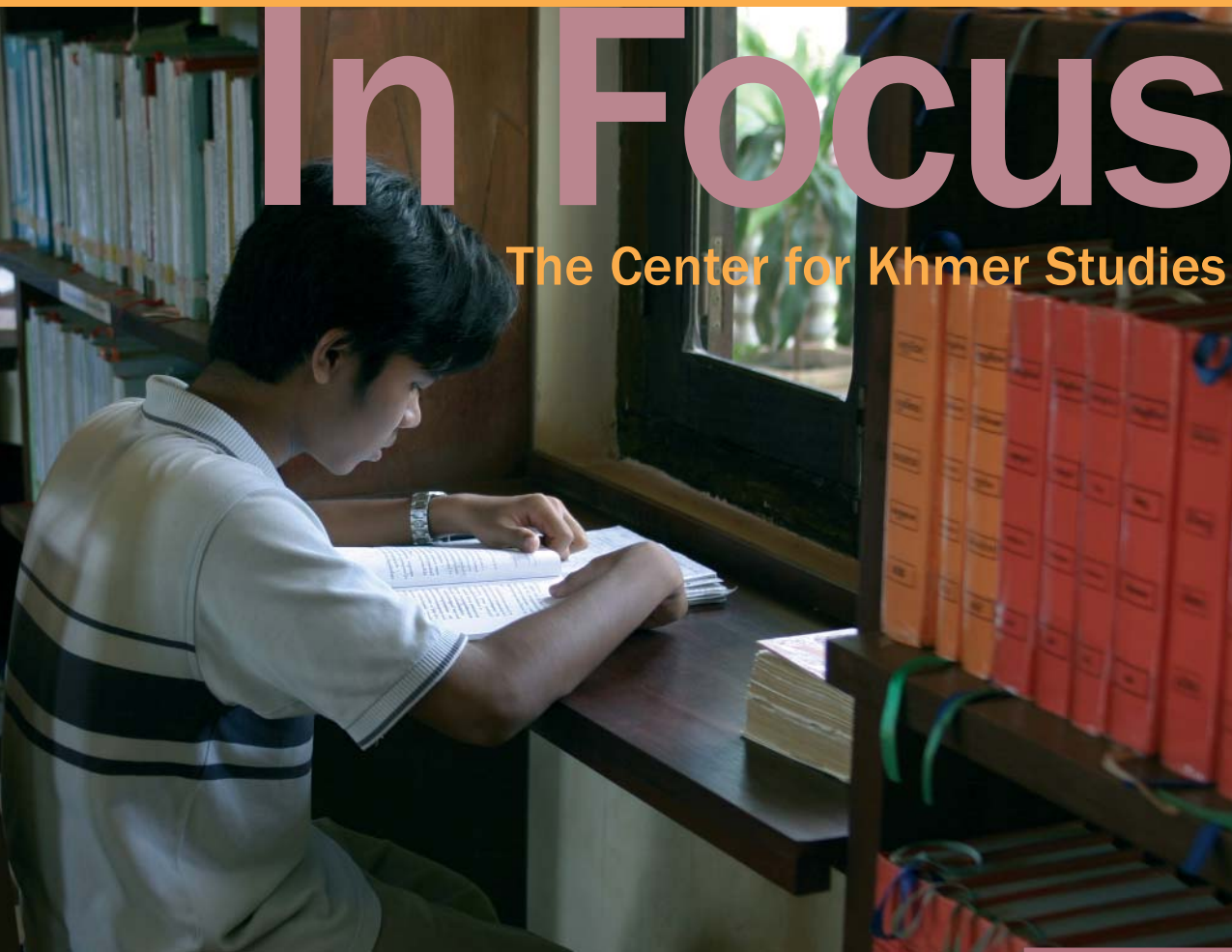


# In Focus

The Center for Khmer Studies

No.3, 2005-2006



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## Mission Statement

The Center for Khmer Studies' mission is to promote research, teaching and public service in the social sciences, arts and humanities, as they relate to Cambodia.

Specific goals of CKS are:

- to facilitate research and international scholarly exchange through programs that increase understanding of Cambodia and its region
- to help strengthen Cambodia's cultural and academic structures and to integrate Cambodian scholars in their regional and international community
- to promote a vigorous Cambodian civil society

CKS is a non-governmental organization supported by a consortium of international institutions, foundations, scholars and individuals.

CKS is registered in Cambodia, and incorporated in the U.S.

CKS is the sole member institution of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) in Southeast Asia. Its programs are administered from its headquarters in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. It also maintains an administrative office in New York City and a support office in Paris, *Les Amis du Centre d'Etudes Khmères*.

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*Longquan celadon bowl, excavated from Prasat Suor Prat by the Japanese Government Team for Safeguarding Angkor (JSA)*

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## Center for Khmer Studies

**Head Office:**

**PO Box 9380**

**Wat Damnak, Siem Reap, Cambodia**

**Tel: (855) 063 964 385**

**Fax: (855) 063 963 035**

**Phnom Penh Office:**

**8 Street 600, Toul Kork**

**Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

**Tel/Fax: (855) 023 991 937**

**Email: [center@khmerstudies.org](mailto:center@khmerstudies.org)**

**Website: [www.khmerstudies.org](http://www.khmerstudies.org)**

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Cover photo: Reader at the CKS Library in Siem Reap

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# Welcome to the Center for Khmer Studies

In more than 10 years that I have been coming to Cambodia, every time I arrive in Siem Reap. I am impressed anew by the rapid pace of development since my previous visit. Where there were 2 dusty hotels in the early 1990s, now there are hundreds, including major luxury chains, plus guest houses, restaurants, shops, and even super markets. A new airport. Major highways now stand where once there were vast expanses of rice paddies and thatch-covered houses on stilts.

Angkor is, indeed, a marvel of human civilization, and it was the colossal achievement of the direct ancestors of today's Cambodians, who call themselves "Khmers". Everything about Siem Reap now bespeaks the enormous importance to Cambodia of tourism. But individual Cambodians have lived this transformation in very different ways. Commercial property owners have prospered, as dollars and Euros have poured in. We at CKS see another face of Cambodia within the precinct of our Buddhist pagoda at Wat Damnak. We see the daily struggle of ordinary people - those for whom the opportunity to hold a book in their hand in our Library (open to all) is like a great gift. The young junior faculty, whom we seek to support in our capacity-building programs aimed at improving the universities in Phnom Penh, the Cambodian students seeking the opportunity to reach an equivalency level that will allow them to pursue graduate study at universities in the region, several of which have English-based MA programs. At the same time, we seek to be good neighbors and community members - to play our role in the UNESCO-directed International Coordinating Committee for Angkor, the international consortium that oversees the preservation of the Angkor temple complex and the community surrounding it, in collaboration with the Cambodian government.

With galloping development, and hotels sprouting in former rice paddies, it should come as no surprise that the future of water resources stands as one of the Government's principal concerns in the region. At a meeting with a high official, we were asked point-blank, "What can you at CKS contribute to the solution of this problem?" Well, we are neither the World Bank, nor a foreign government with development investment funds (what he had in mind in raising that question). So we are contributing what we do best-an international conference on water, in the Fall of 2005. CKS is small, 'light' and quickly responsive.



*CKS Board members and employees, January 2005*

We are also responsive in more immediate and tangible ways. This year, the monks at Wat Damnak, our hosts at the Buddhist Pagoda that is our 'campus,' began a program to educate street children. Civic initiatives like this are not common in Cambodia. Our Director responded immediately with an offer to help by supplying paper and writing materials, and by inviting members of our staff to join in this teaching effort. Our Jr. Resident Fellows, American and French undergraduates in our 2005 summer program, have rolled up their sleeves and volunteered their time and talent to the task. We are now sharing our administrative building with this program and renovating classrooms for their use. Buddhist pagodas are traditional centers of education.

As you walk around our 'campus' in Wat Damnak, pause to notice the effects of our presence there, and what it means to this community to live side by side with our international scholars, with our Cambodia-based programs of assistance, our promotion of reading culture, and our outreach in education. You will see a sampling of our programs during the past year in these pages. We hope you catch a bit of the spirit, and we invite you to join in supporting our community of hope. We try to think big and also to think small. We believe we are making a significant difference to many lives, and are gratified and sustained by the support and encouragement we receive from public foundations and public officials, but especially from so many international visitors passing through.

Welcome to CKS !

*Lois de Menil, Ph.D.  
President and Chairman of the Board*

## Director's Note

I am pleased to report that the Center for Khmer Studies continues to grow and strengthen its programs in ways never imagined at our conception. I would like to focus in this introduction on two capacity-building initiatives recently undertaken by CKS-- our Higher Education Support program and our publishing activities in the Khmer language.

In November 2004, CKS received a second grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to support a three-year program entitled *Building Institutional Capacity in Cambodian Higher Education*. The program builds upon our three-year experience in running the first Rockefeller-funded program which concentrated on research and training of individual Cambodians. This time, rather than training individuals, the aim is to reinforce Cambodian universities, particularly by supporting cohorts of their young teaching faculty. While the demand for higher education has grown exponentially in recent years, the quality of education has not kept pace with this demand. For the most part, the education offered at Cambodian universities is not at a level comparable with universities in Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines. The challenge is for Cambodian universities to be able to rely on a pool of well-trained, professional and academic faculty and to ensure that they remain as professors.

The program is also offered to graduate students wishing to pursue a teaching career, and is composed of 6-month series of seminars, workshops and field-research projects culminating in a yearly conference. The first session began in February with 11 participants from five different universities. In addition to augmenting the training of the faculty, the program also encourages partner universities - both public and private - to more actively address the professional development of their faculty, and to engage in developing real 'departments', with specific curricula and reading materials, under the expertise of professors experienced in research in their field. In fostering quality education at the university level, CKS hopes to create a community of young Cambodian scholars likely to shape a more coherent academic landscape in the social sciences. (See p. 16)

CKS director Philippe Peycam



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The other initiative that has occupied us this year has been exploring ways for CKS to contribute to the development of a viable academic publishing program. Cambodia lacks affordable academic reading material in the Khmer language; indeed, the whole education system remains hampered by the paucity of reference books in Khmer. The Khmer Rouge genocide resulted in the disappearance of an entire generation of writers, translators and editors, with the consequence that Cambodia still lacks skilled professionals in this sector. Current academic translations are weak and lack consistency, sophistication and standards, to a degree that renders them nearly unreadable. Only a long-term strategy can ensure the sustainability of a publishing program. More skills and human capital are needed, not only to translate and produce books, but to select which books are to be published. This need is crucial to the viable development of Cambodia's civil society.



CKS deputy director Lesley Perlman (left) with TITH Srey Pich, administration officer, and NOP Sovanna, finances coordinator.

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CKS has been addressing some of these deficiencies. Most recently, we completed the translation of David Chandler's *A History of Cambodia*, widely considered as a major reference resource, and the only account of Cambodia's history to fit into one book! (see p. 15). Under the supervision of Dr. Michel Rethy Antelme, our peer-reviewed academic journal *Siksacakr*, continues to present articles on topics related to Khmer Studies, all of which are translated into Khmer.

CKS also collaborated with the government and funding organizations to develop a better understanding of the whole book sector in Cambodia. Assessing the needs of the sector was the task assigned to the joint CKS-Reyum-Toyota Foundation *Publishing in Cambodia* (PIC) project, which led to the development of Cambodia's first systematic survey on the subject (2003). Under the supervision of Christiane Lalonde, our director of publications, CKS drew up a business plan for a comprehensive program of translation and publication of educational materials in the social sciences. The plan envisioned a timeframe and a budget for an economically sustainable *Academic Publishing Program* (APP).

Our objective now is to contribute gradually to the development of a national Academic Publishing Program - an undertaking requiring the involvement of major institutional donors larger than CKS. We think we can help by initiating some strategic projects. We recently submitted two proposals to develop concurrent vocational training programs, one in translation from English to Khmer and the other in academic Editorial Publishing (from editorial supervision, selection of material, to distribution and promotion). The selection of material to be translated and published by the APP projects will be inspired by our ongoing higher education support program, described above.

The following pages will introduce other important CKS activities, from our fellowship programs, the Library at Wat Damnak, our numerous conferences and the recently implemented research program with the University of Chicago. This year's feature article on ceramics, by Dr. Bonnie Baskin, also gives a glimpse on the fascinating work undertaken by one of the CKS Senior Fellows.

Philippe Peycam, Ph.D

ADDRESSING YOU, OUR MEMBERS AND BENEFACTORS ONCE again is a pleasure, but it is also a daunting task. The pleasure comes, of course, from the Center's ever-growing achievements: young though it still is - a mere six years - it is widely acknowledged as a place of sound and innovative scholarship. The conferences it hosts, the papers it publishes, all have been an important contribution to our knowledge of ancient and modern Cambodia. A new scientific field, bio-archeology, has, with the help of our board member, Dr. Rethy Chhem, and under his impulsion, brought new light into the nature of the early populations of the area. Research into the pre-Angkor period and its monuments, flowing from the conference we held, is daily making new progress.

On the human side, too, we have achievements to celebrate. Our Junior and Senior Fellowship programs are thriving. The rigorous and transparent selection process put in place by the academic members of the Board has produced first-rate candidates, and the presence in Siem Reap of this diverse group makes for highly fruitful exchanges between people of different ages and backgrounds. This year, to our great pride, we have also been able to send Cambodian students to universities in Thailand and India.

Our very success, however, comes at a cost. The great foundations which have been backing our programs financially continue to do so, but that still leaves a gap to cover our daily operating expenses.

We have instituted a travel program, which I administer and lead - our first trip, to India and Bhutan, took place in early October 2005 and was sold out. In January 2007, another trip, which you may wish to join (email: ob@olivierbernier.com) will take us to little-visited sites in Cambodia, including the non-public reserves of the Phnom Penh Museum, and to Borobudur, the great Buddhist temple in Indonesia.

You receive In Focus because you have already contributed to the Center. Please be generous again, and help us to continue what you have made possible until now. In helping us, you help to create the educated young men and women who are the only hope of Cambodia.

**Olivier Bernier, Vice-Chairman**

## Support CKS's Mission

### General Support

While our major grants provide support for running specific projects, your annual contributions provide the only source of income for our daily operations and overhead.

### Sponsor a Cambodian Fellow to study overseas (\$15,000)

Through our Capacity Building Program, CKS trains and selects promising young Cambodian university faculty to further their academic training at major universities in South East Asia. Sponsor a junior faculty member and help them to continue their education. Fellowships will be named for donors.

### Sponsor the Translation of Essential Literature (\$5,000)

In the absence of essential books in the Cambodian language (Khmer), CKS is actively involved in translation projects. A donation of \$5,000 or more will defray costs for an average 300-page book and will be acknowledged in the publication.

### Bookshelf naming at the CKS Library (\$8,000)

CKS's Library is the only public library in all of Cambodia outside Phnom Penh. Students, monks and others in the community use it daily. CKS welcomes gifts to expand and maintain its collection. Place your name on a bookshelf containing approximately 400 titles.

### Support our Facility in Phnom Penh

CKS maintains a facility in Phnom Penh, which serves as a gathering place for meetings and a temporary residence for our Cambodian and overseas Fellows. It also houses our publishing and university training programs.

### Become a CKS Member

Participate in our growth and development by becoming a member. Membership categories include Members (\$100 to \$2,499 per year); Gold Members (\$2,500 to \$4,999 per year); Patrons (\$5,000 to \$9,999 per year), and Sponsors (\$10,000 or more per year).

### Thank You for Your Support!

**Checks should be made out to the Center for Khmer Studies and sent to:**

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*Provision can also be made for the transfer of stock shares.*

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## The CKS Library

CKS's Library is the largest public library in Cambodia outside Phnom Penh, and is a meeting ground for scholars, students, tour guides and the general public, who come to peruse our extensive holdings free of charge.

The Library's growing collection of over 4,000 references serves as an invaluable resource to scholars and researchers in Khmer and Southeast Asian Studies, with particular reference to the fields of history, archaeology, arts, linguistics, religion, literature, and politics. The Library has a unique collection of Masters and Ph.D. theses both in Khmer and other languages, as well as an important collection of academic journals and rare books. Dictionaries, bibliographies, maps and newspapers in Khmer, English and French languages are also available.

The Library catalogue can be accessed via the CKS website at [www.khmerstudies.org](http://www.khmerstudies.org). Also on the website is the Library's Wish List - an up-to-date list of the books we are currently looking to acquire. Suggestions for additions to our Wish list, and of course donations, are always welcome! CKS would like to thank all those who have made generous donations of materials to the Library in the past.

Over the past year, CKS's Library staff have been involved deepening and strengthening the Library through important undertakings, such as:

- ♦ The acquisition of many important items for the Library collection, in Khmer, English and French languages.
- ♦ The upgrading of our catalogue software, the provision of training in using this software and the subsequent shelving of a substantial backlog of many un-catalogued books.
- ♦ The recruitment of a second Librarian, Ms. MAM Vannary, to work alongside our Librarian Ms. OUM Daraneth.
- ♦ The provision of additional training with CKS Board member, Dr. Thonewath POU from The National Library, Phnom Penh.

In addition to strengthening both its current acquisitions policy and networks with other Cambodian and overseas libraries, the CKS Library also plans in the near future to complete another important project, the creation of a database that will enable the cataloguing of Khmer texts directly in the Khmer language. This is a pioneering ambition.

The Library owes its current development to the vital and generous support of Ms. Nancy Lassalle.

CKS Conference Hall, detail  
© Jerry Gorman

## Contemporary Research on Pre-Angkor Cambodia

**Siem Reap, January 10-12, 2005**

A conference held at the CKS Conference Hall at Wat Damnak from January 10-12, 2005, attracted over 30 presentations. The co-chairs of the conference included John Miksic from the National University of Singapore, Bion Griffin from the University of Hawaii, and Son Soubert, member of the Constitutional Council, Kingdom of Cambodia. Many of the same participants in the January 2005 conference had attended a preliminary workshop in 2002, at the start of a 3-year research program funded by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation's Creativity and Culture Program. The goal of the workshop had been to set an agenda for research on the developments which led to the evolution of the Angkor kingdom in the 9th century, and to encourage various groups working on the subject to share information and collaborate more closely in other ways with one another. The rationale for this concept was two-fold: to compensate for the lack of research devoted to the origins of Angkor in comparison with the many studies already in existence or planned for the Angkorian period, and to maximize efficiency of the use of resources by avoiding duplication of effort.

The conference was divided into thematic panels. The first day was devoted to linguistics and epigraphy. The study of Pre-Angkor inscriptions is a difficult field requiring long years of dedication and specialization. Fortunately the older generation of scholars who have worked in this field such as Prof. Kamaleswar Bhattacharya and Long Siem are working hard to transfer their knowledge of ancient Khmer and Sanskrit to a younger generation of students who, though not numerous, are enthusiastic about the subject. Comparative studies in India form an important component of this field. The range and quality of the subjects dealt with, including dating problems, trade, politics, grammar, gender relations, and the use of modern technology such as digital databases, generated active discussion during question periods.

The second day began with presentations regarding the important pre-Angkor complex of Sambor Prei Kuk, where Japanese and Khmer scholars have been conducting important studies of the architecture. The second session presented the results of one of the Rockefeller-funded research projects conducted under CKS: surveys and excavations of pre-Angkor sites in eastern Cambodia. The last sessions dealt with technical archaeological subjects such as fish bone analysis and early Khmer metallurgy.

The final day began with presentations by Thai and Vietnamese scholars on research beyond the borders of present-day Cambodia. This was followed by papers on pre-Angkor architecture and art history, including music. The final session included more papers based on research conducted under the Rockefeller grant to CKS on early moated and walled sites in east and southeast Cambodia.

The conference demonstrated that studies of pre-Angkor Cambodia, while still far behind those devoted to the Angkor period in terms of funding and other resources, had made important progress in the three years since the workshop in 2002. It is hoped that CKS will continue to play a role as a point of contact between teams who work on similar projects in the future.

## Workshop: Ceramic Identification and Analysis

Siem Reap, January 13-16, 2005

*Pottery forms the major single source of data for archaeology. A sophisticated set of methodological and theoretical approaches has been developed over the past 150 years to use the humble potsherd as a sensitive tool capable of delivering information about a wide range of cultural and historical subjects.*

Cambodia's contributions to the development of ceramic art and technology are no less important than in other fields such as architecture and sculpture.

Local earthenware is plentiful at many sites from prehistory to the colonial period. The Khmer were the first Southeast Asians to produce glazed wares, which they developed for many purposes from decorative boxes to storage jars to animal figurines to architectural components during the Angkor period.

Despite the importance of the subject, and its prominence in Khmer history and civilization, no archaeologist working in Cambodia has yet focused on this subject as a major field of research.

One of the reasons for this anomaly is that Khmer archaeology has tended to be drawn into the service of the study and restoration of monuments. Education in the subject of ceramic studies has not been a significant part of the curriculum in archaeology courses in the country. Books on the subject are difficult to find in Cambodia.

Young Khmer archaeologists are aware of the problem, and were anxious to do something about it. As a result, the Center for Khmer Studies sponsored a 4-day, 12-hour intensive workshop. Approximately 50 people including many young Khmer scholars and students, attended. Several took advantage of invitations to bring samples of artifacts which they had discovered during their own research for discussion and analysis.

Bonnie Baskin, who has been training Khmer scholars in the processes of ceramic analysis and restoration, attended and brought many of her students with her. John Miksic from the Southeast Asian Studies Programme, National University of Singapore, organized the workshop and gave lectures.

Copies of the Powerpoint presentations used were deposited with the CKS library. Topics discussed included: basic ceramic terminology; technology of pottery production; decorative techniques; history of Southeast Asian ceramics; history of Chinese ceramics; identification of Chinese ceramics; and analytical techniques used by archaeologists who specialize in ceramics.

## Economic Growth, Social Inequality and Environmental Change in Thailand and Cambodia

A University of Chicago project hosted by CKS

*This past year, CKS began a collaboration with the University of Chicago under Professor Alan Kolata on his research project entitled Economic Growth, Social Inequality and Environmental Change in Thailand and Cambodia. Joined by co-principal investigators, Robert Townsend and Michael Binford, the project aims at analyzing the interacting social, economic and ecological processes that affect economic growth, the emergence or intensification of social inequality and the dynamics of land-use and environmental change.*

The ambition of this multi-year research project will be to integrate the natural and social science analyses of distinct social, economic and physical variables to answer the question of how and to what extent environmental and cultural variability affect economic behavior and decision making.

CKS is supervising and facilitating the implementation of the Cambodian project. In the past few months, CKS has recruited a Cambodian supervisor and four Cambodian researchers to collect extensive data on social, cultural, historical and environmental factors at the household level in villages in Siem Reap, Battambang, Kompong Thom and Oddtar Meanchey provinces. These five recruits are expected to play a core leadership role for the next 3 years. In July 2005, they attended a one-month training at the Thai Family Research Center in Thailand and fully benefited from the expertise of the staff there who have been doing the same data collection in Thailand for over 10 years.

Led by supervisor, Mr. Mok Tonh, who will be based at the project headquarters in Siem Reap, each of the four researchers (Mr. Yem Makara, Ms. Vorn Vichheka, Mr. Nhim Kim-Eang and Mr. Theng Lipine) are assigned to a specific province and oversee the survey data collection for selected villages.

The pilot phase of the project is expected to last through this calendar year with data collection beginning at the villages in September 2005.

CKS has renovated the room below our administrative office for project use, and welcomes the addition of these five promising new staff members!

## CKS's Role Acclaimed by the International Coordinating Committee

On the occasion of the last ICC meeting (International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor) in June 2005, we were honored to receive from the ICC Secretariat under the patronage of UNESCO, formal congratulations for CKS's efforts in capacity building activities for Cambodians, and for our support of creative and innovative research.

Since its inception, CKS has contributed to efforts supporting increasing knowledge of the Angkor historical site. Some of the Center's senior fellows - among whom Dr. Olivier Cunin, Dr. Anna Gade, Dr. Tim Winter and Fabienne Luco - have been and continue to be engaged in research on Angkor, from its ancient history to the way the surrounding villagers

interact with the temples today.

By virtue of our location within the Wat Damnak monastery complex, in the center of Siem Reap, CKS has played an important role in linking Angkor to the rest of Cambodia, its society and its region.

We continue to do so through our public library (the only public reading space in town), our publications in Khmer, our numerous conferences, and our training programs, including our summer junior resident fellowship program, which is centered in Siem Reap.

CKS is a multi-disciplinary intellectual presence in the Angkor region, contributing to the long-term development of the city and the historical sites surrounding it.

## Study trips of Foreign Institutions

For the second year in a row, CKS hosted the Cambodian portion of the study trip for Central Washington University (Ellensburg, WA) for ten days in July and August 2005, funded by the Fulbright Program.

The group of 12 secondary school teachers and three CWU professors began their study tour in Siem Reap, accompanied by CKS-affiliated scholars Olivier Cunin and Fabienne Luco for visits to the Angkor temples and the traditional village of Srah Srang. The group then traveled to Battambang, with CKS-affiliated researcher Denis Gambade, and visited Aek Phnom, Samdech Oue High School and the beautiful local pagodas for which Battambang is renowned.

Their trip culminated with three days in Phnom Penh, where the teachers and professors went to the National Museum, the Royal Palace and Tuol Sleng Prison accompanied by CKS scholar Timothy Wood, as well as visiting Sisowath High School and CKS's Phnom Penh office, where they learned about CKS' publishing activities and the Building Institutional Capacity in Higher Education Program. The study group was also given the opportunity to sample the cultural and culinary traditions of Phnom Penh through Khmer dance, the Russian Market and a cruise on the Mekong, which included a dinner of traditional Khmer food. In July, CKS hosted the Cambodian portion of a tour with the East-West Center, an internationally recognized education and research organization. With the aim of exposing educators to firsthand experience in Asia, 22 educators from the United States and EWC director Namji Steineman toured the temples of Angkor, visited the traditional village of Srah Srang and visited the primary school located in Wat Damnak, accompanied by CKS staff and scholars.

## Upcoming Events

### CONFERENCES

#### WATER IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA


Together with the Institute for International Asian Studies (IIAS), with funding from the Asia-Europe Foundation, CKS is hosting a conference on Water in Mainland Southeast Asia from November 29 to December 2, 2005. Twenty-seven speakers will present on topics such as urban water management, agriculture and fisheries, policy and water management and hydro-geography and waterways. Presenters come from Asia, Europe, Australia and North America.

#### HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

On January 9 and 10, 2006, in Siem Reap, this first international conference of its kind will cover all aspects of the history of medicine in Southeast Asia, with the aim of fostering closer fellowship among all medical historians, scholars and students, especially those practicing in the region. The conference committee includes Kieth Rethy Chhem, CKS board member, and Professors Harold Cook and Laurence Monnais. It is sponsored by the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at the University College of London, the University of Montreal and the Schulich School of Medicine at the University of Western Ontario.

#### RETHINKING MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA: COMPARING SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES

Originating in the first and second sessions of the CKS program Building Institutional Capacity in Higher Education - *Contemporary Southeast Asia and Cultures and Identities of Mainland Southeast Asia* - this conference to be held



February 25-27, 2006, will provide a forum for early-career Cambodian scholars to present their research alongside international counterparts with related interests. In addition to participants from the CKS capacity-building program, this conference will involve up to 25 other presenters and will be run in collaboration with partner universities in Cambodia. The emphasis will be on developing comparisons between Cambodia and other countries in Southeast Asia.

## OTHER EVENTS

### TEACHING KHMER WORKSHOP

On October 10-14, 2005, CKS sponsored its second workshop on teaching the Khmer language, entitled Using Specialized Teaching Methodologies to Teach Khmer. There is a specific need for competency in teaching Khmer to foreign scholars, who wish to deepen their knowledge of Khmer studies. The workshop was conducted by Frank Smith, who demonstrated specific teaching techniques, and showed participants how they can use the inexpensive and plentiful materials all around them, including newspaper, magazines, signs, television and radio broadcasts, to create their own lessons. Sixteen participants took part in the weeklong workshop, three of them recruited from Siem Reap, where very few Khmer teachers are available.

### RENOVATION OF THE VIHEAR AT WAT DAMNAK

The renovation of Wat Damnak's Vihear, or Prayer Hall, will begin in November 2005. It will continue the preservation efforts initiated by CKS in Wat Damnak, that have included the Library, the conference hall and the administration building. As the monastery committee lacks both the funding and expertise to preserve the Vihear, CKS, in conjunction with the pagoda authority, developed a plan to restore the central building of the pagoda, restoring at the same time its cultural and spiritual significance.

It will hopefully also serve as a model for other preservation initiatives related to Cambodian vernacular heritage - a subject always raised, but rarely if ever followed through in action.

CKS would like to thank its board members and donors for giving generously to this much needed restoration project: Selma Ertegun, Lois de Menil, Steve and Michele Pesner, Anne Bass, Jacques Hennessy, Alan Kolata and Stanley G. Mortimer III.

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# Putting the Past Together


**BONNIE BASKIN**

**Head conservator, Ceramics Conservation Lab  
and CKS Fellow 2005**

A SHIFT IS UNDERWAY IN CAMBODIAN ARCHAEOLOGY FROM AN EMPHASIS ON MONUMENTS, WHICH ARE LESS FREQUENTLY DISCOVERED THESE DAYS, TO A CONCERN WITH ARTIFACTS, WHICH NOT ONLY ARE FOUND AT MOST SITES, BUT MAY CONSTITUTE THE MAJOR REMAINS OF PREHISTORIC SOCIETIES. SINCE MOST OF THESE ARTIFACTS ARE CERAMICS, THE STUDY OF POTTERY HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT.

Photo: A pot found in Phum Snay

© Ceramics Conservation Lab



SINCE most of these artifacts are ceramics, the study of pottery has become increasingly important.

It seems, in fact, as though each new excavation is remaking Cambodian ceramics history. Recent finds have included objects unlike anything seen before, such as the iron-horned ceramic epaulettes excavated by Dougald O'Reilly and his Royal University of Fine Arts (RUFA) team at Phum Snay, and the red-and-white painted pottery unearthed by Christophe Pottier at the EFEO excavation of Koh Ta Mea. Similarly, the discovery of a remarkable large Longquan bowl, excavated from Prasat Suor Prat by the Japanese Government Team for Safeguarding Angkor (JSA), has enabled researchers to appreciate - more clearly than from the fragments and small vessels previously found - the high quality of the Chinese celadon wares used in the Angkorian royal household.

Cambodia had no facility for conserving these extraordinary ceramics, however, until the Ceramics Conservation Lab opened in 2002, making available the services of four conservators, three of whom have been trained to international standard at the lab. At its headquarters at the RUFA Faculty of Archaeology in Phnom Penh, or in portable labs set up at the offices of archaeological teams elsewhere in Cambodia, the conservators clean, stabilize, and assemble the 100 or more sherds that may comprise a pot. Through support from the Honolulu Academy of Arts, Global Heritage Fund, Friends of Khmer Culture, U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh, and Adopt A Pot, nearly 175 ceramics have been conserved by the lab since its inception.

### **Cleaning and stabilization**

Starting from a bag of pottery pieces, or *sherds*, or from an assembled pot that archaeologists had joined quickly to get a sense of its profile, conservators evaluate the material condition of each ceramic and develop a treatment plan. The first step is usually cleaning, which must be done to remove dirt, old adhesive, or both without removing the often-fragile ceramic surface. Great care must be taken, for even a small amount of water brushed lightly over an ancient low-fired earthenware may dissolve the burnished top layer, for example, and the gentlest dry-brushing can dislodge flaking glaze. Cleaning must similarly uncover but not disturb usage indications,

like soot on cooking pots, that provide key evidence about an artifact's history. Cleaning must also retain bits of earth in the recesses of once-buried pots as specimens for future analysis.

After cleaning, an insignificant sherd is tested to see whether salts from groundwater infused into the clay during burial are at a critically high level. Trapped in the pores of the clay near the surface, these salts may later expand with humidity and knock off the surface, especially with repeated expansions and contractions as humidity fluctuates. If the salt level, measured by a conductivity meter inserted into water in which the sherd has soaked, is indeed critical, then all the sherds will be immersed in deionized (salt-free) water to dissolve and flush out the salts. Sherds with water-soluble paint, very low-fired or degraded clay, or other fragilities cannot withstand this desalination process, but they can sometimes be desalinated by other, more elaborate means.

Next the sherds are consolidated- their edges fortified with repeated applications of very dilute conservation-grade resin, which the edges absorb- and laid out like jigsaw-puzzle pieces so they can be matched. While the decoration on some sherds may make them easy to match, many are largely unfeathered and can be matched only by hunches and a long trial-and-error process, made even longer when pieces are very small, very thin, numerous, or all of these. Porous earthenware can be particularly perplexing because different soil conditions may stain adjacent sherds entirely different colors and because the sherd edges may be so worn that matching may occur almost by intuition alone.

### **Assembly**

The assembly process that follows is also laborious. Even when pieces seem to fit together perfectly, the angle at the join may prove to be off by a hair's breadth when added sherds define the actual contour. Or added sherds may show that the first join crosses an area where the clay was pinched in by the potter's fingers and is therefore an indentation rather than the flat surface the pieces seemed initially to form. Thus each new join redefines the previous ones, which may then need re-adjustment. This process of precise fitting brings dramatic results, however: the sherds will be so accurately aligned that, whatever their number, they will read as a single continuous surface.

Joining also requires the right adhesive. If sherds fit together tightly, they can be joined with a thin film of conservation-grade adhesive. If they fit loosely, however, such that light is visible through gaps when pieces are held closely together, then the adhesive must be thickened with a chemically-inert filler, like a powder of microscopic glass balloons, to produce a kind of sticky bubblegum for filling the gaps. These so-called bulked adhesives may be augmented with dry pigments, so the adhesive visible in the joins, like mortar between bricks, will blend with the color of the pot and not require later painting.

Whether or not an adhesive is bulked, however, it must be thoughtfully chosen. The temperature at which it becomes soft and rubbery must be higher than the maximum temperatures of a particular climate. Its chemical stability must prove excellent in the aging tests conducted by conservation research organizations. And it must demonstrate good "reversibility," meaning that it can be dissolved and removed easily when sherds need realignment during assembly or if the pot might in the future need to be taken apart. Conservation must, above all, be reversible. So using the correct museum-grade adhesive, rather than a hardware or stationery store adhesive, is imperative.

### Restoration

After joining, pots may display large and small voids left by missing pieces, and these voids, if structurally or aesthetically disruptive, need to be filled. Fills are usually made of hard, high-quality dental plaster, often applied over a sheet of plasticene or dental wax molded to an intact area with the same curvature as the missing section. After refinement by scalpel and sandpaper until their contours meld with those of the pot, the completed fills are consolidated with dilute adhesive to make both sides waterproof and then painted with acrylics or other reversible paints to blend with the pot. By rule of thumb, these painted restorations should be inconspicuous, even invisible, from arm's length but detectable by a trained eye from close up. Additionally, restorations must never falsify an object by installing somebody's guess of what a missing neck or spout or handle looked like or by re-creating more than 50 percent of a pot to produce an artifact that looks like ceramic but is more restoration plaster than original clay.

The outcome of conservation is that sherds recapitulate the objects they once were—objects now made strong enough for handling and display and integrated enough to appear not as patchworks conspicuous for their missing areas, but as true pots. Conservation thus brings the past together piece by piece, as pots become whole, stable, and more meaningful both historically and aesthetically.



*Conservators Chap Sopheara, Tep Sokha and Pich Thyda work on ceramics excavated by EFEO at Prei Khmeng.*



*Left: Ceramics found by Dougald O'Reilly and his Royal University of Fine Arts (RUFA) team at Phum Snay. From sherds to an assembled pot.*



*Below: one of the iron-horned epaulettes excavated by the same team at Phum Snay.*



## SPECIAL EVENT

### David Chandler's A History of Cambodia in Khmer language

Successfully introducing book publishing at CKS



On August 11, 2005 the long-awaited translation into the Khmer language of *A History of Cambodia*, by the American historian David Chandler, was officially launched at the CKS office in Phnom Penh.

Philippe Peycam, Director of CKS, Mark Storella, Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy and David Chandler spoke to a crowd of over 100 people who gathered for the occasion. David Chandler also signed copies of his book. This translation marked the launch of our new CKS Khmer publication series.

Chandler's book has long been considered one of the essential reference texts, providing a clear and concise historical account of Cambodia from prehistoric times to 1999, but it had never before been available in the Khmer language. The translation and printing of the book was supported by the Van Waveren Foundation (New York) and the Embassy of the United States of America in Phnom Penh.

Westview Press, a member of the Perseus Books Group, kindly agreed to cede CKS the foreign rights for free, and David Chandler waived his author's royalties. Four young Cambodians - Mam Vannary, Prak Sonnara and Seng Soth, graduate students from the Royal University of Fine Arts, and Chin Channa, a former monk - undertook the translation, while Prof. Michel Rethy Antelme (INALCO, Paris) and Deth THACH in Phnom Penh proofread and edited the final manuscript.

In the years to come CKS hopes to translate and publish more essential academic texts in Khmer for Cambodian students and the Cambodian public in general.



*Siksacahr*, the trilingual peer-reviewed academic journal, which gives an opportunity for Cambodian scholars to publish in their own language, is also an essential component of the CKS's publishing program.



The translation team with the author: Mam Vannary, Chin Channa, David Chandler, Seng Soth, Prak Sonnara, and Thach Deth

# BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY IN CAMBODIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

*This 3 year-program, composed of six half-year long sessions, builds and strengthens the capacity of junior Cambodian faculty through weekly seminars on selected topics, workshops on research methodology and individual research projects in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Its implementation was made possible thanks to core funding from the Rockefeller Foundation.*

The first session began in February 2005, and focused on the comparative study of the social, cultural, and political contexts in neighboring Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. It comprised eleven participants from the Royal University of Phnom Penh, Pannasastra University, the Buddhist Institute, the University of Technology of Phnom Penh and the Teacher Training Center in Takeo. The seminar sessions were conducted by visiting scholar Professor Duncan McCargo and guest lecturers from universities abroad. Prof. McCargo employed an interactive pedagogical approach in which students formed small groups, discussed selected topics, provided critical arguments and then presented the group's opinions. This approach allowed the participants to make presentations and to be active within the group.

In early May, the group went to Siem Reap for a three-day intensive workshop on research methodology, conducted by program director Chean Men and guest lecturers Dr. Leakthina Ollier and Fabienne Luco. The purpose of the workshop was to prepare participants for proposal writing and fieldwork through in-depth training on qualitative research methodology.

Participants then embarked on study tours to Vietnam and Thailand to give them direct experience of the social, cultural, political, and economic situation of the neighboring countries. One-week was spent in Vietnam at Nong Lam University (Ho Chi Minh City and another week was spent in Thailand at Mahasarakam University. The group spent time with faculty and graduate students, participated in social events, visited historical sites and non-governmental organizations, attended cultural performances and presentations. Both visitors and visited exchanged views on the social and political situation of their own country and how they perceived each other. Visits to Cambodian communities were also organised in Vietnam's Kampuchea Krom region and Surin province in Thailand. In July, participants began their individual fieldwork and later began writing up their final papers.

One of the successful outcomes of this first session has been that some participants were offered opportunities to study or participate in other events abroad: a two-weeks teacher training at the East-West Center in Hawaii, an invitation to attend an international conference in The Netherlands, and a two-year grant for graduate studies in Vienna, Austria and Wroclaw, Poland. Finally, three participants attended the CKS Summer Junior Fellow program in Siem Reap, along with American and French undergraduates.

The second session, entitled *Cultures and Identities of Mainland Southeast Asia as related to the Cambodian context* is now being conducted by Dr. Penny Edwards.



*Above:  
Prof. Duncan McCargo, visiting  
scholar for the 1st session*



*Left: Chean MEN,  
Program director*



*Above left: Heng Sreang,  
Pannasastra University  
Above right: Sou Sochenda,  
Royal University of Phnom Penh  
Right: Participants engaged in  
class discussion*



## SUMMER 2005 JUNIOR RESIDENT FELLOWSHIPS

*Sponsored by the Florence Gould Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation and the Asian Cultural Council, the 2005 Summer Junior Resident Fellowship Program brought together undergraduate students from Cambodia, France and the United States in residence at CKS Headquarters in Siem Reap.*

Now in its second year of operation, the Fellowship Program attracted many strong applications, and the selection resulted in the coming together for two months of 14 very bright and highly motivated young students, with research projects ranging from Khmer traditional dance and music, and Christianity in Cambodia, to studies dealing with issues such as the effect of tourism in Siem Reap-Angkor, homeless children, the politics of international aid, Khmer Rouge memorial sites, and relations between Cambodia and Vietnam, to name just a few. Led by Program director, Dr. Leakthina Ollier, and Senior Resident Scholar, Prof. Peter Hammer from Wayne State University, the academic program included Khmer languages classes for the French and the Americans, and English classes for the Cambodians. Lectures and discussion sessions given by the Program director, the Senior Resident Scholar and guest lecturers covered a broad range of topics, providing the students with an introduction to Cambodian history and culture, as well as more focused lectures and discussions about contemporary Cambodia. Weekly field trips in and around Siem Reap, and a trip to Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville complemented the lectures. Joining in to assist the Life and Hope Association organized by the head monks of Wat Damnak, the students were also involved in volunteer work in the community, teaching English to children from poor families and street children.

During these two summer months, junior fellows were given a taste of Cambodia. More important, friendship among them blossomed. They cared for each other, helped each other out and celebrated a few 21st birthdays together. To their surprise, they discovered they had much in common. While it was easy to assume that the French and Americans came to discover Cambodia, the

Cambodians themselves discovered their own country, too. During a visit to the Toul Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh, for instance, one of the Cambodian students, overcome by emotion, burst into tears. It was her first visit there. One of the French students arrived with many negative thoughts about the U.S. and "American ideologies and policies." By the end of the first week, he befriended one of the American students and for the rest of their time in Siem Reap, they were often seen together having great debates about what they had learned, and talking about whatever else young people normally talk about. Lastly, while there were no credits or grades to be earned, the students took their research seriously, with a spirit of genuine interest and enjoyment, and with great maturity.

At the end of the program, the students understood a little more - and knew a little less - about themselves, Cambodia and the world. Some of their old ideas were shaken up to make room for a new idealism tinted by the reality they had come to see, feel and experience.

Indeed, this fellowship program has succeeded in building bridges between different cultures and in developing new interest in Cambodian studies among younger scholars. Many students said they will come back to carry on further research in Cambodia.



*From top: Dr. Leakthina Ollier, Program director, Senior resident scholar Prof. Peter Hammer, and young fellows attending a Khmer language class.*

### Chhom Kunthea: A Promising Young Scholar

Chhom Kunthea is a dynamic young Cambodian woman, who graduated in French Literature with a specialization in Linguistics from the Royal University of Phnom Penh in 2001. She is a promising Cambodian scholar who has been associated to CKS for many years.

She is being supported by CKS and the Indian Council of Cultural Relations to pursue her M.A. in Sanskrit Studies at Magadh University (India). She is currently working on an

English translation of the Ta Prohm inscription (translated into French in 1906 by George Coedes). Her future scholarly interests focus on epigraphy.

She has been invited to participate in the workshop Reconfiguring Religion, Power and Moral Order in Cambodia, to be held in Verberg (Sweden) in October 2005, organised by the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (Copenhagen) and the International Institute of Asian Studies (Leiden).

## SENIOR FELLOWSHIPS 2005-2006

### CKS SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

**Supported by the Henry Luce Foundation, the Florence Gould Foundation and the Council of American Overseas Research Centers**

**Bonnie Baskin. Technical studies of Pre-Angkorian and Angkorian ceramics: Research to Characterize and Analyze Ceramic Production in Archaeological Cambodia (CAORC)**

Ms. Baskin is the founder and the head conservator of the Ceramics Conservation Lab of the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh. Her research will propose and test a protocol for technical characterization of ceramics. She aims to determine whether temporal or spatial continuities of form or technique can be demonstrated among recently excavated pre-Angkorian and Angkorian ceramics. This will be done by technically characterizing the ceramics from ten or more sites to create a profile of ceramic production for each site and then analyzing across sites. The ceramics will be characterized by multiple technical factors, interrelationships among these factors will be explored, and all these considerations will be used to analyze the pottery from each site and then proceed with site comparisons.

**Pollie Bith. Female-headed Households Living with HIV/AIDS in Cambodia (CAORC).**

Ms. Pollie Bith holds a Ph.D. in Medical Anthropology from the University of Hawaii. Her research is a continuation of her Ph.D. research, which seeks to uncover how the disease category *svay* shapes perceptions of HIV/AIDS and influence preventive and therapeutic behaviors. The specific aim is to describe illness narratives of female-headed households re the highly active anti-retroviral therapy, in order to provide a deeper understanding of their knowledge and attitudes regarding HIV/AIDS. Ethnographic research methods will include participant-observation and interviews with people living with HIV/AIDS as well as service providers. She will immerse herself in the day-to-day life of people, seeking to share their perspective of the systems that surround them.

**Pinna Indorf. Analysis of Form Composition in Early Khmer Architecture (CAORC)**

Dr. Pinna Indorf received her Ph.D. in Historical Architecture from the National University of Singapore. She was an Associate Professor at the National University of Singapore where she lectured for 25 years before retiring in 2002. Dr. Indorf's research for her CAORC fellowship is entitled

Analysis of Form Composition in Early Khmer Architecture and she intends to test the hypothesis that the architectural composition of early Khmer temples was based on the conceptualization of the movement of formal components outward from the center of the sanctum. The study relies on a study of actual monuments through photo documentation and key measurements to identify components of the architectural forms, models of the formal language, the movement pattern and a preliminary analysis of the rhythm patterns.

**Navin Moul. Citizen in the Making: Deported "Cambodian Americans" in Cambodia (CAORC)**

Navin Moul is Ph.D candidate in Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Her project relates to a distinct and relatively new community in Cambodia, the growing population of predominantly young male deportees from the United States. Her research will focus on this community's role in the new "democratic" Cambodia of the post-1993 UNTAC period. In particular, she will look at Khmer-based nationalism, wherein the government gives deportees citizenship, but extra-judicial measures and techniques of "subjectification" serve to exclude them from Cambodian society. Her hypothesis is that institutional and public practices define them as a kind of sub-citizen group, analogous to ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia.

**Timothy Dylan Wood: Tracing the Last Breath: Anlong Veng from Stronghold to Museum (CAORC)**

Mr. Wood is a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology at Rice University. His project aims to understand how Cambodian individuals' experiences influence institutional efforts at representation and memorialization of Cambodia's twentieth century past. By working with community members and officials involved in the museum construction in Anlong Veng, this work examines the social dynamics that govern the process of constructing sites of remembrance, which have as their focus a period of tragic loss. It will explore how different communities approach and re-construct historical periods in divergent ways, and how these differing representations offer innovative ways for Cambodian people to negotiate their own understandings of their past. In addition, this work provides a detailed post-1979 history of the Khmer Rouge at its last stronghold.

### **Olivier Cunin: Contribution to the Architectural History of Jayaçrî (Florence Gould)**

Mr. Cunin holds a Ph.D. in Architectural Science from the Institut National Polytechnique de Lorraine (France). His research aims principally at updating the relative chronology of this vast complex known nowadays as the Preah Khan, as well as its associated temples. It is a continuation of his thesis research that provided an updated chronology of the main monuments of the twelfth-century architectural program of Jayavarman VII. The inventory of both internal and external wooden structures will help to complete the data on the Preah Khan complex, collected in the past through the examination of mineral structures.

### **Anne Guillou: Constitution of Therapeutic Spaces in Southeast Asia. General Assessment and Regional Comparative Case Studies (Florence Gould)**

Ms. Guillou holds a Ph.D. in Social and Cultural Anthropology from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS, Paris). Her research is embedded within a larger project bringing together social scientists working on Southeast Asia in order to implement an overall comparative analysis of therapeutic networks in these societies and to examine the coexistence of different healers within the same social and territorial unit and how they interact with each other. Special attention will be given to modern forms of the medical "tradition" which is being constantly recreated and its relation with the Cambodian scientific medical practice.

### **Emiko Stock. Identity Perceptions of the Chams in Cambodia: Community Heterogeneity and Interpretations of the Concept of Ethnicity (Florence Gould)**

Ms. Stock is a Ph.D. candidate in Ethnology and Comparative Sociology at Université Paris X (Nanterre). Although the Chams in Cambodia seem to be bound by their triple ethnicity-belonging to Champa, to Islam, and the Cambodian nation, the communities appear to be heterogeneous when it comes to their social, cultural and religious practices, and this despite a common background which is still very much present. This research examines identity representations of the Chams and focuses on the Chams' representations of themselves as well as others' representations of them. Likewise, it focuses on relationships, real or conjured up, between the different Cham groups and the relation to the Other, whether s/he be a Muslim or a Khmer.



## **A TRIBUTE TO INGRID MUAN**

Cambodian studies suffered a tragic loss in January 2005 with the sudden death of the art historian, curator and cultural critic Ingrid Muan. A dedicated scholar, Ingrid had been selected for a CKS-CAORC Fellowship, to conduct a study on US-Cambodian relations; a fitting topic for such an extraordinarily gifted cultural ambassador.

In 1998, Dr. Muan co-founded with Ly Daravuth the Reyum Institute for Arts and Culture, while completing her doctorate in Art History at Columbia University. She served for many years as a visiting lecturer in Art History and Painting at the Royal University of Fine Arts (RUFA). Through her work at Reyum, her teaching, and above all, her personal dedication in helping Cambodian artists, Ingrid made an immeasurable contribution to the revival of Arts in Cambodia, and earned the lasting friendship and admiration of many people. A meticulous scholar and prolific writer, Ingrid co-authored a number of works on Cambodian culture, art, modern literature and history while at Reyum.

In the next six months, CKS Visiting Scholar Penny Edwards will be co-ordinating the publication of Ingrid's outstanding doctoral dissertation, 'Citing Angkor: Cambodian Arts in the Age of Restoration (1918-2000)' (Columbia University, 2000). This pioneering work tracks the inherent dynamism of the visual and plastic arts, explores the origins of contemporary Cambodian artistic production, and brings to light the works of numerous individuals and artists. A small fund has been established to ensure the publication of this work - a project which Ingrid neglected in her own lifetime in favour of promoting and publishing the works of others.

Potential donors are invited to send any inquiries to [penny.edwards@anu.edu.au](mailto:penny.edwards@anu.edu.au)

## CKS Institutional Consortium Members and Affiliates

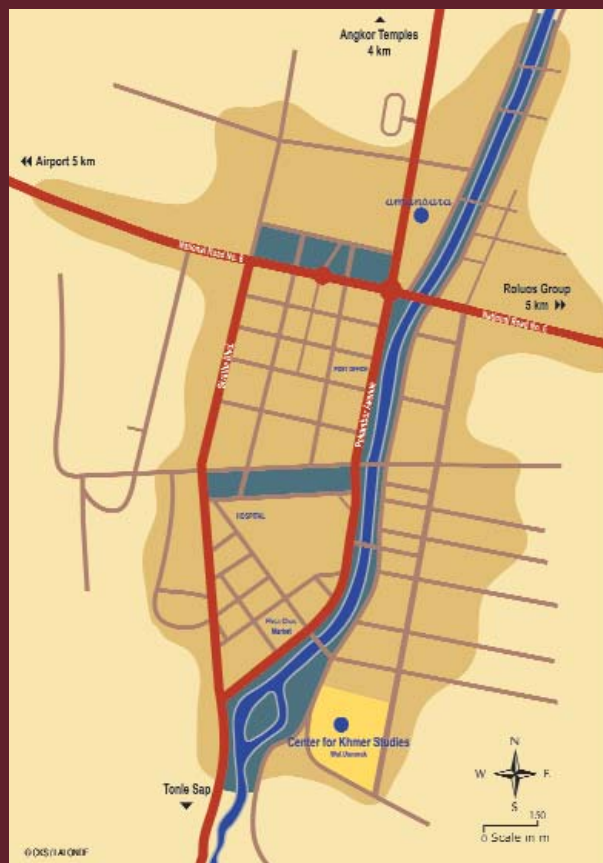
### CAMBODIA

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### INTERNATIONAL

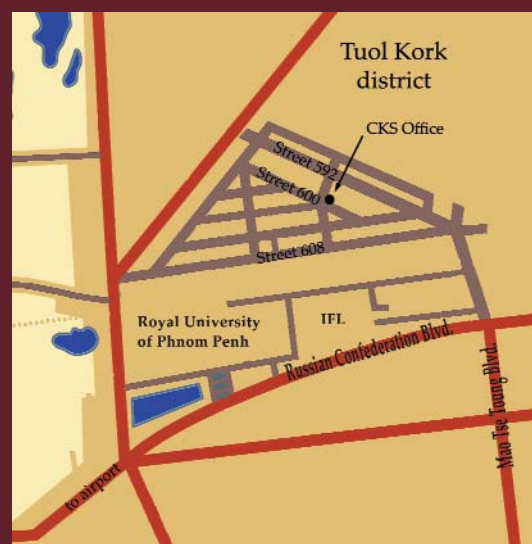
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Head Office: PO Box 9380  
Wat Damnak, Siem Reap, Cambodia  
Tel: (855) 063 964 385 - Fax: (855) 063 963 035

Phnom Penh Office: 8 Street 600, Toul Kork  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
Tel: (855) 023 991 937



Email: [center@khmerstudies.org](mailto:center@khmerstudies.org)  
Website: [www.khmerstudies.org](http://www.khmerstudies.org)

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