TALK

Metallurgy of the Khmer Empire: discovery of an iron smelting site in Angkor capital

Friday, July 7, 2017, 5:30pm at RUFA (behind the National Museum)
Metallurgy of the Khmer Empire:
Discovery of an iron smelting site in Angkor capital

by Im Sokrithy

In these recent years, researchers from the Apsara Authority came across evidences of an ancient iron smelting site, in Sala Kravan village (Zone 2 of the Angkor World Heritage site) which could not be seen in aerial photographs nor be detected by radar. Iron slags left on the mounds made local people called the site Tuol Ach Daek, or “mound of slags”. Many ceramics pieces remain on the sites as well. We previously knew about the existence of some iron sites, located at far suburban areas of the capital, such as Khvav (east) and Kôl (north-west). But as for the heart of Angkor, this is a very first discovery. Unexpected until then for the capital city center as well as its fringes, these recent discoveries require that all the assumptions about the importation of iron from Bakan, Phnom Dek area, Buriram, etc. be reassessed.

Early 2016 and early 2017, two excavation campaigns have been conducted at Sala Kravan, the results of which will be reported in my presentation.