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No.11 March 2011

India Studies Lectures & Discussion



Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn graciously presided over two days of public lectures and discussions in the 'India Studies' series by Professor Romila Thapar (Professor Emeritus of Jawaharlal Nehru University, India) and Professor Frits Staal (Professor Emeritus of University of California, Berkeley, USA) in room 401/18 of the Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Building on 1-2 February 2011. Professor Thapar delivered two lectures on "The Changing Interpretation of Indian History," and "Classical Literature and Historical Consciousness," while Professor Staal gave a lecture on "The Himalayas and the Rivers of Southern Asia." In the afternoon of February 2, Professor Thapar also led a discussion on "The Politics of Historiography." These lectures and discussions were highly informative and inspirational for those in the fields of history, literature, and India Studies. There was a wide variety of distinguished guests including the Ambassadors of India and Argentina, delegates from the Indian Cultural Centre and the Indian Chamber of Commerce, and eminent scholars such as, Professor Ambeth Ocampo, Dr. Peter Skilling, and Dr. Chris Baker. These events were also attended by prominent members of the academic community of Chulalongkorn University including, Professor Dr. Charat Suwanwela, Associate Professor Dr. Sunait Chutintaranond, Assistant Professor Dr. Khunying M.R. Kalaya Tingsabadh, Assistant Professor Dr. Charit Tingsabadh and Assistant Professor Surat Horachaikul.





India Studies Lectures & Discussion

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Throughout the course of the India Studies Lectures and Discussion, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn expressed great interest and participated fully in each and every activity. After Professor Thapar's first lecture on February 1, Her Royal Highness graciously invited Professor Thapar, a few distinguished guests and some members of the Faculty of Arts to lunch in her royal residence at Srapathum Palace. In the afternoon, Her Royal Highness kindly led the group on a private tour of Queen Savang Vadhana Museum, which is located in the Queen Grandmother's former residence in Srapathum Palace. On February 2, Her Royal Highness attended the morning lectures by Professors Thapar and Staal and later joined the Professors and distinguished guests from the Indian Embassy and Indian Cultural Centre for lunch in the Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Building. Her Royal Highness participated in a lively lunch conversation, during which she recounted her various visits to India and assured Professor Thapar that she would definitely be visiting the Delhi area again in the very near future. In the afternoon, Her Royal Highness joined the discussion session on "The Politics of Historiography," led by Professor Thapar, during which lively contributions were offered by representatives of the Indian Embassy and Cultural Centre on the matter of the influence of Hindu Nationalism in Indian Historiography. Faculty members, as well as students of the Faculty of Arts, also voiced their opinions and expressed their points of views on various aspects of the development of Indian Historiography, which they felt could be employed as relevant points of comparison to the politics of Thai historiography. Addressing these matters, Her Royal Highness also mentioned the importance of research in historiography and her experience teaching matters related to historiography at Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy. The three-hour discussion session proved to be extremely interesting and thought-provoking. It was a most fitting conclusion to two very successful days of intellectual investigation and academic exchange.

The India Studies Lectures and Discussion was jointly organized by the Department of History and the Department of Eastern Languages, with the gracious patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn and the generous support of the Chula Global Network and the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University.



Thai-Vietnamese Cultural Exchange



The Section of International Affairs, together with the Section of Academic Affairs, and the Humanities Information Center, joined hands to arrange a cultural exchange activity with the Vietnam National University of Ho Chi Minh City on Thursday January 13, 2011. The activity took place in Room 304, Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Building. There were altogether six professors and ninety-six Vietnamese students joining in the event. Assistant Professor Dr. Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, Dean, Associate Professor Surapeepan Chatraporn, Deputy Dean for International Affairs, Assistant Professor Sunij Sutanthavibul, Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs, Assistant Professor Sankavat Pradithpongse, Deputy Dean for Student Affairs gave a warm welcome to the Vietnamese professors and students, led by Professor Bui Hai Dang, Deputy Dean, Faculty of International Relations.

The event started with a short lecture on “An Overview of the Faculty of Arts: Its Background, Curricular, and Activities” by Ajarn Dr. Saseporn Petcharapiruch followed by another short lecture on “Thailand: A Brief History and Current Situations” by Ajarn Dr. Bhawan Ruangsilp. Next were Thai classical performances by the Thai Classical Club of the Section of the Student Affairs. The performances included “Kritsada Piniharn” which is a dance featuring angels and female fairies scattering scented rose petals and love blossoms as a symbolic act of courteous guest welcoming, and “Chumnum Tai”, a dance featuring people of diverse races coming together to form a harmonious Thailand. The performances were attentively watched by the Vietnamese students, all of whom applauded enthusiastically and took endless snapshots.



The students from the Vietnamese National University of Ho Chi Minh City, in turn, sang and danced to three popular Vietnamese songs including the most popular rap song of the time. The MCs of the event were two seniors of the Faculty of Arts: Ms. Nantamas Chatraporn and Ms. Parima Phoopat. The Vietnamese students were so impressed with the event that they made a request for several group photos of all involved in the activities. Next, the Vietnamese professors and students were taken on a tour of the digital library and Learning Commons of Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Building guided by Director Yupin Chanchareonsin herself. All the professors and students were fascinated with the state-of-the-art technology and resources in this library. Some Vietnamese students even inquired into the possibility of becoming exchange students at the Faculty of Arts. The cultural exchange activities that day were warm, joyful, and fun and helped promote better understanding and closer ties between the two institutions. The cultural exchange ended with a campus tour, of which the Statue of the two Kings, Maha Chulalongkorn Building, and Mahawajiravudth Buildings were highlights. The campus tour was conducted by the Assistant Director and staff of the Office of International Affairs, Chulalongkorn University, who willingly lent a helping hand to our Faculty.





A Courtesy Visit by the Australian Ambassador



Australian Ambassador H.E. James Wise paid a courtesy visit to the Faculty of Arts on Friday January 28, 2011. Upon arrival His Excellency was given a warm welcome by Assistant Professor Dr.Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, Dean, Associate Professor Surapeepan Chatraporn, Deputy Dean for International Affairs, Assistant Professor Sunij Sutanthavibul, Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs, and Ms.Yupin Chanchareonsin, Director of Humanities Information Center. The Dean courteously escorted the Ambassador on a tour of the Maha Chulalongkorn Building and gave a detailed explanation about the history and importance of the Building. While touring the building, H.E. James Wise was warmly greeted by Nun Vimuttiya (Associate Professor Supaphan Na Bangchang, Ph.D.), Head of the International Tipitaka Hall, who invited H.E. to step into the Hall and viewed the precious books, records and digital materials concerning the Tipitaka. Nun Vimuttiya gave a briefing of the Hall and detailed the related major Buddhist activities and classes conducted there. Then H.E. James Wise was led to Room 105 where he met with Arts students from both the regular and international programs. The Ambassador gave a short talk on the requested topic “Scholarships and Study in Australia” to the students who are interested in the possibilities of furthering their studies in Australia.

The Ambassador began his talk by introducing himself as a fellow Arts student who majored in history, thus immediately establishing an empathetic relationship with all his audience. He proceeded to talk about living and studying in Australia, giving comprehensive details on facts and figures. His Excellency ended his friendly talk with a humorous touch by relating his own personal memories of student life, which not only galvanized the attention of his audience but evoked considerable laughter as well.

A Courtesy Visit by the Australian Ambassador

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Unlike many diplomats, H.E. James Wise was very down-to-earth; he did not present an air of high diplomacy which might be intimidating and inaccessible to some people. The Ambassador was friendly in his manner and kind in his tone, which was always tinged with a very good sense of humor. The talk didn't seem to be a formal one between an ambassador and students, but more like a talk between an experience grown-up and teenagers who are enthusiastic to further their education overseas. After the talk, the Ambassador gave the students an opportunity to ask questions and/or make comments. No less than the talk, the Q&A session was informative, friendly and humorous. For this historic event Ajarn Mathurin Leelasetakul and Ajarn Scott Humphries teamed up as MCs.

The next session was conducted by Miss Busarin Sinthunavarat, Business Development Manager for Education and Training of the Australian Embassy, who gave detailed information about study opportunities, scholarship applications, and Australian scholarship criteria.

After the talk and meeting with the students, the Ambassador expressed his interest to see and learn more of the Faculty of Arts. To their delight, the Dean and the Deputy Dean for International Affairs took H.E. James Wise on a tour of the new pride of the Faculty, Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Building. Included in this tour were small-sized, medium-sized and large-sized conference rooms, as well as classrooms all equipped with modern technology and the latest computer systems. Director Yupin Chanchareonsin proudly showed the Ambassador the digital library and Learning Commons and explained in detail about its many activities. On the sixth floor H.E. James Wise took a look at the Sodsai Puntumkomol Dramatic Center where some Drama majors were rehearsing their senior project "The Good Body." Ajarn Punpassa Thuptien, senior project supervisor, together with her students excitedly greeted the Ambassador and welcomed him to the theater and the rehearsal. H.E. James Wise genuinely enjoyed watching the students working on staging, lighting and acting. He was impressed by the ability and talent of these young students.

In a single afternoon H.E. James Wise experienced both the place and the people of the Faculty of Arts. The Australian Ambassador expressed his thanks to the administrators and students for giving him a warm welcome and for sharing with him the unique culture of the Faculty. He wished to strengthen the cordial ties and promote further academic and cultural cooperation between the Australian Embassy and the Faculty of Arts in the future.





Academic Cooperation with Chengdu University and Agreement Signing Ceremony

Assistant Professor Dr. Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, Dean, signed an Agreement with Professor Huang Ming, Dean, School of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Chengdu University, on Monday, January 10, 2011 in the Jade Garden Room, Montien Hotel, Bangkok. Associate Professor Surapeepan Chatraporn, Deputy Dean for International Affairs, will be in charge of the contract and any activities that will ensue. Associate Professor Dr. Prapin Manomaivibool, Director, Asia Research Center, was the consultant in drafting and signing the Agreement.

Present at the signing ceremony were Assistant Professor Dr. Nattama Pongpairoj, Head of English Department, Assistant Professor Dr. Suradech Chotiudomphant, Director, BALAC Program, Ajarn Dr. Saseporn Petcharapiruch, Deputy Director, BALAC Program, Ajarn Thanyaporn Parinyawut from the Thai Civilization Unit, and Associate Professor Ingorn Supavanit. These administrators will be involved in the management of the academic exchange program once the first program starts in October 2011. The signing ceremony concluded with the traditional exchange of souvenirs from the two universities.

The contract between the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, and School of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Chengdu University, China, aims to promote academic cooperation and student exchanges. Chengdu University will send twenty 4th year Thai major students to take three to four courses, totaling 12-15 credits, from October 2011 to March 2012. A Professor from Chengdu University and one from the Faculty of Arts will take care of the exchange students and assist them in their studies and research. Professors from the Faculty of Arts will also be able to teach or conduct research at Chengdu University, with expenses and assistance provided as per the contractual agreement. For Arts students who are interested in going on exchange to Chengdu University, the Faculty of Arts will advise and liaise with Chengdu University about the curriculum and university life in China.



Academic Collaboration with the Australian Embassy

As a follow-up to the visit by H.E. James Wise to the Faculty of Arts in late January 2010, the Australian Ambassador sent his representatives to discuss the possibilities of co-organizing academic activities with the Faculty. On February 3, 2011, Ms. Natalie Lastary Dewi Lee, Academic Regional Coordinator, Macquarie University, Miss Busarin Sinthunavarat, Development Manager of Education and Training, and Miss Watinee Kharnwong, Deputy Director of Education, Australian Government, paid a visit to the Faculty and met with Assistant Professor Dr. Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, Dean, and Associate Professor Surapeepan Chatraporn, Deputy Dean for International Affairs, to discuss plans for academic cooperation and dissemination of information on available Australian scholarships for Arts students.



It was agreed that both institutions will co-host "A Study in Australia Week for Arts students" in November 2011. The event will comprise an exhibition at the Learning Commons in Maha Chakri Sirindhon Building, special lectures on scholarships, study plans, and life in Australia by invited professors from Australia, Thai alumni, and officers from the top ten Australian universities, as well as other related activities.



We are at Your Service.



The Committee Members of the Section of International Affairs, which comprise Deputy Dean Surapeepan Chatraporn, Dr. Brett Farmer, Charunee Hongcharu, Dr. Duanthem Krisdathanont, Donald Scott Humphries, Dr. Julispong Chularatana, Dr. Nurida Haiyikah, Pawit Mahasarinand, Dr. Piriya-dit Mani, Dr. Saseporn Petcharapiruch, Dr. Sirivan Chulakorn, Mathurin Leelasetakul, Wipada Petcharak, and Walailuk Chorpankul 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.