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SUBJECT: Article: "Impressions: The Status of Women in Southeast Asia

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Here's the article.

Khun Chamchit, mentioned in the piece on Thailand, remained my friend for 20-some years after we met in Chiang-Mai. She visited me when I lived in Westport, CT, and entertained about five sets of my friends over the years who visited Chiang-Mai. She died several years ago.

One of the pieces in my memoir, "Thai Silk," is about my experiences with her in Chiang-Mail.

Att.



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Editorial

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

As we move towards the close of 1978 we look back upon the various articles published in this journal and can ascertain quite easily that we have only scratched the surface. The international practice of law with the appropriate transnational and comparative developments only add to the already growing abundance of materials which are just now coming into broader circulation. The digesting of these materials as they are released and the reporting of new developments as they occur then becomes but one challenge to the staff here at **The Common Law Lawyer** in terms of contributing to the field of legal journalism and jurisprudential writing. No doubt we will witness in the years to come more efficient and electronic systems of information storage and control. It is in this area of legal document and data control that **The Common Law Lawyer** will strive to continue to provide the Bench, Bar and

public with the personalized and most authoritative materials that will be of ultimate benefit to both the academic as well as practicing Bar.

Despite the wide dissemination of articles and materials in law however there are large segments of the legal profession completely out of touch with the heartbeat of their own profession. Predominantly this lack of communication and contact is most severe in foreign jurisdictions that include civilized yet still underdeveloped portions of Central and South America; parts of Asia, Eastern Europe and even certain geographic areas of the United States.

Perhaps the ultimate goal for legal publishers such as ourselves will be to improve upon the reporting of facts and events and develop a larger base of distribution transnationally. In the process we might just discover that the more attractive and readable the material the more encouraged and involved the readers will become.

On behalf of the entire staff at ICLES and **The Common Law Lawyer**, I extend my deepest appreciation and thanks to the subscribers and members who have so enthusiastically demonstrated their support and encouragement for our organization and journal.

It is with Great Expectations that the support and encouragement for **The Common Law Lawyer** will continue to flourish and that the membership and subscriber rolls will likewise follow.

Ira B. Marshall
President
Editor-in-Chief



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Articles from the Profession

IMPRESSIONS: THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

by Sonia Pressman Fuentes*

The Common Law Lawyer wishes to express its thanks to Ms. Fuentes for her timely and in-depth review of Impressions on the Status of Women in Southeast Asia.

The value of this article by Attorney Fuentes can be found in the "diary style" reporting of the facts, situations, and characters experienced first hand. This impressionistic expose should prove to be essential reading for those practitioners who are involved and/or interested in the international developments of Women's rights and sexual equality.



In November 1977, I travelled halfway around the world to Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines to speak on the women's rights movement in the United States. I spoke with union leaders, law students, faculty members, government officials and judges. I met women in business, law, education and government—women who were activists, and women who were defenders of the status quo. This is the story of that trip.¹

THAILAND

The kingdom of Thailand, formerly known as Siam, is in the heart of mainland Southeast Asia. It is primarily an agricultural country, with a population of 44 million people: 75% are Thai, 14% are Chinese, and 11% are other minorities. The predominant religion is Buddhism; and the per capita annual income is \$230.

**Ms. Fuentes was a founding or charter member of various nationwide women's rights organizations founded since the mid-sixties, such as the National Organization for Women [NOW], The Women's Equity Action League [WEAL], and Federally Employed Women [FEW]. For 8 years, she specialized in women's legal rights as an attorney and Chief of the Legislative Counsel Division, Office of the General Counsel, at the Equal Opportunity Commission [EEOC] in Washington, D.C. She has lectured and written extensively on women's rights both in the United States and abroad. She is currently employed as a labor lawyer for a multi-national corporation.*

1. My lecture tour was sponsored by the United States Information Agency (USIA), known abroad as the United States Information Service (USIS), in response to a request from their Manila office. The talk I gave throughout Southeast Asia appears in the December 1977 issue of the Philippine Law Journal.

Bangkok

Briefing

"Thai women, particularly professional women, have freedom, equality, and power," said the USIS woman official who met us² at the airport. "They are, however, living off the backs of their sisters." Their freedom depends on servants who care for their households and children.

According to Mr. A,³ the American official who briefed me, there is not much overt discrimination in Thailand, especially against educated women. "Women's rights is not an issue here," he said. There are a lot of Thai women in responsible jobs and they are accepted. There are two prominent women labor leaders. About 50% of the Thai work force is female and half the Thai students who study in the United States are women. Thai women work in the fields along with their husbands.

Mr. A and others told me that Thai women are the more stable members of the society; they hold important positions in business, and maintain family ties. Men are frequently spoken of as frivolous and less responsible. They frequent massage parlors and night clubs, and are interested in women and gambling. Thai men have three socially acceptable avenues of escape from family responsibilities: entering the monastery for three months,⁴ taking minor wives,⁵ and visiting the omnipresent massage parlors, which are generally-recognized fronts for prostitution.⁶ There are no

2. My husband, Roberto, was travelling with me.

3. This type of identification is used, where necessary, to protect the identity of individuals.

4. An unmarried man can earn merit in Buddhism for his mother by entering the monastery; a married man can earn it for his wife. It is difficult for a woman herself to earn merit in Buddhism. There are nuns in Thailand, but they do not have the status of monks.

5. Bigamy is legal in Thailand and men take as many as three and four minor wives. Concubinage is also practiced. A man's wife is expected to take the concubine's children into her home and treat them as her children; and the concubine is expected to "know her place."

6. Just as it is socially acceptable for certain American men to stop at the local bar after work and before com-

similar escape hatches for women.

The real problem for women in Thailand, said Mr. A, is prostitution. There are 125,000 prostitutes in Bangkok and Pattaya (the beach resort near Bangkok). Advertisements aimed at attracting European tourists stress the availability of Thai women. Girls in the northern provinces are sold by their parents to pimps and massage parlors. Other women come to Bangkok to find work and end up as prostitutes, either voluntarily or by force. Police corruption contributes to the perpetuation of the system.

I was later briefed by Khun⁷ Poonsang and Khunying Kanitha. Khun Poonsang, an employee of the American Embassy who had been educated in the United States, mentioned that in the rural areas, young girls are abducted by their suitors when they wish to avoid parental objections to the match or the expenses of a wedding. Khunying Kanitha is executive secretary to the Thai-American Technical Cooperation Association, and the chairperson and leading force behind the Status of Women Promotion Group, one of Thailand's most active women's rights organizations.⁸

Department of Labor

I met with Khun Somsri Kantamala, Deputy Director-General of the Depart-

ing home, so is it acceptable for certain Thai men to stop at the massage parlor. While the double standard is socially acceptable, it nonetheless produces a great deal of stress and jealousy among wives.

7. "Khun" is the everyday polite form of address, corresponding to "Miss," "Ms.," "Mrs.," or "Mr." "Khunying" is a special title given by the King to women in recognition of special accomplishments. Thai people use first names as we use last names. It is perfectly polite to call a Thai woman named Poonsang Sutabutr whom you have just met "Khun Poonsang" rather than "Mrs. Sutabutr."

8. Khun Kanok, another outstanding Thai woman, who was unable to join us due to another commitment, had just been named to the new national legislative assembly. She was a major organizer of the Girl Guides, and had educated women servants on their right to be free of rape by the men in their households, and to report such matters to the police.

ment, and its highest-placed woman, prior to addressing a group at the Thai Department of Labor.⁹ The audience was limited to government employees, about 50 men and women with the Department of Labor and some women associated with the local university faculty (faculty members are government employees).¹⁰

Interest was expressed in the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), and in starting women's rights organizations and a women's movement such as had been done in the United States. One of the women addressed a plea to the married men present for assistance in running the home and raising the children. Several of the women mentioned that Eastern women, due to their training and religion, are not as aggressive and militant as American women. Thai women have not been conditioned to the confrontation which has been such an essential part of the women's movement in the United States.

There was discussion of the fact that in October 1976, Thai law had been changed in the direction of greater equality. Now a wife, as well as a husband, could sue for divorce on the grounds of adultery; and a husband needed his wife's consent to sign a contract just as she needed his.

That night, my husband and I attended an inter-club debate of the Bangkok Toastmasters and Toastmistresses Clubs on the subject: "Resolved that Equality of the Sexes is Indispensable for the Progress of our Society." Unfortunately, the negative side won.¹¹

Chiang-Mai

Bangkok is a crowded, polluted, traffic-ridden city and we were glad of the opportunity to fly up to Chiang-Mai in the northern interior, Thailand's second largest city with a population of about 150,000.

Chiang-Mai turned out to be an enchanting city — our personal Shangri-la. We were met at the airport by the energetic Director of the USIS office, Hugh Ivory. Hugh had an extensive program planned for us, which included a talk at the Rotary Club; Thanksgiving at the American Consulate with 60 guests, including American students studying in Chiang-Mai, followed by a traditional Thai dinner and an evening of authentic Thai dancing

9. Mr. A had mentioned that while the Thai Labor Department had jurisdiction similar to that of the U.S. Labor Department (worker's compensation, labor relations, labor statistics), it had low prestige and limited expertise. It is merely one of the departments of the Ministry of the Interior, and it is the Ministry which has the political clout.

10. My audience was originally slated to include representatives of private industry. The Labor Department, however, fearful that my talk might antagonize the new administration established since the October 20, 1977 coup, whose interests were not yet known, restricted the audience to government officials and employees.

11. "Chiang-Mai" is also written "Chiang Mai," "Chiangmia," and "Chiangmai."

at the Old Chiang-Mai Cultural Center;¹² a dinner and ball for 250 people at the British Consulate to celebrate Loy Kratung, Thailand's principal festival; and a visit to the Meo Hill Tribes.

Rotary Club

I was the first woman ever to address the Rotary Club, one of Chiang-Mai's two male clubs.¹³ My audience consisted of Thai and Caucasian men and women. A number of Caucasian men asked why the women's movement didn't drop controversial issues such as the ERA, abortion, and lesbian rights and concentrate on more generally accepted issues. Similar comments were later made to me by one of the USIS officials in Singapore, who thought the American people needed a respite from "burning issues" after Watergate and Vietnam. I responded on both occasions that like all human rights movements, the women's movement is not a monolithic movement orchestrated by an elite group. Rather, it consists of individuals and groups of women with various concerns across the country and no one person or group dictates goals and priorities.

The real problem for women in Thailand is prostitution.

Khun Chamchit Laohavad

One night at a dinner arranged by Hugh, I met the most fantastic woman I was to meet during the trip: Khun Chamchit Laohavad. When she joined us for dinner, I saw before me a woman in her 60's who looked like the proverbial inscrutable Oriental. Looking about for a conversational gambit, I remarked that we were staying at the Rincome Hotel and that it was lovely. "I'm glad you like it," she said. "I own it."

Khun Chamchit was the outstanding woman in Chiang-Mai, and her family its outstanding family. Among her titles and activities were the following: owner and Managing Director of an immense 3-level indoor shopping center; owner and Direc-

12. When we left the States on November 19, friends commiserated about our missing Thanksgiving Dinner. To our amazement, in the heart of Thailand, we found ourselves having a traditional Thanksgiving Dinner, complete with turkey and all the trimmings, followed by a traditional Thai dinner, both of which, to our astonishment, we ate with gusto.

13. The other was the Lions Club. When I chided the Rotary Club for limited itself to male members, I learned that the Club wanted to admit women but was prevented from doing so by the International.

tor of a finance company; Vice President of the Tourist Association of Northern Thailand; Honorary Secretary of the Lampang Leprosy Foundation, which operates a home and school for children of lepers; Honorary Manager of a school for the deaf, and Associate Judge of the Juvenile Court.

One of her brothers designed the shopping center which she owns; her sister owns the Old Chiang-Mai Cultural Center, which seats 200 for dinner and has daily performances of traditional Thai dances; and her mother owns a travel agency.

Khun Chamchit's friends are similarly outstanding. Mom. Tada¹⁴ Kunsuikmengrai is a Princess, owns and manages a silver shop, and represents the Chase Manhattan Bank. Another Princess owns and manages the Lamphoon weaving establishment which supplies handwoven Thai silk to the Queens of Thailand and England, is the granddaughter of the last ruling Prince of Chiang-Mai and the widow of a Prince, and serves as an Associate Judge and President of the local Red Cross chapter.¹⁵

USIS Center

Khun Chamchit and I were panelists at a program at the USIS Center in Chiang-Mai. Khun Chamchit spoke of the good fortune of Thai women in being equal to men. She mentioned that: property in Thailand descends matrilineally; a past Thai Queen had played a significant role in the country's history; Thai women could choose their husbands; Thai women have equality in education; most university students and the heads of many university departments are women; career women receive promotions on an equal basis with men; jobs in finance are generally given to women because they are considered reliable and honest, and don't gamble as the men do; and women have been appointed to high positions in banking. She praised Thai women for their ability to work and run their households while American women needed their husbands' help.¹⁶ She mentioned that women's careers in Thailand don't result in a high rate of divorce as they do in the United States because servants and the extended family help care for the children.¹⁷

14. "Mom." is a royal title indicating close relationship to a King of Thailand.

15. The power and influence of these women is principally a function of their elite class standing and their business achievements. The masses of Thai women are certainly not in their category.

16. This contrasted with the plea of the women at the Labor Department in Bangkok for more assistance from the men in running their homes and raising their children.

17. In my prepared remarks, I had mentioned that nearly 40% of all American marriages end in divorce; and that the United States has the highest divorce rate in the world. While there are many causes for the American divorce rate, many in my audiences throughout Southeast Asia (particularly the men) viewed divorce as a direct consequence of the women's liberation

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The only area where Khun Chamchit was critical of Thailand's treatment of women involved pay. She stated that even highly educated and able women received unequal pay.

The third panelist was the Vice-Governor of Chiang-Mai, Khun Sueb Rodprawert, whose entire address was along the lines that women's place is in the home, and that anything else is "unnatural."

Whether due to the problems of transla-

tion or indifference to the subject, the audience accepted all three speeches with equanimity, although there was some antagonism expressed to remarks by a few of the men.

week, and earn 10 bat (50¢) a day during training.²⁰ When they get older, they generally leave the factory and return to work on their farms. Boys work on a piecework basis at the potter's wheel, which is considerably more strenuous and pays more. The owner said he would never hire girls for this work. When I chided Khun Chamchit about this in the light of her statements about equality, she responded by saying that she didn't want girls doing this

At the end of our tour, we discussed the status of household employees. In Southeast Asia, unlike the United States, household help is generally plentiful²⁴ and reasonable.²⁵ The relationship of employer to household help is, however, different. The Asian employer assumes obligations towards his/her employees over and above the payment of salary. Khun Chamchit, for example, has a close relationship with her servants; they and their children live in her home, and she sends their children and grandchildren to college. Employers pay the medical and funeral expenses of their employees, advise them on birth control, and lend them money to make investments for their retirement.

Elephants at work; Meo Hill Tribes

One of Chiang-Mai's tourist attractions is the elephants who have been trained to work with logs and timber. Each elephant is trained by one particular boy; only boys can train elephants because elephants are considered holy. If a woman sits on an elephant, there is a purification ceremony to restore the elephant's holiness; otherwise, it is believed the elephant's tusks will fall off.²⁶

The Meo Hill Tribes, who left China about 60 years ago and settled in Thailand, Vietnam and Laos, live in an isolated village near Chiang-Mai. The conditions at the village were more primitive than any I have ever seen, although similar primitive conditions exist among the poor throughout the world. Young children sit on the ground with no clothes below the waist, with runny noses and bellies distended from parasites and malnutrition. Their mothers nurse until the next child comes along. If a Meo tribesman needs more money, he marries another wife and sends her to work. Village boys are more apt to be sent to primary school than the girls because the girls are needed to help their mothers at home.

After our tour with Khun Chamchit, we had dinner with Joyce Rasmussen, Asia Regional Program Developer with the Overseas Education Fund of the League of Women Voters. Joyce had just completed a

Only boys can train elephants because elephants are considered holy. If a woman sits on an elephant, there is a purification ceremony to restore the elephant's holiness; otherwise, it is believed the elephant's tusks will fall off.

Touring with Khun Chamchit

Next morning, Khun Chamchit brought her car and driver to our hotel for a tour of Chiang-Mai. As I was about to step into the car, she cautioned me that women in Thailand did not sit in the front with the driver; only men sit in front. When I chided her about this in view of her statement the previous night about equality in Thailand, she responded by saying that she and other Thai women didn't want to sit in front anyway.

Once I was seated in the back seat of the car, we began our tour by driving past Chiang-Mai University, which has about 6,000 students. Khun Chamchit pointed out that 3 of the 10 deans are women: in nursing, pharmacy, and dentistry.¹⁸

We stopped at a ceramics factory established through the encouragement of Khun Chamchit's brother. The factory employs about 60 persons, most of them 15- or 16-year old girls because, said the owner, girls are "more skilled and patient."¹⁹

The girls work 8 hours a day, 6 days a

kind of heavy work anyway.²¹

Khun Chamchit mentioned that most school classes in Thailand are segregated on the basis of sex, and that most of the sales personnel in her shopping center are women,²² whose husbands serve as their wholesalers.

We visited a tobacco grading plant, which, like the ceramics factory, employs mostly young girls. The conditions, to Americans sensitized to the dangers of pollution, are deplorable. The girls grade tobacco leaves all day without masks in an atmosphere stifling with tobacco dust. Fortunately, they only work at the plant a few years, after which they marry and return to work on the farms.

Our last stop was a Thai silk factory owned and managed by a Princess. Six women — housewives who work part-time — were at individual looms, weaving 10 inches of brocade a day.²³

20. Hugh Ivory mentioned that women in Chiang-Mai work in construction 7 days a week, 12 hours a day, and earn 25 bat a day. One cannot, however, equate income in foreign countries with that in the United States because of the great differences in cost of living and per capita income.

21. This discrimination in employment and pay and Khun Chamchit's acceptance of it are typical of Southeast Asia. In Bali, Indonesia, men and women doing identical work in the rice fields earn unequal pay. Khun Chamchit's approach, like that of most Southeast Asian women, is non-confrontational. She herself has, of course, done well without confrontation. On the other hand, most Thai women have not.

22. Later, in Singapore's outdoor markets, we noted that most of the sales personnel are women.

23. Skill in weaving is passed down from mother to daughter.

In Bali, an island filled with villages devoted to particular skills, skills in stone carving, wood carving, basket weaving, cloth weaving, and painting are similarly

passed down from parent to child, generally along sexual lines. Thus, males do all manner of woodcarving, while females are restricted to carving small birds.

Training in a particular skill in Bali is limited not only by sex but also by village. At one of the woodcarving galleries, we asked the guide whether he carved, too. "Oh no," he said, "I don't have the talent for it; I don't come from this village."

24. An exception is Singapore, where help is becoming scarce, and the cost is increasing due to the preference of young women for factory work.

25. We stayed with American friends in Indonesia who pay their staff of four for a 6-day week on a monthly basis what one housekeeper earns in the United States for a 5-day week on a weekly basis.

26. This is similar to the American superstition that it is bad luck for a woman to be underground which, until recently, resulted in the refusal to hire women as miners and underground engineers.

movement, and stated that it was a price they did not wish to pay.

18. We later noted in Indonesia and the Philippines that there, too, women deans were more common than in the United States. University faculty and administrative personnel in these countries are, however, low paid.

19. Khun Chamchit mentioned that radio factories in Thailand employ mostly women because they are considered "more skillful with their hands." The same explanation is often given for the predominance of women in American radio and electronics factories.

study of 1,000 women in rural Thai villages. The women complained that only men had been receiving skills training, and indicated that they wanted to be trained in income-producing skills, like vegetable- and fish-farming, and weaving. As we left Thailand, Joyce was beginning a quest for funds to develop a project to train Thai women in six villages.

SINGAPORE

Highrise Living; Family Planning

Singapore is a city-state of 2.25 million people living on 227 square miles. Its per capita income, \$2,637, is far above that of the other countries on my tour. The outstanding feature of Singapore is the tremendous number of highrise apartment buildings erected during the 18-year regime of the current Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew.

Singaporeans are, however, paying a high price for these highrises. In the past, while their living quarters were deplorable, they lived in extended family units in neighborhoods with community spirit. The move to the highrises uprooted them from their homes, and destroyed the emotional support systems provided by the extended family.²⁷ As a result, Singapore has a rising divorce rate, problems of drug abuse, child abuse,²⁸ problems with the elderly, and a high suicide rate.²⁹

Singapore is the first nation to rely primarily on disincentives in its fertility reduction program, and there is strong government pressure to encourage family planning.³⁰ Those with more than the recommended number of children receive low priority in the allocation of government-subsidized apartments, and in the choice of primary schools for their children. They are ineligible for certain income tax relief, and their delivery charges for increasing birth orders are higher unless either parent consents to sterilization within six months of delivery. Working women are ineligible for paid maternity leave for the delivery of the third and subsequent children.³¹

27. The government is beginning to change its housing policies and housing quarters so as to permit extended families to live in these apartments.

28. This phenomenon is partially caused by the fact that Singaporean mothers are closeted with their children in these apartments all day because they are fearful of letting the children ride downstairs in the elevator alone.

29. There are, of course, other reasons for the high suicide rate, including unhappy romances and school competition, which is intense and starts at an early age.

30. Family planning was initiated in 1949 by a voluntary organization, and in 1966, a government agency, the Singapore Family Planning and Population Board, was established.

31. The above information is based on an article by Tan, Lee, and Ratnam, "Effects of Social Disincentive Policies on Fertility Behavior in Singapore," 68 AMER. PUB. HEALTH 119 (Feb. 1978).

Several USIS officials commented on the philosophical outlook of Singaporeans and other Asians vis-a-vis Americans. The concept of self-development and fulfillment does not exist in Asia as it does in the United States. Asians don't expect to be "happy." An Asian has responsibilities towards his/her parents, spouse, children, and community. One marries not for happiness but to fulfill these responsibilities.

Working women

The recent emergence of Singapore as a technological society has increased women's role in the economy.³² The labor shortage caused by rapid industrialization has resulted in the government's encouraging the education and employment of women. Day care centers have been established and pollution-free factories located near or in housing centers. As a result, the percentage of women in the labor force has grown: in 1957, women represented 18% of the 480,000 labor force; in 1974, 32% of the 858,000 force.

Between 1961 and 1976, women's employment in manufacturing and the commercial and service sectors more than doubled. Women remain, however, employed largely in unskilled and semi-skilled positions, such as clerks, shop assistants, gas station attendants, and manual workers in restaurants and beauty parlors. Three out of five working women still earn less than \$200 a month. They generally earn half the wages of men, especially in manufacturing, where women are employed in traditional "women's jobs" or in work requiring "female skills," such as manual dexterity. They have not made much headway in heavy industrial or skilled jobs, or managerial and executive positions.

Women constitute a high proportion of professional and technical workers, 38%, although this figure is inflated by the large number of school teachers and nurses included in these categories.

There is a definite trend towards increased education for women. In 1956, 21% of the students at the University of Singapore were women; in 1976, the figure had risen to 48%. Women are increasingly taking technical courses at Singapore's Polytechnic and Ngee Ann Technical Colleges. In 1971, 25% of the graduates of these two colleges were female; in 1976, 45%.³³

For an article based on the first published reports on family planning in Thailand, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Nepal, see Westoff, *The Unmet Need for Birth Control in Five Asian Countries*, 10 FAMILY PLAN. NING "Perspectives" 175 (May/June 1978).

32. The information which follows is based on *Women's Role in Singapore's Economy*, an article in the October 24, 1977 issue of *The Mirror*, a weekly Singaporean newspaper of current affairs.

33. Female vocational school graduates, however, have more difficulty securing employment than male graduates.

Professional Women's Club

My talk to about 25 women³⁴ at the Professional Women's Club was my first contact with representatives of middle- and working-class women in Southeast Asia. At my request, in addition to business and professional women and representatives of Zonta (an international women's service organization), representatives of the Asian Women's Welfare Association and the Amalgamated Union of Public Employees had been invited.

The women complained of the lack of senior women officials in government and Parliament. The most senior female official is the Deputy Director of the Monetary Fund, which is comparable to our Federal Reserve Board. There are no women among the 65 members of Parliament.

The women were proud that Singapore has had a "Women's Charter" since 1962, and that it is the only such charter in Southeast Asia. It deals, however, only with subjects such as marriage, support, divorce, and prostitution; it does not cover discrimination in employment, education and other areas.³⁵

The women mentioned that there is equality in hiring and promotion in the public, but not the private, sector. However, even in the public sector there is discrimination against women with regard to benefits for maternity and dependent children.

About 35% of the labor force is organized, but only 1 out of 3 labor union members is female. Women are reluctant to participate in union activity, particularly when they have the responsibilities which come with marriage. Accordingly, most active union members are single.

There is a high proportion of women in the electronic and textile industries, labor-intensive, low-paying industries, which offer women little opportunity for upgrading.

Most non-professional women have low expectations. They are traditional in their thinking, and do not aspire to high positions and the salaries which go with them. They have family responsibilities and can't afford household help. Accordingly, from the age of 30 on, they begin withdrawing from the labor market. Professional women are more apt to remain at work, but must deal with the conflicting demands of home and job.

34. Most of my audiences were small since it is USIS policy to maximize the impact of lectures by restricting invitations to those directly concerned with the subject under discussion.

35. Many countries have provisions concerning equal rights for women in their laws and constitutions, but the United States is unique in the extent to which the government has assumed the burden of ensuring the enforcement of such laws. Thus, a woman in the United States need not make a written statement to the appropriate government agency, alleging that she is the victim of job discrimination, and the agency will investigate and process her complaint through the Supreme Court, if necessary.

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One of the Australian women in the audience mentioned that Australia has a retraining program for women who wish to return to the work force; Singapore has no such program.³⁶

Singapore University School of Law

At the Singapore University School of Law which, unlike American law schools is an undergraduate school, about half of the 450 students and the 25 faculty members are women. Most of the faculty are young, because low pay causes the faculty to leave for better-paying positions elsewhere, and Singapore's repressive regime results in the exodus of intellectuals to other countries.

After my address to about 80 students in two combined law school classes, there were numerous questions from the male law students, but few from the females. The men were largely antagonistic towards women's rights, and one or two women shared their antagonism. The men were concerned that if women's rights became an issue in Singapore, it would result in divorce and the breakup of the family unit. In response to my statements that American courts have found that it is unlawful to force pregnant school teachers to take mandatory leaves of absence, and to discharge unwed pregnant employees, the men argued that permitting unwed pregnant school teachers to teach would indicate to the students that unwed pregnancy is condoned. It is indicative of the threatening nature of women's rights that it made these men become staunch supporters of marriage and family, subjects generally relegated to women.

The Law School Dean discussed with me his recently-published law review article,³⁶ which included the following discussion of the high percentage of women law students and the discrimination they face in finding jobs:

The large number of girls who have opted to read Law in the Faculty has already given cause for concern. In 1976, the male-female figures for the four years of the LL. B course were as follows:—

Year	Male Students	Female Students
IV	43%	57%
III	24%	76%
II	45%	55%
I	50%	50%
Total in all 4 years	41%	59%

The Prime Minister, in his address to the Law Society of Singapore remarked that "In another five to ten years, whoever occupies the office of Minister of Law will discover that his

best lawyers are young women and not young men."

What are the reasons for the high percentage of female law students? One explanation was offered by the Prime Minister himself:

Another reason for this development is the school system. Streamlining took place and still does, as early as 15 plus. Students go into the Science or Arts stream. The traditional cultural attitudes of parents and students have made many girls believe they ought to be doing Arts. This means that they study English language and literature...and so they go on with greater ease and facility to the study of law. The boys have gone into sciences and on to engineering, architecture, and the hard sciences. But this is changing, albeit too slowly.

Another factor that could have contributed to the high rate of enrollment

Dean is that the female law graduates have difficulty in obtaining employment upon graduation. In particular, law firms are reluctant to employ them. This includes girls who have done well in the Faculty and have good recommendations from their teachers.

Three standard explanations are offered by practising lawyers when queried on their bias against employing women lawyers. One explanation is that the law firms find it necessary to indulge in "socializing" and entertaining and that male lawyers are more appropriate. I consider this to be a totally unpersuasive explanation, leaving aside the questions that are raised about the nature of socializing. The second explanation, which seems more genuine, is that firms which have much litigation need young lawyers, who are prepared to "run to and

Nearly 40% of all American marriages end in divorce; and that the United States has the highest divorce rate in the world.

of females is the method whereby male students who gain admission to law must complete their national service obligations (they enter Law School two and a half years later; places are reserved for them). Some of the males do not, in fact, come to the University after completion of the national service.

The University was so much concerned over the poor employment prospects for female law graduates that the Registrar's letter to applicants drew attention to such discouraging employment prospects.³⁷ Fortunately, the figures show that the percentage of female law students is dropping gradually (50% in the first year class compared to 76% in the third year class). Whether the Registrar's letter will further reduce the proportion in 1977 intake remains to be seen.

What is of greatest concern to me as

for the Courts; it is alleged that girls are not enthusiastic about such tasks. Another explanation, which is plausible, is that clients prefer to talk to male lawyers.³⁸

Some of the very bright female graduates with whom I have discussed this matter believe that the law firms are either ignorant or blatantly discriminatory; they do not accept the view that there may be logical reasons for not employing women lawyers.

The reluctance to employ female law graduates is a pity for, in my experience, the good female law graduate is bright, conscientious and has excellent potential. The principle of meritocracy is as important for the legal profession as for other sectors of Singapore society. Discrimination on the basis of sex or other irrelevant criterion, can only result in the profession losing good brains. It is my hope that law firms will open doors more for them. At the same time, the young female lawyers must realize that they cannot be too choosy over the tasks assigned to them and that, initially, they may have to do a variety of rou-

37. In response to the discriminatory hiring practices of Singaporean law firms, the Dean has sent a letter to female law applicants advising them of the difficulty women lawyers face in securing employment, with the intent that it would cause a drop in female enrollment.

He might instead have written a letter to Singapore's law firms and businesses recommending that they cease discriminating against women lawyers in hiring. What Singapore may need is legislation prohibiting sex discrimination in employment and an agency to enforce it.

38. Similar justifications offered by American law firms were generally pretexts for the firms' reluctance to hire women, and proved to be fallacious. If a competent woman is placed in a position, clients rarely refuse to deal with her.

tine and seemingly unexciting, but nevertheless essential, tasks in legal practice.

The Dean expressed interest in my recommendation that he establish a course in women's rights under the law.

Association of Women Lawyers

At the Cricket Club, a former bastion of British colonialism, I addressed about 20 members of the Singapore Association of Women Lawyers, an organization established 3-4 years earlier.

Most of the attorneys present were private practitioners, who specialized in real estate, debt collection, and divorce. Others worked for finance companies, the Development Bank of Singapore, and the Attorney General.

One of the successful projects instituted by the Association provides free legal counselling to women at community centers set up by the government around the city.

A number of the lawyers expressed surprise that married women in America had had to sue to secure permission to use their maiden names as it was common practice in Singapore for married women to practice in their maiden names.³⁹

In response to my comments that American women had made progress only when they became angry and formed organizations to express that anger, and that I had met no angry women in Southeast Asia, one of the women present, Ms. B, identified herself as an angry woman. In fact, she said there were other angry women in Singapore but they had not revealed their anger to me because I was a foreigner and they feared reprisals from Singapore's repressive government.

Ms. B pointed out the following concerning women's status and the government's relation to it:

1. The Singapore Labor Department published the results of surveys done in 1975 and 1976 which revealed that women's salaries, particularly for management positions, were only one-third those of men.

2. A committee, consisting only of male lawyers, had been appointed to study the Women's Charter. The report issued by the committee was sent to the heads of government agencies but is not being made available to the general public.

3. The Singaporean husband files an income tax return on unearned income both for himself and his wife. This insures his having information as to his wife's unearned income although she does not have similar information on his income.

4. The government's programs in

connection with family planning have been forced on Singapore's citizenry, men and women alike.

5. The government did not participate in International Women's Year. However, women's organizations combined in 1975 to present the first exhibition of women's activities. The exhibition lasted 4 days, drew 40,000 people, and was a huge success.

6. Australian women recently asked her to convene the first Southeast Asian Conference on Sex Discrimination in Singapore in 1978. However, she feared opposition to the idea from the Prime Minister.

Ms. B stressed that it is vital for feminists to visit Singapore and communicate with Singaporean women.

Singapore is the first nation to rely primarily on disincentives in its fertility reduction program.

INDONESIA

Indonesia's approximately 141 million people make it the world's fifth most populous nation.⁴⁰ Java, the island on which Jakarta and Surabaya are located, is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, with over 90 million inhabitants in an area the size of New York State. Jakarta, on the western side of Java, has a population of 5 million people. The principle ethnic groups in Indonesia are the Malays and the Chinese. Life expectancy is 48 years; per capita income, \$128.

Jakarta

Pauline Hillone, an American social scientist who was preparing a profile on Indonesian women for an American organization,⁴¹ gave me an excellent briefing at the home of a husband-wife team of USIS officers.⁴² She made the following comments:

40. When Columbus sailed from Spain in 1492, he sought a new route to the Spice Islands of Indonesia, where an advanced civilization had existed for almost 1,000 years on the islands of Java and Sumatra. During 300 years of Dutch rule beginning in 1602, the Netherlands East Indies were developed into one of the world's richest colonial possessions.

41. Similar profiles are also being done on women in a South American country and an African country.

42. The phenomenon of husband-wife teams at USIS offices is a recent development. There were two such couples in Jakarta.

Under the marriage law, which is complied with in the public, but not in the private, sector, women are entitled to 3 months' maternity leave and 2 days menstrual leave.

2. Polygamy is practiced. An American woman at the briefing that mentioned that one of her Indonesian colleagues is married to three professional women, all of whom support him; and that one of her Indonesian women employees learned, upon becoming pregnant, that her husband's first wife was pregnant, too.

3. Family planning is more successful in Indonesia than in most other Southeast Asian countries. At the village level, the government enlists the support of the village chief, and that has proven to be very effective. There is, however, a conflict between the government's support of family planning and its granting of subsidies to those who have up to three children.

4. While prostitution is illegal, certain areas are reserved for prostitutes.

5. In Jakarta, there are "wives organizations," which are organized so that the women's positions parallel their husband's jobs in business.

6. Somewhat less than 50% of the population is illiterate, and most of these are women.⁴³

7. Women have a higher unemployment rate than men. Officially, it's 11% but in reality it's closer to 30-40%. Underemployment as well as unemployment is a fact of Indonesian life.

8. Advertisements directed towards businessmen stress the availability of women employees in Indonesia at one-third less than anywhere else in Southeast Asia.⁴⁴

9. Professional and business women are doing well; there are women university deans, and a woman Supreme Court Justice. Public life, however, remains largely a masculine domain.

10. Although some upper-class women are involved in projects to improve the status of lower-class women, most are unconcerned. Indonesian women who run shops exploit the girls who work for them. These girls commence working at the ages of 10-12, and earn \$.25 a day.

11. Indonesian women are working to achieve equality through the unification of existing law⁴⁵ and the passage of new legislation.

43. Most children don't attend schools. There are insufficient schools and teachers, and attendance requires uniforms and the payment of fees. Nonetheless the literacy rate is fairly high: the government claims it is 80%; actually, it is over 50%.

44. There is no minimum wage law.

45. Indonesian law is very developed and complicated. There is traditional or customary law (adat), Islamic law, the Dutch Civil Code, and laws for different ethnic groups.

A new marriage law, passed in 1974, represents one of the first steps towards achieving unification of the law. It is not, however, applicable to all persons. Different ethnic groups are still governed by different laws.

39. Indonesian and Filipino women later made the same comment. I do not, however, know whether these women use their maiden names to vote and secure drivers' licenses, the gravamens of the American lawsuits, or whether they simply use their maiden names to practice law, which is common in the United States, too.

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Faculty of Law, University of Indonesia

The Faculty of Law at the University of Indonesia, a 5-year law school, has about 1,000 day and 2,000 evening students, half of whom are women.

After I addressed 10 women faculty members and Indonesian women involved in women's rights,⁴⁶ they made the following observations:

1. Indonesian law requires employers to provide transportation for women who work at night.⁴⁷
2. The women are seeking to change an instruction of the Director General of the Immigration Office which requires an Indonesian woman to secure her husband's permission if she wants to leave the country.⁴⁸
3. The Indonesian Constitution, unlike the United States Constitution, was intended to include rights for women when it was drafted in 1945.
4. There is a high rate of divorce in Indonesia. All that is required for a man to obtain a divorce is for him to repudiate his wife. There are rural women who have been married up to nine times because of their husbands' divorcing them. This is, however, largely a phenomenon of the lower class.
5. Abortion is illegal, but is generally available for about \$30.⁴⁹

FEMINA Magazine

Ms. Hiang Marhhimin of FEMINA Magazine, who interviewed me, told me that it is a woman's magazine which covers a broad range of issues. There was one other women's magazine in the past, but it concentrated on areas such as the family and cooking. FEMINA was started 5 years ago, is issued twice monthly, has a circulation of 130,000⁵⁰ and has more readers than TEMPO, Indonesia's newsweekly magazine. About half its readers are male.

Ms. Marahimin mentioned that there are about a hundred female, and thousands of male, reporters in Indonesia.⁵¹

Surabaya

Surabaya, a city on the eastern side of

46. Present was Mely C. Tan, head of the Social Sciences Division of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, and a prominent feminist.

47. The American women's rights movement has lobbied for the elimination of such laws because they result in employers' reluctance to hire women.

48. Such permission is not required of women who are government employees, but is required of those in the private sector.

49. Public health standards are quite low. My American hostess told me that there were no adequate medical and hospital facilities in Indonesia, and that even her wealthy Indonesian friends were unfamiliar with the advisability of having an annual Pap test.

50. Most of FEMINA's readers are in Jakarta, but it also reaches readers in Singapore and Australia.

51. There is no school of journalism in Indonesia although there is a journalism course at the University of Indonesia.

the island of Java, has a population of 3 million. I met with about eight women — an ophthalmologist, a law student, members of the law faculty at the local university — at the home of the female USIS Public Affairs Officer. The women had met frequently in the past to discuss various issues, but this was the first time they had met to discuss the status of women. They made the following comments:

1. The statutory 3 months' maternity leave to which married women are entitled makes employers reluctant to hire married women.
2. The law's provision for 2 days

The women were proud of the fact that Singapore has had a "women's charter" since 1962, and that it is the only such charter in southeast Asia.

menstrual leave is a subject for amusement; few women request such leave.⁵²

3. The rape of women by men who know them is a cause for concern. It causes problems of legitimacy and child support.⁵³

4. Due to the lack of funding for educational facilities⁵⁴ and parental attitudes, boys are more apt to have an opportunity to go to school than girls.

5. Most husbands permit married women to have careers so long as they are simultaneously able to fulfill their responsibilities for the home and the children.

6. There are not many constraints on Indonesian women because of sex. The main problems are social and cultural.

52. While the law remains on the books, however, it lends support to the view that women are unreliable employees.

In Bali, a sign at the entrance to a temple states that menstruating women may not enter. An Indonesian man may explain the absence of his wife at a social function on the ground that she is menstruating and cannot go out. This is similar to the Biblical concept of the ritual impurity of menstruating women (Leviticus 15: 19 et. seq.) adhered to in traditional Judaism.

53. There are also problems of child support involving Muslim men who are permitted to have four wives.

54. In both Indonesia and the Philippines, the government has given priority to the erection of highrise buildings rather than to educational facilities. In Jakarta, the outstanding structures are office buildings; in Manila, they are hotels.

7. While women may know who their legislators are, they do not know what procedures, if any, are available to them to get laws passed or amended.⁵⁵

THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines, with a population of 42.5 million, is a mixture of East and West. Filipinos are mostly of Malay stock. The largest ethnic minority group is Chinese, and as a result of intermarriage, many Filipinos have some Chinese ancestry. Americans and Spaniards constitute the next largest minorities. About 90% of the people fit into a relatively homogeneous Christian category. Most are Hispanicized people who were, to varying degrees, westernized during the nearly 400 years of Spanish and American rule. One of the problems is language: some 87 native languages and dialects, all belonging to the Malayo-Polynesian linguistic family, are spoken, although the government is engaged in promoting the use of the national language, Filipino.

The per capita income is \$410.

The country has been under martial law since 1972.

Manila

Briefing

The programs arranged for me by Terry Rusch,⁵⁶ the USIS Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer in Manila, the city where the request for my trip originated, were the most extensive of my tour.

At the American Club, a group of women who were to be my co-panelists at programs scheduled for later that week, made the following comments:

1. Manila, a city of highrise modern hotels, is, like Jakarta, a facade. Behind the hotel fronts exists a largely agricultural society whose women are second-class citizens.

2. There are angry and involved women in the Philippines: women involved in research on women, in drafting decrees, and in working with rural women.⁵⁷

3. The principal topics of conversation were the recently published study, *A Profile of Filipino Women*, hereinafter referred to as "Profile," and the proposed decree dealing with women's rights. "Profile" documents the second-class status of Filipino women socially, educationally,

55. In the United States, one of the principal tools of change in the area of women's rights has been lobbying the Congress and state legislatures to pass or amend legislation. Such access is not necessarily available in other countries. In fact, as demonstrated in the Philippines, such legislatures are not necessarily available in other countries.

56. The selection of certain cities and countries on my itinerary was directly related to the concern of responsible local USIS officials with the status of women.

57. I met the largest number of active feminists in Manila; it was the city I most regretted leaving.

legally, economically, and politically. The proposed decree deals with marriages, annulment, maternity benefits, divorce⁵⁸, child custody, adultery, rape, prostitution, and employment discrimination.⁵⁹

The decree was running into strong opposition from the Catholic Church because it provided for divorce.⁶⁰

4. There are two kinds of annulments which are available: church and civil. Since

Chairman of the commission on the Role of Women, is not a feminist.⁶¹ The Commission has returned money to the government because it has not found projects worthy of funding. Its one activist member has found herself at odds with the other members.

8. One of the women present had just conducted a training program for rural women under the sponsorship of the U.P.

Even if divorce were permitted, most Filipino women couldn't afford the time or money involved.

neither the church nor the government recognize each other's annulments, one has to secure both types for the marriage to be both religiously and civilly annulled. Few people have the time or money for this.

5. Even if divorce were permitted, most Filipino women couldn't afford the time or money involved. Thus, separation is a more realistic solution for most Filipino women than either annulment or divorce.

6. Family planning has not been successful due to the opposition from men and the Church. The high birth rate has contributed to the deterioration in education.

7. The First Lady, Imelda Marcos,

58. "Profile" was prepared in July 1977 for the United States Agency of International Development (AID), under the sponsorship of the University of the Philippines (U.P.) School of Law, by Isable Rojas-Aleta, Teresita L. Silva, and Christine P. Eleazar of Philippine Business for Social Progress.

59. The employment section of the decree would be considerably strengthened if an agency were established to enforce it, and if government contractors were required to engage in affirmative action to hire, train and promote women on sanction of having their contracts suspended or terminated, or being disbarred from future contracts.

On the other hand, the section goes beyond its counterparts on the federal and state levels in the United States in that it provides for paternity, as well as maternity, leave with pay, and requires the establishment of a nursery in the workplace for the benefit of employees. Paternity leave is, however, limited to 2 weeks, while maternity leave may extend to 6; and it is limited to married men while maternity leave is available to any pregnant woman.

60. Eighty-three percent of the Filipino population is Catholic.

61. Mrs. Marcos insisted that the Commission be called the Commission on "the Role" of Women rather than "the Status" of Women because, according to her, the status of Filipino women is equal to that of men.

In her speech at the 1975 International Women's Year Conference in Mexico, she related the Philippine version of the story of Creation. In the beginning, there was a bamboo shoot which was split in half: one half was beautiful, and from that half was created woman; the other half was strong, and from that half was created man. Hardly a story to inspire notions of equality.

College of Law. Thirty eight rural women, representative of others in their community, had attended and were excited at the prospect of working on common problems.

9. The struggle in the Philippines should be waged for particular groups of women, such as rural women⁶² and teachers,⁶³ rather than for the rights of women in general.

10. There was a women's rights group, consisting predominantly of students, in 1969-1971. It was a radical, leftist organization, whose leaders were arrested when it was quashed by the government.

U.P. College of Law

Prior to a symposium⁶⁴ at the U.P. College of Law, which, unlike the Singapore University School of Law, is a graduate school, I met with a number of outstanding Filipino women⁶⁵ in the office

62. "Profile" documents the problems of Filipino rural women. There are almost twice as many rural as urban women (64% rural; 36% urban). About three-quarters of these women regard their primary role as that of housekeeper. They spend at least 29 days a month, 8 hours a day, on housekeeping, and in addition, work on the farm. They usually have no time left for involvement in outside issues or recreation.

Their median years of schooling is 4.6 years, and only 17% graduate from elementary school.

In spite of women's involvement in farming activities, most agricultural programs are geared towards men, with the women relegated to home economics programs. Vocational training has reached only 1% of married rural women. Their participation in the nationwide cooperatives development program is minimal since they act only as substitutes for their husbands. There are few organizations directly involved in improving the status of rural women.

63. Women teachers are among the lowest-paid professionals and have minimal chances for promotion.

64. The symposium was sponsored by the Fortia Sorority of the U.P. College of Law, the U.P. Law Center, and the Thomas Jefferson Cultural Center of USIS.

65. One had recently become president of the Association of Women's Organizations, which consists of over 60 organizations. If these organizations unite to promote women's rights, they can be a powerful influence.

of the College's first woman Dean, Irene R. Cortes. While the Dean has encouraged and supported research into women's legal rights, she did not respond favorably to the suggestion that the school offer a course on women's legal rights: a number of faculty members were, however, most enthusiastic about the establishment of such a course.⁶⁶

The audience at the symposium, consisting of male and female law students and faculty, was the largest of my tour.⁶⁷ After my address, Yolanda Q. Javellana, a distinguished attorney and one of the drafters of the proposed decree, expressed surprisingly conservative views. She stressed that Filipino women are more fortunate than American women because Filipino men are more "gallant"; and concluded that Western women have been too aggressive in demanding their rights.⁶⁸ She favored execution of the proposed decree only so as to ensure that the rights of Filipino women have could not be taken away from them in the future.

Thomas Jefferson Cultural Center

At a seminar at the USIS Thomas Jefferson Cultural Center, Isabel Rojas-Aleta, one of its authors, reported on the following highlights of "Profile":

1. Sex role socialization starts early in life in home, is extended in school, and is reinforced by peer group pressures and pervasive cultural values. The adolescent girl is chaperoned, and raised by her mother to be a housewife. The boy is raised by his father to be a future household head.

2. It has been estimated that 40-45% of Filipino families are undernourished, as a consequence particularly of low income but also ignorance, large family size, lack of medical services and sanitation, cultural preferences and tradition. Malnutrition most seriously affects women, especially pregnant women and nursing mothers from low socio-economic classes. One effect of the poor nutritional status of pregnant women is their reduced capability for live births. The mortality rate among children and fetuses due to abortion, miscarriage, stillbirth and infant/toddler deaths is alarmingly high. Fifty-two percent of women from low-income communities have experienced such mortalities; the incidence is higher among urban than rural women.

3. The literacy rate for Filipino women (82%) is almost equal to that of men. The only evidence of sex differences occurs in the choice of academic and vocational

66. The Dean who succeeded Dean Cortes, Froilan M. Bacungan, who also serves as Director of the U.P. Law Center, has expressed interest in developing such a course.

67. There are, and have been, numerous women lawyers and professors in the Philippines. On December 8, I had the honor of lunching with the first woman Associate Justice of the Philippine Supreme Court, Cecilia Muñoz Palma.

68. Other women present told me privately that they were shocked at her views and did not share them.

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courses. Nutrition, nursing, midwifery, pharmacy, and teacher training are still dominated by women; while engineering and technology, nautical sciences, agriculture, music and fine arts are male-dominated fields.

Female students in private vocational programs concentrate on beauty and fashion courses. However, in public vocational schools, the proportion of women enrolled in technical courses, such as fishery and agriculture, is high, 48% and 41%, respectively.

The educational expectation of parents remain much higher for their sons than their daughters.

4. The wages and salaries of women are considerably lower than those of men. As in the United States, there are various reasons for this, including women's relegation to lower-paying jobs; women's lower level of training and work experience; women's working fewer hours than men; and discrimination against women in pay and promotions.

5. Less than 1% of employed Filipino women are in administrative, executive or managerial positions.

6. School teachers, domestic helpers, prostitutes⁶⁹, and women employees in leisure and entertainment establishments are among the most disadvantaged groups. Teachers are the lowest paid of all professionals. Although most teachers are women, most promotions go to men.

Domestic workers, 14% of the female work force, earn low wages for long hours.

While a law has been passed requiring operators of leisure and entertainment establishments to extend legal rights to their women employees, there is little reason to believe that there is compliance with the law.

7. Women's participation in labor organizations is low. Filipino women represent one-third of the work force but only 13% of the membership in organized labor unions, and 22.4% in independent unions.

8. There is a general lack of enthusiasm over women's involvement in politics because of the attitude that woman's place is in the home. The typical female political leader is either unmarried or has grown children. A very small minority of women politicians achieve local and national leadership positions. Although more women than men participate in village political meetings, women still persist in electing male leaders.

9. Women's social participation is greater than their political involvement. But membership in women's social organizations is usually concentrated among the middle and upper classes. Lower-class and rural women are more commonly recipients of benefits from government and other organizations than the initiating agents.

10. Awareness of community programs, especially in nutrition, is low among low-income women. Only one-fourth of the married women use social service instit-

tutions, like hospitals and health and family planning centers, and these are mostly urban and working women. Those community projects in which women do get involved do not provide them with the skills and opportunities for development.

11. Child rearing, the most traditional and clearly differentiated of sex roles, has such a magnitude of responsibility that alternatives will have to be provided to

nondiscrimination in employment; liberalization of the law on abortion; and amendment of the Civil Code.

At the conclusion of the report, there was discussion on whether it would make tactical sense to delete the provisions permitting divorce⁷⁰ from the proposed decree so as to secure passage.

Questions were raised as to how

The Indonesian constitution, unlike the United States constitution, was intended to include rights for women when it was drafted in 1945.

mothers so as to facilitate their participation in the labor force.

12. The Civil Code contains the following provisions evidencing women's second-class status:

A. Marriage between a Christian woman and a Mohammedan or pagan man follows the customs and rites of the man's culture or religion.

B. A woman under 23 cannot leave the parental home without her parents' consent, except to marry, exercise her profession, or upon remarriage of either parent.

C. The choice of the family residence is determined by the husband.

D. In case of disagreement concerning parental authority, the husband takes control.

E. The husband is the legal administrator of the conjugal and the children's property.

F. The wife cannot accept expensive gifts from anyone other than close relatives without her husband's consent.

G. The wife has the right to make household purchases, but cannot make expensive ones without the husband's consent.

H. The husband has the right to object to the exercise of his wife's profession if he can support her adequately.

I. In lawsuits by or against the wife, the husband's involvement is generally required, but not vice versa.

J. A man can file for separation on the ground of a single adulterous act by his wife. It is much more difficult for the wife to establish infidelity on the part of the husband.

K. A widow cannot secure a license to remarry until 300 days following her husband's death unless she has given birth to a child in the interim.

13. Among the reforms which have been proposed are: expanded training and education, particularly for rural women;

women's rights groups in the United States such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), and women's centers, had been established; and how Filipino women might start similar organizations and centers. The women were surprised to learn that NOW did not start with thousands or even hundreds of members; and that 10 or 20 dedicated, committed men and women can begin a women's organization or movement.

IMPRESSIONS

One can, of course, only skim the surface on a 3-week trip to four countries. I did, however, come away with the following impressions:

1. There are a number of ways in which Southeast Asian women have advanced beyond American women and a number of ways in which American women have advanced beyond Southeast Asian women. The economic influence and participation of Southeast Asian women in business, and their participation as law students and law deans appears to exceed that in the United States. Both Indonesia and the Philippines have a woman Supreme Court Justice.

2. While professional and businesswomen in these countries form a fortunate elite, many professional women, such as teachers, are underpaid.

3. More attention needs to be directed to

70. The divorce provisions are replete with references to the "innocent" versus the "guilty" spouse, and provide that, with certain exceptions, the custody of minor children "shall be awarded to the 'innocent' spouse." In the United States, the trend has been to no-fault divorce; and recognition that the failure of a marriage is generally the responsibility of both parties, and that "innocence" or "guilt" has little or no bearing on the determination of custody.

69. In the main, these are young women from large poor rural families with little or no education.

the problems of lower-class women: rural women, domestic servants, prostitutes, and those employed in leisure and entertainment establishments.

At first glance it appears that upper-class women are exploiting lower-class women who work as their servants for long hours at low pay. The problem is, however, more complex. First, the Southeast Asian employer assumes considerably more responsibility towards her household help than her American counterpart; and opportunities for other employment for these lower-class women are frequently even less attractive. Since Southeast Asian men do not assist in running the household and raising the children, the woman who wishes to work must rely either on other family members or servants, and cannot realistically be expected to establish conditions of employment far exceeding the norms of her country. What is needed, of course, are efforts by the private and public sectors to ameliorate the conditions of servants (both male and female). In addition, with the decreasing availability of household workers in Singapore, which undoubtedly is the harbinger of future developments in the other countries, more attention needs to be given to the establishment of day care centers and other facilities to ease the burden on working women. Asian women can, of course, play a significant role in stimulating such developments.

4. Polygamy is still legal in some of these countries, and there is greater acceptance of extra-marital behavior by men than in the United States. Southeast Asian women are subjected to great stress in accommodating to societal norms.

5. The political participation of Southeast Asian women and their influence in government, with the exception of someone like Imelda Marcos, is minimal. Most of these women have little or no access to their legislators, and little or no knowledge of the processes by which legal change may be secured. In countries where there is no legislature, such as the Philippines, impact on the system is even more difficult to achieve.

6. These countries do have women's charters and constitutional and statutory rights for women, and much can be done to educate Southeast Asian women in their rights. Law schools can play a significant role in this connection in fostering research on women, establishing courses on women's rights under the law, and training lawyers in the techniques for achieving legal reform through legislation and litigation.

7. Women lawyers in Southeast Asia, like their counterparts in the United States, are frequently in the forefront of the struggle to achieve legal and other reforms for women in their countries. With the large proportion of female law students, and the

increasing awareness of women's second-class status, the activities of women lawyers will undoubtedly increase.

8. Just as in the United States prior to the mid-sixties, the status of women in these countries is not recognized as a serious national issue. Job segregation and discrimination based on sex are so woven

families. In this regard, both groups of women can learn from each other so as to achieve a happy medium in fulfilling their responsibilities to themselves and their families.

11. Southeast Asian women with families who work, like their American counterparts, are expected to perform their jobs

The Prime Minister, in his address to the law society of Singapore remarked that "in another five to ten years, whoever occupies the office of minister of law will discover that his best lawyers are young women and not young men."

into the warp and woof of these societies that few recognize or oppose it. If Southeast Asian women can succeed in bringing this issue to the forefront, they will have set the stage for achieving necessary reform.

9. There is a paucity of legislation guaranteeing women freedom from discrimination, and compliance with such legislation as exists is minimal in the private sector. There are no governmental agencies comparable to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the other American federal and state agencies which enforce legislation prohibiting sex discrimination.

10. Southeast Asian women tend to think less in terms of individual fulfillment and happiness, and more in terms of fulfillment of their responsibilities towards their parents, spouses, and children. American women, on the other hand, have in recent years moved in the direction of giving more concern to their individual development and less to their responsibilities to their

and run their households. Scant assistance is given them by their communities and governments in managing this feat.

12. Southeast Asians are better informed as to developments in the United States than Americans are concerning developments in Southeast Asia. Nonetheless, Southeast Asian women are not sufficiently informed as to legal developments with regard to women's rights in the United States. They lack information on legislative developments and on the formation of women's rights organizations and centers.⁷¹ Thus, there is a continuing need for the interchange of information between the United States and these countries.

The importance of women sharing their experiences and goals was highlighted by a poignant story I heard in the Philippines. A Filipino social worker told of meeting with rural women who discussed their husbands' extra-marital relationships for the first time.⁷² One woman said that when she learned of her husband's infidelity, she was too ashamed to mention it to anyone, even her own mother. Instead, she went into her house, shut the door, and cried out, "Where have I sinned?" As she shared her feelings with other women for the first time, she gained the insight to ask instead, "Why was it I who sinned?"



71. Southeast Asian women have not yet formed organizations such as NOW and women's centers. Filipino women are, however, on the brink of such action, and Singaporean women may be next.

72. It is common practice among Filipino men to have two families, either through a bigamous or extra-marital relationship. This is partially dictated by economics: rural men frequently leave their wives and families to earn more money in Manila; there, they either marry or set up housekeeping with another woman, and establish a second family.