under review, with subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals, including materials on microfilm. A purchasing agent in Djakarta was hired.

Finance

In this, its initial year of existence, the principal source of financial support was a grant of \$262,000 from the Government of the Republic of Singapore. Tuition fellowships were obtained from Yale University for two trainees of the Institute who joined the University in September, with the Asia Foundation bearing the major costs of their training in the form of travel expenses, maintenance allowances, tuition fees, etc. Funds were also received from the Ford Foundation with effect from 1 December to cover inter alia the differential between the Singapore emoluments of the Director and his home country emoluments.

Visitors

Among the visitors to the Institute during the year, many of whom were from the University of Singapore and Nanyang University, were the following from overseas:-

Prof. Lauriston Sharp, Cornell University
Prof. Chen Ching-Ho, Chinese University of Hong Kong
Dr. Milton E. Osborne, Monash University

/Prof. Karl ... p. 6

Prof. Karl J. Pelzer, Yale University
Dr. Peter Lyon, London School of Economics
Mr. Lewis Perimban, World Bank, Washington, D.C.
Prof. Hidejiro Kotani, Kyoto Industrial University
Prof. Wang Gungwu, Australian National University
Prof. Hedley Bull, Australian National University
Dr. Vishal Singh, Indian School of International Studies
Prof. Selo Soemardjan, University of Indonesia
Dr. Pierre Fistie, Fondation Nationale des Sciences
Politiques
Dr. Chong-Woo Lee, President, Korea University
Dr. Bernhard Grossmann, Institut für Asienkunde, Hamburg
Mr. Tarzie Vittachi, Press Foundation of Asia, Manila
Prof. Takeshi Motooka, Asian Development Bank.

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59

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SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

SPEECH BY MR. ONG PANG BOON, MINISTER FOR
EDUCATION, AT INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE
INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES IN THE
COURT ROOM, UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE, ON MONDAY,
18TH NOVEMBER, 1968 AT 2.30 P.M.

A survey of the field of Southeast Asian Studies inevitably reveals a relative paucity of works on Southeast Asia done by scholars belonging to the region. The bulk of whatever publications there are - whether on history, geography, literature, languages, anthropology, sociology, politics and economics - have been written by scholars, missionaries and erstwhile administrators from outside the region. Many of these publications have flowed out from Asian or Southeast Asian Studies Centres in America, Australia and Europe. Many post-graduate students from this part of the world have almost invariably had to proceed to those distant Centres to do research on the region often back-tracking thousands of miles for field observations. It is not surprising that people in this region seem to know more about America and Europe than about our neighbouring countries.

The dearth of Southeast Asia oriented literature on this region has meant that policy-makers have not been able to benefit from the views of scholars in the region concerning our various pressing problems. There is a need for more research and study by Southeast Asian scholars on the many social, economic and political problems in this region.

We, in Southeast Asia, need to know more about countries in our region.

With knowledge will come a greater understanding of each other's way of life. Issues likely to strain relations between countries in this area can then be better avoided.

The establishment of this Institute represents an attempt to solve some of the problems I have just outlined. It is hoped that this Institute, situated as it is in the heart of the region, will eventually become a centre which will attract scholars from all over the region to do useful research, which will add materially to the present limited pool of knowledge of Southeast Asia as soon through Southeast Asian eyes. With the increasing interdependence on one another of the countries of this region, the fruits of such research

should prove of value over the years in enhancing economic, political and social relationships in the region.

I also hope that this Institute will not lead a cloistered life, but will participate in, and indeed, also initiate, study groups and seminars which will involve not only members from the academic community but also people from business, the professions and the Civil Service.

I am confident that under your trusteeship the Institute will be making its contribution to the field of Southeast Asian Studies.

Finally I wish to thank you for inviting me to your Inaugural meeting.

18th November, 1968.