



Issue 3 – September 2017

Note from the Editors

The [Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme](#) (SAAAP) was created with a donation from the Alphawood Foundation in Chicago to build a world-leading centre for the study of ancient to pre-modern Buddhist and Hindu art of the region. This newsletter features Southeast Asia-related academic art events at SOAS, new publications and items of interest, and events taking place in the institutions of the region that are sending over 80 scholarship students to SOAS through the Alphawood Scholarships programme within SAAAP.

Please send us news from your region, about yourselves, your research and your projects – we'd be delighted to hear from you!

Liam Roberts & Dr Peter D. Sharrock



Dr Tamsyn Barton, Chair of the SAAAP Programme Board

Note from the Chair: Dr Tamsyn Barton looks ahead

It has been a busy year for the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme, and an exciting one. Over the course of 2017, we've striven to build on the successes of the Programme to date through building our team and supporting a whole range of new projects, events and partnerships, which we detail for you in this edition of the SAAAP Newsletter.

We were delighted to welcome new SAAAP Programme Manager Liam Roberts to the programme earlier this year, and we're also just as pleased to be welcoming Programme Administrator Chloe Osborne in the SAAAP Office as well. They will already be familiar faces to Scholars and staff here at SOAS, and we know they'll be providing a warm welcome to new incoming Alphawood Scholars this September as well.

We have a brilliant new cohort of Alphawood Scholars joining us this academic year, and I would like to extend a personal welcome to each of them. Studying at SOAS through an Alphawood Scholarship is a remarkable opportunity for Scholars to develop and advance their knowledge, skills and academic networks which we know will be of real benefit to the field of ancient and pre-modern art and archaeology in the region – as well as an unforgettable experience that will benefit them each personally.

We also bid adieu to our graduating cohort of Alphawood Scholars, returning to Southeast Asia to take up new challenges and to bring their experience and skills to bear in their home institutions. We look forward to keeping in close contact with all Alphawood alumni, and to continue to work together on new projects that we'll be supporting through SAAAP over the course of the next year and beyond.

Tamsyn Barton is Chair of the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme and a Trustee of SOAS University of London.

The Alphawood Scholarships at SOAS

Each September, we must say goodbye to our outgoing group of dedicated and inspiring Alphawood Scholars as they graduate from their programmes of study. We are extremely proud of the dedication and positive spirit that they have shown, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate each and every one of them on their success so far. We are confident that they will go on to even greater achievements when they return home, and we look forward keenly to hear about their future progress.

At the same time, this is an exciting opportunity to welcome the next generation of Alphawood Scholars to SOAS: we are delighted that they are joining us. I am sure that they will be helped to integrate into the School of Arts by our continuing Scholars, an enthusiastic, committed and friendly group who enter their academic programmes this September having graduated from their English-language studies. I know that they will be keen to welcome and support their new fellow students.

Once again, on behalf of the whole School of Arts, let me extend heartfelt congratulations to our recent graduates and a warm welcome to all our newcomers!

Anna Contadini is Chair of the SAAAP Scholarships Sub-board and Head of the School of Arts at SOAS.



Graduating Alphawood Scholars (2016/17)

Thet Mon Htoo (Myanmar; MA); **Yamin Htay** (Myanmar; MA); **Pawinna Phetluan** (Thailand; MA); **Menghong Chhum** (Cambodia; MA); **Pipad Krajaejun** (Thailand; MA); **Samnang Huot** (Cambodia; MA); **Panggah Ardiyansyah** (Indonesia; MA); **Eko Bastiawan** (Indonesia; MA); **Aria Danaparamita** (Indonesia; MA); **Kunthea Kou** (Cambodia; Diploma); **Chanraksmeay Muong** (Cambodia; Diploma)

Continuing Alphawood Scholars (2017/18)

Praphaphan Chuenkaek (Thailand); **Kittikhun Janyaem** (Thailand); **Ye Myat Lwin** (Myanmar); **Thon Tho** (Cambodia); **Nachanok Wongkhaluang** (Thailand); **Chonthicha Khunthong** (Thailand); **Chanraksmey Muong** (Cambodia); **Sopheara Chap** (Cambodia); **Vuthyneath Khut** (Cambodia); **Hninn Wut Yee Latt** (Myanmar); **Tu Anh Nguyen Thi** (Vietnam); **Van Tho Nguyen** (Vietnam); **Akpivath Vitou** (Cambodia); **Sanda Linn** (Myanmar)

New Alphawood Scholars (2017/18)

Conan Cheong (Singapore); **Karuna Srikureja** (Thailand); **Selina Chong** (Singapore); **Si Ming Pang** (Singapore); **Chy Rotha** (Cambodia); **Liliekh Suhardjono** (Indonesia); **Kyaw Minn Htin** (Myanmar); **Christa Hardjasaputra** (Indonesia); **Sreivy Bun** (Cambodia); **Leakmy Kong** (Cambodia); **Theint Theint Aung** (Myanmar); **Pwint Phyu Maung** (Myanmar); **Monyroath Reth** (Cambodia); **Ranet Hong** (Cambodia); **Sopheap Meas** (Cambodia); **Vitou Phirom** (Cambodia); **Tuan Nguyen Anh** (Vietnam); **Sanpiseth Kim** (Cambodia); **Kunthy Seng** (Cambodia); **Nan Htike** (Myanmar)

Alphawood Scholarship applications for 2018/19

The 2018/19 window for new Alphawood Scholarships applications opens on

1 November 2017

and closes on

22 December 2017

For more information on the application process and window,
please visit the Alphawood Scholarships page at

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/scholarships/alphawood-scholarships.html>

From our scholars

Cities and Kings: a review of the Ancient treasures of Myanmar exhibition

Conan Cheong (Alphawood MA student)



Dr Stephen Murphy (left), chief Southeast Asian curator at the Asian Civilisations Museum, opens the *Cities and Kings* exhibition with Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Tsien Loong (centre) and Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi (right)

Earlier this year, the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) in Singapore showcased the art and culture of Myanmar with a landmark exhibition of important loans from the national museums of Myanmar, supplemented with pieces from our own collection. Many of these fine works of art have never left Myanmar, such as a lobed silver bowl from Sri Ksetra, inscribed in Pyu and decorated in repoussé with a peacock.

Heidi Tan, current Alphawood SOAS PhD candidate, initiated the *Cities and Kings: the Ancient Treasures of Myanmar* exhibition with the Ministry of Culture in Myanmar while she was principal curator at ACM. The exhibition was taken over by Dr Stephen Murphy, a SOAS alumnus and ACM Curator for Southeast Asia, as well as myself in my capacity as Assistant Curator for Cross-Cultural Art at the ACM.

As a real testament to the strong bilateral cultural relations between Singapore and Myanmar, the opening ceremony on 1 December 2016 was graced by State Counsellor of Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi, and Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Hsien Loong.

The great cities and urban centres in Myanmar's long history served as the focal points of the exhibition — in particular, Sri Ksetra, Bagan, and Mandalay. The Mon cities in lower Myanmar, the Shan highland polities, and Arakan on the west coast were also represented. Craft objects from colonial Yangon gave insight into its growth as an important port city.

Famed for its wish-fulfilling powers among pilgrims to the Bagan Archaeological Museum, an 11th century sandstone Buddha with hands in *dharmachakra* mudra was a highlight of the show. Monks from the Burmese Buddhist Temple in Singapore were invited to the museum to conduct a welcoming ritual for this much-venerated image.

Representative figural sculptures from not only Bagan, but also Pyu, Mon, Arakan, Inwa, Nyaungyan, and Konbaung cities demonstrated how Myanmar aesthetics developed over time, assimilating outside influences. For example, a 16th or 17th century silver-plated bronze Buddha made in Arakan (Rakhine State) has stylistic elements from Sri Lanka, which could have been facilitated by a Dutch presence in both kingdoms.

Manuscripts from the 19th and 20th centuries hint at the rich literary traditions in Myanmar, while luxury goods made in lacquer and silver exemplify the adaptability of craftsmen to changing markets. A silver miniature stupa, carved on the base with scenes of teak logging in Upper Myanmar, was gifted to an employee of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation on the occasion of his retirement in 1914.

A display of *nat* statues carved in wood tells the oft-neglected story of vernacular religion in Myanmar before Buddhism and Hinduism. *Nats* are indigenous nature spirits still propitiated in the country today. When conducting condition checks on the *nat* statues for the trip to Singapore, the ACM curators were warned to be respectful and not to wear black, for fear of incurring bad luck.

The catalogue published in conjunction with the exhibition, edited by Stephen Murphy, features essays by international and in-country experts on Myanmar, including Elizabeth Moore, San Win, Win Kyaing, Charlotte Galloway, and Heidi Tan.

***Cities and Kings: Ancient Treasures from Myanmar* was held from 2 December 2016 to 5 March 2017 at the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore.**

Conan Cheong (Singapore), Assistant Curator at the Asian Civilisations Museum, is a current Alphawood Scholar and MA candidate.

Harihara Reunited: reunion of statue's head and body must be permanent

Socheat Nhean (Alphawood MA)

The returning of the head of Harihara (half Shiva, half Vishnu) from Musée Guimet, France to Cambodia in 2016 was both exciting and worrying. It is exciting because the head, which had been separated from its body in Cambodia for over a century, could be reunited and reattached. It is very rare for Cambodian objects to be returned from France after being kept there for several decades.

This reunion of body and head of Harihara received a warm welcome from the government. Deputy Prime Minister Sok An said in a speech on January 21, 2016: “According to the Cambodians’ belief, this is a good symbol of reunion, reunification, harmony and strength of the Cambodian nation’s spirit, and a good omen for this new year 2016, which will bring about prosperity and new achievements to the Cambodian nation in addition to the existing ones attained by the Royal Government of Cambodia.”

However, it transpires that the returning of the stone head was made under a loan agreement. Therefore, this reunion of Harihara’s head and body is not permanent. The head remains the property of the French state.

In return, according to the loan agreement, a pedestal of the Goddess Uma dancing was to be brought to the Musée Guimet. Uma’s pedestal and feet will remain the property of the Cambodian state. This loan exchange is valid for five years.

Although no one knows for sure what will happen to the statue in five years when the loan agreement expires, the reunited parts of the two icons may be separated one day, unless there is another agreement.

A version of this article originally appeared in the Phnom Penh Post, 30 January 2016.

Socheat Nhean (Cambodia) is an Alphawood alumnus (MA, 2014). He has recently been appointed to the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in Cambodia.



© REUTERS
The Musée Guimet facilitates the return of the head of this Harihara statue in situ in Cambodia. The head’s return is currently subject to a loan agreement.

A scholars' experience: The journey so far

Chanraksmei Muong (Alphawood Diploma graduate and MA student)



Alphawood Scholar Chanraksmei Muong (Cambodia) begins his MA programme in September 2017

I have been very happy to achieve the unique opportunity to study at SOAS through the Alphawood Scholarship programme. Since I began my studies at SOAS, I have improved my academic English proficiency and have had the wonderful experience of meeting and befriending many other students from Southeast Asia in this programme.

I have felt especially fortunate to be both an alumnus and current scholar through the programme. I was first awarded an Alphawood

Scholarship to take up the Postgraduate Diploma programme in 2016-17 after completing my English-language studies here. Through this programme, I have learned and achieved so much relating to my field of study, that I was inspired to apply for a higher degree as well. I then applied and was accepted by SAAAP to receive an Alphawood Scholarship to take up the MA to continue my Masters Programme on History of Art and Archaeology this year.

There have been many benefits to being an Alphawood Scholar. One benefit is the opportunity to grow my knowledge and experience in the field, which would not otherwise have been possible without this scholarship. There are also great opportunities to befriend other students from many different places and, the most important thing is, to discuss and exchange ideas and information with other students and professors. The benefits of such interaction help us all to develop a greater understanding about the art and archaeology of the region from different perspectives. Those achievements have provided me with a very important basis to continue my further study.

It is a very great opportunity that I have continued and communicated with incoming scholars. I strongly believe that this opportunity is a firm bridge leading us to develop our field of study through the academic experience and through the interactions with the other Scholars here as well. This also brings us the great chance to keep communicating and working together in the future of our academic lives.

Chanraksmei Muong (Cambodia) is both an Alphawood alumnus (Diploma in Asian Art, 2017) and a current Alphawood Scholar and MA student

New Announcements

Knowledge through experience: SAAAP launches the Postgraduate Internships Programme for Alphawood Scholars

Ben Murtagh

SAAAP is delighted to announce that we will be awarding bursaries for a small number of Postgraduate Internships for current and graduating Alphawood Scholars to undertake internships in museums, galleries and libraries in and around London this year.



The internships are intended to facilitate postgraduate work and engagement with ongoing projects related to the SAAAP mission and remit:

To support and advance the understanding and preservation of Southeast Asian Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture from ancient to pre-modern times. The SAAAP remit includes study of the built environment, sculpture, painting, illustrated texts, textiles and other tangible or visual representations, along with the written word related to these, and archaeological, museum and cultural heritage.

We have been soliciting Expressions of Interest from galleries, museums and libraries in London and the region, identifying projects and exhibitions where Alphawood Scholars might have opportunity to contribute their knowledge and to expand their professional experience. Internships are expected to last a maximum of 60 hours, and will fall between September 2017 and March 2018 in the first instance, with new opportunities expected to open up thereafter. All interns selected for placement will be eligible for a bursary determined by the time of the internship itself.

Alphawood Scholars and alumni interested in pursuing a Postgraduate Internship opportunity should contact the SAAAP Programme Manager, Liam Roberts, at lr25@soas.ac.uk to learn about the newest opportunities.

Ben Murtagh is SAAAP Programme Board, Outreach Sub-board and Research & Publications Sub-board member, and Head of the School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics at SOAS

Book launch: *The Arts of Southeast Asia from the SOAS Collections* published and launched in Penang

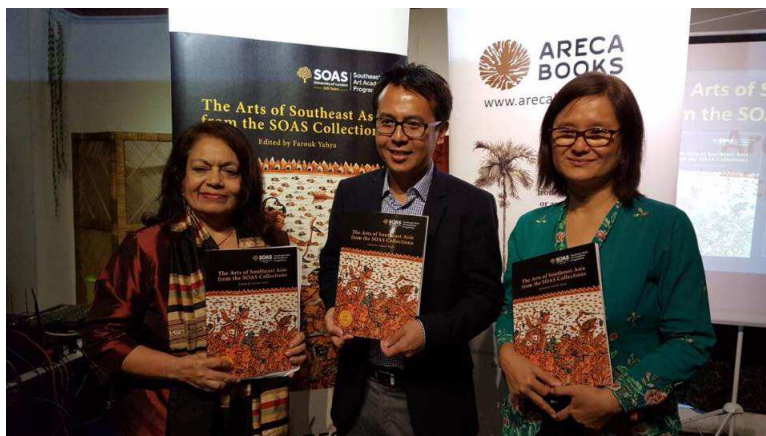
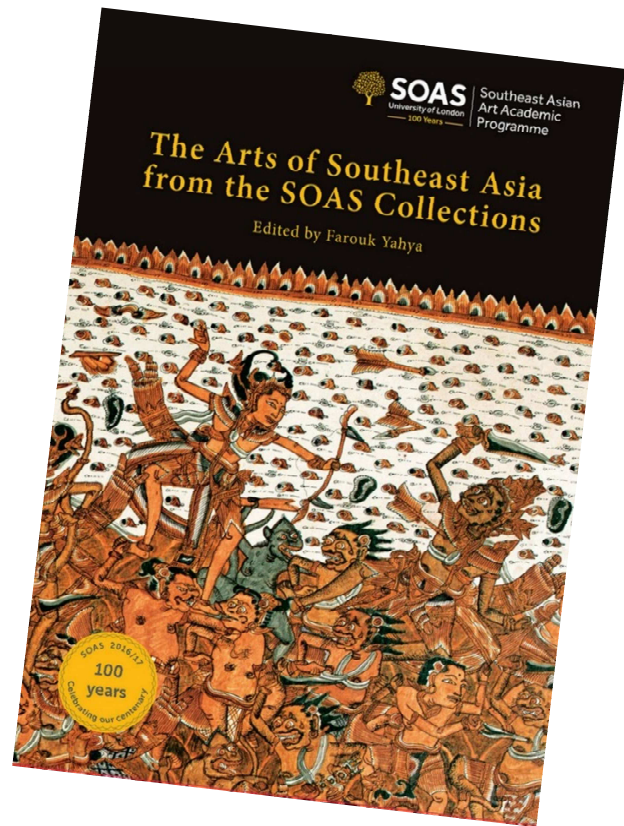
Farouk Yahya

The recently published SAAAP-sponsored book *The Arts of Southeast Asia from the SOAS Collections* is the definitive catalogue of an exhibition that was held in the Foyle Gallery of the Brunei Gallery, SOAS, from 28 May 2014 to 2 September 2016. The exhibition was held to mark the inauguration of SAAAP, and was curated by Professor Anna Contadini of SOAS, with myself as Assistant Curator. It also represents a further stage in the “Treasures of SOAS Project,” a programme designed to display and research the SOAS collections.

The catalogue highlights 75 objects relating to Southeast Asia that are held in the SOAS collections. The material covers Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, with objects dating from circa 1000 BCE up to more recent times. They include manuscripts, rare printed books, paintings, maps, textiles, sculptures, metalwork and ceramics.

I acted as the editor of the catalogue, which includes a number of contributions from various scholars from within and outside of SOAS. The book was published by Areca Books, a niche publisher based in Penang, Malaysia, and the publication was made possible by a grant from SAAAP.

The book came out in April 2017, and thus its publication coincides nicely with the SOAS Centenary celebrations. It is now available for sale on the [Areca Books](#) website, in the SOAS Bookshop, and in various bookshops in Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.



Book launch at the Black Kettle Café in George Town, Penang. Left to right: Dato' Dr. Wazir Jahan Karim, Farouk Yahya, Khoo Salma (co-founder of Areca Books) (Photo: Courtesy of Areca Books)

Recently, a book launch was organised by Areca Books at the Black Kettle Café in George Town, Penang, on 29 July 2017. The book was officially launched by Dato' Dr. Wazir Jahan Karim, an eminent Malaysian anthropologist who has done much work on heritage and conservation in Malaysia. The launch was accompanied by a talk that I gave on “Malay Magic and Divination” as part of the George Town Festival, an annual arts festival held to celebrate George Town's status as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Around 130 people attended the event, and the

audience included scholars, students, curators, journalists and members of the general public. For a selection of photos and videos from the talk, please visit the [Areca Books Facebook](#) page for more details.

The Arts of Southeast Asia from the SOAS Collections is available now at the [SOAS Book Shop](#) and online at [Areca Books](#).

Farouk Yahya is Leverhulme Research Assistant at Oxford University and Postdoctoral Research Associate in the School of Arts at SOAS

Crossing new thresholds: Announcing *Pratu*, the new Journal of Postgraduate Research on the Hindu-Buddhist Art, Architecture and Archaeology of Ancient to Pre-modern Southeast Asia

PRATU Editorial Team

A group of postgraduate research students in the Department of History of Art and Archaeology at SOAS, together with advisory members of SAAAP's Research & Publications Sub-board, are currently preparing the launch of *Pratu*, a new online journal dedicated to the Hindu-Buddhist art, architecture and archaeology of ancient to pre-modern Southeast Asia. The journal welcomes research on topics covered by SAAAP's remit: 'study of the built environment, sculpture, painting, illustrated texts, textiles and other tangible or visual representations, along with the written word related to these, and archaeological, museum and cultural heritage'.

Meaning 'gateway' or 'entrance' in several Southeast Asian languages, *Pratu* offers a transitional space for emerging scholars. This includes scholars who would like to reach a wider readership by publishing in English and benefitting from the peer-review process, as well as scholars who wish to reach an international audience while publishing in a Southeast Asian national language.

The journal will be issued annually, beginning in 2018, with a mix of feature articles and short reports. Although the working language is English, submissions in Southeast Asian languages are encouraged and the editorial team will endeavour to provide peer review, translation and editing services for these.

More information and a call for papers will be published shortly. For further details the editorial team can be contacted at: pratujournal@soas.ac.uk

The Pratu Editorial Team is comprised of Alphawood PhD candidates Duyen Nguyen and Heidi Tan, Alphawood MA alumna and PhD candidate Udomluck Hoontrakul as well as SOAS PhD candidate Ben Wreyford. SAAAP Research and Publications Sub-board members Ashley Thompson, Christian Luczanits and Rachel Harrison act as advisors to the doctoral student team.

Digital horizons: SOAS joins the Southeast Asian Materials Project (SEAM)

Jotika Khur-Yearn

Thanks to the support of the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme, SOAS has become a full member of the Southeast Asian Materials Project ([SEAM](#)), which will give students and staff access to historical journals and government serials and thousands of historic manuscripts, as well as more than 300 historic newspapers from every country in the region in national, minority, and English languages.

SEAM was founded in 1970 by North American institutions specialising in Southeast Asian materials. SEAM's microform and digital collections form a large pool of historical, political, linguistic, economic, and geographical data and primary source materials not available elsewhere. SEAM holdings include more than 300 historic newspapers from every country in the region (in national, minority, and English or other colonial languages), similar numbers of historical journals and government serials and thousands of historic manuscripts.

Through joining SEAM, SOAS members can now borrow materials from SEAM collections via Interlibrary Loan or Electronic Document Delivery and submit proposals to SEAM for microfilming, for the digitisation of materials from SOAS holdings, or to purchase materials for the SEAM Project.

Membership is designed to help SAAAP achieve its aim of strengthening teaching and research on Southeast Asia. The SEAM Collection contains sources of information not available in the SOAS Library, nor at any other UK library. The following books can now be downloaded as PDFs via [on-campus](#) access, while [off-campus](#) access is available for current SOAS staff and students.

- *Angkor, Fransk Indo-Kina*, by Erik Arentz (1931).
- *The Khmer king at Basan (1371-1373) and the restoration of the Cambodian chronology during the 14th and 15th centuries* / by O. W. Wolters (1965).
Studies in Sanskrit inscriptions of ancient Cambodia, on the basis of first three volumes of Dr. R.C. Majumdar's edition / by Mahesh Kumar Sharan (1974).
- *Chot mai het sayam samai khao nai krungthep khao thoralek nok* (19th century Thai newspaper, 1883-84).

The SEAM digital library is, however, small compared with the vast microfilm collection. As was said during library forum meetings in June, we need to develop a strategy to push SEAM to expand its digital offering. We will record our usage of SEAM data in early 2018 to measure the usefulness of this resource. We must also encourage SEAM to add to its resources on ancient to pre-modern art and archaeology as this is the specific remit of the SAAAP agreement digitization project in this field, which would then help strengthen the areas of teaching and research on Southeast Asia at SOAS, with wider range of options for access to source of information.

I would therefore like to encourage SOAS members and friends to take this great opportunity of getting access the SEAM Collection.

Jotika Khur-Yearn is Subject Librarian (Southeast Asia and Pacific Islands) at SOAS

Recent news

A Metropolis of Buddhism: Report on the Bagan Metropolis Conference 2017

Elizabeth Moore



The *Bagan Metropolis Conference* (10 – 14 July 2017) in Yangon and Bagan, Myanmar celebrated not only the unique role of the Bagan Temple complex at the crossroads of Buddhist traditions in the region, but also the Alphawood Foundation and the SAAAP Alphawood Scholarships through new perspectives on the role of this ancient Buddhist kingdom.

The tone of the conference was set by the Keynote speech of Dr Heather Elgood, who underlined the shared traditions between the Buddhist

culture of Bagan and that of North East India. These connections were also at the heart of the presentations by a dedicated panel of Alphawood Scholarship alumni who were able to apply much of their experience and knowledge gained during their time at SOAS through the presentations that they led. All brought forward innovative ways to frame the art and religion of Bagan.

The conference discussion itself (10, 11 July) was comprised of four panels: History, Alphawood Scholarship Alumni, Art and Contemporary, each with four to five speakers. The post-conference trip to Bagan (12-14 July) was led by the Alphawood Scholars and other speakers looking at the on-site evidence of the Buddhist art and epigraphy of the Bagan Kingdom.

The common focus on the ancient Buddhist art of Bagan bonded the Alphawood Alumni together with a current PG Diploma student, incoming PG Diploma students and upcoming PG Diploma and MA applicants. This combined educational and social activity was significant, as a common trait of Myanmar scholars is to not cite their contemporaries, only their elders in keeping with the social respect accorded teachers in this society.

One of the Alphawood Alumni, Dr Win Myat Aung, originally proposed establishing this conference on his return to Myanmar after completing his PG Diploma in Asian Arts at SOAS. Thanks to his suggestion, successful collaboration began in developing the conference themes and panels with SEAMEO CHAT (Yangon), the Centre for History and Tradition, and the Ministry of Education, Myanmar. The institutional impact was significant in the formal collaboration of SOAS with the Ministry of Education. Impact within universities was excellent given the participation of the Heads of Department of Archaeology and Department of Anthropology (Yangon University), the Head of the History Department (Distance University Yangon), and the attendance and chairing by senior member

of the Myanmar Historical Commission. Their participation successfully reminded all of the generous Alphawood Scholarships.

The activity has contributed significantly to the overall work of SAAAP in its scholarly focus on the ancient Buddhist art of Myanmar and in its pedagogical focus on the Alphawood Scholars. The SAAAP mission includes mentoring of the Alphawood Alumni,



Bagan Metropolis Group at Bagan (Photo by Su Latt Win, Alphawood Alumna)

assisting and encouraging them. Bagan Metropolis, in its planning, execution and follow up is closely following the SAAAP aim in this mentoring process.

It was extremely valuable to have the input of Dr Elgood, on the art and the aims of the SAAAP programme. Teachers and students listened closely and responded to her exploration of the special links between Bagan and North East India during our trip, her first visit to Bagan. We are in the process of mounting a Bagan Metropolis website hosted by SAAAP to be followed by a definitive publication and printed version to be published in Yangon in our continued collaboration with SEAMEO CHAT.

Read more about the Bagan Metropolis Conference, its presentations, event summary and photos on the [SAAAP web pages](#).

Elizabeth Moore is SAAAP Outreach Sub-board and Scholarships Sub-board member, In-Region SAAAP Liaison and Professor Emeritus at SOAS.



Visit to Ratu Boko during the SAAAP/UGM Summer Programme in Yogyakarta

Yogyakarta: The SAAAP/UGM Summer Programme for 2017

Peter Sharrock

Forty academics, PhD and MA students participated in a SAAAP-sponsored Summer Programme held at Java's cultural capital of Yogyakarta on the campus of the Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) from 27 July-3 August.

In the presence of world-leading scholars Hudaya Kandahjaya (Numata Center), Jeffrey Sundberg (University of Arizona), Andrea Acri (EPHE Paris), Jinah Kim (Harvard University) and John Guy (Metropolitan Museum of Art), four days of intensive and highly-stimulating lectures were followed by three days of site visits with



Jeffrey Sundberg, University of Arizona, speaks to the SAAAP/UGM Summer Programme in Yogyakarta

UGM archaeology experts. Participants judged it the most rewarding seminar they had ever experienced on the 8th and 9th Century monuments of Central Java. Students (including current, past and potentially future Alphawood scholars) came from across Southeast Asia, India, Europe and the United States.

Following on from an inspiring address by Hudaya Kandahjaya, who has studied Borobudur and related texts in Sanskrit and Old Javanese all his life, subsequent sessions probed deep into the Buddhist messages enshrined in the enigmatic 9th Century stone pyramid covered on all sides by life-size Buddha statues – the largest Buddhist monument on earth. Jeffrey Sundberg delivered his latest research on the nearby Buddhist Ratu Boko monument that was, according to

inscriptions and unique monastic architecture features, closely linked to the then-dominant Abhayagiri monastery in Sri Lanka. Later, he led the group across the extensive Ratu Boko ruins, arguing with non-stop expertise for his interpretation of its meaning and function. He dwelt too on the implications of this unique inter-state alliance between Esoteric Buddhist institutions who were then engaged in a remarkably successful strategy to extend their doctrines and political formulae from southern India, across Southeast Asia, to China, Korea and Japan.

On other days, the group studied the Saiva temples at Prambanan with Andrea Acri, and toured the smaller temples set among the volcanoes belching sulphuric smoke high on the Dieng ('gods') plateau.

A SAAAP-UGM publication on this exceptional event is now under preparation.

Peter Sharrock is SAAAP Outreach Sub-board and Scholarships Sub-board member and Senior Teaching Fellow in the School of Arts at SOAS

Inspiring voices: a review of the SAAAP/CSEAS Seminar Series so far

Ashley Thompson

The SOAS Centre for Southeast Asian Studies is delighted to continue hosting an annual research event series sponsored by SAAAP. Hosting a wide range of international scholars at the cutting edge of research on Southeast Asian Hindu-Buddhist art and archaeology, the series is designed to bolster the SOAS research environment while enabling speakers to seek feedback on work-in-progress through post-talk discussions.

This year saw the regular Research Talks complemented by collaborative Research Workshops – more elaborate events involving multiple speakers and soliciting focussed responses from SOAS staff.



Prof Rasmi Shoocongdej (left) of Silpakorn University in Thailand leads a SAAAP/CSEAS Seminar at SOAS on 4 July, introduced by Ashley Thompson

Research Talks included Musée Guimet Curator Pierre Baptiste, on French Indochina's formative links with Southeast Asian Art and Archaeology; Art Historian Sadiah Boonstra on Indonesian Wayang Heritage Politics; Art Historian Gabrielle Abbe on colonial sales of Khmer artefacts; and Archaeologist Pierre-Yves Manguin on the origins of Srivijaya.

A first workshop on Methodologies in Southeast Asian Art History highlighted the work of Tran Ky Phuong and Soumya James on ancient Cham and Khmer art. The second workshop brought four SOAS Professors into dialogue with Centenary Fellow Rasmi Shoocongdej and PhD student Udomluck Hoontrakul on the topic of 'Critical Heritage' in Southeast Asia.

[Watch this space](#) for the exciting 2017-18 line-up!

Ashley Thompson is Hiram W. Woodward Chair in Southeast Asian Art, Chair of the SAAAP Research & Publications Sub-board, Member of the SAAAP Scholarships Sub-board and Chair of the Centre for South East Asian Studies at SOAS

EuroSEAS: A review of Europe's leading Southeast Asian conference

Eko Bastiawan (Alphawood MA)

The ninth Conference of the European Association for Southeast Asian Studies 2017 (EuroSEAS) took place at the iconic Examination Schools, Oxford University in Oxford. This event was held from the 16th to 18th of August 2017 and included around 450 conference participants representing over 40 countries around the world.



Speakers from the panel “Reappraising Figurative Ornamentation: mid-10th to mid-20th century” at the EuroSEAS Conference 2017 (left to right: Eko Bastiawan, Denise Heywood, Lesley Pullen, Lupt Utama)

Presenting as an Alphawood Scholar with the support of the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme’s *Academic Support Fund*, I delivered a paper entitled “Ornamentation in Miniature: Nganjuk Bronzes” which is part of my on-Masters dissertation research at SOAS under the supervision of Dr. Christian Luczanits.

The paper I presented was under the panel called “Reappraising Figurative Ornamentation: mid-10th to mid-20th century” and was convened by Lesley Pullen from SOAS. Other speakers in the panel included: Lesley Pullen herself (who discussed a case study of 13th century

Manjusri sculpture from East Java – in particular, investigating the roundels textile patterned on the sculpture); Denise Heywood, an independent scholar, talked about decorative elements on figurative depictions in the sacred art of Laos; while the last speaker, also an independent scholar Lupt Utama, presented a paper on Buddhist cosmology and Hindu mythology motifs of Indian chintz and objects for the early Bangkok court.

The three-day conference was filled with many fascinating panels with the topics ranging from ancient Southeast Asian arts to the modern and challenging issues the areas are now facing. This conference was also attended by many top scholars in Southeast Asian studies both from the Southeast Asia regions in particular and international scholars in general. Additionally, this event also provided a great opportunity for young scholars, like myself, to not only meet and discuss but also build connections with the many other scholars who participated in this event, which will be useful for my future study and career.

Eko Bastiawan is a recent SOAS graduate and Alphawood alumnus (MA, 2017)

SAAAP Academic Support Fund

The Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme invites applications to its Academic Support Fund.

The Fund supports individual and group research projects, conferences, workshops, publications and other activities and outputs which further the research and outreach aims of the Programme and its remit. The Fund is open to all SOAS staff, current SOAS postgraduate students and SOAS alumni, and applications may be submitted at any time.

To find out more and to apply for project support, please visit the [SAAAP home page](#) and download our [application form and submission guidelines](#).

From the region

Engaging bright minds: Updates on the Myanmar Libraries Project

Elizabeth Moore



At the SAAAP-sponsored Yangon Library in the Anthropology Department at Yangon University. Volunteers work to catalogue and arrange the materials for ease of access

The Myanmar Libraries Project continues to help provide access to a focused collection of books and articles on the ancient Hindu and Buddhist art of Southeast Asia.

Building on an initial donation made for the project fourteen years ago, in October 2016, the Yangon Library (an initiative of the Myanmar Libraries project) moved to the Annex of the Anthropology Department at Yangon University. This has had a positive impact on accessibility and visibility: teachers and students regularly drop in during the library opening hours to consult a book or to discuss their research with others. The library has become known as a place to be able to sit and read quietly, taking advantage of the open shelving access to browse and discover new and often unexpected images and ideas.

New books are regularly donated to the library, which we announce on our [own dedicated Facebook](#) – we're proud to have nearly 350 followers of the page to date, with frequent new requests to join the group. As the community grows, we're encouraging reading and the furtherance of scholarship on the ancient Buddhist and Hindu arts of Southeast Asia – all of which is made possible by the generous bequest of the Alphawood Foundation to SOAS.

Through accessing the library, not only do scholars gain the opportunity to develop their knowledge base, but I've also been able to meet with prospective applicants to the Alphawood Scholarships scheme, to discuss the scheme, to advise on the application process and to help guide applicants in the complex process of becoming an international student moving to the UK. This continues to be a

valuable opportunity to engage with some of the brightest minds in the area who are attracted to the opportunities at SOAS and the ways the Alphawood Scholarships scheme can help them to realise these opportunities.

Elizabeth Moore is SAAAP Outreach Sub-board and Scholarships Sub-board member, In-Region SAAAP Liaison and Professor Emeritus at SOAS.

Sign up and join in with the SAAAP Newsletter!

The SAAAP Newsletter is published three times annually, with contributions from across the SAAAP Community – Alphawood Scholars and alumni, SOAS academics and key international project partners. The Newsletter is edited by Dr Peter Sharrock and Liam Roberts.

The Newsletter is open for new contributions and submissions from Alphawood scholars, alumni, academics and partners – if you are interested in having your article featured in the Newsletter (or if you are interested in guest editing the next edition), please contact Dr Peter Sharrock at ps56@soas.ac.uk.

You can also sign up to the Newsletter to ensure you receive future editions directly in your inbox. Please email alophawoodscholarships@soas.ac.uk to sign up. We look forward to hearing from you!



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