



An Introduction to the Exhibition of Digital Images on Shan Manuscripts

Presented by Dr Jotika Khur-Yearn (SOAS, University of London)

Theme of the exhibition: *The Art of Shan Manuscripts: Creation, Practices and Preservation*

Venue: Wolfson Gallery of SOAS Library, University of London

Times: From Monday 3rd November 2014 to Friday 2nd January 2015

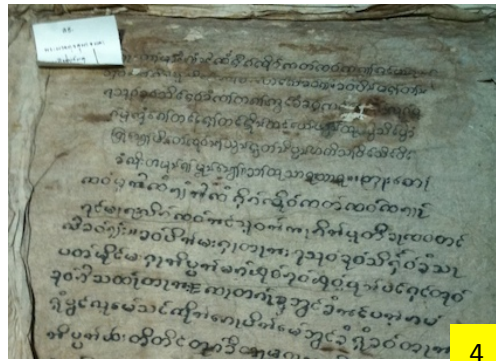
Admission: Free. However, as the gallery is located in SOAS Library, a Library's visitor-pass ticket maybe required, please bring your photo id card and a document to approve your home address. For more information, see <http://www.soas.ac.uk/library/using/admission/>

The tradition of producing manuscripts has been an important custom among Shan communities for many centuries. Apparently there are Shan traditions of ritual practices that have influence on the producing and copying manuscripts. As a results, Shan manuscripts can be found everywhere in the Shan State, in Buddhist monasteries as well as in people's houses. There are very few Shan houses where you do not find manuscripts. Nowadays, Shan manuscripts can be found even outside the Shan communities, such as archives, research libraries, art collections and antique shops.



The exhibition unfolds through digital images that highlight the lifecycles of Shan manuscripts: the methods of making native papers, customs of producing and keeping manuscripts, ritual practices in connection manuscripts, the migration of Shan manuscripts, and the preservation and cataloguing Shan manuscripts. Digital images shown in this exhibition are some highlights of Shan Manuscripts from public collections in UK, Northern Thailand and Shan State of Myanmar/Burma. These include digital images of Shan manuscripts from temple collections of Shan manuscripts in Thailand and Shan State of

Burma/Myanmar. For example, in Northern Thailand, we made several visits to Wat Tiyasathan in Mae Taeng District, Chiang Mai, where there are about 200 manuscripts (image 1 above, with collection manuscripts and the temple abbot), Wat Jong Klang in the town centre of Maehongson (image 3, with three local Shan scholars participated in cataloguing the manuscripts) and Wat Papao in the Chiang Mai city (image 4).



Some large collections of old Shan manuscripts are found at research libraries in the Western countries such as UK, US and Germany. In UK, many of these manuscripts were first brought by colonial officials during the British rules over the Shan States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and later were donated to the national research libraries, such as the British Library, the Cambridge University Library (image 2, above), the Oxford University's Bodleian Libraries (image 5, below), and the SOAS Library of the University of London (image 6).



The aim of this exhibition is give a taste of Shan manuscript culture and raise more awareness Shan manuscripts collections both inside and outside the Shan communities. We hope that Shan manuscripts are of great treasures and invaluable resources of information for various areas of subjects in Asian studies in general and Shan or Tai studies in particular.

The Art of Shan Manuscripts: Creation, Practices and Preservation exhibition is presented by Dr Jotika Khur-Yearn, Subject Librarian for South East Asia and Pacific Island collections of SOAS Library, University of London. This exhibition is supported by the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme (SAAAP) at SOAS, University of London; the Oxford Buddha Vihara; the Shan Cultural Association UK; and two private donors: Dr Sai Tin Maung and Sao Phong Keau's families.

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