



SOUTHEAST ASIA LIBRARY GROUP

NEWSLETTER

No. 40, December 2008

ISSN 0308-4035

Contents

Editorial	p. 1
SEALG Annual Meeting 2008	p. 2
Southeast Asian Film and Cinema Studies at SOAS (<i>N. Martland</i>)	p. 4
Shan Manuscripts Collections outside the Shan State (<i>J. Khur-yearn</i>)	p. 12
The Chakrabongse Archive at the British Library (<i>J. Igunma</i>)	p. 16
Announcements	p. 21



Editorial

A warm welcome to the 40th issue of the SEALG Newsletter! This issue marks the revival of our organisation's newsletter after a break of thirteen years. Obviously, the main change is the electronic format, in which the newsletter should appear on an annual basis on the SEALG homepage at www.sealg.org. However, like in the former issues, we will stick to the presentation of news from associated libraries as they are being reported at the SEALG Annual Meetings, as well as research articles by SEA librarians, book reviews, and conference announcements.

With this newsletter, we hope to provide a useful and interesting information resource for SEA librarians in Europe and worldwide.

Jana Igunma, Chairperson of SEALG

SEALG Annual Meeting 2008, Marseille

The Annual Meeting 2008 of the SEALG was held on 11-12 July 2008 in Marseille, at the Université de Provence Aix-Marseille. Participants from Denmark, France, Russia, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom attended the meeting this year.

The program on Friday started with a visit to the Bibliotheque Universitaire Lettres et Sciences Humaines in Aix-en-Provence, where we were invited to a guided tour to CADIST, a special collection on the French colonisation 1450-1914 AD.

In addition to that, we were also allowed to view the collection of books and artworks by Nobel Price winner Gao Xingjian at the Espace de recherche et de documentation Gao Xingjian.



The library tour was followed by a lovely walk through the old town centre of Aix-en-Provence, before the group returned to Marseille. In Marseille we visited the Maison Asie-Pacifique and were given an introduction to their collections.

The day ended with a dinner at the Vieux Port in Marseille.

On Saturday morning, we met at Maison Asie-Pacifique for our Annual Meeting.

Jana Igunma welcomed the participants of the meeting and presented the report for last year's meeting and the financial report of SEALG for the year 2007, which had been prepared by Margaret Nicholson.

Three talks were given at the meeting:

First, Nicholas Martland (SOAS, London) gave a talk about "*SEA film and cinema studies at SOAS: the role of the library*".

Jana Igunma (British Library, London) followed with a presentation on "*The Chakrabongse Archive at the British Library*" and spoke about the

acquisition, cataloguing, conservation and digitisation of this valuable collection.

Jotika Khur-Yearn (SOAS, London) presented a paper on "*Shan manuscripts collections outside the Shan States*".

Following the presentations, participants gave an update of what had happened in their libraries since last year's meeting.

After the post of the Vice-Chairperson/Secretary of SEALG had been vacant for a couple of years, we were able to fill this vacancy at this year's meeting.

Sergei Kukushkin was elected Vice-Chairman of SEALG, and Louise Pichard-Bertaux was elected Secretary of SEALG.

For the organisation of next year's meeting, we accepted a proposal from Leiden University Library. Suggestions were made that the best time to meet would be July, 2009.

Last, but not least, the following issues were discussed:

Over the next 12 months, we will explore the possibility to add a sub-page to the SEALG homepage, which will contain book reviews. On this web-page, commercial ads could be included, from which SEALG might gain financially. These funds could be used, for example, to support retired SEALG members, who hold a post in the SEALG Committee and are active members of the association, with part of their travel costs to SEALG Annual Meetings.

It was also suggested to revive the SEALG Newsletter in electronic form, which should be made available on the SEALG website. The presentations given at the Annual Meetings will be published in the Newsletter.

In the afternoon of that day, we had the great opportunity to go on an excursion to the Calanques/Frioul island, which was the final highlight of this year's meeting.

Many, many thanks to Louise Pichard-Bertaux and Isabelle Dupeuble for organising the meeting so perfectly, and to the Maison Asie-Pacifique and the Mairie of Marseille for their generous financial support!

Articles

The following three papers were presented at the SEALG Annual Meeting 2008 in Marseille.



SOUTH EAST ASIAN FILM & CINEMA STUDIES AT SOAS : THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY

Paper presented at the South East Asia Library Group (SEALG) meeting, Maison Asie-Pacifique, Marseille, 12 July 2008 by

Nicholas Martland, Librarian for South Asia, South East Asia & Pacific Studies, School of Oriental & African Studies Library, University of London

Although US and UK films dominate mainstream cinema in Britain, there has been a growing interest in viewing world cinema (also known as national cinema). In the UK context, world cinema covers non-US and UK films that are usually, but not necessarily, in a language other than English. There has also been a corresponding academic interest in world cinema, so that a large number of UK universities now offer film and media studies courses, some originally focussing on British and American cinemas, but now often incorporating a world cinema studies element.

Within the University of London there are a number of colleges and schools offering world/national cinema studies as part of their film and cinema studies courses. As well as SOAS, some of the other University of London colleges offering world cinema studies include:

Goldsmith's Department of Media & Communications
<http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/media-communications/>

Birkbeck's School of History of Art, Film and Visual Media
<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/hafvm/>

Queen Mary's School of Languages, Linguistics and Film
<http://www.sllf.qmul.ac.uk/filmstudies/>

Royal Holloway's Department of Media Arts
<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/media-arts/>

King's College London's Film Studies Department
<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/content/1/c6/03/20/82/FlimStudies.pdf>;

University College London's Centre for Intercultural Studies
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/filmstudies/>

These, and other University of London colleges, have come together to form the University Of London's Screen Studies Group
<http://screenstudies.sas.ac.uk/>

As much as European national cinema, South Asian (particularly Bollywood), Chinese (including Hong Kong and Taiwan), Japanese (including anime), Arabic and Iranian cinemas have a dedicated following in the UK. Some films are seen as too specialist or obscure for wider commercial release and are limited to release in art-house cinemas or shown at film festivals.

Some individual films are popular successes on commercial release in the UK, recent commercial successes include the animated Iranian film *Persepolis* (Marjane Satrapi, 2007) and the Franco-Tunisian film *Couscous (La Graine et Le Millet)* (Abdel Kecchiche, 2007).

Some film genres are aimed at a particular audience, usually linguistic or ethnic, such as Bollywood films. However, Bollywood cinema in the UK, once seen as a niche (but not commercially insignificant) market, has a growing UK audience beyond the original British South Asian communities in the UK, helped by crossover films such as a Bollywood-style interpretation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice (Bride and Prejudice)*, Gurinder Chadha, 2004) and the rising profile of such cinema in the mainstream media through reporting on events such as the 2007 International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) showcase of cinema held in the northern English cities of Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, York and Hull in 2007.

There are also films produced and/or directed by Asians or Asian diaspora film-makers such as *Bhaji on the Beach* (Gurinder Chadha, 1992) and *Bend it like Beckham* (Gurinder Chadha, 2002); *My Son the Fanatic* (Udayan Prasad/Hanif Kureshi, 1997). Other films that have a British Asian slant such as *East is East* (Damien O'Donnell, 1999) and *My Beautiful Laundrette* (Stephen Frears/Hanif Kureshi, 1985) are sometimes categorised under diaspora or world cinema.

The popularity and awareness of world cinema is reflected in the growing amount of information available on the subject, both in print and on the Web - from Bollywood *filmi* fanzines to more serious organisations such as the British Film Institute (BFI) <http://www.bfi.org.uk/>. There is also a growing range of English language academic publications on Asian and other world cinema published in the UK, elsewhere in the EU, in North America as well as in Asia itself.

Publishers such as the British Film Institute, Zed Books (<http://www.zedbooks.co.uk>) and Intellect Books (<http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/>) as well as a number of university presses in Europe, the US and Asia have published in the field, but it is only since 1990 that significant academic research on South East Asian cinema has been undertaken and published. (See bibliography below)

South East Asian films have a more limited appeal and are less widely distributed in the UK, but even here there have been commercial successes such as the Thai films *องค์บาก / Ong Bak / Thai Warrior* (Prachya Pinkaew, 2003); *ฟ้าทะลายโจร / Fah talai jone / Tears of the Black Tiger* (Wisit Sasanatieng, 2000) and *สัตว์ประหลาด / Sat pralat / Tropical malady* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2004); and Vietnamese films such as *Scent of green papaya / Mùi du d'u xanh* (Trần Anh Hùng, 1993) and *Cyclo* (Trần Anh Hùng, 1995), *Three Seasons / Ba Mùa* (Tony Bui, 1999) and *The Buffalo Boy / Mùa len trâu* (Minh Nguyen-Vo, 2004)

Other films such as *สุดเสนหา Sud sanaeha / Blissfully yours* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2002), *นางนาก / Nang nak* (Nonzee Nimibutr, 1999), *โอเค เบตง / OK Baytong* (Nonzee Nimibutr, 2003), *หมานคร / Ma Nakhon / Citizen dog* (Wisit Sasanatieng, 2004), *เฟค โทกทั้งเพ / Fake* (Prachya Pinkaew, 2003) and *ช็อคโกแลต / Chocolate* (Prachya Pinkaew, 2008) from Thailand and Royston Tan's Singapore films *4:30* (2006), *15* (2003) and *881* (2007) have had a more limited release in the UK, either being shown in art house cinemas such as at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) <http://www.ica.org.uk> or shown at film festivals such as at the London Film Festival <http://www.bfi.org.uk/whatson/lff/>; the London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival <http://www.bfi.org.uk/llgff/> and the Singapore Season Film Week held in London in 2005

http://www.mica.gov.sg/pressroom/press_050215.html.

Other films have been popular and commercial successes in their home countries, such as the Singaporean films *Forever fever* (Glen Goei, 1998), *Chicken rice war* (Chee Kong Cheah, 2000), *Xiao hai bu*

ben / I not stupid (Liang Zhiqiang aka Jack Neo, 2002) and *Singapore dreaming* (Woo Yen Yen, 2006) and the Malaysian films *Sepet* (Yasmin Ahmad, 2004), *Gubra* (Yasmin Ahmad, 2005), *Mushkin* (Yasmin Ahmad, 2007) and *Mei li de xi yi ji / The beautiful washing machine* (James Lee, 2004) but have not been widely released out-side of South East Asia.

As well as the Thai films listed above, horror films have always been popular in Thailand and recent releases include *ชัตเตอร์ กดติดวิญญาณ / Shutter* (Banjong Pisanthanakun and Parpoom Wongpoom, 2004) and *แฝด / Fad / Alone* (Banjong Pisanthanakun and Parpoom Wongpoom, 2007)

Indonesian film has limited distribution outside Indonesia, other than in Malaysia and Singapore, where Malay speakers understand Indonesian. Horror is a genre that has, like elsewhere in South East Asia, always been popular in Indonesia, and includes such recent releases as *Rumah pondok indah* (Irwan Siregar, 2006), *Kuntilanak* (Rizal Mantovani, 2006), *Lewat tengah malam* (Koya Pagayo, 2007) and *Kuntilanak 2* (Rizal Mantovani, 2007). Romantic comedies and romantic dramas are also popular including recent releases such as *Arisan!* (Nia Dinata, 2003), *Eiffel I'm in love* (Nasri Cheppy, 2003), *30 hari mencari cinta* (Upi Avianto, 2004), *Apa artinya cinta?* (Sunil Soraya) 2005 and *Realita cinta dan rock 'n' roll* (Upi Avianto, 2006).

Film and cinema studies programmes covering South Asian, Arabic, Chinese and Japanese film are offered elsewhere in the UK but SOAS is unique in offering courses in South East Asian film and cinema studies. The two main areas of current teaching and research at SOAS are in Indonesian, Malaysian and Singaporean cinema and in Thai cinema. There is also an interest in Vietnamese film.

Related to these national cinemas are films about South East Asia, such as *Saint Jack* (Bogdanovich, 1979) set in Singapore; *The Year of Living Dangerously* (Weir, 1982) set in Indonesia and *Indochine* (Wagner, 1992) set in Indochina/Vietnam. By far the largest genre of Hollywood films set in South East Asia are films about the Vietnam War such as *The Deer Hunter* (Cimino, 1978); *Apocalypse now* (Coppola, 1979); *Platoon* (Stone, 1986); *Full metal jacket* (Kubrick, 1987) and *The Quiet American* (Noyce, 2002).

SOAS Library's film collections are strongest on Indonesian, Malaysian & Singaporean and Thai cinema, reflecting current research and teaching interests. At SOAS South East Asian film studies are offered either in the Department of the Languages and Cultures of South East Asia or in the Centre for Media and Film Studies.

SOAS is able to call upon academic and library staff with linguistic and other expertise relating to South East Asia to support South East Asian film studies. Courses are supported by a range of library resources, both print and online, relating to South East Asia cinema in particular and on film studies in general. A major resource is the growing collection of actual films (either on DVD or VCD) from South East Asia.

There are three main resources the library provides to support South East Asian film and cinema studies: (i) The print collections (both monographs and journals); (ii) online resources including full-text journal databases and links to resources on the WWW; and (iii) finally, and perhaps most importantly, SOAS Library holds a unique (certainly within the UK and Europe) collection of South East Asian films. Most films are made available on DVD or VCD, some older films are available on VHS video. The Library is investigating the possibility of providing films online by streaming but there are issues of IT capacity and support and more problematic, the issue of copyright and licensing films for online access.

Acquiring books from South East Asia is usually straight forward. Publication and bibliographic data is available through printed and online publishers' and booksellers' catalogues, through national bibliographies and through national and university libraries' online catalogues. SOAS Library uses established book suppliers such as Select Books in Singapore, Nibondh & Co. in Bangkok, Xunhasaba in Hanoi and Solidaridad in Manila. SOAS Library also subscribes to the National Library of Australia's Indonesian Acquisitions Program, in order to acquire Indonesian publications.

Finding information about film on DVD and VCD is more problematic. Booksellers do not usually include films in their catalogues, so it is often difficult to know what is available. Booksellers are also usually either not willing or are unable to acquire VCDs and DVDs, although the National Library of Australia's Jakarta office has been able to obtain specific Indonesian DVDs when asked to. Sourcing, selecting and acquiring films is much more complicated than acquiring books from South East Asia. Some films have limited release and if a DVD/VCD is not acquired in the first few months of release it may well be unobtainable.

A number of works on national cinema, such as *Malaysian cinema, Asian film : border crossings and national cultures* (2002) and *Latent images : film in Singapore* (2000) include a filmography (a list, often annotated, of films). There are also film catalogues such as the *Katalog film Indonesia, 1926-2007* for Indonesian films. These publications are useful tools to check what films have been produced.

Some films, particularly older classic works, such as the Malay language Singapore and Malayan/ Malaysian films produced by Malay Film Productions and Cathay-Kris in the 1950s and 1960s are available on VCD and DVD and can be easily found in DVD stores and street stalls in Malaysia and Singapore.

More recent releases, that are often only commercially available for short periods and only available within the country of production, can be difficult to obtain and are often only acquired by academic staff or the South East Asia librarian visiting South East Asia and purchasing what is available in DVD stores in Bangkok, Jakarta, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.

SOAS academics with an interest in Thai film (Rachel Harrison) and Indonesian film (Ben Murtagh) buy DVDs/VCDs when in Thailand or Indonesia. As they make visits perhaps every 12-18 months, SOAS Library has been able to build up a comprehensive collection on Thai and Indonesian cinema. Nicholas Martland, the Librarian for South Asia, South East Asia & Pacific Studies, makes occasional visits to Singapore and Malaysia and has been able to develop the collection of both older and contemporary Singaporean and Malaysian film.

Academic staff inform the Library that they are visiting the region and intend to purchase DVDs or VCDs. The Library reserves the funding – usually between £100.00 and £200.00 (€125,00 and €250,00) – to cover the purchase of the items and shipping costs. On receipt of the items, the Library reimburses the staff member.

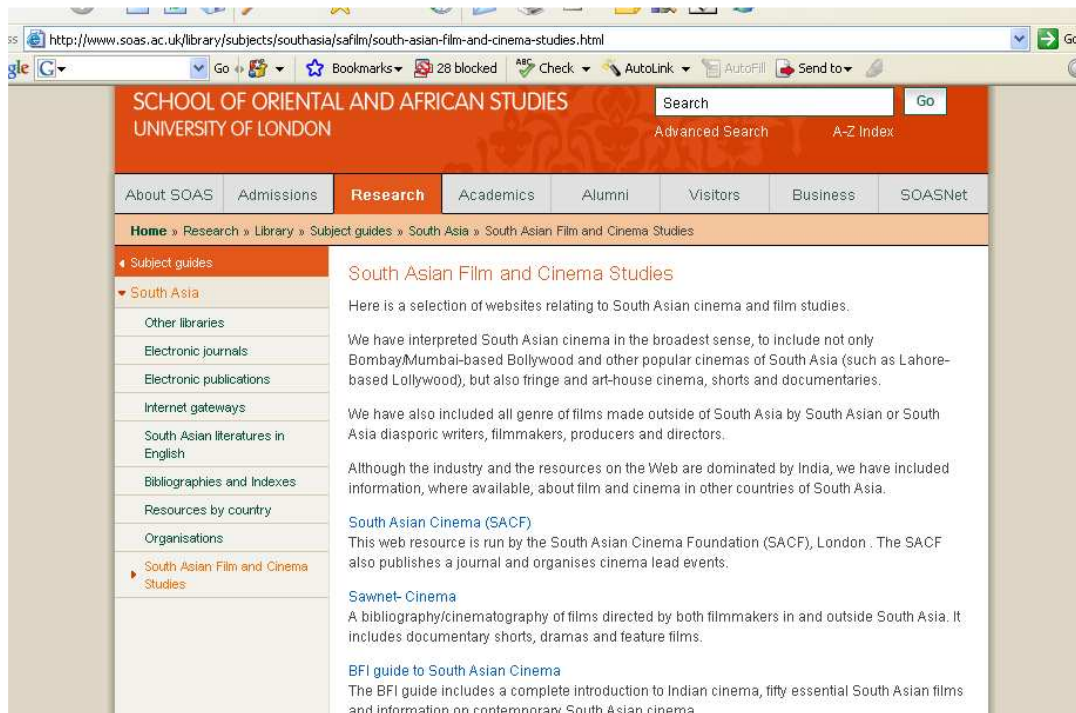
Most VCDs bought in South East Asia cost between €3,00 and €7,00 each; while DVDs are priced between €5,00 and €15,00. The Library will sometimes buy a second copy, so that one copy of a VCD/DVD is available for loan to SOAS staff and students, and the second copy is kept for reference use only and acts as a back-up copy.

The Library holds more than 50 Malaysian/Singaporean films; more than 100 Thai films; more than 300 Indonesian films and about 50 films relating to Vietnam (some are Vietnamese films although many are Hollywood Vietnam War films).

Although SOAS Library can depend on established suppliers for books and journals, sourcing and acquiring films on VCD and DVD has been more difficult. Established book-suppliers rarely deal with DVDs and VCDs and DVD stores in Asia do not have a tradition of dealing with institutional buyers. SOAS Library therefore will continue to depend on library and academic staff visiting South East Asia to buy DVDs and VCDs.

The Library plans to develop a subject guide website on South East Asian cinema and film similar to the one it has developed for South Asian film:

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/library/subjects/southasia/safilm/south-asian-film-and-cinema-studies.html>



Record: [Next](#)

TITLE **Mukhsin [videorecording] / written and directed by Yasmin Ahmad ; produced by Ahmad Puad Onah.**

LOCATION	CLASSMARK	LOAN PERIOD	STATUS
Main Library	MDVD /6321	REFERENCE ONLY	AVAILABLE

IMPRINT Kuala Lumpur : Dragon Jester Entertainment, [2006]
 DESCRIPT 1 videodisc (ca. 90 min.) : sd., col. ; 4 3/4 in.
 NOTE Prequel to **Sepet**.
 Title from disc label.
 Sharifah Amani Yahya, Mohd Syafie Naswip, Sharifah Amani Yahya DVD.
 In Malay; subtitles in Malay, English and Chinese.

SUBJECT [Feature films -- Malaysia.](#)
[Motion pictures -- Malaysia.](#)

ALT AUTHOR [Ahmad Puad Onah.](#)
[Yasmin Ahmad.](#)
[Sharifah Amani Yahya.](#)

Searching the SOAS online catalogue for films.
 Under keyword or subject heading key in these terms:
 “Feature films + country” or
 “Motion pictures + country”

Bibliography

- Devine, Jeremy M., *Vietnam at 24 frames a second : a critical and thematic analysis of over 400 films about the Vietnam War* (Jefferson, N.C. : McFarland & Co.,1995)
- Dittmar, Linda & Michaud, Gene (editors). *From Hanoi to Hollywood : the Vietnam War in American film*. (New Brunswick : Rutgers University Press, 1990)
- Dwyer, Rachel *100 Bollywood films* (London : BFI, 2005)
- Harrison, Rachel "Introduction : cinema as an emerging field in South East Asian studies" *South East Asia Research*, 14 (2). July 2006, p. 211-30.
- Harrison, Rachel "Somewhere, Over the Rainbow': Global Projections/Local Allusions in Tears of the Black Tiger/Faathalayjone.' *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 8 (2), 2007, p.194-210.
- Heider, Karl Gustav. *Indonesian cinema : national culture on screen* (Honolulu : University of Hawaii Press, 1991)
- Hixson, Walter L. (ed.) *Historical memory and representations of the Vietnam War* (New York : Garland, 2000).
- Kristanto, J. B. *Katalog film Indonesia, 1926-2007* (Jakarta : Penerbit NALAR bekerjasama dengan Fakultas Film dan Televisi, Institut kesenian , 2007.
- Murtagh, Ben 'Istana kecantikan: The First Indonesian Gay Movie.' *South East Asia Research*, 14 (2). July 2006, p. 211-30.
- Sen, Krishna. *Indonesian cinema : framing the New Order* (London : Zed Books, 1994)
- Sen, Krishna and Hill, D.T. *Media, culture and politics in Indonesia* (South Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Sukwong, Dome & Suwannapak, Sukwong. *A century of Thai cinema* (London : Thames & Hudson, 2001).
- Taylor, Mark. *The Vietnam War in history, literature, and film* (Tuscaloosa : University of Alabama Press, 2004)
- Uhhe, Jan & Uhde, Yvonne Ng. *Latent images : film in Singapore* (Singapore : Oxford University Press, 2000).
- van der Heide, William. *Malaysian cinema, Asian film : border crossings and national cultures* (Amsterdam : Amsterdam University Press, 2002).

SHAN MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTIONS OUTSIDE THE SHAN STATE: PRESERVATION AND CATALOGUING

Paper presented at the South East Asia Library Group (SEALG) meeting, Maison Asie-Pacifique, Marseille, 12 July 2008 by

Jotika Khur-yearn, *School of Oriental & African Studies Library, University of London*

Introduction

For centuries, the tradition of producing manuscripts has been an important custom among Shan communities. Shan manuscripts can be found everywhere all over the Shan State, in temples as well as in peoples' houses. There are very few Shan houses where you do not find manuscripts.

The texts of Shan manuscripts are on a variety of subjects starting from charming, romantic and heroic performances to Jataka stories, histories, meditation and on particular events such as the ceremony of ordination, anniversary of a temple, New Year, and so on. Hence Shan manuscripts contain important resources for the study of various fields such as Buddhism, sociology, anthropology, history, astrology, and so on.

However, one problem concerning Shan literature is that the writing in the manuscripts utilises the old system of Shan scripts, which the modern Shan generation can hardly read or understand. Another problem is that the tradition of producing manuscripts has been in decline while most of the existing manuscripts in Shan State are in danger of disappearing.

In this paper, first I would like to present some crucial information on Shan manuscripts, with special reference to major collections of Shan manuscripts outside the Shan State and the threat to the tradition of Shan Buddhist texts in manuscripts. Secondly, I shall discuss the issue of cataloguing Shan manuscripts, which is the main focus of this paper. In the conclusion, I shall discuss some significance of Shan manuscripts and the danger their disappearing.

Major Collections of Shan Manuscripts outside the Shan State

The major collections of Shan manuscripts outside the Shan State are found in Thailand, UK and Germany. It is also possible to find old Shan

manuscripts in Assam in India and Yunnan province in China, where there have been Shan inhabitants for centuries.

First, I would like to talk about the major collections of Shan manuscripts in Thailand. There are thousands of Shan manuscripts scattered in different temple collections, particularly in the Northern provinces, such as Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Maehongson. I went to Thailand three times between 2005 and 2007 to do fieldwork for my research. I visited four places where Shan manuscripts are preserved. The first place is Wat Tiyasathan, a Shan temple in Mae Taeng district, forty kilometres to the northwest of Chiang Mai, where over 200 Shan manuscripts are preserved. I spent several days there, going through the manuscripts and taking notes. I have a plan to publish a catalogue of these manuscripts in the near future. The second place is Wat Papao, a Shan temple in the city of Chiang Mai, where over 500 Shan manuscripts are kept. When I visited the temple in 2005, I was told by Venerable Intra, the head monk of the temple, that the manuscripts there were being worked on by a group research project for cataloguing. But, I have never heard if the project has been successful or the catalogue published. The third place is the Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation, in Bangkok, where over 300 Shan manuscripts are kept. I spent three days there in January 2005, looking at the titles of the manuscripts. The fourth place is Wat Pangmu, a Shan village temple, 8 kilometres to the north of Maehongson city, where there are over 1000 Shan manuscripts, which were catalogued in Thai by a project of the Chiang Mai University in the 1980s. A copy of the catalogue is kept at Wat Pang Mu, but it is not found at Chiang Mai University although I enquired a few times at several departments at CMU. In addition, there are two other temples, namely, Wat Jong Klang and Wat Pha Norn, in Maehongson city, where a considerable amount of Shan manuscripts are kept, although I did not have a chance to go through them in detail.

There are many reasons for the presence of Shan manuscripts in Thailand. Firstly, Shan communities have been in the region, particularly in northern Thailand for centuries. Secondly, there are Shan refugees, who fled to Thailand because of endless civil war that has been going on in the Shan State for the last fifty years, and these refugees had brought with them manuscripts, some of which were donated to local temples, where they are well preserved, usually kept in hidden boxes in the shrine room.

In the UK, a great number of Shan manuscripts have been collected in some famous libraries, including the British library, the Cambridge University Library, the Bodleian Library of the Oxford University, and

the Public Library in Brighton. There is a big collection of Shan manuscripts at the Cambridge University Library, which is called "The Scott Collection". These manuscripts were brought by Sir James George Scott, who was Superintendent of the Shan States in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, when the British annexed Shan State as part of Burma. There is a hand-list of Shan manuscripts in this collection, but a full catalogue is yet to be done.

In Germany, there are over 300 Shan manuscripts and most of them are housed at Berlin Library and Munchen Library. They are well catalogued by B. J. Terwiel and his assistant, Chaichuen Khamdaengyodtai, and the catalogue was published in book form in 2003.



Shan manuscripts from a collection in Northern Thailand



Folio from a Shan manuscript

Cataloguing Shan Resources

As discussed above, there are a huge number of Shan manuscripts at libraries of leading institutions even in the West. However, many of them are kept in their book storage and left untouched. Although a few of them has been catalogued, the system for classifying them is

varied from one library to another. For instance, some libraries follow the Burmese system of transliterating Burmese scripts into Roman scripts while some follow the Thai system. It is worth of noting, however, that Professor B. J. Terwiel has invented a unique system for the transliteration of Shan scripts into Roman scripts for his cataloguing Shan manuscripts mostly kept at Berlin library and Munich library in Germany. This system is found in his 'The Shan Manuscripts' published in 2003. The system, unlike the Burmese and the Thai systems of transliteration into Romanised scripts, has its unique characteristics, which is sufficient and accurate for the description of Shan texts. The only disadvantage, however, is that general readers will not be able to read it properly. But, one should be able to learn and understand it within a short period.

Another issue concerning the catalogue of Shan resources is the method of classifying them. As far as I know, at SOAS library for example, most materials on Shan are located in the Burmese section although some are also found in the Thai and Chinese sections. For example, the class mark for the Shan manuscript of *Satipatthana sutta* at the Bodlien Library, Oxford, is *MS Burm.a.8 106 Exp*, which is apparently sharing the system of cataloguing Burmese materials. In the SOAS main library, western materials on Shan are generally under the class marks either GB (Burmese section) or GC (Thai section). However, remarkably, SOAS has a specific section for vernacular Shan works, with class mark 'GQE Shan', separated from Burmese section under class mark GPC and Thai section under class mark GQA. Apart from the main library, SOAS also has a special collection, which also possesses rare books and manuscripts from Burma and Thailand.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude this paper with three briefings: -

1. For centuries, the Shan manuscripts have been produced and preserved through tradition and belief in Buddhism. However, these unique culture and tradition of practising Buddhism remain little studied.
2. All the large collections of Shan manuscripts outside of Burma are indicative of the political troubles and repression in Shan State. At the same time, these collections have at least preserved what might otherwise be lost.
3. Although huge amount of Shan manuscripts are scattering around the world, only a few of them has been in complete catalogue. Also, the system for classification or self mark

invented for cataloguing materials on Shan is varied from one library to another.

This paper is an attempt to bring awareness of the richness of Shan manuscripts and the danger of their disappearing from this world.

Sources cited in this paper:

Khur-yearn, J., 2005-07: *Notes taken during his fieldwork in northern Thailand.*

Terwiell, B. J., (with an assistance of Chaichuen Khamdaengyordtai) 2003: *Shan Manuscripts Part I.* Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

**THE CHAKRABONGSE ARCHIVE AT THE BRITISH LIBRARY
(Or. 15749)**

Paper presented at the South East Asia Library Group (SEALG) meeting, Maison Asie-Pacifique, Marseille, 12 July 2008 by

Jana Igunma, Curator of Thai, Lao and Cambodian Collections, The British Library, London

Prince Chakrabongse Bhuvanath

His Royal Highness Prince Chakrabongse Bhuvanath, Prince of Bisnulok, was born on 3 March 1883, as the 40th child of His Majesty King Rama V (Chulalongkorn) and 4th child of Her Majesty Queen Sri Bajarindra. He was educated at the Royal Palace, and then was sent to England for further study. During King Chulalongkorn's visit to Russia, His Imperial Majesty the Tzar Nicolas II of Russia, a close friend of King Rama V, invited the king to send a son to be educated in mighty Russia, under the care of the Tzar himself. Prince Chakrabongse was chosen and soon, after learning Russian in England, he went to Russia to study military science (1898-1912?). He finally became a Colonel in the Hussar Regiment of Emperor Nicholas II of Russia.

After his return to Siam, he initiated the idea of establishing a flying unit in the Thai Army and set up the Aviation Section in the Directorate of Engineering in 1913. During World War I, he was the

commander in charge of war plans and established the Volunteer Force as well as sending Thai soldiers to help the Allies in Europe under the royal command of King Rama VI. In 1919, aircraft was used for postal purpose in Siam for the first time. Up till today, he is respected as the "Father of the Royal Thai Air Force".

Prince Chakrabongse was a member of the Privy Council to King Rama V and King Rama VI, Chief of the General Staff of the Royal Siamese Army, Minister of War, and heir presumptive to the Throne.

He was married in Constantinople, to Mom Catherine Chakrabongse Na Ayutthaya, a Russian. Their only child was HRH Prince Chula Chakrabongse. Prince Chakrabongse died in 1920 at the age of 37.

The Chakrabongse Archive

Acquisition

The British Library received the Chakrabongse Archive of about 260 letters as a donation from Narisa Chakrabongse, granddaughter of Prince Chakrabongse, in 2001.

The letters were written by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) and his sons Prince Chakrabongse and King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) between 1896 and 1915. They cover a range of personal and political topics, descriptions of several European and Asian countries during that period, as well as evidence of the close relationship between King Chulalongkorn and his two sons. The acquisition was managed by Dr Henry Ginsburg, who was at that time Curator of Thai Collections at the British Library.

Cataloguing

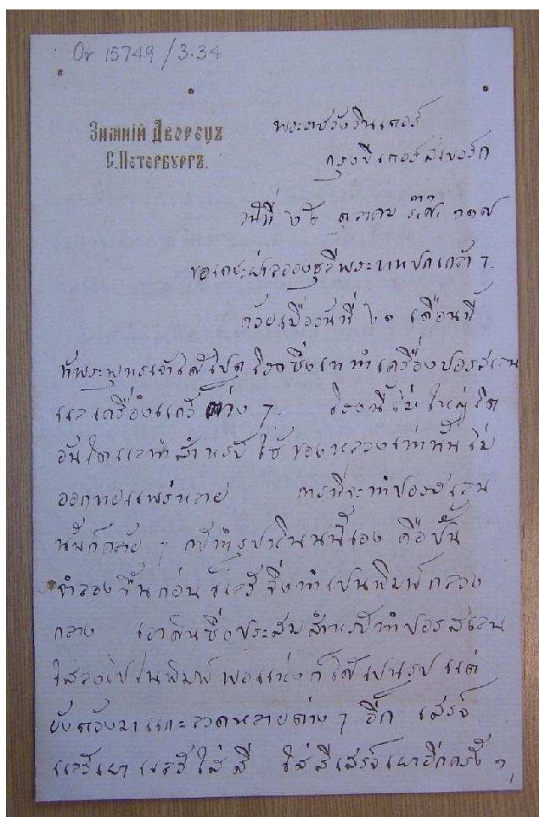
Initially, Dr Henry Ginsburg began to catalogue and to describe the letters until his sudden death in 2007. What he left behind was a huge text document with a list of shelfmarks and detailed descriptions of most of the letters. For some selected letters he also had prepared a romanised transcription of their contents.

At the beginning of 2008, a decision had been made that the Chakrabongse archive should be completely digitised and made available on DVD-R and on the homepage of the Thai Collections at the British Library. Following this decision, a cataloguing method had to be worked out, which can

- a) act as an inventory of the archive as well as the digital derivatives to enable the management of their secure custody, preservation and access, and
- b) provide information about the material to library users enabling them to decide if they need access to the original letters or to their digital derivatives.

As a guideline we used the British Library's Integrated Archives and Manuscripts System's (IAMS) Guidelines together with the library's Digitisation Technical Standards and Guidelines. We've worked out a set of metadata to describe both the original and the digital derivatives. It includes:

- technical metadata (for the digital images only)
- rights metadata (for the digital images only)
- descriptive metadata applying MARC21



Letter written by Prince Chakrabongse



Prince Chakrabongse after his return to Siam

The minimal set of descriptive metadata includes Repository (BL), Collection Area (Oriental MSS), Collection (Chakrabongse Archive), Reference (shelfmark), Title, Creation Dates (1896-1915), Era (Rattankosin), Calendar (Chulasakkarat), Extent (folios), Physical

Characteristics, Source of Acquisition, Scope and Content (preferably LCSH), Access Conditions.

The metadata are being captured in an Excel file (inventory purpose) and then migrated into a Dreamweaver created HTML file (web publishing purpose) in order to make it accessible online, and to link it with the digital derivatives.

Conservation, storage and security solutions

Almost all of the letters in the archive, written on European paper, are in a good condition. A few are slightly torn at the edges and will be repaired by the library's conservation studios.

A decision on an appropriate storage solution has not been made yet. There are several aspects to take into consideration, like safety and security of the archive, convenient reader access to the archive, technical aspects of order and supply, aesthetic aspects, and costs. The following storage suggestions were made, each with their own pros and cons:

- a) storage of the loose letters in boxes (pros: easy access and supply; low cost of boxes; contra: low security and safety)
- b) storage of each single letter in a hardback folder (pro: high security; cons: difficult access and supply; costly folders)
- c) storage of each single letter in a plastic cover and binding of the plastic covers together (pros: easy access and supply; low cost; cons: safety and security questionable; un-aesthetical)
- d) binding the letters in form of a book with a hardback cover (pros: high security and safety; easy access and supply; low cost; contra: mutilation of the letters)

To me personally, security and safety of the archive have the highest priority.

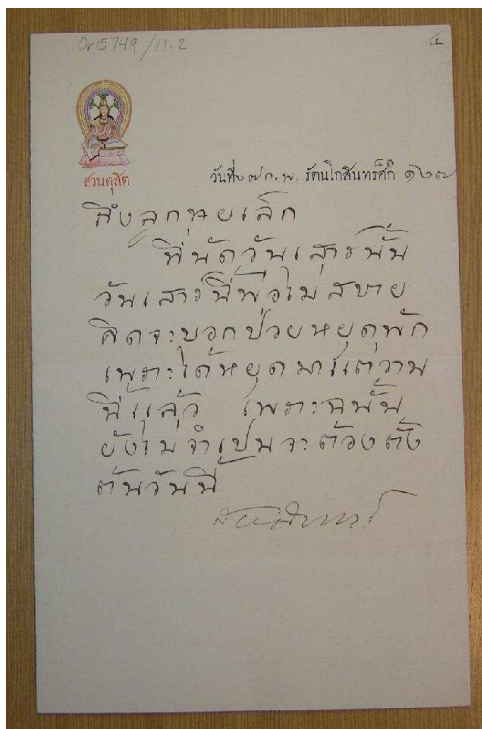
Taking into consideration that the archive will be completely digitised and made available on the BL's homepage and on DVD-R, I personally tend to prefer method b). Although it will make it more difficult for the library user to get access to the original letters (due to a daily ordering limit), and it could increase the work load and stress for the supplying staff, this method seems to provide the best security and also high safety of the archival material.

Digitisation of the Chakrabongse Archive

The digitisation of the Chakrabongse Archive is part of the British Library's Thai Manuscripts Digitisation Project, which is funded by the government of Thailand through the Royal Thai Embassy in London. In this project, the complete Chakrabongse Archive and most of the library's collection of Central Thai manuscripts will be digitised and made available on DVD-R and partially on the library's homepage.

The master file format is TIFF, from which web-ready formats like JPG or GIF can be derived.

The digitised content will first be stored on the Imaging Studio's computing platform. This serves as short-term storage, while backups on the BL server may be used as longer-term storage. It is intended to store the master files on Digital Linear Tape (DLT), because it has a significantly longer expected lifetime than CD-R or DVD-R. For curatorial and service purposes, the files should also be stored on high quality DVD-R. This requires migration about every five to ten years.



Letter by King Rama V to his son, Prince Chakrabongse



Letter by King Rama VI to Prince Chakrabongse



Announcements

SEALG Annual Meeting, 2009

The next Annual Meeting of the ***Southeast Asia Library Group*** will take place in Leiden in July 2009, in collaboration with the University Library of Leiden University.

For further information, please go to the SEALG homepage www.sealg.org, or contact

Dr Doris A. Jedamski
Publieksdiensten & Collecties, Universiteitsbibliotheek
Universiteit Leiden
Witte Singel 26-27
2311 BG Leiden
The NetherlandsUK
Email: d.a.jedamski@library.leidenuniv.nl

SAALG Conference, February 2009

The next conference of the ***South Asia Archive & Library Group*** will be held on Friday, 20th February 2009, at the Wellcome Library, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE, UK. Further details will appear on the SAALG blog in the next few weeks at <http://saalg.blogspot.com/>.

AAS Conference 2009

Each spring, the ***Association for Asian Studies*** holds a four-day conference which is devoted to planned programs of scholarly papers, roundtable discussions and panel sessions on a wide range of issues in research and teaching, and on Asian affairs in general.

In 2009, the ***AAS Conference*** will take place in Chicago, March 26-29. For further information and registration, please have a look at <https://www.aasianst.org/annual-meeting/index.htm>.

3rd SSEASR Conference

The 3rd Conference of the ***South and Southeast Asian Association for the Study of Culture and Religion*** will take place on 3-6 June, 2009, in Denpasar, Bali Island, Indonesia, in collaboration with Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI), Universitas Hindu Indonesia (UNHI).

The conference is dedicated to the theme "Waters in South and Southeast Asia: Interaction of Culture and Religion".

More detailed information can be found at www.sseasr.org.

ICAS 6 – "Think Asia!"

Daejeon, Korea
6-9 August 2009

ICAS 6 will be hosted by the Chungnam National University (CNU), the Center for Asian Regional Studies (CARS) and Daejeon Metropolitan City and will be held in the Daejeon Convention and Visitor's Bureau. The overarching theme is: Think Asia! More than 1,500 Asia Studies specialists are expected to come to Daejeon. This city is located in the heart of the Korean peninsula and successfully merges its long history of culture and tradition with leading research in science and technology.

Deadlines

15 October 2008: Submission of Individual Abstracts

15 October 2008: Submission of Organized Panels: organized by a group of different (national) backgrounds.

15 November 2008: Submission of Institutional Panels: constituted and sponsored by an institution, association or a network. Submission of abstracts and panels is possible as of 15 March 2008 at the ICAS website.

Please note that all abstracts and presentations should be in English. Submission of abstracts for panels and papers can be made through ICAS 6 registration forms available at <http://www.icassecretariat.org>.

ICAS Book Prize

For the third time the ICAS Book Prizes will be awarded in the categories:

Humanities, Social Sciences, Best PhD and Colleagues¹ Choice Award
Deadline: 31 August 2008

ICAS Publications Series

A selection of the ICAS 6 papers will be included in edited volumes of the ICAS Publications Series at Amsterdam University Press.

Information

The International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) is one of the largest biennial gatherings for Asia scholars to meet and discuss new developments in the fields of the Human and Natural Sciences. Since 1998, ICAS has brought more than 5,000 academics from 60 countries together at five conventions.

For more information on ICAS 6 and requirements for participation, please visit <http://www.icassecretariat.org>.

**World Library and Information Congress:
75th IFLA General Conference and Assembly**

"Libraries create futures: Building on cultural heritage"

The 75th **IFLA General Conference and Assembly** will take place on 23-27 August 2009, in Milan, Italy.

There will be a special **Asia & Oceania Section** dedicated to the theme "Preserving the past – creating the future".

The five sub-regions of IFLA's Asia-Oceania Section encompass ethnic groups and cultures whose rich histories are embodied within written, pictorial and oral traditions that date back to the beginnings of human civilisation. The Asia-Oceania Open Session at Milan focuses on the critical role being played by libraries and other information organisations in Asia-Oceania in preserving the richness of the past so that their peoples can create a future that is linked to the past. The theme encompasses both the practicalities of cultural heritage preservation work to ensure the survival of the past and the efforts involved in services that focus on helping individuals and groups make

use of those cultural heritage resources to understand the past to create a better future.

Dedicated to the theme, 'Preserving the past - creating the future', this session therefore aims to highlight the work of libraries and other information organisations in Asia-Oceania that contributes to the creation of better futures by preserving the past.

Submissions of papers

1. The deadline for submitting a detailed, abstract (500 words) and full author details is 15 December 2008. Selection of papers is based on the abstract, and presenters will be notified by mid-February 2009 at the latest whether they have been successful
2. The full paper is due on 1 May 2009 and must be an original submission not published elsewhere
3. Both abstracts and full papers should be submitted as a MS Word file by e-mail; fax or post should be used only as a last resort
4. Papers should be of 20 pages maximum, double spaced
5. Papers should be in English with an abstract, and the presenter must be fluent in English
6. 20 minutes will be allowed for a summary delivery of the paper in the Conference; the full written paper is not to be read
7. The author(s) should indicate his/her personal full contact details and include a brief biographical note with the paper. Also, a digital photograph would be useful.

Please send your abstract by 15 December 2008 to:

Ms Premila Gamage, RSCAO Chair, Email: premilagamage@gmail.com
OR M. Al Mamun, RSCAO Secretary, Email: almamun@icddrb.org

For more information about the conference, please go to their homepage at <http://www.ifla.org>.

25th ASEASUK Conference 2009

The 25th **ASEASUK** Conference will take place at the University of Swansea, on 11-13 September 2009.

For detailed information, please contact Dr Felicia Hughes-Freeland at f.hughes-freeland@swansea.ac.uk.

ADVERTISEMENT

TAI CULTURE**Interdisciplinary
Tai Studies Series**

Vol. 20 (Dec 2008)

***"Tai peoples in
China"***

ISSN 1431-1240

SEACOM

southeast asia
communication centre
Editor: O. Raendchen
Fischerinsel 1 (1307)
D-10179 Berlin
(Germany)

*taiculture@gmx.net***www.seacom.de*****Contents of this issue on "Tai peoples in China":***

FAN HONGGUI	Ethnic relationship between Zhuang, Dai, Lao and Shan
ZHENG XIAOYUN	A new probe into the origin of the Tai ethnic group and establishment of a Tai cultural zone
OLIVER RAENDCHEN	Tai ancient philosophy: <i>tau tae tching</i> or <i>lao-tse</i>
LIU ZHI	Tai-Thai: Formation through cultural diversity
HE SHENGDA	Historical and cultural development of the Thai and Dai and the challenges they are faced with
GORDON MATHEWS; LESHAN TAN	The commodification of Dai identity
DAO CHENGHUA	How can the Tai nationality of Yunnan achieve development in the China-ASEAN economic integration?
ZHENG XIAOYUN	Water culture as ethnic tradition and sustainable development of the Tai peoples of China
TIAMJIT PUANGSOMJIT	The Puyi in South China and in North Vietnam
LIN CHAOMIN	Abolition of the system of the Tai hereditary headmen in Yunnan
PAN YANQIN	<i>Longkiu</i> , marriage and ancestors: An examination on a rite of passage of the Tai in Guangxi
HE SHAO-YING	An exposition on the funeral rite and view of soul of the Tai in Jinping
ROGER CASAS	Some reflections on the influence of tourism and economic development on Theravada Buddhism in Xishuangpanna
PAN YANQIN	Frog worship of the Zhuang
LIANG QUANWEI	The Loss of Dong Culture

Southeast Asia Library Group Newsletter

ISSN 0308-4035

c/o Thai, Lao and Cambodian Collections, APAC, The British Library,
96 Euston Rd., London NW1 2DB, UK

Contact: jana.igunma@bl.ukThe newsletter is published annually in electronic format at www.sealg.org.