

The Center for Khmer Studies **In Focus**

No.13, 2015 - 2016

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Mission Statement

The Center for Khmer Studies supports research, teaching and public service in the social sciences, arts and humanities in Cambodia and the Mekong region.

CKS seeks to:

- Promote research and international scholarly exchange by programs that increase understanding of Cambodia and its region,
- Strengthen Cambodia's cultural and educational structures, and integrate Cambodian scholars into regional and international exchange,
- Promote a vigorous civil society.

CKS is an American Overseas Research Center supported by a consortium of educational institutions, scholars and individuals. It is incorporated in the state of Delaware, USA. It receives partial support for overhead and American fellowships from the U.S. Government. Its programs are privately funded.

CKS is the sole member institution of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) in mainland Southeast Asia.

CKS's programs are administered from its headquarters in Siem Reap and from Phnom Penh. It maintains a small administrative office in New York and a support office in Paris, Les Amis du Centre d'Études Khmères.

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CKS tree of knowledge: young accounting student studying on CKS frangipani tree. Photo by Krisna Uk.

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WELCOME TO CKS!



A lot is happening this year at CKS. We are embarking on our first program of outreach from Cambodia to its immediate region, with a program that will reach across borders to bring Thai, Vietnamese, Burmese and Lao mid-career professionals together with their Cambodian counterparts for training in research skills

as well as methods of evaluation and monitoring. Diligently planned by a sub-committee of scholars from CKS's Program Committee, in collaboration with the Executive Director, to ensure that both in substance and direction it will meet the high standards of previous CKS programs, this new 5-year program is inspired by the first steps toward ASEAN economic integration that will take place at the end of 2015. The theme for this year is political, including cross-border areas of conflict. Each year will address a different topic, but all will focus on research methodology and evaluation. These are increasingly important professional skills, above all in a context of increased reliance on conclusions buttressed by numbers. This major new program has received initial funding from the Ford Foundation and the Henry Luce Foundation.

After fifteen years of leading CKS, from its inception as an American Overseas Research Center in Cambodia, I will step down as President and Chief Executive officer in January 2016. Transition toward the next phase in leadership is already underway and will be finalized at our January 2016 Board meeting in Cambodia. Prof. Andrew Mertha, a distinguished scholar focused on China and Southeast Asia, from Cornell University, will succeed me. Andy has been a dedicated CKS Trustee for many years. I have every confidence that he will provide strong future leadership. While Andy will assume executive responsibilities, as President of the Corporation, I will continue as Board Chair. CKS is now a mature, respected institution, with a track record of excellent programs, a strong professional staff, and procedures of management that will ensure its future.

I am also pleased to report that thanks to your generous financial support over the years, I will pass on CKS as a strong institution financially. We have progressed from sending out SOSes at year's end to cover expenses to a point of financial stability that supports our program and overhead. Last year, Board Member Mary L. Porter, a recently retired investment professional, agreed to manage a fund for CKS. While we do not yet have an endow-

ment—though we do have an endowment policy, as required by law—we have, with careful shepherding of our income, built an asset base that will insure CKS a steady stream of returns that will help to sustain our operations over periods when financial stress results in lower Annual Fund income and cut-backs at funding institutions. – two challenges we had to face in recent years. At other times, it will provide welcome income for additional programs and new directions

We set out with a bold vision to rebuild scholarship in Cambodia, a society fractured by a violent civil war that had closed its educational institutions entirely. We did so also to foster scholarship on Cambodia and Southeast Asia and to ensure knowledgeable regional experts. We opened our new research library to local students to help build a reading culture, to offer a pleasant context of calm in which young minds could safely inquire into the world around them. We now host a new generation of young students, who appear with their laptops and tablets, who speak English, and who think of CKS's campus as their home. At the same time, we are welcoming more and more scholars from around the world, hosting Study Abroad programs from major universities, a CKS summer residential program on Cambodian history and society for undergraduates, research fellows from the US and France, and so many others. There are workshops afoot pretty much all the time, a monthly public lecture program in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, and an annual conference. CKS is buzzing. It has been a joy to watch CKS grow.



Future CKS President Prof. Andrew Mertha, Cornell University.

We welcome you to visit CKS and see what you have helped us to create. CKS is a place of welcome.

**Lois de Menil, Ph.D.
President and Chair**

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It has been a year full of stimulating and successful partnerships at the Center. We have been privileged to carry on our work with the continuous and generous support of our donors, members and fellows. As a result, we have been able to reach out to wider subjects and geographical areas.

In collaboration with Cornell University, our “Chinese Empire and the Cambodian Experience” winter program brought in eleven undergraduate students who enthusiastically explored the multifaceted relationships between the two countries. This new program was also the opportunity to work closely with the Cornell Southeast Asia Program in helping New York State community college faculty broaden their horizon by exploring the possibilities offered by a Cambodia-focused syllabus and study abroad program. One faculty and one student from Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) in Dryden came last January to experiment the potentials of such partnership. Following the success of this trip, TC3 staff will return next winter, this time with a group of 10 students. With the help of scholars on our board of directors, new academic and

learning opportunities have been extended to community colleges in Wisconsin, and will soon expand to the San Francisco Bay area.

We have also been fortunate to work closely with the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh, with whom we are hoping to partner on a number of projects, including furthering the skills of Cambodian and Burmese librarians, and preserving Cambodian tangible and intangible heritage. In partnership with them as well as the Bophana Audiovisual Center, we are developing our CKS film series. These events enable film directors, like Rithy Panh and Arthur Dong, to interact with the audience during Q&A sessions and to inspire and involve the younger generation in the important transmission work that Bophana is creatively leading.

Meanwhile, our alumni continue to provide us with useful feedback that helped us develop a new regional program on “Exploring Conflict in the ASEAN Region”. This new 5-year initiative, generously supported by the Ford and Henry Luce Foundations, directly responds to the needs of



mid-career professionals in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. Led by Prof. Oscar Salemink, this year's program attracted 11 participants, who will contribute to building regional experts.

In light of current trends in the field of Asian Studies, our fellowships, workshops, lectures and programs enable us to nurture this new generation of scholars who will be at the helm of rebuilding the foundation of Cambodia's academic and professional research. With our very first Cambodian Senior Fellows funded by the U.S Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), we now work with a pool of researchers who can advance the domain of Khmer and Southeast Asian studies and actively engage with their American, European and regional counterparts.

With the construction of the ASEAN Economic Community, where the flow of information, goods and labor is at work, our Center is positioning itself at the crossroads of the intellectual exchanges offered by this "Imagined Community", where the scholars who are shaping the wider field of Khmer Studies are fully prepared to transform new challenges into exciting opportunities.



Krisna Uk, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Pictures from left to right:
Workshop for New York State community colleges faculty: "Expanding Your Global Coverage: Cambodia, History and Culture". Photograph by Melina Draper, Cornell University.

U.S. Embassy Visit: (From left to right) Mr. Jay Raman, Public Affairs Officer; Krisna Uk, CKS Executive Director; and Mr. William Todd, U.S Ambassador to Cambodia.

CKS's new Mid-Career Regional Program announcement.



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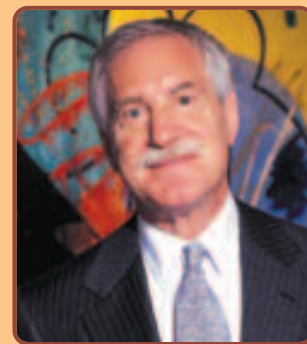
The world, CKS and Cambodia have all changed greatly since 1999, the year of our foundation. We have grown in many directions –we have built a new Library, and its collections have gone from a few dozen books to nearly twenty thousand items, some of them extremely rare; the internet, at first hardly accessible, is now part of the life of the many readers, students, researchers and specialists, who use our resources. Just as important, our community has grown apace: we are now linked to an imposing group of universities in Asia, Europe and the United States. Our programs have also multiplied: from the lectures given by visiting professors to the readings in our Children's Library, we have engaged with the local community and the world at large.

This has been the result of joint efforts by all concerned. Our Trustees have consistently provided key financial support, and the scholar members of our Board have expanded and sustained our intellectual reach. Our staff, whose efficiency and competence have proved, again and again, highly worthy of praise, provides the backbone of our daily activities. Visiting lecturers add new knowledge and new perspectives for their eager listeners.

It might, at first, have seemed an almost insuperably difficult challenge to create an American Overseas Research Center in a country barely emerging from the Khmer Rouge holocaust and the ensuing years of civil war, but we can say proudly that we have managed to foster true scholarship and to make it accessible. CKS, in 1999, was unknown, little more than a question mark. Today, it is an essential component of the scholarly and educational world. We have also shown that we could carry out long-term projects to a successful completion: our supervision of the digital cataloguing of the National Museum in Phnom Penh, and of its on line site, have abundantly

proved this.

Just as important, our scholarly successes have gone together with a thorough integration into the community. At our campus in Siem Reap, and at our center in Phnom Penh, Westerners and Cambodians come together to exchange ideas and knowledge. Our links to Cambodian universities have strengthened these ties, making us highly visible within the country. As a long time trustee, I have watched the change from the inevitable question: what is CKS? To a very different sort of enquiry: what are you offering us next? What will your new programs be like? And when should we come?



We owe an important part of this massive –and thrilling– progress to you, our supporters. We receive funds from a variety of private foundations and U.S. Government programs, but we also depend on your generosity. You sustained us at the very beginning when we offered promises for the future; you helped us make those promises come true. Now that we are respected for the variety and high quality of our programs, we need you more than ever. We have always watched expenses; we have always kept them amazingly low. We know that money must go where it is doing the most good, to programs. Happily, because life in Cambodia is still much cheaper than in the West, we can make dollars go very far indeed.

The time has come again to help us. If you have done so before, please know that we have put your contribution to good use, and help us again. If you are new to CKS, this is a chance to make a real difference. In either case, we count on you; you can count on our gratitude, and that of the many young people for whom CKS is a life changer.

Olivier Bernier,
Vice President

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Support CKS's Public Outreach Program.

Free lectures, workshops and conferences, publications on contemporary and historical topics, and translation of essential educational texts into Khmer. (\$30,000 per year)

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U.S. contributions to CKS are tax deductible.

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The center for Khmer studies wishes to thank H.M. King norodom sihamoni for his generous contribution and continued support.

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We are grateful for your support!

Support CKS Library Fund.

CKS's library is the largest free public library outside Phnom Penh. It offers unparalleled educational facilities to Cambodian students, children and public, as well as to visiting scholars.

- **Support Basic Overhead:** Contribute to our Annual Fund
- **Acquisition of books,** and the ongoing training of our Cambodian librarians. (\$15,000 per year)
- **Donate a new computer** for our library reading room-- regular updating (\$1,500)
- **Connect CKS's** Library to the World Wide Web, with open Wi-Fi access. (\$2,000 per year)
- Help to **Digitize our library** collection-- an unending process. (\$5,000 contributions)

Sponsor the Translation of Key Books into Khmer.

In the absence of books in the Cambodia's native language, CKS

translates and publishes key texts. A donation of \$10,000 will defray costs for an average 300 page book and will be acknowledged in the publication. (\$10,000 contributions)

Sponsor a Cambodian-American to participate in the summer Khmer Language and Cultural Studies Program: (\$3,500 each).

Sponsor a Cambodian-American undergraduate to attend our in-country summer Jr. Resident Fellows Program (\$3,500 each).

Also Support the Southeast Asia Travel Grant Program: enable Cambodian scholars to attend regional conferences

Sponsor a Fellowship for Cambodian, U.S. or other Doctoral Student's Research. (\$5,000-\$10,000 each)

U.S. contributions to CKS are tax deductible.

THE CKS LIBRARY AND THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

By Jacques Hennessy, Chairman CKS Library Committee

The CKS Library has a well-established position in the educational and cultural landscape of Siem Reap. It serves school pupils and university students thanks to its sound basic collection. It helps guides and eager tourists wishing to improve their knowledge of Khmer art and history. It is a resource for our fellows, and visiting scholars will find enough unique documents to help their research.

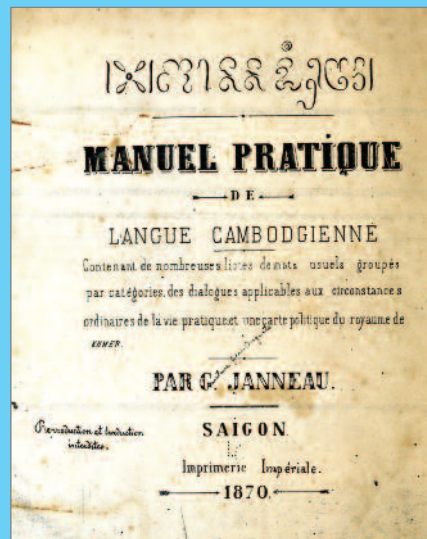
In January, the board decided that the library should try to make itself more widely available in Cambodia by establishing links with other complementary libraries, and so be able to exchange books and documents with them. The first to be approached is the Library of the CDRI, the Cambodia Development Resource Institute, a well established think tank whose purpose is to provide high level development policy papers to the Royal Government of Cambodia. It was an obvious choice as the newly appointed director of CDRI is Professor Rethy Chhem, CKS board member, and that Sreang Chheat, who now coordinates our programs, has previously worked with them. An MoU between CDRI and CKS has now been signed, and some documents have already been exchanged such as journals and articles from the Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême (BEFEO). If this blueprint proves practical, we hope to extend the model to other interested libraries in Cambodia.

Our Head Librarian, Daraneth, and Research Librarian, Sivileng, had a chance to get to know CDRI even better last March, when they took part in a one day workshop entitled "Collections and Connections". This was presented by Ah Win, who was librarian at the International Atomic Energy Agency, where world renowned radiologist Rethy Chhem was in charge of the Fukushima crisis. These workshops are useful, when, as in this case, our librarians can return to CKS with new ideas and improved practices to implement.

Daraneth also had some more exotic training, spending two weeks at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, discovering the workings of Worldcat with Larry Ashmun, Southeast Asian bibliographer. It is not all one way, as Daraneth had the chance to help them with romanizing Khmer titles and to help correct some of the Library of Congress outdated Khmer entries.

In his turn, Larry will be coming to Cambodia in August for a week to run a training programme for Cambodian librarians. We are very grateful to him for giving CKS the opportunity to organise this event. It is open to librarians from all over the country and we hope to bring together as many as 20 participants.

For our regular readers, CKS has started an occasional course on library usage: the point is to help them use the library more efficiently and usefully, by learning how to use the catalogue and the e-library. This has proved quite popular and should help readers make the most of our library.





By the time our youngest readers graduate to the main library, hopefully they will be fully conversant with the magic of electronic catalogues. In the meantime, they continue to enjoy the children's library. It is now open four days a week, and its fame has spread. There are new groups of children visiting, with their teachers from outside Siem Reap. Young readers from ODA (Opportunities of Development thru Arts of Cambodia), Angkor Thom Primary School from Angkor Thom commune, Sunrise Children's Village (Australia Cambodia Foundation inc), and JPA (Jay Pritzker Academy) from Pourk district all came with their teachers to use our premises. Our Children's Library also has faithful friends, like Sue Guiney. She kindly came once more this February to give a reading, this time of Maurice Sendak's "Where the Wild Things Are" to 40 enthusiastic and attentive children.



Deepening the collection is of course always a principal concern. Professor Gérard Diffloth has been travelling Southeast Asia for the last forty years documenting vanishing, rare languages, some so rare they have no names. His notes are often the only records of these languages, and his library on the subject is exceptional. Professor Diffloth has promised his library and research notes to the CKS library, and some books have already arrived on our shelves. The latest addition is the extraordinary "Manuel Pratique de Langue Cambodgienne" typed and also hand-written by G. Janneau in 1870.



We are very grateful to Professor Diffloth for his gift. I would like to thank him for it, as well as our librarians and director of the Centre. It is a credit to their work and dedication that he should consider CKS the suitable repository for his archives.



Pictures from top left to bottom right:

A young late-comer listens to Sue Guiney's reading at the Children's library.

A rare book on Khmer language, from the CKS Gérard Diffloth's collection.

Attentive children listen to Sue Guiney's story telling.

Oum Daraneth, CKS Head Librarian, working on WorldCat at the University of Wisconsin, Madison library.

Cambodian Rock Star puppets in front of the CKS Library.

Visit to the U.S Embassy's American Resource Center by participants in the Librarian Training Workshop, with Larry Ashmun, UW, Madison Southeast Asian and Hmong Studies Bibliographer.



ACTIVITIES & PROJECTS

Conferences and Workshops

CKS ORGANIZES ITS 2ND AND 3RD WORKSHOP FOR CAMBODIAN RESEARCHERS

Following the launch of its first Workshop for Cambodian Researchers in 2014, CKS held its second and third workshop with great success. As an integral part of CKS's mission to strengthen the sector of higher education in the country, the workshops provide Cambodian scholars with a dynamic platform to share and discuss their research project, experience peer review and strengthen their academic and professional network.

The 2nd workshop aimed at developing scholars' skills in proposals writing. With the Ministry of Education's latest pledge to allocate substantial funding to research, this workshop was timely in that it enabled the participants to develop well-articulated, theoretically engaging and original proposals.

Our latest workshop held in March 2015 gave scholars from the Royal University of Phnom Penh, the

Ministry of Education and the World Bank the opportunity to review a research project on higher education in Cambodia that investigates both its development and impact since reforms in the system were undertaken in the 1990s. Dr. Un Leang and Dr. Khieng Sothy, were awarded a CKS joint senior fellowship with funding from the U.S Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Economic Affairs through the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). This workshop was particularly useful in bringing together different stakeholders who were able to provide pertinent feedback on the scope of the study, the methodology and available sources of information.



Third CKS Training Workshop for Cambodian Researchers, Phnom Penh.



Ancient ceramics on the grounds of Phnom Kulen. Photo courtesy of Dr. Ea Darith, APSARA Authority.

CERAMICS IN CAMBODIA: NEW RESEARCH

Conference on Special Topics in Khmer Studies 2014

By David Brotherson, The University of Sydney, Robert Christie Research Center

The Conference on Special Topics in Khmer Studies (COSTIKS) is a free and regular event, which brings together experts to discuss the state of the art in a given field. COSTIKS is a collaboration between the APSARA National Authority, the Center for Khmer Studies, Friends of Khmer Culture Inc., École Française d'Extrême Orient and the University of Sydney. In 2014 the fifth conference was focused on ceramics and was titled "People, Pots and Places: New Research on Ceramics in Cambodia". The conference was held for three full days on Friday-Sunday, December 6-8 at the APSARA Authority conference hall in Siem Reap. The conference was structured around three general themes, one for each day: 1) ceramics production; 2) ceramics use and consumption; and 3) ceramics trade and importation. 36 papers were presented (with scholars from Cambodia, France, Australia, China, USA, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Korea, Thailand and Hungary). In total, over 150 scholars and students attended including those from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, the National Museum of Cambodia and the Royal University of Fine Arts. A bilingual (Khmer – English) translation service was provided.

The conference was opened by H.E. Dr. Tan Bun Suy, Deputy Director of APSARA, and a separate keynote address opened each day. For ceramics production, Dr. Don Hein presented "The Order of Angkor in the Evolution of Ceramic Kilns in Southeast Asia"; for use and consumption Dr. Armand Desbat spoke about "The

CerAngkor Program: Assessment and Prospects", and for trade and importation Dr. Li Baoping presented "Ceramics in Chinese trade and diplomacy with the world: the Ming Dynasty".

Several events were also held after the conference. These began with an after-party at the EFEO, which featured a live demonstration of a kiln firing. The kiln was a ¼-scale model based on the excavated remains of Angkorian kilns. The following day, a skills workshop was held at the EFEO to offer the students a more informal environment to learn from the experts, and which also showcased the new sherd reference library available at EFEO. Finally on Wednesday we made a field trip through the countryside to the Tani kiln museum, as well as a visit to the Norodom Sihanouk museum.



Live demonstration of kiln firing at the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient (EFEO). Photo by David Robertson, University of Sydney.

THE GIANT PUPPET PROJECT

By Bina Hanley, Marketing and Communications Director, The Siem Reap Giant Puppet Project

Siem Reap's 2015 Giant Puppet Project (GPP) was an outstanding success again last February owing to the dedication and hard work invested by a small group of artists, volunteers and local sponsors.

Project workshops commenced on the 7th of February in the beautiful gardens of Wat Damnak, a space generously donated by the excellent Center for Khmer Studies (CKS). CKS has supported the Giant Puppet Project since 2009 by offering invaluable teaching, storage and workshop space to the artists and children in a safe and peaceful environment.

GPP Project Director, Stuart Cochlin, along with his team of 16 artists from Phare Ponleu Selpak Visual Arts School in Battambang set up project base camp at Wat Damnak and the "intense education in arts" began.

One of the main objectives of the Giant Puppet Project is to teach the next generation about the huge importance of their environment. GPP re-tell old local folk tales, highlight the plight of critically endangered indigenous species, promote cultural awareness and advise on road safety and personal hygiene. All of these important issues are unfortunately not on the average school curriculum.

This year they had an onsite environmental and wildlife expert, Tony Yon, to educate the children about the Binturong, Oriental Bay Owl, Wolf Snake, and the Mekongina Erthropsila Fish. Tony has worked with wildlife conservation agencies such as the Sam Veasna Centre and the Angkor Center for Conservation and



Volunteer 'rehearsing' prior to the big puppet exhibition.
Photo by Krisna UK.



A fire eater at the Siem Reap Giant Puppet Parade. Photo by Scott Melish.

Biodiversity (ACCB)

Previous endangered indigenous species covered by the project include; The Moon Bear, Black Shank'd Douc Langur Monkeys, Clouded Leopard, Kouprey, Irrawaddy Dolphin, Indochinese Tiger, Giant Catfish and the Giant Ibis (also the national bird of Cambodia).

GPP also was inspired by the 1960's Cambodian singing sensation Pan Ron, who although deceased, is still hugely admired by all ages as her music and iconic voice fills the airwaves of local radio stations, television channels and wedding parties.

The Giant Puppet Project takes pride in working with Phare Ponleu Selpak, and each year is astounded by the artistic talents of these gifted young adults. This year was particularly poignant as it was the first without the presence of an Artistic Director, who generously stepped down in 2014 to allow the students free creative reign. The results were not disappointing.

In addition to the incredible experience and recognition this initiative provides the children involved, it is also a meaningful, entertaining and popular evening for the residents and visitors to Siem Reap. In 2015, the Giant Puppet Street Parade drew a monumental 15,000 spectators.

CKS PUBLIC LECTURES: PARTNERS IN ACADEMIC EXCHANGE AND OUTREACH

CKS expanded the subject areas presented in its lecture series by inviting scholars and professionals whose research relate to medical and social anthropology, archaeology, history, environmental sciences, political science and economics.

To reach out to an even wider audience, the Center partnered with higher education institutions, research networks and American Overseas Research Centers (AORC) on several occasions. In collaboration with the University of Cambodia, Zaman University and the Human Science Encounter in Phnom Penh (HSEPP), CKS co-organized a lecture by CKS board member Benny Widyono on “Economic Globalization and Economic challenges facing Cambodia.” With the build-up towards ASEAN regional integration, this topic proved timely and drew interest from 200 university students, faculty and journalists.

A two-hour talk by three CKS Senior Fellows (Ms. Cheryl Yin, Ms. Linda Chhath and Ms. Linna Chhun) was coordinated with the HSEPP at the Royal University of Fine Arts on the subject of “Khmer Rouge Effects and After-effects: Performance, Social Engagement, and Trauma as Legacies of Violence”, which marked the 40th anniversary of the Fall of Phnom Penh.

With the visit of the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute (CAARI), our sister organization based in the Mediterranean, Dr. Andrew McCarthy did a presentation on “Aphrodite’s Ancestors: Cyprus and the Role of American Overseas Research Centers (AORC): Understanding the Past”. This excellent talk explored the

synergy between the academic study of archaeology, history and culture in the Eastern Mediterranean and the pivotal role of the AORC in fostering international scholarship, education and cultural dialogue.



Former CKS Senior Fellow, Dr. Courtney Work, giving a presentation at the CKS-HSEPP joint lecture on Climate Change Mitigation.

This kind of mutually beneficial partnership enables CKS to remain close to its constituencies and contribute to building a stronger culture of academic research and exchange in the country and beyond.



Audience addressing questions to CKS Trustee, Prof. Benny Widyono, at a lecture on Development co-sponsored with the UC.

Anthropologist Extraordinaire: May Ebihara (1934-2005)

By Prof. Penny Edwards, University of California, Berkeley

A self-described “gossip” who “didn’t want disciples”, a woman embraced as “fictive kin” by rice-farmers in Cambodia, but interned as a child in her own country of birth and citizenship, and a “consummate New Yorker” raised in Oregon, May Ebihara defies categorization and resists quick description. In this sketch, I offer only glimpses of the intellect, warmth, courage, compassion, resilience, curiosity and no-nonsense acuity that characterized the persona and oeuvre of the first American anthropologist to conduct fieldwork in Cambodia.

Always attuned to due decorum in Khmer cultural life, May could not stand pomp or pretention in academia. Historian David Chandler remembers her “lightly worn wisdom, ...crystalline lucidity, ...impishness and ...joie-de-vivre”. Elegance and empathy were her hallmarks, and through these qualities she established acceptance and respect among the people of Svay, where she conducted fieldwork in 1959-1960. Decades after her death, they still remembered May as a gentle-mannered young woman (“neang slout”) with a beautiful heart (“chett l’a). Their enduring respect is reflected in the stupa established to house her ashes.

Dogged with ill-health throughout her childhood, May had contracted tuberculosis at the Minidoka War Relocation Center, Idaho, where she was interned from 1942 to 1945. In her twilight years, she depended on an oxygen tank, which she would carry with her to friends’ weddings and academic conferences. But from 1959-1960, in the village of Svay, May thrived. Despite conditions that would put many contemporary scholars to shame, without electricity or running water, May only once got sick. But she hated mosquitoes “with a passion,” stockpiled insect repellent at an army surplus store before leaving for Cambodia, and found the heat debilitating. With little electronic distractions (Svay had two radio’s, one of which was May’s), the people of Svay had plenty of stories to share. Quickly gaining their trust and respect, May amassed a great depth of detail about village life.

Conscious of her role as “the first American anthropologist to have studied Cambodia,” May made a deliberate choice to fill her long dissertation with information that could be “used by subsequent scholars of Cambodia.” Its clear, cogent prose foreshadowed the lucidity and luminosity of her later articles.

May filed her dissertation in 1968, thirteen years after starting graduate school. As a young mother, she combined an appointment as Assistant Professor at Bard College (1961-64), and a visiting lectureship at Mount Holyoke (1966), with raising two sons. Speaking in Manhattan a year after

her death, her husband Marvin Gelfand looked back in anger at the “iron door” slammed on May by his family due to her ethnicity. We will never know how this familial exclusion, or her childhood detention, shaped May’s personal philosophy or honed her ethnography. But Marvin attributed May’s tenacity and her ability to transcend human pettiness, to her “great generosity of spirit” and “an anthropologist’s eye”.

That judicious gaze, as John Marston writes, made May wary of post-war media stereotypes of Cambodia as a land of war and gore, enabling her “to look with a clear head beyond the death and violence to the humanity of the Cambodian people, to their real human suffering, and to their real warmth and humour.”

During decades of absence from Cambodia, May felt a deep “sense of guilt” that the people of Svay had given her so much, and wondered “what did I give them in return?” Interviewed by Marston in 2004, May recalled feeling “extremely depressed” on her return to a village emotionally, physically, and materially devastated by loss. Starvation, illness and execution had claimed half of the population she had known. One thing May was able to “return” to the community were photographs she had taken in 1959-1960, without which, as the village chief told her, “Our grandchildren would not know what their grandparents looked like.”

The conference papers and articles she wrote following a series of return visits to Svay in the 1990s, offered rare insight into both ruptures and continuities. May found, for



May Ebihara photographed, in 1959, in Phnom Penh. Photo courtesy of Prof. Judy Ledgerwood.

example, that patronage seemed much stronger than before. But gnoe was “the happy balance” that May had noted in the relative status of males and females in village society and economy. Among May’s “remarkable findings”, writes Kate Frieson, was how much better off villagers seemed to have been forty five years previously.

May might not have wanted “any disciples,” but her work is still widely referenced and taught by her core group of mentees, including John Marston at Colegio de Mexico, Judy Ledgerwood at Northern Illinois University, and Kate Frieson at Royal Roads University. But the torch does not stop there.

Her scholarship has fostered a new wave of Cambodia scholars. These include Erik Davis, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Macalester College, whose path-breaking *Deathpower: Imagining Religion in Contemporary Cambodia* is forthcoming with Columbia University Press (2015), Jonathan Padwe, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Hawai’i, and Eve Zucker, Visiting Scholar at Rutgers Center for Genocide and Human Rights, whose richly nuanced ethnography *Forest of Struggle: Moralities of Remembrance in Upland Cambodia*, was published by Hawai’i University press in 2013. Writing from Cambodia, Erik remembered first meeting “the giant of Cambodian ethnography through her dissertation, which I read on a ridiculous 12-hour boat ride from Siem Reap to Battambang, on my first trip in 2001.” While his copy of May’s thesis was warped by water, Davis’ sense of humour has remained famously intact throughout years of ethnographic involvement with Cambodia; and for this he has May to thank. “My understanding of Cambodia was influenced...by her care, genius and good humor,” Davis explains. Padwe, who finds May’s

work “the very best ethnographic writings on Cambodia,” admires how her post-war work was “incredibly attuned to the lives of the people of Svay.” Zucker, who describes May’s dissertation as “touchstone for all ethnographic work in Cambodia, especially village work,” recalls the “inspirational” and “heartening” phone call from London to New York, when May shared experience and dispensed an hour of “frank advice” before Zucker departed for Kampot to conduct her doctoral fieldwork.

Although May visited Paris en route to Cambodia in 1959, meeting with anthropologist George Condominas (who she described as “really very nice”), her dissertation has received scant attention in France, where of several anthropologists contacted for this article, only Fabienne Luco credits May as having had a strong influence on her work.

By making her work more accessible to Cambodian students and researchers, the forthcoming publication of May’s dissertation by Cornell University, and its planned translation into Khmer by CKS, will allow May to “repay” some of the debt she felt so keenly to a country that gave her so much. It will also ensure the wider appreciation of her work in Europe and beyond.

SOURCES: John Marston, Ed. *Anthropology and Community in Cambodia: Reflections on the work of May Ebihara* (Clayton, Monash University Press, 2011); Marvin Gelfand *Anger* recorded by The Moth, May 3 2006, <http://themoth.org/posts/stories/anger>; Private communication with David Chandler, Erik Davis, Kate Frieson, Anne Guillou, Charles Keyes, Judy Ledgerwood, John Marston, Fabienne Luco, Jonathon Padwe, Emiko Stock, and Eve Zucker.



May Ebihara returning to Svay, in 1989. Photo by Charles Keyes.

CKS PROGRAMS

SUMMER JUNIOR RESIDENT FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The Summer Junior Fellowship Program 2015 at CKS: Expect the Unexpected

By Dr. Markus Karbaum

At CKS, one would imagine that it is 'business as usual' after running 10 junior fellowship programs since 2004. Far from this, as the dynamics in a group of sixteen mostly undergraduate students from different disciplines and three continents are often unpredictable. Different backgrounds, different expectations, and sometimes even very different interests made it a challenge for the students, instructor, and even the CKS staff. However, all students – six from Cambodia, and five from the United States and five from France – had to put a lot of effort into the program right from the beginning. A normal working day consisted of 120 minutes Contemporary Cambodia Class, one hour of language course (Khmer for foreign students and English for the Cambodians), readings for the next day, attending public lectures at the CKS Conference Hall, in addition to working on their research projects.

It was amazing to watch how the students created small groups in which they supported each other, took over responsibility for and shared their knowledge with their peers. In consequence, mutual understanding across cultures and disciplines rose and created that unique learning atmosphere at CKS that many alumni appreciate until the present day. Surprisingly or not, most students were not aware that there is also a huge benefit in reading local newspapers on a daily basis, but this was not the only methodological lesson they learned.

In addition to class, the second centerpiece of the fellowship program was the individual research project. For most students, it was the very first time in their university career that they had to design and conduct their own fieldwork, not to mention the exotic environment for most foreign students. But it was very worthwhile, thanks to the immense commitment of most students. Some of them even indicated that they wanted to continue to work on their projects after the program finishes; since less than six weeks often

makes it difficult to complete a research project.

Despite these numerous duties there was still enough time for some fieldtrips to an excavation site near Angkor Wat, historical sightseeing in and around Phnom Penh, the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, as well as the Sonja Kill Memorial Hospital in Kampot in Southern Cambodia. These destinations offered invaluable insights and created special moments people who participated will not easily forget. Further Enlightenment was given by CKS' distinguished guest speakers Dr. Alison Carter (University of Wisconsin, Madison), Mr. Ali Al-Nasani (Heinrich Böll Stiftung), Mr. Wim Conklin (Solidarity Center), H.E. Dr. Yos Phanita (Sonja Kill Foundation), and Mr. Pou Sovachana (Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace). Finally, many thanks go to Professor Andrew Mertha, Professor Gérard Diffloth, Professor Michael Cullinane, and Dr. Krisna Uk for their additional contributions and support, as well as to Ms. Kem Sopheara and Mr. Khim Maland for their preparation of a very special workshop dedicated to Khmer ballet and Folk Dance.



Former CKS Senior Fellow Dr. Alison Carter presents the Greater Angkor Project to the Junior Fellows



Khmer Language Students performing classical Khmer dances.

KHMER LANGUAGE AND CULTURE PROGRAM

This language training program is crucial for American scholars and prospective students of Khmer Studies or Southeast Asian studies to get their language lessons, experience the language use and culture of the country. This should prepare them better for their future academic interest on Cambodia. In partnership with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa 's Advanced Study of Khmer (ASK), this year program features Khmer language training (speaking, writing, listening, and reading), first-hand experience of Khmer culture through various activities such as cooking and dancing, fieldtrips to various locations of historical and cultural values, public lectures on Cambodian contemporary issues, and individual research. Altogether we have 15 students. CKS grants three fellowship to students and scholars from various American academic institutions, namely Princeton Theological Seminary, Columbia University and the University of Massachusetts.



Khmer Language students giving their final impression of the program, in Khmer, at the completion of the program.

CKS HOSTS CORNELL IN CAMBODIA COURSE ON CHINESE EMPIRE AND THE CAMBODIAN EXPERIENCE

By Andrew Mertha, Professor of Government, Director of the China and Asia-Pacific Studies (CAPS) Program, Cornell University and CKS Board member

For two weeks in January 2015, CKS was ground zero for a two-week Cornell University undergraduate course on Cambodia's past and present relationship with China, combining classroom lectures and discussion with intensive fieldwork in Siem Reap, Phnom Penh, Kampong Chhnang, Phnom Kulen, and Anlong Veng. The course, *Chinese Empire and the Cambodian Experience*, used an interdisciplinary approach to explore this relationship, with the ulterior motive of exposing students to Cambodia and possibly establishing a lifelong interest in the country.

I was the instructor of the program and was ably assisted by Teaching Assistant Alice Beban-France, a doctoral candidate in Development Sociology at Cornell. We began the course with a one-day trip to Angkor Wat, Ta Phrom, and the Bayon, before settling into several days of lectures and discussion in CKS' seminar rooms at Wat Damnak and at the CKS office in Phnom Penh.

The course benefited immeasurably from the active participation of a number of Cambodia experts, most of whom have deep associations with CKS. Board member Ambassador Benny Widyono gave a presentation of his experience as UN governor of Siem Reap during the UNTAC period and as UN Ambassador to Cambodia from 1994 to 1996. His Excellency Khuon Khun Neay presented his work with former Minister of Culture Vann Molyvann in creating the urban architectural landscape for Cambodia during the *Sangkum* era (1954-1970). And Alexandra Kent and former CKS fellow Dr. Courtney Work held an impromptu seminar on spirits, religion, and the state in Cambodia.



Students pose in front of the Angkor Wat temple.

In addition to these more sedentary lectures and discussions, a substantial part of the course had to do with exposing students to the challenges of field research. CKS provided the logistical work necessary so that we were able to visit all the sites that we could have hoped for, as well as propitiously stumble upon some that were not on the program. In addition to visiting Tuol Sleng / S-21 and the killing fields at Cheoung Ek, the class was able to visit the site of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). In the field, the students were mesmerized by the knowledge of CKS scholar associate, Henri



Students on their way to a field site in Kampong Chhnang.



Gasoline container used during the Khmer Rouge period, at Kampong Chhnang Airport.

Locard, as he negotiated our way into the Krang Leav airfield, built by the Chinese in 1977-78, using Khmer Rouge slave labor. At one point, professors Locard and Ms. Beban-France, and I got into a debate over the timing of the airfield construction and the type of labor that was mobilized to build it, while the students became keenly aware of just how slippery simple facts can be and how uncertain



Students pose in front of an iconic building by eminent Cambodian Architect Vann Molyvann.

scholars can be on what had occurred within their areas of expertise. Later that same day, we were also able to go to the Achang Irrigation site and meet with both Cambodian land-use activists and Chinese engineers working on the project. Another day saw the group take a bus to Phnom Kulen to see the site of the Khmer Rouge guerrilla base in 1973, take in lunch and a swim, return to CKS and watch a documentary on the Cambodian experience during the Vietnam War. This was followed by an impromptu presentation by Hannah Phan, who told us of her first-hand experiences living under the Khmer Rouge. You could have



Tareach tunnel in Kampong Chhnang, built and used during the Khmer Rouge period.

heard a pin drop as we were all transported into her world of suffering and loss.

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

Throughout this entire program, we were joined by two professors at Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) and by one of their students. This was their first trip to Cambodia and they were so enchanted with the possibilities here that they are recruiting up to ten students for next year with additional faculty who want to share and expand upon their service learning pilot project.

All of this was made possible by the CKS team in Siem Reap and in Phnom Penh. The seamlessness and professionalism of the CKS staff was simply extraordinary. My hope is that we can make this an annual program where different Cornell faculty can teach their classes on some aspect of Southeast Asia in partnership with CKS on site at Wat Damnak and at the CKS office in Phnom Penh. If the first year of the program is anything to go by, this could be one of the most successful meaningful international experiences in Cornell University's quiver, thanks to CKS!



Students taking a rest at the Terrace of the Elephants in Angkor.

NEW REGIONAL MID-CAREER PROGRAM: “EXPLORING CONFLICT IN THE ASEAN REGION”

For more than fifteen years the Center for Khmer Studies (CKS) has successfully supported research, teaching and public service in the social sciences, arts and humanities in Cambodia and the Mekong region. To better strengthen the country's cultural and educational structures and further integrate Cambodian scholars into regional and international exchange, CKS launched a new series of workshops to develop the capabilities of current scholars, professionals and students.

Two interrelated developments have shaped the focus of CKS's attention in recent years. First, is the emergence from economic insecurity and instability of a generation of Asian scholars and professionals, who embody what Dr. Tongchai Winichakul described in his 2014 Presidential Address to the Association for Asian Studies (AAS), as “one of the most recognizable features in the changing landscape of Asian studies in this post-Cold War era...the growing importance of Asia not only as the object of studies by the “first world” academia but also as the producer of knowledge.”

The second development is the growing interconnectedness of not only the world, but particularly that of the ASEAN bloc, which is in the process of removing barriers to physical and economic movement across the borders of its member countries. This new chapter in the history of the Southeast Asian region marks a dramatic contrast to centuries of conflict



Prof. Oscar Saleminck, University of Copenhagen, lecturing.



Cambodian participant, Oudom Ham, discussing the role of the ASEAN community in mitigating the adverse impact of hydropower constructions on the lower Mekong.

and misunderstanding. These positive developments are not without their own challenges.

Attempts to manage, preempt, and resolve security and conflict and to pave the way toward a more stable and secure future take on an increased importance in this new international climate, even as traditional issues such as cross-border trade and professional exchanges, resource management, transitional economies and sectarian violence themselves become more complex and require new tools and methodologies to manage them.

Building on the strength of its experience and on its institutional network, *Exploring Conflict in the ASEAN Region* mid-career program is very much on target with emerging new visions in the field of Asian Studies. With the support of the Ford Foundation and the Henry Luce Foundation, this program aims at addressing current academic and professional needs among Cambodians and other Southeast Asians from the Mekong region by researching and addressing issues of conflict, using a regional and cross-border approach that attracts a mix of scholars and public intellectuals.

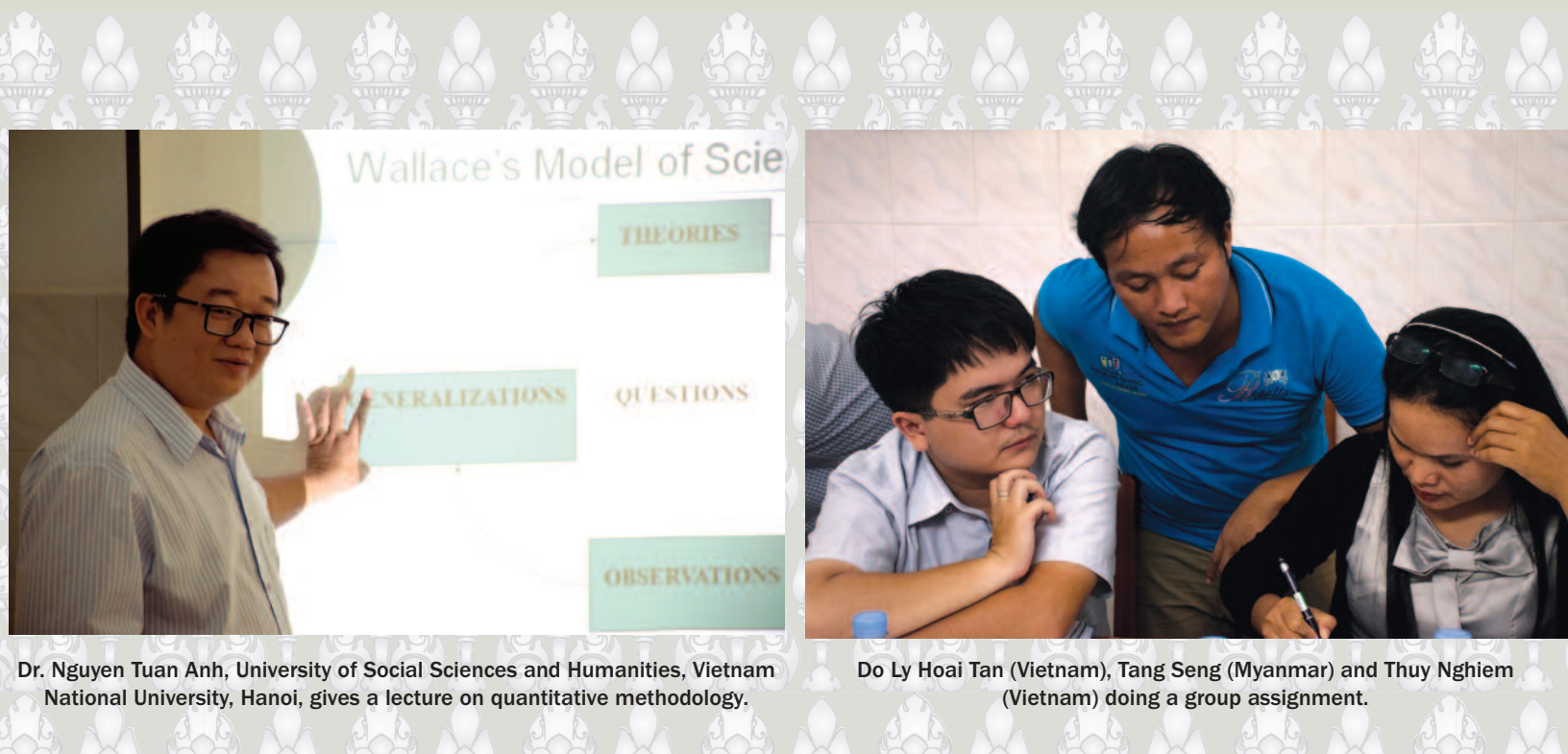
Following specific requests formulated from our Cambodian alumni and regional partners, whose ability to access such

training is limited due to political, financial and time constraints, this short but intensive program is tailored to mid-career professionals who wish to develop their skills in order to have greater positive impact throughout their career and to become part of a dynamic network of researchers and decision-makers in the region.

With current political and social changes in Cambodia, the opening of Myanmar to the outside world and the inauguration of the ASEAN Economic Community at the end of 2015, this program is timely in that it will promote transborder cooperation between Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam and bridge the divide between mid-career professionals from government ministries, universities, think tanks, and non-governmental institutions.

In light of current concerns, the topic for 2015 focuses on cross-border and political conflicts. Led by University of Copenhagen, Prof. Oscar Salemink, the first phase of this pilot year took place in August. With backgrounds ranging from universities in Vietnam to humanitarian organizations in Myanmar, eleven participants engaged in theoretical and empirical analysis of issues relating to sovereignty and nationalism, immobility and migration, cross-border resource politics, and licit and illicit investment flows. The sessions were led by Prof. Salemink, assisted by Prof. Chayan Vannhanaputi, Director of the Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development (RCSD), in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

The participants also spent time improving their research skills by means of short training in research conceptualization



and approaches, quantitative and qualitative methods as well as monitoring and evaluation, specifically tailored to their needs by consultants from the region.

The participants will return in November after using their analytical tools to conduct their individual research project in their home country. Chosen subjects range from: “Common Space Concept as a Tool for Conflict Transformation in the Deep South of Thailand”, through “International Labor Migration in Cambodia: Situation and Challenges” (A Case Study in Vietnam to Cambodia) to “Ensuring safe Border Crossing in Lao PDR in the Context of the ASEAN Economic Community”.

We are hoping that this platform will be conducive to a greater understanding of regional differences, stimulate open debates and the creation of new opportunities for people working on similar issues to collaborate, publish their research findings and develop best practices.

We expect that the impact of this program will enable us to move the field of Asian studies in new directions by bringing together an important mix of regional actors, including some not at traditional academic institutions, to generate knowledge in and about the region.

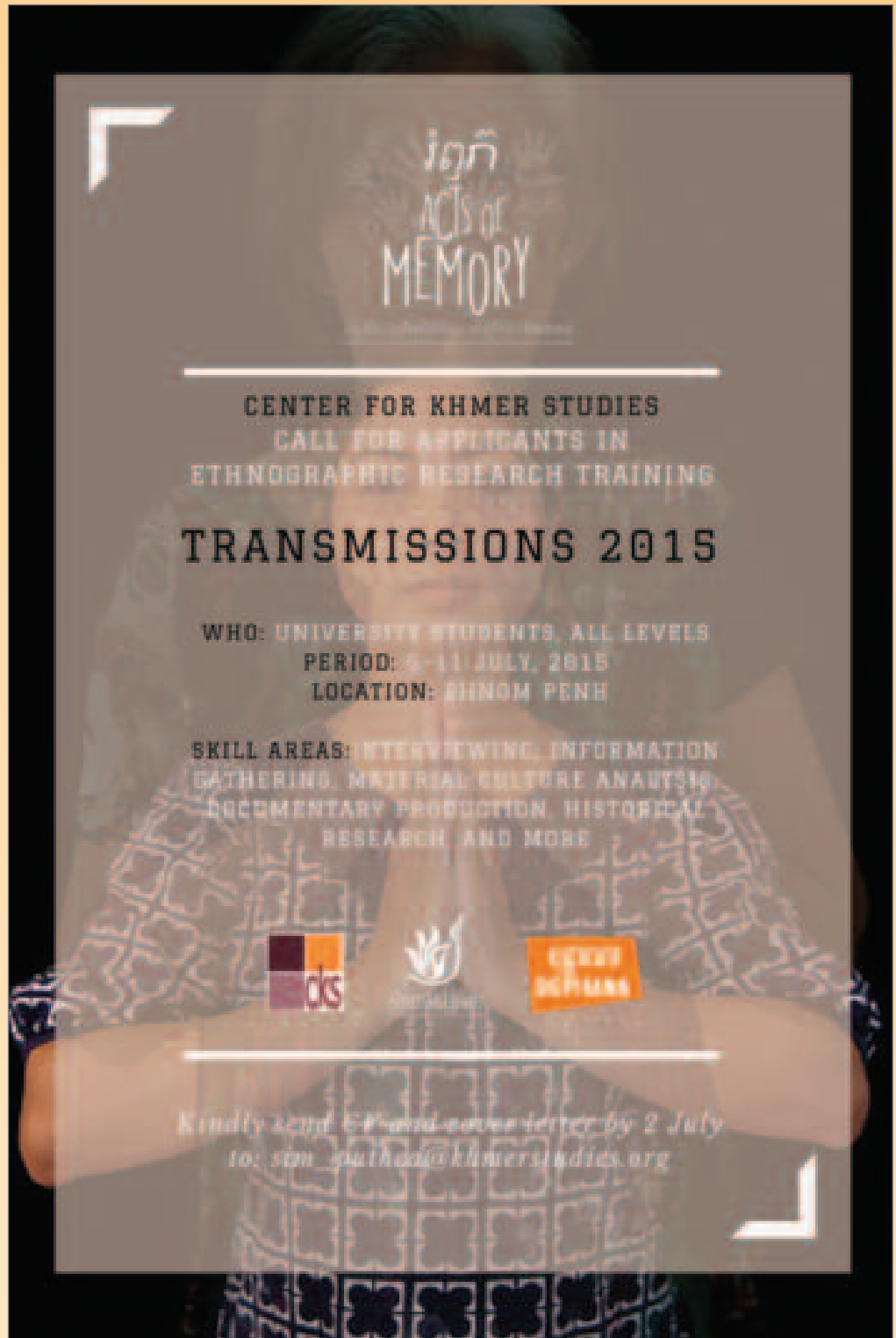
THE TRANSMISSION PROJECT: CKS TRAINING IN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

In the framework of the “Acts of Memory” initiative launched by the Bophana Audiovisual Center and Cambodian Living Arts early this year, CKS contributed its academic expertise by inviting Cambodian graduate and undergraduate students to participate in one week of training in ethnographic research.

As part of the “Transmission Project” the training aimed at bridging the gap between the old and the new generation. It provided young people with the skills and tools to collect first-hand information on personal memories of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) through interviews of their parents, grand-parents and relatives. The training also comprised a special session on material culture with the objective of collecting objects that have been specifically used at the time of the Khmer Rouge regime.

Led by anthropologist Dr. Alberto Perez Pereiro, the training exposed the participants to the intricacies of doing research and interviews with family members. Issues of trust, emotions and ethics were thoroughly explored so as to make this information collection process a bonding experience for all those involved, facilitating the flow of memory in the family chain.

This training also provided students with the unique opportunity to work with Cambodian film Director Rithy Panh and the technical team of the Bophana Audiovisual Center in producing a documentary on the subject. Students will also collaborate with the Cambodian Living Arts by contributing “memory objects” for a unique artistic and cultural exhibition to be held in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.



Announcement flyer for the Transmission of Memory

VOICES:

Venerable Long Somony—CKS Cambodian Junior Fellow



To begin with, I would like to convey my profound gratitude to the CKS Summer Junior Resident Fellowship Program of which I was fortunate to be a part. Along with other undergraduate fellows from France and the United States, I learned how to build “self-confidence” and improve my communication skills. As a freshman in International Relations at Zaman University and a Sophomore in Law at Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia, I originally found it difficult to conduct my research project on the roles and responsibilities of Buddhist monks as human rights defenders, educators, and environment protectors in Cambodia. But thanks to the invaluable support and encouragement from our Program Instructor, Dr. Markus Karbaum, I felt an immense relief once I managed to achieve my project.

I cannot find words to describe how much I enjoyed this fellowship program. I have learned so much about Cambodian history, economics, and politics from the readings and discussions in class. Moreover, our English tutor, Ms. Frieda Kreth, helped me make sense of the readings and review the relevant literature for my research. I would not have been able to do that without her help. I hope this program carries on with strong support from people around the world so that it continues to give opportunities to all these undergraduates who wish to participate in research and learn about contemporary Cambodia from knowledgeable scholars. I will keep in touch with Dr. Karbaum and Dr. Krisna Uk, CKS Executive Director, to get updates on further educational opportunities. I wish to utilize my knowledge and experience to help my country as much as I can, and help create a better society in the next few decades.

Participants in the CKS Regional Program

Tang Seng, Kachin State, Myanmar. First of all, I would like to thank CKS for accepting me as a participant to this regional program. This kind of experience is new to me. And so, I had to put more effort to this program. I love putting effort to this anyway. The participants' projects that explore the political situations, human rights and environmental challenges are very interesting and helpful for local communities. This program helps me a great deal to plan for the research project on “Mining in Kachin State and its Affects on Local Environment and Livelihood” that I will carry out with Ms. Htoi Pan. I am confident that it will be useful for our organization too, since our organization values analytical and creative thinking. Many Thanks!



Jularat Damrongviteetham, Thailand. When I first received the program assignment, I was surprised by the number of articles we needed to read before participating in the workshop. My impression on the program schedule was also not different. However, my opinion gradually changed as I participated and had the chance to gather the logic behind and the intention. This program is very well designed and there is a good flow in terms of systemic thinking about how to do applied research. Starting from literature review tools, research questions, methodology, reading articles through to exploring the connections with one another's research topics, qualitative research, quantitative research, monitoring and evaluation and concluding with a research flowchart; it all became fruitful and very practical. This program really impressed me and helped me clearly understand the sequences involved in doing research.

Duy-Ly Chu, Vietnam. After thoroughly attending the program, I am now confident that the CKS's Mid-Career Regional Program offers more than what I first expected. As an active part of the shared learning community, I feel that I can build up a long-lasting professional relationship with the ASEAN intellectual circle through a wide range of activities offered within the program. The program brings together ASEAN leaders and excellent professionals in their domain of expertise as well as adorable professors. Building friendships and professional relations with these people is definitely a priority. So, apply now, immediately, pronto mates!



FEATURE ARTICLE:

KANAM ELEPHANT RIDERS: ROCK ART IN THE CARDAMOM MOUNTAINS

An exciting ancient rock art site in Cambodia has been recently identified, assessed and photo-documented. Mounted elephants stand out vividly among numerous paintings of animals found in the pre-modern Cardamom ecosystem. Preliminary analysis and interpretations yield intriguing questions about the artisans and communities who used the site.

The Kanam site lies deep in the Cardamom Mountain forests of Kravanh District, Pursat Province. The local Sui people introduced us to the paintings following a considerable trek through the mountainous terrain. The small rock shelter is hidden among sizeable sandstone outcrops on the tree covered slopes. Paintings were drawn on the undersurface of a large slab which forms the rock shelter's ceiling. Elephants, deer and wild animals, once abundant in the dry monsoon forest, cover the ancient stone canvas. The antiquity remains unknown—well beyond multi-generational memory. The images may enable us to glimpse an old way of life in the Cardamom.

Legends only refer to a *Neak Ta* (ancestral spirit) related to the site, but not the time of initial creation or use. Ritual offerings and ceremonies are still performed periodically to placate the *Neak Ta*, honor the ancestors, and assure safety, health and prosperity for the local residents.

We are tempted to suggest the red-ochre paintings are the creations of the Sui people's ancestors. Both Khmer and Sui farmers currently live in nearby Kanam village. As late as 1970 the Sui were skilled catchers of wild elephants. Former elephant catchers and local residents informed us that they once provided the Kings and royalty of Cambodia with captured, tamed, and trained elephants.

The coming of the Khmer Rouge ended their traditional way of life. Elephants were forcibly relocated, mistreated and killed off, or, taken by Sui fleeing to Thailand, never to return. Looking at the myriad of animal figures may be looking into the old world of the Cardamoms.

His Excellency Chuch Poeurn of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, one of Cambodia's most eminent senior archaeologists, was the first to take action on reports filtering out of the mountains. He personally visited the site to verify its existence, assess content and review preservation conditions. H.E Chuch subsequently enabled a second trip led by Cambodian archaeologist and conservator, Tep Sokha, to provide an initial report. Unfortunately, site visits were limited in duration to half day excursions.

In January 2015 Tep led our team (aided by Pursat Ministry of Culture personnel) to the site for a multi-day research session to systematically record images and site conditions.

As guests of the local villagers, we were able to involve local residents, view artifacts recovered from the area, survey surrounding areas, and interview key respondents including one of the few surviving elephant catchers (now 76 years old).

Fortune smiled on our team as the master catcher, trainer and rider of elephants provided valuable insights concerning the past role of elephants in the area as well as the lifestyle and traditions of an elephant catcher. He and other respondents also revealed legends, traditions and oral history related to the site and elephant use. This information greatly assists interpretation of the site and meanings of the paintings. The site is rather small and unique; one of a kind thus far. Ancient Jar Burials and Log-Coffins of post-Angkorian age (15th-17th centuries CE) are found in similar rock features in the Cardamoms. Inquiries for rock art have turned up only stone piles or natural features related to *Neak Tha*.

Except for a remarkably striking painting of two elephants and riders, all the images are underneath the stone slab. Miraculously preserved, the two horizontal images lead us to think that the dominance of elephants with multiple standing human riders portray the acts of catching wild elephants, a prominent focus of Sui life at the time.

The capture of wild elephants necessitates three or more village elephants, each with a mahout, or driver, and men riders to lasso the quarry. Once a leg or neck is lassoed, the tame elephants, guided by men, surround and constrain the new captive. None of the scenes suggest men on elephants were fighting. No images show howdah, or furniture for carrying cargo or people on an elephant's back. Nothing suggesting elaborate costuming on the part of either elephants or men may be discerned.

What we most likely see are elephants catching elephants. Why this is painted on the surface is unknown to the research team or the local Sui in the area today. Were the images for luck in the chase or for other ritual significance? Did they represent high prestige elephant catchers? Or, were they art for art's sake? Perhaps none of these. That's what makes prehistoric rock art both perplexing and interesting. We can look through the lenses of known tribal societies' meanings to gain a glimpse of why such art exists.

The non-elephant images are mostly medium to large forest mammal known to exist, or once existed, in the Cardamom Mountains. What is shown and what is not adds more puzzle. The *gaur*, *kouprey*, buffalo, and other wild cattle seem to be plentiful. However, determination of exactly "what is what" among the obscure, eroded and overlapped images takes systematic analysis, deducing

species that many animals are **not** (body part by body part), and a strong dose of daring and imagination with a willingness to be contradicted.

One image seems to portray the massive horns of a large male “cow” like a *gaur*. These bovines are really big, muscular in the shoulders, and sport horns of great size, span, and curvature. Cambodia’s national animal, the likely extinct *kouprey*, is a *gaur* look-alike.

Deer, including Eld’s deer, a beast with magnificent antlers, prance and leap about among the images. Other animals such as dogs, pigs and birds have been said to be present among the potpourri of images. One villager suggested goats! Arguably one monkey might be present. Surprisingly, no wild boars are clearly evident.

The determination of animal type has been made more difficult by some villagers’ well intentioned outlining of some of the best images with chalk! One can lament the damage, but better to be thankful no serious recent destructive actions have occurred. Indeed, if the paintings were not under a protective overhang, they would likely be erased by monsoon rain and wind.

Our favorite conundrum focuses on images of the primitive ox drawn single bladed plow – or so the villagers have it. The long curved part of the painting suggests the handle held by the plowman. The shaft to attach to the ox runs straight ahead. Under this shaft is the plow share which digs the furrow into the soil.

We initially agreed with this interpretation until one of us pointed out the incongruity of a plow among wild animals and men riding elephants. Also, Cardamom tribal inhabitants probably favored swidden farming over plow agriculture. The latter is the rule in the lowlands where flat land and water control is known, but swiddening, the cutting and burning of forest clearings for cultivations is more a mountain adaptation.

If the images in question are not plows, what are they? Perhaps they represent the *ankus*, or elephant goads. Every elephant driver carries a metal tipped implement attached to a wooden shaft. Usually a sharp point about fifteen centimeters long protrudes straight ahead. Behind it at right angles is a second curved hook used to touch sensitive points on an elephant’s skin. This, in addition to leg and voice commands, directs the elephant’s movements. The horizontal point is seldom used. It is for emergencies only when a male elephant takes potentially lethal action against its rider. Male elephants, especially those minimally trained, are very dangerous. The argument will continue. Some say plow, some say ankus. Perhaps neither is cor-



Kanam rock site. The authors inspecting images underneath the overhang on which all but two of the images are located.

rect. Paintings don’t talk.

The future of the Kanam rock art site is troubling. As with so many heritage sites throughout the world, development from outside looms ahead. Several Chinese-built dams are already constructed or planned. We cannot determine if the site will be flooded. The forest is being cut down daily. Security is a serious problem. Our visit entailed police and armed guards.

Access is very difficult and only for the fit and able as one walks, fords streams, floats across flooded areas, rides on the back of dubious although skillfully handled motorcycles, or, for the less adventurous, a LONG and SLOW ride in a water buffalo cart. But, this may not last.

Dams and logging come with roads, and, the frequent appearance of those who desecrate rock art out of sheer disrespect and ignorance. The Ministry of Culture of Fine Arts personnel, both in Phnom Penh and Pursat, are intent that Kanam rock site and others yet to be found will be preserved, remaining an important component of the Kingdom’s ancient heritage. As stated, Kanam is one of a kind. It cannot be replaced.

Authors:

P. Bion Griffin is a CKS Board Member and Professor Emeritus in Anthropology at the University of Hawai’i, Mānoa.

D. Kyle Latinis is a Research Fellow at the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore and an active researcher in Cambodian archaeology.

Tep Sokha is an independent scholar based in Phnom Penh with wide experience in historic preservation and the Cardamom Mountains.

CKS SENIOR FELLOWS 2015-2016

French Fellows receive support through a grant from the Scaler Foundation. U.S. Fellows are supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, through the Council of American Overseas Research Centers

1 Erik Davis is an Assistant Professor at Macalester College who is conducting a short-term research on “Crisis, Change and Religious Creativities in Contemporary Cambodia.”

Cambodia is experiencing a series of transformations provoking a widespread - but not uniformly conceived - sense of crisis. Linked to the radical material and social transformation of the Cambodian economic, political, and social-technological landscape, these changes have in turn provoked a number of novel religious practices. The study will focus on three areas, with selected examples: 1. Anti-syncretic and self-referentially ‘traditional’ Buddhist movements, including a recently disgraced lay-person claiming to be a Buddha; 2. Spirit possession and witch hunts in the context of a rapidly transforming social and economic existence; and 3. The creation of new religious organizations oriented to social reform, protest, and political ends.

The goals of this project are to (i) describe religious changes, both from observer and participant perspectives; (ii) determine the history of the creation of novel forms of religious performances, through long-form interviews with performers and their affiliated groups; and (iii) Theorize creativity in contemporary Cambodian religious practice, emphasizing the creative potential of such practices, through a performative approach to religious practice.

2 Chivoïn Peou, Professor of International Studies, Royal University of Phnom Penh. Dr. Peou is working on a project entitled “Negotiating aspirations and mobility: Khmer migrant workers in Cambodia and Thailand.” This research will examine young Khmer peasants’ experiences of migration to do manual work in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh, the Thai capital of Bangkok, and the Thai coastal city of Rayong. Through context analysis, narrative interviews and field observation, it will examine the conditions and practices of a nascent working class inside and outside Cambodia that is made up largely of Cambodian young migrants, particularly through their experiences of managing everyday life, especially in work, residence and social relations. The research will problematize their lived experiences, daily risks and challenges resulting from such mobility and transient existence, and ensuing social implications, in relation to the structural conditions of international and regional dynamics.



A mine detection rat in action. Photo by Darcie DeAngelo.

3 Clemence Schantz Inguenault, is a doctoral student in socio-demography at the University of Paris Descartes. She is undertaking research on “Déconstruire les pratiques périnéales biomédicales à Phnom Penh.” Two major perineal biomedical practices that seem to be common in Phnom Penh: episiotomy and perineography (surgery practiced just after childbirth or several months later) will be the focus of this research. Both practices affect the women’s perineum, their privacy, their sexuality and will be examined as a way to increase our understanding of several aspects of Cambodian society.

The methodology will combine an approach that is both quantitative and qualitative to observe the logic of the actors (doctors and patients) and to examine why and how these interventions are performed. A statistic, epidemiologic approach will quantify these perineal practices, both in a public maternity and also in a private clinic where these perineal practices appear more frequent. The anthropological approach moreover will investigate the body and its symbolism in Cambodia and enable us to reflect on women’s body ‘standards’ and how they are imposed to them – or not – in the capital city. This will open wider lines of enquiry related to gender relations through sexuality during and after pregnancy.

4 Anne-Laure Porée, Ph.D. anthropology student at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS). Anne-Laure is researching “They worked and lived in a Khmer Rouge death factory: an anthropological study of life at S21.”

S21, a public school turned into a detention and killing center between 1975 and 1979, was a central place that saw the Khmer Rouge ideology unfold, a place where Pol Pot's regime was defining its enemies and training its perpetrators. To date, many researchers have focused on the purges within Khmer Rouge ranks and on how this elimination process worked. Not yet readily explored or attempted to be understood however, is the everyday life that took place for those working within S21.

Instead of analyzing S21 as an exceptional situation, the study will try and shift our perspectives by questioning everything that made up ordinary life within the prison: the rhythm of daily routine, an ordinary work day, human habits, social activities, sexual life and the everyday language, in order to understand how women and men lived in this place despite the omnipresent climate of terror.

This research will also take into consideration S21 in its original territory in order to better understand its structure and its sphere of influence. The anthropology of everyday life has never been used to study the Khmer Rouge. It aims at bringing a new understanding of how this ideology was

implemented by means of physical and psychological violence, relationships of manipulation and domination. Such themes will be explored in order to contribute to and help explain the nature of the genocide.

5 Nathan Badenoch, Associate Professor at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University. His long-term research is a "Linguistic Research for Documentation of Traditional Knowledge of Minority Groups in Cambodia." This project collects linguistic data on the Kaco' language – a Bahnaric language spoken by approximately 1,000 people – focusing on basic vocabulary, flora and fauna, rituals and folklore. The data and analysis will also contribute to our understanding of the local histories of Cambodia and beyond, in addition to being the first step in a longer process of detailed description of the language and the cultural heritage it encodes.

6 Darcie DeAngelo is a Ph.D. student at the Department of Anthropology at McGill University. She is working on her dissertation that focuses on "Doctors and Deminers: An Anthropology of Landmines in Cambodia."



Nathan Badenoch interviewing ethnic minority people.



A newborn at Calmette Hospital. Photograph by Clemence Schantz Inguenault.

These landmines are the remnants of military conflicts from the 1960s to the late 1990s, but they continue to have a profound adverse impact on the local population. Specifically, Darcie will investigate the biomedical instruction and mine detection training the deminers receive as they integrate non-human partners into their demining and emergency medical activities and will examine how doctors treat amputee patients and submit patents for prostheses and bio-engineering equipment.

Her interest lies in how landmines create a context that requires syncretic practices surrounding bodies because, while Cambodians have ‘always already’ engaged with traditional and mixed medicines, landmine-related injuries entail biomedical presuppositions that conflict with Cambodian myths, religion(s), spirits, and practices.

7 Farina So is a Ph.D. student at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. She is carrying out research on “Intra-Sectarian Conflict in the Cambodian Muslim Community.” This project investigates regional and temporal variations in patterns of intra-sectarian conflicts in the Cambodian Muslim community (1992-present). It is the first to systematically analyze internal and external factors and conditions that are indicative of varying degrees of conflict among the followers of Sunni Islam across time

and space using archival materials, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observations with the Saudi-Kuwait-influenced Salafi, Malay-influenced Safi’i constituents and Dak’wah Tablighi followers.

Two villages that differ in patterns of conflict in two provinces for a total of eight villages will be studied. The research will help shed light on the dynamics operating at the local community level and the different experiences these communities have. Farina will also seek to compare her findings with inter-sectarian conflict studies of Buddhists in Cambodia and intra-sectarian conflict among Muslims in Thailand.

8 Louise Beyrand, Ph.D. student at the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Strasbourg, is doing research on “Rising Tradition in Cambodia: Comparative Study of Performing Arts and Arts and Crafts in contemporary Southeast Asia.” After the Khmer Rouge regime, starting in the early 1980s, the Cambodian government sent officials to estimate the cultural damage and restore the Khmer arts program by finding survivors and persuading them to pass on their knowledge. From 1990, the government’s initiative has been endorsed – at times replaced – by international aid from supra-national organizations (United Nations, UNESCO), and private NGO projects launched by foreign associations created by the Khmer diaspora.

These efforts to rebuild the arts and crafts in Cambodia have progressed along with a substantial increase in tourism from Western countries (Europe, America,



An artisan of the Kok Thlok troupe prepares a sbek thom shadow puppet, Phnom Penh. Photograph by Louise Beyrand.

Australia) as well as from the Asian region (China, Japan, Korea). Tourism became the main source of revenue for these traditional activities while the majority of Khmer people still had to re-appropriate their own artistic culture. Using the lens of Cambodia's shadow theater, this thesis will expand the study of the contemporary process of exposing a traditional culture to the mixed effect of massive tourism and will compare it to the situation in Thailand and Vietnam.

9 Say Sok, Senior Lecturer at the Department of media and communication at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, works on "Civil Society Building and Local Development: Experiences from Agricultural Associations." This research explores the effectiveness of and challenges to community building for local development in Cambodia, with illustration from experiences of community-based agricultural associations. While theoretical and empirical debates are ambivalent as to how much and how local civil society organizations (CSOs) can affect local development and broader social and political change, scholars agree that local CSOs are a catalyst for such.

At present, literature on Cambodian civil society is limited, although interests on such research have been recently on the rise. This project is intent on enriching theoretical debates related to the roles and challenges that local CSOs, illustrative of agricultural associations, have in the process of local development. It aims at addressing this question through extensive field interviews with key informants and focus group discussions involving concerned stakeholders such as farmers, association leaders, NGOs, and

local state agencies in Battambang province.

10 Kheng Sothy and Leang Un, Research Fellow at the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI) and Adjunct Professor at Pannāsāstra University of Cambodia respectively, are jointly working on a project focusing on "Higher Education: Whose Project and for Whom?"

Over the last three decades, Cambodian higher education has undergone a transformation in scope and quality that has few precedents anywhere else in the world. Especially since the introduction of so-called 'public private partnerships' in the late 1990s, the shift to private higher education and fee-paying streams within public higher education institutions has been rapid and the effects profound.

The gross tertiary enrolment rate increased from around 1% in the early 1990s to about 16% presently. There are limited studies on higher education in Cambodia today and most focus on providing a general description of the system while too few examine how to implement reforms, particularly on governance and finance. None however have asked the following relevant questions: Who decides which directions reform will take? Who do the reforms serve? Where is it all heading to? This research led by a two-person team will study the process of policy formulation in the heavily aid-driven Cambodian higher education sector, investigating who introduces these reforms and who benefits, but also which questions and voices are forgotten in that process.



Dr. Un Leang (left) interviewing H.E. Mok Ngoy, Secretary of State, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

CKS REGIONAL TRAVEL GRANTS FOR CAMBODIANS

CKS's Regional Travel Grants attract a growing number of applicants from a broad community of national scholars, some of whom are studying abroad. Three of them attended the Asian Political and International Studies Association (APISA) 8th Congress, in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in September 2014. One grantee is taking part in the 16th World Sanskrit Conference, in Bangkok, while two archeologists will present papers as participants in an archeological field school at the Ifugao World Heritage Site, in the Philippines.

The list below gives an overview of their academic backgrounds and the conferences and workshops they attended in Southeast Asia.

- 1 **Mr. Sokphea Young**, Ph.D. student at the School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne, Australia, participated in the eighth Asian Political and International Studies Association, APISA 8, Congress, in Chiang Mai. Mr. Young presented an article on "International supply chain movement approach: A Case Study of the Sugar Cane Conflict in Cambodia".
- 2 **Mr. Yi Sora**, lecturer at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP)'s Development Studies Department, was also invited by the APISA 8 organizers to present on "Local stakeholder engagement in climate adaptation: Challenges and Opportunities." This presentation mainly focused on the role of sub-national governments and civil society organizations in climate adaptation in Cambodia.
- 3 **Dr. Sok Say**, CKS senior fellow and senior lecturer at the RUPP's Department of Media and Communication, chaired a panel at the APISA 8 on local democracy and natural resource governance. He presented an article on "Community-Based Fisheries Management in the Making: Challenges and Prospects".
- 4 **Ms. Chhom Kunthea**, Ph.D. student at the École Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris and a member of staff of at the APSARA Authority was awarded a CKS SEA Travel Grant to attend the 16th World Sanskrit Conference in Bangkok with a paper on "Astronomy in Ancient Cambodia: A Study of Khmerization of Sanskrit vocabulary".
- 5 **Ms. Chap Sopheara**, head of the Ceramic Conservation Laboratory at the National Museum of Cambodia and lecturer at the Royal University

of Fine Arts will participate in the archaeological field school at Ifugao, Philippines. She will share the results of archaeological investigation in Cambodia that have contributed to a more nuanced interpretations of consumption and trade patterns and increased our understanding of Khmer cultural history.

- 6 **Mr. Moul Kamnit**, archeologist at the APSARA Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap, attended the archaeological field school at the Ifugao World Heritage Site in the Philippines. This field school enabled him to contribute recent groundbreaking research findings in Cambodia and further his knowledge of ancient urban centers and settlement mounds in Southeast Asia.



Cambodian traditional family-scale fishing gear.
Photograph by Dr. Sok Say.



Excavation at the Ifugao World Heritage Site, Philippines

TRAVEL WITH CKS 2016

By Olivier Bernier, Vice-President

After our 2015 trip exploring Borobudur and the many temples of the adjoining valley, comes “The World of the Maharajas”, a trip through the major cities of Rajasthan. We will focus on North India, starting on January 11th, 2016 and ending on the 26th. At every stop, there will be private visits to palaces and houses not open to ordinary tourists: Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur will not only allow us to experience the multi-colored life of India, but also to see just how grand these former kingdoms could be; and our visit to Agra, and to the Taj Mahal will bring us to one of the world’s most beautiful buildings.

In April, we will return, for the fourth time, to “Romantic Chateaux, Burgundy and the Franche Comte.” The extraordinary success of this trip, which brings together great architecture, interesting museums and some of the best restaurants in France, has been such that yet another repeat is in order.

Finally, in September, another French trip will take us through spectacular but lesser known areas: “In the Realm of Eleanor” will begin in Poitiers, where Eleanor of Aquitaine, who managed the unique feat of being first Queen of France, then Queen of England, was brought up. Poitiers itself has one of the most important Romanesque churches in France, as well as Eleanor’s palace; Rochefort, La Rochelle, Saintes, Cognac will show us different fascinating aspects of France’s Atlantic provinces; and as we end in Bordeaux, we will find ourselves in that celebrated wine and food city. In Cognac, home of one of our



Foreign envoys bring presents to Shah Jahan, Shahnama, India, 17th century.

CKS board members, a tasting and reception will be offered us at the House of Hennessy.

All these trips are limited to twenty five participants.

I hope to see you on one or perhaps more of these trips.



Volunteers working on a 1960s Rock and Roll giant puppet singer at Wat Damnak. Photo by Krishna Uk.

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