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Editorial

Welcome to a new issue of the SEALG Newsletter. We are delighted to present you three articles resulting from recent research activities our members are involved with, in addition to the latest information from our group, including the report from our Annual Meeting that took place in Leiden in June 2019. The articles and report written by our members and guest author give insight in the work we do to serve the academic community as much as the general public and future scholars. I would like to thank all those who support our work and contribute to our network in many different ways.

With best wishes for 2020,

Jana Igunma (Editor)
SEALG Annual Meeting 2019, Leiden

Report by Marije Plomp, University Library Leiden

The Annual Meeting of the Southeast Asia Library Group 2019 took place on 28-29 June 2019 in the Rouffaer Room and the Vossius Conference Room at Leiden University Library (UBL) in Leiden, the Netherlands, and was organised by Doris Jedamski and Marije Plomp. Participants from Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom attended the meeting this year.

Participants:
Jana Igunma (British Library, London, UK)
Doris Jedamski (University Library, Leiden, Netherlands)
Rahadi Karni (formerly University Library, Leiden, Netherlands)
Marije Plomp (University Library, Leiden, Netherlands)
Holger Warnk (Library of Southeast Asian Studies, Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany)

On Friday afternoon the participants gathered for the first part of the programme. Doris Jedamski welcomed the participants present, noticing that the vice chairperson had not yet arrived. Due to a mix-up, an anxious search for Holger Warnk was started in the library building. Finally, it turned out that he had not even reached Leiden yet but that he was stuck in a major traffic jam. With some delay but very relieved the group opened the first session with a presentation by Marije Plomp, entitled War, Love and Paintings; The Correspondence Between Emiria Sunassa and Willem Pijper (1940-1963). Emiria Sunassa was one of Indonesia’s first modern women painters. Emiria was ‘rediscovered’ only about a decade ago, whereas many of the male painters of her generation had long become well-established names in the history of Indonesian Modern Painting. Due to the lack of data on her personal life and work, many questions related to her career have remained unanswered. Last year, Leiden University came in possession of the private correspondence (or a part of it) between Emiria and G.F. Pijper, a Dutch islamologist. Notwithstanding the personal nature of these letters, they contain references to Emiria’s work and career that provide answers to some of those unanswered questions.

The second presentation of the afternoon was given by Doris Jedamski: Resident Hartman, His Wife, and a Mysterious Album Amicorum. The album, although in a saddening state, contains, among other things, a number of extraordinary drawings. They are dedicated to Mrs. Hartman but often show Javanese temples discovered and/or restored by her husband, the Resident of Magelang, C.L. Hartman. One very rare, superb drawing by F. Junghuhn springs out; it shows the Hartman Residency in 1840 - ten years after the famous Javanese Prince Diponegoro had been trapped there by the Dutch to be banished. Not only did Junghuhn write a personal dedication to Mrs Hartman on the sheet, he also added a short poem-like text. The mystery of this album, however, lays in...
the fact that a well-concealed, handwritten ex libris proves that the album had a prior owner before Resident Hartman presented it to his wife as a gift.

After the tea break Doris Jedamski had prepared a small pop-up exhibition of selected items and manuscripts from the UBL/KITLV collections. She also invited the participants to visit the exhibition on the ground floor presenting the three items from the UBL and KITLV collections that have been inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register and related items.

In the evening the participants had dinner at The Prentenkabinet in Leiden. In preparation for the discussion scheduled for the Business Meeting on Saturday, the participants shared their thoughts on SEALG and its future: expectations, challenges and potential.

**Annual Business Meeting**
Saturday morning started with the South East Asia Library Group Annual Business Meeting. After a short welcome the apologies of Christophe Caudron, Carina Enestarre, Annabel Teh Gallop, Claudia Görtze-Sam, Per Hansen, Jotika Khur-Yearn, Mia Nilsson, and Margaret Nicholson were announced. Also San San May and Sud Chonchirdsin sent their apologies.

The minutes from the Annual meeting 2018 in Leiden, as well as the financial report that had been compiled by our treasurer Margaret Nicholson were presented and unanimously accepted by the present members. Margaret Nicholson had expressed her wish to step down as treasurer. She is willing to stay on until a successor has been found. The committee will seek a successor. Holger Warnk inquired if the so-called “Brexit” could have any impact on SEALG and its (modest) bank account in the UK. Jana Igunma explained that the account was set up before the UK joined the EU, hence no problems are to be expected.

**Reports from the members**

*Jana Igunma* explained how she has been busy for the last two years with the preparations for the major exhibition on Buddhism in the British Library. Digitisation of Southeast Asian material at the BL continues, with Annabel Teh Gallop taking the lead in this initiative with manuscripts from insular Southeast Asia. Also, two staff members will retire in autumn 2019.

*Holger Warnk* informed the participants that his department might lose one junior professor. This will result in a lower budget for the library. The library will move to a new building yet to be built and with less space for the library. The library received several donations, among them two exhibitions (one on the caricaturist Zunar, whose work is banned in Malaysia). There is ongoing cataloguing work on the Kratz and the Vietnamese collection.

*Marije Plomp* has tried to expand the library’s acquisition by joining Library of Congress’ Collective Acquisition Program Southeast Asia for a two-year trial. Dropping student numbers for Southeast Asian Studies are disturbing. If this trend continues the library’s budget for SEA will be cut significantly (the KITLV budget is not dependent on student
numbers). Other issues that keep the subject librarian and her colleagues at the library busy: digital collections and copyright, a platform to offer access to sources in PDF and the need to preserve audiovisual collections through digitization.

With the Leiden University Libraries’ focus still on Asia, there is extra budget and thus extra work for the curator and subject librarian for South and Southeast Asia. As the convener of two double/triple panels at ICAS 2019 and as a presenter, Doris Jedamski is currently focusing on ICAS. She furthermore curated the current library exhibition on the three UNESCO items kept at Leiden University Libraries: Panji – Diponegoro – La Galigo. Furthermore, she announced the successful wrapping up of the digitization project concerning a selection of ca. 260 Panji manuscripts.

After the institutional news, the group discussed the SEALG blog. In order to stimulate the contribution of blog posts it is suggested to set up a schedule. Contributors can contact Jana Igunma. In addition, Jana proposes to ask SEALG presenters to convert their presentation into a blog post.

The main topic for this year’s Business Meeting was how to proceed with SEALG while facing a steadily growing workload and a shrinking number of active members. What is SEALG? What do we want it to be and what is feasible? These questions formed the basis for a lively discussion. Although the number of members participating in the yearly conference and attending the Annual Meeting has never been large, the number has been decreasing in the last few years. This, in combination with recent developments in the field of European libraries holding Southeast Asian collections made that the need was felt to evaluate the current state of affairs. SEALG is a member organization with half of its members from outside Europe. Most members are library or archive staff working with South-East Asian collections. One of the organisation’s main objectives is to provide a network for its members, to facilitate the communication and exchange between libraries and researchers, and also to advance the education of the public in South-East Asian studies. At present SEALG activities comprise an annual conference and business meeting, a yearly Newsletter, a website, and a blog. The Newsletter and blog posts inform librarians, scholars and others interested in South-East Asian studies. The yearly conference and annual business meeting offers members the chance to share knowledge and experiences, as well as disseminate news about projects, digital initiatives, conferences, and exhibitions. Whenever the meeting is held to coincide with a larger conference, such as EUROSEAS for instance, SEALG strives to organize a conference panel.

The interest in the yearly SEALG-meetings seems to be decreasing, the number of members that attend the meetings is diminishing. One major factor that might be responsible for this is the lack of funding/support from the employer. Moreover, more and more South-East Asian collections are managed by subject librarians for Asia General. The enormous workload all library staff are facing does not help either, and library staff without Special Collections feel less appealed (SEALG’s output is often related to Special Collections). As one possible reason the point was also raised that holding the meeting
twice in a row at the same location could have caused this year’s meagre participation. All members present at the meeting confirmed that they deemed it important and worthwhile to meet fellow librarians at the SEALG conference and Annual meeting for the exchange of knowledge and experiences, even in a small group. The annual meetings were seen as informative, inspiring and a good way to strengthen the network one could always rely upon for help and advice.

It was felt that SEALG could and should take some kind of action to attract more members to the conference. One important step would be to clearly communicate to the members that the topics presented and discussed are not exclusively related to Special Collections, on the contrary, topics that are informative to librarians who work with modern collections only are most welcome. Examples are copyright, metadata standards, workflows, acquisition, faculty liaison, library services for the various user groups, provenance issues, digitization and everything that comes with it, and so on. Hence, the invitations could be more specific, mentioning in particular topics that could be of interest to libraries with modern collections only.

It was also proposed to consider adjusting the conference format, as the idea of having to present a paper might discourage members to participate. Several panels with round table discussions on topics of immediate interest to the participants could be an alternative format.

Another point that came up was the possibility of engaging scholars in the conference by, for example, opening up the conference to the public. But it was also pointed out that there are just a few local academics working on Southeast Asia at any location that can host the annual SEALG conference. An attempt could be made to reach out to each individual member by sending a personalized letter. To gain insight into what topics SEALG members are interested in, a survey among SEALG members was proposed.

Following the business meeting, the SEALG Annual Meeting continued with two presentations.

In her presentation *Curating Buddhism*, Jana Igunma gave an account of her work as one of the curators of a major exhibition on Buddhism in the British Library. To be able to offer an exhibition that appealed to the general public, an external consultant was involved at the stage of writing the initial proposal. In addition, visitor focus groups were invited to give feedback. This research resulted in four key messages that are addressed in the exhibition, 1) Diversity of Buddhist Culture, 2) Global Outreach of Buddhism, 3) Mindfulness and Contemporary Buddhist Practice, and 4) The Role of Women in Buddhism. One of the challenges was to offer a balanced geographic representation of Buddhism.

*Holger Warnk*’s presentation *Cermin Mata: A Missionary Journal from 19th Century Singapore* told the story of an early missionary journal printed in Jawi (Arabic script for Malay) in Benjamin Keasberry’s Missionary Printing House in Singapore in 1858. Much of the text was perhaps written by Keasberry and translated into Malay by Abdullah
Munshi or Husin bin Ismail. Keasberry had a school where he trained young boys to become, among other professions, writers, printers and bookbinders.

The SEALG programme concluded with an extended lunch at the Hortus Botanicus. This year’s Annual meeting, like last year’s meeting, was kindly sponsored by the UB Leiden for which the group is utmost grateful.

Holger Warnk giving his presentation at the SEALG annual meeting. © Jana Igunma

Conclusion of the SEALG annual meeting 2019 with lunch at the Hortus Botanicus in Leiden. © Jana Igunma

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A brief account of traditional Shan manuscript culture

Chaichuen Khamdaengyodtai, Chiang Mai

The Shan, or Tai Yai, are an ethnic group of approximately five million people living primarily in the Shan State of Myanmar (formerly Burma) and adjacent regions in Assam, China, Laos and Thailand, as well as an unknown number living in Western countries. Speaking a language in the Tai-Kadai language family, they are culturally close to other Tai peoples in Southeast Asia like the Lao, Tai Khuen, Tai Lue and Thai.

The majority of Shan people follow Theravada Buddhism and have a rich Buddhist and literary manuscript tradition, which is an important part of their cultural identity and everyday Buddhist practice. This article looks at various aspects of the material culture of the Shan manuscript tradition, including papermaking, writing techniques, bookbinding, and reading practices.
1 Writing Support

1.1 Maue pe (corypha palm-leaves)

Palm leaf books are relatively rare in Shan culture, because the Shan possess an extensive tradition in making tse sah (sah paper) and tse naw sarng (bamboo shoot paper), and in producing best quality waterproof black ink and good quality kam kut (fern pen). In other words they use the kam kut (fern pen), the handmade waterproof ink to write text on the papers which is easier and more easily to read than text incised on palm leaves with the kam lek (metal pen). Shan people prefer to use paper instead of palm leaves for creating manuscripts.

Nonetheless, Shan people know the technique and have a term for palm leaf manuscripts, namely pap maue pe (books made of palm-leaves). For writing on palm leaves a special instrument is used, called kam lek (metal pen), a sharp stylus with which the scripts are cut into the layer of the palm leaf. The word "literature" in Shan is lik laai maue pe (literally: scripts or letters - method or technique – palm leaf or corypha umbraculifera). Sometimes the lik laai paai pe (scripts or letters - method or technique - later part or tip – palm leaf or corypha umbraculifera) is also used.

![Metal stylus for incising text on palm leaves, with a bamboo cover. Burma, 19th century. British Library, Or.15951](image)

1.2 Tse-sah (sah-paper)

The inner bark of the sah (a type of mulberry) tree is the standard source for making paper pulp which is then turned into tse-sah (sah-paper). The steps of making sah-paper are the following:
(1) The sah bark is washed thoroughly, dirt picked off. Then it has to be soaked one night in water to weaken the peels.

(2) The pulp must be boiled over a period of two days in a mixture with the ashes of the bulbous top of banana trees until the fibre has become soft. Nowadays, chemicals (potassium sulphate) are also used as a method to reduce the time the mixture has to be boiled. When ready, the pulp is washed again to clean it from the ashes.

(3) Then the pulp is put on a wooden block or a flat stone, and beaten with wooden mallets or hammers till the pulp is soft. The pulp is kneaded into small balls. One ball is for one sheet of paper. The ball is put into a large segment of bamboo which has been partly filled with water. Then it is crushed with a loi (a wooden implement with four jags at the end) inside that bamboo segment until the pulp has completely dissolved.

(4) Next, the mixture is poured into a tharng (a rectangular sieve or mould and deckle with a very fine cloth screen) in a water basin to distribute the pulpy water evenly by striking it with the palm of the hand lightly. Then the tharng is swirled around and finally lifted out of the basin. The mould is then set to dry.

(5) On a sunny day it takes about three hours for the paper to be sufficiently dry. The surface of the paper can then be rubbed gently with a smooth stone to make it suitable for writing before peeling off the mould.

1.2.1 Tse-sah lam (black sah-paper)

In traditional Shan writing culture many texts have been written on black surface sah paper. To make the paper black, the following steps are taken:

(1) Three measures of soot, three measures of fine charcoal powder sieved through a cloth, and one measure of fine (dust) powder sieved through a cloth are mixed together.

(2) The mixture of black powder is then mixed with steamed sticky rice.

(3) A suitable amount of water is poured into the mixture, then kneaded together until it looks like water glue.

(4) The black coloured water glue is rubbed on the folded paper page and polished.

(5) Then the paper is allowed to dry in the sun in a single day. If it is not dry in a single day, the adhesive may seep through to the other side of the paper. This black paper is also known as tse-poon (slate paper).
1.3 *Tse-naw-sarng* (bamboo shoot paper)

Bamboo shoot is another material the Shan people use to make paper pulp. This type of paper is called *tse-naw-sarng* (bamboo shoot paper), also known as silk paper. Young bamboo shoots are soft. They are cut into small pieces, washed thoroughly, and any dirt left after washing is picked off. The bamboo pieces are put in a large pot together with some lye and boiled for about two hours. The result is a smooth and very fine pulp. The pulp is kneaded into a small ball. One ball is for one sheet of paper. Then the steps for making *sah*-paper are followed. The *tse-naw-sarng* paper is thinner, finer and smoother in texture than *sah*-paper. When handling the *naw-sarng* paper it has a much softer, silkier touch.

*Shan curled book made from very thin tse-naw-sarng (bamboo shoot paper). The treatise on Nibbana (Nirvana) is written in black ink in Tai Neua – Tai Mao cursive script, which is also used in Yunnan and northern Laos. 19th century. British Library, Or.1070, ff.3-4*
2 Writing Substances

2.1 Black ink

In ancient time, when kerosene and electricity were not in use yet, Shan people used pieces of pine for lighting. The pine pieces were put into the fireplace with a chimney to brighten a room.

To collect soot for making black ink a small hole was drilled carefully in the middle of the bottom of a large clay pot. The pot was hung upside down in the chimney. In addition, to collect soot more effectively, a medium-sized pot with a hole in the bottom could be hung inside the larger pot to collect the soot from the smoke coming from the burning pines. After a considerably long time, soot could be scraped off from each pot. The soot in the top pot is of the best quality.

When kerosene lamps came into use to light up the house, the pots for collecting soot were hung up above the lamp cover. After a long time, good quality soot could be removed from the pot. However, clay pots are heavy, and instead of the pots people also used much lighter kerosene cans. After collecting the soot, the following steps are to be carried out:

(1) Weigh one khan (160 grams) of soot.

(2) The soot has to be mixed with one hong (40 grams) of good bile of cow, ox, buffalo or fish. If the bile of pig is used, the ink will have poor quality as it is only lightly black.

(3) The mixture must be stirred well.

(4) From the mixture small bars or balls are formed equal to the size of mark haeng (a species of wild eggplant).

(5) The bars or balls are allowed to desiccate and then are kept in a dry place. These are the best quality black ink.

(6) When the ink is to be used for writing, it is crushed in a kok muek (ink bottle) and mixed with nam neng khohm (bitter tea juice). After stirring it well, it is ready to use.

By using the best quality ink, bleeding and feathering of the ink (soaking of ink into the paper and causing wet damage) and the occurrence of oily spots can be prevented. When humidity is high, the good quality ink is also waterproof and the written scripts will remain in good condition.
Shan text written in black ink, the most frequently used writing substance in Shan paper manuscripts. With added decorative ornaments in ink at the end of the main text “Sankhara bhajani kyam”, a sermon on the Abhidhamma in Shan, with some Pali. From a Shan community in the area of “Muang Lakon Pa Kham” (Lampang), Northern Thailand. Dated 1916. Doris Duke’s Southeast Asian Art Collection. British Library, Or.16079, f.259

2.2 White ink

Shan people use kam koo (soap-stone or steatite pencil) for writing on the tse-poon (black sah paper) instead of preparing white ink. Further details are below.

3 Writing Instruments

3.1 Kam laai meu (“many kinds of pens”)

The word “literature” in Shan is liklaai, liklaai paa ki kam or liklaai paa ki pee. Linguistically, the Shan word for “literature” is directly related to the use of many types of writing instruments for writing.
Liklaai, liklaai paai kam or liklaai paai pee literally and linguistically, (lik) means “writing, scripture, literary article”; (laal) translates as “pattern, method, technique”; (paai) means “extremity, point, tip” and (kam) refers to “pen”. And the word (pee) means “pipe, flute” (referring to kam pee which means writing brush with a pipe handle). The word kam refers to the pens, expressing that the Shan people use the recording device called kam (pen) or kam pee (writing brush).

The pen used to write on a slate is called kam hin (slate pencil). The equipment used to write on the tse-khao (white sah paper) is kam pee (writing brush), kam kut (fern pen), kam tsuem (modern fountain pen) and kam tsuen (modern pencil).

3.2 Kam kut (fern pen)

For writing on white paper, Shan people use pens made from ferns. This type of pen is called kam kut (fern pen). The kut (fern) mostly grows naturally as a clump of leaves like an edible fern. It can be found on mountain slopes and in low lying wetlands. The plant grows about 1.50 to 2 meters in height. It has hard round stems with the thickness of chopsticks. Inside the stem is a soft pith.

To make a pen, first a piece of the hard round fern stem of about 15 cm length has to be cut and the pith is taken out. Then on one end a lip is made and cut so that it is split at its longest point for a length of approximately 3 cm.

Then the pith is put back into the pen at the upper most end of the split of the lip. When the tip of the pen is dipped in ink (about 2 cm), the filling will keep the ink up for a long time. When the pen is pressed on the paper for writing, the lip will open up a little, so that the ink will be evenly dispensed. When writing a longer text, the pen is re-filled by regularly dipping it in the kok muek or the container with ink. If the tip of the pen gets worn out, it can be sharpened.

The older kut (fern) is the more tolerant and therefore makes the better pen. The thickness of the writing depends on the sharpening of the tip or lip of the kam kut (fern pen).

3.3 Kam lek (iron pen)

The stylus that is used to write on the maue pe (palm leaves) is called kam lek (iron pen).

3.4 Kam koo (soap-stone or steatite pencil)

The material that is used to write on the tse-poon (black sah paper) is called kam koo (soap-stone or steatite pencil). This type of stone is common in Shan State, especially in the areas of Moeng Kueng, Moeng Nong and Moeng Pan. In Shan the substance is called hin nau (rock deformation).
3.5 *Kam pee (writing brush)*

The *pee* (casing; linguistically pipe, flute) is usually the small segment of the top part of the bamboo that has a long and narrow end.

To make the *kam pee* (writing brush) cow hair is often used. The longest hairs are attached to the bamboo and then cut into a pointed tip of soft bristles. Depending on the length of the hair it is possible for a skilled writer to draw long lines evenly without stopping. A regular *kam pee* (round script brush) can also be used, but has to be dipped in ink more frequently.

3.6 *Kam tsuen (modern pencil)*

For writing on paper Shan people traditionally use *kam kut* (fern pen) only and never *kam tsuen* (pencil). They use pencil only occasionally, for example for drawing margins and guiding lines. Pencil is also used occasionally by Shan scholars to add notes or remarks to the original text written in ink on the margins of the manuscript to clearly distinguish between original text and a later added note.

4 Book Formats

4.1 *Pap tohp (folding book)*

The *pap tohp* or folding book format is known in the European cultural tradition as leporello or concertina book. When a writer prepares to make a book for a particular text, or when a scribe or copyist prepares to copy a text, the first step he needs to carry out is to calculate how many folios will be needed to fit the whole text on. Then he will be able to decide how many sheets of paper will have to be glued together.

To produce a *pap tohp* in the Shan tradition thick and firm *sah* paper of naturally white colour with a standard size is 43x17 or 44x18 is used. With a picket (bamboo split) or a pencil 3 cm margins on the left and right sides of the paper are drawn.

At the top and bottom of the paper 2 cm margins are drawn. Then 6 or 7 guiding lines are drawn between the top and bottom margins (making it altogether 8 or 9 lines) on the upper or lower folio for writing after the paper is folded. The folded paper with all margins and guiding lines drawn on is then glued together to create a folding book (leporello or concertina book).
A Shan paper folding book, pap tohp, made from one long piece of paper. Folding books are in the West also known as leporello or concertina book because of the folded pages. Photograph by Nongying Khamdaengyodtai.

4.2 Pap ken (suspended or curled book)

When a writer prepares to write down a text, or a scribe or copyist prepares to copy a text in a pap ken, he will first take the four-sided or quadrilateral thin, pliable sah paper and fold over each piece of paper into a rectangular shape. The smoother sides are on the outside. Inside, between front and back of the smoother sides, the scribe puts the poeng theo (sheet with guiding lines) to prevent ink soaking through and then they write on the front and back of the folded paper.

Afterwards the necessary amount of sheets of folded paper is prepared for binding. With the folded side on the right hand side, a 3 cm margin is made on the top side and a hole is made at the centre of the top margin line with a pointed metal. Finally, the sheets of paper are bound together with a soft thread.

Before the text can be written on the sah paper, a 3 cm margin is drawn with ink on the left and right sides and a 2 cm margin at the top and bottom sides using the kam kut (fern pen). In addition, guiding lines are drawn from the top margin line with gaps of 2 cm between them until to the bottom margin at the end of the single rectangle sah paper sheet is reached. This sheet is called poeng theo (sample sheet with guiding lines). The pap ken is a book made of thin paper. Since the ink easily saturates the single layer of the thin paper the poeng theo prevents ink from staining the other side of the paper.
A Shan curled book with a sewn-on printed cotton back cover which is covering the binding. The book contains a text on Vipassana in Shan language, dated 1916. Soren Egerod collection. British Library, Or.15363

5 Layout Instruments

5.1 Mai that (ruler)

The mai that (ruler) is used to draw margins on the pap tohp paper as well as the guiding lines between the top and bottom margins.

5.2 Sok tang (square)

The sok tang (square) is used to create right-angular margin lines on the pap tohp as well as to making guiding lines on the poeng theo (sample sheet with guiding lines) that is used to write in the pap ken (suspended or curled book).

Besides this, the sok tang (square) is also used to cut the rectangular folded papers for the pap ken (the suspended or curled book) into shape before binding the book.

5.3 Mit (knife)

The mit (knife) is used together with the sok tang (square) for cutting both top corners of the pap tohp (folding book) to be right-angular.
Together with the sok tang it is used to cut the top side of pap ken (suspended or curled book) after arranging the folded paper with order the folded side on the right hand side. The mit is also used for cutting every side of the poeng theo (sample sheet with guiding lines) to be right-angular before drawing the 2 cm guiding lines.

6 Scribes and Other Actors of Production

6.1 Scribes, Copyists, Authors

The word scribe, copyist or author in Shan language is tsa-re or maw lik (writer). Tsa-re is a word derived from Pali racarekha – the Shan reading sound is ratsarekha - meaning “to write, compose”. In the word ratsarekha, the syllables ra and kha were omitted, therefore it became tsa-re in spoken Shan.

Furthermore, the word tsa-re is used as a polite academic term highlighting the high qualities and virtues of a person that the Shan people praise as a recognized person in society; someone who is a person with high moral standards, but also an educated person responsible for disseminating traditional knowledge through the literature reading ritual.

The art of lik haw is the scribe’s profession. A scribe, copyist or author usually has his own store for book-making material, such as sah paper (thick and thin), glue, rak (resin) and gold leaves.

6.2 The act of writing

After the preparation of the paper, the folding, gluing and drawing of guide lines and margins, the actual copying or writing of the text itself can finally begin.

For pap tohp the inner front cover is used as the title page; it contains the sponsor’s name and the date the copyist completed the copy.

The first page of the text in the book usually contains the introduction, prologue and then the actual text begins with chapter one. Traditionally the text is in chapters and there are no paragraphs from the beginning to the end of each chapter.
Title page and introduction of the Pawthi pakkhiya watthu (Bodhipakkhiya Vatthu) on the "Wings to Awakening", in a Shan folding book dated 1899, Wat Papao Monastic Library, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Photograph by Nongying Khamdaengyodtai

A new paragraph indicates the beginning of a new chapter. The chapters are numbered. Page numbers are written on the left margin at the top on the verso of every folio. To write text in the pap ken, the poeng theo is placed in between the rectangular folded paper, then the text can be written on the poeng theo of the first sheet, parallel to the binding. When the lower rim is reached, the first sheet is lifted up and the writing continues on the lower side of the reverse until the binding is reached.

In principle the lik haw (meritorious text) is a vehicle for the transfer of merit in the Buddhist context. The lik haw was usually written exclusively on white sah paper. It is based upon the idea that it is meritorious and honourable to sponsor a book to be written with a suitable devotional text, usually in commemoration of a beloved person who has passed on.

A notebook is called in Shan pap maai tong (memory note book, record), and it is devoted to a single topic. Sometimes black sah paper is used to write the text of a notebook. When such a book is exclusively devoted to matters related to finding out auspicious and
inauspicious times for certain events, the notebook is called *lik hoo lah* (books with knowledge that is wide-ranging). The text is then mainly about astrology. When the text only deals with tattooing, the notebook is called *lik laai sam* (book concerning tattooing). However, most of the notebooks begin with some type of esoteric information and after a while continue with another topic.

### 6.3 Purposes of writing

The making of a book containing *lik haw* (meritorious text) is in itself a major act of merit-making. A good copyist makes a name for himself (to be mentioned in a colophon) by creating personalized commemorative books and by being able to choose texts on themes that suit the purpose and character of his clients.

Many notebooks (*pap maaì tong*) contain a wide range of different types of information. They can contain a mixture of religious texts, medicinal recipes, tattooing designs and instructions on how to prepare the ink with which to execute them, interspersed with calendrical tables that indicate at what moment particular actions ought to be performed or avoided.

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*Page opening of a Shan manual of yantras, tattooing designs and astrological diagrams, 19th century. British Library, Or.16448*
6.4 Writing in the community

The books containing lik haw (meritorious text) are often at the centre of formal meetings, during which the community comes together to hear the meritorious text sung. Such chanting session constitute an important part of the Shan cultural tradition on the village level. The expression lik haw literally means scripture (lik) and illumination, clarity or recitation (haw).

Usually the sponsor is prominently mentioned in the opening paragraphs of the book or at the near end of the last chapter (as a colophon).

6.5 Patrons, Dedicatees, Donors

The cost and the manner of payment for the making of a lik haw depend on what both parties agree to. Some copyists will insist on receiving a down payment of about half the total sum and the remainder upon completion of the work.

If a work has to be newly composed the price is higher than for a mere reproduction or copy of an existing work.

7 Writing Process

7.1 Copying techniques

Following the preparation of the paper (margins, guiding lines, foliation, numbering of chapters) and writing the prologue and/or introduction, the actual writing or copying of the main text begins. At the end, the copyist completes the writing process with a brief account of the sponsor and their family, with possible additions on their way of life, but also other aspects like ecology, society, economy, custom and traditions, etc. Finally, the copyist would insert a wish that the merit goes to the sponsor and their family together with their relations and all beings eligible for nirvana as part of the colophon.

Last but not least the date, month, year, and time of completion of the copy is recorded in the colophon.
Colophon on the last page of the Gihicaritta in a Shan folding book dated 1914, Wat Papao Monastic Library, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Photograph by Nongying Khamdaengyodtai

7.2 Scribal error

No one is perfect. The copyist may have made an error when copying or writing a text. Because ink cannot be erased, the copyist can add a black dot on every erroneous letter and then continue to write or to copy the text.

7.3 Omission

Occasionally, the copyist may come across a thin spot of paper that could not be written on. In this case he would make an omit sign by drawing a circle around the thin spot, or alternatively a leaf or a flower, indicating that the area was excluded, then the writing process is being continued.

7.4 Insertion

The copyist sometimes may have made an error by missing some word(s) from the original text while copying. To correct the mistake, he or she would insert the words or phrases by adding an insertion sign or by making a mark (put a cross or an arrow) on or under the line where the missing word(s) are inserted. Then the missing word(s) are written on or under that line.
If there are longer phrases that were missed, the copyist should write down the missing text on the right or left margin that is nearest to where he made the insertion sign.

8 Bookbinding and Preservation

Traditionally, there was no profession specialising in bookbinding in the Shan villages. Therefore, the copyists or the scribes or authors had to bind the books by themselves. Great attention had to be paid to the outer appearance of the book, since this ought to reflect the great value attached to their making and their role in village ritual.

When the writing process of the text is finished, a thin layer of nam men or nam men lohng (rock oil, crude oil or petroleum) is applied on the manuscript to prevent insects from damaging or destroying the paper. It is left to dry for a while. Nam men or nam men lohng is commonly used as a preservative, and it is also used to impregnate wood that needs to be protected, for example wood used to make chests to store books.

8.1 Binding of the pap ken (curled book)

For the pap ken, the sheets of rectangular folded paper are stacked on top of each other. Then a nail is hit through the papers at the centre of the top margin line to make a hole. The same method is used to make two more holes left and right of the centre hole on the top margin line.

The rims of the pap ken may be cut to be neat. Then the nails are removed and the book is bound with soft thread through the three holes. At the end, a textile cover is added to the pap ken. This can be a piece of cloth with special hand-woven patterns in the Shan style, or a plain cloth of any colour, but the piece of cloth has to be slightly wider and longer than the size of the sah paper sheets.

When the book is not in use the cloth cover is folded over the edges of the book and the whole is then rolled up, beginning at the binding. Usually a long cord or ribbon with special hand-woven designs is sewn on to the middle or a corner of the lower part of the textile cover. This cord is used to wrap and fasten the curled book. The cloth cover is the only embellishment of the pap ken.

Most of the commemorative pap ken are quite large in size. The result is often spectacular: from a distance the unopened pap ken looks like a pillow with a beautifully designed and hand-woven textile cover.
Cover binding before adding a textile cover: The cover or title page of the “Lik hoh tham lohng” in Shan language, from Terwiel, Barend Jan and Chaichuen Khamdaengyodtai, 2003, p 25.

8.2 Binding of the *pap tohp* (folding book)

8.2.1 Binding the book like a solid block

For the *pap tohp*, before the writing process is finished, the scribe or copyist or author must pay attention to the outer appearance of the book. To indicate the meritorious value of a text or a book the *pap tohp* should appear like a solid block of silver, copper or gold. This appearance is achieved by taking great care to fold the pages in an absolutely even manner and then pressing the manuscript so that all sides have smooth edges. After treatment with *nam men* or *nam men lohng* the natural cream-white colour of the paper becomes shiny and looks like a solid block of silver (below).

![Top view of a folding book made in the Shan manuscript tradition, the back cover of “Gihicaritta” in Shan language, Wat Papao Monastic Library, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Photograph by Nongying Khamdaengyodtai](image)

Instead of applying *nam men* or *nam men lohng* the scribe can decide to apply red lacquer on all sides (e.g. edges of the folded pages) and on the front and back covers. This treatment gives the book the appearance of a solid block of copper. (below)
Shan folding book with red lacquered covers, seen here the back cover of “Poy Sao-sarm Pamg” in Shan language, Wat Papao Monastic Library, Chiang Mai, Thailand.
Photograph by Nongying Khamdaengyodtai

Depending on the purpose of the book or the ambitions of the sponsor, golden flower decorations can be applied on the red lacquered covers. This effect can be achieved by applying gold leaf shortly before the red lacquer dries up. (below)

Shan folding book with red lacquered covers and gold flower decorations, the back cover of “Buddhavamsa” in Shan language, Wat Papao Monastic Library, Chiang Mai, Thailand.
Photograph by Nongying Khamdaengyodtai

Another valuable option for the appearance of a pap tohp is achieved by applying red lacquer on all sides as well as the front and back covers. Then gold leaf is applied in an even manner before the lacquer has fully dried. This type of pap tohp has the appearance of a solid block of gold.
Some commemorative books have both covers and sides covered with a layer of gold, others have only gilded front and back covers and the sides remain red.

*Buddhadanadipani pathama tvai, Shan Buddhist manual on the perfection of generosity, volume 1 only, dated 1911. Folding book with gold on red lacquer covers and edges. Soren Egerod collection. British Library, Or.15350*

### 8.2.2 Binding the book like a solid block of gold with high relief decoration

There is an additional, special kind of commemorative book in the Shan manuscript tradition. It is made in a special technique of decorating the *pap tohp* in an elaborate way. This is what is called in Shan the *sah law* technique, meaning the decoration in high relief, or *sah law* decoration, of the book covers.

At the stage that the person making the book has covered the manuscript in red lacquer, before that lacquer has fully dried out, a thin paste of *sah law* is mixed. Then, a pattern is laid out with a fine thread of the paste on the front and back covers.
Top view of a Shan folding book in the shape of a solid block of gold with elaborate high relief decoration, the front cover of “Buddha the Conqueror” in Shan, Wat Papao Monastic Library, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Photograph by Nongying Khamdaengyodtai

Usually the pattern consists of a decorated broad margin, leaving a central panel. The dominating design filling the broad marginal band is a floral pattern. The space between the flowers is filled up with undulating creepers or leaf designs.

The flowers usually are made by applying some sah law in the appropriate places and pressing coloured pieces of glass in the paste; relatively large pieces to form the hearts and a circle of smaller ones to indicate petals.

Just before this elaborate decoration has fully dried out the bookmaker will carefully rub gold leaf on all surfaces to achieve the appearance of a solid block of gold. Finally, a piece of soft cloth is used to gently rub the surfaces, causing the gold to stick on all surfaces that are not glass (below).

9 Textual Functions

In principle, the lik haw is a vehicle for the future transfers of merit in the Buddhist sense. Commemorative books are meant to be the focus of formal meetings, during which the community comes together to hear the text sung. Such chanting sessions constitute an important part of the Shan cultural tradition on every level of the community.

9.1 Furniture for Reading and the Reading Process

At the venue, a reading stand is erected. It has four posts, tied with fresh banana leaves and sugarcane shoots, miniature paper umbrellas, pennants and fah tah saeng (diamond shaped lattice bamboo fences) that are surrounding the reading stand. The top of the four posts are tied with a white canopy.

Banana shoots symbolise freshness and fertility. Sugarcanes mean softness and sweetness. The diamond shape lattice fences stand for prosperity and happiness. Miniature paper umbrellas symbolise nobility and peace, and pennants mean victory. The white canopy means pureness. Through erecting these symbols the Shan express that the audience is welcome and everyone is invited to join in the event.

The upper part of the decoration of the reading stand. Photograph from Chaichuen and Nongying Khamdaengyodtai, Reading Literature in Thai Yai Way of Life: Wisdom, Outstanding Characteristic and Value, p. 78 (Sponsored by the Thailand Research Fund), 2013

On the pedestal there is a cushion, usually with a hand-woven cover, with a beautiful pattern for the reciter to sit on comfortably. A bookstand or podium is in front of the cushion, mostly covered with a fine and beautiful patterned fabric on the top. The manuscript to read is placed on the bookstand or podium. At the right hand side there are a footed tray with flowers and popped rice on it, a water jug, a cup and a cuspidor. The reciter faces the bookstand in front direction, with his back to the listeners. The reciter then sits on the fine cushion and begins to read. The seating area for the listeners is
simply laid with carpet. Water jugs, cups and cuspidors are placed in spots between the people. In front of them there is a footed tray with flowers and popped rice for gathering donations from the audience, depending on the faith to give as a gift to the reciter. The members of the audience usually sit on mats that are spread on the floor facing the back of the reciter, so that all people involved are looking in the same direction.

*Decoration with diamond shaped fences around the reading stand. Photograph from Chaichuen and Nongying Khamdaengyodtai, Reading Literature in Thai Yai Way of Life: Wisdom, Outstanding Characteristic and Value, p. 79 (Sponsored by the Thailand Research Fund), 2013*

*Manuscript reading session with the audience behind the reciter. Photograph from Chaichuen and Nongying Khamdaengyodtai, Reading Literature in Thai Yai Way of Life: Wisdom, Outstanding Characteristic and Value, p. 80 (Sponsored by the Thailand Research Fund), 2013*
10 Storage

An important part of the material culture relating to written documents and manuscripts in the Shan tradition is the *tuek lik* (book box), a chest for the storage of manuscripts. This is usually a large wooden chest, which is lavishly decorated with gold and scarlet paint or red lacquer, as well as mosaic designs made with small pieces of mirror glass. In this type of a beautiful box the manuscripts are kept for safe storage and to protect them from dust and insects.

"Manuscript chest with gilded floral decorations and mirror-glass inlay in the Shan style, Wat Nantharam, Chiang Mai"

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Calendars and horoscopes in mainland Southeast Asia

Jana Igunma, British Library, London

A variety of calendar systems is known in mainland Southeast Asia, besides the Gregorian calendar that is officially in use today as the civil calendar. One traditional calendar system that had been widely used across mainland Southeast Asia is the luni-solar calendar, in which the months are lunar with alternately 29 or 30 days. Over a period of nineteen years, seven intercalary months are added in order to bring the lunar cycle in accord with the solar cycle.

In Burma, religious and cultural festivals are regulated either by the Burmese era, which is counted from AD 638, or the Buddhist era dating from 544 BC. In Cambodia, the Buddhist era is normally in use to regulate religious holidays. In Khmer inscriptions the Saka era is often used, beginning AD 79. Besides that, the Culla era, dating from AD 639, was common to record history.

In Thailand, in 1932 the Buddhist era was declared the official calendar system. Since the beginning of the Bangkok period (AD 1782) the Buddhist era had been defined to start at 543 BC. Other eras in use were Chunlasakkarat beginning AD 638, Mahasakkarat beginning AD 78, and Rattanakosinsok beginning AD 1781. In Laos, the Buddhist era, the Chunlasakkarat and the Mahasakkarat eras were in use, too.

Buddhist holidays (Uposatha days) up till today take place on completion of the four main lunar phases: first quarter, full moon, last quarter and new moon. A new month begins with the first day of the waxing moon. Each full moon day is a major Buddhist holiday. The names of the months and days are derived from Sanskrit, but a simple method is to count the months from one to twelve, and days from one to seven. Where the luni-solar calendar was used, the age of people was traditionally calculated in cycles of twelve years which correspond largely to the Chinese zodiac. Someone who was born in the year of the rat would start a new cycle each time the year of the rat recurs. Someone who has completed, for example, five cycles, would be sixty years old.

A common method to represent the date and year together with the constellation of planets, sun and moon was by way of a Zata (Burmese) or Duang Chata/Sata (Thai, Lao and Shan). It takes the form of a circle divided into twelve segments that represent the signs of the zodiac in anticlockwise order starting from the position of 12 o’clock. Within the circle the planets, sun and moon are placed to indicate their constellations, together with an indication of the time zone of the day. These Zata or Duang Chata were drawn to record important events like the birth of a child, coronation of a king, founding of a Buddhist monastery etc.
Rubbing of a stone inscription found near Kengtung, Shan State in Burma, with a Zata circle at the top. The inscription in Tai Khuen script contains information about a donation of a Buddha statue and a Vihara (assembly hall in a Buddhist monastery) that was made in honour of the Great King and Queen of Jeng Saen (Chiang Saen) by Nang (Ms) Kham Daeng and her family on the seventh day of the week (Saturday), 14th day of the waxing moon of the seventh month (June), BE 2464 (AD 1921). British Library, Or.16993
Horoscopes based on the Zata or Duang Chata together with the zodiac were consulted to establish the fate and future of people and to explain unexpected events. In practical terms, these horoscopes were important methods to help people cope with the uncertainties of life and everyday challenges which could be emotionally distressing. Divination specialists and astrologers acquired knowledge that was secret to ordinary people. Certain constellations of day and time of important events with the planets, sun and moon, zodiac animal and guardian spirits of the birth place, for example, could be interpreted as positive or negative influences in someone’s life.

Before making important decisions, like choosing a spouse or a name for a new-born child, choosing the date for a wedding, moving to a different place, starting a new business or going on a trip people would consult a horoscope specialist for advice. Horoscope manuals that included predictions for each year of the twelve-year cycle, or each sign of the zodiac, are known as Phrommachat in Thailand; “phromma” referring to Brahma, the creator God in Hinduism.

Simple horoscopes were drawn on palm leaves, paper or fabric sheets. Horoscope manuals are found in the format of paper folding books with coloured illustrations accompanied by text explanations. Horoscope manuals usually contain illustrations of the twelve animals of the zodiac. Each animal is accompanied by a female or a male “avatar” (representing what is understood as yin and yang in the Chinese tradition) and a plant that houses the guardian spirit of the soul of the person born in the year of this animal. Also included are number diagrams to calculate years and periods of time when the person has to be particularly careful about their health, family, work or trade, accidents, lawsuits etc.
Southeast Asian peoples adapted the animals of the Chinese zodiac in accordance with their own purposes and ideas. The principle of the twelve-year lunar cycle with each year represented by an animal was followed, only that the Chinese dragon was replaced by a *naga* (serpent) in the Southeast Asian traditions.
The first animal in the zodiac is the rat with the avatar of a nobleman. The element is water and the guardian spirit of the soul resides in coconut palms or in banana plants. In this year, the sun is the mouth (talks openly to superiors), Mars is the heart (an inconstant character, not keen to learn), Jupiter is the loins (strong sensuous desires), moon and Mercury are the hands (hard-working but unskilful), Venus and Saturn are the feet (enjoys travelling).

The year of the rat is followed by the year of the ox with the avatar of a male human, and the element earth. The guardian spirit of the soul lives in sugar palms.

Folio in a horoscope manual with explanations on the year of the tiger showing a yakkhini (female demon) dressed in a Thai-style loin cloth as avatar for this year, a neem tree, four types of tigers and four types of wood on the left edge of the page. Text in Thai language in black ink. Thailand, 19th century. British Library Or.4830 f. 6
The year of the tiger has the avatar of a *yakkhini* and the element wood represented by four twigs of trees. The plant where the guardian spirit of the soul resides is the neem tree (Indian lilac). In this year, Mars is the mouth (talkative), Jupiter is the heart (poor learning ability), sun is the loin (likes sensuous pleasures), Mercury and Venus are the hands (skilful and crafty), Saturn and moon are the feet (will travel much and be fortunate).

A female human is the avatar of the year of the hare with the element wood and the guardian spirit of the soul residing in coconut and silk-cotton trees.

The year of the hare is followed by the year of the *naga* (water serpent), which has a nobleman as an avatar and metal as its element. Residences of the guardian spirit of the soul are silk-cotton trees and bamboo plants. Jupiter is the mouth (speaks with the knowledge of a scholar), Saturn is the heart (quick to anger, but generally good-hearted), Mars is the loins (strong sensuous desires), Venus and sun are the hands (unskilled), moon and Mercury are the feet (desires to travel).

*Folio in a horoscope manual with explanations on the year of the naga showing four types of nagas and a nobleman as avatar for this year, seated beneath a silk cotton tree. Explanations in this folding book are written in black ink in old Mon script. Burma or western Thailand, ca. 1800. British Library Or.14532 f. 6*
Next is the year of the snake that has the avatar of a male human and the element fire. Neem trees and bamboo plants house the guardian spirit of the soul. The year of the snake is followed by the year of the horse, which has a noblewoman or devi as an avatar and fire as its element. The guardian spirit of the soul resides in banana plants and large hopea trees. Saturn is the mouth (kindly spoken), moon is the heart (has high aims, desires to strive), Jupiter is the loins (constancy in sensual desires), sun and Mars are the hands (not very skilled), Mercury and Venus are the feet (not fit for much travel).

A noblewoman or devi is the avatar for the year of the goat, which has the element metal. The guardian spirit of the soul resides in bamboo plants.

The year of the monkey has the avatar of a male demon (yakkha) and metal as its element. The guardian spirit of the soul lives in Jack trees.

The year of the rooster also has the avatar of a yakkha and its element is metal. Silk-cotton trees are residences of the guardian spirit of the soul in this year. Mars is the mouth (chatty, tells risky stories), Jupiter is the heart (not very prudent, but good-hearted and law-abiding), sun is the loins (strong carnal desires), Mercury and Venus are the hands (skilful and able craftsmanship), Saturn and moon are the feet (likes travelling).
Folio with explanations on the year of the rooster showing four types of roosters and a nobleman as avatar for this year, seated next to a silk-cotton tree. Text in Thai language in black ink. Thailand, 19th century British Library, Or.16455, f. 9

Next comes the year of the dog which has the avatar of a yakkhini and the element earth. The guardian spirit of the soul lives in royal lotus plants.

Last but not least is the year of the pig with a female human as an avatar and water as its element. The guardian spirit of the soul is housed in lotus plants. In this year Jupiter is the mouth (knowledgeable, but not always trustworthy), Saturn is the heart (hot-tempered, but forgiving and not vengeful), Mars is the loins (liable to carnal faults), Venus and sun are the hands (gets tired easily, not keen to work), moon and Mercury are the feet (likes to travel).
In addition to the basic characteristics of the years in the zodiac there are alternative interpretations depending on the month and day of a person’s birth. Although the Buddhist tradition to celebrate the New Year in April has been adopted in all Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia, according to the luni-solar calendar the first month of the year is December. However, only the Shan ethnic group in Burma and Thailand still celebrate the New Year in December.

Each year is divided into quarters, each of which is associated with a particular type of animal of the zodiac sign. For example, the 5th, 6th and 7th months in the year of the monkey are associated with an excellent monkey. Such people have a mild disposition, may not be very helpful to others but are able to develop. The 8th, 9th and 10th months in the year of the monkey are associated with a forest monkey. People born in these months are faithful and good-hearted, they will succeed. The mangrove monkey is associated with the 11th, 12th and 1st months of the year of the monkey, and people born at that time will be of a military disposition and acquire wealth. The remaining three months are associated with the wind monkey, and people born in these months in the year of the monkey are hard to teach as children, but will have a good disposition and repute in later life.
Birth on a Sunday in the year of the monkey is associated with a monkey reared by a lord. Someone born on that day will be fortunate in life. Monday is connected to a common monkey, and someone born on that day is likely to live in poverty. Tuesday is associated with an imprisoned monkey. Born on that day in the year of the monkey, one should expect trouble and misfortunes. Wednesday is the day of a monkey reared by a hermit. People born on that day are well informed and will live a good life. Thursday is associated with a monkey brought up by a chief Brahmin (learned ceremonial master at the king’s court); someone born on this day is intelligent, clever and has great potential. Friday is the day of an excellent monkey. People born on a Friday in the year of the monkey are very fortunate. A chained monkey is associated with Saturday which means that people born on Saturday in the year of the monkey may experience suffering in their life.
There are even more complicated calculations by combining the numbers of months and days in order to give more detailed predictions for each year. For example, someone born in the 5th or 11th month and on days 1 or 7 in the year of the tiger – represented by a yakka riding on a white tiger – is a powerful speaker who keeps his word, but finds it hard to bring up his sons. People born in the 6th or 12th month and on day 2 – represented by a man with attendant – will be a great person with many servants and do good government work. Birth in the 7th or 1st months and on day 3 – represented by a woman riding a serpent – predicts hard-heartedness, a person who likes amusements and is apt to be diseased. Someone born in the 8th or 2nd months and on day 4 – represented by a palace – will do well and be very happy with many attendants and never needs to feel tired. Birth in the 9th or 3rd months and on day five – represented by a common house – means the person will be settled, wealthy and happy. People born in the 10th or 4th months and on day 6 – represented by a nobleman riding on a serpent – are expected to have an active disposition of power, but often worried by litigation.
But even when prospects look unfortunate, there are ways to turn one’s fate around. Visiting a Buddhist temple and meditating, making offerings to the Sangha - the Buddhist order of monastics, vowing to take five or eight or ten Buddhist precepts for one or more days, or even joining the Sangha for a certain period of time are the most common ways believed to avert bad luck. But also good deeds like making peace with an enemy, helping someone in need, or planting and maintaining trees associated with the year in the zodiac that one is born in may help to improve one’s Karma.

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Two Bugis Manuscripts in the Library of Seminar für Südostasienwissenschaften (FB 9), Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, Frankfurt

Sirtjo Koolhof

The manuscripts (size 228 x 142 mm; with new green linen library binding) are written on the same paper and in the same handwriting as Cod.Or. 17.093 in the library of Leiden University. All three manuscripts have a note written with pencil that they contain ‘Part of the Gospels in Bugis, Celebes’, and contain episodes of the La Galigo epic. RE CH 24a also contains other writings. Probably these three manuscripts originate from the library of Prof. Otto Karow (1913-1992).1 Microfilm copies of the Frankfurt manuscripts are kept in the Leiden University Library.

Taking into account the paper, handwriting and the pencil notes the manuscripts originate from the ‘scriptorium’ of the Mission Press of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM) in Singapore. Run by the missionary Alfred North from 1836 until its closure in 1843 at least two scribes, Abdullah bin Abdulkadir and Husin bin Ismail produced Malay and Bugis manuscripts at his request. Both Abdullah and Husin wrote Malay manuscripts, while the latter also wrote Bugis manuscripts. Two larger collections of Bugis (and Malay) manuscripts from the same source are held the Library of Congress, Washington, and the Houghton Library, Cambridge, both in the United States.2 The Library of Congress holds ten Bugis manuscripts, all of them written by Husin bin Ismail (Tol 2003:64). The Bugis collection in the Houghton Library consists of six manuscripts. Two of those are written by Husin, one is in the same hand as the manuscripts in Leiden and Frankfurt, while two are written in yet another hand. The handwriting of one ms is close to that of the Leiden and Frankfurt manuscripts, but is possibly from yet another scribe.

The majority of these manuscripts contain La Galigo episodes, sometimes mixed with short other texts.3

RE CH 24a

144 ff., unnumbered (for microfilming the ms. has been foliated with pencil); 14 lines/page; text ± 196 x 110 mm.; Bugis script, written with black ink. Ff. 1v, 2r, 16v, 17r, 89v-90r, 112v, 132v, 133r, 138r-144v are empty. Date: approx. 1840.

1 The Leiden ms was acquired in 1981 from Brill’s antiquarian booksellers in Leiden (Witkam 2016).

Ff. 2v-102v contain an episode of the *Sureq Galigo*. It concerns one of the so-called *Datu Pammusuq* episodes (cf. Kern 1939:506-7).

Ff. 103r-114v contain notes on customs in Wajoq; 114v-117r customs in Boné and Wajoq; 117r-120v sayings of Arung Matoa on warfare; 120v-137v various magical formulas.
RE CH 24b

366 ff., unnumbered (for microfilming the ms. has been foliated with pencil); quires numbered 2-30 (same number on last page of previous, and first page of next quire); 15 lines/page; text ± 193 x 107 mm; Bugis script, written with black ink. Date: approx. 1840.

On f. 1r written in black ink in Latin script ‘Hikajat [illegible]; in pencil ‘Part of Gospels in Bugis Celebes’. Further a blue stamp ‘Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität Frankfurt/M, with inside written with black ballpoint ‘V no. 6706/67’. The text begins at f. 3r and ends at f. 365v.

The ms contains a long continuous part of the Sureq Galigo. It begins with Sawérigading’s visit to his twin sister Wé Tenriabéng who lives in the Upperworld, to ask for her assistance in arranging his ‘wind-marriage’ (botting ranenring) with Wé Cudaiq, the princess of Cina (cf. Kern 1939:323ff.). Other episodes are: I La Galigo’s birth, f. 103-11 (cf. Kern 1939:355ff.; 1954:61ff.); La Galigo’s return to his mother; the birth of Wé Tenridio; La Galigo’s journey to Luwuq to obtain ceremonial objects for the treatment of his sister Wé Tenridio’s disease. The text ends abruptly in the description of the ceremonies for her consecration as bissu.
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Exploring Southeast Asia Scholarly Resources in Taiwan: 
A Brief Report

Virginia Shih, South/Southeast Asia Library at the University of California, Berkeley¹

This report highlights my explorations of Southeast Asia scholarly resources in Taiwan in winter 2019.

I. My Trip Objectives

- Attended an international conference on Chinese Overseas studies.
- Established academic institutional links and working relations with academics, librarians, vendors, and publishers for potential international collaboration on Southeast Asia collection development.
- Collected relevant Southeast Asia bibliography series, book series, research paper series, conference proceedings, and working papers published in Taiwan.

II. International Conference on Chinese Overseas Studies

I attended an international conference entitled 跨界華人：海外移民與文化中華的散播 Kua jie huaren: Haiwai yimin yu wenhua zhonghua de sanbo (Migration and the Dissemination of Overseas Chinese Culture)² held at the National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei on November 29-30, 2019. The Chinese Overseas Research Society of the Republic of China and the Department of East Asian Studies of the National Taiwan Normal University co-sponsored the conference. It was interesting to see that 14 out of a total of 18 presentations were about various topics of cross-border Southeast Asia Chinese Overseas studies. All presenters are faculty members, researchers, and administrators from various academic institutions in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and the US. All presentations were in Mandarin Chinese except two keynote speeches in English.

¹ Virginia Shih is the Southeast Asia Curator of the South/Southeast Asia Library at the University of California, Berkeley. She wishes to thank her colleagues, faculty, researchers, graduate students, and friends for their warm welcome and logistical assistance to make her “vacation” trip worthwhile in Taiwan. She is especially indebted to her host, Ophelia Chun-yin Liu, Chief Librarian Emerita of Academia Sinica for her hospitality and support during her stay in Taiwan.

III. National Central Library

The International Cooperation Division of the National Central Library offered a presentation on the international cooperation with libraries in Southeast Asia. It includes three types of cooperation: Offering exchange of publications, establishing cooperative agreements of library information experts in sharing scientific knowledge and library information technologies, and creating a Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies for promoting publications of Taiwan studies and Chinese studies as well as digitization resources sharing.

The National Central Library has established working relations with 63 institutions in 10 Southeast Asian countries except East Timor. It collects ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) publications in religion, history, agriculture, geography, anthropology, social sciences, and literature. It promotes access to ASEAN information through electronic resources and scanning services to the general public.

The National Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations in Taiwan serves as the national depository of all theses and dissertations for all academic institutions in Taiwan. This is the most effective tool to search for Southeast Asia related theses and dissertations citations or full-text by title, author, advisor, keyword, abstract, or reference in Chinese or English.

IV. Treasures of Burmese Palm Leaf Manuscripts

Three prominent Burmese palm leaf manuscript collections are located in the following institutions in Taiwan:

1) National Palace Museum (NPM)

The National Palace Museum has a decent gift collection of Burmese-Pali palm leaf manuscripts (over 100 titles) which is mostly about Theravada Buddhism. For details about the NPM palm leaf manuscript holdings and its descriptive cataloging, please see the following two research articles (in Chinese pdf version) by Shu-hwei Yeh 葉淑慧, Assistant Researcher, Department of Rare Books and Historical Documents at the National Palace Museum:

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1 Source: National Central Library’s International Cooperation with Libraries in Southeast Asia presented by the International Cooperation Division of the National Central Library, November 26, 2019. (PowerPoint)
4 Shu-hwei Yeh can be reached at: anitayeh@npm.gov.tw
• 南傳巴利聖典在故宮：院藏緬文貝葉經初探 Nan chuan ba li sheng dian zai gugong: Yuan cang mian wen bei ye jing chutan (Bibliotheca Pāḷi Sacra Birmanica at the National Palace Museum: a Preliminary Report on the Myanmar Palm Leaf Manuscripts)¹
• 論述貝葉經整理與編目工作 Lunshu bei ye jing zhengli yu bianmu gongzuo (A Study of the Cataloging of the Palm Leaf Manuscripts)²

Virginia Shih at the entrance of the Department of Rare Books and Historical Documents of the National Palace Museum in Taipei, November 2019. Photograph by Hsiao-ming Yu

2) **The Library and Information Center of the Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts**

The Library and Information Center of the Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts has a special collection of 緬甸貝葉寫本 Miandian bei ye xieben (Bibliotheca Sacra Birmanica in Taipei). The collection was evaluated and summarized by Professor Jacqueline Filliozat, École francaise d'Extréme-Orient, Academia Sinica in Taipei and Peter Nyunt, Visiting fellow, Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies. It includes a total of 245 cases of palm leaf manuscripts with 446 texts. The entire summary catalogue is available online. This special collection, if fully digitized someday, would help promote the study of Theravada Buddhism to the scholarly community worldwide.

![Bibliotheca Sacra Birmanica at the Library and Information Center of the Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts. Photograph by Virginia Shih](image)

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3) The Fo Guang Shan Buddha Museum

The Fo Guang Shan Buddha Museum co-organized an exhibition on 穿越時空，法寶再現—佛經寫本與刻本特展 Chuanyue shikong, fabao zaixian—fojing xieben yu keben te zhan (Finding the Dharma through Time and Space: Exhibition of Buddhist Manuscripts) with the National Central Library of Taiwan in 2019. The exhibition catalogue consists of a section on the “Treasury of the True Dharma: Promotion and Spread of Buddhist Teachings.” It includes the following exquisite Burmese palm leaf manuscript holdings of the Fo Guang Shan Buddha Museum collection:

- Garubhanda – vinichaya (Burmese)
- Bhikkhuni Pacittiya Nissay (Pali-Burmese parallel text)
- Nissay (Pali-Burmese parallel text)
- Pubbakicca and Pubbakarana (Burmese)

• Commentary on Khuddakapatha
• Yajamanasutta (Pali, Commentary in Dhammasangani)
• Commentary on Pacittiya (Pali)
• Dhammasangani (Burmese), Dhatukatha (Burmese), Puggala-pannatti Nissaya (Pali-Burmese parallel text)
• Commentary on Visatinipata (Burmese, collected in Khuddaka Nikaya)

In addition, the exhibition also covered the Buddhist scriptures, rubbings, inscriptions, and printed works of Buddhist canons with the goal of promoting the Dharma to the world.

V. My Observations

I always combine site visits whenever and wherever possible during my travels to help facilitate collection building, to develop scholarly networks, and to outreach to any new local vendors and publishers to learn about local publishing trends and challenges within the region.

I visited some major bookstores, used bookshops, and antiquarian shops in Taipei in hoping to hunt for Southeast Asia scholarly resources. I was able to collect a few Southeast Asia Chinese publications of Taiwan imprint.

I visited Airiti Library¹ headquarters office in Taipei for an onsite orientation to their dynamic academic publishing, multidisciplinary databases, system services, and digital products primarily about East Asia. Airiti could help acquiring Southeast Asia Chinese publications of Taiwan imprint among an array of other services to libraries worldwide.

Collaborative Southeast Asia collection development in Taiwan through purchase or gift takes extra time and effort to nurture as well as to renew working relationships before it can bear any fruit. Monographs and a handful of academic journals in printed format are still the primary collecting category. Southeast Asia documentaries are difficult to collect since most of them are unavailable commercially. Acquiring hard-to-find Southeast Asia research materials in Taiwan will depend on dedicated networking with local academics and book vendors if anyone would be interested in resources sharing.

If and when opportunities would arise in the future, I hope to discuss the following topics with Southeast Asia faculty, researchers, library professionals, and graduate students in Taiwan:

• Crossroads of Taiwan Southeast Asia scholarship and stewardship
• Taiwan transdisciplinary and cross-regional research trends and future prospects of Southeast Asian studies
• Taiwan Southeast Asia Chinese Overseas studies

It will remain an ongoing challenge to document how academic librarians can help with building innovative Southeast Asia collections, and with providing open access through effective global library networking and resources sharing in an ever-changing digital culture in Taiwan.

Here are a few Taiwan institutions that offer Southeast Asian studies and/or have a Center for Southeast Asian Studies:

- **Academia Sinica, Center for Asia-Pacific Area Studies**
- **National Chengchi University, Center for Southeast Asian Studies**
  http://cseas.nccu.edu.tw/home
- **National Cheng Kung University, Center for Vietnamese Studies**
  http://cvs.twl.ncku.edu.tw/
- **National Chi Nan University, Center for Southeast Asian Studies**
  https://www.cseas.ncnu.edu.tw/
- **National Chi Nan University, Department of Southeast Asian Studies**
- **National Sun Yat-sen University, Center for Southeast Asian Studies**
  http://cseas.nsysu.edu.tw/?Lang=en
- **The Taiwan ASEAN Studies Center**
  https://www.cier.edu.tw/research-unit/the-taiwan-asean-studies-center

VI. Conclusion

My trip explorations provided me an opportunity to foster the exchange of ideas and to expand my horizon of examining issues in global transdisciplinary Southeast Asia scholarship and curatorship in Taiwan, as well as preservation of and access to special collections and resources sharing. It confirms my understanding that international Southeast Asia collection development travel remains indispensable and relevant for international and area studies librarians in the 21st century if they are expected to build unique or hard-to-acquire foreign language collections. In addition, the trip helped me gain valuable insights into quality selection of Taiwan Southeast Asia publications, which will undoubtedly benefit our users’ needs.

All in all, my trip was academically rewarding, professionally dynamic, and intellectually challenging within a full spectrum of institutional visits and local networking. I returned not only with a significant amount of Southeast Asia gift publications that were impossible to acquire offsite, but also with the seeds of new working relationships with academics and professionals which promise to enrich Southeast Asia collection at Berkeley in the years to come.
SEALG Blog

For regular updates regarding the work and annual meetings of SEALG and our partner organisations and institutions, please visit our blog at the following URL:

http://southeastasianlibrarygroup.wordpress.com/

There is an option to subscribe to our blog so that you will receive email alerts each time the blog is updated. You will also be able to find interesting short articles on library matters and developments in the field of Southeast Asian Studies as well as information on outstanding items in the collections of our member institutions.

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