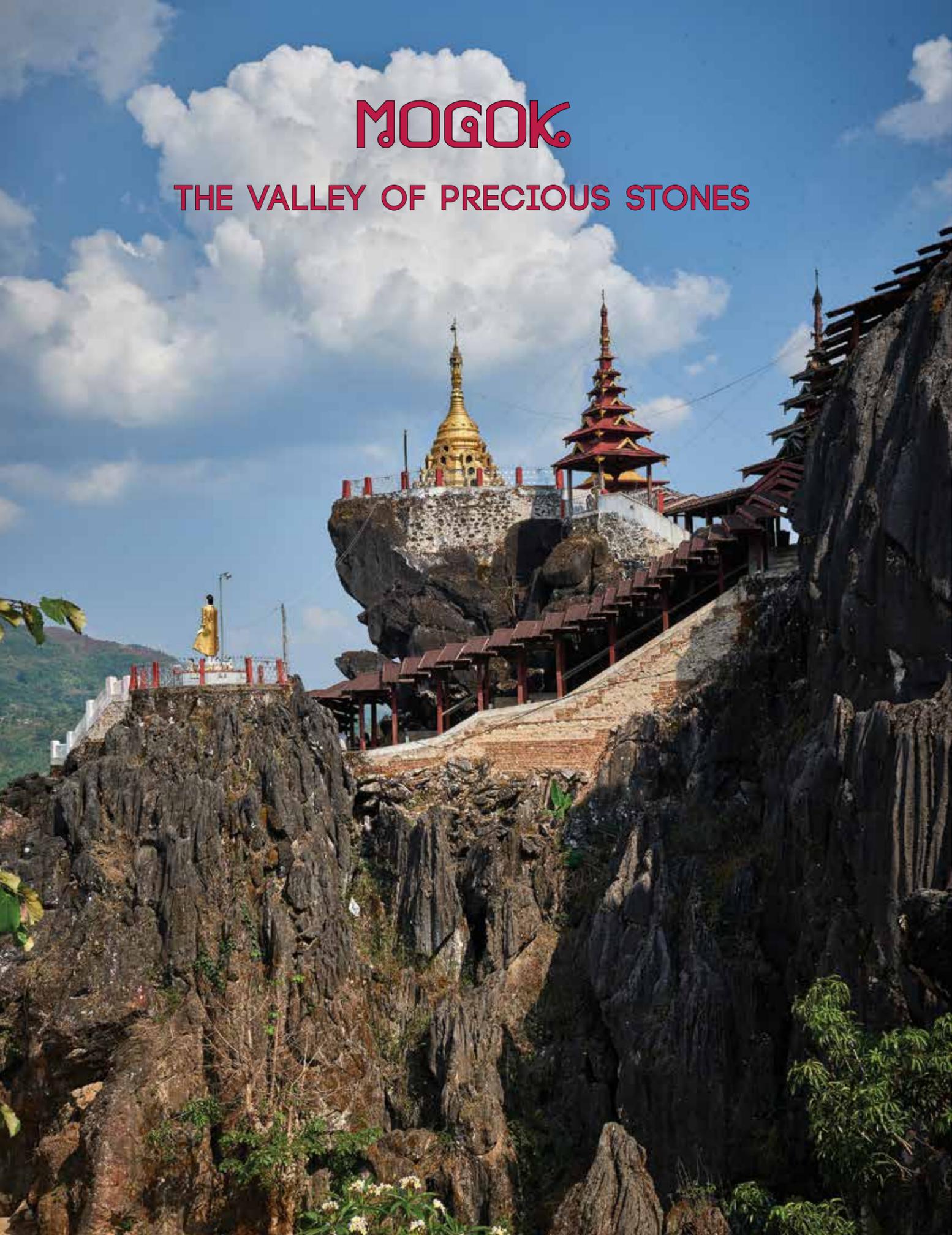


MOGOK

THE VALLEY OF PRECIOUS STONES



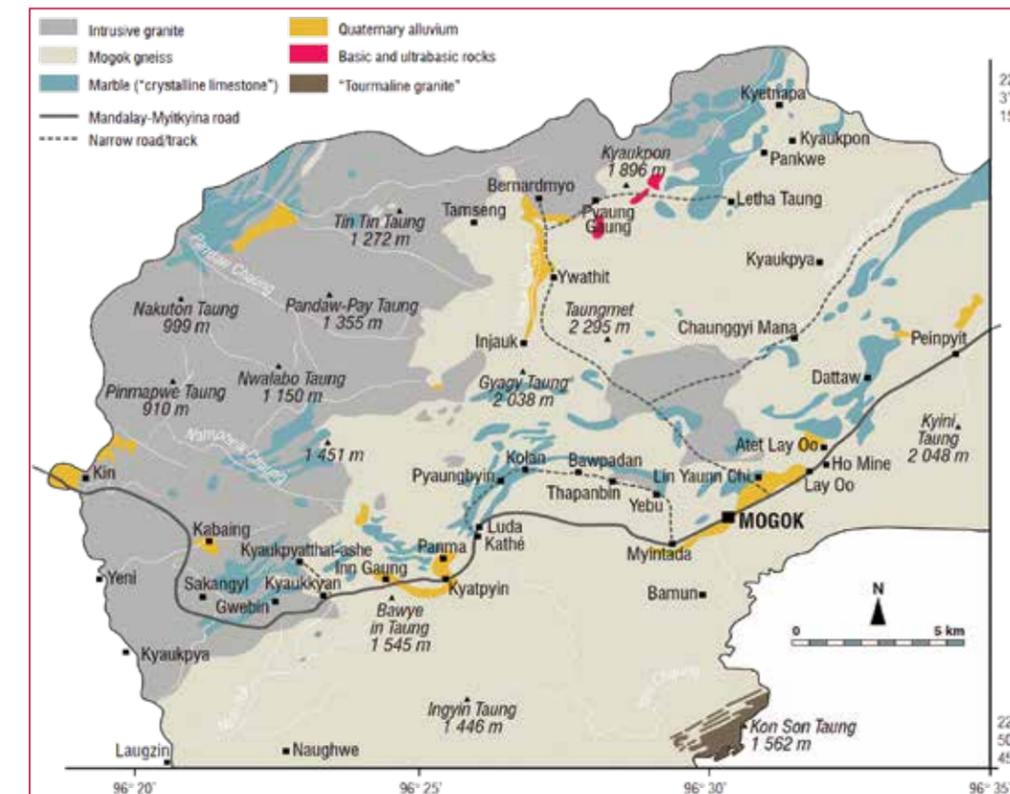
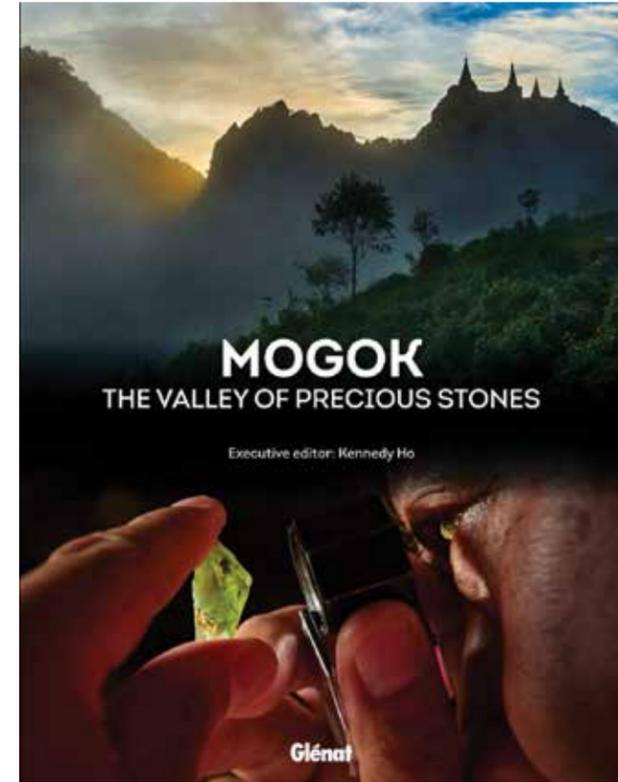
Connoisseurs of gemology know Mogok as the mythical and eternal valley of precious stones "lost in the mountain of the Shan country" at several hours drive from Mandalay over an unsafe remote road. A few years ago, as a tribute to this famous Burmese valley, Kennedy Ho, one of heirs to a Sino-Burmese family that has been active in gem trading for two generations, and also chairman of the Asian Institute of Gemological Sciences (AIGS), started a project for this beautiful book with a team of renowned gemologists and scientists.

Dr. Emmanuel Fritsch is a geologist, professor and researcher of physics at the University of Nantes in France. He also directs the Degree of Gemology (DUG) in Nantes. In the first chapter, he describes with simple words how the area was influenced 50 million years ago by the collision between India and the Asian plate that created the Mogok metamorphic belt and its great diversity of minerals. He also explains how the different gems were formed.

Franck Notari is the director and co-founder of the GGTL laboratories in Geneva, head of scientific research at the AIGS and also senior lecturer at the DUG of Nantes University. Notari explains the particularities of the right chemistry balance between the chromogenic elements that gave some stones their perfect red hue and luminescence, making them so rare and desirable.

Candice Caplan, archeo-gemologist at the GGTL Laboratories in Geneva and Egyptologist, is passionate about antique jewelry, history and legend. She gives an overview of the Mogok valley from the first Neolithic settlement to present day, telling the passing of the secret and unreachable city of Capellan. [Also called Capellan, now identified as Mogok.] The city is the historical provider for the Silk Road of spinels and rubies that created the symbol of power and spectacular jewelry for the grand maharajas of India and the crowned heads of Europe.

Book Review by Adrien Trivier



Photos

Above: Cover of the book *Mogok - The Valley of Precious Stones*, edited by Kennedy Ho. (Photo: Jean Baptiste and Sandrine Rabouan)

Left: Geological map of the Mogok region. (Image: Emmanuel Fritsch)

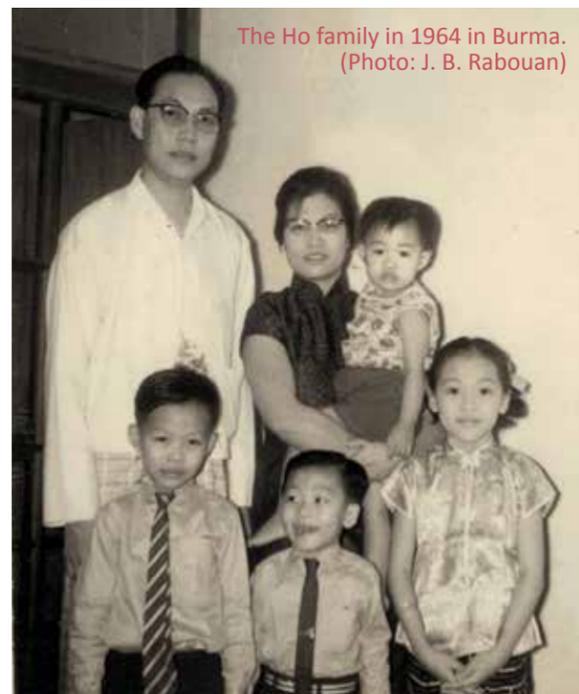
Opposite page: The Kyauk Pya That pagoda is built on top of jagged ridges of blackened karst. Stupas and temples are often built to offer thanks for all the gems-bearing surroundings. (Photo: J. B. Rabouan)



View over the town of Mogok at night. (Photo: J. B. Rabouan)



Bubble of mixed gas of CO₂, H₂S and COS in a Mogok ruby. To realize this micrograph, the author had to polish the sample as close as possible without making the inclusion explode. He took 27 pictures with different depths of field, which were then combined to create an image with a greater depth of field. (Photo: F. Notari)



The Ho family in 1964 in Burma. (Photo: J. B. Rabouan)



Photos

Left: Women selling gemstones at the *Cinema Market*, which is held in the eastern part of Mogok every morning from 8 am to 10 am. (Photo: J. B. Rabouan)

Center: In the street of Mogok during the ceremony to celebrate children's entry into the monastery. (Photo: J. B. Rabouan)

Bottom: Independent miners working with very limited means at a sapphire mine. (Photo: J. B. Rabouan)

Dr. Thomas Hainschwang (Ph.D in physics, University of Nantes, founder of GGTL Laboratories in Liechtenstein) talks about the diversity of colors in Mogok sapphires. From the rarest blue found in the valley to the extremely rare vanadium color change—from green in daylight to almost red in incandescent light—that is exclusive to this region.

A talented photo reporter, Jean Baptiste Rabouan is passionate about ethnography and gemology, and he is also a permanent contributor to photo-reporting magazines. His wonderful ethnographic approach to Mogok, with breath taking pictures, shows the life of the hidden valley at different periods of the year, allowing the reader to visualize Mogok's life and environment.

Kennedy Ho took a unique opportunity, during a period of stability between 2016 and 2017, to obtain all the permits and an exceptional "green light" to explore the mines. The making of this book required five consecutive trips to the area to collect all the data and pictures necessary to finalize the book. The last trip took place in March 2018 during the 800-year anniversary of Mogok, which was open exceptionally for few days to foreign visitors.

This remarkable team started a study of the valley, visiting various mines and gemstone markets. They wrote the story of Mogok from a new approach and under a different angle exploring indepth the local population, while making an overview of the mineralogy of the valley—one of the richest gemstone occurrences of the world. Although Mogok is particularly famous for its rubies and sapphires, many other gems are also mined, including spinel, peridot and some extremely rare gems such as poudretteite or Kyawthuite. Kyawthuite is an orange gem composed of bismuth and antimony. A 1.61-carat cut stone is known as unique and the only piece listed until now.





Left to right - Candice Caplan, Emmanuel Fritsch, Kennedy Ho, Franck Notari and Thomas Hainschwang in Mogok. (Photo: J. B. Rabouan)

A magnificent 20-ct ruby, certainly one of the most beautiful stones mined in Mogok. (Photo: Frank Notari)



Classical *Landscape* inclusion in an unheated Mogok sapphire. (Photo: T. Hainschwang)



Exceptionally rare Poudretteite crystal of 17.14 carats. (Photo: N. Jarusinthanakorn)

This book is not only a fantastic book about gems, but a real compilation of scientific reference collected *in situ* and studied in a gem laboratory and a university, offering some totally new information.

It also pays homage to small-scale miners, who sometimes risk their life for the gems. For centuries, they have been mining the valley to find the most beautiful gems on Earth, but today they are threatened by fast growing mechanized techniques and large-scale mining.

The different backgrounds and complementary nature of the authors provide unique knowledge that combines science, history and ethnography.

Whether a gem lover, gemologist, photographer or a passionate traveler, *Mogok - The Valley of Precious Stones* is a must-have book in every connoisseur's or aficionado's personal library.