

Cornell University

A photograph of a lush green rice field with golden rice stalks in the foreground. A woven basket is partially visible on the left, and a metal bowl is in the bottom left corner. The text "A Southeast Asia Program at Cornell University" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

A Southeast Asia Program

at
Cornell
University

FALL BULLETIN 2011

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

This year the conditions for the perfect storm converged: on-going budget constraints across U.S. universities combined with drastic and unexpected cuts made by Congress to the Department of Education's Title VI/Fulbright-Hays programs, which includes National Resource Centers such as the Southeast Asia Program. The "stealth" cuts amounted to 47% of NRC funding across all such centers in the U.S. and sent every NRC director scrambling for emergency financial support from their home universities.

On the bright side, the cuts catalyzed unprecedented cooperation across Cornell's three Asia NRCs (East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia), which worked with Einaudi Center Director Fred Logevall to successfully lobby for emergency bridging funds to maintain our language offerings and programming efforts for the upcoming year. We gratefully report that Cornell University Provost, Kent Fuchs, recognized the value of the Asia NRCs and the stakes involved in even a single year's cuts, which would have amounted to nearly \$350,000 across the three programs. In the upcoming year, SEAP will continue efforts to educate those in DC about the importance of maintaining the capacity to train experts in Southeast Asian languages and cultures. We also encourage anyone who has benefited directly or indirectly from the NRC funding, including Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships, to urge a restoration of full funding for the U.S. Department of Education's international and foreign language studies programs.

Despite the rather gloomy national forecast for international education, SEAP has had a vigorous and engaging year, and promises more of the same for 2011-12. Many of our initiatives focus on Indonesia. The Cornell Modern Indonesia Project has been revitalized under the gentle guidance of director Eric Tagliacozzo, who together with the CMIP faculty organized the inaugural conference on the State of Indonesian Studies at the Kahin Center in April 2011. The conference assembled three senior scholars from six different fields to jointly discuss the arc of Indonesian studies over the past and into the future. The resulting publication will chart the state of Indonesian Studies by many of the founding figures who helped build the field, and will revitalize interdisciplinary scholarship on Indonesia. We are currently planning a smaller thematically focused workshop on Indonesian politics and Islam to be organized by Tom Pepinsky as the second installment in the revived CMIP series.

SEAP's Indonesianists created and offered lectures in a new undergraduate course led by anthropologist Marina Welker. The course—"Ten Thousand Islands: Indonesia in Historical and Contemporary Perspective"—was offered for the first time in the spring of 2011.

Professors Marty Hatch, Tom Pepinsky, Audrey Kahin and Eric Tagliacozzo secured a CAORC start-up grant and a Henry Luce Foundation award to establish the American Institute for Indonesian Studies (AIFIS), a non-profit organization, in Indonesia. AIFIS already has an office in Jakarta and an on-site executive director, Dr. Timothy McKinnon (Max Planck Institute). The AIFIS executive committee is comprised of representatives from key U.S. universities and institutions with a strong interest in Indonesian studies. The AIFIS will operate much like a Center for American Overseas Research by offering assistance to and enabling exchanges among foreign and Indonesian researchers.

SEAP continues its efforts to build intellectual partnerships with Cornell scientists and professionals who work in Southeast Asia. To this end, our brown bag series is now offered once per semester on the Ag quad where we feature a talk by a leading CU scientist who works in Southeast Asia, and we invite one scientist or professional school faculty member to give a brown bag talk at the Kahin Center. Already we have seen the fruit of these interdisciplinary exchanges in the form of an interdisciplinary graduate seminar on rice genetics and language diversification taught in the spring 2010. In addition, this September 2011 SEAP will co-sponsor an international conference on Rice and Language: Crops, Movement and Adaptation. It brings together leading international scholars and Cornell faculty from anthropology, linguistics and plant breeding and genetics.

SEAP's science initiative has expanded to include climate change efforts led by Vice Provost Alice Pell, whose office was asked to create a concept note on climate change for President Obama. The climate change project includes scientists and Indonesianists from Cornell and their focus is on the Indonesian archipelago, which is arguably the world's most biotically diverse region. Marea Hatzios, Senior Coastal and Marine Specialist at the World Bank, came to speak about a WB project on the impact of climate change on Indonesian reefs and low-lying coastal lands.

Vice Provost Alice Pell invited SEAP to cohost a bevy of visitors, mostly involved in higher education, from Thailand,

Malaysia and Indonesia. Among the many guests from Indonesia were Vice Minister of National Education, Dr. Fasli Jalal (a Cornell alum), the energetic Rector of the University of Indonesia, Dr. der Soz. Gumilar Rusliwa Somantri and visitors from Bogor Agricultural University. In December 2010, Dr. Dino Patti Djalal, the Indonesian Ambassador to the U.S., visited Cornell along with Ambassador David Merrill, now President of the U.S.-Indonesia Society. Ambassador Djalal has been invited to return as an Einaudi Center Foreign Policy Distinguished Speaker.

Our graduate students organized their annual SEAP Graduate Student Symposium where four panels featured the exciting new research by graduate students working in Southeast Asia. Professor Andy Mertha gave the keynote on Sino-Khmer Rouge relations.

Post-secondary and K-12 Outreach programs continue full steam ahead. Outreach Coordinator Thamora Fishel organized instruction in five different Southeast Asian languages taught to over 200 elementary school students in the Afterschool Language Program. She also provides teacher training to educators who work in communities with growing populations of refugees from Burma. SEAP Outreach is a part of the Rural Schools Initiative, which offered an International Studies Summer Institute in June 2011 that focused on food cultures around the world.

In addition to these ongoing endeavors, SEAP will begin the Southeast Asia Visibility Project this year, which will improve the Program's media presence in traditional media as well as Facebook and Twitter. The Visibility Project, guided by media consultancy Gayeski Analytics, will teach SEAP faculty and graduate students how to skillfully engage the media in part of a larger effort to raise public awareness about Southeast Asia and Cornell's collective expertise in the region.

Nancy Loncto, Thamora Fishel, and Wendy Treat have had a hand in each of these diverse initiatives, none of which could be accomplished without their resourcefulness and competence. Having an exuberant faculty and a warm and capable staff has made my first year as director a fulfilling one.

Warm wishes,
Tamara Loos



Collaborative research in highland Southeast Asia:

The extraordinary work of
Damrong Tayanin and Kristina
Lindell on Khmu culture



Magnus Fiskesjö
Associate Professor
of anthropology



Kàm Ràw and Kristina Lindell in Northern Thailand at an (unrelated) local shrine. Photo probably taken in 1973 or 1974. Courtesy of Olivier Evrard and Ten Nyi (on left in the photo).

Kàm Ràw, also known by his Thai name Damrong Tayanin, was a Khmu (Kammu) scholar born in northern Laos, where he grew up in a highland village and gained wide-ranging knowledge of his own peoples' culture, including the treasures of Khmu oral literature and music. As a young man and itinerant laborer (including as a wartime army porter), he also learned several other languages spoken across the region of the Khmu who live mainly in northern Laos and Thailand but also in China and Vietnam.

In the early spring of 1973, Kàm Ràw (1938-2011) was invited to meet Kristina Lindell (1928-2005), a Swedish linguist, folklorist, and scholar of East and Southeast Asian cultures in northern Thailand, near Lampang. At the time, Kristina Lindell was conducting a year of research at the Lampang field station of the Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies in Copenhagen (today renamed the Nordic Institute for Asian Studies, NIAS), where she initiated the Kammu Language and Folklore Project in 1972. Kàm Ràw was originally invited as one of several storytellers who were asked to share their stories for documentation in the alphabet that Kristina Lindell created. She quickly realized his extraordinary capabilities, and he was asked to join the project as an assistant and interpreter. Thus began a collaborative research project on Khmu language and culture extending over almost four decades—one of the most striking stories of productive and profoundly meaningful long-term collaborative research in Southeast Asia. It is remarkable not least because Kàm Ràw grew up without formal schooling and yet produced a body of scholarship and documentation which constitutes a dramatic testimony both to the formidable richness of Southeast Asia's historically non-literate cultural traditions, and to the intellectual capabilities of his people.

In 1974, she arranged grants for him to come and work at Lund University, a major research university in Southern Sweden. There she gathered a broad team of researchers in all these fields and more, who all collaborated with Kàm Ràw, coauthoring books and articles with him. Kàm Ràw and Kristina Lindell remained based at Lund University for the rest of their careers. They left only for research trips in Southeast Asia, or for brief *séjours* elsewhere, such as Kàm Ràw's academic year visit with his family at Cornell in 1989-90, on which more below. When she passed away, Kristina bequeathed her Lund house, where she lived for many years with her aging mother, to Kàm Ràw, who lived there with his own family until his death this April. The two are buried near each other in the Limhamn Cemetery, Sweden.

At the time when they first met, Kristina was in the process of founding the Department of East and Southeast Asian Languages at Lund University, where she organized the teach-

ing of Chinese, Thai, and other languages. I myself first signed up for her Fall 1978 intensive Chinese class and remained a disciple ever since, even though I came to Mon-Khmer studies much later through my research on the Wa, who are also speakers of a Northern Mon-Khmer language, like the Khmu and the Lamet (or Rmeet), and others. I learned to deeply value not just Kristina's tough-love mentorship as a formidable and demanding teacher, but, as I noted elsewhere (Fiskesjö 2005; see too Swahn 2006), above all her insistence on taking language and culture seriously. I am personally convinced that it was her fundamental regard for the irreducible complexity and richness of others' languages, folklore, and culture, that fueled her determination in her long years of research and writing.

She too came to academia through extraordinary hard work (having once been a primary school teacher, she persevered in studying foreign languages, overcoming gender bias, etc.). Ultimately, her ethos derived from her training both in languages and (later) in folklore, in which she had come to



Kàm Ràw visiting at Cornell University, 1990. Photo by Charles Harrington, courtesy of the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. (The original appeared in a *The Cornell Chronicle* article by Kaff 1990).



Kristina Lindell at Lund University after receiving her honorary doctorate. *Courtesy of Kristina Lindell.*

grasp how linguistic and cultural difference really does make a difference that can be ignored only at the price of either misunderstanding or missing the point, or both. This was her starting point, in listening to Kàm Ràw—really listening; and collaborating with him in writing down, and in writing about, those vast riches to which he had access through his learning of what was essentially an oral tradition.

Kàm Ràw was warm, friendly, and caring, and was endowed with remarkable talents as a singer, storyteller, and scholar. At Lund, he soon became fluent in both Swedish and English—this was a man who once taught himself Lao writing by peeking through a schoolhouse window. In the research, Kàm Ràw originally was a linguistic and cultural informant, and continued as such throughout. He was also one of several storytellers whose retellings of Khmu oral literature provided the material for six volumes of tales published 1977-1998, under the general heading *Folk Tales from Kammu* (see below for details). Volume III presented a wealth

of stories told by Kàm Ràw himself. (It is prefaced by a marvelous account of his invoking of a Khmu story to rebuke what he saw as the misbehavior of Kristina Lindell.) The other volumes, produced with his editorial aid, rendered stories told by Khmu storytellers, both masters and novices, engaged by the project team through Kàm Ràw's aid. Kàm Ràw himself also became involved as an author and scholar in research on a wide range of other topics such as ethnobotany and music. In 1986, in recognition of his scholarship, Kàm Ràw was given an honorary doctorate at Lund University (Kristina Lindell received hers in 1994).

Their collaboration was primarily focused on the recording and analysis of Kammu folktales, music, and language, and were increasingly based in the Linguistics department at Lund University, where Kàm Ràw's own rich webpages are still hosted (see below). The work also involved the linguist Jan-Olof Svantesson and the ethnomusicologist Håkan Lundström, among others. The folklorist Jan-Öyvind Swahn, together with Kristina Lindell, explored the motifs deployed in Kammu oral literature, and sought to link them with other Asian and world traditions (on the methodology, see Lindell et al, *Working on the Motifs in a Folk Tale*; Lindell & Swahn 1997).

Kàm Ràw was a visiting scholar at Cornell University in 1989-90, as a Rockefeller Resident Fellow in the Humanities, and the university newspaper ran an article on him (Kaff 1990). The power of his Khmu singing is still recalled by those who attended his presentation. Another of the outcomes of this stay was the autobiographical book published in English in Cornell's Southeast Asia Program's book series, *Being Kammu: My Village, My Life* (it has also been published separately in Thai, in 2005). It is a fascinating account, but in a review, the US social anthropologist Durrenberger (1997) painted Kàm Ràw as a passive captive of "the Scandinavian tradition of folk studies," a straw-man construction denounced by the reviewer as divorced from history, and also mistakenly conflated with Karl Gustav Izikowitz, 1903-84, cf. Izikowitz 1985, the anthropolo-

Kàm Ràw was warm, friendly, and caring, and was endowed with remarkable talents as a singer, storyteller, and scholar. At Lund, he soon became fluent in both Swedish and English—this was a man who once taught himself Lao writing by peeking through a schoolhouse window.

gist famous for his work on the Lamet of northern Laos, neighbors of the Khmu, who also welcomed Kàm Ràw in Sweden and encouraged his scholarship). This aside, in his eagerness to reject "folk studies," Durrenberger seems to have missed the key point about taking seriously what people say (at length, in detail, in many volumes!), which is the core and enduring

value of “humanistic” folklore studies—sadly ignored in some forms of social science. Durrenberger made a better point when he expressed his hope that Kām Rāw would also write more about the modern-day history of the Khmu (not least their war-time experiences)—only Kām Rāw was already doing this, in his own way (e.g. Damrong Tayanin and Lue Vang 1992), and about his life in the West (cf. Damrong Tayanin 2005). But much more importantly, what is dismissed by some as so-called “folk” materials may remain crucial materials for Kām Rāw and other Khmu, not idle “stories,” but vehicles for both the embodiment and transmission of treasured knowledge of key importance for their people, including for their identity as a living people. For this reason it is also important to point out that his work to record and transmit Khmu folklore and culture was very highly regarded across the global communities of fellow Khmu, whom Kām Rāw’s visited during his travels to France, to the US, and elsewhere. As Charles “Biff” Keyes noted on the ThailandLaosCambodia online network, April 21, 2011, Kām Rāw “was received in Seattle as among other Kammu communities both abroad and in Laos as their chief advocate for their cultural heritage.”

Among Kām Rāw’s last work was his participation in the twin books recording and discussing his Khmu songs, produced in collaboration with Håkan Lundström within the framework of linguistic recording first built by Kristina Lindell in the early 1970s. Together, Kristina Lindell and Kām Rāw, and their several collaborators, have created an example of dedi-

Together, Kristina Lindell and Kām Rāw, and their several collaborators, have created an example of dedicated collaborative work producing a lasting inheritance—not only for the Khmu people as they go into the future as a global presence in their own right, but also for all of us, as a treasure-house of human ingenuity, and wisdom.

cated collaborative work producing a lasting inheritance—not only for the Khmu people as they go into the future as a global presence in their own right, but also for all of us, as a treasure-house of human ingenuity, and wisdom. ♪

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For more on Kām Rāw’s and his collaborators’ research (and for more pictures of Kām Rāw), see the rich pages still hosted at Lund University under the title of the “Kammu Home Page,” <http://person2.sol.lu.se/DamrongTayanin/kammu.html>. In addition, there are lists of Kām Rāw’s publications at this page: <http://www.sol.lu.se/en/sol/staff/DamrongTayanin/>. For more on Khmu culture, also see Evrard (2006), Proschan (1997, 1999, etc.).

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The Divided Discipline of Burma/Myanmar Studies

Writing a dissertation during the 2010 election



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BURMA OR MYANMAR? Many readers will be familiar with the dilemma over how to refer to the country in English. You may already know that the British called the region “Burma” when they annexed it in the 19th century, and that some object to the colonial roots of this appellation. You may have also heard that the military regime changed the country’s name to “Myanmar” in 1989, and that the political opposition and its sympathizers still call it “Burma” to protest this unilateral decision. If you are familiar with the Burmese¹ language, you will know that the source of the English words “Burma” and “Myanmar” are the colloquial and literary names for the country; it has always been called *myanma* in formal contexts, while it’s often called *bama* in conversation.² You may be even more confused about how to refer to the country after the ambiguous transition to “discipline-flourishing democracy” following the 2010 elections, after which the military junta (the State Peace and Development Council or SPDC) ceded power to a partially civilian parliamentary government that has yet to do much of anything.

1 I use “Burmese” to refer to the language and to people of any ethnic group with origins in Burma (not only ethnic majority Burmans). This choice both reveals my own position along the Burma/Myanmar divide, and reflects the fact that “Myanmar” or “Myanmarese” are less widely used as adjectives in English.

2 For a genealogy of these terms, as well as an exploration of their ethnic as well as national implications, see Houtman (1999).

Because I finished my dissertation during these elections, as the latent Burma/Myanmar debate was renewed, I often found myself thinking about the division between “Burma studies” and “Myanmar studies,” and the underlying distinctions between natives and foreigners; between those based inside and outside the country; between scholarship and activism; and between ethnic majority Burmans and ethnic minorities. As a graduate student, I was faced with a terminological choice that had political, semiotic, and practical implications. In Burma/Myanmar studies, whether you are a purportedly apolitical scholar examining ancient Buddhist murals or a partisan in a debate on contemporary politics, you can be sure that some segment of your audience will consider your choice a shibboleth for your personal and academic biases. We are judged by the linguistic company we keep—whether we place ourselves in the camp of those who say “Burma” (whom I’ll call the “Burmaphiles”), “Myanmar” (the Myanmarites), or in between, in the realm of the fence-sitting “Burma/Myanmar”icans or the “Myanmar(Burma)”nians. I’d like to take this opportunity to extrapolate on these distinctions, which must usually be compressed into an unsatisfying footnote.

Burmaphiles, Myanmarites, and everything in between

According to my unscientific observations, Burmaphiles are likely to be pro-democracy, left-leaning Burmese exiles or foreigners sympathetic to the “Free Burma” movement. They are often found on the Thai-Burma border or in Scandinavia, the UK, Australia, or the US. They may get their news on Burma from the Thailand-based, Burmese-run media organization *The Irrawaddy*, or from news services such as the Norway-based *Democratic Voice of Burma*. They are likely to hold democracy movement leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in high esteem. Their choice to use “Burma” can be seen as a positive commitment to human rights, but their critics might accuse them of idealism and unwillingness to compromise with authorities who, like it or not, hold power.

Myanmarites, on the other hand, are more likely to live inside the country or visit frequently, whether they are Burmese or foreigners. Their politics are more likely to be social democratic than radical, although there may be conservatives among them. They may be involved in a local or international aid organization or an educational project. As scholars, they may take either a traditional objectivist stance or a post-activist approach. If they are Burmese, they might feel pressured to use “Myanmar”

might accuse them of being apologists for the government, opportunists interested in their own careers, or naïfs who play into the authorities’ hands.

As a compromise, some have attempted to please both sides by using the terms “Burma/Myanmar,” “Myanmar/Burma,” “Myanmar (Burma),” or “Burma (Myanmar).” Many international organizations take this approach, as do some people who spend time both inside and outside the country. They may wish to bridge the gap between



I give a lesson to the children of Burmese migrant workers at an informal school in Phang Nga, Thailand.

for their own safety, or if they are foreigners, they may wish to avoid attracting the authorities’ suspicions so that they can maintain access to their research site. Or they may simply take the practical position that “Myanmar” is the de facto name of the country, based on the long-standing Burmese-language term *myanma*. They may characterize themselves as pragmatists working for change from the inside, or as neutral observers uninterested in politics. Burmaphiles

the two camps, to address both without offending either, or to reject the Burma/Myanmar binary. Some may simply be tired of the name debate. Their attempt at inclusivity might be the more neutral choice, but they can also be resented for their reluctance to take sides.

As an ethnographer, I can’t move on without a paragraph on my own positioning in this typology. I became interested in Burma’s democracy movement as an idealistic college student in the late

1990s, and I spent a year after graduation working with Burmese exiles on the Thai-Burma border. Because my initial contacts and many of my current closest friends are affiliated with the democracy movement, I have always been sympathetic to their perspectives even if I don't hold their ideas above criticism. However, even my brief visits inside Burma showed me that the situation there is much more complex than the fairy tale of evil generals and oppressed people that the exiled opposition movements and Western media sometimes present. I understand the impulse to use "Myanmar," and in certain contexts, I do it myself—for instance, when preparing scholarly work for an audience inside the country, who might be endangered or alienated by my insistence on "Burma." In that sense, I position myself toward the "Burma" end of the spectrum among the "Burma/Myanmar" fence-sitters, knowing that this stance is a political choice with personal and academic consequences.

The 2010 vote: Opportunities for change in Myanmar, a sham election in Burma

This in-between position became both more appealing and less tenable amidst the polarization surrounding the 2010 elections, the country's first in twenty years. The SPDC claimed that the election heralded a transition away from military rule. Opposition parties and voters faced the decision about whether to contest the election, thus legitimizing the SPDC's process even if they suspected it would be flawed; or boycott it, effectively removing themselves from "the only game in town" (*The Irrawaddy* 2010). This decision split the best-known opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. My own loyalties were divided; I had friends and acquaintances on both sides the election debate.

In the months leading up to the November elections, this debate heated up, and it often seemed that analysts were describing two different countries—Burma, which was being primed for a sham election, and Myanmar, which was poised for liberalization. Some for-

eign Myanmarites hoped that even if the election results were a manipulated, incremental change might result; moreover, they felt that the increased space for civil society development and expression of political agency were opportunities in themselves (Horsey 2010, Lall 2010). Some local Myanmarites inside the country participated in the electoral process and in the civil society development projects surrounding it, and they received intellectual and financial support from groups in the US and EU (Beech 2010).

The Burmaphile media condemned these local Myanmarites as opportunistic or deluded; their foreign backers were cast as "apologists" for the SPDC who were advancing their own economic and political interests (Aung Zaw 2011, Wai Moe 2010, Zarni 2010). In response, one foreign Myanmarite claimed that politi-

people; some sources accused the exiled opposition of being "out of touch" with current realities in the country they may have left decades ago (Fuller 2010). In this context, the perspectives of "ordinary Burmese people" (for whom both Burmaphiles and Myanmarites claimed to speak) were elusive.

Natives and Foreigners

While the election made the Burma/Myanmar split more apparent, there are other divisions running through the discipline. The most obvious is the distinction between foreign scholars and those native to Burma.¹ Like many "area studies" disciplines, Burma/Myanmar studies has roots in the colonial era, and scholars from the West continue to dominate. These power dynamics have prompted some Burmese to question the nature of knowledge production about



I present my research at the 2010 Burma Studies Conference in Marseilles.

cal change was being "held hostage to exile politics" (Lall 2010). Such charges aroused fresh indignation among Burmese Burmaphiles, who have long criticized "Burma experts" who they deem uninformed or disingenuous, but whose pronouncements shape international discourse (Aung Zaw 2011, *The Irrawaddy* 2002, Zarni 2010). Yet the Burmaphiles launching these accusations, valid as they might be, also spoke from a position of relative privilege removed from the daily life of ordinary Burmese

Burma, and the 2010 election provided new material for this questioning.

An anecdote from the most recent International Conference of Burma Studies, held in Marseilles in July 2010, highlights this tension between natives and foreigners. On a panel focusing on possi-

¹ This divide is blurred—for instance, by Burmese people raised outside Burma, and by people with both Burmese and foreign heritage. I use the terms "native" and "foreign" tongue-in-cheek, as a shorthand for how these groups tend to see each other, and with an awareness that the native/foreigner distinction has been constructed over time.

bilities for democracy in Burma, a foreign scholar proposed that Burmese people might not even know what democracy was if they experienced it, in the same way that a person who had never tasted ice cream would not recognize it. There were murmurs of discontent from some Burmese in the crowd, which I took to mean that they interpreted this comment as a reincarnation of the colonial claim that Westerners would have to teach the politically immature Burmese how to govern themselves properly. One Burmese woman objected that even if the Burmese government was not democratic, Burmese people might know democracy intimately through their involvement in grassroots organizations. Another commentator was more blunt in expressing his views on the ice cream metaphor and the quality of the democracy that the elections would bring: "We may not have eaten sh*t before," he said, "but we know it when we taste it."

Inside Myanmar, outside Burma

The foreign professor's next comment revealed another oft-hidden division in Burma/Myanmar studies—that between Burmese inside the country and in exile. Indeed, he protested, he had not come up with the ice cream metaphor; a Burmese person living inside the country had been the one to suggest that his countrymen were unacquainted with democracy. On my brief visits to Burma, I also encountered locals who made the disarming plea that I, as an American, should train them to understand democracy. Their attitude was a great contrast to the Burmese I had met in exile, many of whom were veteran political organizers who had availed themselves of various educational opportunities, and who often had trenchant critiques of my country's government. Besides differences in education and self-perception, I also noticed variations in political tactics between older exiled democracy activists, and the new generation inside the country who made up what some called a "third force" between the regime and the opposition. In contrast to my friends on the border, many of whom had spent time in prison or in armed struggle movements, one young woman living



A house damaged by the 2008 Cyclone Nargis, which illustrates for me the precarious position in which many Burmese people found themselves under SPDC rule.

in Rangoon explained her approach to political change to me this way: "I want to help my country. I don't want to sacrifice my life for my country." This attitude led her to a decision to participate in the election rather than protest against it.

Myanmarite academics and Burmaphile activists

Indeed, the contrast between the political zeal of many exiles and the more cautious approach of some inside the country runs parallel to another division in Burma/Myanmar studies: that between activists and academics (and journalists, who tend to align themselves with one camp or the other). The ethical and political responsibilities of scholars in Burma/Myanmar studies has long been a contentious topic (Kent 2005), but the election brought these tensions to the surface. As one Burmese commentator put it:

Burma Studies has by and large chosen to remain silent on the fundamentally criminal and colonial nature of Burma's "state-building" process, while in effect finding fault with the natives' languages, imaginations, social organisations and politics, without any empirical basis. [...] On their part, Burmese scholars and writers, both minority and majority, from the British colonial period onward, have constructed

their own versions of neo-Orientalist historical discourses colored by different strains of patriotisms and ethno-nationalisms (Zarni 2011:213).

In other words, both native and foreign scholars were accused of not taking a strong anti-government stance, especially in relation to the elections.

On the contrary, some foreign Myanmarites have lamented the politicization of the field and defended the neutrality of their academic work. Robert Taylor (2009), whose controversial book 1987 book *The State in Burma* polarized a generation of Burma observers by seeming to legitimize military rule, explains in the preface to the new edition—now titled *The State in Myanmar*(!):

The ability of the original book to generate antagonism apparently carries on, as I was abruptly reminded a few years ago. I sat at a cafeteria table during a break at an international meeting on Myanmar and introduced myself to a young postgraduate student who was also attending. When I told her who I was, she immediately announced that she hated me. Since we had never met, I was puzzled. How could reading my tedious prose evoke such strong emotions? She could not explain except to suggest incoherently that I was



A view of downtown Yangon.

responsible for Myanmar not being the liberal, prosperous country she thought it should be. If only books and their authors had such powers!
(xv-xvi)

Thus, it is not only Burmese activists who object to the purportedly apolitical nature of some scholarship, but also those like the (presumably) foreign post-graduate student, who may have, like me, been introduced to Burma through the democracy movement (no, the student was not me). However, other foreign scholars, most notably Monique Skidmore (2006), have taken (and been attacked for) the position that it is ethically irresponsible for academics who study Burma *not* to take a stand against the authorities.

Ethnic minority Myanmarites and Burman Burmaphiles

Yet the exchange among scholars like Taylor and Skidmore over whether academics should take an anti-government stance tends to obscure a division that many Burmese people might find more salient. While most Western media have focused on the dispute between the ruling junta and the democracy movement (e.g., Fuller 2010), the relationship between ethnic Burmans and minority groups such as Shans, Rakhines, Karens, and Kachins is also key. While there is no hard and fast separation between the democracy movement and

the struggles of ethnic minority people for self-determination, the leadership of main opposition parties including the National League for Democracy (NLD) is mostly Burman. The NLD's decision not to contest the election highlighted the distinction between it and ethnic minority-based parties such as the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party and the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party, which decided to participate and won a significant proportion of seats in parliament (although nowhere near as many as the army-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party). Not only do these ethnic parties use "Myanmar" instead of "Burma" to refer to their country in English, but like many other Myanmarites, many ethnic minority leaders took a pragmatist approach to the election, hoping that even if the form of government didn't change much, they might gain a greater voice in it (Ellgee 2010). While Burman democracy activists launched criticisms at each other's decisions to boycott or contest the elections (Ba Kaung 2010), few questioned the decision of ethnic minority people to participate; to do so could have been seen as a power-play that replicated a history of Burman dominance antithetical to democracy. Interestingly, the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party and some other ethnic parties are in fact closely allied with the NLD, illustrating the possibilities for coalitions among Myanmarites and Burmaphiles.

Breaking down the divisions

Of course, none of the distinctions I have discussed are absolute. Plenty of Burmese people living inside the country dismissed the election as wholeheartedly as the exiled opposition did. There are foreign scholars who attempt to confront and counter the discipline's disturbing tendencies to silence native voices. Die-hard activists sit down with ivory tower academics for political discussion over bowls of *mohinga*.

These divisions also overlap with each other and with class, gender, and political identities. A Burman academic man with financial and political connections to the regime may have gotten a better hearing for his views on the election in some circles, while an activist ethnic minority woman might have been championed in other contexts. However, I don't want to present these distinctions between native and foreign, inside and outside, activist and academic, ethnic minority and Burman as equally balanced power relationships—in my view the latter term in each pair is privileged. For instance, while the knee-jerk native criticism of foreign scholars, "You don't understand us," may be a relic of the era of identity politics, the foreign response, "You don't understand yourselves," is to my ears more disturbing given the legacy of Orientalism in which this discipline is steeped. Moreover, the fact that I am positioned to write this article while scores of brilliant, hard-working Burmese people are not has everything to do with the history of colonialism and the current realities of global capitalism from which I benefit as a foreigner affiliated with an academic institution.

Writing a dissertation in a divided discipline

All of these divisions had a significant impact on the way I wrote my dissertation, especially because of the way they were highlighted during the 2010 elections. As I struggled to focus on finishing up, I was frequently distracted the new developments emerging daily, and I was often sucked in by the endless comment trails at the ends of controversial online articles. I also became more conscious of where I fit into the typologies I outlined

above, and I often found that I wanted to bridge the gap in some way. For instance, although my first involvement with Burma was as an activist, I wanted academics to take my work seriously. I was eager to convey to my academic audience that I was “one of them,” but I also felt I should own up to the reasons I was writing the dissertation—to contribute to movements for democracy and inter-ethnic reconciliation. Likewise, while I aspired to be part of an international community of scholars, I couldn’t imagine doing my research as a “neutral observer” of “natives.” And although I was doing research in communities of refugees and migrants in Thailand, I wanted to generate insights that would be valuable and accessible to people inside the country, too. Finally, while I supported ethnic minority people’s movements for self-determination, I also hoped that all ethnic groups in Burma could live peacefully together.

For all of these reasons, I opted for a participatory research model, working in collaboration with Burmese teachers in Thailand to develop methodologies of teaching history that promoted reconcili-



The abandoned Secretariat Building in Yangon, where General Aung San was assassinated in 1947, which I associate with suspended hopes for democracy.

ation and acknowledgement of multiple perspectives. I took care not to portray myself as a “Burma expert,” and I circulated drafts of my chapters to both Burmaphiles and Myanmarites in order to gauge their reactions and adjust my tone. Nonetheless, I realize that the polarized nature of the discipline means that some readers will be alienated by the choices I made, and that some may dismiss my work outright for veering toward one or another extreme along the spectrums I’ve described.

New possibilities for Burma/Myanmar studies

Just as Burmaphiles and Myanmarites differed in their views in the run-up to the election, they also interpreted its results differently. For most Burmaphiles, the election was clearly a sham and indicates little or no political change (Ba Kaung 2010, Wai Moe 2011). For some Myanmarites and Burma/Myanmarians, there are signs of positive change—a functional parliament, greater constitutional freedoms, and the potential for a relaxation of censorship laws—all indicating a greater semblance of democracy than before (Steinberg 2011). This Burmaphile/Myanmarite split is predictable, and it drives home for me the point that all of us in this divided discipline are likely to learn the most from conversations with people farthest from us along the spectrums I’ve described. It is only through these exchanges that we can get closer to the many realities of the place that some of us know as Burma and others call Myanmar. §

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The Khmer Language Program at Cornell



Courtney Work (right) harvesting rice with farmers in Cambodia



Hannah Phan
Lecturer, Khmer language

Cornell has a long history of instruction in the Khmer language. In the spring of 1999, I first taught Khmer at Cornell after my graduation from the Master of Professional Studies program. Since the fall of 2005 I have been teaching Khmer full time as a teaching associate. My training as a language instructor started at the Pushkin Foreign Language Institute in Moscow and the Institute of Pedagogy in Penza, Russia. There I was taught to be a Russian language teacher not a Khmer one! However, the pedagogical skills my Russian teachers taught me apply equally well to Khmer. I received further language instruction at the Regional Language Center in Singapore. My masters program here and the experience of working as a language teacher have given me a strong foundation in my Khmer teaching at Cornell.

My time in Russia showed me how much I love studying different languages and cultures myself. The excitement from learning a new language and my experience teaching Khmer culture at an International School in Cambodia inspired me and made me choose a career as a language teacher.

In this article I am going to talk about where the Khmer language is taught in the U.S., what the Khmer language is, and who studies Khmer and why. I'll give some related experiences from three learners, and describe the Khmer program at Cornell (teaching methodology, classes, textbooks/materials used).

Surprisingly, there are not many institutions offering Khmer language programs. According to the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) database, on the east coast, Cornell is the only university that offers Khmer courses full time. Besides Cornell, on the west coast there are only two other universities that have a full time Khmer program: the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and the University of California, Berkeley. Ohio University, Northern Illinois University and University of Washington Seattle do not offer Khmer courses full time. They only have first year and second year Khmer classes. During the summer, SEASSI and the Advanced Study of Khmer program offer intensive Khmer language courses. In the past students from other universities and colleges in the surrounding areas commuted to Cornell to take Khmer. In 2005-2006 and 2007, students from Ithaca

College, Wells College, and Binghamton University attended Khmer classes with me.

Khmer is a language in the Austro-Asiatic language family, one of the six major language families found in Southeast Asia. Khmer script derives from the Indic script family from the Southern part of India. Some of my students have claimed that "to write Khmer letters is like doing a beautiful drawing."

At Cornell, learners of Khmer include graduate and undergraduate students from different departments and schools such as Department of Asian Studies, Government, Linguistics, History of Art, Development Sociology, History, Anthropology, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, School of Hotel Administration, Cornell Institute for Public Affairs, Cornell Law School, etc. The graduate students are interested in doing research on different topics related to Cambodia: politics, culture, art, history, linguistics, development sociology, etc. A smaller number of students are heritage learners who grew up at home speaking Khmer and do not know how to read and write Khmer. One of the most unusual aspects of my job is that I also teach faculty and staff—respected scholars such as Andrew Mertha, Associate Professor of Government and Greg Green, the Curator of the Echols Collection.

Some of my students have traveled to Cambodia for field study or for work-related projects. Recently, Andrew Mertha researched connections between the Khmer Rouge and China in the 1970s. Gregory Green went to the country to do work related to the library. After taking Khmer at Cornell, anthropology graduate student, Courtney Work, took her children with her to live in a rural village in Cambodia while she began her research in the summer of 2010. She plans to live in Cambodia for a whole year to do her field study so that she can observe and investigate all the religious rituals that have been practiced in the village throughout the year. Yula Kapetanakos has been doing research on endangered Asian vultures. Pamela Corey is doing research on the contemporary Cambodian art scene. Mirabelle Yang is analyzing the contexts of romantic relationships between young Cambodian men and women. Becky Butler is doing field work related to linguistics among the Bnong minority people living in the northern part of Cambodia.

Gregory Green, the curator of the Echols Collection, took Khmer with me for three years starting from the fall semester of 2006. As he put it:

I have long wanted to learn the Khmer language, ever since getting to know a few Khmer speaking friends as an undergraduate. I fell in love with the sound of the spoken language and always thought the written script was just beautiful. I finally made the decision to start learning the language after starting work here in the library five years ago. As curator of the Echols Collection, the benefits of knowing more about one

of the languages I work with in the collection are obvious. From ordering books to communicating with booksellers in Cambodia to dealing with publications when they arrive, knowing the language is a huge benefit to the work I do every day.

Beyond all of the job-related benefits, the biggest factor driving me to learn a new language is the ability to communicate better in my travels. It's a great feeling to speak the local language when in another country. Knowing the language adds so much depth to the experience. It's also nice to now be able to speak the language with my old acquaintances here in the US. As an added bonus, I had a great instructor and wonderful classmates who made for an enjoyable language learning experience.

Courtney Work, an anthropologist, also studied Khmer for three years (fall 2007-spring 2010 with funding from the Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) Title VI grant program through the U.S. Department of Education). The focus of Courtney's project is on "the work of religion and spirit beliefs in the rebuilding of community and political life in a village in rural Cambodia, where thirty years of war and the tragedy of the Khmer Rouge mark the lives of the people." She is living in a small village and engaging in the regular activities of village life, rice production, market activities, Buddhist celebrations, agricultural, and life-cycle rituals. Her research uses "participant observation, formal and informal interviews, geographic mapping of spiritual landscapes, and the documentation of embodied ritual practices," all of which rely on her Khmer language skills acquired at Cornell.

Another student, Yula Kapetanacos, a Ph.D. candidate from the department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, has been doing research on critically endangered Asian vultures in Cambodia. This year is her second year of taking Khmer and she will continue to take it next year. As she explains:

"It is imperative, both for my research and for conservation efforts, that I am able to communicate directly with government administrators, NGOs, and local residents. Thus I am striving to improve my proficiency in Khmer. During my first field season I had not yet received any language instruction. In contrast, for my recent trip in January 2011 I was equipped with one year of Khmer instruction. The difference in my interaction with both the Khmer field staff as well as with residents living near the field sites was profound. I was able to communicate and receive ideas allowing for a mutually beneficial interaction."



Yula monitoring endangered Asian vultures out of a bird watching blind.

For the past six years, I have been working to build up the Khmer program in terms of both quantity and quality. When I taught Khmer the first time in the spring of 1999, there was only one beginning class with five students enrolled. In the last several years, the number of students has increased. It ranges from 20 to 24 students per academic year. I have developed teaching materials such as audio/videos to meet the need of the learners.

In 2009, Lorraine Paterson, Assistant Professor of Southeast Asian Literature, started the Scholars of Cambodia lunch group so that students could get to know each other and discuss ideas about their research interests. The lunch group includes scholars who have already done field research in Cambodia, so by meeting one another they have an opportunity to share their experience from the field with one another and less advanced students. The group still meets every semester or two at a conference room near the SEAP office. All Khmer speakers and learners are welcome to sign up for the e-mail invitation list.

The Cornell Khmer program offers beginning, intermediate and advanced level Khmer. Students can also enroll in a directed studies course. The curriculum emphasizes the four basic skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. It follows the performance-based interactive pedagogical philosophy. I use a variety of teaching methods and emphasize the communicative approach to language teaching. I design the syllabi for all levels of Khmer classes and make my language materials based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines. (Currently, I am a certified ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview tester

for Khmer language, so this helps). In addition to that, my two summers (2006 & 2007) of teaching Khmer at the Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison broadened my teaching horizons. There I exchanged ideas with my colleagues to find better techniques to teach Khmer.

At the beginning level, the course introduces students to the Khmer alphabet, vocabulary, and basic sentence structure. Students like conversations and role plays. For example after a lesson about animals, we had a role play so that we could practice saying all the animals we learned. In that beginning class, there were five students and each student had a role: one was a tiger, one was a cat, another was a dog, a monkey, and a goat respectively. The animals were very

friendly. And I was surprised that they said that "the tiger does not eat other animals." Apparently it was a vegetarian tiger and wanted to live in harmony with other creatures. When students first learn how to write the alphabet, they often compare it to something. "That letter curves on the top. It looks like an



Beginning Khmer class, spring semester 2009 with Christopher Hinkle (graduate student, Asian Studies), Alicia Intriago, and Thanhbinh Thi Le, (both undergraduates). The stick in my hand is not for hitting; it is used to point to the letters.

elephant's trunk." Some said. It made the class laugh.

The intermediate course is a continuation of the elementary courses, and it is designed to help students to master the four language skills. Students enjoy reading short texts taken from Khmer folk tales. One funny story was about a father who chooses a son-in-law for his daughter. The father does not like the man who might become his son-in-law. But the man is smart and does everything to win the young woman. The story reflects an old Cambodian tradition, still practiced today, that parents arrange a marriage for their children.

In the advanced course, students learn to communicate in everyday conversation using complex questions/answers. They become proficient in listening to long texts and conversations and can read long stories, Cambodian folk tales, novels and books. Students can write complex essays/texts about various aspects of Cambodian life and culture. I look forward to working with students in the advanced class so they can pretend to be the characters in folk tales or stories that we read in class. Furthermore, at the end of each semester, students do a twenty-minute presentation about a topic of their choice. These presentations are often very thought-provoking and interesting.

The Directed Studies course is for advanced students who would like to continue to study Khmer. It is designed based on students' interest. Also students will be exposed to more novels, poetry, some articles from the newspapers, and online materials such as videos, radio programs like Radio Free Asia and Voice of America that are available in the U.S. Also some Cambodian TV programs can be found on-line.

There are sufficient textbooks to be used for each level. However some need to be updated. This year Routledge is working on updating a beginning textbook "Colloquial Cambodian." I also add supplementary materials which include

authentic texts, dialogues, and a number of exercises, and songs. Furthermore, during my recent trips to Cambodia I videotaped people at the markets, on the streets, at Buddhist temples, and elsewhere. I also interviewed a number of people, some with regional accents so that my students can learn to listen to different ways of speaking Khmer. The videos have been posted at the Language Resource Center website, thanks to the support from the department of Asian Studies, SEAP, NRC, and the Language Resource Center. These language lab materials give an intimate and complex approach to understanding Khmer people and culture. The people in the videos are a diverse selection of Cambodian characters who speak in a range of styles and accents.

One of the struggles is that after learning the language in the classroom, students went to do work in Cambodia, and when they talk to local people they have difficulty in following what people say in reply. However, after staying in the country for a while, students can master the language proficiency and they can understand local people more and more each day. One of my students e-mailed me that "I'd be so proud of her" that now she can "talk about her research with Khmer researchers in Khmer."

To learn a language takes time and practice in order to achieve proficiency. Then it brings a satisfactory result. You never know where studying a language will take you. The excitement of learning a new language, including Khmer, is like building a cultural boat to sail across the ocean to a land you would never discover. Sometimes the boat leaks but it is still there holding you up and will eventually bring you to the shore of a rich and ancient culture like Cambodia. This can be achieved only through language learning. ♪



Cambodian script is so beautiful that Mirabelle Yang one of my fourth year students put it on a cake she got from Wegmans for our Cambodian New Year celebration, May 2009. The word on the cake means "Good." I hope she is referring to Khmer class.

It is a little hard to think of Cornell, located in rural upstate New York where they could grow rice but don't, as one of the leading universities in rice research and development in Asia over the past half century. In fact most Cornellians are not even aware of this.

The story of one of Cornell's most significant joint ventures in agricultural development began in 1952. In that year the decision was made by the

(IRRI) with a mission: "increase rice production in Asia."

The location of IRRI in Los Banos was an obvious choice. Many well trained Filipinos provided and still provide the research and support staff at IRRI. Graduate students do research at IRRI while receiving their degrees from the adjoining university. In short UPCA (now University of the Philippines at Los Banos), IRRI, and Cornell each have benefited tremendously over the years from

book co-authored with another Cornellian and IRRI alumnus, Bob Herdt, *The Rice Economy of Asia* (1985) provides an important foundation for scholars from a wide-range of academic disciplines. And indeed, Barker continues to "promote interdisciplinary research and teaching at home and abroad." The bottom line for Barker: "understanding the factors that led to the spread of rice culture is essential to understanding the history and development of Asia."

Rice and Cornell: A Retrospective



Susan McCouch, Randy Barker and IRRI colleague Hey Leung

Cornell administration, in keeping with the land-grant mission, to initiate an exchange program with the University of the Philippines College of Agriculture to help build the capacity of the latter in agricultural teaching and research.

Under two separate contracts, the latter funded by the Ford Foundation, the exchange program lasted for 20 years. During that period, approximately 70 Cornell faculty spent one to two years in Los Banos. Over 60 Los Banos faculty went abroad to obtain MS degrees. Forty five Cornell and Filipino graduate students obtained PhD degrees from universities abroad. Ford, Rockefeller, and USAID provided most of the funding not only for training but also for infrastructure on the UPCA campus.

During this period there was growing concern for food security in the wake of Asia's population explosion following World War II. In 1960 the Vice-President of the Ford Foundation, Frosty Hill, former Provost at Cornell, and the President of the Rockefeller Foundation, George Harrar teamed up to establish the International Rice Research Institute

"Understanding the factors that led to the spread of rice culture is essential to understanding the history and development of Asia."

—Randy Barker

this joint venture. The first two directors of IRRI, Bob Chandler and Nyle Brady were Cornellians. The Dean of UPCA, Jack Umali, who received his PhD from Cornell, provided IRRI with 75 hectares of college land at the nominal rent of one dollar a year. (See photo on page 39 of IRRI headquarters with Chandler Hall on the left and Hill Hall on the right.)

Over the past half century there has been a steady flow of students and faculty between various parts of the rice growing world and Cornell. Several faculty and emeritus here at Cornell are Los Banos alumni. Among these are Susan McCouch, geneticist-rice breeder (at IRRI from 1990-94), and Randy Barker, an agricultural economist with an interest in water management, and former director of the Southeast Asia Program (SEAP) (pictured above in Los Banos this June with IRRI colleague, Hey Leung). Barker went with Cornell to Los Banos in 1965, but because IRRI needed an agricultural economist, he ended up spending 13 years in Los Banos, most of that time working for IRRI.

When he returned to Cornell in 1978, he broke ground by joining the Southeast Asia Program. He served as SEAP director from 1987-1993, providing an important bridge between the science and agriculture-focused upper campus and the humanistically-oriented college of arts and sciences. His widely-read

Cornell has also played a significant role in rice research and extension efforts related to the "System of Rice Intensification" (SRI). SRI is a management program designed to maintain or increase rice yields using fewer seeds, less fertilizer, herbicides, and pesticides and less water. Developed in Madagascar, it has been promoted by Norman Uphoff since 1997. Uphoff was director of Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development (CIIFAD) from 1990 to 2005, where he was instrumental in creating the SRI International Network and Resources Center. This center, based at Cornell, has made SRI unique in extending its message through a communication network which includes websites in 45 countries.

In 2011 Cornell's quarterly magazine *Ezra* focused on the significance of McCouch's path-breaking research and the web of cross-disciplinary scientific connections at Cornell that makes her work so successful. But McCouch and the other organizers of the International Symposium on Rice and Language have raised the bar on interdisciplinary rice studies at Cornell by bringing together disciplines that are rarely in contact. These exciting projects continue the Cornell tradition of being a world leader in rice research. ॥

Abby Cohn,
Professor,
Linguistics



Magnus Fiskesjö,
Associate Professor,
Anthropology



Susan McCouch,
Professor, Plant
Breeding and Genetics



Laurent Sagart,
senior scientist,
Centre de Recherches
Linguistiques sur
l'Asie Orientale (CNRS,
EHESS), Paris, France



John Phan,
Ph.D. candidate,
Asian Studies



John Whitman,
Professor, Linguistics



Rice and Language Across Asia: Crops, Movement and Social Change International Symposium, September 22-25, 2011

Building on the long-standing tradition of rice studies at Cornell, this interdisciplinary symposium grew out of a collaborative project initiated by Laurent Sagart during his time as a visiting professor at Cornell in Linguistics, with support from the Southeast Asia Program. The connection he made with Susan McCouch has expanded to include scholars from across the Cornell campus. The symposium will bring together archeologists, geneticists, and linguists from Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America.

The goal of this symposium is to examine the relationship between the beginnings and spread of rice agriculture and cultural and linguistic developments of early Asian societies. The timing of the symposium is motivated by rapid advances in the fields of language reconstruction and subgrouping, human and plant genetics, archaeobotany, and related subfields of archaeological research. The symposium will focus on the complex relationship between crops, language, and sociocultural developments in early South, Southeast, and East Asia.

Special attention will be paid to the role of rice, as a highly significant, dominant crop in early agricultural transformations and expansions across Asia, and to how human populations were impacted and societies changed as a result of the introduction and development of rice farming. A focal question of the symposium is the relationship between the distribution of major language families and their subgroups in Asia and the spread of rice cultivation, which we also hope to examine in relation to theoretical issues such as the conceptions of "language family" and "population" across disciplines.

Open to all members of the Cornell community and other interested scholars and students. Participation in the symposium is free, but **preregistration is required**.

Conference website: <http://conf.ling.cornell.edu/riceandlanguage/>

For more information, email: riceandlanguage@cornell.edu

Sponsored by Cornell's Southeast Asia Program, East Asia Program, and Department of Linguistics with generous support from Cornell's College of Arts and Science, Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, Institute for the Social Sciences, Lehman Fund for Scholarly Exchange with China, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, with additional support from Cornell's Departments of Anthropology, Asian Studies, and Classics.

NEW COURSE! **Rice and Language: Geography, Movement, and Exchange**

ANTH 4495, ARKEO 4495, IARD 4495,
LING 4495, co-meets with ANTH 7495,
ARKEO 7495, LING 7495

Instructor and course coordinator:
Magnus Fiskesjö, Anthropology

Co-instructors: Abby Cohn (Dept. of Linguistics;
Southeast Asia Program), John Whitman (Dept. of
Linguistics; East Asia Program), Susan McCouch
(Dept. of Plant Breeding and Genetics), and
Randy Barker (Dept. of Applied Economics and
Management; Southeast Asia Program; retired)

In recent years numerous breakthroughs have been made in the study of early human history and the formidable role of agriculture in that story. New insights in several disciplines have cast new light on areas previously believed to lie outside of the reach of science. Taking early crop domestication and agricultural expansions and parallel socio-cultural and linguistic developments such as migration and language diversification among early peoples of Asia as a special focus, we will consider evidence from the study of geography, water, rice domestication, plant genetics, human genetics, language, and identity and social change. We will pay special attention to the conversation between disciplines, to how data and insights can be compared from different disciplines, and how the significance of new insights can be enhanced in the light of the theories and methods in different academic disciplines. The focus is Asian rice, but geographically the course has numerous, worldwide comparative dimensions.

Other planned guest lecturers include: James Scott, Yale University (AD White Professor-at-large at Cornell); Laurent Sagart, CRNS, Paris (Visiting Professor in Linguistics at Cornell in 2006-07); Spencer Wells, Director, Genographic Project, National Geographic Society (Frank H.T. Rhodes Class of '56 Professor at Cornell)

Margaret Aung-Thwin

(December 20, 1919–April 8, 2011)

Born in Burma, the first of 14 to John Hodgson and Naw Thet Po, Margaret graduated from Judson College, Rangoon and later SUNY Cortland. She taught Burmese at Cornell from 1967-1970 and is remembered as a “gentle and classy presence on campus.” Margaret was also a Fulbright Scholar, she taught at the International School in Rangoon, Kodaikanal School in South India, and adult education with the Miccosukee in Florida. She translated Ma Ma Lay’s *Not Out of Hate*, the first Burmese novel in English translation published outside Burma. Her memory lives on at Cornell through the Margaret Aung Thwin travel grant, awarded to graduate students for pre-dissertation or MA thesis field research. Donations to purchase books on Burma in her memory may be made to the Southeast Asia Program, 180 Uris Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.



On a Fulbright in the US in 1954
another Fulbright teacher from B

REMEMB

Ruth Burdick Sharp (June 27, 1910–June 16, 2011)

Ruth Sharp moved to Ithaca in 1936 with her husband, Professor Lauriston Sharp (1907-1993), when he took up an appointment as the first anthropologist at Cornell University. During his long career at Cornell he established the Southeast Asia Program and he and Ruth were important members of the SEAP community until his death. For some 60 years they traveled the world, primarily back and forth between Cornell and Thailand—almost always together—and in the early years often with one or both of their young children, Sander (b. 1937) and Suki (b. 1943). Ruth enjoyed her role as a faculty wife and she worked at making the lives of international students at Cornell, particularly Thai students, easier and more comfortable. Wherever they were in the world, Ruth used her unique social talents to create a vibrant and interesting home where friends, colleagues, students and visitors could share experiences and ideas along with a gimlet. During her travels to Thailand with Lauri she became interested in Southeast Asian pottery. She took courses, read extensively, and visited potters and potteries educating herself in this specialized field in which she earned a reputation as an expert. She created a fine teaching collection which she donated to Cornell University. (The full obituary can be found in the *Ithaca Journal*, June 20, 2011.)



Ruth and Lauri Sharp
and their dog Walter
at their house at 880
Highland Drive, in the
mid 1980's



, Margaret (left) shops with
Surma



Margaret and 3 of her 5 great-grandchildren

ERED



Donna and Angela at Seaworld in 2008

Donna J. Amoroso (September 18, 1960–January 22, 2011)

Donna received her Ph.D. in Southeast Asian history at Cornell in 1996. She was also the assistant and then acting editor of Southeast Asia Program Publications from 1992-1994. Anyone at SEAP who was lucky enough to overlap with her in Ithaca will have fond memories of her and her husband Patricio “Jojo” Abinales both at 102 West Avenue and then in the Kahin Center. Together they co-authored *State and Society in the Philippines* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005). After several years as assistant professor at Wright State University in Dayton, OH, Donna became a visiting scholar at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies in Kyoto. In 2002 she became the founding editor of the *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, almost single-handedly bringing to fruition a remarkable multi-lingual on-line (and free) journal that is one of its kind. This may be one of her most enduring contributions to Southeast Asian Studies. As another SEAP alumna, Coeli Barry noted in her eulogy, “Donna believed in the value of other people’s languages and perspectives and out of that commitment she helped bring to life the *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*—an incredible publication which allows for the dissemination of ideas by people whose first language is not English.” From 2004 until her death, Donna also served as an associate professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) in Tokyo, where she established the Academic Writing Center. For many at SEAP it was a delight to see Donna and Jojo (and to meet their daughter Angela) when Jojo gave a SEAP brown bag talk this past November. We were shocked and saddened to hear of her death and many in SEAP contributed children’s books that were collected by SEAP Publications and sent in her memory to Panglima Sugala, a small community in the Southern Philippines.



Indonesian Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Dino Patti Djalal addresses Indonesian students and SEAP faculty.

Indonesia Initiative

Indonesian Ambassador Visits Cornell

In December 2010, Indonesia's Ambassador to the U.S., Dr. Dino Patti Djalal visited Cornell. In an impassioned speech to Cornell's numerous Indonesian students and students studying Indonesia, the Ambassador outlined an ambitious set of efforts aimed at increasing the number of Indonesians and Americans studying each other's country. This visit launched discussions of higher education exchanges between Cornell and Indonesia, including student exchanges, climate change initiatives, and the establishment of an overseas research center that will facilitate research for individuals in both countries. The ambassador's trip was followed by the visit in May of Indonesian Vice Minister of Education, Dr. Fasli Jalal.



Ambassador Djalal's engaging talk included a Q&A session and several light moments. Here SEAP Director, Tamara Loos, CMIP Director, Eric Tagliacozzo, and Ambassador David Merrill, President of the U.S.-Indonesia Society listen intently.



The Kahin Center was full to capacity during the State of Indonesian Studies Conference.

The State of Indonesian Studies Conference

SEAP capped off the first year of its Indonesia Initiative with an international conference on the “State of Indonesian Studies” from April 29-30 at the Kahin Center. The two-day conference was spearheaded by the recently revitalized Cornell Modern Indonesia Project (CMIP) under the direction of Eric Tagliacozzo. CMIP was established by George Kahin at Cornell in the 1950s, and became well known for publishing research on Indonesia. (All 75 of the classic CMIP volumes are now freely accessible online at <http://cmip.library.cornell.edu>.) The State of Indonesian Studies Conference launched CMIP’s new efforts to enhance and support academic research and publishing on Indonesia.

The main objective of the conference was to gather three senior Indonesianists from each of six disciplines to chart the state of Indonesian studies and to discuss the future direction(s) of the field. Scholars from across the United States, the Netherlands, England, Australia, and Indonesia presented a total of eighteen papers in six disciplines: Anthropology, Art History, History, Language and Linguistics, Government, and Ethnomusicology. Speakers and talks included:

Anthropology Panel

Kenneth George (Professor of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin – Madison), “*Mau ke mana ini?* Disciplinary Reflections on ‘The State of Indonesian Studies’ – A Presentation in Two Parts”

Danilyn Rutherford (Associate Professor of Anthropology, UC Santa Cruz), “Both Places at Once: Indonesian Studies Commentary”

Patsy Spyer (Global Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, NYU), “After Violence – A Discussion”

Discussants: Andrew Willford (Associate Professor of Anthropology, Cornell University) and Marina Welker (Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Cornell University)



Patsy Spyer

History of Art Panel

Natasha Reichle (Associate Curator, San Francisco Asian Art Museum), “Continuities and Change: Shifting Boundaries in Indonesian Art History”

E. Edwards McKinnon (Recently with ARI, Singapore; UNDP, Aceh), “Indonesian Archeology and Cultural Heritage Management”

Astri Wright (Professor of Art History, University of Victoria), “The Arc of my Field is a Rainbow with an Expanding Twist and all kinds of Creatures Dancing”

Discussant: Kaja McGowan (Associate Professor of Art History, Cornell University)



Kaja McGowan wields a miniature *kris* to keep the panel on schedule

History Panel

Rudolph Mrazek (Professor of History, University of Michigan), "Mostly Personal: moments of knowledge and writing the 20th century Indonesian history in the last thirty years"

Laurie Sears (Professor of History, University of Washington), "The Afterwardness of Indonesian Studies"

Jean Gelman Taylor (Professor of History, University of New South Wales), "A History of Indonesian History"

Discussant: Eric Tagliacozzo (Associate Professor of History, Cornell University)



Jean Gelman Taylor



Donald Emmerson

Government Panel

Edward Aspinall (Head, Department of Social and Political Change, Australian National University), "Researching Indonesian Politics in an Age of Democratization"

Donald Emmerson (Director of the Southeast Asia Forum, Stanford University), "The Art of Not Being Disciplined: Themes and Choices in Indonesian Political Studies"

William Liddle (Professor of Political Science, Ohio State University), "Political Science Scholarship on Indonesia: Revived but Constrained"

Discussant: Thomas Pepinsky (Assistant Professor of Government, Cornell University)

Language and Linguistics Panel

Joseph Errington (Professor of Anthropology, Yale University), "Studying Indonesia's Languages"

Tineke Hellwig (Associate Professor of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia), "The State of Indonesian Studies: Literature and Literary Criticism"

Bambang Kaswanti Purwo (Professor of Linguistics, Atma Jaya University), "Constructing a New Grammar in Indonesian: A Trip from Expectation to Reality"

Discussants: Abigail Cohn (Professor of Linguistics, Cornell University) and Jolanda Pandin (Indonesian Lecturer, Asian Studies, Cornell University)



Bambang Kaswanti Purwo



Sumarsam

Ethnomusicology Panel

Sumarsam (Adjunct Professor of Music, Wesleyan University), "Javanese Music Historiography: The Lost Gamelan of Gresik"

Andrew Weintraub (Professor of Ethnomusicology, University of Pittsburg), "What's so funny about Dangdut?: Popular Music Studies and the Ethnomusicology of Indonesia"

Marc Perlman (Associate Professor of Music, Brown University), "Musics of Indonesia: Three Decades of Ethnomusicological Study"

Discussants: Martin Hatch (Associate Professor of Music, Cornell University) and Chris Miller (Lecturer of Music, Cornell University)

American Institute for Indonesian



Professors Marty Hatch, Tom Pepinsky, and Eric Tagliacozzo, along with Audrey Kahin secured a CAORC start-up grant and a Henry Luce Foundation award to establish the American Institute for Indonesian Studies (AIFIS), a non-profit organization, in Indonesia. AIFIS already has an office in Jakarta and an on-site executive director, Dr. Timothy McKinnon (Max Planck Institute). The AIFIS executive committee is comprised of representatives from nine U.S. universities and six institutions with a strong interest in Indonesian studies. AIFIS will operate much like an American Overseas Research Center by offering assistance to and enabling exchanges among foreign and Indonesian researchers.

Its main purpose is to promote research on Indonesia among institutions of higher education in the United States. It will:



Marty Hatch, curator Ellen Avril, and Astri Wright during the conference's special tour of the newly re-opened Asia gallery at the Johnson Art Museum.

Studies (AIFIS) Established

- facilitate research affiliations in-country (visas, contacts, and related permits)
- provide office/meeting space and administrative support
- host seminars, lectures, symposia for American researchers and Indonesian academics
- develop a small library of books on Indonesia (provided by collaborating institutions) and work with Library of Congress representative in Jakarta to expand this collection
- teach Indonesian to visiting American researchers—through quick study courses on colloquial Indonesian with a focus on the technical vocabulary associated with the research of each individual (English instruction will be available on a more limited basis)
- maintain a network of links to various institutions including the Indonesian Government Research Board (LIPI), the Ministry of Research and Technology (Menristek), the National Library (Perpustakaan Nasional), the National

Archives (Arsip Nasional), immigration, the police, tax offices, and others to secure permits and permissions.

- serve to answer the needs as identified in the recent US-Indonesia Comprehensive Partnership, including its target of doubling the number of American and Indonesian secondary students studying at each other's universities over the next 5 years

Logo derived from Art by Kaja M. McGowan
Detail from ikat Kepala, decorated with 'Arab-Tulis' (Manuk)

13th annual southeast asian studies graduate conference kahin center for advanced research on southeast asia 640 stewart avenue cornell university ithaca, new york march 11-13, 2011

Conference Schedule:

Saturday, 3/12 - 10:00 AM
Panel 1: Architecture and New Urban Spaces
• "Vientiane's New Landmarks: Postcards from an Urban Oscillating Modernity," Jose Rafael Martinez

13th Annual Southeast Asian Studies Graduate Conference

KEYNOTE TALK:

"Ambivalent Allies: Sino-Khmer Rouge Relations, 1975-1979," Andrew Mertha (Associate Professor, Department of Government, Cornell University)



PANEL 1: Architecture and New Urban Spaces (Discussant: Rebecca Townsend)
"Vientiane's New Landmarks: Postcards from an Urban Oscillating Modernity," Jose Rafael Martinez (Ohio University)

"The Impact of the Built Environment on the Location Choices of the Creative Class: Evidence from Thailand," Nij Tontisirin, Yuri Mansury, Sutee Anantsuksomsri (Cornell University)

"A Tale of Two Corpses: Siamese Funeral Architecture and the Modern Aesthetic State," Lawrence Chua (Cornell University)

PANEL 2: Political Processes and Socioeconomic Outcomes (Discussant: Diego Fossati)

"Democracy and Poverty Reduction in Southeast Asia," Sirojuddin Arif (Northern Illinois University)

"Reform from Above or Revolution from Below? Explaining Divergent

Democratic Pathways," Andy Scott Chang (University of California at Berkeley)

"When Religion Trumps Ethnicity: A Regional Case Study from Indonesia," Sebastian Dettman (University of Michigan)

"Fear Nothing but Poverty: Legal or Illegal? The Risky Motorbike Import in Burma," Mu-Lung Hsu (Northern Illinois University)

PANEL 3: Construction and Performance of Identities (Discussant: Becky Butler)

"Apprehending Authority & Genealogy: The Tale of Two Hawl in Contemporary Central Java," Fajrie Alatas (University of Michigan)

"Spirits of Place and Communal Identity in Northeast Thailand," Supeena Insee Adler (University of California at Riverside)

"Ethnic Women's Inclusion in Vietnamese Propaganda Posters," Nhung Walsh (University of Alabama)

"Lao Lum, Lao Theung, Lao Suung: Some Reflections on Common Lao Ethnonyms," Charles Zuckerman (University of Michigan)

PANEL 4: Livelihood Strategies and Empowerment in Rural and Community Development (Discussant: Keenan McRoberts)

"Does it Work? Community Development through Empowerment Approach," Viriya Cheamphan (Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan)

"The Politics of Well-being in International Development Discourse: Research with Organic Farmers in Cambodia," Alice Beban (Cornell University)

"Leaving the Green Revolution Behind," Rebakah Minarchek (Cornell University)

"Rural Non-farm Dynamics: Another Story of Occupational Ladder and Earning Mobility in Thailand," Chayanee Chawanote (Cornell University)

Funded in part by the U.S. Department of Education as part of SEAP's designation as a National Resource Center.

Organized by the SEAP student committee: Tim Gorman, Ermita Soenarto, Rebakah Daro Minarchek, Inga Gruss, Samson Lim, Trais Pearson, John Phan, Edmund Oh, Ivan Small, Kankan Xie, and Mirabelle Yang.



Above: (From front left) Wannasarn (Saam) Noonsuk, Rebakah Daro Minarchek, Professor Andy Mertha, Supeena Insee Adler (UC Riverside), Ermita Soenarto, Hoa Duong, (Second row) Chayanee Chawanote, Nij Tontisirin, Sivalai Vararuth, Corina Chiu (NIU), (Third row) Alice Beban, Viriya Cheamphan (Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan), Ismail Farjrie Alatas (U of Michigan), Mu Lung Hsu (NIU), (Fourth row) Lawrence Chua, Keenan McRoberts, Jose Rafael Martinez (Ohio U), Diego Fossati, Andy Scott Chang (UC Berkeley), (Fifth row) Tim Gorman.

Right: Outgoing co-chairs Tim Gorman (development sociology) and Ermita Soenarto (history) did an amazing job coordinating the brown bag lecture series, putting on the spring banquet, and organizing a fantastic graduate student conference.



FALL BROWN BAG LINE-UP

The SEAP Graduate Student Committee co-chairs for 2011-2012 will be Rebakah Daro Minarchek (development sociology), Becky Butler (linguistics), and Rebecca Townsend (history)—affectionately known as the “tri-Becca.” They have an exciting brown bag schedule lined up for the fall:

SEPTEMBER 1: Susan Morgan (Distinguished Professor, Dept. of English, Miami University of Ohio)

SEPTEMBER 8: Christoph Emmrich (Assistant Professor, Dept. for the Study of Religions, University of Toronto at St. George)

SEPTEMBER 15: Marcus Mietzner (Sr. Lecturer, School of Culture, History & Language, ANU)

SEPTEMBER 22: Pittayawat (Joe) Pittayaporn (Lecturer, Dept. of Linguistics, Chulalongkorn University)

SEPTEMBER 29: Christopher Duncan (Assistant Prof., School of Hist, Phil, Rel Studies, Arizona State U)

OCTOBER 6: Nadi Tofighian (Visiting Doctoral Candidate, Dept. of Cinema Studies, Stockholm University)

OCTOBER 13: Tim McKinnon (Resident Director of the American Institute for Indonesian Studies (AIFIS) in Jakarta)

OCTOBER 20: Gene Ammarell (Associate Professor, Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, Ohio University)

OCTOBER 27: Randy Barker and Gil Levine (both Professor Emeritus, Cornell University)

NOVEMBER 3: Patricia Sloane-White (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Delaware)

NOVEMBER 10: Ian Baird (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Geography, University of Wisconsin-Madison)

NOVEMBER 17: Charles Keith (Assistant Professor, Dept. of History, Michigan State University)

Fellowships

Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship: Pamela Corey, Ph.D. Candidate in History of Art and Archaeology, Cambodia/Vietnam, “The Art of Place: Visuality and Urbanism in Contemporary Vietnam and Cambodia”

Milton L. Barnett Scholarship: Kankan Xie, MA Candidate in Asian Studies, “Legitimizing Ethnic Supremacy: MARA’s Bumiputera Development Projects in Malaysia”

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation/ACLS Early Career Fellowship Program Dissertation Completion Fellowship: Samson Lim, Ph.D. Candidate, History, for his dissertation *Siam’s New Detectives: A History of the Police, the Press, and Conspiracy in Thailand*. His dissertation traces the parallel histories of police science, sensational crime news, and detective fiction as they relate to the generation, dissemination, and believability of information about violent crime in Thailand.

Kahin Prize awarded to Al McCoy

Professor Alfred W. McCoy (Department of History, University of Wisconsin, Madison) won the George McT. Kahin Prize for his book “Policing America’s Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State” (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

The George McT. Kahin Prize was created in 2007 at the behest of SEAP, friends and students of George Kahin, and the Southeast Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies to honor the contributions of George McT. Kahin to the field of Southeast Asian Studies. It is awarded by the Association for Asian Studies every other year to an outstanding scholar of Southeast Asian studies from any discipline or country specialization to recognize distinguished scholarly work on Southeast Asia beyond the author’s first book. McCoy was awarded the prize at the AAS annual meeting in Honolulu, in March 2011.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS ON SOUTHEAST ASIA

<i>Degree Granted</i>	<i>Discipline/Chair</i>
Johnson, Andrew Alan Rebuilding Lanna: Constructing and Consuming The Past in Urban Northern Thailand	Anthropology (D. Boyer)
Kaufman, Daniel Aaron The Morphosyntax of Tagalog Cities: A Typologically Driven Approach	Linguistics (J. Whitman)
Lammerts, Dietrich Christian Buddhism and Written Law: Dhammasattha Manuscripts And Texts in Premodern Burma	Asian Religions (A. Blackburn)

James, Soumya E. The Symbiosis of Image, Monument and Landscape: A Study of Select Goddess Images at Prasat Kravan, Kbal Spean and Banteay Srei in Cambodia	History of Art & Arch. (K. McGowan)
Lentz, Christian Cunningham Mobilizing a Frontier: Dien Bien Phu and the Making of Vietnam	Development Sociology (S. Feldman)
Rath, Amanda Katherine Contextualizing Contemporary Art: Propositions of Critical Artistic Practice in Seni Rupa Kontemporer in Indonesia	History of Art & Arch. (K. McGowan)
Yamamoto, Nobuto Print Power and Censorship in Colonial Indonesia, 1914-1942	Government (P. Katzenstein)

MAY 30, 2010

JANUARY 31, 2011

CORNELL UNIVERSITY **MASTER'S THESES** ON SOUTHEAST ASIA

FEBRUARY 10, 2010

Degree Granted

Brown, Bernardo
"Special – no thesis required"

McRoberts, Keenan (MPS)
"Special – no thesis required"

Ngo, Binh
"Special – no thesis required"

Suthiwan, Prushaya (MLA)
"Special – no thesis required"

Vrinte, Irene
"Special – no thesis required"

Watanabe, Chika
"Special – no thesis required"

Discipline/Chair

Anthropology
(V. Munasinghe)

Int'l Ag & Rural Dev.
(D. Cherney)

Anthropology
(A. Willford)

Landscape Architecture
(D. Krall)

History
(F. Logevall)

Anthropology
(H. Miyazaki)

MAY 30, 2010

Corey, Pamela
"Special – no thesis required"

Siddik, Abdullah Fahrizal
"Toward Integration: Ethnic Chinese Movements
In Post-suharto Indonesia"

Vo, Eileen Nho
"Examining Postwar Issues of Male Identity Crisis And Disenfranchisement in Vietnamese File: The Wild Reed And Living in Fear"

History of Art
(K. McGowan)

Asian Studies
(T. Chaloeontiarana)

East Asian Literature
(L. Paterson)

AUGUST 23, 2010

Lim, Colin Kim
"Cambodian Genocide Museums and Memorials:
A Medium For Transmitting Intergenerational Cultural Memory"

Siddik, Abdullah Fahrizal (MPA)
"Special – no thesis required"

Vo, Alex Thai Dinh
"Agrarian Policies in North Vietnam During The
Resistance War, 1945-1953"

Asian Studies
(J. M. Law)

Public Affairs
(N. Chau)

Asian Studies
(K. Taylor)

JANUARY 31, 2011

Gruss, Inga
"Special – no thesis required"

Hinkle, Christopher Veinbergs
"Thananchai Pandit Chadok: The Cultural Transmission
of a Jataka Tale"

Mohsin, Yulianto Salahuddin
"Special – no thesis required"

Pearson III, Quentin A.
"Special – no thesis required"

Work, Courtney
"Special – no thesis required"

Anthropology
(A. Willford)

Asian Studies
(M. Fiskesjö)

Science & Technology
Studies, (S. Prichard)

History
(T. Loos)

Anthropology
(M. Fiskesjö)



2009 Lauriston Sharp Prize

Congratulations to Pittayawat (Joe) Pittayaporn (Ph.D. linguistics, August 2009) who has been awarded the Lauriston Sharp Prize for 2009. Named after the founder of the Southeast Asia Program, this prize represents the highest honor given to the graduating student who has contributed the most to scholarship and to the community life of the program. His outstanding dissertation *The Phonology of Proto-tai* is “the first comprehensive attempt to reconstruct the ancestor of all modern Tai languages in 40 years, and draws much new information from primary data collected by Joe himself in Thailand, Vietnam, and Southern China. Particularly in his work in Vietnam, Joe collected data that has not been before comprehensively studied by linguists.” His former advisor, John Whitman, goes on to explain “Joe’s dissertation makes a number of revolutionary proposals. It expands the inventory of consonants in proto-Tai while eliminating others proposed by Li. It greatly simplifies the tonal reconstruction, and makes sense of the chronology of changes in later Tai languages. It reorganizes the language family in a completely original way.” To read an accessible account of Joe’s path-breaking field research see his article “Karsts, Rivers and Crocodiles: the spread of Tai languages in Southeast Asia” in the 2010 SEAP bulletin (http://einaudi.cornell.edu/southeastasia/publications/bulletin_archive/Karsts.pdf). During his time at Cornell Joe contributed greatly to the Southeast Asia Program and the Linguistics Department, organizing brown bag talks, student conferences, and helping to initiate the Cornell project on Rice and Language. Joe currently teaches in a distinguished position in the Linguistics Department, the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.

Welcome to our new Faculty Associates in Research (FAR)

Nori Katagiri is an assistant professor of international security studies at Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL. He teaches Southeast Asian politics, United States foreign policy, and global politics. He has conducted research in Vietnam and Malaysia and is now working on nongovernmental organizations and irregular warfare in the Philippines. His publications include an article on the British counterinsurgency missions during the Malayan Emergency. He has been a research associate at RAND on counterterrorism, visiting researcher at Keio University and the University of the Philippines, Diliman.



Neal Keating is an assistant professor of cultural anthropology at the College at Brockport, SUNY. He began working on problems of indigenous political and visual expression as a graduate student in the 1990s, initially in Central and North America. He completed the Ph.D. in 2002, and is the author of a book, titled *Iroquois Art, Power, and History* (forthcoming in March 2012 from the University of Oklahoma Press). Keating began new research in 2007 at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which led him to Southeast Asia, where his research and teaching interests include the anthropology of human rights, indigenous peoples, culture, history, and economic globalization. He is the recipient of a 2011 Senior Fellowship grant from the Centre for Khmer Studies. His current study aims to identify, compare and analyze the cultural and historical obstacles that prevent the full realization of indigenous peoples' human rights in two sets of indigenous communities in rural Cambodia, one Kuoy and the other Bunong; in particular the rights of self-determination, and rights to their traditional lands, territories and resources. Through analysis of the obstacles that suppress these rights, the research goals are to better understand what are the conditions under which it becomes possible for states, corporations, and NGOs to better recognize and protect human rights; and possible for indigenous communities to actually realize their rights as contemporary human beings and peoples. The project methodology is meant to be replicable in other communities, and combines ethnography and dialogue, archival research, linguistics, archaeology, and audio-visual recording.



Ken MacLean, a cultural anthropologist, is an Assistant Professor of International Development and Social Change at Clark University. He has conducted long-term ethnographic and archival research in Vietnam and Burma as well as worked with a range of NGOs based in the region over the past two decades. His book manuscript, *Governing Documents: Peasant-Bureaucrats and Their*

Pasts in Socialist Vietnam, examines the role low-level cadres played in shaping actually existing forms of government in that country. His more recent work explores the socio-technical practices shaping freedom of expression online, including official as well as unofficial forms of censorship related to politically sensitive issues. His work on Burma primarily concerns the dynamics affecting natural resource extraction, conflict and development-induced forms of displacement, and humanitarian assistance to eastern parts of the country.



Sudarat Musikawong is Assistant Professor of Sociology with research in cultural studies, Thai/Asian American studies in immigrant labor justice, transnational studies, national memory and violence, and citizenship. Recent publications and research projects include: "Mourning State Celebrations: Amnesic Iterations of Political Violence in Thailand," *Identities*, v17, n5 (2010); "The Invisibility of the Thai Non-Citizen Immigrant Worker in the U.S.," (manuscript in progress).

Ermin Sinanovic is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD. He studied for MA and Ph.D. in Political Science at Syracuse University. His doctoral dissertation was on contemporary Islamic revival in Malaysia. Sinanovic obtained two BAs (one in Qur'an and Sunnah Studies, the other in Political Science) and an MA (Islamic Civilization) from the International Islamic University Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur.



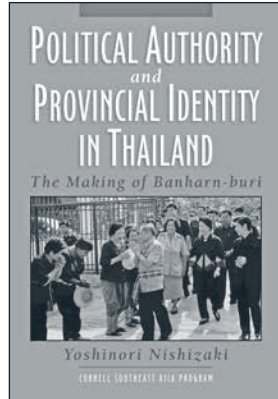
His research interests include transnational Islamic revival, Southeast Asian politics, Islamic movements, Middle East politics, and Islamic political thought. At the Naval Academy, Sinanovic teaches courses on Southeast Asian politics, Middle East politics, and Islam and politics. He speaks Bosnian, English, Arabic, and Malay/Indonesian.

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Political Authority and Provincial Identity in Thailand: The Making of Banharn-buri

Yoshinori Nishizaki

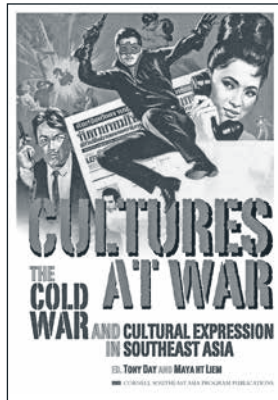
A powerful Thai politician, former prime minister Banharn Silpa-archa has often been disparaged as a corrupt operator who for years channeled excessive state funds into developing his own rural province. This study reinterprets Banharn's career and offers a detailed portrait of the voters who support him. Relying on extensive interviews, the author shows how Banharn's constituents have developed a resilient provincial identity based on their pride in his improvements to their province, Suphanburi, which many now call "Banharn-buri" ... the place of Banharn. The analysis challenges simplistic perceptions of rural Thai voters and raises vital questions about contemporary democracy in Thailand. 2011



Cultures at War: The Cold War and Cultural Expression in Southeast Asia

Edited by Tony Day and Maya H. T. Liem

Cultures at War examines how the cultures of postcolonial Southeast Asia responded to the Cold War. Based on fieldwork throughout the diverse region, these essays analyze the ways in which art, literature, theater, film, physical-fitness programs, and the popular press reflected complex Southeast Asian reactions to the ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, and, to a degree, China. Determined to remain "non-aligned," artists synthesized traditional and modern, local and international sources to produce a vibrant constellation of work. For each of the national cultures discussed here, any Cold War tendency toward anxiety and conformity was challenged by creative pluralism and individual expression. 2010



Vietnam and the West: New Approaches

Edited by Wynn Wilcox

Studies of Vietnam's relationship with the West have tended to focus on the country's political and military responses to the aggressions of foreign powers such as France and the United States. The essays in this volume take a different approach. Rather than assuming that Vietnamese and Western civilizations must clash, they examine the ways in which the Vietnamese have reformulated conceptions of the West within their own cultural context, through exchanges involving Catholicism, medical advances, gender relations, and other key issues—complex interactions that began in the sixteenth century and continue to this day. 2010

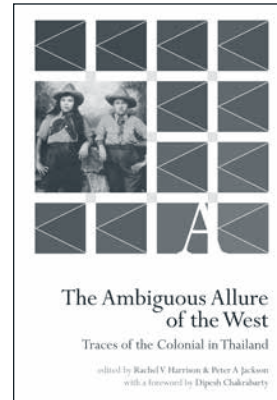


The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand

Edited by Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson, foreword by Dipesh Chakrabarty

This volume examines the impact of Western imperialism on Thai cultural development from the 1850s to the present, and highlights the value of postcolonial analysis for studying the ambiguities, inventions, and accommodations with the West that enrich Thai culture.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, Thais have adopted and adapted aspects of Western culture and practice in an ongoing relationship that may be characterized as semi-colonial. As they have done so, the notions of what constitutes "Thainess" have been inflected by Western influence in complex and ambiguous ways, producing nuanced, hybridized Thai identities. *The Ambiguous Allure of the West* brings together Thai and Western scholars of history, anthropology, film, and literary and cultural studies to analyze how the protean Thai self has been shaped by the traces of the colonial Western Other. The book draws the study of Siam/Thailand into the critical field of postcolonial theory, expanding the potential of Thai Studies to contribute to wider debates in the disciplines of cultural studies and critical theory. 2010



<http://einaudi.cornell.edu/southeastasia/publications/>

The Journal Indonesia Online! <http://cip.cornell.edu/Indonesia>

SEAP Data Paper Series Available Online: <http://seapdatapapers.library.cornell.edu/s/seap/index.html>

The Echols Collection: On the Road in Southeast Asia

by Jeff Petersen

In May and early June of this year, I took a three week library acquisitions trip to Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. As assistant to Echols collection curator Greg Green, it is my job to handle the island side of Southeast Asia. I had my work cut out for me: re-establish personal connections with libraries and book vendors in these countries, facilitate the collection of resources for Cornell, and promote an online newspaper project jointly run by Cornell and the Library of Congress. For certain portions of the trip two Cornell graduate students, Ermita Soenarto and Taomo Zhou, accompanied me, giving valuable language and cultural assistance along the way.

As one priority for the trip, I spent time getting to know local librarians at various research collections in the four countries. To start with, in Singapore I visited the library at ISEAS and in Malaysia I visited Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. I covered the University of Gadjah Mada at Yogyakarta, and Petra and Airlangga Universities in Indonesia. While in the Philippines, I visited Ateneo, UP, and a couple of universities in Northern Luzon. It is a priority for us to make face-to-face contact with librarians in Southeast Asia. It encourages greater reciprocity when responding to requests for information and for resources such as dissertations. It also allows for the possibility of participating in exchange opportunities in the future.

Another objective of the trip was to meet with various book vendors to improve opportunities to collect material from the region. In Indonesia and the Philippines I met with staff members from the Library of Congress' overseas offices who run the Cooperative Acquisitions Program for Southeast Asia, or CAPSEA. This program accounts for the majority of material coming into the Echols Collection. Since it had been several years since an Echols staff member had been to their offices, these visits were important to the

collection. I was able to go with them to vendors, universities, museums, and other organizations to see how they usually acquire materials, as well as to get a sense of the types of materials they could not purchase for our collection. Through extended conversations, I was able to convey with greater clarity the types of materials we wanted. This is in addition to the usual benefits that come with meeting people face to face, such as looking over actual materials together, and pointing out what was of interest. In this way, I was able to help our Library of Congress representatives understand the full scope of materials that were most appropriate for our collection. For example, one representative in Indonesia had been bypassing certain Chinese materials in Indonesia, not realizing how important they were for us. She then indicated that she would be sure to pick up more of these materials. And likewise in the Philippines, I pointed out that a number of duplicate books that had been set aside by the Library of Congress were actually of interest to us. This representative said that she would look into having such duplicates regularly sent to us.

Much of our time was spent working on the newspaper digitization project that Greg Green and the Library of Congress have been working on. The idea here is to get PDF copies of the original digital version of newspapers. Often their online version will vary from the paper version, and this would allow us to capture the original. We would then store these PDFs securely and make them available to paying subscribers in a database. It would also save us the difficulty of storing the paper copies, which has long been a challenge. So we visited newspaper publishers, and I gave several presentations on the topic to various audiences composed of publishers and librarians in Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Surabaya.

On this trip we made a special effort to locate Chinese language newspapers and materials. This focus on Chinese-

Indonesian connections was inspired in part by some requests from Ben Anderson and the fact that several students are working on the Chinese in Southeast Asia. We were very grateful to have encouragement and tips from Ben Anderson as well as from Ben Abel, who works with us in the library.

In our innocent wanderings in Indonesia, and as we generated interest in our projects, we ended up being featured in the local Chinese newspapers twice (*Guo Ji Ri Bao*) and once in a Yogyakarta paper (*Kedaulatan Rakyat*). We may have made it onto local television as well when Taomo spotted and then attracted the attention of an Indonesian movie star (we saw the cameras rolling as we talked). I told Taomo and Ermita that when they work with the Echols collection they just have to get used to the fame and deal with that in an appropriate, professional manner. They handled it all well, and again, I was grateful for their assistance despite their jokes and the fact that they officially dubbed me "Princess" due to my persnickety ways. But I accept that designation with dignity. I can remember well being stopped at one security location in Indonesia airport as the officer looked over three passports, one from the US, one from China, and one from Singapore (Malay). I would not have necessarily thought that was very exceptional, but he held us up and paused for a bit looking amused. "You don't see this very often he said," and he had a look like that of Eomer in the Lord of the Rings movie: "What business does an Elf, a Man, and a Dwarf have in the Riddermark?"

For library patrons here at Cornell, the bottom line is that we hope to establish better communication with libraries in Southeast Asia so that we can help each other and better assist researchers. If you have a specific request that we can't fill here, we may have a better chance of getting help from elsewhere. So please let us know if you have specific requests. Never hesitate to drop by or send us an e-mail. ♪

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访创生先有...
多还报,国际



SAVE THE DATES!

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2011

8 PM, in B20 Lincoln Hall
FREE fall gamelan concert.

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8 PM, in Bailey Hall

Purbo Asmoro presents Arjuna's
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An Evening of Javanese Shadow Drama
and Gamelan

Shadow drama master Purbo Asmoro presents the living classical drama and musical traditions of Java. The remarkable visual effects, to the sounds of a full gamelan ensemble, will be accompanied by projected English translations of the narrative.



New Music in Southeast Asia:

A Concert and Symposium

Christopher J. Miller,
lecturer in music
and director of the
Cornell Gamelan
Ensemble

New music in Southeast Asia. The fact that there is such a thing—that there are composers creating contemporary art music analogous to new music in the West—might come as a surprise, as musically Southeast Asia is best known for its traditional forms, such as Indonesian gamelan music. Upon learning that there is in fact new music in Southeast Asia, one might assume that like so much new music from other parts of the non-Western world, it has its foundation in the European classical tradition.

There is something to both these preconceptions. There are composers of new music in and from Southeast Asia, and some of them do compose in Western forms. But there is not so much of it—certainly less than there is in East Asia. And traditional music is more prevalent than European classical music—though neither is as prevalent as commercialized popular music. And alongside composers who identify or might reasonably be characterized as Western-oriented there are composers who create new music from a basis in Southeast Asian traditions.

A sampling of Southeast Asian new music was presented at Cornell at a concert in Barnes Hall on March 30, 2011. Owing to the involvement of the Momena Quartet, a string quartet based in New York, there was a focus on work for Western strings by Western-oriented composers such as the Cambodian-born American composer Chinary Ung, the Malaysian composer Kee Yong Chong, and Tony Prabowo and Michael Asmara from Indonesia. There was one work for Balinese gender wayang by I Gusti Nyoman Darta, a leading young Balinese musician who was resident in Ithaca this past year. Further, there were examples of crossing the Western-oriented/traditionally-base divide: a work for violin, cello, and piano by Darta's older colleague, Wayan Gde Yudane, and in the other direction, a piece for Javanese gamelan instruments by Michael Asmara.

The afternoon before the concert there was a symposium, hosted by the Society for the Humanities at A.D. White House, that critically examined the state of new music in Southeast Asia, with a focus on Indonesia. By way of an introduction I reviewed the ways in which the Indonesian scene reflects the weakness of European classical music and the prominence of indigenous traditions, drawing upon a dissertation which I am on the verge of completing. Stephanie Griffin, founder



GAMELAN



and violist with the Momena Quartet and co-organizer of the concert and symposium, talked about the challenges this has posed for Tony Prabowo as a Western-oriented composer. Nyak Ina Raseuki, a singer who had come to premiere Tony Prabowo's chamber opera *Pastoral* with Momena and the American soprano Katharine Dain, talked about Prabowo's collaborative work with traditional musicians. Yuan Peiying, who came to Cornell from Singapore to pursue a D.M.A. in composition, offered a comparative example with an overview of new music and its relationship to Singapore's multicultural policies. Finally, Andrew C. McGraw, a fellow at the Society for the Humanities from the University of Richmond, put things in perspective by discussing the use of the Indonesian term *musik kontemporer* (contemporary music) by creative musicians who might not be thought of as new music composers.

SEAP Music Outreach

The Cornell Gamelan Ensemble performed in an extra spring concert this year, designed just for students from area schools. Teachers from Dryden High School, Dewitt Middle School, Belle Sherman Elementary School brought classes to Barnes Auditorium for the special outreach concert. Gamelan director, Christopher J. Miller gave a presentation that helped students place gamelan in cultural context and understand what they were hearing better while outreach coordinator, Thamora Fishel showed them Indonesian shadow puppets.

In May, art and music teachers had the opportunity to participate in hands-on gamelan and rondalla workshops as part of a professional development workshop titled "Music, Words and Images: Aligning Student Learning with Collections in the Johnson Museum of Art." They jumped right in to playing gongs, metallaphones, and other unfamiliar instruments as they learned about the cycles that structure gamelan music. They also had the opportunity to work with Jane Maestro-Scherer of 14 Strings!, Cornell's Filipino Rondalla Ensemble. In that session teachers experimented with instruments such as the banduria, octavina, and laud.



GAMELAN OUTREACH

OUTREACH



SEAP Outreach has used the collaborative multi-lingual Afterschool Language and Culture Program as an opportunity to broaden the Burma-Karen Project by offering a series of Karen lessons during the school day and two Burmese classes. The Karen lessons alone reached all 120 kindergarten and first grade students at the Belle Sherman elementary school in Ithaca where Karen ESL students are clustered. Burmese was taught to Ithaca middle school students in the fall and to second and third graders in Trumansburg in the spring, when it was paired with Thai

Right: Zin Htet Chan teaching Burmese to students at Trumansburg Elementary School

Below: Paw Bleh Hutko teaches students at Belle Sherman to count in Karen.



and kids learned about the border, ethnic minorities such as the Karen. The Thai and Burmese classes ended with a border market where they had to exchange baht and kyat at the “currency exchange” to buy snacks and crafts.

These classes connected wonderfully with the Burma/Karen Project, providing the school teachers who came in contact with the program on-the-job-learning opportunities to become more aware and inclusive. The curriculum (already online with audio) can also serve as a model for programming in communities with growing populations of refugees from Burma. In fact an educator from North Carolina who found out about the SEA teacher study group session on the Karen program eagerly participated in the discussion via video-conference.

Overall, the Afterschool Language and Culture Program has been a huge success. From August 2010 to May 2011 CERIS (Cornell Educational Resources for International Studies—the combined outreach programs of the Ein-audi Center) offered 16 languages, in 12 locations, to over 300 students, most of whom were second and third graders in either rural schools or in low-income urban neighborhoods. Taught by a mix of international undergraduates, graduate students and native speakers in the community, this program is in high demand. SEAP has made the biggest contribution to the program, offering three different Thai classes, two Burmese classes, two Indonesian classes (including the first high school level class), and Tagalog, as well as piloting the Karen lessons during the school day.



Teachers at the Slow Food/Fast Food professional development workshop learn to make Thai summer rolls using locally-grown greens and herbs.

SEAP is now leading the way to collect evaluative data and feedback from these children’s parents and we will be seeking additional funding to keep this program at full steam despite the deep cuts to the NRC.

Our other major CERIS collaboration, the annual International Studies Summer Institute for teachers, was our biggest ever. 50 teachers, the majority from rural school districts, participated in a three-day workshop on Slow Food/ Fast Food: Food Cultures Around the World held at Mann Library on the Cornell campus. Teachers were so enthusiastic that they were “tweeting” about the workshop and many have already e-mailed to get rice samples or advice on making Thai summer rolls as a classroom activity that utilizes plants grown in school gardens. ♪

SEAP outreach coordinator, Thamora Fishel, taught Trumansburg students Thai. Here she helps them make notebooks and cards using Thai mulberry paper to “sell” at the border market.

SEAP Faculty 2011-2012

Benedict R. O. Anderson, Aaron L. Binenkorb Professor Emeritus of International Studies, government and Asian studies

Iwan Azis, professor, city and regional planning (on leave 2011-12)

Warren B. Bailey, professor, finance and Asian studies

Randolph Barker, professor emeritus, agricultural economics and Asian studies

Anne Blackburn, professor, south Asia and Buddhist studies (on leave Spring 2012)

Thak Chaloemtiarana, professor of the Graduate School

Abigail Cohn, professor, linguistics and Asian studies

Magnus Fiskesjö, associate professor, anthropology (on leave Spring 2012)

Greg Green, curator, Echols Collection on Southeast Asia

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

Ngampit Jagacinski, senior language lecturer, Thai

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

Fred Logevall, professor, history; Director of the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies

Tamara Lynn Loos, associate professor, history and Asian studies; Director of the Cornell University Southeast Asia Program

Andrew Mertha, associate professor, government

Kaja M. McGowan, associate professor, art history, archaeology and Asian studies

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

Lorraine Paterson, assistant professor, Asian studies

Jolanda Pandin, language lecturer, Indonesian

Thomas Pepinsky, assistant professor, government (on leave Fall 2011)

Hannah Phan, language lecturer, Khmer

Maria Theresa Savella, senior language lecturer, Tagalog

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

Eric Tagliacozzo, associate professor, history and Asian studies (on leave Spring 2012)

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

Erik Thorbecke, H.E. Babcock Professor Emeritus of Food Economics and economics

Thuy Tranviet, senior language lecturer, Vietnamese

San San Hnin Tun, senior language lecturer, Burmese

Marina Welker, assistant professor, anthropology

Andrew Willford, associate professor, anthropology and Asian studies (on leave Fall 2011)

Lindy Williams, professor, development sociology

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



Top: Workers transplant rice at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Los Banos, Philippines. (See page 18 for the article on Rice and Cornell.)

Right: IRRI headquarters features buildings named after Cornellians who were instrumental in the establishment of the institute. On the left is Chandler Hall; Hill Hall is on the right.



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The background of the entire page is a photograph of a vast, green rice field under a clear sky. In the lower-left foreground, a traditional woven bamboo basket is tipped over, spilling white rice grains onto the ground. The basket's intricate weaving pattern is clearly visible.

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