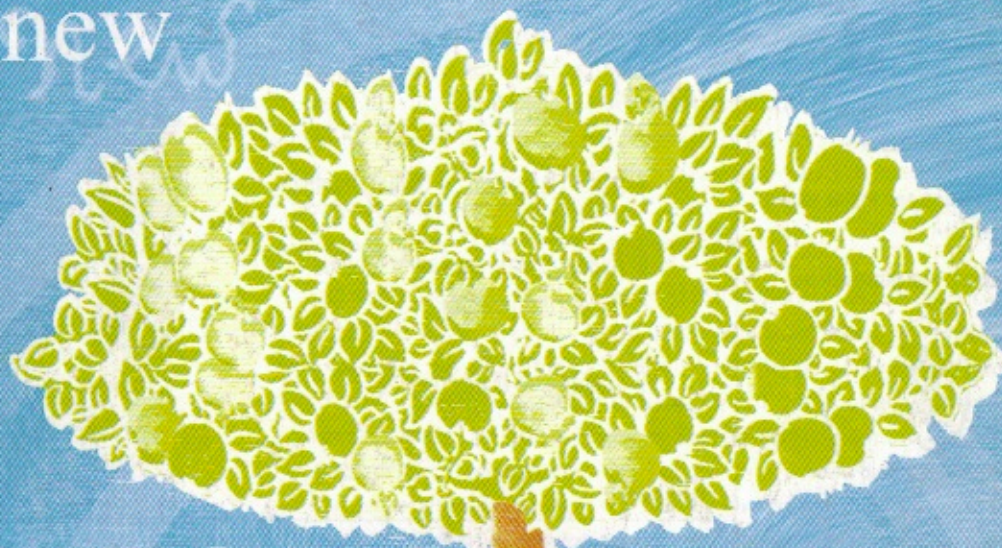


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# CONTENTS

Southeast Asian Studies Bulletin 2/01 Oct-Nov 2001

## Features

---

4 Asian Emporiums: A Global Dialogue

6 Recontextualizing Khmer Studies  
9 For Further Study

10 Tradition of Malay Textiles

## Reviews

---

14 International Conference on Southeast Asian Religious Mosaic  
in the 3rd Millennium

25 Urvashi Butalia: The Other Side of Silence

## Profiles

---

26 Professor Dr. Ishak Shari (1948-2001): In Memoriam

28 Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS), UKM

## Special Insert

---

15 SEASREP Report 2001

## Announcements

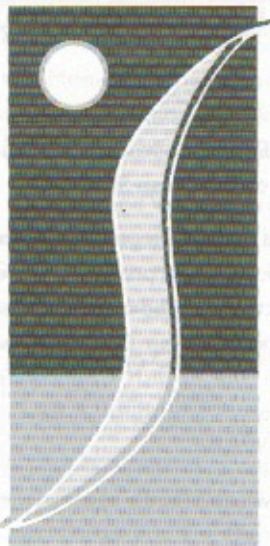
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33 Conferences • Publications • Tan Sri Rashid Hussain's Distinguished Chair  
in Finance



## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Maria Serena I. Diokno



**N**ow on its seventh year, the SEASREP Council is ready to enter a new phase of regional collaboration. Featured in this issue is a proposed introductory course on Southeast Asia entitled "Asian Emporiums: A Global Dialogue". Prepared under the stewardship of Council member Shaharil, director of the University of Malaya's Asia-Europe Institute (AEI), the course approaches Southeast Asia from multi-disciplinary themes that span centuries of trade and all sorts of inter-island exchanges. The course is intended for undergraduate students.

Once approved by the University of Malaya Senate, "Asian Emporiums" can be offered to students from other Southeast Asian universities. To complement this effort, the Council will study the possibility of reorienting its annual Traveling Classroom project toward this course, which can be taken for credit. The Council's Visiting Professors Program can similarly be reconfigured to support the new course (and others like it). Southeast Asian universities in the region are being invited to adopt the course so that it can be offered on rotation among universities in the region, thereby drawing in a larger pool of Southeast Asian students.

Support for curricular activities in the area of Southeast Asian studies is a new direction for the Council. Though implicit in the Council's vision, its programs thus far have focused on various forms of training (language, postgraduate study) and research that are necessary infrastructures of Southeast Asian studies. To continue to bear fruit, however, these efforts must at some point be linked more formally to the curriculum, and the initiative of AEI represents the first and necessary step.

Early next year the Council, together with AEI and the University of the Philippines Center for International Studies, will jointly hold a workshop aimed at producing a reading list of annotated works by indigenous Southeast Asian scholars in their own and in foreign languages. The annotated bibliographies, which will be written in English, are geared specifically toward undergraduate and graduate courses on Southeast Asia. Courses on Southeast Asian art, history, anthropology, politics and so on can avail of the bibliographies and use them in class. The next logical step would be to have selected works in the bibliographies (or portions of them) translated into various languages, another measure the Council intends to take up in its forthcoming meeting.

This new and exciting direction would not be possible without the vibrant interaction of scholars in the region, who are increasingly getting to know one another as colleagues and friends. The network is invaluable and the friendship, simply irreplaceable. Last June we lost one such partner and friend, Ishak bin Shari, who steered the Council's Selection Committee

*continued on page 32*



# Asian Emporiums: A Global Dialogue

## A course of 48 hours, 3 credits

Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 2 August 2001



*Dr. Shaharil, SEASREP Council member and director of the*

*University of Malaya Asia-Europe*

*Institute, recently put together a group of Southeast Asians (Adrian Lapian, Charnvit Kasetsiri, Maria Serena Diokno, Consuelo Paz, Cynthia Zayas, and Miriam Ferrer) to formulate an undergraduate introductory course on Southeast Asia that could be offered in the region for credit. AEI will initiate the course offering and, if adopted by Southeast Asian universities, the course could rotate among them every summer. Below is the course description.*

**T**he liquid world of Monsoon Asia has benefited from its strategic location in what O.W. Wolters has called 'the single ocean', that is to say, the wide expanse of sea from the Bay of Bengal to the China Sea, connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Since time immemorial people have moved all over the region, especially for the purpose of trade and also for other reasons such as pilgrimages, tributary missions, in quest of the 'white elephant' or other symbols of prowess and prestige, in search of medicinal herbs, to escape from the clusters of tradition and for sheer adventure. Ports and market places, some of which developed into emporiums, became the meeting places of a variety of peoples and cultures, creating a cosmopolitan world that predates the present era of globalization. It was indeed in these very places that all forms of multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious dialogues took place, gradually assuming global dimensions which we are experiencing today.

This is an introductory course which aims to familiarize undergraduate students with the world of Monsoon Asia throughout the centuries. The course will serve as a

background to other AEI courses on Asian Studies and complement AEI courses on European Studies.

Lectures are expected to be of a general nature, making use of many audio-visual aids, and providing guidelines for further reading. Special lectures will be organized, dealing with specific topics such as the Dongson Culture, Sriwijaya, the Rise and Fall of Ayuthia, the English Country Trade, the Armenian Diaspora, Tharekat, Nationalism & Revolution, and Piracy in Southeast Asian Waters.

The course breaks down into six big interrelated topics (8 hours each):

- ▶ Monsoon Asia
- ▶ Heritage
- ▶ Religions and Beliefs
- ▶ Cultural Expressions
- ▶ Trade and Emporiums
- ▶ Government and Politics

### **I Monsoon Asia (8 hours)**

This section deals with the main geographical aspects of the region, the common as well as different physical features which have shaped Monsoon Asia. River valleys separated one civilization from another, as did islands. However, mountain tribes who regard the mountains as their home and sea nomads who are children of the sea were those who traversed and networked the different river valleys and islands.

A short introduction is necessary to deal with geological factors such as the sunken 'Sunda' continent, the existence of volcanoes, the Wallace line, to explain the physical subdivisions of the single ocean, the existence of gold mines and other minerals such as copper and tin, oil resources and precious stones.

Suggested sub-themes:

- Mountains and Rivers,
- Islands and Oceans,
- Winds and Currents,
- The Dry Zone



## 2 Heritage (8 hours)

The heritage of the Asian Emporiums is introduced under the following sub-themes:

- **Peoples and Languages.** Various ethnic groups and the mosaic of languages are unique to the region. Dispersal of the Austronesian-speaking peoples over the Indian Ocean up to the eastern Pacific. Migrations of the Thai and Viet into the area of the Mon-Khmer, etc. Language pockets in island Southeast Asia as in Timor and Alor, Halmahera, Irian (New Guinea). Introduction of writing systems.

- **Customs and Values.** Ceremonies of *sirih-pinang* as symbols of friendship, royal regalia, wedding customs, clothing, housing. Social values such as reciprocity, perceptions of honour, revenge and notions of justice.

- **Rice and Sago Cultures.** How these determined the people's life cycles, day-to-day rhythm and attitudes toward the environment. For example, the wedding ceremony among the Tobelo people, an ethnic group in northern Halmahera, where the exchange of gifts revolves around sago and food made of sago (cakes and the like) brought by the groom's family, and rice, rice cookies, etc. brought by the bride's family — a symbolic meeting of the two cultures.

- **Body and Healing Systems.** The human body as understood and treated by traditional medicine that has long sustained life.

- **Artifacts and Monuments.** Prehistoric finds and ancient monuments, focusing on selected 'world heritage' monuments such as Angkor, Pagan, Borobudur and the spectacular architecture of the Ifugao terraced rice-fields rather than on the numerous archeological remains of the region. Architectural styles of some religious buildings that show a continuation of a former period, such as the old mosque in Kudus (Central Java) which has the appearance of a Hindu temple.

## 3 Religions and Beliefs (8 hours)

The arrival of religions from abroad brought the region into a wider world of fellow believers. However, some characteristics are still discernible that reveal a basically common traditional belief in spirits and ancestral rites. An important feature in this section is the movement of people such as pilgrims, religious teachers and missionaries.

Suggested sub-themes:

- Ancient Beliefs
- Confucianism

- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Islam
- Christianity

## 4 Cultural Expressions (8 hours)

The thoughts and feelings of the people, then and now, have been expressed in various ways: in oral and written form, in folk art as well as the fine arts. This section discusses ancient texts as well court chronicles, folk tales and modern novels. Attention is also given to expressions of dissent as reflected in traditional drama, folk songs and the like.

Suggested sub-themes:

- Oral Traditions
- Literature
- Clothes and Textiles
- Visual Arts

## 5 Trade and Emporiums (8 hours)

The dynamics of trade and shipping is the central theme of this section.

Suggested sub-themes:

- Overland and sea-borne trade routes, enabling the movement of commodities such as silk and cotton, spices, ceramics, forest and sea products, and gold and precious stones.
- Different networks of traders: Hakka, Hokkien, Gujerati, Arabs, Persians, Armenians, Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutch, British, American (New England), Japanese, etc. Indigenous trade and shipping: Malays, Makassarese, and Buginese, Minangkabau, etc.
- Ports and emporiums where the first cosmopolitan communities developed.
- Shipping technology and legal instruments (maritime law, etc.).

## 6 Government and Politics (8 hours)

Political structures and their interplay are discussed under the following sub-themes:

- Concept of Mandala and Leadership
- Western Colonialism and Japanese Occupation
- Emergence of Modern Nations
- International Relations, Regional Cooperation (ASEAN) ▶



# Recontextualizing Khmer Studies

Alan Feinstein, Program Officer, Southeast Asia Programs, Toyota Foundation

*The newly formed Center for Khmer Studies in Siem Reap, Cambodia played host from January 14 to 17, 2001 to an international workshop that took stock of the state of academic study in the humanities and social sciences of Cambodia.*

**T**he Center for Khmer Studies (CKS) is a non-government, non-profit international institution dedicated to "facilitating study, teaching and research related to the evolution of Khmer civilization." It aims to "promote interest in Khmer studies worldwide" and help "relate Khmer studies to Cambodian educational institutions and people." The CKS involves an international consortium of institutions, including the Cambodian Ministries of Education, Youth and Sport, and of Culture and Fine Arts, APSARA (Authority for the Protection of the Sites and Administration of the Region of Angkor), the Royal University of Phnom Penh, the Royal University of Fine Arts, the Royal Academy of Cambodia, the Buddhist Institute, the National Museum, the National Archives, the Center of Advanced Studies, and, from abroad, the National University of Singapore, the World Monuments Fund, the Asia Society, Cornell University, and the University of Hawaii, among others.

The list of consortium members continues to grow. CKS has received start-up funding from the World Monuments Fund and several private donors, and was recently awarded a grant by the Rockefeller Foundation to carry out a range of projects over the next three years. The Luce Foundation has enabled the American scholar of Cambodia, David Chandler, to serve as full-time Senior Advisor to the Center's staff, who include Philippe Peycam, director; Beng Hong Socheat Khemro, program coordinator; and Michel Antelme, editor. The CKS is located in a beautiful *wat* (temple) complex, in two old buildings that CKS itself helped to restore.

## Workshop Participants

It was in these beautiful buildings that the workshop, entitled "The State, Practice and Future of Khmer studies," took place last January. Present were over 130 participants from various countries who represented a range of disciplines. More than half were Cambodians, including the Minister of Culture, H.E. Princess Boppha Devi; the Secretary of State for High[er] Education (Ministry of Education), H.E. Pok Than; distinguished parliamentarian and historian of art, Son Soubert; the head of the new Royal Academy, Sorn Samnang; and many professors, lecturers, and students, including Phong Tan, Ros Chanrabot, Long Seam, Hean Sokhom, So Chenda, Lek Sareth, Pou Thonevath, and Sisowath Rittarak. Many of the students could attend thanks to a grant from the Asia Foundation.

From the Southeast Asia region I noted Charnvit Kasetsiri of Thammasat and the SEASREP Council, Rujaya Abhakorn and Shalardchai Ramitanondh of Chiang Mai University, Pisit Charoenwangsa of SPAFA, and John Miksic, Richard Ho and Chhem Kieth Rethy of the National University of Singapore. Several Vietnamese scholars were invited but could not attend. The distinguished Indian Sanskritist and scholar of Cambodia, Prof. K. Bhattacharya of the Sorbonne, was there — amazingly, on his first visit to Cambodia, after years of publishing on the Sanskrit inscriptions. And there were a number of prominent European, American, Japanese and Australian scholars, some of whom were supported by funds from the Asian Cultural Council, including Olivier de Bernon, David Chandler, Jacqueline Fillionzat, Helen Jarvis, Thomas Maxwell, Tomoko Okada, Christophe Pottier, John Sanday, David Snellgrove, Ashley Thompson, Hiromi Ueda, Michael Vickery, Hiram Woodward, and many others.

The fields represented were various, and in order to cover as much of the Khmer studies landscape as possible, the organizers had divided up the meeting into separate disciplinary panels, each with co-chairpersons who were then to report back to the plenary session. The eleven panels were: Ancient







Cambodian studies should aim for: the "recontextualization of knowledge" about Cambodia in Cambodia.

Asian studies. Many of these conclusions would seem to gibe with suggestions that came out of the panel sessions, it turned out.

The following day the plenary session heard reports from the various panels, many of which had come up with lists of projects or topics that should be explored in their fields. These are far too numerous to mention here but some of them are enumerated here (see inset).

### Common Themes, Needs

The general discussion that followed brought out many of the commonalities in the panel members' ideas. Clearly there is an urgent need for training Cambodians in various fields. Developing efficient means of keeping each other informed about what is going on in particular disciplinary fields seems overdue, and relatively easy now with the Internet and e-mail. A major theme was the need to "bring home" the results of much research carried out by mainly foreign researchers and published and disseminated abroad. In fact, it was estimated that a vast majority of the academic literature about Cambodia is written by non-Cambodians, is published in foreign languages, and is not available in Cambodia. From this flows the need to develop translations of key materials from other languages into Khmer and to publish these and original research written in Khmer. This will depend on good linguistic tools like modern dictionaries and grammars of the language. It will require, too, the development of a scholarly publishing industry and distribution system. Presumably increasing the supply of Khmer language materials in a multitude of fields for various levels of readers will help build the demand. At present, the reading habit is woefully underdeveloped.

Finally, and this will certainly strike a chord with readers of this *Bulletin*, the participants pointed out over and over the need to open up Khmer studies by seeing it as part of the study of the Southeast Asian regionally generally, especially by studying Cambodia in comparison or in complement with its immediate neighbors on the mainland. The director of CKS also explicitly took the model of SEASREP, which stresses the

study of Southeast Asia that takes place in the region by Southeast Asians, as a model for what Cambodian studies should aim for: the "recontextualization of knowledge" about Cambodia in Cambodia.

The final morning session was devoted to presentations by representatives from various foreign organizations, to explain how they support or carry out activities relating to Khmer studies and what the possibilities for collaboration with them might be. Dr. Thak Chaloemtiarna of Cornell University summarized the previous day's meeting of donors with Cambodian institutions for the plenary meeting. Among the other presentations were those relating to Southeast Asian studies from SPAFA (Dr. Pisit), SEASREP (Dr. Charnvit), SEAMEO-Centre for History and Tradition (Dr. Rujaya), Southeast Asian Consortium on Access and Preservation or SEACAP (Dr. Rujaya), and the National University of Singapore's Centre for Southeast Asian Studies (John Miksic).

### Final Output

The final session aimed to summarize the meeting results and was led by the chairperson of the World Monuments Fund, Ms. Bonnie Burnham, who is also a member of the CKS Board of Trustees. She congratulated the participants and considered the meeting a success for several reasons:

- It was an opportunity for colleagues to meet, many for the first time.
- It was useful in developing a set of research and development priorities, even down to the level of identifying specific projects that could be undertaken together.
- It had brought together funding organizations from foreign countries and allowed them to interact with the local and foreign scholarly community, which should be useful in the task of implementing our future goals together.



## For Further Study: Suggestions of Workshop Panels

► *Ancient history*: study ancient Cambodia not in isolation but in its relations with neighboring cultures, especially Champa and the Mon states of Thailand; publish new inscriptions; map temples and inscriptions; translate and publish manuscripts; boost teaching of Sanskrit and Pali.

► *Anthropology*: document and study contemporary Cambodian culture; monitor and understand social change; develop indigenous perspectives; de-emphasize "high culture"; see Cambodian culture as dynamic not static; focus future projects on: (a) family life; (b) youth culture; (c) rural peasant life; (d) health practices; (e) dynamics of religion in Cambodian society; (f) supernaturalism and spirit cults; (g) notions of "Khmer culture."

► *Archaeology*: carry out salvage archaeology; compile a nationwide survey of sites; explicitly link heritage tourism and community development; develop "Mekong archaeology" by linking the archaeological study of Cambodia with that of Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam; develop underwater archaeology; do excavation and research in and around the Angkor monuments and other monumental sites<sup>1</sup>; develop physical anthropology and prehistoric archaeology; publish findings in Khmer.

► *Art history*: introduce and train Cambodian scholars in new techniques of object conservation; develop museum curatorship programs; do comparative regional (Vietnam, Thailand) and inter-regional (India, China) studies on

iconography; produce tourist guides; develop digital image library for training scholars and tracing looted objects; publication, especially in Khmer and for popular Cambodian audiences.

► *Libraries and archives*: train librarians and archivists in-country; develop extant holdings; develop tools for users to access information; encourage inter-institutional cooperation; create a union catalogue or database on CD-ROM of collections in all Cambodian libraries for potential distribution world-wide; put the database on-line; create a professional association of librarians and archivists; help lawmakers draft laws on legal deposit and on ISBN numbering; develop glossaries of terms in librarianship in Khmer; provide guidelines to Cambodian publishers; publish legal advice on copyright issues; develop translations from foreign languages into Khmer; carry out oral history projects at the National Archives.

► *Linguistics*: link researchers working on Khmer linguistics, in-country and abroad, e.g., through a web site; develop a computerized Khmer lexicon database based on modern lexicographic principles; develop a new grammar of Khmer based on actual facts and newest linguistic theories; describe Khmer dialects in Cambodia and among Khmer speakers in Thailand and Vietnam; compile a linguistic atlas of Cambodia, essential for other social science fields; study ethnic minority languages before they disappear.

► *Literature*: revive creative writing in Khmer through such schemes as (a) literary magazine; (b) annual literary award; (c) international scholarships and support; (d) translation from Khmer into foreign languages to raise the profile and prestige of Khmer literature; in addition, arrange translations into Khmer of recent analytical work on Khmer literature; document on microfilm literary texts composed before 1975 that are now unavailable in Cambodia.

► *Modern history*: widen research scope to a cross-national approach in Southeast Asia generally; put out publications in Khmer; study history of press, of Cambodian Buddhism, of Cambodia's international relations, of post-Angkor period up to colonial period, of post-1979 period, of UNTAC period, etc.; create a web site; develop oral history research techniques; translate important works written in foreign languages on Cambodia's modern history and on Southeast Asian history generally into Khmer.

### Note

- 1 Interestingly, a few months after the meeting, the articulation of the need for excavation in and around the Angkor monuments turned out to be prescient. A group led by Prof. Y. Ishizawa of Sophia University (Japan) made a spectacular find while excavating near the temple of Banteay Kdai — 108 large stone-carved Buddha images that they surmised were purposely buried in the 12th century or so to prevent their destruction by anti-Buddhist iconoclasts.



# Tradition of Malay Textiles

Zulkifli Bin Mohamad, ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta, Indonesia

Below is a paper read at a symposium organized by the Toyota Foundation, UNESCO and ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information on **Artisans of Southeast Asia** in Osaka, Japan on 27 March 2001.

**T**he history and culture of the Malay world, its relationship with the Malay Archipelago and the environment of the Malay artisan, could be presented in three old sayings:

*Kemana tumpah kuah kalau tidak ke nasi*  
Where else does the gravy spill if not on rice

*Air dicincang takkan putus*  
Cutting water could never end

*Di mana bumi dipijak, di situ langit di junjung*  
Where earth stepped is where the clouds sit  
above

*Pantun* and *Syair*, the Malay poem verses, were part of daily conversation, letters, songs, storytelling as well as visual artworks. Certain patterns and designs were chosen to represent or symbolise words that are normally layered. The actual meanings are thus hidden by those sayings about the moon, sun; star, cloud, mountain and sea, hill and river, flowers and birds, so on and so forth. Though these *pantuns* and *syairs* are less heard today, certain types of *pantun* verses are now being adopted into Malay popular songs. The colourful batik on silk and cotton, with patterns inspired from old designs such as flora and fauna, are seen everywhere in Kuala Lumpur and major cities in

Malaysia. These batik and textile traditions originated from the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia — Kelantan, Trengganu and up to Pekan in Pahang. Today batik makers are everywhere from Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Johor Bharu, the resort island of Langkawi to East Malaysia Borneo in Kuching.

The main problem of Malay cultural history is the tendency to look at 15th century Melaka as the beginning of the Malay world and civilisation. In fact, the remote east coast states more ancient than Melaka, are found to have possessed abundant art production. East coast states were not only close to China; the Hindu-Buddhist world of India-Sri Lanka was part of the old kingdom of Chih Tu in the upper river of Kelantan, Langkasuka kingdom in the Isthmus Kra between Siam and the Malay Peninsula as well as the Sri Wijaya and Majapahit kingdoms.

## The Ethnoarchaeology Perspective

Ethnoarchaeology looks beyond the aspects of antiquities history and ethnology of certain cultural materials. It seeks to compare the patterns recognised in material culture with archaeological contexts, patterns yielded through the study of living societies. The ethnoarchaeologist is particularly concerned with the manufacture, distribution and use of

artifacts, the remains of various processes that might be expected to survive, and the interpretation of archaeological material in the light of ethnographic information. The ethnoarchaeological approach not only satisfies art or aesthetic value but cares about the preservation of the object for further research and development. Less materially oriented questions such as technological development, subsistence strategies and social evolution are also compared. Such an approach

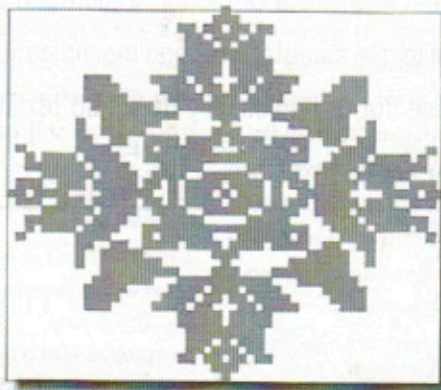
*Design of Rajong Tree (Neottopterisnidus), motif of continuous design plant found in wood carving of Northern States of Peninsula Malaysia.*





considers the past, analyses the present and contemplates the future.

Much of the indigenous textile production technology of the region has remained traditional among the native populations. The techniques passed on from one generation to another, serve as part of each nation's cultural heritage, and need to be properly noted, documented, and upgraded using modern information technology without sacrificing the ethnological value of the trade.



Motif of 'Mahkota Raja' (King's Crown) found in songket and weaving.

Changing lifestyles and preferences in designs, colours, patterns, materials and the way people dress are influenced by globalisation processes in the region. Traditional textiles face a real threat in this era of modernization and prevalence of derivative lifestyles. Competition between the industrial textile manufacturer and the indigenous textile maker could result in the marginalisation and eventual phase-out of traditionally designed textiles in favour of the cheaper, more attractive and more 'popular' product. This could lead to the disappearance of local identity and the loss of a unique cultural heritage and the outstanding features of creative expression and homegrown skills and technology.

### The Bias of Malay History and Politics

Political power formation, alignment, disagreement and separation movements are common issues in the Malay-Indo world. Southeast Asia has long been the arena of change. The Malay states in the golden peninsula of mainland Southeast Asia were mapped and remapped by various powers even before the arrival of western colonials.

We often look at "Malay" in association with Malaysia, a country that obtained independence from Great Britain in 1957. If we look at art forms, for example, we tend to concentrate on Malay Islamic art forms, when the arts flourished most probably during the Melakan civilisation, after the sultan converted to Islam. Modern Malaysian education tends to reinforce the view that Malay art forms started from Melaka after Islam, ignoring the northern states that have a rich historical background. Local Malay traditions and recent archaeological findings point to the existence of pre-Melaka states such as Gangga Negara, in the Bruas-Dinding area prior to the founding of Perak, Trengganu and Kedah. Records of the Ming Dynasty also prove the existence of Kelantan and

Pahang in the pre-Melaka period. The Isthmian Malay States regained their independence in the middle of the 6th century after the Khmer Prince of Kambuja conquered Funan. The development of Malay culture after independence recognised Jawanese, Bugis and Sumateran immigrant origins, overlooking Langkasuka origins because Langkasuka was a Hindu-Buddhist state and its old centre of Pattani is now in Thailand.

In short, the official version of modern Malaysian culture is that Malaysia is a land of convergence of many immigrants from the Indonesian archipelago looking for new hope. In this formulation, lost is the soul of being peninsular Malay, of possessing indigenous cultural roots going back to Langkasuka, Funan, and before. It is worse for Pattani, since the once famous kingdom became part of Thailand, a Buddhist country that plays down Malay racial and cultural identity in order to develop its own distinct national culture.

Map of Peninsula Malaysia showing location of Kelantan, Pattani, and Langkasuka.





Traditional textiles face a real threat in this era of modernization and prevalence of derivative lifestyles. Competition between the industrial textile manufacturer and the indigenous textile maker could result in the marginalisation and eventual phase-out of traditionally designed textiles in favour of the cheaper, more attractive and more 'popular' product.

## Northern Malay as a Cultural Sphere

Langkasuka culture is controversial in modern Malaysia because it tends to be defined as Buddhist or Hindu. Yet the arts of Langkasuka flourished for 400 years during the Islamic era of the Pattani Kingdom. Langkasuka should not be looked at as a period, a city or a particular religion, but rather as a cultural sphere. One of the unspoken but influential reasons why modern Malay scholars have not paid much attention to Langkasuka and its legacy is that from their perspective, the Isthmus lies on the fringe. Pattani, Kelantan, Kedah, Perlis, and Trengganu are barbarous places lying far away from the cultural centres scholars are familiar with. These cultural centres would be: Sri Wijaya and Majapahit from the 6th to the 14th centuries, Melaka in the 15th century, Singapore and Penang under colonial rule, and Kuala Lumpur today. The northern states remain still very much "non-federated" from the point of view of mainstream Malaysian culture. Making them seem even more remote is the fact that they speak dialects that are difficult for outsiders to fully understand.

Strong Thai influence on the culture of the northern states also makes them seem outlandish from the point of view of central Malaysia. On the other hand, the Thais easily dismiss the heritage they acquired from the Malay states because, looked at from the vantage of Sukhotai, Ayudthaya, and Bangkok, the Isthmus lies far to the south. Its culture, being Islamic today, is alien to them. Since King Rama V (Chulalongkorn), the process of absorbing the southern states into Thailand has been successful, with the result that remnants of Islamic culture there seem crude and simple. For the Thais, too, Langkasuka lies at the fringe.

The Isthmus way up north seems very distant from the royal capitals of the Sri Wijayan and Majapahit empires and the later Islamic kraton of Solo and Yogyakarta. Seen from Jawa island, the arts of the Malay Isthmus appear old-fashioned, rustic, and folk; in short, watered-down versions of classic Javanese art. In any case, since 1947 with the creation of the modern nation of Indonesia, the Isthmus has stood politically

remote as well, a no-man's-land divided between two different countries, Thailand and Malaysia.

## Langkasuka Culture

Especially in the case of the Malay peninsula, the argument could be made that Langkasuka culture, far from lying at the fringe, was the primal and determinant culture of the peninsula for most of the historic period. Even today, it is the arts of Langkasuka as they have survived in the northern states and southern Thailand that wield the strongest influence on traditional Malay art. It is important to look closely at traditional art forms such as dance, shadow puppets, martial arts and wood carving because of a problem peculiar to Malay peninsular culture: the lack of tangible monuments. Thoreau wrote: "Many are concerned about the monuments of the West and the East, to know who built them. For my part, I should like to know who in those days did not build them, - who were above such trifling." In asking ourselves what was the essence of Malay traditional culture both before and after the advent of Islam, it would seem that the energies of common people, artists and the ruling elite did not pour into building enduring monuments. Rather, they went into ephemeral art forms such as ritual, dance, music, *pantun* poetry, and wood carving as sensitive responses to the numinous forest and ocean environment in which the Malays lived. The belief that nothing is permanent appears to be the underlying shared assumption.

It could be said that not building enduring monuments was a trait of the Malay-Indo world in general. So the dances, Silat, shamanism, and keris carving described above have come a full circle: Born among the people, they were refined with the court, and now they are the property of the people again. This means they have become more rustic, perhaps, and rawer than they presumably once were. Yet the dancers and musicians still play as though they were performing before the sultan. You can see one of these men, hardened by daily labour in the village pulling a cart during the day; but at night when he picks up his fiddle or flute, he transforms into an exquisitely sensitive



artist in a royal court of old. These performers and practitioners exist today in a special world of their own, belonging to both the court and the village at the same time — the hidden world of ancient Langkasuka [Mohamad-Kerr: 2000].

In the case of Langkasuka, the discussion is further complicated by the fact that there are really several Langkasukas. One Langkasuka, most narrowly defined, was the early 7th century kingdom of Lang Ya Shu described in Chinese annals. Another Langkasuka, the definition most commonly used, is a kingdom or series of kingdoms beginning with Lang Ya Shu and lasting until the fall of Majapahit II in 1502. Another Langkasuka, using the word in the broad sense favoured by artists and traditional folklore, refers to traditional Isthmian culture in general. In this larger Langkasuka, the Langkasuka of legend and art, a series of Malay kingdoms ruled the Isthmus more or less independently from the 1st century, surviving through the hegemony of Funan, Sri Wijaya, Chola, Majapahit, Siam, and the advent of Islam. This larger Langkasuka disappeared with the fall of Pattani in 1902. Only a century, well within a few generations of human memory, separates modern Malays from old Langkasuka.

### Eclectic, Steadfast Art

In looking at the arts of Langkasuka, certain traits stand out as a result of the region's distinctive history. One trait is the eclectic nature of the arts. From the earliest period a love of the natural environment permeates everything. Above this are strata from Hindu-Buddhist Sumatra and Jawa, which were refined with the admixture of court ritual, costume, and art motifs of Angkor, Siam, and China. Capping these strata are the arts and traditions of Islam. The subtle mix of cultures and qualities is what has given Langkasuka arts their enduring power and fascination.

It is a paradox that while the northern states of Malaysia are known for their strong Islamic ways, they are at the same time the centre of shamanistic practices. But great contradictions are the other side of what it means to be "eclectic". The contradictions survived the centuries without the culture disintegrating because of another important trait of Langkasuka: conservatism. The attachment of the people of southern Thailand and northern

Malaysia to "old fashioned" ways is often viewed as backwardness and weakness. But the attachment could also be seen as a form of inner strength. The people of the Malay Isthmus, other nations who saw a stream of rulers come and go, have had long experience in preserving their inner culture through various dynasties, conquerors, suzerainties, hegemonies, and ideologies. While kingdoms rise and fall, the people remain resolutely themselves, and one may find in their conservative ways remnants of ancient wisdom going back centuries or even millennia.

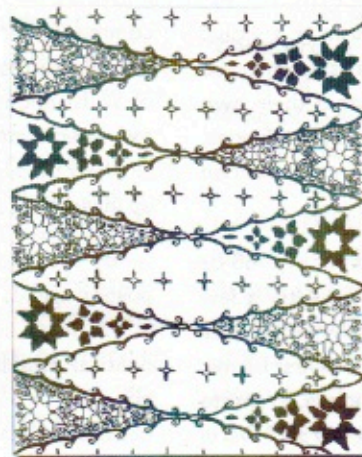
### Village and Court

A turn to strong Islamic practices in fact protected the arts in some ways by raising high walls against the homogenized and simplistic state culture advocated by the "modernists" in Kuala Lumpur. Another trademark of Langkasuka art that stands out in modern Malaysia is that most of the art forms were patronized and developed within royal courts. They are distinguished by the finesse and sophistication that only comes from the leisure and luxury of royal life. This is the result of another Langkasukan paradox: the continuity of the royal houses. Despite the many shifts of power and dynasty, the sultans of the Isthmian states maintained hereditary links that survived over centuries. In the rest of the peninsula, with the confusion of colonial conquest, most royal houses fell to Bugis invasions and afterwards never experienced long enough periods of wealth and peace necessary to develop arts as they existed in the north.

One might say that in most developed traditional cultures, there are two poles of artistic expression: the People and the

Court. The people, especially as represented by the villagers, are the final and ultimate source of it all, but their arts are often raw and rough-edged. These arts, when adopted by a court, develop a wealth of expression and sophisticated techniques that raise them to a higher level. A core element in the development of courtly arts, although an unexpected and anti-intuitive one, is the fact the court and the village are surprisingly close. Peasant and princess are both tied to the land and its history, sharing a similar love of the hills and fields, and even speaking a similar dialect. In most countries the bond between the arts of the people and arts

*Design of 'Pucuk Rebang' (bamboo shoot), motif found in batik sarong (Kelantan and Trengganu).*





# International Conference on Southeast Asian Religious Mosaic in the 3rd Millennium

*Mahidol University International College in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand organized the conference on 1-4 February 2001 as part of its Southeast Asian Studies Program, which the college has been offering since January 2000. Presented here are abstracts of two papers read at the conference.*

## Transnational Issues in Islamic Revivalism: Southeast Asian Reponse to a Malaysian-Based Islamic Movement Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, Lecturer in Politics, School of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia

*Abstract by Glenda Lopez, university researcher, Third World Studies Center, University of the Philippines.*

**A**lthough Islam acquired the position of a majority religion in a number of post-independent Southeast Asian countries, it has been put aside as a factor in state governance. At best, it is honored as the 'state religion' entrenched in the national constitution, but without any substantial political influence. The emergence of Islamic movements in Southeast Asia is a response by Islamic revivalists to put Islam at the helm of policy-making. While Islamic revivalism is a global phenomenon, Islamic movements almost invariably emerged to challenge the dominant establishment within their own national polities. Despite their cultural and linguistic affinities, only the Malaysian-based Darul Arqam movement attained transnationalism among Southeast Asian activists.

Darul Arqam was established in Kuala Lumpur in 1968 by an Islamic religious teacher Ashaari Muhammad. After a few years of shifting bases and participating in programmes of other Islamic groups, Darul Arqam established in 1973 its first Islamic village model on a five-acre land in Sungai Penchala, a remote area 20 kilometers from Kuala Lumpur. During 1973-79 Darul

Arqam expanded its activities into the public sphere, with priority given to socio-welfare services. *Dakwah* activities were intensified at all levels of society through talks, visits and various forms of social interaction. Darul Arqam's village in Sungai Penchala served as the center of public interaction as local and foreign visitors came in huge numbers. Later, Darul Arqam put up its own schools, publications, medical center and economic projects. Toward the end of the 1970s, Darul Arqam's branches and villages were successfully entrenched outside Kuala Lumpur as the movement increasingly gained adherents from the ranks of professionals and technocrats.

The 1980s to 1990s saw the massive expansion of Darul Arqam abroad. Branches of Darul Arqam were established in Britain, USA, New Zealand, France and Australia pioneered by Malaysian students in these countries. So successful had Darul Arqam become by the late 1980s that foreign observers labeled the movement a 'state within a state', with its own political, economic and social order within the Malaysian secular superstructure. In 1990 one journalist commenting on the success of the 'Darul Arqam Empire' abroad compared it to Henry Ford's automobile empire.

By 1993, in addition to 48 Islamic villages throughout Malaysia and 158 branches spread according to national parliamentary constituencies, Darul Arqam had developed 37 communication centers in 16 other countries in Asia, Europe, USA, and the Middle East. Communication centers served as information-cum-*dakwah* outlets for the surrounding community, venues for internal meetings and social gatherings, religious retreats and havens for the practical externalization of an Islamic identity. Darul Arqam had also established its own international school in Thailand and university in Indonesia. Similarly, through trade missions Darul Arqam managed to set up investment subsidiaries abroad.

By the mid-1990s Darul Arqam's socio-economic and political agenda had clearly acquired a transnational orientation. It was from overseas that Ustaz Ashaari denounced ruling political establishments and elaborated on Islamic political principles through his various writings and speeches. On several occasions, Ustaz Ashaari criticized inept Malaysian leaders and



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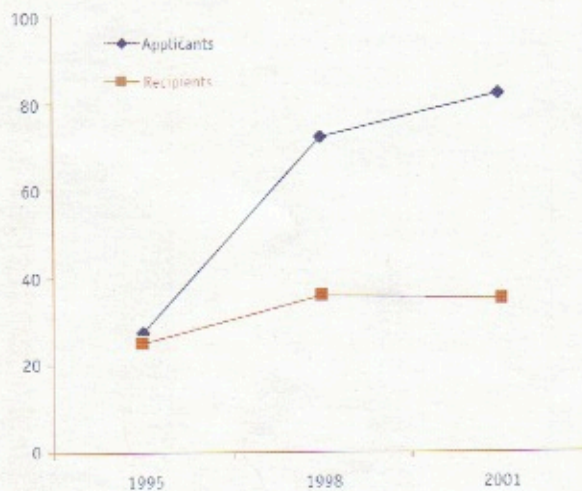




## SEASREP Report 2001

**Figure 1**

**Total Applicants and Recipients of SEASREP Grants  
(1995, 1998, 2001)**

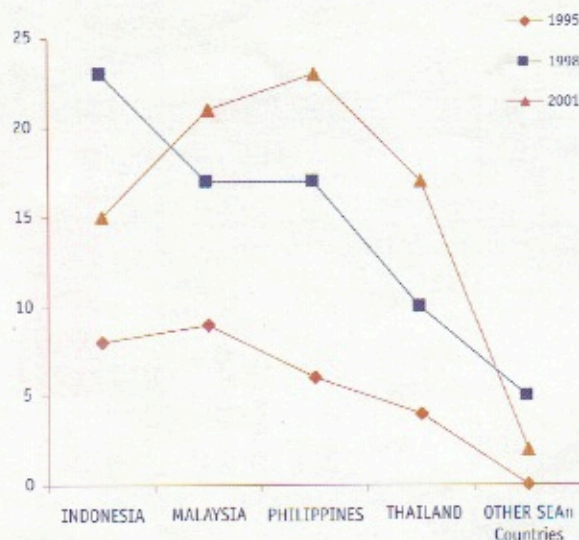


The graphs chronicle the growth of the SEASREP Grants since their inception in 1995. A continuous increase in the number of applications can be observed, from 27 in the first year of operation to 82 in 2001. Over the years the process of approving applications has become more selective in keeping with the thrust of an external body comprising the Selection Committee to raise the standard of applications (Figure 1).

The countries whose universities signed an agreement in support of the SEASREP exchange programs — Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand — have continued to account for the bulk of the applications. In 1995 Malaysia produced the largest number of applications; in 1998, Indonesia took over; and in 2001, the highest number came from the Philippines. But in general, participation by these countries in the grants program has risen considerably since 1995 (Figure 2). The number of actual recipients, however, has tended to vary.

**Figure 2**

**Total Applicants by Country (1995, 1998, 2001)**



In the early years the tendency was to apply more liberal standards so as to encourage more applications. However, over the years standards rose. For example, the acceptance rate of Indonesian applicants fell from 88% in 1995, to 35% in 1998 and 27% this year. Similarly, 89% of Malaysian applications were approved in 1995, but in 1998, the figure dropped to 53% and in 2001, to 43%. Philip-



pine and Thai applications experienced a similar decline: starting at 100% approval rate for both in 1995, the figure fell to 59% for the Philippines and 80% for Thailand in 1995, and 30% and 59%, respectively, in 2001 (Figure 3).

The Regional Collaboration grants have proven to be the most attractive of the SEASREP programs, while the Visiting Professors program has tended to be under-subscribed. Interest in the two training programs — language training and the Luisa Mallari MA/PhD Fellowship — has also grown. Again it is evident from Figure 4 that the selection process has increasingly given attention to the quality of the proposals.

The rise in the number of applications was matched by an increase in grant funds (Figure 5). In 1995 the total amount allocated was US\$159,000; this year, the amount is nearly double (\$304,600). Too, in recent years the funds have been fully utilized although this was not so in the first two years of operation.

The Regional Collaboration grants account for 60% or so of the total amount of funds actually disbursed to recipients (Figure 6). In practice the funds allocated per program are adjusted to accommodate the final number of proposals accepted, provided the over-all grant amount is retained. Because of the decline in

Figure 3

Total Recipients by Country as Percent of Applicants

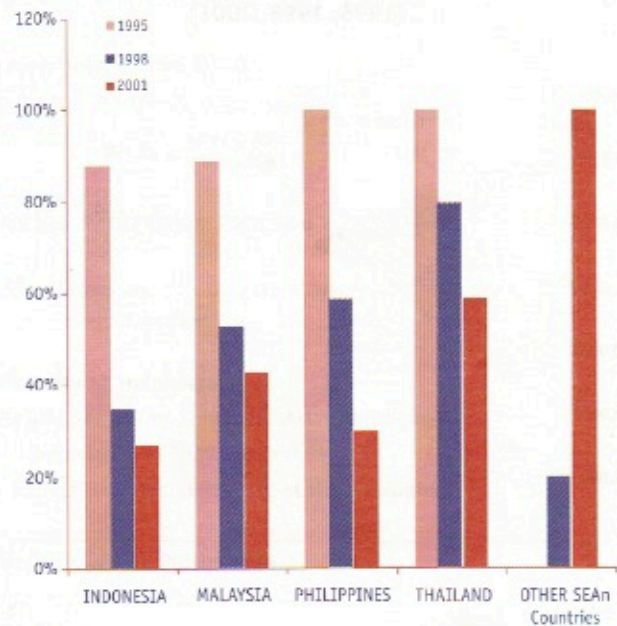
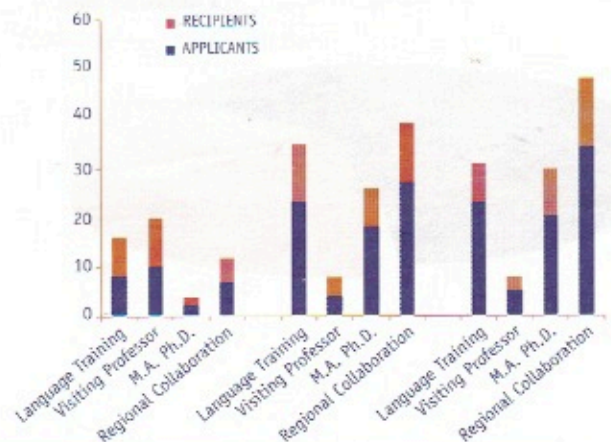


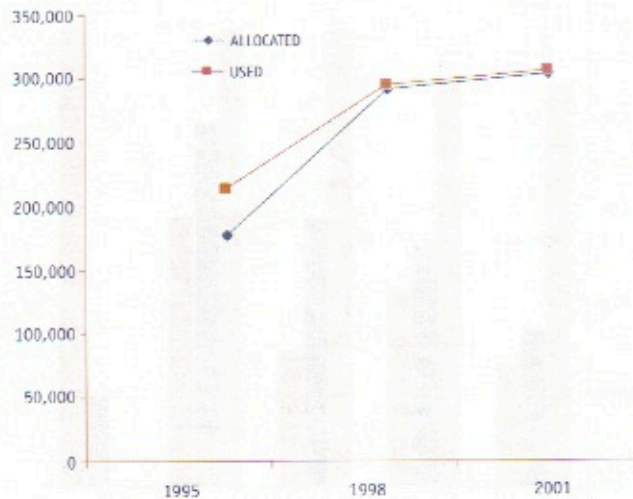
Figure 4

Total Number of Applicants and Recipients by Program (1995, 1998, 2001)





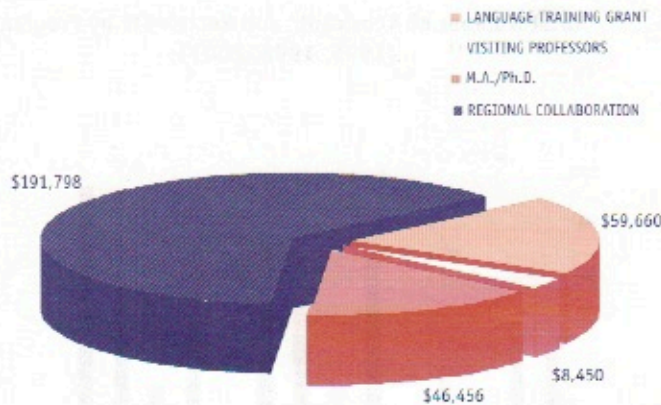
**Figure 5**  
**Total Amount Allocated and Used for All Programs (1995, 1998, 2001)**



the number applying for the Visiting Professors grant, for example, the fund allocated to it is distributed to the other programs. The SEASREP Council is in the process of re-examining this particular program and any changes will be announced after March 2002.

Once again the SEASREP Council affirms its vision: to help build the infrastructure necessary for research on Southeast Asian studies in the region by indigenous scholars and, in the process, bring out the best of Southeast Asian scholarship. ▀

**Figure 6**  
**Amount Used by Program**





## SEASREP Grantees 2001-2002

### LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAM

*Recipient, position, institutional affiliation, language to be studied and where*

**Salome Rhian T. Alfuentes**, Research Fellow  
Center for Integrative and Development Studies  
University of the Philippines  
Javanese, Gadjah Mada University

**Rodney C. Jubilado**, Instructor  
Department of Languages and Literatures  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of Southeastern Philippines  
Bahasa Malay, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

**Maria Khristina S. Manuelli**, M.A. Student  
Department of Linguistics  
College of Social Sciences and Philosophy  
University of the Philippines  
Bahasa Malay, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

**Sophana Srichampa**, Assistant Professor  
Institute of Language and Culture  
for Rural Development  
Mahidol University  
Vietnamese, Institute of Linguistics, Hanoi

**Thananan Boonwanna**, M.A. Student  
Department of History  
Faculty of Arts  
Chulalongkorn University  
Vietnamese, Vietnam National University  
Ho Chi Minh City

**Phumphet Chetianonth**, M.A. Student  
Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology  
Thammasat University  
Burmese, University of Foreign Language, Yangon

**Nguyen Thi Van**, Lecturer  
Department of Oriental Studies  
Hanoi University of Society and Human Science  
Bahasa Malay, University of Malaya

**Nguyen Hong Quang**, Librarian  
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies  
Thai, Chulalongkorn University

### VISITING PROFESSORS PROGRAM

*Inviting University, title of lecture, visiting professor, university affiliation*

**University of Indonesia**  
"Sex and Society in Southeast Asia: Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand"  
Dr. Michael Lim Tan, University of the Philippines

**University of the Philippines**  
"Siam in the 17-18th Century Southeast Asian World"  
Dr. Dhiravat na Pombejra,  
Chulalongkorn University

**Thammasat University**  
"Indonesia: Post Suharto Problems (Democratization, Economy, Nationalism-Regionalism)"  
Dr. Mohtar Mas'ood, Gadjah Mada University



THE LUISA MALLARI FELLOWSHIPS FOR M.A. AND PH.D. RESEARCH IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

*Recipient, position, institutional affiliation, title of thesis/dissertation*

**Tri Marhaeni P. Astuti**, Ph.D. Candidate  
Gadjah Mada University  
"Poverty Migration, and the Loss of Womenhood: The Life-History and Story of Poor Women from Central Java in Malaysia"

**Moordiati**, M.A. Student  
Gadjah Mada University  
"Mother and Child: Study of Mortality and Behaviour Health Nineteenth Until Early Twentieth Century in Rural Java and Malaysia"

**Rosli Bin Mohamad Ali**, M.A. Student  
Department of Southeast Asian Studies, University of Malaya  
"The Other Battlefield: The Vietnamese Historiography During the Vietnam War Era in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (1960-1975)"

**Nasrullah Ali Fauzi**, M.A. Student  
Institute of Malaysian and International Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia  
"Mass Media and the Problem of Reformasi in Indonesia and Malaysia (1997-2000): A Comparative Study"

**Suria Saniwa bin Wan Mahmood**, Ph.D. Candidate  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia  
"Democracy and Minorities: A Comparative Study of the Malay-Muslims in Southern Thailand and Thai Buddhists in Northern Malaysia, 1990-2005"

**Win Myat Aung**, M.A. Student  
University of Malaya  
"Trade and Development of the Port of Penang (1867-1939)"

**Jun G. Cayron**, M.A. Student  
Archaeological Studies Program, University of the Philippines  
"A Comparative Analysis of Ancient Glass Beads from the Pandanan Shipwreck Palawan, Philippines and those from Contemporary Manufacturing Sites in Thailand and Malaysia: An Archaeological Understanding of Early Southeast Asian Trade"

**Misael L. Racines**, M.A. Student  
Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines  
"Indonesian Migration to Southern Philippines: Profile, Causes, and Impact"

**Hamam Supriyadi**, M.A. Student  
Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University  
"Thai-Indonesian Advertising in Internet Media: A Pragmatics Study"

**Sittiporn Netniyom**, M.A. Student  
Graduate School, Chiang Mai University  
"Decorative Glass Mosaics in Mandalay: A Study of Cultural Relations and Change during the late Konbaung and Colonial Periods in Myanmar (1857-1949)"

REGIONAL COLLABORATION PROGRAM

*Research: Recipient, position, institutional affiliation, title of project*

**Che Wan Ahmad Zawawi bin Ibrahim**, Professor  
Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak



"A Comparative Study of Identity and Political Empowerment of Indigenous 'Tribal' Minorities in Southeast Asian Nation States: Malaysian and Indonesian Case-Studies"

**Shamsul Amri Baharuddin**, Professor  
Institute of Malay World and Civilization, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, "Identity, Ethnicity and Unity in Western Borneo: The Oral Traditions of Contemporary Kalimantan Barat and Sarawak"

**Tun Aung Chain**, Professor  
Yangon University, "An Exploratory Collaborative Project on a Compact Encyclopedia of Southeast Asian Cultural History"

**Darunee Tantiwiranond**, Director, WARI (Women's Action and Resource Initiatives)  
"Strategies for Women's Economic Empowerment in Indochina Promoting Women in the Formal Sector (Food and Germent Export Oriented Industries) in the Transitional Economies of Indochina (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia)"

**Ong Keng Sen**, Artistic Director, Theatreworks Singapore Limited  
"Roots, Re-Invention and Continuity in Changing Times: Tracing the Continuum Between Traditional and Contemporary Southeast Asian Artists"

**Leo G.M. Alting von Geusau**, MPCDE Foundation  
"Documentation and Research to Safeguard Archaic Knowledge of the Akha"

**Huyn Thi Ngoc Tuyet**, Institute of Social Sciences in Ho Chi Minh City  
"Female Migrants to Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) and Those to Bangkok (Thailand): Circumstances, Consequences and Solutions — A Comparative Study"

**Sadono Sukirno**, University of Malaya  
"Harnessing Regal Economic Potential and Regional Cooperation: The Case of Bangkalis Regency in Riau, Sumatra, Indonesia — and Johor-Malacca Region"

**Mohamad Zain Bin Musa**, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia  
"The Cham People After 1975: The Case Study in Malaysia"

**Myrthena L. Fianza**, Mindanao State University  
"Ethnicity, State Policy, and Women's Access to Land and Participation in Agricultural Production, the Political Process, and Social Reproduction in Southeast Asia: Focus on Indigenous Women in Indonesia and the Philippines"

**Ahmad Hidayat Buang**, University of Malaya  
"Islamic Law and the Shariah Courts in South East Asia: Reform and Future Prospect"

**Pornpen Hantrakool**, Silpakorn University  
"A Survey of Vietnamese Historical Documents during the Periods of the 18th and 19th Centuries"

*Publication: Recipient, position, institutional affiliation, title of project*

**Yonariza**, Universitas Andalas  
"Southeast Asia Land Tenure in Transition: Case from Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand"

**Suwilai Preamsriat**, Mahidol University  
"Thesaurus and Dictionaries of Khmu Dialects in Southeast Asia"







*International Conference... (continued from page 14)*



**Above left** From left: Dr. Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid (author), Dr. Imtiaz Yusuf, and Dr. Muhammad Ismail Marciniowski at the Conference on Southeast Asian Religions, Mahidol University International College **Above right** Dr. Muhammad Ismail Marciniowski, Dr. Peter Jackson, Dr. Pattana Kitiarsa (author), Mr. Rory Mackenzie, and Dr. Francis A. Gealogo

the UMNO for their internal disunity, and censured Dr. Mahathir for his belligerent attitude towards Islamic movements. Considering Darul Arqam's alarming political agenda, strong economic base, rising social influence and ambitious transnational venture, the Malaysian secular authorities' treatment of Darul Arqam changed from provisional toleration to overt hostility.

In 1994 the Prime Minister issued a directive to take action against the estimated 7,000 civil servants identified with Darul Arqam. This was to avert the continuing increase in the number of adherents from the urban-based intelligentsia and civil servants, which was drawing crucial middle class support away from UMNO. In May that year the National Fatwa Council announced a ban on all Darul Arqam activities including its schools, businesses, socio-cultural activities and villages. With the Securities Act outlawing the Darul Arqam, what followed was the persecution of Darul Arqam members, involving raids on communes, mass arrests, confiscation of property, job and scholarship suspension and vilification in the media. A foreign travel ban was imposed on Darul Arqam leaders. Likewise, foreign Darul Arqam members were ordered to leave Malaysia immediately and Malaysian embassies abroad were instructed to stop renewing the members' passports who were advised to return to Malaysia immediately. While in Thailand, with his passport revoked, Ustaz Ashaari was apprehended and was turned over to Malaysian police at the Thai-Malaysia border.

Prior to the proscriptive *fatwa* of May 1994 on Darul Arqam, the impression conveyed by Malaysian leaders in the Malaysian press was mounting success in persuading neighboring governments to impede the movement's influence in their countries. However, this is contrary to what was happening.

In the three Southeast Asian countries (Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand) believed to be important centers of Darul Arqam's influence, the governments exhibited less than punitive attitudes toward the movement. This can be attributed to the countries' higher regard for basic freedoms of religion vis-a-vis Malaysia's. Since such freedoms had been enshrined in their constitutions, they could find no legal justification to outlaw Darul Arqam.

In Singapore, the Community Development Officer-cum-Minister of Muslim Affairs stated that Singapore's guarantee of religious freedom prevented the government from banning Darul Arqam on the "basis of faith," although action could be taken on the ground of "internal security." This stance was taken despite an earlier *fatwa* issued by the Islamic Council of Singapore, proposing to ban a book by the Darul Arqam leader and advising Singaporean Muslims against joining Darul Arqam or practicing its teachings.

In Indonesia, the largest Islamic organization (Nahdatul Ulama) with 60 million members issued a *fatwa* exonerating Darul Arqam members from charges of deviationism and exhorted the government not to ban Darul Arqam. In the wake of ISA arrests, the Indonesian Minister of Religion declared that Indonesia was neither interested in detaining Darul Arqam members in Indonesia nor in banning the movement. Meanwhile in Thailand, protests were registered against the Malaysian government's clampdown on Darul Arqam and against consequent Thai police's complicity in apprehending Darul Arqam leaders. The record of Darul Arqam in Thailand was overwhelmingly defended by respectable sections of the Thai population.



In 1996 despite Darul Arqam's official dissolution, former Darul Arqam members were still organizing their activities around the principles and aims that shaped the movement. At the same time, former Darul Arqam members started remobilising themselves through privately managed enterprises, which in reality were tied to interlocking directorships involving the former Darul Arqam leadership. These enterprises, whose products and services became popular among the Malaysian public, played the triple role as a source of living, a provider of public legitimacy and confidence and most importantly, a guise under which ex-Darul Arqam members could meet, discuss, plan for the future and refresh their entrenched beliefs. Amidst the growth of business activities, which supposedly indicated a remobilisation of Darul Arqam, several members were arrested in mid-1996 to forestall the revival of Darul Arqam. But in spite of the seemingly disadvantageous situation, the remobilisation of Ustaz Ashaari's followers via their business activities persisted.

The status of Darul Arqam as a transnational movement has raised major difficulties for the Malaysian state in its efforts to eliminate the vestiges of the movement. During his overseas sojourn from 1988 until 1994, Ustaz Ashaari successfully established cordial relations with religious scholars, government figures and Islamic bodies, apart from expanding the number of its centers and followers not only among Malaysians but also among foreign nationals. These relations were further cemented through mixed marriages between Darul Arqam's Malaysian and non-Malaysian nationals. The existence of transnational families meant that the strategic flow of former Darul Arqam members to international borders could not be halted. This has left the Malaysian authorities in a dilemma. As long as Darul Arqam members abroad adhere to the law of their countries of residence, governments are in no position to disrupt their activities despite assurances given to Malaysia of keeping close tabs on them.

The efficacy of the transnational network formed by Ustaz Ashaari could be seen in the pivotal role played by his international followers in 1996, 1999 and 2000 bouts of revival. As a result, Malaysia had to openly plead for cooperation from neighboring countries to help monitor the Darul Arqam revival, but without much success. While outwardly showing concern to protect bilateral relations, foreign governments may be reluctant to act on Darul Arqam, whose record of observing the rule of law outside Malaysia has been impeccable. In addition, there exists a fear of human rights backlash from their own people as many of them view Darul Arqam members as peaceful and innocuous. ▀

## Luang Pho<sup>1</sup> Khun as a Postmodern Medium

Pattana Kitiarsa, Instructor

School of General Education, Institute of Social Technology,  
Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand

*Abstract by the author.*

The "crisis of modernity" in contemporary Thailand not only sees the decline of public faith in Buddhism and in the Sangha's authority, but also manifests itself as the chaotic, noisy, and disoriented ground of "prosperity religion," to use Jackson's term [1998]. The national cult of Luang Pho Khun and other popular spirit-medium cults attracts a large percentage of the Thai population. Widely known as the "superstar magical monk" in Thailand, Luang Pho Khun has been cited by the press, scholars, and social critics as a prime example of the commercialization of Buddhism and the increase of supernatural and magical practices within Buddhist institutions in contemporary Thailand. These worldly-oriented cults offer followers resolutions to mundane problems. They can be seen as religious responses to day-to-day experience in the terrain of a capitalist economy, in which people share a common desire to make money and live a secure life.

I view the cult of Luang Pho Khun from a socio-semiotic perspective. The rise of the cult can be read as a "multivocal sign" and its meanings are "grounded in [the] everyday life experience" [Gottdiener 1995:26] of the Thai in the 1990s. The Luang Pho Khun phenomenon, especially as viewed from the production and consumption of his supernatural power embedded in amulets and auspicious objects, can be considered as "religious hyperreality." "Hyperreality" does not mean fake or made-up reality. Rather, it refers to a mode of representation that focuses on "the image and its manipulation by the media" [Ibid.] The broadcast and print media use their communication technologies to penetrate people's everyday lives by conveying religious messages which emphasize Luang Pho Khun's supernatural power and his cultural mediation roles. The popularity of Luang Pho Khun is not based solely on his media-promoted religious charisma. Rather, it also stems from the fact that he has a powerful personality to "disregard existing cultural and political hierarchies" [see Jackson 1998:7]. I contend that this aspect of Luang Pho Khun's personality, together with his popularity, makes him a "postmodern medium" in contemporary Thailand.

I see Luang Pho Khun as a cult leader. His popular roles are parallel to those of spirit mediums in urban-based popular spirit-medium cults. These types of mediums and their cults have arisen during the most "discursive" period in modern



# Urvashi Butalia:

## *The Other Side of Silence. Voices from the Partition of India.*

Penguin Books. 1998. Reviewed by Diana Wong, IKMAS, National University of Malaysia

In 1984, violence — gruesome, grotesque, and vengeful violence — rocked the sophisticated and secular Indian capital of New Delhi and its many suburbs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister, had been assassinated by two Sikh guards. Her violent death was followed by a tidal wave of killings directed in blind passion against innocent members of their ethnic group. Urvashi Butalia, the author of this book, herself partly of Sikh origin, plunged into the work of helping the victims of violence. Soon, she kept hearing the refrain, "This is like Partition again". And she remembered the forgotten stories of her childhood, the stories of the Partition. This book is about these forgotten stories.

"I would listen to these stories", she writes at the beginning of the book, "with my brothers and sister and hardly take them in. We were middle-class Indians who had grown up in a period of relative calm and prosperity, when tolerance and "secularism" seemed to be winning the argument. These stories — of loot, arson, rape, murder — came out of a different time. They meant little to me".

The indifference of middle-class youth to the clamouring voices from family storehouses of memory was paralleled, and indeed possibly reinforced, by the silence of the professional historians. As Urvashi Butalia embarked on her search for knowledge on the events of 1947, which had rent a society in two and had

displaced 12 million men, women and children, thousands of whom were killed, raped or abducted along the way, she realised that the stories of these experiences had themselves been displaced — to the margins of professional narratives which privileged the state, and the high politics of its difficult delivery.

She began seeking out the kind of stories she had been indifferent to in her past, the kind of stories the professional historians had refused to hear. She records the moral dilemmas which arise when such stories are finally listened to. Stories of families severed by a sense of betrayal as members take up different positions on different sides of the new geographical and religious divide; of women against whom violence was committed by men on the other side of that divide, but also by those closest to them, in order to protect their "honour", of children whose lives were blighted by the trauma of the violence they had witnessed, of marginal communities whose invisibility during the killings stood them in good stead.

Stories of much pain and grief, and not seldom, of much dishonesty. But there were the stories too which were withheld — for "what", she would often be asked, "is the use of remembering, of excavating memories we have put behind us?" What indeed is the use of this recent spate of work on memory, of which this one on Partition stories is just one example. Both for individual, as well as collective sanity, is there not

a case to be made for memories to be put to rest, safely to rest, for, as Butalia, quoting Krishna Sobti, notes, Partition was "difficult to forget but dangerous to remember".

Butalia's courage in daring to remember and the intellectual sensitivity and moral integrity with which she approaches the difficulty as well as the desire to forget, is worthy of recognition and replication. These stories and the questions they engender resonate deeply with the contemporary Southeast Asian reader. Like the Indian sub-continent on the eve of decolonisation, everyday lives and histories in Southeast Asia are hopelessly entangled in shared lives in shared spaces which defy the neat cartographies of imagined nations and their imagined homelands. Violence, of the sort if not the scale, of the Partition, has also constituted defining moments in the national histories and individual lives of many in the region. And as in India, a blanket of silence would soon smother all attempts to understand and remember these events, safe for the official narratives crafted to serve the purpose of the state and its elites.

The stories which make this book such compelling reading are a reminder that the violence which surround these events are not only dangerous to remember, they are also too dangerous to forget. Ferreting out and anguishing through these stories, Butalia is left with the insight that the narrative of the state, which reduces the human and moral





## Professor Dr Ishak Shari (1948-2001) In Memoriam

*Prof. Dr. Abdul Rahman Embong, President, Malaysian Social Science Association,  
3 July 2001.*

*The late Prof. Ishak, IKMAS director,  
was a member of the SEASREP  
Selection Committee  
from 1998-1999.*

Professor Ishak Shari, President of the Malaysian Social Science Association (PSSM) from 1990 to 1993, passed away on the morning of 30 June 2001 hardly two weeks after he underwent major surgery for cancer. He was 53 years old. PSSM has lost one of its most distinguished members and leaders. This tragedy has left his family and friends in profound shock and deep sorrow.

Ishak studied at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) from 1967 to 1972, where he obtained his BSc (Hons) and MSc in economics and statistics, and at Universiti Malaya, where he obtained his PhD in development economics in 1985. Coming from a humble family background, and growing up at the same time as his country did, he entered the world of scholarship with a deep and life-long commitment to a vision of a shared and just future as a nationalist and internationalist. Formed by the

His early work on poverty in the traditional fishing sector, which was to form the basis of his PhD dissertation, was a reflection of this understanding of Malaysian social science in the service of a developing nation. Throughout his life, this commitment to the poor and the marginalised was to inspire his teaching, research, writing and all other endeavours.

intellectual and political ferment of the late 1960s and early 1970s, he became one of the active student leaders who helped define the moral and intellectual horizon of Malaysian student politics in England during that period.

The moral and intellectual integrity and social commitment which had developed early in the man and his work never left him throughout the course of a long and illustrious, and now prematurely shortened, academic and public career. His early work on poverty in the traditional fishing sector, which was to form the basis of his PhD dissertation, was a reflection of this understanding of Malaysian social science in the service of a developing nation. Throughout his life, this commitment to the poor and the marginalised was to inspire his teaching, research, writing and all other endeavours.

Cognisant of the changing global landscape, and nourished by a transnational intellectual community of which he was a highly respected member, he not only consistently drew attention to issues of inequity but was also concerned, in his later work, with

the onslaught of global neo-liberalism and unfettered liberalisation. As a thinker and visionary, he advocated a reconceptualisation of the meaning of development (including the concept of poverty and its operationalisation in the Malaysian context), and of globalisation, at the centre of which should be the prosperity, resilience and cohesiveness of the Malaysian nation-state and the well-being of the poor and of the vulnerable.

Part of this on-going intellectual labour found expression in his Inaugural Lecture as Professor of Development Studies at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) delivered in 1999. The title he gave to this lecture, *The Earth for All Mankind*, encapsulates the belief which had driven his scholarship, and his understanding of scholarship as a form of service to humanity. Towards the end of his life, he tried to envision the social safety net that he considered necessary to cope with the on-going chaos created by globalisation. As an enlightened economist, he also tried to place economics on the larger canvas of culture and civilisation, and envisioned the ultimate goal of economic development not as mere material prosperity per se, but the development of the whole person through the enrichment of the society's civilisation and the cultural values and practices of the individual.



Ishak's record as an outstanding scholar and public intellectual was matched by the stature he acquired as a university academician and administrator. He joined UKM in 1972 after returning from England, became Head of the Department of Economic Statistics in 1974, was promoted to Associate Professor in 1980 and to Professor in 1991. He served as Dean of the Faculty of Economics (1988-1990) and Deputy Dean (1993-1994) and Dean (1994-1997) of the Centre for Graduate Studies. His last appointment before his untimely death was as Director of the Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS) which he took over in 1997. Guided by his visionary leadership and supported by his colleagues, he turned IKMAS into a respected regional centre for globalisation and transformation studies.

Although trained as an economist, Ishak always transcended the confines of his discipline and embraced the social sciences as a whole. Standing for the integration of the social sciences, he was firmly against their fragmentation and compartmentalisation and translated this stance not only through his position as IKMAS Director, but also through his involvement in the reform of social science teaching and research in UKM.

A careful, meticulous scholar who could read statistics, and as importantly, interpret them, with a practised eye sharpened by sustained reading of the relevant theoretical literature, Ishak developed into one of Malaysia's finest development economists and a leading authority on national income distribution and social transformation. He was a key consultant for and led many major projects commissioned by the Federal Government and various State governments as well as many international agencies. He was Chair of the UKM-based *Kumpulan Penelitian Sosial*, which reviewed the achievements

and shortcomings of the New Economic Policy (1971-1990) and submitted an important memorandum to the Malaysian Government in 1990. He served as a resource person on issues of poverty and income distribution for the First National Economic Consultative Council (MAPEN I), which provided input in the formulation of the National Development Policy (1991-2000). He was one of the experts in the Second National Economic Consultative Council (MAPEN II), which made proposals for the formulation of the National Vision Policy (2001-2010). He served as Chair or Co-Chair to several international committees and was a prime mover in various regional collaboration and intellectual exchange programmes.

On a personal level, I have had the good fortune of knowing Ishak for over 30 years since 1969 when we were both students in London and matured together. The enduring life-long and trusting relationship which we had cemented was not merely as dear friends and colleagues, but also as intellectual collaborators. Over the long years, we debated and shared numerous ideas and thoughts which subsequently found expression in many of our writings either singly or jointly. PSSM, IKMAS and UKM in particular, and Malaysia in general, have lost a leading academic and public intellectual, while I have lost a close life-long friend and an intellectual collaborator.

His wife, Rashidah Md Dali, has lost a dear and loving husband and his five young children, an immensely caring father.

His glorious memory will live forever and his vision for the future will eternally inspire us!

May Allah shower His blessings upon his soul. ▀

#### **For Further Study...** (continued from page 9)

▀ *Plastic and performing arts:* document, preserve, revive, revitalize traditional arts; expand definitions of what is "Khmer art" really; collect data through interviewing older artists; keep each other informed through e-mail, newsletters, workshops; publish books on Khmer arts in Khmer language; translate books on design, etc. from foreign languages into Khmer; subsidize artists in residence; encourage artists to write about their arts.

▀ *Philosophy and religion:* study actual, not idealized, Cambodian Buddhist practice; on Buddhism in Cambodia and neighboring countries; study religious practices among Khmer communities outside Cambodia, e.g., southern Vietnam; carry out research on Buddhism between 5th and 13th centuries.

▀ *Vernacular architecture:* build a resource library of research documents and visual materials on vernacular (as opposed to monumental) architecture in Cambodia; develop a web site; convene a conference on vernacular architecture in order to develop comparative models and share research results; develop public education programs to explain why vernacular architecture is important to document; do a pilot project to salvage a threatened timber house; carry out an architectural inventory of Siem Reap province, also as a pilot project; develop a typology of traditional Khmer houses and wats; develop a glossary of technical terms in Khmer; translate basic materials from Western languages into Khmer. ▀



# Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS) Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

*Submitted by Professor Abdul Rahman Embong of IKMAS,  
the article draws heavily from the IKMAS official brochure, 2001.*



The Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS), established in 1995, is a center for research and post-graduate teaching in the field of the social sciences and humanities within Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). The university is located about 40 kilometers to the south of Kuala Lumpur, very near Putrajaya, the newly established capital of Malaysia.

As a research institute, IKMAS' objectives are: (1) to conduct scholarly research and post-graduate teaching; (2) to promote collaborative work and dialogue with other scholars and institutions in Malaysia and other parts of the world on various themes of mutual interest; (3) to produce a series of publications in the form of research reports, working papers, monographs, books, etc.; and (4) to develop the Institute as a regional center for studies on globalization and social change.

## Research Thrust

IKMAS conducts basic and applied (as well as strategic) research by employing a multidisciplinary approach. The thrust of the Institute's research is in the field of Malaysian and international studies covering three inter-related dimensions of globalization and social transformation:

- ▶ Economic dimensions of globalization: structural change,

technology transfer, financial flows, labour, international trade, regionalism, income distribution and poverty.

- ▶ Socio-political and cultural dimensions of globalization: future of the nation-state, class inequality, social cohesion, ethnicity, gender and religion.
- ▶ Discursive dimensions of globalization.

To date, some of the research projects undertaken by IKMAS fellows include discourses on democracy; globalization and the Malaysian economy; multinationals, technology and the development of local firms; Japanese economic activities in Malaysia; liberalization of trade, technology and income distribution in Malaysia; the middle classes, globalization and the future of the nation-state; modernity and social relations in Malaysia; Southeast Asian pluralisms; social movements and political change; international migration and labour mobility; and democratization in Southeast Asia.

## Postgraduate Students

IKMAS is a popular center for post-graduate students to conduct their research in Malaysia. The institute currently has 16 postgraduate students from Malaysia and abroad studying on a full- or part-time basis. Students can select a topic of their choice in keeping

with the IKMAS' research agenda and conduct research at the Institute for their MPhil or PhD, either in Malay or English.

## Pok Rafeah Chair of International Studies

To advance its scope of research to new areas as well as to widen and deepen its network of international scholars, IKMAS has set up the Pok Rafeah Chair of International Studies. Funded by the Pok Rafeah Foundation, the Chair was established in IKMAS in 1996 to be held by a leading scholar in the study of globalization and social transformation.

The first holder of the Chair (1997-99) was James H. Mittelman, Professor of International Relations at the American University, Washington D.C.

The second holder is Yoshihara Kunio, Professor of Economic Development, from the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, whose research focuses on globalization and national identity. Yoshihara's tenure which began in 2001 will end in early 2002.

## Fellowship Programmes

As an institute that promotes close intellectual collaboration with scholars and institutions in the region, IKMAS currently runs two fellowship programmes. First is the Asian Public



Intellectuals Fellowship Programme or the API Fellowship. Launched in July 2000, the API Fellowship is a mechanism for scholarly exchange and research within Asia. IKMAS serves as the coordinating institution working in collaboration with partner institutions in four countries — Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Japan. Funded by the Nippon Foundation, API is now entering its second year and has received enthusiastic response from leading scholars in the region.

Second is the Southeast Asian Fellowship Programme (SEAF Programme). The SEAF Programme brings together in IKMAS public intellectuals from Southeast Asia in order to foster close intellectual dialogues. This fellowship, started in 2000, offers a unique opportunity for Southeast Asian intellectuals, particularly those of the slightly younger generation, to participate in a residential programme in the UKM campus for a period of two months. The principal funders of this programme are the Kaneka Corporation and the Japan Foundation.

### **Publications**

Among IKMAS' flagships are its publications. Selected recent books by IKMAS and its fellows include: *Capturing Globalization* (edited by J.H. Mittelman & Norani Othman, Routledge, 2001); *Malaysia's Engagement with Globalisation: As a Participant or Captive?* (in Malay, edited by Norani Othman & Sumit K. Mandal, UKM Press, 2000); *The Earth for All Mankind: Addressing Economic Inequality under Globalisation* (in Malay by Ishak Shari, UKM Press, 1999); *Southeast Asian Middle Classes: Prospects for Social Change and Democratisation* (edited by Abdul Rahman Embong, UKM Press, 2001); *State-led Modernization and the New Middle Class in Malaysia* (by Abdul

Rahman Embong, Palgrave, 2001); *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore* (edited by Diana Wong & P. Lim Pui Huen, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2000).

IKMAS fellows also have contributed numerous articles in refereed journals both nationally and internationally and have presented papers at many international fora.

### **Public Lecture Series**

IKMAS has two public lecture series. The first is the *Pok Rafeah Lecture Series*. The Pok Rafeah Chair delivers two lectures, an inaugural and a farewell address. The first holder, Professor J.H. Mittelman, delivered two lectures on globalization, while the second holder, Professor Yoshihara, delivered one on globalization and national identity in 2001 and will deliver his farewell address in 2002.

The second series is the *Ishak Shari Memorial Lecture* on the theme 'Asia in the Twenty First Century', for which outstanding intellectuals are invited to speak on this theme. The first lecture was delivered by Professor Nurcholish Madjid, Rector of Universitas Paramadina-Mulya, Jakarta titled 'Islam and Democracy in Indonesia'. The second was by Professor Takashi Shiraishi from the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, titled 'Rethinking Regionalism in East Asia'.

### **Staff and Visiting Fellows**

The first Director of IKMAS was Professor Osman-Rani Hassan (1995-97), followed by Professor Ishak Shari (1997-2001). The current Director is Professor Ragayah Mat Zin, who took over the directorship following the

untimely death of Professor Ishak on 30 June 2001.

Currently, IKMAS has a full-time research staff of seven, of whom five are Senior Fellows, and plans to expand its academic strength in the next few years.

IKMAS also appoints for terms of up to two years Associate Fellows either from other UKM faculties, where they remain members of permanent staff, or on an honorary basis from other universities and institutions within Malaysia and overseas. Visiting Fellows are appointed to terms of not less than four months, either on an honorary basis as academic visitors or on short-term research contracts. Associate and Visiting Fellows conduct research at IKMAS, share their experiences and contribute to the institute's research agenda.

Those interested in IKMAS programmes and activities can contact the Director at the following address:

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**Tradition...** (continued from page 13)

of the court has been a close one, each influencing the other.

The arts and culture of the old Malay world were part of everyday life. Within that world the Malays discovered primal principles—one might say universal spiritual attitudes—that fit well with strong religious feeling in general and with Islam in particular. This is why the Malays of Langkasuka had seemingly so little difficulty in adapting their culture from Hindu/Buddhism to Islam.

### Weaving Tradition and the Spirit of Langkasuka

The silk weaving areas are mostly in the east coast of the Malay Peninsula especially in Kelantan, Trengganu and Pekan, Pahang. It was said that weaving thrived in Kelantan during the reign of Che Siti Wan Kembang and Puteri Saadong (17th century). The local development of textiles was clearly open to influence from India, China and the Islamic world. The finest Malay weaving has always come from the east coast, with influences probably coming from China, Cambodia, India and the Middle East. These countries perhaps also influenced the development of *songket* weaving in the east coast today [Nawawi: 1989].

Part of the Malay Peninsula weaving tradition, *Kain* (cloth) *Limar/Limas/Limau* was believed to be an imitation of the Javanese *Kain Cindai*, which actually originated from Northern India where it was known as *Chunri* (*cindai* is a rich silk cloth made through the process of *ikat*). The history of *Songket* and *Limas* in the Malay peninsula remains obscure but historical accounts point to a long tradition of weaving stimulated by flourishing trade at least since the 13th and 14th centuries. Most Kelantanese (they account for the largest number of *songket* weavers in Malaysia) who are interested in the history of *songket* weaving believe that the technique came from the north, around Siam and Cambodia, and then travelled south via Pattani to Kelantan and then Trengganu. However, in Trengganu the belief is that *songket* was introduced from India via the Sumatera kingdoms of Palembang and Jambi, where it probably originated during the time of Sri Wijaya [Selvaratnam: 1990].



*Keris-Trenggonu 'Jawa Demam' (Ill Java)*

A Malay weaver/scholar, Norwani Nawawi, believes that *songket* was introduced to Malaysia only after the spread of Islam in the Malay archipelago and has since developed into sophisticated form with its own identity. The motifs and patterns in *songket* were largely influenced by the environment surrounding the weaver, such as flowers, insects, mountains, seas and the sky. In addition, patterns and motifs such as Malay cakes, weapons and games reflect aspects of the weaver's everyday life. These show how observant and creative the weaver was in designing *kain songket* [Nawawi: 1989].

Their natural surroundings and forest environment were great inspirations for artistic life. The wilderness of beasts in the jungle, the gigantic trees of the rain forest with sunlight slanting through the leaves and shining on little plants on the ground, the sweetness and fragrance of jasmine, cempaka, and tanjung flowers, the restless flow of rivers, the wild waves of the South China Sea and the continuous rain in the monsoon season are part of everyone's life. In addition to nature, the old Malays drew inspiration from an oral tradition of tales of heroes and heroines, kings and queens. From this environment the ancient Malays derived their arts of Water, Wind, Earth, and Fire — essential components of life and the human condition. And yet today, connection with natural life is seen as animism and is not quite accepted by popular and official Islamic society.

*Angin* ("Inner Wind") has a meaning beyond wind as found in nature; the Inner Wind could be verbalised as one's primal needs and wants, which when provoked or repressed cause depression and rebellion. *Angin* is the essential make-up of a human being, one of the Four Elements: *Tanah* (earth), *Air* (water), *Api* (fire), *Angin* (wind). *Tanah* is the material constituent of the human body; *Air* shapes this material and vital fluids animating human skin, the nervous system and blood flow; *Api* consists of our feelings and emotions; and *Angin* is life and soul. Earth, Water, Fire, and Wind, concepts from traditional medicine and shamanism, found expression in various ways in traditional Malay art, and many modern artists have adopted these concepts as important elements of their artistic endeavours. ▀



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### Recontextualizing... (continued from page 8)

Then she drew a set of recommendations for CKS in particular that she felt had come out of the discussions. In so doing, she stressed that CKS is a network and facilitating organization, not a donor, and hoped CKS would not be expected to provide funding for all the good ideas put forward. The recommendations CKS had received from the meeting were:

- ▶ to develop a web site to exchange information and ensure that this information and the site were accessible to Cambodians in Cambodia;
- ▶ to develop interdisciplinary projects anchored in a specific geographic area;
- ▶ to involve the equal co-participation of Cambodian and foreign researchers in all of CKS's projects and activities;
- ▶ to strengthen linguistic studies of both ancient and modern Khmer language;
- ▶ to collect data and documentation for easy access in Cambodia at the CKS library and undertake publications in Cambodian and other languages;
- ▶ to keep the members of the panel groups, to be called "Working Groups," in touch with each other, by electronic means if possible; and
- ▶ to reconvene this kind of meeting on a regular basis.

### Conclusion

I, too, feel that the CKS workshop was an exciting one for Khmer studies and for Southeast Asian studies more generally. Cambodia is in an extreme situation perhaps in the region, given its terrible recent history. But it is also now a place of great opportunity and growing hope despite the daunting challenges it faces. There is a great deal of good will on the part of the international community and though there have been considerable problems in the use of funds or of cooperative opportunities, and there is still a desperate need to develop the systems and infrastructure that will enable projects to be sustained as long-term programs, the very recent past shows that patience and relatively small investments for collaboration will certainly pay off in the long run.

One wishes that the Cambodian government itself were more cognizant of the need to invest what are relatively modest sums on rebuilding the intellectual infrastructure so that the Cambodian scholarly community can "recontextualize knowledge" about themselves. And one wishes that the role of outside scholars were not so preposterously out of proportion in the production and interpretation of that knowledge. Still, the good will and ethical motives of the foreign intellectual community should not be discounted. I sensed genuine feelings along two parallel tracks; that Cambodia is an important place to study, that it matters in the world, that its history, society and culture are important for all of us to know; and that it is of primary significance that Cambodians themselves be in the forefront and that all of us understand why this is (must be) so. ▶

### Urvashi Butalia... (continued from page 25)

cost of such violence to the cold statistics of number of lives or limbs lost, shared one deep, unspoken commonality with the more graphic narratives often buried in the deep vaults of personal memory: namely, the refusal to admit *complicity* to the violence perpetrated.

It is only in the admission of complicity that the severed bonds of humanity can be repaired. And without repair, the demons unleashed by violence will remain to beget further violence. For this reason, if for no other, the painful work of memory will have to be placed on the research agenda of those in Southeast Asia concerned with its contemporary condition. ▶



**International Conference...** (continued from page 24)

Thai history. The proliferation of these cults can be seen within a sociocultural context in which state-sponsored religious vision and official control over people's lives are increasingly questioned and contested. I propose that the most compelling characteristic of "postmodern mediums" is their capability to ignore existing sociopolitical hierarchies and juxtapose a religious message and symbolism with the capitalist desire for making profit and material wealth. The "postmodern medium" is the representation of popular religious multivocalities, and serves to disclose "otherwise unexpressed" social relationships, especially between the elite and the popular, in the religious world.

Luang Pho Khun's magical power and media-promoted image and reputation overshadow the long-standing polarization between the intellectual and the popular in Thai Buddhism. Despite criticism for his involvement in commercial activities, Luang Pho Khun's religious charisma seems to bring Buddhist practices and belief into commercialized and magic-like practices, which appear to be meaningful to Thai people in the 1990s. Luang Pho Khun connects the powerful elite and the powerless through the commoditization and mass circulation of religious symbols and messages that capture popular religious faith and tastes. His popularity also depends on the "indiscriminate approach of bless everything, criticise nothing" (Jackson 1998:39). Luang Pho Khun sends a message to his followers that people, however powerful, well-educated or well-to-do, cannot escape the fundamental problems of existence and suffering such as life and death, or love and hate. He tells people to be cautious in life, to stay away from all kinds of devils, and to make merit. In other words, Luang Pho Khun simply reminds people of the concept of being an ideal Buddhist.

However, narratives of his teachings are overshadowed by the supernatural power of his popular amulets and auspicious objects. Whatever Luang Pho Khun says or preaches is perceived by his followers as a sign of luck and wealth. As presented in media coverages, Luang Pho Khun's religious messages have been gradually replaced by popular ideas of luck and material wealth. Making religious merit and good conduct, as taught by Luang Pho Khun, are highly regarded by his followers as a symbolic blessing enabling them to make money and to be free of debt. In the cult of Luang Pho Khun, people share the "religious" message that "profit is to be worshipped, debt is to be condemned."

It is argued that the fetishization of Luang Pho Khun's amulets and images in the 1990s is far too complex to be summed up as people's "... propensities and preoccupations

with the exercise of power..." as Tambiah [1984:229] puts it in his interpretation of the Thai craze for, and the insatiable collection of, protective amulets and other fetishes in the 1970s and the early 1980s. In the 1990s the Thai perception of "power" connotes desire and anxiety surrounding the commodity consumption and gain of material wealth. Through Luang Pho Khun-blessed amulets and auspicious objects, Thai men and women have embraced protective assurance and supernatural power that will enable them to be competitive politically and economically in the capitalist world. They seek to "make their worlds manageable and meaningful" [Comaroff and Comaroff 1993:xxix] in a different fashion from what Tambiah [1984:229] describes as "violent competition for coercive power...[by] men rather than women." Luang Pho Khun's supernatural power is believed to bring more money, material wealth, and happiness to followers, regardless of sex or socioeconomic background, than anything else in postmodern Thai society. ▀

**Note:**

- 1 The honorific title of *Luang Pho*, literally "reverend father," is usually added to the first name of senior and respected Buddhist monks in Thailand. In this case, the monk's first name is Khun. The public and his followers always address him as Luang Pho Khun.

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**Editorial...** (continued from page 3)

in its earliest years. Ishak understood young scholars and what they aspired to do. We are grateful he allowed us to partake of his immense talent, his sense of humor, and his profound knowledge of life and society in our part of the world. We especially miss him in today's war-torn world; Ishak had that rare gift of understanding complex developments and concepts without ever losing a sense of humanity and compassion. ▀



## CONFERENCES

- **CLARA (Changing Labour Relations in Asia) Conference on Reconstructing the Historical Tradition of Twentieth Century Indonesian Labor**, 6-8 December 2001, Denspasar, Bali, Indonesia. Organized by the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden and the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam; the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia), Indonesia and CAPTRANS, University of Wollongong, Australia, the conference aims to view Indonesian labor history in the 20th and 21st century; explore the state of theorizing within the Indonesian labor studies; and bring Indonesian and non-Indonesian social scientists together and stimulate research on labor in Indonesia, based on oral and written sources.

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- **8th International Conference on Thai Studies**, 9 January 2002, Nakhon Phanom River View Hotel, Thailand. *Special Topic:* Isan Studies — Thailand and Laos. *Themes:* Thailand and Laos; Isan studies; Thai as a dynamic, adaptable and beautiful language; literatures as a reflection of Thai

society; media; environment; diaspora; cultural crisis; Thai folk wisdom and science in Thai society; music and performing arts; the economic crisis and its impacts; boundary margin and local autonomy in Thai history; the reinterpretation of Thai history; symbolism in Thai writings and art; ports, commodities and trades in Thailand from the 14th-19th centuries; postcolonization; the blurring of the rural-urban frontier; micro/macro perspectives on agrarian change; gender; rural development; and endangered languages and culture.

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## ASIAN CENTER

- **Conference-Workshop on Southeast Asian Studies in Southeast Asia: An Assessment Towards a Collaborative Action Plan**, 8-10 January 2002, Manila. *Aims:* To focus on the teaching of Southeast Asian studies particularly at the graduate level, and to draw up an action agenda for future collaborative efforts. *Panels:* Current state of Southeast Asian studies; Southeast Asian studies in East Asia; teaching of country studies; and action agenda in Southeast Asian Studies.

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- **International Symposium on Sustaining Food Security and Managing Natural Resources in Southeast Asia: Challenges for the 21st Century**, 8-11 January 2002, Chiang Mai University, Thailand. *Topics:* Sustaining food security and managing natural resources: Dimension of the problem, challenges, conceptual issues and new focus; poverty, vulnerability and access to natural resources; governance, ethnicity and local institutions for food security under sustainable natural resource management; and technologies, innovations, institutions and policies.

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Website: www.uni-hohenheim.de/  
symposium2002

- **2nd International Training Workshop on Women, Gender and Development**, 18-28 February 2002, Bangkok, Thailand. Organized by WARI (Women's Action and Resource Initiative) based in Bangkok, the workshop aims to enable people active in the field of gender and development to enhance their analytical tools and strategies in gender equity and equality projects.

For inquiries, contact:

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- **3rd International Conference on Emerging Issues and New Challenges: Human and Resource Development in Southeast Asia including Transitional Societies of Indochina (Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Myanmar)**, 1-3 March 2002, Ambassador Hotel, Bangkok. *Aim:* To analyze women's socio-economic roles, their changing contexts and opportunities, and the efforts made by the governments and non-governmental organizations to enhance their contributions. *Panels:* Civil society, women's economic activities (the informal, small and medium enterprises and formal sectors), national gender institutions, and natural resource development. Presentation on gender issues related to health, education, political participation and the history of gender relations is also accepted.

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- **International Workshop on Fertility Decline, Below Replacement Fertility and the Family in Asia: Prospects, Consequences and Policies**, 10 April 2002, Institute for Asian Research, National University of Singapore. *Themes:* Re-assessing theories of fertility decline: lessons from Asia; the question of optimal fertility, mortality, rate of migration, and ultimately, an optimal population size for a country; population projections, with an emphasis on possible scenarios of fertility changes in the future; intergenerational

relations, fertility and the family; gender politics within the family and fertility; the effects of declining family sizes on family values in Asia; social, economic and political implications of below-replacement fertility (aging, labour shortages, etc.); and fertility decline, family planning and government policy.

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- **International Conference on Language and Empowerment**, 11-13 April 2002, Hilton Hotel, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. *Aims:* To share insights and experiences on the interrelationships between language and empowerment in different social contexts; to discuss and review good practices in language use that can bring about positive changes in power relationships; and to encourage continuing research activities in areas related to language and power. *Topics:* Developments in theories, approaches and working models on the relationship between language and power; links in theory and practice between language, power and ideology; reports and studies of language use and empowerment in various formal and informal contexts; and findings of data driven research on language and its empowerment potential.

*For inquiries, contact*

The Secretariat  
International Conference on Language  
and Empowerment

Malaysian Association of Modern  
Languages  
c/o Faculty of Languages and  
Linguistics  
University of Malaya  
50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Tel. +603-7967-3000  
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- **International Conference on The Penang Story: A Celebration of Cultural Diversity**, 18-19 April 2002, City Bayview Hotel, Penang, Malaysia. Organized by Penang Heritage Trust and STAR Publications, the conference aims to bring together established and new scholars from various academic disciplines to revisit, reevaluate and consolidate the history of Penang. *Themes:* Early Penang and foreign interaction with indigenous populations; occupational histories and regional trading networks; competing knowledge systems and print media; diaspora communities and the role of minorities; political awareness, territorial groupings and contestation; indigenization of religious values and social institutions; environmental history and urban development; cultural encounters and hybridization; and view from the margins: women and workers.

*For inquiries, contact:*

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## PUBLICATIONS



- **Jaludin Chuchu. *Morphology of Brunei Malay. 2000.*** 162 pp. Pub. Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Cost: RM20. The book presents a brief description of the morphology of the Brunei Malay dialect spoken at water settlement area. Data mostly are acquired from the Saba District, besides the tapes recorded from the Brunei Historical Center. The book also describes the general morphology of Brunei Malay in order to give a clear picture of the dialects and for the reader to comprehend subsequent chapters.

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- **Vietnam Social Sciences Review.** A bimonthly publication of the National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities in Hanoi. The review features researches done by Vietnamese scholars in the fields of social sciences and humanities; activities of Vietnamese scholars working on social sciences and humanities including cultural studies, education and art; and works on Vietnam done by foreign scholars. Research topics published thus far include ancient cultures, contemporary and modern histories of Vietnam, the struggle for peace and independence by the Vietnamese people, the construction of socialism in Vietnam, and current issues of Vietnamese social sciences and humanities. Subscription rates:

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- **Maria Serena I. Diokno (ed.) *Imagining the Past, Remembering the Future: War, Violence and Memory in Asia. 2001.*** 234 pp. Pub. University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies. Cost: PhP250 (excl. postage). The book features the proceedings of the conference of the same title on 8-10 March, 2001 in Cebu City, Philippines. The papers cover issues on memories of World War II, civil wars, inter-ethnic violence and political repression in East and Southeast Asia and their role in shaping collective identities in Asia.

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