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ANGKOR REDUX

Colonial Exhibitions in France



SEAMEO SPAFA Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts

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Angkor Wat, Colonial Exhibition, Paris, 1931
Photograph Courtesy of Dawn Rooney

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Đỗ Hoàng Tường - Sống trong Thành phố, 1997
'Living in the City', oil and acrylic on canvas
(100 cm x 100 cm)

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Angkor Redux: Colonial Exhibitions in France

Dawn Rooney offers tantalising glimpses of late 19th-early 20th century exhibitions that brought the glory of Angkor to Europe.

"I saw it first at the Paris Exhibition of 1931, a pavilion built of concrete treated to look like weathered stone. It was the outstanding feature of the exhibition, and at evening was flood-lit with yellow lighting which turned concrete to gold (Fig. 1). I had then never heard of Angkor Wat and thought this was just a flight of fancy, a wonder palace built for the occasion, not a copy of a temple long existent in the jungle of French Indo-China.

But within I found photographs and read descriptions that introduced me to the real Angkor and that nest of temples buried with it in the jungle. I became familiar with the reliefs and carved motifs that decorated its walls, and that day I formed a vow: Some day . . . Somehow. . ." – Claudia Parsons, 'Vagabondage', 1941

For many, such as Claudia Parsons, awareness of the Angkorian kingdom and its monumental temples came through the International Colonial Exhibitions held in France in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when French colonial presence in the East was at a peak. Much earlier, the Dutch had secured domination over Indonesia, the Spanish in the Philippines, and the British in India and Burma. France, though, did not become a colonial power in Southeast Asia until the last half of the nineteenth century when it obtained suzerainty over Cambodia, Vietnam (Cochin China, Tonkin, Annam) and, lastly, Laos. Thus, the name 'French Indochina' was coined not only because of the location of the three countries between



Fig 1. Angkor Wat, Colonial Exhibition, night view, Paris, 1931



Fig 2.
Shrine of King Sisowath
commemorating the French-Thai
Treaty of 1907, Phnom Penh

two giants – India and China – but also because they absorbed influences from both of them, although not equally.

In August 1863, France signed a protectorate that gave it administrative control over Cambodia except for the northwestern provinces of Battambang, Sisophon and Siemreap (where the ancient capital of Angkor is located). The three provinces remained in Siamese (now Thai) hands until April 1907 when they were returned to Cambodia after a treaty between France (signing on behalf of Cambodia) and Thailand was made. A postcard published by Ludovic Crespin circa 1915 depicts a shrine commemorating this historic event at the base of Phnom (hill) in Phnom Penh. The king sits on a throne with three princesses standing on his left, representing the three provinces that were returned to Cambodia (Fig. 2). Another postcard features a map that clearly shows the demarcation after the 1907 treaty (Fig. 3).



Fig 4. *Le Petit Journal*, 24 June 1906

France hosted several large international exhibitions highlighting their colonial empire between 1889 and 1937. Southeast Asia was still an anomaly to Europeans in the late nineteenth century, and so the idea of an exhibition designed to bring together displays of a country's economic and cultural interests abroad took hold. News media, such as *Le Petit Journal* (Fig. 4), posters, and postcards widely disseminated information about the exhibitions. Postcards with scenes of places other than Angkor, and marked 'Exposition Coloniale Paris 1906' on the face confirm that postcards were used to give the public a different view of France's colonial empire in Cambodia. An example is an elaborately decorated boat on the Bassac River at Phnom Penh, illustrating the annual water festival that is held to give thanks to the spirits for the bountiful supply of water in the past year. Boat races highlight the grand, three-day celebration (Fig. 5).

Postcards issued between 1900 and 1931 feature Cambodian pavilions that were constructed by the French for international exhibitions. Models of Angkor Wat and the Bayon, two twelfth-thirteenth century Angkorian temples, imitated the originals enough to make an immense impression on Europeans at that time. The pavilions dominated the Indochinese sector, and attracted widespread attention because of their uniqueness, size and exotic appearance.

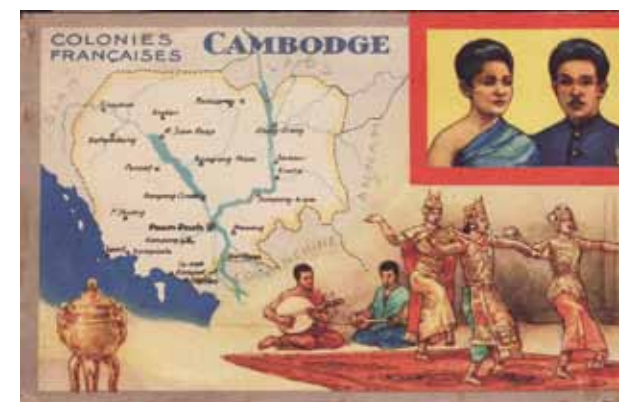


Fig 3. Postcard with a map showing the demarcation
after the 1907 treaty



Fig 5. Annual Water Festival

The Kingdom of Angkor (Fig. 6)

“Angkor was once the heart of a magnificent kingdom and what an immense city it was – and is.” - Harry A. Franck, ‘East of Siam, Ramblings in the five divisions of French Indo-China’



Fig 6. A postcard, with snippets of temple views, circa 1906

Angkor, capital of the Khmer Empire, was a large kingdom in Southeast Asia, and at its peak in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, its territorial control extended beyond Cambodia to northeastern Thailand, the Malay Peninsula and parts of Laos and Burma (now Myanmar). Reconstruction of Angkor’s history is a work in progress as new discoveries continue to be

made. Epigraphists translate inscriptions written in Sanskrit, Pali and Khmer; art historians and conservators analyze sculpture; geologists, anthropologists and scientists study other aspects. The most extensive material evidence of Angkor is the remains of temples built of brick and stucco or sandstone that are spread over a vast area of more than 200 square kilometres. Thirty-nine kings ruled the Khmer Empire for over 600 years beginning in the early ninth century, and each one strove to create a symbolic relationship between the ruler and the divinity to ensure harmony on earth and prosperity for the kingdom. The kings built temples that embodied their power, and emulated an earthly microcosm of the macrocosmic world.

Angkor Wat, the creation of King Suryavarman II, was built at the pinnacle of Khmer artistic skill and creativity. A later king, Jayavarman VII, constructed several large monastic complexes and the Royal City of Angkor Thom with the Bayon temple at the centre. However, after his death, circa 1218, no other temples were built, and the kingdom dwindled gradually. It suffered from invasions by the Thais, loss of manpower, overbuilding, depletion of the forests, weakening of central power and increasing autonomy in the provinces. Then, after a long seven-month siege by the expanding Thai Kingdom of Ayutthaya in the mid-fifteenth century, the inhabitants of Angkor migrated to Oudong, Lovek, and eventually established a capital at Phnom Penh where it remains today.

What happened to Angkor after the Khmers left? Angkor Wat and a few other temples were maintained by Buddhist monks; most, though, were neglected and at the mercy of the rapidly growing tropical jungle for more than 400 years. A few Portuguese, Spanish and French missionaries and German, British and Japanese travellers saw Angkor, and reported their findings. Charles-Emile Bouvillevaux, a French missionary, published the first report on Angkor in the mid-nineteenth century. It was not, however, until the diaries of Henri Mouhot, a French naturalist, were presented posthumously in March 1862 at the Royal Geographical Society in London that an awareness of and interest in Angkor developed. Perhaps it was because Mouhot’s diaries, published in 1868, included the first drawings of the site.

Commander Doudart de Lagrée, a French naval officer, led a Mekong Expedition in 1866-7 to explore the Mekong River with the aim of establishing commercial relations between southern China and southern Vietnam. Two notable members of the mission were Francis Garnier, deputy, and Louis Delaporte, draftsman. En route, the expedition visited the ruins of Angkor. Detailed notes and drawings by Delaporte provided early views of the temples. He subsequently organised four archaeological missions to Angkor between 1873 and 1897 during which sculptures were removed and mouldings were made of objects that would be of interest to museums in France (Fig. 7). A gigantic stone balustrade from the late twelfth-century temple of Preah Khan was displayed at the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1878. It is one of a pair of sculptures with 108 demons on one side and the same number of gods on the other side; they hold the scaly body of a naga (serpent) which terminates with its nine heads rising upwards, and spread



Fig 7. Transporting sculpture from Angkor, drawing by Louis Delaporte, 1880



Fig 8. Naga balustrade, Preah Khan Temple, Angkor, 13th C, in Musée Guimet, Paris

like a fan. Today, this structure is at the entrance of the Khmer gallery in the Musée Guimet (Fig. 8).

The École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) was founded at the end of the nineteenth century (1898) to carry out research on the archaeological and philological exploration of the Indochinese Peninsula, and to contribute, by every means possible, to the understanding of its history, its monuments, and its languages. Work on the Angkorian monuments did not begin in earnest, however, until after 1907 when the three provinces were ceded back to Cambodia. Thereafter, the French worked tirelessly for nearly three-quarters of a century

clearing jungle that had overtaken the monuments, building roads to give access to the temples, documenting their work, and setting up the Archaeological Park of Angkor.

Angkor Wat (the city that is a temple)

“Angkor Wat is the most remarkable body of ruins in the world, whether one regarded the prodigious magnitude of the ground plan, the grandiose dimensions of the principal palaces, and temples, or the artistic beauty and delicacy of the bas-reliefs and sculpture.” - Hon. George N. Curzon, ‘Journeys in French Indo-China’, The Geographical Journal

An architectural masterpiece, Angkor Wat is unequalled in composition, balance, proportion and carving. The Hindu temple is the largest religious stone monument in the world. Construction began soon after King Suryavarman II ascended the throne in CE 1113, and it was completed sometime after his death in CE 1150. In contrast to most Khmer temples which are entered from the east, the main entrance of Angkor Wat is at the west, the direction presided over by the Hindu god Vishnu to whom the temple is dedicated.

Khmer masons, decorators and painters constructed the Angkor Wat pavilion for the colonial exhibitions in France. Only part of the plan was recreated but it was enough to make Angkor Wat the most spectacular of all the pavilions. A wide moat and wall enclose the original temple. In the exhibitions, though, the moat was replaced with a pond that reflected the towers, just like the original (Fig. 9). Even in the truncated version, it was possible to perceive the temple's superb symmetry and repetitive elements.



Fig 9. The towers of Angkor Wat reflected in the surrounding pond, Colonial Exhibition, Marseille, 1922



Fig 10. Causeway leading to the entrance of Angkor Wat, Colonial Exhibition, Paris, 1931

Two long causeways flanked by naga balustrades led to the entrance (Fig. 10). The cruciform-shaped Terrace of Honour, in front of the central entrance, served as the stage for performances of the royal ballet where scenes from the Ramayana and other popular epics from Hindu mythology were enacted (Fig. 11).

Although Angkor Wat looks like it is on one level from the entrance, the temple actually rises to an astonishing height of 65 metres from the ground to the top of the central tower. Its height is achieved through three elevated levels, each one surrounded by a gallery decorated with carvings. Twelve sets of stairs with 40 steps each ascend at a 70-degree angle giving access to the top level (Fig. 12). Five lotus-bud shaped towers (one in each corner and a central one) representing the five peaks of Mount Meru, the centre of the universe, adorn the top most level and are a timeless symbol of Angkor, as ubiquitous as ever (Fig. 13).



Fig 11. Royal Cambodian Dancers, Angkor Wat



Fig 13. Five lotus-bud shaped towers of Angkor Wat, Colonial Exhibition, Paris, 1931



Fig 12. Steps leading to the top level of Angkor Wat, Colonial Exhibition, Paris, 1931

The Bayon

“No better mask can be put on to a face than that of a smile. Slightly curving lips, eyes placed in shadow by the lowered lids utter not a word and yet force you to guess much.” – P. Juennerrat de Beerski, ‘Angkor: Ruins in Cambodia’

The architectural scale and composition of the Bayon are majestic, and the elements juxtapose harmoniously. The whole is eternally protected by some 200 faces on each side of more than 50 towers. It is generally accepted that the faces are those of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, a being in Mahayana Buddhism, and that they represent the omnipresence of the king. Pierre Loti, a French naval officer, saw the Bayon in 1900, and wrote in his diaries that the towers are *“... so far exceeding human proportions that it requires a moment or two to fully comprehend them.”* The temple gives a powerful and yet primitive impression. Its thick, dense grey sandstone blocks layer, one on top of the other, to form the square profile of the temple culminating in a central, circular mass

Cambodia in Colonial Exhibitions (Exposition Coloniale Internationale) in France

The Cambodian pavilions in early colonial exhibitions in France were less authentic than later ones because the French did not have sufficient access to the site to make drawings, to take photographs or make casts of the sculptures until after 1907.

While attendees were fascinated by the massive Eiffel Tower – soaring to the sky at 324 metres – that was built as the entrance arch to the 1889 international exhibition, it was the Cambodian female divinities that captured the attention of Paul Gauguin (1848-1903),



Fig 14. Cambodian pavilion, Colonial Exhibition, Paris, 1900



Fig 15. The Cambodian tower (the Bayon),
Colonial Exhibition, Marseille, 1906



Fig 16. The Bayon, drawing by Louis Delaporte, 1880

a post-impressionist Parisian artist best known today for his paintings of the people and landscapes of French Polynesia (Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands). Two years later, Gauguin left France for Tahiti, and one of his earliest works was a painting of a Tahitian female standing in repose which was inspired by the ethereal apsaras/devatas (celestial nymphs) of Angkor Wat that he had seen at the exhibition in Paris in 1889. The 1900 pavilion featured a modern-style Cambodian Buddhist temple built on a mound with a staircase flanked by stone lions and two guardian figures at the entrance to the temple (Fig. 14).

In 1906, an attempt was made to replicate the Bayon temple (Fig. 15). It was, though, more of a fantasy that drew inspiration from drawings made by Delaporte in the late 1800s rather than from the original temple (Fig. 16). Nevertheless, the structure with its monumental, enigmatic faces adorning all four sides of the central tower dominated the Indochinese pavilion.



Fig 17. King Sisowath of Cambodia
(r. 1904-27)

An official visit to France by King Sisowath (r. 1904-27) of Cambodia in 1906 marked the peak of French colonial expansion. He was sixty-six years old and the first Cambodian king to visit Europe. Sisowath sailed from Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh) on a French liner to Marseille. The French received King Sisowath graciously. He was described by the press as a “good-humoured man of medium height, with large, expressive eyes, and a heavy-lipped mouth with a thin moustache” (Fig. 17). During the visit to the exhibition, he wore a silk *sampot chang kben* (a formal silk, pant-like garment), black silk stockings, a western-style tailcoat and white gloves (Fig. 18).

Some 100 royal Cambodian dancers and musicians accompanied him, and they attracted enormous attention (Fig. 19). The dancers, in unique costumes and headresses, and their movements as well as the music, possessed an exotic quality (see Fig. 11). The entourage, soon after landing at Marseille, went to Paris where the President of France hosted a garden party for the king in July 1906, and the Royal Cambodian dancers and musicians performed. Françoise-Auguste-René Rodin, the renowned French sculptor, saw a performance in the Bois de Boulogne, and mesmerized by the beauty and uniqueness, he said: “I contemplated them in ecstasy!”. He was so besotted with the dancers that he



Fig 18. King Sisowath of Cambodia visiting the 1906 Colonial Exhibition in Paris



Fig 19. One of King Sisowath's
premier dancers



Fig 20. Drawing with watercolour
by Auguste Rodin, 1906

followed them back to Marseille where he spent a week making more than 150 drawings focusing on their female sensuality, lithe bodies and sensuous movements. He later added a subtle palette in watercolour to the drawings (Fig. 20). When the dancers left France, Rodin commented that they “... took with them all the beauty of the world.” Today, these pieces are in the Rodin Museum in Paris, and are considered amongst the highlights of his art.

When it was time to leave France, French officials escorted King Sisowath to the port of Marseilles, wished him a safe return journey, bid farewell, and departed. The king, though, did not leave. Instead, he went back to Paris where he stayed for several more months, and returned to Cambodia just in time to sign the French-Thai Treaty of 1907 that gave Angkor back to Cambodia.

1922

The size of the Angkor-inspired pavilions more than doubled between the 1906 exhibition and those of 1922 and 1931, probably because of the growing public interest and increased attendance at the exhibitions. It was also due to the temples being returned to Cambodia in 1907, after which the representation of Cambodian pavilions became more authentic. The model of Angkor Wat built for the colonial exhibition in Marseille that opened in February 1922 was the largest of all pavilions (Fig. 21). Auguste Émile Joseph Delaval was the chief architect of the model, the interior of which contained some 35,000 plaster casts made of carvings and sculpture. Original sculpture and cast moulds of decorations in the collections of the Musée Guimet and the Musée Khmer au Palais du Trocadero were also on display. An effort was made to create a replica close to the original although it was scaled down in size. The apex, though, was the

readily recognizable quincunx of lotus-bud shaped towers, making it amongst the most impressive pavilions at the 1922 exhibition.

1931

The greatest of all colonial exhibitions in France took place at Lake Daumesnil, Paris, in 1931. It opened in May 1931, and closed six months later. The pavilion occupied 110 hectares of the Bois de Vincennes, and featured the reconstructed grand temple of Angkor Wat, including sculpture and bas-reliefs made from plaster molds. It took six years to build the temple, under the supervision of Charles and Gabriel Blanche, father and son architects; George Auberlet, a French architect, was the sculptor.

The reliefs on the walls of the first and second galleries were replicated, which gave the visitor a sense of the interior. Apsaras on the inner walls of the gallery are one of the most renowned decorative elements at Angkor Wat, where some 1,700 female apsaras, carved in stone, stand in sublime beauty and grace. These exquisite and sensuous creatures, created to please the gods, appear singly or in pairs or triplets, and face the central tower. They are dressed in luxurious attire, and bejeweled with gold and precious gems.

Each one wears an ankle-length, filmy skirt that clings to her legs; a belt inlaid with precious gems holds it in place. Her upper arms, wrists and ankles bear



Fig 21. Angkor Wat, Colonial
Exhibition, Marseille, 1922



Fig 22. *Apsaras adorn the walls of Angkor Wat, Colonial Exhibition, Paris, 1931*

elaborate jewellery, and a sumptuous necklace drapes gracefully around her neck. Sometimes her headdress is like the spires of the great temple itself, and other times it is a tapering tiara that sets off her upswept hair (Fig. 22). Casts had been made of the originals for the exhibitions, so the apsaras at the exhibition gallery were exact replicas.

“I spent a week at Angkor. I could not have done with a day less...On my last visit to this temple I sat and watched the sunset from the topmost shrine...Sitting up here, I thought of those concrete steps that I had seen in Paris, put up for a temporary exhibition...I saw why the flood-lighting at the exhibition had been golden, only gold wasn’t really the right shade. Away and away the jungle stretches over flat country, and the sun has an uninterrupted view of the towers till it plunges into a green ocean of trees. By that time the light is vermillion.

And now the sun went down on Angkor. But it would come again tomorrow, when I would be starting back over the long road home. Would the road be empty, I wondered, now that ambition was fulfilled? But emptiness is a thing of mind, not space.” – Claudia Parsons, ‘Vagabondage’

In the first three decades of the 20th century, International Colonial Exhibitions in France were designed to boost trade and give the world a sense of France’s colonial empire. In 1931, over 33 million visitors had the opportunity to see two of Cambodia’s majestic Khmer temples. They could admire the architectural genius, the rhythmic symmetry, and the delicate carvings adorning the walls of Angkor Wat’s galleries; and they saw the Bayon with its imposing towers carved with four faces expressing the enigmatic ‘smile of Angkor’. A visitor could walk inside, and view the interior architecture, examples of food stuffs, clothing, fisheries, and forest products. Postcards capturing these various aspects were also available for sale. For most visitors, the temples were their first exposure to Khmer art and culture.

An international exhibition of the arts and techniques in modern life was held in the Bois de Boulogne, Paris, in 1937, and although it included hybrid representations of Angkor Wat and the Bayon, the pavilion was a greatly reduced version

of previous ones. During the post-depression years, the possibility of travelling to Angkor reached unprecedented heights in the 1930s, and allowed tourists to go to Angkor, and experience the original temples. Transpacific voyages became the norm. Luxury ocean liners, such as those of the Dollar Steamship Line, plied the seas between the west coast of the states and Asia. Air France, formed in 1933, flew to the French Colonies. Other European airlines followed with flights to Asia. The Thomas Cook Group offered round-the-world tours calling at ports in Indochina. During the same period, work at Angkor was progressing under the auspices of the EFEO. Increased roads, the clearing of more temples, further restoration, and additional tourist facilities such as local transport, hotels, and eateries, made travelling to Angkor more appealing and rewarding.

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Images contributed by author

Dawn F. Rooney is an art historian specialising in the art of Southeast Asia. She is the author of several books on the culture of the region; her latest book is ‘Khmer Ceramics, Their Beauty and Meaning’ (Bangkok, River Books, 2010).

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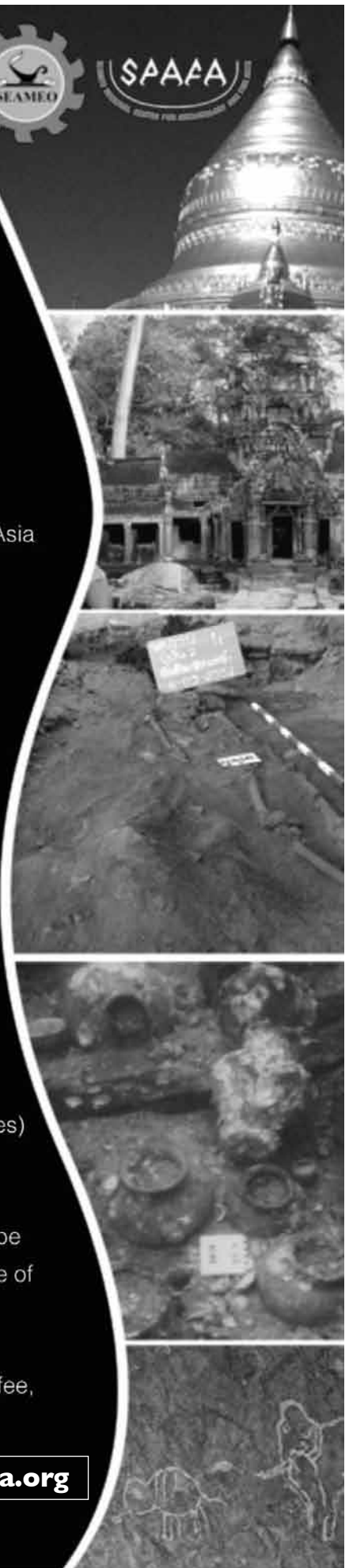
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Information on the conference programme, accommodation, registration fee, excursion programme, etc. will be announced soon.

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Rock Painting at Cardamom Mountains, Cambodia

The following is a preliminary report made by archaeologists Heng Sophady, Tep Sokha, Em Dany, and Son Chantoeurn on the rock art site in the Cardamom Mountains which has attracted the attention of archaeologists.

Introduction

Rock art, or rock painting, is not well known in Cambodia; however, there has been significant interest in the recent “official” discovery of a few rock shelters containing rock paintings in the mountain of Kulen in Siem Reap, and another site in the Cardamom mountain range of Kravanh District, Pursat.

History of the site

The site in the Cardamom Mountains is not a new discovery. For a long time, local residents of the area have been aware of the rock art. However, information relating to the site is new to authorities and researchers. In 2007, officers of the Culture and Fine Arts Department of Pursat province reported the red paintings on the small rock shelter at the Cardamom Mountain to the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts.

The authorities decided to protect the site, and arranged for officials and staff of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts to collaborate with local authorities. They visited the site in October 2007 to determine the location, and assess the situation by studying the styles of the rock paintings. At that time, only H.E. Chuch Phoeurn, Secretary of State, Ministry of Culture, and a few officers could access the site; the road conditions were also difficult. Subsequently, officers of Pursat Culture and Fine Arts Department visited the site, and confirmed its location and features.

On 21 - 23 February 2011, officers of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, led by Mr. Heng Sophady, accompanied by Mr. Tep Sokha, Miss Em Dany, and Mr. Son Chantoeurn (in collaboration with a French team led by Dr. Fabrice Demeter from Musée National d’Histoire Naturelle, Paris, as well as local participants) conducted a survey of the site.

Site location

The rock painting is located southeast of Kanam village, Rokat commune, Kravanh district, Pursat province (UTM: N 37 05 35, E 133 85 62). The site is situated around 2 km south of the village. Kanam is a new and remote village located on the Cardamom Mountain range, about 70 km from Pursat provincial town, and about 40 km from Kravanh District. Accessible only in the dry season by foot, motorcycle or oxen cart, it takes a whole day to reach by motorcycle; and a few days by oxen cart or walking. The road to the village cuts through the Cardamom Mountains, and passes through some small villages, such as Veal Vong, Sach Pouk, Peam, Khsang, Prei Khmam and Kanam.

A river originating from Ta Sai village runs through the area. The survey team crossed that river three times before reaching the site. Few families live in the area, and most of them are migrants from Pursat. The inhabitants earn their living from agriculture, cutting trees, foraging, and fishing. They ride buffalo carts, and walk down the mountain once every month or two to purchase supplies from the market.

Description

The locals call the rock paintings “*laang komnou*” in Cambodian (“*Laang*” refers to “cave”, and “*komnou*” means “painting”). The term is misleading because the site is not a cave, but a small rock shelter of grey sandstone approximately 3.46 m high, 6.60 m long, and 4 m deep. The roof is about 7.40 m long and 4.80 m wide; and the edge of the roof is about 65 cm thick (Fig. 1). Under the roof are several big blocks of sandstone, suggesting that the shelter would not be suitable for prolonged

settlement by a migrating people. Under the rock shelter’s ceiling is a big block of sandstone with traces of red, perhaps powdered, ochre pigments similar to the colour of the paint on the ceiling. This spot was possibly used for colour preparation before the painting is done (Fig. 2).

Fig. 1: “Laang Kamnou” from Northeast direction

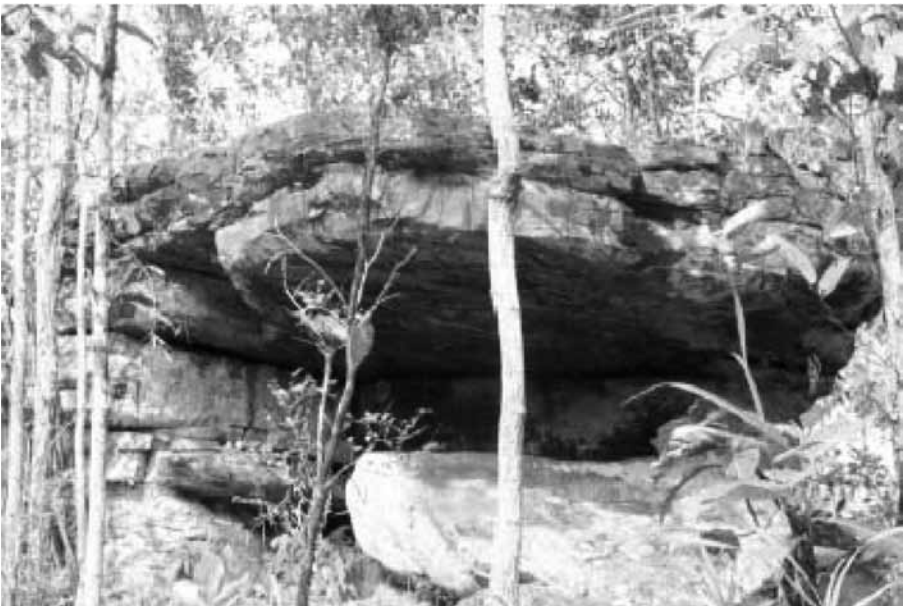


Fig. 2: Remnants of red colour on rock under shelter



The pictographs and paintings might have been drawn using pigments of red ochre, the remains of which are found on the rock under the ceiling. This type of colour is easy to find in the natural environment, and is very popular as a painting or drawing material among prehistoric humans.

Most of the paintings are on the ceiling, and a few paintings were found on the edge of the roof and on the vertical wall. The paintings depict human figures, terrestrial animals, and agricultural tools, mainly ploughs (Fig. 3, 4). There are both single and group images of humans riding on an elephant, and holding something in their hands (Fig. 5, 6 and 7). Some



Fig. 3: Terrestrial animals



Fig. 4: Plough



Fig. 5: Human riding on elephant



Fig. 6: Group of humans riding on elephant



Fig. 7: Group of people riding on elephant



Fig. 8: Probably a water buffalo



Fig. 9: Unidentified animal

parts show a group of animals or a single animal, such as that of a water buffalo (Fig. 8). Birds are rarely depicted, and fish are not represented.

Some animal images in the paintings are difficult to identify because of damage caused by the effect of rock erosion and water. In addition, some images of the original paintings were modified by village children using white chalk (Fig. 9).

During the visit, samples of the red powder were removed from a rock panel under the shelter's ceiling, and sent to a laboratory in Paris for chemical compositional analysis.

Conclusion



The paintings at *Laang Kamnou* site depicted human activities, terrestrial animals, and agricultural tools. Those of humans riding on elephants possibly reflected human travels or migration. Animals represent domesticated and undomesticated species, such as water buffaloes, cows, multiple species of deer, elephants, and various animals, which we could not identify either because of the impact of natural damage or acts of modern humans. Depictions of ploughs probably indicated the agricultural activities of the communities in that period, which for now are not precisely ascertained yet.

In the current research on rock paintings, analysis on samples of red pigments left on the rock is being carried out to identify the raw materials used for painting.



Damage to the paintings, most of which are still in good condition while some are in a poor state, was likely caused by water dripping from the ceiling during the rainy season while human activities were also a contributing factor.

Rock painting is very rare in Cambodia. *Laang Kamnou* is, therefore, tremendously important as the country's cultural heritage. It should be further studied in detailed investigations and research so as to understand the life of people in the past, and the significance of rock paintings in Cambodia.


Photographs Courtesy of Heng Sophady




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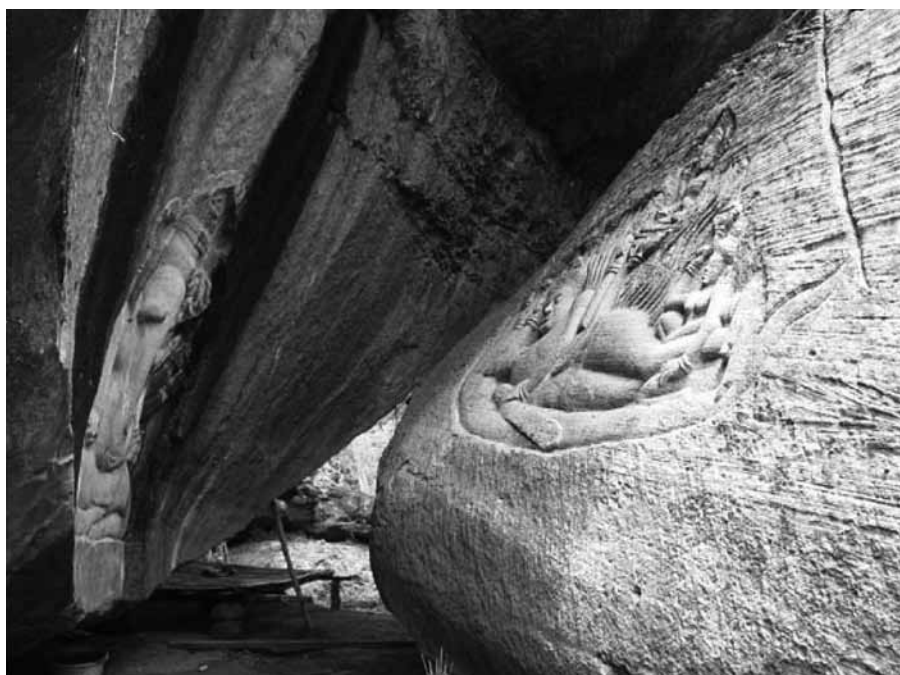
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Kulen Mountain Rock Art: An Initial Assessment

The following is a presentation on rock art in the Kulen Mountain of Cambodia by archaeologist **Heng Than** at the 2011 SEAMEO SPAFA workshop on rock art studies.



Rock art at the base of Kulen Mountain

The study of rock art, a new discipline in Cambodia, has arisen due to recent discoveries of rock art sites in the country. In 2005, rock art sites located in Kravanh Mountain, near the southern coast of Cambodia, were discovered by wildlife conservators. In 2010, the team of Living Angkor Road Project of APSARA Authority (National Authority for Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap) found many rock paintings on the southeast of the Kulen Mountain.

History

While community members living near the rock art sites in the Kulen Mountain have long been aware of these sites, researchers on the other hand had no knowledge of them. In 2010, through the Living Angkor Road Project (LARP) which carried out studies in archaeology, remote sensing and geographic information system (GIS), as well as Geo-physics of the Kulen Mountains, five rock paintings were discovered. The sites were photographed and mapped. In a training conducted by Prof Paul Tacon of Griffith University in early 2011, four more rock paintings came to light.

Methodology/Research Approach

The inspection in the area was primarily based on archaeological survey, remote sensing and GIS studies. While the archaeological survey was based on the data collection form developed by the LARP, the survey form was used as a guideline to collect archaeological and cultural data from the field. The three primary respondents of the interviews were the village chiefs, monks, and former looters.

Key Observations at the Rock Art Sites

The rock paintings were found on eroded sandstone boulders on scree slopes or raised terrace-plateaus below the cliff’s edge. Given the distribution of similar looking boulders, there may be many more sites around the base of Kulen Mountain.

The locations of the rock art that were identified during the 2010-2011 surveys are as follows:

Group A: Poeung Komnou

The “Poeung Komnou” site is located approximately 5 km to the northwest of Tatem village, Kan Tout commune, Svay Loeu district, Siem Reap province, and about 10 km from Svay Loeu central district. The site consists of an enormous sloping boulder next to a small one on the flat plateau below the mountain.

The name of this site means *sculpture rock shelter* for many Cambodians but for the local community, it means *rock art painting*. Features of the large boulder include 12th century Hindu bas-reliefs on its eastern and western vertical sides. The sloping northern side of the main boulder forms a large rock shelter. Found on its sloping ceiling is a large and solid red painting of a fork-tail catfish. The painting is 108 cm wide by 64 cm long, and is located 2.5 m above ground level. Also found in the rock shelter are some red zigzag lines and recent charcoal drawings of the head and shoulders of two human figures.

Group B

From 2010 to 2011, LARP members discovered nine rock art sites (located approximately 7 km to the east of Thma Chhrounh village, Khnang Phnom commune, Svay Loeu, Siem Reap). These sites are situated close to a natural stream with a north to south orientation.

This group consists of a sloping boulder and bedrock on a scree slope. There are red outlines and solid paintings, solid orange painting, and line charcoal drawings. The paintings include solid red human figures; a red outline of cattle with solid red heads and horns; a partially solid red cattle head and horns; a cart-like design with two wheels; and a few faded solid orange or outline geometric designs. Recent charcoal drawings consist of an animal, human figure, and the names of individuals.

Some glazed Khmer pottery typical of the 11th-13th centuries were also found on the ground below the shelter.

Local community members who live up in the mountain commonly camped in the shelter overnight when they came down to clear the nearby area for agriculture.

Conclusion

Kulen Mountain is the most sacred part of the Cambodian landscape. Today, it is a special place not only for the Khmer people but also for Hindus, Buddhists, and other visitors around the world. The recent rock art discoveries indicate the mountain’s importance in the mythology of the



Boulder shelter containing painting



Poeung Komnou site

people perhaps for thousands of years, even before Hinduism influenced them. The rock art in Kulen Mountain is unique and diverse, and were made over a considerable period, with the earliest phases consisting of paintings typical of hunter-gatherers, while the more recent ones are associated with agriculturalists. Some of the imagery in bas-relief and recent charcoal drawings relate to Hindu monuments spread across the larger Angkor region.

Rock art of many different forms and styles can be found spread across the 10 sites, and it includes paintings, drawings, engravings and bas-reliefs. Solid red animal paintings appear to be the oldest surviving rock art, while the most recent, consisting of charcoal drawings, was found in three of the largest shelters at the eastern end of Kulen Mountain, where the widest rock art distribution is located.

Future Research

Documentation is necessary to record all the sites by using the site checklist approach to provide consistent comparative details.

More field surveys of rock arts should be made in the area, particularly at the top and along the scree slopes of Kulen Mountain and in the vicinity of Kravanh mountain.

A comprehensive database of sites with photographs, GPS/GIS and all site details, should be maintained.

Partners for joint research projects should be sought.

Management and Conservation

Fire, whether caused by humans or wildfires, is obviously a major threat to some Kulen Mountain rock art sites. Vegetation should not be allowed to grow in rock shelters or close to painted panels. Moreover, extensive clearing of tall trees near the front of rock shelters should not be undertaken as changes to sun exposure could cause negative impact on the art.

Graffiti is a major threat to rock art sites world-wide. Fortunately, the Kulen Mountain rock art sites have not been damaged in this regard, although some rock art at Kbal Spean have been extensively damaged by graffiti. Local villagers would be asked to cooperate in carefully removing graffiti (while making sure the rock paintings are not negatively affected in the process).

Insects, especially termites, mud-wasps, and birds, are other threats. Some bird nests at the sites could be carefully removed, but termite

tunnels on shelter walls and ceilings cannot be interfered with as the termites would just build new tunnels, possibly causing further intrusions of some paintings.

As before, local inhabitants should be discouraged from camping near the main panels in rock shelters, and from adding graffiti or writing anywhere in the rock shelters.

An education/awareness programme would be implemented to inform the local community, and others, that the Kulen Mountain rock art sites are important places of heritage, and that some of the paintings were made by their ancestors.

For various reasons, Kulen rock art sites should not be developed for tourism; the exception being *Poeun Komnou* (Group A), which is already visited by a small number of people for its Hindu carvings. Outside specialists who want to visit rock art sites should be supervised by staff of the APSARA.

Photographs courtesy of Heng Than

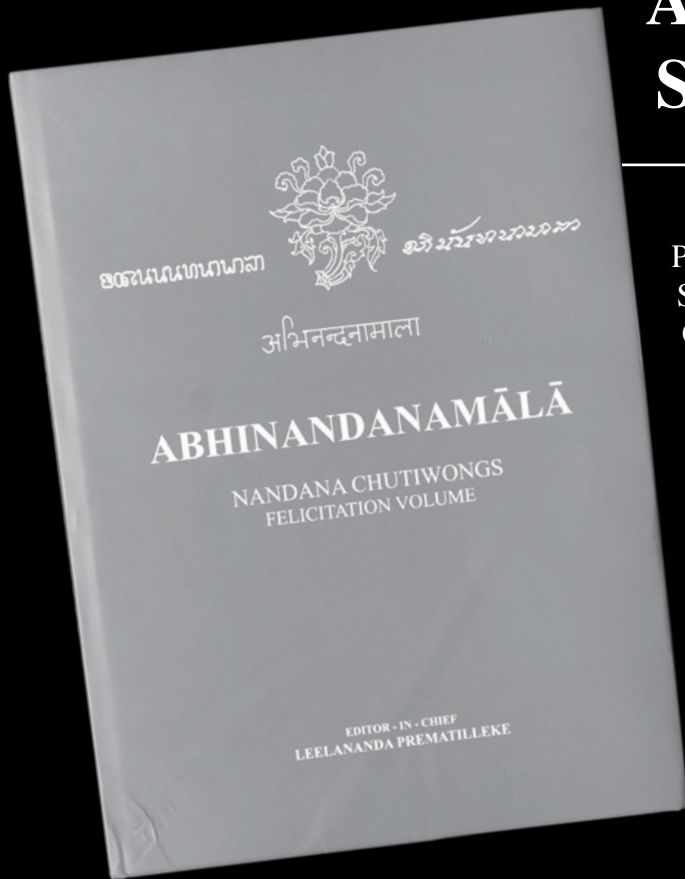
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Abhinandanamala and Supplementum

Published in 2010 under the joint auspices of SEAMEO SPAFA and the Abhinandanamala Committees in Colombo and Bangkok, Abhinandanamala and Abhinandanamala Supplementum constitute a felicitation volume dedicated to Dr. Nandana Chutiwongs by her colleagues and friends. The volume was compiled under the editorship of Professor Leelananda Prematilleke (Peradeniya and Colombo), Professor Pisit Charoenwongsa (Bangkok), Professor Kalpakam Sankarnarayan (Mumbai) and Professor Timbul Haryono (Yogyakarta).

The volume contains 57 significant research articles covering countries of Buddhist and Hinduist Asia. Divided into sections on prehistory and cultural history, art and

archaeology, religion, iconography, museology and heritage, the articles were contributed by scholars of established international repute, and young researchers. Serious readers will find many topics which are both unique and inspiring in these richly illustrated publications that were splendidly designed by Gunaratna Printing of Colombo and the Museum Press of Bangkok.

The Abhinandanamala and its Supplementum are available for free, but are in limited number. Research institutions and scholars may apply for printed copies at:
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Preventing Malaysia's Traditional Music from Disappearing

Connie Lim Keh Nie and Mohamad Fadzil Abdul Rahman discuss how instrumental music performed in the past by the indigenous tribes in Sarawak, are gradually vanishing, or merging with contemporary musical styles, transforming to a modern fusion of ethnic folk music. The authors touch on the diversification of Malaysia's traditional music, and the approaches adopted by composers and arrangers.

As the advocates of ecology do their best to keep nature intact, musicians should strive equally hard to ensure that traditional and ethnic music survive. Negligence will allow the music to vanish in the process of globalization and changes in trends, lifestyle and preferences, particularly among the new generation.

The world of music has been experiencing an evolution of genres through the years. In response to these changes, the rationale for diversifying various aspects of traditional music in the form of performance, instrument making/modifications or repertoires should be considered. Using different approaches to keep traditional music alive can ensure its survival. They are, however, not tantamount to abandoning the authentic forms of traditional music, as some critics claimed.

The term "World Music" has long suffered the difficulty of precise definition. In the media and the music industry, it was first used as a marketing/classificatory device to generally classify any kind of non-Western mainstream music. However, it is now accepted that in musical

terms, ‘World Music’ can be roughly defined as music that uses distinctive ethnic scales, modes and musical inflection. It is usually produced with or accompanied by distinctive traditional ethnic instruments. However, the transition from the traditional community setting, where such music is played, to the performance stage is fraught with challenges that need to be faced. As our lifestyle changes, it becomes increasingly difficult to hold on to our individual cultural identity and our traditional modes of expression. There is a danger that our native music is increasingly becoming a novelty reserved for tourists or museums.

Old folks as well as the veterans have passed away without handing down the knowledge of music to their children. Why this tradition is no longer in practice is perhaps due to many factors, one of which being the lack of interest among the youngsters – contemporary music is much more appealing to them. It is difficult to promote the appreciation of traditional music when the inheritors of the heritage are not even interested in it.

In the purists’ view, cultural heritage must be preserved in its truest form; any deviations from this is considered a corruption of the original source. In subscribing to this principle, stifling the creativity and freedom to innovate and reinvent is inevitable, and contribute to the loss of interest of the youth, further consigning traditional music to the pleasure of tourists, and the privilege of museums.

Pragmatic Reasons/Sentimental Preferences

There are many views on the cause of traditional music disappearing. Purists bemoan the loss of native music and its authenticity. Improvising and modifying ethnic music performance or musical instruments have encountered resistance (a participant at a recent international conference, for example, expressed fierce opposition to *any* change, whether it be modernising traditional instruments, improving the tuning systems, or altering the way traditional music is performed). The reluctance to change reflects a denial of the fact that the young generation today does not enjoy listening to monotonous and repetitious tunes, and even less when the music is off tune, and performed in a dominantly pentatonic scale for hours on end. Indeed, there is validity in the arguments, but the

issue should be seen in a holistic and broader perspective. Suggestions offering pragmatic reasons, much more than sentimental preferences, should be considered seriously.

Concern for the fate of traditional music has been well documented. However, efforts to promote interest, and foster tradition, were opposed on the basis of authenticity. Organising concerts, workshops, appreciation classes and intellectual discourses are impressive efforts, but to what extent do they enhance the level of awareness amongst the younger generation? Are these activities appealing enough? The answer is no. To develop more realistic efforts in promoting traditional music, changes in contemporary lifestyle must be accepted.

The Way Forward

A group called ‘Tuku Kame’ in Sarawak has taken several steps in confronting the difficult challenge of attracting the interest of the young generation in traditional music. It has successfully revised traditional music by creating modern versions of it. Tuku Kame, literally meaning “our rhythm” in the local Malay dialect, is an ensemble which performs daily at the village. It was formed in 1998 in the Sarawak Cultural Village, a centre established to preserve and exhibit cultural and artistic heritage of Sarawak. The group strives to introduce Sarawak’s traditional music and instruments to the world music industry. The aim of the Sarawak state multi-ethnic “world music” ensemble is to encourage the young generation to appreciate the musical instrument, *sape*¹, and learn how to play it. The group incorporates its use in performing popular music.

¹ A lute type, four-string traditional instrument played by the *Kenyah, Kayan, Penan* and other upland ethnic groups of Sarawak. It is used to provide music for dancing and entertainment in festivals. In the past, the instrument is also used in healing ceremonies.



*Sarawak Cultural Village
Tuku Kame (which means "Our Rhythm or Beat")
was created in 1998.
This award-winning Sarawak Cultural Village
ensemble consists of 7 musicians,
and 3 vocalists.*

Under the directorship of Mr. Narawi H Rashidi, Tuku Kame performs compositions that aesthetically synthesize various aspects of local vocal and instrumental traditions with globally recognized popular music idioms. In the last ten years, Tuku Kame has struggled to find a contemporary audience outside the Cultural Village where it originated. They have so far produced two albums, 'Gadong' and 'The Rhythm of the Rainforest', both of which are available at the Cultural Village, tourist outlets, and sold online through www.borneoworldmusic.com. The group participated in MTV Band Alert in 1998, and won the 'Grand Prix Award' and 'MTV Breakthrough Award'. Mr. Jerry Kamit, a *sape* player of the group, and Tuku Kame itself, received the highest recognition and achievement at the 12th World Championship of Performing Arts in 2009. These achievements are clear indications of how traditional music can be popularized and internationalized. The efforts undertaken by this group to promote, preserve, enhance creativity and diversify the Sarawak music heritage among local and international audiences should be supported.

When asked why traditional music is not performed the way it was performed in the past, Mr. Narawi replied in jest: *"We are all traditional musicians. We want our next generation to play traditional instruments as well as [traditional] music. That's why we infused jazz, pop and fusion in our performance. We also want to convey the message that traditional music is not only used in the olden days for ritual ceremonies but can also be extended through contemporary music."*

It is clear that to reach out to the youngsters, traditional music must adapt to contemporary and diverse styles. The interest of the young is one of the most important factors in ensuring the continuation of the heritage. Once taken to the music, the desire to learn to play the instruments will follow. Currently, the practice at Sarawak Culture Village focused on the basics, and lessons are taught in the traditional manner and form. From how to hold the *sape*, tune the strings, and memorize the name of the strings and the traditional tune 'Datun Julud²', youngsters are equipped with all the fundamental knowledge. This is an example of how fundamental values are not forgotten when authenticity is a concern. Only upon mastering the basics of playing the *sape* and its music are practitioners allowed to make creative variations and arrangements based on the traditional tune.

According to Mr. Narawi, Tuku Kame usually plays one or two original form(s) of folk/traditional songs before adopting the contemporary style during their one-hour stage performances. Most of the traditional songs are repeatedly played with no refrain. *"We have to instill interest [in] and retain the attention of the young generation, so they will love traditional music. If not, it will die,"* said Mr. Narawi.

² Traditional dance music of the *Kenyah* ethnic group in Sarawak

Ghazal

Ghazal, which is a form of syncretic music, is performed as a popular social music in the State of Johor, south of Malaysia. Featuring recitation of romantic and religious verses in a singing style, Ghazal is an art form that came to Malaysia from the Middle East in the early 20th century.³ Over the years, local music traditions have influenced its form and style, transforming it into a musical genre with a unique Malaysian flavor. Ghazal was brought to the Malay Peninsula by Arab missionaries in the early 1900s, and depending on the repertoires, it is still performed as popular music in the Middle East. As a syncretic music genre, Ghazal combines musical instruments and influences from Indian, Arab, Malay and Western Music. Musical instruments used in a Ghazal ensemble include the Indian harmonium, tabla and baya, the Western violin, guitar, maracas, and tambourine as well as Middle Eastern musical instruments, the gambus and the ud. The violin and the harmonium are the main instruments that provide the melody, sometimes in unison with the singer. The gambus and guitar provide the accompaniment, and the maracas dictates the rhythm at regular beats, picking up tempo at the end of the passage. Occasionally the rebana drum and gong are used when a local rhythm is played. Maruas (a type of hand drum played by the Malays) is also used to emphasize the drum beat in a particular rhythm.

Ghazal Johor is believed to have been introduced by musicians from North India in the 1920s. Pak Lomak (Mr. Haji Musa Yusof), a locally-recognised musician, was credited with popularizing this strain of Ghazal in Johor. He was well-known for singing the Ghazal in Urdu, and playing the harmonium and tabla, the two main instruments in the Indian Ghazal. Later, Ghazal is localised to suit the taste of the locals by introducing long melodic and musical forms. Lyrics are also created to suit the local language as in the popular Malay *pantun* (poem) form. Pak Lomak started to translate Urdu lyrics from the Indian Ghazal songs into the local dialect, and some of his songs, such as ‘Seri Mersing’, ‘Gunung Banang’ and ‘Pak Ngah Balik’, are still popular today. Over the years, Malay rhythms such

³ Matusky, P. & Tan, S. B. (2004). The Music of Malaysia. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited. pp. 351-354.

Organising concerts, workshops, appreciation classes and intellectual discourses are impressive efforts, but to what extent do they enhance the level of awareness amongst the younger generation? Are these activities appealing enough? The answer is no. To develop more realistic efforts in promoting traditional music, changes in contemporary lifestyle must be accepted.

as *Joget, Inang, Zapin* and *Masri* have blended well in the Ghazal musical repertoire.⁴ Many Ghazal songs composed in the original rhythm have been incorporated in other musical genres, and adapted into folk songs featuring the *Asli* eight-beat rhythm.

It is obvious that had the authenticity issue been an impediment, and the “purists” held sway, Ghazal would not have made its mark in Malaysia, and a national music heritage would not have been created. Ghazal Malaysia is a national music heritage produced by the “melting pot” approach to become unique and different from its origins even though almost all of the instruments involved are foreign

to Malaysia. With its creativity, modifications, and arrangements adopting local flavours, Ghazal Malaysia does not exist in any other part of the world.

Irama Malaysia

Irama Malaysia (Malaysian Rhythms) was established by Malaysian composers who incorporated the *Asli, Zapin, Inang* and *Joget* rhythms in their musical compositions. The composers include Suhaimi Mohamad Zain (Pak Ngah), Mohamad Nasir Mohamad (M. Nasir), Manan Ngah, Zubir Ali, and S. Amin Shahib. Their efforts in promoting Irama Malaysia and creative ethnic music were further boosted by local singers, such as Dato Siti Nurhaliza and Noraniza Idris. Singer Dato Siti Nurhaliza and composer Pak Ngah won an award for their song, ‘Cindai’, in *Anugerah Juara Lagu*⁵ under the category of Irama Malaysia in 1998. ‘Cindai’⁶ was composed in standard ternary form (AABC) and played in minor mode. The scale used is similar to the Arabic *Maqam Nahawand*, which is similar to the harmonic minor and melodic minor scale. One of the characteris-

⁴ Ariff Ahmad. (2004). Ghazal. In Ghulam-Sawar Yusof (Eds.), The Encyclopedia of Malaysia – Volume 8: Performing Arts. Singapore: Archipelago Press. pp. 84-85

⁵ Anugerah Juara Lagu (‘Champion for Songs Award’) is a popular annual music competition in Malaysia, organised by TV3. Nominees are derived from a list of mostly Malay songs which have garnered the most public votes throughout the year.

⁶ Anon. (2006, January, 12). Siti Nurhaliza – Cindai (Live @ Royal Albert Hall, London) [Video File] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucdhzbbDWqQ>



Dato Siti Norhaliza Binti Tarudin
<http://liriksemualagu.blogspot.com/2010/02/semua-lirik-lagu-siti-nurhaliza.html>

tics in Irama Malaysia is the combination of local and foreign traditional musical instruments. A standard feature of Pak Ngah's compositions is the insertion of Malay traditional drums such as the rebana, gendang and kompang together with the Indian *tabla* and Arabic darbukha or maruas.⁷ In 'Cindai', the fast pace of *Inang and Zapin* rhythms is applied, while traditional Malay and western drums provide the interlocking rhythm patterns. As a professional accordionist, Pak Ngah is fond of inserting accordion and gambus sounds in his works.

Blending the local with the foreign whilst maintaining the essence of traditional music is the fort  of Irama Malaysia; the indicator of its popularity is the overwhelming response from the public, including the younger generation. The radical approach taken by Pak Ngah proved that creativity, exceeding limits, and preserving the essence and fundamentals of traditional music could actually be very fruitful and productive in promoting traditional music. 'Cindai' served as a catalyst in drawing the young generation toward traditional music.

⁷ Chor, K. C., Mohd Nasir Hashim & Yeong, H. Y. (2009). Irama Malaysia – A Case Study of Pak Ngah's Irama Malaysia. Saarbrucken: VDM Publishing House. pp. 38

When Classic Meets Pop

Music of the past has been revived in the 21st century in different forms to accommodate the younger generation. 'Canon in D' (originally scored for three violins and basso continuo) by German Baroque composer Johann Pachelbel is a famous piece of music characterized by imitation and repetition. Many other classical works forgotten for centuries were rediscovered in the 21st century by songwriters who created popular songs and film music. In 1967, a Greek progressive rock band Aphrodite's Child released their first single, 'Rain and Tears'⁸, which was a rework of Pachelbel's 'Canon in D'. Through this song (with English lyrics), the band became an overnight sensation in France and several other European countries in which the single charted well. It sold over one million copies, and was awarded a gold disc. In 1997, artist Leon Ivey Jr, better known by the stage name Coolio, performed 'C U When U Get There',⁹ another rendition of Pachelbel's Canon – in a rap version. It was featured on the soundtrack in the comedy film 'Nothing to Lose'. The Farm ft S.F.C. Boys Choir borrowed the well-known chord progression, the circle of fifth from Pachelbel's canon, to produce the official song, 'All Together Now 2004'¹⁰, for the England Football Team's Euro 2004 tournament campaign (the song reached number 5 in the UK charts that year).

The native musical instrument of Scotland, the bagpipe, is another example of how old instruments can be brought back into vogue again. The bagpipe has been used in various genres of music, from traditional folk to jazz, and even rock. The song, 'Mull of Kintyre'¹¹, popularized by Wings in 1977, was composed on the pentatonic scale by Paul McCartney, who included bagpipes in the music to exude a characteristic Scottish sound. The Darkness, another rock band, also used bagpipes in the song, 'Hazel Eyes'¹², in November 2005.

⁸ Anon. (2007, January, 13). Aphrodite's Child - Rain and Tears [Video File] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4e_a8xXtb6Y

⁹ Anon. (2006, November, 26). Coolio - I'll C U When U Get There [Video File] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tP1PXRiVoJw>

¹⁰ Anon. (2010, May, 27). The Farm - All Together Now 2004 [Official Video] [Video File] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3xrv5A41AU>

¹¹ Anon. (2006, November, 9). Mull of Kintyre – Wings [Video File] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYhTye_A9H0

¹² Anon. (2008, September, 6). The Darkness - Hazel Eyes [Video File] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvc3P2-C3Ns>

‘Canon in D’ was a 17th century musical composition that has been re-popularized in movie soundtracks, pop songs and rap music to become one of the favourite classical music of the young generation.

Tailoring to the needs of young people is crucial; music can be rearranged, reinterpreted and adapted to suit their tastes. New skills on the use of instruments can emerge. Accepting changes is part of musical development.

Conclusion

The survival of music heritage, and the commitment in preserving it, have been a concern for many. However, there are differing perspectives, anchored in different ideas and approaches, even though the aim and goal to preserve and maintain music heritage are the same. The debate on maintaining the authenticity of music by only allowing it to be performed in its original form will continue. Intellectual discourses on the issue should be encouraged but what matters most is supporting what is best for the survival of traditional music. Whether we like it or not, diversifying performances and instrumentation occurs regularly, and will continue to develop. Maintaining authenticity for the sake of being authentic at the expense of survival and development is a heavy price to pay, as traditional music vanishes.

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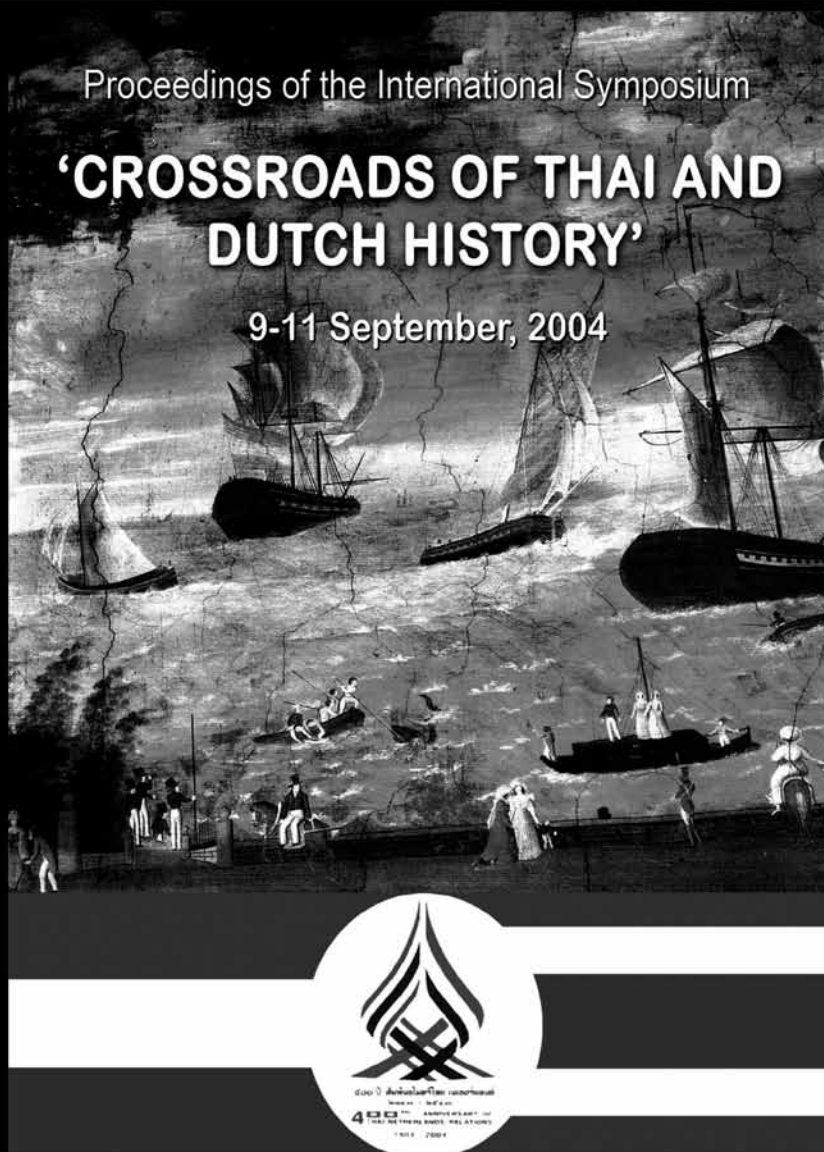
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