

The Digital Documentation of Heritage Sites in Maritime Southern Asia



ONLINE

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The seasonal monsoon cycles of Maritime Southern Asia have for centuries facilitated the circulation of people, materials and ideas across this vast seascape and created a rich mosaic of diverse local cultures. Today, many of the important sites, monuments and objects associated with this rich history are increasingly under threat: exposed to environmental stress from cyclones, tsunami, coastal erosion, land subsidence and rising sea-levels; rapid and unplanned development and construction; and in some instances, deliberate acts of vandalism. This presentation introduces the work of the Maritime Asia Heritage Survey (MAHS), based at the Kyoto University Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS). Our goal is the digital documentation of historical and archaeological sites across the broader region of maritime Southern Asia and includes new field surveys in the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Brunei, and Vietnam.

To document this endangered heritage, the MAHS field teams use digital technologies including GIS mapping, digital photography, video, CAD drawings and IIF (International Image Interoperability Framework) standard manuscript digitization, as well as aerial and terrestrial LiDAR to produce robust records for the benefit of historians, local communities, and heritage management professionals. Our database also provides a platform for the standardization and integration of other data sets that have been generously shared with us by partner institutions and individuals across the region and will be hosted on the servers of Kyoto University.



R. Michael Feener
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R. Michael Feener is Professor of Cross-regional Studies at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University, and an Associate Member of the History Faculty at the University of Oxford. He was formerly Research Leader of the Religion and Globalization Research Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, Associate Professor in the Department of History at the National University of Singapore, and the Sultan of Oman Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. He has also taught at Reed College and the University of California, Riverside, and held visiting professor positions and research fellowships at Harvard, Kyoto University, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris), the University of Copenhagen, The Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art (Honolulu), and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands. He has published extensively in the fields of Islamic studies and Southeast Asian history, as well as on post-disaster reconstruction, religion and development. He is currently Head of the Maritime Asia Heritage Survey: <https://maritimeasiaheritage.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp>