



SPEAKER 3: DR EA DARITH

**NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL JOINT RESEARCH PROJECTS AT KOH KER:
REGULATORS, NON-REGULATORS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

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Local people visit the site

**WORKSHOP ON
THE HERITAGE OF ANCIENT AND URBAN SITES:
GIVING VOICE TO LOCAL PRIORITIES
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ABSTRACT

Koh Ker was the capital city of Cambodia during the 10th century. There are numerous ancient temples, architectural features, archaeological sites and major landscape modifications throughout the ancient urban landscape and its hinterland. Koh Ker is located approximately 100 km northeast of Siem Reap Town. It is isolated in the dense woodlands with only a few small villages in the area.

Until recently, there was no major road access and only limited tourism, conservation and research. A new road was paved after the site was placed under the management of APSARA Authority. APSARA Authority, NGOs and several international teams have worked hard to promote site conservation, research, environmental stewardship, and local community welfare with improved efforts at inclusive involvement, communication, education and management.

Local community members collaborate effectively with national and international institutions in preserving their heritage. All stakeholders emphasize an active and cooperative approach. In order to contribute to the conservation and preservation, local community members work with the APSARA Authority and other international research teams as guards, stewards and workers. Work opportunities and knowledge exchange are important. Particular NGOs help with education on how to preserve and 'live with' heritage assets. They also provide advice on how to benefit through the tourism industry.

Higher level government, international researchers, and NGOs respect and promote local community beliefs, practices and intangible heritage in addition to tangible heritage assets. They provide a platform for local communities to have an active voice. They seek local advice and encourage locals to participate more closely; providing access and opportunities rather than exclusion.

Although successful, there are some areas that need improvement. As the number of people in the communities increase, more land is required for agriculture and more wood extraction is needed to build houses and provide fuel. This impacts the heritage zone. Occasionally there are conflicts between local communities and management. Mutually acceptable trade-offs and appropriate mitigation measures need to be adequately devised and negotiated.

BIODATA

Dr Ea Darith received his BA from Royal University of Fine Arts (1995). His MA from Kyoto University (2000) and PhD from Osaka University (2010). He has coordinated a spectrum of diverse projects between APSARA Authority and numerous international teams. His main research interests focus on Khmer stoneware ceramic industries during the Angkor period from the 9th to 15th centuries. He has excavated more than 10 stoneware kilns as well as other monumental sites throughout the Angkor region and presented at several esteemed international conferences. He recently took over all management of ceramics excavated from the Angkor area as part of the new ceramics conservation and research and documentation initiative of APSARA Authority in 2015. He was a NSSC Visiting Fellow in 2014-2015 and has co-directed previous joint research and field-school projects where he produced a seminal paper on Torp Chey kilns, a book on Angkor and provided seminars on current Cambodian archaeological research.

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CONFERENCE PAPER

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Cambodia

Abstract

Koh Ker was the capital city of Cambodia during the 10th century. There are numerous ancient temples, architectural features, archaeological sites and major landscape modifications throughout the ancient urban landscape and its hinterland. Koh Ker is located approximately 100 km northeast of Siem Reap Town. It is isolated in the dense woodlands with only a few small villages in the area.

Until recently, there was no major road access and only limited tourism, conservation and research. A new road was paved after the site was placed under the management of APSARA Authority. APSARA Authority, NGOs and several international teams have worked hard to promote site conservation, research, environmental stewardship, and local community welfare with improved efforts at inclusive involvement, communication, education and management.

Local community members collaborate effectively with national and international institutions in preserving their heritage. All stakeholders emphasize an active and cooperative approach. In order to contribute to the conservation and preservation, local community members work with the APSARA Authority and other international research teams as guards, stewards and workers. Work opportunities and knowledge exchange are important. Particular NGOs help with education on how to preserve and 'live with' heritage assets. They also provide advice on how to benefit through the tourism industry.

Higher level government, international researchers, and NGOs respect and promote local community beliefs, practices and intangible heritage in addition to tangible heritage assets. They provide a platform for local communities to have an active voice. They seek local advice and encourage locals to participate more closely; providing access and opportunities rather than exclusion.

Although successful, there are some areas that need improvement. As the number of people in the communities increase, more land is required for agriculture and more wood extraction is needed to build houses and provide fuel. This impacts the heritage zone. Occasionally there are conflicts between local communities and management. Mutually acceptable trade-offs and appropriate mitigation measures need to be adequately devised and negotiated.

I Introduction

Koh Ker was an exceptionally active and large ancient Khmer city in the 10th century when it was the Angkorian Capital under the reign of Jayavarman IV (928-941) and his son, Harshavarman II (941-944). Massive projects for temple construction, infrastructure development, dam and road construction, quarries, landscape modifications and water control features were conducted. Koh Ker houses numerous magnificent structures including the famed seven tiered pyramid site of Prasat Thom. It has its own definitive art and architectural style. It was connected to a network of urban and industrial sites of varying scales throughout the Angkorian territories.



Figure 1: Map of Angkor Kulen and Koh Ker, LiDAR 2012

As evidenced by inscriptional texts, the political capital returned to the “Angkor proper” area near modern Siem Reap following Jayavarman IV’s reign. Several theories to Koh Ker’s presumed (and quite possibly erroneous) demise have been offered. Few of them have been archaeologically tested. Our recent efforts with international research teams and the APSARA-Authority ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute (ISEAS-YII), Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre (NSC) International Field School¹ are beginning to unearth data to address various hypotheses. An EFEO team, also working in conjunction with APSARA-Authority and ISEAS-YII NSC research teams, is exploring another hypothesis that there may have been catastrophic flaws in dam structures that reduced large population sustainability at that time. However, archaeological remains indicate significant activity before and after the 10th century ‘construction boom’ and political heyday.

Koh Ker drew archaeological and art historical interest from the early years of French colonial operations in Cambodia. Conflicts in the mid to late 20th century such as the Khmer Rouge and Vietnam Wars ended most activities until recently. Koh Ker has attracted increasing attention from researchers, tourists, NGOs and government bodies since it was demined, opened up for visitation and research, and the new road began in 2003 (mostly completed in 2012).

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Currently, only a few villages and a small townships live in or near the ancient city of Koh Ker, which is now designated a national park area with conservation and protection zones under APSARA-Authority guidance and administration (2005: MoCFA transferred authority to APSARA-Authority by Royal Decree). In fact, elderly community respondents describe an even more remote and sparsely populated area in the dense forest from pre-WWII times.

Koh Ker has been targeted for increased tourism promotion and site conservation. A private company will run the tourist ticketing operations and some aspects of park management. APSARA-Authority plays a significant role in management of the park, the heritage assets, the people and the environment. With the rezoning, various policies affect local communities and their physical and social environments in different ways. Increased research and tourist attention also contributes to potentially positive or negative impacts. Population growth and development also add to the complexity.

APSARA-Authority and international research teams are conscious of the local communities. We want to know what they know about the ancient city and its history; what they know about the landscape, environment and ecology; what they think about changes, planning and activities; what they want for the future; and what advice they can offer. Although they have village and commune leaders, councils, government/civil service offices, and religious organizations, they do not have any grass-roots organization specifically dedicated within their communities to address issues vis-à-vis the archaeological city, heritage assets, heritage policies, and heritage related activities (to include researchers as well as tourists).

Additionally, APSARA-Authority does not have any specific policies for active local community inclusion and representation. However, APSARA-Authority and many international teams increasingly promote local inclusion **in practice**. It has always been our **unwritten** policy and part of normative Cambodian culture to respect local communities, engage in dialogues with local communities, involve them in activities, and include their voices and opinions in reporting and policy advising to higher levels. In fact, APSARA-Authority is constantly revising codes of conduct (e.g., JAN 2016 meetings and codes of conduct revisions) to put even greater emphasis on local community concerns in light of increasing drives to boost social responsibility among all interest groups.

It is increasingly our intent to further empower local communities to have a more active voice and to be engaged and included as “equal” participants, especially through our research projects, site management practices, and international field school activities. Our job is also to make sure local communities have an “educated and aware” sense of the undertakings, possibilities, impacts, trade-offs and choices.

APSARA-Authority also frequently acts as a mediator and “juggler” of many local and non-local interest groups (regulatory and non-regulatory). We engage with all possible stakeholder groups and channel voices in several directions. Lastly, we have increased our breadth of dialogues, ethnographic

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interviews and focus groups with local communities (and others) to include issues such as heritage management and socio-economic-environmental impacts rather than the traditional “oral history” collection and paternalistic heritage protection approaches of the past, which generally sought to add to site identification, add to site narratives and tell people to protect the sites and environment respectively.

We are constantly seeking innovative ways to increase local community voice and inclusion—encouraging them to use APSARA-Authority as a platform for communicating opinions, suggestions, grievances and advice. Modern social media helps considerably and allows broader, more visual and more rapid communication. In addition, we, as regulators, are trying to bridge gaps, increase engagements, and communicate more effectively with all regulatory and non-regulatory interest groups in finding mutually acceptable solutions to problems rather than increase potential distance, exclusion and tension.

The following paper highlights various successful approaches APSARA-Authority recently implemented in our international Field School and research activities with ISEAS-YII NSC. Also discussed are some of the compliments, concerns, requests and advice from local communities. In addition, we have been able to capture qualitative and quantitative measures of effectiveness in our assessment approaches that allow us to more effectively improve relationships, activities and impacts for the future. Our goal, as “regulators”, is to support increased opportunities for local voices (and others) to be expressed, transmitted, amplified and heard with sincere attention and appropriate beneficial action.

II Operationalizing Local Inclusion and Enhancing Local Voice

The following points are steps we have taken or advise taking. Although most examples here are from the recent Koh Ker international field school, many of these steps are implemented at other sites and parks.

1. Identifying stakeholder groups, objectives, roles, conditions and relations:

It is first important to identify and understand all the important stakeholders (regulatory and non-regulatory alike). Local communities are a priority. We try to determine stakeholder goals, roles, relations, needs, assets, potentials, shortcomings and their grievances. The local communities, APSARA-Authority, various Government Ministries, researchers, international organizations, NGOs, religious organizations, tourists, tourist operators, developers, and many others are often major stakeholder groups (in some cases such as Preah Vihear, even the military).

A formal stakeholder analysis and incentive analysis approach has the potential to improve benefits, planning, effectiveness and efficiency. However, we are not yet at the stage of formal implementation. Nevertheless, we informally and intuitively conduct stakeholder analyses to understand the current situation.

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At Koh Ker, for example, site jurisdiction was transferred from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts to APSARA Authority in 2005. The APSARA Authority, various Ministries, local authorities, NGOs and several international teams work hard to promote interaction, information sharing, site conservation, research, environmental stewardship, and local community welfare with improved efforts at inclusive involvement, communication, education and management.

The projects necessarily include regulatory and non-regulatory institutions. The regulatory institutions include: APSARA Authority, MoCFA, heritage police, military, and many authorities from village, commune, and district, provincial (Preah Vihear) and national levels. Some NGOs and international organization such as UNESCO can be viewed as quasi-regulatory. That is, they have varying influences as advisors on policies and implementation.

On the other hand, the main non-regulatory institutions included: local community members (e.g., laborers, villagers, farmers, guardians); official community leaders; local community organizations, such as the Buddhist monastery; international organizations, such as UNESCO, CMAC, EFEO, HSARI, JSA, AU-NSC-ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute; NGOsⁱⁱ working in the area, such as the Peace Boat, Heritage Watch, Angkar Racha, and Ponnary Foundation. As stated, some of these organizations have a great role in research and advising, thus they help regulatory institutions with their policy upgrades.

Some relations between stakeholders are good. Some relations are tense—often because of misunderstandings or competing rather than complementary goals. Some stakeholder groups have no relations at all and they may benefit by working more closely with each other. Some groups overlap significantly without knowing and this reduces overall efficiency. It may even cause problems because of competition.

Some goals among stakeholder groups are opposed and this can cause problems. For example, locals at Koh Ker may want to extract more wood for fuel use, house building, agricultural land clearance, and selling to make cash. However, the park and many ministries want to preserve the forests and reduce wood extraction for more sustainable resource management for all of Cambodia, Southeast Asia and the world.

Another example includes researchers who may want to excavate at sites. However, the locals do not want to disturb any spirits associated with a particular place or site. Furthermore, if local rituals are not followed before work commences, locals fear it will cause bad luck and are less supportive. In fact, there are incidents of this occurring at Koh Ker. Lastly, some “negative” stakeholder groups, such as collectors, looters, illegal loggers, etc., cause irreparable damage and loss.

2. APSARA Staff embedded with local communities: APSARA-Authority staff members live among the communities. They manage and protect heritage sites and the environment (both social and physical).

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As part of their duties, they actively engage with locals on a daily basis. Also, senior APSARA-Authority and Ministry members frequently visit the communities and sites. This assures linkages from non-regulatory community stakeholders are strong, information is accurate, and their voices remain empowered. Repeated face-to-face visitation and interaction has a powerful affect. It motivates responsibility and allows feedback to be more frequent and candid.



Figures 2 & 3: APSARA staff working at the site. Samnang (left-Fig 2; with computer) explaining the Koh Ker site to students. Yav (right-Fig 3; wearing red scarf) explaining the KK02 site to NSC Staff, field school participants and local workers. Samnang, Yav and Phallay (see Fig 4) have lived or currently live at Koh Ker. They work with the local people on a daily basis. They organized local labour for the Field School research operations they managed.



Figure 4 Phallay (red T-shirt) explains his excavation site, KK01, to NSC staff, International participants, and local labourers.

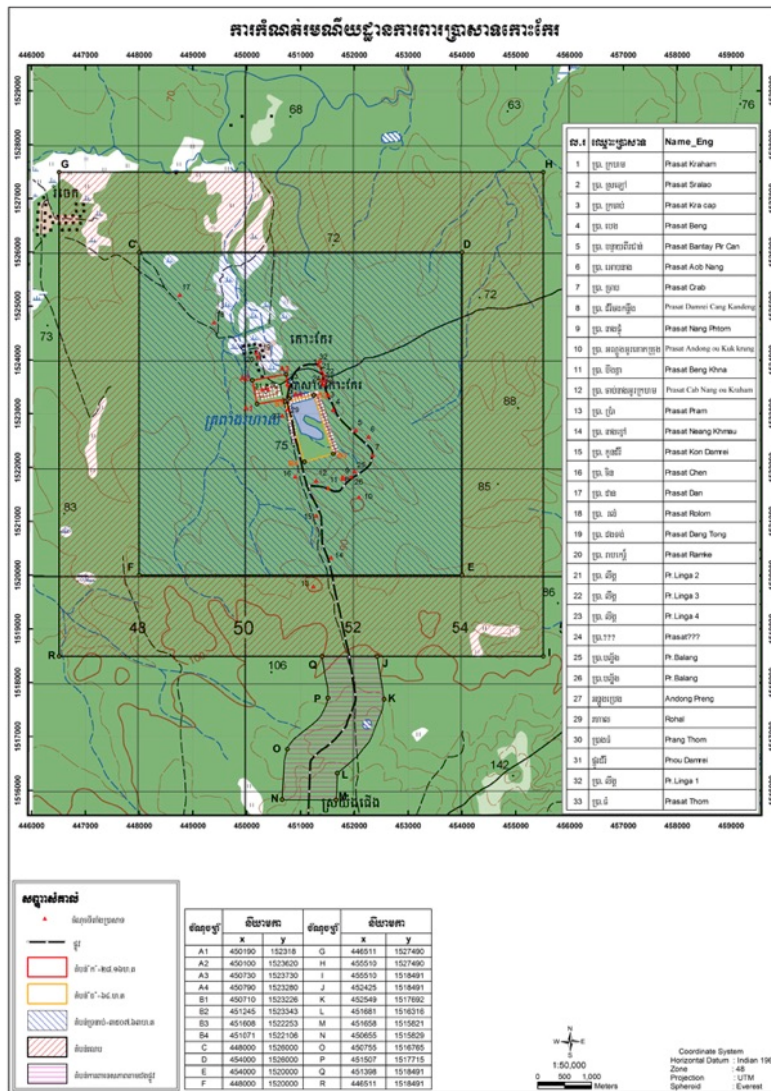


Figure 5: Zoning protected the monuments at Koh Ker Site

3. APSARA-Authority employment of locals: APSARA-Authority employs local community members to assist with park protection and maintenance. The Koh of Koh Ker park zone was designated in 2004 to cover 81 km² (9 x 9 km). The APSARA Authority employs almost 100 local people to safeguard, maintain, and clean the site. While working with APSARA Authority, the local people learn about the value of heritage, how to prevent looting, and local involvement possibilities and benefits for preserving their own heritage. We also educate locals about the value of preserving nature in the heritage zone.

4. Initiating Projects and Field Schools: The first step is to design and conduct research projects and field schools with local inclusion. Some teams conduct research and minimize local interaction. Our goal is to maximize local inclusion. The more research projects, conservation and preservation projects, and field schools we can initiate, the more opportunity there is for all stakeholders—not just locals, but our teams as well.

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5. Live with the local community: We live with the local communities, interact, and contribute to local economies and social environments. We live on-site as much and with the local community members as much as possible. In many cases, we stay in their houses (e.g., Phnom Kulen research: June 2015). We buy supplies and food at the local markets and shops. We purchase local farm products, produce, fruit and meats from farmers. We even purchase surplus rice and other local products to bring home. We eat at local cafes and restaurants (*hang bai* and food stalls). We build social relations while interacting. We contribute to the local economy as much as possible. We also inform locals about us so that they can learn about our various cultures and background.



Figure 6: Live in a local house with local family on Kulen Mountain in 2015

The 2015 Koh Ker international field school students and staff camped together at APSARA house near Trapeang Khnar. The camp is close to the archaeological site and villages. We were able to communicate with the local people easily. The research teams respected and promote local community beliefs, practices and intangible heritage in addition to tangible heritage assets. Importantly, the team also invited local leaders and specialists to conduct opening ceremonies and rituals. This is not only very important for community members, but a great ethnographic lesson for the field school participants and staff.



Figure 7: Camping at APSARA house near Trapeang Khnar. The EFEO team came to visit our site

6. Hire local workers: Local workers are hired as survey and excavation labourers. Others are hired to assist with laundry, food preparation, clearing, cleaning, etc. Our first priority is to build rapport, trust and friendships. We treat them like family or community members rather than robotic workers. We generally have a natural balance between men, women, youth and elderly. Our local labourers make up more than half to three-fourths the total teams (anywhere from 15-30 workers on average, pending project size).



Figure 8: Local workers are hired as survey and excavation labourers

We emphasize inclusion, fun, safety, interaction and balance. Besides cash for labor services, we provide snacks and water; a closing party and banquet (always fun and appreciated); and frequently assist with various issues when appropriate. We often eat and snack together when possible. Our goal is to make a fun and friendly environment. We understand when personal issues arise and they have other obligations. We maintain flexibility.

We strongly emphasize that it is more than a wage opportunity, but a mutual learning experience. It allows us to explain what we do, how we analyse and what it means. Many learn several archaeological field skills. This makes them valuable labourers for other teams and locations (increasing their opportunities).

Locals also provide information on history; other site locations (for example, on a follow up survey and feedback trip to Torp Chey, local respondents were able to guide us to a previously unrecorded Angkorian hospital site); current local knowledge of heritage assets; local perceptions, beliefs and attitudes on a wide variety of related issues; environment; ecology; land use; farming; soils; traditional medicines; social organization; labour; rituals; even threats to sites (natural and 'spiritual'). They provide feedback about our operations and people; give us advice and most importantly, offer friendship and hospitality.



Figure 9: A follow up survey and feedback trip to Torp Chey village (Photo Kyle)

7. Respondent interviews and ethnographic approaches: We conduct informal unstructured respondent interviews and focus groups dialogues continuously. It is almost impossible not to engage in discussions about heritage during work. We also often conduct several interviews and focus groups while making arrangements before projects begin. We try to include and balance different demographic and stakeholder groups for a more holistic understanding.

During the course of projects, we try to identify key respondents from different stakeholder groups to conduct semi-structured interviews with informed consent (females, males, youth, elderly,

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local leaders, ticketing company personnel, park workers, farmers, shopkeeper, security personnel, etc.). We seek a balanced representation of stakeholders, but emphasize the local voice as a priority. There are specific heritage, cultural resource management, socio-cultural, economic and environmental questions that allow them to provide feedback (see Appendix A).



Figure 10: Local people visited the site



Figure 11: Interview the local people

Interviews are conducted at the end of the research so that it is an ‘informed’ interview. Because we have discussed many issues during the course of work the locals understand what are intents are more clearly. They understand trade-offs and repercussions more broadly. We often record these sessions when possible. Respondents are very receptive and usually quite candid. The psychological satisfaction of being included and ‘heard’ is very strong and has a positive impact on the community and relations beyond the community with government, visitors, etc.

With the field schools, we have specific **ethnographic and ethno archaeological training sessions** that not only train our people, but act as an integral part of research data collection. The ethno-archaeological aspect goes a step further. Our students help do particular tasks with locals in order to learn about them more thoroughly (similar to participant observation). For example, many of the students were able to try to make pots at the Kampong Chhnang traditional pottery villages.

For example, at Koh Ker we included ethnographic research, focus groups, key respondent interviews, and knowledge exchange in our endeavours. We recorded oral history, folktales and legendsⁱⁱⁱ, rituals, traditional medical recipes and practices, traditional land use and resource extraction practices, etc. We actively engaged in activities such as traditional ritual ceremonies to pay respect to local ancestral spirits for success and safety in work endeavours. We provided a platform for local communities to have an active voice. We sought their advice. We encouraged locals to participate more closely; providing access and opportunities rather than exclusion.

The information from the interviews with local people provide very useful knowledge about the history of Koh Ker from the past to present, their beliefs, and the main temples that the local people use and respect the most. They have a few key temples that are major parts of their ancestral identity in many ways. They are sacred and respected parts of their local traditional belief systems.

We also learned about changes in the environment and site conditions over time and local perceptions of these changes. The local people mentioned that 30-40 years ago, there were still dense forests in Koh Ker and many dangerous wild animals like tigers, boars, and wild elephants living around the villages and temples. Moreover, they stated large statues were still in situ at the temples. The people did not dare visit the temples because they were afraid of dense forest, dangerous animals and the large statues covered with vegetation. We asked about their thoughts on deforestation and the NGOs as well as national and international teams that help support living condition improvements in their communities.

We were actually quite surprised to hear that older generation locals are happy about the deforestation around the villages and communities because they can walk around and see many temples easily. They no longer fear the dangerous animals (because many are now gone due to habitat loss and other factors). They can now visit each other more frequently without fearing the temples or dense forest. They can meet with many outsiders from different parts of Cambodia and foreign countries.

It seems a bit ironic that deforestation improved some aspects of the social environment. This is another aspect of local goals and benefits not synching with national and international goals. Additionally, the local "voice" to the authorities is to provide more agricultural land for their communities to support economic productivity and growth. This is where informed dialogue about the long-term destructive aspects of increased deforestation may help locals make better choices. Also, locals may be able to inform authorities where good agricultural locations for development may be viable without disrupting the park's natural ecosystems; and/or make appropriate suggestions on alternatives to support viable and sustainable economic growth.

Locals also informed us that with support from the higher levels of government, NGOs, and international researchers, the living conditions in their villages are better. The activities and programs have helped reduce poverty. A school and health care center were built in the village to educate their kids and to treat the disease of people in the village. The locals also emphasized that communication between the local communities, NGOs, national and international researchers benefit knowledge exchange, trust building, mutual understanding and mutual respect.

We also conduct follow-up visits, checks and interviews. This maintains relations, allows us to measure long-term impacts, and has several added benefits of for both locals and researchers. For example, during our follow-up at Torp Chey recently (FEB 2016), we were able to discover a previously unidentified Angkorian architectural structure which was probably a hospital.

8. Local school and teacher site visits: Inviting school children and teachers to make site visits during various research and field schools.



Figure 12: Local people students and teachers visited the excavation site

9. Work with local guides: We have increased our use of local guides in our research survey and field schools. Increasing the use of local guides in museums, site visits and research survey is important. They are a wealth of information. At the same time, we can provide them further professional insights on research methodology, analysis and results to add to their narratives and knowledge base to impart to others. For the Koh Ker Field School, we employed local guides at museums and sites such as Sambor Prei Kuk. The also volunteered to provide respondent interviews. It would be useful to increase our inclusion of local guides; perhaps even providing workshops while doing fieldwork.

10. Encourage local reporting: Our efforts also encourage local communities to learn how to recognize sites and report them, especially when there are planned undertakings such as development. We try to emphasize that reporting to APSARA-Authority and the MoCFA helps us to best mitigate site destruction without compromising local goals.

11. 'Local voice' dissemination: We are increasingly presenting local feedback, advice and opinions in publications and conferences. The ISEAS-YII NSC Heritage Workshop is an excellent example. The NSC team (e.g., Dr. Latinis) has also presented local voices in most of his seminars, public talks and publications. The creation of social media communication platforms (e.g., blogs) can be of further assistance. Videos, film, and podcasts would be helpful as well (e.g., the Koh Ker, the Lost Wonder 2013; Chen Chanratana; AKASA Studio; ch.chanratana@gmail.com; khmerfilmfoundation@gmail.com)

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III Conclusion

Although successful, there are some areas that need improvement. As the number of people in the communities increase, more land is required for agriculture and more wood extraction is needed to build houses and provide fuel, for example. This impacts the heritage zone. Properties are developed and sites are compromised. Occasionally there are conflicts between local communities and management. Some people fear their personal goals will be undermined. Also, there are some tensions at various parks between local communities, ticketing companies and some tour operators. Mutually acceptable trade-offs and appropriate mitigation measures need to be adequately devised and negotiated.

In order to solve the problem together effectively to balance between preserving heritage and traditional livelihoods, we would like to propose the following measures:

- Document the local people living in the heritage zone
- Document land use and development in the area and assess potential impacts in the heritage zone
- Educate locals about the long-term importance of nature and heritage conservation and sustainable management
- Assist local educators (teachers, schools, principals, monks, etc.) so they may best educate the youth and other community members
- Train local guides and provide them updated research activities and results
- Seek local involvement to preserve the nature and heritage, particularly to stop forest clearance for more agricultural land that may affect the landscape and site integrity
- Create more jobs for local people
- Give priority job opportunities to local people in heritage zones
- Encourage and assist locals to develop alternative income sources such as local handicrafts and food
- Promote more tourists to visit the site
- Work with the Ministry of tourism, ticketing companies, and tourism operators
- Promote socially and environmentally responsible tourism
- Promote home stays
- Promote more research and field school projects, especially with emphasis on local stakeholder inclusion (e.g., the code of conduct for researchers)
- Promote more ethnographic and social research to be included in projects
- Promote development of computer/device applications, communication platforms, and use of social media to contribute to all efforts
- Publications, seminars, blogs and social media; documentaries, etc.
- Contribute to evolving policy creation, upgrading and implementation

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Appendix A: Ethnographic Interview Template for Guidance, Training and Data Collection (note: it includes ethics, rapport building and informed consent considerations)

APSARA-Authority & ISEAS YII NSC

Dr. D. Kyle Latinis & Foo Shu Tieng

Ethnographic Interview Training, Koh Ker Field School 2015

Ethnographic Questions and Respondent Interviews for 2015 Koh Ker Field Season

Build Rapport: It is critically important to build rapport at the beginning. It's easy. Just be friendly, be curious, be inclusive, be yourself, and be honest. Ask your respondents how to best build rapport. Let them be your cultural teachers. Empower them. Make them feel comfortable. There's no need to be cold, mechanical and distanced. Rather, decrease social distance. The primary goal is to build friendships and trust. The purpose is to increase understanding, respect and help all stakeholders. Most of all, have fun.

Not all questions will be answered. That's OK. Be flexible. Other questions may arise as the conversation flows. Give your respondents a chance to speak. Listen. Take notes when needed, but pay attention to your respondent and listen. Don't over-focus on the notes and note-taking. Absorb the conversational and contextual nuances as well.

It's often best to work in pairs (with a partner). Your partner can take notes while you pay attention to the respondent. You can trade roles as note-taker at any point. Let your partner interject with questions when appropriate.

If the respondent drifts too far off topic, find a respectful way to bring the topic back into focus. Try not to be mechanical and go through each question one by one. Often by relaxing and listening, the respondent will answer many of the questions without you having to ask directly. If you sense the respondent is tired or bored, take a break.

Avoid double barrel and overly complex questions; but find a balance. Overly simple questions can be equally inappropriate. Most key respondents are extremely intelligent even without any formal education.

If you work with a translator/interpreter, rehearse questions with the translator in advance. Make sure the questions are well understood. While interviewing, don't overload your interpreter. Let them do their work. Then let them summarize later. While you're asking questions to the respondent and listening to answers, pay attention to the respondent (pay attention to the interviewee; not the interpreter). You don't have to have everything interpreted immediately. You can debrief with the interpreter afterwards.

Informed Consent: Thank you for your considerations to participate in respondent interviews. We would like to ask you questions about culture, history, and important beliefs and practices. We seek your opinions and advice to help us with our work. Your opinions and advice are very important. This also allows us to involve your community more closely. We believe your opinions will help your community and Cambodia, as well as our project and the international community of interest. The intention is to work together with your community. It allows us and others to better respect you and your community. Please also tell us what we can do to improve mutual respect, understanding and cooperation.

APSARA-Authority & ISEAS YII NSC

Dr. D. Kyle Latinis & Foo Shu Tieng

Ethnographic Interview Training, Koh Ker Field School 2015

Some questions have personal information. We will keep it private (protect it). Nobody will be allowed to trace or use your name or family information (personally identifiable information: PII) unless you authorize it. You may choose not to participate, or, choose not to answer any particular questions. You can stop at any time. There is no penalty for not participating, not answering particular questions, or stopping the interview process. If you feel uncomfortable, please tell us and tell us how to improve. We will always respect your choices. Please be honest. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know what you think, not what you think we want to hear. As stated, we will respect your answers and maintain privacy and confidentiality. Do we have your permission to continue? Y/N. Is it OK to record (video and/or sound) Y/N?

1. Demographic Profile of respondent (could you tell us a bit about yourself?):

- a. Name
- b. Gender
- c. Age
- d. Occupation
- e. Ethnic group & language
- f. Education level
- g. How long have you stayed in the area?
- h. Married Y/N; # Children__; How many people in household__; ages and gender range; whose extended family (wife/mother; husband/father)? Number of household occupations, who, and their contributions? Average household income? How long have your family stayed in the area?
- i. How representative is your family of the community (100%; 50%, 25%, etc.)? Nature of diversity in community? Which communities do you interact with the most; nature of interaction? Significant changes in the last few generations?

Note: If a focus group: Estimate the basic demographics and nature of the group. Build rapport. Ask them if they have questions about our activities and us. Take note of the key respondents and the dynamics of group interaction. Is there a leader or a few leaders/spokespeople? Do they share similar opinions or different? Do they influence the rest of the group, or, are they influenced by the rest of the group? What is the mood? The setting? Do they feel comfortable?

2. Project Participation:

- a. Why did you decide to participate in the project?
- b. What do you know about the project?
- c. What would you like to learn?
- d. How do you feel about the project?

3. Site Use:

- a. We have been excavating at certain places in this area. Do you know if local villagers use the area for something in particular? (eg: hunting? Planting fruit trees, etc.) How long have they been using that area for that purpose?
- b. Do you feel any attachment or connection to this particular area? Why?

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- c. What are important natural resources in the area? Wood, resin, building materials (do people recycle bricks and building materials from archaeological sites/features--may want to ask discretely), animals, clay, natural fertilizers, medicines, others? Are there any fruit trees or useful trees / plants in this particular area? Please list them and what they can do. What fuel is used (if wood fuel, how much)?
- d. Do you know of any stories or legends related to this place? How did you know them?
- e. Do you know of other places where we can find things which are similar to what we find when we dig? Are there sites that you think we should know about? (eg: ceramics)

If answer is yes, can you take us there so that we can document it for the record?

- f. Do you consider certain places near this place to be special; or to be associated with magic or full of magic? If so, why / why not?
- g. Are there areas where rituals are performed? Please describe.

4. Cultural Resource Management:

- a. How do you feel about living in / near the historical park? What are the most important sites and features, and why? Do other community members have the same opinions...?
- b. Do you have any problems living in / near the historical park? Are there any benefits? Please describe.
- c. Are the authorities doing a good job of protecting heritage?
- d. Are the authorities doing a good job of telling villagers the information about the history or the importance of this area to you? How often do you interact with authorities? What is the nature of interaction?
- e. Has tourism or tourists affected the area and your lives? Please describe. What are the negative and positive effects that you experience or foresee? How can it be improved?
- f. Has development affected the area? Please describe. What recommendations do you have?
- g. Have you noticed any major environmental or social impacts? Please describe.
- h. Do you have any suggestions about what we or the authorities can do better?

- 5. **Recap, Rank Importance, and Respondent Questions (for us):** What are the most important subjects/topics we discussed? Did we miss any that are important? Did we misunderstand anything? Please describe. What questions do you have for us? Give contact information and ask if they want to discuss anything further at a later time, or, if they remember something else or want to change something, they can always contact us later.

Appendix B: History of Archaeological Interest and Research

Koh Ker was the capital city of Cambodia during the 10th century (928-944 CE), under the reign of Jayavarman IV (928-941) and his son, Harshavarman II (941-944). The ancient Khmer inscription named the area as *Chok Gargyar*. There are numerous ancient temples, architectural features, archaeological sites and major landscape modifications throughout the ancient urban landscape and its hinterland. Koh Ker is located approximately 100 km northeast of Siem Reap Town. It is isolated in the dense woodlands with only a few small villages in the area.

The Koh Ker site was identified and surveyed by the French from the late 19th century. The survey noted various temple remains and reservoirs (Baray or Rohal in Khmer). The first French scholar who visited the site in 1873 was Louis Delaporte. He published a record of the sites: *Voyage au Cambodge-Architectures Khmers*. It included a plan map of the main temple of Prasat Thom with descriptions and included the Rohal, Prasat Chen, Bak, and Neang Khmao temples (Delaporte 1880).

Following this survey, Jules Harmand visited in 1876 and reported Prasat Thom, Prasat Chen, Andong Preng, Bak, Neang Khmao, Rohal, Prasat Damrei, Prasat Krachap, as well as three other temples housing the *Lingas* (Harmand 1879). Etienne Aymonier visited the site in 1882 and created the first map of Koh Ker and added historical interpretation based on the epigraphy (Aymonier 1900). Later, Etienne Lunet de Lajonquiere classified the temples into two groups: the south and the north group followed the axis line of Rohal. Furthermore, George Groslier visited the site in 1923 and published *La Region North-East du Cambodge et Son Art* (Groslier 1924). He pointed out a regional artistic group that could be called *Ecole du North-East*.

After 1924, the EFEO's activity at Koh Ker was carefully surveyed by Henri Parmentier. His major results were published in *L'art Khmer classic* (Parmentier 1939). It included an area map based on the aerial photos and the description of 43 major architectural remains.

Construction for the new road to Koh Ker began in 2003 and was completely paved by 2012. An increasing number of researchers were interested in exploring questions and conducting survey to further understand the mysteries of the ancient city. Among those, two Cambodian students were interested in studying the Koh Ker site for their higher education, the PhD programme. The first student was Dr. Tin Tina who studied about *An Integrated Approach to the Management of Cultural Heritage in Koh Ker Site (Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia)* at Sophia University in Japan in 2006; and the second person was Dr. Chen Chanratana who studied the about *the Site of Koh Ker and the Reign of Jayavarman IV: History, Arts and Archaeology* in French in 2012.

The other international teams who have been working at Koh Ker site are as followings:

- 2007-2010: Akinori Mizoguchi, Meijo University and Takeshi Nakagawa, Waseda University of Japan conducted various surveys at Koh Ker.

Conference draft. Please consult the author when citing.

- 2007: Bruno Brugulier, EFEO and Phann Nady, the higher officer of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MoCFA) [published the site map of Koh Ker].
- 2009: Damian Evans published a topographic site map of Koh Ker and has continued research in Koh Ker until present.
- 2012: the LIDAR map of Koh Ker was produced with Evans' technical assistant.
- 2009-2010: Eric Bourdonneau, EFEO, excavated the 22 m high artificial hill behind Prasat Thom known as the "tomb of the white elephant".
- 2009-present: The Royal Angkor Foundation (RAF) of Hungary and the Hungarian Southeast Asian Research Institute (HSARI) has been surveying, excavating and conducting research and conservation at Koh Ker from 2009 to present (particular attention to Prasat Krachap).
- 2015-present: The Archaeology Unit (AU) of the Nalanda Sriwijaya Center (NSC), Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) Yusof-Ishak Institute collaborated with APSARA Authority to run a field school in Cambodia and excavated three locations in the royal residence compound in 2015.

Beyond the research, training programs, and park management, the APSARA Authority has also worked with many local communities and NGOs. The communication between the local communities, NGOs, national and international researchers benefit knowledge exchange, trust building, mutual understanding and mutual respect.

Additional comments on national and international teams working in the Koh Ker area

In the past decades, many unstable temples were temporarily supported by wood to secure site structural integrity as much as possible, increase safety (people and sites), and prevent collapse. Efforts have continued and are constantly upgraded. For example, a wooden staircase with secure railings at the northwest corner of Prasat Thom was erected in 2013 in order to promote and facilitate a safer and less destructive climb up Prasat Thom for a better site visit and view of the landscape of the ancient capital.

Besides preserving and managing the sites at Koh Ker, the APSARA Authority also conducts research. An APSARA excavation project was undertaken in 2007 to understand the water flow from the northeast corner of the Rohal to Prasat Srot and Trapeang Sre. The water flowing in front of Prasat Srot caused the eastern part of temple sink into the stream. The excavation identified the structure of the dyke at the Rohal's northeast corner, the structure of the Trapeang Sre (water structure) dyke, and changed the water flow in front of Prasat Srot to rescue the temple (Ly et al 2007).

Archaeological excavations were also conducted inside the west and east gates of Prasat Chen in order to find the basement/pedestals of statues housed inside the gates. As a result, nine basements of statues from the west gate (Ea et al 2012) and three basements of statues from the east gate (Ea et al 2014) were identified. Several statues were looted during the civil war. Some statues were housed in US museums. The Cambodian government requested that some of these culturally valuable statues be returned. With support from the US government, 6 statues have been returned to Cambodia and one more will be returning soon.

Conference draft. Please consult the author when citing.

Koh Ker is not inscribed as the world heritage site yet. We hope this will be achieved in the future as Koh Ker is a very unique site complex and ancient urban area. UNESCO experts have visited the site and provided advice on how to manage and preserve the site more effectively. UNESCO, of course, has been a solid Cambodian partner and source of global assistance for decades.

The RAF of Hungary has conducted detailed research and conservation actions since 2009. They surveyed the surrounding environment and assessed photogrammetry, aerial photos, and inscriptions. They have identified and advised on critically unstable parts of several monuments at Koh Ker site from 2009 to 2010. From 2011 to present, the Hungarian Southeast Asian Research Institute (HSARI) has published translated inscriptions they researched from 2009. They have also excavated Prasat Krachap to understand the history of the site and its surrounding structures (HSARI 2011). Results have greatly expanded our knowledge. They have shown that there is a much greater site complexity than previously known.

The Meijo University led by professor Akinori Mizoguchi, and the Waseda University of Japan led by professor Takeshi Nakagawa, Director of Japanese Government Team for Safeguarding Angkor (JSA), conducted various surveys at Koh Ker including architecture, geomorphology, petrology, archaeology and art history.

An EFEO's team led by Bruno Brugulier and the higher officer of Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts led by Phann Nady conducted a survey at Koh Ker to confirm the locations of monuments recorded by the French scholars during the colonial period. They have published an updated site map of Koh Ker. The Carte Interactive des Sites Archaeologiques Khmers (CISARK) was published and registered 65 archaeological remains at Koh Ker including the ancient royal road passing by the northern part of the capital.

Damian Evans and a large group of international teams have revolutionized our understanding of Koh Ker through recent LIDAR survey and analysis. As with Angkor, Koh Ker, Phnom Kulen and Ben Mealea, Koh Ker's landscape, settlement and water control complexity has proven far more sophisticated than previously imagined. Dr. Damian Evans and EFEO recently partnered with our Koh Ker Field School to conduct research at the northern Dam.

The Archaeology Unit (AU) of the Nalanda Sriwijaya Center (NSC), Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) Yusof-Ishak Institute, Singapore was developed in 2010. The AU established MOUs with the Kingdom of Cambodia working with APSARA Authority in Angkor region, Royal Academy of Cambodia (RAC) in Phnom Penh, and Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MoCRA). Four research projects on the archaeology, anthropology, and environment has been conducted with APSARA Authority: Torp Chey kiln project (2011-2012); Banteay site (possible royal residence) in 2014; Sema Daun Meas and Sema Peam Kre sites in 2015; and the habitation and water management at Koh Ker site in December 2015 which included the third international field school. Two previous international field schools have also been conducted within Cambodia and Singapore (2012-2013) with funding from the Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to enable to East Asia Summit student participant.

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ⁱ The ISEAS-YII NSC and APSARA-Authority International Field School invites participants from all East Asia Summit countries. It is multi-disciplinary with a heavy emphasis on archaeology and heritage. The program is generously supported through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore. This year's Koh Ker Field School was a unique innovative design with high input and high impact. It will serve as a leading model for international partnership building and field training in the region.

ⁱⁱ Besides demining operators and organization, there are four main NGOs who have worked at Koh Ker. The Heritage Watch (2007-2008) from USA helps to educate the local people on how to preserve and 'live with' heritage assets, raise bees (alternative income source), and educate English language. They also provide advice on how to benefit through the tourism industry. The Ponnary foundation from Cambodia (2010-2011) helps with education by assisting with the construction of an elementary school and library; providing stationary, nourishment, clean water station for students and staff; and encouraging and supporting for higher education by providing scholarship to high achievers. The Peace boat from Japan (2010-2011) sponsored CMAC to clear the mines at the Koh Ker site around their villages and communities. They also constructed a health care center. The Angkar Racha from Cambodia (2010-2011) helps to educate about health care (including the sex and hygiene) by performing dramas to show the local communities.

ⁱⁱⁱ An excellent example of integrating oral history conducted during research with tourism is the Hungarian produced "Koh Ker Short Guide" Csaba Kadas (2010) which showcases the story of the White Elephant.