



Ekamai International School.

Photo courtesy of Ekamai International School.

# Ekamai International School

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## EVANGELINE TAN ALVEZ, AND VERGILIO DENILA QUIMBA

Evangeline Tan Alvez has founded a community volunteer initiative in Thailand, facilitates a daily international prayer call, and is a board member at her local church. She holds a B.A. in communication and has completed the academic requirements for an M.A. in industrial psychology to support her role as media coordinator for Ekamai International School. Recently, she became a trained clinician in psychiatry from Harvard Medical School.

Vergilio Denila Quimba Jr. graduated with a Ph.D. in human resource management and a Ph.D. in educational management. He has been the director's secretary and human resource coordinator of EIS and a RISDAC board member for the past ten years. He is a licensed teacher in both the Philippines and Thailand. Mr. Kim, as he is fondly called, has a Professional Teaching Certificate from SSD, is married to an educator, Janice, and is blessed with two children.

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Ekamai International School (EIS) (then Christian Training Center, CTC) opened in 1946 with only a few children in the first class. The classes were held in the garage of Dr. Ralph Waddell on Phayathai Road in Bangkok,

Thailand. Later a classroom was constructed of bamboo with a metal roof. In 1957 the present Ekamai property was purchased, despite many objections that it was very far from the central city. The first building was the intermediate school building. It was surprising to see a school surrounded by rice fields with buffalo roaming around.<sup>1</sup>

## Founding of the School

On a day in late August 1946 Robert and Alma Milne reached Madrasas—having toured the mission stations in southern India, conducted colporteur institutes, and inspecting schools—a sizable package of mail was handed to them which had been forwarded from their home in Poona.<sup>2</sup> Among the telegrams and letters they received was a cable from Dr. Waddell and Pastor Ritz, asking Mrs. Milne to fly to Bangkok and start a school for their children.<sup>3</sup> They thought a teacher would be coming from America soon.<sup>4</sup>

When Mrs. Milne arrived a month or so later, she found that a small schoolroom had been made out of a part of the garage. It was nicely painted, had four tiny desks and a teacher's desk and chair, and four children were eager to begin school the very next day. And so, the American School was born. Later the name was changed to the Church School, and still later to the Child Training Center.<sup>5</sup>

The center had many applications that year, but accepted only three more students. There were from the beginning grades three, four, five, six, and eight.<sup>6</sup>

They had several annoyances. Thieves broke into the schoolroom again and again, taking from the children's desks knives, pens, and small amounts of money. Snakes visited the classroom frequently, and rising tide from the canal outside often made the floor wet, so they sat with the feet propped up off the floor. "If you've never tried making a train of yourselves on roller skates, pulled by one on a bicycle, you don't know how much fun you've missed," Mrs. Milne stated. There were great games of hide and seek and drop the handkerchief, for the lawn was green, extensive, and inviting, and the giant trees made good hiding places.

Following Mrs. Milne's departure on furlough, Miss Esther Feltus arrived and, under her tutelage, enrollment grew to 66.<sup>7</sup> Three other teachers were added. However, it was felt that many were not availing themselves of all the blessings the school should bring to them, so enrollment was cut and, when Mrs. Milne returned from her furlough, she found an enrollment of 42 awaiting her.

The school was moved to the hospital grounds, the school shed was enlarged to include two classrooms, and there were an additional three classrooms at the rear of the church. Later, when the hospital built a laundry, they were happy to rent to the school the three rooms above the laundry. As time went by and attendance grew, the limited area used by the school at the hospital was further restricted when a service road was cut through the playground; so many months and years were spent searching for the right piece of property to purchase for the school home. They felt that the Lord led them to the property which the school now owns and made it

possible for them to purchase the 12½ rai (1,600 square meters per rai) of land at a reasonable price. Homes for teachers were constructed, along with two school buildings, a home for the principal, and a building that housed a school kitchen and dining room, with apartments above. Plans called for dormitories for both girls and boys; an auditorium between the two classrooms which will include a principal's office, business office, bookstore, storerooms, and a place to play in rainy weather; a library and science building; a separate building for the first four grades; an industrial building or shop; and more homes for teachers.<sup>8</sup>

"We thank God, too, for the fine young people who have been baptized and who are now furthering their education here and in lands abroad. The original four are still in school, albeit all are married. Our children have had phenomenal success in fitting into schools in America, so we believe they are fitted for the work they have to do later in school. We humbly thank God for His many mercies of the past and pray for added blessings in the future," Mrs. Milne concluded.<sup>9</sup>

The Ekamai property was purchased in 1956 and the school opened in May 1957.<sup>10</sup>

## More Recent History of the School

Ekamai International School is a private Christian school owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Mission in Thailand. Its curriculum is based on the American system of education, and English is the medium of instruction.<sup>11</sup>

For more than 60 years, the school has provided education in English to its students. In 1992 EIS earned international status from the Thai government and earned accreditation status from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) in Burlingame, California, U.S.A.<sup>12</sup> It is also accredited by the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventists (AAA) in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.<sup>13</sup> The listed accredited schools can be access through their website.<sup>14</sup>

Currently, 23 countries are represented in the student body. The majority of students are Thai. The school considers its strong points: emphasis on good conduct and character development, and teacher concern for students.<sup>15</sup>

As a Seventh-day Adventist Christian International School, EIS places great emphasis on the role of spiritual values in the personal lives of its students.

The school began in 1946 as a Child Training Center with four children in the first class. Classes were held in the garage of Dr. Ralph Waddell of Phayathai Road. Later a classroom consisting of a bamboo shed with a metal roof was constructed and used for two years. In 1957 the present Ekamai property was purchased, despite many objections to setting up a school far from the city. The first building was the former high school building at the English school. How strange that must have appeared with rice fields all around and water buffalo roaming about.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, the school became Adventist English School (AES). In 1993 the Thai Ministry of Education granted AES international status, and the name was changed to Ekamai International School (EIS). The latest development is the school's accreditation by WASC in 1998.<sup>17</sup>

#### Vision

Ekamai International School aspires to provide an excellent global academic education that promotes moral character development for the 21st century in a Seventh-day Adventist Christian environment.

#### Mission

Ekamai International School offers Christ-centered, quality, global academic programs. It endeavors to create an internationally competent learning climate, marked by God's presence and love, respecting uniqueness and diversity, and providing care and development of the potentials and abilities of students.

#### Philosophy

Ekamai International School recognizes God as Creator and the ultimate source of knowledge, wisdom, and truth. We believe, promote, and advance the holistic and harmonious development of human nature's physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions.

Identity: Empowers, Inspires, Serves

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Uniqueness: Moral Development | Academic Excellence | Global Competence

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Ekamai International School has been at the forefront of mission work in Thailand. The deliberate creation of its campus ministry and the integration of faith into the learning process and instruction has been the bedrock of EIS.<sup>18</sup> The school participates in activities with the church, the community, and the kingdom of Thailand.

Following its general mission statement, EIS seeks to be a Christ-centered school that endeavors to create a climate marked by a sense of God's presence and action in the world, love for one's neighbor, and a concern for social justice and equality for all people.<sup>19</sup> EIS seeks to introduce students to Jesus Christ and encourage them to commit to Him as their personal friend and Savior while helping the students who are already Christian to continue to grow in their knowledge and experience of God.<sup>20</sup>

## President/Vice Chancellor/Principal Chronology

Alma M. Milne (1946-1974; 1950-1958; 1961-1964); Esther Feltus (1947-1949); A. P. Ritz (1949-1950); C. E. Ondricks (1959-1961); John Blair Falconbridge (1966-1968, 1971-1972); John Frederick Harris (1969-1970); Barnes (1972-1973); Arthur F. Bell (1973-1979); Sunti Sorajjakool (1981-1982); Ron Anderson (1983-1984); Wendell

Walcos (1984-1985); Komel Santumalpeng (1985-1986); Paul W. Essog (1986-1988); M. Earl Adams (1988-1989); Donald R. Duncan (1990-1994); Stanley Baldwin (1994-1996); Komol Santimalapong (1<sup>st</sup> semester) and Roy Richardson (2<sup>nd</sup> semester, acting) (1996-1997), Ronald Anderson (1997-2002); Ronald Anderson (1<sup>st</sup> semester) and Keith Anderson (2002-2003, acting); Thomas Gerald Kea (2003-2004); Johnny Rueh (2005-2006, acting); David Leroy Gouge (2006-2008); David Leroy Gouge and Surapee Sorajjakool (2008-2009); Surapee Sorajjakool (2009-2011); Rajdeep Takeuchi (2011-2012); Prachack Jitbunyad (2012-2014, acting); Rajdeep Takeuchi (2014-2016); Prachack Jitbunyad (2016-present).

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## NOTES

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