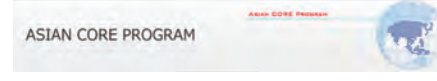
2011 Southeast Asia Seminar

Transformations of Human Landscape in Southeast Asia

Sponsors: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University and Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Asian Core Program

Date: 2011 November 22 - 25

Venue: Mekong Delta Boutique Hotel, Mae Sai, Thailand



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2011 Southeast Asia Seminar
Program

Nov 22 Introductions

13:30 *Arrival and lunch for all participants*
14:00–14:30 *Registration*
14:30–16:00 Opening (MC: Yoko Hayami)
Opening Remarks
Sunait Chutintaranond
Hiromu Shimizu
Introduction to the seminar
Brief self-introduction by participants
16:00–16:30 *Coffee break*
16:30–17:30 Lecture
Sunait Chutintaranond, Historical Overview of the Lower Mekong Region
18:00–20:00 *Reception*

Nov 23 Session 1: Infrastructure and Land Use Change

Coordinator: Yasuyuki Kono
Moderator: Nathan Badenoch

9:00–11:30 Lectures
Somphong Sirisophonsin, On Logistic Landscape Change
Yasuyuki Kono, On Land Use Change
Kate Lazarus, On Water Resources and Dam Construction
Attachai Jintrawet, Agriculture as a Basis of Transformation: a System Approach

Lunch break

13:00–15:30 Group discussion

Coffee break

16:00–17:00 General discussion

Nov 24 Session 2: Human Flows and Resettlement

Coordinator: Nathan Badenoch
Moderators: Mario Ivan López and Hiroyuki Seto

9:00–11:30 Lectures
Nathan Badenoch, On the Spatial Reorganization of Human Diversity and its Implications for Local Society
James Chamberlain, On Human Resettlement in Mainland Southeast Asia
Prasit Leepreecha, On Minorities across Borders

Lunch break

13:00–15:30 Group discussion

Coffee break

16:00–17:00 General discussion
18:00–19:00 Film showing

Nov 25 Session 3: Political Economy and Resource Management in the Face of the Rise of China

Coordinator: Ukrist Pathmanand
Moderators: Jafar Suryomenggolo and Nao Sato

9:00–11:30 Lectures
Nguyen Van Chinh, On China and the Mekong Region
Ukrist Pathmanand, On human Landscape, Change in GMS' Countries: International Political Economy Perspective
Simon Creak, On Resource Management and Contestation
Visara Kraiwatanapong, On China and ASEAN

Lunch break

13:00–15:30 Group discussion

Coffee Break

16:00–17:00 General discussion
17:00–17:30 Closing remarks

Nov 26–27 Excursion (optional)

26 November 2011

9:00 Trip to Ko Donsou Laos

Afternoon visit to Opium Golden Triangle Park

27 November 2011

8:00 go to Huay Sai Laos (by boat from Chiang Khong)
10:00 go to Bo Keaw Market (located at Mekong river road)
10:30 visit Yong Hin Village (Tai Lue)
11:00 visit Nam Wang Village (Wenten or Lao Huai, 20 km from Huay Sai)
12:00 visit Pakraw Nheu Village
13:00 go to Indochina Market (8 km from Huay Sai immigration checkpoint)
14:30 go to Wat Jomkhaomaneerat

Early dinner near Chiang Rai (in time for evening flights)

Overview of 2011 Seminar

Over the past two decades following the end of the Cold War era, Southeast Asia's human landscape has been visibly transformed by regional economic and institutional integration, due to shifting state priorities and policies, cross-border migration, the growth of money economies, and the economic and geopolitical rise of China. These and other global, regional, national and local developments impacted on the ways in which the people in this region live in, interact with, perceive, and reshape their environments (both natural and human). This seminar, hosted by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies and the Institute for Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, focused on the Upper Mekong sub-region — eastern Myanmar, northern Thailand, and Laos — covering archipelagic Southeast Asia at the beginning of the 21st century. Drawing on historical, comparative, and contemporary sources and perspectives, the seminar sought to identify the causes and consequences of the socio-cultural, political, economic and ecological transformations in the region. Over a number of days the seminar covered three broad topics; infrastructure, resource contestation and land-use change; human flows and resettlement; and political economy and resource management in the face of the rise of China.

Firstly, the development of large-scale infrastructure, particularly transportation and communication networks, has been heralded as an opportunity to transform the Upper Mekong sub-region from a land-locked to a land- and water-linked region. These developments have had a profound impact on the political economy of resource contestation in the region. At a macro level, the vast expense of these projects is requiring large-scale foreign investment. For many observers, funding this infrastructure has resulted in an unacceptable increase in foreign dependence and sacrifice of national resources as well as threatening national sovereignty. How can history and changing concepts of resource mobilization contextualize these changes? At a micro level, changes have triggered the influx of traders and entrepreneurs, and intensified exploitation of natural resources such as land, forest and water. This has inevitably brought increased intra-regional migration and rapid transitions in local peoples' livelihoods. At the same time, positive pressures to strengthen environmental governance have demanded the conservation of globally valuable biodiversity. In the context of this topic the seminar asked what are the co-existing mechanisms of rapid fluidization of natural and human landscapes, and how are these reflected in resource contestation and changes in land use?

Secondly, the region is on the periphery of bordering states, inhabited by linguistically and culturally heterogeneous populations. At the same time, it is rich in natural resources, including land, forest and water. While the region has been the site of human mobility over centuries, the past few decades has been characterized by the transnational movement of

people due to economic, political and ecological factors, instigated by the liberalization of the socialist countries, development and economic growth in the region in the face of globalization, and the rising power of China. Migrant laborers, as well as traders and entrepreneurs, seek better opportunities across borders, while refugees seek political asylum. At the same time, resettlement of people progresses in both state-driven and spontaneous forms, driven by initiatives with political, economic and ecological objectives. What is the nature of the socio-cultural and economic displacements, and how do local communities face such changes?

Finally, the influence of China has always been a key force in the making of Southeast Asia. However, with the rapid pace of economic integration, and China's strategy of engaging its southern neighbors "through trade rather than aid," there is a feeling among many observers that the current "rise of China" has significantly different implications from those of the past. Transboundary investment, notably in industrial crops such as rubber, — although very modest by Chinese economic standards — are having major implications for the human and natural landscapes of the region. Furthermore, at a regional level, the environmental governance of the Mekong River basin has become characterized by a divide between China and the lower basin countries. Until recently, the dam cascade being implemented on the Chinese stretch of the river has dominated the debate over how to manage the region's international water resources. It seems now that a lower basin mainstream dam may be built. What are the implications of the new political economy of the regional environment, in which the rise of China is accompanied by increasingly confident lower basin countries?

Over three days participants from across the region came together to discuss these issues and their implications to try to better understand the exigencies of the future direction of Southeast Asia. This report offers views from some of the participants and their thoughts on the 2011 seminar.

Shimizu Hiromu, CSEAS Director

Keynote Speech:
Looking at the Past of the Mekong to Meet the Challenges of the Present

Sunait Chutintaranont
Director of Southeast Asian Studies Program, Chulalongkorn University

What can we learn from the past of the Mekong region? The lower Mekong is not only one of the most dynamic regions of Southeast Asia, but it is also becoming an increasingly important academic field. In this respect, the Mekong region must not be taken for granted and should be considered as an integral part of this growing field. In the conference, 'Transformation of Human Landscape' held in Nov. 2011, by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies Kyoto University and the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, the Mekong played an integral role in discussions. It is here where I would like to flesh out some of the implications of what was discussed, mainly changing patterns of land-use, evolving infrastructure across the region, human resettlement, migration and resources management.

Recently, we have seen a great deal of research on the lower Mekong, yet there has been a very limited amount of attention given to the Mekong's past and the relationship between its history and the present. It has been challenging for me to incorporate the historical aspects of the Mekong's past with present concerns; a challenge in how can we make connections between the past of the Lower Mekong and its present that could open up ways to consider possible solutions to several problems that the region now faces. What sorts of lessons can be learnt from the past and applied to the present situation of the Mekong? If we are able to find solutions by looking into the past maybe we can do something for the betterment of the present and the future.

One initial concern that requires attention is the use of terms. Before the arrival of the European colonial powers in the 19th century, the lower Mekong region, as a term, did not exist. It was fashioned during this period and then, as a concept, developed as the colonial powers extended their reach throughout the region. In mainland colonial Southeast Asia, Burma, Malaysia and Indochina were under the influence of European powers. The colonial authorities shaped new perceptions, understandings and expectations as well as created new knowledge about our "own" region. What we have learnt about Mekong is first, the knowledge that was accumulated in the Western World and this extends to Southeast Asian history.

When I first started out with an interest in the history of the region, there were no Masters or Doctoral programs that taught regional history in Thailand and Southeast Asia

and I was forced to go abroad to learn about my own region. As such, a perception, or better said, a way of thinking about the region was adopted from Western scholars, something which can be traced back to knowledge formation in the colonial period. The Mekong and Indochina region are certainly terms created in the West. Yet, if we go back before the arrival of the French, the Mekong River itself had several names.

These never expressed the whole length of the upper and lower Mekong in terms of divisions. How was the Mekong expressed by different people who lived in its proximity? At the farthest limits of the river, the Tibetans called the river, *dza chu* (water of stone); the Chinese named it *láncāng jiāng*, (turbulent river); and below China the Cambodians named it *tônlé mékông* (great river). In Thailand and Laos it is known as *mae nam khong* (mother of waters) and the Vietnamese know it as *Sông Cửu Long* (nine dragons river). These names show that there is a tendency to see the river as one, rather than split it into the two parts it is identified as at present. If we have to trace back the history of the river, we really need a new perception of what the Mekong *was* before we see it in terms of parts belonging to different nations that it runs through now.

If we perceive other tributary river systems such as the Nile in Egypt as a gift to the peoples there, then the Mekong is undoubtedly our regional shared gift. The shared junction at the borders of Thailand, Myanmar and Laos, known as the Golden Triangle, was a key place for the French when they first started to explore the Mekong which led to the creation of the first maps. The Golden Triangle is an area where the boundaries between Thailand Myanmar and Laos blurred and looking back at the history of this particular area we can see that in the 10th century, an ancient Thai settlement known as *chiang saen* (the ancient city) existed close to this junction. The city is understood to be one of the older known polities that existed in the northern part of present day Thailand and functioned up until the early Bangkok period. What its presence tells us is that civilizations in the region flourished in close vicinity to the river itself. This is one starting point we can use to inquire into the Mekong. However going downstream we come across another kingdom that played a very significant role in history as of the 13th century, the Lan Xang Kingdom. At that time, the kingdom was home to a major city Luang Prabang. This was followed by the kingdom of Vientiane and then Champasak.

Fig. 1 shows the level of development of the Lan Xang civilization. If we travel further downstream, Champasak, in lower Laos, represented one of the oldest urban centers that existed in this particular area and was home to the culture known as *chēn-là*. Looking back at earlier Southeast Asian history, we can see that other civilizations such as the kingdom of Funan preceded this one. What is significant about these is the remains of a temple that remains situated up in the mountains in the Champasak area, Wat Phu. What should be made clear here is that the growth of these civilizations that developed and ruled in the area, were sustained by their proximity to the river.

There are many lessons that we can learn from how past civilizations lived along the

Fig. 1 Painting from the Colonial Period showing Vientiane

Fig. 2 Aeriel photo of Angkor Wat

river in the region and one other that deserves mention is the Angkorian civilization. Angkorian society emerged and developed in the early part of the 9th century and flourished until the 14th. Fig. 2 shows Angkor Wat, the largest of what were undoubtedly many temples that were constructed during the period. The complex also makes clear that its proximity to the Mekong River played a crucial role in the development of Southeast Asian Societies. Angkor or the great city is to the Northeast of the Ton Le Sap River, of which around 70–80% of the water came from the Mekong itself. In this respect, we should see the Mekong as a river of life which fostered civilizations in mainland Southeast Asia, and one which people in the past treated with great respect. How do we know this? A look at the names given to the river

Fig. 3 Various images of Naga

highlights the level of respect people had towards it. Thais, Laotians and Cambodians believed that the river is the home of *Nāga* (Fig. 3), a mythical animal/creator residing at the bottom of the river. The Chinese may not have shared the same belief but they did believe that a great serpent resided in the river. Vietnam also associated a dragon with the river. What these beliefs point to is that there was a certain sacredness embodied in the Mekong and all of these center around the idea of a creator who provided both prosperity and catastrophe.

Toward the end of the Angkor period of rule, one of the last rulers of the kingdom, Jayavarman VII was visited by a Chinese diplomat who left us with some notes from the past in the form of a diary. Zhou Daguan, made some interesting observations about the king stating that before he retires to sleep with his wife, he must first sleep with a female *Nāga*. Failing to do so would lead to a great calamity. We know from these small observations that people were showing great respect for the power of the rivers, but that it was ritualized through *Nāga* belief and worship, something shared by people in the lower Mekong region. The Mekong has survived for another 1,000 years up until the present and there is much that can be learnt from this past to help us understand it now.

If asked what I have learnt from looking at its history and how we could conceptualize it, a number of keywords are apparent the first being 'sharing.' The river was a public property and belonged to many people across many generations and was a shared economic resource. By people we do not just refer to those who ruled, but all those who shared an equal right to share resources coming from the river. They shared similar values and beliefs that played out through their interactions with it. The other keyword which is conjured out of past interactions with the river is 'connectivity.' This keyword can be seen in a number of dimensions.

People in the past were connected socially and culturally. Since the pre-Ankorian period the connection between the people of the Mun River in the northeastern part of Thailand to people in Champasuk were connected and these would 'flow' into the central parts of Cambodia. If we trace the history of the *chen-la* kingdom back into the past, there is reference to a king called Chittasen. There is an inscription at the mouth of the Mun River in northern Thailand which makes reference to some of these connections. Some scholars have hinted that we can trace connections along the river between different kingdoms which should make us rethink how connectivity took place along the river in the past. This suggests that the river is not about one way traffic. Looking at Cambodian history we can see that its cultural influence extended "upstream" to many places along the Mekong river, and may have also stretched beyond its adjacent boundaries.

During Jayavarman VII's rule, a royal path was created in many directions, almost reaching Sukhothai, an ancient northern Thai state, and we can see in architectural remains the influences of Srisatchanalai and Sukhothai. What this all suggests is connectivity stretching through these kingdoms along the Mekong between the inland people, the Thai and Laotians. If we trace back the legend of the founder of the Lan Xang kingdom, Fa Ngum, we can see that he had connections with the Angkorian king, through personal and cultural linkage. What I want to stress here is that there were activities that connected people in both the upstream and downstream regions. Another thing that needs to be kept in mind is that people connected themselves to the world beyond their boundaries, and this was one which flowed over into the supernatural world (as with the shared belief in *Nāga*). Through the image of the river as mother, it served as a holy focal point and was accorded respect. This kind of belief creates what can be said to be a pattern of relations between humans and nature which has disappeared from our modern societies.

Sharing and connectivity are key words that come to us from the past, yet it is difficult to say to what extent they can be applied to our present circumstances. Framing the past through some statistics on the Mekong River can shed light on its role in the world. The Mekong is the third richest area of biodiversity in the world after the Amazon, and the Sabie River in Africa. It is home to 1,245 species of fish, and maybe as many as 1,700. The river zone consists of 795,000 km^2 of wetland and more than 70 million people rely on it for agriculture, fishing, transportation and rituals. Resources from the river feed more than 300 million Southeast Asian people. Yet, against this statistical backdrop, present sharing practices are undoubtedly decreasing. The river is no longer treated as a public property to increased upstream damming.

During the winter, snow at the upper parts of the Mekong melts off to feed into the river. An incredible volume of water flows down south at high speed. However, this sheer volume of water cannot enter into the sea and its flow reverses to stream back up north to fill the Ton Le Sap River. During the rainy season, this river size triples and it is at this time that fish

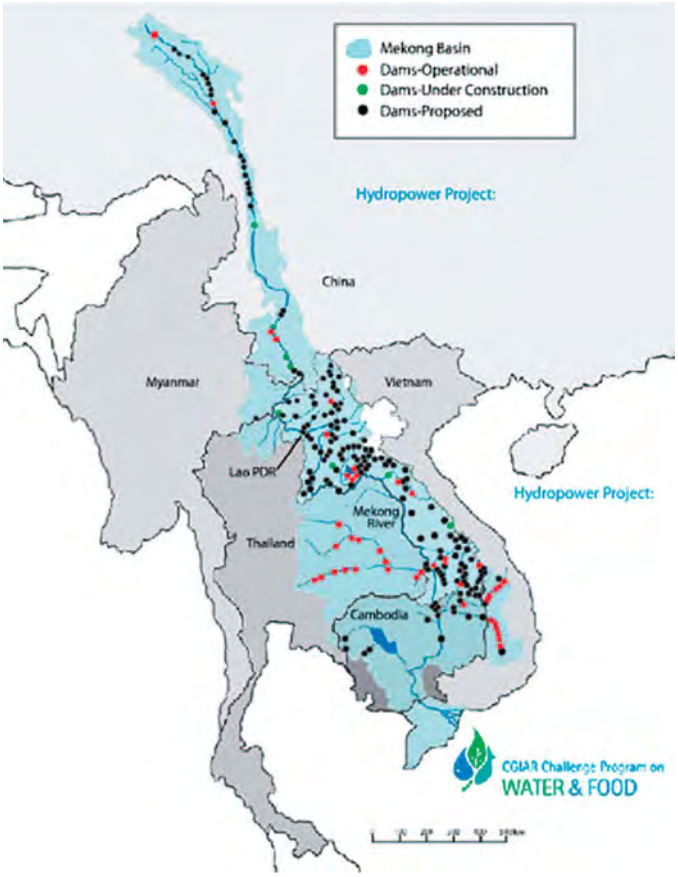

Fig. 4 Location of dams along the Mekong river

enter the lake to spawn and lay eggs. This leads to the season where Cambodians can increase their fishing catches.

As the Mekong loses its public accessibility through its allocation as a hydropower source, the proliferation of dams on the river and its tributaries are causing increasing problems (Fig. 4). It is obvious that the river has become the property of the state and of private companies as it becomes dammed within the national boundaries of different nations. If we come back to a point I raised earlier, there is now no clear demarcation between the river's holiness and unholiness. It only exists as a utility resource for different nations and their needs. Now, when we think about the Mekong, we think of it in terms of the east-west corridors that have developed across the region. I don't deny that these corridors play an important role in the region. Yet, water is increasingly being controlled by fewer people and this will inevitably lead to clashes over resource use and access of a river that was once public property.

Thus, how can we practice sharing in this current climate? Serious emphasis on answering the dilemma posed by public loss is necessary and looking back over the past of the Mekong region we can see that the water in the river and the river itself was seen as public property. This is not a call to destroy dams, but to seek harmony among the stakeholders across countries who manage and use its resources. How can we accomplish this? Under present circumstances, asking stakeholders to consider the connectivity that exists across and within the Mekong River. Thinking in terms of connectivity may offer us a strategy to allow people who share the same ideas and beliefs across the region to communicate, activate and build bargaining power across their own local communities and social arenas. In this respect, at a grass root level, NGOs must starting building local networks that spread across borders and create new channels that can counter the power of the state.

Finally, if people want to voice their own concerns over rights to water management, they require more connectivity across localities, countries and the region itself. This will become the arena which will allow people to do so. Yet, people were already connected in the past, and that by looking at our histories we may find clues as to how to meet the challenges of the present and our near future. We don't need to rely on all knowledge as it was used in the past, but yes, we can use its "spirit" to form our strategies that will allow those who live from the Mekong to come to know it and its value: as a river recognized all over the world.

Reflections on the Seminar

Golden Triangle: Gold, Goals and Ghouls

Adrian Albano (PhD student, ASAFAS, Kyoto University, Japan)

As I tried to prepare this short reflection, I found myself overwhelmed by the many issues covered during the seminar. While procrastinating (and using the social networking website Facebook), I realized I had already started preparing, albeit through a photo album I had uploaded to Facebook after the seminar, which has the same title as this short essay. More than just to share interesting photos, I intended it to draw curious comments for further intellectual conversation.

Obviously, my choice of words in the title was mainly for their aesthetic and Facebook value. However, the words also suggest a way to organize my thoughts on the issues common to Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries and the Philippines, particularly with regard to local (i.e. indigenous peoples') livelihoods and forest management, under the pressures of increasing market integration. The GMS countries have resources ("gold") and as part of their plan to improve livelihoods ("goals"), policy makers have recently eased trade barriers, but with unintended negative consequences (or "ghouls"). I will henceforth discuss the theoretical framework through which I connect these three factors, as well as look back at some of the issues in the seminar that are related to my research.

Various economic theories offer differing narratives regarding the poverty or prosperity of countries, certain groups and individuals but most theories agree on some basic market principles. People are endowed by nature with different capabilities to utilize and transform nature-given resources into (i.e. produce) consumable goods that they need to survive and fulfill other wants. To protect themselves from external vulnerabilities, people accumulate savings to different degrees. These savings allow them not to work for as long as their savings can sustain them but, more importantly, savings also allow people to invest and improve their productivity or their output per unit input of land and labor. Since humans have different endowments, land resources are diverse and the extent of savings and investments differ, these factors of production (labor, land, and savings or capital) are unequally distributed. Meanwhile, the amount of these factors of production needed varies differently for each person or owner according to their needs and desires. They could rearrange these factors of production according to their need in order to improve their productivity and this can be peacefully done through voluntary xchange with each other. Voluntary exchange happens because each exchanging party values the opposite party's goods more than what they are exchanging; thus, after the exchange, both parties are better off. The more people trade what they have for something they value more, the better off they become, and so does their society.

The current disparity in material prosperity between countries (GMS countries, China, Japan, Philippines) and people, therefore, has much to do with past and present barriers to trade, as well as to savings and investments. As trade barriers have recently been eased and the factors of production

Taken during a field trip to Bokeo, Laos. Left: Khmu women weaving. Right: a local whisky distillery. These less efficient producers are threatened in a freer market but, at the same time, a freer market allows them to reach more consumers who will pay a premium for indigenous, handmade or local products.

reorganized within GMS countries, ASEAN, Asia, and the world, economic activities have increased with evidence of increased material prosperity. As consumers, Asians can buy more or cheaper goods than before; savers and owners of capital can receive higher rates of interest on their money and more opportunities for higher returns on their investments; workers can receive higher pay and land and property owners can benefit as their assets appreciate in value.

Obviously, not everyone is happy after these recent changes, as was shown in the seminar case studies of Thai garlic farmers, Lao farmers, and villagers downstream of the Mekong River, as well as forest dwellers. Should the easing of market barriers be halted because of these negative impacts? The answer depends on how one views the causes of these problems and to do that, we must look further at certain characteristics of markets. First, consumers prefer cheaper and better quality goods and, as a consequence, reward more efficient producers with profit while punishing, often unknowingly, inefficient or less competitive producers with losses. Thai consumers were happy buying cheaper garlic imported from China but, as a result, they "punished" garlic farmers in Thailand with losses. Second, producers interpret and react to information differently. Farmers in Laos allocated their land to banana, rubber or a combination of these with other crops. Each cropping mix would yield different returns or even losses if it transpired that there was too little or too much of any crop. Third, some exchanges and their consequent activities fail to include external costs in their valuation such that third parties suffer (or benefit) from some transactions. This is true for many mega-projects such as the dam constructions along the Mekong River which threaten entire fishing villages downstream, or the transport,

After crossing to Tachileik, Myanmar, my driver took me to one of the tourist spots inside a casino and golf complex. I had derided others for wearing native attire, and posing with tourists for money, but no longer. The ladies were happy that I visited (I paid 150 baht entrance fee and bought their products) and I too left the place happy. Voluntary exchange through markets makes both parties happy but is not free of ethical concerns.

energy and mining infrastructures clearing forests and even forcing people out of their villages.

Preventing a freer market reduces peoples' freedom and will make the poor poorer and more vulnerable to the whims of nature and even politicians. The easing of market barriers should be pursued. Again, various theories suggest means to solve the above problems, mainly through various wealth redistributive policies and programs which differ in costs and claims of benefits. In this regard, it is important to note that government intervention can do even more harm than a free market. For example, the displacement of villagers in Laos can be attributed more to their government's non-recognition of ownership rights over the land and property they use for their livelihoods than to the effects of a free market. If they owned the land, these villagers would have the power to reject destructive mega-projects or bargain for higher valuation of their assets, and claim fair compensation for damages. In the same manner, government intervention to promote the cultivation of particular crops or farming intervention in general skews price signals and gives the wrong information to farmers, causing malinvestment and greater vulnerability.

In my research area in the Philippines, -my hometown in the province of Ifugao which has a few of the remaining tropical montane forests in the Philippines- it is said that the main reason why our lands, which have been continually inhabited even before the Philippine government existed, were classified as public lands was in order for these lands to be easily allocated for large corporations for dam construction, mining and logging concessions. I am not familiar with land laws in the GMS countries

but the mega-projects in Laos and Myanmar discussed during the seminar indicate that the same is true in these countries. Villagers in these areas have suffered doubly, having had the freedom to trade across their own borders suppressed for years, then recently being allowed to trade but with their land taken away from them.

One positive note for the Philippines is that the government has enacted a law recognizing indigenous peoples' land rights. Although it has its flaws and is yet to be realized, especially over forested lands, I believe such kinds of legislation are a way forward in both improving livelihoods and protecting remaining forests, not just in the Philippines but also in the GMS countries. Such legislation secures and adds resources available for indigenous peoples to better adapt to the changes from increasing market and political integration, including the possibility for them to participate in, and benefit from, market-based policy instruments being set up to conserve forests as well as mitigate forest carbon emissions.

A Reflection on the Seminar Topics

Sitti Aminah (Department of Community Development and Communication Sciences, Human Ecology Faculty, Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia)

I would like to thank the Committee and those that gave me the opportunity to participate in CSEAS in Mae Sai, Thailand. The topics in the seminar were very relevant to the conditions in developing countries, especially countries in Southeast Asia at this time. I was particularly interested in the topics and issues concerning the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (by Visara Kraiwatanapong and Narumol Nirathron). The topic related to my own research on the "Model of Participatory Communication to Self Reliance of the Peasant (Small Farmer)." My opinion about the topic is described as follows.

What happened to the agricultural sector of developing countries with the implementation of liberalization and free trade agreements like ACFTA? Liberalization and free trade cause farmers in developing countries to compete directly with the farmers of developed countries before they are able. There are vast differences between developing and developed countries in their respective economies and technological sectors. Most farmers in developing countries (like Indonesia) are classified as small farmers (peasants), or subsistence farmers, and generally have an average land area of less than 0.5 hectares. These farmers also tend to be older (25-54 years old) and less educated, and they have to bear higher costs to obtain materials for production (seeds, fertilizers, plant protection drugs, etc.). In addition, intellectual property rights owned by the multinational seed companies has marginalized such farmers even more, because they must buy seeds from those who have mastered the technology of seed production.

What is the impact of liberalization and free trade on peasant farmers in developing countries (like Indonesia)? At present, cheaper agricultural products from developed countries (China, Australia and USA) are flooding the Indonesian domestic market. This happens because the developed countries have more advanced agricultural technology and more self-reliant farmers. As such, liberalization and free trade does not give hope to peasant farmers; on the contrary, it makes them increasingly suffer. At the same time, farmers in developing countries serve as a backbone for ensuring food security for themselves and for the domestic needs of their nation. If such farmers are not able to maintain food security, developing countries will become even more dependent on developed countries and the multinational companies that produce agricultural products. This would become a big problem for farmers and society in developing countries.

What should be done by countries in Southeast Asia? One recommendation that emerged from discussions during the CSEA seminar in Mae Sai was that governments in the countries of Southeast Asia create a farm policy that would ensure the protection of farmers' rights. Peasants should be given rights to maintain the viability of sustainable production and protect their domestic markets of agricultural products. Governments should provide incentives (subsidies) to ensure the availability of land, seed, fertilizer and water (irrigation) for farmers to manage agricultural production in a sustainable manner. Low production costs would help farmers to sell agricultural products at a competitive price, so their products can compete with agricultural products from foreign countries.

Availability of land for agricultural development should be a concern of government and changes in the function of agricultural land for industrialization activities should be limited. Changes in land use for industrial areas, real estate, malls and golf courses have led to decreased agricultural production. Such developments have led to Indonesia, originally a food surplus country, becoming a rice-importing country.

Availability of seeds based on local experience. The government of Indonesia has banned the use of local rice varieties, causing the disappearance of local seed varieties owned by local farmers. The seeds planted by farmers come from research centers of both governments and international organizations such as the International Rice Research Center in Manila (IRRI). As a result, the plants become susceptible to pests and diseases and farmers become very dependent on seeds patented by multinational companies with high prices. Therefore, farmers should be free to gain access to seed. This is an important condition for ensuring the preservation of the diversity of varieties that ensure the continuity of agricultural development and food security.

Guaranteeing the availability of fertilizers to farmers is essential to ensure the continuity of agricultural production. Agricultural production will increase when fertilizer is available at prices affordable for farmers. In Indonesia, cheap fertilizer subsidies from the government led to Indonesia reaching food self-sufficiency in 1985. However, when the subsidies stopped fertilizer prices soared and became unaffordable to farmers. The higher production costs have led to farmers' incomes declining dramatically. As a result, farmers are reluctant to produce, so rice production at a national level has declined sharply.

Availability of water (irrigation) such as the use of dams by farmers in the Mekong River area should be a serious concern of the government. The government must guarantee the rights of farmers to water through the empowerment of farmers' water user organizations. The government should also give political rights to such organizations to protect and promote the rights of farmers with regard to water. These organizations should be entitled to hold authority over the management of water resources in the region. As a result, any party wanting to take advantage of existing water sources in a given rural area for commercial purposes would need to consult with the water user organization.

In addition, it is essential that a paradigm shift in agricultural development is undertaken by governments in developing countries. Previous models of agricultural development tend to be top-down with one-way communication. This pattern needs to be shifted towards a development model that emphasizes bottom-up and two-way communication patterns. So far, government officials, planners and scientists/researchers in developing countries have not regarded farmers as a source of information for agricultural development, and the model of development is often defined as a process of introduction and adoption of new technology for farmers. Farmers are forced to accept the technology, which in turn often increases their financial burden as well as the risk of crop failure.

In conclusion, governments and scientists/researchers must conduct regular dialogue with local farmers. Governments, researchers and scientists have valid knowledge but not enough to understand and overcome the problems faced by farmers. They need to learn, share information, and build a rapport with the farmers who have local knowledge, as well as accept farmers' input, ideas and viewpoints. If this is done, agricultural development will gain an internal perspective of the needs of farmers rather than being based simply on an external perspective. It also requires that every effort made should be sensitive to the cultural development of the agricultural community by making the knowledge and culture of the local community the main variable in the process of agricultural development.

Southeast Asia Seminar Report

Gianluca Bonanno (Ph.D, Ritsumeikan University, Japan)

This seminar about sensitive and most timely issues directly affecting all facets of life for the region's peoples was important. A venue, Mae Sai, at the crossroads of ancient co-existing cultures, yet also more recent, globalisation-driven frictions. A group of around forty scholars and experts from different personal backgrounds and formation gathered together to exchange views and ideas on topics of common interest. These were the premises for a successful seminar that not only deepened our awareness of some of the region's dynamics, but, most importantly, provided us with the opportunity to discuss them with a pluralist mindset.

Herewith acknowledging the appropriateness of all of the proposed themes, as well as the high quality and professionalism of the presentations by the panelists, I would like to emphasize two aspects

of this seminar that, in my opinion, were the most valuable and in accordance with what I am personally trying to promote as a researcher: 1) its mixed academic/non-academic nature; and 2) its inclusive characteristic.

The very essence and interdependence of all occurrences shaping the recent development of Southeast Asia have shown us that the need for a paradigm shift in how we define and analyse the region's dynamic changes has become apparent. The traditional demarcation line between academia and the business world has been blurred by more frequent, spontaneous "intrusions" of each part into the other. The choice to invite experts somehow external to academic society was a winning move for the success of this seminar. Equally challenging and stimulating for future occasions might be the presence of non-academic experts among the participants. The angle from which they look at the same topics, and their expertise on the ground, are definitely complementary to the scholarly analyses more familiar to us as academics. It would have been interesting to let those experts participate more actively in the discussion sessions as well. Nonetheless, the hopefully long-lasting personal connections that could be established between them and the participants will arguably bear fruit on a personal level, as well as for an indirect contribution to the field and the spreading of a common message to the international community.

Closely connected to the abovementioned first aspect, the inclusive characteristic of this seminar was, undoubtedly, another successful element. People belonging to different geographical areas and at different stages of their respective careers served the cause of the event. Different perspectives, with sometimes largely diverging levels of understanding, were brought up at the level of both group and general discussion. The co-existence of pluralities in Southeast Asia could not have been better felt than at this seminar. The common, genuine and sometimes naïve expectation of levelling all differences in sight of attractive community-style future projections could be seen on the faces of almost all of the participants. These faces would rapidly change expression when reacting to more personal questions about compromises that a community needs to achieve in order to survive, but that are less willingly welcomed by the individual parties. On a smaller scale, this seminar gave all of us a taste of what is the biggest challenge for the future of Southeast Asia: connecting all of its realities and making them interact and strive for the common good.

A special note of appreciation is warranted for the two-day excursion to the border areas. The only way to fully understand, or at least try to, the way local people are reacting to an ever-changing situation is to go and visit them in these places. This is an opportunity that not everybody is granted, for a variety of reasons. Greatly appreciated were the follow-up explanations provided by organisers and professors, giving us a real-time analysis and interpretation of the situation on the ground, that very same situation being eye-witnessed by the participants. Notwithstanding some organizational difficulties that might arise in this case, it would generally speaking be interesting and indeed useful for the seminar's purpose to provide some space for discussion after the fieldtrip.

That said, keeping a constant eye on what could be further implemented in order to provide even more precise tools for a more thorough understanding, this seminar has been a critically fruitful endeavour that ought to inspire the whole academic world and that I hope will be repeated in the future.

Southeast Asia Seminar Report

Jinmyung Choi (Yonsei University, South Korea)

The Interpretation of Culture is a representative work of Clifford Geertz, a famous anthropologist, and I studied Geertz and his ideas in an anthropology class. The 2011 Southeast Asia Seminar gave me a chance to reconsider Geertz's emphasis on culture, and a new research topic I am interested in studying, "the Understanding of Culture."

My master's thesis deals with the cooperation between China and Mekong Subregion states.

I focused on the official behavior of governments in matters like foreign policies and international cooperation at a macro level. I thought that economic matters and mutual interests among those states were at the core of Mekong Subregion issues and that the macro-level approach was realistic and essential for this goal.

The 2011 SEA seminar, however, changed my perspective. I realized the importance of detailed factors such as language, ethnicity, environment, and identity in studying international relations as well as specific regions. These interconnected factors determine what the lives of the regional people are like. Their identity and attitudes to the world influence international relations.

What particularly caught my interest were border areas between Southeast Asian countries, or between China and Southeast Asian countries. Mae Sai, Thailand, where the 2011 SEA seminar was held, is a border area adjacent to Laos and Myanmar. There is only one bridge linking Mae Sai and Myanmar, through which a number of vehicles go, and a big market opens every night. Contrary to my expectation that it would be a small and quiet town as located in the northernmost part of Thailand, Mae Sai appeared a vigorous and populous town. This impression was confirmed during the lectures in the seminar, which explained that Mae Sai evidenced typical border area features such as active trade and human exchange.

The fact that multiple languages are spoken in the border areas and that the Yuan currency is accepted in the area adjacent to China drew my interest towards the unique cultural features of border areas influenced by multiple states, and how people in these areas perceive the notion of the state. Linguistic issues also drew my interest, such as the fact that children of ethnic minorities in Laotian border areas speak Chinese as well as Laotian and their tribal language, while the languages of some other ethnic minority people have gradually disappeared. How can we explain this phenomenon in terms of international relations?

In addition, a lecture about the issues of immigrants in the border area was of great interest to me. Immigration and migrant labor in Southeast Asia continues to increase with Chinese companies' entry into the region. Given that China and Vietnam have had armed conflicts in the past, what the life and culture of immigrants in those border areas is like, and whether the existence of these immigrants will facilitate or hinder interstate cooperation, would be interesting research questions.

Mekong dam and water resource issues also made an impression on me as they were closely related to the everyday life of people in the region. Although increasing cooperation with China would bring

great benefits to the economies of these Southeast Asian countries, such developments would also be a double-edged sword and likely to cause significant problems. I had considered this perspective before, and it became more consolidated throughout the seminar.

In retrospect, participating in the 2011 SEA seminar was a great opportunity and intellectual stimulation. It was also a rare chance to attend the detailed lectures of indigenous scholars from Korea. Moreover, I was delighted to be able to study and discuss topics with young scholars who had great passion and academic ability. Although I attended several seminars during my Master's program. I did not have sufficient opportunity for extended discussions and to get acquainted with other participants, as the seminars were held only for a short period. In contrast, the weeklong 2011 SEA seminar provided ample opportunity for discussion and making the acquaintance of fellow scholars.

My perspective was significantly enlarged through the 2011 SEA seminar. I am very grateful to Kyoto University for providing this great opportunity, and hope to keep in touch with all the "young scholars" who learned together.

Is China taking over? The political economy of resourcification in Laos [1)]

Simon Creak (CSEAS, Kyoto University, Japan)

This lecture was written for the session titled "Political Economy and Resource Management in the Face of the Rise of China" but it was clear even before giving it that, with a broader commission, the lecture might better have been titled "Is China and Vietnam taking over" or, even more generally, "Is Laos being taken over by its neighbours and other menaces." In any case, it is true that "China" looms largest in press coverage of the resource boom in Laos. Many articles play on the motif of Boten, a special economic zone incorporating a casino in Luang Nam Tha bordering with China. The Boten SEZ sounds awful though I have never been there. We hear that it is a hotbed of prostitution, kidnapping, and even murder. But most alarmingly, we hear that Boten is no longer Lao. Chinese is spoken, Renimbi is traded, and Lao police are powerless to act. "It's China now; China rented it," a Lao employee in Boten told anthropologists Chris Lyttleton and Nyiri Pal (No year) — "in fluent Chinese."

In raw figures we can see that not only Chinese but also Thai and Vietnamese investors are pouring relatively vast sums into Laos — according to official reports, $2.9b, $2.6b and $2.2b respectively between 2000 and 2010) (*VT Times*, 16 July 2010). As much as 13% of the country has been granted to investors on long-term concessions, though much less has so far been taken up (Schoenwager and Üllenberg, 2009). These figures come with lots of qualifications about who the actual investors are — what or who is "China" for instance — but, whichever way you crunch them, the figures indicate massive economic change in Laos. Beyond that, though, what do we make of the changes? Are China and these other countries taking over, as we so often read? Or is Sino-phobia to blame for scaremongering? Many researchers address these questions at the local level, as this reveals the complexity and

variability of how these changes are being experienced. I think we also need to engage with these issues at the national level — if only to engage with, and counter, more sensationalist coverage of national "takeover."

What does international relations have to say about the current changes in Laos? Ian Storey, a fellow at ISEAS in Singapore, has a new book that considers the rise of China vis-à-vis all eleven countries of Southeast Asia (Storey 2011). His chapter on Laos summarizes its relationship with China since 1945, arguing that the ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party is effective at balancing the influence of its traditional ally, Vietnam, with which it still shares its closest political ties, with that of China, which bears much needed capital. He concludes, however, that this cannot go on forever and China will eventually force Laos to choose – by which time there will only be one choice to make. I cannot pretend to predict the future but, as a historian, I feel we can learn by looking a little further into the past than does Storey. First, though, some key concepts.

The concept of "resourcification" is a useful starting point for understanding the current situation. I'm sure this term has its own history, but in the Lao context Holly High describes it thus: "the vision for development here is that abundant resources, in the form of mountains, waterways, and forested areas, will attract foreign direct investment, primarily in mining, agri-business, and hydroelectricy … population and territory are increasingly being reinterpreted as resources available for profitable exploitation in exchange for the radical transformations of developmentalist dreams" (High 2010). As Jim Chamberlain discussed in an earlier lecture, these dreams are rarely realized. Nonetheless, many people, including those within the state, find them intoxicating.

While resourcification is a useful point of departure, resources need to be viewed broadly. As well as the most obvious resources, the natural ones, the exploitation of which provides the basis of Laos's robust recent economic growth (8%+), there are other resources to consider: for instance, foreign investment, which accounts for 54% of projected expenditures under the 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015); foreign aid and loans (24% of the NSEDP); and control of regulatory process. In this sense Laos is simultaneously resource rich and exceedingly resource poor — the government share of the NSEDP is only 8% — contradictory clichés we hear all the time, often without a hint of irony. The resource economy is based on perpetual resource mobilization in which anything can be a resource. In this sense of resourcification, resources flow in many directions and between many actors: from land users/owners to the Lao state (or agents/organs of it); from land users to foreign investors; from the Lao state/foreign investors to land users (even if this is a pittance); from foreign investors and donors to Lao state bodies; and of course from the state and land users to investors. This web of relations is the resource economy understood broadly.

Another conceptual field requiring critical and historical attention is sovereignty. The pre-colonial tribute system, including Lao kingdoms, was based on acknowledged hierarchies, though these could be contested. By contrast, the Westphalian system of nation-states assumes sovereign equality between states, enshrined in the UN, ASEAN, etc. Like the tribute system, Westphalian equality is a "myth" but a "useful and necessary" one, since it provides a structure for diplomacy (Vuving 2009). Yet the

dictates of nationalism mean its mythical quality cannot be acknowledged. As nationalism preserves the myth of sovereign equality, it obscures the fact of "sovereign *inequality*." This may be a more useful explanatory concept than "extra-territoriality", a colonial-era legal term used by Lyttleton and Nyíri (No year) to characterize foreign concessions. Arguably, the latter term's use is limited to the formalised extra-territoriality of the SEZs.

The concept of sovereign inequality is useful (like extra-territoriality) because it connects the present to the past. Laos has a long history of "negotiating asymmetry," to use the title of a recent volume edited by Reid and Zheng (2009), especially with Vietnam and Thailand. Language captures the embedded acceptability of inequality in the *ai-nong* couplet, older-younger brother, which is applied officially and sometimes unofficially to the relationship with Vietnam (as in fraternal socialist countries, *pathet sangkhomninyom ai-nong kan*). It is also applied with respect to Thailand though this is contested since Laos as well as Thailand can be the *ai* country, based on the Lao Tai reputedly migrating first from southern China. Nevertheless, I've heard some Lao refer to Thailand as *ai* (or *phi*, to use the Thai term). The same linguistic device is used within Laos to acknowledge the ethnic Khmu's (*ai*) anterior right to the land vis-à-vis the Lao (*nong*). Here contemporary power relations are ritually reversed to observe the past and maintain the status quo of Lao ascendency (as in the pre-revolutionary rituals of Luang Prabang). In short, the people and culture are comfortable with normative hierarchies expressed in the idiom of kinship. It would be interesting to know if kinship terms have been used in Laos to talk about China, as in Vietnam and Burma (Vuving 2009; Myoe 2009).

By recognizing and respecting inequality, the pre-colonial Lao kingdoms were able to retain autonomy; they were "unequal but autonomous" (Reid 2009). Though we must be cognisant of the enormous changes wrought since then by colonization, decolonization and postcolonial nationalism, features of this "unequal but autonomous" political culture seem to have persisted in modern Laos, even if the myth of sovereign equality makes hierarchy inadmissible.

Despite the obvious cession of autonomy by pre-colonial rulers, the colonial era produced the modern territorial state of Laos as well as the key cultural foundations of modern Lao nationalism. Likewise, although the royalist period of independence is characterized in official historiography as "neo-colonial," French and American resources buttressed nationalism, if only to aid its battle for hearts and minds. Some scholars have likewise characterised post-1975 Laos as neo-colonial (up to perhaps 1991), but Vietnamese assistance also allowed local cultural tsars to strengthen nationalism while reconstituting it in socialist terms. These critical foundations of modern nationalism in Laos were full of contradictions, which at various times threatened and sometimes managed to undermine Lao autonomy. Yet from this tension emerged the modern nation-state of Laos.

It seems reasonable to ask, therefore, if the latest phase of post-socialism is continuing these trends, despite the contradictions that remain apparent. In some respects, the Lao state (or those who make it up) is looking stronger and more prosperous than ever. Studies of the rubber boom in northern Laos argue that at the district level a "sovereignty and power status quo" can be observed (Diana 2009). We await further research but it seems likely that foreign capital creates new networks of patronage,

with both winners and losers. At the national level, a new generation of party technocrats has apparently emerged with connections to entrepreneurs from China, Vietnam, and other countries that invest in Laos (New Mandala 2011). Furthermore, international patronage helps the party-state to strengthen its symbolic power through national extravaganzas like the 2009 SEA Games, Vientiane's 450th year celebrations, and international meetings, which boost its prestige at home and abroad. Foreign patronage has paid for national monuments, public buildings, statues, and urban infrastructure, with which the LPRP has rebuilt Vientiane in its own image.

There are many losers in Laos's new resource economy, notably dispossessed land users (though some find a way to secure benefits). But the Lao state and its functionaries do not appear to be high among them.

Note

1) This lecture draws on and develops ideas contained in CREAK, S. 2011a. Laos: National Celebrations and Development Debates. *Southeast Asian Affairs,* 2011, 107–128, CREAK, S. 2011b. Sport as Politics and History: The 25th SEA Games in Laos. *Anthropology Today,* 27, 14–19.

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Reflections on the Southeast Asia Seminar

Lizhu Dai (Advanced Institute for Contemporary China Studies, Hong Kong Baptist University)

My research is about the development of urban clusters in China. I will focus on how governance of regional integration contributes to this development. This seminar "Transformation of Human Landscape in Southeast Asia" discussed transformation in infrastructure, land use, human flows and political economy, and especially the influence of China. In particular, the studies of changing human flows and political economy have given me much insight into my own field of study, in terms of knowledge, research method, and conceptualization.

Firstly, I learned about the geographical, economic and social conditions in this region. It is composed of several countries in a limited territory which complicates the flow of humans, capital, and product. These countries have shared and connected over a long history. Thus, they share a similar culture, religion, and history. To improve regional competitive strength, these countries in Southeast Asia are on the path of integration, both physically and socially. This process is similar to what I am studying – the integrated urban cluster – although this is much more complicated, as country borders are involved. However, both research topics may still embrace some common points in terms of the integration process, and the problems it generates.

Secondly, the studies of migration also inspired me, in terms of what governments do and how people react to cross-border employment. Labor policies bring inequality and exploitation to migrant labors. However, migrants have developed their own broader social system, religious organizations, and education systems. How this will contribute to the integration of this region, and how the government should react to this, are also important factors to consider with regard to regional integration.

Thirdly, how the political economy will change in this region is what concerns me most as a researcher, as governance has played an increasing role in the integration of regional or urban clusters. How do different governments cooperate and compete? What is their role in cooperative projects, especially in terms of power bargaining? What is the relationship between big corporations and countries, and how do they entwine in the decision-making process? These are all questions we need to consider when talking about regional integration. The perspective of "resourcefication" to understand political economy is very interesting and useful. It can better describe the power shift and interest conflicts of stakeholders in this region which require further attention.

Fourthly, how to balance integration and human diversity is also a major topic which deserves further consideration. Through the construction of infrastructure and unification of language or even ritual activities, human diversity has been decreased, while few people and governments have realized its importance. To me, it seems natural that integration usually sacrifices diversity, as people have to communicate through the same language, and similar culture. However, in their seminar presentations, James Chamberlain and Nathan Badenoch provided distinct perspectives on understanding spatial reorganization through language and cultural transformation. People always look at how integration has been achieved and what inhibits this process, as they deem that integration improves competitivity

and sustainability development. The negative effects of integration have been ignored for a long time. I hope to consider these further in my own study.

In addition, the group discussions provided opportunities for more active communication and opinion-sharing by people with different academic and geographical backgrounds. I have learned a lot from the people in my group by the way they express themselves, think, and cooperate. Their ideas were critical, logical, and challenging. People worked together and were very willing to cooperate, discuss, and contribute to results and it was a very precious experience for me to cooperate with people from so many different countries.

Finally, the influence of China in this region has been studied a lot during recent years in terms of economic cooperation, migration, and cultural dissemination. Although these topics are not so related to my own area of study, I am quite interested in such discussions. As a citizen of China, I can see that there is a huge lack of academic studies from Chinese scholars, which are important to offset the imbalance and reduce misunderstanding throughout this region. Communication among China and ASEAN countries should be strengthened in the future. Finally, I would like to thank Kyoto University and Chulalongkorn University for organizing this meaningful seminar to widen our knowledge and inspire our own research.

Report on the Southeast Asia Seminar

Eom Eunhui (HK Professor[1)], Korean Studies Institute of Pusan National University, South Korea)

The 2011 seminar was co-hosted by CSEAS of Kyoto University in Japan and the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University in Thailand. The hosting organizations selected 21 young scholars through a call for applications internationally and supported full budget for participation. Originally, I had thought that all participants were to be "young scholars" (in a Korean context, students who have graduated or are Ph.D candidates); however, some attendees were Ph.D holders or professors with teaching jobs in various universities, myself included. Nonetheless, seminar participants worked hard and discussed their research at length during the whole six days (including two days of field-trips) so that we could extend the depth and breadth of our knowledge and understanding of Southeast Asian areas focusing on the Mekong region.

The reason why the border town of Mae Sai was chosen as a seminar venue was, I believe, deeply related to the theme of the seminar: "Transformations of the Human Landscape in Southeast Asia," with sub-topics focused on the issues of upper Mekong Subregion countries like China, Myanmar, Thailand, and Laos. Mae Sai is a border town in Northern Thailand that shares a lively border market with neighboring Thakhilek in Myanmar and is just an hour's distance (by car) from the 'Golden Triangle' gate cities of Chiang Khong and Chiang Saen along the main stream of the upper Mekong. The 'Golden Triangle' describes the border area between Myanmar, Thailand, and Laos. Borders in modern times

are the geographical lines dividing different political entities. However, some borders are specific sites for the exchange of peoples and commodities, rather than closed boundaries. The 'Golden Triangle' in the upper Mekong might be considered a typical example of such an area of exchange. In that sense, Mae Sai was a suitable venue for a seminar focusing on transnational issues across the Mekong River.

The Mekong River is a transnational river on the mainland of Southeast Asia. From its source in the Tibetan Plateau, China, the Mekong runs through China's Yunnan province, Burma, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. It is a lifeline of the Indochina peninsula and its influence and significance on livelihoods in the region is huge. From a historical perspective and even from the perspective of the people whose livelihood depends on it, the Mekong River is a common source for subsistence and a corridor or medium for the exchange of goods and people. The people in the region have adapted as well as modified the natural landscape through their various interactions with the river.

However, the Mekong region has drastically and profoundly changed alongside transitions that have taken place in communist countries in the region since the end of the civil war in Cambodia in 1991. At the center of these changes in the region lie the "GMS (Greater Mekong Subregion) Project" and, more recently, the emergence of China as a regional superpower. Due to the geopolitical importance of the Indochina peninsular and the high developmental potential of its abundant natural and human resources, this region has become a "hot spot" of various developmental plans. Recently, large and small-scale development plans are proceeding on the main stream as well as many tributaries of the Mekong River and their watersheds. Moreover, the actual driving forces of changes in the Mekong region are the development projects and programs across diverse geographical scales from local to global. As a result, the environment and local people's lives are also affected by lots of development activities. In this regard, the transformation of human landscape was an apt topic for the seminar.

The seminar organizers set as main goals interpreting and understanding the causes and results — in socio-cultural, political, economic, and ecological terms — of the transformations that have occurred in the Mekong region, through analysis and comparison of the interactions between humans (society) and the environment, both historically and contemporarily. With these aims, the seminar was structured around twelve lectures during the four days with three main themes: infrastructure, resource contestation and land-use change; human flows and resettlement; and political economy and resource management in the face of the rise of China.

The fresh and diverse encounters I experienced during the seminar left a strong impression, but most important for me was the existence of researchers investigating transnational issues beyond single states and their willingness to pass on this knowledge unconditionally toward successive "multinational" generations. I think the Southeast Asia Seminar 2011 conveyed the centrism of a "single nation perspective" in the following two ways.

Firstly, the topic and themes of lectures and discussions consistently focused on multinational (or transnational) issues rather than reducing topics to small issues related to a single state. In some ways, of course, this is inevitable because the Mekong River is international. Southeast Asian scholars would

surely all agree that the spatial hallmarks of Southeast Asia are openness and heterogeneity (or diversity). Meanwhile, if I may compare, the Korean school of Southeast Asian studies tends to emphasize so-called 'state-specific professionals.' It is fair to say that the current status of Southeast Asian studies in Korea still imposes limitations on research topics to restricted locales or the issues of individual countries. In this sense, I would like to say that the Korean school of Southeast Asian studies should escape "the trap of state-centrism" and make its research agenda correspond to the current situation and changes in its research field. The results of regional studies should aim to reflect the real situation of the region under study.

Secondly, I was impressed by the diversity of the seminar participants. I think that the composition of the seminar participants reflected the reality of the 'post-national state.' Nowadays, even though they are held in Southeast Asia, most international events have to adopt English as the official language for communication among participants. In my several personal experiences of participating in such seminars, however, most Asian participants get tired of expressing their feelings and opinions in English (which is a second language for most of them) day after day. Finally, participants tend to form small groups based upon where they are from and participants in these small groups only communicate in their mother tongue. This tendency weakens participation in the core group and results in a considerable communication gap. However, in the case of the Southeast Asia Seminar 2011, only one or two participants were from the same country and this made for a truly multinational composition. In these conditions, most participants had to make equal effort not to miss the chance of exchange with others and, as a result, participants did not withdraw into small groups based on native language. In these circumstances, I think most participants gained a higher level of knowledge and understanding about the Mekong region than expected. I was very impressed by the attitude of Kyoto University's CSEAS in giving young Japanese scholars, as well as other young scholars from foreign countries, an unconditional and equal chance to learn and exchange.

Compared to the long history and affluent tradition of Southeast Asian studies among Japanese scholars, the history of the Korean school of Southeast Asian studies is quite short. It was really inspiring that the seminar design was an issue-based approach across national boundaries rather than an approach based on individual countries. After the seminar I look forward to expanding research topics on Southeast Asian studies to include transnational issues beyond national borders and keeping in touch with the young Southeast Asian scholars who I met at the Southeast Asia Seminar 2011. The seminar certainly gave me the vision and imagination to embark on individual or joint research around the Mekong region. Above all, I will find colleagues who share my research interests on Mekong issues and do joint research with them, here and now.

Note

1) HK stands for Humanities Korean project, an initiative of the Humanities Promotion program launched by Korea Research Foundation in 2007. The Korean Studies Institue in PNU is running the HK research program, focusing on "Localties and Humanities."

Report on the Southeast Asia Seminar

Naoki Fukushima (ASAFAS Kyoto University, Japan)

Whenever I hear about "the Lower Mekong Region" I always think of the Pakxe and/or Champasak regions in Laos. Perhaps this is because I have lived in Vientiane for many years.

The Lower Mekong Region and Pakxe-Champasak sometimes come to mind in relation to Cambodia as well, but not Vietnam. In April 2011, the Lao government met with Vietnam opposition to discuss the Xayaboury Dam construction plan along the main stream of the Mekong River. It was only then that I recognized that the Cuu Long River that flows across Vietnam is an extension of the Mekong. As a result, I came to understand that both Vientiane and Luang Prabang are cities in the Lower Mekong Region. In that meeting, Professor Chutintaranont provided a quick "historical overview of the Lower Mekong Region," suggesting that Laos is located in the Lower Mekong Region as seen from China. From the heights of Tibet too – the source of the Mekong – both Laos and the starting point of the Cuu Long in Vietnam, almost 4000 km away from Tibet, is considered part of the Lower Mekong Region.

After participating in this seminar I realized that the idea of the Lower Mekong Region might not be that useful. To consider the Lower Mekong as one common region, it is imperative that this is only one river. But the Mekong is Langcang Jiang to Chinese or Tonle Sap to Cambodians and Cuu Long to Vietnamese. This implies that the people in Southeast Asian regions have a different history associated with the same river. Given that, when and how did the Lower Mekong Region appear as a common region? What is implied by calling it the Lower Mekong Region? These are one set of questions that came to mind in relation to a history of the river.

Another perspective is that in almost every river a drop of water takes a trip from upland to the ocean. It means that the history of a river is in part the flowing of water along the surface of the earth. In this process a river passes through various regions, particularly from higher to lower. Those areas normally have many small-scale circulations of animals, plants and materials. The making of a river history occurs under multiple layers, then. The small-scale circulations are influenced by bigger ones. The bigger-scale circulations are influenced by smaller ones. Here, I considered the meaning of harmonization.

In this seminar we discussed the interdependent systems of nature and society in Southeast Asia. This was particularly the case in the first session. In the following two sessions we also discussed some interdependent patterns between society and community across the region. This seminar provided many insights for me, but I also tried to share my views against simple categorization. It means my quest to understand more about rivers is an enduring one and that is why I need to explore and carry on with my investigations.

Engagement between the Outcomes of "the Transformations of Human Landscape in Southeast Asia" Seminar and the Study of Indigenous People in Cambodia

Oudom Ham (Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia)

The natural, cultural, and linguistic similarity of countries in Southeast Asia frequently convinces development and/or academic scholars to take into account the situation of the countries of the region before choosing a research topic in one of them. For example, inequalities in receiving the benefits of economic development for indigenous peoples compared to the majority population of a country has become a topic for multi-disciplinary research, revealing facts and contributing ideas to the task of indigenous community development. Specifically, as education is one of the most significant factors that is used to measure the living conditions of people, I am conducting a research study about the situation of access to primary education for indigenous peoples in Cambodia, in order to identify further root causes of poor access to education among indigenous communities and the implications for improving this access.

Poor public school facilities in primary education, lack of understanding of the value of education among indigenous communities, geographical isolation and poor teacher performance are root causes leading to poor access to education for indigenous peoples. In addition to these, teaching curricula in public primary schools that fail to take into account the traditional culture of indigenous communities remains a troublesome issue for implementing education for indigenous peoples. This is just one piece of evidence from an educational aspect showing that indigenous peoples have poor access to socio-economic development when development decisions are made without taking enough consideration of the voice of the local people. Many development projects have been implemented by governments and non-government organizations as a result of poor access to education as well as poor access to the socio-economic development of a specific group such as the indigenous community. However, little has been reported about development models suggested by local people themselves for their own community development.

During my research, I have found that in order to gain a broad understanding of the issues surrounding indigenous peoples in Cambodia, it is helpful to take into account the situation of indigenous peoples from other countries within the Greater Mekong Subregion such as Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam, and even, if possible, the Southeast Asia region as a whole. Interestingly, the top-down development approach regarding indigenous community development issues happens not only in Cambodia but also in Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam, even though these countries have different political platforms (for example, democratic, socialist, or authoritarian) . This fact attracts several questions not only about the situation of access to education for indigenous peoples but also other aspects that require additional research.

Therefore, meetings and discussions among multi-disciplinary research scholars regarding issues in Southeast Asian countries is apparently needed in order to facilitate the emergence of sustainable development practices that could reduce tensions between governments and their citizens. The Center

for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto, has hosted several meetings annually since the 1960s, providing a vital platform for research scholars to meet and discuss Southeast Asian issues. At the end of 2011, a seminar entitled "The Transformations of Human Landscape in Southeast Asia," aiming to facilitate meetings and discussions among senior and junior research scholars from Southeast Asian countries, was celebrated in Thailand, one of the countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

Without having had the opportunity to attend the seminar, I might not have come to know and gain an understanding of problematic issues that are even worse for indigenous peoples living outside Cambodia. For example, James Chamberlain, a senior researcher in Laos, described the relocation of Khmu in Laos PDR, an ethnic group that had been living peacefully in the forest until the beginning of the last decade. They have subsequently been relocated against their wishes to provide land for a hydropower dam development project.

Such examples remind me that the situation of indigenous peoples in Cambodia remains better than that of Laos. Furthermore, as the seminar location was close to the Golden Triangle area where Thailand, Burma and Laos meet, I was also able to learn about the situation of the approximately 100 indigenous groups in Burma who suffer from the consequences of a prolonged civil war insofar as they are forced to relocate, forcibly conscripted into the military, and are even put to death by the Burmese army. Many choose to flee the country and they have gathered together for years in camps along the Thai-Burma border. In these cases, social development among the indigenous communities can not be ensured as the camp is only a temporary place for them to stay. Though their personal safety is ensured, health, education, freedom and other components granted to full citizens are not afforded them. Refugee issues also occur in the Central Highlands of Vietnam due to lack of land and religious rights in the country. As a result, some choose to leave the country, moving mostly to Cambodia (the rapid movement of people from Vietnam has created a sense of anxiety for Cambodian nationalists that sometimes leads to individual arguments between the refugees and Cambodians). Finally, the development assistance that emerged as an intervention to reduce the poverty rate among indigenous people has failed. However, the poverty rate among the majority of the population in Vietnam has been significantly reduced.

All in all, the precarious situation gathered from Cambodia, Laos, Burma and Vietnam regarding development through the mechanism of centralized power or a bottom-up development approach provides a different picture of unsustainability, as each country has its own unique development strategy despite the similarity of their landscapes. However, through a commitment to learning and exchanging ideas, these problematic issues related to development will be gradually improved.

Migrants in the Thai-Myanmar Borderland: Continuities and Discontinuities in the Human Landscape

Yoko Hayami (CSEAS, Kyoto University, Japan)

With focus especially on Mae Sot in Northwestern Thailand, I discussed the changing human landscape on the border where migrant labor from Myanmar to Thailand floods in. I look at how trans-border minorities experience the border under fluctuating state policies and regulations.

On the peripheries of the states in Mainland Southeast Asia, minority people reside across the national territorial boundaries so that there are cultural and linguistic continuities across the border. What the border means to these people is quite different from the design and intent of the center of a modern territorial state. What does this imply for the migrant labor situation today? In order to understand what the border means to agents involved, we must look not only at state-defined maps, but at the cognitive maps of those involved in the borderlands of which there are three levels. These are the pre-border network of relationships, the state-based maps with territorial borders, and the post-border maps of relationships that have been constructed based on the borders. These three maps overlap in the experience of borderland people (van Schendel 2005).

I start by discussing the evolving economic policy of the state and how this has affected the border and the flow of people. For a decade from the mid-1980s, Thailand experienced a boost in its export-oriented industrialization. In 1988 the Chatichai government announced "constructive engagement" with its neighbors, turning the battlefields into markets. As real wages grew rapidly, Thai workers no longer took up low-wage so-called "3D" ("Dirty, Dangerous, Demeaning") jobs. Also in 1988, the Burmese movement for democracy took place. Student activists as well as ethnic rebels flocked to the border, and around this time, migrant labor on the border became a recognized phenomenon. Increasingly, the refugees became a necessary labor supply for Thai economic growth in the 1980s and 1990s. Successive Thai governments allowed the entrance of refugees and illegal sojourners. In 1997 the Mae Sot Friendship Bridge was completed.

Under the National Economic Development Plan, the Thai government began to promote trade as well as industry along the border, while it also took various measures to regulate the labor in-migration. Several border provinces were designated as Special Border Economic Zones including Tak Province in 2004 (Mae Sot is the border town in Tak). Designating such zones meant formulating "economic dams" at the border which would contain and utilize the flow of migrant workers, and using their labor right along the border where investors were lured to build factories and plantations. By relocating industrial activities to border areas, the latter could benefit from low-cost unskilled labor.

After 1992, the state began to issue one-year work-permits to illegal migrants. Since then, state policies towards migrant labor have fluctuated until in 2008, a new law to provide nationality verification for migrant laborers was instituted. The policy enabled the use of cheap and flexible labor while keeping them illegal. An estimated 1-1.5 million Burmese workers are now in Thailand (Pitch 2007).

Mae Sot in the Special Border Economic Zone grew rapidly, based on the cheap labor that continues

to come in across the border. There is today a varied population of migrants in Mae Sot and its vicinity: the inhabitants of refugee camps which are said to number 120,000; 80-100,000 migrant laborers in factories, agricultural villages, and at homes as domestic workers (some are seasonal laborers while others come and go either on foot across the bridge or by boat across the river); and traders who come and go. There are more than two hundred factories in the area, 95% of whose laborers are migrants working for wages as low as 40 to 70 baht per day (the official minimum daily wage in Tak Province in 2011 is 162 baht, in Bangkok, 215 baht). The local Chamber of Commerce, the Labor Protection Office and the police and authorities are complicit in keeping wages low, making conditions for workers in Mae Sot extremely harsh (Arnold 2007).

If we compare the working conditions at Mae Sot with those further inland, wages are higher in Bangkok, relationships with employers are better, and other work and living conditions seem relatively better. Why then, do so many of the migrants stay on the border? Mobility is easier, since to go home they need not travel through other provinces, which raises the risk of being caught. From Mae Sot, they simply cross the river, so that even without work permits, they can easily go home. Migrants in the interior send remittances far more regularly than those along the border in Mae Sot. Many of the former, in fact, send their children to school in their home town in Myanmar, seeking the help of their parental home. Those in Mae Sot, on the other hand, mostly send their children to informal Learning Centers, run by NGOs along the border, where children are taught in Burmese and other vernacular. Furthermore, Mae Sot is a border town with many Burmese speakers. Migrants therefore can get by without speaking Thai or adopting a Thai lifestyle. The percentage of migrants who professed that they would never go back home to Myanmar was higher in Mae Sot than in the interior. All this tells us that the mode of adaptation among migrant families in the interior and those in Mae Sot seems quite disparate.

Much of this difference may have to do with the cultural continuity experienced on the border, especially by cross-border minority populations such as the Karen. In pre-modern days, they were inhabitants of the "forest corridor," not quite under the control of either kingdom (Thongchai 1994). They had always been quite mobile, moving of their own accord or at the whim of the needs of the battling kingdoms, and this border region was a pathway for local people in the region. The recent migrant flow thus takes place on the foundations of existing patterns of migration and cultural continuity across the border. Religious activities have also taken place across the border, including Christian and Buddhist, as well as other smaller religious movements led by charismatic figures. Such pre-border networks are alive, allowing Karen relationships on a face-to-face basis.

In the 20th century, the border area became contested ground for the ethnic conflict involving the Karen, with the Karen National Union seeking ethnic self-determination since 1947. The battleground moved from Rangoon to the eastern border and the headquarters of the Karen National Union was near the border from 1974 until its fall in 1995. The border became an important point for black market trade among the ethnic military, and the locus of military, political and economic negotiations. The Thai military allowed the Karen to escape into Thai territory and to develop this economic base along the

border, partly as a strategy to maintain the buffer zone. For the minorities, the border has always been continuous and yet contested. To this, the recent trend has added seekers of political asylum, labor opportunity, and education, as well as medical aid. It is since the late 1980s that the move has become one-sided.

As a result of such networks across the border and waves of migrants, we can now see that a social system specific to this border has emerged (Lee 2007). With the increasing number of migrants on the border, various informal institutions were begun at the border, including the local Learning Centers for migrant children. These were schools outside the Thai curriculum. Today, an estimated 200,000 school-age illegal Burmese, Karen, Mon and Indian children study in these schools. Forty-six of these schools are aligned with an organization called the Burmese Migrant Workers Education Committee. The schools vary in scale and are mostly supported by foreign aid. The Thai government has reinforced its policy to allow illegal migrants to receive public services including education (2004), but still only 10% attend while most attend the LCs. Students are given student cards which in Mae Sot town can serve as ID cards.

In such informal institutions, we find that the border has developed its own social system, accommodating the very specific situation prevailing there. This is a result of the overlaying of existing regional social and cultural continuity, the modern delineated border and the formal system it accompanies such as immigration and customs, border security etc., and the newly emerging informal institutions, as well as alliances and networks for coping with it.

In a modern territorial state with a linear boundary, the habitat of people in the borderlands becomes divided. From the state perspective, they are categorized as "minority groups on the peripheries." Borderland people are not non-problematically integrated as national members, nor merely peripheralized as stateless nomads. The story of Mae Sot and the border social system that emerges there are the product and process of articulation between the modern state border, political implications of the ethnic struggle, the acute need for cheap labor in the globalizing economy of Thai industries, and the development of the registered illegal immigrant worker regime. The migrant people live with the layers of pre-border, state-border-defined and post-border relationships and networks in seeking their own social and cultural position and meaning in life, weaving an altogether different borderland space and relationships.

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Towards Collaboration across National Differences and Disciplinary Divisions

Masao Imamura (Department of Geography, National University of Singapore, Singapore)

I am constantly amazed by my own ignorance about Asia, but I tell myself that it is a reflection of a broader collective ignorance. I think it is fair to say that Asian people in general do not know each other as well as Europeans or Latin Americans know each other in their respective regions. This is understandable because, first of all, Asia is much larger both in terms of land area and population. In addition, Asia is exceptionally diverse — culturally, religiously, linguistically, and politically. There is no language in the region that can act more or less as a *lingua franca*, and there is no common religious background that gives a sense of unity across the region.

Considering the vastness and the diversity of this region, we must wonder whether "Asia" is really a viable category. Indeed, we know that the name "Asia" used to describe this vast area of Eurasia (four-fifths of the continent) has a short history. In addition to these complexities, the intense and long conflicts in this part of the world in the past century have caused numerous and deep divisions. As a consequence of these disconnects, tensions, and hostilities, when we Asians from various countries meet each other for the first time, we tend to act like self-appointed diplomats. As Dr. Yeoh Seng Guan pointed out near the end of our event, many of us assume the position of explaining and defending our respective governments; we act as "the state's apologist," as he put it. As he further noted, it is somewhat disturbing that we voluntarily accept — often quite eagerly — to speak on behalf of "our government" or "our people."

In addition to this issue of national differences, there is another issue of division that tends to strongly condition the way we think as researchers — namely, academic disciplines. The participants in our conference came not only from various countries but also from a wide range of research disciplines. Different disciplines have different questions, conceptual paradigms, methods, and vocabularies. It is not easy for engineers, anthropologists, and biologists, for example, to carry on a substantive conversation as researchers. Conversing with professors from Kyoto in Mae Sai, I gained some illuminating insights into challenges and opportunities for multi-disciplinary research. What might be called the "Kyoto school of area studies" conducts research with a radically multi-disciplinary approach, by combining natural, social and human scientists under the rubric of "area studies." This is a unique approach, admired by many but imitated by no other institutions, as Dr. Kono noted in his talk. Proponents of the Kyoto school have demonstrated that their style of multi-disciplinary collaboration is not only possible

but, in fact, immensely fruitful. At the same time I have heard from them that the model of collaboration is not easy to replicate. In other words, it is difficult for this model to work as a discipline. Why is it so difficult?

"Discipline" is a remarkably revealing word about the nature of academic work. Related to another word, "disciple," it means "training to act in accordance with rules." What is exciting and at the same time daunting about multi-disciplinary research is that there are not common "rules of the game" for the researchers to follow (except, of course, that they all somehow research in or about the "same" area). Prof. Kono and Prof. Shimizu told me in Mae Sai that area studies researchers trying to work together is like athletes of different sports (soccer, tennis, golf, etc.) trying to play a game together. This can be very frustrating and confusing — especially to those already accomplished in a particular game/discipline.

It is worth recalling, however, that all the rules and conventions have been created at one point or another in history. They have been formulated through a process of trial and error. Anthropology is a particularly new discipline; as an institution, it used to be marginal but it is well-established today. Religious studies still seems to be in the process of disciplinary formation. Should and can area studies be effectively established as an academic discipline? Perhaps it is more advantageous not to be a rigid discipline; possibly, there are more merits in keeping the rules flexible and loose. However, I think that area studies should actively provide sustained critiques of the conventional model of academic disciplining.

A further point worth remembering is that sports games and musical genres have changed dramatically in the course of their journeys around the world. I think, for example, of jazz and hip-hop created in North America; academic researchers should emulate such creative dynamism. I hope that researchers in Asia will greatly contribute to the fruitful transformation of national boundaries and disciplinary divisions.

Southeast Asia Seminar: Transformations of the Human Landscape in Southeast Asia

Manoliu Cecilia Ioana (University of Tsukuba, Japan)

The 2011 Southeast Asia Seminar was a valuable experience for me from many perspectives. The presentations were rich in information and brought forth quite interesting views on some of the most important issues in Southeast Asia. The themes of the seminar were also meaningful in terms of current development in the region and the input of participants provided valuable contributions to the proposed topics. Moreover, the fact that the seminar drew together researchers from various countries, involved in one way or another in research or activism in the region, contributed considerably to the quality and diversity of the information. The combination of presentations and workshops was particu-

larly good as it offered the chance to discuss, analyze and further develop new ideas around the major themes broached in the seminar. The broadness of the chosen topics was a further positive element as it gave participants the opportunity to discuss their particular interests but also to see the larger regional picture where multiple elements interconnect.

My interest in the region has been mostly on water issues, dam project development and civil society, and the seminar contributed to my understanding with quality information in this area. I had the opportunity to meet researchers and activists in this field with vast experience in this subject and related fields. Water plays a crucial role in the human landscape: it may bring development but also impoverishment; it may ensure food security or its opposite if badly managed; it gives people the opportunity to move, interact, communicate or trade but it is also a source of conflicts, isolation, forced or voluntary resettlement and a threat to life during natural or manmade disasters. Seeing everything in an interconnected manner is an important starting point in grasping the realities that change and affect the human landscape in Southeast Asia. Maybe this interconnection between various aspects of development in the region is very obvious whenever we discuss water and particularly trans-boundary water sources like the Mekong River. One verb that can encompass perfectly the importance of working together for a common goal and was used in the presentation, "Contested Waterscapes in the Region," as well as indirectly in other places, is "to share." If various stakeholders realize the importance of sharing benefits and information beyond national borders then this is already an important step forward in the regional development process.

The seminar offered the possibility of analyzing challenges in the South Asia region from a number of different angles, due to the high diversity in background of speakers and participants. It is, perhaps, a model of participation that could be extended beyond the academic world into the real decision-making processes that affect overall regional development. Sharing ideas and visions brings people together and encourages regional cooperation and communication, but when those ideas are also integrated in actual projects then they contribute to a healthy and balanced development that brings advantages to multiple stakeholders. This need for sharing information and cooperation was highlighted often in our group discussions on different topics. Also noted frequently was the need for real and active participation in order to solve various problems that affect most Southeast Asian countries.

Finally, the holistic approach of the seminar helped me to reconsider my own research and make further improvements, and overall it was a positive experience academically and for personal and professional development.

Agriculture as a Basis of Human Landscape Transformation under Climate Change Scenarios: A System Approach Perspective

Attachai Jintrawet (Crop Science and Natural Resources Department and Multiple Cropping Center, Faculty of Agriculture, Chiang Mai University, Thailand)

A short history

Agriculture, a risky business of human society, has aided societal transformation from hunting-and-gathering to agrarian society and then industrial and information society over a period of more than ten thousand years, and will continue to do so, but with more efficient and effective agricultural technology. Through trial-and-error processes, on so-called "real systems," in stations or on farms, agricultural research generates new agricultural technologies, such as crop varieties, animal breeds, and cultural practices suitable for a given ecosystem. However, since ecosystems are complex, interactions between components create a large number of combinations of factors to be tested. Consequently, during the 1960s, several international agricultural research centers (IARCs) were established to fight hunger by developing components of "green revolution" technologies for major staple food crops. These IARCs used a "transfer-by-analogy process" to generate research outputs and outcomes for a given agroecological zone, based on a combination of soil and climate maps. The transfer-by-analogy process poses similar drawbacks to the trial-and-error process: namely, a large number of combinations of soil and climate, as well as socio-economic conditions, prompts a call for formulation of research frameworks that visualize multi- and interdisciplinary teams such as cropping systems, farming systems research, rapid rural appraisal, and agroecosytem analysis methods to gain better understandings of the interactions of biophysical and socio-economic components of an agroecosystem.

In the early 1980s, the development of personal computers, and information and communication technologies (ICTs) allowed the development of digital databases of natural and agricultural resources, such as digital soil and climate maps, and empirical and process-based crop and livestock simulation models. These ICTs have spawned an array of agricultural ICT tools capable of predicting, supporting decision-making, and promoting collaborative efforts to allocate limited resources to sustainable agricultural systems.

An ICT framework to humanize agricultural production systems

To feed a growing population, agricultural systems are faced with four major pressures: a changing climate, declining natural resources and fossil fuel as energy sources, demands for collective decisions based upon good governance, and participation for better livelihoods in rural and urban environments (Table 1). In addition, agricultural research and development organizations must generate agricultural technologies that are sustainable and environmentally friendly. To achieve such multi-purpose goals, agricultural scientists should combine the two research processes with ICTs to generate agricultural

Table 1 Opportunities and challenges for coexistence and sustainability of natural ecosystems and agroecosystems based on five major drivers.

Drivers	Opportunities	Challenges
Climate change	Increased interest in linking climate and weather patterns with agroecosystems performance	Incorporating climatic data and information in decision-making process to handle floods, drought, and crop pest infestation.
Growing population	Increased demand for foods, fiber, feed, fuel, environment	Food assessment and utilization
Natural resources & decline of fossil fuel	Use of: - better irrigation. - balanced soil and crop nutrients - alternative energy sources	Incorporating natural resources data and information in decision-making process
Collective decisions	Increased demand for better decisions on utilization and allocation of resources	Quality data for analysis/synthesis to actively participate in free trade agreements
Participation for better livelihood	Willingness to join discussion, online & offline.	Development of tools that accommodate participation and action to promote sustainable production

ICT tools or AgICT tools.

The development of AgICT tools to accommodate participation in promoting sustainable production presents an opportunity for developers. Fig. 1 schematically displays a practical framework to humanize the willingness of various components of a given crop production system, the lowland rice production system. It begins from a joint meeting between key stakeholders of a production system, such as rice production in one district, to develop planting, management, and harvesting plans, as well as a map showing the location of each production unit. Once the farm operation plan is agreed among concerned parties, data about soil identification codes, weather identification codes, and management data of each production unit can be retrieved and passed on to the simulation model to calculate crop growth and development overtime and, finally, crop yields. Meanwhile, farmers operate and maintain their crops according to the agreed plans and regularly report actual activities and record actual outputs via wireless or other types of digital communication to the 'main' system for further processing. The actual outputs, for example, crop yield or agricultural pollutants, will be compared to the results from simulations. The agreements or discrepancies between the two can be visualized and used for planning of the next season's crop production.

Conclusion

AgICT tools are memory storage systems for users at various levels. These tools combine simulation models and resource databases for users to address various "what if" questions and "risk situations," such as climate change scenarios. Effective research for development can be carried out, using these AgICT tools, to generate understanding of the interactions of natural ecosystems and agroecosystems. I hope that this note contributes to redressing the lack of interdisciplinary research designed to gener-

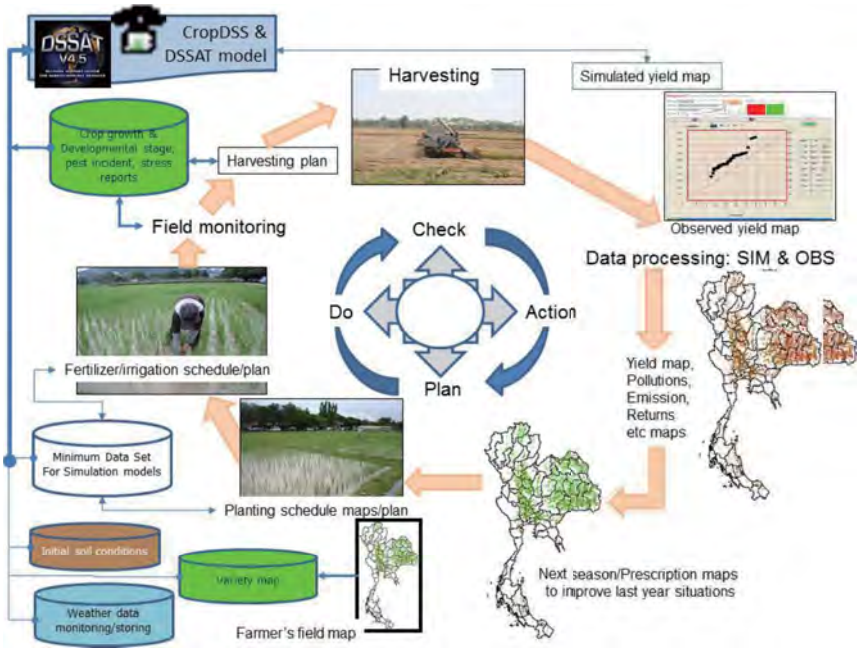

Fig. 1 A practical framework to humanize the various components of a given crop production system.

ate understanding of interactions of key processes and promotes active discussion regarding the pros and cons of proposed approaches. I also hope it provides some insight into the implementation of agricultural production situations in Thailand, among GMS members, and among ASEAN members at large, under pressure from increasing population, a changing climate, and limited natural resources. AgICT tools are the products and purpose of research projects, the sustainability of agroecosystems and natural ecosystems are the prize.

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Encounters and Land Use Changes

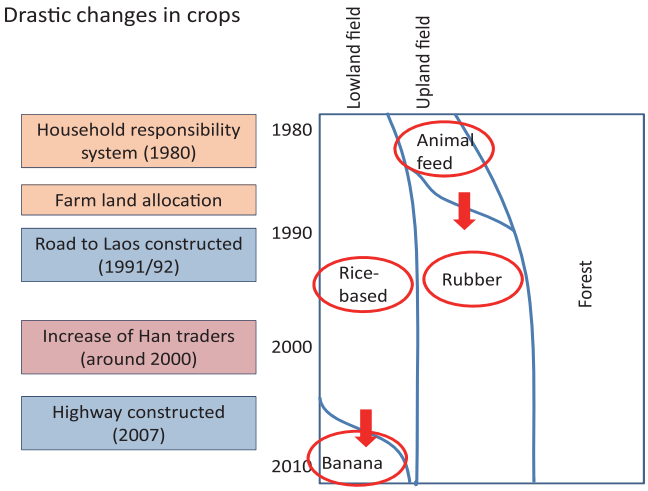
Yasuyuki Kono (CSEAS, Kyoto University, Japan)

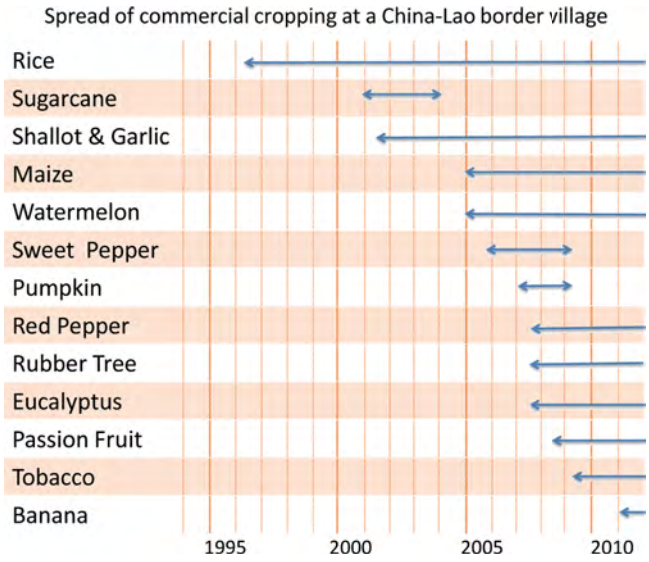
Land use is one of the key indicators of the human landscape and represents the interactions between multi-layered human approaches to land and deeply embedded geological, hydrological and biological attributes of land. This lecture highlighted the changing process of land use and encouraged discussions on the sustainability of land use from the perspective of its mechanisms and stakeholders.

Land use has, theoretically, two types of mechanism of change, structure-driven and event-driven (Leisz *et al.* 2010). Since the event-driven mechanism is much more influential in recent land use dynamism of Southeast Asia, I focused on event-driven changes in this lecture, raising two encounters as case studies, the encounters of Southeast Asia with China and the encounters of remote areas with the private sector.

The first case is the encounter of Southeast Asia with China at the border area between South Yunnan and Northwest Laos, a village on both sides of the border. The encounter of a Dai village in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, with commercial production of banana for the huge domestic market of China led to drastic changes in lowland cropping patterns from paddy-based crops to mono-cropping of banana within a short period. It also transformed the livelihood of local people from subsistence-oriented to market-dependent. Local people, surprisingly, almost simultaneously accepted these changes and did not hesitate to take risks to convert their livelihood. Although it is not known yet how these decisions were motivated and how the changes were promoted, the underlying driving forces are thought to be the strong leadership of community leaders, intensive competition among villagers, and various kinds of Chinese (Han) networks for production, trading, labor recruitment, financing and so on, which spread in this remote area rather recently, particularly after the completion of a highway.

The encounter of Lao farmers with Chinese traders aiming at producing vegetables and fruits for the Chinese market created a much more complicated process. They have repeated a trial-and-error process to operationalize the encounter for more than ten years. They introduced a wide range of commercial crops including watermelon, sweet pepper, pumpkin and passion fruit, but they gave up most of them due to technical, trading and administrative obstacles. Through this process, however, both Lao farmers and Chinese traders gradually learned how to produce commercial crops in Laos for the Chinese market, how to expand commercial cropping under the Lao administration and how to form





constructive cooperation between them. This is a time-consuming but indispensable process for forming a mutually beneficial and long-lasting collaboration between them.

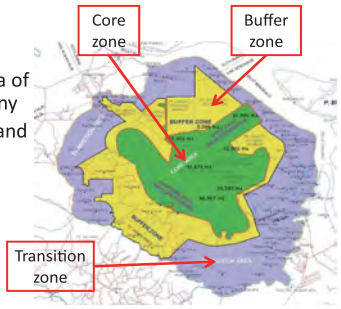
Another case is the encounter of a remote area with the private sector, one in Sumatra, Indonesia, and the other in Northeast Thailand. The encounter of tropical peat land with a pulp and paper company led to scientifically rational land development with a huge initial investment. This quickly converted land use from degraded natural forest to plantation forestry, and contributed to the development of a pulp and paper industry. This development, however, also changed former no man's land to habitable land, attracted many migrants, promoted encroachment by local and migrant people, and finally caused

Difficulties in development

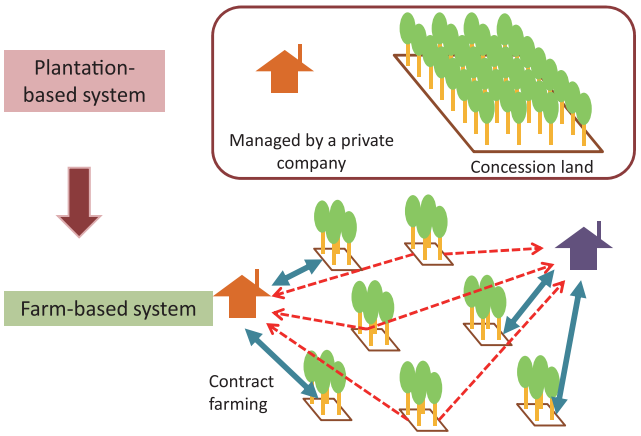
- To drain water and control water levels by constructing drainage network
- To construct road network for farming operation
- To protect against fire
- To minimize carbon emissions

Development process

- A concession of 800 thousand ha of land to a pulp and paper company
- Land use zoning for production and conservation
- Infrastructure development
- Tree plantation
- UNESCO Biosphere Reserve



Shift from plantation-based system to farm-based system



serious land conflicts between the company and local people.

Plantation forestry of eucalyptus in Northeast Thailand also caused land conflicts between the plantation companies and local farmers. Through repeated negotiation processes among companies, local people and government sectors, tree planting transformed from a plantation-based to farm-based system. This transformation materialized partly because of the emergence of various kinds of livelihood options for farmers owing to the rapid growth of the Thai economy.

Through these cases studies, I would like to extract two key questions regarding the learning process and the role of the private sector. The Xishuangbanna and Central Sumatra cases showed highly productive and profitable land use changes due to higher technology, bigger investment and stronger institutions. The Northwestern Lao and Northeast Thailand cases repeated “trial and error” for the

changes. This type of change is much more common in Southeast Asia, though it is rather difficult to categorize. What should be done in order to make "trial and error" not simply an adaptation process but a creative learning process to achieve sustainable land use and local societies?

Participation of the private sector in rural development is undoubtedly essential. It is, however, also true that this causes numerous conflicts, particularly on land, basically because of the crucial difference in the interests among the private sector, local people and government sectors. What role is the private sector expected to play, and how can its comparative advantages be harnessed to contribute to the local environment and society?

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ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement: From Concept to Reality

Visara Kraiwatanapong (Ubon Rachatthanee University, Thailand)

Since China opened its economy to the world in the late 1970s under the "open door" policy imposed by Deng Xiaoping, it has become an economic powerhouse and achieved spectacular growth with an average of 6.6% in real GDP between 1970 and 1990 and 9% over the period of 1990-2009. The increasing role of China in the international political and economic arena brings about different perceptions toward the country. Those who express great fear of this trend voice concern over the possibility of a reduction in their shares in the international market because of China's cheap labor costs; in contrast, those who welcome the rise of China see the huge size of China's domestic market as an advantage. To respond to negative feelings, China increased its economic cooperation with many countries, especially after it accessed to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. Initially, China was negatively regarded by some ASEAN countries after proposing a free trade area with ASEAN. However, after a one-year intensive study discussed by Chinese and ASEAN senior officials, the "Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and China" finally led to the establishment of an ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement in 2004. The agreement was fully implemented in 2010 for long-standing ASEAN members and will come into effect by 2015 for new members.

Some specific political and economic motivations for both China and ASEAN should be emphasized. Economically, the proliferation of Regional Trade Areas (RTAs) or Free Trade Areas (FTAs) in the early 1990s, especially in Europe and America, signaled to Asian countries the need to launch their own RTAs and FTAs to enhance economic integration in the region. The trend in RTAs/FTAs was a reaction to the slow progress in trade liberalization during the WTO Doha Round. ASEAN and China could

enjoy the benefits of better market access in their selected products. In addition, the 1997-98 Asian Financial Crisis illustrated the economic interdependence of Asian nations. For ASEAN members, disappointment over the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) made them hope that ASEAN +3 (APT) monetary and financial cooperation would preserve economic stability in the region. The success of market-driven economies and the idea of open regionalism paved the way for ASEAN members to enhance cooperative activities such as RTAs and FTAs with China, Japan, and South Korea to attract global investors to the region. Thus, the FTAs were efforts to facilitate liberalization and development cooperation. Politically, the FTAs could also be a vital instrument of diplomacy, especially for China to demonstrate its good neighbor policy with the aim of mitigating Asian countries' fear of Chinese economic growth and competition.

Theoretically, under the principles of the comparative advantage of economic liberalism and the factor endowments approach, both concepts which focus on cost effectiveness, lower trade barriers and cost reduction would inevitably bring about increased intra-regional trade and investment. According to Asian Development Bank, trade between ASEAN members and China has grown substantially since the mid-1990s and has been more rapid since China joined the WTO. Trade among ASEAN member states as well as ASEAN's share of total foreign direct investment (FDI) was increased in macro-economic aspect. However, some sectors have been negatively affected by regional economic liberalization.

Micro-economic level research conducted by Narumon Nirathon[1)] found that after the FTA between Thailand and China was reached under the framework of ACFTA, the livelihood of garlic farmers in Chiang Mai was directly affected as a result of severe competition. The price of imported garlic from China, Myanmar and Laos undercut local garlic prices while production costs tended to increase. With the exception of farmers who were members of cooperatives, most of the garlic farmers did not understand that the lower price of garlic was a consequence of ACFTA. Since growing other crops such as soybeans, sweet potato and corn under the contract farming system recommended by government officials did not provide higher returns for the farmers, their income, as well as their way of life, was severely threatened. However, the farmers learned some lessons and responded with various adaptive strategies, such as: reducing areas for garlic farming and receiving compensation; switching to other crops recommended by the government; decreasing the cost of production by reducing the use of chemical fertilizers and making their own organic fertilizers on a 'trial and error' basis; assuming the role of middlemen when they had sufficient capital and other related knowledge; choosing to stop farming and then offering their lands for rent; and becoming local manual workers or moving to work in the city. The worst case occurred with a garlic farmer who had no alternative idea and was waiting for government assistance.

On 14 February 2011, the China Program at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, held a workshop for discussing and reviewing the first year of the full implementation of ACFTA. At the workshop, Southeast Asian scholars addressed some of the benefits of ACFTA, as well as challenges ahead. On the one hand, trade volume between

ASEAN and China had increased 37% from the previous year amidst the global financial crisis, a remarkable achievement. Greater economic efficiency and lower costs had led to an increase in mutual direct investment. Mutual understanding on ACFTA had been gradually developed via a number of meetings as well as greater cooperation, and relations between China and ASEAN had significantly improved with a more substantial role for regional businesses in cross-border investments.[2] The development disparity among ASEAN nations reflected different opportunities and difficulties. Since Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand had been able to shift their major exports from primary products in the 1990s to information and communication technology (ICT) goods in the mid-2000s, the complementarities between China and these more developed ASEAN countries had deepened. On the other hand, some challenges for CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam) remained. Since the structure of CLMV and China was competitive rather than complementary, they would continually compete with each other. Moreover, although there were complementarities between China and the more developed ASEAN countries, they also had to compete in exporting to more advanced countries such as USA and countries within the European Union. Such competition might cause concern among some ASEAN countries that ACFTA would harm their particular industries such as electronics, footwear, apparel and textiles. In conclusion, to reduce economic competition and enhance mutual interest and understanding under the framework of ACFTA, closer cooperation and development is required from both ASEAN and China to reduce negative impacts from trade liberalization and to achieve economic growth and individual welfare for people along the principles of economic liberalism.

Notes

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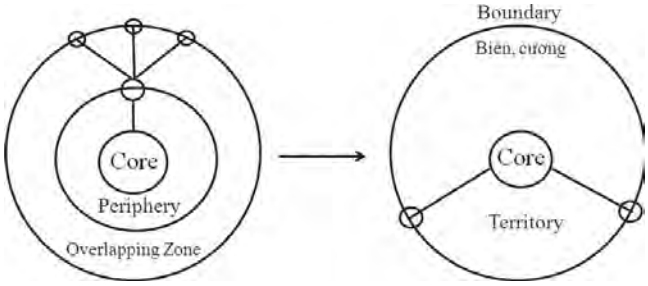
2) Keith Flick, ed., ASEAN-China Free Trade Area: One-Year Review in *Report of A Workshop Organized by the China Programme at the S. Rajatnam School of International Studies (RSIS) Nanyang Technological University, Singapore on 14 February 2011,* Available from [http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/conference_reports/ACFTA.pdf], access on 31 October 2011.

Thoughts on Changing Political Landscape in Early Nineteenth Century Vietnam: A View from Lowland and Highland Interaction

Vu Duc Liem (Chulalongkorn University, Thailand)

"Of the national treasure, nothing can compare with land, from which people and prosperity are generated." (Phan Huy Chu, 1820)

Previous scholarship on Vietnam history seemed to deal with this subject from either the Chinese model of a tributary system or a very centralized ideological approach. In both circumstances, there was the



Changing Paradigm of Power in early nineteenth century Vietnam

overwhelming influence of centralist historical ideology in which kings and states dominate the narrative and capture the main theme of these histories through the perspective of the centralized powers of Thang Long/Hanoi, Hue or Saigon. In this respect, the early 19th century is seen as a watershed in shaping the modern Vietnamese geo-political body. Generally speaking, scholarship on Vietnam, also pays much attention to the North-South "surface orientation" as a main stream of Vietnamese history. Therefore, lowland-highland interaction between Viet and other ethnic minorities was either academically neglected or found to be far less important than the discourse of the "march to the south."

In this short essay, I want to highlight the east-west interaction in creating a structure of Vietnamese modern history. Their interaction with the hills was found as a *de facto* source of dynamism in the early modern Vietnam and the clash between lowland and highland had a significant role to play in the making of Vietnam as a modern nation state. Within this framework, the Viet's state-making project of the early nineteenth century reached to three peripheries and semi-peripheries of ethnic minority, namely the northwestern region of the Tai, H'mong, Tay, Nung, Dao, Giay, Ha Nhi, La Hu, Kho-mu, and La-ha; the central highlands of Hre, Cham, Bana, Brau, Bru-Van Kieu, Cho-ru, Chut, Co-ho, Co-tu, Jarai, Ede, Gie-Trieng, Ma, Mnong, Ro-mam, Ta-oi, Tho, Xo-dang, and Xtieng; and the highlands in the south of Cham, Cho-ro, and Khmer. During the eighteenth century, in times of civil war and regional conflict among Trinh, Nguyen, and Tay Son, the Cham, Bana, Jarai, Ede, Khmer, and others actively engaged and played a tremendous role in creating a new Vietnamese geo-politics from the Red River delta to the Lower Mekong.

The situation, however, changed drastically when the new Viet political system was set up under the Nguyen Dynasty as the Viet's idea of state was in crucial transformation: from a kingdom based on control of people to one based on direct control of land, manpower, and economic resources. Correspondingly, a new change in the political ideology from Hue can be noted, the transformation from a kingdom based on single ethnicity, the Kinh, into the idea of a state of multi-ethnicities based on geo-political surface or territory and boundary. The Hue court had a strong commitment and made great efforts to incorporate three different ethnic zones into a new Viet-style administrative network and turn those peoples into subjects of Vietnamese taxation.[1)]

The extension of centralization resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of new administrative

units under the Hue authority. For two decades, those ethnic peripheries and semi-peripheries were seen as tributary zones or a "*barbarian frontier*," and were incorporated into parts of the Viet's core-state. Between 1558 and 1802, the Viet's territory was tripled in size and most of the new land came from spaces of ethnic diversity and multi-culturalism.[2] Meanwhile, from 1490 (Dai Viet) to 1847 (Dai Nam), there was also a significant increase in the number of districts, from 178 to 283.[3] In the reign of Minh Mang and Thieu Tri (1820–1847), fourteen of the forty districts were set up in the south in areas previously inhabited by other ethnicities as a majority.[4]

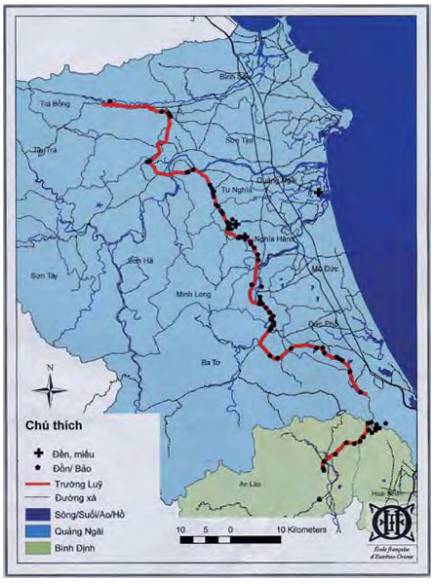
This phenomenon was associated with destruction of local ethnic political organizations as a polity and their incorporation into Vietnamese standard administrative units vis-à-vis imposition of new land management, taxation, and corvée labor. The institution of *Cai tho qui luu* placed local chiefs and local rulers with officials sent from Hue who would introduce the lowland values and transfer them as the dominant social and political mechanism to rule hill peoples. This process was strongly assisted by creating the facilitation of "national" integration, building roads, citadels, and military walls, sending standing troops, and setting up garrisons and military plantations. In 1839, an ethnic minority village leader in Bien Hoa reported that "since Cai tho qui luu, they (Viet) charged a head tax every year, and have forced us to sell local products at a low price. In addition, they have conscripted soldiers from us, and have measured our land (in an arbitrary way). How can we cope with this?"[5]

The extension of state control undoubtedly included economic resources which were becoming vital for regional economic integration in the nineteenth century and for the court's demand. The court also monopolized iron trade in Ninh Thuan, exploiting iron in Thai Nguyen, and gold in Tuyen Quang.[6] The taxation system probably became a new source of suffering for the highlanders, including a head tax of which most non-Viet ethnicities had had no experience before.

In creating one people from different ethnic minorities, Hue had to face a fundamental challenge: given that the peoples of the ethnic zones were long considered "barbarians," how could they become "equal subjects" to the "civilized" Viet? The answer was to be found in a "cultivation" policy established to convert these peoples into "civilized Vietnamese" subjects. The Hue court moved people from the lowlands to the highlands. This movement of the Kinh "majority" to ethnic areas resulted in intensive ethnic, cultural, economic and political interactions. Other forms of facilitating "national" integration can also be seen in presenting Vietnamese as the *lingua franca,* and establishing Vietnamese villages in between ethnic communities.

It is no surprise that the zenith of this political transformation witnessed the peak in ethnic resistances in various forms throughout the country. Interestingly, the hill peoples in early 19th century Vietnam, in struggle with state power, did not choose to "run away" from the "valley kingdom" but, rather, chose to express their attitude in the form of resistance. In this context, the number of massive anti-Vietnamese revolts that broke out from 1832 to 1835 showed the last Cham attempts to resist being directly governed by a new form of Viet authority.

In the North, Nong Van Van collected the Tay and Nung ethnicities and led an insurrection from 1833 to 1835. The revolt started in Tuyen Quang but spread to the provinces of Thai Nguyen, Cao Bang



Tinh Man Truong Luy [The Pacified Barbarians Long Wall] [Source: EFEO Hanoi 2011]

and Lang Son (new provinces established in 1831) and rapidly became the most significant ethnic revolt.

In the south, ethnic resistance became a wide movement, especially during the reign of Minh Mang. Choi Byung Wook suggests that the conflicts directly resulted from the court's radical assimilation policy and "southern Vietnam was swept by a series of ethnic insurrections."[7] A report to the court in 1840 described how "barbarians rebelled everywhere.… From An Giang to Ha Tien, from An Giang to Tran Tay all captured and ruled by rebellion."[8] The expression of southern ethnic resistance can also be found in the form of religious movements, of which *Buu son ky huong*, established in 1849 by Doan Minh Huyen (1807–1856), is a typical example. Combining popularized Buddhism and local beliefs, the religion grew out of ethnic differentiation during the peak of the Viet's assimilation project.[9]

The longest ethnic rebellion, however, was the Da Vach revolt in the central highlands. The situation became more complicated after 1842, when several French missionaries fled into this highland area to escape Minh Mang's suppression of Catholics. The Church of Bana was then established and supported by the local people against the Hue court.[10] In 1819, the Hue court started building a stone wall known as *Tinh Man Truong Luy* [The Pacified Barbarians Long Wall] to prevent Da Vach's plunders toward the lowlands. However, the highlanders seemed not to give up and continued their raids on a large scale. In 1885, there were twelve attacks recorded and since 1864 Hue had appointed a military leader to deal with those peoples only.[11]

In conclusion, there was a fundamental change in early 19th century Vietnamese political organization which can be clearly seen from the lowland and highland interaction. The phenomenon of lowland

and highland integration in early 19th century Vietnam is found as part of this state-making project. Although the establishment of direct state control and assimilated policies involved various ethnic groups on a large scale, diverse forms of ethnic resistance, in fact, suggest an uneasy path in the making of modern Vietnam.

Notes

1) In case of Champa, see Manuscript Cam Microfilm 65(5); Nicolas Weber. 2012. The destruction and Assimilation of Campa (1832–35) as seen from Cam sources. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 43 (1): 169.
2) From 1613 to 1744, in the Nguyen Cochinchina only, administrative units extended from seven prefectures (phu) to fourteen prefectures and one commandery (tran). See Tran Thi Vinh. 2008. To chuc bo may nha nuoc o Dang Trong tu 1614 den cuoi the ky XVIII [State structure of the Inner Region (Nguyen Cochinchina) between 1614 and the Late Eighteenth Century] in *Uy Ban Nhan Dan Tinh Thanh Hoa and Hoi Khoa Hoc Lich Su Vietnam, Hoi Thao Khoa Hoc: Chua Nguyen va Vuong Trieu Nguyen Trong Lich Su Vietnam Tu The Ky XVI Den The Ky XIX [Proceedings of Conference on Nguyen Lords and Nguyen Dynasty in Vietnamese History: from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries]*. Hanoi: The Gioi, p. 239.
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6) Quoc Su Quan Trieu Nguyen, Dai Nam Thuc Luc (*DNTL*) Vol. 3. 2004. Hanoi: Giao Duc, 2004, p. 447; Cao Xuan Duc. 1998. *Quoc Trieu Chinh Bien Toat Yeu* [Summary of the Primary Compilation of the Present Dynasty], Hue: Thuan Hoa, 1998, p. 308.
7) Choi Byung Wook, *Southern Vietnam*, p. 151.
8) Cao Xuan Duc, ed. 1998. *Quoc Trieu Chinh Bien Toat Yeu.* Hue: Thuan Hoa, p. 315.
9) Hue Tam Ho Tai. 1983. *Millenarianism and Peasant Politics in Vietnam,* Cambridge: Harvard UP, pp. 14–15; Choi Byung Wook, *Southern Vietnam*, p. 158.
10) Dao Duy Anh, 2010. *Dat Nuoc Viet Nam Qua Cac Doi* [The Land of Vietnam across the Ages], Hanoi: Van Hoa Thong Tin, pp. 214–15.
11) Nguyen Tuan, 2002. *Vu Man Tap Luc Thu* [The Book of Pacifying Barbarians], Hochiminh City: Archives of the Institute of Social Sciences; Nguyen Phan Quang. 2002. *Viet Nam The Ky 19 (1802–1884)* [Vietnam in the Nineteenth century (1802-1885)] (Hochiminh City: Nxb Thanh Pho Ho Chi Minh, p. 218.

Reflections on the Southeast Asia Seminar

Mario Lopez (CSEAS, Kyoto University, Japan)

Over the course of the seminar, most mornings I woke up for my ritual early morning run. Our hotel, on Phanthon Yothin Rd 1 was around five kilometers from the border and this brief run up to the border gave me a chance to observe early morning border traffic between Myanmar and Thailand. Trucks

View of Border crossing with Myanmar to the left taken from Wat Phrathat Doi Wao temple

loaded with goods and people and bikes carrying impossible numbers of passengers. Early morning traffic was observable from the Thai side but I was able to get a better view of movement and the urban differences on both sides of the border by climbing up to the Wat Phrathat Doi Wao temple complex. Sweating after the climb I was presented with an aerial view of changes on both sides of the border. Standing there I was approached by one of the temple priests in his bright orange robe smiled and greeted me in English. "Are you a tourist?" he asked to which I had difficulty in replying. I asked him if the area had changed much over the years overlooking the border and he replied laughing change is all around us, that the border can be crossed easily in many places, and that we will always be crossing them.

This dawn conversation was a striking moment for observing and reflecting upon the porous nature of borderlands, an undercurrent at the seminar. Borderlands are contact zones where language, culture, peoples and their histories intersect: all themes that were intensely discussed over the course of three days. These intersections were all the more apparent as a diverse range of young scholars from around mainland and insular Southeast Asia came together. They listened to and discussed the implications of the fast paced changes sweeping over the region and how they are affecting Southeast Asians.

The main theme of the seminar "Human Flows and Resettlement" made clear the broad concerns participants' familiar with the region shared. There was acknowledgement of intense growth, infra-structural change and gradual economic and political integration across the region. Yet, this has occurred in tandem with the rising shadow of China as it continues to sweep across Southeast Asia. This has presented the region with both opportunities and risks. Access to resources, goods, food and energy have gradually led to many actors and stakeholders sharing a mutual concern and a search for a better

understanding of how global changes will affect Southeast Asia's geo-political future in the 21st century.

Globalization is fickle but exemplar in how it can play out in specific locales. This was made all the more apparent by our fieldtrip to the small island of Ban Yong Hin in Bokeo Province of Laos. This island seemed to sum up the paradox of border zones, opportunities and risks. An opportune crossroads were Chinese immigrants from central China peddling fake brand goods at discount prices had pushed locals to the edges of the village. Our resident linguistic Prof. Nathan Badenoch made clear what kind of forces were sweeping through the region as he questioned both Chinese and local Thai Lue about the changes taking place. These peripheral spaces are in fact central to the new regional configurations taking place: Chinese entrepreneurs targeting a new generation of middle class Chinese consumers on a vague periphery. These dis-placements highlight new forms of mobility, and consumption that are crossing borders and drove home to me the need to keep in mind the new configurations that are re-organizing the region and shaping people's lives.

Facing Change: Continuity, Creativity, and Knowledge

Yu-Sheng Lin (Department of Anthropology, National Taiwan University)

In this seminar, several different issues about the Mekong River Subregion were raised and analyzed in different scales and aspects. Sometimes I felt confused as a result of disciplinary training, as I am more used to small-scale analysis. However, this was a good chance to learn from different cases and opinions in this interdisciplinary seminar. In fact, all the discussions were concerned with interconnecting issues, focusing on changes due to the economic and political influence of China and developmental differentiation within diverse areas in the Mekong River region. For me, regardless of scale, what I think is interesting is the continuity of, or creative feedback to, these changes.

As we could see from the examples presented in the seminar, some changes are actually not "changes" at all, but are based on existing social-cultural institutions. For example, transnational Karen migrants have become a new issue in the Thai-Myanmar border town of Mae Sot because of the political-economic development of the "border." However, this development is itself based on the social networks that previously existed there. In another example, the deployment of Confucius Institutes as a policy of "soft" diplomacy made by the Chinese government seems a new development because of the increasing regional influence of China. However, their success in Thailand (but not other countries) is supported by the strong Chinese-Thai community and little anti-Chinese sentiment in Thailand itself. Furthermore, Dr. Sunait Chutintaranond also suggested that we should learn from the characteristics of "sharing and connectivity" in the history of this region, in order to face the new situations that will arise as a result of politico-economic change in this region.

However, sometimes changes are beyond one's control, and people must find creative new ways to face them. Dams and hydropower developments in this region influence floods and droughts, fisheries

and sediments, and people are using the growing civil society and social movements as a tool to negotiate with the government or development agencies. Fishermen are also finding new ways to cope with the new situations (for example, by learning from the Columbia River Region, although comparisons may not be apt). With regard to agricultural changes in Xishuangbanna, Laos, and Northeast Thailand, some changes are based on the highly-planned knowledge of big companies. However, most changes seem based on "trial-and-error" methods or newly-formed social networks. After the ACFTA, Thai garlic farmers have also used a different strategy. Some have changed their quantities, crops, or made the quality better (by reducing chemical fertilizers), and some have changed their jobs to middlemen or other labor-works. In Laos, due to war and slow economic development, we can also see that a *lingua franca* was created because of communication and marriage among different groups. That is to say, many new ways are created because of those politico-economic changes.

As previously stated, we are dealing with new developments regarding continuity and creativity, and we need new tools of knowledge to better understand coming changes. My own research focuses on transnational migrant workers from Northeast Thailand. For me, transnational migration from Northeast Thailand is the result not only of politico-economic changes in Thailand and the global world but should also be understood as a dialectic relation between the existing socio-cultural relations and the politico-forces. That is, as in the cases above, we should be concerned about questions of both continuity and creativity. However, as Dr. Attachai Jintrawet indicated during the seminar, we are facing more dramatic changes in the coming era. How we use new technology and get different ideas from respective sources to form useful knowledge is important for the future. Although a researcher with his/her own background of academic training may only regard the idea of continuity and creativity from a particular viewpoint, interdisciplinary seminars like this one held by CSEAS, Kyoto University and IAS, Chulalongkorn University, offer us a good way to learn how knowledge can be formed from different cases and opinions to reflect the changing situation in the Mekong River Region, Southeast Asia, and the world.

Recollections/Reflections from the "Asian Landscapes" Seminar

Myfel Joseph D. Paluga (University of the Philippines, Mindanao, The Philippines)

Reviewing my seminar notes, I was impressed by the number of important points covered in such a short seminar time. In the course of the seminar/excursion days, several threads within Asian social/environmental fields that critically need reconceptualizing were opened up, discussed, hinted at, and reviewed — even if only in quick-survey, broad-stroke manner.

These critical threads are captured in the eleven keywords/phrases of the program: (1) "the Mekong River," (2) "landscape change," (3) "land use dynamics," (4) "water resources and dam construction," (5) "agricultural systems," (6) "linguistic and human diversity," (7) "settlement patterns

and changes," (8) "transborder movements," (9) "China," (10) "resource management," and (11) "human landscape and political economy."

Several topics revolving around each of the above keywords, and linking with many others, certainly etched themselves deeply in the minds of many participants, if only because they became starting points for arguments and exchanges in the afternoon group sessions. To mention some of those that I can readily recall now:

"New" bioregions are becoming more and more salient for ecological governance

(1) A deepened understanding of the (apparently familiar) "Mekong River" (and, by analogy, other river systems): as a complex ensemble of connecting rivers and connected lands, power-zones and lives forming as one important political/ecological entity; perhaps, as a kind of mainland Southeast Asian "riverine backbone," the Mekong bioregion — and so immediately suggesting the need for a region-wide ecological governance, equally challenging given the range of transected states and corporate interests.

Social experiments at the borders offer room for political re-imaginings

(2) The political (and theoretical) importance of focusing attention on "border communities" — recognizing them as complex adaptive, emerging "social systems" that are (re-using an old phrase) "betwixt and between" mainstream states — as if consciously counterposing the homogenizing/diversity-effacing moves of these states, ever arising in these Asian border sites are interesting cultural mixes and surprising experiments in living "marginal(-ized) lives."

These two seminar topics also hint at an underlying direction: social or institutional movements that push further these above-outlined points would (a) threaten to "burst open" the increasingly anachronistic border-formations of present dominant states, or at least the ways these borders are presently "managed" by occupants of power-centers; and (b) encourage political re-imaginings for new adaptive "living-spheres" — and their corresponding "modes of governance" — beyond the present regional/class-limits of dominant nation-states (and their particular kind of "region-formations") and also beyond the worn-out, 20th Century social/state "alternatives." Perhaps it is interesting to insert here Zizek's counter-anarchistic framing, which leaves behind the often-heard "state-versus-non-state" line: the unusual-yet-apt question is "how to construct a *state* that works in a *non-statal* way."

Other discussion points that invite continuing reflection/investigation are in the form of questions raised in varied segments of the seminar. Following one line/sub-theme I am interested in, I would frame one question in the following manner:

The frame for "human diversity" differs from "biodiversity"

(3) On collapsing/differentiating "biological/nonhuman diversity" and "human/cultural/linguistic diver-

sity": Are the terms of logic and lines of reasoning "in defense of diversity" easily similar, and simply transferable, as one shifts from (mainstream) "biology"-centered to "social-science"-centered discourses? While the emphasis on "species diversity" fits easily with any biological calculus ("biodiversity is of supreme evolutionary/ecosystem importance"), should the same weight be also given to, for example, linguistic diversity *as such* as opposed to, say, the competing imperative of forming/supporting a broad, cross-cultural medium of communication (as in the pragmatics and linguistic consequences of supporting "national/emerging-nation languages")?

Since other branching topics of discussion necessarily extended the time limits of the seminar proper, other points were carried into informal conversations in the evenings and during travel-excursions. One important question-topic which I recall is the following:

Social-science insights need to be defended/re-argued in the context of heightened interdisciplinary engagements

(4) On the all-too-spontaneously-invoked idea of "inter/multi/trans-disciplinarity": What if — now that the present intellectual climate easily recognizes the need to simultaneously *link* socio-political and bio-physical domains — it is even more important now to emphasize the differences in "social science" approaches as opposed to traditional "natural science" styles of knowing if one wants to arrive at a more rigorous and expansive "insight/information sharing" in the disciplinary "border zones"?

Perhaps certain hard-won philosophical formulations developed in the long history of the social sciences are also threatened with being swept under bio-informatic rugs if not defended and re-argued in the course of interdisciplinary engagements. To illustrate one line of difference (exapting an observation of Wittgenstein), it is not always the "how" (a vintage "nat-sci" interest) that arouses much surprise and interest but also the "it" (framing our very "objects" of inquiry).

All these interesting points will certainly open analogous patterns of inquiries in our varied points of origin and disciplinary interests — and, thereby, sustain this opened theme of "Asian landscape transformations" by allowing it to become branched/linked into other micro/macro scales. For example, relative to the first point given above, I would like to think of the Mekong-region-like importance (yet less emphasized at present) of the "Pantaron/Pantadon range" (and its connected river-systems) in the case of Mindanao.

The "sphere" in "Asian humanosphere" is good to think with

(5) One interesting neologism used during the seminar seems to grasp well several keywords together — as entities forming part of a present Asian "humanosphere" — and drive the highly relevant perspective of thinking in terms of politico-ecological spheres. Personally, and in broader theoretical concerns, I hear conceptual echoes of this style of viewing "places"/"areas" — not as flat spaces but as enfolded spheres — in the Philippine/Austronesian linguistic category *banua/banwa* (which is a "nature-culture"

concept, prompting one observer to comment that it is an important "ecosystem" concept in the Austronesian context), and also in the theoretical elaborations of lived worlds in Uexkull"s *umvelt* and then again in Sloterdijk"s layers of enveloping spharen. While moves like these might simply be word-turns ("humanosphere" and other notion-terms of socio-ecologically enfolded worlds), they are of interest to track because they index yearnings for better conceptual tools to grasp the present 21st Century Asian "ensemble."

A Short Reflection on the Southeast Asia Seminar in Mae Sai, Thailand

Nao Sato (Research Fellow, CSEAS, Kyoto University, Japan)

This seminar was held during a period of extensive flooding in Thailand. The flood greatly affected the Japanese economy and encouraged Japanese citizens to realize the importance of the Thai economy and the close relationship between Japan and Thailand. As a result, during this seminar I considered the fact that various problems and topics in Southeast Asia are not only relevant to the people in those Southeast Asian countries, but also to the people in Japan and other countries at any time.

My major research topic is the economic structure and the role of social networks in risk management in rural Cambodia. This study aims to grasp the issue of "poverty" from the concept of not only "poor income" but also "human poverty." In recent years, I have also become interested in subjects such as "post-growth", "post-globalization" and "post-development." The four-day seminar and excursion confirmed my understanding of the diversity of culture, language, ethnicity and nature in Southeast Asia and the ways in which these diversities are a feature and advantage of the area. At the border area in Mae Sai and the villages in Laos that we visited on the excursion, people lived in coexistence with other ethnic groups. I think that such diversity in Southeast Asia indicates an alternative way of building a "post-development" world.

Finally, I had a good chance to talk with many students and scholars from East and Southeast Asian countries during the seminar. I would like to express my thanks to all the members of this summer seminar.

A Short Reflection on Southeast Asia Seminar in Mae Sai, Thailand

Hiroyuki Seto (Research Fellow, CSEAS, Kyoto University, Japan)

My major research topic is about the role of local administration in the management of peoples and foreign investment in Laos. The issues raised in this seminar were in line with my research interest because I have faced similar issues in my research field. In the northern part of Laos, it seems that

China's influence is growing with the increase of investments and exploitation of resources; resettlements of ethnic minorities have been implemented, and the livelihood of local peoples is changing with the process of economic integration of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS).

In the first session on infrastructure and land use change, Prof. Sompong Sirisophonsin suggested that improvements in transportation and new business environments in the GMS are the strongest driving force to change livelihoods in the upper Mekong region. Prof. Yasuyuki Kono also discussed the differences in process between the drastic change in cultivation patterns of Chinese farmers and the "trial and error" process of Lao farmers. These lectures illustrated the important point that common driving forces of economic integration in this area may provide different effects in each country according to the local features.

In the second session on human flows and resettlement, James Chamberlain discussed how resettlements of ethnic minorities have been connected with industrialization and how this has formed monotonous landscapes in the region. In line with that, Dr. Nathan Badenoch shared his observations on how resettlement projects run by the government have caused problems of multiple languages among villagers. These lectures made me understand that governmental policies for industrialization and integration of peoples are affecting the livelihood of ethnic peoples and their strategies for survival.

In the third session on political economy and resource management in the face of the rise of China, Prof. Nguyen Van Chinh stated that China's increasing influence in the mainland of Southeast Asia is achieved by means of strengthening her "soft" power through building Confucius Institutes in the area. Dr. Simon Creak, however, suggested that although the rise of China's influence in Southeast Asia may have caused some reactions among scholars about the issue of invasion or extra-territoriality, Southeast Asian countries are not simply becoming the economic object of China as they can still manage their autonomy. These lectures provided the perspective that the growing influence of China is impacting in ambiguous ways upon the region, such that we need to consider China's influence by differing between diplomatic influences and its impact on the livelihood of peoples.

I also gained some interesting information during the excursion to the Golden Triangle and Opium Hall, and in listening to the explanation by Prof. Sunait Chutintaranond about the history of Chiang Saen. It made me understand the dramatic change of these regions clearly. In ancient times, Chiang Saen was a major trading crossroads between China, Laos and inland Thailand. However, after the area was divided by borders, it became infamous as an opium-producing region. Recently, it has become a sightseeing destination for foreigners. I was therefore impressed that this area is a typical example of the transformation of border areas.

Moreover, by joining this seminar, I got a chance to talk with a lot of young scholars and participants from Southeast Asian countries. I also saw that the exchange of researchers and students is increasing in Southeast Asian countries because, for example, students from Europe and Southeast Asian countries are studying in Japan, and students from Taiwan and Vietnam are studying in Thailand. Given this development, I felt that academic cooperation and exchange between researchers and students also seems to be one of the important driving forces of integration in this region.

Reflections on the Southeast Asian Seminar

Kearrin Sims (Centre for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney, Australia)

Given my research interest in the ways in which the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) has been imagined conceptually, its historical origins, and the multitude of ways that regional connectivity is taking place in the GMS, I found Dr. Sunait Chutintaranond's presentation highly engaging. Dr. Chutintaranond's suggestion that the term 'Greater Mekong Subregion' was created by the West, and that the different names for the Mekong (such as Tibetan, Chinese, Cambodian, Thai, Lao, and Vietnamese names) suggest the lack of a regional identity for the Mekong River in the pre-colonial era, are instructive when considering how the GMS came into being as a "region." In understanding contemporary regional aspirations, its links to French colonialism (Dr. Chutintaranond argued that the French produced the first maps of the Mekong River in its totality) require further research.

In Dr. Somphong Sirisophonsin's presentation on "Logisitic Landscape Change," I found interesting his observation that many of the economic corridors in the region start in Bangkok. In understanding how and why the GMS has been/is being formed as a region, it is interesting to examine where the key nodal points of connectivity are situated, as well as the various means by which these spaces are being connected into transnational networks (roads, railways, airports, etc.). Likewise, Dr. Somphong's questioning of where the benefits of this connectivity will lie, and how 'transit' countries will be affected, is also a topic that I believe requires further consideration.

In regard to Kate Lazarus' presentation, I found her comments on the complexity of the impacts of hydropower dams to be an important point. It seems that regional infrastructure programs (including the electricity produced from hydropower) are happening at "break-neck" speeds. This issue of "speed of transition" was one that seemed to emerge again and again throughout the seminar series and it is an issue that seems difficult to resolve. There appears to be such a powerful push for "development" and "connectivity" from the majority of key power-brokers in the GMS (national governments, IFI's such as the World Bank and ADB, and multi-national corporations) that the possibility of slowing down "development" has little room to enter the discussions on regionalism. Such suggestions face not only powerful institutional opposition but also powerful discursive opposition in that they are likely to be framed as against poverty-reduction.

Regarding Dr. Jim Chamberlain's presentation on "Monotonous Landscapes," I found his discussion to be extremely valuable in the challenges it presented to the ways in which 'development' in the GMS can be understood. Dr. Chamberlain discussed the ways in which development and modernization can become homogenizing forces that seek to eliminate diversity. As with many such analyses, the challenge that remains for such alternative ways of seeing and knowing the world is how such conceptualizations can be translated into political action. This idea of diversity as a barrier to development was also explored by Associate Professor Nathan Badenoch in his presentation on "the Spatial Reorganization of Human Diversity and its Implication for Local Society."

A particularly interesting comment that Associate-Professor Badenoch made about previous forms

of governance, control and regulation in the GMS was related to James Scott's discussions on Zomia and movement as a means to avoid state control. What I find interesting here is the ways that state governance measures must themselves undergo changes in how they regulate national (and transnational) populations, given that increased mobility is one of the primary objectives of the regional integration projects that states themselves are actively engaged in. Mobility may remain as a means to avert state control mechanisms, yet at the same time, mobility has also become a state-driven objective. One of the interesting questions to emerge from this dialectic is whose mobility the state seeks to increase and whose mobility it seeks to limit. This is especially so given that Associate-Professor Badenoch sees movement as "an inherent feature of the human landscape [that] makes landscapes dynamic."

Another interesting point raised by Associate-Professor Badenoch was the ways in which "economic corridors" are also corridors of cultural exchange. Again, I find it interesting to consider the different ways in which forms of regional exchanges can be conceptualized and explored.

With regard to Professor Yoko Hayami's presentation what I found most interesting was the way in which her work brought the discussion away from a more macro-analysis of regionalism to specific cross-border exchanges. Border regions are some of the most fascinating and dynamic locations within any region, and provide intriguing research sites to understand intercultural exchanges. As Professor Hayami pointed out, understanding of regional exchanges requires more than just looking at border movements simply as the flow between states; rather, there is also a need to look at the people's movements in these areas from their own perspectives. Another valuable component of Professor Hayami's work to my own research was the location of her research site within a Special Economic Zone. It is my opinion that Special Economic Zones are going to play an increasingly important role in linking different locales throughout the GMS: in stimulating economic growth; in transforming natural environments; and in altering the lifestyles and cultural practices of the peoples of the GMS.

Reflections on the Southeast Asia Seminar

Jafar Suryomenggolo (CSEAS, Kyoto University, Japan)

"I am a Muslim," answered a young roti-seller with a smile in responding to my question as to whether he was a Rohingya. By asking the daring question I was throwing my "charm-dice" as an amateurish anthropologist in the field, trying to immerse myself within the local scene. For his part, he was preparing my order for a sliced banana-roti, and seemed unconcerned by my inquisition. His response in perfect English surely indicated that he had noticed my broken pronunciation of the Thai language and my beeping toy camera after taking some pictures of the glittering Mae Sai night market. The market's location in a major border crossing between Thailand and Myanmar had accentuated our "accidental" meeting that was primarily for commercial purposes. Unlike the roti-seller, who needs to commute daily through the immigration checkpoint in the imposing structure of the border-gate, my presence in

A roti-seller at the Mae Sai night market

the market was simply driven by curiosity. There was a gap between us, yet the lure of the night market had brought us together for a brief conversation.

A number of works of literature have described the selling of rotis in a two-wheeled stall as a common job undertaken by many young male Rohingya migrants in Thailand, as it is the only possible niche open for them by which to make a living. This self-enterprise is usually enabled through unwavering solidarity and help from networks of fellow Rohingya migrants. The strong sense of grouping and the bonds they may have had earlier back home must have established a certain notion of identity. The roti-seller's humble answer that he was simply "a Muslim" has forced me to consider how far the term "Rohingya" is an academic construct. The notion of identity and how he understands it evidently is informed by his personal experiences as a migrant. He may look at the world as a person who always remembers (and is constantly reminded of) the hardship back home, in terms of religio-political identity fractures and economic insecurities imposed by the current regime in Myanmar. With that, his daily commuting to the border area symbolizes the flow of millions of forced migrations (and also, displacements) to neighboring countries, making it the largest migration in the history of humankind in mainland Southeast Asia. His story forms the narrative of diversity of ethnicity, language and identity in the region and its current transformation.

This indefinite linkage between human experiences and spatial intervention in the context of trans-border movement is precisely in line with one of the sessions of the 2011 Southeast Asia Seminar on "Human Flows and Resettlement." The session illustrated various unintended implications of our

over-confidence in state-centered perspectives, and presented striking examples of how human diversity in Southeast Asia is threatened by the juggernaut of globalization in the region. Thus, the session served as a gentle reminder for future researchers to consider thoroughly the movement of people based on their own experiences in considering the drastic changes in environment and socio-political structures in the region. The challenge this poses is how to formulate a better framework, not only to accommodate the voices of the people but, importantly, to recognize them as the basic principle in any institutional intervention in a Southeast Asian context. Although we are yet to conceptualize such an overarching framework, the seeds for its progress were well discussed in the seminar. The general consensus was to take diversity of ethnicity, language and identity in Southeast Asia as part of the driving force of transformations in the region.

Notes from the Chiang Saen National Museum, November 2011

Yeoh Seng Guan (Asian Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore, Singapore)

The Mekong River is 4,200 kilometers long and originates from the Tibetan Plateau. It is the 12th largest and the tenth longest river in the world, its water sources stemming from the melting ice of the Himalayan mountains and from monsoon rainfall (May to October). Fifty-three million people reside in the Mekong Basin and the area comprises 100 ethnic groups representing four countries (Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam).

Ethnic groups, or 'hill tribes' in the region include the following: Thai Yuan or Khon Muang, from Northern Thailand; Thai Lue, a group who came from Xishuangbanna in Yunnan Province in the past before finally settling in Chiang Saen; Thai Khuen, who reside mostly in Shan State in Burma and villages in Thailand's Mae Sae district; Tai Yai or Tai, whom the Kachins refer to as Shan; Akha (Ekaw), a group whose homeland is in Xishuangbanna; Yao, who refer to themselves as Mien, and follow Daoism; White Hmong or Meo; Karen, the most populous ethnic group; and the Lisu/Lisaw, who believe in the mystical powers of water and locate their villages on ridges with a stream on the other side, building aqueducts to supply water without having to expose themselves excessively to its magical powers.

Settlement of the ancient city of Chiang Saen can be traced back to 13,000 B.P. Chronicles report that King Saen Phu of the Mang Rai Dynasty started the city around the fourteenth century and at least three princes of the Lanna Kingdom ruled Chiang Saen before succeeding to the throne in Chiang Mai. Chiang Saen was one of the Buddhist centers of the Lanna Kingdom until 1558, when it was conquered by the Burmese. In the mid-16th to 18th century the city was an important military outpost of the Ayutthaya Kingdom during the war with Burma. After this, it was deserted until 1881 when King Rama V ordered a prince of Lamphun to lead people from Lamphun and Chiang Mai to resettle the city.

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Women weaving on a cotton loom at Pakraw Nheu Village (20 Km from Hauy Sai, Laos)

Photo: Mario Lopez

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Participants on a river boat crossing between Huay Sai, Laos and Chiang Khong, Thailand.

Group photo of participants at the Hall of Opium, Golden Triangle Park

Photo: Mario Lopez

Organizers of the Seminar
(from left to right) Ukrist Pathmanand, Yoko Hayami, Yasuyuki Kono, Sunait Chutintaranond, and Hiromu Shimizu

Photo: Mario Lopez