Welcome back students, staff, and faculty! I hope everyone had a good and productive summer doing whatever each of you does best. Since our last newsletter, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies has moved to a new home on the 4th floor of Adams Hall (our official address is now 412 Adams Hall). Although we may be “out of the way” for many—but then, that depends on which way you’re going—we hope that you will drop by and see us. We share a floor and a conference room with the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies and the Center for Burma Studies.

This semester we will be continuing our Friday Southeast Asia Lecture Series. As is “traditional,” the first speaker becomes our guest of honor at the annual Southeast Asia potluck to be held Friday, September 10th. This year, our guest of honor will be Dr. Ruby Parades from the University of Wisconsin—Madison.

The new semester also brings us new students. Welcome to history graduate student Tim Bray, who comes to us from the University of the South, and Thanisna Songkhla from Thailand, who will be studying political science. At the same time, we wish all those leaving us the best of success: Katie Wiegele to the University of Illinois to pursue a PhD in anthropology; Ida Fadzillah to the University of Illinois to pursue a PhD in anthropology; George Fisher to Inner Mongolia, Burma, and other places we’ve all wanted to visit; he will return next year to enroll in the PhD program in history; Alexandra Green to SOAS, London, for a MPhil in art history; Panitan Wattanayagorn to join the faculty of Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok; Ann Wright-Parsons graduated with a master’s degree in anthropology and moved to New York City.

We are also pleased to announce that the following students received FLAS and Luce fellowships for the academic year of 1993-1994:

### Luce Fellowships
- Sun Laichen, history
- Jo Jo Fornier, history

### FLAS Fellowships
- Tony Altucher, political science (Thai)
- Anne-Marie D’Aprix, anthropology (Thai)
- Robert Dayley, political science (Thai)
- Bryan Hunsaker, political science (Thai)
- Jeffrey Lattimer, political science (Indonesian)
- Ted Mayer, anthropology (Thai)

Students who attended summer language programs
- Bob Vore studied Burmese at SEASSI
- Julie Tumbarello studied Indonesian at SEASSI
- Ted Mayer attended the program for Advanced Thai Abroad at Chiangmai University.

This year we will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Center. Our celebration dinner has been scheduled for October 23, and our keynote speaker will be James Scott of Yale University. We plan to hold the ceremony in the Sky Room atop of the Holmes Student Center. Faculty, students, staff, and administrators who have shared the Center’s goals and dreams will be invited to celebrate.

The Council on Thai Studies (COTS) Annual Conference is also being held at NIU the same weekend as the Center’s 30th anniversary celebration.

Our survey course on Southeast Asia has a new teaching assistant, Julie Tumbarello, who is a graduate student in the anthropology department. We welcome Julie to this position. There are over 80 students currently enrolled in the class.

Our karma must be pretty good, because the position of editor in our publications program has been funded for one more year. It is a good thing too, for there are several manuscripts already accepted for publication and awaiting production. We are pleased to announce that at long last R. Anderson Sutton’s book, Variations in Central Javanese Camelan Music: The Dynamics of a Steady State, is now available for purchase. This manuscript has been under production for a while for a variety of (mostly good) reasons. But once you see its abundance of useful but technically challenging diagrams and charts, the reason for its delay should be apparent.
Forthcoming also are Michael Rhum’s manuscript, *The Ancestral Lords: Gender, Descent, and Spirits in a Northern Thai Village*, and John Okell’s four-volume beginning Burmese textbook. The next Crossroads is also being prepared for publication. It promises to be another stimulating issue that has a subtheme dealing with education and values in Southeast Asia: within a Piagetian framework, Nancy Eberhardt provides a study of moral development among Shan children in Northern Thailand, and Soh Kay Cheng offers her own analysis of Singaporean youth values. Both authors posit and Eberhardt states explicitly that, “We will not truly comprehend Southeast Asian religion, ritual, ethnic identity, gender, or any other culturally constructed domain of knowledge until we understand how it is reproduced in the hearts and minds of each generation.” Two other articles deal loosely with the topic of “welfare” in Thai society: one discusses the process of instituting a formal social security system in Thailand; and the other deals with the rise of Thai “Godfathers” and the informal (albeit often illegal) role they play in people’s welfare.

In addition to Crossroads, we have decided, for the first time, to publish select papers written by some of our graduate students in the Southeast Asia program. This project is the result of last spring’s student conference on Southeast Asia, “Suvannabhumi: Land of Gold.” Ida Fadzillah has been editing these all summer, and we expect their completion sometime in the near future. Topics range from AIDS and prostitution in Thailand to Chinese historical sources on Burma.

The Center program is at full strength except for Brantly Womack who has taken a position at the University of Virginia. We wish Brantly all the best. We also wish Ron Provencher the same; he recently did a superb job as acting director of the University Libraries and has now returned to teaching anthropology. And we wish Clark Neher good fortune as he assumes the position of chair of the Political Science Department—again.

And finally, an interesting thing happened this summer that might whet the appetites of Southeast Asianists, particularly the historians. I received a letter from a Mr. Richard Pittman from the Summer Institute of Linguistics in North Carolina who was asked by an underwater archaeological team in California to decipher what appeared to be writings on pieces of timber recovered from a sunken ship on the West Coast. Some of you, particularly those with an interest in trade between Southeast Asia and the New World before the 19th century, might find my reply to him of interest:

Indeed, the inscriptions on the teak timbers are Burmese. I’ve enclosed your originals with comments on them, but let me say a few words about them. Page “A” (as I’ve marked it) has (to use one system of romanization), *Lī Wūik* (and what appears to be Burmese numeral) “4”. Page “B” has what appears to be *Lī Cuik Ma* although the vowel on the second word is not clear. Page “C” is a mirror image of the first two words, though the vowels are triangular rather than circular. *Lī* means “the forepart,” “beginning,” “first,” and so on. I think *wūik* of page “A” is really *cuik*, since the first doesn’t make sense while the second does and the first needed one more stroke to make it *cuik*. *Cuik* means anything one “plants” as in padi, or if in a building or ship, “to erect,” “to set up” as a post. *Ma*, which is not in the other two, usually means “main.” I notice that *Lī* is missing the tone markers (‘). That may be because the carpenters knew what was meant without the builders going to the trouble of making two dots on many pieces of timber. Or it could be because this timber belonged to a period earlier than the 17th century (or whereabouts) when that particular tone marker was not yet used.

Offhand, inscription “B” seems to refer to the main timbers that go in the bow of the ship, and perhaps the shipbuilders, or whoever was responsible, marked it as the main timber to be put in such a place. Inscription “A” with the Burmese numeral “4” (if that’s what it is) may mean that that’s the fourth “forepost,” say of several, that goes into the bow. Inscription “C” with the mirror image may have been written that way in order to designate on which side of the ship that particular “forepost” belongs. That is, let’s say the timbers belonging to the right side were written normally, but those for the left side were written in mirror image so that the carpenters building the ship knew which timbers go where.

Pegu in Lower Burma in the 16th and 17th centuries was a very well-known shipbuilding place. It is also known for its teak. I’m not sure how it got to California, but the English and Dutch by that time had taken over the role that the Portuguese had played earlier in the trade of that region. It could have been either of the former who had bought the ship (or the timber to make the ship) from Pegu, though I think the inscriptions suggest that the ship was made in Burma, otherwise one did not need these directional markers. That same ship then may have been used for trade with America that somehow got to California.

As far as I know, there was no direct trade between Burma and America, although you know that the Spanish “galleon trade” plied the waters between Spain, Mexico, and the Philippines. If there were trade between Mexico and the California coasts, at least one link between Southeast Asia and California can be made. There were, of course, regular trade links between the Philippines and the Malay Peninsula, which had very close trade links with Lower Burma. Indeed, the Burmese word for oceangoing ship is *Malay, samphaw*.

Readers, any insights on this New World-Southeast Asia relationship?

Michael Aung-Thwin
**Modern Burmese Painting and the West**

An exhibit of 20th-century Burmese artists, paintings from the Bennett Collection at Northern Illinois University, opened August 1993 at the Burma Gallery of Northern Illinois University Art Museum. This exhibit will run up until the holidays.

**Search for Manuscripts**

While not directly related to Southeast Asia, we have received word from the "Papers of Robert Morrison" project and would like to pass on their request: The project is seeking copies of all correspondence to or from Robert Morrison (the first Protestant missionary to China), as well as anything else written by him. We are aware of the major collection in the London Missionary Society holdings, but we are seeking others that may be held in other locations. Please write, FAX, or e-mail Dr. John Barton Starr, History, Hong Kong Baptist College, 224 Waterloo Road, Kowloon, HONG KONG. FAX: (852) 338-6005 or e-mail: STARR@CTSCHKBC.HK.

**Southeast Asia Lecture Series**

The tradition of Friday lectures is alive and well here at NIU. Everyone is invited, including colleagues and students from nearby mandala. We suggest that you phone ahead to reconfirm the schedule and reserve an authentic Southeast Asian lunch.


Sept. 24 — Dian Murray, University of Notre Dame “Pirates of Fact and Fiction: The Problems of Disentangling Myth from Reality in Reconstructing Sino-Vietnamese Piracy of the Late 18th and Early 19th Century”

Oct. 1 — Clark Neher, Northern Illinois University “The Winds of Change in Southeast Asia”

Oct. 8 — Maureen Aung-Thwin, journalist “Drugs, Dictatorship, and Human Rights in Burma”

Oct. 15 — Than Than Win, graduate student, Northern Illinois University “When the Chinese, Burmese, and Indonesians Met on the Good Ship Tong Sern”

Oct. 22 — To Be Announced

Oct. 29 — Katherine Bowie, Univ of Wisconsin—Madison “Peasant Political Movements and Their ‘Hidden Transcripts’ in Southeast Asia”

Nov. 5 — Lois Self, Northern Illinois University “Doing Womens’ Studies in Thailand”

Nov. 12 — To Be Announced


Dec. 3 — Richard M. Cooler, Northern Illinois University “Nga Ya Min — An Ancient Rainmaking Cult at Pagan and its Imagery.”
Center Associates' Activities

**Michael Aung-Thwin**, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, was invited to present a paper at the International Conference on Burma at Humboldt University in what was East Berlin. He spoke on “The Principles of the Precolonial Burmese State.” The collected papers from this conference will appear next year. Last February, he was invited to a conference on “Legitimacy and Power in Southeast Asia” held in Chiangmai, Thailand; he presented a critique of Chao-Tzang Yawnghwe’s “Political Authority and Legitimacy in Burma: The Depoliticization of the Political.” He has recently completed the “Myanmar” section to appear in the next edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica.

**Lee Dutton**, Donn V. Hart Southeast Asian Collection, was an editorial advisor for the *Statistical Record of Asian Americans*, a reference volume recently published by Gale Research (1993). During July, he paid a visit to the French colonial archives at Aix-en-Provence, France, and also met with Southeast Asia colleagues at the universities of Nice and Provence. A new center for Southeast Asian Studies is being established at the University of Provence.

**John Hartram**, foreign languages and literatures, was on sabbatical leave in Thailand this past year. His projects included: “Language and Social Relationships in Thai Markets,” “The Language and Meaning of Southern Thailand Shadow Puppet Theater,” and the translation and analysis of Khwam Khun Therng. He also published an article entitled “The Manoa Mantra and Model,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Language Teaching* 1:1/2, pp. 17-38. He has received funding for two US Department of Education research projects with Professors Patricia Henry and George Henry to 1) continue work on CAI (computer-assisted instruction) for Thai, Indonesian, and other foreign languages in general (funded through summer of 1993), and with Professor Robert Zerwekh 2) to create an electronic dictionary of Thai and Indonesian (funded through summer of 1994).


**Clark Neher**, political science, used his Spring 1993 Fulbright (Southeast Asia Regional Grant) to collect information for his forthcoming book on democracy in Southeast Asia (“Transitions to Democracy in Southeast Asia”). In April, he led a Stanford-sponsored tour of Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and India; he will lead a similar trip to Cambodia and Vietnam in December 1993. He is now serving as chairman of the Political Science Department.

**Grant Olson**, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, had an article entitled “Thai Cremation Volumes: A Brief History of a Unique Genre of Literature” published in *Asian Folklore Studies* 51:2, pp. 279-294. He traveled to London to attend the 5th International Conference on Thai Studies at SOAS, delivering a paper on the importance of biographies of sacrifice in the Santi Asoke Buddhist movement, entitled “Bodhirak, Chamlong, and Phonphichai: A Trinity of Santi Asoke Biographies.” This paper has been accepted for publication in the *Buddhist Forum*.

**Ron Provencher**, anthropology, recently stepped down as acting director of the University Libraries. He has returned to teaching full-time in the Anthropology Department.

**U Saw Tun**, foreign languages and literatures, completed the first volume of his multi-volume work on the history of Burmese literature (in Burmese), which covers the Pagan period. He has submitted this volume to a national competition in Burma on Burmese literature. He also taught Burmese at this summer’s SEASSI in Seattle.

**Ed Thomas**, physical education, recently received first prize in the 6th annual national videography competition sponsored by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and the American Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AHPERD). The tape, “Image in the Golden Mirror,” documents the development of a model for a concept of physical culture designed to improve national productivity, cooperation, and security in Burma.

Publication Information

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Looking to America to Solve Thailand's Problems
by Phra Rajavaramuni (currently holding the rank of
Phra Debdodi [Prayudh Payutto])
Translated by Grant A. Olson

The publishers of this book—the Satirakoses-Nagaprapida
Foundation in Bangkok and the Thai-American Foundation
in California—have sent us a limited number of copies of this
unique Buddhist critique of Western development in Thai-
land. After spending time teaching in America and observ-
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Issues are often focused on special topics, while others are of
a more general nature. Recent issues worth noting include the
following:

A special issue on Burma (4:1) sold out in a short time;

4:2 and 5:1 are Special Thai Issues. They are still available as
back issues (4:2 is a collection of recent research on Thailand;
and 5:1 is comprised of a panel commenting on the work of
Condominas in Northern Thailand);

5:2 is a general issue containing articles on Malay political
cartoons, the language of a gay community in the Philippines,
and Japanese aid to Burma;

6:1 contains a major article by Craig Lockard on modern
Malay pop music;

6:2 contains articles on writers and activists in Southeast Asia,
featuring an article by Donald Swearer on the life and works
of social critic Sulak Sivaraksa;

7:1 summarizes the contribution of Lucien and Jane Hanks to
Southeast Asian studies (including a definitive bibliography
of this couple's works);

7:2 contains a major set of papers on Vietnamese poetry and
history by Keith Taylor, Tran Quoc Vuong, John Whitmore,
and Neil Jamieson.

For more information on how to order back issues and current
subscriptions, please see the enclosed publications order form.
**An Introduction to the Thai Poem**  
"Lilit Phra Law"  
(The Story of King Law)

Robert J. Bickner

The ancient Thai poem entitled *Lilit Phra Law* holds a position of great importance in the literary heritage of Thailand. Countless Thai students have read it, and many can cite parts of it from memory. Despite the enduring popularity of the story, those who composed the poem are frequently criticized for seeming flaws in their poetic forms. There is a curious dichotomy of opinion among modern scholars who have studied the classics: the ancient poets are appreciated for their skill and storytelling, but they are also criticized for the imagined limits of that skill. This study addresses the curious dichotomy in modern treatments of this ancient work by examining the text *Lilit Phra Law* and the verse forms used to create it, as well as the criticism made of it by contemporary scholars, especially from the point of view of linguistic analysis.

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**Ku Đâng—Thirty Years Later**  
A Village Study in Northern Thailand 1954-1984

Konrad Kingshill

Konrad Kingshill has updated his classic ethnography of the village of Ku Đâng. This volume contains indispensable information on Thai village life, rituals, and beliefs. Over three hundred pages, including charts, maps, glossary, and index.

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**MEANINGFUL TONE:**  
A Study of Tonal Morphology in Compounds, Form Classes, and Expressive Phrases in White Hmong

Martha Ratliff

The significance of this book is twofold. First, it makes a contribution to our understanding of a language that has become important to many Westerners since the end of the Vietnam war in 1975 and the subsequent arrival of tens of thousands of Hmong refugees to the United States. Prior to this time, only two dictionaries and one grammar by missionary linguists existed for White Hmong. Since the arrival of the Hmong refugees, linguists have started to take the task of describing the language seriously. The publication of this major study of Hmong language will bring multiple benefits: to students of Hmong, students of the Southeast Asian linguistic area and language history, and to students of the nature of human language. Second, it corrects the mistaken notion that Asian tone languages do not use tone for grammatical purposes as do African tone languages.

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Variation in Central Javanese Gamelan Music: Dynamics of a Steady State

R. Anderson Sutton

Moving beyond a simple and occidental sense of “a variation on a theme,” Variation in Central Javanese Gamelan Music: Dynamics of a Steady State, is a comprehensive, analytical study of Javanese gamelan music by the noted ethnomusicologist R. Anderson Sutton.

Sutton defines gamelan as “a generic term for instrumental ensembles consisting predominantly of percussion instruments (knobbed gongs, metal-keyed instruments, and drums).” It is also a music that is thoroughly and indigenously Javanese and, as Sutton eloquently demonstrates, the music that best captures, if not actually mirrors, the Javanese psyche and the Javanese notion of variation within a steady state.

Irrigation in the Heartland of Burma: Foundations of the Pre-Colonial Burmese State

Michael Aung-Thwin

Since the last two centuries of the first millennium BC, except for a short span of sixty years, the pre-colonial state in Burma has been centered in the dry zone of Upper Burma. The basis of this state was agrarian, yet little has been written on its economic wherewithal. Instead, scholars have tended to focus their attention on the state’s political, legal, religious, cultural, and administrative structures and institutions. This study attempts to fill this crucial gap. In part, it highlights a major theme in pre-colonial Burmese history—“dry-zone paramountcy”—which was the result of state-run irrigation works constructed in six critical regions of central Burma, most of them existing before the 15th century AD.

This volume contains a unique and valuable set of maps to illustrate the areas discussed above.

Papers on Tai Languages, Linguistics, and Literatures

In Honor of William J. Gedney

Carol J. Compton
John F. Hartmann, Editors

Twenty-one scholars from Australia, Canada, China, Thailand, and the United States have contributed to this unique collection of articles on Tai languages, linguistics, and literature. The book is organized into four major sections: Tai Linguistics, Phonology, Syntax and Semantics, Linguistics and Literature. The research produced is a reflection of the profound influence Emeritus Professor William J. Gedney has had on the field of Tai and Sino-Tibetan linguistics.

This volume comes with discography, bibliography, glossaries of musical terms and gamelan instruments, and very extensive musical notations.

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