

SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM



SPRING 2023 BULLETIN



Cornell University



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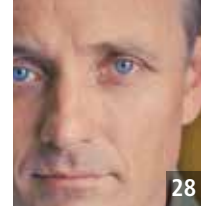
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Industrial monoculture forest of eucalyptus trees at the site of Indonesia's new capital, Nusantara (photo by Wendy Erb).

SEAP ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

180 Uris Hall, Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14853
607.255.2378 | fax 607.254.5000
SEAP@cornell.edu
listserv: SEAP-L@cornell.edu

Tom Pepinsky, Director
seap_director@einaudi.cornell.edu

Thamora Fishel, Associate Director
tfishel@cornell.edu

James Nagy, Administrative Coordinator
jen72@cornell.edu

Emily Falica, Program Assistant
ef429@cornell.edu

KAHIN CENTER FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH ON SOUTHEAST ASIA

640 Stewart Avenue
Ithaca, New York 14850

kahinbuildingmgr@einaudi.cornell.edu
Kahin Center, Room 104
607.255.3619

SEAP PUBLICATIONS

Sarah E. M. Grossman, Managing Editor
sg265@cornell.edu

<https://einaudi.cornell.edu/programs/southeast-asia-program/publications>

SEAP OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ava White, Communications and Outreach Coordinator
607.253.2035
amw383@cornell.edu

Kathi Colen Peck, Postsecondary Outreach Coordinator
190E Uris Hall
ksc32@cornell.edu

<https://einaudi.cornell.edu/programs/southeast-asia-program/outreach>

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Mario Einaudi

CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES

LETTER from the DIRECTOR



Spring 2023 looks to be another exciting semester for Southeast Asian studies at Cornell, and the SEAP schedule is packed with events that bring together our community with scholars from the region and around the world. Amidst all the events to come this semester, we also have some longer-term projects in the works that will strengthen the program in new and important ways.

The Fall 2022 semester was an invigorating time for the program, with two special highlights for me. The first was our Golay Lecture by Brenda Yeoh, Raffles Professor of Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore, and Research Leader of the Asian Migration Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Professor Yeoh provided us with an incisive overview of migrants' lives and personal experiences, highlighting the different temporalities that international migration produces and how these shape interpersonal relationships and family dynamics. I was reminded of how Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* invoked Walter Benjamin's concept of "simultaneity" to explore how communication technologies reconfigure our sense of community across space. The idea that thanks to smartphones, one can simultaneously be at work in another country and participating in one's own family life at home invites us to reflect on what sorts of communities we imagine ourselves to be part of.

The other highlight was a celebration hosted by SEAP for Emeritus Professor John Wolff, on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday. We gathered together at the Kahin Center, making new friends and connecting with John's extended family; a real treat was a flute duo featuring John and Professor Kaja McGowan. As someone who first learned Indonesian through John's *Beginning Indonesian Through Self-Instruction*, I got sense—amidst all the celebration and good cheer—of just how important his teaching has been for SEAP and for the field of Southeast Asian studies.

Before I describe our plans for the spring and beyond, I have a special word of thanks for Andrew Willford, who kindly stepped in to lead SEAP during my sabbatical semester this fall. I spent my sabbatical in Ithaca—hiding out in a shared office in the Kahin Center, working hard on a book on the Malay world and the politics of identity, and periodically emerging for a couple of events like the Golay lecture and John's birthday. Andrew, Thamora, and the rest of the SEAP staff treated me as if I were not there—which is just what I wanted! With the benefit of having had some space to think, reflect, and recharge, I am happy to be back as Director once again.

SEAP grad co-chairs Harry Dienes and Tamar Law have assembled a dynamite group of Gatty lectures for the spring semester, featuring topics ranging from the politics of social media and authoritarianism in Cambodia to personhood and property on plantations in Philippine Mindanao. The SEAP grad conference is scheduled for this March, on the theme of "Crossing Boundaries, Sustaining Connections." And I cannot wait to see what the SEAP banquet has in store for us later this April.

There are some other special events scheduled for the semester as well. We excited to join the Asian American Studies Program and the Department of Literatures in English in hosting Allan Punzalan Isaac, author of the award-winning *American Tropics: Articulating Filipino America*, to campus. He will give a talk on his recent work, and will lead a workshop with the Asian Diaspora Studies Reading Group. We are co-sponsoring a visit by David Siev, a Cambodian-American filmmaker who has just released a compelling film entitled *Bad Axe*, about the everyday struggles in Siev's hometown of Bad Axe, Michigan during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are also co-hosting the Balinese dance troupe Sanggar Seni Citta Usadhi, who will perform with the New Atlantic Chamber Gamelan, hold dance and music workshops, and visit Kaja McGowan's class.

In addition to our usual semester activities and special guests, SEAP is also investing in the long-term vitality and growth of the program. We have set in motion some plans to upgrade the Kahin Center's audiovisual setup to better enable virtual events that are engaging for an in-person audience and take advantage of the unique space that we have. Thanks to generous support from our alumni, this semester we are accepting applications for a new postdoctoral fellowship program that targets policy-engaged social scientists working in Southeast Asia. And we are working hard on new grant opportunities that might infuse the program with even more resources—watch this space for updates on these and other initiatives in future SEAP Bulletins. For support for all of these efforts, I am grateful to Thamora Fishel, James Nagy, and Ava White for all that they do. And I am happy to welcome Emily Falica, our newest full-time SEAP staff member, to the team as well.

—Tom Pepinsky, Professor of Government

SEAP

AND THE EARLY YEARS OF THE CENTER FOR KHMER STUDIES

1999-2010



by Thak Chaloemtiarana
Trustee Emeritus,
Center for Khmer Studies

My involvement with the Center for Khmer Studies (CKS) was serendipitous. In late 1998, Professor Stanley O'Connor was invited to a workshop in Phnom Penh, organized by the World Monuments Fund (WMF) to discuss historic preservation of sites in Cambodia. Professor O'Connor is our renowned Southeast Asian art historian. I had just become Director of the Cornell Southeast Asia Program, and he asked that I attend in his place to represent SEAP. I am not a Khmer Studies specialist but had covered topics of Khmer art, religion, and politics in classes that I taught. I had never been to Cambodia and a trip there was hard to resist.

The meeting, in January 1999, brought together participants mostly selected by the WMF's field of specialization (architecture and preservation), administrators from several local and foreign institutions, and individual scholars. One of the ideas discussed was to consider establishing a field school for historic preservation. After lengthy discussions, the majority of the participants agreed that a different kind of institution should be established. The new institution should address the broader concerns of revitalizing Khmer Studies, helping to strengthen Cambodian higher education, and providing public services to Cambodia. This three-prong goal of the new Center for Khmer Studies (CKS) was proposed by Michael Tomlan, Cornell professor of historic preservation who was the other Cornell representative at the conference. His proposal was based upon Cornell's mission of teaching, research, and outreach.

The idea of establishing such an institution was later approved at a meeting in New York City in November 1999. Thus CKS was incorporated as a non-profit research institution under the auspices of the WMF. An important suggestion from Dr. Mary Ellen Lane at that meeting was that CKS should join similar institutions coordinated by the Council for American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC), which she headed. As a member of CAORC, the Center would be eligible for fund-

*Photo taken by Professor Ea Darith with the 2017 Cornell in Cambodia participants,
with Andrew Mertha and Kaja McGowan present.*



ing from the U.S. Department of Education. To conform to CAORC guidelines, the Center established a consortium of six founding institutional members: the Asia Society, Cornell University, the University of Hawai'i, WMF, the National University of Singapore, and the Cambodian government agency responsible for Angkor (APSARA). As Director of the Cornell Southeast Asia Program, I committed our institutional support for this new venture.

In January 2001, I attended a large conference of international institutions and supporters in Siem Reap to discuss the state of teaching and research of Khmer Studies. It was apparent that Khmer Studies, especially in the U.S., had lain dormant for two decades, and that new scholars must be nurtured to revitalize Khmer Studies. For several decades under the Khmer Rouge regime Cambodia was closed to scholars, and major American grants for graduate student field research had been suspended.

My participation in CKS became formalized after I agreed to join the CKS Board of Directors in 2002 as its first scholar. Most board members were prominent donors who helped to fund the new Center after the WMF withdrew its support. I was later joined by Professor John Miksic (SEAP PhD '79) of the National University of Singapore, and Professor Bion Griffin of the University of Hawai'i. Scholars were required as members of the CKS Board of Directors to qualify for membership in CAORC. CKS Chair Emerita Dr. Lois de Menil wrote

a short history of CKS in the 2016-2017 volume of *In Focus*, the annual CKS newsletter. She mentioned in that article that there were doubts whether I would agree to join CKS as a board member. It was true that I already had many responsibilities at Cornell. However, CKS had a mission which I could not ignore. As Director of SEAP, I also had the obligation to promote and strengthen Southeast Asian Studies whenever and wherever possible.

Khmer language has been taught at Cornell since I can remember, but after Frank Huffman's departure, Khmer language was taught somewhat haphazardly by Cambodian graduate students. After the reorganization of the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics that moved language teaching to literature departments, I was given the task of supervising and funding Khmer language teaching after it was transferred to my department, the Department of Asian Studies. I was also acutely aware of the need to inject new energy into Khmer Studies by attracting more graduate students. The growth of Khmer Studies in U.S. universities was hampered by the lack of field research funding for graduate students (e.g. Fulbright did not resume funding until 2007). However, as a CAORC member CKS would receive funding to support emerging graduate students, and other faculty members teaching or interested in Khmer Studies. My commitment to help revitalize and to strengthen Khmer Studies prompted me to accept Dr. de Menil's invitation to join the CKS board.

My active involvement in CKS coincided with my tenure as Director of the Cornell Southeast Asia Program (1998-2010). When I stepped down from my directorship and retired from active teaching, I was elected trustee emeritus but continued to provide advice when needed. SEAP's close involvement with CKS continued when Andrew Mertha took my place as trustee. Andrew Mertha also became President of CKS until he left Cornell for a new position at Johns Hopkins University. In his place, Kaja McGowan is now a trustee representing SEAP.

2015 Cornell in Cambodia participants at the National Archives.




Faculty members who have received grants from CKS include:

- Bion Griffin (CKS trustee and University of Hawaii)
- Peter Bell (State University of New York at Purchase)
- Michael Binford (University of Florida at Gainesville)
- Peter Hammer (CKS Trustee and Wayne State University)
- Boreth Ly (CKS Trustee and University of Utah)
- Kheang Un (Northern Illinois University)
- Kim Irvine (State University of New York at Buffalo)
- Kathie Carpenter (University of Oregon)
- Alexander Jun (Azusa Pacific University)
- Judy Ledgerwood (Northern Illinois University)



Above: Photo taken by Professor Ea Darith with the 2017 Cornell in Cambodia participants, with Andrew Mertha and Kaja McGowan present.

Right: Andrew Mertha lecturing the 2016 Cornell in Cambodia participants.



This short article looks back at contributions I had made during my active years in CKS. I will focus on just a few: building the library, and revitalizing Khmer Studies, especially in the United States.

The Khmer Rouge interregnum and genocide (1975-1979) had practically destroyed the holdings of the National Library of Cambodia, and decimated faculty members in universities in its attempt to wipe out the past to create a new society. The Khmer Rouge regime was interrupted by the Vietnamese occupation, which ended with the United Nations intervention in 1992 that brought political calm to Cambodia. Parenthetically, Dr. Benny Widyono was part of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) and later he wrote *Dancing in Shadows* to chronicle his time with UNTAC, written while a SEAP visiting fellow. I was also able to convince Benny to join the CKS Board of Trustees.

To help rebuild the intellectual life of Cambodia and its National Library, Cornell offered to microfilm and then to donate its Cambodian holdings from the Echols Collection of Southeast Asia. As part of its public service mission, CKS also

established a public research library at its Wat Damnak headquarters. In 2008, CKS paid to digitize Cornell's microfilmed holdings that were sent to the National Museum. Two of its librarians were also invited to Cornell for further training. Personally, I would bring books to give to the library every time I was in Siem Reap. To date the CKS library is the only public library with significant holdings outside of Phnom Penh. Auspiciously, King Norodom Sihamoni came to the opening of the new CKS office and library building in 2010.

My other major contribution to CKS was chairing the Fellowship Committee that reviewed Luce Foundation funded summer grants for undergraduate students, and awarded research funds to American scholars, both graduate students and faculty members interested in Khmer Studies. Before the CKS office was organized to handle this function, the fellow-

ships processing was done through SEAP's office in Uris Hall. The fellowship committee selected five American undergraduates for the CKS Luce Junior Scholar Program. This program placed the U.S. students with five students from France, and five more from Cambodia. Applications from American students were sent to our SEAP office to be reviewed by a committee of three: I as chair, Professor John Miksic of the National University of Singapore, and Professor Alan Kolata of the University of Chicago. The review process and voting were done by email. To this day, I marvel at how our assessments and voting were always identical!

CKS should also be proud of its achievement in reviving and revitalizing Khmer Studies in the U.S. as well as in France. U.S. funding for faculty and graduate student field research was from CAORC and the U.S. Department of Education Title VI grant, while funding for French scholars came from the Florence Gould Foundation. My account will only include the awards made to U.S. scholars from 2002-2011 when I was Chair of the Fellowships Committee. Awards were made at the January CKS annual board meeting in Siem Reap. Members of committee included John Miksic (National University of Singapore), Alan Kolata (University of Chicago), Michel Antelme (Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales), and on occasion, Ang Choulean (APSARA), and Son Soubert (scholar and politician). I have researched the whereabouts of awardees and have been able to document some of their progress and achievements. All in all, more than fifty scholars received research grants when I was chair of the committee.

Some of the graduate students who received CKS funding and have gone on to teaching careers include:

- Erik Davis (Macalester College, and former chair of the Thailand/Laos/Cambodia committee of the Association for Asian Studies)
- Alison Carter (University of Oregon)
- Emiko Stock (American University Cairo)
- Rachel Hall (Virginia Commonwealth University)
- Daniel O'Neill (University of the Pacific)
- Dennis Arnold (University of Amsterdam)
- Jenna Grant (University of Washington)
- Sylvia Nam (University of California at Irvine)
- Lisa Arensen (University of Edinburgh)
- Viet Le (California College of the Arts)
- Michael Dwyer (University of Indiana at Bloomington)
- Thien Huong Ninh (University of California at Davis)
- Courtney Work (National Chengchi University, Taiwan)

For example, six awards were made in 2002, the first year CAORC funds were available. Our current CKS President and SEAP Faculty Associate in Research Eve Zucker was one of the first to be funded for her field research when she was a doctoral student at the London School of Economics. And if my notes are correct, she received another grant in 2010. It should be noted here that several of our awardees have returned years later with CKS funding to do more field research. Not all awardees went on to pursue academic careers. Two awardees took different paths: Jennifer Foley from Cornell is now a museum curator in New Mexico; Tyrone Siren from University of Wisconsin has a business and lives in Ho Chi Minh City.

There were six in the second group of awardees. Sophal Ear is well-known to CKS as a Trustee and a faculty member at Occidental College and now at Arizona State University. Anna Gade taught at Oberlin College when she applied and is now at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Jonathan Padwe was a graduate student at Yale. He, too, received funding later for his PhD field work on the Jarai. Jonathan is teaching at the University of Hawaii. Two others were funded by Luce: the late prominent historian Michael Vickery, and Leakthina Ollier who teaches at Bowdoin College.

Significantly, most of CKS graduate student grantees produced new and cutting edge knowledge in the form of monographs and articles that have rejuvenated Khmer Studies. My account includes only U.S. scholars. Below are some examples of published monographs:

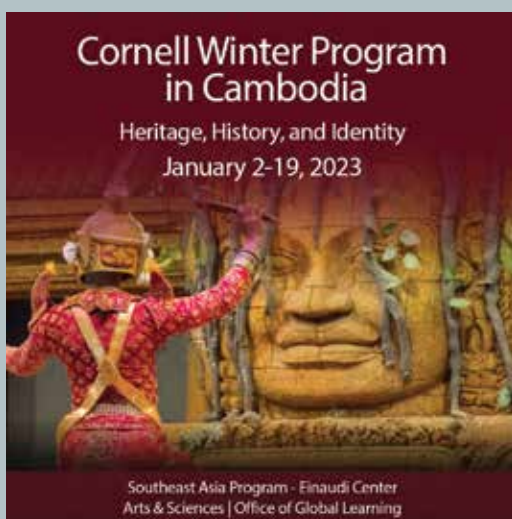
- Eve Zucker, *Forest Struggle: Morality and Remembrances in Upland Cambodia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013)
- Erik Davis, *Deathpower: Buddhism, Ritual Imagination in Cambodia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016)
- Jonathan Padwe, *Disturbed Forests, Fragmented Memories: Jarai and Other Lives in the Cambodian Highlands* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020)
- Courtney Work, *Tides of Empire: Religion, Development, and Environment in Cambodia* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2020)
- Leakthina Ollier and Tim Winters (Eds.), *Expressions of Cambodia: The Politics of Tradition, Identity, and Change* (New York: Routledge, 2012)
- Jenna Grant, manuscript for publication titled *Fixing the Image* which examines medical imaging services in Cambodia



2015 Cornell in Cambodia participants at Angkor Wat.

I will not give details by year of the rest of the scholars CKS funded. Instead, I will highlight some names and their work (see Fig 1) to show that my participation in CKS to fulfill its mission of revitalizing Khmer Studies was a success. Funding was also made available to faculty members whose teaching was on Cambodia, as well as those looking to include Cambodia in their teaching and research.

I am sure that many scholars have benefited from CKS research funding after my time. I am also aware that they have also published books and articles that benefitted from their field research in Cambodia. But even looking just at what CKS has achieved in the ten years that I was active, we can all take pride in the fact that CKS and SEAP have indeed played a vital and significant role in rejuvenating Khmer Studies. 🌸



I mentioned earlier that SEAP continues to actively support the Center for Khmer Studies through the work of Andrew Mertha and Kaja McGowan. In particular, Andrew Mertha was first to establish the SEAP/Cornell in Cambodia Program in 2014. A study abroad course has been offered regularly during the winter break led by a SEAP faculty. In the beginning, the course was partnered with the Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3). The first two courses “Chinese Empire and the Cambodia experience,” in 2015 and 2016, were led by Andrew Mertha where Cornell students were joined by TC3 faculty and students. The third and fourth classes in 2017 and 2018 were led by Kaja McGowan focusing on the performing arts and artifacts. Hannah Phan co-led the 2019 class. Sarosh Kuruvilla offered the fifth course in 2020 that took a deep dive into the garment industry. The most recent SEAP/Cornell in Cambodia 2023 winter session course “Heritage, history, and Identity” was led by Magnus Fiskesjö. SEAP is also partnering with CKS to sponsor an undergraduate internship based in Phnom Penh in summer 2023.



ADDRESSING INTERCOMMUNAL PROBLEMS IN RAKHINE STATE THROUGH RESOCIALIZATION



by Kyaw Yin
Hlaing,
Visiting Scholar

In June 2012, fierce intercommunal riots occurred between Rakhine and Rohingya people in various parts of Myanmar's western state of Rakhine. These riots proved to be one of the worst bouts of intercommunal violence in the history of Myanmar.



Left: Rohingya and Rakhine community members visiting a mosque in Yangon together.

Above: Another group visiting Shwedagon Pagoda.

FOLLOWING THE RIOTS, the government of the day appointed two Cornell PhDs, the late professor Myo Myint and I, to lead a Commission of Inquiry to investigate what had gone wrong between Rakhine and Rohingya, and how peace and stability might be restored in Rakhine State. At that time, many senior government officials appeared to have the view that the two ethnic communities had lived together peacefully for many years, and that resolving the situation would simply involve restoring pre-2012 conditions.

A group of researchers and I made several trips to Rakhine State to gather information for the Commission of Inquiry's report. Between 2012 and 2013 I talked to over 300 Rakhine and

Rohingya people, both individually and in groups. These discussions provided insight into the events of 2012 and the relations between the two communities before that date.

In initial meetings, members of the two communities gave rather different accounts of the situation in Rakhine State. Rohingya community members complained more about the failure of security officials to protect them from unruly Rakhine rioters than about the rioters themselves. In almost all official meetings, the majority of Rohingya community members reminisced about the good times they had had with their Rakhine friends. They recalled how they celebrated each other's traditional and religious festivals together, and

how Rakhine and Rohingya did business together. Most of them said that if the government maintained law and order properly, peace would be restored momentarily and that all internally displaced persons, Rakhine and Rohingya alike, could go home, resume their regular lives, and live peacefully.

On the other hand, almost all the Rakhine community members who spoke in official meetings blamed the riots on the Rohingya, who, they said, planned to take over Rakhine State. They took the position that the only way to restore peace for Rakhine people was to keep the Rohingya away from them. Most of the Rakhine I interviewed expressed the view that the two communities were too different to live together.



Above: Participants singing a social cohesion song they themselves composed. Right: An intercommunal soccer tournament.

Unlike the Rohingya interviewees, the Rakhine stated that they rarely celebrated religious festivals with members of the other community. In a joint meeting I had with members of both communities, a Rohingya businessman stated that the two communities celebrated the water festival together. A Rakhine community member angrily called the Rohingya businessman a liar, after saying that the communities always celebrated the water festival separately. Several Rakhine community members who were present in that meeting also said that most Rohingya were illegal immigrants and that they should be kept in internally displaced person (IDP) camps until a third country was willing to take them.

In private, when interviewed individually, members of both communities gave somewhat different accounts of the situation. In these circumstances, several Rohingya portrayed the pre-2012 conditions in a less rosy manner. They talked about how they had been mistreated and suffered discrimination from members of the Rakhine community and government officials over the years. On the basis of the stories shared by Rohingya, I came to see a pattern: the poorer and less educated they were,

the more discrimination they experienced. In these private interviews, most Rohingya community members did not have anything good to say about the Rakhine, describing them variously as dirty fish-paste eaters, dirty pork eaters, bullies, untrustworthy, evil people, and human rights violators.

Rakhine community members were less vocal about the Rohingya when I talked to them privately. However, most made clear that they believed the government should expel Rohingya who had entered or were living in Myanmar illegally and allow those legally resident to move to other parts of the country. Some privately recognized that the human rights of Rohingya had been seriously violated in the 1990s and 2000s when the State Law and Order Restoration Council (Myanmar's third junta) started restricting their rights to travel, to marry, and to have children. However, all admitted that most members of the Rakhine community view the Rohingya as lowly people. Some said that in the eyes of Rakhine, Rohingya had always been lazy, dirty, ugly, promiscuous, evil, untrustworthy, and ungrateful.

From these meetings and interviews it was clear that there had been prob-

lems in the intercommunal relations between Rohingya and Rakhine even prior to 2012 and that members of the two communities never trusted and understood each other as well as they should. This also meant that sustainable peace could not be achieved by restoring the pre-2012 conditions in Rakhine State. Moreover, I came to realize that Rakhine and Rohingya of all ages were socialized into disliking each other via historical narratives.

The most serious negative narratives prevalent in each community date back to 1942, to the aftermath of the first major intercommunal riots between Rakhine and Rohingya. In these riots, many innocent members of both communities were abused, harassed, or killed. Both Rakhine and Rohingya victims shared their sufferings with the younger generation, blaming the other community. Since that time, several negative narratives and revisionist histories have been constructed and shared within each community. By 2012, the way Rakhine and Rohingya interacted in many parts of Rakhine State resembled what John Furnivall termed a plural society. The two communities lived in their own neighborhoods and rarely had close, regular, and cordial



Intercommunal soccer tournament winners posing with their trophy.

interactions other than business transactions. As they did not know or understand each other well, members of both communities were easily influenced by negative narratives. The ubiquity of these negative narratives is illustrated by the fact that since I started conducting research on Rakhine State in 2008, I have not come across a single Rakhine or Rohingya in Northern or Central Rakhine State who did not have a negative view of the other community.

While there have been tensions between the Rakhine and Rohingya communities for the last seven decades, the situation has become worse over time. The situation deteriorated following the 2012 intercommunal riots, with a noticeable intensification of negative narratives about the other community among both Rakhine and Rohingya. Access to the internet and Facebook have facilitated the dissemination of such negative narratives, while the policies of successive Myanmar governments have done little to improve the situation. In particular, the decision to confine Rohingya to IDP camps and their villages entrenched the segregation of the two communities. This separation also meant that the members of each community were rarely exposed

to alternative views of one another, instead mainly receiving and repeating the negative narratives circulating among members of their own community. Between 2013 and 2015, I interviewed 100 Rohingya and 250 Rakhine who admitted that they had only ever heard negative things about the other community. In the circumstances, it is not surprising that these Rakhine and Rohingya saw each other as an existential threat.

In order to bring peace and stability to Rakhine State, this negative socialization needs to be addressed; we must liberate the members of the Rakhine and Rohingya communities from the influence of deep-rooted negative and hateful narratives and expose them to more

constructive and reconciliation-oriented narratives. In other words, the culture of fear and distrust must be changed by re-socializing both Rakhine and Rohingya into understanding and respecting each other.

The Commission of Inquiry which Myo Myint and I led identified this as a key element of resolving the situation in Rakhine State, and recommended that the government promote reconciliation and social harmony between the two communities through civic education and social cohesion programs. However, no government agency was interested in doing this work. To fill the gap, a group of like-minded people, including myself, established a nongovernmental organization (NGO) with



Workshop participants visiting Immanuel Baptist Church in Yangon together.

the aim of doing everything we could to build peace in Rakhine State. While some government officials supported these efforts, others openly opposed them, so we were not able to use the formal education system for our work.

Instead, the NGO began by inviting members of the Rohingya and Rakhine communities to Yangon and persuading them to have informal discussions on common concerns. We also exposed them to the ways diverse communities can live together peacefully by arranging visits to organizations involved in interfaith dialogue both in Myanmar and abroad. We organized talks with community peace activists from South Africa, Northern Ireland, Iraq, Sri Lanka, New Zealand and Switzerland. At the outset, many of the participants agreed to join our activities primarily because they offered free trips to Yangon, but others recognized that Rakhine State, which has long been the second poorest state in Myanmar, would degenerate further if peace and stability were not restored. After a while, even those who came to the meetings for fun started engaging seriously with these discussions.

Some community leaders then requested that we organize aware-

ness-raising trainings that would allow them to better understand and address intercommunal problems. In these trainings, we explained how negative socialization processes could turn members of different communities against each other, and that to reverse the process and bring peace and stability to their state, members of the contentious communities must first try to first know and understand each other. These meetings, where members of the two communities met and interacted as equals, including in fun activities such as karaoke sessions, allowed them to become more comfortable in each other's presence, which served as a slow resocialization process.

Community peace-building is by no means straightforward. It is utterly impossible to keep people out of the negative socialization process. The best we could do was provide an alternative socialization process, so that people were exposed to multiple socialization processes simultaneously. Unsurprisingly, our efforts met with some resistance. Some self-styled Rakhine nationalists tried to undermine our effort by incorrectly accusing our NGO of receiving financial support from Islamic countries and therefore trying to please

them. The criticism from within their own community was so intense that many of the Rakhine who joined our activities outside Rakhine State distanced themselves from their Rohingya friends once they were back in Rakhine State. Several Rakhine community members at that time told me that if they were openly friendly to Rohingya in front of Rakhine nationalists, they would be ostracized and labelled as national traitors.

However, after going through several trainings and exposure trips, some people became more daring. Some participants in peace education trainings eventually had the courage to discuss the negative socialization they had experienced and how the trainings and other resocialization process had gradually changed their views. A striking example is provided by a self-reflection paper written by a Rakhine student for a peace education class. He wrote that after hearing and reading disgusting things about Rohingya from his friends, family, community leaders, books, articles, and Facebook posts, he had long hated them. As a result, during the 2012 riots he was prepared to kill Rohingya. However, after going through a series of peace education trainings, commu-



Another group of community members visiting a Hindu temple in Yangon together.

nity meetings, and exposure trips, he had come to realize that some of the narratives and stories he had heard were inaccurate or far from the truth. He noted that he, like others, changed his attitude towards the Rohingya after interacting with them at meetings and trainings. He said, “they [Rohingya] were also human beings like us and like us, they were just trying to have a life.” He proudly concluded his paper with the statement that he would not have a problem living with any of the Rohingya he met at meetings and trainings. Similarly, several Rohingya youths noted that when they first came to a training organized by my organization, they did not feel comfortable when they were told that they would have to share rooms with Rakhine participants. However, they soon found that their Rakhine roommates were considerate and treated them with respect. A Rohingya youth wrote,

“Before I came here some people from my village told me that Rakhine would treat me like an illegal immigrant. Our teachers made sure that I was not mistreated. My Rakhine classmates did not really treat me differently. When I worked on a group

project together with Rakhine students, I was not treated as an outsider. This changed my view of Rakhine people.”

These are not isolated examples. Several Rohingya and Rakhine students shared how peace education and other intercommunal activities had changed them, during Zoom sessions with Cornell students who took the ‘Identity Politics and Ethnic Conflict in Myanmar’ class during the spring semester of 2022.

The degree of resistance to social cohesion programs among the Rakhine community abated considerably when the Arakan Army (AA)—a popular Rakhine ethnic armed group—started publicly calling for the promotion of social cohesion among all residents of Rakhine State. In particular, these calls seem to have silenced the opposition of many Rakhine nationalists. This created a space in which civil society networks working towards social harmony have been able to expand, consolidate their internal organization, and develop their resocialization programs. Many community-based organizations are now organizing intercommunal activities openly, actively, and effectively. Rakhine and Rohingya youths

can now be a part of the same soccer team in township and district soccer tournaments. Rohingya can move around more freely, especially in the townships where the AA has administrative control.

Although these are positive developments, they do not mean that intercommunal problems in Rakhine State are now a thing of the past. The decades-old misunderstandings and distrust still linger among many members of both communities. Negative and hateful narratives remain alive at the community levels and new misunderstandings continue to emerge, including in the context of armed clashes between the military and the AA. While the AA’s support for social cohesion has silenced opposition, this does not mean the Rakhine nationalists have all changed their views; some are simply wary of going against the popular and powerful AA. There is still a pressing need for social harmony activities and positive resocialization processes to build amity between Rakhine and Rohingya and bring an end to the tensions between communities for once and all. 🌿

HEARING THE FOREST

Through the Trees...



Scan the code above to listen to the accompanying audio.

An adult female southern grey gibbon (Hylobates muelleri) sings great calls – accompanied by squeals from her presumed offspring – in a tiny parcel of forest within a small village where Indonesia's new capital city will be sited (recording by Wendy Erb).

WAS THIS A DREAM? As my sleeping brain caught up to my rousing ears, I recognized an unmistakable tune. In an instant, I shot out of bed, grabbed my recorder, strapped on my headlamp, slipped into my sandals, and darted out of the homestay. Still in my pajamas, I switched on my recorder and listened in the darkness.

Sonic Entanglements in Nusantara

Less than 10 km from “*titik nol*,” the ‘ground zero’ of Indonesia’s planned new capital – where ten months before, the president and governors of Indonesia had brought together soil and water from each of Indonesia’s 34 provinces in a national ceremony of unity – two groups of gibbons sang defiantly to each other across separate fragments of forest, each no more than a couple of hectares. Standing on the roadside in the middle of town, I listened in amazement to their ‘**great calls**’ of resilient co-existence in this shared, squeezed place. As dawn approached, the chorus of gibbons co-mingled with the sounds of the awakening village: buzzing motorbikes carrying commuters to company jobs, rumbling trucks hauling logs from the eucalyptus plantation up the road, and the morning call to prayer floating from the mosque atop the hill.

Tiny bats returned to roost in the deep folds of banana leaves, squeaking a finale of soprano notes, as the nocturnal orchestra transitioned to day. As the gibbons faded to the background of the busy morning, I wondered: how long will this iconic sound endure in Borneo’s soundscape? What will happen if the gibbons’ song disappears, can no longer be heard over an urban din, or is missed by ears attuned to different sonic worlds? What knowledge will be forgotten, what histories fragmented, what relationships lost?

—Wendy’s journal entry



by Wendy M. Erb,
Postdoctoral Associate,
K. Lisa Yang Center
for Conservation
Bioacoustics, Cornell
Lab of Ornithology,
Cornell University



by Walker DePuy,
Visiting Fellow,
Southeast Asia
Program,
Cornell University

Gibbons’ Great Calls...

Gibbons (Family Hylobatidae) are small apes who are distributed across Asia, from India to Indonesia. Typically residing in small family groups comprising an adult pair and their offspring, gibbons are famous for their musical vocal performances. The great call is a species-specific vocalization produced by adult females (sometimes accompanied by their maturing daughters and often involving contributions from their male partners) that appears to serve an important role in the establishment and maintenance of their family’s territory.





The authors and UNMUL research partners enjoy a nature walk in a mangrove forest near the southern border of Indonesia's new capital city (L-R: Wendy Erb, Walker DePuy, Rustam Fahmy, and Chandra Boer, photo by Wendy Erb).

A Green Dream or a Neoliberal Fantasy?

In August 2019, Indonesia announced plans to relocate its national capital from Jakarta to a newly constructed city – Nusantara – in Borneo, one of the richest and most imperiled cultural and biodiversity hotspots on Earth. Situated in a vast mixed-use landscape in East Kalimantan, where corporations and local communities practice diverse land uses amidst key endangered species' habitats, Nusantara's construction has begun.

The dream of relocating Indonesia's capital traces back to the country's first president, Sukarno, who hoped to reorient the nation's economic and political center away from the island of Java and towards Kalimantan. This rationale remains central to the creation of Nusantara along with the desire to reduce the environmental burdens facing Jakarta. The current administration sees the construction of Nusantara

as a way to realize Indonesia's commitments to social justice and climate change mitigation by creating a "forest city" centered around ecological restoration, renewable energy, and culturally inclusive economic prosperity.

There is much debate, however, about the rationales, feasibility, and ultimate effects of the plan. Myriad civil society organizations and academics have voiced concerns about potential social and environmental consequences, citing other nations' experiences of relocating their capitals as well as Indonesia's long history of mega-projects and ongoing issues with urban and infrastructure expansion across Southeast Asia. Key amongst these concerns are the fragmentation of critical habitats for endangered species and anticipated inequities regarding political representation, economic opportunities, and land rights for the area's local and indigenous residents. As Indonesia enacts its vision for a more sustainable and prosper-

ous future, the question remains: what will this "forest city" really mean for Nusantara's local and indigenous communities and the forests that hold so much of their history, sources of livelihoods, and cultural identities?

Unearthing Borneo's Sonic Worlds

Within this context, our interdisciplinary research team of American, Indonesian, and Malaysian scientists (see our partners below) is working to inform sustained health and longevity of the region's ecosystems, and to support the rights and needs of the human and non-human communities who rely on them. Indonesia's capital relocation presents a unique opportunity to investigate wide-ranging and intersecting social-ecological change across Borneo's shared landscapes. In particular, we see soundscapes as a potent yet under-utilized avenue for elucidating and monitoring human-environment relationships.

An entire discipline – bioacoustics – is dedicated to studying sounds in nature. By deploying remote autonomous recording units (ARUs), bioacousticians monitor wildlife populations, identify biodiversity, and assess ecosystem health in marine, freshwater, and terrestrial environments worldwide. Beyond its ecological functions, sound also plays an essential role in shaping how people understand and experience space and place. Sounds can hold cultural meaning, represent environmental knowledge, and shape individual and community identities and practices. While ARUs can provide snapshots of sound events in space and time, people are living sensors, whose situated and embodied sensory knowledge can enrich and challenge our understanding of sound- and landscapes. By combining bioacoustics and

Our research team comprises partners from Cornell University (Drs. Holger Klinck, Director of the K. Lisa Yang Center for Conservation Bioacoustics, Shorna Allred, Professor, Departments of Natural Resources and Environment and Global Development; and Carol J. Pierce Colfer, Visiting Fellow, Southeast Asia Program), Universitas Mulawarman (Dr. Chandra Boer, Professor, Rustam Fahmy, Lecturer, and Dr. Emi Purwanti, Expert Assistant and Teaching Staff, Forestry Department, and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Drs. Poline Bala, Director of the Institute of Borneo Studies and Narayanan Ramaiyer, Director of the Institute of Social Informatics and Technological Innovations).



The authors and community research partners pause for a brief pre-lunch prayer next to a dock where eucalyptus logs are loaded for shipment down Balikpapan Bay to other islands in the archipelago (photo by Rizky Ramadani).

anthropology, thereby engaging soundscapes as perceived and experienced by local people, we hope to uncover previously unseen (and unheard) understandings of landscapes.

Unpacking the development of Nusantara and its impacts will require bringing together theories and methods from a range of disciplines in the social and natural sciences. By focusing on soundscapes, we hope to examine existing and emergent relationships among humans and nonhumans. Through the co-development of this research with communities, our long-term goal is to establish a longitudinal participatory monitoring program that centers communities' knowledge and expertise, allows Western and indigenous knowledges to co-mingle, and fosters more complete understandings of human-environment relationships.

Laying the Groundwork for Community-Led Soundscape Research

Since arriving in Indonesia in November 2022, we have focused our attentions and dedicated our efforts to

building relationships with research collaborators. One component of this has been connecting with the local civil society ecosystem, which has for decades advocated for environmental and social policy changes. Crucially, with our research partners in the Forestry Department at Universitas Mula-warman (UNMUL), we have sought to develop relationships with area communities at the frontiers of Nusantara's development. These communities' generosity of time and knowledge has provided an invaluable glimpse into the complex histories and overlapping drivers of social-ecological change that shape these landscapes.

Following multiple sweet-tea-fueled discussions and tours of their territories by land and water, we reached preliminary agreements to collaborate with Balik communities whose customary lands lie within Nusantara's planned borders. These communities have, for decades, experienced increasing restrictions on their use of their ancestral territory as it has been absorbed into the national forest estate and partitioned out to logging and industrial

agriculture companies. They now face the possibility of permanent relocation that would sever their relationship to a landscape that holds generations of their history, culture, and sources of traditional livelihoods. Customary leaders have expressed their strong interest in studying local soundscapes and documenting their territory's history, value, and meaning. Combining participatory soundwalks and passive acoustic monitoring of community-selected sites that hold biocultural importance, together we will practice the art of listening to study shared sonic worlds.

Our work in East Kalimantan builds on a pilot study I (Wendy Erb) conducted with Lun Bawang communities in northern Sarawak last September. These communities possess rich and complex knowledge of their landscapes and share a strong desire to document and preserve their forests and culture for future generations. Working with community members, we uncovered myriad meanings behind the sounds of birds, insects, and other animals. One animal routinely mentioned was the gibbon – locally called *kelabet* – whose



Community research partner, Cikgu Sang, retrieves a Swift recorder from one of the recordings sites in Ba'Kelalan, Sarawak (photo by Wendy Erb).



Audio: Groups of northern grey gibbons (*Hylobates funereus*) sing great calls in a large tract of selectively logged forest in the highlands of Sarawak in the 'Heart of Borneo' (recording by Wendy Erb).



Wendy Erb (center) and community research partner Seliman Lakung (seated on her right) celebrate a successful program with the students (grades 4-6), teachers, and principal of the Long Semadoh elementary school (photo by Wong Kee Heng).

songs (reflected in the audio above) help them keep time, predict the day's weather, and identify humans nearby (which, in one story, reunited lost travelers who had been separated in the forest overnight) . As one Lun Bawang hunter explained,

"At the start of the morning, around 5:30 or so, the gibbon calls from the top of the mountain there. So that day, of course the weather will be sunny, that's a good day. Actually they know but we humans don't know unless we look at the sun, we look at the situation in the sky, then we know the weather is good. But these gibbons surely know first."

During my stay, we deployed ARUs in areas where there was interest in recording forest sounds. We then held

community listening sessions to review recordings, discussing local history, culture, and the names and meanings of a range of sounds. These experiences demonstrated that soundscapes can hold great interest and value for local and indigenous communities as a rich repository of place-based knowledge about human and more-than-human lives and entanglements – but we have only begun to scratch the surface. "It is worth passing down to younger generations," a Lun Bawang teacher reflected. "It's a traditional knowledge, I (Wendy Erb) would say. Even though we have the watch now, but it's good to know something that has been used by our ancestors."

Grounded in values of equity and sharing, our work emphasizes capacity-sharing not only in our research,

but through a broader range of activities that engage diverse audiences and participants. In Sarawak, I was generously invited by two village elementary schools to talk about bioacoustics and listen to the sounds of the surrounding forests. My community counterparts, in turn, shared with students the rich local knowledge those sounds held. I also equipped local leaders with research tools and training to record and analyze sounds of interest to support their ecotourism, education, and outreach efforts in their communities.

Since arriving in East Kalimantan, I (Wendy Erb) have also trained more than a dozen undergraduate students in the UNMUL Forestry Department. After just three days of introduction to the theory and methods of bioacoustics, students' capacity and enthusiasm



Above: The authors with UNMUL faculty partner, Rustam Fahmy (back row, third from right) conduct bioacoustics research training for undergraduate forestry students in UNMUL's Lempake Education Forest (photo by Ifal).

Right: The authors at "titik nol," the ground zero of Indonesia's new capital and future site of the president's palace situated in a vast eucalyptus plantation (photo by Wendy Erb).



Audio: Black hornbill (*Anthracoceros malayanus*) recorded in UNMUL's Lempake Education Forest, a 100-ha parcel of forest located on the edge of Samarinda city (recording by Wendy Erb).

for passive acoustic monitoring shone brightly. In fact, ideas are already percolating for multiple thesis projects for the recorders we deployed in the university's education forest – a small parcel on the city's edge where, in a 24-hour period, we recorded a surprising number of threatened species (listen to audio above) – and across the broader Nusantara landscape. Through the magic of Zoom, I'm also able to stay connected with a network of research teams across the archipelago – from Peninsular Malaysia to Papua. As one of the co-founders and mentors of the Yang Center's 'Bioacoustics Equipment, Training, and Mentorship Program,' I have the honor of learning with inspirational leaders from local universities and NGOs and supporting their efforts to establish exciting and impactful conservation research. Together, we are imagining and co-creating a more inclusive bioacoustics, where local people pursue culturally-appropriate solutions to conservation problems that they are uniquely positioned and qualified to solve.

When We Listen Together...

We see this collaboration as a rare and exciting opportunity to study how human and non-human communities exist, interact, and respond to rapid and wide-ranging social-ecological change. Learning with and from local communities, we hope to show how an inclusive, sound-based research praxis can lead to improved understandings of the connections among people, nature, and place. In documenting a long-term evidence base that braids Western and indigenous ways of knowing, this research seeks to honor and advance communities' capacity to advocate for their rights in the face of potential political and economic injustice.

We recognize the ambitious nature of this project and are not naive as to its challenges and inherent contradictions. As we build on our personal research histories with indigenous communities in Indonesia, this work challenges us to rethink methods, question assumptions, and confront biases as we cautiously and respectfully move this partnership forward. Through the practice of listening together, we make space for muted voices, work to restore



damaged and severed kinships, and unfurl knowledge over space and time.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the community members of Ba'Kelalan and Long Semadoh for their generosity of time, knowledge, and warm hospitality – particularly to Cikgu Sang, Cikgu Leo, Padan Ukab, Kuab Padan, and Seliman Lakung – who were essential partners and facilitators for the research in Sarawak. In East Kalimantan, we extend our deep gratitude to the communities of Jonggon Desa, Mentawir, Pemaluan, and Sepaku for their thoughtful conversations and time. We greatly appreciate the support of our sponsors who make this work possible, including the Cornell Migrations Initiative, the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability, and the Fulbright Program. 🌱



MAKING THE CUT IN MALAYSIA:

Beefsteak and Other Un-National Foods



by Joshua Chun Wah
Kam, PhD student,
Asian Studies

The lamps of the steakhouse hang low in the woodworked interior. It feels like a faux-saloon. A rough pile of barrels props up the list of today's specials: carpetbagger steaks, Angus beef. Above us presides a gallery of watchers: cowboy western posters, ten-gallon hats, and an unfortunate portrait of Chief Geronimo. I sit down at a nondescript corner, looking at the publicity photos framed on the wall. A former prime minister grins in front of a prime rib. But this isn't a Texas Roadhouse. It isn't a Cracker Barrel. This is Jake's, allegedly one of the oldest charbroil steakhouses in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

20 年牛仔西餐廳

【JAKE'S Charbroil Steaks】

掌門人：第一代

古早味：陳舊感西部牛仔擺設

招牌菜：紅燒牛扒、脆烤馬鈴薯皮



牛仔世界熱溫交流

JAKE'S CHARBROIL STEAKS 西餐廳的老板娘 Cynthia 常說一句話：make yourself at home，the only different is you have to pay。意思是說：把自己當成在家裡好了，唯一的不同是你必須付賬。

是的，JAKE 就像家一樣，我看見幾乎每個進來午餐的顧客都和 Cynthia 打招呼、擁抱，她都叫得出他們的名字，而每個顧客結賬後都會和她招呼一聲才離開，就像客人來我們的家之後，要離去的那種場面。在城市裡的餐廳，到底還有那間可以做到像這樣呢？

照片變裝飾

有廿年歷史的 JAKE，你一進門就會被吸引住了。首先你會看見滿滿的美國西部牛仔和印地安人風味的佈置，陳舊的紅印地安人照片、牛仔片常見的繩



Left: Trilingual advertisements for halal Australian beef. "For all Cuisines!"

Above: Mandarin Malaysian newspaper articles framed on the walls of Jake's Charbroil Steaks.

Right: A Hainanese steak at Victoria Station, served on a hotstone plate.

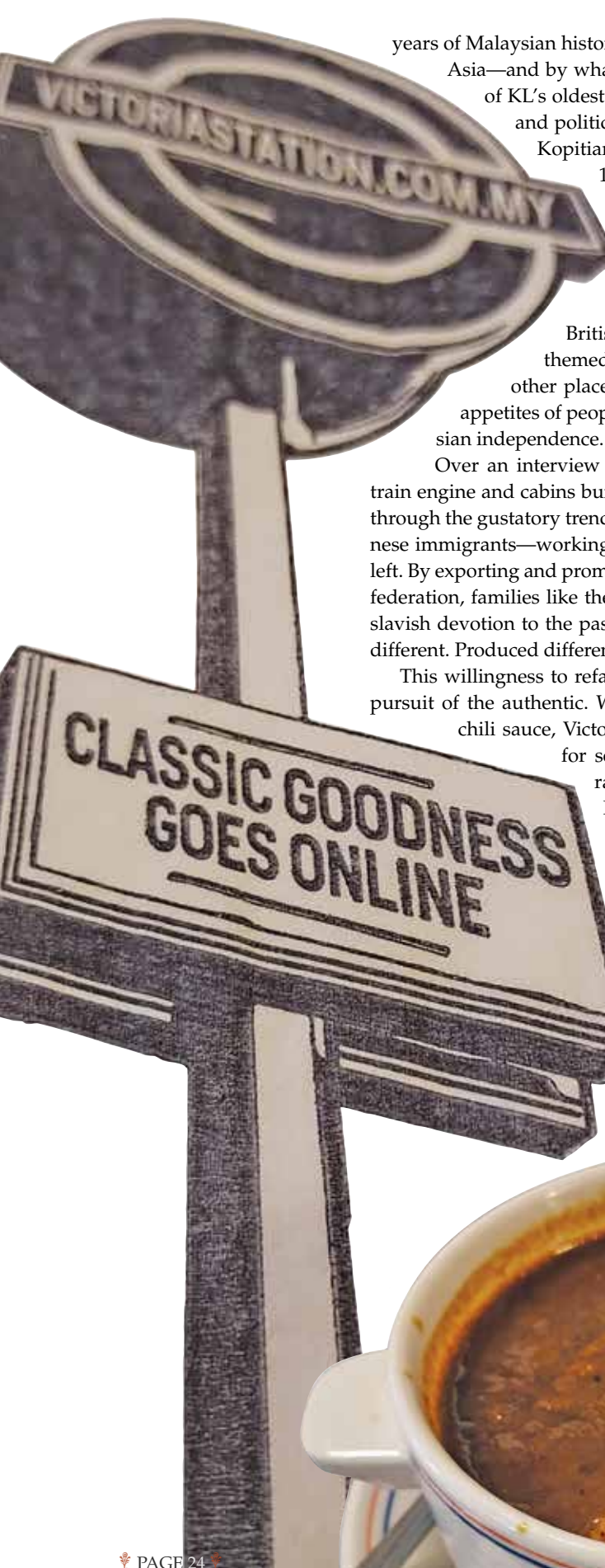


I'm fairly used to the surprise registered on both sides of the Pacific when I out myself as a historian of restaurants. It's a useful shorthand, but it doesn't really narrow down what I do. I study un-national cuisines—the foods, restaurants, and recipes in Southeast Asia that never made the cut. We think of food as a marker of cultural identity, but this usually refers to foods lionized as emblems of whatever country managed to claim them: chili crab for Singaporeans, laksa for Malaysia, etc. Last summer, under the auspices of SEAP's Barnett Fellowship, I went home to Malaysia, hunting for steakhouses and other foodways that got the chop long before national cuisine was defined. The trip took me across the national foodscape—from nostalgic steakhouses to Hainanese coffee-houses to international hotels presenting *world cuisines* (whatever we mean by that) to urban palates.

My research traced a path through Malaysian *western food*, a subcuisine that also exists in other former British colonies, like Singapore and Hong Kong. Intricately tied to the history

of Hainanese Chinese chefs who worked for the British, western food still incorporates the sauces, appetites, and classed anxieties of its diners from a century before. Seared chicken chops doused in heavy gravy; steaks with baked beans and white toast; fried bread stuffed with pork and crab (*roti babi*); are all still available in the remaining Hainanese restaurants of KL and Penang. Then, as now, you're offered a taste of what the colonizers used to eat. The dishes might not sound like much modern British fare—no chicken tikka masala here—but certain dishes straight out of the Raj are still available on request. Foo, the owner of the Victoria Station steakhouse in Kuala Lumpur, ordered me mulligatawny soup—an Indi-an-inspired, beef-and-rice curry stew catered to British appetites.

But British appetites interest me far less than the ways postcolonial eaters have redefined these cuisines. It's not culinary authenticity I'm after. I'm far more invested in how class, desire, and *good taste* have evolved in the last sixty-odd



years of Malaysian history. My project examines what food and restaurants tell us about class in Asia—and by what we’ve defined as *the good life*. For all their faux-colonial kitsch, some of KL’s oldest steakhouses linger on as venerable meeting places for prime ministers and political bigwigs. In other Hainanese coffeeshops, like the venerable Yut Kee Kopitiam on Kamunting Road, diners order pork and chicken chops—nostalgic 1960’s comfort food—in cozy, now unpretentious digs. But those same interiors would not have seemed nearly as proletarian a half-century ago. These restaurants interest me precisely for their aspirational appeal—the ways they embody the envied, leisurely lives of decades past. They don’t quite represent national cuisine—on par with nasi lemak and other popular exemplars. But they don’t sound exactly like British or European cuisine either. The steakhouses themselves, lavishly themed after British tube stations and New World saloons, hark to other ages, other places. They exist as suspended futures, past futurities: the ambitions and appetites of people trying to live into the good life as they knew it on the heels of Malaysian independence.

Over an interview at the Victoria Station—a steakhouse infamous for an actual vintage train engine and cabins built into the dining room—the Fong family owners traced a long history through the gustatory trends of the nation. Hainanese cooks had come here as the last wave of Chinese immigrants—working in the British kitchens was one of the few employment opportunities left. By exporting and promoting the tastes of those kitchens to Malaysians, then Malaysians after the federation, families like the Fongs found ways to adapt to the postcolonial world. But this is not slavish devotion to the past for its own sake—“Even the soya sauce, the Worcestershire sauce, is different. Produced differently. How could I preserve the recipes exactly?”

This willingness to refashion the past and its foods draws me to cuisines uninterested in the pursuit of the authentic. With its sizzling hotplates, Raj-era stews, and its own house brand of chili sauce, Victorian Station does not exist as a facsimile of ages past. People looking for self-consciously modern modes of eating might hit up a hotel restaurant—perhaps the also delicious Prime at Le Meridien. But now, as then, Hainanese cooks and bearers of other un-national cuisines have not ceased to work with the foods and futurities left over.

We’re leftovers people, in my family, re-steaming and refrying dishes from previous feasts. There’s no shame in the act here; cooking with leftovers takes stock of what’s present, what’s lacking, and throws it all down on the pan. It’s healthier, we say. It tastes better, the way a cheesecake tastes better after it’s set. National cuisines, as a rule, focus only on what’s present, on the ability to make sure one has all the accoutrements and condiments, in their right proportions, not unlike the staid national Malaysian discourse on politics and race. But maybe it’s precisely in the gaps—the leftover longings, the past futures, and staff lunches—where the best cuts are saved. 🌸



IN AND BEYOND AN ARCHIVE: *My Summer Research Trip in Singapore*



THE MOMENT I HOPPED onto the plane departing from New York's JFK, I, like most college students with the good fortune of receiving a research grant, had no idea what might happen on my journey. The purpose of my first field trip was to compile primary and secondary sources for my undergraduate thesis, originally titled "Revolution's Offshore Center: Singapore and Transnational Chinese Intellectuals, 1898-1912." I first went to London, where I immersed myself in books at the British Library; and then to Singapore, plowing through colonial government gazettes and local Chinese newspapers with the help of the archival staff at the National University of Singapore (NUS). However, it was my experiences outside of archives that taught me the most: visiting historical sites, meeting young people from all over the world, and enjoying Singapore's cosmopolitan city life. Different people, different cultures—they changed the way I look at my own life.

There was a steep learning curve for getting settled into archival research, and Singapore's soaring hostel price was eating through my limited budget. I consulted with Professor Suyoung Son, librarian Jeffrey Petersen, and curator Liren Zheng at Cornell, who shared with me lessons from their first visits to archives. I also worked with my advisor during my trip, who approved



by Zhiyuan Zhou,
Undergraduate, College
of Arts and Sciences



Page 25 photo: The Merlion, the mascot of Singapore, in front of Singapore's skyline.
 Above Left: The Arab Quarter, where I lived for several weeks. Above Middle: Singapore's Central Fire Station.

my previous efforts and shared pointers for my future research. Furthermore, I gleaned information from every new friend I made on how to lower my cost of living, even moving into the apartment of a generous friend for a week.

I expected archival work to be hard, and it was. Locating and ordering documents apposite to my research online was daunting, but it was negligible compared to the work of examining those primary sources in the archives. Browsing the catalog, securing the reference number, plowing through formidable amounts of pages, securing what I need, taking pictures, and writing notes—these were the routines of my workdays. The reading rooms were scholars' battlefields. They gazed, frowned, typed, scribbled, and sweated. The work ethic was contagious.

Hard work was rewarded by moments of ecstasy, as I occasionally found communications between the British Foreign Office and Chinese revolutionaries in Singapore, or a newspaper column outlining how Chinese scholarly platforms were built in Brit-

ish Malaya. Even without these "highlights," simply enthralling were the fragile, thin-layered telegram papers and the mold-ridden government gazettes (perhaps few people but scholars and archivists can appreciate this). I finally understood the complete cycle of historical knowledge production: one begins with secondary literature (books, journal articles, etc.), followed by a tentative argument, and by the collection of primary sources. After that, one works back: interpreting primary sources, discussing secondary sources, and, finally, arriving at a thesis and thus a piece of academic work is "cooked."

I also immersed myself in Singapore's dazzling cultural life. I lived in the city's Arab Quarter, visited Sikh temples, tasted Malay food, and went to a Japanese art exhibition. I made friends with people I met at hostels, mostly college graduates and young professionals who are always planning their next travels. Joined by one of my old friends who went to study in Singapore, I toured the National History Museum and Fort Canning, one of Sin-

gapore's earliest military complexes and an important piece of heritage from the colonial era. On the top of the fortress, I found a 19th-century colonial mansion of marble, through which I could see a forest of skyscrapers in Singapore's financial district. It felt bizarre. The British colonial period brought prosperity to Singapore, and the legacies of that period are still visible in Singapore today. Yet, at the turn of the 20th century—the period I study, the weight of such prosperity fell on the shoulders of Chinese laborers, Sikh policemen, and Japanese sex workers. What would they think of today's Singapore?

In my thesis, I originally planned to argue that racial hierarchies in colonial Singapore influenced the political ideologies of the transnational revolutionaries who went back and forth between China and British Malaya at the turn of the 20th century (which included today's Malaysia and Singapore). Nevertheless, I found very limited evidence to support my argument because these revolutionaries, due to the underground nature of their work,



The National Museum of Singapore.

left little traces of their personal actions, opinions, and feelings. For example, the founding father of the Republic of China (1912-1949) Sun Yat-sen traveled to Singapore nine times to avoid assassinations, collect funding, and train his men to overthrow the imperial government in China. His secret residence in Singapore, a villa originally owned by a Chinese merchant, became the headquarters of the revolutionary organization T'ung-meng Hui (Chinese Revolutionary Alliance) in the late 1900s. Sun may have viewed Singapore as a springboard for his political ambition in China, but he left only a few words about Singapore in his extant works – which did not address the racial legacies I was studying.

As the end of summer approached, I had found some fulfillment, but also anxiety. I collected plenty of primary sources, improved my research skills, made friends, and tasted a global city's cosmopolitan lifestyle. However, based on what I had found in the archives, I had to completely change my research question and rebuild my argument

from scratch – a process no doubt familiar to countless students who have been to the field before me. Back in Ithaca, I poured over everything I had amassed on my way: notes, pictures, and souvenirs. A new research focus occurred to me: why not focus on those Singapore-based Chinese who supported Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary agenda? Why did these people, already settled in one of the world's most prosperous cities, enthusiastically support Sun's vision of a Chinese nation with a strong, centralized state? Why did most of them have a background in medicine (in fact, Sun himself was a physician)? Based on these questions, I did another month's research and came up with a new research topic: the professionalization, ideologization, and governmentalization of Chinese medicine in British Malaya.

I did not come up with my new research question in the archives. Instead, it was prompted by what I saw, heard, and touched on the streets of Singapore. I came to realize that there is a limit to archival work: it tells you what

is left behind, but it does not necessarily bring you to great questions, which one cannot conceive in an armchair. "The nation" could not become the core of my research question if I had not wandered into Singapore's colonial architecture and thought about the choices those Chinese merchants, intellectuals, and, most importantly, medical doctors, faced a century ago. To be a good historian does not mean one has to live in archives and produce academic papers like a streamline worker; one must first experience the world, understand the realities, and return to the archives when he or she has a compelling reason to do so. I realized today's academic job market cannot guarantee my survival, and I ceased to prepare to be a professional historian after my trip. But I knew I don't need to be a historian just because I love history: a whole world exists out there, and I have to find it. 🌿



Left: In the 1960s, shortly after becoming a full-time staff member of IRRI.

Right: Randy helping dry rice along a Philippine roadside.



Randy Barker

December 23, 1929 - July 4, 2022

by Michael Montesano

In the late 1970s, Randy Barker returned to Cornell's Department of Agricultural Economics after a dozen years in the Philippines. "One of the first things I did," he later recalled, "was apply to join Cornell's prestigious Southeast Asia Program. It wasn't that easy. Being a farm boy from the 'upper campus' this time was no help. SEAP faculty looked upon the College of Agriculture as being politically too far right. After careful investigation of my background I was admitted to SEAP with the proviso by one of the senior staff, 'We are left of center, and we want to keep it that way.'"





*Left: Leading Fulbright Economics Teaching Program students on a field trip to the Mekong Delta, 2004.
Right: In the field.*



A decade later, at the instigation of Ben Anderson, Randy became the program's first director from one of Cornell's statutory colleges. His five years leading SEAP proved eventful. The program left 102 West Avenue for the Kahin Center, and the Echols Collection moved to the Kroch Library. The study of Vietnam and academic exchanges with that country gained momentum. Plans to host an annual lecture in memory of former director Frank Golay took shape, and Randy brought into the program the economist Erik Thorbecke, who would give the first Golay Lecture. Randy also invited future director Thak Chaloemtiarana to join the program's executive committee, while the appointment of Penny Nichols-Dietrich as outreach coordinator brought new energy to SEAP's work outside the ivory tower. Cornell hosted SEASSI in 1990 and 1991, and that first summer saw John Wolff organize the remarkable conference on "The Role of Indonesian Chinese in Shaping Modern Indonesian Life."

Notwithstanding these successes, Randy worried about the impact of Cornell's delicate finances on the program's future and about disciplinary departments' willingness to replace retiring Southeast Asianists with specialists on the region. Through his friendship with his upper campus colleague, Provost Malden "Mal" Nesheim, he worked

to ensure that Day Hall appreciated SEAP's importance and needs. He established an outside advisory council to chart directions for the program, to highlight its significance to Cornell's leadership, and to try to raise money. These efforts culminated in the preparation of a strategic plan for SEAP.

Ben Anderson's determination to see that Randy succeed him as director in 1989 stemmed from a belief that the program would benefit from the collaborative ethos of Cornell's upper campus. In fact, Randy's strong collaborative ethos was due in no small part to his experiences in Southeast Asia.

Arriving in Los Baños in 1965 on a two-year assignment in the Cornell-University of the Philippines College of Agriculture exchange, Randy soon moved to the nearby International Rice Research Institute (IRRI). He and his family remained in the Philippines until 1978, and he would return regularly to Los Baños for research and to give seminars through the final years of his life.

In his first years at IRRI, Randy found himself the lone social scientist among biological scientists bent on re-engineering the rice plant to achieve greater yields. Farm-level realities seemed hardly to figure in their thinking, and the presence among them of an economist provoked skepticism. But these scientists did not know Randy,

his willingness to learn from colleagues over morning coffee, or his eagerness to join them on the IRRI softball team. They could not anticipate his decision to conduct his own experiments on the Institute's trial plots or his enthusiasm for the seminars held at eight o'clock every Saturday morning. In his words, "Each of the departments was responsible for reporting on their research in four to six of these seminars each year. The whole staff was 'required' to attend. It was like going to church. You didn't ask what the sermon was. You couldn't understand many of the technical details in say soil-microbiology—but through the questions and answers you could understand the basic issues. It was a great learning experience." (All a bit like the Thursday SEAP brown-bag talks of earlier decades that gave rise to the Gatty Lectures of today.)

In addition to graduate students from the University of the Philippines College of Agriculture and from the School of Economics on the University's main campus in Diliman, Quezon City, Randy recruited to IRRI's growing Agricultural Economics Department not only his fellow economists but also an anthropologist, a geographer, and an engineer. He initiated a survey of farm households along a loop of the national highway in Central Luzon that, focused in each round on the same parcels of land, would be undertaken repeatedly

for almost half a century. With farmers' constraints in mind, Randy pushed for investigation into low-input cultivation of IRRI's high-yielding rice cultivars. He took a growing interest in issues of water management. His department became a model for the incorporation of social science into the activities of the global network of centers operating under the umbrella of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

Randy's IRRI years also saw him travel across South and Southeast Asia, developing an unrivalled network of economist colleagues and talking to hundreds of farmers about their cultivation practices.

Talking to farmers was one of Randy's greatest loves and greatest skills. It was a habit inseparable from his earliest relationship to Cornell. In the summer of 1950, after two years at Princeton, he made a trip to the American West with classmates headed for the business world. This trip convinced Randy that he must chart a different course in life. He resolved to study agriculture, and to transfer to Cornell to do so. But Randy was no farm boy, and the College of Agriculture required a year of farm experience for graduation. To get a start on meeting this requirement, he left school to spend that fall working on a dairy farm in the Catskills. Half a century later, he remembered having "learned two things from this experience. First, I did not want to be a dairy farmer . . . Second, I learned how to communicate with farmers. Farmers are much the same the world around. If you are interested in what they are doing, they will tell you anything you want to know."

Randy did gain the farm experience necessary to finish undergraduate studies in agriculture at Cornell, before earning his master's degree at Oregon State and his doctorate at Iowa State, and then returning to Cornell as a member of the faculty. In Ames he studied under the supervision of Earl Heady, the father of the approach to agricultural production economics that Randy would later bring to rice. His educational trajectory imbued Randy—the Boston-born Red Sox fan and former



With former Philippine president General Fidel V. Ramos, 2014.

prep school wrestler at Phillips Exeter Academy—with the commitments that define the American land-grant institution. Those commitments center on research, teaching, and extension—each for the benefit of rural people and for the assurance of food security. Those same commitments were reflected in the energy and imagination that marked Randy's achievements at IRRI and in his conversations with Asian farmers. They distinguished his 1963 attachment with the Sino-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction in Taipei and his later service on the board of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in Nigeria. Those commitments were, likewise, evident in his affiliation with the Inter-

national Water Management Institute in Sri Lanka following retirement from Cornell in 1995, in the Institute's project on "growing more rice with less water" in China, and in the field trips to farms in the Mekong Delta that Randy organized for students in the Fulbright Economics Teaching Program in Vietnam during 1998-2004.

Randy Barker was a prolific and thoughtful memoirist, with keen historical perspective on his experiences. To immerse oneself in the writings that he left behind is to remember with both wonder and delight his friendship, his sense of humor, his unfailing respect for others, his love for Cornell, and his appetite for life. 🌱

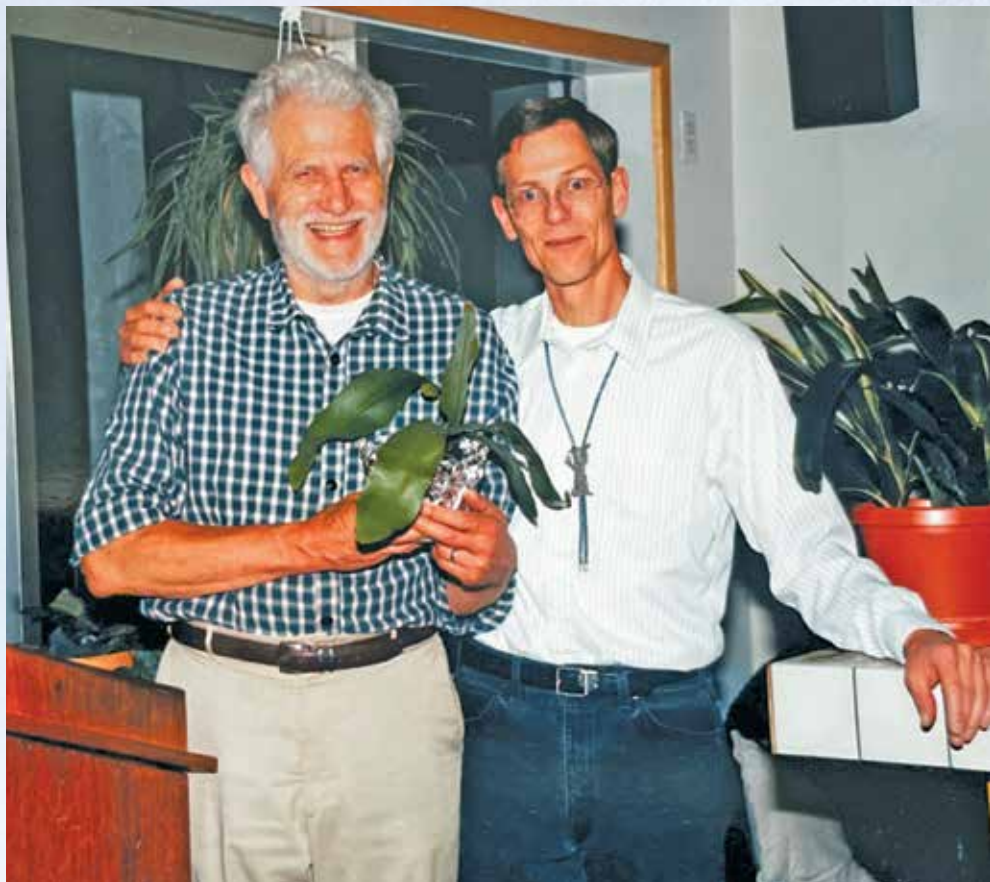
JOHN H. BADGLEY (1930-2022)



John Badgley and Julian Wheatley in the 1990s.

by Julian K. Wheatley

I WAS FIRST INTRODUCED TO JOHN BADGLEY IN 1986 AT A DINNER PARTY arranged by Knight and Nancy Biggerstaff who, in those days, took it upon themselves to entertain newcomers at their house in Ithaca. We were both new to Cornell: He, taking up the position of Associate Professor and Curator of the Southeast Asian library (the Echols Collection), and me, managing language programs in the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics. That was the first meeting. The last was in 2018, as I recall. John appeared rather early one morning at the Winner Inn in Yangon where my wife and I were staying. We joined him for breakfast and later, strode with him along Insein road towards the Shwedagon pagoda, blindingly brilliant in the distance, ultimately arriving at the home of an elderly brother and sister – Burmese – who had hosted him many times over the years. John was in a contemplative mood. He had first travelled to Burma in 1957; had returned many times since; and had kept in touch with Burmese friends during the long period that Burma was closed to Westerners. THIS WOULD BE HIS FINAL VISIT, he said.



John Badgley (left).



John Badgley (left) in Myanmar.

The focus on the political leadership of a township was, I like to think, probably a reflection of Badgley's interest in local politics growing up in Montana – an interest that led him to political science in the first place. But his experiences in Burma may have, in turn, also informed his next move, which took him in an entirely different direction.

John Herbert Badgley was born in 1930 in Missoula, Montana during the Great Depression, which hit Montana especially hard. His mother had been a schoolteacher, his father was the chief auditor at Montana State University – and in retirement, a gentleman rancher. Ninety-two years later, in March of 2022 in Edmonds, Washington John died, attended by his wife, Atsuko, daughter Lya, son Chris, and other family members. He was a man of many passions that took him far off to East and South-east Asia, but always back to his roots in the American Northwest.

In 1952, Badgley obtained a B.A. in history and political science from the University of Montana, where he met his first wife, Patricia McMeekin. His interest in Asia was prompted by a stint in the army after the Korean war when he was stationed in Hokkaido. From then on, his education followed a tight trajectory: an M.A. in International Relations (Asia) from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies – SAIS – in 1957; a year at the Rangoon-Hopkins Center with a Fulbright graduate fellowship (1957-58); and a Ph.D. in political science and government from U.C. Berkeley, completed in 1961. His dissertation was entitled “Progress and Polity in Burma”

and was based on interviews done in and around the town of Monywa in the Lower Chindwin region of Upper Burma. Even earlier, in 1959, he had written a monograph entitled *Burmese foreign economic relations, 1948-58: a survey*.

After four years as an assistant professor at Miami University of Ohio (with periods of leave at both Kyoto University in Japan and Chulalongkorn University in Thailand), Badgley returned to SAIS in Washington D.C. as an associate professor, teaching courses on Asian politics and political development (1967-70). The D.C. milieu, with scholars like William C. Johnstone and C.B. Marshall, both experts on international politics, seems to have suited him. He completed two books while there, one focused on Burma, *Politics Among the Burmans: A Study of Intermediary Leaders* (1970); and another, *Asian Development: Problems & Prognosis* (1971), more expansive, dealing with the political problems of development and the ramifications for American foreign policy.

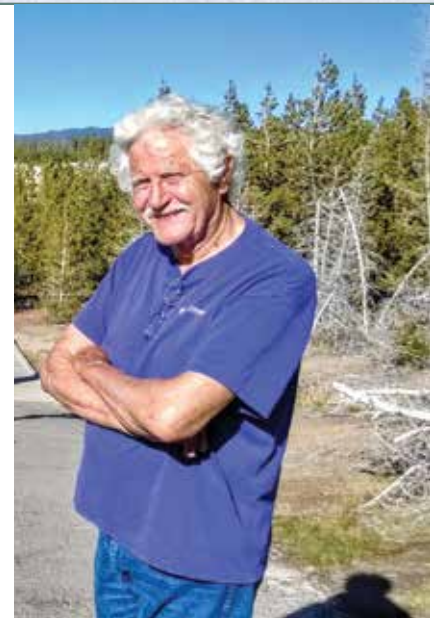
The first of the two books, *Politics Among the Burmans*, was an elaboration of Badgley's doctoral dissertation, with its attention to local leaders and the intermediary link they provided

between capital and village. The focus on the political leadership of a township was, I like to think, probably a reflection of Badgley's interest in local politics growing up in Montana – an interest that led him to political science in the first place. But his experiences in Burma may have, in turn, also informed his next move, which took him in an entirely different direction. For in 1973 he decided to leave SAIS and embark on a journey that led to the founding, with his wife Patricia, of the Institute of the Rockies, a not-for-profit educational association based in Missoula, which sought funds to enhance local democracy in the American Northwest. Badgley remained president until the death of his wife in 1984. In 1985, he took the position at Cornell, where he had already been a visiting professor from 1973-74 and before that, a post-doctoral fellow studying Burmese in 1960-61. While back in Ithaca, he was married for some years to Barbara Hand, a weaver of considerable repute, whom he had met in Montana.

As curator of the Echols collection Badgley, heading a team that included librarian Lawrence Ashmun, sought to bring the Burmese collection, particularly materials in Burmese language, up to the standard of the Indonesian and



John Badgley in Montana.



other collections. He also undertook successful fundraising for a number of in-country preservation and conservation projects. The most consequential of these was probably the Cambodia Library Archival Presentation Recovery Project (1991) which, with the assistance of Cambodian specialists such as then graduate student Judith Ledgerwood, sought to restock (and rebuild) Cambodian libraries after the ravages of the Khmer Rouge. News of the Cambodia project was picked up by the New York Times (July 26, 1989: 9), which recognized the delicate political negotiations involved and the immense contribution made by the project to the preservation of Cambodian culture.

Badgley retired from Cornell in 1995 and a year later married Atsuko Kenoki. Together, they opened a rather smart restaurant in Ithaca called La Table, with Atsuko displaying her skills as an international chef. But John remained active in both educational and library work. He played a central role in launching the Pre-Collegiate Program of Yangon, an independent non-profit school, for which he served as a trustee, hosted students, and helped with placement of graduates.

In the 1990s, Badgley with his old friend U Thaw Kaung, head of the Uni-

versities Central Library in Rangoon, had inaugurated the Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation, which provided books, equipment, and training for librarians in Burma and continued to do so under different auspices at least until 2018. But it was the response to tropical cyclone Nargis in 2008 that earned the greatest kudos. The Nargis Library Recovery project – established as a non-profit in Seattle by Badgley – managed to collect some six million books from university libraries and from ThriftBooks (head-quartered near Seattle), and then to persuade American President Lines to ship them free-of-charge to Burma to restock libraries across the country. Some of this haul was also sold by the bagful in Burma to raise funds to buy Burmese language books to distribute to village schools.

Over the years, Badgley published books, articles, and reviews, mostly on Burma, and continued to do so at least up until 2011 with the publication of *Red Peacocks: Commentaries on Burmese Socialist Nationalism*, a collection of translations and commentary on important Burmese socialist political writings which he edited with Burmese colleague U Aye Kyaw. But as in his younger days, John contin-

ued to peruse old haunts. In 2017, for example, together with another retired political scientist, David Leuthold, he crisscrossed the state of Montana conducting interviews for a video project on civic engagement called *Montana Voices* (2017).

John Badgley would not have been pleased with recent political developments in his two favorite places, Burma and Montana. And while he would have appreciated the elegance, he would not have appreciated the fatalistic content of the Burmese proverb, Pyi-deh: ayei: | pau'-neh. cei: (ပြည်ထဲအရေး၊ ပေါက်နဲ့ကျေ၊), which translates loosely as “understanding politics is like trying to find a parrot in a Flame of the Forest tree” (you can’t). As a man who had once qualified as an alternate for the Olympic hurdles competition, John was not afraid of obstacles. He once said that he saw hope where others saw failure. May it be so. 🌿

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Thanks go to Lya Badgley, Dorothy and Jim Guyot, and Larry Ashmun for corrections and helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article.



Led by Kaja McGowan, dancing breaks out after the 2017 SEAP Banquet.



*by James Nagy,
Administrative Coordinator*

A Fond Farewell to the SEAP Community

On a hot and muggy Thursday in 2016, which also happened to be my birthday, I was introduced to SEAP. My partner Juan Fernández and I had only very recently moved to Ithaca to begin his PhD in Southeast Asian history, and we were invited for some reception event. Though I had peripherally and vaguely known about this “Southeast Asia Program,” which was part of the reason for choosing Cornell for his doctoral program, I had yet to experience it. Living only a block away on University Avenue at the time, we arrived at the reception promptly and found quite a party already in motion: new community members, long-time community members, faculty, staff, students, and friends all gathered at the Kahin Center and spilling out into the parking lot, under tents, up the little slope, and everywhere else you can imagine. It was the first time I heard the joke that they hold the SEAP Fall Reception on an invariably hot and humid day so as to “bring Southeast Asia to Ithaca”—it certainly wasn’t the last time I heard this jest, which tends to elicit a chuckle (particularly during the winter months), and perhaps a glance into the distance, with a more than a slight wish for Southeast Asia to indeed be a bit closer to Ithaca.

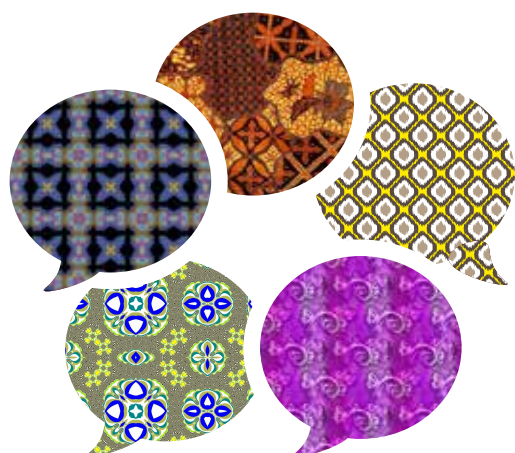
That first year before working for SEAP showed me glimpses of the SEAP community that I would go on to experience time and time again. I was walking down Aurora Street one day after I got off work at Tompkins Trust Co. when several people yelled my name. I vaguely recalled some of them, but they remembered me clearly: Juan’s partner; they said I should join them for dinner and that Juan was on his way. So, it being rude to refuse, I joined and sat with people I knew only a little and had a jovial time. And of course, who can forget their first SEAP Spring Banquet? The Banquet is when I believe you see SEAP in truest form, with its various potluck dishes and performances. Amid a Southeast Asian-style downpour during the 2017 Spring Banquet, I found myself overseeing the deceptively simple task of arranging and labeling the unending stream of potluck dishes which soon overflowed the long tables, while Juan and MK Long presided over the performances and entertainment in their duties as incoming graduate committee co-chairs. It was there that

I learned Betty Nguyen was about to leave the position of SEAP Administrative Assistant to move with her husband to California. I wish I could say that I thought long and hard about the possibility, but I confess that I did not: I immediately decided to apply!

When I first started working at SEAP a few months later in July 2017, I wrote in my self-intro piece for the Fall 2017 SEAP Bulletin that I hoped “to foster an atmosphere of direct and open dialogue at SEAP,” and I reflect that this was indeed always my hope. Throughout my almost six years as SEAP’s administrative assistant and later administrative coordinator, I have had the pleasure of getting to know and working with the full breadth of the SEAP community: faculty, graduate students, faculty emeriti, undergraduate minors, alumni, community partners, and more. My comparatively short stint at SEAP is a but blip in the history of the Program, but the Program has become to me and my partner (as I suspect it likewise had been or continues to be to many of you), a family during our time in Ithaca and at Cornell—as cliché as this sounds.

When I first arrived in Ithaca, I knew almost nothing about Southeast Asia. I am still a dilettante at best, but working at SEAP has enabled me to take courses such as Tagalog with the inimitable Tita Thess Savella, and Gender and Sexuality in Southeast Asian Cinema with Arnika Fuhrmann. Moreover, SEAP’s Gatty Lecture Series (formerly the Brown Bags) enables even the most unknowledgeable to peer into specialized topics and subfields and gain a sense of the scope of Southeast Asian studies, broadly conceived. But more than all these things, it is the people of SEAP, the faculty, the students, and the staff, who make it what it is. I now look forward to returning to Ithaca and SEAP in the future to see how the Program continues to grow, educate, and be not just an intellectual resource but also a resource, familial at times, for those who sojourn in Ithaca and have a connection to Southeast Asia.

James will leave SEAP later this spring and move to Madison, WI where he will join his partner Juan Fernández who has accepted an academic position in the History Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. 🌿



Southeast Asia
LANGUAGE WEEK
April 16-22, 2023

NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

SEAP Welcomes New Staff Member



Emily Falica, Program Assistant

Emily Falica is very excited to be joining SEAP. Before coming to Cornell, she worked as an English writing and language teacher for private schools and refugee organizations in Seoul, South Korea. Emily graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Asian Religions and Culture concentrating in Korean and Japanese language from Western Kentucky University in 2020. Emily enjoyed learning about art and food history in South Korea and is excited to explore these topics in Southeast Asia. She looks forward to connecting undergraduate students at Cornell to Southeast Asia studies and introducing them to new languages while learning more about the region herself.

The Einaudi Center Welcomes Sarah Plotkin

My name is Sarah, and I started at the Einaudi Center in November as Student Engagement and Community Outreach Coordinator. My job is to work with students, staff, and faculty to create meaningful programming that engages K-12 students and teachers. I advise and support the Cornell student leaders who run the Foreign Language Introduction Program (FLIP), which brings world language and cultural education to K-12 classrooms and community programs. I will also be organizing the International Studies Summer Institute (ISSI), our annual K-12 teacher professional development workshop. Additionally, I will be managing and re-organizing our Culture Kits and Lending Library, amazing resources for teachers to access artifacts, books, and music curated from around the world.

Before starting this position, I worked for the past 10 years as an educator and community-engaged theater artist in New York City and Boston. Now I am excited to have returned to my hometown of Ithaca! Community engagement is at the heart of all my work, and I am so happy to have this opportunity to help share the amazing resources the Einaudi Center and the larger Cornell community has to offer with upstate New York's K-12 students and teachers.



25th Cornell SEAP
Graduate Student Conference
March 10-12, 2023

Hybrid: At the Kahin Center and on Zoom

Crossing Boundaries,
Sustaining Connections



COURSE SPOTLIGHT

COURSE SPOTLIGHT: Commerce, Currencies, and Commodities: Reconfiguring the Archive

by William Noseworthy, SEAP Visiting Lecturer

In Fall 2022 students in Kaja McGowan and Ellen Avril's art history and anthropology practicum embarked on a unique journey. The challenge presented before the group – a mix of undergraduate and graduate students – was to design their own exhibit for the Johnson Museum, based entirely on existing Asian Arts collections and with zero necessary area studies expertise as a prerequisite. They undertook this challenge with creativity and vigor, exploring the history and culture of Southeast Asia through an examination of the transregional connections woven by trade, religious movements, and linguistic exchange. Each student selected a series of objects in the Asia Collections, researched them, and presented their objects to the other students in the practicum, seeking connections with one another through concept, form, and material.

The exhibition "A Cosmos in the Home: Circulating Materials, Objects, and Ideas in Southeast Asia" includes many pieces in the Johnson that are well known, such as Cheong Lai Tong's 1962 painting, "Red Dancing Figures." It also features a survey of ceramics, classic art objects, folk art, and contemporary art from the region, conceptually emphasizes connections between

the macrocosm and the microcosm. However, the students also drew inspiration from recent radical interventions in art and museum space which they had studied in the course, emphasizing how art objects can become both displaced and re-placed through an exhibition. As the constructed their interventions, a new display case in the Southeast Asia wing grew in concept to include East Asian (Chinese) coins, which can also connect to the feature of coinage common in temple shrines and sacred spaces in the home in parts of Southeast Asia. Additionally, the placement of Choeng Lai Tong's "Red Dancing Figures" puts the work in conversation with K.C.S. Paniker's "Garden" (1958, India) and an image of a mandala in the South Asia wing. The exhibition, "A Cosmos in the Home," will remain at the Johnson Museum through the end of Spring semester 2023.



Ronald and Janette

Gatty Lecture Series

Spring 2022 | Kahin Center, 640 Stewart Ave, Ithaca, NY

- 1.26** | **JEREMY LADD**, Cornell University | Department of Government
The Unintended Consequences of Repression in the Electoral Regimes in the Social Media Era
- 2.2** | **JUAN FERNANDEZ**, Cornell University | Department of History
Sex and Gender in the Ethnographic Encounter in the Highlands of the American Colonial Philippines
- 2.9** | **SOHPIE CHAO**, University of Sydney | Department of Anthropology
We are (not) Monkeys: Raciality, Animality, & Cosmopolitical Struggles in Indonesia West Papua
*Note: held only on Zoom at 6:00pm
- 2.16** | **MK LONG**, Cornell University | Department of Asian Studies
Buddhist Women and Biographical Time in Burma
- 3.3** | **ALYSSA PAREDES**, University of Michigan | Department of Anthropology
Plantation Liberalism: Personhood and Property between Mindanao and the Black Atlantic
*Note: Held on Friday at 3:00pm in Warren Hall B73
- 3.9** | **JOSEPH SCALICE**, Nanyang Technological University | School of Humanities
Rehabilitating Dictatorship: The Marcos Martial Law Regime and the Election of Ferdinand Marcos Jr.
- 3.13** | **KHATHARYA UM**, UC Berkeley | Asian American & Asian Diaspora Studies
*Note: Held on Monday at 12:30pm
- 3.23** | **TRENT WALKER**, Stanford University | Ho Center for Buddhist Studies
Songs of Love and Loss: Crafting Buddhist Poetry in Early Cambodia
- 3.30** | **SEAN FEAR**, University of Leeds | School of History
Assessing Saigon's "Year of Sand": The 1968 Tet Offensive and Rise and Fall of South Vietnam's Second Republic 1967-1975 *Note: Held at 11:25am on Zoom only
- 4.13** | **RISA TOHA**, Wake Forest University | Department of Political Science
Can National Identity Trump Ethnic Favoritism? Experimental Evidence from Singapore
- 4.24** | **NANCY PELUSO**, UC Berkeley | Environmental Science, Policy, and Management Studies
*Notes: Monday. Time and location TBA
- 4.27** | **LINA CHHUN**, University of Texas at Austin | Department of American Studies
Walking with the Ghost: On Autoethnography and the Study of Familial and Historical Violence
- 5.4** | **PHI HONG SU**, Williams College | Department of Sociology
The Border Within: Vietnamese Migrants Transforming Ethnic Nationalism in Berlin



Accommodation requests: seap@cornell.edu



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

FOREIGN LANGUAGE INTRODUCTION PROGRAM



*connecting our diverse
Cornell community
to underserved local
communities in upstate
New York*

Formerly known as the Afterschool Language and Culture Program (ALCP) the Einaudi Center's Foreign Language Introduction Program (FLIP) is heading out into the local community to teach children about world cultures and languages. In Spring 2023, you can sign up to share your language at libraries around Tompkins County.

FLIP aims to connect our diverse Cornell community, with its rich languages and cultures, to underserved local communities in upstate New York. We connect Cornell volunteers with local schools, libraries, and other community partner organizations to provide short introductory lessons on foreign languages and cultures. In Fall 2022 we held five sessions which exposed more than 40 kids to seven different world languages.

If you are interested in learning more, scan the barcode and we will be in touch!



From the Southeast Asia Program
at Cornell University



DID YOU MISS OUR GATTY LECTURE THIS WEEK?

Do you want to know more about the Gatty speakers? We've got you covered! Check out our podcast: *Gatty Lecture Rewind*. This weekly podcast is currently hosted by Francine Barchett, a second-year Ph.D. student in Natural Resources and the Environment. With a new season each semester, the podcast provides a platform to rewind and learn about our guest speakers and their academic interests.

Tune in as Francine picks the brains of our guest lecturers, recapping their Gatty lecture while following up on more unanswered questions. Discover fun facts and learn more about our guests during the exciting lightning around! Each episode is filled with easter eggs: What steered them to their research topics, tales from their research in the field, and other topics that may arise during the conversation. Each episode also gives an insight into what can be expected from our guests in the future whether it be upcoming research or expected publications. We always end on a note of generosity, as our guests share some advice for scholars, researchers, and students and give recommendations for books, articles, movies, or podcasts.

SEAP's Gatty Lecture Rewind podcast is available on all podcast streaming platforms, and available for download. With a different guest, topic and story each episode, be sure to tune in every week!

2021 LAURISTON SHARP PRIZE

Anissa Rahadiningtyas is an art historian working on the position and question of Islamic religiosity, rituals, and performances in the works of modern and contemporary art in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. She received her Ph.D. from Cornell University and is currently an assistant curator of Islamic aesthetics in modern and contemporary Southeast Asia at the National Gallery Singapore. Her research interests include comparative modernisms, Indian Ocean studies, postcolonial and decolonial theories, gender and feminism, environmentalism, and Islamic studies.



WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE that Dr. Anissa Rahadiningtyas is the recipient of the 2021 award. The review committee arrived at that decision based on the excellence of her dissertation entitled, “Islam and Art in the Making of the Modern in Indonesia,” and on her many important contributions to SEAP.

The dissertation advances at least two bodies of work in noteworthy ways. Anissa’s focus on Islamic art in the colonial period through post-independence helps fill a substantial gap in contemporary understandings of modern Southeast Asian art, which historically has under-recognized the contributions of Muslim artists. At the same time, global attention to modern Islamic art has tended to focus largely on the Middle East. Anissa’s consideration of the work of pivotal Muslim artists in Indonesia thus helps enrich scholarship on two fronts.

The thesis assesses and challenges conceptualizations of “Islam” and “modern,” primarily through the work of four noteworthy artists (Haryadi, Arahmaiani, Sadali, and Pirous), all of whom attended the colonial art training institution in Bandung. One of the greatest strengths of her writing is her ability to contextualize the lives and contributions of each artist, conveying a deep understanding of each one in historical, political, and religious perspective. This very much enriches the story she tells. Dr. Rahadiningtyas beautifully interweaves the aesthetic and historical, and her arguments are well substantiated and convincing. Members of the committee believe she will make continue to be an important voice in her field. Indeed, she is currently based at the National Gallery Singapore and will soon curate her own exhibition drawing heavily from her dissertation.

by Lindy Williams and Jenny Goldstein

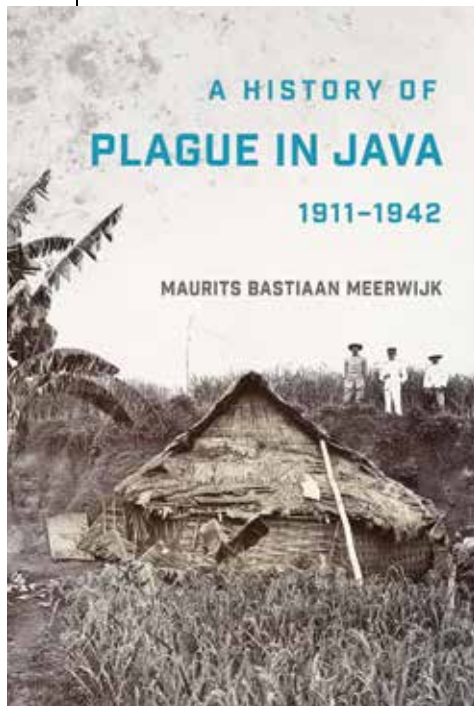
VISITING FELLOW

Chindavone Sanlath (Chin) is a 2022-2023 Hubert Humphrey fellow from Laos based in the Department of Global Development, Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. In her current role, she is an environmental and social consultant at Earth Systems and a certified lead auditor in integrated management systems. Chin has provided consultation services to numerous projects across industries including renewable energy, agroforestry, mining, and international development. Some of the consultancies she provided include developing integrated management systems and conducting environmental and social due diligence assessments for commercial agroforestry projects, conducting stakeholder engagement activities as part of environmental impact assessments for solar energy development projects, designing and conducting socio-economic surveys for the private sector and government ministries in Laos. In 2021, Chin and her team successfully conducted a Circular Economy Project in Lao PDR, where they identified circular GHG mitigation opportunities for Lao PDR through a comprehensive metabolic (resources flow) analysis.

At Cornell, Chin has focused on deepening her skills and knowledge of climate change sciences and policies, sustainable business management, and project management. She aspires to use her new skills to help development projects and businesses achieve sustainability through the provision of practical, effective, and innovative solutions to complex environmental and social problems. During her Humphrey Fellowship Program, she has also enjoyed community engagement activities, including volunteering at Loaves and Fishes Ithaca and visits to Monroe Community College (organized by the Einaudi Center) and to Alfred State College. Community engagement has helped her to understand and appreciate the local culture and spirits of America, and to be part of the community.



NEW BOOKS



FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM PUBLICATIONS

an Imprint of Cornell University Press

More information at

cornellpress.cornell.edu

Shorna Allred, professor, natural resources

Christine Bacareza Balance, associate professor, Asian American studies, performing and media arts

Victoria Beard, professor and associate dean of research, city and regional planning

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