



# ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF AFGHAN ARCHAEOLOGY

NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2013

## FUNDING TARGET

Our funding goal for 2013 is \$250,000. Every dollar is wisely allocated towards:

- Scientific excavations at Bamiyan & Mess Aynak
- Education and professional training
- The establishment of a Minor in Afghan Studies in Northern California
- Scientific & Educational Publications
- Operations of the APAA

No amount is too small and we need your support to continue this important work. Please contribute what you can via [PayPal](#).

## NEWS

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## CONTENTS

Page 2

Letter to Mde Tissot  
Page 3-4

Mess Aynak Petition and Report

Page 5

Publications

Page 6

Mr. Masoudi

## 2012 AT A GLANCE

2012 began with the loss of a great specialist and friend of Afghanistan, Mde. Francine Tissot. She was an avid traveler, writer and a devoted preservationist and was particularly enamored by Gandhara art. She helped and inspired many researchers, specialists and lovers of Central Asia alike and had a clear penchant for Afghanistan. She is sorely missed. You will find on page 2. a letter written in her honor by APAA President Zemaryalai Tarzi.

Our first petition in 2010 on behalf of the endangered site of Mess Aynak, Afghanistan, had collected over 13, 000 signatures, the petition was delivered to UNESCO with no reaction from them. We still hope that UNESCO will prove to be reliable thus our second petition which collected over 50,000 signatures was delivered to UNESCO February 7, 2013. The battle is not over far from it. On page 3 of our newsletter you can read more about the incredible support it received and what comes next.

There are only a few truly experienced and knowledgeable specialists of Afghanistan still amongst us today, it behooves on us to ensure their knowledge be passed on. The APAA published its first eBook in 2011 and this year it published its first scientific book in the series *Archaeologia Afghana*. You can read more about it on page 4.

We rarely talk about the good things that happen and yet there are many. One such occasion took place right here in San Francisco on the occasion of the visit of Mr. Masoudi Director General of the Museums of Afghanistan, read more on page 5.

**Thank you!**

**To all of you who have supported the APAA throughout the years. In December 2013 we will celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary, stay tuned for details. Also thank you to the [Dhammakaya Foundation](#), the Marin Community and friends all around the world for their immense support with our [UNESCO/Mess Aynak petition](#), we continue to collect signatures, please keep spreading the word.**



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## LETTER TO MADAME FRANCINE TISSOT

### Madame Francine Tissot

Her name was known by India's north western archaeology specialists and amateurs alike. Former Chargée de Mission at the Guimet Asian Art Museum in Paris, teacher at the School of the Louvres, great specialist of Afghanistan and Pakistan, particularly of the art of Gandhara, Francine Tissot, left us on December 7 2011, after a long and rich life filled of museum research, events and travels.

Her disappearance leaves a large void in the domain of the Art of Gandhara in which she excelled. Her bibliography is so extensive that we are not able to describe it here. As a University teacher I always recommended my students the following four major publications:

*First: "Gandhara", in the series "Public and private life in ancient India", published in 1985 at the Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, Jean Maisonneuve, Paris; including her own photographs and drawings, it is a precious bible on the Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhara. The second book that complemented our university research is a compilation of her teachings at the Ecole du Louvre, titled: "The ancient arts of Pakistan and Afghanistan", published in 1987, Paris, in Les Grandes Etapes de l'Art, Éditions Desclée de Brouwer. Her third book's title evokes the conditions under which the Kabul Museum was looted: "Kabul, the Past Confiscated-Tresors of the Kabul Museum 1931-1965", it is illustrated with pictures by her friend Dominique Darbois and gives us the master pieces of the Afghan capital's Museum. Her fourth book, here chosen, is the last piece of her legacy, given to us at the very last moment, a true scientific testament on the archaeological heritage of Afghanistan.*

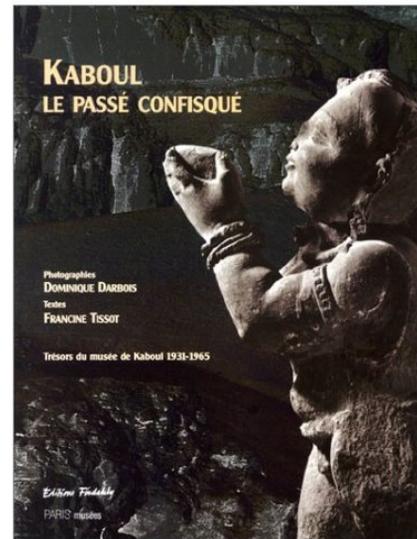
She had the ingenuity to create a catalog of all of the Kabul National Museum's pieces after its looting and destruction. This she managed despite the distance and gave us a true scientific feat that no one else could have managed with such meticulousness, mastery and exactitude. This precious book is titled: *Catalogue of the National Museum of Afghanistan, 1931 – 1985*, in –Arts, Museums and Monuments series, UNESCO Publishing, 2006.

Francine Tissot has humbly given a priceless gift to the scientific world, the Kabul National Museum and furthermore to the Afghan youth, uprooted and totally separated from its ancestral culture as a result of the three decades of warfare in its homeland.

The disappearance of Francine Tissot is very sad for her family and we offer them our most sincere condolences, as for us, specialists of Afghanistan, we have lost our spiritual mother and a dear friend who never hesitated to guide us, open her home library and share with us her valuable archives. We have learned so very much by her side for she was always of good advice.

Francine Tissot was generosity itself we keep an eternal souvenir of her.

Zemaryalai Tarzi

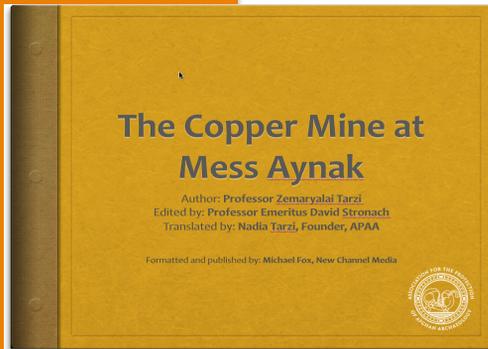




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## THE COPPER MINE AT MESS AYNAK: THE PETITION TO UNESCO



In 2008 the Afghan Government called for international bids to exploit the copper mine at Mess Aynak, located in the Afghan province of Logar, south of Kabul. The **China Metallurgical Group Corporation** entered the bidding and won the contract. China already supports Afghanistan militarily and economically and this hugely important project has now become a focus of intense international attention. While economical boost is much needed in Afghanistan there is also another side to this issue: namely a legitimate concern for cultural preservation.

For the past three years, a team of Afghan and International experts has been excavating at the Buddhist site of Mess Aynak unearthing world history. The size of the site and the quality of the statues and other relics found so far indicate that not only are we looking at a splendid and unique depository of archaeological finds from the “Afghan” Buddhist period but also that the excavation in fact will require several decades of work. The prospect of it all going to oblivion for the purpose of mining copper is simply not acceptable. One cannot compromise the heritage nor the cultural identity of a country for any reasons whatsoever. Action has to be taken to halt or and redirect the mining process, this historical site has to be enlisted on the World Heritage List and the UNESCO list of Endangered Sites. Furthermore, support must be provided to facilitate further excavations, preservation of objects and the move, out of harms way, of as much as can be moved to the National Museum of Afghanistan.

The APAA has been asking UNESCO since 2010 to get involved, with no avail. A first petition through Care2 collected 13,000 and was delivered to UNESCO, with no response. A second APAA petition, this time through [Change.org](http://Change.org) collected over 50,000 signatures largely thanks to the [Dhammakaya Foundation](http://Dhammakaya Foundation) in Thailand whose amazing networking brought together Buddhists from all over the world.



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## THE COPPER MINE AT MESS AYNAK: THE PETITION TO UNESCO

On November 13, 2012 demonstrations were held in Bangkok in support to the Mess Aynak site. The World Fellowship of Buddhist Youth delivered a letter of disagreement to UNESCO, urging the organization to preserve the site of Mess Aynak for the future generations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand lend a hand and got in touch with the Government of Afghanistan to also try and halt the destruction of the site. As a result the [Ministry of Mines of Afghanistan](#) has released on January 2, 2013, a statement in favor archaeologists to continue their work. There are however conflicting news coming from Mess Aynak about explosions underway as of February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. The APAA petition to UNESCO with over 53,000 signatures petition was delivered to UNESCO in Paris on February 7<sup>th</sup> and will remain open in an attempt to continue international outreach in a third campaign of mobilization. Mining is not the only danger Mess Aynak faces. Looting and illegal excavations also threaten Mess Aynak as is the case for the underrated, precious and very large Buddhist site of Khawar. Afghanistan holds in its bosom some of the most brilliant ancient Buddhist art found in the world and each new day the loss is greater. We must act before it is too late.

You can sign our petition, help spread the word and read about the historical site of Mess Aynak on our website .



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November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Our Ref: WFBY 86/2555

Mr. Gwang-Jo Kim  
DIRECTOR  
UNESCO Bangkok  
Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education  
Mom Luang Pin Malakul Centenary Building  
Prakanong, Klongtoey  
Bangkok, Thailand 10110

Excellency,

We received the plea from people around the world, who care for the destiny of the ancient Buddhist remains at Mess Aynak, which is scheduled for copper mining in December 2012. The 2,300-year-old priceless cultural heritage site will be permanently erased from human history in exchange for a commercial gain.

Mess Aynak is in an already fragile condition, and it can never be substituted with copper tubes and wires. As a Buddhist organization, we hereby submit our request for this copper mining project to be cancelled. We also demand that Mess Aynak to be enlisted immediately on the list of Endangered Sites and the World Heritage. This mining project will destroy the only remaining artifacts, which connects the chapters of history between the ancient and modern worlds on the Silk Road forever.

We convey our plea to UNESCO to preserve this cultural heritage for our future generations.

Very Truly Yours

Dr. Pornchai Pinyasong  
President



# ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF AFGHAN ARCHAEOLOGY

NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2013

## APAA PUBLICATIONS

Greetings,

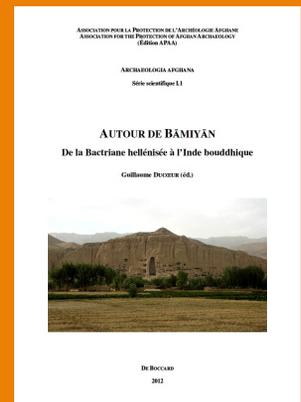
I invite you to visit our website and if you have not done so already, to take a look at our 2011 APAA published its first eBook-article. The content of the eBook is on the endangered archaeological site of Mess Aynak and is based on a survey undertaken by Professor Zmaryalai Tarzi in the 1970' as well as 2009. It is written by Professor Tarzi and edited by Professor Emeritus David Stronach.

I am also very pleased to inform you that in the fall of 2012 the APAA published its first volume of the scientific *Archaeologia Afghana* series, titled "*Autour de Bamiyan*". Edited by Guillaume DuCoeur and published by De Boccard (Paris), the content of the publication brings together colleagues and students of Professor Tarzi, on the occasion of a vibrant tribute given to him, June 19-20, 2008, to celebrate the fundamental knowledge and decades of precious work he has shared as a professor and a researcher. The participants to this two day symposium concentrated their contribution around Bamiyan and were able to demonstrate how the complexity of diffusion in the area remains important, as much from an artistic stand point as from a religious stand point. Professor Tarzi presents us with a synthesis of seven years of archaeological excavations in Bamiyan (2002-2008) and a new chronology in regards to the occupation of the site. Moving tributes to Professor Tarzi by his esteemed colleague Paul Bernard and dear friend Mde. Francine Tissot are also included in the publication.

"*Autour de Bamiyan*" is published in French. There are hopes to secure funding to undertake the translation of this first APAA scientific publication into English.

Finally, I am delighted to let you know that the much anticipated children's book "*Shine a Light on Ancient Afghanistan*" is now so very close to publication!

**Nadia Tarzi**  
Executive Director



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## MR. MASOUDI, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL KABUL MUSEUM

Mr. Omara Khan Masoudi Director of the National [Museum of Afghanistan](#), was in San Francisco in December 2012, on a two-week exchange at the Asian Art Museum as an Asia Foundation [Brayton Wilbur, Jr. Fellow in Asian Art](#). Throughout his visit Mr. Masoudi gave several lectures. One of such lectures was on the “Current State of Archaeology in Afghanistan” at U.C. Berkeley, hosted by the Near Eastern Studies and the Center for South Asia Studies. Mr. Masoudi also met with Colleen Hicks, Executive Director for the [Museum of American Indian](#), located in Novato, CA. Together they discussed concerns for their respective cultural identity and the challenges of preservation. They also shared the many joys and difficulties of overseeing a Museum.

Several members of the APAA met over dinner with Mr. Masoudi to discuss his visit, the state and needs of the Museum and the situation at the endangered site of Mess Aynak.

Mr. Masoudi was very enthusiastic about his trip to San Francisco. He discussed the productive days he spent with the very capable and professional staff at the Asian Art Museum. He described plans for the future building of the Kabul Museum for which an architectural design, by Spanish designers *AV62 Arquitectos SLP*, was selected in September 2012. Mr. Masoudi also stated the importance of continued support from the APAA and the International community for the preservation of the archaeological and historical heritage of Afghanistan.



Left to right, Pr. Arthur Scott, Mr. O.K. Masoudi, Nadia Tarzi, Pr. David Stronach, Claudia Brose, Pr. Mitra Ara, Lilla Razaqui, Julia Chen

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