

- International Colloquium on “Uncovering the Past: The Nineteenth-Century Royal Siamese Maps and Ancient Trade Routes”
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## International Colloquium on “Uncovering the Past: The Nineteenth-Century Royal Siamese Maps and Ancient Trade Routes”



The Asia Research Center in collaboration with the Section of International Affairs, Faculty of Arts, held an international colloquium on “Uncovering the Past: The Nineteenth-Century Royal Siamese Maps and Ancient Trade Routes” on October, 28, 2010, in Room 105, Maha Chulalongkorn Building. A first-of-its-kind for Thailand, the event was opened and presided over by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. The Colloquium was accompanied by an intriguing poster exhibition of copies of Siamese maps on display in the foyer of the Maha Chulalongkorn Building.

This international gathering of cartographic experts from Thailand, Malaysia, China, and elsewhere was brought together under the auspices of Her Royal Highness to report on ongoing research into seventeen royal Siamese maps discovered in 1996 in the Treasury Pavilion of the Grand Palace in Bangkok. Believed to date from the first three reigns of the Bangkok period (1782–1851), these military and trade maps, unlike many others of their kind, depict in rich detail many locations throughout Southeast and East Asia, extending from the Malay Peninsula to Korea.





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The morning began with the arrival of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn at the Maha Chulalongkorn Building to the strains of royal music. She took her place at the front of the elegantly appointed hall and was presented with the schedule for the event by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Assistant Professor Dr. Prapoj Asavavirulhakarn. The President of Chulalongkorn University, Professor Dr. Pirom Kamolratanakul, gave a briefing to Her Royal Highness. The Crown Princess then officially opened the event,

gracing the audience with her welcoming remarks before presenting several of the chief researchers with mementoes of the occasion. Among them were Dr. Man Zhimin, Dr. Zhang Weiran, and Dr. Yang Yuda, all from Fudan University in Shanghai, China, Dr. Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian from Malaysia, and Dr. Santanee Phasuk, and Khunying Wanna Sirivadhanabhakdi, a generous patron of the research project. Her Royal Highness then proceeded to the royal desk at the rear of the hall so that she could have an unobstructed view of the presentations to follow.

The colloquium proper began with the topic of “Historical Toponyms and Names of Naval Trade Routes from Maps in the Royal Library of Siam.” The emcee for the event was Associate Professor Surapeepan Chatraporn. She introduced the discussion leaders, Distinguished Scholar, Associate Professor Dr. Prapin Manomaiwibul and Dr. Santanee Phasuk, who in turn introduced the chief researchers, each of whom gave illuminating and enjoyable presentations. The specific subject of the colloquium was Map 14 of the set, a true work of art: a coastal map of Asia containing information on trade routes between Thailand and other countries in the early Rattanakosin Period.

The Chinese researchers from Fudan University, all experts in historical geography, were commissioned by Her Royal Highness to investigate the annotations on the map, which include not only toponyms (place names) but also notes on sailing directions and other practical advice to navigators. Drs. Man, Zhang, and Yang noted that most of the place names on the map were of Chinese content, although recorded in Thai script—either a Thai transliteration of Chinese pronunciation, a Thai translation of the Chinese meaning of the name, or a blend of the two. They noted that they had been able to link most of the toponyms to known locations by investigating both present and past names (including old, folk names) of places on the map. The Fudan University researchers made a point of stating that this was one of the best navigation maps for China and its neighbors that they had ever seen in the course of their careers in historical cartography and that it revealed an amazingly high level of cartographic skill: for example, they noted that the shape of the Asian continent is extremely accurate. The map is also entirely unlike Chinese navigation maps of the same time period, pointing to a completely different school of cartography existing in Thailand.





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Dr. Kobkua then presented her research into the map’s depiction of the coastline of the Malay Peninsula, comparing its contents to notes made by Sir John Bowring in 1857 and John Crawford in 1828 and hypothesizing that the map dates from about the period of King Taksin the Great, earlier than proposed by the Fudan University researchers. A lively debate then ensued, with the speakers exploring the question of the map’s production date, pointing to various features that were established at known times. (For example, the map contains no mention of Hong Kong, which became a British colony in the late 1830s-- but the annotation marking the capital of Japan seems to read “Tokyo”, not “Edo”, suggesting a date later than 1868.) All were in agreement that the question of the map’s date deserves further study.

The presentations were followed by a question-and-answer session, in which the audience was invited to address queries to the research team. One question that arose concerned the makers of the seventeen royal maps-- who they might have been, and what role they might have served in the royal court. Her Royal Highness spoke up to provide some insightful and illuminating suggestions on this matter, to which the assembled participants listened with appreciation.



After the morning session the Crown Princess viewed the exhibition on the royal maps in the foyer with interest. Then, Her Royal Highness retired to Room 111 in the Maha Chulalongkorn Building for luncheon with the chief researchers, administrators, and honorable guests. The colloquium participants were privileged to share the room for their buffet lunch. The luncheon room was artistically bedecked with pink, purple, and white flowers in standing vases and trellises at each corner, as well as sprays of orchids and other blossoms hanging in profusion from the walls and doors, transforming the room into a breathtaking floral wonderland. The air was replete with animated academic talk, smiles and occasional laughter as the scholars continued discussing the topic and other matters of mutual interest. The friendly atmosphere was augmented by enchanting Thai and Chinese melodies provided by the Arts Chamber Music Group and a Chinese cymbalo player. Pleased with the sweet melodies of the musicians, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, kindly summoned the students to an audience and graciously allowed the young musicians, who were all Arts freshmen, to be photographed with her prior to her departure. The Crown Princess’s kindness brought much delight to these students who never dreamt they would be given such a royal privilege, which they will surely treasure as a precious and endearing moment in their lives.





## An Exhibition on German Division and Reunification



The International Affairs Section and the Humanities Information Center, Faculty of Arts, in collaboration with the German Embassy, held an exhibition on the history of German Division and Reunification from November 8 – 30, 2010 on the mezzanine level of the Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Building, the first exhibition to be housed in the Faculty's new state-of-the-art building. On the opening day of the exhibition, November 8, Assistant Professor Dr. Prapoj Asavavirulhakarn, Dean, Associate Professor Surapeepan Chatraporn, Deputy Dean for International Affairs, together with Associate Professor Dr. Kongkarn Tavetheekul, Deputy Dean for Administration, Assistant Professor Sunij Sutanthavibul, Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs, Ajarn Nenuphar Supavej, Deputy Dean for Quality Assurance, Professor Thanomnuan O'charoen, Director, The Chalermprakiat Center of Translation and Interpretation, Ms. Yupin Chanchareonsin, Director, Humanities Information Center, Assistant Professor Dr. Neungreudee Lohapon, Head, Department of Western Languages, and Assistant Professor Dr. Wilita Sriuranpong, Head, Section of the German Language, gave a warm welcome to H.E. Dr. Hanns Heinrich Schumacher, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as the Deputy Chief of Mission and other diplomats from the German Embassy.

Dignitaries, faculty members, students and guests began gathering in the foyer of the Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Building on this sunny morning shortly before the ceremony. At 10:00am, our student emcees, Ms. Nantamas Chatraporn and Mr. Akra Chowchong, speaking in English and German respectively, introduced the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, who gave a warm welcoming speech recalling two previous courtesy visits paid by the German Ambassador to our Faculty. Impressed that many still remembered his lecture about the uniqueness of the German Republic that he delivered last year, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, showed great delight and cordiality before delivering another insightful 20-minute talk, with anecdotes drawn from his own personal experiences, on the history of the division of Germany after



World War II and its subsequent reunification after the fall of communism in 1989. In his speech, the Ambassador also stressed the supportive and friendly relationship between Thailand and Germany, which has endured for a good number of years.

After the speeches, the Dean and the Ambassador performed the ribbon cutting ceremony at the base of the patio stairway leading to the mezzanine. Guests, faculty members, and students were then invited to follow the two dignitaries upstairs to view the photographs and enjoy the exhibition. In honour of the occasion, the German Embassy kindly provided attendees with souvenir CDs containing copies of all the photographs on display at the exhibition. In addition, with the compliments of the Embassy, participants got to taste delicious, authentic German food and pastries from a well-known German restaurant in Bangkok. The event thus gave not only academic food for thought but actual food for the stomach as well. Those who were fortunate enough to attend will never forget the friendly interaction between Germans and Thais in the relaxing and breezy atmosphere of the Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Building.





## Arts Homecoming Party



The Chula Arts Alumni Association is holding a homecoming party titled “Ruam Pol Kon Dhevalai” (a gathering of the Dhevali dwellers) on Saturday, January 8, 2011 on the lawn and adjacent areas between the Maha Chulalongkorn Building and the Main Auditorium. This year the party will be in the form of a traditional temple fair at which alumni can enjoy a wide variety of games played in times gone by at temple fairs in provincial areas. Some of the games include “Num Noi Tok Nam” (young lads falling into the water), “Soi Dao” (choosing dangling stars from an artificial tree), darts, singing contests, and “Rum Wong” (popular traditional Thai dance) contest.

On the party grounds, there will be stalls selling garments, O-TOP products and a variety of other goods and enticing tidbits. As part of the highlights, alumni will enjoy selecting delicious all-you-can-eat food, desserts and drinks from a wide range of kiosks catered by well-known restaurants in and outside of Bangkok. Admission for all the fun and goodies is only 500 baht per person. The party starts at 5:00 p.m. after the annual meeting of the Chula Arts Alumni Association. All proceeds will go to the Faculty's Students' Affairs Section to be used for the welfare of students in need. Please do not miss this once-a-year gathering to reminisce about the good old days and to rekindle relations with senior and junior friends and classmates. Fun and enjoyment is guaranteed! See you there! ✨

## English Research Writing Assistance Unit



One of the policies of the Dean is to encourage faculty members to present their papers at international conferences and publish their papers in well-recognized journals. To facilitate the policy, the Dean in January 2009 requested the Office of International Affairs to establish an English Research Writing Assistance Unit which offers consultation to faculty members who need assistance in editing their papers written in English. Since its establishment, the Unit has given service to a number of faculty members from various departments and offices. Anyone who wishes to avail of this service can contact the Secretary of the Unit, Ms. Walailuk Chorpunkul, for further details at 02-218-4885.



### ✨ We are at Your Service. ✨

The Committee Members of the Section of International Affairs, which comprises Deputy Dean Surapeepan Chatraporn, Dr. Brett Farmer, Charunee Hongcharu, Dr. Duantem Krisdathanont, Donald Scott Humphries, Dr. Julispong Chularatana, Dr. Nurida Haiyiyakoh, Pawit Mahasarinand, Dr. Piriyaadit Mani, Dr. Saseporn Petcharpiruch, Dr. Sirivan Chulakorn, Mathurin Leelasetakul, Wipada Petcharak, and Walailuk Chorpunkul as secretary, welcome advice and suggestions concerning any plans and activities. We aim to encourage a fully internationalized environment and to promote increased networking with overseas institutions and scholars. If you would like to talk to us, you can contact any of the committee members. We would be very happy to hear from you and cooperate closely with you.