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The Newly Established Asian Research Institute

From increased interest in Asia and its problems has come a newly organized Asian Research Institute at Brigham Young University. The Institute recognizes the imperative need for countries of the West to gain a more realistic understanding of Asia and its cultures. Recommended by the University Administration, the Institute was approved recently by the Board of Trustees and will begin its activities at once under the direction of Dr. Lee W. Farnsworth, specialist in Asian studies. Members of the Executive Committee of the Institute are: Lee W. Farnsworth, Ray C. Hillam, Russell N. Horiuchi, Wesley P. Lloyd, Paul V. Hyer and Spencer J. Palmer—all with academic training and practical experience relating to Asia.*

“The establishment of the Institute at Brigham Young University is a formal recognition on the part of the University of the need for relations between occidental and oriental countries to be developed on the basis of reliable information,” said President Ernest L. Wilkinson. “This institution, with historic concern for cultures of the world, will establish through research procedure a body of significant information about the Orient and its people that will supplement the findings of other educational institutions.”

In addition to its major research activities, the Institute is, according to Director Farnsworth, authorized to develop a library of research materials, establish financial aids for students working in Asian studies, set up panels on which faculty members, students and visitors may present significant issues relating to Asia, and encourage and sponsor publications on Asian subjects.

Asia, as the largest, least known, and possibly the most critical area in the world today, presents both danger and opportunity. It is to the credit of the University that a systematic research approach will now be given to problems of Asian cultures. It is expected that through the Institute

*For vitae of ARI personnel see p. 192.

further steps will be taken toward a type of original thinking and investigation that can become a hallmark at B.Y.U. The research approach can enrich and make more reliable the basis of teaching for which Brigham Young University has been traditionally known. To be disseminators alone without giving appropriate emphasis to research as a companion discipline to teaching is to fall short of the purpose for which universities exist. The Institute is established separate from but complementary to the Asian Studies teaching program.

The Asian Studies Program established in 1961 has a faculty of five and draws on a considerably larger number of people in supporting areas. The present curriculum includes about forty-five courses in eight disciplines. The number of majors studying in the field is increasing rapidly. Majors are required to fill requirements concurrently in a regular discipline. The number receiving assistantships, scholarships and other grants to continue work at major institutions is most encouraging. Paul Hyer is Chairman of the Committee on Asian Studies, which includes all the Asian Studies faculty listed below. The necessity of research facilities for advanced work and graduate study is keenly felt and the new Asian Research Institute is planned with this in mind.

The trend toward increased interest in Asia at B.Y.U. is shown partly by the academic work and research presently in process by members of the faculty. There is a major gain also in the number of Asian students and professors of the University. There is a substantial gain in enrollment in the area of Asian studies.

With increased emphasis on graduate work on the campus it is imperative that more attention be given to research, and in this area activity will be coordinated for the best use of time, talent and finances. This research organization can serve faculty and mature students toward the encouragement of and genuine interest in the cultures of the Orient.

Not the least justification for emphasizing research in Asia is that of the national interest. American interchange has been more successful in European countries than in Asia, partly because Americans are better informed about Europe than about the Orient.