**Ringing in the Year of the Snake**

*By Teresa Sobieszczyk*

“*I wish you good health!*” “*Happy New Year!*” “*One-two-three-yo!*” Though my Vietnamese is still fairly rudimentary, these toasts slipped easily off of my tongue as I helped ring in the lunar new year—Tet—in a village in Nam Dinh province in Northern Vietnam. My Fulbright teaching fellowship usually keeps me in Can Tho in Southern Vietnam. But I recently had the opportunity to spend several days in the North with Minh, a Vietnamese student who had a US government scholarship to the University of Montana last year.

Unwilling to brave the overcrowded buses filled with Tet revelers, Minh and I took a taxi from Hanoi to her home province; the fact that it took about three hours to cover 60 kilometers gives some indication of the infrastructure of the region. The highlight of the trip was an afternoon at my friend’s grandparents’ village where I was apparently the first American visitor ever. Minh’s 86 year old grandfather, 83 year old grandmother, and 91 year old great uncle welcomed me to their home. The artificial flowers that a friend in Can Tho had convinced me to buy were a big hit. Grandma noted that these were the first flowers she had ever received—not even her husband had ever brought her flowers! We lunched on the traditional boiled rooster, fried spring rolls, and freshly-made pickled shallots and carrots. Grandma laughed and said that she couldn’t believe that she was sharing a Tet meal with an American as in the past she had always participated in anti-American demonstrations.

Minh’s 86 year old aunt showed us how to fold leaves into mold and helped us to make banana leaves into a traditional Vietnamese savory snack—banh chung, the traditional Northern sticky rice cakes eaten at Tet. We tied the completed cakes with thin strips of bamboo and stacked them in a large pot to be boiled for ten hours. For me, banh chung tastes best when fried and dipped in fish sauce, while children like it sprinkled with sugar. The banh chung cakes and daily feasts were a reminder of families that had killed some of Minh’s ancestors in previous generations.

It was an honor and indeed a pleasure to share this cultural experience with my friend and her family. The Fulbright Program, like its cousin the Peace Corps, should be commended for its ability to nurture people-to-people relationships. It is these contacts, more than any technical assistance, that improve cross-cultural understanding and provide a fertile ground for collaboration on global environmental and development issues.

I wish you all a productive and happy year of the snake and look forward to sharing some lessons about sustainable development in Vietnam with IDS students in my classes at the University of Montana next fall.

**HEALTH IN UGANDA**

Professor Kimber Haddix-McKay spent time this spring in Uganda with local colleagues and her former student Catherine Sanders who received her PhD in medical anthropology at UM in 2013. Kimber’s research focuses on health seeking behavior in Nakaseke District, Uganda, concentrating on maternal, infant and child health, and on impediments to finding health care in this rural region. They are also investigating adolescent health and education, as well as the utility of programs to retain adolescent girls in the school system.

One school Kimber and Catherine are working with is spearheading a new program aimed at addressing issues of girls dropping out of puberty because they lack the means to manage things at school—no sanitary materials, no girls’ latrine, and nowhere to wash up. It’s taboo for men to talk about such things with their daughters, so due to AIDS etc, someone else has to step in. That’s Betty. Betty is in charge of advising girls about menstruation and other adolescent health matters. In addition, one wall of the latrine block carries an important message to adolescence girls (see right).

Another aspect of their research is weighing babies who come into villages for immunization outreach programs where Kimber and Catherine are doing their research to access and monitor infant and child health. The little guy in the picture with Professor McKay is having fun getting weighed by Kimber in a hanging scale, and he was also getting some of his vaccinations.
DEEP IN THE DELTA

By David Schaad and Delyla Wilson

There’s no better time of year to explore Vietnam than during their sun and our gray! This past wintersession, Dan Spencer led a group of 15 UM students Deep in the Delta on an exploration of climate change in Vietnam, visiting the cities, river delta, and beaches of Vietnam. Students participating in the 2013 wintersession left the US for Ho Chi Minh City on December 26, 2012, for many, stepping on Asian soil for the first time.

Over the next three and a half weeks, UM students traveled the Mekong River Delta of southern Vietnam, learning about the rich culture and history, local biodiversity, land use and management, climate change issues, and future-minded projects of the region. UM students attended classroom lectures at Can Tho University from local Ph.D. scientists and professors and cemented new perspectives through numerous field visits to national parks and biosphere reserves, agriculture and aquaculture sites, closed-loop energy systems, cultural sites, museums, and government and nonprofit agencies. Throughout their visit, students encountered an astonishing degree of hospitality while getting valuable hands-on experience.

The Vietnam wintersession course gave students a newfound critical awareness and understanding of the global environmental issues faced by humanity today, in particular, the ways in which these challenges are manifested in SE Asia. Vietnamese farmers and park rangers are already shifting their policies and land management to reflect imminent shifts in climate. Experiencing the culture of the Vietnamese people who live closer to the land and enjoy a rich social support system offered students the thrill and excitement of experiencing life in a new country and culture.

Next year’s Deep in the Delta: Wintersession in Vietnam runs from December 26 2013 to January 19, 2014 and will offer the IDS content course NRSM 391: Society, Economy and Environment of the Mekong Delta. To find out more information, contact Dan Spencer at daniel.spencer@umontana.edu.

IDS FACULTY SABBATICAL ADVENTURES

IDS faculty, Jeff Bookwalter, Economics, spent the 2011/12 academic year on sabbatical. He spent the first half here in Missoula, wading through a muddy transition from SPSS guru to STATA beginner, and finishing up a number of research projects, including some on the economics of happiness and subjective well-being in South African and East Timor. In January, he and his family departed for a semester at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. Being a visiting scholar at the South African Labor and Development Research Unit gave him access to many top-notch scholars and uniquely good household survey date. Jeff had the opportunity to travel in the region and presented research at three different universities including UCT, the University of Western Cape, and the University of Pretoria. Family connections took the whole crew to Swaziland for a month, working with his wife Mo’s parents on health care for rural Swazis with HIV and AIDS. Jeff, Mo, and daughter Willa welcomed a new daughter, Wren, in September.
TEA TIME AT IDS SEMINAR SERIES

Joy W’Njuguna, founder of Royal Tea of Kenya company, offered IDS students an opportunity to learn more about tea commodities and sustainable practices in tea production during the Spring 2013 IDS seminar series. Joy engaged a roomful of eager students and faculty in a discussion of how she came to be passionate about Kenyan tea as well as the environmental and civil rights issues surrounding tea production in Kenya. The Royal Tea of Kenya company was founded and is managed by an all-woman team of equal share owners.

Through Royal Tea of Kenya, an organization that represents a half a million Kenyan tea farmers, Joy works to influence the tea industry to promote sustainable farming and ethical labor practices. Joy is the daughter of Samuel W’Njuguna, who has long championed small-scale tea farmers and is from one of the oldest tea families in Kenya. In addition to the IDS seminar, Joy gave an evening talk at the University of Montana and worked with Heather and Jake to host an evening of tea tasting at the Lake Missoula Tea Company.

During the seminar, Joy expressed interest in returning to the UM for future presentations and working with IDS to develop internship opportunities for students interested in learning more about the complex world of tea through hands on study in Kenya. For more information about the Royal Tea Company of Kenya, visit the website royalteaofkenya.com. To taste some of the Royal Tea of Kenya, including the incredible white tea that was served during tea tasting, visit the Lake Missoula Tea shop right here in Missoula. For hours and information check out their website at https://lakemissoulateacompany.com.

NEW DIRECTOR OF OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

Dr. Paulo Zagalo Melo began as the new director of the University of Montana Office of International Programs in April 2013. Previously, Dr. Zagalo-Melo spent 6 years as the Director of the Luso-American Foundation in Lisbon, Portugal. Prior to that, he served as Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission in Portugal for a decade. He earned a degree in Business Administration from the Higher Institute of Languages and Administration in Lisbon, an MPA from Harvard University, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the Catholic University of Portugal. Paulo brings expertise in public administration, political science, and management to the task of successfully leading UM’s International Programs into the future.

NEW IDS COURSES

The IDS Steering Committee has approved three new IDS Content courses and has recommended adding two new IDS Core courses pending approval of the UM Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee (ASCRC). The approved content courses, representing a variety of disciplines, include: MANS 495: Transitions from War to Peace (offered autumn semester); ESCN 445: International Environmental Economics and Climate Change (offered autumn semester every other year); and NRSM 391: Society, Economy and Environment of the Mekong Delta (offered intersession). The first of the proposed new IDS Core courses, ENST 493.8: Environmental Justice and Sustainable Development, was recommended as a IDS Core course by students and is currently an IDS content course. The other recommend IDS Core course is a new course being developed by Abhishek Chatterjee, Assistant Professor of Political Science. The course, Political Economy of Development in India, explores development from a lens of differential access and the role of government in the amelioration of relative deprivation. Stay tuned for more information regarding the proposed IDS Core courses and be sure to check out the new IDS Content courses this coming fall.

IDS STUDENT RUNNER-UP IN VIDEO CONTEST WITH GIRLS WAY VIDEO

IDS senior Kelsey McCall was runner up in the Learning By Giving Foundation’s Videos with an Impact competition. Kelsey completed the project as part of COMM 496: Philanthropy and Social Entrepreneurship course offered through funding from the Learning By Giving Foundation (www.learningbygivingfoundation.org). According to Kelsey, the course takes a holistic approach to studying nonprofits and foundations as well as how they work together. Contest submissions required an original video made by students to highlight the funding process learned in the course, as well as how their chosen organization fills important needs in their community. The subject of Kelsey’s video was The Girls Way (http://thegirls.way.org), a Missoula non-profit that provides after school programs to teach girls personal empowerment and how to lead a healthy, active life. As a runner-up in the contest, Kelsey was awarded a $2,000 grant to present to The Girls Way. You can see Kelsey’s winning video at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...
The committee members who planned the IDS minor in 2005 envisioned that if IDS annually enrolled five students the program would be a success. How robustly we underestimated student interest in international development at The University of Montana! Seven short academic years after its launch, over 300 students have registered for IDS. With the exception of one sabbatical semester, I have had the pleasure and privilege of advising all IDS minors from more than 20 major fields of study. IDS has certainly come a long way from the time of its inception.

As I reflect back on past years, several highlights come to mind: the 2006 campus visit by UNDP’s Senior Evaluation Advisor Juha Uitto, then Provost Engstrom’s sponsored retreat with core faculty and others at Snowball in 2008, Professor Krishna Tummala’s glowing external program review (a “very impressive program”), Governor Brian Schweitzer’s inspiring address to graduating IDS minors in 2012, and Sociology Professor Teresa Sobieszczyk’s willingness to take over program leadership beginning fall 2013.

Programmatically, the most important developments are the outstanding international development internship opportunities now available through the IE3 program, the Peace Corps’ recognition that completion of the IDS minor qualifies graduates for Peace Corps Prep Program (PCPP) certification, the creation of an annual scholarship for an IDS international student, and the University’s commitment to funding a half-time Program Coordinator position.

There are still many unfulfilled goals for the IDS program: attracting students from other college campuses to come to UM for a year of study to complete PCPP certificates, securing funding for IDS student and faculty overseas opportunities; ensuring that IDS faculty participate annually in Global Leadership Initiative (GLI) seminars; and, most critically, providing additional scholarships for IDS students. I’d like to see a Peace Corps Prep scholarship, a College of Arts & Sciences scholarship, a College of Forestry and Conservation scholarship, and a College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences scholarship – for starters. As IDS embarks on the next stage of its programmatic development, I would like to say, “Continued smooth sailing on the journey ahead, IDS!”

NEW IDS/GPH STUDENT COALITION

The Student Coalition for International Development Studies and Global Public Health has been created to bring together University of Montana students who choose to focus a portion of their academic studies toward international work.

Many opportunities exist on the UM campus and in our community to expand awareness of the important topics discussed in IDS and GPH courses. The SCIDSGPH gives IDS and GPH students the chance team up with like-minded students across campus to create an active community of change. The first meeting was held on April 15th. Interested students should contact Kelsey McCall at kelsey.mccall@gmail.com or the group’s faculty director, Professor Peter Koehn at peter.koehn@mso.umt.edu.