

The Study for The Conservation of Tourism Attractions in Mae-hong-son and its vicinity.

ABSTRACT

From the study which is aimed towards conserving important places of interest in and around the city of Mae-Hong-son taking into account the physical, cultural, natural and other relevant factors as well as making specific case studies, it was found that the target areas can be identified into three groups as follows :

1. The various urban communities which still retain the local characteristics apparent from the settlements' physical patterns, the clustering of forms, the width of roads in relation to the scale of buildings, the religious centers in relation to the community, the building materials used, and the architectural character which give the city its particular identity.

2. The prominent natural attractions which have retained their values and beauty such as caves, waterfalls, hot springs etc.

3. The rural communities which still reflect local culture and customs both in the way of life and in the physical surroundings particularly the Dai culture (Thai Yai) which is the major one, as well as those of other interesting minority groups which are also worthy of preserving.

Because Mae-Hong-Son has many unique aspects worthy of being preserved while at the same time progress and developments are inevitable at all levels, it is important to emphasise on developments which give priority to conservation such that they mutually complement each other. In order to do so, the following remarks were determined for each of the identifying groups.

The Urban Communities. It is vital that the city retains its image and character. Therefore constraints must be made on all physical developments with regards to the following :

- set up height restrictions for all new building developments within the city.

- restrict width of roads to suit the scale of buildings.

- control the use of building materials and building designs.
- restrict sizes of vehicles entering the city.
- link important activity nodes with landscaped pedestrian walkways sympathetic with the context.
- enforce land use regulations seriously to ensure environmental protection.
- encourage use of old buildings for tourism with proper advise on renovations from state departments.
- create public awareness of the value of local culture and importance of retaining the city's image.

The Natural Attractions. Mae-Hong-son's natural attractions rank highly amongst those around the country and in some cases comparable to those in other parts of the world. Several however have yet to be surveyed officially. There fore the conservation of these valuable resources require more study. Meanwhile promotional publicity of these places must be carried out with precaution.

It is proposed that in the conservation of these natural attractions, three zones be identified for each case : the natural (protected) zone, the developing zone, and the activities zone. As for places which have yet to be surveyed, these should be closed to the public in order to prevent undue damage until action has been taken and conservation measures set up.

The Rural Communities. These are villages with interesting local cultural and physical characteristics. The following proposed measures in this case therefore place stronger emphasis on conservation than on development in order to retain the traditional image and atmosphere (physical and otherwise) :

- retain the physical structure of the villages with respect to planning and settlement patterns.
- ban large vehicles from entering the village.
- new structures are to conform to existing styles and context.

- make proper alterations to existing structures.
- create local awareness of the value and importance of the community.

From the study it can be seen that the conservation of Mae-Hong-son's tourism assets involve the cooperation of many responsible parties. These range from the administrative bodies at various different levels, the department of forestry, the national board for the environment, the department of town planning, the department of fine arts, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, and other various private organizations. Most importantly it is the responsibility of Mae-Hong-Son's inhabitants to become involved and participate in the process of conservation in order to accomplish the tasks successfully.