

MAIDS NEWSLETTER



Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University

Issue 5 – May 2007

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Master of Arts Programme
in
International Development Studies
(MAIDS)

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Newsletter Editor: Brennen Jenkins



MAIDS staff and students meet with the Governor of Koh Kong over an informal dinner to discuss the implications of development projects on this southwestern Cambodian island.

2006 Fieldtrip to Cambodia *by Otto von Feigenblatt*

What better place to visit for students studying development than Cambodia? As one of the most popular countries for development projects, with a higher NGO density than any other nation in the region, Cambodia serves as a microcosm of the International Development universe.

The adventure started early on December 13, 2006. The MAIDS gang - composed of 16 students, two lecturers, and two officers - traveled by road to the Thai-Cambodian border. The itinerary of the trip was so dense that a full description of the many activities and lectures would place unnecessary stress on the reader. Therefore, instead I will rely on my personal impressions.

One of the most important observations made by the MAIDS gang is that development is observable everywhere in Cambodia. The King's project on the Thai side of the border gave us a glance at the brighter side of development. We, or at least most of us, left with a warm feeling about how development should be.

This warm feeling slowly vanished as we crossed the border and were exposed to more radical development projects. We saw the construction of bridges, roads, gaudy Casinos, and met migrants, well-intentioned NGO workers, optimistic government officials, and more. The overall picture was surreal to say the least. Extreme poverty coexisted with opulence while the latter came as a surprise to many of us.

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A Costa Rican national, Hereditary Baron Otto Federico von Feigenblatt studied Political Science in Washington and Lexington in the USA. He also attended the University of Medical Sciences in San Jose before completing his B.A. in Sociology on a scholarship to the Asia Pacific Ritsumeikan University in Japan. Otto's extensive international experience has included an internship at the Panamanian Consulate in Monaco and support for European Associations working in Latin America. He is a recognized member of various orders of knighthood and an honorary member of the Augustan Society in the United States, which promotes education about heritage.



Continued from page 1 ►

The journey to Phnom Pehn helped to reinforce our first impression of Cambodia. Our group was then subjected to a speedy tour of the NGO scene. We met representatives of NGOs representing everything from environmental protection to land rights groups. Not to forget the importance of the State, we also visited the Ministry of Women's Affairs.



Other important highlights of the trip include the nocturnal visit of a slum, which was under threat of eviction. This urban example of poverty was then contrasted with the pristine beauty of a rural fishing village. For me, the meal we had in a traditional wooden house in Koh Thkov village was a highlight.

At this point we were all suffering from a severe 'development overdose'. With so many experiences and so much information we left seemingly more confused than before. Perhaps this was more the result our ignorance uncovered by countless development realities. Nevertheless we realized the importance of in-field experience and the myriad of options it encompasses.

The MAIDS trip to Cambodia was very successful in that it taught us much more than any series of lectures. On behalf of the students I would like to thank the program and lecturers for their dedication and understanding during the fieldtrip.

M-Power (Mekong Program on Water Environment and Resilience)

Research Fellowships

An M-POWER **Research Fellowship** provides an exciting and challenging opportunity for a wide variety of actors to join a multi-country and multi-disciplinary team of researchers. *Fellows will gain a deeper understanding of water governance issues facing the region, conduct original research, and be involved in public events and deliberations.*

Eligibility and Qualifications

The fellowships are open to all nationalities; however, priority will be given to people from **Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam, and China**. Research Fellows will be expected to either have a demonstrated record in research with appropriate academic qualifications (at least a Master's Degree) **OR** significant practical experience in water management and governance with community or state organisations.

Grant awards will range between **USD \$5,000 to a maximum of USD \$15,000**. A minimum of **twelve Research Fellows** are expected per year for 2006 - 2008.

Application Deadline

Research Fellows will be selected twice each year. Deadlines for applications are **1 January and 1 July** each year. Fellowship awards will be announced 1 February and 1 August respectively.

***For more information on M-Power Fellowships, please visit:** <http://www.mpowernet.org/mweb.php?pg=59>

Interview with MAIDS Lecturer Jerrold Huguet

By Brennen Jenkins, MAIDS Staff



Mr. Jerrold Huguet has spent over 25 years working in Thailand for the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). In his latter years of service, he became the Chief of ESCAP's Population and Social Integration Section. Now retired, he remains an active Consultant on population and development issues in the region. Mr. Huguet is currently a co-lecturer for the MAIDS migration class and also helped to lead MAIDS students on the 2006 fieldtrip to Cambodia. As such, the following interview was conducted to get a development practitioner's perspective of the MAIDS programme given his experience with its students, faculty and staff.

What are the strengths and challenges of the MAIDS approach to International Development Studies?

While I can't speak for the MAIDS program as a whole, the course on Migration is intended to be a survey course. In my class, students have two core instructors - myself and Ajarn Supang. They are also exposed to eminent development professionals working in Bangkok and the region. This is definitely a major strength of the MAIDS program. However, it can also be a challenge for students who must articulate the connection between the readings and the larger development issues discussed at respective lectures. At the same time, this is a good exercise for students who must make these academic connections when they begin their thesis research.

Do you find there are gaps in students' knowledge and language ability?

I think these 'gaps' are inevitable in any international program. MAIDS students come from diverse backgrounds but I believe this inter-cultural aspect is an important learning experience, especially for those wishing to work in the international sector. On the other hand, all MAIDS students have practical experience in development so - for example - the survey course on Migration can help to fill those theoretical gaps. Even though students may begin with a broad-based perspective on development they end up with a unique specialization vis-à-vis their thesis.

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How can MAIDS attract more students from the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS)?

I guess student scholarships would be the most obvious answer. Many international organizations are willing to contribute research training resources through their built-in country capacity building programs. Further, you don't have to limit your search to domestic/international organizations based in Thailand. Funding from other GMS countries may also be sought as to means to send their own nationals to study at MAIDS.

I also suggest MAIDS plan a promotional field trips to other GMS countries. For example, this can be done in conjunction with another university - such as the Royal University of Phnom Penh in Cambodia - whereby there is a joint professional development seminar. This seminar can then be followed by an information session on the MAIDS program that outlines how prospective students from Cambodia can apply to study at Chulalongkorn University. Clearly the overall theme here is personal engagement.

Do you have any suggestions on how the MAIDS program can continue to evolve?

At the beginning of each academic year, perhaps the MAIDS faculty could discuss a potential overarching theme for each semester. In my opinion, this would help to give a more solid structure to the program. As such, each Course Coordinator and Lecturer(s) can gear their course toward a particular theme. I can think of two ways this can be accomplished. This idea could manifest itself as a case-study approach (e.g. country/sub-regionally-specific) or by using a particular topic (e.g. tourism). This may help to reconcile a broad-based approach to development issues - such as the MAIDS approach - with a more in-depth, specialized approach to graduate studies. It may also help to provide faculty and students with a tangible source of program integration and continuity. Faculty can also benefit from a more flexible course syllabus where they can creatively adapt their course content for each student cohort.

Reflections on the Waseda Summer Seminar

By Chanchai Chaisukkosol, Ph.D Student, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University

Chanchai Chaisukkosol of Chinese decent was born and raised in Thailand. Before pursuing his keen interest in the social sciences, Chanchai completed a Master's in Computer Engineering at Chulalongkorn University. Upon graduation Chanchai remained involved at the university as a Research Assistant for the Center for Social Development Studies. Currently a second year Ph.D. student, Chanchai was nominated by MAIDS to attend a seminar entitled "Creating Cooperation and Integration in Asia" sponsored and hosted by the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies at Waseda University on August 22nd-26th, 2006 in Japan. It was a five day program including field trips, student seminars and a concluding public symposium. The following article gave Chanchai the opportunity to share his views on Asian integration following his first experience at an academic seminar outside Thailand.

The idea of this summer seminar program was to introduce the concepts of Asian regionalism and economic integration. This was inevitably influenced by the model of European Union (EU) and supplemented with the rise of the Asian Miracle. In the first three days, graduate students from many countries had the chance to listen to various Asian specialists while also having their own voices heard through a number of politically-charged discussions. For example, one topic revolved around the conception of the Asia Barometer - a kind of country-based and liberally democratic approach to quantitative research on Asian people's daily lives. We were informed by our Indian lecturer from Nanyang Technical University that the reason why Asia has failed to establish regionalism is because they do not acknowledge a single dominant leader. As such, we have not listened to our economic giant China about its views on Asian regionalization. Prof. Wang Yizhou from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences told us that this vast territory has at least 5 disputes with their neighbors including Tibet, Mongolia, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea to name a few. The issue of national sovereignty is a critical point that does not allow China to hold regional leadership despite its robust economy.



From Left to Right: Chanchai Chaisukkosol, Kulapa Suaprae, Chantana Banpasirichote and Myint Zaw pose for a picture at the 2006 Waseda Summer seminar in Japan.

The three-day seminar was intended for graduate students. In the final day's symposium, teachers from each country were invited to give their opinion on the creation of Asian wisdom through the networking process. Regarding the student seminar, the discussion emphasized the importance of regional cooperation. This discussion was largely debated at the symposium where we saw a variety of models on the topic of Asian economic integration. The panellists who agreed with this notion were specialists in economic development in their respective countries including Japan, South Korea, China, and Singapore. They were concerned with the strengthening the regional economic system. The opponents of regional integration notably Hong Kong, Indonesia and Taiwan were more concerned with international issues of inequality, such as poverty, pollution and illegal immigration. This reinforced my scepticism on the issue of regional integration - based on the capital economy and raised by highly developed countries - as it can equally contribute to the problem as in the case of Burma.

...there are many fundamental issues that local people are facing in which regional cooperation can contribute. There is therefore a need for a concrete Asian position on the important issues facing the region rather than a shared, tangible sense of identity. The question here is how our regional cooperation efforts can tackle the issues we face at home?

In sum, the seminar reflected the imagination surrounding the idea of regional cooperation. People in these academic circles tend to see the superpower's economic crisis or the EU's accomplishment of regionalism as the major reason for us to strive for regional cooperation. But for me, it seems that our imagination is limited by this phenomenon while there are many fundamental issues that local people are facing in which regional cooperation can contribute. There is therefore a need for a concrete Asian position on the important issues facing the region rather than a shared, tangible sense of identity. The question here is how our regional cooperation efforts can tackle the issues we face at home? Also, we might ask ourselves how our intellectual attempts can help to reconcile international issues such as the controversial Yasukuni shrine in Japan. Therefore, I conclude with the following question: how we can widen our imagination to tackle the wider and deeper fundamental issues preventing constructive Asian regional cooperation?

MAIDS NEWS: Fall 2006 - Spring 2007

MAIDS Programme - Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University

The MAIDS programme welcomes **Dr. Charas** as the new Dean of Political Science and Chair of the MAIDS programme • **Dr. Thitinan** is promoted as the Director of the Institute of Security and International Studies (ISIS) • Congratulations **Dr. Naruemon** on completing her Ph.D. at the University of Leeds, United Kingdom; she joins the MAIDS programme as Deputy-Director • Representatives from Waseda University (Japan) meet with the Dean and other senior colleagues to discuss the exchange of respective faculty and students for conferences, seminars and research projects • The MAIDS programme hosts the faculty's first International Development Studies Colloquium to discuss the new Ph.D. programme in Human Security and Development Studies • MAIDS professors meet with students from Gadjah Mada University (Indonesia) to discuss the impact of globalization and tourism on traditional Thai culture • **Ms. Prapaporn** assists **Dr. Amara** on an Incite Gov. pilot project funded by the Open Society Institute.

Conferences and Seminars

Dr. Chantana participates in a workshop on the Science and Practice of Flood Disaster Management in Urbanizing Monsoon Asia hosted by the Unit for Social and Environmental Research • **Dr. Puangthong** and **Dr. Chantana** are commentators for papers presented at an international conference on Democracy and Human Security in Asia • **Ms. Prapaporn** assists with the Asia Fair Trade Forum entitled "Developing New Markets: Challenges & Prospects" • **Dr. Supang** attends an International Labour Organization (ILO) workshop on the Migrant Recruitment System • **Dr. Chantana** gives a short presentation at Waseda University for the conference "Searching for Asian Human Community: Toward building a Human Security Network" • **Mr. Brennen** attends a five-day Annual Conference in Cha-am held by his sponsoring Canadian development organization CUSO • **Dr. Puangthong** is an invited panelist for "Coming to Terms with the Past: Cambodia's Long Way to Justice" organized by the Institute for Asian Studies and Federich Ebert Stiftung • **Dr. Supang** attends an ARCM-organized forum on refugee children attended by NGOs and government officials • **Dr. Puangthong** acts as a commentator for the book *Origin and Development of Human Rights* by Associate Professor Thanet Apornsuwan • **Dr. Supang** presents a paper on the strategic framework for cross-border collaboration at a bi-regional meeting on cross-border infectious diseases • **Dr. Chantana** participates in the 2006 Asian Civil Society Education Forum organized by ARENA and Sung Hung Hoe University in Seoul.

MAIDS Visiting Professors and Lecturers

Dr. Jayant from Queen's University (Canada) teaches a four week module for the MAIDS Politics of Public Policy course • Former Rockefeller Foundation Regional Program Director **Dr. Rosalia** offers a course on Development Project Management • The Stockholm Environment Institute opens a MAIDS elective course on Environmental Politics and Policy under the direction of **Tariq Banuri** • Farewell to Visiting Professor **Dr. Philippe** who accepts a position at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT).

MAIDS Students and Alumni

Mr. Ken (2006) is assigned a practicum placement with the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand • **Mr. Mike** (2006) accepts a practicum with the Governance Team at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) • **Mr. Robert** (2005) returns to Bangkok for an internship with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) • **Ms. Sanna** (2005) and **Ms. Jill** (2005) undertake internships with the Environment and Energy Team at the UNDP • **Ms. Kimberly** (2004) receives a job offer from the Southeast Asia Regional Delegation of the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) in Bangkok • After completing her internship, **Ms. Jill** is promoted as a Consultant for the Mekong Community Dialogues programme • **Ms. Supapohn** (2005) is hired as a Communications Officer at the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

The Interdependencies between Education and Sustainable Development

Special Lecture by Mr. Sombath Somphone; Lecture Overview by MAIDS student Kamolrat Chotesungnoen

Mr. Sombath Somphone is the Executive Director of the Participatory Development Training Center (PADETC) in Vientiane, Laos. He has devoted his life to promoting education as a means to facilitate the long-term development process in his country. In recognition of his efforts, Mr. Somphone was the recipient of the 2005 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership. Mr. Somphone was invited to give a special lecture at MAIDS to discuss the role of education within a development framework.

“Education is the key to sustainable development” Mr Sombath Somphone highlighted repeatedly during his lecture at Chulalongkorn University on December 22nd, 2006. Born into poverty in a rural area of Laos and walking bare-footed to school could not stop Mr Sombath’s thirst for education. After graduating highschool, he won a scholarship to the University of Hawaii where he received a degree in Education and Agriculture. He could have had a better-off life settling there and escaping the unrest as Laos was being pushed into the Indochina war. But Mr Sombath decided to return home; in fact, he was the only one doing to do out of some 200 Laotian fellows. The same year he returned to Laos, Mr Sombath helped set up the Rice-Based Integrated Farm System Project and started working actively with the strong hope for Laotian farmer food security.

Over the years, Mr Sombath was intimately exposed to the unfair reality that Laos - with an abundance of natural resources – still has so many people living in poverty. In 1996, Mr Sombath founded the Participatory Development Training Centre (PADETC) with the ultimate aim to foster sustainable, equitable, and self-reliant development in Laos. The Centre advocates a range of alternative development projects which emphasize organic farming, eco-friendly technologies, micro-enterprises and marketing strategies, recycling in towns and particularly constructive education through extra-curricular programs for youth. Today, PADETC has shifted its strategy from the higher education level to a new child-centered scheme for primary schools.



Mr. Sombath is convinced that today’s dominant development models under-emphasize spiritual well-being and over-emphasize materialism. A sustainable model is the one centering on human spiritual well-being and happiness. It needs to balance the four pillars of development, notably economic development, environmental harmony, promotion and preservation of culture, and spiritual well-being. In this view, education is the essence of the conceptual model. Children and youth are active at the core of the education process while parents and grandparents serve as role models of good behaviour at home. This example of good governance is said to support the entire sustainable development process.

Mr Sombath has learned that development and education are complementary; a model for sustainable development cannot be carried out in the absence of education. Yet there is a need to differentiate genuine education from schooling and mass media. For most students, schooling tends to be boring and stressful rather than participatory, activity-based and creative. The largely material nature of mass media leaves the impressionable spiritual unfulfilled. Therefore, Mr. Sombath underlines the need to change the focus of the media to be more supportive and promote EDUTAINMENT, to ignite joyful learning among children.

Mr Sombath’s visit to Bangkok coincided with the latest policy of Thailand’s new Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont. He has encouraged Thai people to follow King Bhumibol’s philosophy of economic sufficiency, which the King himself has bestowed for three decades. Mr Sombath’s hands-on experience would help underlie the principle that the education of the heart is a pre-condition for sustainable development. The act of producing educated citizens will only reinforce appetites for culture, history and nature, which are all aligned with the Thai conception of the sufficient economy. That is why education and development are inseparable.



Kamolrat Chotesungnoen (Dao) graduated from Thammasat University in Bangkok with a degree in English. After graduation, Dao gained practical development experience working for a Thai-American corporation which provides training for ASEAN law enforcement officers against various forms of trans-national crime. Prior to joining the MAIDS programme in 2006, Dao worked for a European Commission funded initiative in the field of the intellectual property rights protection for the ASEAN region.

Young, rich, beautiful and volatile: Whither Timor-Leste?

By Supapohn Kanwerayotin, 2006 MAIDS Alumna

Ms. Supapohn is an experienced journalist. She has reported for the Nation, served as a Bureau Chief for the Bangkok Post in Hanoi and was a broadcaster for the Thai section of the BBC World Service radio in London. After completing the MAIDS programme in 2006, Ms. Supapohn joined the United Nations Development Fund for Women as a Communications Officer at UNIFEM's East and Southeast Asia Regional Office in Bangkok. The following article reflects Supapohn's personal account while on a mission in Timor-Leste in February 2007.

I thought I landed in the wrong city – Phnom Penh circa 1992 instead of Dili 2007. The scorching sun and stifling humidity, big trees, open sewers, stray pigs, big white UN vehicles, and a mandatory one US dollar for anything from a bunch of bananas to a cup of coffee and even a taxi ride. These are some common surface features of the two UN-monitored post-conflict nations at two different junctures in recent memory. The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste likes to call itself the world's youngest nation. It is a resource-rich (oil, coffee and forest) and conflict-ridden state still suffering from the trauma of Indonesian occupation. Yet it is full of natural beauty and idiosyncrasies that make it perhaps the most interesting development challenges around.

For residents of Dili, daily life remains conditioned by “the crisis” which triggered large-scale riots in May 2006. Three colleagues unwillingly joined the crisis-induced wave of ‘Internally Displaced Persons’ (IDPs) within their very own hometowns. One colleague’s house was looted and burnt to the ground. Two others were forced to relocate as they deemed their neighbourhoods unsafe for their families to return. From the hotel to work, I had to walk past one of the city’s main IDP camps situated across the street from the UN compound. It’s a collection of tents and UNHCR-stamped water buckets encased in a barbed-wire compound teeming with people. Sexual and gender-based violence against women were reportedly two of the major concerns in the various IDP camps.

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In a unique activity driven by local demand, UNIFEM published a text entitled “Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women” (CEDAW) in all four languages. In fact, UNIFEM's focuses its efforts on empowering Timorese women so that they can meaningfully participate in democratic governance and development. Timor-Leste is part of the regional CEDAW-Southeast Asia Programme that UNIFEM is implementing. I joined a trip from Dili to the southwestern districts of Cova Lima and Bobonaro. My colleagues working for the Programme for Enhancing Rural Women's Leadership and Participation in Nation Building in Timor-Leste (PERWL) organised to bring three women members of Parliament for dialogue with rural women. For the larger Timorese community, the most important issues remain peace and security, employment, the price of rice and being able to sell what they grow.

How is such a tiny population capable of having so many contentious issues? Take the local language of Tetun for example. It is designated as one of four official languages (the others being Portuguese, Bahasa Indonesian and English.) The educated elite - many of whom are senior officials - speak Portuguese. Meanwhile, most young people in junior to mid-level positions who grew up during the Indonesian occupation operate in Bahasa Indonesian. “It’s a crazy country,” said one frustrated Timorese upon receiving a request for official communication in Portuguese instead of the Tetun request she submitted earlier to a senior government official. This exchange forced her to venture beyond her immediate circle in search of someone with a sufficient command of Portuguese.

Lush forests, plenty of coffee trees and beautiful scenery offer an endless feast for the eyes along the mountainous roads winding out around Dili. The air smelled so fresh and clean. Roads are in dire need of repair and maintenance, at times abruptly unusable prompting vehicles to travel on the riverbed. Wherever they can, villagers hawk their wares in the most creative of fashions. We saw half a dozen oranges neatly tied to a bamboo pole on the way to Cova Lima and a lone squid dangling from a tree branch en route to Dili. At the roadside market near Lliquica a woman approached us with three live chickens tucked away in a loving embrace. Our female MP bought one as it is said to cost just one third of the price they charge in Dili. After this road trip, I left wondering how better roads and more efficient electricity in Dili and Baucau - currently the only two districts in the country with 24-hour power supply - will transform what I've encountered.



Student Interview with MAIDS student Bea Moraras

By Brennen Jenkins, MAIDS Staff



Bea Moraras, an American of Thai decent, was born and raised in the United States. She graduated from Northwestern University with a degree in Political Science and International Studies. Bea has interned at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok as well as for InterAction, an American development NGO. She has also held positions as a Program Assistant for Rotary International's polio eradication program and as a Research Assistant for an AIDS prevention study focused on Nigeria. The following interview gave Bea the opportunity to share her unique perspective as a Thai-American studying in Thailand.

How does your dual Thai-American background affect your understanding of international development?

Although I was born and raised in the United States, my parents are originally from Thailand. I grew up speaking Thai and spending many of my summers in Thailand, and these experiences instilled in me a particularly strong awareness of Thai culture and society. Continual exposure to the political, social, and economic conditions in Thailand peaked my interest in Thai national development specifically, and international development generally.

For me, working in the field of international development has been as much a personal pursuit as a professional one. My dual identity and personal connection to both Thailand and the United States has passionately driven me to try to understand and address the factors that underlie the differences in the standard of living and quality of life between the two countries. On the one hand, being born and raised in the United States has given me the privilege of receiving a strong education and access to many opportunities. Meanwhile, my ethnic Thai background gives me an insider's perspective on Thai society that a non-native development researcher or practitioner in Thailand would not have. My ability to speak Thai at a near-native level, as well as my personal social interactions with native Thai families and friends, positions me to better and more sensitively understand the social, political, economic, and cultural context of Thai development issues. I'd like to draw upon my educational, professional, and personal experiences to work on development issues in Thailand and the Southeast Asian region.

2006-2007 MAIDS Students	
67%	Female
33%	Male
33%	Thai Students
67%	International Students
7%	Students with Advanced Degrees
26%	Students with Financial Support
27	Average Age

On the one hand, being born and raised in the United States has given me the privilege of receiving a strong education and access to many opportunities. Meanwhile, my ethnic Thai background gives me an insider's perspective on Thai society that a non-native development researcher or practitioner in Thailand would not have.

What are your specific interests in the field? What are your plans after graduation?

My interests in the field of international development include development theory, development policy, and globalization. I have chosen to focus my thesis on the concept of the "sufficiency economy" in the context of Thailand. The topic of the "sufficiency economy" provides an ideal case study of a current development policy that proposes an alternative to the dominant global neoliberal paradigm. After graduation, I plan to stay in Bangkok to work on development policy with an NGO or an international organization like the United Nations.



International Development Studies Conference on Mainstreaming Human Security: The Asian Contribution

BANGKOK October 4-5, 2007

<http://humansecurityconf.polsci.chula.ac.th>

The International Development Studies Conference on Mainstreaming Human Security: The Asian Contribution will be held on October 4-5, 2007.

PANELS

1. Critical assessment of human security framework (Plenary Session)

Analysis of cross cultural factors as well as socio-political context of human security; philosophy, interpretation and debates in specific Asian context as compared to general understanding; political and economic dimension, an interface with the mainstream development policy; impetus of human security policy, interplay or trade off between freedom from fear and from want.

Convener: Third World Studies Center, University of Philippines

2. Technology, environments and natural/man-made disasters

Emerging environmental crises and impacts on the quality of life, preparation and management of environmental catastrophe, new threats and risks such as Tsunami, Bird Flu, climate change and floods, impact of new technology on food and health security.

Convener: M-POWER

3. Human rights and security

The inter-relationship of human rights and human security, a rights-based approach to development, translation of human security into rights instruments.

Convener: Waseda University, Japan and Human Rights Studies Program, Mahidol University

4. Urban security

As urban areas expand, new threats to human security are posed. How is public security ensured in urban spaces throughout Asia. This panel would discuss the impacts on human security of slum dwellings, rapid migration, urban violence, vandalism and sabotage, reliance on technologies and

growing global urban networks and other human security issues related to fast growing urban areas in Asia.

Convener: Pending

5. Human security in the context of violence and conflict

How is human security affected by violence and the State response to this violence through the prism of traditional security? Can a human security approach succeed where traditional security means have failed? This panel will explore the relationship between traditional security and human security in the context of violent conflicts with possible highlight on the case of the South of Thailand.

Convener: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

6. Engendering human security

Is human security gendered? What are security risks faced by men and women in Asia and how is gender a factor in the response to those risks and threats. Possible areas of discussion are varied but could include migration and trafficking, violence and conflict, discrimination and stigma, private sphere vs work sphere, etc.

Convener: Gender and Development Studies, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)

7. Displacements and Exploitative Migration

Exploring problems contributing to human insecurity; displacements and exploitative migration, human trafficking, contradictions of modern development resulting in massive cross-border migration, impacts of informalization and feminization caused by selective immigration policies; the label of "illegal" migration and the implications for the mixed targeting of global organized crimes and terrorists; internal displacements from large-scale development projects as well as from violence and conflicts; assessment of innovative policies, social movements and transnational networking.

Convener: Center for Asia and Pacific Partnership, Osaka University of Economics and Law

8. Rethinking rural development

Human security innovation in rural development, local initiatives, community rights, poverty and social disparities, development induced internally displaced people.

Convener: Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India

9. Human security and democracy

Political deprivation as the primary impediment of human security, political responsiveness and accommodation of ethnic minorities and the underprivileged, governance, the role of civil society and public participation in policy advocacy and rights protection.

Convener: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Pending)

10 Human Security Education

The practice of Human Security should go beyond technocratic social engineering. It is imperative for us to broaden the horizon of human security by means of the expansion of formal and informal education about human security and sustainable development. Universities are expected to play a significant role in this regard. Networking of such initiatives shall be accelerated through the dialogue of educational institutions in Asia.

Convener: Global Collaboration Center, Osaka University

11. Post Graduate thesis seminar

This panel will provide a platform for graduate students in Asia to present their research findings on any possible topics in international development studies and social sciences regardless of its direct relevance to human security.

Convener: Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University and Human Rights Studies Program, Mahidol University

Truth in the Vietnam War: The Casualty of War and the Thai State

Abstract by Dr. Puangthong Pawakapan, MAIDS Deputy Director



In addition to her involvement at the MAIDS programme, Dr. Puangthong is a Lecturer at the Department of International Relations and spends considerable time on various research projects. She recently completed her most recent publication entitled the Truth in the Vietnam War: The Casualty of War and the Thai State. The following abstract illustrates the Thai position in the Vietnam War. It is intended to give readers a glimpse into some of the current research that is being undertaken by MAIDS faculty.

After Field Marshall Phibun Songkhram had decided to side with the "Free World" under the leadership of the United States, his government then faced widespread opposition, behind which was the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). To counter such movements, the government launched anti-communist propaganda and laws in order to legitimize its Free World policy and at the same time to suppress its opponents.

This was the prelude to Thailand's extensive involvement in the Vietnam War in the following decades. Between the mid-1960s and early-1970s, Thailand allowed the use of its airbases for the US aerial bombardments in Northern Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The Thanom-Prapat government also sent troops to fight in Vietnam. The government justified its "defending the Free World" duties by propagandizing the communist invasion and the pro-Free-World campaign, which was followed by the use of hatred discourses against its neighboring Indochinese countries. The Vietnamese and Chinese in particular were portrayed as loathsome beasts, uncivilized, untrustworthy and inhumane, who wanted to conquer Thailand, while Thailand - as the Free World agent - was the defender of world peace and freedom. The dehumanization process was the legitimate basis for Thailand to employ violence against its neighbors. Such a constructed "truth" was supported by the nation's important institutions but also widely praised by the Thai press. This overwhelming support underlined the success of the government's truth management.

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In the late 1960s, when Thailand was participating in full-scale involvement in the Vietnam War, the anti-Vietnam War, anti-American Imperialism movements began. This movement was initiated by a small group of intellectuals and later spread into the universities. They challenged the legitimacy of Vietnam War policy and questioned the nation's dignity and sovereignty on Thailand being the US military base to invade its neighboring countries. Anti-Vietnam War activities had become so widespread and so influential that even the post-October 14, 1973 governments had to acknowledge the movement's demands. However, after the October 1973 incident, the expulsion of the US military bases campaign became part of socialist revolution strategy embraced by the increasingly radical student movement. While the Thai state allied with the Americans in stirring up nationalism against the alien threat, the left employed the Chinese-model of Maoism to form nationalism discourse against the American and Thai states.

In the midst of confrontation between the rightists and the leftists, right-wing leaders began to exploit the US military base issue to counter and subsequently destroy the student movements. The former not only built up lies on the importance of US bases to Thailand's national security but also accused the students' anti-US based campaign of offering assistance to the Vietnamese invasion of Thailand. The right-wing, on the one hand, repeatedly stated that the students were either Vietnamese or Vietnamese supporters and, on the other, sent out rumors that Vietnamese troops had penetrated the country. At this time, Vietnamese refugees in the northeast region became the victims of violence, the outcome of a hatred campaign against the Vietnamese and students. The right-wing, in other words, employed a Vietnamese-hatred discourse as a weapon to suppress the enemies within.

Student Thesis Profile:

“Humanitarian Assistance and the Empowerment of Karen Women in a Refugee Camp in Thailand”

By Kimberly Brown, 2004 MAIDS Alumni

The civil conflict in Burma, causing mass amounts of displacement, has been ongoing and relatively unnoticed by the international community for more than two decades. Increased levels of fighting combined with countless cases and forms of human rights abuses has led to the flight of many people across borders into neighbouring countries. The first Karen refugees came to Thailand in 1984, ongoing SPDC offensives and human rights abuses have led to a refugee case load which is now over 150,000.

Women’s experiences in conflict as well as in refugee situations are often unique due to their gender. Women in conflict zones often face increased threats of sexual abuse and rape and many times become uprooted and forced to migrate with the added responsibility of care taking for children and the elderly. On top of the basic needs which all refugees share, refugee women may face specific vulnerabilities such as manipulation, sexual physical abuse, exploitation and unequal access to goods and services.

There are 7 Karen camps along the Thai-Burma border and a wide variety of humanitarian organizations work along the border area and within the refugee camps. Some organizations focus specifically to help women deal with the conditions of the refugee camp and post-conflict situation. This research uses five in-depth case studies to answer the research question of how Karen women are empowered through humanitarian assistance programs. The empowerment of Karen refugee women is measured through four indicators: access, conscientization, mobilization and control.

This research argues that certain conditions in the lives of refugee women living in Mae La camp create vulnerability and makes specific humanitarian assistance to them necessary. The research finds that women are empowered on some levels, mostly on an individual basis in education on gender, human rights, and democracy; income generation and increasing representation in political and social capacities. However, Karen refugee women in Mae La camp meet numerous obstructions in their empowerment due to certain power structures, namely the lack of female representation at decision-making levels.

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The author proposes ongoing education with regard to gender roles and sexual and gender-based violence in order to decrease refugee women’s vulnerabilities and negative experiences within the refugee camp. Further to this, the author encourages an increase in women’s representation at decision-making levels.

Farewell to MAIDS Visiting Professor Dr. Philippe Doney



Visiting Professor Dr. Philippe Doney receives a gift from MAIDS students at his farewell party on February 23rd, 2007. In March, Dr. Doney left the MAIDS programme to become an Assistant Professor of Gender and Development Studies at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok. The MAIDS programme wishes him the best of luck in his new position at AIT.

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