

Mission Statement

The Center for Khmer Studies promotes research, teaching and public service in the social sciences, arts and humanities in Cambodia and the Mekong region.

CKS seeks to:

- Promote research and international scholarly exchange by programs that increase understanding of Cambodia and its region,
- Strengthen Cambodia's cultural and educational structures, and integrate Cambodian scholars in regional and international exchange,
- Promote a vigorous civil society.

CKS is a private American Overseas Research Center supported by a consortium of educational institutions, scholars and individuals. It is incorporated in the state of Delaware, USA. It receives partial support for overhead and American fellowships from the US Government. Its programs are privately funded.

CKS is the sole member institution of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) in Southeast Asia.

CKS's programs are administered from its headquarters in Siem Reap and from Phnom Penh. It maintains a small administrative office in New York and a support office in Paris, Les Amis du Centre d'Etudes Khmeres.

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Three Generations of Scholars, Prof. SON Soubert (center), his teacher (left), and Phon Kaseka (right) outside the Sre Ampil Museum

Center for Khmer Studies

Head Office:
 PO Box 9380
 Wat Damnak, Siem Reap, Cambodia
 Tel: (855) 063 964 385
 Fax: (855) 063 963 035

Phnom Penh Office:
 234 Street 450, Tuol Tumpung II, Chamkamorn,
 Phnom Penh, Cambodia
 Tel/Fax: (855) 023 991 937

Email: center@khmerstudies.org
 Website: www.khmerstudies.org

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WELCOME TO CKS!



Lois de Menil, President

like to tell you a bit about how that spirit is carried forward in all that we do, both officially and unofficially

Our dedicated Board members have generously assisted our small staff in moving CKS forward. With the help of His Excellency Son Soubert, we have signed an agreement with the Buddhist pagoda of Wat Damnak that assures our continued long-term presence there. That has opened the way for CKS to build an office, scholars' facility and research library at Wat Damnak. We have watched our new building emerge from a dusty hole to a complete research center that we look forward to inaugurating in January 2010. With our existing library soon to become an expanded reading room for the local community, we will now move into transition, while we renovate our existing facilities.

In addition to new facilities, we have new leadership. Dr. Michael Sullivan, a young British Ph.D. from the distinguished School of Oriental and African Studies in London, and formerly CKS's Chief Operating Officer, is now Acting Director. Mike's field of interest is the impact of Chinese investment on Cambodia. Together with Board member Jacques Hennessy, Mike has been overseeing the construction of the new facility, which, we are delighted to report, will be completed on schedule and on budget.

During my visit to CKS in June, I had the pleasure to visit two heart-warming ventures begun by Cambodians. The first is an orphanage begun by Pol Pean, a young former night watchman at CKS. Inspired by the example of CKS's service to Cambodia, when Pean completed his course of study to become a teacher, he returned to his native village--1 ½ hours and several light years removed from Siem Reap--and began an orphanage in his portion of his parents' land. The 50 young people who live at the orphanage are both real orphans and also children whose parents could not afford to care for them, reflecting the dire poverty of the Cambodian countryside. Pean provides pleasant housing in boys' and girls' dorms, the required school uniforms and shoes, sends them off to the village school, and provides remedial support classes in English and math at the orphanage. A small library, with children's books sent by visiting tourists, was filled with young girls happily gathered around a low table.

A similar distance outside Phnom Penh, I visited Sre Ampil, site of another orphanage founded 17 years ago by CKS Board member H.E.

Son Soubert, a distinguished scholar and member of Cambodia's Constitutional Council. Prof. Son Soubert's children are by now a rather large and lively 'family,' who assume responsibility for all the tasks of living together, as well as attendance at school and participation in a multitude of activities. Several of them speak quite good English as a result of his efforts. He welcomes interns from around the world. The children put on a wonderful traditional Khmer dance recital in my honor. I then joined them for lunch and participated fully in their community by singing "Old McDonald Had a Farm" with them. The positive spirit of what Son Soubert has accomplished was evident in his presentation of a 'problem'. One young man would soon be finished with his high school studies and longed to go to medical school in Phnom Penh--but where to find the funds to make that possible? Prof Soubert also has a second, more recent orphanage close to the Thai border, where he welcomes Cambodian children who have been sold into servitude in Thailand by their parents or simply deposited on the Thai border, and who are subsequently repatriated to Cambodia by the UN. Far from our usual suppositions about grim orphanages, these are places of welcome and of hope, where in the orderly life of a nurturing community, children are sent to school, given instruction in the useful work of life, valued and cared for.

While in Sre Ampil, I also visited the museum and the site of the archeological training program sponsored there by CKS. The modest museum, tended by local villagers, houses the findings from our pre-Angkorian site excavations. The CKS project director was a former student of Prof. Soubert, now a professor himself at the Royal Academy in Phnom Penh. Phon Kaseka led me to the site with great anticipation. Alas, just a few days earlier, the peasant who owned the land had plowed the field under to plant eggplants, completely destroying the neat lines of brick that outlined the ancient riverbank village settlement. Sre Ampil had been a main trading stop along the river in Pre-Angkorian times. Kaseka registered his acute disappointment with a certain philosophical self-discipline. At least they had the complete records of the site, with photos, he commented. Two minutes later, the farmer appeared. She told Kaseka she had something for him. During the plowing, they had unearthed a large stone tablet covered with inscriptions. She said he could have it. Brimming with excitement, Kaseka lost no time in gathering some men to help move the tablet straight to the museum. With the support of CKS Board members Emma Bunker and Prof John Miksic, Kaseka is now collaborating with a Vietnamese and a Lao colleague on a cross-border archeological research project--a first among traditional enemies. The Khmer empire spread far beyond the borders of today's Cambodia.

By its example and its programs, and through its Board members' and staff's dedicated engagement, CKS is reaching out in many directions, encouraging both scholarship and caring.

Welcome to CKS. I hope you will join in supporting our programs.

Lois de Menil, Ph.D.
President

Director's Note



Michael Sullivan, Acting Director

By the end of 2008, after almost three years in the planning, construction of the new Library and research center at CKS' Siem Reap headquarters finally got underway. The new construction proudly represents the Center's continued commitment to promoting research and public service in the social sciences, arts and humanities in Cambodia and the Greater Mekong Sub-Region. When it is fully up and running in early 2010 it will provide an impressive range of services for local, national, and international scholars and researchers.

As well as space for about 20,000 books, journals, and digital resources, it has study carrels, a spacious seminar room, all with free Wi-Fi access. Together with our existing facilities, the addition of the new Library and research center strengthens the position of CKS as the sole American Overseas Research Center in Southeast Asia. At the same time, it distinguishes us as a key destination in Cambodia for all scholars and researchers working on Khmer and Southeast Asian studies projects. As such, it forms the centerpiece in our continuing efforts to develop community networks of Cambodian, regional and international researchers.

Just as the new building in Siem Reap got underway a number of long-standing projects run from our Phnom Penh office were coming to a



successful finish. As part of our Publication and Translation program CKS was delighted to publish Professor Kamaleswar Bhattacharya's and Karl Heinz Golzio's (eds.) 'A Selection of Sanskrit Inscriptions From Cambodia', and the proceedings from the CKS conference, 'Living on the Margins: Minorities and Borderlines in Cambodia and Southeast Asia'. Also, the first series of five 'readers' produced by the Junior Faculty Training Program (JFTP) and translated from English into Khmer is now complete. Last but by no means least, the CKS translation into Khmer of Dr. Milton Osborne's *Southeast Asia: An introductory history* was completed in May. At the end of June Dr. Milton Osborne attended the CKS launch of his book at the Australian Centre for Education (ACE) in Phnom Penh, and gave a lively account to a packed audience of how the book took shape in the 1970s. The launch provided an excellent platform for CKS to showcase and promote all of its publications to date. The evening was a huge success generating a great deal of interest in the Center's Publication and Translation program.

The addition of new research facilities and the continued success of programming marks almost ten years of CKS operations in Cambodia. During that time, Cambodia has undergone many changes as it transits through a post-conflict phase in its development towards political stability and economic transformation. Accompanying those changes are new challenges and opportunities especially in the education sec-

tor. Now more than ever, research and teaching in the social sciences are of paramount importance as the country begins to look beyond the problems of the past, and takes full advantage of the new opportunities that lie ahead.

Likewise, renewed outside interest in Cambodia and Southeast Asia more generally is likely to intensify especially as China continues to extend its influence in the region. As an American Overseas Research Center we are adapting to those changes in a variety of ways. As the following pages will show, as well as the provision of new high quality academic research facilities, we have begun to reach out beyond academic communities to serve and promote mutual understanding between international, national scholars and Cambodian communities outside of our already well established networks.

Michael Sullivan, Ph.D., Acting Director



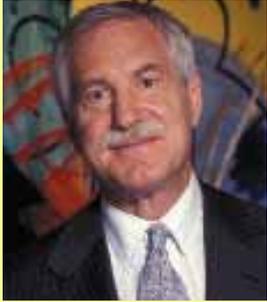
Milton Osborne Book launch



Sim Puthea, selling CKS books at Banteay Meanchey university **IN FOCUS 5**

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Olivier Bernier, Vice President



A few books, and mainly empty shelves; a few readers and mainly empty seats: at the beginning of the decade, and of CKS, our library was more striking by what it lacked than by what it had. Two years ago, we faced a very different problem, too many books, too many readers. The walls could support no more shelves;

we were most generously given entire collections, and the result was that piles of book-filled cartons had been banished to the outer office; as for the chairs they were always full. In some ways, it was a happy problem, as the only free public library outside Phnom Penh, we were attracting more readers than we could handle, in part because we had more books than we could put out. And then there was the Internet. Access to the Web has become hugely important, no student should be without it; but, in Cambodia, both computers and electricity are expensive. We wanted to supply access, but lacked the room to do so on the proper scale.

A new library was obviously needed, but libraries don't come cheap. A new building, new shelving, new study room, these were our goal. Thanks to the research carried out by one of our board members, Jacques Hennessy, we learnt that, in tropical countries, air conditioning is fine for students but bad for books; people, and computers, should be kept cool, books rot. What they need instead is a series of openings that create air flow through the shelves while, of course, keeping out the insects. The shelves themselves cannot be made of metal; a

special hardwood is what works best. Then, there was the building itself, we knew that it must fit into its surroundings. We are, after all, on the campus of Wat Damnak, one of the most important monasteries in the area.

Finally, there was the cost. Most of that has been contributed by the board, although help is still needed. It is the largest project CKS has ever undertaken. It also goes straight to the heart of what CKS is about, raising the intellectual capacity of Cambodia. Students need libraries—and here, there are all kinds of students, young men and women, of course, but also monks—the traditional educators- and guides learning about their own culture. In the past, we have been able to send students to universities outside of Cambodia, but first we had to bring them up to the necessary level. The library will help to do this. It will also fit in perfectly with our other programs—teaching, research, translation and publication.

The new Library is under the King's patronage, because he knows that we are offering new possibilities to his countrymen. When it formally opens in January, it will be a great day for CKS and for Cambodia. Now we need more help to finish the Library, to cover some of the new running costs. Please help us: when you do, you will know that you are really making a difference.

Join CKS!

Participate in our growth and development by becoming a member. Your contribution is essential for sustaining our program:

- Support CKS's Library Fund: our library's expansion and new building; acquisition of books, equipment and computers, and the training of our librarians
- Support important public services: free lectures, publications on contemporary and historical subjects, and translation of essential educational materials into Khmer
- Help us train junior faculty at the universities, to rebuild a country where the entire higher education sector still bears the effect of a vicious civil war.

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We Need You!

Support our Library (\$10,000)

CKS's Library is the largest public library in all of Cambodia outside Phnom Penh.

Sponsor the Translation of Educational Texts (\$5,000)

In the absence of essential books in the Cambodian language (Khmer), CKS is actively involved in translation and publishing. A donation of \$5,000 or more will defray costs for an average 300-page book and will be acknowledged in the publication.

Donate a new computer to our library (\$1,500)

Connect the CKS Library to the worldwide web for one year (\$2,000)

Digitize a collection of books from a major Southeast Asian library (\$5,000)

Place your name on a bookshelf containing approximately 400 titles (\$8,000)

Join the Director's Circle and place your name on a plaque in the new library (\$20,000)

We are grateful for the support of our donors!

The CKS Library : A year of Renewal

CKS's library opened its doors in 2001, with the ambition of fostering a reading culture in the surrounding community by providing a quiet haven within the dusty surrounds of the town of Siem Reap, that afforded both scholars and visitors a place to study, if not yet the resources of a full research library. Our ambition was far larger than our resources, which then consisted of a few books, current newspapers and journals, and a librarian whose need for training was more apparent than his skills. We began with the ritual blessing of the new library by the head monk of Wat Damnak, and a donation of rice by CKS. After 9 years of operations, we will open our new building with a similar ceremony in January 2010. We have come a long way.

CKS's library now contains over 8,500 titles. We have received donations of extensive scholarly collections and built through acquisitions a library whose depth and range serves not only the local community but also the international community of scholars. For several years, we have been delighted by the presence of scholars alongside the high school and local university students who come to our library daily. We have expanded our services by providing for wireless computer access, and several free computers for our younger readers to discover the Internet and the breadth of information available beyond our walls. Now our collections are expanding by digitized contributions, including the extremely

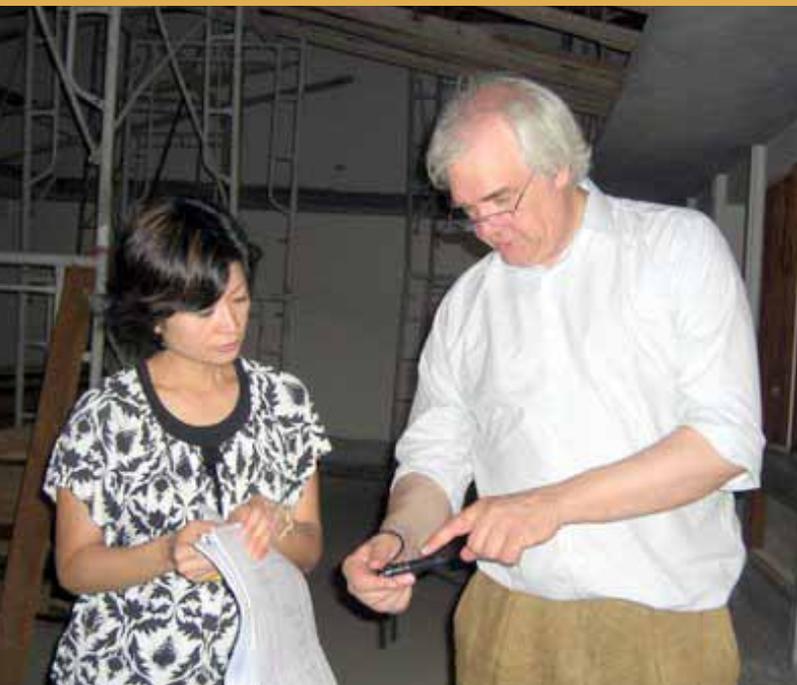
generous contribution by Cornell University of a digitized reproduction of its Southeast Asian collection.

In the process, we outgrew our current building's capacity far faster than we had imagined. We had a comprehensive online card catalogue, but no more shelves, insufficient space for readers and scholars, 2 trained librarians who are busy full-time; and our library hours extend from 8am-5:30pm six days a week. The CKS library is a popular place.

As we contemplated a new building, we realized that we faced a real challenge in the hot, wet climate of Cambodia. With interrupted electrical service and sky high utility rates, a climate-controlled HVAC-equipped book storage facility was not in the cards. After two years of persistent investigation by our Library Committee chairman, Trustee Jacques Hennessy, we were finally successful, with the extraordinary assistance of the Cornell University Library's expertise on tropical libraries, and the dedicated assistance of an expert at the French Ministry of Culture, in drawing up a building program that would both protect and preserve our collections through Monsoon rains and baking heat by a system of natural aeration that had worked successfully in old colonial libraries.

Even our bookshelves were to be split in two lengthwise to allow for ventilation. We then began the search for an architect who could translate this program into a building appropriate to the site that the Monastery of Wat Damnak made available to us, just behind our current library, effectively describing a CKS "campus" around a grassy courtyard enclosed by our conference center, the existing library and the new building.

After several unsuccessful attempts at implementing our program, we finally found a young, highly trained Japanese architect living in Siem Reap, Yoko Koide, whose proposal met all our hopes. The new building will group a naturally ventilated book storage area for an eventual 20,000 volumes, a scholars' research room, librarians' office and conservation area, and also at the other end an office for the CKS staff that makes it possible to return the space we had been using to the monks for their school. The whole building is naturally air-cooled, but the offices, semi-



Library committee chairman and trustee, Jacques Hennessy, with Yoko Koide project



Putting on the roof before the rainy season

nar room and scholar's research room have the possibility of air-conditioning during the hot season. The entire building is equipped for wireless communication. It has been financed largely by generous contributions from members of CKS's Board of Directors and major donors. In November 2009, we will begin to occupy the new building.

When we move, we will temporarily close the existing library in order to refurbish and expand its use for the local community. The reading room will be made 1/3 longer by annexing a room previously used by scholars. The collections available on the shelves will be directed by our librarians to the interests of local readers. All materials in the card catalogue will, of course, continue to be made available on request. We hope to increase the number of computer stations. Computers, and especially internet access, continue to be too costly for most young Cambodians. CKS's free access is important to them and is, of course, a very popular resource. Our librarians intermittently supervise computer stations to make sure they are being used appropriately.

While the Board has been addressing consolidation of CKS's facilities, we have also been training our dedicated librarians, Oum Daraneth and Mam Vannary, in research and cataloguing skills. CKS librarians speak French and English. Research librarian Vannary attended a conference in Chicago last year to learn how to use the invaluable new tool to locate journal articles, J-Stor, to which we hold a subscription through the Council of American Overseas Research Centers; and head librarian Daraneth has been invited by the SE Asian Program at Berkeley to come for training as soon as the new library is in operation.

KDP 2008-2009

The Khmer Dance Project was launched in March 2008. The duration of the project aims to last for three years (3 phases) commencing in 2008 and finishing in 2010. Each phase is divided into 2 sessions of interviews (winter and summer period). The current situation of Royal Khmer dance compelled us to focus on interviews of elderly dance masters. Very few members of this first generation have survived the Khmer Rouge period. Only five remained. The first phase took almost six weeks (March and July 2008). Several hours were spent at each session asking the masters about their lives as artists in the Royal Palace, about traditional dances or melodies, and about the names of artists (dancers and musicians) who disappeared. In addition during this first phase we enriched our collection by filming the rehearsal of an old ballet 'Sovannahong' recreated by HRH Princess Norodom Buppha Devi and its final performance in Chatomuk Theatre.

The second phase of the Khmer Dance Program focused on the second generation of artists who trained under the old masters filmed in Phase 1. This group of dancers also suffered tremendously during the Khmer Rouge regime. Almost 90% of this generation's artists died because of ill-treatment, diseases, and dedication to their art. This phase comprised 6 to 8 weeks of interviews including two sessions (January and July-August 2009) of filming.

Session 1 began in January 2009, with a series of interviews at Angkor Wat of the second generation of artists. During this session, we also filmed the Arts Dance School in Siem Reap and the School of Dance and Music at Chouk Sar (near Banteay Srey) which is funded by the Nginn Karet Foundation and is under the patronage of HRH princess Buppha Devi. At both schools we were able to film a number of folk dances as well as Royal Khmer dance. Folk dances are also included in our filming project, for they are a part of the national Khmer heritage.

Session 2 started on July-August 2009, mostly in Phnom Penh and its surrounding areas. Interviews are focused on prominent artists who are both dancers and choreographers with a special focus on



The Dance Master



Ritual of paying homage to the Kru

Sophiline Chem Shapiro co-founder of a new troupe 'Khmer Arts Academy'. In addition we were able to film a re-creation of a ballet 'Enao Bosseba' by HRH Princess Buppha Devi from the beginning to the end and its final performance at the Chenla Theatre.

CKS/National Museum of Cambodia Inventory Project

With continued funding by the Leon Levy Foundation, CKS's National Museum of Cambodia Inventory Project has now completed its fifth phase. Over the last five years, the inventory team under the general supervision of the Museum's director Mr. Hab Touch have digitally photographed and safely relocated almost all of the museum's collections of metal, wood, ceramic, horn and bone and modern material artifacts, as well as manuscripts.

What this amounts to is the photographing, relocation and computerization of a staggering 17,097 works of art.



Inventory project staff at work

This is a remarkable achievement, given limited resources, and the time consuming, painstaking work involved in recording and computerizing the properties of each individual piece. It is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the small inventory team.

In the past year the team has completed the compilation of information related to the museum's 8,437 metal artifacts. A major focus, during this phase, has also been on the 3,170 stone objects, 97 per cent of which have been processed to date.

For the future, the Museum aims to provide more detailed and accurate information on each object. To this end, new labels have been prepared in three languages, Khmer, French and English. The labels will give more appropriate information such as dating, museum acquisition details, and physical measurements of the artifacts. Work will also continue on the creation of storeroom space for artifacts. The galleries are being renovated and walls stabilized for that purpose, colors are being harmonized, and new display and installation techniques are being adopted.

Overall, this CKS project has huge benefits, not just for the Museum and its staff, but also for local and international scholars and students who can now access the collection for research purposes.



The National Museum in Phnom Penh

Ancient Khmer Ceramics Conference: The Revival of Ancient Crafts



Ceramic Khmer teapot

From December 10-12, 2008, the 2nd International Conference, “Ancient Khmer and Southeast Asian Ceramics: New Archaeological Findings, Production and the Revival of Techniques”, took place at the CKS conference hall in Wat Damnak. The conference was organized in collaboration with the National Center for Khmer Ceramics (NCKCR), and Heritage Watch, and formed part of the 2nd International Khmer Ceramics Festival which took place shortly afterwards from the 14-29th. The conference was dedicated to Dr. Roxanna Maude Brown, Director of the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum at Bangkok University, who sadly passed away on 14 May 2008. Dr. Brown was remembered for her involvement in the kiln reconstruction for the NCKCR, and what remains as the definitive work on the subject, her book, *Southeast Asian Ceramics: Their Dating and Identification*, published in Singapore, by Oxford University Press in 1988.

The conference was organized around two main themes: new perspectives in understanding ancient ceramics, and the revitalization of ceramic production in Cambodia and Southeast Asia. The objective of the conference was to examine issues surrounding the ‘illicit trade in antiquities, and raise awareness about the archaeological importance of ancient Cambodian and mainland Southeast Asian ceramics, and to highlight the new opportunities for sus-

tainable economic development in the region through the contemporary revival of ancient crafts’.

It brought together Cambodian and International scholars, craftsmen, and other specialists of ancient Khmer and Southeast Asian ceramics, all of whom are interested in the revival of ancient techniques. Participants gave papers on a wide range of related topics, ranging from the excavation and conservation of ceramics, using ceramics to understand medieval Khmer daily life, using Radar as a possible method to investigate Medieval Khmer kiln sites, standardization in Khmer ceramics, to technical innovation of Khmer ceramics industries and solar ceramic production techniques from antiquity. Other participants presented fascinating papers on contemporary Chinese ceramic arts, ceramics in public places, ceramics process, pottery from the Philippines, and a personal ‘potters’ history.

“Ancient Highways Workshop: From the Tonle Sap to the South China Sea, Paving the Way for Regional Archaeological Collab- oration in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam”

This two-day event brought together junior and senior Southeast Asian scholars of archaeology and related disciplines to the CKS Wat Damnak campus. The overall aim of the event was to build bridges between national scholarly traditions and to initiate cross border research that would contribute to the writing of a common regional history of the ancient world of mainland Southeast Asia. The workshop was organized by the CKS Junior Faculty Training Program Director (JFTP), Chean Men, Cambodian archaeologist Dr. Ly Vanna, the coordinator of the Sre Ampil project, Phon Kaseka, Senior Vietnamese Archaeologist and Art Historian Dr. Tran Ky Phuong, and Senior Archeologist and CKS board member Professor John Miksic, from the National University of Singapore. Eleven papers covering issues related to important archeological sites in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam were presented, before all workshop participants discussed institutional collaboration and the development of regional networks in the context of a regional archaeological research project.

On the second and final day, the workshop split into technical discussion groups to develop a framework for future collaboration and potential sources of funding. As a result,

these discussions produced two concrete outcomes. Firstly, it was decided that there was the need to develop a common framework for future coordination among national and regional archaeologists and their institutional affiliation. Secondly, it was necessary to identify regional research topics that would lead to a draft of a grant proposal. With these points in mind, the workshop participants formed a regional archeological research team, called the Network for Archaeological Study of Regional Interaction in Mainland Southeast Asia (NAS-RIM SEA). By the end of the workshop participants produced a draft grant proposal containing specific research topics, an institutional framework, collaboration network, coordinating body, research sites, potential funding sources, and an estimated budget. After the workshop, participants were invited on a short study tour to the proposed archeological site in Cambodia, located at the border of Laos and Vietnam.



The archeology workshop in Siem Reap

Siem Reap Forum: Urban Development in the Shadow of Angkor

Problems of urban development, tourism, and the conservation of cultural heritage related to Angkor in Siem Reap has preoccupied the Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap Authority (APSARA), and its international partners, since its creation by Royal Decree in 1995. In the following years, a variety of planning documents designed to tackle these problems have been developed, including the latest 2006 'Master Plan Study' conducted by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and a related

land use plan conceived by the German Development Service (DED).

The Roundtable Forum 'Siem Reap: Urban Development in the Shadow of Angkor', held between 26-29 October 2008, was led by the Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development (PRCUD) in collaboration with APSARA, the Getty Conservation Institute, CKS, and with technical support from Observatoire Siem Reap/Angkor: Architecture, patrimoine, développement. The stated objective of the forum was to "convene international and local experts to advise APSARA and its partners on crucial next steps associated with this Master plan, based on lessons learned and other relevant expertise from around the world". The intended outcome was to 'assist and complement the recommendations already put forth' by other relevant agencies, such as the International Coordinating Committee (ICC), and UNESCO.

CKS played a pivotal role in bringing these organizations together, and in providing local and international level organization for the forum. This included logistical support for the preparation of a comprehensive briefing paper authored by doctoral students Adele Esposito (Observatoire Siem Reap/Angkor), and doctoral research fellow Sylvia Nam, (CKS/CAORC Doctoral Fellow University of California, Berkeley) with additional input from Aline Hêtreau-Pottier (Observatoire Siem Reap/Angkor).

The forum brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including foreign and Cambodian experts from various disciplines, such as urban planning, architecture, cultural tourism and economics, as well as local political leaders, venerable monks, civil society groups, and members of the business community. It was organized into five sessions each concerned with specific themes and questions related to the values and meanings of Siem Reap/Angkor, institutional structures and constraints, tourism and conservation strategies, economic and social investments, and the next steps to be taken.

The forum concluded with a number of observations and recommendations that it hoped will help inform a plan of action to meet the challenges of guiding Urbanization in the Siem Reap/Angkor region, 'in a manner that that contributes effectively to the broad development aims of the people who work here, while at the same time conserving and enhancing the monumental and universal significant cultural legacy, values and heritage of Angkor'.

Of Elephants and Men: The ethnography of elephant husbandry in Cambodia

Prof. Bion Griffin

"Bion, you'll never be a real mahout. It's one thing to drive these sweetie pies, but, a tusker in a bad mood is another matter. One out of every three tries to kill its driver." So I was told by Richard Lair, "Professor Elephant," of the Thai Elephant Conservation Center, when I began my project to undertake ethnography of elephant use in Southeast Asia. Gulp! Tuskers are male elephants; only they have tusks. Sweetie pies are adult female elephants accustomed to human drivers, and are docile and easy to command. So I thought.

Months later, in Mondul Kiri Province, eastern Cambodia, I continued my training in elephant driving. My elephant, Happy Lucky, forgot, however, that she was a sweetie pie, and continued my lessons rather forcefully. Her mahout, Yeh, sat perched in the middle of her back as I sat on her neck, knees up and legs behind her ears. We were an hour into trying to make Happy Lucky follow my commands. Well into the forest, we, and she, were off the trail and into a thicket. I was telling her to back up and turn around, while she continued pulling branches into her mouth. Then... lurch to the left, lurch to the right, repeat process three times. Driver (me) headed downward and groundward, and Yeh on top of me as he sought to catch me. Happy Lucky bolted, while Yeh laughed heartily. No damage done. The ground was soft. Yeh ran after Happy Lucky, while she bellowed her displeasure and ran off, "headed for the barn," as we say in my hometown. Another lesson. So continued my long-term study of "The Ethnography of Elephant Husbandry in Cambodia."

As an anthropologist with long interest in Cambodia and even longer fascination with the animals that people keep, I was drawn to Asian elephants as an endangered species, and to the rapid changes taking place in peoples' knowledge of and interaction with these magnificent creatures. My ethnography interlaced people and elephants. Since most elephant keeping people are non-Khmer tribals in the provinces of Mondul Kiri and Rattana Kiri, I began research among the Bunong.

Bunong are part of the peoples once called "Montagnards" by French colonials. In the hills and mountains dividing Viet Nam and Cambodia, Bunong were, and to an extent still are swidden farmers, cattle keepers, and elephant handlers. The capture and taming (and subsequent sale) of elephants occupies a special place in Bunong culture. Elephants hold a dominant place in the social and spiritual life of Bunong, but the future both of the Bunong and their elephants is dire.

In 2000, approximately 90 tame village elephants lived in Mondul Kiri. By 2009, there are 60, the others sold to Siem Reap for the tourist trade or dead of illness, maltreatment, and old age. For the Bunong, life without elephants looms, and for the elephants, extirpation is a possibility. The Bunong lament the end of centuries, or more likely millen-

nia of capturing wild elephants. They were master elephant capturers. Now, however, capturing young elephants from the dwindling herds of eastern Cambodia is illegal. The 250-odd wild elephants that still range freely are in grave danger as more and more forest is lost to rubber plantation development.

One does not capture wild elephants simply by chasing them down, hogtying them, and forcing them back to the village. It entails detailed ritual procedures. An experienced guide deeply informed in the "spirit" or "forest" language leads the party of men and village elephants in the ritual. Bunong speak of a "grandfather elephant spirit," which must be either misled or placated so that the wild elephants will not be forewarned of the presence of the humans. With Bunong and Khmer assistants, I interviewed elderly men who once were masters of the requisite knowledge. Some younger men claim to be able to lead capturing parties, but the older men are skeptical. The essential knowledge for the ritual of the capture is nearly lost, while the technical task of managing village elephants, handling ropes and other details are unpracticed. Village elephants must be skilled and easily controlled when confronted with their wild counterparts. Between the lack of available fresh wild stock and the loss of cultural knowledge, there is little prospect of return to this once central component of Bunong culture.

Hours around Mondul Kiri assessing the Bunong taboo on elephant breeding leaves one anthropological puzzle: their utter refusal to consider breeding village elephants to replenish their aging animals. Practical and spiritual reasons intersect. Richard Lair, in Lampang, Thailand, suggested to me that elephants born into captivity could actually be more dangerous. They have not been subjugated after wild capture and have less fear of/ respect for people. No elephant is domesticated. Elephants in captivity are "tamed," and if placed back in the wild could, perhaps, get along fine. Given their considerable intelligence, in captivity, they, like jail inmates, have plenty of time to study their captors. Bunong men agree.

Elephants inhabit a complex place in the social, religious and psychological worlds of the Bunong. I do not yet understand these worlds. In ancient days, Bunong people and elephants were one and the same-- or, as I was told, elephants were once human. Elephants are family. Elephants are also the spiritual and social anchors of a village. The senior elephant spirit visits shamans in dreams. The well-being of elephants is not the stuff of veterinarians, but is linked to the conduct of villagers. Illness in an elephant indicates social misconduct or bad behavior in the village. When an elephant is lost, a social control is lost and people lose a sense of proper behavior. A casual overview suggests that villages without resident elephants do experience more social difficulties.

The worst village crisis would arise from improper elephant mating. Details vary, but first, the wedding of the pregnant cow is required, and involves costly sacrifices of cattle, pigs, and chickens and the consumption of lots of rice wine. Then, the cow and her calf must be sold to an elephant owner in a distant village. Failing these requirements, major illnesses will descend on the village, and especially on elephant owners. The focus of the pregnancy is less the expensive wedding than the dangers resulting from transgressing spiritual mores.

I was told that breeding would incur devastating health problems for the Bunong people. One owner of an elephant that had become pregnant in a far-off village contended that now that she was no longer a virgin, she could be bred. He would keep the resulting calf. Others sternly disagreed. I suggested it might be acceptable to breed non-Bunong owned elephants, say from Rattana Kiri. At this point, the conversation became so stressful that the hosts being interviewed asked that we no longer discuss the topic. Bunong recognize the conundrum, but like most people do not easily yield on their most fundamental beliefs.

A further anthropological dilemma I struggle to understand is why so many Bunong treat their elephants badly. Many are heavily overworked, are worked with debilitating medical problems, inadequately watered and fed, and harshly handled by gangs of inexperienced mahouts. I myself come from a background where great care is taken of one's working livestock. I expected that an elephant keeping people would maintain their valuable charges in top shape. One mistaken belief is that if an elephant is not working, it does not need to drink or eat. An elephant requires something in the order of 100 liters of water a day plus many kilos of fodder. In Mondul Kiri, one sees some elephants in beautiful condition and others dehydrated and underweight. Many are forced to carry excessive weight.

One theory holds that their tradition is elephant capture, not elephant husbandry. The distant ancestors of the Bunong were provisioners of the royal courts of the region. Once elephants were caught and broken (tamed), they were sold to others. To a people who live in scattered villages with low population density, elephants in number may have been impractical. Moreover, in parts of old Mondul Kiri, Bunong were well known as cattle herders, not elephant keepers. Then, as now, elephants could carry people from village to village, pack rice and other agricultural goods from fields to settlements, and haul logs for house construction.

The mortality rate of elephants has always been high. Before the mid-twentieth century, Bunong simply went to the forest and caught replacements for lost stock. By 2009, most village elephants are aging. Few are under thirty years of age. Some cows are still coming into heat and could bear young. Mating of village cows and wild bulls may no longer be an option, but Bunong reject breeding. Young men suggest they would

attempt to catch wild elephants were the government to lift the ban on capture. They worry about the loss of elephants in their culture, but would proceed without full knowledge of capture ritual.

Elephant husbandry ethnography also focuses on how elephants are used today. Elephants are less useful than only a few years ago. Logging is widely illegal. Why ride a slow elephant to town when a motorcycle will get you there faster, cheaper, and in style? Why load up an elephant that needs lots of food and water, when an old truck will haul more, farther and faster? And, with resin producing trees being cut by Khmer, what resin will an elephant haul to a middleman? What are elephants good for now? For providing tourists with rides, of course.

Since my first visit to Mondul Kiri, tourists have reached all but the most remote villages, and many come to ride elephants. At one end of the scale is Jack Highwood's Elephant Valley Project, where he rehabilitates abused elephants using funds gained by providing sophisticated elephant experiences for visitors. At the other end are hotel operators who take tourists to Bunong villages for hourly or overnight trips in howdahs. Elephants still do pack in rice harvests, work long hours in the forest during resin collection season, and haul in small timber for house construction (Bunong deny logging, which is illegal). As these tasks diminish in importance, and as income from tourism rises, Bunong owned elephants will be assigned to visitors. Their care and well-being will probably be enhanced.

My research project is far from finished. To understand elephant keeping people, I must understand elephants. Since elephants "know" either Khmer or Bunong, I must improve in both languages. As any anthropologist will concede, to dig deeply into spiritual and social worlds, one must master language. Working with elephants is a great way to begin. Happy Lucky's temper aside, elephants are intelligent, personable, irascible, ornery, are sweetie pies and killers, and are, as the Bunong know, "like people." I expect to spend many years ahead hanging out with these beauties.

p.s. Happy Lucky is so called because when she arrived at the Elephant Valley Project she was a nervous wreck, was in ill health, and faced a grim future. After intensive care, she is both happy and lucky.

Professor Bion Griffin is a CKS Board Member

Summer Junior Resident Fellowship Program

At the end of June 2009, 15 more expectant and enthusiastic undergraduate students—5 each from Cambodia, France and the United States—joined in the Junior Resident Fellowship Program at CKS's Wat Damnak campus. Now in its sixth year, this program enables young undergraduates to expand their knowledge of Cambodia's history, culture and contemporary society, and the country's place in the Southeast Asian region. The program is unique. Nowhere else in Cambodia can students from such diverse backgrounds come together to study and to engage in a short research project on topics of their own choice.

Over a two-month period, they choose one of two university-level courses taught by experienced Southeast Asian studies instructors. At the same time, they attend daily language classes, Khmer for the French and Americans, and English for the Cambodians. Under the supervision and guidance of the instructors, all students develop a research proposal and gather data in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, before writing up their findings and presenting them to their fellow participants and instructors at the end of the program.

For the third year, the program was run in partnership with the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE). Together, we offered two courses of study: *Nation Building in Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, taught by Dr. Henri Locard, and *Cambodian History and Culture*, taught by Dr. Kyle Latinis. Henri and Kyle offered both intellectually challenging classroom content, and exciting field trips in and around Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, striking a healthy balance between academic rigor and fun. Some of the highlights of the field trips included Kyle's tour of

the 11th-century temple of Phnom Chiso. Seldom visited by foreigners, this temple with its expansive views proved to be a big hit with students. Henri's field trip to the Extraordinary Chambers of the Courts in Cambodia (ECCC), aka Khmer Rouge Tribunals, was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness firsthand the process of pros-



Junior Resident Fellow on fieldtrip in Phnom Penh

ecuting those responsible for some of the worst crimes against humanity in the 20th century.

The United States Ambassador to Cambodia, Carol Rodley, was so impressed with the program after her visit to the CKS campus in July, that she invited all students and instructors to the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh, where she spoke to them about U.S. foreign policy in Cambodia. The program was again made possible by renewed support from the Henry Luce and Florence Gould Foundations. We are justifiably proud of what the program has achieved over the last six years. It encapsulates all that CKS stands for—international scholarly exchange, the promotion of research, and increasing knowledge about Cambodia and its region.

Voices: Meenakshi Menon

CKS Junior Fellow, 2009

The CKS Junior Fellowship Program is an indispensable opportunity for young scholars interested in Cambodia and Southeast Asia. The prospect of conducting research abroad for two months is one that does not present itself often, especially for undergraduate students. However, as someone who recently completed the program, I can say without hesitation that the most profound aspects of the experience were being given the opportunity to study the Khmer language, interacting with Khmer people and culture on a deeply personal level, and having the ability to travel across the country and region independently. In addition, having the fellowship open to American, French, and Khmer students was critical to the success of our research and scholarship. While all of the CKS fellows were united by their interest in Cambodia and Khmer Studies, our backgrounds and approaches to the study of the region were all vastly different. But these differences ultimately only enhanced our schol-

arship, and created a unique camaraderie that rarely comes to fruition within most groups.

At the end of my two months in Cambodia, I am much better situated to study health and medical anthropology, and the research that I conducted through CKS has enabled me to continue to study Cambodia through fellowship opportunities available at my college. If there is one program that must remain available to undergraduate students currently studying Cambodia, it is the CKS Junior Fellowship. I sincerely hope that students after me have the same opportunities to study, travel, and research that I was given this summer. Without fellowship and travel experiences like those offered by CKS, students cannot adequately transcend the gap between academia and conducting research.

The Junior Faculty Training Program (JFTP)

Since the last In Focus update, two more Junior Faculty Training Program (JFTP) sessions have been successfully completed. The first session in the second year of the Rockefeller Foundation funded program focused on 'The History of Modern Southeast Asia'. This session was led by the eminent Professor of History from Thailand, Charnvit Kasetsiri, Thammasat University, Bangkok, and was attended by 15 more junior faculty from various Phnom Penh Universities. Prof. Kasetsiri continued with the tried and tested format of weekly academic seminars, a regional study tour, followed by supervised individual research projects, all conducted over a six month period. Prof. Kasetsiri's session had a particular focus on the concepts of nation-state building and nationalism in the region. This was particularly poignant as the session took place at a time of heightened tension and military standoff, in the dispute over the Preah Vihear temple between Cambodia and Thailand. The dispute continues to arouse considerable nationalist fervor in both countries.



Prof. Ben Anderson with CKS participants

The session was also privileged and honoured to have two distinguished guest speakers give lectures to participants. Benedict R. Anderson, the Aaron Binen Korb Professor of International Studies, Emeritus Cornell University, gave talks on the concept of nationalism to the session participants at the CKS office in Phnom Penh. Prof Anderson's hugely influential book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 1983) has been translated into 24 different languages. The session also warmly welcomed the Honorable Benny Widyono a retired senior United Nations diplomat and CKS board member. Dr. Widyono's book *Dancing in Shadows: Sihanouk, the Khmer Rouge, and the United Nations in Cambodia* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008) is an important first hand account of his role during Cambodia's political transition beginning in 1992, first as the United Nations Transitional Authority (UNTAC) *de facto* governor of

Cambodia's North West province, Siem Reap, and second the United Nations Secretary General's Special Representative for Political Affairs in Cambodia. Benny had a front row seat in the post-UNTAC period political drama leading up to Cambodia's 1998 parliamentary elections. Both speakers made an invaluable contribution to understanding recent historical events in Cambodia.

In April, the second session focusing on Political Science got underway. This session was led by Dr. Eric Haanstad, from the Center for South East Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin—Madison. Eric is an interdisciplinary scholar by training, and brought a holistic perspective to his session, informed by political science, anthropology and Southeast Asian studies. Topics of inquiry focused on the cultural dimensions of political expression, states, bureaucracy, warfare, colonialism, counter-expression, borders, underground economies, and patterns of globalization. The session explored ethnographic approaches to political science, particularly the cultural construction concept, as it applies to political phenomenon. It combined research exercises, individual presentations, theoretical and thematic readings, lectures and group discussion to explore this thematic intersection.

Publishing and Translation

In the space of five short years CKS has earned a reputation for the production of high quality publications, and English to Khmer translations of academic books and articles. The Center continues to publish new and relevant material on Cambodia and Southeast Asia, such as our annual peer reviewed journal *Siksacakr* highlighting new trends in Khmer Studies; and publications that arise out of CKS research projects and selected conferences; and new research materials and monographs providing vital and updated research in the social sciences and humanities. These achievements are testament to the commitment and perseverance of everybody involved in overcoming the considerable difficulties and complexities of translating English academic texts into the Khmer language.

Building on this achievement in 2009, the Center was thrilled to present its latest offerings. Professors Kamaleswar Bhattacharya and Karl-Heinz Golzio's *A Selection of Sanskrit Inscription from Cambodia*, was published in April. Dr. Milton Osborne's book *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History* was launched in June. Milton put in a personal appearance at the Australian Center for Education in Phnom Penh, explaining the origins of his book, which including this Khmer language version, has been translated into nine languages, and answer-

ing questions from an enthusiastic audience.

At the same time, two more volumes of JFTP ‘readers’—collections of English to Khmer translations of academic articles chosen by the programs’ visiting scholars—were completed, bringing the total number so far to five. The new additions, Volumes 4 and 5, focus on issues and themes related to religious practices in Southeast Asia, and urban and rural development. The four readings contained in Volume 4 were chosen by the visiting scholar Dr. John Marston, for their theoretical interest and for the ways in which they provide an introduction to the Buddhism of Cambodia neighbors, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. Volume 5 also has four readings chosen by session scholar Dr. Kate Frieson under the collective title ‘*An Understanding of Urban and Rural in Southeast Asia*’. In the era where globalization is pivotal to Cambodia’s development, knowledge about early history remains essential in shaping key debates. Therefore, this volume represents the theme of transformation shaping Southeast Asian urban and rural history since the 17th century.

OUTREACH: PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

With five sessions of the JFTP completed, and with an impressive stock of publications and translations of books and related academic materials, in July 2009 the Center embarked upon its first outreach exercise. The aims of the exercise were to push and promote the Center’s work beyond the boundaries of already established and developing academic networks in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, and to reach out to Cambodian and international communities that are not yet familiar with our work. We did this in a variety of ways, including visits to, and presentations of the Center’s work at Universities in the provinces outside Phnom Penh, newspaper features, appearances on the CTN and APSARA television networks, and the sale and promotion of our publications and programs at events hosted by the international community. The exercise was an important first step towards achieving the CKS goal of promoting a vigorous Cambodian civil society.



Outreach team on the road

OUTREACH IN ACTION

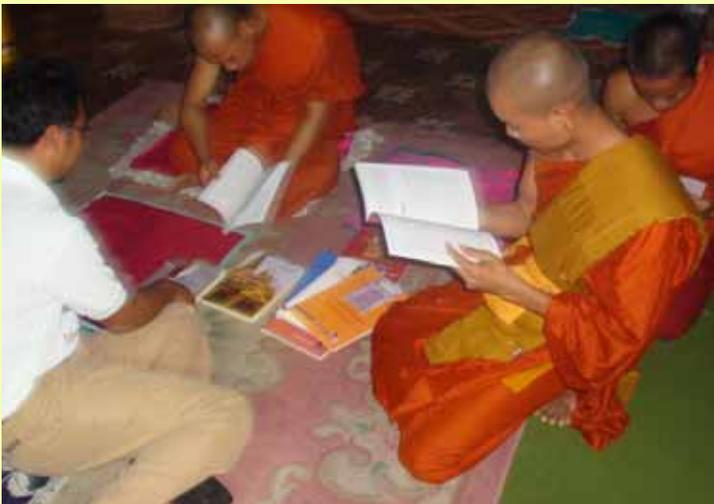
At the beginning of August, a team of six JFTP participants and CKS staff, led by the program director Chean Rithy Men, set out on the road to showcase the Center’s work. The team went to all universities in ten provinces, starting in Kompong Cham, Prey Veng, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, Kompong Thom, Kompong Speu, Sihanoukville, Kompot and Takeo. In each university they presented CKS, and the important programs that we have completed, and those we are currently running. This was followed by a talk given by JFTP participants on the current state of English to Khmer translations in Cambodia, and the importance of promoting reading and research in Cambodian society. The team also presented the five translated JFTP readers, as well as the two translated history books. Chean Men the outreach exercise leader describes one of the presentations held in Battambang province:

“As I stood in front of 150 people in the lecture hall of Battambang University I was in awe to see the many faces of students and lecturers waiting eagerly to hear about what I was going to present about CKS. The first question I asked, “How many of you have ever heard of or know about the Center for Khmer Studies”? I asked this question both in Khmer and English and pointed to CKS and Rockefeller Foundation logos showing on the slide and on my T-shirt. There was silence and no hand was raised. Of course, I was not surprised and had not expected that anyone in Battambang province to have known about CKS.... This has made me realize the importance of what we are beginning to do with the outreach activity, which is part of CKS’s core mission for public services and civil society building”. Chean goes on to add:



Lecturers and university students at Battambang university

“When we finished our presentation and opened for questions, we were surprised to see so many young students and lecturers eagerly raising their hands to ask many challenging questions, and make all sort of comments and requests for our team to do in the future, including providing training on research and academic teaching on topics related to Southeast Asia. Before the closing of the event we presented two sets of all CKS publications to the university library and gave one copy of the Readers and CKS T-shirts to all participants. The event ended with the selling of the books where participants had the opportunity to purchase other books at a discount price. I was overwhelmed to see so many students flocking to the table where all CKS publications were displayed; some just wanted to see the books, others were counting their money to see if they have enough to buy another book”.



Monks reading CKS books in Wat Dorie Sor in Battambang

The outreach exercise was not just confined to Universities as Chean Men goes on to report:

“When there was enough time for us, we went to the community where we can make the donations of CKS books to the community library. One of these was in Prey Veng province where we were asked by Director of the University to visit the new Community Learning Center where they have a small library with few books in Khmer, but many English books that only relate to business and technology. Another community library we visited was in Wat Dorie Sor (the White Elephant Temple) in Battambang province. When we visited the temple in the evening we were surprised to see several buildings in the temple compound full of monks, young girls and boys studying English and other subjects. We went up to the vihear (prayer hall) to meet with the head-monk and found him and several other monks chanting under the candle light. We were quietly waiting for them to finish their chanting in the shadow of the candle light. The

head-monk then took us to the library that has only a few book shelves with some collections of religious texts standing against the wall with the big Buddha shrine at the other end of the hall. Again with his gentle smile, the head-monk said, “Now we want to make an offering of this empty building to CKS and make it into a CKS library like the one you have in Siem Reap.” We were struck by this offering. We were delighted but could not promise anything to the monks yet.

The outreach exercise proved to be a resounding success in raising awareness about CKS and the importance of the work we do. One other notable success of the outreach exercise is the role played by the JFTP. As Chean Men pointed out “it is immensely gratifying for me to see previous JFTP participants actively using knowledge gained from the program with confidence and enthusiasm, promoting higher education and research in Cambodia”.

The university and local community visits built upon the success of the first event CKS participated in to showcase its work; the ‘Queen’s Birthday Party Event’, hosted by the British Embassy at the Phnom Penh, Intercontinental Hotel in June. The event was well attended by members of the diplomatic community, senior government officials, and representatives from prominent local and international NGOs. CKS staff set out a stall to sell our books and publications and tell people what the Center does. Finally, the outreach exercise clearly had a profound impact as the center was approached by producers of culture and educational programs from two of Cambodia’s leading TV networks, CTN and APSARA. They asked if they could feature CKS in their programs. Naturally we were thrilled and delighted, and of course agreed straight away. The programs featuring interviews with CKS staff including the JFTP Director, Chean Men, who explained in full the center’s work and its programs. The programs were broadcast on National Television in September.



Chean Men on Apsara TV talking about CKS and its programs

SENIOR FELLOWS 2009-2010

Supported by the Florence Gould Foundation and the Council of American Overseas Research Centers/U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Dr. Ann and Jane Allison, are an independent mother and daughter research team working on a project entitled: *Lost-Wax bronze casting using clay of large statuary c. 1900-2009: Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand*. As well as being unstudied, the process of lost-wax bronze casting is fast disappearing on mainland Southeast Asia. This research aims to record, archive and understand each detail and aspect of the casting process. Ann and Jane are especially interested in individual castors' reasoning behind the production of each cast, thus adopting an ethnographic and comparative approach to the subject. This comparative ethnographic study will clarify what is specific in the bronze casting process in each of the three target countries. Having already developed a body of knowledge of early contemporary bronze casting, Ann and Jane will extend their existing research to encompass the whole of the twentieth century in Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand. (CAORC/ECA)

Lisa Arensen is a U.S. citizen studying for a Ph.D at the University of Edinburgh. Landmines and unexploded ordnance continue to be obstacles in the lives and livelihoods of many rural Cambodians. Lisa's dissertation, *'The War Will Go, the War will Stay: Landmines and Livelihoods in Northwest Cambodia'*, explores how residents of a village attempt to recover from violent conflict while still constrained by its material consequences, and its impact on the very ground on which they live and work. Her research is grounded in anthropological literature on landscape, focusing on embodied or material engagement with physical environments, as well as the representation and conceptualization of place. Lisa will examine multiple modes of engagement with one such landscape in the district of Rattanak Mondul in Battambang, a key site of conflict between the Khmer Rouge and Cambodian government forces during the early 1990s. (CAORC/ECA)

Siti Keo is a Ph.D candidate in the Department of History, University of California, Berkeley. Siti's research project, *Understanding Change: Modernity and Urban Life in Sangkum Reastr Niyum Phnom Penh*, sets out to trace the development of Phnom Penh during the transitional moment in Cambodian history, when French colonial control ended and a new independent government, Sangkum Reastr Niyum, took shape. It examines the development of literary images and other means in which those living in Phnom Penh understood, imagined, and/or engaged their urban world. The research attempts to answer some fundamental historical questions related to conflicts and debates among urban dwellers that were particular to Phnom Penh. It does this through an examination of three distinct mediums, the burgeoning press, the modern novel and cinema. (CAORC/ECA)

Viet Le is a Ph.D candidate at the University of Southern California, Department of American Studies and Ethnicity. His dissertation, is entitled, *Trauma and Desire: Representation, Contemporary Art and AIDS in Cambodia and Vietnam*. Viet is conducting eleven months of research on contemporary art in Phnom Penh. This research forms part of his larger project that addresses the intersections of trauma, desire, and cultural production in Cambodia and Viet Nam, two societies in transition and linked historically and regionally. The research adopts two approaches, visual culture analysis and participant observation. It focuses on two sites, contemporary visual art and HIV/AIDS. Viet thus examines how traumas, such as war, socio-economic transition, and national desire are constructed. (CAORC/ECA)

Colleen McGinn is a Ph.D candidate in the Department of Social Work at Columbia University. Colleen's project deals with the *Psychosocial Impact of Forced Evictions on Women in Phnom Penh*. She asks the questions: How do forced evictions affect the current lives and future prospects of displaced women in Phnom Penh? What are their modalities of coping, and what are the sources of their risk and resilience? Colleen has utilized qualitative research methods to investigate the psychosocial and livelihood impact of women in Phnom Penh who have been displaced by clearances of several city neighborhoods in recent years. In addition to investigating a critical issue in Cambodia today, this study has far-reaching implications for the development of best practices, service programming and public policy in the rapidly expanding arena of global community-based mental health.

Art Historian, **Dr. Rachel Loizeau** is conducting postdoctoral research into Narrative traditions in Asia and Southeast Asia. Her research focuses on the historical bas reliefs on Hindu



Mine clearing in Cambodia

monuments in Cambodia, Java, and India. From India to Cambodia, via Java, artists have shown a common interest in decorating temples with narrative bas-reliefs representing Hindu myths, especially the epics and legends of Krsna. This research project sets out to study the nature and function of historical decor. It reviews the architectural, historical, and cultural context of images, comparing in particular the structures and narrative processes as well as iconographic themes. The aim of this comparative approach is to determine the common traditions of the artists in these regions, and to emphasize their original characteristics by taking as study subjects two particularly popular themes: the legends of Rama and Krsna. (Florence Gould Foundation)



Bas-Relief Angkor Wat

Noëllie Bon is following a doctoral program at the University of Lyon (2). Her dissertation is entitled the *Morphosyntactic description of Stieng Language*. The project is concerned with the minority language, Stieng, spoken in Snoul district in Cambodia's southeastern province, Kracheh. Noëllie has established an initial sociolinguistic profile of this community, and has conducted a preliminary study of phonetic and phonological rules. The trans-

lation, transcription and analysis of the data will be done on the ground in Snoul district. The description of these activities will be made in typological perspective to underline their characteristics. One of the main aims of the project is an attempt to elaborate a grammar for this language. Another goal is to adopt an areal and genetic viewpoint, by comparing the Stieng with other Mon-Khmer languages. (Florence Gould Foundation)

Dr. Dominique Soutif, Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris III, is working on the preparation for publication of a collection of pre-Angkorian and Angkorian Khmer inscriptions (7th and 13th centuries). The corpus of studied work is comprised of approximately 40 unpublished inscriptions, which give detailed information about the functioning of sanctuaries in Ancient Cambodia. As well as Philologists, these inscriptions will be of great interest for scholars in a variety of disciplines such as archaeology and linguistics.



Sanskrit Inscriptions from Cambodia, Photo Courtesy EFEO

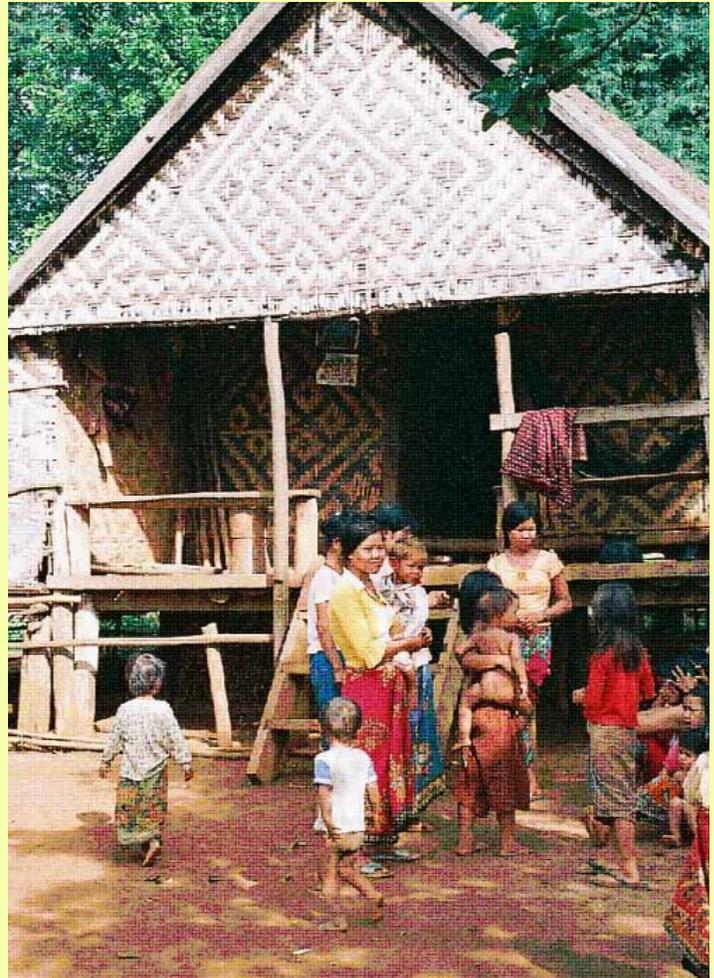


Urban development in Phnom Penh

Gabriel Fauveaud is following a doctoral program at the University of Paris I. His dissertation is entitled, *Dynamics of urban spaces and private investments in town: towards a territorial recomposition of Phnom Penh?* The project focuses on the growth in the last five years of large scale investments, especially the establishment of large and ambitious real estate projects in Phnom Penh. The existing downtown area of Phnom Penh is changing, as new modern areas are developing. The construction of tower blocks over thirty stories, are particularly striking. At the same time, new peri-urban area are springing up on the cities outskirts. These outskirts are becoming spaces where modernity and new urbanities are being expressed. Private investment in this case is a real driving force behind territorial transformations in the Cambodian capital. In the light of these facts, the question of management and interference by local authorities is paramount. (Florence Gould Foundation)

Krishna UK, is a French national studying for a Ph.D at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. Her dissertation is entitled '*Aesthetic forms of memory or the art of considering and addressing the pain of the past: a study of the Jarais from Ratanakiri*'. The research deals with the topic of memory among the Jarai ethnic minority in Ratanakiri province, North-East Cambodia. Krishna's research highlights the forms of expression of post-war memory through local artis-

tic production, and more specifically it studies the scars of the US bombing, which is one of the most tragic episodes in Jarai modern history. It examines the aesthetic ways through which individual and collective memories show remembrance in order to reinforce individual's adherence to a social, physical, and historic space. Via sculpture, drawing, weaving as well as other artistic forms of production of tangible or intangible artifacts (such as songs), the goal of this research is to analyze the reproduction of memory of tragedy which allows not only to express the grievance of a painful past, but also to foresee new opportunities of symbolic deconstruction of evil. This project explores the affect new axes of reflection on the therapeutic virtues, such as mode of expression can have on consciousness as well as on the persistence of the Jarai identity through consecutive but different generations. (Florence Gould Foundation)



Jarai house in Ratana Kiri province

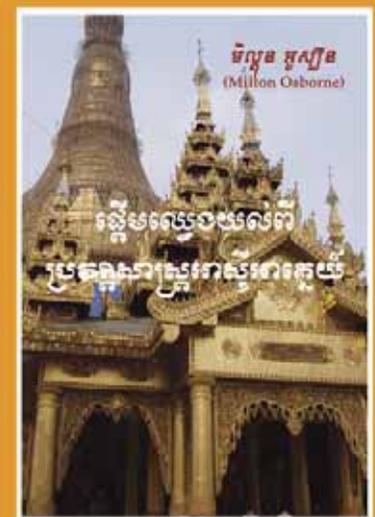
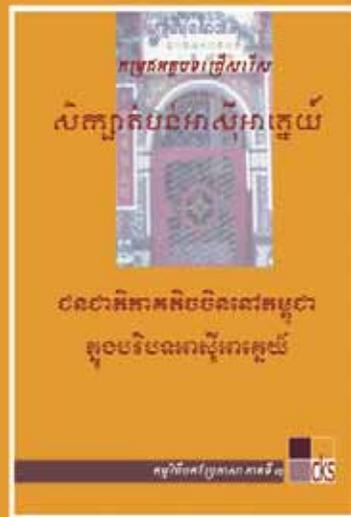
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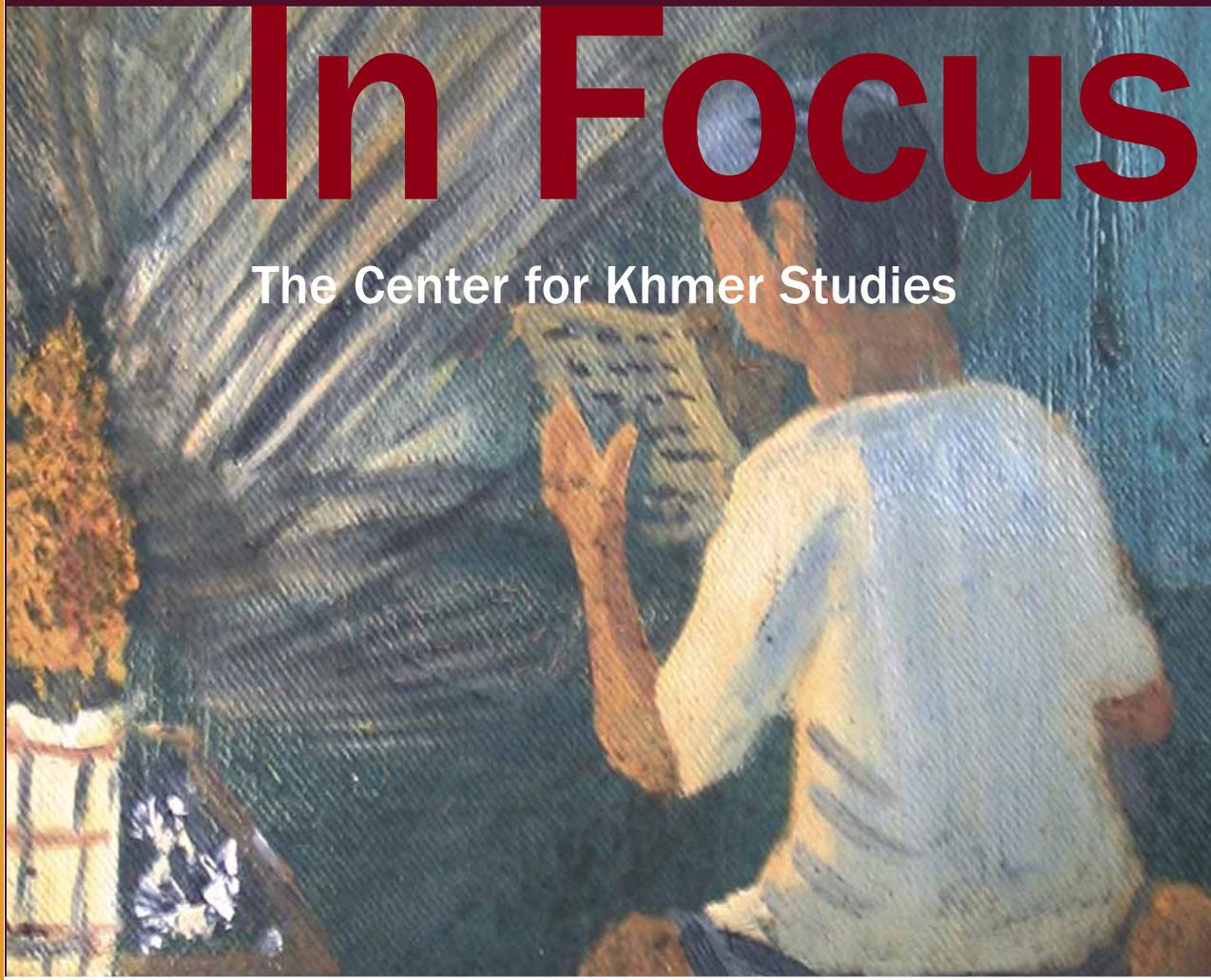
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No.7, 2009-2010



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