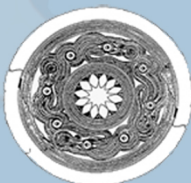




# THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LAO STUDIES

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PROMOTE & DEVELOP LAO STUDIES



# ABSTRACTS

**The Fourth International Conference on Lao Studies  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
April 19-21, 2013**

**Keynote Address      Friday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 11.00-12.30, Room 325/326**

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Yves Goudineau

**The Invention of a Multiethnic Heritage in Laos**

EFEQ, Vientiane, Lao PDR

The multiethnic nature of the nation has long been part of the official discourse in Laos. However, when referring to a national culture, it seemed until recently as if Lao historical heritage had to be its only foundation. Prior to the organization by UNESCO in 1996 of an international conference in Vientiane aimed at underlining the importance of the local cultures and of the different ethnic minority heritages in Laos, this issue was generally ignored and not discussed. Local folklore was showcased, mostly songs and dances, but many aspects of village social organization and belief were regarded as backward and superstitious. By contrast, Lao PDR nowadays declares the importance of “the fine cultures and traditions of all ethnic groups”. Several provincial museums devoted to local popular culture have been recently created and about five-hundred villages across the country have been awarded the status of “cultural villages.” Still, one can wonder, what is the local or multiethnic cultural heritage that is supposed to be preserved? In the last two decades, economic and social constraints, administrative pressures and resettlement processes with the grouping of different ethnic minorities together have deeply undermined the former ways of village life, with considerable losses in terms of specific social dynamics and ritual practices. As a result, most of the so called local cultures tend to be a negotiated mix between the villagers self-presentation (some ethnic groups being better prepared for that than others) and the borrowing of Lao cultural norms strongly encouraged by provincial officials. If ethnography can provide relevant comparison with ancient village cultural patterns, history must help to put the issue of ethnic and multiethnic heritage into perspective.

**John Hartmann\*; Alan Potkin\*\*, and Catherine Raymond\*\*\***

**Wat Pathumwanaram: A Lao Cultural Transplant in Bangkok's Siam Square**

\*Professor of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Northern Illinois University, USA

\*\*Team Leader, Digital Conservation Facility, Laos

\*\*\*Associate Professor of Art History, Northern Illinois University, USA

Raymond, Hartmann and Potkin offer their collaborative perspective on Wat Pathumwanaram ("Pathum"), a royal monastery of the third rank commissioned in 1857 CE by King Mongkut (Rama IV, r. 1851-1868), in what was then an outlying semi-aquatic district with a considerable ethnic Lao population, but which now lies at the heart of Bangkok's most upscale commercial center. The Pathum *wihan* (i.e., main image hall) is notable for the original lower course murals illustrating the non-canonical Siang Miang "trickster" tales found throughout Theravada Southeast Asia, rather than the conventional temple depictions of mythologized events from the life of the historical Buddha, nor from the hundreds of *Jataka* stories recounting the Buddha's previous incarnations. Raymond will also examine the contiguous upper course murals of a grand flotilla, in light of the monastery's highly-revered bronze Buddha images: all of which were likely cast in Vientiane no later than the mid-18th century; seized by Siamese armies in the wars against Lao Lan Xang during the period 1777-1827, thence taken to Nonthaburi, and eventually brought by boat to Pathum. Hartmann will discuss the extent and rationale for the apparent degree —from the outset— of Lao "primacy" at Pathum (called *Vat Sapatum* by Lao-speakers); the possible motivations for the choice of the trickster tales for the interior murals; and the special role served there even today by the Isan *sangha*. Potkin will present the latest digital imagery of the recently-restored *wihan* interiors (including a comparison to the 1990s Thai Fine Arts Department archive of the deteriorated original *Sri Thanonchai* murals); and will demonstrate the stunning, "stitched virtual reality" panoramas of Pathum which comprise a key element of our new interactive online repository of the site and its history, including recent notorious aspects of the Red Shirt uprisings.

**John Hartmann**

**Preserving the Past: *Siang Miang* as the Essence of Lao Humor and Poetic Genius**

Professor of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Northern Illinois University, USA

The Lao trickster tales known as *Siang Miang* have long been an integral part of Lao heritage— its oral and written literature. In 2013, the Center for Lao Studies reprinted a revision of a version published in 1964 by the Lao Ministry of Education. Here we will discuss the revision process and discuss points of spelling reforms, noting some of the official spelling changes after 1964. In addition, we will point out the rhyme scheme employed by the poet.

The 2013 Center for Lao Studies Reprint of *Siang Miang* preserves old Lao literary culture and spellings. It should be read and recited for esthetic pleasure. It merits comparison to the palm leaf manuscript collection in the National Library of Laos, especially those written in Lao *Buhan*.

**Alan Potkin****Interactive digital applications for archiving the iconography, architecture, historical landscapes, and interior murals at Wat Pathumwanaram (Bangkok)**

Team Leader, Digital Conservation Facility, Laos

During this presentation new archival imaging of the paintings and altars at the principal structures in Wat Pathumwanaram will be presented. Those inside the *wihan* —which would have remained in much their original condition (although several panels were severely degraded) and had been conventionally documented in the 1990s by the Department of Fine Arts— were competently restored during the extensive rehabilitation (2010-2011) of the entire temple complex. The *ubosot* (ordination hall) interior was ruined years ago by fire, so the paintings there now may give no indication of the original subject matter. He will also demonstrate interactive virtual reality (“VR”) panoramas of both interiors; and also exterior VRs of the temple grounds.

Historical maps and photos show the Wat Pathum setting evolving from a semi-aquatic outlying landscape: thinly settled in the 1830s-1840s by Lao prisoners of war (and eventually their families), who had excavated *Khlong Saen Saeb*; and later the site of Sra Pathum palace. The wat’s décor—including exterior bas reliefs—comprises almost a museum of botanical paintings and sculpture, now also archived digitally (and in architectural renderings by Kwan Bongsasilp): representing in taxonomically-correct detail the many varieties of lotuses that grew in the erstwhile lakes, marshes and waterways of the Patumwan district, which became “Siam Square”. (Khlong Saen Saeb —while now cut off from the Chao Phraya mainstream, still carries local long-tail boat traffic.)

All these visual and textual materials have recently been mounted as an interactive online e-book in PDF; publicly-accessible at this URL:

[http://www.sethathirath.com/ICLS4\\_e-book/Wat\\_Pathum\\_ICLS4.pdf](http://www.sethathirath.com/ICLS4_e-book/Wat_Pathum_ICLS4.pdf)

**Catherine Raymond****Lao influence in a highly prestigious Thai monastery: the case of Wat Pathumwanaram**

Associate Professor of Art History, Northern Illinois University, USA

According to the records Wat Pathumwanaram, a royal temple of third rank, was built during the fourth reign by King Mongkut (r. 1851-1868), also known as Rama IV. Insofar as the architecture of the *wihan*, the *that* and the *ubosot* bear the style of the Ratanakosin period, one can be intrigued by the representation in the *wihan* of extensive murals illustrating the popular folktale of the trickster anti-hero, Sri Thanonchai: better known in Laos as Xieng Miang. Such a choice of subject matter is rather surprising in a Thai Royal monastery. This paper will examine Wat *Pathum* within the historical context of its iconography and local geography and will more carefully study the upper-level murals of the royal flotilla procession in light of the monastery’s many original bronze Buddha images, all of which came from Vientiane —especially the revered presiding Buddhas *Phra Soern* and *Phra Saen* installed in the *wihan* and *Phra Sai* in the *ubosot*— and removed by pillaging Siamese armies to the new capital at Bangkok.

**Nicholas Roberts****The Human Use and experience of Caves in the Lao PDR: Some Preliminary Considerations for Heritage Management**

Independent Consulting Anthropologist/Archaeologist and Ph.D Candidate, James Cook University, Queensland, Australia

This paper will introduce the context of industry, government, heritage and other professionals, and local communities using and managing the cultural and natural heritage of caves and karstic landscapes in the Lao PDR. The Lao PDR and other parts of Southeast Asia have limestone karstic environments that dominate large geographic areas. In Southeast Asia, caves and karstic landscapes have been continuously utilized by local communities for thousands of years. Caves have been identified as significant repositories of each cultural, ecological and mineralogical value. Caves are the location of Buddhist shrines, animist spirit sites, and Vietnam War period, wild resource localities, and places for human habitation. Cross-disciplinary research finds caves and karstic environments hold information with the potential to produce undiscovered facts of past and present use and adaption of human and natural species. However, caves and karstic environments are also identified as 'under threat' from destruction in development contexts. Also, very little social scientific research into contemporary cave use in tropical locations in South East Asia has been completed, notably in the Lao PDR. Research of the cultural and natural heritage and contemporary human use of caves and karstic environments in the Lao PDR is therefore regarded as important and has the potential to explain how and why caves are used and are made meaningful to multiple users in a rapidly developing country that must increasingly consider caves and their traditional human use and value in heritage management practices.

**Rie Odajima****Poverty and Nationalism in Making a National Symbol: A Case Study of the Champasak World Heritage Site**

Graduate School of Letters, Arts and Sciences, Waseda University, Japan

Since December 2001 when the inscription to the World Heritage list was completed, in Champasak a series of new installations, such as the construction of an exhibition hall of artifacts and restorations of old buildings, have been undertaken by multiple agents composed either of domestic officers or of international experts. Concentrated on the site of Wat Phou, different authorities have deployed their own discourses about what is a heritage and how it should be. For local site managers hired from the local community, on the contrary, this quasi-neoliberal setting was bewildering because of an ambiguity about who had the initiative. Simultaneously, it was a process to tackle with "poverty" for them; to follow "global standards" to manage the Heritage meant nothing but a collapse of their site office that held a limit on budget. In order to avoid a worse situation, consequently, they found a more intimate way to manage "poverty," by keeping a spirit of thrift in their minds. This experience of "poverty" moreover led them to feeling "We, the Lao," though this "nationalism" was an individual rather than a collective sentiment in the space in which the location of power was not concrete. Based upon fieldwork at Wat Phou during the mid-2000s, this paper aims to depict ethnographically how "poverty" and "nationalism" are observed in everyday management of the Heritage site. By taking an example of this micro-space, it examines what can be sources of problems in development projects conducted in the wider context in the LPDR.

**Weeranan Damrongsakul**

**Displaying Ethnic Identity through a World Heritage Site: Ban Chiang as a Case Study of the Tai Phuan in the Northeast of Thailand**

Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, Salaya, Thailand

Thailand's Northeast (Isan) has long been considered a region rich in ethnic diversity. However, globalization and the modernization process can be detrimental to ethnic groups' livelihoods. If openly accepted without proper preparation, ethnic groups' ways of life might be vulnerable. In particular, the expansion of tourism plays an important role in commoditizing cultural heritage. Many ethnic groups compete to market their identities.

This paper describes a study of the Tai Phuan ethnic group in Ban Chiang, Nong Han district, Udon Thani province, to understand a complex process of ethnic identity construction and negotiation. Ban Chiang is a World Heritage Site internationally known as the home of the prehistoric population that settled in Southeast Asia more than 5,000 years ago. Villagers of Ban Chiang village today are of Tai Phuan ethnic origin migrating to Ban Chiang village from the left bank of the Mekong River in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rather than showcasing their Tai Phuan ethnic identity, the villagers choose to identify themselves as Ban Chiang villagers, suggesting that they share cultural heritage with the prehistoric population of Ban Chiang. They reproduce Ban Chiang styled red painted pottery for sale. Their carefully constructed and commoditized identity is evident in the narrative of Ban Chiang village history presented at the Ban Chiang National Museum.

**Thom Gatewongsa**

**The Representation of 'Nation' Shown through the History and the Exhibitions of the Lao National Museum**

Lecturer, Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

The Lao PDR is a country in Southeast Asia with complex, at times conflicting, social and cultural history that includes long-standing relationships with ethnic minority groups. Learning to understand such ethnic relationships and history is one important tool in enhancing much-needed international understanding in Southeast Asia.

For a number of visitors, the Lao National Museum is perhaps the first channel to learn about Lao's past. The themes and issues presented in the Lao National Museum are organized to communicate the nation's identity in the eyes of the ruling elites to the audience, both national and foreign citizens. The determination to portray the nation's image has long been driven by several important social, political, economic, and cultural factors and conditions.

This paper aims at studying the representation of Lao PDR as a 'Nation of Diversity' from the history of the establishment of the Lao National Museum and from a study of current and past exhibitions of the Lao National Museum.

**Leena Neng Her**

**Education, Development, and Modernity: Ethnic Minority Status and Schooling in Laos**

Assistant Professor, Department of Inclusive Education, Bagwell College of Education, Kennesaw State University, USA

The role of education has been linked to the notion of modernity and development (Inkeles, 1998). In developing nations such as Laos, education plays a significant role in articulating advancement towards modernity and development (Stambach, 2000). Given the impetus of the government toward development and modernization to free itself from being an underdeveloped country, this paper explores how modernizing policies have affected ethnic minorities in Laos by examining how members of one ethnic group (Hmong) have been affected by policy changes in education. It asks, what does schooling promise for citizens of a nation that is building itself from a socialist state to a market-based economy? What are implications for ethnic minority citizens of a nation when educational opportunities are scarce and infrastructure is limited? How does a nation and its people negotiate and understand these disparities? By exploring one ethnic group's understanding of educational disparities, this paper seeks to understand how the political economy of schooling intersects with the lives of everyday individuals in Laos.

The findings from this research are based on 12 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Laos over a period of 3 years in two Hmong villages in Vientiane Province, National University of Laos, and Health Science University in Vientiane Capital City.

**Amy Bowers**

**Quality vs. Quantity: Planning Supplemental Infrastructural Support Activities in Rural Schools of Laos**

Milwaukee, WI, USA

Organizations that provide educational support and development in rural Laos rely heavily on building schools, completing repairs and distributing supplies as quantitative indicators of their work. Although rural schools do benefit greatly from such infrastructural development, providing quality supplemental support, as well as persistent follow-ups, can offer greater rewards. From my own experience as an intern with an NGO doing sustainable development work in Laos, I have seen first-hand how supplemental activities can increase awareness and generate interest around new infrastructure. This can in turn lead to more community support and investment in maintaining the project over an extended period of time, which is essential to the long term survivability of the projects started by NGO's. However, I have also experienced that activities going deeper than providing school infrastructure are complicated to plan, implement, and evaluate. In this presentation I will explain why I feel it is important to provide supplemental activities to infrastructural support of rural schools in Laos, provide examples of such activities and explore possible difficulties of implementation.

**Christine Elliott**

**Literacy Activities of Lao University Students**

Ph.D Candidate, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

This paper examines data collected from a survey of students at the National University of Laos pertaining to student reading and writing practices in Lao, English and other languages. This paper is part of a larger project looking at student multilingual literacy practices both inside and outside of

school as a way to better understand challenges of English language education particularly in the Lao post-secondary context.

The Lao government continues to position rates of functional literacy in Lao language as a key indicator in being able to meet national poverty reduction and sustainable development goals. Similarly, knowledge of English has been positioned by the Lao government as a critical factor necessary for the development of human capital to meet economic development goals and integration into Southeast Asian and world communities. However, in practice, what is it that Lao university students are reading and writing in Lao, English or other languages?

Analysis of survey data is used to help contextualize the language and literacy experiences of eight focal students who participated in an ethnographic case study examining student literacy practices. This paper will examine types of print and technology-based literacy activities that students are involved in both inside and outside of the classroom and include preliminary discussion of changes that are taking place in Laos which may impact student multilingual literacy practices.

**Larry Ashmun**

**Laos Online: A Resources' Overview**

University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

Resources available online about Laos/the Lao PDR exist more than ever before in today's world. They range in nature from digitized versions of books originally published in hardcopy, to governmental, international and NGO documents, to photographs and slides similarly scanned, to items born digital, and variations in between. Good examples of these include (a) History of Laos by Maha Sila Viravong (as translated from Lao by the U. S. Joint Publications Research Service in 1959), (b) “ແຜນທີ່ກ່ຽວກັບສັງຄົມ-ເສດຖະກິດຂອງ ສປປລາວ” (or, its title fully Romanized, Pūm phānthī kieokap sangkhom-sēththakit khōng Sō Pō Pō Lāo kānvikhrō phūnthān dān phon khōng kānsamlūat phonlamūang lāe thīyū ‘āsai nai pī 2005), by the Lao Department of Statistics, Ministry of Planning and Investment and several international organizations [2008], (c) Aiding or abetting? internal resettlement and international aid agencies in the Lao PDR, by Ian Baird and Bruce Shoemaker [2005], (d) the pioneering Journal of Lao Studies published by the Center for Lao Studies, and (e) “Indochina War Refugees in Laos, 1954-1975—Documents and Reports”, a 2013 collection addition within SEAIt (Southeast Asian images & Texts project), a unique University of Wisconsin-Madison digital resource.

**Suwaree Sripoona**

**Learning Management Method for ASEAN Studies in Lao PDR**

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Loei Rajabhat University, Thailand

ASEAN community is the cooperation of the countries in Southeast Asian countries that have various and diverse geographical, historical, socio-economic and political situations. Therefore, ASEAN studies are significant. This study aims to study the learning management method and problems of ASEAN studies of Thai and Lao. Two Lao secondary schools were selected. Data was collected by means of in-depth interviews, observations and documentary studies. The participants were school principals, teachers and students. Content analysis was applied.

The findings were as follows. Learning management focused on a new generation of citizens building for an ASEAN center of Laos. At the secondary level, there was no direct ASEAN content, but content was



inserted in social science subjects that consisted of geography, history and citizen studies. In geography, it focused on the knowledge of cultural and economic aspects of ASEAN. The learning management methods were multi-disciplinary integration that inserted the infusion model of contents rather than interdisciplinary integration. The teachers' teaching concentrated on successful and outstanding case studies of ASEAN countries as the themes and then compared and connected them with Laos. Supplementary activities were conducted such as exhibitions and quizzes through photos and television. The ASEAN studies problems in Laos were stated as the shortage of books, artificial globes, electronic media and budget.

The findings are stated as the limitation of resources. The wealthy countries should support budget for higher education and fieldtrip studies. Besides, more learning media should be provided.

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**Panel 4 Lao Literature Friday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1.30-3.30, Room 309**

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**Smai Wanna-udorn**

***Phra Lak Phra Lam: The Representation of Cultural Ecology in Lao Society***

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

This research article is aimed at studying the role of the literature *Phra Lak Phra Lam*, the Lao version of the Ramayana, which represents wisdom in the cultural ecology of Lao society in the past through the relationships between human and human, human and nature, and human and supernatural things.

The study's findings reveal that the literature *Phra Lak Phra Lam* represents cultural ecology in Lao society through 1) *Physical space*; for example; it shows the topography of the Mekong River's basin as in the travelling routes of the characters, which can show the state of cities, scenery, existing tributaries of the Mekong River, forests, mountains, minerals, plants and animals in local areas, etc.; 2) *Sacred space or ideal space* represents beliefs: indigenous beliefs and Buddhist beliefs, namely; belief in the Naga, belief that humans were born from nature and are a part of nature, and it represents cosmologies, traditions and rites; 3) *Social space* represents the relationships between human and human, such as trade exchange, tax levying, husbandry, exchange with other ethnic groups who live in the Mekong Region, marriage across ethnic groups, and politics, etc.

**Soraya Thunyapakob**

**The Nang Phom Horm Legend: Narration of the Memory of Tai Loei and the Identity of Lao Ethnic**

Graduate Student, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

The Nang Phom Horm Legend was in the memory of people and was told widely in the Me Khong (Mekong) region. The narration was told differently by each ethnic group and was adapted according to the source of culture. This article is on a study of the identity of the Tai Loei ethnic group through the narration of the Nang Phom Horm legend in the memory of the Tai Loei, analyzed by concepts from the Memory of the displaced people and the concept of identity.

It was found that the narration of the Nang Phom Horm legend was of a story that shows the relationship of the Tai Loei ethnic group who descended from the Lao Lan Chang kingdom in Luang Prabang. The value of the narration was purposively to teach the rules of Karma (the results of what people do) and to promote doing good things following Buddhist principles such as showing gratitude which is reflected in the society, the customs, the festivals, and the sense of involvement in the creation of ethnic identity. In the legend, the characters were specified and set to be related to the beliefs of the

historical and the cultural dimensions; so the Nang Phom Horm legend was a tool for enhancing the completion and the solidity of the Tai Loei culture, maintaining the social pattern along with the unity of people in the society for benefit in living the ways of life in Thai society.

**Panita Noilublao**

**The Phadang-Nang Ei Tale Type: Its Popularity and Reproduction**

Graduate Student, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

The purpose of the article is to study the popularity of the Phadang-Nang Ei story and the nature of the reproduction of the various tales belonging to the Phadang-Nang Ei tale type. Thirty four stories of the Phadang-Nang Ei tale type are collected from northeastern Thailand.

The study reveals that the Phadang-Nang Ei tale type is widely known among the Thai – Isan people and also people in Laos know this story very well. This shows that the Thai – Isan and the Lao peoples similarly and mutually know the stories belonging to the Phadang-Nang Ei tale type. Analysis shows that the structure of the Phadang-Nang Ei tale type consists of 5 important episodes: first, the lovers marry; second, the spouses are separated by the parents; third, being tested about true love; fourth, the woman dies; and in the last episode, the man also dies.

The study of the tale reproduction indicates that various versions or new stories under new names can be reproduced though sharing the same structure with the Phadang-Nang Ei tale type. The analysis shows that new tales can be reproduced under 8 conditions: 1)changing the order of certain functions; 2) reducing some episodes or certain functions; 3) choosing only certain episodes and making new stories; 4)repeating certain functions in order to emphasize a certain episode; 5)adding new functions or new episodes; 6) adding subplots into the main plot; 7) combining two stories together; and 8) changing the details of every function though holding onto the old sequential structure. Under these 8 circumstances, variants of the Phadang-Nang Ei story and new tales belonging to the Phadang-Nang Ei tale type can be created and reproduced though the tale structure remains the same.

**Panel B: Friday April 19, 2013, 4.00-6.00PM**

**Panel 6 Nam Theun II and other Lao Hydropower Dams**

**Friday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 4.00-6.00, Room 313**

**Alan Potkin**

**Missing the Boat at the Nam Phit Turbinated Outfall**

Team Leader, Digital Conservation Facility, Laos

Until the proposed Mekong-mainstem Xayaboury dam goes forward, the largest and most controversial hydropower project so far implemented in Laos is Nam Theun II (NT2), an inter-basin transfer scheme of ~1,300 MW installed capacity. The World Bank (and later the Asian Development Bank) championed NT2; and for the former, it represented an emphatic return to investing in “pharaonic” dams. Much was made of the extraordinary commitments to E/SIA and to generous mitigation elements funded by the revenue stream, but without question, NT2 was very far along before likely down-basin effects within the receiving waterway —the Xe Bang Fai (XBF)— and its floodplains were even half-seriously addressed. Reportedly, a relatively minor and obscure “flooded forest” fishery located exactly where NT2’s turbinated effluent outfall (Q = 314 cumecs!) was to have entered Nam Phit —about 8 km above the XBF confluence—long-entailed quite notable ecological, nutritional and cultural aspects. Whatever the more-distant impacts of NT2 might have been on “living aquatic resources”, it was beyond serious

doubt that this particular Nam Phit fishery was sustainable, once NT2 went online. The NT2 developers were advised of this site and encouraged to survey and document its latter-day usage; its likely demise; and eventually, its post-facto environment: a proposal they then declined. Such an investigation would have seemed a basic obligation on the proponents' parts, within a properly comprehensive S/EIA; and not least also, to comprise a part of the regional institutional memory. We intend to re-visit Nam Phit in early 2013 and to present our findings in emerging formats for archival interactive media.

**Nicholas R. Zeller**

**Doing a Dam Better? Understanding the World Bank's Eco-Governmentality in Lao Hydropower Development**

Graduate Student, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

The purpose of this research is to make explicit the arts of government, defined as a field of power in the Foucauldian sense, employed by the World Bank in the cases of Pak Mun Dam in Thailand and Nam Theun II Dam in Lao PDR. Much of the literature on the latter case, both from the World Bank and its critics, focuses on the incorporation of conservation practices and the creation of state apparatuses which account for natural resources and local populations through a discourse of environmentalism. Using World Bank planning and evaluation documents, I argue that although these practices represent an escalation of the role of environmentalism in the justificatory logic for new hydropower projects, they do not represent a change in the World Bank's major justificatory mechanism, the presence or absence of institutional structures necessary for present and future project implementation. That is, project justifications continue to rest, on the one hand, on an already established relationship with the borrower such that the World Bank's technical and managerial expertise can be easily transmitted, or, on the other hand, the presumed likelihood that such a relationship can be established. In either case, the emphasis is on the creation of what I call a seasoned borrower and its inclusion into the production of knowledge legible to development discourse.

**Tania Lee**

**Cracks in the Walls: Reflections on Dams as a Poverty Alleviation Strategy in Laos**

Lao Program Coordinator, International Rivers

There are over 80 dams planned or under construction by Lao PDR on the Mekong River and its tributaries, with more than 90% of the power generated to be exported to neighbouring countries. Opening up the rivers of Laos for hydropower development by foreign companies is promoted by government authorities as well as international donor agencies as a route towards development and prosperity. However, research has demonstrated that the social and environmental track record of dam building in Laos has been poor, with affected communities consistently deprived of access to natural resources essential for their survival. To date, tens of thousands of people living downstream and upstream of hydropower projects in Laos have not been adequately compensated for their losses. Furthermore, there has been little evidence that the revenues from these projects are used to alleviate poverty in the communities most affected by them. Though affected villagers are promised new infrastructure and livelihood programs, realities on the ground reveal that there are often inadequate resources to meet the infrastructural needs of these families, unaffordable fees imposed for usage of electricity and water provision, and livelihood restoration attempts that become failed experiments in social engineering.

To provide alternative perspectives to the mainstream discourses on hydropower in Laos, this paper will present an analysis of three dam projects at different stages of development, based on first-hand field

research and literature reviews: the widely promoted Nam Theun 2 Dam, the recently completed Theun Hinboun Expansion Project, and the first dam to advance along the Lower Mekong River, the Xayaburi Hydropower Project.

**Philip Hirsch**

**Dams, Land and Livelihoods in Lao PDR: Converging Agendas?**

Professor, University of Sydney, Australia

Long-running debates on hydropower development in Laos have seen the country push ahead with an accelerating program of dam building in a highly charged policy setting. More recently, issues of access to land have intensified, with the realization that the notion of Laos as a land-abundant country is no longer tenable – if it ever was – and that development of the country's land resources involves tradeoffs, conflicts and inequitable outcomes. Meanwhile, the less politicized arena of livelihood development through a host of rural development programs has increasingly collided with the resource constraints associated with widespread projects to grow the country's economy from its natural resource base. This presentation explores the convergence of these hitherto somewhat separate policy arenas and debates at a national level and through preliminary observations from a case study in Feuang District of Vientiane Province in central Laos.

**Panel 7 Agriculture and Development**

**Friday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 4.00-6.00, Room 325**

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**John H. Barnett**

**Lao Agriculture, Aquaculture and Forestry Policies 1986-2012: A Discussion**

Associate Professor of Political Science, Emporia State University, USA

The purpose of this paper is to discuss Lao politics and rural development, focusing on agricultural policies that include aquaculture and forestry. This paper is divided into five parts. Part one discusses the historical background of Lao agriculture policies from 1976-1985. Part two focuses on research methods and the problems that were encountered. Part three discusses the policies from 1986-1996. Part four discusses policies from 1997 to present. Part five will give the analysis.

Laos is a very poor country and the majority of all economic activity is still related to the agricultural sector. Like all developing countries, the goal is to reach self-sufficiency in to be able to food its own people first. What is left over is then sold into the global markets such as Cambodia, Thailand, and China. Although Lao agriculture reforms were implemented as early as 1976, Lao leaders sought to preserve the family economy (agricultural activity) because it made up a huge portion of their national economy, while at the same time trying to preserve socialist ideals.

Over a period of 26 years, the Lao government created policies that encouraged development of the agriculture sector. To be more specific this includes rice, coffee, rubber, and peppers which they are now exporting on the global market.

**Miles Kenney-Lazar**

**State Strategies of Agricultural Modernization and Shifting Cultivation in Laos**

Ph.D Candidate, Clark University, USA

Since the 1975 revolution, the Lao state has sought to lead the country on a path of economic modernization by boosting agricultural productivity and eliminating shifting cultivation (also known as

swidden or slash-and-burn), an agricultural practiced viewed as antiquated and associated with rural impoverishment and environmental degradation. Government policy programs, such as land and forest allocation, were intended to reduce and eventually eradicate shifting cultivation, but instead have constrained the ability of upland farmers to construct socially and environmentally sustainable livelihoods. Over the years, the very apparent devastating impact of these policies upon rural populations and pressure from international donors have influenced the government to incrementally reform its approach toward swidden, providing a space for certain types of stabilized shifting cultivation, referred to as 'upland rotational cultivation'. However, it is still not clear what this form of rural production might look like or how it might impact upland livelihoods, in part because significant ambiguities and contradictions still exist within the policy framework and it remains to be seen whether and how these policy changes will be implemented. In this paper—based upon an analysis of government policies, prior research reports, and interviews with development practitioners—I argue that the uncertainties and confusions within the Lao government's current approach toward shifting cultivation reflects the country's fraught engagement with a broader agricultural and economic modernization project. The situation of swidden today is representative of a larger political impasse within the state concerning how to organize upland territories and their inhabitants.

**Charlotte Moser**

**Participation of Women Fishers in Village Fishery Management on the Sekong River, Lao PDR**

Consultant, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Water Programme, Asia Regional Office, Bangkok, Thailand' Deputy Chair, IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management-North America & Caribbean, Washington DC, USA

Gender-specific divisions of labor in village fisheries, combined with deteriorating water quality in the Sekong River basin in Attapeu Province have put women fishers at the center of what could be the threshold of an ecosystem collapse. Based on recent field work in Attapeu Province, this paper will draw on resilience theory to examine how integrating women into traditionally male fishery management could activate a positive feedback loop during a period of rapid change for Lao PDR.

Research for this paper will be conducted primarily through public documents available at the World Bank, Washington DC and Vientiane, Lao PDR, and the Mekong River Commission Secretariat, Vientiane, as well as interviews and research on site in Vientiane and Pakse, as funds are available.

**Vorada Savengseuksa**

**Developing a Strategy Framework for Improved Non-Government Organization Work in the Lao PDR for Sustainable Development**

Graduate Student, Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington, USA

**Background.** The presence of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in development is growing exponentially, including in the Lao PDR (or hereinafter referred to as Laos) and its INGO sector. The climate of public service and community work, therefore, has changed substantially for INGOs and other public service organizations in carrying out their activities. With regards to the shifts in managing policy, strategic planning, and leadership, administrators of INGOs must be able to understand the strategies and competencies that non-governmental organizations and community-based initiatives should pursue in order to operate successfully and sustainably in Laos.

**Research Objective.** The focus of this research is to ask, "What is an effective framework of managing policy and processes within the Lao PDR for non-governmental organizations that supports sustainable

development work?” In attempting to answer these questions, the research uncovers several elements of competent leadership and effective strategies that may be applied to Lao INGOs.

**Methods.** Administrators at seven INGO entities in Laos were interviewed individually for 1 to 1.5 hours in this process. Each organization had a presence in Laos for at least 15 years with the exception of one non-direct service provider. Open-ended interview guides were developed and addressed key themes in organizational structure, internal capacity building, managing processes, and strategic communication. The respondents represent a wide range of sectors including but not limited to primary and secondary education, UXO clearance, environmental and wildlife conservation, land rights, health and sanitation, child welfare, human trafficking, sexual abuse intervention and prevention, and alternate livelihood creation.

**Results and Their Implications.** At current, the preliminary findings are being finalized from summer 2012; so far, the results revealed a number of lessons learned. In brief, the respondents shared their work in best practices and recommend bolstering the following areas for successful INGO work in Laos:

- Advocacy approaches
- Relationship building
- Conducting research on national policies
- Building local leadership capacity
- Role of expatriate staff in capacity building

The findings of this research are in process of finalization. The research here has also been selected to be published as a chapter in the book “Growing Sustainable Communities: A Development Guide for Southeast Asia,” to be submitted for publication in Winter/Spring 2013 by Tilde University Press. Our hope is these qualitative data and best practice data will inform the design of a preliminary framework of strategies based on the current policies, processes, and opportunities for growth.

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#### **Panel 8 Culture and Change: Recent Studies on the Peoples of Laos**

**Friday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 4.00-6.00, Room 335**

**Jacob Cawthorne\*, Champathong Phochanthilath\*\*, Tara Gujadhur\*\*\*, and Yukino Ochiai\*\*\*\***

\*Ph.D Candidate, Asia Institute, \*\*University of Melbourne, Deputy Head, History and Archaeology Department, Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Laos, Lao PDR, \*\*\*Co-Director, Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre, Lao PDR \*\*\*\*Associate Professor, Kagoshima University Museum, Japan

The exposure of Laos' diverse population of six million to the world continues to intensify as the country's infrastructure expands. The demarcation of international boundaries, opening of new border crossings, construction of bridges for transnational crossings, and plans for a high-speed railway in Laos are just some modes in which different political, economic, and cultural elements are brought into the lives of its citizens. Increasing interest in Laos' ethnic diversity and cultures is attracting visitors to the country, and tourism also increases exposure to these elements.

In the name of modernity and development, aspects of traditional life and culture are being replaced with transglobal features. Although changes constantly occur and perceptions of group identity and culture are continuously being adjusted to accommodate the various changes, alterations are occurring

more rapidly with the increasing exposure. Some of these modifications have led to the loss of markers of identity and culture. How can preservation of cultural markers occur without freezing them in time?

This panel explores changing perceptions of identity and culture of some ethnic groups of Laos, such as the Brao and Kim Mun. The panel papers based on ethnographic research address issues of identity and change, relationships between people and nature, and challenges in the interpretation of ethnographic research findings in a museum setting.

**Tara Gujadhur**

**Interpreting the Ethnic Diversity of Laos: A Museum Perspective**

Co-Director, Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre, Lao PDR

Laos is host to a rich diversity of cultures, traditions, lifestyles and arts. Its roughly 6.8 million people are distributed among four major ethnolinguistic groups, which are said to represent over 100 ethnic groups and sub-groups. There are a number of approaches to categorising and representing this immense cultural diversity, and the exact number of officially recognised ethnic groups shifts every 10 years with the government census-taking.

Though no longer official, a classification which divides the country's people into three categories based on geography and eco-niche has persisted over the years: Lao Loum, Lao Theung, and Lao Soung. Though an oversimplification of the complex and changing circumstances by which people live, these terms are still popular and regularly heard today. Many Lao citizens will use one of the three names to refer to themselves if asked about their ethnicity, and in urban areas, many residents are not familiar with any other terms for ethnic identity.

In the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre, a non-governmental, non-profit museum in Luang Prabang, a process of re-education is attempted. The displays aim to introduce ethnic groups through their ethnonyms and individuality, referring to the Diasporas, exhibiting contemporary clothing, and acknowledging the complexities in the cosmology and identities of each group. The conundrum arises of how to accurately and sensitively represent ethnic groups to maximise the amount of knowledge a Lao or foreign visitor is able to absorb, without oversimplifying entire cultures.

**Jacob Cawthorne**

**Taoism in Laos: An Investigation of Present-Day Kim Mun Ritual Practices**

University of Melbourne, Australia

The Kim Mun are an ethnic sub-group classified as part of the *Hmong-Mien* (or *Miao-Yao*) ethnolinguistic family. In Asia, Kim Mun communities can be found scattered throughout the contiguous area of southern China and the northern regions of Laos and Vietnam, however their ancestral homeland is located in southern China. The Kim Mun practice a mixture of ancestor worship, shamanism and a form of Taoism most akin to the Meishan teachings. It is this tripartite religious configuration that provides structure and guidance to Kim Mun communities.

Taoist ritual, with regard to its mediation of the interactions between the terrestrial and heavenly realms, models itself on the religious rites and bureaucratic practices of the Chinese imperial state. Taoist practitioners have long assumed the role of intermediary between the lay populace and these realms for the benefit of local communities. Kim Mun communities have however, despite adopting aspects of Taoist ritual into their religious framework, operated largely outside imperial administration

and civil and religious bureaucracies. Nonetheless, during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the demarcation of national borders aligned many Kim Mun communities within the polities of new nation-states and redefined the social obligations of Kim Mun communities to the state.

In light of this development, the purpose of this paper is to analyse data collected from fieldwork in Laos in order to illustrate 1) the role of Taoist ritual in Kim Mun religion in its present form, and 2) the role Kim Mun religion plays in defining relationships both within the community and between the community and the modern Lao state.

**Yukino Ochiai**

**Lessons in Museum Interpretation: An Ethnobotanical Case Study in Laos**

Associate Professor, Kagoshima University Museum, Japan

How do we share the findings of research with people in the study areas? To answer this question, traveling exhibitions were organized by “Traveling Museum” in Oudomxai, Luang Prabang and Vientiane, Laos from 2006 to 2007. The exhibits were based on my ethnobotanical research on uses of seeds (Job’s tears or Gramineae Coix) as beads in Southeast Asia (Laos, Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia and the Philippines) and East Asia (Taiwan and Japan). When comparing handicrafts from various places in the displays, visitors realize that: 1) not only Lao people but also people in other areas use the same type of plant seed for handicraft making which have their own purposes, meanings and aesthetic senses; and 2) the seed can be re-evaluated as plant resource closely connected to ethnic culture in Laos. These results suggest that handicrafts play an important role as symbols of plant diversity and cultural diversity and also mediators between producers of handicrafts and visitors to the museum exhibitions.

**Khampanh Keovilaysak**

**Brao People’s Livelihood Change**

Global Association for People and the Environment (GAPE), Pakse, Lao PDR

Brao is one in forty nine ethnic groups of Laos, and it is grouping in the Mon-Khmer group. “Lave” was well known by low-land Lao, but Brao people its self prefers to call “Brao”, and at the present, the Lao government has adopted to use “Brao” as the officially name of this ethnic.

Population of Brao is around 55,000 people, a half in Cambodia and a half in Laos. There is a village in Vietnam. Within Brao ethnic group has many sub-group such: Brao-Kanying, Brao-Hmong, Brao-Kavet, Brao-Mba, Brao-Yree, Brao-Loun, Brao-Pah, Brao-Trabok, Brao-Kreung, and Brao-Tanap.

The Brao people in Laos are mostly living in Attapeu and Champasak province. They use to living by doing rotation shifting cultivation, and being on natural resources. By this living style, Brao people have very nice culture. Especially, they have their own language, dress style, traditional music and song style. In addition, they have many kind of celebrations and ceremonies that show about dignity and solidarity among themselves.

Livelihood of Brao people in Laos at the present has been change very much by affecting from the Lao government policy and social change. Lao government has strategy to stop shifting cultivation; they are moving ethnic people from mountainous to the low-land, to have permanent occupation by providing an appropriate area for doing rice paddy to villagers which is making changing all life style of Brao people. They have been lost all important ceremonies that related to culture on agricultural; they are



losing important traditional seeds that they have ever grown on their rice field when they were on the mountainous; they are losing knowledge on herbal medicine;... etc.

The life style of Brao people at the present is mostly the same like Lao Lum people. Young Brao are learning and practicing Lao Loum culture. They are missing their dressing; traditional music; traditional folk song;...etc. moreover, in some communities are missing their own language. These are the social change. These changing is also causing from government policy said above. Because most of Brao communities right now is located in low-land which is easy to access to the city, and the communication between people in community and outsider are accessible; it makes easy for young Brao people to consume the other popular culture, and it is hard to turn them back.

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**Panel 9 Lao History      Friday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 4.00-6.00, Room 326**

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**Ian Lowman**

**Understanding Vat Phou: An Early Khmer Pilgrimage Site**

Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century Vat Phou has been recognized as one of the most significant archaeological monuments in Southeast Asia; today it is one of two world heritage sites in modern Laos. Perhaps noting its proximity to the 18<sup>th</sup> century Lao kingdom of Champasak on the Mekong, scholars have sought to uncover Vat Phou's independent political history: it has been identified variously with the first capital of Chenla, the homeland of the Khmers, and the city-kingdom of Śreṣṭhapura.

This paper will try to put these theories about Vat Phou's political history to rest. Vat Phou in its heyday was not a separate polity but a Khmer pilgrimage destination—Angkorian Cambodia's answer to Pura Besakih in Bali or the Cham temple complex at Mỹ Sơn in central Vietnam. Unlike Mỹ Sơn, Vat Phou was always located on the political periphery, a fact which accounted in part for its sacred significance. It was especially important as the location of Cambodia's premier *svayambhū* or "self-generated" Śaivite deity, Bhadreśvara or Kamrateṇ Jagat Liṅgapura. As such, it must be understood within the context of a far-reaching Khmer network of *svayambhū* shrines of which it was the most revered during the Angkorian period (9<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries CE). Though Vat Phou was never politically separate, it had unique authority, at once sacred and profane, for provincial Khmer elites who were obsessed with accruing merit and obtaining tax-exempt property.

**Ivan Polson**

**The Last King of Ubon Ratchathani**

Australia

Shortly after his coronation in 1852, Rama IV presented his good and loyal governor of Ubon Ratchathani, Phra Prom Worarat Suriyawong (Kuthong), with a set of gold regalia, an honor usually reserved to princes. With this act he confirmed the success and importance of the place, effectively elevating it to the status of a vassal state. On Kuthong's death, he completed this elevation by appointed a Lao prince, Chao Phrom Thewanukhro (Phrom), a grandson of Chau Anuvong, to be the first King of Ubon Ratchathani.

After twenty fraught years of attempting to govern, Phrom was forced to abandon his throne and was replaced by a salaried commissioner, a Bangkok government official who answered to directly to Bangkok and whose authority was enforced by professional Siamese soldiers. This

direct rule from Bangkok is the model that is expanded to become direct rule of all the middle Mekong valley polities that were not ceded to direct colonial rule by the French.

Using narrative and drawing on Thai, French and English language sources, this paper attempts to draw a portrait of the people of the place to show that while this decision may have been well meaning, it reflected Bangkok's failure to understand the place, and it set in train the complete collapse of the old world of the middle Mekong Valley with disastrous consequences for people all across the Khorat Plateau.

**Nutkritta Nammontree**

**The Story of Chao Anuwong in the Korat Community and its Dynamics in Conveying the Meanings of Thai-Lao Relations**

Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

Chao Anuwong (1767-1829) was highly respected and honored by the Laos as the great hero who saved the country in 1829. Chao Anuwong attempted to seize Korat but his troops were resisted and finally forced to retreat by Thao Suranari, also known as Khun Ying Mo. His story has become a historical story which is widely recognized and presented in many different ways in Korat until now.

This article presents the roles, functions, and meanings of Chao Anuwong's story in the Korat community, in relation to the relationship between the Thais and the Lao. The main quest of this article is to see how the functions and meanings of the story have been constructed, interpreted, and changed in the Korat community. The concepts of storytelling and its dynamics were employed for the study.

It was found that the story of Chao Anuwong presented the roles, functions, and meanings in relation to the life of the people in the Thai-Lao community in Korat in 4 ways: 1) The story of Chao Anuwong and its role in promoting social harmony, 2) The story of Chao Anuwong and the binary opposition meanings, 3) The story of Chao Anuwong and the symbolic meanings, and 4) The story of Chao Anuwong and the dynamics of Thai-Lao relations.

The presentation of the meanings of Thai-Lao relations through the story of Chao Anuwong reflects the roles, functions, and meaning of stories in relation to the people in the Korat community, leading to historical awareness and harmony between the Thai and Lao people in the Korat community in the changing world under globalization and the ASEAN community trend.

**Patrice Ladwig**

**Re-Materializing Empire and Colonial Rule as Mimesis: The Reconstruction of Sacred Lao Monuments and the Patronage of Buddhism in French Indochina**

Research Unit Historical Anthropology, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany

When Laos became part of the French empire in 1893, colonial officials found Vientiane in devastated condition. After King Anouvong lost the battle against the Siamese in 1827, the city was almost completely destroyed and large parts of the population were deported to Siam. Temples and other Buddhist monuments were not exempted from this destruction. French colonialism from very early on had an interest in sponsoring and restructuring Lao Buddhism in order to create an 'Indochinese Buddhism' that was supposed to counter Bangkok's hegemony in religious matters. Over a span of several decades, but in a more concerted ways after 1930, the French promoted monastic education,

reconstructed the major temples in Vientiane and renovated the *thaat Luang*, the most important Buddhist relic shrine of Laos. This article explores the motivations and strategies for this endeavor, and specifically focuses on French efforts to 're-materialize' Lao Buddhism. I argue that this can certainly be understood as a strategy to enhance and stabilize colonial rule, but that, moreover, this also represents a mimetic strategy that imitates the patronage of Kings towards Buddhism and his control of the monastic order. This partial imitation of local concepts of rule and statecraft by the French demanded a detailed knowledge of Buddhist civilization, which colonial administrators, and scholars and architects of the École française d'Extrême-Orient produced. Finally, by exploring emic concepts related to relic shrines as symbols and centers of the power of Buddhist kingdoms, I want to argue that the renovation of these monuments and the other measures of patronage are to be understood as a colonial politics of emotion and sentiment. Mimetic processes were crucial for winning the 'sympathies' of the colonized.

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**Panel 10 Music**                      **Friday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 4.00-6.00, Room 309**

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**Terry E. Miller**

**One Hundred Fifty Years of Musical Memory: Khap Phuan Singing among the Thai Phuan of Lopburi Province, Thailand**

Professor Emeritus, Kent State University, Kent, OH, USA

Following the Siamese invasions of Vientiane, 1827-1829, Lao Prince Anuvong sought protection on the high plateau occupied by the Phuan in the Xiang Khuang area. Following Anuvong's capture and during the following years most of the Phuan population was forced to migrate to central Thailand, joining other contingents of Lao, as well as Mon from Burma and Yonok Thai from northern Thailand. Lopburi province remains the center of the Thai-Phuan population today, especially Ban Mi district west of the provincial capital, where there is a cultural center and museum. In 2012 I met and recorded two elderly female singers, both in their 90's, and a male *khaen* (mouth organ) player of similar age. After the singers and an audience of neighbors sang several central Thai *ram thon* circle dance songs, the elderly singers performed what they remembered of *khap phuan*, the traditional form of repartee singing of the Phuan people of Laos. Although their voices are no longer strong, it was clear that they were singing *khap phuan* similar enough to that which I recorded near Xiang Khuang and Ban Ban in 1991 that I could recognize its distinctions. Informants affirmed that there had been no known collaboration between these singers and today's Phuan in Laos, suggesting that select culture bearers of the Ban Mi area have passed the singing tradition down through the generations for almost two hundred years. The paper explores both the historical background and the peculiarities of *khap phuan* as retained in Ban Mi.

**Priwan Nanongkham**

***Thet Phawet: Aesthetic and Legitimacy in Lao Vocal Buddhist Music***

Kent State University, Kent, OH, USA

In Buddhist society, monks are considered and expected to be serious practitioners who are not allowed or supposed to engage in any kind of musical activity. Music and any other kind of entertainment are unnecessary among those who are expected or have reached higher levels than common laymen in pursuing the path of "happiness." However, music is not totally disregarded among Buddhist monks. In a general sense, *saut* "chanting" is a kind of music that is an essential part of religious activity although it is not regarded as music. Unlike the *saut*, *thet lae* "preaching in style of *lae*" is another kind of music that is common only among talented monks who have gifts in "singing." Different kinds of *thet lae* are classified based on the preaching topics. *Thet lae phawet* or shortly *thet phawet* is a *jataka* sung by Buddhist monks telling the story of Prince *Wetsandawn* who is willing to give away his children and wife

to fulfill his Buddhist faith. In Lao tradition, *thet phawet* is the main activity in the *bun phawet*, the “*phawet* festival” held in March or April. It is a ceremony in which monks have a chance to teach Buddhism formally through the story of *Wetsandawn* in a musical style in order to catch laymen’s attention to the teaching. This presentation offers a discussion of aesthetic in the *thet phawet*, Lao vocal music in a Buddhist form of preaching, both in sonic structure and poetic aspects examining what is considered legitimate “music” from the Lao Buddhist perspective.

**Gregory Green**

**Self-Teaching the *Khaen*: A Practical Resource Review and Discussion of Implications for the Future**

Curator, Echols Collection (Southeast Asia), Cornell University, NY, USA

Though seen as a symbol of Lao culture, the *khaen* in Laos has an uncertain future. Older Lao *khaen* experts often lament the lack of interest by young Lao in learning to play or make the instrument. Thus they worry about not being able to pass on their specialized skills. In order to build up interest, the community of *khaen* experts in Laos recently created a national *khaen* competition. While a competition to reward the best *khaen* players and makers is a start, it is unclear if it will lead to a large community of younger *khaen* experts. Fewer numbers of young experts also means fewer numbers of future instructors. At the same time as the pool of experts is decreasing inside Laos, an increasing amount of material purporting to teach *khaen* playing is being uploaded to the internet by people outside of the country. This adds to the small amount of teaching material previously available in print. Can one self-teach traditional *khaen* playing or making via the internet and printed resources without the services of an instructor? After answering this question, I will review the available resources’ usefulness in teaching the next generation of *khaen* experts both inside and outside of Laos. I will also suggest how current teaching resources can be improved and attempt to identify what cannot be done without an expert instructor. This will then aid those interested in the future of the *khaen* in Laos to focus resources on areas that need the most attention.

**S. Steve Arounsack**

**Transnationalism and Lao Music: A Comparative Analysis between the Homeland and the United States**

Assistant Professor, Anthropology Program, California State University, Stanislaus, USA

Since 2003, the modern music industry in Laos has flourished and subsequently influenced listening habits of the Lao diaspora in the United States. By 2010, hip-hop and rock music from Laos established solid footholds at home and abroad, with a legion of young musicians and executives driving the movement. However, very few studies have examined the Lao music industry—both in Laos and the United States—and how the influence of these industries has spread beyond conventional geopolitical borders. No clear metric has been applied to Lao music’s transnational potential. This study measures transnationalism through the number of international concerts held by Lao nationals and Lao-American musicians (*i.e.*, the number of cross-border music events held).

Additionally, this study employs a reflexive anthropological approach: my ethnographic fieldwork in northern Laos from 1994 to 2008 examined transnationalism, specifically how the diaspora in the United States maintain ties with the homeland through music. Unbeknownst to me at the time, I was witnessing the infancy of what became a seismic shift in the music industry in Laos during the turn of the millennia. I lived amongst, interviewed, and/or worked with a number of prominent Lao musicians in both Laos and the United States between 2003 and 2010. Because ethnographic data regarding the Lao music industry is extremely limited, their perspectives provide rare insight into a subculture that has

transformed the listening habits of Lao worldwide. Results and observations confirm that these two cousin industries, while connected, are headed in two very different directions.

**Panel C: Saturday April 20, 2013, 8.30-10.10 AM**

**Panel 11 Mining      Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 8.30-10.10, Room 335**

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**Nigel Chang**

**Ancient Miners, Modern Miners – and their Communities: the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage of Vilabouly District, Savannakhet Province, Lao PDR**

School of Arts and Social Sciences, James Cook University, Queensland, Australia

Other Authors:

Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy (Department of National Heritage, Lao PDR)

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Phimmaseng Khamdalavong (Department of National Heritage, Lao PDR)

Souliya Bounxaythip (Department of National Heritage, Lao PDR)

Warren Mayes (LXML-MMG Sepon Copper and Gold Operation, Lao PDR)

Amphone Monephachan (National University of Laos)

Ongoing copper and gold mining in Vilabouly District has led to the discovery of an ancient copper mining industry dating to at least 2300 years ago. This paper outlines the results of excavations and other fieldwork carried out since the 2007 establishment of an MOU between the Department of National Heritage, James Cook University, and LXML-MMG. In summary, we now have clear evidence of a previously unknown, extensive, copper mining industry producing ingots for trade during the late prehistoric period. Mining and smelting sites are also associated with cemeteries where artifacts related to the copper producing industry are present as grave goods. Questions for discussion include: 1. the somewhat odd mining process – involving dozens of discrete vertical pits with no evidence of horizontal tunnels or galleries, 2. the identity of the miners and the origin of their technology, and 3. as just the third ancient copper mining area to be investigated in Southeast Asia, how important was this site in supplying the region in prehistory? When did production actually begin in Vilabouly District?

This paper also discusses the context of the ongoing research as a cooperative enterprise between universities, government and industry and the challenges and opportunities of working closely with diverse local communities. Immediate outcomes for discussion include the establishment of a related community learning centre in Vilabouly town with direct support from LXML-MMG and the inclusion of students from the newly established archaeology programme at the National University of Laos in excavation projects.

**Marc Mouscadet**

**Mining in Laos during the Colonial time, 1893-1949: France's Modest Legacy**

Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO), Paris, France

Mining activity has been attested to in Laos since prehistoric times. All scholars reviewing Lao history during the Christian era mention exploitation and trade of minerals. When planning to extend their influence in Laos in the late XIX century, French policy makers were also attracted by the potential

subsoil riches of the country. With today's rush on Lao natural resources, it is not uninteresting to review what happened during the first half of the XXth century and what legacy the French left behind them.

The colonizers first dreamt of an Eldorado and until 1914, adventurers, apprentice miners and ill-trained administrators collected information from the villagers and conducted superficial geological and subsoil surveys in very rough conditions, concluding that there was an omnipresence of various metals: gold, of course, and tin, copper, lead, iron, coal and precious stones. The post-WWI period witnessed an incredible rush for mining permits (25% of Indochina's surface was theoretically canvassed for prospection!) But very rare were the French businessmen ready to bring in the necessary financial resources and technical skill to achieve success. The bubble predictably burst in 1930.

Eventually, only a couple of French companies developed significant mining sites. The most notable was SEEMI (Société d'Etudes et d'Exploitation Minières d'Indochine) which profitably extracted tin in Khammouane province. They did so until 1975. Lao tin production remained very small by international standards, but its tiny size allowed it to carve its niche in the international tin cartel which was created in 1932. SEEMI got through the various crises safely.

While the French pursued their ventures, traditional indigenous mining went on in most provinces: iron, gold, sulfur, and salt were extracted. But the colonizers hardly paid notice, and seemingly no attempt was made to improve the local technology. Interestingly, as Charles Archaimbault described, given Lao popular religious beliefs, the peasant's quest for the wealth of mineral deposits was associated with rituals to appease various chthonian deities or spirits.

French legacy was finally very modest: a series of interesting surveys and very few mines in operation. However, this has to be put into perspective. Given the huge natural obstacles, the difficult sanitary conditions, the technological capacity of the time, and the lack of manpower, reaching for the underground treasures could not be the Protectorate's top priority. Today's mining industry operates in a very different context.

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**Panel 12 Hmong History                      Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 8.30-10.10, Room 325**

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**Mai Na M. Lee**

**The Women of Dragon Capitol (Long Cheng) and the Rise of Vang Pao**

Assistant Professor of History/Asian American Studies, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, USA

This paper critically re-assesses the notion that Hmong society is patriarchal with men dominating politics and women having little or no say in the events that have shaped Hmong history and society. Going against the grain, the paper examines women's contributions to the rise of General Vang Pao in Laos from 1945 to 1975. I argue that Vang Pao's marriages, much like the marriages of other Hmong leaders before him, were strategically aimed to form alliances with the most powerful groups. Vang took as wives women from elite clans—the Lo, Ly, and Moua—who have held power in the Lao highlands for over a century. His marriage to a Lao woman in 1968 was also for a similar political reason. By marrying women from powerful families and obtaining the support of these traditional elites, Vang Pao succeeded in becoming supreme leader of the Hmong by the time of the Secret War (1961-75). Although they have been largely glossed over by historians, Vang Pao's wives were instrumental to his rise to power. Their families supplied him with the financial backing and manpower that allowed him to dominate Hmong politics in Laos as well as in exile. Depending on her usefulness to Vang Pao, each of

his wives rose or fell out of favoritism. Nevertheless, history can no longer deny that the women of Dragon Capitol (Long Cheng) often dictated the direction of men's power and influence, shaping Hmong history and society in the most unassuming, and quiet manner.

**Phimmasone Michael Rattanasengchanh**

**The Hmong Discrepancy**

Ph.D Student, Ohio University, Athens, OH, USA

After a brief civil war in Laos, America signed the Geneva Agreements of 1962 which called for the removal of all foreign troops. Since America could not send ground troops to Laos and the Royal Lao Army was inept, the United States recruited the Hmong people to fight for them. The agreement and partnership between the Hmong and the United States is full of controversy and speculation. The Hmong were to rescue U.S. pilots shot down in Laos and thwart North Vietnam's use of the Ho Chi Minh trail. The U.S. provided the guns, money and supplies. One of many rumors that is speculated about and debated in the Hmong and academic communities is the promise of land or sanctuary. Some argue that the U.S. did not promise land while others say the contrary. Both the Hmong people and academics are divided on what the U.S. promised and the nature of the alliance.

The Hmong community still struggles with accepting their role in the Viet Nam conflict. Hmong military leaders and political figures look at the United States with great admiration. They were and are grateful for U.S. intervention. However, some Hmong see the Viet Nam conflict as a tragedy. Thousands were displaced from their native lands. Many men died in combat or were placed in reeducation camps after the war. They feel a sense of betrayal.

The academic community is also divided in explaining the nature of Hmong-U.S. relations. Scholars who have close associations with the Hmong assert a narrative of Hmong betrayal. Other academics take a neutral stance or give little treatment to the discrepancies and controversies.

The purpose of the study is not so much to declare who is right and wrong but to bring attention to the discrepancies regarding the nature of the relationship between the Hmong and U.S. government. More research and inquiry into this topic will provide new perspectives to the "shadow war" in Viet Nam. Examples of new viewpoints include: the Hmong experience during the Viet Nam War was not uniform, Hmong sentiments about Vang Pao and the United States are mixed, and the ambiguity of U.S. covert-war policy had an adverse effect on the Hmong and other ethnic minorities in Laos and Viet Nam.

**David Chambers**

**Building a Temple: Thai and Hmong Spatialities and Identity on the Landscape of Wat Tham Krabok**

Ph.D Student, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

This project is a place-based study of residents of Wat Tham Krabok Buddhist Temple in Saraburi, Thailand, including the experiences of a large number of Lao Hmong refugees and Thai monk members of the Tham Krabok sect. This research is particularly interested in aspects of territoriality and spatiality that played into interactions between these two communities and created hierarchical relationships, including patronage and subordination at Wat Tham Krabok. Hmong life and identity at the temple seem strongly influenced by the protection and sense of political identity provided by temple patronage and assistance. However, as a population under various forms of control and subordination, the Lao Hmong at Tham Krabok sought to express the legitimacy of Hmong identities through the media of Tham Krabok symbols and landscape.

The spatiality and territorialities constructed at Wat Tham Krabok involve the complex interplay of historic and geographic factors that have created a unique situation which allowed for many Hmong refugees from Laos to reside there during the past few decades. For many Hmong that made their way to the temple, having already faced tremendous life changes—in terms of geography, livelihood, and so forth—and finding themselves in a unique setting constructed in part by the Tham Krabok institution, have struggled to negotiate varying aspects—ethnic, political, and religious—of their identity, especially citizenship and political legitimacy. Furthermore, the project explores the expressions of Hmong political and religious identity as seen on the landscape of Tham Krabok. These expressions are in some ways unique to the Hmong experience at Wat Tham Krabok and indicative of larger issues of the livelihood changes and political alienation faced by many Lao Hmong members of the Lao Diaspora.

**Ian G. Baird\* and Paul Hillmer\*\***

**Veterans from Laos: War, Remembrance, Ritual and Rank**

\*Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

\*\* Professor, Concordia University, MN, USA

Many former soldiers from the Royal Lao Army (RLA) and the Secret Guerilla Units (SGUs)—who fought against the Pathet Lao and Vietnamese Communists in Laos before the country's government was taken over by the communist Lao People's Revolutionary Party in 1975—came to the United States of America as political refugees between 1976 and the mid-2000s. These former soldiers, especially those who are ethnically Hmong and Lao, consider themselves “veterans of the Secret War in Laos”. In the 1980s and 1990s many veterans became involved with various political and insurgent groups opposed to the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) government. Some organizations, such as the United Lao National Liberation Front (ULNLF) (*Neo Hom Pot Poi Xat* in Lao) provided higher military and political ranks, often based on the amounts of money donated to the ULNLF. More recently, many veterans have joined private organizations set up primarily to lobby for increased recognition and benefits for veterans from the US government, including the Special Guerrilla Units Veterans and Families Development of USA, Hmong Lao Veterans of America, the Royal Lao Veterans of America, and others. Veterans from Laos have also joined private organizations which claim to be devoted to US national security and disaster relief, such as the United States National Defense Corps (USNDC) and other similar groups. Of particular interest to us, the USNDC recognizes the previous military ranks of veterans from Laos, and also gives military ranks out to non-veterans based on educational attainment and other career factors. Rank can increase based on service, and now a number of Hmong have attained the rank of general, even though the late General Vang Pao was the only Hmong military general in Laos before 1975. Uniforms and ranks can also be obtained by members of veterans' families.

In this paper, we explore the intersection between Hmong and Lao veterans from Laos, and issues associated with remembrance, military ritual, and rank. We argue that the identities of many veterans from Laos as political refugees in the USA are closely linked to their identities as Secret War veterans. We also consider how many veterans and other refugees from Laos have attempted to achieve military ranks through associating with private organizations in the USA, including those opposed to the Lao PDR government, veterans groups, and organizations officially devoted to US national security and disaster relief. We also show that for many veterans from Laos, the boundaries between these different types of organizations have often become blurred.



**Taylor Easum**

**What's the Laos News? On the Usage of 'Lao' in Northern Siam and Beyond**

Assistant Professor/Faculty Fellow in Global Histories, New York University, USA

The wide application and flexibility of the term 'Lao' in inland mainland Southeast Asia is well-known. The ethnonym has been applied to groups in countries neighboring modern Laos, and especially in Thailand's northeast. The term was widely applied in Thailand's north as well, however, until an abrupt change in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, after which the term fell out of favor among local and expatriate elites in the region.

This essay will examine the complex life of the term 'Lao' in northern Thailand/Siam. The American Presbyterian Mission (APM) in Siam's north was founded as the 'Laos Mission', using the term in contradistinction to the 'Siam' mission based in Bangkok. As the mission expanded its presence to Phrae and Nan, cities with a close connection to Lao states such as Luang Prabang, key missionaries promoted the term Lao also to fuel the aspirations of region-wide mass conversion. At the same time, Bangkok began to see the term 'Lao' as standing in the way of nationalism. So, in the 1910s, the mission gradually shifted from promoting distinct aspects of the local 'Lao' population, to promoting the policies of Bangkok, aimed at making 'Lao' into 'Siamese'. Thus, though the APM in northern Thailand/Siam eventually aided and abetted the extension of Siamese power in mainland Southeast Asia, there was a historical moment in which the American missionaries envisioned and promoted a very different notion of 'Lao' in Southeast Asia.

**Thaveesilp Subwattana**

**The Characteristics of "Lao"**

Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

Lao or Laos has several meanings. As a country, it is currently known as "The Lao People's Democratic Republic." It may also refer to the culture of Lao people. Also, "Lao" is a name of a group of people who live along the Mekong River in both the Lao PDR and Thailand. In the past, the people in the North and Northeast Thailand have been called "Lao." At present, the people in the Northeast Thailand may still be called "Lao."

Most of the Lao in Northeast Thailand migrated from the left bank of the Mekong River during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They moved to the right bank of the Mekong River taking with them their original beliefs, traditions and knowledge, including their local wisdom. However, the Lao migrants faced many new environmental phenomena and they adapted their original culture to the new ways of life, which now form the characteristics of the 'Lao' in Northeast Thailand.

Many Lao in Northeast Thailand prefer to call themselves "Isan." For more than a hundred years, the Lao or Isan people were seen to be inferior to the Central Thai from the Central rulers' point of view. Some have considered the Lao to be poor people, with less ability than the Central Thai, and also lazy. Lao or Isan people sometimes do not have much opportunity in their lives, but when they do they can show their abilities.

**Udom Buasri**

**Jao Kote and Conflict Resolution in Traditional Isan Society**

Associate Professor, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand

Jao Kote is a conflict resolution system in I-san or Northeast Thailand. It is traditionally believed that the institution of Jao Kote can control any conflict occurring in Isan society. The data for this study was collected from 18 villages of 6 districts in three different provinces. Villages were classified in three groups – i) Villages with a strong Jao Kote system in the past and present, ii) Villages with a strong influence of Jao Kote in the past but a debilitated one at the present, iii) Villages which never had Jao Kote from the past until now. From the survey it was found that there were no villages in group 3. Therefore, all villages that were surveyed have traditionally paid a significant amount of allegiance to the Jao Kote system and have considered it as an “Institution”. But there exist many variations in the constitution of the Jao Kote system. In some villages the Jao Kote is believed to be a system from the elders - for example, in some cases it is an elder relative of the family or an elder person from any family and in some other cases it is a system of elder relatives in the village. Under the impact of rapid modernization the Jao Kote system has received tremendous set-backs in recent times. This paper will detail the functions, attributes, and consequences of Jao Kote’s conflict resolution actions on these village communities, reasons for the weakening of the Jao Kote system, and suggestions for reviving the system.

**Panel 14 Weaving, Pottery and other Handicrafts**

**Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 8.30-10.10, Room 309**

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**Junladit Obpahat**

**The Development Strategy for Handicraft of Phi Ta Khon Mask in Dansai Community, Loei Province**

Associate Professor, Loei Rajabhat University, Thailand

This research investigated the development strategies for handicraft of Phi Ta Khon mask in Dansai community, Loei Province. The objectives of this study were to identify the problems, to formulate the strategies development of Dansai community, Loei province. This research procedure was divided into two phases as follows.

Phase 1: The study was to identify the problems of Phi Ta Khon Mask handicraft development in Dansai community, Loei Province, utilizing interview techniques with 25 target village members which was conducted during May 2007 to August 2008. The results found the problems on the development of Phi Ta Khon mask handicraft in 5 aspects separately: a model of mask, craftsmen’s knowledge and technique, materials and tools, marketing, and budgeting.

Phase 2: The study was to form development strategies in September 2008 to December 2009, using the “brain-storm” meeting technique with 50 target members. The result revealed three development strategies for Phi Ta Khon mask handicraft: a strategy on constructing a community learning center, an information relation to management strategy, and a network formation strategy. Those strategies composed of eight operating plans: a producer and distributor development plan, an information system development plan, and exhibition management plan, an information handout development plan, and information video development plan, an information staff development plan, a marketing development plan, and a budget development plan.

**Nagisa Ito**

**Why Do They Weave? Textile Culture of Lao-Tai Females in Hua Phan Province**

Ph.D Candidate, School of Cultural and Social Studies, Department of Comparative Studies In National Museum of Ethnology, Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Japan

In this presentation, I will show the socio-cultural aspects of textile production in Lao-Tai villages in Hua Phan province; the socio-cultural aspects have made the province a big producer of textiles and weavers.

I have conducted research in Xam Nua and Xam Tai district in Hua Phan province since 2010. I did participant observation, interviewed villagers and recorded the data about textiles so far. In Xam Nua and Xam Tai area, the villagers' life is based on the division of work between males and females, and weaving is categorized as females' work. Traditionally, people in this area put a high value on women who are good at weaving. Weaving is nothing special but a common skill for Lao-Tai females, thus almost all females are engaged in textile-concerned activity in my field. In this presentation, based on the research results, I will explain why females in the area weave so much.

Nowadays, textiles woven by females have become an important resource for cash income, which is critical in coping with changes in both social and environmental conditions. Still, I would like to show that weaving is not only a source of cash income, but also an important socio-cultural element in constructing social relationships and in gender construction, both of which help maintain the transmission of weaving skills among females.

**Phitsutthilaksana Boonto**

**Lao Song Identifying Maintenance in the Western Cultural Zone of Thailand through *sin ta-mee*, the Ikat Woven Skirt Reproduction**

Graduate student, Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, Salaya, Thailand

The Lao Song, an ethnic group which settled in the western cultural zone of Thailand e.g. Ratchaburi, Petchaburi, and Nakhonpathom, originally emigrated from Dien Bien Phu in northern Vietnam more than 200 years ago. The immigration affected their cultural heritage which has changed over time and also by the social context of Thailand.

This research describes the maintenance process of Lao Song identity through their ethnic fabric products called *sin ta-mee* (the Ikat woven dress of Lao Song women which had been extinct in daily life use for more than 100 years); by their collecting of this ancient fabric; by studying its pattern and design; by reproducing this fabric; and also by reinstating it back into present culture. The researcher found that the Lao Song have been reproducing *sin ta-mee* fabric by maintaining their original patterns, colors and designs; however, the fabric materials have been changed and adapted according to the availability of the materials in their land. They also have created some new designs and wear them until the present, by linking with the oral history of the elders. This process could be considered as a sentimental longing for the past or nostalgia for maintenance of their identity of Lao Song.

**Choetkiat Kunlabut and Junladit Obpaphat**  
**Communities of Arts: A Case Study in the Southwestern Part of Lao PDR**  
Loei Rajabhat University, Thailand

The purposes of this study were 1) to investigate and connect the disparate body of knowledge within the Communities of Arts in the potteries in the Southwestern part of the Lao PDR, 2) to analyze the local art wisdom related to pottery in the Southwestern part of Lao PDR, 3) to analyze the Communities of Arts potteries' migration to Southwestern Lao PDR and the types of raw materials that were needed in the potteries.

The research consisted of two methods: 1) Survey Research and 2) Qualitative Research. The instruments for data collecting were: 1) a survey form, 2) an interview form, and 3) an observation form. Snowball sampling was used to obtain the population groups which included more than nine communities in the Southwestern part of Lao PDR. The key informants of the study were comprised of local wisdom experts, local community leaders, and local pottery craftsmen.

The findings showed that there were different aspects of the body of knowledge in the potteries in the Southwestern part of Lao PDR but some similarities could be identified as follows: 1) Cultural and religious beliefs, 2) Local arts wisdom, 3) Occupations, 4) Product transitional development, 5) Networking, and 6) Interaction and communication.

**Carol J. Ireson-Doolittle\* and Geraldine Moreno-Black\*\***  
**Fashioning Lao Identity: Textiles, Representation and the Lao Handicraft Festival**

\* Professor Emerita of Sociology, Willamette University, USA

\*\*Prof. of Anthropology, University of Oregon, USA

How do Lao textile companies present themselves and their products? In doing so, how do they represent Laos, the Lao, and Lao textile traditions? The authors draw mainly on observations at the Lao Handicraft Festival and the associated fashion show, focusing primarily on representations by companies the authors have been studying for more than a decade. In particular we focus on the design elements selected by Lao textile companies for their creative fashions. We interrogate the use of traditional elements used in apparel highlighted in the fashion show and contrast clothing presented for casual, business, evening and wedding occasions. The continued use of more traditional elements in the more formal clothing suggests the designer's targeting of the older, more professional audience as well as the importance of the retention for more ritualized events even while acknowledging the more cosmopolitan aspects of contemporary and elite Lao society.

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**Panel 15 Religion      Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 8.30-10.10, Room 326**

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**Dipti Mahanta**  
**Monastic Leadership in the Making: Venerable Sali Kantasilo's Insightful Unifying of Gantha-dhura and Vipassanā-dhura**

Assistant Professor, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand

This paper aims at reflecting on the concept and ideal of Buddhist leadership keeping in view the exemplary case of Venerable Sali Kantasilo, whose insightful approach based on the practice of *vipassana* meditation has helped revive and restore Buddhism in present-day Laos. The paper starts with a definitional framework of Buddhist leadership and traces the trajectory of its functional values

that ideally unites the personal spiritual quest and the ideological commitment of leading this quest to forge social benefits. Buddhist leadership is thus operative not on a uni-dimensional level alone, but rather manifests itself on multi-dimensional levels along the trajectory of a self-oriented 'gesture' of individual spiritual search and a socially-committed ideological stance. Within this individual-social nexus the realization of such truths as the *tilakkhana* and the development of a mindset bestowed by the sublime qualities of *metta*, *karuna*, *mudita* and *upekkha* function in tandem. Besides, strict conformity to monastic disciplinary codes (*vinaya*) is the hallmark of Buddhist leadership which is clearly reflected in the life, work and ideological standpoint of Venerable Sali Kantasilo, who has genuinely tried to strengthen the Lao Sangha's ecclesiastical role by creatively fusing the two monastic tasks, namely the task of learning or *Gantha-dhura* and the task of meditation practice or *Vipassanā-dhura*. Through his teachings and various dhamma-oriented projects and activities he has made a persistent effort at reviving and restoring Buddhism despite the restrictions a Socialist form of government is likely to impose on the dhamma dissemination work of monastic leaders. The abbot of the two most well-known monasteries, Wat Mahaphutthowongsapaluang (or Sokpaluang) and Wat Paa Nakhounnoi in the capital city of Vientiane that have flourished as centers of *vipassana* meditation, Venerable Sali Kantasilo, is today recognized as one of the most highly respected living meditation masters in Laos for his multi-faceted and strategic dhamma propagation measures.

**Supeena Insee Adler**

**City Pillar, Spiritual Pillar: When the Spirit and Human Realms Meet in Sisaket Province, Northeast Thailand**

Ph.D Candidate, Music Department, University of California, Riverside, USA

Spirit mediums in Sisaket province practice animism and local beliefs along with other religions. Rituals transmit local knowledge to the community and publicly pay respect to the spirits to ensure everyone's continued good health, to bring relatives together, and to create a socially comfortable space for the participants. One medium, Ms. Buarian Thamwiset has the spirit of the Sisaket city pillar in her while performing healing rituals. Symbolically, the city pillar is a wooden pole in the center of a province and is considered to be a spiritual place where people come to worship. The pillar has spirit in it which acts as a spiritual protector of the town. When Ms. Buarian has the city pillar spirit in her, she is believed to be the highest spirit of the city. The body of the medium bridges the human and spirit realms. Before other mediums perform their own annual rituals, they must first attend the ritual at Ms. Buarian's home once every three years, to pay respect and obtain permission to conduct their own rituals elsewhere. At the age of 90, Ms. Buarian still performs and conducts healing and renewal rituals for the spirits and for other mediums in Sisaket. Most of the mediums and their families will gather together to prepare for the ritual. Even mediums families are obligated to publicly support the mediums even if they themselves are not spiritually involved. Without approval from both Ms. Buarian and medium's families, mediums would not be able to participate in the rituals that enable them to act as healers and are necessary to maintain their own spiritual health. By enacting the power of the city pillar in human form, Ms. Buarian makes tangible the power of the spirit realm over human affairs.

**Jeffrey C. Parker**

**Treatment of Christians and Christianity in Laos and the Influence of Vietnam and the United States**

Undergraduate Student, Theology Department, Whitworth University, USA

The treatment of Christians in Laos by low grade government officials does not reflect the freedom of religion presented to the international community in the *Constitution of Laos PDR* (1991) and the *Decree on Management and Protection of Religious Activities in the Lao PDR* (2001). These actions are

permitted largely through vague statements in the aforementioned documents on religious freedom in Laos. These two documents have enabled low-grade government officials to persecute Christians under the international guise of the protection of religious freedom and state unity.

These government documents and the treatment of Christians by low-grade government officials mimic the treatment of Christians in Vietnam. Past and present influences from Vietnam and the United States have fostered an environment in which the persecution of Christians and the suppression of the Christian faith have been institutionalized.

**Saimai Chaisirin**

**The Change of Traditional Funeral Rites of Phu Tai People in the Nong Phue Community,  
Nanai Sub-district, Phannanikom district, Sakon Nakhon Province, Thailand**

Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

This research aimed to study the change and effects of change of traditional funeral rites of the Phu Tai people. The field data were gathered by participant observations and interviews with key informants. Conceptual frameworks of the research were the concepts of identity, social and cultural changes, and beliefs in traditional rituals.

Findings indicated that during the years 1945-1949, “Luangpu Mun Bhuridatta Mahathera” who established the forest meditation tradition, came to propagate Buddhism in Nong Phue community and in the nearby communities. Consequently, since 1949 Phu Tai people in Nong Phue community changed their beliefs in ghosts to beliefs and perspectives in Buddhism. As a result, the steps of the traditional funeral rites were reduced and less complicated. The number of days for the funeral rites was also diminished. The Phu Tai people in Nong Phue community neither recognized the importance of an auspicious time for burning the dead body nor emphasized males ordained at one’s funeral. They did not drink alcohol and gave up eating the meat of a big animal in the funeral rites. Such changes positively affected the community in economic, social, and cultural ways.

The research emphasized the role of Buddhism in changing the identity of Phu Tai people’s funeral rites. These became a new identity in which they have taken pride.

**Panel D: Saturday, April 20, 2013, 10.30AM-12.10PM**

**Panel 16 Luang Prabang History**

**Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 10.30-12.10, Room 335**

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**Volker Grabowsky**

**A Buddhist Archive in Luang Prabang**

Professor, University of Hamburg, Germany

Centre of Lao Buddhism is and was the old royal capital Luang Prabang. Traditional forms of Buddhist praxis and monastic organization persisted here more tenaciously than at other places, notwithstanding manifold challenges by French colonialism, Marxist ideology and capitalist consumerism with which Lao society has been confronted during the twentieth century. In spite of its relative geographical isolation, monks in Luang Prabang used very early modern technologies such as the photography to document daily life in monasteries as well as Buddhist rituals and ceremonies. The Buddhist Archive of Photography has collected so far more than 35,000 photos from twelve monastic archives which

document more than 120 years of monastic life, as well as rituals, ceremonies, pilgrimages, portraits of monks and the social life in its manifold forms.

This unique corpus of historical photographs of the Buddhist Sangha of Luang Prabang represents a rather challenging and dramatic century for Laos. Pha Khamchan Virachitto (1920–2007), the Venerable Abbot of Vat Saen Sukharam and owner of the most important collection of photographs, left an enormous correspondence that he led over many decades with monks and laypersons in Laos, Thailand and the Lao diaspora. Recently a large corpus of documents has been discovered in several monasteries of Luang Prabang. These documents include rare published and unpublished printed material on Lao Buddhism, society, politics, and history, administrative documents and statistics, magazines and journals, as well as diaries and handwritten notes by leading monks. In the personal abode (*kuti*) of Pha Khamchan Virachitto also more than one hundred palm-leaf and mulberry paper manuscripts have been unearthed which reflect the intellectual interests of this most influential and venerated monk of Luang Prabang during the last three decades.

This paper provides an overview of the rich material kept in the Buddhist Archive of Photography and elaborates how this material – comprising both textual and non-textual sources – can provide new insights into the development of contemporary Lao Buddhism.

**Bounleuth Sengsoulin**

**The Lao Sangha of Luang Prabang and its Social Role in the Post-1975 Period**

Ph.D Candidate, University of Hamburg, Germany

The members of the Lao Sangha, monks as well as novices, do not stay in their monasteries just for spiritual purposes, praying many hours a day. In fact, they are also obliged to participate in numerous activities connecting them with the daily life of laypeople on whose constant support they have to rely. Monasteries function as schools or centres of training and learning. Monks are teachers and instructors of young novices and devoted laypeople alike. In other words, members of the Lao Sangha study Buddhist scriptures to seek answers to a variety of social and developmental issues. This paper seeks to explore how Buddhist institutions, from the highest levels of the Sangha hierarchy to individual monasteries, have defined their social responsibilities since the founding of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. According to the policy of state and the leading Lao People's Revolutionary Party, the "multi-ethnic Lao nation" has to fulfil the two main tasks of defending and developing the country. As an inseparable part of Lao society, the Lao Sangha seeks to contribute to this primary goal in its own ways. Based on hitherto unknown primary sources discovered recently in the holdings of various monasteries in Luang Prabang town as well as photographic evidence, this paper seeks to shed new light on the social role of the Lao Sangha after the founding of the Lao P.D.R. in December 1975.

**Khamvone Boulyaphonh**

**Pha Khamchan Virachitto (1920–2007) and Preservation of the Lao Culture Heritage in Luang Prabang**

Ph.D Candidate, University of Hamburg, Germany

Pha Khamchan Virachitto, the late abbot of Vat Saen Sukharam and Chairman of the Buddhist Fellowship Organization of the province of Luang Prabang, was one of the most outstanding Lao intellectuals during the twenty century. The Venerable Abbot was a charismatic monk who was a model that numerous monks and novices in Luang Prabang tried to emulate. He was highly respected by the people of the old royal capital of Luang Prabang which has been the spiritual centre of Lao Buddhism since ancient times and the seat of the Supreme Patriarch until 1975.

Pha Khamchan Virachitto's outstanding works include the constructions and reconstructions of Vat Saen Sukharam and many other monasteries in the style of modern Lao Lan Xang architecture. Moreover, the Venerable Abbot was leading numerous Buddhist ceremonies, rituals and other festivals in accordance with the rules of the Sangha. Finally, he was the decisive figure to set up the Buddhist Archive of Photography in Luang Prabang (2007) and the Museum of Buddhist Art at Vat Saen.

Based on a large corpus of historic photographs, manuscripts, documents, personal letters, as well as Buddhist art objects which the Venerable Abbot kept at his monastery over a period of more than fifty years, this paper aims at studying monastic life in Luang Prabang by focusing on the intellectual biography Pha Khamchan Virachitto.

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**Panel 17 Rubber/Cash Crops    Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 10.30-12.10, Room 326**

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**Vong Nanhthavong**

**Impact of Cash Crop Development on Food Security in Rural Areas: A Case Study from Northern Lao PDR**

Center for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Bern, Switzerland

In the Lao PDR, cash crops are promoted as an alternative to shifting cultivation and poppy production; cash crops are thus aimed at contributing to poverty reduction. Private sector foreign and domestic investors have been encouraged to invest in cash crop development through land concession and contract farming. The boom of cash crop development has triggered intense debate about its impacts on the livelihoods of the local population.

This study was conducted in late 2011 for a master thesis submitted to the Graduate Institute of Geneva, Switzerland. The study aims to analyze (1) the consequences of cash crop development on livelihood systems and food security and (2) the strategies that people employ to cope with the consequences of cash crop development. This paper investigated the context of contract farming in rubber development.

Interestingly, local food security has become worse rather than improved; villagers cannot produce food because their land is now devoted to cash crops production. Most people must rely on markets for food supplies, especially rice. Most people cannot afford to buy food from the market because as the price of imported food items has been on the rise. On the other hand food safety has become a big concern since the transformation from food production to commercial agricultural production because a lot of herbicide is used in production; however, in rural areas people still gather wild foods for their dietary supplies as well as still relying on natural rivers and streams as their water source .

Being indebted is another aspect of the impact of cash crop development. Most people have to rely on credit from banks and private sources for food, especially rice since the booming of cash crop development because income from cash crops was not high enough to purchase foods from the market. Due to the decline of household income compared to food prices, most people had to rely on credit more and more but unfortunately the household income was not enough to repay the loan. The result is a constant cycle of debt.



**Ian G. Baird\* and Pao Vue\*\* (Pao Vue to present)**

**Developing Small-Scale Rubber in Laos: The Varying Roles of Different Types of Hmong Social Networks**

\*Assistant Professor and \*\*Ph.D Student, Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

The Hmong maintain particular types of social networks. Three of the more prominent and recognizable social networks are the connections associated with simply being Hmong, clan identification, and lineage bloodlines. These networks play important roles in Hmong social activities and ritual life. Functions embedded in these relationships include—but are not limited to—assisting with legal authority, providing social support, and ensuring economic security. Indeed, social networks are crucial for understanding how Hmong socially and spatially organize, as well as how Hmong relate to other Hmong in particular circumstances. Over the last few years many Hmong in Laos have become involved in cultivating rubber as an agricultural cash crop. Rubber is seen as a viable substitute for illegal opium production and shifting cultivation. In addition, rubber is seen as a stable source of income that is capable of generating employment and alleviating poverty. Here we examine Hmong small-scale rubber development in central and northern Laos, and the varied types of social, economic, and tenure arrangements that Hmong are generating in relation to rubber cultivation. In particular, we consider the ways that various types of Hmong social networks, both inside Laos and internationally, are being utilized to support rubber development through knowledge transfer and the provision of financial capital. Hmong people, communications, and capital are traveling much farther than previously understood. Our results demonstrate considerable variation in the ways social networks are being deployed, while also indicating the varied and pragmatic nature of Hmong social networks and relationships today.

**Karen McAllister**

**Idle lands and idle hands: the evolution of local resistance to a Chinese rubber concession in Luang Prabang Province, Northern Laos.**

Ph.D Candidate, Department of Anthropology and Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID), McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada

Since the mid-2000s, foreign investments in agro-industrial tree plantations have been enclosing village lands across Laos, displacing rural communities (often ethnic minorities) from the resources upon which they depend for their livelihoods. Many of these “land grabs” have been initiated under the radar of the national government, backed by local state cadres who manipulate ambiguities in land classification and policies for allocation of resource rights in order to “legally” claim village land. Promises of new labour opportunities and more productive land uses are often used as justification for these dispossessions. Reports of discrete cases of local resistance to these land grabs are beginning to emerge from across the country, with mixed responses from the national government. Applying theories of resistance and struggles over property and labour that occur during agrarian transitions, this paper examines the trajectory of local opposition to a Chinese-owned rubber plantation in a Khmu ethnic minority village in Northern Laos over a period of five years. I examine the processes by which District officials initially appropriated village lands for the concession, the legitimizations made to justify the enclosure, and the evolution of local counter-narratives and various forms of resistance by which villagers have so far managed to undermine the success and expansion of the plantation. Currently, with support of the government, villagers are attempting to formally reclaim the land back from the company, arguing that the promised trees have not been planted and wage labour opportunities have not materialized.

**Panel 18 Education for Sustainable Development in Laos: Happiness, Hollistic Education, Service-Learning, Youth Volunteers, and a College      Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 10.30-12.10, Room 309**

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**Marcia J. Harr Bailey\*, Christina McMellon\*\*, and Chanthalangsy Sisouvanh\*\*\***

\*Founder/Executive Director, Poom Loom, USA \*\*Ph.D Candidate, Social Policy

University of Edinburgh, Scotland \*\*\* B.S. NGO Management and Social Work Student, Cavendish University, Kampala, Uganda

In 1987, the Brundtland Report defined sustainable development as, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (RRCAP.UNEP.ORG, 2008). Since then, three pillars -environmental, social, and economic- help define sustainable development. The Participatory Development Training Center (PADETC), a Lao based organization, uses these principles in its work. PADETC’s network of training centers promotes participatory processes for sustainable development: development with a balance between social development, economic development, and environmental harmony (PADETC, 2008). PADETC uses a similar approach to Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness as a basis and goal of development. The four pillars of environment, culture, heart/mind connection, and economy are supported by quality, holistic education and good governance with the goal of happiness.

Through the lens of happiness and Lao ethics of service, this panel will explore current approaches to sustainable development through education and youth volunteers in Laos. We will explain the views youth volunteers have about happiness, learn about the current holistic education programs at Sompanya School, review sixteen years of youth for development programs, and reveal the service ethic (values and practice) of students. Finally, we will introduce PADETC’s newest project, the Mekong College for Holistic Development (now under development) which will offer both formal and non-formal programs in sustainable development, including organic agriculture, social development (education and health), and economic development (business that preserves Lao culture and traditions) through mobile classrooms that take students to serve and learn in rural villages.

**Christina McMellon**

**Using Collaborative Ethnography to Explore How Young Lao Volunteers in Vientiane Understand and Experience Happiness**

Ph.D Candidate, Social Policy University of Edinburgh, Scotland

There is increasing cross-disciplinary interest in the role of happiness in development. However, happiness is, obviously, a subjective concept and research suggests that concepts of happiness may vary across ages and cultures. If we, therefore, want to find ways to embed happiness in our practice of development, it is vital to develop a nuanced understanding of how people understand happiness and the things that they value in their lives.

This presentation draws on Ph.D fieldwork conducted in Vientiane with a group of young people who volunteer for Lao Non-Profit Associations (NPAs) within Laos’ rapidly emerging civil society. These organizations and the young people who volunteer for them are, simultaneously, negotiating their place in a changing Lao society. Happiness, and related concepts, figure in both sets of negotiations.

The researcher uses volunteering as a lens through which to examine the ways that young people in Vientiane create and recreate new and already existing opportunities for happiness. This presentation will cover substantive questions related to how young volunteers understand happiness and the

tensions inherent in these understandings. Crucially, however, it will also address methodological challenges of gaining a deep understanding of happiness. The researcher will suggest that many Lao young people have not thought about the things that they consider important in their lives, and will argue for the importance of opening spaces of reflection where young people can freely think and learn about their own values.

**Chanthalangsy Sisouvanh**

**Student Volunteers for Social Change: Sixteen Years of PADETC Youth for Development**

B.S. NGO Management and Social Work Student, Cavendish University, Kampala, Uganda

In order to support a new generation of community leaders through providing training for youth in leadership skills, concepts of sustainable development, and critical thinking, PADETC has developed an internal system to develop and empower youth volunteers as “youth for change.” Rote education is not practical and does not prepare students to perform in society. Therefore, PADETC has developed a non-formal curriculum that is through a holistic, Buddhist lens. The design of the curriculum includes leadership, public speaking, volunteerism, gender inclusiveness, facilitation of work, project management, team building, administration, mindfulness, and interpersonal communication. This happens through a series of trainings and campaigns to develop skills while learning about culture, biodiversity, agriculture, and environmental issues in Laos.

The curriculum is age, knowledge, and experience driven to ensure it is appropriate and meaningful to each set of volunteers. Primary, lower secondary, and higher secondary school aged students are “Dek Asa- young volunteers.” Yet, each curriculum is slightly different, gradually increasing the leadership and critical thinking skills necessary to participate in projects. Postsecondary Students are called “Wai Noom Asa – youth volunteers.” Upon completion of this program, some volunteers become interns for PADETC in various programs, depending on their skills, interests, and college degree. Upon completion of the internship, these volunteers either become PADETC full-time paid staff or they pursue work with other non-profit organizations, schools, government, businesses, or other private sector jobs. This paper will discuss best practices based on sixteen years of experience and the future of this sector of PADETC’s work.

**Marcia J. Harr Bailey**

**Hand in Hand Working Together: The Service Ethic of Lao Buddhist Undergraduate Students**

Founder/Executive Director, Poom Loom, USA

While service-learning has become an integral part of education in the United States, little thought has been given to education combined with community service to address development needs in the poorest countries of the world. With abundant human capital to be engaged as a valuable development resource, there is a need for further investigation on this topic, particularly in today’s global society where more than 800 million children lack access to education worldwide. While service-learning has grown substantially internationally during recent years, thus far it has been uncommon in Asian countries. Before an expansion occurs, it is important to understand the service ethic of Asian students.

A recent mixed method dissertation study through a U.S. Student Fulbright grant to Laos has explored service-learning in the Lao context by evaluating data from a survey instrument distributed at a national university in Laos and personal interviews conducted with Lao undergraduate students. The works of John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and socially engaged Buddhist scholars like Sulak Sivaraksa, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, and P.A. Payutto have informed the study. While postsecondary service learning projects have

not yet been formally used in Laos, student respondents indicated an interest in participating in one in the future. The output of the dissertation adds to the body of research and introduces a postsecondary service-learning model in the Lao context. The culturally relevant service-learning model, EducAsialan Community Engagement (ECE), introduces the concept of utilizing existing human capital in developing countries as a grassroots development effort. This paper will report these findings.

**Marcia J. Harr Bailey\*, Somchit Phankham\*\* and Chanthalangsy Sisouvanh\*\*\***

**Progress through Service: Introducing the Mekong College for Holistic Development**

\*Founder/Executive Director, Poom Loom, USA \*\*M.Ed Candidate, Arsomsilp Institute for the Arts, Bangkok, Thailand, \*\*\*B.S. NGO Management and Social Work Student, Cavendish University, Kampala, Uganda

Lack of access to adequate education prevents many from achieving literacy, obtaining employable skills, and ultimately realizing economic independence. Laos has the lowest UNDP Human Index rating and the lowest literacy rates in Southeast Asia (UNDP, 2009, ACCU, 2008). Recent efforts by the Ministry of Education and aid organizations have expanded the education system and increased literacy projects. The higher education system has expanded quickly: 22,605 students in 2000 increased to 47,204 students by 2005 (SEAMEO RIHED, 2006). However, interviews with students and employers have shown that students may not be entirely prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation. With the continuation of rote learning in higher education (memorizing versus doing), students lack the real life work skills necessary to perform in the modern workplace. These institutions also lack a holistic approach that considers the local context and places an emphasis on sustainable development.

After sixteen years of delivering training programs throughout Laos, the vision of PADETC will next be realized through a postsecondary institution that plans to offer non-formal programming and formal degrees in sustainable development: in organic agriculture, social development (education, health), and economic development (social business that preserves Lao culture). Using the indigenous knowledge of community members, local experts, and the abundant resource of development organizations working in Laos as guest speakers, PADETC and Poom Loom will educate relevant development topics in mobile classrooms and facilitate service projects that impact rural communities. This paper will introduce this unique curriculum and describe the pilot program opening in 2013.

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**Panel 19 Isan Cultural Maintenance      Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 10.30-12.10, Room 313**

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**Saowanee T. Alexander\* and Duncan McCargo\*\***

**Revisiting Isan Identity: A Linguistic Perspective on Dual Identities in Northeast Thailand**

\*Faculty of Liberal Arts, Ubon Ratchathani University, Thailand

\*\*School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds, UK

This paper explores notions of Isan-ness and Thai-Lao dual identities in the Northeast of Thailand. Earlier work by McCargo and Hongladarom (2004) has found that younger and more educated generations prefer to identify themselves as Thai by speaking the language in most occasions, while older and less urbanized generations tend to express more regional pride by referring to themselves and language as of Lao origin, suggesting some degree of resistance to Bangkok power. Recently, the region has become a major base of support for former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and the political parties he has led or sponsored. The paper is based on fieldwork in Ubon Ratchathani province, both the only stronghold for the conservative Democrat Party in Isan, and also a major focus of Southern Isan political struggle, as a result of the crackdown on the 2010 'redshirt' protests against the then Democrat-led

government. Drawing upon focus group interviews with key informants, a sociolinguistic survey questionnaire, and observation, the paper discusses Isan residents' views toward the local language, their own self-identification and regionalist sentiments.

**John Draper**

**The Isan Culture Maintenance and Revitalization Programme: Summary Report on the First Year with a Special Focus on Multilingual Thai-Isan (Thai Lao)-English Signage**

Project Officer, Isan Culture Maintenance and Revitalisation Program (ICMRP), College of Local Administration (COLA), Khon Kaen University, Thailand

This paper reviews the progress of the first year of the Isan Culture Maintenance and Revitalization Programme, a four-year 540,000 euro series of pilot studies 90% funded by the European Union. The programme, probably the largest language and culture maintenance and revitalization programme in Northeast Thailand, is based in four semi-autonomous municipalities in Khon Kaen Province, viz. Ban Phai, Chum Phae, Khon Kaen and Meuang Phon, and facilitated by the College of Local Administration at Khon Kaen University. Its four main action lines are introducing multilingual Thai-Isan (using *Tai Noi*)-English signage and an atmosphere of multilingualism, revitalizing cloth weaving by using traditional methods to supply student uniforms, maintaining and revitalizing cultural performances through training schoolchildren and the community and then creating a multimedia educational database complete with lesson plans, and introducing first oral Isan then written Isan as part of a mandatory Isan school subject. The programme also aims to develop an 'Isan Day' to celebrate Isan identity. Each municipality is responsible for developing one action line as a commercially and politically viable policy over the first two years, then the partners initiate the other action lines in their municipalities. Thus, this paper provides a brief overview of one year's development of each action line. It then focuses in detail on the achievements of the Chum Phae Municipality action line, i.e., the introduction of multilingual signage, by focusing on information provision, attitude surveying, the installation of multilingual signage and public relations initiatives.

**Gerald W. Fry\* and Tatpicha Nunta\*\***

**The Divergence of Lao and Isan Cultures: Transcending Cultural Misrepresentations and Distortions**

\*Professor, Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development, University of Minnesota, USA

\*\*Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University, Thailand

Historically what is now Laos and Isan (Northeast Thailand) were for long periods part of the same nation-state, sharing the same language, culture, customs, and having similar strong royal traditions. Later the powerful forces of colonialism and then communism separated and changed them.

There is a common assumption among both many in the region and outsiders such as Westerners that the Lao people of the Lao PDR and the Lao people of Northeast Thailand are basically the same in the sense that they speak the same language and share the same basic culture (the *baci/baisi* ceremony, for example. In the intercultural field this view would be termed minimization, that is, differences between the two peoples are minimized (Bennett, 2007). The purpose of this paper is, thus, to assess this assumption by analyzing the ways in which the Lao (of the Lao PDR) and Isan people are similar and different using an interdisciplinary lens, looking at historical, cultural, linguistic, geographic, economic, educational, and political dimensions of this complex and changing relationship.

One of the methodologies used in the study is participation-observation. One author is a native of Isan of Lao-Khmer heritage from Sri Sa Ket. The Western author has lived in Laos for approximately 18 months over a period of nearly two decades and has frequently visited Isan ever since. The other methodology is meta synthesis, analyzing studies done of the both the Isan and Lao cultures such as Charles Keyes' recent insightful study of the new cosmopolitanism of Isan people (Keyes, 2012).

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**Panel 20 Symbols, Relics, Rituals, and Spirit Cults**

**Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 10.30-12.10, Room 335**

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**Pathom Hongsuwan**

**Long Life to the Mekong River: Meaning and Symbols in the Invention of Tradition in Border Communities of Thai-Laos**

Associate Professor, Research Institute of Art and Culture of Isan, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

This paper aims at studying the meaning and symbols in the tradition of "*Seub Cha Ta Mae Nam Kong*" at Chiang Khan Village, Chiang Khan District, Loei province, Northeast Thailand. The Study indicates that Pha Pe Nee Seub Cha Ta Mae Nam Kong (Tradition of Long Life the Mekong River) is an invented ritual based on the Knowledge, the thoughts and Spiritual Belief from the Tai Dam, Lanna and Lao traditions entitled, *Seub Cha Ta*. The Spiritual Belief is not only the text recited, in the ritual, but also the source of the meaning in inventing the ritual objects and the ritual acts performed in this new Spiritual tradition. Moreover, this Spiritual and Indigenous Belief provides a symbolic meaning in the sense that it is the symbol of fertility and sacredness of the Naga.

**Malinee Klangprapan\* and Jaruwan Thammawat\*\***

**Implication of Lord Buddha's Relics at Phra That Phanom Stupa**

\*Ph.D Candidate, and \*\*Associate Professor, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

*Mahaparinibbana Sutta* is a sutta concerning the end of Lord Buddha's life. It was spread from India and depicted events after the cremation of Lord Buddha. Relics were distributed to disciples and the pious as a memorial of Lord Buddha's teaching. Phra That Phanom is one of the important stupas in the Mekong Basin region that contains Lord Buddha's relics. In this case, it was found that people residing in this area have adapted to the power relation amid the political transition to the *mandala* (state) system in Lan Xang Kingdom and Siam by expressing their identities through ceremonies relating to the worship of the stupas. For example, people calling themselves "*Kha Okas*" have established the "*sia kha hua*" ceremony which symbolized the tradition of paying tribute to the temples instead of serving in the army, and "the offering of *phuechaphak* rice," (an offering of agricultural products harvested during the harvesting season) held for the Phra That Phanom merit making festival on the full moon day of the third lunar month or *Makha Bucha* Day. These ceremonies symbolize the management of power relations between manpower and economics in the Buddhist domain under the authority of the Kingdom of Siam. Even though it was during the reign of King Chulalongkorn that slavery was abolished, people still perform these ceremonies today.

**Tomoko Nakata**

**Buddhism and Spirit Cults in a Multiethnic Village in Southern Laos**

Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, Kobe, Japan

Although Laos is regarded as a Buddhist country, most of its ethnic minorities have traditionally worshipped various spirits and conducted diverse rituals related to them. In some parts of the lowlands, some ethnic minorities who arrived from the highlands during different periods in Laos' history such as

the French colonial rule, the civil war, and the aftermath of the revolution, adopted Buddhism after coming into close contact with the Buddhist Lao. Highly complex situations can be observed in villages where the Lao and ethnic minorities live together: a non-Buddhist making an offering at a temple to transfer merit to his deceased son or a Buddhist participating in a practice similar to that of ethnic minorities, making an offering of a pig to a malevolent spirit considered to be the cause of his wife's illness.

This presentation, based on fieldwork conducted in a village in Champasak Province, examines the relationship between Buddhism and spirit cults by focusing on practices in the village whose first settlers were people from the *Nge*, a Mon-Khmer group, and where people from other groups including the Lao and *Taliang* have since settled. A close observation reveals that the relationship between Buddhism and spirit cults in the village cannot be understood only in terms of the affinity of two religious customs, which is generally observed in Lao practices, but through the context particular to the village community.

**Channipha Doungwilai**

**Phra Chao Ong Tue Myths: Their Role as Sacred Narrative in the Communities along the Thai-Lao Borderland**

Demonstration School of Khon Kaen University, Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University, Thailand

Phra Chao Ong Tue (พระเจ้าองค์ตื้อ) is a Buddha image which people along the Thai-Lao borderland have respected for a very long time as a sacred object of their faith. The image has been influential to the thinking system and the behavior of these people. It also plays an important role in Thai-Lao Society. This research aims to analyze the myths and the rituals related to Phra Chao Ong Tue in the communities along the Thai-Lao borderland, with focus on examining social thoughts through cultural signification and ethnic relationships. The findings indicate that the myths and the rituals related to Phra Chao Ong Tue can be signified through the thinking system of these people and their relationships which have been established through the channel of Buddhism along with the common beliefs among the people living in the communities under investigation. Phra Chao Ong Tue plays different roles: in the negotiation between the authorities and the villagers in view of the relationship between the people and the existence of the monarchy, the signification of the Buddha gestures, the relationship between the female and the male symbols, and the image's function as a Buddhist symbol signifying the prosperity and the fruitfulness of the economy in the globalization era.

**Panel E: Saturday April 20, 2013, 1.30-3.30PM**

**Panel 21 Lao Film      Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1.30-3.30, VandeBerge Auditorium, Room 121**

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**Scott Christopherson**

**Laos Third Cinema: The Creation of a Lao National Cinema seen through the Lens of Three films and Teshome Gabriel's Three Stages of Progression**

Assistant Professor of Communication, St. Edward's University, Austin, Texas, USA

In this presentation I analyze the Lao National Cinema by looking at three films: *Siengpeun Chak Thong Chai* (*The Sound of Gunfire from the Plain of Jars*), *BouaDeng* (*Red Lotus*), and the Academy Award nominee *The Betrayal*. I will explore these films and the Lao national cinema seen through the lens of Teshome Gabriel's seminal text on Third Cinema, *Third Cinema in the Third World*. His text provides a foundation to discuss and understand Lao nationalism and thought. In order to discuss the films in this

essay in the context of the Third Cinema movement, I will use Gabriel's three progressions of the Third World film style. The first is a "dependency on the Hollywood model of conventional cinema, submitting both to the concepts and propositions of commercial cinema." Second are "national cinemas that promote the decolonization process but without at the same time decolonizing conventional film language." And, third, is "the emergence of decolonization of culture and liberation—here the entire spectrum of conventional production apparatuses of cinema undergoes a radical alteration. (7)." In addition to these three progressions of Third Cinema, I will discuss how the major themes in Third Cinema posed by Gabriel are confronted in these films and how these films differ. Those major themes are class, culture, religion, and armed struggle. All of these are prominent themes in the films I will discuss.

I've chosen to discuss three films in this presentation that show a glimpse into Lao filmmaking. These include two fiction films and one documentary, all produced after the 1975 Communist revolution. The fiction films are the first two feature films produced by the National Cinema Department and sponsored by the Lao government. The last film, *The Betrayal*, is a documentary made by a Lao-American refugee who fled the country after 1975.

As I discuss Gabriel's views on Third cinema within a Lao context, I will also explore the representation of the Hmong in *The Sound of Gunfire from the Plain of Jars*. In this film, the Hmong are glorified in a way never before seen in Lao film and are portrayed in this way to ensure their loyalty to the new government after 1975.

#### **Nakhone Keodara**

#### **Roses and Red Ants: Great Men Unleash Terrible Destruction**

USA

The dust from bombed megalithic stone urns-covered Plain of Jars and cratered battlefields of sleepy Laos settled almost 40 years ago, yet around one-third of the country remains contaminated with about 80 million unexploded cluster bombs that litter villages, school grounds, rice fields, roads, and other populated areas. Over 20,000 people have been killed or injured since the bombing ceased, many of whom are children. Even now, over 100 new casualties occur each year. Nearly four decades after the war, close to a million displaced Lao still live in fear, afraid to talk about what they left behind, scattered across five continents far away from their homeland. *Roses & Red Ants* is an extraordinarily fascinating and never-been-told tale of a country that time has forgotten; an epic documentary in production about four Princes and a soldier fighting a Civil War for the soul of Laos.

*Roses and Red Ants* will follow three unique students across sweeping landscapes of America and on globe-trotting scavenger expeditions to excavate the farthest reaches of the minds and deepest chambers of the hearts of its survivors. These students believe that Laos deserves to assume its rightful place in the history of the world. Theirs is a quest to memorialize the struggle of a people—relegated to a footnote in history; conveniently swept under the rug—that was an important (and crucial) part of world history during the Vietnam War.

In the background, *Roses & Red Ants* is about a Lao peasant revolution—to rid itself of over half a century of colonial repression (France) and 200 years of its local neighbors' domination (Thailand, Vietnam and Burma)—ignited by the universal flame of the human need for freedom of spirit, liberation from tyranny and a desire of a people for self-governance. At one point in time, France referred to Indochina as "our beautiful balcony on the Pacific."



**Somsak “Kenji” Saykosy****Lao Warrior, Kenji’s Story**

Producer, Director, Screen Writer, Actor, stunt and fight choreographer for “Lao Warrior”, USA

Lao Warrior is a movie based on the true story of Kenji's life as he and his family flee from a small village in Laos during the Vietnam War and eventually make their way to the U.S. We then follow Kenji as he must adjust to a new culture, a new language and all of the problems you face growing up in America. As Kenji overcomes his fears, racism, bullying and the shock of his new life, he grows and becomes an incredible martial artist with good friends and a good life. When things seem at their best, Kenji must face new challenges as his world collides with that of a powerful, corrupt mob boss bent on controlling the city through terror and violence. As the reminder of his childhood and the struggles of his life come flooding down on Kenji, will his will, spirit and skill be enough to stop a human trafficking ring, underground fighting and a murderous enemy from the past?

**Panel 22 Voices From Laos: Clearing Bombs, Protecting Lives**

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**Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1.30-3.30, Room 325/326**

**Channapha Khamvongsa****40 Years On: Ending a Legacy of War in Laos**

Executive Director, Legacies of War, USA

Channapha Khamvongsa is executive director of Legacies of War, an organization that seeks to address the problem of unexploded cluster bombs in Laos, to provide space for healing the wounds of war, and to create greater hope for a future of peace.

Channapha will talk about the history of the Vietnam War-era bombings of Laos, which ended 40 years ago, and the lasting problem of unexploded bombs. She will introduce the Voices from Laos national speakers tour, which is raising awareness about this issue across the United States through the stories and perspectives of a new generation in Laos working to clear bombs and transform lives.

**Thoummy Silamphan****Healing the Wounds of a Forgotten War: Survivor Assistance in Laos**

Executive Director, Quality of Life Association, UXO Survivor, Lao PDR

At age eight, Thoummy Silamphan was foraging for bamboo shoots to help feed his family when the spade he was using suddenly struck an unexploded ordnance (UXO). Thoummy was hospitalized for 18 days, during which his left hand was amputated. Thoummy went on to recover from his injury, and has become a forceful advocate for UXO survivors. He is now the executive director of the first non-profit association in Laos for UXO survivor assistance. Thoummy will share his experience as a survivor and his vision for improved assistance for survivors and people with disabilities.

**Manixia Thor****Clearing the Path to Peace: UXO Clearance in Laos**

Deputy Team Leader, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) All-Women’s Bomb Clearance Team, Lao PDR

As a bomb clearance technician and the deputy leader of an all-women’s bomb clearance team in Laos, Manixia Thor has one of the most dangerous jobs in the world, but she knows that her work clearing

bombs will make Laos safer for her two-year-old son and for future generations. Manixia will talk about her work detecting and clearing cluster bombs and other munitions in Xieng Khouang province, one of the most heavily contaminated provinces in Laos.

**Douglas A. Hartwick,**  
**The State of the Sector: An Ambassador's Perspective**  
Former U.S. Ambassador to Laos (Retired), USA

Douglas Hartwick served as U.S. Ambassador to Laos from 2001 to 2004. He entered the Foreign Service in 1977 and, among other posts, served as Director of the Tsunami Reconstruction Task Force, Senior Advisor to the Director General of the Foreign Service, and Director of the Office of the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore Affairs.

Ambassador Hartwick will discuss the role of U.S.-Lao relations in regards to UXO, and describe current challenges and potential solutions. He will also talk about his tenure as Ambassador to Laos, and how the UXO sector has evolved in the last decade.

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**Panel 23 Health                      Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1.30-3.30, Room 335**

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**Anousavanh Sanaphay,\* Somjit Daenseekaew,\*\* and John F. Smith\*\*\***  
**Home Delivery Traditions in Southern Lao PDR: Challenges for Achieving MDG 4 & 5 Targets**  
University of Health Sciences, Lao PDR\*, Khon Kaen University, Thailand\*\*, and Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand\*\*\*

**Background and Rationale:**

Lao PDR, like the rest of the developing world, is actively trying to reduce maternal, infant and child mortality to meet Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 4 and 5 by 2015. Among the 68 countries included in the MDG countdown, Lao PDR is one of 21 on track to achieve MDG4, but is most unlikely to achieve MDG5. Lao PDR has the highest maternal mortality rate (MMR) of neighboring countries in its South-East Asian region. The overwhelming majority of Lao women give birth at home, and only a quarter of children are born to women who received antenatal care. This study explores maternal and child health care practices and services in a rural southern province with some of the highest MMR and IMR in Laos. It investigates current birthing practices, maternal health care services and health-care seeking behavior from the standpoint of women who have recently given birth, or are due in the near future. It aims to bring their voice into processes for building strategies for more user-friendly and effective maternal and child care services.

**Objectives:**

This study explored birthing practices, maternal health services utilization and health seeking behavior of women during pregnancy, delivery and postpartum.

**Methodology:**

This was a community-based descriptive cross-sectional study, the first phase in a larger Participatory Action Research project. It was conducted in December 2011. Thateng district in Sekong province was purposively selected given its low maternal and infant health status and lack of improvement after a series of recent maternity health services interventions. Participants were 120 women who had a child aged 1 year or less, and 46 women who were currently pregnant at the time they participated in the

study. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Quantitative data was analyzed using the SPSS program and qualitative data were analyzed using thematic content analysis.

### **Results:**

The main results showed that of the 120 women who had given birth in the past year, 20% had one child and 2.5 % had given birth to their 12th baby. Almost 80% gave birth at home. Forty percent had experienced the death of at least one of their babies. Of the 46 currently pregnant women, 30.4% did not visit antenatal care facilities. 43.5% would prefer to give birth at home and 56.5% intended to give birth at a health facility. Reasons given for preferring home deliveries, not using hospital services and/or no health-worker assistance at delivery were: anticipated easy birth with unskilled assistants, lack of transport, lack of funds to pay for services, and unable to estimate date of birthing. Only complications and prolonged labor were mentioned as factors that necessitated women being admitted into hospital to save their lives.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

A range of social, cultural, economic and geographical factors and prior negative health service experiences clearly influenced the women's decision making. It was clear that home birthing was seen by many, as not just unavoidable, but the preferred option. The study argues that improving maternal and child-health strategies will require much greater community participation in research and planning, and use of participatory action methodologies to bring women's voices (the key stakeholders) into policy and planning for maternal and child care services.

### **Mónica Ruiz-Casares**

#### **Alternative Child Care and Wellbeing in Xayaboury and Luang Prabang**

Assistant Professor, McGill University and Division of Social and Cultural Psychiatry & Centre for Research on Children and Families, Montreal, Canada

This paper will describe the research process and preliminary findings from an on-going study on alternative care in Xayaboury and Luang Prabang conducted in collaboration with Save the Children and local partners. The UN Alternative Care Guidelines (2009) are not yet transcribed into the Lao context and these guidelines are being drafted without local research evidence on these issues. To address some of the gaps in child protection data and research, this study analyses the situation of alternative care—both informal and formal care systems, in the selected provinces. Particularly, the study documents (a) family and community practices aimed at preventing parental separation and promoting parental care and family reintegration, and (b) alternative out-of-home care arrangements for providing physical and emotional support to children separated from their parents in these provinces. Special attention is paid to social and cultural factors that may affect the provision of alternative care and children's wellbeing such as poverty, ethnicity, religion, sex/gender, mental and physical disability, and birth out of wedlock. Remoteness, urbanization, and seasonality are also taken into account as care arrangements may vary along those lines as well. The perspectives of adults and children are elicited by means of individual and group interviews, photo-voice, and an online survey with child protection agencies. This information will be particularly useful to policy makers and program planners in the child protection sector.

**Bethany G. Elkington**

**Ethnobotany and TB in the Lao PDR**

Pharmacognosy Department; University of Illinois at Chicago, USA

In Laos, old medical documents in the form of mulberry paper books and palm leaf manuscripts (PLM) provide an invaluable record of traditional medical treatments through history. Today, traditional herbal remedies are still frequently used. Because tuberculosis (TB) is presently a problem in Southeast Asia, this study aimed (A) to determine which plants were used to treat TB symptoms in the past by examining old medical documents, (B) to determine which plants are presently used to treat TB symptoms through interviews with traditional healers, (C) to collect and document the plants cited in the PLM and by healers, (D) to biochemically analyze the plants in vitro, and (E) to return findings of this research to the people of Laos in order to encourage the preservation of native biodiversity of the country, the preservation of indigenous knowledge passed orally between healers, and the preservation of indigenous knowledge contained in the palm leaf manuscripts. Samples were collected for 43 plants listed in the manuscripts and 50 reported by healers (19 were named in both the manuscripts and by healers) and submitted to various in vitro assays. Some of the plants demonstrated in vitro activity, providing some scientific support for the ethnomedical claims.

Other Authors:

Bounhong Southavong (Institute of Traditional Medicine, Ministry of Health, Vientiane, Lao PDR )

Kongmany Sydara (Institute of Traditional Medicine, Ministry of Health, Vientiane, Lao PDR)

Scott G. Franzblau (Institute of Tuberculosis Research; University of Illinois at Chicago)

D. Doel Soejarto (Pharmacognosy Department; University of Illinois at Chicago; Botany Department; Chicago Field Museum of Natural History)

**Mónica Ruiz-Casares<sup>\*</sup>, and Manivone Thikeo<sup>\*\*</sup>**

**The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire: Reflexions of its Translation Into Lao**

<sup>\*</sup>Assistant Professor, McGill University and Division of Social and Cultural Psychiatry and Centre for Research on Children and Families, Montreal, Canada

<sup>\*\*</sup>Postdoctoral Research Associate, Department of Psychiatry, University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, USA

Information on child mental health is very limited in Laos. The most recent World Health Organization (WHO) Mental Health Situation Analysis In Lao PDR (2002) revealed that more information on child rearing practices and environments is needed in the country. Culturally and linguistically appropriate outcome measures are needed to address this paucity of data and to generate valid and reliable information on child mental health for service delivery and policy-making. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997) is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire for children ages 3-17 years that has been widely used cross-culturally by researchers, clinicians and educators to assess behavioural and emotional difficulties and pro-social behaviour in children. It consists of 25 items on strengths and difficulties and an impact supplement that assesses whether the respondent thinks the young person has a problem, and if so, inquire further about chronicity, distress, social impairment, and burden to others. This paper will describe the normative process of translation and back-translation of the original English instrument into Lao by bilingual mental health professional. In this session, we will also invite participants to rate the clarity and importance of the instrument's content and format. Their understanding of the instructions, questionnaire items, and response options will help further test the official translation before it is made freely available to the public.

**Karen Haisten**

**Treatment and Prevention of Malaria in Lao PDR**

Indian River State College, USA

Malaria is a devastating, tropical, mosquito borne disease caused by a parasite, vectored in the saliva glands of the *Anopheles* mosquito. Of the over 400 species of *Anopheles* mosquitos, around 40 are known vectors for the four species of Malaria that affects humans. *Plasmodium falciparum* is the most common parasite, and *Plasmodium vivax* is responsible for human Malaria in Asia. Once the parasite enters the blood stream, it hides in the liver, reproducing itself thousands of times until the invaded cells explode, releasing the parasite offspring into the blood stream where it hides in the red blood cells and feasts on the hemoglobin, reproducing until the cell explodes, once again releasing the parasites to invade red blood cells. This process continues until the parasite is halted either through medications or, for the unfortunate victim, the parasite travels to the brain and inflicts even more devastation than it did in the liver. In the tropical country of Laos, where most of the population lives in rural, jungle like areas, the majority of Lao's population is at risk of acquiring this deadly disease. This presentation will investigate who is most susceptible to Malaria, the specific species of *Anopheles* mosquito vectors for human Malaria in Laos, ways to prevent Malaria's spread through traditional and modern methods, and methods of treatment for those infected.

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**Panel 24 Jatakas and Moral Teachings Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1.30-3.30, Room 313**

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**Pisit Kobbun**

**The Jātakas in Tales and Buddhist Arts in Lao Culture**

Associate Professor, The Department of Eastern Language and Literature, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Ubon Ratchathani University, Thailand

The Jātakas have no little importance to the cultural way of the Lao. This article is aimed at studying the role, importance and use of the Jātakas in the way of life of the Lao as apparent in tales and Buddhist arts. The study results reveal that, on the topic of Jātaka adaptation in Lao culture, folktales have been adapted into Jatakas and at the same time, Jātakas into the Tipitaka and the Jātaka. Commentary has been adapted into folktales. This reflects the wisdom and shows the social and cultural identity of the Lao. Furthermore, one major observation is that most of the Jātakas in Lao culture are stories with emphasis on the importance of animals, which illustrates the significance of and combination between Buddhism and traditional beliefs, which endows the Lao Jātakas with a unique character representing the identity of the ethnic group.

**Leedom Lefferts**

**"Buddhist Storytelling" in Northeast Thailand and Laos**

Research Associate, Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, USA

The publication of the first book covering a long-neglected arena Buddhist art – the long, painted Vessantara scrolls of Isan and Laos – provides an opportunity to begin to chart the different varieties of Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia. While participating in the ethos of the Pali *imaginaire* (Collins), these scrolls as art – and the performances in which they occur – make clear that Lao and Thai-Lao Theravada Buddhism substantially differs from Siamese, Khmer, and Burmese Buddhisms. Drawing attention to the volume in which these data are more adequately discussed, this talk rapidly examines just one scroll and the performance which surrounds it to begin to characterize this "Lao/Thai-Lao" Theravada Buddhism.

**Buppha Sueakham****Moral Teaching Strategies in Lao Proverbs**

Faculty of Technical Education, Rajamangala University of Technology, Isan, Khon Kaen Campus, Khon Kaen, Thailand

This study examines the strategies used for teaching morals in Lao proverbs. The findings showed that morals are taught in Lao proverbs through concepts of philosophy relating to Buddhism, and these concepts serve as a model for the people to follow. In this study, evidence of traditional beliefs in Animism as well as Buddhist morals was found, and the use of Dharmic principles, which is the essence of Buddhism, was found as well. This shows that Buddhism has long been a strong foundation of Lao culture and society. Buddhism not only plays the role of 'maintenance of order', but also 'socialisation or enculturation' in society. The study of proverbs through Buddhist concepts therefore reflects that Lao society follows Buddhist principles for living, cultivating traditional social values, and preserving the common values of society. This results in valuable ways of life which enhance the civilisation of the country. Therefore, the concept of Buddhist Dharma is integrated in Lao proverbs to influence new members of society to perform the appropriate societal role and social status.

**Panel F: Saturday, April 20, 2013, 3.50-5.30PM**

**Panel 25 Engaging Local Communities in Biodiversity Conservation in Lao PDR****Room 325**

The National Protected Area (NPA) system in Lao PDR was established in 1993 by Prime Minister's Decree 164 and has three main objectives: i) protect forests, wildlife and water, ii) maintain natural abundance and environmental stability, and iii) protect natural beauty for leisure and research. The Lao government further defines NPAs as multi-use areas that should be managed in a participatory manner with local communities and government around NPAs. Therefore, it has been essential for NPA managers to identify effective methods for engaging local communities to achieve the main objectives of the NPA system. This panel presents results from four studies that evaluate approaches used by two NPAs to involve local communities in managing hunting for sustainable use, reducing human-wildlife conflict, and employing traditional ecological knowledge in NPA management.

**Santi Saypanya<sup>\*,\*\*</sup>, Troy Hansel<sup>\*</sup>, Arlyne Johnson<sup>\*,\*\*\*</sup>, Annalisa Bianchessi<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> and Brooke Sadowsky<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>**  
**Combining Social Marketing with Improved Law Enforcement to Conserve Tigers and their Prey in Nam Et Phou Louey National Protected Area, Lao PDR**

<sup>\*</sup>Wildlife Conservation Society, Vientiane, Lao PDR

<sup>\*\*</sup>Cornell University, College of Agriculture and Life Science, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, USA

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>Foundations of Success, Bethesda MD, USA

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>Rare, Arlington, VA, USA

The Nam Et Phou Louey (NEPL) National Protected Area (NPA) in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) contains the last confirmed breeding population of tigers (*Panthera tigris*) in Indochina. There are two main threats to tigers, direct killing of tigers and the illegal hunting of wild ungulates, the tigers' principle prey. Villagers living around the NPA rely on these same ungulates as an important source of protein in their daily diet. The illegal hunting of tigers and prey for commercial trade is unsustainable and is driven by a lack of ownership by local villagers who engage in illegal activities and by government

agencies that do not enforce the laws. To reduce these threats the NEPL NPA is using a social marketing campaign in parallel with traditional enforcement to change the behavior of illegal hunters, village members, and government officials. To determine campaign effectiveness, a survey instrument was developed to measure knowledge, attitudes and behavior change, which included both a control and pre and post surveys of target audiences. The campaign delivered conservation messages to targeted audiences through print, mass media and special events, along with the establishment of a telephone hotline for reporting illegal wildlife trade and the establishment of a District Wildlife Crimes Unit to process incidents of illegal wildlife crime. The evaluation of the campaign through a Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey indicates a direct contribution to reducing indirect threats to tigers and their prey, while helping the NEPL enforcement strategies.

### **People's Perceptions and Behaviors Affecting Human-Carnivore Conflict in Nam Et-Phou Louey National Protected Area, Northern Lao PDR**

Jeong Eun (Any) Lim<sup>\*</sup>, Adrian Treves<sup>\*\*</sup>, Arlyne Johnson<sup>\*\*,\*\*\*</sup> and Peter Steiner<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup>University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

<sup>\*\*</sup>Wildlife Conservation Society, Vientiane, Lao PDR

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>Foundations of Success, Bethesda, MD, USA

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

The Nam Et-Phou Louey National Protected Area in northern Lao PDR, famous for its rich biodiversity, provides a home for various carnivore species including tiger (*Panthera tigris*), Asian golden cat (*Pardofelis temminckii*), clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) and dhole (*Cuon alpinus*). However, carnivores' attacks on livestock in the area are considered as a major cause of conflict that results in serious economic loss to poor local communities and also undermines carnivore conservation by inducing retaliatory killings of these carnivores. For long-term carnivore conservation to be achieved ameliorating the conflict is essential. In order to develop appropriate conflict mitigation strategies, a questionnaire survey and vignette study were conducted to livestock herders, especially those using the core zone of the protected area, to understand their perceptions and behavior related to the conflict. The survey showed that almost half of herders (46.8 %) think the tiger population has decreased in recent five years, which is consistent with recent camera trap survey results, and a majority of respondents (68.5%) expressed that the tiger population should increase. On the other hand, less herders (28.6%) supported conservation of dholes which have started dominating the landscape in recent years, and many of them (58.1%) noticed this trend. The results confirm that a negative perception of carnivores is directly related to livestock loss, and this calls for the introduction of prevention, better livestock management and more involvement of local communities in carnivore conservation practices.

**Arlyne Johnson<sup>\*</sup>, Jutta Krahn<sup>\*</sup>, and Senvilay Seateun<sup>\*,\*\*</sup>**

### **Cooking Up a Storm? Wildlife Management and Household Food Security in Rural Northern Lao PDR**

<sup>\*</sup>Wildlife Conservation Society, Vientiane, Lao PDR

<sup>\*\*</sup>National University of Laos, Faculty of Science, Vientiane, Lao PDR

Several decades of over-hunting and illegal trade of wildlife have contributed to precipitous declines in wildlife populations in Lao PDR. At the same time, Upland villages report ever-increasing effort by hunters to find wild meat. Over half of children <5 years of age in these same areas are stunted as a result of limited intake of nutrient rich foods. Early research suggests that the main food group that differentiates rural households with acceptable food consumption from those without is animal protein, and particularly wild meats. To estimate the sustainability of wildlife hunting and the role of wild meats

in household food consumption, we conducted surveys of over 450 households in 34 villages bordering two national protected areas in northern Laos. We found that wild meats made up at least two-thirds of the occurrences of meat consumed. Rates of harvest of most wildlife were unsustainable while household food and nutrient intake was suboptimal and mainly vegan. These findings are in stark contrast to results indicating that the majority of households reported regular hunting and sale of larger terrestrial mammals from their villages. The findings indicate that unless hunting in Laos is better managed, wildlife numbers will continue to drop. If left unattended, the increasingly vegan diets, low nutritional knowledge and lack of opportunities to source meat alternatives together with limited legal income opportunities will likely hamper the acceptance and effective implementation of the regulations for wildlife management, which are essential for wildlife recovery in the country.

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**Panel 26 Ethnic Identities      Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 3.50-5.30, Room 313**

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**Guido Sprenger**

**The Connectivity of Folklorized Culture: New Codes for Identity in Northern Laos**

University of Heidelberg, Germany

In Laos, cultural festivals and other folklorized practices are currently emerging as new ways of communicating locality and ethnic identity to external agencies, in particular to the national level. This paper documents fragmentary strategies of identity-making in northern Laos and a small cultural festival that was staged spontaneously in a Rmeet (Lamet) village. The representations chosen to stage Rmeet ethnicity were conventional: dance, music, and clothing. However, I argue that these practices are continuous with earlier ones which addressed and transformed socialities beyond the village boundaries. They also resonate with the folklorization of cultural representations of the Khmu, a closely related group, in the nationally celebrated Boun Greh festival. If boundaries are seen as being constituted from both sides and constitutive of social structure, then local socialities can only be understood by looking at the way representations of the foreign have been incorporated into the local. Seen this way, folklorization is just the most recent model for communicating difference in a semantic that is connective with the state, neighbouring ethnicities, and a global language of locality.

**Somsonge Burusphat, Sujaritlak Deepadung, Sumittra Suraratdecha, Narong Ardsamiti, Patama Patpong, Jitjayang Yamabhai, and Pichet Setaphong**

**Community-Based Ethnic Tourism Development and Its Impact on the Linguistic and Cultural Maintenance of Thai Song Dam**

Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, Salaya, Thailand

A previous study on the language usage and attitudes of Lao ethnic groups in the western region of Thailand shows that Thai Song Dam, Lao Song or Tai Dam possess the strongest language vitality across all provinces because of their active language usage and the preservation of cultural traits such as ritual practices and costumes. Therefore, a prospective community-based ethnic tourism project could possibly be developed in areas where the majority of Thai Song Dam reside and ethnic language vitality and cultural practices are still productive.

The Thai Song Dam community at Phaihuchang village in Nakhonpathom province was selected as a model community based on a number of supporting factors: overall community strength, availability of manpower, the authenticity of the linguistic and cultural data available in the community and most importantly, the willingness of the whole community to participate in sustainable ethnic tourism development. The aims of this paper are to present a study of the development of community-based



ethnic tourism at this location using the participatory action research and the impact of this ethnic tourism development on the linguistic and cultural maintenance of Thai Song Dam people.

**Junladit Obpahat**

**Thai and Lao Cultures for ASEAN Identity**

Associate Professor, Loei Rajabhat University, Thailand

Lanchang Kingdom covered Lao PDR and the northeastern part of Thailand. Cultures of Loei, Thailand and in Sayabouly, Laos, were similar but they have changed because of globalization. ASEAN community aims to create cultural identity. The purposes were 1) to study and analyze the ways of life pattern based on Heet Sip Song (twelve-month tradition) Kong Sip Si (14 practical moralities), and 2) to analyze the relationship between Heet Sip Song Kong Sip Si and ways of life by using qualitative research including survey, documentary studies, field trip study, in-depth interview, observation, and in-group discussion. The target group consisted of villagers, community leaders, Buddhist monks. Data quality was verified by methodological triangulation. Data were analyzed by content analysis.

The findings were as follows:

1. The ways of life from birth to death of the dwellers was related and practiced according to Heet through some activities had been adapted and changed but the tradition was the same.
2. The belief and practice of the Heet and Kong were implanted to the descendants. The inheriting from generations to generations through the sacred ritual interested the descendants and people. This was the intelligence of the ancestors for creating body of knowledge and the awareness from human and nature and supernatural things.

The findings reflected the pattern on the transferring of the body of knowledge and practices which represented methods of thinking and practice from past to present and future, and could be the model for identity creation in changing society.

**Panel 27 Lao Writing**

**Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 3.50-5.30, Room 326**

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**Khanungchai Viriyasoonthorn**

**Lao Isan Worldviews from Idioms**

Ph.D Candidate, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

Idioms are the culture of the language which created by the ancestor who had the lifestyle relating with locate nature, the idiom show the local wisdom of humans in each nations. The studying about idioms is the way to get to know the ethnic's idea, culture as well as wisdom and experiences.

This article is aim to investigate the worldviews form Lao Isan Idioms which collected from books, documents, researches, and interviews. There are a total number of 890 idioms and the result found that Lao Isan's Idioms shows four aspects:

1. Worldviews about humans which are men, women, soul and feeling, honor, and strength in work.
2. Worldviews about human relations which are related relationship senior respect
3. Worldviews about speech such as how to speak in good manners, truth, and lies.
4. Worldviews about religion such as karma.

Moreover, the researcher found that these worldviews still exist in Lao Isan's culture though the world is changing rapidly. Also, the communities in the countryside keep the old way of life rather than change into city's lifestyle.

**Nilobon Nakphalangkul**

**Discourses of Isan in Laos's Short Stories**

Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

Thai residents have been accustomed to the discourse of Thai-Lao relations which states that the people of these two countries are sibling-bound. This statement may claim that those have inherited from the same ancestors. More specifically, in the past people living in the Northeastern region (Isan) of Thailand had shared the same boundary which was called the 'Lanxang Kingdom.' Of this date, the Mekong River functioned as a geographic separation of two river banks' regional sections. Nonetheless, as nation states emerged, the river's banks have come to play a more political role, that of national segregation between Thailand and Lao P.D.R.

This article aims to analyze the Isan discourses encoded in 12 Laos' short stories by applying several theoretical frameworks including discourse theories, nationalism and social construction. The results decode that 'Isan discourse' was meant as a residency of the nation's enemies. It could also be perceived as a region of better life opportunities. In a similar vein, Isan could be represented as a region of modernity while it also appeared as a region of brutality. Hence, the constructed Isan discourses represented both positive and negative sides. Noticeably, even some images were represented as positive but such images were elaborated on rather to conceal other hidden discourses. Eventually, 'Isan' was manipulated to be 'other' or we could raise a further question such as whether the 'voice' which virtually oriented the construction of Isan discourses in Laos' short stories was coincident with that of the powerful national figures of the country of its time.

**Chairat Polmuk**

**Detecting the Mystery of the First Lao Novel, *Phra Phouttahoup Saksit***

Ph.D Student, Cornell University, USA

*Phra Phouttahoup Saksit* (The Sacred Buddha Image), with the French subtitle, *La Statuette merveilleuse: nouvelle laotienne*, was written in 1944 by Somchinne Nginn, a Lao intellectual who worked for the French administration in Laos during the colonial period. It has been regarded as the first modern Lao novel by both Lao and Western scholars. Despite harsh criticism from Lao literary scholars for its superstitious and unpatriotic tendencies, the novel has still not received much scholarly attention. This paper aims to offer a textual as well as a contextual analysis of this novel. By focusing on its genre, as detective fiction, and its colonial context, it proposes to examine the ambivalences of colonial discourse as well as the complexity of the geopolitical relationship between French Laos and Siam as reflected in the novel.

**Frederic C. Benson**

**Indochina War Refugees in Laos (1954-1975): Reports and Documents**

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

The purpose of this paper—which focuses on emergency relief and resettlement assistance provided to refugees displaced during the conflict in Laos by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—is to introduce a unique collection of related reports and documents (mostly unpublished) that has recently been made available in the University of Wisconsin’s Southeast Asian Images & Texts digital collection (SEAIT.org).

During the period leading up to and following the fall of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, some 27,000 civilians escaped into Laos from China and Vietnam, and others fled from villages within Laos to more secure areas during times of uncertainty. Population movements spiraled upward after the Kong Le coup in 1960 and hostilities leading up to a precarious 1961 ceasefire agreement between the Pathet Lao (PL) and the Royal Lao Government (RLG). Rough estimates indicate that by then more than 100,000 refugees comprising people of the region’s Lao-Tai, Mon-Khmer, and Hmong-Mien ethnic groups had been displaced by battling factions.

Even though USAID (known at that time as USOM) set up shop in Laos in January 1955, it was not until 1962 that a formal agreement was signed by the United States Government and the RLG’s Ministry of Social Welfare governing programs for assisting refugees who were victims of an accelerating war that peaked in the early 1970s before a lasting agreement was finally reached between the PL and the RLG in February 1973. By the time the war ended (USAID withdrew from Laos in 1975 following the fall of Vietnam), a significant percentage of the people of Laos had been upended in one way or another by the turmoil that it wrought.

While most of the reports in the collection contain first-hand accounts of refugee-related events, as well as interviews of refugees themselves and cultural profiles, others describe the prevailing conditions under which the refugees were displaced. These include military-related reports plus statistics, maps and charts, and tables defining RLG administrative structures.

Although the collection is by no means comprehensive or complete, it presents to viewers a series of snapshots which, when pieced together, provide insights into the hardships experienced by Laos’ ethnically diverse war victims, ranging from Akha to Yao, and their interactions with dedicated Lao-speaking USAID field operations personnel and their local and RLG colleagues who took the lead in providing refugees with welfare support. The long search by the people of Laos for peace and stability spanned a period of two decades of social strife and economic disruption in a highly politically charged and war-torn environment.

**J. Lin Compton**

**Matching Government Support with Local Initiative: IVS Rural Development Work in Laos in the ‘60s**

Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

This paper provides an account of rural development activity in the Borikhan/Pak Chao area of Laos during a time of military conflict in Indochina. The participatory and collaborative approach used by International Voluntary Services (IVS) personnel is described as it unfolded in an area encompassing 34

villages spread across 4 Tassengs (Khet) in Muong Pak Chao District of what is now Bolikhamsay Province. Concepts and principles guiding the development effort are highlighted along with descriptions of a range of projects undertaken by the people. The work can be best understood as being grounded in and guided by a theory of margin as the ratio of power to load. Many lessons learned from this work are still relevant to today's contexts in rural Laos.

**Maria Carmen Domingo-Kirk**

**Towards Understanding Theravada Buddhism - Theory and Practice**

Educator and Anthropologist, Berkeley, California and Guest Lecturer, Department of Philippine Studies, City College of San Francisco, USA

Buddhism has been described as a philosophy, as a meditative discipline, touching on human psychological insights and as the religion of reason. This paper is an attempt to begin to understand the theory, actually encompassing many theories of Theravada Buddhism and to observe if theory follows practice. The first part is the writer's understanding of the topic covered. The second part is actual observation of the practice of Theravada Buddhism in Laos, specifically in Luang Prabang.

**Panel 29 Syntax and Lexicon**

**Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 3.50-5.30, Room 309**

Carol Compton

**Lexical, Syntactic and Poetic Aspects of Lao Four-word Phrases**

Retired, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

The treatment of Lao four-word phrases as lexical units, as elements in Lao syntax, and as examples of Lao poetics in both spoken and written discourse are analyzed in this paper. Over five hundred tokens collected from oral and written discourse provide evidence of the function of these sub-sentential and sentential elements within texts. The internal structure of these phrases, including use of repetition, rhyme and semantic linkage, is analyzed and described. Both productive and fixed phrasal patterns are presented, and similar patterns from related languages are discussed. Implications for lexicography and translation are indicated in the conclusion.

**Douglas Cole**

**Affected Experiencers in Lao: the *t<sup>h</sup>ɯ:k* Construction.**

Graduate Student, Department of Linguistics, University of Iowa, USA

The *t<sup>h</sup>ɯ:k* construction has been widely discussed in Thai linguistics literature. Filbeck (1973) analyzed it as a passive morpheme in Thai. The structure also exists in a related language, Lao, and on the surface it appears to promote the object to subject position, a characteristic of the passive voice. See (1) below.

- (1) a.      lót      tà̌m      Nôi  
              car      hit      N.  
              'A car hit Noy.'
- b.      Nôi      t<sup>h</sup>ɯ:k      lót      tà̌m  
              N.      strike      car      hit  
              'Noy was hit by a car.'

However, Enfield (2007) argued that *t<sup>h</sup>ɯ:k* cannot be a passive morpheme because it actually adds arguments to the verb rather than suppresses them as seen in (2) below.

- (2)      phēn    tʰɛ:k    pǔa              pài      nɔ:n    kēp    pʰu    sə:w  
             3        strike husband        go        sleep with        person other  
             'She suffered her husband sleeping with (another) girl.' (Enfield, 2007)

Many Thai linguists like Wongbaisaj (1979) have argued that *tʰɛ:k* is a full lexical verb that selects a CP complement. And Warutamasinthop (1975) proposed that *tʰɛ:k* is an auxiliary verb with lexical meaning.

I want to show that the *tʰɛ:k* construction in Lao is actually an applicative projection. An applicative morpheme adds an unselected argument to a verb. Examples are Authier and Reed's (1992) "affected datives" in French, Borer and Grodzinsky's (1986) Hebrew "ethical datives", Shibatani's (1985, 1994) "adversative passives" in Japanese, and Pylkkänen's (2008) "high applicatives". Using four syntactic tests proposed in Bosse et al. (2009) for what they termed "affected experiencers", I tie the Lao data to similar constructions found in the languages above.

**Charles (Chip) Zuckerman**

**The Sounds of Others: Reflections on Reported Speech in Laos**

Ph.D Student, University of Michigan, USA

In this paper, I analyze and reflect on instances of reported speech as found in a corpus of recorded conversations among Lao speakers in Vientiane. I first present the common methods that these speakers use to quote, voice, or otherwise present the words of others. After describing these basic means for reporting speech, I reflect on what this Lao data means for theories of reported speech across languages and the distinction between 'direct' and 'indirect' discourse.

**Dutchat Jitbanjong**

**The Evidence of the Language and Account Connected with a Background of the Saek Ethnic Group in Laos and Thailand**

Department of Thai and Oriental Languages, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

The purpose of this article is to compare the Saek vocabulary usage in Laos and Thailand. The data was collected in three main areas; Baan Toung Muang Nakai--Kammouan district, Baan Nakadok, Muang Kamkerd -- Bolikhamxay district, Laos and, Baan Bawa Tarue district --Amphur Nawa, Nakhornpanom province, Thailand. This study is not only presenting the language information but also indicating the similarity and difference of word usage which leads to some notices of Saek language.

The finding revealed that the Saek vocabulary could be divided into three categories; those were, the similarity of vocabulary in three places, two-group of Saek vocabulary usage and another word usage, and the difference of word usage in three areas.

There are many words that are used altogether. These typically define the relationship of Saek language among those three areas. In term of the variation of Saek vocabulary, it has been found that Baan Nakadok the words are differently used from another two areas. Particularly, the cluster consonant in the original Tai language is found in Baan Toung and Baan Bawa. In addition, Saek language usage in those two mentioned areas has still remarkably kept its traditional characters, comparing to the usage in Baan Nakadok. Ultimately, it could be assumed that Saek language in Baan Nakadok might previously be separated from Baan Toung and Baan Bawa. This affected the variations of their sounds and words. Thus it was in accordance with the historical accounts from the group of Saek people in Baan Nakadok who had separated from Baan Toung before they had been herded to Thailand from then on.

Noticeably, words with historical account from the ethnic group in Seak language are used more in other two areas. In other words, the Seak ethnic group formerly migrated from Vietnam and lived in the areas near Baan Nakadok, at present. Then, a part of them moved further to the areas of Baan Toung, Baan Bueg, Baan Na-moey and Baan Na-maew. The rest of them moved to Baan Nakadok area. Afterwards, some Seak people from Baan Toung were gathered across the Kong River, entering along Atsamat, Thailand. These groups of people expanded to Baan Phailorm in Muang District; then, finally moved to Srisongkham district and Nawa district.

**Panel G: Sunday, April 21, 2013, 9.00-10.40AM**

**Panel 30 Lao Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management**

**Room 325**

**William Robichaud**

**Saving a Lao Unicorn: Saola and the Extinction Crisis in Southeast Asia.**

Saola Working Group, IUCN Lao Programme, Vientiane, Lao PDR

The Saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*), is a large, hooved mammal found only in the Annamite Range along the border of Lao PDR and Vietnam. Its scientific discovery in 1992 was one of the most spectacular zoological finds of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 2012, twenty years after Saola's discovery by the outside world, IUCN recognized it as one of the 100 most threatened life forms (plant or animal) on earth. Saola is also the only animal whose international common name comes from the Lao language. Since the Saola's discovery, several other previously undescribed wildlife species, as well as undocumented human languages and ethnic groups, have been found in the Annamites, marking the area as a site of 'bio-cultural megadiversity'.

In Lao PDR, Saola are threatened mainly by intense hunting in the species' range along the Vietnam border. Most endangered species of wildlife in Southeast Asia are threatened by targeted off take for the region's unsustainable wildlife trade. Paradoxically, Saola is one of few large animals in the region without a significant price on its head. The species does not occur in China, and so does not appear in the Chinese traditional pharmacopeia. Saola are killed mainly as by-catch, in the pursuit of other, more valuable species. While tragic, this also presents a tremendous hope and opportunity to save Saola from extinction. The global conservation of Saola will depend on actions taken in Lao PDR. A window remains to save this extraordinary, beautiful animal, and we must act soon, and act together.

**David Pick**

**Survey of the Lepidoptera (Butterflies and Moths) of Laos**

Florida Atlantic University, USA

As with much of the biodiversity of Laos its Lepidopteran species richness, abundance, and distribution is largely unstudied. Their study is needed not only for documentation of species new to science, but also as indicators of ecosystem health for Conservation Biology and public policy. This presentation gives the results of in-country pre-research, background on the Lepidoptera of Laos as obtained from an English literature search, and the goals and plans for proposed research to survey the Lepidoptera of Laos. This proposed project will start by focusing on ecosystems in areas scheduled to be flooded by the formation of hydroelectric reservoirs in order to collect and document these species and environments for scientific posterity. Along with the collection of Lepidopteran species, a major focus of this proposed research will be the integration of local knowledge, tradition, and language into scientific literature, and

to form relationships among people producing ideas that create understanding and excitement about the environment for Lao and English speakers alike. The specimens obtained in this project will be used to produce a display of Lao Lepidoptera for Florida Museum of Natural History and a collection for a university in Laos to educate scientists and the public about species found in Laos.

**Chris Hallam**

**Integrating traditional ecological knowledge and scientific knowledge to improve conservation planning for gibbons (*Hylobatidae*) in Lao PDR**

Wildlife Conservation Society, Vientiane, Lao PDR

Biodiversity conservation planning and management requires the use of knowledge from a wide range of sources. It also requires an understanding of the beliefs and attitudes towards biodiversity among local people in order to integrate these viewpoints effectively in conservation planning and management activities. We investigated the nature and status of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of globally important gibbons (*Hylobatidae*) in the Nam Kading National Protected Area in central Laos. The research used focus group interviews and comparative case study methodology to investigate TEK in two contrasting villages. Results indicated that there was a range of traditional knowledge of gibbons in the region, with more detailed knowledge of specific aspects of gibbon habitat preferences and behavior in the more remote village (Khontao) that had been less subject to outside influence. Knowledge in the more accessible village of Kengbit was more anecdotal and less informed on specific aspects of gibbon ecology. Specific knowledge of gibbons and traditional taboos appears to be degrading under new social pressures, but communal knowledge and understanding of gibbons appears more resilient. A comparison of SEK and TEK indicated that both forms of knowledge share many pieces of common information about the factors affecting gibbon occurrence across the landscape. Models developed using Bayesian Belief Networks from this knowledge to integrate the two forms of knowledge have significant benefits in incorporating different data sets, incorporating traditional knowledge, involving local people and promoting a shared understanding of the target conservation species between different stakeholders.

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**Panel 31 Tourism      Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup>, 9.00-10.40, Room 313**

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**Shih-chung Hsieh**

**On the Development of Radical Tourism in Sipsong Panna and Formulated Ethnic Performances of the Tai-Lue**

Professor, Department of Anthropology, National Taiwan University, Taiwan

Ethnic tourism began to appear in Sipsong Panna, Yunnan, China since the 1980's. However a radically rapid step started in 1995 when the government of PRC decided to practice a policy of economic development in frontier area especially the southwestern border. In contemporary Sipsong Panna say Jinghong the capital city becomes a typical location where tourism is almost the only aspect of daily life among the residents and immigrants including the developers from other metropolis. Everything is for performance and more correct performance itself. Theoretically Tai-Lue people, the native majority ethnic group in Sipsong Panna, participate in such a radical tourism movement without hesitation because all of the major ideas of cultural and ethnic symbolism in touristic arena based on Lue history and people. But in reality the ethnic and cultural configurations had been manufactured by the state and its local representatives with a formula of making Lue historical heritage and cultural legends. The Lue people now in Sipsong Panna contribute "traditional culture" defined by the state for the economic development in their own lost homeland.

**Michael Kleinod**

**Linking Ways of Nature Worship: Tourism to Sacred Forests in Laos**

M.A, Institute for Asian and African Studies, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany

In the everyday experience of the rural population of Laos, spiritual notions of nature are still current. Across ethnic boundaries, certain places are taboo for certain forms of resource extraction due to fear of spirits. In these cases, forests are 'conserved' as being threats rather than because they are seen as threatened. Conservationists try to cash in on the preservation aspect of 'animism,' such as where a species 'protected' by local customs is at the same time 'endangered.' This ambivalence of 'sacred forests' – icons of a 'traditional' relation to nature, as well as 'modern' sanctuaries – makes them an object of a very different, 'secular' form of nature worship: ecotourism.

How do such local spiritual manifestations tie into the socio-economic rapids of global capital accumulation? How are they situated within Laos' dilemma to integrate resource extraction and conservation? While globalization materializes in tourism, local nature relations are embodied in 'sacred' sites. Focusing on a phenomenon which is a combination of both and drawing on firsthand data, the presentation examines the copings of 'sociocultures' (Rehbein 2007) with the current boost of globalisation that Laos is experiencing.

I argue that local nature relations enter into complex tensions with emerging global paradigms, such as sustainable development, which selectively integrate or discourage 'indigenous knowledge.' Looking at sacred forests in Laos from this angle sheds light on a surprisingly under-studied phenomenon and locality, but also gives rise to more general questions about current Lao society, as well as about the religious content of late capitalism.

**Masao Nishimura**

**Tourism Development and its Impact on the Lao-Cambodian Border Region**

Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

This paper intends to discuss two points: it compares tourism development policies of Lao PDR and Cambodia; and it exhibits on-going development projects and their impact on the lives of people residing in the Lao-Cambodian border region.

Tourism is the most important industry in Lao PDR and Cambodia. This importance is reflected in the policy of those countries. We see hectic change of landscape due to heavy construction of infrastructure throughout those countries, especially in the area along the Mekong River. In order to examine their impact on local cultures, field research was conducted in the border region between Champasak Province of Lao PDR and Stung Treng Province of Cambodia.

The research reveals that there is a sharp difference in people's perceptions of tourism in these two countries. Cambodia has gone ahead in terms of tourism development and the land along the border is now a target for developers to exploit. People outside Stung Treng, both Cambodians and foreigners, have attempted to obtain large tracts of land and monopolized natural resources in a predaceous manner. Consequently, people who used to make their living on such resources are no longer able to rely on them, and an increasingly large number of people have moved to other means of making a living. Cambodian people have suffered heavily from such practices and therefore tend to be negative toward further changes in the landscape through tourism development. They are desperately attempting to



adapt to the quickly changing natural environment as well as to the socio-economic environment by using their own tactics such as establishing multiple income resources. Those Cambodians look at Lao PDR as one income source, while believing that they are more developed than people in Lao PDR.

In contrast, Lao national and Champasak provincial governments are enthusiastic about tourism development, but strategically promoting tourism. Their strategy is to increase the number of international tourists. For this purpose, the border policy has been changed. According to this trend, the regulation at the Lao-Cambodian border has also been significantly loosened. They have been looking for more resources for tourism development, and even created them. Lao people express their expectation for tourism development. They are positive toward this development. The present research emphasizes that as the political barriers at the border are lowered, the cultural barriers at the border, instead, are rising through tourism development.

**Warinart Pitukwongwan**

**Chiangkhan's Cultural Landscape and the Change of Tai People's Ideology towards their Careers**

M.A Student, Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, Salaya, Thailand

Chiangkhan is a city, located on the right bank of Mekong River in Thailand, where many Tai ethnic people have lived and earned their living. These people, in the past, came from Laos and settled in many places close to the Mekong River. In this paper, I explore the patterns of Chiangkhan's land and water use and their implications for Tai people's livelihoods in Chiangkhan since the Cold War period. The research employed a qualitative approach and numerous informants were interviewed. Throughout the history of Chiangkhan city's development, powerful groups have dominated the development discourse while local stakeholders have struggled to survive the impact of development. The factors, I argue, that have caused the changes in Chiangkhan's cultural landscape include development policies since the Cold War period, the impact of tourism, and the changes in water resource management in this region. These factors also have created a change in Tai people's ideology towards their careers related to water from the Mekong River especially fishery and agriculture along the riverbank as well as have led to the emergence of many new business and service areas in Chiangkhan city.

**Panel 33 Tai Dialects**

**Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup>, 9.00-10.40, Room 326**

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**Mudjalín Luksanawong**

**The Relationships among Five Tai Dialects in Sakon Nakhon, Thailand: A Study of Basic Words**

Graduate student, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

This article is a comparative study of lexical items in five Tai dialects used in Sakon Nakhon province: Yo, Phu Tai, Yooy, Lao (Isan) and Kaloeng. The hypothesis of the study is that the lexical items in Yo, Lao and Yooy are more closely related than those in Kaloeng and Phu Tai.

In this research, a wordlist of 800 semantic units was used to interview four informants of each dialect. After the interview, 750 items in the wordlist that have relatively clear semantic properties were selected. These lexical items were then analyzed by using linguistic rules. Based on the analysis, the patterns of usage of these items and their relationships were determined.

The results show that the usage of these lexical items in Yo, Phu Tai, Yooy, Lao and Kaloeng can be divided into two types: 1) those using the same lexical items and 2) those using different lexical items. The lexical items used in Yo, Lao and Yooy are more closely related than those in Kaloeng and Phu Tai.

In addition, the results show that the five Tai dialects can be classified into three groups based on their relationships. Yo, Lao, and Yooy are group 1. Kaloeng and Phu Tai are group 2 and group 3, respectively.

#### **Sasithorn Onlao**

#### **The Grouping of Tai Language in Nam Paw Basin, Khamkeut District, Bolikhamxai Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic**

Graduate Student, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

There are a variety of ethnic groups in Nam Paw basin, Khamkeut district, Bolikhamxai province, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and each group has its own culture and spoken language, which have not been studied so far. Therefore, these areas become very interesting. The tonal systems, vowel systems, consonant systems, and lexical items in each of the ethnic groups were studied in order to group Tai dialects in Nam Paw basin. The fieldwork data was collected by interviewing informants of each of the groups inhabiting Khamkeut district, Bolikhamxai province, Lao People's Democratic Republic. These ethnic groups consisted of the Tai Thaeng, Tai Mod, Tai Moei, Phoo-tai (Phu Tai), Nho and Lao. In each group, one major informant and two more informants were interviewed for 1,000 basic words. All of the words were analyzed and compared on sound systems, then they were grouped as dialects by using 4 criteria of grouping Southwestern Tai as followings; 1. Consonant sound changes of Proto-Tai, 2. Tonal changes of Proto-Tai, 3. Vowel changes of Proto-Tai, and 4. Lexical items.

The results of the study are as follows. As for consonant sounds, there are 20 consonant sounds in Tai Mod, Tai Moei, Phoo-tai, Nho and Laos. As for tonal sounds, there are 8 tonal sounds in Tai Thaeng, Tai Mod, Tai Moei, and Phoo-tai, and there are 9 tonal sounds in Nho and Lao. When salient syllables and weak syllables are merged, it is found that there are 6 tonal sounds in Tai Thaeng and Tai Mod; there are 7 tonal sounds in Tai Moei, Phoo-tai, and Nho; and there are 8 tonal sounds in Lao. As for vowel sounds, there are 11 single vowel sounds in Tai Thaeng, Tai Mod, Tai Moei, Phoo-tai and Nho; there are 18 single vowel sounds and 3 diphthongs in Laos; and there are no diphthongs in Phoo-Tai.

For grouping of Southwestern Tai in Nam Paw basin by using Proto-Tai consonant sound changes, it is found that the Proto Tai consonants have been changed into varied sounds in present. They can be divided into 2 groups: the P group consisting of Tai Thaeng, Tai Mod, Tai Moei; and the PH group consisting of Phoo-tai, Nho and Laos. Moreover, by using the other criteria to sub-group these dialects, it also is founded that for the P group, Tai Thaeng has a close relationship to Tai Mod, and for the PH group, Phoo-tai has a close relationship to Nho.

The results of this study are useful in that they can be used to subgroup Southwestern Tai Dialects in further studies, which investigate the genetic relationships in order to study the development and the emigration of Tai people.

#### **Banyat Salee**

#### **Language Usage of Lao Diaspora in Cambodia**

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

This study aims to analyze language usage of the Lao diaspora in Cambodia. The selected study areas are Mongkhol Buri and Orchrov Districts, Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia. This study is framed by the concept of code switching, and data was collected through interviews and participant observation.

The study found that the Lao diaspora in Cambodia have a sense of their own ethnicity. They use an alternate language for different purposes in various situations. This method is called “metaphorical code switching,” such as for ethnic consciousness, to disguise their ethnicity, to act in harmony, and to argue with other ethnic groups.

Code switching of the Lao diaspora has various connotations including social situational creation of the Lao diaspora among the other groups in Cambodia.

**Panel H: Sunday, April 21, 2013, 11.00-12.40PM**

**Panel 34 Resettlement, Agriculture and Economic Zones**

**Room 313**

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**Pinkaew Laungaramsri**

**Civilizing Mission, Commodifying Sovereignty and the Making of Neo-liberal Subjects in the Special Economic Zone of Northern Lao Borders**

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Thailand

Laos has followed its Chinese neighbor in creating the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) as part of the new economic engine that allows distinctive economic policies and flexible governmental measures conducive to doing business in certain areas of the country. But unlike its Chinese counterpart which uses SEZs as dual roles of "windows" in developing the foreign-oriented economy and generating economic exchanges, SEZs in Laos operates as one form of self-imposed “extraterritoriality” tailored to foreign investors especially the Chinese. Vast areas of agricultural land, village settlements, and other natural resources have been appropriated and turned into entertainment and tourist complexes. This paper uses the case of the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone to examine the paradox between the desire to civilize and the will to survive played out in the border zone of northern Lao PDR. It investigates the means and mechanism that facilitate the process of civilizing mission by the Chinese investor. Commodifying sovereignty and legal flexibility have contributed to the creation of the space of exception (Ong 2006) necessary for the new economic possibilities to reshape the “wild zone” and its people into a productive resource. Negotiation and reluctance by the Lao villagers to participate in the new economic enterprise has kept them in the state of “abeyance” (Mizuchi 2003). The paper also analyzes the role of the Burmese migrant workers as key actors-- the neo-liberal subjects that help make the Chinese civilizing mission possible.

**Lamphay Inthakoun**

**Land Policy, Forest Access, and Rural Livelihood Transformation in Northern Laos**

International Development, Community, and Environment (IDCE), Clark University, USA

This paper examines the relationship between government land policies, forest access, and livelihood change in northern Laos. The land area of Laos is 80 percent mountainous and 70 percent of the Lao population lives in rural areas. Many depend upon subsistence agriculture, particularly shifting cultivation, and the collection of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) for their livelihoods. As the Lao government has opened up the country to foreign investment since 1986, they have implemented a land and forest allocation program (LFAP) to protect forest areas and promote market-oriented agricultural production. To examine how this program has impacted rural Lao’s livelihoods in regard to their forest access, I conducted interviews with households and village chiefs in three Khmu villages of Pha Oudom district, Bokeo province. Each village varied in the degree to which they have been

integrated into the market economy and subjected to government land and forest policies. Thus, have had different experiences of livelihood transformation. However, I found that government policies and agribusiness schemes often worked against village livelihoods, in part because such interventions were not appropriate to their socio-cultural and environmental context. The LFAP, which was implemented in a partial and haphazard way, restricted villagers' access to land used for shifting cultivation and NTFP collection. Promoted alternatives such as rubber planting and livestock production were unsuccessful due to lack of extension support. In light of these findings, government land and forest policies ought to be re-oriented to reflect the livelihood needs of rural Laos in mountainous areas.

**Michael B. Dwyer**

**"All-Around Secure Localities": Focal Site Development in Laos's Postwar Political Forest**

Centre for Development and Environment, University of Bern, Germany

Since the late 1990s, Laos's state-managed "focal site" development zones have attracted substantial criticism from scholars and development professionals. Causing involuntary displacement, decreased food security, and increased morbidity and mortality, focal sites have been widely seen – together with Land and Forest Allocation, with which they have often been linked – as exemplifying governmental incompetence at best, and at worst the "development at all costs" approach of the contemporary Lao state. This paper both extends and corrects current understandings of focal site development by presenting a genealogy of what has come to be known as the focal site *policy*. Drawing on archival sources, I trace the historical process by which Laos's first focal site was proposed, created, and subsequently abstracted as policy. What this historical "grounding" shows is, first, that as the focal site concept made its way from drawing board to field to policy, it became stripped of a highly politicized history of postwar counterinsurgency-cum-resource development that was fundamental to its creation; and second, that as the Lao government embraced market-oriented development in the late 1980s, this earlier model – one in which the upland population was treated largely as a political constituency whose respect needed to be *won* – became replaced by the legalistic, enclosure-oriented model exemplified by the Land and Forest Allocation program. The intersection and contingent articulation of these two frameworks has, in the years since, given rise to an uneven landscape of upland development, the history of which helps us make sense of the (uneven) impacts of large-scale land concessions.

**Panel 35 Migration**

**Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup>, 11.00AM-12.40PM Room 325**

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**Sutida Tonlerd\* and Puttarat Masong\*\***

**History of Lao Labor and Its Effect on Thai Society from 1991 – 2012 A.D.**

\*History Program and \*\*English and Communication Program, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Ubon Ratchathani University, Thailand

This study is based on an historical approach with the aim to analyze the development of Lao labor and its effect on Thai society from 1991- 2012 A.D. Recent research has demonstrated that Lao labor is ranked third among unskilled foreign labor in Thailand. This research revealed that Lao labor has been a part of Siamese society since the Thonburi period. From 1991 to 2012, its status and role has fallen into two categories: wage labor and trafficking trade. The development of the Thai capitalist economy system needs Lao labor to support its cycle. Furthermore, there has been an influx of Lao labor because of the collapse of the Cold War. As wage laborers, they can be classified into three statuses: legal, illegal, and stateless. According to Thailand's historical background, Lao labor can be divided into three types including vassal state, forced army, and cheap labor. This study stresses that Thailand, which is in an industrial revolution era and depends on alien labor, has exploited natural and human resources from

neighboring countries. Moreover, this situation raises another comparative study. For example, Lao labor created the Ratanakosin era, which is similar to the study of the black people who built the American nation. In sum, from 1991 to 2012, Lao labor has affected Thai society in three areas: the economy, as being cheap labor; politics, as being stateless when fleeing from the former rightwing government in Laos; and society, as being a part of diversity in the Thai and global communities.

**Suchada Thaweessit**

**Displaced Lao in Northeastern Thailand**

Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, Salaya, Thailand

This paper discusses Thai state's practices of inclusion and exclusion towards ethnic minorities and the consequences of the practices that play out on the lived experiences of minorities. It focuses especially on the problematic status of displaced persons from Laos and their descendents living in the Northeast of Thailand. This particular group of Lao people is classified as one among many groups of ethnic minority who are having personal legal status and rights-related problems in Thailand. These people have been living in Thailand continuously more than thirty years, but the State sees them as aliens because they entered the country without permission. These Lao people previously have no record in a civil registration system, and many of them lack any proof or documents to verify their relationship with any state. These conditions put them at great risk of poverty and human rights violations. Their problematic status makes them de jure stateless persons. The paper also emphasizes the livelihoods and struggles of these people, as well as the ways in which they assert themselves to be accepted as Thai nationals.

**Nicole Reichert**

**Lao migrants in East Germany: Life between official state discourse and individual migration histories**

Ph.D Candidate, Max-Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany

In the context of the flows of socialist "development aid" between the Lao PDR and the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), about 2500 Lao got further training as vocational trainees, students or Ph.D Candidates in East Germany between 1974 and 1998. This paper discusses the migration trajectories of Lao citizens to East Germany, their daily life experiences there, and the circumstances of their return to Laos. Most Lao on average stayed for five years in the GDR. However, many Lao were able to prolong their stays in the former GDR (and later in reunified Germany) for a longer period, or could make arrangements to stay in or at least go back to Germany on a regular basis. By complementing general historical accounts and state documents concerning migration with individual narratives, the paper presents an in depth-analysis of the conditions of arrival, specific migration histories, and interaction with state structures that all had a crucial impact on the development of social, cultural and symbolic capital of Lao migrants. Furthermore I will show that in spite of powerful structuring and controlling state forces, in daily life Lao had options to build up extensive networks. Even after reunification, many continued to benefit from these networks after returning to Laos.

**Vanina Bouté**

**Migration and the Emergence of New Social Stratifications in Northern Laos**

Associate Professor, IRASEC - Research Institute on Contemporary Southeast Asia, Bangkok (CNRS-MAEE) and University of Picardie, France

This paper aims to analyse certain social dimensions of transnational dynamics in northern Laos. It will focus in particular on the effects of the opening of borders on local societies. One can distinguish two types of

destination for internal migrants: mountainous villages that have been resettled along roads and large villages (or small market towns) located in lowland areas. Many villages were resettled along roads in the 1990s, and this policy has been carried out again since 2005 with the gradual banning of shifting cultivation – the highlanders have to be relocated near the road in order to cultivate cash crops. At the same time, spontaneous migrations have emerged and are multiplying. They are caused by highlanders' desire to anticipate and escape government-driven resettlement programmes, and instead, to organise their departure to the lowlands themselves. As their final destination, most of them have the option of reaching and settling in urban areas where some of their relatives (working as civil servants or shopkeepers) are living. Others settle in areas that appear to be economically attractive because of their location near future corridors of development, such as the small market towns located at the crossroads between China and northern Laos (Bun Tay and Ban Yo in Phongsaly province, as well as Müang Sing and Nateuil in Luang Namtha province).

All these changes have had several impacts. In this paper, I will focus on two processes, i.e. territorial change and social change. First, I will give an overview of the changes that have occurred within the territory of the northern provinces, in particular an overview of the emergence and strengthening of demographic and territorial imbalances throughout Laos' northern provinces. Then, I will focus on the social impacts engendered by these territorial changes, through the study of some resettlement areas for migrants, especially some urban places in northern Laos which have attracted many migrants over the last ten years. I will argue that land and demographic pressures in these areas develop in parallel with a growing social differentiation leading, paradoxically, to the control of land by the first inhabitants of these urban areas, i.e. civil servants and traders.

#### **Panel 36 Phonology**

**Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup>, 11.00AM-12.40PM, Room 326**

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**Garry W. Davis**

**The Story of Lao <r>: Filling in the Gaps**

Associate Professor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA

The resurgence of the grapheme <ᨾ> (<r>) in written Lao in recent times is a curiosity that has been frequently noted. While <ᨾ>'s new-found popularity may be due to a plethora of cultural and political reasons that are not completely understood, it is certainly clear that <ᨾ> is orthographically superfluous in modern Lao. That's because the sound that it supposedly represents (the phoneme /r/) is known to have disappeared from the Lao phonological system long ago, and the sound that <ᨾ> now represents is /l/, which can also be spelled as <ᨿ> or as <ᨻᨿ> (Enfield 2007). The present paper examines the historical development of the phoneme /r/ in Lao starting with the earliest known written records (Gagneux 1983) and using the first dictionaries of Lao compiled by European sources (Cuaz 1904, Guinard 1912). We proceed from the conventional assumption that Lao originally inherited a phoneme \*/r/ from Proto-Southwestern Tai that was probably pronounced as a highly aspirated trill or flap [r] much like the prescribed pronunciations of /r/ in modern Thai (also known as Central Siamese). We confirm the traditional assumption that the original Lao /r/ merged with /h/ wherever it was in initial position in monosyllabic words such as \**ᨾᨾᨾ* > *ᨾᨾᨾ* 'hot', \**rak* > *hak* 'to love' (Diller 1996:459). Included in this change were monosyllabic loan words of Khmer origin such as \**rim* > *him* 'edge, shore'. Eventually, a new grapheme <ᨾᨾ> (commonly called by the pneumonic *ᨾᨾ ᨾᨾ*) developed to write this /h/ sound. Evidence gleaned from written records allows us to date the loss of the phoneme /r/ in Lao between about 1500 (when the change of *r* > *h* began) and 1900 when evidence from early European

dictionaries of Lao make it clear that /r/ had already disappeared from the spoken language in all environments.

In contrast to traditional wisdom, however, the present paper suggests that the loss of /r/ in consonant clusters (cf. Thai *khruaŋ* versus Lao *khuaŋ-jǎk* ‘machine’) and in disyllabic words (Thai *ráwaŋ*, *ráya* versus Lao *lawán*, *lanya* ‘danger’, ‘distance’) may have occurred substantially later than the change of *r* to *h*. This means that there may have been an intermediate period of time when /r/ had already merged with /h/ initially in monosyllables, but would still have been pronounced as [r] in clusters and in disyllables (Davis 2010:53). In this way, the phoneme /r/ could have survived in Lao for some time, but there would have been a gap in the phonological system where /r/ did not occur, that being in initial position in monosyllables where it had already merged with /h/. According to this view, early literary loan borrowings from Pali (Sanskrit) into Lao (such as *\*rook* ‘disease’) could have filled this phonological gap, and would have continued to be pronounced as [r] until the phoneme /r/ eventually merged with /l/ (*lôok—labàat* ‘epidemic’). All of this suggests a plausible scenario whereby the merger of /r/ and /l/ in Lao could have been completed later than traditionally assumed and in a time frame that matches the testimony of the written documents. This somewhat later time frame would also more closely match the developments in Thai, where the merger of /r/ and /l/ seems to have begun around 1800, and was probably complete in low register speech by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Varisa Kamalanavin**

**The Tonal System of Lao Khrang in Nong Mamong District, Chainart Province, Thailand, and Its Foreign Accent Rated by Luang Phabang Speakers**

Department of Linguistics, Thammasat University, Thailand

Like many other Lao Khrang communities in Thailand, legend has it that the Lao Khrang people of Kut Chork Village, Nong Mamong District, Chainart Province, Thailand, were originally from a village called Phu-Khang in the northwestern part of Luang Phabang. They claimed that their ancestors set foot in Thailand over 150 years ago. From my data collection of citation forms in Lao Khrang, I found that their tonal system is very similar to that of Luang Phabang Lao, except for those tones in checked syllables. If their homeland were truly Luang Phabang or somewhere nearby, Luang Phabang speakers should be able to identify the speech variety of Lao Khrang as being similar to theirs. My objective is to investigate how Luang Phabang speakers would rate Lao Khrang speakers’ utterances in terms of foreign accentedness. Forty-eight Luang Phabang speakers were asked to listen to the Lao Khrang utterances produced by three Lao Khrang speakers, with some utterances from one Salavan speaker as control non-native stimuli, and with some additional utterances from four Luang Phabang speakers as control native stimuli. The listeners were unaware of the speakers’ language background. Their task was to assess the degree of foreign accentedness of these stimuli by using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “no foreign accent” to “very heavy foreign accent”. The result of the ratings will give us a clue as to whether the speakers of the two dialects which have been separate for over 150 years would still judge their sister dialect as similar to their own.

**Nonglak Sungsuman**

**A Phonological System of the Tai Bo Dialect, Bolikhamsai and Khammuan Provinces, Lao PDR**

Mahasarakham University, Thailand

The Tai Bo dialect belongs to a sub-group of Lao (Lao Front for National Construction, 2008: 36). The speakers of the Tai Bo dialect are now scattered in the central region of Laos. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the phonological system of the Tai Bo dialect in Bolikhamsai province and in Khammuan

province, Lao PDR. The methodology used is that of descriptive and comparative linguistics. The interview method was used for eliciting the data. The informants were asked how they used a number of basic words in their dialect. Based on the minimal pair method and William Gedney's tone box, the consonants, vowels and tones were analyzed. The phonological system and basic words of the Tai Bo were then compared with the other dialects. It was found that 1) The Tai Bo dialect has 19 consonant phonemes; 2 clusters; 18 monophthongs; 3 diphthongs; and 5 tones. 2) The comparative study of Lao, Nyo, Yooi and Phu Tai dialects reveals that the development of proto Tai initials: / \* $\text{p}^h$ , \* $\text{p}$  > /  $\text{p}^h$ √ $\text{p}$  and / \* $\text{p}$ , \* $\text{p}^h$  > /  $\text{p}$ √ $\text{p}$ , change of diphthongs: / \* $\text{a} \leftrightarrow \text{a}^h$  , \* $\text{a}^h \text{a}^h$  , \* $\text{a}^h \text{a}^h$  / > /  $\text{a} \leftrightarrow \text{a}^h$  / is similar to that in Nyo and Phu Tai and the \*DL with final /-k/ in Tai Bo and Phu Tai became glottalized dead short. It shows that this dialect belongs to the same group as Phu Tai.

#### **Panel 37 People from Laos in America**

**Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup>, 11.00AM-12.40PM, Room 335**

##### **Youd Sinh Chao**

##### **How Intercultural Communication Impacts Mien and other Southeast Asian Marriage and Family Relationships**

American Biblical Counselors Association, Mien Christian Mission Fellowship, USA

With so many individuals, couples, and families now living in the United States from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds, there are various communication styles among the different ethnic groups that play a key role in determining the success and failure of today's marriages and family relationships. The Mien and other Southeast Asian communities living in the United States have been encountering not only cultural differences but many other linguistic and communication challenges that affect the health and well-being of their marriage and family dynamics.

From the combined years of research and personal experiences in working with individuals, couples, and families from different cultural, social and educational settings, the presenter has the honor and privilege to write and publish a book, "Intercultural Communication: Impacts on Marriage and Family Relationships" which comes with many practical implications for individuals, couples, parents, pastors, community leaders, therapists, educators, and researchers.

This book is written by an author who was born in Laos, grew up in Thailand refugee camps, and resettled in the United States as a teenager with nothing but a pair of old and torn clothes on his back. Throughout the countless years of personal struggles, the author survived many levels of challenges, such as escaping from Laos to Thailand to be freed from political persecution, surviving in a refugee camp from sicknesses and hunger, coming to America with zero English or employment skill set, in order to become a language instructor, marriage and family counselor, and Mien language and cultural consultant.

##### **Akarath Soukhaphon**

##### **Lao Place-Making in Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

Milwaukee, WI, USA

While there is an abundance of literature on the resettlement and adaptation of Indochinese refugees in the United States from the perspective of various disciplines, the importance of place has often not been given enough credit. The process of (re) making place can be found in all migrant experiences—how communities are formed, sustained, and viewed by the larger society are all part of the ongoing place-making process. Similarly, studies on Lao refugees have been scarce in comparison to other



Indochinese groups arriving to the United States following the end of the Vietnam War. Greater attention to these other groups can partly be explained by their greater population density in certain locales and/or greater political and social participation.

This paper attempts to fill the gap between geographical and Lao diaspora studies by examining the place-making and community building processes of the ethnic Lao in Milwaukee, WI. While drawing on literature on other Lao, Indochinese, and Asian American communities, findings will reveal that Lao place-making is indeed unique due to the particular values placed in the social interactions the Lao community chooses to engage in. The research relies on a conceptualization of place, as in a sense of place, to best analyze Lao place-making in Milwaukee, WI. Less reliant on the more familiar visible religious, commercial, and residential markers of other communities, the Lao community in Milwaukee has recreated semblances of what was once familiar in more subtle, yet effective ways.

**Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy**

**The Educational Experiences of Lao and Khmer High School Students: The Influence of Families, Friends, and Teachers on Academic Achievement**

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

According to U.S. Census data, Southeast Asians students, in particular of Lao and Khmer (Cambodian) descent, have one of the lowest rates of high school graduation and college attendance in the United States. Using Bourdieu's cultural capital and Coleman's social capital frameworks, this cross-cultural qualitative study examined the influence that parents, friends, and teachers have on the academic achievement of thirteen Lao students and twenty-seven Khmer students. Southeast Asian parents have high expectations of their children. Yet there is a paradox between what parents and children aspire to and what they know about how to achieve those goals. Contrary to the cultural-deficit argument, it was found that Southeast Asian parents and families are the most influential motivating factors in these students' academic lives. However, Lao and Khmer parents lack institutionalized and embodied capital and are limited by their working-class networks in providing any academic and career information to their children. For these reasons, the students rely on the social capital they can gain in school through their relationships with teachers and peers. This paper will present the challenges that Lao and Khmer high school students face in schools and at home. It highlights how these students access support from parents, friends, and teachers and reiterates the important role of institutional agents in their academic lives. Lastly, this paper will end with concrete recommendations for educators, administrators and policymakers who are invested in ensuring the academic success of all Lao and Khmer American students.

**Buasawan Simmala**

**Coping Strategies with Cross-Cultural Adjustment Challenges of Lao and Vietnamese International Graduate Students in the United States**

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA

The context-based interpretation of the experiences of thirteen students, using the "constant comparison" data analysis method, revealed that the differences in the Collectivist and Individualistic core values, which shape Asian and American educational systems contrastingly, are the major causes of Lao and Vietnamese international graduate students' adjustment difficulties. In order to cope effectively with these unfamiliar situations, these students had to use eight coping strategies that were developed by weighing their coping resources versus the demands at hand. They included making extra effort and

determination, utilizing university support systems, establishing support networks with students from different cultures, establishing and maintaining social and emotional support networks of co-nationals and families, learning to accept the differences/ignoring negative effects, doing pre-departure preparation, developing organizational skills, adopting new social norms in learning, and being confident.

These research results have implications for both international higher education institutions and international students from Laos and Vietnam. Educators and administrators can use this new knowledge to frame their instructional designs as well as the support and intervention program development that aim to make the learning experience more meaningful for students with diverse backgrounds. Prospective Lao and Vietnamese students can also use these findings to frame their preparation process for more effective and meaningful academic journeys in the U.S. or possibly in other Western countries that have similar cultures and higher education systems. These insights into coping strategies with cross-cultural adjustment challenges of Lao and Vietnamese graduate students fill in the gap in the development of a conceptual framework for understanding adjustment experiences of international students with distinctive cultures in the U.S. It also contributes to expanding the studies of intercultural interaction in mixed-cultural classrooms and cross-cultural adjustment in various ways.

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**Panel 38 Music and Song                      Sunday April 21st, 11.00AM-12.40PM, Room 309**

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**Chalernsak Pikulsri**

**Changes in Music of Khmu Tribe in Lao People's Democratic Republic**

Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Khon Kaen University, Thailand

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is composed of many different ethnic groups. In its long history, the country has undergone a number of abrupt political, social, economic, and cultural changes, leading to changes in people's way of life and culture. According to a study of music of Khmu people, most of whom lived in the northern part of Laos, it was found that prior to the political change in 1975, apart from being played in internal activities of the group, Khmu music was also included in major events of the region, such as Puyee Yayer Festival in Luang Prabang Province. During the critical time of the United States war in Laos, the Lao Phuan people in Xiangkhoang Province fled the war in their hometown and lived with Khmu people, resulting in exchange and combination of cultural music between both ethnic groups. After the Lao People's Revolutionary Party successfully freed Laos from the United States of America, it had a policy to use culture for the development of the country. Songs about the revolution were played along with a Khmu band. As a result of its New Thinking Policy, Laos began to open its door to the world. The government promoted tourism with an objective to stimulate economic growth of the country. The music of Khmu people actively took part in the implementation of this policy. It was a kind of cultural music with a close link with customary rites. Khmu people's way of life began to clearly change while the government was using the cultural capital of Khmu people to promote tourism.

**Maneerat Ragphuan**

**Identity of Dialects in Northeastern Thailand in Country Song between 1998-2010**

Mahasarakham University, Thailand

The Thai country music of Isan is a literary work with the aim of creating melody happiness and impressions for the mind. The way to inspire the hearer to get the feeling the writer of the song and the singer want to communicate by means of the content will focus on the verbal language. But nowadays

Thai country music uses the Thai dialect of the northeastern region in narration, which is an important factor in communication instead of using the standard Thai for the whole song. This article aims to study the Thai country music of northeastern region which consists of the strategy of using language and its role in communication.

**Autthapon Intasena**

**Representations of the Mekong River in the Song Called ‘Song Fung Kong’**

Graduate Student, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

This paper aims at studying and attempting to understand the representations of the “Mekong River” which have been presented through contemporary songwriting of two nations, namely, Thailand and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic. The Mekong River is a great river route and a biologically diverse environment. It is also important for the ways of life of the people living on both sides of the Mekong River’s banks. The Mekong River resembles the main blood vessel providing nourishment to this region and is like the people’s soul in Southeast Asia. The analysis of the data reveals that the Mekong River in contemporary songwriting is presented as a representation of the border division between Thailand and Lao PDR. It is also a representation of a young man and girl of the two countries and their love, bearing witness to love, promise, love and connection, care, and their wait for each other. In addition, the Mekong River is a representation of beautiful scenery, fertility, ideology, and an important place to a young man and girl. Furthermore, the Mekong River in contemporary songwriting is a representation of a long relationship, reconciliation, shared cultural sense, rapport, hopes, faith, and harmony between the two nations.

In the format of contemporary songwriting from the many perspectives and emotions of a composer’s viewpoint, it can be stated that the characteristics of the representations of the Mekong River are drifting, reproduction, and recreation. All of which help confirm the influences of the Mekong River upon the songwriting. In doing so, a variety of meanings is created.