

# Informal Northern Thai Group Bulletin

3 October 2012

1. PAPER (Pdf) by Ian G. Baird on the topic of the 350<sup>th</sup> INTG Meeting, July 24th, 2012
2. MINUTES of the 352nd Meeting: Sept. 11, 2012: “The Peace Corps’ 50th Anniversary in Thailand”. A Talk by Hugh Leong.
3. NEXT MEETING, 353rd Meeting: October 9, 2012: “Restitution of Stolen Works of Art”. A talk by Manus Brinkman.
4. FUTURE MEETINGS.
5. MAILING PROBLEMS.
6. INTG CONTACTS.

1. PAPER (Pdf) by Ian G. Baird on the topic of the 350<sup>th</sup> INTG Meeting, July 24th, 2012: “The Monks and the Hmong: The Special Relationship between the Chao Fa and the Tham Krabok Buddhist Temple in Saraburi Province, Thailand”.

Ian G. Baird has now been able and kind enough to send us the Pdf version of his paper on “The Monks and the Hmong” published in the book *Buddhism and Violence – Militarism and Buddhism in Modern Asia* (Routledge). Please find it here as an attached document: “Baird 2013 - Monks and the Hmong”.

2. MINUTES of the 352nd Meeting: Sept. 11, 2012: “The Peace Corps’ 50th Anniversary in Thailand”. A Talk by Hugh Leong.

2.1. PRESENT: Hans Bänziger, Sängdao Bänziger, Klaus Berkmüller, Bonnie Brereton, John Butt, Martha Butt, Simone Buys, John Cadet, Guy Cardinal, Harry Deelman, Margaret Deelman, Ken Dyer, Annelyse Etienne, Louis Gabaude, John Gunther, Oliver Hargreave, Celeste Holland, Roy Hudson, Janet Illeni, David James, Mongkhoot James, Kanya Jitnaree, Keeli Kawa, Peter Kunstadter, Mike Larsen, Jon Manning, Luis Marcon, Caroline Marsh, Peter Maurer, Pikun Leong, J. Simpson, Suriya Smutkupt, Eduard van Tuyll, Bruce Vinall, Renee Vines, Bodge Wallingford, Rebecca Weldon (Convenor), Pia Wunna. A total of 38 at least.

2.2. THE 352<sup>nd</sup> TALK: “The Peace Corps’ 50th Anniversary in Thailand” by Hugh Leong

## By way of introduction

I’m Hugh Leong. I came to Thailand first as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1969 and spent three years here at Yuparaj provincial boys’ school in Chiang Mai. Later, I returned to teach at Chiang Mai University and then spent 2 years as AUA Director in Chiang Mai. I am now retired here and have written a number of English language textbooks. I also write blogs aimed at helping retirees here in Thailand.

The blogs include:

[www.retire3thailand.wordpress.com](http://www.retire3thailand.wordpress.com) – aimed at people retired or thinking about retiring in Thailand.

[www.womenlearnthai.com](http://www.womenlearnthai.com) – Thai Language, Thai Culture

## **On Peace Corps Thailand's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

The Peace Corps was established by Executive Order issued by President John F. Kennedy on March 1, 1961.

The Goals of Peace Corps are as follow:

The stated mission of the Peace Corps includes three goals: providing technical assistance; helping people outside the United States to understand American culture; and helping Americans to understand the cultures of other countries.

Since 1961, over 200,000 Americans have joined the Peace Corps. Currently about 8,500 volunteers are in the field. In 1970, when I was serving, there were 9,000 Peace Corps volunteers. They have served in 139 countries around the world. The Peace Corps is a 2 year commitment by U.S. citizens.

Today, Peace Corps Volunteers are working in 68 countries including such diverse countries as the Kyrgyz Republic, Vanuatu, Cambodia, Swaziland, and, of course, Thailand. Today there are 107 volunteers in Thailand – 56 teaching English in rural Prathom (elementary) schools and 51 doing community development. At one time there were as many as 500 volunteers in country.

### **Peace Corp Training in Hawaii**

The training I underwent for service in Thailand included 3 months of 5 ½ day weeks of study and activities. We got a half day of rest on Saturday and all day on Sunday. The first language class of the day was at 6:30 am, before breakfast. Each day included 6 hours of language training, 3 hours practice teaching, 1 hour cross-cultural training, and Homework.

### **How I got to Chiang Mai**

At the time, Thailand was the most sought after post in the Peace Corps world. And Chiang Mai was the top post in Thailand. So, by definition, Chiang Mai was the best Peace Corps post in the world. And we were told that if you requested it, you'd be sent somewhere else. So how did I pull it off? When asked to describe the type of posting I would like, without naming any specific post, I wrote only one thing "Chiang Mai". And, I got it, amazingly enough.

### **40+ years ago Chiang Mai was a place:**

- Where there were very few privately owned cars
- Where the cliché of traveling with chickens and pigs was true. I know because I did it.
- Where the silk workers rode their bicycles to work (not having cars was a good thing)
- Where if you were an Expat you knew almost every other Expat
- Where Immigration was a one room wooden house out on the Mae Rim Rd – run by The Fat Man
- Where a bowl of noodles cost about 3 – 5 baht although at my favorite place it was 1 ½ baht because I had to live on a Peace Corps volunteer's wage
- Where the road from Bangkok had not been finished yet
- Where the asphalt road up to Doi Suthep was just being started
- Where there were places upcountry we couldn't go because of the Communist Insurgency
- Where there were no shopping malls
- Where almost no one had an air conditioner
- Where there were no food courts – only night markets
- Where movie theaters had original soundtrack booths – you had to sit separately to hear the original
- Where the Chiang Mai airport had only one large room and only a few flights a week

## How the Peace Corps experience applies to who we are today

The Peace Corp today is made up of a somewhat different group of young people. Still idealistic, they are probably a little more skilled and professional than we were. They don't have to worry about avoiding wars like we did and many are thinking about how a stint in the Peace Corps would help their resumé's.

The Peace Corps still have an influence on the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers today. Many have stayed in teaching or public service type jobs, or they continue to volunteer. It is hard to get it out of your blood.

Most volunteers, when asked what they accomplished in the Peace Corps, have very similar answers. I can't tell you how much I accomplished but what I can say is that I got so much more out of the experience that I could have ever put in.

Winston Churchill once said "If you are young and not liberal, then you have no heart; but if you are old and not conservative, then you have no brain," I am proud to say that when it comes to my political leanings, I, and so many of my fellow Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, never really did develop a brain.

### Epilogue:

Soon after our talk I found out that the U.S. ambassador to Libya, Christopher Stevens, was killed by an angry mob (or maybe something more nefarious). **Ambassador Stevens was a returned Peace Corps volunteer** who served in Morocco in the 70s. He learned to love the Middle East and its people and was doing what he could to help the Libyan people start a new government. He seemed to never have gotten the Peace Corps experience out of his blood either. **RIP.**

### **3. NEXT MEETING: 353rd Meeting: October 9, 2012: "Restitution of Stolen Works of Art". A talk by Manus Brinkman**

Theft and looting of works of art is a phenomenon of all ages. Temple complexes in Cambodia have been stripped of most of its sculptures. In colonial times many objects have been transported from the colonies to museums in the colonizing countries. In the second world war Nazi's confiscated Jewish art works and Japan took important objects from Korea. Human remains have been dug up everywhere. And many thefts continue these days in temples, churches and even museums worldwide. When an object is stolen or looted it should be sent back to its owner, right? Well, that's not so easy. People may have bought stolen items in good faith, colonial powers may have exported objects with legal permission of governments in countries that no longer exist and human remains may be claimed by several competing groups and individuals. This talk will be about the dilemmas of returning stolen works of art.

*Manus Brinkman had a career in the museum world. He now lives in Chiangmai. He was born in the Netherlands in 1950. He started his career in the Royal Tropical Institute's Museum in Amsterdam, followed by a position as the Director of the Dutch Museums Association. From 1998 - 2005 he was Secretary General of the International Council of Museums in Paris, which ran an important programme against illegal trade in art in close cooperation with UNESCO and Interpol.*

### **4. FUTURE MEETINGS**

**353<sup>rd</sup> Meeting:** October 9, 2012: "Restitution of Stolen Works of Art". A talk by Manus Brinkman

**354<sup>th</sup> Meeting:** November 6, 2012: "The Right Wing Capture of American Politics". A talk by Gary Suwannarat.

**357<sup>th</sup> Meeting:** January 15, 2013: A talk on the Hmong by Dr. Chia Youyee VANG, Dept of History, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Specific topic to be announced.

## 5. MAILING PROBLEMS

The following addresses do not work and have been erased from the INTG mailing list. If you know a working address for these addressees, please sent it to [gabaudel@yahoo.com](mailto:gabaudel@yahoo.com).

<alttreks@ksc.co.th> [Mail server for "ksc.co.th" unreachable for too long]  
<aulino@fas.harvard.edu> [User unknown]  
<ceesdeg@hotmail.com> [mailbox unavailable]  
<cles@inet.co.th> [User unknown]  
<ewhite@ksc.co.th> [Mail server for "ksc.co.th" unreachable for too long]  
<gbs@ksc.co.th> [Mail server for "ksc.co.th" unreachable for too long]  
<jcassils@axion.net> [unknown recipient]  
<karin@ksc.co.th> [Mail server for "ksc.co.th" unreachable for too long]  
<komson@cmu.ac.th> [your message could not be delivered]  
<livingsp@loxinfo.co.th> [Address rejected]  
<lizspring@afrodyn.plus.com> [Remote host said: 552 Spam Message Rejected]  
<martinspring@afrodyn.plus.com> [Remote host said: 552 Spam Message Rejected]  
<miguel7f@loxinfo.co.th> [Address rejected]  
<mlott@elic.org> [unable to deliver your message to the following addres]  
<newsletter@chiangmainews.com> [Recipient address rejected: User unknown in virtual mailbox table]  
<peterdaw@ksc.co.th> [Mail server for "ksc.co.th" unreachable for too long]  
<shrf@ksc.co.th> [Mail server for "ksc.co.th" unreachable for too long]

## 6. INTG CONTACTS: Convenor, Secretary, Website

- 1) **Convenor : Rebecca Weldon:** e-mail: <[rebecca.weldon@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.weldon@gmail.com)>. Mobile: **087 193 67 67**; Home: **053 227272**. Address: Gerard Habitat, Room 204 - 8/2 Soi 3 Nimmanhemmin Rd. - T. Suthep - A. Muang CHIANG MAI 50200 – THAILAND
- 2) **Secretary: Louis Gabaude:** e-mail: <[gabaudel@yahoo.com](mailto:gabaudel@yahoo.com)>. Mobile: **087 188 50 99**. Address: 28/64 Laguna Home 10 - T. Sansai Noi - Mu 8 - A. SANSAI - CHIANG MAI 50210.
- 3) **INTG Website:** <http://www.intgcm.thehostserver.com>

- Thank you for printing and posting the following on any board you can -

**Informal Northern Thai Group (INTG)**

*27 years of Talks!*

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**Restitution  
of Stolen  
Works of  
Art**

A Talk by **Manus Brinkman**

**Tuesday 9 October 2012 : 19:30**

At the **ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE – AHANG MAI**

138, Charoen Prathet Rod, opposite Wat Chaimongkhon & EFEO

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*27 years of Talks!*

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**The  
Right Wing  
Capture  
Of  
American  
Politics**

**A Talk by Gary Suwannarat**

**Tuesday 6 November 2012 : 19:30**

**At the ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE – AHANG MAI**

**138, Charoen Prathet Road, opposite Wat Chaimongkhon & EFEO**