

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
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KENNETH P. LANDON

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INTERVIEW

Q: I recall the first time that I met you; it was at a very busy intersection in Washington. My wife and I were riding with Mrs. Nelson Johnson, wife of the former Ambassador to China and also a former Club member, 1919-1954. It was an amusing incident because we stopped at this busy intersection and you were going across as a pedestrian and - recognized her and came rushing over to the car to greet her, both of you utterly oblivious to the line of cars back of her! I was introduced to you at that time. Unfortunately, I had never known Nelson Johnson. He died before I really became acquainted with Mrs. Johnson. Did you know him?

LANDON: Yes. I knew Nelson Johnson in the Foreign Service when we were both here in Washington after World War II. I had a number of anecdotes about him from various Foreign Service officers. One of Nelson's favorite stories was about an American going abroad for the first time, by ship. He found himself sitting at meals beside a Frenchman who spoke little or no English.

The first time they met the Frenchman said bon appetit, and the American, thinking that this was his name, replied, "Jones." Little more was said because of the problem of communication. But at each meal the two exchanged the same pleasantries, the Frenchman saying "bon appetit" and the American replying "Jones." Toward the end of the trip it occurred to the American that surely they didn't have to introduce themselves on each occasion and that perhaps there was some misunderstanding of an international nature. On the last evening on shipboard as the two came to dinner the American decided to explore the possibility that the Frenchman was not really just introducing himself but was conveying some friendly sentiment, and so he spoke first and exclaimed, "bon appetit." The Frenchman was surprised and delighted and in the spirit of the occasion bowed and exclaimed "Jones."

I heard Nelson tell this story many times, and it always brought roars of laughter from himself, which of course brought much laughter from me. He seemed to feel that this tale reflected the problems of international understanding.

Q: Ken, I noticed from the records that you've been a member of the Cosmos Club for some 30 years, joining in 1952. Do you recall who your sponsors were at that time?

LANDON: My primary sponsor was a geologist friend, William D. Johnston. He was a very heavy man and yet seemed agile in the climbing of mountains. He was also internationally minded and became interested in Thailand, an interest that brought us

together. He had an amusing way of talking and telling stories, and we were often together at Scientist Cliffs in Maryland where we too had our vacations. I had been encouraged to become a member by William Cullen Dennis, the president of Earlham College, where I taught philosophy in 1939-41. At that time I came to Washington, initially to make a report on the Japanese in Indochina on the invitation of Colonel William Donovan in August 1941 when he began to set up the Office of the Coordinator of Information. But I was then so preoccupied with the war that I didn't take time to appreciate the Cosmos Club.

Q: As I understand it, you became a minister in the Presbyterian Church in 1927 and shortly thereafter you and your wife were sent to Siam as missionaries. I understand that you spent one year in Bangkok, learning the language, customs, and traditions of the country, and the next nine years as a missionary in various parts of Siam, as the country was then known. Do tell me a bit about those ten years you had over there.

LANDON: I became a missionary because of a series of sermons I preached in Columbus, New Jersey, where I was pastor of a church while I was also a student in the theological seminary at Princeton. I was one of my own converts. At Princeton my studies had included Semitic philology, Hebrew, and Greek. So I expected to become a missionary in the Middle East. At one time it seemed that Margaret, my wife, and I might be sent to a place called Hilla, which was on the road to Baghdad. But the only opening at the time was in Siam. The day before we landed in Bangkok on a little 90 ton steamer going up from Singapore, Margaret asked me to tell her all I knew about Siam. I said that I understood that most of the Thai people were twins. She thought that was interesting and asked for more information. I said they had a great many white elephants in the country and I was sure it must rain a lot as I had seen a picture of the king sitting under an umbrella built like a fountain with nine tiers. Aside from these observations I didn't know a thing. I didn't even know where we were going when we landed. Fortunately we were met and taken to a residence.

The same day we landed, our Ford coupe, shipped in a box from New York, was unboxed and fueled and I had my first adventure in driving on the wrong side of the road as traffic moved in the English rather than the American pattern. The first year we spent in Bangkok studying the language. I've never been bashful about languages so that as soon as I learned a few words I'd rush out into the street and try them out on someone. My first two words were "how much" and "expensive." I went into numerous shops and asked "how much" while pointing at something. After getting a reply I would say "expensive" and start out of the shop. What followed in words was beyond me because I had not yet learned to count. Feeling sorry for frustrated shopkeepers who would follow me down the street while lowering their price step by step, I quickly learned how to count so as to know what the price actually was.

Both Margaret and I studied three hours a day with a teacher and then spent another three hours studying for the next lesson. We learned the language thoroughly as we expected to work with people and knew we had to be able to converse with ease and without dictionary in hand. After six months I preached my first sermon in a Bangkok church, not

without some consternation in the audience. An elder in the church came to me afterward and congratulated me on my sermon and with a kindly smile said that I had told him something new about Jesus that he had never heard before. I had said that Jesus was crucified on a pair of wooden pants. The words for cross and for pants were close in sound, and I had used the word for pants. I was as amused as the elder was. We discovered that the Thai language required an ear for tone, for music, as the meaning of a word or sound changed with the tone, whether it was high, low, even, rising or falling, or acute either high or low. It was common for a missionary to ask his servant for a tiger when what he wanted was his jacket. We discovered also that some 60% of the words were derived from Sanskrit or Pali, classic languages of India, and that the language was replete with terms derived from the Buddhist religion, which arrived centuries before via Ceylon and Burma. So I knew I would have to study India if I were to understand the people of Siam. I later studied both Sanskrit and Pali at the University of Chicago, where I took courses also on India.

After a year in Bangkok we were assigned to Nakhon Si Thammarat on the east coast of the peninsula facing the Gulf of Siam. A year later we moved across the peninsula to a town called Trang (a Malay word meaning "light"). In Nakhon Si Thammarat we lived in the compound of a girls' school with the principal, a Miss Helen McCague.

Our first incredible experience occurred one Sunday when I was coming home from church dressed in a white duck suit and carrying a Malacca cane. As I came up the road toward the house, which was on the edge of town, I looked across a high hedge and saw five servants of the compound standing and looking at something. I came through the gateway, and to my horror I saw our newborn baby girl lying naked on a mat with a sun helmet over her head to shade her eyes, but with a 12 foot king cobra encircling her and with its head erect and swaying above her while it examined her, presumably to determine what to do with her. The king cobra is different from the ordinary cobra, which is generally 3 to 4 feet long. This is a giant breed that is not afraid of people and will attack, sometimes without provocation. They may grow in size to between 9 and even up to 15 feet. Such a cobra may strike chest high on a person while the ordinary cobra seldom hits above the ankle.

Well, I being a father didn't think of all this. I just let out a war whoop and started racing across the lawn leaving my Malacca cane. The king cobra, apparently recognizing a reckless father coming to save the baby, reared up an extra foot or more to view the approaching conflict and suddenly took off like an express train, spinning the baby like a top as it unwound. I later observed portraits of Buddha in temples encircled protectively by such a cobra with its coils keeping him safe from the monsoon wind and its hood spread like an umbrella over his head. And as Buddha was a prince, son of a king, a mythology developed that if one were so embraced by a king cobra that person was a prince or princess. The myth was reinforced by the fact that a Sino-Thai infant was so embraced and grew up to drive the Burmese out of Siam and become King Chao Tak, a boyhood friend of the man who had him later assassinated to become king himself, the first monarch of the Chakri Dynasty. I was frequently informed by Thai that my daughter would grow up to become a princess and marry a prince or even a king. She did,

American style, marrying a football hero.

Soon after this first dramatic experience with the wildlife of Siam I went on a tour with the evangelist of the station, an elderly gentleman who was about to retire and whom I was supposed to replace. He had been in Siam about 40 years and was proud of his preaching ability. We went to the town of Singora. He then set out to show me how to go about preaching. He stood on a box in the market place and began to sing a hymn and soon got a crowd together. As he preached there would be a murmur of awe now and then. I was impressed and went to stand among the listeners in the hope that I might hear what they had to say. I discovered that the murmurs of awe occurred when he made some dramatic shouts when his mouth would open wide but his teeth would remain closed. This performance held the crowd spellbound. I realized there was more to mission work than met the eye. I had everything to learn, of course. In that part of South Siam there was a large Chinese population on the rubber plantations and tin mines. They did the heavy labor and were the commercial class. They also ran the restaurants in market places, and this led me to decide to abandon the practice of other missionaries who traveled with their own cook and equipment and to depend on the Chinese cook-shops. And this led me into closer contact with Chinese.

As I went from town to town I discovered that the Chinese in Siam had no schools to speak of. This was not surprising as they came from a coolie class in China. They admired scholarship but had few scholars among them. I saw also that they had money and could afford schools, and I talked to them about setting up schools. And then I learned also that I could get little out of them while speaking Thai. So I began to study Chinese while traveling about, my informant being a Swatow Chinese who was an evangelist to the Chinese. In about six months I was able to preach and converse in the Swatow or Tacho dialect. I was surprised to have Chinese inform me I was from a village in China named Pho Leng, because of my nasal intonations, of which I was unaware.

When I was fairly fluent in Chinese I started a campaign in a town on the railroad line largely inhabited by Chinese. The Chinese merchants would go to the local opium den about 10 o'clock and again at about 4 in the afternoon for a pipe or two of opium. I would follow along and sit on the side of the divan and chat with them about schools. I would first select a good piece of land on which a school might be built and find out who owned it. Then I would become acquainted with that man, find out if he was Chinese, and follow him to the opium den. I would talk to him about building a Chinese school on his property that would be owned and operated by the Chinese community. The conversation would move on to the bricks and lumber and roofing and labor involved, and then I would ask him to bring together some of the leading Chinese merchants to discuss ways and means. This first school took about a year to promote and build--a modest effort that offered only primary education through the fourth grade. I helped procure the teachers from Bangkok, Singapore, Penang. All funds, materials, and labor were provided locally.

A frequent question was what was in it for me--and did they have to become Christians. My only suggestion was that they provide for a reading room for the Chinese community and subscribe to Chinese newspapers and periodicals, and that I would provide some

Chinese Christian periodicals published in China and Singapore. Over a period of about seven years was able to bring into being a number of such schools along the railroad line and had a waiting list of invitations from other towns on the west coast. Eventually all these schools established Christian chapels and hired dual-purpose teachers who could function also as pastors or preachers as needed. My parish extended from the Kra Isthmus to the Malay border, a couple of hundred miles, and I toured the area traveling by train, bullock cart, elephant, coastal boats, river craft, bicycle, and on foot. In order to keep in touch with widely scattered Thai and Chinese communities I began to publish a letter, which evolved into a brief monthly journal in both Thai and Chinese. By the time we left Siam in late 1937 I had a lively correspondence with Thai and Chinese, with my Chinese evangelist handling the Chinese end of things. I could read hand-scribbled Thai and I used Thai typewriters, but hand-written Chinese was beyond me. I still, in 1982, occasionally receive letters in Thai and find to my own surprise that I still have no trouble reading the script.

As for Margaret, she was busy running a large household, having three children, and acting as principal of the Anugun School for Girls. She was a very effective educator and introduced a kind of primary education for Siamese children who were able to read in a very short time as compared to the length of time that it would take to learn to read in the public schools. They might be in a public school for two or three years before they could achieve the skills that Margaret achieved in about a year. This led the minister of education to come down from Bangkok to inspect Margaret's program and methods. By the time we left Siam in late 1937, I had a 10-year file of several Siamese-language newspapers and periodicals as well as a library collection of books, pamphlets, and maps on the area. There had been a coup d'état in 1932 against the absolute monarchy, which I felt was of historic significance and on which I obtained substantial documentation over a 5-year period.

After we returned to the United States in 1937, I resigned from the mission for various reasons. But here's one anecdote that might show the cultural interplay we had with one Thai village, a village on the railroad line near Tungson. I had inherited a small notebook from a former Thai evangelist who had noted on the cover the phrase: "Those that have been talked." It contained a list of names in the village and nothing more. The first time I visited the village I consulted the notebook and began asking where the people were on the list. The village was soon empty of people because they were alarmed by this stranger carrying a book with their names in it. I finally convinced them of my innocent intentions and eventually we became friends. I visited the village every few months and would stay in the house of the village chief, sleeping on a mat at the end of a row of sleeping children.

One day, two of the men of that village came some 40 miles to visit us. I'd stayed with them and eaten their food, and they stayed with us and ate our food. They spent their days looking over the town and fields. After a week or so they returned home. They returned about a month later with their village chief and I could see they had something very heavy on their minds. They stayed a week or more and again toured the countryside. Then they said they would like to have a serious consultation with me. The village chief

said that they liked me and my family and that it was obvious that we liked them, too. He said, "You have a very large compound." It was about 6 acres because it had been acquired when the mission was hoping to build a boys' school. It was an old pepper garden with many wells.

The village chief said, "You have many coconut trees, enough to feed a village. And betelnut trees in plenty, which would take care of our chewing of betel." This was an aromatic kind of chewing tobacco that stained the teeth red at first and then turned them black. The chief said that they purposed to move their whole village over to our compound, and he said, "We think we could be a real help. For instance, you could fire all of your servants (who were Chinese) and we'd do all your compound work and the housework and take care of your children. You have only one wife. You're a young man of great importance; so you could have the pick of our girls and you could have a number of wives, which would be appropriate to your position. And then instead of just the two children that you have, you could have a great many that would really establish you here. And when you went out, instead of going alone--we see you always have books with you--one of us could carry your betelnut set, you really ought to chew betelnut. It's very good for you, for the digestion, very stimulating. Another one could carry a spittoon. You shouldn't just spit any place. Another one could carry your cheroots. You should really learn to smoke our cheroots; they are very fragrant and settle the stomach. And we notice that every day you go on a bicycle to meet some men and you rush around with a club and hit a ball. We'd be glad to do that work for you. You don't need to sweat like that. And wherever you went you would have an entourage that would show you were a person of importance. And then when we got into trouble, why you'd take care of us and represent us before the government, and you and we could have a very good and happy relationship.

Now we have discovered some fields that you could buy, and we would work those fields and you'd never have to buy any more rice. We'd raise your vegetables and chickens also. And we'd be your people."

I was quite impressed and I thanked them warmly. But I told them that in the first place I had a little problem. In about another year or so I would return to the United States and then they would become orphans. And whether I returned to Siam or not was problematical. I might and I might not. Furthermore I didn't own the compound. So that I'd have to ask permission from the company that owned it. They got the idea. They realized that although we would have been very happy together it might not work if I returned to the United States. So that was the end of that adventure.

One of my unusual experiences involved a missionary colleague named Dr. L. C. Bulkley who ran the Trang hospital; a wounded tiger; a young professional hunter; and Dr. Livingston's shoulder. When Margaret and I moved across the peninsula from Nakhon Si Thammarat to Trang, south Siam, we had as a resident physician Dr. L. C. Bulkley whose father was a prominent physician in New York City and who insisted that his son also become a physician. But L.C.'s interests were more veterinarian than his father anticipated and he became an inveterate hunter of tigers and other game. We soon learned

to count on the doctor's vanishing on the nights before the full moon, during the full moon, and a day or so after the full moon when he went tiger hunting. And we were very much impressed by his achievements. His stairwell was literally fenced at the top on three sides with tiger skulls ranging from huge ones in the middle of the "U" down to cub-sized ones at the ends of the "U" - all of which glared at one ascending the stairs to the second floor. The doctor was only too glad to show pictures of himself with gun in hand and foot resting on the body or head of a dead tiger, which he had presumably just killed.

Looking at the pictures I asked him where each tiger was shot and how he did it, and how he encountered the tiger. And I began to wonder at his replies, which were somewhat vague, such as, "This one was killed over near Nam Dok." Or, "Oh, that one was shot while taking a drink from the Daang Creek." And then asked a direct question. "You did shoot them, didn't you?" And then he looked at me from sad brown eyes and confessed, "No." He went on to explain that he had a standing offer of 10 cents to anyone who brought him an animal to look at with an option to buy, even if the tigers were dead. As a consequence he had a parade of enormous proportions passing by with every kind of wild animal from king cobras to black panthers and tigers and young elephants. Dr. Bulkley tried several times to get me to go tiger hunting with him, but I was not interested as I had never had much success even shooting rabbits sitting on the ground and looking at me. I had had some success shooting birds on the wing for some reason I never understood. So tigers-definitely no!

One night in 1934 or 1935 I had been to a church meeting and at about 10 p.m. or so I was riding my bicycle slowly from the church past the hospital on the road home. I saw a light in the operating room, which was separate from but connected to the hospital and wondered why the doctor was working so late at night. I turned my cycle in that direction and stopped at the foot of the steps leading up into the operating room and could see through the open screen door the figure of Dr. Bulkley at the operating table. I could not see any assistant working with him giving anesthesia. The doctor was alone and he was chuckling some more. I became alarmed and wondered if he was out of his mind and what he was up to.

I cautiously went up the steps and said, "Good evening, Doctor. You're working late. What's the emergency?"

The doctor didn't even look up at me as I entered the room. He welcomed me as a helper and told me to take over the anesthesia, chloroform, which he was having to administer with one hand as the patient needed it, while engaging in surgery. On the table lay a young man, little more than a boy, who, the doctor told me, was a professional hunter, a boy who loved to hunt rather than go to school and who had been required to attend classes but had managed to complete the mandatory attendance, learning little or nothing. He couldn't even read. But, this boy was going to become the luckiest boy in the world because, when the doctor completed his surgery on the boy's left shoulder, he would have provided him with a shoulder exactly like the shoulder of Dr. Livingston, who had been mauled by a lion, also on the left shoulder. In fact, he announced, "This boy might

become famous because of his shoulder, the only one like the famous Dr. Livingston's."

On a stand next to the table stood a model of Dr. Livingston's shoulder, which Dr. Bulkley told me he had bought when he was first going through London en route to Siam to become a missionary doctor. He had been a great admirer of Dr. Livingston and in hero worship style had bought this model to inspire him in his own missionary work. As Dr. Bulkley cut and sutured and did what surgeons do to shoulders, he kept chuckling and talking about the boy and how it came about. And I kept adding chloroform now and then and hoping I wouldn't give him too much, which I knew was easy to do. I had seen my own little daughter, Peggy, operated on by Dr. Bulkley under chloroform and suddenly turn white and stop breathing only to be brought back to life when Dr. Bulkley dropped the chloroform pad and gave her a shaking and slapping and got her back alive again.

What had happened was that Dr. Bulkley and his hunter went after tiger on a route followed almost nightly by a tiger which the boy had studied. This was the way tigers were usually shot--by cutting across the path of a tiger on his nightly rounds and generally getting a shot in at close quarters. Most tigers were shot with 12-gauge double-barreled shotguns, often with one barrel loaded with screws and nails for the initial shot. Dr. Bulkley, however, thought this not sporting and he carried a rifle--and perhaps for that reason never got close enough to bag his own tiger. This night he had had a skilled hunter who brought him in close for his shot--and he hit the tiger but only wounded it. It was dusk and they followed the blood droppings for a while but didn't get another shot before it became too dark and too dangerous to trail the tiger. Up to then the young hunter had been in the lead and Dr. Bulkley behind. When they decided to go back they reversed the order and Dr. Bulkley took the lead. They went only a short distance when the wounded tiger leaped from the top of a termite mound beside the trail and knocked the boy to the ground and seized his shoulder intending to drag him off into the jungle. Dr. Bulkley was astounded and swung around in the direction of the attacking tiger, and as he did his gun went off accidentally and killed the tiger, fortunately missing the boy. It was the only tiger he ever shot and he had not planned that shot!

Making sure the tiger was dead and the boy alive but in great pain, Bulkley ran to the nearest village to get help. He got some men to rip out a bamboo-woven wall from a shack to use as a stretcher. They carried the boy on the stretcher out of the jungle to the road where Dr. Bulkley's car stood and loaded him into the back seat. Bulkley then drove to his hospital, which was about an hour's drive or more away. When the doctor examined the boy's shoulder and saw the kind of bone separation and crushing that had occurred it suddenly struck him that this was a close parallel to the experience of Dr. Livingston. He brought out his shoulder model, which indicated what the injury was and shows how it had been treated. He then decided that with only a little extra help he could give the boy the same kind of shoulder as his hero, Dr. Livingston. That was when I arrived on the scene. I was curious about the boy and visited him daily. He was in pain. and feverish, but like so many country Thai had remarkable healing qualities. To entertain him I took a copy of Aesop's Fables in Thai and read him some stories of the animals in the Fables. As a hunter he was fascinated with animals and took a great interest in the stories. One day he remarked that he wished he could read them himself,

but was no good at it. He was not the first young Thai whom I had known who had managed to go through as much as four years of primary school and come out unscathed.

One of the things that I had learned as a foreigner studying the language was that the alphabet was phonetic and indeed was probably designed to help assimilate non-Thai. There were clear indications, critical markings and arrangements, that told one whether the tone was rising, dropping, high, low, or acute--and whether the vowels were long or short, etc. So I began to show the boy how the language was put together and how easy it would be for him to read, if he really wanted to. Margaret had had a similar experience teaching a maid, Maa Cham, to read. She caught on quickly and became so excited reading that for a time she didn't want to work but read. Once the word was pronounced phonetically the Thai who spoke the language immediately knew the meaning for most words. And this was the case with the young hunter. I left him with the copy of Aesop's Fables to read when he pleased.

During the Eisenhower administration I was employed by the Operations Coordinating Board, an adjunct to the National Security Council, and had my office in the Executive Office Building. I think it was in 1956 or 1957 that I had a phone call from the Thai Embassy asking for an appointment for the Thai Minister for Adult Education. I explained that I was no longer on a State Department political desk and that his call on me would be wasted but that if they could tell me his interest or problem I would be glad to help him see the appropriate officials. The Embassy officer said that it was a personal interest and would take only a few minutes. And so we set a time.

The Thai official, handsomely dressed, arrived on time, and stood before me expectantly for a few minutes without sitting down. Then he asked me if I remembered him. I have always found this an annoying question, unfair really, and thought to myself that this was going to be embarrassing to both of us because he obviously expected me to remember him. My mind was totally blank, and I made the usual dishonest response that I thought he looked familiar but couldn't quite remember where and when we had met. He laughed at my remark and then asked, "Do you remember a young boy mauled by a tiger near Trang who was operated on by Dr. Bulkley?"

I said, yes, I did remember such a boy and felt sorry for the young man in a way because like Dr. Livingston who had had a similar experience, the young hunter would never be able to hold his gun in shooting position again since he could not raise his left arm into shooting position, and his work as a hunter was thus ended.

The Thai official then showed me that he indeed could not raise his left arm to hold a gun in shooting position and said, "I was that boy!"

He then told me how he had gone on in his education and had now become Minister of Education for Adult Education. He said also that he still liked to read Aesop's Fables now and then but had long since worn out the paper copy I had given him.

Q: Well, Ken, I understand that after you came back to the United States in 1937, you

went to the University of Chicago and obtained a Ph.D. and a short time thereafter you went to Earlham College as a professor and head of the philosophy department.

LANDON: That's right.

Q: So, I wish you would tell me a little bit of something about your academic career.

LANDON: Well, I had gotten my M.A. at the University of Chicago in 1932, and after coming back from Siam at the end of 1937 I went first to Harvard and then to Chicago to see about graduate study. I chose Chicago because I could get the courses I wanted and also was attracted by the plan of President Hutchins. His idea was that if one was in residence for three successive quarters and if, during that period of time, he was able to take the written exams in the chosen discipline, pass French, German, and any other language requirements, complete a dissertation and the oral examinations, then he could complete all the requirements for the Ph.D. I decided that I would try to do it, as I was short on money and time was urgent. Well, I about killed myself in the process and finally, when I went up to get my hood, President Hutchins was sitting in a big armchair on the platform. He looked up at me and then he looked at a little note he had and he said, "I understand that you got your doctorate in three quarters here under my plan." And I said, "Yes, that seems to be the case." He laughed and said, "I always wondered who the damn fools would be who'd try to do it. I'm glad you succeeded."

After that I became a professor of philosophy at Earlham College. I got the job in a very unusual fashion. I had first tried to interest various universities in Southeast Asian studies. I was sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies and by Mortimer Graves in particular. He sent me to visit the Far Eastern departments of the universities of Pennsylvania, Princeton, Columbia, Yale, Harvard, and Chicago and also urged them to take an interest in Southeast Asian studies.

As bait, one of my old friends, His Royal Highness Prince Damrong, who was in exile in Penang after the coup d'état of 1932, agreed to let me locate at some university his famous library collection, probably the finest in the world at that time on southeast Asia. He had spent a lifetime collecting his materials and got his start in World War I when he confiscated the collection of a German scholar in Bangkok named Frankfurter. Damrong himself was a fine scholar and had founded the National Library in Bangkok, also the Ministry of Education. But I could not give his library away. No American university would accept it. The great librarian Metcalf at Harvard said to me, "Mr. Landon, Harvard does not have a course on southeast Asia. We would never use it. And he added, prophetically, we probably never will have such a course." Harvard, still, in 1982, has not discovered southeast Asia and has only trivial interest in Vietnam because of its relation to China.

I was up against it financially and I had to get a job. I suppose that my procedure was very unorthodox. I drove to almost every college and university in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and western Pennsylvania hunting for a teaching position of some sort. This was in 1938 going into 1939. I finally got a job at Earlham College out of a gas station on four nickels. I drove into the town, saw the Earlham campus, went to a gas-station telephone,

dropped in a nickel and asked to speak to the college president. I didn't know at the time that he was a sucker for telephone calls and seldom wrote a letter. We talked a while and he asked me what position I was applying for.

I thought of my theological background as a Presbyterian missionary and knew that Earlham was a Quaker school, so I decided not to mention religion. So I said I was applying for a position teaching philosophy. The phone seemed dead for a few moments and then President Dennis said that this was rather unexpected and a little odd as that position had become vacant only the night before about 10 p.m. He asked how I knew about it. I said that these things got around rather quickly and went on to present my case as a philosophy professor. After I dropped in my fourth nickel I said to him, Mr. President, I've told you just about everything I can over this phone, and that was my last nickel; may I come to see you? So he allowed me to go to his office.

President Dennis asked me many questions about what I thought I could teach. I was prepared to tell him I could teach anything. Finally he said, "Do you think that the head of your department at Chicago would believe that you could teach all the courses we need here at Earlham? I said, very blithely, "Why don't you ask him?" "Well," he said, "I will." And he turned around, picked up his phone, and called the university. In a moment or so he had the head of my department. Then a monologue went on in which he sat there looking at me while asking most of the questions he had asked me. Finally he thanked the Chicago professor and hung up and laughed. He sat and looked at me a moment and then said, "He says you can!"

So I got the job teaching philosophy. Later President Dennis told me that I had three balls and two strikes on me to begin with, as he had a policy of getting his philosophers from Harvard and disliked Chicago, that he was opposed to having a preacher or a theologian teach philosophy on the grounds that they lacked a broad outlook, and that he preferred a Quaker for the job as the department of philosophy was supposed to be the soul of the college. At any rate I got the job. That was 1939. In 1940, I offered the first course in Chinese philosophy ever offered in this country for undergraduates, although of course there had been graduate courses. I thought I was going on then in Asian or Oriental philosophy as my field of specialization. I added Indian philosophy the next semester. Then I discovered that although I was translating a history of Chinese philosophy, Dirk Bodde at the University of Pennsylvania had the rights to translate it; so I gave that up.

Later in 1942 I gave the Taft lectures in Chinese philosophy at the University of Cincinnati, and then a series of five lectures in the same field at Yale. There were two Kennedys at Yale who wanted me on the faculty. One was head of the Chinese language department and the other was a sociologist who specialized on Indonesia. They wanted me to teach something on southeast Asia and hoped that I could satisfy the department of philosophy, which had a teaching vacancy at that time. At the close of my five lectures the head of the Yale department of philosophy kindly gave me a protocol luncheon and took the opportunity to inform me that they at Yale did not regard my presentations as real philosophy. He said, "Your lectures on Chinese philosophy are nothing but ethics!" That seemed to wind up my teaching of Chinese philosophy, but I continued for another

ten years as a book editor for the Journal of Philosophy, published at Columbia University and edited by Herbert Schneider, writing reviews on books dealing with Oriental philosophy.

I suppose I should say, that I had a couple of books published on southeast Asia: one on Thailand, which dealt with the 1932 revolution, and the other dealing with the Chinese in Thailand, both of which continue to be available in reprint form in 1982. The latter book came out just before WWII, and I had the odd experience of encountering a Japanese intelligence officer who had come to Washington to see me while also attending an academic conference and who presented me with his copy in the Japanese language of my Chinese in Thailand. I told him I did not know it had been translated into Japanese. He said that he had carried it in his knapsack throughout the war and that the Japanese military had found it one of their best guides in dealing with the people of Thailand!

In 1947, the head of the department of comparative religion at the University of Chicago, supported by Dr. Harley Farnsworth McNair, a historian on China, invited me to give the Haskell lectures in comparative religion, hoping that if we were mutually pleased they might offer me a position to succeed Professor A. Eustace Haydon, who was the head of the department of comparative religion. So I took leave from the State Department for one academic quarter to give the Haskell lectures on religions in southeast Asia. The lectures later formed a book, Southeast Asia, Crossroads of Religions, University of Chicago Press, 1949. I was shocked to discover when we discussed job possibilities that a full professor's salary was only about half as much as I was already receiving at the State Department.

Q: Well, Ken, with the heating up of WWII, I understand you came to Washington and spent the next 25 years of your life in various government services, mostly as the southeast Asia expert in the State Department.

LANDON: Yes, I began in 1941, six months before the war. Margaret and I were at Gull Lake, Michigan, and I was out in a rowboat with the kids when Margaret came out and shouted that I was to go to a telephone at Hickory Corners and call operator something or other in Washington. We'd had a friend who'd had a baby in Union Station once before and I said to Margaret, "My gosh, I wonder if Agnes has done it again." I didn't know anybody in Washington. But when I made the call I found I was in telephonic communication with Ernest Griffith of the Library of Congress and with a Colonel William Donovan. It was one of those party lines with about eight other phones on it, and they all went off the hook to listen in. The voices in Washington got fainter and fainter, but I gathered that Colonel Donovan, speaking on behalf of President Roosevelt, wanted me to come to Washington immediately and make a report on the Japanese in Indochina. I was to get there just as fast as possible.

I said that I was not a rich man and couldn't afford it, and I was on vacation. Then I heard faintly that I would either be paid \$15 a day or \$50 a day, I couldn't make out which. I said to Margaret, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if it was \$50." And she said, "Well, it would be wonderful if it's \$15. It's more than you're making now teaching philosophy." And I

agreed that even \$15 a day would be splendid, which it was. So I went off to Washington. I think I was the first substantive employee dealing with an area that Colonel Donovan engaged in his new office of the Coordinator of Information in August 1941. We met in the Triangle Building; Donovan had two secretaries and a receptionist and me. When I arrived, they wanted me to put together a report in three weeks, which he would then give to the President, on the Japanese in Indochina and their intentions toward the rest of southeast Asia, particularly Thailand.

I went to work and soon had two offices, one in the Triangle Building and another in the Library of Congress. The second day, when I went into the Triangle Building office, the door swung back and bumped into someone--a tall, bald-headed man whose coat sleeves were too short for him. He said, "Hello, I'm James Roosevelt. My father asked me to come to see you to be of any help you might need in preparing your report for him on the Japanese in Indochina."

I thanked him and said, "Yes, I would like to know what the U.S. Government already knew so that I wouldn't duplicate." He said that he thought I should go to G-2. I asked him what G-2 was, and he said it was "Intelligence." I said that was nice and where was it and how could I get there. And he said he would take me. In about 10 minutes we were sitting in a limousine built to hold nine and I almost got lost in the back seat. We drove a few blocks to the Navy temporary building on Constitution Avenue and walked up to the second level where G-2 was located, headed by a Major Pettigrew, a Japan language officer. James Roosevelt informed the major that I was to make a report to his father on the Japanese in Indochina and asked him to let me see what they had in their files on southeast Asia.

Major Pettigrew was very agreeable and called a sergeant and instructed him to open the file case on southeast Asia for me. He went to a safe and located a key, which unlocked a draw bar on a cabinet marked Southeast Asia. The top drawer was empty and the two bottom drawers were empty. The second drawer held one file folder, which he handed me. I opened it and discovered four articles written by me for Asia Magazine published by the John Day Co. That was it!

I asked Major Pettigrew what he would do in case he wanted to know something about southeast Asia, and he said he would ask our allies, the British, the French, or the Dutch.

At the end of my three weeks I completed my report and turned it over to Colonel Donovan. I'd been asked such questions as, "If the Japanese are going to move against Thailand, when will they go?" "Is it likely that the Japanese might bypass Thailand and strike farther south?" "Would the Thai fight the Japanese if invaded, and if so how long could they resist?" Well, I didn't know much about Japan, although I had written an article for Asia magazine entitled, "Siam Rides the Tiger," the tiger being Japan. This article had caused the Thai to put me on their CID list as a person who should not be permitted to return to Siam because they felt that my article put Siam in a difficult position with Japan.

I didn't know anything about Japanese intentions, but I did know a great deal about the terrain and the Thai because I had been both a country boy as well as a city boy in Siam and I was very familiar with the royal family, the Thai officials, and Buddhist clergy, as well as the geography, the rainfall, and the seasons. With terrain in mind I said that if the Japanese were smart and if they were going to move against Thailand, they surely would start in the first or second week of December--no earlier because they'd be bogged down in the fields, which would still be soaked by the monsoon season, and later than that they'd be wasting their time as the rains would start again in late April or May. And then I said goodbye to Colonel Donovan, and he said "Where are you going?" And I said, "Back to Earlham College, it's time for the Fall semester." "Oh," he said, "I can't spare you." He wanted me to stay a few more weeks and asked if I would stay if my college president would permit it. And I said yes. He turned to the phone and in a few moments was talking with college president William Cullen Dennis, who was very sympathetic, having been legal adviser to Chiang Kai-shek at one time. Incidentally, he was also a member of the Cosmos Club. Dennis said I could stay, "But, he has got to be back here to teach the spring semester in January." That was agreed, but Pearl Harbor occurred, and I never did go back except to lecture or visit. So I was with Donovan for that first year. After Pearl Harbor, Donovan wanted to make propaganda broadcasts. Arrangements were made for the Thai Minister, Seni Pramoj, to make the first broadcast directed to Thailand. And then I began to make broadcasts. We recorded on platters in the facilities of the Department of the Interior, and then the recordings were flown out to San Francisco for broadcasting. Then I became involved in helping organize a Free Thai Movement, using Thai student volunteers under the direction of the Thai military attaché's Colonel Karb Kunjara, who had been trained in England. The chief American training officer was Colonel Preston Goodfellow. The Free Thai Movement became an intelligence operation under the Office of Strategic Services when that came into being. At first the Thai worked out of China, but after the Chinese intelligence chief, Tai Li, had a couple of the Thai killed and also interfered in other ways in Thai effectiveness, the locus was changed to Ceylon as a way station en route to Bangkok. Before the end of the war the OSS had agents located inside the Thai royal palace sponsored by the Regent, Pridi Panomyong, the hero of my first book on Thailand.

Although I left Donovan toward the end of 1942 for the Board of Economic Warfare to select bombing targets and related activities, I kept in touch with the Thai operations under Donovan and continued to make broadcasts in Thai.

One of my most amusing incidents while I was at the Board of Economic Warfare, which was headed by Milo Perkins, occurred when I was informed by Max Ways, one of my many chiefs, to go and meet with the Joint Chiefs of Staff about elephants and the Stilwell operations in the China-Burma theater. I encountered them in a building that is now part of the Department of State on 21st Street--very elegant quarters that inspired me with awe and made me think I would like to become a four-star general. I had never before seen so many medals in one room.

They said they were faced with a problem in logistics because of the jungle and mountainous nature of the terrain--how to move supplies--was it to be tractors? or

elephants? or both? They knew about tractors and trucks but they wanted to know about elephants. I had traveled with elephants and knew something about them. They wanted to know how many miles an elephant could go in a day. Well, that was easy. I said 16 miles. They were dumbfounded to think that I knew that, and so I explained that after an elephant has gone 16 miles he won't go any farther because he's got to eat. And furthermore the staging areas in ancient Cambodia were 16 miles apart. Then they wanted to know how many hours an elephant would work if he was pulling things and I said about 4 hours. He had to eat 20 hours a day to keep his belly full of leaves and bark, which he dragged down out of trees, and even then if he was required to do heavy work he required a bucket of rough rice for Strength.

Then they said that the terrain was terrible and with deep valleys. They asked how steep a hill an elephant could go up. I said that if need be he could go up on his knees, if the load was not too heavy. And how steep a hill could an elephant go down? And I said they were just like boys when it came to going down. If the hill is very steep they would sit down, put their trunk up in front and tail up behind, and slide on their bottoms, trumpeting all the way. I've seen them slide 50 or 60 feet down steep banks into the Mekong River. Then they wanted to know how much weight an elephant could carry on its back. I said they had weak backs for their size and maybe 500 pounds would be the maximum, but of course when dragging they could pull a half ton or a ton or more depending again on the terrain.

This conversation sticks in my mind after all these years as one of the more hilarious moments with the Joint Chiefs. As far as I know they settled for only one herd of elephants in charge of a man known as Elephant Bill, whom I had known briefly with the Borneo Lumber Company. Years later Elephant Bill wrote two books on his elephants, and I have a copy of them both as a memento. I think they might not have used the elephants if they had not talked with me about them. Many years later while Ben Hibbs was still editor of the Saturday Evening Post, I tried my hand at writing short stories and wrote one about an elephant. One of their readers picked the story out of the slush pile as a possible short story, which it proved to be. The story went into many reprints in about a dozen languages and I received some fan mail on it. The letter that pleased me most was from the head elephant trainer who was responsible for the herd with the Barnum and Bailey Circus. He wrote to say that he had read the story many times and hoped I would write more about elephants because he felt I knew and understood elephants. I don't think I knew as much as he implied, but I liked his letter.

In late 1943 I was still in touch with the Free Thai Movement under Donovan and sent out some telegrams to a General Timmerman (I think that is how to spell his name) in Ceylon at Colombo. The answers unfortunately came back via the State Department, not the OSS. I found out what the identification numbers were on these highly classified telegrams and for the first time went to the Department of State, Far Eastern Bureau, and was directed by a receptionist to see an officer named Sabin Chase. I asked him to let me see these telegrams explaining that they were the answer to my outgoing.

Sabin Chase viewed me with absolute consternation and paled visibly and then excused

himself, and I could hear him hurrying down the hall. In a few moments another officer burst through the swinging doors, followed by Chase. He informed me that I could not see the telegrams and demanded to know how I knew about them and proceeded to give me a scolding. So I too became angry and told him he was a dummy, he didn't even know what the telegrams were about, that I had sent the outgoing and I demanded the incoming, and if I couldn't get them from him in a courteous way I would see his chief and if need be his chief's chief. I didn't realize it at first but I soon discovered that the more I tore into him the more he liked it, and he then introduced himself as Larry Salisbury and took me down the hall to call on Political Adviser Stanley Hornbeck (a Cosmos Club member). They decided that the best thing to do with me was to hire me, and so that's how I became a political affairs officer in the Far Eastern Bureau.

At that time it was a small bureau with only eight officers, I being the eighth, with Joseph Ballantine as chief. There was an octagonal "FE" seal stamped on all papers, and Ballantine told me that I would see every piece of paper that came in and out of FE and that every piece of paper would have this octagonal seal on it and I was to put my initial "L" in the northeast corner and no place else and his "B" would be in the center. He also gave me orders never but never to take any document out of the department home for study. He said this is the way you'll get into trouble, taking papers home. So I obeyed that order and was very grateful later on for the advice, because several of my colleagues did not follow it and later had some problems of a security nature.

Those were very informal days, and many people didn't realize that security was becoming important. In fact, for a couple of years the files on southeast Asia reposed in a drawer of my desk, which I locked at night if I remembered. I was the first desk officer the State Department ever had who had lived in southeast Asia and spoke a southeast Asian language. I was quite a shock to the nervous system of the European desk officers on the French, British Commonwealth, and Dutch desks because they had always taken the lead on any proposed action since these were colonial areas. So now here was I in a position to become a drafting officer, and I shortly found myself drafting policy papers for Franklin Roosevelt on Indochina. What to do about Indochina? The President didn't care for the French and thought they were very poor colonialists. He was determined that the French should not return to Indochina. So I was assigned the job of drafting these policy papers, which of course had to be cleared not only with my masters in FE but also with the French desk and the superior officers in EUR.

Now this in a sense marks the kind of activity I had for most of the rest of my 25 years in government. I was always an Indian, never a chief. As for the policy papers on Indochina for Roosevelt, I think I must have re-written them 30 times before I could get the language well enough to obtain a "no objection" from EUR. Eventually something had to go over to the White House, and I remember the thrill I got when the original drifted down the line back to me and in the margin, in fine clear handwriting I read, "I want no French returned to Indochina, F.D.R."

I continued to be a political desk officer in the State Department until about 1954 in the Eisenhower administration. Foster Dulles became the Secretary of State, and he launched

a program to require departmental officers to become foreign service officers. I had no desire to become a foreign service officer for many reasons, but chiefly because I had no desire to go off to Africa or Latin America or Europe and preferred to work on southeast Asia. Under the new program it meant that if I were to continue in the Department of State, I would never get any further advancement, in salary or position.

So I called on Elmer Stats, who administered the Operations Coordinating Board, an adjunct of the National Security Council, and was taken on with respect to the area from Kabul to Saigon to Djakarta.

Bill Atwood has asked me to talk about one of my many trips to southeast Asia as a State Department officer. After WWII, I went out in October for the British-Siamese negotiations to settle their alleged state of war. The Thai had declared war on both the British and the United States and the British had responded in kind but we didn't. We went on the advice of the Thai Minister, Seni Pramoj, that the declaration didn't really represent the Thai people, and he refused to extend the declaration of war officially.

At the end of the war the British had made 21 demands on the Thai, which if accepted would have made Thailand a Virtual British colony. The problem was, what could the U.S. do about these demands? I was sent out as a political adviser, of sorts, to the chargé d'affaires, Charles Yost, who was about to open our legation in Bangkok. Those were very unusual times, and I was able to write myself travel orders authorizing me to go anywhere I chose to in southeast Asia. The U.S. negotiator beat down the British demands until the 21 faded to about 1, which related to requiring the Thai to provide free rice for areas presumably deficient in that grain. These negotiations came to an end in December to the satisfaction of the Thai and the United States. During this period and subsequently I had time to tour most of southeast Asia. on one trip I decided to go up-country in Thailand to see the state of the nation. I had a car for my use, a somewhat dilapidated Chevy, and I had two young OSS men plus a driver for my car, as my escorts. I think that trip was in November, and I found myself driving along a road behind some 90,000 Japanese troops walking along the highway under their own officers with no Allied military around, going to their camp to await repatriation.

At first we thought it was a big herd of buffalo because of the dust and then discovered these were troops from Burma and Thailand. The OSS men were driving a jeep and both our cars had American flags pasted on the windshields. We had a conference as to what to do and decided to go on. I said, "Let's just step on the horns in both cars and see what happens." So we drove up behind the troops and blew our horns. Japanese officers turned and saw the American flags and the uniforms of the OSS men and gave some commands and began to move the troops to the side of the road as they continued marching. We of course drove slowly, and it took us a long time to get past the troops. The officers all saluted our flag as we drove slowly by. We went on into Cambodia.

Among other places I visited Angkor Wat, and I spent several days there and was met by the French Curator who came up from Phnom Penh to meet me. He brought his family along also, and we had an expert tour of the various temples directed by the one man in

residence who knew the most about them at that time. I took a quick trip to Saigon and then went down to Singapore, where Pat Mallon was the consul general, and on to Batavia, as Djakarta was then called, where Foote was the consul general. Back in Bangkok, I received orders from the Department to go back to Saigon and try to go up to Hanoi. At that time the British were supposed to be taking the surrender of the Japanese south of the 16th parallel and General Lo Han, representing Chiang Kai-shek, in the north. So I went over to Saigon again and met with DeGaulle's representative acting as High Commissioner, Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu. He had been a monk and had been brought out of his monastery to become High Commissioner. He brought with him a mistress, a Madame Galsworthy.

I had read the Forsyte Saga and I was somewhat up on the Glasworthy family; so I was quite intrigued by Madame Galsworthy, who was of the French side of the family and bilingual in French and English. The admiral included her in our first luncheon together as my interpreter because the word had gone ahead of me that my French was terrible, which it was. I read French, of course, but I had never tried to speak it much. The Admiral spoke the most beautiful French and I had no trouble understanding him, and so, to my regret, I didn't see any more of Madame Galsworthy. The Admiral was very helpful and arranged for me to ride to Hanoi on a plane with General Salan of later Algerian misfortune. Well, General Salan was supposed to go to Hanoi and take charge of the French community and any troops that might be left over. The Chinese General Lo Han was in occupation.

I was told to join General Salan at the airport at 6 a.m. But how to get a taxi to the airport? I managed it by paying a large sum to a driver--half of it the evening before and the rest on delivery. I arrived at the airport without having had time for a shave or anything to eat or drink. And the airport was deserted. Along about 9 a.m. a few people drifted in, including a pilot of the C-47, which was sitting cold and unattended on the strip. About 10 o'clock the General showed up with his aides, well fed and well drunk on champagne. And I still hadn't had anything to eat or drink.

General Salan ignored me as we got on the plane and sat in bucket seats facing each other, with the baggage piled in the middle. As we took off, without warming up the engine, we all leaned forward on the baggage to keep it from bounding around. In the air, I tried the General in English and he responded in a mongrel French I couldn't understand. I tried him in Chinese with no avail. Then I tried him in Thai and he showed interest--he speaking a Lao dialect similar to Thai. So we conversed for a while. As he had learned his Lao from mistresses, and I had learned from a sainted Presbyterian old maid, there were marked differences in our selection of words.

We arrived in Hanoi at about 4 p.m. after a stop at Pakse. I still had had nothing to eat or drink all day. It was stinking hot and I was very depressed. General Salan was met by a French delegation and they all loaded up their cars and drove off leaving me absolutely alone, with no other cars in sight, on the wrong side of the river from Hanoi and about 30 miles out of town. I had no wheels and no Americans to meet me because there were no Americans, I thought, after the withdrawal of an OSS mission, which had been there for a

time until it got involved in the political warfare going on among the French, British, Chinese, and Viet Minh led by Ho Chi Minh.

So I had a problem. I had a little tin trunk with me containing my belongings, which I dragged over to the nearest building. At that point I smelled something cooking and looked around the corner of the building and saw a Chinese GI squatting in front of a charcoal brazier, making a bowl of stew. Well, I hustled right over to him, squatted down beside him, and spoke to him in Swatow Chinese, a south China dialect. Lo Han's troops were from the south. I took the family approach and called him "Brother, Ah Hia," and he looked at me in some surprise. And I said, "Brother, I'm just starving to death. Brother, I haven't had anything to eat or drink all day and I am very hungry. Will you sell me part of your stew?"

He sat back on his heels and looked at me perplexed and then said, "No, it's all the stew I have and it's my dinner." I began to urge him further and he said he didn't want my money; he just wanted his stew. "Anyway," he said, "I have only the one bowl to eat from and we couldn't divide it." And I said, "Brother, who needs more than one bowl in a hungry family?" And then he put the clincher on me, he thought, when he said, "Ah, but I have only one pair of chopsticks!" And I said, "Who needs more than one pair of chopsticks between brothers?"

Well, this struck him funny and he gave up the contest and so we squatted with the bowl between us and we passed the bowl and the chopsticks back and forth until there wasn't a morsel left.

We squatted and looked at each other for a while and he asked me where I had come from and what was I going to do. And I asked him if he could help me get into town, and he said the only wheels would be a lorry loaded with Chinese troops going in for recreation and he wished he was going too. So, I persuaded him to hail down a lorryload of Chinese, about 40 of them standing in the open back, packed in like sardines. He said he had this Chinese redhead who wanted to go, too, and how about it. They stared at me in disbelief until I began chattering at them in Chinese, and they gave me a hand up so I could stand among them going in to Hanoi. And I stood there with my head bobbing around among theirs for some 30 miles. They put me off in front of the Hotel Metropole, but the hotel didn't have any rooms they weren't full. So I said that was all right I would sleep in the corridor. I carried a small mosquito net.

The next day I cleaned up, dressed as well as I could, and went across the esplanade to the High Commissioner's palace, which had been taken over by Ho Chi Minh, the alleged president and head of the Viet Minh, hoping with his new constitution to head a new Vietnam free from French colonialism. I sent in my card and he received me. I told him who I was, from the State Department. I was fascinated to discover that he spoke flawless English, which I would call "TV English" as it didn't seem to be any regional kind of English, just beautiful English. Ho Chi Minh asked me how long I was staying, and I said I was just taking a look around--maybe we would open a consulate after things settled down. And he asked me if I could stay longer. I said I would stay longer if he wanted me to but that I had expected to fly back in a couple of days with the plane I had come up on.

I added that I also had no place to stay. He asked me to stay a couple of weeks and said he would provide a place for me to stay. And what he did was to assign me to some quarters with an American graves mission hunting for the bodies of Americans who had been shot down during the war. The house where I went was large, and all the graves hunters were out in the countryside, but the house was well occupied by their mistresses; so I had a lot of company whenever I was there. Ho Chi Minh provided me also with a tiny automobile, French make, the size of a bathtub with just enough room for the driver in front and me behind. We couldn't communicate except by sign language and I drove by street map, pointing past the driver's face with my hand to indicate what direction I wanted to go and making a chopping sign to tell him to stop.

I had one meal a day with Ho Chi Minh most days, sometimes two, and we had extensive conversations, always the same theme of independence for Vietnam, free from the French and Chinese. He provided me with letters to the President and Secretary of State asking that the American Government would help him keep the French out, because as he said, "Your great president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, didn't want the French to return," And I said, "I know!"

One day I received a delegation from the Vietnam-American Association to bolster the line I had been receiving from Ho. They assured me that they were nationalists and socialists, as was Ho Chi Minh, and not real Communists as sometimes alleged. Their leader told me his name and I asked him to write it down for me in my little notebook I carried with me. I said I wanted to be sure and have the correct spelling. And he wrote "Le Duan." Later, I learned that he was the head of the Indo-Chinese Communist party. In subsequent conversations with Ho he re-emphasized that he was primarily a nationalist and not really a Communist. This was their party line, the same line they had been handing Colonel Patti, the chief of the OSS mission, which had been withdrawn. In 1982 Colonel Patti wrote his story entitled Why Vietnam, in which he set forth at length very much the same line that Ho and Le Duan had given me. I had the pleasure of reviewing his book for the American Political Science Review.

While in Hanoi I met again the French political adviser to Admiral d'Argenlieu whom I had first met in Saigon. He was returning from Chung King where he had been on a diplomatic mission to the Chinese. I flew back to Saigon with him on his plane, and during the flight he gave me the details of the agreement with the Chinese that he had negotiated and that was to be signed by both governments on or about March 9. So as soon as I arrived in Saigon I put this information in a cable to Washington and thus by happenstance provided the State Department and other branches of the government the first details of this agreement. When I finally returned to the Department in March, I was suddenly notorious for a day and was beset with many questions, which I was unable to answer as I had already told all I knew about the subject.

One day at lunch, Ho Chi Minh told me of one occasion in the 1930s when he was in Hanoi secretly working underground against the French. He was in a very relaxed and bemused mood as he talked about those times. He said that the French had been trying to capture him, and on this occasion in the 1930s they thought they had him firmly trapped

within an 8-block area surrounded by French police and military. Ho said, "They really thought they had me at last. But what I did was, I took off all my clothes down to my white underpants, but on a big coolie hat that came down over my face, put on coolie rubber sandals, got a wide 2-seater rickshaw, and had it loaded with a very fat Chinese market woman with a huge basket of chickens on one side of her and baskets of vegetables on the other. And then I, a little thin man, got between the shafts of the rickshaw and pulled her right through the French lines. The French were more preoccupied looking at the fat woman and chickens than they were at this thin little rickshaw puller. He sat at the lunch table and had the heartiest laugh during my visits with him." He felt he had made fools of the French.

Q: Well, Ken. This is Bill Atwood again and I understand that when you first joined the Club there used to be several chairs that were sort of honored for certain distinguished members and no one else dared sit in them. Do you recall that incident?

LANDON: Yes, I do. I was new in the Club. One day I came into lunch and sat at the long table and I was frowned upon by a good many people and felt very uncomfortable. I suddenly asked one of the fellows near me if I had made some mistake. And a number of men spoke up and said that that was the chair that Herbert Putnam, the Librarian of Congress, always sat in and no one else because he sort of held court when he came and they had some fine discussions. I realized that I was quite a comedown from the Librarian of Congress and I was very glad to vacate that chair. I subsequently identified a number of other chairs used by members who regularly lunched at the Club. I didn't get to the Club every day of the week. Far from it. But I took care to avoid those chairs used by the regulars and tried to sit near them so that I could enjoy their pearls of wisdom.

Q: Ken, I understand that during your career in the Club you served on the Admissions Committee through one of its most trying experiences. I'm sure you have some very good reminiscences of that period.

LANDON: Yes. I had five years on the Admissions Committee. I had two years of someone else's un-expired term and then three of my own, which seemed to me to take care of my committee work for the Club for all time. I remember a number of very interesting cases that came up. One was the night that the committee in its wisdom rejected the artist who created the Iwo Jima monument, but with no discussion voted in as a member a scientist who was the greatest living expert on micro-organisms of some sort that ate the bottoms of ships in the Red Sea. This was probably symptomatic of the scientific interests of the membership at that time. I have noticed that everyone without exception considers himself an expert in religion, politics, and art, regardless of how little he actually knows. But when it comes to science, the knowledge has to be more substantially founded. So art failed and science won on that particular occasion.

The most noteworthy experience occurred when I was informed one night that I had been assigned the portfolio of President John F. Kennedy, who had been nominated for membership by John Kenneth Galbraith and someone I don't remember. I do recall that I announced this unusual honor at home, and Margaret said later that when I made my

announcement I laughed like a crazy loon because I had just been abolished from my job on the Board coordinating operations under the National Security Council. McGeorge Bundy had called us together and read us a funerary oration. Granted that it was better to be abolished than fired because you're on the payroll and have no work. But you do have a hunting license to find another resting place. And for four months I was in this ambivalent position. When I got the portfolio of the President, I thought it was rather ironical that a possibly discontented office holder should hold his portfolio. But of course, I was determined with my Presbyterian and theological background to be quite dispassionate. And then I discovered to my astonishment that a great many members in the Club didn't want a President, any President, as a member, because of the security problems and the inevitable upset to Club quiet atmosphere. There was a great deal of informal discussion and some tension in the committee to wonder what to do if someone blackballed the President's application. At the same time a nomination for membership was made for Carl Rowan, who was a newspaperman. He was not only a reporter and indeed a black reporter, which gave him special attention because of possible racial prejudice, but he was also head of the USIA in the Kennedy Administration. Rowan's nomination for membership came up ahead of that of the President and there was some adverse discussion as to whether Rowan was really distinguished in his field. I don't recall any mention that he was a black man. Well, someone dropped in a blackball against Carl Rowan, and he failed to become a member.

That didn't shake the world, perhaps, but what did shake the world of the Club was when John Kenneth Galbraith and a number of other people then wrote letters of resignation on the grounds that the Club had discriminated on a racial basis. It happened also at that time that I was briefing a man named Stevenson, a cousin of Adlai Stevenson, to go to be Ambassador to the Philippines. Adlai gave a reception for him. At the reception, which was attended by many of Adlai's friends and admirers, suddenly his great hand came down on my shoulder and he said, "Ken Landon, turn around here. Carl Rowan, I think you ought to know Ken Landon. Ken Landon, you ought to know Carl Rowan better. Carl, Ken was on the Admissions Committee of the Cosmos Club which just blackballed you."

Carl Rowan said nothing but looked at me with great distaste and I wondered what to say. What I did say was, "Well, Mr. Rowan, I hope you appreciate what the Club did for you. After all, we have given a man who had a parochial reputation a national or possibly an international one. You really owe us a debt of gratitude. But as for knowing nominees for membership, we on the committee make it a point not to know them, so that we won't be prejudiced." Adlai let out a great guffaw and I left the party.

Not very long after that the historian John Hope Franklin was elected a member and so were one or two other black gentlemen who qualified. The Admissions Committee then received letters from Galbraith and some others indicating that as the Club was no longer discriminating racially they would withdraw their resignations and rejoin the Club. The Board of Management, in its wisdom, sent them letters saying that if they wanted to join the Club they would have to be nominated (again) in the usual manner.

As for the case of President Kennedy, as his sponsors had resigned from the Club, his nomination was withdrawn and his portfolio was filed with no action.

Q: Well, Ken, during your sojourn in the State Department, I understand you had one rather delightful trip out to Thailand for the coronation of the King and subsequent marriage.

LANDON: Yes, that occurred in 1950. I had known the King as a young boy in Bangkok in 1945-46. In fact, I was in the reception committee when he arrived in the country from Switzerland with his brother, who at that time was King Ananda, who was later assassinated. I had dinner with the Royal Family a number of times in 1944-46 and I was familiar with their interests and their activities.

In 1950 young King Phumiphon was to be crowned and married and his brother cremated, in a sequence of events beginning with the cremation, which was a Brahman ceremony for the coronation of the spirit of King Ananda, which would take care of him. I asked the protocol office what they were planning to give the young King as a wedding present and they said they were going to give him some Steuben glass because he was interested in jazz music and dancing and youthful activities. So I said the best thing to give him was a fancy, modernistic Fisher phonograph with a complete set of Gershwin records. "Oh," they said, "we couldn't do that." I asked, "Why not?" And they said it would take the President himself to make such a decision and provide the funds from his special fund. They said they didn't have that much leeway to choose.

So I said I would write a memo to the President and clear it with protocol, making the suggestion. Which I did. And the answer came back to protocol approving the idea, and I was to go help buy it and take it out. So I did.

At that time Edwin Stanton was our Ambassador and naturally he would make the presentation. I had the pleasure of showing Ed all the workings and playing the records to be sure they were all in good shape, and fortunately they were. We were very pleased after the wedding to learn that when the King took his Queen on their honeymoon this Fisher phonograph and records was the only wedding gift he took with them.

The National Geographic Magazine sent out W. Robert Moore, a photographer, to get pictures of the cremation of King Ananda and the coronation and wedding of King Phumiphon. Unfortunately, after arriving in Bangkok with all his equipment, he got appendicitis and had to be in the hospital. So he farmed out his various cameras to various people, and I was one of them. And there I was in white tie, top hat, and coattails trying to take pictures at the same time I participated in the ceremonies, where appropriate. At one time during a procession of the King I made a mistake in protocol and got too high so that I was above the head of the King. This caused some adverse comment in the newspapers, which pointed out that this particular foreigner should have known better, which of course I did. Other picture takers for Moore seized the opportunity to take pictures of me taking pictures of the King, and one shot was printed in National Geographic of this picture taker having his picture taken. In line with the King's interest in jazz, I might say that the King got his wife from jazz sessions in

Switzerland. She played the piano, a jazz piano, and he played the saxophone. I had known her first in Bangkok in 1945 when she was about 13 years old, and I danced with her in the Suranurom Gardens. She had pigtailed down her back and was a very pretty little girl. At that time her father was being considered for Ambassador to Washington. Lucky for her he was sent to London. She was one of the pretty Thai girls who went often to Switzerland to entertain the brothers Ananda and Phumiphon. Phumiphon fell in love with her. After his brother died, many parents began pressing their daughters on Phumiphon as possible queen.

One prominent family headed by Prince Dhani, a fine scholar and one time Minister of Education, had a daughter highly eligible and looked like the front runner. But Prince Dhani was a historian and a stickler for procedure and insisted that the young couple must first call upon and secure the approval of the old Queen Mother living in a palace north of Bangkok. This would entail requiring Phumiphon to return from Switzerland, and he became impatient and went ahead and decided on the girl of his choice who had been playing jazz piano with him.

In the Eisenhower Administration, when John Foster Dulles was Secretary of State, he called me on the phone and said, "I am going out to Bangkok and want to take a present to the King. "What should I take him?" And I said, "Take him an alto saxophone. He doesn't have one. He has other saxophones but not an alto." So Dulles had such a saxophone purchased and suitably engraved and carried it out with him.

While speaking of kings and queens I was reminded of King Prajatipok and his Queen Ramphaiphani, the King being the last absolute monarch in the Chakri line who officiated at the time of the 1932 coup d'état which limited the monarchy from that time on under diverse constitutions and military regimes. That King was a dapper, slim man who loved to smoke huge cigars. At the time of the coup he was having a constitution drafted by the American legal adviser, Raymond Stevens, but the initiative was taken from him by the coup and subsequent events described in my book Siam in Transition. The King wanted to disengage from the scene but the military deprived him of that opportunity until he sought medical attention and an operation for cataracts on one eye and was given leave to go to the United States for the surgery. He then went on to England and settled there until his death.

Queen Ramphaiphani and many Thai were caught up in WWII, and the next time I encountered her was at the end of the war in 1946 in a New York hotel. She and a group of Thai students and diplomats were being repatriated, presumably to Thailand, although I was given to understand that if they chose to go elsewhere there would be no objection. So I was sent to New York to meet the group, which were settled into a wing of the hotel, with some American constraints pending further decisions. My job was not only to reassure them but also to find out where they wanted to go and when.

I walked into their area in the hotel and found them gathered in a large sitting room reading and talking. They were all speaking in Thai, naturally. So I spoke up in Thai and asked if I might meet them for a brief discussion of their plans. The silence that struck

that room made me feel that they thought I was the fox entering the chicken house. They were at first very suspicious until a couple of them and the Queen recognized me from pre-war times. I remember that one young student in particular didn't want to return to Bangkok but wanted to go to England--he had been in Germany--to complete his education. He later came to Washington as Ambassador and then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and he and I had a good laugh as he recalled his initial alarm and then his pleasure at my help in his going to England and not to Bangkok.

Queen Ramphaiphani came to Washington and during her stay sent word to me that she would like to come to dinner at our house, which then as now was 4711 Fulton Street, NW. One does not invite a queen to dinner, but royalty invites itself - and she was being not only royal but wanted to see something of that remarkable woman, Margaret Landon, who had written Anna and the King of Siam, which was already in a movie starring Rex Harrison and Irene Dunn. So we got the caterers and trimmed up the house for the dinner.

We heard the cars bringing the Royal Family to dinner and hurried to open the front door. I had hardly opened the door when Prince Supawat, brother of the Queen, came bursting in with great enthusiasm and upon seeing Margaret standing with me exclaimed: "I am one member of the Royal Family that likes your book, Anna and the King of Siam, about our famous King Mongkut. It is all true! I am a painter and I know that every picture has both sunshine and shadow! He continued to congratulate Margaret on her book as his sister mounted our steep front stairs and came into our house more sedately.

I had procured, while in Bangkok in 1945-46, a most complete set of classical Thai records and I thought it would be nice if I could have one of my daughters sit in an adjacent room, during dinner, and play some records. I picked a few out and when I gave the signal at the second course of dinner, my daughter started a record. Queen Ramphaiphani was startled at the music and her fork dropped out of her hand and she burst into tears. She covered her eyes briefly with her napkin and we were all stunned into silence and concern, not knowing what had gone wrong. She dried her eyes and explained: "That particular music was the favorite of my husband, and he had it played often by the Royal Orchestra while we dined. The music brought back many happy memories when there was no sadness!" I asked her if she would like to have my daughter play more records and she said she would be delighted. And so the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of King Prajatipok entertained his queen at dinner in our home that night!

One of my most amusing memories, perhaps valuable for a time politically, was when General, later Marshal, Sarit came to Washington before becoming prime minister of Thailand in 1958. I had met him for the first time in Bangkok when Ed Stanton was the Ambassador in 1950. My reading of the Thai language newspapers led me to realize that General Sarit was going to become a very prominent politician, and so I asked Stanton to arrange for me to call on him. Stanton asked his military attaché to make the arrangements and the attaché balked. He said that he didn't see that it was any of my business to call on a General, which was his area of responsibility. He said that if I wanted to know something military I should ask him to provide the answer. So I said to Stanton, don't bother. I told some of my Thai friends I'd like to call on the General and

they sent word to him. General Sarit sent word back to me that the meeting would be pointless because he didn't speak English. So I sent word back to him that I didn't speak English either.

Sarit was amused and sent his car around for me. He was in command of the first army tank corps in Bangkok, and his office was behind barbed wire, which was set up as a maze. We had a very pleasant and unimportant conversation as he tried to figure out what my interest was in him and I tried to figure out how able he was and what ambitions he might have.

So he came to Washington in the late 50s and by that time he was a big shot in politics and it was only a question of time when he would take over the seat of power. I knew this and he knew that I knew it. So he came out to our house for dinner one night with his entourage of aides who filled the house. I still remember that we had a caterer provide French food, which he stirred around on his plate until Margaret served a turkey stuffed with wild rice, which she had prepared herself. He then settled down to eat with great satisfaction and in large quantity. We had a porch at the side of our residence that looked out on a very quiet backyard. At dusk we went out to stand on the porch and the General lighted a cheroot. As we were standing there a bit fat opossum came out from under the porch and sat down on the grass and scratched itself. He looked at us standing there and showed no alarm at all and finally, when he got through scratching, he waddled out through the yard probably in search of his evening snack. General Sarit looked at this animal in amazement and exclaimed, "Maa chao woy, what's that?"

I explained to him that it was an opossum, that they didn't have one just like that in Thailand. He asked me "Is it wild or is it tame?"

I said, "It's wild."

He said, "Does it live here with you?"

I said, "Yes, it lives here with me, under our porch."

He asked, "Is he afraid of you?" and I said no, he's used to me. He sometimes walked right past me.

"Maa chao woy," exclaimed General Sarit.

Well, the birds were twittering around the bird feeders in an apple tree, getting a final snack before bedtime, and he admired them and asked me what I fed them. He wanted to know if they were wild or tame. I said they were wild. He then proceeded to go through the same questions he had asked about the opossum and when satisfied exclaimed again, "Maa chao woy!" Then a mother chipmunk came out of a hedge at the east side of stone steps that led up a steep terrace to the rest of the yard and proceeded without haste to a hedge on the west side of the steps, followed by five little chipmunk babies. General Sarit exclaimed in amazement, "Ai ya, what are those animals?" And I explained what they were and that was a mother chipmunk taking her children for an evening walk.

"Maa chao woy," he exclaimed, and asked "Are they wild or are they tame?" And I said they were wild. And then the General went through the same questions again that he had asked about the opossum. Were they afraid of me? Did they live with me? And did I feed them? I assured him they took care of themselves in my very quiet backyard.

Then we stepped out into the garden and started up the steep stone steps. As we went up, there were squirrels running around overhead. The General made no comment but just observed them. When he came near the top of the steps of which there were about fifteen, he stopped short of the top and stood silently, absolutely dead still. Then he turned his head and asked me, "Ai ya, what's this?"

I stepped up beside him and there about four feet in front of him crouched a great, fat rabbit chewing its cud, looking complacently at General Sarit and me. "It's a rabbit," I said.

The General shook his head in wonder and exclaimed "Maa chao, woy" and then asked the inevitable questions--is it wild or tame? Does it live with you? Is it afraid of you? And while we were talking the rabbit casually hopped away into a hedge at the back fence and disappeared. The general was silent as we went back down the steps, but before we went back into the house he turned to me and said, "I think I'm beginning to understand you. You've got the heart of a Buddhist, and these animals know it and live with you."

Shortly after, in 1958, he became prime minister, and I flew out to Bangkok again in 1960 while Working for the Operations Coordinating Board. At that time, Laos was in a tense situation, and I flew there in the course of my travels in southeast Asia. Coming back into Bangkok I landed one night at about 1 a.m. from Saigon. An aide of the Prime Minister, Marshal Sarit, was at the airport to meet me. He said that the Prime Minister wanted me to come to breakfast with him. "He wants to talk to you about Laos and Vietnam."

I said that of course I would be very glad to do that, but--"you come out like this at 1 o'clock in the morning?" And his reply was that Sarit wanted to see me. So I went on to my quarters where I was staying with old friends and sent word to the deputy chief of mission, Leonard Unger, to go with me if he could. He came in his car about 7:30 a.m. and we drove to have breakfast with Sarit at about 8 a.m. We were received in a very friendly fashion. There were just the three of us--with numerous aides in the background but not at breakfast with us.

My conversation with Marshal Sarit was entirely in Thai, as usual. To my astonishment Leonard Unger, who had been studying Thai during his lunch hours, was able to follow a great deal of the conversation, occasionally asking what some word meant. One of the things that bothered me during our conversation was that the lights in the room gradually grew brighter and brighter until they were almost blinding. And then the Prime Minister recalled his visit to our home in Washington and the experience he had with the opossum,

the birds, the chipmunks, the squirrels, and the rabbit. Furthermore he recapitulated his questions to me on each of the animals and his exclamations of wonder. Apparently, the visit had really stuck in his mind.

And then the lights began to dim and fade off and he turned to other subjects briefly, and I thought to myself, thank heavens someone had sense to dim those lights. And then Leonard Unger and I departed and went to the embassy. Well, when I got to the embassy the phone was ringing like mad. Old friends wanted to see me because they knew I was back in Bangkok. How did they know, I asked. Why, I'd just been on live television with the Prime Minister and they'd all listened to his tale about the animals in my backyard!

While recalling some of my State Department experiences it might be of interest for me to say something about my experience with the Kennedy administration and with what became known as the counter-insurgency program and the establishment of the National Interdepartmental Seminar under a presidential directive. After I had been abolished by McGeorge Bundy along with the rest of the staff on the Operations Coordinating Board, Dean Rusk graciously took me back into the State Department. He really didn't have a job for me, and so I was put on hold in the Foreign Service Institute on the grounds that I was a professor and teacher. I found myself giving a two-week course on southeast Asia once every six weeks - and I thought I might just coast out that way to retirement if nothing turned up more exciting. Then I had a phone call from Walt Rostow after he and General Maxwell Taylor had made a trip to Saigon toward the end of the first Kennedy year, 1961, and they came back saying, "There's an insurgency in Vietnam and we must counter insurgency." Counter-insurgency became the cliché or touchstone word for Kennedy policy in countering what was believed to be the wars of national liberation sponsored by the Soviet and Chinese Communists around the world. So Walt Rostow said, "Ken, I may have a job for you. Come on over."

So I went to his office and he had a National Security Council order in draft form to be signed by President Kennedy to set up a training program to counter insurgency--and, in particular, also, a country team training program for the top brass in embassies, training ambassadors, generals, colonels, and the top officials in CIA, USIA, and so forth. And Walt offered me the job of concocting such a program under the directive. And I said something that came out sounding like yes, sir. And I read the NSC draft looking for just one thing, money. I wanted a blank check that the Under Secretary of State for administration would honor when I began spending money.

Soon I met a committee that met under General Taylor and included General Krulak for the military, Alexis Johnson for State, Walt Rostow, and some others. I was given a very general directive because they didn't know what they wanted, not even how many weeks the training program should be, and I didn't know what I was going to be able to provide. That was in early 1962. I was told the first class would consist of 60 senior officials and they would arrive the first week in June. As I got started in March I saw I had a lot to do, setting up quarters at the Foreign Service Institute, establishing a reference and study library collection, and arranging for faculty - but, first and foremost, inventing a curriculum on how to counter insurgency. I was bemused to think that I was expected to

dream up how to counter insurgency while from the time I was a boy I had always been on the other side, more insurgent than counter insurgent. But then I regarded this as an academic exercise and I didn't think anybody else knew any more than I did or didn't about how to counter insurgency, anyway.

Walt Rostow suggested that I go up to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and discuss curriculum with Max Millikan, Lucian Pye, Everett Hagen, and various others, who might also become some of the lecturers. These were scholars writing and doing research on economic development, social change, and political development. They were very helpful with suggestions, and I settled down to develop a bibliography as of first importance, on which base I might arrange a course of study and lectures. I ordered 50 copies of each book that I bought on the theory that such high officials shouldn't wait to use the books they needed. I drafted sample courses for various lengths of time from four weeks to eight weeks, and after some discussion with the overseeing committee we agreed that five weeks was about right and also was as long as we could expect high officials to sit still for such study.

About six weeks before the first class, Rostow phoned me, "I told you that all 60 of these officers were to go east Asia, but now we want to divide the class and send some to Latin America. Can you modify the program to make that possible?" So naturally I said something that sounded like yes, sir and hired some Latin America experts to concoct parallel bibliography, lecturers, etc. etc. I might say that for the second class, which was held a few weeks after the close of this first one, the program was extended to cover Africa and subsequently the Middle East and South Asia. So it was evident that in the Kennedy administration it was the policy to consider the Communist conspiracy as worldwide and emanating from Moscow, even though in 1960, Professor Zagoria had written his book showing that China had parted from the Soviet Union as a fellow conspirator and that nationalist differences were clearly emerging within communist movements around the world.

In addition to this so-called Country Team Seminar, I was asked to arrange and chair a series of six lectures in the main auditorium of the State Department, which would seat about 400, to be attended by all officers above GS-7. This series of six lectures was kicked off by the Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, and by Walt Rostow. Walt told me he would give one lecture on every sequence of lectures, but I think he gave only that first lecture and left me to it. The military also arranged for similar general lectures and some 50,000 of their officers went through such a course the first year. I lectured in many of their programs, also.

After the Country Team Seminar had been going for about six months it was given a more fancy name: National Interdepartmental Seminar, and we moved at great expense into new quarters, a former -restaurant facing the Iwo Jima monument, introducing the most modern teaching aids and equipment then available. At the end of my year at this job I was phased out, and an ambassador on leave was given the job of administering the seminar. I became Dean of Area Studies at the Foreign Service Institute.

The first graduating class of the Country Team Seminar was very interesting to me. It included a General Joseph Stilwell, son of the famous "Vinegar" Joe Stilwell of the China-Burma theater. General Stilwell came reluctantly the first week with no enthusiasm, under the presidential directive. He made a move to goof off on Thursday by informing me that he was departing for New York at 1500 that day and would not therefore return after lunch, and he would return on Monday at 0900. So for the fun of it, and also meaning it, I said, "Negative, General."

He was startled and said, "Negative?"

And I said, "Negative. You are here under a presidential directive, and how would it look to the President if you went off to New York?" "I see your point," he said, and we both laughed.

General Stilwell was not exactly a reader of books, and the bibliography I had assigned for reading was imposing. Toward the end of that first week General Stilwell stood up in class and said, "Professor, I have a question a good many of us are asking. Do you expect us to read all of those assignments?"

I said, "General, I developed these assignments on my understanding of the habits of chickens. If you scatter grain in front of a chicken, he will pick enough grain to take care of his appetite. If you tie him by the leg beside a small pile of grain he will eat and eat until it is gone. But if you tie him by the leg beside 5 pounds of grain he will peck until he has to lie down beside it and will continue pecking and that's what I expect you all to do." They were all very good natured about it and I think they did more reading than they or I had anticipated.

President Kennedy wanted to meet the graduates of that first class. He wanted to see what kind of people would be countering insurgency, and perhaps inspire them a little. So I had the honor of taking the 60 senior officers over to the White House. They stood in a small group near the White House, and I walked around by the President's office at the French doors there to let him know we were waiting for him. He looked up slightly startled and said, "What do you want?" And I said that I was there with a class of 60 senior officials who had taken a course of study on counter insurgency under his directive and that "You have a memo from me in your in-box no doubt on the subject." So he looked in his box and said, "Oh, yes, just give me a minute."

I backed off and in about 5 minutes the President appeared and we had the 60 officers all standing around on the grass. General Taylor and Walt Rostow were both there also. President Kennedy didn't have a single note in hand, but for about 15 minutes he gave a brilliant presentation of how to counter insurgency, showing that he was a quick learner with a most mobile mind. And also that he knew what he wanted.

Q: Well, Ken, those are certainly some very fascinating stories. You know, there's one thing you and I have in common. We both have very charming wives that have each published a book. Your wife did a most fascinating book Anna and the King of Siam in

which she took the rather stilted diary of Anna Leonowens, who was an English governess, and made a fascinating story based on her years in Siam, her familiarity with the royal family, and very intensive research subsequently. And my wife, on the other hand, has written an interesting little book and illustrated and translated an old manuscript by a French Sinologist published in Paris at the turn of the century. The reason I mention this is that my wife was greatly aided and helped by two members of the Cosmos Club for many years and then, when _____ returned to this country, became the head of the Oriental department of the Library of Congress. He was most helpful to my wife in making the library facilities available for her research and in encouraging her in her endeavors.

Also, Dr. John Alexander Pope, former director of the Freer Gallery of Art, was very encouraging and allowed her to do considerable research in the library of the Freer. Both of these gentlemen have been long-time members of the Cosmos Club and also of the Literary Society of Washington, of which I believe your wife has been a member for a long time. So you must be familiar with them and their activities. Do you have any comments on them?

LANDON: Yes. To begin with Dr. Hummel--we became very good friends when I first arrived in Washington in August 1941 because, of course, I went directly to his Oriental section at the Library of Congress. I wanted to find out what documentation there was on southeast Asia. I found there were a few books on Vietnam written in the classic Nom character system, a "Siamese twin" sort of system using two characters side-by-side linked in the sense that one carried the meaning and the other the sound, approximately, in Vietnamese. But there was nothing really to amount to anything on Indochina except some of the publications of the Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient, a school of study located at Hanoi.

On Thailand, I found most of the Thai language publications lying in heaps on the floor, unprocessed because they had no one to read and classify them. As for Dr. Hummel, who first met me with casual interest, he became fascinated when he discovered that I could speak fluently in the Swatow dialect of south China, understood Fukienese dialect, and could manage in what I called schoolboy Mandarin, which was somewhat like the French spoken in Indiana as taught by teachers who had never been in France. Hummel was quite charmed by my interest in Chinese and also that I was the book editor on Oriental matters for the Journal of Philosophy published at Columbia University, when I held that post beginning in about 1943 or 1944.

I became quite an admirer of Dr. Hummel when I came to realize the magnitude of his achievements at the Library, his acquisition of one of the most substantial collections outside of China. He frequently twitted me that I had come to Washington on southeast Asian affairs but that my really important interest, in his view, was in Chinese matters.

This interest of mine in Chinese and Japanese affairs, of course, brought me into frequent contact with John Pope. So that he and I have been friends through the years. I often discussed with him some of the philosophic publications I was reviewing for the Journal

of Philosophy because of his extensive knowledge and profound understanding of Asian ways of thought.

Q: Ken, one of our mutual friends was Waldron Faulkner. And I always remember a story he told me about the presidential guesthouse, Blair House. It seems that when Waldron was a young man, a young architect just starting here, he'd gotten a job in some architectural firm that was remodeling Blair House to be used as an adjunct to the White House for visiting dignitaries. Well, one of the things the architect said was "Waldron the thing doesn't have any portico over the door. Would you do some research? There must have been one." Well, Waldron did a great deal of research, and so far as he could find, from old photographs, there never was a portico over the door. So he carefully designed one that he thought would be correct. Just recently, before his death, he picked up a book on old and famous houses in Washington, and here was a picture of the Blair House with this magnificent old portico, which gave him a great deal of chuckles.

LANDON: In connection with our famous wives, I might add a word more suggested by Bill Atwood. Margaret had excellent writing ability in college and could even write poetry, which she told me was only verse. This perplexed me as I didn't understand poetry and couldn't understand how anybody could write it. In fact, I viewed this ability with considerable awe. Her interest in writing was perhaps stimulated again years later when she noticed that I was spending some of our small income as missionaries in Siam on various publications of more political and societal nature than missionary. She asked me why I was buying such books and periodicals and ephemeral newspapers. And I said, "I'm going to write a book on the 1932 revolution in Siam because I think it marked a turning point in Thai history."

One day in 1929 or 1930, Margaret was visiting Dr. and Mrs. Edwin Bruce McDaniel, who lived across the peninsula from us in Nakhon Si Thammarat, where we had lived for a year after our one year in Bangkok language study. The doctor ran a hospital and a leper home. One morning when he and Mrs. McDaniel were preparing to go to work at the leper home he handed her a book, "The English Governess at the Siamese Court." He said he kept the book hidden behind other books in his bookcase because the Siamese people didn't like it. They felt it was demeaning to their king because it made him seem as a fallible human being and not the divine incarnation of Siva they believed him to be.

The book by Anna Leonowens was written in the Victorian style of the 1860s and '70s and to many people would have been boring reading. But Margaret was carried away into another century and world and hardly noticed the passage of time until she had finished it.

The next day Dr. McDaniel gave her a second book by Anna called "Romance of the Harem." These two books remained a vivid memory to Margaret when we returned to the United States, and she determined to try to find copies and perhaps to write an essay about Anna. We were in a Chicago bookstore where I was selecting books on China for university studies when Margaret drifted into the out-of-print fiction section and found a copy of the "English Governess" for \$1.50 and could hardly believe the price, as listings

by English stores were in the neighborhood of 5 pounds. And then at Marshall Fields a book sale was held and on a table she found the "Harem" for 50 cents. So she felt she was on her way to writing an essay about Anna.

Our lives have had many strange coincidences and one occurred when I was lecturing at Northwestern University to a clerical audience drawn from the greater Chicago area. In the audience was an Episcopalian clergyman named Dean Gerald C. Moore of the Evanston cathedral. He came up to me after the lecture and said, "My mother would love to meet you. She had a very dear friend in Siam named Anna - did you ever know her?"

The foreign community at that time was small and I knew all Americans and many British but no Anna, and so I said, "The only Anna I've ever heard of was Anna Leonowens and I never met her; she was before my time." And Dean Moore said, "That's the Anna!" I did some mental arithmetic and I figured that his mother would have to be about 100 years old to have known Anna Leonowens and so I said, "It would have been nice to have met your mother." He got the point and laughed and said, "Mother lives only four or five blocks from here and she'd love to see you!"

So we went to see his mother, who proved to be 93 years old. Her mind was as lively as that of a young woman and she had many vivid memories of Anna dating from 1867. I asked if I might bring Margaret to meet her, saying that Margaret was writing an essay on Anna and would appreciate her clear memories of Anna as a living person. So Margaret and I returned shortly for a very happy tea conversation.

And then a few months later we received an invitation to call again on the Moores to meet Miss Avis Fyshek, youngest granddaughter of Anna Leonowens, who came from Toronto for the only time in her life to visit the Moores. At that meeting they kept returning to the idea of Margaret's essay on Anna, which had actually not yet gotten underway except in sketch form in Margaret's mind and perhaps a little on paper. And they asked me repeatedly what I was writing and more about my book that was shortly to be published by the University of Chicago Press and Oxford Press on the 1932 revolution in Siam, called Siam in Transition.

The upshot of all this conversation was that Avis Fyshek told how she had tried to write the story of her grandmother and had almost 300 pages written before she realized that she didn't know enough about Siam to write it. Later she came out to Wheaton, Illinois, where we were living, and brought with her a file of her own attempted biography, as well as a box crammed with letters from Anna Leonowens to the family members plus some holograph letters from King Mongkut to Anna, which no one outside of the family knew existed. She then proposed that Margaret and I collaborate on a book about her grandmother if we were interested and willing. I said that that was more Margaret's line of writing than mine but that I would help in a support role in any way that might seem useful. Margaret and I both knew that a writer can't write with someone looking over the writer's shoulder with authority to modify, revise, or delete, and Margaret so informed Avis Fyshek. Fyshek not only turned over what materials she had but also graciously provided Margaret with a letter giving her a free hand. Also, she collected and sent

further family material.

Then in August 1941, I came to Washington and discovered a mass of Siamese language pamphlets and books in paper cover in Dr. Hummell's section of the Library of Congress- -most of them lying un-shelved at the end of a corridor. These items provided extensive documentation in the Siamese language of the period when Anna was in Siam. And by that time I had said many times to Margaret, "You've got a book, not an essay." There were four more years of research including materials at the National Archives. At any rate, by a chance meeting at Northwestern University, Margaret was introduced to the subject of her most famous book which in the 1980s is still being memorialized on stage by Yul Brynner in "The King and I," to large audiences.

Waldron Faulkner and I became acquainted at the Literary Society where Margaret was the member, not I. And I always enjoyed being the consort. Waldron and I seemed to strike it off from the first. We got into the habit of having luncheon together at the Club about once a month. This went on for years. And as both Margaret and I became very fond also of Waldron's wife, Bussie, we met now and then for dinner or some other event. I frequently discussed with Waldron some of the architectural things that I had observed while taking pictures in Asia. One of the puzzles was why the arch was never developed at Angkor Wat. Why was it they could use those tremendous stones that would gradually inch toward each other at the peak and be held there in suspension, but they never developed the arch. Waldron went into that question at some length but never found any good answer. I have a copy of his book on "Color in Architecture" as we also discussed color in Asian architecture shown in some of my pictures. Sitting here with Bill Atwood, of course, I think frequently of his father. I admired the many articles he wrote and in fact pulled out many old ones for rereading after we became acquainted at the Club. He always did the most meticulous research and his writing was delightful. We loved to hear him talk about any subject that was of interest to him because he had a way with words. I was especially charmed one day when he told me he had enjoyed a couple of my short stories that had appeared in the Saturday Evening Post while Ben Hibbs was still the editor.

End of interview