



Monday, June 12 through Sunday, 18 June  
Newsletter #4: Second Version

In the last two Newsletters, we have shown photos of feet.

Quiz time: Whose feet are shown on the right (Figs. A and B)?

Fig. B explains why last week's Newsletter (#4) June 12-18 is late.

Yep, after giving all of you MHIRT student's lectures and handouts on "Staying Safe," Dr. T reports that "while carrying up the green waste from my yard, I slipped on a muddy rock and broke two bones in my leg-ankle (tibia and fibula). However, because I had my cell phone with me, I could call for help." "The docs re-set the break on Tuesday, on Thursday they did surgery and put in a plate and screws, and today I am back to creating our Newsletters." While confined to a wheelchair/bed at home, I am enjoying "seeing the world" through your weekly reports.

A



B



On June 12, the Bangkok + Rangsit groups were invited to dinner by Dr. Pornsawan. The group included (from L to R): Dr. Argon Steel, our in-county program coordinator; Dwayne, Brithney, Cindy, Sasha, Chung, Dr. Pornsawan and Ashley. The food was wonderful and the feeling of camaraderie is unique and can only be found as a member of MHIRT. The following day, Ashley presented a paper at Journal Club at Mahidol University and then returned to Rangsit University.



Meanwhile, in Yaoundé, Cameroon, Brad reports that, "One night we went out to eat soya (barbecued meat skewers) with our friends and mentors from the Biotechnology Center. Soya was delicious. Between the seven of us we ate about 200 skewers. Tonight we're going out to a concert that is thankfully in English, because learning French is hard. But I've learned lots of food words [in French] already." Ah, isn't it wonderful when someone takes you to dinner and they order!

This year, each student is, not only conducting research in the laboratory, but also doing a culturally-related project. During the Pre-Travel Workshop, we discussed the concept of "culture," and concluded that culture is a blend of the history, traditional practices and beliefs of different groups of people, i.e., the culture of the people where the MHIRT students are currently living. Of course, the best projects that each student has a personal interest in, for example, a special hobby, art form, or dance. Most students selected a topic before they left Hawaii. However, (SURPRISE!), almost all of the students changed their topics after living abroad for a week or two. Some realized their projects were not feasible, but most discovered wealth of new and exciting topics to peruse, many of which they didn't even realize existed before they left Hawaii. Originally the projects were designed to be individual or personal projects. However, as the students began to discuss their projects with others students, many of the students became excited about their colleagues' projects and asked to join in. So, there are a lot of cool things going on outside of the laboratory. In this newsletter, we will highlight two of the projects in Thailand.

**At Rangsit University**, Ashley is learning to cook Thai food. She is new to cooking and hopes to increase her culinary skills. Her goal is to identify great Thai dishes, learn how to make them or at least find recipes for them, then "translate" the ingredients and amounts into US English (i.e., cups, tablespoons, etc.) and provide a little history about the dish. She hopes to make a cookbook with the help of her friends and share it with you. So on June 17: Ashley had the "opportunity to attend Aj. Bird's wonderful house for cooking lessons and a beautiful traditional Thai meal". She writes to her mentor: "Aj. Bird, thank you so much for your hospitality and the honor of being your first student in Thai cooking. I enjoyed learning how to make Tom Yum Kung and Tub Tim Grob. I intend to make these dishes back home and share them with my family! The lunch was truly delicious with so many different foods, from Massaman chicken curry to Ma Haw, Aj. Mamiow's favorite *hors d'oeuvre*. Thank you again to you and your family for organizing this luncheon as well as making today possible".



**In Bangkok**, Sasha wants to learn more about Buddhism and meditation. Cindy and Brithney-Nicole wanted to join in. "We walked down one of the sois (side-streets) extending from the main street near the Asok BTS station. Our search for a meditation center for Sasha's cultural project led us on a 20-minute walk through a mix of street stalls, massage centers, international cuisines and cafes, and other small businesses. I must admit that without Google Maps, I would have thought we had gotten lost along the way. On the 3rd floor of a slightly sketchy looking building, we found our destination, Bangkok Meditation. We were given a seminar by one of the teachers, and at the center, they practice a subtraction method of meditation to "change the human mind into an infinite universe mind." There are seven different levels through which individuals essentially learn to "throw away" their thoughts and the images they hold of themselves and others in their mind." Sasha wrote "On Saturday, we visited a meditation center here in Bangkok. We found out after we got there that it was a style of meditation that came from Korea. Not exactly what I was looking for, but it was a good intro into meditation in general. The staff was very friendly and gave us a free seminar on their particular method. I have been in contact with a Buddhist meditation center in the same area and I am planning to attend a class this coming Friday after work."



OK, which photo came first? Happy smiles followed by meditation (shown here) or meditation followed by happy smiles?