

5th

International Conference on Lao Studies



ການປະຊຸມນາໆຊາດ ລາວສຶກສາ ຄັ້ງທີ ໕



July 8–10, 2016

Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University

Dear Attendees.

On behalf of the administration and faculty of Thammasat University it is my sincere pleasure to welcome you to Bangkok and Thammasat University's Tha Prachan campus for the Fifth International Conference of Lao Studies. This year's conference promises to be an exciting academic endeavor.

Thammasat University is Thailand's second oldest university officially on 27th of June 1934. Thammasat's guiding philosophy "to teach students to love and cherish democracy" still holds to this very day. Thammasat enrolls over 30,000 students a year in bachelor's, master's and PhD programs across 27 Faculties, Colleges, Schools and Institutes. Since its inception Thammasat has been engaged in developing an academic community with strong ties to Southeast Asian Studies including Lao studies, most notably the research that has been conducted and has contributed to Lao Studies by the Faculty of Liberal Arts and the Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology. And as such we are delighted to host the 5th International Conference of Lao Studies.

During your stay at the conference I am sure that you will find Thammasat to be an active academic community with members who share a common goal, from faculty, to students, to administrative personnel alike: to develop those who seek knowledge with the ability to sustain themselves and to develop Thailand.

I would like to add that the Thammasat community feels very privileged to have this opportunity to host the 5th International Conference on Lao Studies for it is the only venue for Lao Studies scholars from all over the world to discuss and exchange information on scholarly work about Laos. We feel even more privileged to host this conference considering that this year marks the first year of the Asian Economic Community, and we believe it is a very auspicious time to host this conference. To that end we wish to thank all of the participants for their contributions to this conference and for all of you to enjoy your time at Thammasat University.



Professor Somkit Lertpaithoon, Ph.D. Rector
Thammasat University

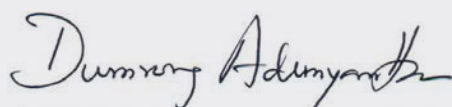
Dear Colleagues, Welcome!

The Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University is pleased to welcome all participants to the Fifth International Conference on Lao Studies (ICLS). Thammasat University's Faculty of Liberal Arts has long been a hub for research and teaching in Lao Studies and Southeast Asian Studies in General. The Faculty of Liberal Arts is delighted to be the host of the 5th ICLS in Collaboration with the Center for Lao Studies (CLS) from to July 2016 at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Tha Prachan Campus in Bangkok.

We are excited by the response to our call for papers which will offer a conference program that includes 95 people making presentations in 40 sessions. In addition we are equally excited by the scope of participants which includes Lao studies researchers from 15 countries. The 5th ICLS will also feature a Lao Film Festival to be held on the 9th of July 2016, the conference banquet and performances on X, and a Keynote address by Dr. James R. Chamberlain.

In addition we would also like to extend our gratitude to our funders: **Banpu Public Company Limited, Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, the Asia Foundation, and the Embassy of the United States, Vientiane, Laos** whom have generously supported the 5th ICLS.

We hope you enjoy your conference and your time in Bangkok, Thailand!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Dumrong Adunyarittigun'.

Dumrong Adunyarittigun, Ph.D.
Dean Faculty of Liberal Arts
Thammasat University

ຈາກຄະນະກຳມະການ ການປະຊຸມນາໆຊາດ ລາວສຶກສາ ຄັ້ງທີ ໕

ຮຽນທ່ານຜູ້ມີກຽດທັງຫຼາຍ ພວກຂ້າພະເຈົ້າຕ່າງໜ້າຄະນະກຳມະການ ການປະຊຸມນາໆຊາດ ລາວສຶກສາ ຄັ້ງທີ ໕ ທີ່ສູນລາວສຶກສາ (Center for Lao Studies) ນະຄອນແຊນແຟຣນສິສໂກ ຣັດຄາລຟໍເນັຽ ສະຫະລັດອະເມລິກາ ແລະ ຄະນະສິລະປະສາດ ມະຫາວິທະຍາລັຍທັມມະສາດ (The Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University) ຍິນດີ ຕ້ອນຮັບທຸກໆທ່ານ ເຂົ້າສູ່ກອງປະຊຸມ ທີ່ຍິ່ງໃຫຍ່ຄັ້ງນີ້. ກອງປະຊຸມປີນີ້ໄດ້ຈັດຂຶ້ນທີ່ມະຫາວິທະຍາລັຍ ທີ່ມີບົດບາດ ແລະ ປະວັດສາດ ທີ່ສຳຄັນສະເພາະການສຶກສາ ສັງຄົມໄທ ແລະ ລາວສຶກສາເປັນຕົ້ນ. ອີກຢ່າງໜຶ່ງກອງປະຊຸມຄັ້ງນີ້ ໄດ້ເປັນຄັ້ງທີສອງ ທີ່ໄດ້ຈັດນອກສະຫະລັດອະເມລິກາ ແລະ ກໍເປັນຄັ້ງທີສອງທີ່ໄດ້ຈັດຂຶ້ນທີ່ເມືອງໄທ. ຈຸດປະສົງ ຕົ້ນຕໍຂອງ ການປະຊຸມລາວສຶກສາ ແມ່ນເພື່ອສ້າງເວທີສາກົນໃຫ້ແກ່ນັກວິຊາການ ແລະ ປະຊາຄົມທີ່ສົນໃຈໃນພາກວິຊາລາວສຶກສາ ເພື່ອມີໂອກາດ ເຕົ້າໂຮມ ສເນີ ສົນທະນາ ປຶກສາ ແລກປ່ຽນ ແລະ ຮຽນຮູ້ປະເດັນຕ່າງໆກ່ຽວກັບລາວ. ຫົວຂໍ້ທັງຫຼາຍນີ້ ນຳມາສເນີໃນກອງປະຊຸມຈະມີການກ່ຽວຂ້ອງກັບປະຊາກອນໃນສີ່ກຸ່ມ ຄື ໑. ກຸ່ມຊົນຊາດຊົນເຜົ່າຕ່າງໆໃນປະເທດລາວ ໒. ກຸ່ມຊົນຊາດຊົນເຜົ່າທີ່ອາໄສຢູ່ປະເທດໃກ້ຄຽງ ແຕ່ວ່າມີປະຊາກອນເປັນຕົວແທນຢູ່ພາຍໃນປະເທດລາວ ເຊັ່ນກຸ່ມໄທລື້ ໃນປະເທດຈີນ ໓. ຊົນຊາດລາວທີ່ຢູ່ປະເທດໃກ້ຄຽງເຊັ່ນລາວພາກອີສານ ແລະ ໔. ຄົນລາວທີ່ຢູ່ຕ່າງແດນ ຫຼື Lao Overseas.

ການປະຊຸມທີ່ໄດ້ຈັດຂຶ້ນຄັ້ງນີ້ກໍໄດ້ຮັບຄວາມສຳເລັດໄປດ້ວຍດີ. ໃນກອງປະຊຸມມີຜູ້ເຂົ້າຮ່ວມຫຼາຍໆທ່ານ ຊຶ່ງມາຈາກ ປະເທດລາວ ໄທ ຍີ່ປຸ່ນ ໂອສະຕາລີ ສະຫະລັດອະເມລິກາ ແລະ ປະເທດຕ່າງໆ ທັງໝົດມີກວ່າ ໑໒໐ ຫົວຂໍ້ທີ່ນຳມາສເນີ.

ການປະຊຸມລາວສຶກສາ ໄດ້ຈັດຂຶ້ນທຸກໆສາມປີ ແລະ ໝຸນວຽນໄປຕາມສຖາບັນສຶກສາຕ່າງໆທົ່ວໂລກ. ທາງຝ່າຍ ຄະນະກຳມະການຂໍຂອບໃຈ ທຸກໆທ່ານທີ່ໄດ້ເຂົ້າຮ່ວມກອງປະຊຸມຄັ້ງນີ້ ແລະ ຂໍຂອບໃຈສະຖານທູດອາເມຣິກັນ ປະຈຳນະຄອນຫຼວງວຽງຈັນ (US Embassy in Vientiane) ແລະ ມູນນິທິເອເຊັງ (Asia Foundation, Lao PDR) ທີ່ໃຫ້ການສະນັບສະນູນຮ່ວມມືໃນກອງປະຊຸມ. ພວກເຮົາຫວັງວ່າຄັ້ງໜ້າທ່ານຈະມີໂອກາດເຂົ້າຮ່ວມ ການປະຊຸມນາໆຊາດ ລາວສຶກສາ ຄັ້ງທີ ໖ ທີ່ຈະໄດ້ຈັດຂຶ້ນໃນປີ ຄ.ສ. ໒໐໑໙. ຂໍໃຫ້ທ່ານໂຊກດີ.

ຂໍສະແດງຄວາມນັບຖືແລະເຄົາລົບຢ່າງສູງ



Vinya Sysamouth, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Center for Lao Studies

ຕ່າງໜ້າຄະນະກຳມະການ
ວັນທີ ໐໘ ກໍລະກົດ ໒໐໑໖

Keynote & Invited Panel Discussions

Keynote Address 1

July 8 10:15 to 11:00

Dr James R. Chamberlain

Lao Ethnicity and Language: Roots of Unity in ASEAN

Abstract

This paper has three main purposes. First it seeks to unravel the etymology and the definition of “Lao” from the points of view of historical geography and comparative and historical linguistics, examining the “root” form and its extensions, and where and how it has been applied throughout the region. Second, considering the central location of Laos as an economic crossroads in Southeast Asia throughout history, it explores the connections between Laos and other ASEAN countries through shared ethnolinguistic configurations, how the language families of Laos overlap with those of other member states. Finally, it illustrates how linguistic “roots” within ASEAN are very ancient and very deep, using examples of common lexicon and phylogenetic relationships between languages of the same family. Taken together, these aspects of the relationship of Laos and ASEAN provide a solid foundation for common understanding both of our own national origins and the common evolutionary development of all member states, in particular those aspects of a shared view of the world as conditioned by language and linguistic heritage.

Keynote Address 2

July 8 11:15 to 12:00

Dr Vinya Sysamouth

10th Year Celebration of the Center for Lao Studies

Mr. Prany Sananikone

CLS Board Chair

Keynote Address 3

July 10 11:00 to 11:45

Dr. Nick Enfield

Remarks on the Contributions of the 5th International Conference on Lao Studies: Lao Studies and Human Diversity

Professor and Chair of Linguistics Department, The University of Sydney

Abstract

In this keynote lecture I will present concluding remarks on the 5th International Conference on Lao Studies, by asking the question: How can Lao Studies contribute to the study of diversity in our species? Laos is a place of remarkable cultural and linguistic diversity. When we focus on this fact, how might this affect our appraisal of Lao Studies? And what might be the new directions for Lao Studies?

Invited Panel Session 1

July 9 13:00 to 14:30

Invited Panel Session

Lao Cultural Heritage

Invited panel speakers

- Douang Deuane Bounyavong, author and independent scholar, “Weaving Poems: Lao Textiles in Classical Literatures”
- Dr. John Draper, Khon Kaen University “Implications of the Isan Culture Maintenance and Revitalization Programme”

Dr. John Draper

Implications of the Isan Culture Maintenance and Revitalization Programme

Khon Kaen University

Abstract

The Isan Culture Maintenance and Revitalization Programme (ICMRP) was a four-year 500,000 euro programme devised and implemented by four municipalities in Khon Kaen Province together with the College of Local Administration (COLA) at Khon Kaen University in Northeast Thailand. It was 90% co-sponsored by the European Union and 10% sponsored by the partners. Five different action lines were pursued, with Ban Phai Municipality being responsible for traditionally made ‘ethnic’ uniforms, Chum Phae Municipality for designing and installing multilingual signage, Khon Kaen Municipality for implementing the teaching of Isan as a subject in municipal schools, and Muang Phon Municipality responsible for a multimedia collection of cultural performances. COLA was responsible for project coordination, research, and visibility, mainly the production of academic papers, research articles, and newspaper columns. This paper summarises and discusses the main results and outcomes, including the first municipal multilingual Thai-Isan-English signage in Northeast Thailand, the first multilingual Thai-Isan-English dictionary using a heritage script, the first Isan subject curriculum, a unique archive of Isan cultural performances, and the production of ‘ethnic’ municipal and school uniforms.

Invited Panel Session 2

July 10 09:00 to 10:30

Invited Panel Session

Laos in globalized world: challenges and opportunities

Invited panel speakers

- Dr. Yos Santasombat, Professor of Anthropology, Chair of Ph.D. Program in Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Senior Research Scholar, Thailand Research Fund, “Challenges of Modernity in Lao PDR”
- Dr. Phillip Hirsch, The University of Sydney, “Hydropolitics and Sovereignty: Reflections on a half century of dam building in Lao PDR”
- Dr. Nathan Badenoch* and Dr. Bualy Paphaphanh**, “Sociolinguistics of the Rubber Economy: Language use along R3 in Luang Namtha Province”

*Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University

**Faculty of Letters, National University of Laos

Dr. Yos Santasombat

Challenges of Modernity in Lao PDR

Professor of Anthropology, Chair of Ph.D. Program in Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University

Senior Research Scholar, Thailand Research Fund

Dr. Phillip Hirsch

Hydropolitics and Sovereignty: Reflections on a half century of dam building in Lao PDR

The University of Sydney

Abstract

Since the 1960s, the Lao government has staked its economic strategy on development of the country's natural resources, including land, forests, minerals and water. Hydropower development has been high on this agenda. As a country rich in water resources and with topography conducive to dam building, engineers have progressively impounded the main tributaries of the Mekong River within Lao territory and started to build projects on the Mekong mainstream. There are plans for many more. These projects have generated not only electricity but also heated controversy. Several factors result in such controversy being internationalized, to the extent that there is more open debate over Lao dams outside the country, and amongst expatriates within Laos, than amongst Lao citizens and organisations themselves. One reason for this is the transboundary nature of the Mekong River Basin, meaning that impacts are felt across borders. Another is the fact that all the dam projects are international in nature, in terms of investment and destination of the power generated. A third reason is that there is little political space for open critical discussion of individual projects and their

impacts within Laos, not to mention critique of the hydropower-based development strategy as a whole. Meanwhile, the Lao government has increasingly asserted sovereign authority to develop its economy and its rivers as it sees fit, at a time when the main transboundary river basin organisation, the Mekong River Commission (MRC), faces critical challenges. Tensions between national sovereignty and the inherently international dimensions of hydropower development in Laos are the subject of this presentation.

The presentation commences with a review of dam building since the 1960s, along with a sketch of plans for future hydropower development. It then considers the various international dimensions of dam building and questions the extent to which project decisions can be portrayed as a sovereign issue. Brief case studies of the Nam Ngum 1, Nam Theun 2, Nam Lik 1/2 and Xayaburi projects illustrate the dilemmas and contradictions. The intergovernmental regimes of MRC and the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation framework and the international civil society responses to Laos' dam building agenda are also shown to complicate the national sovereignty discourse. The presentation wraps up by arguing that, were there to be a more robust and open debate over dam building within Laos, the sovereignty assertions would remain problematic but nevertheless be more compelling.

Dr. Nathan Badenoch* and Dr. Bualy Paphaphanh**

Socio-Linguistics of the Rubber Economy: Language use along R3 in Luang Namtha Province

*Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University

**Faculty of Letters, National University of Laos

The physical and social landscapes of northern Laos are being integrated into the broader regional economy. In Luang Namtha province, the completion of the Route 3 upgrade in 2004 has begun to draw people to roadside settlements. Both formal arrangements for the transfer of village populations as well as spontaneous movements of individual households have meant that road-side settlements have been growing rapidly. Promise of improved access to education and health services is an important driver, and has gone hand-in-hand with perceived opportunities to significantly increase cash income through planting rubber.

Working together, these forces are rearranging the geography of ethnic diversity. The social and environmental risks of rapid shifts to life along the roads have received some attention, but the implications of the development of large, multi-ethnic villages for cultural dynamics in this area of high ethnic diversity are only starting to emerge now. Language is a fundamental part of this diversity.

This paper focuses on language use along the section of R3 stretching between Namtha town and the Chinese border. Drawing on baseline data from a 2001 ADB survey of ethnicity along R3 and the authors' own field research (2011-2015), we will describe the new ethnic demographics that have come to characterize this area. Language use

practices in these villages will be presented, focusing on inter-generational transfer of language and traditional knowledge, the multi-scalar landscape of lingua francas, and emergent networks of language maintenance. In particular, we discuss:

- the situation of small languages such as Bit (Mon-Khmer), Sida and Pana (Tibeto-Burman)
- the position of Khmu (Mon-Khmer) as a regional language and lingua franca
- the shifting roles of local Tai languages, such as Nyuan, Tai Dam and Lue

It is clear that it will be increasingly difficult for many smaller languages to maintain the domains of use needed to ensure that they are transmitted intact to the coming generations. That said, it is important to explore the different types of threats and responses at this critical juncture. The uplands of Laos are historically areas of not only high linguistic diversity, but also sites of extremely complex and dynamic networks of language use. Thus, it is particularly interesting to see not only how local forms of multilingualism are affected by rapid rearrangement of settlement patterns, but also how multilingualism provides people with a framework for responding to new types of interaction and communication.

International Conference for Lao Studies Film Festival, 2016
Saturday July 9, 2016
Bangkok, Thailand

Coordinated by
S. Steve Arounsack, Ph.D.
sarounsack@csustan.edu

Dr. Arounsack serves as the Director of the Keck Visual Anthropology Lab (KVAL) and is an Associate Professor of cultural anthropology at California State University, Stanislaus.

16:30-16:47PM (shown in both rooms)

Those Below

Director: Xaisongkham Induangchanthy
Producer: Natasha Soto, Vannaphone Sitthirath
Studio: Lao New Wave Cinema Productions
RT: 17 min.

When his estranged father visited Laos's years ago and lost contact with the family, Jeff traveled to the country to search for him. Upon his arrival, Jeff is followed by a local taxi driver who assists him with the search. Jeff finds his father living with a young girl in a remote village and is unable to convince his father to leave. Jeff confronts his father about this secret life in Laos.

17:00-18:36

Venue: Room #201, Faculty of Liberal Arts BLD

Noy – Above it All

Director: Anysay Keola
Producer: Athitxay Keomanikone
Studio: Lao New Wave Cinema Productions
RT: 96 min.

Noy, a male medical graduate who appears to lead a perfect life, is pressured by his parents to marry his beautiful rich girlfriend. When he can no longer deny and hide his sexual preference, he risks the consequences of telling his parents the truth. At the same time, Noy, a Hmong woman from a poor family in Xieng Khouang, looks forward to celebrating her graduation after a long struggle to support herself in Vientiane. However, her parents' arrival does not bring the joy she expected. However, she faces a difficult choice: should she remain in Vientiane with her musician boyfriend or get married overseas in order to repay her parents' debt?

17:00-18:36

Venue: Room #202, Faculty of Liberal Arts BLD

Vientiane in Love

Directors: Anysay Keola, Phanumad Disattha, Vannaphone Sitthirath, Xaisongkham Induangchanthy

Producer: Athidxay Boundaoheuang

Studio: Lao New Wave Cinema Productions

RT: 95 min.

Vientiane in Love is the first omnibus Lao film delving into different aspects of love as shown through five separate stories: Mon, a professional photographer falls in love for the first time; Noy, a fisherman's daughter, escapes from her father in order to pursue her vision of "happiness"; Ray, a singer who gives his ex-girlfriend an unforgettable surprise; Ninda, a business woman who suspects her husband is having an affair with a young woman who later becomes part of Ninda's revenge; and Luck, a young girl who is caught at a fancy restaurant with a middle-aged American tourist. These love stories in Laos' capital city reflect nuanced and non-typical relationships, complete with romance, heartbreak, and even humor.

Session #1: Individual Paper Session on Economics, Development & Ethnic Identity

Shoua Yang, Ph.D.

Foreign Direct Investment and Its Impacts on Lao Social, Economic, and Political Structures

Department of Political Science, St. Cloud State University, Minnesota, USA

In 1988, when the Ministry of Planning and Investment, having complied with an executive decree of the Politburo, modified its international investment codes, easing international trade restrictions. Since then, the number of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Laos has increased exponentially. Of the international investors, China, Thailand, and Vietnam are the top investors investing billions of U.S. dollars in various projects in the economy. Although the existing literature analyzes the economics of scale of FDI in the country, none of the analysts explores the impacts of FDI on Lao social, economic, and political structures. This paper, guided by an import-substitution industrialization approach of economic development, argues that FDI will inevitably change the status quo of the existing structures. A change that cannot be controlled by the Lao government, given Lao economic tradition of dependency, shortage of human resources, and lack of economic infrastructures. This argument is built upon a time series of qualitative data collected through interviews, examination of government policies, and professional observations.

John Walsh, D.Phil.,

Impacts of the Special Economic Zones of Lao PDR

Director, SIU Research Centre, School of Management, Shinawatra University, Thailand

One of the principal policies for rapid economic development in Lao PDR is the creation of special economic zones (SEZs). These areas aim to encourage inward investment by providing stable infrastructure and tax breaks in various categories to potential domestic and international investors. Hosting factories on this basis enables the country to pursue its trajectory along the Factory Asia paradigm (low labour cost competitiveness in export-oriented, import-substituting manufacturing). In addition to direct effects of increased employment, this also offers possible spillover effects in the form of industrial deepening and technology transfer. SEZs are generally located near to large markets or population bases or the intersections of transportation routes. If successfully managed, SEZs act as magnets for new forms of development and provides demand for social and public services. Social relations are also affected because many of

the people drawn from the agricultural into the industrial sector will be women. The Lao government is planning to build an additional 41 SEZs and specific economic zones with the view of creating another 50,000 jobs and adding US\$2,400 to local per capita incomes. International investors in both private and public sectors will be invited to contribute to these projects. This paper explores the existing use of SEZs in the country and their impact on local conditions from various perspectives (e.g. social, environmental, legal and geographic) and then attempts to predict likely impacts to be caused by the future constructions. Policy recommendations are derived from this analysis.

James Brown

Reworking Fixity and Motion: Labour Agency, Global Production Networks and Uneven Economic Rescaling in the Savan-Seno Special Economic Zone, Lao PDR
SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies), University of London

This paper uses geographical political economy and labour geography approaches to analyse labour in manufacturing industries in the Savan-Seno Special Economic Zone (SEZ), Savannakhet. The paper is based on fieldwork carried out in 2013-2014. I argue that the informal agency of workers is a core constitutive part of the expansion of global production networks (GPNs), national development outcomes, and the global social relations of capitalist development. The agency of workers produces tangled geographies of development, creating interwoven networks, places, and scales. Firms in GPNs attempt to create new production locations, such as the Savan-Seno SEZ, to maintain competitiveness and accumulation. The success of these endeavours depends on marshalling the necessary labour force. In Savannakhet labour emerges from place-based community networks whose primary aim is social reproduction and not the success of GPNs. Workers engage with (potential) employment in the zone by reworking their fixity and motion. They rework place-based commitments and mobility into household livelihood strategies which incorporate factory and farm work and labour migration to Thailand. This problematises the establishment of GPNs in Laos by creating tight labour markets and high labour turnover. The Lao state's attempts to fix mobile capital and mobile workers in place through the mechanism of the zone constitutes a strategy of rescaling national space into macro-regional economic space and entails the rescaling of local class relations into global relations. The contradictory relational nexus of labour, capital, and state strategies produces uncertain and uneven developmental outcomes for Lao special economic zones.

John Draper

The Thai Lao Question

College of Local Administration, Khon Kaen University

This paper presents an anatomy of the crucial 2011 Thailand Country Report to the Committee responsible for the *UN Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, in which Thailand recognized the Thai Lao to the international community. The paper details the submission of the Country Report and related shadow

reports as well as the deliberations of the Committee in dialogue with the Thailand Country Delegation. The paper also provides a policy context for the Country Report, in which the classification of ethnic communities is rooted in a scientific research context developed at Mahidol University, supported by the Office of the National Identity Board and the international community, especially UNESCO. The paper also introduces five policy issues framed in the context of inclusion which arise from the recognition of approximately 14 million Thai Lao by the Country Report, namely educational disparities between the Thai Lao and Central Thai (economic inclusion), the 'Nao Lao' issue of discrimination based on type of face, an issue related to whiteness theory (social inclusion), the health disparities between the Thai Lao and the Central Thai (social inclusion), the lack of an elected metropolitan administration for the Thai Lao compared to the one for the Central Thai, i.e., the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, and the partial nature of the recognition of the Thai Lao itself, i.e., their recognition to the international community as compared to the lack of recognition at the national level, which may be compared with the recognition of 'highlands peoples' (political inclusion).

Session #2: Individual Paper Session on Music

Pisit Aemduang* and Jarernchai Chonpairot**

Popular Music in Lao PDR: Problematic Issues and Guidelines for the Development toward International Popularity

*Ph.D. Candidate in Music, College of Music, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

**Ph.D. in Musicology-Ethnomusicology College of Music, Mahasarakham University, Thailand.

This qualitative research paper examines the contemporary conditions and problematic issues of Lao contemporary music in Lao PDR and explores the guidelines for the development of Lao contemporary music towards international popularity in era globalization. Fieldwork was conducted in Vientiane Metropolitan of Lao PDR through interviews and observations. The results of the study revealed that contemporary pop music of Lao PDR has been rapidly growing through the use of advanced technology and globalization. There were co-operations among music producers in Laos and foreign countries. The music productions were also promoted through various technology channels. However, there were still some problems among the majority of the Lao people because the Lao people were not attracted to listen to the contemporary Lao pop music. They still turned to foreign pop music rather than Lao pop music, such as the pop music from neighboring country's television programs, especially, from Thailand. Lao singers, musicians, and song writers were not well known. In addition further problems were caused by limited language skills and also the content of texts had to be in line with the Lao government cultural regulations. The guidelines for the development of Lao contemporary music to develop international popularity, the song writers have to improve their language skills as well as music content so that it contains various aspects of Lao culture in order to attract the tastes of Lao people, including the

beautiful and charming melodies that symbolize and promote the Lao culture through globalization.

S. Steve Arounsack, PhD

The Resurgence of Lao Music and Film

Anthropology, Geography, and Ethnic Studies Department, California State University, Stanislaus

After being largely dormant for decades, the private music and film industries in Laos have developed rapidly since the turn of the millennium. In a culture anchored in Theravada Buddhist beliefs, new lyrics and images can draw sharp contrasts to cultural norms. Drawing on interviews with prominent musicians and filmmakers, this research explores how these young pioneers navigated through the duality of modern influences and traditional underpinnings during this watershed. What ignited these movements and what socio-cultural changes resulted? This study highlights the early and on-going challenges faced by these industries; examined topics include censorship, economics, equality, transnationalism, and generation gaps. These vignettes provide an emerging picture of a generation determined to not only change their country, but adamant about preserving their values and heritage. The footage and data gathered over 15 years of research are being distilled to produce a documentary.

Sasinut Phongnil, Ph.D.

Musical Instruments of the Ethnic Groups in Central Laos (P.D.R.)

Music Department, Naresuan University, Pitsanulok, Thailand

The qualitative research on “The Musical Instruments of the Ethnic groups in Central Laos (P.D.R.)”, investigates the various kinds of musical instruments and their functions among the ethnic groups in Central Laos (P.D.R.). Field work was conducted in Sawanakhet province in Central Laos. These ethnic groups belong to the Mon-Khmer and Tai-Lao language family. They believe in the spirits in nature and their family spirits. In this study, the researcher found that the musical instruments of the ethnic groups in Central Laos (P.D.R.), consisted of areophanes, membranophones and idiophones. All of the musical instruments were made by the local ethnic groups. These included: *sanai* buffalo horn aerophone; *klong hang*, long drum membranophone; and *klong shaun*, short drum. The people played their music in many occasions, such as *Aroy*, spirit ceremony as well as in for entertainment. Globalization and new technologies did not have much impact upon the ethnic music traditions. The people are proud of their own music traditions.

Winyoo Piewrat* and Songkoon Chantachon, Ph.D. **

History of Pong-Lang in Northeast Thailand

*Ph.D. Candidate in Cultural Sciences, Faculty of Cultural Science, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

**Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

The *Pong-Lang* wooden xylophone originated in Kalasin province in Northeast Thailand and is generally believed to have been developed from the signaling device called the *kaw-law*. In the old days *pong lang* originally was a solo instrument; later on other instruments were added to be a *pong lang* ensemble. A *pong lang* ensemble consists of a *pong lang* xylophone, a *khaen* mouth organ, a *phin* plucked lute, a folk drum set, a set of plucked jars, a pair of wooden clappers, and dancing. Nowadays *Pong-Lang* ensembles are taught and performed in the school system at various levels. Each year or each semester there are many *pong lang* competitions. People of all ages, old and young, enjoy watching and listening to *pong lang* music.

Session #3: Individual Paper Session on Cultures, Ethnicity, Music and Religions

Dr. James E. Coughlan

The Countries of Birth and Ethnicities of Australia's Hmong and Lao Communities: A Brief Analysis of the 2011 Australian Census Data

Independent Scholar, Thailand

From the beginning of 1975 until mid-2015, approximately 11,700 Hmong and Lao immigrants and refugees have settled in Australia. Although these immigrants are well aware of their ancestral origins and ethnicity identity, within the broader Australian community there is a general ignorance of the ethnic diversity of Laos, as well as some misunderstanding about the number of Hmong and Lao immigrants and their descendants in Australia.

This article presents a brief preliminary analysis of *ancestry*, *country of birth*, and *language spoken at home* data from the 2011 Australian Census of Population and Housing relating to the Hmong and Lao communities in Australia, with the main emphasis on the responses to the *ancestry* and *language spoken at home* questions. The analysis and data presented here seeks to (i) develop an ethnic profile of the Laos-born communities in Australia, and to discuss how this profile has changed since 1986, and (ii) produce an estimate of the size of the ethnic Hmong and Lao communities in Australia as of mid-2011.

The 2011 Census data show that of those persons born in Laos, approximately 66 per cent indicated that they were of Lao ethnicity, 14 per cent of Chinese ethnicity, seven per cent of Hmong ethnicity and five per cent Vietnamese ancestry; while at the same time there were 2,750 people of Hmong ancestry and 12,370 of Lao ancestry resident in Australia.

Yifan Zhang

A historical perspective on the case study of Laotian-Sri Lankan cultural and religious connections

Chulalongkorn University

Sri Lanka and Laos are two Theravadin Buddhist countries respectively located in South and Southeast Asia. W. M. Srisena, a Sri Lankan scholar argued that in much the same way as Vietnam and the Philippines, Laos has had little connections with Sri Lanka.

However, his proposal is partially questionable historically. Geographically, Sri Lanka and Laos are far from each other. The distance between the two countries could not deny the cultural and religious connections of two countries since the ancient time. When Sri Lanka became the chief religious influence in the region, the influences crossed the mountains and rivers in Southeast Asia even though Laos is a land-locked region, the influence of Sinhalese Theravada Buddhism spread to Laos through Thai, Burmese and Khmer Kingdoms at that time. In the book “The Most Important Buddha Images Of Lanna” from Wat Suan Dok, Thailand, Ven Phra Thepworasithajarn mentioned that the renowned Emerald Buddha Image once was standing in Wat Phrakeaw in Vientiane. Earlier this iconic Buddha’s image was kept in the island Sri Lanka before it was sent to Southeast Asia to avoid Cola invasion from South India. It is said that in the 1350s the miraculous Buddha image ‘Prabang’ was given by a Sinhalese king to a Lao monk. Discerning more connections between Laos and Sri Lanka will help us to know a more complete historical and religious understanding of Theravada Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia and a new dimension of Lao-Sri Lankan relations.

Hommala Phensisanavong

The Characteristics of ASEAN Greeting Custom

Department of Lao Language-Mass Communication, Faculty of Letters, National University of Laos

Greeting is considered an important aspect of human communication. So greeting should be practiced beautifully and meaningfully at the first meeting before moving on to be closer and have more successful communication. In order to accomplish the three pillars of ASEAN Community: ASEAN Economic Community, ASEAN Political-Security Community and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community all ASEAN member countries should have learned and experienced the characteristics of greeting customs of each member nation. If we can do so, the ASEAN goal can be achieved more effectively and we will be able to live peacefully in this harmonious community. This Documentary Film is a production of teachers and students from the Department of Lao Language-Mass Communication, Faculty of Letters, National University of Laos that will present The Characteristics of Greeting Custom of ASEAN Member Countries beginning by The Characteristics of Greeting Custom of Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Brunei Darussalam, The Kingdom of Cambodia, The Republic of Indonesia, Malaysia, The Union of Myanmar, The Republic of The Philippines, The Republic of Singapore, The Kingdom of Thailand, and The Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The focus of this documentary film will identify the similarities and differences of verbal and Non-verbal greeting in our ASEAN member countries, so this will lead us to see our ASEAN Community via greeting customs that we are ‘One Community, One Identity or Multiple Identities.

Marie-Pierre Lissoir

Singing in the microphone: Tai Dam traditional music and modernity in Laos

Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium), Laboratoire d’Anthropologie des Mondes Contemporains, and La Sorbonne-Nouvelle Paris 3 (France), Laboratoire de Phonétique et Phonologie, Ciney, Belgium.

Tai Dam singing (*khap Tai Dam*) is a collective practice performed during every event of community life, which plays an important role in the construction of the Tai Dam identity. The *khap* is traditionally performed during a party or a feast. A singer (called *moo-khap*) spontaneously sings while sitting among the other guests. His *khap* is structured by refrains performed by the audience. While not everyone can be called a *moo-khap*, every member of the community is able to sing the refrain. This action creates, along with the setting of the performance (collective celebration, food, alcohol), a sense of belonging and is, in this perspective, the most important and recognizable part of the song. However, along with the arrival of electricity also came sound installations with speakers and microphones. This paper will explore the influences of this new setting on the singing itself and its role in the Tai Dam community. While it allows for large scale performances, the use of this equipment completely changes the traditional setting of the performance and its impact on the community. The singer is now isolated from the audience, standing next to the speakers and usually under a banner describing the event. With the distance and the use of microphone, the audience can't perform the refrains, which completely changes the relationship between singer and listener. The interpretation becomes more formal and functional, serving a specific topic (usually linked to a political subject) and reducing the role of developing social bonds usually filled by the *khap Tai Dam*.

Session #4: Individual Paper Session on Linguistics

***Somsong Burusphat, Ph.D. and **Sopita Thavorn, Ph.D.**

Language vitality of Tai-Dam Lao

*Research Institute of Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University

**Chiang Mai Rajabhat University

Tai Dam, or Black Tai people, are a Tai Ethnic group whose original homeland is in the northwest of Vietnam. The Tai Dam ancestors migrated to Laos and Thailand at different periods historically. In Laos, the Tai Dam ethnic group dwell in Northern provinces such as Louang Namtha, Bokeo, Xiangkhoang, Houaphan, and Phongsali. This paper aims to study the language vitality of Tai-Dam Lao to find out to what extent the Tai Dam people could preserve their language in the context of the larger Lao community. Tai Dam speakers living in Louang Namtha province are chosen as representatives of Tai Dam in Laos. The phonological and lexical studies reveal that Tai Dam speakers have very strong language vitality. They still keep the original features of Tai Dam phonology such as the diphthongs [au], and the initial voiceless unaspirated stops /p-, t-, c-, k-/ which are reflexes of the Proto-initials *b-, *d-, *ʃ-, and *ɣ- respectively. A tonal analysis also shows a tonal system typical for the Tai Dam language, namely, a binary split of the four tonal categories conditioned by the voicing of initials. This tonal system is similar to the tonal system of the Tai Dam variety spoken in Muang La (Son La) from where Tai-Dam Lao migrated. While the Tai Dam phonology remains intact, lexical usage has been marginally influenced by the Lao language. The Tai-Dam Lao have been able to maintain

their language very well because most Tai Dam communities in Laos are strongly united. They use the Tai Dam language in daily life and have positive attitudes towards their own language and culture. Other factors leading to the strong language vitality are: an extended family environment in which three generations live together in the same house; support of the Lao government for the preservation of ethnic languages and cultures; and the regular practice of ancestor worship which helps strengthen the Tai Dam identity.

Attasith Boonsawasd, Ph.D.

Variation in Tai Kinship Terminology and System in Laos

Srinakharinwirot University

This research discusses the variations of the terms and systems of basic kinship in Tai languages spoken in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). The languages include Lao, Tai Dam, Tai Daeng, Tai Lue, and Tai Yuan. All data was collected from native informants living in Luang Namtha province situated at the northwest tip of Laos, and analyzed with a componential analysis approach. The results revealed that the basic kinship systems in such languages distinguished between generations, linealities, ages, parental side, and genders. All five languages made no distinction for the third generation above ego (G+3) and the second and the third generation below ego (G-2, G-3), and employ sex-neutral kinship terms from the first generation below ego to the third generation below ego (G-1 to G-3). Such terms include great grandparent: “mǎ:n” (Lao, Tai Dam, Tai Lue, and Tai Yuan), “hǎi” (Tai Dam), and “hǎ:k” (Tai Daeng); grandchild: “lǎ:n” (Lao, Tai Dam, Tai Daeng, Tai Lue, and Tai Yuan); and great grandchild: “lǎ:n” (Lao, Tai Dam, Tai Daeng, Tai Lue, and Tai Yuan). However, the kinship systems in Tai Lue and Tai Yuan are differentiated from the other three languages as Tai Lue made no distinction in gender for the Ego (G0) generation, and Tai Yuan made no distinction on the parental side for the second generation above ego (G+2). To make a gender designation in sex-neutral kinship terms, the terms “cai”, “bǎ:u”, “wǎ:u”, “tsai”, or “sai” are used for male, and “yiŋ” or “sǎ:u” are used for female.

Wichaya Bovonwivat, Ph.D.

Aspectual Implication of Directional Verbs in Black Tai

In Tai languages, certain verbs denoting direction have been grammaticalized to convey temporal aspects due to their inherent meanings of space and time. Black Tai or Tai Dam, which belongs to the Southwestern branch of Tai languages, also possesses this linguistic feature of directional verbs. In spite of a number of linguistics studies of these directional words signaling aspects in some major Tai languages such as Thai, which is widely spoken and holds several interesting features of aspects and verbs, research relevant to directional verbs and aspect markers in smaller Tai languages such as Black Tai, Tai Lue, Shan, Bouyei, etc. is relatively rare. Thus, Black Tai or Tai Dam has been chosen and compared with Thai in terms of the grammaticalization process of directional words to aspect markers. This study aims to explain spatial and temporal

meanings—rather than directional meanings—of directional verbs of Black Tai and illustrate the grammaticalization path of these verbs. The Black Tai data in this study is collected from Luangnamtha province in Laos where Black Tai community is very dominant and other Tai languages such as Lue and Kalom are used in some villages. The common directional verbs in Black Tai are classified into three contrastive pairs: *pai*²² “go” and *ma*⁵⁵ “come”; *khun*²¹ “up” and *lon*⁵⁵ “down”; *khaw*²¹ “enter,” and *ʔɔ:k*²² “out.” These directional words not only present the movement direction of a subject, but also note aspectual meaning of a situation by passing through the grammaticalization process over time. Generally, *pai*²² indicates the movement away from the speaker, while *ma*⁵⁵ demonstrates the movement toward the speaker. *ʔɔ:k*²² refers to moving outward; on the other hand, *khaw*²¹ denotes moving inward. *khun*²¹ shows upward movement, but *lon*⁵⁵ shows downward movement. Spatial and temporal relations increase semantic and syntactic use of the directional verbs more extensively, from verbs to aspect markers. Originally, the directional verbs functions as verbs, are then used as prepositions following main verbs. At this post verbal position, the directional words have been grammaticalized to aspectual markers indicating the beginning or the termination of a situation. To conclude, the process of grammaticalization of directional verbs in Black Tai or Tai Dam has been influenced by spatial and temporal relations, in which those directional verbs have various grammatical functions and meanings.

***Zirivarnphicha Thanajirawat, Ph.D. and **Yutthaporn Naksuk, Ph.D.**

A linguistic identification of Tai Kalom

*Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin

**Research Institute of Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University

Tai Kalom or Kalom is a Tai ethnic group residing in LuangNamtha Province, Lao PDR where the majority ethnic group is Tai Dam. Tai Kalom people speak the Tai Kalom language, a language of the Tai language family, which is still debatable as to whether or not it is Tai Lue or Tai Yuan language as spoken in the Northern Thailand. This ethnic group is classified into a Tai Yuan group by the Lao Government which might be a reason why most Tai Kalom villagers call themselves Tai Yuan. However, the language of Tai Kalom sounds like both Tai Lue and Tai Yuan. This study, therefore, aims to clarify the Tai Kalom identity using both lexical and tonal linguistic evidence. A linguistic study of the Tai Kalom language at Ban Vieng Tay has found that Tai Kalom people at this village are Tai Yuan. A lexical analysis of the Tai Kalom at this village reveals a high frequency of Tai Yuan lexical usage mixed with marginal Tai Lue words. This linguistic evidence is supported by a historical account. Learned villagers expound that Tai Kalom people migrated from Chiang Saen, northern Thailand, which is populated by Tai Yuan people. Some cultural objects also affirm Tai Yuan identity such as: the Tham or Dhamma alphabets on palm leaf manuscripts which are also found in the northern Thailand, Tai Yuan fiddles, and Tai Yuan tube skirts. On the other hand, a tonal analysis does not correspond with the results of the lexical study. A typical feature of Tai Yuan tonal system is a split and merger in tone A category conditioned by the glottalized feature of the initial consonant of a syllable. However, a binary split across the four tonal

categories based on voicing typical of Tai Lue and Tai Dam languages is found. As Luang Namtha Province is a multi-lingual community, it is possible that the original tonal system of Tai Yuan might have been influenced by Tai Lue or Tai Dam and thus Tai Kalom people at Ban Vieng Tay are often mistaken as Tai Lue.

Session #5: Panel A Legacies of Peace: Addressing the UXO Issue in Laos

***Channapha Khamvongsa discussant**

Legacies of Peace: Addressing the UXO Issue in Laos

Matt Ference, Public Affairs Officer

“Embassy of the United States in Vientiane: US Assistance to the UXO Sector in the Lao PDR”

***Lathtana Chanthala and **Colette McInerney**

***VAST Project Coordinator**

**** Country Director**

World Education Laos: Building resilience in UXO survivors in Lao PDR

Simon Rea, Country Director

Mines Advisory Group: Clearing UXO from the Lao PDR

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Representative from NGO in Laos working on demining

It has been over 40 years since the end of the war in Laos, with remnants of unexploded ordnance, or UXO, a significant hindrance to the development of the country. The panel will explore the history of the bombing in Laos and the current efforts to address the issue. With the attention on Laos as ASEAN Chairman and the planned visit of President Barrack Obama in 2016, the first U.S. President to visit Laos, the panel will discuss the implications of this historic visit for addressing this important bilateral issue.

Conference Themes: Rural Development, Environment and Health, Roles of the private and public sectors, Infrastructure demands, Lao language, culture, and history

Organizer & Discussant

Channapha Khamvongsa

Executive Director

Legacies of War

1312 9th Street NW

Washington, DC 20001

Presenters

Embassy of the United States in Vientiane

U.S. Assistance to the UXO Sector in the Lao PDR

Presenter: Matt Ference, Public Affairs Officer

Email: FerenceM@state.gov

World Education Laos

Building resilience in UXO survivors in Lao PDR

Presenters: Lathtana Chanthala (VAST Project Coordinator), Colette McInerney, Country Director

Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

Clearing UXO from the Lao PDR

Presenter: Simon Rea, Country Director

Legacies of Peace: Addressing the UXO Issue in Laos

PANEL ABSTRACTS

Embassy of the United States in Vientiane - Matt Ference, Public Affairs Officer

U.S. Assistance to the UXO Sector in the Lao PDR

Assistance to Laos to clear UXO, educate the population about UXO, and to care for the physical, economic, and psychological needs of UXO victims remains an important pillar of the growing U.S.-Lao bilateral relationship. Our modern bilateral relationship with Laos encompasses health, trade, investment, rule of law, counter-narcotics, and education, to name just a few areas, but UXO assistance has long been our largest bilateral assistance program in terms of dollar value, and we remain the largest single donor to the sector. Secretary John Kerry and Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes recently visited Laos, and both said that the United States remains committed to helping make Laos safe from UXO accidents. The White House has publicly indicated its intention to address UXO when President Obama visits Laos in September 2016.

The extent of contamination that remains in Laos has not been documented and no national UXO survey has been conducted. Such a survey can provide a baseline on what remains to be cleared, and a way to prioritize tasks, and this is what we are focused on now with the Lao government and with our implementing partners. The UXO problem in Laos is not a 'forever' problem. We can and will determine the amount and nature of the remaining contamination. And we will work with Laos to make a comprehensive plan to clear the UXO that we survey. We will remain engaged so that one day future generations will only read about UXO in history books, not walk over UXO in farmers' fields.

World Education Laos - Lathtana Chanthala (VAST Project Coordinator), Colette McInerney, Country Director

Building resilience in UXO survivors in Lao PDR

Laos is the most heavily bombed country per capita in the world, with over 2.4 million tons of explosives dropped from 1964 to 1973. Unexploded ordnance (UXO) remains a huge challenge in Laos, with an estimated 48,375 casualties from 1964 to 2008 and only 186,984 of the 80 million estimated UXO destroyed thus far.¹ Both international institutions and the Government of Laos (GOL) recognize the challenge that UXO contamination poses for development across all sectors and for the livelihoods of its population.

While the number of new UXO accidents has continued to decrease, dropping from 302 in 2008 to 45 in 2014,² the number of UXO survivors with persistent medical issues requiring long-term, or in some cases lifetime, support remains. To meet this need World Education established a Victim Assistance Support Team (VAST) that provides one-on-one support to UXO survivors enabling them to improve their lives and that of their families.

This presentation will focus on VAST in Xieng Khouang Province (one of the most heavily UXO impacted provinces in Laos) and its comprehensive case management approach to victim assistance. We will also discuss the importance of working with the Government of Lao by ensuring we align our plans and approach with that of the strategic direction of the government.

Mines Advisory Group – Simon Rea, Country Director

Clearing UXO from the Lao PDR

In 2016 Laos stands at an extremely important and very exciting juncture in efforts to rid the country of the terrible legacy of cluster munitions contamination. Clearance of these and other UXO items has been an ongoing activity at various scales in the country for over 20 years but it is only now that we are moving towards a point where there is the capability to accurately determine the location and type of cluster munitions contamination and develop evidence-based estimations on the timeline and cost for removing these items.

Admittedly it has been a long time coming but there is now finally agreement amongst all the main stakeholders including national Government, international donors and in-country operators regarding the importance and necessity of developing these estimations. Very importantly, all are also in agreement on the methodology that will need to be implemented, in the form of a National Survey, so that these estimations can be formulated. The underlying issue that all stakeholders are aware of is that the

¹ 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED), Government of Laos

² The UXO Sector Annual Report 2014 is available in English, and can be downloaded on the NRA website: <http://www.nra.gov.la/> in the section “Resources”.

Humanitarian Mine Action sector in Laos will face serious challenges in maintaining donor engagement in the country if this National Survey does not take place. Additionally, without the survey results Laos will also face major challenges in achieving obligations under important international agreements, including the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Session #6: Panel B Charting a Future for the Lao Music Industry

Organizer: Aluna Thavonsouk

Discussant: Aluna Thavonsouk

Volachith Intharaphithak, Vilouna Phetmany, Soulisack Vongduangdy, and Aluna Thavonsouk

Charting a Future for the Lao Music Industry

The modern Lao pop music scene was welcomed starting in the year 2000 when the Lao Government decided to open the door to varieties of music genres. An increasing amount of transnational Lao (alternative) rock, pop, hip-hop and R&B created a new 'oeuvre' next to traditional Lao music like morlam. The mission to have the support from Lao fans both in and outside of Laos, toward modern Lao music, and toward our very own Lao music idols, seemed to be successful for a decade. However, unlike in other neighboring countries, many music partners within the Lao music industry, such as artists and music producers, have still not been able to take this pathway as their main career. This presentation aims to focus on different perspectives of several artists/singers on how the Lao music industry can move forward. In particular, we consider opportunities for the Lao music industry to reach more Lao fans around the world as well as fans from neighboring countries, especially from the other nine member countries in the AEC.

Session #7: Panel C Lao Buddhist Murals in Isan

Organizer: Bonnie Brereton

Discussant: Bonnie Brereton

Udom Buasri

A Study of the Inscriptions on the Murals at Wat Sa Bua Kaew

Buddhist University, Khon Kaen, "Phra Lak Phra Lam at Wat Sa Bua Kaew"

The murals on the exterior of Wat Sa Bua Kaew depict the Lao version of the Rama epic, Phra Lak Phra Lam. The story is very complex and is based on the Lao epic Sinsai as well as the Indian Ramayana. Accompanying the scenes are inscriptions in two forms of the old Isan language, Dham and Thai Noi. This paper analyzes the inscriptions and the function they serve on the murals. The analysis includes an examination of the handwriting, and concludes that the inscriptions were done by many different scribes.

The paper also includes a translation of the inscriptions into modern Lao, Thai and English.

Anuchit Rodjanacheewinsupond

Villagers' Way of Life as Seen in Murals of Mahasarakham Province

Maha Sarakham Rajabhat University

Local Isan murals in Mahasarakham province are an important source of knowledge about the history of society. These murals, which are unique in form and very different from those of the Central Region, were created, executed and used by local artisans. The pictures tell stories from local literature and are intertwined with “genre scenes” depicting the local village way of life in the early 20th century.

The researcher studied such genre scenes from three wats created by local village artists in Mahasarakham province: Wat Photharam, Wat Ban Yang, and Wat Pa Rerai. The methodology consisted of quantitative research based on observation, interviews and the deconstruction ideas of Jacques Derrida. The technique involved removing the stories from literature and studying only the way of life of the villagers. The research thus employed the theory of structuralism in analyzing the relationship between family, society, and physical surroundings and reconstructing it into a new picture of the villagers' way of life.

Ivan Polson, Knowing the Mekong

The Cognitive Geography of the Mural Stories

Independent scholar, Imagining the Mekong: Cognitive Geography of the Mural Stories

We cannot hope to think of the landscape the way the people of the past did, yet by exploring the cognitive maps they have left us, we can attempt to reconstruct their understanding of it, and try to understand what that ‘knowing the landscape’ meant for people who were carrying it in their heads. This paper focuses on the Mekong River, exploring the way it was understood and depicted in the murals on the sim at Wat Ban Nong Phok, a small village in what is now Maha Sarakham province, in the center of the Khorat Plateau. Here, the local literati devoted two external walls of the sim to illustrating the story of Phra Lak Phra Lam, following the Viang Chan telling. The stories of the murals were situated on the Khorat Plateau, a landscape very familiar to the people who looked at them and read the stories. To be believable, the understanding of the landscape embedded in the stories would have needed to fit with people's beliefs, experiences, and perceptions of these places they knew. The narratives speak of the river as a series of comfortably navigable stretches separated from each other by rapids and waterfalls which imposed such severe difficulties on movement that the river of the Khorat Plateau can be better understood as a sequence of contiguous lakes each of which had developed its own microecology. The murals and the stories from which they are derived are often reduced to decoration for established historical narratives, but as we extract the cognitive maps from the narratives, the murals and the stories, by the logic of the situation become, of themselves historical evidence.

Bonnie Brereton

Phra Malai in Early 20th Century Lao-Isan Murals

One of the most common themes in early 20th century Lao-Isan murals is Phra Malai, the arahat-monk figure who is able to fly to the Buddhist hells and heavens. The story of Phra Malai is found in various different “tellings,” but the basic plot is the same in all: a virtuous monk endowed with miraculous powers visits the beings in hell, relieves their sufferings, and then relays their requests to relatives in the human realm to make merit on their behalf. He then flies to Tavatimsa Heaven, where he meets and converses first with Indra, and then the future Buddha, Ariya Mettraiya. The Buddha-to-be tells him about the utopian society that will develop in the future after which he will come down to be born as the next Buddha. Those people who wish to be born in the human realm at that time should lead good lives by observing the Five Precepts, making merit, and avoiding bad deeds. They should also listen to the entire Vessantara in one day and one night. In so doing, they will be able to attain enlightenment. Phra Malai is best known among the Lao people through a pair of texts (*Malai Muen- Malai Saen*) read conjunction with the recitation of the Vessantara Jataka during annual Bun Phra Wet festivals. Both stories are depicted in murals found on the walls of *sim* (ordination halls or *ubosot*). The murals vary greatly from one wat to another but certain elements are common to all. This paper will explore some of the ways the story was depicted and the reasons for its popularity.

Session #8: Panel D Boundaries, topography and conflict: Case studies from North Laos

Organizer: Dr. Lia Genovese

Discussant: Dr. Manithaphone Mahaxay

Boundaries, topography and conflict: Case studies from north Laos

Panel Abstract

This panel deals with history, boundaries and topography in north Laos, with particular reference to Xieng Khouang, Hua Phan, Xaysomboun and Luang Prabang Provinces.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, British and French explorers crisscrossed the rugged interior of northeaster Laos to map and apportion territories that Siam and France would lay claim to. The observations of these early travelers are detailed, in the wake of turmoil instigated by Yunnanese rebels commonly known as ‘Haw’.

Long Cheng valley’s topography was the theatre for covert military operations during the Second Indochina War. At the height of the war, weather patterns and topography

dictated offensives and retreats, with the Hmong General Vang Pao intent on recapturing the strategic Plain of Jars. The presentation will feature aerial photos of Long Cheng valley taken by the presenter in 2009-2010.

While archaeological research in Laos is still nascent, the known rock-art sites of Laos can be characterised by their unique positioning in the landscape, to explore rock paintings, carvings and megaliths – and their relation to surrounding topography.

Xieng Khouang Province hosts the majority of archaeological sites populated with megalithic jars and discs, but the stone artefacts in Phou Khoun District, Luang Prabang Province, are characterised by unique features, such as shallow and thick-walled jars, mushroom-shaped discs and animal-decorated stone domes. These features are compared to, and contrasted with, their equivalent in Xieng Khouang Province, to establish the extent to which the jars and discs of Phou Khoun constitute a localised development.

Frederic C. Benson

European Explorers in Northeastern Laos during the 19th Century

Independent Scholar, based in the USA.

Prior to the Paknam Crisis in 1893, which led Siam to yield the east bank of the Mekong River to the French, northeastern Laos was comprised of overlapping mandala-structured principalities lacking territorial boundaries—chiefly Phuan (Xieng Khouang) and Huaphan—which were positioned within the spheres of influence of the more powerful neighboring Lao princes of Vientiane and Luang Prabang, at a local level, and Siamese and Vietnamese kingdoms at a regional level.

As France took initial steps to gain control over Vietnam in 1858, the Siamese acquired a greater understanding of the Western political geographical concept of fixed boundaries and its potential impact on their historical presence in Laos. However, it was not until the 1880s and 1890s that the French sought to integrate Laos within colonial Indochina. Although previous French expeditions surveyed the Mekong River in search for a trade route to China, little was known by the French, as well as the Siamese from a technical standpoint, about the actual geography of northeastern Laos adjacent to Vietnam.

The purpose of this paper is to provide overviews of the routes travelled by British and French explorers who crisscrossed the rugged interior of northeastern Laos, as well as their observations, in the wake of turmoil—instigated largely by Siam and Chinese bandits known as Ho who, for competing purposes, wreaked havoc in the area for decades—as they mapped and assessed the territory on behalf of Siam and France, respectively, in an effort to lay claim to historical tributary rights over the east bank of the Mekong.

Dr. Noel Hidalgo Tan

Rock Art at the Edges

SEAMEO-SPAFA, Bangkok

This paper explores the themes of rock art – rock paintings, carvings and megaliths – and their relation to surrounding topography. While archaeological research in Laos is still nascent, the known rock art sites of Laos can be characterised by their unique positioning in the landscape.

Rather than studying rock art in terms of iconography, the Laotian examples discussed in this paper, namely the Plain of Jars in Xieng Khouang and the Pak Ou Cave paintings in Luang Prabang, present new perspectives in understanding the past. Laotian rock art is found in thresholds of human activity and at the edges of spaces.

This paper explores this issue of rock art in place by examining the extraordinary effort that must have been mustered for their creation, and secondly by studying distribution patterns that may suggest the locations of potential sites.

Dr. Lia Genovese

The stone jars of Phou Khoun District, Luang Prabang Province

Thammasat University

Xieng Khouang Province, in north Laos, hosts the majority of archaeological sites populated with megalithic jars and discs, but the stone artefacts of Phou Khoun District, in Luang Prabang Province, are characterised by unique features, such as shallow and thick-walled jars, mushroom-shaped discs and animal-decorated stone domes. Phou Khoun District is located within a large expanse of land now partially commissioned for the Nam Ngum 5 Hydropower Project. The sites in this area are extremely inaccessible and were first surveyed by Madeleine Colani in the early 1930s. However, no substantial research has been undertaken since she left the field in 1933. The author will present images from sites she documented in Phou Khoun District in recent years and will contrast the jars and discs with those in Xieng Khouang, to establish the extent to which Phou Khoun constitutes a localised development.

Session #9: Individual Paper Session on Language & Culture of Isan Community

Suddhinan Sri-on

The action and the representation of folk Bodhisattva in the Isan community

Ph.D. candidate, Faculty of Humanities and social sciences Mahasarakham University

The purpose of this research was to study the action concepts of Bodhisattva in 32 Isan Folk Jatakas composed in verse. The characteristics and special roles through his interactions and conversations with other characters were analyzed. The Bodhisattva characters studied were the king, an ordinary person, an orphan and a person with a distorted body. The results found that: 1) the heroic representations of the Bodhisattva in Isan Folk Jatakas were reflected through his bravery as a warrior, his morality, his ability to teach the doctrine of Buddhism, and the ability to live in the world of mixed

religious views; 2) the Bodhisattva represented the cultural hero that had a close connection with the lifestyles, community, faith, and Isan custom; and 3) the Bodhisattva was characterized as a traditional local hero who could solve problems of the Isan community. Thus, the character of Bodhisattva in Isan Folk Jataka reflects a heroic representation through the lens of Isan. That is, it illustrates the worldviews and ideology of Folk Buddhism as well as popular traditions, old community lifestyles and multi-faceted faiths that are mixed or overlapping in the Isan community.

Sakunpan Photijak

Language Constraints: Negotiating Social Identity of Isan Female Staff in a Beauty Parlor in Bangkok

Ph.D. Candidate, Graduate School of Language and Communication, National Institute of Development Administration, Bangkok, Thailand

This study is an ethnographic case study which directs attention to micro-social details of everyday interactional contexts of female staff working in a beauty parlor in Bangkok. It is therefore an endeavor to examine; firstly, the ways in which Isan female staff code switch their languages in their work place, a high class beauty parlor. Secondly, the study identifies the factors which influence the decision to code switch between the organizational obligation to use Standard Thai language and their ethnic Isan language. Thirdly, this paper will unfold characteristics of female staff negotiating their social identity among colleagues and their customers in the context of a luxury beauty parlor.

Khomkrit Woradejnaiyana

Trans-boundary in Isan - Lanxang Literature Phra Lax Phra Lam

Department of Thai, Faculty of Technical Education, Rajamangala University of Technology Khonkaen, Thailand

The aim of this article is to study trans-boundary Isan - Lanxang Literature. More specifically, the objective is to compare the Phra Lax Phra Lam, the national epic of Laos, with the left and right sides of the Mekong River in regards to politics, ethnicity, traditional religious beliefs and Buddhism, and sexuality between men and women. These characteristics are the result of the binary social system that exists on both sides of the Mekong River between Laos and Isan. Conflicting viewpoints between Laos and Isan have been compromised over time. The cultures and traditions of both geographic areas have descended from the same literary ancestor.

Session #10: Individual Paper Session on History

Jose Fuentecilla

Filipinos In Laos: In the Service of the Cold War?

Between 1957 and 1975, Filipino technicians representing a broad range of professions came to Laos. They were hired from Manila by the U.S. government such as the Agency for International Development (USAID) to help administer an aid program intended to

keep the Royal Lao Government (RLG) viable against a local insurgency inspired by Communist North Vietnam. What began as a \$50 million a year economic assistance package had consumed by the mid-1970s more than \$800 million. Military assistance, during the same period, marched in lock-step, but in larger sums estimated in the billions.

Constrained by a lack of Lao technical and administrative skills, both the American economic and military aid projects relied on so-called Third Country Nationals (TCNs) to implement a vast array of village-level development projects that spanned the entire country. Prominent among the Thais, Taiwanese, and South Vietnamese TCNs were Filipinos. At the peak of their employment by the USAID, Air America, Continental Air Services, some 900 Filipinos were hired as agriculturists, engineers, teachers, office staff. Much has been documented about the work of the medical project known as Operation Brotherhood (OB) and their Filipino doctors, nurses, social workers. But much less is recorded about the Filipinos such as those contracted with the Manila-based Eastern Construction Company in Laos (ECCOIL) whose more than 400 non-combat technicians served as instructors to the RLG armed forces.

This paper will discuss the extent of the Filipino role during this Lao period when the Cold War was at its height. If their contribution to nation-building was effective, was being Asian a factor? Some contend they were mercenaries. Others say their development skills were vital at a time when these were most needed by the Lao.

Nengher N. Vang, Ph.D.

From Exile to Return Migration: Hmong Diasporas and the Lao PDR, 1975-2015

History Department University of Wisconsin, Whitewater

More than 100,000 ethnic Hmong left Laos following the takeover of the country by the Pathet Lao in May 1975. The majority ended up in the United States, where Hmong leader General Vang Pao had gone, but many of them also took refuge in France, Canada, Australia, and other countries in the West. Despite their forced exodus, Hmong in the diaspora have continued to maintain strong cultural, economic, and political ties with their Lao homeland. In this paper, I analyze the relation between the Hmong diasporas and the Lao PDR from 1975 to 2015. I argue that a combination of economic calculations, cultural ties, and geopolitical struggles best explain the changing relations between the Hmong diasporas and the Lao PDR from confrontation during the Cold War to de-escalation in the 1990s and return migration and some reconciliation in the new millennium. In short, this presentation will highlight not only the changing relations—from exile in 1975 to confrontation in the 1980s and return migration and reconciliation in the 2000s—but also the economic calculations, cultural ties, national security fears, and geopolitical struggles that shaped the contours of the relationship between the Hmong diasporas and the Lao PDR during the past four decades.

Chairat Polmuk

The City of Thorny Bamboos: Urban Literati, Nostalgia, and Cold War Politics in Laos

Ph.D. student in Asian Studies, Cornell University

Phai Nam (thorny bamboo) is the title of a monthly literary magazine founded by Maha Sila Viravong in 1972. Alluding to the name of an ancient city surrounded by a bamboo forest as a natural fortress, the magazine invokes the folkloric past to offer social commentary on the present. Within the context of American intervention in Laos during the Cold War, the magazine demonstrates how Lao writers critically respond to political conflicts and social changes through their literary works. The thorny bamboos thus allegorically refer to those writers of the *Phai Nam* who position themselves as the safeguards of society during the American era. This paper investigates the literary project of the *Phai Nam* magazine in relation to Cold War politics. I argue that *Phai Nam* captures the tension between the conservative literary campaign of the Royal Lao Government and an emerging socialist literary movement associated with the Lao Patriotic Front. Short stories, poems, and essays published in the *Phai Nam* express a nostalgic longing for cultural roots that resonates with the government-sponsored campaign to promote national culture. Nonetheless, instead of resorting to traditional forms of literature to celebrate an idealized national heritage, the magazine promotes a realist mode of writing that offers a more dynamic view of culture and society. *Phai Nam's* writers, such as Dokked, Duangchampa, and Panai reframe elements and references to the Lao past to discuss social problems such as political conflicts, moral decline, and corruption. This mode of social criticism reveals a predilection for an emergent genre of socialist realism that would have a long-lasting impact on modern Lao writing.

Session #11: Panel E Crafting a Living: Present day Handicraft Production in Laos

Organizer: Dr. Linda S. McIntosh

Discussant: Dr. Linda S. McIntosh

Crafting a Living: Present-day Handicraft Production in Laos

The diverse population of the Lao People's Democratic Republic or Lao produce a variety of handicrafts including basketry, textiles, and woodcarving. Various factors have affected the production of handicrafts, such as introduction of a market economy and the growth of tourism, especially in the late twentieth century. A free flow of goods and an open market in member countries of the ASEAN Economic Community, including Laos, is a new issue artisans are facing in the beginning of the twenty-first century. How will Lao handicrafts, especially handwoven textiles, compete with products created in neighbouring countries?

In Laos, different types of organisations, including local and foreign private enterprises as well as national and international government and non-government entities, have interacted with handicraft producers in Laos. The papers presented in this panel will discuss the roles of some organisations and the effects of a few external factors,

including the designation of Luang Prabang as a UNSECO World Heritage Site, in the commercialisation of handicraft production.

Handwoven textiles of Laos are internationally renowned, and present-day weaving will be a focal point of the papers. The majority of textile producers from the country's diverse population are women. Some of the papers will address the effects of the commercialisation of textile production on their lives and the lives of their families. How will their lives be affected when there is a free flow of productions of the ASEAN Economic Community?

Linda S. McIntosh, Ph.D. * and Mone Jouymany**

Katu Craft: Commercialisation of Handwoven Textile Production in Laos

*Independent Researcher, Luang Prabang, Laos

**Weaver/Teacher, Luang Prabang, Laos

Abstract

The textiles of Laos or the Lao People's Democratic Republic or Laos are internationally renowned. Exhibits and written works have primarily focused on weavings produced by the Lao and related lowland groups. Some research on the material culture of groups residing in North Laos has been exhibited and published, but little has been published on the ethnic minority groups living in the country's south such as the Katu.

The Katu group belongs to the Katuic sub-branch of the Mon-Khmer branch of the Austro-Asiatic ethnolinguistic family, and subgroups reside in Central Vietnam and South Laos. This paper will focus on Katu groups living in Laos (population 22,800 according to the 2005 census). The majority of the Katu settlements in Laos are found in Sekong Province with smaller populations in adjacent provinces such as Salavan and Champasak.

Both national and international organizations have initiated projects with Katu weavers. Japanese entities has promoted the use of natural dyes and banana thread along with handspun cotton as well as opened different avenues for sales. Lao government institutions have encouraged commercial production for inter-provincial sales. Private businesses from other parts of Laos have ordered from Katu weavers.

The outcomes of these interventions have varied. Some weavers have left their hometowns to begin business endeavours elsewhere in the country. This paper will explore the effects of the commercialisation of Katu handweaving.

Khamchanh Souvannalith

The Commercialisation of Handicrafts and Status of Women in Luang Prabang

Outreach and Education Manager, Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre, Ban Khamyong, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR

As lifestyles and livelihoods of the people of Laos have changed, handicrafts have become a more commercial pursuit driven by tourist demand, but also export to neighbours like Thailand and the increasing disposable income of the Lao middle class. Further, girls and women, now attending school and working outside the home in greater numbers, have less time for textile production. Luang Prabang has a large tourism sector, and the night market in particular has become an important arena where local people can sell crafts directly to tourists. Women make up a large proportion of the sellers at the night market and producers of the handicrafts themselves. As part of the “Map Your World” project, TAEC’s Community Researchers conducted a mapping exercise in the Luang Prabang night market and surrounding handicraft villages to learn more about the flows of money to women and ethnic minorities through commercial handicrafts, and how that might impact their economic and social status. Most of the respondents were young married women with children who had learned to make handicrafts (primarily weaving, appliqué, or embroidery) as children or teenagers and converted the skill to a micro-business. Most of them sold handicrafts from other local artisans as well as their own products, and controlled the earnings from their sales themselves (rather than passing on to husbands or family). Handicrafts were also the family’s primary income.

Session #12: Panel F Tai Dam Identity Maintenance: Music, Belief, and Woven Textile

Panel Organizer

Mr. Iyared Boonyarit

Research Cluster for languages and cultures of ethnic group

Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University

Tai Dam is an ethnic group with a strong sense of shared cultural consciousness. Such shared sense is reflected by their unique lifestyles, traditions and culture. However, the social context has changed so it is necessary for the Tai Dam ethnic group to adapt to changes in social trends. Tai Dam people consider various forms of cultural representations and select some aspects of culture to negotiate with the social mainstream. They also adopt other cultures to be blended with their own traditional culture. Such a process adapted by Tai Dam people aims to re-create their identity, and shared memories, to maintain their own ethnic heritage, or to negotiate a cultural sphere within the social mainstream to maintain their existence in society.

This research will describe ethnic changes in the sociocultural context by studying three cultural aspects including: music (Khub Tai Dam Songs), beliefs (THAEN- A spirit of the sky), and woven textiles (Pha Sin Ta Mee). It is based on three frameworks; 1) ethnomusicology 2) folklore and 3) ethnic Identity.

The findings of the study reveal that the changes for maintaining their ethnic identity with respect to these three cultural aspects are derived from four factors including: 1)

regional factors, 2) sociocultural factors, 3) political factors, and 4) shared ethnic consciousness factors.

Phisutthilaksana Boonto

Pha Sin Ta Mee: The shared cultural heritage of Tai Dam ethnic group in Thailand and Laos

Lecturer, Department of Social and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Thailand

Tai Dam, an ethnic group, originally emigrated from Dien Bien Phu in northern Vietnam. Nowadays, they have settled in many areas in Asia especially Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand for more than 200 years. Evidence shows that their common culture is based on the costumes inherited from their ancestors up to the present. However, the cultural heritage has changed over time and also due to the context of different areas.

This research aims to describe the relationship of Tai Dam's shared cultural heritage through 'Pha Sin Ta Mee', the Ikat woven skirt of Tai Dam ladies. The research areas include Suphanburi, Ratchaburi, and Nakhon Pathom provinces in central and western Thailand, Loei province in northeastern Thailand, and Luang Namtha province in northern Laos. This research uses an interpretive anthropological approach and explores the concept of ethnic identity.

The researcher found that Pha Sin Ta Mee of Tai Dam people in three areas still make efforts to express their ethnic identity but have adapted according to the social context, for instance, names, patterns, meaning of designs, and the opportunities for wearing. In addition, the inheritance trends of their shared cultural heritage are also different. The Tai Dam's Pha Sin Ta Mee in Laos have developed to contemporary style. They sew their skirts for easy wear in everyday life. On the other hand, Tai Dam people in Thailand maintain their original textile patterns and designs that are similar to the original. Furthermore, they wear them only on special occasions, traditional, and ritual events. However, Tai Dam people in the three research areas recognized the significance of Pha Sin Ta Mee that it is the remembrance of their ancestors. In conclusion, the maintenance of Tai Dam ethnic identity through Pha Sin Ta Mee differs in keeping with political, social and cultural contexts, and shared ethnic consciousness in each area.

Sutee Chansri

Khub Tai Dam: Maintenance and Adaptation of Musical Culture in order to Maintain Ethnic Identity

Lecturer Department of Thai and Asian Music, College of Music, Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, Thailand

This article aims to describe the identity maintenance of the Tai Dam ethnic group through an analysis of musical components of Khub Tai Dam, which was a cultural symbol that changed in accordance with social context. The case study was mainly from Tai Dam people in Luang Namtha Sub-district, Lao's People Democracy Republic.

The results of the study found that Khub Tai Dam were topically played on two occasions—at ritual ceremonies and as entertainment culture. Khub Tai Dam inherited the form of condition maintenance largely due to relationships and beliefs. The singer would learn and strictly follow the inherited ritual tradition. Currently, there are few successors available to sing Khub Tai Dam. As for Khub Tai Dam as entertainment culture, it was found that adaptation mixed rhythmic patterns of modern musical instruments such as electone, with rhythm and content which remained unchanged in order to appeal to a greater audience, especially teenagers from Tai Dam. When comparing Khub Tai Dam in Thailand, it reveals the conditions of the maintenance of Khub Tai Dam singing in ritual ceremonies and entertainment culture. However, its role these days has been reduced to demonstration on important occasions as a result of condition maintenance of the music without new adherents (novices). This reflects that Khub Tai Dam culture in a modern social context, inherited in the form of condition maintenance, is no longer able to serve as a cultural symbol in the absence of qualified successors. Khub Tai Dam has changed for learning and inherited purposes and musical characteristic maintenance reflecting Tai Dam identity has resulted in Tai Dam identity being maintained in line with social dynamics.

Iyared Boonyarit

The Dynamics of Tai Dam Culture: The Maintenance of Ethnic Group through belief of “THAEN (A spirit of the sky)” in Thailand and Laos PDR.

Mahidol University

The concept of “THAEN (A spirit of the sky)” is an important structure within the Tai Dam group. It strongly builds the interrelationships within Tai Dam ethnic group. This concept is reflected by beliefs, traditions, and rituals of Tai Dam in the current sociocultural context in terms of space, time and context. The concept of “THAEN” has changed based on social factors.

This paper studied Tai Dam’s folklore of “THAEN” under the perspective of sociocultural dynamics. Based on the spatial dimension, this study explores Tai Dam ethnic groups in Nakhon Pathom, Phetchaburi, Chumphon, Surat Thani, Sukhothai, Phitsanulok, Kamphaeng Phet, Phichit, Nakhon Sawan, and Loei as well as Luoang Namtha in Laos PDR.

The results of this study show that the dynamics of the beliefs of “THAEN” in Thailand and Laos share three common characteristics: 1) Dynamic ideology which refers to the definition of THAN, the dynamics of which have changed in terms of imagery and belief, 2) Dynamics ideation which refers to the common ideas and practices of the Tai Dam ethnic group influenced by the dynamics of THAN, and 3) Dynamic patterns which refers to appearance or schemes influenced by the dynamics of THAN.

Factors influencing the “THAEN” dynamic beliefs of the Tai Dam include: 1) changes of the socio- cultural mainstream, 2) localization, 3) changes resulting from external

cultural and religious beliefs, 4) changes based on the concept of invented tradition, 5) changes under the conditions of ethnic tourism, and 6) adaptation under the conditions of art and meaning in contemporary society.

Session #13: Individual Paper Session on Politics

Supitcha Punya

Lao government and the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015: adaptation, opportunity and challenges.

School of Politics and Government, Chiang Mai University
Chiang Mai, Thailand

This paper will describe the adaptation of the Lao government under the ASEAN Economic Community context as well as opportunities and challenges for the Lao government. The data were collected by reviewing literature such as Lao policies on ASEAN Economic Community in the 7th Five Years National Socio-economic Plan in 2010-2015 and information about the forthcoming five years socio-economic plan in the Vientiane Time website as the mainstream Lao new. The results showed that, since 1986, the regional and subregional economic integrations are important to improve Lao economic performance. Therefore, the Lao government has been improving political institution, trade and investment laws and regulations, human resources and infrastructure in order to facilitate a flow of capital in the economic integration. However, there are many challenges for the Lao government such as a lack of development budget and the knowledge about the AEC among government officers.

Sonemany Nigole

Adaptation to a development project : *The case of the lao « organic peasants » in Vientiane*

Ph.D. Candidate, Aspirante FNRS, LAMC (Laboratoire d'Anthropologie des Mondes Contemporains) - ULB (Université Libre de Bruxelles) – Bruxelles, Belgium

In this paper, I will examine how the peasants of Vientiane Capital assumed ownership of Organic Agriculture (OA). The beginning of OA in Laos was the result of the importation of concepts and values coming via a Swiss NGO, *Helvetas*. Ten years after the PROFIL project ("Promotion of Organic Farming and Marketing Project in Lao PDR"), the OA is so deeply implemented that the majority of peasants do not know its origin. In the "Organic Farmers Group in Vientiane Capital", managed by the "Market Committee", the ambitions and innovations are noteworthy. The Lao peasants are trying to initiate growth in OA through launching projects such as bringing in more members, opening a permanent shop, and creating an official cooperative. However, support from the government is essential since it holds authority and provides opportunities for development through global policies. Moreover, international cooperation remains volatile as it is derived from major donors who supply the means and assistance for peasants to achieve some of their goals.

This research is based on fieldwork and interviews conducted with various farmers associated with the group. Thus the development of OA these past years has to be replaced in networks that aren't always well defined by the farmers. Furthermore, in the context of AEC and the near end of the international cooperation (Japanese JICA are finishing their mission in September 2016), I will draw up assumptions for the future of Organic Agriculture that reflects the views and ambitions of the farmers.

Mana Southichack, Ph.D.

Poverty in the Lao PDR: Is it time to re-calibrate the poverty line?

Director, Economic and Business Advisor, Lao Intergro Ltd

Poverty in the Lao PDR (Laos) has been declining, and official reports indicate that national poverty headcount rate has dropped from 39.1% in 1998 to 23.2% in 2013, with 28.6% in rural areas and 10% in urban. However, existing official basic needs poverty lines of kip 6,457 and kip 7,279 per person a day respectively for rural and urban living are insufficient to cover for food alone required for an individual to live a normal, active life. Despite that official poverty lines are below the level needed to meet basic needs, which mechanically lower the poverty rate, it is clear that real poverty in Laos has declined considerably in the past several decades. Absolute rural and urban poverty lines that meet basic needs in 2015 in Laos are respectively estimated at kip 16,700 and kip 21,300 per person per day on average (kip 8,000 = US\$1 exchange rate). This raises a question of what the country's real poverty rate is. Even at these higher poverty lines, it is unclear whether the real poverty headcount rate will be much different from the official reports. This study explains why, to get out of poverty, an individual must earn 30% above the absolute poverty line at a minimum. However, poverty has many causes. Besides things that are controllable by individuals and families, such as: spending and savings practices, working and learning (productivity- or capability-enhancing) habits; often there are many more factors determining poverty beyond the control of individuals and families which must be dealt with at the government level. These factors often involve equal opportunity of access to resources and public services.

Session #14: Individual Paper Session on Linguistics

Reiko Suzuki

A Study of /nám/ in Lao

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

The purpose of this study is to explain the behavior of /nám/ in Lao. /nám/ occurs in several different syntactical positions without changing its form. That is, it can be used as a verb, a preposition, or an adverb. Based on corpus data of modern literary novels, more than one syntactic property of /nám/ was found. The data are useful for performing syntactic tests in order to classify /nám/ and defining word classes. The syntactic tests in this study included: inserting the negative marker in front of /nám/, the possibility of the ellipsis of /nám/, and so on. Substituting other prepositions for

/nám/ test is also intended to consider the semantic properties of /nám/. Although /nám/ can be classified into different word classes, it is possible to say that all these /nám/ are related to each other, and there are certain semantic extensions that make them connected.

Rangsan Naiprom

The Politics of Ethnicity Found in the Lao Didactic Literature Entitled Heet Sip Song (twelve-month tradition)

Ph. D. Student of Thai Language Program (Literature), Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Mahasarakham University

Didactic literature interestingly implies the political issue regarding ethnicity; especially, in Lao didactic literature named “Heet Sib Song (Twelve-Month tradition)” by Leela Weerawong in B.E. 2517. The literature content includes the main point describing the Heet Sib Song (twelve-month tradition)—mutually practical concepts among Laos and North-Eastern Thai people since early times. According to the study of the literature content—based on the symbolic violent point of view—it shows the interesting connotation that there is a relationship between ethnicity and its meaning contestation via the rituals, language and the military power toward colonization. Through the content, it implies an unequal-relationship of power to claim its meaning of ethnic identity. Moreover, there is the ethnic formation based on the geographic and cultural classification. In addition, the main point is the definition of ethnicity by outsiders seems negative due to ethnic bias. Hence, the didactic literature leads the aforementioned concept to the symbolic violence encouraging people in a society to accept without questioning the politics of literature.

Session #15: Individual Paper Session on Economics & Development

Nicholas D. Roberts

Cultural Heritage Management, Economic Development and Nation-Building Strategies in the Lao PDR

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Uses of heritage in the Lao PDR are argued to promote a national and multi-ethnic ‘Lao’ identity, endorse association between modern Lao society and the historical Buddhist Kingdom of Lang Xang, and legitimate the Indochina Wars and the 1975 revolution in context with the current political regime. Authorising a national identity, history and political authority through applying ‘heritage’ has been supported through the creation of museums, the promotion of ‘key’ national heritage sites, historical figures, cultural performances and authorising specific ‘texts’. More recently Cultural Heritage Management (CHM) as a practice of heritage has become established in the Lao PDR and has continued to support the post-colonial discourse of the Lao State. However CHM in the Lao PDR, as with other nations in Southeast Asia, is also applied in economic development processes, including mining and dam construction, to mitigate impacts of

development on past and present cultural lifeways and the natural environment. The growth of CHM with development is arguably the result of economic integration with ASEAN and international the international community, with CHM also supported by international heritage agencies including UNESCO, ICOMOS and the IUCN. Given its more recent development, the process for applying CHM, the ability of CHM to effectively manage heritage, and the outcomes of CHM in economic development contexts are not well documented nor discussed. This paper will therefore examine contemporary uses of heritage in the Lao PDR, including the recent emergence of CHM, and will analyse the relationship between CHM, economic development practices and nation-building strategies.

Rie Odajima, Ph.D.

The Lao Agrarian Economy in the Post New Thinking Period

Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

The classic studies of agrarian societies have investigated moral economy of different peasant communities in Southeast Asia. Those studies elucidated that moral-based behavior (i.e., reciprocal practices and redistribution of resources) penetrated in peasant economy and fueled the agrarian societies' construction of life security networks.

The Lao peasant studies have supported the basic perspectives of the above propositions. The Lao peasant studies have noted that the Lao agrarian communities inclined to observe conventional farming practices, claiming in everyday forms of resistance that their work ethics and moralities were sharply different from high modernist disciplines during the revolution period.

In the post-*New-Thinking* period, too, the rural agrarian communities claim that their lives are relied upon traditional customs and humanistic relationships between landlords and tenants. Indeed, some communities find traditions very important because of worries about breakup of reciprocal relationships among the neighbors. However, others observe traditional ways of life only because they find traditions strategic to survive in more competitive situations which market economy is encouraged to be disseminated. The objective of the paper is, hence, to underline the contemporary Lao agrarian economy being made up of mixed practices and emotions. The paper points out that the moral economy continues as a principle of life in the new period although it is not necessarily a pure continuation of the past pattern of economy.

Sunsanee McDonnell

Business as usual: SEZs, development discourse and the persistence of idiosyncratic entrepreneurship in Laos

Asia Institute, The University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

The Asian Development Bank's Greater Mekong Subregion economic program features the development of 'economic corridors' which include physical infrastructure such as the Kunming-Bangkok highway with a goal to encourage flows of people, goods and capital. Emerging in parallel with these developments are pockets of non-contiguous 'zones' or spaces along the borders, wherever the prospect of further cross-border development is promised. These public-private partnerships have taken the form of concession zones in Northern Laos, awarded to Chinese-based entrepreneurs or wealthy Thai conglomerates. While governments and private sector brochures market these spaces as pockets of economic growth, modernity and sites of capital flow for local communities, media and some scholarly literature depict them as enclaves of crime and illicitness. The reality lies somewhere in-between.

Based on empirical field work this paper examines three case studies of 'leisure cities' along the Laos-Thai and Lao-China borders within the North South Economic Corridor. In these case studies I contrast 'legitimate' activities and aspirations such as those of the young hotelier in Huay Xay or the ventures of Northern Thai investors in the newly opened China town in King Roman's Kapok City, with instances of 'unlawful' activities involving contraband and corrupt transactions between business and local government. Seeking to move beyond Aihwa Ong's paradigm of 'graduated sovereignty', it will consider how these spaces can be understood as yet another unintended consequence of the 'will to improve' in Southeast Asia, embedded in existing cultural norms and historical memory that are also in the process of being reshaped.

Session #16: Individual Paper Session on Resource Management

Brian Eyler* and **Alan Potkin

Resurrecting the Pak Beng hydropower project

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Likely related to the planned opening in mid-2016 of the fifth (or sixth) Mekong Friendship bridge just upstream of Pak Beng town (91% financed by the China Ex-Im Bank), the Pak Beng hydropower scheme has now been officially announced and formally submitted to the Mekong River Commission (MRC) for notification of the MRC Compact members. Originally mooted by the TVA-inspired Integrated Mekong Development vision first put forward by the USA with the Second Indochina War then looming large, Pak Beng was little heard about since: notwithstanding a 2007 MoU with Datang International Power Generation Co., Ltd. (PRC-Hongkong) for some version of that project, with an originally expected completion within ten years. The original 1960s-era concept was for a 1,200MW facility, entailing a dam height of ~70m, which as it re-appeared in more recent documentation, e.g., the MRC's 2010-2011 Strategic EIA, indicated an installed capacity of 1,230 MW and a "rated head of 31m". In September 2015, the Lao Government announced revised plans pursuant to the existing Datang MoU, lowering the installed capacity to 798 MW, and describing the project as "run-of-

river” (RoR); i.e., entailing no substantive storage reservoir. Like the Xayaburi dam ~280km downstream and now about half-constructed, Pak Beng would be sited within that extensive reach of the Mekong where both banks lie entirely within the Lao PDR. The impoundment behind the presently-agreed 25m rated head dam would not extend upstream beyond Lao territory. By the time work would presumably begin, the success—or failure— of Xayaburi’s critical fish passages would have probably become apparent. The Pak Beng project has now been re-institutionalized as a joint venture of China and Thailand’s Ratchaburi Electricity Generating Holding Public Company Limited (RATCH), with nearly all of the produced power wheeled to Thailand.

Kyoko Kusakabe

Cross-border agriculture investment in rubber: Intersecting effects of state, market and gender relations at the Lao-China borderland

Gender and Development Studies, School of Environment, Resources and Technology, Asian Institute of Technology, Klong Luang, Pathumthani, Thailand

Since the 1990s, Chinese cross-border investment to Northern Laos has increasingly focused on rubber plantations. This paper explores the gendered impact of the introduction of rubber plantations in this region. Using “Exclusion’s double edge” (Hall et al. 2013), we analyze the complicated power relations across state, market, community and households, and among different ethnic groups with varying access to land frontiers. The focus is on studying how Lao women and men are responding/adjusting to the boom (and bust) of the rubber industry. It argues that women and men experience the introduction of rubber differently because of the gender-based division of labor and access to resources including land, information, and connections. We compare gendered work and benefits during different phases of the rubber plantation – before rubber, during the planting period, when the rubber trees are harvested and when the price of rubber dropped. During the transition of upland production to rubber plantations, women often bore a disproportionately higher burden of work by providing for the family through daily wage work. In many villages, a notable increase in cash income led to improved girls’ education. We have also seen a proletarianization of farmers, especially among women. Rubber farmers are renting out land to Chinese investors for banana production, while they themselves work as hired labor in China. We analyze how exclusion occurs in various dimensions – by women and men small holders, Chinese companies, and state – and how positive and negative impacts are experienced differently by different people.

Pawadee Thakrairach, Ph.D., Dr. Montree Pimjai, Jiriya Kumnung, Surat Tongthap, and Songkieat Massri

Ways of Sustainable Forest Resources Management in Sisaket Frontier

This qualitative research was aimed to; 1) Study the context and status of the forest resources in the border area of Sisaket province, 2) Study the existing ways of sustainable forest resources management in the border area of Si Sa Ket province, and

3) Study proposed ways of sustainable forest resources management in the border area of Sisaket province.

The target group of this research consisted of 725 people. The study methods of this research were: 1) The study of the context and status of the forest resources in the border area of Sisaket province was done by conducting in-depth interviews with 11 representatives of the agencies responsible for forest administration, 9 representatives of the local governments, 2 Buddhist monks who involved in caring for the forest resources, and 217 representative of the households in the target area, 2) The study of the existing ways of sustainable forest resources management in the border area of Sisaket province was done by conducting 19 group discussions of community representatives, totaling 395 people participated, and 3) The study of proposed ways of sustainable forest resources management in the border area of Sisaket province was done by 3 sessions of brainstorming of local authorities, village representatives, community leaders, community forest committees participating in the brainstorming stage, totaling 91 people. Qualitative data analysis consisted of five stages: 1) inductive analysis, 2) data validation, 3) data index creation, 4) tentative conclusion and data lapse processing, and 5) generating conclusion.

Results of the study.

1. The border area forests of Sisaket province composes of 1) *Pa Fang Kwa Huey Sa La* (Right-Side-of-Huey-Sala-Stream Forest) national forest, covering an area of 69,600 hectares, 2) *Pa Khao Pra Viharn* national forest, covering an area of 13,000 hectares, and 3) five Department of Forestry registered community forests, i.e. (1) a community forest in *Pa Fang Sai Huey Sa La* (Left-Side-of-Huey-Sa-La-Stream forest) permanent forest designated by the cabinet resolution, covering an area of 448 hectares, in Praipatana sub-district, Phusing district, (2) a community forest in *Pa Fang Sai Huey Sa La* (Left-Side-of-Huey-Sa-La-Stream forest) permanent forest designated by the cabinet resolution, covering an area of 128 hectares, in Dongrak sub-district, Phusing district, (3) a community forest in *Pa Fang Kwa Huey Sa La* (Left-Side-of-Huey-Sa-La-Stream forest) national forest, covering an area of 128 hectares, in Dongrak sub-district, Phusing district, (4) *Ban Tab Tim Siam 07* (Tab-Tim-Siam-07 village) community forest, covering an area of 317 hectares, in Bak Dong subdistrict, Khun-Harn district, and (5) Ban Non Toom Tavn (Non-Toom-Tavn village) community forest, covering an area of 66 hectares, in Bak Dong subdistrict, Khun-Harn district. There are different types of forests in the areas such as dry evergreen forest, tropical rain forest, mixed deciduous forest, deciduous dipterocarp forest, savanna forest, and rocky ground forest.

2. The existing ways of sustainable forest resource management in the border areas of Sisaket province were: 1) The government sector's way in forest resources conservation was to cooperate with the relevant local authorities in public relations to raise awareness and in promoting the establishment of community organizations for forest conservation; 2) The local governments' ways were in promotion of forest resources restoration and conservation, training youths in forest fire prevention, and reforestation. 3) Monks have significant roles in coordination to resolute conflicts

between government personnel and local people, and in “ordination of the forest”. 4) The local people were involved in forest conservation and restoration, participated in training as forest destruction prevention volunteers, and issuing regulations for forest resources utilization in the community.

3. Ways in sustainable forest resource management proposed by stakeholders can be classified into three levels: 1) The household and community level including creating community leaders, creating plans for promoting forest resource friendly occupation, and cultivate awareness in forest conservation, 2) The local and provincial authorities level including promote the coordination among local authorities, construct the database systems and clearly define the forest boundaries, 3) The policy and country level including cooperate with the local authorities, support the work of local authorities, establish policies in accordance with the local situation, allocate land to individuals appropriately as needed, and give opportunity for public participation in order to reflect the real problems in the community.

Session #17: Individual Paper Session on Molam Music

***Suteerapong Pinitpol and **Jarernchai Chonpairot**

Lam Competition of Molam Singers in Lao PDR

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**Ph.D. in Musicology-Ethnomusicology, College of Music, Mahsarakham University, Kantharawichai, Maha Sarakham, Thailand

This qualitative research paper, entitled, “*Lam* Competition by *Molam* Singers in Lao PDR”, intends to: 1) investigate the historical aspects of *lam* competition in Lao PDR; and 2) examine the *lam* competition process in Lao PDR. The field work was conducted between April 2014 and April 2015 through interviews and observations.

The results of the study showed that a *lam* performance was used mainly for entertainment, education, as well as teaching codes of conduct to a mass audience. Male and female *molam* singer competed by singing artistically illustrating their vast knowledge and skills. Whoever could not respond to the questions of his/her counterpart became the loser; he/she would be ashamed and left the stage.

Concerning the competition process of *lam* competition, a *lam* competition could be a part of general merit celebration or could be set up as a special event. In general *lam* competitions involve a session, called *lam kathu* (question and answer), within a *lam* performance. The question would start from fundamental knowledge and then proceeds to higher knowledge, with a special focus on Buddhist doctrines. The one who had acquired more knowledge and more skills in improvisation would certainly to be the winner.

***Chumchon Suebwong and **Jarernchai Chonpairot**

Isan Khaen Mouth Organ Development: Expanding Its Tonal System into a Chromatic Scale.

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**Ph.D. in Musicology-Ethnomusicology, College of Music, Mahsarakham University, Maha Sarakham, Thailand

This is an innovative and development research project aiming to: 1) examine and find the *khaen* pipes arrangement of a *khaen* mouth organ for a chromatic *khaen*; and 2) find a *khaen* maker who wants to try to make a chromatic *khaen*; and 3) practice the fingering system on traditional tunes as well as on contemporary pop tunes. The results of the study showed that smaller sized *khaen* pipes had to be selected, otherwise the *khaen* size is too big and too far to reach by certain fingers. Only few *khaen* maker agreed to make the chromatic *khaen*, because they were not used to doing so, or they thought it would be too complicated to do so. To play a chromatic *khaen* was not easy, this due to the added pipe. A traditional *khaen* has 16 pipes of 16 tones of diatonic scale: A, B, c, d, e, f, g, g¹, b¹, c¹, d¹, e¹, f¹, g¹, a². For the chromatic *khaen*, the extra pipes have to be added between the two whole tone scale.

***Jarernchai Chonpairot. Ph.D. and **Ratree Srivilai Bongsitthiporn. Ph.D.**

Poetry and Song: How a Molam Singer Transforms a Spoken Poetry into a Sung Melody

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In this qualitative paper we aim to: 1) identify the tonal structure of a *lam* poetry; 2) examine the tonal structure of a *lam* melody that has been derived from a stanza of the poetry; and 3) investigate the relationship between each stanza of the poetic tonal structure and its *lam* melody. The experiment s were proceeded as follow: Step One, a two-stanza poem was written and then each *molam* singer was asked to read it in normal speech; Step Two, each *molam* singer was asked to sing to the poetry in three styles of *lam* singing—*lam thang san*, *lam thangyao*, and *lam toei*; Step Three, the analysis and comparison between speech tones and sung tones patterns was performed. The results of the study showed that one stanza of the poetry consists of four lines with each line containing 7-12 syllables. The last syllable of the preceding line has to rhyme with first, second, or third syllable of the following line. The sound of the last syllable of the four lines, from the first to the fourth line, is in mid, mid-fall, high, and mid tone respectively. A stanza of *lam* melody consists of four phrases; each phrase consists of four beats. The tonal structure of each phrase of a *lam* melody corresponded with each poetic line within the poetic stanza. Each phrase of a *lam* melody can be sung in tonic or dominant level. However, the last tone of each phrase has to conform with its pitch level.

Georges Farhat, Ph.D. * and Roman Dudka, Ph.D. **

Versailles to Vat Phu: Laying out the landscape of the Other

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Despite its historically diverse visual paradigms, design philosophies, and resulting landscape systems, a unified Western cultural framework still dominates landscape studies and commands landscape management plans worldwide. As a consequence, our understanding of Lao landscape heritage remains limited, while global histories of architecture and designed landscapes continue to be Western-centric projects. However, when it comes to grappling with this issue, critical theory and post-colonial discourses of 'otherness' and the 'subaltern' can only provide us with methods of inquiry specific to the humanities. They inevitably fail to grasp what lies at the core of non-verbal and non-figurative artifacts and experience within the landscape of the 'other'. In fact, design procedures need to be tackled through their own conceptual tools and by way of reconstructing design experiments *in situ*. Building on fieldwork in both Lao and French contexts, we propose to contrast two apparently comparable historic large-scale layouts: Vat Phu and Versailles. The claim is that only by bringing closer these physically, temporally, and culturally distant archetypes will we gain more precise insight into their irreducible differences and explain their respective characteristics. To do so we will focus on the notion of visual scale in relation to topographic and hydraulic engineering in French and Lao histories of landscape. The paper shows how Western approaches to 'otherness' can benefit from the study of Vat Phu's axial layout. It concludes that research on Lao landscape heritage has a tremendous potential for contributing to its improved management and the advancement of global history of landscape design.

Masashi Okada

Survival Strategies of an Inland Port Polity: The Politics and the Trade of Muang Theng (Muang Thanh) in the 18th and 19th Centuries

Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Letters, Osaka University Osaka, Japan

This paper examines the history of Muang Theng (or Muang Thanh, presently called Dien Bien Phu) in the 18th and 19th centuries through a new point of view. Muang Theng has been believed to be the homeland of Tai language speakers (like Lao, Phouan, and Tai Dam) with their shared origin myths. Thus, previous scholars tended to refer to Muang Theng in focusing on the origin and the historical formation of these Tai speakers. However, no study has addressed the unique position of Muang Theng as an inland emporium, nor examined its meaning for the frontier society as well as the historical changes in this area. In this paper, I would like to focus on the position and role of Muang Theng in the context of not only the Tai society in northwestern Vietnam

but also northern Southeast Asia, which underwent massive historical changes. During the period, this region saw economic and social changes that were caused by large-scale immigration of Chinese, who took an important role in the trade of forest products and the mining industry, and the expansion of state powers from the lowlands (Siam and Nguyễn Vietnam—the latter would be succeeded by the French colonial empire). This paper will assess the social dynamics of Muang Theng, and the formation of its historical tradition, as survival strategies in response to the abovementioned changes, based on the study of multilingual sources.

Hunter I. Watson

Old Mon inscriptions in Laos and northeastern Thailand

Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

The Laos civilization quite arguably received cultural influence from the Old Mon civilization. For example, the Laos people are thought to have received Theravada Buddhism through the Mons, and the Laos script was arguably derived from the Old Mon script. This article is about the Old Mon inscriptions discovered in the Vientiane plain of Laos, which can be considered as an extension of the Old Mon culture which existed in northeastern Thailand. The Mon language is a member of the Mon-Khmer language family, and Old Mon was a language of court for numerous kingdoms throughout Thailand, Burma and Laos. Old Mon inscriptions can be divided by region and period. The Old Mon inscriptions in Thailand can be divided into three periods by the script styles, roughly datable based on palaeographic evidence, and corresponding to different regions of modern-day Thailand. In the first period, inscriptions were written using the Pallava Script and have been found on the central plain. In the second period, inscriptions were written in the Post Pallava Script and have been found on the central plain of Thailand and on the Khorat Plateau in northeastern Thailand, as well as in Laos. In the third period, inscriptions were found in northern Thailand, and written in the Old Mon Script.

Initially the Old Mon culture of Dvāravatī thrived in central Thailand, and later the influence from this culture spread to other regions; Old Mon inscriptions are found throughout northeastern Thailand and across the Mekong River into Laos. The script style which was used to write the Old Mon inscriptions found in northeastern Thailand and Laos, commonly known as the Post Pallava script, was used during approximately the 8-10th centuries C.E.. This was a period of cultural expansion, both of the Old Mon culture from central Thailand as well as the Old Khmer culture from Cambodia. Northeastern Thailand is a geographical crossroads between these territories, and there is ample evidence of influence from both cultures.

Old Mon inscriptions have been found in several provinces in northeastern Thailand, including Nakhon Ratchasima, Mahasarakham, Chayaphum, Khon Kaen, Kalasin, Udon Thani and Sakol Nakhon. Inscriptions have more recently been found in the provinces of Petchabun and Nakhon Phanom. Based on artistic and epigraphic evidence, it is known that this culture in northeastern Thailand also existed on the Plain of Vientiane in Laos.

One inscription stone was found in 1968 at Ban Thalat, in Vientiane Province, together with a Dvāravatī style standing Buddha image. Another unpublished inscription from Laos is also thought to be Old Mon. This article will provide an overview of the Old Mon inscriptions of Laos and northern Thailand, provide readings and translations as examples, and will discuss the relevance of the Old Mon inscriptions to the history and culture of the region.

Session #19: Individual Paper Session on Cultures, Ethnicity, & Religions

Dr. Sirijit Sunanta and Dr. Narong Ardsmiti

Phu Tai Ethnic Identity Revival in the Context of ASEAN Economic Community

Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University

This research studies the Phu Tai ethnic identity revival in the context of the ASEAN Economic Community. In the first year of research, the researchers conducted field studies in Nakhon Phanom Province of Thailand. Local experts and those who were involved in the revival of the Phu Tai ethnic identity were interviewed, with a focus on the organization of the International Phu Tai Festival and the World Phu Tai Day, as well as cross-border travels of the ethnic Phu Tais in Thailand to villages in the Lao PDR, believed to be the homeland of the Thai national ethnic Phu Tais before their relocation to the west side of the Mekong River. The researchers found that ethnic Phu Tai networks have been built locally and across borders to revive the Phu Tai ethnic identity. In Thailand, these networks consisted of local elders and intellectuals, the local and provincial government, prominent ethnic Phu Tais who had gained economic success and social status outside the communities, academics in a regional university, and local, provincial, and national politicians. Individuals and networks who worked to mobilize Phu Tai culture and ethnic identity collaborated in organizing and participating in Phu Tai cultural events and activities, but there were also conflicts and disagreements among these parties. One important disagreement was on the definition of the Phu Tai ethnic group. One party viewed that the Phu Tai is a people who speak a specific subgroup of the Tai language and residing in the Lao PDR and Northeast Thailand. For the other party, the Phu Tai includes various Tai minority groups in Vietnam and Southern China who speak various groups of the Tai language. Although this is a disagreement on the technical and academic level, it has important implications on the practicality of cross-border Phu Tai ethnic identity revival.

Guido Sprenger

Re-connecting the ancestors: Buddhism and animism on the Boloven Plateau, Laos

Institute of Anthropology, Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany

As in many Southeast Asian societies, the religious landscape of Laos is structured by the difference of a world religion and local and personalized relations often called animism. This paper deals with the dynamic relationship between Buddhism and what is vernacularly called spirit religion (sadsana phi) among Jru' (Loven) on the Boloven Plateau. Research has focused on a village which identifies mostly with Jru' ritual while

in the other, people identify as practicing both Buddhism and spirit religion. In both villages, however, elements of Buddhist and Lao ritual have been integrated into village ritual life. The inclusion of Buddhism has close connections with the shift from swidden agriculture to coffee plantations in this region. Under these conditions, the question arises, what is happening to the non-human agents, especially the personalized ancestors, of local ritual and value systems, when a transcultural religion like Buddhism becomes prominent?

Supeena Insee Adler

Gender, Power and the Sense of Place in a Spirit Healing Ritual in Sisaket Province, Northeast Thailand

Independent Scholar, San Diego, CA

In this paper I investigate the power and relevance of a set of traditional healing rituals in Northeast Thai society that invoke spirits to heal individuals who have become ill and cannot be cured by modern medicine. The rituals function to re-integrate into society the subject who has become separated as a result of their illness. Mostly female or trans-gender spirit mediums lead trance-inducing ceremonies that theatricalize socially acceptable behavior, and build communal and geographical identity, while also providing a unique opportunity for the “joyous release” that Judith Becker has identified in other female-based trance traditions in societies with restricted gender roles. In these rituals, mediums invoke the names and histories of nearby towns and features of the landscape in improvised ritual narratives, identifying their relationship to the ancestors and spirits who created them and who dwell there, and effectively re-positioning the subject with respect to their physical surroundings. By instilling a sense that the spirits of place are always watching, the ritual reinforces socially acceptable behavior as people move through their local environment. Stories of traditional lifeways model this socially acceptable behavior while building a sense of communal and historical identity that is integrally tied to the realms of the living and the dead. Participants acquire a protective power that functions like an amulet in modern syncretic Buddhist practice.

Session #20: Individual Paper Session on Lao Ethnic Groups in Thailand

Warunsiri Pornpottanamas

What Dialects of Lao are Spoken by the “Lao Wiang” of Tambon Nong Nae, Amphoe Phanom Sarakham, Changwat Chachoengsao?

Linguistics Department, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

We always assume that the “Lao Wiang” in Central Thailand speak Lao Wiang or Vientiane Lao varieties. Perhaps this assumption is incorrect? An investigation of tones among the Lao varieties spoken in Tambon Nong Nae, using Gedney’s concept of tone box and acoustic phonetic techniques, revealed the fact that the Lao of Nong Nae actually speak five varieties of Tai (non-Lao), similar to Phuan. Moreover, the patterns of tonal split and merger indicate that they speak some kinds of Tai languages spoken in the northern region of Laos (not Black Tai, Red Tai or White Tai). Linguistic evidence can

help trace the homeland of the ethnic groups which migrated from the Lan Xang Kingdom two hundred years ago. Their migration route could be from Northern Laos to Vientiane and then to Siam.

Pattama Patpong, Ph.D.

A contextual and lexicogrammatical analysis of a Sen Huen ritual manuscript

Research Institute of Language and Culture of Asia, Mahidol University, Thailand

The Sen Huen ritual is a significant aspect of the Lao Song Dam's ancestor worship. This ritual must be conducted in a room set for ancestral spirits called *kalorhong* and the ritual is required to be done every 2-3 years to avoid bad luck and receive good fortune and blessings, otherwise the descendants will suffer misfortune such as illness, hardship and adversity. This paper is a part of the research project entitled "Transmission of 'Sen Huen' ritual as an intangible cultural heritage of Tai Dam ethnic group". The data are based on some parts of a Sen Huen ritual manuscript taken from a shaman residing in Nakhon Pathom province. The manuscript was transmitted among Lao Song Dam communities living in Lo city (Muang Lo) in Vietnam where the manuscript was initially written. This study draws on Systemic Functional Linguistics. Based on the stratification dimension, two key aspects of SFL are analysed: context and lexicogrammar strata. Based on contextual analysis, three contextual values—mode, tenor, and field—are discussed. In terms of lexicogrammatical analysis, the study is carried out at the clause-rank system at the stratum of lexicogrammar, across the metafunctional modes of meaning—systems of THEME, MOOD, and TRANSITIVITY. The emerging lexicogrammatical profiles point to typical features of Lao Song Dam's Sen Huen ritual manuscript contributing to an understanding of their grammatical patterning, namely, how the selected chanting chapters of Sen Huen ritual manuscript is grammatically characterized in domestic ritual procedural texts.

Jean Pacquement

Saek language in the early years of the 20th century and nowadays

Professeur agrégé de grammaire, Roi Et Rajabhat University

Lao-ization is a relevant concept to describe the various evolutions of minority languages in modern-day Laos. If one takes the example of the Saek language, prominent features of the Lao language, such as the absence of consonant clusters, the merging of the initial consonant /r/ with /l/ or /h/, or the merging of the final consonant /l/ with /n/, were a part of "linguistic predictions" concerning Saek (Gedney 1993; Wilaiwan Khanittanan 1976, 2008).

Agreeing with the assessment formulated by Wilaiwan Khanittanan, according to whom "it appears that Saek is not going to be extinct in the near future" (Wilaiwan Khanittanan 2008), the presenter will refer to both data collected from informants speaking the Saek of Ban Buek (Nakai district, Khammouane province) - in 1993 (by Michel Ferlus), then in 2015 (by the presenter) - and to two corpora of Saek which are included in a collection belonging to the École française d'Extrême-Orient's library

(Maison de l'Asie, Paris) called "manuscripts européens" (henceforward ME) - and which have so far never been mentioned in the literature concerning Saek. Both documents (ME 398-399 and ME 406) give a significant amount of Saek language items, which were collected in the early years of the 20th century (the precise date of ME 398-399 is 1903) and contain a presentation of the Saek language which was already enhancing Siamese and Lao influences on Saek and even predicting its rapid extinction!

The more comprehensive of these two compilations is the corpus collected by Antonin Baudenne (ME 406), who is better known as one of the two authors of a French novel about colonial Laos *Sao Tiampa, épouse laotienne* (1912). A civil servant of the colonial regime based in Laos from 1901 (he was a "commis des services civils de l'Indochine"), he is also the author of a detailed travel guide about the country, *À travers le Laos: Guide à l'usage des voyageurs*.

Session #21: Panel G Social Forms of Health: Ongoing Investigations in Laos

Organizer: Pascale Hancart Petitet, Ph.D.

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Discussant: Pascale Hancart Petitet and Kathryn Sweet

PANEL: SOCIAL FORMS OF HEALTH: ONGOING INVESTIGATIONS IN LAOS

Topic: Environment and Health

This panel explores the historical and contemporary social issues related to health systems, norms, practices and ideologies in Laos. It questions the historical bonds and frameworks that stand behind and determine the contemporary logics and practices in the health domain; local interpretations of global health agendas and their unfulfilled desires; the main actors; the ways and the means in which health care is accessed and delivered; and the kinds of networks and bonds that users and caregivers mobilize. The panel examines how these questions inform social researchers about class, sex and *space* distributions and inequalities? What does it tell us about Lao society, its rapid social changes and the health system's attempt to serve its people?

Following a reflexive perspective we also wish to interrogate the ethnographical experience in Lao PDR. How do researchers deal with methodological constraints and unexpected opportunities? What is shared and what is withheld?

Kathryn Sweet, Ph.D.

'Divided Efforts: The Impact of War and Instability on the Health Sector of Post-Colonial Laos, 1950-1975'

National University of Singapore

The paper explores the fragmentation of the Lao health sector following independence in the 1950s, and provides much-needed context for the diverse health infrastructure,

staffing, and professional and technical standardization inherited by the Lao PDR. It is based on recent Ph.D. research using archival sources in the Lao PDR, France, USA and the Philippines.

Laos' small health sector diverged rapidly after the colonial Assistance médicale au Laos was handed over to the Royal Lao Government (RLG) in April 1950. At least three civilian services and two military services, in addition to a modest private sector, emerged in the place of the single colonial service. By the late 1950s, the RLG's civilian and military healthcare services had separated, and US assistance was supporting development of a predominantly rural health network run by Filipino NGO, Operation Brotherhood, in parallel to the Ministry of Health's network. In the 'Liberated Zone', a civilian healthcare service under the Central Health Committee (Khanakamakane Sathalanasouk Sounkang) split from its military counterpart in the mid-1960s. These various healthcare services were motivated by different priorities, supported by different international donors, and employed different technical languages of training and operation.

Post-1975 the Lao PDR's Ministry of Health was confronted with the task of uniting these divergent healthcare services into a uniform national healthcare system.

Somaphone Chankongsin, MD

**Users' and Caregivers' Representations and Practices Related to Family Planning
Sekong Province, Laos**

Institut Francophone de Médecine Tropicale Vientiane, Laos.

Deciding how many children a woman wants and the most appropriate time to have them is a human right. In Lao PDR, little is known about the factors associated with access to family planning, especially for people living in remote areas. The paper presents the main results of a qualitative study that aimed to determine the representations and practices related to family planning from both users and caregivers in 2 districts of Sekong province. We conducted focus groups categorized by age and sex (with the villagers) and individual interviews (with health personnel, the heads of the villages and health volunteers). 101 individuals participated in the study (ANRS PREMS 12127 project).

The study found that family planning is constrained by four main factors: the influence of husbands about contraception; the unmet need for family planning for those 18 years old and single women; the fear of gossip if someone attends family planning services; and the perception of the quality of family planning services offered to the population. From caregivers' point of view, there are many obstacles such as the availability of human and material resources; and the low quality of services offered.

This study points out that youth under 18 years old and unmarried women faced several barriers to access to family planning services, which put them at risk of unwanted pregnancy and abortion.

Elizabeth Elliot

A medical landscape in Laos: 'traditional' medical practices in the rural south

Ph.D. Candidate, University College London, United Kingdom

The incorporation of traditional medical practice in Lao PDR is part of the official health policy; like the promotion of similar practices in China and Vietnam under socialism, it has represented an important form of rural healthcare, but has not been well developed, institutionalized or researched. Common perceptions of it as both 'natural' and 'traditional' create a high cultural value, and enquiries based on the use of material objects (plants) provide insight into local classifications of health and illness. This research is based in rural Champassak province, exploring the practices and relationships of the 'maw yaa' (healers), their families, patients, Buddhist clergy, villagers' household plant use, and local health workers. It aims to 'map' a 'Medical Landscape', the range of modalities that intertwine against a background of social and environmental change; in the current generation, both medicinal plant knowledge transmission and biodiversity are declining sharply.

Session #22: Individual Paper Session on Education

Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy, EdD

Southeast Asian Parental Involvement in U.S. Schools

Assistant Professor, Leadership in Schooling, University of Massachusetts Lowell,
Graduate School of Education, Lowell, MA

Studies have shown that high achieving students are supported by highly involved parents. Yet, some scholars have found that for minority students, their parents struggle with being involved. Overall, though, there has been a lack of focus on Southeast Asian (SEA) parents' role in support of their students in school by scholars and practitioners alike. This paper examines the extent to which SEA parents are involved in their child's education. Fifty-two SEA parents participated in a series of focus groups. Content analyses of their discussions showed that SEA parents are battling a misconception of them as not caring enough to get involved with their child's schools. Due to barriers (i.e., lack of language access, limited educational background, lack of involvement opportunities, and lack of familiarity with U.S. school systems), SEA parents defer to school professionals because they think that school staff have more knowledge and understanding of the academic needs of their children. The findings suggest that ideas about parental involvement are shaped by both the parents' educational background and experiences in Southeast Asia and American school staff lack of cultural competence. While some scholars have argued the lack of participation in schools by these parents, this research study documents the ways that SEA parents motivate and engage their children. This study expands the understanding and conception of what parental involvement would look like in the SEA communities. Policy implications include more cultural competency training for school educators and staff as well as leadership and advocacy training for SEA parents.

Inleusa Basengkham, Ph.D.

Migration to Thailand as a result of severe school dropout among primary school-age children in rural areas of Laos

Department of Sociology, Institute of Social Science University of Minho (Portugal)

This paper puts forward an understanding of the problem of school dropout among primary school-age children in Houa Kham village, a small suburb city of Savannakhet province. It is part of my Ph.D. dissertation entitled: Girls out of School? State, Culture and Education in Rural Lao people's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Qualitative research techniques were applied, participant observation and interviews with village authorities; the school principal and teachers; community members, as well as parents of dropouts were conducted during the data collection process. As a result of the poverty, the results of my study revealed that severe school dropout among primary school-age children in the sampled village is the result of a high rate of migration to Thailand. Therefore, the problem of Lao primary-school age children's migration to Thailand may be considered a priority of the government policies and plans if the Universal Primary Education (UPE) is to be accomplished. Some policy intervention is addressed to the government of Laos aimed at proposing some possible solutions in order to improve the quality of primary education in rural areas of Lao PDR.

Sengfa Holanouphab

Eighteen Years of Lao SEA Write Awards

Department of Lao Language and Mass Communication, Faculty of Letters, National University of Laos, Vientiane, Lao PDR

The purpose of this paper is to introduce Lao literary works which won the SEA Write Award from 1998-2015, covering six poems, six short stories and six novels. It was found that patriotism and morality were the most common themes in the 18 Lao literary SEA Write Awards. The themes of the six poems include: patriotism, morality, social change, nature protection, and love between mother and daughter. The themes of the six short stories include: patriotism, morality, humanity, environment, ethnic culture, culture protection, and conflict between old and new tradition. The themes of the six novels include: patriotism, morality, life struggle, forest protection, and love.

Session #23: Individual Paper Session on Economics & Development

Nittana Southiseng, Ph.D. * and John Walsh, Ph.D. **

Cluster Development in the Organic Rice Sector of Lao PDR

** Dr. Nittana Southiseng, SME Development Advisor, RELATED Project, GIZ, Vientiane capital, Lao PDR*

*** Asst. Prof. Dr. John Walsh, Director of Research Division, Shinawatra University, Bangkok, Thailand*

A cluster is, simply defined, a supply chain in close geographical proximity. A supply chain is a series of activities that cause an upstream resource (i.e. raw materials) to

move towards downstream consumers (i.e. retailers). Different parts of the supply chain add different levels of value to the process, usually in an inequitable manner so that some members benefit more than others. States wishing to promote rapid economic development (like Lao PDR) benefit from clusters because all sections of the value chain occur within their borders, and so they can influence the distribution of benefits with a view to enacting long-term developmental goals. This paper reports on research conducted in cluster development of organic rice in Sangthong district, Vientiane capital of Lao PDR. The status of the development of Santhong organic rice is analysed, as well as its prospects for contributing to export growth. Problems identified include low levels of capital and technology, lack of capacity in technical issues and limited market development. Some recommendations are made with the hopes of improving the overall quality of cluster development and to derive lessons for other parts of the economy.

Tomoko Nakata, Ph.D

Rubber Plantation Development and its Effects on Local Culture and Community; a case study of Bachieng District, Champasak Province

Kobe City University on Foreign Studies, Kobe, Japan

This paper examines the effects of a rubber plantation development on the local community in terms of both livelihood and culture. Ten years have passed since the rubber plantation development project in Bachieng district was launched in 2005. While the project has received a great deal of criticism from international NGOs and foreign researchers, and has faced informal opposition from the locals, who were deprived of a large portion of their cultivated lands, its real effects on local livelihood, lifestyle, and culture have not necessarily been made clear. Have the locals accepted their occupational change from swidden cultivators to plantation workers? Do they fully earn their living by working at the rubber plantation? Does their cash income alter their lifestyle or value system? What do they think now of the changes brought about by the project? To these questions, I try to respond based upon the data collected during fieldwork conducted mainly from 2010 to 2015 in a village involved in the development project, focusing particularly on the locals' point of view. By following the progress of the project, from its early stages to the present, we will see how the rubber company's course of action has been changing and, following that, how the locals' attitudes toward the rubber company and plantation labor have also become varied and diversified.

Michael J. Jones (Presenter), Peter Case & John Connell

Farmer organizations in Laos, essentially contested concepts or opportunities for productive collaboration?

College of Business, Law and Governance, Division of Tropical Environments and Societies, James Cook University Townsville Campus, Australia

In a coordinated effort to meet national socio-economic development goals and maintain the viability of smallholder farmers, several Lao government line ministries recently began to officially promote Farmer Organizations (FOs). The present formative period involves contested conceptualization over the form, function, and accountability

of FOs: government offices sponsor FOs to shape, grow, and gather information on economic and social activity; private actors seek easier access to bulked, quality product; and ODA organizations hold aspirations of democratic economic activity. Farmers, of course have their own agendas.

In this paper we report on research into this nexus as explored by an ACIAR-funded, GOL-managed research project working with farmer organizations in two provinces. Emergent findings indicate that FOs, when organized around market activity, may in fact sidestep a potentially intractable conflict by performing essential market functions for an efficient smallholder farmer-based economy. Central to this scenario is an FO that empowers farmer agency through access to information and understanding, capacity (and independence) to adjust production to meet market needs, and joint negotiating and selling. However, challenges remain to broad uptake of this strategy: poor economic and organizational practices, shortage of social capital, and competing and dampening regulatory procedures.

The participatory action learning supported within this project shows how networking, facilitated market and organizational analysis, and farmer opportunity to respond to new opportunities are key to overcoming these challenges. In short, FOs can contribute to a viable path for sustaining smallholder farming as a substantial element within a connected, responsive, modern economy.

Session #24: Individual Paper Session on Geography & Tourism

Warinart Pitukwongwan* and Narong Ardsmiti, Ph.D. **

Landscape of Desire: Chiangkhan's Landscape and the Way of Meaning Construction

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**Faculty Member, Research Institute for Language and Culture of Asia, Mahidol University, Thailand

The way of meaning construction in Chiangkhan's landscape was determined by the state authority and way of people life throughout the past, this procedure have made Chiangkhan's landscape, including its land and the Mekong river emerge as an implicit word, phrase or sentence in the terms of semiotic. The process of the meaning construction in the landscape does not only represent the landscape as a signified, but reverts to the term of signifier again with an elaborated meaning. The landscape as a signifier can present itself agentively meaning it can preference a set of values in the landscape. Meanwhile, it can specify a pattern of uses and rules.

This study examines Chiangkhan district, Loei Province in the area between Chai-Khong Rd. and Sri-Chiangkhan Rd. (public and priority property) and Mekong River to investigate the pattern of land and water resources used in an economic dimension. This study also focuses on the construction of meaning throughout the area and the ways the meanings derived by the stake-holders such as villagers, government agencies, companies etc. I attempt to engage this study in the context of a border town which

involves people and resources (land and Mekong River) in Lao PDR. In the time period from the commercial age in the Mekong river (before Lao PDR transformed the state to communist country in 1975) up to 2015 (a context of tourism city after 2009).

The result of the study was the ways that meaning was constructed affected the landscape which acted as if it was an agent. We can conclude that it also contributes an image of a person or a group of persons who are a user's or an occupiers. This result directly affects local rules and laws. It allows me to consider the question "Why are local rules and laws weak?" To answer this question I used a concept of the politics of desire in the context of capitalism to analyze the object of inquiry. In so doing I had discovered what I refer to as the "Desire of Chiangkhan", an emergence of psychological needs relating to suppressive effects of intense meaning construction that reflects from everyday life negotiation dependent upon on each individual's opportunity.

David J.H. Blake

A new paradigm in sustainability or expanded failure? The Theun-Hinboun Hydropower Project's role in socio-ecological transformation processes

Independent scholar, Taunton, Somerset, United Kingdom

Large swathes of Lao landscape are being rapidly transformed by a variety of large infrastructure development projects, including roads, agribusiness and industrial forestry, mining, industrial estates and dams. Arguably, it is the latter category that contributes most significantly to the processes of change, not just as a result of dams' unique role in bio-physical transformation, but also due to the profound socio-political processes they precipitate, both intentionally and otherwise. Recent state estimates suggests that the country has the potential to generate about 28,000 MW of hydropower, with present development generating approximately 3,300 MW from 27 projects, and over 70 more projects in various stages of planning. Taking a nationally iconic project in central Laos, the Theun-Hinboun Hydropower Project first commissioned in 1998 and its later "expansion project" (commissioned in 2012), provides for an illustrative case study of some the processes involved. Proponents have long argued that this project represents a textbook example of "sustainable development", successful mitigation of impacts and benefit-sharing with affected communities, "planned and implemented in accordance with international good practice". This paper critically examines both processes of socio-ecological transformation and how they have been discursively represented by various actors, based partly on the author's own empirical field observations and reference secondary sources. It maintains that while the project could be considered successful in achieving certain economic goals laid down by the government and private-sector investors, social and environmental sustainability has not been established, raising fundamental questions about the prospects for the majority of other dam projects with weaker standards and oversight.

Sparkes, S. (2014) Sustainable hydropower development: Theun-Hinboun Expansion Project case study, Laos. *Water Resources and Rural Development*. Vol.4 (October 2014):54-66

Shih-chung Hsieh, Ph.D

When a Frontier Town is getting Sino-sized—on the Changing Landscape of Muang Sing District in Northern Laos

Department of Anthropology, National Taiwan University, Taipei, TAIWAN

Muang Sing, one of the northern most towns in Luang Namtha Province, Laos is experiencing a tremendous change in both appearance of the town and its way of life among local residents. The major influence is the impact of Chinese migration for business reasons. Chinese financial groups began to develop several main economic products originally rooted in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan such as rubber trees, bananas, sugar cane and watermelon in northern Laos in recent years, and caused the Lue and multi-ethnic territory of Muang Sing serious challenges. In this paper I would describe the process of change within landscape from the border gate to Muang Sing town center, approximately eight kilometers, after the migration of a great number of Chinese businessmen and workers whom are directly or indirectly related to those newly-formed enterprises. Lao or Lue or other local elements in this area have been reduced in significance or even disappeared. Various kinds of Chinese colors have occupied many spheres alongside the main road. I would argue that the superficial economic phenomenon is not the end of Muang Sing story at present. Whereas it is the critical first step to drive multi-dimensional cultural change of the particular Lao frontier district.

Session #25: Individual Paper Session on Culture

Bouaphone Malaykham

Lao women and conservation of wear

Department of Lao Language - Mass communication, Faculty of Letters, National University of Laos

As we know over time, Laos, its neighbors and other countries have inherited traditional costume from their ascendants such as from mother to daughter and other members of previous generations. These invaluable arts and culture have been preserved, promoted and passed on as highly honorable and precious treasures of the nation from ancient times to present.

In view of imitation cultural protection, Lao ethnic women have protected the nation's beautiful traditional customs, and promoted imitation of culture. Especially with regards to wearing traditional Lao ethnic female dress by using silk or decorative cloth made from textiles and different designs that represent local Lao lifestyle. Lao textile is an invaluable cultural heritage for the nation, and includes a great amount of knowledge about Lao women's handiness in the present.

This article aims to explicate the history and current state of Lao woman's wear. For instance, what they wear varies according to their setting, such as home, festival, the market, and work. Furthermore students and teachers wear traditional dresses, when they go to school. Office workers, too, wear various uniforms when they work.

Lao women maintain and conserve their cultural heritage. This is evident in the Sin, Lao's costume. Recently, they maintained their culture through their dress and have promoted their crafts for customers across the country, in order to keep and conserve their culture. The maintenance of traditional women's wear, especially "Sin" demonstrates how Lao women express their cultural and national identities.

Masao Nishimura

Practicing Heritage – Living Heritage in Champasak, Lao PDR

Waseda University, Tokyo

Present research will discuss the results of a long-term field research on the relationships between the local residents and concrete objects of the World Heritage sites, the so-called Chamassak World Heritage site. The relationships have often been discussed by scholars as living heritage in other contexts mainly in Europe and South Asia. However, in Southeast Asia, especially in Lao PDR, this issue has not been noted, although a few scholars noted issues and developed their discussions (e.g. Miura 2009, 2013; Odajima 2014). Based on their pioneering work, and my field research, the present paper focuses on one issue concerning when and how local residents perceive "heritage" in their everyday life. Namely I would like to examine local people's ideas of heritage, if they have any, and how they represent it through daily activities. In doing so, the research touches on the discrepancy between the heritage perception which we usually have and that of local residents. In doing so, the present research intends to further discuss heritage management issues, which UNESCO has emphasized on "enhancing local residents' ownership." By touching on this issue, in conclusion, two points will be emphasized: 1) As a specific conclusion, the research manifests that heritage for local residents of Chamassak are perceived only through their daily practice. In other words, heritage is not a past event, but built into the on-going practice of life. 2. As a general conclusion, I would like to urge everyone to review the management policy and re-consider the policy of heritage management. At end, the research will contribute to better understanding of local people's rather positive attitude toward the conservation of heritage, and protect their life through a powerful pressure on local residents due to tourism development, and to paying more attention to local life as a part of heritage.

Chariya Seangyen* and Suwattana Iamprawat**

A Lexical variation among three generation in Phuthai Kapong language in Savannakhet Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic

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****Associate Professor, Department of Thai program, Faculty of Arts, Silpakorn University.**

This article aims to study lexical variation by three generations in Xebon, Savannakhet Province, and Lao People's Democratic Republic. The researcher collected the data using 465 semantic units by asking the speakers who were divided into three group by age levels: The first group with 55-65 years old, the second group with 35-45 years old, and the third with 15-25 years old. It is found that 1) the lexical variation by the first group indicates that Phuthai Kapong vocabulary is the most frequently used while the third group use the least and use the most Phuthai Kapong vocabulary along with other vocabulary. 2) In terms of lexical variation, it is found that there are variations in consonant and vowel sounds in Phuthai Kapong vocabulary and other ones. 3) In terms of variation in meaning of vocabulary, it is found that there is variations in both widening and narrowing in meaning. In addition, the lexical loss is found in Phuthai Kapong as the result of using other vocabulary to replace that of Phuthai Kapong.

Session #26: Panel H Surviving Filmmaking in Laos

Ms. Mattie Do, Lao filmmaker

Mr. Anysay Keola, Lao filmmaker and managing director of Lao New Wave Cinema

Mr. Preecha Sakorn, Thai researcher on Lao films

Mr. Xaisongkham Induangchanthy, Lao filmmaker: will moderate the panel and interpret Lao and Thai into English, and vice versa.

Panel Organizer: Mr. Xaisongkham Induangchanthy

Panel Discussant: Mr. Xaisongkham Induangchanthy

This year there will be close to 10 Lao films being made and screened in cinemas. It is going to be the busiest year for Lao filmmakers. Currently, there are more players entering the filmmaking scene offering choices for local audiences. Having more theatres and screening venues also encourages filmmaking in the country. With some support from the government, an eager local audience, and interest from overseas, it seems like this is a good year to make films in Laos.

However, Laos has lost the movie going culture for so long; watching a movie in a cinema is still not a very popular hobby for Lao people. With entertainment from a neighboring country widely available on TV and the flourish of pirated DVDs, also available widely and cheaply, not many local people are willing to pay, or are accustomed to paying, for a higher-price ticket to see a movie, especially a Lao one, in a cinema. In other words, Lao filmmakers make very little money from their movies. Although in recent years, we see the increasing support from the government allowing more genres and topics to be made; more filmmaking workshops; more screening venues, etc., yet despite such trends financial support from the government is still lacking. Government censorship is another challenge felt by local filmmakers. With

vague guidelines and many layers of bureaucratic procedures to get through, this discourages not only Lao but also foreign filmmakers from making films in Laos.

With little money to make and a lot of troubles to go through, how are some local filmmakers still doing what they are doing? And how do they navigate?

Mattie Do will share her experience working with foreign crews and how she has managed to raise money from overseas for her feature film – crowd sourcing and pitching a project overseas is a very new concept for local filmmakers.

Anysay Keola will talk about the challenges making his latest feature film “Noy-Above It All” – it is considered as the Laos’ first movie dealing with homosexual and ethnic minority issues.

Preecha Sakorn will present some of the findings from his Ph.D.’s thesis research on Lao films and emerging Lao filmmakers.

Session #27: Individual Paper Session on Phonetics & Phonology

Nonglak Sungsuman

“siang – pak – kon – ka - lom”: The Phonological System of Tai Yuan Dialect in Luang Namtha District, Luang Namtha Province, Lao PDR

Faculty of Liberal Arts, Ubon Ratchathani University, Thailand

Kalom are an ethnic Tai Yuan group who migrated from Chiang Saen district, Chiang Rai province, Thailand to Lao PDR and have settled in Xayabouly, Luang Namtha, and Luang Phabang Provinces. This article presents the phonological system of the Tai Yuan dialect in Luang Namtha district, Luang Namtha province and its comparison with the results of previous phonological studies of the Tai Yuan dialects in Thailand. The results of the study show that the Tai Yuan dialect in Luang Namtha has 20 consonant phonemes and 9 final consonants. The 21 vowel phonemes are divided into 18 simple vowels, 3 diphthongs and 6 tones. The comparative study of the Tai Yuan dialects reveals that the pattern of tone splits are similar. In terms of tone characteristics, there are both similarities and differences. There are the same number of consonants and vowels. However, when the sound correspondence are compared, certain vowels in the Luang Namtha dialect are modified. The modification might be the result of the influence of the Tai Lue dialect, who are native to the areas.

Phinnarat Akharawatthanakun, Ph.D

Tonal Simplification in Lao (Nam Pua)

Linguistics Department, International College, Payap University, Chiang Mai, Thailand

It is generally known that language variation and change can be induced by either external factors, e.g., language contact, or internal factors, e.g., simplification/ease of

articulation. However, when it comes to tonal variation and change, the internal factors are hardly mentioned. This paper aims to illustrate that internal factors also play an important role in tonal variation. This study focuses on Lao (Nam Pua) spoken in Nan province of Northern Thailand. A 240-word list was used for collecting the data from 15 native speakers in three age groups (5 speakers in each group). The data were analyzed both auditorily and instrumentally. There are five tones in Lao (Nam Pua): High-Falling-Rising /434/, Low-Rising-Falling /232/, Low-Falling /21/, High Level (with glottalization) /44^(ʔ)/, and Mid-Rising (with glottalization) /35^(ʔ)/. The /434/ tone has two variants, [434] & [34] and the /232/ tone also has two variants, [232] & [23]. The use of the different variants depends on the age group. The youngest age group uses only the simplified variants while the oldest and the middle age groups use a mixture of the two. So overtime the two contour tones /434/ and /232/ have become less complex as [34] and [23], respectively. Since the two tones in question are not similar to corresponding tones in neighboring languages, external factors can be ruled out as the cause of the change. We are therefore left to conclude that in this case tonal change is caused by an internal factor, namely simplification.

Nantana Ronakiat, Ph.D., Varisa Osatananda, Ph.D., and Apinya Hantrakul
Speech Rhythm in Luang Phrabang Lao: Comparison Between the ISO and RM
Methods

Thammasat University

The objectives of this research study are threefold; First, we examine the structure of speech rhythm in Luang Phrabang Lao. Second, we compare two techniques that were selected for this analysis—the Isochrony (ISO) and Rhythmic Metrics (RM) methods to determine the similarities/differences of the results they provide. The third objective is to determine if both methodologies are suitable to investigate the rhythmic pattern of Luang Prabang Lao utterances. Since previous research on rhythm in Vientiane Lao indicates that it is a syllable-timed language (Poprom 2547), we hypothesize that Luang Phrabang Lao might also be a syllable-timed language, with dominating one- or two-structured rhythmic structures. Until now, there have been several acoustic methodologies in analyzing the speech rhythm of a language. The ISO method is a traditional way of measuring rhythmic units (Pike 1945, Abercrombie 1967) and has been widely used for analyzing the speech rhythm in Thai (Sawanakunanon 2002, Poprom 2004). Other methods, such as the RM, measure the duration of consonants and vowels, as well as the proportion of vowel duration to overall speech utterances (ΔC , ΔV and $\%V$ respectively). The RM method has gained grounds among western linguists in recent years (Ramus et al. 1999). With regards to the Tai languages, we found only two research projects which carried out using the RM method; one is from Yanin Sawanakunanon (2012). The other is an MA thesis by Apinya Hantrakul (2015). Both projects studied Thai rhythmic patterns and have posited that the latter method is proved to be efficient. Apinya Hantrakul (2015) points out that in comparing the rhythmic patterns between the speech utterances of normal and autistic children, both ISO and RM methods are fairly efficient in identifying the nature of the rhythmic pattern. By applying both methodologies to the analysis of the speech rhythm, we can

compare the efficiency of both methods. We recorded the connected speech from six female informants who were born and raised in Luang Phrabang, with ages ranging from 20-40 years old. We will elicit stories from them of their own choosing. Passages of 5-7 minutes in duration will be selected for acoustic analysis. The PRAAT Program 4.0 will be used for the acoustic analysis. The results of this study will examine the structure of the rhythmic patterns in Luangprabang Lao, as well as testing the efficiency of the ISO and RM methodologies.

Session #28: Individual Paper Session on Lexical Usage

Kowit Pimpuang, Ph.D.

Social Reflection through Naming of the Kings in Lanchang and Ayutthaya Dynasty

Assistant Professor, Department of Thai Language, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University, Bangkok

This research explored social reflection through naming the Kings in the Lanchang and Ayutthaya dynasties. Truly speaking, names of the Kings in both the Lanchang and Ayutthaya dynasties were meaningful and also had semantic significances in reflecting their own status. In total, the Lanchang dynasty had 36 Kings and the Ayutthaya dynasty consisted of 33 Kings, and all of the Kings, as observed in general, used their names with different titles. The objectives of the research were: 1) to explore word usage and its patterns of word formation for naming the Kings in both the Lanchang and Ayutthaya dynasties; and 2) to explore the social reflection and semantic significances of Lao Kings in Lanchang as well as Thai Kings in Ayutthaya dynasty. It was found that the Kings of Lanchang dynasty used words with the following name titles; *Nang*, *Phra*, *Phraya*, *Chao Phraya* and *Somdej Chao Phraya*. Most names of these Kings were coined by the following patterns of word formation: compound word, followed by PL-SKT's compound word (*Samasa*) and primary derivative (*Kitaka*) respectively. Other patterns of word formation for naming Kings were not found. Kings of the Ayutthaya dynasty used names with the following titles: *Khun*, *Somdej Chao Fa*, *Somdej Phra*, *Somdej Phrachao* and *Somdej Phrachao Yuhua*. Most names of the Kings were coined by PL-SKT's compound word (*Samasa*), followed by compound word and primary derivative (*Kitaka*). Word formation was done through the following three patterns: 1) compound word + combination (*Sonthi*), 2) compound word + *Samasa* word, and 3) *Samasa* word + compound word. As for the study of social reflection, names of Lao Kings in the Lanchang dynasty reflected the old belief in *Khun Borom* for holding fast and claiming the right for being a successor back in time to *Khun Borom*. Not only that, it also reflected the Kings, who followed the doctrines of Brahman-Hinduism through a thorough concept of Divine Kings (*Devaraja*). There seems to be a similarity on this matter as found in the Ayutthaya dynasty, due to the influences of Brahman-Hinduism. The Kings in the Lanchang and Ayutthaya dynasty used Brahman-Hinduism and the concept of Divine Kings (*Devaraja*) to strengthen their own political authority, while they used the concept of Righteous Kings (*Dhammaraja*), based on Buddhism, as an important political tool in order to provide their own political legitimacy.

Werapong Mesathan, Ph.D.

Politics of the word "Thai Noi"

In Thai, the term ‘Thai Noi’ has been present since at least the decade 1910. This study from documentary data found 2 meanings for Thai Noi. First is alphabetic and second is the ethnic name. The detail of the documentary evidence focus on the people of Lao culture who reside in the Khong river region both in Thailand and Lao PDR. An investigation of “The Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand (2004)” did not reveal any groups who refer to themselves as Thai Noi. Meaning Thai Noi is rather negative for Lao people because it can be interpreted to be a subsidiary of Thai. Lao people call themselves Lao. Therefore the name Thai Noi was created for Thai political reasons, such purposes of governance and ethnic prejudice. Thai intellectual leaders used this term to explain the Thai network and support an idea about how Thai is the great country.

Sutthiluck Sawanyavisuti

Health Ideologies in Lao Contemporary Magazines

Ph. D. Student of Thai Language Program (Language), Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Mahasarakham University

This research analyzes health ideologies as represented in language used in Lao contemporary magazines and the social ideologies hidden in those Lao contemporary magazines which are linked to the social and cultural contexts. The researcher analyzed the texts from 3 Lao contemporary magazines issued on Jun-July 2015 to be analyzed by Purposive Random Sampling. The magazines included: Kwan Jai Magazines, and Mahachon Magazines using critical discourse analysis. The results were as follows: There were several language methods used for health ideological presentation. They were vocabulary selection, immaterial for people who love their health, science information or specialist references. Among these methods, the researcher found that the vocabulary used was a strategy for the presentation of good health ideas; whereas, the immaterial for the people who love their health and science information and specialist references, was the strategy for emphasizing reliability creation for idea package. For health ideologies represented in Lao contemporary magazines, they indicated that both major and minor ideologies were found in ideological representation.

Session #29: Panel I Social Forms of Health: Ongoing Investigations in Laos

(Continued from session #21)

Pascale Hancart Petitet, Ph.D.

“Techno-Biopolitics” in Laos? Look at Human Reproduction and HIV Medical Science’s Embodiments through a Feminist Lens.

Cluster Local Cultures and Global Health, IRD Laos, Vientiane

An ethnographic study conducted in Laos since 2013 invites us to reformulate some theoretical questions in the study of gender and sexuality and in the domain of human reproduction and HIV. What are the standards conveyed in this area during the construction and implementation of HIV prevention and treatment programs and

activities related to reproductive health? What about the discourses and practices of health actors? How do local interpretations of the concepts of "choice", in the private sphere articulate with the recommendations made by international public health agencies and by the societal normative requirements related to sexuality and/or conjugality? What are the representations and practices left on the side? How do individuals in a context of rapid social change negotiate them? Does the Lao matri-system, its institutions and logics, produce alternatives for public health assumptions and models?

Data were collected during the PREMS ANRS 12271 (2013- 2016) research program that aims to describe and analyze the prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV in Laos from an anthropological perspective.

Ethnographical data illustrate the distribution of power in the processes of public health in the HIV field, from policy making to program delivery and from various points of view. The data interrogates how gender relations of domination, sex and sexuality reproduce and articulate in such context. It also analyzes the interactions between the body and the social facing HIV/ Human Reproduction "techno-biopolitics" in contemporary Laos through a feminist lens.

Angkhana Lasaphonh, M.D.

Lao Youth Facing HIV in Savannakhet Province: A Qualitative Study

Institut Francophone de Médecine Tropicale, Vientiane, Laos

It is widely documented that young people are particularly at risk of being infected by HIV especially when their access to information and preventive methods are scarce. In Lao PDR, little information is available about the attitudes and practices of young people related to HIV prevention, especially in the provinces.

This study aimed to document the representations and practices of young people in Laos in connection with HIV. A qualitative approach was used. The sample consisted of 16 young people aged 15 to 24 years old who live in Savannakhet province. The study was conducted within the ANRS PREMS 121271 project.

Youth do not always have accurate knowledge about HIV. They know that the condom is an effective way to protect them from HIV but in practice they do not use it consistently. They are especially reluctant to use condoms at first sex and with their regular partner. Youth know that HIV screening is important but they are reluctant to be tested, not only because they fear a positive result, but also they doubt the ability of the health system to maintain the confidentiality of laboratory results.

This study points out that youth have knowledge about HIV but their practices are not always consistent with their knowledge. Information dissemination and access to confidential HIV services are needed in Laos.

Sotsay Khamstone, M.D.

Medicines Consumption and Lactation Practices in HIV Positive Women Under Antiretroviral Therapy in Vientiane

Institut Francophone de Médecine Tropicale, Vientiane, Laos

Lao PDR is undergoing a rapid socioeconomic transition. Human relations also grow at a fast rate and can bring sexually transmitted disease, which includes HIV. HIV can be transmitted from mother-to-child. This has become a public health issue. Compliance of HIV positive women with post-natal recommendations is a key element to reduce the risk of virus transmission to children. This compliance is based on people's behaviour and on the society where they live, hence on cultural, social and economic settings. However, nothing is known about this topic in HIV positive women in Lao PDR.

This study aimed to provide information on practices regarding the use of medicines and breastfeeding practices among HIV positive women in Lao PDR. A qualitative approach was used. The researcher interviewed 19 women who were on ARV treatment in two HIV centres based in Vientiane in 2014. The study found that women followed the recommendations on medications and breastfeeding. But HIV-related stigma in the community and the family is still a real problem that threatens the effectiveness of HIV compliance and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of the virus. A program of medical care should be accompanied by a program of education of the family, the community and health care services to diminish the stigma faced by HIV-infected mothers.

Session #30: Individual Paper Session on Poetry, Folklore & Literature

Kiengkeo Naunnavong

A Linguistic Analysis of Phu Thai Phaya Poetry

Dept. of Lao language-Mass Communication, Faculty of Letters, National University of Laos

"A Linguistic analysis of Phuthai Phaya Poetry from Muang Vang Angkham in Central of Laos" aims to study phonology and compare word-idioms in Phuthai poetry; study of prosody and figures of speech used Phuthai poetry of Muang Vang Angkham. The main methods of the study are literature review, research tool design, data collection and data analysis which focuses on tone, word-idioms, rhythm and figures of speech in Phuthai poetry. The research results are varied but include the following: Phuthai Phonology of consonants, vowels and tone. There are 20 initial consonants, 9 final consonants and 13 combine consonants. There are 18 vowels, but no diphthong and 5 phonemic tones are in Phuthai. A comparative analysis of words used in Phuthai poetry and Lao found that the major differences tend to be found in terms of nouns and verbs. In terms of lexical structure, different whole words, in the initial or final syllable. Besides that the consonants and vowels phonetics also changed, in particular, the changes from short to long vowel. The difference of idioms in Phuthai poetry and Lao: different speech, but similar meaning was found in more abundance

than differences in both speech and meaning. Prosodic analysis of Phuthai poetry found that rhythm consists of vowel, consonant and tone rhyme. The various kind of figures of speech used in Phuthai poetry of Muang Vang Angkham included simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, metonymy, paradox, reduplication, rhetorical question, alliteration, onomatopoeia etc.

Phitsaphong Vongphachang

The literature and poetic folktale portray Lao women caught in a cycle of power attenuation

This article studies the characteristics of folklore stories and poetic legends written by Lao male writers. The results show that the writer's perception of women is from their own cultural and social perception of women being of low social value at that time. Seven works were studied they are; 1.Nang Tang On 2.Nang Phom Hom 3. Nang kea Na ma 4.Nock Chork PHA 5. Pa Bou Thong 6. Khoun Loun Nang Oou. 7. Ousa Balot. The writers have used three social contexts to portray the female character 1.daughter 2.wife 3. mother. These three portrayals of women are dominated by males, each having a lower social role and status in politics and culture thus being subservient to men. These stories reinforce the representation of women simply for the use of their bodies for sexual pleasure which causes further devaluation to the female gender. The old social and cultural hierarchies of different groups of people is further complicated by caste systems within their societies. Female political, social and cultural values are further decreased by this improvident domination, making women impotent and cast to the lowest social levels under male domination.

Mayphone Duangphasy

Evolution of Lao Contemporary Literature (1893-2010)

Lao language-Mass Communication Department, Faculty of Letters, National University of Laos

The study of the evolution of modern literature firstly aims at examining the historical existence of modern literature. Secondly, it investigates references in dividing the evolution of modern literature and lastly it studies the evolutionary periods or ages of modern age literature. This study employed a qualitative approach where data was mainly collected from documents. The results of the study can be concluded as follows: Findings of the examination of the historical existence of modern literature showed that modern literature originated from legacy literature which was inherently nationalistic and patriotic against any form of aggressions, strong spirits that refuse the state of being slaves which was absorbed in the old literature such: *Khouncheuang*, *SanluebBorsoun* and *Meuangphouane Poetry*. Apart from these, some of the literature expressions originated from Isaiah Words, proverbs and socio-cultural linguistics of local poetry. Though there were very few short literature contribution from the earlier age, they were very important and significant sources for the promotion and growth of Lao modern literature. Furthermore, modern literature was conceptually derived from Buddhism, fighting against colonization from both France and America. Modern

literature also originated and grew from revolutionary developmental activities. The present study on the evolution of modern literature mainly relied on the history through the resolutions of literature of the political Party, literature theories and authors' biographies. All of the aforementioned are significantly important for modern literature since they influenced the division of evolution periods of modern literature. The evolution of modern literature was divided into three revolutionary periods: Literature before the revolution since 1893 to 1954, during the revolution 1955-1975 and final period of Literature in the construction and development period since 1976 to 2010 was divided into three small periodic timescales: the first period was since 1976 to 1986, second period was 1987 to 1997 and final period was since 1998 to 2010.

Session #31: Individual Paper Session on Geography & Tourism

Pao Vue (Xeempov Vwj)

In Search of Forest Spirits in Laos

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Geography, Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The Hmong in Laos are crucial when it comes to natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. They are the 3rd most populous ethnic group in Laos and tend to live near areas with important conservation values where they engage in hunting and the collection of various kinds of non-timber forest products (NTFPs). Although they are heavily dependent on natural resources, there also exists cultural spiritual beliefs that govern how they should interact with the forest and those resources that could be viewed as traditional natural resource conservation practices. However, the last few decades have seen these beliefs being impacted by various external factors. In this study, I look at how government laws and regulations, the introduction of the market economy, and technological advancements have affected these beliefs and how this change has, in turn, affected how the Hmong interact with the available resources. Data gathered through ethnographic research in Laos suggest that while the Hmong are still aware of these traditional beliefs, the beliefs themselves have been greatly weakened by the aforementioned external factors and in many cases, are no longer a concern to the majority of Hmong hunters. Thus, while these traditional beliefs remain an integral component of Hmong spirituality, such beliefs may no longer be depended upon to have the same influence as it once did. As such, conservationists must look for other opportunities to work with the Hmong in Laos to encourage sustainable resource use.

Dr. Laura LaBelle

Tourism as a Medium for Development: A Visual Journey of Progress in Lao PDR

Big Red Education, 22758 Fairburn Dr. Grand Terrace, California, USA

Drawing upon the interpretive theories of Jürgen Habermas, Paul Ricoeur, and Richard Kearney, this paper explores the role tourism has played in providing economic stimulus to the country of Lao PDR as described through conversations held between 2008 and 2015 within various village communities. Through such conversations, suggestions for

further developmental goals had been formed by village leaders and elders aimed at protecting all of the Lao people with regards to tourism inside their villages. This paper situates villages' reported progress from the tourism industry; examines aspects of infrastructure adaptations that have occurred; and reviews the goals village leaders have developed for their villages to help affect and shape future tourism policy. A discussion of the unforeseen and complex issues that have arisen inside villages affected by the industry will be covered in part by reviewing photographs and video of conversations held with villagers. The paper is an autoethnography study based upon the author's critical hermeneutic research, and relationships built during travels through Lao. Photography, videography, journal entries, and audio from multiple conversations held with leaders from various strata of Lao society were utilized to further the narrative of tourism as a medium for development.

Joshua Bernstein

Buddhist Performance: Examining the Impact of Tourism on the Almsgiving Ceremony in Luang Prabang, Laos

Lecturer, Language Institute, Thammasat University
English Language Center Building, Bangkok, Thailand

Luang Prabang has experienced a dramatic increase in tourism since its listing as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994. This influx has had advantages to the city's economy but has negatively impacted aspects of the local culture and the community's perception of foreign visitors. The UNESCO designation may therefore, paradoxically, hurt aspects of the culture it purportedly seeks to protect.

This paper examines the impact of tourism on the daily almsgiving ceremony in Luang Prabang. The ceremony is a popular tourist attraction ranked as one of the top 10 "things to do" in the city on the travel website TripAdvisor. This notoriety transmits into large crowds of tourists. As a vital part of Lao culture, an examination of the current impact of tourism on almsgiving is needed. Field research suggests that the site where tourists and local community members congregate as a contact zone where cultural performance and the tourist spectacle collide.

Session #32: Individual Paper Session on Language Shift & Classification

Thananan Trongdee, Ph.D.

A New Classification of Lao Dialects

Maharakham University
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It is apparent that there are many geographical varieties of Lao language in Laos, Thailand, Myanmar and Cambodia. The patterns of proto-tone development including the merger, the split, and the tone shapes have been adopted as the most significant criterion to classify them. Nevertheless disagreement about the classification of Lao

dialects still persists. Based on data gathered from printed material and from my own field study in Laos, Myanmar and northern Cambodia, I propose that more criterion should be added to the classification of such dialects. In this new classification the shared innovation of proto-diphthong *aw, and the patterns of merger and split of proto-tone *A are adopted as the criterion to classify Lao dialects; and the patterns of merger and split of proto-tone *B are adopted as the criterion to classify their sub-dialects. The patterns of tone shape, certain contoids and vocoids are set aside as the criterion to classify their geographical accents. The result is that there are 4 dialects of Lao language: Northern, Central, Southern and Southeastern. In the Northern dialect there are 2 sub-dialects represented by Luang Phabang and Loei. In the Central dialect there are 2 sub-dialects represented by Vientiane prefecture and Khon Sawan. In the Southern dialect there are 2 sub-dialects represented by Champasak and Stung Treng. In the Southeastern dialect there is 1 sub-dialect represented by Attapeu. It can be concluded that there are a total of 7 sub-dialects of Lao dialects, and each sub-dialect comprises certain geographical accents.

Yutaka Tomioka

The Language Shift and the Status of Lao in a Kuay Community in Northwestern Surin, Thailand

School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Northeastern Thailand (Isan) is linguistically very diverse with several ethnolinguistic minorities in close proximity. In the Surin province people speak Thai, Kuay, Khmer, and Lao. The relationship between these languages is hierarchical: (Central) Thai is at the top followed by Lao, Khmer, and Kuay. The general attitudes towards these languages are that a language in a higher position is more formal, has more prestige and/or is used more widely. Kuay speakers are traditionally considered as fluent in the other three languages for accommodating speakers of these other languages; while Khmer and Lao speakers do not necessarily speak Kuay.

This study is based on a preliminarily survey conducted at a Kuay community to determine the degree of language shift and ethnolinguistic vitality. Language attitudes and choice were the foci of the study. Data was collected from more than 40 participants by means of a questionnaire and qualitative in-depth interviews.

In this paper, I focus on the transitional status of Lao in this community. If language shift is occurring in this community, speakers of Kuay, as the minority language, will be shifting to the majority languages, Thai and Lao. By contrast, Lao could be both a majority language to which people shift, and the minority language from which people shift to Thai.

The results of the survey seem to show that Kuay is still widely spoken in the community, even by the younger participants. While Lao's role as a regional Lingua Franca seems to be shrinking and is being replaced by Thai.

Dr. Watcharee Sriksam

Understanding Laos Cultural Attitudes Regarding Sex: A Tool to HIV/AIDS Prevention

Asst. Prof. Faculty of Liberal Arts, Ubon Ratchathani University, Thailand

This paper is an interpretive study of the dynamics of cultural attitudes regarding sex of Lao Luom and Lao Theung ethnic migrant workers in Ubon Ratchathani and Loei province of Thailand, based on intercultural communication during interviews on HIV/Aids perception among the workers. Laos cultural attitudes regarding sex may contribute to high risk sexual activity and HIV/Aids in a number of ways, including: social and cultural taboos against sexuality expression with the common idea that sexuality is embarrassing and not to be discussed with children or partner especially condom use; gender inequalities and traditional gender role beliefs on sexual activity that men control sexual impulses and women should please men rather than consider their own desires and needs, which make men more coercive and women more submissive. Therefore, women are unable to negotiate safer sex practices, and that increases their vulnerability to HIV infection. Public health messages on HIV/Aids and community-based interventions should reinforce social and cultural values that support mutual respect and improved communication on sexual issues between men and women in Lao society and shared responsibility for sexual and reproductive health. Moreover, developing culturally appropriate HIV/Aids programs for different ethnic groups across countries is highly recommended as one HIV/Aids prevention strategies.

Somphay Vilaysak

Orphanage boy in Lao Social Dimensions

Department of Lao Language and Mass Communication, Faculty of Letters, National University of Laos, Dongdok Campus, Vientiane, Lao PDR

The word “Khampha” (an orphanage boy) is defined as a child whose parents have died. In Lao literature, it can be defined as a child whose parents are dead when he/she was young, leaving him or her alone. As a consequence, the child became physically and mentally poor. Because of poverty and difficulties, Khampha became one of the crucial characters in Lao literature which plays a very important role in Lao social dimensions, reflecting the following: Khampha represents physically and mentally poor character because there is a lack of food, and clothes. This motivates the boy to fight for life to overcome problems. The boy shows high respect to his parents by listening to their teachings and believes in goodness. Therefore, by listening to parents’ teachings and committing to making good things paves the way for success in his future. The story reflects the result of using love and kindness to others. Because of these he was assisted by others when facing difficult circumstances. In the story, he avoided killing elephants, ghosts, lions, tigers, snakes, and other animals captured. Instead, he released all of them. More importantly, the story reflects social dimensions, specifically, it reflects an authoritarian society and inequality. In conclusion, the story reflects patience and commitment for overcoming difficulties and injustice.

Richard J. Frankel, Ph.D.

Working Paper on Economic, Environmental and Social Impacts of Hydropower Development in the Lower Mekong Basin

Adjunct Professor, Natural Resources & Environmental Management, Mae Fah Luang University, Chiang Rai, Thailand

The proposed hydropower projects on the Mekong River and its tributaries would block fish migration routes, change flood areas, sediment/nutrient flows, and reduce the catch from the largest freshwater fishery in the world. The Costanza report showed that by changing some key assumptions in the MRC Basin Development Plan BDP2 (low discount rates for natural resources; fish value) *the economic feasibility of the planned hydropower projects would change from positive (as in BDP2) to negative in terms of Net Present Value (NPV)*. This paper used an updated (2015) plausible set of data and key assumptions. The NPV calculations are summarised below.

		BDP2 Scenario 6 Dams	BDP2 Scenario 11 Dams
		NPV (\$ millions)	NPV (\$ millions)
BDP2	Hydropower	25,000	32,800
10% Discount Rate	Capture fisheries	-1,000	-1,900
	Others (details in text)	2,700	2,500
	Total Economic Impact	26,700	33,400
Revised Case	Hydropower	25,000	32,800
3% Discount Rate	Capture fisheries	-27,000	-54,900
for natural resources	Others (details in text)	-800	-400
	Total Economic Impact	-2,400	-21,800

The above table shows that the negative NPV for the capture fisheries loss (using 3% discount rate for natural resources) is much larger than the positive NPV for hydropower generated. A sensitivity analysis (fish loss, fish value, discount rate) was also carried out. *It is concluded that the proposed mainstream hydropower projects would not have a net economic benefit in both the 6 dams and 11 dams scenarios.* Furthermore, we have queried some inconsistencies in the BDP2 (hydropower NPVs) and challenged a key BDP2 assumption that hydropower profits would accrue to the country where they would be built – this resulted in Lao PDR being the main beneficiary. We have reassessed the allocation of hydropower costs and benefits to be 30% for the host country and 70% for the country funding the project and importing the electricity over the concession period (typically 25 years). This results in Thailand and Lao PDR being the beneficiaries whereas Cambodia and Vietnam would bear the main cost of hydropower developments. It is also clear that project developers and electricity

importers would benefit but poor, rural agriculture and fishing communities would suffer.

Our study of the economic analysis of the BPD2 indicates that the benefits of the hydropower projects have been over-estimated and that the NPV needs to be re-adjusted. There are considerable uncertainties in the impact costs and some factors (social/cultural costs, lost capture fisheries, sediment and nutrient flows) may be considerably understated. The above conclusions fully support the Costanza report and ICEM SEA recommendations for a moratorium on mainstream dams in order to carry out further studies of project risks.

Session #34: Individual Paper Session on Culture & Discourse

Koichi Morinaka

A study on the marks inscribed on the silver (Hoi) and copper (Laat) ingot money used in the Lan-Xang kingdom—focusing on the identification of the production age of the Laat money

Silver and copper ingot money (called Hoi and Lat) used during the period of Lan Xang Kingdom would provide us with cultural, historical background and even its trade and political relationships with the other countries, if the marks inscribed on them could be analyzed properly. Unfortunately, previous studies are lacking of systematic analysis of their marks. For example Howard 2014 (*Lao Coins and Currency* p37) describes the following Hoi as the product in the year of 1795 describing its mark as: But, Lao people, if shown, will say this is upside-down, then read this as the letter ຫ (Hno), though they don't know the meaning of the mark. The right answer can be found in p144 of “Lanna currency” เงินตราล้านนา 2012 by Naraka Lekkhahun, which clearly identifies the letter mark (ຫ) as an evolutionary form of the letter ຫ (Hmo) which was the symbol letter of the City of Chiang Mai, the capital of Lan Na kingdom. Why was the symbol letter of Lan Na inscribed on the Lan Xang money? This question will be easily answered by the historical fact “Sethtilart was the king of Lan Na kingdom in 1546-47”. Yes, the above mentioned ingot was the product around 1540s instead of 1795. By scrutinizing their markings, the author can demonstrate how the production age of “Lat money with marks” which were mistakenly judged to be the oldest coins in the kingdom, can be identified as products produced at the end of 18th century.

Narong Ardsmiti, Ph.D.

Influence of Phu Tai culture on Bru's language use: A discourse analysis

Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University at Salaya Campus, Salaya, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand

The issue of endangered ethnic language is a major concern around the globe. In Thailand, the Bru people of Kok Tum sub-district, Dong Luang district in Mukdahan province, in the past, they regularly spoke the Bru language for communication in their community, but now the youth speak neither their ethnic language nor E-san dialect,

they use Phu Tai language instead. In this paper, I employ a combined methodology including an anthropological and linguistic approach to investigate the reasons why the young generation of Bru speak Phu Tai language in everyday life and not their ethnic language. The frameworks of critical discourse analysis by Paltridge (2006) and discursive practice by Foucault (1971, 1984) are explored to analyze the relationship between language and the socio-cultural context, particularly power, dominance, ideology, inequality and social stratification. I argue that the ethnic historical discourses making Bru inferior, affect only the elderly people, but do not affect the language use of the younger generation. However, economic and social changes at the community level which have caused a migration to obtain the land of the Phu Tai people, as well as cross ethnic marriage, are the major issues that determine children's language use, and whether or not they choose to follow parents' language (Phu Tai) in the household and community domains. Furthermore, the study also shows that the Bru language still exists but is rarely found in specific circumstances. Bru children, for example, speak their ethnic language only when they do not want outsiders to understand.

Session #35: Panel J Youth Development for Social Change in Laos: Happiness Capacity Building, and Education in the Land of Kindhearted People

Youth Development for Social Change in Laos: Happiness, Capacity Building, and Education in the *Land of Kindhearted People*

Christina McMellon, Ph.D.

Center for Research on Families and Relationships, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland

Session #36: Panel L Social Forms of Health: Ongoing Investigations in Laos

Continuation of sessions 21 & 29

Evelyne Micollier, Ph.D.

Doing Research on Health-Related Issues in Lao PDR: Methodological Limitations and 'Localization' of a Global Health Issue

Research scholar at IRD (French Institute for Research in Development), Cluster Local Cultures and Global Health, IRD Laos, Vientiane

In the last decade, Lao PDR experienced dramatic transformations, evolving over time from a land locked to a crossroads country, in a context of accelerated regional integration in order to achieve ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) construction. Along with increased circulations of people, goods and ideas, the health sector and health-related issues do not escape from the ongoing changes. However behind the 'moving' scene, capacity is still limited due to lack of trained human resources, resilience to the

implementation of internationally designed policies, and the difficulty to draw an actual picture of the situation. From an ongoing research on HIV-related issues, I will firstly draw lines on qualitative, more specifically ethnological, research limitations and their implications; secondly try to understand key points on the process of 'localization' of a global health issue through the local adaptation of an international agenda.

Jo Durham, Ph.D. and Hebe Gouda

Measurement For Development: Looking Back Going Forward

Lecturer Health and Development, Director, Masters International Public Health Faculty of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, School of Public Health, The University of Queensland

In July 1997, the Lao PDR joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and has progressively become more integrated into regional and global markets. This integration has increased access to information, commerce, labour markets and consumer goods and is also changing lifestyles. This is seen by the rapid demographic and health transition that is underway. This is characterised by the triple burden of communicable diseases, injuries and chronic diseases. In order to effectively plan for a changing health profile, accurate health information is critical. Information needs include surveillance data for diseases, risk factors, and outcomes, and in particular mortality. The health information system however, is relatively weak, remains primarily orientated to communicable diseases and maternal and child health and use of available data is frequently sub-optimal. At the same time, as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) become operational in 2016, there will be increasing demands on Lao PDR to collect information on the seventeen goals. Discussions are underway to finalise the proposed list of indicators, but regardless, there will be increased demand for information if countries, such as Lao PDR are to report on progress towards the SDGs. This raises the question of where should a country such as Lao PDR, begin? And how can, or does, the collection of data on global indicators contribute to reducing regional inequities? In this paper, using health as a case study, we explore lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals in Lao PDR and examine options for Lao PDR.

Session #37: Individual Paper Session on Politics

Joel Sawat Selway

The Nomination Procedure and Political Competition in the Lao PDR

Department of Political Science Brigham Young University,

The 2011 elections in the Lao PDR provide a rare opportunity to analyze the nature of political competition in this one-party Communist state. This study focuses on the nomination procedure for the electoral ballot to uncover the strategies and preferences of the central party leadership. Specifically, I examine the effect of economic, demographic, and geographic cleavages, as well as institutional factors and electoral dynamics on the proportion of centrally-nominated candidates that compose the final electoral ballot in each province. Using an originally compiled dataset of candidate- and

constituency-level indicators combined with qualitative interviews, I find that the central party leadership sends more candidates to rich, large, ethnically Lao-dominated constituencies in the South and Central regions. In contrast, it sends fewer candidates to poor, minority-dominated, Northern constituencies. In addition, I find evidence of strategic placement of nominees based on district size, seat-to-population ratio and district competitiveness. These findings underscore the expected importance of the National Assembly in Laos going forward. Lastly, I try to untangle the possible motivations of the central party leadership, including state strength, corruption, and identity politics.

Martin Rathie

Diplomatic Extortion - Lao-Cambodian Relations 1975-1979

Vientiane College

This paper will analyze the relationship that the Lao revolutionary movement shared with the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s which has been neglected by scholars in the past. It will argue that the KR manipulated their Lao counterparts to gain influence over conservative and radical forces in Thailand, who were needed to counterbalance the perceived threat of the Vietnamese. It will show how the LPDR relied on its southern neighbour significantly to stabilize its weak **economy** and to bolster its regime in the region and beyond. This presentation will detail how and why the LPRP compromised its view of Pol Pot's regime, namely its awareness of bloody reprisals against revolutionaries with Vietnamese links, to meet its own domestic objectives. This will help to shatter the long held myth that the Pathet Lao have always been totally subservient to the dictates of the VCP. The terms of six ambassadors (three Lao and three Khmer) will be examined to show the evolution of the Lao-Cambodian **bilateral relationship** from 1970 to 1979. The shared experience of **refugee** and **insurgent** problems (Ku Xat and Khmer Serei) emanating out of Thailand will be used to explain the common mindset with regard to reactionary forces and how this facilitated empathy between Lao and Cambodian leaders who were detached from the real situation along their respective frontiers. This revolutionary fraternity was manifest in joint condemnations of **border** clashes and the harboring of exiled rebels. The flow of food **aid** in the form of rice and salt from Cambodia to Laos will illustrate the **dependency** of Laos and the **debt** owed to the CPK. The hosting of delegations to the Lao and Cambodian provinces will be analyzed for the mixed messages each tour presented. Finally the hidden rivalry between the LPRP and the CPK to secure influence over the CPT's regional branches in Isan will be touched upon to show how **state** and **party** relations differed.

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