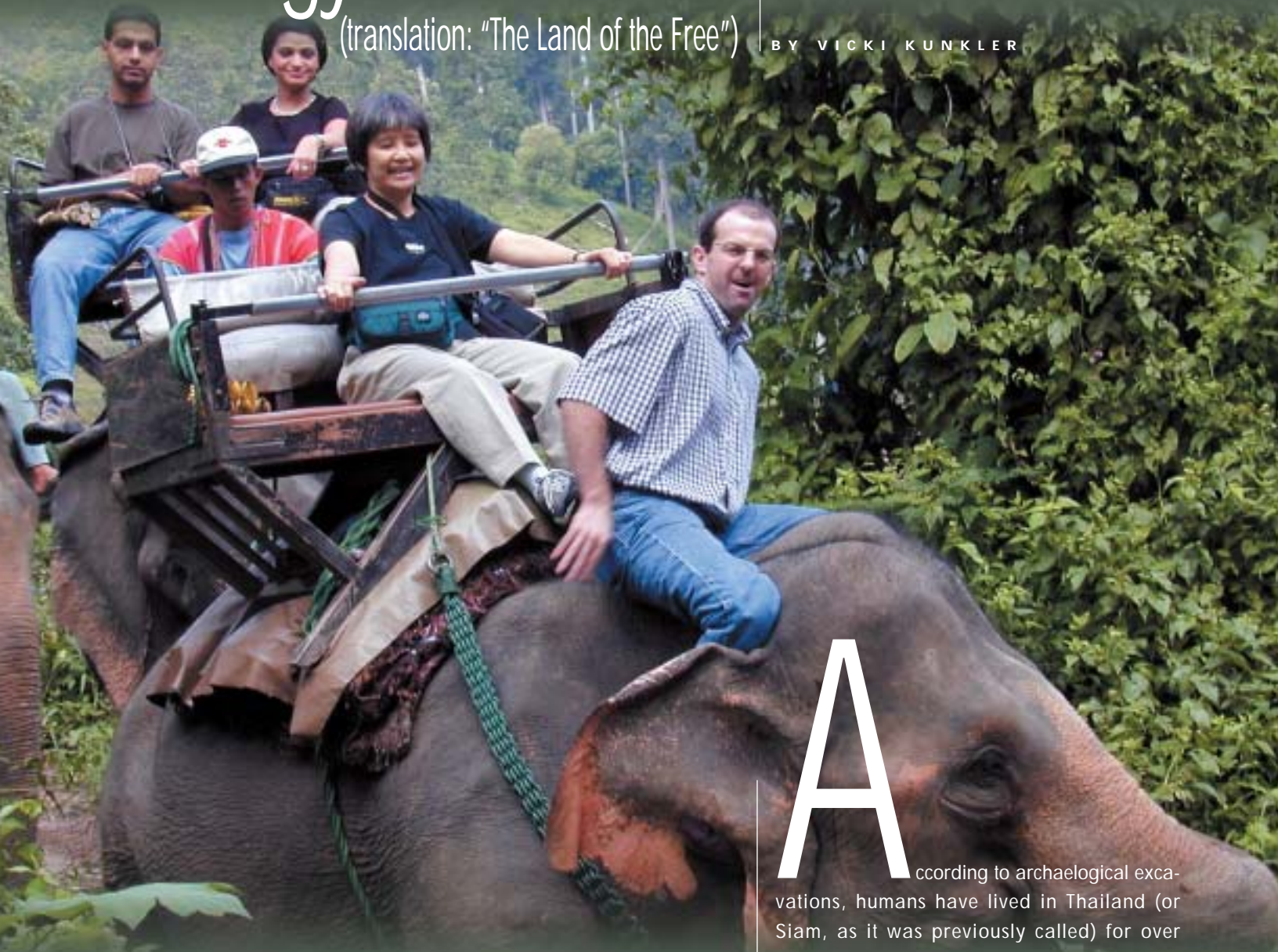


# Radiology in Prathet Thai

(translation: "The Land of the Free")

BY VICKI KUNKLER



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According to archaeological excavations, humans have lived in Thailand (or Siam, as it was previously called) for over 4,000 years. Bordered by Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Malaysia, Thailand is internationally known for its highly refined classical music, dance, and folk arts; beautiful silks; gemstones, such as sapphires; and mineral resources, such as tin.

Between lectures and reviewing case files, an MIR team explored Thailand's flora and fauna: Doctors David Jeck (front), Prensri Barton, Sanjeev Bhalla (back), and Christine Menias.



Above: Sanjeev Bhalla, MD, (center) discusses cases with Thai physicians.

Below: Doctors Bhalla and Bradley Freeman at Wat Mahathat in the Sukhothai Historical Park. Sukhothai was the ancient capital city of Thailand.

For Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology's (MIR's) Premrsri Barton, MD, Thailand has a special meaning: It is her homeland. And for six years, Barton, an associate professor in the Institute's breast imaging section, has introduced MIR faculty to her native land by coordinating community-outreach trips to Thai medical schools and teaching hospitals. The medical teams have provided educational lectures and clinical evaluations for health-care facilities in northeast and southern Thailand and in the capital city of Bangkok.

Barton, who joined the MIR faculty in 1993, has been quite

resourceful in attaining funding for these trips and is appreciative for the sponsorship provided by the Thai Physicians Association of America (TPAA). In fact, TPPA was the impetus for the first trip in 1996. The society was hosting a large, general scientific meeting in Thailand that encompassed all aspects of medicine. They asked Barton for recommendations



for musculoskeletal radiology lecturers, so she quickly recruited doctors Louis Gilula and Anthony Wilson. Barton added a breast imaging segment to the scientific program and asked Barbara Monsees to join her on the trip.

In Thailand, approximately three percent of the country's physicians are radiologists, so the medical community was eager to learn about the latest in radiologic

technology. "Our radiology talks were the most well attended of any lectures at that 1996 meeting," says Barton. "So that set the stage for our subsequent trips."

Barton is a successful recruiter for the trips that now include teaching residents and medical students in several of Thailand's medical schools, such as Khon Kaen, Chiang Mai, and Prince of Songkhla universities. Thailand has a good health-care system, with about 90 provincial hospitals (at least one hospital in each of the 76 provinces) and more than 700 community hospitals throughout the country.

"Although the Thai hospitals can provide good basic medical care, they do not have the higher levels of care available in the United States," says Barton. "Mallinckrodt Institute can play an important role by sharing the expertise gained from seventy-plus years of radiology experience."

For the past two years, one or two Thai residents, sponsored by their government, have come to the Institute as visiting fellows to receive training in chest and abdominal radiology. "Doctor Monsees accepted the first visiting fellow from Thailand—she has been my strongest supporter—

## FACTS AND FIGURES

- **Capital city:** Bangkok
- **Population:** 60+ million
- **Area:** approximately 198,000 square miles
- **Languages:** Thai, English, ethnic and regional dialects
- **Official name:** The Kingdom of Thailand
- **Government:** Democratic, led by a prime minister
- Estimated 99% of Thailand's population is literate
- Only Southeast Asian country never governed by a foreign power

## Participants in MIR's Thai Outreach Program

Prem Sri Barton, MD, coordinator for all Thai outreach trips

1996

Louis Gilula, MD (Radiology); Anthony Wilson, MD (Radiology); Barbara Monsees, MD (Radiology)

1997

Andrew Fisher, MD (Radiology)

1998

Andrew Fisher, MD (Radiology)

2000

Joanne Mortimer, MD (Internal Medicine); Marie Taylor, MD (Radiation Oncology); Barbara Monsees, MD (Radiology); Gerard Doherty, MD (General Surgery)

2001

Sanjeev Bhalla, MD (Radiology); Christine Menias, MD (Radiology); David Jeck, MD (Radiology)

2002

Sanjeev Bhalla, MD (Radiology); Christine Menias, MD (Radiology); Daniel Riew, MD (Orthopaedic Surgery); Robert Swarm, MD (Anesthesiology); Bradley Freeman, MD (General Surgery); Beverly Field, PhD (Psychiatry)





Above: Doctors Barton (right) and Rosakorn, a mammographer at The Breast Health Center (Thunyaruk), Siriraj Hospital in Bangkok

Below: Doctors Menias, Freeman, and Bhalla during rounds of the Trauma Unit at Thammasart University Medical School in Bangkok

and I am most grateful to her and others, such as doctors Jay Heiken and Stuart Sagel, for their efforts with this program,” says Barton. “And the program at MIR is expanding to include nuclear medicine and interventional radiology.”

The incidence of breast cancer in Thailand is low, as is true in most Asian countries, but “it is on the rise, with a five percent increase in the past few years,” says Barton. In 2000, TPPA sponsored a multidisciplinary Breast Cancer Symposium, and several Washington University Medical Center physicians were guest lecturers.

On the most recent trip, the focus was emergency and trauma medicine—an appropriate topic in a country where one of the greatest health threats is from injuries caused by vehicular crashes.

Barton plans to continue the teaching program, taking a multidisciplinary approach and including lectures on all aspects of specific clinical areas. She will also serve as a mammography consultant for a new Thai program that trains nurses to go into the rural communities to educate women about breast cancer and the benefits of mammography. **MIR**

