The Sub-regional Symposium for the Fight against illicit Trafficking of Cultural Heritage in South East Asia

Situation of Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property in Cambodia

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Overview

- Overview of Cultural Heritage
- Responsible Authorities
- Legislation
- Activities carried out
Overview of Cultural Heritage

Pr. Talat, Banteay Meanchey
Banteay Meanchey
Cultural objects – “Cultural property”

- Artfacts, works of arts, antiquities...
- Objects separated from monuments
  - legally
  - or illegally (pillage or looting)

- Movable
  - Museum items
  - Religious objects in religious places..

Objects from the underground (archaeological excavations)

Objects from underwater: legally or illegally

Law on the Cultural Heritage Protection 1996

“Cultural property is considered to be any work produced by human agency and any national phenomenon of a scientific, historic, artistic or religious nature which bears witness to a certain stage in the development of civilization or of the natural world and whose protection is in the public interest”.
2-Responsible Authorities

- Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts

- Authorities for World Heritage Sites
  - APSARA Authority : Angkor Region
    (Autorité pour la Protection du Site et l'Aménagement de la Région d’Angkor/ Siem Reap)
  - Preah Vihear Authority : Preah Vihear Temple

- Heritage Police
- INTERPOL – HERITAGE POLICE - MCFA
- Swiss custom officer discovered 900 items
• Tuol Prâng, Banteay Ampil District, Utdor Meanchey Province
3-Legislations

a-
National

• The Constitution (1993)
  - Articles 69, 70 and 71:

• Law on the Cultural Heritage Protection (1996)

• Sub-decree on enforcement of Law on Cultural Heritage protection (2002)
B-International Legislation

- Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed conflict: Ratified 1962
- Fighting against the illicit trafficking of cultural property, 1970: Ratified 1972
- The UNIDROIT Convention, 1995: Ratified 2002
C-Agreements

• MoU
  – The United States on the import restrictions on Khmer archaeological material: 2003

  – Thailand
to combat against illicit trafficking and cross-border smuggling of movable property and to restitute it to the country of origin.
Agreements
**Head of Apsara (Ka.3169)**
Angkor period, Angkor Wat style, 12th century, Sandstone,

This Apsara’s head was smuggled out of Cambodia and was seized from an importer in CA, United States in 2005.

The piece was repatriated to Cambodia on **30th July 2007**.
Bas-relief depicting images of the multiple-armed Bodhisattva Lokeshvara
Prasat Banteay Chhmar, Banteay Meanchey
4-Activities carried out

A-Inventory

1995, 2002: Archaeological sites inventory since 1995

1994-1997 : Inventory of Artefact ( Warehouse, National Museum and CA)

2007-2008 : Inventory of Artefact (six provinces) (Warehouse and temples)

Since 2013 : National Register of khmer antiquities.
4-Activities carried out

B-Publication

+ 1997,..: One hundred missing objects

+ 1994-1998 : Red list of Cambodian antiquities at risk
OBJETS RETROUVES GRACE À LA PREMIERE EDITION DE PILLAGE À ANGKOR


DCA 7081. This statue sold by Sotheby's (lot 96) in New York on June 2, 1992 was found in Switzerland in January 1995. Negotiations for its restitution are currently under way with the owner (an American gallery).

DCA 5602. Cette tête vendue durant les années 80 à Hong Kong a été localisée sur le marché américain durant l'été 1996. Des négociations sont actuellement en cours avec le propriétaire pour sa restitution.

DCA 5602. This head was sold in Hong Kong in the 1980s and found on the American market in summer 1996. Negotiations for its restitution are currently under way with the owner.


DCA 3489. This head was found in Great Britain in November 1994 after having been sold by Sotheby's in London (lot 555) on October 21, 1993. The Cambodian authorities made the owner an official request for the return of the head. Restitution took place in Phnom Penh on December 4, 1996.

OBJECTS FOUND THANKS TO THE FIRST EDITION OF LOOTING IN ANGKOR

DCA 1664. Cette tête a été mise en vente à Londres par Sotheby's le 10 juin 1985 (lot 143). Elle a été récemment retrouvée à l'Academy of Arts, USA ; les négociations sont en cours pour sa restitution et conformément au Code de déontologie de l'ICOM.

DCA 1664. This sandstone head was sold by Sotheby's (lot 143) in London on June 10, 1985. It was found at the Academy of Arts, USA. Negotiations for the return of the head are currently under way in compliance with ICOM's Code of Professional Ethics.

DCA 5729. Cette tête a été retrouvée en mars 1994 au Metropolitan Museum of Art de New York, USA. Les dirigeants du musée ont effectué une vérification auprès de l'ICOM et ont immédiatement pris contact avec les autorités cambodgiennes. Le Metropolitan Museum of Art a décidé de restituer cet objet, conformément au Code de déontologie de l'ICOM.

DCA 5729. This head was found at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, USA, in March 1994. The museum directors checked with ICOM and immediately made contact with the Cambodian authorities who made an official request for the return of the head. The Metropolitan Museum has agreed to return the object in compliance with ICOM's Code of Professional Ethics.

DCA 1429. Cette sculpture avait été volée au début des années 80. Elle a été récemment restituée par un antiquaire parisien, le 4 décembre 1993 aux autorités cambodgiennes.

DCA 1429. This sculpture was stolen in the early 1980s. It was handed over to the Cambodian authorities by a Parisian antique dealer in Paris on December 4, 1993.
ANTIQUITIES AT RISK

RED LIST OF CAMBODIA

METAL (comprising bronze, copper, iron, gold, and silver)

PREHISTORIC (6th millennium BC to 5th century BC)

A. Ceremonial objects: large and waisted drums with decorated top surface often with a central star and decorated bands, bell-shaped hollow vessels with decorative motifs, and bells. Illus. 19-20

B. Adornments: bangles, beads, necklaces; buffalo-head finger rings, earrings, and mirrors; many bronzes have delicate spiral motifs. Illus. 211

PHALANX (5th century BC to 4th century BC)

A. Ceremonial and ritual objects: vajras, bells, conches, tripods, and incense burners; chariots inanj of bronze. Illus. 24-25, 26, 27

B. Adornments: finger rings, earrings, clasps, necklaces, armbands, and mirrors made of bronze or gold. Illus. 28

C. Utensils: spoons, ladles, bowls, and chafing-dish. Illus. 29

D. Sculpture. Illus. 30

POST-JANGAL (5th century BC to 1st century AD)

A. Utensils: spoons, urns, bowls, and cooking pots of bronze. Illus. 31-32, 33

B. Weapons: iron daggers and swords, usually with decorated hilt. Illus. 34

C. Religious objects: both symbolic and anthropomorphic; bell, chariot fixtures, poppy, percussion instruments including varying sizes of gongs and cymbals, candlesticks, and betel containers made of bronze. Illus. 35-36

POST-JANGAL (3rd century AD to 12th century AD)

A. Relics: boundary markers, slabs of stone with a gently peaked top sometimes with Buddhist iconography. Illus. 18
4-Activities carried out

C- Public Awareness Campaign

Meeting with local people
• Banner
DESTRUCTION, TRADE OR TRAFFICKING OF
ANTIQUITIES IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE

Offenders will be imprisoned and will be fined.

Article 68, Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage
Rules for monitoring the export of Cultural Property -1
Rules for monitoring the export of Cultural Property -2
Conclusion

• There are responsible authorities, legislation
• Looting and illicit trafficking of artefacts still happening
• Need expertise from other countries
Thanks