

CSEAS Weekly Bulletin

Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Northern Illinois University • Aug. 30, 2010



A new year begins: The flags of Southeast Asia's eleven countries welcomed visitors, including anthropology graduate student Poonnatree Jiaviriyaboonya, to the center's open house on Aug. 25. Poonnatree is one of three students leading the NIU Thai Association this year, along with political science graduate student Shawn McCafferty and Siri Sasitorn, an undergraduate business student.

Flying the flag for a new semester

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1. Opening the semester with flags and festivities

More than sixty faculty, students and staff filled the driveway at Pottenger House Wednesday, **Aug. 25**, during a three-hour open house for both CSEAS and the Center for Burma Studies ushering in a new semester of Southeast Asian studies at NIU. In between bites of pizza, guests visited with each other, perused a display of center programs, and played two Southeast Asia-themed games organized by center graduate assistant Shahin Aftabizadeh. Outreach coordinator Julie Lamb organized the open house with the help of students Sylvia Ginting, Rai Hancock, Mirah Kertayuda, Brett McCabe, Shawn McCafferty, Dan Pojar, Srie Ramli, and Mary Thomas. The center thanks the Southeast Asia Club, the NIU Thai Association, and the Burma Interest Group (BIG-NIU) for their support. Thanks also to the Division of International Programs, which provided the eleven Southeast Asian country flags welcoming guests to the event. Look for more photos soon on the [CSEAS website](#).



Graduate student and Burmese gamemaster specialist Shahin Aftabizadeh, right, times the action with office manager Nancy Schuneman as players using chopsticks try to put as many beans as they can into a bottle in 10 seconds.

2. Ramayana conference registration ends Sept. 3



The deadline for registration is **Sept. 3** for the Third International Ramayana Conference, scheduled for Sept. 18–19 on campus. The two-day event focusing on the Asian epic, the Ramayana, is co-sponsored by the center, the University of Illinois Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, and the International Ramayana Institute of North America, will include presentations on various topics and a teacher workshop. The conference theme is “Educational and Cultural Enhancement.” Register at the [conference website](#).

3. **Save the date:** CSEAS weekly lecture series starts Sept. 10

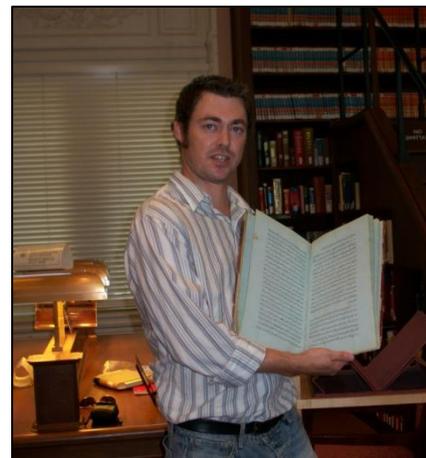
The center’s 2010–11 weekly lecture series will begin Friday, **Sept. 10**, with a talk by art historian and Burmese art expert Donald Stadtner, who will present “The Sacred Sites of Burma” at noon in Room 110, Campus Life Building. Bring your lunch and feed your mind.



4. New FLTAs: This year's Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants, seen here at the Aug. 25 open house, are Nanda Octavia (Indonesian), Leizel Arsenal (Tagalog) and Jocelyn Sim (Malay). They will be teaching with foreign language faculty Patricia Henry, Rhodalyne Crail, and Jim Collins respectively. The center welcomes them to NIU.

5. Studying *Jawi* script at the Library of Congress

Anthropology graduate student Brett McCabe, who won the 2010 Florence Tan Moeson Fellowship in spring to study at the Library of Congress (LOC) over the summer, returns to NIU with more fodder for his master's thesis examining the changing role of Malaysia's *Jawi* script, an Arabic-based script used in the Malay language for seven centuries up until the 1960s when it was abandoned in everyday use. McCabe spent the hottest days of summer deep in the LOC's Asian Division delving into periodicals and rare books written in *Jawi*, called the Latin of the Southeast Asian trading states in the 17th century. "My goal was to find sources to explain the process of the change in the *jawi* script, from a practical script to a symbol of Malay ethnic identity," McCabe says. McCabe is the second center-affiliated NIU student to compete for and secure a Florence Tan fellowship. Lily Ann Bolo Villaraza, a Ph.D. candidate in history, also successfully competed for the award in 2008.



Anthropology student Brett McCabe examines an early 19th-century book printed in *Jawi* script at the Library of Congress this summer.

6. Looking for career opportunities?

The center gets word of Southeast Asia job leads and vacancies regularly. You'll find them posted on the big bulletin board at Pottenger House and soon on the center website (click on the Careers tab).

7. Legacy in Lacquer exhibit on display at NIU Art Museum



Lacquerware, named for its highly polished finish made from tree sap, is the subject of "Legacy in Lacquer: A Living Art from Burma," now on display through **Oct. 2** at the NIU Art Museum in Altgeld Hall. Art history professor and Center for Burma Studies Director Catherine Raymond will give two curator talks in conjunction with the exhibit. Following a reception from 5 to 6 p.m. in the museum **Sept. 16**, Raymond will present an overview of the exhibit in Room 315 Altgeld. At 2 p.m. **Sept. 18** in the same location she will discuss "Narratives in Burmese Lacquer."

8. Conferences and calls for papers

- **Council on Thai Studies annual conference**, Oct. 29–30, University of Wisconsin-Madison. **Deadline for abstracts and panel proposals: Sept. 15.** Contact: Kathleen Gillogly at gillogly@uwp.edu.
- **Issues and Trends in Southeast Asia international conference**, Oct. 22, University of Michigan. Held in conjunction with UM Center for Southeast Asian Studies [50th anniversary](#) weekend events. Admission free for graduate students; registration required.
- **Power and Change in Malaysia and Singapore**, Dec 10–11, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. Sponsored by the [Malaysia and Singapore Society of Australia](#). **Deadline for abstracts and panel proposals: Sept. 15.** E-mail to massa.colloquium@anu.edu.au. Some postgraduate registration fees will be waived on a competitive basis. Contact: Dr. Yasuko Kobayashi at massa.colloquium@anu.edu.au.

9. Ongoing area Southeast Asia cultural opportunities

- The Indonesian Consulate in Chicago offers **free Balinese and Javanese dance and gamelan classes** on weekends. For details, see the consulate [website](#).
- The Cambodian Association of Illinois holds **free traditional Cambodian music and dance lessons** Sunday afternoons at the Cambodian American Heritage Museum and Killing Fields Memorial, 2831 W. Lawrence Ave., Chicago. For details, call Anneth Houy at 773-878-7090. Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday and on weekends by appointment. **New this year:** Morodok, a museum store featuring handmade Cambodian silks, clothing, sculpture, gifts, and unique household items. For details, see the association [website](#).

If you are a person with a disability who may need assistance at any center-sponsored event, contact office manager Nancy Schuneman at 815-753-1771 or nschunem@niu.edu. If you no longer wish to receive this bulletin, please reply to this e-mail with a request to remove your name. Thank you.