

SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM

e-BULLETIN

AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

SPRING 2008



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WELCOME TO THE SPRING EDITION OF THE SEAP E-BULLETIN!

This winter and spring (yes, there are a few daffodils starting to poke up through melting snow) has been a busy time for SEAP faculty, graduate students, and staff. This edition of the e-bulletin tries to capture some of the energy and excitement of the past few months. In addition to our regular coverage of visiting fellows, brown bag lectures, and outreach activities, we are pleased to include the full schedule of the SEAP Graduate Student Conference, slated for March 14-16, 2008.

The Kahin Center has been at the center of much of this activity. The new exhibit in the Kahin Center display case was curated by Anne Blackburn and Tom Patton. It focuses on Buddhist Monks of Southeast Asia and their Accoutrements (see photo 1a). You may also want to take a closer look at the Buddha image in the display case near the lectern, which Thak Chaloemtiarana relocated from his office in Uris so that more people appreciate it. (It was originally from the collection of Alexander B. Griswold, who also donated many fine pieces to the Johnson Museum.)

Other noteworthy events include the workshop organized by Tamara Loos in February to provide critical feedback on Michael Peletz's manuscript, *Gender Pluralism: Southeast Asia Since Early Modern Times*. Her report provides a glimpse into that intellectually stimulating event. In November, SEAP hosted a book launch for Benny Widyono's *Dancing in Shadows: Sihanouk, the Khmer Rouge, and the United Nations in Cambodia*, which was written during his time as a visiting fellow at the Kahin Center (see photo 1b). Kaja McGowan's recent book signing at the campus store included an introduction to the social and ritual context of Balinese art and a discussion of two newly published articles: "Raw Ingredients and Deposit Boxes in Balinese Sanctuaries: A Congruence of Obsessions" and "Love, Death, and Shifting Patronage in Bali during the 1930's: Two Spatial Models Meet 'Face to Face' on Painted Threads of Sound" (see photo 1c).

This edition also marks the initiation of two sections of the e-bulletin that we hope will become regular features: film reviews and travel (b)logs. These more informal contribu-



Photo 1a

Tom Patton points out special aspects of the display to Alicia Turner after her brown bag lecture on Buddhist movements in Burma.

tions should provide a window into what fellow SEAP members are seeing, doing, and thinking about—be it in the realm of Southeast Asian popular culture or during their travels to the region. Please send us your submissions any time.

Finally, SEAP is engaged in a number of outreach projects including an on-going Southeast Asia Study Group for local teachers and a semester-long engagement with Indonesia at Enfield Elementary School. SEAP is also part of developing a number of new collaborative International Studies Institutes. On March 14 and April 25 we will be helping teachers internationalize their approaches to teaching about global climate change. On August 11 we will be teaming up with Project Look Sharp to present media literacy curriculum and lesson plans focused on international perspectives on U.S. elections. We have asked SEAP members to help us gather visually-stimulating and thought-provoking materials that illustrate how people in Southeast Asia are perceiving the U.S. presidential elections. Please send me any relevant magazine covers, cartoons, editorials, video clips, or any other media that would shed light on this topic.



Photo 1c



Photo 1b

Warm spring wishes,
Thamora Fishel
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Take time to chat

WITH OUR CURRENT VISITING FELLOWS



Edwin Zehner

is a Ph.D. (anthropology) from Cornell's Southeast Asia Program. His dissertation focused on Protestant Christians and religious conversions in

Thailand. He has also written on the Dhammakaya Buddhist meditation movement in Thailand and on short-term Protestant missions in Thailand and elsewhere. For several years he headed the publishing programs on Southeast Asia at Northern Illinois University. He has also taught anthropology and most recently spent three months studying Arabic in Yemen. He is currently exploring contemporary relations between Thai and North American Christian communities, while also continuing informally his studies of Arabic.



Rachel Guimbatan

is a visiting scholar from the Philippines under the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Program. She is a professional architect and a planner specializing in

protected areas occupied by indigenous peoples. A native of the rice terrace communities of the Philippine Cordilleras World Heritage Site, she was part of the team that created strategic development program plans in the conservation site. The areas she worked on are on land management and education; she facilitated community-led land use planning and indigenous knowledge transmission activities. During her fellowship year, she is focusing on mediation, specifically on the management of natural resources conflict.



To learn more about the SEAP Visiting Fellows in Residence Program visit:

<http://einaudi.cornell.edu/southeastasia/academics/scholar.asp>

THE SCHOLARS OF CAMBODIA LUNCH

This newly formed lunch group meets every two months to discuss all aspects of Cambodian scholarship. Fourteen people (undergraduates, graduate students and faculty) attended the inaugural lunch held in the Department of Asian Studies on February 27th. From anthropologists to historians, from linguists to literary scholars, a full range of scholarly interest is represented in the group. The lunches are a way for all people learning Khmer, or studying Cambodia, to meet, exchange ideas and network. Anyone with an interest, or even a future interest in Cambodian studies is very welcome to join the group. Please contact Lorraine Paterson at lp20@cornell.edu.

SEAP CO-SPONSORS AWARD-WINNING DUTCH/INDONESIAN FILMMAKER'S VISIT TO CORNELL



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cornell
cinema
presents

the films of Leonard Retel Helmrich with the filmmaker in person

"The singlemost mind-blowing filmmaking technique the cinetrix has ever seen occurs in the films of Leonard Retel Helmrich, who was at the Flaherty Seminar this week."
—cinetrix, *daily.greencine.com*, June 24, 2007



THE EYE OF THE DAY

THUR APR 17 • 7:00

PROMISED PARADISE

FRI, APR 18 • 5:00

THE SHAPE OF THE MOON

FRI APR 18 • 7:15

**ALL SCREENINGS IN
WILLARD STRAIGHT THEATRE**

Cornell Cinema welcomes Dutch/Indonesian filmmaker Leonard Retel Helmrich for a special day engagement to present his three most recent documentaries—shot before, during and after Suharto stepped down as president in Indonesia. While filming a demonstration in 1995, Helmrich was arrested and jailed as a suspected spy, then declared *persona non grata*. He was not able to return to Indonesia until 1997. That same year he began following the Sijamsu This footage became *The*

Film screenings and discussions with the filmmaker:

Thursday, April 17 at 7pm:
The Eye of the Day (2001, 92 minutes)

Friday, April 18 at 5pm at
Cornell Cinema
Promised Paradise (2006, 52 minutes)

Friday, April 18 at 7:15 pm:
Shape of the Moon (2005, 92 minutes)

All screenings at Willard Straight Auditorium

Director Leonard Retel Helmrich is a Dutch/Indonesian filmmaker who worked as a drama director and cameraman in the Netherlands before going to Indonesia to make a series of documentaries that have won awards world wide. His most famous film *Shape Of The Moon* won Best Documentary in the World Docs Competition at Sundance 2005 as well as at the International Documentary Film festival Amsterdam (IDFA) in 2004 where he won the prestigious Joris Ivens Award. Leonard developed a theoretical perspective for his work as well as a practical technique for an approach that he calls "single shot cinema," involving long takes with a constantly moving camera. He has also designed a special camera mount that allows extraordinary stability and maneuverability in shooting called "SteadyWings." Having spent years designing this technique he now also runs workshops for broadcasters and with filmmakers to share his skills, most recently in Amsterdam, Belgium, Kansas City USA, South Africa, Germany, Indonesia and Sydney, Australia. Cornell Cinema, with co-sponsorship from the Southeast Asia Program, is excited to be able to bring Helmrich to Cornell for discussions following the screenings of his films.

F I L M D E S C R I P T I O N S

THE EYE OF THE DAY (2001, 92 minutes)

In 1998 a deep political and economic crisis forced President Suharto to resign after 32 years in power. This was the beginning of the tumultuous period known in Indonesia as the Reformasi. With a population of 200 million, Indonesia has seen ongoing political change, accompanied by protests, poverty and general insecurity. *The Eye of the Day* documents these conflicts as they play out in the lives of sixty-year-old Rumijah, her two sons Bakti and Dwi, and her friend Ibu Sum. In the cinéma vérité tradition, filmmaker Helmrich creates this cinematographic feast for the eyes while capturing the trials and tribulations of everyday life in Indonesia today. While filming a demonstration in 1995, Helmrich was arrested and jailed as a suspected spy, then declared persona non grata. He was not able to return to Indonesia until 1997 - that same year he began following Rumijah and her family with his camera.

SHAPE OF THE MOON (2005, 92 minutes)

In this vivid follow up to *The Eye of the Day* (2001), director Leonard Retel Helmrich again visits Indonesia through three generations of the Samsuddin family. Rumidjah, a 62 year-old Catholic widow, lives in a working-class district of Jakarta, with her son Bakti, a new Muslim convert, and her granddaughter Tari. Since the fall of Suharto, she has witnessed the country pass through a period of socio-political chaos. Islam, Indonesia's largest religion, is trying to maintain order and discipline, while becoming increasingly fundamentalist in its tone. These changes and conflicts with her son make Rumidjah long for life in the simple country village of her birth. Mother and son's good-natured quarrels take place against the background of anti-US demonstrations and an Islamic neighborhood watch. In this way the film continually connects small issues with large ones. There are no interviews, no voice-over. *Shape of the Moon* offers the kind of cinema vérité where the camera moves intuitively along with the action. Joris Ivens Award, International Documentary Festival Amsterdam; Grand Prize, World Cinema Documentary, Sundance Film Festival.

PROMISED PARADISE (2006, 52 minutes)

Banned in Indonesia, *Promised Paradise* follows the quest of an Indonesian puppeteer to meet three men convicted of the 2002 nightclub bombings in Bali. Along the way, director Leonard Retel Helmrich shows the puppeteer's unique method of exploring the issue of terrorism through puppet shows, featuring - among other things - a dancing Osama Bin Laden doll and a shadow-play attack on the World Trade Center.

In a suburb in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, the largest Muslim community of the world, encased in a cardboard television set, troubadour Agus re-enacts the September 11 - 2001 attacks in New York in front of a public of children, using the packaging of a toy featuring the World Trade Centre and a weird looking fish-plane. "Everything you see on your television is a lie: in this cardboard television the people are made of flesh and blood," he explains. Looking for answers, Agus tries to encounter terrorist Imam Samudra, the organizer of the 2002 discotheque bombing in Bali, in his cell in order to better corner him. He even consults a paranormal medium to enter in contact with one of the suicide bombers who died during the attack, and ask him if he regrets his act. *Promised Paradise* confronts reality to theatrical performances through scenes inspired by acts of violence that shatter the country and the confusions that plague Indonesian society.

Suharto stepped down as president in Indonesia. V
filming a demonstration in 1995, Helmrich was arre

SOUTHEAST ASIAN FILMS You SHOULD NOT Miss!

LORRAINE PATERSON WAS KIND ENOUGH TO SHARE HER SHORT-LIST OF RECOMMENDED FILMS FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA. ALL OF THESE FILMS ARE READILY AVAILABLE IN THE U.S. THROUGH NETFLIX AND OTHER SOURCES. THE SEAP BULLETIN IS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR FILM REVIEWS AND SUGGESTIONS—SO SEND US YOUR LIST OR THOUGHTS ON YOUR FAVORITE FILMS FROM THE REGION. REVIEWS THAT DISCUSS HOW TO USE A FILM AS PART OF TEACHING A CLASS ARE ALSO WELCOME. ~THE EDITOR

“BE WITH ME” *Singapore – 2007*

The latest film of one of Singapore’s *enfant terribles*, this is Eric Khoo as a kinder, gentler director mixing the inspirational (real) life of Theresa Chan (who is both dumb and deaf) and fictitious story lines of various disenchanted Singaporeans. It made a hardened film critic for the *New York Times* cry. Enough said.

“CITIZEN DOG” *Thailand – 2004*

The much anticipated subtitled version is finally here. In startling (computer-generated) bright colours, Thai New Wave director, Wisit Sasanatieng tells the story of Pod as he moves from his rural village to a sardine factory in Bangkok. It is quirky, endearing and rather addictive. From talking geckos to smoking Thai teddy bears, this is a Thailand you have never seen before but become increasingly enchanted by.

“RICE PEOPLE,” *Cambodia – 1994*

If you have not seen it, you must seek it out. Rithy Pahn’s moving story of a Cambodian family in post-Khmer Rouge Cambodia explores Cambodian village life and its grinding hardships with incredibly sensitivity and excellent acting by a largely amateur cast. Highly recommended.

“THE BLOSSOMING OF MAXIMO OLIVEROS” *Philippines – 2005*

Directed by Auraeus Solito, this tale of a twelve-year old gay boy in Manila depicts life in the slums of Manila with vivid authenticity. Hailed as a captivating coming of age story, it is both disturbing and moving, and a remarkable performance by Nathan Lopez as Maxi will draw you into the difficult dramas of daily life at the bottom rungs of Philippine society.

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at the Flaherty Sem
ne.com, June 24, 2007



FOREVER FEVER

Written and Directed by: Glen Goei

Produced by: Tiger Tiger Productions Pte Ltd./Shaw Organisation (Singapore distributor) 1998

Runtime: 95 minutes

EDITOR'S NOTE: This review contains spoilers. Read on at your own risk!

FOREVER FEVER—A SINGAPOREAN JOHN TRAVOLTA TURNED ICON OF ASIAN VALUES?

Wei-Li Woo

The film *Forever Fever*, known as *That's the Way I Like It* to American audiences thanks to distribution by Miramax, is a remake of *Saturday Night Fever*, the 1977 hit that made disco and John Travolta synonymous. In the Singaporean version of *Saturday Night Fever*, however, the language is tame and the male protagonist and his friends are portrayed as nice and even silly boys. The main character, Ah Hock's friends are hardly the chauvinistic, misogynistic and racist lot that Tony Manero's friends are. The female protagonists are paragons of self-sacrificing virtue, seemingly incapable of jealousy or meanness. They might be beautiful and attractive, but we do not see them portrayed as sexual. Everyone seems so *nice* in this "feel-good" Singaporean comedy.

At the end of *Forever Fever*, Ah Hock gives up his dream of buying a Triumph motorcycle and cruising the streets with Julie, his glamorous and Westernized dance partner. Instead, he gives his winnings from the dance competition to his brother, Leslie, who needs it for an operation. Ah Hock's final decision to give his brother the money he would have used to buy a motorcycle appears to show that "family values 'triumph' over individual materialistic desires" (Khoo, 4). This view, however, becomes problematic when we look at what Leslie actually represents.

Leslie, always the "perfect" brother, is a medical student and the dutiful son who will be able to support his parents in the future through his prestigious career. Ah Hock, on the other hand, works at the local supermarket stocking shelves. In the family scenes at the dinner table, Ah Hock's parents shower their affections on his brother, and criticize him for being too caught up with his "half past six" motorcycle. It comes as a shock to them all when Leslie confesses that he wants to become a woman and later tells his father how much he actually hates medicine.

Although Leslie is the filial son, his

desire to pursue personal happiness at the expense of being disowned, and the materialistic nature of their family relations highlight tensions within the "hybrid neo-Orientalist Confucianism" depicted in the film (Khoo, 3). On the surface Hock might seem like a poster boy for "Asian Values," a term coined by Singapore's founding father Lee Kuan Yew, to justify Singapore's authoritarian regime. Lee emphasized that Singaporean society, and by that he meant Singaporean Chinese society, had a cultural legacy of putting family and society above self, and of privileging order over freedom. This was used to explain why Singaporeans were not suited for a plural democracy. Hock does put his brother's needs before his own at the end of the film. But what triumphs is not family values but the pursuit of personal freedom and choice that in some ways is antithetical to "Asian Values."

Leslie's decision to have a sex-change operation in spite of his parents' vehement disapproval is a sign that he is no longer willing to be the obedient son. Some of his statements even suggest that he might not continue studying medicine. Leslie is sick of trying to fulfill his parents' expectations; "I want to start living life for myself" is his tearful explanation to his father. But rather than allowing his parents time to get used to the idea that their son wants to be a woman, Leslie makes the decision on his own without discussing it with his family at all. Rather abruptly, over the smoking candles from his birthday cake, he tells his parents that he is going to have a sex-change operation. Perhaps the lack of character development was not deliberate, but it appears that Leslie has defiantly chosen himself above family values without any dialogue or room for compromise. What is interesting is that although Leslie makes this decision on his own, he ends up needing financial assistance from his family, which Hock provides. The penultimate scene in the film is of an impersonal monetary

transaction. Hock does not even wait until his brother, who has attempted suicide, wakes up, he just leaves the money in Leslie's hands as Leslie lies sleeping or unconscious (it is not clear which) in the hospital. Hock's giving Leslie the money is not a sign of the "triumph" of family values over materialism, but rather a sign that Hock understands his brother's need for freedom and self-determination away from the stifling hierarchy of their family.

Leslie is also trying to break free of his anticipated role as the main breadwinner in the family. To his parents, Leslie is practically a status symbol, because of the prestige that his anticipated medical career confers on them. He is also assurance of a stable income stream, which will ensure their comfort in old age. Materialism and the notion that the family is as much an economic as it is a social unit, inform the Singaporean Chinese view of family obligations. It is difficult to make the claim that "Asian Values" and the familial ties that it promotes are antithetical to materialism. On the contrary, in the Singaporean Chinese context the two are woven together.

Forever Fever ends on an unquestionably positive note. Rather than challenging the dominant ideology of "Asian Values," an invented concept in itself, the film glorifies personal choice as a way to escape the stifling paternalism of the family (which could be seen as a metaphor for the state or national culture). The film, unfortunately, does not question the materialism disguised within family values, nor does it criticize Singaporean national culture—its rigid ideals of success or its oppressive paternalism.

Works Cited

Khoo, Gaik Cheng. "The Asian Male Spectacle in Glen Goei's Film *That's The Way I Like It* (a.k.a. *Forever Fever*)." *Asian Research Institute: Working Paper Series*. 26 (2004).

FOR THOSE OF YOU LESS FAMILIAR WITH BLOGGING, I would like to introduce you a great blog by in-coming Government professor Tom Pepinsky. The two excerpts below give you a small taste of the lively description and commentary to be found on his blog. Check out the following website:

http://indolaysia.typepad.com/some_southeast_asian_junk/politics/index.html



[Some Southeast Asian Junk](#)

Indonesia, Malaysia, Politics, Food, and Music

January 13, 2008

Signing off from Doha

Last post for a couple of months. I'll be back again this summer, maybe with JM again. I'll close with some final thoughts, with no common connection among them.

I like all fruits in Indonesia except for durian and papaya. Many people like papaya, but many people do not. It's too cloying. I think it tastes like dirty rotten trash.

Qatar Airways has great on-demand music. I mentioned this previously, but I did some more exploring and it's much better than I thought. In addition to the [previous ones I mentioned](#), I found Pet Sounds, Who's Next, loads of Beatles/Stones/Zeppelin, Iggy Pop, Lou Reed, Parklife, Different Class, Joy Division (the second one), Massive Attack (the first one), Doolittle, Odelay, the "big three" of 90s grunge (Nevermind, Ten, Badmotorfinger), and tons more that escape me now. If the list of albums that Qatar Airways had was my entire collection of albums for the rest of my life, I wouldn't be too upset. I wonder if the Qatari government knows what Lou Reed is actually talking about on Transformer.

It's raining here. Didn't think that happened.

When Soeharto dies, I'll write an obituary here, even if I'm in the states.

It actually is difficult to tell what parties are Islamic parties, even if you use the simple metric we use (do they say that their basis is Islam?). Is a party whose basis is officially Pancasila, but which is a political organization based on a moderate Muslim organization of about 30 million people called "The Awakening of the Ulama," an Islamic party or not? We'll let the respondents tell us what they think. This summer, I'll ask the leaders what they think themselves.

12:11 PM in [General](#) | [Permalink](#)

[« Signing off from Doha](#) | [Main](#)

January 29, 2008

Soeharto: A Political Obituary

Soeharto died on January 27 in Jakarta. He was 86 years old. [I have written previously](#) that Soeharto was an often-contradictory figure. I think that this is how he will be remembered. I'm writing this "political obituary" not only to collect my own thoughts on his death and his legacy, but also to clarify and correct some misconceptions that I have seen in the media over the past two days. ...

What Soeharto knew, though, was that ruling through control alone is expensive and dangerous. It is better to be respected, not just feared, and it is always better to incentivize your subordinates to protect your rule than to compel them to do the same. Soeharto, moreover, realized that Indonesia's economy offered the tools for accomplishing these tasks. This was Soeharto's greatest insight. The fact that ordinary Indonesians themselves craved development and sensible economic management in the wake of Sukarno's incompetent rule meant that Soeharto was able to adopt the policies that would spur economic development at the same time that he constructed one of the world's most impressive systems of patronage and corruption.

One way to think about this—and this is a perspective developed independently by [Andrew MacIntyre](#) and [Ross McLeod](#), based on work by [Shleifer and Vishny](#)—is to consider Soeharto as a franchiser. Or, less charitably, a mafioso.

Tony Soprano at age 80?

Source: NYTimes

Soeharto's subordinates (or "franchisees," or "made men") did his dirty work for him, and in exchange were offered lucrative business opportunities throughout the archipelago. These subordinates (usually ABRI figures with territorial commands) had small fiefdoms, maintained their own micro-fiefdoms from which they extracted tributes and levies, and passed a portion of these proceeds up to Soeharto, who sat at the apex of this steep pyramid of corruption. In exchange for tribute, the subordinates received protection and political favoritism. For subordinates, the incentive to perpetuate the system came from the immense opportunities for personal enrichment that a personal relationship with Soeharto offered. For Soeharto, a never-ending pool of potential cronies allowed him to keep overly-ambitious subordinates in check. And the genius is that Soeharto also had an incentive to keep the economy running smoothly. Economic growth throughout the economy flowed right into his wallet. This means that Soeharto himself had a strong motivation to keep corruption "in check," to make sure that it never hampered growth. (Think of Matthew Bevilacqua and Brendan Filone: too much corruption is bad for business.) And perhaps ironically, this growth that lined Soeharto's pockets spilled over into the entire Indonesian economy. While the greatest benefits were heaped upon those with high political connections, a rising tide did lift most boats. Under Soeharto's rule the economy grew by an average of over 7% per year. This is one of the greatest feats of development in any country in recent history. Soeharto, though immensely corrupt, was no Sani Abacha, no Mobutu Sese Soko, no Ferdinand Marcos. He wasn't even a Pinochet or a Fujimori. The World Bank ranks Soeharto as the most corrupt politician in modern history, yet the economic development that he engineered is stunning.



Soeharto's capitalist impulses may have come from his rejection of communism and his recognizance that a market economy offered unprecedented opportunities for self-enrichment. But it is unlikely that Soeharto knew much about how to run an economy, the arcane minutiae of interest rates, bank regulation, trade policy, and the like. For this, he depended on a small clique of "technocrats," economists trained at the University of California at Berkeley under the auspices of a Ford Foundation program. These economists are commonly known as the Berkeley Mafia. (Contrary to some media reports, they were not an actual mafia.) The Berkeley Mafia are often likened to the Chicago Boys, a group of neo-conservative economists who advised Pinochet in Chile. (NB: This is "neo-conservative" in the Rolf Luders sense, not the Paul Wolfowitz sense.) This is misleading, for liberal though they were, Indonesia's technocrats were eminently pragmatic. Indonesia in the late 1960s did not receive a shock treatment of deregulation such as that which Chile received in the mid-1970s, nor did Soeharto turn over the entire economy to the technocrats, as Pinochet did. Pragmatism was necessary, for the Berkeley Mafia depended on Soeharto for their influence—and Soeharto was as concerned with enriching his cronies and placating nationalist generals as he was with textbook market efficiency. Still, for decades Soeharto listened to the Berkeley Mafia when it mattered the most: in the adjustment programs of the late 1960s that brought inflation under control, in the outward export orientation of the economy, and in the halting State Enterprise deregulation of the mid-1980s. The Berkeley Mafia have often been blamed by Soeharto's critics for authoring the financial liberalization of the late 1980s that foreshadowed the financial collapse of 1997, but the technocrats certainly did not advocate the types of financial misdealings that made Indonesia's banking sector so fragile. The Berkeley Mafia's economic ideology, favoring free markets as much as possible, was always tempered by realism. It is to Soeharto's credit that he was willing to heed the advice of the Berkeley Mafia when he did.

A graduate student on the trail in Vietnam: lost & found among the stacks

—John Duong Phan

The book was a Ming Dynasty glossary of Vietnamese, a quick-reference manual for diplomats produced by an office known as the *Interpreters Institute* 會同館. A micro-film of the original manuscript was shot in Saigon in the early part of the last century, a copy of which is held in our own Echols Collection. The film, however, is incomplete, and so I set off for Vietnam last December, with the side-quest of hunting down one of the remaining, original manuscripts.

The Vietnamese text was one of thirteen foreign glossaries, commissioned during a period of imperial expansion. Our best guess for authorship relies on a preface written by Zhu Zhifan 朱之蕃 [1564-?], the optimus of the 1595 Metropolitan Examinations. In this preface, Zhu Zhifan attributes the glossaries to his friend and classmate, Mao Ruizheng 茅瑞徵 [fl 1597-1636], which places the production of the glossaries somewhere in the early 1620's.

The next two hundred odd years of its history are lost; how it was used, when, and by whom, left undocumented, and historically cloaked. The text only resurfaces in the 19th century, when Qing Dynasty bibliophile Yang Shoujing 楊守敬 (1839-1915) purchased a manuscript during his tenure in Japan. This manuscript—one of six to survive—passed on to Leonard Arousseau, who obtained it from Yang in 1912, and donated the text to the Hanoi *Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient* (EFEFO) in that same year. As far as I could discover, the trail ended there, in the Hanoi EFEFO. The other five manuscripts were distributed outside of Vietnam—four in Japan, and one in England. This one however—the copy that Yang Shoujing had found and Arousseau had purchased—this one's last known resting place had been in Hanoi.

It was therefore, at EFEFO, where I started my search. The new building lies in the neighborhood of *Ha Hoi*, near Lake Thuyen

Quang—about a six minute motorbike ride from the original EFEFO site. I was greeted by air-conditioning and a courteous receptionist, who asked me to wait while he searched through the computerized catalogue. I stepped over into the reading room, where three young students were sifting through bulletins. About two minutes later, the receptionist told me that it wasn't in the collection, but to try the new *Institute for Information*—the original site of the Hanoi EFEFO.

"EFEFO left very quickly," he told me, "and a lot of their old collection stayed in the building."

The building itself was a kind of inverse of the new EFEFO site. Where EFEFO had been quaint and new and neat, the Information Institute was old, and grand, and falling apart. Layers of paint were peeling in the humid air, and half the building was under (what looked like interminable) construction. Nevertheless, the library's courtyard was crammed with motorbikes, the reading room overflowing with students.

My initial experience was identical. It was like the skin of the Institute had the same, modern, automated sleekness—a smiling receptionist and a computerized catalog that didn't have what I was looking for. The illusion lasted for about twenty hours; when I returned the following day, I was pulled beneath this veneer, into a dustier, grittier place that—for a moment at least—held more promise.

When I came back the next morning, I was told that the *catalogued* collection did not have what I was looking for, but that it was possible that the "old French records" might list the book. A librarian then lead me down a hallway choking with sawdust and deafened by the roar of construction, to a narrow room with a small stool—and an enormous wall of card catalogues. The cards were divided into French, Chinese, and Vietnamese entries.

"See if you can find a record in here," she

told me, and then left.

About forty-five minutes later—and no luck, my librarian friend reappeared, cocked her head, and then beckoned me over one more time. We left the little room, and went down another hallway, slipped behind a broken bookshelf and into a nook of the old building, where *three more* ancient and dilapidated card catalogues sat, one after the other, like old beer bottles waiting for a slingshot. Half of the drawers were empty or almost empty, the other half stuffed with random cards and dead spiders, pocked with rust stains. An inch of dust sat on everything like the first snow of the year.

"Try here," she said. For the next two hours or so, I pulled drawers, ploughed through drifts of cards, and probed behind the draw frames. By the time my librarian friend came back, my hands were black, my stomach empty, and still there was no sign of the book.

With condolences, my librarian friend let me know that this was the end of the line.

It was only later that a friend pointed out to me the probability that the Paris EFEFO headquarters might house the text—even if the local (Hanoi) EFEFO catalogue did not list it. Nevertheless, my romp through the shelves of the old center left me wondering just how many books were stacked away, still invisible to the computerized system, out of reach—not for a stringent access policy—but casualties of circumstance, funding, and the heaving movements of information bureaucracies. It came as a slow, but rude shock to realize that such quantities of knowledge could still disappear—and yet my search took place against a backdrop of construction, crammed reading rooms, and the irresistible expansion of the computerized catalogue. It finally occurred to me that, if another certainly lies beside the fact of so many lost texts, it may well be that more indeed reappear with each passing hour.



Burmese adventures, January 2008

—Sally McConnell-Ginet

It's hard to know where to begin in sharing with you a little of the flavor of our visit to Myanmar/Burma, but I'll start with some general impressions and then give you a brief day-by-day chronicle of our time there.

First, the obvious question: should one visit this country at this time? The well documented awfulness of the military regime in charge, including its harsh and repressive response to the September and October demonstrations led by monks (the so-called "saffron revolution"), certainly should give one pause. The Nobel laureate dissident, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (famously known as "the Lady"), has urged international sanctions, and has suggested that tourist visits may help support the regime rather than ordinary people. Others, however, including many who have worked with Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy, believe that visitors—especially those who talk with a wide range of people and are willing to listen and learn—offer much needed contact with a wider world.

The ruling State Peace & Development Council (SPDC, formerly the State Law & Order Restoration Council or Slorc, renamed in 1997 in Orwellian style on the advice of a Washington, DC public relations firm!) discourages foreign contacts, but increasingly ordinary Burmese listen to BBC and CNN and some 10% of the population regularly accesses the internet (though unreliable electricity and government censorship complicate that access). In some places (and during some periods) people are constrained in speaking by the very realistic fear that they will be overheard and reported, but in other places (and at other times) they feel free to be relatively open.

Our guide, Shine (that was how he introduced himself and was designated by the travel agency—he has a different Burmese name), was the key to our successful interactions: he was very skilled at putting others at ease and drawing them out, translating for us and them. And he recognized and appreciated our interest in exchanges with ordinary folks.

What is often not apparent in western media accounts of the Burmese situation is its complexity. There are not just good NLD guys and bad SPDC functionaries (though there certainly are plenty of both). Myanmar is the most ethnically diverse country in southeast Asia, and there have been civil wars

and insurgencies dividing the population for at least the 60 years since independence (and indeed going back much further). The regime (which is overwhelmingly Bamar) has reached at least tentative settlements with some of the minority groups, but enduring well-being of the country would seem to require achieving workable collaboration



among different groups.

The February 14, 2008 issue of the New York Review of Books has a good, though brief, article by Pankaj Mishra, which some of you may have seen: "The Revolt of the Monks," (vol LV, #2, 36-38). I also highly recommend *The River of Lost Footsteps: Burmese Histories* by Thant Myint-U, grandson of U Thant, former Secretary General of the UN. Carl and I read the 2006 book by Thant Myint-U before leaving—in Bangkok on the way home we found a new edition with an excellent afterword dated October 15, 2007 and dealing with the events of this past autumn and international responses to them (whether that edition is available here yet I don't know).

Anyway, we did decide to go, and we were very glad we did. We never felt in any particular danger ourselves, and we learned an enormous amount—from our wonderfully articulate and intelligent guide, Shine; from our "fellow travelers", especially John Badgley, formerly in charge of Cornell's Burmese collection and a scholar of Burmese social and political organization, and Derek Tonkin, former British ambassador to Thailand and, more briefly, to Vietnam with a brief spell, I think, on the Burma desk and a great interest in Myanmar (networkmyanmar.org is the website he's recently established); and from the people we encountered both at tourist destinations and off the beaten track.

As my friend and colleague John

Whitman said to me, much of what makes Myanmar so "exotic" stems from its long isolation and thus the absence of the westernization found in so much of the rest of the world. For example, oxcarts are widespread as transport for people and goods and motorized vehicles are pretty much restricted to overloaded trucks and buses, often precari-



ously laden with both passengers, produce, and many other kinds of stuff (e.g., lots of baskets being taken to market, bundled rice straw). There are many bicycles (some w/ a side-car—we rode a couple of times in these "trishaws"), some motorbikes (and some of our group were ferried behind on these), and lots of (mostly barefoot) pedestrians. Only in Yangon did we see a significant number of taxis and even private cars as well as trams.

Typical village houses sport woven bamboo walls and wooden stilts, and agriculture is generally conducted with little mechanized help—we saw farmers carrying water in old gasoline cans on poles over their shoulders to irrigate tomatoes. Cooking is generally over small fires, and electricity and thus refrigeration is rare outside hotels and major cities. Even where electricity exists it is less than constant—sometimes on a schedule of a few hours daily, other times alternating days, and everywhere susceptible to unscheduled interruption (tho' most hotels we stayed in had generators that fairly quickly kicked in).

Most men wear longyis, a tubular piece of cloth (often very colorful) that functions like a skirt, tied in the middle—it can be caught up between the legs for wading in the water or other situations where something like shorts would be in order. Women too wear longyis but they are tied on the side, and sometimes women wear something that looks similar but is more a wrap-around skirt with a tie. Washing is frequently in streams—

and the washers often also shampoo their hair and wash themselves and their current clothing at the same time. Water buffalo were also treated to shampoos in the streams, brushes being used to groom them. Most women and children sport thaneka on their cheeks and sometimes forehead—it is a paste that functions as make-up and sunscreen, produced by grinding the bark of a plant something like sandalwood, and the thaneka patches are usually pale tan/yellow blobs (in the cities we sometimes saw thaneka applied in decorative patterns—e.g., lotus leaf).

Women often carry trays of stuff (flowers, fruit, vegetables, assorted food) or other things (pots & pans, baskets) on their heads, walking erect and gracefully w/ very heavy loads. C saw two young women w/ trays of fruit kicking off their sandals to enter a

encountered in India or Nepal.

Landscapes were varied. I took a few pictures from our plane the first day, which showed both flat red clay plains and forested mountains as well as bright green rice paddies and terraced fields, and often visible ribbons of river running through the scene. And everywhere golden stupas and temples dot the landscape, visible from the low-flying plane as well as from the bus in which we rode.

Buddhism is integral to everyday life, from the pink-robed, golden-sashed nuns with their parasols or umbrellas and their bowls for gifts of rice and other food to the young people standing by the road with silver bowls for donations for the local temple to “baby” monks (boys from 6 to 12 or so) in their saffron/red robes studying in a

met the Catholic bishop of Moulmein and also saw Adoniram Judson’s First Baptist Church there) or have brought Hinduism or Islam from India, Nepal, and Bangladesh (we saw a couple of Hindu temples and also several mosques). Many Burmese of all these religions also still invoke “nats”—spirits associated with earlier animistic practices—in a variety of ways (saw several nat shrines along the road, e.g.). But as so many Burmese believe their ultimate well-being (success in future lives) is tied to support of Buddhist institutions and gilding is a very visible form of such support, gold spires constantly punctuate the other features of the landscape.

Even the main roads are generally only about a lane and a half—our bus would approach a teetering truck (w/ bikes and pedestrians on both sides) and it sometimes seemed like a game of chicken, tho’ eventually someone always pulled off to let the other go through. Almost all vehicles have steering wheels on the right (as in Britain or Japan, where driving is on the left), but some decades ago traffic was switched from the left to the right, giving the driver a considerable challenge. Our bus had a second attendant who was the lookout on the left—it may have been good having driver on the right as the clearance for passing all the slow traffic was pretty small. Perhaps the most hair-raising was a day spent on very curvy mountain roads where we jounced over the broken pavement and got right by the edge of what looked like a pretty unstable shoulder. And then there was the moment when we suddenly rounded a curve and saw a couple of dozen stopped vehicles. Turned out repairs were in progress on the bridge we needed to cross, hammering down a board or two on what looked to me a somewhat dubious structure. Other large vehicles had their turn crossing before us—didn’t know whether to be reassured that the bridge had held them or to worry that their weight had further weakened it. But nothing more than a few scrapes of minor stuff—other drivers’ carelessness!—marred our trip. Although the lengthy driving over bumpy roads was certainly tiring, it did allow us kinds of sights and experiences we would not otherwise have had as we’d just pull over when something caught someone’s eye—I’ll offer some examples in the chronicle below. Gasoline was purchased on the black market—poured from cans into bus and some cans stored in compartment of bus (again, we’re very lucky that we had nothing to trigger an explosion).



monastery (bare feet are required in monasteries and temples for respect and are often expected in houses or schools to keep dirt from floors) and then stooping to pick up the sandals and arising to move ahead, all this w/o ever extending a hand to keep their trays from slipping—a master class in balance and beautiful control. I missed that particular pair but gaped in admiration at women riding bikes with large trays on their heads. The young women were often very beautiful as were many of the young men and children—our guide was gorgeous, tall and slim and with a wonderful face-lighting smile (and also elegant clothes—sometimes longyi and sometimes a longyi-like wide-legged pair of pants, color-coordinated w/ nice shirts and in the cooler north, a scarf round his neck). We did notice, however, the tolls of hard work and poor dentistry and other health care problems in middle-aged and older people—as well as occasional skin conditions in children. Although hardly anyone was overweight we did not see signs of serious hunger or the kind of poverty frequently

monastery to people (male people, that is—“ladies” not allowed) slathering gold on Buddha images and other “native tourists” (title of an entertaining book by Ma Thanegi)—i.e., Burmese visiting in large numbers the many Buddhist sites also open for tourists and making offerings, praying, and the like. The shaved heads and bright robes of monks and nuns are frequently encountered—most Buddhist boys spend at least a week or two at about 6 or 7 in a monastery and frequently return for periods of several weeks or months as young or older adults. How often girls participate as nuns is unclear—we talked with four young nuns (10 to 14) who said they were in it for the long haul, but certainly older women can and do enter such communities, sometimes permanently but sometimes for temporary stretches of meditation and study.

The monks are not supposed to cook or do similar work but nuns are “allowed” such labor. The Bamar people, the major ethnic group, are almost all Buddhist; some other ethnic groups have been Christianized (we

EDITOR’S NOTE: This travel (b)log was initially written for family, a few friends, and fellow travelers. The detailed daily chronicle has been omitted. To read two other accounts of this trip see former SEAP faculty and Echols curator John Badgley’s account “Musing midst the Pagodas” (<http://networkmyanmar.org/images/musing.pdf>) and “Myanmar: Divergent Views on the Way Ahead” by Derek Tonkin, former British ambassador to Thailand (<http://networkmyanmar.org/images/bp%208%20feb.pdf>). Tonkin’s piece discusses a Karen village wedding and links to footage on YouTube in a clip titled “Karen Dancers” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqNhuzsMH2U>).



PROFESSOR MICHAEL PELETZ'
 “GENDER PLURALISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA SINCE THE
 EARLY MODERN TIMES”: AN INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP
 KAHIN CENTER, 22-23 FEBRUARY 2008

On Feb. 22-23 scholars who specialize on gender, sexuality and transgender issues joined us at the Kahin Center for a workshop focused on Professor Michael Peletz' new book manuscript, *Gender Pluralism: Southeast Asia Since Early Modern Times*. Peletz, whose renowned work on Southeast Asia includes *Islamic Modern: Religious Courts and Cultural Politics in Malaysia*, *Reason and Passion: Representations of Gender in a Malay Society*, and *Gender, Sexuality, and Body Politics in Modern Asia* among other books, teaches anthropology at Emory University. He wanted to present his latest manuscript at Cornell to take advantage of Cornell's strengths in the area of Southeast Asian studies and gender and sexuality studies. The Southeast Asia Program similarly wanted to support the creation of the best possible scholarship on Southeast Asia by providing a place where scholars can come to discuss and crystallize their ideas.

To this end, Tamara Loos hosted an international workshop at the Kahin Center where twelve faculty and graduate students gathered to discuss the manuscript over a two-day period. Four panels tackled different sections of the nearly five hundred page text and offered Professor Peletz critical feedback about it. The collaborative format not only produced constructive input for Peletz, but also invited thought-provoking conversations among all participants about related themes in their own scholarship. We hope these conversations will continue long after the manuscript has been published by Routledge.

Many sponsors including not only the Southeast Asia Program, but also the Departments of Anthropology and History, the Society for the Humanities, Southeast Asia Program Outreach, and the Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program, supported the workshop. Its success, however, stemmed from the generous input of the participants (listed below) whose stimulating readings of Michael Peletz' new scholarship enabled an intellectually vibrant and engaged discussion about gender pluralism in Southeast Asia, past and present.

Michael Peletz, Professor, Anthropology, Emory University
 Evelyn Blackwood, Associate Professor, Anthropology, Purdue University
 Jane Ferguson, PhD Candidate, Anthropology of Southeast Asia, Cornell University
 Durba Ghosh, Assistant Professor, South Asian history, Cornell University
 Tom Gibson, Professor and Chair, Anthropology, University of Rochester
 Tyrell Haberkorn, Visiting Professor, Peace and Conflict Studies, Colgate University
 Mark Johnson, Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology, Hull University
 Ward Keeler, Associate Professor, Anthropology, University of Texas at Austin
 Tamara Loos, Associate Professor, Southeast Asian history, Cornell University
 Kathryn March, Professor, Anthropology, Cornell University
 Kaja McGowan, Associate Professor, Southeast Asian art history, Cornell University
 Steve Sangren, Professor, Anthropology, Cornell University
 Megan Sinnott, Assistant Professor, Women's Studies Institute, Georgia State University

Cornell University Southeast Asia Program Graduate Student Conference

March 14-16, 2008

FRIDAY (3/14)

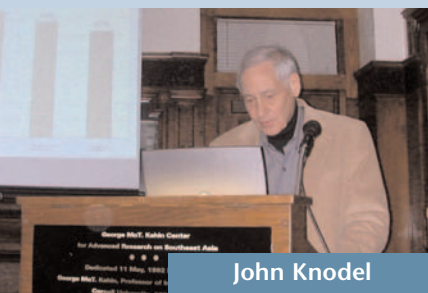
- 3:00 – 4:30 Echols Collection Tour/Visit
- 5:00 Registration
- 5:30 – 6:30 **Thongchai Winichakul, Keynote talk, “Silence of the Wolf: encounters with the perpetrators of the 1976 massacre in Bangkok”**
- 7:30 - Dinner at Taste of Thai

SATURDAY (3/15)

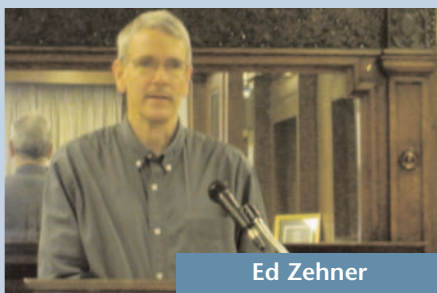
- 9:00 – 9:30 Breakfast
- 9:30 – 11:30 **Panel 1, “Alternative Visions of the State: Rewriting the Past, Imagining the Future” (moderator Thongchai Winichakul)**
- (1) “On the experience of being consumed: Jarai highlanders’ encounters with government in northeast Cambodia,” Jonathan Padwe (Yale University)
 - (2) “State (Dis)formation in Burma’s Shan State,” John Buchanan (University of Washington, Seattle)
 - (3) “Controversy of Apostasy in Malaysia: the power rise of neoconservative Islamic civil society,” Sophie Lemiere (Sciences-Po Paris)
 - (4) “Wife, Mother, Microcredit? Women’s Leadership and Gendered Change in Rural Vietnam,” Sukjong Hong (Cornell University)
- 11:30 – 1:00 Lunch, Aladdin (Middle-eastern) catered
- 1:00 – 2:30 **Panel 2, “Actions of Architecture: Space, spectacle, and violence in the making of the public sphere” (moderator: Lawrence Chua)**
- (1) “Encoding a Casino—A Case Study of the Politics of Aesthetics in Singapore,” Kah Wee Lee (University of California, Berkeley)
 - (2) “Sufficiency and Spectacle: The Harmonious Dissonance of the 2006 Chiang Mai Ratchaphruek Floral Expo,” Andrew Johnson (Cornell University)
 - (3) “Racialized Dispossession and Entangled Justice in Medan, Indonesia,” Yen-ling Tsai (University of California, Santa Cruz)
- 2:30 – 2:45 Break
- 2:45 – 3:45 **Panel 3, “The Use of Sacred Objects in Mapping Time and Space” (moderator Pamela Nguyen Corey)**
- (1) “Thailand: The Center of the Theravada Buddhist World,” Melody Rod-ari (University of California Los Angeles UCLA)
 - (2) “Remembering Hindu-Buddhist Java: Photographic Memories from the Dutch East Indies,” Paul Bijl (Utrecht University)
- 3:45 – 4:00 Break
- 4:00 – 5:00 **Panel 4, “History Textbooks and National Identity” (moderator Adam Lindsay)**
- (1) “Splitting the Blood: The Language of National Solidarity in Burmese History Textbooks from the BSPP and Post-Socialist Eras,” Rosalie Metro (Cornell University)
 - (2) “Marginal Identity—A case analysis of high school history textbooks in Vietnam and in California,” TitiMary Tran (California State University, Long Beach CSULB)

SUNDAY (3/16)

- 8:30 – 9:00 Breakfast
- 9:00 – 10:30 **Panel 5, “Contemplating the Mirror: Literary Imaginings of Society in Flux” (moderator John Duong Phan)**
- (1) “The Sexual Body and Ethical Community in the Poetry of Xuan Dieu,” Richard Tran (University of California, Berkeley)
 - (2) “History from the Footnotes: National Imagination in the Rizal Morga,” Isabel Esterman (University of California, Berkeley)
 - (3) “Utuy Sontani and the ‘essence of Marxism,’” Scott Schlossberg (University of California, Berkeley)
- 10:30 – 11:00 Break
- 11:00 – 1:00 **Panel 6, “Conflicting Religious Worlds in Southeast Asia” (Jonathan Young/Tom Patton)**
- (1) “Vietnamese Catholic Anti-Communism: the Evolution of an Idea and a Movement, 1919-1954,” Charles Keith (Yale University)
 - (2) “A Rising Tide: The Buddhist Movement in 1964,” Hoang Ngo (University of Washington, Seattle)
 - (3) “Political Roots of Muslim-Christian Conflicts in Indonesia: Tracing the Origins of ‘Kristenisasi’ and ‘Islamisasi,’” Alexander Arifianto (Arizona State University)



John Knodel



Ed Zehner



Soumya James-Madhusudhan

Fall 2007

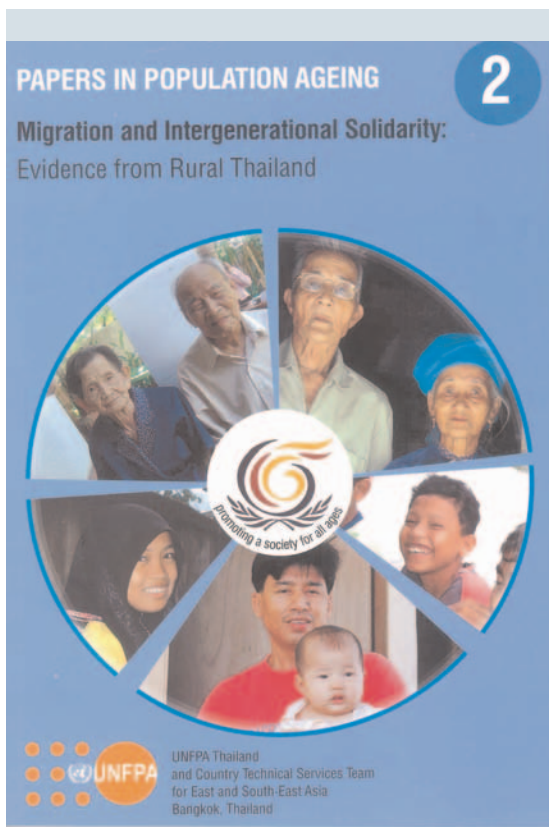
SEAP Brown Bags

NOVEMBER

- 29 Soumya James-Madhusudhan (PhD Candidate, Department of History of Art, Cornell University) – “Searching for the goddess in ancient Khmer art: re-examining temple art and inscriptions”

DECEMBER

- 6 John Knodel (Professor Emeritus, Department of Sociology, University of Michigan) – “Rural Parents with Urban Children: Assessing the impact of migration on older-age parents in Thailand”



MIGRATION AND INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY: EVIDENCE FROM RURAL THAILAND

By John Knodel, Jiraporn Kespichayawattana, Suvinee Wiwatwanich and Chanpen Saengtienchai

The publication examines the impact of out-migration from rural areas in Thailand on intergenerational solidarity. With increasing migration of young adults from rural areas to the towns and cities, Thailand offers an interesting case to examine the implications of migration for maintenance of relationships among family members of different generations. The Report provides extensive evidence from the first systematic survey focusing specifically on this issue. It thus provides a unique basis for assessing the complex implications of out-migration on older parents remaining behind in rural areas.

Available for downloading at:
http://cst.bangkok.unfpa.org/396_3368.asp

Brown Bags, continued

JANUARY

- 31 Alicia Turner (PhD Candidate, Divinity School, University of Chicago) – “Education, Democracy and the SCSana: Misunderstanding Buddhist Movements in Colonial and Contemporary Burma?”



Alicia Turner

FEBRUARY

- 7 Edwin Zehner (Visiting Fellow, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University) – “Doing Fieldwork in Thailand and Yemen”
- 14 Tamara Loos (Associate Professor, Department of History, Cornell University) – “Violent Intimacies: History and Affect in Siam”
- 21 Lydia Breckon (Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Massachusetts - Dartmouth) – “Survival, Success, Matrimony? Changing Circumstances of Cambodian migration to the U.S.”
- 28 Wan-ling Wee (A.D. White Fellow, Society for the Humanities, Cornell University) – “Alternative Asian Modernities? The case of Singapore”

MARCH

- 6 Kaja McGowan (Associate Professor, Department of Art History, Cornell University) – “Can a Painting Defy Death? Re-Embodying Wyana Karya Through His Work”
- 13 Nang Raw (Fulbright Fellow, Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy, Duke University) – “Nyein Foundation: A Burmese Local NGO and its Mission and Strategies”



Nang Raw

MAR 14-16 *SEAP Graduate Symposium*
MAR 15-23 *SPRING BREAK*

- 27 Vicente Rafael (Professor, Department of History, University of Washington) – “The Afterlife of Empire: Sovereignty and Revolution in the Spanish Philippines”

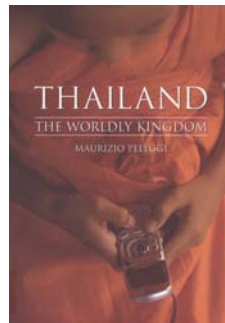
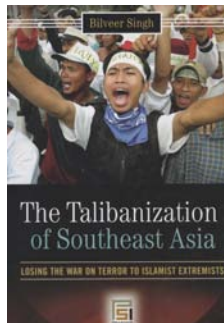
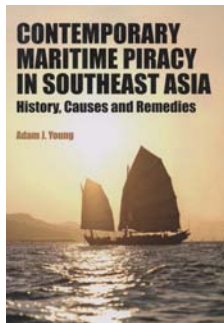
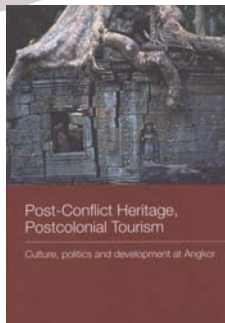
APRIL

APRIL 3-6 *Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting – Atlanta, GA*

- 10 Lorraine Paterson (Assistant Professor, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University) – “Landscapes of Cambodian Memory: Place, Accountability, and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal”
- 17 Mary Steedly (Professor, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University) – “Transparency and Apparition”
- 24 Donald Swearer (Distinguished Visiting Professor, Department Buddhist Studies, Harvard Divinity School) – “Presence-ing the Buddha in Northern Thailand: Ritual and Narrative Perspectives”

LIBRARY NEWS: UPDATES FROM THE ECHOLS COLLECTION

Greetings from the Echols collection. We want to remind you once again that we are available to help you with your research needs. Please contact either myself (Jeff Petersen jwp42@cornell.edu or Greg Green ghg4@cornell.edu) with any comments or questions you may have. We very much welcome a chance to hear from you about your research interests since this will give us a chance to look for and notify you about related items that come our way. Please contact us if you want us to keep a specific lookout for any needs you might have.



MONTHLY ACQUISITIONS:

To see our latest acquisitions, please check the following site:

<http://asia.library.cornell.edu/ac/Echols/Accessions-Lists.cfm>

Monthly updates are provided that list what we have just purchased for the collection. It is divided according to language.

THE ECHOLS NEW BOOK SECTION:

Also remember to check and browse the new book section in the Asia reading room. Many of our newest books are placed here for a short time.

SPECIAL PURCHASING TRIPS TO SOUTHEAST ASIA:

Our curator Greg Green is currently (through March) on a trip to Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos where he will be purchasing materials. He can be reached at ghg4@cornell.edu if you would like him to try to pick up any specific materials that you might need. If you are taking a trip to Southeast Asia and would like to help pick up books for the collection (this is very helpful) please let us know so we can make arrangements.

DISSERTATIONS AND THESES:

We are continuing to work on making more dissertations available. As a reminder: we recently worked with the Library to set up a subscription to Proquest Dissertations and Theses. This database makes the full text of large numbers dissertations from the U.S. available online. (To take advantage of this database simply do a search for Proquest Dissertations and Theses in the catalog). We are also making paper purchases of some dissertations that are listed in Proquest but not available online. Of course there is wealth of information that is also being produced in universities outside of the United States. Foreign dissertations often cannot be borrowed at all and are difficult to acquire (some will never be published). We are trying to make some efforts in this area however. We are looking at subscribing to a database that is trying to provide dissertations from universities in Southeast Asia, and we are sending out orders for individual dissertations from places like Australian National University and universities in Britain and Europe. Please give us any specific recommendations you have or feedback as to how helpful these efforts are.

Recent Acquisition Highlights

Securing Southeast Asia : the politics of security sector reform / Mark Beeson and Alex J. Bellamy.

Contemporary maritime piracy in Southeast Asia : history, causes, and remedies / Adam J. Young.

Vietnam's forgotten army : heroism and betrayal in the ARVN / Andrew Wiest.

Thailand : the worldly kingdom / Maurizio Peleggi.

The vernacular press in the Netherlands Indies, c.1855-1925 [microform].

Post-conflict heritage, postcolonial tourism : culture, politics and development at Angkor / Tim Winter.

Megacity Yangon : transformation processes and modern developments : Second German-Myanmar Workshop in Yangon/Myanmar, 2005 / Frauke Krass, Hartmut Gaese, Mi Mi Kyi (eds.).

Hawking spleens, selling genes : the human body and the laws of property : with special reference to South East Asia / John Candlish.

Pramoedya postcolonially : re-viewing history, gender, and identity in the Buru tetralogy / Razif Bahari.

Children in armed conflict : roundtable discussion / Elizabeth Aguilin-Pangalangan, H. Harry L. Roque, Jr., editors.

Before and after September 11, 2001 : an Asian perspective.

Genocide and resistance in Southeast Asia : documentation, denial & justice in Cambodia & East Timor / Ben Kiernan.

The headman was a woman : the gender egalitarian Batek of Malaysia / Kirk M. Endicott, Karen L. Endicott.

The West Papua conflict in Indonesia : actors, issues and approaches / Esther Heidbuchel.

Powers of blessing from the wilderness and from heaven : structure and transformations in the religion of the Toraja in the Mamasa area of South Sulawesi / Kees Buijs.

Walking on the path of the Buddha : history, scripture, and archaeology : a brief study regarding some ancient Buddhist sites / Phramaha Thanat Inthisan ; edited by Duwayne Engelhart.

Hmong in Minnesota / Chia Youyee Vang ; foreword by Bill Holm.

The Talibanization of Southeast Asia : losing the war on terror to Islamist extremists / Bilveer Singh.

SIEW NIM CHEE, 1922-2008

Dato' Siew Nim Chee, the first Malaysian to get into Cornell, passed away peacefully on 3rd February 2008, at the age of 86. Dato' Siew Nim Chee obtained his postgraduate degree in Industrial Relations in 1953.

The positions held by Dato' Siew included:

- Asst Lecturer of Dept of Economics, Universiti Malaya (and then Head of Dept of Economics, UM till 1959)
- Economist and head of Bank Negara Department of Economic Research
- Founder of Persatuan Ekonomi Malaysia
- Treasurer of Esso Malaysia 1965
- Magnum
- Advisor/Consultant of Genting (till 1985)
- Victorian of the Year by Victoria Institution in 2002.

As a SEAP alumnus, Dato' Siew endowed The Milton L. Barnett Scholarship Endowment to promote Malaysian studies at Cornell. The endowment provides support for Cornell

students, either Malaysians enrolled in Southeast Asian Studies or other students whose focus is on Malaysia. A portion of this fund is also used to purchase books related to Malaysia.

<http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/SoutheastAsia/funding/index.asp?section=barnett>

Dato' Siew Nim Chee also made contributions to the Cornell Club of Malaysia and he was there to cut the Cornell Club Anniversary Cake in 2005 at INTEKMA.

His wake was held at the Nirvana Memorial Centre, No.1, Jalan 1/116A, Off Jalan Sungai Besi, 57100 Kuala Lumpur (03-79818899) on 4th and 5th February 2008. The memorial service was on Wednesday, 6th February 2008.

Excerpted from the obituary provided by Chen Chow (On behalf of Dr. Yusof, President of Cornell Club of Malaysia)

ROGER DOWNEY

8 JANUARY 1944 - 26 DECEMBER 2007

In Memoriam: Vignettes of his Life

I first met Roger when he enrolled in the PhD. Program in Economics at Cornell University. Typically graduate students converge on a dissertation topic only in their third year in Graduate School. But not Roger. Almost as soon as he had arrived at Cornell he approached me to ask me to be his thesis supervisor and he proceeded to tell me in some detail what the topic of his thesis was going to be. He is the only graduate student - out of the approximately eighty I supervised - who knew even before embarking on the doctoral program what his specific research interest were. Of course, when Roger moved to Cornell he was already a mature scholar with a deep grounding in theology, philosophy and Asia. As a Jesuit he was very much concerned with issues related to poverty and income distribution and he had decided that in order to help alleviate poverty he needed to acquire a technical competence in economics and economic development. Perhaps even more surprising was the fact that he had

selected Indonesia to be the focus of his dissertation research. He was planning to study the root causes of poverty and income inequality in Indonesia. Parallel to his economics studies he became fluent in Bahasa Indonesian and immersed himself in the rich activities of the Southeast Program at Cornell.

...

While a graduate student at Cornell, Roger lived in a Catholic parish about ten miles from campus where he assisted the priest- a very old and colorful Irishman- with pastoral duties. On St Patrick day the Irish priest together with Roger would organize a party for the congregation to which we would be invited. Although Roger was always mindful of the need to maintain the right decorum, once he brought my wife over to an empty corner of the party room away from the crowd and proceeded to show her how proficient a dancer he was. He was careful that

nobody would see him. Behind a serious exterior was hiding a "joie de vivre" always under control.

...

Close to the parish where Roger resided was a small lake with a row boat. One of Roger's fellow graduate students at that time was Iwan Azis (today one of the leading Indonesian economists). Roger invited Iwan to row across the lake. When they reached the middle of the lake Iwan dropped his camera in the water and fell overboard. After a short while Roger realized that Iwan did not know how to swim and had to dive in the cold water to save Iwan's life. (Incidentally Iwan who was also one of my students shares the same birthday as mine: February 17 which is also the date of the Memorial Mass in Roger's honor. We shall think of him and pray for him on that day).

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ROGER DOWNEY *continued from previous page*

Just at about the time Roger had completed all of the course work for his PhD. and was ready to embark on writing his dissertation a very fortunate thing happened. The Dutch Ministry of Overseas Development was initiating a research and training program to help the Indonesian Statistical Bureau build a competence around the concept of the "Social Accounting Matrix" (SAM) that is crucial in understanding and measuring the inter-relationship among the structure of production, the incomes of different socio-economic groups, their consumption patterns and the satisfaction of basic needs. The SAM is a necessary quantitative and analytical tool to understand the root causes of poverty.

The Institute of Social Studies in the Netherlands approached me to see if I (as one of the earlier architects of the SAM) would be interested in joining force with the ISS in preparing a proposal to be submitted to the Ministry. I immediately contacted Roger who expressed great interest in being involved. The proposal called for a small team of experts to be located at the Indonesian Statistical Bureau in Jakarta first for a three year period and subsequently renewable. The proposal jointly submitted (ISS and Cornell) was funded and Roger became the chief of party of a small group of experts. In retrospect the timing could not have been better. Just at the time Roger was ready to work on the topic he had focused on years earlier and which led him to pursue an advanced degree in Economics, destiny intervened with a golden opportunity.

...

As co-technical director of this project one of my duties was to prepare a budget including settling on a salary for Roger. Since Roger's lifestyle was very modest and frugal and since he was planning to live in the Jesuit complex in Jakarta I, naively, assumed that he would be satisfied with a likewise modest salary. To my great surprise Roger proved to be a hard nosed and demanding negotiator requesting the remuneration that he thought befitted the position. My first reaction was that this behavior was not in keeping with Roger's character but then I realized that I was wrong and that he was fully entitled to the market salary.

It is only years later that I heard that most of Roger's salary if not all of it went to build a school in a remote part of Indonesia. Needless to say I learned a valuable lesson and felt guilty about my lack of sensitivity.

...

A key member of the team of experts working with Roger was a very young and very bright Dutch econometrician Steven Keuning. At regular intervals I would visit the team in Jakarta and have extensive discussions with the Indonesian statisticians at the Bureau. It was clear that although the SAM was a novel and esoteric concept very difficult for many Indonesians to



TO VIEW DOWNEY'S PHOTOS, GO TO:

<http://brittonia.blogspot.com/2007/12/professor-roger-downey-sj.html>

grasp, Roger and his team were highly respected and valued. Roger was a most demanding taskmaster expecting perfection from himself (more on this later) and from his co-workers. Often Steven would be frustrated by Roger's expectations but, in the process, he and others would learn and acquire the enormous discipline, commitment to hard work and patience required to deal with large scale data sets originating from often mutually inconsistent sources. Steven Keuning has had a brilliant career and is now the Chief Statistician for the European Central Bank- a most prestigious job. I can not, of course speak for Steven but I feel confident that his professional success in improving, promoting and disseminating the SAM world-wide owes a debt of gratitude to Roger's at times tormenting demands. Likewise, the Indonesian statisticians and economists who were trained under the auspices of this project have the highest appreciation for what they learned from Roger, Steven and their successors. The SAM project lasted about ten years and propelled Indonesia as the leading producer of SAMs globally.

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After spending a number of years in Indonesia, it became time for Roger to return to Cornell to complete his PhD dissertation. On the basis of the progress

already achieved and the chapters that I had read I had estimated that Roger would easily be able to finish his dissertation in a couple of semesters. Roger and I would have bi-weekly meetings to go over his work. He always insisted that we go into the material very thoroughly and in its most minute details. Time after time, as his supervisor I was satisfied with his work but he was not. Time went on and the thesis got longer and longer- reaching over 700 pages in length (the average length of a dissertation in Economics is probably around 200 pages). I finally put my foot down and told Roger that his dissertation met the most stringent quality requirements and that he should put an end to it.

...

When it appeared that we were at a standstill and that Roger would continue indefinitely to refine his dissertation, destiny again intervened. His Jesuit superiors ordered him to move to a new assignment (as I recall in the Philippines). Where I had failed his order succeeded. Roger felt very frustrated but with no choice in the matter he let go of his dissertation- quite unsatisfied with it- and promptly was rewarded with the prize for the best dissertation on Southeast Asia (in all disciplines) at Cornell.

Roger was such a perfectionist that nothing he wrote (and probably others as well) was ever good enough. This is undoubtedly the reason he, as a first class and mature scholar, published relatively little in his lifetime. However his influence on others is continuing to be strong and enlightening through what he taught those fortunate enough to have crossed his path during his (too) short but rich and intensive lifetime.

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Erik Thorbecke, Fort Bragg, CA, February 13, 2008



INDONESIAN IMMERSION FOR ENFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Enfield Elementary School looks out across cornfields and a wooded lot, just off of Route 79 as it rolls westward toward Mecklenburg. Starting in January, and through the snow and ice storms of February and March, SEAP faculty, students, and staff have been bringing different aspects of Indonesian culture to the students in this rural school. Art teacher Christine Finnigan coordinated all of the arrangements with SEAP, including access to two display cases where shadow puppets, batiks depicting the Ramayana and batik-making tools were showcased along with a miniature Javanese gamelan, maps, and pictures illustrating the importance of Islam in Indonesia. For three months, these different aspects of Indonesia were what children saw as they entered their school, and many of them peered curiously at the unfamiliar objects.

In an attempt to create a school-wide “buzz” and interest in this island nation on the other side of the globe, different classes welcomed special visitors for a variety of hand-on activities and interactions. The second graders were thrilled to have the chance to learn about gamelan by playing the Balinese instruments Bethany Malone brought and set up in the cafeteria. The kids bounced with excitement to the rhythms that she clapped out for them to follow and the sound of the gongs could be heard echoing down the hall to the library where a box of books and resources on Indonesia were made available to teachers and students. The third graders learned about shadow puppets from Thamora Fishel and decorated their own poster-board puppets of Rama, Sita, and the magical monkey Hanuman. The fifth grade classes welcomed Abdullah (Rizal) Siddik, who spoke to them about being Muslim in Indonesia. They peppered him with questions about the pictures he showed and about his experiences both in Indonesia and the U.S.

The culminating event was a school-wide assembly in the gymnasium for a spectacular Balinese dance demonstration. Kaja McGowan and Ketut Raka Nawiana visited several classrooms in full dance costume before the performance, and the halls hummed with excitement as students lined up to enter the gym. Students and teachers were spellbound as the music began and they absorbed the precise eye-movements and hand-gestures of the dance. This series at Enfield Elementary may well serve as a model for targeted outreach in which a whole school focuses on a particular country, and the activities at different grade levels reinforce each other.

SOUTHEAST ASIA TEACHER STUDY GROUP

One of the most significant developments in SEAP’s offerings for teacher’s professional development has been the creation of a Southeast Asia Teacher Study Group. Participants meet at the Kahin Center approximately every other month during the school year to meet with guest speakers and to discuss a variety topics, including readings and films. Topics have included folktales and literacy preservation, pop music in Burma and on the Burmese border (led by Heather MacLachlan), and the next meeting will focus on post-traumatic stress and the children of Southeast Asian refugees (led by Nancy Koschmann). The group is organized by SEAP Outreach Coordinator, Thamora Fishel, with registration assistance from the Ithaca City School District.

Turnout has been high, with more than a dozen teachers filling every seat in the seminar room. Many teachers are motivated by a desire to reach their Southeast Asian students more effectively, as well as having an interest in incorporating information about Southeast Asian cultures into the general curriculum. Teachers also appreciate the chance to network and share ideas and information with other teachers, particularly those who are working with students from Southeast Asia, many of whom are related or face similar challenges in a school setting.

Other professional development opportunities for teachers this spring have included a gamelan workshop for music teachers and an International Studies Institute on global climate change.

