

My impression of my first semester

It is very wonderful to me to study Southeast Asia. I am not only study from the theories in document but I am also got knowledge of the region from the real society; my classmates and people around me. There are many nationalities who studied in this program. They are from different countries around the world such as Burma, Canada, China, Holland, Japan, Lao, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Thailand, the United States, United Kingdom, and Vietnam. We shared our ideas, knowledge, and experiences more often both outside and inside the classroom.

Field trip is another part of this interesting program, which we like it very much. The trip gave us an opportunity to learn more about Karen in refugee camp in Tak province, Vietnamese in Thailand, Hill tribe people and Narcotic at Thai-Burmese border and we also visited Royal palaces in Huo Hin- the changing perspective from building a Royal Palace on the top of the mountain to build on beach, Temple in Phimai, and had a special Khmer studies trip to Phnom Penh and Angkor Wat.

Now I would like to move you back to my course work. In my first semester, I enrolled four courses. They are Modern Southeast Asian-Colonialism, Nationalism, and Democratization, Research Methodology in Southeast Asia, Gender in Southeast Asia, and Literature and Society in Southeast Asia.

For **Modern Southeast Asian-Colonialism, Nationalism, and Democratization course**, I learnt colonialism in the Philippine- the changing from Portugal to Spain and to the United States, French in Indochina, Britain in India, Burma, Malaysia, and Dutch in Indonesia. Japan in Southeast Asia during World War II. I also learnt the nationalism movement for independent in Indochina, Malaysia. The coming of communist ideology in Southeast Asia such as Cambodia, Lao, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and it causes the civil war in Cambodia, Lao, and Vietnam. We also talk about the transformation of Democracy into Southeast Asia, the United Nation in Cambodia, the role of International Organization and Democratic ideology in Southeast Asia. All these information make me found a topic for my term paper in this course. It is **“The rise and demise of Khmer Rouge movement as Influenced by Colonialism, Nationalism, Democratization, and Globalization in Cambodia”**

The paper argued that Khmer Rouge Movement, a communist one, started in 1930s as a part of Indochinese communist Party. The movement developed very well during French colonialism and the movement slowed down when Cambodia gained independence. It became stronger and stronger in the time of Lon Nol government backed by the United States and it defeated Lon Nol and applied communist ideology as a result 1.7 million people died. Khmer Rouge movement still strong during Vietnamese invasion Cambodia from 1979 to 1989 but it was being isolated when the UN came to Cambodia. The isolation made the movement end in 1998.

Research Methodology in Southeast Asia course, in this course, lecturers showed us many approaches that used by French, British, American. In addition, we applied these approaches together with the new approaches in our field trip. My group went to Mae La Refugee Camp, Tak province. Our topic for this study is **“Life opportunity in Mae La Camp”**. Because of war between Burmese government and ethnic groups, many thousands

of Karen fled to stay in this camp. Our team study in four areas: Education, Karen Traditional Weaving, Health, and Environment. There is no higher education there, except Bible school. There is not enough teacher. For training skill, there is on formal training center in the camp. The camp face with high number of new born baby, about two babies were born a day. There is no recycle in the camp so controlling garbage is a big problem in the camp.

In **Gender in Southeast Asia course**, we talked about gender issue in Muslim community in the Philippine and the changing of those Muslim women from stay at home to involve in war with the Pilipino government. We also talked about gender and Buddhism- the rights of women to ordain, the discrimination in Buddhism- women as bad images. A woman is told not to touch a monk if does so she will get sin and the monk will break Buddha rule. Women rights, Marital law, Domestic violence. My papers for this course are:

“Analysis Story: “Kaki” as Gender issue in Khmer society”

“The Code of Conduct for Khmer women as reflects women life in society”

Both Kaki and the code of conduct for Khmer women empower the men. Husband always right and wife more often wrong. Wife must serve husband as a king in their houses. These writings exaggerate the reality in some points. For my argument I think that the writers want women do what they wrote and they try to draw a line for women to follow. If we look through the two writings, there is power and sexual inequality between men and women in house as well as in society. These things cause gender issue in Cambodia and in Southeast Asia.

Literature and Society in Southeast Asia: We learnt literature before, during, and after colonialism as reflect to society. We talked about Vietnamese, Cambodian, Pilipino, and Burmese literature. Through this course I learnt that literature was changed by society. And also literature is a tool of the leaders to spread their ideology. At the end of the course I catch up an idea to write a paper for this course. The paper is about **“Psychological Aspects of Khmer women as reflected in genocidal literature Under Khmer Rouge Regime”**. I analyzed literature that talk about Khmer Rouge regime to understand emotion of Cambodians during that time. Base on my paper, I learnt that Cambodian people were suffering both physical and mental from that regime very much. They lost their relatives, they witness of killing, they were threatened to kill, torture, hard work, starvation, diseases.

All these courses gave me an idea of a topic for my thesis. That is “Experiences of suffering during Khmer Rouge Regime and Relationship with Psychology of New People.” I will find the interaction between torture, losing, threaten, witness of killing in the regime and the psychological of the Khmer Rouge victims to react with these things.

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