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by

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MASS COMMUNICATIONS

IN

THAILAND

BY

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THAILAND

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AMIC

Background

Thailand, one of the Southeast Asian countries, is situated in the Indochinese Peninsula with the population about 37 millions. Thai is the official language. There are some dialects such as Malay in the southern and Laos in the northeastern part of the country. Among Chinese still speak their own language. In the big towns such as Bangkok the people can speak English. There are newspapers in Chinese and English in Bangkok. Some radio stations in Bangkok broadcast some programs in English too.

Mass Media

As is true with most other countries in the world, the foundations of the press in Thailand were laid well before those of other major media of mass communication; namely, the motion picture, radio, and television.

Press

The modern press in Thailand, it is safe to say, originated with a small group of Westerners who made their residence in Bangkok as Thailand began her gradual process of westernization. These Westerners were Christian missionaries who stayed in Thailand long enough to know, love and be concerned for the Kingdom and its people. They not only propagated their religious faith but also introduced modern techniques and ideas, including such things as the printing press and their first newspaper in Thailand. Captain James Low, a British, who studied Thai at Penang and had them cast at a type foundry at Calcutta in India and kept them in Singapore. Then, he printed the first Thai book of grammar for Westerners studying Thai language called "A Grammar of the Siamese Language" in 1828. But literary interest was not the only impetus given to the development of printing in Thailand; religious interest also had its part to play. In 1835 Reverend Robinson establish the first printing press in Thailand. There was another American missionary named Dr. Dan Beach Bradley who designed new types in 1937. The first Thai Government's use of the printing press occurred on April 27, 1839, when 9,000 handbills containing a royal proclamation banning opium smoking and trade were printed at Dr. Bradley published the first newspaper in Thailand "The Bangkok Recorder" as a Thai and English language. It came out fortnightly. This first venture was not particularly successful, however, and "The Bangkok Recorder" suspended in 1846 because of political pressure by the French envoy to the Thai royal court. While in existence, The Bangkok Recorder presented the readers with political news, advertising, articles and local news of neighbouring countries, Europe and America. Not more than 150 copies were printed in each edition and the average circulation was 124. Dr. Bradley was not the only missionary who went into

the still not viable newspaper business. Others also tried their hand at it, but their products were short-lived. All weeklies died out within a year. These included: The Siam Times (1864), Bangkok Press (1864), Siam Monitor (1867), and Bangkok Summary (1868). In order to seem up the historical background of Thai, the author would like to say that under the absolute monarchy of the Kingdom of Siam at that time the freedom of the press was unknown to the public until the reign of King Rama VI or King Vachiravudh who had education from England. He was the first King of Thailand who went to study abroad. There were no fewer than 20 daily newspaper including two Chinese and one English at that period of time. The newspaper business continued to make reasonable progress until it was handicapped by the shortage of newsprint and political factor during the Second World War.

After the Second World War until now there are some conflicts between the government and the press. Generally speaking, the Thai press is privately owned and operated with increasing profit motive and dwindling political backing. There are exceptions, to be sure, but with rising costs of equipment and supplies, growing competition, need to enlarge readership and get more money from advertisers, the newspapers have been forced to keep a wary but steady eye on their business side. It is still true that newspapers in Thailand are concentrated in the capital city of Bangkok. There are 20 dailies here compared to none in the province. There were some newspapers in some provinces tried to be published daily but there occurred problems of subscribers and cost of production. The majority of the provincial newspapers are published once every ten days to coincide with the announcement of the results of the state lottery. The results, picked up from the radio broadcast from Bangkok, are the mainstay of a provincial newspaper. But legitimate news stories of local events are presented as well, and in this respect the publication is no different from any other established provincial newspapers elsewhere. The 20 dailies in Bangkok include 10 in Thai, 7 in Chinese and 3 in English. Regarding the Thai dailies, all are privately owned except Khao Panit (Trade News), which is issued by the Department of Commercial Intelligence of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The estimated circulation of daily newspapers in Thailand of about one million approximately. The two big circulation daily newspapers are Thai Rath (Thai State) and Daily News (about 300,000 each). There are about 50 weekly newspapers in Thai, 10 in Chinese, 4 in English.

On the part of the journalists, they have formed associations with an eye to their own well-being, advancement and social benefits. There are Press Association of Thailand (in Bangkok, founded in 1941), the Reporters' Association of Thailand (in Bangkok, founded in 1957), the Northern Press Association of Thailand (in Chiangmai, founded in 1960), the Press Association of the South (in Songkla, founded in 1962),

the Provincial Press Association of Thailand (in Phitsanulok, founded in 1965), the Journalists' Association of Thailand (in Bangkok, founded in 1965) and the Foreign Correspondents' Club (in Bangkok, founded in 1957). The relationship between the government and the journalists is quite smooth but sometimes the conflicts occurred when the government tried to pass the new publication law. The government has extensive power to control the press directly and indirectly.

Radio Broadcasting

Another medium of communication which has been playing an increasingly important role for the mass audiences in Thailand is radio. Radio communication was first introduced to Thailand in April of 1910, during the reign of King Rama VI or King Vachiravudh who adopted this foreign term "radio" into Thai language, means "wireless". But the first broadcasting was in 1928 when a 200 watt transmitter was brought from Europe and set up an experimental station in Bangkok. Later that same year a one kilowatt transmitter was installed at the radio station in Bangkok. The station that was to become Radio Thailand or Radio Station of Thailand dates from 1929. The Radio Station of Thailand was transferred to the newly established government Bureau of Publicity, now the Department of Public Relations in the Office of Prime Minister. During the Second World War. Radio Thailand played a great role in propaganda against the Allies because of the Thai government agreed to join the Japanese Army. After the Second World War the situation of broadcasting was not just the Department of Public Relations' duty but the Arm Forces and other ministries operated their own stations for their own purposes. It is so confusing even to the government and audiences. However it must be mentioned that historically all broadcasting facilities have been operated by governmental ministries and departments. Presently there are about 70 radio stations in Bangkok and at least 30 stations in provinces. All stations are state or government owned. Even the Thai Television Company, supposedly a private organization, is not privately owned in the sense of American enterprise because all of its stock is held by governmental departments. Broadcasting in Thailand is controlled by the Radio Communication Act and the Radio Broadcasting Act. The standard of programmings are often criticized by audiences because of lacking experiences and techniques of some stations. Most programs are entertainment and music. Except some stations such as Radio Thailand and Thai Television Company's station.

Television

Thailand was the first nation on the Asian mainland to have a regular television program service. The first station, Thai TV channel 4 (HST-TV), set up in Bangkok by the Thai Television Company in 1955. Army TV Channel 7 (HSA-TV) was set up also in Bangkok by

Royal Thai Army in 1957. In 1961 the Department of Public Relation set up 3 television stations out of Bangkok -- TVT Channel 8 at Lampang in the North, TVT Channel 5 at Khon Kaen in the North East and TVT Channel 9 in the South. These ^{three} ~~there~~ regional stations' programmes mainly consist of news, documentary films, public service shows, live music, short plays, film series and videotape programmes produced in Thai TV studios. In 1968 Army Color TV Channel 7 was set up by the Royal Thai Army and in 1969 Bangkok Entertainment Company and the Department of Public Relations set up Thai Color TV Channel 3. In 1971 the setting up the nationwide television network is experimented and it is hoped that in the near future Thailand will have national television network which can respond to the needs of audiences throughout of the country.

Film

It was introduced to Thai audiences by Japanese traders about fifty years ago. American, Chinese, Indian and Europe^{an} movies ^{are} popular among people who live in big towns such as Bangkok but Thai movies are very popular among Thai people throughout of the country. Thai movies began 35 years ago by a group of Thai producers who realized that some best selling stories should be ^{made} ~~treated~~ into films. Very few studies about Thai movies had been done. Until recently the Ministry of Economic Affairs tried to survey the needs and problems of Thai movies' production. There is a group of local producers ^{led} ~~lead~~ by two persons in the royal family trying to unite the producers and players (caste) in order to ask help from the government. An Association of Thai Movies' Producers was established by this group. Then are many obstacles to local movie development. One of the greatest obstacles to the development of Thai movies is the lack of critical appraisal of production. The Thai movies industry needs government help. The aid that the government could wisely extend to Thai movies may be in the form of reduced Taxes. To raise the ^{standard} ~~criteria~~ of actors and actresses must be considered by the association of film producers.

Conclusion and Suggestions.

Though time and space are so limited to the author ~~but~~ he has tried the best to provide the overall view of mass communication in Thailand. The historical background of newspapers in Thailand has shown that newspapers have played a great role in political, social and economical development of the nation. Though all newspapers are private owned, ^{they are} ~~but~~ still under ^{the} ~~controlling~~ of some political groups. The freedom of the press needs to be improved. ~~The~~ self control must be considered among journalists themselves. Though there are many professional associations ^{they} ~~but~~ are not united and strong enough. The training of young journalists, employers' associations, employees'

associations and the press council ^{are} strongly needed in this country. The government must consider wisely ~~about~~ censorship and control. Radio and television, ^{being} ~~are~~ in the hand of the government, must be fully utilized to serve the need of national development. Mass Communication in Thailand is in the period of transition. As a developing country, mass communication is a catalytic agent in the modernization process. Research ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ the field of mass communication must be conducted in order to reflect for the national mass media planners. The trainings, both in-service and pre-service ^{at} ~~of~~ undergraduate and graduate level in the field of mass communication must be improved and promoted to ~~the~~ high standard.

Mass Communication Education in Thailand

In Thailand, at present, there exist nine universities, all of which are state owned and operated. In only three of these universities is there a curriculum in journalism or communication. Chulalongkorn University started its program in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in 1939. However, this program was discontinued in 1951. In 1965 an independent department of mass communication and public relations came into existence whose status is being elevated to that of a faculty in 1971.

Thammasat University has had a department of journalism within its Faculty of Social Administration since 1954. This department will be separated and elevated as an independent unit. The latest curriculum in communication has been established since 1964 as part of the larger curriculum within the Faculty of Humanities in the University of Chiangmai, the first provincial university in Thailand, located in the Northern part.

In this brief report, I intend to present to you only some relevant facts and figures about the communication/journalism programs in these universities.

THE INDEPENDENT DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

HISTORY

The Independent Department of Mass Communications and Public Relations is a new academic department of Chulalongkorn University. The first enrollment in the Department was in 1965. Students were first selected from two categories of candidates:- (1) those who had finished Mathayomsuksa V (high school) or equivalent, and (2) those who had a minimum of three-year experience in the field of mass communications and public relations, and who also had finished Mathayom III.

In the first year, 1965, there were seventy-eight students enrolled in the department. All of the classes were conducted in the evening from four to eight p.m. The Department was administered by the university-appointed committee under the chairmanship of Professor Kasem Udyanin. Assuming an independent status, the Department's authority and functions were equivalent to those of other university faculties. At that time three areas of study were offered by the Department, i.e., Journalism, Radio and Television, and Public Relations. At first the program offered diplomas and later on it was promoted to a bachelor's degree program.

It should be emphasized that, Chulalongkorn University used to offer courses leading to the Diploma in Journalism between 1939 and 1951. This earlier program existed because the university recognized the importance of this subject. Specifically, it was realized that effective newspapermen must have training in the journalistic discipline. Chulalongkorn University then authorized the Faculty of Arts and Sciences to take responsibility of the program. The curriculum was designed in such a way that those who had finished the sophomore class of Arts could come to continue a one-year course in journalism, and on fulfilment of the requirements a Diploma in Journalism would be granted. The syllabus consisted of Journalistic Practice, History of Journalism, Wire Editing, Economics, Laws, Psychology, and International Affairs. The program, unfortunately, was terminated because of the very small enrollment during the national crisis when the country was at war. Nevertheless, the university continued to offer evening classes in Journalism for three years. Altogether Chulalongkorn University had graduated 461 journalists prior to the establishment of today's Independent Department of Mass Communications and Public Relations.

UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

In providing a four-year course on mass communications and public relations, the department follows a two-phase plan. The first is concerned with the curriculum for first and second year classes. Both general and professional subjects are taught, viz: Thai Language, Thai and International History, Physical and Political Geography, Sociology, Principles of Political Science, Current Affairs, English Language, Psychology, Logic, Economics, Introduction to Jurisprudence, Comparative Government; and Public Relations, Comparative Literature, Theory of Printing, Theory of Communications, History of Communications, Creative Writing, Journalism, Feature Writing, News Writing and Reporting, Photography, etc.

The second phase covers the curriculum for third-year and fourth-year classes. An emphasis is placed on training and specialization in professional subjects which students can choose from any section in

accordance with their future needs, whether they want to join government or private organizations where the demand is increasing for professional in these fields. The following majors are now offered:

1. Journalism: Teaching in this section aimed at giving the students both basic knowledge and practiced training in the field of journalism so as to prepare them for their chosen careers after graduation.

2. Radio Broadcasting and Television: At present this is combined with the first and is called the Mass Communications Section.

3. Public Relations: This are focuses on public relations of government enterprises, private companies and industrial concerns.

4. Speech and Drama: This is concerned with all aspects of oral communication. It attempts to understand the various phases of the speech and dramatic communication process and to apply its theoretical knowledge to the practice of effective and responsible communication in the arts.

The fact that the university has encouraged and supported the opening of the department to teach subjects on mass communications and public relations shows that the university is concerned with the benefits which the country and the public will derive from these subjects. This move should generate an academic interest in and strengthen the professions of mass communications and public relations. The university plans to raise the status of the department to that of a full faculty in the academic year 1971.

In addition to evening classes, the department has opened day classes since the academic year 1967. The third year students have started to produced a weekly tabloid newspaper named "Students" and a monthly magazine in English as a part of their journalism laboratory. Individual classes provide an average total of 26 hours of study weekly. A student enrolled in the bachelor's degree program has to complete the following units:

<u>Subjects</u>	<u>1st. Yr.</u>	<u>2nd Yr.</u>	<u>3rd Yr.</u>	<u>4th Yr.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentag</u>
Science & Humanities	18	22	16	10	72	34.62
Mass Comm. & P.R.	24	16	-	-	40	19.23
Mass Comm. (separate)	-	-	16*	30*	46*	22.12
P.R. (separate)	-	-	16**	30**	46**	22.12
Political Science	6	6	4	4	20	9.6
Sociology	4	-	4	-	8	3.85
Economics	-	4	4	-	8	3.85
Law	-	4	2	-	6	2.88
Business Admin.	-	-	-	4	4	1.92
Public Admin.	-	-	-	4	4	1.92
Total	52	52	52	52	208	100

* compulsory subjects for Mass Comm. section

** compulsory subjects for Public Relations section

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

Entrance examination for the academic year 1971 was conducted jointly by the university and the National Education Council. The department accepted some 80 students for the day class and another 50 for the evening class. Total enrollment for the academic year 1971 is 480 students.

Development Project for the Faculty of Communication Arts

Chulalongkorn University has decided to promote the Department of Mass Communications and Public Relations to be Faculty of Communication Arts in the academic year 1971. Construction of the second building for the new faculty will be completed in 1972. The cost of this new building will run about 100,000 dollars, excluding the cost for the equipment and other facilities. The development plan of the third phase (1971-1975) or the third five-year plan, the faculty will consist of eight departments as follows: Journalism, Radio and Television Broadcasting, Cinematography, Advertising, Public Relations, Speech Communication, Drama, and Theory and Research in Communication.

Present Administration and Faculty Members

Professor Bumrongsook Siha-Umphai is the Dean and Chairman of the department. There are 36 full-time instructors. Six of them are studying abroad.

THE INDEPENDENT DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS THAMMASART UNIVERSITY

After the journalism teaching at Chulalongkorn was closed in 1951, the government opened a new journalism department leading to bachelor's degrees in the Faculty of Social Administration at Thammasart University in 1954. It was the only university which provided courses in journalism at that time. There was a foundation of journalism profession in Thammasart University which has been giving scholarships to students in the field. In 1966 the department started evening classes leading to certificates in journalism for those who were in the professions of mass communications and public relations. The following year the program was changed to one that offered diplomas of journalism. Those who were qualified to receive degrees, however, continued taking courses toward the degree in journalism. In 1970 the university approved the development project as an independent department of journalism and mass communications. The enrollment of academic year 1971 is about 826 students with 30 full-time instructors. Dr. Kasem Sirisamphan is the dean and chairman of the department. Each student has to achieve 143 credits in order to graduate with a bachelor's degree. Students have a chance to participate in the production of a weekly tabloid newspaper named

"University" as a part of journalism laboratory.

DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

UNIVERSITY OF CHIENGMAI

The Department of Mass Communication is in the Faculty of Humanities which started its program in 1964. The program is concentrated more on radio and television broadcasting than on newspaper publishing. Each student has to achieve at least 144 credits in order to get a bachelor's degree. At present there are 100 students majoring in mass communication. Mrs. Charoenphan Xoomsai is the acting head of the department with 15 full-time instructors as her colleagues. The department has been operating a one-kilowatt F.M. multiplex radio station as a broadcasting laboratory for students since 1966.

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