

Frederic Kris Lehman

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Anthropologist and Teacher

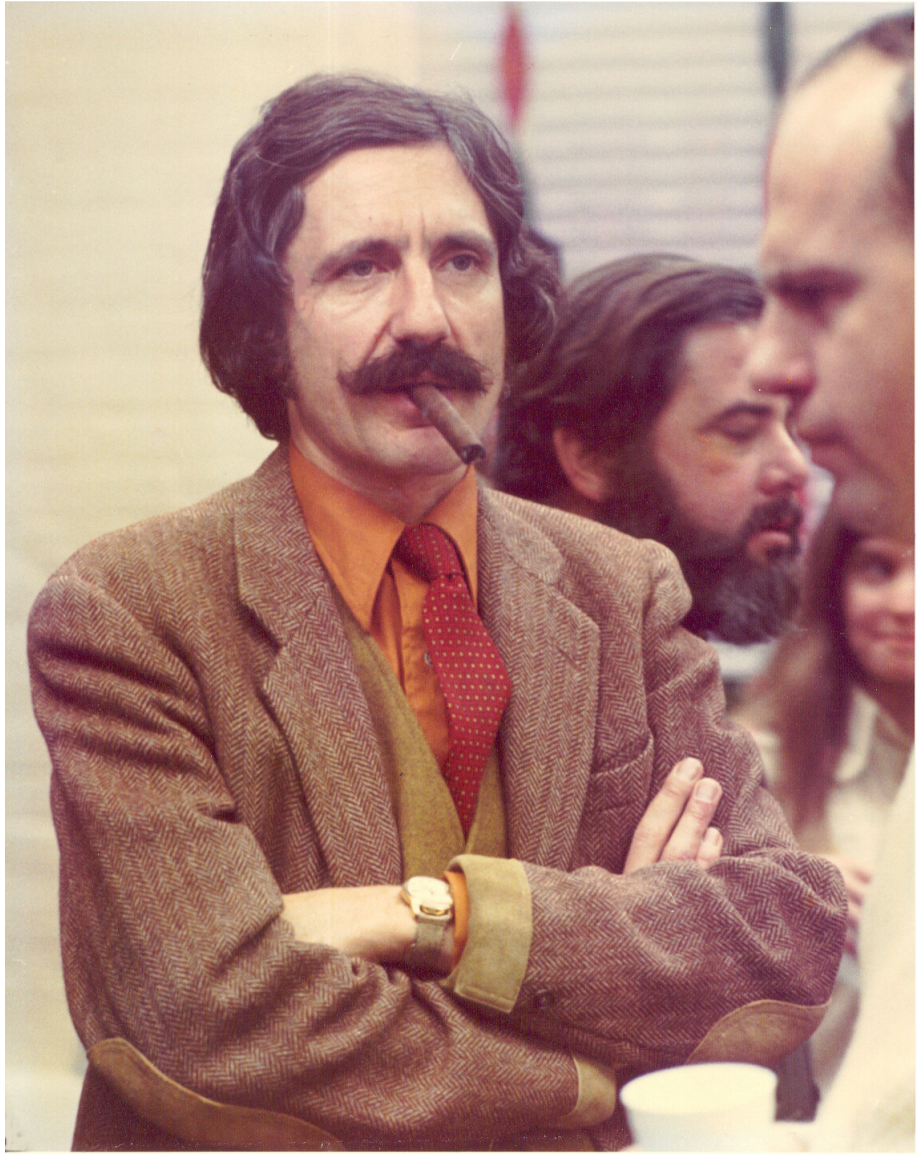
**A collection of personal remembrances and
reflections by some of his former students**

EDITED BY

JOHN GATEWOOD

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Then ... (1973)

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Preface

Some teachers make a difference in people's lives. All too often, however, the little debts of gratitude students feel for a kindness, an idea, a way of looking at the world, or just the encounter with a teacher's personality go unspoken.

This collection of personal remembrances and reflections is mostly a way of saying "Thank you!" to Frederic Kris Lehman (U Chit Hlaing), a splendid teacher who continues to exemplify genuine intellectual passion. At the same time, it was also a way for a widely scattered group of former Illinois anthropology students to rekindle their sense of solidarity through shared memories.

The idea for this collection came about as several former Illinois students were having drinks at an AAA meeting. Giovanni Bennardo, Ann Hill, David Rosen, and I followed up on the initial concept with a flurry of email exchanges, and the rest, as they say, is history.

As with any effort of this sort, there are many of our academic siblings whom we were unable to contact or who were unable to meet the necessary deadline. Still, it is impressive how many did respond to the call, as well as the range of time they represent – the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s.

The collection is organized somewhat chronologically, based mostly on when the different authors were in residence at Champaign-Urbana (or is it now Urbana-Champaign?). Individual contributors were free to use any writing style, format, or genre they chose. Thus, there are a couple of rather academic essays, some letters, several informal recollections, and even a poem. Variety is the spice of life. What they all have in common, of course, is that they were written in a celebratory mode.

We trust that you, Kris, after recovering from the initial embarrassment, will find some satisfaction as you read these. The main message is simple: thank you for being you (even though, who else would you be?).

Lastly, speaking as compiler-editor, I would like to express my appreciation to all the contributors. It has been a joy to work with you all, including some whom I had not known before. As our Alma Mater statue says:

*"To thy happy children of the future,
those of the past send greetings."*

– John Gatewood

Periphery and the Image of Wholeness

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Origin of the Problem

To a foreign student like myself, the anthro department in Urbana in the early sixties was an exciting milieu for wild theoretical speculations in the discipline. The cross-cultural regularities programme Julian Steward had been directing provided us a paradigm of research wherein the subject of research is no longer *sui generis* but a part of the larger whole, higher level social formations influencing the structure of the target of research. Steward (1950, 1955, 1966[1956]) articulated this view as level of sociocultural integration, and it was programmatized as a method of area research.

At the same time, there was another movement – structuralism. In those years, it was somewhat subdued and pursued more or less as independent studies at the university, though Rodney Needham had been at the department in the late fifties. *Structural Anthropology* (Lévi-Strauss 1963) had just been translated, but its reception in the department was ambiguous, with Clifford Geertz (1967), in the *Journal Encounter*, caricaturizing Lévi-Strauss as a “cerebral savage.” It was, however, *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (Leach 1954) that attracted some of us trying to make sense of the part-whole issue. Among the students, I believe it was Gerald Suttles, a participant in Steward’s seminar as a sociology student, who used to talk about *Highland Burma*. Leach’s work was a challenge to the static view of a sociocultural system such as tribe or community. His structuralism was less forbidding than Lévi-Strauss’s, mainly because African anthropology, through British social anthropology, was closely followed in the Illinois department, and its contributions to descent theory made it easier to digest the Kachin system of kinship. Of course, the Leach thesis was eventually to generate a heated debate on the concept of “tribe.” Even before these debates, however, some of us anxiously anticipated the results of Kris Lehman’s research in the very area where Leach’s thesis was born.

Steward’s idea of an “area” and civilization and Leach’s on the situationality of the ethnic identity came to occupy some of us in the department in those days. I for one did a study of a Hopi colony village on the assumption that its structure might be determined by its relationship to the parent communities. It is Third Mesa Hopi society as a whole, I hypothesized, that conditioned the structure of Moenkopi as one of its parts, a colony of

Old Oraibi (Nagata 1970). Although I was unable sufficiently to demonstrate this hypothesis, it remained with me. One of the stimuli to this question came from Lehman's (1963) theoretical speculations on the open social system, such as the Burmese Chin, that he elaborated in the notion of "subnuclear society." This looked to me like an elaboration of the Stewardian "area" analysis and the Redfieldian "part-society," which is peasantry.

As I shifted my research area to Malaysia and tried to understand the social change of a formerly foraging but recently sedentized group of people, my theoretical baggage was derived mostly from the hunting-and-gathering societies, with little regard to what engaged me in Chambana. A few years ago, however, Geoffrey Benjamin (2002) published a longish article in which he took up the theoretical status of the concept of "tribe" in the context of Malayan ethnology and the relevance of Lehman's "subnuclear society" to it.

Ethnology of Malay Peninsula and "Tribe"

The anthropology of the sociocultural groups of Malay Peninsula is circumscribed by the fact that all these groups exist historically within a multi-cultural network of interaction within and outside the peninsula. Traditional ethnography of Malaya, however, seldom took this broader context into account. Although political scientists, beginning with Rupert Emerson (1969[1937]), were mostly concerned with the political dynamics of Malaysia as a plural society, anthropologists were writing ethnographies of constituent cultural entities as if they existed on their own, in isolation from the surrounding cultures and societies. This was so even with the post-war studies of East Malaysia by a Cambridge group, under the leadership of Edmund Leach. The monographs that the group produced were excellent and form a set of classic ethnographies. Nevertheless the implication of the country as a "whole" is not, I am afraid, taken consciously into account in their analyses.

In the early 1970s, the relevance of multicultural context became a basic framework in which to mould interpretation and analysis in anthropology. This is partly due to the emergence of ethnicity in anthropological discourse. As mentioned above, ethnicity, "race relations" or "communalism" as it had been called, had been the concern of political science for some time but anthropology was slow to take it up as a research topic. Although both Maurice Freedman (1960) and H. S. Morris (1967) discussed Malaysia as a plural society from anthropological points of view, it was Judith Nagata (1974) that connected the question of ethnicity in Malaysia to Leach's work in Burma. I do not intend to review the history of anthropology of Malaysia here since it has been discussed by others. I wish to point out, however, the manner in which "ethnicity" became a subject of research in the aboriginal societies of Malaysia was in part compelled from the circumstances of their position in the plural society of the country, partly from the influence of the Leach thesis.

Although the study of non-peasant aborigines of Malaya began in the late 19th century, it was mostly carried out by British colonial administrators and a few European explorers. The former were often attached to local museums and became highly visible during "the Emergency," a period of communist insurgency around the time of the country's independence in 1957. This incident demonstrated, if unwittingly, the importance of the national context for aboriginal studies. It took almost a decade,

however, to focus on this unique context of the Malayan aborigines. I mention here Geoffrey Benjamin and Robert K. Dentan (1975) who attempted to bring into focus the relevance of pluralism in the aboriginal studies. A culmination of this type research is the 2002 chapter Benjamin published in the book he and Cynthia Chou edited, entitled "*On being tribal in the Malay World.*" There he discussed conceptual issues involved in the idea of "tribe." *Subnuclear society* is one of them.

"Subnuclear Society" and "Complementary Dissimilation"

Benjamin's concern in this chapter was how to characterize the various social formations in the peninsula minus immigrant populations, of the pre-colonial peninsula. A popular understanding of these was dualistic, i.e., Malay peasants versus non-peasant, non-Malay aborigines, often pejoratively, even today, called "Sakai." The latter are made up of a rich mixture of subsistence hunting and gathering groups, swidden cultivating horticulturalists, collectors of resins in the forests for trade, and boat-dwelling and trepang collecting sea nomads. Of this confusing mass of ethnic entities, Benjamin proposed two "lifeways" he calls Semang and Senoi. Thus, excluding immigrant groups, the peninsula socio-cultural types are made up of Semang, Senoi and Malay "lifeways."

A problem that arose from this typology is the characterization of non-Malay aboriginal groups. The Malays are peasants, well integrated to pre-industrial sultanate states. Such strong association with centralized kingdoms is not evident in the case of Semang and Senoi groups and yet the latter are by no means without important relationships with the sultanate. The relationships took the form of slavery and tribute (Benjamin 2002:49). The acephalous society of non-Malay groups, while not entirely independent of the kingdoms, continued to exist as if they were an autonomous entity. It is this ambiguous status, part and yet not part of the kingdom, to which Benjamin considered it appropriate to apply Lehman's concept of "subnuclear society." In the end, however, he opted to adhere to the "tribe" to refer to these social formations for the reason of terminological awkwardness of the term, "subnuclear" and its ambiguity in conveying the image of this type society (2002:16).

Traditional explanations of the diversity of indigenous non-Malay populations were to hypothesize successive waves of migrations from the north of mainland Southeast Asia. Some prehistorians continue to employ this type of theory, e. g., pre-existing generalized culture of Hoabinhian type being displaced by the migration of fully neolithic Southern Mongoloids. Against this wave theory that Benjamin calls *kueh lapis* view (2002:18-19), he asserts the in-situ differentiation of the three lifeways by a process he calls "complementary dissimilation" (2002:34-35). The in-situ development of ethnocultural diversity in Malayan Peninsula was also proposed by Fix (1995) in a study of genetic diversity of these groups. A similar speculation was made in terms of the origin of the Philippine Negritos, who were claimed originally to be Proto-Malays but who became Negrito somatotype by physical adaptation to the forest environment (Omoto 1985). So the idea itself is not limited to Malaya. What is problematic in the case of Malayan ethnohistory, however, is the structure by which the three "lifeways" differentiated, i.e., "complementary" dissimilation.

As Benjamin discusses in several of his writings (1973, 1979, 1980, 1985, 1986, 1993, 2004), the details of institutional setups of Malay-Senoi-Semang types, in terms of

kinship, marriage regulations, subsistence, settlement, and religion, are complementary opposites to each other. It is as if each group deliberately chose to be different from the other in such a way as to maintain its cultural distinctiveness. In the chapter referred to above, Benjamin explains this movement by taking the example of in-law avoidance rules:

Differential kinship patterns had a great deal to do with this (contrast of Semang nomadism and Senoi and Malay sedentism): the distinctive Semang and Senoi kinship rules generated the demographic structure appropriate to each of the lifeways, and served to sustain an ideology that painted the other population's ways as inappropriate. To give just one example: where the Semang forbade sexual relations with both traceable consanguines and affines, the Senoi actually favoured sexual and marital relations with close affines, even to the extent of instituting sexually charged joking-relationship between siblings-in-law of opposite sex. This, as Semang individuals have remarked to several investigators (including myself), is immoral behaviour that just should not be emulated. The Malay pattern, on the other hand, favours an ideal of close consanguineal marriage, something that followers of both the Semang or the Senoi pattern find hard to accept (Benjamin 2002:37).

The stringency of this opposite sex in-law tabu among the Semang is illustrated in a well-known passage from Schebesta's work (1954:245, refuted by Carey, 1976:53-54, but confirmed by Nagata, 1999:56) that the Semang would not go to help save a mother-in-law drowning in the river, a refusal totally incomprehensible either to a Senoi or a Malay.

Benjamin goes on to argue that these patterns have their "roots in the kind of deliberate dissimulatory complementarity between populations that is typical of the whole (Malayic) region" (2002:37). The complementary dissimilation process is reminiscent of Bateson's (1935:181) *complementary differentiation*, which is subject of *schismogenesis* unless there is a restraining factor.

In the analysis of Chin society, Lehman (1963:225) says the Chin society of the hills and the Burmese civilization of the plains are in a "symbiotic" relationship and notes Leach, while mentioning the hill-valley symbiosis in his 1960/61 article, did not emphasize the symbiosis of the two sectors. Lehman does not use the idea of "complementarity" between the hills and the valleys and points out the sociocultural system is open in contrast to, say, a language, which is a closed system (1963:227).

Problem Re-Stated

In a classic paper on the kingship in Southeast Asia, Robert Heine-Geldern (1942) pointed out that Indianized states, headed by the supreme head of *cakravartin*, do not recognize a boundary as the glory of the state and the king radiates from the center to the periphery like a ray of light, its strength diminishing only gradually in the distance. Leach (1960/61) compared the Indianized states to Sinitic ones, the latter like the ancient Roman empire, clearly recognizing the defended borders, whereas the former recognized no such border or limit of the centre's radiance.

Both Heine-Geldern and Leach take the Burmese state as illustrating the Indianized state and this accords Lehman's subnuclear society and the Burmese civilization forming an open system. Indianized states, that embodied civilizations, historically developed in the plains of mainland Southeast Asia, except Vietnam, which followed the Sinitic model. Subnuclear society of the hills forms the periphery of the civilization's realm but does not form the border of the civilization. The relation between the two sectors of the system may be symbiotic but is not complementary in that the contrary of a hill tribe is the plains' civilization, though Leach does present a series of contrast as below:

	PLAINS	HILLS
Marriage:	Status endogamy	Egalitarian exogamy
Marriage payment:	Dowry	Bridewealth
Descent:	Bilateral	Unilateral
Succession:	Undefined (civil war)	Unigeniture

More importantly the contrast of the civilization in the plains and the subnuclear society in the hills is not a result of differentiation out of a single, undifferentiated sociocultural entity but that of waves of migrations from outside the region. In contrast to this, the complimentary dissimilation of three Malayic lifeways was *in-situ* development out of a single, undifferentiated entity. Thus, the Malayic system is already circumscribed by its origin, not by the subsequent migration of peoples from outside the peninsula. A problem I wish to explore here is how this difference of the Malayic system from the mainland contrast is reflected in the relationship of the periphery to the centre, i.e., the sultanate kingdom in Malayan peninsula.

Complementarity and Totality

As mentioned, socio-cultural types of the Malay Peninsular are, according to Benjamin, complementary to each other. Complementarity, however, is a type of opposition which assumes the "whole" as in the oppositions of "Father-Son", "Husband-Wife", "lover-beloved," which are "complementary; not only in the sense that together they constitute a whole, but also in the sense that each in the pair is dependent upon the other in its very singularity" (White 1955:147). This "whole" or totality is *tertium quid* of the opposing pair. A pair of opposites, which is mutually complementary, is capable of combining to form a totality (White 1955:143). The "totality" or "whole" at the same time completes and closes the system whose elements are these opposites. If we are to apply this logic, we should say the social system that is made up of the complementary opposition is closed to the extra-system elements. Let me apply these features of complementarity to the ethnography of the peninsula.

If the dissimilation of Malayic lifeways is complementary, one must ask what constitutes a "whole" that unites and transcends these complementary lifeways. In a three-way differentiation in the peninsula, however, such an entity is difficult to identify. One can posit Malay state and the kingship that represents it as such a whole that encompasses the opposition of, say, Semang and Malay, or Senoi and Malay lifeways. In the opposition between Semang and Senoi types, however, it is difficult to envisage the synthesis of the opposition, except to say here again Malay kingship, without entailing Malay peasantry, symbolizes *tertium quid*.

While the strict application of this formal logic may not be as straightforward as one may expect, I should like to reflect on the relationship between a Semang community of the Kensu in Baling, Kedah, and the Kedah sultanate in order to speculate on the shape that the closure of the system of complementary opposition may take.

Closure of the System and the Formation of Totality

The nomadic hunting and gathering people of the Keinsu appear to have maintained a long-standing relationship with the Malays and the Sultanate of Kedah. Schebesta extensively quotes from the report of the French Catholic missionary, Pupier, in the early part of the 19th century, on a segment of the Semang in the Province Wellseley, who, in contrast to those that seldom leave the forests, cover their bodies with cloths given to them by the neighboring Malays and work for the Malay peasants (Schebesta 1952:19-20). They appear to be closely related to the Kensiu. It is also reported in an anonymous paper that a group of the Semang, met in the Baling river basin and so most likely Kensiu, was under the protection of the Raja of Kedah (1878, quoted by Benjamin 2002:49). I discussed in detail the history of relationship between Kedah sultanate and the Kensiu elsewhere (Nagata 1997). In the course of my research in the resettlement community of the Kensiu, I also noted the oral tradition that indicates the antiquity of Kensiu-Sultanate relationship.

It says that Alor Setar, the seat of the Kedah sultanate, is the original place of the *meni* (Orang Asli). There are ancient relics in the compound (or the museum) of the palace, one of which is a clock, made of monkey bones (*tulang awa!*), that doesn't produce any sound but (its pendulum?) just swings to and fro (*jalan-jalan*). If the clock sounds, however, the whole world will become a sea. Another item is a cannon or a gun that strikes against the enemy (*musuh*) but if it does fire, the calamity will follow. These items are guarded by a *menteri* (official), whose permission is needed to see them since the Sultan is afraid (*takut*) of the Orang Asli coming back and claiming them; if the Orang Asli go there and speak in their own language, the Sultan will find out they came to reclaim and the whole chaos would follow (*kacauk*) and that's why it's *pantang* (prohibited) for the Orang Asli to speak *asli* (their own language) there. A man added that one can speak anything but *asli*; it doesn't have to be Malay but can be *putih* (white, i.e., English), *cina* (Chinese) or India (Nagata 1989).¹ In fact, some Kensiu state that even in Mekka, the sacred place of Muslim pilgrimage, there are Orang Asli, but that they all became Malays (Nagata 1971-2001: notebook 5 [1987], p. 32; notebook 7 [1987], p. 7).

One may note these are the views of the periphery about the centre, that it is the centre that is dependent on the periphery, and that if the periphery asserts itself by, say, speaking its own tongue, as in the tradition above, the whole system will collapse. The system of the Kedah kingdom is thus dependent on the quiet acquiescence of the peripheral Semang, who thus completes the totality of the Malay kingdom which include the three lifeways of Malay, Senoi and Semang. The last term, Semang, occupy the peripheral or liminal position in the system in order to complete and close it.

¹ An Indonesian saying goes: "Although Orang utan can in fact speak, he will not for if man finds out he can, he will be forced to work" (Chikyu no Kankyo to Kaihatsu o Kangaeru Kai. *Hakaisareru Nettai-rin*. Iwanami Booklet No. 115 (Japanese). Tokyo. 1988: 2).

Victor Turner gives an account of the Ndembu rite to confer *lukanu* bracelet to a newly installed chief and states that this bracelet and the rite to confer it originally belonged to the subjugated but autonomous Mbwela people, whose “inferior” and “liminal” position gave them “mystical and moral powers . . . over the total welfare of societies whose political frame is constituted by . . . incoming conquerors” (1969:109). The Semang, like the Mbwela, occupy the liminal position in the Malay polity and yet precisely this liminality that integrates the political frame of sultanate as a system and completes it as a total society.

Conclusion

The Malay polity encompasses the complementarily dissimilar three lifeways and its ideological boundary (*limes*) is occupied by the hunting and gathering people, the Semang. It is an ordered world, a cosmos and the symbol of completeness and hence holiness (Douglas 1966). Herein lies a significant difference, I submit, between the Malayic system and the nuclear-subnuclear system of the mainland Southeast Asia. The latter, as Lehman claims, is an open social system, devoid of the symbol of unity and encompassing order, whereas the former forms a closed totality with the sultan at the apex and enclosed by the liminal Semang hunter-gatherers.

The ideological structure of mainland social systems may yet be modified when our understanding of the states and their relationships to non-state groups of the realm improves further. In spite of several studies on Southeast Asian kingship (e.g., Gesick 1983, Wyatt 1982, Tambiah 1976, Keyes 1995[1977]), however, the model of pre-colonial state order of Southeast Asia as a representation of “total moral society,” encompassing tribal peoples, a problematic raised by Kris Lehman, following Leach, and which seems to be present in pre-colonial Malaya, appears yet to be a problem of further research.

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Remembering “Kris”

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With one year of junior college under my belt and fresh from three years in the US Army, most of which was spent in the Republic of Panama, I arrived on the UI campus with my first wife and three children in the fall of 1958 to begin work as Highway Salvage Archaeologist for the State of Illinois under the supervision of John McGregor. After a year of doing that, I began my studies at the UI as an undergraduate in the fall of 1959. During that first year, I met Kris (and most of the other faculty), but did not really get to know him. Soon after I began course work, I saw Kris in the hall leaning up against the radiator with his back arched so that his shoulder blades were pressed against the wall, and, of course, there was the ever-present cheroot. At this distance I don't remember why I stopped to talk with Kris, nor do I remember what the conversation was about. What I do remember is that, after a few sentences passed my lips, Kris stopped me and said “If you are going to be an academic you must learn to speak the English language properly,” and he proceeded to correct my pronunciation. Having grown up near Chicago, I apparently spoke a dialect of English that grated on Kris' sensibilities. He was always forthright about such things. It took considerable effort but I think my Chicago “accent” is finally gone now.

Much of what I learned about kinship and social organization I learned from Kris, not so much in formal classes, but in those inimitable hallway “lectures,” which proved to be of immense value when I was doing my doctoral research in Panama. There is nothing like field research to make one realize how important the difference is between a genealogy and a kinship diagram or between kinship terms as labels for social categories and concatenated strings. I returned from the field in the spring of 1965, during the heyday of formal analysis of kinship terminological systems and the debate between Leach and Lounsbury about the proper way to analyze Trobriand kinship terms. With encouragement from Kris, who served as a member of my doctoral dissertation committee, I did a formal analysis of Ngawbe kinship terms and proved that Lounsbury's reduction rules could usefully be applied as analytic tools without any need whatsoever for the assumption that the nuclear family was the core of it all and everything else was extended out from there. The battle in those days was between the extensionists and the categorists. Kris was a categorist then, and he converted me, which was not difficult considering that prior to listening to his very logical arguments I didn't really have a position. What was intended to be a chapter in my dissertation grew to be almost 100

pages long and had to be seriously abridged. With help from Kris it became 10 pages within another chapter. For several years I taught a two-quarter graduate level sequence entitled “Kinship and Social Organization” at the University of Oregon, based heavily on how I had learned from Kris to think about kinship and social organization. Over the years I did a lot of rethinking, but I remain a categorist to this day. I don’t know about Kris. I am currently married to my third wife so, clearly, I took to heart the notion of serial polygyny.

I recall occasional discussions with Kris about linguistics, but when I was in residence he was not, so far as I know, teaching linguistics and I took my linguistics courses from Ken Hale and Bob Lees.

Among my most vivid memories of Kris from those days back in the early 1960s is the string-bean physique, that hank of jet black hair (where did it go?), the ever-present small black cheroot and the three piece English-tailored made-in-India suit. One of the great surprises of my life occurred about three summers ago when I saw Kris walking along 13th Avenue in front of the University of Oregon Bookstore! He was here for a conference sponsored by our Linguistics Department. The string-bean physique and the suit were still there, but the hair was gone as was the cheroot. He told me he had given up smoking. He didn’t tell me what happened to the hair. I had already retired and I inquired if he had. He told me that he was never going to retire and I guess he meant it.

During my last term as an undergraduate in the fall of 1960, I asked Kris if I could audit his History and Cultures of India seminar. Determined to finish my undergraduate work during that term, I was already signed up for 5 graded courses. Kris agreed. The course met in the evenings for two hours (if I recall correctly). In those days one could not only smoke in the hall but in the classrooms as well. Kris was always cold, so the few windows there were on the back wall of 313 Davenport Hall were closed. As he lectured the black cheroot quickly filled the small room with smoke. Our small group of about eight often wondered if we would survive until our 10 minute break without succumbing to asphyxiation. At the same time we were all trying desperately to make sense of Kris’ sentences. He lectured in sentences of seemingly interminable length. He was and probably still is the reigning master of embedded clauses. The man had, and I am sure still does have, an encyclopedic knowledge of many subjects. He clearly saw the many sides and complexities of any issue – and often elaborated upon all of them in a single sentence. Several of us got in the habit of inviting Kris, even pleading with him when he seemed reluctant, to join us at that place a block away in back of Davenport hall, the name of which I have long since forgotten (but it has probably changed names several times anyway), for a beer, because early on we discovered that, after a glass of beer, Kris spoke in shorter more comprehensible sentences, which aided us greatly in understanding the points he had so eruditely presented in seminar. (The preceding sentence is definitely dedicated to Kris.)

I had done all of the reading for the course, but as an auditor I was not intending to take the final exam. During exam week Kris called me into his office and said that if I took the final he could fix it so that I would get graded credit for the course. I thanked him for the offer and explained that I was overburdened with studying for finals and writing papers in my other five courses and simply did not have the time to prepare for an exam in his course. He asked me to sit down and proceeded to give me an oral exam on

the spot. When the question was one I could respond to thoroughly he cut me off after a couple of sentences, saying “OK, I know you know that one” and he would move on to the next. Of course when I stumbled in my response he let me go on digging myself a deeper hole. This went on for about an hour, although to me it seemed much longer. At the end, he said “well, I think your performance is deserving of a “B”, so if you agree I will see that you get credit for the course (or words to that effect – it’s been a long time and we’re talking memories here, not journal entries). I agreed. However, when I received my transcript for that term (fall, 1960), I was surprised to note that my grade in Kris’ course was an “A.” I went and asked him if it was a mistake. He replied that it was not. He said that after he had read the written exams of the rest of the class he decided that my performance was deserving of an A. Sometimes difficult to understand, holding all of us to exacting standards, but unflinchingly fair is the way I remember Kris.

My doctoral committee consisted of Joe Casagrande as chair, Julian Steward, Oscar Lewis, Donald Lathrap, and Kris Lehman, with Bob Lees as outside member. All but Kris have crossed over – may they be resting easy wherever they are.

Some Things Never Change

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All the old-timers lounging around the mail slots in Davenport hall laughed when I told them I had signed up for everything that Julian Steward was teaching. Someone explained that he had retired but "they" kept his courses on the books. Leaning against the wall smoking a cigar was a figure decked out in a white suit.

"Have you had linguistics?" he asked with a flourish of the cigar.

"Yes," I said.

"What books did you use?"

I mentioned Gleason, a workbook, and others.

"You haven't had linguistics!" he proclaimed as he arched his back against the wall and cast a prolonged downward glance in my direction through a cloud of smoke.

FKL revealed that he was teaching a course on linguistics that summer. I signed up for it to see what he was talking about.

That was the summer of 1966. After I got married in Austin, I traded my 1950 Ford panel truck to a Trotskyite who lacked the means to pick up a printing press in Chicago in return for his dropping all of our goods at Kay Sutherland's and Odin Toness's apartment on Daniels Street. Dorothy and I came a few days later in her more recent car to stay in Kay and Odin's basement apartment while they were in Latin America.

"I can't describe him," I told Dorothy after the first day of class. "Come with me tomorrow and see for yourself."

Clad in the white suit, resplendent with studs in his shirt, sculpting every proposition in the air with his hands, FKL did not disappoint.

By the end of the summer, he had persuaded me that the difficulties that Ne Win and his military were causing in Burma would soon pass and that land would once again welcome anthropologists to do fieldwork, as he had been doing with Chin before the coup. I signed on. FKL was opening the secrets of the human mind, exploring the dynamics of cultures, and introducing me to a world of formal thinking. In the fall I began studying Burmese with LaRaw Maran, another of Kris's students. FKL and Sheila

opened their home to me and Dorothy to teach us to eat Burmese food with our hands and to enjoy their company and LaRaw's.

That summer, Ne Win was still in control, so FKL invited me to go with him to Thailand. There he and Sheila showed Dorothy and me the ropes of Northern Thailand and fieldwork with Shan. The next academic year he invited me to use his office while he continued his fieldwork.

From Kris's unstinting backing, I learned the importance of support and loyalty to students, of showing them in addition to explaining to them about the intricacies of fieldwork and the importance of disciplined observation as well as thinking.

By the end of that year, Ne Win was still in power in Burma, so I did the fieldwork for my dissertation with Lisu in Northern Thailand.

In those days there was no e-mail, but Kris corresponded with me continually about the work I was doing with Lisu. Sometimes he sent audio tapes full of commentaries on observations or ideas I had sent to him. Unless a horse caravan of KMT opium traders came through the village, the closest mail delivery was a very long walk and upcountry truck ride away in Chiangmai. After a couple of years, I returned to Champaign-Urbana to write a dissertation. Then I had to face the daunting prospect of no longer being a graduate student.

After a brief stint at Antioch College, I went to the University of Iowa where I worked with Ann Hill and Nancy Eberhardt. I recommended that they continue their studies with FKL at Illinois.

In the mid-70s, Ne Win and his group were still in power in Burma, but I returned to Thailand for more fieldwork with Shan. During the summer, I was able to return some of FKL's generosity to me by showing Nikki Tannenbaum and Nancy Eberhardt something of Northern Thailand.

In the acknowledgements of her book on Shan religion, Nikki paraphrases the Shan saying that one of the debts that you can never repay is the one you owe to your teachers. That is true. But I try to pass on to others what Kris so generously shared with me.

There have been a lot of changes in the world and in my personal life since those days. Dorothy and I are divorced. Suzan Erem and I are married. After twenty-five years, I left Iowa for Penn State in 1997. I hear that now people can drive to Lisu villages and the Shan area where Kris and I and others worked has undergone remarkable changes. I haven't been back to Thailand for twenty-five years as my fate took me to Iceland and then to Mississippi, Alabama, Iowa, Chicago, Pennsylvania, and now to Charleston and back to Iceland to continue the tasks of anthropology.

In all of that flux, there are some constants. I see Kris now and again at AAA meetings where he is likely to be arched up against a wall to share his wit and wisdom with a wry observation and expansive gestures.

Ne Win's guys are still running Burma.

And Kris is still helping graduate students and colleagues understand the human condition.

For that, we can all thank him.

I introduced him to Suzan as the guy who taught me everything I know about anthropology...except those parts he may not agree with.

Some Remembrances of Kris Lehman

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Some 44 years ago, in the summer of 1963, while in the process of transferring both from Navy Pier in Chicago to Urbana and from engineering into anthropology, I walked into Davenport Hall. There, by the broad wooden staircase, I met a thin, awesome looking, mustachioed figure, smoking a cigar and wearing a suit of a distinctly foreign cut. In answer to my question about enrolling in anthropology, he curtly directed me to Betty Star, the departmental secretary in room 137. I'd just met Kris Lehman, the first anthropologist I'd ever spoken to.

Being a second year undergraduate at the time, I didn't have much contact with Kris during the following year. During my third year, however, I took Peoples and Cultures of Southeast Asia and was exposed to a vast array of information on archaeology, linguistics, and ethnography brought in Kris' inimitable lecture style: swaying back and forth, peering off into a mental distance as he tried to clarify and link ideas. My notes often resembled a series of embedded clauses, to be rearranged and pondered at leisure. Being of Dutch extraction, I was assumed to have linguistic skills above the rather modest ones I did have, and, having lived in Indonesia as a child, I must, of course, be familiar with Indonesian customs. I indeed was, sort of, but never with the things Kris mentioned. In spite of these limitations, this course was one of the few that I took that was truly important to my career as an anthropologist, not so much because of the large amount of ethnographic data it presented, but rather because of the questions it did not answer for me. In many ways, the questions that Kris and the literature left unanswered then are the ones I have been pursuing since. Kris certainly is primary among the audience I address in my writings.

After that I only took one or two other courses from Kris and sat in informally on a few more. One of these was a 1969 summer course in Southeast Asian linguistics, during which he asked me to look into the phenomenon of levels of politeness. I cannot remember what was taught in the course itself, but the language levels puzzle occupied me the whole of that summer. The literature on it was none too clear, and there seemed to be no obvious logic to the matter. Somewhere in late July or early August, I was thoroughly disgusted with the problem, threw my papers on the floor, and filled up a large pipe with some fine Mexican marihuana. A few tokes later, as my mind began to focus on other realities, the key to the language problem was suddenly there, but being rather high, I could not write it down. I ran off to look for Kris on campus and caught up with him at the Alma Mater statue, on his way to the barber. Somewhat incoherent, I

explained the solution to him and asked that he remember what I'd said until the next day – I wasn't sure that I would! The next day we worked out the logic of the problem and wrote a set of rules for it, slowly refining these down from a large set of ad hoc ones to five formal propositions.

During the six years between that first meeting in 1963 and the summer course, my contacts with Kris were mostly informal but never non-educational or uninteresting. Though he was never formally my advisor, he was always my mentor. We'd run into each other, most often by the mailboxes or for lunch at Treno's, and had conversations that seemed to go on and on for months, he or I picking up the thread as we met. One of the problems we discussed he turned into a prelim question. This informality of our contacts suited me perfectly, especially later when I was writing my dissertation. I could walk into his office with a question or a harebrained idea, and Kris would usually be willing to discuss it, sometimes turning it on its head, other times guiding me to some literature on the topic. The confidence in me that these contacts and discussions showed, as well as the challenges they posed me, were an impetus toward a personal and intellectual growth that had been rather impeded by the lack of confidence in me that I experienced during my youth. It was through Kris' encouragement as well as that of Demitri Shimkin that I began to dare to believe that I might be able to actually succeed in anthropology.

Even after my dissertation, this informal relationship continued whenever I returned to the Urbana campus. When possible, Kris let me use the extra desk in his office as a workspace. This was sometimes distracting but usually worked wonderfully as I naturally became involved in conversations and Kris has a way of making comments that spark things in my head, though it is sometimes difficult to specify which comment set me off. Once, in 1976, in the course of a summer seminar on Godelier, he casually referred to tigers and tiger beliefs in Southeast Asia, reminding me of some notes in my West Javanese data. This set me off on a decades-long chase after tigers, shamans and spirits – matters that had been anything but clear to me in the Cultures of Southeast Asia course – and resulted in a book about tiger-beliefs published in 1986 and a long article on Javanese spirit-beliefs that is now in press. In both Kris' influence is very clear and neither would have taken the form they did without his input.

In the fall of 1977, Kris and I participated in the cognitive section of the Anthropology for the Future conference in Houston for which Kris wrote a paper that I assigned to my students in symbolic anthropology until the last time I taught that course in 2001. Kris, Demitri Shimkin, John Lowe, Larry Chrisman, and perhaps John Morrison, and I drove to Houston in my old VW bus. During this relaxed two-day trip, the conversation inevitably turned to anthropology, libraries and information technology, and cognitive science. The way back was more of the same, now spiced up with our experiences at the conference and the Houston AAA meetings. Returning to Urbana we decided to continue the conversation as the irregular Flying Turtle seminar, named after a little wooden turtle attached to the dashboard of my bus in which it had started. Happy as I was to get a job at Northern Illinois University that spring, I was loath to leave the ongoing conversation. I still have the turtle.

After 1980, contacts became more irregular as I first went to Aceh as a Fulbright lecturer and then returned to the U.S. unemployed. In the end I left the USA to try my

luck in Europe. Kris and I have kept in touch through occasional emails, and whenever I need an article of his, it arrives in the return mail. He also very graciously participated in a project in which the above-mentioned paper on perceptions of spirits in Java was commented on from the perspective of various Southeast Asian societies.

All this should not lead one to think that Kris is only seriousness and anthropology. During the spring of 1974 an advertisement appeared in, I believe, the *Daily Illini* promoting Arby's sandwiches at half price, and featuring a person that strikingly resembled Kris. Though Kris never admitted (to me anyway) that he had posed for the picture, the ad did grace his office door for a while afterward.

One cannot speak of Kris without also speaking of Sheila. As I got to know Kris better, my then wife and I were occasionally invited to their home for dinner. Later this grew into a close friendship with Sheila as well. Both of us are enthusiastic cooks of Southeast Asian food, and her friendship saw me through some personally difficult times. Although my visits to Urbana are more rare now, I'm always welcomed in their home where I can look forward discussions with Kris about whatever we have been doing anthropologically and to sitting in the kitchen with Sheila gossiping as we put together some delicious Burmese curry.

Finally, in Indonesia there is a saying that monetary debts can be repaid, but debts of the spirit will follow one to the grave. This is a burden that I happily bear, Kris. Thank you.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time

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It is difficult to fathom that forty years have passed since I came to Illinois. Having expressed an interest in Africa, I was assigned to Al Jacobs, along with Dave Rosen, and Dave and Bonnie Kettel. After a year or so, Al went back to Kenya, from where he was able to get all four of us grants for the Summer of 1968. We had a great couple of months and returned to Illinois. Jacobs decided to remain, so there we were without an Africanist at Illinois. I can't recall exactly how it came to pass but we ended up working with Kris. Might as well work with the smartest guy in the pack.

Anthropology can be viewed as a series of questions which are pretty similar no matter where you ask them.

(Aside: Kenya 1968) Barreling down an escarpment in the back of a Land Rover sitting on a tackle box half the size of his ass and holding on with both hands for dear life, Rosen manages to fall asleep. "It's a gift," he explains.

Kinship

I wonder if there is a term in English for my mother's sister's husband's sister who lives near my parents in Queens. Kris comes up with, "Matrilateral parallel neighbor, five blocks removed. But please note that if we did not know this person, it would be a matrilateral parallel Stranger, still five blocks removed."

Walking over to Treno's one noontide, Kris allows that his in-laws are concerned about him. "Here you are," they say, "a full professor; you have gone to the top of the University. So when are you going to finish school and find a job?"

On reconsideration, I believe the relative I was looking for was actually my mother's sister's husband's sister's husband. Also five blocks removed.

Cultural Geography

Somebody was doing fieldwork in Arthur, Illinois. Kris pointed out that the town was clearly named for a small potted plant. Gads, I realize. Kris reads MAD. Those of you under fifty probably won't get this.

During a bus trip back to New York, we stop in Crawfordsville, IN. I noticed that at high noon on a pleasant day there is absolutely nobody walking up or down the main

street. Upon returning I told Kris about this and wondered why it was so. He pondered for a minute and intoned, “Clearly the entire town is populated by Non-Overseas Chinese.”

Kenya 1970

I have collected a bunch of interviews and write a progress report to Kris. I don't recall the contents of the report, but I know it was unreadable and full of ethnographic baffle-gab. I know this because Kris told me. He fired off a letter shredding the report and said, in essence, “Richard, don't be an idiot.” He was totally right of course.

In the time it took for his letter to arrive, I had done some much better work; so I submitted the structural insight that became the basis for my dissertation. Kris said, “Now you've got something,” and he was right again. I presented the piece to a small conference in Nairobi and received pleasant feedback.

I was going to title this piece “Richard, don't be an idiot.” It is certainly the best piece of advice I've ever received. Sorry I didn't heed it, but it's too late now.

Urbana 1973

I had finished my dissertation defense a year earlier and gone off to Kent State. I had, however, lacked the funds to have it properly typed up. This was odd since my then-spouse, Quasimodo, was a trained typist, but she wouldn't do it for me. She was being paid to do it for others. I won't pursue this line of questioning, Your Honor.

In any event, it finally got done, and so just as Fall semester was approaching, I drove back to Urbana to distribute copies to my committee and deposit this gem with the University. Kris informed me that I couldn't leave. Seems Dave Kettel was defending his dissertation in another two days, and Kris had decided that I should be on the committee as an outside member.

It was a beautiful honor for me. I not only got to serve on a friend's defense, I had been validated by the professor I respected more than anyone.

It was the only Ph.D. defense I was to serve on.

I returned to Urbana a couple of times. I remember shooting pool in Kris's basement, which of course was accompanied by cigars and Scotch Ale. I remember that notorious Arby's ad. Remember it, hell! I have a framed copy of it.

January 2004

The phone in my office rings and it is the Chairman of Anthropology at Kent State. A professor has been taken ill, and they need someone to teach his 120 student Intro class.

I decide to think it over. It's an early morning class, so it wouldn't involve much impact on my business.

There's a knock on my office door, and it's the Chairman. He hands me a copy of Haviland's 10th edition and says, “Here's your text.”

Please, I've been out of the business for 25 years. That's OK; the semester doesn't start for five days.

Naturally, I took it. WWKD (what would Kris do?).

Coda

Teaching is the best way to learn. For two years now I have defined and redefined concepts I thought I would never again encounter. I get to think about applying fractal geometry to structuralism. I can't do it, but what the hell.

If Kris taught me anything, and he taught me a lot, besides how to speak English instead of New York, he taught me to look for anomalies. People "follow rules," or do they? Does culture change proceed from those actions which are in some sense "against" the rules? Why do we believe we do one thing when we are doing another?

"Is there anything to which you wish to draw my attention, Mr. Holmes?"

"Yes, the curious incident of the dog in the night time."

"But the dog did nothing in the night time."

"That was the curious incident."

(Silver Blaze)

Thank you, my friend. I'll try not to be too much of an idiot.

Kris Lehman: A Reflection

David Rosen

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Like many new students, I first met Kris Lehman at the Departmental mailboxes in Davenport Hall. As an aspiring Africanist, the mailboxes seemed something akin to a watering hole on the Serengeti. You could always be sure that if you stood there long enough, all the creatures of the savannah would show up. It never disappointed, and Kris was King.

I had never met an anthropologist like Kris. My undergraduate professors were old lefties. My beloved mentor, Alexander Lesser, was one Boas’ last students and one of the great ethnographers of the Pawnee. A student of the Ghost Dance, he brought to his work a passion about the great dramas that had played out on the Plains and of the people he knew who had participated in them. He was a gritty, political, and unromantic ethnographer. In my undergraduate world, history was all, theory was bunk.

So, who was this professor who dressed in a fancy suit, spoke with an accent I could never pin down, and wanted me to theorize about primary genealogical space? I can’t say that I took to Kris easily. I found him intimidating. I was astonished by his public pronouncement, at the mailboxes of course, that I spoke English with Yiddish syntax – a fact he derived from my mentioning to him that my mother had been a union knitter in a tie factory and that my grandmother, who lived with our family, only spoke Yiddish. He also seemed to assume that Richard Lowenthal, Jim Baltaxe and I (all of us first year graduate students in the fall 1966) were somehow all childhood friends who had grown up together in New York and whose parents had probably come from same poor village in Poland. He had theorized me (or stereotyped me), and my first thought about him was how does this guy know so much about Jews? Perhaps it was a case of “Dress British, Think Yiddish.”

But I decided to stick with him for the one and only reason that ever made sense to me: I liked him. He took ideas seriously, and he took my ideas seriously. He was ever tolerant of my fumbling attempts at componential analysis. When David Kettel and I dreamed up a scheme by which we used a kind of formal analysis to do a comparative study of witchcraft and sorcery accusations, he took a genuine interest in our views and was willing to engage them at almost any time. When I went off to Sierra Leone and came back to write my doctoral dissertation, he agreed to serve on my dissertation

committee and read my materials with great care, sympathy and support. Because of his basic decency and kindness Kris Lehman always gave me a lot more credit than I actually deserved, made me feel a lot smarter than I actually was, and for that I will be always indebted to him.

Kudos to Kris

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Having come into graduate school at the University of Illinois in 1965 with very little training or background in anthropology, I was continually placed in a defensive position. Kris Lehman, however, never made me feel that my background was in any way inferior. After taking his general course on Southeast Asia at a time when the Viet Nam war was getting into high gear, I signed up for his special seminar on peoples of Southeast Asia the following year. In this seminar, held in his office in Davenport Hall, I was admitted into the company of Robert Wessing and LaRaw Maran, both of whom had not only lived much of their lives in that region, but also spoke languages indigenous to the area. I must confess I felt very flattered to be allowed into this seminar. Never having lived in the region, I wished to understand it much better, and also signed up to study Indonesian, in hopes that someday I might be able to do field work in either Indonesia or Malaysia.

This seminar prepared me for my doctoral thesis on the Wind River Shoshone, and for future work in anthropology, better than almost any other course I took at the University. For me, gaining a real understanding of what social structure was all about laid the foundations for my career in anthropology. In the seminar we studied the impact of valley civilizations on the hill peoples – something that others had done before. But we also took a close ethnographic look at the hill peoples of Burma and Thailand and built upon the work of Edmund Leach. LaRaw had much insight to add to that research, which Leach had conducted several decades earlier. The strategies of adaptation, and the shifting ethnic categories that went along with these strategies, hit a universal note that seemed to apply to other tribal societies on the margins denser, agriculturally based civilizations.

Realizing that it would be unrealistic to switch into Southeast Asian studies, I eventually found a new approach to North American Indians (now known as First Nations of North America) that was really totally new. As with most of us, a dissertation topic that was truly novel did not form that easily. Older studies, including that of my major advisor, D. B. Shimkin, had focused on *culture*, not social structure, and had the additional liabilities of a synchronic approach that was not at all historical, even though it claimed to be studying aboriginal culture. None of the changes or adaptations that had been made since white contact was regarded as anything but part of what constituted

“Shoshone” culture in 1805 when Lewis and Clark first contacted Northern Shoshone in Montana. By 1967, Shimkin had announced that he was leaving the North American field, and placing all his effort into applied work with African Americans in Chicago and Mississippi. I was fighting the draft and could not predict the future, so I remained with the Shoshone project begun in 1966. It was a cautious approach that others perhaps did not understand. Most of the students at Illinois were absorbed with studying societies outside of North America or were getting involved with applied anthropology. But with the assistance of a one-time graduate student, Grosvenor Pollard, who had studied at Oklahoma, I came to realize that most of the “memory culture” approach to North American societies was simply a narration of certain individuals with little regard for or understanding of social structure. The Boasian approach to the study of culture and tribal societies – its historical particularism and all the naiveté that went with it – had to be rejected. But the rejection of that legacy required not only an understanding of native social structure, but also of ethnohistory. Both approaches were very new in North American studies in 1970. Indeed, Fred Eggan had pioneered in the application of the study of kinship to North American cultures, under the influence of Radcliffe-Brown, but the vital ingredient of the historical dimensions and changes in those societies was never addressed. In the next two decades more research would be done on these changes, as well as the social structures of many of the peoples of the mountain West, the Plains, and other North American peoples outside the obviously more complex societies of the Southeastern and Southwestern United States.

As I returned to Illinois after a couple of years of teaching to complete work on my dissertation, between 1973 and 1975, I found a congenial atmosphere. My idea of studying the migration of a Flathead/Iroquois family to settle among the Shoshone, whose chief, Washakie, was also of mixed tribal heritage, fascinated me. As I completed a full genealogy of the Enos family among the Wind River Shoshone, I realized that I had uncovered a totally new understanding of Shoshone society. Shimkin had realized that by 1870 the Shoshone were an ethnically mixed people. They were the product of at least one hundred years of interaction with many groups whose strategies had been much influenced by the Spanish in the Southwest, the Hudson Bay Company in Canada, as well as the horse, guns, and new diseases. He returned to writing about these subjects in the 1980’s. But my dissertation, completed in 1975, showed clearly, through the influence of one important family, how all of these changes had affected Shoshone society. Its theoretical model was very powerful, since it combined the study of social structure with the impact of historical changes brought about by the impact of the domination of the West. It was a completely new approach that was not fully appreciated at the time. But with the help of informants and probate records, I was able to show that the Shoshone leadership in the late 19th century was shaped by people from a variety of tribal backgrounds, and that this was probably true of the other tribes in the region. While the dissertation was far too technical to merit publication, it has been copied and studied as a model for understanding how these Native societies came to be what they are today. The unpleasant ethnic mixtures that early ethnographers choose to ignore were indeed very important to the survival of these societies. As warfare and disease increased, survival strategies included the rise of new kinds of leadership. The Wind River Shoshone exemplify this as much as any people in the Rocky Mountain area.

But I have said enough about my own accomplishments. What I want to do here is to thank Kris Lehman for being an excellent teacher and advisor during those difficult years of graduate school when I was with two enormous handicaps: the draft, and a limited undergraduate background in anthropology. He introduced me to ideas and approaches to the understanding of social structure and ethnohistory that came to be my own and encouraged me to apply them to a different area of research – North America. The application of these ideas to the Shoshone and to North America is largely due to him. For that I am eternally grateful.

It's about the Work

William Delaney

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First Impressions

In 1967, Urbana seethed with possibilities. We were young and the country was, well, in deep turmoil. Kris Lehman, to me, was pretty much an intellectual bully and provocateur in those early days. At our second meeting, he told me I probably would never be able to sufficiently overcome my working class Irish Catholic upbringing to do well in anthropology. He then handed me a copy of Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures*.

Second Impressions

Lehman would argue at the drop of a hat. He always tried to dominate. I understood about 30 percent of what he said. He was not affectionate with students, although he seemed to have 'pets' whose names he would constantly drop for brief periods. It was always based on work and writing. It infuriated me, until I heard he dropped my name a few times many years later, and then I was delighted.

The Full Brunt

The hardest test I faced with Kris, given his temperament and mine, was to resolve my own intellectual identity and basically individuate out from Lehman's theoretical concerns (which I always found obscure) and still keep a relationship with him. I did that with the dissertation on aging in Northern Thailand. To his credit, Lehman met me half way and challenged me to the bone. He read every word of my dissertation and commented with a savage, oftentimes unkind, intelligence. But it was like a prize fight where fatigue and pounding hit such levels that they finally transformed into something earnest, bloody, and right.

Lehman, the bully, became Lehman the sparring partner. I nearly caved under the pressure several times. Poker games with Doug Butterworth and Joe Casagrande balanced me during this period. But I answered Kris' objections, took a year or two longer than anticipated, and in so doing crafted a piece of work that I am still very proud of.

I was depressed for several months after submitting my dissertation.

Memories of Chambana and “Kris” Lehman

Penny and John Van Esterik

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Dissertation (Penny): “Cognition and Design Production in Ban Chieng Painted Pottery”
Dissertation (John): “Cultural Interpretation of Canonical Paradox: Lay Meditation in a Central Thai Village”
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Like Paul Durrenberger’s stories, ours are replete with cigar smoke and a disdain for all our past courses on linguistics. We came to the University of Illinois as a set – two for the price of one, both under Kris’s supervision. On our arrival at Davenport Hall, the ‘Voice’ said, “they’re mine”. But as we recall, Kris was in brown tweed not a white suit. Since that time we progressed under Kris’s guidance in tandem. Only one of us would be in the dog house at any one time. Early on, we received a combined progress report from Kris – “John and Penny are progressing well toward their degrees” – a shorthand that reinforced the fact that our academic lives were intertwined. One year we also TA’d for Kris’s Introductory Anthropology course. Years later we confess: we pinched the course evaluation that documented in lurid detail what Kris could do with his cigar!

We have memories of Kris visiting us in Thailand. John’s doctoral funding allowed our advisor to come to the field and advise us. We remember going to a Burmese restaurant in Bangkok with Kris ordering in Burmese, of course. We sat in our rented Thonburi house and brainstormed two theses with the Kris. Back in Illinois we remember Sheila’s Burmese feasts.

Just as Kris pulled us through the rough spots, we’ve pulled each other through some. A few years after graduation, we went to an Illinois party only to hear from several people that we were divorced. We’re not – if you can do fieldwork together and work with the same supervisor, anything is possible. We plan on having a dance party to celebrate 40 years of anthropological affinal bliss, so whoever in the crowd wants to dance, come on up to Toronto next June 17 and celebrate with us.

Intellectually we remain in Kris’s debt – he goes where his mind takes him and where his view of anthropology should go – never following the buzz words of the day. Kris’s version of cognitive anthropology shaped the thinking of many of his students. Although the school passed quickly off the radar, many of the lessons are still being passed through Kris’s students. It is a great pleasure to be a part of this lineage, descendent through Shuichi Nagata who taught us at the University of Toronto and sent

us to Kris. Perhaps we will still be able to send our students to Kris, or at least pass the Kris in us on to them.

A leading grocery store chain in Toronto sells President's Choice spicy sauces, recalling the taste of different places like Memories of Bangkok, Memories of Tuscany, etc. What would Memories of Chambana taste like? Like Treno's grilled cheese sandwiches, cheap beer, essence of cigar smoke, peppered with intellectual (and not so intellectual) debate with Kris and colleagues. Unfortunately, the Treno's site today is an overpriced yuppie coffee shop.

We are both teaching at York University. Penny teaches nutritional anthropology, feminist theory, and advocacy anthropology. John teaches Peoples and Cultures of Southeast Asia (thanks to Kris), a course on New Age religions and, yes, even an introduction to kinship. When we see David Kettel (Bonny and David are good buddies – Bonnie is at York University also), David always wants to discuss kinship theories that Kris started him on over 30 years ago. After a few years at Mount Meru (Cornell University's Southeast Asian library), we moved (over 20 years ago) to the outer edges of the mandala (Toronto) where library materials on Southeast Asia are rare. Penny is still trying to save the world, working with NGOs on issues of food security, breastfeeding, and maternal and child health. John plays in a brass band (on an E Flat Horn for you music connoisseurs), and has been investing in the stock market, trying to make a million (somehow that is inspired by Kris too).

In 2005, we went to Illinois as part of a nostalgic trip to our old stomping grounds. After a conference in Hyde Park, New York, we drove on to Ithaca to return to Cornell, then on to South Bend, Indiana, where we revisited the University of Notre Dame, and on finally to Chambana, where Penny participated in a course on Southeast Asia for teachers arranged by Clark Cunningham. We visited Kris, and lo and behold, he had just returned from several months of field research in south China and Burma. He hadn't changed a bit and was still teaching us. Sheila looked the same, energetic as always. We brought Katherine Bowie with us, and Kris regaled all three of us with stories of the gem trade. Unfortunately, we weren't able to negotiate a deal to fund our retirement with a few well chosen gems. But we trust the gems – his students, of course – will be a continuing source of pleasure in future years.

An Encounter of a Personal Kind

Michael Aung-Thwin

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When I walked into Davenport Hall during a Rangoon-like sticky Fall Registration day, I was looking for a Professor F. K. Lehman listed in the catalogue. I did not know him or of him, had never been to Urbana or the University of Illinois, nor was I even sure I wanted to proceed with my enrollment in the History Department, as I had no financial support. Having worked that summer driving a CTA bus and as a counselor at the Pritzker Center for Children in Hyde Park, I had enough to make the registration fees and perhaps the rent for a room in a house with 15 other guys (and 1 refrigerator). So, I wanted to know at least if Lehman was around to offer the course in Beginning Burmese advertised in the catalogue so that I could jog the passive vocabulary in my “native language” that I had mostly forgotten.

At the main office, I asked the secretary where I could find F. K. Lehman. This tall, skinny man in a dark suit standing behind her, with an unlit cigar stub between his gold-plated teeth, huge mustache and good sized nose, looked at the ceiling and said: “You are looking at him, man!” After I told him I wanted to take Burmese and explained that I grew up speaking the language but had forgotten much of it, he said in a profoundly authoritative manner: “In 3 weeks, you will get back 75% of what you had!” (Of course, he was right; I did get back most of the Burmese I knew after the first 3 weeks of class and jumped to the 3rd or 4th year level) – where I was the only one – and we did mostly reading of certain texts. The informant handling the first year course with Lehman at the time was a young Shan, Simon something, and there were about two other students in the class who may be in this present group of festschrifters. That, in short, was the start of my career in Burma Studies.

But that was only the academic component; there was still the financial part: where to get the money to pay for the relatively cheap tuition at Illinois, at least for the first term? I told Saya of the problem and he said, “Crawford (director of the Center for South Asian Studies at the time) owes me something and I can get you a tuition waiver for next term. But not this term.” As it was already registration week, I had to do something very quickly. The alternative was to return to Chicago to drive a CTA bus (and to my Blackstone Rangers passengers who always rode the bus free.) I asked Lehman who the top person was in his college. He gave me the Dean’s name (which I have now forgotten, but will never forget him). I went directly to his office, walked in, and told his secretary I

wanted to see Dean so-and-so. She said, “Do you have an appointment?” I said, “No, but it is a matter of life and death,” with a look that said I was ready to kill someone. She said in a very calming voice, “Just a minute,” then came back out and said, “He’ll see you.” After explaining my situation to him, he looked down at his desk, covered and rubbed his face with his hands, then with a great sigh, took out a piece of paper and wrote on it: “Tuition waiver for Michael Aung-Thwin, fall term, 1970.” With that waiver particularly (and also working at McDonald’s each night), the passive Burmese vocabulary came back at even a faster rate than Lehman’s prediction.

There are many such conjunctures, to use Fernand Braudel’s term, in our personal histories. This one was crucial: had F. K. Lehman not done the things he did at this particular time and place, who knows where I (and without being immodest, early Burma studies) might be today? Thereafter, Lehman’s contributions to my intellectual and academic growth have been a continuous process.

Since Illinois did not have Southeast Asian history, I got my Masters in East Asian History with Lloyd Eastman and John Pierson instead, then transferred to Michigan to do Southeast Asia. Lehman said he wished I could have stayed at Illinois and continue Burma Studies with him but realized I had to move if I wanted to do the early history of Burma. I presume he wrote me a good recommendation for I ended up with a TA-ship at Michigan. (He also got me into SOAS but since they did not offer any financial support, I went to Michigan instead.) And therein lies some of the unselfishness of our professors: they mostly have our interests and welfare at heart.

During those Michigan years, the Saya and I kept in touch rather closely, as we were both involved in the founding of the Burma Studies Group, which originated at Boston under a lamp post during one of the AAS meetings in the early 1970s, and have remained active members in it until today.

When I received my Ph.D. at Michigan in the mid-1970s, of course, Lehman was one of the first to be informed. I also sent that Illinois Dean a thank you letter to let him know what that one tuition waiver for one semester (amounting to about \$500.00) had done.

Saya, befitting that title, continues to be a mentor in one way or another – perhaps we’re close enough to say “like it or not” – and has been instrumental (with other colleagues) in ensuring that my latest research project received a fair (at the time anonymous) review in its initial publications stages.

I’m sure such good deeds have spawned other, similar ones amongst us regarding our own experiences with our own students, in effect, carrying Saya’s torch into the next generation. His good karma did not have to wait endless cycles of death and rebirth to benefit all creatures after all.

“What’s the difference between a duck?”

John Gatewood

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I arrived in Shampoo-Banana in the fall of 1967 as an undergraduate chemistry major. Within a year, however, I switched to anthropology, and in 1978, I finally left the wild, wind-swept plains of central Illinois with a Ph.D. in this strange but curiously satisfying discipline. During that decade of hanging around Davenport Hall, there were several professors who greatly influenced my thinking – Chuck Bareis, Don Lathrap, Charlie Keller, Mary Douglas, Barbara Bond, Demitri Shimkin, Larry Crissman, Hal Ross, Clark Cunningham, Joe Casagrande, Tom Zuidema, Janet Dougherty Keller, Klaus Witz, and others. Among all my teachers, however, Kris Lehman was the most influential in developing my understanding of anthropology.

Like many other students, my first exposure to Herr Doktor Professor Lehman was encounters with him near the mailboxes in the department’s office area. That was the era when Kris smoked short cigars with Sumatra wrappers, wore tailored English suits, and spoke rather loudly in an oddly British-American-German accent. He was certainly an imposing figure: interestingly eccentric, but also unusually intense. So, it was with some trepidation that, during my senior year, I followed Chuck Bareis’s advice and enrolled in Kris’s year-long graduate course on kinship.

Of course, I’d heard about Kris’s course since my sophomore year. In the late 1960s, many of the graduate teaching assistants – people like Dave Rosen, Dick Lowenthal, and David Kettel – were all talking about formal analysis, Zuidema-Kettel numbers, and the mysteries of Crow-Omaha systems. Deep voodoo to an undergraduate! Still, by the end of my junior year, I’d read Robin Fox’s book, Durkheim and Mauss’s “Primitive Classification,” and selections from Lévi-Strauss’s *Structural Anthropology*, so I figured I wouldn’t be completely lost. Uh huh.

As the months went by, I slowly began to realize that the course wasn’t really about kinship systems, rather kinship was just a vehicle for Kris to profess his vision of anthropology. The real point of the course was to demonstrate that aspects of human social systems could be described mathematically, where the mathematics involved was algebra, not statistics. Furthermore, one was supposed to develop new mathematics as necessary to describe the phenomena in question. There were a bunch of new words involved in all this, e.g., Procrustean bed, *an* algebra, reduction rules, expansion rules, concatenations of filial links, PGS, feature matrices, mapping rules, and so on. I was

simply amazed by two things. Firstly, subtle little details seemed to make all the difference when evaluating one formal analysis of kin terminology vis-à-vis another. That is, there are facts, and then there are significant facts. Secondly, while lecturing, Herr Doktor spoke in incredibly long, involuted but nonetheless grammatical sentences. Often he would start such a sentence, and I would think there's no way he can finish this one, but he would.

Looking back, that kinship course changed my life, because it made me want to go to graduate school in anthropology, rather than to law school. I was smitten by the idea of formal analysis.

In the fall of 1971, thanks largely to Kris's letter of reference, I went off to Oxford to study with Rodney Needham. At my first private meeting with Professor Needham, he gave me an assignment: read Friedrich Waismann's *Principles of Linguistic Philosophy* and Needham's own new book *Belief, Language, and Experience*, and then write an essay answering the following question, "What does the formalization of a phenomenon add to our understanding of the phenomenon so treated?" Much to my surprise, only a few days later – one week into Michaelmas term and before I'd completed the initial assignment – Professor Needham called me into his office to say that he was dumping me as an advisee to take on another incoming student. I was crushed. Rejection, and before I'd even gotten started.

So, with confidence shaken, I left Oxford and returned to Illinois, where they let me enroll as a graduate student half-way through the fall semester. And, this brings me to something that Kris did, which over the years I've come to appreciate a great deal. Kris's first assignment for me in a readings course was to write a detailed critique of Needham's *Belief, Language, and Experience*. What a wise and thoughtful assignment for someone in my situation! It made me confront my demons, get back on the horse.

Between the fall of 1971 and spring of 1978, I learned a great deal from Herr Doktor, my thesis advisor, though probably not as much as I could have. His ethnographic survey course of mainland Southeast Asia was fantastic, with lots of interesting stories (e.g., the saga of *sui ngaleng*, "the golden trout") as well as ethnographic facts and interpretations. Similarly, readings courses with Kris were always stimulating. And, when I audited his kinship course as a graduate student (I may be the only student to have taken this twice), I found that everything made much more sense the second time through. Still, I suspect it was our numerous conversations on diverse topics in his office that have had the longest-lasting influence on my conception of anthropology.

As entertaining as Kris can be as a classroom teacher, I think he shines the most when it comes to critiquing students' papers. His incisive commentary and copious corrections don't spare a student's ego, but there is no doubt that Kris has read your work and taken it seriously. Having been a teacher myself now for almost thirty years, I realize how much effort this takes. On the other hand, if you are trying to help students grow intellectually, that's just the sort of teaching effort and commitment it takes. (So, if I haven't said it before, thanks, Kris, for shredding the initial drafts of my M.A. paper and Ph.D. thesis.)

Well, I could go on reminiscing about events from my student days – such as the famous Arby's advertisements, Kris's 50th birthday, Lewis Carroll stories, pocket

billiards in Kris's basement, when Kris started wearing blue-jeans in class, and so forth. But, I'd like to close with an observation about much more recent times.


Several of us former Illinois students see Kris on a fairly regular basis at professional meetings and conferences. Of course, Kris has always been active in Asian Studies circles, and his area-focused students routinely see him in those contexts. What some former students may not know is that, over the past 10-15 years, Kris has become a very active participant in cognitive anthropology gatherings (yes, this subfield is still going) and has resumed publishing significant works in this vein. Whether Kris is in the role of discussant or presenter, I always look forward to hearing his comments and reading his papers. He remains one of the most engaged academics I know, genuinely enjoying the give-and-take of intellectual discussion and the beauty of well-formed and well-expressed ideas. Indeed, it is precisely Kris's joyful intellectual engagement that I hope will stay within me as the years go by. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing Kris in action at the next AAA or SASci conference. Who knows, given enough time and exhortations, anthropology may yet become "sufficiently abstract" to create new mathematics that accurately describe the phenomena we study.

Oh yeah, the answer: "... one of its legs is both the same."

P.S. Here's one of those Arby's advertisements (from the April 20, 1976, *Daily Illini*)...

20 April 1976 | Daily Illini

I'm not going to eat one.




I'M GOING TO EAT TWO.

That way I get twice as much juicy roast beef, topped with melted cheese, all on toasted sesame seed rolls. Between April 19th and May 2nd, two Arby's Beef 'n' Cheese are just \$1.80. And I save 30¢.

TWO BEEF 'N' CHEESE FOR \$1.80.

504 W. University URBANA
2010 W. Springfield CHAMPAIGN



Knowing Kris Lehman

Brett Williams

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In 1971 I rumbled into Champaign-Urbana in a shabby Volkswagen bus, with an undergraduate major in History and a staunch 1960s belief that Anthropology held the key to building a more egalitarian society. My advisor, for some inscrutable, slightly pickled reason of his own, suggested that Kris Lehman's year-long course on Kinship would introduce me to the basics of Anthropology. So there I sat, for two baffling semesters, humbled by mathematical wizardry, the fiery deconstruction of apparently vitriolic debates between kinship scholars I had never heard of, and a passionate celebration of the cognitive breakthroughs provided by G and PGS. I was terrified. I thought, although I couldn't be sure, that the other students in the class had an inkling of what was going on, but I certainly did not.

Each of us did a research project that year, and I stumbled onto the idea of interviewing children about kinship. I would ask them to draw their families and to talk about how the members of their families were related to each other. Kris was very supportive of this idea, but I still felt pretty clueless about what I was doing. Armed with magic markers and pads, I approached faculty children. The youngest was three. "Is that your Mommy?", "Who's your Mommy's Mommy?" I asked, until we could go no more. At last, something miraculous happened, when a four-year old vaulted into Primary Genealogical Space by working out the complex computation that because his uncle was his father's brother, when he grew up he would be his brother's children's uncle. I think that I had learned from Kris that this uncle relationship was key, and that being able to project oneself into future, imagined kinship relations was to understand the rules. I don't think I've ever felt more like an anthropologist than at that moment. I continued interviewing older and older children, and with age their understandings grew more complex, but the parent's sibling always held the key. I don't think I've ever learned so much from writing a paper, or felt such pride from Kris's profuse praise. Years later, when I met students who had come after me, they told me that my paper was a required reading for the course. This response from such a brilliant man helped me believe I could actually do anthropology.

Kris and I had some hard times. I did my doctoral research among migrant farm workers. I was deeply interested in their families, but grew more interested in how family networks helped them cope with dire poverty than in their cognitive understandings of kinship (as if one could actually separate the two). The United Farm Workers were

boycotting iceberg lettuce, and I joined their picket lines in front of Eisner's, because the store sold iceberg lettuce. I've never regretted this, and I learned an important lesson – Romaine and red leaf lettuce really are tastier. But I have a few ghastly memories of Kris harrumphing past me and my fellow protesters, and once I think he actually shoved me out of his way. On my first day of prelims, as I trudged down the hall with my pathetic little manual typewriter to begin writing, Kris blistered (as only he could), "You just want to get a Ph.D. in boycotting lettuce."

But now, I always look forward to seeing Kris, center stage at AAA, holding forth with great fire and gossip. I think he's forgiven me. My vivid memories of him, I believe, testify to his brilliance and exuberance as an anthropologist and a teacher, and as a person who's always interesting, and often fun, to be around.

F. K. Lehman – A Personal Recollection

John Lowe

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It was really through Kris that I became an Anthropologist, in two senses. Taking his Southeast Asian peoples course was instrumental in making me want to be an Anthropologist in the first place, and secondly, the course helped me get admitted to the University of Illinois Anthropology graduate program. And, not incidentally, his encouragement in the first few years of the program was galvanizing.

That said, I would say Kris has had the most profound influence on me intellectually, even more than professionally. He has always had a particularly clear-headed view of anthropological problems. That ability to reduce complex issues down to their core essence is the mark of a truly great teacher and has always been an inspiration. His abiding belief in a rigorous, explicit, testable approach to anthropology continues to guide my efforts today. Kris deeply felt that theory should consist of more than simply insight, insistence, and political maneuvering.

Kris loved the flow of ideas. He was far more excited about what was right than what was “his,” that plus a startlingly clear and creative intellect made him a pleasure to talk to, whether in class or out. I can still remember a car trip down to an AAA conference in Houston with Kris, Dimitri Shimkin, and Robert Wessing that was pure joy.

Kris has focused on, and remains a dominant player in, certain specialized arenas in anthropology, but mostly I think he specialized in curiosity and the search for truth. Whether I talked with him about systems theory, fashion, or the trajectory of civilizations, he almost always had something interesting to say. Many of his ideas have withstood the test of time (at least from my perspective). For instance, the notion that paradox was a central feature of all great religions pre-figured much of what is best in the PM movement; also I think his insights on the social causes of the historical demographics in mainland Southeast Asia are becoming mainstream. It sometimes feels a little creepy to hear myself quoting Kris three decades later.

I believe people live on in other people, some perhaps more vividly and positively than others, and certainly I feel Kris inhabits some of the best about myself.

The Lehman Identity

Michael Goldsmith

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'No set can be a member of itself' (Bertrand Russell?)

September 1973. My first few weeks as a grad student in Dragonfart Hall. Planning my coursework program for the first two years of study, my faculty adviser, Hal Ross, advises me that at some point I should do a two-semester paper offered by a certain Kris Lehman, Kampus Legend. Its title is 'Formal Analysis of Kinship'. He makes it sound like it might be good for me, in the sense that taking cod liver oil might be good for me.

1973-1974 is also the year that Jim Baltaxe finishes his thesis on the Cook Islands. Because I met Jim in Auckland a year or two earlier and have a shared interest in the Pacific, we hang out sometimes. He speaks admiringly of the professor at the cutting edge of algebraic descriptions of kinship systems, working with a young physicist on how to analyze social systems in quasi-mathematical fashion. Formalist samizdat circulates among those in the know.

September 1974. Having plucked up courage, I enroll in the famous paper. To be honest, I don't recall a huge amount of the course itself. Formalism was never my forte, it's fair to say. A few of my cohort seem at home. The pattern seems to be that if you can point to a flaw or something in the grand theory that needs strengthening, there's a chance your name will end up attached to it. I recall a 'Morrison's condition' but there's no chance there will ever be a 'Goldsmith's corollary'. It's a different language world. Kris jokes about a young prodigy being asked to get up in front of the family and 'say some algebra'. Like everyone else, I laugh at the time but, for some of his students, it's no joke.

At the end of the course I take an incomplete (my only one at Illinois) but eventually I get the grade by writing a goodish term paper, pillorying an infidel bastard who queried the genealogical basis of kinship in some benighted Micronesian society.

Most of what I know about Kris Lehman is based on legend, some of it purveyed by him. He can't drive a car, he claims, because he's too absent-minded. A car figures in a story told about him by a former student who says that they were in the field together and that he decided to test Kris's powers of observation. "What make of car was that which just disappeared around the corner?" "A Ford," Kris confidently asserts. The student tells others there was no car.

My last year on campus, I take Larry Crissman's paper in economic anthropology. He and Kris have neighboring offices just across the corridor from the seminar room where most graduate classes take place. One afternoon, a technical discussion on logic is interrupted by Kris bursting into the classroom to correct a statement he just 'happened' to hear through the closed door: "Not in Principia Mathematica, Morrison!"

Larry gets his revenge. We arrive at class one day to find him weeping helplessly with laughter. Kris has just asked him if he could break a twenty. "Sure," said Larry, tearing the note in half and handing it back to him. Part of the humor lies in knowing that Larry is not much less in awe of the more senior academic than the poor plebeians sharing graduate offices. But, how could Kris not see the joke? After all, he's the guy who, when asked if he knows where anyone is, says, "Yes, I do – he's not here".

Kris engages in popular culture. He appears in a TV commercial for a local hamburger chain. It becomes a cult classic, one that the sad cases who keep the television on during stoner grad parties call people to see when it comes on. I vaguely recall Kris – hamburger in one hand and stogie in another – biting gingerly into his burger and then uttering a catchphrase that is lost in the mists of time. Unless Kris himself remembers.

One semester he turns up a lot wearing denim jeans and jacket. Oh, the flares. Oh, the horror. Since he's somewhat skinny (not enough of the hamburgers he purports to eat?), the flares tend to flap against each other. Hearing him walk up behind you is like hearing a crow flapping its wings on the way home.

* * * *

January 1988. I've been taking a lengthy incomplete on my dissertation in New Zealand; but here I am, back at Dragonfart Hall, for one final assault on the beast. Slinking in to check my mail at the Anthropology office one afternoon soon after my arrival, I encounter Kris Lehman. He may or may not be aware I was due to return. By mutual agreement, he never came anywhere near my dissertation committee. He looks quizzically at me for a few seconds and says, "Ah, Goldsmith..., you'll be pleased to know you still resemble yourself." Then he wheels around and walks away in a cloud of cigar smoke.

The Perfect Professor: My Recollections of FKL

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Somewhere, in my growing up, I developed a stereotype of what a university professor should look like. Maybe, it came from that picture of Albert Einstein, in his later years, that was in wide circulation. Or, maybe it was from old movies that featured tweedy professors who lectured with crisp accents and a preoccupied air. All I know is that when I got to college, I was horribly disappointed that nobody seemed to look like they were "supposed to." Yes, there was the German-accented historian, also my advisor, who hung out in a musty office. He remains unforgettable for his "advice" that I not take the anthropology course I had put on my schedule (historian hubris). And, there was the newly-arrived Englishman with a theatrical flair who taught linguistics in the fashionable skinny black suits of the day and burned up the stage. Then, there was the philosophy professor about whom the story swirled that his wife used to pin his home address on his lapel so that he would be directed home at night if he got lost. Ironically, the one who came closest to my image in those undergraduate days was a tiny English woman, Judy Nagata, who spoke in full and complex sentences, usually without notes, and painted wonderful pictures of both American anthropology and British social anthropology. When I first knew her, she had recently arrived at York University in Toronto with a Ph.D. from Illinois.

Of course, by the time I got to Illinois in 1974 and into the graduate program in anthropology, my ancient stereotype of the proper professor had evaporated. As I became familiar with the cast of characters in Davenport Hall, I encountered the full range of professors, all normal looking. In general, it was only their offices full of fieldwork mementos that belied their not unusual appearances. That is, until I met Kris Lehman.

He was wonderful, the perfect professor in every way. He looked the part, acted the part, and he spoke the part. He was never out of character, whether that was in the classroom, at the mailboxes, or at Treno's. (I always wondered what he wore in the field.) There were those three-piece tweed suits that were perfectly complemented by the man inside with dark hair and mustache, always with the stubby, thin cigars that punctuated the air when he spoke. In class, his demeanor was a mix of professorial distraction along with an acute awareness of his student audience. His lexicon and sentence structure were the best. Oh, those long, involuted utterances with embedded clauses that left us wondering whether they would end as full sentences! (They always did.) And, he knew anthropology like no other, as I discovered in his theory class. He knew all about

everything outlined in the book I revered, Harris's *Rise of Anthropological Theory*, and then some, and then some more.

But, the very best aspect of Kris Lehman's persona was his mythos. Who was he, where did he come from? The stories were delicious, and I never knew who spawned them. An 18-year old shoveling coal on a tramp steamer bound from Asia. A Burmese mother? Gem merchant father? A wife or wives across the ocean. A protégé of the famed Margaret Mead? Who knew? It didn't really matter because we all relished the Lehman myths, real or otherwise. So, thanks, Kris, for keeping a certain wonderful professorial stereotype alive for the several generations of students who have known you.

Letter to Kris

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Dear Kris,

The two of us have a long history, dating back more than thirty years. What a pleasure when our paths unexpectedly converged in Kunming in 2003. We were both still doing border work, you on the China-Burma trade and I on the Nuosu in the Cold Mountains. And you were in your preferred environment – the thriving jade market. Fun to sit in Kunming's cafes and the Flying Tiger Bar observing the scene and chatting with students. I met Sheila, the best pal for shopping and poking around in the city. We knew we weren't in Kansas, but both of us were instinctively drawn to a pair of red high heels in a store selling Chinese opera stuff. I think of Sheila every time I wrap myself in the luxurious scarf she gave me as a present in Kunming.

In Kunming you also extended kindness to a bright student, now at Hong Kong University. Under your tutelage, he became an anthropologist, self-confident and, in his words, a "real fieldworker." The same could be said of your role in my scholarly career. From the first day in your office, you treated me to a level of intellectual engagement that became a life-long habit, a standard with which I approached my own research and responded to the work of others.

Thinking of Walter, the anthropology student in Kunming, reminds me of something else I absorbed early on in our relationship: respect for indigenous scholars. For good reasons, you were beloved by international students in the anthropology program at Illinois, and you staunchly supported the work of Maran Laraw and other scholars from SE Asia. I was edging toward China at the time, although working in Thailand. I recall my frustration because there was so little reliable ethnology coming out of China in the 1970s, and I couldn't get in to do fieldwork. Then in the 1980s, ethnology from the solid gold fieldwork of the 1950s and 1960s was published. And in the 1990s, I began to meet indigenous scholars, such as my current research partner, as well as many local culture professionals. When this finally happened, I was certainly prepared to embrace their work. Later, in Kunming, I was amazed at how at ease you were, especially with your Yunda colleagues. Partly, this was because you had the stomach for hot food, but really it was matter of intellectual compatibility and mutual respect between you and your Chinese colleagues.

Fortunately, you were never a careerist. We never strategized about my “career moves” or what I needed to do to succeed in the ever-abysmal job market. Our talk was always about what I was writing, some of it dutiful graduate student stuff and later papers for publication. Your handwriting was reliably indecipherable, so I always had an excuse to stop by your office for more attention. I continued to send you papers long after I was grown up as a scholar, and laughed when one of my overwrought arguments was described as “the purist Bourdieuism,” not meant as a compliment. When I went looking for a job, I think I was terribly impractical and frightfully dressed, but that really didn’t matter, and I think people hired me for what I had to say. One could say I was well-rehearsed by the time I began interviewing. I was lucky – I had the confidence that came from long, positive relationships with many good teachers, foremost among them my thesis advisor. As a result, I was relatively insulated from the pressures of finding a job, or maybe I was simply oblivious. In any event, I wound up with work that has been immensely rich and satisfying.

Gratefully, and fondly,
Ann

On Learning to Make Sense: Reflections on F. K. Lehman

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Since I am writing this on the plane, on my way back from Southeast Asia (and close to the submission deadline), I will keep this short. I will leave it to others to tell the many funny stories that showcase Kris' wonderful eccentricities and his flair for the theatrical. I just want to mention two things that stand out when I consider the lasting legacy of Kris' teaching on my work and on my overall approach to anthropology.

The first has to do with the way Kris taught us about Southeast Asia. For those of us who planned to do fieldwork in this area of the world, it quickly became apparent that Kris' identification with the region (especially with Burma) was virtually complete. Talking to him about it often became a kind of mini-fieldwork experience in itself, with Kris taking on the role of native informant-cum-guide. Although a bit confusing at times (as fieldwork often is), this had the salutary effect of forcing us to take seriously the native point of view (he was, after all, our advisor) and certainly made it impossible to treat Southeast Asian systems of thought and practice as anything other than viable, working modes of being in the world. In his more prosaic moments, this approach was reinforced with lectures and ethnographic descriptions that helped us find the sense in seemingly exotic practices. I don't think I fully appreciated the effect of all this until I did fieldwork myself and found that my years of study and interaction with Kris had prepared me rather well for the experience.

The second point has to do with his approach to anthropology in general. Kris has a talent for thinking clearly about complicated things, and for being able to explain them to others. As a student in his course on anthropological theory, I can still remember the thrill of feeling that I had finally understood the significance of theories I had been reading about for years. What made an even more lasting impression, however, was the manner in which these various approaches were subjected to his critical gaze. Although Kris had strong opinions about their worthiness (which he did not try to hide), he treated each one almost ethnographically, taking pains to make sure we understood the social, cultural, and intellectual context in which each arose. His goal, it seemed, was to enable us to imagine how a sane person might have come to propose such a view, no matter how strongly we were ultimately advised to reject it in favor of another that Kris himself advocated.

In essence, this approach was yet another variation on the way he taught us about Southeast Asia; that is, it was premised on the need to take seriously the ideas of other people and to try to find the “sense” in them, even when (perhaps especially when) we were quite certain they were in error. This was a lasting lesson, one I still try to practice in my work and, indeed, in my everyday life, and I will always be grateful for it.

Sayah Gyi or the Great Teacher

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I first encountered Kris at the beginning of my sophomore year in college. The previous summer I had taken Larry Crissman’s course on political anthropology, loved it, and decided that anthropology was what I wanted to do in life, though I wasn’t really sure what that meant. When I stopped by Larry’s office the week before classes started he escorted me a few steps down the hall to Kris’s office and said, “This is Kris Lehman, and he is going to be your advisor.” (In those days undergraduates actually had faculty advisors.) Thirty five years and more trips to Southeast Asia than I can count later, he still is.

To an eighteen year old just off the farm (literally), Kris can be somewhat intimidating, but I soon learned that, unlike most professors at U of I, Kris enjoyed talking about all manner of things, including butchering cows – something that I happened to know something about. This and the fact that I knew John (Bloody) Earls – my cousin was his girlfriend’s roommate – eased the transition from living in my own village to studying those on the other side of the world.

One of the courses I took that fall was Kris’s Peoples and Cultures of Mainland Southeast Asia. One of the many books we read that semester was Sir Edmund Leach’s *Political Systems of Highland Burma* which I found absolutely fascinating, as were Kris’s amazing stories about Burma and his days in the Chin Hills. Mid-way through the semester in the midst of a typically rambling conversation about *mithan* (an upland Southeast Asian bovine) and pigs, he walked over to his book self, pointed to a group of thick books with faded blue bindings, and said, “It’s time that you read these.” These were the 1930s ethnographies of the Naga by J. P. Mills and J. H. Hutton. I spent most of the rest of my undergraduate days working through them and was determined to get there to see what difference forty years had made. That did not happen, as the Naga Hills were and are off limits to anthropologists.

One of the things Kris always stresses is the complexity of cultural systems and that it is the task of anthropology to unravel and explain these complexities. He encouraged me and all of the rest of us to take courses in linguistic and mathematics as well as anthropology. While I do not “do” either linguistics or math, I am deeply indebted to Kris for pushing me in that direction. Without that training I would never have been able to

decipher the religious logic of Javanese palaces and Burmese monuments I studied years ago or the models of state failure and democratic transitions that I am currently working on.

My fondest memories of Kris and Nunu (Sheila's Chin name) were the days that Juliane and I spent with them in Rangoon. Thanks to Kris's good offices (and the gift of a video tape of Star Wars to an unnamed Burmese official), it became possible to get research visas to Burma in the early 1980s. We stayed with them and their son Charles for a month or so in the US Embassy grantee house. Both of them gave us vast amounts of academic and practical advice – what to wear and how to wear it, the location of the best tea shop in Mandalay, how to deal with the Burmese bureaucracy. They also introduced us to U Tin Maung U, who was to become our assistant and landlord. Nunu taught me how to do Burmese cooking for which I am eternally grateful.

In Southeast Asia the relationship between students and teachers is much more and deeper than it is in the US. It is a life long bond that goes far beyond strictly academic concerns. Kris is an exemplary teacher in this tradition. All these many years later, he continues to offer marvelous advice and counsel and is as engaging now as he was on that day more than thirty five years ago when I first walked into his office. There is a Javanese proverb according to which the debt one owes to one's teacher is one that can never be repaid. The Javanese are right.

I've never gotten to the Naga Hills, but am still working on it and doing ethnography by e-mail. Much has changed in the now more than sixty years since those faded blue books were written. The Nagas are now Baptists and, as they say, have turned from "the hunting of heads to the harvesting of souls." And, Kris continues to advise me on how to unravel the complexities of Upland Southeast Asian cultures, for which I will be eternally grateful.

The Tower

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Although I took but one course from Kris Lehman and served as a teaching assistant for one other, knowing him formed one of the most memorable experiences of graduate school and helped initiate me into the field of professional anthropology. I remember most his keen intelligence, which could slice like a razor through Gordian knots of kinship and formal theory. I recently re-read *The Structure of Chin Society* and wondered again why Kris never received the recognition of a Rodney Needham or E. R. Leach. Perhaps it was his shyness and deep humility – recognized by everyone who gets to know him even a little – but I like to think, as I follow Kris for a third decade into my own anthropology magisterium, that maybe he made a conscious choice to focus until the end of his days on the site of true learning and which, for him, was his truer calling.

I am always very pleased to see Kris at AAA meetings, standing tall and handsome like a radio tower sending out important signals: Be true; be smart; be brave; be the one who lights up minds without compromising a single synapse in your own. I'm still on his wavelength, thankful that he's still in the classroom and still serving as a powerful intellectual recharging force for us all.

The Teacher in Theory

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"Good morning," said the civil student.
"Possibly," responded he, content.
The mailboxes were his passion
And three-piece suits were still in fashion.
Always, Connecticut Broadleaf cigar smoke arose,
And might I add, a taxing challenge to the nose.
Yet eight of us transfixed, gathered expectantly each week
To hear the logician speak, on occasion, tongue in cheek:
Of fuzzy sets, and carved and served, dead dog steak.
The class of none cannot be one.
Residency may be concrete,
The house, too, but not the rule.
If genealogical descent does not thrive,
Then birth before residence does not jive.
The weathermen cannot predict degree of heat.
The clouds of the heavens know how to cheat.
A student raised his hand and queried, "May I ask a question?"
"You just did," he said in fun.
Dialect was ever present.
It had to do with what was meant.
Georgie had his day as well.
HRAF was easy to spell.
But the proper English gentleman leered
And decided that he preferred
An acronym for those not gifted with a tongue like our teacher's.
For most of us, aspirated liquids were irksome creatures.
Intentional definitions were explained.
Being pleased with one's self pertained
To identifying the criteria
Of being human without hysteria.
The elusive *tabula rasa* had a chink.
It clearly amounted to double think,

Possible, always in the English mind,
And for that matter, in all humankind.
Three philosophers he named and what they taught.
Those the anthropological tradition had reified and caught:
Socrates taught Plato and Plato taught Aristotle.
Heavens! Radcliffe-Brown, Durkheim and Harris, trapped in a Klein bottle.
Anthropologists hold grudges, unaware and absurd, to be sure,
But Mandalay elephant owners, to the contrary, concur
That the animal must be sold after fifteen years.
Otherwise, the remains of the owners may amount to two ears.
If one insists on being grammatical
And wearing a vest with watch chain (obviously, not on sabbatical),
Then the time by the wristwatch can only be a hair past a freckle.
The vulgar materialists have been torturing poor Karl and playing around
With the Hegelian monkey, porcupine, or woodchuck (quite unsound).
FKL has returned all in one to Marx's back, its rightful home.
Yet we still must grapple with the giant and gnome.
The generation of opposites "*tertium non datur*"
Whether existent in mind or in matter.
"Some theories are weird, really weird
"And buzz words be damned,
"Hey, like wow." This man is the height of élan.
If none of this is comforting, it is at least easy to see
That sci-fi monsters are merely those of humanity.
However, the point of this ode is to express,
Anything whatsoever not withstanding
That we offer FKL our very best.

I took Kris's course, "Anthropological Theory in Contemporary Perspective," in Fall 1981. I also took his course on Southeast Asia. Kris, as a larger than life character, gave me tools for analysis and logical argument that have been invaluable in my work. Rather than stuff us full of data (which he could have done), he challenged us to engage epistemology. As I reflect on where I am now, a Latin Americanist embarking on a new comparative project on transnational adoption, an area of research remarkably different from anything I have done before, I find myself indebted to Kris. This is not only because of his own, more formalist, pioneering work in areas of kinship, cognition and linguistics, but also because of his insistence, especially in his class on Southeast Asia, that global and local processes had to be considered within the same frame, and that the arguments of anthropologists who were not attentive to the dynamics of history, as well as state formation, were likely seriously flawed. I gave this poem to Kris at the end of our class in theory. It seems to me, it remains timely.

With fondness,
Linda

Ah, I Remember Him Well, or Is It Just All Due to Parallel Neural Computation?

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Anyone who has ever met Kris Lehman always comes away with a dozen colorful stories or anecdotes (some of them, probably even true). In speaking of my relationship with Kris, it is hard to know where to start. How can one adequately reflect on a life such as his, which encompassed so many facets and touched so many lives? I guess I will follow Kris’s advice he gave me about teaching when I was first a TA: “Always start at the beginning, James, and finish at the end. The rest they can figure out for themselves.”

I first met Kris sometime in the early 1980s when I came to U of I for grad school. Walking into Davenport 109 for the first time, with my usual organizational efficiency and coordination, I was trying to pull out some form from a stack of books and papers I was carrying that I needed to give to the office before I went upstairs for my initial meeting with my advisors, Janet Dougherty and company. Setting my junk down and going through seemingly endless envelopes and pockets, I finally found what I was looking for. All this time, in my peripheral vision, I noticed the presence of a tall and thin frame – a mustachioed figure staring up at some seemingly interesting object in the corner of the ceiling that apparently only he could see. Trying to sound nonchalant and confident to cover my confusion and embarrassment, I said – to no one in particular – “Ah, it’s always in the last place you look.” Behind me came a low voice saying – also to no one in particular – “Well, yes, by definition of course.” It wasn’t until later that I fully understood what he meant – a common response to many of Kris’s comments – but I did know then that someday I was going to get me a suit like that.

I suppose my last interaction with Kris – at least in an official capacity, before U of I gave my walking papers and asked me leave – was at my dissertation defense. Some may recall, I think, that I won the award for the most picayune and obscure thesis topic of the decade (no mean feat in a genre well-known for its esoterica). I claimed this was due to my linguistic specialization, but looking back, in all honesty, it was as much due to graduate student extravagance as anything else. Needless to say, at the defense, it was sometimes hard to get a committee composed of four anthropologists and four linguists to be totally convinced of the brilliance my answers. At one particularly difficult moment in the questioning, when it seemed like my whole future academic career depended upon my making clear some arcane point on lexical semantics, Kris came to my aid: “What I

think young Stanlaw here is trying to say is simply this.” And at that point he goes on and sings the first sixteen bars of the opera *La Boheme*, unaccompanied and surprisingly good. “That was in the original, I might add,” says Kris. “I hope the point is now clear.” It wasn’t – at least to me – but I nodded sagely, and looked at the rest of the committee with an expression that – I hoped – said do you mere mortals now get the big picture? Kris then declares, “As this point is elemental, but elementary, I suggest we go on.” After that, the last hour went fine.

But I guess I must tell at least one incident from the middle of my graduate school career. In one of Kris’s classes on kinship, I came up with what I thought was a pretty elegant formal model of Chinese family structure. The Chinese had confounded even Lévi-Strauss, after all, but I thought that my mathematics background as an undergraduate would pull me through. However, I had underestimated Kris’s sophistication in group theory and symbolic logic. After looking at my paper rather quickly he pointed out some assumptions that I was making, most of which were either empirical issues or untenable, or both. Kris could tell I was disappointed and in an effort to offer encouragement related to me the following – no doubt apocryphal – tale:

James, let me tell you something from which you might extract a lesson. Some years ago the meetings of the Indian Academy of Sciences were being held in Delhi, if I recall correctly. Perhaps it might have been Bangalore, or maybe Hyderabad, though who knows why anyone would want to hold a conference there. But I interrupt myself, as it were.

Regardless, three anthropologists – whose names, of course, will not be mentioned here – were traveling by train from the airport in New Delhi to wherever the conference was being held. Coincidentally, three mathematicians sitting in the seats across the aisle were also traveling on the train to attend the same conference. It was a big conference, you see. A conversation began, and things went well until one of the anthropologists noticed that the mathematicians had one, and only one, ticket between them. “What are you going to do when the conductor comes?” asked one of the anthropologists. “You’ll see,” replied the specialist in topology, I think it was.

Soon the conductor entered the car, and one by one the mathematicians slowly made their way to the WC in back, and surreptitiously squeezed themselves into the little room. Not always a pleasant thing on an Indian train, I can tell you. Nonetheless, after punching all three of the anthropologists’ tickets, the conductor finally made his way down to the end of the car. Stopping in front of the toilet, he raps on the door saying, “Ticket, please.” The door cracks open and a hand sends out a single ticket which the conductor proceeds to punch. Of course, the anthropologists are taken aback by all this, but give each other a sly smile, thinking they now have a plan for the return trip.

On the train trip back after the conference, the anthropologists notice that the same mathematicians are also on the train again as well, sitting once more across from them. One of the anthropologists gives the mathematicians a grin, and shows them an envelope holding a single ticket. Nonplussed, one of the mathematicians shows them his empty hands, saying “No tickets.” The anthropologists are surprised to say the least, but have no time to discuss it as the conductor enters the car, you see.

As planned, the anthropologists casually stroll back to the WC and step on in when no one is looking. Soon there is knock on the door, and a voice says, “Ticket, please.” Dutifully they pass the ticket out through a crack in the door. One of the mathematicians takes it, and he and the other two proceed confidently and casually into the next car.

So, James, what is the moral of this story? Well, as I am certain you yourself can clearly see, it is simply this: Don’t follow mathematicians blindly unless you fully understand their methods.

Well, perhaps over time this anecdote has become a little colored in my mind. Maybe it wasn’t told in exactly this language. But it is not apocryphal or exaggerated to say that Kris has been a tremendous influence on me and my work in countless ways. (“I think you mean formally *uncountable* ways, James.”) One of the advantages of getting a receding hairline is that over time you learn to appreciate better the gifts you were given in the past. And certainly Kris Lehman’s help and advice was one of the most important blessings given to me for some unknown good deed I had done in a previous life. I am sure Kris could explain the Buddhist logic behind it. But being a lesser mortal, all I can say is thank you, Kris, for your wisdom, humor, and guidance. It has been a privilege to be your student and friend.

A Tornado on the Road

Lorraine V. Aragon

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In 1982, I visited the Midwest for the first time. Driving south on an empty highway from Chicago to Urbana, I was startled to view a whirling tornado in my rearview mirror. The conical grey tower followed me for most of the journey. I seemed to be alone on the road except for a vocal troupe of red-winged blackbirds, a species I had never seen before.

I had come to meet Dr. Clark Cunningham, Department Chair, who offered me a fellowship to begin the Anthropology graduate program at Illinois. My fellow broadcast engineers at WHYY-Public Radio in Philadelphia said I was crazy to resign a full-time, unionized job for a paltry one-year study grant. Yet traveling to Asia the previous year on the windfall of my wages had left me curious for further exploration and far too cocky to appreciate the economic security I momentarily enjoyed.

When I matriculated in the fall, Professor Cunningham informed me that Kris Lehman would be my advisor.

"But, um... I hope to do research in Indonesia," I pleaded. I had spent a month in Indonesia, and found it more puzzling than any other place I visited on my trip around the world.

"I think Professor Lehman will be a fine advisor for you," Clark replied resolutely, indicating the door as he juggled his cigarette and coffee cup.

Upstairs, I knocked.

"Enter!" a booming voice called. The cigar smoke inside was thick and pungent. I politely addressed the heavily mustached individual towering before me as "Dr. Lehman."

"Call me Kris!" the baritone commanded. The terse imperative and tone of voice seemed to undercut any intimacy or equality invited by the words. During class in the days ahead Kris would clarify that equal did not mean identical, and demonstrate in mathematical terms that equality was not the absence of hierarchy, but rather its reciprocal form ($A > B + B > A$, as I recall.)

Kris seemed to think I had some experience studying foreign languages, which I did, and some ability in mathematics, which I didn't. He informed me "straight-off" that he knew nothing about "the islands." That wasn't exactly true. Certainly Kris was less interested in island Southeast Asia, but it would prove to matter little for my studies. Three years later, I had taken just about every class Kris offered, including the dread Kinship course, which we held in his office because no one else was foolhardy enough to enroll. As my advisor, Kris had leverage.

When I reported signing up for Kinship, my office mate, Lucy Whalley, burst out laughing in her inimitable way. By then I was used to her jovial companionship, as well as to routine invitations from Ronnie Kann and Mary Weismantel to lunch, where the only items they ordered were pitchers of beer that guaranteed free popcorn. This was not exactly the lunch I had in mind. Yet commensality, theoretical exegesis, and (let's not forget) gossip were the point of these meetings, surely some preparation for fieldwork.

Years later, in highland Central Sulawesi, Tobaku people often said that what they most appreciated was that I could eat their food, which they deemed meager, and that I spoke their language. They did not mean Indonesian, the language of the outside world, but a dialect of Uma, what they self-denigratingly called the "green" or "unripe" language. They taught me about marginality from the inside out.

Eating was the easy part, with homegrown coffee, fragrant hill rice, bamboo, winter squash, ferns, and turkey tail mushrooms cooked in coconut milk, lemon grass, and chili peppers. Rancid smoked rat and slimy black water beetles were mercifully infrequent menu items.

Speaking Tobaku language, unwritten except for a few missionary word lists and reports, was a more challenging matter. There Kris's teachings, ever attentive to the most arcane aspects of phonology, morphology, semantics, and transformational grammar, were indispensable as I blundered through large pronoun sets, vowel harmony, and ergative verbs. Genealogies collected from nearly every household in a village of roughly 1,000 individuals provided data for my dissertation's formal analysis of kinship, a small sidebar I included with Kris in mind.

But those genealogies also gave me a foothold to make sense of other interactions. The stock phrase, "we are siblings, siblings, all," proved to be literally as well as figuratively true, given the frequent second and (oops!) first cousin marriages. On family treks from mountain to mountain, I learned how to read the omens proffered by Central Sulawesi's birds and came to understand the inestimable value of gossip for ethnography.

Kris's admonition to elicit local visions of a social system and then check, chuck, and revise formal analyses through repeated observations never ceased to be salutary advice. For three years I moved annually through swidden settlements with related Tobaku families. Like prior investigators, I began by taking their word about how often they returned to the same location. Only during my last few weeks, by which time I knew many of the mountainsides by name and landscape view, did I think to collect "genealogies" of the exact swidden locations that individual families had farmed over the past decade. Suddenly I saw a much more variable system than claimed, along with a new set of contingency factors involved. Not many anthropologists these days seem to care about such ethnographic particularities. But Kris ever was one to shrug off facile

glosses and disciplinary fads in favor of getting data right in the service of theoretical models.

A few years ago, while preparing to teach a new course on Southeast Asia, I pulled out an old spiral bound notebook containing my notes from Kris's "Peoples and Cultures of Mainland Southeast Asia" course. I was impressed by the text's completely formed prose. There are few lines trailing off into space, and no ungrammatical sentences. The notebook contains a substantive transcription of Kris's lectures, beginning in prehistory and ending firmly in an ethnographic present, usually anchored to the uplands of Burma. Somehow, Kris was able to lecture at such a measured pace that I could copy almost all of it with nary a blemish. Every blasted word, English, Burmese, or Kachin.

Kris, of course, did not read his own notes or prepared text to us. Rather, he delivered his eloquent words in a compelling and sonorous stage performance. No amplification or visual aid ever was provided, or needed. Kris stood before us in an impeccable three-piece suit of distant provenance and varying vintage, fabric, and color. A gold pocket watch timed the event. For Marxist Anthropology, we were treated to an atypical faded blue jeans suit, topped with Maoist cap. Kris's garb was indisputably eye-catching, but it was his words that left us pondering and, on a good day, swallowing laughter.

My notes of April 23, 1984, begin with the title "Rats Revisited," and run, "Rats are not unambiguously symbols of either witchcraft or evil, but rather an element in Kachin cosmology which refer to gifts related to particular domains." This sentence is followed by the etymology of a phonetically transcribed Kachin term that unpacks as "rat + fish + bundle," which then transpose to "land + water items of bridewealth." Kris never let us stray too far from the words and categories of the people whose worlds we wished to understand. What might look like ethnographic minutia or useless area studies fluff to a contemporary academic overseer inevitably were tied to larger theoretical matrices of kin exchanges, marriage alliances, and social hierarchy.

The history sections of that spiral bound notebook are filled with conundrums raised and answered in unfamiliar ways. Why was Indian rather than Chinese statecraft adopted in Southeast Asia? How did Thailand escape European rule while neighboring Burma could not? These lessons taught the beauty of counterfactual history as a provocative teaching and investigative strategy.

In Kris's graduate introductory Theory course, I learned another unorthodox pedagogical technique: teaching *against* the textbook rather than simply with it. Marvin Harris's theoretical claims might look good on the surface, but Kris inevitably could give us a more compelling exegesis of the same data, or a more relevant set of data and categories to define the problem. By teaching this way, Kris killed two hornbills with one stone...or was it two nagas? Ten years later, an undergraduate in one of my introductory Anthropology courses at East Carolina University asked with some rancor why I had assigned the textbook she had to buy because I didn't seem to agree with the author. As I explained how each of the introductory textbooks has its own set of limitations, and gently floated the idea of critical thinking, I thought of Kris.

Anthropology, as we all know, has changed dramatically in the past twenty-five years, and so have our individual parts within it. Although my current post hardly

qualifies as a day job, I feel more responsibility to listen to and speak with Southeast Asians and other peripheral peoples than I ever could have imagined. The sleepy Indonesian province where I conducted my dissertation fieldwork is now a volatile site of big business and migration-spurred deforestation, Muslim-Christian conflagration, massive displacement, and humanitarian aid embezzlement. Headhunting there takes macabre new forms, where masked men on motorcycles shoot victims before carrying the heads to symbolically significant places such as churches or cacao fields. I have encountered a transformational grammar of anthropology's scope and duties beyond my wildest imagination. The great range of topics falling within Anthropology's purview was always my night sky but, truth be told, midnight is scarier now.

I do my best to write with engagement and analytic precision about Central Sulawesi's dilemmas, but I'm not sure what Kris would have to say about this. I am too far away to hang out in the Davenport hallways and ask. His magisterial erudition belongs to a new generation of students now. I imagine Kris has watched Burma long enough to know that academic analysis is hardly a quick fix for the world's broken political wings. Kris probably would tell me to "just get on with it" and then ask about my husband Dale and our twelve-year old son, Will, who knows Professor Kris Lehman merely by legend. When Will was an infant, I entertained him with an improvised theatrical version of Kris's lectures using a dime-store glasses and moustache kit. He was suitably impressed.

Some months ago, I traded an email with Kris – one of those emails where I ask him a teaching-related question about a Burmese term, and he gives me an extensive linguistic exegesis. This time he parried with what he referred to as "TMI" ("Too much Information??? Well, you did ask, you know!"). At the end of a thank-you note for his assistance, I wrote that I looked forward to catching up with him at the next Asian Studies Meeting. As often happened, Kris's brief reply took a literal bend.

"No one catches up with me!" he thundered. I thought, "You go, Kris, just like that tornado on the road."

Epilogue: Three of the Many Things I Learned from Kris Lehman

1. Rules of Performance and Sartorial Splendor
Dress and act memorably in the classroom, or properly for the occasion elsewhere. Ignited props, costume accessories, and vocal dramatics draw interest and inscribe memories linked to otherwise daunting concepts. (By contrast, camouflage is useful in fieldwork, from highland forests to World Bank seminars.) Wit, rubato, and varied tonal dynamics clinch the deal. Make 'em laugh, make 'em laugh, make 'em laugh.
2. Rules of Student Engagement and Professorial Life
Breezily act as if your students already know something, and it may incite them to go study it on their own. Teach against the popular texts that students might foolishly revere. Enjoy the repartee, but never let it get personal. Expect the best from your students and then brag on them shamelessly. Support the good students as they grow and the others even

when they don't. Maybe they will blossom later. The cycles of existence are long and we all may yet have some small part to play. (O.K., maybe that one is from Tolkien.) Have fun and amuse yourself with the inanity of this gig. Academics is just one of many kinds of hard, honest work. It is an involuted microcosm within a vast and transient world.

3. Rules of Terms, Classification, and Formal Analysis

Words and their etymologies are never unimportant. Theory is bunk if it rests on weak data and flimsy categories. Don't be tricked by the obvious. When our analyses are less than prescient, it is a signal that our categories and their relational matrices are vague, banal, or otherwise off the mark. Jettisoning pedestrian thoughts is time-consuming and painful, but striving to do that is our lot in life, even if it is a poorly appreciated one. Consider the possibilities of incommensurable cognitive frameworks, but then tackle the job of translation boldly, even in the face of undecidability.

In the rare moments when I am clever and capable enough to remember and follow any of these rules (or the myriad others he taught), I inwardly thank Kris.

“Not that it does me much good, mind you.” That is what Kris would say, smiling broadly, just to catch us off our guard. But, when all is said and done, there still might be merit. If not, well, it has been an interesting visit, with conversation, exchange, and discovery surely the point of it all.

Anthropology behind Linguistics and Mathematics: Kris and Professor Lehman

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In 1988, I started a Ph.D. program in linguistics at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. After a couple of months though, I realized that becoming a professor of linguistics did not attract me anymore. So, I decided to cross the narrow space between FLB (Foreign Language Building) and Davenport Hall and inquire about anthropology. When I mentioned my background, I was immediately advised to see Professor Lehman.

I climbed the two flights of stairs leading to Kris' second floor office. The door was open. I could see only shelves full of books and a few odd looking objects at the end of a short hall. I gently knocked. No answer, except for some noise coming from a squeaking chair from the left side where the hall opened into a room. Somebody was in. So, I boldly knocked again, louder, and a deep voice shouted, "Come in!" I entered the room and to the left the voice continued, "Didn't you see that the door is open? Why knock?"

It was Kris, tall, slim, moustache, and dead cigar hanging from the left side of his mouth, leaning against the squeaking chair. I introduced myself and asked if he had time to talk about my possible move from linguistic to anthropology. He offered to talk right there and sat down, leaning way back in the noisy chair, cigar moving from one side of his mouth to the other. I explained that I was disillusioned with linguistics and that I wanted to study behavior more than just language. "Language is behavior!" he shouted at me and went on giving me his first lecture about language, behavior, mind, and whatever else he has lectured me about since.

Yes, in spite of that experience, I transferred into anthropology and became one of Kris' advisees. Being European (Italian), he was always praising me for the quantity of mathematics we study in high school. This may be true, somewhat, but I am convinced that what Kris was referring to was not my mathematical sophistication which I regard as minimal, but my desire to engage him in highly abstract thinking, which I believe is a result of my own intellectual preferences and of my having studied philosophy in high school.

"No, no, no, you should... [going to the board and filling it with symbols and more] ...and this is how what you said must be expressed formally. Formal simplicity enhances comprehension, formal clarity illuminates the issue." This and many other of Kris' statements, made loudly while leaning forward toward me or arching back toward the

ceiling, still resonate in my mind as vividly as on the day they were produced. I spent many, many hours in class, by the mail boxes, in his office talking to Kris (maybe I should say ‘listening’) about anthropological theory, the history of anthropology, linguistics, ethnography, kinship, field work stories, geometry and more (including Opera). I learned a lot of what I know about anthropology from these ‘conversations.’ But most importantly, I learned to appreciate the intellectual challenges that the discipline offers, the need of sophisticated formal theories accompanied by careful, very detailed observations and ethnographic cunningness, the deeply rooted passion for knowledge accompanied by the utmost respect for and love of the human condition in any form.

“Giovanni, it is time to sleep now.” I had listened to my advisor (with whom I was going to present a paper the next day at a conference) for more than two hours. I had been treated to a slow life narrative punctuated by laughs, sudden changes of pitch, rich and colorful descriptions of people, events, and places (including suggested smells). We were sharing a room in a Belgian hotel that made people physically closer than the average American would tolerate without fleeing. I felt the humanity, the person behind the professor float high and thick in the room just rendered dark by the quick firm pressure on a light switch. My professor was a person, what a concept!

“Giovanni, we are colleagues now.” This is not what he said after my graduation, but when we were working on an article we published seven years after that. It was the result of a collaboration that had started at the conference I mentioned above and that lasted 12 years. I remember when he said that for the first time. I remember it because to be considered a colleague of Kris by Kris is one of the greatest honors I have received in my professional life.

“You see, Giovanni, ...” and he raises his finger either up to his mouth or up in the air to accompany the flow of ideas, insights, knowledge that his speech will soon express. Well, being a colleague of Kris does not imply that he will not lecture at you. Any excuse is appropriate, a comment about something that you said or wrote, a comment you might have ventured into about somebody else’s work, and most dangerous of all, a reference to any idea historically associated with any of the Fathers/Founders/Masters of anthropology (and linguistics), especially British.

Do I mind, though? No, I actually enjoy it. I always learn something from listening to Kris. It could be something about my work I had not seen clearly enough, some fact about past anthropology or linguistics that I had no idea about, something about his work I did not know he had done. Most of all, I have learned to go beyond the surface realizations, the noise, to try to get to the source of behavior (including linguistic behavior, of course!), to the universal formal property of the human mind.

Recently, a colleague who did not know Kris well and who was sharing a symposium with us, asked me what kind of a person Kris was. It took me a while to think of an appropriate answer. I wanted to point out his eccentric speaking style, maybe his long experience as a professional anthropologist and linguist, his Burmese roots, his mathematical background, his continuous desire to discuss any issue, his sharp mind. In the end I only said, “Just listen to him. You will learn something for sure.”

Real Person, True Inspiration

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When I think about F. K. Lehman, I can clearly see his tall, thin and straight figure. Sometimes he is well dressed, but more often casually. His long legs move back and forth in the classroom, and his moustache moves about in a spirited way as a series of long modified sentences come out of his mouth. If he put on a suit and held a walking stick in his hand, he would become a typical English gentleman, handsome, cold and fearful, in my imagination. But, he is not like what he seems to be. He is frank, easy to talk to, and only one email away when you need help. What follows is not so much praises as scattered memories about Kris, my mentor and friend. Although I might have not enjoyed every moment when it occurred, I do cherish them dearly.

He is not as strict as he looks

In the beginning of my graduate training at UIUC, my English skills were so bad that I had to struggle constantly to keep up with lectures. I couldn't finish the reading assignments before class and had to try very hard to catch the words and phrases pouring out of professors' mouths. I often had to ask the TA to go through what was covered in a class again so I would know what was going on. And I had to visit the professor's office if there was no TA for that class. Prof. Lehman was very serious about his class, and he looked very strict. He talked a lot in class and encouraged students to ask questions. But, I could catch so little of what he said that I didn't know what to ask. I debated in my mind for a long time before I went to his office. Since I pretty much needed him to explain the whole thing again, I was worried that he would think that I had not worked hard enough to learn the subject, and that my visit was just a waste of his time. How could he be tolerant of a student who was not working hard? When I knocked at his door and heard a loud, “Come in,” my heart was pounding and I didn't know what was waiting for me. “Professor Lehman, I have two questions about the class we just had...” He didn't seem to be mad at all. He stood up, drew a map on the board in his office, and explained in detail what he had just taught in class. Since I was the only student, he knew immediately if I understood what he was talking about. He tried different ways to help me to understand and connected the issues to my previous knowledge in China. I was able to form some specific and meaningful questions based on my understanding of the subject matter. Towards the end of the session, I relaxed and felt that it would be possible for me to catch up with the class. At the same time, I also felt guilty that I had to take so

much of the professor's time. "Professor Lehman," I said, "I really appreciate that you have spent so much time to help me with this." "That's why I'm here, and as a matter of fact, it's what I'm paid for," he said. "Please, call me Kris. You make me feel old." Although it was very hard for me to address professors by their first names unless they were younger than I, I forced myself to call him Kris. It became natural after a while.

He smokes

Once I attended an AAA meeting and was surprised to see Kris smoking on the street. It was a very cold winter day. On my way from a hotel to the conference center, I saw a familiar figure walking across the street quickly with a cigarette in his mouth. The wind was blowing the edge of his coat and the smoke behind him. It looked very much like Kris. "Kris, is that you? I didn't know you smoke," I said. "I've heard that only people who smoke a lot smoke on the street." "Oh, yeah. I'm a big smoker." "I've known you for a couple of years. How come I've never seen you smoking until now?" "What do you expect me to do? Davenport is a smoke-free building."

Handwriting

I had to spend a lot of time to figure out the comments that professors wrote on my papers, and then to improve my paper accordingly, even if their handwriting was very clear by normal standards. I had a hard time reading Kris's comments, but the good thing was that I was not afraid of going to his office to ask him in person by that time. After trying my best to decode what he wrote in the margins of my paper, I took the paper to his office. "Could you please tell me what your comments are here, and there?" I pointed to some of his comments. He held the paper in front of his eyes and examined it for a little while, and then returned it to me, "You should have come to ask questions right after you got the paper back. Now, I can't read it myself!"

Tips for fieldwork

"Talk to me when you're ready to go to the field," Kris reminded me a few times when I was preparing for my fieldwork. When I went to his office, he had me seated and said, "I'm going to give you some small details about fieldwork. Don't take them lightly because they are very important." Then, he told me that I should number and page my fieldwork notebooks, and, more importantly, make index cards and cross indexes on all related subjects as frequently as every day, no matter how tired I was. Only when I was in the field did I realize how difficult this was, and only when I wrote my dissertation did I start to appreciate how helpful these tips were. During the mid-1990s when I was doing my field research, it was very uncommon for anthropology graduate students to use a laptop in the field. All my field notes and journal entries were done by hands. I found it rather difficult to record index cards when I had been taking notes for a whole day, and when I could not sit still on cold winter nights. I skipped some days, but did try to do it as often as possible. The index cards helped me to locate certain data that were scattered in more than fifteen different notebooks. Today, 10 years after my fieldwork, I can still easily access the information I need to do my research with the help of these valuable handwritten index cards.

Grand-teacher

Of all Chinese people of my generation and my age, I was very lucky to get the chance to receive higher education at an American university. At the same time, I faced more difficulties in my own studies and in helping my son. When I started my graduate training, my son was 10 years old, and while I was writing my dissertation, he was in high school. Not even a year after I got my Ph.D., he entered college. We spent a lot of time doing homework together, but I could not help him when he had questions related to American history and society. One night I emailed my son's questions to Kris. To my surprise, he answered right away in great detail. Later, I directed more of my son's questions to Kris, and he answered them all with patience and enthusiasm. Both my son and I learned a lot from Kris's answers and explanations. My son was so impressed by Kris's knowledge and manner that he selected an anthropology class when he became an engineering student at UIUC.

Spurring on students

Several years have passed since my graduation. During these years, I could not focus on anthropological research because my first priority was to earn a living. Whenever I contact Kris for any reason, he asks about my research and reminds me, "Your research is important, so you should continue to do it." Last summer, when I was finally able to return to my research and wrote two abstracts for an international conference in China and for the AAA meeting in Washington, DC, he offered to read, correct and comment on my abstracts. His comments and encouragement made me confident that my research was worthwhile and that I had the ability to do it well. As a result, I presented both of my papers. The paper I presented at the conference in China was requested on the spot by a chief editor from a scholarly journal and published last month. When I emailed Kris to thank him for helping me return to my research and for helping me with the paper that would be soon published, he wrote to me, "When will you begin publishing some things in English? You need to, professionally. After all, most people outside China do not read Chinese, but in China most read English. I'll help with the English if you need it." I would never expect an advisor to offer this kind of help to a student seven or eight years after her graduation. But, he knows that I need this kind of help and encouragement, and he does not mind providing it. I have no excuse for not doing what he said. I'm now writing papers in English and will publish them. I will write books in English and publish them, because Kris says I should and I can.

Forever inspiration

One that continues to amaze me is how effective Kris is. In addition to all of his teaching, writing and service work, he always replies to emails immediately. It seems to me that he has never been swamped by work, but rather that he is always ready to deal with it. Whenever I send him an email, I can expect his reply quite soon. He would tell me whether he could help me or not. This makes it very easy for me to either seek other assistance or count on his help, which will come soon after he promises. I don't remember any case in which I've had to sit there trying to figure out what's going on. He did an entire year's fieldwork in China and Burma and wrote a long report when he was almost 80 years old. He attends academic conferences every year and presents papers.

Yet, he still replies to my emails promptly, reads my papers and gives comments and suggestions. He does not look like an eighty-year-old and does not act like one either. All these years seem just to build up his knowledge and experience, but not his age. It seems to me that he simply enjoys this kind of life and he never gets tired of doing research and giving advice. I wish I could be like he is to my students.

Visiting Kris Lehman / Visiting Wa Country

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One hot day in the summer of 1996 I traveled from the University of Chicago to meet Kris Lehman (Chit Hlaing), in Urbana-Champaign, further south in the same state of Illinois. I was a doctoral student preparing for a field research project in the historically autonomous Wa lands in between Burma and China, a project which might actually never happen – but Kris took me very seriously, and offered precious encouragement.

Let me mention the background to our meeting. The previous year, I had been on an exploratory trip to Yunnan, China, coming to realize that field research in the Wa lands now part of China would have tremendous potential. But there was uncertainty regarding whether or not such field research would be feasible in any meaningful way. In China, it was only at that very time that it seemed once again to begin to become possible for foreign ethnographers to remain for extended periods in areas not intended for tourism. Indeed, the archaeological team project which I was also on an exploratory mission for on that same trip in 1995, intended to be carried out at a site also located in the Wa borderlands with Burma, was later cancelled by higher-up authorities. Moreover, back in the library in Chicago, I myself had learned that the reason for the paucity of available first-person writings on the Wa area was closely connected with the history of violence that had plagued the area since several centuries back. I had also to come to understand that in terms of cultural and religious traditions as well as history, there were striking parallels with other parts of northern Burma and southwest China – and Kris Lehman's name kept reappearing very persistently among the authors of the writings I was finding on these topics. I was then thrilled to note that he was at the University of Illinois, only several hours away across the Midwest plains.

Arriving there and searching around the summer-quiet campus, I finally located the anthropology department and Kris' office. Our meeting, it turned out, lasted several hours. Kris, of course, had spent so much of his life in the fertile region of Southeast Asia's borderlands with China, including his scholarly endeavors, while I, in contrast, evidently had hardly been there and knew little. But Kris was prepared to take seriously a student who said he wanted to go study the Wa. In hindsight, I feel that the most important and lasting outcome of that trip, the first of many meetings over the years, really was this encouragement in the shape of a serious engagement. Even in that first meeting (as on many later occasions and in email exchanges over interpretations and historical details), he offered me a range of learned observations on the Wa, drawing on

his immense knowledge of the literature, as well as of the region. He also probed my knowledge of the literature, pointed out gaps in it, and even lent me hard-to-find materials that would be prove useful as sources on early twentieth-century Wa history, such as *Barton's 1929 Wa Diary* (which I believe he had lent another scholar of the region, Jonathan Friedman, at a time when he was a doctorate student at Columbia in the early 1970s, and when it was hardly possible at all to go to Wa country on either side of the new border cutting through it). Needless to say, Kris himself was keenly interested in Wa culture and history. (I later understood that he had once nearly been part of the scholarly expedition to the Wa organized in new Burma, which resulted in the book *Va tui thani* [‘The primordial land of the Wa,’ Rangoon, 1962].)

I left that first meeting quite thrilled and even more convinced that my ideas for exploring Wa history from an anthropological perspective were worthwhile. I was also strengthened in my sense that it would all only be *truly* worth the effort if it did indeed were possible to try to also study the local perspective on Wa history in the Wa areas themselves, not just from historical accounts written by others, mostly itinerant visitors relying on accounts interpreted second- and third-hand. It would matter, *and matter very much*, what Wa people said, in their own language. It would matter what people said and that it must be taken seriously, since it might, very likely, reflect a saliently different point of view with which one would have to come to terms, ethically as well as analytically. This conviction was one instilled in me by my first teacher, the late Mon-Khmer scholar and folklorist, Kristina Lindell, as well as by the late Valerio Valeri and the other eminent anthropologists at the University of Chicago. Kris Lehman reinforced it, specifically and eminently for the Wa context and its most peculiar violent history so easily reduced by outsiders to generalities about opium profits or endemic headhunting.

I would like to mention two incidents from my stay among Wa people that I think may serve to illustrate the power of this insight. The first relates to the violent Wa history of the last half-century (during which the area went from endemic, entrenched warfare, to becoming engulfed in the second world war, and to traumatic pacification in the 1950s). It occurred at a time when I had settled into a particular place in the Wa country, a settlement that was historically a formidably powerful center but is nowadays in practice reduced to something like an ordinary village of the Chinese periphery. In the fall of 1996, I still lacked anything but basic conversational skills in the local variant of the Wa language, and several months had passed during which I had been mostly observing and not so much participating in local life. I had barely started the participant intoxication with Wa rice beer, a *sine qua non* for almost any social interaction and certainly meaningful field research in this area (Fiskesjö, n.d.), and which I was drawn into later on. Out on a stroll, I encountered a small crowd of local women and children (a daycare center of sorts), sitting on one of the ubiquitous bamboo verandas at local houses. They beckoned me over and I sat down with them, chatting. Soon, a young mother was explaining something to me. I was struggling quite a bit to follow, since I lacked the words for “dream” and “gun” – but the crowd helped explain these points through vivid dramatizations, and I finally made out the whole dreadful nightmare: She was telling me (and everyone), that she had had a dream the other night, where I, the strange newcomer in the area, went from house to house in with a large gun, systematically shooting and killing every one in every house in this Wa village. I did not quite know what to say (except that I was not carrying a gun!), but I sensed the direct link to the wars that had

affected the area, often arbitrarily, as seen from the Wa perspective. Later, I often recalled that nightmarish scenario, not least in the probing discussions that frequently arose on the topic of how to explain my motives in coming to Wa country in the first place. The alternative explanations suspecting me of being a reconnaissance agent and harbinger of war was never completely taken off the table, and given the historical record (from the Chinese gazetteers I had been reading to *Barton's 1929 Wa Diary* and accounts of more recent events), I must admit that was not at all unreasonable.

The other incident was my first encounter with the Wa language. It had come in the summer of 1995 when, as mentioned, I visited an archaeological site also located in the Wa Chinese borderlands with Burma. A cave with ancient remains, the site had become a focus of interest not least because of the rich ancient rock paintings documented in the very same area by Wang Ningsheng and other scholars. While visiting this cave site together with Chinese provincial government archaeologists to assess the feasibility of the proposed project, I was also able to see several rock art sites located on rock faces high above the valleys. Walking back down into a valley, I found myself side by side with a little Wa boy, perhaps seven years old, herding his huge water buffalo down the same path. Not knowing any Wa at all at that point, I greeted him in Chinese. His area, which is close to a Chinese county seat, had Chinese schools, and he could speak some of the language. I asked him what “buffalo” would be in his language. “Grag” he replied, and then after a pause, “...and what is it called in your language?” Baffled with the quick-minded boy, evidently just as inquisitive as myself, I told him the Swedish word for water buffalo. After this exchange, we had to part ways, but the boy stands out in my memory, not just as one smart fellow but, somehow, as a worthy representative of the many sharp and able people I was to meet in the Wa country in the years that followed. It was only later, after my encounters with Kris Lehman’s and other scholars’ scholarship, that even this fleeting, seemingly trivial exchange can also be explained as an expression of the prevalent insistence on reciprocity so characteristic of not just the Wa, but several of the societies of the region historically characterized by a prestige economy that puts a premium on a certain kind of reciprocity that is notably practiced in a spirit of honorable yet keenly competitive exchanges (cf. Lehman 1989; see too Friedman [1979] 1998, and Fiskesjö 2000 and 2002), and which moreover also sets the moral norms and terms for social interaction generally – even down to the competitive mutual enhancement, while coming down the hill, of two interlocutors’ vocabulary of foreign words for “buffalo.”

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and now ... (circa 2006)