A STUDY OF THE CULTURAL INTERACTION BETWEEN THAI STUDENTS AND NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North Texas State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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by

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Because international students are an increasingly significant aspect in American colleges and universities and on the North Texas State University campus in particular, this study was undertaken to explore the intercultural clash which Thai students at North Texas State University experience. Twenty-two Thai students were interviewed in depth using the oral history method. Ten faculty and administrators who work with international students were interviewed concerning their observations of Thai students. The information gleaned from these thirty-two interviews and from an examination of the basic socio-cultural differences between Thailand and the United States resulted in the isolation of the following basic difficulties.

1. Thais do not have command of written and oral English.

2. Americans do not have an appreciation of foreigners and lack tolerance in everyday exchanges with them.

3. Thais avoid becoming involved in American society.

4. Thais are not efficiently prepared for the American classroom.
5. American instructors do not appear prepared to handle the problems of Thai students.

The study also developed a number of suggested solutions:

1. Raise the consciousness of Americans concerning Thai students;

2. Provide more effective ways of improving oral and listening skills in the English proficiency of Thai students beginning with American-directed programs in Thailand and including a revamping of the Intensive English Language Institute;

3. Provide studies in American culture for Thai students which would require them to become acquainted with this society;

4. Develop in Americans an appreciation of foreign culture and an international awareness; perhaps even a formal international cultures program should be initiated;

5. Involve Thai students with Americans in cross-cultural activities: encourage membership in campus organizations, invite them to speak at civic and educational occasions, develop the host family program;

6. Provide effective services for Thai students especially through the International Office; and

7. Set tuition and entrance regulations based on goals of the university not on whether it will include or exclude international students.
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In his introduction to *Expanding the International Dimensions of Higher Education*, Clark Kerr says, "The proper concern of education is the whole world, not just a part of it. Any educational effort that, in its totality, concerns itself with less than what can be known about all the countries and peoples of the world is incomplete" (1, p. xix). The people of the United States have a long history of isolationism. They have been concerned with internal growth and have had little patience with, and less interest in, things outside their boundaries, particularly those outside their hemisphere, which might direct them from their own development as a nation. Although World War I threatened to bring the United States out of this stance, it was World War II that finally led this country onto the international scene. It mixed peoples together, bred new curiosity about others, and began to develop what Cummins calls "the feeling of one world" (3, p. 16). Veterans who had been in Europe and in the South Pacific came home with experiences that they took into colleges and universities as they earned their educations under the newly established G.I. Bill. Some students whose interest was piqued by the evolving international scene were stimulated to go abroad
for study to learn first-hand about other cultures. Students from Canada had studied in the United States for years, but large numbers of students from the emerging nations joined them in coming here to learn.

Laws were passed to facilitate international education, including the Fulbright Act of 1946, the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, and the Foreign Economic Assistance Act of 1950. From the newly independent nations came appeals for trained manpower to aid in economic and social development programs (2, p. 2). American business's foreign investments increased nearly 28 billion dollars in the fifteen years between 1950 and 1964 (2, p. 3). The lives of Americans became inextricably intertwined with those of others from many foreign nations.

The detonation of the atomic bomb had alarmed most of the civilized world. People began to believe that another war might bring annihilation and that the best way to avoid war was for the people of the world to come to know each other better. Yet, any country that aspires to international leadership must realize that its people need education in international affairs (1, p. xx). The citizen may study international affairs in a university in his own country, or he may travel and study abroad, or he may participate in classes or organizations with people who are international students in his country. It is unlikely, however, that one
can really find understanding except through personal contact.

To this end, students and faculty in American colleges and universities have numerous opportunities to broaden their cultural understanding. An ever-increasing number of international students is studying in American institutions of higher education. From 1954 to 1965, the number increased by 250 percent, and by 300 percent from 1965 to 1978 (11, p. 2). In 1978, foreign students comprised 7 percent of all graduate enrollments and 2 percent of undergraduate enrollments (7, back cover). There were 253,025 international students in the United States that year as compared with approximately 300,000 in 1982 (7). Although the percentage of students has decreased, the number continues to grow by nearly 50,000 students per year. The largest number of students came from Iran for several years: 5,310 in 1980 (4, p. 14), 47,550 in 1981 (5, p. 17), and 26,760 in 1982 (6, p. 21). The second largest for 1980 matriculated from Taiwan; the third, Nigeria with about one-third the number from Iran. In 1982, however, Taiwan and Nigeria were only 600 behind Iran's decreasing enrollment. By 1983, Iran had dropped to second place with 20,960, while Taiwan pulled ahead with 21,960. Nigeria remained third with 20,080 (8, p. 2). In 1984, Taiwan held the first position with 22,590, Malaysia took over as second with 21,720, and Nigeria remained third
with 18,370. Iran dropped to fourth (9, p. 34). Traditionally, most international students in the United States have come from Asia and Latin America with few coming from Europe (11, p. 2). For instance, in 1968, there were 45,000 foreign students enrolled in graduate degree programs alone, and 20,000 of them were from Asia (14, p. 6).

In recent years most international students tend to locate primarily in the sunbelt regions of the United States, particularly California and Texas, probably because of the warm climate and the lower cost of living as well as the relative economic health of that region (11, p. 2).

North Texas State University began to admit international students after World War II. As of October, 1985, 2,398 international students were located there. Of these, 293 were permanent residents; 165 were students at the Intensive English Language Institute, and the remaining 1,940 accounted for 9 percent of the student population at North Texas State University (13, p. 1). Just fifteen years previously there were only about 100 international students at that university (11, p. 3).

Almost half of North Texas State University's international students come from Asia. In 1982, they came from eighty-four countries, led by Iran, and then in order, Thailand, Taiwan, and Nigeria (11, p. 3). In 1985, students from 100 countries were present on that campus, with leading
representation, respectively, from Taiwan, Nigeria, Thailand, and Iran (13, p. 6).

The students from Thailand are a particularly interesting group on the North Texas State University campus. Although that country ranked tenth in 1980 (4, p. 14), twelfth in 1981 (5, p. 17), fifteenth in 1982 (6, p. 21), and thirteenth in 1983 and 1984 (8, p. 21; 9, p. 34), in the number of students it sent to the United States, it represents the third largest international group at North Texas. Of particular interest is the fact that North Texas State University has had the largest Thai student population of any other single campus in the country (10). Students from Thailand represent a wide range in age, background, and fields of study. Although the largest number are in education fields and computer programs, they are also studying art, home economics, interdisciplinary studies, business, and several other majors (12). The Thai culture is markedly different from that in the United States, so that students coming here from that country are faced by a definite culture shock. Not only because Thailand is an interesting and culturally unique country, but also because it is a pivotal country of mounting importance to the United States is it the subject of this study.
Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze the cultural interactions that Thai students undergo while attending North Texas State University and to determine ways by which the faculty, students, and staff of North Texas State University could improve the overall international education experience for them.

Two specific outcomes were sought: (1) to develop a list of recommendations to help the university, its staff, faculty and students make improvements in the way that Thai students are dealt with at this time, and (2) to develop a readers theatre script for the purpose of raising the consciousness of individuals concerning Thai students and Thailand.

Methodology

For this study, twenty-two Thai students from varying major fields and of varying ages and backgrounds were interviewed through the oral history method. These interviews were recorded on audio cassettes where the information could later be retrieved and organized to facilitate the study. Ten persons who have taught or worked with Thai students at North Texas were also interviewed through a structured interview technique. This material was recorded and sorted later. The culture of the country was studied through research of written materials as well as from the
information obtained during the interviews. The analysis and synthesis of this material have produced this document. A detailed description of the method used in the study is provided in Appendix A.


CHAPTER I

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF THAI CULTURE
AND UNITED STATES CULTURE: BRIEF OVERVIEW

Thailand is located in Southeast Asia with Burma along its eastern and north-eastern borders. Laos lies to its northeast, and Kamphchea to its southeast, while directly south are the Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia. Thailand is slightly larger in land area than the State of Texas (7, p. 3). Because of its proximity to Vietnam and Cambodia, as well as China, Thailand is in a pivotal location in today's world. In 1979, the Saturday Evening Post warned, "It appears the next domino to be tested will be Thailand" (5, p. 93). Robert Shaplen described the country as being either a "dam or domino" (17, p. 266).

Although this country is important to the United States as a bulwark against communism in Southeast Asia, many Americans tend to recognize it only as a name on the map of Asia, blending its people and its customs into a sort of Oriental potpourri. But this kind of thinking does Thailand a disservice. UNICEF couples Thai uniqueness with Thai independence.

Though Thailand was known to the rest of the world for five centuries as Siam, a western corruption of the Chinese name Hsiien, its people have called their
country Muang Thai, meaning Land of the Free, for three thousand years. The Thais are proud of the fact that (unlike most Asian countries) they have never been subject to colonial rule. This liberty was hard-won, however, and has been severely challenged in the course of the country's long history. In spite of, or perhaps partly because of, unsuccessful colonization attempts by China, Burma and Cambodia, a uniquely Thai culture has evolved: while Thailand is modernized in many respects, the ancient traditions of former generations are deeply respected (20, p. 1).

Frank Darling, writing in Current History, reiterates the independence of the Thai culture: "For more than 100 years, they have preserved many of their own traditions while adopting technological innovations. They have relied heavily on foreign assistance, but they have managed the speed and direction of their own modernization" (3, p. 185). Although the Thai culture is quite different from that in the United States, several areas are of special concern in this study: the family, religion, education, and social customs.

The Family

In the United States the nuclear family is becoming less and less the norm with single parents increasing in number each year. David Stannard states, "Throughout the twentieth century there has been a steady decline in mean household size and a corresponding, though much more dramatic, increase in the percentage of single parent households" (18, p. 83). In America's highly urban setting, people do not tend to be as loyal to the family as they
once were, and they are more and more attentive to elements outside the home: school, work, friends. Stannard continues,

For over a century the American family has been gradually unburdening itself of its responsibility; as it has turned its nurturing functions over to other more recently created institutions, family members have been freed to pursue independently an unprecedented range of self-gratifying endeavors (18, p. 95).

As soon as a child reaches eighteen, or perhaps, graduates from college, he is considered prepared for life and expected to face it on his own, making his own way in the world, becoming independent. As Philip Rice explains,

The child in Western culture must assume a drastically different role as he grows up: he shifts from non-responsible play to responsible work, and must do it rather suddenly. . . . One of the primary goals of the adolescent is to decide what he wants to become, vocationally speaking, to prepare for the career, and then to become economically emancipated from parents by earning his own living (14, p. 41).

Eric Rayner summarizes the young person's situation in this way:

In Western culture at the present time the pre-adolescent child expects to be cared for by and to be obedient to his parents in major issues. The post-adolescent adult in this culture and legal system cannot expect as a right to be looked after by his parents. Nor does he expect to be obedient to them (12, p. 104).

Americans look askance at a thirty-year-old man who still lives with his parents, yet in the rural days of this country, several generations might have lived near each
other and looked after one another. Jon Demos describes the family of that period as a community.

Indeed the family was a community in its own right, a unit of shared experience for all its individual members. It was first and foremost a community of work—in ways hard for us to even imagine today. Young and old, male and female, labored together to produce the subsistence on which the whole group depended (4, p. 47).

This is less frequently the case today.

In the United States, normal behavior for a teenager is to rebel against the authority of the parents. Rice refers to this as "idealistic rebellion" (14, p. 43). The elderly are considered foolish, bumbling, weak, and absent-minded. He further observes, "One member of the traditional family unit [has become] relegated to a drastically reduced status: the aged grandparent with little to contribute any longer to the vitality of family life [has] lost virtually all of his or her former power" (18, p. 89). They are not respected for their wisdom, but rather resented as a burden both to their children and to society who retires these individuals from useful work and expects them to mind their own business.

The Thai attitude toward family is in severe contrast to that of current American society. Among the traditions revered in Thailand, one of the most intense is the family. In fact, the Prime Minister of Thailand, when writing about his own country, suggested that the organization of the
family unit was the microcosm for the entire structure of Thai society.

Every household has within it a system of dynamics and attitudes governing personal interaction which is repeated on all levels of society. Indeed, the Thai nation can be seen as one huge extended family, a pyramid made up of innumerable pyramid-shaped bricks . . . from earliest childhood, every Thai learns a code of behavior for relating to those around him which he will find perfectly viable when, later, he ventures out of his home to deal with the hierarchies of school, the office and the government. He will even use the words connoting members of the family—"mother," "father," "uncle," "aunt," "brother," and "sister"—when addressing friends, co-workers and others he comes in contact with during the course of the school or work day. . . . Essentially the family represents security and stability in an uncertain world and as such commands the individual's loyalty and respect. Its welfare is always the primary concern, and it is incumbent upon each family member to consider his actions in light of their consequences to the family's well-being (21, p. 6).

The father is the patriarch, and the mother plays a supportive role and handles the family finances. One writer commented, "All members abide by the elders' decisions and children continue to strictly obey parents' advice after reaching adulthood. However, this custom is changing as the country becomes more modern" (7, p. 3). Respect for elders is a primary aspect of the upbringing of a Thai. Thais expect to be responsible for their parents in their old age. One study observed, "There is no feeling of being inconvenienced by caring for aged parents, whose acquired wisdom gives them an elevated place in the household" (21, p. 60).

Thai children do not leave home as soon as they reach the age of legal adulthood. Particularly in rural areas,
they often remain in their parents' house even after they have married. In the city it is not unusual for several brothers and sisters to live in houses near each other so that the parents can move freely back and forth among their children, living with one for a while, then with another. All may meet frequently for dinner at the house where the parents are currently residing.

The differences between the Thai family and the American family are rather severe. The Thai family forms a close-knit unit that nurtures the individual from birth to death. The American family affords a starting place for the individual from which he faces the world on his own, often leaving the others behind as he forges ahead. Both structures are of value to their cultures. The Thai family offers the stability and security that is needed by people in the uncertainty of a developing country in this modern age, while the American family helps to create independent individuals who can accomplish their goals on their own.

Religion

In the United States there is no unified religious body. Although the Judeo-Christian ethic has greatly affected our community structure and our justice system, the religions practiced by Americans are highly diverse. There is no national church in this country. Although the president has always been a Christian and, except for
John Kennedy, a Protestant, he does not officially represent any church or religion. America's constitutional separation of church and state is a basic tenent of society affecting actions taken by churchmen and statesmen alike, as Philip Schaff notes,

The church as such has nothing to do with the state except to obey its laws and to strengthen its moral foundation; the state has nothing to do with the church except to protect her in her property and liberty; and the state must be equally just to all forms of belief and unbelief which do not endanger the public safety (16, p. 10).

Although churches and synagogues are plentiful across the nation, these buildings usually do not perform many functions outside of their specific religious purpose. When they do, it is under the guidance of the particular congregation and not as a part of a nationwide action. Some churches operate schools, but the percentage of students that attend public educational institutions is far larger. The idea of committing some time to service in the religious life is practiced in the United States primarily by the Mormons, whose young people spend two years in missionary service.

Several major holidays are built around Christian celebrations, Christmas and Easter, for example. Others, such as Thanksgiving and the Fourth of July, are based on history with little direct connection to religion.

Although the Judeo-Christian ethic does influence American society, it does not affect it to the extent that
the major religion of Thailand does life in that country. Buddhism, which is the faith of approximately one-fifth of humanity (15, p. 79) is practiced by 95 percent of the people in Thailand. The country has more than 19,000 Buddhist temples. As might be expected, this dominant religion has a profound influence on the Thai culture.

Buddhism performs many roles in the life of the Thai. First and foremost, it inculcates a Buddhistic view. One of the basic tenets of Buddhism is the law of causation. That is, every happening must have a cause, explainable by either past karma (deeds) or present karma. The ultimate cause of all happenings, particularly life's problems, is avijja or ignorance. From ignorance sprouts desires. Desires, particularly in extreme forms, are the immediate root cause of all problems. Buddhism lays stress on the middle way. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the Thais are well-known for their moderate outlook (2, p. 89).

The Theravada form of Buddhism, which is the more conservative, orthodox form of the religion, is the tradition which is dominant in Thailand. According to Donald Swearer, "Years ago becoming a monk was one of the only ways to be educated. For middle-class Thais, it still remains as a symbol of socialization into Thai society" (19, p. xv). In fact, says Richard Gard, "In most areas of Thailand it is still the cultural expectation that all adult males will spend at least a few months in Buddhist monastic life" (6, p. 169). Even the king served for a time as a Buddhist monk, since he is the national leader of the religion.

Every village has its wat, which is a Buddhist monastery that acts also as a temple, a school, and as a
basic center of village life. Monks are so plentiful that one of the names that Thailand has been called is "land of the yellow robes" (2, p. 79), a reference to the saffron yellow garment worn by all Buddhist monks.

Many of Thailand's major holidays revolve around Buddhism.

Visakha Puja is the most important ritual celebration. The belief is that Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death occurred on the same day. This takes place in May . . . in Thailand this celebration reflects other beliefs also which are non-Buddhist--the planting season, the founding of the temple (19, p. 58).

Beyond the obvious training in religion and the basic educational duties that Buddhist monks perform, "Buddhist monks in Thailand are enrolled in community development training programs in order to assist government officials in public health projects and in meeting rural needs such as sanitary wells, access roads and schools" (19, p. 80).

Although the Judeo-Christian ethnic permeates American culture, it does so in a subtle way, allowing people who do not consider themselves Christians or Jews to concur with such practices as "Thou shalt not kill." Buddhism, however, seems to affect the overall attitude and behavior of the Thai people.

The Buddhist feels that through right understanding and mental training, a new relationship to the world can be constructed--in the process of changing mental attitude, environment is changed as well--since the nature of the world is conditioned by the mind . . . what people know affects what they are and that affects the way they act (19, p. 36).
A shortage of teachers or schools is not a serious problem in most of the United States, although a shortage of good teachers or a shortage of teachers in certain fields may exist. Masland and Williams suggest that we tend to have a surplus in some areas, such as social studies and English, and a shortage in others, such as mathematics and science (8, p. 36).

In Thailand during the first half of the twentieth century, King Vajiravudh instituted compulsory education (10, p. 9) for children from seven to fourteen years of age. Katsumi Mitani says that "the illiteracy rate has been reduced by government efforts to develop education" (9, p. 164). However, although the literacy rate is now about 82 percent (7, p. 4), in some remote areas of the country the compulsory education law cannot be enforced because of a shortage of teachers and schools.

The average Thai who comes to America for study has probably spent one to three years in kindergarten and six years in elementary school. Tuition for his six years in secondary school must be paid by the student's parents. At the end of high school, students take examinations in order to compete for the opportunity to attend a university. The competition for one of the limited places in these universities is keen, and only a small percentage of those taking the examinations are admitted to one of the
nation's five closed admissions universities, all of which are in Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, Thammasart University, University of Medical Sciences, University of Fine Arts, and University of Agriculture. In 1969, the public made a very vocal demand for more space in the institutions of higher learning in Thailand (11, p. 1). This outcry led to the development of several open universities, the first of which was Ramkhamhaeng University, in 1971. These universities are located throughout the country rather than exclusively in Bangkok. Thailand also has a number of two-year and four-year teachers colleges and technical schools.

Some do not attend institutions of higher education because of other constraints such as lack of money for living expenses. It is easier for boys from distant parts of the country to go to the city to study at colleges and universities than it is for girls to do this because boys are able to live in the many temples there. Girls are only allowed to live in hostels and boarding houses (7, p. 4).

Frequently, being turned down for one of the Thai universities causes a Thai student to seek education in another country such as the United States. Some, however, decide to go abroad before taking the examination because they fear they will not be able to make a grade high enough to qualify them for university selection.
The basic educational differences between Thailand and the United States exist in the classroom and in the attitude of individuals. In Thailand the teacher, on whatever level, is respected by all. A student would never question or argue with the teacher. That is certainly not true of American students. Information in the Thai classroom is given to the students, and they are expected to learn it and be able to give it back accurately. In the American classroom, students are taught to question, to examine what they are told, and to discuss it openly with their fellow students and with their teachers. The Thai student's reverence for the teacher inhibits his or her ability to question the teacher's information, and the Thai's custom of listening and responding with the expected answer has not prepared him to participate in class discussions in the United States.

An example of the respect that Thais have for their teachers was demonstrated by a ceremony that they performed at North Texas State University in the Spring of 1985. It was a "wai kru," which they describe as follows.

Many of Thailand's ceremonies and customs are unique to the country. One such custom not found anywhere else in the world is "wai kru"—paying respect to teachers. The "wai kru" ceremony dates back to the time when Thailand's only centers of learning were the temples. In those days parents took their children to the temple school on a Thursday with a small golden bowl containing flowers. The children gave these to their teachers making the same promises as they do today.
A typical "wai kru" ceremony in a school starts with the school principal lighting candles and joss-sticks and paying homage to the Buddha image. A senior student then reads a prayer or wish aloud. This is repeated in unison by all the other students, after which they take a vow to be loyal to their nation, religion, and King; to be good students; to behave themselves; and to obey the school rules. Next, the head student of each class in turn presents flowers to the teachers. There's a school competition for these flower decorations, which students have previously spent a lot of time and care in preparing; prizes are awarded by the principal for the most beautiful or original flower arrangements. The ceremony ends with the principal delivering a speech (22, p. 2).

Social Customs

There are a number of other social customs in which American practice is different from that in Thailand. Thais do not customarily shake hands. In fact, men and women do not generally touch each other in public at all. It is not unusual, however, for good friends of the same sex to hold hands. A person's head is considered sacred, and Thais do not touch another's head. The bottoms of the feet as the lowest part of the body are not pointed at anyone, and Thais avoid stamping their feet, touching anyone with their feet, or using them to point at objects. One usually removes the shoes when entering a Thai home. A Thai may also feel that in order to be polite it is necessary to offer something to drink to a guest.

Of course, the Buddhist attitude toward adversity is sometimes perplexing to Americans, since the Buddhist feels
that trouble is mainly a matter of controlling the mind. They also try to conform to "right speech" and to harm no one with words. These practices have led some Americans to express the same idea as Robert Shaplen when he said, "Thais are the most contradictory and confusing people in Asia: delightful and exasperating, determined and vacillating, modern and backward" (17, p. 269). Americans pride themselves on being straightforward and honest and are frequently perplexed by the extreme tactfulness of the Thai. Thais also hesitate to involve themselves with organizations and political structures. Suratath Ayuwathana explains,

Thai political culture places more trust in persons than in the system. Unlike the Westerner who tends to believe that if the system is good the administrator will also be good, the Thai believes that, if the person is good it doesn't make any difference what the system is. The system, ideal, or principle is not important, or if it is important it is secondary to the person (1, p. 3).

Thais, therefore, do not go to the International Office at North Texas State University for help, but to another Thai; they do not discuss abuse with the police, but among themselves.

Thai culture differs from American culture in many ways, but of particular importance to this study are those contrasts concerning the attitudes about family, religion and education as well as a number of nonverbal social customs. It is these contrasts which contribute to many of the
problems faced by the Thai student at North Texas State University as is discussed in subsequent chapters.
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CHAPTER II

THE CULTURAL CLASH BETWEEN THAI AND
UNITED STATES CULTURES

In order to underscore the severity of the clash between cultures that confronts each student who comes from Thailand to the United States, a hypothetical example was developed based on the typical experiences of the twenty-two students who were interviewed.

Phornchai was a Thai student who came to North Texas State University. He was in his mid-twenties, and he was born in Bangkok where his parents, who supported him while he was in the United States, owned a mid-sized company. The older of his two brothers was already studying in the United States and completed his degree a semester after Phornchai came to this country. Phornchai's other brother was working with their parents in the family business. His sister had married and was working for the Ministry of Education in Thailand.

At the age of three years, Phornchai began his education in a private primary school near his home in Bangkok. There was some serious discussion between his parents about sending him away to boarding school, but they decided against it. After completing the fourth grade, Phornchai attended
another school in Bangkok where he remained through the tenth grade, and then went to high school for the last two years. After completing high school he attended the Teachers College in Bangkok where he studied for two years. Although he was qualified to teach mathematics, he went on to the university to get his bachelor's degree in mathematics.

After graduation he taught high school for two years, but his parents decided that he would be in a better position to advance if he were to study abroad. Phornchai was not eager to leave Thailand, but he saw the wisdom of his parents' idea, so he talked with his friends and wrote to his brother, who had already been in the United States at a college in the Northeast for two years.

His brother had often complained about the cold weather in the Northeast, so Phornchai decided he wanted to attend a school in the southern United States, since the climate there would be more like Thailand. Also, since the cost of college in the North was very high, Phornchai's parents were eager for him to choose a school that did not cost too much. Phornchai's brother in America had a friend who had transferred from the same university that he was attending to North Texas State University in Denton, Texas. He asked his friend to send Phornchai an application form. Meanwhile, Phornchai also applied to several other colleges whose names and reputations were known among his friends in Thailand.
He was accepted by three of the colleges, among them North Texas State University. The other two were more expensive than North Texas, and he knew no one who was attending the other two schools. Phornchai and his family decided that North Texas would be the best choice.

The acceptance of Phornchai by North Texas brought him an I-20, which is the form that allows a foreign student to obtain a visa to come to the United States for education. Phornchai took his I-20 to the American Embassy in Bangkok and persuaded the officials there that it was his intention to go to the United States for his master's degree and then to return to Thailand. A visa was issued to him. Meanwhile, his brother contacted his friend at North Texas and asked him to look after Phornchai when he arrived.

Phornchai spent several weeks studying English and trying to improve his oral communication skills. He read books in English and went to American movies and watched American programs on television. He also made arrangements through the bank to have his money transferred to a bank in Denton. This is a difficult part of going abroad from Thailand because Thai citizens are only allowed to take a minimal amount of money out of the country with them when they leave. He would need much more for his stay in Texas.

About two weeks before leaving for the United States, Phornchai wrote to his brother's friend in Denton and asked
him to meet him at the airport. Phornchai had wanted to get to Denton on his own, believing that he could take a bus from the airport to the university, but his brother had warned him that was not likely.

Phornchai arrived at Dallas-Fort Worth Airport after a sixteen-hour flight on Thai Airlines. He was very surprised when he looked out the window of his plane. Where was the big city of Dallas that he had seen on television? Where were the tall buildings and the busy streets? Denton, too, was a shock. After living all his life in the bustling city of Bangkok, he found this quiet, slow-moving town to be very different.

Phornchai's new friend took him to his apartment and introduced him to his circle of friends, most of whom were Thai. He showed Phornchai where the stores were and gave him some instructions on how to deal with the local business people. He also helped Phornchai to find his own apartment and assisted him in moving into it after a few days.

Phornchai attended an orientation sponsored by the International Office on the North Texas campus. He received useful information at that meeting: how to deal with the university's technical side, how to shop, how to get a driver's license. All of this information was very helpful, but it did not explain why Americans acted the way they did. It did not explain the subtle customs of the culture which
Phornchai found perplexing. Perhaps, he thought, he had missed all that information, since it was so hard to understand what the man said in the orientation because he spoke so rapidly in English.

The most difficult thing for Phornchai was communicating in English. He could read directions very well. He had done well on his TOEFL, the examination on English that all foreigners must take in order to enter college in the United States, and was not required by the Intensive English Language Institute to take its special courses, but listening to Americans, especially Texans, was very difficult. Not only was it hard for him to translate their words in his mind, but the drawling way they pronounced the words was quite different from the way it had been done by his teachers in school and by the actors in the films. The words they used were sometimes confusing, also. They used expressions of which, even though he understood the words, he did not understand. He soon discovered that Americans use a lot of slang, and he began to try to learn it, too, along with correct classroom English.

Although he lived in an apartment and prepared most of his own food, which he was able to purchase at the Thai grocery store, he enjoyed going out for American fast food. Since Thailand has restaurants that feature foods from all over the world, he was not unacquainted with many foods he
encountered on American menus, but he did not like pizza. Hamburgers and Mexican food were a pleasure, however.

At first Phornchai tried to walk everywhere he went, but he soon discovered that he wasted too much time that way. He would have to leave his apartment so early to get to class that he was spending a lot of time he could have used studying. Although in Thailand tardiness is quite acceptable, he quickly learned that Americans thought him impolite when he arrived somewhere late. He decided that he needed a car. He had driven one of the family cars in Bangkok and was a good driver. Americans, however, drive on the right side of the street rather than the left side as in Thailand. He asked his friend to help him, and he practiced driving on the right side of the street. It was very frightening at first, but after a while he mastered it and decided to apply for a driver's license. The person in the Department of Public Safety who administered the test was rude and yelled at him. He had difficulty understanding what she wanted, and when she shouted at him, he became flustered and confused. He did not pass the test the first time. When he went back the second time, he was determined to pass, and he did. He knew, however, that many other foreign students were not so lucky as he and had been forced to go back again and again before they were able to get a license.
Buying a car was much easier than getting a license. With the help of his friend, he purchased a decent used car. Then he was able to get from place to place easily and to be on time.

He did not find the classwork particularly difficult. He was able to read and understand all the materials, and when he had time to prepare outside of class, he was able to write intelligent answers to the questions the professors asked. His grammar was not perfect, but he was improving with practice. As time went by he was better able to understand what was being said by the instructor. At first each class period had been exhausting because he had to concentrate so hard in order to grasp the meaning of the lecture, but that, too, was improving with practice.

The thing he found most difficult was that many teachers in graduate school based a portion of the grade on class participation. In Thailand the student is expected to listen and to be able to repeat back what he has learned. He never questions the teacher, and discussion of topics is not a part of the style of learning. But in his classes at North Texas, he was not only expected to ask questions and to discuss ideas that had been presented by the professor, but he was expected to do it in English and to be articulate enough that everyone could understand him. At first he was afraid to speak in class at all. He knew that his English
was not very good, and he did not want to make a fool of himself. But the teacher called on him specifically, asking him his opinion of the idea under scrutiny. Phornchai was forced to respond. He tried very hard to be clear, but the words did not seem to come out right. He could tell by the look on the faces of the others in the class that what he said was not understandable to them. He could sense the teacher's impatience with him. He felt frustrated. He had an opinion. He felt it was a worthwhile opinion, but it was painful for him to try to express it. He went to the professor to explain that he was not accustomed to participating in class in this manner. The teacher was sympathetic but said that in American education the ability to think for oneself and to synthesize and analyze data into ideas and opinions was an important part of learning. Because of that, classroom discussion was an integral part of the grade and could not be waived even under Phornchai's special circumstances.

Phornchai also noticed that his classmates did not seem to be eager to talk with him. He could not be certain if it was because of the fact that he was a foreigner who looked different than they or if it was because his English was difficult to understand. He had observed that Americans were rather impatient in general and thought that perhaps this was the major problem. But noticing, also, the
negative ways that black people and Latin American people were often treated by white students made him wonder if his skin color did not have something to do with the distance his classmates put between him and themselves. It was his observation that Americans liked to be alone more than Thais do and that they did not seem to be interested in learning about cultures that were different from their own.

Although he was rapidly becoming acquainted with American customs, he still found some things perplexing and a little embarrassing. For example, he was not accustomed to seeing men and women touching each other, especially affectionately, in public. Yet as he walked across campus everyday, he saw many behaviors of this type, and no one seemed to think anything was wrong with it. Also, once a classmate had asked him if he would like to go and get a cup of coffee after class. Phornchai was delighted with the expression of friendliness, but that pleasure was almost spoiled because of the confusion about who was to pay for the coffee. In Thailand, the person who invites the others to go somewhere to eat pays for the food, but Phornchai's classmate obviously expected him to pay for his own coffee. The concept of "going dutch" was unheard of for Phornchai, and he was still uncertain of how to handle these situations when they occurred.

As the semester wore on, Phornchai's ability to cope with American culture improved, but he was very lonely for
his family. At home would be his father and mother and younger brother, sharing the same house in a warm and friendly companionship, and his sister and her husband would be in their house close by. Always, someone would be about, and one never had to be alone. Here in America, Phornchai was often alone, and he did not like the feeling. Americans did not have the same kind of close family units to which he was accustomed. They did not live several generations in one home or at least near each other. In fact, young people seemed to be eager to get away from their parents and to be out on their own. Sometimes it almost appeared to Phornchai that the parents forced the children out, insisting they live by themselves and support themselves. In fact, the metaphor that was frequently used to talk about this phenomenon was "pushing them out of the nest."

If young people were thrust out on their own, the elderly had it no better. They were left alone. No one paid any attention to them. The lady who lived in the apartment next to him was sixty-five years old and had raised three children who seldom came to see her and did not call her often. Phornchai began stopping in to check on her each day and to help out with little tasks around the house. They soon developed a close relationship that made Phornchai feel more comfortable and more at home.
Phornchai's two and a half years at North Texas passed. He missed his family, but he learned to appreciate many American customs. Although he never felt entirely comfortable speaking in class, he did learn to contribute without feeling foolish. His friendship with his elderly neighbor helped to fill the void of his absent family, and he developed a group of Thai friends that he knew would carry over when they all returned to Thailand. He learned to communicate with Americans and to tolerate their hesitancy to communicate with him. One thing he was never able to get used to about Denton, however, was the abrupt changes in the weather: cold one day and warm the next; blistering summers and freezing winters; rain, sleet, snow, sunshine, and tornados. Denton had them all. Phornchai looked forward to the relative simplicity of three basic seasons: one dry and hot, one rainy and warm, and one a bit cooler. He was glad to receive his degree and return home. He was, however, forever changed by all that had happened to him in those two and a half years. If in the future he rose to a place of importance in his government and was in a position to influence foreign policy, we would remember the people he had met and the experiences he had in Denton, Texas, and the future of relations between Thailand and the United States might stand or fall because of what had passed between him and his classmates and teachers at North Texas State University.
CHAPTER III

WHY THAI STUDENTS COME TO
THE UNITED STATES

Thai students come to the United States to obtain their education for a variety of reasons. Some arrive when they are still in high school. Others come as undergraduates to attend community colleges, small liberal arts colleges, or big universities. The majority, however, do not journey to this country until they are seeking a graduate degree (14, p. 6). It is not uncommon for Thais to earn an undergraduate degree in some country other than the United States and then to seek an American graduate degree. It is not uncommon for a Thai to come to the United States and begin his American education in the Northeast only to decide that he does not like the weather there and that the tuition is too high. This brings him south, frequently to Texas and sometimes to North Texas State University. This chapter will discuss the reasons given by the twenty-two Thai students interviewed for coming to the United States and for deciding to attend north Texas State University.

The most repeated reason for coming to Denton was that a friend, friend of a friend, or a relative was here and suggested that the student attend North Texas State University.
Most Thai students seem to have a contact on the campus before they arrive. Twelve out of the twenty-two interviewed said that was one of the reasons that they came.

Achara Sirpradit explained that she came to North Texas because her financee was in school here and he was lonely. He wrote to her and asked her to come to school at North Texas, also (16). Jan Skulkul's husband was attending Iowa State working on his doctor of philosophy, but he became very ill and sent for her to come, too (15). Pongpanich Wongdeethai had relatives in the United States, and came to North Texas because of the ones living in Fort Worth (27). Vinich Getkhom had a friend at North Texas who sent him information about the university. He liked the things he learned about the school and decided to attend it. Although she was not interviewed, Vinich's wife was another who came here because of a relative. Vinich was very lonely during his first year at North Texas, living without his wife and two sons, but finally he persuaded her to come to North Texas where she is now working on a graduate degree. Their two sons are attending Denton public schools and becoming truly bilingual (5).

Another important reason for coming to North Texas State University is the comparatively low tuition. Coupled with that is the low cost of living in the South as compared with the Northeast or California. Also, the South seems to
have a good reputation for hospitality. Vinich had heard
that people in Texas and in the entire South were nicer than
they were in the North (5). The weather influences many
Thais to come to this part of the country. It is warm
enough most of the year that the students from the more
tropical Thailand do not suffer severely from the cold.

Education is a significant part of Thai life. In fact
Sria-an Wichit says, "High level education [has become] the
ultimate status symbol, dividing those who [have] 'made it'
from those who [have] not" (26, p. 61). At first, Thailand's
universities were for the specific purpose of providing
skilled personnel for government service (26, p. 59).
Changes only occurred in the curriculum of the universities
when specialists were needed in areas of the government which
were not covered by existing educational facilities (26,
p. 60). By the end of World War II Thailand had five
universities but most of them specialized so highly--University
of Medicine, University of Agriculture, University of
Fine Arts--that the title university may have been a
questionable appellation. After the war, radical changes
began to occur. Wichit explains how the need for specialized
manpower changed the role of the university.

As advisors began to pour in from abroad, the cry
went up for the first time from private industry for
experts trained in areas of technology previously
unheard of in Thailand. . . . The developments of the
postwar decades catapulted [the university] into the
role of supplier of specialized manpower to both
public and private sectors and consequently the most
important force in national development (28, p. 60).
Naturally, this increased demand for a wider range of professionals multiplied the number of students who sought admission to the five universities, but the number of places were limited and as has been discussed in Chapter I, the entrance examinations were extremely difficult.

Warotamasikkhadit and Leuschel describe how this situation led to the establishment of new institutions.

For many years, a large number of high school graduates were denied seats in universities and were left in despair and without hope of entering a university. Newspapers and parents blamed the Government for failing to provide more space in State universities. Provincial universities were incorporated in three regional areas to help absorb the large number of applicants for a university education, but these could not meet the popular demand which was at least partly caused by the increase in population.

The result has been that relatively few Thai high school graduates have had the opportunity to pursue a university degree. This minority has often represented mainly the well-to-do class, since only the graduates of expensive private high schools and of long established public high schools have been able to reach the higher ranks of those who pass the national university entrance examinations. An additional result was the concentration in Bangkok of up-country students unable to enter a state university and unwilling to return home, thus causing social problems (24, p. 29).

As can be seen, another part of the problem was the location of the institutions of higher education which had been for so many years centralized in Bangkok. Hannarkin states, "The distribution of higher education institutions to cover different geographical areas of the country is considered to be an important aspect in planning and expanding educational resources to Thai people. The current
system of education tends to decentralize to the rural provinces" (6, p. 25).

By 1975, Thailand had thirteen government universities and ten private colleges. The public institutions were Chiang Mai, Chulalongkorn, IAT, Kasetsart, Khon Kaen, KMIT, Mahidol, NIDA, Price of Songkla, Ramkhamkaeng, Silpakorn, Srinakharinwirot, and Thammasat. The private institutions were ACBA, Bangkok CBA, Commerce, Krirk, Payap, Saengtham, Siam Technical, South East Asia, and Sri Pathum (Appendix D; 25).

Even this increase from five to twenty-three institutions of higher education has not yet solved Thailand's overflow of students seeking college degrees.

According to a UNESCO recommendation, a developing nation (which Thailand is) should have two college students for every 100 pupils currently going to elementary school. If Thailand measured up to this guideline, it should have at least 140,000 students in various universities. But the fact is that as of 1970 Thailand had only 41,000 college students in the entire kingdom. That makes for less than one percent of the total enrollment of school pupils (22, p. 17).

In 1975, the number of students had increased significantly to 144,075, but since the population also continued to increase, Thailand still did not meet the UNESCO recommendation.

Alternative methods for achieving advanced education have been developed.
The Department of Teacher Training, Ministry of Education, has offered correspondence courses leading to a Certificate in Education and a Higher Certificate in Education for school teachers throughout the Kingdom since 1976. In 1978 the Ministry of Education launched radio-correspondence courses consisting of broadcasted lectures accompanied by lecture notes and produced cassette tapes of the lectures for students.

On 5 September 1978, the Sukothaihammathirat University, which is somewhat similar to the Open University in England, was chartered, but its first classes with the use of printed materials, radio, and television will not begin until 1980. This newest university will be equipped with modern communication equipment, a modern printing house, and an energetic staff to cope with the problems of increasing demand for higher education that will be encountered (24, p. 35).

"The establishment of community colleges, 'second chance' education and comprehensive mass media educational programmes are all under consideration" (26, p. 65).

All of these forms of education are a part of Thailand's attempt to meet the burgeoning demand of its citizens. However, many students will go abroad for their education because of the limitations they face at home. Even with all the possible alternatives for education in Thailand, a significant number of students still aspire to attend one of the five original universities which have strict entry requirements, one of which is a high examination score. Many students who have difficulty making the grades necessary to enter one of the major Thai universities decide to go abroad to study. They may have been afraid they would not be able to pass the examination or their grades may have been too low
for them to qualify for entrance. Nartnittha Jirarayapong was only able to gain acceptance at North Texas State University. The other colleges, even in the United States, had refused her because her grade point average and her Graduate Record Examination grades were too low (8). Suratath Ayuwathana came to the United States even before he graduated from high school because he felt he would not be able to make a high enough grade on the examination in Thailand. He completed high school in Texas and got both his undergraduate and master's degrees in Kansas. He returned to the United States to work on his doctorate after several years at home (1). Pongpanich Wongdeethai, when he was not accepted into a Thai University, felt there was nowhere else to go in Thailand, so he came to the United States (27). Siam Sungvaaribudh thought school in Thailand would be too hard (19). Vanida Visitkitjaakarn thought it would be too hard to get into a Thai University (23). Kosal Tuangsintamakul explained that it was difficult to get a master's degree in Thailand, difficult to get into the school and difficult to learn once one is accepted (20).

Becoming proficient in English is another goal which brings Thai citizens to school in the United States. Each year in Thailand a significant majority of students choose English to fulfill their foreign language requirement (12, p. 47). Most of these students have also studied English
for a number of years before entering higher education. The ability to speak English makes a person a much more desirable employee because he can communicate in the language of international trade.

Pongpanich Wongdeethai wanted to be in a college where he would have to practice his English. He felt that he would not do that if he could spend all his time with Thais. For this reason he did not go to school in California where the overall Thai community is much larger than in Denton (27). Siam agreed with Pongpanich's assessment and came to Texas for a similar reason (19).

Pensri Gajasula said that most of the textbooks that are used in Thailand come from America and that it is good for a Thai teacher to know English (4). Vanida Visiitkiljakarn (23), Sammart Koonprakan (9), Sutthidej Jermjansa (7), and Pongpanich Wongdeelhai (27) each cited the desire to be fluent in English as a reason for their coming to the United States for study.

As has previously been stated, the family unit is of deep importance in the life of the Thai people. Richard Coughlin explains, "Filial piety and respect for one's elders are prized virtues still, taught to all children, and expected of all in the community as a matter of course. Children thus submit to their parents' wishes in matters of their education, vocation, courtship and marriage" (3, p. 72).
It is no wonder then, that a number of the Thai students interviewed expressed the idea that paramount among their reasons for studying in the United was that their parents, especially their fathers, had told them to do so. In the Thai family, formal authority belongs to men and juniors must defer to seniors (13, p. 99). When Surtirapawn's father informed him that he must go to college in the United States, Surtirapawn did not want to do so. He tried to find out why he must go away, but no explanations were forthcoming. Finally, although he was frustrated by his circumstances, Surtirapawn came to America to attend school (17).

Sommart Koonprakan said that he was joking with his father about going to the United States when his father stopped joking and began thinking seriously in that direction. Soon Sommart was being prepared for the trip to the West. He still does not know exactly how it happened. Perhaps, his father had wanted him to go to the United States all along and was waiting for him to suggest it. The joking conversation that Sommart initiated was just the opening his father was waiting for, and he used it to give his son something that the father felt his son should have (9).

College in the United States is costly, and even though most of the students who come to North Texas from Thailand are upper middle-class and so have plenty of money
in Thailand, expenses in the United States cannot help but place a hardship on those that are still at home. In Thailand, college costs are about 25 to 65 bhat per university credit hour and 150 to 300 bhat per private school credit hour. This is about $19 to $49 for university and $75 to $225 for private colleges (25, p. 34). Here the cost at a state university is $42 to $105 and at a private institution can average as much as $511 (18, p. 155). In several cases, i.e., Pratoom and Surtirapawn, more than one child of a family was attending school in the West. In order to be willing to make the sacrifices necessary to give their children this opportunity, Thai parents must place a high regard on an American education.

In fact, even the Thai government recognizes education in America as a worthwhile activity. Kamchorn pointed out that the United States and Thailand have a good relationship which makes his government agreeable to the idea of his coming here (11). Achara said that the name of North Texas State University, because it mentions the government in its title, creates good feeling with her government (16). Vanida Visitkitjakarn explained that a high social value is placed on going to school in the United States (23).

It is also true that North Texas has a reputation as a fine school and some of the programs which interest Thai students are known as good ones. Kamchorn (11), Sutthidej Jermhansa (7), Sakkasem Udomwatthawi (21), and Jan Skulkul
all were attracted to North Texas because of the computer program. Waraporn Kovasupat had heard positive comments about the finance department (10). Adit Benchart felt that apart from one of the Big Ten he would get as good an education in business at North Texas as in any other college in the United States (2).

Thais come to the United States for many reasons, but the primary ones seem to be that they fear they will not get into a Thai university, their parents want them to come, they want to learn English, and the United States has a good standing with their government. They come to North Texas in particular because they have a friend or a relative here, because the tuition is low, the weather is agreeable, and the university has a good reputation.
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CHAPTER IV

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES REPORTED BY THE

THAI STUDENTS

Because the Thai culture is so different from that in the United States, our societal qualities that are most pleasing to them may be somewhat surprising. Often implicit in a particular "like" expressed by a Thai student is the dissatisfaction with the manner in which this same aspect of life is handled in Thailand. When Kosal Tuangsintamakul says, with obvious approval in his voice, "Americans don't care what they wear," one suspects that at home he would be expected to dress in a certain manner in order to be acceptable. He does not feel this pressure here and does not sense that Americans feel it either (16). Pensri Gajasuta explains that she likes the way children are raised in the United States--they are taught to be more independent than the children are in Thailand--and she plans to carry this approach back to her home where she will encourage this type of behavior in the children who attend her early childhood center (3). Jan Skulkul contrasted American and Thai attributes about time.

"Always expect if it's a Thai party, you go like thirty minutes late, it's still all right. But I like the American way of--you're in time or at least on time. I like that very much. And I did that myself when I
was in my country. I try to be on time everytime I have an appointment (11).

Nipawan Teepanont echoed this sentiment (15) and Vinich Getkom said that Americans have "time responsibility," a quality he admires but does not find at home (4).

Sometimes the undercurrent of fears held by the students before they came here surfaces as they speak about the good things Americans do. Sommart Koonprakan said softly, "Many Americans are gentle people" (6). Perhaps he was expecting the "Ugly American" he has met in his own country or the violent and angry personalities of the Americans seen on television, the Kojaks and the J. R. Ewings. Adit Benchart, who attended preparatory school in England, said that Americans are easier to get along with than the British (2).

Although on the whole, American students have not made an overly favorable impression on the Thai students, they did have some good comments concerning their American counterparts. Vanida said that American students were very nice when working with a foreign student on a group project (18). Waraporn Kovasupat explained that American students have great self-confidence and that this was helping her to develop more self-confidence (7).

The department in which a person is studying seems to make quite a difference in relationship to how the Thai views his American peers. Pongpanich Wongdeethai said, "Art students are very nice." In fact, he is one of the
few Thais who does not have very many Thai friends (19). Pensri thinks that the students in her department, Early Child Education, are quite friendly (3). Jan, who is studying higher education, believes American students to be "sincere, friendly and kindhearted" and eager to help Thais with their language problems (11).

Phornchai Sakullelarasmi explained that he likes the American system of separating business and personal lives. What I saw is, they respect your personal life. What is duty, your work, your job, they can separate. That reflects. I like your system, the way people deal with one another. It works quite well. In Thailand they can't separate it out between personal [life] and responsibility, your job. Most mix and it causes difficulty to work with one another. Here it seems to me that whenever you work you don't care about personal life. You don't try to get your personal life involved with the job. Like when you're working, you can discuss or express your idea, your belief, frankly; and after that you may see friends. But the way you dispute it seems serious, but after that, after the job, you have a friendship, have a good relation. Nothing changed. But in my country, I believe, there's a little difference about this relation. They bring personal emotion there, involved in jobs and work. The system does not work good enough. What impress me is this. I like the system (10).

Pongpanich says that there is not as much corruption in America as there is in Thailand (19). Perhaps the Thais perceive Americans this way because as Phornchai observed, "People believe in each other here. For most people the law is the same--most people follow it" (10). He suggests, however, that it may be easier for Americans to be this way because they are not a poor country (10).
An important area of life for the Thai student is, of course, the education he has come to this country to earn. Although Thais have many problems in American classrooms, on the whole they are pleased with the education they are receiving here. Many speak highly of North Texas State University. Kosal said, "NTSU gives good education" (16). Sakkesem declared, "NTSU is good" (17). Kamchorn Lelmongkol, who has attended three other universities, two in Thailand and one in the United States, said, "NTSU is a good university— one of the best I've known" (8). Jan, who must always search for the economical, is pleased with North Texas because "... it offers a good program for low price" (11).

Many Thai students become quite familiar with the Intensive English Language Institute, and some do not like it. Achara Sripradit felt, however, that it was fun (12). It was in the Intensive English Language Institute that Sommart met a teacher who helped foreign students get Social Security numbers and who "... understood the problems of the international student" (6).

Suratath Ayuwanthana, who is fairly outspoken about himself and his countrymen, believes that the way Americans teach is easier. The method of discussion and question-asking seems less demanding to him than that of the rote memorization that is used in Thai schools (1). Kamchorn explained that he likes his doctoral classes better than he
did his master's classes because they are smaller. He feels less self-conscious about discussing his ideas with a smaller group of people (18).

Of course, as in most educational institutions, it is the teachers who make the class a success or failure. The majority of the interviewees agreed with Phornchai, who said, "Most students and most professors are nice" (10). He did, however, qualify his statement. Most professors were nice—but not all: "Faculty is mostly good," said Sakkasem Udornwatthawi (17). "Most faculty treat me well," commented Pongpanich (19). It may be significant that the "right speaking" Thai cannot give an unqualified affirmation to North Texas's faculty.

Sometimes, on both the good and the bad side, it is the little things that make lasting impressions. Ponpanich, smiling broadly, related with warmth that one of his professors greeted him on the first day by saying "Hi" in the Thai language. The teacher had visited Thailand and realized that "Pongpanich" was a Thai name (19). This may seem an insignificant kindness, but Pongpanich's reserved Thai heart was touched, and he felt more welcome in that class than in any other.

Thai students are rather reticent when discussing the official structure of North Texas. Offices, staff and administrators do not have the significance in their lives
that faculty do. Several of the interviewees made positive statements, however, about North Texas administrators and staff. When Suratath was applying to his government for permission to come to Denton to study, his application was viewed with little enthusiasm until he returned it to North Texas and requested that the word "history" be added to his college teaching major. "Someone in the office understood the importance," he said, and the quick expedition of his application allowed him to come here with his wife (1).

Most Thai students do not go to the International Office. They prefer talking with another Thai. As Sakkasem explains,

> For the new people when they come here, usually they don't know what they're supposed to do or ask. So they might not get help. And also Thai people like to get help through friend, ask friend. Sometimes they get good advice if they ask the right person. And sometimes they don't get what they're supposed to get if they go and see somebody who not really know (17).

Most of the time the Thai student approaches the International Office with a specific question concerning a subject such as immigration or university procedure. Sakkasem obtained considerable assistance from that office when he decided to remain in the United States. The staff there helped him apply for a permanent visa (17). Jan, who came here completely alone, appreciated the orientation. She liked walking around the campus and becoming familiar with it (11). Both Phornchai and Vinich said that the International Office
helped them with a number of things (4, 10). Sommart commented on the helpfulness of the workers in that office (6). Pongpanaich said they gave him information concerning housing and offered to help with his English problems (19). Sutthidej Jerzmhansa stated without qualification, "They do a great job!" (5). However, it is important to note that while each of the twenty-two students was asked about what the International Office had done for him, only six made positive statements about it.

Because the family is the center of Thai culture, Thai students observe the American family with interest. The American way of dealing with each other within the family unit is considerably different from the Thai custom. Young people in the United States are expected to move out on their own much sooner than in Thailand. Sutthidej said that this freedom taught young people to rely on themselves and that is good (5). Montira said that because children are sent out to make their way in the world at about age eighteen or when they finish their bachelor's degree, they are essentially starting a new life. She felt that this was an advantage over the way children are treated in Thailand. She added, however, that it was not good for the parents because they were left alone (9).

As has been discussed previously, Thai people venerate their elders, while Americans tend to push the older citizen
aside in favor of the young. Frequently, lonely Thai
students form an attachment to an older American, which
brings a richness to their lives as well as to the older
American. Vinich worked as a companion to North Texas's
retired president, J. C. Matthews, treating him with a
warmth and respect he might never have received from an
American youth (4). Sutthidej lived with a widow in Ohio,
and, he said proudly, "She treated me like a son" (5). Jan
lived with an elderly invalid in Denton whom she called "Mom."
She was quite comfortable in that situation because it was
homelike (11). A number of the students mentioned older
adults who had treated them especially kindly. Vinich
summed up their feelings when he said, "The older generation
of Americans tend to be more generous" (4). To whom is he
comparing the older generation? To his peers? To the North
Texas students he has met on the campus and in his classes?
This suggests a problem that will be discussed more
extensively.

For those students who have not been fortunate enough
to find by chance a foster-grandparent, the university host
family program is well-received. Through this program,
Thais are able to glean a bit of the warmth that they are
accustomed to in their own homes. Achara said that her host
family experience was good, but because she was so busy and
they were so busy, they had drifted apart (12). Sakkasem,
who always tried to spend as much time with Americans as possible, enjoyed being taken home with his roommates to visit their families. He particularly recalled one trip when the family went skiing. Thailand, having no snow, does not have that sport (17). Sakkasem liked the American culture enough, however, that he decided to remain here and has married an American woman (17). When Surtirapawn first came to the United States, he went to school in central Texas. At that time he became connected with a family in San Antonio that has taken him in as if he were a son. He says they are great, and even though he has gone to two other areas of the state, he has kept up his connection with them, visiting them sometimes on holidays (13).

Most of the Thais who were interviewed spend the majority of their social time with other Thais. Speaking in their own language rather than in English is more comfortable for them. The social customs of their countrymen are clear to them, whereas sometimes they find American customs confusing or uncomfortable. Adit said, however, that he had made a lot of friends here (2). Pongpanich, one of the two undergraduates interviewed, has few Thai friends, but that may be because there are not many Thai undergraduates and because he finds the students in the Art Department to be so friendly (19). Sakkasem, as has already been mentioned, has decided to stay in the United States and has married an
American. He divided his time between Thais and Americans, believing that it is a mistake to confine oneself to exposure to only one culture (17). Siam Sungvarbudh also is quite outgoing and has friends among Thais and Americans as well as other international groups. In fact, he particularly liked working in the Student Union because there he could meet so many different people (14).

A number of individual comments were made concerning specific things about living in the United States. Achara liked Mexican food perhaps because it is spicy as is Thai food (12). Waraporn liked hamburgers, a preference she has in common with most of her American counterparts (7).

Many of the facilities in this country are seen by the Thai students as being superior to those at home. Kosal mentioned Denton's electric and phone service as being superior (16), and Achara and Waraporn said that television reception is better here (7, 12). Kosal and Sommart like the way that transportation operates in Denton (6, 16), and Adit says that in Thailand you always have to ask directions but in the United States it is easy to find your way with a map (2).

Basically, Thai students seemed to appreciate the education that they are receiving in the United States, and they held North Texas State University in high regard. They thought the American democratic system was fair and equitable.
American self-confidence was also appreciated by them although they did not necessarily embrace it. The relationships they most treasured were those that brought them into a family situation and gave them some sense of the warmth they were used to at home. However, they did not greet American culture with unreserved enthusiasm and their reasons are explored in the next chapter.
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CHAPTER V

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES REPORTED BY
THE THAI STUDENTS

Although most Thai students at North Texas State University seemed pleased with the education that they received and most had some pleasant experiences with their American peers and professors, many problems exist for the Thai in American culture. Persuading a Thai person to express negative thoughts about American culture, however, was a difficult task. They did not wish to offend. They considered themselves guests in this country and were unwilling to be ungracious. The very precepts of their religion of Buddhism bade them to "speak rightly," to never speak in a hurtful manner. One must view the difficulties discussed in this chapter with the overall character of the Thai people in mind, even though most of the students who agreed to be interviewed were more outspoken than many of their fellows. They knew in advance that they would be asked for negative aspects of their North Texas State University experiences, so they may not have been as reticent as the average Thai.

The main problem was, not surprisingly, that the cultural differences between Americans and Thais were quite
pronounced. Kamchhorn Lelmongkol explained the difficulty this way:

The problem is that we [Thai people] try to think of them [Americans] as Thai, not as Americans. First, we have to understand the culture of this country, then we can be able to adapt ourselves to your culture. During our stay in the United States most of us do not intend to learn much about this culture because most of our students are intended to go back home after finishing their course, and it's just a matter of a short period of time comparing to the whole life. We have to spend not more than four years, probably an average of two years to finish their work and then went back. So they didn't care too much about the culture of this country [sic] (7).

Kamchorn expressed a serious problem: the inability of the international student to become absorbed into the society. Of course, at North Texas State University, where there are so many Thais, it was easy for the Thai student to submerge himself in familiar surroundings, surfacing only to attend class. The Thai looked at the American and said to himself, "That is not how we would behave at home." He forgot that he was not at home, and because he would be here a limited time, he probably felt that there was small advantage to gain by coming to understand Americans.

Siam Sungvaribudh suggested that one cause of the Thai's insular behavior in this country is because he feels inferior to Americans since America is a superpower (12). But the more likely root of the problem is that Americans tend to distance themselves from foreigners because the foreigners are different and because they are hard to understand.
Kosal Tuangsintamakul said that since people in America, at least the ones he knew about, do not travel much, they looked at him as foolish or different. They did not seem to trust him. Kosal believed that it was because Americans think Orientals are dishonest, but he explained that Americans are wrong in this belief (15). Naartnittha Jirarayapong thought that Americans tried to avoid helping Thais (4). Surtirapawn Sonolen explained that there were some bad feelings about foreigners here and there in town (13). In fact, Kamchorn said, sometimes people shouted rudely at them because they are foreign (7).

Vinich Getkhom seemed to summarize what the others were trying to say.

I think I am a strange person when I came here because, you know, everything is not the same as the American people and foreign student and I have to adjust myself to the people and the culture over here. The people is changed. [Interviewer: Changed from what?] From I expect. I know from my friend the people in the South is not quite different from the people in our country, but when I came, . . . [Interviewer: Are you saying that Thai people in Thailand are more friendly to each other than Americans are to each other? or to foreign students?] To foreign students. I guess to foreign students. [Interviewer: You think that if I were a student in Thailand that the Thai people would be more friendly to me?] Yes! That is what I mean. [Interviewer: Why do you think that is?] Maybe it is . . . I am not an American . . . I think that the foreign student or international student are different from the students over here. For example, maybe I just guess, I'm not sure, they don't like to talk to the foreign student because of the language problems. I guess when we communicate they don't understand what we are saying, what we are talking about. That's why we get bored when we first come here. I tried to ask something in a shopping center, like how can I go. . . . Maybe the American accent is different from the
international accent because we never teach it like that. We never talk. We just read and write. In a real-life situation we never talk. Maybe that's an education problem in our country [sic] (2).

Many of the Thai students suggested that the reason that Americans do not relate much to them is because Americans in general simply do not try to understand foreigners. Suratath Ayuwathana said that Americans do not recognize the worth of foreigners and so do not try to adjust to their language styles (1). In particular, Sutthidej Jermhansa said, American students do not seem to want to talk to foreign students (3). Vinich feels that it is primarily a language problem, that Americans do not like to talk with Thais because the Thais have difficulty with the language (2). Sakkasem Udomwatthawi agrees with this observation, adding that Americans treated others based on the manner in which they understand and speak, so when one was learning English, one got very frustrated (16). Suratath gave an example that seems to describe the sort of experiences the others were talking about.

It is not that easy for a foreigner to come to this country maybe because this country is so big and then your society seems to look at your own self and you seem to think that everything is over here just like any big person would think about themselves. So you seem to understand about yourself more than outsider. But different in my country is that we seem to like to understand outsider and like to know more about foreigner. We respect more. And that is seen in everything—in every project we have with foreigner we seem to put our best person to work with a foreigner, you know how it is because our face is in that project in my country. In my country or other foreign country when the foreigner comes to your country you seem to
treat him the best you can. Especially in my country you do the best thing for a guest, better than your own self, and then you seem to try to understand foreigners, understand their language . . . or even they try to speak your language, you say, "yes, I understand." . . . even you have a question, what's that word. . . . Of course, our language is not perfect. But in this society the people seem to not recognize your worth somehow even just like this example. You go to a hamburger shop, just MacDonalds. Then you ask for hamburger, I mean your accent and your sound is different because you speak a different language and somehow you try to speak English. The only thing that you can order in that shop is hamburger. But the people who give you the service, they seem to question you . . . "What did you say? Did you say something?" They don't understand you at all. It's a strange feeling. You go to a hamburger shop. What else can you order except a hamburger? . . . And they question you and they look at you as if you speak a strange language, not as a foreigner, but they look at you as, you know, the people who can't speak . . . people here doesn't seem to adjust to your strange accent or strange sound. Then . . . even you point at the thing that you say . . . "hamburger," . . . they seem to question you. Maybe sometime they look at you with some kind of strange look and they don't want to accept your different pronunciation or your different tone of voice. This would include into everything you do in this country like having conversation with somebody else, some American. This would be an extension of greater misunderstanding if you go to registration office and ask for something and if your pronunciation is different they will treat you as different. So that's the kind of thing that turn you off from speaking with Americans. Then you feel kind of negative to the society and then you withdraw yourself from the society and study the pronunciation before trying it again (1).

The frustration level and the feelings of embarrassment must have been extremely high for the Thai when he was unable to make himself understood and when Americans treated him as if he were not very bright because he could not speak English the way they could. It is not strange then that they tended
to retreat into their national enclaves and avoid extensive contact with people of this country.

Another difficulty that Thais face in this country is that sometimes they feel American behavior is unjust and incomprehensible. Sommart Koonprakan said that Americans did not live up to his image. He expected that United States students would be just and fair and that they would not try to corrupt or to cheat, but he was wrong. They were often not fair, and they did cheat (5). Siam told of a frightening and incomprehensible experience which he had on the North Texas campus.

I was walking on the street to Kendall Hall past Wooten Hall, that street. It was at night and I was in the junior year, I think. And there was this person . . . it was a guy. He dress up in the Air Force or something . . . the people who study in Kendall Hall. [Interviewer: The ROTC?] Yeah . . . I'm sure it was those people. Just one of them. I was walking this way and he was walking this way. [He indicates that they were approaching each other from opposite directions.] But I can see him coming like that, so as he came this way, so I just change this way and walk this way. [He indicates that he tried to avoid confronting the person on the sidewalk.] So finally he come, and he hit me on my . . . you know, he just go like that [bumps arm] on me like that. And he turn around, and he say "Watch it, Foreigner!" [Interviewer: So he ran into you?] He ran into me. I can't fight him. He's big. There's no way I can do anything. And it's not my country. And I was just quiet, and then he came close to me, and he was just close, you know, as close as this [indicates right beside him], and I couldn't think of anything. I couldn't fight him, and I couldn't run, you know. I was mad, too. That's why I didn't run. So I finally thought of something and I said, "What are you going to do?" I let him see that I'm looking at his badge, his rank and everything . . . I didn't know what rank it is, but I know his name. I say, "What are you going to do? Are you going to hit me?" And I look him in the eyes and I say, "Are you going to hit me?" And his eye was
just . . . it was just . . . he was mad. He really want to hit me. I don't know why. I didn't know him and he didn't know me and he just turn around and he said, you know, bad thing [spelling], "F-u-c-k you foreigner!" And he just go. He was about to hit me, you know, but I was thinking, if I can remind him of what the consequences would be after he hit me, maybe he doesn't. And he didn't. So I was glad for that (12).

In the preceding chapter, the positive side of Americans was primarily concerned with their cultural practices: they organize time well; they are self-confident; they seem to be able to separate work life from personal life. As for individuals, Americans are kind to foreigners when they work on a group project with them and are nicer in general than the Thais expected, but over all, the negative qualities of Americans seem to dominate the Thai view of them. Americans appeared to be unfriendly, self-centered, unpredictable and unfair, not interested in foreigners and their feelings. In fact, Vanida Viskitjakarn suggested that Americans' greatest value is on money (17).

An area of their lives in the United States that the Thai students were willing to express themselves on more frequently was education. The Thai educational system is quite different from the American one, a fact which makes their adjustment in classrooms in this country highly difficult. Thai students have an entirely different attitude from American students. Sakkasem said that Thais do not ask questions and that they treat the teacher as an
authority (16). Jan Skulkul explained the difference between the American attitude toward teachers and the Thai attitude.

Here the teacher and student is quite equal, but in Thailand the teacher has more authority over the students. They can correct students whatever it is. You can see in that class [referring to a play which had been done at the Wai Kru] she correct him for having long hair, not just for English grammar. She would go straight and say, "Get your hair cut," even [though] she's an English teacher, she could do that. And the student wouldn't say a thing. He would go right away and he would have a hair cut. You just listen and do what they say. And I think that's a bad part of it. Sometimes you do not understand, but you just keep silent. After you've been treated that way a long time you get used to it. Now you're afraid to even have your hand up, even [when] you know it's the right answer. You're afraid to express yourself, your feelings and your thoughts . . . because you're afraid it might affect your grade and your parents and everything . . . cause the teacher has the power. They can talk to your parents. Then you'll be in trouble if you don't believe in them. I think that I be lucky that my parents understand [the] way [they do]. Some parents, I mean, not just my parents, they understand the children, and they urge the children to express themselves out, so some might be quiet and some might speak up. But most of them will be quiet in the class. And then they come to the United States and, as they say, they will sit in the back of the class [sic] (10).

It was difficult for the Thai student, then, to express himself in class, because he had been taught to listen and to accept what he was told and never to question. When he was encouraged here to discuss his opinions with others, he found he could not break out of his old pattern without considerable discomfort. Siam summarized the problem this way:
Most Thai people don't get a chance to talk because they just don't talk. They're not trained to do that as opposed to Arab students, the Chinese students, which tend to go forward and speak out. Thai people don't speak out because they're trained to listen to teacher only when they're back in Thailand. You just listen. You don't argue. You just learn, you know. So when they come here, they are less advantaged in that kind of class where you need to learn to speak. They were afraid they were going to make fun of themselves (12).

Another major problem for Thais in the classroom was the language. English is so radically different from the Thai language that is very hard to learn. To compound the problem, as Vinich explained, they never spoke the language in practice (2) so they did not feel comfortable talking in English. Sakkasem said that it was hard to write a paper because of the language problem (16), but most Thai students seemed more concerned about the trauma of trying to express themselves orally in English. When asked what the greatest problem about coming to the United States was, Nartnittha replied without hesitation, "Language barrier!" (4), but a part of Nartnittha's job in Thailand had been translating Thai and Japanese into English. Why did she feel so insecure in the English language?

When I first came here, I came with confidence. When I got into the class and I couldn't understand even one single sentence, I was shocked! It may have been the accent and maybe the intonation, too. And maybe because of the fastness. I couldn't get what they said, the instructors. People told me to calm down. I always expect too much from myself. [Interviewer: How long did it take you to understand?] Maybe one semester. No, maybe for two or three weeks. I gradually understood what the instructor said. But it
took me maybe one semester to understand fully, not fully, but to be able to understand more and be confident. I never spoke in class, never. And I was very surprised of myself. Even after the first semester, I dare not speak up in class. I don't know how to make up the sentence. I just don't want to be a nuisance in the class (4).

The Intensive English Language Institute, which should be the answer to this problem, presented some of its own problems. Jan and Achara Sripradit both stated that it was simply too expensive (10, 11). Achara was so adamant about this problem that she quit attending and studied on her own in order to pass the TOEFL (11). Sommart, who was a student in the institute, was quite unhappy with it. He wanted to pass the TOEFL, but the teacher was more interested in improving his English and subsequently assigned a lot of homework. The class worked step by step, but Sommart wanted to go faster. Also, he did not feel that the instructors understood the special problems of Thai students. In fact, the course of study tried to be generic enough to cover all foreigners and, therefore, did not deal with any one group in particular (5).

Another area of concern was the attitudes of teachers at North Texas. Many of the Thai students mentioned a feeling of being discriminated against. A friend of Pongpanich Wongdeethai's who was unable to get into the special history class for international students was repeatedly insulted by the instructor of the regular history class which he did try
to take. The young foreigner was finally forced to drop the class (18). Sutthidej said that as a computer science undergraduate, he was made to feel unwelcome by both students and teachers (3). Phornchai Sakullelarasmi observed that some professors did not accept foreign students (9), while Vanida stated that some teachers did not like them (17). Even Vinich, who for the most part felt that he had been treated well in the United States, said that sometimes the faculty discriminated a little (2). Sometimes the problem may be caused by a lack of understanding between the student and the teacher. Phornchai was most disturbed and embarrassed when a professor saluted him during registration (9). Nartnittha had a hard time understanding what she was to do in a special project class she was taking and felt that the teacher was trying to avoid her.

This semester I take one course which is advanced journalism. It is a project-type, and my advisor, maybe he's busy. Whenever I went to his office, he seemed to be very busy and I could not start my project until now. This is the sixth or seventh week already, and I need to complete this course because this is my last semester. If I cannot finish, I cannot graduate. And I don't want to acquire a grade without doing anything. Maybe he can give me a grade, a B or an A, but I don't want that. I want to work, and I want to study. I want to acquire knowledge. And it seems to me everything doesn't go smoothly ... I am mad. ... Sometimes when I went to his office, he would take his overcoat and say, "I will have a meeting." And then he would leave. And then when I opened the room again I saw his room was lighted. [Interviewer: Like he was still in there?] Yes. [Interviewer: So you think he was not busy but was just avoiding you?] Yes. [Interviewer: Why would he do that?] I don't know. Maybe he feels that he has too much to do. I don't want to complain too much
because I have already complained a lot. I don't know what to do (4).

In another situation, Jan described a teacher who told her it would be all right for her to turn in her paper late since she had to go out of town because of her husband's illness. However, when she turned the paper in, she received a bad grade because it was late (10).

Perhaps some of these problems are caused by the Thais' lack of facility with English and by the imprecise use of English by the teachers. Americans are prone to use a lot of slang and colloquialisms. Also, some people simply do not speak clearly. Montira said that when an instructor spoke low or did not move his mouth much, she could not understand (8).

Several of the Thai students remarked on their feelings about American students. Surtirapawn said that American students do not like it when foreign students do better than they do (13). Waraporn Kovasupat noted that American students did not seem to understand her and that they did not talk to her, in fact, even ignored her when they sat right next to her (6). Kamchorn said that undergraduates were not very nice to foreigners (7), and Siam observed that American students do not have the urge to know international students (12). Pongpanich, who was very happy with the way the other students in the art department treated him, went on to say that in political science, astronomy, and physics,
the students were not nice, were not caring and polite (18). Achara said that after she had worked in a group with American students, then they ignored her and would not speak to her. She thought maybe it was because they did not like foreigners (11).

It seems obvious that there are some definite attitude problems among American students and teachers on the North Texas campus. Much of the difficulty is caused, without doubt, by the language barrier and by the extreme cultural differences, but since the Thai are reluctant to criticize, they must have been facing some truly uncomfortable situations in order for them to express themselves in the strong terms which they used.

North Texas, as an institution, received little criticism from the students. They seemed to feel that the university was, on the whole, giving them what it should: a good education. However, sometimes it did appear to behave in an impersonal manner. Suratath explained that before coming to North Texas, the college seemed eager to have the student; after the student arrived, it was different. The university forgot about the foreign student (1).

The International Office, however, did not seem to be assisting the Thai in many ways. Although the previous chapter mentioned some assistance received by a few of the students, the majority did not feel much support from the
International Office. Montira said that she did not know what the International Office did for students (8). Achara felt that the International Office did nothing for her (11). Siam repeated this same observation, adding that the International Office did not reach enough people (12).

A few of the Thai believe that orientation was helpful, but most either did not receive an orientation or did not understand what was taking place. Suratath said that their orientation was cancelled because of snow and never rescheduled, so they had to find out things on their own (1). Because of their arrival schedule, Kamchorn and his wife missed orientation and received no other help from the International Office (7). Waraporn explained that she attended orientation but that it was not helpful to her because it was conducted entirely in English, and she could not understand what they were saying (6). The university seems to be missing an important opportunity for starting international students out in a positive way.

Some of the Thais who had been exposed to Americans on a more personal basis, such as being roommates, expressed a few unpleasant experiences. Montira's first American roommate appeared quite rude to her, treating her as if she were ignorant (8). Nartnittha worried about her studies when she arrived in Denton and did not spend much time socializing. Her roommate was intimidated by her silence,
which made for a most uncomfortable situation. Siam had an inappropriate roommate.

I usually get along well with Americans but this one, I didn't get along with him at all. It was a terrible experience. I don't think he likes foreigner, you know. He likes football, and he likes to stay out late. I don't think he had many friends but he always . . .
everytime he talk it's just like he's looking down on me and I didn't feel good, so I didn't want to talk to him. And he is big, you know, and I can't do anything about it (12).

Pongpanich noted that he had expected things here to be like they were on television where all the friends seem to be so close, but that had not happened. In fact, some of the people whom he considered to be friends still seemed to look down on him because he was an international student (18).

Various individuals mentioned a number of things that had been problems for them. Achara said that the Texas accent was hard for her to understand (11). Kosal did not think American food had much variety and it was not spicy enough (15). Some complained that there was not enough to do here (15, 17). Vanida felt that she was spending too much money (17), while Sommart was disappointed in the town. He was expecting high buildings and lots of department stores (5). Of course, these complaints dealt with personal taste and not with shortcomings on the part of Denton or the United States. There is, however, one other complaint mentioned by many of the Thais. A woman in the Department of Public Safety where they go to get their driver's licenses was
extremely unkind to a number of them (14). Those that did
not encounter her have heard of her from friends to whom
she was rude. She shouted at them and treated them as if
they were stupid (12).

Obviously, some of the things that bother the Thai
about their experiences here cannot be changed. In fact,
Americans probably do not want to change some of them, but
many of the problems that the Thai face here might be
alleviated in varying degrees by careful thought and plan-
ning on the part of the university.
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CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Summary

The Thai students who were interviewed in this study agreed that the greatest obstacle they face while going to school in the United States is the language barrier. They have difficulty understanding what is being said, not only because it is in English, but also because most Americans have a different accent from the teachers from whom the majority of them learned the language. The fact that Americans characteristically do not enunciate clearly and tend to have regional dialects further complicates the problem. All of this created difficulty in the classroom where it took them weeks to reach a point at which they felt they had a basic understanding of what was occurring; and, it also interfered with their ability to relate to Americans because the Thai could not comprehend what the American was saying to them. In addition to American accents and poor speaking habits and the Thais' lack of experience listening to people speak English, Americans depend heavily on the use of slang and colloquialisms, and the meaning that Americans attach to nonverbal behavior is often significantly different from the interpretation a
Thai person would make. These, too, must be understood, learned, and assimilated by the foreigner before a reasonable degree of communication fidelity can occur.

The other side of the problem deals with speaking. The Thais never study English as an oral language. They read it and write it, but their educational system does not require them to speak it. As a result they come to the United States unprepared to engage in communication with Americans since they can barely understand spoken English and they have had virtually no practice speaking the language. They do not feel confident about the vocabulary and they cannot think rapidly enough in the language to frame accurate sentences quickly. They become so self-conscious that they hesitate to cause a slowdown in any dialogue by interjecting their thoughts. They do not speak in class and they do not speak to Americans. Also, some Americans have been impatient with many of them, causing them to be embarrassed by their lack of proficiency in pronouncing words clearly or communicating with speed. All of this leads to the Thai student going to class, sitting silently, trying to absorb as much as possible, returning to his enclave of Thai friends and family and asking them what was going on in the class. As Sakkasem Udomwatthai said, "They like to ask a friend" (25). And few of them have American friends.
However, this problem is not simply one of language. It has more facets than that. The attitude of Americans which the Thai's perceive as impatient adds to their confusion and frustration. Many of the students said that American students did not talk to them, suggesting that maybe they do not like foreigners; but perhaps it is too much trouble, as Vinich suggested (4), to try to talk to the Thais because the American has to work at understanding. Several of the Thais explained the American attitude as insular. They said Americans do not travel much and so do not understand and appreciate foreigners.

They said that if the word is not pronounced "just so" the American will not understand it and will treat them as if they were retarded, slow or even mute because they are unable to speak the way that the American thinks they should. It is no wonder that Thais quit trying to talk to Americans. Thai people are naturally a retiring and polite people. They do not want to inconvenience anyone and they are severely distressed by the perceived slights from Americans.

Because they cannot communicate comfortably with Americans they do not get to know them. They withdraw to their cliques of Thai students and only venture forth when absolutely necessary. They do not become comfortable in English because they do not speak it on a regular basis. They speak it only when required to do so, in class or in public, but with their friends they retreat to their native
It is understandable that they should do this, but an entire part of their education is eclipsed when they do not mingle in American society. Many never come to know or to understand Americans. Thais do not seem to appreciate American culture because they are not intimately involved in it.

Ten faculty members and university administrators who work with foreign students were interviewed in order to obtain a view from the other side of the situation. All of these university personnel agreed that the most serious problem for Thai students is the language barrier. Dwane Kingery of the Matthews Chair in Higher Education said that English is so difficult for Thai people because the entire structure of their language is completely different from English. For instance, Thai is built on tonal quality and inflection. The same set of symbols may mean several different things depending on the intonation given in pronunciation (7).

Not only is the language difficult for them, but they face the added cultural inhibition of fearing to look foolish by making errors. As John Crow of the English Department explained, "They fear losing face" (2). Dan Robertson, who directs the Intensive English Language Institute, suggested that learning to speak English is not really considered a vitally important task. Students generally perceive
listening and reading to be the most significant skills to master, followed by writing. Speaking is fourth in order of importance (15).

Beyond this, Kingery suggested that Thais are unwilling to deal with anything that is not clearly defined, although they do seem to become more capable of directing their own affairs and taking positions on issues after they have been studying in the American classroom for a while (7). Further, he stated that they want things to be structured for them so that they can memorize material to be given back at the appropriate time (7). Howard Smith of the Higher Education Division observed that Thai students become quite frustrated and upset when working in a group with other students if the group does not perform in a well-structured manner. They do not seem comfortable with loose plans (20). This quality along with their fear of appearing foolish causes them to avoid situations where random, uncontrolled interaction may occur such as in ordinary dialogue with a fellow student.

Crow said that Thais have problems with the American system of education because it encourages, requires, and rewards student participation. American teachers do not characteristically "spoon-feed" and expect regurgitation (2). Robertson explained that teachers in the Intensive English Language Institute, indeed in every class, must draw out the Thai student to encourage them to participate (15).
The Thai's very formal and respectful attitude toward professors leads to some further difficulties. Their courteous, almost reverent, treatment of an instructor may cause the teacher to feel a bit uncomfortable as does Smith (20), and it may also make it hard for Thai students to go to the professor for assistance when they need it. In fact, Crow suggested that since they do not ask questions in class and they fear going to the professor, they frequently do not say anything and so remain confused on many issues (2). It is a measure perhaps of the quality of Thai students that, in spite of these difficulties, the average grade-point average for undergraduates is 2.3, just under the national average for all undergraduates, and 3.3, which is right on the national average for all graduate students (12).

Rosemary Rodriguez, who works in special programs with foreign students who are on scholarship here, suggested that many of the Thai students' academic difficulties may be tied to cultural problems (16). For example, as Robertson said, one of their greatest advantages is also one of their greatest problems. They have a strong support group in Denton, and they tend to stay together. This gives them support, but it also causes them to miss opportunities to interact and learn about American culture. They also miss many chances to speak English (15). In fact, Crow only rarely saw them interacting with other students (2). Joyce Sauter of the International Office said that they are very
conscious of the way they appear to others. They want to seem cheerful, friendly, and unworried, so they do not give out many signs of dissatisfaction (18). Pan Kruatrachue, who was first a Thai student at North Texas and how, having earned her doctorate, is working in the Graduate Dean's office, explained that Thai people are afraid to ask someone to do something for them because they do not want to cause trouble for the other person. This keeps them out of places like the International Office where they might find answers to their questions. Pan said that if a Thai feels he is having a problem with the culture, he will just withdraw rather than create any difficulty (10).

These, then are the problems this study has identified.

1. Thais need a better command of English, both written and spoken.

2. Americans need a deeper appreciation of foreigners in general and a more tolerant response in everyday exchanges with them.

3. Thais need to be more involved in American society.

4. Thais need to be more effectively prepared for the American classroom.

5. American college instructors need to be more positively prepared to handle the problems of Thai students. Solving these problems will require effort on both the Thai and the American sides.
Recommendations by the Thai Students

The Thai students did not have many recommendations concerning the problems with English. Kosal Tuangsintamakul said that the Thai government needed to provide better English classes for Thais before they are allowed to come to the United States (22). Kamchorn Lelmongkol suggested that living in a dormitory would help the Thai to learn to speak English better (11). Although the Intensive English Language Institute should be an agency to which all foreign students could turn for help in solving this problem, most of the students seem to resent having to take classes there. The primary reason for this appears to be the cost. Siam Sungvaribudh said that it is very expensive and that some do not feel that they get their money's worth (23). Sommart Koonprakan suggested that the way to improve the Intensive English Language Institute would be to address the specific problems of the various racial and ethnic groups. For example, Thais find grammar easier than the Chinese do; therefore, in the classroom, the Chinese hold the Thai back in this area. However, the Chinese are more outgoing and like to speak up in class, so the Thai are pushed aside in oral portions of the class (8).

Involving Thais and Americans with each other is a good way to help solve the language difficulty, and this lack of involvement itself is another of the main problems.
Sakkasem said that North Texas State University needs to have someone on its staff that understands the way that Thais think (25). Sakkasem stated that Thais do not know what questions to ask to gather information and besides, they would rather ask a friend (25). Surtirapawn Sonolen said that this attitude keeps them from getting help at the International Office (22). It would be unwise to dismiss this difficulty by saying that it is their own problem and that the university need not worry about it. Phornchhai Sakullelarasmi warned that it is unusual for Orientals to complain, so when they do, one should really listen (11).

Part of the problem is that Thais simply do not understand American culture. Several of the students recommended that American culture be taught to international students (4, 9, 11). Vanida said that Thai people need to remember that America is not their home (26). She is warning against expecting things to be as they are at home.

The other side of this situation is the narrowness which the Thai perceive in Americans. Kosal recommended that people in the United States study about other countries because they need a broader view of the world (24). At least, the Thais feel Americans should be more eager to get acquainted with foreigners. Nartnittha Jiraraypong said that Americans should not avoid the Thai people but should be nicer to them. This would make it easier for them to adjust (6).
The way to get Thais involved with Americans was not a subject for which the Thais really had an answer, but Sakkesem said that North Texas State University should try to get Thais involved with Americans (25). Vanida mentioned that on special days Thais should be with American families (26). Jan Skulkul, who lived on the Iowa State Campus with her husband before coming alone to North Texas, had several suggestions based on her experiences at the other university. There was an organization on campus called Friends of International Wives which helped them to adjust to everyday life in the United States as well as offered them friendship. International students lived in an International Village, several apartment or dormitory-type buildings which housed only foreign students and their families. This drew all the students from different countries closer together and, since English was the main language they had in common, encouraged them to speak it. There was also a university-sponsored tour service for international students as well as a special lounge and a counselor to assist international students (19).

Some of what Jan is describing is an integral part of the university structure at Iowa State but would require major changes to become so at North Texas. Sutthidej Jermhansa said that North Texas has done the best that they can do. Now it is up to the Thais to adjust (5). Doubtless,
there are many people on the North Texas campus who would echo this sentiment, but others were not content to leave it at that. The Thai students had a number of other ideas concerning the way the university is managed. Pongpanich Wongdeethai said that the university needs more offices in the international area, especially he expressed the need for individuals who would help with the small things that come up (27). Adit Benchart said that changing his major was a very confusing experience. More effective assistance needs to be organized for students for situations such as this (1). Kamchorn suggested that a weakness in campus organization lies among the international clubs themselves. He said that the Thai Student Organization should bring all Thai students together to find out what each student needs (11). Siam believed that this was important because the International Office needs more input (23). Waraporn said that the university should provide information about these student organizations to the new students. Some students from other countries come here without knowing anyone and they need to find a community that will assist them (9). This assistance is needed since, as Nartnittha said, orientation was not much help (6). Vinich's idea is that there should be a program set up to assist international students, but it should not be the sole responsibility of the International Office and should involve more Americans (4).
Of course, many of the Thai were deeply concerned about the increase in tuition. Some even recommended lower tuition as a change the university needs to make (1, 13), and Adit went so far as to call raising tuition a "bad thing" (1). They also were disturbed about the changes in admission requirements, saying that this decreased the opportunities for foreign students to come to the United States (21). Vanida and Surtirapawn, on the other hand, encouraged the university to lower the number of Thais which they accept as students (22, 26).

The final area in which the Thais made recommendations for change was the classroom. Pensri said that foreign students should not have to write papers (3). Kosal agreed that writing in English was difficult, especially in essay questions on examinations. He felt these should be eliminated (24).

The faculty was of considerable concern to the Thai students who made several suggestions about them. Pongpanich said that someone needs to talk to the faculty because they try to impede international students. He felt that international students should have the same chance as American students (27). Phornchai said that if an international student can prove that a professor is discriminating against him, the university should do something about it. He also suggested seminars for faculty to help them
understand foreign students (17). In fact, Vinich said that all students and faculty should learn more about inter-
national students (4). Sakkasem, putting the weight on the Thais' shoulders, said that Thai students need to learn to treat the faculty like friends (25).

Recommendations by the Faculty and Administrators

The faculty and administration offered a number of suggestions about ways in which the university could help to make the Thai students' experience at North Texas State University more successful. Kingery went so far as to say that the university has an obligation, if they accept international students, to find out what they need. He said that we do not do enough to orient our faculty to deal with foreign students (7). One reason for this may be experiences such as Edward Rice-Maximin had when he planned a staff development program on the subject of cross-cultural communication, and the only people who attended were those who did not need to be there because they already understood about the cultural differences (15). Kingery's suggestion is, however, very practical. He said that the university needs to offer to teachers who do not have experience dealing with international students "cookbook methods" for helping foreigners learn in the American classroom. He recommended a potpourri of ideas be gathered for dissemination among the faculty, and, further, that the international
students themselves be called upon to suggest ideas and activities (7). Smith recommended more planned group interaction in the classroom to help Thais, and other international groups, to become more involved with Americans (20). Jim Miller, Dean of the College of Education, said that we need to devise a way in which there can be ongoing discussions between American and Thai students. Among other advantages, this type of interaction would help Thais to pick up the English language more quickly (12). And Crow felt that the American students need to learn about cultural differences and be persuaded of the value to them in becoming acquainted with international students (2).

Actually, Crow believes that proper preparation for education in the United States should begin in Thailand with at least a six months course of study in intensive English to develop good oral skills, and to also begin to introduce the Thai student to the type of teaching methods that they will experience in the United States and to help them begin to "loosen up somewhat." Then when they arrive, Crow would place them in situations which would minimize the chance of failure in order to build up their confidence. Perhaps the university should establish a core of courses to develop cross-cultural understanding where no grades are given. The method of teaching would be exploration and discussion, and stress would be placed on the positive experiences of
success for the student (2). Smith agreed with the idea of an orientation period to ease the student into our educational system. In fact, Smith recommends a semester of orientation with time to adjust to the American culture and including special instruction on American slang and idiom (20).

Rodriguez's office specializes in what may be one of the most important things that can be offered to a student who is attending school in a foreign country, tender loving care. She says that she tries to make them aware of better ways to cope while they are here, but she does not want to change them because then they would not fit into their own culture when they return home (16). Pan Kruatrachue said that we can encourage Thai students to be more open but that we can only do this by becoming friends with them. It is hard to open up and be close with someone from a different culture unless you know them very well. Pan believes that the host family program is the best idea that North Texas has had for foreign students, but she warns that both sides of this arrangement must cooperate. Sometimes even in the host family situation a Thai student may misunderstand some cultural thing and back away (10). Joyce Sauter, who administers the Host Family Program, says that many Thais sign up for the program, but they will not stay if things do not work out with the host family. One of the biggest
problems is getting the Thais to tell her when something is not going well. If the family does something wrong or does not contact them, the Thais simply do not mention it which makes it difficult for her to keep the program functioning. Another problem is finding appropriate families. This has been hard to do in Denton, but she is finally making some progress. Families must be chosen with care and oriented properly. The Thai students are not looking for substitute parents; they are looking for the warmth of a family group, but it is an adult-to-adult exchange of cultural experiences.

The faculty and administration who were interviewed had a positive attitude about Thai students. Miller summarized fairly well for everyone when he said that Thai students have been diligent workers and have gone well beyond what one might expect. This is particularly impressive considering the difficulty they have with the language. Robertson believes that Thais contribute a great deal to North Texas State University by the variety of their input.

Concluding Recommendations

Solving the problems that have been presented in this study is not an easy task, yet it is an important one. The Thai students who come to the United States today are the leaders of Thailand for tomorrow. As was stated in the
preface, Thailand is a pivotal country in Southeast Asia, standing as it does as a dam against the spread of communism. It is an economically developing country in an area of the world that is increasingly becoming a significant market. The impression of Americans that these students carry home with them will form the policy, economic and political, of their country in the future. Besides this nationally expedient reason, should not American institutions of learning be responsible to stand for the ideas their country's philosophy espouses, primarily that of equality and human dignity? With all these factors in mind, the following recommendations are offered.

1. Raise the consciousness of Americans concerning Thai students.—Perhaps the first thing that must be done is to raise the consciousness of those on the North Texas campus to a higher sensitivity to the feelings of international students. One way to accomplish this might be through a readers theatre presentation which would use the words of the students who were interviewed for this study as they explained their experiences here. Such a script is provided in the final chapter.

2. Provide more effective ways of improving oral and listening skills in the English proficiency of Thai students.—North Texas State University cannot tell the Thai government how to teach English to its subjects, but North
Texas could make recommendations. On several occasions in the past few years, officials of the educational arm of the Thai government have visited North Texas. Doubtless they will do so again. It would be possible for educators in this country to suggest that English taught as an oral language as well as a written one would help Thai students to be more effective communicators in the United States. North Texas might recommend more intensive English training in listening and speaking just prior to allowing a student to come to the United States for an education. This university might even offer to set up an institute in Thailand to prepare Thai students for the American classroom.

Kamchorn's suggestion that living in dormitories helps one to learn English faster is certainly on target, but how would international students react to being told they must live in certain areas? Something such as the International Village which Jan described would be of considerable value, but Iowa State had a much smaller population of international students than North Texas does. It would be unwieldy to set up such a system here, although a pilot project mixing various international groups together or mixing international students with Americans would be a worthwhile idea.

A practical suggestion which was made by Pensiri would be a pool of people who are willing to assist international students with their English in written papers. After a
student has completed a paper, preparing it to his best ability, then he could contact someone in this pool of people who would correct the English grammar. That way, the international student would actually write the entire paper, but would not have to suffer the embarrassment of turning in something that was incorrectly done. Most instructors would be pleased with this arrangement too because it would make grading so much easier.

The dissatisfaction with the Intensive English Language Institute needs to be examined. Discussions with Dan Robertson, Director of the Institute, indicate that they are doing the best that they can (15). Naturally, the students are anxious to pass the TOEFL, while the teachers are interested in improving their students' ability to communicate in English. An indepth orientation during which the goals of both faculty and students are brought more into harmony might be attempted. Is there any way to lower the cost of instruction? This seems to be the major complaint. Is it possible to divide the classes along ethnic or even national lines in order to avoid the problems which arise when such differing cultures are trying to learn something so basic and so important as language? Robertson says that the instructors are aware of the possible danger of some groups dominating the class and that they work very hard at equalizing the participation in the classroom (15). However,
the Thais are not pleased with the result. Perhaps the
Intensive English Language Institute should listen.

3. Provide studies in American culture for Thai
students.—The Thai students and the interviewed faculty
and administrators appear to be recommending that North
Texas teach a thorough course in American culture to inter-
national students, especially to those coming from cultures
which are particularly different from that in the United
States. It will need to be a required course because most
students will not take anything that they do not have to,
and, as has been previously expressed, some of the Thai feel
that they will only be here for two years so there is no
need to bother learning about the culture. This is an error
on their parts because they are losing a large portion of
the value of an education in the United States through this
omission.

4. Develop in Americans an appreciation of foreign
cultures.—By the same token, Americans need to learn more
about foreigners. The readers' theatre concept mentioned
earlier would be one effective way to do this. The theatre
department could also begin to chose plays that would have
the same impact. International students usually enjoy
talking about their home countries and would be glad to
speak to groups on topics concerning the cultures from which
they come. Occasions which spotlight one particular country
or area of the world could be organized involving the students from that area. What is needed is to give a broader world view to all of North Texas's students and faculty. Perhaps an entire international cultures program should be developed and attendance could be encouraged through some sort of credit or reward system. It is a shame that people might have to be bribed to learn, but it may be necessary. However, if North Texas is going to continue to have large numbers of foreign students on its campus, it is going to need to find some way to help the Americans who share the campus with them to benefit from the experience of working and studying with those from other countries.

5. Involve Thai students with Americans in cross-cultural activities.--In order for the Thai to become more involved with Americans, they need to develop American friendships and have American reference groups. Campus organizations could make a concerted effort to solicit membership from international students. The international host family program needs more emphasis. It is a good fledgling program, but it does not yet have enough support in the community. The faculty is a natural support group for this program as they are members of both the university and the Denton communities. Anytime international students can be included in any sort of family activity, this should
be encouraged. It is especially important for the Thai to have contact with older citizens and with children for they miss their intergenerational homes. Campus-wide activities which stress a sharing between foreign students and American students and faculty need to be more plentiful and attendance at them needs to be encouraged.

6. Provide effective services for Thai students.—Although Iowa State's smaller international population made it easier for them to create a family feeling with their foreign students, some of their ideas might be adapted to North Texas State. For instance, counseling for foreign students is a good concept. The International Office spends the majority of its time handling immigration and financial matters (14), perhaps it could add to its staff and shift its focus somewhat. An international lounge could be an asset. It would offer a place for meeting others who are strangers in this country and it would give all foreign students a much needed reference point on the campus. It might have the danger of becoming a cliquish place, but if the university, perhaps through the International Office, monitored the area, the situation could be controlled enough to prevent any one group from dominating it.

The position of the International Office needs to be examined. It is an important part of the North Texas structure but its staff is too small for the number of
students which are currently on the campus. The services which are available are many and varied, but the ones that are used seem to be fairly limited. For the Thai, the International Office is of little assistance in its current form. The Thai do not even know what it can or will do for them. Since they usually choose to ask a friend for information and advice, they would not be inclined toward going to the office. Besides, Thais do not trust systems and structures; they trust individuals. Of course, the services which are available need to be made clear to all international students, and perhaps the orientations need to be more varied and more flexible. Perhaps some should be scheduled after the semester begins to include those people who were unable to arrive early. Perhaps some sessions should be given in the students' native tongue to make them feel more comfortable, and others should be done in English to help the foreign student to get used to listening to the language. The International Office should be very conscious of the particular needs of each national group, keeping in mind those special characteristics which may effect their use of and participation in university programs.

The method of reaching Thai students which promises to be the most effective is through an informal network of the Thai Student Organization. In the Thai community there are certain people in any one year who are the recognized leaders.
These people may be older, or have more status from Thailand or they may have been here longer, but they are informally recognized by the Thai community as its leaders. These people can be identified and enlisted to help the International Office in reaching the needs of the Thai students. Another idea might be to have a representative in each department which has a significant number of Thai students. Anytime the university wanted to be certain that the Thai students were aware of a particular event, they could send the information through these representatives or through the informal leaders which they had identified.

7. Set tuition and entrance requirements based on goals of the university.--Whether to increase standards, thereby reducing the number of international students who will qualify for entrance, is a matter of priorities. What exactly does the university want to accomplish? If the university is attempting to be more selective and to raise the level of learning capability in the entire university, then they have every right to do so. If this limits the number of international students who qualify for entrance, then perhaps that is not a totally negative thing. Since several of the Thai students said that there are too many Thai students here, perhaps more stringent admission requirements will reduce that number to a more accessible group. Perhaps with a more limited number of their countrymen with
which to associate, the Thais will be more inclined to interact with Americans and with other foreign students.

The Thai students mentioned a concern about the increase in tuition, but this is not a problem which can be altered based on humanitarian attitudes. It is, unfortunately at this time, a matter of economics.

Conclusion

In general, to make the educational experience at North Texas State University more pleasant and enriching for Thai students and most other international students will require a concerted effort on the parts of the university, and the students, both Thai and American. Thai students need to come to this country better prepared in the language. American students need to be more polite, more patient and above all more interested in learning about cultures that are different from their own. Faculty need to be aware of the cultural differences that may create problems in the classroom, and they need to develop an appreciation of those who have the courage to come to the United States for an education, encouraging them and assisting them, not hindering them or placing obstacles in their paths. The university needs to work at developing programs, both formal and informal that will involve the Thai students more with Americans, both students in the university and families in the community. More opportunities for the Thai to share
their culture with their peers and their professors need to be organized. The International Office should be expanded and perhaps revamped to stress service to all international students. The Intensive English Language Institute requires close examination to see if the complaints brought against it are warranted.

North Texas has been working to obtain national visibility, but this university already has begun to gain a measure of international visibility through the education of nearly two thousand international students each year. With thoughtful consideration of the services provided to these students and the manner in which these students are treated, North Texas can increase the quality of this growing international visibility.

If the United States is to retain its current good will with Thailand, the colleges and universities of this country which are educating Thailand's students must represent America at her best. When the Thai students attending North Texas today return home, let them take with them a good education and a good attitude about America.
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18. Sauter, Joyce, Interview, December 18, 1984, in the International Office at North Texas State University in Denton, Texas.

19. Skulkul, Jan, Interview, February 10, 1985, at her home in Denton, Texas.

20. Smith, Howard, Interview, December 17, 1984, in his office at North Texas State University in Denton, Texas.


22. Scripradit, Achara, Interview, February 23, 1985, at her apartment in Denton, Texas.

23. Sungvaribudh, Siam, Interview, November 11, 1984, at his apartment in Denton, Texas.


25. Udomwatthai, Sakkasem, Interview, November 11, 1984, at his apartment in Denton, Texas.


27. Wongdeethai, Pongpanich, Interview, December 2, 1984, in the Business Building at North Texas State University in Denton, Texas.
CHAPTER VII

READERS THEATRE

Introduction

This chapter contains a readers theatre script based on the twenty-two interviews that have been the focus of this study. Experiences and expressions concerning a variety of aspects of life for the Thai student at North Texas State University have been selected and arranged in an appropriate order for performance. The purpose of this script is to raise the consciousness of those who see it to a more empathetic understanding of the situation that Thai, and by extension most foreign students, face when attending school in this country.

When this readers theatre is performed, communication of the feelings expressed will be the central focus. If the readers can be oriental in appearance, it would be advantageous, but not necessary. The setting should be simple and uncluttered so that nothing interferes with the basic communication. The readers should wear ordinary clothing in uncomplicated but current styles to avoid any costumed look. The style of presentation should be fairly intimate and personal as if the audience were sitting around chatting with the Thai students about their lives.
"Thailand was known to the rest of the world for five centuries as Siam... but its people have called their country Muang Thai meaning Land of the Free for 3,000 years" (1). Isn't it interesting that we, too, call our country the land of the free? Perhaps we have more in common with the resilient Thai people than we might at first think. "They are proud of the fact that (unlike most Asian countries) they have never been subject to colonial rule" (1), and we are proud of the freedom which we won from our colonial beginnings.

Thailand is located in Southeast Asia with Burma wrapped around its eastern and northern borders. Laos lies to its northeast and Kamchea to its southeast, while directly south are the Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia. Thailand is slightly larger in land area than the State of Texas (1). Because of a close proximity to Vietnam and Cambodia as well as Mainland China, Thailand is a pivotal location in today's world, standing as a bulwark against the overflow of communism.

Education is a highly revered privilege in Thailand and higher education is the mark of distinction, but one that is not available to everyone. Because American colleges and universities are respected by the Thai government and by the Thai people, many Thai students
aspire to come to study in our country. If they are lucky, they are accepted by an American university and are granted a visa to come here.

Before leaving their homeland most of them try to prepare themselves for our culture. One method of doing this is through seminars in which they are told what to expect when they get here.

Pawn: In my country before we came they told us about self-service. You know, not to spoil it. There is so much self-service here, I mean you can fill up your own gas, your own car. Buy your newspapers from the coin place. Don't spoil that. I mean, it's a right over here. Don't spoil that right.

And they tell us to be patient because we probably have a handicap in language, and because the American's accent is different from the English. Our English teachers mainly came from England, not the United States. And words and structures are a little different.

Narrator: Some Thai students watch American movies and television to learn what we are like. Can you imagine what they expect of us after observing our culture through Dallas and Family Feud? Many Thai talk with friends who have been to this country. They should have a better image of what we are really like, shouldn't they?
Vinich: I heard from my friend the people in the South are not quite different from the people in our country, but when I came, I found out that Thai people treat foreigners more friendly than Americans do. I'm not sure, [maybe Americans] don't like to talk to foreign students because of the language problem. I guess when we communicate, they don't understand what we are saying, what we are talking about. I tried to ask them for directions in a shopping center, . . . . Maybe the American accent is different from the international accent. In school we never talk in English. We just write and read. We never practice talking in a real life situation. Maybe that's an education problem in our country.

Pawn: I was afraid I wouldn't fit in because I heard from some people that in some areas they rejected foreigners. I don't know why. Maybe it's from the Viet Nam War which had a bad impression on some people. But I was afraid I would find a place of that sort. But when I came here I had a nice roommate. He was an American. I'm glad he was a nice guy. And he helped me around. And he showed me a lot of things. I had a lot of friends then. I stuck with the basketball players. I play tennis, but my suite mates played basketball and my roommate was a big fan of basketball, so I went to basketball games a lot then. And he showed me
around a lot and made me feel comfortable. I had no problem. I fit in alright and I didn’t have the problem I was worried about.

Narrator: The Thai are a highly agreeable and adjustable people. This attitude grows out of their religion. Ninety-five percent of the population of Thailand is Buddhist. But in this country Buddhists are a religious minority. I wonder if being a Buddhist presents any special problems here?

Phornchai: I have no trouble being a Buddhist here because I follow the Buddha way. He told us that what you appreciate is in your mind. And he taught me not to hate the other religions. So I think that's why I don't have any problems with religion here.

Pawn: I am a Buddhist also. In Buddhism we just have symbolic figures and things like that. Actually Buddhism, I perceive, is something just like the Ten Commandments. Buddha, he's the founder of the religion, he's a philosopher; he's nothing solid like God. He's not God. He never recognized himself as God. He's just a philosopher, and what he preached, if you can take some, take it, if you can't, just leave it. That's what he said. In fact, Buddhism is not a religion really, not what you say is a religion. I don't believe in having a religion. I just believe in doing good. Don't do this, don't do that. I think that everything's
almost common sense. If people use their common sense, you don't need religion anyway.

**Narrator:** Some Thai people are quite familiar with Christianity and have a high degree of regard for the religion. What did you know about Christianity when you came here?

**Noo:** I was born and raised with the Christian religion. But I don't believe in any part that's . . . okay, I don't want to talk about metaphysics. I believe that Jesus is very, very good. And it's good for you to follow if you believe in him. I just don't believe in the . . . oh, I'll call it supernatural. I don't believe in that part, whatever religion, even in Buddhism itself. If someone said, well, Buddha just came down from the heaven and he could walk the first day. That was part of the history of Buddha, that he could walk seven steps the first day that he came to earth, and I don't believe that myself. Maybe it's just me. And some say that Thai people believe in reincarnation, and I don't believe that either, so maybe, I don't know, it's just me. Maybe somebody else does. But I believe that Jesus is very good. And Buddha, I think he's a real person. He's just a regular person. Okay, he might be a king, but he has the logic, the way of thinking, that I like. But I don't believe in anything that's supernatural in him.
And Jesus, too. In the same manner. I believe that he is a real person and he is very, very good and you should follow him, because I studied the Bible when I was in Missionary school. Yeah, I went to school and I got certificate for Bible. But I don't believe in anything that's supernatural even in the Bible, so I question the Bible itself and I question the Tripitaka, whatever is supernatural in it.

I go to church sometime with my Mom in Thailand. I went to the Methodist church. I feel comfortable there. I feel free and I have fun and I met a lot of people. I have a good time. Even here, I went with Ruth to the Highland Baptist Church. You know, I came to tears when they had a chorus. I was so impressed when I went to church and they sang together. I think oh, this is what the Thai people should do when they go to church because in Thai church . . . okay, Thai temple . . . you don't sing, and I feel sometime we are not together like Americans are, because Americans, they sing together, they pray together. But the Thai people, they do it individually, even if they go together, they don't do it at the same time. Sometime they do, but they don't do it every time, like in American church. You have a feeling of togetherness that makes you feel you belong in there.
Narrator: Even though our practice of religion in the United States is very different from that in Thailand, Thai students do not seem to have difficulty adjusting to that difference, but there are other things which are not so easy for them. What do you think are the hardest differences for Thai students to handle when they come here?

Vinich: First thing is English language. Second thing is they feel unsure about themselves because they are still new and [are in a] new environment and everything, so, they feel that the American people treat them not very nice, partly because of the language problem and partly because they feel insecure in the new environment. Usually, I think, anywhere you go might have the same kind of problem if you're new.

Achara: As a foreign student, the first problem is when I go to class. I do not understand all the things the professor say. It's not his accent. I just use English for these two years, so English is my problem, and even when I do right and take my time, it doesn't do any good. This is the study problem. And it's real bad because if you have the same class as American students, they have more participation, but I can't, because sometimes I'm afraid I will ask a dumb question because I'm not understanding what they are talking about. Because they use slang and sometimes they talk about the news, and I'm not read the newspaper. So I have difficult
time in class. And now I took an advance course and they need more participation and that make me crazy. I'm not used to it. I'm not used to live here. I don't have a lot of friends here. And when you have problems, you don't know who to talk with. And you have more responsibility, because you come to study here, you use a lot of money of your parents, and you should respond to that. I think it's a lot of pressure. And then you go to class, you have problems with the course you study. And then you go back home and you should think a lot about how you spend, your Dad, your Mom, money. And sometimes people make me just . . . someone is real . . . is not nice . . . and we don't have our family to talk with, and we're not used to it.

Waraporn: I think the first difference is the way of the family.

Narrator: In Thailand, families are very close. The father is the patriarch and the mother plays a supportive role and handles the family finances. Respect for elders is a primary aspect of the upbringing of a Thai person and Thais expect to be responsible for their parents in their old age. There is no rush among young people to move out on their own and the parents do not push them out of the nest as is often the case in the United States. How do you compare American and Thai family life?
Waraporn: I don't know the real family life in the U.S., only what I saw on television. I think that the younger do not really respect the older. Well, maybe it is some kind of respect, but if you have something that you think is right, you say it. But in Bangkok, in Thailand, you don't say it. Sometimes they say if you know you are right, keep your mouth shut. Don't say anything. I think, I don't know about American people, but in Thailand when you're older, you just think that you right. But not if you're younger. Then you are never right. We have some poem that says that. "Because I'm take a warm bath before you, I am wiser." You know, it's the firstborn child that comes out from her mother first, so she takes a bath first, so she says, "I know that better than you because I took a bath before you." It just means that she was born before you so she should know better. So sometimes if you go to your boss or supervisor or something like that, if he did anything wrong and you know it's wrong, but it's not very serious, but if that wrong will make the supervisor lower, you just keep your mouth shut. If you say anything and anyone knows about that, he will be really angry with you. That would make him down.

Narrator: You mean he would lose face? You're right about us. We may respect our elders, but we don't always
show that respect. In fact, our attitudes are different from yours in a number of ways, aren't they?

Vinich: The problem is that we try to think of you as Thai. Not as American. First, we have to understand the culture of this country. Then we can be able to adapt ourselves to your culture. During our stay in the United States most of us do not intend to learn much about this culture. Because most of our students are intended to go back home after finishing their course. And it's just a matter of a short period of time compared to the whole life. We have to spend not more than four years, probably an average of two years to finish our work and then go back. So some don't care too much about the culture of this country.

Phornchai: What I saw is in the United States they respect your personal life. You work, your job, they can separate. I like your system, the way people deal with one another. It works quite well. In Thailand, they can't separate it out between personal life and responsibility, your job. Most Thais mix them together, and it causes difficulty to work with one another. Here it seems to me that whenever you work, you don't care about personal life. You don't try to get your personal life involved with the job. Like when you're working, you can discuss or express your idea, your belief, frankly, and after that you may be friends. The way
you dispute, it seems serious, but after that, after the job, you have a friendship, have a good relation. Nothing is changed. But in my country, I believe, there's a little difference about this relation. They bring personal emotion there, involved in jobs and work. The system does not work good enough. What impresses me is this. I like the system.

Noo: In the Thai Education System if we work hard but don't try to please the boss, you know, we just stay at the same level. We do not go up, even though we work hard. They don't look at the work you do. They look at other things that you do in the college like please the boss. Here you are different. You confront people. If you work hard, you will get good benefit here in the States, but not over there, even though you work hard to teach students. The administrators will look for other things there like you have to be social people and try to please the boss, and have a good mouth, you know, speak nice.

Narrator: These are interesting perceptions. What other differences do you notice particularly?

Achara: Always expect if it's a Thai party, you go like thirty minutes late, it's still alright. But I like the American way of . . . you're in time or at least on time. I like that very much. And I did that myself
when I was in my country. I try to be on time every time I have an appointment.

Waraporn: I think people are basically the same. Yes, they are the same. But the difference is, you know, you people, you are more organized. Like when you have a child, you teach them how to be in their . . . to be in their certain way of life. Yes, and you have to stay in a certain way of life. But in Thailand when we have a baby, we just try to please them. Even when they're a year or two or three years old, we just follow them with some food saying, "Eat, eat!" My American friend says that he could not stand that. Because in your country the child has to sit still and eat their own food, you know. But in Thailand, all I can say is 95 percent, they treat their child very differently from here.

Vinich: Also, in my country you would not see a young man and young woman walking along together . . . touching, holding hands, like they do here.

Achara: Yes, I found that very shocking. I could never do that.

Narrator: I can see where it would be disturbing if you were not used to it. A while ago Vinich said that the first problem was the language. Talk about that, would you? Do you agree that it is the biggest problem?
Waraporn: Language is a big problem, I think. Because I cannot explain how I really feel sometimes . . . when I'm sick, I want to tell the doctor how I feel. It's hard for me to . . . to tell the doctor. Or when I have problem with my bill, telephone bill, anything, you know. If I talk on the phone, I have problem when they talk back to me, you know, because they talk so fast. So I have to get some American people to talk for me.

Noo: When I first came here, I came here with confidence. When I got into the class and I couldn't understand even a single sentence, I was shocked. It may have been the accent and maybe the intonation too. And maybe because of the fastness. I couldn't get what they said, the instructors. People told me to calm down. I always expect too much from myself. I gradually understood what the instructor said. But it took me maybe one semester to understand fully, not fully, but to be able to understand more and be more confident. I never spoke in class, never. And I was very surprised at myself. Even after the first semester, I dare not speak up in class. I don't know how to make up the sentence. I just don't want to be a nuisance in the class.

Achara: Sometimes when I came here I didn't have a brave to talk with American. When they ask me, I always smile
and go away. I didn't answer them because I think my pronunciation is very bad and they cannot understand me. When I speak to them, they just . . . "Pardon me?" So I didn't talk to them. I feel better now.

Pawn: Some people tell us that we shouldn't speak our own language here. I am against that. I think that when you know two or more languages you can do more things. You have the right to choose what you want to do. Like there are so many restaurants here, I have the right to choose where I want to go. So I have the right to choose what I want to say. And I speak my language only when I'm with my friends, but if there's an American or there's an outsider around, then we'll speak the language that he knows because it wouldn't be fair if I don't know English . . . or I don't know Spanish, and I go into a Spanish community and they say everything in Spanish. I would feel bad. I would feel left out, too, but if I was with my friend and I want to say something in my language, I think I can do that. Some people have walked up to us and said to us, "You're in the United States. You shouldn't be speaking your own language." Things like that. I know that maybe they think that when I'm here I should learn English. . . . I think I understand why they say that. The first time I heard it, I took it very hard because I thought, I mean, why . . . why can't we say something
which is in our own mother's tongue? I mean why can't we do that? Why do you have to tell us what to say? I know I came here to learn English and, you know, education, but I think there are times aside that you can do what you like, especially when you are with your own people. But I have been taught not to argue when these things happen because it would make the matter worse if I start arguing with those people who talk to me that way, so I kind of keep silent and blow it up somewhere later.

Narrator: Do many Americans say things like that to you?

Pawn: No not many. Just a few.

Narrator: How do Americans treat you? Do you find Americans easy to become friends with?

Noo: Thai people don't like to approach the Americans because once they approach them the Americans act unnaturally. I don't know. That's my feeling. Maybe because of the language and maybe because of the feeling. I mean, they think that they are superior to us. I don't know. But even now I have that feeling that they are uncomfortable to talk to us. My English is not that bad, but I still have that feeling, that impression, that some of them are intimidated. I have unpleasant experiences in many of my classes when, if we cannot write down the lectures, after class we would
talk to the . . . not only me, many of us . . . would talk to the Americans and ask for the lecture. They would say, "Yes, no problem," but the next class they would move their seat to another seat to avoid us . . . and that really makes us feel bad. I have encountered that situation myself and some of my friends also. But I won't say that everyone is not quite right . . . only some of them.

Vinich: It's not that easy for a foreigner to come to this country, maybe because this country is so big and then your society seem to look at your own self and you seem to think that everything is over here, just like any big person would think about themselves. So you seem to understand about yourself more than outsider. But in my country, we like to understand the outsider and know more about foreigners. We respect more. And that is seen in everything . . . in every project we have with foreigner we put our best person to work with a foreigner, because your face is in that project in my country. And then you seem to try to understand foreigners, understand their language . . . or even if they try to speak your language, you say, "Yes, I understand," even if you have a question about a word. Of course our language is not perfect. But in this society if your accent is different the people seem to
not recognize your worth somehow even just like this example. You go to a hamburger shop, just McDonald's. You cannot order a steak or shrimp or fish, but you have to order a hamburger, of course. Then you ask for hamburger. The only thing that you can order in that shop is hamburger. But the people who give you the service, they question you . . . "What did you say?" "Did you say something?" They don't understand you at all. It's a strange feeling. And they look at you as if you speak a strange language, not as a foreigner, but they look at you as, you know, the people who can't speak. Even with our accent you could make it out somehow, but people here don't seem to adjust to our strange sound. Even when you point at the menu and say, "Hamburger," they seem to question you. This would include into everything you do in this country like having a conversation with somebody else, some American. This would be an extension of greater misunderstanding if you go to the registration office and ask for something and if your pronunciation is different, they will treat you different. So that's the kind of thing that turns you off from speaking with Americans. Then you feel kind of negative to the society and then you withdraw yourself from the society and study the pronunciation before trying it again.
Pawn: There are some bad feelings here and there in town. But it's because they haven't been exposed to different cultures so they don't know what's going on. Maybe they feel that they're being invaded. And they'll want to protect their own land. So they have done some, you know, they say some bad things to you. I used to work one summer, you know, as a door-to-door salesman. And there I got a lot of different opinions. Some people would tell me to go home. Maybe I interrupted their dinner. I'm not sure, but here in Denton, well, I had one guy who say that to me, but then I think that's common. I don't take that seriously. I don't feel rejected, or anything, when they say that. I think I understand why. Because I'm new here. They don't know who I am. I'm a stranger. They treat me as a stranger and they just feel like this is their place. I don't think I did anything to them, but maybe they are being a little too protective.

Achara: Ummmm . . . I have bad experience when I went to public safety. The people over there, they are very unfriendly, especially to foreigners because, probably of the other language, you know, and they might not understand, so they got mad. They scolded me, too. They told me to raise my hand, you know, when I was applying for my ID card. And I didn't hear, you know,
perfectly, so I didn't raise my hand. She say it twice and I was shocked, so I didn't understand until my Thai friend say, "She told you to raise your hand." Then I raised my hand and say, "I'm sorry." And I told my friends that, you know, my classmates, and they say that these people are, you know, they feel unsafe. That's why they did that. They are unhappy, probably. "So don't feel bad," they told me. But I don't know. They are talking, my American friends in the cafeteria, and they say "Don't worry! They treat me like that, too!"

Pawn: When I was in Kentucky, when I was working door-to-door, there I think I got really close to the community. I had to be down there [on a] certain level to speak to them face-to-face. One idea I had was changed. I mean before that I wasn't sure about the black people. I had questions about why they had to be separate, why they had to be in a separate community, and why people say they are bad. Sometimes they live so poor. And when I went to work in Kentucky, I had to go everywhere, black, white community. And when I visited the black community, they kinda changed my idea. I mean, they were very friendly. I don't know if it was only a first impression because you don't know them real well, but they treated me better than a lot of the white people. I'm sorry to say this, I mean, black and white,
I don't like to do that, but anyway, most of them treated me better than the white people ... I mean they welcomed me to their homes. The way they talked to me was like they had nothing to fear. Not like some of the white people I talked to. Hardly anybody rejected me, I mean the black people. They welcomed me to their home. They welcomed me to sit down and talk. And they'll listen and they say, "yes" or "no" later on. And they paid attention. They were very warm to me. I don't know why. I mean they changed my idea. And then I got a thought. They're not as bad as most people think.

Phornchai: I have one bad experience and that's the only bad experience I have ever in America. I was walking on the street to Kendall Hall past Wooten Hall, that street. It was at night and I was in the junior year, I think. And there was this person ... it was a guy. He dressed in a uniform like the people who study in Kendall Hall ... ROTC ... I'm sure it was those people. Just one of them. I was walking one way and he was walking the other way. But I can see him coming at me like that. So as he came this way, I just change this way and I just walk this way (indicates he tried to avoid confronting the person on the sidwalk). So finally he came and hit on my ... you know he just
go on me like that (bumps arm). And he turned around and he said, "Watch it foreigner!" I can't fight him. He's big. There's no way I can do anything. And it's not my country. And I was just quiet and then he came close to me and he was just close, you know, as close as this (indicates right in front of him). And I couldn't think of anything. I couldn't fight him and I couldn't run, you know. I was mad, too. That's why I didn't run. So I finally thought of something and I said, "What are you going to do?" I let him see that I'm looking at his badge, his rank and everything . . . I didn't know what rank it is, but I know his name. I said, "What are you going to do? Are you going to hit me?" And I look him in the eyes and I say, "Are you going to hit me?" And his eye was just . . . it was just . . . he was mad. He really wanted to hit me. I don't know why. I didn't know him and he didn't know me. And he just turned around and he said, you know, the bad thing (spelling) "F..U..C..K you, foreigner!" And he just go. He was about to hit me, you know, but I was thinking if I can remind him of what the consequences would be after he hit me, maybe he doesn't. And he didn't. So I was glad for that.

Achara: I have host family because when I study in Intensive English Language Institute they give me one host
family. They were really good to me. Right now we don't contact anymore because I didn't have time. They try to contact me sometimes but I didn't have time. He is a doctor for the pet. They have four children. The first time they asked me to come to join in the family and I go there and am very impressed. Is very nice.

Pawn: I'll tell you a story about when I went skiing last Christmas. Just me, a Thai, and the rest American. It was a group from NTSU. I went with them. Most of them are younger than me. But they don't know that. Most of them think I'm an undergraduate and they don't know that I'm a graduate student. I stay in a condominium with the American people and we got along just fine. . . . I studied in England and both my parents studied abroad. My parents have a lot of foreign friends because of business so I don't feel real uncomfortable with foreigners. . . . Sometimes I like to go to a bar by myself. When I was skiing I met this guy. He was slightly drunk. He invited me to go to another bar. He said, "Did you ever go out with the local people before?" I think he was about thirty-five. He just quit his job and he was getting drunk, so I say, "Okay." Within about a half an hour I was driving his car because he was too drunk to drive. So I just drive to another bar and just sit with him and
drink before I went back to the condominium because I decided on my last day because I was so tired of skiing, you know, for about four days in a row. I say on my last day, I just want to rest and just go out and drink, and I got along pretty fine.

Vinich: Usually I get along well with Americans, but this one, I didn't get along with him at all. It was a terrible experience. He . . . I don't think he liked foreigner, you know. He liked football and he liked to stay out late. I don't think he had many friends, but he always . . . everytime we talk, it's just like he was looking down on me and I didn't feel good, so I didn't want to talk to him. And he was big, you know. I can't do anything about it. But I got all my help from one of my friend who was an RA. And we became very good friends. This is an American. He used to be in the Air Force. He was the RA in the hall and so he changed me to another room in which I can stay by myself, and we became really good friends. Even after I left Kendall Hall to live in an apartment, he always visited me.

Waraporn: When I lived in Austin, I lived in the YWCA, and I had an American roommate. She's quite nice. At that time, I could not communicate with her really well. She moved from Chicago and was just looking for a job
in Austin, and she lived with me and she studied part-time and she wanted to get her master's degree. She's quite nice. She's good. I still miss her. Because she took me to play the rolling skate together. She took me to American Church. That impressed me. She took me two or three times. After that I don't have much time, but usually we went outside quite often. Sometimes after she was working, she would ask me to ride a bicycle with her because . . . she's a little bit fat and she liked to exercise. Sometimes she ask me to walk about ten blocks on weekends! No, I could not. She used to, but I could not. She's quite nice. Before she move out of Austin, at that time she had a boy friend and she moved out, and because her office is far from YWCA. She has to move out and after that we still talk, communicate together. Sometime she called me. Sometimes she came and visited me in the YWCA. And before she moved out to El Paso, she came here to Denton. She told me she was gonna leave. . . . She said good-bye to me.

Achara: You know, when I lived in the dormitory . . . I think I cannot blame them because it's also my personal problem, too, that I was not quite outgoing when I first came here. I was pretty shy because of the difference of hair, face, and everything. And I don't feel
comfortable because nobody stood next to me, you know. No one shared my feelings and shared the same problems. And I didn't go out that much to participate in the Thai community. I don't know that well where they were then because most of them, most of the Thai people, they lived in apartments, and I didn't have a car, so it would take me a while to walk to their apartment. And since I didn't know them so much . . . and I spend most of the time in the library and it made me bored.

Narrator: Some of you have had good experiences with Americans, but most of you seem to be saying that Americans don't like foreigners and that they don't try to help you out. What about the University? What kind of things do they do to help you, like when you first arrived here, what did they do?

Vinich: For the new people, when they come here, usually they don't know what they're supposed to do or ask. So they might not get help. And also, Thai people like to get help through a friend, ask friend. Sometime they get good advice if they ask the right person and sometime they didn't get what they're supposed to get if they go and see somebody who doesn't really know.

Achara: When I came here, I went to orientation, but I don't think it helped me a lot. Generally, they told me about the education system. They didn't talk about
American customs at all. . . . I think that we should be provided the information about the Thai Student Association because some of my friends, they told me that they had a lot of problems when they first came here. They didn't have any friends, so they had to go later to ask the International Office about whether there is Thai Student Association here or not, I think we need information about American customs and any kind of information we can get about the Thai Association because when we first come here we have a lot of problems about listening and speaking. If we go to the orientation, I don't think we can get a lot of information because we have some problem about listening. It would be better if it was a Thai student giving information and speaking in my language. I could understand better. 

Waraporn: I think they should provide information about how to . . . I'm gonna tell you my problem . . . after I finished my first master's degree here. It's very difficult for me to further apply for the second master's degree. When I apply I don't know about how to apply for second master's degree. I went to the graduate dean's office and I handed him my application form and about two weeks later I asked him about the result and they say that my application form has gone away and they didn't know what happened. So I have to
turn in the new application form, and have to refill it and then turn it in and it's gone away again. . . . On the third time, I got it through! We should be provided a certainty of information about how to apply . . . how to get it through. When I first came here, I applied through my country, so I didn't know what the system is.

Noo: The university could help better with financial problems. Some students do have the money and it just hasn't come in time. Not like me. I don't have it. It's alright. I know my situation. I have to work for it. But those student . . . okay first when they arrive in the United States . . . and they wouldn't have been allowed to take a lot of money out of their country. Now they have to send the money through the student department, the counselor section that takes care of you in Washington, and it takes a great deal of time for them to send the money. So when they first came they have about three hundred in their pocket or the most they have is a thousand, and they have to get an apartment, pay deposit, buy utensils, buy books, buy clothes if it's cold, and they don't have enough for the tuition fee cause their government wouldn't let them carry a lot of money out. Then they have to wait for that money that's coming, but it doesn't come in
time and they have a problem. They don't know where to turn to. And if they run to the International Office they have . . . okay, they have a short-term loan for international students, but it's not over four hundred. And you can't do that unless you have twelve hours in North Texas already. So the new student is not eligible. You can't borrow that money unless you've been here for a semester already. That's really something.

**Narrator:** It's what we call a Catch-22. You don't seem to be able to win no matter what you do. Maybe the university needs to think about how to work that out better. Since all of you came here for an education, let's talk about that. First, how do you feel about American students?

**Achara:** Some American students are good; some of them are not. Like if they are your classmate this semester, when you meet them, they always say hello to you. After that they never say hello to you again. Some of them are really good. I know one. He works in Dallas. He is very good to me. When he meets me he will say, "Hi, Ann. Did you pass the GRE yet? How can I help you?" He's very kind. I like him. But some of them are not good. Like if, when they are your classmate, when they can't understand some problem, they ask me and I
explain it to them and they can understand and they say, "Oh, you're really good and you're very kind." But after that I say, "Hello" to him or to her and they don't say hello to me. I don't know. My friend said some of them are not good, and don't like foreigners very much.

Waraporn: I think that the way American students treat me depends on the professor, very much. Like I have a class with Dr. Bob Miller. He tries to make in some way that will have American students associate with the foreign students, and he tries to have everybody participate in the activities in class. So if you have a chance to participate in class then you feel like that is your place. Then you have social interaction with the other students, also. But there will be some classes that the professor comes and gives the lecture and just leaves, so . . . I'm a very shy person . . . so it's hard for me to push myself to make friends with them if they just sit still and they don't turn and smile at me, you know. So I found it easy to make friends in some classes, but I found it's hard to make friends in other classes like statistics that I have with Dr. Brookshire, because everybody's just so serious with the statistics. And as soon as he finished the lecture, they just left because they have to go to their job. And I found that one
thing. If you want Americans to be your friend, you have to approach yourself . . . first. If you're really interested in making friends, you have to do it first.

**Narrator:** You said that it helps you if the teacher structures the class for interaction, and Achara and Noo said earlier that they had difficulty participating in regular class discussions. Is that a problem for most Thai students?

**Pawn:** Most Thai people don't get a chance to talk in class because they just don't talk. They're not trained to do that as opposed to the Arab students or the Chinese students which tend to go forward and speak out. Thai people don't speak out because they are trained to listen to the teacher only, when they are back in Thailand. You just listen. You don't argue. You just learn, you know. So when they come here, they are less advantaged in that kind of class where you need to learn to speak. They are afraid they are going to make fun of themselves. If . . . maybe they can find some way of improving their situation, maybe they can learn better.

**Waraporn:** The classroom is different. In my country we don't have to have a lot of participation. We just listen and ask when we don't understand something.
But when we come here, we have to participate . . . a lot. Everybody has to speak out, has to show off . . . when I came here it was very hard to adjust to this climate. When I first came here I took an accounting class, and we had about 20 percent to be participation, and when I attended the classes it was very . . . pressured. I couldn't speak out because when I first came here I didn't understand what they were saying so it was very difficult for me to speak out. So I got a zero on participation.

Noo: Here the teacher and student are quite equal, but in Thailand the teacher has more authority over students. They can correct students however they want. A teacher can correct a student for having long hair, not just for English grammar. She would go straight and say, "Get your hair cut." Even if she's an English teacher, she could do that. And the student wouldn't say a thing. He would go right away, and have a hair cut. You're supposed to listen to the teacher and not argue. Just listen and do what they say. I think that's a bad part of it. Sometime you don't understand but you just keep silent. After you've been treated that way a long time, you get used to it, and you're afraid to even have your hand up, even if you know the right answer. You're afraid to express yourself, your feelings and your
thoughts. And then we come to the United States and sit in the back of the class. Well, I'm not in that part. I normally speak up whatever I have in mind. And if I think it's the right answer, I will try to say it out now. I think if we are more open to the teacher like American students are, it might be better for us. . . . Here and in Thailand, too.

Phornchai: I think teachers have to realize that we are far different in culture. I think that they expect us to behave as an American, and I think that we can't because we came from a different culture. So they have to respect us in that manner, and I think that's the way it should be for the professor and administrator.

Waraporn: The thing that I'm most impressed about is when I am in the classroom most professors are very nice and they care about me, so they always ask, do I understand, or something like that. But that is not the same way that teachers treat the students in my country. I think the way they teach, forces the children to participate in the class here. But not in Thailand. Sometime I prepare and read the chapter before I go to the class, but when the teacher asks the question or asks the students to participate in the class, although I know the thing that I have in my mind, I can't speak out. I have to think about the sentence that I use. When I can think, they change the topics.
Achara: Intensive English Language Institute is fun. . . . It's fun because when I went there I felt so foreign but all of my classmates were foreign too. Even though I didn't have a brave to speak with Americans, I could get accustomed with other foreign students. One teacher impressed me. One is really good. I have two teachers. One taught grammar and the other taught vocabulary. I really love the grammar teacher. She's really nice. But the other one . . . I think sometimes that she didn't understand the problems of the foreign student. Like when you had a problem, you talked to her but she didn't understand. She didn't give you an opportunity to do something that you want to. I got a TOEFL score that was not enough to pass two level, but my score in the class is really good . . . not really good, but good . . . and my grammar teacher said, "You can pass two level because you are really a good student and I think you can study in the university, but she said the other teacher doesn't like me to pass two level. She wanted me to stay in the Intensive and study one more semester. That means I have to use a lot of money there. I don't want to. So I make up my mind. I don't want to study there. I study by myself and I got TOEFL, and I go to the university.

Narrator: So what you are all saying is that Thai teachers and American teachers have a very different style and
expect very different things from their students. You've already mentioned some experiences you've had with our university faculty. Tell us some more about that.

**Noo:** This semester I take one course. It is a project-type and my advisor, maybe he's busy. Whenever I go do his office he seems to be very busy. And I could not start my project until now. This is the sixth or seventh week already and I need to complete this course because it is my last semester. If I cannot finish this, I cannot graduate. And I don't want to acquire a grade without doing anything. Maybe he can give me grade, a B or an A, but I don't want that. I want to work and I want to study. I want to acquire knowledge. And it seems to me everything doesn't go smoothly. I am mad. Sometimes when I go to his office, he takes his overcoat and says, "I have a meeting." And then he leaves and then when I looked back at his door again I saw his room was lighted as if he were still there. Maybe he feels that he has too much to do. I don't want to complain too much because I have already complained a lot. I don't know what to do.

**Achara:** They have some faculty that don't like foreign students. Sometimes I have to take that class anyway. If a friend says that a teacher doesn't like foreign
students, I believe it is true now. One teacher like that did not really treat us bad. He was just not kind to us, you know. Someone said that if he had time to put us down, he would do it. Like if you make a presentation, if you are American, he did not ask a lot of questions, but if you're foreign, he ask, ask, ask, ask. It's too much pressure, because you have to stand in front of the room and make a presentation and you get nervous and he asks questions . . . I know that he knows better than us, so he can ask a lot of questions, difficult ones, tough ones. And you are be very nervous because you stand there alone.

Waraporn: Things are good for me since I changed my major. Because I wanted an I-20 form, I applied for Secondary Education, and then I was not happy in Secondary Education. I was very suffering when I studied Secondary Education. Probably I got a . . . not a good teacher, understanding teacher, that understand foreigners, you know, so I decided to change my major. After I changed my major, I became happy because the people, the faculty in Higher Education, they are more open-minded. I'm a teacher before. I know that any subject, you can make it easy for anyone, but it depends on the people who teach it. They can make it hard or they can make it easy. It depends on the teacher.
Pawn: I didn't have a problem with the faculty, but one of my friends had a problem in history. That semester he could not get the history class for international students, so he had to take the one for Americans. This is what he told me. The instructor didn't want him in the class so he told him to transfer to another class. He said, "Why? I can try and I can take all the exams." So he tried the first exam and got a C. The instructor says, "That is a disappointment. You don't belong in this class." My friend said, "Let me try one more time." He said that he believed that he could do it. And after the result of the second test, he said the instructor, in one class, asked him in front of the class whether he is gonna transfer. He said no he want to try. There were two Thais in that class. They both said, "No. We want to try." And then the instructor just took them out and took them to the registrar's office and asked them to drop. So they just drop.

Vinich: Americans believe that they are the best, or something like that. Hey, some should be better than the other if they work harder, but it looks like it's based on your skin, your color. I think that's wrong, what your believe, that's wrong. It depends on your brains inside, and that causes a lot of problems. Now it is much better than ten or twenty years ago. You are
trying to improve the situation, but still there is some evidence that prove Americans are white against blacks or white against Oriental or Asian people, and this has caused a little difficulty in working together. With white and black and also with white and international students. I had it happen to me in political science department. One professor, the first time I went to that department, because I registered late then, because I had to take a test in English, a placement test, screening test. After I knew that I passed I could register then. I went to the department to pick up a computer card. When it's my turn to pick up the computer card, one of the professors stood up and made a salute at me. It was not a time to do this, and he was more than fifty years old. In my country it's very funny if you saw someone this age do something like that. At first, I tried to accept it in a positive way, but after I asked them some questions and they didn't try to help me . . . I mean maybe they don't have enough patience for me. The way I communicate is not good enough at that time. Even now I still have some problem about communication. Suppose I ask you as an American what you understand from that action? If the professor saluted you at that time. Maybe it is just poor communication. I think it's not good for that
professor to do something like that. I don't think we would ever see something like this in my country because older people stay kind of calm and cool, usually. It's difficult to interpret this kind of thing as positive or even neutral.

**Narrator:** I don't know what I would have thought. Probably I would have laughed or ignored it, but it's hard to interpret what the professor meant without having seen the event. Tell me, all of you, after being here for awhile and having the kinds of difficulties and experiences you've described, do you feel it's worthwhile? Are you glad you came?

**Achara:** Yes, it's good to be independent and do everything on your own and also learn the discipline of the American people. And you learn how they respect the rights of each other. I love this.

**Noo:** At least, I can be in the hard situation again. I mean I can struggle and survive in the future, right? Since I have so many, many hard things. In Thailand, you can ask many, many Thai students here, they don't work. In Thailand they have servants. I also have some . . . okay sometimes I also wash my clothes, but we wash by hand. I don't cook because my mom takes care of that. You can say we live very pleasantly, happily. We can eat anything we want. We can go
anywhere we want. Here I don't have a car so I can't
go anywhere I want. I cannot eat anything I want. I
have to take care of myself, everything! Which is very
tough. And I must earn my money. I work here in the
student union in the Silver Eagle Suite. But that's
not a job that we would do in Thailand, right? And if
the guest doesn't treat me well, then I think, "Why did
I come here to be treated this way?" As I said, after
this I still can go to another hard situation. Before
I came, my mom used to say, "You cannot go to live in
America. You cannot study there. You are here being
treated like a princess and you would go there and be
in another situation." But I proved to her that I can.

Waraporn: I do enjoy being in American society. To see
things very different from us and to learn good things.
It's my good experience that I can compare things and
take some things back to Thailand. And I can tell my
people what I experienced here. And I do enjoy it very
much to come to study here.

Phornchai: The opportunity is open wide for you to study
here, and I have learned a lot from here, especially
your system. And I appreciate your system. I can't
hope that the whole world will live together and stay
happy. It's too far. But I want, here in North Texas,
Americans, professors and international students to
live together and to have a better understanding and respect [for] each other.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES
Appendix A

Description of the Study

Oral History Method

Oral history research is a method of gathering primary source material by use of a tape recorder. The information is obtained through a planned, well-thought-out interview with someone who was an eye witness to an event or who has first-hand experience. This interview is a question and answer session, not a monologue; however, the space taken by the interviewer should not be more than 10 percent of the tape. The interviewee is the focus and must be encouraged to recount his experiences.

Oral history is designed primarily to supplement the written record as opposed to substituting for it; therefore oral history is not used to cover that material that is in the written record. It is used to fill in the gaps in the written record.

Preparation is extremely important in the entire process of interviewing. The interviewer has a responsibility to do a thorough job of pre-interview research of what is already known. If one is going to fill in the gaps of an event or series of events, one must be fully aware of where the gaps are. If the interviewee knows that the interviewer has researched the subject under discussion, he is more likely to tell the truth, to be accurate. Also, the interviewer's
knowledge of the subject on which the interviewee is an expert can help to establish the necessary rapport for the interview.

The interviewer must also prepare an outline of the topics to be covered in the interview. This is a worksheet which guides the interview toward its purpose keeping the focus clearly before the interviewer, but it is not a list of the questions to be asked. An oral history interviewer must learn to listen actively and to probe effectively for the information that is sought.

When the interview is completed, the information will be stored on the tapes which have been recorded, but a decision about whether the material will be transcribed must be made. Under any circumstances, each tape should be carefully indexed so that the information on it is accessible.

Anyone who is planning an oral history research project would be wise to take a course on oral history, but if that is not feasible, then the researcher should spend some time thoroughly familiarizing himself with the literature which describes the oral history process. A number of books cover this topic. Two of the best among those currently available are, Davis, Cullom, Kathryn Back, and Kay MacLean, Oral History: From Tape to Type, Chicago, American Library Association, 1977, and Gorden, Raymond L, Interviewing: Strategy, Techniques, and Tactics, Homewood, Illinois, Dorsey Press, 1980.
Procedure

An intensive study of Thailand and its culture was made by reading books and articles written by both Thai and Western authors. People who had lived in Thailand or who had visited Thailand were sought and interviewed informally. Other experiences such as eating Thai food and attending Thai parties and ceremonies helped to create a working knowledge of the country and its social customs.

Twenty-two students from Thailand, who were at that time attending North Texas State University, were selected to be interviewed using the in-depth oral history style of interview. These interviews were conducted during the Fall of 1984 and the Spring and Summer of 1985. Each interview was recorded on audio tape so that a permanent record could be retained. A copy of the basic areas which were covered in each interview is in Appendix B. The selection process for these students was based on two major items: (1) the need to be articulate in English and (2) the need to be willing to be interviewed. As a result of these two requirements, it was possible for the interviewer to communicate with a reasonable level of fidelity with each interviewee. Also, since the interviewees had all volunteered or had been asked by a Thai friend if they would be willing to participate in the study, they were probably more candid than a random selection would have been.
The interviewees are, however, fairly representative of the Thai population at North Texas. Twelve were men and ten were women. Five were doctoral students. Fourteen were working on master's degrees and three were undergraduates. The primary majors among Thai students are education and business, particularly business computer information systems and other computer programs. Among the interviewees were eight education majors, five straight business majors, six computer majors, and three others—one in interior design and two in interdisciplinary studies.

It was decided that a total transcript of each interview would not be needed, but a written record of significant information should be drawn from each interview. These records are in Appendix C. Various portions of the interviews have been transcribed verbatim and used as quotations within the body of this study and as the majority of the content of the readers theatre script.

Ten members of the faculty and administration at North Texas State University were interviewed also. These people were selected because of their frequent interaction with international students, particularly Thai students. These interviews were less indepth and were more directed, dealing only with certain aspects of the individual's work which was relevant to their perception of the problems and needs of Thai students at North Texas.
The information gleaned from these interviews has been reported in this study and the recommendations made have been drawn from those suggested by the interviewees and synthesized by the interviewer.
Appendix B
Interview Topics

Background

Name
Birthplace/Birthdate
Family Life
Education
Religion
Typical Day

Decision to go to another country

Why United States?
Why North Texas State University?

Talk through process of coming to Denton

General information on life in the United States

Adjustments to this alien culture (climate, language, food, dress, religion, transportation, etc.)

When and how arrived here

Duration of stay

Major

Living situation

Community of friends

Experiences and impressions

Cultural contrasts

Aid from North Texas
Treatment
  by students
  by faculty
  by townspeople
Good experiences
Bad experiences
  What has been learned from difficulties here?
Ways to improve international experience
Recommend North Texas to others? Why?
Glad/sorry came?
Travels in the United States
Appendix C

A Written Record of Significant Information from Each Interview
NAME: Pensri Gajasuta
SEX: Female
AGE: 24
PLACE OF BIRTH: Roderi, 2 hours south of Bangkok.
SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND: Father is a doctor (surgeon), mother is a nurse. They have a private clinic.
RELIGION: Buddhist
PLACE OF EDUCATION: Kindergarten at 3 1/2, finished high school at 17, went to Bangkok to go to school at age 6. Went to school in South Thailand. Worked one year in private hospital in Bankok. Came to NTSU. She wants to open her own nursery school. Will be here two years (one more year).
TYPE OF EDUCATION: Bachelor's in Nursing
WHY CAME TO U.S.: Came to Denton because her boyfriend was here. Came to United States because many people in her country come to U.S. to study. It's good because you can study English. The textbooks they use in Thailand are from U.S.
CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS: Climate was too cold. Food was a problem, she doesn't like it. Writing and speaking English was hard--speaking is getting easier but writing is still hard.
FAVORABLE ATTITUDES: People in her department are very friendly. Likes the way children are raised here--plans to apply it in Thailand. Most students are nice to her. Likes transportation because bus comes right by her apartment.
UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES: She's heard her friend in business say teachers aren't nice. People in stores sometimes seem unwilling to speak to her—some speak to her with bad manners. Some discriminate—they look at her and speak to her badly.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Don't require papers from Thai students, or grammar shouldn't be so strict. [What about someone who would correct grammar after it has been written.] The new requirements are too high.
NAME: Adit Benchart
SEX: Male
AGE: 28
PLACE OF BIRTH: Bangkok

SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND: Father is a merchant, sells diving equipment and speed boats—Chinese background. Has four servants for the four of his family. Both his parents went to school in England.

RELIGION: Buddhism

PLACE OF EDUCATION: Boarding school named after King--outside Bangkok, when he was 8 1/2 (for 3 years). England for prep school when 12--1 1/2 years, Newells and Dicend in Sussex. Public school in England--Shropshire Wilkinkol, 4 1/2 years. At 18 he went to Carnegie-Mellon for 1 year--then went to Lehigh. Back to Thailand working for three years. NTSU.


WHY CAME TO U.S.: He had a feeling there was something left for him to study. He wanted to come back. He plays too much at home, needs to mature more. Apart from top 10, most schools are similar in business--NTSU is a big school which means more courses. Cheaper than in North--shouldn't spend too much money on Business Administration degree. He wanted to get away from the "good" life at home.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS: American accent was hard to understand. Weather is a lot different--so much contrast between Summer and Winter.
FAVORABLE
ATTITUDES:
Americans are easier to get along with than British—but he was very young when he went to England. It's easier to find your way around here than in Thailand--use a map and the yellow pages--in Thailand you have to ask people. To fail is a good experience--you can learn something from it (this isn't an American experience). He's made a lot of friends here--he's made lots of Thai friends.

UNFAVORABLE
ATTITUDES:
He doesn't remember bad experiences. Not good for someone coming from Thailand for first time because they don't have to adjust to U.S. culture because there are so many Thai students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
He doesn't see any negative things that need changing. Except maybe the raising of tuition is bad. There are some confusing things--like changing majors--he went through quite a bit to do this--the offices are inconsistent.
NAME: Kamchorn Lelmongkol (John)

SEX: Male

AGE: 30

PLACE OF BIRTH: Bangkok

SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND: Father is in military, an air force commander.

RELIGION: Buddhism

PLACE OF EDUCATION: Santego College in Bangkok. Chulacon College in Bangkok. East Tennessee State University. NTSU.

TYPE OF EDUCATION: Bachelor's. Master's in Math and Computers. Working on Doctorate in BCIS.

WHY CAME TO U.S.: Wanted to learn high technology and America is the best. NTSU is cheap and had a good degree in computer. Learned about NTSU from bulletin in library at East Tennessee. There is a good relationship between U.S. and Thailand.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS: Everything was different—he thought the United States was full of skyscrapers. Tennessee was full of trees—style of living was different—they lived as a family and everything was done for them at home. It's colder in U.S.—especially in Tennessee—Texas is better. Language gave many difficulties—speaking was especially difficult. Thai people are taught to be passive learners—in university it's different.

FAVORABLE ATTITUDES: Thais helped them and they didn't need much else. In doctoral classes he feels much more comfortable—class is very small and faculty is understanding. Older generation Americans tend to be more generous. NTSU is a good university—one of best he's known.
UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES: Because of the different cultures, Thais aren't friends with Americans or other foreigners—it's more comfortable. NT gave no help—they missed orientation. Undergraduates don't like foreign students much. People in town are not quite friendly—Thais are much more friendly. Sometimes people shout rudely at them because they are foreign. Wouldn't recommend NTSU to others in computers because it takes too long.

RECOMMENDATIONS: If one lived in dorm and had to speak English one would learn it better. We need to learn about your culture, but most don't care about it because they came for education and then go home. Other students need to realize Thais are from a very different culture and not expect them to act like Americans. Thais need to communicate better with each other. Thai student organization needs to bring all the students together to find out what each student needs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
<th>Nartnittha Jirarayapong (Noo)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEX:</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE:</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE OF BIRTH:</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND:</td>
<td>Chinese parents, 7 brothers and sisters. Middle class after struggling up from nothing. Insurance broker. Also the three-wheel Thai vehicles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGION:</td>
<td>Buddhism. She has her own belief. She doesn't eat beef for religious reasons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE OF EDUCATION:</td>
<td>Primary 1-4 Chinese school, co-educational. 5-8 typical Thai (first studied English). 9-11 another private school. Took exam for best high school in Thailand. Went there for 2 years. Took another exam for Holacorn University and studied art there four years—got Liberal Arts Bachelors. Worked for Japanese newspaper as secretary to Japanese reporters. They talked to each other in English for business. This is her last semester in Journalism—she's been here two years, came in 1983.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE OF EDUCATION:</td>
<td>Liberal Arts Bachelor's degree from Holacorn University. Last semester at NTSU in journalism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY CAME TO U.S.:</td>
<td>She wanted to quit the job she had because of the sexist Japanese who was her boss—but it was a very prestigious job. She decided to travel and open her eyes to see the world. She wanted to be a reporter so she applied to many good U.S. schools—only NTSU admitted her because her GRE and GPA were low. U.S. is easier to live. Australia isn't cultured. Canada was hard. Europe she Japan—too expensive and is male dominated society.</td>
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</table>
CULTURAL
ADJUSTMENTS: Language difficult (even though her job had been translating) when she got here she couldn't understand a word. Took two or three weeks to begin to catch on. It took time to feel confident. She never spoke in class because she can't make up a sentence. Not much culture shock--she's liberal, she can understand our country. She doesn't drive and we have no buses. She can eat anything here except beef. She likes our climate. Doesn't like sex scenes on TV.

FAVORABLE ATTITUDES: She liked Kerr Hall. She had her own place and not responsible to cook, etc. Living in dorm settled her down (but it's too expensive). She's been writing for NT Daily for three semesters.

UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES: A professor was too busy to help her with her paper for the semester. Here, American roommate was intiminated by her studies and so she didn't say much and when she did roommate couldn't understand. Americans try to avoid helping Thais. She's glad she came, she's learned a lot.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Orientation was not much help. Americans shouldn't avoid us and be nicer--this would make it easier for us to adjust. International students mingle with each other because they are all in a hard situation and it is hard to mingle with Americans.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
<th>Vinich Getkhom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEX:</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE:</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE OF BIRTH:</td>
<td>Sukolhai province in northern part of Thailand. Tonu Town in middle of province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND:</td>
<td>Family used to work a tobacco farm. His mother set up a private dorm and now his parents own one in Bangkok.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGION:</td>
<td>Buddhism. He's joined an American Christian Fellowship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PLACE OF EDUCATION:**

In Sukolhai until he finished the 10th grade. Moved to Bangkok and went to Teachers Training College for 4 years. Moved to Northeast Thailand and got Bachelor in Education in Biology, College of Education. Worked on Master's in Education with major in Guidance. Worked 2 1/2 years in Bangkok. Taught Developmental Psychology in another teacher training college for 10 years. Came to U.S. to NTSU in 1982. Plans to finish in Spring of 1986.

**TYPE OF EDUCATION:**

Bachelor of Education in Biology, Northeast Thailand College of Education. Worked on Master's in Guidance. NTSU degree to be finished in Spring of 1986.

**WHY CAME TO U.S.:**

A friend was here and gave information. Not expensive. Texas weather is not too different from Thailand. People in Texas and South, his friend said, were very nice. U.S. because of value of government. He pictured America as great. Came in 1982.

**CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS:**

People are different, they like to stay by themselves compared to Thai. Language is very difficult because they never converse in Thai (in English). Didn't like food at first but some now,
especially beef. No bus lines in Denton. He was very lonely without his wife.

FAVORABLE ATTITUDES:
International office helped a lot—gave lots of information about the university. Most of faculty treat him well. Likes communication system. Americans have time responsibility. Likes our tax system on items.

UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:
Americans are not as friendly to foreign students as Thais would be to Americans in Thailand. Americans don't like to talk with Thais because they have difficulty with language. Some faculty discriminate a little. Local people don't seem to like foreign people coming to their town. Cost of living is high--money is worth more.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
Telling about American culture would be helpful. Set up a program for international students, don't make only international office do it—inform and involve Americans. Students and faculty should learn more about international students.
NAME: Jan Skulkul
SEX: Female
AGE: 30

SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND: Parents are teachers (mother elementary teacher) elementary principal, one sister is an engineer. Brother in advertising. One in college.

RELIGION: Buddhism—not supernatural.

PLACE OF EDUCATION: Elementary in small town missionary school and downtown to grade 7 (3 years). Narilugrakon School—junior high girls' school—3 years. Senior high with boys, Benjamamahardt. Uborn teachers college for 2 years. Moved to Bangkok, Cinaron Kwon University. Three years more worked in Behavioral Science Institute as a researcher at same University. NTSU in 1983.

TYPE OF EDUCATION: Bachelor's Degree in Biology and Education. Master's Degree. NTSU for Ph.D. in Educational Research.

WHY CAME TO U.S.: Her husband came to Iowa State to study for three years. He got sick and sent for her. She wanted to come but couldn't afford it before. She stayed for three years. She applied for school in biology and wasn't accepted, but went to Higher Education and was accepted, but it was too expensive. NTSU has program she likes and could afford.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS: Language—listening was hard because Thais teach English wrong. Pronouncing and listening are hard—not grammar. She learned by listening to radio and TV. We have no bus system and she didn't drive. Thais aren't on time—she likes how we do it. Thais respect elders. Thais respect teachers—Americans don't.
FAVORABLE ATTITUDES:
Likes way we handle time. Likes singing at church. American students here are very sincere and they want to help you with language. NTSU faculty is very nice. NTSU has good orientation—they walk you around. NTSU offers a good program for low price. The people are friendly and kind.

UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:
One teacher told her she could turn paper in late and be absent when her husband was ill—but he gave her a bad grade for her absence. IELI is too expensive.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
At Iowa Friends of International Wives. Tour Service for Internationals with lounge and counselor. Care about family of students. International Village. They have a park on campus. Library has ten times as many books. She feels safer. Everyone knows each other. People are friendlier. Town is prettier. Computer set up is better in Iowa. Stalls are closer to gether, costs more. Everything here is so slow. NTSU needs program to get Americans and Thais together. Raise tuition and increase library and computers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
<th>Phornchai Sakullelarasmi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEX:</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE:</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE OF BIRTH:</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND:</td>
<td>Five brothers and sisters. Father sells medicine for a family firm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGION:</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE OF EDUCATION:</td>
<td>Boarding school away from home late 9th grade. High school in Bangkok. Took exam for doctor, studied medicine two years in Bangkok at University. Took law exam and went to University to study law for three years. 2-3 years taught math in high school. Didn't study enough and failed. Went to University for five years. Studying finance at NTSU. Wants to study law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE OF EDUCATION:</td>
<td>Came to NTSU in Fall, 1983, will stay until Fall of 1985. Planned to study Public Administration but some professors made him uncomfortable so he changed. Studying finance at NTSU. Wants to study law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY CAME TO U.S.:</td>
<td>His friend sent him an application to NTSU and he decided to apply and was accepted. It was cheap, climate was not cold, so he came.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS:</td>
<td>He thought that he could take a bus from the airport. Some people from Thailand helped him. At first he walked everywhere then he got a bicycle. Now he has a car. He had studied about Americans before he came.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAVORABLE ATTITUDES:</td>
<td>He likes our system of separating personal and business life. Most students and most teachers are nice. For most people the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
law is the same, most people follow it. People believe in each other here--this may be because it isn't a poor country here. International office did several things for him.

**UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:**

Some professors don't accept foreign students--you feel. We have discrimination by skin--it should depend on what is inside. He was very disturbed by a professor saluting him.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Any professor who is discriminatory (if student can prove it)--U.S. should do something. When orientals complain it's unusual--we should listen and do something. Have seminars for faculty to help him understand international students.
NAME: Surtirapawn Sonolen (Pawn)
SEX: Male
AGE: 26
PLACE OF BIRTH: Bangkok

SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND: Father has shipping business. Mother imports farm machinery. They work together.

RELIGION: Buddhist (had a bit of difficulty with Baptists when he was at Hardin Simmons.

PLACE OF EDUCATION: Private schools in Bangkok through high school 10th grade. Went to India to English School 7 1/2 years. Kerrville to Shriner College for 3 years. Hardin Simmons for 1 year. NTSU--has just begun Master's in Interdisciplinary Studies.

TYPE OF EDUCATION: Went to India to study English and grow up (he didn't want to go). A change in policy said he must learn an Indian language so he left. He came home and took Equivalent exams for High School. Father sent him off again. He was angry. Associate degree. Hardin Simmons was very expensive. Bachelor's in Marketing.

WHY CAME TO U.S.: His father made him. Shriner was chosen because he had a problem with grades. After being in India the grades were difficult to compare. Hardin Simmons accepted him after Shriner, but he wanted also to be here. Family sent him here and they wouldn't tell him why but he thinks he has to compete with his cousins who are in school in other countries. Now he's glad he came but he didn't feel that way at first.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS: He was afraid he wouldn't fit in. He says they drive on other side at home--that was hard to do.
FAVORABLE ATTITUDES: He had a good American roommate and some new friends. He has an American family in San Antonio and they are great. He loves American food. He likes open spaces and small towns like Denton. Pan and Vivian helped him fit in (also a cousin who was here). Some American students have been good to him. He appreciates the many changes he has experienced here.

UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES: He had some unpleasant experiences with other Thais. Some professors seem biased against foreigners. Some American students resent it when foreigners do better. Some bad feelings here and there about foreigners from town. Some American students yell and insult him--probably freshmen.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Thais only go to International Office for official business. Thai students stick to their own group. As group gets smaller we can see who is who and get better participation (enrollment is coming down here). Thais will listen to own people before to outsiders--it might be good to work through Thai leaders.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>NAME:</strong></th>
<th>Siam Sungvaribudh</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEX:</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AGE:</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLACE OF BIRTH:</strong></td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND:</strong></td>
<td>Father produces movies (owns movie company), he directs and produces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELIGION:</strong></td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLACE OF EDUCATION:</strong></td>
<td>Boarding school at 3 years to 10th grade. English for 3 years in boarding school. Selwin school for 6 months to graduate from high school 1979 or 1980. Went to NTSU for 1 year. Taking courses and planning to take GMAT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TYPE OF EDUCATION:</strong></td>
<td>International Marketing. Wants to major in Management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY CAME TO U.S.:</strong></td>
<td>He thought school would be too hard. He wanted to study business and thought English wouldn't be good for that. He knew Texas and Dallas from movies and wanted to come here. There weren't as many Thais here as in California. He was not accepted by other schools but NTSU because his SAT was too low.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS:</strong></td>
<td>Poor public transportation (everyone has a private car). There were only 40 Thais at NT when he started. He lived in dorm. He always liked American food, so no problem. Going Dutch is not something he is used to. The Texas accent was hard at first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAVORABLE ATTITUDES:</strong></td>
<td>The RA in dorm (American) was very helpful. He likes working in Union because he meets many people and sees interaction between many kinds of people. Faculty is better at graduate level. NT is cheap, Business School is not bad. Dr. Hurley is very nice, he listens to international students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:

Lady at driver's license place is rude. He didn't get along with his American roommate. Thais feel inferior to Americans because America is superpower. A degree from an American University means more in Thailand than a Thai degree (in fact any Western degree is better). There's no special handout in class. International office did nothing for him but they try to arrange worthwhile thing. They don't reach enough people. American students don't have urge to know International students. An ROTC guy accosted him. Students in dorm treat you all right except they just don't know you.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

International office needs more input. Passing GRE and GMAT is very hard. IELI is very expensive and some feel they don't get money's worth.
NAME: Waraporn Kovasupat
SEX: Female
AGE: 26
PLACE OF BIRTH: Nonkai, Thailand—North Thailand
SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND: Merchants
RELIGION: Buddhist
WHY CAME TO U.S.: To broaden her knowledge. NT because her friend's brother had gone here and recommended the Finance Department.

PLACE OF EDUCATION:
Kindergarten at 3, went to school 12 years in Nonkai. University in Bangkok, studied Master's. Second Master's at NTSU. 80,000 students finished high school, U.S. can only accept 20,000.

TYPE OF EDUCATION:
Bangkok, Master in Finance, is working on BCIS. Wants to work in an American oil company when she goes home.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS:
Nonkai is cold and she likes the cold here. Classrooms are very different—in Thailand they can't participate, here they must—this was especially true at first. They seldom speak or listen to English. She seldom communicates with Americans.

FAVORABLE ATTITUDES:
Likes Burger King and McDonald's, we get better vegetables. Because of her job she has some American friends but not very close. She's treasurer of Thai Student Association. Teachers are understanding. American students have self-confidence--this is helping her to have more self-confidence. Study system here is good in Business.

UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:
It's hard to talk to Americans when they don't seem to understand her. NT did
nothing for her—the orientation was not helpful. American students don't talk to her, they ignore her, even if they sit next to her in class. Salesmen are not sincere—they say they will do something and they don't do it.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Should provide information about Thai Student Association—some who come have problems and no one to help them. Give information about American customs. Make orientation in native language. Information on how to do things like applying for a degree should be explained.
NAME: Sakkasem Udomwatthawi (Saki)
SEX: Male
AGE: 32
PLACE OF BIRTH: Paginbul--two hours east of Bangkok
SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND: Big family, seven brothers and sisters.
RELIGION: Buddhist
PLACE OF EDUCATION: Went to boarding school at age 5, Chachin Sau Province east of Bangkok also for 10 years grade 11 and 12 in Bangkok. Then came to U.S., Conn.-Cronister. Took grade 12 again to learn English. Went to Northeastern University in Boston for 5 years. Aid cooperative education.
TYPE OF EDUCATION: Bachelor's in Electronics. Interdisciplinary, working on Master's (mostly comp.)
WHY CAME TO U.S.: He came back this time to study comp. He'll use it and make business more efficient. Bangkok bank recommended the school in Connecticut. He decided to come to Texas--weather was warm, tuition cheaper, schools also good. NTSU--concentrated on Business, in Computer Science. NT concentration on software [UTA concentrates on hardware].
CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS: Only knew how to read and write English--not speak English in Thailand, first year in college was very hard. Relationship between friends--in Thailand men can touch men and women can touch women but don't touch each other in public. They eat a lot of rice and food is more international, very hot and spicy. At first American food was hard to get used to. Americans eat lots more meat. Weather--missed, colder here. Transportation was a problem, it was inconvenient here. There are not many places to go to eat.
FAVORABLE ATTITUDES: Most friends are in same classes. International office gives advice and documents, very helpful, especially when he applied for permanent visa. Faculty is good, mostly. He enjoyed visiting with American family—he spent holidays and went skiing. Tuition is low, have option to work. NTSU is good school.

UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES: Americans treat you on how you understand and how you speak—so when you're learning English you get very frustrated. He used to feel very different because of language. This depends on how long you are here and how much you talk with others. It's hard to write a paper. Thais don't ask questions and treat teacher as friends. If he had an aggressive roommate he stayed with them for awhile and then moved out.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Foreign students don't have good English and they don't know what to ask—Thai people like to ask a friend. Thais need to learn to treat faculty like friends. Biggest problem of Thai students is language. Second is that they are unsure of themselves. NTSU should try to get them involved with Americans.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
<th>Pongpanich Wongdeethai (Fiat)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEX:</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE:</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE OF BIRTH:</td>
<td>Chung Mai (?) East on Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIOECONOMIC</td>
<td>Family owns a furniture making company in Chungmari.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BACKGROUND:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGION:</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE OF EDUCATION:</td>
<td>To 10th grade in Chungmari. Then to Bangkok to Continuity High School to 12th grade—he didn't get into the Thai University—he came to NTSU. May go for a Master's in Italy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY CAME TO U.S.:</td>
<td>He has relatives in U.S. and especially in Fort Worth. Since he didn't get into University, there's nowhere else in Thailand to study interior design. He and his mother took a tour and came to United States—he also didn't want to go somewhere there were too many Thais—he didn't think there were so many here—he wanted to study and practice English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS:</td>
<td>First he took ESL in Dallas. In Dallas there is entertainment all night long—it was too much and he had trouble controlling himself. TV is lots—in Thailand no cable, no 24-hour TV. There, movies aren't rated. Some R-type movies can be shown on TV. Going out Dutch is different.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| FAVORABLE ATTITUDES: | Doesn't have many Thai friends. Art students are very nice. One professor said hi in Thai—he had visited Thailand. (His American friends are undergraduates, Thai friends are graduates.) Internationa
Office gave him information and offered to help him work out some English problems. They gave housing information—warned to avoid people who discriminate and other things like that. If Texans are cold, they are very cold. Art Department is great. Fee is low.

UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:

Some friends look down on him and don't trust him because he's an international student. Political Science, Astronomy, and Physics students are not nice. A friend who couldn't get International History class was threatened badly. If Texans are nice, they are very nice. Old people are nicest. He expected the good times he saw in movies—all those friends are so close—but that hasn't happened.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Need an office to help with little things that come up. They need more offices in international area—they need to have office to handle small things. Faculty needs to be talked to because they try to prevent international students—they need same chance American students have.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
<th>Suratath Ayuwathana (Pat)</th>
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<tr>
<td>SEX:</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>AGE:</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE OF BIRTH:</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND:</td>
<td>Upper-middle class, military.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGION:</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate--Masters, 1974-1976.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Returned home until 1981--came to NTSU--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE OF EDUCATION:</td>
<td>Bachelor's in Political Science. Master's</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in History, Ph.D. in College Teaching and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>minor in History (not completed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY CAME TO U.S.:</td>
<td>Because he feared his grade would not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be high enough to pass into 11th grade--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>first time. Came back for Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS:</td>
<td>Language! It is not easy to adjust to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>different form of education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAVORABLE ATTITUDES:</td>
<td>Education is good--someone in registrar's</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>office understood his need for History to</td>
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<td></td>
<td>be on his application and responded quickly.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NTSU helped with paperwork--they under-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stand the technicalities. The way we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teach in this country is easier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:</td>
<td>Americans don't try to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>foreigners. [He missed orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>because it was cancelled as a result of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>snow.] Because of this they had to find</td>
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<td></td>
<td>out things on their own. Before they</td>
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<td></td>
<td>came the college seemed eager to have</td>
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<td></td>
<td>them come--after you're here it's different--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>they forget about your being a student</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
at all. Americans seem to not recognize your (foreigners) worth. They don't try to adjust to your language.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Thai students ask many questions about laws and someone in the International Office needs to really understand situation and be able to explain—you get many different answers and get confused. Someone needs to understand the way Thais think. Thais don't trust the system—they trust other Thai people—so they keep asking more questions. They have to keep checking because in Thailand things aren't always the same tomorrow. Thai problems would be very hard to solve. Thais don't like to discuss serious subjects with each other—they like to be social—it is easier to discuss the class subject with foreign students or with Americans—they don't want to disagree among themselves so they stay away from topics like class subjects and beliefs.
NAME: Sommart Koonprakan
SEX: Male
AGE: 24
PLACE OF BIRTH: Bangkok
RELIGION: Buddhist
PLACE OF EDUCATION: Kasesat University, Bachelor's Degree.
Plans on getting MBA at NTSU (had only been here since August of 1984) plans to stay two years.

TYPE OF EDUCATION: Faculty Economics--Bachelor's. Business Administration--MBA.

WHY CAME TO U.S.: He didn't think he could come here at first—he joked with his father about coming here—his father took him seriously and so Sammart studied harder so he could come here—he really wanted to go to Japan or Australia. Because English is so important he chose U.S. Came to NTSU because it was cheaper and he knew someone who had gone here—cost of living is also lower here.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS: The climate here is very changeable which is hard to get used to—he likes Spring and Winter—it's too hot in Summer. At first he didn't speak English to anyone—it was very hard—he knew what he wanted to say but not how to say it. He can only eat American food once in a while. His friend told him to bring lots of jeans, tennis shoes, overcoat—he never wore jeans at home. Boys and girls are more friendly in public. Girls can shop in public.

FAVORABLE ATTITUDES: One teacher helps foreign students to get drivers' license and social security card—he's in intensive English. Teacher understands problems of international students. He likes the transportation--
our traffic system (not buses or taxis) with cars. The officer and the workers in international admission office were very helpful—they gave him lots of material—they try to do the best for the student. Many Americans are very gentle people.

UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:

Has almost no contact with American students because he's in IELI. Sometimes even this good teacher treats him ways he doesn't like—Sammart wants to pass TOEFL, but teacher wants him to improve his English—gives him lots of homework. The class doesn't prepare student to pass the TOEFL really—it works step by step and students want to go faster. They don't know special problems of Thai student—it's different from Chinese, for example—grammar is easier for Thais—the course is goo general. Oriental students have little to say in class, mid-Eastern students have lots to say. America didn't live up to his image—he expected U.S. students would be just—wouldn't try to corrupt—he was wrong. He expected town to have high buildings, lots of department stores and restaurants, Denton isn't like that. Weather was surprising.

RECOMMENDATIONS: IELI should address the specific problems of the various racial groups.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
<th>Vanida Visitkitjakarn (Wa)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEX:</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGE:</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLACE OF BIRTH:</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGION:</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE OF EDUCA-</td>
<td>BS in Economics in Bangkok, Kasceiser.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE OF EDUCA-</td>
<td>BS in Economics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY CAME TO U.S.:</td>
<td>Universities in Bangkok are more difficult one reason is because it is taught in English. They also have limits on number. Her father wanted her to come because knowing English is a real advantage. She thought it would be easier here but it's not at NTSU. There is a large social value about going to school in U.S. England is more expensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTURAL ADJU-</td>
<td>Went to school in New York--had only five Thai students--only two were graduates. New York was scary to her family. Her family believed she would learn more English because there were no Thais. Family life is very different here. Youngsters don't respect older. Difficulty understanding in class-she writes to standard--hard to participate in class. Current news. Not having a lot of friends. Need to have responsibility. Many people are nice--Thais included. Everything costs too much. There's not much variety of food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAVORABLE ATTI-</td>
<td>American students are very nice when you work on a group project. Americans who live in Thailand for five years come back and like Thai styles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES: She feels she's using too much money coming here. U.S. students are not very interested in foreign students. Some teachers don't like foreign students. American people seem to value money so much. People don't talk to their neighbors.

RECOMMENDATIONS: There is such a large group of Thai students and other foreign students that they cannot be close—a smaller number is better. Learn English before you come. Thai people need to remember U.S. is not their home. On special days, students should be with American families.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>NAME:</strong></th>
<th>Kosal Tuangsintamakul (Mou)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEX:</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE:</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLACE OF BIRTH:</strong></td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELIGION:</strong></td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLACE OF EDUCATION:</strong></td>
<td>Went to Bangkok Christian College.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cassisak University in Bangkok.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NTSU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TYPE OF EDUCATION:</strong></td>
<td>Bachelor in Economics. Working on Master's in Computer Science. (When he first got here he was in IELI. He's been here two years and has three and one-half more years.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY CAME TO U.S.</strong></td>
<td>It's hard to get Master's in Thailand. Hard to get in and hard to learn. His father wanted him to continue education. Mou was allowed to choose where he'd go--he had a friend here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS:</strong></td>
<td>His friend helped him when he came and did everything to help him get adjusted. At first he liked hamburgers but then he got tired of them and didn't want to eat them any more. Not many wear suits in Thai--except rich people. Girls and boys don't touch each other in public--he didn't try to change to be like Americans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAVORABLE ATTITUDES:</strong></td>
<td>Like facilities (phone, electricity etc.). Likes traffic mostly, but we drive too slowly on highway. Americans don't care what they wear and he likes that. There's not as much corruption in U.S. as in Thailand. Mormons are good people because they have a goal. He loves NTSU because it gives a good education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:</strong></td>
<td>People in America don't travel very much and they look at him like he's foolish or</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
different--they don't seem to trust him. Americans don't have wide variety of food and it's not spicy. He doesn't have much fun here--he likes Six Flags. Americans think Orientals are dishonest, but they're not--it's the Taiwan people who take things.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Teachers who have traveled widely tend to understand foreign students better. No essay questions. People don't listen to people who don't have as much education as others. People in U.S. need to study about other countries--they need a broader view of the world. Thai government needs to make us have better English before we come.
| **NAME:** | Montira Rawee |
| **SEX:** | Female |
| **AGE:** | 24 |
| **PLACE OF BIRTH:** | Bangkok |
| **SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND:** | Father retired and living with her older brother. |
| **RELIGION:** | Buddhist |
| **PLACE OF EDUCATION:** | No high school. Occupational degree at occupational school, Bangkok. Worked for two years as a secretary and bookkeeper. Austin (1981) Community College two years and transfer to NTSU. |
| **TYPE OF EDUCATION:** | Occupational diploma degree. BCIS at NTSU (Bachelor's). |
| **WHY CAME TO U.S.:** | Wanted to go to University to get a better job, but couldn't pass high school test so decided to come to U.S. because she had friends in Austin--chose NTSU because her friends had a friend here to show her around. |
| **CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS:** | Austin was different from U.S. in movies--it's a small town--Austin is small and quiet and not like Bangkok. It was strange to live in an apartment without her family. The changeable Texas weather was hard. Language--listening and speaking. Food was not spicy like Thai food. Denton has poor transportation. |
| **FAVORABLE ATTITUDES:** | Americans have advantage in way they raise children. Students go away to schools to start a new life (but it's not good for parents). |
| **UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:** | She would not like to live alone. She doesn't know what International Office does for new students. If instructors... |
Talk low or don't move mouth much—I can't understand. Overall faculty are quite nice.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Lower tuition—or at least keep it constant—it will double in next ten years.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>NAME:</strong></th>
<th>Sutthidej Jerhmans (Top)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEX:</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE:</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLACE OF BIRTH:</strong></td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND:</strong></td>
<td>Father is businessman--hotel executive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELIGION:</strong></td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLACE OF EDUCATION:</strong></td>
<td>School in Bangkok. After five years went to Catholic (about age 10) school in Bangkok. Passed exam for special studies at about 14. Like a high school. Father sent him here to NTSU in 1982. Wants to go to Ohio State or Boston U. for Master's. Went to IELI at Ohio State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TYPE OF EDUCATION:</strong></td>
<td>Studying computer science. Hopes graduation 1986. Will go on for Master's.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY CAME TO U.S.:</strong></td>
<td>His father decided. He was unsure of a field of study and was interested in learning English. He had to decide after three months of intensive English if he wanted to stay. Came to NTSU because he had a cousin in Dallas and weather was terrible in Ohio. Tuition is low. Computer Science is growing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS:</strong></td>
<td>Cold weather. Was expecting America to be good--but we made him feel unwelcome. Language--speaking. We drive on right side, this was confusing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAVORABLE ATTITUDES:</strong></td>
<td>International Office did some things to help him with his I-20. International Office does good job on immigration. Orientation was helpful--good book on adapting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:</strong></td>
<td>Teachers and students at NTSU made him feel unwelcome and discriminated against.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Having American friends is difficult. American students don't seem to want to talk to Thais. Most people are good but some discriminate. He had a problem with an English teacher and with an Administrator.

RECOMMENDATIONS: What NTSU has done is the best they can do--it's up to Thais to adapt.
NAME: Achara Scripradit (Ann)
SEX: Female
AGE: 25
PLACE OF BIRTH: Bangkok
SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND: Father is accountant for a sugar company.
RELIGION: Buddhist
PLACE OF EDUCATION: High school in Bangkok for five years. Sinaping school in Bangkok for four years. Worked as a Math Teacher then as a programmer. Here, she's studying computer science.
WHY CAME TO U.S.: Her fiance (Nick) was going to school here and was very lonely. He wanted her to come here. (John also came here first.) Fiance came here so he could get a better job—its cheaper here and a good one too. It has a government name which makes the government think it's good.
CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS: U.S. didn't look like in movies—no subway and not noisy. Language—didn't feel have enough to talk. Changeable weather is hard to adjust to—arrived in January. Hugging is not private here—very different in Thailand.
FAVORABLE ATTITUDES: Likes Mexican food and hamburgers. TV is very good here. IELI is fun. Some students treat you well. Host family is good. Has some American friends. Denton is a safe place. Likes to go shopping here (but is's more expensive than in Thailand).
**UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:** International Office did nothing but Nick had been here and helped her. She felt it cost a lot and studied during Summer alone to pass TOEFL. Texas accent is hard to understand. Some students ignore you later—or they won't speak to you later—maybe don't like foreigners. Feels uncomfortable with Americans sometimes.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Give more opportunity for foreign students to come. They are raising standards so won't have so many foreign students. (She recommended NTSU to her sister.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
<th>Somsri Triratanachat (Som)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEX:</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE:</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE OF BIRTH:</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND:</td>
<td>They own family business. Only one other brother has gone away to school. Whole family has lived in same house until recently. Two married sisters live with family. One brother is interning away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGION:</td>
<td>Buddhist. Some have tried to convert her. When she lived with American family they wanted her to go to church. She was not comfortable there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY CAME TO U.S.:</td>
<td>It's a plus and honor to study here. They treat you well when you return. Was accepted at Columbia in Mo. Tuition was too high there. Her brother knew some people in Dallas area that would help her. Cost of living. Easy to accept you but don't want you to study a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE OF EDUCATION:</td>
<td>From K-2 near home. 3-7 secondary. 8-12 high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE OF EDUCATION:</td>
<td>Passed exam for Chuluchor University--B.A. in English. Work briefly at Korean Embassy. One and one-half years at Thai feed mill. The Thai bank. Came here 8-83. One Master's in Education, Early Childhood. December or May--MS in Home Economics. May go for Dr. at TWU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS:</td>
<td>Nobody pays attention to her--nobody helped her. She had to learn to get along on her own. Language problems. No one understood her. Supermarket was neat. Couldn't buy much. Clothing expensive and didn't fit. Men and women in same dorm. Youngsters have more aggressive manners. She was very lonely.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and missed family life. No orientation here. International Office got money for car and visa.

FAVORABLE ATTITUDES:

Had good roommate. Looked at every item in grocery store. Americans who are friendly are more religions. International Office, Joyce Sauter and Lucille were great. Graduate students are nicest to her. Faculty are nice people. Liked Boston. People were more friendly and treated her like she was a guest. Like holidays and celebrations. Like our houses. She's learned to be independent. Likes the fact we respect each others' rights.

UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:

Vivian in International Office is not nice and has lots of power. Felt uncomfortable and shy in dorm and was bored and lonely. Undergraduates were indifferent to her. Her friend says in Computer Science there's lots of discrimination. Her friend changed schools because of this. People in town ignore Thais. North is friendlier than South for foreigners. People take advantage of her because she's quiet.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Less international students. They want to learn English but there are so many of them. There are too many Thais to really know each other. Some teachers expect too much where language is concerned. She would recommend NTSU to others if tuition didn't go up and if there were fewer international students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
<th>Nipawan Teepanont</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEX:</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND:</td>
<td>Farm community. No parents. Live with grandmother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGION:</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY CAME TO U.S.:</td>
<td>Because she was bored with what she was doing and wanted to change something. Friends at NTSU. Tuition is low. NT is good school in Education. It's easy to get 1-20 from NTSU. Weather is pleasant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE OF EDUCATION:</td>
<td>Elementary and secondary in Sarkorn Nakorn. Same to U.S. for 12th grade. Bangkok two more years teacher training. Penang for two years for Bachelor's. Taught two and one-half years. Master's in Philippines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE OF EDUCATION:</td>
<td>Ele.--4 years, Sec.--6 years. Teachers training--2 years. Master's in Philippines. Dr. at NTSU in Higher Education Administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS:</td>
<td>Had to take care of herself. Learn to drive a car. Lonely without a roommate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAVORABLE ATTITUDES:</td>
<td>Business and education are good areas. Americans are organized. Americans are on time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:</td>
<td>NT didn't do anything to help her. NT not very friendly. Not much social life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOMMENDATIONS:</td>
<td>International Office needs to give more help.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NAME: Pratoom Watanatkana
SEX: Female
PLACE OF BIRTH: Luborai—40 miles from Bangkok.
SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND: Parents own an import-export business. It collapsed and parents retired. Seven sisters and three brothers. Two sisters and one brother came here. Two sisters and one brother are at home.
RELIGION: Buddhist. She's very adjustable.
WHY CAME TO U.S.: Came to NTSU because it's cheap. Education department big and have many interesting courses. Came to U.S. to learn more. She was inspired by her students to learn more. To go to U.S. is her highest ambition because you get more recognition. Education here is good and we have more experts and teachers.
PLACE OF EDUCATION: In Luborai to grade seven. Eighth-grade moved to Bangkok (father rented a house for the nine children he sent at that time). Parents believe daughters should go to woman's teacher college for grades 11-12 and then two more years for associate degree. Went to College of Education--didn't have to take exam because her GPA was high. Taught four years.
TYPE OF EDUCATION: At teacher's college Home Economics and Education. At College, BA in Sec. Ed. in English. University of Kansas at Lawrence four years to get master's. Been at NTSU since January, 1983. Working on doctorate--classwork is finished.
CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS: Misses her family. Lonely. She expected it to be like on TV in movies. It was like a dream come true here. People were very friendly in Kansas. Girls and guys
kissing on street embarrass her. Didn't go to orientation because she'd been four years in Kansas. Went to International Office once to see who is foreign advisor. He was a nice guy.

FAVORABLE ATTITUDES:
Really loved Kansas—had host family, lived in International House. How students treat her depend on teacher. Rob Miller creates group work which gets interaction. Town people treat her well. NTSU is very good in Education.

UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES:
Environment at school does not feel good to her—in Union for example, she doesn't feel the right age. Too many Thai students, they aren't friendly. They're not close. Classes with only lecture are hard to make friends. If you want to be friends with Americans you must approach them first. In some cities like Dallas, people seem shocked by her. She just does her routine work—there's nothing interesting here. There's no social life. One man in registrar's office was very rude to her. Another lady at one of windows doesn't seem to know what she's doing.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
Advisor of foreign students should take more action for example picking up students at airport, find host family. In Kansas, she went often to see her advisor, but only once here. Union should be better. Library needs better service. Need to create better social environment—clean also.
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