

09

NSC

Features

- Buddhism on the Shan Plateau: Bawrithat and Intein
- The Indonesian Art Market: Is it out of control?
- Only Time Will Tell: The Precarity of Yangon's Heritage Coalition in its Vernacular City
- The Mystery of the Pasir Panjang Pillbox

Upcoming Events

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HIGHLIGHTS



IMAGE:
DETAIL OF FORGED HENDRA GUNAWAN
PAINTING (COURTESY OF OWNER)

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ISEAS – YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE

30 HENG MUI KENG TERRACE

SINGAPORE 119614

TEL: (65) 6778 0955

FAX: (65) 6778 1735

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Editorial



PRIME MINISTER LEE HSIEN LOONG VISITING THE NSC ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT EXHIBITION AT THE ISEAS 50TH ANNIVERSARY LECTURE, ORCHARD HOTEL SINGAPORE, 13 MARCH 2018. (CREDIT: ISEAS – YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE)

Mark Heng's article, "Only Time Will Tell: The Precarity of Yangon's Heritage Coalition in its Vernacular City," depicts a complex tale of shared but competing interests regarding Yangon's colonial buildings, where informal dwellers and a mixture of shops, residences, and offices have come to reside in an organic manner. Heng's tale is but one of many in Southeast Asia where various heritage groups that might have competing interests campaign together underneath the overall umbrella of "heritage." While Heng's analysis of the various group dynamics are useful and case-study specific, what one should take away from the article is how these discussions demarcate those who privilege the past over the present, and those who privilege the present over the past, and the implications therein.

Chan Wai Peng's "The Mystery of the Pasir Panjang Pillbox" refers to a World War II pillbox in Singapore which was documented by the NSC Archaeology Unit (AU) after road developments in early 2017. Chan provides a preliminary analysis of the structure, which is understudied, based on the topography and structure, and speculates on its possible use during the war. The project is a part of a larger continued effort by members of the NSC AU to study military archaeology in Singapore.

Finally, continuing on from the previous issue's centrefold article on "Ancient Southeast Asian Polities: A Primer," this issue's centrefold focuses on tracing the importance of salt, an extremely important commodity both in the past and present, and how it contributed to the centralisation of power and growth of empires.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue and will look forward to our forthcoming issues.

The articles in this issue offer varying perspectives on the careful interplay between the past and present – how the present affects the research and perceptions of the past, and how the perceptions of that past might in turn affect the present.

The feature by Elizabeth Moore on "Buddhism on the Shan Plateau: Bawrihat and Intein" showcases how researchers are now looking into ancient Buddhist landscapes outside of the Ayeryawaddy Basin and the importance of doing so. Further studies on the particularities of these Buddhist landscapes will likely pave the way to a greater understanding of the relationship between ancient settlements in these regions, and how they might have interacted with each other in the past.

Adrian Vickers' "The Indonesian Art Market: Is it out of control?" on the other hand, is significant in that it explains how the art market affects various stakeholders—from collectors to artists. The valuation of specific art styles over others, and the rarity of pieces by certain famous artists means that the art historical research—the ability to discern forgeries from genuine pieces—would be quite important to the scene moving forward.

Buddhism on the Shan Plateau: Bawrithat and Intein

BY ELIZABETH E. MOORE
NSC VISITING SENIOR FELLOW

The introduction of Buddhism to Myanmar has been primarily focused on the central Ayeyarwaddy (Irrawaddy) River basin and interchange with South Asia. The 2014 inscription of the Pyu Ancient Cities to the UNESCO World Heritage List reinforced this model, with the walled sites of Halin, Beikthano and Sri Ksetra all located on or near the Ayeyarwaddy. Other walled sites such as Pinle (Maingmaw) and Waddi have continued to be explored by the Department of Archaeology and National Museum, Ministry of Religious and Cultural Affairs (MORAC) but are rarely included in national narratives. Responding to the gap in documenting the distribution of early Buddhist sites in the country as a whole, the Department of Archaeology and National Museum increased explorations outside the central zone. One such area is the Southern Shan State Branch Taunggyi office, where new information has come from their survey and excavation of the large walled site of Bawrithat (Kausambi, Pawrithet), north of Nyaung Shwe Township just west of Taunggyi on the western part of the Shan Plateau.

The Bawrithat wall (2.4 x 1.8 km) encloses a palace-citadel (20.729197°N, 96.919319°) where a number of surface finds have been made, with the actively venerated Bawrithat pagoda just outside the southern wall traditionally dated to the first millennium CE. Excavation in 2015 of eight 5 m² grids (PRT-1) of an overgrown section of a 10-meter long western gate of the city wall, yielded a brick wall over 3m in height at circa 1m below surface level. Artefacts included finger-marked and moulded bricks typical of first millennium CE Pyu sites in the central basin, stamped and painted pottery and iron nails up to 12 cm in length.

Many other significant finds have been made outside the wall. The densest clustering of ancient mounds is on the west around the Hpaya Ni ('red temple') pagoda (see Figures 1a, 1b, 1c). During recent renovation of Hpaya Ni, a small image of the Buddha (*circa* 7.6 cm high) in *bhadrasana* with legs pendant was recovered, comparable to a gold image

“The Shan, Chin and Kachin States and the Rakhine and Tanintharyi Regions were not peripheral to the emergence and flowering of Buddhism within the present day national borders of Myanmar.”

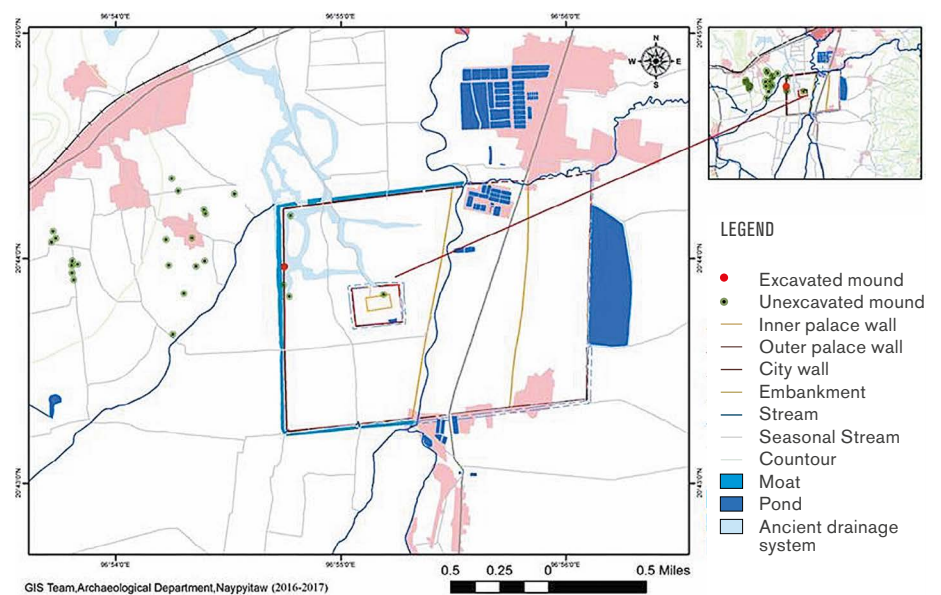


FIG. 1: PALACE-CITADEL MAP OF BAWRITHAT (PAWRITHET) (CREDIT: DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND NATIONAL MUSEUM, MYANMAR 2015)

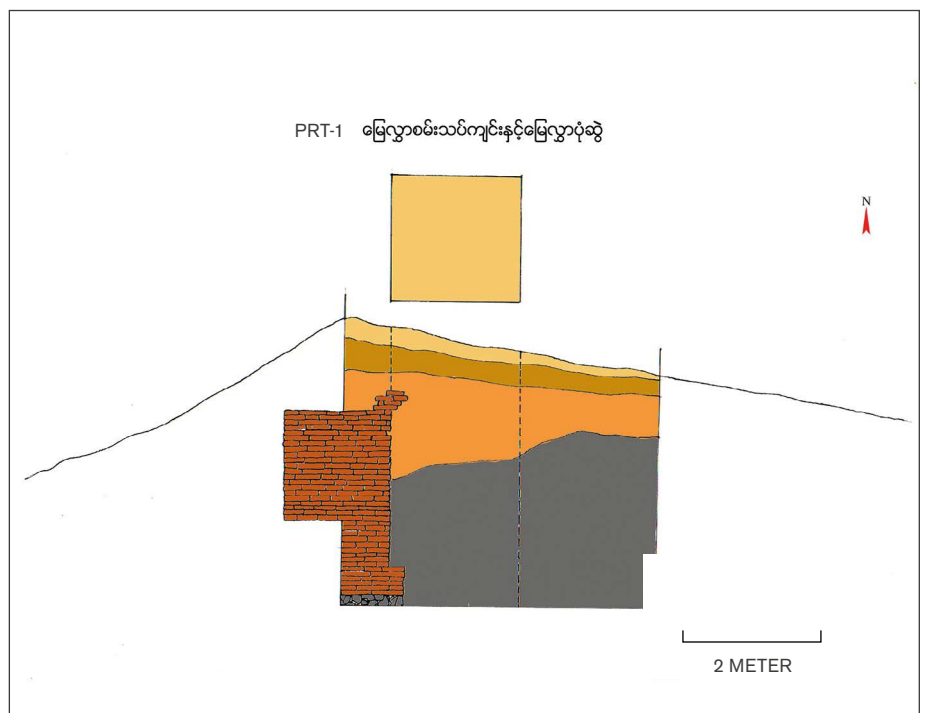


FIG. 1A: PROFILE (CREDIT: DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND NATIONAL MUSEUM, MYANMAR 2015)

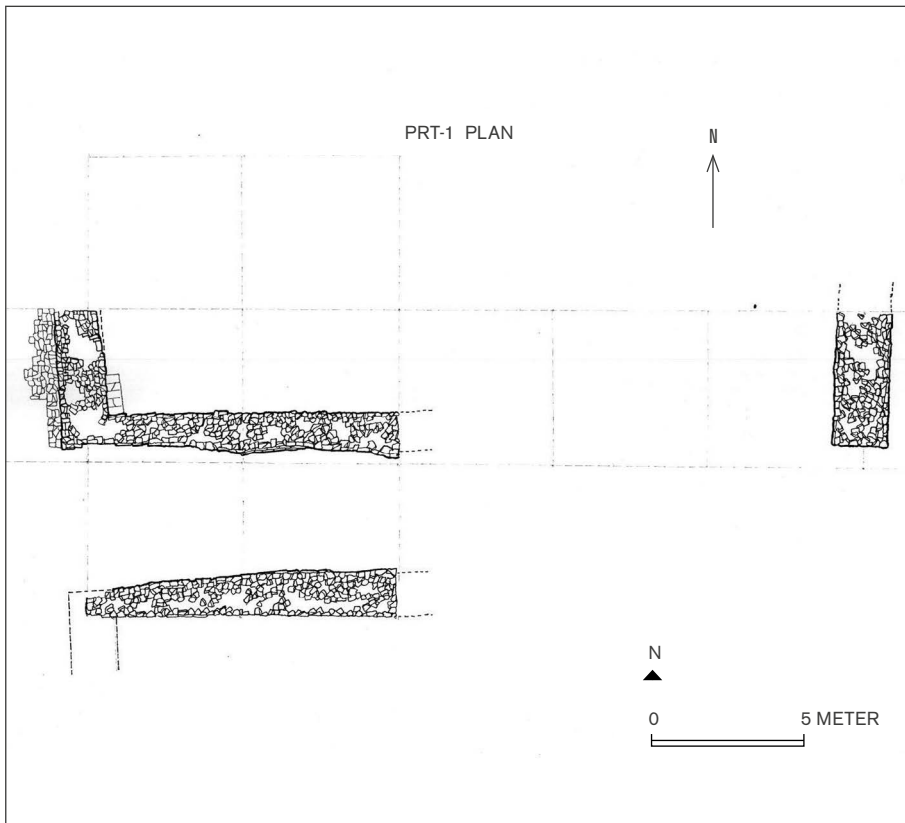


FIG. 1B: PLAN (CREDIT: DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND NATIONAL MUSEUM, MYANMAR 2015)

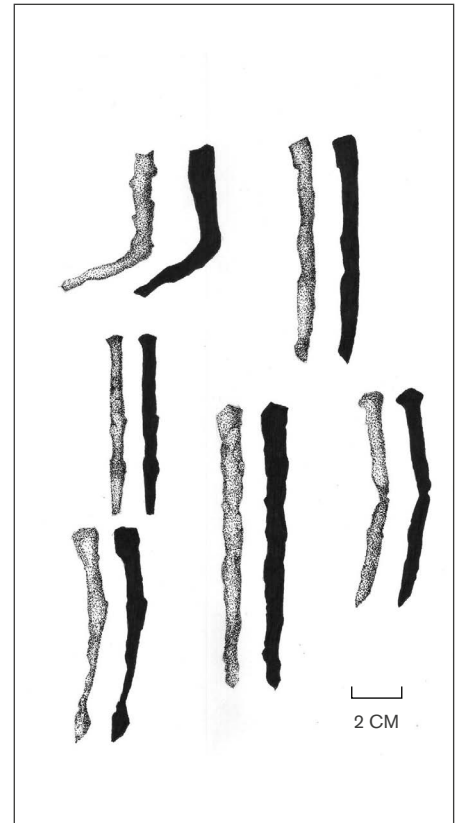


FIG. 1C: IRON (CREDIT: DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND NATIONAL MUSEUM, MYANMAR 2015)

(4 cm) from Maingmaw (Pinle) and a bronze image (12.5 cm) excavated at the Pyu site of Beikthano in 2003. All three have the right hand in *vitarkamudra* with the left hand on the knee, and can be stylistically dated to *circa* the 6th to 7th century CE. The Hpaya Ni image is probably a combination of metals, principally silver, with the simple workmanship suggesting local production (Figure 2). This position of the image of the Buddha is rarely seen in first millennium CE sculptures from Myanmar apart from terracotta votive tablets such as those excavated at Thaton in Lower Myanmar. The closest comparisons come from Vietnam and China.

Other first millennium artefacts include silver coins decorated with auspicious designs such as a rising sun motif (circa 2cm diameter) seen at Pinle (Maingmaw), the nearest Pyu city to Bawrithat. A further group of finds from Bawrithat are terracotta plaques (circa 8-14 cm long by 8-10 cm wide) but unlike the coins. One depicts a lion in profile with a finely detailed upturned tail and flowing mane. The workmanship is sharp and while the plaque is now broken, the posture is majestic. A second shows an oversized profile of a deer with antlers facing a standing figure within a border frame of circles and lozenges. While more eroded than the lion plaque, the artistry is likewise

considered and well proportioned. Additional plaques depict an elephant, an ogre (*bilu*) and other anthropomorphic and mythical creatures. They are not like Pyu examples nor are they comparable to first millennium CE terracotta plaques from Kyuntu near Bago (Pegu) or later plaques from Bagan (Fig. 3 and 4).

Whatever domestic or external connection is eventually established, it necessarily relied on local economic and religious stimulus in the Taunggyi area of the western Shan Plateau. Further suggestions supporting an ongoing localised cultural contexts date to the early 2nd millennium CE. The traditional history of Hpaya Ni pagoda for example, records its destruction by the Chinese in 1113 CE, but a group of brick temples at Intein southeast of Inle Lake are stylistically close to the 11th to 13th century CE temples of the prominent Buddhist site of Bagan on the Ayeyarwaddy. If the traditional history is roughly based on memory of events, any incursion from the northeast did not curtail local developments or interaction with central Myanmar. The Bagan period structures are located at the foot of Intein hill where hundreds of stupas were built in *circa* the 17th century under the patronage of Shan *Saophya* (*Sawbwa*) or hereditary chiefs. Whether the structures can also be attributed to



FIG. 2: IMAGE BUDDHA (CREDIT: E.MOORE, 2016)

local Sawbwa rather than a Bagan king needs further evidence to confirm, as does the extent of the remains. As these examples show, however, while there is much research to be undertaken, the new exploration and finds at Bawrithat and Intein begin to widen the narrative of Myanmar's Buddhist cultures.



FIG. 3: LION PLAQUE, BAWRITHAT (CREDIT: E. MOORE, 2016)



FIG. 4: DEER PLAQUE, BAWRITHAT (CREDIT: THU THU AUNG, AYE AYE THIN, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND MUSEUM)



FIG. 5: BAGAN PERIOD TEMPLE, INTEIN (CREDIT: U WIN KYAING, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND NATIONAL MUSEUM, MYANMAR)

The Shan, Chin and Kachin States and the Rakhine and Tanintharyi Regions were not peripheral to the emergence and flowering of Buddhism within the present day national borders of Myanmar. The strongest impact on the history of the Pyu cities and the Bagan kingdom amongst these regions is Shan. Myanmar chronicles describe the Shan as a threat yet the Shan language is seen in a Bagan inscription of 1120 CE. Bawrithat had access to the central Ayeyarwaddy basin, but is also located due south of Hsipaw, with connections to Yunnan and whose rulers are recorded in Shan histories during the 6th century CE. The affinity of the Hpaya Ni image of the Buddha with examples from Vietnam and China together with the rising sun motif on silver coins similar to those at Maingmaw (Pinle), point to multiple Buddhist traditions reflecting its location on an active route linking Central Myanmar and farther areas to the north and east. More research is needed to confirm this proposition but it illustrates ways that the recent discoveries described here can open up discussions on how localised religious diversities developed in mainland Southeast Asia during the first and second millennium CE.

PROF. ELIZABETH MOORE IS A VISITING SENIOR FELLOW AT THE NSC. HER CURRENT PROJECT ON 'WIDER BAGAN' AT THE NSC COMPARES SELECTED QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE CRITERIA BETWEEN REGIONS, SHOWING THE REGIONAL VARIATION SUPPORTING THE BAGAN EMPIRE. THE QUANTIFIABLE DATA INCLUDES SITES, WALLS, TEMPLES, STUPAS AND MONASTERIES, AGRICULTURAL, DEFENSIVE AND HYDRAULIC RESOURCES AS CRITERIA WITHIN A CARTOGRAPHIC OUTPUT. THE QUALITATIVE DATA INCLUDES SOCIAL MEMORY AND PILGRIMAGE TO INTERPRET THE CHANGING TEMPORALITY OF THE CRITERIA WITHIN THE BUDDHIST CULTURAL TRADITION OF MYANMAR.

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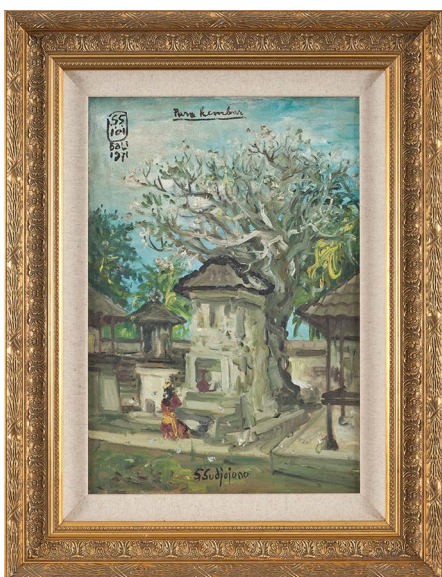
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The Indonesian Art Market: Is it out of control?

BY ADRIAN VICKERS
PROFESSOR OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY



A FAKE PAINTING FROM THE COURT CASE - "DURIAN SELLER" BY "HENDRA GUNAWAN" (COURTESY OF OWNER)



A FAKE PAINTING FROM THE COURT CASE - "MORNING PRAYER" BY "SUDJOJONO" (COURTESY OF OWNER)

A hearing last year in the Singapore Supreme Court has excited the Southeast Asian art world ("[Father, son get back \\$2.8m they paid for fake art](#)"; *The Straits Times*, 4 November 2017). The case involved thirteen Indonesian art works exchanged for millions, not unusual in an over-heated market. Having carried out decades of research into Indonesian art, I appeared as an expert witness in this trial. As with a similar 2011 case in Singapore, the judge found that these paintings were imitations, fraudulently misrepresented. Such cases reveal how the lack of strong public institutions in Indonesia affects the art world, and also how Singapore's role as arbiter in these cases showcased its rise as a regional arts hub.

The Indonesian art market is dominated by private collectors, and whereas once they were predominantly domestic,

increasingly collectors from other parts of Asia are choosing Indonesian art. The market operates without checks and balances, in the form of independent critics and research institutions which can document Indonesian art history. In other countries, public art galleries, museums, and universities would play such a role, but during the Suharto period (1967–1998), Indonesian institutions were both starved of funds and suffered from policy neglect. Internationally, public galleries, museums, and universities have set the standard for research, conservation, and collecting. In the case of Indonesia, the major public galleries cannot afford to pay the prices asked at auction for either major older works, or even for new emerging contemporary art. Furthermore, the expense of setting up conservation laboratories, and subjecting works to scientific analysis is too great.



A FAKE PAINTING FROM THE COURT CASE - "PADI FIELD" BY "SUDJOJONO" (COURTESY OF OWNER)

Market dominance has a two-sided effect for artists. It has produced great success and wealth for some, but at times it has been at the expense of promoting conservatism. Indonesia was the first country in Southeast Asia to fully embark into Contemporary Art in the 1970s. The assemblages of found materials and radical performances in such art is difficult to collect, and even more difficult to hang on your wall. Collectors prefer the older form of paintings. This preference has several implications. In many cases, the competition by collectors has meant that any painting with a great master's name on it would do, whatever its quality or historical significance. In some cases, historical significance is a draw-back. I have seen an early, impressive work by famous left-wing painter, Hendra Gunawan sell for a low price because its colours were dark and its content, a disabled fighter of the Indonesian Revolution, too sombre. Later and more dubious works by Hendra with bright colours have been better sellers. This lack of discernment regarding art historical values easily opened the door for an industry of professional forgers.

Combined with this market dominance has been the under-funding of scholarship. Indonesian academics are poorly paid in international terms, and have limited access to research funds. Some very good major studies have been published on Sudjojono and Affandi,

but not all owners of their works have participated. Worse, in one case, 75 per cent of the paintings depicted in a recent book purporting to be a catalogue of Hendra paintings are said to be fake. Singapore's sudden rise as a regional arts hub has been a major game changer in two ways; first in terms of showcasing regional art, and secondly, by providing infrastructure. Singapore galleries have developed long-term involvement in the art of neighbouring countries. When the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) came along over twenty years ago, it held regional shows. These brought together major works by Indonesian artists with those of their nearby contemporaries, demonstrating that thinking about art regionally could be productive for art history and stimulating new art. The National Gallery Singapore (NGS) has taken this possibility further. By employing talented curators and providing state-of-the-art conservation and documentation facilities, it has laid out the new agenda for the study of regional art. ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute has also embarked on research projects on Southeast Asian art, and regularly presents seminars on the topic.

We are at the point where the overheating of the Indonesian art market may be slowing down. While that may not be good news for those who see purchasing art as an investment, for the rest of us, it offers a time for rethinking the role of art

“Market dominance has a two-sided effect for artists. It has produced great success and wealth for some, but at times it has been at the expense of promoting conservatism.”

in society. A better understanding of art history through research demonstrates the close connection between nationalism, internationalism, and the ways that people think and feel. Art is important for defining oneself, both individually and in relation to those around us. The new turn in Southeast Asian art is returning art to the public, and in so doing, creates new kinds of regional consciousness.

PROF. VICKERS WAS FORMERLY A VISITING FELLOW AT ISEAS – YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE FROM JULY TO OCTOBER 2017. AT ISEAS, HE WORKED ON THE TOPIC OF ART AND INSTITUTIONS IN INDONESIA. CURRENTLY, HE RESEARCHES AND PUBLISHES ON THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. HIS RESEARCH UTILISES EXPERTISE IN THE INDONESIAN LANGUAGE AS WELL AS DRAWING ON SOURCES IN BALINESE, KAWI (OLD AND MIDDLE JAVANESE) AND DUTCH. RECENT SELECT PUBLICATIONS INCLUDE THE CO-AUTHORED BOOK WITH JULIA MARTÍNEZ, “THE PEARL FRONTIER: INDONESIAN LABOR AND INDIGENOUS ENCOUNTERS IN AUSTRALIA'S NORTHERN TRADING NETWORK” (UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PRESS, 2015); “A HISTORY OF MODERN INDONESIA” (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2ND EDITION 2013), “BALI: A PARADISE CREATED” (TUTTLE PUBLISHING, 2012), AND “BALINESE ART: PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS OF BALI 1800-2010” (TUTTLE PUBLISHING, 2012).

Only Time Will Tell: The Precarity of Yangon's Heritage Coalition in its Vernacular City

BY MARK HENG
NSC RESEARCH OFFICER

“Given that Yangon’s heritage actors have to negotiate their incompatible approaches to dealing with its existing landscape, I posit that this heritage coalition is in a precarious state.”

Much of the news coming out of Myanmar over the past half-decade revolves around things changing, particularly in Yangon, which remains its beating heart. *This* story is about keeping things the way they are, at least in part. It centres on the colonial buildings in Yangon marked for conservation and the communities living in and around them.

Myanmar’s political and economic reforms at the turn of the decade have ushered in an era of urban (re)development for the metropolis. Yangon’s landscapes are changing as the city grows in population and size. Given these transformations, calls to conserve Yangon’s colonial buildings as heritage have emerged from different sectors. Moreover, Myanmar’s reforms have paved the way for promising cross-sectorial collaboration for ‘A Better Yangon’. Urban planners in governmental agencies, heritage conservationists in non-governmental organisations, faculty members in academic institutions, and other players have therefore been working together to conserve Yangon’s colonial buildings as heritage in what I term Yangon’s heritage coalition.

Downtown Yangon has a distinguishing urban core with the largest number



FIG. 1: INFORMAL DWELLINGS INSIDE THE FORMER SOFAER & CO BUILDING. (CREDIT: MARK HENG).



FIG. 2: A ROADSIDE STALL OUTSIDE THE CURRENCY DEPARTMENT BUILDING. (CREDIT: MARK HENG)

of colonial buildings of any Southeast Asian city. While the country’s half-century of relative isolation has allowed the city to save these buildings, albeit to varying degrees of preservation, generations of dwellers have come to inhabit them in their own ways, each one adding on another layer of history. These urbanites are making their own places and making places their own – this is Yangon’s vernacular city. Within and between every colonial building are neighbourhood-like collections of shops, offices, and residences. With such a convivial mix of people, places, and practices, the centre of downtown Yangon is truly a living museum.

Yangon’s heritage actors come to the table with diverse concerns that extend beyond heritage, so how they understand Yangon as the heritage city varies in oft-

subtle ways. These urban stakeholders therefore also have different perspectives regarding roadside stalls, street vendors, and informal dwellers, which seem to be emblematic of the vernacular city for them.

The Yangon City Development Committee renders informal dwellers out of place in the heritage city since they disrupt the preservation of heritage fabric that it seeks, and aims to educate street vendors and relocate roadside stalls elsewhere. The Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development has a more participatory planning process, in revising proposals by public consultation, but calls for controlling roadside stalls and street vendors for health and safety reasons. The Yangon Heritage Trust attends to heritage users and considers the neighbourhood holistically, pursuing options for the livelihoods of informal



FIG. 3: A TEAHOUSE INSIDE THE FORMER SOFAER & CO BUILDING. (CREDIT: MARK HENG)

dwellers, but faces tough choices in handling legal and ownership issues and fairly prioritising building and community. The University of Yangon suggests that roadside stalls and street markets are part of Yangon's 'living heritage', and that both tangible and intangible heritage and people's livelihoods would disappear if this was to be erased, since heritage encompasses colonial buildings and their atmosphere – the sense of 'being heritage' in their surroundings.

Given that Yangon's heritage actors have to negotiate their incompatible approaches to dealing with its existing landscape, I posit that this heritage coalition is in a precarious state. As Roberts (2017:41) notes, conservation efforts reveal the "contradictions and contestations inherent in the forms and functions of cities." Furthermore, the city's "messiness" is evident in, for example, differentiating between the formal and informal elements of downtown Yangon. Colonial buildings and their environs are owned by the government and/or private owners, so informal dwellers are allowed on the premises with their explicit or tacit permission, since owners are unwilling to offer compensation for eviction, as is legally required. Some

squatter residents also work as officials or cater to government staff as shop owners. This blurring of lines makes the area unique yet tough to unravel for the urban stakeholders as they aspire to remake the city on its own path of development and work to reconcile conservation with this, which they affirm in their comprehensive Yangon Heritage Strategy (Yangon Heritage Trust 2016).

Living communities have adapted these spaces in everyday ways giving them a place in the city. Their memories are valuable local wisdom; their stories support yet subvert official histories (Henderson and Webster 2015). Transforming colonial buildings into a "heritage that belongs to contemporary Yangon" means inviting their opinions and not dismissing the messy vernacular (Roberts 2017:55). Indeed, while conservation can render colonial Yangon local, everyday urbanism has already inscribed Burmese-ness on these historic buildings and streets (Roberts 2017), as part of the city's cultural and heritage tapestry (Henderson and Webster 2015). Whether Yangon's heritage actors remember this ordinary city well, only time will tell.

MARK HENG IS A RESEARCH OFFICER WITH THE NSC, ISEAS, AND ALSO WORKS WITH THE REGIONAL SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES AND THAILAND STUDIES PROGRAMMES, ISEAS. HE RECENTLY GRADUATED FROM UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON WITH AN MSc IN URBAN STUDIES (2016), WHICH HE PURSUED ON ISEAS' TUN DATO SIR CHENG-LOCK TAN M.A. SCHOLARSHIP. HE ALSO HOLDS A BSOCS (HONS) IN GEOGRAPHY FROM THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE (2015), WHICH HE COMPLETED THIS PIECE OF RESEARCH ON HERITAGE IN YANGON (2014) FOR, AND IS AN ALUMNUS OF THE UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS PROGRAMME. HIS RESEARCH INTERESTS LIE IN CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY AND URBAN STUDIES, WITH PROJECTS FOCUSING PRIMARILY ON THE URBAN, URBANISATION, AND URBANISM IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA, AND HAS HAD SIGNIFICANT FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE IN MYANMAR (IN YANGON) AND THAILAND (AROUND CHIANG MAI).

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Empire Building in Southeast Asia: The Importance of Salt

BY FOO SHU TIENG
NSC RESEARCH OFFICER



FIG. 1: OPEN PAN SALT MAKING IN BO KLUEA, THAILAND, WHERE WOOD IS USED AS FUEL. SALT WATER IS BEING BOILED TO REDUCE IT. THE SALT IS THEN PUT IN THE BASKETS AND SUSPENDED OVER THE PANS TO DRY IT OUT FURTHER. (CREDIT: TAKEAWAY / WIKIMEDIA)

gained worldwide awareness through a march to Dandi in 1930 to protest the high price of salt (Pletcher 2015).

The need to manage and control salt economies is not only a current phenomenon and necessity for modern states, but an extension of centuries-old practices. Throughout history, the successful management of key commodities like salt was used by the elite as a way to consolidate power and generate state revenue. Although there are many products that can be used to study power centralisation and the growth of states in Southeast Asia (SEA), the case study of salt is important, interesting, and under-researched.

Salt was known to be an important nutritional supplement and a means to enable the preservation of seasonal or geographically restricted meat sources since antiquity (Flad et al. 2005). There is also evidence that salt was given to livestock as a dietary supplement (directly or indirectly) to increase milk generation and fat content (Hoi 2011: 70). Salt also facilitated long distance settlement, enhanced trade, and food diversification. Import and more effective distribution of salt allowed certain areas to be more densely settled - areas which may have had valuable resources in high demand - while also benefiting producers and distributors throughout the value/supply chain. The ability to access salt resources was thus integral to a society's ability to produce and maintain food surpluses and encourage the growth of trade and logistic networks. This also allowed opportunities for value chain control and power consolidation at certain points along the value chain. Networks could be co-opted by agents of institutionalised power in order to feed standing armies and be mobilised for lengthy campaigns for conquest (Morehart & De Lucia 2015).

The early history of salt production and the spread of salt extraction technology in SEA is not well-known. Further research will provide useful information regarding earlier elite power-politics as well as labour organisation and trade networks. There are also different tiers of analysis. At the micro-level, we can study individual production methods and technological changes. At the middle-range (meso-level), we can study group dynamics and social networks - how salt is commoditised, distributed and consumed through trade networks (i.e., value-chains). At the macro-level, we can analyse top-down issues - how policies created and enforced by the elite (such as taxes and supply-flow

Salt is a critically essential mineral needed for survival (Bloch 1963: 89). Many populated areas around the globe are deficient in local salt supplies. Thus, salt is one of the most widely processed, traded and consumed items in the world – so much so, that the volume of production, distribution and consumption often goes unrecorded in history. However, changes in supplies or prices have major impacts.

In April 2017, the market price for edible salt suddenly experienced a 600% increase in Indonesia due to a lack of supply as a result of increased rain (Ivansyah 2017). A few months later, some areas experienced a 1,000% surge (Widodo 2017). Had the situation been left unchecked, the prices for food and products from related

industries would have risen accordingly, along with socio-political discontent. Tensions were rapidly increasing.

The Indonesian government intervened in February 2018 to increase salt production by allocating land specifically for salt production. The government intends to protect local salt manufacturers by setting a 2020 target to prohibit the import of salt for industrial purposes (Hakim 2018). While the supply shortage and ramifications of the food security policy are still being felt (Munthe & Silviana 2018), it is clear how a key commodity like salt may need to be managed carefully.

History demonstrates how salt prices affected economic and socio-political conditions. For example, Mahatma Gandhi

What can the archaeology of ancient salt-making sites tell us?

RAJASTHAN

During the medieval period (600-1300 CE) salt was seen as an important source of income for Rajasthan rulers, with inscriptions referring to salt taxes; the Nadulai inscription of Rayapala (1143 CE), for example, records that salt was granted to Mahavira Chaitya temple (Geetika Gupta, personal communication, April 13 2018).

At Bo Phan Khan, researchers believe that this salt exposure was the site of early industrial-level salt extraction activity. Salt was likely extracted by passing water through salty soil and boiling the brine in flat metal trays. According to radiocarbon dating, the site was first exploited in the 1st-2nd centuries CE (Higham 2002: 194). The site had large-sized mounds which bore evidence of salt extraction as deep as 6 m, and thick-walled crude pottery thought to be briquetage.

PADRI

At Padri (also known as Kerala-nodhoro), Gujarat, several structures were excavated (likely for dwelling and storage, as well as a possible workshop), unveiling pottery and architectural remains. The site was suspected to be a salt-making site based on an ethnographic survey of a nearby salt making area as well as on the basis of favourable geomorphological conditions (Shinde et al 2008).

EASTERN GANGA

In a 12th century CE Eastern Ganga inscription under Chodagangadeva, there was a reference to a salt collector (*lavanakaradhikari*) (Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, personal communication, April 11 2018).

NON TUNG PIE PONE

At Non Tung Pie Pone, in Northeast Thailand, excavations revealed water storage tanks; filtration troughs which were used to filter out sediments from the salt water; hearths to boil the salty water; pots found near the structure; and post holes which suggested possible habitation (Nitta 1997: 158).

BO PHAN KHAN

GÔ Ô CHÙA



1000

km

GUNUNG WINGKO

Legends

- Ancient Salt Making Areas
- Ancient Kingdoms

SALT PRODUCTION

Salt production in China was thought to develop as follows (Guo, in Flad 2011: 37):

- Phase 1 (ca 4,000 BCE to about 200 BCE): Salt was naturally extracted from lakes, seawater, and brine springs;
- Phase 2 (ca 200 BCE to 200 CE): Seawater was boiled, long distance salt transport began, and wells were constructed to access brine;
- Phase 3 (ca 200-1100 CE): Salt ponds were used for solar evaporation, natural gas could be used as fuel to heat the brine, and the brine wells had an increase in productivity;
- Phase 4 (ca 1100-1900 CE): Rock salt deposits could be accessed by tunnels, sea salt was boiled at an industrial scale, and iron boring wells were developed. They could extract brine and natural gas resources up to 1,000 m in depth.

According to Flad (2011), three different types of ceramics were used at Zhongba, Chengdu, China, during each phase of salt production. In Phase I (2500-1750 BCE – the Neolithic), large vats were utilised as possibly brine storage vats or as evaporation containers. Then in Phase II (1600-1210 BCE – the early Bronze age), small cups were used as the moulds for salt cakes. Finally, in Phase III (1,100-200 BCE), when the site was being used at an industrial scale, production involved small globular jarlets used to evaporate brine, and associated faunal remains suggest that various fish and wildlife were being salted at the site. Oracle bones were also found in association with salt production, suggesting that production was imbued with ritual significance (Flad 2011: 7). To learn more on the briquetage, see Flad et al (2009).



At Gò Ô Chùa, near the border between Cambodia and Vietnam, researchers found a kind of coarse ceramic associated with salt evaporation and production (briquetage) – archaeomagnetic tests conducted on the pottery, which had finger-like protrusions on one end, showed that they were consistently heated in a certain orientation, with the protrusions on top (Proske, Heslop, & Hanebuth 2009).

The Gunung Wingko site, in Central Java, Indonesia, was suspected to be an early salt manufacturing site, with radiocarbon dates suggesting that the site was in use since $1,990 \pm 90$ BP* (40 ± 90 BCE) (Alifah 2017: 24; Alifah, personal communication, March 16, 2018).

* BP IS A TIMESCALE WHICH STANDS FOR "BEFORE PRESENT," WITH THE "PRESENT" REFERRING TO 1 JAN. 1950. IT IS USED WHEN REFERRING TO A RADIOCARBON DATING ESTIMATION, WITH THE DATES USUALLY GIVEN AS A RANGE.

regulation) affected various population sectors under their control/influence as well as the overall political economy.

In SEA, there have been a number of studies regarding contemporary and recent historic salt production (see Le Rouf & Ivanoff 1993; Yankowski 2007; Godelier 1982/1986; Godelier 2011; Yankowski & Kerdsap 2013; Yankowski, Kerdsap, & Chang 2015, among others). However, the study of earlier salt production, trade, and technology is currently understudied owing to at least three major factors (D. Kyle Latinis, pers. comm., Feb. 16, 2017). The first is that salt is somewhat of an invisible commodity. Once it is consumed it is very difficult to trace - unlike pottery, for example. At best, what researchers can find are production and storage areas as well as production tools, containers, and other implements. Secondly, coastal changes such as sea levels rising approximately 5 meters from around 2,900-2,500 BCE (the mid-Holocene high stand; see Horton et al. 2005 for evidence from the Malay-Thai Peninsula) may have impacted coastal salt production as well as erased archaeological traces. The point is that coastal areas are dynamic. Environmental and geologic factors may relate to the possibilities that: a) what were once coastal salt producing areas might now be significantly further inland than what would be predicted, or, b) inundated. This, along with other ecological and economic forces which might have caused local salt producers to abandon their production, would make it harder to identify potential ancient coastal salt production areas. Thirdly, as salt is considered a ubiquitous commodity, serious studies on the historicity and archaeology are lacking. Also, the common and prolific nature of salt production and exchange may also explain its relative absence in historic documents.

Analysing ancient salt trade:

The micro-level: There is still a large gap between what is known for early salt production in China and India versus SEA. In SEA, the earliest known salt production site is at Gò Ô Chùa, near the Cambodian and Vietnamese border, where it began around 1,000 BCE (Reinecke 2012: 243). Sites such as Bo Phan Khan and Non Tung Pie Pone sites in northeast Thailand (Nitta 1997: 158, Rivett & Higham 2007: 588, 593), and the Gunung Wingko site in Central Java, Indonesia (Alifah 2017: 24; Alifah, personal communication, March 16, 2018; van de Velde 1988; van de Velde 1984) have yielded data regarding production methods, seasonality, resource



FIG. 2: FILTERING SALT FROM SEAWATER ON OPEN GROUND IN SUMENEP, MADURA, INDONESIA, SEPT 1911. (CREDIT: FRITS FREERKS FONTEIN FZ | [RP-F-2001-17-12-112](#) | RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM)

“Wang Dayuan (汪大渊), a 14th century Chinese traveller who sailed from Quanzhou to Africa and possibly visited ancient Singapore, reported that the inhabitants at Banzu / Pancur (班卒) (interpreted by some to be Fort Canning Hill) boiled sea-water to make salt (Rockhill 1915: 133; Wang 1339/2015).”

requirements, and ecological implications for salt extraction (see centrefold for more information). Thus, the potential for further research is promising in SEA.

SEA's data seems to suggest relatively later development of salt production industries when compared to China, where salt production likely began around 4,000 BCE in Shandong with the artificial evaporation of marine brine in pottery containers (Flad 2011: 37; Adshead 1992: 40), and India, where the site of Padri in Gujarat was thought to be an early salt manufacturing centre during the Harappan period (2,200-2,000 BCE) (Shinde et al. 2008: 59). Furthermore the data from Chinese sites indicate clear technological phases of production associated with salt extraction (see centrefold). The temporal gap is intriguing as it suggests that there is still much to discover in the SEA region, or, that there is a clear lag in SEA's industry developments. This leaves us with many possibilities for testing why this is so.

The meso-level: Salt can be studied across several sites as part of value-chains and trade networks. Salt was considered a key commodity for coastal-hinterland trade interactions for both insular and mainland SEA. In

Vietnam, mountain chiefs traditionally bartered horses and cattle for salt from the lowlands. This was disrupted when Li Cho, the protector-general of the Vietnamese territory on behalf of the Tang dynasty in the 9th century, seized control of the salt and iron routes (Hall 2011:96). It is also noteworthy that many of the mountain passes from coastal Vietnam to inland Laos and Cambodia were referred to as “salt roads” – locals suggesting since ancient times (D. Kyle Latinis, pers. comm., May 5, 2018). In Sumatra, salt, iron, cloth, and prestige goods from the lowlands were traditionally traded to the highlands for ivory, benzoin, camphor, and prestige goods between chiefs in the highlands and sultans in the lowlands (Drakard 1990: 33, Miksic 1985: 446). According to Sellato (1993: 264-265), however, there is reason to believe that the coastal-hinterland trade in processed and refined salt and sugar in some parts of insular SEA (such as Borneo) may be a more recent phenomenon. From the field of historical linguistics we know that some inland groups did not have consistent words to describe “sweet” and “salty” flavours in food. Instead, they obtained salt naturally through other means (e.g., consumption of vegetable salt or water from saline springs).

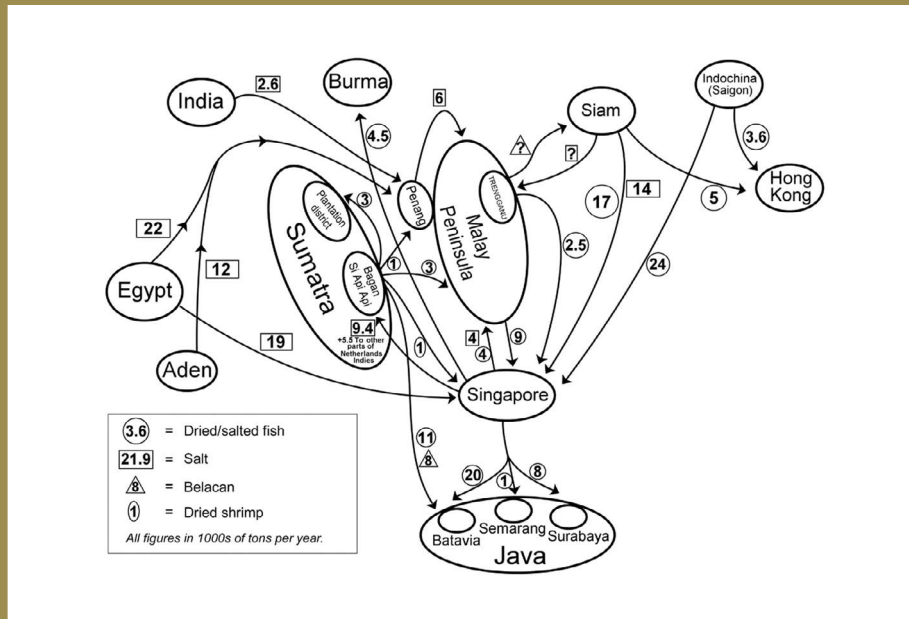


FIG. 3: TRADE IN DRIED FISH, SALT, AND BELACAN, C. 1910. THE IMAGE IS REPRODUCED HERE WITH THE KIND PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR. (CREDIT: BUTCHER 2004, FIG. 3.1)

Salt-making areas in SEA were also known to Chinese traders through foreign information and trade knowledge compendiums such as the 13th century *Zhu Fan Zhi* (諸蕃志) (Hirth & Rockhill 1911). The fact that salt-making areas were recorded suggests that salt was sufficiently valuable as a trade commodity and that production techniques, locations, and networks were of strategic interest. Wang Dayuan (汪大淵), a 14th century Chinese traveller who sailed from Quanzhou to Africa who possibly visited ancient Singapore, reported that the inhabitants at Banzu / Pancur (班卒) (interpreted by some to be Fort Canning Hill) boiled sea-water to make salt (Rockhill 1915: 133; Wang 1339/2015).

Comparing salt trade differences in SEA with China is rather interesting. In China, there is historical evidence to suggest that the state ran a monopoly on the salt trade by the Qi era (685 BCE; Flad 2011: 35). The monopoly operated by controlling all the salt sales from producers, controlling the logistics routes for their distribution, and by ensuring that the government profited as middlemen. The practice of state monopoly continued when China was unified during the Qin dynasty (221 BCE) and remained in various forms until 2017 when the Chinese government finally ended it, with the only major interruption occurring during the World War II (Flad 2011: 36; Kor 2016; Yang 2014).

The macro-level: Salt taxes were not only an important viable source of income for the state but affected the power-

politics of the elite in very significant ways. China, India, and SEA had all enacted salt taxes for centuries. In China, salt taxes enacted by the Tang period (618-907 CE) were responsible for half the central government's revenue (Flad 2011: 36). For India, salt taxes came into effect since at least the time of the Mauryan king Chandragupta's reign (324/321-297 BCE) (Moxham 2001: 34-35, Singh 2009/2016: 330), although we are not clear on what percentage of state revenue it provided. The earliest solid evidence for SEA's salt taxes can be found in 7th century Khmer inscriptional data (K.940) (Chenla period in Cambodia). This may have been evidence for power and resource consolidation during the reign of Jayavarman I (Lustig 2009: 197; Vickery 1998: 295; Sahai 1970: 117).

The colonial powers likewise used salt production and trade as a way to gain and maintain power in SEA. For example, the VOC in various Indo-Malay polities initially made use of temporary contracts with local rulers to gain control over trade goods including salt. When the Dutch company monopolized the salt trade in 1882, the *Zoutregie* tax regulations came into effect. This taxation was largely contracted to ethnic Chinese as middlemen tax-collectors. This dramatically changed the structure of those who owned socio-political capital (Parwoto & Hartono 2014: 36-37; Kwee 2006: 163-167). The arrangement benefited the Company (VOC), the local rulers, and the ethnic Chinese, with the elite sharing part of the revenues. Notably, this arrangement prevented the rise of

political opponents and competition from the local populations as they were left without monetary and social capital. However, this also created a situation where a small number of elite could control the price and supply of commodities. Given that the price of salt closely impacted the price and supply of associated fishery products, this regional elite became quite influential (Kwee 2006: 27, 166; Butcher 1996; see also Fig. 7).

However, to dispel the idea that salt taxes (or exemptions) only privileged the rich and powerful, there is also evidence to suggest that exemptions were in place for small-time peddlers as well. For example, the Dhimanasrama Inscription from Java (thought to be a Majapahit period copy of a 10th-11th century inscription) stated that peddlers who carried their goods by shoulder-poles (*pinikul bhandanya*) were exempted from taxes if the goods they carried (such as salt and salted fish) were below 5-*bantal* weight (60-75 kg) per person (Christie 1998a: 372-373; Christie 1998b: 154-155). The possible tax exemptions for religious institutions or the degree of untaxed smuggling are certainly interesting topics worth further exploration. The cumulative effects may be significantly important.

Reviewing the data, it seems that salt was a key strategic resource since antiquity. The successful management of salt production and trade allowed for kingdoms and empires to expand, as stocks allowed for food surpluses and trade to flourish. Micro-level production to macro-level political economies concerning salt industries and trade are critically important, yet frequently neglected in research and discourse. While there is still much to research with regards to early salt industries and economics, the control over its supply and redistribution continues at the level of government and national interest; this is seen in the Indonesian example, where salt security is paramount. Thus, understanding the history of salt economies in ancient polities is highly relevant to modern nation-states.

S. T. FOO IS A RESEARCH OFFICER AT THE ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT, NSC, ISEAS - YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE. 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. SHE WOULD LIKE TO THANK PROF. JOHN N. MIKSIC, DR. D. KYLE LATINIS, MR. LIM CHEN SIAN, MS. ALIFAH, PROF. HERMANN KULKE, DR. BHAI RABI PRASAD SAHU, AND MS. GEETIKA GUPTA WHO GAVE USEFUL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS PAPER. ANY ERRORS THAT REMAIN ARE THE AUTHOR'S OWN.

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The Mystery of the Pasir Panjang Pillbox

BY CHAN WAI PENG
NSC AU RESEARCH ASSISTANT

At the intersection of Pasir Panjang and Science Park Road stands an oddly shaped grey structure half-buried in the ground. Colloquially, it is called a 'pillbox' and is used to refer to small military concrete infantry fortifications capable of defence. Typically, a pillbox is enclosed on all four sides with solid concrete walls to provide defence for soldiers within it against enemy small arms and artillery fire. Small slits are made around the pillbox to allow all-round visibility and opportunities to return fire while still providing sufficient defence. This pillbox is one of the few remaining military structures that can be found in Singapore from the Second World War (1941-1945). On the eve of the war, there once stood more than sixty of these defences along the major roads in Singapore which fortified the island and contributed to the idea of Singapore being the 'impregnable fortress' (Clements 2016). Today, it remains as a part of the country's forgotten past, often ignored by busy office workers who rush by in their daily commute to work.

However, road developments in early 2017 brought this overlooked structure to the attention of archaeologists as construction works were conducted to widen the intersection. The works caused the ground level around the pillbox to be raised, and accidentally encased the pillbox beneath a new concrete pavement. This spurred the NSC Archaeology Unit to study and document the site, to ensure that should such accidents were to occur in the future, at a minimum, the site would be recorded.

From the late 1800s until the 1960s, Pasir Panjang Road was the main thoroughfare for carriages and vehicles travelling from the western rural areas of Singapore to the town centre, which comprised of many important areas, including Keppel Harbour and the military headquarters of the British command in current day Fort Canning Park. With an unobstructed view and hilly terrains, the location proved to be extremely strategic, and this led the British to reinforce the defence of this



FIG. 1: PASIR PANJANG PILLBOX LOCATED AT THE CROSS SECTION OF SCIENCE PARK ROAD AND PASIR PANJANG ROAD IN THE BACKGROUND (CREDIT: CHAN WAI PENG)



FIG. 2: PASIR PANJANG PILLBOX WHEN IT WAS ENCLOSED IN CEMENT PAVEMENT (CREDIT: CHAN WAI PENG)

particular road during their fortification of Singapore prior to World War II.

On 8th February 1942, the Japanese Imperial Army invaded Singapore through the northwestern and northern coastline of the island. By 13th February, the Japanese penetrated as far as Pasir Panjang where the 1st Malaya Brigade put up a strong resistance along Pasir Panjang road. The Brigade was then forced to retreat up to Bukit Chandu where they were

defeated. Although the Pasir Panjang pillbox was under the control of the 1st Malaya Brigade, it is not certain whether it was used during this battle.

Unlike other surviving pillboxes in Singapore, such as those on Pulau Blakang Mati (modern day Sentosa island), which focused on beach defences and were erected to defend against enemy naval landings, the Pasir Panjang pillbox was structured with

PASIR PANJANG ROAD/ SCIENCE PARK RD PILL BOX

NORTH ELEVATION
12 JUN 2019
CHAN WAI PENG
SCALE 1:50

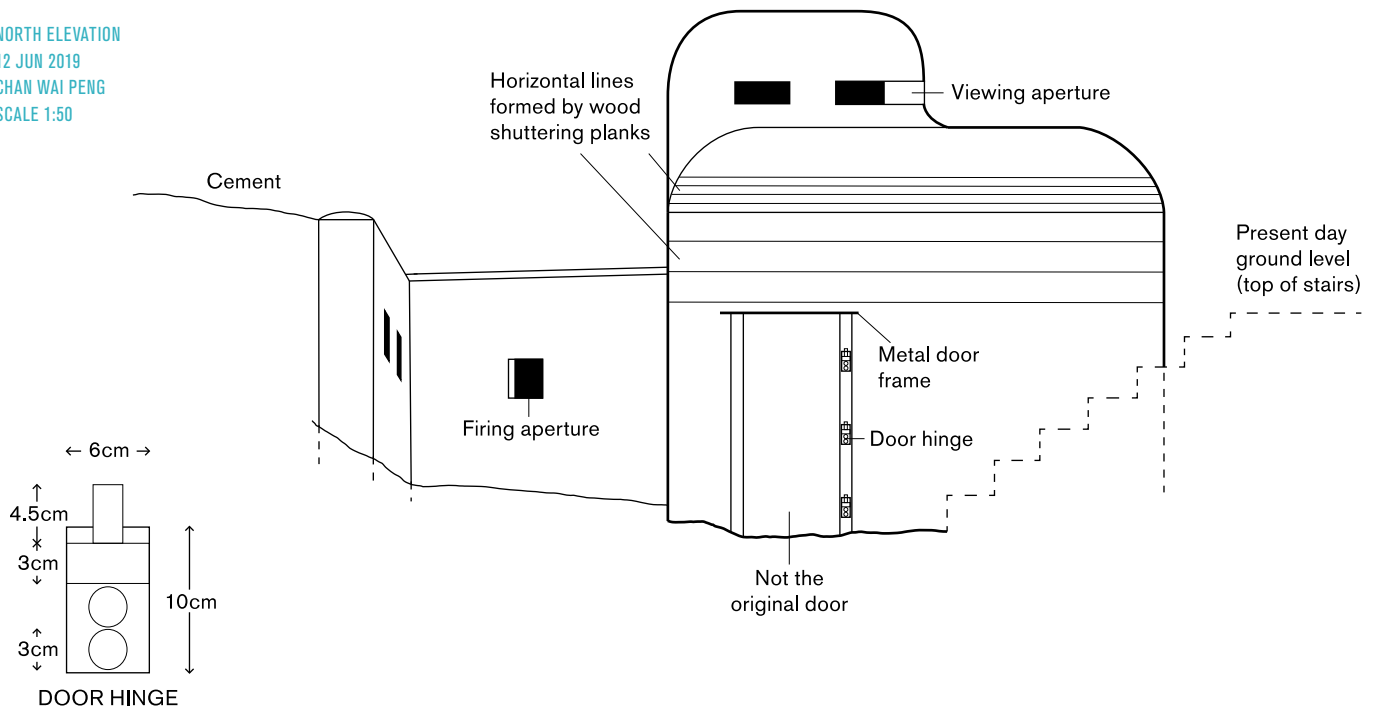


FIG. 3: ILLUSTRATION OF THE PILLBOX, NORTH ELEVATION (CREDIT: CHAN WAI PENG)

“Contrary to what was stated on the NHB historic marker erected next to the structure, it seems unlikely that the pillbox was a part of the beach defences; rather, it served as a small fortification meant to defend a stretch of road and a line of enemy approach.”

an emphasis on the landward defence against incoming enemy infantry who would utilise the road. Emplaced beside the road, the cuboid structure has two firing apertures along with the commander’s cupola on top. The pillbox faced westwards, anticipating attacks from that direction. There is an additional rear defence wall built into the side of the pillbox which is not found with other pillboxes. One possible explanation for this feature is that it was a later addition, used as a precaution against the Japanese infantry technique of outflanking fixed positions and to provide opportunities to return fire from the rear.

By interpreting the typology of the structure and the topographic terrain, the archaeological survey was able to shed some new light on the pillbox. Contrary to what was stated on the NHB historic marker erected next to the structure, it seems unlikely that the pillbox was a part of the beach defences; rather, it served as a small fortification meant to defend

a stretch of road and a line of enemy approach. The project also brought increased awareness of the vulnerability of such historic structures in the face of an ever-changing landscape and modern development. The case study illustrates how the NSC Archaeology Unit advocates for an approach where minimally, preservation is done by documentation. Such documentation is crucial in ensuring that detailed records of such remains are available for future generations, keeping these forgotten parts of Singapore past alive even well beyond the existence of their physical form.

CHAN WAI PENG IS AN NSC AU RESEARCH ASSISTANT. SHE WAS A PARTICIPANT IN THE 2017 NSC ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOL AT TONLE SINGUOT AND HELPED TO EXCAVATE SEVERAL SINGAPORE SITES.

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ISEAS 50th Anniversary Lecture by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong



DR. TERENCE CHONG (HEAD, NSC) BRIEFING PM LEE ON NSC ACTIVITIES AT THE ISEAS 50TH ANNIVERSARY LECTURE AT ORCHARD HOTEL SINGAPORE, ON 13 MARCH 2018. LOOKING ON TO THEIR RIGHT IS MR. CHOI SHING KWOK (DIRECTOR, ISEAS) AND PROF. WANG GUNGWU (CHAIRMAN, ISEAS). (CREDIT: ISEAS – YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE)



STUDENTS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE AT THE ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT'S SPECIAL FINDS EXHIBITION AT THE ORCHARD HOTEL, ON 13 MARCH 2018. (CREDIT: ISEAS – YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE)



MR. MICHAEL NG (NSC) AND MR. AARON KAO (NSC, PICTURED ABOVE) BRIEFED GUESTS AT THE EXHIBITION ON ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT ACTIVITIES AND EXCAVATIONS. (CREDIT: ISEAS – YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE)

Demystifying Chinese Vegetarian Halls: The Esoteric Tradition of Sino-Southeast Asian Religion

BY MARK HENG
NSC RESEARCH OFFICER

Monday, 23 April 2018 – Dr Show Ying Ruo, Visiting Fellow at Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, ISEAS, delivered her NSC Lecture on “Demystifying Chinese Vegetarian Halls: The Esoteric Tradition of Sino-Southeast Asian Religion”. This lecture explored the lineage, gender dimension, and texts of the religious network of Chinese vegetarian halls and temples in Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and linked them to the broader landscape of Southeast Asia’s early Chinese community. Dr Show obtained her PhD in Chinese Studies from NUS in 2017, focusing on the premodern Chinese Precious Scrolls scriptures. Her research interests are gender and religion, especially the Three Teachings (Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism) in Southeast Asia. Over thirty participants from institutes of higher learning and research, the diplomatic corps, non-profit societies, private firms, the press and the media, and the public attended this lecture.

Dr Show began by noting that the term “vegetarian hall” is rather vague since these temples are known by different names (e.g. Halls of Guanyin), yet are all linked to the esoteric Chinese syncretic religious sect called the Way of Former Heaven, whose religious pursuits draw from the Three Teachings. These halls were established in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by the sect’s respective Great Masters and resident-members. They have fostered a sense of community through the religious commitment of their members and formed inter-connected networks by their respective lineages and orientations. Employing epigraphy and multi-sited ethnography, Dr Show shed light on these less well-known religious networks and practices, which are unique to Southeast Asia, to show how these localised forms and manifestations of lay Buddhism have become integral to the region’s society and culture and evolved over time.



DR SHOW YING RUO WITH ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SU JUI-LUNG (DEPARTMENT OF CHINESE STUDIES, FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE) WHO CHAIRED THE LECTURE (SOURCE: ISEAS – YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE).

Dr Show shared that the “Precious Scroll” texts printed in Southeast Asia and circulated in the halls feature hagiographical content of sect leaders and the cults of deities, characterised by a message of salvation. In some, female protagonists found ways to express their identity, mediate between female religiosity and domestic resistance, and negotiate gendered roles. Although sectarian Masters were largely males, these halls were usually maintained by women, especially as they attracted more women than men and remain feminised spaces. The history of these halls presented evidence of religious reciprocity, business links, and intellectual exchanges. Their founders included elites, successful businessmen, Chinese physicians, and traders of Chinese herbs. She also illustrated how to identify whether residents were vegetarian followers, Buddhist, or converts to other religions.

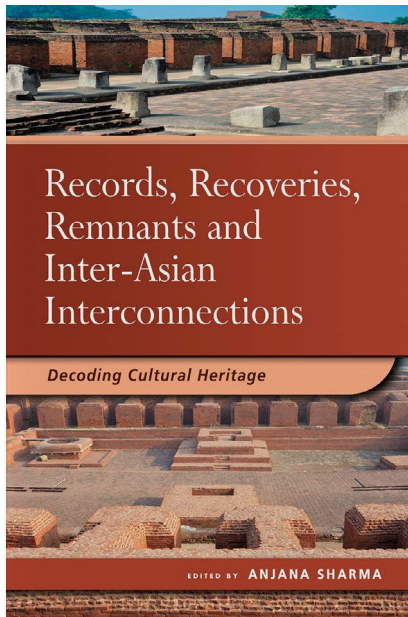
Dr Show traced this religious movement’s expansion from China to Nanyang, where political sentiments were more evident. Chinese authorities considered these redemptive societies, with their salvationist religion and anti-revolutionary beliefs, to be militant and heterodox, and persecuted them, so followers went underground and travelled elsewhere. They split into different divisions, reflected in the iconography of the halls, with the most influential line in Southeast Asia. Divisions established their own connections to temples in China for mutual support, and actively contributed to their local communities, resulting in a landscape of multi-directional connections intertwined with changing political boundaries. Dr Show emphasised the importance of attending to the social context of immigration, since many vegetarian nuns had been “water guests”, often single, strong, and independent women, facilitating mobility.

Dr Show concluded by noting that these halls are finding it increasingly difficult to survive and attract women, who now have greater opportunities to find jobs and homes, to join them as vegetarian nuns. Her comprehensive introduction to vegetarian halls and extensive material set the stage for a lively question-and-answer session. This allowed Dr Show to share about the spatial arrangements of vegetarian halls as part of certain Buddhist temple compounds, the sect’s greatest period of expansion in the 19th century, and the smaller halls’ income from joining Buddhist associations and performing rituals (bigger ones are supported by their main, ancestral halls in Southeast Asia, especially Singapore). She noted that some vegetarian disciples were adopted and ordained by Buddhist masters, contributing to the Buddhization of some vegetarian halls, and that while the sect was seen as heterodox in China, it was not banned in Southeast Asia and flourished in secrecy.

Dr Show also answered questions on the sect’s beliefs and practices, including an earlier strict form of cultivation that included meditation and alchemical practices inspired by the Three Teachings, attaining higher status via examinations involving chanting and training in fortune-telling and medical knowledge; and how higher-ranking members were designated as such on tombstones while some preferred to be identified as Buddhist. She also shared about the impact of the halls’ foodways on the region’s foodscapes, with masters and nuns advancing vegetarianism by introducing dishes and establishing restaurants with their creative culinary skills. Finally, Dr Show discussed how early female immigrants played key roles in the halls by providing funds, forming connections, performing and chanting for donations, donating to schools in the region, and even venturing into poetry and painting.

New Books

Records, Recoveries, Remnants and Inter-Asian Connections: Decoding Cultural Heritage



EDITOR: ANJANA SHARMA

Publisher: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute
Pages: 285
ISBN (Soft Cover): 978-981-47-8641-6
Price: US\$29.90 / S\$39.90

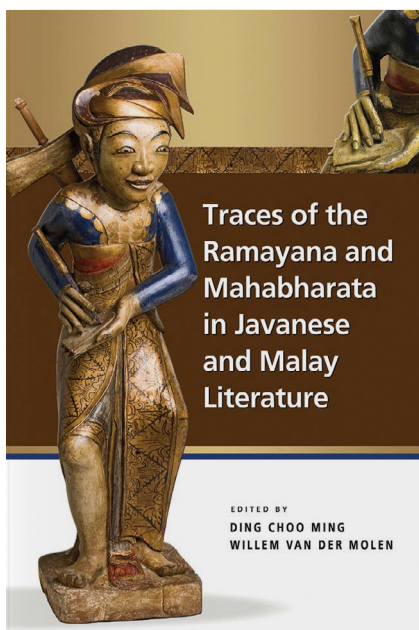
Records, Recoveries, Remnants and Inter-Asian Interconnections: Decoding Cultural Heritage has its conceptual core the inter-regional networks of Nalanda Mahavihara and its unique place in the Asian imaginary. The revival of Nalanda university in 2010 as a symbol of a shared inter-Asian heritage is this collection's core narrative. The multidisciplinary essays interrogate ways in which ideas, objects, texts, and travellers have shaped – and in turn have been shaped by – changing global politics and the historical imperative

that underpins them. The question of what constitutes cultural authenticity and heritage valuation is inscribed from positions that support, negate, or reframe existing discourses with reference to Southeast and East Asia.

The essays in this collection offer critical, scholarly, and nuanced views on the vexed questions of regional and inter-regional dynamics, of racial politics and their flattening hegemonic discourses in relation to the rich tangible and intangible heritage that defines an interconnected Asia.

For more information:
<https://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg/publication/2305>

Traces of the Ramayana and Mahabharata in Javanese and Malay Literature



EDITORS: DING CHOO MING, WILLEM VAN DER MOLEN

Publisher: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute
Pages: 229
ISBN (Soft Cover): 978-981-4786-57-7
Price: US\$ 29.90 / S\$35.90

Local renderings of the two Indian epics Ramayana and Mahabharata in Malay and Javanese literature have existed since around the ninth and tenth centuries. In the following centuries new versions were created alongside the old ones, and these opened up interesting new directions. They questioned the views of previous versions and laid different accents, in a continuous process of modernization and adaptation, successfully satisfying the curiosity of their audiences for more than a thousand years.

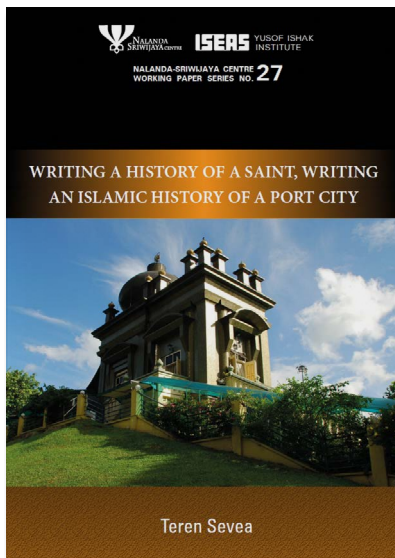
Much of this history is still unclear. For a long time, scholarly research made little progress, due to its preoccupation with problems of origin. The present volume, going beyond identifying sources, analyses the socio-literary contexts and ideological foundations of seemingly similar contents and concepts in different periods; it examines the literary functions of borrowing and intertextual referencing, and calls upon the visual arts to illustrate the independent character of the epic tradition in Southeast Asia.

For more information:
<https://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg/publication/2308>

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.

Writing a History of a Saint, Writing an Islamic History of a Port City



AUTHOR: TERENCE SEVEA

Abstract: This paper analyses multilingual hagiographies and historical traditions of a nineteenth century Islamic miracle worker (*keramat*), Sayyid Nuh bin Muhammad al-Habshi (d. 1866), who lies buried in Singapore and is popularly venerated as a *keramat* amongst devotees. Like most *keramats* and Islamic saints, he enjoys an afterlife across Muslim societies of the Indian Ocean. The paper will focus on the texts and traditions that remembered the quotidian lives and afterlives of these *keramats* in the Malay Peninsula. These texts and traditions have been

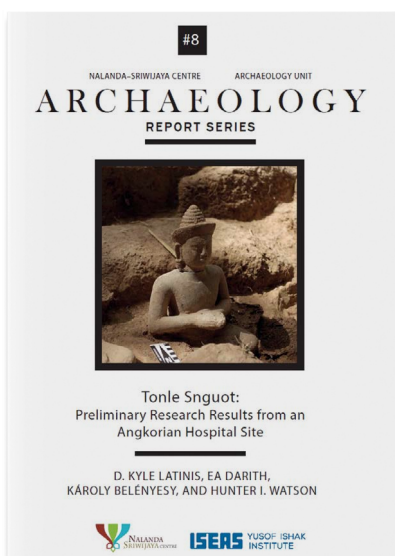
preoccupied with the *keramat's* miracles, his healing powers, his flights, his urban cults, his relationships with Europeans, his 'crimes', his prison sentences, prison-breaks, alleged 'madness', and Sufism. As this paper demonstrates, there is an 'archive' of traditions of this *keramat* that has been memorised by Islamic historians, preserved by them for posterity, and passed on across generations of believers by a reliable chain of transmitters. Historical traditions of this archive have been compiled in Malay hagiographies and in Tamil poems.

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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.

Tonle Snguot: Preliminary Research Results from an Angkorian Hospital Site



AUTHOR: D. KYLE LATINIS, EA DARITH, KÁROLY BELÉNYESY, AND HUNTER I. WATSON

Abstract: Tonle Snguot is an 11th/12th century CE hospital site at the northern gate of Angkor Thom, Siem Reap, Cambodia. It was partially excavated by an international team from the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre (NSC), APSARA Authority, and East Asia Summit (EAS) training participants in 2017. This was part of an EAS research and training mission supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Singapore, the NSC and the ISEAS- Yusof Ishak Institute. Statuary and habitation remains were recovered. cursory analysis is provided throughout

the report – ranging from large-scale settlement concerns to smaller-scale "hospital-compound" and artifact-specific topics. The following report is intended to provide theoretical, methodological, and 'ancient Angkorian medical industry' data, information and speculations. Several sections are theory-method focused while other sections provide descriptive results. The overall intent was to explore and identify habitation sites related to the hospital compound.

THE COMPLETE SET OF THE NSC WORKING PAPERS CAN BE ACCESSED VIA:
[HTTPS://WWW.ISEAS.EDU.SG/ARTICLES-COMMENTARIES/NSC-AU-ARCHAEOLOGY-REPORT-SERIES](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/nsc-au-archaeology-report-series)

2018 Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre- Nalanda University Internship

The NSC has invited applications from students at the Nalanda University (NU) for the 2018 NSC-NU Internship Programme. First inaugurated in 2016, the programme is meant to strengthen institutional links between NSC and NU and to offer NU students an array of library and research resources in order to facilitate their academic development. The successful applicant will spend a month in Singapore at NSC where they will have access to the ISEAS Library and participate in NSC and ISEAS activities.

Dates: 1 - 31 July 2018

Venue: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore

“Ten Years Of Archaeological Research In Indonesia: Highlights From The National Archaeology Research Center” by Bambang Budi Utomo and Shinatria Adhityatama

The National Archaeology Research Center (PUSLITARKENAS) was established shortly after Indonesia Independence, on the foundations of the Dutch colonial Antiquity Service (*Oudheidkundige Dienst*, 1931). For about 70 years after its creation, PUSLITARKENAS has conducted archaeological surveys and research at a much wider scale throughout the archipelago on land as well as underwater. The last ten years saw groundbreaking discoveries from prehistory to the Second World War period; those highlights will be presented in this seminar. These endeavors range from the Harimau cave, a site once inhabited by the Srwijayan people on the estuary of Musi River (South Sumatra), to the early Mataram period Lijangan settlement site in Java, on the slope of Mt Sindoro (9th c.), and lastly, the shipwreck of the German U-boat which sank in the Java Sea in 1944.

Date: 8 August 2018, 10:00 - 11:30am

Venue: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute Seminar Room 2

External Conference - Asian Studies Association of Australia

Co-organised by the Sydney Southeast Asia Centre, the China Studies Centre, and the School of Languages and Culture, the 2018 conference theme, Area Studies and Beyond, “builds upon traditional interdisciplinary fields of research within Asian Studies and seeks to move beyond them, to celebrate the full breadth and depth of scholarly interest in Asia.”

Hélène Njoto (ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute) will be presenting at this conference on “The Impact of Foreign Communities on Javanese Urban and Architectural History” in the panel, “The Humanities in Asia: Visual and Literary Perspectives A” on Wednesday, 4 July 2018, 1:30 - 2:50PM.

Date: 3 - 5 July 2018

Venue: University of Sydney, Australia

2018 NSC Field School: Archaeology and Art History

The 2018 Field School will focus on the ancient polity of Majapahit (ca 13th-15th centuries CE). Led by Hélène Njoto (ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute) and Bambang Budi Utomo (PUSLITARKENAS), participants will conduct intensive archaeological and art historical research as well as heritage management at Mount Penanggungan, Trawas, Mojokerto, East Java. Penanggungan is regarded as one of the most sacred mountains in Java, with over 100 sites discovered on its slopes.

The Field School maintains a unique full-spectrum approach designed to introduce participants to research design, methodology, field skills, excavation, analysis, and presentation. Funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Singapore), the Field School is a collaboration between the Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre (NSC), ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute (ISEAS), Singapore; and Pusat Penelitian Akeologi Nasional (PUSLITARKENAS; The National Archaeology Research Center). It will be hosted at the Ubaya Penanggungan Center, Trawas East Java.

The Field School will culminate with student presentations at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute on 10 August 2018 (details TBA).

Date: 22 July - 11 August 2018

Venue: Indonesia and Singapore

**NSC FIELD SCHOOL:
ARCHAEOLOGY AND
ART HISTORY**

FOCUS: MAJAPAHIT AND MOUNT PENANGGUNGAN
Trawas, East Java (Indonesia)

July 22–August 11 2018

Programme Overview
The Field School focuses on archaeology, art history, anthropology, history and related fields. Preference will be given to candidates in archaeology and art history. The programme is structured for full time second or third year undergraduate students. MA and PhD students with little to no experience in excavations may also be considered. This Field School will begin in East Java, Indonesia, and conclude in Singapore.

Participants will engage in lectures, site visits, and field training (survey and excavations). Analysis, reporting and team presentations are expected.

Applicants must be citizens of East Asia Summit (EAS) countries: Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, United States, and Vietnam. The language of instruction will be English.

Application forms and further information can be found here: <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/about/iseas-international-centre/archaeology-and-art-history-field-school/>

Applications and queries must be sent to: nscafa@iseas.edu.sg until the space is full. Application deadline: 8 April 2018

Grants
Travel grants will be offered to successful applicants to cover their travel expenses or part of it. Meals and lodging will be provided.

2018 Session
The Field School will include numerous site visits and lectures in East Java. It will focus on the ancient polity of Majapahit (ca 13th-15th centuries CE). Participants will conduct intensive archaeological and art historical research as well as heritage management at Mount Penanggungan, Trawas, Mojokerto, East Java. The Field School maintains a unique full-spectrum approach designed to introduce participants to research design, methodology, field skills, excavation, analysis, and presentation.

Penanggungan is regarded as one of the most sacred mountains in Java, identified with the summit of Mt Mahameru during the Hindu-Buddhist period. Well over 100 archaeological sites, comprising temporal structures, cave tombs, bathing places and the remnants of religious communities, have been discovered on its slopes. These historical remains represent the classical age of East Javanese art spanning the 10th to 16th century. The majority of these structures were apparently constructed during the Majapahit period (ca. 1300–1511), thereby contributing to a broader understanding of the cultural dynamics of the so-called ‘age of transition’ in Javanese history.

This Field School is a collaboration between the Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre (NSC), ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute (ISEAS), Singapore and Pusat Penelitian Akeologi Nasional (PUSLITARKENAS; National Centre for Archaeological Research) Indonesia. It will be hosted at the Ubaya Penanggungan Centre (UPC), Trawas.

Hélène Njoto (ISEAS) and Bambang Budi Utomo (PUSLITARKENAS) will lead the Field School.

Logos: Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, PUSLITARKENAS, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore, Pusat Penelitian Akeologi Nasional.



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ISEAS – YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE
30 HENG MUI KENG TERRACE
SINGAPORE 119614
TEL: (65) 6778 0955
FAX: (65) 6778 1735