

SEA- NEWSLETTER

The Department for Languages
and Cultures of Southeast Asia

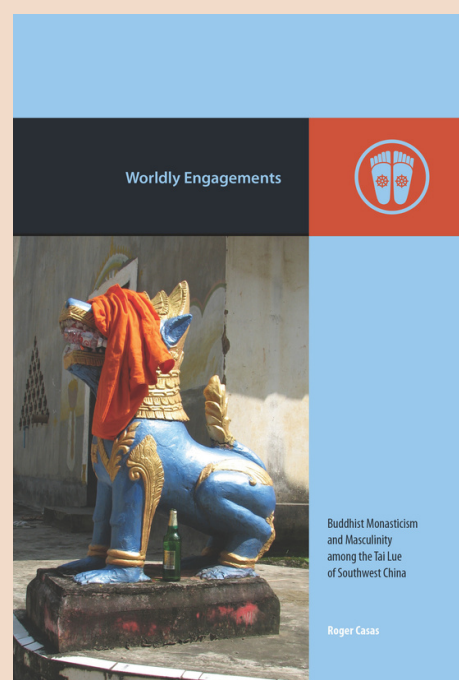


Book Launch and Extended Lecture by Roger Casas

Roger Casas, Lecturer of Yunnan University's National Center for Studies of Borderland Ethnic Minorities in Kunming, has recently published a new monograph "Worldly Engagements: Buddhist Monasticism and Masculinity among the Tai Lue of Southwest China" by the University of Hawai'i Press. He led an online Book Launch with the Hamburger Gesellschaft für Thaiistik (HGT) on 13 March 2026 and an open discussion on Buddhist monastic disciplines among monks and novices in Sipsong Panna. The book launch event so gained so huge scholarly attention that he was invited by the Department of Asian and North African Studies, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italy, to run another book launch talk on 26 May 2026, which was financially supported by the Marco Polo Centre for Global Europe-Asia Connections (MAP).

Extended from his March's book launch forum, a special lecture "Vanishing Virtue: Buddhist Monasticism, Ethnic policy, and Masculinity Crisis among the Tai Lue of Sipsong Panna" was organized by Hamburger Gesellschaft für Thaiistik again on 28 May 2026 to develop arguments offered in his book. In this talk Roger Casas considered the participation of Tai Lue monks and novices in practices of competitive masculinity as a key part of a discipline of manhood fundamentally concerned with transforming "raw" (dip) boys into "ripe" (suk) men. The presentation looked at the current crisis of monasticism in Sipsong Panna, exacerbated by the recent implementation on the part of the Chinese state of the so-called "second generation" ethnic policies. •

Contributor: **Volker Grabowsky**
Photo Credit: Roger Casas



Recent Highlights from HGT Lecture Series

Contributor: Kornkanok Khetnongbua

We are delighted to bring you the most recent information regarding our activities at the Hamburger Gesellschaft für Thaiistik (HGT).

Recap: Recent Highlights.

- May 19, 2026 | Guest Lecture with Prof. Dr. Anthony Waters: In addition to our main lecture series, Retired Ambassador Mohammed Abdul Hye contributed as a guest speaker in the course "Southeast Asia and the International Refugee Regime since 1945," co-teaching with Prof. Dr. Anthony Waters to offer participants deep historical and diplomatic insights into regional refugee frameworks.
- June 05, | Retired Ambassador Mohammed Abdul Hye: A seasoned diplomat with a 34-year career (July 1990 to June 2024), he delivered a lecture titled "From Victims of Genocide to Host of the Displaced People: The 1971 legacy and Bangladesh's response to the Rohingya crisis."

In this session, he revisited the 1971 Bangladesh conflict, which forced ten million people from East Pakistan to seek refuge in India before they returned after the surrender of the Pakistan Army in December 1971. The talk then moved into the twenty-first century, exploring how this historical memory of exile has been directly informing Bangladesh's ethical framework and geopolitical response to refugee situations. Despite severe land and resource constraints, Bangladesh continues to host roughly 1.2 million stateless Rohingya refugees, who have fled ongoing violence and persecution in Myanmar's Rakhine State since 2017. Drawing on its past experiences in 1978 and 1992, he explained how Bangladesh keeps faith in repatriation under the bilateral agreement signed in November 2017.



<http://thaiistik-gesellschaft.de/> <https://www.facebook.com/hgt.hamburg/>

Die Hamburger Gesellschaft für Thaiistik e.V. in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Arbeitsbereich Thaiistik der Abteilung Sprachen und Kulturen Südasiens des AAI lädt Sie zu folgendem Online-Vortrag ein:

From Victims of Genocide to Host of the Displaced People: The 1971 legacy and Bangladesh's response to the Rohingya crisis



This lecture revisits the 1971 Bangladesh conflict which forced ten million people from East Pakistan to seek refuge in India and they returned after the surrender of Pakistan Army in December 1971.

Moving into the twenty-first century, the lecture evaluates how this historical memory of exile has directly shaped Bangladesh's ethical framework and geopolitical response to refugee situation. Despite severe land and resource constraints, Bangladesh continues to host roughly 1.2 million stateless Rohingya refugees, who have fled ongoing violence and persecution in Myanmar's Rakhine State since 2017.

Bangladesh also facilitated refugee repatriation earlier in 1978 and 1992 when people returned to Rakhine. Drawing on this past experience and her own experience of returning home in 1971, Bangladesh keeps faith in repatriation as a means of resolving refugee crisis under bilateral agreement signed in November 2017.



Photos by Mohammed Abdul Hye

Online Lecture via Zoom & in English



Retired Ambassador **Mohammed Abdul Hye** earned his degree in Civil Engineering in Bangladesh. After joining the diplomatic service, he received training at Beijing University of Foreign Affairs, Defence University at Washington D.C. and National School of Law at Bangalore, India and University of Southampton, UK on South Asian Affairs, humanitarian law and UN Law of the Seas respectively. In his long diplomatic career of 34-years from July 1990 up to June 2024, he served at the Headquarters for territorial desks for China, North America, West Asia, Central Asia, and Africa. He was also a member of Bangladesh team for maritime delimitation court cases with both India and Myanmar. He served as a mid-level political officer to Bahrain, Moscow, Bangkok and Dubai. As head of Mission, he served at Brunei Darussalam, Algiers (with concurrent accreditation to Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Cameroon) and Bangkok (with concurrent accreditation to Cambodia). On his retirement in June 2024, he has been associated with policy discussions at Dhaka on national newspaper and electronic media.

Friday, 5 June 2026
14:00—16:00 (CEST)
19:00—21:00 (Thai time)

Click or Copy:

<https://uni-hamburg.zoom.us/j/64563521222?pwd=OEdSbENCQUV2Ynl5SUdnNG5mM1pwQT09>
Meeting-ID: 645 6352 1222 || Passcode: hgtlecture



Asien-Afrika-Institut



Ambassador Hye holds a degree in Civil Engineering and served at the Headquarters for territorial desks for China, North America, West Asia, Central Asia and Africa before retiring. He was also a member of the Bangladesh team for maritime delimitation court cases with both India and Myanmar and served as a political officer and Head of Mission in various stations, including Bahrain, Moscow, Bangkok, Dubai, Brunei Darussalam, and Algiers. •

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Students and Alumni of the Southeast Asian Studies Department



Lecture series: Vietnamese Culture Forum

Online Talk

Journey into Cham Philosophical Wisdom

Friday, June 19, 2026
14:30 – 16:00 (CEST)
19:30 – 21:00 (Vietnam)

Zoom-ID: 683 2328 0572
Password: 07476467

Speaker: Phan Rang
Moderator: Cao Quang Nghiep
Host: Thomas Engelbert

Zoom link:
<https://shorturl.at/CsK4l>

Abstract

Vietnam today is a multiethnic nation, and the Cham are one of its constituent peoples. The Cham were the inhabitants of the ancient Kingdom of Champa, a land that once created a brilliant civilization in regional history. After the kingdom collapsed, the Cham integrated into the unified Vietnamese nation. Yet despite more than two centuries of living alongside and intermixed with the Vietnamese, the Cham have preserved their distinctive ethnic identity. This uniqueness has significantly contributed to the diversity of Vietnamese culture. Conversely, such distinctive differences have also generated cultural conflicts. "Cham Culture Seen from the Cham Perspective" attempts to take the first steps toward addressing and reconciling those conflicts.

The Cham possess what Tạ Chí Đại Trường called a "great maritime mindset." Throughout history, the Cham developed a long and far-reaching maritime history and sea culture. Nevertheless, land still constitutes an important component of Cham culture, and the Cham conception of land is itself quite unusual. The Cham manage land as though they do not possess it; thus, most sacred lands have no walls or fences, because no one would dare to encroach upon or violate them. This has led to cultural conflicts surrounding events such as the Grand Banquet held within the precincts of Po Klong Garai Temple in 2022, the encroachment upon Ghur Raneh, and the phenomenon concerning the statue of Pô Inur Nugar.

Cham notions of ownership are also fundamentally different. While the spirit of Đại Việt was expressed in the verse by Huỳnh Văn Nghệ: "Since the day we carried swords to expand the realm / The southern land still remembers Thăng Long," reflecting an expansion into territories already inhabited, the Cham did not share this outlook. The Cham do not appropriate what does not belong to them - whether land, property, or human beings. From this perspective, one may reinterpret the historical phenomenon of Chế Bồng Nga: he did not annex territory, enslave prisoners of war, or gather beautiful women into his court.

The distinctiveness of Cham cultural spirit and social life is reflected in many other aspects as well. In religion, Bà-ni represents a unique Cham creation - an indigenous religion grounded in peace and humanism. It is simultaneously "closed" and "open": it does not admit "urang parat" (outsiders) into the faith, yet it coexists harmoniously with surrounding communities. Religious dignitaries are required to have wives, clearly expressing the Cham conception of "two in one" through the symbolism of male and female, masculine and feminine. The maternal spirit also forms a foundation of Cham identity through three moral pillars: women must not become prostitutes, men must not be illiterate, and neither should beg. Alongside this is a festive spirit centered on playfulness and enjoyment, as Inrasara wrote in The April Purification Festival (2002): "Champa culture is a culture of playfulness / One that knows how to celebrate even amid suffering."

From this perspective, several enduring myths may also be reconsidered and reinterpreted: the myth of Huyền Trân, the myth that lục bát poetry is "purely Vietnamese," and the spirit of releasing hatred found in Ariya Glông Anak. This stands in contrast to the lingering resentment once expressed by Chế Lan Viên: "Who can know the old sorrow and hatred within my heart? / While others rejoice, I remain forever resentful."



Inrasara

Researcher, critic, and writer
Phan Rang, Vietnam

About the speaker

Inrasara was born in 1957 in the Cham village of Chakleng, Ninh Thuận Province. From 1982 to 1986, he worked at the Cham Script Textbook Compilation Board in Ninh Thuận. Later, between 1992 and 1998, he worked at the Center for Vietnamese and Southeast Asian Studies of the Ho Chi Minh City University. Since 1998, he has pursued an independent career, engaging in literary composition, criticism, research, journalism, and public lecturing.

Among his representative creative works are Sunlit Towers (Tháp nắng), a poetry collection; The April Purification Festival (Lễ tẩy trần tháng Tư), an epic poem published in 2002; Portrait of Sand (Chân dung Cát), a novel published in 2006; and Tcherfunith, a novel published in 2024.

In literary criticism, his major works include Dialogue with the New (Song thoại với cái mới, 2008), Entering the Discourse toward Openness (Nhập cuộc về hướng mở, 2014), Vietnamese Poetry: The Journey of Ecstatic Transformation (Thơ Việt, hành trình chuyển hướng say, 2014), Vietnamese Poetry: From Modernism to Postmodernism (Thơ Việt, từ hiện đại đến hậu hiện đại, 2019), and Disintegrating Literature (Văn chương tan rã, 2019).

His research contributions include the five-volume Cham Literature (Văn học Cham, 1994–1996), Cham Philosophical Wisdom (Minh triết Cham, 2016), and Searching for a Path of Survival for Cham Ahiêr Awal (Đi tìm Sinh lộ cho Cham Ahiêr Awal, 2020).

He was also the founder and editor-in-chief of Tagalau, a Cham literary and cultural special issue published in fifteen volumes from 2000 to 2014.



Inside the sacred circle of “DAM”

In a circular stage, modestly formed by combining flour and chalk, a sacred circle, the narrator comes from the outside into the circle, into a different world. A world of its own on a small stage. And thus the performance unfolds.

The Defendant, suspected of the murder of a stranger, a man driving a luxurious car. Be it jealousy or the accumulation of oppressed feelings over the amount of injustices that have plagued the country he loved, they take shape as a violent rage that leads him to use a *celurit* (traditional sickle) and slash the throat of this stranger of a man in a random street. He said, no strings attached. The Prosecutor, stuttering to provide the facts to the court. Unable to utter a single word without stumbling over the truth or the proof. Only able to speak in full sentences when rage takes control of his body. The Judge, eager for justice. Eager to fry the small fish. That is a story of a murder trial, an eerily apt one-man show titled DAM performed by Wawan Sofwan.



DAM was originally a short story of the same title by Balinese author Putu Wijaya. It was not among the author's most popular works, the author himself even forgetting parts of the plot, yet it remains painfully relevant to the current political discourse in Indonesia. It was first adapted into a live performance in Melbourne in 1998 and has since travelled to many places around the globe. The word DAM itself means more than one thing: a dam, a water barrier, as well as dam or dom, a card-playing game (similar to dominoes), as it is called in Balinese. This kind of double entendre remains consistent throughout the play. Be it the circle that forms the stage, the song at the beginning and the end of the performance, the string that hangs the Defendant's mask, or the Judge giving money to the voluntary audience playing the police officer.

Watching the play as an Indonesian myself feels like watching a horror film unfolding in real life. Well, some of the masks used, inspired by Pajegan masks, were visually haunting. But that is not the only reason. The message that the play successfully transmits is a frightening one. In the turmoil of the political situation the country currently faces, one question lingers: Is justice like a card game? There is no answer. The end is not yet here.

We would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations and thanks to Wawan Sofwan for his wonderful performance in Hamburg. He will continue his journey performing this play, alongside his other singular and extraordinary works. Please go see him if he performs nearby. His IG: Stageofwawansofyan •

Contributor: **Tiara Ulfah**

Photo credit: **Tiara Ulfah; Hellen Kustanti**

DON'T MISS OUT!

Interactive Workshop

Embrace (Your) Multilingualism: Discovering and Activating Linguistic Repertoires through Written Artefacts

Wednesday, June 10, 2026
14.00-16.00 (CEST)
Von-Melle-Park 8, R 213
Universität Hamburg

Organizers & Speaker:
Dr. Mariapaola Gritti
Dr. Irina Usanova

The joint workshop "Embrace (Your) Multilingualism: Discovering and Activating Linguistic Repertoires through Written Artefacts" is an interactive two-hour session that invites participants to explore the richness of their own and others' multilingual resources and their connection to cultural identity. Through engaging with written artefacts from across cultural and historical contexts and reflecting on personal experiences, participants take part in creative, hands-on activities, producing their own model written artefacts while actively exploring and activating their multilingual resources.

Registration: Send an informal email to mare.ew@uni-hamburg.de

More information: <https://www.uni-hamburg.de/chancengerechtigkeit/diversity/diversity-tag/2026-einzelveranstaltungen-detailseiten1/en-embrace-your-multilingualism-2026.html>

Lecture series Asia Africa Institute

AFRICA AND ASIA BEYOND THE HEADLINES

Friday/Thursday
14.00-16.00 (CEST)

Edmund-Siemers-Allee
1, Lecture Hall H
Universität Hamburg

Organizers:
Prof. Dr. Elsa Clavé
Prof. Dr. Hewan Semon Marye

The lecture series "Africa and Asia beyond the Headlines" highlights contemporary events in regions of the two continents that receive little or no media coverage. By providing re-regional expertise and historical insight, the series aims to be informative and accessible to a wide audience and bring other perspectives on events or countries general known but little understood. It aims to give students and the academic community key elements to understand social and political developments in the region.

June 2026

Friday, 05 June 2026

**The 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON):
Football Tournament and the
Improvement of the Quality of Play in
Relation to the Bosman Ruling of 1995 in
Europe**

Dr. Mukhtar Lawan (rer. nat.), Max Planck
Institute for Structure and Dynamics of
Matter (MPSD), Hamburg

Thursday, 11 June 2026

**Asia floods in 2025. Indonesian case
(18-20 CEST)**

Dr. David Gaveau, TheTreeMap (France/
Indonesia)

Friday, 12 June 2026

**Political violence and genocide in
Indonesia and Ethiopia: Historical
memory**

Double-lecture, in conversation: Prof. Dr.
Elsa Clavé, Austronesian Studies / Prof.
Dr. Hewan Semon Marye, African Studies,
both Asia Africa Institute, University of
Hamburg

Friday, 19 June 2026

**Misrepresentations of Granular
Commodity Prices in Nigeria**

Buhari Abubakar, Deekwambos Farm Ltd/
FarmRate + CGI (Nigeria)

Friday, 26 June 2026

**Elephant(s) in the Room. Southeast
Asia between China and the US**

Prof. Dr. Thomas Engelbert, Vietnamese
Studies, Asia Africa Institute, University
of Hamburg

