

Preservation management training in south-east Asia

ALIA APSIG Library Preservation Management Seminars, 1994

In June, Wendy Smith (*lecturer in paper conservation, University of Canberra*) and Ross Harvey (*then senior lecturer in librarianship, Monash University*) packed their bags and trusty computer and set off for another round of preservation management training sessions in south-east Asia. The seminars continued from a previous workshop held in Bangkok in 1992. Sponsored by the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau through its Professional Associations International Development Scheme program, the objectives of the programs were to assist in the completion and implementation of library materials preservation management plans in the institutions of delegates; to consolidate and extend training provided to delegates; and to encourage the development of national training programs in the preservation of library materials.

The first seminar, in Bangkok, was attended by sixteen delegates, including six from our previous workshop. All returning delegates reported on developments since 1992. These showed considerable progress already made in improving the preservation of their collections. As part of the seminar, we 'invaded' a section of one of the general reading rooms and set about examining the condition of some of the collections. It was a good chance to see

traditional Thai materials, their repair and storage. Delegates voted these activities the highlight of the seminar.

Also in Bangkok, we attended a meeting organised by Professor Khunying Maenmas Chavalit for the Thai Library Association to discuss training needs for library preservation. There was a lot of interest in hearing of our experiences in establishing library preservation training courses and conservation laboratories.

In Hanoi we were welcomed by the director of the National Library of Vietnam, Mr Nguyen The Duc and the deputy director, Dr Ha Thu Cuc. The official opening of the seminar in Hanoi, attended by eighteen delegates, was performed by the vice-minister for culture and information, Professor Dr Luu Tran Tieu. Mr Do Huu Du, responsible for libraries in the Ministry of Culture and Information, and Mr Vuong Thinh, director of International Relations Department of the Ministry, also gave speeches.

As in Thailand the returning delegates talked about their own institutions and what progress they had made. One pleasant surprise was that our manual has been translated into vietnamese by Nguyen Tuan Khanh. Two delegates reported on papers published on library preservation in vietnamese scholarly journals, and there was anecdotal evidence about the



Haji Abdullah Haji Tahir (Brunei) and Nansee Honradee (Thailand) carrying out a condition survey in the NLT

use of the 1992 manual in other institutions.

Dirt, dust, lack of storage, damage by insects, high humidity and lack of resources are all critical factors hindering any immediate improvements of conditions in Hanoi, although staff at the National Library of Vietnam are taking steps to improve conditions. The National Library is commencing a major building project that will see many of the problems rectified.

The overall impression given by the Hanoi librarians was of a group with a great willingness and ability to learn, but with an almost total lack of resources to put anything but the most basic procedures into practice. With relatively modest assistance, by Australian standards, the potential for vast improvements exists.

Wendy Smith



At the National Library of Vietnam: evaluating the condition of a vietnamese newspaper

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