



# The Association of American University Presses, Inc.

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AAUP ANNUAL MEETING, JUNE 1976

Address by Robert G. Barnes, Director, Columbia University Press  
and President (1975-1976) of  
The Association of American University Presses

Ladies, gentlemen, guests, and fellow members of this Association, I shall reverse the customary pattern of talks by Lam Duck Presidents. Rather than conclude with my thanks to the many to whom I am indebted, I prefer to commence on that note. I shall then report briefly on my recent trip to Asia, and conclude with a few comments and suggestions on the future of this Association.

First, my sincere thanks to you, my misguided associates, for electing me to this office. It has been fun all the way: Board meetings, regional meetings, committee meetings, the rare privilege of being your representative in Kyoto and now this splendid Yale meeting. I owe this all to you and I am most grateful to serve.

Second, my thanks to the members of the Board, Chairmen of the committees, and committee members. You were all magnificent. You have served all of us efficiently, effectively, and unstintingly. Your reports merit reading, rereading, and also heeding. We are indebted to you all.

Third, thanks to Carol Franz and Jerry Lewis, to Larry Fees and Florence Cohn, to Alice Baer and Ellen Noble and all others at the Central Office who have coped with my inexperience and with my idiosyncracies with grace and competence. In varying degrees, past and future presidents, have, and will be dependent upon you. You are a great gang and may Will Lockwood and Weldon Kefauver have the good fortune to have all of you serve with them.

Jack Putnam, I have saved my thanks to you till last. When we commenced last June I sensed that yours was a most difficult position. You serve as our spokesman and observer, in industry, government, and academia. You serve, and at the same time lead, 67 masters with energy, consideration, wisdom, and diplomacy. All of us are grateful, but none more than I. I hope you will serve many future Presidents. Thank you, Jack.

Now let me say a few words about my trip to Asia, made possible by a grant from the Asia Foundation supplemented by this Association.

I went expecting to accomplish too much. I returned feeling that I had accomplished too little. The greatest benefit of these International meetings is the opportunity to meet publishers from around the

world, and to share ideas with them, and then hope that tangible benefits will develop. I believe this may happen.

Our first stop on this month-long journey was Kyoto, the cultural center and former capital of Japan. There I attended the meeting of the International Association of Publishers and a concurrent meeting of the International Association of Scholarly Publishers. You have read, or will read, fuller accounts than I shall give of those meetings in Publishers Weekly; or if you wish, you may read the detailed and voluminous proceedings given to all who attended the I.A.P. But let me say I was struck by the similarity of the topics covered there, with the current concerns of this Association. The topics covered sound like a list of the activities of our committees:

- Censorship and the Freedom to Read
- Copyright and the Reprographic Problem
- Cost of and Delays in Obtaining Translation Rights
- Training in Publishing
- The Need for Support of Publishing in Developing Countries
- Transport of Books by Air, Land, and Sea
- Trade Barriers to Books
- The Need to Strengthen Trade & Professional Organizations

I recite this list, not only to report to you, but to urge your continued interest in these subjects and to urge intensified efforts in some.

As an example, let me cite one item from Sandy Thatcher's Copyright Committee report. That report suggested that this committee be used as "a central clearing house for information from individual presses about copyright violations." How many of us have observed instances of unlawful reprographic reproduction on our campuses? And how many of us have reported these instances? To the former question, the answer is "too many," and to the latter question, "too few."

The I.A.S.P. meeting was all too brief, with only 10 minutes allowed for the 15 countries represented to report on their country's concerns. At this meeting Marsh Jeanneret and Miriam Brokaw were elected President and Secretary, respectively. Under their leadership, I believe we shall hear more from I.A.S.P. than in the past.

So much for the two conventions. After leaving Japan, I commenced my assignment for the Asia Foundation visiting Taipei, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Singapore. In and around these four cities I visited 18 educational, research, or publishing organizations. All of these are involved with, or are planning some form of scholarly publishing. My contacts were with University Presidents, Deans, Publishing Committee Chairmen.

In such a short trip, full of language difficulties and culture shocks, one must guard against returning to pose as an Expert on Asian Scholarly Publishing. One obtains only superficial impressions. If one is lucky,



he may get a correct impression; if he is so unwise as to form firm opinions he may appear a fool.

Hoping that I can be lucky, let me give you three general impressions.

First, though we generally recognize our purpose as the dissemination of scholarly knowledge, and uniformly agree that part of this process is marketing and distribution, the majority of the institutions I visited seem to have few plans for, and little concern with, marketing and distribution. For some presses, the end of the game comes with the delivery of a printed copy of the monograph. With those few that are concerned with the marketing aspect of our job, I found them to be overwhelmed by the problems of distribution beyond a limited area. There are a very few exceptions. Presses have copublished occasionally with the University of Washington Press and a few others. But the majority of their books of interest to an American audience reach the U.S. only on a very haphazard basis.

Some of us may be able to assist Asian presses in this problem, by distribution arrangements or by copublishing. We should do so if at all practical. It would be a service to scholarship. It might even be profitable. But profit or not, I do know they need our help, and hope this may be forthcoming. When I recover from jet lag, this meeting, and a month's absence from my office I shall distribute through the Central Office any relevant information that may be useful to you and to them.

My second impression is that there is little recognition of the possibilities for economy that go with cooperation; the corollary of our theme of "Interdependence" here in New Haven, and part of Ed Booher's theme last evening.

On one campus, there were two small and relatively new scholarly publishing units, less than a block apart. One promises to be a viable press. The other, a publishing arm for an independent research unit, is struggling to survive with a staff of one. To me, the "instant expert" from halfway round the world, the solution was obvious. First a recognition of the principle of Interdependence; then movement in the direction of cooperation. This was not the only instance of this kind. It was the most vivid.

My last observation is one reported by earlier AAUP missions to Asia: the principal function of many Asian presses is to serve as their University Printing Office, printing catalogs, lecture notes, etc. I make this point not to demean this purpose but to emphasize our difference. They are performing a much needed service, but one which few of us include in our purpose.

So much for this trip which was only possible because I held this office.

This has been a good year for AAUP, for AUPS, and for the majority of our members. The Committee Reports, the Treasurer's Report, the Report of the Executive Director, the Balance Sheets and the Operating Statements tell the story. Except in a few minor instances, goals and budgets have been achieved. I say this with full humility, knowing how small has been my contribution, and reflecting how I wish I had accomplished more.

Allow me to close with a few suggestions for future administrations:

1. Though all of us may answer to our own satisfaction the two related questions:

What is the role of a university press? and

Why is there a need for university presses?

I am not certain that our public--authors, faculty, foundations, administration and customers--are convinced by our answers. The Professional and Institutional Relations and the Government and Foundation Relations Committees have been our subtle and effective advocates in responding to these questions this year. I urge the continuation and intensification of the work of these committees.

2. Our theme, here in New Haven, is "Interdependence." To me this connotes cooperation within the Association in every functional area of publishing (distribution, market research, production, etc.); and "cooperation" outside the Association with: the ALA, the ABA, the AAP, the ACLS, The National Enquiry, and on and on. Work has been done in most of these areas for years. But let us not think the task is complete.

In Jack Putnam's splendid Annual Report he properly says "we are a miniscule part of a small industry." Because this is true, I say we must find new areas in which we can cooperate and thus grow in service to the scholarly world.

3. Earlier I reported that one of the concerns of the I.A.P. was a need to strengthen its organization. I see a similar need for AAUP. Because of the discontinuity of the terms of our officers and our committee members, and since each of us has press duties as our first priority, I suggest a need to strengthen the role of our Central Office.

I suggest that it would be wise to follow the practice of AAP in developing a list of priorities, revising that list annually with schedules for accomplishment. And finally greater delegation of responsibility and authority to the Executive Director.

4. My fourth proposal relates to an activity of the Asia Foundation. I refer to their BOOKS FOR ASIA program. Asian universities are young by our standards. They have much "catching-up" to accomplish. So do their libraries. All of us have warehouses with some copies of older titles which will never be sold. I suggest that these can be donated to BOOKS FOR ASIA without interference with sales. Some of our members are already participating in this program. I hope all of you will.

5. And finally I wish to return to my reference to cooperation with The National Enquiry. In Indiana last year I spoke of AAUP serving as a catalyst bringing about contacts between us all that result in a number of inter-press cooperative ventures. I believe The National Enquiry will also serve as a catalyst. It is potentially a more effective one for two reasons:

A. It will be more objective, because its view is more comprehensive, encompassing all scholarly communications. And,

B. It has, as its leader, Ed Booher whose experience and respect is not matched by any of us.

Although we may think we have more urgent demands on our time, I urge us all to respond promptly and completely to any request he makes. I predict the dividends will more than repay the effort.

And now at last I say farewell and thank you.