The Anti-Thai Riots: Sparking Khmer Nationalism
by Kheang Un*

Increased economic ties between Cambodia and Thailand over the past decade indicate a growing interdependence that should gradually erase the historical animosity between the two kingdoms. However, the anti-Thai riots on January 29, 2003 indicate the existence of undercurrents of nationalism embedded in this process of change. Although Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Sinawatra recently referred to the riots as an “accidental nightmare,” the short-lived violence reminds us of the strength, as well as potential danger, of nationalism. The manipulation of nationalist sentiment for political consumption has widespread social, political, and economic ramifications.

On January 18, a local Khmer newspaper ran an unsubstantiated rumor that a Thai actress, Susawan Kongying, better known in Cambodia as “Miss Morning Star”, made the claim during an interview with a Thai TV station that Angkor Wat, the symbol of Khmer identity, belonged to Thailand. Further, she was alleged to have said that the temple was stolen by Cambodians, and that she would agree to perform in Cambodia only on the condition that Angkor Wat be returned to Thailand. This unverified rumor drew strong criticism and outrage from many Cambodians—including Prime Minister Hun Sen. In remarks during a school opening ceremony in eastern Cambodia on January 27, Prime Minister Hun Sen described the actress as “Theft Star,” adding, “The price of Miss Morning Star is not equal to some patch of the grass at Angkor Wat.” These rumors further circulated and built momentum, particularly among Cambodian high school and university students. The outrage against Thais “looking down on Cambodia” eventually erupted into anti-Thai riots on January 29, resulting in an unprecedented short-term crisis in Thai-Khmer relations, in a shaking up of Cambodian internal politics, and in the rejuvenation of nationalism among many Cambodians.

The protest against the Thai actress for “looking down” on Cambodians started with bands of mostly middle-class high school and university students traveling on motorbikes along Phnom Penh’s major streets. They denounced her in chants and carried signs depicting her as half-dog and half-human. They also staged peaceful protests in front of the Thai embassy. By sunset, the demonstration intensified, sparked by another rumor circulated via electronic mail and mobile phones that the Cambodian Embassy in Bangkok was destroyed and its embassy staff killed by Thai mobs. The false rumor was reported on the radio in a call-in talk show, swelling the crowds. This rumor

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enraged the youth and led to violence; the newly-built Thai Embassy was looted and torched, forcing the Thai ambassador, Mr. Chatchawed Chartsuwan, to flee the embassy compound over the back fence. The rioters then turned on a number of Thai-owned businesses ranging from hotels to telecommunication companies. Some, including Thaksin Shinawatra’s own company, were vandalized; others, such as the Royal Phnom Penh Hotel, were burned to the ground.

According to eyewitnesses and first hand observation by the author, there was a lapse of response from the Cambodian government. The riot and the military police initially did not intervene, despite calls for help by Thai Embassy officials. When asked, a police official said they were not given orders “from the top” to intervene. The slow response from the Cambodian government prompted Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to threaten to send Thai commandos into the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, to protect Thai nationals and interests. It was not until several hours into the events that sporadic gunfire was heard as Cambodian security forces started to disperse crowds of protesters at various locations throughout the city.

The riot poses more questions than answers. Why did security forces fail to curb the riot in the first place? Who was behind the riots? What possible benefits could there have been in destroying the Thai Embassy and Thai-affiliated businesses?

The Thai ambassador to Cambodia told the Thai media that the riot was “organized, not spontaneous” and that the Cambodian government did not take adequate measures to prevent the riot from escalating. The Thai government immediately insisted that the Cambodian government identify those who were responsible for the riots and bring them to justice. They also closed the 840 kilometer-long border with Cambodia, expelled the Cambodian ambassador to Thailand, and recalled their ambassador to Cambodia. Meanwhile, diplomatic ranks were downgraded to the level of charge d’affaires, reflecting an embassy where an ambassador or minister is not assigned.

The Cambodian government immediately apologized to the Thai government and offered “unconditional compensation” for the damages to the Thai Embassy and Thai-owned businesses. The government accused unspecified “political extremists,” blaming them for turning “cultural and personal conflict into a conflict of race and culture.” In the meantime, the government arrested around 150 people; some 58, mainly students, remain in custody. An outspoken leader of an opposition party, Sam Rainsy, went into hiding for several days after reports that he might be arrested for his alleged involvement.

The most shocking outcome was the sacking of a popular governor of Phnom Penh, Mr. Chea Sophara, whom many observers saw as a rising star within the ruling Cambodian People’s Party. He had been heralded by many city dwellers as a leader who was tough on crime and effective at improving city infrastructure. Despite the government’s claim that the removal of the governor was a normal administrative procedure, Cambodian public and foreign diplomats believe that the purge was the result of the riots. The removal occurred after Thai intelligence sources publicly pointed their finger at “a senior Phnom Penh municipal official.” Mr. Chea Sophara had earlier raised the ire of the Thais for his support for the restoration and opening of the Preah Vihear temple complex on the Cambodian side of the border. The facts regarding who was really behind the riots will not be known, though the sacking of Chea Sophara raised some interesting questions regarding Cambodian internal politics. The removal of a respected mayor, who could deliver votes for the CPP during the upcoming general elections, could be read as a sign of a split within the CPP. This rumor is a speculation that Prime Minister Hun Sen, de facto leader of the CPP, strongly denies. Cambodians definitely played the unfolding events to win over domestic constituencies with the nationalist card.

In fact, the Thai and Cambodian governments both manipulated the incident to win over domestic constituencies. Because the incident was Cambodia’s fault, the Thais initially dragged their feet in order to make Cambodia pay a heavy price. While the two countries agreed to reopen their borders, Thai border security did not allow Thai nationals to cross into Cambodia, citing security concerns, though they let Cambodians travel into Thailand. This crippled the booming casino industry along the border that caters to a Thai clientele, and limited trade from the Thai side. On March 5th, the Cambodian government then declared a unilateral decision to close the border with Thailand from the Khmer side, claiming that Thailand did not act on good faith and that the decision was made to protect Cambodians from ongoing Thai operations against drug smuggling and banditry. This decision won widespread support from Cambodians, who viewed the Thai government’s action as a form of bullying. Both sides finally agreed to reopen the border on March 21.

Perhaps most importantly, the riot reveals a deep sense of nationalism and animosity that many Cambodians feel towards their more economically and militarily developed neighbor, Thailand. Historical conflicts, compounded by the strong presence of Thai businesses, products, and culture (including the Thai TV shows in which the actress stars) have raised serious concerns among Cambodians over Thai domination. Even a small spark can ignite the strong feelings of nationalism thus generated, and the unsubstantiated rumor about Miss Morning Star was just such a spark. The author’s casual conversations with Cambodians reveal the general feeling that although the incident inflicted great damage to the Cambodian economy, with compensation now estimated to run as high as $55 million U.S., this conflict serves as a signal that Cambodians are willing to endure pain to uphold their national pride. This sense of national pride is further seen in the explosion of the display of Cambodian flags and maps on cars and motorbikes in the wake of the riot. Cambodians see themselves as caught in a war for survival that necessitates they uphold their national pride and integrity under the shadow of their larger and more powerful neighbors.
Peter Ross  
Research Associate/Editor  
Center for Southeast Asian Studies

As of October, 2002, Peter Ross is the new Research Associate and Editor of the Southeast Asia Publications Program of the CSEAS. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Linguistics (Cognitive Linguistics/Thai language) at The Australian National University. He served as Graduate Officer at the National Thai Studies Centre at The Australian National University from 1992-95, where he worked in multimedia development and desktop publishing. His background in Southeast Asia includes living as an AFS exchange student in rural Thailand (1982-83), studying at the University of Hanoi in Vietnam (1990), and fieldwork in Thailand, Vietnam and Laos (1994, 1997). He completed his B.A. degree with Honours in Asian Studies at The Australian National University (1988-91) and held a lectureship at Thammasat University in Thailand (2000-2001). His publications include an invited research essay on Tay-Nung language for The Encyclopedia of the World's Languages, Past and Present, edited by Jane Garry (Yale University Press, 2001). His computer program Learning Thai Script (published by Allen & Unwin, 1997) went on to win a national award for “Exemplary Use of Electronic Technologies–Best Large Project”. His most recent conference papers include “Luon, Then, Sli: Tay-Nung Song Forms”, presented at the Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics conference in Tempe, Arizona (2002) and “Children and Faith in Southern Thailand: Goodness in the Fiction of Kanokphong Songsomphan”, presented at a conference on Children and Faith: Islam and Social Change in Africa and Southeast Asia at Ohio University (2003). His current research includes a project for the World Wide Web entitled “Thai Muslim Perspectives Through Language”.

Kenton J. Clymer  
Department of History

After a nationwide search, Dr. Kenton J. Clymer has accepted the position of Chair of the Department of History. Prof. Clymer will begin his new position next year after he returns from a year’s appointment in China as a Fulbright Distinguished Lecturer in American Foreign Policy at Renmin University in Beijing. He comes here after working at the University of Texas at El Paso for more than twenty years. He is the author of four books, including editor of The Vietnam War: Its History, Literature, and Music (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1998). His other books include Quest for Freedom: The United States and the Independence of India (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995. Indian edition, New Delhi: Prentice-Hall, 1997), Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines, 1898-1916: An Inquiry into the American Colonial Mentality (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1986), and John Hay: The Gentleman as Diplomat (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975). His most recent articles include “The Perils of Neutrality: the Break in U.S.-Cambodian Relations [1965],” Diplomatic History 23 (fall 1999): 609-31; and “Jimmy Carter, Human Rights, and Cambodia,” Diplomatic History (forthcoming). He has held several overseas appointments, including the George Bankroft Visiting Professor of History at the University of Gottingen, Germany; Fulbright Lecturer at the University of Indonesia, Jakarta; Professor of History, Texas International Education Consortium, Shah Alam, Malaysia; and Fulbright Lecturer, Silliman University, Dumaguete City, Philippines. Prof. Clymer’s current research project is “The United States and Cambodia: A History”.

Eric Jones  
Department of History

As of fall 2003, Dr. Eric Jones will be an Assistant Professor in the Department of History. He received his Ph.D. in History at the University of California, Berkeley. The title of his dissertation is “Wives, Slaves, and Concubines: A History of the Female Underclass in Dutch Asia”. He has had numerous fellowships awarded by the University of California, including the Ehrman Chair fellowship, the Regents fellowship, in addition to being a Foreign Language Area Scholar. In addition, he was a Fulbright Scholar in the Netherlands from 2000-2001, where he also was funded by a Nordholt-Leiden History grant from the Netherlands-America Foundation. He is the author of numerous entries on Indonesia and the Dutch East India Company in The Encyclopedia of Colonialism, ed. Melvin E. Page (East River Books/ABC-CLIO, forthcoming). He also has published (with Robert Schecter) The State vs. Wouter Basson: the Republic of South Africa (Transvaal Province), 1999 Acts of Indictment (The Johns Hopkins University Center for Civilian Biodefense Studies and the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, 2000). His most recent conference papers include “When Concubines Attack: Female Violence in Eighteenth-Century Jakarta” (Southeast Asia Program symposium, Cornell University, 2002) and “The Darker Side of Enlightenment: Monopolizing Reason in Colonial Asia” (conference of the Institute of the Malay World & Civilization and the Ecole Francaise d’Extreme-Orient, 2001, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia).
Homage to a King in Laos
by Catherine Raymond, Director, Center for Burma Studies

On January 5, 2003, tens of thousands of people gathered in Vientiane, capital of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, for festive and solemn events that culminated in the unveiling of a huge new statue of King Fa Ngum, founder of the Lane Xang Kingdom in the 14th century.

Located at the western entrance to the central city, this cast bronze sculpture—4.3 meters high and weighing nearly four tons—now welcomes visitors arriving overland from Luang Prabang, the former royal capital; from points north to China; and nearby Wattay International Airport.

The celebration of Fa Ngum lasted for four days. It was organized in close accord with classical descriptions of rituals for consecrating Buddha images considered important enough to be patronized by the Lao kings. The last of the Lao kings was compelled by the communists to abdicate in 1975, and imprisoned soon thereafter. Along with most of the former royal family, he died under circumstances that even today remain mysterious and publicly unmentionable.

As recently as the mid-1990s, place-names, artifacts, and public iconography making reference to the former Lao royals were—with certain exceptions—energetically suppressed by the new revolutionary regime. (About the same time, the Soviet-style propaganda billboards, which were then everywhere in Vientiane, began to palpably disintegrate under the sun and the monsoon rains. These signs have now largely disappeared from the cityscape.)

Included in the dedicatory procession—the most ambitious spectacle mounted in recent years—was a rare and auspicious white tusker among the several beautifully caparisoned elephants. There were hundreds of costumed warriors and dancers leading and bearing the grand palanquin on which was borne the actual Phra Bang—the solid gold traditional palladium of the Lao kingdom and still the country’s most important Buddha image. Trailing it closely was a contingent of senior monks and abbots, as well as numerous phu nhay: party and governmental VIPs, many of them dressed in splendid antique pantaloons and tunic-
vats at the southwestern limits of the old city. They finally crossed the culverted, channelized bed of Nam Passak, the defunct waterway that formerly encircled the capital—and which twenty years ago was still mostly navigable. A little beyond there, the cortege finally halted at the new park where the statue of Fa Ngum awaited its unveiling.

Mounted on the elephants were actors in royal finery playing the principals: Fa Ngum and his Khmer princess wife and adviser; followed by the bearers of the Phra Bang, and of the bound palm leaf texts of the Phra Bang and the Siamese in the 1860s. In the manner of the tak bhat—the morning food offering to the monks in procession—they silently awaited the Phra Bang’s passage: respectfully bare-footed, bearing flowers, fruit, incense and candles and kneeling as the palanquin approached.

(While the putative Phra Bang is on permanent display in a recently built pavilion on the grounds of the Royal Palace Museum in Luang Prabang, it is widely believed that the statue displayed there is only a copy, with the actual solid gold Buddha image secured in a bank vault somewhere. By contrast, it was accepted that at the Fa Ngum events, the genuine item was deployed. There is no transparent evidence for any of this.)

The festival’s elaborate design and choreography were largely envisioned by Soumth Photsiane, the curator of the National Museum—known as well for popularizing the history and pre-history of Laos as for his commitment to revolutionary ideals—and it received an unprecedented...

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degree of international mainstream media coverage, including live satellite upfeed. (The US Ambassador was accompanied by a senior correspondent from the New York Times.)

What could be more astonishing in an unabashed communist state—where stern portraiture of Marx and Lenin is still the official iconography and the hammer-and-sickle Party flag is everywhere—than this replication of a ceremony conjoining the Lao kingship with the Lao Buddhist establishment?

Some press speculation on the underlying motivation behind so unlikely a spectacle was probably correct, e.g., it was an alternative approach by the Lao PDR government to consolidate the national identity of a fractiously and ethnically heterogeneous population not deeply satisfied with its experience of nearly three decades of revolutionary governance. But other reports—particularly in elements of the European press—were wildly off the mark: most extremely so were those which interpreted the “beatification” of Fa Ngum as an oblique gesture of reconciliation by the Communists towards the handful of supporters of the Paris-based pretender to the Lao throne.

Some days afterwards, fragments of a new play based on the history of Fa Ngum were premiered outdoors at several temple grounds around Vientiane, very much in the traditional style of Lao dramatic epics, e.g., the Phralak Phralam. Interestingly, while Fa Ngum was crowned in Vientiane, he established his capital at Muang Swa, the precursor of Luang Prabang. (It was so renamed only after the Phra Bang itself arrived there a century later.)

### Speaker Series

**Fall 2002**

- **September 13**
  James Eder, Director, Program in Southeast Asian Studies, Arizona State University, “Migration and Coastal Resource Use in the Frontier Philippines: Gender, Ethnicity, and Community”

- **October 4**
  Catherine Raymond, Director, Center for Burma Studies, NIU, “The End of Lan Xang Kingdom (Laos) at the Turn of the 19th Century Within Southeast Asia: Vat Sisaket Temple in Vientiane, Laos, as a Case Study”

- **October 18**
  Notrida Baso Mandica, Graduate Student, Department of Political Science, NIU, “Local Democracy in South Sulawesi, Indonesia”

- **November 1**
  Jon Ashmann, Department of Art, NIU, “Return to Southeast Asia”

- **November 8**
  Vinya Sysamouth, Graduate Student, Development Studies Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, “Dai People’s Communal Irrigation System: A Case Study of the Adjustment of Tai Lue to Government Policies in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, PR China”

- **November 15**
  Chandra Mahakanjana, Graduate Student, Department of Political Science, NIU, “Changing Municipalities in the Context of Decentralization in Thailand”

- **November 22**
  Kathy Foley, Department of Theater Arts, University of California at Santa Cruz, “An Asian Mosaic: South and Southeast Asian Puppetry”

### Spring 2003

- **January 24**
  Paul Chambers, Graduate Student, Department of Political Science, NIU, “The Evolution of Parliamentary Groupings in Thai Politics”

- **February 7**
  Cindy Kleinmeyer, Graduate Student, Department of Political Science, NIU, “Burma Travel Diary: On the Fun, Frolic, and Politics of Thingyan (Water Festival)”

- **February 14**
  Erlinda Alburo, Visiting Fulbright Scholar, Director, Cebuano Studies Center, University of San Carlos, Cebu City, Philippines, “Folklore as Alternative Source in History: The Maria Cacao Legends of Central Philippines”

- **February 21**
  Ward Keeler, Department of Anthropology, University of Texas at Austin, “Performing Masculinity in Mandalay” (Graduate Colloquium Speaker)

- **February 28**
  Nancy Keiser & Maureen Kincaid, Department of Education, Division of Human Thought and Behavior, North Central College, “Literature About Southeast Asian Cultures for Children and Adolescents”

- **March 21**
  Sylvia Fraser-Lu, Independent Researcher/Writer, “A Lacquered History of the Kings of Pagan: According to the Glass Palace Chronicle” (Graduate Colloquium Speaker)

- **April 4**
  Carol Wagner, Author and Human Rights Activist, “Human Rights in Cambodia”

- **April 24**
  Rick Doner, Department of Political Science, Emory University, “Growing into Trouble: The Challenge of Economic Upgrading in Thailand”
Due to the age and uniqueness of the maps, the maps cannot leave the Reading Room nor can they be sent physically through interlibrary loan. The department is open from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon and from 1:30 to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Interested researchers may contact the Rare Books and Special Collections Department at (815) 753-9398 for more information.

Report on the 2002 Lao History Symposium at Berkeley

The Lao History Symposium, billed as “the first international, educational forum on Laos’ multi-ethnic, social and cultural history,” was held at the University of California-Berkeley on May 3-4, 2003. Approximately 200 persons from five different countries and fourteen different states of the U.S. attended the conference. Conference participants consisted of people from all walks of life, ranging from university professors, former minister in the Lao Royal government, to high school and college students. There was a Lao Cultural Night on the evening of May 3rd where Lao artists donated their work as part of a silent auction. Food, video show, singing, and dancing were provided and performed by the local Lao community.

The keynote speaker of the conference was Australian-trained, prolific writer Dr. Grant Evans, who has been teaching at the University of Hong Kong for the past eleven years. The title of his keynote address on the opening day was “Lao Royalty” and on the following day he talked about “Katay’s ‘Le Laos’, the first nationalist history by a Lao.” Two other panels took up the topic of the rise and fall of the Lan Xang Kingdom. Dr. Alan Potkin and Vinya Sysamouth represented the Midwest at the conference with presentations of their own: “Problems of Historical Conservation in Present-Day Vientiane,” and “Tai-Lue’s Communal Irrigation System and the Chao Prah To 1949,” respectively. Further details on the conference can be found at http://laohistory.muanglao.com/

First International Lao Studies Conference

Plans are now underway for the First International Lao Studies Conference to be hosted by Northern Illinois University in 2005. An advisory planning committee is being assembled and will include members of the 5,000 Lao-American Elgin-Rockford community in Illinois and others from neighboring Wisconsin and Iowa. Asian representatives will be added in due time. While in Vientiane during June, Catherine Raymond initiated plans to bring scholars from Lao PDR to present their work. Exhibits, workshops and other cultural events are being planned for Elgin and Chicago, as well as other sites to be announced in the near future. Those who wish to make suggestions concerning the conference can do so by e-mail: (jhartman@niu.edu or laolanxang@yahoo.com).

Tai Dam Language and Culture

John Hartmann and his research assistants have created a new Tai Dam language and culture component for the Lao language site on SEASite, our Southeast Asian Interactive Learning Resources webpage (www.seasite.niu.edu). The site can be accessed from the contents of the Lao site (www.seasite.niu.edu/lao), and is designed to help preserve and study a very unique Tai minority that has its origins in the intermontane basins of northwestern Vietnam. The site hosts an assemblage of important myths, in addition to other cultural and linguistic resources.
Faculty News

Rhodalyne Gallo-Crail (Foreign Languages and Literatures) presented these conference papers: "Minority L1 Maintenance and Loss, (Colloquium; IC: Sociopolitical concerns), TESOL International Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, March 2002; "Intergenerational Literacy Issues," SEALS Conference, NIU, May 2002; "Teaching Oral Communication (A Workshop),," COTSEAL Teacher Training Workshop, held at UCLA, January 2003; and "Strategy-Based Vocabulary Activities in the Internet: Language Learning and Research," with Monita Manalo (University of Wisconsin) at the COTSEAL/SEASSI Conference held July 2003 in Madison.

John Hartmann (Foreign Languages and Literatures) was the organizer and presenter of the panel "The Sinification of the Tai of Southern China: Where History, Language, Culture and Geography Meet," at the MCAA conference held at Illinois State University, October 2003. He also presented "Beyond the Thai and Lao Language Classroom and Into the Wide, Wide World: Select Pages from SEASite," at the COTSEAL/SEASSI meetings held at the University of Wisconsin – Madison in July 2003. Prof. Hartmann’s graduate assistant, Jenjit Gasigitamrong, presented “Delivering an Advanced Thai Online Course: A Pilot Project,” at this same conference.

K.H. Han (School of Music) published “Introducing Southeast Asian Group Music to General Music Classrooms” in General Music Today, vol. 16, no. 1, Fall 2002 (on line). He presented “Bamboo Music for the Classrooms?” (with Susan Tarson) at the Illinois Music Educators Association conference in January 2002. From March 2002 through June 2003 he participated in 17 workshops, including two at the University of Kentucky, as well as giving 10 performances in Illinois, Wisconsin and South Dakota.


Dwight Y. King (Political Science) completed work on his book Half-Hearted Reform: Electoral Institutions and the Struggle for Democracy in Indonesia (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003, pp. 240). In July 2003, he visited McGill University’s Institute for Islamic Studies, Montreal, under a travel grant for Islamic course development. His objective was to obtain teaching resources on state and government in Islam, generally, and on Islamic politics in Southeast Asia.

Julia Lamb (Center for Southeast Asian Studies) visited Thailand, Cambodia and Laos to gather materials for Southeast Asia Culture Boxes to be used with K-14 teachers as teaching resources. In addition, she made contacts with Southeast Asian educators for future travel study by Southeast Asia master teachers.

Judy Ledgerwood presented a paper at the National Socio-Cultural Research Congress, Royal University of Phnom Penh, November 2002, “Preliminary Research on the Budd Damnay”. She has completed the 3rd year of a 3 year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) on the Buddhist prophetic texts known as the Buddh Damnay. She also conducted research this past year with Fulbright funding on the reestablishment of Buddhism in the wake of the Khmer Rouge regime and civil war of the 1980s. In July 2003, she ran a cultural anthropology fieldschool with students from the United States and from the Royal University of Fine Arts, Faculty of Archeology and the Buddhist Institute. They conducted research on the reestablishment of Buddhism in local communities, working in six temples in two districts of Kandal province. The students also had lectures from local scholars and concluded with a three day trip to Angkor Wat and the other Angkorian period temples in the Siem Reap region.

Grant A. Olson (Foreign Languages and Literatures) published “Filling the Void: Thai Khwan and Burmese Leip-pya, the Stuff of Which Souls are Made,” in (David Chappell, editor) Socially Engaged Spirituality: Essays in Honor of Sulak Sivaraksa on His 70th Birthday, Bangkok: Sathirakoses-Nagaprapadiya Foundation, 2003, pp. 271-302. His “Introduction to Thai Buddhism” website can be viewed at: http://www.thaibuddhism.net

Catherine Raymond’s (Art History/Center for Burma Studies) travel grant took her to work with faculty at Yangon University and the Ministries of Culture in Myanmar and Laos to prepare a series of lectures on Islam in Burma/Myanmar and Laos, focusing particularly on Arakan State adjacent to Bangladesh.

Peter Ross (Center for Southeast Asian Studies) traveled to Thailand to collect materials for developing a web-based course “Thai Muslim Perspectives Through Language” with the cooperation of faculty at Prince of Songkla University in Pattani.

Susan Russell (Director, Center for Southeast Asian Studies) organized a panel and presented a paper entitled “State and Local Conflicts in Philippine Maritime Conservation” at the Association for Asian Studies meetings in New York in March. Her chapter “Labor discipline, debt and effort in a Philippine fishing community” will appear this fall in Labor in Anthropology, ed. E. Paul Durrenberger and Judith Marti (Altamira Press). She (with Lina Davide-Ong) has received a grant to work on a southern Philippines project from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State. She also has conducted a curriculum development project on Islamic issues in southern Thailand in May-June, 2003.

M. Ladd Thomas (Political Science) presented “Formal and Informal Modes of Governance in Malay Muslim Villages/Communes of Southernmost Thailand in the 1960’s,” as part of a panel at the Conference on Southern Thailand, in Pattani, Thailand from June 13-15, 2002. The conference was jointly sponsored by Prince of Songkl University and Harvard University. He spent June and July 2002 conducting interviews in Bangkok of a few highly informed Thai

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government officials as part of his ongoing research on Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand.

Saw Tun (Foreign Languages and Literatures) presented a paper “An Examination of the Present Status of Colloquial Burmese” at the conference of “Burma-Myanmar Research and its Future” (September 21-25, 2002) held at Gothenberg, Sweden.


Burma Travel Diary: Reflections on the Fun, Frolic and Politics of Thingyan
by Cindy Kleinmeyer
Ph.D. candidate, Department of Political Science

The Burmese New Year falls in mid-April, when the intensity of the sun robs you of energy and breath. For centuries, Thingyan has been a time to celebrate the coming of the new year with purification rituals. Pouring water over one another used to symbolize peace, prosperity and the washing away of impurities. In the past, a man only splashed a woman with water if she did it to him first, and anyone wishing not to be splashed was left dry. That gentler version of Thingyan has all but passed.

Today, Thingyan is one of the wildest, most raucous New Year’s festivals held anywhere in the world. For three to five days, people all over Burma splash in the new year by relentlessly dousing each other with gallons of water. From sun-up until sundown, kids, teenagers and adults, armed with buckets, bowls, fire hoses, water guns and pipes, blast motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians alike. Apart from the occasional monk and the very elderly, few people are spared. Foreigners, it turns out, get special treatment in the form of an extra dousing, maybe for good luck.

During Thingyan, people travel all over the country to take in the festival with family and friends. I decided to celebrate Thingyan up north in the city of Myitgyna, Kachin state, hoping to get some relief from the April sun.

Until recently, traveling to Myitgyna required a special government permit, which involved getting a signed letter approved by the Ministry of Defense. Traveling further north was off limits, and remains difficult. Even traveling within the legal areas is somewhat restricted, and frustrating too because travelers are often monitored by Military Intelligence (MI). The MI is but one part of the junta’s oppressive forces that have for decades wreaked havoc throughout the country.

In one form or another, the Burmese military has ruled the country with an iron fist since the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) took control through a coup in 1962. Together, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and its earlier incarnation, SLORC, have one of the worst human rights records in the world. Arbitrary arrest, torture and killing, forced labor, and forced relocation are all too frequently reported. Fifty years of civil war, and decades of the junta’s severe economic mismanagement, have left Burma in a shambles. And, as I soon found out, traveling in a country ruled by the military presents safety hazards that one mightn’t expect.

On Sunday, April 9, I road my bicycle to the train station to buy my ticket to Myitgyna. It wasn’t yet noon, and already the heat was suffocating and intense. When I got to the train station and found an attendant, I was told to follow him to one of the back rooms. In English, an official told me I’d be taking the 55 up train to Myitgyna. It would take two days and one night, and I was to travel in upper class in a seat. As soon as I heard him measuring time in days, I started thinking about getting a berth. When I asked about it, however, the attendant laughed and shook his head NO. “All soldiers”, “military”, “We can’t guarantee your safety,” he said.

Without protest, I agreed to travel in a seat.

The 55 up to Myitgyna was about four hours behind schedule. The searing mid-day heat left hundreds of people on the platforms, fanning themselves in vain. Finally, we boarded our train.

The cars were full but more spacious than I’d expected. They were individual units, so there would be no traveling between cars unless you braved the window exits like the hawkers, but that meant climbing out the window, onto the roof and down to the next car, and through someone’s window. I decided to stay put. We sat two to a bench-style seat, facing two others, and had a small wooden table between us. I had a window seat, and next to me sat an older Kachin teacher from Myitgyna. People walked

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throughout the car visiting with friends, sharing food, and telling stories. Laughter filled the hot, dry air.

As we lurched our way north towards Myitgyna, the train slowly wound its way through the first small village and made a stop for passengers. SPLASH!!! Thingyan was underway! “Ye la ye la!” yelled my neighbor. In Burmese, this means the water is coming. Yes, the water was coming indeed, by the bucket-full. The calm buzz of friendly chatter had in a heartbeat morphed into raucous clatter. Water streamed through the open windows, people ducked, flew to close windows, yelled, admonished, laughed, and retaliated with any water they could find. I sat there for a moment, stunned. Soon I leapt to close my window but I was too late. A boy about eight years old, armed with a pail of water and wearing a grin from ear to ear, had targeted my open window. Bull’s eye. I was soaked and so was my neighbor. Everyone had a good laugh. For the rest of the day, we rolled through village after village, making several stops along the way.

As we traveled through the arid Burmese countryside the next day, I recalled a conversation I’d had with a monk about a week earlier on the origins of Thingyan.

Earlier in my travels, an elderly monk had explained to me that Thingyan is a Burmese word derived from Sanskrit that means change, or transition from one part of the year to the next. Historically, he explained, Burmese people believe that just before the start of the new year, Thagyamin, king of the celestial stars, comes to earth to judge people’s deeds. As soon as he leaves, the new year is said to have begun.

In the past, poets and cartoonists have chastised Thagyamin for not aiming his thunderbolt at the truly bad people in Burma. The implication is, again, that Thagyamin should have targeted the military. Censorship is so tight, however, that these kinds of poems and cartoons rarely slip past the censors’ pens. However, as one journalist wrote, “during the series of crackdowns on pro-democracy activists by the Burmese military in the mid 1990’s, a famous cartoonist penned a cartoon in which thagyamin is ridiculed by his wives for missing the target (bad people) with the use of his thunderbolt.”

But, now, since SLORC and the SPDC have increased the scope and severity of the censorship laws, “any political implication or interpretation of thagyamin is banned.”

Late that evening our train finally pulled into Myitgyna. That night, traditional Burmese dancing and local bands began performing on stages around town. The sponsors for these events couldn’t be missed. London, Vegas and 555, three popular Burmese cigarette brands, were advertised on stages and water-throwing platforms all over town. And the beer and whiskey companies did the same. Myanmar Beer, Tiger Beer and Myanmar Whiskey banners were everywhere. As one journalist put it, “critics say that the traditional New Year’s event should be renamed the Beer and Cigarette Festival.”

But, people are turning to corporate sponsors because constructing the stages and water-throwing platforms costs a small fortune.

People in cities around the country are forced to donate time, money and resources to build the stages for Thingyan. According to a news release from Narinjara news, this year the military started taxing people who own business farms in Arakan state to help pay for the cost of erecting stage for performances and water-throwing. The report states that “the Burmese junta ordered two saw mill owners to give five hundred cubic feet of sawn timber for the stages”, bankrupting both and forcing them to face legal action because they can’t comply with the junta’s demands.

Early the next day, I left Myitgyna by pick-up truck to travel southeast for about eight hours to Bhamo. The security in the region was tight. About every half hour or so we had to stop at a military check point so that our driver could show his ID, and at every checkpoint, I was asked to get out of the truck and show my passport. The first time I went through the drill, I was handed back my passport and told I could leave. But as soon as I turned my back, one of the officials came up behind me and dumped a bucket of water over my head! He got me good. The people in the truck roared, and the checkpoint police couldn’t have been happier. When I boarded the boat for Mandalay from Bhamo, I felt relieved and happy that I’d experienced something so distinctive to Burmese life.

In Letters from Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi writes that a “traditional part of the water festival in Burma has disappeared in recent years: the thingyan thangyat, rhyming choruses that provide pungently witty commentary on topical subjects, particularly on the government.” People all over Burma used to participate in thingyan, but after SLORC came to power in 1988 it was no longer tolerated. SLORC did not take criticism well, and in 1989 jailed about 40 National League for Democracy party youth members for singing thingyan during that year’s water festival. Many others were jailed as well.

Thingyan, Burma’s new year’s water festival, is still a time to wash away the impurities of the past year and to start the new year afresh. For many, the festival is one of the only times of the year that the junta allows people to publicly let loose and have fun together. But for others, the festival remains a painful reminder of the cruel realities of living under the brutality and oppression of a military regime.

(Footnotes)
1 Aung San Suu Kyi www.aappb.org/suukyi24.html
2 Ibid. p.2.
5 Narinjara News, Sittwe, 11 April, 02. “Burmese Junta Extort Tolls For Celebrating the New Year”
New Grants

Title VI National Resource Center and FLAS Grant

The Center for Southeast Asian Studies is very happy to have been awarded a new NRC and FLAS grant from the International Education and Graduate Programs Service of the U.S. Department of Education. The NRC grant for 2003-06 includes projects to a) develop a number of new courses on Islamic issues, including new interdisciplinary and comparative courses on Islam; b) start offering Khmer language classes and an innovative set of new translation courses at the advanced level for Thai, Indonesian, and Tagalog, together with customized and useful linguistic software tools; c) expand the quality of undergraduate advising and international career counseling; and d) enhance our teacher training activities at the elementary and community college level through new faculty development programs. These new activities complement our ongoing Master Teacher programs and Summer Teacher Training Institutes.

International Research and Studies Program Grant

Jim Henry and Robert Zerwekh (Computer Science), John Hartmann and Patricia Henry (Foreign Languages and Literatures) have received a new three year grant from the International Research and Studies Program, U.S. Department of Education, for the development of a Web-based version of advanced-level comprehension and translation courses for Thai, Indonesian, and Tagalog. These courses will focus on the receptive skills of reading and listening, with an emphasis on student use of software tools to support theory and techniques of translation. The materials studied will be authentic language samples such as newspaper articles and recorded speech. Several Content Modules, each with custom exercises keyed to the content, will be developed for the course, giving students and teachers the flexibility to study materials of particular interest to them. Rhodalyne Gallo-Crail (Foreign Languages and Literatures) will be in charge of the Tagalog portion of this project.

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State

Susan Russell, Director of CSEAS and Lina Davide-Ong, Director of International Training, have received a grant for 2003-04 from the U.S. Department of State to recruit 30 Muslim and Christian youth and adult community leaders from the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao and offer a one month intensive training institute in diversity, civic society, interethnic dialogue, and conflict resolution strategies. The institute will be held at Northern Illinois University in April, 2004. As part of this program, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies is working with partners in the Philippines, including Capitol University in Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao and the International Visitors Program-Philippines. Dr. Nagasura T. Madale, former chair of the Department of History and Anthropology and the Southern Philippines Center for Peace Studies at Mindanao State University in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, is the in-country coordinator. He is currently Vice President for Research and Extension at Capitol University.

Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Grant, Fulbright Program

The Center for Southeast Asian Studies and the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures welcome two new Foreign Language Teaching Assistants this fall. Khadija Laamouri from Morocco will offer Beginning Arabic as an intensive course this year, and Theodora Hendio from Indonesia will assist Patricia Henry in her Indonesian courses at all levels. They also will interact with members of our Southeast Asia Club and be involved in the Center’s Outreach program to K-12 schools in northern Illinois.

FIELDWORK IN THAILAND’S MUSLIM SOUTH

Peter Ross interviewing Abdulrozeuf Waemusa, principal of Sasmupam School in Pattani

Central mosque (Masjid Klang) of Pattani
The major focus of outreach this year has been on teacher training, resource development and developing a core group of K-14 Southeast Asia Master Teachers. In addition to bringing Southeast Asia into the classroom curriculum, SEA Master Teachers serve as an advisory group to the Center in developing curricula and materials on Southeast Asia for the elementary and secondary level classroom. There are currently 22 teachers involved in the SEA Master Teacher program.

Southeast Asia Master Teacher Program and Summer Teacher Institutes

Summer 2002

During the summer of 2002, the Outreach office organized two teacher institutes on Southeast Asia. The first was held at Naperville North High School in Naperville, Illinois. Nine teachers attended the week-long institute which was designed to help bring Southeast Asia into the middle and high school curriculum. The second institute was held at Evanston Township High School in Evanston, Illinois. Thirteen high school teachers from the Chicago area attended this institute. During both institutes, teachers had the opportunity to visit the Northern Illinois University and its Southeast Asian collections and experience Southeast Asian music and culture firsthand. Master Teachers from both institutes participated as presenters in the 2003 institute.

Summer 2003

In June, 2003, a five-day institute entitled “Teaching East and Southeast Asia: Resources for the Classroom” was held in Rockford, Illinois. This institute was coordinated in conjunction with the Asian Studies Program at Beloit College, Wisconsin. Beloit College is a recipient of a Freeman Foundation grant to expand Asian studies at its institution and at K-14 schools in Wisconsin. Seventeen teachers from elementary though college level and from Illinois and Wisconsin attended this institute.

Any teacher or school district interested in this program should contact Julia Lamb, Outreach Coordinator for the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at 815/753-1771 or jlamb@niu.edu.

Faculty Development Seminar – North Central College

During May and June of 2003, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies conducted a five-day faculty development seminar on Southeast Asia for faculty from North Central College, a private, liberal arts college located in Naperville, Illinois.

North Central College is the recipient of a Freeman Foundation grant to expand their East Asian studies and to initiate Southeast Asian studies in their curriculum. Faculty and staff from the Center for Southeast Asian Studies provided in-depth lectures on the culture, politics, art, religion and current issues of Southeast Asia. Faculty and students from North Central College will be traveling to Southeast Asia in December 2003 as well as developing courses on the region. Northern Illinois University will continue to partner with North Central College in providing resources, presentations, and joint community activities focusing on Southeast Asia.

Travel to Southeast Asia

In July and August of 2003, the Outreach Coordinator will be traveling to Thailand, Laos and Cambodia in order to visit schools and teachers to begin planning for taking SEA Master Teachers to Southeast Asia in the future. Artifacts associated with education and religion in Southeast Asia will also be gathered. These artifacts will be used to develop Southeast Asia Culture boxes to be used in the classroom by K-14 teachers. This is a joint project between the Center for Southeast Asian Studies and the Anthropology Museum at Northern Illinois University.

Workshop for Educators: Puppets and Puppetry of South and Southeast Asia

On November 23, 2002, Kathy Foley, professor of theatre arts from the University of California, Santa Cruz, provided a stimulating hands-on workshop for teachers on the puppetry of South and Southeast Asia. This workshop was held in conjunction with the opening of her exhibit at Northern Illinois University.
This year's recipient of the Clark and Arlene Neher Graduate Scholarship for Southeast Asian Studies is **Lynne Picker**. Lynne is currently working on her thesis for an M.A. in Music with an emphasis in Ethnomusicology. She is conducting research among the Lao lu-Mien of DePue, Illinois on their present day musical activity and investigating the circumstances surrounding their migration experience. Her thesis will focus on the effects that migration has had upon Lao lu-Mien musical practices. Her future plans are to return to Asia as a music teacher, where she hopes to be able to live in a lu-Mien area of Southeast China or Laos.

**FLAS Fellowship Recipients for 2003-2004**

**Jason Conerly**, MA student in Anthropology (Thai). Jason’s master’s thesis will focus on the local practices of Muslim peoples in southern Thailand and concepts of personal identity in a Buddhist and Islamic social environment.

**Jennifer Gelman**, second year Law student (Burmese). Jennifer plans to work directly with refugee populations and to work toward the implementation of the kinds of laws that would protect refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people worldwide.

**Michael E. Johnson**, MA student in Anthropology (Thai). Michael’s future plans are to conduct research on applied and environmental anthropology in Thailand.

**Tyler McKellar**, MA student in Political Science (Burmese). Tyler plans to continue on to doctoral work culminating in fieldwork in Burma.

**Dominick Pelletier**, MA student in Anthropology (Indonesian). Dom’s interest is in cross-cultural education through games based on and around topics of art, culture, and history of Southeast Asia.

**Jessica Rinehart**, MA student in Anthropology (Indonesian). Her research focuses on Indonesian concepts of cultural identity. In addition, Jessica hopes to examine how Indonesian media promotes an idealized concept of the modern Indonesian woman and how this image is changing over time.

**Kristina Saldi**, first year MA student in Political Science (Indonesian). As an undergraduate, Kristina became fascinated with Indonesia while taking “Politics of Developing Areas”. Her aspiration is to work for the US government in Indonesia.

**Kheang Un**, Ph.D. student in Political Science (Thai). Kheang is currently in Cambodia doing research on his dissertation, which addresses the factors that impeded the process of democratic consolidation in Cambodia between 1993 and 2002.

**Jennifer Weidman**, MA student in Anthropology (Thai). Her continuing study of the Thai language and culture will support her research on cross-cultural perceptions and social relationships in Thailand. Her ultimate goal is to pursue a career that involves translation and mediation between cultures.

**Nicholas Wiles**, MA student in Political Science (Thai). International Relations is Nick’s current focus as he works toward his aspirations of working abroad in Southeast Asia.

**Car lynne “Lyndy” Worsham**, MA student in Political Science (Thai). Lyndy’s thesis research, scheduled for 2004-2005, will document, examine, and compare changes in the Thai government’s domestic policy toward Burmese refugees from the Chuan I to Thaksin administrations. Her career goal is to become a program director for an international non-governmental organization or U.S. governmental agency, dedicated to tackling specific environmental or socio-political justice problems in mainland Southeast Asia.

**Student Conference**

The annual Southeast Asian Student Conference was held on March 1, 2003. This year’s theme was “Religious Accommodation and Conflict in Southeast Asia: From Indigenous Belief to Zealotry”. Erinita Joaquin, Ph.D. Student in Political Science was awarded first-place in the paper competition for “Of New Wines and Old Bottles: Unfunded Mandates in the Age of Local Government Autonomy”.

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Visayan Archives of Donn V. Hart
by Erlinda K. Albuco

[Last February the Center for Southeast Asian Studies was host to Fulbright senior researcher Erlinda K. Albuco, director of the Cebuano Studies Center, University of San Carlos in Cebu City (Philippines). She has a Ph.D. in Literature from Silliman University and is completing a dissertation on art as cultural system for a second doctorate in Anthropology. She gave a brown bag lecture ("Folklore as Alternative Source in History: the Maria Cacao Legends of Cebu") and talks in two classes, but was here mainly to go over the field notes and materials left by the late Anthropology professor Donn Hart. She wrote the following from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor where she spent part of her Fulbright semester.]

Reading what I could in special sections of the Founders library until 4:30 pm, I felt like I was entering a world that my grandmother had told me about and which I was too small to appreciate. I have taken digital shots of some pictures documenting that world and I shall share them with friends back home. My one regret is that I had not enough time to go over the vertical files and the field notes of Dr. Hart thoroughly, and my one hope is that I shall be able to finish doing so in some future time. It was a surprise to be told that I was perhaps the very first to ask to take a look at those materials.

These notes corroborate data I have compiled from Spanish-period dictionaries of Visayan, a remaining resource for studying our past that only a few scholar-detectives (like W.H. Scott) have used. Indeed, the abundance of terms lost to my generation tells us of the richness of a culture that relied primarily on the natural surroundings for the physical and spiritual life of the people. There are names of boats according to size and function; plants with healing, decorative, nutritional and ritual uses; nets and traps for various types of marine species; weapons for household use, hunting and fighting; and terms in ceramics, weaving, toys, personal grooming, entertainment, etc.

I found three sorts of materials: articles, typescripts and manuscripts written by Dr. Hart himself; those of his fellow Filipinos (both in vertical files); and the field notes of interviews conducted in Negros Oriental and Samar between 1954 and 1965 that were in four boxes at the Rare Books/Special Collection section. Even if the vertical files are only until the 1980s, they reflect the interests of an earlier period in Philippine scholarship, and are useful to one coming from a provincial city in the Philippines for whom US journals are seldom accessible. Of Dr. Hart's several annotated bibliographies that must have served many scholars, I was fascinated by a guide to Southeast Asian novels. An accompanying article stressed the significance of such novels to social scientists (like public administrators and political scientists) in their study of reactions, situations, personalities, values and behavior. One insight given in the novels with overseas Americans as characters is on the role of food in culture shock. (In my school, Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart was classified under Anthropology until I used it in a literature course.) As a sample, I looked up a novel by the American missionary W. H. Thomas entitled A Manila Romance: Life in the East Indies (1873) and photocopied the first few pages.

Another discovery was the Overland Monthly (San Francisco, 1868-1935), founded by the short-story writer Bret Harte, which carried articles on the reworking of saints' narratives by Filipinos (1905), progress on the Visayan and Manila railroads (1907-1908), and a version of the Juan Pusong tale (1909). There is also a document by Jose Marco, annotated by the historiographer Manuel Artigas y Cuerva, who notes that cockfighting was encouraged by the Spanish administration to attract mountaineers to come down to the lowlands. Still other articles, although somewhat dated, will have use in comparative studies, like Sibley's study as to why rural Filipinos are reluctant to give up beliefs in spirits in spite of Church teachings and modern education, and Lieban's on sorcery as an indication at the local level of the limitations of the nation-state.

It is the field notes, however, that seem with details often accompanied by illustrations, which I'm tempted to compare with those in the longer, phenomenal work on the Visayas by Francisco Ignacio Alcina. Cited in the notes is the encounter between the Christianized Visayans and the indigenous Bukidnon, which Alcina did not mention in Samar or Leyte. At least two of the several life histories, which are not covered by Dr. Hart's dissertation of 1954, were published as journal articles in 1956 and 1965. Anthropologists preoccupied with the etic perspectives and self-reflexivity in ethnography might take note of Dr. Hart's comments on approaching and negotiating with informants and on his donations of money (to buy coconut wine or tuba) and in kind (tuba) to facilitate the narrative flow. Life histories (as mediated by the interpreter) can give information that elude interview schedules and participant observation. e.g., why women forsook the wearing of abaca, how the mouth was kept open while teeth were filed, what the folk did to crows scavenging on their precious carabao that died of an epidemic (these were herded together to escape both the guerrilla fighters and the Americans); how children made a toy car out of buri leaves, why kids crawled up the beams of the stage while watching a play, or that the folk of Caticugan entertained at fiesta time only as they could afford without resorting to borrowing money or selling animals (as others are reported to do), etc. The data on the barrio fiesta might be compared, too, with those of Mojares (Cebu) and Cannell (Bicol).

But the world I'm familiar with is well described in the notes: "...one can say that in most barrio houses you will find calendars, usually donated by Chinese merchants, the mirrors with place for putting pictures of marriages, birthday dates, etc.—usually vacant. Then there will be frames filled with photos of relatives, members of family, or friends, just portraits, graduation pictures, funerals—often with family grouped around the corpse, the latter sometimes showing the corpse, school class pictures. There are always the wooden chests which can be locked and I

Continued on Page 15


**Publications News**

NIU Monograph Series on Southeast Asia’s latest output boasts work from two Oxford scholars. The long-awaited *Killing a Buffalo for the Ancestors: A Zhuang Cosmological Text on Southwest China* (NIU-MS No. 5) by David Holm (University of Melbourne, Institute of Asian Languages and Societies) is finally available. With an almost total lack of Western language sources on the Zhuang, China’s largest minority (see also Katherine Kaup’s *Creating the Zhuang: Ethnic Politics in China* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner, 2000), this work has been hailed as a milestone. A modern classic, the work packs two traditional texts in Romanized transcription with parallel English translations (“Song of Invitation” and “Cosmogony”); detailed annotations with characters for each text; a hefty introduction and discussion on Zhuang history, culture and ritual; maps; botanical sketches; and plates of cultural artifacts and selected pages of the original text. For smart classroom lectures and further research, the book comes with a CD-ROM (PC/Mac) with color plates—those from the book and more; full IPA transcriptions and recordings of the two texts; the annotated notes; and supplementary data on Zhuang language. Book (304pp. pb.) & CD: $65.00. ISBN 1-891134-25-6.

In the soon-to-appear *Vietnamese Voices: Gender and Cultural Identity in the Vietnamese Francophone Novel* (NIU-MS No. 6), Nathalie Huynh Chau Nguyen (University of Newcastle, School of Language and Media) opens up a world of ‘beauty interlaced with pain’ in the lives of men and women in colonial and post-colonial Vietnam—from the 1930s to the 1980s. Following on from Jack Yaeger’s *Vietnamese Novel in French* (Hanover & London: UP of New England, 1987), Nguyen digs deeper into the timeless issues of identity and adjustment that await any who, by choice or imposition, go beyond their own culture. Topics treated include the imprint of classical Vietnamese literature on the modern novel—recasting *The Tale of Kieu*; patriarchal constraints on women in a post-Confucian society—mother figures, virtuous daughters, prostitutes; male authors’ portrayals of ‘women sitting here and there’; love between Vietnamese men and French women; and alienation—Vietnamese men with torn loyalties, outsiders in their own homes. Along with its excellent bibliography, this book hints at a course on Popular Culture in French Indochina. Price TBA. ISBN 1-891134-26-4.

Two more monographs in the line up for the coming year are *The Limits of Kinship: South Vietnamese Households* (1954-1975), a quantitative analysis by David Haines (George Mason University) and *Võ Phịn and The Sadness of Exile*, a study by John C. Schafer (Humboldt State University) on the life and work of a prominent Vietnamese writer exiled in the United States.

*Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asia* is being re-vamped. Our first major task has been to clear a backlog of articles, after which we will aim to maintain a submission-to-print time of twelve months maximum, five articles per issue. In order to achieve this goal, our submission criteria has changed. Authors are asked to email electronic submissions in an attachment to seap@niu.edu with “Crossroads Submission” in the header. Submissions should be no longer than 30 pages double-spaced in Times 12 and include references, a 120 word abstract, and five key-words (no page separate title page). Use citation-in-text for references, bold face for headings, italics for titles of works. Minimize footnoting. We invite articles on all traditional topics in the social sciences, humanities, and linguistics, as well as in the area of popular culture. Cull, construct, communicate: engage Southeast Asian language primary source material; evidence a clearly-constructed argument; communicate to your reader—and remain objective.

The revival of our popular Book Review program is our second major task. We are looking for reviewers for up to 100 recent publications on Southeast Asia. For a list of available books for review, see (forthcoming) *Crossroads* Volume 17 Number 1. Our third and final task for the year, in response to growing demand, will be to overhaul and upgrade our website to offer more services (see www.niu.edu/cseas/seap/index.html).

*The Journal of Burma Studies* this past year has seen both a new editor and a new production editor. Catherine Raymond, new Director for the Center of Burma Studies, and Peter Ross, new editor for Southeast Asia Publications, both double in these respective roles. Apart from ensuring the ongoing quality of the journal, we are privileged to have in our publishing line-up a special issue on the towering Burmese scholar U Pe Maung Tin (1888-1973), based on the best of papers presented at the 1998 SOAS, University of London symposium in his honor. Students and associates of U Pe Maung Tin whose work will appear in the special issue include Denise Bernot (France), Patricia Herbert (formerly British Library), Tilman Frasch (Heidelberg), Alan Saw U (Myanmar Christian Literature Society), and Anna Allot (SOAS).

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think many of them contain hand-operated sewing machines. Singer, of course! Quite frequently newspapers, pages from magazines, both colored and black and white, are pasted on the walls. Always, of course, the family shrine with gaudy pictures of saints, painted plaster saints, and often old wooden saints in various stages of deterioration, inherited from the parents of occupants of houses."

That world, of course, is now strange to my own children.

As part of curriculum development projects in Islamic studies, the team worked with PSU colleagues and people in the Pattani and wider southern Thai communities to collect material for the creation of a short course on "Thai Muslim Perspectives through Language." Material collected involved notes, recordings, video, photography and interviews with people in various walks of life in Thailand's mixed Muslim-Buddhist communities. Interviewers asked people their thoughts, feelings, aspirations, fears, and questions on a range of issues. People included a Rusamilae fisherman; high-school pondok principal, teachers and students in Pattani and Nakhon Si Thammarat; birdkeepers, a salt-harvester, university students, orphanage/day care director, drug rehabilitation center director and patients, army commander; a number of imam in Pattani, Nakhon and Ayutthaya; a local museum employee and an award-winning restaurant owner in Satun. This material will be edited and coordinated with other resources including contemporary Thai fiction (short stories), research papers, linguistic notes, and a teaching plan on a website as an advanced Thai language and culture learning resource.

In addition, the team also interacted with colleagues and students at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences on a research project concerning Thai popular culture. Together with Dr. Prathana Kannavakun, Associate Dean of the Faculty, they will write on the Thai fascination with the character of Mae Nak Prakhanong. Nak, whose story has something of an historical basis, reached international fame following Nonsri Nimibut's internationally acclaimed movie Nang Nak (1999). This most recent of appearances followed on a trail of 20 films since 1936 in which Nak (a woman who, after dying in childbirth, returns as a ghost to be with her husband) has appeared in guises as vastly different as a Marilyn Monroe-styled blonde and a Godzilla-like giant rampaging through the streets of Tokyo. Nak has been the subject of theses and internet sites. Her shrine is visited by transvestites and royalty. She has been banned in Malaysia, and a TV series hit in Indonesia. Over 20 faculty at Prince of Songkla University watched and offered various interpretations of the 1999 film as part of this project—horror? comedy? drama?—as did community members on a separate seven-member panel discussion group.

Principal of Songkla University Collaboration

Susan Russell (Director), Peter Ross (Research Associate/Editor), and Jason Conerly (FLAS student, Anthropology) spent several weeks at Prince of Songkla University (PSU) in Pattani, southern Thailand early this summer 2003 renewing faculty exchange contacts and working on curriculum development and short-term research.

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Donn V. Hart Southeast Asia Collection of Founders Library

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Summer 2003
Graduate Fellowship Opportunities

Clark and Arlene Neher Scholarship for the Study of Southeast Asia

Provides $2,400 toward education expenses or research. Must be a graduate student in good standing and be able to demonstrate a commitment to a career involving Southeast Asian Studies. No citizenship restrictions.

Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship for the study of Burmese, Indonesian, Tagalog and Thai

Provides a stipend of $14,000, plus payment of tuition, fees and insurance for the fall and spring semesters. Must be a full-time graduate student in good standing. Must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Funding provided by U.S. Department of Education, Title VI program.

Both fellowships have a March 1, 2004 deadline.

Funding for this newsletter is provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Title VI program.

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