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REORGANIZATION OF CCSEAS & DEMOCRACY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

President's Column

By Philip Kelly

Department of Geography
York University

Dear CCSEAS member,

In the last newsletter I alluded to some changes that were likely to be coming to the larger institutional structure of which CCSEAS is a part. Significant changes have indeed come about and the CCSEAS executive met to discuss them at the recent CASA meeting in Waterloo.

Before continuing I should briefly wade into the acronym soup. As CCSEAS (the Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies) we are a constituent part of CASA (the Canadian Asian Studies Association), along with an East Asia Council and a South Asia Council. CASA, in turn, has been a part of the Canadian Council of Area Studies

Learned Societies (CCASLS), which also included associations of Middle Easternists, Latin Americanists, and Africanists. CCASLS has received substantial IDRC funding in recent years and it was this funding that maintained a secretariat based at Concordia University in Montreal. The secretariat consists of Annamaria Piccioni and Lynn Berrouard.

The IDRC funding for CCASLS has now come to an end, but several of the associations involved in CCASLS had already withdrawn their participation and severed their ties with the secretariat. An IDRC review of CCASLS was initiated in the summer of 2008, but given the disintegration of participation in the Council, any continuation in the form it has taken in recent years is now impossible.

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PRESIDENT'S
COLUMN

By P. Kelly

IN THIS
EDITION

PRESIDENT'S
COLUMN

By P. Kelly

A task force has been established by CASA (with CCSEAS represented by Yann Roche) to seek ways of maintaining the secretariat operations, but the CCSEAS executive has decided that the prudent way forward is to plan for our future without the existence of a secretariat, as future funding currently seems uncertain. This means that we face challenges, such as organizing our 2009 conference in Vancouver, and maintaining our membership records without secretariat support, but we are making plans to ensure that we can do so.

As an initial strategy, the CCSEAS executive decided to request our full membership database and any archival material from the secretariat in Montreal, which I will maintain as President for the time being. We also decided that rather than maintaining a formal membership database, and charging membership dues for delegates at the 2009 conference, we would instead maintain a database of all members, past and present, which we would update and use as the list for circulating newsletters and announcements.

Membership fees will not be charged for attendance at the 2009 conference - instead, we will charge a registration fee to cover the expenses of the conference and all delegates will be added to the membership database for future information circulation. Given membership dues in the past were partly used to fund travel to conferences and meetings by the executive and secretariat staff, we believe that without these expenses it is possible for the CCSEAS to continue without income from formal membership fees. Any surplus from the 2009 conference will be transferred to the new executive team who will

take over and organize the 2011 conference.

Preparations for the October 2009 conference at UBC are well underway. A first conference announcement is included in this newsletter and Tineke Hellwig (CCSEAS Vice-President) and her colleagues - Rick Barichello, Abidin Kusno, Michael Leaf and Hannah Lim - have already done extensive work in making local arrangements at UBC. Meanwhile, registration and abstract submission arrangements will likely be managed by Keith Barney and myself at York University, which has a dedicated conference organizing office. We will also be depending on the advice of Danièle Bélanger (CCSEAS Treasurer) who did a splendid job as program chair of the recent CASA conference. We expect to have the website for the 2009 conference ready by early January, at which point we will circulate a second call for papers with full details about how you can submit paper and session proposals, pay registration fees, and book accommodation.

The dissolution of the CCASLS Secretariat certainly presents challenges for CCSEAS. We are not a large organization - our membership fluctuates between conference and non-conference years, at about 130 and 70 respectively. But we have always been fortunate to have a core group of Canadian Southeast Asianists who have been committed to the Council and prepared to work hard to see it prosper. I hope we can count on your continued support.

Do plan to come to the conference at UBC on October 15-17, 2009. It promises to be a large and diverse meeting, and will also provide an opportunity (at the AGM) for us to put in place the framework for our future as an organization.

Democracy in Timor-L'Este

By David Webster

Kiriyama Research Fellow

University of San Francisco

Southeast Asia's smallest country is arguably the one that has embraced the language of democracy most enthusiastically. Hopes were sky-high for the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (East Timor) when it became the first new state of the century in 2002. These hopes wavered in 2006 when an internal army dispute turned violent.

Political rivalries between top leaders were part of the reason. President Xanana Gusmão had led

guerrillas and become the national symbol of resistance to Indonesian rule. Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, as head of the governing Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin), made parliament rather than the presidency the locus of power. When soldiers facing demobilization began to protest against Alkatiri's government, the issue was caught up in national-level politics. Violent clashes saw more than 100,000 people internally displaced.

The conflict seemed to indicate problems inherent in democratic political party competition. Some observers immediately called East Timor a "failed state," and the confidence of Timorese in

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Democracy in Timor-L'Este

By D. Webster



(Continued from page 2)

their ability to run their own affairs was badly shaken. The "failed state" image returned in 2008 when ex-soldiers tried to shoot both the president and the prime minister.

Nevertheless, calls for a government of national unity or the uniting of several parties into one have been over-ridden in favour of what emerged as a contest between Fretilin and an alliance of parties led by Xanana. Why? First, the still-influential United Nations mission urged the virtues of multi-party competitive democracy on the model accepted in Western countries, to great effect.

Second, the image of East Timor as a democratic country is a constitutive factor in the diplomatic identity of the Timorese people. During a 25-year struggle for independence, resistance activists contrasted promises of a democratic independent East Timor to the authoritarian system of Suharto's Indonesia. They used the idea of democracy versus authoritarianism to leverage support from Western governments. During the heyday of the "Asian values" thesis, Timorese activists could be found at global summits pressing the opposite case: Asians (at least these Asians) wanted democracy and human rights. Timorese activists made democracy and human rights central elements of what it meant to be Timorese. Images of elderly women walking for days to cast their ballots in the 1999 referendum on independence, a second foundational moment after the short-lived 1975 independence declaration, remained powerful. Afterwards, Timorese diplomats proudly pointed to their decision to ratify every UN human rights instrument.

Three rounds of voting in 2007 (the first round

and run-off of a presidential election, then voting for parliament) were seen not as exhausting, but as a demonstration of democracy. I heard laments that voter turnout was falling towards 80%, but saw enthusiasm and queuing up to vote. This remains one of the most zealously democratic countries in the world, with elections very much designed to show the world a democratic success story, and voting day very much a community celebration.

Political communications, though, have shifted since the election that gave virtually all the seats in the first Timorese parliament to Fretilin. The narrative of common resistance to foreign rule no longer operated. Instead, there was a robust political contest, expressed in the visual campaigns of the competing parties.

Fretilin's election symbolism recalled the days of struggle. Fretilin put its party flag on the ballot paper for presidential voting, alongside the photo of candidate Lu Olo. Other candidates countered by placing the national flag next to their own pictures. In the run-off, the visual choice was not only between Lu Olo and Jose Ramos Horta (running as the "Nobel peace prize laureate"). It was also between the Fretilin flag and the flag of East Timor. Fretilin's rivals had symbolically reversed the identification of party and nation that carried Fretilin to power in 2001. Ramos Horta rode that to a resounding win.

Otherwise, Fretilin chose a grassroots approach to political communications. Banners for the parliamentary election in Dili, for instance, pledged free health and education. The banner outside the Fretilin central committee building called on Timorese to vote for "independence" and "liberation." The party flag remained the domi-

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nant image.

Xanana Gusmao meanwhile entered partisan politics as head of a new party, which simultaneously claimed the mantle of nationalist resistance and deployed images of economic development reminiscent of the days of Indonesian rule. Xanana named his new party the CNRT, the same acronym as the former resistance coalition. Where the "old" CNRT was the National Council of Timorese Resistance, Xanana's new party was the National Congress for Timorese Re-construction. Banners featured two pictures of Xanana - one as guerrilla leader in a beret, one as business-suited technocrat (see picture). The two heads of Xanana faced the past and the future, linking development and liberation. A frequently-mocked banner showed Timor as Singapore, with glittering ultra-modern glass buildings lit up along the Timorese coastline. One even showed a rocket soaring into space.

Fretilin emerged from the legislative elections as the largest party, but a CNRT-led coalition had enough seats to cobble together a majority with Xanana as prime minister. Both sides evoked "democracy" in claiming they should hold power.

Fretilin leaders said it was democratic that the largest party be offered a mandate to govern; the coalition argued that it held a majority, even asserting that a coalition government is inherently more democratic by including more parties and hence more diverse voices. The new coalition government led by Xanana claims democracy as its guiding principle. In the words of one cabinet minister: "The overall vision is to nurture democracy and make it viable for the country, for the future, in the belief that democracy allows for active participation of all citizens and thus contribute to national development in a more effective way."

Democracy rhetoric means that the attack last February on President Ramos Horta and Prime Minister Xanana has been interpreted - including by leaders in the now-opposition Fretilin party - as an attack on democracy. "A bullet can wound a president, but never penetrate the values of democracy," Xanana said. Ironically, the attack served to create a new sense of unity and re-commitment to Timorese democratic values, a renewed assertion that democracy is part of Timorese identity.

A Research Note on the Middle Class and Democracy in Thailand

Erik Martinez Kuhonta

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Is the middle class a harbinger of democracy? This question has been one of the most enduring issues in the study of comparative politics. Much of the literature has leaned towards the view that the middle class serves as a central force for democratic change. Yet, there is also much evidence to suggest that the middle class is not necessarily a bulwark for democracy. This question is particularly important today in Thailand. With the country deeply split over the accomplishments and legacy of the Thaksin Shinawatra government, the middle class has been one of the most important players in the current crisis. A broad coalition of largely middle class supporters, the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), has spearheaded public rallies against the Thaksin government that eventually opened the

way for the 2006 military coup. The PAD continues to call for the ouster of the current government led by Thaksin's brother-in-law, Somchai Wongsawat, while advancing a proposal to curtail the electoral influence of the rural sector - the core support base for Thaksin. In this political turmoil, it is important to think theoretically about the role of the middle class in Thai politics and its democratic or anti-democratic leanings. In the context of the PAD's behavior, we should be very skeptical of general arguments of a democratic middle class, but we should also not be too quick to "throw out the baby with the bathwater."

The literature in comparative politics has generally tended to view the middle class as a force for democracy. This goes back to Lipset's (1959) classic work on economic development and democracy where he argued that the middle class, as the more moderate, tolerant, and educated class would usher in democracy. This view has since then been dominant in academia, in policy circles, and in journalistic work. Yet, important

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Democracy in Timor-L'Este

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THE MIDDLE CLASS & DEMOCRACY IN THAILAND

By E. Kuhonta

comparative work has also challenged this position. In a ground-breaking study, Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (1992) claimed the real issue in identifying which class supports democracy is to understand who has the most to gain or lose by promoting and defending democracy. In their work, they identified the working class as more central to democratization. More recently, Bellin (2000) has argued that the relative support for democracy among class groups is contingent on their political interests. Thus, Bellin conceptualizes the bourgeoisie and labor as "contingent democrats."

The literature on Thai politics in contrast, has been quite critical of the role of the middle class as a force for democracy. Writing during the turbulent 1970s, Anderson (1977) argued that the incipient middle class, particularly the petty bourgeoisie that was born of the 1960s economic boom had some democratic inclinations, but its insecure position and its concerns over heightened student radicalism eventually led it to support an authoritarian crackdown. Other authors writing with the backdrop of the 1991 coup and the 1992 upheaval have also claimed that the middle class exhibits ambivalent positions toward democracy. Such authors have collectively pointed out that the middle class tends to be pragmatic, materialistic, and self-interested. It will only support democracy if the alternative (authoritarianism) provides conditions antithetical to their interests. In particular, the middle class cherishes political stability in order to protect its investments (Girling 1996; Voravidh 1993). The middle class is furthermore deeply tied to the capitalist order, such that it often allies with capitalists and its behavior reflects capitalist interests (Preecha 1993; Voravidh 1993). Others posit that the middle class sense of alliance lies with the monarchy and aristocracy (Ockey 1996). It is clear, then, that the Thai middle class acts like a "contingent democrat," and that its attitudes and behavior tend to be quite conservative.

These critiques of the Thai middle class paint a very mixed picture compared to the progressive views of modernization scholarship. How are we to resolve this tension? The central issue that needs to be disentangled in this theoretical discussion is this: what are middle class interests? That question in itself needs to be broken down

further, for the middle class is not one coherent entity: what are the interests of the middle *classes*? Although we are used to thinking about the middle class as one whole, analytically speaking, this class is a residual category, composed of those who are neither in the lower class and those in the upper class. While they may share certain common traits such as a modern lifestyle shaped by material consumption, differences in values and attitudes among small shopkeepers, business executives, and academics is vast. As Koo (2006) notes, it is thus not necessary to unravel contradictions in values within the middle class. What is necessary, however, is to recognize the heterogeneity of the middle class and identify which groups support particular values and maintain particular interests. Girling (1996) has already moved in this direction, arguing that groups in civil society, such as NGOs, tend to represent the progressive values of the middle class, while industrialists, financiers, and traders tend to be more concerned with stability than with justice.

In the current struggle in Thai politics, it is imperative to sift through much of the conventional thought concerning the different actors engaged in pitched battle. In the first place, we should be wary of categorizing one class group as more democratic than the other. Despite their rhetoric, the PAD's behavior and agenda is anything but democratic. At the same time, we should not necessarily jump to the conclusion that the middle class as a whole is anti-democratic. Some groups in the middle class, such as white-collar professionals, did support the coup and the more active continue to rally against the current government, accusing it of corruption. On the other hand, some elements of the middle class, such as intellectuals and NGO representatives, while not challenging the coup, did not support it either. The middle class, in all its diversity, complexity, and contradictions thus remains a fertile area for political analysis.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The Constitutional Court decided on December 2 to dissolve the major parties of the governmental coalition. The PAD used this opportunity to stop their controversial occupation of Bangkok's airports. Much radicalized since last summer, the PAD has vowed to resume their activities if another pro-Thaksin government was formed. Events to follow:

- Thaksin's speech to supporters on December 13
- Formation of the next government and coup rumours
- Will the police lay charges against the PAD?
- The King's health: for the first time he did not deliver his annual birthday address on December 4. Interpretations of this silence vary.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

THE MIDDLE CLASS & DEMOCRACY IN THAILAND

By E. Kuhonta

THE BENEFITS OF NGOS

By C. Ellingson

Navigating the Cultural and Political Geographies of Indonesia: The Benefit of NGOs

By Courtenay Ellingson

Masters Candidate, Local Economic Development

University of Waterloo

From March 2002 through August 2007 I volunteered and worked in Indonesia with CUSO, a Canadian based volunteer development agency, (www.cuso.org) as their Country Program Representative. My initial placement was with the Flores Welfare Foundation (SANRES) working with their micro-credit project. These projects were small, 10-20 member, saving and lending groups where each member deposited a specified amount of money each month and had the ability to borrow from the entire group's savings for projects such as constructing rain catchment tanks.

The NGO sector in Indonesia is well developed. While there were several active NGOs during Suharto's era, there has been a proliferation of NGOs since his fall during the period of *reformasi*. The strength of the NGO sector in Indonesia is exhibited through the extensive partnerships international NGO and governmental agencies have developed with local NGOs to deliver programming in the country. These NGOs range from locally based program delivery agencies to larger national networks providing research and

information to their members around the country. For anyone looking to perform development work or academic research in Indonesia they may find the NGO network to be very helpful. It is important before beginning any work in the country to spend time building necessary networks there.

Over the past ten years Indonesia, has undergone significant political and societal changes. For the past thirty years the country has essentially been a one party, military state. Indonesia now has open elections at all levels of government and, similar to the American model, presidential elections independent of parliamentary elections. In addition, they have begun to decentralize power from the central to the regional governments creating an increased need for key local contacts to be made in order to carry out work or conduct research at this level. Cultural norms and hierarchies need to be understood and adhered to. In some cases obeying these norms are necessary not to be able to work but to ensure the safety of foreigners working at the local level. NGOs can be helpful in navigating these complexities and making the necessary contacts. However, there is also a certain level of social competition in Indonesia as NGOs and directors will compete for status and international connections. International NGOs like CUSO or Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO) and national networking agencies based in Jakarta (Yappika), Jogjakarta (Insist),

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Bali (Veco), and Makassar (SOFEI) can assist in making links to the most effective local NGOs. In addition to contacts, local NGOs can assist with challenges such as cultural understanding and language.

For example, my partner organization, SANRES, focused on livelihood activities, primarily micro-credit schemes, cooperative stores, and women's weaving groups, as well as environmental and health advocacy. SANRES along with many other NGOs would sometimes become confused about their objectives and activities as they were often asked to do a variety of tasks by a variety of donors. SANRES was a well-known NGO in Flores and often received funding for a diverse range of projects. SANRES staff, on the other hand, did not come from such a diverse background and did not often receive training on the various issues being dealt with.

Flores is an island consisting of 12 distinct cultural/linguistic groups. The region of Sikka, where I was based, was home to 4 of these groups. I had to climb a steep learning curve to understand both the national and local, minority languages, as well as various religious beliefs, cultural differences and accepted behaviours and practices in

these various contexts. I found that micro-credit projects were intrinsically linked with issues of gender roles, agriculture, and forestry management. I could not have navigated my way through the maze without the assistance of my co-workers at SANRES.

Tribal and religious conflicts do occur and it is possible to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The country is consistently labeled unsafe in Canadian travel advisories but, in reality, most people would not be in danger. The acts of terrorism that have occurred in the country are not representative of the general population's feelings towards foreigners. There was never a time or place when I was not welcomed and treated with generosity and respect. However, it is important to remember that the best way to ensure personal safety is to follow all cultural norms, paying respect where due, and building a strong local network of friends. One should always keep their ears to the ground and listen to co-workers and friends for hints on whether the winds are shifting. The network of NGOs and projects in Indonesia are as diverse as its people and the country offers countless opportunities to learn and grow in personal and professional experience. I encourage anyone to consider work or research in Indonesia.

THE BENEFITS OF NGOS

By C. Ellingson

FIELDWORK CHALLENGES IN LAOS

By

M. Lachappelle

Reflections About Fieldwork in Laos: A Linguistic, Ethnic and Political Challenge

By Marise Lachapelle

Doctoral Candidate in Anthropology

Laval University

I performed the fieldwork for my master's degree in anthropology in the province of Luang Namtha in Northern Laos. I was interested in the use of tourism as a tool for the development of ethnic minorities and the social and cultural transformations it provoked. I studied the implantation of the Nam Ha Ecotourism Project (NHEP) in the Khmou community of Ban Nalan. This short paper sheds light on some unique challenges I encountered while conducting fieldwork during two visits to Laos totalling 6 months in 2005 and 2006.

Laos, formerly known as the country of a million elephants, could be now considered the land of a

million smiles by the many tourists who travel there today. While visiting this small country, one gets the impression of a refuge still protected from the outside world. As such, one could easily be lead to believe that fieldwork could be conducted with very few difficulties. However, I soon came to realize that my research was going to encounter many of the pitfalls typical of anthropological fieldwork.

In Laos, every foreign researcher must possess valid documentation and be accompanied by government officials. However, prior to 2008 research visas did not exist. One means of circumventing this problem was to get a working visa and then obtain official researcher status. Another option was to conduct research in secret with a tourist visa, which sometimes put some participants and even the researcher in danger. In my case, I chose the first option. Thanks to the help of Steven Schipani (Team Leader, Community-based Tourism Component) one of the

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founders of NHEP, the National Tourism Administration recognized me as a researcher. I was then able to obtain the official authorization which opened the necessary doors for conducting my fieldwork. Three conditions, however, were that the government strongly suggested the participant village, assigned an interpreter to me, and I had to agree to send them a final report on my research.

This had both positive and negative aspects. It allowed me to have access to internal data as well as obtain permits for overnight stays in the community of Ban Nalan. On the other hand, the possession of official documentation as well as the accompaniment of an interpreter from an ethnic group perceived by the village community as superior had some unforeseen consequences. I was seen as an ally of the government and treated with some suspicion, making it difficult to earn the trust of the people. Such association with the government raised some thorny ethical questions as in a socialist country where criticism of the government is potentially dangerous, I could never be certain if participation in my research was entirely voluntary. I repeatedly saw the village chief pressure villagers into participating in the research even though they clearly did not wish so. In many occasions, he tried to answer for those who did not and apologized for them in order to save face in a situation which seemed critical to him. This subtle coercion meant that the inhabitants of Ban Nalan participated in my research under some duress, posing a potential challenge while conducting research. That said such access to the community would have been impossible without any official authorization. Moreover, the villagers often had difficulty understanding the purpose of my presence. I was often considered a tourist as that has been the previous extent of their exposure to Western visitors.

**FIELDWORK
CHALLENGES
IN LAOS**

By

M. Lachappelle

Further complicating the matter was the fact that not only were there translation and language problems between both myself and the interpreter and between the interpreter and the Khmou villagers, but there were also problems linked to interethnic dynamics. Indeed, although well-intentioned, my interpreter sometimes coloured his translations by his own value judgments, for example concerning rituals and agricultural practices. He sometimes answered for the villagers when he believed he knew a better answer or could provide information that was potentially more useful to my work. He even rectified comments he considered false. Fortunately, my understanding of Laotian allowed me to minimize some of these distortions.

The question of ethnicity was one of the many factors affecting the complex and multi-layer relationships linking the researcher to the interpreter and the participants. Other factors also included age, sex and social standing. For example, partly because my interpreter was a man, it was practically impossible to learn from the women. At the same time, the women perceive their knowledge to be inferior and do not believe they can contribute to the research. In many cases they suggested I discuss the matter with the men.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize the fact that being a woman has certain implications for conducting fieldwork in a male-dominated culture such as that of Laos. Luckily, I was accompanied by my husband, which facilitated my contact with the men. Even though this was my project, people frequently shook hands with him rather than me, or directed their answers to him. In short, his presence allowed me to benefit, to a certain degree, from his status as a male, which in Laos is viewed as superior. To summarize, working in Laos poses many cultural, ethnic, linguistic and political challenges.

News from Members

Stéphane Bernard

Stéphane Bernard, assistant professor in the School of International Development and Global Studies, University of Ottawa, has obtained SSHRC funding in 2008 as a co-researcher for a project entitled Agricultural expansion, deforestation, biofuels, the global market: Borneo in the middle of the storm. As a geographer by training

and specialist in the intensification of land use in Southeast Asia, his research interests centre on the "new conditions" governing agricultural expansion. This subject includes how the accelerated commercialization of land, driven by the forces of globalization, is affecting local populations and the environment. The recent trend toward the production of agrofuels and the many resulting

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repercussions on world agriculture are at the heart of his research concerns.

Vincent Pollard

Vincent Pollard of the Asian Studies Program at the University of Hawai'i—Manoa reports that he was recently a Short-term Visiting Lecturer at the Center for Cold War International History Studies, East China University for May and June 2008.

New Publications from Members

Browne, K.E. and Milgram, B.L. (eds) (2008). *Economics and Morality: Anthropological Approaches*,

Lanham and New York Altamira Press.

Milgram, B.L. "Activating Frontier Livelihoods: Women and the Transnational Secondhand Clothing Trade between Hong Kong and the Philippines." *Urban Anthropology Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 37(1): 5-47.

Pollard, V.K. (2008). "Introduction and Overview: State Capitalism in Europe and Asia" *Critical Sociology* 34(4) (July 2008): 535-606.

Pollard, V.K. (forthcoming) "Redesigning Asia's Military Landscape at the 1986 Constitutional Commission of the Philippines." *Guo ji leng zhan shi yan jiu [Cold War International History Studies]*6 (2009) (in Chinese)

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

GRADUATE STUDENTS DOING FIELDWORK IN THE WINTER, 2009

Student & Discipline	Time and Location	Research Title or Subject	Supervisor
University of British Columbia			
Danielle Labbé Urban Planning (PhD)	Hanoi January-September 2009	Hanoi on the edge: A study of the socio-spatial construction of periurban Hanoi	Michael Leaf
York University			
Adam Lukasiewicz, Geography (PhD)	Philippines June 2008- March 2009	Impacts of migration and remittances on rural households involved in agricultural production	Philip Kelly

CCSEAS 2009 Conference

Announcement

The Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies is pleased to announce that its biennial conference, *Engaging Southeast Asia: Centres and Peripheries*, will be held at **The University of British Columbia on October 15-17, 2009**. The keynote address at the conference will be delivered by **Alexander Woodside**, UBC professor emeritus and distinguished historian of Vietnam.

The CCSEAS conference is Canada's largest meeting of researchers concerned with Southeast Asia and the region's connections with the rest of the world. The conference will feature leading researchers from across the country and around the world. We look forward to welcoming all researchers, students, and activists with an inter-

est in Southeast Asia.

Individual paper submissions for the conference will be accepted, but we also encourage proposals for organized sessions. For paper presentation sessions, we encourage organizers to identify three papers per session in order to facilitate greater panel coherence and discussion. The program committee will also be open to proposals for other session formats, such as panel discussions or cultural performances. Session proposal submissions will be accepted **from January 15th onwards**, by which time a website will be established for registration and submission. The deadline for session proposals will be **March 15th 2009**, and the deadline for individual paper submissions will be **April 1st 2009**. Formal acceptances of papers

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CCSEAS CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 2009

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will be issued by April 30th 2009.

Please Note: Due to the increased volume of tourists coming to Vancouver in advance of the 2010 Winter Olympics, we strongly advise potential participants to **book accommodation for the conference as soon as possible**. We regret that we cannot book accommodation *en masse* for the conference. Listed below are various accommodation options on the UBC campus, and at local hotels accessible by public transit.

ON CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION

Green College - Guest House

(604) 822-8660

gc.reception@ubc.ca

Green College - Short Term Accommodation

(604) 822-6067

gc.assistant@ubc.ca

Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies

(604) 822-4782

info@pwias.ubc.ca

All bookings are subject to the approval of the Director of the Institute.

St. John's College

(604) 822-6522

sjc.reception@ubc.ca

<http://www.stjohns.ubc.ca/GuestRooms.stm>

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EARLY MORNING MARKET

By C. Ellingson

Early Morning Market: A Volunteer Experience in Flores

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The following is an excerpt from a journal entry by the author while she was volunteering with CUSO.

Under cover of dark we are leaving the island and village of Pangabatang destined for the Saturday morning market in Talibura on the Flores mainland. The villagers from the mountains arrived yesterday with their goods of fruits, vegetables, tubers, corn, flour, sugar, and ikat. The fishermen are awake at 4am loading their boats with salted fish for the market. They will also be

selling fresh fish caught last evening and during the night. After a breakfast of fish and a mixture of rice and corn we leave for the markets. Shortly after setting out the morning sun begins to warm the tops of the mountains in the east.

This is my trip home to the town of Maumere after spending the night in the small village of Pangabatang. It is my second trip there to attend meetings with my non-profit partner the Flores Welfare Foundation (SANRES). SANRES facilitates the operation of cooperative kiosks (very small shops) and cooperative credit unions in 16 villages in the regency of Sikka on the island of Flores in [East Nusa Tenggara](#) province of Indonesia. They also receive funding for the rehabilitation of mangrove forests along the coast, and assist farmers and women with establishing selling cooperatives for agricultural goods and locally

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A VIEW FROM THE
FIELD

EARLY
MORNING
MARKET

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woven ikat cloth.

Although many of the villages in which SANRES works are remote, this village of Pangabatang is perhaps one of the most isolated. If I were an eighteenth century novelist looking for a perfect location for a beautiful, deserted, tropical island this would be a good fit.

At that time the island of Pangabatang would have been deserted, as these Muslim fishermen are immigrants from the island of Sulawesi arriving here about 100 years ago. Located approximately 15 km from the town of Talibura, off the north shore of Flores, the island is about 1km long and 400m wide composed mainly of incredible white coral sand. There is a small rocky hill in the centre and perhaps a dozen coconut trees on the eastern end. The setting is stunning in its beauty especially in the setting sun. The shallow seawater is a light turquoise colour and the bay is dotted with small fishing boats and fishermen casting their nets. Another nearby island to the north-west is mountainous and heavily forested. In December 1992 a magnitude 6.2 earthquake just off the coast of Flores created a large tidal wave, which wiped out this community and a neighbouring community on the island of Babi 5km to the east. After the tidal wave, 60 of the families returned to the island to resume their traditional way of life. No insurance and a lack of government funding to recover from the disaster currently



Photo C. Ellingson

leave the community without electricity or drinking water. There is no school or food grown on the island. At the same time they are reliant on the sale of fish, seaweed for traditional medicine and boatbuilding for their livelihood.

We arrive in what appears to me to be mass chaos. Many fishermen from Pangabatang and other villages have already arrived. We find a place to beach about 100m away from the shoreline market and unload. There are so many people seated and milling around a small area of the beach that it takes me some time to make any sense of it all. I wish I were more versed in chaos theory. Is there order to be found in anarchy? If there is then I am seeing it unfold before me. The people sitting are actually marking out a small winding path that snakes along the beach away from the main path leading through the village back to the main road. Vendors work in teams. One or two will remain seated with their wares spread before them while another will take some of the goods and work their way through the crowd. They are both buyers and sellers as this part of the market is pure barter. No cash is used



Photo C. Ellingson

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here. Transactions only take place if each party has a good that the other is interested in. Those walking around will initiate with those seated. This woman has the type of fish this man is looking for. He presents his bunch of bananas and she offers two buckets of the small fish. He is satisfied and as he hands over the bananas the fish are deposited into his bag, hand-woven from the leaves of coconut trees. As you follow the path back up through the village and to the main road you will find sweets and alcohol, sugar and oil for stoves. The main road is filled with vendors from the city with clothes, soap, plastic containers, and various other goods. By this time the market has reverted to cash, as you are no longer dealing

with villagers but people operating shops in Mau-mere 40km to the west.

I set out home with my coworker from SANRES at about 7am. The bus is crowded with people returning from the market, but not as crowded as I have experienced in these last few weeks. That is another story. I am completely exhausted. In the last 24 hours I have had less than 6 hours of sleep and been attending meetings and discussions in my new tongue of Bahasa Indonesia. I have just completed my third week at my CUSO—a Canadian volunteer development agency—placement in Mau-mere and have now been to 8 of the 16 villages. The days are long and challenging. Today I am making my second trip to the village of Sikka.

Composed mid-May 2002

THE
NEWSLETTER

The *CCSEAS Newsletter* endeavours to inform Southeast Asian specialists in Canada about relevant Southeast Asian issues: events, debates, innovative research. It is sent by email to Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies (CCSEAS) members. Previous editions are available on-line at the CCSEAS website (<http://canadianasianstudies.concordia.ca/case/htm/seac.htm>). If you would like to be removed from the distribution list, please send a message to the editors (CCSEAS@hotmail.com) with the subject line "Remove me from the Newsletter distribution list."

The deadline for the next edition of the Newsletter is **March 1st 2009**. Send us news from your research, from your fieldwork, ideas and commentaries so we can publish them in the next edition. Please, keep articles short and send both a French and English version whenever possible.

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