

## OBITUARIES

### **Rev. Eugene Denis S.J.**

At 2:40 P.M. on Thursday, December 11th 1986, Fr. Eugene Denis went to the Lord. He was sixty-five years old and had spent forty-four years in the Society of Jesus. Fr. Denis led an ordinary life and worked hard until the last day. He appeared to be in good health, but nine years ago, on the 11th of October 1977, he underwent a serious double by-pass operation. The heart specialist who operated on him told him that he had about seven more years to live. Fr. Denis knew that he was living on extra time. He was ready to go and meet the Lord at any moment. But for those who did not know his secret, Fr. Denis was the same as usual, a man full of energy, always ready to meet people, with a continuous smile and good humour, and with an insatiable capacity for work.

Fr. Denis was born on the 2nd of February, 1921, of a devout Catholic family of farmers in Corps-Nuds, a small village in Northwest France. At the age of ten he joined the minor seminary of his diocese of Rennes and then went on to the major seminary, where he finished philosophy and did part of theology. Then he applied to join the Society of Jesus. His bishop, Cardinal Roques, granted him the necessary permission, and he entered the novitiate on the 7th of September of 1942. Two years later he pronounced his perpetual vows. From the novitiate he was known for his good heart and cheerful character, his gift for music and his capacity for studies.

In 1948 Fr. Denis volunteered and was chosen to go to the mission of China. He studied Mandarin in Peking for two years and then taught Latin at the minor seminary of Sienhsien and music at Chabanell Hall. One year later he had to leave China, expelled by the communist government, and was sent back to France where he completed his studies in theology at Fourviere. Fr. Denis was ordained a priest by Cardinal Gerlier at the cathedral of Lyon on July 20, 1952.

When the Society of Jesus was called to work in Thailand, Fr. Denis volunteered for this new mission.

In 1955 Fr. Denis was sent to come to Thailand. He arrived in Bangkok on the 20th of December, 1955, and there met with Frs. Cerutti and Bonningue who had arrived shortly before him. He studied the Thai language at the Assumption School of the Brothers of Saint Gabriel in Sriracha—a hundred kilometres southeast of Bangkok. While still studying the language he used to come to Bangkok on his motorcycle for meetings with the association of Catholic students. In June 1957 he was invited to teach at the Faculty of Arts of Chulalongkorn University, where he also

studied the Pali and Kmer languages as well as Thai. From 1959 he acted as the chaplain to the Catholic students in Bangkok. He combined this work with studies for a doctorate at the Sorbone University in Paris. In 1964 he helped establish the Catholic Doctors Guild of Thailand, of which he was a chaplain until his death. The next year he became chaplain of the graduates' group, later named the Newman Club, a job which he held also until the end of his life.

One of his outstanding contributions to student work was his initiating the Xavier Hall work camps. It was at a time in which the majority of university students were unaware and unconcerned about the problems of the country. The first work-camp was organised in 1967. A total of sixty-four students with Fr. Denis and a Catholic doctor stayed in the village of Muang Bang in Nongkhai province from April 17 until May 2 where they helped the local villagers repair some roads and lay drainage pipes in the village. The Xavier Hall workcamp was soon known for the superb spirit of its members and its good organization. A total of ten big work camps were organized through as many years until they had to be stopped for political reasons.

From 1971 to 1976 Fr. Denis worked on his second doctorate, doctorat d' état, at the Sorbone in Paris. In 1971 he became a member of the National Center for Scientific Research (C.N.R.S.) which published some of his works, like the critical editions of *The Legend of Asoke of South-East Asia*, *The Lokapadipasara*, *The Cakkavaladipani* and *The Pathamsambodhi*. While in France he kept in contact with many Thai students in Paris, and invited many of them to go to his home in the countryside for a rest. When he came back from France he returned to his teaching at Chulalongkorn University and continued as chaplain both to the graduate group and the Catholic doctors. On the 30th of July, 1985, he was granted a Honorary Doctor's Degree by Chulalongkorn University as an acknowledgement of his many contributions to education over a period of twenty-nine years, and especially in the preparation of new courses for the French department.

Although his contribution to research and teaching was well known, Fr. Denis never gave the impression of being a man lost in deep research and aloof from the problems of people. He was rather a close friend who took a special interest in the lives of the people he met and he always found time for each person. His extraordinary capacity to remember names helped him bring people together. He was most happy when he was able to reconcile people together. His door was always open in welcome and his room became the meeting place of the Newman Club. Fr. Denis's only free time was after supper. He would often stay until late into the night studying and working on his research. One graduate student, who knew Fr. Denis for a long time, said that he had never seen Fr. Denis get angry. It is true. Fr. Denis had an enormous

patience and a continuous smile on his face.

Fr. Denis was a compassionate priest who served the Lord humbly and faithfully until the end.

When he met the Lord face to face, he must have heard the words of the Master : ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master’ (Mt 25,23)

***Miguel Garaizabal, S.J.***

Regional Superior

Xavier Hall, Bangkok

**John Frank Brohm**

John Frank Brohm, who died at his home in Hayward, California, on January 21, 1987, after a long battle against cancer, contributed significantly to Asian Studies, anthropology, intercultural education, and socio-economic development in Thailand. Early in his career, he was an exemplary student of Burmese Buddhism and a university teacher of anthropology and Asian Studies. Thereafter, for over two decades he was Southeastern Asia Representative of the Institute of International Education, with offices in Bangkok and Hong Kong. In this role, he made unique and pioneering contributions to the strengthening of shaky bridges of understanding between Asian and American academic institutions, while effectively aiding literally thousands of Asians who came to him for advice on higher education or research.

Brohm's introduction to Asia occurred during World War II service as a medical corpsman in the Chima-Burma-India Theatre. He was posted to a U.S. Army surgical unit attached to the Chinese Army, using the facilities of, and assisting, the famous "Burma Surgeon," Dr. Gordon Seagrave. He later recounted many "hard and bitter" experiences in upcountry Burma, starting with his first day of service there, when he fell thirty feet down a mountainside in the dark, and as a result suffered a lifelong back ailment. His unit functioned under chronically poor medical conditions, in which legs were amputated without anesthesia, and wounded soldiers were left behind because there were no stretchers or no bearers. During these years John shared his whole life and fate with his Asian comrades: Burmans, Indians, Shans, Kachins, and especially Chinese. He ate their food, learned to speak Chinese, joked with them, gave them nicknames, and developed a deep admiration for them.

When the war was over, John turned promptly to the pursuit of a career in anthropology, and developed a life-long concern with problems of cultural change. The G.I. Bill enabled him to enter Stanford University in 1946. There he continued his study of the Chinese language and began formal work in anthropology with Felix Keesing and Marvin Opler, and in Chinese history with Arthur Wright. Stanford gave him his first real taste of serious scholarship, and he responded brilliantly, earning election to Phi Beta Kappa and an A.B. *magna cum laude* in 1950.

Although China was by then closed to American scholars, Brohm's teachers urged him to go on to graduate study, suggesting Asian Studies and the newly established program in cultural anthropology at Cornell University. No sooner was he accepted by Cornell than he received offers of Fulbright grants for a year in Rangoon or Calcutta; but faculty in both Palo Alto and Ithaca strongly advised that

professional graduate training should precede such fieldwork.

Scarcely had Brohm settled in at Cornell when the university announced plans to add multidisciplinary programs on Southeast and South Asia to its existing China Program. The study of most of this austro-oriental quadrant of Asia would be guided by resident faculty -- except Burma, for which Cornell had to depend upon visiting faculty. While continuing to study China and Chinese, Brohm decided in 1951 that his area of cultural specialization would be Burma (and Southeast Asia); among visiting specialists with whom he was able to work at Cornell were D.G.E. Hall, John Furnivall, John Cady, Hla Myint, and Hugh Tinker.

In 1951 John married Wu Hsin-min, who had recently received her M.A. and was teaching in Chinese language and literature at Cornell. It was also a fateful choice for her, for it meant, in all probability, that she would never return to her home in mainland China. Hsin-min Brohm, a scholar in her own right, became John's close professional collaborator. His remarkable success in relating with Asians owed much to her warmth, tact, and intellectual attainment. It was a happy and productive partnership.

Brohm's academic energies were remarkable. After two years of intensive work which included studying literary Chinese, serving as a teaching assistant, writing on Buddhism and on minorities for a Thailand project, and completing an M.A. thesis on Burmese religion, he was ready for field research in Burma.

The Brohms wrote from Rangoon in 1952 that Burma was no "bed of roses" for sensitive and earnest American scholars. They were dismayed by the plush living, isolation, and complacent ignorance of some Fulbright grantees and most technical specialists of other United States agencies, and by the "arid scholarly atmosphere" of the University. It was a relief to move north to Mandalay where John found both city and village Buddhists who understood his research aims and were interested and responsive; but the months in the area were arduous and even hazardous because of active local political strife and banditry.

Loaded with research materials, the Brohms returned to Ithaca in the fall of 1953. The following year John completed course work for his doctorate in anthropology (with minors in Far Eastern Studies and social psychology). Progress on his dissertation was slowed by his acceptance in 1954 of a teaching position in anthropology at Harpur College (later the State University of New York at Binghamton) where he taught general and Asian anthropology and developed a successful course on comparative symbolic systems. Also in that year, in his "spare" time, he dealt with several Burmese topics in courses being offered at Cornell by Furnivall, and the following year took charge of a country seminar on Burma.

During the summer of 1955 he worked at New York University on the Human Relations Area Files' three-volume Burma Handbook and consulted on Burma with the Council on Foreign Relations. In 1957 he completed his doctoral dissertation, an outstanding study of *Burmese Religion and the Burmese Religious Revival* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1958). This work was accepted as a Monograph of the Association for Asian Studies, but unfortunately Brohm never re-edited it for publication.

In 1959 Brohm worked out plans for a study in northern Thailand of interaction patterns between lowland Thai and upland minority groups (especially Hmong/Miao and Mien/Yao) and resulting degrees of assimilation or of negative, neutral, or positive acculturation. These were topics and an area in which the Thai government was beginning to take a more serious interest. In the field, however, the project turned almost too "activist," for Brohm quickly established good rapport with members of representative groups, only to find to his dismay that he was learning too much about opium traffic networks and participants for his own health. His project was several years ahead of public and general awareness of the opium trade, a fact that made the experience all the more dangerous and frustrating for him.

In any case, John's strictly academic career was drawing to a close. On the day after SYNY/Binghamton awarded him tenure, he resigned and began the quest for what he referred to as "a more activist participation" in the world at large. After brief stints with CARE and AID, he welcomed an appointment in November, 1962, as the first representative in Southeast Asia of the respected Institute of International Education.

The next twenty years were dedicated to constructive and creative public service with IIE, constructive because he helped meet the acuted need for cultural expertise in this area, and creative because Brohm clearly defined his own role and could make most of his own decisions. These years were the most deeply satisfying of his life, for he was able to develop an organization that offered systematic, informed, culturally sensitive advice to thousands of Asian and other students and educators concerned with Asia. By 1964 his Bangkok headquarters had the most complete and sophisticated counseling facilities for Asian students of American education to be found anywhere in Asia. Full-time counselors were available to Asian scholars interested in working in the United States; a collection of some 2,000 catalogues of American colleges was kept remarkable current. In 1968 he established IIE's Hong Kong office, and thereafter until his retirement he divided his month between Hong Kong and Bangkok, as well as marking frequent trips to other parts of Southeast Asia, offering similar services to all who needed them.

Brohm worked not only with Asians needing advice about American schools, but also with Americans needing advice about what sorts of Asian applicants to accept for what sorts of educational programs. Increasingly, American educational institutions requested Asian applicants to consult with IIE staff members and obtain from them IIE's evaluative report on their qualification, and often also on the quality of the schools where they had been trained. Such requests led Brohm and his associates to a second major achievement: the development of rigorous evaluations of many Asian colleges, their varied curricula, grading systems, scholarly standards, language teaching proficiency, strong and weak departments. Brohm periodically published scrupulously honest, impartial, culturally informed evaluations which enabled American admissions officers to make much more sense of the varient records of Asian institutions, and helped prevent thousands of inappropriate or even disastrous admissions decisions.

The sheer productivity of Brohm's operation was staggering. Although precise records are not available, it is clear that he and his staff conducted well over 10,000 in-depth, searching interviews of Asian applicants to American universities, in addition to offering less formal services to many times that number. During this same period, Brohm conducted or supervised the publication of 135 detailed "institutional profiles" of institutions of higher education in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia -- especially Thailand.

Because of these pioneering efforts, the interaction of American colleges and universities with those of Southeast Asia has been placed on a much more sophisticated level. Because of Brohm's keen interest in the changing needs of Asians, his vast knowledge of Asia's varied human resources, and his utter dedication to helping the right Asian find the right education at the right institution, the lives of countless Asians have been enriched.

Fortunately, much of what John Brohm accomplished was recognized and appreciated during his lifetime. Literally hundreds of Asian intellectuals remember his genuine kindness and reliable assistance with deep gratitude, and found ways to let him know this while he was still alive. But beyond this, his work benefited thousands of others in ways they are not aware of, and could not be.

His was a life well spent.

*Lauriston Sharp*, Cornell University

*Robert B. Textor*, Stanford University

### John Blofeld

Among the rarities from whom the Siam Society has benefitted over the years is an English Chinese Buddhist of the Vajarayana school whose passing at the age of 74 on 17 June 1987 is the occasion for this memorial.

John Calthorpe Blofeld also known by his Chinese name, P'u Lutao, was born in England on 2 April 1913. Responding to his calling, he left Cambridge University in 1933 before finishing to begin a total immersion in Chinese ways interrupted when the Second World War broke out in 1939. He then joined the British Army with the rank of captain but at the time there were so few Englishmen who knew Mandarin he was moved from the War Office to the diplomatic service to serve as Cultural Attaché in Chungking from 1942 to 1945. He returned to Cambridge University in 1945-6 to obtain his degree and immediately afterwards returned to China until the victory of the Communists in 1949 led him to leave for Hongkong where he taught at a high school until 1951.

Mr. Blofeld was then persuaded to seek the more congenial Buddhist atmosphere of Thailand and he settled here in 1951. In Thailand, he taught English language and literature at Chulalongkorn University from 1951 to 1961, was Chief of Editorial Services with ECAFE, now ESCAP, from 1961 to 1974 and for the next five years again taught English at Kasetsart and Chulalongkorn Universities. Then free of the need to make a living, Mr. Blofeld devoted himself entirely to his Chinese studies, to lecturing in the United States and Canada and giving seminars on Taoism and Buddhism and to writing. Shortly before his death he completed his autobiography in Chinese now being published in Hongkong and was, until almost the last day, working in Chinese on a collection of old tales recalled from his early days in China. The Siam Society had the privilege of the membership of Mr. Blofeld in December 1978. Even before joining he had led the Society on a tour of Chinese temples in Bangkok followed by a Chinese lunch reflecting two of his many Chinese interests: religion and food, and had lectured on 8 November 1977 on TAOISM, THE WISDOM OF INACTIVITY. Subsequently, from time to time, he led the Society on tours of Chinese temples in the provinces and in Bangkok.

Mr. Blofeld's achievements, spiritual and cultural, are reflected in the many books he has written, most of them while he was in Thailand. The major works are listed below. In the second edition of his spiritual autobiography THE WHEEL OF LIFE written when he was 59 he summarized as follows the great experiences of his life which in their content and the felicitous manner of their expression give an insight into the warmth of character and sincerity of this extraordinary person:-



My friendship with Tahai and all that emerged from it, including my first initiation at the hands of the Lama we used to call in Chinese Dorje Joonjay;

My holiday on Mount Wu T'ai with its fantastic peaks and flower carpeted plateau where stood a whole galaxy of temples and monasteries inhabited by colourful throngs of recluses belonging to an age gone by;

The months of ardent meditation spent in the palatial halls of Hua T'ing Ssu which, standing amidst the forests of the Western Hills, looked out across the lake to the mediaeval walls and towers of the city of Kunming;

The ceremony in the gloomy Temple of the War God during which I took the oath of blood-brotherhood to Chin P'eishan of the Imperial Clan of Ai-hsin-chieh-lu;

My pilgrimage to the conical mountain of Tashiding, where the roar of the waters and reverberations of the lama's drums merged in the mantra of never-ending sound;

The winter spent in Kalimpong with the Nyingma Lamas and with John Driver, King Punchok and a nearly invisible dog;

My glimpse of Mongolia's lovely land, where Buddhist herdsmen still dwell amidst their herds of yak and horses on the limitless plains of Central Asia, still largely undisturbed by the crudeness of modern man;

My reception by the Dalai Lama, his warmth and sweetness, the scenic grandeur of the mountains and noble courage of the Tibetan exiles.

Towards the end of his life Mr. Blofeld became noticeably more Chinese. His maner became even more courtly and courteous, he dressed nearly always in Chinese fashion and his sparse white beard grew wispy and with his good humour and ready laugh he gave the impression of a sage rather far along the road to spiritual enlightenment. Except for his felicity of expression in English and fondness for an occasional European meal, there was not much of the Englishman left. By then he was spending hours a night studying old Chinese texts and working on his last two works in Chinese. As a Buddhist, death held no fear for him. He was sceptical of what the next life would bring but thought as so many of the Buddhist insights turned out in his experience to be true, those on death and what comes afterwards

are likely to be true as well. Having had a full life and having known the inconveniences of old age he accepted the end with equanimity, ready to make the dash for nirvana. John Blofeld was cremated at Wat Hualampong after 7 days of Thai, Chinese and Tibetan rites on 25 July 1987.

***Damnern Garden***

Bangkok

**BOOKS BY JOHN BLOFELD**

	Year
1. <i>The Jewel in the Lotus</i> - Sidgewick & Jackson, London An outline of presentday Chinese Buddhism	1948
2. <i>Red China in Perspective</i> - Wyndgate, London An attempt to explain the reasons for communist success in China.	1951
3. <i>The Wheel of Life</i> - Rider, London; and Shambhala, USA Autobiographical, largely about China and Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism.	1959
4. <i>People of the Sun</i> - Hutchinson, London Life in Siam	1960
5. <i>The Zen Teaching of Huang Po</i> - Rider, London; and Grove press, USA Translation of an 8th century Buddhist classic from Chinese	1958
6. <i>The City of Lingering Splendour</i> - Hutchinson, London Life in pre-war Peking	1961
7. <i>The Zen Teaching of Hui Hai</i> - Rider, London; and Grove Press, USA Translation of an 8th century Buddhist classic from Chinese	1962
8. <i>The Book of Change</i> - Allen & Unwin, London; and Dutton, USA A new translation of the most ancient existing book in the world.	1965
9. <i>The Way of Power</i> - Allen & Unwin, London; and Dutton, USA Tibetan Buddhism with emphasis on meditational techniques	1970
10. <i>The World of Buddhism</i> - Siam Society, Bangkok A pictorial album illustrating Buddhist practice in five groups of countries-Theravadin, Mahayana, Vajrayana, formerly Buddhist countries and those where Buddhism is taking root.	1979
11. <i>King Maha Mongkut of Siam</i> - Asia Pacific Press, Singapore	1972
12. <i>The Secret and Sublime</i> - Allen & Unwin, London; and Dutton, USA	1973
13. <i>Beyond the Gods</i> - Allen & Unwin, London; and Dutton, USA Taoist and Buddhist ways of living	1974
14. <i>Mantras</i> - Allen & Unwin, London; and Shambhala, USA	1976
15. <i>Compassionate Yoga</i> - Allen & Unwin, London; and Shambhala, USA A story of Kuan Yin (Chinese 'Goddess of Mercy')	1978
16. <i>Taoism: Quest for Immortality</i> - Allen & Unwin, London; Shambhala, USA All aspects of Taoism	1979
17. <i>Gateway to Wisdom</i> - Allen & Unwin, London; and Shambhala, USA Taoist and Buddhist meditation practices	1980
18. <i>The Chinese Art of Tea</i> - Allen & Unwin, London; Shambhala, USA	1985

## Some Remarks about the Life and Works of Sunthon Phu, JSS. Vol 74:

**CORRIGENDA**

- page 172, line 10 : after 'were' include 'burnt'
- 175      4 should read as follows:  
          'works. That such analyses .....
- 176      8 replace 'Sermon' by 'German'
- 11 'not longer' should read 'no longer'
- 2 *from below* should read 'be established with a fair ...'
- 178      8 replace 'portrait' by 'portray'
- 6 *from below* should read ... 'Although with a measure'
- 180      1 should read: 'influence on character formation *in* later years.....'
- 181      3 should read: 'and thus lays *himself* open to .....
- 186      6 should read: '.... living on *as persona* ....'
- 9 should read: 'every opportunity to attract *attention* to ...'
- 11 *from below* should read: 'prompted *to believe that the phrai*  
          *wished to bring his own person into prominence* by associating....'
- 187      9 replace 'Lord in life' by 'Lord *of* life'
- 18      18 should read: .....*'felt by a good many'* .....
- 189      8 *from below* should read: ' ... beginning of a literature of the'
- 192      10 *from below* should read: ' ... in the *last* analysis ...'
- 193      28 should read: '*progression in a historical pattern, but revolving in*  
          *ever recurring-cycles. All that ...'*
- 7 *from below*: full stop after 'expression'. Nature...
- 195      5 should read: '...The concept kam, in Pai kamma,'
- 197      2 *from below*: should read: '...aspirations and presentiments...'
- 7 *from below*: should read: '...have a presentiment of ...'