



SAAAP Newsletter 11 – February 2021

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 and 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 Olivia Burt (SAAAP Project Administrator) and Dr. Peter D Sharrock (Outreach and Communications Manager). 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 Olivia at ob9@soas.ac.uk.

Welcome from the Head of the School of Arts, Professor Shane McCausland

Dear Newsletter readers,

I am delighted to introduce the 11th edition of the SAAAP Newsletter, which highlights new and ongoing projects and initiatives that SAAAP is proud to sponsor. The newsletter illustrates impressive SAAAP activities, announcements and updates that are made possible by the generous Alphawood Foundation.

One of the major changes at SOAS since I last wrote to you is that we have welcomed a new Director – Adam Habib. He joins us from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg, South Africa and brings a wealth of experience to London. He has not lost any time in establishing himself here and has already embarked on devising a new strategy for SOAS for the next 5 years. We are fortunate that he also will be a member of the SAAAP Programme Board.



As I write, the situation in Myanmar following the recent military coup is reported to remain tense, with intermittent internet blackouts taking place at night. We hear of popular street demonstrations and other forms of free expression continuing to take place in support of the civilian government elected in a landslide vote late last year. In these anxious times, we express solidarity with and concern for the people of Myanmar and in particular our many Alphawood alumni in the country, who keep in close touch with one another and us through the alumni network.

Newsletter Highlights

We are excited to welcome Dr. Stephen Murphy, Pratapaditya Pal Professor in Curating and Museology, following the departure of Professor Louise Tythacott.

We extend our congratulations to Panggah Ardiyansyah and Louise Tythacott, Woon Tai Jee Professor of Asian Art at Northumbria University, for their publication *Returning Southeast Asian's Past* with NUS.

The SAAAP office reports on the Alphawood Scholarship application process for the 2021-2022 academic year, which received an impressive influx of applications.

Dr. Malcolm McNeill, Director of the Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art and Senior Lecturer tells us how the Diploma programme is using filmed tours of museums and recorded interviews across the globe to enhance online teaching.

Alphawood alumni Jean Heng and Yin Nyein Aye internships report on their successful internships with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in Phnom Penh and the Royal Asiatic Society.

SAAAP Outreach and Communications Manager Dr. Peter D Sharrock updates us on *The Creative South* publication now 'in press' from the two SAAAP Summer Programmes in Java, Indonesia.

Alphawood PhD alumna Heidi Tan provides us with news from our journal *Pratu*, and Udomluck Hoontrakul tells us future plans for the Research Seminar Series, sponsored by SAAAP and the Centre for East Asian Studies.

Alphawood alumna Chhay Davin tells us about her work with the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives Preservation and Digitization Project at UNESCO in Phnom Penh.

Alphawood MA alumnus Dr Chhum Menghong tells us about his exciting work supporting Cambodia's World Heritage application for Banteay Chhmar temple as Deputy Secretary General of the Cambodia National Commission for UNESCO.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and I encourage all to get involved in the editorial work by contacting the editors.

Shane McCausland is Chair of the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme Scholarship and Outreach Sub-boards and Head of School of Art, SOAS.

Introducing Dr. Stephen Murphy

SAAAP welcomes Dr. Stephen Murphy, Pratapaditya Pal Senior Lecturer in Curating and Museology of Asian Arts

Previously based in Singapore, Dr Murphy joined SOAS in late November 2020. After graduating with his PhD, which focused on Buddhism in 6th-9th century Thailand and Laos, from the Department of History of Art & Archaeology at SOAS in 2010, Dr Murphy spent two years as a research associate at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, working with John Guy on organizing the international exhibition, *Lost Kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Early Southeast Asia*. It was this opportunity that opened the doors to the museum world for him. He is an archaeologist by training and up to that point his experience was very much in that field. This exposure to the world of museums continued with his move to Singapore and the Asian Civilisations Museum in 2013, where he became Senior Curator for Southeast Asia. The exhibitions and galleries that he has curated over the past nine years have allowed for a broadening of his research interests.



As well as still specializing in Hindu-Buddhist Southeast Asia, he now also looks at Asian maritime trade and the Indian Ocean world, particularly in the mid- to late-first millennium CE. In terms of museology, in recent years he has been engaging more with issues surrounding colonialism and post-colonial studies, and the debates surrounding the limitations and possibilities of decolonizing museums. He hopes to develop these areas of interest further in his teaching, research, and publications at SOAS.

SAAAP Scholarships 2021-22

SAAAP Programme Manager Alan Goulbourne and Project Administrator Olivia Burt tell us about the highly successful SAAAP Scholarships 2021-22 Campaign

The SAAAP office is thrilled to report a successful campaign for the 2021-22 Alphawood Scholarships to support Postgraduate Diploma and MA study in the Department of History of Art and Archaeology, School of Arts.

The Alphawood Scholarships form part of the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme (SAAAP) at SOAS University of London, which is generously supported by the Alphawood Foundation (Chicago). The remit of SAAAP is to:

support and advance, through study and research, 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 studies.

Through the Alphawood Scholarships scheme, it is expected that our scholars and alumni will be well-equipped to make a significant and positive impact on the understanding and preservation of ancient to pre-modern Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture in Southeast Asia.

The application window opened on 16 November 2020 and closed on 15 January 2021. As a result of our in-region reputation, relationship with alumni, and liaison support from Elizabeth Moore, we received an impressive volume of competitive applicants from throughout Southeast Asia. The Alphawood Scholarships Selection Panel, comprised of members of SOAS staff with pertinent academic and professional experience, expressed their excitement for the scholarship selection process and were delighted to see many Diploma alumni apply to the MA Alphawood Scholarship. We look forward to welcoming next years' cohort of Alphawood Scholars.

Object-based Learning in an Online Environment: Challenges, Opportunities, and a Call for Collaboration

Dr. Malcolm McNeill, Director of the Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art and senior Lecturer writes about the experience of teaching online



As a course centred on object-based learning, moving the Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art online this year has been uniquely challenging. My predecessor, Dr Heather Elgood, and our various module convenors take due pride in the distinctive way we teach from objects. In pre-pandemic times, our courses involved numerous in-person visits to the galleries and storerooms of art dealers, auction houses, and museums. The core of these sessions comes from the reserve collections of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), through our memorandum of association with these world leading institutions.

After joining SOAS on 1 June 2020, my first and most important task was to determine how we would adapt this in-person experience to an online format. I began by initiating a conversation with our museum colleagues. Before the start of the autumn term, Postgraduate Diploma convenors and SOAS faculty met with curators and learning specialists from the British Museum and V&A. We discussed the challenges we faced, but also the opportunities. Our conversations coalesced around a few key principles. If we were going to make online object-based learning work, we needed to meet the following aims:

- Online object-based sessions needed a distinct format from conventional lectures.
- Curators should convey the tactile qualities a camera or image cannot capture.
- The online experience should add new dimensions to our students' learning.
- Most importantly, online object-based learning should not try to supplant or substitute the uplifting experience of holding a piece of history in one's hands. We needed to do something new. Something different.

In the past six months we have developed a series of films to meet these aims, used in our full-time modules on Indian Art and Chinese Art. These were shot in the galleries and stores of the V&A and British Museum, with the invaluable support of both museums under very difficult circumstances. These films were made available to our students online, followed by online Q&A sessions with the curator in each video. They allowed our students to examine each object in intimate detail: exploring

the unglazed foot of a Chinese Yaozhou ware bowl, appraising Jain sculptures in the V&A's South Asia gallery, and examining the techniques used Tibet Tangkas on view in the British Museum's ground-breaking exhibition *Tantra: Enlightenment to Revolution*. Yet this format did more than communicate the qualities of the collections we work with. The follow-up Q&As allowed our students to access the expertise of the curators who care for these collections in new and engaging ways.

While a video can never replace a bodily connection to an object, it can add something new. Pre-recorded sessions gave the students greater control of their learning. Now they can look as close as they like, for as long as they like. If anyone misses a key point, they can rewind and replay without the embarrassment of asking a curator to repeat themselves. This really helps to maximise our students' learning from the extremely valuable time spent with objects in storage. Moreover, providing recordings in advance of Q&A sessions gives students time for reflection. When the curators join us for an online Q&A session in real time the class have had up to a week to prepare. We have had very considered, careful questions as a result. This combination of pre-recorded video and follow-up live Q&As adds significant value to the students' experience. Not only does it make objects more accessible, but also gives our classes even greater access to the expertise of the curators who care for them.

Where we have not been able to create bespoke footage for a reserve collection visit, we have found other ways to adapt our teaching. In what we are calling 'virtual viewing sessions' museum curators guide our classes through a handful of pieces from their reserve collections using high-res images on a Power Point presentation. Pausing between each object to take questions the experience is quite different from a lecture. This is a small change, but an effective one. This teaching style ensures our students have the opportunity to discuss each piece in an interactive, accessible format.



Our students have responded particularly well to online object-based learning on the Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art. These sessions consistently gain the highest scores in our student feedback. One student recently commented:

These are fantastic sessions. They are slow, careful and deliberate and show the subject matter very well. By not trying to jam so much into a session you have time to think and digest and then prepare for questions.

Online object-based learning was the greatest source of anxiety for the Postgraduate Diploma team at the start of this academic year. Now, it is our greatest point of pride, proving that we can adapt our teaching to meet the challenges of the covid-19 pandemic. We are still working to refine and improve our approach. I would love to share and discuss our experiences with the Alphawood alumni community.

I know many of our alumni are in teaching posts in the region. I would be delighted to hear from anyone who wants to discuss the challenges of online learning. I would be particularly interested to

hear from anyone who is facing the same challenge we are, in teaching from objects in an online environment. Please do write to me, tell me what you are doing. Hopefully we can find ways to collaborate, support one another, swap ideas and share experiences and expertise. I hope to hear from you soon!

Email: mm133@soas.ac.uk

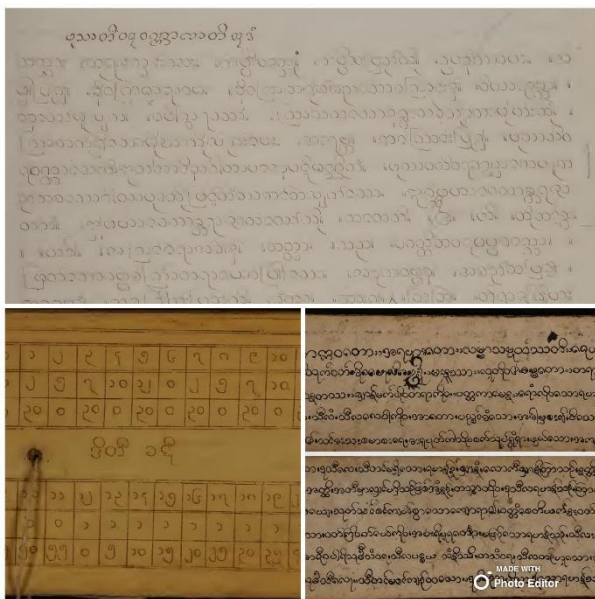
Dr. Malcolm McNeill, Director of Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art, Senior Lecturer in Arts Education

Student stories

SAAAP Internships

Alphawood alumni Jean Heng and Yin Nyein Aye report back on their successful internships supported by SAAAP

The time I spent with Royal Asiatic Society (RAS) as an intern from 1st December 2020 to 27th December 2020 was a memorable one for me. It was rich in experience sharing and helped me discover my potential. I have had so many valuable experiences and opportunities that I personally believe will forever shape and influence my professional life while promoting personal growth and development.



19th Century Burmese Manuscript

During this time of internship with RAS, I worked with the 19th century Burmese manuscripts to make a catalogue. These were previously unidentified and relate to several different subjects (Buddhist scripture, monastery administration, and astrology). I conducted extensive research into these manuscript traditions, as well as original textual translation, in order to be able to accurately identify the manuscripts and describe their contents. This will now be made available via RAS online catalogue and Digital Library for the benefit of future researchers. It was a challenge to orchestrate the project while physical access to the collections was limited due to the pandemic. However, Dr Ed Weech was able to organise a pre-project planning meeting with me onsite at

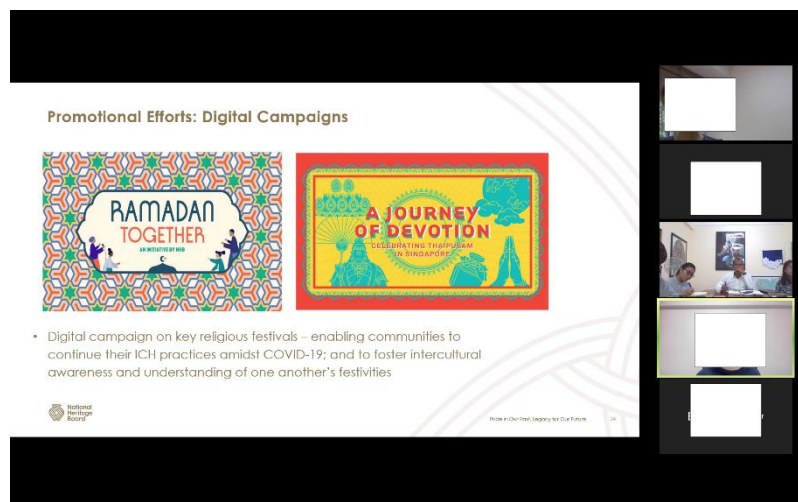
the RAS, and I could be able to complete the project remotely as the manuscripts had already been digitized to a high standard. It has been a wonderful experience, and I recommend the institute organises more of such programmes to widen its sphere of operation.

This experience would not have been possible without their permit me to allow to join this project. So, I would like to thank both the Alphawood Foundation and the Royal Asiatic Society (RAS).

Yin Nyein Aye, Alphawood MA Alumna

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit British shores and the city of London went into lockdown in March 2020, many programmes that I was looking forward to, such as the study trip to Europe, could no longer proceed. Having made the decision to return to Singapore in order to be closer to home during this difficult time, I was not expecting to be able to participate any other programmes if they were to continue in London. I was therefore pleasantly surprised to find that SAAAP not only continued to support internships for their MA graduates amidst the pandemic, but also overcame current restrictions by offering virtual internships for the first time.

With my employment at the National Heritage Board Singapore (NHB) and interest in cultural policy, the virtual internship with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Phnom Penh (MCFA) was fitting and relevant. Over the course of five weeks, I had the honour to work with His Excellency Siyonn Sophearith, General-Director of Techniques for Cultural Affairs and his team. I was mainly tasked to look into some of Cambodia's existing policies and initiatives related to the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Cambodia and provide recommendations for their consideration.



Screenshot from the bilateral sharing session between MCFA and the National Heritage Board Singapore

Although we could not meet physically for discussions and had to communicate entirely through video conferencing and messaging platforms, the arrangement allowed for cultural institutions of different countries to engage in dialogue without having to make an official trip overseas. I was able to facilitate a dialogue session between MCFA and NHB over zoom, where both teams shared about their country's policies, initiatives, and struggles in safeguarding their ICH.

Being able to look into and experience first-hand the workings of another country's cultural institution, together with the connections forged through the internship, was a privilege and an opportunity of a lifetime. This virtual internship provided many valuable takeaways that I could apply in my work in Singapore, and I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to those involved: SAAAP and the Alphawood Foundation for the generous support and facilitation of this excellent and unique opportunity despite the present limitations, as well as the MCFA team – His Excellency, Ms Bun Sreivy, Ms Kong Laksmey, and Mr Chan Monyodom, for the valuable insights, patience, and guidance throughout this internship. Although I was unable to meet the MCFA team physically, I look forward to the bilateral cultural visits between both institutions when travel restrictions lift.

Jean Heng, MA Alphawood Alumna

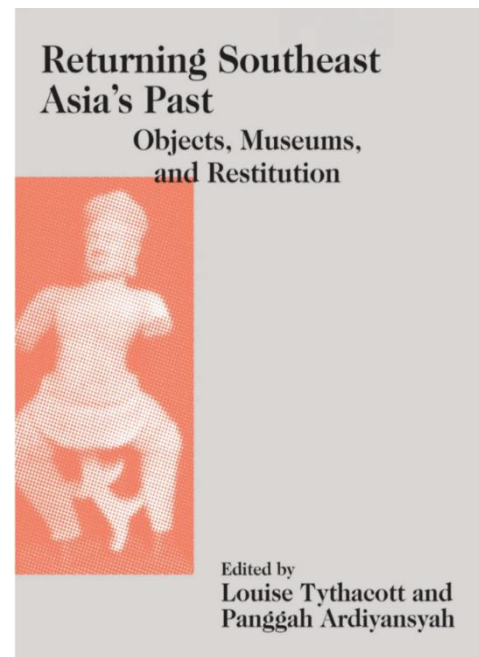
Approved projects

“Returning Southeast Asian’s Past: Objects, Museums, and Restitution” for SAAAP-NUS Press book series

Alphawood PhD Student Panggah Ardiyansyah reports on his first publication for the book series “Art and Archaeology of Southeast Asia: Hindu-Buddhist Traditions” with Louise Tythacott, Woon Tai Jee Professor of Asian Art, previously the Pratapaditya Pal Professor in Curating and Museology of Asian Art

Returning Southeast Asia’s Past: Objects, Museums, and Restitution, edited by Louise Tythacott (former SOAS/currently Northumbria University) and Panggah Ardiyansyah (SOAS), was recently published in January 2021 by NUS Press with Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme. It is the first publication for the book series titled *Art and Archaeology of Southeast Asia: Hindu-Buddhist Traditions*, and includes contributions from Gabrielle Abbe, Jos van Beurden, Socheat Chea, John Clarke, Charlotte Galloway, Chanraksmei Muong, Duyen Nguyen, Phacharaphorn Phanomvan, Melody Rod-ari, Wieske Octaviani Sapardan.

This book is a timely consideration of object restitution and related issues across Southeast Asia, bringing together different viewpoints including from museum professionals and scholars in Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia – as well as Europe, North America and Australia. The objects themselves are at the centre of most narratives - from Khmer art to the Mandalay regalia (repatriated in 1964), Ban Chiang archaeological material and the paintings of Raden Saleh. Legal, cultural, political and diplomatic issues involved in the restitution process are considered in many of the chapters; others look at the ways object restitution is integral to evolving narratives of national identity. The book's editors conclude that restitution processes can transform narratives of loss into opportunities for gain in building knowledge and reconstructing relationships across national borders.



<https://nuspress.nus.edu.sg/collections/frontpage/products/returning-southeast-asias-past-objects-museums-and-restitution>

The Creative South: Buddhist and Hindu Art in Medieval Maritime Asia

SAAAP Outreach and Communications Manager Dr. Peter D. Sharrock writes about plans for the publication in mid-2021

The manuscript of this hefty two-volume proceedings anthology from 2 SAAAP Summer Programmes in Java, attended by many SAAAP alumni, went to the publisher in January for copy-editing, design and printing later this year, with strong endorsements from leading scholars on the region.

In 18 chapters, the 400-page work celebrates the leading, yet still underestimated, historical role of the littoral and insular mediaeval states along the burgeoning trade routes of the southern Asian seas in the propagation and enhancement of Buddhism and Hinduism through sacred art and architecture. Editors Andrea Acri (EPHE Paris) and Peter D. Sharrock (SOAS) claim in the preface that the papers

show that far from being a mere southern conduit for the maritime circulation of Indic religions, in the period from ca. the 7th to the 14th century those regions transformed across mainland and island polities the rituals, icons, and architecture that embodied these religious insights with a dynamism that often eclipsed the established cultural centres in Northern India, Central Asia, and mainland China. The presence of such major Esoteric Buddhist teachers as Prajña, Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, Śubhakarasiṃha, and Atiśa in the polities arising along the ocean and shipping lanes, turned them into vibrant centres of Buddhist innovation rather than passive recipients of transmitted Indic ideas, as they have often been considered. These teachers went on to have profound impact in East Asia.

Yury Khokhlov's research shows the images from Mogao and Yulin caves in Dunhuang, which are traditionally ascribed to Tibetan influence, were in fact influenced by Southern Indian art and in particular by the art of the Pallava kingdom in Tamil Nadu. This style, visible in jewelry, dress and conceptual setting, was enhanced in Sri Lanka and Java and bound into the textual and ritual expertise brought to China by Vajrabodhi in the 8th century and propagated in the Hexi corridor and Dunhuang by Amoghavajra. Other papers show that fierce Esoteric Buddhist Heruka deities like Trailokyavijaya and Hevajra were deployed in royal state protection rituals in Cambodia, Champa, Java, Sumatra and Mongol China in ways unknown in India, where the Buddhists were monastery-bound. Another paper focuses on the enigmatic Amoghapāśa form of Avalokiteśvara with eight arms, which is prominent in the art of both Indonesian and Nepalese tantric Buddhism. No scriptural source for it has yet been identified but Iain Sinclair locates the earliest images within Buddhist Malayu kingdom of the Peninsula and Sumatra then traces its diffusion through all Insular Southeast Asia, East Asia, and eventually Nepal, probably at the hands of the renowned travelling master Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna. Atiśa was a major influence across the expanding Buddhist world from the north (Vikramaśilā monastery in Bengal) to the south (Sumatra) and back (Tibet). Amoghapāśa's vast cult therefore appears to be a remarkable case of a creative 'periphery' culture disseminating far and wide over a long period and distance and ultimately changing the 'centre'.



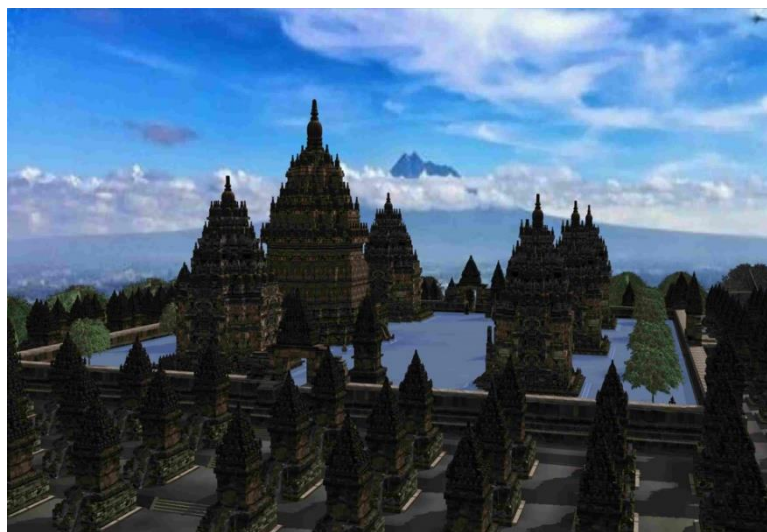
Prambanan Śiva temple covered in spiked finials.

Studies of the unmatched scale and architectural innovations of Maritime Asia include the latest analytic ponderings of the world-leading Indonesian scholar of Borobudur, Hudaya Kandahjaya. He uncovers a new 'Scheme of Borobudur' by analysing the monument's shape and layout in the light of numerological mandala patterns important in Buddhist doctrine. The research of the late Dutch Java specialist Roy Jordaan and Jeffrey Sundberg (Arizona) explores the elaborate drainage system under the vast 9th century Śaiva complex at Prambanan and discover that the 47m tall Śiva temple, covered with hundreds of spike-tipped, ribbed bulbous finials, was built as a giant multiple Śivaliṅga (or *sahasraliṅga* '1000-liṅga') sacred water consecration mechanism for the ritual protection of the state.

The blurb endorsement of **John Guy**, New York Metropolitan Museum curator, says that 'The collective objective of this two-volume work is to give substance to the oft cited mantra that medieval maritime Southeast Asia was as much an innovative contributor, as a recipient, in the cultural conversations that took place across

the Bay of Bengal and South China Sea. In bracketing these studies between the 7th and 14th centuries, the editors have drawn into focus two key traditions that are explicated in texts, ritual art and architecture and religious landscapes of this period: Tantric Buddhism and esoteric Shaivism... Nowhere did the architects of the religious landscape of early Southeast Asia think of themselves as being on the periphery, or as outsiders, looking in. Rather, they knowingly imbued their tirthas and sacred centres with the same authority as those in India and created religious edifices that were on occasions beyond India's experience. I can highly commend this publication to anyone with an interest in bringing a wider lens to the study of Indian esoteric religious practices and to understanding the relationship of early Hindu-Buddhist Southeast Asia to the wider Asian world.'

Professor **John Miksic** of the National University of Singapore (NUS) added: 'This cosmopolitan society afforded plentiful opportunities for artists to find patrons and develop individual styles and aesthetic sensibilities. In the bustling ports of Asia's south coast, rulers sought to embellish their prestige and attract foreign merchants by sponsoring the development of monumental complexes and centres of learning and debate. These educational institutions attracted teachers from all over Asia, and in their cloisters they developed new intellectual frameworks which were reflected in works of art and architecture ... This volume contributes to the endeavour to show how maritime Asia was not an incoherent jumble of misunderstood influences from better-known civilizations; there was a pattern to this creativity, which the authors in this collection clarify for us.'



Computer reconstruction of the imagined flooded Prambanan Saiva temple complex in Central Java, under the Mount Merapi volcano, that the publication interprets as a *sahasraliṅga* (1000-liṅga) mechanism for state consecration of water. (courtesy P. Jordaán)

Hiram Woodward, Emeritus Curator of the Walters Art Museum Baltimore and doyen of the art historians of the region takes this view: '*The Creative South* is a rich compendium of scholarship concerning the religious art of Southeast Asia and its ties to India in the period beginning in the eighth century. It was a time when merchants were crisscrossing the seas from India to China and when advocates of innovative doctrines and rituals were finding ready support among the rulers of the varied kingdoms... [and] these eighteen studies provide fresh understandings of the patterns of reception and innovation. From the identification of images embraced by the seafarers to the mysteries of the fire shrines in Cambodian temples, from the funerary beliefs of Odisha to the unique

character of the Javanese Ramayana, these eighteen studies provide fresh understandings of the patterns of reception and innovation.'

Research Seminar Series supported by SAAAP and CSEAS

PhD candidate Udomluck Hoontrakul updates us on the SAAAP-CSEAS Research Seminar Series

The Research Seminar series supports the research and study of Southeast Asian ancient to pre-modern Hindu and Buddhist art, architecture, archaeology, and museum and heritage studies. The program is jointly arranged by SAAAP and SOAS Centre of South East Asian Studies (CSEAS). In the 2020-21 academic year, the program aims to invite international scholars in various disciplines including history, archaeology, history of Art, and heritage studies.



RIVER ROAD TO ANGKOR
Human Ecodynamics of a Tropical River Basin

 **Veronica Walker Vadillo**
University of Helsinki

Abstract: From the very first academic studies of Angkor, researchers have assumed that rivers played an important role in the establishment of this polity. Despite this acknowledgement, most of the research conducted on Angkor has deployed a terrestrial approach to the study of this polity, focusing on agriculture and urbanism. This presentation will shift the focus to the region's amphibious nature, and lay out the main characteristics of Angkor's complex cultural responses to its watery environment. This is done by analyzing the extensive corpus of nautical iconography in the context of human-environment interactions. Khmer nautical iconography is unique inasmuch as it presents a wealth of information of activities that took place on board vessels, from pilgrimages, to warfare, festivals, and elaborated rituals performed on water (both in man-made and natural spaces). Additionally, they show that the people of Angkor tapped into Indian iconography to modify their vessels, creating an eclectic tradition that survives, albeit modified, in the royal barges of Thailand. In this talk I will discuss how Angkor's fluvial culture points to political and cosmological responses to the amphibious landscape they inhabited, and provided the kings of Angkor with a religious framework with which they exerted control over the river network and the people living in and around it. The study applies the interdisciplinary theoretical framework known as the Maritime Cultural Landscape, incorporating data from environmental sciences, archaeology, nautical technology, ethnography, and history.

9th December 2020
:11 am London time
: 6 pm Phnom Penh time

Live on FB: Southeast Asian
Art Academic Programme at SOAS
<https://www.facebook.com/southeastasianartacademicprogramme>



Due to ongoing pandemic restriction, research seminars series have been held online. This new platform has enabled the seminar series to be participated internationally. The number of our audience has also been increasing significantly (from 40 to more than 100).

The forthcoming webinars will be held on:

- 1) 3rd March 2021 at 11 AM
Speaker: Dominic Goodall, EFEO*

- 2) 17th March 2021 at 11 AM
Speaker: Michael Falser, University of Heidelberg**

*, ** Topic to be confirmed.

The webinars in Term 2 will be broadcast live on the Zoom. Details of registration for receiving the meeting link will be updated on the SAAAP's Facebook page and the CSEAS webpage at: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/cseas/events/>

For those who have missed our webinars, the recordings are now available for watching on the SAAAP's Facebook page and CSEAS [webpage](#).

Dating 'Uthong' Buddha Bronze Imags by Scientific Method for Understanding the Development of Buddhist Art in the 13th and 14th centuries

PhD candidate Pipad Krajaejun reports on his SAAAP funded research

The dating of bronze 'Uthong' Buddha image has been unclear, despite it being very important for understanding the development of Theravada Buddhism in central Thailand in the 13th-14th centuries. This project is the first attempt to date the bronze casting core of bronze Uthong Buddha images by Thermoluminescence dating (TL) in Thailand and Southeast Asia. 10 samples of bronze casting core from various National Museums and 4 brick samples were taken from 3 monuments, namely the main prang of Wat Mahathat Lopburi, the prang kleep maphueang #6b of Wat Mahathat Lopburi and the main stupa of Wat Mahathat Sanburi, were collected for doing dating.

The result of TL dating in this project is the new data for art history and archaeology in Thailand which change the previous knowledge on Uthong Buddha image, and help to confirm the dating of monuments but it creates more specific dating than using only art historical determination. The TL dating of them show in this below table:

Label no.	Uthong Style	TL Lab ID.	Apparent Age (BP.)	Calendar Date (AD.)
Buddha #006	III	A1734	700±17	1320±17
Buddha #007	II	A1735	700±15	1320±15
Buddha #008	III	A1736	675±15	1345±15
Buddha #011	II	A1737	707±16	1313±16
Buddha #012	III	A1738	632±14	1388±14
Buddha #013	II	A1739	743±19	1277±19
Buddha #014	II	A1740	739±20	1281±20
Buddha #015	III	A1741	615±13	1405±13
Buddha #016	III	A1742	675±19	1345±19
Buddha #017	II	A1743	718±16	1302±16
Monument #003	-	A1730	731±18	1289±18
Monument #004	-	A1731	632±14	1388±14
Monument #005	-	A1744	484±12	1536±12
Monument #006	-	A1804	676±15	1344±15

Remark: These 14 samples were dated at the 9th September 2020 at the Thermoluminescence Laboratory, Department of Earth Science, Kasetsart University, Bangkok



Uthong style II,
Bangkok National Museum, unknown provenance,
Label no. Buddha #014, National museum no. ๑๗.4



Uthong style III,
Bangkok National Museum, Nakorn Chaisri,
Label no. Buddha #012, National museum no. ๑๗.18



Arrow shows the position of a brick sample (Monument #003) taken from the brick floor of the main prang of Wat Mahathat Lopburi

The two main findings in this project are a great contribution to our knowledge of Buddhist art in Thailand and Cambodia: the first is the TL scientific dating change to the previous knowledge of Uthong Buddha images particular. According to the previous work such as Subhadradis Diskul and Santi Leksum, the influential senior art historians in Thailand, Uthong style II probably dates from the 13th and 14th century, while Uthong style III probably to the 14th and 15th centuries (Subhadradis 1971:17). Santi suggests that Uthong style III was created at the beginning of the Ayutthaya Kingdom or between the second half of the 14th and the first half of the 15th centuries (Santi 2009:96). However, this project reveals that Uthong style II was created between 1277-1320 CE, while Uthong style III was extended from 1320-1405-CE.

The second finding is the dating of 3 monuments that confirms the accuracy of earlier art historical evaluations and the archaeological evidence from excavation. For example, the main *prang* of Wat Mahathat Lopburi was dated by Hiram Woodward to the 1280s-1290s. Last year I excavated this monument and

found Chinese ceramics, dated between the Southern Song to Yuan periods or to the late 13th and early 14th centuries, which confirms the correctness of Woodward's work and underpins it with precise dating from Chinese ceramics. The result of Monument #003 sample dating was 1289±18 CE. Another example at Monument #004, *prang kleep maphueang* #6b, was dated to 1388±14 CE. This means the Uthong Buddha image stucco style III was popular in Lopburi city in the late 14th century, which correlates with historical documents that say King Ramesuan ruled that city in that time. Moreover, this dating can be also used for the famous Western Top Prasat, where an elegant early walking Buddha image decorates at the north false door and which has several stylistic similarities with *prang kleep maphueang* already mentioned.

Two brick samples from the main stupa of Wat Mahathat Sanburi were also sent for dating: the first sample (Monument #005) returned the dates 1536±12 CE; the second sample (Monument #006) gave the dates 1344±15 CE. So, the brick floor found in the excavation trench 50 cm below the surface may have been built in the middle Ayutthaya period, while the main stupa was built in the 1340s or during the pre-Ayutthaya period. The great contribution of this project includes: 1) the new method for dating bronze Buddha images; 2) accurate dating of Uthong Buddha images and monuments in the 13th-14th centuries. These new findings have been communicated to the local community in Supanburi province and to Thai archaeologists.

Update on Pratu: Journal of Buddhist and Hindu Art, Architecture and Archaeology of Ancient to Premodern Southeast Asia

Alphawood PhD alumna Heidi Tan reports on the launch of Pratu's inaugural volume

The editorial team now welcomes new submissions for Volume Two. If you are interested in submitting, you can find guidance on our policies, the peer review process and author declarations (in six languages) [here](#). We will also support you to obtain rights to publish [figures and illustrations](#). We would like to thank our advisory board and SOAS colleagues for their unstinting support, and in particular, our contributors and anonymous peer-reviewers for their commitment to helping us bring [Volume One](#) to fruition last year.

Volume 1:

Ambra Calo, Durgā Maḥiṣāsura-mardīnī in Likely Tantric Buddhist Context from the Northern Indian Subcontinent to 11th-century Bali [Durgā Maḥiṣāsura-mardīnī dalam konteks agama Buddha Tantrayana dari Subkontinen India Utara dan Bali pada abad ke-11]

Abstract: This study examines the significance of the originally Hindu goddess Durgā Maḥiṣāsura-mardīnī (Durgā slaying the buffalo demon) in Tantric Buddhist temple contexts of the 8th–11th century in Afghanistan and northeastern India, as well as in 11th-century Bali. Drawing primarily on archaeological and iconographic evidence, it suggests that Durgā Maḥiṣāsura-mardīnī is likely to have reached Bali in a 10th–11th century transmission of Tantric Buddhism to Indonesia.

Conan Cheong, Kingship and Procreation in a Pyu Viṣṇu Anantaśāyīn Stone Relief from Śrīkṣetra
[သရေခေတ္တရာရှိ ဗိဿနိုး အနန္တသာရင် ကျောက်စစ်ရုပ်တု၏ မင်းရိုက်ရာ နှင့် စည်ပင်ပြန့်ပွားခြင်း]

Abstract: This paper examines closely a stone relief carving found in 1919 at the Pyu city of Śrīkṣetra in Myanmar, an unusual variant of the Viṣṇu Anantaśāyin iconographic type, which offers new ways to think about the significance of kingship and the art of the Pyu period. It also considers the apparent reinterpretation of Viṣṇu's Creator-function in this image in relation to his possible cadastral functions, to the Bagan king Kyanzittha's conceptions of kingship, and to Buddhist lineages as reflected in the succession of the four Buddhas of the Past.

Chhum Menghong, Nine Deities Panel in Ancient Cambodia [ផ្ទាំងចម្លាក់ទេពប្រាំបួនអង្គ ក្នុងអារ្យធម៌ខ្មែរបុរាណ]

Abstract: This paper re-examines the iconographic development of the nine deities panel through the pre-Angkorian and Angkorian periods. It argues that earlier panels showed nine celestial bodies, while later panels represented a combination of four celestial bodies and five deities of the directions. This study considers the imagery's meaning and significance, based on associated iconographic themes of cosmological order and their original architectural contexts. The significance of the panel is suggested to relate to the idea of the temple as cosmic space.



Bayon, Angkor, Cambodia. 12th century. Duyen Nguyen. CC BY-NC 4.0.



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. For more information please visit the website and contact us.

pratujournal@soas.ac.uk

<https://pratujournal.org/>

Pratu Journal Editorial Team

SAAAP Alumnus heads up World Heritage application for Banteay Chhmar temple and a digital inventory of the Conservation of Angkor

Alphawood MA alumnus Dr. Chhum Menghong has been appointed Deputy Secretary General of Cambodia's National Commission for Unesco

Alphawood scholar Dr Menghong Chhum graduated from his SOAS MA in 2017 and has now been made Deputy Secretary General of the Cambodia National Commission for UNESCO (Cambodian NATCOM), in the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts.

Cambodian NATCOM provides him opportunities to use his training and expertise in archaeology and art history in multiple activities in the culture sector, notably in the field of cultural heritage conservation, documentation of work on culture objects and heritage site management.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 most of the activities of Cambodian NATCOM have been impacted and diverted to working only with online platforms. However, some projects related to field research and documentation have been selected as a priorities for the year 2020-21 and Menghong is involved in the four prominent culture projects below.

(1) Revising the tentative list of world cultural heritage of Cambodia

Information on eight sites, in projects led by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in cooperation with Cambodian NATCOM, is being revised for inclusion in the country's tentative list of world heritage sites first submitted in 1992. The new sites are being updated with new information under the guidance of the World Heritage Centre formula for site description, justification of outstanding universal value, authenticity and/or integrity, and comparison with other similar sites.



Research activities on iconography at Banteay Chmar temple

(2) Preparing the dossier of Banteay Chhmar temple for nomination as a World Heritage site

As a research member in the technical team, Dr Chhum is in charge of collecting data to establish the outstanding value of this site. The main work is focusing on analyzing the iconography of the reliefs appearing on the outer gallery of the huge 12th-13th century Buddhist temple complex.

(3) The cultural heritage education program:

This project is supported by UNESCO to educate the high school and university students about the value of the Cambodian world cultural heritage. Cambodian NATCOM has cooperated with Department of Culture and Fine Arts in Kampong Thom province to create a guide entitled *To Understanding Cambodian world cultural heritage* for distribution through the country's educational system and through seminars on cultural heritage.



Discussing how to make digital inventory with the Institution of Conservation Angkor

(4) Creating a digital inventory of cultural objects at the Conservation of Angkor in Siem Reap province

Again supported by UNESCO, Cambodian NATCOM has implemented a project for creating a digital inventory of the vast storage of culture objects held at the Conservation of Angkor. The creation of a digital inventory model for the wide array of collections is expected to transform future research into treasures unearthed during the multiple archaeological and restoration project now underway across the country.

Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives Preservation and Digitization Project

*Alphawood alumna **Chhay Davin** reports on her work as National Project Assistant of Communications and Information Unit at UNESCO Phnom Penh Office*

The archives of the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum (TSGM)'s provide detailed documentary evidence of the prison system during the Khmer Rouge regime (1975-9). In 2009, the museum's archives were registered in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register, an international initiative to preserve the documentary heritage of humanity. Since 2015, with generous financial support from KOICA (The Korea International Cooperation Agency), UNESCO has been implementing, in partnership with the Cambodian Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MoCFA), the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archive Preservation and Digitization Project.

The project's goal is to develop TSGM into an educational site to support efforts for reconciliation, facilitating dialogue on non-violence by providing youth, Khmer Rouge survivors, and the general public with access to information about their historical past. Additionally, the project will provide a platform for peacebuilding efforts and intercultural dialogue, both in Cambodia and around the globe.



Chhay Davin at UNESCO Phnom Penh Office, Cambodia

Given the COVID-19 situation, and in line with Royal Government of Cambodia and UN/WHO guidelines, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts has announced to all Cultural and Fine Arts departments both in Phnom Penh and Province, Public, Tour Guide Community, Tour Guide Agency as well as all museums including Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, that they have to remain closed for health and safety concerns. The project work-plan has been adversely affected, including the archive-website launch ceremony and visit of President of KOICA, which has been cancelled until further notice.

Fortunately, early 2021 the COVID-19 situation in Cambodia UNESCO was able to launch the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives Website on 20 January 2021. All digital archives are now accessible online at archives.tuolsleng.gov.kh. This historical digital archive will be conserved and developed for generations to come in order to preserve the legacy

of victims and to give stronger resonance to the survivor's voice.

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

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

As of mid-February 2021, all the SOAS Alphawood Alumni in Myanmar continue to keep in close touch, supporting and sharing concerns and hopes.

All are looking forward to our continued joint projects and conference attendances in the coming year. Throughout January, our focus was our work on the Bagan Museum Catalogue in collaboration with the Bagan Archaeological Museum, Department of Archaeology. Six members of the group also will present at the 5-7 March 2021 virtual conference International Conference on Burma/Myanmar Studies in Chiang Mai (<https://www.burmaconference.com/>).

Here is our section on Bagan in the programme:

The Story of Bagan: Bronze and Stone Sculpture in the Bagan Archaeological Museum

Convener: Elizabeth Moore, SOAS Alphawood Scholarships, SAAAP University Of London

Chair: Elizabeth Moore

Discussants: Hninn Wut Yee Latt, Sanda Linn, Win Myat Aung, Thet Mon Htoo, Yamin Htay, Sulatt Win



Zoom Meeting 4 for Bagan Museum Catalogue

Updates on the Myanmar Alumni:

1. **Thet Mon Htoo** has been active with her independent research and developing her painting skills.
2. **Yamin Htay** has been busy with the Department of Archaeology at Bagan, and will give a peer-reviewed paper, "Challenges and Opportunities in Conservation of Bagan Monuments: Reconciliation amongst Veneration, Renovation and Architecture" at the KF XXII Kongress, Swedish Royal Academy of Engineering Sciences, IVA Conference Centre in 20-21 October 2021, Stockholm [http://www.ecco-eu.org/fileadmin/user_upload/NKF_XXII_-_Call_for_Abstracts.pdf].



Yamin Htay (in green, front row left) with her colleagues upon completion of a Department of Archaeology project in December 2019

3. **Win Myat Aung** through the SEAMEO (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation) Secretariat with his Yangon SEAMEO office is hosting Zoom sessions on (1) World Heritage Sites in Myanmar: The Journey and Beyond in July 2020, and (2) Buddhist Arts of Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar in August 2020.



Win Myat Aung's SEAMEO Secretariat meeting

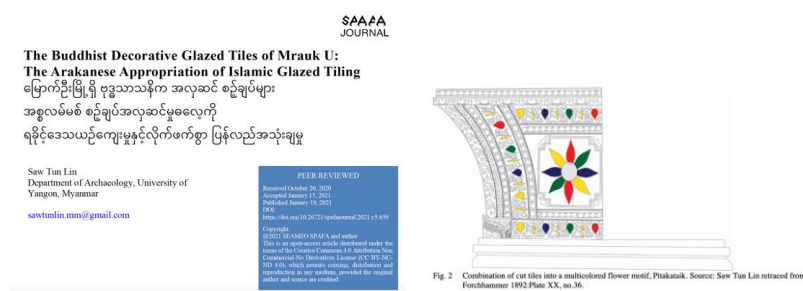
4. **Sanda Linn** has been promoted to Professor of Mandalay University, and published the paper "Flaming Pediments of the Bagan Period" in *Advancing Southeast Asian Archaeology, Selected Papers from the Second SEAMEO SPAFA International Conference on Southeast Asian Archaeology, Bangkok, Thailand 2019*. Edited by Noel Hidalgo Tan (<https://www.spafajournal.org/index.php/spafapub/issue/view/136>)
5. **Hninn Wutyee Latt** continues at Yadanabon University preparing for and attending lectures about online teaching.
6. **Nan Htaik** has been busy at PYUCOM, at the Department of Archaeology in Nay Pyi Taw working on reports and management for the UNESCO World Heritage site. She has been helping the SOC (State of Conservation report) and periodic reporting for the Third Circle in Asia and Pacific Region 2021 and assisting her Director in the Conservation Management plan for Mrauk U, and the Myanmar Cultural Heritage Management System (MCHMS) Collaborative Project with Korea and the Myanmar Cultural Heritage Digital Archive,
7. **Thu Ya Aung** continues with the Myanmar Archaeology Association, recently organizing and programming host for Zoom Discussions on Tangible and Intangible Heritage Issues. He is also



Thu Ya Aung Heritage event

preparing a heritage management strategy for the Magway regional government and assisting in preparations to see the University of Yangon added to the country's protected properties.

8. **Kyaw Minn Htin** has been working on his research and writing and in January 2021, began project research on the role of faith healers in the Peace Process in Rakhine/Chin and Kachin/Shan's North for PaRD, the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD) at Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in Germany] [<https://www.partner-religion-development.org/about/contact-us/>]
9. **Su Latt Win** has been attending conservation classes, writing a catalogue on the manuscripts of the Zaykabar Museum and preparing for the museum opening.
10. **Swe Zin Myint** continues at Mandalay University preparing for and attending lectures about online teaching.
11. **Pwint Phyu Maung** has been cataloguing stone beads, attending conservation classes and completing a volume of the Painting Collection of the Zaykabar Museum while preparing for the museum opening.
12. **Theint Thaw Aung** has been cataloguing stamps and lacquerware, attending conservation classes and preparing for the Zaykabar Museum opening. Her article "Sustainable Culture: Burmese Lacquerware" has been published, pp. 9-19 in the *Journal of the Myanmar Academy of Arts and Science*, 2020 Special Issue *Research and Innovation for Sustainable Development in Asia*, Sub-Theme IV (Alleviate Poverty through Socio-economic Development) from the 19th Science Council of Asia Conference, 3-5 December 2019, Nay Pyi Taw.
13. **Ye Myat Lwin** has kept in touch with the Alumni group from Portugal where he is attending an archaeological materials course through ERASMUS Mundi.
14. **Saw Tun Lin** is writing his SOAS doctoral dissertation draft, assisting the Bagan Catalogue and was a panellist on the Myanmar Archaeology Association (MAA) Zoom on Heritage Preservation. He published "The Buddhist Decorative Glazed Tiles of Mrauk U: The Arakanese Appropriation of Islamic Glazed Tiling" (including his redrawing of older sources) in the *SPAFA Journal* <https://doi.org/10.26721/spafajournal.2021.5.659>



Saw Tun Lin tile and redrawn illustration in his article in SPAFA Journal

15. **Htay Wai Naing** (formerly Dhamma Sami) is back and searching for a job, possibly with Parami Institute until he goes to Harvard for his Internship in May.
16. **Thet Thet Aung** continues at Dagon University preparing for, and attending lectures about online teaching.
17. **May Su Ko** continues at Yangon University preparing for, and attending, lectures about online teaching. She has co-authored "Over-research and ethics dumping in international

archaeology", with Ben Marwick and Thanh Son Pham, in *SPAFA Journal*, 2020-12-

15; <https://doi.org/10.26721/spafajournal.v4i0.625>

18. **Soe Yu Maw** is back at her job in Nay Pyi Taw as Research Officer, DHR (Department of Historical Research) working on a department projects comparing Pyu and Dvaravati Buddhist art and preparing for an internal seminar in March.
19. **Yin Nyein Aye** is back at the Field School of Archaeology in Pyay. She has completed her Internship with the Royal Asiatic Society (RAS), with summaries of three palm-leaf manuscripts and a compliment from RAS in asking for more. She will be making a presentation for her school on her study abroad and is working on an analysis of pottery from two Sri Ksetra excavations (HMA 58/59).



Soe Yu Maw back at work January, Department of Historical Research, Nay Pyi Taw



Theint Theint Aung arranging stamps at her job, January 2021

Sign up and join in with the SAAAP Newsletter!

The SAAAP Newsletter is published 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 Olivia Burt. 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 Olivia Burt at ob9@soas.ac.uk.

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



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