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NSC

Features

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IMAGE: A SECTION OF THE ENGRAVED WOODEN REPRODUCTION OF THE MAO KUN MAP AT ISEAS - YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE. (CREDIT: ISEAS - YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE)

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Editorial



HUE CITADEL, VIETNAM. PART OF THE HUE MONUMENTS UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE (1802-1945). (CREDIT: S. T. FOO)

This issue showcases how historical data can be interpreted in new ways. Many of the articles here demonstrate how new narratives can tease out new nuanced understandings of the past for Southeast Asia and its neighbours.

Tai Yew Seng's "Different Navigation Methods in the Pacific and Indian Ocean Before the Age of Discovery" discusses how an early 17th century map showcases the knowledge of Chinese traders and sailors for many parts of coastal Asia, and their familiarity with such routes; the navigational directions may also settle certain old debates regarding the location of certain ancient harbours, some of which may no longer exist.

Elizabeth Moore, Nan Kyi Khaing, and Yannaung Soe's "Pots in Unexpected Places" on the other hand, looks at how new ancient pottery finds in Myanmar could reveal promising information regarding inter-regional trade networks with China as well as intra-regional trade with Southeast Asia. The rise in local awareness for these artifacts signifies a positive outlook for the burgeoning heritage management scene.

Next, Li Tana's "The Changing Landscape of the Former Linyi in Provinces of Quảng Trị and Thừa Thiên - Huế" examines how certain areas in central Vietnam near the current city of Hue were not only important for coastal-inland trading networks but were part of an ancient global maritime route. Her multi-disciplinary approach in using geographic, historical, and riverine geological evidence in explaining the shift, rise, and fall in the use of certain harbours should be commended as it allows for a more complex but finer understanding of Linyi.

Subsequently, we turn to H el ene Njoto and Teren Sevea's "Bukit Kasita," a gated cemetery and mosque site in Singapore. The preliminary survey results are significant in that the authors were able to establish the active nature of the heritage, to describe the architectural heritage style of

the site, and owing to the fact that the site houses several prominent graves of historic value, linking Singapore's history to that of Penyangat.

Although the ancient finds from Singapore's 14th century past (also known as the Temasek period) have thus far largely been concentrated in the Civic District and Fort Canning Hill area (otherwise known as Bukit Larangan, or Forbidden Hill), the potential architectural remains from Singapore's past settlements were not yet sufficiently investigated. Kwa Chong Guan's article "What Dr. John Crawford Saw on the 'Forbidden Hill'" seeks to bridge that gap by re-evaluating one of the few extant sources prior to their destruction and to consider the likelihood of Crawford's interpretations and descriptions. All 6 artistic renderings by Glenn Lim are published here.

Iain Sinclair's "New Light on the Karimun Besar Inscription (Prasasti Pasir Panjang) and the Learned Man from Gaur" presents a possible new and more accurate reading of an ancient inscription. While the transmission of knowledge between Southeast Asia and the Himalayas has been discussed by other scholars with reference to the Buddhist monk Atisha and his travels to Sumatra and Borobudur (see Miksic 2010: 22-24), the inscription presents more questions as to why Karimun was chosen among the islands.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

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The Different Navigation Methods in the Pacific and Indian Ocean Before the Age of Discovery

BY TAI YEW SENG
NSC VISITING FELLOW

At the ISEAS-Yusuf Ishak Institute, visitors are greeted by a wooden engraved navigation chart displayed on the wall along the corridor near the front entrance. Known as the Mao Kun (茅坤) Map, or the Zheng He Navigation Charts (郑和航海图), George Phillips (1836-1896), the British Consul at Fuzhou, in Fujian province, found the map in the US Library of Congress, printed on 40 pages in the 'Records of Military Preparations' (武备志) by Mao Yuanyi (1594-1640). Yamamoto Tatsuro (1910-2001) was the scholar who named the map as the Zheng He Navigation Charts, while J. V. C. Mills called it the Mao Kun Map (Tatsuro 1934-1935; Mills 1970: 236). The map contains four pages of stellar diagrams and 34 places with stellar altitudes (all in India or kingdoms west of India). The Mao Kun map is thought to be the earliest Chinese map that depicts Southern Asia, Persia, Arabia, and East Africa in an adequate manner, and is particularly important to Singapore as it mentions Danmaxi (Temasek, thought to be a location on the ancient island of Singapore).

How does the navigation in the map work? One commonly known way in which to determine the distance of a person standing further away (particularly for men who have undergone national service in Singapore) is to stretch out the arm and point the thumb upward to measure the height of the person. If the person is about the size of a thumb nail, their distance is approximately 100 meters. The celestial navigation uses the same principle, but measures the stellar altitudes in order to determine the locations. For example, in order to find out the latitude of a position for the Northern Hemisphere, the higher the North Star (Polaris) is in terms of altitude, the higher the latitude.

The Stellar Diagram No. 1 (Fig. 1) depicts the route from Deogarh in India to Hormuz in Persia. In the introduction of Stellar Diagram No. 1, it says (Mills 1970: 337):

Direction for crossing the ocean.

(Part of the passage is missing before this sentence)

You see the Polaris is 11 fingers [high, 17° 40'], and the Crux 4.5 fingers [high, 7° 13'].

You see, on the east side, the Lyra 7 fingers [high, 11° 14']; [this measurement] serves as a base.

You see (on the west) the Pollux 9 fingers [high, 14° 27'], and you see Procyon 11 fingers [high, 17° 40'].

Sailing from Deogarh, on reaching Hormuz you see the Polaris 14 fingers [high, 22° 29'].

Around the diagram of three-masted Chinese junk, there are eight sets of constellation maps, and each has a few small circles linked by thin lines, indicating a constellation. Beside each constellation map, it says (Mills 1970: 337-338):

(On the north) On crossing the ocean from Deogarh, the guiding star, the Polaris star, is 7 fingers [11° 14'] above the level of the water. On reaching Jabal Qurayyat Mountain, you see the star

“...the Mao Kun map indicates that there were two different navigation traditions for the Pacific and Indian Ocean.”

Polaris is 14 finger [high, 22° 29'] (Note by Mills: it should be '11 fingers') above the level of the water. On the east side the Lyra star are 7 fingers [11° 14'] above the level of the water. On the south, the two stars of Centaurus are 6 fingers [9° 38'] above the level of the water. On crossing the ocean from Deogarh, the Crux are 8.5 fingers [13° 39'] above the level of the water. At Jabal Qurayyat Mountain the Crux are 4.5 fingers [7° 13'] above the level of the water. (On the west) The Pollux is 9 fingers [14° 27'] above the level of the water. The Procyon is 11 fingers [high, 17° 40'] above the level of the water.

As depicted in the Stellar Diagram No. 1, the Mao Kun map used Polaris, Lyra, Centaurus, Pollux and Procyon to guide the ship from Deogarh to Hormuz. The other three stellar diagrams are routes from Ceylon to Kuala Pasai in Sumatra, Poulo Rondo in north of Sumatra to Ceylon, and Hormuz in Persia to Calicut in India. All of these diagrams did not have compass bearings.

Aside from the four stellar diagrams, the stellar altitudes of Chagos Islands, and the routes between the Maldives, India, Persia and Mogadishu of Africa are listed on the main map, together with compass bearings. Therefore, even though Chinese navigators did use compass navigation in Indian Ocean, the evidence suggests that astronomical navigation prevailed. On the other hand, the stellar altitudes were not indicated for the places east of Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia. The routes from the port of Taicang at the mouth of Yangtze River, China, to Aceh were all given only in compass bearings.

The earliest record on magnetic compass used in maritime navigation is in the book *Pingchow Table Talks* (1119) written by Zhu Yu (2007: 133):

The captain can recognize the landmarks, observe the stars at night, observe the sun during the day, and during cloudy days, use the south-pointing-needle (i.e. compass). Or, by using a hundred-foot-rope to bring up the soil of the seabed, he can smell it and will know where (the ship) is.

The Chinese envoy to Korea, Xu Jing (1091-1153), who had written a book entitled the *Illustrated Account of the Xuanhe Embassy to Goryeo*, indicated that the compass used on ship floated on water (Xu Jing 1986: 895):

Tonight, the ship cannot stop in the ocean, therefore one has to observe the stars to move forward. If it is cloudy, use the south-pointing-floating-needle to indicate the south and north.

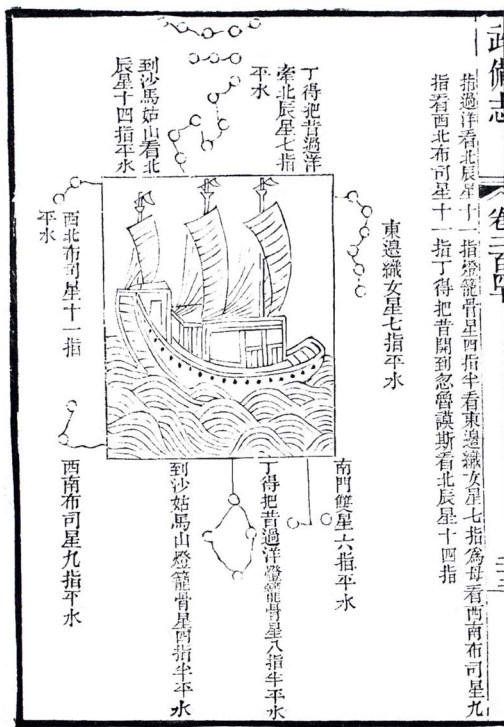


FIG. 1: STELLAR DIAGRAM NO. 1 OF MAO K'UN MAP/ZHENG HE NAVIGATION CHART. (CREDIT: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS)

These records provide valuable information on ancient navigation. It is known that the Chinese compass used for maritime navigation was in use from at least the beginning of the 12th century and was in the form of a “floating needle”. However, Zhu Yu was an observer, not a navigator. Some of his interpretations of navigation practices were wrong. For example, the sailors used “hundred-foot-rope” not to bring up the soil for smelling, but in order to measure the depth of the water so as to prevent themselves from running aground.

On the Mao K'un Map/Zheng He Navigation Chart, landmarks are indicated along with compass bearings. For example at the port of Taicang, from which the Chinese fleet set sail, there is an illustration of temple with the name “Palace of the Celestial Spouse” (Fig. 2). This is the location where Zheng He erected a stele on 14th March 1431. The stele had an inscription that listed his seven expeditions before his fleet set out. For the sailing directions, the map (Mills 1970: 261) indicated that:

From Taicang to Wusongjiang: The ship starts from Taicang, and steers exactly 105°; after 1 watch (2.4 hours) the ship is level with Wusongjiang.

From Wusongjiang to Nanhuizui: Steer 105°-90°; after 1 watch the ship reaches Nanhuizui and level with Zhaobaoshan.

Exit the port, steer 105°-120°, the water is sixteen to seventeen feet.

The bearings and depth of water are all indicated, and the landmarks are illustrated. These are all the information needed. The stellar altitudes are not mentioned.

As shown above, the Mao Kun Map indicates that there were two different navigation traditions for the Pacific and Indian Ocean. As the Chinese were familiar with the Pacific, they may have primarily used the compass for navigation. However, when they entered the Indian Ocean, aside from using the compass, they likely employed Indian or Persian pilots for navigation; this would not be unusual. When the Portuguese



FIG. 2: THE MAO K'UN MAP/ZHENG HE NAVIGATION CHART IS 220.4 INCHES LONG AND 8 INCHES WIDE. THE COAST-LINE IS IRRESPECTIVE OF ITS TRUE DIRECTION AND IS SHOWN AS ONE LINE RUNNING FROM RIGHT TO LEFT. (CREDIT: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS)

explorer Vasco da Gama (1460s-1524) first circumvented the southern tip of Africa in 1498, for example, he employed an Indian pilot in Malindi to guide the expedition to the Calicut, India. This may have been a common practice in the 15th century.

The methods of astronomical navigation and compass navigation were later developed into the use of a sextant to take the altitudes and this allowed maps to be navigated with greater accuracy. These methods survived until the Global Positioning System dominated the navigation in late 20th and 21st centuries.

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Notes:

1. A common alternative spelling for Mao Kun is Mao K'un, which was based on the earlier Wade-Giles system of transliterating Mandarin into English. This article primarily uses the Hanyu Pinyin system.

2. The underlined sections of the quoted passages are the author's additions or corrections from the original Chinese.

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Pots in Unexpected Places: Public Awareness of Ancient Ceramics in Lower Myanmar

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FIGURE 1 LOCATION OF PAKAN-KYUN AND MUTTAMA. (CREDIT: ELIZABETH MOORE, NAN KYI KHAING, AND YANNAUNG SOE)

When ancient Chinese glazed shards washed up on the beach of a small island off the southwest coast of Myanmar at Pakan-kyun and a row of Martaban jars were inadvertently exposed during digging of a water tank in Muttama, another area of lower Myanmar, they were safeguarded by the local community. This is encouraging, as the safeguarding suggests that there is an increasing awareness that these archaeological ceramics were significant. Whereas previously ceramics were often discarded, the villagers are now – with the active support of the regional governments and increasing numbers of local heritage associations – bringing new finds forward.

The glazed Chinese shards come from the small island of Pakan-kyun ('plate island'), located three km off the southwest of the Ayeyarwaddy Delta in Myanmar (see Figure 1). The location is west of a larger island known as Ohn-kyun (coconut island), and in comparison, Pagan-kyun is small (620 m north-south and 62 m east-west). While uninhabited today, two decades ago, fishing families had temporary houses on the east coast, and today their children still go to the island periodically. Both generations regularly found glazed shards along the beach on the southern tip, and report having seen larger vessels, some complete. The shards can be provisionally dated to the 14th century, pending

further samples of the base diameter (see Figure 2). Most are celadon but others have a very white body and may be *qingbai* wares; two blue-and-white shards have been recovered. The pieces are not a one-off find but come up regularly with the rains on the beach though not the rocky west shore or the tip of the island. While no further survey has been made, the pieces are tantalising hints for future exploration. To put the Chinese shards at Pakan-kyun in context, the most valuable source for mapping the trade of Chinese ceramics to Southeast Asia has come from shipwrecks, but none have yet been found in Myanmar, and this could be quite the exciting find.

The Martaban jars, on the other hand, were found near the southern tip of the Muttama peninsula, at Zarkadon Quarter, Mon State, at the end of February 2018 in the compound of U Soe Tin. The owner is a well-known noodle-maker who needs good water for washing the noodles during making. In 2014, while digging, he unearthed a number of smoking pipes, earthenware shards, and three blue-and-white shards of Chinese export ware, possibly from the 18th century. One unglazed vessel was found at a depth of 1.2 m (23 cm mid-diameter, 59 cm height), and has a rounded bottom and inward tapering body. It was incised near



FIGURE 2: COMPARING FABRICS SHARDS FROM CHINESE SHARDS FOUND AT PAKAN-KYUN. (CREDIT: ELIZABETH MOORE, COURTESY OF YANNAUNG SOE)

“Whereas previously ceramics were often discarded, the villagers are now – with the active support of the regional governments and increasing numbers of local heritage associations – bringing new finds forward.”

the neck of the vessel and around the lower body (see Figure 3). The pipes can be relatively dated from the ash-glazed green wares found in the same context to the 15th to 17th century CE.

Numerous unglazed shards were also found in association with the glazed wares, a correlation reinforced by the 2018 finds of a large rounded unglazed jar, set before a row of three glazed jars. This time, when a new 2.4 m tank was dug, the tops of three jars emerged 1.2 m below the surface. The upper habitation layer (10-13 cm), was underlain by sandy and clayey soils (10-13 cm), hard clay (51 cm thick) and a thick (65 cm) layer of charcoal ash and clayey soils. The ash

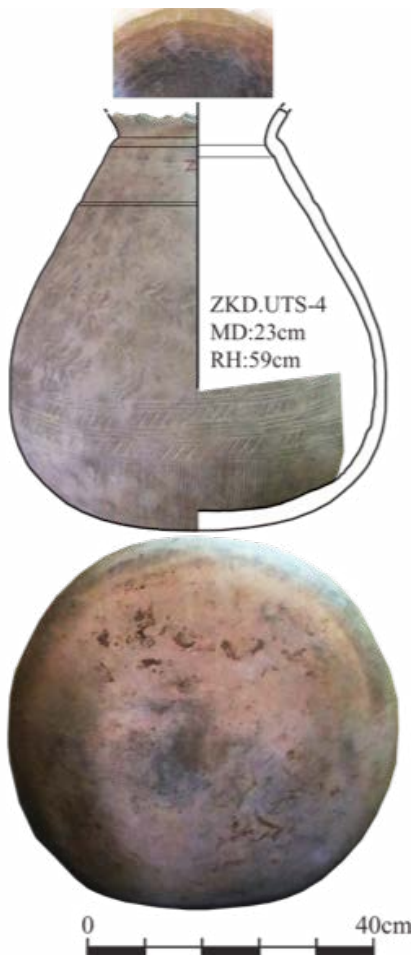


FIGURE 3: UNGLAZED POT FROM MUTTAMA FOUND IN 2014. (CREDIT: NAN KYI KYI KHAING)

layer could indicate evidence of a fire, and the reason for the neatly set jars being abandoned (see Figure 4). Facing the glazed vessels was an unglazed jar (49.7 cm tall) with a pale brown fabric and impressed with a hatched pattern all over the surface. The three glazed jars (55 – 61 cm tall) are ovoid with a narrow foot (22 -25 cm), consisting of a dark purple brown or black brown fabric and blackish brown glaze.

A 2013 excavation of a rubbish pit in the same compound showed that at a stratigraphic depth of 2.5m – 90cm below the surface, several items were found, including an unglazed earthenware pot with a carinated profile overlaid by round-bottom impressed pot, typical of the 11th to 13th century, and a 15th to 17th century celadon plate above it. While Martaban jars have been excavated in Indonesia and other parts of the world, this was the first find in Muttama, near where they are thought to have been made. The linear arrangement of



FIGURE 4: UNGLAZED AND MARTABAN JARS, MUTTAMA. (CREDIT: NAN KYI KYI KHAING)

the jars suggests that they may have been used for water storage, but another possibility is that they were set in front of a market shop and contained various goods. The juxtaposition with the large round bottom storage jar underlines the contemporaneity of the pieces. It is important to note that glazed vessels did not displace the earlier unglazed ones, and that both continued to be produced and used continuously from the first millennium CE. It is hoped that further discoveries in this manner can bridge another gap in the knowledge of Myanmar ceramics; how locally produced wares were used. This includes the most renowned pieces from Myanmar, the large black brown vessels named after Martaban (Muttama), an ancient port facing the Andaman Sea. Made from at least the 15th to 17th century in Lower Myanmar, the Martaban jars were famous for their preservative qualities, for keeping water, foodstuffs and gunpowder fresh. Knowledge of these uses, however, has come from international collections, excavations and shipwrecks, not local contexts.

The Pakan-kyun and Muttama finds are two of many examples of the ongoing research on ceramics in Lower Myanmar. The region of Lower Myanmar is one

that is archaeologically rich, with bronze images of the Buddha and numerous laterite and brick stupas present from the first millennium CE. Strategically located ports continued in operation throughout the second millennium, with trading networks to Upper Myanmar capitals such as Bagan (9th to 13th century) and Inwa (15th to 18th century). There has been little archaeological work carried out in the Ayeyarwaddy Region focusing on the 2nd millennium CE or in the Mon State, apart from excavations at the 16th century palace of Bago (Pegu) undertaken in the 1990s, whose riches were praised by European travellers of the day. Over the last five years, a collaborative project between the Myanmar Department of Archaeology, the National Museum, the Mon State government, along with Kyoto University and the Nara Cultural Properties Institute have been conducting research on a kiln site that produced green wares located near Mawlamyine. In addition to Martaban jars and green wares, white and green and white wares were also made in Lower Myanmar in the later second millennium CE. The export trade of these is recorded by glazed ceramics found from Japan to Indonesia and the Middle East. As of now, however, there is scant information on the ancient ceramics trade and its links between settlement patterns and court and village life. Discoveries such as the Pakan-kyun shards and the Muttama jars are only beginning to fill this gap.

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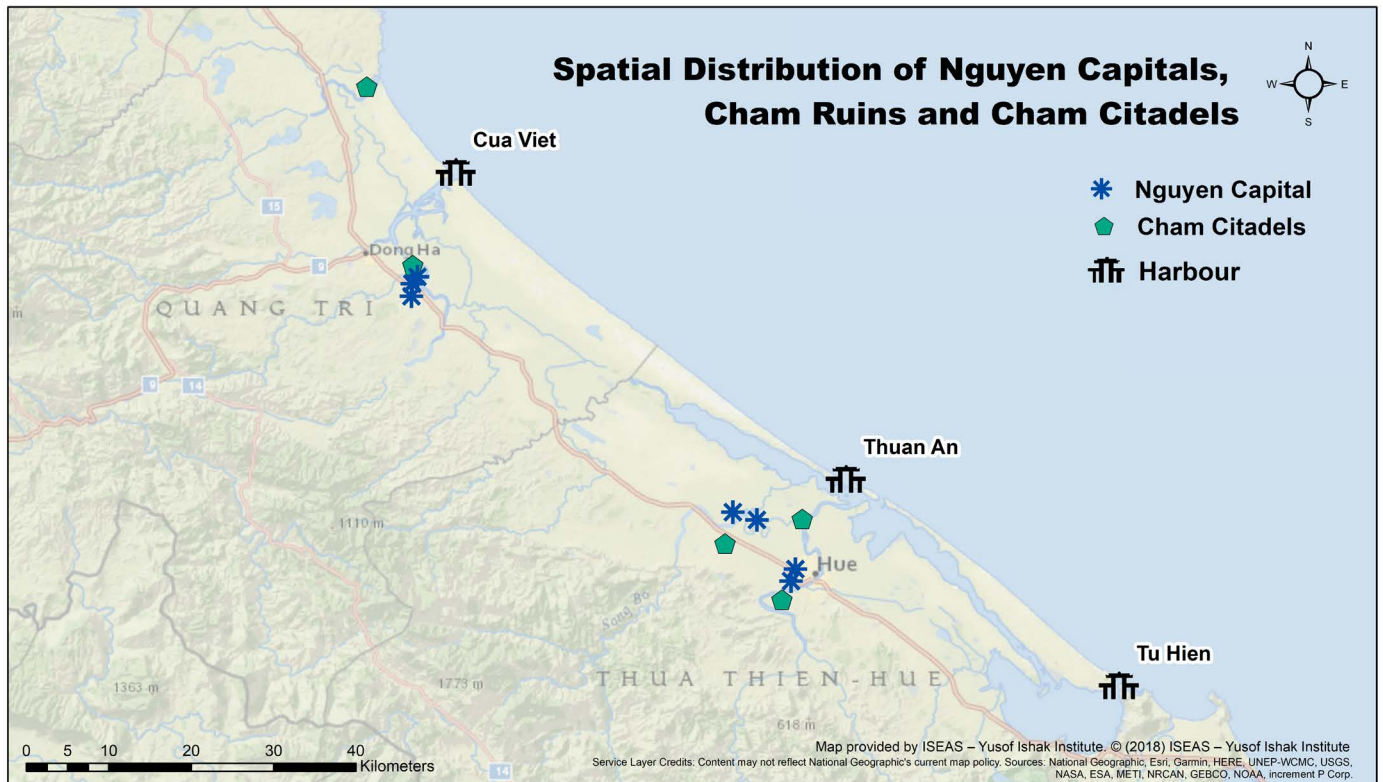
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The Changing Landscape of the Former Linyi in Provinces of Quảng Trị and Thừa Thiên - Huế

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MAP 1. (CREDIT: LI TANA)

If we were to choose one principality to focus on for its environmental history prior to the 7th century, it would have to be Linyi 林邑, a Mon-Khmer kingdom (according to Michael Vickery), or a northern Cham principality (according to most scholars) that conducted maritime trade along the South China Sea, located in today's central Vietnam. Founded on the former territory of the Han Empire's southmost province Rinan (日南 "South of the Sun") in the 2nd century, Linyi was "the harbour and the path of all countries" (众国津途), as a 5th century Chinese source stated (see Fan Ye). All overseas visitors came to China by this gateway, including the envoys of Roman king Antoninus Pius in 166 CE (see Li Daoyuan). Linyi straddled the mountain and the sea. It was the key link between the trans-Mekong networks of Mainland Southeast Asia and the coast of the South China Sea. It was also located close to the Ai Lao Pass, which was the easiest to access among the entire 1,100 km Annamite Range (Trường Sơn).

This thousand year old route, now Vietnam's no. 9 national highway, remains as the shortest route from Laos to the ocean.

P. Gourou (1955) once commented that Champa occupied one of "the least coherent territories in the world", where enclaves were separated by the mountains and each were open to the sea individually. However, new evidence seems to suggest that its northern part, Linyi, may have been better connected than the rest of the Champa nagaries¹. No mountain stands between its core areas, which are known today as the Quảng Trị and Thừa Thiên Huế regions. A river-lagoon system seemed to run across its heartland.

Whereas the Perfume River dominated the Thua Thien Hua province today, it was different up until the 16th century, as the Bồ River was the most important river of the region. Originating in Laos, the Bồ River was large enough to travel

by ships, linking salt-making sites on the coast with the uplands. The Bồ River plains were situated next to mountains where eaglewood 沉香 was abundant, and the trade with China formed an important foundation for Linyi's prosperity. Rolf Stein suggested that Linyi's 4th-century capital was in Văn Xá, which lies on the Bồ River. It was on the Bồ River that the Hóa Châu citadel was built, first by the Chams in the 9th/early 10th century, and later by the Viet's Trần dynasty in the 13th century. North of the Bồ River lies the Ô Lâu River. On this plain we find Văn Trạch Hòa, a cluster of Cham temples of the late 9th /early 10th centuries. The Ô Lâu River could have been a much larger river in the first millennium. As such, the Bồ-Ô Lâu rivershed may have formed the old heartland of Linyi. This area continued to be important to the Nguyễn Cochinchina in the 17th century, if we locate Cham citadels and Nguyễn lords' capitals on the same map, as Map 1 shows:

“Whereas the Perfume River dominated the Thua Thien Hua province today, it was different up until the 16th century, as the Bô River was the most important river of the region.”

Map 2 shows that the two citadels of Thuận (Cham Ô) and Hóa (Cham Lí) were connected by a river-lagoon system. Thuận Châu citadel, the northern citadel located in Hải Lăng District, was connected to Tam Giang Lagoon in the north, while Hóa Châu citadel lay on the southern end of Tam Giang Lagoon at the time. As Anne-Valerie Schwayer's (2017) GIS project shows recently, Hải Lăng is no longer connected to the Lagoon, which moved southward around the 17th century.

This waterway is seen on a 17th century map (map 2). It connected Huế and the Nguyễn lords' earlier capital, Cát Dinh, in Quảng Trị, and the Tứ Dung/Tứ Khách harbour located in the vicinity of Huế and served as the city's port – a place where palaces, markets, granaries, inns, and elephant stables were concentrated.

The name of the harbour Tứ Khách was changed into Tu Hien. Its current location is shown on Map 1. It is found far south of Huế, while its formal location lay south near today's Eo/Thuận An harbour. Comparing the two locations of the same harbour shows that Tu Hien harbour moved southward. Harbours in this region do change often: they close, reopen and unavoidably shift their locations, so much so that a Vietnamese geologist comments: “the opening, closing, and sudden locational shift of harbours is ... the most typical in Thừa Thiên-Huế area.”

Geologists seemed to be ready to talk about landscape changes and ruptures. Trần Đức Thành et al. (2002: 147) summarised the changes of the landscape of the Huế area as follows:

By the fifteenth century Thuận An became the only outlet of the Hương river, while Tứ Hiên became secondarily important and filled up in an increasing rate. The Phú Cam River, which had been the main stream of the Hương River, almost dried up, while the Bô River joined completely with the Hương, the Ô Lâu River zigzagged into the Tam Giang Lagoon, and the Thuận An Gate moved three times and seven kilometres in the last 100–200 years. The Tam Giang



MAP 2

lagoon is now much shallower and narrower, reducing its body of water at a speed of 2.4 mm per year. This means that the depth of the lagoon is only half of what it was in the last 600 years.

Such environmental landscape features would have impacted or maybe even determined the fortune of Linyi. The former prince of maritime commerce of the South China Sea must have experienced multiple cycles of construction, destruction, abandonment by settlers, and reconstruction. These can only be revealed by joint projects by scientists and historians.

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Notes:

1. “Principalities”; Champa was not one country but a series of small nagaries.

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Bukit Kasita: A Burial Ground of Rajas and Site of Architectural Heritage

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WESTERN FAÇADE OF THE BUKIT KASITA GATE (REAR FACADE), LIME COATING REMAINS AND MASONRY WORK. (CREDIT: HÉLÈNE NJOTO)



EASTERN FAÇADE OF THE BUKIT KASITA GATE (FRONT FACADE). (CREDIT: HÉLÈNE NJOTO AND MICHAEL NG)

The Bukit Kasita site, which consists of a gated cemetery and mosque, is located at the junction between Kampong Bahru Road and Lower Delta Road, near Telok Blangah. The cemetery is mostly unknown to most Singaporeans and its enclosure is now in an advanced state of decay. While the mosque has a typical 1930's Malay architectural style, the cemetery is a rare testimony to a Malay-European architectural heritage style in Singapore.

Once known as “Bukit Maula” (God’s Hill) due to the abundance of keramats in the neighbourhood, visitors still go to Bukit Kasita for its miracle-working graves. According to a preliminary research survey conducted by the authors at the site from June 2017 to January 2018, although the mosque at the site is no longer in use, about twenty visitors visit the cemetery’s miracle-working graves on regular days,

and it is visited by hundreds on prominent days of the Islamic calendar.

The Graves

Within the walls of the gated cemetery lie 58 graves. The great majority are covered by several layers of yellow or green cloths, displayed in about five rows distributed from east to west. The green colour signifies royalty whereas the yellow colour denotes the Sufi graves belonging to the Qadiri pathway (*tariqa*). The tombstones belong to a late and rather common Malay style.

Two of the most prominent graves at Bukit Kasita belong to that of Raja Ahmad (BK1) and Engku Fatimah (BK2). According to Rivers (2003), these graves were said to be miracle working and held a sacred place in 20th century Singapore. A genealogy recovered from the island of Penyengat in Riau proposed that Engku Fatimah was a granddaughter

of Temenggong Abdul Rahman (d. 1825), who was a prominent political leader for that period. According to the inscriptions on her tomb, she died in the month of Rabi al-Awwal in 1317 AH (*Anno Hegirae*, or in the year of the Islamic Hijri calendar), or July 1899.

Located next to her tombstone is that of Raja Ahmad Raja Said, Engku Fatimah’s father. If the aforementioned genealogy was accurate, he was married to Tengku Aminah, the Temenggong’s daughter. Raja Said was also said to be the great-grandson of Daeng Kamboja, who occupied “the throne of Johor and Pahang and all its dependencies” (Andaya & Andaya 2001: 102). According to the inscriptions, Raja Ahmad died in the month of Sha’aban in 1296 AH, or November 1858.

Beyond the graves of these two individuals, closer to the western wall



BUKIT KASITA CEMETERY. (CREDIT: HÉLÈNE NJOTO AND TERENCE SEVEA)

of the cemetery, lies Tengku Siti Fatimah (BK 15). According to Rivers (2003: 116) it was described as a keramat which had a spring nearby with “healing powers.” Rivers noted that devotees in the mid-20th century would collect spring water near her grave “to ease aches and pains in their legs and joints.” The authors found a cavity to contain the sacred water; this was located in between the head and foot stones of the grave.

Another genealogy suggests that Tengku Siti Fatimah was the great grand-daughter of the last Sultan of the Riau-Lingga sultanate, helmed by Abdul Rahman Muazam Shah II (r. 1885-1911).

The Sultan had been forced into exile to Singapore along with members of his family after Dutch troops besieged the royal court at Pulau Penyengat in 1911. According to devotees who memorised genealogies of Malay royalty in the region, graves like those of Tengku Siti Fatimah housed the remains of royals from the Riau-Lingga Sultanate.

The gated cemetery

The cemetery is accessible from the east through a 5m high and 4.5m wide gate. The cemetery is protected by an enclosure itself measuring 12.8m x 15.57m, and the wall is 1.9m



DETAILS OF AN URN WITH STUCCO LEAF DECOR. (CREDIT: HÉLÈNE NJOTO)



NORTH-EAST WALL ANGLE FROM OUTSIDE. (CREDIT: HÉLÈNE NJOTO)



REMAINING FLAT TERRACOTTA TILE PROTECTING THE GABLE. (CREDIT: HÉLÈNE NJOTO)

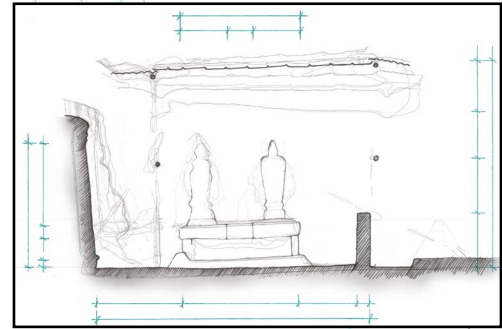
“According to devotees who memorised genealogies of Malay royalty in the region, graves like those of Tengku Siti Fatimah housed the remains of royals from the Riau-Lingga Sultanate.”

in height. Although the gate and walls are in a poor state of conservation, the cemetery itself is fairly well-preserved and shows signs of regular maintenance.

The overall style of the gate is inspired by Neo-Classical architecture which was predominant in the 19th century and early 20th century, as it has a three-centred arch but also a triangular gable flanked by two decorative urns.

Bukit Kasita Cemetery and Mosque

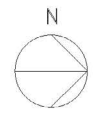
Map Credit: Atlas Consulting Surveyors



TOMB ELEVATION (CREDIT: MUHAMMAD SHAFIQ BIN MOHAMMAD AFFANDI AND PAMELA DYCHENGBENG CHUA)



EAST FACADE OF THE MOSQUE. (CREDIT: HÉLÈNE NJOTO)



SVY21 DATUM



LENGTHS ARE IN METERS
SCALE 1:50



BK1

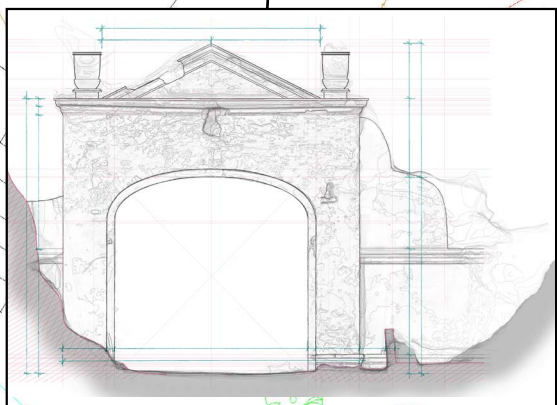


BK2



BK15

Tomb photos credit:
Ms. Tan Chay Hiang



GATE ELEVATION (CREDIT: MUHAMMAD SHAFIQ BIN MOHAMMAD AFFANDI AND PAMELA DYCHENGBENG CHUA)



AERIAL VIEW OF THE SITE FROM THE EASTERN SIDE. (CREDIT: MICHAEL NG AND HÉLÈNE NJOTO)



THE MOULDING, PROFILE, CORNICE AND STUCCO/LIME COATING ARE IN GOOD CONDITION FOR FUTURE CONSERVATION WORK. (CREDIT: HÉLÈNE NJOTO)



ENTRANCE TO THE MOSQUE ORIGINAL BUILDING WITH THE WOODEN DRUM (KULKUL) STILL HANGING. (CREDIT: HÉLÈNE NJOTO)



ONE OF THE ORIGINAL WINDOW FRAMES AND SHUTTERS (SOUTHERN WALL). (CREDIT: HÉLÈNE NJOTO)

The entire surface of the gate is covered with a coating of lime. The upper part of the gate has a cornice of which the plaster is carved in an ornamental frieze. On both sides of the gate, the gable also has a cornice and a floral motif. The urns also has a décor sculpted with a leaf motif. The gable is covered by flat (probably Chinese) terracotta tiles, many of which can still be seen.

The Neo-Classical style gates were standard in Singapore and can be found since the first half of the 19th century, during G. D. Coleman's leadership as Superintendent of Public Works (1833-1841) (Hancock 1986). Coleman established a similar style of buildings with porticos and triangular gables through many public and private commissioned buildings, as illustrated in John Turnbull Thomson's 1851 oil painting "The Esplanade from Scandal Point."

The Bukit Kasita cemetery gate is likely to be one of the last remaining examples of a Neo-classical Colonial-era gate of the 'European India' imprint, dating to the late 19th century to early 20th century. Although the architects and builders might remain anonymous for a long time due to a lack of documentation available, it is likely that the patrons were of Malay descent. This would make this gated cemetery a rare example of Malay architecture with European influences.

This type of gate is an example of a tradition that goes beyond the frontiers of Singapore. The arched gate with a gable and two urns are motifs which

seem to have developed in the region at least since the 19th century, as it can also be seen in the royal cemeteries at Penyengat Island (South of Bintan), which once stood as the cultural capital of the Malay World (Matheson 1989).

Based on the two main tombs BK1 and BK2's dates (1858 and 1899), it is assumed that the walls and gate were built shortly after those dates, thus in the second half of the 19th century. The triangular gable with two side urns, the classic European cornice of the gate and gable, and the style of the urns also concur with this second half of the 19th century estimate. However, the sizeable three-centred arch suggests a later construction, maybe dating from the early 20th century. Nevertheless, the gate does not appear in any of the National Archives' "Maps and Building Plans collection," which may suggest that it was built before 1884. This date is the earliest recorded date when contractors were requested by law to register their construction plans with the Municipal Building Surveyor Department, with a precise description of materials used. Further laboratory analysis on the brick and mortar materials could refine the dating.

The mosque or prayer hall (*surau*)

The mosque is located at the south-western corner of the cemetery. It stands as one of the rare remaining examples of Malay prayer halls of the early 20th century in Singapore (see Tajudeen 2008, pp. 137 and

fig. 8 on p. 145). Although it does not function as a prayer hall anymore, the overall layout and the main building is kept intact and the wooden drum to call for prayers still hangs at the entrance of the building.

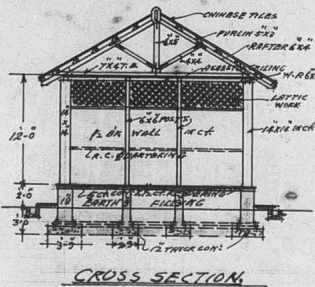
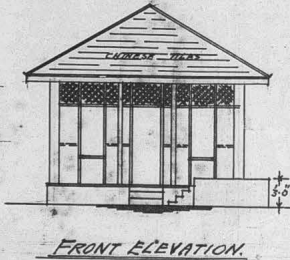
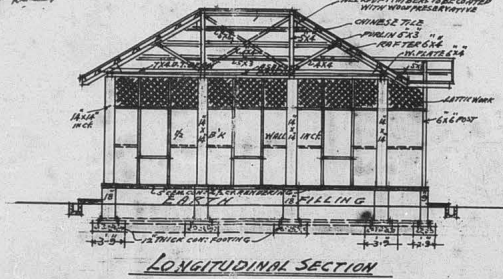
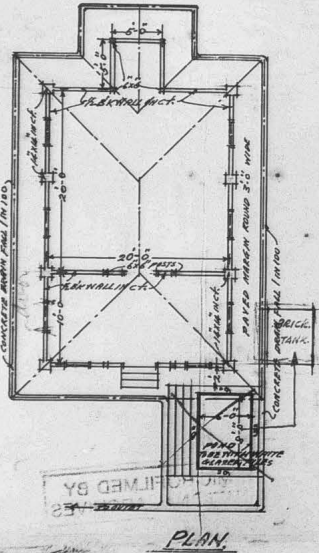
A 1932 plan of the mosque found at the National Archives of Singapore (NAS) shows that the mosque did not originally have tiered Roofs but a simple hipped roof with Chinese tiles. The NAS plan specified that the construction of the mosque was spearheaded by Kathi Hajji Abdul Haleem bin Kartha, a member of the "Mohammedan Advisory Board." According to his son, Abu Bakar bin Hajji Abdul Halim (1986), the plans were an expansion of the original mosque built in 1911. Abdul Bakar recalls how the surrounding historical graves and keramats were frequently worshipped by residents. It was also highlighted that the first residents of the area were either servants of royals (*hamba raja*) or the followers of Temenggong Daeng Ibrahim (d. 1862), whose palace was located a couple kilometres to Bukit Kasita.

The plan for the mosque is quadrangular and measures 9m x 6.5m with a 10m x 8m terrace. The mosque has a prayer niche (*mihrab*) built on the western wall of the *surau* to indicate the direction of Mecca. On the southern side of the terrace, the floor is held by short stilts. The four-sided pitched roof is held by a load-bearing wall with eight square pilasters in masonry, aligned with the southern and northern walls.

PLAN SHEWING A MALAY MOSQUE TO BE BUILT AT KAMPONG BAHRU ROAD FOR HAJJI ABDUL HALIM KATHI.

OWNER'S SIGN: [Signature] ADDRESS NO 798 Kampong Bahru Rd.

Let the entire construction of the mosque to be finished in the year.



Municipal Ordinance 533/31 dated 20.1.22. Sanctioned Subject to the Municipal Ordinance and By-laws. Municipal President: [Signature]

Acting MUNICIPAL BUILDING SURVEYOR. Date: 4-3-22. Computed area: 625 sq. ft. Committed Fees: \$600.00. [Signature] ARCHITECT.

'PLAN SHEWING A MALAY MOSQUE TO BE BUILT AT KAMPONG BAHRU ROAD FOR HAJJI ABDUL HALIM KATHI', MAPS AND BUILDINGS PLANS COLLECTION, NAS, 532/31. (CREDIT: NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF SINGAPORE)

This preliminary survey will hopefully allow more scholars–historians of Singapore and the Malay world, oral historians, as well as observers of Islamic rituals–to further their understanding of the rituals and traditions at Bukit Kasita. It is hoped that Bukit Kasita can be preserved as it can serve to show that Singapore was a key centre for pilgrimage and Sufism in the Malay world and beyond. The architectural features also stand as rare witness to Singapore’s early hybrid cultures where Malay and European features were blended with much art. This picturesque site with its century old trees should attract the growing domestic as well as regional and international crowd of heritage lovers.

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THE AUTHORS WOULD LIKE TO THANK VALERIE YUE MIN, FOO SHU TIENG, AND MARK HENG FOR THEIR KIND HELP IN EDITING THIS PAPER. THEIR THANKS ALSO GO TO NOORASHIKIN ZULFIKI (ACM).

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What Dr. John Crawfurd Saw on the “Forbidden Hill”

TEXT BY KWA CHONG GUAN, NSC ASSOCIATE FELLOW
ILLUSTRATIONS BY GLENN LIM, INTERN

Dr John Crawfurd, M.D. stopped over in Singapore in February 1822, when he was en route to the Courts of Cochin China and Siam as an Envoy of the Governor –General of India, the Marquis of Hastings. Crawfurd (1828) recorded his impressions of Singapore in his Journal of an Embassy from the Governor General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China.

Crawfurd spent the morning of 3 February walking “round the walls and limits of the ancient town of Singapore.” He spent the following morning of 4 February studying the large sandstone inscription at the mouth of Singapore, and exploring the Hill we know as Fort Canning. Crawfurd’s (1971: 402) observations merit quotation:

“After being cleared by us of the extensive forest which covered it, it is now clothed with a fine grassy sward, and forms the principal beauty of the new settlement. The greater part of the west and northern side of the mountain is covered with the remains of the foundations of buildings, some composed of baked brick of good quality. Among these ruins, the most distinguished are those seated on a square terrace, of about forty feet to a side, near the summit of the hill. On the edge of this terrace, we find fourteen large blocks of sandstone; which, from the hole in each, had probably been the pedestals of as many wooden-posts which supported the building. This shows us, at once, that the upper part of the structure was of perishable materials, an observation which, no doubt, applies to the rest of the building as well as to this. Within the square terrace is a circular inclosure [sic], formed of rough sand-stone, in the centre of which is a well, or hollow, which very possibly contained an image; for I looked upon the building to have been a place of worship, and from its appearance in all likelihood, a temple of Buddha. I venture farther to conjecture, that the other relics of antiquity on the hill, are the remains of monasteries of the priests of this religion. Another terrace, on the north declivity of the hill, nearly of the same size, is said to have been the burying-place of Iskandar Shah, King of Singapore.”

Crawfurd's Experience in the Region

Crawfurd’s observations of what he saw on the Hill are our only description of Singapore’s “antiquities” before they were cleared for Raffles to build his “small bungalow” in January 1823. This “small bungalow” was enlarged to become the Residence of the Governor which Crawfurd occupied from 1823 to 1826 when he was appointed Resident. Further, what Crawfurd saw was demolished in 1859 when the summit of the hill was levelled for the construction of an artillery fort and the hill re-named Fort Canning.

Crawfurd’s observations are significant because he knew what he was looking at. His inferences of what he observed are informed by a deep knowledge of the history and culture of the “Indian Archipelago” he started studying after his arrival at Pinang in 1808 to join its Medical Staff. In 1811 he was assigned to join the expedition to take-over Java and during the next five years served in a variety of civil posts and political appointments, particularly as Resident of Yogyakarta and had to study and collect data on the lands and their communities he was assigned to administer.

A Buddhist Monastery on the Forbidden Hill

Crawfurd’s description of Bukit Larangan is however marred by one error: he got his compass directions mixed up. The grave of Iskandar Shah lies on the eastern, not the northern slopes of the “Forbidden Hill.” However, if Crawfurd’s directions were corrected, then the ruins, especially the forty feet square platform, would lie not on the western slope of the hill, but its east. Besides this direction error, Crawfurd identified a few features that made him link Singapore to the rest of the “Indian Archipelago” he knew so well. First, his description draws attention to a mysterious “well” or pit in the centre of a “circular enclosure” on the square terrace. He would have seen similar “wells” in the ruins of the central and east Javanese

“Crawfurd was right in speculating that he was looking at the remains of a Buddhist temple, similar to what he would have inspected in Java.”

Hindu-Buddhist temples he visited or inspected during his five years of service in Java.

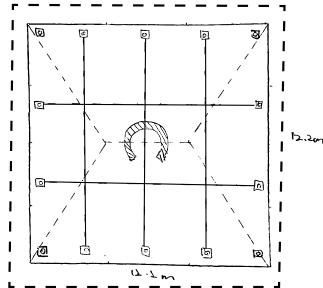
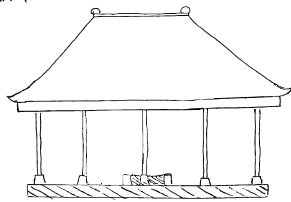
He could therefore conjecture that he was probably looking at the remains of a Buddhist temple and that the well “contained an image.” This “well” or pit Crawfurd saw was a standard feature of the sacred architecture of Indic Southeast Asia from Angkor to the monuments of central Java and Majapahit temples of east Java.

20th century archaeological excavations have revealed that stone reliquaries functioning as ritual deposit boxes containing mantras and other sacred items were placed at the bottom of these shafts. An icon was probably erected over the pit. Whatever icon and ritual deposit box in the shaft Crawfurd saw on Bukit Larangan was long lost by 1822.

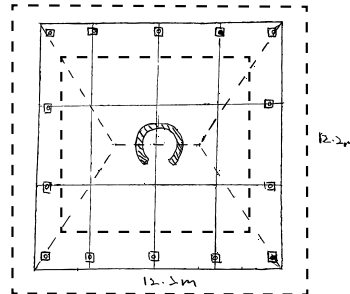
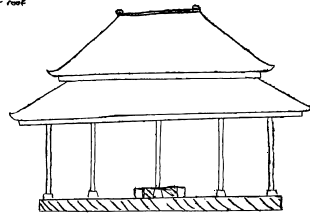
Interpreting Crawfurd’s Description

Crawfurd was right in speculating that he was looking at the remains of a Buddhist temple, similar to what he would have inspected in Java. The sandstone blocks would have been imported to Singapore, which bring further evidence that the building was an important (religious) building. Furthermore, Crawfurd correctly inferred that the fourteen large blocks of sandstone with a hole in each were the pillar bases for a wooden structure. The question of the architecture type of this building remains a mystery. However, visual images of such wooden pillars supporting a thatched roof over a brick or stone platform is well documented. They can be seen on the reliefs of temples in central and east Java and in Balinese temples today.

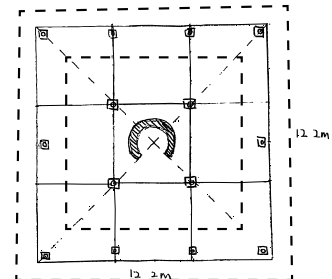
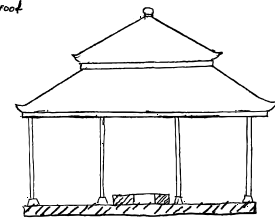
-14 PB
- Square (12.2m x 12.2m)
- one tier roof



-14 PB
- Square (12.2m x 12.2m)
- 2 tier roof



4 PB
Square (12.2m x 12.2m)
2 tier roof



AN ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF CRAWFURD'S DESCRIPTION OF THE STRUCTURE ON THE "FORBIDDEN HILL." (CREDIT: GLENN LIM)

The bas-reliefs on the fourteenth-fifteenth century Majapahit temples provide detailed illustrations of what may have been found on Bukit Larangan. The underlying assumption is that if we follow the Sejarah Melayu stories of Singapura's close but troubled relations with Majapahit in Java, then it follows that the structures erected on Bukit Larangan would have been influenced by Majapahit architecture. The gold bracelet engraved with a Majapahit style kala makara recovered on Fort Canning in 1926 and the almost certainly Javanese kawi script on the fragments of the demolished Singapore Stone suggests that the structure on the pillar bases would copy or be deeply influenced by Majapahit temple structures.

These Majapahit temple reliefs show buildings on pillars supporting three or more tiered roofs. Similar multi-tiered ijuk (sugar palm fiber) roof structures symbolising the Meru (World Mountain) of Indic cosmology, continue to be erected in the courtyards of Balinese temples today. Crawford described 14 sandstone pillar bases laid on the edge of the terrace he was looking at. Assuming that the pillar bases were distributed evenly, then the layout could be a square structure with four bases on two sides and five on the other two sides supporting one roof to three superimposed roofs (see also drawings p.20). However, we cannot exclude that a few pillar bases were missing as they often do on archaeology sites. When Crawford visited the site, the building had been abandoned for a long time seen from the fact that the wooden structure was gone. The probability of having a three tiered roof would be increased if

the terrace had originally four pillar bases in the centre as usually seen in ancient Javanese architecture (thus counting 16 bases instead of 14).

The last word goes to Crawford, who in 1858 reflected and recollected that "the remains discovered in Singapore are certainly not such as to convey a high opinion of what [the 16th century historian João De Barros calls 'the celebrated city of Cingapura, to which resorted all the navigators of the western seas of India, and those of the eastern of Siam, China, Champa, and Camboja, as well as of the thousands of islands to the eastward.' Earth, brick, unhewn sandstone, and wood, seem to have been the only materials made use of, and there is not a vestige of the granite which abounds in the neighbourhood and is now so largely employed."

KWA CHONG GUAN IS AN ASSOCIATE FELLOW AT NSC. RECENT PUBLICATIONS INCLUDE "STUDYING SINGAPORE BEFORE 1800" (2018; NUS PRESS, WITH PETER BORSCHBERG) AND "EARLY SOUTHEAST ASIA VIEWED FROM INDIA: AN ANTHOLOGY OF ARTICLES FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE GREATER INDIA SOCIETY" (2013; MANOHAR AND ISEAS PUBLISHING). HE HAS ALSO PUBLISHED TWO NSC WORKING PAPER SERIES, "THE MARITIME SILK ROAD: HISTORY OF AN IDEA" (2016) AND "LOCATING SINGAPORE ON THE MARITIME SILK ROAD: EVIDENCE FROM MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY, NINTH TO EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES" (2012), WHICH CAN BE FOUND AT THIS LINK: [HTTPS://WWW.ISEAS.EDU.SG/ARTICLES-COMMENTARIES/NSC-WORKING-PAPERS](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/nsc-working-papers). KWA IS ALSO AFFILIATED WITH THE S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE. THANKS TO DR HÉLÈNE NJOTO FOR SHARING HER INSIGHTS INTO TRADITIONAL JAVANESE ARCHITECTURE AND ENGAGING NSC INTERN GLENN LIM TO BRING HIS ARTISTIC SKILLS TO SKETCH WHAT CRAWFURD MAY HAVE SEEN ON FORT CANNING..

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New Light on the Karimun Besar Inscription (Prasasti Pasir Panjang) and the Learned Man from Gaur

BY IAIN SINCLAIR
NSC VISITING FELLOW

There is an inscription of extraordinary significance etched into a granite hill on the northern coast of Karimun Besar, one of the Riau islands located to the southwest of Singapore. The inscription records the visit of a holy man whose identity, up till now, has not been well understood. It is said that the inscription dates to the Sriwijaya era and refers to a person who is “astrolabe-endowed” (*golayantrita*). The claim is often repeated in scholarship on the Prasasti Pasir Panjang, as it is called in Indonesian, and goes back to the first published study (Brandes 1887:150). The “astrolabe” reading confuses three glyphs, as can be seen from recent photographs, and can now be safely retired.

It has further been proposed that the inscription refers to “The holy footprints of The Venerable Gautama [Buddha]” (Caldwell & Hazlewood 1994:475). However, the indentations in the granite do not look much like footprints. It is grammatically more feasible that the inscription contains the proper name Gautamaśrī, as a couple of scholars realised back in the early twentieth century (Kern 1917:142; Chatterjee 1933:95–96). The inscription most likely



FIGURE 1: THE GLYPHS OF THE KARIMUN INSCRIPTION, A.K.A. PRASASTI PASIR PANJANG. ITS THREE LINES READ AS FOLLOWS: 1: mahāyānika 2: gaulapaṇḍitaśrī 3: gautamaśrīpādā[h]: “the feet of glorious Gautamaśrī, Mahāyānist pundit of Gaur.” MANUALLY TRACED FROM CALDWELL & HAZLEWOOD (1994:462). (CREDIT: IAIN SINCLAIR)

means: “the feet [i.e. the honourable presence] of glorious Gautamaśrī, Mahāyānist pundit of Gaur.” What has not yet been done is to identify the illustrious pundit who journeyed to Riau from Gaur in Bengal.

Who was Gautamaśrī? Many sources from outside Southeast Asia refer to a pundit named Gautamaśrī who was active in the early-mid 13th century. This Gautamaśrī appears to have sought refuge in the Himalayas after the collapse of the Hindu-Buddhist Sena dynasty. The Senas, formerly the rulers of much of Bengal, retreated to Gaur as the Turkish invasions broke up their empire. Gautamaśrī would have joined the exodus of other learned men from Eastern India as they resettled in places such as Nepal and began to teach Tibetan and Newar students. Tibetan lineage documents identify Gautamaśrī as an expert in over a dozen texts and tantric practices, many of which were passed on to the Tibetan Sakyapa

tradition and are still studied today. He also helped to translate Sanskrit texts into Tibetan. According to the colophon of one translation, Gautamaśrī had visited Sakya monastery in Tibet itself (Bühnemann 1994:16).

In 1253 a young lama of the Sakyapas, Dampa Künga Drak (1230–1303), was advised to travel to meet and study with Gautamaśrī. Dampa later performed war magic for the Mongols in their campaign to establish the Yuan dynasty, and rose to join the court of Kublai Khan. The connection between Dampa and Gautamaśrī is recorded in Chinese sources and has so far remained unnoticed, since the Chinese-language transcription of Gautamaśrī’s name (*Gudamashili* 古達麻室利) was not read correctly in the only published study of Dampa’s life (Franke 1994:160 n.14).

Gautamaśrī was also involved with the ancient monastic complex of Guitah in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. Guitah,



FIGURE 2A: THE INSCRIBED STUPA BASE AT GUITAH BAHU IN PATAN, NEPAL. (CREDIT: ANDREA WOLLEIN)



FIGURE 2B: THE WORDS paṇḍita ...śrīgautamaśrī INSCRIBED IN RED ON THE STUPA BASE. (CREDIT: IAIN SINCLAIR)



FIGURE 3: THE EXTENSION TO GUITAH BAHİ BUILT BY GAUTAMAŚRĪ JULY 8, 2018. (CREDIT: ANDREA WOLLEIN)

“What could have driven a Buddhist pundit from Bengal not only to the Himalayas, but as far away as the Singapore Strait?”

which still functions as a monastery for the Newar community, preserves two stone inscriptions that mention Gautamaśrī. One inscription, carved on the pedestal of the standing Buddha image in the main sanctum, is dated in the 339th year of the Nepalese era. This year corresponds to 1279 CE. The pedestal inscription commemorates the rebuilding of the part of the monastery built by Gautamaśrī, which seems to have been destroyed in the catastrophic Nepal earthquake of 1255. The poetic language of the inscription testifies to a certain level of literary accomplishment at Guitah; it calls Gautamaśrī a “god among ascetics,” a *yatindra*.

Another inscription at Guitah, located on the base of a stupa in the main courtyard, credits Gautamaśrī with having built part of the monastery. The stupa pedestal was inscribed in the year 144 (Vajrācārya 1999:60). If this year is interpreted in the dating system of Gaur – the Lakshman Samvat – it gives a date corresponding to 1250 CE, and as such would have been written in Gautamaśrī’s lifetime. The inscription refers to the *paṇḍita* called *śrīgautamaśrī* – the very same wording as the Karimun inscription. This commonality leaves little doubt that the inscriptions in Nepal and at

Karimun refer to the same person.

What could have driven a Buddhist pundit from Bengal not only to the Himalayas, but as far away as the Singapore Strait? The 13th century was a time of major upheaval, with the Turkish invasions of South Asia clashing with the Mongol expansions into East and Central Asia, causing massive demographic shifts. The sea routes that reopened after the demise of the Senas would have offered a path out of this chaos to the relative peace of Southeast Asia. Gautamaśrī’s presence in the Riau Islands coincides with a final flourishing of Sanskritic culture in Java and Sumatra, as seen in the inscriptions of Singasari and Ādityavarman, which can now be re-examined with reference to Gautamaśrī’s expertise. In conclusion, the inscription at Karimun Besar should now be appreciated as a major milestone on the Maritime Silk Road, and due attention given to its conservation and further study.

IAIN SINCLAIR IS A VISITING FELLOW AT NSC. THIS ARTICLE IS A SHORT PREVIEW OF THE AUTHOR’S WORK IN PROGRESS (SINCLAIR 2018).

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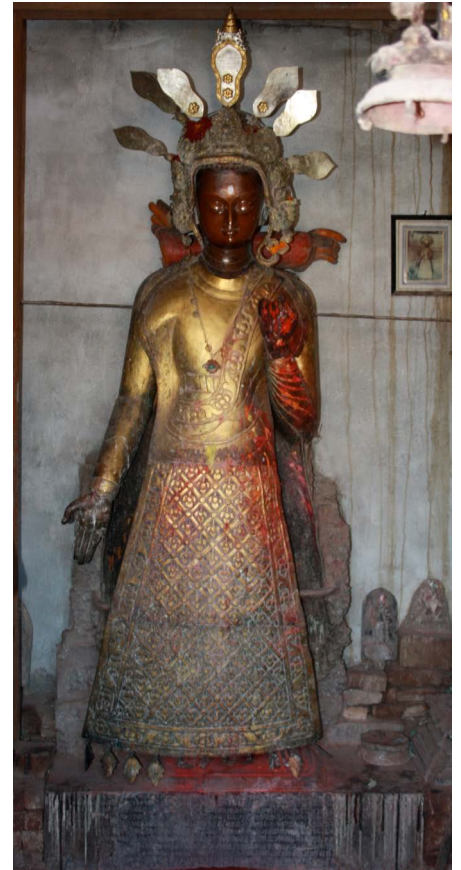


FIGURE 4: THE STANDING BUDDHA OF GUITAH BAHİ AND ITS INSCRIBED PEDESTAL. 2013.. (CREDIT: AURORA GRALDI)

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10 Years of Archaeological Research in Indonesia

BY FOO SHU TIENG
NSC RESEARCH OFFICER



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: MR. BAMBANG BUDI UTOMO, HELENE NJOTO, AND MR. SHINATRIA ADHITYATAMA. (CREDIT: ISEAS - YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE)

Wednesday, 8 August 2018 – Mr. Bambang Budi Utomo and Mr. Shinatria Adhityatama, archaeologists from the Pusat Penelitian Arkeologi Nasional (PUSLIT ARKENAS; National Archaeology Research Centre), gave a talk entitled “10 Years of Archaeological Research in Indonesia”. The talk unveiled some amazing discoveries that gave the audience greater insights to Indonesia’s distant and more recent pasts.

Mr. Bambang Budi Utomo first introduced PUSLIT ARKENAS as one of the oldest centres for archaeological research in Southeast Asia that built up its knowledge on the prehistoric and historic period in Indonesia over 105 years. He highlighted how the institute had begun on the foundations of the Dutch colonial antiquity service, and how its researchers had made great contributions to the study of both Majapahit and Sriwijaya, among other sites. Subsequently, four specific sites were showcased in the talk: Harimau Cave (a prehistoric cave in South Sumatra with remains over 4,500 years old); wetland settlement research in southeast Sumatra (an area with artefacts dating from 4th-13th c. in East Sumatra); Liyangan (a 11th c. Pompei-like site in Central Java); and the WWII-era shipwreck of a German U-boat in the Java Sea.

Mr. Shinatria Adhityatama then presented data retrieved from Gua Harimau, a prehistoric cave site in South Sumatra near the Ogan River where 81 individuals were found from a wide range of dates, the oldest being over 4,500 years old, and the most recent being about 1,700 years old. He showed the different types of burials and burial positions that the individuals were found in, and mentioned that there is ongoing research into their disease profiles (whether the individuals suffered from illnesses) as well as the faunal material found at the site. DNA testing suggests that the individuals found were from mongoloid and australoid populations. Pottery and stone tools were also found and examined. Mr. Shinatria emphasised how the site was significant in that it was also the location of the first rock painting found in Sumatra,

with approximately 50 different types of motifs. Next, Mr. Bambang, assisted by Mr. Shinatria as translator, discussed a wetland settlement area on the Musi river drainage basin, on the east coast of Sumatra that may have been inhabited by the people of Sriwijaya, and used data from Air Sugihan, Karang Agung, and Banyuasin areas. Although the area was initially investigated in the 1980s in conjunction with a team from EFEO, led by Pierre-Yves Manguin, recent discoveries including wooden pillars made out of Nibung trees for stilt house posts, and 4th century Carnelian beads (thought to be from Arikamedu, India), suggest that the Karangagung area had the earliest evidence of contact with India in the Indonesian archipelago. Furthermore, the remnants of a sewn-plank and lashed-lug boat were found at Banyuasin regency, along with ceramics, clay stoves, beads, and coconut shells, and were most likely evidence of Orang Laut activity. These groups played important roles in the straits of Melaka and elsewhere, as look outs and navigators (among other roles), leading traders through a maze of mangrove swamps to various ports of trade.

Subsequently, Mr. Bambang discussed recent finds from the Liyangan site, a 2nd-11th c. site dubbed as Asia’s Pompei in Central Java. The village of Rukam on the slope of the Sumbing Volcano was mentioned in a 907 CE inscription and was destroyed by volcanic eruptions, and in 2008, collapsed buildings were found in Liyangan at a depth of 8-10 meters. Archaeological investigations were conducted at the site since 2010, and they have found various items related to everyday life in relatively good preservation—such as oil lamps, rope, timber, irrigation systems, and various religious statuary. The estimated 8-12 hectare site was also investigated for agricultural activities, and its various monumental buildings were considered to be examples of the pre-Hindu and Mataram-era style religious beliefs.

Finally, Mr. Shinatria spoke on the discovery of a German U-Boat in waters at a depth of 18-24 meters, in the Java Sea off the north coast of East Java,

Indonesia. He explained that based on archival research in 2010, there was potential for several German wrecks in the area as the Germans and Japanese were allies in WWII, and were trading technology and other natural resources such as rubber and glass. The PUSLIT ARKENAS team worked with the local fishermen in the area to discover a submarine wreck. The submarine was identified as a German U-Boat from WWII by a stamp on the bottom of a porcelain artefact (from the Porzellanfabrik Joseph Rieber & Co. A.G. which had a Nazi swastika logo). Documentation of human and uniform remains also revealed the Caucasian and national origins of the crew.

Chaired by Dr. H el ene Njoto (Visiting Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute), the 60 min lecture was attended by an audience of 49 people, including scholars, students, and members of the public. It was followed by a lively 30 min Q&A session in which both speakers answered questions from the audience. Initially, the questions were focused on the shipwreck; whether the human remains were repatriated; whether international collaborations would allow for more underwater archaeology work; and underwater archaeology regulations. The speakers also received questions on whether the Mataram period settlement site at Liyangan had influences from earlier traditions. Other questions addressed the origins of Carnelian beads; whether they might have been circulated from Myanmar instead of India.

FOO SHU TIENG IS A RESEARCH OFFICER AT NSC. SHE RECEIVED HER MA BY RESEARCH IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES FROM THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE (NUS) AND HAS HELPED TO FACILITATE FIELD STUDY PROGRAMMES BOTH AT ISEAS AND NUS IN CAMBODIA, THAILAND, AND INDONESIA.

Visiting Researchers

THIS SECTION PROFILES THE NEW VISITING RESEARCHERS AND THEIR RESEARCH PROJECTS AT THE CENTRE.

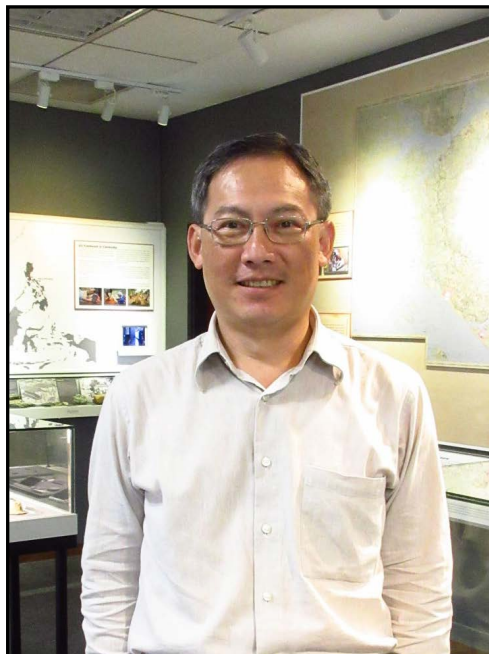


Dr. Iain Sinclair

Dr. Iain Sinclair is a Visiting Fellow at NSC. He studies the history and art of South and Southeast Asia, focusing on primary sources in Sanskrit and other classical languages. His research at NSC explores religious exchanges between the Malay Archipelago and the Indo-Himalayan region during the tenth to fourteenth centuries. His PhD dissertation (Monash University, 2016) researched long-term shifts in the institutions of South Asian Buddhism taking place throughout Nepal's Transitional Period. Dr Sinclair's recent publications include book chapters on the origins of Avalokiteśvara's iconography (2015), early portraits of tantric practitioners (2015), the coronation manual compiled by the Javanese monk Bianhong in China (2016), and the diffusion of Buddhism and Sanskrit throughout Asia up to the present day (in press).

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Dr. Tai Yew Seng

Dr Tai Yew Seng is Visiting Fellow at NSC. He is a ceramic archaeologist and specialises in excavating and handling ceramic from kiln sites, shipwrecks, ruins and tombs, and the Southeast Asian maritime trade with China. His current project is on Chinese navigation charts and texts. He was a Research Fellow at the Earth Observatory of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University (NTU), and was involved in the Aceh Geohazard Project which collected and analysed over 52,000 pieces of ancient ceramics sherds. He has taught courses on Chinese culture and lectured on material culture at the Chinese Department at NTU and the National University of Singapore. He has authored a number of papers and book chapters on ceramic archaeology and maritime trade in English and Chinese.

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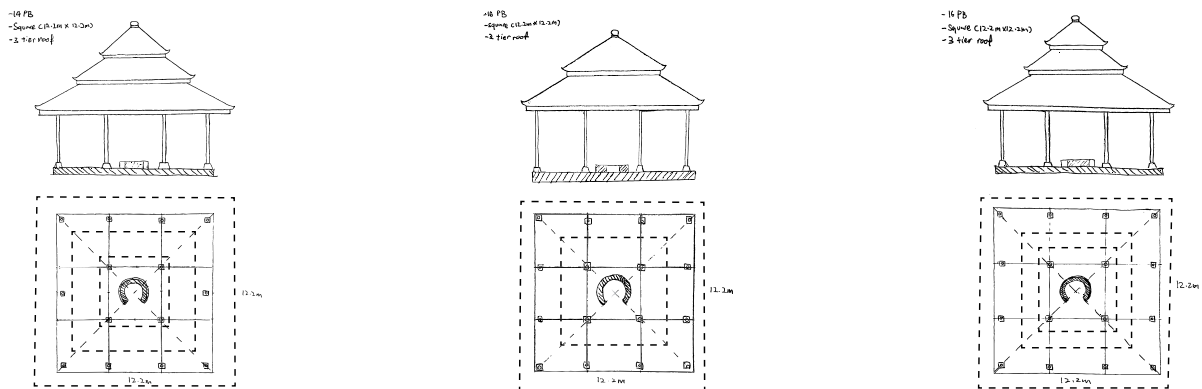
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An Artist's Contribution to Singapore's Architectural History:

Illustrating Kwa Chong Guan's "What Dr. John Crawfurd Saw on the 'Forbidden Hill'"

BY GLENN LIM

BA, LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS



AN ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF CRAWFURD'S DESCRIPTION OF THE STRUCTURE ON THE "FORBIDDEN HILL." (CREDIT: GLENN LIM)

I was given the rare opportunity between May 2018 and September 2018 to gain some training in research at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute. My initial goal before meeting my mentor at ISEAS, Dr H el ene Njoto, was to help contribute to the on-going research on Muara Jambi (4th-13th c. capital of a Hindu-Buddhist polity, Malayu), located in the East Coast of Sumatra, Indonesia.

Muara Jambi had been the focus of my supervisor Gilles Massot's Crossing the Straits project in Lasalle School of Art that ran in 2016-2017, a project for which Dr H el ene Njoto together with Dr Mai Lin Tjoa gave a lecture on Indonesian Architecture History. This art project concluded in a Singapore-Indonesia group exhibition during which Dr Imran bin Tajudeen, an Assistant professor in Architecture from the NUS' Department of Engineering, gave an inspiring presentation on Muara Jambi's history in the Malay World, pointing at the gaps in the region's historiography. Dr Tajudeen's presentation sparked my interest and I asked Gilles if there was a way by which I could contribute to the current research on the region's history.

Upon defining my deliverables with Dr Njoto, she suggested I could contribute creating artist renderings to a mysterious construction built in Singapore in the early Modern period that seemed to belong to a Malay-Javanese architectural type, probably comparable to the architecture found in Muara Jambi. She suggested me

to produce a series of drawings to illustrate an article-in-progress by Singapore historian Mr Kwa Chong Guan (see article pp. 14-15 in this NSC Highlights issue). Mr Kwa's article addresses this building witnessed by John Crawfurd (1783-1868) on Singapore's Forbidden Hill in 1822 to better make sense of Singapore's past. Crawfurd's description, although incomplete, brings enough evidence, according to Mr Kwa, of a Buddhist type of building in bricks with multi-tiered roofs in wood. Crawfurd describes a 40 feet square terrace with 14 pillar bases on the edges made of sandstone with a hollow 'circular enclosure' in the middle of the terrace. These were features, according to Mr Kwa and Dr Njoto that closely resembled structures found in the Malay Peninsula (Peacock 1974) as well as North Sumatra and Central and East Java from the 8-9th to the 14-15th centuries (Galestin 1936), which in some cases had central pillars in the middle supporting one or two tiered roofs.

Along with this process, I had the privilege of consulting Dr Imran bin Tajudeen, who guided me on the accuracy of my draft illustrations. After several discussions, it was decided that I should stick as close possible to Crawfurd's description. I created six options; four options with 14 pillar bases, with one to three-tiered roofs.

My initial intention through this internship was to experiment on a suggestion by Prof. Dr. Mundardjito reported

to me by Gilles: To research on Muara Jambi's archaeological past "through a multidisciplinary approach to unfold the hidden knowledge" (Mundardjito, "Seminar International Jambi Heritage", 28 November 2010). As I feel it, the role of an artist in the setting of an academic research is to provide an opportunity to visualise material culture from a different perspective, to imagine what could have been even when scientific data is incomplete.

GLENN LIM WAS AN INTERN FROM THE LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS. HE WOULD LIKE TO THANK H EL ENE NJOTO AND GILLES MASSOT, WHO PROVIDED COMMENTS AND PROOFREADING HELP FOR THIS ARTICLE.

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“Banks, Raffles and the Poison Tree of Java: Botanical Exchange in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries” by Dr. Sarah Tiffin

In the late 18th century, a sensational account of the upas or poison tree of Java was published in the *London Magazine* which captured British imaginations with its exaggerated depiction of Java’s natural and cultural landscapes. This presentation looks at late 18th and early 19th century botanical investigations of the upas carried out in the wake of the *London Magazine* article. In particular, it examines the roles played by Sir Joseph Banks and Sir Stamford Raffles in encouraging attempts to uncover the true nature of the tree. It places these investigations within the context of the global botanical network established by Banks which oversaw the circulation of information, seeds, specimens and plants of scientific and economic interest, and suggests that Raffles’s participation in the network was more nuanced than the mere sharing of new information on unusual or useful plants.

Date: 11 December 2018, 10:00-11:30 am

Venue: Seminar Room 2, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute

“What More Can Archaeology Tell Us About Singapore’s Past?” by Prof. John N. Miksic

Part of the “1819 and Before: Singapore’s Pasts” special series of lectures commemorating Singapore’s bicentennial anniversary

This month marks the 35th anniversary of Singapore’s first archaeological excavation. Since then, over half a million artefacts have been recovered. These cover two periods: the Temasek era (14th to 16th century) and the Singapore era (1819-present). The artefacts from these excavations have succeeded in proving that Singapore had a sophisticated multicultural society and complex economy before 1350. There are still important questions about Singapore’s history which further research, particularly laboratory analysis, may be able to answer. This seminar will address important questions over provenance of artefacts; ancient ecology and environment of Singapore; reconstruction of artefacts; statistical analysis of intrasite variation; and comparisons with other sites in the region.

Date: 29 January 2019, 10:00-11:30 am

Venue: Seminar Room 2, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute

“The Mysterious Malay Jong and Other Temasek Shipping” by Dr. Michael Flecker

Part of the “1819 and Before: Singapore’s Pasts” special series of lectures commemorating Singapore’s bicentennial anniversary

Apart from the European square riggers, the eclectic mix of vessels anchored off Kallang Basin during Raffles’ early years would not have differed much from the shipping of five centuries earlier. Chinese junks would have swung alongside Southeast Asian traders in Temasek roads. The Southeast Asians were transitioning from the thousand year old lashed-lug tradition to the fabled jong that would fascinate the Portuguese upon their arrival. There would be a smattering of Arab and Indian dhows, and a myriad of small craft. Drawing on archaeological and historical evidence, we will take a look at the range of ships, their crews, their cargoes, and their legacy.

Date: 15 February 2019, 10:00-11:30 am

Venue: Seminar Room 2, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute

“Workshop on Chinese Ceramics” by Dr. Tai Yew Seng

This special workshop on Chinese ceramics includes two lectures (one which introduces the concept of ceramics, manufacturing procedures and firing techniques at ancient kilns, and another which introduces different types of Chinese ceramics) and a hands-on sherd handling session. The hands-on session will allow participants to handle sherds samples collected from various kiln sites and encourage participation between the speaker and workshop participants. The workshop will pay special attention to the needs of archaeological discoveries in Singapore and show materials with particularly dateable contexts, and compare materials from different periods from the same kiln.

Date: 19 February 2019, 09:00am – 03:05pm

Venue: Seminar Room 1 & 2, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute
By Invitation Only



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