Contemporary Archaeology as a Global Dialogue: Reflections from Southeast Asia

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Introduction

As in many countries in the world, archaeology in Southeast Asia has been used to legitimize both colonialism and nationalism, especially "nation-building" (e.g., Glover 2006; Majid 2007; Shoocongdej 2007). Since the colonial era the practices of professional archaeology in Southeast Asia have generally been inherited from and influenced by western archaeologists and amateurs (e.g., Daz-Andreu 2007; Glover 2001; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Kohl, Kozelskey and Ben-Yehuda 2007; Ucko 1995). Because local archaeologists, who are western trained and trained by local universities in Southeast Asia, are presently in charge of their own research and advancing knowledge of their own past, nationalist sentiments have strongly dominated archaeological activities in the region.

In the past two decades, contemporary Southeast Asian archaeology has developed by incorporating western theories and methodologies into its own archaeological practices. At the same time, the search for indigenous archaeological knowledge has been important in the post-modern world era. Evidently, a number of Southeast Asian archaeologists face many challenges. Increasingly, they have been examining the history of archaeology in local contexts, and how these contexts have impacted the development of archaeological knowledge and practices in the present. These contributions reflect self-awareness ,and help us to gain a better understanding of the current situation in the region (e.g., Bray and Glover 1987; Glover 1986, 1993, 1999, 2006; Shoocongdej 1992, 1996, 2007; Tanudirjo 1995).

Perhaps the most troublesome problem concerns the proposed West/East and foreign/local dichotomies in the current discourse. In my view such a dichotomous way of thinking will lead us nowhere. Consequently, Southeast Asian archaeologists are more locally focused on cultural developments in their own countries. They seek to trace the historical roots of their own societies and ancestral links

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L.R. Lozny (ed.), *Comparative Archaeologies: A Sociological View of the Science of the Past*,
DOI 10.1007/978-1-4419-8225-4_21,

between their specific cultures. There is still less interest in studying the cultural developments of humankind in a broader context, while western archaeologists are interested in studying human past and heritage on the world's scale. Therefore, we see differences in the questions being asked by Southeast Asian and foreign archaeologists working in the region due to disparities in research goals.

This paper examines the history of the development of prehistoric archaeology in Southeast Asia from a local perspective, and how the current status will impact the growth and construction of archaeological knowledge in the region. In particular, this paper emphasizes archaeological traditions, research methodologies, and the current status of archaeological practices within Southeast Asian countries. I am aware of many contributions by foreign archaeologiststo Southeast Asian archaeology, which I cannot discuss here due to lack of space. I focus only on a few as I would like to provide some examples from local Southeast Asian's works. Finally, in writing this paper, I share my self-reflections from my personal experiences working in prehistoric archaeology in Thailand and Southeast Asia as case studies.

The Historical Contexts of Southeast Asian Archaeology

Before critical examination of prehistoric archaeology in Thailand, I think it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the development of archaeology in Southeast Asia as a whole. Geographically, Southeast Asia includes Brunei, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, and Vietnam (Fig. 1). Due to the lack of information from a few countries (e.g., Brunei, Myanmar, and Singapore), I am not able to provide a complete discussion for these countries of Southeast Asia. Here, prehistoric archaeology is not always distinguished from historical archaeology,[1] and I will discuss both interchangeably. It will be shown that the cultural historical frameworks of pioneer archaeologists of the colonial era still strongly influence contemporary archaeology in Thailand as well as other Southeast Asian countries.

Research Traditions and Methodologies

The development of archaeology in Southeast Asia can be divided into the following three major phases: the colonial era to World War II; post-World War II-1960; and the present.

[1] I mean the period from the appearance of written records onward; with an exception of the Philippines where historical archaeology refers to the period from European contact onward.

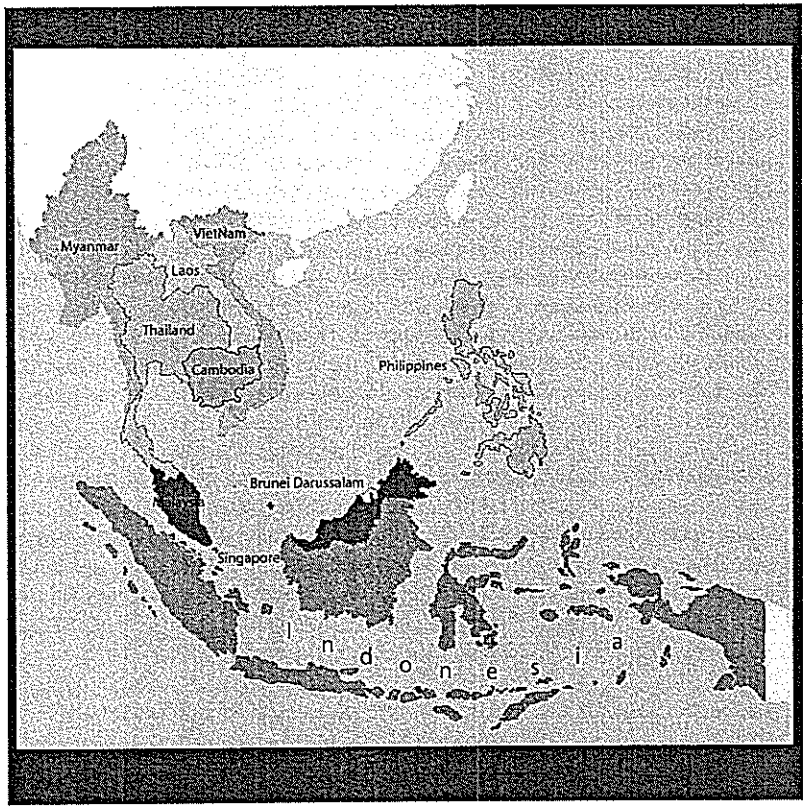

Fig. 1 Map shows southeast asian countries mentioned in text

Colonial Era-WW II (ca. 1800–1945)

Between the eighteenth and early twentieth century, most Southeast Asian countries had fallen under the control of western colonial powers. Burma, the Shan state, Brunei, and Malaysia were under the British; Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia were under the French; Indonesia was under the Dutch; and the Philippines – under the Spanish and the US control (Steinberg 1987; Dixon 1993). Several colonial institutions devoted to archaeology and the past emerged during the colonial period (Anderson 1991), for instance, the Royal Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences, and an Archaeological Survey were established in 1778 and 1885 respectively, in order to collect antiquities and to encourage scientific exploration in Indonesia. These institutions had a strong influence on research concerning the history and archaeology of Indonesia (Soejono 1994; Daud Tanudirjo 1995: 61–75). In 1899,

the Archaeological Department of Burma was founded by the British, which aimed to study the culture, history, and antiquities of Burma.

Later, around 1904 the Siam Society was founded in Thailand by royal Thai elites and westerners who worked in the government, as missionaries, and in the private sector. Their goal was to conduct research on the people, nature, and ancient history of Siam (Davis 1989). At about the same time, the French school of the Far-East (*Ecole Française d'Etreme Orient*) was founded in Hanoi, Viet Nam in 1901. This organization served as a training institution for French "orientalists" and later for training indigenous scholars. During this time, no archaeological research was undertaken by the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laosian scholars. Early French archaeological research in the region was closely tied to history and history of art, oriented toward typology, monumental architecture and epigraphical research (Audouze and Leroi-Gourhan 1982: 170–183). In addition, the Geological Service of Indochina also played an important role in research on early prehistoric times of the region. Particularly interesting were the results of the geological expeditions to northern Viet Nam by Madeleine Colani and Henri Mansuy in the 1920s and 1930s (Ha van Tan 1992). The French successfully established a general history of Indochina, especially focused on cultural chronology of Cambodia and Viet Nam (Coedès 1983; Higham 1989). It is interesting to note that George Coedès, a French epigrapher, served as president of the Siam Society (Davis 1989: 87) and was also a researcher in the French school of the Far-East (Forest 1990: 72–73). He played a major role in building and linking cultural chronologies in and between Thailand and Indochina during the 1930s and 1940s.

The beginning of the discipline of archaeology in Southeast Asia is usually attributed to western influence. Although prehistoric studies were gradually developing, generally, at the beginning of the second quarter of the nineteenth century there were no organizations or institutions supporting prehistoric archaeology. The majority of the research focused on historical archaeology, art history, or history, while prehistoric archaeology received less attention. Archaeology was utilized for both cultural and political purposes in order to gain insight into local Southeast Asian peoples and their histories. Especially, archaeology showed that Southeast Asian cultures were "backwater" and were not "civilized."

Prior to World War II, the first Far-Eastern Prehistory Congress was organized by P. V. van Stein Callenfels, a Dutch archaeologist who worked in Indonesia for the Archaeological Service of the Dutch East Indies at that time. George Coedès served as a chair at the Congress held in Hanoi, Vietnam, in 1932. The Congress evolved into the Far-Eastern Prehistory Association and changed its name to the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association in 1976. This organization was the first attempt to encourage Western scholars/archaeologists working in Southeast Asia to think beyond each individual country and to view Southeast Asia in a regional context. The 1932 meeting was the first attempt to foster prehistoric archaeology and archaeological activities in this region before World War II (Solhiem 1957). Three consecutive meetings were held in Hanoi (1932), Manila (1935), and Singapore (1938).

These organizations no doubt have had a tremendous impact on the development of Southeast Asian archaeology in general, and on the establishment of a cultural

chronology specifically. It is important to keep in mind that prior to World War II prehistoric research in Southeast Asia was in its emergent stages. Cultural history, therefore, generally was developed in two ways: by arranging the archaeological data from a small number of individual sites in Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam into tentative cultural sequences that were extrapolated to the whole region, as well as by correlating similar artifacts with groups of people endowed with distinctive cultures (e.g., Movius 1948). During World War II, most organizations in Southeast Asia had to lay aside their archaeological research and activities for over a decade. Therefore, archaeological activities were carried out mostly by western archaeologists.

Post-WWII-to 1960

Since World War II, modern archaeology has been introduced in Southeast Asia and prehistoric archaeology has rapidly developed throughout the region by a number of collaborative projects (e.g., SPAFA 1987). For example, the Siam Society initially supported the first prehistoric research in Thailand, a joint Thai-Danish expedition, during 1959–1960 in Kanchanaburi, western Thailand (van Heekeren and Knuth 1967). At the same time surveys and excavations were carried out by the Dutch in Indonesia focusing on Pithecanthropus erectus, rectangular axes, megalithic structures of stone slabs, and kettle drums (Daud Tanudirjo 1995; Soejono 1994); by the French in Cambodia on Hoabinhian (Mourer and Mourer 1971; Mourer 1977), in Vietnam on Hoabinhian and Dong Son (Janse 1958) and by the British in Malaysia (e.g., Nik Hassan 1993).

Concerning research methodology, it is important to note that systematic techniques of survey, excavation, and data processing were introduced after World War II. Prior to the war, methodology was mainly based on description and typological classification of artifacts (e.g., van Heekeren 1957). Relative dating including artifact typology and stratigraphy was used to establish culture histories of each country. The development of prehistoric archaeology in Southeast Asia was strongly influenced by the ideas of geological and biological evolution from the pioneer western archaeologists (Movius 1948; van Heekeren 1957) and geologists (Higham 1989). Chronology based on stratigraphic sequences of the geological timeframe constructed by geologists provided a model for the development of cultural chronology of Southeast Asian prehistory.

For example, a number of stone tools from Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia were collected and identified by Halam Movius in the 1930s. Based on these collections, Movius proposed that there was a geographical division between Europe and Asia and that these two regions underwent distinctive technological developments during the Middle Pleistocene. Movius characterized the stone tools from the region extending from East Asia to eastern India as belonging to a chopper-chopping tool tradition, and the western India to Europe and Africa region as belonging to a hand-axe tradition (Movius 1948). Movius' work became a significant

framework for Paleolithic studies in Southeast Asia since the earlier research was heavily concerned with lithic classification and typology as well as the correlation of lithic types with stratigraphy in order to establish cultural sequences. In other words, a developmental framework of cultural stages was applied to Southeast Asian prehistory based on a presumed progression of technological stages (Heine-Geldern 1932). The archaeological research in this period was inductive in nature. In addition, archaeological materials were collected from uncertain cultural and stratigraphic contexts such as secondary deposits along river terraces.

In summary, prehistoric archaeology in Southeast Asia did not develop equally in all parts of this region, and it is relatively young in comparison with European or North American archaeology. The development of this discipline has been influenced and affected by Western archaeology since the colonial era. Prehistoric archaeological research in Southeast Asia developed based on the European cultural-historical approach. It has only been since the 1970s that most archaeological activities in Southeast Asia have been conducted systematically by local archaeologists. Research agendas slightly changed aiming to serve national interests, but methodologies remained the same.

From 1961-to the Early Twenty-First Century

Reviewing the current status of prehistoric research in Southeast Asia is a very difficult task. I must admit that my knowledge of research in all the Southeast Asian countries is uneven because my analysis generally is based on the available publications written in English and Thai. In the following discussion of the current archaeological research in Southeast Asia covering the period from 1960 until present, I comment on the transformation of Southeast Asian archaeology and the increasing use of more sophisticated analytical techniques. The Vietnam War tremendously impacted archaeological research in Southeast Asia; as a result of this war a number of archaeologists and students were attracted to study of Southeast Asia. During this period, we have seen an increase in the number of well-trained local archaeologists pursuing research supported by funds from their governments and western foundations (e.g., Adi Taha 2000; Bannanurag 1982; Dizon 1988; Kijngam 1985; Lertrit 2002; Majid 1982; Ratnin 1988; Pookajorn 1988; Sovath 2003), the involvement of local archaeologists in archaeological research and "*collaboration*" between local and foreign archaeologists (e.g., Adi Taha 1986; Dizon 1993; Nik Hassan Abdul Rahman 1987; Ronquillo 1985).

Research Traditions

During this period a number of initiatives aimed at developing local archaeology in Southeast Asia have been funded through foreign aid and local governmental support, for example: the Thailand Research Fund, the Toyota Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the National Science Foundation, National Geographic Society, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

Many Southeast Asian archaeologists hold M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, France, the Netherlands, Germany, the People's Republic of China, etc. They mostly serve the government (e.g., state archaeological offices and universities) and private sectors (e.g., private museums and universities, consulting companies). Presently, archaeological research concerns both the government and the academia. Generally, the structure of government archaeology is similar in all Southeast Asia countries, which involves centralized control and management of cultural resources.

In terms of training, very few universities in Southeast Asia have active programs in prehistoric archaeology with faculty members who are local Southeast Asian such as Silpakorn University in Thailand, the Centre for Archaeological Research in Malaysia, University of Sains in Malaysia and the University of the Philippines. However, several universities have archaeology under the Department of History, for instance, the University of Hanoi in Vietnam, University of Gadja Maha, University of Indonesia, University of Malaysia, University of Rangon, etc.

As for conceptual training, in most Southeast Asian countries archaeology is closely tied to art history, history, and the humanities. The Philippines is an exception, for anthropology is a major approach to archaeology there. As mentioned above, archaeology is structurally placed in history departments in most Southeast Asian universities. Regardless of the disciplinary placement of archaeology, there has been an increase in the use of new scientific methods and high-tech analyses, for instance, DNA analysis, GIS, Geo-radar, neutron activation analysis.

American archaeology has increasingly influenced Southeast Asian archaeology since the 1960s due to economic and political factors. For instance, a few dam construction projects in Thailand and Laos required archaeological assessments, which resulted in the significant archaeological discoveries of domesticated rice and bronze metallurgy by American archaeologists from the University of Hawaii (Solhiem 1968, 1971, 1974). Later, in 1971, the Ford Foundation provided support to strengthen local Southeast Asian communities to protect and conserve their own heritage through training programs and collaborative archaeological projects. As part of this program, some prominent Southeast Asian archaeologists were given an opportunity to study at American universities, for instance, the University of Pennsylvania (Charoenwongsa 1982; Lyon and Rainey 1982; Tanudirjo 1995; Bannanurag 1982; Dizon 1988).

In terms of prehistoric archeological research, each country seems to have its own research agenda, which is based on the local developmental history of archaeology. Therefore, I will briefly outline the archaeological organizations and prehistoric research interests in each Southeast Asian country, beginning with the mainland Southeast Asia.

In Viet Nam, there is the largest number of Ph.Ds. in Southeast Asia. Most Vietnamese archaeologists received their Ph.Ds. from China, or Eastern European countries such as the former Soviet Union, the former East Germany, and Bulgaria. In contrast, in most Southeast Asian countries, local archaeologists have been

trained in the western capitalist countries. However, prehistoric research in Vietnam still is influenced heavily by the French tradition; especially research on the "Hoabinhian," "Dong-Son," and "Sahyun." For instance, Vietnamese archaeologists have devoted a great deal of time and effort to re-excavating sites that had been excavated by the French, and they have reinterpreted the prehistory of Vietnam as the roots of Vietnam today (Ha Van Tan 1991, 1992). The Institute of Archaeology in Hanoi plays an important role in archaeological research in Vietnam. The University of Hanoi in the North and Ho Chi Minh National University in the South dominate archaeological teaching in this country. Other universities such as Hue University, Da Lat University and Thai Nguyen University provide courses in archaeology under their history program. There are twenty faculty members, and approximately twenty BAs, ten MAs, and six PhDs students for the entire country annually train in archaeology (Nguyen, Doi 2009, Personal communication). Apart from the Institute of Archaeology in the North, there is the Institute of Social Science in Ho Chi Minh City in the South, which is very active in archaeological research. Moreover, a number of museums also carry out their own archaeological research, for instance, the National Museum of History in Hanoi (Ha van Tan 1993: 73). Most research focuses on prehistoric and historic archaeology. It is interesting to observe that Marxist approaches are not being important in their research in comparison, for instance, to Chinese archaeology (Glover 2006: 25–27).

Due to political upheavals in the 1970s and through the 1980s, archaeological research in Cambodia has only recently been resumed. National Museum of Cambodia and the Faculty of Archaeology of the University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh have begun conducting archaeological research with the assistance of the SPAFA, UNESCO, the University of Hawaii, Sophia University, the University of Sorbonne, DAAD, etc. Most research has focused on historical archaeology, art history, and restoration of the ancient monuments, in particular Angkor Watt and surrounding area. Prehistoric research in Cambodia has also been influenced by the French tradition, and it has been used as a symbol of the Khmer people and Cambodia. Unfortunately, very few prehistoric projects have been carried out in Cambodia after the excavation of Samrongsen by the Frenchman Mourer, such as excavations at the circular earthwork structures in Kompong Cham province (Phoeurn 1999). However, the French works remain an important framework for prehistoric research in Cambodia. Since 1995 the prehistoric research has been taken into account by a few collaborative projects such as the joint project between Cambodia and the University of Hawaii, which has been launched by M. Chunch and Miriam Stark at Angkor Borei focusing on the pre-Funan period (Stark et al. 1999). There are a number of Cambodian archaeologists who have graduated with MA and PhD degrees from the University of Hawaii (Sovath 2003). At present, Cambodia has produced 10 PhDs, 50 MAs and 400 BAs in archaeology (Thuy, Chanthourn 2009, Personal communication). It is important to point out that during the 1980s Cambodia was under heavy political influence from communist China, but there were no traces of this political domination in the local academic institution, the Royal Fine Arts University, which resumed in the 1990s.

Archaeology in Laos has been gradually re-established during 1976–1981. The Department of Archaeology was set up during the 1970s (Sayavongkhamdy 1993: 69–72). There is the National University of Laos, but presently offers no training in archaeology. Archaeological research has been supported through foreign aid including UNESCO, Australian National University, etc. Prehistoric research in Laos has been influenced by the French tradition and is little known in comparison to historical periods (Karlstrom and Kallen 1999; Kallen 2004; Karlstrom 2009). The Department of Library, Museums and Archaeology under the Ministry of Education is in charge of all archaeological research in this country due to lack of funds and administrative organizations.

In Myanmar, prehistoric research is only a part of archaeological projects that focuses on broader cultural developments in the Paleolithic, Hoabinhian, Neolithic Periods, and the Bronze and Iron Ages (Aung-Thwin 2001; Min Swe 1999). Clearly, in the ongoing research, European tradition in studying the country's prehistory is well traceable. Recently, there has been a major excavation focusing on the Bronze Age site. However, there has been a tendency to focus on conservation and restoration of ancient monuments rather than on prehistory. The Department of Archaeology under the Ministry of Culture is in charge of archaeological research in this country. Archaeology has been taught under the Department of History at the University of Yangon, Yangon Eastern University, Yangon Northern University, Mandlay University, Dagon University, and Monywa University (estimated number of 300 BAs and 50 MAs; see Han, U Nyunt 2009, Personal communication). Now, Myanmar is opening the country by allowing research collaboration with individual foreign archaeologists from different countries (such as France, Australia, and the USA) (Glover 2006; Moore 2007).

Malaysian archaeology has been dominated by museums and the Department Arts and Tourism in the Ministry of Culture. Recently a number of universities also became more active in archaeological research, for example, the University Sains Malaysia (four faculty members), the University of Kebangsaan, and the University of Malaysia (three faculty members), all providing training through the M.A. and Ph.D. levels in both prehistoric and historic archaeology (they produce approximately 30 postgraduate students from three universities, see Mohktar 2009, personal communication). The prehistoric research practice still follows the British tradition.

In Thailand, there are two major institutions involved in archaeological research and cultural heritage management: the Royal Thai Fine Arts Department (FAD) in the Ministry of Culture and Silpakorn University structurally under the Ministry of Education. The Division of Archaeology of the FAD is primarily responsible for conducting archaeological research and is in charge of registration, restoration and preservation of all archaeological sites in the country (Sangkhanukit 1999). Most research focuses on historic archaeology, conservation, and cultural resource management. Research collaboration with foreign archaeologists is common in Thailand. At present, the government uses archaeology to promote tourism, since the tourist industry provides direct profits for the Thai economy. The majority of the FAD budget is used to maintain, restore, and preserve archaeological monuments all over Thailand. Rescue archaeology also is a major priority of the FAD as

there are large mega projects rapidly expanding in major cities in this country. Unfortunately, only a small amount of money is left for conducting genuine academic-style research projects. However, at present, there are quite a few archaeological projects focusing on prehistory. The Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University is the only institution in Thailand providing direct training in archaeology through the M.A. level in both prehistoric and historic archaeology, and the Ph.D. level in historic archaeology (17 faculty members trains about 120 BA students annually; they have also produced 100 MA and 15 PhD students within 5 years, 2004–2009). Recently, the Faculty of Archaeology of Silpakorn University, Thammasat University, and Chulalongkorn University have started an M.A. program in cultural resource management. Silpakorn University was originally established as the School of Fine Arts under the Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Education. The school attained university status in 1943, offering formal programs of study in fine arts including the Faculty of Painting, Sculpture, and Printing, Faculty of Architecture, Faculty of Archaeology, and Faculty of Decorative arts. Currently, Silpakorn University has grown to include six established faculties. It is clear that archaeology is a part of the humanities rather than the social sciences at this institution. Therefore, archaeology and anthropology are separate disciplines but rather closely related to art history, history, and eastern Asian languages.

Now, let us look at the current status of prehistoric archaeology in the island region of Southeast Asia. In Indonesia, the Dutch tradition still is influential in prehistoric research, especially in the study of hominids, which is a well-known and important field of research in this country (Soejono 1987, 1993). Archaeological research in Indonesia has been carried out by the National Research Centre of Archaeology from its head office in Jarkarta and its branch offices (i.e., Yogyakarta, Bali, and Bundung). The major universities providing training in archaeology through the M.A. level are the University of Gadjah Maha and the University of Indonesia. Archaeological research focuses on prehistoric (early hominids), historic, and underwater archaeology. A number of collaborative research projects between Indonesian and foreigners, including the recent Hobbit controversy, paleoanthropology (Sémah et al. 2001, Simanjuntak 2001) have been conducted there. Moreover, a number of archaeological organizations in Indonesia are quite active in organizing annual conferences.

In Singapore, the Department of History at the National University of Singapore plays an important role in archaeological research in both Singapore and Indonesia. There is only one professor, who is an American, and three PhD students. Most of the archaeological research in this country focuses on trade, ceramics, and historical archaeology (Miksic, 2009, Personal communication).

Prehistoric archaeology in the Philippines has been carried out in the American tradition since the 1940s. Most prehistoric research focuses on cave sites with deposits from the Paleolithic and the Neolithic Periods, and the Bronze and Iron Ages. Archaeological research is controlled by the National Museum of the Philippines. Several ongoing projects are conducted in this institution, focusing on prehistoric and underwater archaeology. There are several universities that provide training in archaeology through the M.A. level, including the University of the

Philippines (40 MA and 2 PhD students, see Paz, 2009, Personal communication), the University of San Carlos, and Silliman University (Dizon 1993).

Finally, archaeological research in Brunei has resumed fairly recently, since the 1970s. The National Museum of Brunei is the only institution involved in archaeological research in this country. Currently, the University of Brunei Darussalam provides training in archaeology. Research has mainly focused on underwater archaeology, historical archaeology, and cultural resource management (Omar 1981).

Another significant development for archaeological research within the region occurred after World War II. Southeast Asian countries reestablished relations among themselves by forming a regional organization in 1986 (SPAFA 1993). Here, I am focusing specifically on the role of SEAMEO-SPAFA (SEAMEO is the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization), the Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SPAFA) which is located in Bangkok, Thailand. The major objectives of SPAFA include:

- To disseminate information on archaeology
- To promote and help enrich archaeological and cultural activities in the region
- To advance mutual knowledge and understanding among the countries of Southeast Asia through regional programs in archaeology

Consequently, cross-cultural, comparative studies have received slightly more attention in Southeast Asian archaeological communities as a result of SPAFA training programs and regional conferences. However, these training programs generally focus on methodologies (e.g., lithic analysis, bead analysis, and palynology) and cultural resource management. This is an attempt to share information and to unify archaeological methodology throughout the region.

In sum, at the present time, the number of well trained local archaeologists has increased, there is more collaboration among the Southeast Asian countries, and more research projects are being conducted by local archaeologists. However, as archaeology originally was a European discipline, Southeast Asian prehistoric research continues to follow the European tradition of taking a culture-history approach. The anthropological approach also was introduced to the region by the Americans through educational training and archaeological research. In addition, archaeology has recently played an important role in economic development and nationalism in Southeast Asia (Ronquillo 1987), which will be discussed in more details below. As a result, the protection, conservation, restoration, and rescue of endangered archaeological sites have been major concerns in each Southeast Asian country, especially for sites that are more closely tied to recent history.

Research Methodology

The most recent developments in archaeological research in Southeast Asia are:

- Increase in interdisciplinary research (e.g., Charoenwongsa 1982; Pookajorn et al. 1994; Shoocongdej 2004; Majid 2003, 2005)
- Application of scientific analyses and computer technology originally developed by western archaeologists (e.g., Maloney 1999, Morwood and van Oosterzee 2006)

These scientific analyses include radiocarbon dating, chemical analyses of ceramics (Chia 1997), metallurgy (Dizon 1988; Natapintu 1991), archaeobotany (Paz 2004a), dendrochronology (Pumijumnong 2007), micromorphological study (Mijares and Lewis 2009), etc. In result, the archaeological methods for survey, excavation, data recording, analysis, and publication are now well developed in Southeast Asia. In addition, archaeological research is carried out using both inductive and deductive approaches (e.g., Dizon 1993). Nevertheless, classification and typology are still the principal archaeological methods for correlating cultural chronology from major excavated sites and often one major site is used persistently to represent an entire region (Shoocongdej 1996).

Obviously, different theoretical approaches have been introduced by western archaeologists and have made their presence visible in archaeological practices in many Southeast Asian countries.

Due to current economic conditions in Southeast Asia tourism has greatly influenced archaeological investigation. In recent years, most Southeast Asian countries have boosted their local economies through heritage tourism. In addition, damage and destruction of cultural resources have increased with the expansion of industry, urbanization, and tourism (Majid 1998). Therefore, most archaeological work has focused on salvage or rescue archaeology (e.g., Ronquillo 1985). Conservation and restoration of historical sites and the development of historical parks are considered high priorities. Meanwhile, new archaeological research is considered as low priority. Consequently, archaeological investigations of sites increasingly have been conducted through contract archaeology. To date, there are no standard guidelines or rules for regulating consultant companies in Southeast Asia. Therefore, many sites have been damaged by ill-advised preservation efforts. A large quantity of data has been quickly produced by rescue archaeology with very little concern for detailed analyses and final reports.

In sum, Southeast Asian archaeologists have perceived western archaeological theoretical approaches and practices as useful and practical tools for archeological research and activities. But archeology in this region is not only for archeologists. It also contributes to the economic and educational well-being of the general public.

Uses of Archaeology

As I mentioned above, Southeast Asian archaeology has been impacted by the processes of western colonialism and nationalism in its history. The emergence of nationalist archaeology is a very strong rationale among the colonized and newly developed countries in our region (Saidin and Chia 2007). Indeed, the archaeological research and activities have directly served both the present political and economic concerns. The roles of western colonialism and nationalism in contemporary archaeology in Southeast Asia over the past few decades have been discussed in a number of articles (e.g., Glover 1986, 1993, 1999; Paz 1998; Saidin and Chia 2007; Shoocongdej 2007) and I will not address these issues here. Rather, I will highlight a few key points made at these discussions.

Archaeology is Central to Nation's Pride

Undeniably there is a close relationship between political environment and archaeological research. The past is a matter of pride for the Southeast Asian nations, as it provides political and ideological symbols for each country. Most importantly, these symbols are rooted deeply into local traditions of the Southeast Asian nations. For instance, Angkor Wat represents the Khmer while the Sukhothai kingdom represents the Thai's origins as it was the first Thai state (Shoocongdej 2007). In Vietnam, the Hoabinhian and Dong-Son cultures are the roots of the Vietnamese people (Glover 2006), Sangriran represents the very beginnings of local populations in Java, Indonesia (Majid 2007). These symbolic roots became important for the Vietnamese after their independence in 1954 when nation-building was a political priority (Glover 2001: 121). In the Philippines, Victor Paz (2007: 52–62) has argued that a nationalist practice of archaeology was a positive force in the nation-building process. The stone ruins of Christian churches on the island of Minodro have led to a general national consciousness in the Philippines.

Archaeology and Politics

Political usage of contemporary archaeology in Southeast Asia varies in pattern and scale depending on the political contexts in each country. As in other parts of the world, the construction of the past in Southeast Asia takes place in the nexus of global politics. The Cold War is considered to be over now, but civil conflicts, political turbulence, or struggles for democracy persist. Unavoidably, archaeology often plays an important role in legitimizing political power. The past and the present are clearly influenced by archaeological interpretations, which are controlled by political authorities through symbolic meanings and territorial claims.

For example, three provinces in southern Thailand, Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, have been under martial law since 2004. Historically, these provinces have had predominantly Muslim communities with Malay origins. They were incorporated by the Kingdom of Thailand during the early twentieth century. As a part of nation-building, Thailand endeavored to create a uniform national identity and the Muslim communities have been transformed into "Thai Muslims." For many decades, there have been organized armed groups in southern Thailand including the Pattani United Liberation Organization and Barisan Revolusi Nasional. Their goal is to liberate the Muslim communities in these three southernmost provinces of Thailand. The Muslim communities in this region feel closely related to the Malay culture and they have strong ties to their common ancestors. Historically in this region, the

ancient Langkasuka kingdom emerged within political, economic, social, and cultural networks of the Malay kingdom of Srivijaya and later, between sixteenth – eighteenth centuries A.D., developed into Pattani. The past has been used and manipulated by different ethnic groups within the same nation, and in this case it has been used to resist the central Thai state. Archaeological evidence shows that Langkasuka did not develop simply by conquering other indigenous states. Rather, peoples of diverse ethnic groups and cultural traditions/religions lived together there for many centuries. The concept of the Thai/Malay-Muslim identity, which refers to language, culture, and so on, was created during the development of the Thai/Malay nation-state in the colonial period. Currently, archaeological and historical evidence of the Langkasuka kingdom are being used as political tools by the organized armed groups to separate the three southern provinces from Thailand (Staanan 2008; Vallibhotama 2007).

Archaeology as an Economic Asset

At present, archaeology as part of cultural heritage management has become very important for economic development in Southeast Asia (Bautista 2007; Paz 2007; Peleggi 2002; Shoocongdej 1992). In many Southeast Asian countries, local economies have benefitted from cultural heritage tourism. For example, in the Philippines, the Tabon Cave Complex is identified as the Filipino cultural heritage site representing the unity of the nation. Between 1972 and present, the National Museum, the Department of Tourism, the Philippines Tourism Authority, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the local government of Quezon have implemented a development project at this site to create opportunities for economic growth (Bautista 2007: 47–51).

In Thailand, as I have argued elsewhere (Shoocongdej 2007), the development of cultural heritage tourism has affected the practice of archaeology in two ways. First, the conservation and restoration of archaeological sites and their management for tourism have come to be considered a high priority, while archaeological research and public education have become lower priorities. Another important phenomenon observed in the development of cultural heritage tourism in Thailand is the promotion of the concept of "Thai Cultural Heritage." This promotion is an effective state cultural propaganda aimed at conserving Thai culture, which draws on a popular desire for a romantic view of the past (Charoenwongsa 2003; Nagavajara 2003).

In Myanmar, cultural heritage management fuelled by tourism has grown rapidly. Many development projects have been completed or planned around ancient cities such as Mandalay and Pagan. On the one hand, a number of archaeological sites were restored around Pagan for tourism and on the other, very little effort was spent on research aimed at improving our understanding of cultural developments in the past in this area (Miksic 2001).

Discussion

Over several decades, Southeast Asian archaeologists have become more aware of the significance of theory, and scientific research and applications in their research and professional activities (Dizon 1993; Shoocongdej 2004; Majid 2005). Nevertheless, Southeast Asian prehistory is still considered marginal in the world's prehistory. I do not mean to imply that Southeast Asians have not made any progress in the study of Southeast Asian prehistory/archaeology. Rather, I think it is important to conduct a frank self-evaluation of our current archaeological practices in order to move beyond western dominance.

For the last two decades, I have struggled to find indigenous theories in Thai archaeology. Thus far, I have not been successful. My thinking obviously has been influenced by my western training in the cross-cultural, comparative approach at the University of Michigan. I realize that there is a serious conflict between my quest for (indigenous) Thai theories and the Anglo-American theoretical approaches that I have been taught and practice in my own research. At this stage, from my personal perspective, I think it is more important to be critically aware, to recognize and understand "how and why" we use, apply, or follow western models in explaining and interpreting the past (e.g., a cultural historical approach, processual vs. post-processual approaches) as well as how we conduct archaeology (e.g., cultural/heritage management) than it is to construct a clear-cut dichotomy of western vs. local archaeology.

Based on the above review of the historical context of Southeast Asian archaeology, I would like to offer a few observations to initiate a fruitful discussion.

First, prehistoric archaeologists in Southeast Asia still suffer from the lack of diversity in theoretical frameworks because training focuses on methodology rather than on conceptualization (Bray and Glover 1987; Peterson 1982–1983; Shoocongdej 1996). I must admit that theoretical debates are not common practices in Southeast Asian region. Like archaeologists working in other parts of the world, Southeast Asian archaeologists fall into the scientific trap of methodological progress rather than theoretical development. They believe that improvement in techniques will upgrade the quality of archaeological knowledge and is essential for global communication with archaeological colleagues. Perhaps the techniques of hard science are easier to understand and require more practical experience to learn than the theories of hard science. Therefore, local archaeologists can spend less time in formal training programs focusing on methodology. It is clear that the archaeological use of advanced methodologies is constrained by the lack of adequate theoretical constructs that allow effective incorporation of the data into a systematized body of archaeological knowledge. Apparently, there is an increasing and uncritical use of scientific analyses. A series of sophisticated laboratory techniques or high-tech analyses are being thrown at the artifacts with the hope that something useful will come out from it (Shoocongdej 1996). However, I see nothing wrong with applying scientific approaches/methods in archaeological inquiry in Southeast Asia as long as someone is consciously aware of why and how they are doing them.

Second, our understanding of Southeast Asian prehistory/history depends on our knowledge of local temporal sequences and prehistoric developments or cultural history. Typological studies and cultural history are very powerful approaches used in Southeast Asian prehistory. There has been a strong emphasis on labeling the geographical and temporal distribution of archaeological remains as different cultures and ethnic groups (e.g., Vietnamese cases such as Son Vi culture and Nguom cultures represent the upper Paleolithic period; Hoabinhian culture represents the Mesolithic Period and Bac Son culture represents the Neolithic Period), which creates a lot of confusion in Southeast Asian prehistory (e.g., Ha Van Tan 1991). Archaeological cultures generally are defined by different artifact types and often ignore the similarities between archaeological assemblages. The efforts by Southeast Asian archaeologists to develop cultural chronologies in their own countries involve the search for identities or nations which serve political ends. Processual approaches have also been utilized in very few research projects. In comparison to other disciplines such as literature, the arts, political science, history, and anthropology, post-modern (post-processual) approaches have had very little impact on archaeological research in Southeast Asia. However, we do find some applications in CRM or heritage studies (e.g., Pricharnchit 2005; Shoocongdej 2009) and post-processual approaches have been used by some western archaeologists (e.g., Kallen 2004; Karlstrom 2009).

Third, most research by local Southeast Asian archaeologists is relatively unknown to foreign archaeologists or the world's archaeological community, and there is a tendency to narrowly focus on research in each country. There are, however, archaeological journals published in English, such as Hukay of the University of the Philippines, Sawawak Museum Journal, Silpakorn International Journal of Silpakorn University. Evidently, each Southeast Asian country mainly has focused on the prehistoric people in that country as the ancestors of modern homogenous populations, particularly the major ethnic groups (e.g., the Thai, the Viet, the Malay, the Indonesian, etc.), which has served a political agenda. Cross-cultural analysis between Southeast Asian countries and other parts of the world is rather limited. In contrast, western archaeologists have often used generalized models of cultural evolution which can be tested in many parts of the world. They can incorporate archaeological data into broader theoretical frameworks. This appears to be a different research focus. In result, it seems that most of the best known archaeological research in Southeast Asia is conducted by foreigners (e.g., Bellwood 1997; Higham 1989), although local archaeologists are working hard throughout the region. I don't mean to imply that all local archaeologists are not attracted to other ways of thinking about the past. There are archaeologists who address broader archaeological issues such as social complexities, hunter-gatherers, mortuary practices, trade, etc (Bacus et al 2006; Paz 2004b). But the number is rather small in comparison to rescue archaeology or contract archaeology.

Fourth, obviously, archaeological historiography, texts, or reports written in English by local archaeologists are very rare (e.g., Majid 2005). Most reports are published in a Southeast Asian language, which very few western scholars can read. Many publications are of limited distribution within each country and very few are available outside Southeast Asia. Due to academic imperialism, it is often the case that publications in local languages do not receive as much attention from the world's professional community as publications in English. The use of English in academic writing and communication remains a major problem for most Southeast Asian archaeologists, who rarely use this language in their academic and daily contexts unless they attend international meetings.

Fifth, I think most Southeast Asian archaeologists have developed their knowledge of the field through foreign/western training, colleagues, publications, and the Internet. Therefore, archaeological practices in the region have been influenced by the Anglo-American models. However, Southeast Asian archaeologists lack access to information generated by western archaeologists, and vice versa. As a result of this inaccessibility (including both documents and direct communication) as well as differences in research traditions, Southeast Asian archaeologists are particularly disadvantaged in learning what is going on in contemporary world of archaeology. Very few Southeast Asian archaeologists follow current debates about archaeological theories and methods internationally. At the same time, western archaeologists have problems keeping up with current research in Southeast Asian archaeology because they generally lack knowledge of the local languages. I think Southeast Asian archaeologists have developed their own models based on data oriented research. However, many are still influenced by the Anglo-American models, in particular culture history approach.

Sixth, in this globalized era, I think archaeology has something more to accomplish in contemporary societies. Most Southeast Asian countries have a handful of PhDs in archaeology with many responsibilities. Most of them have to do many tasks at the same times such as administrative jobs, teaching, research, rescue archaeology, consultation with and service to local communities and societies on issues relating to cultural heritage, etc. As mentioned above, research is not a high priority in many Southeast Asian countries. Cultural resource management or applied research for the tourism industry is much more likely to receive funding than theoretical research. Academic research generally is ignored by governments Southeast Asian states. In this capitalist world, scientific research generally is carried out by foreign archaeologists who have secured research funding that can support extensive fieldwork abroad. Southeast Asian currencies have been devalued for a few years; consequently, dollars and pounds have increased in value. With this economic power, foreign archaeologists have more opportunities to initiate collaborative archaeological investigations in most of the Southeast Asian countries (e.g., an Indonesian-French project, Indonesian-Japanese project, Thai-New Zealander project, Laosian-Australian project, etc.). Hence, the structure of archaeological research still depends on specific scientific inquiry. The search for alternative Southeast Asian archaeologies has rarely been attempted (Shoocongdej 2009). Clearly, building theory through text is not an integral part of the Southeast Asian way of practicing archaeology.

Finally, how can we reach beyond the purely academic and administrative to the ethical and moral aspects of the field? I think archaeology has been used and interpreted in multiple ways by different countries. In Southeast Asian countries,

I think archaeologists are more aware of their professional responsibilities to the communities and societies with which they work (e.g., Natapintu 2007; Paz 2007; Pricharnchit 2005; Shoocongdej 2009). More recently, the ethical and moral aspects of the profession also have been acknowledged. Southeast Asian archaeologists have become sensitive to issues concerning multiple cultures and ethnic minorities in their countries. Admittedly, this is due to the influence of post colonial studies. The archaeological evidence of the past and control over interpretations of the past do not belong to one particular ethnic group; instead these belong to all human beings who live in the area (e.g., Shoocongdej in press). Understanding cultural diversity in the past will make a significant contribution to the current situation, in particular, in countries with many cultures such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Myanmar, Thailand, etc.

What is the future of Southeast Asian archaeology? From very practical points of view, I think we need to have more communication among archaeologists from Southeast Asia and western/foreigners. Southeast Asian archaeologists should encourage research across the region. There are Southeast Asian conferences (such as SPAFA seminar, Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association, European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists), annual archaeological meetings of each country, joint projects (such as Thai-Malaysian, Thai-Cambodian, Thai-New Zealand, Indonesian-French, Indonesian-Australian, Filipino-French, Cambodian-US, Vietnamese-Japanese), workshops, and personal communications which contribute to better recognition of regional archaeologies.

Concluding Remarks

With the above discussion and suggestions in mind, I unfortunately must admit that contemporary Southeast Asian archaeology is of western origin. Indeed, I did not want to come to this pessimistic conclusion. While there are increasing numbers of studies on alternative archaeologies applying ethnohistories (Bacus 2002), oral histories (Junker 1999), Buddhist philosophy, folklore, etc. (Karlstrom 2009), they still are very few when compared to the contemporary literature on Southeast Asian archaeology as a whole. Modernization and westernization have had a strong impact on Southeast Asian societies, cultures, and archaeology. Whether we like it or not, we, local Southeast Asian archaeologists, cannot isolate ourselves and ignore the contemporary trends in the world-wide community in our profession. We still need to obtain information about archaeology from elsewhere in the world, and we must have critical minds with strong theoretical backgrounds in order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of current theories and methods. In my view, interpretations and explanations must be based upon clear and rigorous analysis theoretical and methodological. Then we will be able to develop theories and practices that are applicable to the Southeast Asian region. In addition, we should be encouraged to conduct research across the region, like our colleagues in South America or Africa do. This will give us a broader perspective on the prehistory of

our own countries and of Southeast Asia as a whole. And we will be able to have an impact on the awareness of the international academic community in our field. Moreover, I think greater use of the internet, blog, and website can help achieve these goals.

Lastly, I want to stress that all discussions between local and Anglo-American/western archaeologists on the subjects of archaeological theories and practices should be based on mutual respect for different priorities in research and professional activities. Critical evaluation of Anglo-American models might assist Southeast Asian archaeologists in self-reflection by allowing them to consider the "otherness" of western archaeology. However, an understanding of the factors affecting the nature of archaeological research will help us move toward the development of future archaeologies. Applying and adapting the Anglo-American model to local contexts requires an awareness of our own cultural backgrounds as these relate to global archaeological theories and practices. Moreover, alternative interpretations of the past have gradually been accepted in many countries of the region. So, this is the direction to which we can head.

Acknowledgments I wish to thank Ludomir R. Lozny for inviting me to contribute this paper and for his patience. Several colleagues generously shared data and information including Chanthourn Thuy, Heidi Tan, John Miksic, Mohktar Saidin, U Nyunt Han, and Victor Paz. I am especially thankful for Tristine Smart and Lis Bacus for their critical comments on earlier versions of this paper.

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