

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

FRIDAY, MAY 4

FRIDAY, MAY 4

8:30AM – 11:30AM, PIMA, 218 MU

GENDER AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

MODERATOR: Sudarat Musikawong, Asian Pacific American Studies Program, Arizona State University

Chansouk Insouvanh, Fulbright Scholar, Ohio University
“Social Exclusion and Gender Discrimination in the Khmu People in the Lao PDR”

Laos is a multiethnic society with at least 50 different ethnic groups. There are four major ethnic linguistic groups - Tai-Kadai, Mon-Khmer (Austroasiatic), Hmong-Mein, and Tibeto-Burmese. For simplicity, the ethnic Lao people have been divided into three major categories: Lao Loum (the lowland Lao), Lao Theung or Lao Kang (the midland Lao) and Lao Sung (the highland Lao), which are based on historical background, linguistic criteria and geographical distribution. This paper focuses on one of the ethnicities within the Lao Theung group: the Khmu, which represents the largest and most important Austroasiatic Mon-Khmer in Laos. It briefly describes the Khmu historical background, culture and traditional practices, and discusses the social exclusion and loss of ethnic identity that has occurred due to ethnic discrimination, weak state control, lack of Khmu political organization, and lack of education as well as experience beyond village life. Another important case of the Khmu's weak position in Laos is that the Khmu was, and to some extent still is, *kha* (meaning “slave” or “servant”). To bury the stigma of caste and humiliation, many Khmu have adopted Lao language and culture and relocated to the lowlands. The paper will also discuss the Lao women's rights in general, then investigate the Khmu women's rights and examine challenges and difficulties faced by them after Laos became a communist regime in 1975 and then adopted a New Economic Mechanism in 1986. The paper aims at arousing awareness and calls for action to improve the conditions of social exclusion and gender discrimination of the Khmu and other ethnic minority's disadvantaged groups in Laos.

Gary Lee, Center for Hmong Studies
Concordia University
“Relations between the Lao and Hmong: A Historical Perspective”

The relations between Hmong and Lao in both Laos and the diaspora seem often tenuous, hanging on the balance and often the subject of international comments and strong negative media publicity. This paper explores the nature of Hmong relations with the majority Lao people from the earliest time of the Hmong's settlement in Laos until today. The author examines issues at both the local and national level, the roles played by major political figures on both sides in the shaping of these relations, the real situation as compared to the public perceptions reflected in government policies and practices. The paper concludes that despite need for improvement and given the resources available, relations between the Lao and the Hmong are operating on a positive and mutually beneficial note, especially at the government level for the 460,000 Hmong living in Laos.

Meaghen Simms, Saint
Mary's University

“Magnifying Vulnerabilities: Assessing the Impacts of Resettlement
on the Participation of Ethnic Minority Women and Girls in the
Domestic Sex Sector”

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has a long and varied history of displacement and resettlement. Vast population shifts marked the war years and continued post-1975 with first the departure, then repatriation of refugees who had fled to Thailand in the wake of the Pathet Lao's ascension to power; but it was in the 1980s and 1990s that contemporary development, of the nation and of the individual, ostensibly began to determine displacements in Lao PDR. One pillar of the current strategy was laid in 1989 when the First National Conference on Forestry strategized the relocation of one-quarter of the national population as a means of eradicating shifting cultivation, contentiously singling out the predominant mode of upland agriculture to shoulder the blame for the rapid deforestation of the country. In the years that followed the Government of Lao further embraced the Focal Site Strategy, a scheme that saw mountain and midland ethnic minority villages relocated and consolidated in the lowlands.

Officially defended as necessary for environmental conservation and cost-efficient service delivery, a host of more political considerations have also defined the scale of resettlement in Lao PDR. These include: the perceived need to integrate the largely subsistence-based minorities into the money economy through labour force participation and intensified agricultural production for trade; external pressure for drug control; security concerns; and a desire to bring geographically and ideologically isolated citizens under the administrative control of the government.

However, the economic, social and cultural vulnerability of communities displaced under state resettlement plans have greatly intensified, with negative impacts including increased mortality, shortages of arable land, food insecurity and rapid debt accumulation. Resultant symptoms of social breakdown have been witnessed in rising levels of drug abuse and domestic violence in some villages, while the United Nations Children's Fund has pointed to a disproportionate risk to women and girls from relocated villages of being trafficked cross-border for sexual exploitation. The work of anthropologists Dr. James Chamberlain and Dr. Chris Lyttleton, among others, has also pointed to the presence of displaced ethnic minority women and girls in the domestic sex sector.

“Magnifying Vulnerabilities” responds to both a local and global dearth of understanding on how the processes of resettlement may be intensifying vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation. It draws on fieldwork with displaced ethnic minority sex workers, discussions with local and international actors and a careful review of secondary sources to map the impacts of recent resettlements on ethnic minority women and girls in Lao PDR. During the course of this research, 12 of 54 “service women” surveyed in Luang Nam Tha Province were identified as displaced. In-depth life histories were then undertaken with six of the young women, in order to identify factors in vulnerability both pre- and post-resettlement, including the circumstances of displacement and how the process of dislocation has impacted: livelihoods; division of labour and workloads; consumerism; exposure to other cultures; and family/community relations. This presentation relates the preliminary conclusions of the study.

Into Bo Champon, Into
Champon & Assoc.

“Legal Problems Faced by Lao Immigrants in the US and an Attempt
to Understand Them”

This presentation will chronicle legal problems faced by Lao immigrants and refugees from the early years to the present time, will attempt to understand them, and suggest some solutions.

The most commonly known problems were immigration-related. Many problems were caused by unlicensed “lawyers”. Other problems include unsupported asylum claims and criminal convictions which ended with deportation orders. Unlike some Lao-American teenagers who just rather “hang out”, some more recently-arrived Laotians would do anything to obtain and

keep their “green cards” including risking their lives. One bright Laotian student was recently killed in an attempt to keep his green card.

The more common and less understood problems resulted from criminal law violations. Why do Laotians who French colonists used to call the “Bor Pen Yaang” (“It doesn’t matter”) people are among the group with the largest percentage in prison in the US? What was the main cause(s)? Was it the lack of education, the “O.J. Simpson Syndrome”, the “Guilty-Until-Proven-Innocent” Mentality, the lack of family support, incompetent counsel, the lack of a competent interpreter, or an interpreter acting as “counsel”? Will there ever be a competent interpreter for many Laotian children who had to wait in refugee camps for many years without any education, had to start earning a living performing manual labor upon arriving in the US, or shortly thereafter, with little or no opportunity to learn English, and can neither understand Laotian or English well enough to comprehend the intricacies of the American legal system? Although immigration “court” hearings are recorded, practically all other courts do not and rely on antiquate court reporters.

Other major problems include those resulted from loan co-signing, naming another person other than the intended beneficiary on his/her own insurance policy, putting someone other than the real owner on title to a property, and making some financial arrangements which was widely used in Laos including the funeral expense sharing group and the community loan group (“Houi”).

Bounheng Inversin, “Lao American Women in Theravada Buddhism”
MSW

Looking at the Buddhist history, males have dominated the Buddhist traditions, especially Theravada traditions for two and half millennia. Until now, despite theoretical equality, the two genders have been trained differently in the Buddhist traditions: men are educated to become scholars and teachers, women are trained to nurture and support them. Poor boys from the countryside, in Laos for example, gain access to valuable educational opportunities-- opportunities not similarly available to poor girls--when they join the Sangha community. By joining the order, males automatically gain status, receive education, and become eligible for positions within the elite and powerful ecclesiastical hierarchy. Men who disrobe, having gained a high quality education free of charge, are eligible to apply for posts in secular sphere, and may assume positions of considerable influence in the affairs of the communities. This paper will look into the history of women in Theravada Buddhism traditions. It will hopefully shed small lights on the question of what failed Maha Prajajati's idea of equal karma for equal spiritual opportunity.

FRIDAY, MAY 4

8:30AM – 11:30AM, TURQUOISE, 208F MU

RESEARCH AND ITS CHALLENGES: SHIFTING LANDSCAPES IN LAO

INFORMATION GEOGRAPHIES

MODERATOR: Larry Ashmun, UW-Madison Libraries, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Gregory Green, Cornell “Information Access in the Lao PDR”
University

Accessing information in the area encompassed by the Lao P.D.R. has been a difficult prospect throughout history, where geography, economics, and politics have consistently slowed the flow

of information through the countryside. Over the past thirty years, the communist government in Laos has attempted to advance its population's ability to access and utilize information in order to enlarge its small, educated human resource base and improve its economy. Despite this effort many barriers to access remain in place, such as an ineffective educational system, a weak publishing industry, poverty, censorship, and a deficient telecommunications system.

This paper examines the current state of the information economy in the Lao P.D.R., focusing on people's ability to access and use information to benefit their own lives. Specifically examined are the educational system, the book publishing industry, libraries and archives, and access to information through television, radio and the Internet. Each section also addresses the impact of poverty, gender bias, ethnic bias, and censorship on information access.

Rich Richie, Yale University “International and Thai Electronic and Media Resources in the Lao PDR”

The author will discuss the historic and recent impact of the Thai media and international information resource development on Lao society. In particular, he will focus on libraries and their provision of international and Thai-based information resources within the Lao PDR. Mr. Richie will also specifically discuss efforts by eIFL in Laos over the past several years. This independent foundation works to provide electronic information for libraries of transitional and developing countries through negotiation and advocacy on their behalf with commercial electronic library resource vendors. He will also discuss efforts by international organizations like the WHO and FAO who are working to provide agricultural, health, and environmental databases to libraries in Laos for use by researchers in these fields. Without the financial resources to provide expensive commercial databases to library users, Laos has long been cut off from easy access to such electronic resources. eIFL, the WHO, the FAO and library partners in the west have worked together with university and other research libraries in Laos to provide free and easy access to these resources.

Virginia Jing-yi Shih, “The International Lao Studies Digital Library: Challenges and Prospects”

In response to the growing interest of research and teaching in Lao studies and the need of convenient electronic access to the significant Lao research collections that are scattered in national libraries, research institutes, museums, archives, and personal libraries in Laos and beyond, there is an urgent need to create the international Lao studies digital library with interested institutions and individuals to share digital research materials and promote Lao studies in all subject disciplines worldwide.

This paper will focus on the challenges and prospects of creating the international Lao studies digital library. It will discuss the current challenges, explore new ideas, collaborative strategies, and innovative solutions to provide online access to Lao research resources and share ongoing Lao studies scholarship in an international forum. It is designed to encourage participation as well as to facilitate collaborative support from international scholars, faculty, government officials, administrators, museum directors, librarians, archivists, and representatives from funding agencies to discuss issues and concerns of common interest and assess the needs to create the Lao studies digital library as an international project that would benefit all.

Larry Ashmun,
University of Wisconsin - Madison “Kiu Katiam: A Village, a Priest, and a Photographer”

Kiu Katiam is a White Hmong village about 50 miles south of Luang Prabang city in Luang

Prabang province. From April 1950-late 1959 it was the home of Father Yves Bertrais, a French Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) missionary, who co-created the groundbreaking Hmong Romanized Popular Alphabet (RPA) in 1952. For the Hmong, who then had no real writing system of their own, the RPA became their first widely adopted script and is now used internationally.

In 1957, Joel Halpern, subsequently Professor Emeritus of anthropology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, then an American Junior Foreign Service Officer attached to the U.S. Operations Mission in Laos, visited and photographed Kiu Katiam on several occasions. These images are now part of the Joel M. Halpern Laotian Slide Collection (<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/SEAIT/subcollections/LaosAbout.html>) produced by the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center (UWDCC) as part of its SEAIT (SouthEast Asian images & Texts) Project. A particular highlight of the Kiu Katiam sub-collection has been the subsequent identification of many of the people and village features through collaboration with Fr. Bertrais and various Hmong individuals. As a result, the village of the 1950s and its inhabitants have come “to life”, as it were, after much time and many traumatic events affecting them.

Fr. Bertrais, now 85, is retired in France after more than 55 years of service to the Hmong – first in Laos until 1975, then with refugees in Thailand, later establishing a resettlement community in French Guyana, working out of the Philippines, and concluding at the Hmong Catholic Center in Lomsak, Thailand. His personal collection – a truly unique array of papers, diaries, letters, photographs, and publications, etc. – is – as I speak – on its way to being housed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and being digitized (as authorized) for addition to SEAIT. The Father Bertrais Collection should undoubtedly prove to be a very significant resource in studying about the Hmong, particularly for the period of the last half of the 20th century.

Mark E. Pfeifer, Texas “An Overview of Recent Developments in Hmong-American and Lao-
A&M -Corpus Christie American Studies Research”

This presentation will provide an overview of key developments in Hmong-American and Lao-American research over the past 5 years with a description of key issues addressed in recent research. The presentation will also identify realms of inquiry where more substantive research is needed. A brief summary of Hmong-American and Lao-American demographics, population, and socio-economic trends from the 2005 American Community Survey will also be provided.

Olivia Given,
University of “Forging Archaeological Partnerships in Laos”
Pennsylvania

In 2001, the Lao Department of Museums and Archaeology (DOMA) and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (UPM) came together to conduct a preliminary reconnaissance survey of prehistoric archaeological resources in northern Laos. The successful reconnaissance led to the establishment of the Middle Mekong Archaeology Project (MMAP), which began in 2005 with a full-scale archaeological survey of the “three tributaries” area just north of Luang Prabang.

In this paper, I would like to discuss MMAP as a case study illustrating the importance of partnership between Lao and non-Lao researchers in the field of archaeology. The MMAP team for both the 2005 and 2006 seasons was diverse along many axes, especially country of origin. The group consisted of Lao, Thai, American, Australian and British researchers. There was a lot to learn about each other as well as language and culture barriers to overcome.

The MMAP team joined forces to implement the latest archaeological survey methodologies, including GIS and other computer technologies that streamlined our flow of information from field collection to the laboratory to data analysis. Because the technology was new to many of us, our team had the experience not only of working together, but of learning together. Beyond the actual archaeology, the close relationships we were able to build between team members depended largely on this experience of training together in survey methodology and laboratory analysis and on our joint efforts to develop greater fluency with computers and with Lao and English language.

This kind of supplementary activity is often critical to the success of an archaeological project and, in the case of MMAP, it was of primary importance in helping us forge a collegial and lasting partnership, not only on a personal level but between our respective institutions, on which we look forward to building many future seasons of archaeological research. Cultivating a working partnership of this type is a necessary part of any successful international archaeological project in Laos.

FRIDAY, MAY 4

8:30AM – 11:30AM, MOHAVE, 222MU

COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS

MODERATOR: Elly van Gelderen, Department of English, Arizona State University

Kritsana Athapanyawanit, Mahidol University “A Tonal Study of Lao Dialects in Kanchanaburi Province”

Lao dialects are spoken not only around the Thailand-Lao PDR border and in the provinces of Northeastern Thailand but also in various provinces in the Central region of Thailand. This study investigates a Central Lao dialect, namely, Kanchanaburi Lao dialect. The focus is on tonal variation and change.

The study locations are Rangwan village, Tambon Thasao, Amphoe Thamaka and U-long village, Tambon Thakhanun, Amphoe Thongphaphoom. The data were collected from six native Lao informants from sixty to ninety years of age. Two word lists were used to study the tones of Lao dialects: the first word list includes eighty basic monosyllabic words adapted from Gedney (1972)’s word list and the second word list, taken from Phinnarat (2003)’s tonal study, is composed of twenty monosyllabic words from analogous set rearranged three times in random order. The words were pronounced and recorded onto Ic recorder. The data analysis was carried out with auditory stimuli to investigate the tonal mergers and splits and speech analysis instruments: the PRAAT 4.5.08 software program to identify the tonal characteristics.

Besides the ethnic names and the history of migration, the tonal patterns and development can be used to classify the Lao language into two subgroups: Pure Lao 1 (Vientiane) and Pure Lao 2 (Lao Long: Burmese Lao). The distinctive patterns of tonal mergers and splits of Pure Lao 1 and 2 are B1234, C1= DL123/ C234= DL4, and B≠DL.

However, they are different in A column: A1-23-4 and A1-234, of which in regard to tonal characteristics, tone variations and changes caused by Central Thai dialect contact are found.

The tonal patterns and characteristics of Pure Lao 1 are closely related to Vientiane Lao whereas they are similar to Southern Lao in case of Pure Lao 2.

Phinnarat Akharawatthanakun, Payap University
"Phonological and Lexical Variation and Change in Lao and Tai Dialects Spoken in Language Mixture Areas of Northern Thailand"

Language contact is an external factor which has an important role for motivating linguistic change. Some earlier works attempt to establish hierarchies of language-contact change, for example, to demonstrate that lexical borrowing normally precedes phonological borrowing. This paper aims to show an evidence of language variation and change motivated by language contact and to present that in some dialects, the lexical borrowing precedes the phonetic/phonological borrowing while in other dialects, it does not. Having studied the vocabulary, the consonants, the vowels, and the tones in five Tai dialects: Lao, Tai Nyuan, Tai Lue, Tai Khün, and Phuan, spoken in the language mixture areas of Nan Province in northern Thailand, it is found that there are different aspects of linguistic variation and change motivated by language contact. The findings reveal that the lexical borrowing is found in all of the studied Tai dialects and such borrowing is suspected to affect the phonetic/phonological variation in some dialects. The lexical borrowing in Lao which is influenced by Tai Nyuan, the majority language, is suspected to cause the accent of Lao spoken in the studied area to differ from the other 65 varieties of Lao dialects in the author's previous study (Akharawatthanakun 2004). This study can also be an evidence to prove that Lao people in the studied area migrated from Luang Prabang and speak Lao Luang Prabang accent, not Vientiane accent as they had been confused before.

Wilaisak Kingkham, Kasetsart University
"A Comparative Study of Tai-Phake and Lao-Wiang"

Tai-Phuan is a dialect language spoken in fifteen provinces which part of Thailand, whereas Tai-Phake is a minority language spoken in ten villages in Assam, India, and Lao-Wiang is a dialect language spoken in twenty-three villages in Thailand.

Phonology: compared with Tai-Phake and Lao-Wiang shows a reduction in the consonant and phonemes, on the other hand, they have preserved all the six tones in the three varieties. On the scale of similarities one finds that the three languages reject the syllabic structure: VC. The three languages do not allow certain aspirated consonants or voiced consonants to occur in the word-final positions.

Lexicon: In the analysis that follows, the researchers presented the fieldwise vocabulary. Identical forms and cognate forms are later taken up as similar vocabulary items. Next we count the different forms and finally we list words from Tai-Phuan and Lao-Wiang which either there were no corresponding Tai-Phake words.

John Hartmann, Northern Illinois U, & Vinya Sysamouth, Center for Lao Studies
"Comparative Tai Toponymic Analysis: Lao Village Names in Laos"

A few studies by Thai scholars have succeeded in demonstrating that village names in different regions in Thailand reflect features of the landscape. A preponderance of *Isan* toponyms with *ban* as headword are followed by descriptives such as by *nong*, *non*, *khok*, *na*, *don*, *huai*, *dong*, *hua*, *kham*, *tha*, *kut*, *wang*, *phon*, *ta*, *pa*, *law*, *nam*, and *thung*. All of these words describe local environments (Phaithun Piyapakon 1994). In a very real sense, the land is a map. The term *nong* 'pond' is highest in frequency because many *Isan* villages are situated near ponds, sources of water supply, indicating scarcity of water in a notoriously dry region. Second in occurrence is *non* 'mound' pointing to early settlement areas in which villages were built on elevations in the landscape but near ponds

and streams (Srisakra Vallibhotama.1989). In the western region of Thailand, a quarter of all village names involve references to water, a sign of a more watery milieu (Sujaritlak Deepadung 1998).

The purpose of this paper is to make a preliminary survey of Lao village place names in Laos and to compare the high-frequency descriptives there to those found in studies of other regions and countries settled by earlier Tai groups. Pranee Kullavanijaya (1996), in her comparative study of place names in Guangxi province and northeastern parts of Thailand, found many references to natural features in the landscape shared by both linguistically related speech groups. Many place names are identical in both countries, further demonstrating a common cultural practice, that of naming a new place after the name of the old. That is, one can surmise that Tai migrants from Guanxi into Thailand named their new village after their natal village, a practice followed as well by the Lue who migrated from Sipsongpanna into northern Thailand and Laos generations ago. In conducting a comparative toponymic analysis of Lao village place names, the history and direction of migrations of earlier Tai groups into Laos and parts of Southeast Asia is clarified as well.

Somsong Burusphat, Mahidol University,

“A Comparison of Shaped-based Numeral Classifiers in Tai-Kadai Languages”

Boualy Papaphanh, National University of Laos

“The origin of the Lao script: The search for its origins by following notable characteristics of its character form.”

FRIDAY, MAY 4

8:30AM – 11:30AM, VENTANA A, 226A

DYNAMICS OF BORDER COMMUNITIES: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS

MODERATOR: Frank Osanka, Independent Scholar

Siriporn Tongkhanarak, Khon Kaen University

“The Dynamics of Thai-Lao Border Communities in the Process of Globalization”

This research aims to analyze transition of the community on Thai-Lao border of Nakhonpanom province, Northeast, Thailand. It also investigates the management of transnational relations in the Thai-Lao border community under social and economic contexts relating to government policies and globalization. This study employs qualitative methodology as a key studied approach.

The study reveals that transnational relations in the Thai-Lao community have been maintained through ways of life of local people. These relationships based on sharing of ethnic history and settling of the communities on the border of Mekong River in the past. Although changing of historical and political contexts as well as policies regarding national relations and globalization affected transnational relations, the community has responded to and negotiated with these changes. Then, transnational relations have been continued through local practices and customs. Recently, the state policy and globalization are key factors influencing transition in border communities as well as transnational relations. As a result of policy and globalization, the emergence of the free border market, a special area where Thai and Lao people can do their business without having to pass immigration, has created not only the area of economic exchange; but also area of contestation where local custom is redefined and reconstructed

through relationships among people in the community, as well as between the community and the outsiders, especially the state.

Pittaya Fhusai, San Francisco State University “Emergence of Chinese Market in Muang Houay Xai, Lao PDR”

The purposes of this research are: 1) To study causes and factors related to the emergence of Chinese market in Mueang Houay Xai, Bokeo Province, Lao PDR. under globalization. 2) To study impacts and responses of government and local community on Chinese market. 3) To study guidelines of solving problem of government and people in local community under Chinese commercial extension. The findings are summarized as follows:

The emergence of Chinese market in Mueang Houay Xai, Bokeo Province, Lao PDR under social globalization brought about 4 factors: 1) Change of economic system in Lao PDR after Cold War's end 2) The economic weak point of Laotian society was Laotian people being hardly interested in business but in agriculture so Chinese merchants entered Laotian market easily 3) The importance of economic co-operation in GMS countries was Chinese merchants took advantage from R3E to transfer Chinese products and move unskilled labors to Mueang Houay Xai 4) The growth of international companies in China after Four Modernizations Policy was the cause of international companies invested in China because of low cost labors and big commercial market of China. Therefore, these international companies produced lots of goods and looked for new market to distribute goods such as Lao PDR. At the same time, the investment of international companies in China was the cause of select labor, especially skilled labors who will get lots of opportunities working in international companies. So, they can exist under competition condition in China. While unskilled labors were being oppressed and lost opportunity under that condition. Therefore, these unskilled labors have changed their role from being labours to merchants.

The study of government and community responses on Chinese market was here with summarized: Laotian government believed that Chinese market was more beneficial for local people than disadvantages to most people in community. Because goods sold by Chinese merchants were very cheap and suitable for lower income Laotian in the community. Therefore, commercial area management for Chinese merchants was used for selling and living. There was arrangement of Chinese merchants living in Mueang Houay Xai through making temporary admission paper and looking after them as Laotian citizen.

The consumers group was divided into 2 groups: 1) Consumers living in Mueang Houay Xai area were high income group who did not consume goods from Chinese market because of inadequate quality and low income group who preferred Chinese goods because of cheap price being suitable for their income, this group does not care about quality. 2) Consumers living in up country far away from Mueang Houay Xai area preferred Chinese goods as well because of cheap price.

The Laotian merchants had much effect from Chinese market because they all sold goods few and few. Because of Chinese goods competed for market share from them. Therefore, they decided to stop being merchants in Laotian market. Some of them turned to be farmer and laborers in factory.

Shih-chung Hsieh, National Taiwan University “Enterprise and Tourism--on Two Kinds of "International" in Luang Namtha, Northern Laos”

Luang Namtha is the biggest town in Northern Laos. The commercial activity is getting important due to immigration of Chinese and the development of international tourism. All alien people, culture, materials, language, enterprise and travelling processes can be defined as "international" in the sense of crossing national borders for some particular purposes. The international tourists, mostly from Western countries, came to Luang Namtha for gazing exotic

world, then re-create themselves in preparation of going back to structured working and living spheres in metropolis, or sacredized oneself during the experiences of infiltrating within a more "natural" and "traditional" world. Another international human movement was originally from the north, i.e. People's Republic of China. More and more Chinese opened guesthouses, restaurants, and retail stores in downtown Luang Namtha. At present, what we can see when walking on the streets in Luang Namtha on "international color" include Western people in biking or watching and Chinese in selling or performing commodity. In this paper, I would like to discuss those two kinds of international configuration appeared and developed in the northernmost petty city in Laos. By the means of this particular research, I believe that we are able to reach a deeper understanding on human activity from alien regions in this Socialist state at this very moment.

Maniemai Thongyou and
Dusadee Ayuwat, Khon Kaen University
“Social Networks of Lao Migrants to Thailand”

Khamsavath Chanthanvysouk, Fulbright Scholar, American University
“Export of Labour: A Contribution to Lao Development”

Over 65 million people worldwide have left their countries of origin in the hunt for remunerative opportunities (IOM, 2004). Labour migration is now of global importance, posing new challenges for all those involved. Border crossing between the Lao PDR and Thailand is not new. The villagers, especially those living along the Mekong, casually and regularly visit each other. The number of migrants to Thailand has been steadily increasing. The latest figure for Lao registered migrant workers in Thailand is 181,614 - mostly young people aged 16 - 24, 45 percent men and 55 percent women. This statistic does not include irregular migrants. It is estimated that there are currently 200,000 to 300,000 Lao workers in Thailand, more than 10 percent of the total Lao labour force.

The objective of the research was to study: (1) the main characteristics of migrant workers; (2) the factors influencing decisions to migrate; (3) the reasons workers choose to migrate illegally; (4) socio-economic impacts of labour migration on the Lao PDR; and (5) the government's responses on labour migration issues in an attempt to produce recommendations on how to benefit from migration. Various data collection methods: literature reviews, documents, interviews, site visits and observation were used. Research and analysis were carried out through: interviews 100 returnees in selected villages in Savannakhet and Champasack, and consultations with related government agencies and international organizations.

The findings are that there are “push” and “pull” factors in migration. The “push” factors are mainly the under-employment and poverty in the Lao PDR. The “pull” factors include the high demand for Lao labour in Thailand, a desire for consumer goods and interestingly a desire to acquire new experiences. Labour migration has significant impacts on migrants and their families, on their communities, and on the country as a whole. Remittances and earnings carried home benefit Lao rural and poor communities. Remittances normally go through informal channels, directly to individuals and families. There are no reliable estimates of the total value of such informal remittances. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, data show workers send or carry home 1,000 - 2,500 THB a month - an average of about US\$500 a year, or an estimated annual total US\$100 million. - making labour migration one of the Lao PDR's biggest exports. Remittances seem more stable than foreign direct investment (FDI), and go directly to the poor. They help improve living standards, generate other economic activities and

enhance school enrolment rates. However negative consequences of labour migration include the exploitation and trafficking of women and children. HIV positive cases are found among migrant workers, the highest-at-risk of all occupational categories. The government of the Lao PDR is recognising the potential benefits of labour migration. Therefore, closer attention has been paid to labour migration over the past few years. With good policies in place, labour exports will make a significant contribution to Lao development.

FRIDAY, MAY 4

1:00PM – 4:00PM, TURQUOISE, 208F MU

IA: HBV: THE UNTOLD STORY OF AN ASIAN EPIDEMIC (1:00PM – 2:15PM)

MODERATOR: Gregory Green, Cornell Libraries, Cornell University

Hepatitis B is a disease caused by infection with the hepatitis B virus (HBV). Infection with HBV can lead to cirrhosis of the liver, liver failure, and liver cancer. 80% of liver cancer worldwide is caused by chronic HBV infection. Hepatitis B is a silent killer that affects 1 in 10 Laotians. In fact, HBV is the leading cause of liver cancer--the number one cause of cancer death among Laotians. Our panel is dedicated to promoting awareness and education in the Laotian community about this deadly yet completely preventable disease. In addition, we will address advocacy efforts and community mobilization strategies.

Anh Tan, Stanford University “HBV and the Laotian Community”

Anh will focus on general hepatitis B education and the impact of HBV and liver cancer in the Asian community, and particularly among Laotians. The objective is to increase knowledge about HBV (including prevalence, modes of transmission, and prevention methods) in an effort to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with the disease.

Cynthia Nguyen, Stanford University “The Jade Crusade”

Kim will demonstrate how this major public health threat can be effectively addressed through the power of community outreach and education. She will share some of the Asian Liver Center’s most successful outreach models and what you can do to join the global Jade Ribbon Campaign.

Khammany Mathavongsy, Laotian American National Alliance “Unite Against HBV”

Khammany will discuss the current guidelines from the U.S. Center for Diseases Control and Prevention on Hepatitis B screening. The presentation will focus on advocacy efforts by a coalition of health advocates with the hope of initiating policy changes in the United States. He will also highlight policy implications of the two pending National Hepatitis B Act (H.R. 4550) and the Hepatitis B Bill (S. 3558) and emphasize the importance of civic engagement, community mobilization, and letter writing campaign of Laotian Americans in support of the development of a national plan for hepatitis B, in particular support for screening and immunization of high-risk populations, and an increase in federal research to improve hepatitis B prevention and treatment options.

IB: CULTURAL PRESERVATION THROUGH NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS
(2:35PM – 4:00PM)

MODERATOR: William Sage, Center for Asian Research, Arizona State University

Tracie Friedman, Khmu Student Foundation (KSF) “History and Background of Khmu New Years”

Khamphouang Lamasay, KSF “How Khmu People Prepare for the New Year Feast”

Bouakhay Phongboupha, KSF “Current New Years Practices in the US and Laos”

GROUP ABSTRACT: The Khmu Student Foundation (KSF) is a non-profit organization comprised of Khmu professionals, scholars, community leaders, youth and young adults throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. The mission of KSF is to unite and promote higher education among the Khmu people throughout the world.

For the 2007 Lao Studies Conference, KSF would like to participate in educating scholars and the community at large on Khmu history and culture. The panel discussion will focus on the unique aspects of the Khmu New Year Celebration both in Laos and the United States. Throughout history, the New Year celebration has been used to preserve the Khmu culture and customs.

Cultural Preservation through New Year Celebrations

Khmu people are the indigenous ethnic minority group of Laos. They are dispersed throughout the country and have been underrepresented at various levels. With no written language and little representation in the government, there has been a lack of documented history on the Khmu culture and customs. The Khmu people have found alternative methods to preserve their ancient customs and culture through story telling, ceremonies and other forms of verbal communication.

The research paper and panel presentation emphasize the unique aspects of the Khmu history, culture and traditions. For this discussion panel, **Tracie Friedman** will provide a history and background of the Khmu New Year celebration. The discussion will focus the significance of how culture, customs and tradition have been preserved.

Khamphouang Lamasay will present on “How Khmu people prepare for the new year feast”. He will focus on the preparation aspects, its meaning and symbols. **Bouakhay Phongboupha** will focus on the celebration as it is being celebrated today, both in the United States and Laos.

With careful examination, this presentation panel will demonstrate the richness of the Khmu culture, customs and history preservation aspect of the New Year ceremonies. The panel will achieve this through interviews with Khmu scholars, head villages, books, articles and videos.

FRIDAY, MAY 4

1:00PM – 4:00PM, PIMA, 218 MU

GLOBALIZATION

MODERATOR: Christopher Duncan, Department of Religious Studies, Arizona State University

Boike Rehbein, University of Freiberg “Globalization and Social Structure”

Laos is integrated into a new form of international division of labor, which leads to a reconfiguration of the Lao division of labor. This reconfiguration has consequences for Lao social structure. Old forms of division of labor and socially relevant “capital” (Bourdieu) become outdated, while others gain importance. Forms of division of labor and the distribution of capital vary according to historical, geographical and ethnic divisions. The paper enquires briefly into the divisions of labor that have evolved during Lao history. The second part looks at the reconfiguration of the division of labor within the framework of contemporary globalization, while the final section outlines the distribution of capital relevant for the reconfigured division of labor in contemporary Lao society.

Kristina Jonsson, Lund University “Health, Poverty, and Globalization”

Poverty, lack of human resources, rural underdevelopment and a weak health care system are serious problems in contemporary Laos. External funding constitutes a large part of the health care budget, and donors and NGOs play an important role in policy formulation and implementation. Also, Laos is exposed to globalisation processes that put the government under increasing pressure both in terms of governance and in terms of coping with increasing inequalities in society. The aim of the paper is to discuss the constraints of public policymaking in the field of poverty reduction and health in Laos in an increasingly globalised world.

Damdouane Khouangvichit, National University of Laos “Economic Transformation and Gender Relations in Rural Laos”

Since 1986, Laos has been engaged in a transition characterized by moving from “command” to “market” and towards the liberalization of cooperation with foreign countries. Foreign direct investment has increased and the country is affected by different processes of globalization. Since 1993, the Sepone Gold Mines’ Project of the Australian company Oxiana has operated in Vilabouly district of Savannakhet province. The operation of the gold mines has created a whole range of new forms of livelihoods in the local areas around the mines, which have led to changes in gender relations in the public as well as in the domestic spheres. This paper examines the character of these livelihood transitions in the local areas during the national transition period, with a special focus on changing gender relations as a result of the transformation of the economy.

Vinya Sysamouth, Center for Lao Studies “Lao National Policy on the Hydropower Sector: Its Implementation and Effectiveness”

As Laos opens its doors to foreign investors in an open market economy, the government has been actively looking for ways to increase its revenue sources. Among many of its development strategies, the government is currently focusing on a valuable natural resource, its rivers and streams, to generate electricity for export. The Nam Theun 2 dam project (NT2), which will be completed in 2009 at a cost of \$1.45 billion, is the single largest investment in the country. Before

its approval, pressure from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank prompted the Lao government to adopt a National Policy on the Social and Environmental Sustainability of the Hydropower Sector.

The National Hydropower Policy covered ten major points, including mandating environmental impact assessments for all hydropower projects, consultation with affected communities, compensation for all affected people and watershed management and conservation. The policy also required all existing hydropower projects to be brought into compliance with the policy by 2008. The purpose of the National Hydropower policy was to clearly define the role of the stakeholders in governing, managing and disclosing information regarding hydropower projects and also to apply the same mode of conduct, procedures and guidelines to existing projects. While the National Hydropower policy has good intentions and looks very impressive on paper, its implementation has been a challenge. This paper will cover various issues and concerns of the National Hydropower policy of Laos and its execution in relation to NT2 and other hydropower dams in the country.

FRIDAY, MAY 4

1:00PM – 4:00PM, VENTANA A, 226A MU

TEXTILES

MODERATOR: Leedom Lefferts, Faculty Emeriti, Drew University

Linda S. McIntosh, Simon Fraser
University

“Makers of Identity: Textiles of the Phuthai of Laos”

This paper examines the hand-woven textiles of the Phuthai ethnic group as markers of ethnic identity. If one asks a Phuthai woman to describe Phuthai dress, she will answer, “*sin mii lae suea lap lai*,” or a skirt decorated with weft ikat technique and a fitted blouse of indigo dyed cotton, decorated with hand-woven, patterned red silk material. Despite the use of synthetic dyes and machine-spun threads that are readily available in the local markets, many Phuthai women still grow indigo and cotton, and indigo-stained hands and the repetitious sounds of weaving are still found in Phuthai villages.

This paper focuses on the Phuthai living in Savannakhet Province, Laos, but they are also found in Khammouane, Bolikhamsay, and Salavan provinces of Laos as well as in Thailand and Vietnam. The Phuthai belong to the same ethno-linguistic family, the Tai-Kadai, as the Lao, who are the dominant ethnic majority of Laos, and the Lao and Phuthai share linguistic and cultural similarities, such as religious beliefs that combine Buddhism and shamanism. The Phuthai migrated south from Muang Thaeng (present-day Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam) and established their own political entity, Muang Vang Ang Kham, located in Vilabouly and Xepon districts of Savannakhet province. The Phuthai incorporated non-Phuthai elements of dress and textiles from neighboring groups, such as the Lao, into their style of dress.

However, despite the changes in political power pushing the awareness of a national Lao identity and the introduction of different styles of dress and textiles, hand-woven textiles continue to symbolize Phuthai ethnic identity. Governmental and other organizations have begun to promote the distinctive Phuthai culture to promote commercial enterprises, including tourism, and this external interest has also affected concepts of identity among the Phuthai.

Sandra Cate, San Jose State University

“Fashioning the Iu Mien in California and the Lao PDR”

In considering new and enduring contexts for the “self-fashioning” projects of the Iu Mien living in Oakland and Richmond, California, this paper focuses on their colorful and densely patterned needlework as one of those projects. As Iu Mien women have put away the “traditional” clothing that marked them as Mien in the Thai and Lao highlands, now wearing lowland-style *siin* there or Western clothing here, the central importance of their embroidery to ethnic identity and gender – as what Iu Mien women do and wear – seems to have faded. Yet, the continuing global trade in such needlework, the infrequent, but spectacular display of Iu Mien dress at the King Pan’s Birthday celebrations, and the discourse about their needlework by Mien women themselves, suggests its shifting, but still relevant function in the production of Mien culture. Following Mien women through celebrations and a journey back to Laos, this paper considers how their embroidery works to negotiate relations between diasporic Mien and family members remaining in the Lao PDR, their status in the Lao national imaginary, and their place within an expanded universe of humans, spirits, and ancestors.

Kristin V. Lundberg, University of Kansas

“Women, Weaving, and Well-Being: The Social Reproduction of Health in Laos”

Health is more than a biological phenomenon and demographic indicators. It exists in synergistic processes between biological actions and social constructs. To a large degree, health occurs because of the interactions of people and their commitment to relationships, institutions, and productive means, resources affected by historical, ideological, political, social, and economic forces. People create health. They maintain it. They reproduce it by passing to the next generation the knowledge and the skills by which well-being is assured. Health is not just about survival but also about maintaining a way of life. It takes resources and strategies to make health happen.

Lao handweaving exemplifies the social reproduction of health. Hand woven cloth in Laos is more than just a piece of fabric hung on a wall or an article of clothing. It embodies what happens in people’s lives. As women weave, so do they shape the well-being of their selves and their family. It is not just cash for which women weave. They are directly supporting their families but they are producing and reproducing the household in the process. Women weavers do so using resources of relationships, information, and material goods. My research examines these means by which women weavers socially reproduce health in Laos.

Rebecca Hall, UCLA

“Buddhist Banners of Northern Laos: Regional Interpretations and Change”

Lao Buddhist banners, mostly textiles handwoven by women for donation at local wats, are a relatively common sight in villages and towns in Laos. These banners typically reflect regional weaving styles, and thus differ in appearance from one location to the next. The differences in Lao banners are largely aesthetic, with variations in motifs, design execution, color, materials, and size. Such disparities reflect not only community and cultural preferences, but also women’s interpretations of Buddhist symbols, stories, and themes. However, in recent years, changes in Laos are affecting banner appearance and production. Modernization has resulted in the use of plain manufactured cloth for banners, without any inclusion of the motifs found on the handwoven ones. Another issue of modernization is the purchasing of banners at markets and thus the increasing uniformity and the loss of the regionality previously discussed. These banners are beautiful examples of both textile and Buddhist arts, although they have been rarely seen or discussed in previous literature. This presentation is an introductory, general survey focusing on Buddhist banners of northwestern Laos. It will show differences in appearance in banners of the area while emphasizing the similarities in purpose or meaning. I

will also discuss contemporary issues and provide a contextualization regarding the changes that may have developed as a result of current modernization and change.

Keomontree Duangbupha, Puang
Champa Project

“Lao Weaving of Luang Prabang”

Keomontree Duangbupha began collecting old art pieces in the late 1980s as a business venture. He soon realized that these pieces were the legacy of Laos' past and felt that they should remain in Laos to be studied and preserved, not sold or exported. In his proposed presentation, Keomontree will describe his collection of art artifacts, which includes textiles, lacquer, jewelry, and wood furniture. He will describe how the artefacts were acquired and the criteria to which he used to select the pieces. Then he will discuss some of the uses of the art pieces and their impact on contemporary LPDR. For example, old pieces can be a model for copies that can be sold to tourists and local retailers or they can be a source of inspiration, both technical and symbolic, for new creations. The history and meaning of the art pieces can serve as links between the past and present, playing an important role in preserving Lao artistic heritage.

Carol Ireson-Doolittle, Williamette
University, and Geraldine Moreno-Black,
University of Oregon

“Traditional Craft or International Business?
Vientiane Textile Company Owners and their
Weavers”

New and reorganized textile businesses emerged from the political, legal and social changes in the Lao PDR following Party endorsement of the New Economic Mechanism in 1986. Drawing on time-honored designs, motifs, and techniques perfected by master weavers of old, some business-oriented weavers sought to reach international markets. These events inspired the authors examine how one aspect of village women's work, weaving and textile production, is being transformed as it is integrated into the global capitalist economy. This paper draws on 2001 and 2006 information from four artistic textile companies located in Vientiane and selling their products internationally (and possibly a March 2007 four-company worker survey) to explore social relationships of and between weaver-owners, their markets, and their workers.

Some of the businesses studied may provide examples of successful business development empowering for business owners and enhancing economic activity in a least developed country – an unusual combination. These Lao businesses did not rely on credit for startup capital, were not adversely affected by the Asian financial crisis of 1997, appear to provide stable employment, and, in 1999, 2000, and 2005 had more orders than they could fill.

Existing scholarship on women textile producers for companies with international markets suggests that these workers may reap some benefits from their employment (e.g., more freedom from family control, a sense of modernity and style) or suffer some disadvantages (e.g., oppressive and unhealthy working conditions, questionable moral reputation). Initial data from the forthcoming worker survey will document some aspects of workers' experiences in these four companies.

FRIDAY, MAY 4

1:00PM – 4:00PM, MOHAVE, 222MU

CULTIVATION PRACTICES

MODERATOR: Jim Eder, School of Human Evolution and Social Change, Arizona State University

Linkham Douangsavanh, National Agriculture & Forestry Research Institute, Lao PDR “Food Security of Shifting Cultivation Systems: Case Studies from Luang Prabang and Oudomxay Provinces, Lao PDR”

The Government of the Lao PDR’s policy is to eliminate the cultivation of upland rice by means of ‘slash-and-burn’ cultivation and to replace it with more ecologically stable systems based on sustainable land use at the village and household level. The objectives of this policy are to alleviate poverty and to introduce more sustainable management of agricultural resources. In order to achieve these objectives, the government has initiated a program of relocation to upland ‘focal areas’ from which marketing, distribution and other services can be supplied, these being essential preconditions for effective agricultural development in these regions.

This diagnostic study has examined communal and household strategies for addressing food security issues and living condition of different ethnic groups in the study area, and has highlighted the main problems encountered in the pursuit of food security on the local level.

The objective of this study is to investigate food security in shifting cultivation systems in Luang Prabang and Oudomxay provinces. Within these two provinces Phonsay and Namou districts were selected for the research area. The two districts are the poorest districts in the Luang Prabang and Oudomxay provinces and two of ten priority poorest districts in the whole country. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for the study. The results of this study were reviewed against the sustainable land use systems strategy formulated from the Lao PDR policy. The study highlights both the benefits and stresses on household welfare, food insecurity conditions at the study areas, and interrelated problems of insufficient rice for household consumption. Finally based on these results the authors propose recommendations and future research indications.

Bounthong Bouahom, NAFRI, Lao PDR “Upland Agriculture in Transition: From Traditional to Intensification”

Lao farmers traditionally practice subsistence agriculture production and currently in the process of the transition to more intensive production. The subsistence-based agriculture provides food, fibre, medicine and other needs from cropped, fallow and forested land. In the past, shifting cultivation practices were sustainable with long fallow period of more than 15 years and low population densities. At present, the combined effects of increased population density, less land available, the shifting cultivation is not sustainable practice any more. As a consequence, emerging problems of weed infestation, soil erosion and declining yields are widespread, the upland farmers are relatively poor. Therefore, alternatives to shifting cultivation are needed to be tested, demonstrated for increasing production, food security and income generation. Investment booming such as rubber, maize, sugar cane production

It is observed that the present agriculture is in transition from traditional to intensification and commercialized production in some areas. The production systems is changing, the production groups of farmers are organized, the production of hybrid maize, rubber, sugar cane, large ruminant production such as cattle stall feeding and cattle farm are in progress. Foreign

Investment in agriculture is booming. The production systems indicated that the government policy in promoting commercial production is working on the ground.

The aims of the agricultural sector from 2006 to 2010, along with the food security, will emphasize on the marketable prioritized production promotion where the country has comparative advantages and competitiveness. Industry and services sector growth absorb Labor from agriculture sector. How to cope the challenges with less labor in agriculture and increasing demand for food. In the transition, along with the economical consideration, the livelihoods and environmental protection should be considered for sustainable production.

Sengpaseuth Rasabandit, NAFRI;
Prasit Jaisil, Khon Kaen U; Gary
Atlin, IRRI; Casiana Vera Cruz,
IRRI; Boonrat Jongdee, Ubon
Rachanthani Rice RC: & Poramate
Banterng, Khon Kaen U

“Rice Production in the Lao PDR”

The Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is situated in SE-Asia. It has an area of 236,800 km², some 75% of the country is hilly to mountainous. The elevation ranges from 130 to 2,818 m asl, annual rainfall is about 1,450 to 2,100 mm and an average temperature is 20°C to 32°C. The population is less than 6 million comprising 48 ethnic subgroups, and an annual growth rate of about 2.5%.

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of the economy of the Lao PDR. It currently contributes 51% to GDP and accounts for 85.5% of the total labor force. Among the agricultural sub-sectors, rice production is the single most important activity in the Lao economy. Most of the rice produced in Laos is consumed directly by smallholder producers and about 85% of production is glutinous rice. Consumption of Non-glutinous rice is increasing gradually particularly in the urban areas.

Therefore, the rice research is closely linked with national food production and focuses on the three main eco-systems rainfed lowland, rainfed upland, and irrigated lowland ecosystems. During the 1990’s there were nine Lao improved varieties which covered more than 50% of the rainfed lowland and 100% of the irrigated rice production area, was based on the adoption of improved production technology. The greatest constraint to rice production is the dependence on rainfed rice based system.

Over the past two decades total production has increased by doubled. Most of this increase has come from the rainfed lowland environment, increasing from 705,000 t in 1980 to 1,801,200 t in 2002. Despite a 8-fold increase in production from the dry season irrigated environment over the past 10 years (41,000 t in 1990 to 375,000 t in 2002) and the planned to achieve a total dry season irrigated area of approximately 150,000 ha by 2005. The wet season lowland environment will remain the most important rice producing environment for the foreseeable future. However, further improvements in production will depend on higher levels of inputs and further alleviation of some of the production constraints. The upland environment will become less important for rice production; as alternative, more sustainable technologies are developed to replace the current ‘slash and burn’ shifting cultivation practice.

More than 98% of the cropped area is rainfed, of which 69% is rainfed lowland rice. The main rice growing areas are generally infertile and drought is the only factor to be consistently ranked as more important than insect pests. The Lao government has targeted using this area for increasing production to achieve self sufficiency. In the 1999, the Lao PDR produced approximately 2.1 million tons, this is regarded as sufficient to provide national self-sufficiency. Laos should be looking at exporting specialty rices such as black rice, good quality aromatic rices and good eating quality rices in the near future as it is expected to produce surplus due to

increased area under irrigation, adoption of modern varieties and technologies.

S. Steve Arounsack, California
State U, Stanislaus

“Effects of Laotian Farmers' Insecticide Applications on
Herbivorous Arthropods and Natural Enemies Found on
Eggplants (*Solanum melongena*) in Fresno, California”

Scores of Laotian farmers grow eggplants (*Solanum melongena*) in Fresno, California; many of these farmers use broad-spectrum insecticides to control herbivorous pests. However, the use rates of these enclaves are largely unknown and the effects of their insecticide applications also remain unclear. Objectives of this study included (1) gathering information on Lao farmers' insecticide use patterns, and (2) examining the effects of Laotian farmers' insecticide use on herbivores and natural enemy densities under field conditions. In-person field surveys were used to gather information on the insecticide use patterns. For two growing seasons (2004-2005), a gas-powered suction device was used to collect arthropods on 5 sprayed and 5 unsprayed eggplant fields on a bi-weekly basis. Results indicated that Laotian farmers primarily used esfenvalerate, a popular pyrethroid, at double and sometimes triple the recommended label rate. A repeated-measured ANOVA revealed significantly higher aphid (*Myzus persicae*) infestations on insecticide-sprayed plots versus unsprayed plots. Densities of two prominent natural enemies, *Geocoris punctipes* and *Zelus renardii*, were significantly higher on unsprayed fields during the first year but not the second. In conclusion, Laotian farmers' high use of esfenvalerate decreased the densities of two important natural enemies while not significantly suppressing herbivorous arthropod densities. The use of such pyrethroids was not an efficient use of resources and could even be harmful to natural enemies. This scenario underscores the need for immigrant small-scale farmers to reevaluate their insecticide use and obtain proper pesticide application training.

FRIDAY EVENING EVENTS

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 4:30 – 5:30pm
“THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LAO REVOLUTION”
Dr. Vatthana Pholsena
Research Fellow, Institut d'Asie Orientale (IAO-CNRS), Lyon, France

KEYNOTE RECEPTION 5:30 – 6:30pm

**LOUAM MIT: LAO RECEPTION/DINNER, PERFORMANCES, AND FUN
WITH CENTER FOR LAO STUDIES, LAOTIAN AMERICAN NATIONAL
ALLIANCE & LAO HERITAGE FOUNDATION** 6:45-8:00pm
TWIN PALMS HOTEL (TICKETS ON SALE AT CONFERNECE)

FILM FESTIVAL 8:15-10:30pm
TWIN PALMS HOTEL

SATURDAY, MAY 5

SATURDAY, MAY 5

8:30AM – 12:00PM, VENTANA A, 226A MU

ISSUES IN TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY BUDDHISM

MODERATOR: Juliane Schober, Department of Religious Studies, Arizona State University

Thongkhoun Pathana, Lao
Community Ctr of RI

“The Lao Architecture History Part II: Neo-Modern
Buddhist Architecture in the West Interpretation”

A country needs its own architecture to show the national symbol and language of the nation. Through the Lao civilization was principal were based on Buddhism, and have been subject to some most profound forces of change and disruption in the last century. The nation was disability through the colonialism, war, communism, and as well as regional and global economy. The nation once known as a “Golden Age” of Lan Xang Kingdom, and now it’s lost the intrinsic value of the Lao national identity through art and architecture. The nation had found themselves restrained from the movement of free expression, free of thought and action from the Buddhist founding principal. The results Lao modern architecture have been returned to its root of the tradition model as it was founded by King Saya Sethathirath in 1560 at Wat Xieng Thong and Wat Phra Keo. The modern Lao architecture is expressing through preserving the tradition, while maintaining its form, but not limited through the materials.

Buddhist temples and monasteries show how the Lao civilization was built based on the Buddhism. The history of Lao is part of the history of Buddhism for more than 700 years. The Buddhist temples and monasteries across Laos had a deep influence in the Lao arts, sculpture, painting, traditions, learning, and the character of the Lao people. It has the Buddhist philosophy of both thinking and acting, “Right of Thought and Action”, according to the Buddha’s Teaching Doctrine. In short, it is part of their life everyday. The influence of Buddhism over her people can be seen in all aspects about the Lao people and their history and culture, and their faith. In doing these buildings fulfill the purpose of architecture, which is to encourage and support Buddhism by building and maintaining monasteries, by giving the materials to the temple and facilities for performing religious duties and educational activities.

The most essential programs to the function of the Buddhist Temple that I have investigated in its’ function in terms of present time and place (modern vs. traditional). There is a need to unifying the separate factions existing within Laotian Buddhist community, to take pride in Laotian community by identifying with this place of *religious center*, and to give Laotian descendants a place to relearn their heritage, culture and religion. The temple can be utilized as an educational resources for Laotian people to search for their roots and take a pride in their culture and costumes; a place to unit all Laotian communities and extended families; to uphold the Laotian arts and crafts; to counsel and assist families with experiencing emotional, spiritual, and psychological; community services; to promote caring for strengthening family’s values; and preparing youth to challenge the future by supporting youth’s education endeavor. This is my exploration from the meanings in one’s culture and in particular, one’s religious needs in terms of a contemporary issue

Sataya Saichur, Rajabhat
Valayaalongkorn U & Somprsong
Chaonarai, Burapha University

“Sasanabanpot Wat Phu”

Niphasone Souphom,
Lao Heritage Foundation

“Luang Prabang's Temples: Why are They Important?”

Luang Prabang is a world heritage site. It was the old capital of Laos or what was then known as the Kingdom of Lan Xang. Luang Prabang is also a home to many historic temples. In fact, there were 65 known temples according to Tiao Khammanh Vonggothrathana in his book, *Thamnan Wat Luang Prabang, or the History of Luang Prabang's Temple*. Upon close analysis of the above book, one will find that these temples not only record the names of the temple, who built them, where they were built and why they were built, but also recorded the history of Lan Xang. It recorded events that occurred during the time that the temples were built or about the Kings who ruled during that time. It also shaded lights into the traditional religious ceremonies and religious history of Laos. The temple itself records many folklores, legends, and stories on its temple walls and ceilings. Upon closer look, one will find that the temple of Luang Prabang is a door into Laos' culture, religion, and art.

Karma Lekshe Tsomo, University of
San Diego

“View from the Margins: Buddhist Women and Religious
Authority in Laos”

This paper explores the roles of Lao Buddhist women and their relationship to male-dominated Buddhist institutions in the socio-political context of contemporary Laos. Aside from brief references to women's supportive roles as donors of the cloth that enables men and boys to ordain as monks and novices, Buddhist women are rarely mentioned in historical accounts or scholarly studies on Laos. Even today, despite volumes of new research about women in other Buddhist traditions, virtually nothing has been written about the religious lives of women in Laos. This lacuna is surprising in view of the fact that lowland Lao society is predominantly matrilinear and matrilocal.

A closer examination of the nature of Lao Buddhist tradition and recent political events is revealing, however. Since the fourteenth century, *bhikkhus* (fully ordained monks) have dominated every aspect of Buddhism in Laos, as in other Theravada Buddhist societies. These patriarchal patterns and the absence of a lineage of full ordination for women help explain the virtual invisibility of Buddhist nuns and laywomen throughout most of Lao history. In addition, Laos has been in a state of war and recovery for the past forty years. Overshadowed by the turmoil of strafing bombings, internecine conflicts, political upheavals, environmental degradation, and economic transition, women's roles in religion have not been a central concern.

Throughout the years of war, political change, and post-war reconstruction in Laos, Buddhist women have continued their devotions and their traditional practices of offering alms and other necessities to monks. A minuscule percentage has opted to renounce household life and become *maekhao*, women who shave their heads, wear white robes, and observe eight precepts. As female religious practitioners with vows of celibacy, such women live as nuns, but do not have the status of fully ordained nuns (*bhikkhuni*), because Laos, like other Theravada countries, lacks a lineage of full ordination for women. Many *maekhao* seek ordination later in life, after marriage and family, and most have received little formal education. *Maekhao* have limited access to the Buddhist studies programs available to monks. Instead, they learn Buddhism informally from individual monks and by attending periodic meditation courses.

Maekhao live at the margins of Lao society, both spatially and economically. Their simple dwellings stand literally at the margins of monks' temple compounds. Disallowed by custom from going for alms like the monks, they receive the monks' surplus food in exchange for cooking,

cleaning, and performing menial tasks for them. The typical patterns of social marginalization are observable in the *maekhao*'s low social status, poor self-estimation, and feelings of powerlessness. Most are unable or unwilling to articulate a clear strategy for their own social advancement, declaring that their goal is the achievement of spiritual liberation (*nirvana*). As closely linked as these women are to their own personal networks, they lack adequate housing, nutrition, education, and healthcare, which hampers their ability to serve as a spiritual resource for other members of society.

A study of the *maekhao* is significant not only because these women have never before been studied before, but also because it documents a group of religious women that has survived and is growing, despite multiple levels of marginalization. To some extent, in terms of geography and a degree of self-imposed isolation, Laos as a nation may be viewed as politically, economically, and religiously marginal. Within Lao society, monastic communities are marginal, self-consciously detaching themselves from family life, normative social roles, and politics. Further, within the religious establishment, the *maekhao* are marginal, being excluded from the Sangha (monastic community) by virtue of their gender. The *maekhaos*' response to gender discrimination and multiple levels of marginalization has been to develop sub-communities that are spiritually independent, while being economically and religiously dependent. The thesis of this paper is that, by embracing their marginal status, the *maekhao* have established a spiritual independence consonant with their goal of spiritual liberation. Based on fieldwork conducted in Laos from 2002-2007 and in San Diego from 2001, it challenges many assumptions about the roles that women and men play in contemporary Theravada Buddhist communities.

Alan Potkin & Catherine Raymond, Northern Illinois University “Restoring Phralak-Phralam (the Lao Ramayana) to Vat Oub Mong, Vientiane”

The Phralak-Phralam wall paintings lost with the 2000 demolition of the former main image hall at Vat Oub Mong (“VOM”) in Vientiane, had fortunately been systematically photographed, videoed, and scanned before and during their destruction. The proposed project would replicate the 1938 Thit Panh murals exactly and completely on the walls of the replacement structure, facilitated by a powerful but simple projector cartooning technology which was originally developed at an earlier AFCP site nearby. Other project elements would include the design and distribution of locally-printed fine arts posters; inexpensive editions of the Phralak-Phralam text, and online and physical (CD- and DVDROM) digital publications that would be benchmarks of computer museology.

SATURDAY, MAY 5

8:30AM – 10:30AM, TURQUOISE, 208F MU

MUSIC (10:15AM – 12:00PM)

MODERATOR: Ted Solis, School of Music, Arizona State University

Sakunpan Photijak, University of Hawaii at Manoa “The Development of Mohlam Performance of Isan in the Twentieth Century”

“Mohlam” is an art form that has persisted since ancient times among Tai-Lao ethnic groups living throughout mainland Southeast Asia. In this study, however, “Mohlam” refers to a folk drama of people living in the Northeast of Thailand. Today, the Mohlam is considered a symbol

of ethnic and cultural identities of the Isan people. This study is an attempt to trace the development of the Mohlam performance in the twentieth century. The study is structured into two sections; the first provides a brief geographic, cultural, and ethnic background of the Northeast, and traces the origin of the Mohlam performance categorizing its typology. The second and major part analyzes the development of the tradition. This section focuses on the Mohlam performed for entertainment purpose, to analyze the factors that influence its development. These include the number of performers, themes, costumes, dance movements, musical accompaniments, stage types and groups of audience.

The findings reveal that the Mohlam's origins are associated with the supernatural, and the worship of a spirit called "Than." Mohlam was first performed for ritualistic worshipping, and detecting causes and cures of illness. From a different perspective, Mohlam probably developed from manuscripts dealing with the functions of mediums, and the transforming of religious principles and communal ethos. Mohlam could also have developed from Isan courtship traditions, where young men and women converse in "wise" prose. The performance is divided into two main categories. The first is the Mohlam performed for spiritual purposes, and the second is Mohlam performed for entertainment purposes. The latter category embraces Mohlam Phun, Mohlam Khu, Mohlam Moo and Mohlam Cing.

During the twentieth century, the Mohlam tradition adjusted itself according to various dynamics, chiefly influenced by The Li-ke and Lukthung, art forms from central Thailand. Mass media and technology, such as radio, television and other visual aids have reinforced these changes. Lately, the politics of folk Thai culture have played a key role in preserving the Mohlam. Through the Thai government promotion, education clearly taking an important role in Mohlam's survival as many artists' lives and works were taken into account.

Mohlam's terminology has emerged during its development, from a solo chanter into a group of performers. This process underwent a devolution, however, as there was a need to decrease the amount of performers for various reasons. As an outdoor performance; the Mohlam's stages have also changed according to this latter adjustment, as well as changes in the styles of music accompaniments, costumes, and also the themes of performance in each period. Khean was the main music accompaniment in former times. Later on, however, western music instruments became more important in running the performance. The costumes also developed from illustrious traditional dress to more lustrous costumes. Likewise, Mohlam's themes were originally mainly about reciting folktale to transmit communal ethos and religious principles. Later, the themes of the performance became a reflection of contemporary lifestyles. Dance movements also change from traditional forms called "Fon" into a mixed western dance movements. The audience of Mohlam has also widened in term of geographical space, but the main ethnic group who consuming Mohlam continues to be mainly of Isan ancestry.

Priwan Nanongkham, Kent
State University

"From Rice Fields to Media Capitalism: Lao Instrumental
Music in the Context of Change"

Lai, as in *lai phu tai*, refers to instrumental music, while *lam*, as in *lam khonsawan*, refers to vocal music. The former focuses on the sound of the instruments alluding to a programmatic theme of nature and imitating a complex song line while the latter focuses on the voices within the beauty of poetic texts. Perhaps the two categories are not really distinguished as separate entities in Lao musical culture. Vocal music has strongly dominated and instrumental music is less significant to the Lao people. Obviously, most instrumental repertoires come from melodic vocal music and involve playing the instrument without the singing part. In the old days, instrumental music functioned as informal entertainment at home, in a field hut, at temple fairs, and for courtship, and self-entertainment among young male amateur musicians commonly playing the *khaen*, a bamboo mouth organ and *phin* a plucked lute. Nowadays, due to industrialization, capitalism, and globalization, this kind of musical practice has languished, and it seems as if the music itself has died out of the society. Furthermore, vocal music has easily been adopted into popular form

while instrumental music has not really appeared in a popular context although there are recordings available. This paper will discuss Lao instrumental music focusing on ensembles, survival, status, forms and functions in the context of the current media environment in Northeast Thailand

Kawisippawit Mueangchan, “Wisdom for Creating Molam Rueang To Klon of Khana Mahasarakham University Heang”

Molam rueang to klon (singing in Isan verses and in story-telling) is a cultural heritage of *Isan* people (Northeasterners). It plays roles in giving knowledge and entertainments,

and adhering culture. *Molam rueang to klon of Khana Haeng Kho Kham* Band won the second award in the annual *Molam Rueang To Klon of Thailand* Championship Festival in 2005 at Research Institute of Isan Arts and Culture, Mahasarakham University. This band is a *khana molam* that creates performance art using wisdom of the band personnel. This study aimed to examine wisdom in creating *molam rueang to klon of Khana Haeng Kho Kham* Band in terms of writing verses (descriptions, dialogs, and singing) ; performing *molam rueang to klon* ; and music playing, songs and dancing of dancers ; and to investigate culture in terms of society and economy

of this *molam* band. The study was conducted using the qualitative research method by means of document study ; and field study using observations, interviews, and group discussions.

Informants

included : artists who founded the band, artists who acted, people involved, and key informants with a total of 35 persons, obtained using the purposive sampling technique. The analysis results were presented by means of a descriptive analysis.

The findings were as follows :

In writing verses, there are 3 forms of *molam rueang to klon* : descriptions, dialogs, and singing verses. Most forms of them are in verses. There are prosodies of writing in the “*Rai Isan*” (*Hai yao*) form. Verses for singing in general have 5-20 syllables in each line. *Kham kai* or rhymes have the last syllable of each line *kai* (rhyme) with one of the syllables in the next line. The number of lines is not limited. The language used most is the Thai *Isan* dialect (Lao). The others are Central Thai and foreign languages. In some lines there are *Pali* verses appearing at the beginning of the line of the singing verses. The words used included modifying words, repetitive and phonemic reduplication words, synonymous compound words, vowel rhymes, and consonant rhymes (alliterations). The writing styles used is comparisons. Singing verses are about didactic tales. Each tale has only one theme. Each plot is not complicated. There are 2 major characters to develop the story. Scenes are the way of life of Isan people and scene of abstract circumstances. Beautiful words are used to transfer emotions in according with the role according to the literary motifs. *Molam* can reflect cultural images in terms of values and beliefs in *hit sip song* (traditions to observe in each of the 12 lunar months of the year) of Isan people. The author used to be monkhood, hero, *molam* teacher, *molam* performance director, and writer of *molam* verses for other *molam* bands framework of *hit sip song* traditions.

In *lam rueang to klon* performance, artists who perform *molam* are selected by considering their abilities to add words in singing, singing melodies, styles of performance, and responsibilities. Singing styles of this *molam* band are *RoiEt* style, *Sarakham* style, and *Kalasin* style. The others are additional styles and singing country songs while changing scenes together with additional folk dances by dancers. In performance of *lam rueang*, *khaen* is the major musical instrument to play in *sut sanean sing* melody. Rehearsals are conducted with taping and recording in the studio. Full rehearsals are conducted before the end of Buddhist Lent. They have performance tasks during the festival of Buddhist Lent to the Festival of merit-making. *Molam*

singers wear both conventional clothes or costumes and clothes worn according to the story contents. The performance begins at 9 o'clock at night. Then *lam rueang to klon* performance begins. At 5.30 o'clock in the morning the performance ends with goodbye-lam singing.

In performance of music, songs, and dancers, country-side music band plays according to international music scores. The performance of dancers is dancers are dances, reviews in supplement to country-side songs and country-side *molam* songs, and folk performance emphasizing cultural contents. The stage, lights, colors, and sounds are in the model of concert *molam rueang to klon*. The performance in all aspects must have rehearsals during the period of Buddhist Lent and before the day of performance show.

For cultural conditions in the social and economic aspects, the major structure is the group of the band founders. The next structure includes the group of artists who founded the band, major artists, artists in general, and groups of co-businessmen. Besides, there are the divisions of stage, lights, colors, and sounds; the section of offices of *molam* business. There are relationship among groups in the forms of relatives, friends, employees, and the employer. They help one another like brothers. The wage per night is approximately 40,000-80,000 Baht depending upon the distance of traveling. During the last performance season in 2005-2006 there were 40 nights of performance. The return wages per night depend on functions and abilities. The incomes all the performance season were an average of 80,00 Baht for each heroine; verse writer and performance director, major artists, and musicians for 40,000 Baht each. Major and additional dancers received 14,000 Baht each. Ordinary dancers received 10,000 Baht each. However, the *molam rueang to klon* manager, after different expenses, received 320,000 Baht. Other occupations of this band member are rice farming, trade, workers, and independent artists. The manager is a *molam* artist by birth. She has been in this cycle since she was 16 years old. She used to be successful in restaurant business and *Isan Ramwong Sing*. At present she works as the full time manager.

In conclusion from the study findings, the following are general recommendations :

- (1) There should be local curricula and development of learning resources concerning wisdom of creating *molam rueang to klon*. And (2) both state and private agencies involved should promote *molam* artists in the social and economic aspects for conservation and adherence to *Isan* cultural heritage in the future.

Terry E. Miller, Kent State University

“The State of Lao Music Research: One of Ethnomusicology's MIAs”

Ethnomusicology grew to maturity as a fieldwork centered discipline in the 1960s and 1970s. Research in many parts of mainland Southeast Asia, however, was limited by the wars until after 1975, but even then few chose Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, or Burma as the focus of their studies. In particular, Laos attracted little attention, drawing only a few researchers to its vast variety of musics. Coupled with challenges in transportation, terrain, languages, and finances, research into music in Laos remains formidable. Most of the nation's regional musics, including those of upland minority peoples, remain unstudied or understudied. Some have only been recorded by scholars during short visits, preventing observation of and writing on the broader functions of the music in Lao society.

While the field of ethnomusicology has continued to expand in scope and numbers, there has been a decided shift away from geographically centered fieldwork and descriptive studies towards issue-driven studies interpreted by numerous post-modern theoretical paradigms. Similarly, few scholars now study “traditional” music, preferring instead the musical results of modernization and globalization and their hybrid, often transnational and popular forms. The majority of papers on mainland Southeast Asia at recent ethnomusicology conferences have focused on such musics, often in diasporic communities. Some of them emphasize media and internet sources over fieldwork.

The likelihood of greater numbers of ethnomusicology students developing interests in Laos appears to be slim for these reasons. And yet it remains true that most Lao “traditional” forms of music are yet to be documented and studied. There is also little prospect that Lao researchers professionally trained in ethnomusicology will appear anytime soon. Similarly, no national archive of musical materials for Laos yet exists.

This paper will assess the present state of knowledge, recognize the few active Lao music researchers, and describe the main tasks that remain.

SATURDAY, MAY 5

8:30AM – 11:30AM, MOHAVE, 222MU

IA: MORPHOLOGICAL PROCESSES AND PRAGMATICS (8:30-9:20)

MODERATOR: John Hartmann, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures,
Northern Illinois University

Souvanny Sisaveuy, “The Word Formation in Modern Lao Language”
Independent Scholar, Lao
PDR

This paper deals with the sources of Lao terms particularly how to form the new Lao words which are being used in modern Lao language especially in terms of technical and official terminology. The Lao technical and official terms can be formed by four ways in accordance with characteristics of the Lao language sources. For examples:

1. Formed by an original Lao word; for instance: fay+faa=fayfaa, tao+ob=tao ob, suak+khuay+khaad=khuaykhaad and so on.
2. Borrow words from other languages; such as fer,bibun,yo... these are from Vietnamese word. kao i, thuay,yiho... these are from Chinese word, technique, technology, chauffeur...these are from French word, technology, computer, percent ...these are from English word.
3. Formed by an original Lao and a Pali root, such as: bala+muang=phon lamuang, ratha+thay=rotthay and so on.
4. Formed by a Pali or Sanskrit root which consists of four kinds:
 - 4.1 Combination word (samaasa), such as: rattha+pala=ratthabaan, kamma+pala=kammabaan, pavatti+sastra=pavadsaad and so on.
 - 4.2 Joining words. such as: sukha+abhipala=sukhaaphibaan, pasa+adhipataya=pasaathipatay, bala+amaya+phalaanaamay and so on.
 - 4.3 Shorten words; such as: candane+jato=chanthanik(Vientiane citizen),samanassa+apaccam=samanero=saamanen(novice) and so on.
 - 4.4 Suffic determination words (Namakita) are the words determined by suffic, such as: naayok, thaayok, kammakaan,kammakone and so on.

The concept of developing a modern Lao term is based on three steps: firstly, looking for a Lao original term, secondly forming a new term by Pali or Sanskrit root and thirdly borrow a technical term from others.

Varisa Kamalanavin, “The Structure of Punchlines in the Lao Joke Texts”
Thammasat University

This paper discusses the nature of joke texts in Lao. The focus is on the strategies in which the punchlines of jokes are constructed. Ninety-two jokes are collected from Vannasin magazine

that were printed from 1995 to present (2006). The analysis of punchline structures follows some ideas that were put forth in Hetzron (1991). Followings are the structures of punchlines that are found in the text data, from the highest frequency to the lowest; (1) unexpectedness, (2) language, (3) crescendo, (4) opposition, (5) misunderstanding, (6) relative-becoming-absolute values, (7) retro-communication, (8) culture, and (9) reader's imaginings. Others that are least found (and are not discussed in other literature, except "internal contradiction",) are (1) sarcasm, (2) metaphor, (3) swear words, (4) internal contradiction, and (5) implication.

IB: CONTESTED ROLES OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE (9:50-11:30)

MODERATOR: John Hartmann, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures,
Northern Illinois University

Frederick Jason Diller, "New Literacy Practices Among the Prai"
Arizona State University

This paper presents an ethnolinguistic study of the literacy practices of the Prai people of Northern Thailand and Laos. Specifically, my research focuses on understanding the current conceptions and uses of literacy for those Prai who have learned to read Prai. In recent years linguists have developed a Prai orthography based on the Thai alphabet and written a set of primers. Presently, there are 21 adult Prai language readers out of the estimated 30,000 Prai living in both Thailand and Laos.

Prai readers have adapted new literacy practices to their own local context in culturally meaningful ways. The ways that the Prai use literacy are rooted in their conceptions of identity and are influenced by contact with the more dominant Thai language. The Prai experience negative social positioning from the dominant Thai but use new literacy practices to change positioning and to construct Prai ethnic group identity.

Understanding how the Prai conceptualize literacy and use new literacy practices gives insight into issues of literacy development for other ethnolinguistic minority groups seeking literacy development in Southeast Asia. In my research, I employed methods of data collection and analysis common to ethnography including participant observation, individual interviews, and document analysis.

Kari Jordan-Diller, "Contested Definitions of Culture among the Prai"
Arizona State University

My paper examines the contested definitions of culture among the Prai of Phae Klang village and the Thai schoolteachers at the Phae Klang village school. There are an estimated 30,000 Prai living in Northern Thailand and Laos. In Thailand, the Prai attend local government schools where they learn to read and write Thai, the official language of Thailand.

Investigating local definitions of culture is central to addressing the education needs of the Prai community. Currently, the government schools take very little account of Prai cultural values when educating Prai children. As a result there is a lack of support for education on the part of Prai parents, and a frustration at the poor performance of Prai students on the part of Thai teachers. Understanding and identifying what specific aspects of Prai culture are important for the community to maintain can help in creating a curriculum that incorporates their values. In addition, it could be helpful to Thai teachers by letting them know how best to motivate Prai students to succeed in school and involve their parents in their children's education.

Christine Elliot, "The Role of English in Laos"

University of Wisconsin-
Madison

For much of the 20th century Western languages have played a significant role in Lao affairs. Vestiges of the colonial French education system are still present today, and the French government continues to promote French in Laos as part of the greater “francophonie.” During the 1970s and 80s hundreds of students and teachers were trained in Russian and other Eastern European languages. Yet now, as Laos moves into the 21st century, it is English that is playing an expanding role in Laos’ economic development and integration into Southeast Asia and the world community.

This paper briefly examines the complex indigenous linguistic diversity that characterizes Laos and then traces the history of exogenous “foreign” (Western) language education in Laos during the 20th and into the 21st century - particularly the growing role of English. The learning and use of English in Laos appears to be primarily instrumentally motivated – i.e. with the goal of furthering education or gaining or retaining employment. In addition, as elsewhere in Southeast Asia (and the world), English is increasingly becoming a language of wider communication – not only with native-English speakers, but equally or more importantly with others whose first language is not English.

Eric Brown, Independent Scholar “Intergenerational Language Loss in a Heritage Speaker of Lao: A Look at Lexical Loss and L2 Borrowing”

Common cross-linguistic features that have been discovered in heritage language research are the loss of vocabulary and grammatical complexity in the speaker’s first language. As a speaker’s lexical inventory declines, he or she relies on the secondary language’s vocabulary to fill in the gaps. In this study, several conclusions are drawn about lexical borrowing based on the mixed language utterances of a heritage Lao speaker. It was found that in cases where lexical information is not available to the heritage speaker, the borrowed L2 lexemes are adapted to a specific L1 prosody, but continue to utilize the L2 phonological inventory. An independent tone system, drawing from a generalization of L1 multisyllabic borrowings, is developed based on the adapted prosodic features. Although further study with additional subjects is required to confirm this analysis, the work done here provides a baseline for further research in heritage language and theoretical Tai-Kadai linguistics, and utilizes some recently developed methods in heritage language research.

SATURDAY, MAY 5

8:30AM – 11:30AM, GOLD, 203N & S MU

HEALTH AND PHARMACEUTICALS

MODERATOR: Hjorleifur Jonsson, School of Human Evolution and Social Change, ASU

Melanie Rosenberg, Leila Srour, Louisa Mackenzie, Rosemary Quirk, Jon White, Cindy Chu, Bryan Watt, Kristine Torjesen, Hakon Torjesen, & Karen Olness, Health Frontiers; Som Ock Kingsada & Sing Menorath, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Lao PDR

“Improving Health Care in Laos through Post-graduate Training of Lao Physicians”

Health statistics in Laos remain among the worst in Asia. Infant and child mortality has begun to improve but continues to be unacceptably high, and adult chronic diseases are rising. Health Frontiers has worked with the Lao Faculty of Medical Sciences since 1991 to help reduce the

morbidity and mortality of the people in Laos through improved training of Lao health professionals.

In 1997 a Pediatric Residency Program was initiated, the first post-graduate training program in Laos. At that time, fewer than ten pediatricians were practicing in a country with 3 million children. Since then, 33 new pediatricians have been trained and work in 11 provinces. The Internal Medicine Residency Program followed and has already graduated 10 internists. The goal of these training programs is to improve health care for children and adults in Laos by increasing the number of physicians that can provide high quality service, education and research in their fields. In addition, these highly trained physicians will be able to contribute to improving undergraduate and post-graduate medical education through teaching and mentorship.

Residents complete three-year training programs based on the Western model. Supervised clinical rotations are completed in Vientiane teaching hospitals which utilize local resources for patient care, as well as at Khon Kaen University in Thailand where important subspecialty training is provided. Didactic teaching based on a locally developed curriculum is provided by expatriate volunteers and increasingly by Lao physicians. Residents are provided with access to medical literature and internet resources, participate in journal clubs, attend workshops by local and international experts, and receive English language instruction. All of these activities serve to increase their ability to access the most current medical information and apply it to their daily practice.

In the past, Lao medical school graduates were limited to working as general practitioners and had little or no access to ongoing educational activities. Because medical education is considered a life-long pursuit, Health Frontiers has taken a leading role in supporting and facilitating Continuing Medical Education activities for Lao physicians. Annual conferences in Pediatrics and Internal Medicine provide unique opportunities for program graduates and other Lao physicians to continue learning and to ensure that they are following the most current treatment recommendations. These activities also foster pride, collegiality and confidence in their profession.

Recent surveys of the residency programs' graduates reveal that this training resulted in increased medical knowledge, improved diagnostic and treatment skills, and increased professional activity. A network of colleagues was developed which facilitated consultation with other professionals. Postgraduate training increased the professional standing of graduates both in Laos and internationally. Ongoing evaluations are underway to assess the impact of residency training on Lao physicians and their health care system.

Bethany Elkington, University of Illinois at Chicago; Bounhong

Southaung, Kingmany Sydara,

Somsanith Bouamanivong & Onevilay Souliya, Ministry of Health, Lao PDR;

and D. Doel Soejarto, UIC at Chicago

“Pali Texts: A Hidden Source of Information on Medicinal Plants”

Old documents in the Lao PDR, written on palm leaves and mulberry tree paper, were recorded by Buddhist monks as far back as the 15th century. Some of these scripts contain information on medicinal plant uses. In this study, selected scripts were translated for indications of disease treatment, specifically malaria, as an attempt to find leads for drug discovery. Malaria has been documented in Asia for thousands of years, but no indication has been found that there was one single name for ‘malaria’ in the

scripts. Therefore, this study has focused on finding indications of malaria by one of its most indicative symptoms, fever.

Keonakhone Houamboun, T.
Atxayavong, B. Phimmasone, S.
Simmavong, & K. Sinhsayachack, “Drug Information in Private Pharmacies in Lao PDR”
Ministry of Health, Lao PDR; C.
Stalsby Lundborg & R. Wahlstrom,
IHCAR, Sweden

Problem Statement: Drug sellers should provide correct information on drug use to customers, in such a way that the customers understand and can follow the advice. Previous research in Lao PDR has shown that drug information is inadequate in terms of both quantity and quality.

Objectives: To explore how well correct, adequate information on drug use is provided by drug sellers to customers in private pharmacies of Vientiane province.

SATURDAY, MAY 5

1:00PM – 4:30PM, GOLD, 203N & S MU

DISCOURSE AND ITS SOCIAL ROLE

MODERATOR: Carol Parish Compton, Independent Scholar

Pathom Hongsuwan, “The Roles and the Meaning of the *Pu Yur Ya Yur* from the Myths
Mahasarakham University and the Rites in Lao Society”

This article aims at identifying the roles and the meaning of the *Pu Yur Ya Yur* in the myths and the rites of the Lao peoples. From the analysis of the roles and the meaning of the *Pu Yur Ya Yur* has 4 major roles and meaning; first, as the ancestor of human; second, the culture hero; third, the representation of the fertility; and the significance of the *Pu Yur Ya Yur* in the relationship with the representation of the Lao peoples and the symbols of the religious. Thus, the analysis of the myths and the rites portrays the importance of cultural with the reflect of the human mind of Lao peoples.

Saengmany Ratsabout, “Continuity and Changes of Buddhism from 'Old' State to 'New'
University of Wisconsin- State of the Lao PDR”
Madison

It is of importance to study the political past of the Lao nation, as it is one of the last remaining “Marxist” states that survived the collapse of Communism in the early 1990s. In order to fully understand Lao society and its past, one must consider the role of Buddhism, particularly for the Lao people. Historically, Buddhism has flourished by reaching an accommodation with native beliefs and cultures. It has shown an exceptional ability to accept and adapt to the local customs, traditions, languages, and cultures. In the Theravada World, Buddhism has become an intrinsic part of the culture, in that it is difficult to understand the histories of these areas without considering the impact of Buddhism. Theravada Buddhism as the traditional religion of the majority Lao of the “Laos” has played a significant role in the construction of the society and

the culture that has emerged.

This paper discusses and examines the role of Lao Buddhism in the politics of the state, particularly in providing political legitimacy. In order to understand the role of Buddhism in contributing to establishment of modern Lao politics, this paper explores the significance of Buddhist symbols and the relationship between Buddhism and kingship (or the state), as well as tracing the continuity and changes in Buddhism from the classical period of Lan Xang to the present-day Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Buddhism has continuously provided legitimacy to the head of the state and has indeed changed and adapted to the changes that have taken place in the society. Buddhist symbols have been regularly manipulated to legitimate power, and in the process the Buddhist Sangha has been politicized.

Justin McDaniel, University of California-Riverside “Some Thoughts on *Hoi Kaeo* and *Wohan* in Lao Buddhist Literature”

There was little separation between oral and written Buddhist “literature” in pre-modern Laos. In fact, many of the rhetorical modes and literary devices of oral literature carried over into written literature. Unfortunately, there has been almost no work on the differences between oral and written forms of Lao Buddhist literature and no diachronic or synchronic studies of common Buddhist homiletic styles. In this short paper, two genres of pre-modern oral Lao literature will be examined and compared to their modern written forms. This study will show that Lao oral methods of selectively translating and glossing Pali terms in pre-modern Buddhist sermons is seen most clearly in two modern genres: *hoi kaeo* and *wohān*. Examining pre-modern palm-leaf manuscripts as well as modern Lao Buddhist texts and textual practices, this paper will very briefly describe the origins of these modern literary categories, homiletic styles, and generic modes.

Raphiphat Phatthana, Chiang Mai University “Post Colonial ‘Laoness’ in Authine Bouyavong's Short Story Collection *Mother Beloved*”

This paper examines how “Laoness” or an identity of Laos as reflected in Authine Bounyawong's collection of short stories “Mother beloved” has been constructed. The paper explores the themes, symbols and characters by employing various post-colonial theories to explain how the traditional image of Laos has been retrieved in the selected short stories. In each short story, the author, in parallel, has also observed how historical events have shaped the political angle and formulated the counter discourse. The study found that in most short stories, Authine Bounyawong has questioned the benefit of Concept of Modernization and Commercialization. A wide range of themes and characterizations has reached similar conclusions that the Capitalist foreign influences have deformed “Laoness” in term of the source of alienation, dislocation, as well as marginalization.

Oliver Tappe, University of Muenster “The Escape from Phonekheng Prison--Revolutionary Historiography in the Lao PDR”

Ten months after the Sananikone government had arrested Souphanouvong, Nouhak Phoumsavan, Phoumi Vongvichit and other leaders of the Lao Patriotic Front, the communist representatives in Vientiane escaped from Phonekheng prison on 25th of May 1960.

The political situation at that time was extremely tense. Rightist forces – supported by the U.S. – refused any political participation of the communists despite the fact that they had been democratically elected. The Lao communist movement, on the other hand, was highly influenced by the North Vietnamese and welcomed their activities on Lao territory. Laos proved defenceless against these external influences and was incessantly drifting towards civil war. In this situation, the escape of the communists into the maquis and their adoption of armed struggle marked a

turning point in post-colonial Lao history and the failure of political integration and consolidation.

The story of this daring flight remains one of the most prominent and quasi-mythical narrations of revolutionary historiography in the Lao PDR, also eminent in schoolbooks and personal memoirs.

Contemporary Lao historiography, controlled by the ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP), shows a rather one-sided perspective towards these events, caught in a restricted revolutionary, anti-imperialistic discourse. The escape of its leadership from Phonekheng prison is glorified as an example of revolutionary power and heroism, thereby reaching a mythological dimension.

The official Pavatsat Lao ("History of Laos"; Ministry of Information and Culture 2000) praises the "correct and righteous way of the Lao Patriotic Front" that even persuaded rightist soldier-guards to support the plans to escape. The narration emphasizes central elements of revolutionary ideology, such as patriotism, bravery, solidarity, and self-sacrifice. At the same time, the revolutionaries are characterized here as "true" Lao patriots vis-à-vis the "puppets of the imperialists". Interestingly, the role of North Vietnam remains obscure here, while some Vietnamese sources mention a commando from Hanoi safeguarding the escape of the Lao comrades.

The most important aim of the narration and memory of Phonekheng today is to legitimate the revolutionary struggle, in particular the adoption of armed struggle against the so-called "Vientiane Regime". The revolutionary struggle is also justified by variations of this narration glorifying the conflict as a battle of morality (sintham) versus immorality (atham). Phoumi Vongvichit's autobiography is an example of this view, attributing the revolutionaries' success to Buddhist merit. Other texts emphasize Souphanouvong's extraordinary charisma as one of the main reasons for winning support by the guards. These are popular histories requiring individual heroic figures. Official LPRP historiography, however, stresses the collective strength of the party leadership and carefully avoids individual glorification.

The story of Phonekheng must be analyzed as a key narration within LPRP historiography and as a crucial component of ideologically influenced historical memory in contemporary Laos. It deserves closer consideration because it is crucial for the understanding of a chaotic and momentous phase in Lao history. Likewise, its historiographical reconstruction and interpretation throw light on politics of legitimation in contemporary Lao PDR.

In my presentation, I would like to discuss the didactic functions of such historical narrations, especially in the Lao context of post-war, socialist nation-building. Furthermore, I would like to examine the ideological dimensions of state-controlled historiography, producing "effects of truth" (Foucault) and perpetuating a specific version of the national past.

Puppap Poonida, University
of Minnesota-Twin Cities

"Language Preservation in Vientiane and Luang Prabang"

SATURDAY, MAY 5

1PM – 3PM, MOHAVE, 222 MU

INDIVIDUAL PAPERS

MODERATOR: Christopher A. Miller, University Libraries, ASU

Kinnalone Kittiphanh
Fulbright Scholar,

"Feminism in Laos"

Ohio University

Orathai Pholdi, Kasetsart
University

“Prehistory and Distinctive Dress of the Tai”

This paper presents new evidence on the prehistory of the Tai and of dress as a distinctive element of Tai culture. This evidence was gathered from archaeological sources, chronicles, inscriptions, literary works, and research works on Tai history and on the dress of the Tai peoples.

The newest evidence suggests that the Tai are descendants of the oldest (2.5 million years B.P.) Eastern Man, remains of which have been found at Yuan Mong in Yunnan, and which evolved into Yan Mo Man (1.7 million years B.P.), Lam Pang Man (500,000 years B.P.), Si Thao Man (100,000 years B.P.), Li Jiang Man (30,000-20,000 years B.P.), and in the Neolithic Period about 7,000 years ago, into the people known as the Pai Yeo, a significant element of whose culture was the planting of mulberry and the raising of silkworms.

The Tai people known as the Ai Lao established the Tai Meuang Empire about 5,000 years ago. When this empire fell, the Tai migrated southward in two groups. The first was the Tai Yai, who established the Mao Luang Empire about 2,600 years ago. The second group was the Tai Noi, who established the Ai Lao Empire about 2,150 years ago.

Tomoko Nakata, Nanzan
University

“Socioeconomic Change in the Villages Situated Along Route 23,
Southern Laos”

Along Route 23 between Pakse and Paksong is a mosaic of villages established by various ethnic groups which migrated to the area at different times for different reasons. The area is remarkable for its ethnic diversity, although the inhabitants have been in contact with the lowland Lao and other groups for several decades and cultural change has been contributing to the loss of ethnic identity.

I carried out fieldwork in the area for a year from 1998 to 1999, living in a village which had been established by the Nge people, a Mon-Khmer group. The village was composed of the members of several ethnic groups, including the Nge, the Lao and the Taliang, but the villagers seemed to maintain a homogeneous lifestyle and were dominated by an egalitarian ideology. However, after finishing my Ph.D. dissertation, I went back to the area in 2004 as a member of a research project to do fieldwork in other villages, and I discovered the situation in many places was completely different from what I had observed previously. So, from 2004 to 2006 I returned to the area 3 to 4 weeks a year, visiting about 30 villages in total. Through this fieldwork, I realized the socioeconomic diversity of the area is just as remarkable as its ethnic diversity. In this presentation, I analyze the factors that contribute to the social and economic differences among the villages, taking into consideration the influence of the French colonial government, which introduced coffee cultivation, as well as the development policy undertaken more recently by the present government.

SATURDAY, MAY 5

IPM – 5PM, VENTANA A, 226A MU

IA: LEGACIES OF WAR I: MAKING HISTORY LOUD & CLEAR: THE POWER OF ORAL HISTORY IN TEACHING COLLABORATIVES (IPM - 2:40PM)

MODERATOR: Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy, Legacies of War

Sakuna Thongchanh
Seattle Community Liaison “Implementation of Legacies Project”

Jacob Savishinsky, Aviation
High School, Seattle “Collaborations on the Legacies Project”

Louie Praseuth,
Hip-Hop Artist “Song and Dance as an Educational Tool”

Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy,
Education Development Ctr “Legacies Curriculum”

**IB: LEGACIES OF WAR II: MODELS FOR TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION:
LAOS & THE US, WORKING FOR RECONCILIATION & PEACE (3:20-5PM)**

MODERATOR: Channapha Khamvongsa, Director, Legacies of War

More than 30 years after the end of war in Laos, Legacies of War seeks to bring reconciliation and peace between the Laotian people and the Laotian diaspora in the United States as well as encourage greater cooperation between the governments of the two countries. Building on the principals of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Legacies of War programs work to achieve: 1. education of the public and policy makers on the *history* of the bombing in Laos and the continuing devastation from unexploded bombs; 2. opportunities for reconciliation and *healing* among Laotians and Laotian/Americans; and, 3. *hope* through advocating for greater U.S. funding and cooperation in the removal of unexploded bombs and economic development in Laos and for bombing victims everywhere, along with supporting a ban on the use and manufacture of cluster bombs throughout the world. The panel will discuss this model for transnational cooperation and the progress made to date.

Titus M. Peachey, Mennonite “Funding Humanitarian Programs in Laos”
Central Committee (MCC)

The author will discuss current work in funding humanitarian programs in Laos and broader initiatives for peace and reconciliation and international efforts to ban the use of cluster bombs, which are similar to the weapons currently contaminating much of Laos.

Khamseng Homdouangxay, “Challenges of Creating Peaceful and Safe Environments”
MCC

Khamseng Homdouangxay is a Laotian working to support the removal of unexploded bombs in Laos as well as other peace projects. He will discuss the challenges and opportunities of creating peaceful and safe environments for Laotian villagers.

Bounthanh Phommasathit, “Healing and Reconciliation from War”
Ohio Commission on Minority
Health

Bounthanh Phommasathit, [bounthanh.phommasathit@ocmh.state.oh.us], is a bombing survivor and frequent international speaker on healing and reconciliation from war. Ms. Phommasathit will talk about her efforts to speak out on the experiences of war in Laos and the shared desire of

war-torn communities around the world for reconciliation and peace.

Laurent Ladouce, The Pakxe “The Pakxe Peace Project”
Project

The *Pakxe Project* advocates a culture of peace in South East Asia. It was drafted in 1996 and legitimated by the UNESCO declaration of the period 2001-2010 as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace: in line with the concerns of UNESCO, it offers an alternative model to the clash of civilizations. In the *Pakxe Project*, Laos plays a key role. Its capacities for peacebuilding, highlighted by independent observers, would be reinforced. Pakxe, the third city of Laos, would symbolize this vocation, and become an international city of peace, or “city on a hill” at the core of the South-East Asian mandala.

The essay will cover three frequently asked questions about this project.

1. How can a city herald a culture of peace?
2. Can a culture of peace blossom in South-East Asia, a region exposed to natural risk, human insecurity, and geopolitical strife?
3. Laotians are a “gentle people”, but theirs is a “forgotten country”, seeking international help. How can Pakxe rise as an international city of Peace?

SATURDAY, MAY 5

IPM – 5PM, TURQUOISE, 208F MU

EMERGING ECONOMIES

MODERATOR: Sheldon Simon, Department of Political Science, Arizona State University

Michael D. Theno, Menlo College “Laos' Nam Theun 2 dam: Benefits and limits of national competitive advantage”

This paper uses Michael Porter's competitive advantage of nations as a focus on how Laos' use of its geographical location in the Mekong region is an example of national competitive advantage. The Lao Nam Theun 2 hydroelectric dam project can be viewed as a specific example of the benefits and limits of this national competitive advantage. The perspectives of some project participants are considered: the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the consortium of international financiers, the Mekong River Commission, the International Rivers Network, the Nam Theun 2 Power Company, and the World Bank. The paper concludes with observations about international assistance to the Lao government in economic development and social programs and Laos as an emerging economy.

Key words: competitive advantage of nations, emerging economies, Lao People's Democratic Republic, International Rivers Network, Mekong River Commission, Michael Porter, Nam Theun 2 dam, World Bank.

Marc Dufumier, AgroParisTech “Laos: Which Comparative Advantage”

Since setting up of the «new economic mechanism» in 1986, the Laotian People's Democratic Republic has gradually opened up the national economy to international exchanges and liberalised the movement of goods inside the country. The quota system for imports has been almost entirely suppressed and customs duties have been drastically reduced. Exchange controls have been abolished and the authorities have started to favour foreign investment. This opening up to the outside world was finally confirmed by Laos joining the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in July 1997. After a transition period, the country should doubtless be able to integrate itself into the ASEAN free exchange zone, whose launch is planned for 2003. But

it is uncertain what comparative advantages Laos possesses on regional and international markets, as it is a mountainous country with no direct access to sea.

Bhounthavy Sysouphanthong & Charles Myers “National Human Development Report: International Trade and Human Development, Lao PDR 2006”

Increasing international trade is affecting the Lao economy, the employment of Lao workers, the role of Lao women, the education requirements of Lao children, the consumption patterns of Lao families, even Lao culture. The impacts will increase in the future. This Report analyzes these multiple impacts of international trade—covering both exports and imports.

The overall finding is that - on balance - the increasing international trade has benefited Lao people and Lao development. Recent economic growth has been equitable and pro-poor. The income distribution has improved. In addition to economic growth, international trade directly benefits Lao people via five “pathways”: informal cross-border trade, labour migration and remittances, employment, rural electrification, and improved information.

Some exports (manufactured exports, handicrafts, tourism, agricultural exports and labour exports) are labour-intensive, favourable to employment, to backward linkages, and to reduction of poverty. Agriculture is the most important sector, it employs more people in the export trade and it has the highest potential to enhance development and reduce poverty. Other Lao exports (minerals, timber, electricity, transit trade and over-flights) use much less labour and some pose threats to the environment. But these exports will also greatly increase the government budget which could be used to enhance development, improve education and health, and reduce poverty.

Some imports are vital for sustaining and increasing exports. Some create employment in cross border trade and retail sales and some improve the quality of life and access to information. Some - particularly Thai television - may threaten Lao language and culture.

Most important, perhaps, the composition of Lao exports is changing rapidly. Exports of minerals and electricity will increase from 20 percent of Lao exports in 2004 to more than half and perhaps even two thirds of all Lao exports in 2010. The more labour-intensive exports will lose relative shares but could still grow rapidly with the right policy and support.

Good policy is thus important to increase the positive benefits of international trade and reduce the negative impacts. Some suggested changes will cost the government budget nothing and may even save money. These suggestions include: leaving informal patterns of cross-border trade alone, normalising Lao labour exports to Thailand and taking it slow on WTO entry. Suggestions that require government expenditures from its trade increased revenues include: education and human resource development, support for solving information problems and supply constraints in agriculture, support for improving the productivity and competitiveness of other labour-intensive exports, and improving the quality of Lao television.

Jim Holzmann, Yavapai College “The Development of the Lao PDR’s Legal System”
This paper is a survey of the current stage of development of the LAO PDR’s legal system in various areas. The objective is to seek a better understanding of the prevailing legal framework, including the status of laws and regulations in force and those currently under consideration. The assessment focuses on understanding the operational aspects of the legal framework and establishing the effectiveness of such a framework, in anticipation of the needs of the economy’s transition toward a free market orientation.

The LAO PDR is making a transition from a socialist planned economy to a market economy.

Such a transition requires corresponding changes in the legal framework for economic activity. It is indeed true that in a planned economy, actors may have relied on government agencies for the overall management of their economic transactions and for the resolution of any consequential disputes. The LAO PDR is shifting toward a more liberalized market economy. However, they will need to be able to rely instead on the rules and recourses provided by a legal system viewed as independent from government interference. To foster the development of the market economy, it is necessary to have in place the required policies, laws, and regulations which generally regulate private sector activities. The legal system must come to be perceived as predictable, transparent and fair.

Anoulack Souvannaphoum,
NOSPA International MBA
Program, Lao PDR

“Opportunities and Challenges for Laos in Joining AFTA”

By joining ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and participating in AFTA (ASEAN Free Trade Agreement), Lao PDR attains significant impact on its trade, investment and overall economic growth, and on other sectors under the ASEAN economic cooperation and CEPT scheme (Common Effective Preferential Tariff). The Lao government must not only seize the core opportunities presented by AFTA, but also ensure that the public and private sectors are aware of what AFTA is. Joining the agreement means Laos will face several problems and challenges, underpinned by the weak basic production and wider economic structure of Laos. Moreover, development of human resources has only taken place in the right circumstances in the last decade. Preparing for an open Free Trade Area in 2008, Laos must improve its domestic products for the home market as well as compete with other ASEAN member countries.

The opportunities given to Laos in joining AFTA comprise expansions to trade links, unemployment rate reduction, better promotion of local products, maximization of market size by increasing access to regional and international markets, and a free flow of goods and services. This will stimulate Lao productivity and improvement in the quality of domestic products and services. In contrast, the challenges for Laos in putting the agreement into practice mean the creation of greater competition, the certain loss of main tax revenues and the necessity to address existing laws to take the AFTA agreement into account. Issues of the country's international negotiation experience and the sufficiency and competence of its human resources are still the main obstacles, however. On the whole, joining AFTA has both gains and losses, but the role of government is to weigh up opposing factors. From the view of eliminating these obstacles, several aspects need to be emphasized: education development, identifying new export markets, improving law and regulation, and promoting local products. This will serve to ensure that infrastructure and national transportation networks are improved hand in hand.

Panpilai Kitsudsang, Australian
National University

“The Involvement of Thai Women in Market Economy
in the Northern Lao PDR”

This paper will investigate the impact of development during Laos's economic transition on Thai women in the northern border areas. These women are experience a number of changes: road development, international initiatives in poverty alleviation; increasing cross-border trade; tourism; and government development policies. The paper will focus on the strategies that Thai women use to handle the changes that have come with development. Positive and negative aspects of the transition will be examined. The way the ethnic women receive, reconstruct and pass on various elements of ethnic identity in this context of transition will also be explored. Case studies of local development activities will be examined.

SUNDAY, MAY 6

SUNDAY, MAY 6

9AM – 12PM, LA PAZ, 223E & W MU

SOUTHERN BORDER MOSAIC

MODERATOR: Alan Potkin, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University

Khambang Sibounheang, “Crossing a Border: A Closer Look at the Lao Khmer”
Independent Researcher

Centuries ago, the Lao lived in China. However, relentless pressure by the Chinese gradually forced them southward. They made their homes along the Mekong River in the eighth or ninth century. According to the latest estimates provided by the Cambodian Government Official (2005-2006), there are approximately 624 villages where over 300,000 Lao-Khmer are found. The Lao-Khmer also known as Laotian Tai live in the lowland regions of northern Cambodia, near the border of Laos. Distinct by their language and practices, this community has adapted and survived over time as Cambodian citizens. This paper will put faces and stories to the name, Tai Lao. The paper will present a glimpse into the lives and routes taken by Laotians of the past who journeyed along the Mekong River. The paper will provide my encounter with the Lao-Khmer in 14 villages of Svay Rieng Province in Kampong Ro District. This district was where the founder of Lan Xang Kingdom gathered his Army to unify the princes of Lao in 1353.

Leedom Lefferts, Drew “Where Did the Oy of Baan Chuomphouy Get Their Pot Making
University From?”

The analysis of earthenware pottery technology provides a basis for a classification of ethnicity at times drastically different from the usual method based on linguistics. The Oy of Baan Chuomphouy, Attapeau Province in southern Laos, a Mon-Khmer speaking group, make pots in a manner distinctive for Southeast Asia, but shared with a number of other communities in southeastern Laos and Central Vietnam. This paper explores this pottery technology through close comparisons with other allied sites, illustrating the range of variation within this pattern. A geographic analysis of these variations shows allied Chamic sites, both in the Vietnamese highlands and Cham sites along the Vietnam coast as well as in other communities in which the people declare that they “have always been Lao”. The paper demonstrates that analyses of material culture may result in insightful understandings of regional contacts and histories.

Ian G. Baird, University of “Development and Spatial Reorganization amongst the Brao in
British Columbia Southern Laos and Northeastern Cambodia”

Development initiatives, whether implemented by governments, international organizations, non-government organizations, private companies or even religious missionary fellowships, are invariably and ultimately aimed at promoting social reorganization, whether this involves building schools and health centers, training people in learning new agriculture methods, changing people’s religious beliefs, or promoting cash crops and plantations. This change in social organization is invariably linked to spatial reorganization. Depending on one’s perspective, different types of social and spatial reorganization can be positive or negative. Often, these changes can be seen as both, or neither. In southern Laos and northeast Cambodia, the ethnic Brao peoples, including the various Mon-Khmer language-speaking sub-groups, are facing rapid and very significant social and spatial changes as a result of various initiatives, many of which are

associated with 'development'. This paper examines how development efforts are causing social and spatial organization amongst these peoples, and how they are responding to efforts to reorganize their spaces. The main goal is to increase our understanding of how development practices are leading to social and spatial reorganization, and encourage readers to recognize how important and potentially insidious development efforts can be in terms of spatial reorganization.

Masao Nishumura, Waseda University, Tokyo

"World Heritage" for Whom?: A Case Study of the "Champasak World Heritage", Lao PDR

The paper intends to discuss contested views on the expectations of World Heritage nomination. It will focus on three points: 1) it examines the process leading to the inscription of heritages in Champasak in southern Laos, on the World Heritage list, and delineates those who held a stake in the event, the different roles they played and how their views varied; 2) it pays special attention to the opinions and expectations of those in charge of administration within the local government; 3) it considers the issues of World Heritage management, question who that heritage is for and discuss who the nucleus of its maintenance and management is.

Among the stakeholders, the author identifies four main players: the central government, local government, local residents and UNESCO. The central government showed the greatest understanding of UNESCO principles and came to realize that the fundamental maintenance and management would be done by the community people in Champasak. At the same time, it consistently showed "sympathy" with the local government, giving its position a dual aspect. From first to last, the local government hoped for economic development through the development of tourism utilizing the site. They saw economic development as progress, and viewed the inscription on the World Heritage list as an opportunity for economic progress.

The local residents hoped that while maintaining their current lifestyle patterns they could improve their socio-economic situation within their own ability to adapt. From the outset, even before the site was inscribed, they had taken care of the sites as places where great spirits dwelt and the mountain forest in which they are located was held to be the place to which the spirits of ancestors returned. UNESCO itself through nominating the sites hoped for "sustainable development" that would not threaten the lifestyle of the local residents. Toward achieving that end, it was considered important to strengthen necessary knowledge for those local residents.

Consequently, it was the opinion of the local government that won the day. Following inscription, they carried out an extensive reinterpretation of the master plan along the lines of their current notions of "development". They implemented a major compulsory resettlement of some of the villagers living adjacent to the site: Vat Phou, thus bringing a major transformation of the landscape. It is clear that regarding World Heritage Site status, the stakeholders' views vary and depending on time and place one of those views wins out and becomes linked with the actual guardianship of the site.

Rie Odajima, Waseda University, Tokyo

"Everyday Life and Spirit Cult in Cultural Landscape of Champasak"

In this presentation I discuss how cultural landscape of Champasak is conceptualized and materialized in post-socialist Lao PDR, examining how inhabitants view the place where they live through their ritual practice of Phii, a spirit cult.

SUNDAY, MAY 6

9AM – 12PM, MOHAVE, 222 MU

LAO-AMERICANS: ACCULTURATION AND ATTAINMENT

MODERATOR: Genevieve Siri, City of Phoenix

Phoumy Sayavong, Khammany
Mathavongsy, & Saengmany
Ratsabout, Laotian American
National Alliance

“Laotian American Educational Attainment”

The mission of the Laotian American National Alliance (LANA) is to mobilize Laotian Americans to promote social, educational, and economic advancement through civic participation and public policy advocacy. LANA’s objectives include (1) advocating on behalf of the Laotian American community; (2) cultivating and celebrate the strength of its diverse ethnic communities from the Hmong, Iu-Mien, Khmu, Lahu, Lao, Thai Dam, and other Americans of Laotian descent; and (3) disseminating information about social, educational, and economic opportunities to Laotian American communities across the U.S. One of our primary objectives this year is to concentrate our efforts in tracking the academic attainment of Laotian Americans and propose recommendations to researchers and policy makers on approaches to address the growing trend of low academic achievement among Laotian American youth.

As of 1990, there are 384,513 are Laotian Americans (including 186,310 Hmong) and 84,180 of them have been naturalized as U.S. citizens (INS, 2001). The Census also reported that 59.8% of Laotian and 71.7% of Hmong Americans have less than high school education. In California, where about half of all Laotian Americans reside, the rates are higher with 67.9% Laotian and 74.1% Hmong Americans having less than high school education. Overall, 3.2% Hmong and 6.6% Laotian Americans have bachelor’s degree or above as compared to 37% of Asian Americans Overall and 18% Americans Overall (US Census Bureau, 1990).

The number of Laotian Americans who attend college are so small that at UC Berkeley and all UC campuses, Laotian American representation remain so statistically negligible that they continue to be lumped in the category of “Asians” or “Other Asians.” This is important because Berkeley, UCLA, and UC Irvine are located in close proximity to some of the biggest Laotian communities in the United States. Historically, Laotian Americans have been grouped in the category of Asians and inadvertently inherited the social stigma of “the model minority.” This misrepresentation of the educational attainment of Laotian Americans have made it difficult to advocate for more research and resources to support.

LANA would be presenting more trends in Laotian American educational attainment and address key recommendations such as expanding student financial aid programs, increasing outreach opportunities to Southeast Asians, encourage more research and documentation, translate more educational and policy publications, and expand the National Mentoring initiative. These policies will discussed in further detail in our panel.

Vinthany Nena Souvannarath,
University of Wisconsin-Madison

“The Effects of Acculturation on Academic Achievement
and Intergenerational Conflict: A Look at Second
Generation Lao Youth”

This session presents findings in a study examining the adaptation experiences of second generation children of Southeast Asian refugees. The first question of interest is: in the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), how are second-generation Lao, Hmong, Cambodian,

and Vietnamese youth being incorporated into the American society? What proportion of each group is conforming to which path of assimilation? Second, if children of immigrants and their parents acculturate at a similar pace, will they experience lower levels of intergenerational conflict when compared to dissonant acculturation (and selective acculturation.)? Lastly, which type of acculturation is most associated with immigrant children attaining low levels of academic achievement?

A closer look at the aggregate experiences of the Lao ethnic group will be given as findings are disentangled amongst other Southeast Asian youth. The expected outcomes from analysis of the CILS data is that if children acculturate at similar pace as their parents, they will experience lower levels of intergenerational conflict when compared with dissonant acculturation. Additionally, dissonant acculturation will be higher correlated to lower levels of academic achievement. After an overview of results, broad policy-related implications of the findings will be discussed.

P. Kelly Bounkeua, Seattle Pacific University

“The Relationship between Differential Acculturation Strategies, Perception of Intergenerational Conflict, and Depression in Laotian-American Adolescents”

American adolescent participants ranged from 13 to 18 years, with an overall mean age of 15. Seventy-four percent of the adolescents reported being second generation Americans. Parent's age ranges between 30 to 68 years, with an overall mean age of 41. Eight-five percent of the parents are first generation. These participants were matched pair of 80 adolescents, and 80 parents. Eighty adolescents completed the multiple questionnaires (demographics information, AAMAS self-rating, AAMAS rating of their parents, ICI, and CES-DC). Eighty parents completed a set of multiple questionnaires (demographics information, AAMAS self-rating, and ICI). There were significant differences between adolescents and their parents in self-reported acculturation strategies. Specifically, adolescents most frequently self-identify as assimilated. However, the adolescents self-identify as marginal slightly more than bicultural and they infrequently self-identify as traditional. As hypothesized, the parents self-identify most frequently as traditional compared to bicultural, marginal, and assimilated.

The results did not support the hypothesis that the greater the differences in the endorsement of AAMAS-EA and AAMAS-CO between adolescents and their parents, the greater the severity of intergenerational conflicts reported by both the adolescents and their parents. However, the hypothesis was supported when examining the differences in the endorsement of EA and CO values between self-reports of adolescents and the adolescents' perceptions of parents in predicting the severity of intergenerational conflicts reported by adolescents and parents. The self-reported and perceived differences between adolescents and parents in cultural values and practices, and intergenerational conflicts reported by both adolescents and parents contributed significantly in combination to prediction of depression scores. The adolescent self-reports of intergenerational conflict contributed independently to predicting depression scores. This study examined the relationship between acculturation strategies leading to intergenerational conflict between Laotian-American adolescents and their parents and the adolescents' clinical depression. The study increased the mental health community's knowledge in the importance of the adolescent's perception of acculturation strategies in their report of intergenerational conflict affecting their endorsement of depression symptoms. In addition, the implications for clinical use and future research are discussed.

SUNDAY, MAY 6

9AM – 12PM, GOLD, 203N & S MU

SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

MODERATOR: Vinya Sysamouth, Center for Lao Studies, San Francisco, CA

Chuthatip Maneepong,
Shinawatra University & Arizona
State University

“Community Based Solid Waste Management in Vientiane:
Is it Sustainable?”

The modern environmental management literature argues that lack of participatory process in most infrastructure-led projects causes unsustainable development and undesirable environmental management goals. It stresses the need for community involvement in planning, implementation, monitoring and assessment. Thus many international aid agencies such as Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) require community involvement as one major component of current public utilities provision projects. Even in less developed countries such as Laos, community involvement in solid waste management projects is considered to be a key successful factor. Communities acknowledge the importance of public awareness on environmental impact and the benefit of family's health care. A number of training on technical operation and maintenance, financial management and accounting and study visit to share experiences with other solid waste company in the country and/or other countries have been undertaken to strengthen community's capacity. However, after project implementation period, many communities face challenges for the project sustainability such as lack of investment capital for new equipments. It raises the question what are other key factors contributing to the project sustainability. Other key factors for project sustainability such as embeddedness of project activities into local and provincial plans, upscaling project to economic scale of benefit and developing partnership with private sector and other similar projects will be discussed.

Bhoj Raj Khanal and Bounsouk
Souksavath, Mekong Institute
Foundation, Khon Kaen University

“Existing Practices and Environmental Management
Measures in Solid Waste Management: A Case Study from
Vientiane, Lao PDR”

In the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) and Cambodia have the highest population growth rates (2.5%). One of the most adverse impacts accompanying the advancement in economic growth, industrialization, and urbanization in the GMS is the increasing rate of solid waste generation in urban areas. Capital city of Lao PDR, Vientiane, is no exception, although its waste problem is not yet as severe as that in the other GMS big cities. In many countries that are experiencing rapid economic development, the problems associated with solid waste production and management are not addressed until they are already posing a serious threat to advancement. Central and Local Governments now increasingly realize the need to deal with the growing problems created by solid waste long before they become overwhelming.

The waste collection capacity of the Vientiane Municipality is about 120–130 tones/day, which is only half of the actual rate of total waste generated in one day. Half of the waste therefore remains uncollected and is left on road corners or is openly burnt or disposed of improperly or thrown to the Mekong River. This study identifies and assesses the general practices and environmental measures used in solid waste management in Vientiane, including market and nonmarket based instruments as well as public education and training programs (moral suasion). It offers policy information to concerned authorities including effective instruments to minimize the polluting behavior of individuals and industries and to recover the cost of pollution in the city. Interviews with key stakeholders, group discussions with city residents, and observations of existing practices in Vientiane revealed the following problems: weak financial

status; insufficient number of staff and facilities; open burning of waste without segregation; use of open dumpsites that pose health and environmental risks; dumping of waste in the bank and tributaries of the Mekong River; and low awareness about solid waste management among residents. Local governments are now faced with major issues such as how to finance the infrastructure needed for effective and efficient solid waste management as well as how to recover the investments related infrastructure, operation, and maintenance. The problems are further compounded by a high rate of rural-urban migration, the uncontrolled growth of industry and businesses as well as recent changes in the consumption patterns of residents. To improve solid waste management in Vientiane, a combination of market-based and persuasive instruments is recommended.

Lao PDR is a signatory to Agenda 21, the agreement reached among nations participating in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Agenda 21 emphasized that reducing wastes and maximizing environmentally sound waste reuse and recycling should be the first steps in waste management. There is a need in the GMS cities to modify the current flat-fee structure, to change public attitudes on environmental sanitation, to introduce hygienic practices, and to provide information and education to waste pickers and local residents. These findings may have implications for other cities in the GMS as they also have the same problems with solid waste and thus face similar challenges.

Kathryn Sweet, Freelance Consultant, Vientiane, Lao PDR “Impacts on Society and Environment of the Lao Mining Sector”

The mining sector in Lao PDR has expanded rapidly in the past 2 years, with more than 100 concessions for mineral survey and exploration approved nationwide. The Ministry of Energy and Mining was created in 2006 to deal with the rapid expansion in the sector.

While development of the mining sector undoubtedly offers economic benefits to the Government of Lao PDR, and local and foreign invest, or developing response strategies. The largest, foreign-owned companies have established community development programs in a bid to address these issues, but have little expertise. This paper attempts to examine some of the potential social and environmental impacts, as well as the potential effectiveness of community development programs run by mining companies.

Panadda Pucharoensilp, Khon Kaen University “Toward the Social and Environmental Risks in the Thai-Lao Border Area”

Before the implementation of development projects, the ecosystem in the upper Mekong River was pristine. The estuary of the river that forms the border between Thailand-Laos and Burma-Laos has been home to many complex ecological systems. These areas, which are very rich in their biodiversity, have been sustaining the livelihood of local people and communities along river. This area is considered one of the most important wildlife sanctuaries in Southeast Asia.

Since the 1980's, development has been taking place along the upper Mekong following the implementation of “Go West” policy and the Lancang Economic Belt policy. These policies have led to the creation of cascade hydropower dam project, industrial estates and upper Mekong navigation channel improvement project, which is an attempt to allow large cargo ship to navigate from Simao in China and Luang praban in Laos PDR. This project includes rapid blasting.

These development projects have directly impacted the fish and plant species and the livelihood of people on both sides of the river. They have caused extensive negative impacts on the ecological system of the Mekong River as it has destroyed the natural balance that once existed. The local people who live along the river have confronted and adapted to the new way of

life and their livelihood. They cannot know what things will be occurred in the future . They lost some old tradition and cultures. They confront a lot of social problems, crimes , debts and so on. The current social does not adequately ensure the wellbeing of the people who are in the local. It is not sure, the regional development can make the good quality of life to the local people. It may just make the people confront and go toward the social and environmental risks.

Khamphouvieng Phouisombath,
Ministry of Agriculture &
Forestry, Lao PDR

“Utilization of Non-Timber Forest Products in Community
Forest Area”

This research is about the pattern of utilization of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in community forests area. It highlight traditional harvesting practices of NTFPs by the local community, examining whether these lead to sustainable use, the research also provides analysis of the economic value of these activities and how the products contribute to the economy of households in Houay Hok Village, Kasy District, Vientiane Province.

The study reveals that, forest resource is a vital asset in everyday life and in the economic income of rural population. NTFPs play a key role in the livelihood of the local community for daily food, consumption, medicine and commercial sales. Sugar palm fruits, Bamboo shoots, Broom grass, Rattan shoots, and Berberin are considered by local people as the most important NTFPs from the forests because these products provide an average of 44 percent of the family cash income per year. Both wealthy and poor families collect NTFPs for sale. More than half of cash income derived from selling NTFPs is being used by the villagers to buy rice and other daily expenditures needed in the family such as additional food, medicine, and clothing. Income from these products also supports the school studies of their children.

This research further reveals that the utilization pattern of NTFPs by the local community leads to sustainable use, because villagers have good collection practices and harvesting methods which do not damage the NTFPs. In addition, villagers also harvest NTFPs under existing community rules as well as regulations of the government. However, despite the good NTFPs harvesting practices by the villagers, the research found that the number and volume of NTFPs decreased if compared to ten years ago. The NTFPs decreased are mainly due to the general state of poverty among rural people, rapid population growth, market pressures of NTFPs resource, legal and illegal timber logging, land clearing for agriculture such as shifting cultivation in the uplands, over harvesting, forest fires, and economic development which requires land for settlement.

Bangone Santavasy

“Impact of Mekong River Fisheries Programme on
Sustainable Development in 2 Fishing Villages, Vientiane,
Lao PDR”

Over the last two decades, countries in the Mekong sub-region especially the new member of ASEAN (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam) have undergone on number of socio-economic development, one of the most constraints is to combat poverty. The increase of population had led to the increase of demand on resource and food. It is expected that food security need to be double through scare resources. The Fisheries Programme’s objectives of Mekong River Commission (MRC) were to coordinate and sustainable development, utilization, management and conservation of the fisheries of the Mekong basin, by focusing on rural livelihood and promoting local participation for self sufficient.

The impacts of MRC’s Fisheries Programme on Sustainable Development in Angnamhoum and Hoinamyen Villages, Vientiane Lao PDR was chosen as a case study for thesis research. This study attempted to assess the extent to which this MRC’s sustainable development had implication for improving the livelihood development of the people in the Mekong sub-region,

particularly the two fishing villages in Lao PDR.

The research finding suggested that the fisheries programme or MRRF II 2000-2005 of MRC contributed considerably positive impacts on the sustainable livelihood development of the people in Angnamhoum and Hoinamyen Villages in terms of natural, physical, human, financial and social aspects. For example, the community took pleasure on the prosperity of its natural resource: fish catch increased, though fluctuated. Fisheries also generated employment USD 1,000 per person/per year. Fisheries Programme led to people's participation and strengthened social tie, and community network, which are the key components of sustainable community development.

However, it should be noted that, this particular MRRF II Project had its disadvantages. In order to prevent such negative effects to occur in future similar fishing project attempted, following factors should be taken to consideration as precaution measure. The promotion of fisheries may cause over-fishing conflicts over natural capital and human activities, and conflicts over investment on fishing gears and increase catch. Fisheries also affects people's health; fishermen may hit malaria while fishing at night. It is crucial to balance and ponder on these issues. Hence it is essential to maximize local resources and enable personnel skills and knowledge to achieve sustainable livelihood development for fisheries programme and other aspects of village life.

SUNDAY, MAY 6

9AM-12PM, YUMA, 211 MU

GOOD-BYE VIENTIANE: UNTOLD STORIES OF FILIPINOS IN LAOS, A BRAIDED NARRATIVE

MODERATOR: Penelope V. Flores, Secondary Education Department, San Francisco State University

Penelope V. Flores, San Francisco State University

“Filipino Americans in Laos, 1957-1973: A Benchmark”

Cecilia Salarda-Datu, West Covina, CA

“The First Practical Lao Nurses Training Program”

Orlando Datu, West Covina, CA

“The Technical Support System to the Lao Royal Government”

Jose ‘Pete’ Fuentesilla, Editor, Mekong International Newsletter

“In Search of a Vanished Hospital”

GROUP ABSTRACT:

Conceptualization

Many historians of the Filipinos in Laos seek a new answer to an old problem about the relationship between the past and the present. Many think that the past is fundamentally separate from the present—the antiquarian solution. Others study the past as a prologue

to the present—the presentist solution.

The panel will present a set of stories, published by Philippine American Writers and Artists. It is organized around a third idea that every period of the past, when understood in its own language and narrative is immediate to the present. This immediatist solution is to explore the immediacy of the past Lao experience without presentism and at the same time to understand the culture of the early Filipino experience in Laos in their own terms without antiquarianism. A retelling of the history of the Filipino in Laos is necessary to an understanding of what makes the Filipino society's contribution to the Lao culture, and society a part of our knowledge of the past.

The Narratives

This panel seeks to combine story telling and history in a braided narrative in a more complex construction mode. The progress of historical knowledge of the Filipinos in Laos is best served by this creative integration. These four panelists will read from their own personal stories. Clothed in reflective thoughts, their powerful stories will form the very soul of Lao-Philippine relations.