



**CENTER FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA STUDIES
UC BERKELEY**

NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Center for Southeast Asia Studies at UC Berkeley is pleased to announce that its Chair, **Prof. Penny Edwards**, Associate Professor in the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, is the winner of the 2009 Benda Prize awarded at the Association of Asian Studies annual meeting in Chicago, for her book, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860-1945* (Hawaii, 2007). The Benda Prize is given annually by the AAS Southeast Asia Council to an outstanding newer scholar for a first book in the field of Southeast Asian Studies. This is the second time this prestigious award has been given to a UC Berkeley faculty member. Prof. Peter Zinoman, Associate Professor of History and CSEAS Chair from 2003-2008, was awarded the prize in 2003.

In making this year's award, the prize committee, which is composed of senior faculty in the field of Southeast Asian Studies, noted:

"In Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, Penny Edwards examines brilliantly the metamorphosis of the kingdom of Cambodia into the French-Khmer colonial entity of Cambodge—the chrysalis from which today's Cambodia has emerged. Demonstrating a masterful command of scholarship and of archival, literary, and popular sources, Edwards reveals not a simple dance of colonial domination and resistance but an array of complex collaborations through which Khmer subjects adapted, and embraced as their own, processes set in train by the French: to iconize and secularize Angkor Vat; to promote a Khmer Buddhism separate from Thai influence and free of hoary superstitions; and to root "Khmerness" both in a romanticized antiquity and France-led modernity. In a narrative that is elegantly crafted and ultimately gripping, Edwards links the colonial world of schools, research institutes, and print culture and of museums, monuments, and tourism to the post-colonial nation-building projects of Sihanouk, Lon Nol, and Pol Pot. In doing so, she brings legibility to highly theorized subjects such as hybridity, authenticity, and nationalism and both complicates and enriches our understanding of the colonial era and its legacies in modern Southeast Asia—demonstrating, as Harry J. Benda did, how rigorous historical scholarship can expose surprising ways in which the past is complicit in the present."

Prof. Edwards teaches courses on history and culture of mainland Southeast Asia, with a special focus on Burma and Cambodia, in the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies. Prof. Edwards studied Chinese for her undergraduate degree at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and received an M.Phil. in International Relations from the University of Oxford. Her Ph.D. in History is from Monash University.