

Southeast Asia Program at Cornell University

FALL BULLETIN 2015



Cornell University



About the Covers

Currently based in Ho Chi Minh City, Tiffany Chung is one of Vietnam's most established contemporary artists. While she actively works in diverse media, including installation, video, photography, and theatrical performance, Chung has received particular acclaim for an ongoing series of drawings that could be described as cartographic abstractions or speculative topographies. Cultivated through archival and ethnographic research into specific locales, these representations chart historical

and/or projected topographical changes resulting from urban planning, environmental disaster, and the often traumatic charting of geopolitical borders.

Chung left Vietnam in her teens as a refugee, and she and her family settled in the United States.

She decided to return and resettle in Vietnam in 2007, a period of intensive building and redevelopment projects in the Ho Chi Minh City metropolitan area. It was during this time that Chung began to research cartography and urban planning maps related to the building boom. From this point onward, Chung developed an ongoing series of cartographic drawings and mixed media works. They are abstract and complex representations of landscapes that have been affected by processes of urbanization, industrialization, natural disasters, and geopolitical conflict and crisis. The crafted components of her cartographic drawings include reticular ornamental forms that convey a sense of organic

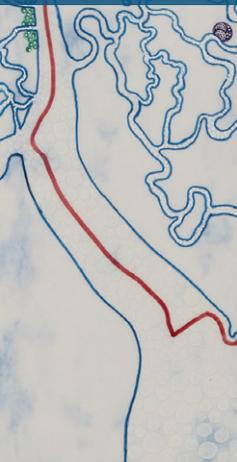
growth, like a fungal spread under the lens of a microscope. Each map contains a complex system of coding, the legend for which the artist selectively provides. For Chung, the extreme level of technical detail and crafted beauty in these drawings speaks to the urgent, at times frenetic, desire for modernization and progress, which, in turn, can cause dire effects for human populations and ecological systems. *Flora and Fauna Outgrowing the Future* represents Chung's vision of the future of Vietnam's Mekong Delta, as development and climate change impact the ecology of the river system and its communities.

Many of Chung's abstract cartographic depictions of such sites, based on historical and present-day maps, focus on the histories and geographies of territorial conflict and its impact on human populations. Chung describes her process of crafting these maps:

“ Each map involves my doing research, drawing layouts of old maps (from the periods of those traumatic events) on canvas, embroidering railways, roads and river systems. At the final stage I pierce holes on canvas and secure them with painted metal grommets and buttons one by one, mapping all areas with colored dots and eyelets. This painstaking process meditates on the memory and experience of trauma and tragedy, which leave mental scars in the human psyche – whether it's a cessation of feeling, psychic closing off, or sensory panic. ”

—Pamela Nguyen Corey, lecturer in Southeast Asian art, Department of the History of Art and Archaeology, the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Tiffany Chung
Vietnamese-American, born 1969
Flora and Fauna Outgrowing the Future, 2010
Micro pigment ink, oil and alcohol-based marker on vellum and paper
Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art
Acquired through the George and Mary Rockwell Fund
2014.014.002



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Letter from the Director Kaja M. McGowan

To be the director of Cornell's Southeast Asia Program requires a certain amount of flexibility, diplomacy, and (to make it to almost every event on the calendar) the calisthenic fortitude of Hanoman. White monkey general from the Ramayana, and envoy to Rama and Sita, Hanoman faithfully attempts to carry out one mission after another, or at least that is what the Kamasan painting hanging alluringly over the director's desk in Uris Hall would have me believe. Frequently my eyes are drawn to the activity of Hanoman as he maneuvers effortlessly from frame to frame, appearing everywhere at once, meeting with powerful dignitaries, attempting to defy gravity with each new streamlining regime, and occasionally with tail poised high eluding the coils of serpents and the mouths (and bellies) of demonic *buta!*—all tongue in cheek and yet...not entirely...

Now, well into my second year as SEAP's director, it is no longer surprising that the story of "Hanoman as Envoy (Anoman Duta)" was one of the favorite plays at the palace of the Mangkunagara of Surakarta in Central Java. Campus and court bureaucracies are perhaps not all that different. Whether swinging from the branches of a nagasari tree in Ithaca or Surakarta, Hanoman's role like that of any director is to understand two key outcomes: 1) how our interaction with the ambient landscape allows us to secure a vital sense of place, and 2) that the evolving narrative at the base of the proverbial tree is dependent upon the assistance and generosity of many good people. This is my opportunity to thank the SEAP community, while calling attention to the sheer vitality of the multiple spaces we inhabit. For those who would like to see Southeast Asia better integrated into global studies, it is the rich complexity of the local, whether here or in Southeast



Asia, that invites us to explore the physically and historically fluid "Borders, Bounds and Brinks" (to shamelessly pluck the title from the highly successful Burma/Myanmar Research Forum, held October 2-4, 2015, at the Kahin Center and the A.D. White House) in which life is conducted—the social organizations that situate individuals into communities.

Speaking of the Burma/Myanmar Forum, I would like first to thank the SEAP graduate students who provided the energy and the momentum to organize this splendid event: Hilary Olivia Faxon, Kevin Foley, Allegra Giovine, Oradi Inkhong, Mai Van Tran, Thet Hein Tun and Youyi Zhang, as well as graduate students from other institutions: Soe Lin Aung, Nabila Islam, and Mary Kate Long. They were largely responsible for selecting the workshop presenters and bringing an exciting convergence of plenary speakers to the Kahin Center: Penny Edwards from the University of California, Berkeley; Tin Maung Maung Than from the Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, Singapore; and Alicia Turner from York University, Toronto. Faculty advisors, Magnus Fiskesjö and Anne Blackburn; Curator of the Echols Collection, Greg Green; and staff advisors, Thamora Fishel, Marjorie Mosereiff, and Betty Nguyen all played their part in shaping this transformative event. In the context of the forum, and in an effort to honor the MoU (memorandum of understanding)

signed into existence with Kyoto University under the directorship of Tamara Loos, it was a great pleasure to welcome Kono Yasuyuki, director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies in Kyoto, Japan, who attended the forum and who provided his invaluable commentary on the proceedings.

SEAP has been addressing four main objectives: 1) engaging a wider, more diverse array of students; 2) improving and expanding the instruction of Southeast Asian languages in the United States; 3) strengthening Burma/Myanmar Studies at Cornell; and 4) continuing to build partnerships to internationalize community colleges and teacher training programs. In collaboration with the Cornell South Asia Program and the South Asia Center of Syracuse University, SEAP has been actively building partnerships to help foster internationalization efforts in community colleges and schools of education. As a result of a substantial internationalizing grant from Einaudi, SEAP secured \$50,000 to begin to foster faculty engagement with Myanmar and to establish partnerships and exchanges. Victoria Beard, Chiara Formichi, Andrew Mertha, Bryan Duff, and I have already, or will soon engage in these exchanges, not only to explore research possibilities, but also to make valuable connections for future programming in the spring semester and beyond.

With Burma/Myanmar still in view, I want to thank the tireless efforts of the search committee: Keith Taylor, Thuy Tranviet, Maria Theresa Savella, and John Whitman who were able to secure the hire of our new Burmese Language Lecturer, Yu Yu Khaing. When I visited Yangon briefly this summer, on invitation from the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies, to attend a conference workshop, Khaing's reputation as a fine language teacher was the "talk of the town." She has joined our vibrant group of language instructors, and we are lucky to be graced with her presence.

Also new to SEAP are Jessica Snyder, new initiatives coordinator, and Brenna Fitzgerald, communications and outreach coordinator for Cornell's Southeast Asia Program. Both women quite literally "hit the ground running." Jessica has been involved in conducting interviews for the second iteration of the highly successful SEAP undergraduate Cambodia Abroad Program held in the winter session, and Brenna has been continuing to nourish the Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) partnership component of this program. Led by Andrew Mertha as a follow-up to his three-credit government course, "Chinese Empire and the Cambodian Experience," the Cornell in Cambodia Program is held in Siem Reap. While the initial piloting of the course last year involved eleven Cornell undergraduates, along with a faculty member and student from TC3, I am happy to see the enthusiasm, which has already translated into increased enrollments this second time around. Brenna replaces Melina Draper, whose contributions as SEAP's outreach coordinator changed the very nature of the position to one of expanded

engagement under the umbrella of Einaudi. While still a Cornell employee, Melina has been promoted to teaching support specialist for internationalizing the curriculum.

Thanks to the patient efforts of Chiara Formichi, we were finally able to sign into being a MoU with City University of Hong Kong. In honor of this partnership, Chiara Formichi and Kikue Hamayotsu (Northern Illinois University), in collaboration with Tom Patton (City University of Hong Kong), organized a two-day international workshop, entitled "Religious Minorities in Asia" held on June 12-13, 2015. Hosted by the Southeast Asia Research Centre at the City University of Hong Kong, the workshop brought together scholars from Australia, China, Malaysia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

A highlight of every week here at Cornell is the Ronald and Janette Gatty Lecture Series, organized by our amazing graduate students who are dedicated to enhancing the quality of the academic and social environment of SEAP. The co-chairs for 2015-2016 are Alexandra Dalferro and Chairat Polmuk, and under their leadership we were able to schedule for this September a month-long series of talks and films in collaboration with Cornell Cinema entitled, "Observing the Silence: Remembering 1965." Special thanks go to the faculty, guest speakers, and graduate students involved in this: Chiara Formichi, Arnika Fuhrmann, Tom Pepinsky, Eric Tagliacozzo, Antonius Supriatma, Degung Santikarma, and Elizabeth Wijaya. Drawing the event to a dramatic close was Siddharth Chandra, director of Asian studies and professor of economics at Michigan State University, whose Gatty Lecture on October 1, entitled "New Findings on the Indonesian Killings of 1965-66" was well attended and thought-provoking.

We welcome back from their sabbaticals, Eric Tagliacozzo and soon, Andrew Willford. Their presence last year was much missed. We congratulate Arnika Fuhrmann not only for being honored this year as a Fellow at the Society for the Humanities (navigating with her counterparts the richly nuanced topic of "Time"), but also for working tirelessly to bring Gina Apostol, novelist and essayist, to campus. As part of the University Lecture Series for 2015-2016, Apostol presented her work: "The Filipino-American War and the Writing of a Novel: Reflections on the Art of Fiction and Revolution," on October 27, 2015. Arnika's formal presence at SEAP will be missed along with that of Marina Welker who is on a Fulbright in Indonesia, and Victoria Beard who is currently taking a two-year leave from Cornell to serve as the director of research for the World Resources Institute's Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, and leading the next World Resources Report to be released in 2017.

Voices on Vietnam was heard on October 27, 2015, thanks to Nha Ca and Olga Dror, who combined a conversation entitled "Mourning Headband for Huế'" with a film screening of "Land of Sorrows." The 10th Frank H. Golay Memo-



*Otonan Ceremony, Batan Nyuh Village, Karangasem, Bali, Summer 2012
 Pictured: Kaja with husband, Ketut Raka Nawiana and son, Kadek Surya Nawiana*

rial lecture, entitled "Writing Regional and National Histories in Southeast Asia: Potentialities and Problems," held on November 13, 2015, and given by Barbara Watson Andaya (chair of the Asian Studies Program and former director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies) and Leonard Andaya (Department of History), both at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. With the ever-expanding field of world history, their joint presentation engaged with relevant questions regarding Southeast Asia's emerging place in global studies. How has their collaborative work been a response to these trends, particularly in their writing of the regional history of "early modern" Malaysia, now in its third revised edition? Last but not least, and still to be announced is Professor Tamara Loos and graduate student Rebecca Townsend's working conference entitled "Cultures of Censorship: Censorship and Secrets in Thailand Beyond the Political." Faculty and graduate students will have an opportunity to engage with prominent Thai editors and/or writers who have experienced first-hand the increasing pressure to censure expression in Thailand.

As you can see, all this rich internationalizing activity requires the dexterity and acrobatic antics of Hanoman. More than this, however, such faithfulness to SEAP requires the

love and understanding of family who patiently (and sometimes not so patiently) watch us as Hanoman leaps from tree to tree in an effort to attend even a fraction of all the required events at Cornell. "We exist in those who by letting us love them, teach us our own faithfulness," wrote the late Galway Kinnell, winner in 1982 of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. My fidelity to SEAP grows out of that familial nourishment. So in the interest of transformation, I choose to honor them here. Instead of including my solo headshot as has been the norm in the past with SEAP directors, I choose to break with that tradition by including two photographs of my husband, Ketut Nawiana, and our son Kadek Surya, together with me during our most recent trip to Indonesia. How but in custom and ceremony can all this be accomplished? *Om Santi Santi Santi Om!*

Warmly,

Kaja M. McGowan

Kaja M. McGowan,
 Associate Professor, History of Art
 Director, Southeast Asia Program

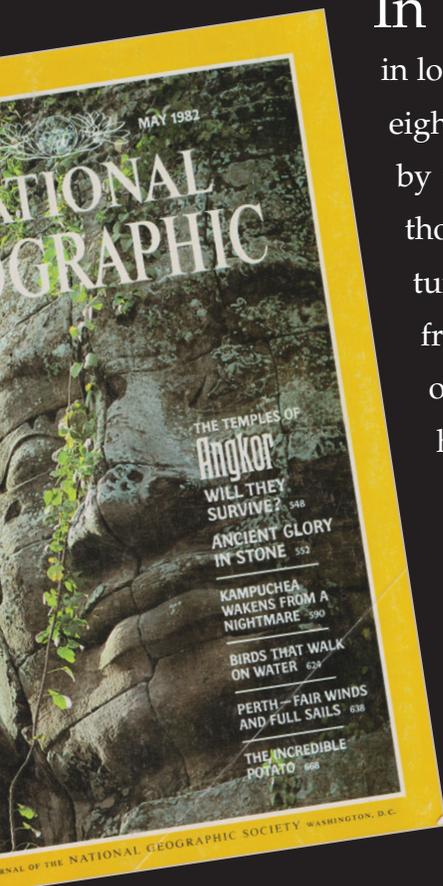
Called to Cambodia:

How a China Scholar Developed the Cornell in Cambodia Program

Andrew Mertha
professor of government



In 1973, my mother and I moved from what is now Tribeca in lower Manhattan to the Upper West Side. Although I was only eight, my mom exposed me to what was happening in the world by tuning in every evening to watch the *NBC Nightly News*. In those days, NBC presented story after story on Cambodia, featuring all sorts of shocking and complex imagery: smoke rising from bombed-out buildings, refugees walking along bombed-out pockmarked roads, children carried by their mothers with haunting faces. I noticed the intricate tendrils of vegetation that grew alongside these scenes of what was shaping into a tragedy of immense proportions. Like the lima bean shag carpeting and faux wood paneling on the ubiquitous Ford *Pintos* and *Country Squires* of the time, these images colored, and in some cases defined, the time and space in which I grew up. Then, in early 1975, just as the news reports were reaching a crescendo, everything went silent.



A few years later, in 1982, two magazines, *National Geographic* and *GEO*, ran features on Cambodia, focusing on the temple complex at Angkor. This time, in high school, I was, again, mesmerized by this small, isolated, and enigmatic country. I sought out everything I could possibly find on Cambodia to learn more about it, but had very little success. Elizabeth Becker's seminal *When the War Was Over* was still four years away from publication and Francois Ponchaud's *Year Zero* was only available in French. The only book on the politics of Cambodia that I had access to at that time was William Shawcross's *Sideshow*, and I devoured it. Cambodia remained a mystery. But, as with all mysteries, its elusiveness increased its allure.

I figured that I would have ample opportunity to study Cambodia when I went to college, but once I was unable to get into my first choice (full disclosure – it was Cornell), that dream evaporated, at least for the time being. As an undergraduate at University of Michigan, I was introduced to a different world, that of China. Two weeks into my first Chinese politics class as a second-semester senior, I was hooked. China became my passion. From 1988 until the present, I lived for seven years in China as an English teacher, a production manager for a toy company, and, since 1998, a scholar. I have written extensively about China and have been lucky to secure a job that requires my constant engagement with the Middle Kingdom.

Although fully invested in China, Cambodia would appear on the radar from time to time. During my 1992 honeymoon in Southern Thailand, I became acutely aware of how close I was to Cambodia. When I lived in Hong Kong, my wife and I entertained the possibility of traveling there, but then we would read the news of murdered backpackers who had wandered into Khmer Rouge territory and realized that our taste for adventure had mellowed somewhat with age. Indeed, my thoughts on Cambodia were uncharacteristically Buddhist in nature: maybe in the next life.

That changed when I came to Cornell in 2008. I had just finished my second book on the politics of China's

hydropower development (*China's Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change*, Cornell University Press, 2008; 2010). Casting about for a new project, I had tentatively settled on looking at China's legacy of thought reform and political indoctrination. By that time, I had obtained dozens of internal files of Chinese Communist Party cadres (*dang'an*) that I had organized around political campaigns going back to the 1950s. I planned to analyze the institutional arrangements that helped shape the evolution of thought reform of Chinese cadres over time.

One day, during my first months at Cornell, my colleague Sid Tarrow asked me what I was up to. I told him my research plans, and he suggested that I broaden my comparative focus to include locales other than China, suggesting, among other cases, Fascist Italy. I would be lying if I said I wasn't tempted by the idea of doing archival research in Rome, but it was expediency that won the day. I wanted to find a set of comparable documents with those I had from China but wanted ones that were relatively accessible. I immediately thought of the thousands of confessions from the archives of Tuol Sleng, the mass incarceration, torture, and execution processing center in Phnom Penh. Once again, Cambodia beckoned.

This time, I refused to let it escape my grasp. Once I overcame the self-doubt that such an undertaking would be too much of an indulgence, I embraced it full on. The following semester, I began four years of Khmer language study with Hannah Phan. I was welcomed into the larger SEAP community and began making multiple trips to Cambodia to begin my fieldwork. And, although there remains a considerable amount of acrimony among Cambodia scholars going back decades, they were all uniformly helpful to and supportive of me, as a novice blundering into their well-established bailiwicks.

I have found Cambodia to be markedly different from China as a field site. Although nobody would argue that Cambodia is anything other than an authoritarian state, the main obstacle to data collection was not bureaucratic formalism, but the simple availability



of archival documents. Sure, the S-21/Tuol Sleng archives are staggering in scope and are continually being updated as new files are discovered (Cornell has the original microfilms of the files that were compiled in the early 1990s). However, it became clear to me early on that comparing the Tuol Sleng files to those that I had obtained from China was not going to pan out as an appropriate set of comparison cases, mainly because the very logic of the confessions were so radically different in the two instances. Specifically, in China, confessions were a first step at thought reform that would eventually allow the citizen to return to society; in Democratic Kampuchea, by contrast, a completed confession gave the green light to execute the confessor. I decided to put the project on ice and, instead, work on piecing together the governing apparatus of the Khmer Rouge regime. I quickly realized that there was a very limited paper trail.

In fact, an extraordinary trove of materials on the Khmer Rouge regime does exist, but, except for a brief period in 2009, it was tantalizingly off-limits to me. The irony was almost unbearable:



Outside Baisha Village, Lijiang, Yunnan Province, China, February 1989

Cambodia possesses a one-stop archive source, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC CAM), which contains an ever-growing set of materials on the Khmer Rouge era—from official documents, to photos, to cadre notebooks, to refugee interviews, etc.—something that, in China, would be completely off-limits to researchers. The problem, I soon found out, is that access to these documents is not at all standardized.

In fact, it is highly idiosyncratic. Access appears to be based on the whims of the DC CAM Director, Youk Chhang, and his standards are, to put it politely, eccentric.

There are countless stories of researchers who have had their research curtailed because they had somehow run afoul of Youk. I am one of them. Since 2010, I have been denied any form of assistance; at best, I have been told repeatedly that they are “unable to find” various documents I have requested. I am wary of that claim because those documents often mysteriously turn up (usually within 24 hours) when somebody DC CAM favors requests those same documents on my behalf. And the same photos they “couldn’t find” always seem to turn up when requested by journalists for local newspaper articles (these same journalists tell me in private that they are keen not to rub Youk the wrong way). And in some cases, those researchers are in a far more vulnerable situation than I am—they are doctoral students and junior faculty for whom such access means, quite literally, the difference between success and failure in the crucial, early stages of their careers.

In part, this is structural: DC CAM’s revenue stream depends on a series of publications that are based on its own archival holdings. If anybody is conducting research that DC CAM sees as “competing” with one of their own publications-in-progress, it closes off access to DC CAM materials for outside researchers. Unfortunately, the quality of the research in DC CAM publications is amateurish, superficial in content and analysis, and oftentimes unverifiable, even inaccurate.

Still, many people are denied access to research materials simply based on Youk’s caprices. As an organization that is generously funded, in part, by the US Government, I do not know how it is possible for DC CAM to limit access in the arbitrary fashion that it has without any regulation or oversight. But so far, no researchers seem to want to raise their voice in public, in part for fear of having their access to these resources closed in the future. I do so here on behalf of those who cannot.

Because of such a huge obstacle to my research, I have had to be entrepreneurial in terms of finding other data sources. Luckily, in this respect, Cambodia has turned out to be a far easier place than China to unearth data, but only if one is willing to work hard doing so. In my experience, people in Cambodia tend to be relatively approachable and willing to discuss even highly sensitive topics with me; this includes dozens of former Khmer Rouge cadres. In some cases, my research assistant and I have been able to track down these individuals through known addresses; in others, we have simply shown up in a village and asked around. Oftentimes, this word-of-mouth tactic works, and sometimes it doesn’t.

Once, my research assistant and I ventured into the camp of Battalion 8. Battalion 8 consisted of former Khmer Rouge soldiers under the late Ta Mok, a particularly fierce commander known as the “Butcher of Takeo”—the Khmer Rouge leader who eventually arrested Pol Pot. The soldiers were dumbfounded when we showed up. We had gone past the foxholes on the Thai-Cambodian border at Preah Vihear, and they laughingly told us to get the hell out of there (they might have been Khmer Rouge, but they were Cambodians, and therefore polite). In China, I would have been, at the very least, detained and made to write a self-criticism.

One of the things that distinguishes me from other researchers of the Khmer Rouge period in Cambodian history is that I am not focusing on the security and killing apparatus—that subject area is well-trod, as it should be, though still highly incomplete. Rather, as a student of bureaucracy, my interest is in the overall macro-institutional structure of the Democratic Kampuchea regime from (but not limited to) 1975 to 1979. This allows me to interview individuals associated with the regime in an environment they feel is far less threatening than if we were discussing the killings that they are aware of or responsible for. That said, since we are often interviewing them way off the grid, my research assistant and I always make sure that our car remains within our field of vision, so that we can make our escape



2015 Cornell in Cambodia participants at Angkor Wat

if an interview goes south. So far, we haven't had to.

One resource that has been extremely helpful to me is the National Archives of Cambodia. This is a far more modest operation than the name would suggest because of the neglect it has received from the Cambodian government. Yet, the archives themselves are constantly being updated and preserved by an extraordinary team of librarians and archivists, led by Ms. Yi Dari, many of whom have been trained at Cornell and who remain extremely fond of Cornell. When I first arrived at the National Archives, the Cornell crest on my business card elicited so much enthusiasm that I was treated like a VIP. On other occasions I was able to "rent" out the archives (i.e., gain access when they were closed on a national holiday) for a very modest fee. My hope is that Cornell can continue to maintain and deepen its relationship with this extraordinary institution, one that has somehow remained free of corruption while still embracing the integrity of its mission, even if that means going without pay for months on end.

I was also lucky to have worked as a consultant for one of the defense teams (Ieng Thirith) within the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) in 2011. This has allowed me to make many contacts and has given me access to a number of documents (including documents that I sought out and was denied by DC CAM) that have been critical for my research.

All these data streams converged once my research topic crystallized,

which it did one day in March 2010 when expatriate historian Henri Locard offered to accompany me on a visit to the Krang Leav airfield in Kampong Chhnang (a province in central Cambodia). After bribing the general who was in charge, Henri took me on a tour of the airfield, which included the control tower, landing strip, water holding containers, quarry, and the Tareach tunnel and underground command and control complex, all built under Chinese management using Khmer Rouge slave labor. Confronted by that reality, I was overwhelmed with questions: What were the Chinese doing in Cambodia at that time? What exactly did they know about Khmer Rouge atrocities? How did Chinese foreign aid to Democratic Kampuchea work to buy Chinese influence over what is perhaps the most autarkic regime in modern times? These questions became the driving force behind a project that eventually turned into a book titled *Brothers in Arms: Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979* (Cornell University Press, 2014).

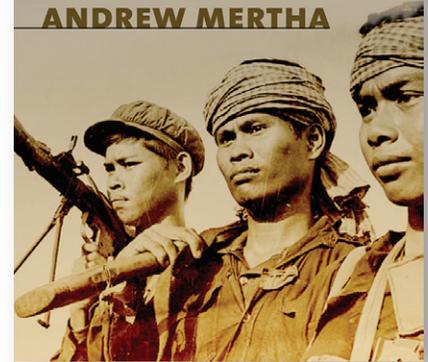
One of the important lessons that I have learned from doing research in Cambodia is that, historically, it is a country that falls through the cracks of our consciousness. It seems that once Cambodia is considered important as a field of study—because of some calamity or its geo-strategic importance—it is already too late to help the Cambodians, many of whom end up victims of the very thing that ushers in the country's ephemeral importance.

If we go back in time to the 1970s, Cambodia received more tonnage of

BROTHERS IN ARMS

CHINESE AID TO THE KHMER ROUGE,
1975-1979

ANDREW MERTHA



airborne ordnance than that which was unleashed during the entire Second World War, including the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was the U.S. invasion of Cambodia—not Vietnam—that led to the Kent State protests and subsequent massacre. It was the illegal bombing of Cambodia that led to the first calls for President Richard Nixon's impeachment. In March 1970, when the U.S. became Cambodia's patron after the coup that toppled Norodom Sihanouk, and installed Lon Nol as Cambodia's strongman, it did so from an uninformed vantage point. In the delicious words of Spalding Gray, at that historical moment, "the only thing we knew about Lon Nol is that 'Lon Nol' spelled backwards is 'Lon Nol.'" None of these realities helped the Cambodians; indeed, they all contributed to one of the darkest periods the world has even seen, the regime of Democratic Kampuchea under the Khmer Rouge.

It seems impossible in today's disciplinary environment to be a "Cambodia scholar," at least in the social sciences. In my own discipline of political science, area expertise is sharply devalued except for some regions and countries (such as China) that cannot be ignored. Unfortunately, Cambodia is one of those countries that can easily be ignored, a fact that has caused the Cambodian people an extraordinary amount of suffering. I have tried to make my contribution to knowledge on Cambodia by fashioning my day job as a China scholar in such a way that it can underwrite my *pro bono* work on Cambodia.

One of the most exciting ways in which I have been able to advocate for study on Cambodia is by initiating the Cornell in Cambodia Program, which I hope will become a model for Cornell study abroad experiences. This past January marked the first course, which was based in Siem Reap. Spanning two weeks, the course consisted of lectures I led with my teaching assistant and Cornell doctoral candidate, Alice Beban. These lectures were supplemented by a plethora of activities and guest visits, including a visit from former UN Ambassador Benny Widyono. Some other highlights of the program included a visit from his Excellency Khuon Khun Neay, who presented on his collaboration with former Minister of Culture, Vann Molyvann, to create the urban architectural landscape for Cambodia during the *Sangkum* era (1954-1970). Additionally, Dr. Alexandra Kent and Cornell's own Dr. Courtney Work gave a fascinating talk on the relationship between spirits and the state.

A substantial part of the course had to do with exposing students to the challenges of field research. In addition to visiting Tuol Sleng/S-21 and the killing fields at Choeung Ek, the class also had the opportunity to visit the site of the ECCC; the Krang Leav airfield; the Achang Irrigation site to meet with both Cambodian land-use activists and Chinese engineers working on the project; and Phnom Kulen to see the site of the Khmer Rouge guerilla base in 1973.

On our final day, we went to the town of Anlong Veng on the Thai-Cambodian border, which was the last stronghold of Khmer Rouge and remains the home of many former Khmer Rouge officials, soldiers, and followers. We hiked to the last bunker inhabited by Pol Pot before his Khmer Rouge rival Ta Mok caught and imprisoned him, and surveyed the utter isolation and rugged beauty of the place. We also went to Ta Mok's house, surrounded by a moat that used to be filled with crocodiles Mok himself liked to raise. While walking around the periphery, we happened to chat with a fisherman there. He told us that he was one of Ta Mok's soldiers who had been part of the force that captured Pol Pot. The students were amazed to be learn-

ing history directly from the source, unadulterated by the scholar, the page, or the classroom setting.

This course has a deeper goal as well. In a typical academic environment, students gain an overwhelming amount of their knowledge from the classroom or the written page. Very few of them are exposed to fieldwork. As an undergraduate at the University of Michigan, I participated in a six-week geology course that was premised on the importance of fieldwork. We examined rocks and, aided only with geological maps, theorized about where these rocks came from and how they were formed. We did this kind of study for twelve hours a day in Wyoming, Idaho, Colorado, Montana, and Utah.

By the end of the course, we were discouraged from studying for the final (the professors physically threw me on a van going to Jackson Hole and demanded that I go hit the bars and "have a good time" – I did not disappoint) because, by then our knowledge had become a part of who we were, and studying for an exam was largely superfluous, indeed unnecessary. In my Cornell in Cambodia course, I want students to use their observations of, interactions within, and appreciation for the cultural environment they found themselves enveloped and embedded in to integrate their knowledge and understanding of the place into their identity—to make it personal. The early returns are in: I think we succeeded.

SEAP was instrumental in the development of this course, especially helping to facilitate a partnership between Cornell and Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3). TC3 Professor of English, Susan Cerretani, and one TC3 student went to Cambodia along with the Cornell group. The TC3 group was engaged in a separate service learning program, but they spent much of their time together with the Cornell in Cambodia students. They participated in lectures, fieldwork, and other key parts of the program, adding their diverse perspectives and engaged experiences to the class discussions. For this winter's course Susan will join again, along with TC3 professor of anthropology, Tina Stavenhagen-Helgren, and ten

TC3 students. The presence and contributions of Susan, Tina, and the TC3 students not only help to broaden the disciplinary perspectives of the Cornell in Cambodia program, but also lay the foundation for strengthening the program's infrastructure and widening its impact.

The development of Cornell in Cambodia was made possible by SEAP and its growing partnership with the Center for Khmer Studies (CKS). CKS is an American Overseas Research Center (AORC) that seeks to facilitate scholarship on Cambodia by American scholars and to deepen the mutual understanding between Cambodia and the United States. In January 2016, I will become the President of CKS and work to further expand and deepen their collaboration with SEAP and the larger Cornell community. I cannot think of a more natural set of institutional partners.

My goal is to make this an annual program where different Cornell faculty have an opportunity to teach their classes on some aspect of Southeast Asia in partnership with interested community colleges, such as TC3, and organizations, such as CKS, on site at Wat Damnak in Siem Reap. SEAP Director Kaja McGowan will be the next SEAP faculty member to utilize the Cornell in Cambodia course shell for her course tentatively titled, "Performing Angkor: Dance, Silk and Stone." Kaja plans to use Angkor as the performative lens for combining her knowledge of stone sculpture, related inscriptions, and architecture.

While working to widen the scope of Cornell in Cambodia by nurturing the three-way partnership between Cornell, CKS, and TC3, my plan as a scholar is to continue the research for my book project, which examines the political history of the Khmer Rouge as a governing organization from 1966 to 1999. My hope is that the wonderful people, the extraordinary culture, and the rich history of Cambodia will continue to attract students and scholars into its orbit, as it did me, starting from an early age and continuing far into the future. ☺

What to Do with the Testimony of a Brahmin?

A Day in the Manuscript Room of the National Library of Thailand

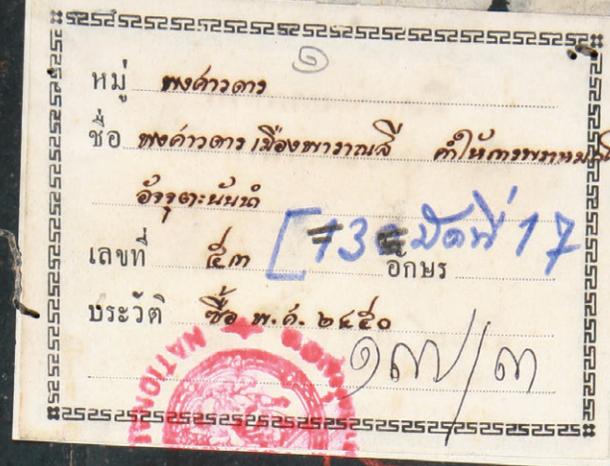


Matt Reeder
Ph.D. candidate in history

Despite the heat of Bangkok in August, I wanted to be taken seriously as a foreign researcher, so I wore nice pants, a collared shirt, and leather shoes. It would have been cooler in a taxi, but the bus was much cheaper. Fifteen or twenty commuters lingered closely together under the shade of a spindly tree. I waited, then boarded a non-air-conditioned bus, number 16. The fare was only six and a half baht, about 20¢. The ride was fast—traffic in Bangkok is either smooth or fitful. Twenty minutes later, I arrived at my stop and slipped through the front gate of the complex that hosts Thailand’s National Library and National Archives. I texted my Cornell friend, Rebecca Townsend-Hill, who was working at the archives. We would meet for lunch to commiserate about our research problems and Thai politics.

Thailand’s National Archives holds government records from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I was interested in an earlier period, so I proceeded past the archives, presented my backpack for a perfunctory search by the National Library’s guards, passed through the lobby to the new building beyond, climbed to the fourth floor, and entered the manuscript room. The room was always cool and quiet except when large student groups appeared for a tour.

Before arriving in Thailand, I was told that until a few years ago, the manuscript room maintained a discouraging attitude towards researchers, especially foreign ones. Manuscripts were made available sparingly and grudgingly. However, when I visited, the staff was friendly, welcoming,



The cover of the “Varanasi Chronicle,” along with its white library sticker.





The manuscript reading room at the National Library of Thailand.



In the back of the manuscript room, a permanent exhibit features reproductions of inscriptions, including the famous Ramkhamhaeng Inscription, and elaborately decorated manuscript cabinets.

and professional. Word of the change in their service has spread slowly. Many Thai and foreign colleagues remain under the impression that the manuscript room still operates under the old regime. Often, I was one of just a handful of researchers, and I was usually the only foreign one.

The staff at the front desk asked me whether I had finished with the previous day's manuscripts—I had. At the beginning of my work at the National Library of Thailand, I was asked to submit a long list of every manuscript I might ever want to see. No inventory of the library's manuscripts can be found online. Instead, manuscript titles and sometimes brief descriptions are recorded in large ledgers and must be perused in person. Some of the ledgers are typed and others handwritten in tired loopy handwriting that I found more difficult to read than the manuscripts themselves.

It took me more than a month to compose the list of manuscripts I wanted to look at, but by the end I had a good sense of the library's collection. After my list was approved, the staff did not check it too closely. Later, I requested a few documents that were not on my list, and no one seemed to mind. By the time I reached the manuscript room that steamy day, I'd already spent several months conducting dissertation research in the reading room, studying a shift in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century historical narratives towards identifying kingdoms as ethnic groups.

I asked to see a new manuscript on my list, recorded in the ledger as "Varanasi Chronicle."¹ Actually, in Thai the name is pronounced "Pharansi," but it refers to India's sacred Hindu city, Varanasi (Banaras). I claimed a seat and waited for the staff to locate the text in the back. Most Thai manuscripts produced before the twentieth century were folded horizontally in an accordion fashion. They were usually made from black paper and written with white chalk, but yellow ink on black paper or black ink on white paper were not uncommon. After ten minutes, a staff assistant gingerly placed "Varanasi Chronicle" on the table in front of me.

A Manuscript Is Not a Book

I peered down at "Varanasi Chronicle." It is not so hard to deal with a contemporary book. Usually, the title, the author, and the publication date are clear. Everything printed within the two covers is related, or at least pretends to be related, to the book's stated content. It is not likely that the author has simply recycled someone else's book, perhaps making only a few minor revisions.² It is rare to find any differences between two copies of the same book. Most books published in most languages now have ISBN numbers and entries in WorldCat. With enough information, they are not too difficult to track down. There are exceptions, of course, but the form and availability of contemporary books usually present few challenges for scholars nowadays.

This is not true for old handwritten manuscripts. Before I started my fieldwork, I had occasionally worked with manuscripts, but it was not until I began my work last year in the manuscripts room at Thailand's National Library that I found myself reading them every day. I quickly realized that nothing was as it seemed—a manuscript's title, the category into which it is placed, any dates or names of writers that might appear in its prologue, its narrative integrity, its fixity, its finishedness—nothing could be taken at face value, if it could be discerned at all. But this realization has taken a long time to sink in, and I still sometimes catch myself treating manuscripts like modern books.

I needed to become familiar with the "common sense" of early Thai manuscripts. In her book, *Along the Archival Grain*, Ann Stoler urges scholars to learn the features of the implicit "grain" in the wood of our research archives. If we can understand the underlying logics of the producers of our documents—their motivations, their assumptions, their purposes and cross-purposes—then we can better understand the social and political context from which each memo, letter, report, or book emerged, and thus have a better sense of its intended impact.³

Stoler's archives, however, were collections of colonial records. Collections of precolonial or premodern manuscripts seem, in comparison, incohesive and unruly. Sometimes a single manuscript furtively combines compositions from centuries apart. Many are the work of countless anonymous authors. Newer copies of older texts might have been faithfully copied, or edited for clarity, or even partially or completely rewritten. Monasteries, royal courts, individuals, national libraries, and research institutions have all used and stored manuscript texts differently, and their motivations for preserving or disposing of texts, for circulating them or denying access, have all changed dramatically—sometimes back and forth and back again—over the centuries. When I encounter a new text, then, I try to consider the histories of its plural archives, its plural common senses, and its plural logics. Certainty is elusive, but some patterns can be detected in the ways old Thai manuscripts have been copied, edited, preserved, shared, assessed, and referenced.

So, I tried to regard "Varanasi Chronicle" not in isolation, but as a member of a loosely-knit community of Thai-language texts.

Manuscripts Are So Entitled

Like most of the chronicle manuscripts at the National Library, the "Varanasi Chronicle" sported several titles. In fact, the very idea that a manuscript ought to have a specific, fixed title seems to be new. In the past, scribes and Buddhist monks sometimes compiled lists of manuscripts held, for example, in a Buddhist temple library or in the palace repository. Often, old manuscripts did not boast an obvious title on their covers or first pages, so the keepers of these texts derived "titles" from a manuscript's presumed genre, purpose, textual origins, language, or content.

The National Library of Thailand has not proceeded differently when it comes to assigning titles to manuscripts. Since the library's establishment in the early twentieth century, the library staff has assessed manuscript contents (sometimes incompletely) in order to position each manuscript in a category and award it one or more titles. These titles are then used by staff and scholars to refer to particular manuscripts. Some scholars, adding to the confusion, have found these library-bestowed titles unsatisfactory and have given their own names to documents. None of these titles, I keep reminding myself, is necessarily the "original" or "real" title, or even an accurate description of the manuscript's contents. I keep the title of my "Varanasi Chronicle" in quotation marks as a reminder of its contingency.

I first encountered the "Varanasi Chronicle" in the library's ledgers of chronicle manuscripts. It occupied numbers three through ten in the category, "Hindu Chronicles," meaning that the library holds eight documents with the name "Varanasi Chronicle." It is very possible that one scholar might refer to, say, the first "Varanasi Chronicle" text according to its category, as "Hindu Chronicle #3." Or, perhaps, another scholar might call it "Hindu Chronicle #53," referring to its

call number before the library renumbered its texts in the 1970s.

The manuscript in front of me displayed a library label that gave it two titles: one general, "Varanasi Chronicle," and one specific, "Testimony of the Brahmin Atjatanannam." Since the National Library was first established, the librarians have periodically stuck labels—often two or three—onto manuscript covers. My "Varanasi Chronicle" was comparatively naked: it wore only a single library label, although traces of older labels were still visible on the cover (see image on p. 11).

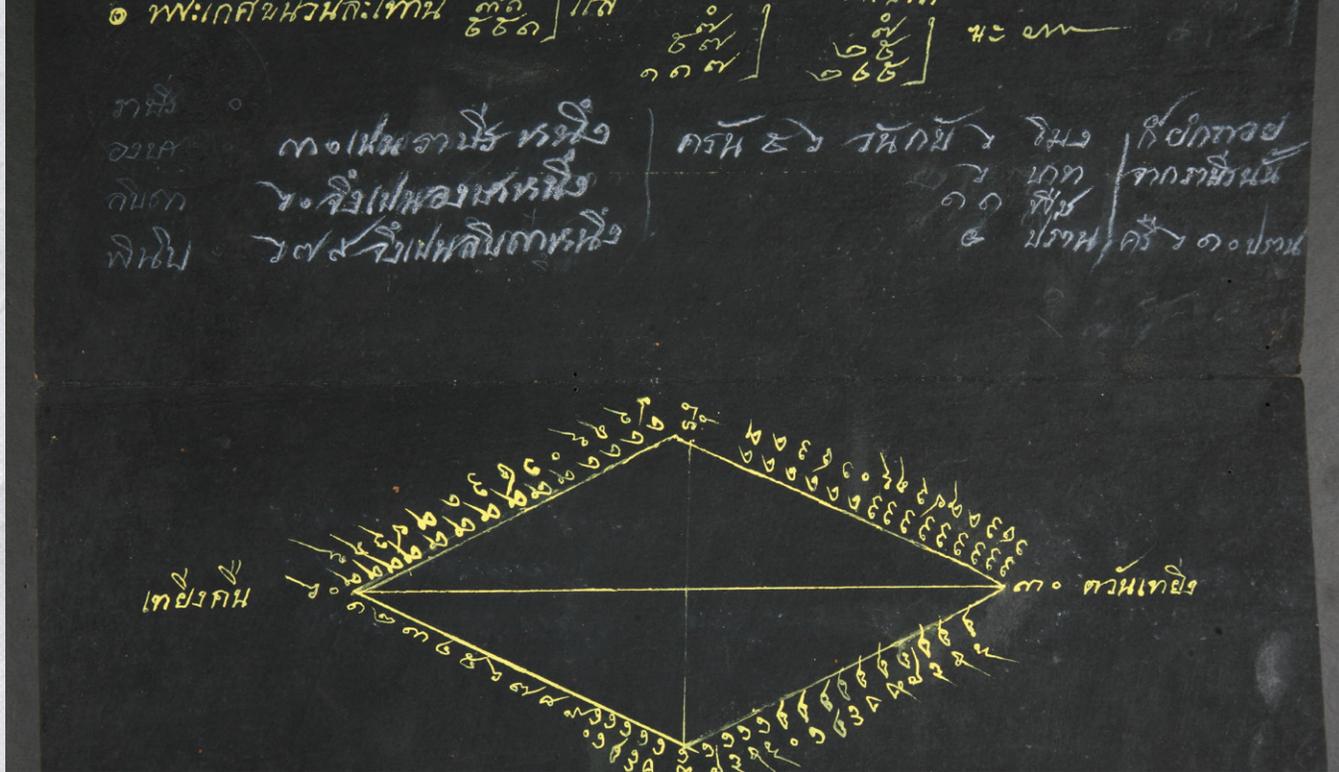
I unfolded the cover to reveal the first two pages. Here, there was no sign of the titles I'd encountered in the ledger or on the label. Instead, in the same handwriting as the rest of the text, I found another appellation embedded in the typical notation that indicated which side of the manuscript the reader was looking at: "Front. About Varanasi." It is tempting to treat this title as the "real" title of the text, but even this would be misleading. Before printing technologies became common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, narratives were preserved through periodic recopying. Copyists, trying to be helpful, often added colophons, comments, and clarifications. They might have also added titles. For this reason, manuscripts containing nearly identical narratives can have different titles.

The first several lines of the text confirmed that "Varanasi Chronicle" was no ordinary dynastic chronicle, as its library-designated category implies, but a testimony taken in 1830. A "testimony" is a particular genre of Thai administrative record-keeping. When the kingdom's officials discovered an individual with unusual knowledge about various matters—crimes, foreign lands, enemy movements, local practices, strange phenomena—his or her testimony was recorded (though not, unfortunately, word-for-word). The text in front of me featured the fascinating testimony of a Brahmin traveler who had just arrived in Siam by road via Tenasserim, then run by the British East India Company. The narrative began in a manner typical of the testimony format:

On Monday, the eleventh waning day of the tenth month, in the year 1192 of the lesser era, year of the tiger, second of the decade, Phra Amonmoli, Luang Nonthet, Cao Tha Phram, and Nai Hong sat together and questioned the Brahmin named Atjatanam, who gave the following testimony: I was born in Varanasi. My father's name was Yiarathamri....⁴

The Brahmin Atjatanam (or, in other copies of this narrative, Atjatanannam), described in detail the social order and ceremonial calendar of his city, Varanasi, and then summarized his overland journey through Arakan and Tenasserim to Siam. The narrative finishes with the statement: "The testimony ends here. The Brahmin from Varanasi gave this testimony, and then it was translated into Thai as above."

Although the librarians have categorized most testimonies as "administrative records," some of the longer ones that



A diagram from the astrological content at the end of the “Varanasi Chronicle,” dividing a day into units of time in order to facilitate horoscopic calculations. Midnight is at left and noon at right. Each quarter of the day is divided into fifteen numbered units. It appears that dawn is at top and dusk at bottom, meaning that the units count down from 60 to 1.

discuss the histories or characteristics of foreign lands, such as this one, have been placed among the “chronicles.” Decisions about categorization have a big impact on scholarship. Because the library’s manuscript collections are vast, and the lists of titles have not been digitized, many scholars limit themselves to investigating a single category of documents. An American colleague of mine, for example, was only able to spend a couple months at the manuscript room. As a result, he had to limit himself to viewing only the administrative records.

That day, I was excited to meet another fellow-researcher in the manuscript room who was combing through the category of administrative records in search of testimonies. When I found that the “Varanasi Chronicle” was actually a detailed testimony, even though it had been placed in the chronicle category, I thought he would be eager to hear about it. He was interested, but felt constrained by advice given by one of his professors to examine only the testimonies among the administrative records. The professor might have had practical considerations in mind—my colleague’s research would certainly have taken longer if he had expanded his body of sources—but this was another example of a way in which the modern library’s somewhat arbitrary efforts at categorization are still shaping historical research.

Many “traditional” works of Thai literature and history were first printed a century ago or more. Scholars often only rely on these and subsequent printed versions, which contain numerous errors and spelling “corrections,” and fail to note differences between different manuscript copies. Although the contingency of a manuscript’s title (or titles) is sometimes evident on the manuscripts themselves, it is effaced when an historical text is printed. Though most scholars know this,

they rarely point it out in their scholarship. The processes of printing texts and then engaging in scholarly discussions of them has only led to the further entrenchment of contingent titles and genre categorizations.

Descendants, Twins, and Orphans

Truth be told, when I asked to see “Varanasi Chronicle” that morning, I had the sneaking suspicion that it was related to another text I’d seen before. Back in Ithaca, I’d run across a tiny little book in Kroch Library. It was the transcription of a testimony manuscript from the library of a provincial teachers’ college in Thailand. Its title will sound familiar by now: “The Testimony of the Brahmin Ajuttanannam.”

So, in all, I was lucky to have access to nine copies of the narrative—the eight manuscripts in the National Library and the print version of a ninth. I kept asking myself: what are the relationships between the different copies? Are the manuscripts “twins”—in other words, almost identical? Is one the “descendant” of another—an edited or retold version of another (lost or extant) manuscript? There are many other possible relationships that I have encountered in other manuscripts—we could call them long-lost relatives, amputees, Frankensteins—but the text of the nine different copies of my “Varanasi Chronicle” testimony itself were almost identical.

There were, however, some interesting distinctions. Two copies, for example, add a sad epilogue about the unfortunate Brahmin: “On the night that the Brahmin gave his testimony up to this point, he came down with a violent fever and died.” Another copy includes an additional short postscript, after the epilogue, stating the context in which it was copied:

On Tuesday, the twelfth waxing day of the fourth month, in the year 1211 of the lesser era, year of the cock, first of the decade, Luang Thep Phakdi, the agent of the palace in Phatthalung, presented this Brahmin's testimony to the governor of Phatthalung, who ordered the scribe Yaem to copy it and check it for accuracy. The copying and checking was completed by Wednesday, the fourteenth waxing day of the fourth month, in the year of the cock, first of the decade.

The Brahmin's testimony was evidently valued. Few of the testimonies in the National Library survive in more than one or two manuscripts, but the Brahmin's appears in nine. However, up until the middle of the nineteenth century, the royal court still carefully guarded most administrative records, law texts, and testimonies. They were considered to contain valuable information that should not be widely shared. That so many copies of the "Varanasi Chronicle" remain, and that at least one was copied in a distant provincial town (and another one, the print version, was also found outside Bangkok), suggests that the testimony contained information that was of wide interest and not politically sensitive.

When I reached the end of the "Varanasi Chronicle" copy that I was reading that day, I found an "orphan" narrative tagging along. After a scribe or monk completed the painstaking process of copying or composing a manuscript, there was often a lot of extra space left over on the manuscript paper. At the end of one text on society and religion, for example, I found the scrawled writing of a child. Content such as this can be called an "orphan," as it is dissociated from texts of a similar category and in some cases mentioned neither in the library ledger entry nor on the library labels. In the case of the child's musings, they certainly would not have been preserved at all had they not been attached to a more formal narrative text.

The orphan at the end of the "Varanasi Chronicle" consisted of pages and pages of astrological charts, including a simple diagram depicting the time divisions in a day (see image on p. 14). Since astrology was often considered Brahmin knowledge, a nineteenth century scribe might have found it fitting to combine in a single manuscript some astrological charts and the testimony of a Brahmin. However, because this astrological content only appears on one of the eight manuscripts in the National Library and the handwriting and ink differed from that of the testimony recorded in the first part of the manuscript, I concluded that this astrological data had not been produced or carried by the Brahmin Atjutanannam himself, but had been added later to the end of one of the testimony copies.

What to Make of a Manuscript?

Unlike at archival institutions in the United States, in Thailand there are no silent tensions between archives' staff and patrons at the four o'clock closing time. The staff does not pressure users to leave promptly, nor do users take advantage of this leniency by attempting to remain beyond their welcome.⁵ At just before four, I returned "Varanasi Chronicle" to the front desk along with a duplication request, and I informed the staff I was finished with the manuscript and would look at the next item on my list on the following day.

In some ways, actually, the Varanasi Chronicle was a relatively straightforward manuscript to decode. Other manuscript narratives present additional challenges, such as dating (various versions or portions of) the text and assessing the impact of editing, not to mention the challenge of making out the sometimes messy, sometimes faded handwriting. Eventually, I learned that deciphering challenging cases of obscure handwriting is the highlight of the day for the manuscript room staff.

Heading home, as I sat looking out the window of bus 99, I thought about all the mysteries I'd encountered and considered—and not totally resolved—that day. What titles had been applied to my text, and why? What title would be most appropriate for me to use in the future, both to accurately refer to the manuscript's contents and to make it easy for a future researcher to find? Why had so many copies of the Brahmin's account been created? How had the text been categorized, by who, and why? Why was the "Varanasi Chronicle" recorded as a testimony in the 1830s, combined with "Brahmin knowledge" later in the century, and then categorized as a chronicle in the early twentieth?

Manuscripts offer ambiguous clues about their creation, modification, dissemination, and consumption over time. Though it can be frustrating, this ambiguity is also, in some ways, fruitful. Manuscripts encourage the researcher to consider the malleability of knowledge. Many twists and turns connected that sick Brahmin, sitting on his deathbed, to the crown functionary who reorganized the old man's testimony to conform to the administrative genre, to the scribe who saw a similar kind of knowledge in the astrological charts and the holy man's account, to the early librarians who preferred to categorize the description of Varanasi as a "chronicle" rather than as an "administrative record," and finally to the young graduate student sitting on the bus wrestling with what he thinks he knows, and what he knows he doesn't. The historian's work of interpreting "primary sources" can be like peeling away the layers of an onion and then realizing, once you're done, that those layers are just as meaningful as the core.⁶

ENDNOTES

- 1 "พงศาวดารเมืองพวาณลสิ (คำให้การของพราหมณ์อั้งจตะนันนา)" [Varanasi Chronicle (Testimony of the Brahmin Atjutanannam)]. National Library of Thailand, Manuscripts Section. Hindu Chronicle #3 [previously numbered 53].
- 2 As I write, however, I am in Cambodia. I'm finding it rather common for authors here to recycle or photocopy content from other books and republish it as their own.
- 3 Ann Laura Stoler (2009). *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- 4 September 11, 1830. The redundancy in the information given for the year helped scribes and monks, and helps modern historians too, fix copy errors in dates.
- 5 I worked on the staff of a handful of special collections institutions in the United States for several years, so I am familiar with this phenomenon!
- 6 I would like to thank Tamara Loos and Chairat Polmuk for their valuable comments and suggestions.

Toward a Natural History of Vietnamese



Stanley J. O'Connor
professor emeritus of art history
and Asian studies



INTRODUCTION *by Pamela N. Corey:*

Over the last two decades significant research on Vietnamese ceramics has been conducted and published, attesting to the vitality of Vietnamese ceramics as objects of aesthetic appreciation in addition to their important role in historical material culture and trade relations in Asia. In dialogue with recent developments in scholarship on Vietnamese art, culture, and history, a one-day international symposium organized by Pamela N. Corey and Ellen Avril was held at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art on April 10, 2015. The symposium, which gathered together established and emerging scholars, curators, and specialists to present critical insights and new research, centered on two exceptional groups of ceramics: the Menke collection, currently on long-term loan at the museum; and the Johnson Museum's own growing permanent collection of Vietnamese ceramics.

The presenters and their topics were:

- **Nam Kim** (Asst. Prof. of Anthropology, UW Madison): "Protohistoric Crossroads: Cỗ Loa, State Formation, and Early Vietnam"
- **Béatrice Wisniewski** (École Pratique des Hautes Études): "Vietnam, the Beginnings of the Glazed Ceramic Tradition"
- **Eric Zetterquist** (Zetterquist Galleries, NY): "Lý and Trần Dynasty White and Brown-and-White Wares: A Visual Declaration of Independence"
- **Louise Cort** (Curator for Ceramics, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC): "Pots in High Places: Ceramics in the Zomian Economy"
- **John Guy** (Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY): "Following the Rising Dragon: Production, Models and Markets in Medieval Vietnamese Ceramic Production"
- **Kaja McGowan** (Assoc. Prof. of the History of Art, Cornell University): "Vietnamese Ceramics from Vân Đồn to Trowulan: Chasing Clouds in a Majapahit Sky"

The presenters and audience received a rare opportunity to hear closing remarks from both Professor Keith Taylor and Professor Emeritus Stanley J. O'Connor, the foremost and preeminent scholars in their respective fields of Vietnamese history and Southeast Asian art history. The closing remarks by Professor O'Connor are featured in this issue, with a broader audience in mind, to situate the symposium's topics and discussions within the rich artistic, cultural, and historical context of Southeast Asian ceramics.

Ceramics



“ This symposium is an occasion to celebrate the Menke collection. Vietnamese ceramics have only recently begun to attract international attention, and it is a measure of John Menke’s originality that he was collecting early in a field so little explored.

Aside from the abundant trade wares of the 15th and 16th centuries, the earlier wares of the 10th to 14th centuries and before (that had not been exported) were an open secret, if they were known about at all. These early ceramics are represented in the Menke collection, and the Johnson Museum is an important destination for studying them.

Perhaps I may be permitted to draw on my own experience to give some sense of how halting, confusing, and rather accidental our acquaintance with Southeast Asian wares actually is. In 1958, I was walking down Orchard Road in Singapore—then still occupied by an arcade of Chinese shop houses—when I began to see ceramics offered for sale as antiques. I had no idea what they were and neither did my friends who were US diplomats stationed there.

Later, in 1963, I learned that these curious objects were flooding the market as the result of illegal grave robbing in the Philippines and Indonesia. They were the residue of the great web of Asian sea-borne trade, in which Southeast Asia, with its extraordinary

length of coastline and strategic position at the hinge between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans, played a vital role. The ceramic debris of this traffic can be seen everywhere on the ground after a heavy rain. The broken pieces are virtually immortal. Together, with the better-known Chinese wares, they became a handy way of telling time in a region where, because of the heat and humidity, historical documents are scarce.

As I was following the trail of ancient settlements down the isthmian tract of the Malay Peninsula as a graduate student, I slowly began to learn this ladder of ceramics. At that time there was very little to read; no university in America had yet appointed a specialist in Southeast Asian art and, I should add, the Johnson Museum had not yet been built.

The beginning of systematic order in the study of Southeast Asian ceramics as a field dates from 1973 when Roxanna Brown, from National University of Singapore, wrote her master’s thesis. It was published in 1977 as *The Ceramics of South-East Asia: Their Dating and Identification*.¹ Her thesis supervisor was William Willetts, a gifted, unusual, and mercurial figure whose energy and vision made Singapore a very early center of study and collection. Certainly, this enthusiasm was not confined to scholars. Indeed, it was the dealers, the workers in the oil

fields, and the tukangs or traders that came to Singapore with wicker baskets full of Southeast Asian ceramics from Eastern Indonesia and from the nearby Riau Islands who slowly helped fuel interest.

A geologist and mining executive, Dean Frasché, curated the first major exhibition of Southeast Asia Ceramics at the Asia Society Galleries in New York. The catalogue was published as a book in 1976. Ruth Sharp, the wife of the founder of Cornell’s Southeast Asia Program, Lauriston Sharp, was a lender to the exhibition. She also visited all the known kilns in Northern Thailand and carefully catalogued a collection of sherds, which is a study resource for Cornell students and is now housed in the Johnson Museum.

Paradoxically, as we see today, it is the museum, which is foremost a perceptual facility for looking at things close-up shorn of their enframing contexts, that is sponsoring a symposium to draw us out of the white cube and into field exploration and discovery much as it was practiced by the great naturalists of the 18th and 19th centuries. Today, we have retraced muddy tracks along rivers leading into the mountain interiors, explored ships that came to grief in the relatively shallow waters off the coast of Vietnam, and examined ancient kilns generating the atmosphere in which recalcitrant and diverse physical materials coalesce into



a cultural form, as Beatrice Wisniewski has shown us.

At Co Loa we have witnessed the patient cutting down through cinder, ash, and sand by Professor Kim, to reveal the dust-glazed emptiness of a great settlement—its signature artifact, an enormous bronze drum. The drum was filled with the remains of another drum and several hundred bronze tools, weapons, and plough-shares. While this could indicate a collection of valuable scrap metal waiting to be reworked, I would suggest that it might also be a deposition, returning wealth and energy to the earth. Whatever the case, one can say without exaggeration that this drum form, with its cosmological decoration, was replicated over most of Southeast Asia in late pre-history. People living in the most diverse environments were caught up in a web of crossed vision, looking long ago at these drums. This suggests that the sense of a shared world was emerging in Southeast Asia long before Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms appeared.

As a focus for this symposium, the organizers, Ellen Avril and Pamela Corey, asked participants to identify

the “enduring questions in this field of study.” Those questions seem to me to be existential, centered on our complex entanglement with the lives of things. There is scarcely an aspect of Vietnamese history that is not somehow caught up in reciprocal interaction with these ceramics. They are mirrors in which the past appears. Certainly, they are at the center of those questions of cultural appropriation that we are familiar with today in the nexus of the global and the local, questions that are also at the center of the intercultural relations charted in this symposium.

It would seem unlikely, for example, that any potter living in the Red River Valley during late prehistory ever thought about making a high-fired, glazed ceramic. The technological skill was already there as exemplified by the control of fire, the clay molds and mineral alloys necessary to make Dong Son bronze drums. But spurred by the demands of Han Chinese administrators for ceramics to be deposited in brick tombs, they rose to the challenge. And, as Eric Zetterquist has so convincingly demonstrated, by the Ly and Tran dynasties, Vietnamese ceramics exhibit

a reinterpretation of Chinese wares, reimagining them into something distinctly Vietnamese with their robust shapes and cream glaze showing under a haze of crackled ice.

Once again, the question of cultural appropriation is at the heart of the papers by Kaja McGowan and Louise Cort; both chart the passage of ceramics as a commodity into another domain of being. The thousands of trade wares found in the holds of sunken ships, as John Guy has shown us at Hoi An, leave little doubt that they were produced on an industrial scale. But in transit the wares went through a sea change on their way to Java where they take on both new uses and new meanings. Similarly, Louise Cort shows us that in the high mountain range of Vietnam, or by extension the forested uplands of Borneo, cultural connotations are unlikely to mirror those found in large scale settlements supported by extensive rice fields.

For people whose categories of thought are based on a universe alive with occult energies and an elaborate system of correspondences between selves and the circumjacent environ-



ment, ceramics haunt the imagination in quite unexpected ways. They attend most of the salient occasions of life: feasting, death, head-hunting, making and drinking rice beer. They may speak, move about, metamorphose, marry, or suffer affronts to modesty if not offered suitable clothing. Obviously, criteria of connoisseurship and criticism take on a whole new framework.

We have been studying ceramics as an organism in its environment, very much keeping alive the great tradition of natural history, which is challenged today in the university by the shift to the laboratory study of microbiology, chemical ecology, and genetics. We have charted patterns of production, exchange, aesthetic values, and varied practices of use. All this commerce with the lives of things is most succinctly and vividly said by the poet Wallace Stevens who placed a jar on a hill:

“The wilderness rose up to it
And sprawled around, no longer wild

• • •

It took dominion everywhere.”²



ABOUT THE CERAMICS

Page 16: Vietnam, Trần Dynasty, *Ewer with lotus leaf lid*, 13th or 14th century, Glazed stoneware, Asian private collection, formerly the Menke collection

Page 17: *Massive Polychrome Charger with Bird Amongst Clouds* (Photo credit: Dirk Bakker for the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University), 15th or 16th century, Stoneware with underglaze blue and overglaze enamels, George and Mary Rockwell Fund

Page 18: Vietnam, Giao Chi period, Thanh Hoa province, *Model of a granary*, 1st–3rd century Earthenware, Asian private collection, formerly the Menke collection

Above left: Vietnam, Lê dynasty, *Plate with design of islands in the sea*, 15th or 16th century; Stoneware with underglaze blue, Asian private collection, formerly the Menke collection

Above middle: Vietnam, *Dong Son culture Tripod vessel with handle and incised designs*, 5th–3rd century BC, Earthenware with red pigment, Asian private collection, formerly the Menke collection

Above right: Vietnam, Lý dynasty, *Ewer with parrot handle*, 11th–13th century, Glazed stoneware, Asian private collection, formerly the Menke collection

ENDNOTES

- 1 Roxanna M. Brown (1977). *The Ceramics of South-East Asia: Their Dating and Identification*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- 2 Wallace Stevens (1923). Anecdote of the Jar. In *Harmonium*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.



Historical Consulting on the Set of Broadway's *The King and I*



Tamara Loos
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A group of sleepy students tumbled out of bed early one Saturday morning in April 2015 to board a bus with me from Ithaca to New York City's renowned Lincoln Center Theatre. There, thanks to funding from SEAP and the history department's Polenberg fund, we attended a matinee performance of the famous Rogers and Hammerstein musical, *The King and I*. Afterwards, the accomplished associate director, Tyne Rafaeli, brought us backstage to see the production up close and to have a conversation with director Bart Sher, who was genuinely interested in hearing our reactions.

Late in 2014, Sher and Rafaeli had contacted me to discuss the historical context in Siam during the 1860s, when Anna Leonowens taught in the royal palace. In January 2015, I walked down Amsterdam Avenue in near-zero temperatures to meet with the vibrant cast and crew of *The King and I*. For an exhilarating three hours, I spoke with them about the colonial stakes involved for Siam, the life and personality of King Mongkut, and the political significance of

women in the Inner Palace. Their eager questions ranged broadly from bodily comportment to Thai language phrases to the details of personal hygiene. High energy abounded, and it was a rare treat to be with a community that wanted to know every detail about nineteenth century Bangkok down to plumbing in the Grand Palace. They also taught me a few things. Most importantly, I learned that the musical held a different value and meaning for them as actors, choreographers, set designers, and producers than it did for me as a historian of Thailand.

For academics, it might seem oxymoronic to be a historical consultant for a musical that is more fantasy than fact. The 2015 revival of *The King and I* has a labyrinthine genealogy: it is based on Rogers and Hammerstein's 1951 musical, which drew on a 1944 novel by Margaret Landon, which in turn used Anna Leonowens' 1870 memoir, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court*, as its main source of inspiration. Moreover, the original source, by which I mean Anna Leonowens and her books, have been the

subject of some of the most unforgiving criticism, not so much by Thai academics, who (unlike some members of their government and media censor boards) recognize the play as fiction, but by foreign academics who have stridently taken up the shield to defend Thailand's royal reputation.

Suffice it to say, there is little historical truth to the narrative of *The King and I*. However, Anna Leonowens and King Mongkut were real people: the king employed Anna for about five years between 1862 and 1867 to teach the women and children who inhabited the Royal Palace. When I ventured to talk to the producer about certain historical inaccuracies in the musical—say, the fact that Anna and the king were not romantically engaged, that King Mongkut would not likely have thrown temper tantrums replete with wild gesticulations, or that Anna was a child of mixed race ancestry—I was quickly but gently reminded that theatre and history are, in this case, two very different creatures. Even the photographs of the real King Mongkut and *Jao Phraya Si Suriyawong* (“the Kralahom”), which I had included in an article published in the *Lincoln Center Theatre Review* for distribution at the performances, were discarded in favor of other photographs of consorts from the reign of Mongkut's son, King Chulalongkorn (LCTR 65, Spring 2015). <http://issuu.com/lctheater/docs/tki-forissuu/1?e=3822525/11631234>

These images of the historical individuals were irrelevant. The musical is not about Thailand. Instead, it offers a fable that projects an ideal American identity—one that appealed to postwar audiences in the 1950s when it dominated Broadway, and one that is enthralling viewers again today. Sher's revival was nominated for nine Tony Awards for a musical and netted four of them for Best Revival of a Musical, Best Leading Actress, Best Featured Actress, and Best Costume Design. The astoundingly talented cast, which is nearly completely Asian or Asian-American, includes the first Asian actor (Ken Watanabe, who made his Broadway debut) in the role of King Mongkut.

The quality of their performances, the choreography, and the set design no doubt account for some of the musical's appeal, but not for all of it. The musical's narrative speaks to audiences today for other reasons having, I suspect, more to do with how many would prefer to see their role as Americans in the world today. *The King and I* offers a salve to those Americans who might feel ambivalent about US military intervention in majority Muslim regions by giving them resolution in the form of an innocent, plucky, well-intended teacher, Anna, who intervenes on behalf of foreign, oppressed women. Sher, who received a Tony in 2008 for his revival of another Rogers & Hammerstein favorite, *South Pacific*, seeks

to play up a resonance he sees between the context of the US in the early 1950s and the world today. Pouring over the original versions of the musical, including the pieces that never made it into the final version, Sher understands *The King and I* to be about the transition from tradition to modernity, an oft-critiqued binary that nonetheless still has ideological power outside academia. For the director, the developing world today encompasses areas, particularly in Muslim countries, that deny women an education. The import of the musical for today's audiences, in his view, lies in its link between freedom and women's education, captured in the moment when Anna gives Tuptim, one of King Mongkut's newest consorts, a copy of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. To cement the link, the *Lincoln Center Theatre Review* magazine reprinted a copy of Noble Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai's 2014 speech about education and women in Islamic cultures.

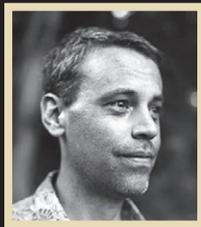
Sometimes the simplicity of an idea—in this case, the idea that the United States is a positive force in the world—regardless of its problematic logic, gives it its legs. Or perhaps it is the impeccable acting and singing and flawless sets. In any case, *The King and I* has sold out, the Lincoln Center Theatre has extended its run indefinitely, and a national tour will launch in late 2016. ☹

Tamara Loos with the cast and crew of *The King and I*. Ken Watanabe, seated second person in from the left, played King Mongkut. To the right of Ken is the director Bart Sher, then Tamara, then Kelli O'Hara, who played Anna.





Graffiti art, Yogya 2013



Brian Arnold
SEAP visiting fellow

For nearly ^{twenty} years I

have pursued two parallel, yet distinct studies in the arts. Born and raised in Colorado, I am a photographer and artist of my own American culture, and I perform and study classical music and art from Bali and Java. It has only been in the last four to five years that I have begun to bring these pursuits together.

When I first started photographing in Indonesia, I was deeply disappointed in the pictures I made. These first photographs lacked any kind of insight or cultural sensitivity and, instead, focused on superficial appearances. I had this idea that perhaps my photographs would gain more depth if learned about the history of photography in Indonesia.

I hoped such study would help me gain a more thorough photographic understanding of the archipelago before trying to make my own pictures. With these intentions, I began my first serious study of photography in Indonesia.

Initially, I pursued my study from two perspectives. I read everything I could find on the history of photography on the islands, though that was mostly limited to work from the colonial era. I also used the resources available to me as an arts educator to connect with and engage some of the different art academies in Central and Western Java. At the time, I was teaching photography and video at the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University, a well-known art academy in Western New York.



Left: *Untitled, Sanur 2011*
Right: *Untitled, Yogya 2011*



Hate Love

Photographs from Java

Initially, I contacted the Institut Seni Indonesia in Yogyakarta (ISI, Indonesian Institute of Art) and the Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) hoping to see how or if photography worked as part of the curriculum in their programs. After reaching out to both institutions, they invited me to visit and meet with their students and faculty.

Word spread quickly of my interests, and I found myself connecting with other schools, including the University of Indonesia, Pasundan University, Padjadjaran University, and the University Islam Indonesia. In each of these academies, I worked with students and faculty interested in photography. Additionally, I found ways to connect with the greater arts cultures in some of

these cities, specifically in Yogyakarta, Bandung, and Jakarta. In such a way, I was able to meet different curators, photographers, educators, and editors all interested in exploring the possibilities of photography and how it could become a greater part of the creative and intellectual culture of the islands.

Now, after several years of pursuing this research, I am in a new position with my work in Indonesia, one that I find remarkably rewarding as both an artist and a student of Indonesian culture. I feel that my initial goal of finding my own photographic voice in Indonesia by engaging the photographic traditions and histories from the region was a great success. I have a clearer sense of purpose and understanding of

the landscapes around the islands, and, as a result, my photographs embody a greater feeling for the place. Before studying this history, I wandered around the islands trying to find a way to think with my camera. Now my photographs are an extension of a more deliberate way of thinking visually about Indonesia. Through my research and travels, I found a new community of friends and colleagues in Java—a group of artists, educators, and curators interested in talking about the role of photography in their lives.

All of the photographs in this issue were made in Yogyakarta and Bandung in 2014, while I was working as a Fellow with the American Institute for Indonesian Studies (AIFIS). Both of these



Top: Volcanic Ash, Yogya 2013; Bottom: Islamic Graffiti, Yogya 2013; Right: Flying Kites, Yogya 2013; Inset: Broken Guitar, Bandung 2013





cities represent so much of what I love about Java—both are cities with vibrant, contemporary art scenes and great academic and cultural resources set against the backdrop of lush landscapes. These photographs were produced using traditional, silver-based photographic processes. The color of the prints comes after developing them and is created

using different baths of gold, selenium, and Lipton tea.

I consider my photographic project in Java a work-in-progress, but I have taken to calling this portfolio *Love Hate Love*, a title derived from the tag of one of Yogyakarta's most prolific graffiti artists. Yogyakarta is peppered with different paintings of disheveled and worried

faces each tagged with the words love hate love. The paintings are striking, but it's really the tagline that caught my attention. The phrase represents so much of what I love about Yogya, Bandung, and even Java as a whole; these are places full of incredible complexity and surprising contradictions. ☺



The general unfamiliarity with highland peoples in mainstream modern Thai society is very apparent in this 1962 illustration.

Thai Fiction and the Anthropologist



Stefan Erlingsson

Hjorleifur Jonsson
 associate professor of
 anthropology, Arizona State
 University

As an anthropologist studying contemporary ethnic minority issues and history in the north of Thailand on and off since 1992, I am used to Bangkok's prejudice against the countryside and the hill tribes. Signs of it are everywhere in the city as well as in anthropological research. My disciplinary orientation may have blinded me to the possibility that highland and lowland peoples—minorities and the majority—are contrived distinctions that offer academic and political benefit to various players while society suffers the consequences. As a SEAP visiting fellow, I had the chance to explore some of the Thai-language holdings in the Cornell Library. Immersing myself in the novels of Malai Chuphinit, particularly his *Long Phrai (Jungle Trails)* novels from the mid-1950s, helped me gain a new perspective. Only by getting lost in fiction could I know a different Thailand, one that sits somewhere below the radar of academic convictions and political rhetoric.

Anthropological research on the tribal zone, largely coming out of Bangkok, has traditionally rested on the conviction that there was a fundamental ethnic divide between highland and lowland peoples. Only by abandoning this supposed truth and researching with fresh eyes can anthropologists see the Thai and their various ethnic others as entangled with one another, made *better* instead of *worse* for this

mixture and blurring of certain boundaries. Thai historian, Thongchai Winichakul, has suggested that the Siamese elite justified their power in society by defining ethnic minority cultures and ways of living as the opposite of their own normalcy. Central to the characterization of the ethnic other, such as the non-Thai who lived far from civilization, was their strangeness: they were *plaek*, *pralat*, or *plaek-pralat* (all three are variations on “strange”).¹

In 1950 Bunchuai Srisawat, a Member of Parliament from Chiangrai Province, wrote an ethnography to introduce the peoples of his province to a Bangkok audience and, perhaps, to bring some tourism up north, as he also gave advice on travel and lodging. This ethnography, titled *Thirty Peoples of Chiangrai*, became popular and was reissued several times. Not long ago the book made it on a list of one hundred books that all Thai should read. *Thirty Peoples* is interesting but rather disagreeable to those of us who work in the highlands, particularly because of its fabricated notion of sexual freedom among the Akha. This notion is conveyed as fact not only through the use of Akha-language terms (that are actually disputed by some Akha activists and scholars), but also through drawings that supposedly describe the exciting things that take place in the villages at night.² The author’s aim was to “prove” that the lowland peoples were as “Thai” as those in Bangkok, thus he had to make the highland people seem strange in convincing ways. This is what I call the realist conspiracy—an idea that *makes* the Thai people uniform through an imaginary contrast.³

I have left my research in the field and, instead, have fallen in with fictional characters. I am particularly enamored with the fiction of Malai Chuphinit (under the pen-name of Noi Inthanon), particularly his *Long Phrai (Jungle Trails)* novels from the mid-1950s.⁴ The stories convey a world where Thai and highland people are fellow-travelers and potential equals. The books appear to have been considerably popular, but at the same time there has been no engagement or interest by the scholars of Thai literature. This is, from a certain

Bangkok perspective, low-brow stuff.

Malai Chuphinit (1906-1963) grew up in Kamphaengphet Province where perspectives on ethnic and other forms of diversity were more inclusive than attitudes in Bangkok. The fiction does not assume any clear divides regarding Thai peoples and others. None of the stories offer any reassurance about the superiority of city life over life in rural areas. In the stories, having education or social status does not offer any particular advantage to people. These themes may help explain the popular appeal of the stories as well as the lack of academic attention to them. Statements on the identities and relationships of fictional characters do not carry the same weight as official pronouncements about national identity or academic descriptions of ethnically distinct groups.

Writers of Thai history often give the impression of the Thai as mono-ethnic and homogenous despite the cultural and ethnic variation that more nuanced and interdisciplinary research has suggested, such as that of historian Ronald D. Renard.⁵ Ethnic mixing and cultural flows apparent in fictional stories are rarely taken seriously even though plentiful evidence suggests that Thai and Karen peoples have a long history of interaction through activities such as tribute, religion, and social connections, especially along the Thai-Burma border. The ordinariness of Thai involvement with Lawa and Karen forest peoples is certainly evident in popular-culture materials, especially the fiction of Malai Chuphinit.

Long Phrai (Jungle Trails) centers on three characters: Mr. Sak Suriyan, his Karen mate Ta-Koen (or Old Koen), and Captain (*roi aek*) Reuang Yutthana, a former soldier or ranger. They sometimes go to the forest for no other reason than to leave Thai society behind, though Koen tends not to understand this and prefers the comfort of his wife at home. Koen is not in a permanent relationship it seems, and sometimes he has a new wife or more than one. Language makes his arrangement further ambiguous in that he uses the term *yai*, which covers a whole range of meaning from grandmother to ‘my old girl’ to

girlfriend. Koen speaks both Thai and Karen, and he has a good sense of the forest and its creatures. As a tracker Koen has no equal, but this comes up so seldom that it does not settle into a stereotype, such as that of forest peoples as “natural hunters.”

By the time the first story opens in *Long Phrai*, Sak and Koen already know each other while Reuang is searching for them. Reuang’s mate, another soldier, was killed by a huge gaur, and the Karen villagers he met with suggested that only Sak might destroy the animal. It turns out that the Karen villagers near the forest all know of the animal; it is a monster gaur (*krathing-yak*) that is ancient and sometimes becomes two animals—no one can bring it down. On their sojourns in the forest they learn some things about the animal, and they encounter a Karen woman spirit, Myawaddi, who tells them to let off the chase. Sak takes offense at this suggestion and asks Koen to convey a message to her in the Karen language: “Tell her that this is Thai territory and that it does not matter if she is a tree spirit or a divinity or something else, she has no right to come and tell me that I cannot traverse where I wish.”⁶ There is certain hilarity to this diplomatic disagreement across the spiritual frontier, and *Long Phrai* never offers any clear and singular political (or other) stance on the world.

To many Thai peoples this world of spirits, were-animals, and ghosts is a matter of practical knowledge and experience, and they don’t find it strange or questionable. But many Bangkokians who view themselves as educated and modern see it as somewhere between nonsense and superstition. However, this attitude may be changing. For example, contemporary Thai filmmaker, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, singles out the influence of Malai Chuphinit’s *Long Phrai* novels for his own recent work. Still, many Bangkokians find the work of Weerasethakul “surreal” and “very abstract,” suggesting that the films were likely made for western audiences. It is interesting to note that ordinary Thai people in provincial towns find these movies quite relatable and fun to watch.⁷

The *Long Phrai* novels engage with national prejudice in various subtle ways. The main characters use the term for “strange” on a number of occasions, but never in reference to any humans (Thai, Karen, Lawa, or other). “Strange” has been excluded from Thai society and is situated instead in the realm of monster-gaurs, snow-white elephants, ape-men, tigers, nymphs, etc. The sub-

and loses his cool, ultimately causing a fire that destroys some forest and fields around the village. An official from the Forestry Department is in the area and asks him to be careful. The upset young man calls out to him: “the forest is yours [the State’s] not ours, why should we care?” The official refuses this and says: “everyone is owner of this forest; not just the logging company; not just me

As every Thai scholar knows, in Thailand there is so much political heartbreak. The recklessness of the Thai military against their own people on the streets of Bangkok in 1976 and 1992, and against Thai-Malay Muslims in the south since 2004 (with no end in sight), makes me wish that Sak, Koen, and Reuang had been in charge. Perhaps I am the only one to take seriously this tale of fantasy about armed men who never lose their curiosity or their cool. But, I do so because the books spell out, through strange adventures, how Thailand can be a safe and pleasant place full of everyday surprises. I will give one old example from a Buddhist ritual as depicted in a classic tale of a love triangle that may go back to the sixteenth century. One of the main characters is being ordained as a Buddhist novice, and the poet describes some action on the sidelines:

“Monks from the nearby [temple] of Cockfight Hill sat chanting prayers until dusk. When they sprinkled water, young men jostled the young Lawa women who pinched them back and there was a lot of noisy pushing and grappling.”¹⁰

To arrive at this kind of serious fun, there has to have been a firm sense of equivalence, trust, interchangeable identities, and mutual interest between the Thai and the Lawa, to the point that you could not necessarily tell them apart. To me, this “fictional” Thailand sets an interesting standard for examining and writing about the “real” thing. ☺



The National Museum in Kamphaeng Phet, unlike elsewhere in Thailand, plays up ethnic diversity as an everyday and important matter.

text of these books implies an insistence on the absolute equivalence of Karen, Thai, and any other member of human society in Thailand.

Most Thai writing assumes fundamental inequality between Thai and Karen or other forest peoples, but *Long Phrai* is a genuine exception to this trend. For example, in one of the stories, Ta-Koen is going to compete with a much younger Karen man for the affection of a Karen headman’s daughter. Though he likes the idea of the challenge, events don’t unfold as he intended. The younger man gets drunk

whose job is here; the forest belongs to us all, no matter if we are Thai or Karen; we are owners of this forest and owners of this land.”⁸ A few pages later the Karen headman, who was in despair over losing this means of livelihood, says to Sak that he is never going to forget this statement: “the Forestry official understands that the forest belongs to us all, and that Thailand belongs to us all.”⁹ This describes a Thailand that, to me, is just right—one that suggests how much of our scholarship was shaped (inadvertently, I presume) by separatist expectations.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Thongchai Winichakul (2000) *The Others Within: Travel and Ethno-Spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects, 1885-1910*. In *Civility and Savagery: Social Identity in Thai States*. Andrew Turton, ed., 38-62. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon.
- 2 Bunchuai Srisawat (1950) *Sansip Chat Nai Chiangrai*, ๓๐ ชาติในเชียงใหม่. Bangkok: Odeon, 379-91.
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- 4 The material in *Long Phrai* was initially a radio play and was published as books in 1955 (later also a television drama). The whole collection was published on three occasions as five volumes (1955, 1968, 1971), but by 1981 Malai Chuphinit’s family got involved in the publishing and changed the format to 14 books of roughly 200 pages each. As part of the reissue, they have added various side-material and photographs in introductory chapters. The Cornell Library has three editions of the series.
- 5 Ronald D. Renard (2002) On the Possibility of Early Karen Settlement in the Chiangmai Valley. In *Inter-ethnic Relations in the Making of Southeast Asia and Southwest China*. Yukio Hayashi and Aroonrut Wichienkeo, eds, 59-84. Kyoto: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University.
- 6 Noi Inthanon (1981) *Long Phrai: Ai Kae lae Nga Dam*, ล่องไพร อ้ายแกและง่าด้า. Bangkok: Krathom P.L., 87.
- 7 Benedict R. O’G. Anderson (2012) The Strange Story of a Strange Beast: Receptions in Thailand of Apichatpong Weerasethakul’s *Sat Pralaat*. In *Glimpses of Freedom: Independent Cinema in Southeast Asia*. May Adadol Ingawanij and Benjamin McKay, eds., 149-163. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications.
- 8 Noi Inthanon (1981) *Long Phrai: Pa-Cha Chang lae Jao-Phaen-Din*, ล่องไพร ป่าช้าช้าง และ เจ้านแผ่นดิน. Bangkok: Krathom P.L., 173.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 176.
- 10 *The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen*, abridged edition (2015). Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, transl., 238. Chiangmai: Silkworm.

Filipino (Tagalog) Oral Proficiency Guidelines: A Collaborative Project

Maria Theresa Savella, senior lecturer

More than one and a half million people in the United States speak Filipino. According to the 2010 United States Census, Filipino is the second most commonly spoken Asian language next to Chinese, and the fourth most widely used language other than English. This number is expected to increase steadily as more Filipinos continue to migrate to the United States each year. Since these immigrants' native tongues could be any of the more than one hundred languages spoken in the Philippines, Filipino has played a major role as the lingua franca that keeps them in touch with their roots in their communities both in and out of the United States.

The steady flow of Filipino immigrants into the U.S. over the past hundred years has produced second and third generations of Filipino-Americans (Fil-Ams). While most of these Fil-Ams grew up with a limited command of Filipino, those expressing a serious interest in learning the language in college, and even in high school, have increased in number over the years. Many have cited that their motivation for learning Filipino stems from a desire to communicate better with their family in the U.S. and in the Philippines, as well as a longing to reconnect with their heritage and more deeply explore their personal identity.

The response to this surge in the demand for Filipino instruction among heritage learners in the U.S. resulted in an increase in the number of educational institutions providing the means to fill this need. In their essay titled "The Language Learning Framework for Teachers of Filipino," Ramos and Mabanglo note that in the 1960s, University of Hawaii and University of California at Los Angeles were the only institutions that offered regular courses in Tagalog.¹ The number of schools and universities offering Tagalog instruction has grown remarkably since then. In recent years, Filipino courses have been offered on a regular basis in one to four levels in 21 middle and high schools in California, eight community colleges in California and Hawaii, and at least 21 universities all over the country.²

In addition, the Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute, a consortium of ten American universities that offer intensive language instruction over the summer, has been offering Tagalog since 1984. Aside from the heritage learners, graduate students with research interest in the Philippines also study Filipino. Because it is the national lingua franca, these researchers need it to get around in most parts of the country. Tagalog is also offered to military, diplomatic and other government personnel through the Defense Language

Institute and Foreign Service Institute.

Filipino instructors in academic institutions most strongly affiliated with the Consortium for the Advancement of Filipino (CAF) have independently addressed various needs related to teaching the language. These needs include developing pedagogical materials and teacher training models, while also implementing intensive summer instruction in the U.S., and a summer immersion program in the Philippines for advanced levels. Ramos and Mabanglo provided an account of both the history and current status of Filipino instruction in the country by citing the resources available to learners of Filipino. In this account, they identify institutions offering Filipino language instruction or available learning or teaching materials, as well as the relevant qualifications for the language instructors who participated in their survey.

Based on all these accounts, it is clear that the Filipino programs in various academic and non-academic institutions in the country have been operating independently of each other and with very limited collaboration, if any at all. This means that in the area of assessment, for example, Filipino instructors have been using university-based placement and achievement, or pro-achievement testing materials,

Participants and facilitators at the final meeting of the Filipino Oral Proficiency Guidelines project, University of Wisconsin-Madison, September 2012



to evaluate the performance of their students. However, in the absence of a standardized tool, how does one assess students' proficiency across institutions? For example, how does one make sure that the entry and exit proficiency evaluations for the recipients of Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships, conducted by different language instructors in different universities, follow a fairly standard process?

Aside from the benefit of standardizing student proficiency assessment in different institutions, the existence of such a tool could also give Filipino instructors an opportunity to reevaluate and, if necessary, make adjustments in the design of their curriculum. Teachers could feel confident that their students would acquire the same set of language skills, described for specific levels of proficiency, as the students in other universities. By extension, with the availability of standard proficiency guidelines, the universities administering the Filipino programs would also be able to more effectively assess the strengths and weaknesses of their program.

To fill this need for a standard assessment tool, some members of CAF decided to initiate the Filipino Oral Proficiency Guideline Project (OPG). This pedagogical resource, which plays a pivotal role in the standardization of assessment and curriculum design, takes into account the specific attributes of the Filipino language. The collaborative undertaking aims to develop Filipino-specific descriptors for all levels of oral proficiency, from novice through advanced. Once formulated and nationally accepted, this set of descriptors will, hopefully, become the standard tool used by Filipino language instructors throughout the US for rating language samples.

Thirteen Filipino instructors participated in the project in varying degrees. Eight of them are from National Resource Centers (NRC): Cornell University, Northern Illinois University, University of California-Berkeley, University of California-Los Angeles, University of Hawaii at Manoa, University of Michigan, University of Washington, and University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison). Four are from non-

NRC institutions: University of San Francisco, College of Mt. St. Vincent, Morse High School/San Diego Mesa Community College, and University of Pennsylvania. One independent scholar also took part in the project. The Filipino OPG project was jointly sponsored by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the participating institutions.

In early February 2011, UW-Madison hosted the first meeting for the project leaders to plan both the implementation of the project, as well as two workshops to be held for all the participants. The first workshop, held on April 8, 2011, was aimed at training the participants to conduct interviews that would allow them to elicit and rate language samples. In the second and final workshop, held in September 2012, participants worked on finalizing the collective formulation of the Filipino OPG based on the consolidated and summarized data from the language samples.

With more than five decades of Filipino language instruction in the U.S. and the increasing enrollment numbers for heritage learners in various U.S. institutions, the development of a standard assessment tool has become a necessity. Through the commitment and collaborative efforts of these Filipino language instructors, along with the sponsorship of CSEAS at UW-Madison and the participating institutions, the Filipino OPG is well under way. To ensure the nationwide acceptance of this assessment tool, the next step is to disseminate the Filipino OPG to all the Filipino instructors in the U.S. Once the Filipino OPG is broadly accepted by all the Filipino instructors, it can be used to standardize the curriculum for teaching Filipino across all levels, at any institution. The hope is that this endeavor, by a handful of Filipino instructors, will encourage more collaborative engagements within the group and among colleagues in the teaching of other less commonly taught languages in the coming years.



Acknowledgment of support from the following people:

*My fellow Filipino instructors for their participation in the project:
Richard Atienza, Edith Borbon, Julia Camagong, Jiedson Domigpe,
Nenita Domingo, Zenaida Fulgencio, Rhodalyn Gallo-Crail, Gloria
Guilas, Erlinda Juliano, Ruth Mabanglo, Vic Romero, Sheila Zamar*

The coordinating team:

*Ellen Rafferty –Project Director
Erlin Barnard–Workshop Coordinator and Facilitator
Joi Barrios-LeBlanc–Co-Project Leader
Mary Jo Wilson–Administrative Facilitator*

Isang taos-pusong pasasalamat sa inyong lahat!
A heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all of you!

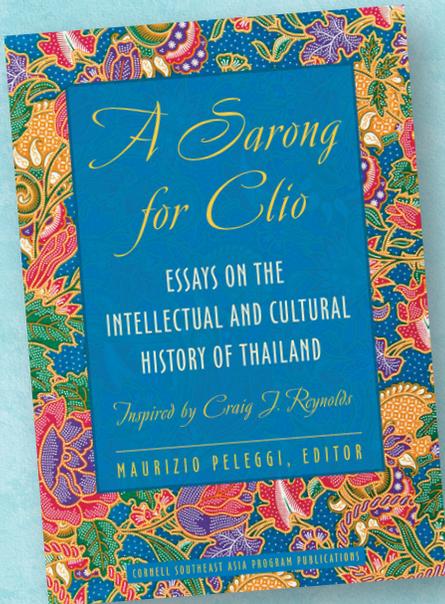
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SEAP Publications Celebrates 50 years of Indonesia



SEAP Publications is pleased to announce a very special anniversary, the publication of the 100th issue of the journal *Indonesia*, in October 2015. Launched in 1966, *Indonesia* has, for fifty years, provided readers with in-depth, cross-disciplinary historical and contemporary coverage of the archipelago. In addition to our regular slate of articles and book reviews, the 100th anniversary issue will include remembrances by former and current *Indonesia* editors, including Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, Joshua Barker, Deborah Homsher, Audrey Kahin, Ruth McVey, James Siegel, and Eric Tagliacozzo, as well as a full index of past articles.



SEAP Publications Newest Book

A Sarong for Clio: Essays on the Intellectual and Cultural History of Thailand

Inspired by Craig J. Reynolds

Maurizio Peleggi, ed.

240 pages, 7 x 10

This volume testifies to an ongoing intellectual dialogue between its ten contributors and Craig J. Reynolds, who inspired these essays. Conceived as a tribute to an innovative scholar, dedicated teacher, and generous colleague, it is this volume’s ambition to make a concerted intervention on Thai historiography—and Thai studies more generally—by pursuing, in new directions, ideas that figure prominently in Reynolds’ scholarship. The writings gathered here revolve around two prominent themes: the nexus of historiography and power, and Thai political and business cultures—often so intertwined as to be difficult to separate. Part I, “Historiography, Knowledge, and Power,” contains four essays that examine different types of historical texts, including the dynamics of their production, circulation, reception, and assimilation into, or rejection from, the established canon; and, in two cases, the vicissitudes in the lives

of their authors. Part II features five essays that deal variously with Thai political discourse and political culture, as well as the media production of consumer culture.

Although he formally retired in 2007, Reynolds continues to be extremely active academically. He has since published articles, commentaries, and three books of collected essays and is now working on a new monograph (a comprehensive bibliography of Reynolds’ writings is included in the book). His scholarship remains a source of inspiration for students of Thailand of three generations—his peers, his former students, and, increasingly, their students. The range of nationalities and geographical locations of this volume’s contributors, and the fact that historians are joined here by political scientists, testify to the influence of Reynolds’ formal and informal mentoring within and outside the discipline of history.

EDITOR

Maurizio Peleggi is associate professor of history at the National University of Singapore and editor of the *Journal of Southeast Asia Studies*. He is the author of *Thailand: The Worldly Kingdom* (2007), *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy’s Modern Image* (2002), and *The Politics of Ruins and the Business of Nostalgia* (2002), as well as many journal articles and book chapters.

ENDORSEMENT

“*A Sarong for Clio* offers bold explorations into several critical areas of Thai studies. Its essays will certainly reshape our understanding of Thailand in the modern era. Audacious and uncompromising—and splendidly engrossing—it is a worthy tribute to Craig Reynolds, the scholar whose work it honors.”

—Richard A. Ruth, Department of History, United States Naval Academy



SEApapers:

Serial Publications from Southeast Asia Going Digital

Gregory Green,
curator,

Echols Collection on Southeast Asia

Subscribing to, receiving, accessing and preserving newspapers, journals and other serials from Southeast Asia has always been a difficult and expensive process. Even the most comprehensive library collections can, at best, only provide very incomplete coverage of the region's serials. Shipping alone is difficult due to the distance and logistics of getting serials from one side of the world to the other. The issues must first be collected by a third party, then bundled, packaged, transported to a shipping location, prepared for customs, then shipped, all of which costs money and takes a lot of time. Once the serials arrive in the United States, handling, storing, preserving, and providing access to them presents a whole new set of challenges and drives up costs. The goal of the SEApapers Archive is to overcome many of the difficulties encountered by US libraries in their ongoing efforts to collect, preserve, and store serials from Southeast Asia. The Archive is a Cornell University Library (CUL) project, which aims to provide a library subscription service to facilitate the online delivery of serials to end users.

The Archive works with publishers from Southeast Asia to gain access to the digital files used to create their print and online titles. CUL has created work flows and technical features to facilitate the deposit of those files into the Archive and allow for subscription services to participating libraries. The Archive will operate on a cost-recovery basis and will be initially limited to libraries with a strong interest in the region, such as Harvard; Yale; Cornell; University of Michigan; University of California, Berkeley; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Hawaii; University of Washington; Northern Illinois University; University of Wisconsin; and Ohio University.

SEApapers is structured so that CUL acts as an aggregator for serials from Southeast Asia, focusing specifically on local and provincial newspapers and smaller academic journals unlikely to be of interest to commercial aggregators. Larger newspapers will also be included if they are interested in

participating. Publishers will send source files to the archive to be uploaded into the database in the original format used for publication ensuring that all information is preserved as it was published. The archive will provide access to current issues and back issues as they become available.

In 2009, CUL developed a pilot database to demonstrate the functionality of a serials portal for titles from Southeast Asia. The prototype database had tools for contributors (to add titles or upload issues); for CUL staff (to manage titles, issues, and metadata); and for readers (to browse, search). After its initial development, and a lot of work on license agreements and the business plan, the prototype has been further developed to the point that it is now ready to accept publisher files and allow subscribers to access content.

Subscriptions to access these titles are managed by staff in the Echols Collection on Southeast Asia. Participating institutions enter the digital serial archive program by paying an initial, one-time fee that enables them to subscribe to any or all of the digital titles available. Each title will cost participating institutions a subscription fee that includes the cost negotiated with the publisher, in addition to fees to cover costs of maintaining the archive incurred by CUL, and any necessary future upgrades.

The goal of the project is to cover costs while keeping subscription fees as low as possible for participants. Thus, while providing quality service to participants, the archive will not include the "bells and whistles" found in commercial systems, but will provide a cheaper alternative to print subscriptions with dramatically improved access options.

Several institutions have already paid this fee as part of the pilot phase and more have joined in since then. Because the archive will be available to a limited number of participant libraries, there will not be any money budgeted or needed to advertise its existence. Currently, librarians at these institutions already have a basic knowledge of the archive and others are learning of it by word of mouth.

The website for the Archive is now live at <https://seapapers.library.cornell.edu/>

Initially, there will be little content available; as we add titles and begin uploading files, however, it will grow rapidly over the next five years.

Outreach

I started as the new SEAP communications and outreach coordinator in late September, just as the tips of the trees were changing from green to yellow. My first event was the fall reception where I was welcomed into the diverse and talented SEAP community, abuzz with intellectually engaged conversations.

In piecing together stories of the many SEAP outreach programs, I cannot help but be amazed by their scope and depth. Outreach does not stop once the planning is over and the events come to a close. The beauty of this work is its continuous potential for expansion, for all the coils of an idea to unfurl in unexpected ways, the process catalyzed by communicating about it. And so, it is with great pleasure and deep appreciation for this community that I present highlights of this year's SEAP outreach activities and also welcome suggestions from you for new ways to engage teachers and community college faculty and to continue building partnerships in and out of our Finger Lakes Region.



Brenna Fitzgerald, communications and outreach coordinator, and Linh Nguyen, SEAP visiting fellow at the 2015 fall reception

Expanding Southeast Asian Language Teaching

SEAP has partnered with Mohawk Valley Community College in Utica to support a non-credit Burmese class. Taught by Saw Bwel Bwel, a Burmese refugee who arrived in the United States over a decade ago, this course is targeted toward people who work with refugees from Myanmar such as teachers, social service providers, and healthcare workers. The course, "Beginning Burmese Conversation," is now in its second year with nine students registered who come from a variety of backgrounds and professional interests.

Global Learning Education Faculty Fellows Program

In mid-April, eight education faculty members from Cornell University, Ithaca College, Syracuse University and SUNY Cortland attended the first Global Learning Education Faculty Fellows workshop held at the Kahin Center. This new and growing program is a collaboration between education faculty at various institutions, Cornell area studies programs, and the Syracuse University South Asia Center, who all come together twice a year to share cross-cultural knowledge and skill-building with the intention of infusing teacher education with area studies knowledge and languages. Participating faculty receive awards to support the development of projects designed to internationalize their curriculum with a specific world regional focus.

The purpose of last spring's workshop was to begin building collaborative working groups and to introduce the participating faculty to the area programs. The participants spent the day brainstorming about innovative ways to internationalize their curriculum using a pedagogically and personally meaningful framework. In anonymous feedback they said: "This was a great experience. Really enjoyed the workshop and coming up with learning objectives! It was surprising to know how we all have different backgrounds, but we all have similar experiences."

The second workshop this year, held in mid-September, featured two dynamic presentations on South Asia and Southeast Asia as well as status updates from participating education faculty on their various internationalization projects. A few projects with Southeast Asia as the focus include those of Cornell Professor Bryan Duff, who is working closely with SEAP to lay the foundations for a new, experientially-rich course on education systems called "Education in and through Myanmar;" and a project being developed by SUNY Cortland Professor, Orvil White, who is working with partner schools in Thailand and Bangladesh to develop a global team-project assessing the impacts of climate change in various parts of the world. White plans to incorporate this piece of engaged learning into his education course, "Teaching Elementary School Science."



SUNY Cortland Professor Orvil White at the Global Faculty Fellows workshop

Teacher Training Workshop on Photography Probes Big Questions

Last February, twenty educators participated in the “Teaching Global Competencies through Photography” professional development workshop organized by Cornell Educational Resources for International Studies (CERIS) in conjunction with SEAP. Held at the Johnson Museum, the workshop included K-12 teachers, a pre-service teacher, and two college professors. Presenters included Carol Hockett, coordinator of school and family programs at the Johnson Museum; master social studies teacher Maryterese Pasquale, who presented “You Have Seen Their Faces: Using Margaret Bourke-White’s Photographs to Teach Global Competence;” and Brian Arnold, a musician and photographer and visiting fellow for the Southeast Asia program, who presented on “Using Photography to Facilitate Cultural Inquiries and Discussions,” with a special focus on Indonesia (see Brian’s feature photo essay on p. 22-25). The workshop was designed to strengthen educators’ commitment to global competencies by providing an opportunity to discuss and engage with historical photographs, while also considering how to integrate this new content into the classroom.



workshop was designed to strengthen educators’ commitment to global competencies by providing an opportunity to discuss and engage with historical photographs, while also considering how to integrate this new content into the classroom.

Teaching Global Competency through the Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts

In late June, Cornell’s South and Southeast Asia Programs, in conjunction with the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, hosted the 2015 International Studies Summer Institute (ISSI), “Teaching Global Competency through the Literary, Visual and Performing Arts,” for elementary, middle, and high school teachers as well as a handful of pre-service teachers. The goal of this annual institute is to support teachers’ area studies knowledge acquisition and curriculum internationalization. At the workshop, teachers engaged in hands-on activities, lesson planning, and lecture presentations. At the end of the two days, the leaders of the workshop asked participants to reflect and share what they learned. Here are some of my favorite responses:

“I learned how language barriers and cultural barriers can be overcome through making personal connections on a variety of other levels and through a multitude of ways.”

“Even though I am a grade eight language arts teacher, it was easy to start to see new ways I could collaborate with other content areas and how I could fold in alternate text, art, music, etc. into my own lessons.”

“An aesthetically rich environment like this workshop experience is an inspiring way to learn. I will remember that when working with my students.”

*Above: Brian Arnold, SEAP visiting fellow, speaks at the teacher training workshop.
Below: Cornell Gamelan Ensemble at the Elephant Extravaganza*

Elephant Extravaganza Blends Wildlife Conservation Education with Exposure to South and Southeast Asian Cultures

This past August, SEAP, in partnership with Syracuse University’s South Asia Center, shared information about the significance of elephants in Asian culture, cultural dances, musical performances, games and more as part of the Asian Elephant Extravaganza. This annual day-long event celebrates the Rosamond Gifford Zoo’s Asian elephant herd, blending wildlife conservation education with exposure to the rich culture and heritage of the native countries of Asian elephants. Many thanks to SEAP staff member, Betty Nguyen, who was responsible for coordinating the event this year, and to the many volunteers who made it extra dynamic.



Announcements

ON CAMPUS AND BEYOND



SEAP Graduate Student Committee Co-Chairs

The 2015-2016 co-chairs are Alexandra Dalferro and Chairat Polmuk. They will run the SEAP graduate conference in the spring, social events for the SEAP community, and the weekly Ronald and Janette Gatty Lecture Series, named in honor of SEAP alumni Ronald Gatty and Janette Gatty and their substantial contribution to SEAP programming, especially activities led by graduate students.



Kahin Center Update

Ryan Buyco has graciously accepted a position as the fall 2015 Kahin Center building manager. Please direct questions and requests to him at kahinbuildingmnger@einaudi.cornell.edu.

SEAP Welcomes New Staff

Jessica Snyder has been appointed as the new initiatives coordinator. She is currently coordinating our Cornell in Cambodia Program and will be taking on an array of new projects after the applications are in and processed for the winter session course. Jessica has an MA in English from Lehigh University, and she previously worked at the University of Puget Sound as a project management assistant. She also spent time in Thailand as a Peace Corps volunteer.

Brenna Fitzgerald has been appointed to lead SEAP and SAP Outreach and edit the SEAP Bulletin as a full-time communications and outreach coordinator. In this capacity she will continue the work we have been doing to build partnerships with faculty at community colleges and schools of education aimed at internationalizing the curriculum. She will also facilitate collaboration between all Einaudi area programs interested in contributing to and engaging in education outreach activities. Brenna is an alumna of Cornell, with a degree in history and concentrations in Asian studies and visual studies. She received an MA from the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California and an MFA in Creative Nonfiction Writing from the University of Arizona.

Over the past five years she has freelanced as a writer and an editor for various publications; developed curriculum for social justice education programs at University of Arizona and for writing support programs at University of Southern California; and taught English in Japan. She comes to us most recently from a position at the University of Washington Press in Seattle where she assisted with both acquisitions and marketing.

Brenna was born in Wisconsin; started kindergarten in Prague; grew up in New Orleans and Ithaca, New York; and has additionally lived in Germany, India, France, Japan, Arizona, and Washington. She loves to travel, hike, practice yoga, read, write, and cook.



The 2015 Burma/Myanmar Research Forum

Borders, Bounds, and Brinks: Rethinking Boundaries In and About Burma/Myanmar

Building on the success of last year's workshop, the second Burma/Myanmar Research Forum, held from Friday October 2 to Sunday October 4, drew nearly 40 scholars and professionals from all over the world to Cornell University around the theme, "Borders, Bounds, and Brinks: Rethinking Boundaries In and About Burma/Myanmar." Following the format of bringing senior scholars into conversation with an emerging generation of scholars with new research in the pipeline, the conference began with keynote talks by Professor Penny Edwards, Dr. Tin Maung Maung Than, and Professor Alicia Turner. Their presentations ranged from rogue Burmese princes, to the politics of modern day ceasefire agreements, to colonial era cosmopolitan monasteries. Their lively and thought-provoking engagement with the workshop themes alongside the evening screening of selected films from the Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival set the tone for rigorous discussions of 24 papers-in-progress in the three all-day break-out sessions on Saturday.

Boundary-crossing was an experiential element of the conference as well, given the diverse international and disciplinary origins of the conference participants. An Estonian lawyer, an American land activist, and a scholar of British colonialism exchanged ideas with a Vietnamese political scientist, a Burmese education specialist, and many others. In addition to Burmese and English, French and Thai could be heard during breaks, and participants traded perspectives from ethnographic work on the Thai-Burma border, examinations of Qing-dynasty maps, and the exploration of colonial archives in Delhi. Breaking up the intensity of the paper sessions were activities such as Burmese language games, an interactive Burmese martial arts demonstration, and a tour of the Echols Collection of Southeast Asian materials at Kroch Library. The excitement of being together with such an amazing group of scholars was palpable, and for those not suffering from jet-lag, discussions continued over drinks late into the night.

On Sunday, the group discussion on research methods and ethics as

applied to Myanmar, foregrounded the challenges posed by inconsistent fonts, obscure Romanization and cataloging, and hard-to-access texts. Scholars also compiled a wealth of resources, helpful tips, and technical workarounds. Additional discussions about reciprocity, considerations of potential harm to informants, and navigating the Institutional Review Board process unfolded with candor and thoughtfulness. The subject of ethics, in particular, set the stage both for a gallery tour by Steven Rubin of his photographs from the Burma-India border, which were on display in the Kahin Center, and a moving talk by Rohingya lawyer and activist Wai Wai Nu about the increasing discrimination and displacement of Muslim minorities in Myanmar.

The Research Forum underscores the growing vitality of Burma studies at Cornell and beyond. The energy and commitment of the organizing committee comprised of graduate students from Cornell, the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia, Harvard, and McGill, is a testament to the value and vitality of scholarly exchange.



Participants at the 2015 Burma/Myanmar Research Forum exchange perspectives in the Kahin Center.

Upcoming Courses, Events, and Gatty Lectures

Fall 2015 and Spring 2016

SEAP Partners with Cornell Cinema

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Indonesian Genocide, SEAP, in conjunction with Cornell Cinema, presented a series of four films throughout the month of September, which centered on the traumatic events following the supposed communist coup on October 1, 1965 in Indonesia. The films included: *The Year of Living Dangerously*, *40 Years of Silence: An Indonesian Tragedy*, *The Act of Killing*, and *The Look of Silence*. Every Thursday afternoon film screening was followed by a discussion led by a member of SEAP. The series wrapped up on October 1 at the Kahin Center at noon with a lecture by Siddharth Chandra, professor and director of the Asian Studies Center at Michigan State University: "New Findings on the Indonesian Killings of 1965-66."



SEAP Fall Reception

In mid-September SEAP hosted its annual reception, bringing together this rich community of students, staff, faculty, friends and affiliates.

Left: 14 Strings! Cornell Filipino Rondalla at the 2015 SEAP fall reception

NEW COURSES FOR SPRING 2016!

Crossing Borders for Education: The Case of Myanmar

(EDUC 4940, Mon, 1:30-4pm)

Ithaca is home to many immigrants and refugees, among them a sizeable group from Myanmar (Burma) in Southeast Asia. As youth and adults pursue education here, they navigate differences between educational norms in the United States and cultural values embedded in schools in Myanmar and in their home lives here. In this course, we will explore this border-crossing not only through texts and guest lectures from Myanmar experts, but also through a set of active border-crossing experiences of our own. We will interact online with education students in Myanmar, pair with local students (children through adult) to create art expressing the challenges and opportunities of crossing borders, and visit a Brooklyn high school renowned for its education of immigrant and refugee teens. An Internationalizing the Cornell Curriculum Grant to Bryan Duff and Kaja McGowan is making the creation and implementation of this course possible.

Conservation with Communities for One Health

(NTRES 4940, Wed, 1:25-4:25pm)

A preparatory course led by Robin Radcliffe and a cross-disciplinary team, for an Engaged Learning Program in partnership with the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) and the Ujung Kulon National Park (UKNP), supported by Engaged Cornell and SEAP.

This course integrates life sciences, social sciences, medical sciences, and the humanities to explore the concept of "One Health," the idea that the health of the environment, animals and people are all inextricably linked. The course provides a comprehensive framework that will enable students to critically examine their perspectives and expand their view of the world, skills that are essential to a career in interdisciplinary fields, such as the emerging fields of One Health, Planetary Health, or Conservation Medicine. The course also serves as a preparatory course for a subset of students who will be selected for international field experiences in Indonesia and Africa, where they will work with communities to conserve endangered rhinoceroses and great apes in partnership with Ujung Kulon National Park and the Jane Goodall Institute, respectively.

Burma (Myanmar) Country Seminar

(ASIAN 3300/6600,
1 credit, Thur,
3:35-4:35pm)

Burma (Myanmar) is rapidly gaining in importance, with political change on several fronts, following on decades of military rule, and a new openness to contacts with Western countries. This seminar is intended as an introduction to modern and historical Burma, and also as a means to continue building Cornell-Myanmar contacts. Through a series of guest presentations by experts from various academic fields and on a range of topics, and also through critical readings about Burma, we will learn about history, religion, politics, ethnic minority issues, and more. The seminar is created for upper level undergraduates and graduate students and will provide an important starting point both for Asian studies students in different specializations, and for everyone in interdisciplinary studies interested in Asia. Conveners: Magnus Fiskesjö and Chotima Chaturawong.



Upcoming Event December 8

The Cornell Gamelan Ensemble's fall concert will be held Tuesday December 8, at 8 PM, in room B20, Lincoln Hall on the Cornell campus.

January 28, 2016

Tamara Ho (Associate Professor, Gender and Sexuality Studies, University of California Riverside) — "Daughters and Diaspora: Burmese Narratives and Interventions in the Twenty-First Century"

February 4, 2016

Eve Zucker (Visiting Scholar, Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights, Rutgers University at Newark) — "Forest Hermits, Harvest Festivals and a Leap of Faith: Imagination and Recovery in the Aftermath of the Khmer Rouge"

February 11, 2016

Chotima Chaturawong (Assistant Professor, Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University) — "Buddha Shrines: A Cross-Cultural Study of Thailand, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka"

February 18, 2016

Richard Ruth (Associate Professor, History, US Naval Academy) — "'Sadej Tia' and the Chakri Shadow Line: A Popular Challenge to a Hyper-Royalist Historical Narrative?"

February 24, 2016

Farid Muttaqin (PhD Student and Fulbright Presidential Fellow Anthropology, SUNY-Binghamton) — "The Politics of Gender and Sexuality of Fundamentalist Muslims and the Politics of Knowledge Production of Feminist Groups in Contemporary Indonesia"

March 3, 2016

Allan Isaac (Associate Professor, American Studies, English, Rutgers University) — "Offshore Identities and Ruptures in the Handling of Time"

March 10, 2016

Nicole Reinsour (PhD Candidate, Music, Cornell University) — "Voices, Self, and Divine Guidance in Mabebasan Literary Performance"

March 17, 2016

Maria Sarita See (Associate Professor, Media and Cultural Studies, UC Riverside) — "The Booty/Beauty of Filipino/American Art"

April 7, 2016

Nefertiti Tadiar (Professor, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Columbia University) — "A Physics Lesson: Mirrors and Phantoms in Filipino Anti-Colonial Thought"

April 14, 2016

Alexandra Denes (Lecturer, Media Arts and Design, Chiang Mai University) — "Aesthetic Entanglements: The Hybrid Heritage of Thai and Cambodian Dance"

April 21, 2016

Erik Davis (Associate Professor, Religious Studies, Macalester College) — "Past Lives, Present Tense: Past-Life Memory in Contemporary Cambodia"

April 28, 2016

Thomas Connors (Associate Research Scientist, Less Commonly Taught Languages, University of Maryland) — "The Language of Informal Media: Form and Function in Indonesian and other Southeast Asian Languages"

May 5, 2016

Christopher Goscha (Associate Professor, History, Universite du Quebec a Montreal) — "Colonial Kings and the Decolonization of the French Empire: Bao Dai, Mohammed V, and Norodom Sihanouk"

SEAP Cornell University Southeast Asia Program
Ronald & Janette Gatty Lecture Series

These talks are partially funded by the US Department of Education as part of SEAP's designation as a National Resource Center.

October 1
New Findings on the Indonesian Killings of 1965-66
Siddharth Chandra
Professor and Director, Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University

October 8
Politics Bytes: Digital Media and Activism in Indonesia
Merlyna Lim
Canada Research Chair in Digital Media & Global Network Society School of Journalism & Communication, Carleton University

October 15
Smiling at Death: Annichang, Ploy Wang, & the Cultural Psychology of Emotion in Contemporary Thailand
Julia Cassaniti
Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Washington State University

October 22
Thai Red Shirt Protests and Radical Vernacular Protest Sound
Ben Tausig
Assistant Professor, Ethnomusicology, Stony Brook University

October 29
Grand Prix Racing: Thai Nationalism and Ambiguous Thai (Elite) Identities
Thak Chaloemtiarana
Professor of the Graduate School, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University

September 3
Hair Apparent: Life Process & the Body Politic in 1965 Indonesia
Kaja McGowan
Director of the Southeast Asia Program (SEAP); Associate Professor, Department of History of Art, Cornell University

September 10
Arrested Autonomy: Posthuman Futures in Sarawak, Malaysia
Juno Salazar Parreñas
Assistant Professor, Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, The Ohio State University

September 17
The Indecency of Adultery: Censorship and Morality in Thai Cinema
Rebecca Townsend-Hill
PhD Candidate, Department of History, Cornell University

September 24
God's Left Eye Crosses the Pacific: Coadaism's Transpacific Transformations
Janet Hoskins
Professor, Anthropology and Religion, University of Southern California

November 5 (MANN LIBRARY)
Rounding up: New Species & Rediscoveries of Asian birds
Pamela Rasmussen
Assistant Professor, Department of Integrative Biology, Michigan State University

November 12
Sidewalk City: Re-mapping Public Space in Ho Chi Minh City
Annette Kim
Director, Spatial Analysis Lab (SLAB) Sol Price School of Public Policy, University of Southern California

November 19
The Future of Genocide in Asia: Burma and Elsewhere
Magnus Fiskesjö
Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Cornell University

December 3
From Planters to Planners: Rubber, Development, and War in Southern Vietnam, 1956 to 1975
Mitch Aso
Assistant Professor, Department of History, University at Albany, SUNY

For accommodation request: seap@cornell.edu
www.seap.einaudi.cornell.edu

AWARDS

Cornell University Southeast Asia DOCTORAL Degrees

JANUARY 26, 2015

Daniel Bjorn Ahlquist
Development Sociology
Linda Brooks Williams, *Chair*
"Losing Place in the Corn
Mountains: Forest Conservation,
in Situ Displacement, and
Agrarian Transformation in
Upland Northern Thailand"

MAY 24, 2015

Amanda Leigh Flaim
Development Sociology
Parfait M. Eloundou-Enyegue,
Chair
"No Land's Man: Sovereignty,
Legal Status, and the Production
of Statelessness Among
Highlanders in Northern
Thailand"

AUGUST 17, 2015

Pamela Nguyen Corey
History of Art and Archaeology
Kaja McGowan, *Chair*
"The Artist in the City:
Contemporary Art as Urban
Intervention in Ho Chi Minh
City, Vietnam, and Phnom Penh,
Cambodia"

Inga Gruss

Anthropology
Andrew Willford, *Chair*
"Waiting for elsewhere: Place,
temporality and Myanmar
migrants in Thailand"

Taomo Zhou

History
Jian Chen, *Chair*
"Diaspora and Diplomacy: China,
Indonesia and the Cold War,
1945-1967"

Lauriston Sharp Prize (2013 and 2014)

John Phan and Quentin (Trais) Pearson were awarded the Lauriston Sharp Prize for 2013 and 2014, respectively. Phan's thesis is titled "Lacquered Words: The Evolution of Vietnamese under Sinitic Influences from the 1st Century BCE through the 17th Century CE," and Pearson's thesis is titled "Bodies Politic: Civil Law & Forensic Medicine in Colonial Era Bangkok." The prize is named in honor of the founder of SEAP, Lauriston Sharp (1907-1993), and is awarded each year to the graduate student who has contributed most outstandingly to both scholarship and the community life of the Southeast Asia Program.

2013 – John D. Phan

Lacquered Words: The Evolution of Vietnamese under Sinitic Influences from the 1st Century BCE through the 17th Century CE

John Phan's 2013 dissertation "Lacquered Words: The Evolution of Vietnamese under Sinitic Influences from the 1st Century BCE through the 17th Century CE," examines Sinitic influences on the history of the Vietnamese language over the span of approximately 1,800 years. During this time, what we now think of as "China" and "Vietnam" were locked in a continuous embrace. Much of this contact was punctuated with episodes of actual occupation when the pace of cultural and linguistic osmosis rapidly accelerated. Phan's study presents a masterful refutation of previous understandings of this history, showing especially that "Sino-Vietnamese linguistic contact was anchored in a sustained and intimate bilingualism," rather than in "rote glossing practices" (428).

Phan's dissertation crafts a unique interdisciplinary methodology. In addition to employing tools from the field of linguistics for the investigation of complex logics of transformation over centuries, he also presents literary, historical, and political evidence. Phan marries these disciplines in an innovative and utterly convincing way that demonstrates how the meeting of these two cultures was adjudicated through numerous social and institutional processes from the bottom up and also in a top-down fashion.

His work is explicitly comparative. The dissertation draws into comparison the history of Sinitic influences on Korean and Japanese in order to illustrate the singular trajectory of the development of Vietnamese throughout large parts of the period under review. He elegantly calls this the "texture, color, and depth of Sinitic influence," and by the end of his dissertation, we can follow all of these changing attributes through his elaborately-detailed study. "Lacquered Words" stands out in the scope of its intellectual undertaking, its potential to make an intervention into both theoretical and historical aspects of the field under investigation, and the clarity and eloquence of its presentation.



John D. Phan is a linguist historian. He completed his MA in premodern Chinese literature at Columbia University before obtaining his Ph.D. at Cornell University. In the fall of 2014, Dr. Phan joined Rutgers University's Department of Asian Languages and Cultures as an assistant teaching professor. He teaches courses on Chinese and Vietnamese linguistics and literature.

Cornell University Southeast Asia MASTER'S Degrees

JANUARY 26, 2015

Jackson Que Alldredge

Asian Studies

Keith Taylor, *Chair*

"Democratic Transition Theory and Civil-Military Conflict: A Case Study of Indonesia and Egypt"

Julia Adrienne Casabianca

City and Regional Planning

Mildred E. Warner, *Chair*

No thesis

Mattias Emerson Fibiger

History

Fredrik Logevall, *Chair*

No thesis

Christopher Allen Sundita

Linguistics

Michael L. Weiss, *Chair*

No thesis

MAY 24, 2015

Tra Huong Thi Duong

Anthropology

Andrew Willford, *Chair*

No thesis

Katie Elizabeth Rainwater

Development Sociology

Elias David Friedman, *Chair*

"Building Inequality: Wage Disparity Between Bangladeshi and Thai Guestworkers in Singapore's Construction Industry"



Fellowships

MILTON L. BARNETT
SCHOLARSHIP

Elizabeth Wijaya

Ph.D. candidate,
comparative literature,
for her field research in
Singapore and Malaysia



During his time at Cornell, **Quentin (Trai) Pearson** served as co-chair of the SEAP Graduate Student Committee from 2008 to 2009. After receiving his Ph.D. in August 2014, Trai joined the Department of History at Wheaton College (MA) as the Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Asian History. He is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University where he continues to miss the view of Cayuga Lake from his old office on the second floor of the Kahin Center.

2014 – Quentin (Trai) Pearson

Bodies Politic: Civil Law & Forensic Medicine in Colonial Era Bangkok

Set in the culturally diverse and politically charged context of late nineteenth century Bangkok, historian Quentin (Trai) Pearson's dissertation offers a riveting account of how injuries and deaths caused by novel forms of urban mobility such as streetcars led to new forms of medico-legal expertise designed to assign blame and compensation. "Bodies Politic: Civil Law and Forensic Medicine in Colonial Era Bangkok" is a fine-grained account of how collisions between new technologies and Siamese royal elite, subaltern, and expatriate lives produced new assertions of class, race, and national boundaries and hierarchies. In conversation with postcolonial theory and Science and Technology Studies, the dissertation also addresses broad questions about the emergence of modern concepts of accident, injury, legal subjectivity, rights, and national sovereignty.

The award committee was particularly impressed by Pearson's expert handling of the original Thai archival documents, revealing a theoretically innovative reading of the disparity between local vernacular understandings of loss and western legal and commercial interpretations ("(mis)appropriations") of these emotionally-charged cultural sites of death. His innovative storytelling style weaves together the compelling narratives and experiences not only of local Siamese, but also of Chinese and foreigners alike living in colonial-era Bangkok. Especially gripping is how the body in death is treated, bringing readers up-close to the subtle ways that pre-existing Siamese medical expertise found in Buddhist texts can be seen to inform the adoption of "Western science." As co-chair of the Graduate Student Committee in 2008, Trai is also remembered fondly by the award committee for his generous contributions to the Southeast Asia Program while here at Cornell.

Faculty Associates in Research

Kosal Path

Kosal Path is assistant professor of Political Science at Brooklyn College, The City University of New York. As a survivor of the Pol Pot genocidal regime in Cambodia (1975-1979), he directly experienced the impact of wars and genocide. As a researcher for the Cambodian Genocide Program at Yale University and the Documentation Center of Cambodia from 1995 to 2000, he took part in documenting the atrocities committed by the Pol Pot regime.

Path received his Ph.D. in international relations from the University of Southern California, where he also taught from 2009 to 2011. At Brooklyn College, he teaches international relations of East and Southeast Asia, comparative genocide, and international human rights. His articles on Sino-Vietnamese relations have appeared in *China Quarterly*, *Cold War History*, *International Journal of Asian Studies*, and *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*. His current research focuses on the social-psychological impacts of thought reform and political indoctrination during the Democratic Kampuchea regime (1975-1978) and transitional justice in post-genocide Cambodia. Relying on Vietnamese archival materials, he is also writing a book on the Sino-Vietnamese split during the Vietnam War, 1965-1973.



Mara Alper

Mara Alper, associate professor of media arts at Ithaca College, is an award-winning media artist with a strong connection to Bali, Indonesia. Interest in Balinese culture and religion inspired her five visits since 1985. This year she stayed from January until May, gathering additional footage for her recently completed documentary *Sacred Waters of Bali*.

Her studies in Bali began when she trained in wayan kulit shadow puppet technique in Peliatan, Ubud for a month in 1985. She returned in 1987 for legong dance training. When she visited in 2011, it was by invitation from the Social Change Film Festival to screen her work and give a workshop on environmental media making. Her deep interest in sacred water in Balinese ceremonies began that year and continued during her sabbatical visit in 2013 and her extended visit in 2015.

Sacred Waters of Bali is an integral part of Mara's courses on water issues at Ithaca College: "The Power of Water" and "Water Planet." It is the first of several films on Balinese ritual, offerings, and performance to be created in the next year. An earlier version, *Tirta: Sacred Waters of Bali*, screened at Westbeth Gallery in New York City in 2014 and at the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans in 2012.

Her documentary, *Visions of the Huichol*, was featured at an art exhibit at the Kampo Museum in Kyoto, Japan for three months in 2010. She was invited to give a guest lecture there about the Mexican Huichol tribe and their art and also worked with Japanese graduate students, conversing in Spanish, their common language. More information about her work and interests can be viewed at MaraAlper.com and maraalper.blogspot.com.



SEAP Welcomes...

New Cornell Faculty, Yu Yu Khaing

Yu Yu Khaing joins the Department of Asian Studies as the new full-time Burmese lecturer. Khaing received her BA in English Language and Literature from Dagon University in 2004, and a Diploma in ELT Methodology from the Yangon Institute of Education in 2012. She also studied Chinese to intermediate level at the University of Foreign Languages in 2002.

Khaing started her language teaching career as a tutor in English but soon progressed to teaching Burmese to foreigners working in Burma. Her classes encompassed both one-to-one and group teaching. She has also been one of the team of language teachers for the Win Academy, catering to university students from the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia, and the annual Okell-Watkins courses, providing intensive tuition in Yangon and Chiang Mai.

She has developed her own course material and exercises for language learners and is currently collaborating with John Okell on a much needed intermediate level course.

Welcome to Cornell, Ms. Khaing!



Warren B. Bailey, professor,
finance and Asian studies

Randolph Barker, professor
emeritus, agricultural economics
and Asian studies

Victoria Beard, associate
professor, city and regional
planning (on leave 2015-2017)

Anne Blackburn, professor, South
Asia and Buddhist studies (on
leave 2015-2016)

Thak Chaloemtiarana, professor
of the Graduate School

Abigail Cohn, professor,
linguistics and Asian studies

Magnus Fiskesjö, associate
professor, anthropology

Chiara Formichi, assistant
professor, Asian studies

Arnika Fuhrmann, assistant
professor, Asian studies

Greg Green, curator, Echols
Collection on Southeast Asia

Martin F. Hatch, professor
emeritus, music and Asian studies

Ngampit Jagacinski, senior
language lecturer, Thai

Yu Yu Khaing, language lecturer,
Burmese

Sarosh Kuruvilla, professor,
industrial and labor relations and
Asian studies

Tamara Lynn Loos, associate
professor, history and Asian
studies

Andrew Mertha, professor,
government

Kaja M. McGowan, associate
professor, art history, archaeology
and Asian studies, director of the
Cornell University Southeast Asia
Program

Christopher J. Miller, senior
lecturer, music

Stanley J. O'Connor, professor
emeritus, art history and Asian
studies

Jolanda Pandin, senior language
lecturer, Indonesian

Thomas Pepinsky, associate
professor, government

Hannah Phan, senior language
lecturer, Khmer

Maria Theresa Savella, senior
language lecturer, Tagalog

James T. Siegel, professor
emeritus, anthropology and Asian
studies

Eric Tagliacozzo, professor,
history and Asian studies

Keith W. Taylor, professor,
Vietnamese cultural studies and
Asian studies

Erik Thorbecke, H.E. Babcock
Professor Emeritus, economics
and food economics

Thúy Tranviet, senior language
lecturer, Vietnamese

Marina Welker, associate
professor, anthropology (on leave
2015-2016)

Andrew Willford, professor,
anthropology and Asian studies

Lindy Williams, professor,
development sociology

John U. Wolff, professor
emeritus, linguistics and Asian
studies

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Published by the Southeast Asia Program
Cornell University, 180 Uris Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853-7601

Editor: Brenna Fitzgerald
Design: Westhill Graphics

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NEW JOHNSON MUSEUM ACQUISITION

Tiffany Chung

Vietnamese-American, b. 1969

Crossing the Boundary at the Pass of Kel 1908 – Preah Vihear, 2010

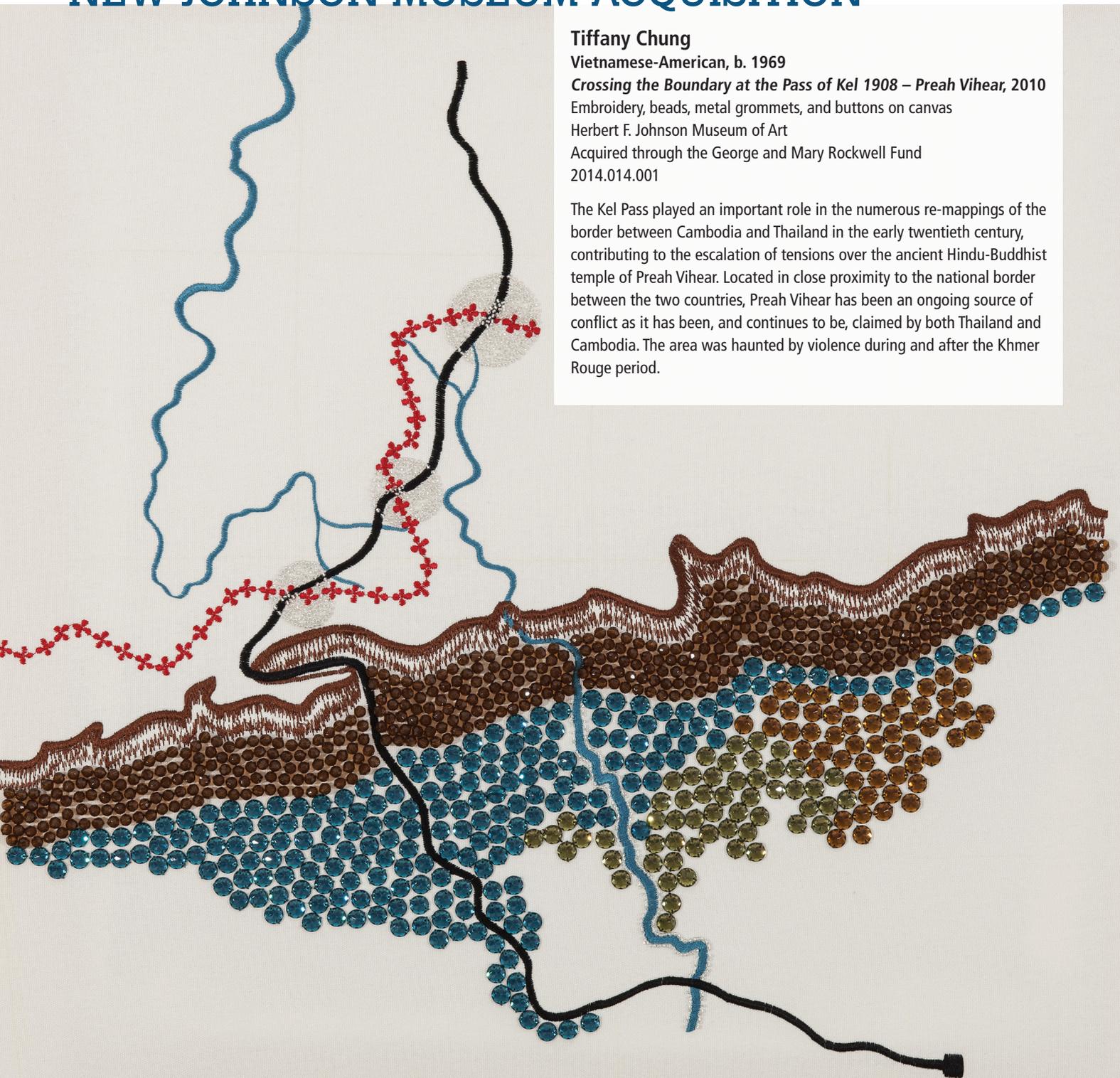
Embroidery, beads, metal grommets, and buttons on canvas

Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art

Acquired through the George and Mary Rockwell Fund

2014.014.001

The Kel Pass played an important role in the numerous re-mappings of the border between Cambodia and Thailand in the early twentieth century, contributing to the escalation of tensions over the ancient Hindu-Buddhist temple of Preah Vihear. Located in close proximity to the national border between the two countries, Preah Vihear has been an ongoing source of conflict as it has been, and continues to be, claimed by both Thailand and Cambodia. The area was haunted by violence during and after the Khmer Rouge period.



SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM

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