

NSC HIGHLIGHTS

News from the Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre

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*The Overland Trading Route between
the Khmer Empire and the Champa
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*What's in a Border? : The Chiang Mai
World Heritage Initiative*

*Not Just 'Pots': Understanding Social
Complexity through Ceramics in
Prehistoric Mainland Southeast Asia*

EVENTS:

2016 NSC Archaeological Field School

*Circulating the Bay of Bengal,
Miraculously*

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- *2017 NSC Archaeological Field School*
- *Public Lectures*

*Traditional earthenware firing at a potting village in
Kampong Chhnang, Cambodia. Photo taken during a visit
by the NSC Archaeological Field School in November 2016.
(Credit: S. T. Foo)*

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The Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre

The Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre (NSC) at the ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, pursues research on historical interactions among Asian societies and civilisations.

It serves as a forum for the comprehensive study of the ways in which Asian polities and societies have interacted over time through religious, cultural, and economic exchanges, and diasporic networks. The Centre also offers innovative strategies for examining the manifestations of hybridity, convergence and mutual learning in a globalising Asia. It sees the following as its main aims:

1. To develop the 'Nalanda idea' of building for contemporary Asia an appreciation of Asian achievements and mutual learning, as exemplified by the cosmopolitan Buddhist centre of learning in Nalanda, as well as the 'Sriwijaya idea' of Southeast Asia as a place of mediation and linkages among the great civilisations.
2. To encourage and develop skills needed to understand the civilisations of Asia and their interrelationships.
3. To build regional research capacities and infrastructure for the study of the historical interactions among the civilisations and societies of Asia.

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The NSC Archaeological Field School participants enjoyed a site lecture conducted by the National Authority of Preah Vihear at Preah Vihear Temple in November 2016 (Credit: D. Kyle Latinis).

EDITORIAL

While NSC's research addresses historical relationships between Southeast Asian communities, such research also offers a sense of how these relationships might impact the present. It is hoped, then, that one might be able to make policy decisions from what was learned from past mistakes. For example, while some posit that the Khmer Empire was in decline due to severe weather fluctuations and a lack of water management, others believe that it fell due to the lack of political cohesion and the breakout of war. Furthermore, were economic depression or weak domestic economic growth to blame for the decline? The evidence suggests that it was a complex combination of these factors, and better understanding the impact of each factor may help in the contemporary policy-making process.

Aligning neatly with NSC's historical agenda is H el ene Njoto's research on the feline figures in Java. Her work shows that these figures were not only popular motifs as religious guardians in both the early Hindu-Buddhist and later Islamic period, but that they shared broadly similar artistic styles. Her ongoing efforts to track down the source of Sinitic influences over these feline figures has led her to Vietnam and this may reveal previously unknown networks of knowledge exchange between Mainland Southeast Asia and Java.

Elizabeth Moore's article on the Chiang Mai World Heritage initiative, on the other hand, demonstrates NSC's contemporary relevance. Regional heritage is becoming increasingly political as governments discover its economic and political rewards. As such, heritage policy decisions will not only impact the way Southeast Asians see themselves, but also how the rest of the world will see them. These policy discussions, as Moore's article shows, require constructive contribution from experts and knowledge producers.

NSC's workshop entitled "Circulating the Bay of Bengal, Miraculously: Translating Wonder and Travel in Southeast Asia" was held on 7 February 2017. Teren Sevea, in his opening remarks, spoke of the need for more serious scholarship regarding religion-making in Southeast Asia by local as well as diasporic populations. The key observation of the workshop was the remarkable geographic range of some of these beliefs which were localised from their original forms by the diasporic population for modern needs and continue to endure despite developmental pressures.

NSC's collaboration with other regional institutions in the form of the NSC Archaeological Field School has borne several articles in this issue. D. Kyle Latinis summarises the most ambitious field school to date as participants traversed nearly the length of Cambodia to explore its rich history. Tran Ky Phuong's article on overland trading networks and Tse Siang Lim's article on pottery will give readers a taste of what was taught at the Field School. Anne-Di Victorino Berdin and Nainunis Aulia Izza's articles give testimony to what was experienced by the participants.

NSC's dedication to furthering staff development can be seen in Michael Ng's account of the Ceramic Petrography and Archaeological Sciences workshop held in October 2016. There, leading specialists from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, spoke on the latest techniques for finding the sources of products through primary materials and how to understand their properties. By understanding the right tools and techniques that can be used to evaluate certain criterion, NSC staff were able to craft sharper and more relevant research questions.



Facade of Sunan Drajat's mausoleum. East Java, Indonesia. (Credit: H. Njoto)

FEATURE:

Sinitic Trends in Early Islamic Java (15th to 17th century)

By *Hélène Njoto*

Visiting Fellow, Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre

Java's north coast is known to have had cosmopolitan and multi-religious towns where Muslim travellers and traders settled since the early 15th century. While there is scarce evidence of the presence of Muslims and foreigners in the early Islamic period, the accounts of past Muslim ruling figures, revered as holy men (*wali*), have persisted. These accounts have survived thanks to the fairly good conservation of the mausolea of these holy men, many of which are five to six centuries old. These mausolea, considered sacred (*kramat*), are visited every year by thousands of pilgrims from Java and other parts of the Malay world.

These mausolea contain elements of a Sinitic (relating to Chinese culture) trend in early Islamic Java. Historical sources note the presence of 'Chinese' among the Muslims present on Java's north coast in the 15th and 16th centuries. Local Javanese traditions and hagiographies also suggest that some of the most prominent holy men were of Chinese descent. Some are said to have come from Champa, the former Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of present-day coastal Vietnam



Seated feline figure in wood from Sunan Duwur's mausoleum. East Java, Indonesia. (Credit: Mandiri & Art Gallery of South Australia)

(Manguin 2001).

Nevertheless, the 'sinitic' origin of some of these holy men on the Javanese coast remains enigmatic since there is little material evidence

apart from these mausolea remains. The richly decorated wooden panels that enclose these tombs on four sides, delicately sculpted, some in openwork or painted in red, are indeed vaguely reminiscent of a Sinitic culture. However, most motifs and stylisation, such as the lotus leaves in a pond, represented in a naturalistic way, had in fact already appeared during the Hindu-Buddhist period, possibly as the consequence of earlier Sinitic borrowings.

However, the motif of the seated feline figure stands out. These feline figures, sculpted in wood or stone, were found in four religious sanctuaries such as in the mausolea of Sunan Drajat and Sunan Sendang Duwur. In these mausolea, they are represented in-the-round, in a seated hieratic position, bearded, with their maw wide open and their tongues pulled out (in Sunan Drajat). They have volutes motifs on the legs and a necklace or winged-like motif spreading from the scapula backwards. These feline figures suggest that these holy men had developed a taste for decorative features found in China and the Indo-Chinese peninsula of the same period.



Seated feline figure in wood at Sunan Drajat's mausoleum, c. 30 cm x 10 cm, H: 50 cm. East Java, Indonesia. (Credit: H. Njoto)



Seated feline figure (Nghe). Nam Dinh museum, Nam Dinh Province. Late Lê dynasty. L. 25 x H. 80 cm. (Credit: H. Njoto)

Feline figures guarding religious sanctuaries were pervasive in Southeast Asia, especially where Buddhism had spread. Nevertheless, these feline figures of the Hindu-Buddhist period in the region had different stylisations from those found in the 15th-17th century Javanese mausolea. Interestingly feline figures with similar features are found in China and Vietnam, dating from the Ming and Lê Dynasties respectively. While Chinese feline figures—such as the famous stone *xiezhi* figures guarding the “spirit way” of Ming tombs—show a discrepancy in size and material that make the filiation difficult, the Vietnamese figures offer more relevant examples.

Vietnam has preserved an important number of wooden feline figures,

popularly known as ‘Nghe’ (lion-dog). The lion-dog bears more resemblance to the Javanese feline figures than any other in Southeast Asia. They are found in northern Vietnam, in communal-houses and temples of the late Lê dynasty. Although dating from a slightly later period than the Javanese ones, these lion-dogs bear features that were probably developed during the early Lê dynasty (15th - 16th century). Moreover, although difference in stylisation clearly suggests local craftsmanship in both cases, their similar features support the idea of a relation between Java and Vietnam.

Most Javanese and Vietnamese figures, sculpted in wood, were located at the entrance of shrines and their proportions (between 50 cm to 80 cm) were similar. Moreover, the

Javanese and Vietnamese versions exhibit hieratic seated positions with the two front legs straightened, slender bodies, stylised flames on forearms, shoulders transformed into a stylised necklace (or a winged-like motif on Javanese figures), and a relative abstraction and high stylisation of the face. The filiation is also more manifest in two other motifs. The dynamic beard of the Vietnamese figures is expressed in a simpler style (a goatee) in Java. In Vietnamese figures, the tongue often held a sphere (pearl) under the palate. Meanwhile, in Java, the motif was simplified into a long curved tongue reaching the palate, as can be seen in Sunan Drajat's example.

The contemporaneity of the figures from Indo-Chinese peninsula and Java should be further verified by carbon dating. However, the circulation of styles and motifs between both regions is not surprising as trade was known to have been dynamic at that period (Guy 1986). This is attested, for example, by the important number of Vietnamese ceramics found in Java between the 14th and the beginning of the 16th century, and later again in the 17th century (Dupoizat and N. Harkantingsih 2007). The feline figures' exclusive religious context would be evidence of a Sinitic culture among Islamised elites in Java during the early centuries of Islamisation.

This article is from a forthcoming paper on feline figures of Java (15th to 17th centuries). The author is grateful to Dr Do Truong Giang (Institute for Southeast Asian Studies), Ms Nguyen Thu Hoan (National Museum of Vietnamese History), Dr Andrew Hardy (EFEO, Hanoi), and especially to Ms. Thi Hang Vu, from the Vietnam Fine Arts Museum, for their generous help and guidance in Vietnam.

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Seated feline figures. Truc Phuong commune, Truc Ninh district. c. L 8 x H 15 cm, Nam Dinh museum, Nam Dinh Province. Late Lê dynasty. (Credit: H. Njoto)



Seated feline figure. Den Lê (Lê temple), Thanh Hoa, Thanh Hoa province. Restored in 1805. Nghe, wood, c. L 25 x H 80 cm. (Credit: H. Njoto)

The Overland Trading Route between the Khmer Empire and the Champa Kingdoms: New Archaeological Findings from Northeast Cambodia

By Tran Ky Phuong

Researcher, Centre for Cultural Relationship Studies in Mainland Southeast Asia (CRMA)



Figure 1 - Prasat Ta-nang, as viewed from the southeast corner. The temple can be dated in the 8th to 9th century, based on its form, structural technique and design. (Credit: Tran Ky Phuong)

Researchers are constantly uncovering evidence to give us a fuller picture of the past. Recent discoveries, for example, have deepened our understanding of the relationship between the Khmer Empire and the Champa kingdoms.

The reassessment of recent archaeological sites between the Khmer empire and the Champa kingdoms suggests that physical geography and dynamic communities played a big role in determining the type and frequency of contact.

Based on the distribution of architectural sites recently recorded in Attapeu Province (Southern Laos), together with the other archaeological sites found in Steung Treng and Ratanakiri provinces in Northeast Cambodia (École Française d'Extrême-Orient et Ministère de la culture et des beaux-arts 2006; Davis 2001-05; Heng 2016), three major tributaries of the Mekong River—the

Sekong, Sesan and Sre Pok Rivers—were historically important to this particular region since the 8th century or earlier.

These three rivers greatly influenced: (1) resource distribution, extraction, and production; (2) settlement patterns; (3) value chain dynamics; (4) social network developments. Collectively, they not only shape our understanding of contact between the Khmer empire and Champa kingdoms, but also serve as socio-economic models of the time.

These three rivers have their headwaters in the mountain ranges of Vietnam which separate into eastern and western watersheds. The eastern watersheds flow from various passes, carving out short and small, but adequate river valleys and flood plains ultimately draining into coastal areas. These substantially contributed to the formation of the traditional historic Cham homelands, which begin from

northern part of central Vietnam and are found further south.

In terms of the cultural landscape, the region of northeast Cambodia from Steung Treng to the Ratanakiri Provinces and farther to the east, can be connected with the northern Central Highlands of Vietnam. This area consist of wide basalt plateaus that had no major obstructions in the form of overland passes.

Routes through several passes could easily have linked them with the Cham polities along the eastern coasts and a completely different and significant resource zone – particularly coastal strand and maritime environs. Interaction and exchange would have significantly benefited people on both sides of the mountain ranges as well as everyone in between – lowland and upland.

The routes were likely linked through several Muong (settlements)



Figure 2 - The map which presents the possible ancient routes of connection, joining the main ancient political and commercial centers/muong in relation to the ethnic communities in Cambodia, Laos and Central Vietnam who speak Mon-Khmer and Malayo-Polynesian languages. (Credit: Tran Ky Phuong)

built along the royal highways connecting the Khmer Empire and Champa kingdoms. It can be further hypothesised that many minority groups were involved in the interactions between the Austronesian Cham and the Mon-Khmer polities.

Stueng Treng was likely to have been the main centre which connected northeast Cambodia to the Central Highlands of Vietnam via the Sesan River, possibly mediated through Jarai communities – an Austronesian speaking people who worshipped the mysterious King of Fire (Patau Apui) and the King of Water (Patau Ia), to

whom all the former Khmer kings sent ambassadors to offer annual tribute in the early 17th century (Dournes 1977: 9-42; Tranet 1983: 75-107).

Anthropologists previously suggested that these mysterious Jarai kings were the chiefs of village alliances, united for defense and/or long wars related to controlling long-distant permanent trade networks (Nguyen Tu Chi 1996: 453- 55, note: 15).

One example in this east-west trade network that allows us to assert the historical and cultural connection between Stueng Treng to the Central

Highland of Vietnam is a newly found brick temple called Prasat Ta-nang (Yeak Naang) (see Fig. 1), situated in a Jarai ethnic village called Dor Touch/ Dor Pir Village, Northeast Cambodia. Located near a small river named O Tang, about 10km from the Cambodia-Vietnam border, the temple was fully covered by a dense forest and only identified and recorded in 2009.

During a site visit in March 2014, many large timber blocks were observed to be scattered throughout the temple area. This suggests that there was a large commercial centre for the



Figure 3 - Field research team in Attapeu province, Southern Laos in 2010. (Photographed by Thonglith Luongkhote)

exchange of goods in the vicinity of the Prasat Ta-nang temple.

The temple probably served as a religious centre for the traders who prayed and offered donations to the gods. The temple was also a symbol of the power of the local lord who controlled the trade route. Thus far, this monument represents the most vivid evidence yet of an early 8th – 9th centuries east-west network from the lowlands to the uplands of Mainland Southeast Asia.

In terms of architectural elements, the temple itself shows design elements of Pre-Angkorian Khmer temples in combination with many typical architectural features of contemporaneous Cham temples. For example, the three temple-group of Hoa Lai located near Phan Rang-Thap Cham City (formerly the Champa Kingdom of Panduranga) dating from the 8th - 9th centuries.

The conjectural map of the trade routes (see Fig. 2) connects the main ancient political and commercial centres in Mainland Southeast Asia,

namely the royal highway linking the Khmer empire and Champa kingdoms. This map is dynamic and presents a picture of fluid interaction between different cultures and linguistic groups over a long period of time instead of a geography of isolated settlements.

TRAN Ky Phuong was a curator at the Museum of Champa Sculpture in Danang, Vietnam, from 1978 until 1998. His recent works include *Crossing Boundaries – Learning From the Past to Build the Future: An Archaeological Collaboration Between Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam* (2013); a co-edited volume on *The Cham of Vietnam: History, Society and Art* (2011) with Bruce Lockhart; and the *Unique Vestiges of Champa Civilization* (2014 – 3rd edition). Dr. Tran gave several lectures for the 2016 NSC Archaeological Field School.

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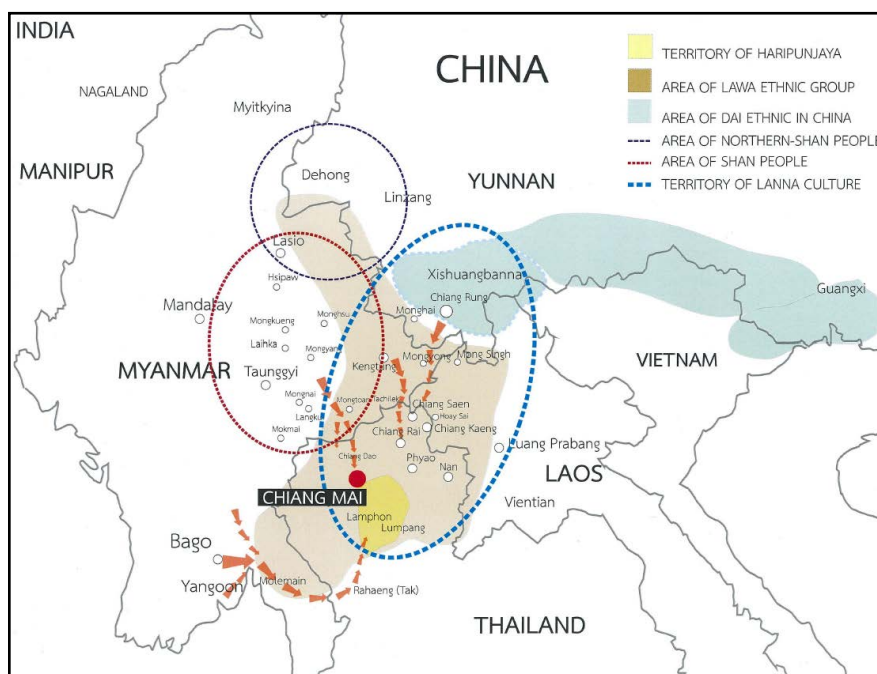


Figure 1: Map showing the Chiang Mai cultural interconnections. (Credit: Chiang Mai World Heritage Initiative)

What's in a Border?: The Chiang Mai World Heritage Initiative

By Elizabeth H. Moore

Visiting Senior Fellow, Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre

Heritage experts from all the globe over met on 4-7 January 2017 at the Chiang Mai Expert Forum to identify the essential characteristics and unique elements of Lanna Historic Cities. Their task was to assist with the preparation of a World Heritage nomination for Chiang Mai historic city.

Chiang Mai city was founded by King Mengrai in 1296 CE after a succession of earlier capitals. One of these was Keng Tung (Chiang Tung) founded in 1287 CE. Keng Tung also became the base of the Mengrai dynasty in the 14th century when the grandson of King Mengrai was based there.

Both cities also have Lawa roots. Over the centuries, Chiang Mai and Keng Tung have at times been separated by political borders as seen today but at other times, such as in the 16th century, been part of the same domain. The year 1558 was the beginning of one of the latter, a 200 year occupation of Chiang Mai by King Bayinnaung of Myanmar's Toungoo Dynasty.

Forum organisers included the Chiang Mai World Heritage Initiative Project—tasked by the Thailand World Heritage Focal Point, within the National Commission for UNESCO—along with the Chiang Mai Provincial Administrative Organisation, Chiang

Mai Provincial Municipality and Chiang Mai University. The forum included academics and policy makers from a range of different organisations.

The transboundary character of the Keng Tung-Chiang Mai nomination is not common. Out of the 1,052 properties inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, only 34 are Transboundary listings. Furthermore, none of the Transboundary sites are in Southeast Asia, with the four within the Asia and the Pacific Region being in Central and East Asia.

Why the absence of such Southeast Asian sites given the many historical connections between cultural regions which are today separated by national borders? Some of the historical and logistical hurdles of a Transboundary nomination between Chiang Mai, Lanna, Thailand and Keng Tung, Shan States, Myanmar were highlighted in the forum.

For example, proposing a Transboundary nomination would celebrate a period of occupation, one not popularly included in the local history of the city. The working timeline of the Chiang Mai Expert Forum illustrates this, with scarce data included within the column titled 'Under Burmese' (1558-1774 CE). While the Myanmar contribution to the distinct culture was raised,

past political divisions and also present logistic disparities made the discussion brief.

If inscribed, Chiang Mai would add a 6th Thai property to the World Heritage List. There are five listings for Thailand, all listed between 1987 and 2005. Three of these are Cultural properties (Historic City of Ayutthaya, Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns, Ban Chiang Archaeological Site) and two Natural properties (Thungyai-Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuaries and Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex).

In contrast, there is just one Myanmar listing on the World Heritage List, the Pyu Ancient Cities inscribed in 2014 as a Cultural property. The apparatus and public knowledge in Thailand is more widespread than in Myanmar, requiring a possible trans-border nomination to tally regulations and norms of different casts. While paused for the moment, the numerous links between the two areas offer fertile ground for future research on shared tangible and intangible heritage.

Prof. Moore presented a paper on "Chiang Mai and Keng Tung (Chiang Tung): History, geography, archaeological models and curating knowledge" at the Chiang Mai Expert Forum.

Not Just 'Pots': Understanding Social Complexity through Ceramics in Prehistoric Mainland Southeast Asia



Excavated display of Neolithic burials and ceramics vessels at the Nong Ratchawat Archaeological Site and Learning Centre, Suphan Buri province, Thailand, June 2016. (Credit: Tse Siang Lim)

By *Tse Siang Lim*

PhD Candidate, School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Australian National University

The number and quality of artefacts found in burial sites (mortuary goods) are good indicators of ancient social complexity. Social complexity was fairly low during the Neolithic age, suggesting a period of comparatively equal wealth distribution (Higham 2014:183-195; O'Reilly 2014b:478). Social complexity rose during the later Bronze Age in prehistoric Mainland Southeast Asia, intensified during the Iron Age, and culminated in the emergence of intricate prehistoric chiefdoms. This emergence coincided with the expansion of Chinese influence into north Vietnam, as well as the development of a maritime

trading network between China and the Mediterranean world via Southeast Asia and India (Higham 2014:196-269; O'Reilly 2014a:485-490).

Understanding the evolution of social complexity is important for the region because the Iron Age's social complexity paved the way for the rise of Funan, the earliest documented Southeast Asian polity (Higham 2014:278-286; Stark 2006a). By the end of the 6th century, a network of walled cities, brick temples, extensive canals, a writing system, monumental architecture and statuary developed in

the Mekong Delta for a few centuries (Higham 2014:278-286; Stark 2006b).

However, little is known about the material processes involved in the social complexity of Southeast Asian prehistory. This is where ceramics play an important role. Ceramics are commonly found and thus are prime candidates for the study of the material processes involved in the socio-political evolution of prehistoric societies.

From every day cooking pots and storage containers to elaborately fashioned ritual and mortuary vessels, ceramics are well-represented in both staple and finance systems during the Iron Age. They were widely produced, distributed, and consumed at all levels of prehistoric society.

For instance, studies have shown that some classes of ceramic artefacts served as a measure and indicator of social distinction in both Southeast Asian prehistory and history. Stylistic, technological, and distribution analyses of decorative earthenware pottery found in the Philippines have suggested that some decorative styles could have been iconographic representations of elite alliances or shared identity in the late prehistoric and protohistoric period (Bacus 2003). As trade routes were gradually established between Southeast Asian and overseas markets over the centuries, Chinese porcelains,



A clay miner and his haul, Phnom Phlang, Kompong Chhnang Province, Cambodia, September 2016. (Credit: Tse Siang Lim)



A potter at work, Ondoung Rossey Village, Kompong Chhnang Province, Cambodia, September 2016. (Credit: Tse Siang Lim)



Reconstructed burial ceramic vessels from the Iron Age site of Phum Sophy (Banteay Meanchey Province), Siem Reap, Cambodia, November 2015. (Credit: Tse Siang Lim)

among other exotic luxury goods, became “key symbols of social status and political power” together with indigenously manufactured prestige goods for the Philippine elite (Junker 1999: 183). Therefore, studying the dynamics involved in the exchange and distribution of different types of ceramic goods is crucial to our understanding of the role material processes play in the development of social complexity.

An important step in the study of archaeological ceramics rests on the identification and understanding of the respective chaîne opératoire (‘operational sequences’) involved in each successive production step where the raw material is transformed into the finished product (Kolb 2011:8-9; Roux 2016:101; Sellet 1993:106). The chaîne opératoire approach sees production steps as non-neutral,



Cambodian sisters Chhoeun Samoem (Left) and Chhoeun Lamoey (Right) assisting in the reconstruction of burial ceramic vessels from the Iron Age site of Phum Sophy (Banteay Meanchey Province), Siem Reap, Cambodia, March 2014. (Credit: Tse Siang Lim)



Excavation of Iron Age burials and ceramic vessels from the site of Prei Khmeng by archaeologists from the “From Paddy to Pura: The Origins of Angkor” research project (www.paddytopura.info), February 2014. (Credit: Tse Siang Lim)

socially-informed actions which reflect how social relations are created and mediated in society (Stark 1998:5, 7).

Hence, the chaîne opératoire approach is more likely to produce a better understanding of ceramic production and typologies, and in turn, a more accurate picture of the archaeological cultures.

Traditional typological approaches towards ceramic classification are usually based on arbitrary sets of parameters which do not necessarily reflect the intended purpose and use by both the potters and consumers respectively (Kolb 2011:7-8; Scarcella 2011:1).

Once one identifies and analyses variation and distribution patterns in the production and consumption of ceramics based on their respective chaîne opératoire, a firm correlation can be made between these patterns and differential social status.

In sum, as one of the most common archaeological artefacts found in the region, ceramics hold secrets to the different layers and rituals of prehistoric societies in Southeast Asia. Ceramics are, after all, not just pots.

Tse Siang Lim is currently working on his doctorate entitled, “Ceramic Variability, Social Complexity and Political Economy in Iron Age Cambodia and Mainland Southeast Asia (c. 500 BC – 500 AD).” His research is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship. This article is an excerpt of a lecture given to the 2016 NSC Archaeological Field School.

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NSC Archaeological Field School members at ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute. (Credit: Ea Darith)

EVENTS:

The 2016 NSC Archaeological Field School

By David Kyle Latinis

Visiting Fellow, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre

The 2016 Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre (NSC) Archaeological Field School successfully concluded with a series of East Asia Summit (EAS) participant presentations delivered at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, on 15 December 2016. The seminar covered a wide variety of topics emanating from: site and museum visits, workshops, on-site lectures, discussions with subject matter experts, ethnographic interviews, archaeological excavations, and artefact analysis. The Field School was conducted from 20 November to 10 December 2016 in Cambodia and 10 to 15 December 2016 in Singapore. Participants formed small teams, designed their own projects, conducted fieldwork and analysis, and presented preliminary results.

This year's EAS country representation included 16 participants from Australia, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. This is the 4th Field School since its inception in 2011. Enhancing cross cultural competencies and strengthening international partnerships through goal-oriented

research projects and skills training are key goals.

Research design, international teamwork, and technical skills training are major objectives of the Field School. The central theme covers the development of ancient civilisations, urbanisation, and pan-Asian interaction over the last 2000 years. Specifically, the Funan, Chenla and Angkorian civilisations from the 1st through 14th centuries in ancient Cambodia are the main focus.

Archaeological excavations and training were conducted at the enigmatic 10th century Angkorian capital city of Koh Ker under the reign of Jayavarman IV – previously considered a usurper king. Participants and staff spent 10 days living in the forest conducting excavations of the royal palace grounds, ancient water control features, and early habitation sites. The three complementary excavation projects were designed by Cambodian site and operations managers prior to the Field Schools in 2015 and 2016 in order to build a better understanding of Koh Ker settlement and ecology.

Koh Ker is defined by numerous monumental achievements such as Prasat Thom – the 36m seven-tiered sandstone pyramid dedicated to Shiva. Other landscape features include the largest premodern dam in the region and enormous unique architectural features (e.g., large doorways, doorjambes, lintels, pedestals, ornaments, etc.). Almost all of these except a few late Angkorian period structures are exclusively placed in the early 10th century according to epigraphic and art historical evidence.

Although the ancient city is largely defined by Jayavarman IV's construction boom era in the first half of the 10th century, archaeological evidence which include radiocarbon dates and pottery style analysis indicate that significant habitation beginning as early as the 7th century and continuing to the colonial period – well over 1000 years of occupation and activity – contrasting sharply with Koh Ker's common narrative of a "short-lived city" which was rapidly carved out of the remote jungles only to be abandoned and swallowed just



Exploring hidden corridors at Leper King Terrace, Angkor Thom. (Credit: D. Kyle Latinis)



Drawing class at Prasat Damrei led by Aaron Kao (NSC). (Credit: D. Kyle Latinis).



Conservation and restoration workshop with APSARA National Authority at 9th century Bakong Temple - using traditional bricks, mortar, sandstone, and construction technology. (Credit: D. Kyle Latinis).



Mapping exercise with Michael Ng and Aaron Kao (NSC) at Prasat Andong Kuk. (Credit: D. Kyle Latinis).

as quickly by time and forest after the reign of Jayavarman IV. The new archaeological discoveries including the radiocarbon dates are very exciting and represent a significant change in understanding Koh Ker. Results have important implications for research on Angkorian civilisation.

This year's highlight was the confirmation of the royal palace grounds which included the discovery of multiple rooms, brick paved floors, drainage features, and an emerging complex design of the palace structures. Of particular importance, a large semi-subterranean oven (1.5m in diameter) in a nearby habitation site yielded an abundance of cooking pots, kitchen features, post holes for wooden structures, numerous animal bones from large wild mammals

(Gaur and Munjak, for example), non-local fish, as well as a cornucopia of other faunal remains. These occur in multiple ash lenses suggesting repetitive use for long durations. This is the first kitchen of its kind excavated in Cambodia, allowing researchers to understand important details of past diet, ecology, and perhaps conspicuous consumption through feasting.

Other highlights included site visits to Angkor, Preah Vihear, Sambor Prei Kuk, Phnom Chisor and Angkor Borei. One of the most highly rated training activities included a special ethnoarchaeology and ethnography session at the traditional potting villages in Kampong Chhnang.

We are very proud of all the

participants for rising to the occasion by continually helping each other and making the Field School experience a lifetime memory, an amazing learning opportunity, and an enduring network of friendships and professional partnerships. It was a rewarding experience for all and we are looking forward to the 2017 campaign coming soon.

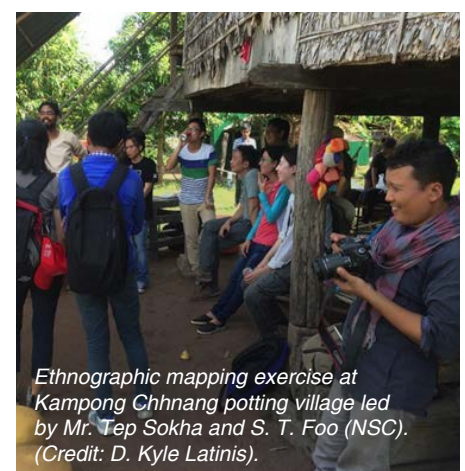
Applications for the 2017 NSC Archaeological Field School are due on 10 March 2017. The upcoming 2017 season, to be held on 28 July to 16 August, will feature research at Tonle Snguot, a 12th/13th century hospital/chapel complex associated with Jayavarman VII.

Further Information

<https://www.iseas.edu.sg/centres/nalanda-sriwijaya-centre/archaeology-unit/the-nsc-archaeological-field-school>

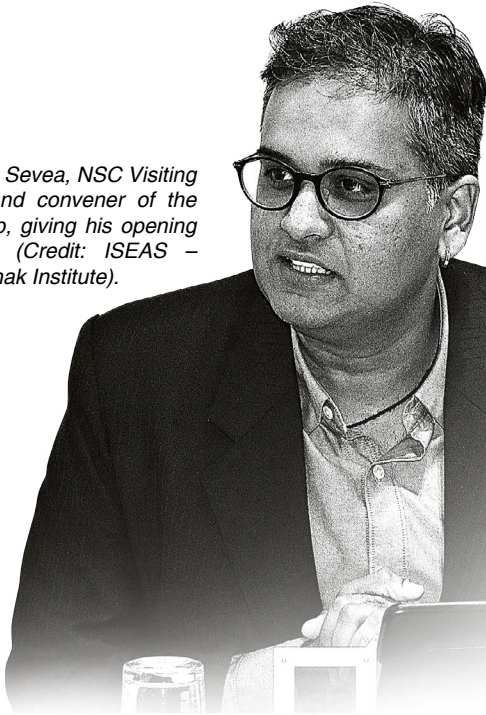


Practicing profile drawings at the KK2 Habitation/Household Site. (Credit: D. Kyle Latinis)



Ethnographic mapping exercise at Kampong Chhnang potting village led by Mr. Tep Sokha and S. T. Foo (NSC). (Credit: D. Kyle Latinis).

Dr Teren Sevea, NSC Visiting Fellow and convener of the workshop, giving his opening remarks. (Credit: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute).



Participants at the workshop. (Credit: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute).

Workshop on Circulating the Bay of Bengal, *Miraculously*: Translating Wonder and Travel in Southeast Asia

By Veena Nair

Research Officer, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute

The 7 February 2017 NSC Workshop convened by Dr. Teren Sevea attracted over 50 participants from government ministries, foreign embassies, academia, private sector firms, museums, and the broader public. As one of the few workshops to undertake a comprehensive investigation of records and oral histories of religion and spirituality in Southeast Asia, it sought to explore the historical context and discourses on miracles, wonder, travel and circulation from medieval, early modern and modern Southeast Asia. It aimed to collect the histories of religious enchantment, of mobile saints, missionaries, mediums, gods, spirits and other travellers.

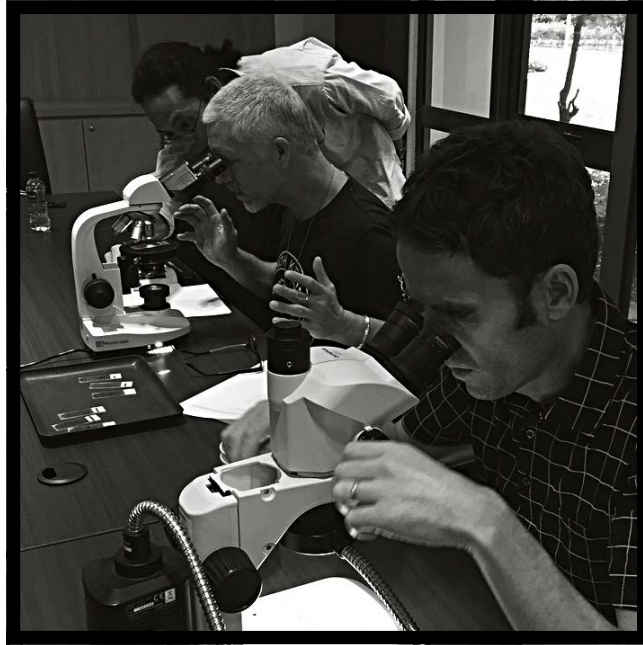
The workshop comprised of three panels. In the first panel, Prof. Barbara Andaya argued that there was a deeply-entrenched belief in the existence of underwater kingdoms and humanoid beings; a belief that was transported from Europe. The special relationship between

seafarers and large sea creatures provided the framework for the idea of religious figures who came to the rescue of mariners in distress, protected shipping, and carried their teachings to distant parts of the world. Prof. Vineeta Sinha used the history of the Malayan Railways to narrate the interlocking accounts of Indian, Hindu labour arrivals into Malaya and the forms of Hindu presence on the island. She studied in particular sacred sites dedicated to Muneeswaran, a deity from rural Tamil Nadu, which were erected along the railway tracks as they were constructed. Muneeswaran has since been described as the railway god and is still worshipped today.

For the second panel, Dr. Ines Zupanov analysed texts from the 16th to the 18th centuries written by Europeans with regards to the Kingdom of Aceh in Sumatra to show how enchantment in a religious sense and wonder in a secular register mediated between the fear and horror

of individual human experiences. It also showed the political and commercial calculations of European actors who were scrambling to get riches from Southeast Asia. Dr. Teren Sevea spoke about ascetics whose miraculous travels were central to the development of cults in Batavia, Rangoon and Singapore and he explored the roving nature and technological flexibility of *faqirs*, miracles, religious articles, and spirits that traversed the Bay of Bengal.

For the final panel, Assoc Prof. Sumit Mandal spoke about stories detailing the biographical details, miraculous acts and exceptional piety associated with *keramat* or gravesite shrines of notable Muslims. This allowed him to chart the sacred geography of the Malay World. Prof. Kenneth Dean focused on the unique characteristics of the Chinese religious sphere in Singapore by examining the role of spirit mediums as agents of ritual change in a fragmented syncretic ritual arena.



Dr. Patrick Quinn giving a demonstration on ceramic petrography. (Credit: Lim Chen Sian)



Prof. Marcos Martinon-Torres and Dr. Patrick Quinn visiting the Thow Kwang pottery kiln in Singapore. (Credit: Lim Chen Sian)

Archaeology Workshop: Ceramic Petrography & Archaeological Sciences

By Michael Ng

Research Officer, NSC

In October 2016, as part of the training and personnel development at NSC, the Archaeology Unit organised an intensive workshop on archaeological science and ceramic petrography for staff members. Over two days on 14 and 17 October, NSC AU was privileged to host two of United Kingdom's leading specialists from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London (UCL), Prof. Marcos Martinon-Torres and Dr. Patrick Quinn to conduct the workshop.

Dr. Quinn provided a concise introduction and practicum on ceramics petrography where participants had the opportunity to work with samples of ceramics under a petrographic light microscope. Meanwhile Prof. Martinon-Torres elaborated on the arsenal of archaeological scientific techniques available, demystifying the complex barrage of methods and acronyms (EDXRF, XRD, FTIR, PIXE, ICP-OES, ICP-MS, SEM, etc.)* confronting archaeologists today. The workshop also introduced the latest portable Raman Spectroscopy

instrument by chemical engineering firm Metrohm.

So, what is archaeological science and ceramic petrography? How is it useful to the understanding of the past? In a nutshell, archaeologists seek various ways to better analyse the artefacts and the material culture they excavate. Archaeological science has many "tools" that archaeologists utilise to better interpret these artefacts by studying the geochemical, microstructure, and elemental composition of artefacts to determine their provenance, technology of production, use, durability, and even contents (e.g. pottery).

Ceramic petrography, in particular, is an application which studies the minerals of the clay. Through thin-section microscopy, the minerals within the ceramic exhibit different colours and structures. By comparing the visible colours and structures of the various rocks and minerals found in the ceramics with a geologic

and geographic rocks and minerals database, it is possible to postulate the provenance of the ceramic and understand aspects of technology and production techniques.

The workshop was an enlightening experience for the participants. It was impressive how much knowledge was condensed in such a brief, impactful workshop. According to Lim Chen Sian (NSC Associate Fellow), the organiser of the workshop, "aside from developing our staffs' capacities and the inclusion of laboratory science techniques to our future research projects, we are looking to expand the collaboration for future training programmes and field research with our specialist colleagues from the Institute of Archaeology UCL."

* Energy Dispersive X-ray Fluorescence; X-Ray Diffraction; Fourier Transform InfraRed Spectrometry, Particle Induced X-Ray Emission; Inductively Coupled Plasma-Optical Emission Spectrometry; Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometer; Scanning Electron Microscope.

CORRESPONDENCE:

2016 NSC Archaeological Field School Highlights: The Kampong Chhnang Experience

By Anne-Di Victorino Berdin

Graduate Student, Archaeological Studies Programme,
University of the Philippines, Diliman



The 2016 NSC Archaeological Field School Participants observed how the clay pots were made. (Credit: Saw Chaw Yeh)



The paddles. (Credit: A. Berdin)

The 2016 Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre (NSC) Archaeological Field School's objectives were to expose the participants to archaeology as a multidisciplinary subject. This was done by introducing participants to various methods in analysing material culture. I joined the Field School mainly because of this reason, as well as to build networks and partnerships in the region.

Personally, one of the highlights of Field School was our visit to Kampong Chhnang Province. Located 91km from Phnom Penh, Kampong Chhnang means "Port of Pottery". Its clay pottery production is well-known in Cambodia. During our short visit in Andoung Rusey Village, we learned firsthand how these clay pots were created through participant-observation and interviews. This method of obtaining data in archaeology is called "Ethnoarchaeology".

Ethnoarchaeology is an ethnographic approach in which contemporary human activities are analysed to identify behavioural patterns in the archaeological record (Gould 1989).

Our group witnessed how the local potters create these earthenwares which are common utilitarian products in Cambodian households (e.g. cooking pots and water jars). They showed us the materials they used in producing the pots and also demonstrated how the pots were made in a circular motion by walking around the pot and shaping the wet clay with a paddle, rather than spinning it on a wheel.

Through the help of our local interpreters, we were able to interview the local potters. We learned that the art of clay pottery in Kampong Chhnang is female-dominated. For several generations, mothers passed the art of pottery production to their

daughters. Nowadays, daughters would much rather seek opportunities in the city than learn how to produce clay pots in the village.

Visiting the Kampong Chhnang female potters made me realise that age-old traditions that benefit a society should be preserved. It is therefore the role of archaeology to connect the ties that bind ancient and modern pottery production in Cambodia through more research and by ensuring that the clay pottery production of Kampong Chhnang will not be lost forever.

After all, what is the use of studying the material culture of the past if we can't make sense of it in our present world?

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Koh Ker Villagers playing music and wearing Khmer traditional clothes for women during a blessing ceremony, Prasat Thom, Koh Ker, Cambodia. (Credit: Nainunis Aulia Izza)



Khmer traditional house, Kampong Chhnang, Cambodia. (Credit: Nainunis Aulia Izza)



Khmer traditional house interior, Kampong Chhnang, Cambodia. (Credit: Nainunis Aulia Izza)

Learning Archaeology, Knowing Southeast Asia

By Nainunis Aulia Izza

**Graduate Student, Department of
Archaeology, Universitas Indonesia**

I had the amazing opportunity to be a participant in the 2016 NSC Archaeological Field School. The Field School gave me a chance to visit Cambodia, a country I had never visited before.

The Field School not only taught us archaeological knowledge and practical skills but it also provided many invaluable cultural experiences. For example, the programme included living in the jungle for 10 days—a unique opportunity to get to know the environment and fellow participants extremely well. I was also able to interact with local communities, witness Khmer traditions, and learn about traditional Khmer clothes, houses, art, and writing. Furthermore, my knowledge about Funan, Chenla, Angkor, and Ancient Southeast Asia has significantly increased.

In this Field School, I found value in being able to see Southeast Asia as an interactive region with a history of connectivity even with vast cultural differences. When I look at traditional houses, clothes, the faces of the local

people and their heritage: it gives me the impression that Southeast Asia's past and present are dynamic, culturally rich, connected, and prosperous, with a history of remarkable kingdoms.

Although the Field School has concluded it has been easy to stay in contact with fellow participants via our Facebook group. This is very useful to maintain our friendships through the sharing our thoughts and memories. This post-Field School sharing has taught me to see culture from different perspectives.

Overall, this was a great opportunity to learn archaeology and “know” Southeast Asia. I hope that the Field School will continue to thoroughly investigate relationships between the ancient kingdoms of Southeast Asia. This knowledge will benefit present and future communities.

I look forward to doing further research on Cambodia and Southeast Asia. Finally, as Dr. Kyle Latinis and Dr. Ea Darith says, “Stay A+ and *beep beep beep!*”

RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

NSC Working Paper Series

The Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre Working Paper Series was established for the swift publication and wide dissemination of research conducted or presented within the Centre, and of studies engaging fields of enquiry of relevance to the Centre.

NSC Working Paper No. 24

Musical Terms in Malay Classical Literature: The Early Period (14th-17th Century)

Author: Arsenio Nicholas

Abstract: From the late 14th century, Malay literati made use of musical references and imageries to illustrate the music of their time. These attestations of musical terms may be interpreted as either having been known for a period of time in musical circle or in elite courtly/literary culture, or as having been newly introduced into the literary language. This study highlights five linguistic sources of these musical terms: 1) Austronesian; 2) Indic- or Sanskrit-derived, appearing later than in Old Javanese, Old Balinese, Khmer and Cham; 3) Middle-Eastern; 4) Javanese (as a product of a long-term contact between Majapahit, Samudra-Pasai and Melaka); and 5) Austroasiatic (via the Orang Asli of the Malay Peninsula). Here I present and discuss various lists of musical terms mined from a pool of Classical Malay and Javanese sources, as well as European and Malay-Indonesian dictionaries. The lists are intended to provide new materials for the study of the musical history of the Malays and, in general, of Southeast Asia.

The complete set of the NSC Working Papers can be accessed via:
<https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/nsc-working-papers>



NSC AU Archaeology Report Series

The Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre Archaeology Unit (NSC AU) Archaeology Report Series was established to publish and disseminate archaeological and related research conducted or presented within the Centre. This also includes research conducted in partnership with the Centre as well as outside submissions from fields of enquiry relevant to the Centre's goals.

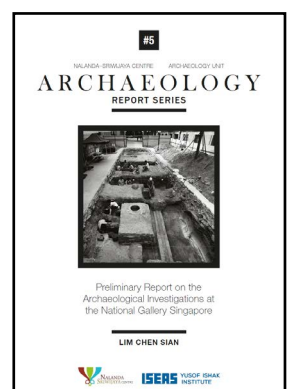
NSC AU Archaeology Report No. 5

Preliminary Report on the Archaeological Investigations at the National Gallery Singapore

Author: Lim Chen Sian

Abstract: The former Supreme Court and Municipal Building (City Hall) underwent extensive redevelopment and was remodeled as a new art museum dedicated to Southeast Asian art. An archaeological evaluation conducted in December 2009 revealed pockets of pre-colonial deposits, which led to a month-long large-scale rescue excavation in November 2010. While the rescue excavation only covered a small part of the construction impact zone, about 375 kg of materials were successfully recovered. This preliminary site report details the excavation sequences conducted at the site.

The complete set of the NSC AU Archaeological Report Series can be accessed via:
<https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/nsc-archaeological-reports>



NEW STAFF AT NSC

Nicholas CHAN (Research Officer)

Nicholas Chan, research officer at the Centre, received his Masters Degree in Asian Studies from the S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University. He manages NSC's website and social media platforms and assists with the editing of NSC publications.



FONG Sok Eng (Research Officer)

Sok Eng obtained her Bachelor Degree with Honours in Social Sciences from National University of Singapore. Her primary research interests are in economics and history.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

NSC Events

2017 NSC Archaeological Field School

We are pleased to announce that the 2017 NSC Archaeological Field School will take place in Cambodia and Singapore between 28 Jul – 16 Aug 2017.

The Field School includes numerous site visits and lectures that span almost 2,000 years of ancient civilisation. The core experiences focus on the ancient Angkorian polity. Participants will conduct intensive archaeological, heritage management, and cultural research at Tonle Snguot, a 13th century hospital/chapel complex associated with Jayavarman VII. Efforts will build upon previous studies of similar sites and general themes of urbanism, settlement, and specialised site activities, and industries (the medical industry in this case).

The Tonle Snguot site is located near the northern gate at the famed Angkor Thom complex, Siem Reap, Cambodia. The Field School maintains a unique full-spectrum approach designed to introduce participants to research design, methodology, field skills, excavation, analysis and presentation. Dr. D. Kyle Latinis (Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute) and Dr. Ea Darith (APSARA National Authority) will lead the project and fieldwork.

Applications are now open and due on 10 March 2017 (+8GMT), please see the following website for further information: <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/centres/nalanda-sriwijaya-centre/archaeology-unit/the-nsc-archaeological-field-school>

External Events

Architecture and Power: Masonry Construction in Java from late 16th to early 19th century

Speaker: Dr H el ene Njoto

Time: 23 March 2017 4:30-6:00pm

Location: HSS Conference Room 05-57, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Info: <http://www.hss.ntu.edu.sg/Programmes/history/Pages/Seminars.aspx>

Association for Asian Studies Conference

Dates: 16-19 March 2017

Location: Toronto, Canada

Info: <http://www.asian-studies.org/AASAnnualConference>

Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions - Theme: "Appearance and Reality"

Dates: 7-9 April 2017

Location: University of Oxford

Info: <https://spaldingsymposium.org/>

Conference: Labour, Working Animals, and the Environment in the Indian Ocean World

Dates: 4-5 May 2017

Location: Indian Ocean World Centre (IOWC), McGill University, Montr al, Canada

Info: <http://indianoceanworldcentre.com/sites/default/files/Labour%2C%20Working%20Animals%2C%20and%20Environment%20-%20CfP.pdf>



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