

2022 Council on Thai Studies (COTS) Conference: 50th Anniversary
Rm 207 Ingraham Hall, University of Wisconsin-Madison
October 21-23, 2022

Thursday, October 20, 2022

4:30-9:00 pm – informal gathering at Katherine Bowie's house

Friday, October 21, 2022

Friday Forum

12:00-1:30 pm

Keynote Address #1

Border and Bribery: An Anthropology of Corruption

Pinkaew Laungaramsri

Chiang Mai University

Corruption has often been defined as a sign of social instability and decay, endemic to weak states with poor legal order. Anti-corruption networks, policymakers, politicians, and international institutes intrinsically linked corruption to the lack of good governance and transparency believed to lead to consequential economic losses for the developing world. Such view is shaped by the separation between the state and society and the law and corruption opposition. Drawing on fieldwork in border town A in western Thailand, this talk attempts to move away from the duality of the relationship between state and corruption and corresponding public and private dichotomy by investigating the politics of bribery, extortion, and brokerage operating at the border. In rethinking the anthropology of corruption, the speaker argues that corruption in the form of bribery has not only been central to the process of state making at the margin, it has also been key to accumulation of capital through fixity of migrant workers that connects the margin with the global textile industries. The complex relationship between state's reification and exploitation of migrant categories, and immigrant's negotiation of such immutability are discussed as fundamental to what Kirsten Endres calls 'corrupt exception' – the overlapping state of inclusion and exclusion in which corruption has become the norm rather than the exception.

Bio: Pinkaew Laungramsri is an Associate Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Chiang Mai University. She earned her Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Washington, and has been a visiting scholar at the University of Washington and Harvard University. Pinkaew's research spans a broad range of topics including politics of nature conservation, the rights of upland minorities, border studies, developmental critiques, gender relation, and social movements. Her first book is entitled *Redefining Nature: Karen Ecological Knowledge and the Challenge to Modern Conservation Paradigm* (2002). Apart from teaching and research work Pinkaew engages in various social and political activism especially the campaigns for freedom of speech and the rights of ethnic minorities in Thailand.

Panel 1

4:30 – 6:00 pm

Religion and the Sacred

Moderator:

1.1) Buddha Images as “Holy Things” in Thailand

Nathan McGovern

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

In Thailand today, certain famous Buddha images are propitiated for mundane boons as “holy things” (*sing saksit*). They are propitiated in much the same way as other “holy things” (including gods and spirits) through a process of negotiation in which one promises an offering in exchange for a boon (cure from illness, a new job, more money, good grades, etc.) but only gives it once the boon has been received. Moreover, only *certain* Buddha images, with individual names and “biographies,” are propitiated in this way, and they are propitiated as individual “holy things” in their own right, not as abstract representations of the Buddha. In this paper, I will show the historical dynamics that have led to what on the surface may appear to be an “unorthodox” practice. Since early in Buddhism’s history, relics (of which Buddha images are a type) have always been considered to be capable of performing miracles through a practice known in Pali as *adhiṭṭhāna*. This practice is reflected in older Siamese literature, but the labeling and treatment of Buddha images as *sing saksit* is modern. It is the result of the idiosyncratic translation of the terms of Western modernity into Thai in the nineteenth century. Prior to that time, *saksit* referred to the supernatural power inherent in gods and spirits and accessible to Brahmans, and as such it was associated with *saiyasāt*. When nineteenth-century missionaries used it to translate the word *holy*, however, it came to be associated with “religion” (*sātsanā*). This opened up a new conceptual space of “holy things” that included both Buddha images and gods/spirits. The sympathetic resonance between negotiation with gods/spirits for boons and boons granted by Buddha images through *adhiṭṭhāna* then led to the practice we see today.

1.2) Entrepreneurs’ Ontology: Making Kin with Sacred Beings in Time of Hyper-networked Economy

Neeranooch Malangpoo

Silpakorn University

This paper explores the phenomenon of sacred beings worshiping in contemporary Thailand among Thai entrepreneurs, reexamining the religious life of the Thai neoliberal subjects in which social acceleration and uncertainty are parts of their everyday lives. It argues that, in Thailand, beyond being a psychological coping mechanism to socio-economic uncertainty, the sacred beings are one of the main actors that propel the hyper-networked economy. The neoliberal space and time and the entrepreneurial ideology have merged with spiritual beliefs. With the help from sacred beings, the Thai entrepreneurs have been transforming risks into potential

uncertainties by making kin with the sacreds, claiming and practicing transcendental intimacies between themselves and the lives beyond human realm.

1.3) An Emotional Archaeology of Differences in Funerary Practices between Northern and Central Thailand

Katherine Bowie
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Understanding the historical differences in funerary practices between northern and central Thailand helps to elucidate the emotional responses of northerners to growing central Thai influence over the course of the early twentieth century. Northern and central Thai funerary practices differed with regard to the overall disposition of the deceased, the location, the timing, and the treatment of final remains. For northerners, many central Thai practices appeared sacrilegious, fueling further resentment as the central Thai government expanded into the northern region.

1.4) Rumors of The Hermit's Emerald Heart: The Case of Cold-War Ascetic Craftsman, Luang Pho Ta Bot Sumano

Anthony Lovenheim Irwin
Siena College

After the funeral pyre flames had cooled, devotees of Luang Pho Ta Bot Sumano (1924–2000) found that the hermit's heart had not been consumed in the blaze. Instead, according to his followers, the holy man's heart had crystalized into a solid piece of emerald. A few years later, the heart was installed inside of a stupa constructed on the grounds of the hermit's meditation center built as an architectural amalgam of structures he had designed throughout his life.

The postmortem transformation of the hermit's heart was far from the only miracle attributed to the craftsman-ascetic, who spent much of his life traveling throughout northern Thailand building stupas and meditating in caves. As his life unfolded, a host of rumors were constructed around the hermit's family origins and reasons for leaving the monkhood in 1951. Some of these rumors, especially those concerning to his relationship with the Thai Royal Family and possible connection with the Community Party of Thailand, still circulate throughout the north as open secrets—whispered in low tones and conveyed with knowing glances.

The sensationalism of these rumors may be attributed to his status as a hermit, and not an ordained monastic. Once he left the monkhood, Luang Pho Ta Bot was able to display supranormal powers to his followers, as well as discuss his recollections of his past lives—activities that are grounds for disrobement for members of the sangha. In short, Luang Pho Ta Bot was able to say what is unsayable for most religious professionals in Thailand.

This paper presents how this hermit's emerald heart was rendered unseeable through its ritual installation within its stupa, and how that ritual act is connected to the various rumors and claims made by and about the hermit during and after his lifetime. The act of ritual installation in this

case is explored to show how in Thai religiosity, the unseeable is often tied to the unsayable—and how the realms of politics, numinosity, and cosmology cocreate regimes of hope and restraint in the lives of religious professionals and their followers.

5:45-6:00 pm - break

Panel 2

6:00-7:15 pm

Ethnic Minorities/Indigenous Peoples

Moderator:

2.1) Hmong perspectives of the Indigenous movement in Thailand

Tou SaiKo Lee

University of Wisconsin-Madison

This research explores the significance of “Indigeneity” for Hmong people in Thailand in collaboration with other highlander ethnic minorities to be recognized by the Thai government as Indigenous People through translocal assemblages. Since Hmong villagers have been subjected to resettlement and discrimination of agricultural practices such as ‘swidden cultivation,’ stereotyped as illegal opium growers and rebels of armed resistance to the Thai government, how does being Indigenous help the Hmong overcome these negative generalizations.

The Hmong villages in Thailand include two close to Chiang Mai, ‘Mae Sa Mai,’ with hemp cultivation, ‘hill tribe’ homestays and the textile center and Pa Kia known for the cultivation and entrepreneurship of strawberries. Two villages closer to Chiang Rai, include Hoi Kue and Hoi Han of Hmong who have immigrated from Laos and former members of CPT (Communist Party of Thailand).

The ethnographic research through the interview method consists of qualitative data from villagers mostly conducted in the Hmong language. Inventive language combinations were communicated to describe ‘Indigenous’ identity to Hmong elders. There were also interviews with entities considered collaborative partnerships with Hmong in villages such as local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), researchers of educational institutions, regional politicians, and Hmong who worked for the United Nations.

Findings include comparisons of distinctive experiences between various Hmong groups that include the *Hmoob Qub* (Original Hmong) of Thailand who advocate to be considered ‘Indigenous’ due to inhabiting the highlands before Thailand became a nation state. Also how the *Hmoob Tshiab* (New Hmong), mostly Hmong who escaped to Thailand as refugees from Laos after the Vietnamese-United States War in 1975 identify with ‘Indigenous’ according to shifting definitions of the global Indigenous movement that include colonized people who were forced to migrate.

2.2) Forests of Stories: Karen Mahouts, Maps, and Multispecies Community in Northern Thailand

Rebecca Winkler
University of Pennsylvania

This paper draws on preliminary ethnographic fieldwork with a Karen elephant keeping community and their collaborative elephant spatial research in Northern Thailand that intersects with political ecology, kinship studies, and cultural geography. In this context, the social role of elephants troubles epistemological boundaries between wild and domestic, village and forest, and human and animal social worlds. Across Thailand, the growth of a new ‘ethical’ elephant tourism industry is reconfiguring environmental politics framed within new regimes of labor and knowledge. The risk of human-elephant conflict in this area does not follow commonly understood schema related to human proximity to wild elephants. Instead, it relates to changing social relations among elephants and human communities who’s proximity to one another has not changed. While certain elephants are considered part of the local community, while certain other elephants are considered welcome or undesirable guests, depending on their social relationship with local elephants and people.

Conservation researchers, aimed at conducting research in ethical and equitable partnership with the locally community increasingly recognize that local ways of mapping the forest and distinguishing between elephants are paramount to understanding changes in human-elephant conflict, but are sometimes challenged by ontological differences. These are especially clear in relation to mapping. Attempts to elicit local Karen language terms and ways of knowing the landscape around the village only yielded the Thai forestry departments classificatory scheme, however, in by reenacting our familiar daily routine of radioing mahouts in the forest to ask for directions to their location in the forest a complex system of story-based placenames emerged. To know how to navigate the forest is to know the stories of the beings who have inhabited it. What ethical and political considerations emerge from Karen socio-spatial imaginaries? How do moments epistemic disconcertment change the way conservation researchers understand the forest and its inhabitants?

2.3) Changing Spiritual Ecologies of the Karen in Northern Thailand

Mitchell J. Rigert
Northern Illinois University

The Karen are one among many ethnic minority groups that dwell in the uplands of northern Thailand. Their Indigenous lifestyle(s) are characterized by various combinations of swidden (slash-and-burn) agriculture and annual wet-rice paddy cultivation. Since the Thai government became interested in peripheral forest resources, land use rights and practices have been contested among “stakeholders.” This has contributed to the discursive construction of the label “hill tribe,” which takes on a pejorative connotation when coupled with the concept of forest destruction. Recently the Karen have carved out a niche for themselves as advocates of resource conservation, differentiating themselves from other upland Indigenous groups as preservationists and ecological stewards. Religious conversion from animism to Christianity and Buddhism has occurred since the early nineteenth-century, rendering highly syncretic and varied belief systems

across villages. In this paper I draw on Leslie E. Sponsel's notion of Spiritual Ecology to first explore Karen conceptions of nature through an Indigenous belief system, and then to offer a series of research questions that seek to understand if, whether, and how such views change upon conversion to and adoption of either Christianity or Buddhism. I posit that conceptions of environment are susceptible to change under such conditions, especially considering that Indigenous ecological knowledge is often deeply intertwined with spiritual and mythological belief. This could likely have implications for the way in which subsistence (land-use) practices are carried out.

2.4) Ethno-Organic Agrarian Change of The Akha People in Northern Thailand

Po-Tao Chang

University of Wisconsin-Madison

The stigmatization of swidden agriculture and opium cultivation for ethnic minorities in Northern Thailand led to a phenomenal commercial farming change in the latter half of the 20th century. Commercial farming changed the structure of the upland society, economy and landscape. The overuse of chemicals has been an important concern related to cash crops because it caused negative influences on both human health and the environment. Recently, organic agriculture is becoming a major shift. Therefore, this article is an ongoing research proposal focusing on the organic agrarian change of the Akha people in Northern Thailand. Based on the master thesis about Puer tea completed by myself and some second-hand data on coffee, I propose an idea of "Ethno-organic" agrarian change to bridge the connection between ethnicity and organic agriculture. From the examples of Akha coffee and Puer tea, we can clearly find out that ethnic relations, indigeneity, kinship, and organic agriculture are all intertwined together. In the example of Doi Chaang coffee, the Akha people create a counter-narrative to the old image of forest destroyers and market their product in a sense of Akha culture. In the example of Puer tea in the Huai Nam River area, I found out that the transformation of organic agriculture is motivated by their relatives in China. In addition, their social networks and ethnic ties with ethnic Akha in China are the keys for them to running a business. In both cases, the organic landscapes are closely connected to their ethnicity, either marketing their products in the name of Akha or building business relationships through their ethnic ties with Chinese Akha. In conclusion, organic agriculture for the Akha has gone beyond "environmentally friendly". Instead, it could lead to some new forms of environmental narratives, cultural revitalization (solidarity), social networking, political movements and economic development.

7:15-7:45 pm

COTS Business Meeting

At conference venue

Saturday, October 22, 2022

Panel 3

8:30-9:45 am

China, Taiwan, Thailand

Moderator:

3.1) Shifting Language Ideology and Heritage Literacies of Thai Chinese Families in Thailand

Nattaporn Luangpipat

Immigrant or minority's heritage language is jeopardized losing every day because it is being overshadowed, if not suppressed, by the general use of a dominant language. Many studies on heritage languages have documented the difficulties and challenges immigrant groups face in maintaining their home language (Hinton). This study, in addition to revealing the challenges the Chinese and Thai Chinese in Thailand had faced during the Thai nationalism period (1938-1960) where Chinese schools were eradicated, it follows how the ideologies of the suppressed generations have been transferred to their descendants and influenced the younger generations' language learning experiences. In other words, how the Chinese language has been differently promoted across generations and how it has resulted in different generations' mindsets toward the Chinese language and cultures. Since the opportunities to use heritage language outside the home are limited, family literacy becomes the stronghold for the use of the minority or heritage language and the least subjected to regulatory or institutional policies (Pauwels). Thus, this study uses narrative inquiry and ethnographic observations to gather the reflections of family ideologies, literacies, and language learning experiences in relation to national politics and international trends. The narratives from the first two generations of the three Thai Chinese families in this study show how their language learning experiences tie to national and international policy and the perception of one's nation. Through narrative inquiry and ethnographic observations in three Thai Chinese families, the loss or the maintenance of a heritage language is influenced by both domestic efforts (family) and national and international support or opposition.

3.2) After De-Recognition: Thailand's Lingering Relations with Taiwan in the Age of Rightist Politics (1975-1978)

Sitthiphon Kruarattikan

Thammasat University

The 1970s was the turbulent decade of Thai politics and foreign relations. After tilting toward the US in the Cold War and recognizing Taiwan as the sole legitimate government of China for more than two decades, the elected civilian government of Mom Rajawongse Kukrit Pramoj, in the wake of the Sino-American rapprochement, the collapse of the Thanom-Prapas junta, and the falls of Cambodia and South Vietnam, decided to normalize its ties with China in 1975. However, contacts between Thailand and Taiwan persisted after the termination of diplomatic relations, especially

when the fear of communism in Thailand gave rise to the coup on October 6, 1976 and the ultra-rightist dictatorial government of Thanin Kraivichien which ruled the kingdom until October of the following year. The author analyzes Thailand's relations with Taiwan in the crucial period by showing the post-1975 close ties between the kingdom's ruling elites and its Taiwanese counterparts under the banner of anti-communism. It can also be argued that Taiwan in the mid-to-late 1970s gave tacit support to Thailand's rightist politics. However, with the emergence of the Cambodian problem in 1978, Thailand under General Kriangsak Chomanan turned to join hands with China against Vietnam and kept its distance from Taiwan.

3.3) Taiwan's New Southbound Policy on Education: A New Generation Interaction Between Taiwanese and Thais

**Non Naprathansuk
Maejo University**

This paper aimed to answer how Taiwan's new southbound policy on education that shaped relationship between Taiwanese and Thais. Documentary review and interview were conducted as a qualitative research methodology. As a results, the new Taiwan foreign policy and a new strategy created a soft power via education to new Thais generation. Scholarships, education support, and social media played the main role for attractive young Thais student. Therefore, the dramatically rose the number of Thai students who studied in Taiwan from 1,418 students in 2015 to 2,803 students in 2020. Finally, it shaped a strong relation between Taiwanese and Thais on social media as a netizen. It created a new alliance who pro-democracy, resisting on non-democratic system, and against China so called "Milk Tea Alliance".

9:45-10:00 am - break

**Panel 4
10:00-11:15 am**

**Conflict – Then and Now
Moderator:**

4.1) Unlikely Allies: Interactions between the Lao anti-communist insurgency, the Khmer Rouge, The Communist Party of Thailand and the Thai Military in the Emerald Triangle Region During the Third Indochina War

**Ian G. Baird
University of Wisconsin-Madison**

During the Third Indochina War, which most consider to have started in 1979 and ended in 1989, ideological alignments differed considerably compared to during the Second Indochina War, often referred to as the Vietnam War. Whereas, the Second Indochina War pitted communists against non-communists in a rather clear cut way, the Third Indochina War was more complicated, and less reliant on the same ideological differences, with communists often fighting against other communists, leading to unlikely alliances. In this paper, I focus on the particular

cross-border interactions and conflict between communists and non-communists that occurred in the Emerald Triangle, the border region between Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, and how Lao anti-communist insurgents, the Khmer Rouge, the Communist Party of Thailand, and the Thai military variously interacted in this area between the late 1970s and the late 1980s. In particular, I examine the ways that the Khmer Rouge interacted with Lao insurgents to oppose a common enemy, communist Vietnam and their allies, the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and how the Thais supported them but insisted on maintaining control of the situation inside Thailand.

4.2) Cold War Intellectuals: The Activities and Rhetoric of Dr. Malai Huvananda and Dr. Somchai Rakwijit

P. Mike Rattanasengchanh
Midwestern State University

Often overlooked in the promotion of anti-communism and Thai national security during the Cold War were mid-level officials within the Ministry of Interior (MOI) like Dr. Malai Huvananda and Dr. Somchai Rakwijit. When looking at Thailand during the Cold War, Phibun Songkhram, Sarit Thanarat, Thanom Kittikachorn, and Phrapas Charusathien dominate the literature. Intellectuals share part of the attention having played a role in interpreting political ideas through mass media. We can look at Prince Damrong, Luang Wichit Wathakan, and Kukrit Pramoj as some examples.

However, when examining Thai government documents and publications from the Thai National Archives, Chulalongkorn University's Thailand Information Center, and Thammasat University, we find lesser-known intellectuals who conducted research projects, informed Cold War and national security policies, and engaged in public relations programs with rural Thais and ethnic minorities. The military leaders and the monarchy were the face of the anti-communist and nation-building agendas but officials like Under-Secretary of the MOI Malai and leader of the Internal Security Operations Command Research Team Somchai were on the ground doing some heavy lifting.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Malai and Somchai were active in promoting anti-communist and Thai national security. Malai worked with rural development, touring the countryside as a representative of the RTG. He promised villagers and hill tribes that Bangkok would take care of them and that they were part of the Thai nation. Somchai lead research projects to help the RTG understand the borderlands and improve government-villager relations and counterinsurgency measures. Later he would write several long dissertations about anti-communism and Thai democracy. These individuals on the ground should be seen as critical pieces to the understanding of Thailand during the Cold War.

4.3) The Failure of Economic Development in Thailand's Far South and the Impact on the Insurgency

Ornanong Husna Benbourenane
Zayed University

This paper traces Thailand's economic development policies in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, with a specific focus on agricultural development since the

resurgence of ethnic conflict in the Far South in 2004. It discusses how successive Thai governments have attempted to use economic growth to win the “hearts and minds” of the region’s Malay-Muslim population. As the agricultural sector provides the primary source of income for more than 50 percent of the Far South’s population, the paper looks at the interaction between agricultural-based development policy, income distribution, and the ongoing conflict. It highlights the impact of the government’s agricultural policy and the violent unrest on the region’s economic development between 2004 and 2021. It discusses how the three Far South provinces have slipped into poverty and how this has impacted the separatist insurgency. Due to weak economic development and little prospect of a political solution to the ethnic conflict, this article concludes that prospects for peace and prosperity in the Far South remain bleak.

4.4) Majority as Minority: The Plight and Mobilization of Buddhists in Thailand’s Deep South

Prakirati Satasut
Thammasat University

The outbreak of violence in Thailand’s Deep South since the early 2000s has led to a protracted conflict that claims more than twenty-thousand incidents and casualties to date. While the situation is generally characterized as a conflict between the Thai Buddhist state and Malay-Muslim insurgents, Buddhist activism has become an important piece of the riddle. Long viewed as a passive, conservative force in alignment with the state, Buddhist activist groups have in recent years begun to actively organize and assert their voices through public demonstrations and participation in peacebuilding efforts, oftentimes directly challenging the agenda and policy of the state. This presentation aims to engage with the why and how of such development and argues that the paradox of majority-minority status, religion-based affirmative action policy, and lack of channels to communicate grievances are drivers of Buddhist mobilization. The coming together of Buddhists, however, remains an incomplete project and at odds with the state as Buddhist activists seek to negotiate between their autonomy, interest, and state agenda.

11:15-11:30 pm - break

Panel 5
11:30 am -12:45 pm

Military, Monarchy and Elections
Moderator:

5.1) Assessing the Political Clout of Thailand’s Monarchised Military in 2023

Paul Chambers
Naresuan University

Since 1980, Thailand’s monarchy and military have enjoyed a partnership of power with the latter as junior affiliate. Though in 1988 and 1992 elected civilians began to challenge this

partnership, following the 2014 coup and subsequent junta, it has returned to dominate the political landscape. The country's post-2019 "charade" democracy represents the continuation of military rule through apparent electoral governance. But the military is currently at a turning point--the government is challenged with economic morass, the COVID-19 pandemic, military factionalism and demands for security sector reform (SSR). In this presentation, the author looks at the current state of Thailand's military as a leading actor on the political stage, though under a king. What are the factions in Thailand's military and what is the level of intra-military division? To what extent has Thailand's king succeeded in dominating the military? Are there really any authentic SSR efforts in Thailand in 2022? The presentation argues that the Thai military has become more factionalized and Thailand's king has been unable to control the Thai military though he has tried. Thailand's post-2019 façade democracy has increasingly become an arena of retired military competition under royal arbitration. Though changes toward more democracy in Thailand may occur following the next general election, one of the following three scenarios is likely: 1) the return to office of a powerful elected civilian (such as a Thaksin) which could well provoke a coup; 2) the return to weak civilian rule (e.g. 2008-2014) which could help the military by taking them out of the limelight; and 3) another premiership for a retired military official which would continue to diminish the popularity of the armed forces as an institution.

5.2) The Democratic Regime with the King as Head of State: Buddhism and Constitutionalism in Thailand

Sanjayan Rajasingham
Yale University and Thammasat University

Thailand defies existing scholarship on Buddhism and constitutionalism. Schonthal's account of Buddhist constitutionalism as essentially embodied in Buddhism-preference clauses and *sangha*-state relationships does not fit Thailand, where both have limited constitutional significance. Instead, this paper argues that Buddhism plays an underlying, structuring role. Drawing on constitutional texts, cases, legal and political commentary, and the work of key political actors from 1992 to the present, it makes the case that Buddhism serves as a 'matrix of meaning' that makes sense both of the basic principle of Thai constitutionalism – the Democratic Regime with the King as Head of State – and of the shift in Thailand's centre of constitutional gravity from democratic assemblies to unelected bodies under the King and the military. Further, Thailand runs against the now-dominant, strategic-realist lens for the study of religion and constitutionalism which denies the relative autonomy of ideas (Hirschl, Merieau). Key Thai actors have drawn on 'Buddhist' ideas – a *karmic* ordering of society, a *baramic* notion of authority, and the *Thammaracha* ideal of Buddhist kingship – to construct today's Thai constitutionalism. And in some cases, these ideas' influence has forced powerful actors into self-defeating concessions. Taken together, and with comparative reference to Theravada Buddhist-majority Sri Lanka, these arguments suggest two theoretical conclusions. First, 'Buddhist constitutionalism' is unhelpful as a category of analysis in Thailand and other Theravada Buddhist-majority states, because no 'common core' of doctrinal or institutional Buddhist constitutional relevance exists. Second, the assumption of strategic-realist analysis – that constitutional change can be explained by a common dilemma: political actors' search for power – is functionalist, and elides the range of motivations and religious self-understandings that drive

those actors. These conclusions will be of significance to those with an interest in Thai Buddhism and Thai law and politics, but also to scholars of law and religion more generally.

5.3) The Thai Youth Movements and their Strategies to Struggle with the Thai Government in Northeast Thailand from 2020 to 2021

Patawee Chotanan
Ubon Ratchathani University

From the year 2020 to the year 2021, there was political excitement generated by Thai youths, aged under 25, in Thailand. According to Mob Data, during that time there were about 4524 protests throughout Thailand. Their political demonstrations mostly happened both in Bangkok and outside especially in Northeast Region, the so-called Isan. This article examines the development and motivations of Thai Youth protests in Isan and also their strategies they used to struggle with the government. This paper is based on observations of Thai youth protests in Isan Provinces especially, Khon Kaen, Mahasarakham and Ubonratchatani, where there were a lot of protests outside Bangkok during that time, on news analysis, and on interviews. It argues that the protests did not just happen two years ago but it was the result of political learning through Isan's history describing political and economic inequality and the suppression of Isan people by the Thai state. Moreover, this paper points out that during the protests, they not only used similar strategies to struggle with the government to those in Bangkok such as flash mobs, making networks, and using technology but also they used the identity of Isan people in the protests and called for the state to solve Isan Problems.

5.4) Shattering the Ceiling: Update on Article 112 and the Role of Scholarship

Tyrell Haberkorn
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Beginning with protests in August 2020, democracy activists in Thailand have continuously shattered the ceiling (ทะลุเพดาน) of what be said about the monarchy. The place of the monarchy in the polity and proposals for reform are now an unavoidable and open part of political discussion. Yet this has been met with a backlash. Since 20 November 2020, at least 210 people have been charged in 229 cases of violation of Article 112. This paper offers an update on the criminal cases, relevant constitutional court cases, proposals to revoke the law, and proposes how scholarship might productively contribute to shattering the ceiling of what cannot be said and supporting the activists who are doing so.

5.5) Regime Consolidation through Deinstitutionalization: A Case Study of the 2019 Elections in Thailand

Viengrat Nethipo

Studies of elections held by autocrats often assume that institutions are strengthened in order to increase the leverage of the dictator. Yet, it can also be the case that institutions are purposely weakened when autocrats allow for elections. The 2019 Thai elections were notable not for

advancing “national reform” or democratization, but for the deinstitutionalization of the party system and the legislature. Through mechanisms of constitutional engineering, electoral manipulation, and prima facie legal rulings, Thailand’s deep state was able to deinstitutionalize the opposition and undermine a fair, democratic process. This paper charts these mechanisms of deinstitutionalization and argues that the 2019 elections have overall weakened institutions in Thailand.

1:00-2:00 pm – lunch break

Panel 6

2:00-3:15 pm

Roundtable 1

Thai Community Engagement and Youth Development in Buddhist and Catholic Organizations

Presenters:

Terry E. Miller

Kent State University

Supeena Insee Adler

UCLA

Benjamin Cefkin

University Colorado, Boulder

Jittapim Yamprai

University of Wisconsin-Green Bay

The panel features four papers/discussions on how religious organizations, such as Buddhist temples and Catholic congregations, can serve as centers to promote community engagement and youth development of the Thais. The first paper, *North-Eastern Music and dance as slum youth development at the Mercy Center in Bangkok* by Terry Miller, describes how catholic priest, Father Joseph Maier, initiated music programs to engage children in slums with regional music and dance activities to keep youth away from selling drugs and illegal conduct. The second, *‘Initiating Thainess’ in the Thai-American youth communities in Buddhist Temple, California* by Supeena Insee Adler displays how creating cultural programs for learning at the Buddhist temple in California can reduce the cultural dissonance of Thai-American youth and bridge the intergenerational gap in the family. The third paper by Benjamin Cefkin, *Southeast Asian Cross-cultural Engagement in the four Buddhist temples, Denver*, features how four Buddhist temples — Thai, Mon, Laos, and Cambodian temples — are developing cultural programs for the Asian-American youth to learn the cultures of Southeast Asia. The last paper, *Buddhist syncretism in the Catholic communities in Thailand* analyzes how Catholic pastors in rural areas of Thailand are able to unite and promote community engagement, development, and Thai cultural awareness by merging Buddhist cultures in the Catholic activities.

3:15-3:30 pm – break

Panel 7

3:30-4:45 pm

Urban

Moderator:

7.1) Another Dimension of Urban Poverty/Precarity in Bangkok: Low Income Rental Housing and the Absent of Rental Housing Policy”

Pitch Pongsawat

Chulalongkorn University

Low income rental housing in Thailand, Bangkok in particular where the number is the highest, has been neglected not only by the government in all levels but also by academics and non-government organizations. There is no rental housing policy for both the normal and the low income market. There is no official and estimation of data, and no government agency to be incharge. Government policies, academics, and NGOs tend to focus on slum and the homeless. People in the low income rental housing has been trapped in the middle of the two main “visible” forms of housing class/ categories: the people in slum where the city government registered them based on the communal/organizational capacity to become the registered community with welfare benefit, and the homeless who has widely gained recognition from city government and several NGOS. People in the low income rental housing sector have been relatively left out of the recognition and benefits from the city and civil society and very precarious to all urban development, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The paper introduces the situation and significance of the low income rental housing issue in Thailand, using the case of Bangkok to reveal another dimension of urban precarity with is hidden in the public perception of spatial aspect of urban poverty: between registered slum and the homeless. The paper discuss the policy and public administrative dimensions, difficulties of research fieldwork, and initial findings from the field, and preliminary discussion on how to understand politics of urban development of Bangkok using the case of low income housing sector as a lens.

The paper is based on the second phase research project on “the undocumented urban poor in Thailand”, funded by the Thai Health Foundation and Chulalongkorn University’s Asia Institute.

7.2) Open City: Nakhon Si Thammarat’s Great Reliquary and Its City in Peninsular Thailand in the 10th Century

Wannasarn (Saam) Noonsuk

California State University, Fresno

At around the middle portion of the Malay Peninsula where people could cross from one ocean to the next, Nakhon Si Thammarat Kingdom was known since c. the 13th century for its thriving Theravada Buddhist heritage. Its local chronicles, which is the most prominent tradition in

peninsular Thailand, proclaim that a righteous king built his grand city and its Great Reliquary (stupa) with the blessing from the king of Sri Lanka in a colorful story full of magical creatures and events. This world of chronicles and myths still holds local people together, with the Great Reliquary at the center. However, recent archaeological research suggests that the Great Reliquary was initially constructed in c. the second half of the 9th to 10th century with a mandala plan of Mahayana Buddhism, akin to the stupas in Nalanda and central Java, rather than Sri Lanka. The reliquary also faces north, which is the opposite direction to the nearest town (Phra Wiang) surrounded by moats and earthen walls. Another city in the area, the old Nakhon Si Thammarat City surrounded by brick walls also seems to be built later in the Ayutthaya Period. Thus, this paper will present both art historical and scientific evidence to propose that the city responsible for the construction of the Great Reliquary, which predates the Nakhon Si Thammarat Kingdom, was probably an “open city” without earthen walls and moats, similar to Koh Ker and Phnom Kulen, early cities in Cambodia, from the ninth to tenth century as well. The discussion of the characteristics of open cities will lead to a new framework to understand early urbanism in Southeast Asia.

7.3) Measuring Cost- The Expulsion of Street Food Vendors in Bangkok

Raymond Lacko
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Historically, much of Bangkok’s urban poor and working class have relied on the city’s street food for consistent meals, contrary to the media’s depiction of vendors as a novelty for tourists. Due to nearly a decade of increased regulations and subsequently high fees, street vendors have been systematically pushed out of parts of Bangkok. With the disappearance of vendors, there are few low-cost alternatives for hot-and-ready meals. Instead, low-income workers are increasingly forced to reconsider their meal options or spend more on food each month. With Bangkok’s new governor appearing to support the ‘Singapore model’ of vendors, it is unlikely vendors will reappear in the areas of the city where regulations have already swept them away. Between June and August 2022, I examined how regulations, gentrification, and COVID-19 have altered the accessibility of street food for working-class people near a stretch of the BTS Sukhumvit line. Fieldwork methodology consisted of participant observation, surveys, and informal and semi-formal interviews. Data from the numerous publications on informal vending from nonprofits and academics are also included in this research.

7.4) Cultural Heritage Management and Centralized Control in Thailand

Seng Khang
University of Hawai’i at Manoa

In 2018, Si Thep Historical Park emerged as an important heritage site through community resistance to international undertaking for oil extraction roughly one hundred meters from the Great Stupa Khao Klang Nok. Since then, the Fine Arts Department (FAD) has now applied for status as an UNESCO World Heritage site – a first of its kind for Thailand’s Dvaravati-period sites. Using Si Thep Historical Park as a case study, my paper will discuss the management style of the FAD pertaining to heritage sites and the control of narratives. Although the decision for

designation was due to local outcry for the protection of local cultural patrimony, they no longer feel the prestige of World Heritage designation due to the sidelining of locals from decisions regarding the management of the Historical Park. According to Meskell (2014), the Convention's success has now contributed to its demise as we can see from the economic benefits, reputation, and global negotiations that have resulted in its impending eclipse. Though World Heritage designation in the past held a prestige throughout Southeast Asia, local benefit in designation is being questioned. With locals being marginalized to fulfill UNESCO obligations for World Heritage designation and FAD controlled narratives, we must consider what the real purpose and intention is for cultural heritage management for cultural sites in Thailand.

4:45-5:00 pm – break

Panel 8

5:00-6:00 pm

Roundtable 2

Looking Back, Moving Forward: 50 Years of COTS

Organizer: Micah Morton, Northern Illinois University

Panelists:

Katherine Bowie

University of Wisconsin-Madison

John Hartmann

Northern Illinois University

Pittaya Paladroi-Shane

Ohio University

Jeffrey Shane

Ohio University

Kanjana Thepboriruk

Northern Illinois University

In this roundtable, we reflect on the history, transformations, and possible futures of the Council of Thai Studies, which was established in 1972 at Northern Illinois University by Drs. Clark Neher and Ladd Thomas. We begin with a brief overview of COTS' early years at NIU. We then engage in an extended dialogue beginning with participants sharing their most memorable moment of COTS. We then address the following series of questions: How and why has COTS changed over the years? How has it remained the same? What further changes do you foresee in COTS in the near future? How have these changes and continuities reflected and shaped developments in the field of Thai Studies?

6:00-6:15 pm - break

Panel 9

6:15-7:45 pm

Keynote Address #2

A Journey with the Fraught, Post-colonial Thai Studies

Thongchai Winichakul

University of Wisconsin-Madison

For forty years, I have been doing Thai intellectual history in the environments of academia outside Thailand but with the Thai world in the background. Recently, I have also addressed more to Thai academia. Doing scholarly works in the contexts of different academies and from different positioning is a challenge. On the one hand, the peculiar twin of the colonial and provincial mentality, and the post-colonial conditions of Thai academia have lasting effects on the scholarship in the country, methodologically, politically and in other respects. Being a home scholar' outside home, on the other hand, also have implications on scholarship and its politics. The fraught, post-colonial Thai studies across the globe is intriguing.

Bio: Thongchai Winichakul is Emeritus Professor of History at University of Wisconsin-Madison and Research Fellow Emeritus at Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO), Japan. He is the author of *Siam Mapped* (1994) and *Moments of Silence: The Unforgetting of the October 6, 1976, Massacre in Bangkok* (2020), and has published eight books in Thai. He received the John Simon Guggenheim Award in 1994, was inducted to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2003 and was also President of the Association for Asian Studies in 2013/14. His research interests are in the intellectual foundations of modern Siam under colonial conditions. He is also a critic of Thai political and social issues.

Sunday, October 23, 2022

Panel 10

9:00-10:15 am

**Air Quality, the Death of Theatres, Genetic Conservation of Bamboo, and Refugees
Moderator:**

**10.1) Genetic Conservation of Bamboo in Loei Province, Thailand Identification,
Distribution and Genetic Diversity**

**Marisa Phriomtan De Bels
Loei Rajabhat University**

Over the past decade, deforestation has triggered an environmental crisis causing the extinction of many native plants worldwide. In in Northeastern Thailand's Loei Province, bamboo forests, even in government protected areas, have given way to para rubber plantations and seasonal farming. One particular species of endangered bamboo, *Schizostachyum virgatum*, is used to make the musical instrument the *khaen*. In Thai vernacular, it is called *hia*. In general, it is found chiefly in mountainous regions, on foothills and higher ridges, sequestered among other species. Field research has begun by a university team in the Dan Sai District of Loei Province. The objective is to map out the distribution of the *hia* by recording data on elevation, soil and moisture conditions, its distribution among other bamboo species and its morphological characteristics. With sufficient data, it might be possible to use GIS and remote sensing to predict the location of the species in adjoining provinces and beyond. The easily identifiable *hia* species (thin canes with long internodes) might be used to monitor the continuing decline of the species due to climate change and other factors and thus be seen as a kind of "canary in the mine" signaling the overall health of the heretofore abundant bamboo forests in the region and in neighboring countries. Because the *khaen* needs to be replaced every few years as the bamboo from which it is made loses its musical timbre, its place in the Lao and Northeastern Thai culture is under threat of disappearing as well.

10.2) Thailand's Road to Clean Air: Lessons Learned from the US

**Chomkate Ngamkaiwan
Mahidol University**

**Scot Schraufnagel
Northern Illinois University**

Ambient fine particulate matter air pollution (PM_{2.5}) has been a serious environmental threat to Thai citizens since 2019. Currently, Thailand is lacking a regulatory body and laws to confront the problem. Accordingly, a new clean air bill, including the establishment of an Environmental Protection Agency, were proposed. However, legislative and political obstacles stand in the way of successful enactment, holding the health of Thai people hostage to powerful interests. This research examines challenges to the implementation of the Clean Air Act in Thailand with regards to corruption and conflicts of interest in the air pollution-related sectors. In this study, documentary

research is conducted, and data is collected on obstacles to successful clean air legislation. To better understand the situation in Thailand, a comparison is drawn to the experience with the Clean Air Act of 1970 in the United States. In the United States, the Clean Air Act has been well-regarded and routinely updated. Yet, in the United States, the law as well as its relevant plans and regulations had been differently enforced and challenged throughout its history, especially during the Trump Administration. The researchers analyze barriers to air pollution control legislation in both countries. It is learned that partisanship and corruption in the energy and automobile sectors is a primary obstacle to clean air legislation. Alternative solutions such as public access to information and public participation in climate change policy arenas are explored. In the end, the researchers argue that transparency and accountability are the best safeguards against political malfeasance in the environmental policy arena.

10.3) Surveying Deaths of Single-Screen Theaters, Media Obsolescence and Labor Disposal in Bangkok Through *Phantom of Illumination* (2017)

Palita Chunsangchan
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Phantom of Illumination [Niran Ratree] (2017), a docufiction directed by Wattanaphume Laisuwanchai, observes a life of Samrith, a projectionist—a hitherto overlooked labor behind the film screening—at the last single-screen theater in Bangkok before the theater stopped operating in 2013. On the one hand, the film acts as a eulogy for many deaths of the standalone theaters in Bangkok in the last two decades as well as a nostalgic lament to the lost days of film culture in Thailand to which this type of theater and its mode of cinematic exhibition once contributed. On the other hand, I am more drawn to the aspect of the discharged labor of the projectionist, a faithful unskilled labor who never worked elsewhere since his migration to Bangkok from a poor provincial area of Thailand in 1980. This paper thus investigates not only the subjectivity of such vulnerable migrant labor vis-à-vis the obsolete mode of cinematic exhibition and distribution in the changing multifaceted urban media infrastructures of Bangkok but also how the film negotiates with the discourse of development and obsolescence through its narrative structure and aesthetic choices. I argue that though the film sides with the dominant discourse of cycle of life and impermanence in Buddhism in order to create an empathetic trope for and make sense of the discarded labor, it fails to resolve the changing nature of cinematic infrastructures and urban activities that actually thrive on volatility and disposal. I also investigate how the film contrasts the remaining days of inactivity both of the theatre and of Samrith's labor to hyper-activities in the urban space outside the theatre and argue that this passivity leaves a lasting psychopathological injury to the life of the marginalized labor even in his post-migration days back in his provincial hometown. While my project analyzes one contemporary Thai film in particular, the scope of questions that it entails spans the discussions around film aesthetics informed by Buddhist philosophy in Southeast Asia and how this Buddhist vernacularism depicts living conditions and mental states of some populations affected by hyper-activities in current urban media infrastructures and cultures.

10.4) Thailand as a Refugee Transit Country: A Story of Physical and Imaginary Space

Bhanubhatra Jittieng
Chulalongkorn University

This paper investigates Thailand's historical locus as a refugee transit country. It argues that a refugee transit country is both a physical and imaginary space, which is figured geographically and constructed socio-politically. Using new historical data from the U.S. government-based archive to study refugee movements in and through Thailand, this paper highlights the initial role of the United States in shaping Thailand as a physical space for refugee transit. Washington provided Bangkok with assurance for refugee resettlement in the early years after the fall of Saigon in 1975, leading to the flow of refugees into Thailand and the opening of camps. The engagement of various actors in refugee assistance, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), solidified the role of Thailand as a transit space where some refugees could get resettled in a third country or seek refuge temporarily before repatriating home. However, this paper further contends that the historical existence of Thailand as a physical transit space for refugees corresponds with the 'imagining' process of transiting through Thailand. Newer groups of refugees have arrived in Thailand hoping to get elsewhere regardless of the transit occurrence and reality. In fact, new arrivals can hardly make transit through Thailand, given the limited resettlement quota and the dimming chance of returning home due to ongoing conflicts. As a result, Thailand has become an imaginary transit country where a protracted refugee situation occurs. This paper provides a new conceptual framework for understanding a transit country where many refugees and asylum seekers live in limbo. It also enriches Thai studies by adding historical evidence and explaining Thailand's role in the global refugee dynamics.

10:15-10:30 - break

Panel 11

10:30-11:45 am

Music

Moderator:

11.1) Comparative Musicology and the Anxiety for Musical Excellence in Nineteenth-Century Siam

Parkorn Wangpaiboonkit

University of California, Berkeley

In the late nineteenth-century, European Comparative Musicologists published the first theoretical studies on Siamese music upon observing Bangkok court musicians on tour to Europe to perform at the world's fairs of 1885 and 1900 (Ellis 1885, Stumpf 1901, Hornbostel 1920). Central to the comparativist goal of studying the various musical systems of the world was the belief that musical organization indexed racially-essential knowledge specific to their practitioner's culture otherwise unobtainable through other humanistic sciences. While these comparativist studies expressed genuine curiosity on the perceived organizational theory of Siamese court music, they routinely cited its lack of vertical harmony as evidence for developmental backwardness, akin to the same musical organization of Europe's distant past.

My paper traces the Siamese intellectual response to the European concern for musical organization as an index for racial standing. I examine the court's response to these studies in the pages of Siam's first publications and treaties on music, to examine the Bangkok elite's anxiety and newfound awareness for the scientific qualities of its music (measured, rather than heard) as a judge of civilizational advancement. An article from the *Wachirayanwiset* journal, for instance, made the self-pitying declaration that Siamese music was "the foulest amongst all nations" for being capable of dividing the octave into only seven tones, while the great civilizations of Europe have long achieved twelve tone divisions – the coveted foundation for vertical harmony. The paper illustrates, then, the moment the Siamese court realized that its music contained more racially specific secrets than were perceptible to its performers. The comparativist concern with pitch organization as an index of cultural standing and as carrier of racialized knowledge was not a one-sided concern of European intellectuals: it was localized by Siamese intellectuals as a matter of colonial contest and self-evaluation.

11.2) K-Pop Fandom in Political Activism: The Cases of BTS ARMY in the U.S. and the K-Pop Fandoms in Thailand

Jiwoo Park
California State University, Fullerton

Penchan Phoborisut
California State University, Fullerton

With the recent meteoric rise to the global scale, such as Netflix's *Squid Game* and the Oscar Award Winning *Parasite*, the Korean entertainment industry has taken the world by storm. Today, K-pop fandoms are not only associated with the success of their favorite artists, music, or any other object of interest but also have evolved as a powerful force in political activism (Ekin, 2020). The fandom groups have not stopped at meeting ups, exchanging paraphernalia, or Instagram posts of their pop idols. More importantly, they have formed coalitions in Asia, North and South America, and other parts of the world. Matching the defense of their common favorite idols, K-pop fans have proven capable of uniting in a highly organized, systematic way to amplify social movements and demand for change (Bruner, 2020; Coscarelli, 2020). Mostly in K-pop fandom, the social media hashtags are trended for creating awareness around social or political issues and a more severe prominent presence for their causes within the broader realm of the sociopolitical world. Thus, this research examines popular South Korean group BTS fandom, ARMY, in the United States and the K-pop fandoms in Thailand by tracing their operationalization and how they mobilized fans to engage in political actions.

11.3) Songs for Climate Change: Sustainable Banking, Sanuk, and Health Promotion in Thailand

Matthew Werstler

On March 18, 2020, Kasikorn Bank (KBank) of Thailand was the first Thai Bank to join 170 Banks around the world in signing the UN Principles for Responsible Banking ahead of the UN

Climate Control Meeting. In response to their commitment to sustainable banking, KBank came out with music videos to educate fellow Thais about climate change.

Sanuk is often used as method in advertisements and health promotion to combat serious issues. Through the music videos, Thais are enacting a sense of *sanuk* in musicking but at the same time emphasizing the need for urgency on climate change. In addition to using these music videos as a method to show concern and provide health education, KBank use *sanuk* as a marketing campaign to gain trust for their business. Further exposing whether the climate change music videos are more for propaganda and not for quality change.

Through the lens of ecomusicology, this paper analyzes the songs for climate change through lyrics, music, movement, and images. I use this analysis to suggest that *sanuk* is both a method in music for a sustainable future and economic security. I provide suggestions in future projects in music and sustainable banking that emphasizes in investing in local musicians to also create for climate change. Further supporting the role that *sanuk* has on climate change promotion through music and provides an outlet to promote climate change and promote positive change in the country's environmental health concerns.

11.4) Taste of Music, Taste of Culture: A Case Study of Musicking as a Mode of Learning Thai Culture

Jui-Ching Wang
Northern Illinois University

Chamni Sripraram
Northern Illinois University

Multicultural music education in the U.S. took a significant step forward when the Tanglewood Symposium of 1967, "Music in American Society," recommended that the expansion of the repertoire taught in schools include the "music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures" and "music of our time in its rich variety," specifically "popular teen-age music and avant-garde music, American folk music, and the music of other cultures." In response, some institutions started to incorporate non-European music into their standard curriculum in the 1970s to expose students to a wider variety of music. The incorporation of Thai music into music program demonstrates such institutional efforts since then.

Along with the UCLA and Kent State University, Northern Illinois University (NIU), the third higher institution in the U.S., offers Thai music for students to learn regional styles, central Thai court music, northeastern Isaan traditional music, and contemporary pop music. Working primarily with cultural bearer, a classically trained-Thai music specialist, students are assigned to play various instruments and study not only fundamentals of notation, rhythmic principles, forms, and tuning systems, but also performance etiquettes and cultural values embedded in the musicking experience. Arguably speaking, authentic musicking experience is framed within a particular social/cultural group, and it is nearly impossible to recreate such unique experiences within which cultural outsiders can be completely immersed. Taking advantage of an already flourishing music and cultural studies at NIU, we strive to provide students with stimuli so that even though they are cultural outsiders, they can also "come to understand and to enjoy musicking" as their counterparts could. Through observations of lessons and rehearsals, interviews with the TME primary instructor and the ensemble members, and an analysis of artifacts of performance

clips, we will define and illustrate the meanings of such experiences specific to the learning of culture through music.

11.5) Born from Bamboo: Introducing *Khaen* Musical Culture at NIU

Chamni Sripraram

NIU

John Hartmann

NIU

Aj. Chamni has been teaching Thai classical music at NIU for the past several years. He has since decided to inaugurate a new course on the *khaen*, the free reed mouth organ of Northeast Thailand and Laos. This summer, he traveled to Khon Kaen to pick up four *khaen* to take back to NIU, and to help inaugurate an instructional program at the Roi Et School for the Blind. To enlarge the experience for students and potential audiences, we have put together background information and illustrations of the components and construction of the instrument, as well as a diagram of its structure and the use of two metaphors used in talking about the “living” functioning of the *khaen*: *luk* ‘child’ and *taw* ‘breast’, words that picture the in-and-out flow of air in the *taw* chamber that holds the *luk* bamboo cylinders in place, like children nursing at their mother’s breast. Time permitting, a video of a *khaen* craftsman will show how this instrument is made.

American and foreign musicians have for some time been composing exquisite new works for the *khaen* in combination with other instruments: the cello, bass, and even the Korean *kamungo*. At NIU we plan to commission new pieces written for the *khaen*.

Panel 12

12:00 am -1:00 pm

Roundtable 3

Thais in Illinois Oral History Project

Organizer and Chair: Kanjana Thepboriruk, NIU

Panelists

Kanjana Thepboriruk (NIU) – Program coordinator

Duangkamon Winitkun (NIU) – Program assistant coordinator

Aleena Chulanon – Program participant

Natasha Dhamavasi – Program participant

Nisara Sripraram – Program participant

Rosalyn Dhamavasi – Program participant

Sarisa Chulanon – Program participant

Tapanutt Sripraram – Program participant

This roundtable will introduce the Thais in Illinois Oral History Project and share the experiences and output from the Project’s first cohort (Summer 2022). The Thais in Illinois Oral History Project is a summer program for high schoolers in the Chicagoland area who have

connections to the Thai communities. The free 12-weeks program aims to build professional and Thai language skills for the youth participants and is funded by NIU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Summer Research Grant. Project outputs were chosen by the participants and include narrative essays, photographic portraits, illustrations/animation, a short film, a podcast, and a website. An end-of-program exhibit is planned for Fall 2022 at a Thai business in Chicagoland and will be open to the public.

1:00 pm END

1:15 pm onward

Gathering at Tyrell Haberkorn's residence in Madison (more information to be provided).

Other Notes:

Bagels, coffee and tea will be provided as sustenance.

Anyone needing a place to stay, contact Katherine, Ian or Tyrell. We may not have beds, but we can provide floor mats and bedding!