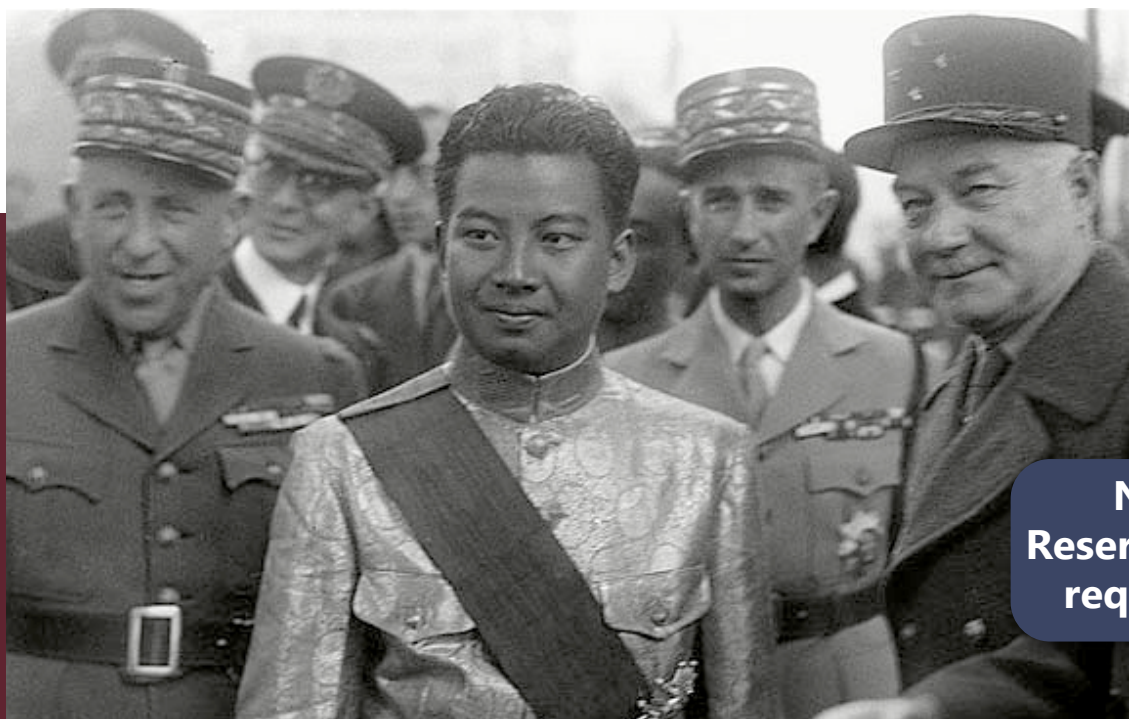


Cambodia's National History in the Making

Translations and the Recreations of Collective Narrative under French Colonial Rule



With
ONLINE

No
Reservation
required

Thursday 22 October 2020 13:30-14:30

Middle-sized Meeting Room, 3F, Inamori Foundation Building, Kyoto University



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He obtained his Ph.D. in History at the National University of Singapore (NUS) in 2018, under a joint doctoral scholarship program between the Harvard-Yenching Institute and NUS. His Ph.D. thesis has won the Wang Gungwu Medal and Prize for the Best Ph.D. thesis in the Social Sciences/Humanities for Academic Year 2018-2019. His research interests lie in the fields of encounters between Southeast Asian societies and the West, foregrounding transregional culture and politics, global Asian history, ethnic identity, intellectual history, manuscript studies, and Cambodian/Southeast Asian studies. His most recent publications appear in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (2020), *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (forthcoming), and *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* (forthcoming). He is working on a monograph entitled "An Intellectual History of Cambodia: From Conventional Chronicle to Scholarly Historiography, 1850s-1960s."

In this presentation, I examine the works of translation and historical writings of Cambodian intellectuals during the 1940s to discuss strong parallels between the production of national history and the development of nationalist thinking. I specifically look at the state-sponsored and most popular scholarly magazine, the *Kampuchea Suriya* (Cambodia Sun), to explore the role of translation in promoting and strengthening Cambodia's collective imagination. I carry out a close reading of new history texts produced by local scholars who intended to offer modern Cambodia a new sense of its "glorious past" and make it proud of its political and cultural accomplishments. The presentation demonstrates that while translation figured prominently in the transmission of knowledge from French scholarship and Thai nationalist writings into Khmer, Cambodian scholars recognized the significance of historical scholarship in reinforcing their worldview as well as political ideologies. Exploring this local historical scholarship helps to advance our understanding about the creation of a new Cambodia's collective identity and culture under French rule which were not just the result of the adaptation and appreciation of a colonial project. This presentation will highlight the significant role of translation as a facilitator of knowledge transformation from other languages into local uses.

MODERATOR: KOBAYASHI SATORU (CSEAS)