



Issue 8 – July 2019

Note from the Editors

The [Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme](#) is a transformational programme that aims to further the *understanding and preservation of ancient to pre-modern Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture in Southeast Asia*. The Programme supported over 90 scholarships between 2014 and 2019, funds three fully endowed academic posts at SOAS, as well as research and publishing initiatives, conferences, lectures and workshops in London and Southeast Asia.

SAAAP is designed to strengthen SOAS' research expertise and existing institutional links to create a vibrant network linking the art, archaeology and heritage organisations in the Southeast Asian region.

This edition of the SAAAP Newsletter has been edited by Chloe Osborne (SAAAP Programme Administrator). If you would like to be involved in the production of future editions of the Newsletter, or if you would like to report on any news from the region or any SAAAP-related activity you've been a part of, please do let us know – we'd be delighted to hear from you! Please contact Chloe at co20@soas.ac.uk

Note from the Chair: Dr Tamsyn Barton



I'm delighted to introduce the 8th edition of the SAAAP newsletter, which contains a very full roundup of articles on the recent initiatives that the programme is proud to have sponsored. This issue begins with a report from Liam Roberts on the highly successful SAAAP Celebration of Graduation Event, which took place in Singapore in April earlier this year.

The event was a really memorable occasion, intended to celebrate the commitment and hard work of our Alphawood Scholars over the past five years, and to bring them all together for the first time since graduation. The Event gave all those involved with SAAAP the chance to pause and reflect on

the successes of the programme as a whole, and in this issue we have many accounts of the fascinating work being done through the programme in various ways, both with publications, fieldwork research, global events and of course by our Alphawood Scholars and alumni. They have been the jewel in the crown of the SAAAP programme.

As the 2018/2019 academic calendar winds down, we begin to bid adieu to our graduating cohort of Alphawood Scholars, who will be returning to Southeast Asia to take up new challenges in heritage institutions in the region. Meanwhile, we look forward to welcoming our new Alphawood PhD Scholars, Sonetra Seng from Cambodia and Panggah Ardiyansyah from Indonesia, who will be joining us over the next two years. We're thrilled to be able to continue the Scholarships scheme by welcoming Sonetra and Panggah back to SOAS to build further on the academic skills they gained whilst here as MA Scholars, and are excited to see how they progress as postgraduate researchers.

We hope that you enjoy reading this edition of the newsletter, which is testament to the considerable achievements of the programme over the past years.

Tamsyn Barton is Chair of the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme Board and a Trustee of SOAS



The Alphawood Alumni, 2014-2018, with endowed posts, SOAS Trustees, and SAAAP management staff at the SAAAP Celebration of Graduation Event in Singapore, 12th April 2019

The Alphawood Alumni Celebration of Graduation Event– The Asian Civilisations Museum Singapore, 12th April 2019

SAAAP Manager **Liam Roberts** reports back on the first SAAAP Graduation Celebration

The Alphawood Scholarships scheme, situated at the heart of the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme, is perhaps the most significant scholarships programme dedicated to the field of ancient Southeast Asian Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture anywhere in the world. SOAS remains honoured to host and lead this exceptional and unique programme, to invite outstanding Southeast Asian students of the region's religious arts heritage into our scholarly community and to continue to build up Alphawood Alumni as a robust academic and professional network of emerging leaders in the field.



Kenny Ting, Director of the ACM

To this end, we were delighted to formally recognise the achievements of four cohorts of Alphawood Scholarship graduates through our first Alphawood Celebration of Graduation ceremony, held this April at the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore.

Between 2014 and 2018, SOAS graduated 55 Alphawood Scholars from their programmes of academic study, including from the Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art and Master of Arts in History of Art and Archaeology / Religious Arts of Asia. In the great majority of cases, our Alumni are obliged through the terms of their student visas to return to their home countries before SOAS is able to hold its School-wide graduation ceremonies. Although the Alphawood Scholarship alumni have proven a robust community, we have not had opportunity to either formally celebrate their graduations nor to convene them as a network of

emerging leaders in the field.

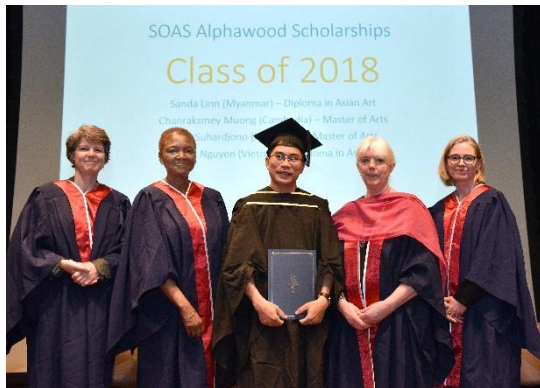
The Celebration of Graduation Event was a unique opportunity for us to confer this formal recognition of graduation and completion of their scholarship programmes; to shore-up an important and unique community of alumni and provide further networking opportunities; and also, to showcase the positive legacy of the Alphawood Scholarship programme and the transformative impact of the Alphawood gift on the lives of our graduates and on the future of study in the field overall.

Of our 55 Alphawood Scholarship graduates to date, nine of them continue



Alphawood Alumni cohort of 2015-16 with SAAAP academic staff, programme Chair Tamsyn Barton and SOAS Director Valerie Amos

to study at SOAS at the Masters and PhD levels (in some cases, through second Alphawood Scholarship awards). Nevertheless, we were delighted to be able to convene 39 (or over 80%) of our alumni from across Southeast Asia and some of those currently in the UK for the Celebration event, coming together in commemoration and reunion.



Graduating Alphawood Diploma Scholar Van Tho Nguyen (cohort 2017-18) with SAAAP staff

Following words of welcome from SAAAP Programme Manager Liam Roberts, the Celebration of Graduation Event was formally opened with a welcome address from the Director of the Asian Civilisations Museum, Kennie Ting, and opening remarks from the Director of SOAS, Baroness Valerie Amos.

Each of the four cohorts of Alphawood Scholarship graduates were introduced in turn by a leading member of SOAS academic staff and leader in the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme, including Dr Louise Tythacott, Dr Christian Luczanits, Dr Peter Sharrock and

Prof Elizabeth Moore. Each individual scholar from each cohort was introduced individually to receive their Certificate of Recognition of completion of their award from SAAAP Chair and SOAS Trustee Dr Tamsyn Barton, Baroness Valerie Amos, Prof Ashley Thompson and Dr Hettie Elgood.

At the conclusion of each cohort's procession of graduates, one of the graduates from the cohort was invited to deliver remarks and words of thanks to the Celebration. These scholars included Liliek Suhardjono (Indonesia: Diploma in Asian Art, 2015), Thu Ya Aung (Myanmar: Diploma in Asian Art, 2016), Pawinna Phetluan (Thailand: Master of Arts, 2017) and Conan Cheong (Singapore: Master of Arts, 2018).



Graduation Alphawood MA Scholar Pawinna Phetluan (cohort 2017-18) giving her thanks

Following processions of Alphawood Graduates, the Celebration Event included a feature panel presentation comprised of current SOAS Doctoral students, either supported at the PhD level with Alphawood Scholarships or who were previously supported at the MA level with Alphawood Scholarships. Chaired by Prof Ashley Thompson, the panel included Heidi Tan (Singapore: current Alphawood Scholar), Duyen Nguyen (Vietnam: current Alphawood Scholar), Sokha Seang (Cambodia: current Alphawood Scholar), Udomluck Hoontrakul (Thailand: former Alphawood Scholar) and Pipad Krajaejun (Thailand: former Alphawood Scholar).

The Doctoral Student panel provided a forum for these scholars to introduce and discuss their research questions, to discuss their progress through the PhD programme, the challenges and the prospects ahead, and to expand on how the opportunity to pursue postgraduate study at SOAS, enabled through their Scholarships, has impacted their academic lives.



SAAAP's Hiram W. Woodward Chair in Southeast Asian Art Professor Ashley Thompson discusses the experience of undertaking PhD research with the Alphawood PhD Scholars and alumni

The Panel was followed with closing remarks from Dr Hettie Elgood who spoke on the importance of continued engagement with and between the Alphawood Alumni. The Celebration was formally closed by Dr Tamsyn Barton and then followed by an alumni engagement reception and dinner.

The Alphawood Celebration of Graduation comprised part of a weekend of wider SOAS engagement in Singapore and Southeast Asia, showcasing some of SOAS' prominent areas of expertise. Following on from the Alphawood Celebration on Friday 12 April, SOAS hosted a regional alumni engagement dinner at the Singapore Cricket Club, followed by two days of SOAS Masterclasses on the theme of *Asia, Art and the Transcultural*, featuring public lectures by SOAS academics in the School of Arts and the School of History, Religions and Philosophies. Amongst the SOAS lecturers were academic staff affiliated with SAAAP, including Dr Hettie Elgood, Dr Christian Luczanits, Prof Elizabeth Moore, Dr Peter Sharrock, Prof Ashley Thompson and Dr Louise Tythacott, as well as Alphawood PhD candidate Heidi Tan.

The Alphawood Scholarships scheme has been at the core of our work in the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme, and, going forward, we recognise the central importance of engaging with the further professional and academic development of our Alphawood Alumni. This can take several forms, including through: encouraging their participation and leadership in new research and publications supported through SAAAP's Academic Support Fund; new opportunities to attend and deliver papers to important regional conferences and events and; we hope in future too, other opportunities to reconvene in celebration and learning as a community of scholarship and knowledge.



SAAAP In-region liaison Emeritus Professor Elizabeth Moore introduces a cohort of Alphawood Scholars



The party kicks off at the Singapore Cricket Club and staff throng to the photo booth

Valerie Amos in Southeast Asia

After attending the Alphawood Celebration of Graduation event in Singapore in April, our Director Baroness Valerie Amos saw first-hand the exceptional work that a number of the Alphawood alumni have been involved with post-graduation by visiting several of the institutions in Southeast Asia to which they returned after their studies at SOAS.



The Director with staff at Gadjah Mada University

Travelling first to Java in Indonesia on the 15th April, the Director visited the Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta where she met with the University Chancellor Professor Ir. Panut Mulyono and Agus Suwignyo, Vice Dean for the Faculty of Cultural Sciences. After a formal welcome to the University, the Director discussed ways that SOAS could collaborate on projects and programmes going forward, and in particular build on existing initiatives in the field of

archaeology. The Director then made the short journey to visit the spectacular temple complexes at Prambanan and Borobudur, whose edifices are the subject of many of the dissertations and theses of our Alphawood Scholars over the last five years. At the Prambanan temple on the outskirts of Yogyakarta, Baroness Amos was welcome by Wiwit Kasiyati, Head of the Conservation Unit in the Cultural Heritage Preservation Office at Yogyakarta, and Dr Mimi Savitri and DS Nugrahani from the Department of Archaeology at Gadjah Mada University, who gave her a private tour of the complex. Finally, at Borobudur, Valerie was met by a familiar face, Alphawood MA alumni and future PhD Scholar Panggah Ardiyansyah, who welcomed her to the site where he trained and specialises, along with Yudi Suhartono, the Head of the Conservation Unit at Borobudur.

Following a busy few days in Indonesia, the Director then travelled across Southeast Asia to Vietnam, where her first stop was the Da Nang Cham Museum on the 17th April. Valerie met with Mr Ho Tuan, the Museum's Director, and current Alphawood PhD Scholar Duyen Nguyen, who guided her through the galleries, introduced the collections, and acted as translator. The Museum Director was keen for the relationship between SOAS and the institution to develop, following on from the recent publication of the *Vibrancy in Stone* catalogue which details the collection in the museum and was a SAAAP funded initiative. Mr Tuan and the Director discussed several areas of potential future collaboration between the Cham Museum, SAAAP and SOAS.



Valerie Amos at the Da Nang Cham Museum with Director Ho Tuan and Alphawood PhD Scholar Duyen Nguyen

During the last leg of her Southeast Asia visit, Baroness Amos travelled to the My Son Sanctuary in Vietnam on the 18th April. The Director received a warm welcome from Alphawood alumni Van Tho Nguyen and his managers who gave a guided tour of the Sanctuary, an important site in Champa studies. Staff at the Sanctuary spoke warmly of SOAS, who have welcomed a number of their local experts to London to study under the Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art and the MA History of Art and Archaeology, and expressed their hopes the relationship between institutions could continue

and strengthen over the coming years.

PhD Fieldwork Report: The Development of Political Economy and Social Formation of the Marginal Polities on the Salween River Basin, Northwestern Thailand During the 13th-15th centuries

Alphawood alumna and current SOAS PhD candidate Udomluck Hoontrakul reports back on her findings and research

My PhD fieldwork took place in northern and western Thailand during October 2017 – October 2018. This research focuses on the highland region between the Salween and Ping river basins and aims to understand political dynamics, social and cultural interaction between highlands and lowlands, the development of highland socio-political structure, and political entities between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries CE. Due to the lack of extant material such as written evidence and archaeological remains, an archaeological ground survey needed to be conducted. Initially, the major research site was a circular earthwork surrounded by a shallow ditch (a so-called ring ditch). However, most of the previous studies of these sites relied on looting that occurred broadly during the 1980s and 1990s in the Tak and Chiang Mai Provinces of Thailand. Therefore this research fieldwork aimed to collect and clarify basic information about this burial site, including dating, site distribution, site patterns, location, landscape, and its relationship with other types of archaeological sites.



Landscape of the research area, Northern Thailand

Fieldwork took place in three regions. Firstly, an intensive archaeological survey and excavation was conducted within two river basins in Pang Mapha District, Mae Hong Son Province, which are sub-rivers of Salween river. For the survey result, 128 sites were discovered including: brick monuments, circular mounds, metal productions, settlements, and lithic sites. 290 circular mounds were found and five new types of mound could be identified.

Archaeological excavations were in collaboration with the National Park and Wildlife Protection's rangers and local villagers who excavated mound sites. I sent the charcoal samples to date at the radiocarbon dating laboratory. The results show that the mounds were constructed in multiple periods. Generally speaking, they were made at least since the first millennium CE until the mid of second millennium CE.

Other two regions were the Thanon Thongchai Range in Chiang Mai and Tak Province where the archaeological extensive survey was carried out. This survey involved interviews with local people, visits to archaeological sites and local museums, and an archaeological ground survey. Most of the mound sites in these regions were dated to thirteenth and seventeenth centuries CE by comparative methods with tradeware ceramics associated with mounds. I found similar types of mound to those found in the first region, however the exciting discovery that I found were compound sites and thought to be residential sites.



Udomluck site mapping during her survey



The ring ditch mound and excavation site

There are more than ten sites found along the mountain ridge near the Thai-Burma border. This is the first time that this site has been identified. In general, the size of sites are over 80 meters in length. Most of them are located on the mountain peak. They are composed of three elements: a defensive terrace which was dug about 5-7 meters in width around the lower level of mountain peak; the embankments which sometimes were raised on the entrance in order to control the visitor; and the residential area which was located on the top of the mountain peak. I will conclude my report that the upland region between Salween and Ping river basin has long extensively been occupied since, at least, the first millennium CE.



Compound site on the mountain ridge

Finally, I would like to thank the National Geographic Society, SOAS, and Thammasat University for supporting my fieldwork.

Udomluck Hoontrakul is an Alphawood MA History of Art and Archaeology alumna and currently working on her PhD at SOAS on the subject of

The 2019 SAAAP MA Study Trip: A Scholars' Perspective

It was a great opportunity to obtain this scholarship at SOAS, which is sponsored by the Alphawood Foundation. All the modules are fascinating, and I have learnt a lot so far. The SAAAP Europe Study tour for MA students is arranged by SOAS and sponsored by SAAAP each year. This year, the field trip took place from the 23rd to 28th of March in the Netherlands and France.

The first three days were in Amsterdam, where we visited three main museums, the Rijksmuseum, Tropenmuseum and Volkenkunde Museum. Additionally, the visit to Leiden University Library was last.



Alphawood Scholars at the Rijksmuseum with William Southworth, Curator of the Southeast Asia Collections

In the Rijksmuseum, we all were given a tour by the Southeast Asia Curator William Southworth, who firstly presented us the history of the collections in the museum. Through the history of the collections, we all learned that the collections in the museum have moved and some of them moved very far from their origin. Importantly, they are not only the artefacts, but they hold the history and the life of the people. They express every sad and happy moment in the

history of humankind. This first introduction to the collections was preparing us to be cautious and ready to ask many questions to the curator and most importantly to the artefacts. We visited three main galleries, sandstone, bronze and ceramic. Those artefacts are very beautiful and vital. Some of them are unique, and I have never seen before. For instance, the head of a deity from Cambodia who has the Vajra on his head. Even though the information about the Vajrayana (religion) in ancient Cambodia is not new, personally, I have never seen this type of representation before.

Another example is the bronze object from Pra Kon Chai (present Thailand) and the Buddha statue from Vietnam. I have learned that both artefacts were published in many books since the last ten years ago. I have always wanted to see them in person, and I have never thought to find them in the Rijksmuseum. By sharing this feeling, I wish to share my personal experience and express the importance of the opportunity to see the artefacts in person which is essential for us as the students to come closer to the history.



Group discussions in the gardens of the Tropenmuseum

In the Tropenmuseum, we learned and understood the collections from another angle. Besides the archaeological artefacts that we were familiar with from the Rijksmuseum, we were able to trace the recent history of colonization through the artefacts. We had a great discussion on the issue and the sensitivity of the collections toward the feeling of the people. We shared our opinion and were open with each other – something we all need to do as scholars. Even though the solution is not always provided, this discussion was very useful for us. We all need a voice from each other.



Group observations, the Volkenkunde Museum, Leiden

The discussion did not end in the Tropenmuseum but continued in the collections of the Volkenkunde Museum. We all were welcome and blessed by a huge beautiful Ganesh (Hindu deity). We visited the gallery of metal artefacts which were full of important collections mostly from India and Tibet. Once again, Tantric Buddhism has drawn my attention because of my studies on the MA at SOAS on the module 'Interpreting Visual Expressions of the Mandala' in the

second term. I came across photos of ritual practice in Tibet. During the class, I always questioned the relationship between the practitioner and the deity through ritual and ritual tools because ritual is fascinating. Here in the museum, I saw the ritual tools and learnt how detailed they are. It is incredible.

The last visit in Amsterdam finished in the Leiden Library. Over there, we absorbed more information about the documents, the library and also how to access the information. More importantly, we had the opportunity to see the rare collections, the manuscripts, in particular.

The second part of the trip was in Paris (26th to 28th March 2019). We visited the BULAC library, Guimet Museum, EFEO (École Française d'Extrême-Orient) and the National Library of France.

In the BULAC, we all learnt the different types of archives in the library, the sources of information that were relevant to our field, and how to access them online. Also, we were shown the old publications such as photos and books about Southeast Asia, especially Angkor, Cambodia.

On the second day, we visited the Guimet Museum. We were guided around by the curator of Southeast Asian collections. Professor Ashley Thompson also took part in this tour in a second session. The collections of the Guimet museum are fascinating and important. They are all the masterpieces. The curator explained to us one by one. However, due to the number of collections, we were all shown the most important artefacts that relatively came from our region (Southeast Asia or



Alphawood Scholars at the Guimet Museum with Curator Pierre Baptiste



Dr Louise Tythacott and Alphawood Scholar Phirom pore over material at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Cambodia). I wished to spend more time in the Guimet Museum because there are many important artefacts to study. I could not stop looking at them because of the beauty of its art and historical context.

As a Cambodian, I have learned about Cambodian history without seeing the artefacts in real life. I have learned about most of the artefacts in this gallery. However, I have never seen it once. What I have seen in the publications is not the same as what I saw in this

gallery. Here, I can see a very tiny detail of art, the function and the trace of the history that these objects came across. In one moment of the visit, I was looking at the face of the great King, Jayavarman VII of Cambodia. I felt the breath and the connection. He reminded me of the lessons that I have learned over the last ten years and what I should know more about him and the history in this region now. It was an incredible moment of learning from the "statue".

We next moved to the EFEO where we explored the collections of the EFEO from Southeast Asia and their publications for history and archaeology. Furthermore, we were shown some significant collections and texts — additionally, the link to access the information from the publication of EFEO.



Professor Ashley Thompson discusses material with Scholars at the BnF, Paris

The last destination of the trip in Paris ended in the National Library of France. In the library, we had the opportunity to see many Southeast Asian manuscripts. We all were helping each other to look and read the scripts. It was a very joyful and exciting time. We were all keen to see more and more, which was hardly thinking about the running out of time.

I believe that everyone had a great time and enjoyed the trip. We learned so many things from the artefacts, curators, staffs and our professors who were involved in the trip. It is not only one direction lesson, but we were allowed to step away from our comfort zone to see something broader and more in-depth consideration. I find this important of the trip, and I hope SAAAP will always continue this programme and provide more opportunities for students to explore and experience the field of history of art and archaeology in an effective way.



The Alphawood MA Scholars 2019 with staff outside the Musée Guimet, Paris

Sopheap Meas is a current Alphawood MA Scholar on the History of Art and Archaeology programme.



Pratu welcomes new submissions and expressions of interest

Pratu journal welcomes new articles and expressions of interest on an ongoing basis. We are particularly interested to hear from scholars whose work speaks to the journal's remit of ancient to pre-modern Buddhist and Hindu visual and material culture of Southeast Asia. Our first papers will be out shortly. For more information please visit the website and contact us.

pratujournal@soas.ac.uk
<https://pratujournal.org/>

Pratu Journal Editorial Team

Durga Mardini in Vajrayana Context across the Buddhist World

A new study by Ambra Calo (Archaeology and Natural History, ANU) entitled: "Durga Mahishasura Mardini in Vajrayana Context across the Buddhist World: with Special Reference to the 11th Century Buddha-Siva Tradition of Bali", was funded by the SAAAP Academic Support Fund (2018). Based on archaeological, art historical and textual evidence, the study traces the presence of the goddess Durga Mahishasura Mardini (Durga slaying the buffalo demon) in early Vajrayana contexts in South and Southeast Asia, from the eighth to the eleventh centuries. Highlighting that the integration of Saivic Tantric teachings was the primary characteristic of Vajrayana or Tantric Buddhism, the author argues that the originally Saivic goddess Durga Mahishasura Mardini is likely to have reached Bali as a Vajrayana deity during the late tenth or eleventh century. She points out that the main tenth-eleventh centuries statues of Durga Mahishasura Mardini in early Balinese temples are found in co-occurrence with Vajrayana Buddha and Bodhisattwa statues dated to the same period.

In particular, a tenth-eleventh century statue of Buddha Aksobya is found in co-occurrence with the largest Durga Mahishasura Mardini statue in Bali, in the Bukit Dharma temple in Gianyar regency. In Vajrayana context, Buddha Aksobya can manifest as the wrathful god Heruka, who in turn is associated with the wrathful form of Durga within funerary rites. The Bukit Dharma temple complex also contains a second statue of Durga Mahishasura Mardini, and one of Bodhisattwa Amoghapasha, a prominent Vajrayana deity in early Indonesian contexts. Calo newly points out that the Bukit Dharma Durga statue in Bali bears close stylistic resemblance to an eleventh century statue of the god Heruka from the Vajrayana monastery complex site of Padang Lawas in north-central Sumatra, which in turn finds

parallels in Bangladesh, drawing a link to the great Pala Empire (ninth-twelfth centuries) Vajrayana monastery and learning centres (mahavihara) of northeastern India and Bangladesh.



Padang Lawas has also produced ceramic evidence for ninth to eleventh centuries' links to Afghanistan and Pakistan, the region which saw the genesis and development of Vajrayana during the seventh-eight centuries. The study examines the earliest known statue of Durga Mahishasura Mardini in Buddhist context excavated at the monastery site of Tapa Sardar in Ghazni, eastern Afghanistan, where the Durga statue stood facing a standing Buddha statue, both dated to the eighth century. Ghazni is located to the west of the Swat Valley of northern Pakistan, where the earliest evidence of Vajrayana was found, in the form of rock reliefs dated to the seventh century. The study also examines the presence of Durga Mahishasura Mardini on reliefs at the Vikramasila mahavihara in Bihar, an important learning centre associated with the transmission of Vajrayana to Indonesia.

Ambra Calo is a post-doctoral researcher in the School of Arts at SOAS

The Question of Uthong Art: A SAAAP Funded Excavation Project in Thailand for PhD Dissertation research

Archaeological excavation is one of many ways to investigate the past and to know the dating of architecture and archaeological site. Last year, I proposed my PhD project: *Deconstructing the Historical Metanarrative of Thai Art and Archaeology: The Emergence of Artistic Styles in the Pre-Ayutthaya Period, or 'Uthong Art,' during the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*. This project aims to investigate the so-called 'Uthong' layer or the stratigraphy between after the reign of Jayavarman VII and before the establishment of Ayutthaya, or around the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This investigation is very important because even though we know the stylistic of Uthong Buddha images, this art style has been investigated outside archaeological contexts and has not known the absolute dating of its architecture style. One of my hypotheses is that we do not know much about this period because the discourse of Thai national history and kingdom history hegemonises archaeologists' thought when they define stratigraphy. Thus, there is a 20-centimetre gap between the Lopburi archaeological layer and the Ayutthaya archaeological layer, yet this gap has not been recognized within a historical or art period. In my opinion, this is a crucial problem for interpreting the past of Thailand.

To accomplish the goal, I proposed my project: *Archaeological Excavation for Investigating the Pre-Ayutthaya Period or 'Uthong Art Period' during the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries at Chainat, Lopburi and Ayutthaya Provinces, Central Thailand*, to SAAAP in order to obtain funding to support excavations. The important contributions of this project are: firstly, this project will increase the information of the history in the periods of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries through archaeological evidences; secondly, Uthong art will be precisely dated using archaeological and scientific methods.

Three archaeological sites: Wat Mahathat Sanburi in Chainat province, Wat Phra Sri Rattana Mahathat Lopburi, and Wat Phanan Cheong in Ayutthaya were chosen for excavation between February and May 2019. The first two sites have monuments which are dated by art historians to the Pre-early Ayutthaya period, and Uthong Buddha images are found densely in both cities. The last site located in the area of Ayodhya city, the city before Ayutthaya, and the main Buddha of this temple was created before establishing Ayutthaya 26 years later, according to the Ayutthaya chronicle.



Pipad excavating at Ayutthaya

The excavation at Wat Mahathat Sanburi

At this temple, 8 trenches were excavated. The first trench was excavated near the foundation of *prang* Kleep Maphuang stupa number 8. The first 40 cm is the late to middle Ayutthaya layer. Below this is the early Ayutthaya to Pre-Ayutthaya period. The significant finds of the early Ayutthaya to Pre-Ayutthaya periods consist of stoneware from Ban Bang Poon kiln from Supanburi, and tradeware ceramics of Yuan and Song dynasty. Thus, the preliminary dating is between the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. This stupa should have been built around the late fourteenth century.



This aerial picture shows the locations of excavation trenches at Wat Mahathat Sanburi



Undertaking exaction at Trench 1, Sanburi

All trenches found Yuan and Ban Bang-Poon ceramics, with especially interesting findings in trench 3. Fragments of green-glazed Yuan ceramics and Ban Pang Poon ceramics were found together and also found with charcoals. These evidences were found at 150 cm. from surface. Thus, roughly, these evidences or this layer should be dated before 1368, the last year of the Yuan dynasty. However, this is the preliminary dating because ceramics could be used before or after this year. I have to confirm by AMS dating by cross checking with Chinese ceramics.



Yuan ceramic found from excavation in Trench 3, Sanburi



Yuan and Ban Bang Poon ceramics found from excavation in Trench 3, Sanburi

Nevertheless, these evidences show that there was the early Ayutthaya or the Pre-Ayutthaya period in this area. *Prang* Kleep Maphuang of this temple can be classified as a representative of 'Uthong' art.

The Excavation at Wat Phra Sri Rattana Mahathat Lopburi

The first trench is located at the corner of the main *prang* (prasad) in order to investigate its dating. The second trench is located at the foundation of *prang* Kleep Maphuang.

For trench 1, when I excavated down around 10 cm. from the surface, three Southern Song ceramics were found, dating to (1127-1279), containing fragment of human ashes and bones. These urns were found under brick floor and above laterite which is the foundation of the main *prang*. A 'Post-Bayon' tablet was found under brick floor, below a surface of around 40 cm. Thus, it is possible that the main *prang* might be built after 1220 or after the death of Jayavarman 7. Moreover, there is not the Yuan evidence or layer above the brick floor. That means the main *prang* should be built between 1220 and 1270. The dating 1220-1270 coincides with other art historians' assumption that the main *prang* of this temple might be built around 1260. So, this excavation contributes to the more precise dating. And it also shows that whilst Angkor declined in constructing of *prasad*, Lopburi inherited the tradition of building *prasad* instead.

For Trench 2, from 0 cm. or surface to 100 cm. is the disturb layer, from modern activities, but under 100 cm. is the early Ayutthaya or Pre-Ayutthaya layer. Yuan ceramics have been found in layer 10; this indicates that this layer is a transition period. Moreover, the living floor of this *Prang* Kleep Maphuang also lay on layer 10; that means this *prang* might have been built in the 'Uthong' period.



The main *prang* of Wat Mahathat Lopburi excavating its foundations



Southern Song ceramic containing human ashes found at the foundation of the main *prang* of Wat Mahathat

The excavation at Wat Phranan Chaeong

At Wat Phranan Chaeong, 4 trenches were excavated; only in one trench did we find thirteenth and fourteenth centuries' evidence. This trench is located near the banks of Pasak and Chao Phraya Rivers. Fragments of Yuan vessels were found, below the surface around 1 metre. These Yuan sherds were used to contain mercury which is used to produce gold. This coincides with a small piece of gold which was found from excavation.



L: Trench 1 during excavation at Wat Phranan Chaeong
R: Yuan sherds found in Trench 1, Wat Phranan Chaeong



In conclusion, as a result of excavations, I would like to conclude that the fact that every archaeological site of the major city found the so-called 'Uthong' layer or 'Uthong' period. During the thirteen and fourteenth centuries, many cities in the Chao Phraya Basin actively traded with China in the Southern Song and Yuan dynasties. Therefore, the problem of studying 'Uthong' art occurs from the national history that governs archaeologists in classifying and doing soil stratigraphy. This means that the picture of this period is incomplete.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to SAAAP for giving a funding, to Prof. Ashley Thompson - my supervisor, and to Liam Roberts who encouraged me to apply for this funding.

Pipad Krajaejun in an Alphawood alumnus of the MA History of Art and Archaeology currently working on his PhD at SOAS

SAAAP Summer Programme in Ho Chi Minh July 2019

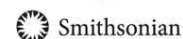
SAAAP Outreach organised a Summer Programme in July with the Museum of Vietnamese History in Ho Chi Minh City, which formally opens the work on the first full-length joint catalogue of its rich and admired collection. Some 30 scholars and SAAAP alumni from around the world flew to Vietnam for a 3-day workshop aimed at finalizing the papers, and their authors, which will furnish the Introduction section of this catalogue of the world's leading collection that reflects the multi-cultural 2,000-year history of the Delta of the Mekong River.



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MUSEUM OF VIETNAMESE HISTORY HCMC_SOAS_FREER|SACKLER REGIONAL WORKSHOP

@MUSEUM OF VIETNAMESE HISTORY HO CHI MINH CITY

14 – 17 JULY 2019

WORKSHOP: MEKONG DELTA AND MASTERPIECES OF THE MUSEUM OF VIETNAMESE HISTORY, HO CHI MINH

The workshop is hosted by Museum Director Dr Hoang Anh Tuan and his staff, who have also arranged a two-day visit to three museums and archaeological sites in the Delta. As well as leading Vietnamese archaeologists and art historians, participants include international historians, curators and art historians including John Whitmore (Michigan), Paul Lavy (Hawaii), Pierre Baptiste (Musée Guimet, Paris), Kenson Kwok (Singapore), Emma Bunker (Denver), Emma Stein (Freer|Sackler, Washington), William Noseworthy (McNeese State), Pinna Indorf (Singapore), Ambra Calo (ANU Sydney).





It is SAAAP's second peer-reviewed catalogue of a major Southeast Asian museum collection. It follows up the 2018 *Vibrancy in Stone* catalogue of the 100 masterpieces of the Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculptures. The Mekong Delta is one of the best natural locations on earth for rice production, and gave rise to one of the earliest complex polities (known only by the Chinese name 'Funan') to arise along the early Maritime trade route. Reflecting this long history, the Ho Chi Minh museum is more extensive and less focused than Da Nang, with artefacts from prehistory, the early history of Oc Eo and Go Thap, as well as early Mon, Cambodian and Cham communities (see below grave goods with pendant, seated Bodhisattva and part of the extensive Cambodian room).

Peter Sharrock is SAAAP Communications and Outreach Manager

'Creative South' proceedings anthology from 2016 and 2017 SAAAP Summer Programme in Indonesia

This edited volume upholds an innovative approach aiming at doing justice to the creative and significant contribution of ancient Southeast Asia (and neighbouring areas in the wider geographical framework of 'Maritime Asia') to the shaping of new paradigms in the religious art and architecture of the mediaeval maritime world. It aims to shift the focus from merely historiographical reflections to the actual evidence of complex dynamics taking place across Maritime Asia, not only in transfer but

also of the production of knowledge, art forms, religious ideas and their application in the political sphere.

The work brings together important new research into an historical readjustment of our sense of the innovations in art and architecture that are the visible mark of the cultural creativity of the early states of Maritime Asia. These collaborative, peer-reviewed realisations aim at a paradigm-shift in reading the religious, political and military history of ancient Southeast Asia. It promotes this new perspective to stimulate new research to fully recover the leading role played by the region in the ancient world. Contributors include Hudaya Kandahjaya (Numata Center), Andrea Acri (EPHE Paris), Jeffrey Sundberg (Arizona), the late Roy Jordaan, Iain Sinclair (ISEAS Singapore), Jinah Kim (Harvard), Umakant Misra (Ravenshaw), Hadi Sidomulyo (UTC Trawas), Mimi Savitri (UGM Yogyakarta) and Peter Sharrock (SOAS).

Most of the 15 chapters stem from papers presented in Summer Programmes in East and Central Java in 2016 and 2017 co-sponsored by the SOAS Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme (SAAAP) and Singapore's Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre of the Institute of SEA Studies -Yusof Ishak Institute (NSC-ISEAS). They show the early kingdoms of Maritime Asia as wellsprings of new ritual technologies, sacred art/architecture, and the new political paradigms they underpinned. A transforming southern stream flowed from Southern India and Sri Lanka, across the emerging island and littoral states to East Asia and eventually reached North-eastern India, Nepal, and Tibet. The presence of the great Esoteric Buddhist teachers Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, and Atiśa in the courts arising along the ocean shipping lanes, turned them into vibrant innovators rather than -- as they have long been considered -- passive recipients of transmitted Indic metaphysics and Chinese technology.

Because of the tropical climate, the textual record in the burgeoning southern trade and rice kingdoms is relatively thin, but the scale and artistic conviction manifested in the monumental ritual centres in Java, Cambodia, the Malay Peninsula and Champa is compelling evidence for the religious and political innovations in what we call the 'Creative South'. Examples are Amoghapāśa, a manifestation of the compassionate Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, important across Asia as a saviour deity, who evolved with new mantras and conjuration texts (*dhāraṇī*) in a major new ritual to assist the dead in transit to their next life. This ritual began in the Malay Peninsula, secured a committed following across maritime Asia and China, then in the early Buddhist heartland in north India.

The vast pyramid of Buddhas erected at Borobudur, the world's largest state ceremonial centre of the Śailendra Dynasty, pioneered representations of the 6th Buddha of the final, Tantric wave of Buddhism. The excavations at the towering Shiva temple at Prambanan, Central Java, show the site incorporated the world's largest system of sacred water production.

Amoghavajra and Atiśa sanctioned fierce rituals to support the armies of Buddhist monarchs. These were major innovations, as they were unknown in Buddhist India. Such southern strategies followed the teachers to China in the 8th century and Tibet in the 11th century, indicating the connected Buddhist world was bi-directional throughout. Tantric cults of the southern 'periphery' states yielded fierce Buddhist Heruka deities in the cults most favoured by the empire-builders of the region – king Jayavarman VII in Cambodia, Vidyanāndana of Champa, Mongol emperor Kubilai Khan and king Kṛtanagara of Singhasari, East Java.

Peter Sharrock is SAAAP Communications and Outreach Manager

The second panel included invited speakers who discussed issues pertinent to publishing on ancient Cambodian Hindu-Buddhist art and archaeology. Heng Piphall from the Institute of Archaeology, University of Hawai'i highlighted the need to consider publishing practices holistically with attention to diverse audiences in Cambodia, while Siyonn Sophearith of the Ministry of Culture raised issues of sustainability since publishing on this topic first emerged in the late 1990s. Alphawood scholar Seng Sonetra discussed challenges to resourcing research in this field at the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, and Dr. Krisna Uk highlighted international research initiatives supported by the Association of Asian Studies (AAS), including artists and archaeologists working in Southeast Asia who have participated increasingly at the AAS' annual conferences since 2018.

The final panel *Beyond Hindu-Buddhist Southeast Asia*, included presentations on publishing trends in the Philippines by Dr. Cristina Juan, publishing histories in Hong Kong by doctoral researcher Ivy Chan, perspectives (from Orientalist to Nationalist) on publishing within the Islamic World by Professor Scott Redford and the China/Greater China context for publishing in both Chinese and English by Professor Shane McCausland. While the issue of hegemonic language-use in the Islamic world echoed earlier concerns, other disparities such as internal and ideological forms of colonisation within these contexts were also highlighted. Professor McCausland's final call to both anticipate and support bilingual publishing underscored a broader need for continued dialogue between scholars of these regions. This half-day workshop has hopefully provided a start towards further such exchanges.

Video documentation of the workshop: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/saaap/news/22may2019-decolonising-the-history-of-art-and-archaeology-publishing-cultures-in-southeast-asia-and-.html>

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Jane Savoury and the team at the Centre of South East Asian Studies, Liam Roberts and Chloe Osborne for their assistance with the SAAAP series this year.

To find out more and to register for upcoming events, see the SAAAP Facebook and Twitter pages and the CSEAS website, at <https://www.soas.ac.uk/cseas/events/>

Heidi Tan is an Alphawood PhD Scholar and Senior Teaching Fellow in the Department of the History of Art and Archaeology at SOAS

Updates from the Region

SAAAP In-Region correspondent Elizabeth Moore updates on regional activities from Yangon, Myanmar

The Myanmar Alphawood Alumni group are taking active roles in museum and heritage initiatives. They are travelling, advocating, writing and teaching, seen in the brief updates below.

1. **Yamin Htay** submitted an abstract for an Australia-Myanmar (AMI) conference in January 2020, titled *"Reinterpreting and Sustaining the Hti of Innwa for the Future"*, on 14-17th century pagoda arts of an ancient Buddhist capital. She is also busy in the Conservation Section of the Bagan Office of the Department of Archaeology, with an increasing number of international cooperation projects including those from Korea and China.
2. **Thet Mon Htoo** also entered an abstract for AMI, *"Safeguarding Colonial Architecture in Myitnge Town, Upper Myanmar"*, on endangered vernacular architecture destroyed by construction of a dry goods port east of Mandalay.
3. **Sanda Linn** has almost completed the presentation on the flaming pediments of Bagan Buddhist architecture for the SEAMEO SPAFA conference in June, with our departure planned for June 17. She also submitted an abstract on Bagan architectural styles to the Department of Historical Research conference on "Myanmar Studies from Center, Periphery and Boundary: An Interdisciplinary International Symposium" in September. She continues to be busy with teaching duties at Mandalay University.
4. **Hninn Wutyee Latt**, has been occupied with school duties, managing a group of fifty final year students of Dagon University on a two-week field trip to first millennium CE Buddhist sites in Upper Myanmar
5. **Thuya Aung** has been active on national media, a selected speaker for a DVB (Democratic Voice of Burma) debate on the issues of cultural heritage in conflict zones and UNESCO nomination dossier of 15-17th century Mrauk-U and local promotions for the UNESCO voting on the Bagan dossier in early July 2019.
6. **Kyaw Minn Htin** has published two books. One is his original translation of J.Leider's *The Golden Age of Mrauk-U*. The second, *Thone-Htaung-Zan (Prisoner of Three Jails)* is by his father, Maung Than Kè, on the Arakan State Movement during the AFPFL period and his experiences in prisons in 1953-1954. In addition, he continues to serve on the UNESCO nomination dossier writing committee for Mrauk U.
7. **Su Latt Win** continues her work at the Zaykabar Museum to publish a catalogue of the paintings. She wrote two SAAAP Newsletter reports at my request, on International Museums Day in Nay Pyi Taw and the DVB Mrauk-U debate.
8. **Win Myat Aung** is busy at SEAMEO CHAT having recently coordinated a programme of lectures titled "History and Culture of the Philippines". Lectures were given by two Philippine professors



Kyaw Minn Htin with 2nd edition of *Thone-Htaung-Zan*

with 78 participants from Myanmar teaching staff and students of history, archaeology, anthropology, international relations, Myanmar language and geography.



9. **Saw Tun Lin** has been excavating with a Canadian-Myanmar team at Bagan. Finds from pits at Bagan this season included a range of earthenware and post-holes. He also continues his teaching duties at Yangon University.

10. **Swe Zin Myint** has been busy with teaching duties in Mandalay University.

Saw Tun Lin and the IRAW team (Integrated Socio-Ecological History of Residential Patterning, Agricultural Practices, and Water Management at the “Classical” Burmese (Bama) Capital of Bagan, Myanmar (11th to 14th Century CE)

Elizabeth H. Moore is SAAAP Outreach Sub-board member, Scholarships Sub-board member and In-region liaison.

International Museum Day in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

International Museum Day forum was celebrated for two days, May 19 and 20, at the National Museum in Nay Pyi Taw. The British Council supported the event, inviting not only government and private museums to attend the forum, with many senior curators and museum directors participating.

The theme of forum, “Museum as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition”, highlighted the museum as public spaces and research centres. The two-day session consisted of paper readings and a roundup discussion on museum collaboration and systematic inventory systems. Ms. Alex Dawson (British Council) discussed “Collections Management Police” supporting collection management while Dr Naoko Sonoda (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan) presented “Conservation Research on Ethnological Collection”. Both topics, vital for the museum industry, stimulated discussion amongst those present at the forum.

SOAS Alumna Su Latt Win, Curator (Public Relation and Display), Zaykabar Museum, Yangon



The roundup discussion focused on the Myanmar Draft Museum Law, editing and discussing some themes and specifics in this law during the forum. The staff from the British Council noted all the advice and adjustments of the participants from a Myanmar point of view for a Museum Law to be enacted by the national legislature. This law would apply to government and private museums, so valuable especially for private collectors to protect their collections legally and in co-operation with government museums. At the Zaykabar Museum we are cataloguing our objects as our museum is being built, so with the enactment of the law, we will begin officially opening as the first and largest private museum in Myanmar. Thus the invitation for Zaykabar Museum to attend this forum was warmly accepted.



*Group photo at International Museum Day Forum 2019
May 19, 20 in Nay Pyi Taw*

By Su Latt Winn, Alphawood alumna

Heritage in a Conflict Zone, Myanmar

While the nomination dossier for the Buddhist site of Mrauk U in Yangon is being prepared to submit to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee this year, the area has become one of increasingly intense conflict between government troops and the Arakan Army. Recently fighting moved in among the ancient temples drawing attention to the unsustainable conditions of Mrauk U. Four panelists spoke on cultural heritage in the first session of a live-broadcast panel on 25 May, “Toward Mrauk U as a World Heritage site” held in Yangon by the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB):

1. Dr Aye Chan (Rakhine/ Arakan Historian)
2. Daw Nu Mra Zan (Museums Advisor, member of Mrauk U World Heritage nomination committee)
3. Daw Ohmmar Myo (Central Executive Committee, Myanmar Archaeology Association)
4. Ko Thuya Aung (Secretary, Myanmar Archaeology Association (MAA)/ SOAS Alumni)

Dr Aye Chan stressed the urgent need to prevent conflict in the ancient monumental zone. The government and the Arakan Army are both part of the Buddhist majority, so share respect for the religious buildings and their value in the national heritage. Daw Nu Mra Zan explained the background of Mrauk U, from its mountains, rivers and lakes to the ancient hydraulic system to the tangible and intangible value of each and every single structure. The Shit-thaung pagoda stone reliefs for example, vividly depict the social and cultural role of Rakhine.



Debate speaker SOAS Alumni Thuya Aung, Myanmar Archaeology Association



Group photo of Cultural Heritage panel, DVB Mrauk U debate

However, these and other structures have been destroyed by incorrect renovation and reconstruction works. Daw Ohmar Myo reminded the audience of the saying that Mrauk U is the 'Venice of Asia' (or that Venice is the 'Mrauk U of Europe'), an ancient city worth nominating as a World Heritage Site but that many preparation activities have broken down because of the local conflict. Thuya Aung highlighted the multi-cultural heritage of Myanmar and the importance giving voice to minority

cultures, drawing parallels to the sustenance of the Welsh culture in the United Kingdom. During the discussion, who holds responsibility for battle damage to ancient pagodas and issues of sustainability were debated. It was agreed that while armed troops are at present needed in the area but called for recognition of the essential role cultural heritage for long-term national peace and stability.

Also by Su Latt Winn, Alphawood alumna

Was Bagan: ‘the metropolis of Buddhism in Indo-China’? (sic Duroiselle 1924)

Edited papers from the SEAMEO CHAT-SOAS Conference Yangon, July 2017

Was Bagan: ‘The metropolis of Buddhism in Indo-China’? (sic Duroiselle 1924) publishes the edited papers from the SEAMEO CHAT-SOAS Conference in Yangon, July 2017. It contains the fourteen papers re-edited and laid out by Nay Myo, E. Moore Collection Anthropology Department Library Manager, from the e-publication [<https://www.soas.ac.uk/news/newsitem122992.html>]. The book was presented to the Acting Director of SEAMEO CHAT, Daw Khin Lay Soe, on 12 December, 2018.

The book opens with the Keynote Lecture, ‘The Significance of Pala in the development of Bagan Sculpture’ by Dr. Heather Elgood, MBE, Course Director, Post Graduate Diploma Programme of Asian Arts, SOAS. The paper elaborates on the links between Bagan and Northeast India, highlighting the fluid state of the Buddhist world of the 12th to 13th century, following the fall of the Ganges Valley monastery-universities to Turkic armies.

The next three papers use epigraphic and visual evidence of the Bagan period to highlight costume, pagoda patronage, and charismatic monastic figures. The first, Aye Aye Than, Professor and Head of Department, Loikaw University, on ‘Myanmar Costume Style in the Bagan Period’ uses text and image to contrast the role of domestic and imported textiles in depicting rank and style. Next is Dr Toe Hla, Member, Myanmar Historical Commission, on ‘Anantasūra’s Inscriptions: Why Among Others?’. The paper uses epigraphic evidence to address the identity of Anantasūra and his donation of monastic areas and stupas, rice lands, gardens, toddy palm groves and domesticated animals in Minnanthu, in the eastern part of Bagan. Mo Mo Thant, Professor and Head of Department, Yangon University, discusses a renowned monk in her paper ‘Pitu Sangha Raja: Post-Bagan Relations between the Sangha and the King’, which addresses the fluctuating relations between the Sangha and the king during the 14th century.



Mekhadeva jataka no. 9, the king and his barber with tweezers to pull out white hairs, terracotta plaque Phet Leik temples (from Pyiet Phyo Kyaw article on “Secular Evidence in the Visual Art of Bagan”)

The next four papers are by Alphawood alumni. Saw Tun Lin, Assistant Lecturer Yangon University writes on ‘The Tradition of Drinking Siy (Se) and the Buddhist perception of Surāmeraya restriction in the Bagan period’, using paintings and terracotta plaques of the previous lives of the Buddha from the 13th century to highlight the uses of alcohol by monks. Su Latt Win, Curator, Zaykabar Collection, shows how the footprint of the Buddha was used in wall paintings and also, unique to Bagan, on the ceiling of entryways to create a sacred space. Swe Zin Myint, Assistant Lecturer, Mandalay University, focuses on crowned sculptures in Bagan, Rakhine and Northeast India suggests wooden images may have been the earliest. Win Myat Aung, Deputy Director, SEAMEO CHAT, discusses the political theme ‘How did the

ideals of State Buddhism inspire the creation of Art?’ He uses three prominent temples to draw out a traditional saying based on the *Dhamamararaja* ideal that ‘Religion prospers when the King prefers’.



Key Informant interview with villager of West (Anauk) Pwasaw village, Bagan (Photo from Mya Mya Khin article on “The Changing Food Culture of Anauk Phwa Saw”)

The next four papers focus on art historical evidence to highlight the role of Brahma, Bagan murals, daily life in Bagan and the significance of an eleventh century king. Independent scholar Cristophe Munier-Gaillard writes on 15th to 19th century Bagan Buddhist narrative murals. Thein Lwin, Deputy Director General Department of Archaeology, Ministry of Religious and Cultural Affairs, and Min Han, independent scholar, use depictions of Brahma of the upper realm of *Brahma-loka* to highlight the incorporation of this Hindu deity within Buddhism during the Bagan

period. Pyiet Phyo Kyaw, Lecturer, Mandalay University, in his paper ‘Secular Evidence in the Visual Art of Bagan’ employs murals and terracotta plaques to highlight daily village activities at Bagan. Lilian Handlin, independent scholar from Harvard, writes to debunk the chronicle belittling of King Saw Lu, showing how his inscriptions, architecture and painting connected to the wider Buddhist world.

The last two papers shift to anthropology, looking at daily food and the significance of everyday monastic activities at Bagan. Professor Mya Mya Khin writes changes in soil fertility from frequent earthquakes and their impact on family social life. The paper of Professor Lwin Lwin Mon from East Yangon University (EYU), profiles a privately sponsored medical clinic run through one of the 19th century monasteries in Old Bagan. Both papers illustrate efforts to adapt traditional practices such as food preparation and daily monastic activities in the changing environmental and social climate of the Bagan heritage area managed by the Department of Archaeology, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

As seen in these edited papers, the *Bagan Metropolis Conference* generated new perspectives on the role of this Buddhist kingdom of the 9th to 13th century CE. All the papers bring innovative scholarship and ideas on historical, art historical and anthropological aspects of Bagan. Collectively, they address the significance and diversity of Bagan as a centre of Buddhist scholarship and political impact. With its unrivalled preservation of paintings, sculpture and architecture of the 9th to 13th century CE, Bagan epitomizes the apex of Myanmar’s religious heritage in the ancient Buddhist world.



(Left to right) Elizabeth Moore with authors Saw Tun Lin, Lwin Lwin Mon, Mya Mya Khin, Mo Mo Thant and Win Myat Aung with copy of Bagan Metropolis, SEAMEO CHAT 'Water' Conference, 12 December 2018.

Elizabeth H. Moore is SAAAP Outreach Sub-board member, Scholarships Sub-board member and In-region liaison.

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 Chloe Osborne. We also welcome the engagement of guest editors from the Alphawood Scholarship community – if you are currently on award at SOAS and would like to get involved in producing the next edition, we would love to hear from you.

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 Student Editing a future edition), please contact Dr Peter Sharrock at ps56@soas.ac.uk.

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