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### CONSERVATION

Blending Science and local know-how







Also inside

World Heritage Site Status: boon or bane?

### SEAMEO-SPAFA Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts

SPAFA Journal is published three times a year by the SEAMEO-SPAFA Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts. It is a forum for scholars, researchers, professionals and those interested in archaeology, performing arts, visual arts and cultural activities in Southeast Asia to share views, ideas and experiences. The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of SPAFA.

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- Promote awareness and appreciation of the cultural heritage of Southeast Asian countries;
- ► Help enrich cultural activities in the region;
- Strengthen professional competence in the fields of archaeology and fine arts through sharing of resources and experiences on a regional basis;
- Increase understanding among the countries of Southeast Asia through collaboration in archaeological and fine arts programmes.



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### **Assistants**

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### **Publication Co-ordinator**

Ean Lee

### **Photographic Services**

Nipon Sud-Ngam

### **Back Cover**

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### **Printers**



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Public Company Limited
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SPAFA Journal
SPAFA Regional Centre
SPAFA Building
81/1 Sri Ayutthaya Road, Samsen, Theves
Bangkok 10300, Thailand
Tel. (662) 280-4022-29 Fax. (662) 280-4030
E-mail: ean@seameo-spafa.org

spafa03@yahoo.com Website:www.seameo-spafa.org The SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SPAFA) promotes professional competence, awareness and preservation of cultural heritage in the fields of archaeology and fine arts in Southeast Asia. It is a regional centre constituted in 1985 from the SEAMEO Project in Archaeology and Fine Arts, which provided the acronym SPAFA. The Centre is under the aegis of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO).

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## Conservation: blending science and local know-how

Patcharawee Tunprawat and Ean Lee report on a Southeast Asian programme incorporating traditional knowledge and scientific principles of conservation

Museum professionals from Southeast Asia participated in a four-week training course in Vientiane to study traditional knowledge and scientific principles of conservation with the hope that they may contribute to the maintenance of collections in their respective countries.

Experts from other parts of the world also joined the programme to share their knowledge on how to take care of artefacts and collections.



Dr. Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, Director, Department of Heritage, at the opening ceremony

The International Course on Traditional Knowledge and Scientific Principles of Conservation was held between 19th November and 14<sup>th</sup> December 2007 in Laos as part of the CollAsia 2010 programme (a partnership between ICCROM and SPAFA). It is also organised in collaboration with the Lao National Museum, the Department of Heritage, Ministry of Information and Culture, Lao PDR, with a generous support from UNESCO Paris.



Dyeing cloths with indigo dye

The course focused on using scientific principles and traditional knowledge to preserve local heritage, and aimed to strengthen mechanisms and develop knowledge of heritage. It was conducted in the form of a workshop concentrated on the principles governing material culture and its behaviour, and on

the social significance of heritage. Participants were able to share their knowledge and experiences, and to study the scientific principles behind the traditional methods of conservation. Their skills were broadened through group work as well as hands-on activities.

In total, 26 participants and observers from nine Southeast Asian countries participated in the workshop (the countries are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam).

### Background

Among the main objectives of the seven-year CollAsia 2010 programme are the improvement in conditions for the preservation of heritage collections in 10 Southeast Asian countries; the generation of knowledge about Southeast Asian collections, their material behavior and the options available for their conservation; and the strengthening of capacity and resources of institutions and professionals to implement conservation strategies. CollAsia 2010 training activities aim to enhance the capacity to understand and discuss the values contained in heritage and institutional mandates as the context for formulating conservation actions. They focus on the material nature of the collections, with the idea that negotiating these intangible and tangible dimensions of heritage as interdependent systems is the basis of sound conservation strategies.



Working on a task on storage

For several years now, there has been rising interest in exploring and promoting the use of traditional and local materials as well as methods

in conservation. It has become obvious that reducing the dependence on imported materials would lead to lowering costs, and establish opportunities for long-term collaboration with local producers and industries.

Incorporating traditional ways of working in conservation practices highlights the links between the living heritage of craft traditions and other specialists from outside the formal

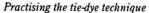


A Vietnamese participant making a presentation in the class



Washing the dyed cloths







Group photo with the owner of the Lao Textile
Museum

heritage field. The term "traditional methods" usually refers to practices in use for a long time in communities to produce, maintain, preserve and treat objects; and the body of knowledge accompanying these practices is often found in oral traditions, or ancient manuscripts, and transmitted through largely non-verbal apprenticeship processes. The incorporation of these non-western, non-academic knowledge systems in mainstream conservation approaches is a challenge for the scientific literacy and critical thinking skills of the professionals working in the heritage institutions.

### **Course Objectives**

The purpose of this course was to establish mechanisms for sharing knowledge, methods and approaches among the professionals caring for Southeast Asian heritage collections. The participants were offered the opportunities to review, discuss, and compare living cultural practices and current Western conservation approaches, and scientific principles underlying the creation, use and conservation of collections. Traditional conservation solutions from Asia were also discussed and used as examples on how to understand, evaluate and further develop different local approaches. These included materials and strategies relevant for pest management, handling practices, storage of objects and collections, and cleaning of objects and spaces (spiritual and material cleaning).

The emphasis was in using scientific analysis to understand the items displayed in a museum. Participants were trained to observe and understand the major risks, and to be systematic in exhibiting the artefacts.

The course also dealt with several matters, such as practices in different fields; collecting, storing and displaying; environmental control; skills in monitoring relative humidity and temperature; conserving natural history specimens; documenting traditional practices; and interdisciplinary collaboration (with curators).

## Lessons Learnt: Traditional Knowledge Meets the Scientific Principles of Conservation

The subject of the course addressed very complex themes. It involved the question of how to approach traditional methods of conservation and care of cultural heritage as practised in the region, as well as how to apply a scientific method to conservation in general. The study visit

to the Houey Hong Vocational Centre, for example, provided participants a hands-on experience with dyeing in the textile workshop. It was not only very interesting and inspiring, but a totally new world for them. While craft-based textile production is still common all over Southeast Asia, it seems that the heritage professionals in the region neither regard the living craft traditions as a source of knowledge on the collections in their care nor have experience in working with specialist craftsmen. It is an important challenge for the future of the profession to develop concrete strategies in working together for mutual benefit. Such initiatives strengthen the museum professionals' understanding of the material culture, and provide the craft sector a channel for using the museum collections and their institutional knowledge in sustainable product development which will ensure the survival of the crafts.

An interesting and unexpected interpretation of traditional knowledge in conservation was raised by some participants, who made the point that many of the procedures they follow in their daily work within their institution could be considered traditional knowledge. Practices have been passed on to them by older colleagues in a fashion resembling inter-generational lore ("this is the way it is done here"), and they

A visit to the Houey Hong Vocational Centre





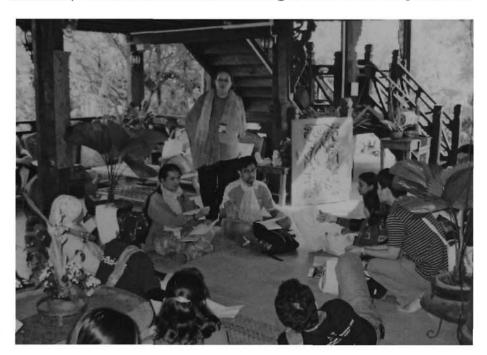
Participants visiting exhibition, Lao Textile Museum

themselves continue using them with little or no knowledge or understanding of the underlying reasons, and sometimes even of expected results. This perception points to the need for reviewing and exploring institutional systems of work and knowledge transmission.

The course contents include areas such as team-building and project planning; studying objects; preserving the material versus preserving the history of the object; working together with local community and learning from them (and sharing) conservation decisions relating to the preservation of local heritage; understanding chemical composition of materials, with an introduction to organic and inorganic compounds; and discussing scientific method applied in conservation practices, and science as a tool used in conservation.

During the workshop sessions on object examination and museum display, training in identification of composition, condition, signs of change, and formulation of hypothesis was included. Discussions on the concept of stability and the difference between signs of change and cause of change were also held.

On the subject of handling objects, proper handling with due respect, and mechanical connections and understanding the principles of adhesion, cohesion and chemical bonding were some of the prominent



Discussions on the exhibition at the Lao Textile Museum

topics raised. Further investigation was carried out on chemical, physical and biological change, concept of reversibility, and the agents of deterioration, exposure and vulnerability, stability and ageing, and appearance, structural integrity and composition.

Participants were also familiarised with measurement, the concept of precision and accuracy, scientific notation and sampling, effect of light and calculation of light intensity (dose), principles and types of sampling.

### Participants' comments

Participants commented that it was important for them to learn the different traditional methods of conservation, such as in textile conservation (the techniques and the plants used in dyeing), and the biography of objects. They also mentioned the usefulness of having learnt the magnitude of risk (identifying risks and predicting damage),





Natural dyed silk threads

Inside the Lao Textile Museum

and calculating the value of loss. A majority of them point to the subject of scientific methods of conservation as most practical, and that it could be used as a reference and guidelines in their work. They also hoped to share their experience with others in the museum communities, and improve conservation skills within their institutions.

When they were asked what subjects CollAsia 2010 programme should include in organising workshops in the future for collections professionals in the region, the following, among many others, were mentioned:

- Project planning and management in conservation
- Training in conservation (on some particular subject)
- Documentation and accessing of artefacts.
- Herbarium training curation
- Pest control using non-toxic chemicals
- Conservation, inventory, and image digitization of museum objects (pottery in particular)
- Conservation of art and manuscript on paper
- Traditional technology in Asean countries

As an outcome of the course, SPAFA will publish a book presenting insights on traditional conservation practices in Southeast Asia, with contributions from course participants.

The training team consisted of **Bertrand Lavédrine**, director of the Research Center for the Conservation of Collection (CRCC) in Paris, France; **Katriina Similä**, Collections Unit Project Manager, CollAsia Programme, and staff member of ICCROM; **José Luiz Pedersoli Júnior**, chemist in Polymer Chemistry from the University of Helsinki – Finland (1994); **Wuttikai Phathong**, founder and owner of the Kaewwanna Natural Indigo Museum in Phrae, Thailand; **Dinah Eastop**, Senior Lecturer at the Textile Conservation Centre, University of Southampton, UK; **Kevin Charles Kettle**, Project Development



Group Photo at the opening ceremony

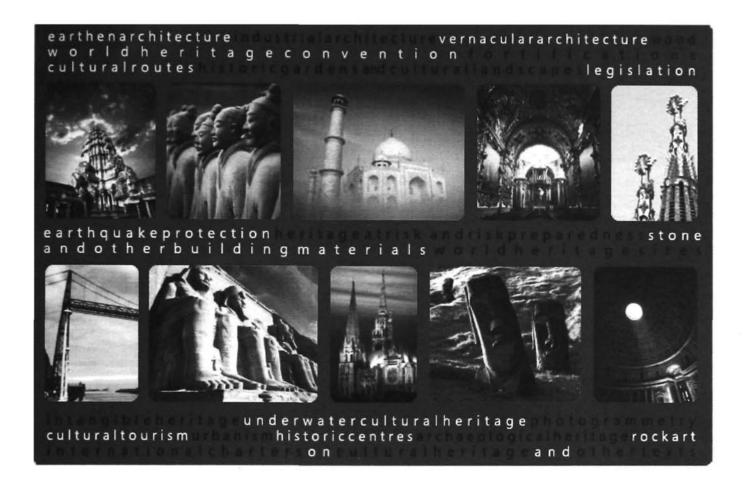
Officer for SEAMEO-SPAFA; and **Patcharawee Tunprawat**, SEAMEO-SPAFA Researcher and Project Coordinator, CollAsia Programme.

CollAsia 2010 is a partnership between SEAMEO-SPAFA (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation - Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts) and ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property). Both organisations are prominent intergovernmental organisations with recognised expertise in conservation training and experience in capacity-building and networking activities. ICCROM, established in Rome in 1959, is the only institution of its kind with a worldwide mandate to promote conservation of all types of cultural heritage, both movable and immovable. Currently comprising over 100 Member States, ICCROM contributes to preserving cultural heritage in the world today and for the future through five main areas of activity: training, information, research, cooperation and advocacy. ICCROM and SPAFA share the objective of improving the quality of conservation practice as well as raising awareness about the importance of preserving cultural heritage.

Photography: Vassana Kerdsupap, Ratchaporn Tesjeeb and Patcharawee Tunprawat

Patcharawee Tunprawat has been a researcher at SEAMEO-SPAFA since 2000 after completing her MA in Southeast Asian Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. She has been coordinating and managing various SPAFA's projects focusing on cultural heritage preservation and community heritage management, including CollAsia 2010 and the Living Heritage Sites Programme for the Mekong Sub-Region in collaboration with ICCROM. She's currently doing a PhD on community and heritage preservation in Southeast Asia at the Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University, Thailand.

**Ean Lee** is the co-ordinator of SPAFA Journal, and the Publication Manager of SEAMEO-SPAFA.



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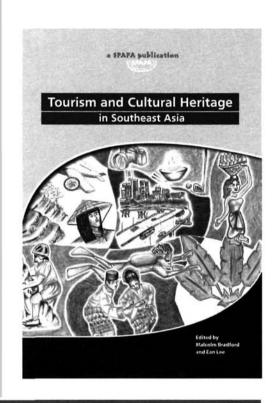
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## Tourism and Cultural Heritage in Southeast Asia



"What make these papers particularly interesting are the specific and in-depth treatments of subjects unique to the individual countries. Of special interest are those papers dealing with countries that are in the earliest stages of modern tourism development, such as Brunei and Viet Nam."

> Russell V. Keune, FAIA American Institute of Architects

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Tourism is today one of the largest industries in the world, and Southeast Asia is a favourite destination among tourists. It generates immense income and employment, and is economically beneficial, but can also leave a negative impact on the environment and culture of the host country.

The management, preservation and sustainability of cultural heritage and an ongoing discussion on their effectiveness in the Southeast Asian region are the particular focus of this publication. Case studies, and essays on heritage management and eco-tourism are presented in this volume, which includes information on the effects of tourism on Southeast Asian society and culture, and the measures and actions taken in response to the phenomenon.

Tourism and Cultural Heritage in Southeast Asia is published by SPAFA, and is available at book shops of Asia Books, River Books, all Bookazine branches, and Muang Boran in Bangkok. For information and purchase, contact:

Publication Manager,
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SPAFA Building, 81/1 Sri Ayutthaya Road
Samsen, Theves, Bangkok 10300
THAILAND
Tel (662) 280 4022-9 ext 109
Fax (662) 280 4030
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Email: spafa03@yahoo.com

## World Heritage Site Status: boon or bane?

Questions are emerging about the ever-increasing Unesco World Heritage Site List. **Ean Lee** takes a look at some of the doubts and concerns.

The World Heritage Committee ("the Committee") has recently decided to remove Germany's Dresden Elbe Valley from Unesco World Heritage List "due to the building of a four-lane bridge in the heart of the cultural landscape which meant that the property failed to keep its outstanding universal value as inscribed".



Dresden Elbe Valley

Extending some 18 km along the river from the Ubigau Palace and Ostragehege fields in the north-west, to the Pillnitz Palace and the Elbe River Island in the south-east, the Dresden Elbe Valley features low meadows, monuments and parks, and was recognized as a World Heritage Site in 2004.

The construction of the Waldschoesschen bridge across the valley, according to the Committee, would tarnish the natural beauty of the area.

An Administrative Court in Bautzen ruled in March 2007 that the 160million Euro construction project should proceed in spite of the threat that the site would be struck off the World Heritage List.

In negotiations, the Committee urged the German authorities to build a tunnel as an alternative, and advised that the damage should be addressed, and that the property would be deleted from the List if work on the bridge was not stopped.

The Dresden Elbe Valley, an 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century cultural landscape, was eventually removed from the List in 2009, and joins the Oryx Sanctuary as sites that had their world heritage status rescinded.

Oman takes the dubious honour of being the first country to have an inscribed site removed from the list.

The Committee took the unprecedented measure of delisting Oman's Oryx Sanctuary in 2007, after Oman decided to reduce the size of the site's protected area by 90%, in contravention of the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention.

Oman's decision to reduce the area for protection, as well as the decline in the population of the rare Arabian Oryx from 450 in 1996 to 65 in 2007, were perceived by the Committee as damaging the outstanding universal value of the site.

The Committee believed that Oman failed to fulfill its obligations in conserving the sanctuary, and also by planning to proceed with oil drilling at the site.

As the natural sanctuary was a massive 27,500 sq km before the reduction, the viability and capability in preventing habitat degradation and the poaching of the Arabian Oryx have always been questioned.

While two sites have been taken off the list, many countries are vying to get their sites on it year after year, with the knowledge that inscription will galvanize tourism at their sites, and benefits can be reaped.

The long-term value of World Heritage Site status, however, has come under greater scrutiny.

In a recent *Newsweek* article, 'To list or not to list', William Underhill suggests that the list should be restricted, and resources should be concentrated on the sites that demand assistance most.

He writes that there's deepening concern "the scheme, intended to preserve the world's greatest treasures, may actually be contributing to their demise."



World Heritage site tourism fuelled by commercial interests, illustration by Pattanapong Varanyanon

Conservation is not always the goal, and a World Heritage Listing "represents a marketing tool that can turn obscure sites into must-see destinations", Underhill says.

Referring to the ancient city of Lijiang, China, he notes that the number of visitors rose annually to 4.6 million from 1.7 million in the decade of it being listed.

Similarly in Siem Reap, Cambodia, the annual number of visitors at the Angkor Wat temple complex is at more than a million from less than 10,000 since 1992.

He says that it is difficult to avoid these consequences of gaining the World Heritage status, quoting a 2008 Unesco mission finding: "Commercial interests have driven measures to facilitate large numbers of tourists, compromising the authentic heritage values which attracted visitors to the property in the first place."

Underhill argues that Unesco, with limited funds and despite its moral authority, is unable "to do much to help the swelling number of sites."

### Reservations

A few years ago, similar cautions had been expressed by *New York Times* journalist Seth Kugel in a provocative piece, 'Flip side of the world heritage status', which was published in the International Herald Tribune and other publications.

In his article, he asks whether the List's meaning has been watered down by its rapid expansion, and if both tourism and development that are often left unchecked at listed sites can do more harm than good to places so anointed by the honour.

One of the major benefits of a site making it on the List is the recognition which translates into tourism income, and a proliferation of travel websites, and publications, and heightened interest, which business agencies are certainly well aware of.

Consequently, how should the effects of increased tourism and development be dealt with?

As a focal point and co-ordinator within Unesco, the World Heritage Centre provides advice to States Parties, organises international assistance, and co-ordinates the reporting on conditions of sites and emergency action undertaken when a site is threatened, including day-to-day management of the Convention.

Kugel points out that the main objective of the World Heritage Centre is to conserve sites through international co-operation for the next generation, but its official mission statement makes no reference to tourism and economic development.

He questions whether the World Heritage Centre can effectively monitor the rapidly-expanding number of listed sites, and provide technical assistance on conservation.

In his Newsweek article, Underhill reports that the Centre employs less than a hundred personnel, and that its annual revenue of about US\$20 million, including donations, can barely help developing countries in conserving their sites.

The World Heritage List has increased steadily since it was introduced in 1978, recognising 12 sites.

The number of properties on the List has now been expanded to 890, of which 690 are cultural, 175 natural and 25 mixed sites.

Today, Unesco world heritage status is well established and promoted by travel agents and websites.

Like Underhill, Kugel wonders whether the award of world heritage status might be – to many applicants – "more an end goal than the beginning of conservation efforts".

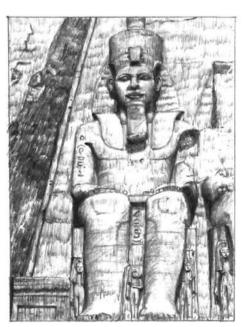
He claims that, following the conclusion of the nomination process which takes 4-5 years, Unesco "generally doesn't provide funds or technical assistance ... [or] regular monitoring to ensure that the ambitious plans come to fruition."

According to him, monitoring is the main difficulty encountered by the World Heritage Centre, which depends primarily on local governments to report on site conditions every six years.

### Historical background

It was after World War I that the idea of initiating an international movement to protect heritage arose.

The historical background to the World Heritage Convention was an event in 1959 which was a major contributing factor: international concern aroused at that time by the decision to construct the Aswan High Dam in Egypt, which would have inundated the valley and destroyed a treasure of ancient Egyptian Civilisation, the Abu Simbel temples.



Abu Simbel Temple, Egypt

Unesco initiated an international safeguarding campaign, following an appeal from the Egyptian and Sudanese governments.

The temples were moved and reassembled in another area, with archaeological research expedited in the region that was later flooded.

It was a successful campaign which cost an estimated US\$80 million, with about 50 countries donating some US\$40 million.

The significance of shared

responsibility and solidarity among nations in protecting prominent cultural sites inspired further efforts in the conservation of Italy's





Borobodur, Indonesia

Moenjodaro Archaeological Ruins, Pakistan

Venice and its Lagoon; Indonesia's Borobodur Temple; and Pakistan's Moenjodaro Archaeological Ruins, leading eventually to the implementation of the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, as well as the establishment of the World Heritage Committee and Centre.

### Promoting tourism, preserving heritage

In 'Social Quality in the Conservation Process of Living Heritage Sites', author Ping Kong referred to the ratification of the 'Unesco World Heritage Convention' in 1972, and observes that "since then, both public and private sectors around the world have attached growing importance to the safeguarding and conservation of selected cultural and natural 'objects', focusing on physical, 'tangible' characteristics."

He also finds that "World Heritage sites receive major publicity and as a result become notable attractions for large numbers of tourists from all over the world. However, in spite of the clear economic benefits and political prestige, this massive influx of tourists disrupts and in most cases, in the long run, destroys the social quality of the indigenous community. The deterioration of social quality could ultimately undermine the application of conservation policies."

"The world's 'most outstanding' sites face threats from tourism, while the world heritage listing does not offer much in the way of support to alleviate the threats," Bart J.M. van der Aa writes in his 2005 book, 'Preserving the Heritage of Humanity? Obtaining World Heritage Status and the Impacts of Listing'. His research is an attempt to determine if the Convention has been effective in better preserving heritage sites; to examine whether inscription raises the level of preservation; and to determine whether the 'best' sites are selected.

It also analyses the effects of tourism to see if they endanger a listed site, and asks whether the international community is willing to assist, and is capable of acting when sites are threatened, and if countries contribute financially through the convention.

Among the major conclusions drawn from this study is one concerning outstanding universal value: there is doubt as to whether all inscribed sites meet the criterion.

The research notes that, with four cultural world heritage sites for every natural site, and about half of the cultural sites located in Europe, questions are also made regarding an imbalance in the List, and the willingness and capability of European countries to nominate (cultural) sites.

As says that there are no indications that the listed sites lose their outstanding universal qualities as a consequence of rapidly increasing visitor numbers after the world heritage listing.

He suggests that there could be a positive impact from the "high visitor-induced pressure" at a majority of the listed sites in terms of site management, based on the presumption that visitors "only continue to visit high-quality environments."

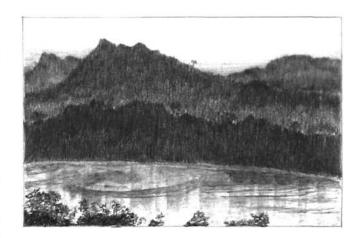
However, with an unlimited number of visitors having unrestricted access to almost any site or part of it, he says that "world heritage status has not had much influence on the site's visitor management."

Writing for AP, Denis Gray wrote in 2008 that by official count there were over 160 hotels and guesthouses providing accommodations in Luang Prabang (Laos), a world heritage site.

From interviews with Luang Prabang experts and residents in 2007, *AFP* reported on the changes, noting that "world heritage status has turned the former Lao Capital from a ghost town into a tourism hub, but too much of a good thing could soon prove the kiss of death."

Francis Engelmann, former Unesco adviser and resident, complains of the increase in cars and noise, and cautioned that the 700-year-old town might turn into "a monoindustry where everything depends on tourism."

The report said that the trendy mantras in Luang Prabang were concerned with sustainable and ethical eco-tourism as in other parts of Asia, but the operational plans of tourist officials in Laos pushed for "more, more, more, more."



Luang Prabang, Laos

### Issues and debates

Heritage professionals have been debating on the World Heritage scheme and its future.

Tijana Rakic explores the subject in her 2007 paper, 'World Heritage: Issues and debates', focusing on the indefinite expansion of the List as a contentious issue among heritage professionals.

According to her, Peter Skoberne, the then Assistant to the Director (Central Europe) of the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Natural and Natural Resources), was concerned that the List will include many high quality sites but will become too numerous to manage, with some sites not even meeting the criteria.

There are arguments for the List to be limited, with the warning that its significance might be lessened.

Georgina Peard, who at that time was a programme officer at IUCN, was reported as saying that the credibility of the List is closely linked to the concept that it is not indefinite.

To maintain credibility, Peard suggests that priority should be on managing the existing sites rather than on inscribing new ones, and she is supported by James Arnold, manager of New Lanark Heritage site, UK, who claims that inscription does not imply that sufficient funds will be offered for site preservation.

With unlimited growth of the List, Rakic cautions in her paper that there may be dilution in the value of the world heritage site status, and doubts the abilities of Unesco and its advisory bodies in preserving listed properties, due to limited expertise and financial support for necessary conservation work.

In the afterword to 'Politics of World Heritage: Negotiating Tourism and Conservation' (2005), Michael Hitchcock writes that the Convention "lacked an important provision from the outset, the need to conduct research on how well the convention was fulfilling its brief in scientific terms."

With reference to Hitchcock's point, Rakic says that despite its influence, Unesco "has only an advisory role in World Heritage Site management since the Convention does not imply its direct intervention."

The research by Rakic included a sample of 180 heritage professionals based in 45 countries, with each country represented by a world heritage site manager, a cultural attaché, and a chairman or highly ranked representative of the IUCN and ICOMOS.

An overwhelming 92.3% of heritage professionals is reported to perceive that the World Heritage status "had become more important for the purposes of the tourism industry than for conservation."

Rakic notes that a few heritage professionals view the phenomenon of tourism, which accompanies the world heritage status, as a contribution to a more rapid deterioration of sites.

There are also references to the world heritage status as a 'brand' or a 'trademark,' even though it was created to ensure conservation, implying that its popularity in tourism has led to its identity as "an authenticity stamp for the heritage tourist."

She concludes that it is uncertain whether the world heritage list will grow to be too big, and if the need of humanity to preserve the listed sites for future generations, or "to 'consume' them in [the] present through tourism development" will prevail.

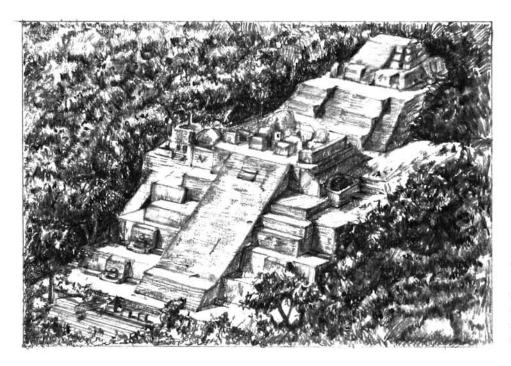
Acquiring the world heritage label is neither necessarily an honour for the local population, nor a useful leverage for tourism and environmental organisations, as indicated by the discussion paper, entitled 'World Heritage as NIMBY? The Case of the Dutch Part of the Wadden Sea'.

Relating to the trilateral nomination of the Wadden Sea by Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands, the paper was produced in 2002 by Bart J.M. van der Aa, together with Peter D. Groote and Paulus P.P. Huigen.

Discussion in the paper focuses on the growing "opposition to handing over local or national heritage to all mankind, as represented by Unesco; the few benefits for local populations; and the avenues through which local stakeholders can challenge imposition of the world heritage status."

It reveals that local stakeholders, in public consultation within the Netherlands, did not support the nomination, and seemed to have adopted the 'Not in my backyard (NIMBY)' approach to World Heritage inscription.

The Wadden Sea has recently been inscribed on the List under the nomination of Germany and The Netherlands.



Cakakmul, Mexico
(Seth Kugel wrote that 15,643
visitors entered the site in 2005,
compared with just 8,962 in
2001, the year before it was
inscribed)

The paper studies the factors which affect the nomination process; opposition by locals, the tourism industry and environmental agencies; and interests at stake that complicate benefits and costs evaluation and the assessment of the World Heritage status from a rational rather than emotional perspective.

## Southeat Asia: world heritage list controversy

In a recent address to the UN General Assembly, US President Barack Obama said "sadly, but not surprisingly, this body [UN] has often become a forum for sowing discord instead of forging common ground."

With regard to world heritage designation, the government of Thailand has – in similar vein – criticised Unesco's inscription of the Preah Vihear temple in 2008 as a decision leading to conflicts rather than promoting peace and cultural conservation for the people of two neighbouring countries, Cambodia and Thailand.

The decision to inscribe, while a bilateral dispute over territorial sovereignty intensified between both Southeast Asian nations claiming territory on which the temple is situated, has provoked border clashes and gunfire exchanges between opposing armies.

Thailand is challenging the decision to list the temple on the ground that the registration process and world heritage principles stipulated by Unesco had been breached.

It concludes by raising the possibility that "far from being atypical, the lack of local support for the case of the Wadden Sea may be representative of a more general trend."

As reported by Underhill in his article, Dresden city councilor Jan Mücke makes a strong point of it, giving attention to the locals, who supported the bridge plan in two referendums, and to whom "ridding the city of choking traffic was more important than any accolade."

The city councilor said: "In a democracy, we cannot have a dictatorship of a minority that, acting out of esthetic grounds, thinks they know more than the overwhelming majority of citizens."

### Local or international

Examining the issues in depth, the abovementioned paper refers to the English site of Stonehenge, which dates to a time when identifiers such as 'English' or 'British' had yet to be developed.

It says that the English should be prepared to share Stonehenge with the rest of the world as a legacy, but the national English Heritage,

which arranged the nomination for inscription, seems to want "to keep it for themselves."

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The sign at the site reads: 'Stonehenge belongs to the nation and falls under the guardianship of English Heritage'.

Despite the obligation following listing that ensures international protection of the site, the authors argue that tangible protection of the site must be carried out at the national level, making international assistance impractical, particularly since Unesco requires that a national World



Stonehenge
Illustration by Parinee Srisuwan

Heritage Act be implemented as a condition for inscription.

Underhill notes that some countries in the developed world may harbour resentment toward outside interference, and presents the U.S. as an example.

He points to the case of Unesco placing Yellowstone National Park on its endangered list in 1995 (after a private company proposed gold mining in the vicinity of the park) as a cause for American mistrust of U.N. interference, and a possible explanation of the absence of any proposal for new sites in the U.S. to be listed.

The Convention is a primary symbolic attempt to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of humanity at the international level, Aa observes in 'Preserving the heritage of humanity'.

"The step from national to global heritage is predominantly a symbolic one, as the world heritage convention hardly leads to a better preservation of listed sites," he says, adding that "most actors involved in it – Unesco, countries and stakeholders of world heritage sites – have been able to use the convention for their own purposes."

While it is difficult to ascertain that tourism is a direct consequence of a world heritage award, the fact remains that heritage sites are increasingly being commercialized through tourism development.

As says that by putting a site under a "spotlight" (through inscription), it is under great danger as it attracts a large number of tourists, and "heritage preservation seemed to have a very problematic co-existence with tourism at most World Heritage Sites."

According to him, "this stirred debates over numerous management issues caused by high visitation numbers, such as managing the increased numbers of visitors, finding the balance between conservation and commercialization of the site, producing and implementing an appropriate management plan and implementing appropriate site monitoring systems."

He points out that cities, such as Zamose (Poland) and Zacatecas (Mexico) are both in dire need of renovation, but receive scant national or international financial support in their preservation efforts, and that "the accolade ensuing from world heritage designation is more often capitalized on by the tourism industry rather than accompanied by increased preservation efforts."



Zacatecas Plaza de Armas, Mexico

### Filling the gaps

Ultimately, as Underhill affirms, "there is no question that Unesco can exert a positive influence", and the agency can help to avert the worst depredations.

In 2004, Icomos produced a study, compiled by Jukka Jokilehto, to provide quantifiable evidence in assisting the effort to ensure that world heritage is adequately reflected on the List.

Titled 'The World Heritage List: Filling the gaps – an action plan for the future', it contains an analysis on both the World Heritage and Tentative Lists that could be used for developing the Global Strategy for a "credible, representative and balanced" List.

Addressing gaps in the list for cultural properties, this study proposes an Action Plan to redress the perception that several of these properties do not reflect "the total corpus" of the world's cultural heritage, in all its diversity and complexity.

Certainly, after more than 30 years of implementation of the Convention, more critical assessments of its contributions toward preserving the world's most outstanding heritage properties are to be expected.

Such assessments shall be beneficial in making the Convention more effective, such as by rendering more emphasis on the international rather than national in the selection of site and impact of listing; addressing the two major management issues of 1) reconciling conservation and commercialization, and 2) dealing with an increased number of visitors to sites; and ensuring that the value of world heritage status will not depreciate as more sites and properties are added to the List.

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Illustrations by Pichet Kanoksutthiwongse except those on pages 17 and 26

## Observatory on illegal trafficking within the Mekong sub region

The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs has set up an Observatory on Illicit Trafficking within the Mekong Sub Region. The Observatory is based in Bangkok, Thailand, where it is hosted by IRASEC (Research Institute on Contemporary Southeast Asia, a member of the network of research centers of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

The main objective of the Observatory on illicit trafficking is to analyze cross-border illicit activities. It is a research structure.

The observatory aims to support junior and senior researchers in order to publish Occasional Papers during the year 2009.

Period	Mid to long-term programme (Maximum 1 year)		
Format	Occasional Paper (Between 28 000 and 60 000 words) Discussion Paper (Between 12 000 and 14 000 words)		
Geographic area covered	Mainland Southeast Asia		
Field of research	Geography, Sociology, Political Sciences, Geopolitics, Law, Ethnology, Development, Demography		
Illegal Trafficking covered	Drug and precursors trafficking, Human Trafficking, Smuggling of Migrants, trafficking of illicit forest products (including wildlife), firearms smuggling, organs smuggling		

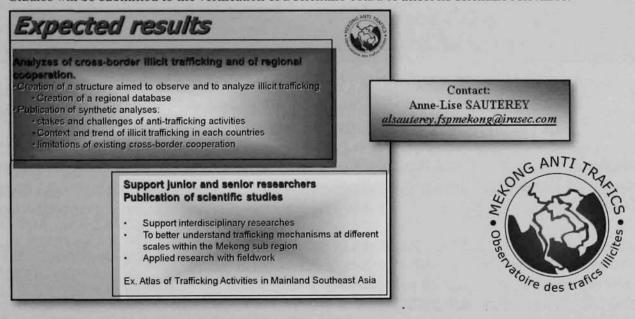
Studies with synthetic diagrams or thematic maps would be an asset.

### **Funding:**

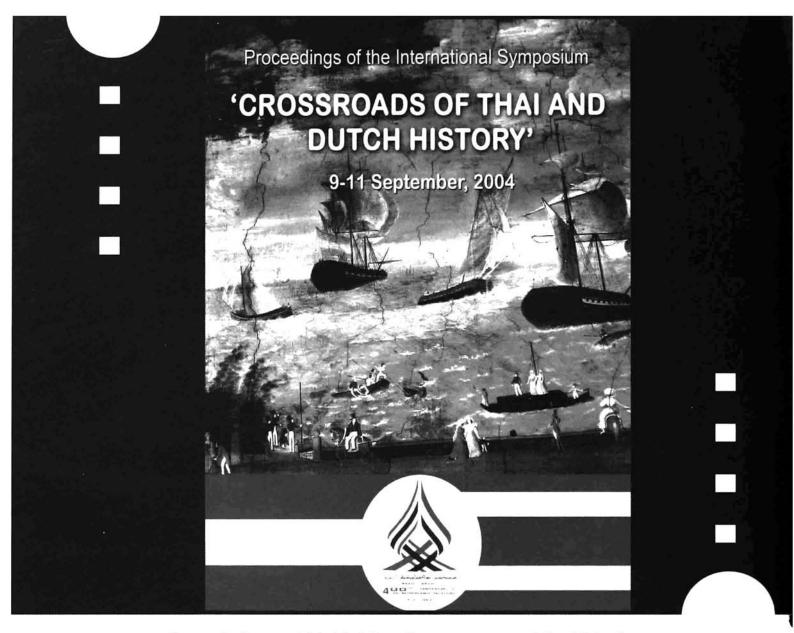
All the studies will be integrally funded by the Observatory.

### **Publication:**

Studies will be submitted to the verification of a scientific board to attest its scientific relevance.



### CROSSROADS OF THAI AND DUTCH HISTORY



Re-exploring and highlighting the process and the historic development of Dutch-Thai relations, along with a re-examination of the underlying circumstances and surrounding contexts.

This volume of the proceedings of the international symposium, 'Crossroads of Thai and Dutch History', has been published by SEAMEO-SPAFA.

The papers were presented at the symposium by scholars of Thailand and the Netherlands, as well as others of international repute. They discuss new evidence, explore new channels of research, and also provide new interpretations of known sources.

Some of these papers are splendidly finished results of long-term research, while others are new and fresh, even challenging presentations prepared specially for this symposium.

### To obtain copies, contact:

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts SPAFA Building, 81/1 Sri Ayutthaya Road Samsen, Theves, Bangkok 10300 THAILAND Tel (662) 280 4022-9 ext 109 Fax (662) 280 4030 www.seameo-spafa.org spafa@seameo-spafa.org E-mail: seameo-spafa.org spafa03@yahoo.com

## **CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT**



Individuals from 18 countries participated, and 47 presentations were made, in the 2nd International Conference on Culture and Development.

This publication is a compilation of 18 papers, selected from the conference, which are largely concerned with the need to strike a balance between economic and social development. The papers cover a range of topics, such as industry, the environment, health, good governance, local wisdom and educational development.

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SPAFA Staff

### World digital libraries

A website offering free access to manuscripts, maps, rare books, photographs and films worldwide will be launched this year.

Containing digitized content such as invaluable Chinese or Persian calligraphy and early Latin American photography, The World Digital Library is the third major digital library in the world, after Google Book Search and Europeana.

The website, drawing from global libraries and archives, will be launched by Unesco and 32 partner institutions, and available in 7 languages, namely English, Chinese, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and Portuguese.

Google has made available for full download books in the public domain, and will eventually provide users free access to 20% of copyrighted material.

Europeana is EU's rival digital library project to Google books, and has been receiving 40,000 online visitors each day.

### Digitising the catacombs of Rome

A team of archaeologists, computer scientists and architects have begun work on Rome's catacombs in a 3-year project of comprehensive documentation.

They are using laser scanners to capture 3-dimensional images of the catacombs.

Dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD, the underground Christian, Jewish and pagan burial sites stretch over 170 km, and there are more than 40 of them.

Wall paintings which have not been seen for over 2000 years will be visible.

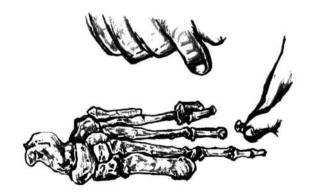
The team has almost finished work on Saint Domitilla, the largest catacomb with tunnels, galleries, caves and burial chambers covering more than 15 km over many levels.

### Flores's little people are a new species

Scientists have discovered more evidence that the "Hobbit" skeletons found in Indonesia belong to a new species of human.

Researchers have been debating the identity of these 1-metre tall humans who inhabited the Flores island about 8,000 years ago.

Papers published in the *Nature* journal endorse the proposition that they were a completely new human species.



The foot of the Flores human is considered primitive in several aspects

The group that unearthed the remains in Liang Bua cave contends that these tiny people belong to the Homo floresiensis species.

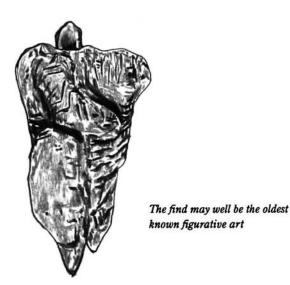
There have been many sceptical reactions to the speculations, and the arguments involved such diverse theories as evolution through a natural selection process called island dwarfing; and ideas such as the diminutive humans of Flores having grown more primitive over time; and even that they had branched off the human line at an earlier date than Homo sapiens.

### Hohle Fels 'Venus' may be oldest

The world's oldest depiction of a human figure may be a grotesque mammoth ivory sculpture.

Discovered in Germany's Hohle Fels cave, the figurine, measuring 6cm in height, is believed to be about 35,000 years old.

The prehistoric carving portrays a woman in a distorted figure with large breasts, huge buttocks and disproportionate genitals.



Known as the Venus of Hohle Fels, the artefact was found in six fragments and is missing its left arm and shoulder.

Scientists suspect that the Hohle Fels cave complex might have been ancient workshops for artists.

The enlarged breasts, buttocks and genitals which characterize later Venus objects are commonly interpreted to be expressions of fertility.

### Stunning fossil, Ida, on display

A 47-million-year-old fossil of a creature resembling a lemur has been put on display in America.

Called Ida, the fossil is believed to be a "missing link" between modern primates, apes, monkeys, humans, and the more distant relatives.

Sceptics have been reacting negatively to the spectacle created in presenting Ida.

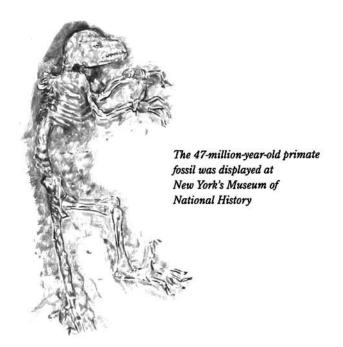
There have been criticisms that the sensationalism could damage the popularization of science if the find was not what it was made up to be.

The remains were unearthed in the 1980s from a fossil "treasure-trove", near Darmstadt in Germany, known as the Messel Pit.

Private collectors had earlier split and sold the fossil in two halves, which were reassembled

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SPAFA Staff



by a team led by Jorn Hurum, a fossil expert in Norway.

It is claimed that Ida existed during the Eocene, an epoch that was crucial for the development of early primates.

### **Imitation art in Vietnam**

A popular discussion topic in Vietnam for some time now has been rampant art forgery.

Among local artists, it is common knowledge that the Vietnamese National Museum of Fine Arts in Hanoi displays art works that are copies of famous Vietnamese paintings

BBC Vietnamese Service reported that Nora Taylor, painting expert and art historian, believed 50% of the paintings exhibited at the museum were copies, the originals of which were either lost or sold.

Many authentic works were also stored away for safety during the war between North and South Vietnam, and have not been returned to the museum.

Officials are believed to have sold some of these originals which are now in private collection or galleries outside the country.



Many museums claim to own the original of 'Playing the O An Quan'

As an added aggravation to the situation, the market and demand for Vietnamese art have been contributing to the increase in the practice of copying, which analysts say has damaged the reputation of Vietnamese art in the international arena.

The *BBC* was told that prestigious museums worldwide were reluctant to borrow works from the Vietnamese National Museum of Fine Arts.

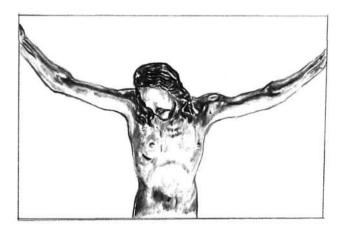
The local art community is now under increasing pressure to flush out the forged art from the original, as the Culture Ministry has announced the establishment of a panel to resolve the issue.

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# Row over 'Christ' sculpture in Italy

The Italian art world is rankled by a debate over the identity of the creator of a wooden sculpture.

Leading art experts in Italy are disagreeing with one another over whom it was who made the 40cm sculpture depicting Christ on the cross.



The controversial sculpture of Jesus Christ

An exhibition in Naples is displaying the work which features only the figure of Christ hanging on a sheet of transparent plastic, without the cross which had been lost in antiquity.

The authenticity of the piece has become a controversy, with skeptics criticizing those who claim that it was the work of Michelangelo.

Apart from the general consensus that it is a Renaissance piece of art from about 1495, arguments over whether Michelangelo, who would have been 20 years old then, was the artist, and over whom might have produced it have been heated and acrimonious.

# The lost city of Z and a legend

In a new book, 'The Lost City of Z' author David Grann recounts the adventures of explorer extraordinaire, Col Percy Harrison Fawcett, a British version of Indiana Jones.

The book is a biography, detective thriller and travelouge in narrating Fawcett's expeditions in the jungles of the Amazon.

It presents a by-gone age of exploration which included Fawcett's survival in the South American wilderness, incommunicado with the world outside it.

In 1925, Fawcett and Jack, his 21-year-old son, and Jack's best friend Raleigh Rimell, went on an exploration trip and never returned.

He was among the last of the individualist explorers who took on the challenges of the unknown before the advent of radio communication and air transportation.

The City of Z is a lost world in respect of which Grann believes Fawcett was convinced "that an ancient, highly cultured people still existed in the Brazilian Amazon and that their civilization was so old and sophisticated it would forever alter the Western view of the Americas"

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Fawcett's adventures are believed to have inspired the novel, 'The Lost World' and the film, 'Indiana Jones and the Seven Veils'.

# 'Oldest pottery' discovered in China

Pottery specimens discovered in China may be the oldest ever found.

After examining the fraction of a type (isotope) of carbon in bone fragments and charcoal, they were determined to be 17,500 to 18,300 years old.

Published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, the report says that the dates are more accurate than previous tests because the estimate is supported by a series of over 40 radio carbon dated samples.

The specimens were found in a cave at Yuchanyan, Hunan province.

Pottery samples discovered in Japan are the previous oldest-known, dated to between 16,000 and 17,000 years ago.

Archaeologists, however, continue to argue over whether pottery was originally created in Japan or China.

# New rock dating method

Scientists have been applying a novel technique in determining how continents were arranged 2.5 billion years ago.

The new method involves extracting rare minerals from rocks to analyse their composition.

For the first time, researchers can accurately date ancient volcanic rocks, and reconstruct early landmasses, by aligning rocks of similar orientation and age.

Geologists are now able to analyse rocks to establish how landmasses form when continents separated.

Minerals such as baddeleyite can be recovered with the new technique.

Baddeleyite contains much uranium, and scientists calculate the rate at which uranium naturally decays to lead, and measure the amounts of uranium and lead to obtain precise dates.

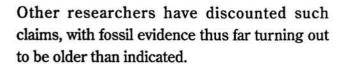
#### Fossil indicate dinosaur survival

Based on his work on fossils from the San Juan Basin (Colorado and New Mexico), emeritus scientist James Fassett has argued for years that some dinosaurs survived the catastrophic event that caused the mass extinction.

The fossils which he has been studying are believed to be bones of various species of dinosaur discovered together in a sandstone formation dating to the Palaeocene epoch that came after the Cretaceous-Tertiary extinction event.



Sketch of artist's conception of the catastrophic event at Yucatan



Popular theory for the mass extinction has it that a devastating asteroid hit the Yucatan Peninsula, while other possible factors include climate change, disease, massive volcanism, etc..

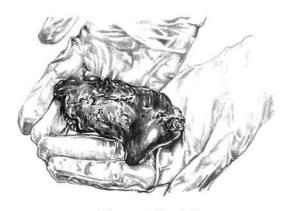
### First Neanderthal find in the sea

Researchers in Leiden, Netherlands, have presented in public a Neanderthal's skull fossil recovered from the North Sea, a renowned area for mammal fossils.

The fragment from the frost of a skull belonging to a young adult male has been studied, with results matching other Neanderthal specimens, suggesting a carnivorous diet.



Portrait of a Neanderthal



A fragment of the skull

Discovery of ancient humans is rare, and finding a known specimen from the sea was a stunning event, despite the large number of fossilized remains of other animals hauled in by fishing trawlers and dredging operations from the North Sea every year.

Stable isotope analysis but not carbon dating was conducted on the 60,000-year-old fossil.

Scientists explained that to obtain adequate collagen, the protein for direct dating, about half of the specimen would have had to be destroyed.

### Fossil snapshot of evolution

A new fossil specimen has been perceived as a snapshot of dinosaur evolution.

The find, dated to approximately 160 million years ago, indicates that the dinosaur's fingered hand consisted of the middle digits of the ancestral hand, with the outer two being dispensed with.

Excavated in China, the dinosaur fossil is contributing to a debate over the evolution of dinosaur hands to wing bones of modern birds.

The specimen, named Limusaurus inextricabilis (dinosaur which would not extricate itself from the mire), has a barely present first finger and the fifth finger is absent.

It is believed to have had been trapped in a mudpool during the Jurassic period.

The new and exceptional dinosaur was unearthed in the Shishugou Formation in western China's Junggar Basin by a team led by China's prominent dino expert extraordinaire, Xu Xing.

# Australia yields new dino species

Fossils of three new dinosaur species have been discovered by archaeologists in Australia.

One of the creatures, 'Banjo' is described as a meat-eating beast that roamed the Outback some 100 million years ago, during the middle Cretaceous period.

The 500kg fearsome predator is believed to have been larger and more frightening than velociraptor (depicted in the Jurassic Park films), and the most complete carnivorous dinosaur ever found in the country.

Australia has now been hailed as a new frontier in vertebrate palaeontology, and an untapped resource in dinosaur history.

\*Banjo' chasing two titanosaurs\*

The other two dinosaurs found with Banjo are new types of plant-eating, four-legged titanosaurs, the world's largest animals ever documented.

They were believed to have had been trapped in river mud, and that Banjo became stuck while attacking them, resulting in their bones being mingled upon discovery.

### The oldest musical instrument found

Scientists believe that a flute dug up in Germany may be the world's oldest musical instrument.

The almost intact five-hole flute was unearthed in the Hohle Fals cave, Ach valley in southern Germany.

Meticulously carved with stone tools, the 35,000-year-old instrument was made from the hollow wing-bone of a giant vulture.



Oldest musical instrument dug up

The flute is about 20cm long and 2.2cm in diameter, and was found with other instruments, including fragments of three ivory flutes, indicating that playing music might have been common among stone age humans.

It is further suggested that creative and cultural expression is entrenched in human culture, and might have enabled modern humans to survive by being more sociable and co-operative, taking into consideration the demise of the more culturally conservative and isolated Neanderthals.

### Burma finds link to human evolution

Fossils found in Burma recently suggest that the evolution of shared ancestry of humans, apes and monkeys occurred in Asia and not Africa.

Researchers report that the pieces of 38-million-year-old jawbones and teeth belong to an extinct family of Asian anthropoid primates, a new species known as Amphipithecidae.

Unearthed in central Burma near Bagan, the fossils are dated older than any anthropoid discovered in Africa.

Despite the contention by the team that excavated and studied the fossils, the absence of a skull means that the distinctive anthropoid features of the eye and ear regions cannot be determined to help resolve the question of whether anthropoids originate in Africa or Asia.

The team expects to continue its search in Burma for more fossils to establish their proposition that the direction of anthropoid migration was from Asia to Africa rather than vice-versa.

### Large fossil find in Thailand

Palaeontologists found a new species in the north of Thailand that may bridge a gap

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between the ancient era dating back to the middle Miocene period and the modern world.

The findings were recently published in the *Journal of Human Evolution*.

A large number of fossils were dug up in Mae Mo, Lampang province, in 2004, including those belonging to a new primate species.

The primate fossils, named Siamoadapis maemohensis, is categorised in the class of strepsirrhines which include the modern lemur in Madagascar and the Southeast Asian loris.

Palaeontologists believe that the middle Miocene strata in Thailand contain an abundance of fossils of diverse mammals.

The Mae Mo coal mine region is one of the largest lignite deposits with tertiary sediments 800m thick.

# **US forces damage Babylon**

The American military invasion of Iraq has caused severe damage to the Babylon archaeological site, Unesco officials reported.

Babylon was used as an army base where heavy machinery were driven over historic parts, hilltops bulldozed, and trenches constructed in one of the greatest archaeological sites in the world, said experts.

They also claimed that it was not only the US military but looters who returned with a vengeance when control of the site was

transferred back to Iraq by the Americans 21 months after the invasion in 2003.

The US Armed Forces had also responded that looting would have been worse had its soldiers not been stationed there.

Unesco is striving to list the 4000-year-old city as a World Heritage site to protect the areas, and the US state Department is developing a World Monuments Fund programme to balance archaeology and tourism at Babylon.

### Modern and ancient meet in Korea

A white shape-shifting tetra-hedron structure, called the Prada Transformer, constructed on a historic site in Seoul, was the unusual setting for a film festival.

Designed by the famous Dutch architect Rem Koolhas, the installation could be transformed to serve various events, such as exhibitions, fashion shows and movie screenings.

The transformer was located on the sacred site of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Gyeonghui Palace, presenting a stunning contrast between ancient and modern.

In April, it hosted a fashion event, followed by a film festival which included rare classics in its programme of 14 films.

The screenings were open to the public, with no admission charges, attracting a large number of students.

### **Dutch returns artefacts to Iraq**

The Netherlands government has handed back to Iraq 69 artefacts stolen from the country after the 2003 invasion by the US.

Dutch art dealers surrendered the ancient objects after the intervention of Interpol.



Thousands of artefacts looted from Iraq have been returned to the country

A more than 2000-year-old terracotta relief of a bearded man praying was among the returned loot.

In the chaos following the US invasion, tens of thousands of items are believed to have been stolen from Iraq, *BBC News* reports.

Less than half of them have been retrieved even though international efforts were made to find them.

Officials in the Netherlands hoped that the return of the looted art would set an example for other countries as well as send a signal to the international art market.

### Machu Picchu a pilgrimage site

New findings suggest that Peru's Machu Picchu was not an Inca royal estate but a pilgrimage site.

Machu Picchu is an ancient site built by Inca ruler Pachacuti around AD 1460.

It is situated about 2,440m above sea level along a mountain ridge.

According to the study, it was constructed specifically as a pilgrimage site for pilgrims to trace the journey presumably undertaken by their ancestors.

Its southeast-northwest layout, for example, was conceived as the path of the sun across the sky, which took about a year in Inca.

Machu Picchu is now a famous tourist attraction although the original purpose for its existence continues to generate much debate.

# Early toolmakers used heat technology

Researchers have found that early modern humans in South Africa applied 'heat treatment' to hone their stone tools some 72,000 years ago.

They say that this innovation, for which evidence was discovered at Pinnacle Point (a Middle Stone Age site on the South African coast), may link the use of fire to cook food 800,000 years ago and the production of ceramics 10,000 years ago.

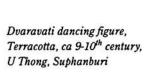
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Archaeologists experimented with heating the silcrete stones at Pinnacle Point, and realized that they could be used to improve the excavated stone tools, which were made of the same hard and resistant material.

They also found that at the same time that the tools were being produced by firing them, these early humans begun harvesting shellfish, creating pigments and grinding ochre.

# Dvaravati art show: Paris to Bangkok

An exhibition that has achieved outstanding success at the Musee Guimet in Paris earlier this year is being held at the National Museum in Bangkok.



The exhibition, 'Dvaravati Art: the Early Buddhist Art of Thailand', offers 149 pieces of Dvaravati artefacts from the National Museum Bangkok and other national museums in the country.

Dvaravati art, with its source in India, were created in the Chao Phraya basin of Thailand during an early period of civilization between the 6th and 11th centuries.

The Dvaravati influence was widespread throughout Thailand, covering the north, northeast and south.

### Bone indicates cannibalism

Torquay museum staff has identified a human bone with tool cuts as possible evidence of cannibalism.

The arm bone bears marks thought to be have been caused by stone tools, and suggests the conduct of a ritual 9,000 years ago, or that humans had been devoured.

Archaeologist William Pengelly discovered the bone in Kents cavern, Torquay, in 1866.

It was "rediscovered" in 2008 from the museum storage, and examined by a team of researchers from the museum and the University of Oxford's School of Archaeology.

They believe that such finds reflect the complexity of funerary behaviour in the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) before the practice of farming – more associated with complex mortuary practices – several thousands of years later.

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# Discovery of Scotland's 'earliest' face

A carving discovered on the Orkney island of Westray may be Scotland's earliest human face. Dated to 5,000 years old, the small figurine has been described as a find of "astonishing rarity."



Neolithic carving of a human with face

Archaeologists unearthed the sandstone artefact at the Links of Noltland, the only Neolithic carving of a human form to have been found in Scotland.

The object is flat, measuring 3.5cm by 3cm, and features a round head, with a face bearing heavy brows, two dots for eyes and the nose represented by an oblong.

BBC News quoted Culture Minister Mite Russell as saying that the discovery is of "tremendous importance – representations of people from this period are incredibly unusual in Britain."

# Boy appointed museum's director

The National Railway Museum in York, England, has appointed a 6-year-old boy as its "Director of Fun."

Youngster Sam Pointon from Leicester, who loves trains, wrote to the museum to apply as a replacement for the outgoing and retiring director.

Sam's family was on vacation when his father came upon a newspaper advertisement, and teased Sam about it being his dream job.

On return from the holiday, Sam wrote a letter, and they decided to post it.

They received an invitation to visit the museum, and Sam was offered the job.

Sam's parents had to tell him that he still has to go to school despite landing his dream job.

### Classic art in multi-media

Digital representation of art works such as the Mona Lisa is the new sensation in a Beijing exhibition.

Leonardo da Vinci's 16<sup>th</sup> century portrait of Mona Lisa speaks fluent Chinese, answers questions, and chats about her life.

In the Last Supper, Jesus Christ walks around the table and talks with his disciples.

The World Classic Interactive Arts Exhibition in China offers classic paintings and life-sized

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Roman and Greek divinities in multi-media, 3-D, holograph, and with voice reognition technologies.

# Khmer dance project

The Center for Khmer Studies is collaborating with the Dance Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts in documenting the history and practice of Khmer classical dance.

With the ambition of making information and the comprehensive archive on the Khmer royal dance available to the public, a database will be created and will include letters, costumes, music, etc..

There has not been a systematic inventory of the Khmer classical dance tradition, despite its worldwide fame, and this project is thus timely as old masters and vast reservoirs of knowledge are vanishing.

For generations, the culture of dance in Cambodia was transmitted orally from master to pupil, but its history suffers numerous disruptions.

The Khmer Rouge regime (1975-1979) banned the classical dance, and many artists were prosecuted, with few surviving after 1979.

# Unique Asean-Korea musical collaboration

Seventy musicians and composers from 10 Asean countries and Korea have formed the

Asean-Korea Traditional Music Orchestra to promote friendship and understanding through cultural exchanges.

Initiated by Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the orchestra will perform in concerts to promote Asian music around the world.

Workshops, rehearsals and a trial performance were held earlier in the year.

After a year-long period of preparation, the orchestra premiered at the Jeju International Convention Centre on May 31 in front of Korean President Lee Myung-bak and 10 visiting heads of state from Asean countries.

The 1,500-person capacity theatre was filled and treated to a performance that produced harmony and new possibilities of musical collaboration amongst countries.

Music of each country was presented by the uniquely-composed orchestra that included 52 types of 79 traditional instruments from the various participating nations.

### Giant ancient elephant dug up in Indonesia

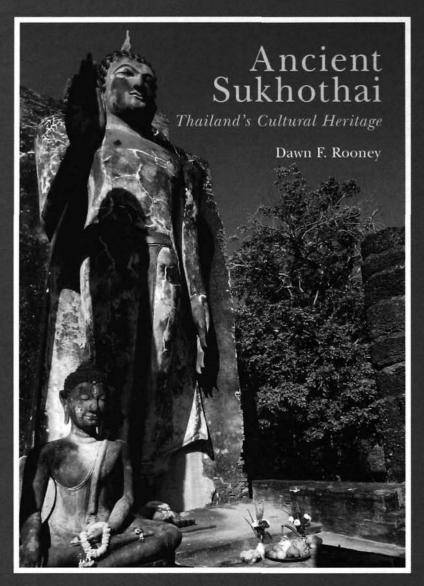
An ancient elephant has been unearthed in Java where villagers of Blora, a small town some 100 km from Semarang, made the rare discovery of what the *Jakarta Globe* described as "the most intact fossilized elephant skeleton ever found in Indonesia."

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The 4-metre-tall, 5-metre-long, 10-tonne giant elephant was estimated to have died 200,000 years ago, and is an extinct species which existed during the period when modern humans evolved in Africa, according to the Daily Telegraph.

University of Wollongong researchers took a month to delicately excavate the prehistoric fossil, and they are the same team that found the Flores human in 2003 known now as the Indonesian Hobbit.

The skeleton of the elephant that had been trapped in quicksand, became visible after recent rain in a sand quarry, next to the Solo River, which had been abandoned since part of the quarry collapsed.



### **Book Information**

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'This guide covers the history and art of the early Kingdom of Sukhothai, which was situated in the fertile Yom River basin of north-central Thailand and is renowned for artistic achievements in the mid-thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Influences from earlier inhabitants of the area and neighbouring kingdoms were overlaid with Theravada Buddhist ideas from Sinhalese culture to create a unique style that is recognised today as 'classic' Thai art. Beautiful remains of this period can be visited at Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai to the north and Kamphaeng Phet to the southwest. Lotus-bud spires, delicate stucco decoration, pillared foundations, huge Buddha images encased in niches and secluded forest monasteries atop surrounding hills testify to the original expression of Sukhothai artisans. The author takes the reader on a journey to the early Kingdom of Sukhothai and explores the remains and cultural heritage of this sacred site.

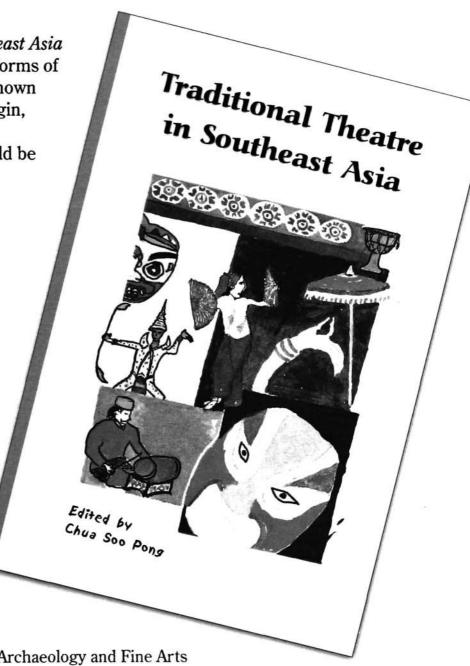
### **About the Author**

Dawn F. Rooney, PhD, is an independent scholar and an art historian specializing in Southeast Asia. She is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Asiatic Society in London, an advisor to the Society for Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. the Thailand representative for the International Map Collectors' Society and the Regional Director, Southeast Asia for Independent Scholars of Asia. Dawn Rooney is the author of several books on the culture of the region including a definitive guide to Angkor. She was awarded a Scholar in Residence at The Rockefeller Foundation Study Center in Bellagio, Italy in 2002 where she wrote her latest book, Thai Buddhas (Bangkok, River Books, 2003). She is an American who has lived in Asia for over three decades and resides in Thailand.

# **Traditional Theatre in Southeast Asia**

9 Euro / US\$10

Traditional Theatre in Southeast Asia focuses on many traditional forms of theatre that are not widely known outside their countries of origin, and provides analyses and discussions on how they could be revitalized.



SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts SPAFA Building, 81/1 Sri Ayutthaya Road Samsen, Theves, Bangkok 10300 THAILAND Tel (662) 280 4022-9 ext 109 Fax (662) 280 4030 www.seameo-spafa.org spafa03@yahoo.com spafa@seameo-spafa.org

### **SEAMEO-SPAFA Staff**

Contacts for information and enquiries:

Director

Pisit Charoenwongsa pisit@seameo-spafa.org

Advisors

Pradech Phayakvichien spafa@seameo-spafa.org Vishnu Aimpraneetra spafa@seameo-spafa.org Samart Sapyen spafa@seameo-spafa.org

Administration

Wilasinee Thabuengkarn wilin@seameo-spafa.org
Vassana Kerdsupap vassana@seameo-spafa.org
Girard Bonotan Girard@seameo-spafa.org
Jittipha Jaiboon jittipha@seameo-spafa.org
Soros Jenjai spafa@seameo-spafa.org

**Finance** 

Supa Thanasakulprasert supa@seameo-spafa.org

Project Development

Kevin Charles Kettle kevin@seameo-spafa.org

Sakulchat Chatrakul Na Ayuddhaya

Publication & Computer

Ean Lee ean@seameo-spafa.org
Ratchaporn Tesjeeb ratchy@seameo-spafa.org

Research

Nyunt Han spafa@seameo-spafa.org
Patcharawee Tunprawat patchy@seameo-spafa.org
Patsri Tippayaprapai patsri@seameo-spafa.org
Patcharee Kunasarn patcharee@seameo-spafa.org
Alongkorn Jutagate alongkorn@seameo-spafa.org

Audio-Visual

Nipon Sud-Ngam nipon@seameo-spafa.org

Library

Wanpen Koogpoon wanpen@seameo-spafa.org
Nawarat Saeng-wat nawarat@seameo-spafa.org

