



# SCA-UK NEWSLETTER

[www.sca-uk.org.uk](http://www.sca-uk.org.uk)

Vol. 10, November 2014

## Updates on Shan Studies & Recent Changes in the Shan State



### SCA-UK: Aiming for Promotion of Shan Arts and Culture

The Shan Cultural Association in the United Kingdom (SCA-UK) is a UK based, not-for-profit, cultural organization. We aim to maintain and promote Shan (Tai) arts and culture through cultural events and to share our culture with Shan and non-Shan who are interested in Shan arts and cultures.

We organize our own Shan cultural events like Shan National Day and Shan New Year Celebrations. We also participate in cultural events organized by other cultural associations in the UK.

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Front Cover: Members of SCA-UK dressed in colourful Shan costumes participating in Thai food and cultural festival at Dorking, 2008. From left: Nang Khao Noom Kham, Nang Moon Kham, Nang Zune Pan Aye, Nang Nidarphorn and Sao On Merng.

Back Cover: Overview of a new book Tai Magic: Arts of the Supernatural by Dr. Susan Conway, 2014



## The 2109<sup>th</sup> Pi Mai Tai New Year Message From the Chair (23 November 2014, London)

### Maison Pi Mai Tai - Happy Tai New Year



#### Another Pi Mai Tai is here. It is the 2109<sup>th</sup>.

It is believed that Tai people started celebrating this Pi Mai, marking the first day of the month, Zeng, in the two neighboring Tai city-states called Murng Loong (Uncle State) and Murng Paa (Aunt State), now thought to be in Yunnan, Southern China. Obviously these two city-states preceded for many centuries two of the historical kingdoms of the Dai/Tai people: Nanchao (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries) and Dali (937 - 1253).

Ladies and Gentlemen, on this auspicious day, the spirit of Pi Mai unites all branches of Tai people, from those in the Shan, Kachin, Kayah States, Sagaing, Yangon and Mandalay Divisions of the Union of Myanmar; in Sinsongpanna (Xishuangbanna) Dai Autonomous Prefecture and Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture to the Dai Zhuang, Yunnan Province, China; northern and central Thailand; Arunachal Pradesh in India; in Europe, America and Australia. The SCA-UK sends their warmest greeting of peace, goodwill, hope and love to all of them: Mai-soong Pi Mai Tai to every Tai in the world as well as their friends here in the UK and beyond.

As we welcome Pi Mai with hope today, we also renew our resolve to work harder for peace, equality, prosperity and harmony by promoting Tai culture in multi-cultural Britain and beyond. We thank you all, our friends from the Lao, Thai and Burmese communities as well as the English men and women in the UK, for your friendship and support.

This year, the Shan Cultural Association celebrates, as in many past years, at School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, one of the most prestigious and befitting venues in the British capital.

And, with the support of the Centre of South East Asian Studies of SOAS, in cooperation with the SOAS Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme (SAAAP), the SCA-UK holds a seminar on Tai/Shan

Studies at the Brunei Gallery. We are very grateful to the distinguished academics from SOAS, the British Museum, the British Library and independent scholars from elsewhere. We are indebted to you forever for your support to Shan studies.

Recent changes inside the Shan State have enabled scholars in Tai/Shan studies to come together this year in the capital of Shan State, Taunggyi; only for the second time in the last sixty odd years. This is a follow-up of what took place in Kengtung in 2012. It brings together researchers including those from Thailand, Assam of India, Yunnan of China, Myanmar and Europe to discuss Tai history, culture and beliefs.

While such effort suggests an encouraging step, it is a reality that the Shan/Tai people still have a long way to go to achieve equality and justice in their homeland, especially in education, healthcare, culture and human rights.

To help address these issues in some small ways, the SCA-UK has set up six bursaries for university students in Shan State and other parts of the Union of Myanmar. The first batch of worthy recipients is doing well with their study; our secretary Dr. Nang Nidarphorn RCPSG, MRCP (UK) receives their study report regularly. We wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your support, and we genuinely hope you will continue to do so as we expand this university bursary project.

On a personal note, I know some of you are here today at the SOAS Pi Mai Tai celebrations knowing it is also my 50th birthday. I am deeply sorry for not being with you in the UK for this birthday as I focus my energy this year on developments at my birthplace, Laikha, with various programmes related to education, healthcare, environment, youth and culture. I wish to thank everyone in the UK who has enabled me to initiate those programmes.

**Mai Soong Pi Mai Tai.**

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**Venerable Dr. Khammai Dhammasami DPhil (Oxon)**

**Chairman, SCA-UK; Buddhist Chaplain to Oxford University  
& Executive Secretary, International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU)**

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**The achievements of our members in 2014**



**Sai Phone Hseng**  
(Taunggyi )

BSc (Hons) Computer Science  
Manchester Metropolitan University



**Sai Kyaw Sein**  
(Lai Kha)

BA (Hons) Hospitality Management  
University of West London



**Khin Warber ACCA**  
(Lashio)

Chartered Tax Adviser  
An Associate of the Chartered Institute of  
Taxation



**Dr Nang Hnin Nu Nu Kyi**  
**@ Nang Nidarphorn (Keng Tung)**

MBBS (London), RCPSG, MRCP (UK),  
Specialist Registrar in Cardiology,  
West Suffolk Hospital NHS Trust



*SCA-UK members at Inaugural Lecture on Buddhist Meditation at King's College London (October 2014)*

## What Does the Shan Word 'Death' Tell Us?

(Paper presented at the ASEASUK Conference, Brighton, September 2014)

Venerable Aggasena Lengtai ( SOAS, University of London)

### I. Introduction

'...the Shan is a Buddhist when he is well and animist when he is ill', this is a statement made by Telford, a scholar who had studied animism in Burma. He further comments that despite the fact that Shan had been converted to Buddhism for centuries, the break away from animism was never completed (Telford: 1937)<sup>1</sup>. To some degree, his statement is still relevant to most of Shan Buddhists today. They celebrate religious ceremonies lavishly all year round in their happy days. But in times of ailing, they are busying with the helps of animism belief, such as, consulting the shaman, searching for *khwan* (ခွမ်/ နမ်) (life essence), incantation candle etc. However, even though the animism practices are not unfamiliar to Shan, it is not an easy task to acquire a set of belief system on Shan animism. This is partly due to the fact that the Shan had embraced Buddhism and some animism beliefs have been redefined to fit into new religious context.

Therefore, this paper, as a preliminary study, will look into the Shan's belief on life after death. This will be done through the two words of 'death' in Shan. They are 'Lap Loi Nguen Loi Kham (လပ်.လွိုင်ခင်းလွိုင်ခမ်း)' (passing beyond the silver and golden mountain) and 'Khao Son Mawk Hark Kham (ခင်းသုခ်မွက်, နှာင်းခမ်း)' (to enter the golden root garden). These two words are chosen, because they contain the elements that indicate the place after death. In addition, as 'death' itself occurs in a sad phenomenon and in the time of loss, for that reason, it is feasible that the words expressed in such situation would have been carefully chosen either to comfort the families left behind or sometimes to avoid being viewed as insulting to the death. At the same time, it could also express the essential belief on after life. Like today, we often refer to someone who has passed away as 'he is in heaven' to console the relatives or at least to children. In this manner, the word 'death' in Shan might as well tell us some places related to life in beyond.

Here, as this particular subject seems to have been long forgotten among the Shans, it is essential to make references to Tai Ahom (of Assam, India) and Tai Dam or Black Tai (of Vietnam). There are two reasons for this, firstly Tai Ahom and Tai Dam are linguistically shared the same family with Shan and secondly, majority of them are non-Buddhists. More importantly, their written records on the topic have been studied and therefore research results and publication are available.

### II. Shan Words for 'death'



A Shan funeral (Shans at Home p. 94)

Shan has quite a number of words for 'death' and some could be traced back to pre-Buddhist belief. Generally, the common word for death is 'Taa (တံ)'. However, in real life, it is seldom used for being deemed as inappropriate. Instead, alternative words are being used according to the person's social class or sometimes, to the speaker's attitude. For example, the word 'Nawn Phe (ခွမ်းပေး)' is used for the rulers or kings. Literally, it means 'lie in silk'. Here, the possible explanation could be that the silk is an expensive cloth and affordable by ruler class or allowed to be used by this class alone. When a ruler dies, his corpse would have been wrapped in silk for his subjects to pay last respects. Another particular class-reserved word is 'Lawn (လွမ်း)'. This is a Burmese loanword used for monk. Literally, it means 'to go beyond or free from'. This shows the alignment with Buddhist concept. The Shan word with Buddhist belief is 'Seng (သိင်း)'. Literally, it means 'be finished'. It is shortened form for poetry-liked word, 'Seng Karm Sut Mun (သိင်းကမ်, သုတ်မုခ်)' or 'being finished of Karma and end of merit'. Another similar word for death is 'Lap Taa Luem Merng (လပ်းတုလုမ်းမိုင်း)' (to close the eyes and forget the

<sup>1</sup> Telford, J. H. 1937. 'Animism in Kengtung State', in Journal of Burmese Research Society, XXVII, p. 89.

country or world). These poetry-liked words are probably euphemistic terms for 'death'.

### III. Words Structure

Let us come to the words of 'Lap Loi Nguen Loi Kham' and 'Khao Son Mawk Hark Kham'. Literally, the former means 'passing beyond the silver and golden mountain' and the latter means 'to enter the golden root garden' respectively.

Structurally, the first word 'Loi Nguen Loi Kham (လွိုင်ခိုခင်းလွိုင်ခမ်း)' transliterates as 'mountain-silver-mountain-gold'. It comprises the word 'Loi (လွိုင်)' (mountain) as nucleus noun and being modified by the noun couplet 'Nguen Kham (ခိုခင်းခမ်း)' (silver-gold). According to Shan language, the chief noun repeats itself twice when modified by couplet. The second word has 'Son Mawk (သုခိဗွန်)' (garden) as its main and modified by 'Hark Kham (ရှာခင်းခမ်း)' (golden root). From this, we learn two places i.e. 'mountain' and 'garden'. Both words also contain the modifiers 'gold and silver'. These modifiers are highly valued and, especially, in Shan, they often used to describe the sacred places. For instance, Shans often refer to Buddhist ultimate goal Nirvana as 'Mong Kham Maha Nikpan (မွိုင်ခမ်းမဂျာခိန်.ပါခင်း)' which can be translated as 'the golden country of Maha Nibbana'. Shans are seeing Nirvana as a physical country not in a sense of voidness. This is another example of animism originated word found in Buddhist context.

Besides these, each word contains a verb syllable. The first word consists of verb 'Lap (လပ်.)' which means to conceal, screen from view (Tern Moeng: 1995, p. 283)<sup>2</sup> or to go beyond. The second word has a verb 'Khao (ခဝ်း)' or to enter. Again, it is presumably that 'Loi Nguen Loi Kham' is a place to be gone beyond or to be crossed over while 'Son Mawk Hark Kham' is the destination to be entered. In other word, 'Son Mawk Hark Kham' is the ultimate goal while the 'Loi Nguen Loi Kham' could be a place on the journey.

From words structures together with existing knowledge in Shan, we could only know that the words 'golden and silver mountain' and, especially, the 'golden root garden' possibly refer to a sacred place somewhere after death. However, as no written record in Shan is found so far, it is hard to confirm. What kind of place it is? How its appearance looks like? Where is its location? How and from where to be

there? The answers for these questions seems to be mysterious among the Shans. Thus, it is necessary to looking into the record of their non-Buddhist kins, Tai Ahom and Tai Dam.

### IV. Some Words from Tai Ahom



*Loi Phi (Ahom Buranji)*

In Tai Ahom, we have seen the words 'mountain' and 'garden' often used in dead context. In the work of Chatthip and Ranoo (1985, pp. 8-12)<sup>3</sup>, in Tai Ahom, there is a burial place called 'Je Hai Loi or Charaideo (လေးရှားလွိုင်/ လေးရုံးတွဲး)' (the city of mountain range). Usually, it is a burial place of rulers. Often, this place has a shrine which calls 'Haw Phi' (ရှေ့ဗို) (spirit house). In local language, 'Je Hai Loi (လေးရှားလွိုင်)' sometimes has the same meaning as 'Pa Heo (ပျှော်ဝ်း)' (cemetery). Again, 'Pa Heo' also called 'Son Phi (သုခိဗို)' (spirit garden) or 'Loi Phi (လွိုင်ဗို)' (spirit mountain) (Ranoo: 1996, p. 13)<sup>4</sup>. These local names are identical to both Tai Ahom and Shan. However, the Ahom words of 'mountain' and 'garden' here seem not to suggesting anything more than a burial place. And the cemetery in Shan village is often placed on a higher ground by the mountain range. In this context, the words 'Loi Nguen Loi Kham' and 'Son Mawk Hark Kham' seem indicate variant terms for cemetery or burial place.

### V. Tai Dam's Khwan Journey

In Shan, there is another word associated with death i.e. 'Ka Her Ka Pe (ကားရှိုင်းကားပေး)' which literally means 'boat and ferry fare'. This funeral custom is widely known among the Shans and also noticed by Milne. In her book 'Shans at Home', she

<sup>2</sup> Tern Moeng, Sao. 1995. Shan English Dictionary, dp Dunwoody Press, Maryland.

<sup>3</sup> Natsupha, Chatthip and Wichasil, Ranoo. 1985. 'Tai Ahom's Belief and Rituals from the Reading of Ahom Buranji in Thai' in Lanna Studies Seminar: History and Archaeology, 28-31 January, 1985, Chiangmai University, Thailand.

<sup>4</sup> Wichasil, Ranoo. 1996. Ahom Buranji Vol. 1 (in Thai), Amarintr Printing, Bangkok.

records that ‘... in offering is in all cases placed on the tongue of the death, being the passage-money for the boatman who ferries the spirit across the river of death; this offering is generally a small coin of silver or copper, ...’ (1910, p. 90)<sup>5</sup>. The belief that a soul has to cross a river somewhere soon after death and coins for ferry fare placed in his mouth is still widely practiced by the Shans today. However, the details on how the departed person’s journey be like, such as from where and towards any directions is often unknown to many Shans today.



*Khwan Guided Swan of Tai Dam (www.taidaml.com)*

However, the journey of a soul, locally known as ‘Khwan (ခွမ်)’ (life essence), is well recorded in Tai Dam’s ‘Khvam Toe Muang (ရွှမ်းတေးမိုင်း/ရွှမ်းတူင်းမိုင်း)’ (History of the Muang) which often dubbed as ‘Tai Dam’s book of the Dead’. This book is read in the funeral to guide the Khwan back to his ancestors abode. To be there safe and sound through different spirits realms, the Khwan needs guidance.

Sumitr Pitiphat (1980, p. 35)<sup>6</sup> has described in detail on the journey of the Khwan which starts at ‘Tat Phi Fai (တတ်ဖိဖို)’ waterfall which is believed to be the convergence point between humanly world and the world of the Khwan or a kind of heaven according to Tai Dam’s cosmology. In his article, the Khwan has to cross two rivers. The first river is ‘Ta Kai (တဲခါး)’ river which is a frontier of ‘Muang Fa (မိုင်းဖာ)’ (a sky country). The second river is ‘Nam Kieng (နမ်ခိင်)’ or river Kieng. Beyond this river is a land of Luen Phan (လွမ်ဖမ်), the abiding places of Taen (ထီမ်) (spirit of the sky).

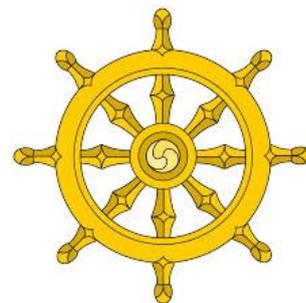
For the sake of comprehension, I would like to quote Sumitr’s full description of Muang Taen, as, ‘... there is a river called, Nam Kieng, and a boat where

Khwan must pass to go to Luen Phan. The river bank is wide and edged by a deep forest of mango and other trees. Some trees are so big that their leaves shade three mountains. The cemetery of the Spirits of the Sky, called Pa Hei Muang Fa, is in this forest. Near the forest is the arid and barren land of Muang Kora which cannot be utilised of cultivation. In this area there is a city for young men and women who died before being married and had to leave their lover behind on earth; in Muang Kora a sad and gloomy atmosphere pervades. A magnificent forest full of gold and silver trees is next reached. Prosperity is everywhere; overhead fly gold and silver birds picking various kinds of fruits from the trees. Next to the area full of silver and gold forest is Muang Taen, the community of team, which is the highest level of the universe of Black Tai.’ (1980, pp. 35-36)<sup>7</sup>.

In this passage, we are seeing the words, ‘river, forest of mango, mountains, cemetery of the Spirits of the Sky, magnificent forest full of gold and silver trees, etc.’ These words used in describing the place after death are corresponding between the Tai Dam and Shan. They are beyond accidental. It is possible that, the ‘Son Mawk Hark Kham’ and ‘Loi Nguen Loi Kham’ of Shan once with their full description might be equivalent to the forest full of gold and silver of Tai Dam. This is the most possible guess we could make so far.

## VI. Conclusion

In summary, the two Shan words ‘Lap Loi Nguen Loi Kham’ and ‘Khao Son Mawk Hark Kham’ refer to sacred place after death. It could not be simply a cemetery as in Tai Ahom. Having seen the Khwan realms described in Tai Dam’s ‘Khvam Toe Muang’, it is more reasonable to believe that they once had the similar description, if not exactly the same. However, as mentioned above, this is only a preliminary study, we can not be sure of any of these assumptions. Would more comparative studies on pre-Buddhist beliefs among the Tais be conducted, only then, the mystery of life after death in Shan cosmology will reveal itself.



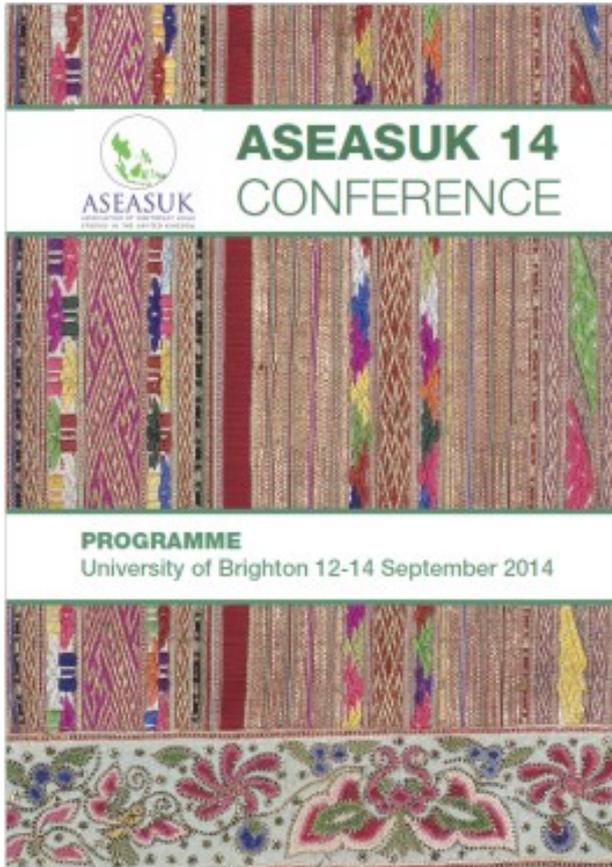
<sup>5</sup> Milne, Leslie, Mrs. 1910. Shans at Home, London.

<sup>6</sup> Pitiphat, Sumitr. 1980. ‘The Religion and Belief of the Black Tai and a Note on the Study of Cultural Origins’ in Siam Society Journal, Vol. 68, pp. 29-38.

<sup>7</sup> ibid. pp. 35-36.

## ASEASUK Conference 2014 Shan Panel Report

**Compiled by  
Jotika Khur-Yearn (SOAS, University of London)**



During the summer this year, a few of scholars and researchers on Shan studies participated in the conference of the Association for South-East Asian Studies in UK (ASEASUK) at the University of Brighton's Falmer Campus, a short distance away from Brighton city centre.

With more than 140 participants from the UK and other European countries, Southeast Asia, the USA and Australia, the conference provided a wonderful gathering of academic communities to share research and network from across a wide range of academic disciplines in a friendly setting. There were 19 panels across the disciplines, sub-regions and subjects, and among them is a panel with a special focus on Shan studies. Remarkably this conference has a special contribution to Shan culture, as you can see here the front cover of the ASEASUK Conference Programme book was designed with an image of Shan textile, the beautiful design of Shan women's skirt cloth from Burma/Myanmar, collected in the 1880s, now in the

collection at the Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove, number WA508311 (<http://aseasuk.org.uk/3/aseasuk-2014-conference>).

The Shan panel, under the wide ranging theme "Shan Studies: Manuscripts, Arts, Beliefs and Current Affairs" covered a few subject areas such as the tradition of manuscripts, British Museum collections of Shan artefacts, social customs and belief, and recent political changes in the Shan State. Six papers were presented at this panel and all the paper presentations have taken place on Saturday from 9am to 1pm in Room A500 of the Checkland Building. The panel was organized by Dr Susan Conway (SOAS Research Associate) and Ven. Aggasena Lengtai (SOAS MA Student) and has received financial support from the Oxford Buddha Vihara and Wat Buddharam London.



The first speaker was Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami (Trustee of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies and Abbot of the Oxford Buddha Vihara) whose paper entitled "Saving the Immoral! A Paradox in the Shan Funeral Texts"; he discussed various Shan rhymed Buddhist writings especially composed for recitation at Shan Buddhist funerals and memorial services. Ven. Dhammasami brought with him some of the funeral texts and showed them to the audience during his talk. The emphasis of his talk was that these funeral texts reconcile between self-responsibility of the Buddhist theory of kamma (S. karma) and saving a ghostly relative through the practice of merit sharing.

The second paper was from Ven. Aggasena Lengtai, an MA student in Southeast Asian Religions at SOAS, University of London. His paper entitled “What Does the Shan Word ‘Death’ Tell Us?” covers the areas of pre-Buddhist and Buddhist beliefs in connection with Shan words for ‘death’. He selected four words as example: ‘Non Phe’ (literary: sleep in silk), ‘Lap Taa-Luem-Moeng’ (close the eyes, forget the country), ‘Lap Loi-Nguen-Loi Kham’ (beyond the silver and golden mountains) and ‘Khao Son-Mawk Hark-Kham’ (enter the golden roots garden). He argued that it is necessary to consider some Tai animist view in order to make sense of some of those words. The full version of this paper is also published in this Newsletter on pages 3-5.



The third speaker was Dr Alexandra Green (Curator of Southeast Asian Collections at the British Museum) who gave her presentation on “Shan Collections in the British Museum), and we were informed by Dr Green that the British Museum holds more than 2,800 objects that are registered as being made or found in Thailand and nearly 4,000 found or made in Burma. Many of these art objects are believed to have Shan origins or connected with Shan regions.

The fourth speaker was Dr Jotika Khur-Yearn (SOAS, University of London), who read his paper on “the World of Shan Manuscripts: Creation, Practices and Preservation” focusing on the centuries-old tradition of producing manuscript books that has resulted in thousands of Shan manuscripts scattered at monasteries and houses in Shan communities and beyond. A project of cataloging and conservation of these collections are

being undertaken and some progress was also reported.

The fifth speaker was Dr Susan Conway (SOAS Research Associate) whose presentation entitled “Conserving Cultural Identity in a Shan Context”. The paper has its focus on the preservation of material culture. Using individual case histories, the author examined current attempts to conserve some surviving material culture in the Shan States.



The six and last speaker of the panel was Mr Khuensai Jaiyen (President and Founder of the Shan Herald Agency for News and Managing Director of the Pyi Daungsu Institute) and his presentation was on “The Current Changing Political Situation in Shan State” with special focus on the peace-making process between the government and the armed groups, as part of ongoing political reforms in Myanmar/ Burma. According to Mr Khuensai, in order to achieve the true peace, a change of mindset from both sides is necessary: that peace is not like war. There can be no winners and losers in peace, but only winners. The sooner both sides accept the idea, the sooner peace and harmony will be achieved for all those concerned, both at home and abroad.

Overall, the panel had attracted a number of audiences from other panels of the ASEASUK conference, with a proximate number of 20-25 people listening to the presentations throughout. In sum, it was an eventful and successful panel, which is also a milestone for the world of Shan academic studies.



**Shan Culture: Arts, Manuscripts, Festivals**  
*Exhibition for Raising Awareness of Information on Shan Cultures*

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



<b>Theme of the exhibition:</b>	<i>Shan Culture: Arts, Manuscripts and Festivals</i>
<b>Venue:</b>	Wolfson Gallery of SOAS Library, University of London; Thornhaugh Street, London WC1H 0XG (Nearest Tube Station: Russell Square)
<b>Times: F</b>	from Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> November 2014 to Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> January 2015
<b>Admission:</b>	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 <a href="http://www.soas.ac.uk/library/using/admission/">http://www.soas.ac.uk/library/using/admission/</a>

The Shan ethnic group, who call themselves “Tai”, is one of the Asian ethnic groups with a long history of civilization as seen in their rich cultural traditions, visual and performance arts, literary works and seasonal festivals. This exhibition of Shan Culture: Arts, Manuscripts and Festivals, with a major focus on the lifecycle of Shan manuscripts, reveals some past Shan events and the process of making Shan identity as expressed directly or indirectly through the distinct character and forms of their social and cultural activities.

The exhibition begins with narrative photos of Shan landscapes and artworks. Shan masterpieces of art, especially wood carvings, can be found in their house designs and monastic architecture such as temple roofs, Buddha statues, and pagodas. While many Shan monastic arts and architecture show influences from the neighbouring Burmese and Lan Na styles, they have a distinctive ‘Shan’ character. For example, when comparing features of Buddhist architecture, such as temple roofs and images of the Buddha, of Burmese or Thai origin from any given period, the Shan pieces are easily recognizable by the floral details on woodcarvings, the facial style of the images and the profile of pagodas and monastic buildings.



*A Shan Temple*  
*Photo: Jotika Khur-Yearn, 2013*

Shan style can also be found in the form of textiles and gilded manuscript covers decorated with floral designs, precious stones and inlaid glass mosaic work. The fact is that the tradition of producing manuscripts has been an important custom among Shan communities for many centuries. As a result, Shan manuscripts can be found everywhere in the Shan State, stored in Buddhist monasteries as well as in people's houses.



*A Shan Manuscript at the British Library  
(Photo by Jotika Khur-Yearn, 2014)*

Nowadays, Shan manuscripts can also be found outside Shan communities, in archives, research libraries, art collections and antique shops. Some large collections of old Shan manuscripts are found at research libraries in Western countries including the U.K., U.S.A. and Germany. In the United Kingdom, a large number are held by Cambridge University Library, Oxford University's Bodleian Library, the British Library, and SOAS Library (University of London).



*Collections of Shan Manuscripts at Wat Tiyasathan, Mae Taeng, Chiang Mai (left) and  
Project of Cataloguing Shan Manuscripts at Wat Jong Klang (right).  
(Photo by Jotika Khur-Yearn 2005 and 2014)*

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 with manuscripts, the migration of Shan manuscripts, and the preservation and cataloguing of Shan manuscripts.

The final part of this exhibition focuses on some popular Shan festivals, in which Shan people from all walks of life participate in cultural and social activities in their own spectacular styles, often with great merriment and hilarity. The most popular Shan festival is the Pi Mai Tai or the Shan New Year Festival. Some photos of the celebration of this festival held at SOAS in the past few years are on display in this exhibition.

The exhibition is presented by Dr Jotika Khur-Yearn, a SOAS PhD graduate in Shan classical literature and subject librarian for South East Asia and Pacific Islands collections at SOAS Library, University of London. Jotika also works as a subject consultant for SENMAI, the ongoing project to compile an online catalogue of Shan manuscripts hosted at the Bodleian Library Oxford, while he is currently writing up his librarianship master's dissertation at the City University London on 'Mapping Shan Manuscript Literature'.

The exhibition is funded by the SOAS Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme (SAAAP), the Oxford Buddha Vihara, the Shan Cultural Association U.K. (SCA-UK) and two private donors: Dr Sai Tin Maung & family and Sao Phong Keau & family.

A great number of people have been involved in the preparation process of this exhibition project and it is impossible to mention all of them here. The team of this exhibition would like to express our heartfelt thanks especially to the following individuals and organizations:

- Venerable Dr Khammai Dhammasami (Abbot and Founder of the Oxford Buddha Vihara & Chair/Shan Cultural Association UK) who has given his full support to the initial plan of this exhibition project and extended his appeal to his devotees and EC Members of SCA-UK for financial support & their lovely photos of Shan New Year celebrations being displayed in this exhibition.
- Professor Elizabeth Howard Moore, Chair/SOAS Centre of South East Asian Studies.
- The SAAAP (SOAS Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme), the main sponsor of this exhibition.
- Professor Kate Crosby (King's College, London) and her team members on the British-Academy (SEAS Committee) funded Shan Buddhism at the Borderlands Project (SBBP) in which this exhibition has its root; a new copy of Shan manuscript made for the SBBP in 2009 is on display in this exhibition.
- Drs Andrew Skilton and Gillian Evison and their team members at the Oxford-based Revealing Hidden Collection Project.
- Dr Sai San Aik, a native Shan scholar, who presented two copies of Shan scrolls to Dr Jotika Khur-Yearn during his Shan "Lik Loung" Manuscript Conference in Yangon in December 2013. The two scrolls are on display in the exhibition.
- Members of SOAS Library and Information Services, especially Barbara Spina, Lance Martin and Jiyeon Wood.
- Jana Igunma, curator at the British Library.
- David Wharton, PhD Researcher on Tai Nuea Literature (Passau University, Germany) and project manager of the Digital Library of Northern Thai Manuscripts (DLNTM), for his fieldwork photos on traditional Tai/Shan native paper making process and the digital images from the DLNTM.
- Members of Shan communities in Shan State of Myanmar, Thailand, UK and all people who love and care about Shan Culture: Arts, Manuscripts and Festivals.

We hope that this exhibition gives some insight into the landscape of Shan culture and some useful resources for various areas of Asian studies especially Tai or Shan art and cultural studies.



*Dancing around the Shan long drum band, performed by members of Shan Cultural Association UK dressed in traditional costumes, at Shan New Year event at SOAS, University of London, 2007. (Photo sources: SCA-UK)*

## What does Ebola outbreak remind us?

Sai Hurng Kham Murng,

*Consultant Immunologist, Department of Immunology, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, UK.*



**Figure 1:** *Ebola virus. Courtesy of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (accessed October 11, 2014)*

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa was first reported in March 2014, and has rapidly become the deadliest occurrence of the disease since its discovery in 1976. As a result, in August, the United Nations health agency declared an "international public health emergency" in responding to the epidemic. General public would be concerned the prediction that this may spread to Europe including the UK. We should look into this event to test our health knowledge, to understand healthcare system around us, and to help participating in improving the health of people who we care. The reason is there are many diseases as fearsome as Ebola (figure 1) including Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection (HIV), multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDRTB), malaria etc.

### Globalisation

We are witnessing an increasing integration of economies, policy-making and cultures around the world in the previous decades. Although there are differences between regions of the world, globalisation has grown through the global network of trade, communication, migration and transportation. However, undeniably the effect of events will still be different in different regions. The better prepared society is highly likely to have a better outcome. This is more evident in health events such as Ebola, pandemic influenza, HIV, MDRTB, etc.

### Healthcare system

The setup of healthcare infrastructure is very important especially when there is no proven specific drug to treat a disease with epidemic potential such as Ebola. Environmental conditions are not favourable for the viral haemorrhagic fever (VHF) such as Ebola in the UK. However the risk is real, although it is still low, due to imported cases i.e. travellers returning from endemic areas e.g West Africa.

In the UK, there are robust, well-developed and well-tested National Health Service (NHS) systems for managing unusual infectious diseases when they arise, supported by a wide range of experts. We should communicate with our friends and families including those who live the developing countries because infectious diseases put most harm in countries with less developed healthcare facilities and public health capacity.

Ebola is one of the VHF caused by Ebola viruses. There are extensive multiplication of viruses after the infection resulting in all body fluids and tissues contains large numbers of viruses. These are very contagious. Ebola is transmitted through contact with these blood or other body fluids. The mortality rate of Ebola varies but can be as high as 89%. There is no approved drug or commercially available vaccine for Ebola treatment at present. Containment is essential to break the transmission. The risk to the general UK population remains very low. The risk to UK travellers of contracting Ebola is also low and can be lessened by simple precautions.

The Department of Health (DH) has produced the clinical management and guidance for health professionals which are free to access from the DH website. These include twelve sections to be used in the different situations such as managing patients who require assessment in the general practice, identifying and managing patients in the hospital, information for family and friends with higher risk of the infections, etc.

If any person feels unwell with symptoms such as high fever (38°C or more), chills, muscle aches, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, sore throat or rash within 21 days of returning from the Ebola affected regions, the advice is to stay at home and immediately telephone 111 or 999 and explain the condition. These services will provide advices and arrange to be seen in a hospital if necessary for further assessment. NHS staff including infection specialists and laboratory staff are regularly updated

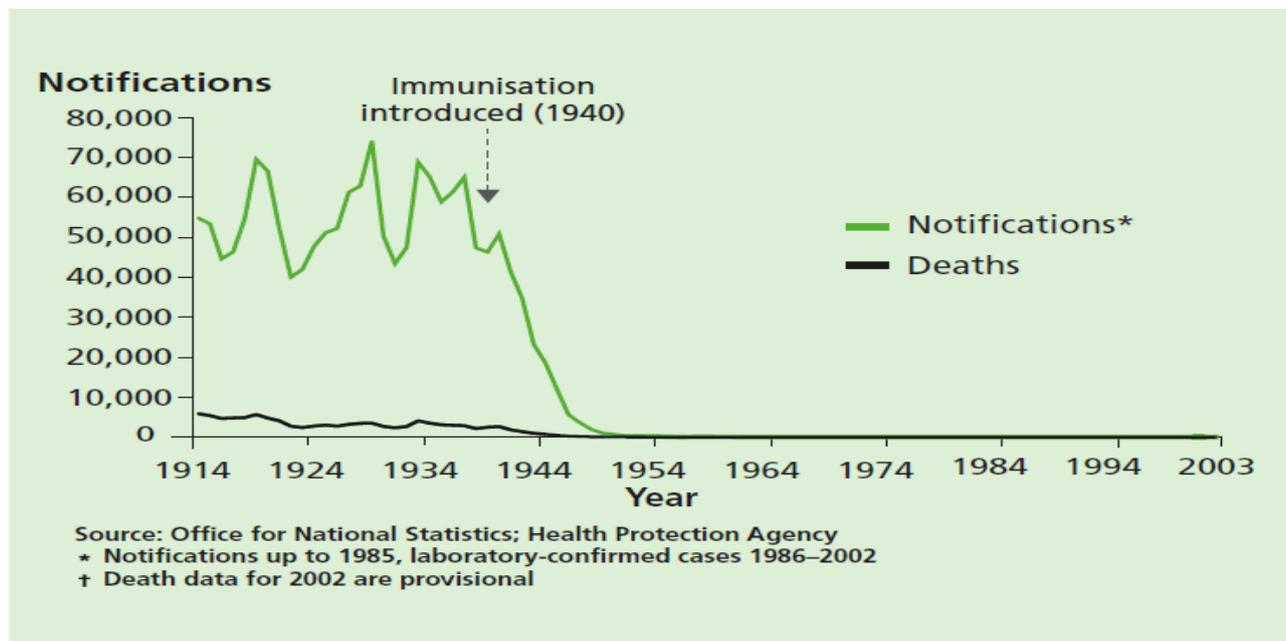
with action plans. It is achievable for developing countries to build similar healthcare system provided public and government are able to put co-ordinate and long term effort.

The setup of healthcare system is also important for diseases where treatments are available. We could discuss public health aspects of some diseases here which have better outcome in the developed countries in order to communicate with our friends and families who live in less developed healthcare facilities and public health capacity.

### Immunisation

One of the great achievements in medical science is the development of immunisation against diseases. Immune system is there to protect our body from harmful effect of organisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi etc. A normal immune

system appears to be capable of making responses to almost all foreign molecules to protect us from harmful effects. The initial response is immediate but less specific to the disease. The subsequent responses after a period of development are stronger, more targeted, and have memory. Therefore in the second encounter the response is very rapid and usually able to protect a normal person from developing serious illnesses. One way of achieving this response is by the process called active immunisation (e.g. universal children immunisation assisted by the World Health Organisation guidance). The benefit of immunisation is very clear (figure 2). 2- 3 million deaths from diphtherias, whooping cough, measles and tetanus were prevented annually by immunisation around the world including Myanmar. We should encourage every body to take up the immunisation whenever it is advised by health authorities.



**Figure 2:** *Diphtheria cases and deaths, England and Wales (1914–2003)- from Public Health England. Guidance 2013. Diphtheria: the green book chapter 15 (accessed October 11, 2014)*

#### Are there other benefits of immunisation?

Some organisms can give other illnesses beyond infections. Human Papilloma viruses (HPV) are examples. These viruses cause viral wart (e.g. genital warts) and are very common among sexually active persons although they do not commonly give rise to visible viral warts. Some HPV infections are responsible for 70% of the cervical cancer which can be life threatening. HPV vaccine has been proved to be very effective in protecting infections

against the viruses included in the vaccine which responsible for the majority of cervical cancer.

The HPV vaccine programme has been started in the UK since 2008. It is routinely offered to girls age 12-13 and recommended to girls from age 12- 18 in the UK. But there are other special circumstances when this vaccine has been used. One should take the immunisation if advised by healthcare professionals. We should inform the benefit of

this vaccine to our friends and families live in less developed healthcare facilities and public health capacity.

### **Are there HIV vaccines?**

Despite an effort for the previous 30 years no HIV vaccine is proven to be effective so far. But the concept of developing HIV vaccine has grown out of the failure of HIV trials. This is achievable although it may take time. Here we should remember that HIV is a global issue for many decades. According to the 2008 estimation 31.1–35.8 million are people living with HIV (1% of the global adult population aged 15-49 y). 3.4 - 4.3 million of these live in South and South East Asia. However, recent reviews have emphasized the persistence of information gaps regarding populations at higher risk in some parts of Asia. This suggests that the true numbers of HIV may be higher.

### **Why should we care about HIV and TB infection?**

In developing nations, infections with both HIV and tuberculosis (TB) are very common. The immune system is progressively impaired by HIV infection in untreated persons. This contributes not only to a higher rate of TB

reactivation but also to an increased disease severity and drugs resistance. Unlike Ebola there are many effective drugs (Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy- HAART) for treating HIV. Currently HAART does not cure HIV. One of the major roadblock for a cure is due to the presence of latent HIV virus reservoirs. However with HAART, patients are able to live as normal for many years as long as viral production is well suppressed. In the UK this treatment is actively provided by NHS. In the reality the cost of continued treatment and monitoring is considerably high since it is life long.

Without help HIV burden of the developing countries, can increase due to the unchecked transmission and inadequate public health system. An associated TB can make the situation worse because TB is usually airborne disease. 1-5 TB bacteria can cause infections. A single sneeze can produce numerous particles that can spread up to 10 feet which can stay airborne for several hours. A single particle may contain 1- 10 TB bacteria. The good news is there are many effective drugs available and TB can be cured. We should communicate these to our friends and families who live in less developed healthcare facilities and public health capacity.

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*SCA-UK members on a day trip in Oxford (Summer 2014)*

## SCA-UK Bursary 2014/ 2015

*Dr Nang Hnin Nu Nu Kyi @ Dr Nang Nidarphorn*

On behalf of SCA-UK, I am extremely delighted to inform our supporters, current students and prospective students, that our education committee has approved to double the amount of bursary for our students. I also want to congratulate our students (Nang Lao Lao, Sao Gan-Dha Vati and Sai Khay Hseng) and celebrate their achievements for successfully completed another year of their university education.

Last year SCA had doubled its effort to ensure more efficiency and wider reach of our education project. This year we have strengthened our communication channel by appointing Sai Aung Mong and Sai Pae as SCA-UK representatives based in Myanmar.

As our Chairman has stated in his welcome message, Tai/Shan people are travelling towards the direction of living in the freer world. Nevertheless, we still have a long way to go to achieve our goals of equality and justice in our homeland. The main steps towards this is undoubtedly good education.

The SCA-UK, which was founded and sustained by the energy of Tai/Shan students studying in the UK, has set up 6 bursaries to help support students in our home land who are studying in the universities in Myanmar. And on behalf of SCA-UK, I wish to thank all of our supporters who have supported this education project thus far. While SCA-UK is slowly but truly expanding our university education project, we genuinely wish that you continue to support our students.

The followings are the 6 bursaries set up to provide financial support to Tai/Shan university students who are studying in various parts of Myanmar. SCA-UK is planning a long term education project to support more students who are pursuing their dreams for a better future of our people. The bursaries are named after “Khu Maw Lik” or Shan scholars who had contributed a great deal towards the history of Shan. They are:

### 1. Dr Sao Ba Nyan Medical Student Bursary

There are two bursaries for medical student. Dr Sao Ba Nyan was born in Hsi Paw. He is known as the father of “Shan Nationalism”. He designed the Shan National Flag “Kham Sarm Tar and Lurn Kham (Three Golder Strips and Golden Moon)”. This idea has recently been adapted to be the Myanmar

National Flag. He was one of the first early Shan Doctors in Modern Medicine. He was also a gifted composer. He composed the Shan National Anthem “Alurm Kham Sarm Tar”.

### 2. Nang Kham Gu Bursary

There are two bursaries for students studying literature and arts. Nang Kham Gu was a well known female poet and an accomplished novelist in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Her most famous work was a love story called “Khun Sarm Law and Nang Oo Pim”, that is still very well known now-a-days.

### 3. Sao Garng Sor Bursary

Sao Garn Sor was the greatest poet and composer ever recorded in Shan history in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. His work including nearly 200 Lik Loang manuscripts have captured interest of many modern scholars and have become the subjects of many researches carried out in many well known institutions such as SOAS. Sao Garng Sor was the father and tutor of Nang Kham Gu.

### 4. Sao Amat Luong Merng Nong Bursary

He was once chief minister for Saofa, ruling prince of Merng Nong in central Shan State. In his later life, he was known for his dedication and achievement in Buddhist studies and meditation.

This year, SCA-UK education project has successfully funded three enthusiastic university students, namely: Nang Lao Lao (Kyauk-me, Northern Shan State), Sai Khay Hseng (Taunggyi, Southern Shan State), and Sao Gan Dha Vati (Lawk Sauk, Southern Shan State).

I have the pleasure and am proud to include the testimonial from one of our students,

**Sao Gan Dha Vati** is in her third year of Industrial Chemistry at Yadanabon University Mandalay. She has been awarded Nang Kham Gu Bursary.



*Sao Gan Dha Vati*

“Thank you for your scholarship, it can support my education expensive. I would like to become a expert person in Industial Chemistry so I am trying very hard. I will be waiting for your newsletter.”

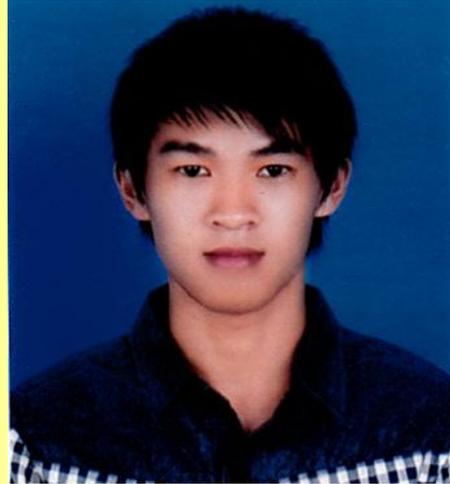
**Nang Lao Lao** has successfully completed her first year at University of Medicine 1, Yangon. She has been awarded Dr Sao Ba Nyan Bursary.



**Nang Lao Lao**

SCA-UK therefore extend our appeal to our friends and supporters all over the world for your generous giving to help us expand our education project. Every penny of your donation will make a difference to the prospects of our students and hence of our country as a whole for Education is the best gift that one can provide for our future generations.

**Sai Khay Hseng** is a student at University of Technology (Yadanabon Cyber City), studying Advanced Material Engineering. He has been awarded Sao Garng Hso Bursary.



*Sai Khay Hseng*

“My name's Sai Khay Hseng and was born in Langkho, Southern Shan State. I'm currently living in Taunggyi. I'm recently studying Advanced Material Engineering at University of Technology (Yatanarpon Cyber City) which exists near Pyin Oo Lwin. As I have four siblings and only one of us have finished university, my parents have to support us alot. It has been easier in supporting me since I got bursary supported from SCA-UK. My study is also going way well. We sincerely thank all of you and I also must say I would try my best in my study with your support.”



For more informatron on SCA-UK Scholarship programs and to support please contact by email to: [sca-uk-scholarship@googlegroups.com](mailto:sca-uk-scholarship@googlegroups.com).

## Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

**Dr Sai Han, MBBS, MSc, FRCP (Glasgow)**

*Consultant Physician and Honorary Clinical Senior Lecturer, Glasgow University, UK*

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) means any learning, outside of undergraduate education or postgraduate training, to help us maintain and improve our knowledge, skills, attitudes and performance. CPD comprises formal and informal learning activities which keep us up-to-date, and competent in our practice.

CPD is a crucial component in career of healthcare professionals including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, technicians and radiographers as well as other professionals such as pilots, lawyers, teachers, engineers etc. Service users and public expect that we, professionals, are providing up-to-date and good quality services. In healthcare sector we are faced with ever evolving and expanding diagnostic tests, therapeutic options, clinical guidelines and protocols, and expectation of patients and public. Emergency treatment of heart attack has evolved to stent/balloon to open the blocked blood vessels. Some strokes caused by blood clots are now treated by urgent clot busting injection. The knowledge and skills we have learnt before we qualified needs to be adapted to the changing working environment so that we can provide a safe and high quality patient focused clinical care.

The continuous learning concept was historically based on the clinical medical topics and widely called Continuing Medical Education (CME). For example, resuscitation training, updates on clinical topics in medicine, surgery, O&G, child health, clinical meetings, and medical conferences provide approved CME credits. However, in the last three decades CME has me to include nonclinical topics such as personal, social, ethical and management skills towards all round professional development. For example leadership course, negotiating skills, team working, discrimination, time management, and effective presentations etc are some of the popular nonclinical CPD topics. CPD activities can enhance career opportunities and job satisfaction by supporting us to work more effectively within multi-professional team. We can say that CME is an ingredient of CPD but nowadays; there is no sharp division between CME and CPD activities.

In the UK practising doctors are bound by the principles of Good Medical Practice set out by the General Medical Council (GMC). The following four domains of Good Medical Practice aim to achieve all round development of doctors to ensure the delivery of quality service.

1. knowledge, skills and performance
2. safety and quality



**Figure (1): Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training on a dummy securing Airway, Breathing and Circulation. Medical professionals need to have a regular update to be competent in dealing with cardiac arrest.**

3. communication, partnership and teamwork
4. maintaining trust.

Requirement of CPD or CME activities can vary among different countries. CPD/CME can be mandatory/legal requirement or voluntary basis. Countries like UK, Ireland, Germany and some states in the USA require doctors to obtain minimum 50 hours CPD/CME credits per year. Currently all the doctors in the UK are being revalidated by GMC to be fit to practise and the crucial requirement for this is the successful Annual Appraisal which requires compulsory CPD records. In Singapore doctors need compulsory 25 CME points per year to renew their practising certificates with Singapore Medical Council. In countries such as Belgium, Spain and Malaysia CPD activities are voluntary.

One of the characteristics of CPD is “self-directed reflective” learning. CPD should not be just a “tick box exercise” but should be activities relevant to our own practice and development. We need to reflect on all aspects of our practice to identify potential gaps in skills and capabilities, or to develop further. Drawing up a Personal Development Plan (PDP) will help identify and address our needs. Undertaking a range of different CPD activities to address a particular learning need

is likely to be more effective than one-off events. It is also important to Record, Review and Reflect our CPD activities to be more effective.

CPD should include activities locally as well as at regional, national or international levels. In the UK the main CPD/CME programmes are run by medical royal colleges (Royal Colleges in Edinburgh, Glasgow and London) or professional associations.

There are limitations of CPD- some obstacles may be the cost, time and access. We can take CPD activities by attending courses physically or participating in online sessions. Online CPD modules such as medical updates and nonclinical topics are becoming more and more attractive as they allow effective learning at our own pace at our own place. Regarding the financial cost to obtain CPD activities doctors can apply for approved study leave days and funding from our employers,

colleges and associations in the UK. If we have to spend ourselves for CPD then the expenses are tax deductible. Some pharmaceutical or medical device manufacturers and distributors may also sponsor healthcare professionals to attend conferences but this practice has become controversial in recent years for ethical reason. In USA “the Physician Payment Sunshine Act” 2011 requires drug and medical device companies to report to the US government about any payment made to doctors and hospitals. Even in 2006 when I was at Stanford, Ca, USA the hospital policy did not allow drug companies sponsoring for department educational meeting!

In conclusion CPD helps medical professionals achieve up to date knowledge and skills and ensure the delivery of safe, effective and patient-centred healthcare services, and this lifelong learning culture should be embedded firmly throughout our medical career.

Country	CPD requirement	Credits / Year
UK	Compulsory	50
Germany	Compulsory	50
Australia	Compulsory	40
USA	Compulsory	12 -50
Singapore	Compulsory	25
Malaysia	Voluntary	
Jamaica	Compulsory	10

*Table (1) CPD/CME requirements in some of the countries*

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*SCA-UK members on a day trip in Oxford (Summer 2014)*

## An overview of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in UK Construction Industry

**Nang Vo Kham Murg**

*Chartered Surveyor, BEng (Civil), MSc (Quantity Surveying), MRICS (UK)*

For construction professionals such as engineers, project manager, quantity surveyors to compete and succeed in the global construction markets, its workers must perform to world class standards. This can only be achievable if each of the professionals continuously maintains and improves individual technical, managerial and professional competence. Like many other industries, the legislation, standard method of measurements and construction methods are becoming complex and ever changing in the UK construction industry. To remain effective within our fields, we need to continuously build new knowledge and skills to carry out our job.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) refers to the process of tracking and documenting the skills, knowledge and experience that we gain beyond the initial training both formally and informally as we work. It is also a record of what you experience, learn and then apply.

The definition of CPD adopted by the construction sector is:

*“The systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills, and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout your working life.” (Cited from*

*Institution of Civil Engineer (ICE) has recommended approach to CPD by treating the process as a cyclical experience which is shown in following Figure 1.*

First, you should review and analyse your recent performance identifying both your current competences and also the areas where you need further learning and development. Having review and identify your CPD needs, you should draw up a plan of how these competences will be met. This includes consideration of possible development activities, resources required and appropriate timescales. The next step is to put the plan into practice. It is important to record your CPD activities once you have carried out your CPD. Also it is crucial to identify what you have learned and evaluated the benefits you have gained. This will also be a good test of your CPD plan. This then completes the first journey round of the CPD cycle.

When people think of CPD, they generally think of apparent examples of structured learning, such as seminars, conferences and courses. While these are brilliant examples of CPD activities which maintain professional competence and standards, there are also other, less obvious activities which are counted as CPD as well. The following are some of the undertakings you can earn CPD without even realising:

- Reading Professional journals
- Delivering a presentation on a relevant technical subject
- Listening to podcasts or watching video content related to your field
- Attending lunchtime presentations/seminars
- Participating in Institute or Community Activities

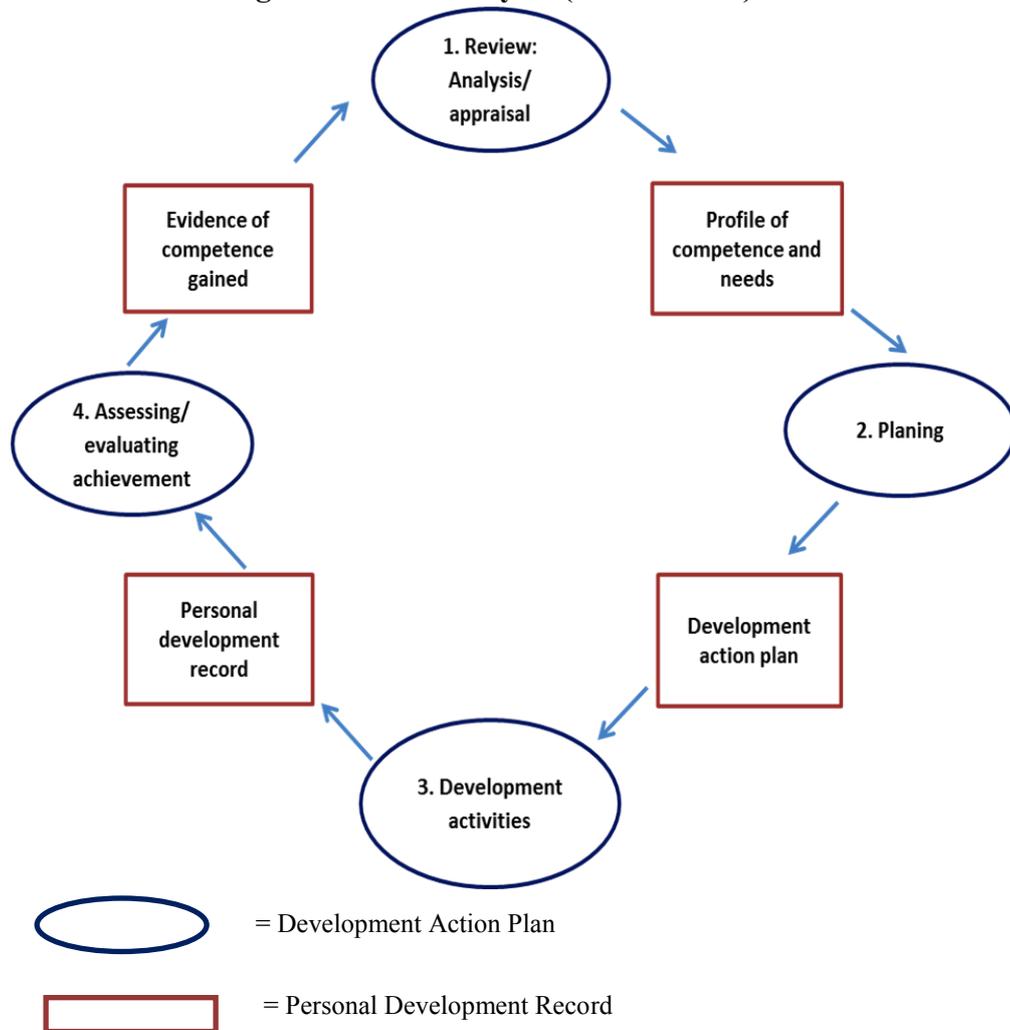
*Institution of Civil Engineer website).*

CPD is a requirement of membership of a professional body. It can help you to reflect, review and document your learning and to develop and update your professional knowledge and skills. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyor (RICS) requires its member (holding the designations AssocRICS, MRICS and FRICS) to undertake a minimum of 20 hours of CPD each year. 20 hours CPD is made up of 10 hours formal and 10 hours informal CPD hours.

Formal CPD can be any form of structured learning that has clear learning objectives and outcomes including a professional course or structured online training. Informal CPD is any self-managed learning that is relevant or related to the professional role. This could include activities such as private study, on-the-job training and attendance at informal seminars or events.

So how do you start CPD? This can be started by asking oneself the following questions:

- Where am I now?
- Where do I want to be?
- What do I have to do to get there?

**Figure 1: the CPD cycle (Source: ICE)*****Photo from Building Magazine (assessed on 25/09/4014)***

As you will now realise, many of these activities incur no cost other than your time. However be sure to make it counts by accessing/ evaluating what you have learned and recording/ logging your activities. The construction industry is moving ever faster. Therefore on-going CPD is vital to support us in our current role as well as helping us with career progression.

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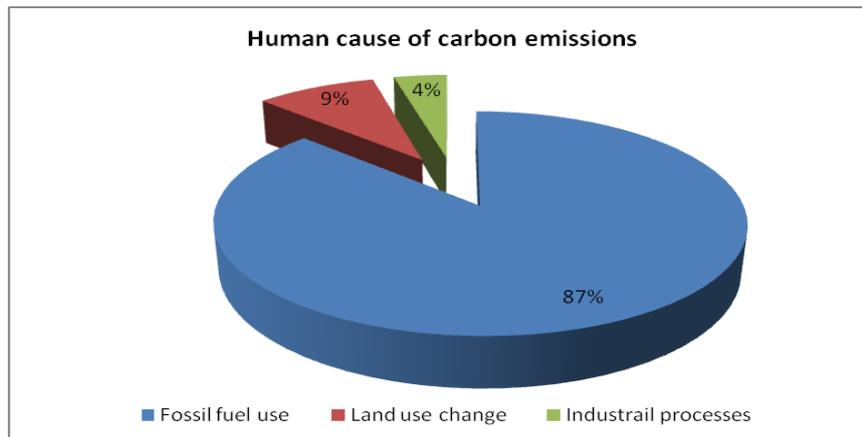
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## A Brief Look at Climate Change & Preservation of Natural Environment

**Nang Vo Kham Murng**

*Chartered Surveyor, BEng (Civil), MSc (Quantity Surveying), MRICS (UK)*



Climate Change is not just a significant threat to the global environment it also presents us with one of the greatest challenges facing in the twenty-first century. So what is 'climate change' and what causes the climate change? Climate change refers to an increase in average global temperatures. It doesn't mean we will all just have warmer weather in future. As the planet gets warmer the climate patterns will change. That means that more extreme and unpredictable weather across the world with many places will be hotter, some wetter and other places will be drier.

The causes of climate change are believed to have come from human activities (man-made causes) and natural events. However, since the Industrial Revolution, the climate change due to human activities has grown significantly. Key human activities include burning fossil fuels (i.e. oil, coal and natural gas), breeding cattle and cutting down trees and industrial activities. Report from the global carbon budget 1959–2011 (cited from <http://whatsyourimpact.org/greenhouse-gases/>) suggests that 87 percent of all human-produced carbon dioxide emissions results from the burning of fossil fuels. The remainder 9 percent comes from the clearing of forests and other land use changes and the remainder 4 percent is from industrial processes such as cement manufacturing.

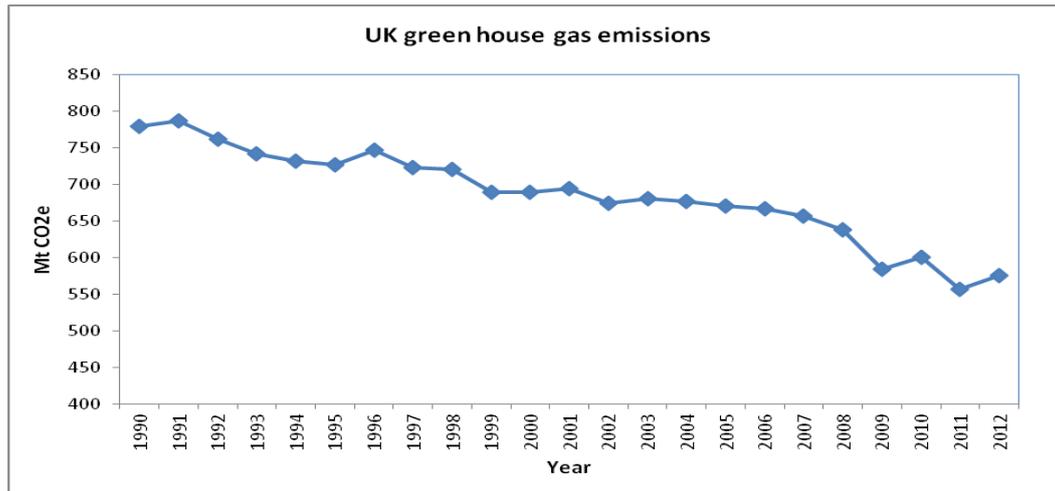
The largest human source of carbon dioxide emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels releases energy which is most commonly turned into heat, electricity or power for transportation. Land use changes are also a substantial source of carbon dioxide emissions globally contributing 3.3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions in 2011. Deforestation has been responsible for the majority of these emissions. It is the permanent removal of standing forests and is the most important type of land use change because its impact on greenhouse

gas emissions. Forests in many areas have been cleared for timber or burned for conversion to farms and pastures. We are witnessing these in many regions of Myanmar including the Shan state. When forested land is cleared, large quantities of greenhouse gases are released and this ends up increasing carbon dioxide levels.

In the UK, carbon reduction commitments and the likelihood of the introduction of more carbon taxes mean that the pressure for reducing carbon emissions is only going to increase. Recent legislative changes are driving focus, in particular the introduction of the Climate Change Act. This Act sets legally binding targets of reducing carbon emissions by 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050, relative to the 1990 baseline. UK Construction projects already face pressure to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from its construction activities. With construction and the built environment accounting for over 30% of UK carbon emissions it is vital that we make changes to the way that we build and operate our assets.

So what is Myanmar situation with regard to the climate change? According to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology, the climate is changing in the country. These include an increase in temperature, an increase in overall rainfall in some areas, a declining trend of rainfall in some areas and early termination of the south-west monsoon. The country is rich in natural resources and known for its high level of biodiversity. Two thirds of the population generates their livings from agriculture, including forestry and fishery. Loss of forest resources and land degradation are among the main causes of climate change that represent key environmental challenges in Myanmar. Concerning forests, the underlying drivers are unsustainable levels of commercial logging, illegal logging, and conversion of forests for agriculture and extraction

As can be seen from the following chart, there was a general downward trend of emissions in the UK from 1990 to 2011.



*Source: UK government website (Department of Energy and Climate Change)*

of fuel wood.

The good news is that Myanmar is now engaged in an active process of reform and changes on many fronts, the situation is dynamic and presents great opportunities as well as challenges. The climate change represents one major challenge as illustrated by a recent study that placed Myanmar in second place globally from extreme weather events in the period 1991-2010.

Preservation of the natural environment is extremely important to maintain our community sustainability. It is essential to protect and restore our natural environment. It has therefore never been a more important time to understand your emissions and produce a plan to reduce them in a controlled manner in order to receive the best outcome for the country and, of course, the environment..

We can help reduce the human cause of emissions by improving the energy efficiency of buildings to reduce emissions from heating/cooling, preservation and protection of the natural environment such as forest, planting forests and tree to remove excess carbon dioxide from our atmosphere and reducing fuel emissions associated

with motor vehicles.



*Photo source: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk>, accessed 18/09/2014*

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## Life in the UK as Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami's assistant

Sai Mein @Jai Merng

Happy New Year to you all!

The Shan celebrate their New Year (Pi Mai) based on the lunar calendar that normally falls between late November and early December in the Gregorian calendar. On 22nd November 2014, Shan peoples across the world celebrate their 2109th New Year. Coincidentally, 22nd November is the day that my mentor, Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami turns 50. To mark the 22nd November as a special day, I, as one of his assistants, feel compelled to write a short article in order to reflect upon his guidance and support.

My first encounter with him was in midsummer 2001 in Sri Lanka Buddhist Temple in Kingsbury in West London, a couple of months after my arrival in the UK. Since then I had paid a regular or sometimes sporadic ones to him in Oxford where he was studying towards PhD back in the early noughties. I can vividly recall the memory of my first visit to Oxford. I lost my way while trying to find his then address when I randomly popped into a nearby cottage in Crotch Crescent, Marston and requested to show me the way.

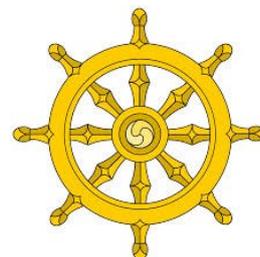
I was offered a cup of tea with biscuits while consulting the A to Z directory with the hosts. After that on my way to Ven. Dhammasami's, an elderly gentleman with the south Asian heritage that happened to drive by me gave me a lift. Those were my very first taste of Britons' hospitality back in 2001. Eventually, I found where Ven. Dhammasami lived in Old Marston, Oxford.

From then on as part of my extra curriculum activities I took part in almost any activities and events spearheaded by the Oxford Buddha Vihara (OBV). Ven. Dhammasami founded the Oxford Buddha Vihara in 2003. Since its inception the OBV has become the melting pot of the international Buddhist communities. And students have been one of the main backbones of the OBV. The majority of students come from East Asia countries like Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Korea, amongst others. They, like myself, have made their contribution as a volunteer in events such as Kathina ceremony and Buddhist Lunar New Year organized by the OBV.



*Photo 1: Sai Mein with Ven. Khammai Dhammasami before his graduation ceremony on 16 July 2005*

Those cultural and religious congregations held by the OBV had provided me with opportunities to mingle with students as well as OBV's devotees from different nationalities, academic, and career backgrounds. I have kept a regular contact with those that I befriended at OBV. Getting to know all those like-minded folks has given me a great exposure. I am from a humble background where most of my peers are working in a logistic industry procuring import and export goods from and to Muse and Mandalay, Myanmar. My life back then was revolving around transporting goods. It was such a great honor to have a chance to know them through the OBV.





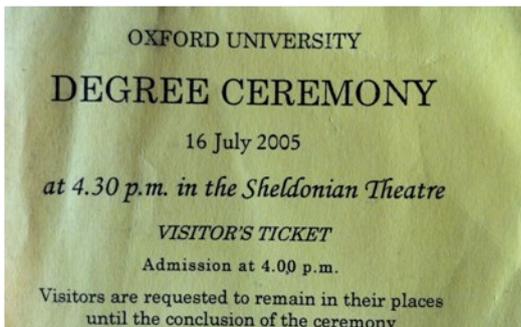
**Photo 2: 2008 Buddhist Lunar New Year/ Water Festivals**



**Photo 3: 2012 Kathina, Robe Offering Ceremony**

The OBV has also served as a meeting place for both students and aspiring young professionals. It has never failed to assist me with my social needs and academic life. During my struggle with an application for a postgraduate study back in 2010 and then later while I prepared for my thesis in 2012; Ven. Dhammasami came to my rescue, as usual. He wrote me a reference letter in support of my applications, and advised me on how to write a personal statement. A couple of years later he too advised me on choosing my thesis title. In 2005 summer – 16 July 2005 - along with his two devotees I had a great privilege to accompany Ven. Dhammasami to his graduation ceremony taken place at the world renowned “Sheldonian Theatre”, Oxford. By any standard, an opportunity to be able to take part in the ceremony to witness his achievement had given me a morale boost needed to pursue my dream. In hindsight, if I must say, without Ven. Dr. Dhammasami’s support and encouragement during those years it would have been a different story for me to recount it to my future grandkids!

There is another chapter of my life that I will always have to cherish upon wherever I am or whenever I think of it. As it has been mentioned earlier, we have addressed our social needs through OBV.



**Photo 4: Degree Ceremony Visitor Ticket**

The Shan Cultural Association in the United Kingdom (SCA-UK) was formed by the Shan/Tai that were studying and working in the UK, under the blessing and supervision of Ven. Dhammasami in 2005. I was appointed as a Secretary and was taken under his wings. I volunteered as a Secretary of SCA-UK till before I returned to Myanmar in 2013. Having volunteered as a Secretary of SCA-UK has immensely altered my life in a positive way such as it improved my communication skills and refined my maturity in the process.



**Photo 5: Members of SCA-UK on Shan National Day, 2010**



**Photo 6: Shan/Tai New Year Celebrations, 2007**

“Don’t get carried away with your emotion” is what he would advise if one faced with difficulties. This profoundly has a positive implication in my daily endeavors. For instance, on several occasions while organizing the cultural events his advice had come in handy when diffusing clashes in ideas with fellow volunteers. I always feel a huge relief and am rejuvenated with new ideas to tackle the issues once I apply his advice. Equally important, I have learnt to fathom the imperfect nature of life through volunteering and mindfulness exercise. In an ideal and a perfect world, whatever we do, things always fall into place, however, it's not the case in a real world that we are living in. His message to me is very clear: don't wait till everything is perfect, you got to do what you got to do but carry out with mindfulness. Ven. Dr. Dhammasami has not only helped me in pursuit of my academic goals, but also has encouraged me to lead a balanced life through Vipassana Meditation – a mindfulness exercise- the teaching of the Buddha. Perseverance and an ability to focus on my studies while in university derived from the application of Vipassana Meditation concepts in daily life.

I sometimes managed to make an effort to join his meditation classes every time University of London Buddhist communities invited him. Register and then release! His explanation of the fundamental concept of Vipassana meditation resonates in my ear every time I sit down to meditate. Vipassana Meditation simply has changed my perception; and the way I perceive myself, and people around me. Looking through the glasses of Vipassana Meditation and daily applications of meditation concept has enhanced my understanding of the way of nature, the Dhamma. Gradually, with guidance and support from mentor like Ven. Dr. Dhammasami, I have been learning to live and value the present moment that has been bestowed upon me. If life is a long journey, I must admit that I have found a priceless tool, Vipassana Meditation, which will lead me through all the ups and downs that I will inevitably encounter on the way. Understanding the fundamental concept of the Dhamma has instilled in me a capability and courage to cherish the journey that I have taken every step of the way.

My parents sow the Dhamma seed, Vipassana Meditation - in me a decade or so ago. While in the UK to pursue my ambitions, I had met great people like Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami that has supported me through and through, and has enhanced my understanding of the Dhamma. Subsequently, to humbly make a bold claim, I come back home wiser and more knowledgeable about the way of nature, the Dhamma, the teaching of the Buddha.

Again, on this auspicious day, may I wish you all “A happy and prosperous new year to you all” and may you all find your own inner peace and be able to lead a balanced life!”



*SCA-UK members at The Oxford Buddha Vihara Kathina Ceremony (October 2014)*

**Academic Presentations to Mark the 2109th Tai/Shan New Year Celebrations**  
**Venue: B102, SOAS, University of London; Times: 10.00-13.30**  
**Abstracts for the Seminars**

**Pilgrims, healers, and wizards:  
 Buddhism and religious practices in  
 Burma and Thailand, an exhibition  
 at the British Museum**

**Dr Alexandra Green**  
 (The Henry Ginsburg Curator for Southeast Asia,  
 The British Museum)



Around the precincts of active Buddhist sites in Myanmar and Thailand there are monks, soothsayers, fortune tellers, and vendors selling accoutrements for religious practice and souvenirs. Shrines to protective deities, spirits, the four Buddhas of the current era, and the days of the week, as well as banners, flags, and pillars representing the cosmos punctuate the temple spaces. Religious activities are eclectic.

The British Museum exhibition includes objects from central Burma (Myanmar) and Thailand, but also from the Shan States and Lan Na. This paper introduces the show, looking at how people in Myanmar and Thailand have interacted with and drawn power from the supramundane world and demonstrating the way a variety of activities work together in daily practice. This is the first exhibition that explores how what is perceived as canonical Buddhism and supposedly heterodox activities fit together in daily practice in mainland Southeast Asia.

**Archaeological Sites in Shan State of  
 Myanmar**

**Dr. Pyiet Phyo Kyaw**  
 Assistant Lecturer, Department of Archaeology,  
 University of Yangon, Advisor, Myanmar  
 Archaeology Association



In Myanmar, there are many places of archaeological interest from Prehistoric Age to Colonial Period. All of the archaeological sites had been relied on the environmental resources such as river, lake, delta, plateau and seashore. Like a tide wave, the progress of civilization was gradually up and down phenomena through the struggle of ancient societal challenges. In this study, Shan State will be emphasized to show the regional archaeological interest.

Shan State is the largest Region as well as the largest plateau. In this region, the sequence of archaeological sites can be classified as Prehistoric sites e.g., Badahlin and Historic sites e.g., Kakku and Inndain Complex. In contrary, the recent archaeological studies and findings cannot significantly show the Protohistoric sites such as the down of urbanization and evolution of City and Town. Nevertheless, the archaeology of Shan Plateau is the very important to correlate with those of Mainland Southeast Asia. The studied information and visual remains provide the prestige for the people living in the Shan State and the development of cultural tourism.

## Abstracts for Seminars

### TAINNESS - ETHNOGRAPHY OF TAI YAI OR TAI SHAN

Nel Adams a.k.a. Sao Noan Oo, B.Sc. Hons. MSc (Biology)



The Tai Yai live along the river valleys of Salween(Nam Kkong) in the Shan States and Tai Khong (the present Dehong Prefecture) in China, the Tai Lue in Yunnan, the Thai in Thailand, the Tai Lao in Laos along the Mekong and the Tai Dam in Vietnam along the Yangtse Caing and their tributaries. From their present settlement we can trace the routes of these three international rivers and determine that they all rise in the watershed of the Qinghai Province in North-West China. The three rivers run parallel and not a great distance from each other. Could this watershed be the first settlement of the Parental Tai after they migrated from Mongolia, all of whom speak the same language and call themselves TAI? Could this be the cradle of the TAI before they moved south along the different routes, the Salween, Mekong and the Yangtse and dispersed into different parts of China and then diverged into subgroups: Tai Yai, Tai Lue, Thai, Tai Lao, Tai Dam etc ?

The Salween flows south, (without entering Sichuan like the others) along the borders of Tai Kong and straight then straight down into the Shan States without passing through other parts of Yunnan. The Tai that came along this route are called Tai Yai or Tai Khong ( the latter meaning people of the River

Khong) and later called Tai Shan. They are more isolated from the other Tai groups that came along the Mekong and the Yangtse Caing.

Similarly, we can form a theory of how, when and where the other Tai-ness or identical traits of Tai Yai originated, e.g the name of places or group of people; their wet rice culture, the Waan-Mong organisation etc.

This year, I am presenting “Tainess – Ethnography of Tai, by using Tai /Yai or Tai/ Shan as my sample study. Due to their geographical position the Tai Yai of the Shan State, and the Tai Yai of Tai Kong (Dehong Prefecture) are isolated and further away from the other Tai groups, and the Han Chinese. They are less likely to be influenced by their neighbours and outsiders, and would retain their traditional Tainess more. They are also known and accepted by the others as being the oldest branch of Tai, hence the name Tai Yai or Tai Long, and thirdly, as a Tai/Shan I am familiar with the group and the language. I have been away from my homeland for sometime, but from a very young age I was very interested in our history, country and people. My relatives and friends in the Shan States continue to send me news, information and their own collection of stories and photographs of the past and present.

#### Parental or Proto TAI

1

Tai = Dai = Thai descendents of Proto -TAI

/ 1 \

sub-groups

Tai Yai- - Tai Khuen - - Tai Lue-- Tai Yuan-- Tai Nuer-- Tai Dam-- Tai Leang --Tai Lao- Tai Thai – Tai Hkamti – Tai Assam etc

#### Note : some Synonyms

Tai=Dai=Thai      Tai Yai=Tai Long= Tai Shan      Zhou= Sao= Chao= Jao  
 Mong= Moeng= Merng= Muang      Waan=Maan= Baan      Sao Hpa= Chao Hpa=Chao Fa  
 Salween- Nu Caing= Nam Khong      Lan Caing =Mekong= Mei Kawng  
 Sao Hpa=Sawbwa      State=Mong= Principality      Keng tung = Chaing Tung  
 Waing= Veing

## Abstracts for Seminars

### The Beautiful Art of Tai Palm Leaf Manuscripts (Shan–Lao–Lanna)

**Jana Igunma**  
(The British Library)



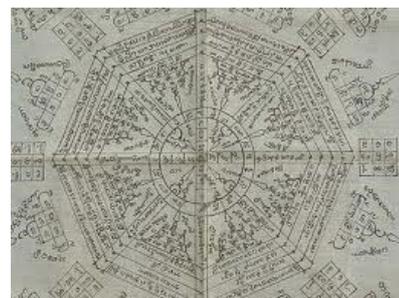
The earliest book format in mainland Southeast Asia were manuscript bundles made from natural materials. The most important traditional material for this purpose is the palm leaf because of its durability and resistance to mould and insects (compared to paper and textile). For centuries, palm leaf manuscript bundles were the most common book formats in the South and Southeast Asian manuscript traditions. Palm leaf manuscripts usually contain religious texts and treatises on a host of subjects such as astronomy, astrology, warfare, law, history, medicine, ritual texts, folk legends and literary works. To provide additional protection for the palm leaf manuscripts, they were often wrapped in a piece of cloth and/or covered with two wooden panels, which could be lacquered and decorated with gold leaf, mirror glass, mother-of-pearl or even precious stones. Palm leaf manuscripts were traditionally stored either in custom-made single manuscript boxes, chests or large cabinets to keep them safe from rodents and water. All three types are usually made from wood, often beautifully carved and/or decorated with lacquer and gilt, or with inlaid mirror glass. Thick layers of lacquer have helped to prevent damage of the chests and cabinets by humid climate and insects. Chests and cabinets were produced for the storage of manuscripts in Buddhist temple libraries or in the royal and local palaces. My presentation will give an overview of the various types of palm-leaf manuscripts from the Shan, Lao and Lanna traditions, together with their embellished covers, boxes, chests and cabinets; and how local communities made sure that their palm leaf manuscripts were well preserved for future generations.

### TAI MAGIC: ARTS OF THE SUPERNATURAL

**Dr. Susan Conway**  
(SOAS, University of London)



Over many centuries the Shan people have developed complex beliefs that are shared with other Tai people in Southeast Asia. These beliefs are based on Theravada Buddhism and healing, sacred objects and spirits, astrology and cosmology, numerology and the power of Nature. This talk features my new book TAI MAGIC and will examine how Tai beliefs are expressed in the written word and in illustrations and incantations. The focus is on nineteenth century mulberry paper manuscripts and vibrant Shan and Lan Na painted textiles. They show what good and bad spirits look like and how mystical diagrams, charts and spells are administered to bring good luck and protection or cause bad luck.



*See the overview of Tai Magi: Arts of Super natural on the back cover*

## Art Performance Presentations to Mark the 2109th Tai/Shan New Year Celebrations

**Venue: Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS, University of London; Times: 14.30-17.00**

### The Programme

Time	Duration (min)	Performance	Performers
14:30	5	Blessing of the ceremony by members of Sangha	OBV Wat Buddharam Wat Santivanaram
14:35	5	New Year Message from Chairman	Dr Sai Tin Maung on behalf of Ven Dr Khammai Dhammasami
14:40	5	Book Launch: 'Tai Magic. Arts of the Supernatural in the Shan States and Lan Na'	Dr Susan Conway
14:45	5	Scholarship Programme at SOAS	Prof Elizabeth Moore
14:50	5	Tok Suu Song (Kat-Jai-Hai-Mai-Soong)	SCA members
14:55	20	Joint Performance of Traditional Shan Kinnari Dance Traditional Shan Martial Art/ Sword Dance Traditional Shan Toh Dance	Nang Zun Pann Aye Sai Aung Tun  Sai Som Pha/Saii Hlyan/Pi Zaw
15:15	20	Music - Part 1	Nang Mophoung Twe Sai Won Kyauk Nang Mo Hom Htun Nang Phway Phway
15:35	5	Traditional Tai Mao Dance	Nang Zun Pann Aye Nang Mophoung Twe Nang Si Hom Nang Nidarphorn
15:40	5	Laos Traditional Dance	Members of Laos Association UK
15:45	35	Music - Part 2	Nang Kham Nwei Leik Mingalar (Ma Khine Zar & Ma Mone Yee Than Aye) Sai Laing Saing @ Nay Myo Duet
16:20	5	Honouring SCA-UK Graduates	
16:25	20	Traditional Shan Costume Showcase	Members of SCA-UK
16:45	5	Group Song	Members of SCA-UK
16:50	5	Vote of Thanks	MC: Dr Nang Nidarphorn
16:55	5	Traditional Ka-Pan-Kong	SCA-UK performers and mem- bers of the audience
17:00		Closing of ceremony	
17:00	30	Shan Exhibition in SOAS Library	
17:30	120	Dinner/Drinks and Socialising	

## Tai Business News



### Myanmar Climb: Brotherhood of the Rope – Dispatch #10

Posted by **Mark Jenkins** on November 14, 2014

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Read all the Myanmar Climb dispatches. Trust. More than any other sport on the planet, climbing is founded on trust. There are two reasons for this: first, consequences are life or death; second, you're always tied to your partner. If your tennis partner blows the volley, who cares. If the tight end misses the quarterback's...

[Read the whole post »](#)

This year Tai Star Travels (a Tai Business) became the official outfitter for The Myanmar Climb Expedition team, made up of explorers from The National Geographic and The North Face.

The Myanmar Climb Expedition team, supported by a National Geographic Expeditions Council grant, recently launched an expedition to Hakabo Razi, the highest peak in South East Asia.

The story from this expedition will appear in an upcoming edition of National Geographic Magazine. Since this expedition began, the rare and genuine pictures of Mount Hkakabo Razi became available for viewing on many different online media, posted by the team.

For more information on this amazing adventure organised by a Tai Business, you can read the team's official dispatches on The National Geographic Travel Blog and The North Face blog.

Dispatches on The National Geographic Adventure Blog: <http://adventureblog.nationalgeographic.com/tag/myanmar-climb/>

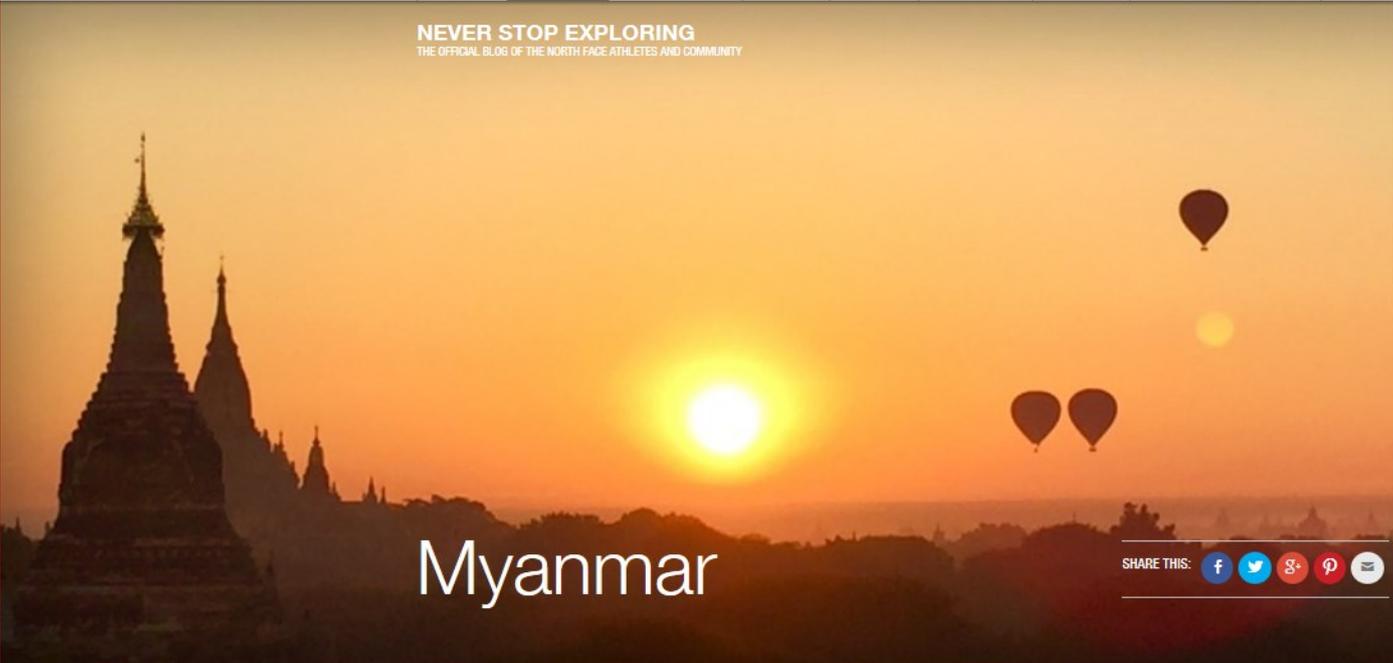

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# Myanmar

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DISPATCHES FROM THIS EXPEDITION

**OVERVIEW**

DISPATCH 1

DISPATCH 2

DISPATCH 3

*In the northern reaches of Myanmar, two of the most remote and dangerous high-altitude peaks on the planet stretch into the sky: Hkakabo Razi and its neighbor Gamlang Razi both measure more than 5,800 meters (19,140 feet), each vying for the title of highest summit in Southeast Asia. To definitively solve the geographical mystery of which is taller, a team of The North Face and National Geographic explorers supported by a NGS Expeditions Council Grant will travel 300-plus miles overland — across tiger reserves, into plunging gorges, and through cultural areas that have only recently been opened to Westerners — in an effort to reach and then ascend the two mountains with a calibrated Juniper GPS system. Follow along at "Expedition: Myanmar" for blog updates from the field. The team will also be posting to Instagram, using #MyanmarClimb to document their travels.*

ATHLETES IN THIS EXPEDITION

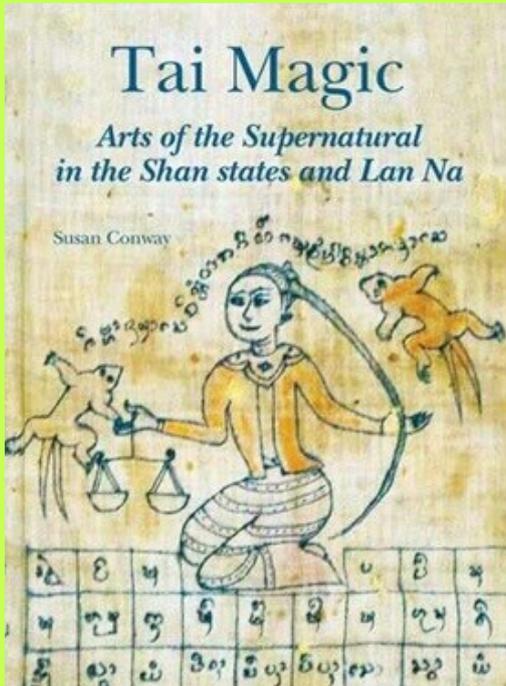


HILAREE O'NEILL

Dispatches on The North Face Blog: <http://neverstopexploring.com/expeditions/myanmar/>

## Overview of TAI MAGIC: ARTS OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Dr. Susan Conway



This superbly illustrated book features manuscripts, textiles and talismans associated with the supernatural. Within the context of Theravada Buddhism and spirit religion, Tai cosmology and numerology, the book examines how good and bad spirits are represented in figurative and abstract illustrations and how mystical diagrams and spells are formulated to bring good luck and protection or cause bad luck.

The research for the book took four years and involved fieldwork in Shan State and northern Thailand. Using field notes and photographs the author Dr. Susan Conway provides a colorful picture of the people who create and administer magic in the form of prescriptions, incantation and spells.

Chapter one summarizes Tai belief systems. Chapter two features illustrations taken from mulberry paper manuscripts. They depict spirits in a bizarre form of portraiture, presented in distinctive Tai style. Chapter three highlights magical diagrams and letters, syllables and phrases and numbers written in secret codes. Trying to crack the codes was part of the research. Chapter four focuses on painted and printed textiles and dress associated with the supernatural. Chapter five records modern ritual practices and the way *sala* (experts) prepare and administer supernatural formulae today in comparison with the past. Chapter six features tattoos, the iconography and rituals involved in their production and their role in the protection of individuals.

