

ForATL News

Newsletter of the Forum of Asian Theological Librarians

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ForATL News

is published twice a year (June and December) by the Forum of Asian Theological Librarians as a channel for updates on ForATL activities, as well as a forum for discussion and exchange in the field of Asian theological librarianship.

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ForATL News welcomes contributions related to theological librarianship and the development of theological resources in Asia. All manuscripts or correspondence should be sent to the Editor, who reserves the right to determine suitability for publication.

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ForATL Workshop & Consultation 16-22 February 2003

After the first and second Consultations in Chiang Mai (1991) and Yogyakarta (1997), which initiated the founding of ForATL, several librarians from Asia gathered this year for a third Consultation in Bangkok, Thailand. The Consultation was hosted by the Student Christian Center, which extended a warm welcome to the delegates and kept them well-fed with good food.

Delegates to the Consultation came from Malaysia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia and, of course, Thailand. Unfortunately, delegates from Myanmar, Korea and India were, at the last moment, unable to attend. The diverse backgrounds of the delegates enriched the proceedings of the Consultation as each shared their ideas and experiences in theological librarianship.

During the Consultation, papers and reports were presented on topics such as "The Impact of Technology and Training on Asian Theological Librarians", "Building Up Resources for Theological Education in Asia" and "Understanding the Spirituality and Theological Thought of Our Region". The Consultation was also addressed by special guests, Dr. Sientje Merentek-Abram (Executive Director of ATESEA) and Dr. Wati Longchar (WCC-ETE Consultant, Asia-Pacific region). Both ATESEA and WCC-ETE have greatly helped ForATL gain wider support and recognition. The ForATL Constitution, which defines ForATL's structure and objectives, as well as the role and responsibilities of various office-bearers, was also amended at the Consultation.

A new Executive Committee, comprising of regional representatives, was elected to serve till 2007. A representative for India, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka has yet to be appointed, as no one from the region was present. In addition to the regional representatives, Mr. Karmito of Indonesia was persuaded to continue as Convenor of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is scheduled to meet in



PARTICIPANTS OF THE 3RD FORATL CONSULTATION AT THE STUDENT CHRISTIAN CENTER, BANGKOK
Front (L-R): Juan Guillermo (Philippines), Tang Sui-Tung (Hong Kong), Jitra Samsa (Thailand), Cahyana Purnama (Indonesia), Wati Longchar (WCC-ETE), John England (New Zealand), Joseph Lin (Taiwan)
BACK (L-R): Karmito (Indonesia), Beth Pulanco (Philippines), Hilda Putong (Indonesia), Christabel Wong (Malaysia), Rita England (New Zealand), Sientje Merentek-Abram (ATESEA), Nurdiana Sari Wijaya (Indonesia), Jocelyn Morris (Australia)

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ForATL Workshop & Consultation

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Taiwan in 2006 to evaluate the progress of various plans and assigned tasks, as well as to prepare for the fourth Consultation to be held in Seremban, Malaysia, in 2007.



PRESERVING CULTURE : Delegates visiting the Siam Society library

On the fourth day, delegates visited libraries in Bangkok. The first stop was the Siam Society library, which enjoyed royal patronage and held collections on the history and culture of Thailand. It also had an archival collection,

which indicated how the Thai preserved and promoted their local collections. Chulalongkorn University library was the next stop on the tour. Although the group was unable to meet the chief librarian, they were able to tour the large library, which had a wide variety of collections located on several floors. The two libraries visited served to inspire some of the delegates, who compared them with libraries in their home countries.

The Consultation adjourned on the fifth day with a service aimed at reminding delegates of their vocations and ministries as theological librarians. Delegates were asked to state on paper how they intended to commit them-



AT THE ALTAR : Statements of commitment by the delegates laid in the form of a cross before the altar during the closing service

selves to their vocations and to read these statements aloud in turn. The pieces of paper bearing the statements were then symbolically laid before the chapel altar in the form of a cross. Officially, the Consultation in Bangkok ended here, but in a sense, the Consultation still continues through links formed there and through an electronic mailing list that was set up a few weeks after the meeting in Bangkok. (Note: You may subscribe to the list by sending an email to: foratl-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

- Nurdiana Sari Wijaya -

Overview of the 3rd ForATL Consultation

AIMS

The third Asiawide ForATL Consultation was held with the following aims:

1. to consolidate the organisation of ForATL and its programmes
2. to form a working committee
3. to establish patterns of networking and exchange of resources for Asian theological librarians
4. to identify, and plan to work on, major issues of theological library development, promotion, and librarian training in Asia.

RESOURCES

Resource people included

1. Dr. Sientje Merentek-Abram, Director of ATESEA and Dean of the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology
2. Dr. Wati Longchar, Asia Consultant, WCC-ETE
3. Mr. Tang Sui-Tung, Head Librarian, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong
4. Mrs. Rita M. England, former Librarian of PTCA
5. Rev. John C. England, former Associate Dean of PTCA
6. Mr. Karmito, Librarian of Duta Wacana Christian University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

CONCERNS

Major concerns shared and planned for included:

1. recognition of the crucial role that theological libraries and librarians have in all theological education
2. the promotion of Asia's vast theological resources in both library accessions and teaching
3. the development of special (Asian) collections, archives and multi-media collections

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Overview of the 3rd ForATL Consultation

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4. the much fuller networking of theological libraries – through exchanges, partnerships and publications – nationally, regionally, and with supporting ecumenical associations

PLANS

Specific plans were set in place for:

1. production of a revised membership brochure
2. publication of a ForATL newsletter
3. enlarged courses in theological librarianship
4. revision and extension of the Directory of Asian Theological Libraries
5. development of seminary bibliographies of theses
6. proposals to ATESEA for accreditation questions concerning libraries and archives
7. networking with national library associations and also internationally
8. standards of training for theological librarians-in-charge, and their inclusion in faculty
9. expansion of support for the course in librarianship, initiated by Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong

COMMITTEE

An Executive Committee was elected for the next five years (2003-2007), consisting of:

1. Mr. Karmito, Convenor
2. Mrs. Elizabeth T. Pulanco, Secretary and representative for Philippines
3. Mr. Joseph Lin Shi-Yang, Treasurer and representative for Japan, Korea and Taiwan
4. Mrs. Jocelyn Morris, representative for Australia, New Zealand and Pacific area
5. Miss Christabel Wong, representative for Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam
6. Mr. Tang Sui-Tung, representative for China and Hong Kong
7. Ms. Nurdiana Sari Wijaya, representative for Indonesia

- John C. England -

A Profile of Asian Theological Libraries

Some findings from the Directory of Asian Theological Libraries (DATL)....

A total of 66 theological libraries in Asia and Australasia responded to questionnaires sent out between 1989 and 2001. Results of the survey were published in the Directory of Asian Theological Libraries (1993; second edition 2002). Below are some interesting facts, gleaned from the DATL, about Asian theological libraries:

HOLDINGS SIZE

- Smallest holdings : Ecumenical Institute, Sri Lanka (2,000)
- Largest holdings : Chung Chi College Library, Hong Kong (179,791)
- Average holdings: 31,044

AGE

- Oldest library : Christian Institute for the Study of Religion & Society, Sri Lanka (1823)
- Newest library : Hanil University, South Korea (1993)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- No. using advanced technology : 45 (68.2%)
- No. with Internet facilities : 34 (51.5%)
- No. that have developed websites : 18 (27.3%)

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

- Dewey : 47 (71.2%)
- Library of Congress : 10 (15.2%)
- Union : 3 (4.5%)
- Bliss : 2 (3%)
- Own system : (3%)
- No information : (3%)

WOMEN AT THE HELM

- No. with women as head librarians : 32 (48.5%)
- No. of women head librarians with degrees in librarianship : 12 (37.5%)

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

- Church history : 28 (42.4%)
- Indigenous writings : 19 (28.8%)

(Adapted from a presentation prepared by Cahyana E. Purnama for the 3rd ForATL Consultation)

Directory of Asian Theological Libraries and Who's Who in ForATL, 2002 (2nd ed.)

Cahyana E. Purnama & Karmito, eds.
Paper, 141p, ISBN 9798611365, US\$15.00



An update of the 1993 edition, the DATL 2002 contains survey information on 66 theological libraries in Asia and Australasia. Data covered include staffing, facilities, opening hours, usage, special collections, classification systems and affiliations. The DATL 2002 is useful for anyone interested in the wealth of theological resources in this region. Enquiries and orders may be sent to:

Mr. Karmito, Librarian,
Duta Wacana Christian University,
Jalan Dr. Wahidin 5-19,
Yogyakarta,
Indonesia 55224

In a lighter vein...3rd ForATL Consultation trivia

Getting around Bangkok

Which delegate would you approach when you need directions to the nearest bank? Or where to get good coffee? Or shopping? You may think the answer is Jitra Samsa, the delegate from Thailand. However, by Jitra's own admission, she is no expert on getting around Bangkok. Apparently, the best person to ask is Jocelyn Morris (Australia), who had arrived earlier and spent time going around before the Consultation.

Bibliofind

One fun thing about being a librarian, especially when you are into "retail therapy", is shopping for books! At least, that was what Nurdiana (Indonesia) would say. Visiting bookshops was her favourite activity during the Consultation, but she sometimes forgot how much luggage she would have to carry home.



RETAIL THERAPY :
Nurdiana and Beth with
their book purchases



BANGKOK ON FOOT : A fun night out
for Hilda, Nurdiana, Beth and Karmito

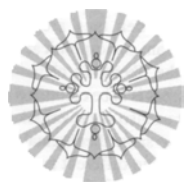
Investigating Thai culture

Coming from different countries, delegates were eager to see and experience the local Thai culture up close. Some felt the best way to do this was to roam the shopping malls and markets of Bangkok, searching for local food, handicraft and souvenirs. Several also decided to explore Bangkok by night ... mostly on foot, which was a sore experience for Beth Pulanco's (Philippines) aching feet.

Sales, sales, sales!

The Consultation proved to be a good opportunity for delegates to promote and sell the publications of their institutions, as well as to buy the publications of other institutions represented. Christabel (Malaysia) not only conducted brisk sales of the books she brought, but also took down orders — good job, Christabel!

- Nurdiana Sari Wijaya -



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