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Dear reader...

The new executive committee of the CCSEAS are pleased to bring you the second issue of the ninth volume of our newsletter.

You will notice that we have made some changes in the current newsletter. First, the format and layout have been redesigned, thanks to Danielle Labbé. We hope that this new design makes the newsletter more appealing, and more appropriate for the longer submissions that we tend to receive. We are also hoping to introduce an HTML e-newsletter format to accompany the print and PDF later in the year.

Second, we believe that it is important to maintain CCSEAS as a bilingual organization. For this reason, we will continue to publish the newsletter in both English and French. At the same time, the work required to ensure quality translation is more than can be provided at present. In order to maintain a bilingual newsletter, we have decided to publish articles in the language in which they are submitted. If authors submit both English and French versions, then both will appear. If submissions are in only one language, then the editors will write a short summary. We hope that this process will meet the needs of Anglophone and Francophone members while also ensuring that the newsletter can be produced on a regular basis.

In the current issue of the newsletter, Sarah Turner looks at issues surrounding cross-border relations, trade, and livelihood in Vietnam and China. Celine Pierdet writes about the impact of the recent economic downturn on the urbanization of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. In the fieldwork section, Vincent K. Pollard discusses “distance interviewing” techniques and Jim Delaney reports on the challenges of studying economic relationships during a period of global financial crisis.

The issue, as always, also provides updates on recent activities undertaken by members of CCSEAS and announces upcoming meetings and conferences. We hope that you enjoy the new newsletter.

Yours,
The Editorial Committee

Comments, suggestions and submissions for future issues are always welcome. You can reach us at: ccseas.executive@gmail.com.

Cher(e)s lecteurs et lectrices,

C'est avec grand plaisir que le nouveau comité exécutif du CCEASE vous présente ce deuxième numéro du neuvième volume de notre bulletin d'information.

Vous remarquerez certains changements apportés au bulletin. D'abord, le format et le graphisme ont été revus (merci à Danielle Labbé). Nous espérons que ce nouveau design rendra le bulletin plus attrayant et permettra d'intégrer les textes plus longs que nous recevons. Plus tard cette année, nous espérons également accompagner les versions papier et PDF du bulletin par un complément électronique au format HTML.

Deuxièmement, nous croyons qu'il est important de maintenir le caractère bilingue du CCEASE. Pour cette raison, nous allons continuer de publier le bulletin en anglais et en français. Cependant, il ne nous est plus possible d'assurer la traduction intégrale du contenu. Nous avons donc décidé de publier les articles dans la langue dans laquelle ils nous sont soumis. Si les auteurs soumettent à la fois une version anglaise et française, nous les publierons toutes deux. Le cas échéant, les auteurs ou les éditeurs s'assureront d'accompagner la soumission d'un court résumé dans l'autre langue. Nous espérons que cette façon de faire conviendra aux besoins de tous les membres tout en nous permettant de continuer à publier le bulletin sur une base régulière.

Dans ce numéro, Sarah Turner discute des relations transfrontalières au Vietnam et en Chine. Céline Pierdet explore les impacts du ralentissement économique sur l'urbanisation de la ville de Phnom Penh, au Cambodge. Dans la section «terrain», Vincent K. Pollard présente une technique d'entretien à distance et Jim Delaney nous parle des défis associés à l'étude des relations économiques en période de crise financière.

Comme à l'habitude, ce numéro inclut des nouvelles des membres du CCEASE ainsi que des avis et annonces concernant les rencontres et conférences à venir. Nous espérons que vous prendrez plaisir à la lecture de ce bulletin.

Vôtre,
Le comité éditorial

Les commentaires, suggestions, et soumissions pour les prochains numéros sont les bienvenus. Vous pouvez nous joindre à : ccseas.executive@gmail.com.

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Doing geography the Hmong way*

Sarah Turner *discusses recent research on livelihood and trade across the China-Vietnam border.*

“Wow, China’s big eh!” Chi exclaims. I’m humbled as a geography professor to witness the excitement on this young Hmong woman’s face when she sees for the very first time on a map where Vietnam is and how big China – 35km from where we’re standing – is in comparison.

We’re scrutinizing a freshly purchased world map that I’ve brought up from Vietnam’s capital Hanoi to the upland Northern Vietnam market town of Sa Pa, a day away by train and bus. Chi’s even more amazed at how far I’ve travelled from Canada to come and talk to her. But she quickly

cottons on to the fact that the map is indeed a bad image of a round globe. “It’s not really flat, it’s more like this” I try to explain as I crumble up the map to form a messy ball, thinking to myself “got to bring some inflatable globes next year...”

Hmong people like Chi, as well

as Yao, Tày, Nung and other ethnic minority groups, live in Lào Cai province, a remote upland region in Northern Vietnam where I’ve been undertaking fieldwork with colleagues and graduate students for the past ten



Photo: S. Turner

Chi becomes an enthusiastic geography student

years. This time I’ve come to Vietnam and China for five months of my sabbatical and as one of my current projects I’m keen to listen to a number of Hmong elders recount their histories of the past and how their livelihoods have changed over time.

A few days later my graduate

student Christine Bonnin and I hop on the back of Hmong motorbike taxis and together with our young Hmong interpreter for the day, Be (who has taught herself spoken English from backpacker tourists visiting the area), head down the narrow valley road that snakes between rice terraces, hemp crops for making cloth, indigo patches (to dye the hemp), small family vegetable plots, and wooden Hmong houses. After we manage to run over

a rather long snake en route and then trek by foot up the other side of the valley, we finally arrive at Be’s family house. Here we offer the pig fat and vegetables we’ve carried down from the local town market to Be’s father, Lue. Even though it’s just after Hmong New Year and Lue has recently slaughtered a pig in celebration, he’s happy to receive our gifts to boost his family’s food supplies.

Our timing is good and Lue has time to sit and chat for a while since it’s not yet the season to plough the

fields for the rice and corn crops. Today Lue is keen to talk about the days when they grew opium poppies in the valley. The lowland Vietnamese and Chinese nearby were enthusiastic customers for this crop that grew well in the upland areas on the Chinese border. While often marginalized as opium

producers throughout Southeast Asia, it's got to be remembered that ethnic minority groups like the Hmong were introduced to this crop by the Chinese and French colonialists (and British elsewhere in Southeast Asia) so it's hardly the fault of the minority residents of these mountainous areas that the trade thrived there for many years and still does in some areas. While Lue is not aware of how the opium arrived in the area, he certainly remembers the trade negotiations between local Hmong growers and eager lowland customers.

Also on Lue's mind is the rice crop that his family will be planting shortly. He's worried that the rice seeds that he's just purchased from the state supplier are of poor quality and even if it's a 'high yield variety' that the government has been trying to encourage ethnic minorities to plant for the past decade, Lue is very apprehensive that the crop will do well. Last year his cousin's crop in another village nearby hardly germinated at all because the government seeds were not suitable for local climatic conditions.

The government did nothing to help those with failed crops and some families had to resort to eating food collected from the forest "like in the old days during the China war" recounts Lue, referring to the 1979 war when China invaded northern Vietnam to "teach Vietnam a lesson" for its military incursions into Cambodia. Lue would much prefer to plant 'traditional' Hmong rice as it tastes far better, if only he had enough land. After hearing a number of troubling stories like this Christine and I begin to realise that there is a worrying lack of dialogue and understanding between a government

bent on improving rice output and upland ethnic groups struggling to maintain parts of their customary lifestyle. We feel it is important to raise awareness of these differences among the local non-governmental organisation community and soon start talking of such a project...



Photo: S. Turner

Typical Hmong hamlet surrounded by terraced rice fields

The next day back in the local market town I run into Chi – the new geographer – selling Hmong textiles

there is a worrying lack of dialogue between a government bent on improving rice output and upland ethnic groups struggling to maintain parts of their customary lifestyle.

in the market. These textiles were originally those made by her family, but these days enterprising Hmong scour the countryside to gain supplies as the demand from tourists for 'authentic cultural artefacts' has grown, a topic that I've been researching for a number of years. Chi explains how a lot of

these textiles are now coming over the border from China, brought across by both China-based and Vietnam-based Hmong. This factors into another aspect of my research in the highlands, analysing the small-scale, cross-border trade of ethnic minorities who navigate the political realities of an international

border that cuts their historical homeland in two.

A month later and I'm just across the border in Yunnan province, China, with another graduate student, Steeve Davie; a colleague from anthropology at Université Laval, Jean Michaud; and our local research partner Bai Tingbin. After an hour on a winding gravel road in a minibus from the regional main town of Ma Guān, we get to a small border town. We make this trip because earlier, in a border

market in Vietnam, I'd met a lot of traders from this Chinese town, many of whom are Han Chinese who speak excellent Hmong. This fact completely surprised my Hmong research assistant in Vietnam, who repeatedly exclaimed "but Kinh [lowland Vietnamese] people never learn Hmong!"

Once in this small Chinese town, not quite knowing what to do next as the heavy fog swirls around us, we soon meet Zou, a Han Chinese man who is very curious to know why on earth there are foreigners here on such a miserable day, or indeed on any day. Zou has lived here all his life, and quickly invites us back to his house on the main street for a chat. A cross-border smuggler for twenty years, to my amazement he starts to detail the tricks of the trade. What do people in China usually take across the border from this town to sell? "Oh mainly cigarettes, batteries, matches,



textiles, medicine, flashlights, those sorts of things,” he says. Where would you cross the border and what would happen if you were caught? “We crossed at the local checkpoint, and if we were caught then the police would take our goods, so we’d run like crazy and try to hide.”

Knowing that there is a large buffalo market in the vicinity, I ask about the cross-border trade of these precious beasts of burden, used by ethnic minorities to plough their rice and corn fields. Zou recalls that until two years prior, most of the buffalo trade went from China to Vietnam, but since two years it’s switched around, and people from Vietnam, mainly ethnic minorities, are bringing buffalo to China to sell. This correlates exactly

with what Hmong buffalo traders had told me earlier that month in Can Cau, a border market over in Vietnam, where one buffalo trader had had to cut short our conversation because he and his buffalo were heading over to China ‘via a secret route.’

When I talk with ethnic minority people in Vietnam and China I find that their livelihood decisions are not always those that outsiders such as local government officials, aid agencies, or academics think they would or should be, be it about rice supply choices, trade preferences, border-crossing decisions, or local environmental judgements. But once you talk to and understand these ethnic minorities as individuals, households and communities, you find that their choices are often entirely

rational based on their own, culturally rooted understandings of what success and failure, and ‘development’ are. The challenge is to get these voices heard.

Sarah Turner is an Associate Professor, Department of Geography, McGill University. She researches how people who live ‘on the margins’, economically, politically, and/or culturally make a livelihood in Asia. This includes research on ethnic minority livelihoods in northern Vietnam and southwest China, as well as on street vendor survival tactics in Southeast Asian cities. She has recently co-edited with Dominique Caouette the book: ‘Agrarian Angst and Rural Resistance in Contemporary Southeast Asia’ published by Routledge 2009.

**This article was first published in the McGill Reporter.*

Aventures géographiques en pays Hmong

Sarah Turner partage les résultats de recherches récentes touchant au commerce et aux modes de vie dans les régions frontalières sino-vietnamiennes.

Voyant une mappemonde pour la première fois de sa vie, Chi, une jeune femme Hmong, est stupéfaite devant l’immensité de la Chine, qui ne se trouve pourtant qu’à 35 kilomètres de son village du nord du Vietnam. Je suis ici avec mon étudiante Christine Bonnin. Christine effectue ses recherches de terrain tandis que, profitant d’une année sabbatique, je poursuis mes travaux voués à mieux comprendre les changements qui ont affecté la vie des Hmongs au fil des générations.

J’ai rencontré dans les collines et vallées disséminées de part et d’autre de la frontière sino-vietnamienne plusieurs paysans comme Lue. Celui-ci nous livre ses souvenirs de l’époque où les Chinois et Vietnamiens des plaines avoisinantes s’arrachaient l’opium qu’il cultivait. Aujourd’hui, Lue se consacre à la riziculture. Il vient tout juste de se procurer les semences « à haut rendement » dont le gouvernement vietnamien fait la promotion auprès des minorités ethniques depuis une décennie. Pourtant, s’il avait le choix et

davantage de terre, il aurait clairement opté pour du riz Hmong « traditionnel », à la fois meilleur au goût et bien mieux adapté aux conditions locales. De telles histoires étant légion dans la région, Christine et moi réalisons le manque flagrant de dialogue entre, d’une part, un gouvernement pressé de voir la récolte de riz s’accroître, et, d’autre part, des minorités ethniques soucieuses de préserver leur mode de vie traditionnel.

Le jour suivant, au marché, Chi m’explique que les étoffes hmong qu’elle vend aux touristes à la recherche de souvenirs « authentiques » ne sont plus tissées par les membres de sa famille comme jadis. On se les procure désormais en Chine de l’autre côté de la frontière politique qui divise la terre ancestrale des minorités ethniques

peuplant ces hauts plateaux. Mes recherches visent aussi à mieux comprendre les rouages de tels échanges transfrontaliers. Par exemple, à la grande stupéfaction d'autres informateurs Hmongs, la frontière fourmille de grossistes Han qui ont appris le Hmong, chose que des Kinhs (Vietnamiens des basses terres) ne font « jamais ». Zou, un de ces Han bilingues, est un petit contrebandier qui transige, entre autres, cigarettes, batteries, allumettes, étoffes, médicaments et lampes de poche de part et d'autre de la frontière depuis 20 ans. Quand je l'interroge à propos du commerce des buffles d'eau, il se remémore qu'il y a à peine deux ans, des bêtes de trait

venues de Chine étaient offertes sur les marchés vietnamiens. Aujourd'hui, c'est l'inverse, et Zou lui-même mène en Chine, par un « chemin secret », des buffles élevés au Vietnam.

Lorsque je discute avec des gens des minorités ethniques au Vietnam ou en Chine, je constate que leurs choix ne correspondent pas systématiquement à ceux que préconiseraient les autorités gouvernementales, ONG, agences d'aide internationale, scientifiques, etc. Par ailleurs, en apprenant à mieux les connaître, on découvre que leurs décisions sont basées sur une rationalité qui leur est propre, de même que sur leur propre compréhension de concepts comme le succès, l'échec ou le

« développement ».

Sarah Turner est Professeure agrégée au Département de géographie de l'Université McGill. Ses recherches, menées en Asie, visent à mieux comprendre le mode de vie des personnes marginalisées, que ce soit aux plans économique, politique et/ou culturel. Elle s'intéresse aux minorités ethniques du nord Vietnam et du sud-ouest de la Chine, et aux tactiques de survie des vendeurs de rues des grandes villes sud-est asiatiques. Elle assurait récemment la codirection, avec Dominique Caouette, de l'ouvrage « Agrarian Angst and Rural Resistance in Contemporary Southeast Asia » (Routledge 2009).

**Une version en anglais de cet article a d'abord été publiée dans le McGill Reporter.*

Investisseurs étrangers et projets immobiliers à Phnom Penh un an après la crise économique.

Céline Pierdet explore les effets d'un ralentissement économique sur les mutations du marché foncier et la forme urbaine de la capitale cambodgienne.

Depuis 2008, les publicités vantant les projets immobiliers à Phnom Penh et aux environs dans de belles brochures se font plus rares.

Selon le Comité de développement du Cambodge (CDC), créé par l'article 3 de la loi du 5 août 1994 sur les investissements et qui fonctionne comme un « guichet unique » quant à l'évaluation et l'approbation de tout projet d'investissement, Phnom Penh

demeure la principale porte d'entrée des investissements directs étrangers (IDE) dans le pays. Cette capitale fluviale, située au centre de la plaine alluviale du Mékong, compte désormais près de deux millions d'habitants. Pourquoi l'afflux de capitaux étrangers au Cambodge s'est-il surtout traduit spatialement par une mutation profonde du tissu urbain de la capitale, avec l'émergence de projets spéculatifs en 2005 ? Qu'en est-il depuis la crise

économique de 2008 ?

Dans un contexte de stabilisation de la vie politique à partir de 1998 et de croissance économique, les investisseurs étrangers se sont tournés vers le secteur immobilier et foncier. En effet, le secteur bancaire reste peu structuré et offre peu de possibilités de placements financiers. De même, le pays compte peu de pôles économiques majeurs. Les tissus urbains de la capitale et de la principale ville touristique, Siemreap, enregistrent alors les transformations les plus brutales. Le taux de croissance économique est de 8 à 10 % par an au début des années 2000, avec un maximum de 11 % environ de 2005 à 2007, ce qui engendre la création de 40 000 emplois dans le bâtiment pour un volume d'investissements de 3,2



Photo : Eduardo

milliards de dollars. Les investisseurs sont à la fois des investisseurs régionaux – Coréens, Malais, Singapouriens –, des Khmers d’outre-mer et des Khmers des classes moyennes et supérieures.

Jusqu’en 2005, ils investissent dans de petites opérations de logements localisées dans la ville-centre ou à la périphérie immédiate qui permettent d’absorber une partie de la croissance démographique, du nombre de ménages mal logés, et le retard pris dans la construction de logements depuis vingt ans. Mais entre 2004 et 2008, les valeurs foncières enregistrent une hausse comprise entre 50 % et 100 % par an pour atteindre 2000 dollars/m² dans les quartiers résidentiels, près du fleuve, et jusqu’à 4 000 dollars/m² dans le secteur commercial, près des marchés. Les prix de l’immobilier flambent encore plus vite que ceux du foncier. Un compartiment chinois situé le long des quais se négocie encore 200 000 dollars en 2004. Les tarifs atteignent 600 000 dollars en 2008. Une mutation des activités de la ville-centre s’engage alors, encore accélérée par l’Etat qui cède lui aussi à des acquéreurs privés de nombreux terrains et bâtiments lui appartenant. Les projets spéculatifs se multiplient et tissu urbain se densifie.

Les premières tours apparaissent en 2008, à l’ouest du grand boulevard nord-sud, le boulevard Monivong, comme la tour de bureaux de la Canadia Bank, située près de la gare et du marché central.

En 2008, afin d’encadrer ces projets immobiliers, le gouvernement souhaite obliger les investisseurs à déposer une caution représentant 2 % du montant total du projet sur un compte du ministère de l’Economie, à la banque nationale, puis à demander une licence auprès du ministère

de l’Aménagement du Territoire et du ministère de l’Economie et des Finances. En effet, nombre de citoyens investissent des sommes importantes dans des appartements jamais construits. Aucune publicité pour un projet ne serait désormais possible sans avoir obtenu la licence et déjà réalisé 3 % du projet.

Mais depuis 2008, les IDE stagnent au Cambodge. D’après un rapport de l’Institut du Cambodge



La nouvelle tour de bureaux de la Canadia Bank à Phnom Penh

pour les études et le développement (ICED), la croissance économique n’est plus que de 5 % en 2009 du fait d’une baisse des exportations de 2,5%, d’un ralentissement du tourisme, de la fermeture d’entreprises textiles et de l’arrêt de nombreux chantiers immobiliers. Les travailleurs qui perdent leur emploi retournent à la campagne, dans leur village natal, s’ils le peuvent. L’agriculture et le tourisme absorbent ainsi une partie de la main d’œuvre licenciée dans les autres secteurs. Environ 186 000 emplois auraient été détruits au Cambodge en 2008, dont 28 000 dans le secteur textile et 36 500 dans le bâtiment. Plusieurs milliers d’emplois sont encore menacés dans le textile. L’application du texte de loi sur les projets immobiliers est donc ajournée.

Les projets immobiliers

déjà engagés en 2008 continuent de progresser. Ainsi, la tour de bureaux de la Canadia Bank, qui compte 29 étages, est désormais achevée et occupée depuis début novembre 2009. De même, le projet de « new town » construit sur une île à la confluence et mené par la compagnie OCIC – filiale de la Canadia Bank qui investit les capitaux des Khmers d’outre-mer –, se poursuit. Le nombre de villas du secteur résidentiel a été réduit au profit d’aménagements « provisoires », dans l’attente d’une reprise du marché. Quant à la new town Camko City, édifiée au nord-ouest de la ville-centre par un investisseur coréen, la première tranche du projet résidentiel s’achève. Environ 200 villas et appartements sont construits et presque tous vendus. Six phases sont prévues à l’horizon 2018.

Par contre, le projet de tours nommé Gold Tower 42 n’a démarré qu’en 2009, avec un an de retard. Ce projet du coréen Yon Woo est conçu comme un condominium, regroupant logements, surfaces commerciales, équipements, etc. Mais son ampleur a été réduite. Les tours ne devraient pas atteindre les 192 m initialement prévus.

Les transactions foncières et immobilières sont donc au ralenti depuis plusieurs mois maintenant. La crise économique a touché le Cambodge au moment où des projets immobiliers haut de gamme devaient permettre à sa capitale de concurrencer d’autres grandes capitales de la région, comme Bangkok ou Singapour. Pour rassurer les investisseurs, le gouvernement envisage de permettre aux étrangers d’accéder à la propriété. Mais sous quelles conditions ?

Céline Pierdet est docteur en Géographie de l’Université Paris 1–Panthéon-Sorbonne. Elle est présentement chargée de cours à l’Université de Versailles–Saint-Quentin.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Asynchronous Distance Interviewing:

Heuristic challenges and opportunities

Ever considered conducting interviews through snail mail, fax or email? Vincent K. Pollard discusses his experience using distance interviewing.

Along with synchronous face-to-face, telephone or chat room interviewing, asynchronous distance interviewing (hereafter, "DI") by snail mail, fax or e-mail is another set of options. Although linguistic, cultural and political distance may separate interviewer and interviewees, the "distance" in DI is asynchronous spatial separation.

What are the challenges of DI? What are its advantages? While answering those questions, this research note suggests how to best utilize DI.

I began DI while writing a dissertation on executive power in foreign policy making. It led to my first book

Globalization, Democratization and Asian Leadership: Power Sharing, Foreign Policy and Society in the Philippines and Japan (Ashgate, 2004). Usually, face-to-face interviews were audiotaped. Interviewees include the following four types: 1) Filipino, Japanese, Taiwanese (ROC) and U.S. cabinet- and sub-

cabinet-level officials, ambassadors, and staff; 2) Filipino business executives; 3) Filipino, Japanese and U.S. professors and scholars; and 4) leaders of Filipino civil society organizations concerned

full line of questioning beforehand, DI is not the first choice; 2) Interviewees requesting anonymity or pseudonymity should be informed of risks to privacy on electronic media, for example, from government surveillance; 3) Unlike face-to-face, telephone, videotaped teleconference and web cam-assisted Internet chat room interviewing, DI lacks aural and visual cues (facial expressions, body language, intonation, subvocalizations and laughter) that facilitate interpreting surprise, hesitation, discomfort, irony, intensity or emphasis; and 4) without follow-up interviews, it is impossible to probe DI responses for accuracy, richness, ambiguity or irrelevance.

Optimal preparation for DI begins with traditionally recommended long-term and immediate preparation for face-to-face interviewing. And before e-mailing, snail mailing or faxing interview questions, the researcher will have contacted her prospective interviewee, introduced herself, indicated one's institutional affiliation, and explained the purpose and likely uses of research. If one's home institution or funding agency requires proof of permission, request it. State whether you are requesting permission to quote the informant's answers directly, to



Photo: D. Allen

about women's rights, environmental protection, farm workers' issues, nuclear weapons, and foreign military bases. DI accounted for about 10% of my interviewing. Virtually all interviewees agreed to direct attribution.

DI has four limitations: 1) For any researcher unwilling to disclose her

summarize them, or simply to use them for better understanding the social, political and cultural context of a case study

Since interviewer and interviewees collaborate in co-creating new knowledge, substantial knowledge of the envisioned interview topic will enable effective questions. Contextualizing the questions will reduce misunderstandings. And if translation is required, formulating the questions will require additional time. Signaling to the interviewee what you think is important may require asking relatively elaborate questions. But doing so will minimize misunderstandings that occur if the interviewer brackets events within

a time frame different from one meaningful to her informant.

Also, consider asking the interviewee to indicate if she does not

Perhaps because interviewees have more time to answer questions, DI responses can be surprisingly nuanced.

share assumptions underlying one's questions. As documentation and for possible post-interview follow-up, acknowledge receipt of DI responses.

And inventory printed and electronic copies and translations for future reference.

Carefully prepared DI is productive. Perhaps because interviewees have more time to answer questions, DI responses can be surprisingly nuanced. Finally, as qualitative and quantitative data-sharing norms advocated by the replication movement in political science are more widely embraced, DI's ready-made transcripts facilitate collegial sharing of data. Thus, DI provides an additional advantage!

Vincent K. Pollard is a lecturer and cooperating graduate faculty in the Asian Studies Program, University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

Doing Research in a Time of Crisis

After a year spent researching the bamboo-flooring commodity chain in and around Vietnam, Jim Delaney reflects on the challenges and lessons learnt from doing research in a period of global economic hardship.

In January of 2009, I made my way to visit an old friend, Mr. Pham Van Khai, who runs a small bamboo construction cooperative on the outskirts of Hanoi. Two years ago, when we first met, Mr. Khai and his small cooperative were entering into new relationships with foreign customers and struggling to meet rapidly expanding orders. It was that initial meeting that sparked my interest in bamboo products, an interest that quickly became the topic of my Ph.D. However, during this return visit, it took three attempts to find anybody in the workshop. Most of the cooperative members had retreated to their farms, as demand for their products—chairs and tables for European homes and gazebos for resorts—had completely collapsed.

The year 2009 was a strange time to be doing economic research, particularly for those working on

any topic connected to the Northern housing and home furnishing industries. My own Ph.D. research looks at the role of institutions in structuring relationships along the global value chain for industrial bamboo products—bamboo flooring in particular. I was

I was left with what I thought at the time was a shattered dissertation. My boom market had gone bust.

initially interested in how the amazing boom that we have seen in demand for bamboo products in the North was reconfiguring longstanding trade relationships in Vietnam. I am working with a wide range of actors, including farmers, small scale producers, large factories, NGOs and government

institutions. All of these actors, with one surprising exception, were thrown into a complete state of disarray by the systemic economic crisis that became apparent in the United States two years ago.

Mr. Khai's story of collapsing sales was repeated time and time again by other actors in my study. First, a French-owned flooring company that had once invited me to spend a few weeks on their shop floor saw orders cancelled from the major distributor who alone comprised 70% of their sales. Although I was able to conduct two interviews and a visit to their factory, I was asked to put the rest of my study on hold while they re-evaluated their position in the market and developed new products. A recently established bamboo-focussed NGO that had offered to work with me also found themselves in a funding crisis, as two of their major donors were forced to slash aid budgets in response to their own fiscal crises at home, leading to the departure of my two primary contacts.

I was left with what I thought at the time was a shattered dissertation. My boom market had gone bust, and the questions I was asking no longer seemed relevant, either to me or to

my informants. It was difficult and uncomfortable to ask about price negotiations and quality standards when nothing was being sold anymore, a fact that no less than two informants impressed upon me in strong terms. In the end, I found other things to do, including looking at another foreign company that was not as impacted by the crisis, and spending more time with farmers. Only in the past few months have I got my research fully back on track.

While my initial assumption was that the economic crisis would change everything, in the end, the collapse confirmed my suspicion that control of these global chains rested with those companies and institutions that are closer to the consumer. Factories, whether foreign or locally owned, found themselves squeezed by their larger customers. They in turn put pressure on their own suppliers—small cooperatives and businesses located close to the supplies of cultivated bamboo. Surprisingly, this downward pressure did not immediately translate into lower prices for farmers. While demand for bamboo to feed global markets was in decline, there remained plenty of local uses in the construction industry and for paper pulp, among others. And farmers did not get a price premium for the high value products favoured by Northern consumers in any case.

Indeed, seeing these struggles work themselves out during a time of major economic crisis threw many of the already existing power relationships into stark relief. This became clear when working with the NGOs and development institutions supporting

bamboo farmers and processors. When aid money flowed freely, there seemed to be relatively few conflicts; but when money became scarce, what were initially small differences ballooned into seemingly insurmountable ideological divides. Once again, the time of crisis offered a window into

bamboo flooring companies. As for my NGO friends, I decided strategically to stay away while they worked out their financial issues and internal struggles.

All of this leads to a number of lessons. First, qualitative and ethnographic research takes time, and out of necessity involves adapting to suit changing circumstances. Had it not been for a decision to move my whole family to Vietnam rather than conduct research through short visits as was my initial plan, I would likely not have managed to work my way through my research. The economic crisis simply amplified the all too common problems experienced during fieldwork.

Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, in choosing bamboo flooring as a case—a new commodity in a market that was rapidly changing—I was opening myself up to the very real possibility of being overtaken by events. Placing my research within a broader context of agrarian and rural industrial transformation has allowed me to pursue my questions without being wholly focused on the specific issues that arose during my field research.

The global economic crisis did not change everything—indeed, it is becoming clear that it has in some cases changed very little, but it did

have a profound impact on my research. Being able to change and adapt, and using the crisis as a window to economic relationships that existed before, has been key to picking up the pieces of my shattered Ph.D. dissertation off the floor.

Jim Delaney is a student in the Department of Geography and Program in Planning at the University of Toronto. He lives in Hanoi, and can often be found wandering around trade routes in Vietnam's North Central Coast region.



Photo: H. Bierau

power struggles that would have been difficult to discern when times were good.

In the end, while the crisis did not have a major impact on my research questions, it did have a major impact on how I conducted my research. During the early stages of research, many of my research partners became less than hospitable—they were far too busy trying to stay afloat to spend much time with me. It took another nine months to arrange for more visits to

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By some odd set of circumstances, I ended up as President of CCSEAS.

Nevertheless, I'm happy to take on this role and look forward to the next two years, as well as welcoming you all at the University of Toronto in 2011.

I would first like to thank the outgoing executive, as well as the organizing committee of the Vancouver conference (8-11 October 200). I think everyone who attended the conference will agree that we reached new heights. With more than 40 panels on the program, as well as 120 papers presented, there is no doubt that this was a record participation. The quality of discussions and exchanges also speaks to the vibrancy and new energy infusing Southeast Asian studies in Canada. Let's keep this up!

I would like to extend a special word of thanks to Tineke Hellwig, the organizing committee, and the UBC volunteers who contributed to making this conference such a great success. In addition, I would like to thank Philip Kelly and the previous executive, who faced a growing set of problems for CCSEAS. They worked hard to attract new members, maintain our current structure, find new sources of income, and develop creative solutions to these problems. Finally, Jean-Philippe Leblond and Geoff Stewart deserve our strong gratitude for producing our newsletters over the last few years.

The next couple of years will be crucial for the future of CCSEAS, as we

face a transition toward new sources of financing and some restructuring of our operations.

I am really pleased to be undertaking these challenges with a solid and energetic new team: Sarah Turner (McGill); Melissa Marschke (Ottawa); Villia Jefremovas (Queen's); and three student representatives, Danielle Labbé (UBC); Sai Latt (Simon Fraser) and Jim Delaney (Toronto).

At the last CCSEAS business meeting



in Vancouver, we discussed a CASA motion regarding the possibility of merging the regional councils. I am pleased to announce that this proposal has been discarded. Nevertheless, we are facing some important challenges ahead.

In the past, we benefited from external sources of funding, particularly from IDRC. This funding allowed us to organize a high quality conference every two years as well as some services to our members, such as this newsletter.

Thanks to the efforts of Scott Simon and Philip Kelly, we were able to gain one more year of funding from IDRC, for very specific activities. Although it allows us some breathing space, we are faced with a very difficult financial future starting next year. We have started to plan for this change.

One option is to become a self-funded association, by which our future activities could be funded entirely from membership and conference fees.

There are several other ideas being explored. We will be discussing various options with our colleagues from other regional councils, with the hope that we can continue to provide the same frequency and quality of conferences as in the past. We depend on your contributions for future activities so I hope that you will all soon renew your membership to CASA/CCSEAS!

On another front, one of our priorities will be the development of a new website. As CASA is currently renewing its own, we are hoping to coordinate our efforts to provide a revamped, more informative and more useful site.

Finally, we are beginning to think about our next conference. Mark your calendars: it will be held from October 13-15, 2011 at the University of Toronto. We invite you to think already of new paper and panel ideas! I very much look forward to welcoming you then in Toronto.

I wish you all a Happy New Year 2010!

Jacques Bertrand

MOT DU PRÉSIDENT

Bien que je ne sais trop comment je me suis retrouvé à ce poste, je suis bien heureux d'assumer la responsabilité de président du Conseil canadien des études sur le sud-est asiatique (CCESEA).

Je tiens tout d'abord à féliciter l'équipe précédente ainsi que le comité organisateur du colloque de Vancouver (8-11 octobre 2009) pour un travail tout à fait formidable.

Je crois que tous les membres qui ont participé à ce colloque seraient d'accord pour dire que nous avons atteint un nouveau sommet. Au programme, plus de 120 communications ont été présentées; sur deux jours, le programme offrait 40 sessions. La qualité des échanges était vraiment remarquable.

C'est un record qui démontre une énergie nouvelle pour les études sur le sud-est asiatique au Canada. Il est important de maintenir cette tendance! Je tiens à remercier particulièrement Tineke Hellwig, le comité organisateur, et les volontaires de UBC qui ont contribué à ce succès.

Ces deux dernières années ont été particulièrement éprouvantes pour notre association, et Philip Kelly et l'exécutif précédent ont travaillé ardemment pour attirer de nouveaux membres, maintenir notre structure, rechercher de nouvelles sources de financement, et développer de nouvelles solutions alors que le CCEASA et l'ACEA doivent faire face à un contexte particulièrement difficile.

Merci beaucoup pour ces efforts!

Enfin, nous avons réussi à publier

régulièrement notre bulletin et à offrir des articles divers grâce au travail de nos membres étudiants de l'exécutif. Il faut remercier Jean-Philippe Leblond et Geoff Stewart pour cette contribution formidable au CCSEASA!

Ces deux prochaines années seront des années charnières. Nous devons faire face à une transition vers une nouvelle structure et un renouvellement de nos sources de financement.

Je suis particulièrement heureux de faire face à ces défis avec une nouvelle équipe solide et énergique: Sarah Turner (McGill), Melissa Marschke (Ottawa), Villia Jefremovas (Queen's), et trois représentants étudiants, Danielle Labbé (UBC), Sai Latt (Simon Fraser) et Jim Delaney (Toronto).

Lors de la dernière assemblée générale du CCSEASA à Vancouver, il était question d'une motion de l'ACEA visant à fusionner les conseils régionaux et éliminer les colloques distincts de ces conseils. Il me fait plaisir d'annoncer que cette proposition a été mise de côté. Néanmoins, nous faisons face à une conjoncture difficile pour le CCSEASA.

Par le passé, nous avons profité de sources généreuses de financement, particulièrement du CRDI, qui nous ont permis non seulement d'offrir un colloque bisannuel de haute qualité, mais aussi d'offrir des services à nos membres tels que ce bulletin. Grâce aux efforts de Scott Simon et de Philip Kelly, nous bénéficions encore cette année de financement du CRDI. Cependant dès l'an prochain, nous

aurons épuisé nos sources extérieures de soutien. Nous avons déjà commencé à planifier le futur, et prévoyons comment nous pouvons faire une transition vers une association subventionnée complètement par les cotisations annuelles de nos membres et les frais de colloque. Plusieurs idées ont été mise de l'avant et feront partie des discussions que nous aurons ces prochains mois.

Nous coopérons de façon étroite avec nos collègues des autres conseils régionaux pour pouvoir assurer un futur solide pour les études asiatiques au Canada. Nous voulons continuer d'organiser des colloques de haute qualité et poursuivre nos activités comme par le passé, malgré cette diminution importante de nos ressources.

Je vous encourage donc tous à renouveler votre adhésion à l'ACEA/CCESEA. Votre cotisation est maintenant une part très importante de notre financement!

De plus, une de nos priorités est la création d'un nouveau site web. L'ACÉA renouvelle le sien et nous unissons nos efforts pour créer un site plus attirant et plus efficace pour le CCESEA.

Enfin, la planification du prochain colloque est aussi bien sûr au menu. Il se tiendra à Toronto du 13-15 octobre, 2011. Nous espérons que de nouvelles idées d'ateliers et de communications commencent déjà à germer. J'espère vous y accueillir en grand nombre!

Je vous souhaite tous une Bonne et Heureuse Année 2010!

Jacques Bertrand

UPDATES FROM MEMBERS

Environmental Certification:

Report from the 2009 World Aquaculture meeting

Peter Vandergeest and Derek Hall say that there is more than meets the eye when it comes to the fish and seafood on your dinner plate.

Vandergeest and Hall have been active lately in controversies around ecolabelling and the certification of seafood. They organized a day-long session on environmental certification at the September 2009 World Aquaculture Society meetings in Mexico (<https://www.was.org/WasMeetings/meetings/SessionAbstracts.aspx?Code=WA2009&Session=2>).

The series of panels on the 'Challenges for Aquaculture Certification' included presentations on traceability in Japan, the acceptability of certification in Thailand, labour practices in Bangladesh and roundtables on salmon farming in Chile - all by researchers who work on Vandergeest and Hall's SSHRC-funded Privatizing Environmental Governance (PEG) project.

Focusing on shrimp and salmon as two of the highest-value, and most controversial, species in global aquaculture, researchers in the project are looking at the effects of seafood certification on the shrimp and salmon

industries and on the communities affected by aquaculture.

The major proponents of a proposed Aquaculture Stewardship



Council (specifically, the WWF) want environmental certification to encompass a major part of the

aquaculture industry, especially the higher value species like salmon, shrimp, tilapia, tuna, and pangasius. However, the ability of these certification systems to address the key problems associated with intensive aquaculture in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, and to be set up in ways that will not exclude small producers, has been questioned by many observers, especially in the global south.

With research sites ranging from shrimp and salmon farms to corporate offices, from supermarkets to international organizations, Vandergeest and Hall's research has also taken up the way that emerging certification regimes reflect the power of supermarkets, consumers, states, and transnational environmental organizations based in the global north, including Japan. The results are also expected to be applicable to other controversial products including palm oil, wild caught seafood and forestry products.

The panels, and the conference more generally, generated discussion around key challenges like how to take account of the need for strong environmental regulations on one hand, and the need for flexibility appropriate to local situations, especially in the global south, on the other. Very broadly,

this tension tends to reflect the distinct interests of two sets of actors. Those based largely in the global north converge around the need for traceability and uniform standards that will ensure safe and sustainable supplies that do not expose buyers to accusations around social and environmental problems. Those based in the global south often see uniform standards and requirements for documentation of environmental and social practices as impositions; they highlight instead the potential role of “communities” or local governments in addressing environmental and labour issues.

In addition to the PEG research team, presenters in the ‘Challenges’ panel included other academics, industry representatives, representatives from

NGOs including Oxfam-NOVIB and the Environmental Law Institute (Washington, DC), and staff from certification organizations including GLOBALGAP and the Aquaculture Certification Council. The Conference was a chance to explore different issues and questions surrounding the way that certification has become the favourite way to address social and environmental problems within the aquaculture industry. It was also an opportunity to engage with stakeholders outside the bounds of academia.

For more information on the ‘Privatizing Environmental Governance’ project, please visit:

www.yorku.ca/ycar/Programs_Projects/PEG_main.html.

Abstracts on the PEG team presentations:

Peter Vandergeest | *Certification and Legitimacy in Thailand*

Derek Hall | *Japanese Food Traceability Initiatives and their Implications for Asian Aquaculture*

Saidul Islam | *Privatizing Regulations in the Global Agro-food System: Labour Standards and their Implication in the Era of Certification*

Beatriz Cid | *Traceability of Chilean Salmon Farming: What is Left Behind?*

Peter Vandergeest is an associate professor of sociology at York University. Derek Hall is an associate professor at the Political Science department of Wilfrid Laurier University.

**Note: The original version of this report was written by Alicia Filipowich, Coordinator, York Centre for Asian Research .*

CCSEAS 2009 Conference

Tinneke Hellwig, *co-president of the organizing committee, reports on the latest CCSEAS conference.*

On October 15-17, 2009 the University of British Columbia in Vancouver hosted the 29th CCSEAS conference *Engaging Southeast Asia: Centres and Peripheries*.

The Asian Centre and C.K. Choi building on campus served as the main venues where the registration, opening reception, paper presentations, keynote address and dinner took place.

Around one hundred and forty delegates from eighteen countries including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam attended and presented papers. The topics addressed in the forty sessions reflect the full spectrum of disciplinary fields including politics and governance, historical perspectives, migration, economics, agricultural practices, ecology and

the environment, religion, cultural production, activism and identity studies. The papers generated a productive exchange of ideas and scholarly debate.

In his welcoming remarks UBC President Stephen Toope reflected on human rights and global relations in the Southeast Asian region. He started his address with the poem “On Kanbawza Road” by Canadian poet and constitutional expert Frank Scott, which poignantly illustrates east-west

relations in Burma.

Professor Toope whose research interests are in the fields of international law, human rights and international dispute resolution has worked as an advisor to the governments of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore.

Historian Alexander Woodside, UBC Professor Emeritus, delivered the keynote address, *Southeast Asia and the Social Sciences Crisis: From Two Solitudes to the Malaise of Modernity?*

He started from the premise that at the end of the 20th century a number of Western scholars proclaimed the social sciences were in crisis. But none of these “crisis” advocates thought their arguments needed to consider the ways in which the social sciences were being internationalized outside the West, including in



Photo courtesy of T. Hellwig

Alexander Woodside giving the keynote address

Southeast Asia.

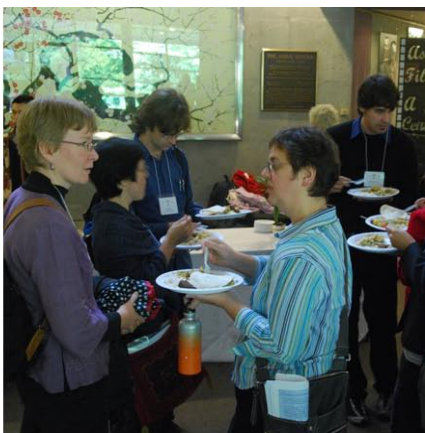
Experience there suggests that one of the reasons for the crisis is the way in which the language associated with contemporary “internationalizations” of state formation and economic development obscures the persistent survival of classical problems in political and social thought from before the Industrial Revolution.

His talk discussed the eternal land question in Vietnam as an example to document the point, and to suggest that the social sciences should not just deprovincialize their notions of space but their notions of time as well.

At the CCSEAS AGM Philip Kelly presented his president’s report explaining the CASA and CCSEAS developments of the past two years and its financial implications, and the members elected a new executive committee. The dinner that followed consisted of a great variety of Indonesian dishes and desserts, and the music and dance performance by the Lao Benevolent Association of BC under the inspiring directorship of Vireth Sisounthone added lustre to the evening. Delegates were invited to join in the Laotian fone dancing.

The CCSEAS executive was able to

provide travel funding to twenty-five student presenters and is grateful to have received financial support and assistance from the VP Research offices at UBC and York University, UBC Faculty of Arts and departments of Asian Studies and History, Women’s and Gender Studies Program, the Northwest Regional Consortium Fund (Prof. Terry McGee), the Indonesian, Malaysian and Thai Consulates General, and Canadian Asian Studies Association. The 2009 conference was highly successful and lived up to the CCSEAS nickname “Convivial” Council for Southeast Asian Studies.



Conférence du CCEASE 2009

Tinneke Hellwig, *co-présidente du comité d'organisation revient sur la dernière édition de la conférence du CCSEASE.*

Du 15 au 17 octobre 2009, l'Université de la Colombie-Britannique (UBC) était l'hôte de la 29^{ème} conférence du CCEASE sur le thème de *L'Asie du sud-est : centres et périphéries*. Environ 140 délégués, en provenance de dix-huit pays incluant l'Indonésie, la Malaisie, les Philippines, Singapour, la Thaïlande et le Vietnam ont participé et présenté des communications. Les sujets discutés dans les quarante sessions reflètent la variété de perspectives

sur la région, de l'étude des processus politiques et de la gouvernance, aux perspectives historiques, études des flux migratoires, de l'économie, des pratiques agricoles, de l'écologie et de l'environnement, de la religion, et des productions culturelles. Les communications ont généré des échanges d'idées et débats intellectuels des plus productifs.

Dans son discours d'ouverture, le président de UBC, Stephen Toope, a discuté la question des droits humains et des relations internationales dans la

région de l'Asie du sud-est. L'historien Alexander Woodside, Professeur émérite de UBC a ouvert la conférence avec une communication intitulée « L'Asie du sud-est et la crise des sciences sociales : de deux solitudes au malaise de la modernité? ».

Le comité exécutif de CCEASE a été en mesure d'assister financièrement les déplacements de vingt-cinq étudiants afin que ces derniers puissent présenter des communications à la conférence. Le comité remercie UBC, York University, les consulats généraux de l'Indonésie, de la Malaisie et de la Thaïlande de même que de l'Association canadienne des études asiatiques pour le support financier et l'aide reçue. La conférence de 2009 a été un grand succès et mérite bien le surnom de Conseil « convivial » des études du sud-est asiatique.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Asian Institute at the University of Toronto is organizing a **graduate students dissertation workshop on democracy and identity in Asia**. Applications are invited from students researching the politics of identity recognition in Asia in recent decades, and the challenges it has posed to practices and understandings of democracy.

The workshop will take place over two or three days (May 13-15, 2010) on the campus of the University of Toronto. It will include a small group of students and faculty members from different disciplines. The costs of the workshop, meals, and accommodations will be covered by the Asian Institute at the University of Toronto. Travel will be subsidized up to a maximum of CDN\$500 per participant.

Applications consist of: 1) A current curriculum vitae. 2) An 8 to 10 page double spaced dissertation proposal. Alternatively, if the work is well underway, an 8 to 10 page double spaced description of specific issues

being addressed, intellectual approach, and materials being studied.

Workshop participants will be selected on the content of the submitted projects, the potential for useful exchanges among them, and the benefits of including a wide range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches and intellectual traditions. Applications and inquiries about the workshop or eligibility can be addressed to: asian.institute@utoronto.ca.



Over the past year, the **Doing Research in Vietnam group** has met on a regular basis in Hanoi. The group is comprised of a large number of researchers - primarily, but not exclusively graduate students conducting research on and in Vietnam. Each meeting follows a seminar format, with a presenter circulating work in advance and attendees offering input on where the work could be improved. To date, the group had reviewed fieldwork plans, survey protocols, conference papers and served as a forum to practice a Ph.D. dissertation defense. There have also been ad hoc skills-building meetings on presentation skills and a number of reading groups. We are looking forward to taking the group to new levels in 2010 with a continuation of the meetings and reading groups. If interested in joining the group, please send an email to j.delaney@utoronto.ca or morrisjung@berkeley.edu



The **Borneo Biomedical Bibliography** has been archived at the Oregon State University library and is now available in ScholarsArchive@OSU using the following url:

<http://hdl.handle.net/1957/12879>

It is over 150 pp. long and includes indices for authors, ethnic groups, place names, and topics, plus frontmatter. The indices and frontmatter can be viewed separately from the annotated topical bibliography. The bibliography includes Brunei, Kalimantan, Sabah, and Sarawak information.



The **6th EuroSEAS Conference** will be held in Gothenburg, Sweden, at the School of Global Studies at Gothenburg University.

All scholars with an interest in SEA are cordially invited to propose panels for the conference. In line with previous EuroSEAS conferences, the meeting in Gothenburg will cover a wide range of topics in all fields of social sciences and humanities. There

are no limits concerning topics with SEA as a focus.

The School of Global Studies encourages at least one panel which deals with the theorization of area studies and area studies a part of theory development.

Participants are encouraged to contribute to no more than one panel. Experience from earlier conferences shows that panel discussions gain tremendously from having a critical

mass of participants that stays for the whole panel. For more information, visit: www.globalstudies.gu.se

Call for papers for : **Asia Pacific Policy Graduate Symposium, *Conceiving Asia Pacific: The Policy Kaleidoscope***, hosted by the Society for Asia Pacific Policy, co-hosted by the Institute for Asian Research, UBC, Vancouver. The application deadline is 18 January. For more information, visit: www.ubc.ca



Photos courtesy of Su Limh

The CCSEAS Newsletter endeavours to inform Southeast Asian specialists in Canada about relevant Southeast Asian issues: events, debates, innovative research. It is sent by email to Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies (CCSEAS) members. Previous editions are available on-line at the CCSEAS web-site (<http://canadianasianstudies.concordia.ca/case/htm/seac.htm>). If you would like to be removed from the distribution list, please send a message to the editors (ccseas.executive@gmail.com) with the subject line: "Remove me from the Newsletter distribution list."

The deadline for the next edition of the Newsletter is July 31st 2010. Send us news from your re-search, from your fieldwork, ideas and commentaries so we can publish them in the next edition. Please, keep articles short and send both a French and English version whenever possible.

Le Bulletin du CCEASE cherche à informer les spécialistes de l'Asie du Sud-Est au Canada des enjeux, débats et travaux innovateurs pertinents portant sur l'Asie du Sud-Est. Il est envoyé par courriel aux membres du CCEASE. Les précédents numéros sont accessibles en ligne à l'adresse <http://canadianasianstudies.concordia.ca/case/htm/seac.htm>. Si vous préférez ne pas recevoir ce bulletin, veuillez envoyer un message à l'adresse courriel CCSEAS@gmail.com en inscrivant comme sujet du message « Retirez-moi de la liste de distribution du Bulletin ».

La date de tombée pour le prochain Bulletin est le 31 juillet 2010. Envoyez-nous vos textes, commentaires, ainsi que des annonces d'événements à venir, de nouvelles publications ou de changement à votre statut institutionnel.

Editors / Editeurs: Danielle Labbé, Jim Delaney et/and Sai Latt