

Biographies and Restitution of Hindu Buddhist Objects from Java, Sumatra and Bali: Collecting, Relocating, Restoring, Donating, Reproducing and Repatriating

Wednesday 18 May 2022
10am-5:30pm followed by reception until 6.30pm
Alumni Lecture Theatre, Senate House, SOAS University of London

Opening Remarks

Prof. Shane McCausland, Percival David Professor of the History of Art, Head of the School of Arts, SOAS University of London

Symposium Convenor Dr. Lesley Pullen, Independent Art Historian, SOAS University of London

Keynote Address

Discussant: Mr. Nick Barnard, Curator, South and South-East Asia, V&A Museum

Prof. Dr. Pieter ter Keurs, Professor for Museums, Collections and Society, LUCAS, University of Leiden

Pieter ter Keurs (1956) is also a professor of material culture at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology at Leiden University. Formerly, he was a curator at the National Museum of Ethnology, mainly focusing on the Indonesian collections. He did fieldwork in Papua New Guinea (1983/84) and on Enggano Island, Indonesia (1994). In the period 2003-2009 he concentrated on co-operation with museums in Insular Southeast Asia and researched the history of colonial collecting.

Collecting Hindu-Buddhist Antiquities in the Netherlands East-Indies: On colonial practices and postcolonial tensions.

During the final decades of the Eighteenth Century, officers of the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) gradually became aware of the importance of Hindu-Buddhist remains on Java and Sumatra. In the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, when VOC property formally became a colony of the Dutch State, this new awareness led to collecting activities, in which the State played more and more a central role. From the 1820s onwards, Hindu-Buddhist material remains regularly found their way to Dutch museums (notably the Museum of Ethnography in Leiden). However, most of the collected material stayed in the colony and often became part of the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences collection. In this lecture, I will reflect on the choices made at the time and the reasons for keeping most of the statues in the colony.

During negotiations for independence in 1947-1949, there was already a discussion on the return of some objects to Indonesia. However, the debate was revived in the 1970s. In January 1978, the famous statue of the Prajñāpāramitā returned to Indonesia. It is now on display in the National Museum in Jakarta, not in Singhasari where it was initially found.

In 2003 discussions on new types of co-operation evolved in a seven-year project called 'Shared Cultural Heritage'. Mutual loans for high profile exhibitions (in Jakarta and Amsterdam) were realized and research on colonial collecting practices was stimulated. During these activities, it became clear that the local voice on heritage and property of objects had, until then, been largely overlooked. Recent discussions on collection care, property rights and restitution cannot be held without ample attention for local views of the people where the objects originally came from on tangible and intangible heritage.

PANEL 1

Chair: Dr. Stephen Murphy, Pratapaditya Pal Senior Lecturer in Curating and Museology of Asian Art, SOAS University of London

Mr. Eko Bastiawan, Independent Researcher, Malang, Java, member of ERC DHARMA project

Eko Bastiawan is an independent researcher and an Alphawood scholarship alumnus who completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art (2016) and a Master in History of Art and Archaeology (2017) at SOAS. His MA research focused on miniature bronzes from Central and East Java groups. He is interested in Old Javanese inscriptions and has been part of the ERC DHARMA Project since 2019. He is active in local communities in East Java, where he aims to preserve and conserve archaeological remains.

The Story behind Prasasti Sangguran

This paper will trace the journey of the 10th-century stone of Sangguran from Malang, East Java; the stone ended up in Roxburghshire in the Scottish borderlands. First, I will talk about the content of the inscription and its significance in Javanese history. Second, I will explore the site at which the Sangguran stone was thought to be discovered and discuss recent archaeological discoveries nearby. I will also argue the local Javanese response to their heritage which is now held in a foreign country, and finally touch on some possible ways to return the stone to Java.

Ms. Ayu Dipta Kirana, Archaeological Collections Manager, Museum Sonobudoyo, Yogyakarta, Java

Karin holds a Masters degree in Anthropology Studies from Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia. She is currently the Archaeological Collections Manager at the Sonobudoyo Museum, Yogyakarta. Karin researches collections as part of her curatorial work on exhibition themes, such as ethnoastronomy in Java and Bali, the silver industry in Kotagede Yogyakarta and the latest, children in Javanese Culture. In May 2021, she became part of the curatorial team at the AIM Project, a collaborative project between the Governments of Australia and Indonesia to develop a joint exhibition on maritime cultural issues between the two countries.

Preliminary Research on Circulation of the Resink - Wilkens Collection in Sonobudoyo Museum

The Sonobudoyo Museum is one of a few museums established during the colonial period in Indonesia. Historically the Sonobudoyo Museum cannot be separated from the Java Instituut (est.1919) which was formed as part of the wave of European culture that flooded the Nederlandsch-Indië to nurture indigenous culture (*bumiputera*). The Cultural Congress (1924) held at the Instituut was the beginning of the idea to represent indigenous material culture through exhibitions. Following this event, the Instituut's collections of ethnographic objects were developed, based on a vision of its institutional role to nurture indigenous culture. Many cultural objects were collected not only from Java, but other areas including Madura, Bali and Lombok. These were registered as part of the collection for the new museum, which opened in 1934.

Mr and Mrs Resink-Wilkens were famous cultural activists, especially Lady Anna Jacoba Resink-Wilkens, who willingly donated the collection, especially artefacts from the Hindu-Buddhist period. Stutterheim wrote an article in *Majalah Djawa* (1934 edition), stating that the Resink-Wilkens collection was the exhibition's highlight because it represented the golden era of the Javanese Hindu-Buddhist Kingdom period.

This paper will discuss the circulation of the A.J. Resink-Wilkens collection and how it entered the Museum Sonobudoyo through the Java Instituut, especially the collection of the Hindu-Buddhist period. Nevertheless, as with other colonial period collections in Indonesia, the challenges to research their provenance are many. The paper therefore also attempts to address the collection's provenance and better understand this issue.

Prof. Dr. E. Edwards McKinnon, Independent Archaeologist

Edmund, now retired but active in archaeological work, was initially involved in rubber planting in Sumatra and later plantation company management, and is a long-time resident of Indonesia. He developed an interest in archaeology by finding sumatraliths in rubber plantations and discovering shell middens at Hinai and the Kota Cina harbour site in 1974. His current interests are mediaeval inter-regional maritime trade, Buddhist and Indianising influences in Sumatra, and archaeological ceramics.

A Hoard of Buddhist Bronzes from Buluh Cina, North Sumatra

The discovery of the Buluh Cina site on what is now a nationally-owned sugar cane plantation was immediately adjacent to the early Islamic site of Kota Rentang. The recovery of this significant hoard of early Buddhist bronzes opens up an entirely new perspective on the mediaeval history of north-eastern Sumatra. In addition, this site reveals a previously unknown Buddhist Srivijayan phase of occupation in what is now the Deli-Serdang region, previously known as the Karo *dusun*.

Its proximity to Kedah considered the western branch of the polity of Srivijaya based on Palembang and Jambi (ancient Melayu), underscores its importance in the network of inter-regional activity in mediaeval times. Moreover, with its mountainous hinterland rich in forest resins such as benzoin, camphor, and gold, this area would undoubtedly have been attractive to traders passing through Selat Melaka.

The indigenous Karo people of this region, amongst whom Indianising influences are apparent in their clan names and traditions, undoubtedly played an essential role in exploiting such resources.

The bronzes, now in a private collection in Medan, are unfortunately corroded or damaged to some degree but are the first tangible evidence of external contacts and Buddhist influence in this region.

PANEL 2

Chair: Dr. Christian Luczanits, David L. Snellgrove Lecturer in Tibetan and Buddhist Art, SOAS University of London

Dr. Lesley S Pullen, Independent Art Historian, SOAS University of London

Lesley Pullen is an art historian focusing on medieval South and Southeast Asian material cultures. Completing her PhD in 2017 at SOAS University of London, she was subsequently appointed a SOAS Post-Doctoral Research Associate. Her teaching experience includes tutoring the Southeast Asian Art module of the SOAS Postgraduate Diploma programme from 2009 to 2015 and tutoring a similar programme at the V&A Museum since 2015. Lesley has lectured for various institutions internationally and published several articles. She is currently a member of the Editorial Board of the *SPAFA Journal* in Bangkok and a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society. She has published several articles based on her PhD, and her monograph *Patterned Splendour* was published in April 2021.

Object Biography: Mañjuśrī Arapacana - From Java to Russia

This paper will discuss the biography of Mañjuśrī Arapacana from East Java, a seated statue that originates from Caṅḍi Jago and is dated to 1268. Inscriptions dating to 1343 were added later on both the front and the rear by two different hands. This paper will also take a brief look at the origins of this statue at Caṅḍi Jago and what was its original exact location, often disputed.

The account of the Mañjuśrī statue from Java to its current location in St Petersburg provides a complete case study in the biography of this object. The sculpture was commissioned in 1343 by a Sumatran prince, who later became King Ādityavarman (r. c. 1347–1379). In 1802 the statue collected by Nicolaus Engelhard from East Java was subsequently shipped to Batavia, after which, in 1825, it was shipped to the Netherlands. Engelhard was Governor-General of the North Coast of Java at the time, from 1801-08. In the 1850s, the sculpture was acquired from Dutch sources (Engelhard's sister), then in 1862 moved to the Ethnological

Collection in Berlin, then in 1864, the statue went on display for some time and was published by R.H. Th. Friedrich (1817-75) in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (Leipzig). Put into flak towers storage during World War II, it was then taken by the Russians after the war. Finally, in 1945, The State Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, acquired the statue.

In 2002 Berlin published a book of all their 'lost' sculptures, *Dokumentation der Verluste, Band 3*, Mañjuśrī appears on page 93 no 1065. The statue was not seen again until 2016, when it went on display in a temporary exhibition, *Sacral Gift to Deity* at the Hermitage and now remains in storage.

Dr. Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz, Associate, Ethnologisches Museum, Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin

Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz is currently an associate at the Ethnological Museum/Asian Art Museum Research directorate in Berlin/Germany. She holds a PhD. in Art History from the Technical University of Darmstadt and an MA in Art History, Archaeology and Southeast Asian Regional Studies from Frankfurt University, Germany. Her PhD-thesis focused on urban planning and shophouse architecture of Penang, Malaysia. She previously joined excavations in Syria and Indonesia and pursued archaeological research in Sumatra and Javanese gold. In Singapore, she was formerly a Visiting Research Associate at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, a Visiting Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, and an assistant professor of the National University of the Philippines. In addition, she worked as a curator and a research associate at various German universities. Her main fields of interest are urban conservation, settlement history, archaeology and material culture of Southeast Asia.

Afterlives of Hindu-Buddhist Gold from Java 7th–16th century: Knowledge Engagements

There is a biased viewpoint on the scanty amount of gold artefacts retrieved from controlled archaeological investigations in Southeast Asia. These are in contrast to potentially essential data from unprovenanced origins, looted sites or lost items attributed to the Hindu-Buddhist period of Java (7th–16th centuries.). Most antiquities found in private collections or exhibited in museums were not recovered systematically but were handed over, found or dug up by locals. This material pinpoints a much more comprehensive – but contested – stock of knowledge. Javanese gold is a powerful agent of historical narratives, market mechanisms, and illicit trade. This cultural good is either traded, acquired or looted; lost, returned or faked, revealing various ways of negotiations among diverging parties and their interests.

I aim to highlight why transformations, contestations or exclusions of knowledge occur and explain stages of (re)appropriation during the afterlives of gold antiquities. Re-assessing gold artefacts from provenance research and their collection history provide insights into how different vital agents such as dealers, collectors, museums, or scholars shape the infrastructure of knowledge on antique gold. For example, archive studies on the provenance of Javanese gold in the Ethnological Museum of Berlin show controversial knowledge engagements of various actors.

Prof. Dr. Brigitta Hauser-Schaublin, Prof. em. Institute for Cultural and Social Anthropology, Georg-August University, Göttingen

Brigitta Hauser-Schaublin has been Professor of Anthropology at the Georg-August University Göttingen since 1992 (emerita since 2016). She has carried out fieldwork among the Iatmul and Abelam in Papua New Guinea (between 1972 and 1985, revisits in 2015 and 2017). Later, her interests shifted to Bali and Sumatra, Indonesia (since 1988), and to Cambodia (since 2008). Many of her recent publications focus on the ritual and political organization of space, on the one hand, and on material culture, cultural heritage, and cultural politics, on the other.

Transformations and relocations: from edicts to gods, to antiquities. Glimpses into the biography of Balinese copperplate inscriptions.

The Balinese copperplate inscriptions labelled "Sembiran" (Goris 1954) date to the tenth and twelfth centuries. They were issued by kings and addressed to a village called Julah, a vital entrepôt on the route to the Spice Islands at that time. These copperplate inscriptions are still kept in a village called Julah, and its sibling settlement, Sembiran, where the Dutch Controleur Liefvriinck had "discovered" them in the second half of the 19th century. Due to the solidity of the material, these historical testimonies, partly written in Sanskrit, Old Balinese and Old Javanese, have survived. They give insights into the life of the fortified village on the north coast almost 1000 years ago. We only know bits and pieces of the copperplates' biography. However, these fragments reveal that the copperplates led a turbulent life at certain times.

In Julah and Sembiran, the villagers carefully looked after them even after these inscriptions had lost their validity, due to substantial changes in the socio-political situation. As a result, the villagers considered them as gods (*bhatara*) instead. They hid them in a crevice during troubled times to prevent them from being stolen and or destroyed. The copperplates were several times relocated.

The so far last turbulent episode started in 2002 and ended in 2010. A burglar broke into Julah's village temple and stole the copperplates. Already experienced in such antiquity thefts and the way of how to sell them on the international black market of antiquities, he transported them to Java. The villagers of Julah started an investigation on their own and were finally able to recover and repatriate them with the assistance of the police shortly before these heirlooms were due to leave country.

PANEL 3

Chair: Dr. Heidi Tan, Postdoctoral Research Associate, School of Arts, SOAS

Dr. William Southworth, Curator of Southeast Asian Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

William Southworth graduated in Southeast Asian Studies from Hull University and gained an MA in Art and Archaeology at SOAS and the Institute of Archaeology (UCL), London. His doctorate on the early Champa culture of central Vietnam was completed at SOAS in 2001, and he became a fellow of the Centre for Khmer Studies (CKS) in Siem Reap and at the International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden. He contributes to the *Corpus des Inscriptions de Campā* (CIC), a research project of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) and is currently Curator of Southeast Asian Art at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

The provenance history of the stone sculptures from Central Java in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

The stone sculptures from Central Java kept at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam are arguably the most important outside Indonesia. The majority of the sculptures are not directly owned by the Rijksmuseum itself but have been on long-term loan from the Royal Asian Art Society in the Netherlands (KVVAK) since 1972. This paper will investigate how the collection was formed from the first founding of the Society in 1918. Some sculptures, such as two statues of the door guardians Nandīśvara and Mahākāla, were acquired from private collectors or bought on the international art market. Others, including an enigmatic stone head believed to come from Candi Sukuh, were transferred from other museums in the Netherlands. In many cases, the original provenance of the sculptures is hard to retrace, while some object histories appear to have been falsified to increase their market value before entering the collection. One example of the latter is a statue of Agastya once thought to have belonged to Prince Diponegoro.

The largest group of twelve architectural sculptures was sent to the KVVAK as a single consignment in 1932 from the Dutch Archaeological Service in Indonesia (Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië). This remarkable acquisition testifies to the central role of the KVVAK in promoting the aesthetic value of Asian art and of Indonesian sculpture in particular at that time. Furthermore, many of the sculptures acquired can be directly linked to the archaeological activities and restoration programmes of the Oudheidkundige Dienst at temple sites such as Candi Sewu, Candi Merak and Candi Lara Jonggrang. In some instances, the published accounts of this work allow us to make precise identifications as to where the sculptures were found.

Prof. Marieke Bloembergen, Professor of Heritage and postcolonial studies in Indonesian History, Leiden University; senior researcher, The Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Leiden

Marieke Bloembergen is professor in Archival and Postcolonial Studies at Leiden University, and senior researcher at the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV). Her research interests concern the politics and mobility of knowledge in colonial and post-colonial Indonesia, which she studies through the lens of policing and violence, material culture, and heritage practices within inter-Asian and transnational contexts. She published widely on the politics of archaeology, material culture, collecting and exhibiting in colonial and post-colonial Indonesia. Amongst these, most recently, with Martijn Eickhoff, *The Politics of Heritage in Indonesia. A cultural history* (Cambridge, 2019).

From Borobudur with love. Moveable Buddhaheads, Friends of Asian Art, and the moral geographies of Greater India

This paper is part of a larger research project investigating the role of scholarly and religious knowledge networks in the makings of moral geographies of 'Greater India'. It aims to understand the impact of these moral geographies on processes of inclusion and exclusion, e.g. their typical disregard for (Indonesia's) Islamic culture. The region that is now South and Southeast Asia has, since the nineteenth century, become part of scholarly and popular geographical imaginations that perceive this part of the world as one superior civilization with Hindu-Buddhist spiritual traits and its origins in India. These *moral* geographies of Greater India continue to exist in universities, textbooks and popular culture, and in museums of Asian Art across the world. Despite a parallel line of scholarly criticism and academic turn in the 1960s, disputing the idea of Indian colonization of Southeast Asia and emphasizing local agency.

In this paper, I discuss the period from the 1890s to 1960s and how the Dutch and French scholar-adventurers and archaeological missions, international associations of art-collectors, Indian gurus, and spiritual seekers became moved by Hindu-Buddhist antiquities based in colonial Indonesia. While they moved (knowledge and ideas) about these objects, between Indonesia, mainland Asia, Europe and the US, they helped shape these moral geographies of Greater India, enabling the inclusion of predominantly Islamic Indonesia. The paper contributes to recent debates on the role of religion and affections in Orientalism. It does this by focusing, through moveable objects, on networks, forms of knowledge, and exchange of knowledge developing at research sites *in* the region, and by exploring the possibilities, violence, and limits of cultural understanding as objects travel from their site of origin to elsewhere in the world.

The paper is part of my larger research project on 'Indonesia in 'the light of Asia'. Scholarly and religious knowledge networks and moral geographies of Greater India, 1880s-1990s'.

Closing Remarks

Prof. Ashley Thompson, Hiram W. Woodward Chair in Southeast Asian Art, SOAS

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