

SEA-NEWSLETTER

The Department for Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia

JULY 2024

Photo credits: Pakorn Duriyaprasit



ALUMNI COLUMN

Pakorn Duriyaprasit

With a long journey in Art History, Asian Studies, and Buddhist Studies, Pakorn Duriyaprasit from Thai Studies Section has gained experience in cultural diversity and was finally able to establish her own business as a content creator in the entertainment business.

Before she came to Hamburg in 2019, Pakorn had studied a wide range of disciplines. She enrolled in the BA program for Art History (major) and Asian Studies (minor) at Humboldt University Berlin. However, Art History there was quite Eurocentric and had a focus on cultural history. Later, she spent a semester abroad in an international programme at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. The intensive exchange that she had there with fellow students and locals changed her views considerably. Finally, she decided to enroll in the MA program in Buddhist Studies (Thai track) at the Universität Hamburg. Pakorn strived to deepen her knowledge of the history and culture of Thailand to get a better comprehension of herself and of the world in which she lived. She believed that by studying the past, one gets a deeper understanding of the present. Due to her art historical background and personal interests in tattoos, she embarked on her MA thesis on magical tattoos and its linkage to Thai religion and society, supervised by Prof. Dr. Volker Grabowsky and Prof. Dr. Michael Zimmermann, graduating in 2022.

As experienced in the MA study at Universität Hamburg, most of the subjects at AAI raised her interest making it easier for her to proceed with her research project.

Through the studies here, she learned to critically analyze and scrutinize sources, skills which are helpful in her current work as a freelance writer. However, the most valuable skill Pakorn gained is the ability to work independently and with diligence and compassion. Besides, with deadlines to meet, she had to efficiently organize her schedule to avoid burnout.



Regarding her current job, she works as a freelance writer and podcaster, contributing to *Tagesspiegel Background* and various online websites and agencies. The lack of Southeast Asian narratives in the German media landscape motivated

Pakorn to initiate THAISPORA, a video podcast that explores the diasporic perspectives of Thais and people with a Thai background living outside of Thailand. In her podcast, she discussed diverse topics with her guests, including marriage migration of Thais to the West, (bi-) cultural identity, and how to deconstruct stereotypical images. The goal of THAISPORA is to amplify the voices

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>>> of Thai and Thai diasporic individuals, shedding light on their living conditions and fostering multicultural intersections.

Moreover, THAISPORA serves as a platform to promote work and current projects of the guests. For example, Professor Dr. Sven Trakulhun introduced his latest publication, 'Confronting Christianity: The Protestant Mission and the Buddhist Reform Movement in the Nineteenth Century,' in one episode. The Thai-German artist collective Un.thai.tled showcased their art show 'In Nobody's Service' at Galerie Wedding in Berlin.



If you have a Thai background or identify yourself as Thai and would like to discuss your experiences living in Germany (or any other country) or promote your latest work or project, you are more than welcome to be a guest on THAISPORA. •

Website: <https://pakonam.com/>

Social Media: https://www.instagram.com/pako_nam/

THAISPORA on Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/7IZxACowQTxv07muQgijMX?si=3d9dfc4a9cd543fa>

THAISPORA on Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=No_4Bdn3Jp8&list=PL4c5veqnTUmO9RVylbMGBZ-tqru9CYUlj

ALUMNI COLUMN

Would you like to share your story as ex-student in our Department?
Contact us and join our **Alumni Group on LinkedIn**



Students and Alumni of the Southeast Asian Studies Department- Hamburg University.
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9016077/>

Thai-Tag 2024

Sustainable Development in Thailand: Social and Cultural Paths



On 3 June 2023, the Department of Thaiistik convened the 11th Thai Culture Day (Thai Tag 2023) at the Asia Africa Institute at Hamburg University. The event was jointly by the Thaiistik section of the Department of Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia in cooperation with the Hamburger Gesellschaft für Thaiistik, e.V. (HGT). It was opened in the morning by addresses from Royal Thai Ambassador H.E. Dr. Nadhavathna Krishnamra and Honorary Consul Stefan Karsten Krohn, and a short introductory note by Prof. Dr. Volker Grabowsky from the Hamburg Department of Thaiistik.

This year, the Thai Tag was held under the motto "Sustainable Development in Thailand: Social and Cultural Paths" with lectures ranging from the origins of Buddhism before Siam (Dr. Nicolas >>>



Photo by Sippakorn Yamkasikorn - Pexels



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Revire, Chicago), personal insights from conducting German-led agricultural development projects (Prof. Dr. Hermann Waibel, Hannover), Demographic problems in present-day Thai society (Prof. Dr. Tony Waters (Lüneburg), to Human Rights issues and legal aid (Ms. Siriorn Aromdee, Ministry of Justice, Thailand).

On this special occasion, we proudly opened the new Thai Corner (Thai: *Mum Nangsü Thai*) in the AAI Library to which the Royal Thai Embassy in Berlin kindly provided about 150 mostly English language books on a wide range of topics related to Thai culture and society. Some of the most interesting books are exhibited in a glass showcase in from of the entrance to the Library. During the opulent lunch meal more than ten kinds of Thai food were served. Afterwards, recently released books were presented by scholars from all over Germany in a special Book Launch. Parallel to this even, a forum on “Career and Scholarship Opportunity in Thailand” initiated vivid discussions between professionals and students of Thai and Southeast Asian Studies.



In the afternoon seven Thai language students from various German universities were engaged in a Reading Contest. A jury awarded three prizes sponsored by the Krohn Foundation. Besides, the winners of the TSNG (T(h)ai Studies Network Germany) Design Contest were announced and awarded with support from the Royal General-Consulate in Munich. The most enjoyable Thai-Tag ended with the Lucky Draw.

Our Thai Tag was lively joined by over 150 registered participants, many from far away, including many high-ranking officials from the embassy and the consulates from Frankfurt, Munich and Hamburg. This shows that the Thai-Tag in Hamburg has become an institution over the last 14 years.

We are truly grateful for all participants and colleagues engaged and hope to welcome you all again next year in Thai Tag 2025! •



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Aurora Rosena Dewi wins book writing competition!

Aurora's novel, "To be: Rebound" is voted a winning entry in a writing competition and is scheduled for publication! The competition, titled "*Tantangan Menulis*" or "Writing Challenge", is hosted by a new publishing house based in Cirebon called Rasi Publishing from December 2023 to March 2024. It functioned more like a writing marathon than a typical writing contest. Over the course of four months, finalists like Aurora not only wrote their stories but also actively engaged in social media promotion. This unique format allows readers to connect with the developing stories and fosters a stronger online community around the competition.

This win is a testament to Aurora's dedication, not just to writing, but also to effective time management. Aurora is one of our third-year Bachelor's students, majoring in

Indonesian and Malay studies. When asked how she juggles her studies and writing, she said that she has been developing stories during her leisure time, so when competitions like this roll around, she is already a few steps ahead.

"To be: Rebound" is not Aurora's only recent success. She has also won another writing contest with a different Indonesian publishing house called Teori Kata. Her new book is called "The Art of Babygirlism" and will be out very soon! Aurora will continue writing under her pen name, "Roosjena", and we cannot wait to see what she comes up with next. For more information about Aurora's writing journey, follow her on Instagram [@roosjena](#). Congratulations again on your many achievements! •



Citra's Concern over Balinese Manuscripts

We are thrilled to welcome Dewa Ayu Carmas Citrawati, a new PhD candidate in our department. Hailing from Klungkung, Bali, Citra completed her bachelor and master's programs at Udayana University and now works as a lecturer for Balinese literature at her alma mater. Before coming to Germany,

she contributed to DREAMSEA (a joint digitization project between PPIM State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and CSMC University of Hamburg) by serving as a local expert entrusted with the digitization task and the collecting of manuscript metadata.

After attending some classes and presentations at the University of Hamburg, Citra was impressed to see students doing manuscript studies against a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, such as philology, linguistics, and literature. This field seems to be so diverse that it even attracts researchers from music, chemistry, and archaeometry disciplines.

For her research topic, Citra is exploring the advancements of open-access websites that provide information about Balinese manuscripts previously only available in printed catalogs. This work will contribute to mapping the life cycle of these manuscripts in Indonesia and abroad. Up until now, Citra has been using the standards employed by Wikidata for storing manuscript metadata. She is eager to learn more about how to enhance these standards to better meet current scholarly needs for information about Balinese manuscripts.

Citra wishes particularly to see Balinese manuscripts have adequate documented information regarding their provenance, an aspect that has been relegated to a secondary importance by many manuscript scholars. She explained to us how elements like colophon should be meticulously investigated to make sense of the manuscripts' original social context. With a vibrant academic environment in Hamburg, Citra envisions a challenging, yet joyful, PhD journey onwards. We hope she can endure all processes of her study, build a prospective network with other scholars, and bring back home many novel findings. •

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Artifact Repatriation from the Netherlands to Indonesia



It was an honor for our department to welcome Dr. Lydia Kieven, a historian specializing in Javanese art and cultural heritage from the University of Bonn, on Thursday, May 30, 2024. Dr. Kieven's presentation focused on the ongoing process of repatriating Dutch colonial collections to Indonesia, offering a

fascinating look at how decolonization efforts translate into tangible action.

Dr. Kieven highlighted the complexities of repatriation through the case of the Museum Nusantara in Delft, which ceased operating in January 2013 and offered to return 14,000 objects to Indonesia. However, Indonesia chose to only receive back 1,500 items. To celebrate and promote this successful repatriation, the Galeri Nasional Indonesia held an exhibition featuring 152 returned objects from November 28 to December 10, 2023.

Assessing Indonesians' reception of artifacts with colonial history, Dr. Kieven also discussed the current state of Kota Tua, a popular tourist spot in Jakarta. She



Photo by: Marieke Bloembergen, Galeri Nasional, Jakarta, 28 November 2023

observed that the old city compound is frequented particularly by young people for recreation. She believes that this demonstrates a sense of independence- of young Indonesians not by abandoning Dutch colonial infrastructure as a sign of resentment, but by 'occupying' them as an expression of ownership.

After the presentation, the audience had the opportunity to ask questions or comment. Zakariya, a fellow doctoral student, expressed concern over the actions that should follow the return of the illegally acquired objects. He implied that repatriation alone cannot atone for the 'sins' committed by the Dutch occupiers. Zakariya hoped to see sustained research opportunities on these artifacts with the present-day Dutch authorities potentially serving as key benefactors. •

Uprooted: Drifting with and Moving Inward to Poetics of Vietnamese Utterances

No. 10 Forum of Vietnamese Culture/ Diễn Đàn Văn hóa Việt Nam



The talk will be introduced and chaired by Professor Thomas Engelbert.

Room 232

Asien-Afrika-Institut, Ost-Flügel
Universität Hamburg
Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1

Friday, July 12, 2024
16:00 - 18:00 CEST

The Department of Vietnamese Studies, Hamburg University cordially invites to a talk by the poet and translator Nhã Thuyên, Hanoi, who is currently a DAAD artist-in-residence in Germany. >>>

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About the speaker:



Nhã Thuyên, Hanoi

Nhã Thuyên anchors herself to Hanoi, Vietnam, and totters between languages. She has authored several books in Vietnamese and/or in English translations, including *viết* (writing) (2008), *rìa vực* (edge of the abyss) (2011), *từ thở, những người lạ* (words breathe, creatures of elsewhere) (2015), *bất \tuần: những hiện diện [tự-] vắng trong thơ Việt* (un \martyred: [self-]vanishing presences in Vietnamese poetry) (2019). Translations of her poetry and writing appear in some journals including *Asymptote*, *Cordite Review*, *The Margins*, *Words Without Border*, *the Lifted Brow*, *Jacket2*, *Gulf Coast*, *The Kenyon Review* and some other places. Her next book of poetry *vị nước* (taste of water) is forthcoming. She has been unearthing her notebooks and rubbing her words in Berlin as a 2023 DAAD's Artists-in-Berlin fellow, and learning to quietly speak up with care.

The discussion centers around the questions of the politics and the poetics of the marginalized in Vietnamese

Uprooted: Drifting with and Moving Inward to Poetics of Vietnamese Utterances

literature, with an attempt at understanding Vietnamese literature in its plural and fragmented entity, historically and culturally. The research approaches this literature, especially poetry as a specific concern, of the writers who hold onto writing in Vietnamese far from home but have not yet been fairly recognized as a contribution to Vietnamese literature as a whole, and of the writers who remain in Vietnam with a very limited readership. Where do the writers belong? In what way can we practically bring together all the writers into a shared house of Vietnamese literature and language? What are and have been the major issues of these literatures in the past and what are the possible literary responsibilities for a Vietnamese writer/literary scholar in the present? And in the end, what does it mean to be a Vietnamese writer (and why should we ask this question)? This project proposes a voyage "moving outward" (researching the politics and poetics of the writers overseas), and in tandem, "returning inward" (attuning to the politics and poetics of the poets who stay in Vietnam), accompanying and being accompanied by the drifting poetics of the Vietnamese language. •

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