A public presentation about the relationship between ethnic diversity in mainland SE Asia (Vietnam, Laos, northern Thailand, and southern China) and ethnicity in the US.

In this talk, Dr. Charles Keyes explores how late 20th century migrations from SE Asia to the USA (and elsewhere) have created new complications for ethnic relationships within Asian nation-states.

Mainland SE Asia is noted as a region with marked diversity of peoples. However, as this region was transformed into modern nation States, governments moved to subsume this diversity within a limited number of ethnic groupings, all within an overall national identity. Although many people accepted the new national and ethnic identities, others attempted to gain recognition for their self-identities. With the creation of Asian diasporic communities outside of Asia, these ethnic groups have now gained significant recognition. Today, for example, peoples such as the Hmong – once subsumed under the semi-pejorative name Miao – are able to assert a transnational identity and others such as Vietnamese and Lao are not only dominant peoples in Asian nations but also ethnic minorities in the USA.

Dr. Charles Keyes, professor emeritus of Anthropology and International Studies at the University of Washington, has since the early 1960s carried out extensive research in Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia on Buddhism and modernity, ethnicity and national cultures, transformation of rural society, and culture and development.

Free & open to the public

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