

NSC HIGHLIGHTS

News from the Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre

#1

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*Workshop on the Heritage of
Ancient and Urban Sites in
Southeast Asia*

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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.

NSC HIGHLIGHTS

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EDITORIAL

By Terence Chong

Head, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the first issue of NSC Highlights.

NSC Highlights is our quarterly newsletter to showcase the vast array of work by our scholars from a variety of disciplines such as history, art history, linguistics and archaeology. This variety of disciplines attests to the NSC's broad mission. Inaugurated at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in 2009 by George Yeo and Amartya Sen, NSC's mission is to develop an understanding of intra-Asian linkages through the historic cultural centres of Nalanda in South Asia and Sriwijaya in Southeast Asia.

2016 promises to be a packed year.

The year's first major workshop, "The Heritage of Ancient and Urban Sites in Southeast Asia: Giving Voice to Local Priorities", was held on 14-15 March. It gathered speakers from the grassroots,

academia, and government to explore issues of local heritage, communities and politics.

On 14 March 2016, the NSC Archaeology Unit Gallery was officially opened at the ISEAS Library. The Gallery proudly presents the on-going excavation work of NSC's Archaeology Unit (AU) in Singapore and Cambodia.

NSC also believes in forging mutually beneficial partnerships with reputable institutions. One such example is its collaboration with the School of Oriental and Asian Studies (UK) and Universitas Surabaya (Indonesia) to conduct the "Summer Programme in Southeast Asian Art History & Conservation" from 23 July to 2 August. Here students from the region and beyond will converge in Trawas, East Java, to study the artistic heritage from the Central Javanese 'Hindu-Buddhist' period to the late Majapahit and Early Islamic period (8th-early 17th century).

NSC has strong links with Nalanda University (NU). An example of NSC-

NU collaboration will be the conference "Imagining Asia(s): Networks, Actors, Sites" to be held in October at ISEAS, Singapore. The conference will attempt to move beyond the divides of area studies scholarship and the arbitrary borders set by colonial empires and postcolonial states in order to explore how mobile bodies and cultures interact to foster new images, identities, and imaginations of Asia.

The Archaeology Field School in Koh Ker, Cambodia from 20 November to 15 December will bring NSC's year to a close. The 2016 Field School will be our fourth Field School in five years and is open to students from East Asia Summit member countries interested in the craft of archaeology.

Finally, I am grateful to the immediate past Head of NSC, Assoc Prof Derek Heng, who has been instrumental in developing the Centre's scholarship and networks.



FEATURE:

2015 Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre Archaeological Field School

By David Kyle Latinis

Visiting Fellow, Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre

Digging Up the Past at Koh Ker, Cambodia

The mysteries of the 10th century Angkorian capital of Koh Ker have long intrigued visitors and residents alike. Until recently this ancient city in north-eastern Cambodia was obscured by time and forest cover. Undeterred, the 2015 Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre (NSC) Archaeological Field School set off to unearth the secrets of Koh Ker’s ancient way of life!

What’s the Field School about?

The NSC Field School is a multi-disciplinary project that includes archaeology, anthropology, art history, and related fields. Three Field Schools held since 2012 have hosted 40 participants from Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Myanmar, New Zealand, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, the US, and Vietnam.

The Field School is part of an ongoing collaboration between ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute and APSARA National Authority, and is funded by the Ministry of Foreign

ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute

Affairs (Singapore) in order to strengthen East Asia Summit (EAS) linkages and networks.

Over 90 per cent of our Field School participants are postgraduate and senior undergraduate students while the rest are young professionals pursuing higher degrees. Everyone shares a passion for archaeology and history.

Excavating at Koh Ker

Koh Ker, about 120km from Angkor, holds over 180 sanctuaries. However, only a few monuments are accessible because of thick forest, undergrowth, and the lack of roads. The most eye-catching feature is the 36m high pyramid, Prasat Thom, thought to have functioned as a state temple under Jayavarman IV.

This 10th century “state-monument” is one of scores of ancient monuments and shrines that have shaped ancient Koh Ker. Our excavations sought to uncover the way people lived and worked around Prasat Thom, The Rahal (the large artificial reservoir), and several other major sites including what is likely the Royal Residence.

Prasat Thom: Koh Ker’s iconic 10th century seven-tiered pyramid. (Credit: D. Kyle Latinis)



Excavation at Koh Ker 2 – recovering an intact early Khmer glazed jarlet. (Credit: S. T. Foo)

The 2015 Field School excavated three sites adjacent to Prasat Thom. More than just digging, interactive lectures on ancient urbanisation patterns covering the Funan, Chenla, Angkor and post-Angkor periods were conducted. Participants made visits to over 30 major sites, museums and institutions, including tailored treks to Angkor Borei, Sambor Prei Kuk, and Angkor Wat to explore the evolution of ancient Khmer cities and civilisation.



Michael Ng (top left, second from left) and Aaron Kao (top right), NSC Archaeology Unit, provided specialised training modules for topographic surveys and illustration. (Credit: Young Wei Ping, Kyle Latinis)

Using Technology

Archaeologists today use more than just the humble spade to uncover the past. LIDAR imaging, a form of aerial topographic data collection, was used in our Field School to narrow down the areas for investigation. Short for 'light and radar', LIDAR is a special apparatus affixed to a helicopter which shoots and receives laser pulses from the ground to help reveal a topographic image of ground features under the forest canopy.

The ancient landscape revealed at Koh Ker is far more complex than originally imagined. LIDAR revealed many archaeological features, but more verification is needed to determine the dates of their construction and abandonment. Cambodian archaeologists have conducted prior surface surveys and verified that there are ancient mounds containing Angkorian and Chinese pottery. The mounds are likely habitation and/or workshop sites.



Architectural history and history training by Dr. H el ene Njoto and Dr. Kenneth Hall at Angkor Wat – exemplifies the experiential learning emphasis of the Field School. (Credit: D. Kyle Latinis)

During the 2015 Field School, we tested two mounds and one structural site near an area thought to feature water-control mechanisms. The sites yielded close to 25,000 artefacts and organic material such as local and exotic ceramics, architectural

remnants, animal bones and metal fragments. Participants designed specific research questions vis- a-vis the finds, analysed their data, and presented their projects at a special forum in Singapore.

Importantly, we included elements of ethnography and ethno-archaeology training, not only for research purposes, but to instil social responsibility and local inclusion in cultural resource and heritage management. At the international level, the NSC Field Schools are designed to facilitate EAS partnership and network development as well as cross-cultural competency among future leaders. Detailed feedback reports indicated that participants were overwhelmingly positive of their experience at the Field Schools.

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The next NSC Archaeological Field School will be held on 20 Nov – 15 Dec 2016. The deadline for applications is 22 July 2016. For more information, please visit: <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/centres/nalanda-sriwijaya-centre/archaeology-unit/the-nsc-archaeological-field-school>

“Exposing participants to early civilisations from Funan to Angkor provided the students a holistic overview and enhanced perspective for understanding the archaeology of Koh Ker.”

--2015 NSC Archaeological Field School Staff feedback

Unique brown glazed stoneware head recovered from excavations.
 (Credit: Young Wei Ping)



EVENTS:

Workshop on Heritage of Ancient and Urban Sites in Southeast Asia



By Elizabeth Moore

Visiting Fellow, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre



Group photo in front of ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute (Credit: Joyce Iris Zaide)

The workshop on “The Heritage of Ancient and Urban Sites in Southeast Asia: Giving Voice to Local Priorities” was hosted by Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute on March 14-15, 2016. Dr Terence Chong, Head of the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, opened the workshop, welcoming the twenty-two speakers from Cambodia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia.

The workshop conveners from the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, Prof Elizabeth Moore, Dr H  l  ne Njoto and Dr Kyle Latinis chaired the Myanmar, Indonesia and Cambodia panels, respectively, with Datin Paduka Zuraina Majid, Independent Scholar and Commissioner of Heritage (rtd’), Kuala Lumpur, Dr Stephen Murphy, Asian Civilisations

ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute

Museum (ACM), Singapore and Associate Professor Dr Derek Heng of the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre and Yale-NUS College chairing the Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore panels.

The speakers were diverse in age and experience, from grassroots organisations, government ministries, and international organisations such as UNESCO. All called for more education on heritage to engage and sustain community awareness. Education beyond the classroom included field trips to ancient temples, producing graphic comic books, municipal histories and opening dialogues between religious and civil users of municipal temples. Awareness does not mean fossilising the past but rather, it equates to pride in the



Panels (top to bottom): Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore, Myanmar, Malaysia. (Credit: Joyce Iris Zaide)

past, in ways that are part of the continuing life of the site. Speakers also stressed the need for better communication between municipal, national or international authorities, and local grassroots organisations.

Whether called grassroots, heritage groups, trusts or associations, it was clear from the projects presented at the workshop that these local groups and voices have now garnered recognition for their efficacy in the complex process of making and managing of heritage today.

The workshop proceedings can be accessed via: <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/centres/nalanda-sriwijaya-centre/research-tools/compilations/proceedings-heritage-of-ancient-and-urban-sites>

The Dig: 100 Days of the Empress Place Rescue Archaeology Excavation

By Foo Shu Tieng

Research Officer, Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre



Archaeology Unit field crew at Empress Place (Credit: Patrick Tan, aka 'Mono Tan')

A photographic exhibition entitled 'The Dig: 100 Days of the Empress Place Rescue Archaeology Excavation,' was held on 29 April 2016 – 15 May 2016 at the Learning Gallery, Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM), Singapore. The exhibition at the ACM was held in conjunction with the Singapore Heritage Fest 2016. It was officially launched on 30 April 2016 by Dr. Terence Chong, Head of the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, who gave the opening remarks. This was followed by curator Lim Chen Sian's remarks and a tour of the exhibition.

The exhibition showcased 30 black-and-white photographs by Patrick 'Mono' Tan and Ung Ruey Loon. The

photographs on display captured over 100 days of the archaeological rescue excavation. It portrays the team's bold efforts in retrieving the artefacts from the long-forgotten past. A selection of the artefacts from Singapore's 14th century Temasek era were displayed, along with a small number of archaeological tools typically used during the excavations. Postcards were created from selected photographs. Visitors were offered the chance to write about their visit to the exhibition to their friends and relatives as the postcards could be sent locally for free.



Top: Terence Chong (extreme left) and Lim Chen Sian (extreme right) with the exhibiting photographers. Middle: Visitors at the photographic exhibition. Bottom: Field equipment and photo exhibition. (Credit: Young Wei Ping)

PEOPLE:

Leonard Y. Andaya*An interview by Lim Chen Sian*

Associate Fellow, Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre



Leonard Y. Andaya, Visiting Senior Fellow at NSC, is a professor of Southeast Asian history at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa in Honolulu.

He has written extensively on the early modern history of Southeast Asia, particularly on Indonesia and Malaysia. His most recent books are *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), and with Barbara Watson Andaya, *A History of Early Modern Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

His current research focuses on the complex network of relationships in eastern Indonesia that helped bind together the disparate cultural communities into a functioning unity in the early modern period. It offers a non-state model of a polity that can be applied to peripheral societies in the seas, the jungles, and the hills, not only in Southeast Asia, but in other parts of the world.



Tell us a little about your research here at NSC, what are you working on?

At the NSC I am working on a book project, which uses a sea perspective to understand the functioning of a large and diverse area of eastern Indonesia. The ultimate aim is to demonstrate how interlocking networks of different kinds (economic, ritual, subsistence) enabled the effective functioning of societies that eschewed overarching political frameworks in the early modern period (c. 1400-c.early 19th century).

Your book “Leaves of the Same tree” explores identity and ethnicity of the Malay World. Would you be able to share with us how this work came about?

What perhaps sparked my thoughts regarding ethnicity was the Malaysian Constitution's determination of what constituted a “Malay”. There were already some excellent studies on Malay ethnicity, but mainly by anthropologists and political scientists reflecting on the modern situation. I chose therefore to focus

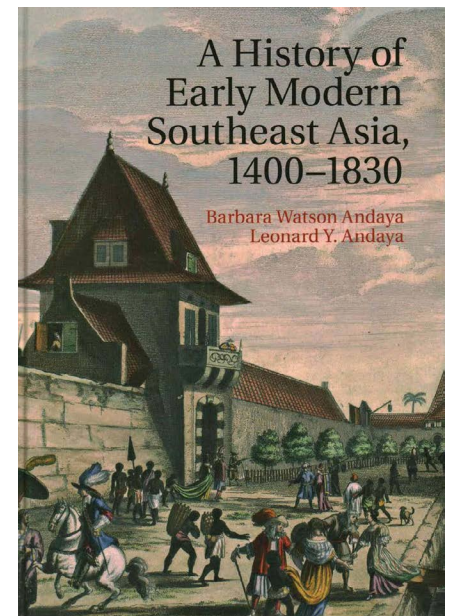
on the process or mechanism of ethnic production using a historical perspective. My research brought me to very early history, in which I tried to show how the nature of ethnic formation, particularly of the Malay, engendered other ethnicities around the Straits of Melaka, such as the Batak, Acehnese, Minangkabau, the Orang Laut, and the Orang Asli.

Do you consider yourself first as historian or a Southeast Asianist?

I think of myself as a historian of Southeast Asia because I use historical methodology to study the region. Nevertheless, as a Southeast Asianist I also employ literature, language, religion, and other disciplines to unlock some of the secrets of the Southeast Asian past.

How did you get interested in Southeast Asia?

I was always interested in Southeast Asia since my school days, most probably because my parents were immigrants from the Philippines to Hawai'i, where I was born.



A History of Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1400–1830 (2015)

Authors: Barbara Watson Andaya, Leonard Y. Andaya

Publisher: Cambridge University Press

What advice would you have for students and others interested in Southeast Asia?

One of the things that I always stress to my PhD students is the need for time and patience to learn the relevant languages and cultures that are required to study any particular subject in the region. Only with these basic requirements can one begin to delve more deeply into any aspect of the Southeast Asian past and present.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Notes from Nalanda University

By Andrea Acri

Visiting Fellow, Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre

In August 2014, more than 800 years after it ceased operations, the 'revived' Nalanda University reopened its doors in Rajgir, Bihar. Hosted by India but 'Pan-Asian' in vocation, the new Nalanda is endorsed by sixteen countries of the East Asia Summit. This modern international University promises to become an icon of Asian knowledge and a forum for improving regional understanding and appreciation of Asia's heritage and history.



I am currently spending a semester at Nalanda University as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the School of Historical Studies, where I teach postgraduate research-driven courses. The courses I instruct draw from my ongoing comparative explorations of the many cultural and religious interactions across the 'Sanskrit Cosmopolis.' Courses include "Introduction to Sanskrit (I)," "Cultural Exchanges between Premodern South and Southeast Asia," and "Research Methodologies: Mediaeval Indic Religions and Rituals."

The small size of the classes, the students' keen interest, and their propensity for debate have turned teaching into a highly interactive and mutually enriching experience.

The presence of important Buddhist and Jaina places of worship, museums, and archaeological sites (such as the old Nalanda Mahavihara ruins, Vulture's Peak, and the Sondanbar caves, among others) in the history-laden environs has ensured that the didactic experience did not remain confined to the class, but also continued 'in the field.'

The community of students is still quite small. There are about 60 of them, divided between the School of Historical Studies and the School of Ecology and Environmental Studies. Many more students are expected in September 2016 when the new School of Buddhist Studies, Philosophy and Comparative Religions will be inaugurated. While most students hail from different regions of India, there are contingents from Laos, Myanmar, Bhutan, and Japan.

My impressions from both the students and the faculty at Nalanda are those of a community moved by the ideals of the 'Nalanda spirit.' This spirit seeks to apply the values of the 'old Nalanda' in order to understand and solve the pressing issues of our increasingly complex and interconnected world.

By integrating bright minds and inspired individuals, our efforts significantly advance the exchange of ideas and applied knowledge. Hopefully, this will also improve regional understanding and promote peace.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

NSC Working Paper Series

The Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre Working Paper Series has been established to provide an avenue for 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.

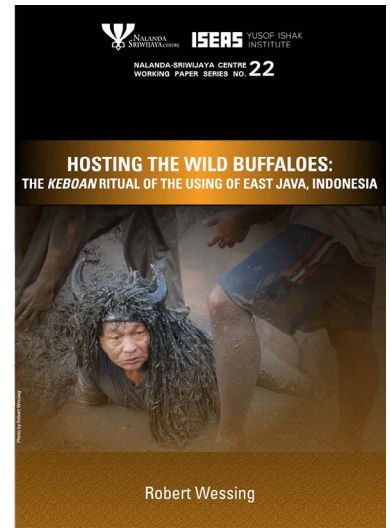
NSC Working Paper No. 22

Hosting the Wild Buffaloes: The *Keboan* Ritual of the Using of East Java, Indonesia

Author: Robert Wessing

Abstract: This article discusses the *keboan* ritual that is celebrated in two Using villages in Java, Indonesia. During this ritual, male descendants of the community's founder become possessed by spirits and behave like water buffaloes. In the past, the ritual was a thanksgiving for the recent rice harvest. In the light of the continued Islamisation of the area, the ritual is now cast as an expression of gratitude to the Almighty for sparing the people from poor harvest and famine. Religious constraints and modernisation have affected the event's ritual dimension, changing it, especially in one village, into a form of folk-theatre.

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



NSC AU Archaeological Report Series

The Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre Archaeology Unit (NSC AU) Archaeology Report Series has been established to provide an avenue for publishing and disseminating 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. The overall intent is to benefit communities of interest and augment ongoing and future research.

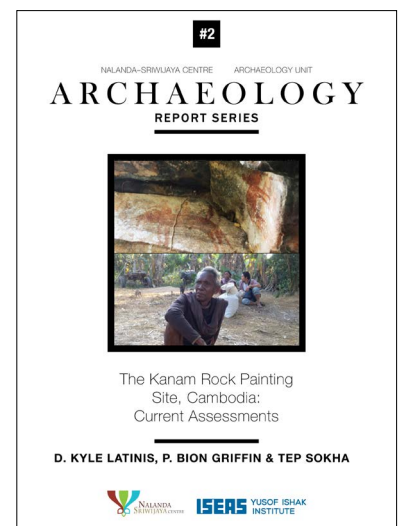
NSC AU report No. 2

The Kanam Rock Painting Site, Cambodia: Current Assessments

Author: D. Kyle Latinis, P. Bion Griffin, & Tep Sokha

Abstract: This paper presents an analysis of the Kanam Rock Art Site in the Cardamom Mountains, Cambodia. Elephant, deer and humans are dominant themes. Scenes may relate to deer skin trade and elephant capture during the Angkorian and post-Angkorian periods. Decorrelation Stretch (DStretch) significantly enhanced image analysis.

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



IN THE NEWS:

“Nalanda a reminder of Asian collaboration”
by Terence Chong and Andrea Acri (8 April 2016, *Today*)

The full article can be accessed via:

<http://www.todayonline.com/commentary/nalanda-reminder-asian-collaboration>

“Parliament: Review of archaeological finds underway to address gaps in existing laws”
by Melody Zaccheus (9 May 2016, *Straits Times*)

The full article can be accessed via:

<http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/parliament-review-of-archaeological-finds-underway-to-address-gaps-in-existing-laws>

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Public Lectures

Chinese Involvement in the Trade of Eastern Indonesia in the Early Modern Period

Speaker: Professor Leonard Andaya
Date: 9 June 2016
Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 nn
Venue: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute Seminar Room 2

Mystery City: Unearthing the 10th Century Angkorian Capital of Koh Ker

Speaker: Dr Kyle Latinis
Date: 7 October 2016
Time: 7.00 pm - 8:30 pm
Venue: Asian Civilisations Museum Ngee Ann Auditorium

This lecture is jointly organised by the Asian Civilisations Museum and the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre.

Field Programmes

Summer Programme in Southeast Asian Art History & Conservation

Focus: Premodern Java
23 July - 2 August 2016
Trawas, East Java (Indonesia)
(Applications for this programme are closed)

This Summer Programme will focus on premodern Javanese Art History in both its local and translocal dimensions. The programme will cover the Central Javanese ‘Hindu-Buddhist’ period to the late Majapahit and Early Islamic period (ca. 8th–early 17th century). Held over ten days at Universitas Surabaya’s Integrated Outdoor Campus (IOC), the programme will take place at the foot of Mount Penanggungan in the town of Trawas (Mojokerto, East Java). Mount Penanggungan is regarded as one of the most sacred mountains in Java, and identified with the summit of the holy Mount Mahāmeru during the Hindu-Buddhist period.

The programme is jointly organised by the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at the ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute (Singapore), Universitas Surabaya (Indonesia), and SOAS’ Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme (SAAAP) at the Department of the History of Art and Archaeology, School of Arts (UK).

2016 Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre (NSC) Archaeological Field School

Location: Cambodia and Singapore
20 November - 15 December 2016
Applications are now open!

Applications for participation in the field school are open now until 22 July 2016 (5pm). We welcome students and junior level professionals who are citizens of the East Asia Summit (EAS) countries to apply. Please refer to the feature article within this Newsletter for more details.

Applications can also be accessed via <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/centres/nalanda-sriwijaya-centre/archaeology-unit/the-nsc-archaeological-field-school>



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