



2012

## I am from Laos

Danny Kotsombath  
dkhotsombath@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/jsaaea>

---

### Recommended Citation

Kotsombath, Danny (2012) "I am from Laos," *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement*. Vol. 7 : Iss. 1, Article 13.

DOI: 10.7771/2153-8999.1055

Available at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/jsaaea/vol7/iss1/13>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

This is an Open Access journal. This means that it uses a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access. Readers may freely read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of articles. This journal is covered under the [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).



Volume 7 (2012)

Kotsombath: I am from Laos

# Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement

[www.JSAAEA.org](http://www.JSAAEA.org)

A peer-reviewed  
scholarly journal  
published by the  
National Association  
for the Education &  
Advancement of  
Cambodian, Laotian,  
and Vietnamese  
Americans (NAFEA)

## I am from Laos

by  
**Danny Khotsombath**

I am from water buffaloes,  
from muddy rice fields and sun-burned backs.  
I am from the wooden huts, stilted and dusty.  
I am from a million elephants, ten thousand rice fields,  
from twelve powerful lords and their slaves.  
I am from prehistoric stone jars that once stored rice wine for giants.  
I am from more than sixty ethnic groups,  
from the highlands, midlands, and lowlands.  
I am from dok champa, the flower from my father's garden,  
whose sweet scent I savor.

I am from shaved heads and orange robes,  
from Three Noble Disciplines, Four Noble Truths, and Five Precepts.  
I am from the Mekong River, lively and strong.  
I am from sticky rice, papaya salad, beef jerky,  
from ant egg soup and fermented fish sauce.  
I am from the boat festival, rocket festival, and harvest festival.  
I am from the alms that I give to each baht,  
from the belief that what I give I shall receive in return.  
I am from the boun, merit-making ceremonies and the baci,  
whose strings I wear around my wrists.

I am from Laos.



**SOME RIGHTS RESERVED** Readers are free to copy, display, and distribute this article, as long as the work is attributed to the author(s) and the **Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement**, it is distributed for non-commercial purposes only, and no alteration or transformation is made in the work. More details of this Creative Commons license are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>. All other uses must be approved by the author(s) or JSAAEA.

*Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement, Vol. 7 (2012)*

### About the Author



Born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota to Lao immigrant parents, Danny Khotsombath is currently pursuing a graduate degree in Educational Policy Studies with a focus on Diversity and Equity through the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His work as an academic adviser at the University of Minnesota supports the achievement of students of color, especially those from underrepresented populations. Having experienced educational barriers as a student of color, his interests include diversity and equity issues, critical pedagogy, and culturally responsive instruction.



Volume 7 (2012)

# Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement

[www.JSAAEA.org](http://www.JSAAEA.org)

A peer-reviewed  
scholarly journal  
published by the  
National Association  
& Advancement of  
Cambodian, Laotian,  
and Vietnamese  
Americans (NAFEA)

## Editor

**Dr. Wayne E. Wright**

*University of Texas, San Antonio*

## Associate Editors

**Dr. Chhany Sak-Humphry**

*University of Hawaii at Manoa*

**Dr. Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy**

*University of Massachusetts, Lowell*

## Book Review Editor

**Dr. Vichet Chhuon**

*University of Minnesota*

## Creative Works Editor

**Bryan Thao Worra**

*Lao Assistance Center*

## Special Advisor

**Gregory Green**

*Curator, Echols Collection on Southeast Asia, Cornell University Library*

## Journal Manager

**Sovicheth Boun**

*University of Texas, San Antonio*

*Comments and questions for the editorial staff may be directed to [jsaaea@lists.sis.utsa.edu](mailto:jsaaea@lists.sis.utsa.edu)*

## Editorial Review Board

**Dr. Steve Arounsack**

*California State University, Stanislaus*

**Dr. Phala Chea**

*Lowell Public Schools*

**Dr. Loan Dao**

*Cancer Prevention Institute of California*

**Dr. Changming Duan**

*University of Missouri, Kansas City*

**Dr. Jeremy Hein**

*University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire*

**Dr. Samlong Inthaly**

*Minneapolis Public Schools*

**Dr. Kevin K. Kumashiro**

*University of Illinois, Chicago*

**Dr. Carl L. Bankston III**

*Tulane University*

**Dr. George Chigas**

*University of Massachusetts, Lowell*

**Dr. Hien Duc Do**

*San Jose State University*

**Dr. Sophal Ear**

*U.S. Naval Postgraduate School*

**Dr. Nancy H. Hornberger**

*University of Pennsylvania*

**Dr. Peter Nien-Chu Kiang**

*University of Massachusetts, Boston*

**Dr. Ha Lam**

*Arizona State University*

**Dr. Jonathan H. X. Lee***San Francisco State University***Dr. Sue Needham***California State University, Dominguez Hills***Dr. Bic Ngo***University of Minnesota***Dr. Leakhena Nou***California State University, Long Beach***Dr. Isabelle Thuy Pelaud***San Francisco State University***Dr. Giang Pham***University of Minnesota***Dr. Bounlieng Phommasouvanh***Minnesota Department of Education***Dr. Kalyani Rai***University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee***Dr. Soveacha Ros***Royal University of Phnom Penh***Dr. Nancy J. Smith-Hefner***Boston University***Dr. Christine Su***Ohio University***Dr. Loan Tran***University of California, Riverside***Dr. Tinou Tran***Aliief Independent School District***Dr. Linda Trinh Vo***University of California, Irvine***Dr. Zha Blong Xiong***University of Minnesota***Dr. Stacey Lee***University of Wisconsin, Madison***KimOanh Nguyen-Lam***U.S. Department of Education***Dr. Max Niedzwiecki***Daylight Consulting Group***Dr. Clara Park***California State University, Northridge***Dr. Mark Pfeifer***SUNY Institute of Technology***Dr. Loan T. Phan***University of New Hampshire***Dr. Karen Quintiliani***California State University, Long Beach***Dr. Angela Reyes***Hunter College, The City University of New York***Dr. Fay Shin***California State University, Long Beach***Dr. Cathy J. Schlund-Vials***University of Connecticut, Storrs***Dr. Yer J. Thao***Portland State University***Dr. Myluong Tran***San Diego State University***Dr. Khatharya Um***University of California, Berkeley***Dr. Terrence G. Wiley***Center for Applied Linguistics***Dr. Kou Yang***California State University, Stanislaus*

### Doctoral Student Editorial Review Board

**Keo Chea-Young***University of Pennsylvania***Ketmani Kouanchao***California State University, Fullerton***Ravy Lao***University of California, Santa Barbara***Thien-Huong Ninh***University of Southern California***Vanna Som***Harvard University***Krissyvan Truong***Claremont Graduate University***Yang Sao Xiong***University of California, Los Angeles***Annie BichLoan Duong***San Joaquin County Office of Education***Peter Tan Keo***Columbia University***Monirith Ly***Texas State University-San Marcos***Malaphone Phommasa***University of California, Santa Barbara***Alisia Tran***University of Minnesota***Silvy Un***University of Minnesota***Yeng Yang***University of Texas, San Antonio*