

Final Report for International Training Programme (2019)

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Supported by the Charles Wallace Burma Trust

My name is Khine Mon Kyaw, Assistant Conservator Grade (2) from the National Museum Yangon, Myanmar. I have been working at this museum since 2001 and now my current work is doing conservation of paintings and textiles. At my museum, much of my time is usually spent doing conservation of artworks, collection condition surveys and preventive conservation in the museum and special art exhibitions. I attended the International Training Programme (2019) from July 8 to August 16 at the British Museum, London. During this training, I got a lot of experiences, confidence and found solutions to the needs of the museums in my country. Firstly, I would like to express my thanks to the Director of British Museum, the ITP team especially Claire Messenger, Mohamed, George and Emily, the staff from British Museum and all participants from ITP (2019).



A special thanks goes to my sponsor “The Charles Wallace Burma Trust”, which has chosen to support this programme at the British Museum and to fill the needs of the museums in my country.

During the training course, I got the knowledge and experience of museum storage, management of the British Museum, museum volunteers, international loans, museum documentation as well as specialist sessions, departmental time, special exhibitions and more. At the ITP 2019, there were a total of twenty three participants from sixteen countries: China, Colombia, Egypt, Georgia, Ghana, India, Iraq, Kurdistan, Myanmar, Palestine, Philippines, Romania, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

At the British Museum, departments are divided into collections departments and non-collections departments. Collection department are sub divided into eight departments:

1. Department of Egypt and Sudan
2. Department of Asia
3. Department of Britain, Europe and Prehistory
4. Department of Coins and Medals
5. Department of Africa, Oceania and Americas
6. Department of Middle East
7. Department of Prints and Drawings
8. Departments of Science and Conservation



Among these departments, we, six participants from China, Philippines, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and India, were based in the Asia Department for our departmental time. During this time, we happily discussed with experts: conservators, curators, and store and database managers.

We also spent time in the stores and we tried to answer these questions as part of a storage survey. Is the building fabric sound and dry, without cracks in the surfaces? Are suitable anti-pest or pollutant measures in place? Is the flooring suitable to allow safe access to the objects for pedestrians and barrows? Is there paint flaking off surfaces on to objects? Are appropriate locks/alarms/CCTV present for the material within the store? How about the use of storage furniture? Security? Are the materials used within the storage units giving support and made of inert materials? Are the objects too close together on the shelves/ in the drawers? Does the retrieval of an object from the back of a shelf cause others to be removed? When I came back to my Museum, I answered these questions inside my own storage - is there spare capacity in the stores? What is the approximate percentage in terms of the overall storage volume? Does the store have environmental controls? Is there appropriate equipment in the store? Does the store show signs of neglect? Are these bins empty? Is there significant dust in the stores and on objects? Are bug-traps present? Can be objects be removed/replaced from the storage units with the equipment readily available? Can the equipment get to the relevant parts of the store? Does everything have a location code? Can material be identified in its location? Risk management: are the objects physically present? But I found that we, my museum's staff, will need to work towards the high standard of storage systems of my museum.

I got knowledge of both theory and practices from presentations. For practice, writing condition reports, practicing packing materials, exhibiting the collections. For theory, international objects loans, volunteering, preventive conservation, collection care, display in the permanent galleries, museum security, training and development guides.

I went to the UK Partner museums in Lincolnshire and Nottingham from 29 July to 7 August. At the UK Partner museums, I was able to study exhibition design from a special exhibition about dinosaurs, the education system from the Usher Gallery to The Collection: Art and Archaeology of Lincolnshire. I got the experience of preventive conservation and about textile storage from the Lincolnshire Archive. I acquired and discussed the conservation of paintings, paper conservation and collection documentation from an excavation site. I also discussed one-to-one about the database with the collection manager from The Collection. These facts are the specific needs of my museum so special thanks to Dawn Heywood and Andrea Martin from Lincoln and Clare Pickersgill from Nottingham University.



I also made a 'participant led' presentation which dealt with conservation at the National Museum, Yangon and the difficulties faced in my museum. At the presentation, I presented about two things: the first is about the textile conservation of my museum and the second one is the difficulties of textile conservation of my museum. After my presentation, Claire planned for me to meet three textile conservators to help solve the difficulties of my museum. Now, I am following their instructions at my museum.

The International Training Programme has made me powerful. It was a giant step forward for me on many levels. On my return, I held a discussion with our curator on the training and because of the ITP I am able to make an impact in almost all the sections of my museum.

Many thanks to all.