

The Journal of Lao Studies is published once per year by the Center for Lao Studies, 65 Ninth Street, San Francisco, CA, 94103, USA. For more information, see the CLS website at www.laostudies.org. Please direct inquiries to info@laostudies.org. ISSN : 2159-2152

Books for review should be sent to:

Mike Rattanasengchanh, JLS Editor
OD 234, Prothro-Yeager Bldg.
History Department,
Midwestern State University
Wichita Falls, TX. 76308

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call for Article Submissions for the JLS

The study of Laos and the Lao has grown significantly over the past few decades. With the opening up of some historical and manuscript archives, the improvement of communication and transportation, and the launching of joint Lao-foreign research projects, Laos has attracted a number of new scholars in diverse fields of expertise. The *Journal of Lao Studies* (JLS) offers scholars in the field of Lao Studies the opportunity to publish their research in a double-blind peer reviewed journal.

We accept submissions on an ongoing basis, including articles, book review suggestions, review articles (extended reviews of major publications, trends in the field, or of political, social, or economic events). These submissions can cover studies on Laos, the Lao diaspora (Northeast Thailand, Europe, the Americas, Australia, and so on), or studies in regards to ethnic groups found in Laos (Hmong, Akha, Khmu, among others).

Language: Lao and English are the main languages of the JLS. Other languages are welcomed, but please check with the editors first before submitting articles in other languages not listed here.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Eighth International Conference on Lao Studies

When: Thursday, 10 September to Sunday, 13 September 2026

Where: Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany

The Institut für Ethnologie at the Centre of Asian and Transcultural Studies, Heidelberg University, and the Center for Lao Studies (CLS) are pleased to announce that the Eighth International Conference on Lao Studies (ICLS8) will be held on September 10-13, 2026 in Heidelberg, Germany. The main objective of the conference is to promote Lao studies, broadly defined, by providing an international forum for scholars to present and discuss various aspects of Lao Studies.

Theme

The Time and Space of Laos: Neighbors and transformations

It is not only in the idiom of “from landlocked to landlinked”, that Laos has been recognized as a country intensely linked with its neighbors. It is also the fact that it is embedded within countries of highly different political organizations and economic statuses. As such, Laos has managed to find unique ways of dealing with both its influences and transformations. This

addresses time – the time of changes and of tradition and of national and geopolitical developments. It also concerns space: besides Laos's borders with neighbors, it has wide-ranging international linkages, but also contains the contrasts between highland and lowland, city and countryside. It contains new modes of transportation and communication that compress time and space, such as railroads and cellphones, but also the cycles of agricultural life and its transformation through climate change.

The Eighth International Conference on Lao Studies invites workshops and presentations that address these issues in a widely conceived way. It also intends to accommodate all academic scholarship in the social sciences and humanities related to Laos, to people identifying as Lao or to the country more generally, including people from all ethnic groups found in Laos, and diaspora communities all over the world.

Description

The conference will bring together Lao Studies scholars and researchers from all disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, and all intellectual and political perspectives, to share paper presentations, panel presentations, exhibits, performances, and cultural activities.

The following are included within the target groups of the conference:

- 1) All self-identified ethnic groups of Laos (e.g. Lao, Khmu, Hmong, Ieu-Mien, Akha, Phouan, Phou Tai, Nyouan, etc.);
- 2) Lao/Thai Isan and other ethnic Lao groups in Thailand (e.g. Lao Song, Phouan, Phou Tai, etc.)
- 3) Ethnic Lao living in Cambodia
- 4) Cross-border ethnic groups living in Vietnam, China, Burma, Thailand and Cambodia (e.g. Akha, Hmong, Phouan, Ieu-Mien, Khmu, Tai Lue, Tai Dam, Lahu, Brao, etc.)
- 5) Overseas diaspora originally from Laos or descendants of people from Laos (including French Lao, German Lao, Lao Americans, Hmong Americans, Khmu Americans, Australian Lao, Canadian Lao, etc.)

The following are some, but certainly not all, possible topics of interest to the conference organizers:

- Architectural Transformations
- Art and Music
- Border Trade and Interactions
- Buddhism and Other Religions
- Community
- Cultures of Ethnic Groups in Laos
- Education
- Ethnic Groups and Economic and Social Change
- Ethnomusicology
- Extractive Industries
- Families and Children
- Gender Relations
- Health and Illness

- History
- Identity Politics
- Infrastructures and their Effects
- Internet-Based Communications and Networking
- Language, Linguistics and Literature
- Lao American Issues
- Lao Heritage
- Lao People in the Regional/Global Economy
- Lao Relations with People from Other Ethnic Groups
- Large-Scale Economic Land Concessions
- Livelihood Changes
- Nature Conservation (including Wildlife and Protected Area Management)
- Nature-Society Interactions
- Politics
- Research Methodologies in Lao Studies
- Rural Development
- Transnational Networks and Relations
- Urbanization and Development

PROCEDURES and TIMELINES

- 1) Please submit abstracts in English until February 22, 2026.
- 2) Submit abstracts electronically, sending preferably a Microsoft word file (document) in an e-mail attachment via the email address: Laostudies8@uni-heidelberg.de.

General Contact information:

Prof. Dr. Guido Sprenger

Institut für Ethnologie, Universität Heidelberg

Centre of Asian and Transcultural Studies

Voßstr. 2, Building 4110

69115 Heidelberg

Germany

Website: <https://www.conferencecentral.org/webpage/view/42>

Laostudies8@uni-heidelberg.de.

- 3) The conference abstract committee will review abstracts and send an acceptance letter with scheduling information and other instructions for submitting final abstract statements and full versions of papers.

- 4) Abstracts of panels and individual papers and full versions of conference papers will be collected for distribution online.

ORGANIZED PANELS

Organized panels, composed of 3-4 scholars presenting formal papers and 1 or 2 discussants that can be scheduled into one-and-a-half-hour time slots are also invited. Panel organizers are requested to supply the following information:

- Title of the panel
- Conference theme(s) related to the panel
- Name, institution, address and email of the panel organizer
- Name, institution, address and email of each paper presenter
- Names, institutions, addresses and emails of the panel discussants
- Abstract (250 words or less) describing the panel as a whole
- Title of each paper and abstract (250 words or less) for each paper

INDIVIDUAL PAPERS

Individual papers will be grouped into coherent panels. The papers must include the following:

- Title of the paper
- Name, institution, address and email address of paper presenter
- Abstracts (250 words or less) with identified keywords.
- Related conference topic(s)

REGISTRATION Website: <https://www.conferencecentral.org/webpage/view/42>

All participants are requested to register online. The registration fee includes the conference program, and morning and afternoon snacks and two lunches for the three-day conference. Early registration deadline is **April 15, 2026**. Please note that there will be no refund for cancellation or absence.

FROM THE EDITOR

ສະບາຍດີທ່ານທຸກຄົນ

I am glad that the revival of the *Journal of Lao Studies* with volume 8 was not a one hit wonder. Here is volume 9! This is my second year as Editor-in-Chief and I am proud to help amplify and promote Lao studies in all its forms. My hope is that in some small way, this journal will show the importance of Laos, though small and landlocked and overlooked in certain disciplines. Thank you to those who support us, especially the peer reviewers. The community is small and we lean on you quite a bit. Thank you.

We have a balanced volume with three articles and three book reviews. The first piece is by Silpsupa Jaengsawang who authored “A Monastery’s Treasure Account: Collecting Payment Proofs.” Silpsupa writes about the financial records of Vat Maha That and how the Buddhist Sangha relied heavily on laypeople to help the temple during a time of economic uncertainty. The next article is “Landscape, Settlement, and Architecture along the Pao River,

1695-1927” by Ivan Polson and Payong Moonvapee. Through a multi-methodological approach that includes GIS mapping and research of texts and oral traditions, Polson and Payong track settlement history and architecture, arguing that communities adapted to local practices and at the same time maintained “cultural forms.” Wynn Gadkar-Wilcox authors the last article titled, “Laos, North Vietnam, and the Credibility of Nehru’s Leadership in Asia, 1954-1962”. Gadkar-Wilcox situates Laos in the middle of Indian-North Vietnam relations by showing that tensions increased due to the “presence of People’s Army of Vietnam troops in Laos.” The larger impact was seen with the International Control Commission (ICC), which was chaired by Indian representatives. The ICC had a difficult time accessing information on the ground to ensure Hanoi was abiding by the Geneva Accords.

We also have three book reviews by Volker Grabowsky, Anna Koshcheeva, and Norbert Francis and Thi-Nham Le. Grabowsky reviews Ryan Wolfson-Ford’s book, *Forsaken Causes*, stating the importance of the book’s contribution to Lao political history and showing that the Royal Lao Government was “an active and influence agent in Cold War geopolitics.” Koshcheeva wrote a review for *Building Socialism: The Afterlife of East German Architecture in Urban Vietnam*, showing the connection between East Germany and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam through the “transfer of socialist technology of urban reconstruction and engineering of an ideal socialist living to build Vietnamese socialist modernity.” The final book review is of *Population Dynamics and Livelihood Changes of Small-Scale Societies in Laos*, by Norbert Francis and Thi-Nham Le. The book examines economic development in Laos after the late 1980s and Francis and Thi-Nham bring out the resulting complexities after the introduction of free market principles and mechanisms.

Please consider submitting an article or book review on anything related to Laos. Each article goes through a double-blind peer review process. If you have any questions, please contact me at mike.rattanasengchanh@msutexas.edu.

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