

Srivijayan Studies Discussed in Workshop

As part of its continuing effort to clarify the history of the Srivijayan Empire, the SEAMEO Project in Archaeology and Fine Arts, SPAFA, again brought together researchers involved in the study of this important trading kingdom. A consultative workshop on Environmental and Archaeological Studies on Srivijaya was held in Indonesia from 31 August to 11 September 1981.

Aside from the presentation of country reports and special papers on Srivijaya, the workshop also included visits to the ancient sites of Palembang and Jambi. It also engendered recommendations on what researches/additional work still have to be implemented and on how to handle archaeological materials related to the empire — mainly epigraphic evidences, monuments and artifacts — already uncovered.

A field trip to the ancient monuments of Jambi was held during the workshop.



The Country Reports

Indonesian and Thai delegates updated the group on their recent research findings. Citing evidences from inscriptions, artifacts and Chinese sources, Mrs. S. Suleiman and Mr. Hasan Muarif Ambariy furnish a chronicle of the rise and fall of Srivijaya. They also mentioned that the kingdom had had three capitals: Ko-ying, Palembang and Jambi.

The Thai country report consisted of three papers. One, presented by Mr. Srisakra Vallibhotama, described the distribution of ancient settlements in Southern Thailand. Dr. Phasook Indrawooth talked of the relationship of the ceramics of Southern Thailand to the Dvaravati and Srivijaya cultures. The third paper, given by Mr. Khemchati Thepchai, dealt on the findings in the recent archaeological excavations at Wat Wieng and Lam Pho in Chaiya, Surat Thani.

Since no research on Srivijaya is currently being conducted in the Philippines, Dr. Juan Francisco and Prof. Benjamin Han submitted research proposals that could shed light on the Srivijayan influence in the Philippines. These involved ethnographic and ethnolinguistic studies.

The Special Reports

In addition to the country reports, results of other studies which focused on Srivijaya were presented. Mr. Boechari voiced his new interpretation of the Ligor Inscriptions; he opined that only one king was involved in the unfinished inscription in side B and that this was written some 75 years later than the one in Side A.

Describing her archaeological excavations at Sating Phra, Dr. Janice

Stargardt pointed out that some of the statues found in the site showed some South Sumatran influence. Dr. Pierre-Yves Manguin presented evidence that no substantial change had occurred in the coastline of Sumatra and that the capital of Srivijaya had been located some distance upriver.

The geological approach to the study of the Srivijaya was expounded by Dr. S. Sartono. He explained how tracing the gold mining area in Sumatra could lead to the location of the capital city of Srivijaya. To prepare the participants for their field work in Jambi, Mr. Uka Tjandrasmita provided them with background information and described the restoration work being implemented in Muara Jambi.

Prof. J.G. de Casparis, on the other hand, talked of the inscriptions associated with the Srivijaya kingdom. He emphasized the need for further study to clear up the confusion regarding the empire.

Recommendations

The participants to the workshop forwarded the following recommendations:

1. A temporary suspension of excavation and restoration work to determine the exact nature of all monuments at the time of discovery and to provide the experts — archaeologists, architects, environmentalist and others — time to design the required supplementary activities
2. The implementation of the following researches:
 - a. a full and systematic survey of the whole Srivijayan area/location using satellite data and aerial surveys for identification of geological formations, hydrographic information and overall settlement patterns;



The remains of a candi associated with Srivijaya



An excavation site showing the artifacts in situ

- b. a large scale on-site surveys of presumed settlement sites. They involve recording and analysis of all surface finds to allow for assessment of priorities for further investigations;
 - c. stylistic and technical comparisons of excavated monuments with those in India and other parts of South-east Asia to determine their relationship;
 - d. a complete geophysical research of the area including sedimentological and paleontological investigations of deposits in and around areas where the artifacts have been found and the scientific dating of the finds;
 - e. a continuing study of the inscriptions. This should include an ethnographic study of Srivijaya and a historic-comparative study of the language of the inscriptions through the succeeding centuries up to the present.
3. Preparation of an annotated bibliography and an index by place names to facilitate access to reference materials by researchers;
 4. An ongoing effort to maintain, restore and conserve all the monuments and artifacts uncovered. The restoration procedure should include detailed recording of the architectural history of each relic and the

dismantling process. Special care must be taken in the excavation of wood structure like ships.

Specific recommendations relative to the Palembang and Jambi sites were also given. They were as follows: a study of the settlement patterns in the area, specifically the relationship between Palembang, the central settlement urban area, and the outlying settlements in Bukit Seguntang, Sungsang, Upang and Sabokingking; the conduct of a paleogeographic study of the places mentioned to determine their relation to the existing sea/estuary during the Srivijayan period; a typology of all finds — ceramics, bricks, beads, etc. — to ascertain the time sequences in the movement of trade goods in, around and beyond the area; and the restoration of the Muara Jambi by professional archaeologists and architects.

The participants to the consultative workshop were the following: Indonesia: Mrs. S. Suleiman, Mr. Hasan M. Ambarly, Mr. Machi Suhadi, Drs. Boechari and Prof. Dr. S. Sartono; Philippines: Dr. Juan S. Francisco and Asst. Prof. Benjamin A. Han; and Thailand: Mr. Srisakra Vallibhotama, Mr. Khemchatit Thepchai and Dr. Phasook In-drawooth. Dr. R.P. Soejono, Prof. Dr. J.G. de Casparis, Dr. Pierre-Yves Manguin, Dr. Janice Stargardt and Prof. Dr. Soekmono acted as con-

sultants. The SPAFA Coordinating Office was represented by Dr. Rosa Tenazas.

Use of Cheap art ...

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instructor and Joel Enriquez of the Design Centre directed the workshops respectively.

The sojourn to Ilocos Norte was spent visiting weaving and pottery centres. Local craftsmen and artisans shared their age-old techniques with the participants who interacted and discussed the process with them. Dr. Isabel Diaz of the Institute of Arts and Designs, MMSU coordinated this phase of the training.

Nine participants from the SPAFA member countries attended the month-long training programme. They were Surisman Marah and Djoko Subandono from Indonesia; Somsak Chowtadapong, Thongsak Hongpaeng and Chaluay Subpas from Thailand; and Consuelo de Mesa, Oscar Pineda, Juanito Qui-men and Ligaya Samonte from the Philippines.

Prof. Virginia Flor Agbayani, Director of the SPAFA Sub-Centre for Fine Arts, was the overall coordinator of the training. Two other faculty members of the UP College of Fine Arts, Prof. Virginia Dandan and Prof. Bertoldo Manta, served as lecturers.

Bronze Objects... From page 10

particularly those related to burials, and stone objects such as sarcophagi, warugas, kalambas and cists. Their widespread application undercores their importance.

Van Heekeren and Soejono opined that the design of human figures prevails on archaeological objects because human beings are considered to have supernatural powers. The parts of the human body which are carved on objects are supposed to ward off evil spirits and are also representatives of their ancestors (van Heekeren, 1958:47). Soejono explains that parts of the human body which are supposed to have great supernatural power are the face and the eyes. The use of human faces has a certain purpose, i.e. to ward off evil power, harm and disasters. The human form also symbolizes the spirit of the dead or the ancestors or revered tribal chiefs (Soejono, 1977:137)

Apart from its unusual shape, the mask pattern is the most dominant element of the bronze object found in Kabila. Based on the kind and uses of the other objects that use similar design, one can assume that this object is a ceremonial axe.

However, the dating of the Kabi-

la. bronze remains a problem since no related finds have been reported during its discovery. The stylized form of the object, the style of the mask motif and the use of simple geometric designs (especially concentric circles) point to the early metal age in Indonesia when those elements form the traditional pattern. The metal age is estimated to be between the last centuries before the Christian era until the first centuries AD. This style though was said to have developed also even during the later centuries.

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nudation of the top soils. Hence the fourth and latest of the cultural assemblages were actually recovered lower than, if not on the level of, an assemblage ante-dating that by half a millennium. Cf. Tenazas, A Report on the Archaeology of the Locsin-University of San Carlos Excavations in Pila, Laguna, Manila, 1968; Tenazas, "Salvage Excavation in Southern Luzon, Philippines. A Summary," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* I (2), 1973.

³ Ageing methods were primarily derived from dentition.

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