

CKS Library's Reading Room in February 2021, before the outbreak of Covid.

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# Mission Statement

CKS is an American Overseas Research Center supported by international foundations, educational institutions, scholars, and individuals. It is an independent non-profit corporation incorporated in the state of Delaware, USA. It receives partial support for overhead and research fellowships from the U.S. Government. Its programs in the social sciences, arts and humanities are focused on Cambodia and are privately funded.

## CKS seeks to:

- Promote research and international scholarly exchange through programs that increase understanding of Cambodia and its region both within Cambodia and at American universities.
- Strengthen Cambodia's cultural and educational structures and integrate Cambodian scholars into regional and international exchange.
- CKS's programs are administered from its offices in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. It maintains a small administrative office in New York and a support office in Paris, Les Amis du Centre d'Études Khmères.
- CKS is a member institution of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC).

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# Welcome to CKS!

## Dear friends of CKS,

“The best laid schemes o’ Mice and Men gang aft agley”, as the Scottish poet Robert Burns tells us. Still, the same man wrote an “Ode to Haggis”, suggesting that even the least likely circumstances can provide a cause for celebration.

The past year has been a curious year, of course not just for CKS. January 2020 started as usual with our Annual Meeting in Siem Reap. It gives board members and staff a chance to catch up in person. It is also an occasion to enjoy our wonderful campus and buildings in the Wat Damnak temple, and to receive a much needed blessing from the monks.

The meeting went well. Everybody left knowing plans were being made, our traditional programs were well in hand, new projects were being considered or started. The dim rumble in the background, audible only because of the proximity of Cambodia to China, was not a cause of worry.

Two months later, the library was shut, the office closed, all the staff working from home, and despite hoping till the last minute that circumstances would improve sufficiently to allow our programs to happen, most of them had to be cancelled.

Nonetheless, a few bright lights. Research programs focusing on urban studies went forward, as the scholars involved are Cambodian or based in Cambodia. A few senior fellows managed to take advantage of their grants during the occasional periods where entry to Cambodia was possible. Our library, closed, opened, closed, opened again, adapted. The popular children’s reading became a video event. The library also received several gifts, including books from the library of Dr. Rethy Chhem, an alumnus of our board. Several workshops



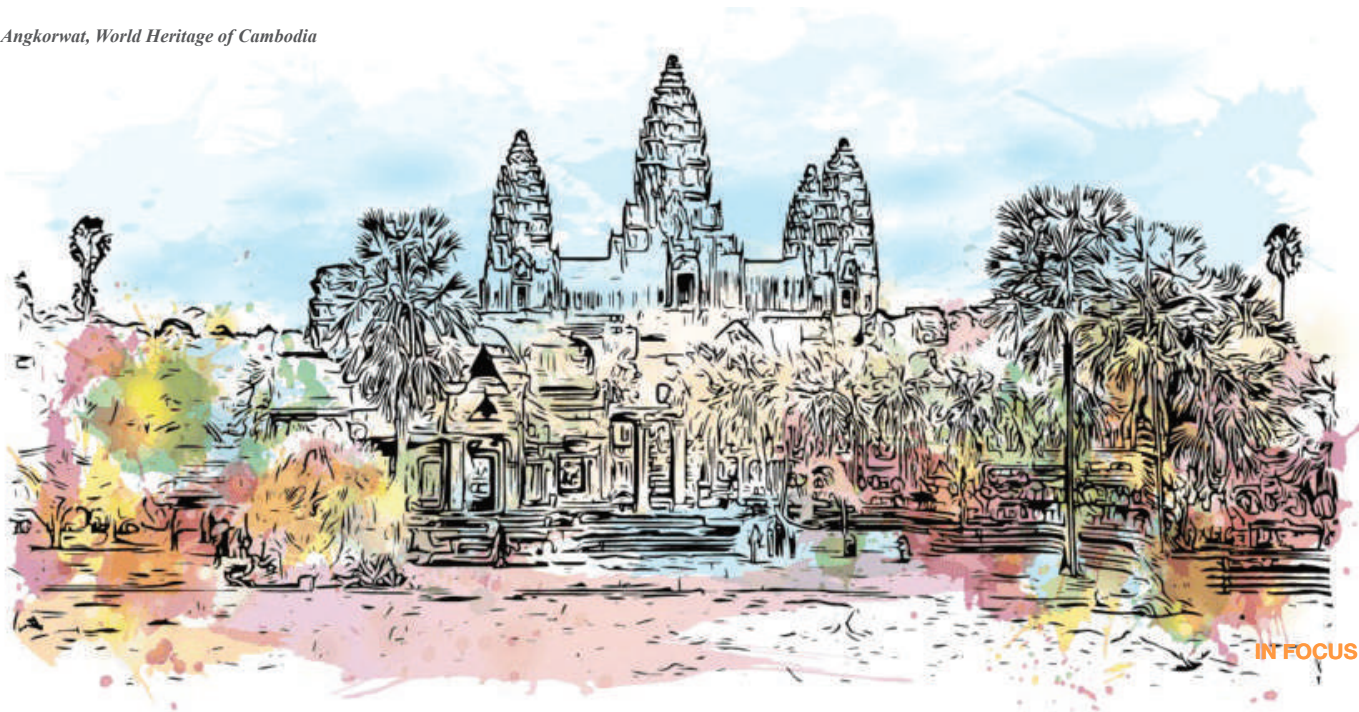
took place when circumstances allowed, and, after a slow start, CKS now has a strong program of online talks, webinars and discussions, not least thanks to our Fellows presenting their new work. Subjects range from the evolution of Cambodian music, to courtship practices in the Kulen hills. As circumstances improve, these events will be live events, both on video and in front of a live audience in our Wat Damnak conference hall.

New grants have been received, both from institutional and private donors, and old ones have been renewed. Finally, for all our research fellows, American, Khmer, French, who have not been able to take up their grants in the past year, they are only postponed, and CKS looks forward to welcoming them in the near future.

We shall not be issuing a call for applications for a poet to write an “Ode to CKS”, but I should like to give a word of thanks to all those, staff, board members, friends, whose efforts and support allow CKS to flourish despite these most peculiar times.

*Jacques Hennessy,  
Chairman*

*Angkorwat, World Heritage of Cambodia*





# President's Note



**I**t was truly an honor to have been elected President of CKS in January of this year. There are few organizations or institutions that have done so much to bolster the study of Cambodia in the US and worldwide, including in Cambodia itself. Much of the leading scholarship on Cambodia today was founded on support from CKS fellowships at the PhD-candidate and post-doctoral

levels. This bedrock of CKS-supported scholarship expands our knowledge of Cambodia and its region, shapes our understandings, and inspires future research and education.

As a former CKS fellowship recipient myself, I fully grasp the value of such support at the individual level. The CKS fellowship I received in 2002 allowed me to undertake my dissertation research, an anthropological study focusing on the aftermath of the genocide in Cambodia's upland communities. The dissertation became my first book, and the research it was based on has and continues to be an inspiration for my writings, projects, courses, and yes, more books! Like me, other dissertation-writing and senior scholars have enjoyed similar benefits from our fellowship programs, allowing them to engage in research and share their scholarship with others through their publications and teaching.

How does one develop an interest in Cambodia and Southeast Asian Studies? The answer is of course through an introduction to its history and culture, and opportunities to learn and explore. CKS's unique Junior Fellows Program engages a select group of American, French, and Cambodian undergraduates in an immersive summer program; CKS children's reading program, hosted weekly by the CKS library, brings children's books to young ears and them to the library itself, which provides a favorite place to learn, study, and explore. We also offer a variety of training programs to researchers, students, and university faculty members. Further details on these programs and testimonials of participants are in the pages that follow.

Since its founding, CKS has made great strides in expanding and enhancing knowledge and understanding of Cambodia and Southeast Asia both abroad and within Cambodia. And yet, it is clear that our work is as necessary as ever. Two recent events signal that need. The first is the rise in hate crimes directed at Asians, particularly in America. The second is the evident misuse of photographs of victims of the Cambodian genocide that are increasingly commoditized as "art", and manipulated through the power of digital editing, reproduction, and online opportunities. Such acts of hate and ignorance signal that we still have much work to do. Increasing knowledge of Cambodia's history and culture and understanding of its region contributes to increased understanding, and hopefully, diminishes intolerance, ignorance, and abuse.

Cambodia and its region remain today among the most interesting and compelling areas for study. The region is integral to understanding the dynamics of global change. CKS will continue to support students and scholars and to build our library's resources and make them widely accessible. Our contribution to scholarship within Cambodia and abroad is made possible through the generosity of donors like you. Thank you!

*Eve Zucker, Ph.D.  
President*

*CKS Conference Hall at  
our headquarters in  
Wat Damnak, Siem Reap.*



## Director's Note

Over the past twelve months, it has been impossible to address anything without mentioning COVID-19. The pandemic has clawed its way into our day-to-day lives. While initially, mostly developed countries experienced surges in infections, Cambodia managed to contain outbreaks until the UK variant arrived, leading to an enormous surge in infections and hospitalizations that led the government to implement full lockdowns in both Phnom Penh and Siem Reap- the two cities that CKS calls home. International travel into Cambodia became very difficult. Regretfully, we had to cancel this summer's Khmer Language and Culture and Summer Junior Resident Fellowship programs. On the brighter side, we turned the pandemic into an opportunity to innovate and initiate new programming. We are proud to have received new U.S Department of Education Title VI funding, which will play an important role in supporting key programs, including our research library. We also initiated a new digital program--the CKS Webinar Series, inviting senior scholars to present their work before a diverse local and international audience. We were pleasantly surprised by the success of the webinars and the level of engagement they generated. Several reached well over 100 attendees!

The pandemic has not slowed down our in-country research programs. We will soon publish research on Urban Mobility in Phnom Penh, generously funded by the UNDP. A study on Resident Well-being in Phnom Penh, supported by the Singapore University of Technology and Design, is almost complete. A new research program, Ponlok Chomnes (Seed of Knowledge), supported by The Asia Foundation and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, has had a transformative effect on projects led by Cambodian researchers. The terms of the Ponlok Chomnes program gave CKS freedom to select Cambodian scholars, allowing us to support both talented young and senior researchers alike. These promising young scholars took the lead in conducting quality independent research on such important topics as microfinance, economics, and urban development, in collaboration with scholars from abroad. We have seen increasing demand for applied

research nationwide, as the pandemic has accentuated and exacerbated the vulnerabilities faced by Cambodians, as well as underscored the importance of looking at economic systems not as ends, but as means to improve standards of living, while respecting environmental and ecological limits. CKS responded to this challenge by supporting research focused on understanding the economic and social impact of COVID-19 and the consequences of rapid, pandemic-related changes for Cambodia's population. Our high-quality research has provided unique insights into unfolding economic transformations brought about by the pandemic, as well as prospects for sustainable alternatives.

I congratulate all my Cambodian and international colleagues, many of whom had to navigate complex family and personal situations resulting from the pandemic. Despite these difficulties, they maintained their professional commitment and focused on responding to the wide array of challenges over the past year.

I would also like to express sincere thanks to CKS's dedicated individual donors, who have made it possible for us to fund the Center's flagship programs and operations. It is because of you that we have been able to continue doing quality work throughout these challenging times.

*Natharoun NGO, M.P.A*  
*Director*

*CKS Library at  
our headquarters  
in Wat Damnak,  
Siem Reap.*



# We are grateful for your support!

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Australia Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
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## Please Support CKS!

**Our Annual Fund supports all CKS projects, including our Library,** the largest free library outside Phnom Penh. Its wide range of educational facilities are open to all.

- Support Acquisition Fund (\$15,000 budget)
- Provide a computer for our Reading Room (\$1,500)
- Support free internet access-- connect CKS Library to the World Wide Net (\$1,500)

**Support translation publication of key educational texts.(\$10,000)**

**Enable Cambodian scholars to attend regional conferences @ \$500 each.**

**Thesis Research Grants to Cambodian students @ \$5,000.**

**Sponsor a Khmer-American to attend the CKS 6-week in-country summer program.**



# My Experience at CKS



If you had told me that I would now work with academic researchers, I would certainly have responded with surprise. Until now, my work has primarily focused on policy and program implementation. And yet, I am now at CKS collaborating with academic researchers and advancing academic research efforts.

I arrived in Siem Reap in September 2020, to begin a one-year professional placement at CKS—an opportunity made possible by a Luce Scholarship. I had been seeking an opportunity to work in urban studies in Southeast Asia. This field is fairly limited in Cambodia. Fortunately, CKS is working to change that through its growing Urban Research and Innovation Program, and CKS welcomed me into its fold.

The “Ponlok Chamnes (Seeds of Knowledge) Data and Dialogue for Development in Cambodia” is a program whose purpose is to strengthen the capacity of Cambodian institutions to undertake quality research. Funded by Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through the Asia Foundation in Cambodia, CKS focuses on two program components—technical capacity development and organizational capacity building. The CKS Sihanoukville Research Project will be completed this year.

*Annika visiting Preah Vihear Temple in the end 2020*



In supporting CKS’s Urban Program projects, I have been working closely with three academic researchers in particular—Dr. Antonin Morin, Dr. Thuon Try, and Dr. Yen Yat—who are conducting a study of the socio-economic and urban transformation of Sihanoukville, a city located on Cambodia’s southern coast that has seen massive influxes of Chinese investment, land use change, and demographic change over the past five years.

Investigating Sihanoukville’s transformation demands caution, given the political sensitivity of the topic in Cambodia and the tremendous media attention, speculation, and activism that surrounds it. CKS’s research team deftly navigates these sensitivities, thanks to its independence and neutrality. They are not beholden to specific policy goals or imposed lines of inquiry. They have built trust with local government officials and residents, precisely because they seek to understand and record accurately, without pushing an advocacy agenda. Because of their impartiality, their findings have a potential for impact in a way that an NGO study or a policy report might not. This academic research project exemplifies the unique role CKS plays in Cambodia, and the importance of its approach: CKS can produce top-notch impartial academic research, with policy relevance, in response to pressing contemporary issues precisely because of its academic orientation and standards.

I am extremely grateful to CKS for welcoming me and offering so many opportunities to learn, to stretch beyond my professional comfort zones, and to contribute to the organization’s remarkable mission. I have been fortunate to share an office in Siem Reap with dedicated, brilliant colleagues (with frequent Zoom/Skype calls to Phnom Penh colleagues). They are the engine bringing CKS’ mission to life.

**Annika Freudenberger**, BA, Urban Studies ’18, Barnard College, Columbia University, received a fellowship of the Henry Luce Foundation to enhance understanding of Asia among potential leaders of US Society. Annika formerly worked at the Meridien Institute, where she provided strategic advice and designed collaborative projects. At CKS, she assists in design, management and implementation of urban projects.

# FEATURES

## A Stunning Museum

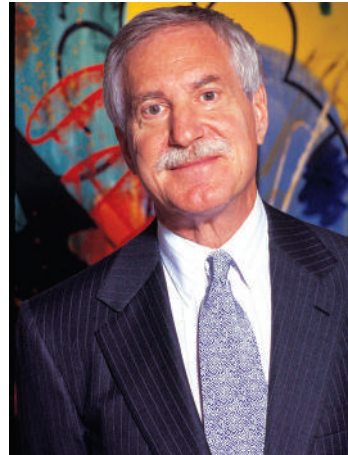
The National Museum in Phnom Penh has much to tell us. It is, of course, a repository of great art; its sculptures are extraordinary embodiments of the ancient Hinduist Khmer religion which informed the thoughts of kings and the very shape of the old Khmer kingdom; it teaches us that there were artists of genius who, over many centuries, expressed the very essence of that remarkable people. And then, there is more. The Museum survived, barely, the depredations of the Khmer Rouges, but when, in the 1990s, it reopened to a then scarce public, it showed all too clearly that it, too, had barely made it through those terrible years.

It was not only that the sculptures it displayed were fewer in number (but not in quality) than they are today: there was no electricity, and, therefore, no lighting or air-conditioning. Bats, on the other hand, had settled in their numbers; their guano, with its unmistakable smell, was everywhere. And of course, there were no explanatory notices. Even then, however, there was no mistaking what we saw: in the half-light, masterpiece after masterpiece told us just why we should care about the ancient Khmer civilization.

Today, there is even more to see. Of course, there is lighting and air-conditioning. There are clear notices on every piece; catalogs can be bought; more pieces are displayed, some of them the result of private generosity. The collection of Khmer gold jewelry, given to the Museum by Douglas Latchford, makes it possible for us to see, in their original form, the crowns, necklaces, and bracelets which we see also carved in the stone of the statues.

The Khmer kingdom, its history, its kings, its way of life had it seemed, been lost somewhere along with the passing of centuries. Then, as Cambodia became a French protectorate, archeologists began to decipher the inscriptions, often carved into the monuments themselves or on stone stelae, and the importance of what they revealed could not be ignored. More recently, scholars from several countries, Khmer of course included, have uncovered more objects and especially more knowledge of that glorious era.

That has benefited the Museum. Very great art may be easily recognizable, but if we are to understand everything it can teach us, we also need data: when, why, how was that piece made, and, in the case of Cambodia, how has it survived wars and other disasters? Where was it found, and in what condition? And how can we read a particular piece of sculpture or a particular relief?



Most of these questions can be answered at the National Museum. We can follow the evolution of style -uniquely in Khmer art from long, graceful forms to a kind of highly detailed classicism and on to imposingly monumental figures. We learn that while art was focused on religion -and the kings- it also expressed the complex refinement of the Khmer culture. We see that beginning with the very evident influence of South Indian art, the Khmer went on to create styles and mythological stories of their own. And sometimes absence is as eloquent as presence. With the decay of the Khmer kingdom and the invasions from Vietnam and Siam it endured, a long blank replaces the former abundance.

That the Museum in its present form should be such a treasure trove of beauty and knowledge is indeed thrilling, and it is gratifying that new catalogue should be easily available online. This is where CKS made its contribution: with the help of art historian Emma Bunker and funding provided by Shelby White and the Leon Levy Foundation we were actively engaged in the making of a complete inventory, the first since the French inventory of the 1920s. Victor Hugo famously wrote: “The cathedral is a book”; we can legitimately add: the National Museum is greatness and history made visible; to visit it is to find ourselves seeing and understanding one of the world’s great cultures.

*Olivier Bernier*  
*CKS Vice-President and Senior Lecturer*  
*at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA*





*Trimurti (From Angkor, Siem Reap)*



*Reclining Vishnu (From Angkor)*



### **Emma C. Bunker (1930-2021)**

Emma C. Bunker, who left us at the age of ninety, had long been one of the foremost scholars on Khmer art. She was the author of over fifty works of scholarly research, among them *Khmer bronzes*, *Khmer Gold*, and *Adoration and Glory*, *The golden Age of Khmer Art*. She served on the boards of several museums and taught generations of students. Her enthusiasm, the depth and passion of her knowledge of Khmer antiquities were an inspiration to several generations of scholars, as were her irresistible energy, her directness and the warmth of her personality.

Emmy was a good friend of CKS, from its very beginnings. She served on our Board until 2017. She was instrumental in obtaining the funding for CKS's path-breaking, multi-year project to re-photograph and create a digital inventory of the National Museum in Phnom Penh's holdings, a project that also involved relocating objects at the Museum, some of which were kept underground where they were subject to the annual flooding of the Siem Reap River. A devoted patron of CKS's Library, Emmy was responsible, not only for obtaining countless core collections to build up its initial inventory, but also for making contact with the Asia Foundation, which agreed to support transporting our books to Cambodia, through customs and onto shelves. She was a devoted CKS trustee who never missed a meeting. She was also instrumental in finding the funding for the new inventory of the National Museum in Phnom Penh. All those who knew her will miss her infectious smile, her willing engagement and her no-nonsense attitude to art and life.



# Sacred Ground on Phnom Kulen

**T**he Kulen plateau is a sacred landscape, an archaeologically important site, a national park, and a place where mountain residents have lived and farmed for many generations. It is one of the most sacred sites in Cambodia. Many visitors come to make offerings at shrines, or on a pilgrimage to the Preah Ang Thom Buddha, or to visit the Angkorian carvings in the riverbed.

Mountain residents are animists, who believe that holy places and objects on the mountain are both visible and invisible, seen and unseen, above and below ground. How does one practice agriculture in such a landscape? What are the consequences of clearing for a farm on sacred ground? My research explores how Cambodian animism is interpreted and negotiated in the sacred topography of Kulen.

Cambodian mountain residents have a panoply of sites and objects they consider sacred. Ancient ruins and ancient graves, for example, are considered places that people should not farm over or even border on. Many of the natural rock formations are regarded as the dwelling places of spirits, places that should not be disturbed.

A major feature of the invisible spiritual landscape of the mountain is the concept of ancient roads. Many people believe that old Angkorian roadways and pathways are now used by the spirit world and should not be farmed over, cultivated, or blocked by boundary fences. If this should happen, the anger of the spirits may lead to human illness. Some people contend that some of these invisible pathways are in fact invisible canals that are sailed on by spirit boats.

Termite mounds must also not be disturbed without consulting the spirits. Springs are other feature of the landscape that often has spiritual associations. Spring sources are believed to have a spirit guardian and are therefore also places that should not be disturbed.

Some of these sacred landscape features are visible to the farmer's eye and can be avoided. Others are invisible or underground and may be disturbed by accident. If a family member becomes sick and no clear medical cause is apparent, families may consult a diviner or a medium to investigate if the sickness has been caused by the spirits. A Pali chanter is often called in to rongoap dai, make the earth cool, in the place where the sick person has offended the spirits. Offerings would be made at that place on the farm.

Research shows that on Mount Kulen, a sacred landscape cannot simply be equated with a protected one. Although many places are sacred, they are still used by humans. The cultural logic behind this is the belief that many members of the spirit world are mobile and open to human invocation—in other words, if appropriately asked, they would leave a place to humans. People also have positive spiritual associations with forests, places where spiritual heritage and biodiversity intersect-- but not a simple one.

*Lisa Arensen is Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Brunei Darussalam, and a CKS Senior Research Fellow in 2020.*

*Successive replicas of the guardian spirits of Ta Penh village  
(Arensen 2020)*







*Village guardian spirits (neak ta mjas srok) remain important for mountain residents (Arensen 2020)*



*Diagram drawn on the ground by research participant demonstrating how bisecting or farming over sacred objects and sites can disturb the spirits (Arensen 2020)*

*Hau brahling ceremony for a Kulen woman believed to have had her soul taken by an angry forest spirit (Arensen 2020)*





# REFLECTIONS



## The Open Door Closes

Never has the prospect of research in Cambodia on Cambodia hung by such a fragile thread. One can almost see the squeezing out of access to data, to human interlocutors, and to process documents occurring in real time, in front of our very eyes. It is an unfortunate State of Affairs, but one that only increases the importance of scholarship on Cambodia, as it becomes more challenging to undertake.

This is not unique to Cambodia. I am trained as a China scholar, even though my fascination with Cambodia predated my interest in China,

and I have been living and working in China for the past 32 years, first arriving for a year in Chengdu, Sichuan, in 1988. I began my work as a formal researcher in China in 1998, when I undertook fieldwork for my doctoral dissertation (and first book) on China's Intellectual Property Regime. From the time I began fieldwork in earnest, from February 1998 to 2003, I saw China gradually – but unambiguously and dramatically – open. Informal networks replaced the onerous processes necessary to secure a meeting that more likely than not would simply parrot the official line. Increased access to national and local repositories and archives, as well as a burgeoning business in local county almanacs (县志), regional and functional yearbooks (年鉴), compendia of policy documents, and even some internal (内部) Chinese Communist Party documents enhanced our understanding of, and ability to analyze China. Indeed, by 2004, local cadres were bragging to me – a foreigner – about how they had prevailed over their rivals in a rough-and-tumble bureaucratic street fight that became the thesis for my second book, China's Water Warriors.

By the time I began working on my third monograph, in 2012, on Chinese foreign aid to the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s (Brothers in Arms), the tide had turned in China (indeed, it began to change around 2008). The same year I began my research, in 2010, the Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia, Zhang Jinfeng, officially claimed, “The Chinese government never took part in or intervened into the politics of Democratic Kampuchea,” thus denying China's role in propping up the Khmer Rouge regime and essentially preempting my ability to follow this line of inquiry in China. Through a lucky break, I found a trove of Democratic Kampuchea-era documents at the Cambodian National Archives, which allowed me to pursue the project, culminating with my ability to interview (through an even luckier break!) some of the Chinese expatriates who had worked in Cambodia between 1975 and 1979.

My wandering afield of China itself was already being contemplated by some other China scholars. William Hurst (Cambridge) studied Bahasa Indonesia to forge a comparative study of legal development in China and Indonesia, while Daniel Lynch (CUHK) studied Thai for his book on democratization in China, Taiwan, and Thailand. What I did not realize at the time was that I could study China indirectly, from outside China, using sources that were, in my case, in Cambodia.

Indeed, one of the pleasures of Cambodia, when I first began research there, in 2010, was how willing complete strangers were to speak to me, relative to their counterparts in China. That summer, I was outside Anlong Veng, Pol Pot's final stronghold, and randomly stopped to speak with a local resident. It turned out he was one of the Khmer Rouge leader's bodyguards (he had a lot of them) and that he was the third generation of his hill tribe family to have had that honor, beginning originally across the country in the uplands of Mondulkiri.

And for several years it was like this. Of course, the challenge was to determine the veracity of the data, but, just as in China, everyone had a fascinating story to tell. Unlike China, they were more than willing to share it.





*Devastating following the rioting/crackdown in Chengdu in 1989, photo: Dr. Andrew Mertha*

But then things began to change. As the political climate constricted, people who had previously been more than willing to chat began to move back into the shadows. Some of them had been rightfully spooked when overzealous journalists and researchers promised them anonymity and then reneged, leaving them watching in horror as their names appeared in print and their faces on television.

Celebrated archives like the Documentation Center for Cambodia (DC-CAM), never terribly transparent about their rules of access, now have to dance around the political landscape in ways they never had to, before. The National Archives, long neglected like libraries around the world, has been forced to rely on foreign donations (I once was able to “rent” the facility and staff on a national holiday because they were so short on money that they hadn’t been paid for three months) or they would cease to function.

Which leaves us in a precarious place. Researchers on Cambodia, like those of China, find it increasingly difficult to secure access in ways they have grown accustomed to – indeed, taken for granted – in the past. As in the case of China, the suffocation of research in Cambodia is less a dramatic sweep of the political hand, but rather a denial of funding to those institutions most vital to researchers, especially to those in the early stages of their professional careers and who are thus most vulnerable. From its inception, CKS has played this essential role of support to young scholars, by offering fellowships, robust programming, and one of the best library systems in Cambodia. But at no time since our founding has our ability to nurture scholarship in Cambodia been as essential as it is today.

***Andrew Mertha, Ph.D., Vice-President CKS, George and Sadie Hyman Professor of China Studies, Director of China Studies Program, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University.***



*Chengdu in 1989, photo: Dr. Andrew Mertha*



# Field Research During The COVID Pandemic

As recipient of a CKS Senior Fellowship, I conducted post-doctoral research on ritual furniture and other artifacts in the temples of Rājendravarman II: Pre Rup and the East Mebon. My project required archival research that could only be done in Cambodia, at the CKS Library in Siem Reap and the École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) centers in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. Working with the artifacts themselves was only possible at the National Museum of Cambodia, the Conservation d'Angkor, or at the temple sites. I planned a comparative analysis of the architectural and furniture layouts in the 10th-c. temples.

I traveled to Cambodia in July 2020 to prepare for my on-site research in September of that year. The frequent updates about the pandemic situation and the Cambodian Ministry of Health decrees forwarded to me by CKS were extremely helpful as I prepared for my trip. The journey itself was stressful. Respecting all the complex government-recommended precautions intended to protect myself and others, I finally arrived safe and sound.

Many Cambodian institutions are closed to the public, including museums. Fortunately, the libraries at CKS and the EFEO center in Siem Reap remained open. Official meetings for consultative, archival,

*The entrance to the East Mebon temple stands empty*



and scientific requests were difficult to arrange because of restrictions aimed at containing the virus, especially in Phnom Penh. However, good working relationships with staff at certain institutions – formed when we collaborated during my PhD research – provided a great deal of assistance. Special thanks to the curatorial team at the National Museum of Cambodia and to the EFEO teams in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.

Despite the early difficulties, once inside Cambodia, I was able to travel without problems, which facilitated my research at the Pre Rup and East Mebon sites. As an art historian, I especially appreciated the rare opportunity to see the temples of Angkor empty of tourists – and to conduct my research in optimal working conditions that such unlikely circumstances presented. It was a great privilege to witness Cambodian families from all over the country take the risk of coming to Angkor to pray in its temples. The economic situation of Siem Reap's residents is dire. I returned home with heartfelt concern for the many people facing economic hardship because of the pandemic.

I am deeply grateful for all CKS's support, which has allowed me to conduct my research successfully, in a wide array of conditions.

*Dr. Sophie Biard is a graduate of the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3 and the École du Louvre. She is currently an associate researcher at the Institut d'Asie Orientale in Lyon, France. Her work focuses on 20th-c. history of Cambodian archaeological artifacts.*

*From the upper terrace of Pre Rup*





# How CKS Shaped and Supported My Scholarship

**M**y first book, *Disturbed Forests, Fragmented Memories: Jarai and Other Lives in the Cambodian Highlands* (Seattle: University of Washington Press) was published this year. It is a look at Cambodian and world history from the perspective of the Jarai inhabitants of Cambodia's northeast hills, and indeed from the perspective of the landscape itself. Travelling through snapshots in time, from the pre-colonial period through the Sihanouk era, the American-Vietnam War, the Cambodian genocide and the period of rebuilding that ensued, this book focuses both on Jarai perceptions of the environment and on how changes in the land itself reflect shifting political attitudes and social circumstances at each of these moments. The book urges readers to consider seriously Jarai conceptions of agency: Jarai view plants, animals and various components of the natural world as actors in their lives and as living parts of their society. The book is an effort to come to terms with the challenges raised by the Jarai understanding of the world.

I spent nearly a decade conducting the research that led to my book. I was most fortunate to be welcomed by the Jarai people of Ratanakiri Province to live and study alongside them for long stretches at a time. While we often think of writing as a solitary affair, my research was in fact a wholly collaborative effort. First and foremost, the inhabitants of the village I call "Tang Kadon" in the book (to preserve its anonymity) were kind enough to welcome me into their lives, to teach me their perspectives on nature and on the past. While studying their language alongside them, I was also in touch with other scholars who had written on topics broaching the subject of the book.

It is here that CKS comes into the picture. CKS provided the initial funding for my Ph.D. thesis research, when I was a graduate student, through its Fellowship Program. CKS campus in Siem Reap, open to all, served as well as a locus for meeting and learning from other scholars. My first contact with CKS came during a chance encounter, almost 20 years ago, with then-CKS Director Dr. Phillippe Peycam at an internet café in Siem Reap. He was on his way to meet Prof. Georges Condominas, the renowned French scholar of the peoples of Vietnam's Central Highlands, and he invited me to join them for the afternoon. I answered Yes, of course. That chance meeting, which led to further interaction with CKS, shaped the course of my scholarship for years to come.

*Jonathan Padwe,  
Associate Professor of Anthropology,  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa*



*The author attends a ceremony in a Jarai longhouse (Dr. Padwe sitting against the wall), Photo: Kevin Morris*



*At a ceremony in the village, an offering to the spirits of rice, homemade (photo: Jonathan Padwe)*

*Dr. Padwe's Published book*



# From Back Then to Now: 21 Years at CKS



*Sovanna at work*

**I**t was December 1999, when I walked in the door for my first day of work as an ‘office assistant’ at CKS. The staff (just five, of whom I was the only woman!) worked in a small office in a 2-story house not far from our current location at Wat Damnak, Siem Reap. I was joining CKS just months after it was established by the World Monuments Fund (WMF), and the organization’s leadership was still charting how CKS could best live up to its founding mission of conservation and preservation training.

Much has changed at CKS since that first day over two decades ago. We now have a mostly female full-time staff of 10 in our two Cambodia offices, who implement multiple major academic programs and dozens of events each year, plus a strong, large Board of Directors. In 2002, after a founding conference the year before, WMF withdrew from CKS, as planned, and CKS was then rededicated, as an independent American Overseas Research Center, to promoting research and teaching in Khmer studies. It became a member of the global network of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers. That mission, and our passionate support team that brings it to fruition, have kept me tied to CKS through various roles, as I became CKS’s Finance Manager, and eventually, now, as I have stepped back, as a CKS Finance Consultant. Over the many years, I was given training on budget management and administration in New York. I worked over 20 years with CKS’s Treasurer, professional accountant Gaye Fugate.

It has been a privilege to witness – and contribute to – the organization’s remarkable growth. One of our earliest milestones was our move to the then dilapidated Wat Damnak complex. Its restoration was the work of a young French architect, Francois Tainturier, who left CKS to earn a PhD in SE Asian Studies at the School for Oriental and Asian Studies in London, and then founded a new American Overseas Research Center on the model of CKS in Myanmar. By restoring the conference hall, we now had a beautiful, historic space to hold events. By creating the open library and reading room, we launched one of CKS’s defining and most valued programs. Another milestone for me was when we welcomed His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni to inaugurate our newly constructed expanded library and office facilities, in 2010. I was filled with pride to see how far CKS had come in just a few years.

I recently flipped through the first edition of our annual newsletter *In Focus* and came across this passage written by Dr. Lois de Menil, Ph.D., former President and Chair of the CKS Board, sharing a story of her meeting with His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk, in 2003: “King Sihanouk turned to us, lowered his voice, and, commending us for bringing to Cambodia scholars from universities around the world, asked us please not to forget to include young Cambodians in our programs and to try to help them become scholars of their own heritage, to take their rightful place around our table. It was a deeply moving message.”





*CKS Former President Lois de Menil and H.M. King Sihamoni cutting the ribbon to officially open the new CKS library and research facility in January 2010.*

This message entrusted to us years ago still resonates today. I am so proud of how CKS has reached countless Cambodian students and scholars through fellowships, workshops and conferences, publications, and mentorship. Through our programs, we have built such an important community of knowledge and research within Cambodia that did not exist 20 years ago.

In the years ahead, my hope is for CKS to continue expanding its programming for Cambodian students and scholars. I hope we can develop more programs for young Khmer scholars to expose them to research opportunities and introduce them to experts within CKS's extensive global network. And, now that we have built such a strong community of Cambodian scholars, I hope they will be more and more involved in CKS leadership and work together with us to uplift the next generation.

*Sovanna Nop was  
formerly CKS's Finance Manager,  
and is now our financial consultant.*

*Now CKS Library reading room but used to be our offices and library in our first years.*



*Sovanna and Dr. Philippe Peycam, former CKS Executive Director (sitting in the middle) and Mr. Francois Tainturier, Deputy Director at the Salar Chann during the contribution to Wat Damnak.*





# CKS LIBRARY

## CKS's Library during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Online Resource Expansion

As the first academic and largest public library outside Phnom Penh, CKS's Library has played a major role in providing invaluable scholarly resources on Cambodia and Southeast Asia to Cambodian and overseas scholars for over twenty years. The Library has long served as a safe haven for students, scholars, and researchers looking both to relax in its verdant setting, work in its digitally equipped reading room, and indulge their intellectual passions amid the hustle and bustle of Siem Reap.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, the Library suspended its public operations from March to July 2020 in an effort to safeguard the health of both visitors and staff. The Library reopened on July 6th, 2020, once Cambodia's public health had stabilized enough for operations to resume safely. A number of protective measures were put into place-- social-distancing and mask-wearing, a 20-visitor occupancy limit, and availability of hand sanitizer. Although a second COVID-19 spike forced the Library to close again on 30 November 2020, it resumed normal operations (with previous safety measures again in place) on 4 January 2021.

CKS Library's staff took advantage of the March-July closure as an opportunity to upgrade the Library's facilities, with funding thanks to the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). Several improvements were made: renovation of the walls in the Library's Reading Room and Children's Library, as well as updates to the lighting systems



*Announcement of prevention measures at the entrance to the library*

and electrical equipment in the Reading Room and Research Library. New furniture and electronic equipment were installed.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, the Library staff has devoted its time and efforts toward expanding the Library's digital resources and virtual service offerings. We have added links to a variety of open-access online resources on the Library website and provided personal research assistance to a number of students and scholars by email and through other networks. The Library staff has done its best to enable scholarly research over the duration of the pandemic and to make its resources available to those who are unable to visit the Library in person, from all over the world.



### In Memoriam (1927-2021)

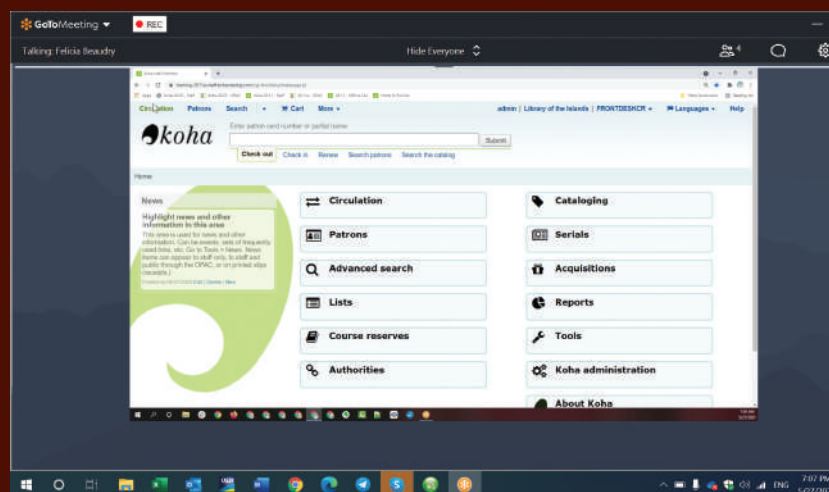
**Nancy Norman Lassalle** left us this Spring. For many years, she was a generous donor to the CKS Library, for which she cared deeply. Her funding came at a crucial time in its development, as it first expanded in its former building and then grew apace in its current location. A friend of Georges Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein, she was also a passionate advocate for the classical ballet, its dancers and its students. She was not only a Board member and a generous contributor to the New York City Ballet and the School of American Ballet in New York, but also helped to frame the cultural programs offered its students. She loved culture in its many forms and was one of the last grandes dames of New York. She is much missed.



# Relaunching Our Online Catalog



*Weekly meeting between CKS Library and Equinox Project staff*



*Koha Training between Equinox Project and CKS Library staff*

The Center for Khmer Studies is pleased to announce that we have received a grant from the Equinox Open Library Initiative to upgrade our online catalog. CKS is one of two grant recipients of the Equinox Open Source Grant, which provides for migration, implementation, hosting, and support of the Koha Integrated Library System of eligible libraries, archives, museums, and other educational, cultural, and information organizations.

The CKS library currently contains more than 20,000 listings specializing in Southeast Asian history, social science, art, linguistics and other subjects. To meet the ambitions of our mission, our collection must be accessible to all of our visitors. In 2020, Internet visitors from more than 110 countries viewed over 120,000 pages in our online catalog. Sixty-seven percent of these visitors accessed our content with a mobile phone. Our current online catalog has served us well; however, CKS is looking forward to meet the needs of a growing digital community.

Over the past year, CKS librarians explored options to relaunch our online catalog with three key objectives. First, we sought to make it easier for people to access our collection by publishing our catalog online with open access to researchers, other libraries, and search engines such as Google. Second, we wanted to be sure our catalog is easy to use, and intuitive for both library visitors and staff. Finally, our catalog leverage software must be actively maintained and regularly enhanced.

Our search led us to Koha, the world's first free and open-source library. Koha is a full-featured library management system running at 3,738 libraries worldwide. Koha offers powerful search capabilities, leveraging content from Google, Amazon, Open Library and other data providers. It is a web-based system, compliant with the most common library standards (MARC 21, UNIMARC, z39.50, etc.) with open-source code supported by a global community. Learn more at [koha-community.org](http://koha-community.org).

## Our migration to Koha is made possible by a generous grant from Equinox Open Library Initiative

"We are extremely honored to be able to implement Koha migration and hosting services by Equinox," said CKS Head Librarian Sivleng Chhor. "We are looking forward to expanding access to our library and catalog to support our community and mission."

The grant was inspired by the vibrant open-source community and the belief that every community deserves to benefit from an accessible and thriving library.

"We are excited and very much looking forward to working with the Center for Khmer Studies," said Rogan Hamby, Data and Project Analyst at Equinox. "The Center is home to a strong and unique collection, combined with an amazing staff. It's a special opportunity to partner with them through the Equinox Open-Source Grant and provide the tools to bring an already amazing institution to a new level."

CKS is grateful for Equinox support, and anticipates announcing its new catalog in summer 2021.

*T.J. Ruthkowski  
CKS Trustee*

# CKS WORKSHOP

## Library Workshop: Copyright Considerations and Open Access

The Covid-19 outbreak in Cambodia limited physical access to our library's resources by users. Faced with that reality, all libraries have begun to look at the huge potential of an e-library collection to expand access to their resources. Embarking on development of an e-library involves several preliminary issues, including international copyright restrictions.

CKS's Library hosted a weekend library workshop on open access and copyright issues at CKS headquarters in Siem Reap, February 22-23, 2021. More than twenty librarians, from university and other institutional libraries in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, as well as partner institutions in Kampong Cham, were invited. Mr. Net Wanna, deputy director of the Hun Sen Library at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, addressed the important topic of Open Access and Fair Use, while another featured speaker, Mr. Lim You Sour, deputy director of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, addressed the professional workshop on the important topic of Copyright Restrictions and e-library resources. Setting the parameters for discussion, these were followed by five further presentations, including by CKS's librarians, concerning libraries' resources and accessibility.

This CKS weekend workshop was intended to address the subject of open access to resources and how to take advantages of them, to discuss how participants might go about developing an e-library at their own institutions, and to understand the general terms of the use of e-resources, while avoiding misuse by providing a basic understanding



*In CKS Conference Hall, Siem Reap*

of copyright restrictions as a general topic, as well as specific copyright regulations in Cambodia.

Participants were attentive and motivated by the topic. They focused on issues that all libraries must attend to when considering digitization--what to prioritize for digitizing and free access? the terms and conditions of e-resource hosting on their websites; how to develop e-resources further? what components to consider?

In promoting practical interaction between experts and participants, this CKS workshop served to bridge professional knowledge gaps and to propose concrete strategies for strengthening libraries' services. On departure, participants thanked CKS for hosting the workshop and expressed their hope for more frequent and wider professional workshops to enable continued sharing of experience among librarians across the country.

*Participants of the workshop*





# CKS WEBINARS

## The History of Cambodia from Funan to Modern Times

*Every year, CKS hosts dozens of public lectures in both Phnom Penh and Siem Reap to provide a platform for our fellows, scholars, and other researchers to share their research on Cambodia with the public. Since early 2020, however, with the restrictions imposed by Covid-19, CKS has complied with restrictive measures to prevent virus transmission. CKS has taken up this challenge as an opportunity to host live digital presentations and webinars on Zoom and Facebook Live, to extend our formerly in-country knowledge-sharing programs to a world-wide audience.*

CKS held its largest public webinar yet on January 29th, with over 130 people from across the world attending on Zoom and Facebook Live! Our guest speaker, Dr. Darith Ea, took on the challenging feat of summarizing two millennia of Cambodian history in about an hour and a half. Dr. Ea, an expert at the APSARA Authority (Angkor) and an archeology professor at the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, was joined by Mr. Duong Keo, lecturer in history at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, who moderated the event and helped to relay dozens of audience questions.

Dr. Ea began his talk in the 1st Century C.E., explaining how religion and cultural practices from India and China influenced the rise of



*Excavation unit at Prohear in February 2009  
(the photo was shown during the presentation)*

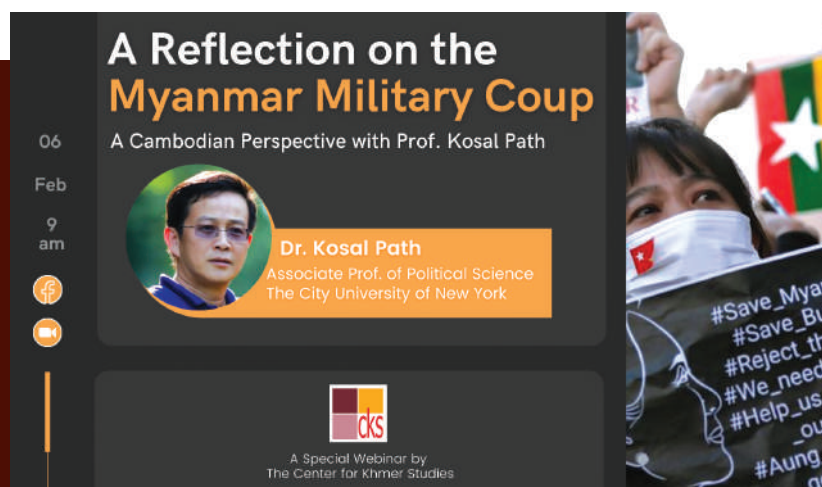
the Funan Empire. He then traced the history of conflict and power struggles from the Chenla period into the start of the Angkor period in the 9th Century. Drawing from maps, recovered artifacts, temples, and ancient inscriptions, Dr. Ea described the breadth of the Khmer Empire and its remarkable infrastructure from its well-known religious temples to roads to hospitals. Finally, Dr. Ea walked through Cambodia's post-Angkor history until the late 19th Century – centuries during which Cambodia was transformed politically, economically, and culturally, all while being enmeshed in regional power struggles.

## CKS Special Webinar

### *A Reflection on the Myanmar Military Coup: A Cambodian Perspective, with Prof. Kosal Path*

On 31 January 2021, the military in Myanmar staged a coup arresting members of the National League of Democracy Party, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and taking over the country. The coup followed the military's allegations of widespread fraud in the November national election and was another episode of unrest in the increasingly volatile and unstable world order. In Southeast Asia, nearly every country in the region is contending with some form of struggle between the forces of authoritarianism and democracy. Within the political context of Southeast Asia today, what does the Myanmar coup mean for Cambodia?

On February 6th, Dr. Kosal Path, Associate Professor of Political Science, Brooklyn College and member of the CKS Board, shared his insights on the recent political coup in Myanmar, drawing on his recent visit there and his politics in the region. The live webinar was moderated by Dr. Eve Zucker, Lecturer in Anthropology, Yale University and President of CKS. This special webinar was organized in direct response to the events that unfolded in Myanmar only days before.





*Books on heritage education for students in Preah Vihear province schools, November 2020.*

*With a grant from the US Embassy in Phnom Penh, Barbara Anello-Adnani conducted a 3-month course in “Heritage Education for Teachers” co-led by Heng Dara, Head of The Global Child, and Mao Sengyeon of Apsara Authority.*

**A** PSARA Authority-- in charge of Angkor Park-- and the National Authority for Preah Vihear (NAPV) administer their respective UNESCO heritage sites in Cambodia. They had already developed heritage preservation programs for schools in the villages within the heritage sites, in partnership with Khmer Heritage Organization (KHO), and Heritage Watch. Inspired by these programs intended to raise awareness of the issues involved in heritage preservation, conservation, and management for both children and adults, we developed a broader course to bring heritage education to the wider communities surrounding these sites. Our three-month course for local teachers, university and museum educators took place both in-person and remotely on Zoom for participants in four provinces. We developed teaching materials, active participatory methodology, and strategies to teach lessons in heritage preservation. We established networks to support teachers and students in these communities. Inspired by this time of Covid 19, we also incorporated into the course lessons online teaching methods and platforms.



*With teachers in Preah Vihear province (Barbara standing at the beginning of the second row from the left)*

## Heritage Education for Teachers

Guest lectures by APSARA experts included archaeologists Im Sokrithy and Ea Darith, hydrologist Lay Poty, environmental expert Un Moninita, and others, who brought their expertise directly to participants, with a discussion of the structure of heritage management institutions, environmental and water management, land and habitat management, community development projects, and aspects of history and archaeology. A tour of Angkor Conservation Office gave insight into the practice of research and conservation of artefacts. At Preah Norodom Sihanouk-Angkor Museum and the MGC Asian Traditional Textile Museum, participants experienced the wealth of resources offered by local museums. Our course finale will be a trip to Koh Ker and Prasat Preah Vihear, back on schedule after a temporary postponement due to Covid-19 restrictions.

One of our goals is to provide teachers with information to guide students’ higher education and career choices. Many of our speakers were women, reflecting the active participation of women in all aspects of heritage conservation. Cambodia’s rich heritage affords multiple responsibilities and opportunities for involvement, with fascinating challenges for the future-- bringing heritage education into wider public view, imagining the future of heritage management.

*Barbara Anello-Adnani, B.A., Reed College; M. A, in Art History, Montclair College, is a specialist in photography. She served as an American Embassy English Fellow, teaching English at CKS for two years before leading this heritage course.*



*Archaeologist, Im Sokrithy, Director, Department of Conservation of Monuments, inside Angkor Park lecturing on the History of Angkor Thom during a site-visit to the Bayon and the Royal Palace, November 2020.*



# FELLOWS' PUBLICATIONS

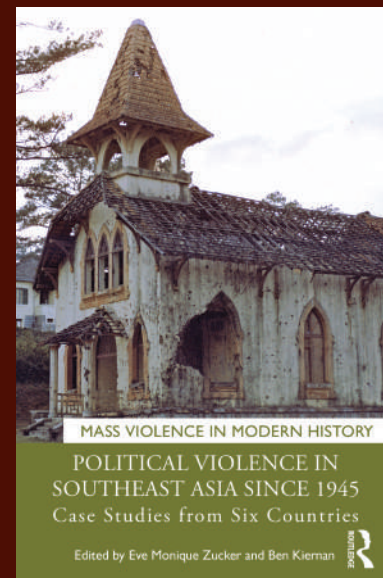
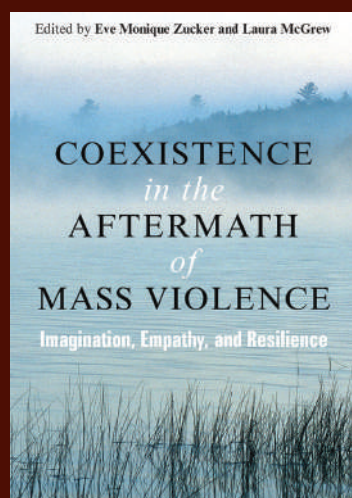
## *Coexistence in the Aftermath of Mass Violence: Imagination, Empathy, and Resilience*

Edited by Eve Monique Zucker and Laura McGrew, *Coexistence in the Aftermath of Mass Violence* demonstrates how imagination, empathy, and resilience contribute to the process of social repair after ethnic and political violence. Adding to the literature on transitional justice, peacebuilding, and the anthropology of violence and social repair, the authors show how these conceptual pathways—imagination, empathy and resilience—enhance recovery, coexistence, and sustainable peace. Coexistence (or reconciliation) is the underlying goal after mass violence, enabling survivors to move forward with their lives. Imagination allows these survivors (victims, perpetrators, bystanders) to draw guidance and inspiration from their social and cultural imagery, to develop empathy, and to envision a future of peace and coexistence. Resilience emerges through periods of violence and its aftermath through acts of survival, compassion, modes of rebuilding social worlds, and the establishment of a peaceful society.

Focusing on society at the grass roots level, the authors discuss the myriad and little understood processes of social repair that allow ruptured societies and communities to move toward a peaceful and stable future. The volume also illustrates some of the ways in which imagination, empathy, and resilience may contribute to the prevention of future violence and the authors conclude with a number of practical and policy recommendations. The cases include Cambodia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somaliland, Colombia, the Southern Cone, Iraq, and Bosnia.

*Eve Zucker, Ph.D. is a Lecturer in the Departments of Anthropology of Columbia and Yale Universities.*

*Laura McGrew, Ph.D. is a practitioner and researcher in peace studies at Coventry University, England.*



## *Political Violence In Southeast Asia Since 1945: Case Studies from Six Countries* *Edited by Eve Zucker and Ben Kiernan*

This book examines postwar waves of political violence that affected six Southeast Asian countries – Indonesia, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam – from the wars of independence in the mid-twentieth century to the recent Rohingya genocide.

Featuring cases not previously explored, and offering fresh insights into more familiar cases, the chapters cover a range of topics including the technologies of violence, the politics of fear, inclusion and exclusion, justice and ethics, repetitions of mass violence events, impunity, law, ethnic and racial killings, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The book delves into the violence that has reverberated across the region spurred by local and global politics and ideologies, through the examination of such themes as identity ascription and formation, existential and ontological questions, collective memories of violence, and social and political transformation. In our current era of global social and political transition, the volume's case studies provide an opportunity to consider potential repercussions and outcomes of various political and ideological positionings and policies. Enhancing our understanding of the technologies, techniques, motives, causes, consequences, and connections between violent episodes in the Southeast Asian cases, the book raises key questions for the study of mass violence worldwide. (From the back cover)

*Several of the chapters on Cambodia were written by former CKS fellows: William Kwok, Laura McGrew, and Kosal Path (all CKS fellows), and Daniel Bultmann, Phirum Gaillard, Tram Luong, and Hoang Minh Vu. The prelude and introduction are written by Ben Kiernan and Eve Zucker (former CKS fellow and current President/CEO). The book is dedicated to Benny Widjono, former CKS trustee.*

# CKS KHMER LANGUAGE AND CULTURE PROGRAM

**C**KS's popular summer Khmer Language and Culture Program (KLCP), in collaboration with the University of Hawaii's Advanced Study of Khmer (ASK) program, led by Dr. Chhany Sak-Humphry, offers an incomparable opportunity for intensive in-country language training, a home stay and cultural exposure. CKS classes are split into two levels— beginner and intermediate—and take place over 8 weeks both at CKS headquarters in Siem Reap, home to the temples of Angkor, and then in Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital city.

Sadly for all, our summer programs in both 2020 and 2021 had to be canceled because of the global pandemic. The voices below give some flavor of the enthusiasm of former participants. We have our fingers crossed for summer 2022.

## *Students' voices*



### **Leah-Marie Marajh, KLCP 2018, Canadian**

I am a PhD Candidate at the University of Toronto in the Department of Geography. My experience with CKS and KLCP were incredibly rewarding. I was able to gain language skills, advance my cultural knowledge, form friendships with my fellow students, and develop wonderful working relationships with CKS staff and researchers. When I went back to conduct my fieldwork in 2019, my affiliation with CKS helped to facilitate my research. During this time, I also participated in the JRFP as a teaching assistant. I am extremely grateful for my experiences at CKS as they have helped me become a better scholar.



### **John Troyer, KLCP 2019, US**

My experience with KLCP has changed my life. Already interested in Khmer language and culture from co-leading a study abroad program at Tompkins Community College (TC3) as a professor of English, this program has greatly deepened my passion for Cambodia. KLCP allows you to see Khmer culture in an authentic, unique way. Whether it is time spent in the classroom with friendly and supportive teachers, or through engaging trips to local villages and attractions, this opportunity gives every participant the chance to have a truly transformative journey.

I could not imagine visiting Cambodia without collaborating with CKS. Everyone working here is professional, understanding, and, above all, friendly. I feel very much at home here. Working with CKS has allowed me to enrich the travel abroad course that I lead. Students are excited to see the Pagoda grounds, interact with everyone, and learn about Khmer culture in an authentic way. I really cannot say enough about the KLCP program, and CKS in general. It is all a phenomenal experience.



### **Allan Zheng, KLCP 2019, US**

I am a graduate student in ethnomusicology at the University of California, Riverside, and my research interests broadly include the music of Cambodia. I applied to the Khmer Language and Culture Program (KLCP) because it was one of the few programs that would allow me to intensively immerse myself in the Khmer language. While in Cambodia, I built a closer connection with my family in Cambodia and became adept at reading, writing, and speaking Khmer. The program allowed me to learn more about Cambodian history, culture, and traditional music through the many activities hosted by the Center for Khmer Studies.

My experience in the program has helped me network with other scholars of Cambodia as well as think forward towards my future dissertation fieldwork in Cambodia. I am grateful for the opportunities and experiences that the Center for Khmer Studies gave me and the friends I made in the program.



# CKS JUNIOR RESIDENT FELLOWS PROGRAM

**E**ach summer, the Center for Khmer Studies (CKS) offers 5 U.S., 5 Cambodian, and French undergraduate students and recent graduates the exciting opportunity to participate in our six-week Junior Resident Fellows Program in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. The program is intended for students with a genuine interest in Cambodia and Southeast Asia, especially those who may be considering graduate studies or careers involving the region. The program strives to strike a balance between academic rigor in the classroom and activities like field visits designed to give students a better understanding of contemporary Cambodia.

Unfortunately, our summer programs in 2000 and 2021 had to be canceled because of the global pandemic. To convey a flavor of this wonderful program, which introduces students to Cambodia past and present, we will share with you below some voices of our 2019 program participants.



## **Phearum Bun, Cambodian, 2019**

I learned so much about my country's history, archaeology, and current issues through the JRFP. I also gained new research skills that enabled me to develop a research agenda, find source materials, select an appropriate methodology, and produce written essays. During my six weeks as a Junior Resident Fellow, CKS provided many opportunities for our group of young Cambodian, French, and Americans to work together, build lasting friendships, and share our previous knowledge with one another.



## **Marine Chuberre, French, 2019**

After the 2019 summer JRFP, I completed my studies in international politics at Sciences-Po, Bordeaux. I am currently a 2nd-year Master's candidate in Asian studies at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon. My experience at CKS confirmed my passion for research in political science and international relations. It played a substantial role in my decision to write my Master's thesis on the relations between the European Union and Cambodia.

It was an honor to conduct research in an international environment, to discuss a multiplicity of issues with my tutor, and to meet an array of impressive scholars who have dedicated their careers to better understanding historical and contemporary Cambodian society. In the course of my project in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, I interviewed both Cambodian nationals and Europeans living in Cambodia.



## **Salen Nhean, Cambodian, 2019**

I am now a Teaching Fellow with the training Program Teach for Cambodia, for which I train 9th-grade public school students in computer literacy. I am genuinely grateful for the amazing experience I had as a participant in CKS's Junior Resident Fellowship Program. From the independent research project to the opportunities for immersive learning about Cambodia's history and contemporary issues, the program helped me hone my research skills and enhance my cultural knowledge. I was given a warm welcome by the CKS staff and am grateful for the lifelong friendships I forged during the program. The program set an encouraging tone for my journey to reconnect with my roots here in Cambodia. My experience as a CKS Fellow left memories that I will cherish forever.



## **Abigail Taylor Edwards, US, 2019**

I continue to be inspired by the advice Ambassador Samantha Power gave in her commencement address at Yale in 2016: "Get close." As someone who has long been interested in memory and reconciliation after conflict, I chose to go to Cambodia with CKS to get closer to what I was studying: to understand better how the theories I was learning in the classroom translated into real life and affected real people. When I got to Cambodia, my expectations were exceeded in nearly all respects. I loved the opportunity to explore Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, felt truly supported in my research, and made lifelong connections with the other fellows. I am now a senior in the dual BA program between Columbia University and Sciences-Po Paris. I can say with confidence that my experience as a Junior Resident Fellow at CKS shaped my studies and the trajectory of my future career.

# CKS RESEARCH FELLOWS 2021

**T**he CKS Senior Fellowship Program is a CKS core program to support academic research on Cambodia, including Ph.D. dissertation research and post-doctoral research. These scholarships are supported by the U.S. State Department Bureau of Economic and Cultural Affairs (ECA) for American scholars; by the Scaler Foundation for French scholars; and by CKS Board of Directors' contributions for Cambodian scholars. Awardees are chosen by CKS's Fellowship Committee of scholars, headed by Board Member, Prof. Peter Hammer.

## U.S. Fellows



**Ian Baird** is Professor of Geography and Director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His latest book is entitled *Rise of the Brao: Ethnic Minorities in Northeastern Cambodia under Vietnamese Occupation*.

Prof. Baird is studying the links between the concept of indigeneity and the development of large-scale economic land concessions in Cambodia, particularly in more remote parts of northeastern Cambodia, where a large number of indigenous peoples live.



**Martine Guyot-Bender** is a French American, Professor of French and Francophone Studies at Hamilton College in Central New York State. She is also a member of Hamilton's Cinema and Media Studies Program and Director of Hamilton's program in Paris. Her scholarship focuses on the narrative construction of trauma memory. Her research on Cambodian cineaste Rithy Panh is at the intersection of both: trauma and cinematography. She is interested in the variety and evolution of Panh's cinematographic choices, and in his attempts to restore Cambodian cinema and reaffirm its place.



**Dr. Craig Etcheson** is a Visiting Scientist at Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. His topic, 'Post-Conflict Stabilization in Cambodia: What Worked, What Hasn't, and Why?' is a study of the reconstruction of Cambodia since 1979. The project examines the measures taken since the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime to recover from its devastation, to evaluate the effectiveness of those measures, and assess why they succeeded or failed.



**Kathrin Reed** is a PhD Candidate in Political Science and International Relations at the University of Delaware. She is conducting research for her dissertation on "(Mis-)Managing Cambodia's Relations and Territorial Conflict in Mainland Southeast Asia." Moving beyond a one-dimensional understanding of Cambodian foreign policy, she examines historical and contemporary mechanisms of bilateral conflict management aimed at building trust between Cambodia and its two larger neighbors.



**Dr. Nhu Truong** is Shorenstein Post-doctoral Scholar on Contemporary Asia at Stanford University. Her research, "Authoritarian Expropriation: From Reactive to Institutionalized Responsiveness in Vietnam, China, and Cambodia," examines how communist and post-communist regimes differ in how they respond to social unrest caused by land expropriation. Her study focuses on the divergent origins of party and state institutions and their responsiveness to broader societal interests. Her study examines the direct consequences for people's livelihoods, rural development, and state-society relations.



## French Fellows



**Dr. Lucie Labbé** is a cultural anthropologist affiliated with the Centre Asie du Sud-Est (CNRS, EHESS, INALCO) in Paris. Her research deals with Khmer royal or classical dance with special interest in apprenticeship, its techniques and rituals, and the link between aesthetics and authority. She will research the recent evolution of classical dance, especially the “Royal Ballet”.



**Dr. Meriem M'zoughi** is a research associate at the French National Center for Scientific Research's UMR 5600 ("Environment Civil Society") unit. Her project is a socio-anthropological study entitled "Merog and Infectious Agents: A Study of the Body and Life in Cambodia." The project examines the ways in which people in northeastern Cambodia perceive the body, living things, pathogens, and infections.



**Dr. Emiko Stock** is a historical anthropologist working with Chams. Her book project “Touching Image of History: Cham Practices of Looking across Cambodia and Iran” asks how we see history beyond its content, in affective and haptic manners. The CKS fellowship will enable her to develop what she calls “writing from the field” through which she will involve her Cham interlocutors in development of the monograph.

## Cambodian Fellows

**Cambodian Fellows 2021: These CKS Research Fellowships are open to Cambodians studying both in Cambodia or at foreign universities, but intending to return to Cambodia.**



**Phasy RES** is a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology at Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. Her research explores the complex mechanisms of ‘debt-coerced’ land sale practices. It examines the material and symbolic relationship between indebted households and their land by focusing on how their concept of ownership and the relationship they sustain with their land increase the likelihood of their losing their land through a variety of market transactions.



**Sopheak YUOK** is a Ph.D. candidate in Cultural Anthropology at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO) in Paris. His research topic is: “From Rice Cultivation Rituals to Cultural Identity: Practice and Value of the Khmer Rice Field”. His research seeks to understand how the enormous importance that Cambodia places on rice culture is currently evolving. At the village level, he will examine the influence that rice cultivation has had over social organization, kinship, religion, and politics over time.



Photo: CKS

*A popular restaurant on Pub Street in Siem Reap after the Covid-19 shut-down in early 2021*

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