

## Notes and News

### The Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts (DLLM)

The Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts (DLLM) will make images of almost 12,000 selected manuscripts from throughout Laos freely accessible for study. This online library project is a joint effort by the University of Passau, the National Library of Laos (Vientiane), and the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz. It is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The project is the direct result of the Preservation of Lao Manuscripts Programme, which was supported by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1992 until 2004, and which surveyed the manuscript holdings of more than 800 monasteries. Of the 86,000 manuscripts preserved and inventoried, certain texts were selected for microfilming and have now been digitised to form the online library. While the vast majority is in the Tham Lao script, a considerable

number of texts are in the ancient secular Lao Buhan, Tham Lan Na, Tham Lü, Lik Tai Nüa, Khom, and other scripts. There is also a significant number of monolingual Pali texts in the collection.

The bi-lingual English and Lao database is of excellent quality. Manuscripts can be searched by title, ancillary term, language, script, category, material, location, date, and code number, and entire manuscripts can be freely downloaded together with inventory data.

This website is a milestone in the development of South-east Asian digital resources, especially since many of the texts are not known outside the region and research based on the study of primary sources has remained very limited due to their inaccessibility.

For further information, please see:  
<http://www.laomanuscripts.net/>

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### Ethio-SPARE: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia: Salvation, Preservation and Research

The richness of the Ethiopian written tradition has been known to scholars for a long time; recently, however, the awareness of the quantity of manuscripts kept in the numerous churches and monasteries of the country has grown considerably, along with the understanding that many are gradually disappearing due to insufficient storage facilities and international illegal art traffic. These as yet undiscovered and unstudied artefacts may be important witnesses of textual but also general history and therefore action must be taken to secure and analyse the information they contain.

With this in mind, the project Ethio-SPARE: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia: Salvation, Preservation and Research was conceived at the Hiob Ludolf Centre for Ethiopian Studies at the University of Hamburg. With the help of the generous support from the European Research Council (EU

Framework Programme 7: Starting Independent Research Grant), the project was launched in December 2009.

The project will run for five years and is headed by Dr Denis Nosnitsin, the winner of the ERC grant. He is supported by three research assistants. It is also envisaged to offer PhD scholarships to young researchers. The project's main tasks are the securing and digitalization of manuscripts in Ethiopia in the course of lengthy field trips, describing manuscripts in a state-of-the-art digital manuscript cataloguing database and producing philological, codicological, historical and art historical analytical essays based on the newly collected material.

For further information, please see:  
<http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/ethiostudies/ETHIOSPARE/>

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