



**MANAGING LIVING HERITAGE SITES IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA**

**By**

**Patcharawee Tunprawat**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Department of Archaeology**

**Graduate School**

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In the 14<sup>th</sup> century A.D. after the decline of Angkor and the rise of Pagan and Ayutthaya, Theravada Buddhism, from Sri Lanka, became the most prominent religion and has been practiced in Mainland Southeast Asia in present-day Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Myanmar, while Mahayana Buddhism, spread from China, became popular in present-day Viet Nam. The Buddhist worldviews governed how the traditional population interacted with past material remains and differentiated the traditional worldviews from the Western worldviews which were based on Christianity. It was noted that the West perceived time as linear and the cult of the holy relics dictated that values were inherent in materials whereas in the East values were ascribed to materials.

The arrival of the Europeans in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D. by way of Colonization greatly influenced the traditional worldviews. After France and England gained control of most parts of the region except Siam, they took it under their responsibilities to study the antiquities of the region which became the legacy of the colonizers. After WWII, the Wars of Independence that took place in many cities gradually made France and England relinquish their controls. Antiquities by then became icons for independence and nationalism for the natives. Though Siam was not colonized, its structure of heritage management was laid out by Westerners, which immersed Siam, which later became Thailand, in the Western concepts of conservation and heritage management. The Venice Charter launched in 1962 became the backbone of heritage conservation in many countries including Southeast Asia. The World Heritage Convention born in 1970s emphasized authenticity. This concept was later questioned and caused heritage professionals to revisit heritage management in their countries in order to move away from the fabric-based conservation, which is not applicable in all cases. During this period, looting has reached a new height, while the lack of awareness is a serious issue. Communities have been separated further from the heritage.

In order to find a practical context-based framework to manage heritage sites in Mainland Southeast Asia, there is a need to explore the current trends and approaches in heritage management which will provide a basis to form a regional framework. This framework will then be combined with results from the case studies in the region and the fundamental concept of heritage conservation and management so as to come up with a model as well as guidelines for heritage managers which are based on the traditional system, making the heritage 'living'.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

#### Statement and Significance of the Problems

Heritage of Mainland Southeast Asia, including Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, is undeniably rich and largely diversified. The richness of the heritage of the region is represented by various monuments, sites, landscapes, and collections showcasing close cultural ties between countries in the region. This heritage, a witness of civilizations which have prospered in the region, is of tremendous values as it contains the collective wisdom and memory of the people in the past, which should be documented, interpreted, and conserved for the general public.

At present the fragile heritage of Mainland Southeast Asia has been under threats from both manmade and natural causes. While illicit trafficking remains one of the main problems, other challenges such as development and tourism are also posing real threats to heritage.<sup>1</sup> This situation causes a lot of losses and damages, not only to the physical part of the heritage, but also to its intrinsic values which include the irreplaceable knowledge and meanings imbued in the heritage itself.

The 2004/2005 Heritage at Risk Report by ICOMOS states clearly that “these dangers result from a lack of knowledge about what heritage there is, a lack of awareness of its value to our society, a lack of understanding of how it may be protected whilst allowing certain developments...”.

These causes stem from unsuccessful communication between heritage professionals and the public. In Traditional Mainland Southeast Asia when present heritage management system did not exist, traditional communities were the ones owning, taking care and using heritage. Now that heritage conservation and management have legally been placed in the hand of responsible government units, traditional communities have been separated from the heritage and they are not allowed to take part in heritage conservation and management even though they are the people who have used and lived with the heritage.<sup>2</sup> This separation causes the lack of awareness

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<sup>1</sup> ICOMOS, *2004/2005 Heritage @ Risk Report* (n.p.: ICOMOS, 2005), 12.

<sup>2</sup> Bunyong Wongrakmit quoted in Sayan Praishanchitr, *Borankhadee Chum Chon : Karn Chad Karn Adit Khong Chao Ban Kab Kan Pattana Chum Chon* (Community Archaeology : The Management of the Past of the Villagers and Community Development) (Bangkok : Archaeopen Project, 2003), back cover.

and sense of heritage ownership among traditional communities, leaving the care of heritage to heritage professionals. More often than not, the interpretation of heritage does not take into account concerns of traditional communities, while the information presented about heritage is mostly technical and shows no relevance to the everyday life of the public. This is another factor contributing to the lack of awareness among the public and signifying the lack of communication between traditional communities and heritage professionals.

In “Your Monument Our Shrine”, Webber Ndoro says that:

For some time cultural heritage management in Africa and perhaps other non-western societies, has mainly been concerned with the preservation and presentation of archaeological monuments primarily from a technical point of view...The major problem with most efforts to preserve and present the heritage...seem(s) to emanate from a failure to fully understand the cultural significance of the cultural heritage and its value to traditional communities.”

This is arguably because the existing heritage management and conservation structure in the region is an adoption of Western worldviews. Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam all experienced a period of Colonization starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was the beginning of the establishment of modern heritage management and protection system in these countries. Though Thailand was not colonized, it has also been influenced by the Western concepts of conservation by way of Modernization. The interest of the Europeans in the antiquities of Mainland Southeast Asia brought in experts who produced extraordinary amount of works which unraveled the mystery of the region’s past. However, their methods of working did not recognize traditional communities as heritage owners. The region’s heritage was then passed on to the hands of foreign heritage professionals.

It was during this period that past material remains started to acquire monetary value, whereas they were not viewed as having values other than spiritual, symbolic, and functional in the time prior to Colonization. Tourism also started to take place in the region during this period as tool to generate income and, for France, to propagate the greatness of the nation.

The colonial period was dying down at the dawn of the WWII when the Japanese army disarmed the colonial troops, which was followed by a long period of internal conflicts and warfares among the former colonial states. After the war which greatly damaged heritage sites, most countries in the world have employed the Venice Charter, the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, adopted by ICOMOS in 1965,<sup>3</sup> as the backbones of conservation principles of their countries. The Venice Charter, however, was aimed at the restoration of monuments and sites damaged by the war<sup>4</sup>, therefore, it is highly technical and does

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<sup>3</sup> Webber Ndoro, Your Monument Our Shrine: The Preservation of Great Zimbabwe (Uppsala : Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, 2001), 1.

<sup>4</sup> ICOMOS Thailand, Song Tossawat ICOMOS Thai : Kan Anurak Moradok Tang Wattanatham Sen Thang Su God Bat Prathet Thai (Two Decades of ICOMOS Thai : Cultural Heritage Conservation – Road to the Thailand Charter) (Bangkok : ICOMOS Thai, 2006), 251.

not address the issue of public participation or involvement in heritage preservation. When countries in the region started to pick up again, heritage professionals were sent to be trained in Western institutions or by Western professionals. In most Asian countries, local conservators in the 90s were able to conserve their own heritage without depending on experts from outside, but the notion from the colonial period still prevails. Thus, the focus of conservation was more on the conservation the physical aspect of the heritage, not the meaning adhered to it. This period of scientific achievement, therefore has divided the public from the heritage even more since it, most of the time, prevents use and maintenance of heritage by traditional communities. This has created the notion of “living heritage” which refers to sites, monuments, and objects which have been used and maintained by the public, as opposed to “dead heritage” which describes those which are fully managed by the heritage authority and have no connection to traditional communities.

It is argued that all heritage in Traditional Mainland Southeast Asia was living heritage which was religious or spiritual in nature. Traditional communities provided meanings to the heritage through different ceremonies and acts of merit, which were traditional forms of conservation. The present heritage management approach which restricts traditional communities from using and traditionally maintaining the heritage, as mostly done at present for the sake of modern conservation, is de-conservation itself and has caused conflicts and problems between heritage professionals and traditional communities in many places. Traditional knowledge and meanings associated to the heritage is also lost.

The contestation of heritage ownership between the heritage authority and the traditional communities became a concern. It can be argued that present problems of looting, illicit trafficking, vandalism, trespassing, ignorance, and neglect have all stemmed from the fading sense of heritage ownership of traditional communities. The more the heritage authority assumes ownership of heritage, the more the traditional communities feel indifferently towards heritage. In some cases, there are even contempts – when traditional communities feel that governments give priority to heritage rather than to them. When the heritage is not relevant to the traditional communities, its role in the society is no more than to serve tourism purposes, and that is not the fundamental reason why heritage was created. Worse still, popularization of heritage can also increase its monetary value which catalyses more acts of looting and illicit trafficking. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D., heritage management has become a burden to heritage authorities in the region due to the lack of staff and financial supports. While heritage managers think hard on how to successfully manage the heritage under their responsibilities with limited means, socio-polical development causes the issues of cultural rights and heritage ownership to be re-examined. In the last three decades, socio-economic as well as political development in Mainland Southeast Asia has caused social changes which have opened up new possibilities in heritage management. Once inactive audience, the public is now seeking to find their identities through the use of heritage. This is not limited to the majority of the public, but also includes ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. This situation happens all around the world and Archaeology is no longer a subject of noblemen and academia.

Traditional communities and ethnic minorities are not viewed as passive, but active actors who are looking to reinforce their identities through the use of heritage. They became key players in both natural and cultural heritage management. Through partnership with traditional communities, governments can better manage heritage with the same limited means, while traditional communities can express their identities through the use of heritage. As a result it is generally accepted that active public involvement is crucial for successful heritage management and conservation.

Heritage professionals worldwide are well aware of the new challenge and try to address this issue by working with traditional communities in order to achieve a mutual understanding regarding the significance of the heritage and collaboration in heritage management. In the West, an array of public archaeology (also known as community archaeology in the UK) programmes and activities are being carried out while the subject of the public and archaeology is widely discussed all over the world.

International organizations for heritage conservation such as UNESCO, ICOMOS (International Council for Monuments and Sites), and the Getty Conservation Institute all recognize the urgency and the significance of public participation in heritage conservation and have addressed the issue through conventions, charters, as well as their programmes of activities.

Just recently, the “Ename Charter” or *the ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites* was ratified. It reflects a heightened awareness of heritage professionals in working with the public and traditional communities which involves the preservation of the intangible part of the heritage. It aims to provide an unbiased form of interpretations which take into account local values and local interpretation of heritage. This step further from the “Conventional Approach” in heritage management is expressed as a new term “Values-based Approach”.

SEAMEO-SPAFA (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization – Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts), which is a regional centre for heritage preservation, has collaborated with ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) since 2003 on a project called “Living Heritage Sites Programme”. The aim of the project is to encourage active participatory approaches in heritage conservation in Mainland Southeast Asia. The project addresses the issues of traditional knowledge and community mobilization as well as promotes collaboration between the traditional communities and the heritage authority. It is believed that the key to efficient heritage conservation and management lies in the “Living Heritage Approach” which translates to active participation of the traditional community in conservation activities and decision-making, which is more pro-active than the “Values-based Approach”.

It is important, therefore, to explore the present approaches and world trends in heritage management and conservation so as to understand their implications and applications. It is also useful to study the history and development of heritage management and conservation in the region in order to achieve an understanding of the fundamental concepts which governed how heritage was viewed, conserved, and managed before the arrival of the Europeans. The social and political factors which

influenced the heritage management system during the colonial and post-colonial period until present should also be examined.

Until present, there has not been an effort to address and explore the issue of community participation in heritage management and conservation in Mainland Southeast Asia as a region. There are local efforts, however, to implement such programs and activities. A study of present efforts in Mainland Southeast Asia is therefore crucial to provide a brief regional landscape of heritage management and conservation approaches as well as their success and shortcoming, which can serve as case studies for others to learn from; and a basis for further recommendations and a holistic approach which can benefit the region as a whole.

### **Goal**

This thesis is titled “*Managing Living Heritage Sites in Mainland Southeast Asia*”. It will discuss present heritage management approaches, community/public archaeology, and world trends in heritage management and conservation. It will also study the beliefs system which governed the traditional worldviews of materiality and time. These traditional worldviews influenced the traditional concepts of past material remains and conservation, resulting in the management and conservation system of past material remains in Mainland Southeast Asia before Colonization. The arrival of the concept of antiquities and the development of models for the management of antiquities during the colonial period until 1940s will also be examined together with the popularization of antiquities during the late colonial period. The thesis will further discuss the social and political changes taking place from 1940s until present which see the use of antiquities for nationalist and patriotic causes and the birth of ‘heritage’.

It then further explores heritage conservation and management approaches in five Mainland Southeast Asian countries by selecting a site in each country which should be representative of other sites in the region. The sites chosen include Angkor in Cambodia, the Plain of Jars in Lao PDR, the historic city of Phrae in Thailand, the Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar, and the ancient town of Hoi An in Viet Nam. The study of these different sites provides examples of various approaches in heritage conservation and management which involve traditional communities. The result of the study should provide a lesson for site conservation and management in the region.

The thesis will conclude with a summary of the results gained from the study. Recommendations and heritage management models will be established which should serve as useful guidelines for successful heritage management and conservation in Mainland Southeast Asia.

### **Objectives**

1. To examine current approaches and global trends in heritage management and conservation in order to understand their implications and applications

2. To study traditional concepts of heritage conservation and management in Mainland Southeast Asia from the traditional perspectives before the colonial period
3. To explore political and social issues during and after the colonial period until present which have influenced heritage management and conservation in the region
4. To study present heritage management approaches which involve traditional communities in Mainland Southeast Asia
5. To provide guidelines and further recommendations for heritage managers which should benefit heritage management and conservation in the region

### **Research Outline and Hypothesis**

Heritage management and conservation have become a major burden for responsible government units in terms of resources and manpower. In case of 'living' heritage, which is the most common type of heritage in the region, the present system of heritage conservation and management also poses conflicts among heritage professionals and traditional communities who traditionally own and use the heritage. Some heritage sites and objects have become targets of looting and illicit trafficking resulting partly from the loss of sense of heritage ownership of traditional communities and the lack of understanding and communication between heritage authorities and traditional communities. At present there has been a global consensus that it is essential for traditional communities to take active roles in the conservation and management of their heritage; and that the voices of the communities with regards to heritage management and conservation should be taken into account. It is noted that the application of Western-based heritage management and conservation system may not be appropriate and out of context for Mainland Southeast Asia. It is therefore important to identify the traditional concepts of heritage conservation and management which are more context-based and should serve as a basis for successful heritage management since they generated from the fundamental beliefs of the people in the region.

Though the Conventional Approach is currently the one being practiced most in the world, the Values-based Approach is gaining popularity though it is argued that it is still based on the Conventional Approach. As a result, this research strongly supports the Living Heritage Approach which provides a level-playing field for heritage professionals and the traditional communities to interact. The research suggests that the collaboration of traditional communities and heritage professionals using the Living Heritage Approach is the key for efficient heritage management and conservation in Mainland Southeast Asia. The roles of the traditional communities should not be limited to participating in surveys and meetings, but they should be involved in the decision-making process, while, at the same time, working together with heritage professionals in implementing conservation plans and actions. Heritage professionals should also provide trainings and education programmes to the

traditional communities in order to raise the level of technical knowledge and awareness among the public. Heritage professionals can also learn from the traditional community, which can enhance their mutual understanding to benefit heritage conservation and society as a whole.

It is expected that by learning from the experiences of the region, through the study of the management and conservation of five heritage sites in Mainland Southeast Asia, a substantial assessment and appropriate guidelines will be achieved which can be utilized in the region in order to improve the current situation of heritage conservation and management.

### **Research Framework**

This research aims to study heritage management and conservation in Mainland Southeast Asia in order to identify appropriate guidelines and recommendations which should lead to effective and inclusive heritage management and conservation.

The research will discuss current trends and global approaches in heritage management while examining the history and development of heritage management and conservation in Mainland Southeast Asia, which should provide a basis for understanding of the fundamental differences between the traditional and the Western-based approaches. It then explores heritage management and conservation practices with public participation in five sites in five countries including Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam as case studies. These sites were chosen to represent different kinds of heritage sites and management.

The result of the study, taking place as guidelines and recommendations, can be applied by heritage managers to benefit heritage conservation and management in the region.

### **Research Methodologies**

- a. Researching initial and relevant documents
- b. Formulation of hypothesis and research framework
- c. Proposing research outline
- d. Researching existing literature on the subject
- e. Doing fieldworks in all five targeted areas
  - i. In-depth interviews with community members in each targeted area, if possible, in order to gain an information on existing heritage conservation and management practices
  - ii. In-depth interviews with heritage professionals, experts, and individuals from and beyond the targeted areas in order to gain perspectives on the subject from a different point of view
  - iii. Dialoguing with community members and experts through other means of communication if face-to-face interview not possible
- f. Compiling relevant documents for research and reviewing information gained
- g. If necessary, doing more fieldworks and research on existing literature

- h. Writing research paper
- i. Submitting research paper

## Chapter II

### Trends and Approaches in Heritage Management

This chapter discusses current trends in heritage management and relevant concepts such as public/ community archaeology. Various approaches in heritage management which are applied internationally will also be discussed. It will also explore the advantages and disadvantages of each model in order to find out which approach is the most suitable in the context of Mainland Southeast Asia.

#### Current Trends in Heritage Management

The first International Charter which provided frameworks for conservation was *the Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments* adopted at the First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, in Athens in 1931, but the implication of the Charter was limited only to Europe. After WWII, there are numerous organizations founded with the purpose to safeguard heritage at both regional and international levels, arguably after the realization of the affects of wars on cultural heritage. Following an establishment of UNESCO in 1946, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) was founded. Later in 1956 at the 9<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Conference, there was a decision to establish the International Centre for the Study of the Restoration and Preservation of Cultural Property (ICCROM), and the Government of Italy hosted the Centre in 1959. The decision to establish ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) was made at the same time as when the Venice Charter was adopted in 1964.

The Venice Charter or the *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* adopted in Venice in 1964, as mentioned in the last chapter, became the backbone of the guiding principles of heritage conservation. One important aspect of the Venice Charter is that it acknowledged the heritage professionals' responsibility to safeguard the heritage for future generations and that "it is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity."<sup>5</sup> It is at this point in time that heritage was seen to be protected by professionals for the future use, and that the present community was regarded as agents of destruction. Authenticity, focusing on the original fabrics of heritage, as specified in the Charter, became a point of departure of conservation works in Europe as well as in the world when international heritage professionals adopted this notion – especially from being trained and educated in the West. The idea that authenticity defined the value of heritage was stressed further in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention in 1972, which, more or less, was influenced by the scientific conservation trend implicated by the Venice Charter and the world context then. The outstanding universal value, which is central to the World Heritage Status,

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<sup>5</sup> ICOMOS, International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, 1965.

is considered an important aspect of the Authorised Heritage Discourse.<sup>6</sup> The term ‘Authorised Heritage Discourse’ or AHD in short, is coined by Laurajane Smith, and it argues that within this discourse, emphasis is placed upon the material and the tangible which defines and legitimizes narratives of the nation, as well as justifies the prominence of expertise.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the AHD validates the privileged status of heritage professionals and excludes others to be just passive visitors or consumers. It is argued that it is also not possible for a heritage to have an universal value, since heritage is interpreted differently by different people.<sup>8</sup>

To be part of the World Heritage, therefore, is to have as a priority an authenticity which signifies an outstanding universal value. This led to a further divide between heritage and the local people, when traditional activities such as restoring a stupa was not allowed for fear of reducing the authenticity of heritage. In this case, heritage professionals attempted to museumize heritage, and the only interaction between heritage and human is between heritage professionals and heritage. Other people became mere visitors who were allowed to look at the heritage, but not touch. In a way, heritage was stripped of its traditional values and then re-sanctified to become a religion of archaeologists, academics, and heritage professionals.

Recognizing problems of Western-based frameworks in heritage conservation and management, local heritage professionals have questioned an effectiveness of such frameworks in local contexts. The first attempt to address the non – inclusive international heritage frameworks, especially the Venice Charter, was expressed through the adoption of the Burra Charter or the *Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance* in 1999<sup>9</sup> arguably out of an experience of the ICOMOS Australia in working with the aboriginal people on heritage conservation. The Burra Charter recognized the less tangible aspects of heritage relating to the use of heritage places and meaning of place. It also recognized the need to:

...involve people in the decision-making process, particularly those that have strong associations with a place. These might be as patrons of the corner store, as workers in a factory or as community guardians of places of special value, whether of indigenous or European origin.<sup>10</sup>

The International Charter for the Protection and Management of Archaeological Heritage was adopted in 1990. Though it emphasizes the role of heritage professionals as main custodians of heritage “on behalf of and for the benefit of present and future generations”, it acknowledges the role of the indigenous people in heritage protection since “other elements of the archaeological heritage constitute part of the living traditions of indigenous peoples, and for such sites and monuments the participation of local cultural groups is essential for their protection and

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<sup>6</sup> Laurajane Smith and Emma Waterton, *Heritage, Communities and Archaeology* (London : Gerald Duckworth & Co.Ltd., 2009), 34.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>9</sup> First adopted and amended in 1979, 1981, and 1988

<sup>10</sup> Australia ICOMOS, *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance*, 1999.

preservation.”<sup>11</sup> In the same year, the ICOMOS New Zealand adopted the Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value which incorporated the Treaty of Waitangi, which:

...recognizes the indigenous people as exercising responsibility for their treasures, monuments and sacred places. This interest extends beyond current legal ownership wherever such heritage exists. Particular knowledge of heritage values is entrusted to chosen guardians. The conservation of places of indigenous cultural heritage value therefore is conditional on decisions made in the indigenous community, and should proceed only in this context....<sup>12</sup>

The Nara Document on Authenticity adopted in 1994 in relations to the World Heritage Convention took into account an importance of context when implementing values judgement. It indicates that:

All judgements about values attributed to cultural properties ... may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture. It is thus not possible to base judgements of values and authenticity within fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong.<sup>13</sup>

In a way, the Charter implies that local criterion must be established when judging values of heritage. The world trend in conservation, therefore, heads towards context-specific framework and increasing roles of the indigenous peoples and the various local communities in safeguarding heritage.

In 2003, a context-specific declaration was drafted for Asian historic districts under the title the Hoi An Declaration on Conservation of Historic Districts of Asia. It indicates that:

Inhabitants and users of historic districts are key actors in conservation efforts. Their role should be recognized and welcomed in the planning, the implementation and the review phases of that process...Owners and users should be encouraged to use traditional knowledge and ingenuity to provide continuous care of historic buildings and neighborhoods. Voluntary and proactive participation of inhabitants and associations in cooperation of the government should be promoted and supported.<sup>14</sup>

In the meantime, the Hoi An Protocol for Best Conservation Practice in Asia drafted by UNESCO in November 2003 recognized that in Asia, conservation of the heritage “...should and will always be a negotiated solution reconciling the differing values of the various stakeholders.” and that there is a need for regional protocols to ensure best conservation practice in Asia.<sup>15</sup> Responding to this idea, local ICOMOS offices in Southeast Asia are also drafting their own charters to serve as suitable heritage

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<sup>11</sup> ICOMOS, International Charter for the Protection and Management of Archaeological Heritage, 1990.

<sup>12</sup> ICOMOS New Zealand, Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value, 1990.

<sup>13</sup> ICOMOS, Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994.

<sup>14</sup> ICOMOS, Hoi An Declaration on Conservation of Historic Districts of Asia, 2003.

<sup>15</sup> UNESCO, Hoi An Protocol for Best Conservation Practice in Asia, 2003.

conservation frameworks in their own contexts, including ICOMOS Indonesia and ICOMOS Thailand, for instance.

Just recently, the draft of the “Ename Charter” or the ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites was proposed to the ICOMOS General Assembly for ratification in 2008. It reflects a heightened awareness of heritage professionals in working with the public and local communities. It acknowledges both the tangible and intangible values of cultural heritage sites, promotes public understanding of, and participation in, ongoing conservation efforts, and encourage “...inclusiveness in the interpretation of cultural heritage sites, by facilitating the involvement of stakeholders and associated communities in the development and implementation of interpretive programmes.”<sup>16</sup>

The Ename Charter is a clear example of how heritage professionals worldwide are supporting the public to take part in taking care of their own heritage while paying more attention on how to communicate with the public in order to achieve mutual understanding. The preservation of the intangible part of the heritage is also acknowledged and the local value and significance of heritage taken into account.

In the museum field, ICOM has taken the same direction as ICOMOS and launched the Phnom Penh-Vientiane Charter on Cultural Diversity and Heritage Tourism in 2006 to promote public participation in heritage conservation and heritage tourism, in order to financially benefit “...heritage conservation, development, maintenance, interpretation and community capacity building through funds established from tourism income.”<sup>17</sup> The formation of a new entity, ICOM Southeast Asia, incorporating an Association of Southeast Asian Museums (ASEAM) was also envisaged together with the establishment of an International Training Centre for sustainable museum and heritage development in Asia.<sup>18</sup>

The international conservation world is, therefore, going local. This is also evident from training and advocacy programmes offered in the recent years by international and regional heritage institutions such as UNESCO, ICCROM, as well as the Getty Conservation Institute, and SEAMEO-SPAFA. UNESCO Bangkok has worked for a number of years now on the LEAP programme to engage local communities throughout Asia in the maintenance and conservation of their heritage through traditional knowledge. UNESCO recently awarded the Cultural Heritage Conservation Award to the Wat Pongsanuk temple in the Lampang province in Thailand, whose restoration was a result of community-based conservation efforts. An UNESCO project in pipeline is to publish a book on Community Museums in Asia and the Pacific in order to advocate local efforts in heritage preservation. ICCROM, since 2002, has implemented community-based projects through the Living Heritage Sites Programme in Mainland Southeast Asia in partnership with SEAMEO-SPAFA. Projects implemented include a community-based research on local heritage preservation in Phrae, Thailand; a cultural mapping project at the Co

<sup>16</sup> ICOMOS, *Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites*, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> ICOM, *Phnom Penh-Vientiane Charter on Cultural Diversity and Heritage Tourism*, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Lao citadel in Hanoi, Viet Nam, and a cultural mapping training project in Sekong, Lao PDR. Based on ICCROM's experiences and works done in the region, a guideline on Living Heritage Approach was drafted in October 2009, which will propose a new model for heritage management in place of the Conventional and the Values-based models which will be discussed later. The Getty Conservation Institute, founded in 1985 under the J. Paul Getty Trust in USA, is now working in Southeast Asia with the focus on the Mekong countries in collaboration with SEAMEO-SPAFA. The most recent training programme in the region to take place in November 2009 is to do with the conservation of historic sites in urban environment emphasizing heritage management and community involvement.

SEAMEO-SPAFA (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization – Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts) established in 1978 in Bangkok, Thailand, is devoted to the promotion of arts and archaeology in Southeast Asia and the cultivation of heritage awareness. The Centre offers training courses on archaeology and cultural heritage management to regional heritage professionals. Its partnership with ICCROM on the Living Heritage Sites programme has expanded into a community-based heritage conservation project in the province of Phrae in Thailand, in collaboration with the local community, which has been ongoing since 2004.

### **Public Archaeology/ Community Archaeology**

As evident from the above discussion, the local community and the public are no longer viewed as passive participants in heritage conservation and management, but key persons in successful conservation. In fact, the concern for public involvement in heritage conservation and management has been raised since the 1970s, when the publication titled *Public Archaeology* was launched by Charles McGimsey III, and Pamela Cressey, an American archaeologist, was trying to advocate the notion of community archaeology. In the UK, efforts by a small group of archaeologists to address an inclusion of the public into archaeological practices were also present around the same time. It was noted that similar efforts happened in Australia then as well.<sup>19</sup> The 1980s saw a more concrete works with regards to public engagement especially on the notion of community by which a handbook on community archaeology was first published in Britain.<sup>20</sup> The origin of interests in engaging the public in archaeology was described as being caused by economic expansion and numerous development projects which prompted the feeling that heritage was “fragile, finite, and non-renewable”.<sup>21</sup> Together with this feeling, there emerged a new discipline of archaeology, which is Cultural Resource Management (CRM) sometimes also known as AHM (Archaeological Heritage Management) and CHM (Cultural Heritage Management) which is thought of as being “a counterpoint to academic archaeology”.<sup>22</sup> It has been pointed out that, in the US, a collaboration of the public was needed then in order to convince legislators and project developers

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<sup>19</sup> Smith and Waterton, *Heritage, Communities and Archaeology*, 25.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

that archaeological sites needed to be protected.<sup>23</sup> With an increased professionalization of archaeology, however, archaeologists took it to as their duties to work on the archaeological sites on behalf of the public, especially the future generation, as a result, the present public rarely engaged with the heritage. Merriman (2004:3) noted that, in this sense, CRM or Public Archaeology actually “signaled the decline of public participation”. It has been just recently that there are attempts to directly re-engage the public in archaeological practices due to strong influences of philosophical debates from Marxism to post-modernism and world political situations and concerns especially with regards to minorities and cultural rights.

Simpson and Williams (2008: 71-72) explain that the development of community archaeology in the UK as follows:

(Community Archaeology) was facilitated by an intellectual shift from ‘processual’ to ‘post processual’ archaeology which led to a move from absolutism to relativism in theoretical archaeology in which the authority of professional archaeologists was challenged together with the existence of a single, true reading of the past.

Another catalyst is the worldwide debates in post-colonial archaeology especially on the indigenous rights and the methodologies required for working with the indigenous communities.<sup>24</sup>

At present, the term public archaeology and community archaeology have been used interchangeably since there is no clear definition of both. Those engaged in public/community archaeology often provide definitions of their own. Below are some available definitions of public archaeology and community archaeology.

Public Archaeology is “the way in which (archaeology) articulates itself with wider social, political, and economic issues”. (Darvill, 2004: 410)

Public Archaeology is archaeology “by the people for the people”.  
([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/community\\_archaeology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/community_archaeology), 2007)

Community Archaeology is “... the practice of archaeological research in which at every step in a project at least partial control remains with the community.”  
(Stephen Moser, University of Southampton, UK)

(Community Archaeology is) an emphasis on multivocality and genuine, two-way dialogue between archaeologists and the affected public, and an investment in empowering involved communities in political, social, and/or material ways. On the face of it, relinquishing total control over a project in this way may seem like a risky proposition that goes above and beyond an archaeologist’s call of duty and endangers scientific objectivity in the process. Yet current archaeological practice is riddled with problems and it is clear from several case studies that community archaeology is not only necessary but actually beneficial to all involved – including the archaeologists and their research. (Barbara Betz, *Saving Antiquities for*

<sup>23</sup> Nick Merriman, ed., *Public Archaeology* (New York : Routledge, 2004), 3.

<sup>24</sup> Faye Simpson and Howard Williams, “Evaluating Community Archaeology in the UK” *Public Archaeology* 7, 2 (Summer 2008) : 72.

*Everyone website)*

(Public Archaeology is) ...engaging the public in order to share archaeological findings and/or promote stewardship of cultural resources or to otherwise make archaeology relevant to society by providing the public with the means for constructing their own past..... (Carol McDavid, (2002:2) From Real Space to Cyberspace: The Internet and Public Archaeological Practice. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge)

(Public Archaeology is) ...this growing field of archaeological research includes theoretical and practical work in archaeological heritage management (AHM), archaeological education, museum archaeology, the sociopolitics of archaeology, Cultural Resources Management (CRM), and a number of other arenas in which archaeologists and their publics interact....” (Carol McDavid, (2002:2) From Real Space to Cyberspace: The Internet and Public Archaeological Practice. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge)

(Public Archaeology studies) ...the process and outcomes whereby the discipline of archaeology becomes part of a wider public culture, where contestation and dissonance are inevitable... This broader definition of public archaeology opens up a space in which to discuss not just archaeological products (such as education programmes, museum displays and site tours) but the process by which meaning is created from archaeological materials in the public realm. (Nick Merriman, ed., 2004: 5)

To conclude, the terms public archaeology and community archaeology can still be used jointly though community archaeology is a more popular term in the UK. Both terms signify physical and abstract aspects of the practice. On one hand, it means actual hands-on archaeological activities or projects which directly engage or are implemented by the local community. On the other hand, it concerns a true dialogue between archaeologists and the local community and the cultural rights and identity which are the product of such engagement. No matter how diverse the meaning of public/community archaeology is, one requirement as commented by Sayan Praicharnjit (2005: 46) is that it has to be done with real and active participation of the local community.

### **Discussing Public**

Who are the public or the local community in public/ Community Archaeology? According to Merriman (2004:2), the ‘public’ has two broad meanings to include, first, the State, who represents and acts on behalf of the population, and, second, a diverse range of people. With power in their hands, the State as public is able to select and promote a specific portion of heritage to represent a singular history or a politicized image of a place, which marginalizes other groups – discussed earlier as the AHD. The people as public have contested views and strive to understand their identities through different portions of heritage.<sup>25</sup> As a result, the two ‘public’ spheres are constantly in tension and have to be taken into account in heritage management.

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<sup>25</sup> Merriman, ed., Public Archaeology, 2.

To complicate matters further, within a public or a community, there comprises different contested groups who have stakes in heritage, and heritage professionals need to address their concerns.

In Authorized Heritage Discourse, when discussing community, heritage professionals do not consider themselves as part of a community, and think of themselves as superiors who have duties to ‘educate’ the non-heritage professionals on the subject matter. As a result, the AHD became essential in legitimizing experts to represent the public in protecting and interpreting heritage. Community archaeological works, therefore, are done *for* the community and not *with* the community.

Merriman proposed that there are two models of public archaeology. The first is called *the deficit model* which regards the community as lacking in terms of knowledge on heritage and need to be educated to understand and appreciate the works of archaeologists. Its role is, therefore, to build confidence for archaeologists and participation is encouraged when it follows professional practice.<sup>26</sup> Merriman commented further that this approach “derived from the need for a professional archaeology to separate itself from the non-professionals, and is associated ultimately with authoritative knowledge...”.<sup>27</sup> The second model is the *multiple perspective model*, which recognizes the community as diverse and contested. It criticizes the first model for being exclusive and authoritative. As Smardz (1997: 103) stated, archaeology should “stop taking archaeology to the public for archaeology’s sake and start doing it to meet the general public’s education, social, and cultural needs”.<sup>28</sup> The purpose of this model is to “encourage self realization, to enrich people’s lives and stimulate reflection and creativity”.<sup>29</sup> While the second model is criticized for relating to extreme-relativism, which will engage all kinds of values and stakeholders into a heritage discourse, it is related more to the core purpose of archaeology, which lies in an interpretation of the past, than the first model which attaches itself to AHD.

Recently, as there has been a growing need of the community to reconstruct their identity through heritage and to challenge the AHD, the need to engage the local community in conservation decision making is translated into a number of conservation policies and frameworks, but it is much said than done. Community involvement has become a hype, but the involvement does not extend beyond ‘consultative’ meetings of different stakeholders where decisions are already made by heritage professionals. With the romantic notion, community involvement in archaeology and heritage management became “uncritically positive and comfortable”<sup>30</sup> and is implemented for the sake of being implemented. At times, it is implemented employing an anthropological method of objects and observers, whereby heritage professionals maintain the privileged role in observing and studying their objects and their objects’ interaction with heritage. This method does not

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Smith and Waterton, *Heritage, Communities and Archaeology*, 39.

contribute to a constructive dialogue between the community and heritage professionals and associates itself with the AHD, which will not result in successful and sustainable heritage conservation and management. Moreover, even among heritage professionals, the sphere of public archaeology is seen to be of minor importance and “(*lies*) outside the more rigorous academic pursuits of ‘straight’ archaeology”.<sup>31</sup>

Consequently, there is a need for heritage professionals to view ‘community’ as encompassing more critical meanings and as an active, contested, and dissonant entity. This perception of ‘community’ allows heritage professionals to reconsider its role in heritage management and view themselves as part of a contested community, which should lead to a more effective method in heritage management.

### **Heritage Management Approaches**

The meaning of ‘heritage’ itself is vague and all-inclusive. Legal texts, charters, and conventions never assign the same definition to heritage. It becomes even more complicated when the word ‘heritage’ is replacing words such as antiquities, artifacts, sites, monuments, and so on. As discussed in the first chapter, heritage is a totally new concept in Mainland Southeast Asia. Therefore, there is a need to explore the definition of heritage in order to provide a framework in heritage management.

Usually, heritage is seen to be divided into two main categories of tangible and intangible heritage. Tangible heritage refers to all that can be seen and touched, while intangible heritage refers to all that can be felt and heard. It is, however, a too-generalized definition and one can argue that a multiple array of feelings derives from seeing, touching, or interacting with heritage. At the same time, when an oral history is noted down, has it changed its status from intangible to tangible? One can say that the fabric of heritage is a manifestation of an unseen, untouched part of heritage, but the saying is true vice versa. As a result, heritage is encompassing both the tangible and intangible which cannot be separated. In fact, the making of these dualities in heritage plays an important role in objectifying and denigrating heritage since heritage professionals often “separate elements out and treat them as discrete things. Once we understand them, we believe we understand heritage. What we forget to do is to put them back together to see how they interact.”<sup>32</sup>

To many, heritage is seen not as a thing, a place, or an inherited entity, but a process, since heritage is an interpretation of the past which translates into the present. Smith and Waterton (2009: 44) explains that “heritage is a cultural process or performance of meaning-making...(it) becomes not a thing or a place, but an intangible process in which social and cultural values are identified, negotiated, rejected or affirmed.” The idea of heritage as a process “allows for a broader capacity within which to consider how and why a variety of things can become heritage, or,..., cease to be heritage.”<sup>33</sup> With this concept, one is offered a wider way of dealing with heritage which goes

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>32</sup> John Carman, *Archaeology and Heritage : An Introduction* (New York : Continuum, 2002), 24.

<sup>33</sup> Smith and Waterton, *Heritage, Communities and Archaeology*, 45.

beyond narrow categories such as being of outstanding particular values or tangible or intangible.

Within the categorization of heritage, the notions which are evident in the issue of conservation and management concern the idea of ‘dead’ and ‘living’ heritage. The terms are self reflective. Dead heritage has lost its connection with its traditional owners. It is conserved and managed in a frozen stage mostly under the attempt of museumization. It has not retained its traditional function in connection with the traditional community, and it has no claimed owners or custodians apart from State or heritage authority. This type of heritage is evident throughout the world especially the prehistoric sites and monument-typed heritage such as the Colosseum in Italy, or Sukhothai in Thailand. Its care and continuity are maintained only by heritage professionals. This dead heritage also extends to museum objects which no longer have any links with their traditional owners. This heritage is known as ‘safely dead’<sup>34</sup>, which means that the link with the traditional community can not be invoked.

Living heritage, on the contrary, refers to a continuous use of the heritage by the traditional community. In this case the link between heritage and the community is still strong, even though their roles as custodians of heritage were replaced by heritage professionals. Angkor in Cambodia, for instance, has maintained its link with the traditional community as a place of worship through time, since the Angkorian period to the Middle period until present, even though the traditional community has been denigrated by new owners namely the French and heritage professionals. The politics of Angkor may be strong, but the site has never meant anything but a place of worship to the traditional community. It should be noted that the traditional community does not have to be geographically attached to the heritage. In many cases such as pilgrim sites, the heritage is used and maintained by those who do not live in the area, but are the true custodians of the heritage. Sometimes, the sense of ownership is not expressed by ‘physical use’ but by an association with heritage through beliefs, collective memories, and narratives. In some prehistoric sites, the sites are not used by the traditional community to maintain their prehistoric functions, but they are associated with beliefs or stories which make the sites sacred or a memorial place, thus the traditional community respects the sites and lives with the sites in harmony. This ‘non-physical use’ of heritage is also considered an aspect of living heritage.

As a result, one can see that there are different peoples involved in the heritage discourse. There is the traditional community, which is also called ‘core community’, who has an immediate connection with heritage and has been its main and traditional owner. There are the local and general public, local authorities, heritage professionals, tourists, etc. who are identified as ‘stakeholders’ and have their own claims in the heritage. These stakeholders view and use heritage differently.

Realizing this, it is important to look back at and reflect on the heritage management models in order to find a way which addresses the contested and diverse nature of heritage the most. At present, heritage management has taken shape under various

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<sup>34</sup> Term coined by Baillie

names including cultural resource management, archaeological resource management, archaeological heritage management, and cultural heritage management. Maybe the problem is semantic, especially, as mentioned earlier, in the non- English speaking world, but the notion of ‘archaeological’ in this context can be biased since archaeology is not the only value of a heritage and it is assigned to the heritage by archaeologists.<sup>35</sup> The word ‘resource’ in cultural resource management connotes a sense of something that can be depleted and should be exploited for human benefits. Arguably, if heritage is a process, heritage is not finite because it is being regenerated through its interaction with man at any given moment. Additionally, the sense of exploitation refers to the feeling of disrespect and associates heritage with social, cultural, and political inequalities, whereby authorized or privileged s were benefiting from heritage. As a result, the most reflective term in this case should be ‘cultural heritage management’ or ‘heritage management’.

Following the above discussion, heritage management models to be discussed here include three approaches termed as the Conventional Approach, the Values-based Approach, and the Living Heritage Approach, which represent different frameworks inevitably resulting from politics and social contexts, as well as world trends in heritage management and conservation.<sup>36</sup> These models are being used at the moment and some are more suitable to some kinds of heritage than others.

### **The Conventional Approach**

The Conventional Approach is very much related to the politics of the past and colonization. This approach has its root in the idea of the West that heritage is a vulnerable resource whose values are inherent in its fabrics. As a result, the approach is fabric-based and focuses on the museumization of heritage and opposes changes to the best without taking into account opinions and rights of the traditional community. Since this approach bases much of itself on the Authorized Heritage Discourse, it sees that heritage needs to be protected by the privileged heritage professionals from the ignorance of the present community for the future generations. In this case, heritage professionals act as the ultimate custodians of heritage while the traditional community is separated from heritage. All decisions are made by heritage authorities who act on behalf of the whole public, and decide on what aspects of heritage to be preserved or neglected. It is highly technical and expert-led, since it assumes that non-heritage professionals are not capable of taking care of the heritage, which is the notion carried from the Colonial period. It also “privileges a Western knowledge system and displaces other ways of understanding the world around us” since other ways are seen as “primitive” and “incorrect”.<sup>37</sup> Ironically, even after colonization, many non-Western countries, through Western-based training and education, have applied the model on their heritage and successfully divided heritage from their

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<sup>35</sup> Robin Skeates, Debating the Archaeological Heritage (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 2000), 17.

<sup>36</sup> The three terms and concepts are taken from the draft of the Living Heritage Approach Handbook prepared by Britt Baillie with contributions from Ioannis Poullos and Tara Sharma, ICCROM, 2009.

<sup>37</sup> ICCROM, the Living Heritage Approach Handbook, 2009: 14-15 cited from Dean Sully, ed., Decolonising Conservation: Caring for Maori Meeting Houses Outside New Zealand (Walnut Creek, CA : Left Coast Press, 2007), 28.

original custodians. Relying heavily on expertise, it is recognized that this approach uses a large amount of state funding making it unsustainable. The approach also marginalizes other groups and creates a great divide between man and heritage, which results in other problems such as looting, illicit trafficking, negligence, ignorance, and even contempt towards heritage. This approach is associated with early conservation frameworks such as the Athens Charter, the Venice Charter, and the World Heritage Convention.<sup>38</sup>

Arguably, this model can be applied on the true ‘safely dead’ heritage, which no longer serves its traditional purpose, no longer in active use, and has no owners, but should not be used at all in all other cases.<sup>39</sup>

### **The Values-based Approach**

The Values-based Approach was developed following the Conventional Approach arguably after there were conflicts with the indigenous groups with regards to an application of the CA on heritage sites which are of importance to the indigenous peoples. This situation and development were reflected in a number of Charters including the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places with Cultural Heritage Value (1996), the ICOMOS Australia Burra Charter (1999), the ICOMOS Charter for the Protection and Management of Archaeological Heritage (1990), and the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994). It was at this period that the needs of the indigenous groups were addressed for the first time in the history of conservation. Another turning point within this approach is that values were seen as being ‘ascribed’ on heritage by people, not as ‘inherent’ in the fabrics of heritage. As a result, there was an expansion of values associated with heritage as ascribed by different groups of people, including social and religious values, whereas within the Conventional Approach, values were historical, aesthetical, and archaeological.<sup>40</sup>

Recognizing the various groups associated to heritage, the Values-based Approach work with stakeholders which are defined as “any group with legitimate interest”<sup>41</sup> in heritage which can include a vast array of people such as heritage professionals, local communities, tourists, new age groups, developers, local governments, etc. The approach aims to democratize heritage conservation and management by assigning various stakeholders with equal claims on heritage, which are supposed to have fair shares in decision-making process. However, because of this, the approach is criticized for being ultra-relativist since all can claim their stakes in heritage which lessens the voices of the traditional community who are the original custodians. Examples are such as the cases of the Stonehenge and the Seahenge in the UK which are subjected to new-found ideologies of new age groups who use the sites as their places of worship. The public involvement within this approach is seen to be rather superficial since it limits to community consultation and meeting whose agendas are determined by heritage professionals. In addition, the stakeholders are defined by

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<sup>38</sup> ICCROM, *the Living Heritage Approach Handbook*, 16.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

heritage professionals who prioritize their values and determine how stakeholders will be involved.<sup>42</sup> Ultimately, heritage professionals still act as the main custodians who control the heritage discourse, so it is still expert-led and focuses on heritage fabric still. In a way, it is seen as a disguise of the Conventional Approach which touches upon the issue of participation and multiculturalism. As a result, the Values-based Approach is neither democratic nor the best practice.

### **The Living Heritage Approach**

On the other hand, the Living Heritage Approach makes a statement by aiming to decolonize conservation.<sup>43</sup> It moves away from the old frameworks which are material-based approaches to be community-based. While taking into account voices from other groups, it gives the first priority to the needs of the traditional community. As Britt Baillie puts it, “for the LHA, heritage management is about learning from, understanding, and (interacting) with the past for the needs of today, whilst seeking to create the conditions needed for the survival and evolution of heritage for the future”.<sup>44</sup> The most important aspect of this approach is that it allows change to take place to the heritage while recognizing change as agent of continuity since heritage is viewed as a continuous process and the tangible and intangible aspects are inseparable. Heritage professionals, for the first time, will become facilitators who facilitate the conservation and management of heritage within the framework of the traditional community. As a result, the approach helps instigate pride and appreciation in heritage which will lead to community-based actions which reduce dependency from State in terms of manpower and other resources. In a sense, this approach is a political process, but while the other two approaches provide benefit to the heritage professionals and the privileged groups, this approach gives an opportunity to the traditional community. The continuous interaction between heritage and its traditional users is encourages since the aim of this Living Heritage Approach is to conserve continuity. It is also an aim of the LHA to promote an inclusive understanding of heritage which incorporates local knowledge, practices, perspectives, and traditional skills.<sup>45</sup> In essence, this approach is seen to be able to initiate a sense of awakening even among a latent traditional community, and to empower heritage professionals to work with the public.

While it may sound like a conservation Utopia, the approach has several weaknesses that need to be addressed. Since the approach is led by the traditional community, there is a need to arrive at a community consensus, which can be far-fetched given the complicated nature of the community as discussed before. The approach also advocates the voice of the traditional community, thus there might be conflicts arising from different groups competing for the traditional, or core community status. In addition, the decision-making is entrusted with the traditional community, which can

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 29.

result in conflicts with other groups of differing interests.<sup>46</sup> Though the community-based conservation projects can be independent from State budget, thus lessening the burden of State, the community as a grouping of individuals does not have a steady source of income to cover the costs of the projects, unless the projects are done in a way that costs do not incur. In the same way, there needs to be a way to solicit continuous community efforts, when community members are also individuals who have various limitations. Another concern is about achieving a balance between the needs of the community and the conservation needs, which should be governed by existing traditions.

However, out of the three approaches discussed here, the Living Heritage Approach seems to be the most inclusive and engaging, and the ultimate break from the colonial and Western-based traditions. What needs to be done is to test the model on various sites to see if it is truly applicable, though the model has already been implemented in some cases sometimes without realizing that they fall into this framework.

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<sup>46</sup> From the discussion during the ICCROM-SPAFA Living Heritage Sites Programme Meeting by ICCROM and SPAFA on 18 Oct. 2009.

## Chapter III

### The Old World: Traditional Mainland Southeast Asia

This chapter goes back in time to the pre-colonial period in order to explore the beliefs system of Traditional Mainland Southeast Asia which influenced the traditional worldviews on materiality, authenticity, and conservation. These worldviews were expressed through the management system of past material remains.

#### Mainland Southeast Asia and the Foundation of Its Beliefs System

Southeast Asia or “Suvarnabhumi” or “Suvannabhumi” was first mentioned in the Indian epic, *Ramayana*, written in 300 B.C., to refer to the “Land of Gold” in the East which had been a trading destination for Indian merchants since the time of the Buddha.<sup>47</sup> The name Suvarnabhumi appeared in a number of Buddhist texts such as the *Milindapanha* and the *Mahanidesa* which were written in Pali around the third century A.D. saying that Indian seafarers often sailed East to the Land of Gold, in Southeast Asia, in order to seek wealth.<sup>48</sup> Archaeological studies revealed that major trading activities between India and Southeast Asia began in the first century A.D. during the Maurya Dynasty of India.<sup>49</sup> They were catalyzed by two factors which were political conflicts in Central Asia and the Mediterranean, which closed trade routes to and from India, and the prohibition of the Roman Empire to export gold to India. As demands for luxurious goods, especially gold, increased, Indian traders began to head to Southeast Asia<sup>50</sup>.

Indian traders set up a network of ports in different towns in Southeast Asia and brought with them Brahmans who propagated Hinduism to the local people. Early ancient states in Southeast Asia such as Funan (first to sixth century A.D.), Chenla (fifth to ninth century A.D.), and Champa (second to fifteenth century A.D.), were all primarily Hindu states, showing close cultural contacts with India. An account on Funan written by a Chinese account in the third century A.D. recounting the tale of the first King of Funan, the Brahmin Kaundinya, who married a daughter of Naga, a mythical serpent revered all over Mainland Southeast Asia, demonstrated a merge between the local and Indian cultures.<sup>51</sup>

Indian traders did not only bring Hinduism into Mainland Southeast Asia, but also Buddhism, which was also practiced widely in India at that time. A century after the

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<sup>47</sup> Phasook Indrawooth, “Rong Roy Wattanatham India Nai Asia Tawan Ok Chiang Tai (Traces of Indian Cultures in Southeast Asia) in *Borankhadee Lae Prawattisat Nai Prathet Thai : Chabab Khu Mue Khru Sangkom Sueksa* (Archaeology and History in Thailand : Handbook for History Teachers) (Bangkok : Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University, 2002), 126.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>51</sup> Charles F. Keyes, *The Golden Peninsula : Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 66.

Buddha attained Nirvana, two Buddhist councils were held in order to solidify the Buddha's teachings. During the Second Buddhist council, Buddhism split into 18 different sects because of a philosophical divide.<sup>52</sup> The main two schools were the *Mahasanghika* (the Majority - those who wanted changes) and the *Sthaviravada* (School of Elders – those who opposed to changes). A hundred years later the *Sthaviravada* branched out into *Sarvastivada* which went north to Kashmir and the *Vibhajyavada* which was supported by King Asoka the Great of the Maurya dynasty and flourished in the Ganges Valley.<sup>53</sup>

In 232 B.C., King Asoka the Great hosted the third Buddhist council and sent Buddhist missionaries out in all directions including Suvarnabhumi in order to propagate Buddhism. This event was recorded in a Sinhalese Buddhist chronicle named *Mahavamsa* that "...and together with the Thera Uttara, the Thera Sona with wondrous might went to Suvannabhumi...".<sup>54</sup>

The King's own son, Prince Mahinda, became a Buddhist monk and went to Sri Lanka as one of the missionaries to spread Buddhism. He established a strong base of Buddhism there and the *Theravada* School of Buddhism was founded. The *Tripitaka*, the Teaching of the Buddha, was first written down in Pali in Sri Lanka in 29 B.C.<sup>55</sup> which formed the first text of Buddhism still copied and passed on until today.

As a result, Buddhism was widespread in Mainland Southeast Asia since the early centuries A.D. along with Hinduism. There are evidences of early Hindu-Buddhist states in Mainland Southeast Asia such as the Pyu cities in Myanmar including Beikthano (second century B.C. to seventh century A.D.), Halin (first to ninth century A.D.), and Sriksetra (fifth to ninth century A.D.), as well as Dvaravati (seventh to eleven century A.D.), and Srivijaya (eighth to thirteenth century A.D.).

Dvaravati Buddhism was influenced by concepts from many schools of Buddhism from different parts of India as expressed through various styles of Buddhist structures and sculptures, including stupas, Dharmachakra, and Buddha images. There was already a belief in this period that the building and worshipping of stupa would bring great merit. Though numerous material remains implied influences from different schools of Buddhism, the people of Dvaravati were strong followers of the Theravada school as evident by the *Ye Dhamma* inscriptions placed in the stupas which were copied from Pali Theravada texts. However, some population of Dvaravati also practiced Hinduism as seen from a large number of Hindu sculptures, such as Vishnu and Linga representing Shiva, found at U-thong.

Beiktano, Sriksetra, and Halin are ancient Pyu cities in present-day Myanmar. The name Beiktano means "the city of Vishnu" signifying a Hindu town, but the town

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<sup>52</sup> Susan Tyler Hitchcock and John L. Esposito, National Geographic Geography of Religion : Where Gods Lives, Where Pilgrims Walk (Washington D.C. : National Geographic Society, 2004), 148.

<sup>53</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching (New York : Broadway Books, 1998), 13.

<sup>54</sup> Roger Bischoff, Buddhism in Myanmar : A Short History (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), 27.

<sup>55</sup> Hitchcock and Esposito, National Geographic Geography of Religion : Where Gods Lives, Where Pilgrims Walk, 134.

planning and the early form of Buddhist stupas found suggest an establishment of Buddhism in the area.<sup>56</sup>

In the second or third century B.C., a new school of Buddhism, *Mahayana* (Greater Vehicle) emerged as a branch of the *Mahasanghika*. This school of Buddhism differs from the Theravada School as it believes that all beings can attain Nirvana, and that the enlightened ones, Bodhisattvas, should help as many people as possible to escape the cycle of birth and death before they themselves enter Nirvana.

The prominence of Mahayana Buddhism was apparent at the Khmer Kingdom of Angkor (ninth – thirteenth century A.D.), where it was recorded to be practiced since the founding of Angkor along with Hinduism and the worshipping of local spirits. Though principally a Hindu Kingdom, one of its most famous rulers was King Jayavarman VII, whose faith in Mahayana Buddhism was demonstrated through the numerous construction projects during his reign including the Bayon temple, the Preah Khan, and the Ta Phrom temples. The temples symbolized Mahayana Buddhist concepts whereby the King depicted himself as the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, the Lord of Compassion.

After the reign of King Jayavarman VII, there were attempts by his successors to make Hinduism the main religion of the Kingdom. Most of the Buddhist icons and temples were destroyed or re-sculpted in order to turn them into Hindu icons. However, at the fall of Angkor, together with the rise of Sukhothai (fourteenth to fifteenth century A.D.) and Pagan (eleventh to thirteenth century A.D.), Theravada Buddhism became the most prominent religion in Mainland Southeast Asia since it was more relevant to the common people than Hinduism and did not recognize the differences of castes.<sup>57</sup>

At this period, some of the Hindu monuments were appropriated by the local people in order to accommodate their changing beliefs. Theravada Buddhism had firmly established in Angkor. A lot of new Theravada structures were built in the Angkor complex, and some of the temples were used as Buddhist temples such as Prasat Top and Prasat Ta Tuot within the wall of Angkor Thom. Buddha images were taken into Angkor Wat and formed the Preah Puon, or the Gallery of a Thousand Buddhas, while some Hindu statues were respected as icons of Animism and Buddhism. The most striking example is the sculpting of the façade of the Baphoun temple into a shape of Buddha entering Nirvana.<sup>58</sup> Other Buddhist structures started to appear in the vicinity of Angkor where Hinduism had prevailed, such as at the Rolois group of monuments and the Kulen Mountain. The same applied to Vat Phou, a gigantic Hindu temple complex in Lao PDR, where people until nowadays have robed Hindu statues with saffron robes of Buddhist monks and respected them as guardian spirits.

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<sup>56</sup>Pamela Gutman and Bob Hudson, “The Archaeology of Burma (Myanmar) from the Neolithic to Pagan” in *Southeast Asia : from prehistory to history*, eds. Ian Glover and Peter Bellwood (Oxford : Routledge, 2006), 158.

<sup>57</sup>Wapola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (Dehiwala : Buddhist Cultural Centre, 1996), vvii.

<sup>58</sup> APSARA, Royal Government of Cambodia, *Angkor : Past, Present and Future* (Phnom Penh : APSARA, 1998), 83.

Champa, however, despite a brief period of Dong Duong where the King practiced Buddhism, remained a Hindu state until its fall in the fifteenth century A.D. when conquered by the Dai Viet Kingdom in present-day Viet Nam, where Mahayana Buddhism flourished alongside Confucianism as a result of its close contact with China.

When Mahayana Buddhism first arrived in China in the first century A.D., it met with a well established local religion which was Confucianism. Confucianism was founded in the fifth century B.C. around the same time as Buddhism and Jainism. Its teaching provides codes of conduct based on respect towards elders and ancestral worship. Since China had colonized the Nam Viet Kingdom from the second century B.C. to the tenth century A.D., Confucianism and Mahayana Buddhism were deeply rooted in the mind of the Viet people of that period and were passed on to the next generations even after Independence from China to the French colonization period until present. At present, Buddhism still has the most followers among other religions and beliefs in Viet Nam.<sup>59</sup>

Whereas Hinduism prevailed in the region following a period of 'Indianization' in the late BC and the early AD,<sup>60</sup> leaving its legacy in forms of Hindu monument complexes such as the Khmer temples in Cambodia, Thailand, and Lao PDR, and the Cham temples in Viet Nam, Buddhism has been practiced by the people in Mainland Southeast Asia since the time of its arrival in the region until present, and is evident by numerous Buddhist monasteries and structures in all countries in the region. However, it is not until the fourteenth century A.D. that Theravada Buddhism became the main religion in the region. This has become an essence of the beliefs system in Mainland Southeast Asia, where remnants of Hinduism are practiced together with Buddhism which incorporated the worship of ancestors and spirits.

As a result, Mainland Southeast Asia is shaped by Buddhism, which penetrates in all aspects of life of the people. The Northern School of Buddhism or Mahayana Buddhism is practiced in Viet Nam which was influenced by China and Japan, while the Southern School of Buddhism or Theravada Buddhism is widely practiced in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand as a result of an influence from Sri Lanka.

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<sup>59</sup> U.S. Department of State, Background Note: Vietnam, Oct 2009 [Online], accessed 16 February 2010. Available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/4130.htm>

<sup>60</sup> ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information, Southeast Asian Art and Culture : Ideas, Forms and Societies (Jakarta: ASEAN, 2005), 22.

## Essence of the Beliefs

### Hinduism

Hinduism, known to the Indians as *Sanatana Dharma* or “the Eternal Law”,<sup>61</sup> was first practiced in the India subcontinent since 3,000 BC. The *Vedas*, or the Holy Books, consisting of the *Rig Veda*, the *Sama Veda*, the *Yajur Veda*, and the *Atharva Veda*, discuss the origins of men, castes, as well as code of conducts by which men have to follow in order to obtain a release or *Moksha* from an ongoing process of life, death, and rebirth.

The belief in reincarnation integrates with the entire system of Hinduism. First appeared in the Holy Books around 500 B.C.,<sup>62</sup> the concept of reincarnation took a grip on people’s way of life. Every living creature is believed to contain a spirit manifesting in many body forms that undergoes a rhythm of endless rounds of birth and death. *Karma*, a Sanskrit word means ‘action’, is the deeds of the present life which shape the character of the next life.<sup>63</sup> The *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* explains the concept of reincarnation as follows:

A man who’s attached goes with his action, to that very place to which his mind and character cling. Reaching the end of his action of whatever he has done in this world – from that world he returns back to this world, back to action.<sup>64</sup>

The most widespread manifestation of Hinduism is the *Trimurti*, a trio of *Brahma*, the creator, *Vishnu*, the preserver, and *Shiva*, the destroyer and recreator. The *Trimurti* represents a process of renewal where all things, even the universe, undergo an endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

In order to obtain spiritual fulfillment, Hindus choose among the four paths available including *karma yoga*, the path of righteous action in the world; *jnana yoga*, intellectual inquiry; *raja yoga*, meditation through physical and mental discipline; and *bhakti yoga*, the path of devotion, which is chosen by most, focused on the dedicated worship of Vishnu or Shiva.<sup>65</sup>

Though not widely practiced anymore, Hinduism still leaves its traces in the region through different daily rites and rituals. The Thai and Cambodian courts still depend on Brahmans to conduct court ceremonies related to different aspects of the royal life while commoners still practice a number of ceremonies, especially the rites of passage, influenced by Hinduism.

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<sup>61</sup> Michael Freeman and Alistair Shearer, *The Spirit of Asia : Journeys to the Sacred Places of the East* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 60.

<sup>62</sup> Hitchcock and Esposito, *National Geographic Geography of Religion: Where Gods Lives, Where Pilgrims Walk*, 99.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

## Buddhism

The Buddha was once a prince born in the Sakya clan in India about 2,600 years ago. He denied the existence of soul, self, or *Atman*.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, the Buddha “attributed all his realization, attainments and achievements to human endeavour and human intelligence”<sup>67</sup> and taught that “man’s emancipation depends on his own realization of Truth and not on the benevolent grace of a god or any external power as a reward for his obedient good behavior”.<sup>68</sup> Though the beliefs in *Karma* and *Samsara*, or the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, are strong in Buddhism, Buddhists do not believe in one eternal self or *Atman* which is an important aspect of Hinduism. The three concepts about ego or self are as follows:

The first one is the eternalist (*sassatavaadi*); the second one is the annihilationist (*ucchedavaadi*); the third one is the Buddha who teaches the middle way of avoiding the extremes of eternalism and annihilationism. (Here the middle way is the doctrine of dependent arising, or causal conditioning — *Paticca Samuppaada*).

All theistic religions teach that the ego survives after death in some way or other, and is not annihilated. The materialist's concept is that the ego is annihilated at death. The Buddhist view is that there is no ego, or anything substantial, or lasting, but all things conditioned are subject to change, and they change not remaining the same for two consecutive moments, and that there is a continuity but no identity.<sup>69</sup>

All Buddhist teachings point that all things or *Dharma* are conditioned by three characteristics: *Anicca* or impermanence, *Dukkha* or suffering, and *Anatta* or no-self.<sup>70</sup> Seeing that all things are impermanent, always changing – due to a chain of causes and effects (*Karma*), and empty of self, Buddhists do not strive to attach themselves to worldly pleasures, but rather to follow the noble eightfold path, *Magga*, in order to realize the Four Noble Truths (*Ariya Sajja*) which will lead to Nirvana.

Along this path to Nirvana, Buddhists believe in an accumulation of merit (*punna* or *punya*) in order to benefit their next reincarnation. The concept of merit is reflected in the stories of the past lives of the Buddha, *Jataka*, which show that the Buddha himself had to cycle *Samsara* for innumerable life times to accumulate merit and *parami* (virtues) before becoming Buddha. The *Jataka* myths are legends which have woven around the story of the Enlightened one beginning with his resolve in a previous life to become a Buddha, followed by the subsequent incarnations in many forms, till at last he was born as the Shakya Prince.

It is explained that the *Jataka*, however, is to:

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<sup>66</sup> Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, 51.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>69</sup> "The Three Basic Facts of Existence: I. Impermanence (*Anicca*)", with a preface by Nyanaponika Thera, *Access to Insight*, [Online], accessed 7 June 2009, Available from <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/various/wheel186.html>.

...make 'actual', the Buddha through his life and history ... and perhaps (is) best seen as allowing the Buddha through his "history": to participate with the monks and lay worshipers. The purpose is to make the Buddha's presence felt, his forms and teachings manifest.<sup>71</sup>

In essence, the *Jataka* teaches people the different ways to accumulate merit through meritorious activities, including giving, virtue, and meditation, which provide a strong foundation for them to follow the path. While developing a wise sense of self in the pursuit of merit, one is:

...already learning how to let go of unwise ways of 'selfing' as one learns to overcome stinginess, apathy, and hard-heartedness through the development of giving, virtue, and good will. The teachings on the three characteristics simply carry this same process of "de-selfing" for the sake of an even truer happiness to a higher pitch.<sup>72</sup>

Buddhism teaches that any kind of actions committed with wholesome intention, *kusalacetana*, will be source of merit. This concept of merit is crucial to the understanding of material cultures of the Buddhist world, which will be discussed later.

### **Confucianism**

Confucianism is more of a code of conduct and a way of life than a religion.<sup>73</sup> Established by the first great philosophers of China, Confucius, or K'ung Fu-tzu, it teaches followers the importance of being 'gentlemen' and following the proper conduct. The way of Confucius stresses the duty to respect and care for parents as well as the practice of venerating one's ancestors. An ideal Confucian is fair, respectful to his superiors, and kind to ordinary people.<sup>74</sup> In China, it is practiced with Taoism, Buddhism, and folk religion since all four offer different aspects of beliefs. In Vietnam, Confucianism is practiced with Buddhism and Animism which together form the basis of beliefs of the Vietnamese people. It is noted that Confucianism was the dominant element in the elite culture since the traditional Vietnamese society was heavily influenced by the Chinese cultures, but Buddhism continued to be an important element in cultural tradition of the Vietnamese people.

### **Animism**

As mentioned earlier, Mainland Southeast Asia has strong local beliefs, which often are referred to as Animism. Since most parts of the region are agrarian societies,

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<sup>71</sup> Robert L. Brown, "The Jataka Stories in Ancient Indian and Southeast Asian Architecture," in *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Tradition of South and Southeast Asia*, ed. Juliane Schober (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 73.

<sup>72</sup> Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "Merit: A Study Guide", *Access to Insight* [Online], accessed 7 June 2009. Available from <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/study/merit.html>

<sup>73</sup> Philip Wilkinson and Douglas Sharing, *Encyclopedia of Religion* (London : Dorling Kindersly Limited, 2004), 110.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

local beliefs gravitate towards the worship of nature and the deification of natural elements, which are also characteristics of Hinduism and Confucianism, such as the Goddess of Rice, Goddess of Water, Goddess of Earth, resulting in traditions and ceremonies related to agricultural cycles and agriculture-related deities. Beliefs in spirits, such as *Nat* in Myanmar, *Neak Ta* in Cambodia, *Phi* in Thailand and Lao PDR, also run strongly among the indigenous people of the region since time immemorial.

The *Nats* of Myanmar consisted originally of a pantheon of thirty-six spirits, all assuming different protective roles and duties while striving for attention and offerings from worshippers. They were human beings in their previous lives, but due to actions committed when they were alive, they had become wandering ancestral spirits which are strongly loved and respected by the people. It was during the reign of King Anawratha (1044-1077), the founder of the Buddhist Kingdom of Pagan, when the thirty-seventh spirit was added to the pantheon as the King of all *nats*. This *nat*, King Thagyamin, was said to be a worshipper of the Buddha, and thus Buddhism and Animism were integrated together.<sup>75</sup>

*Neak Ta*, meaning grandfather in Khmer, refers to ancestral guardian spirits who are protectors of places and people. A Vishnu statue in the West Gallery of Angkor Wat, *Ta Reach – the Grandfather King* - is believed to hold this ancestral spirit and is revered by the Khmer people who often come to him to ask for prosperity and to have their wishes fulfilled. He is considered the most powerful *Neak Ta* in the region and there are two other statues in Angkor Wat which are considered his wife and child.<sup>76</sup> *Neak Ta* can appear in different forms such as a statue or a termite mound. Even when some statues which are the physical representations of *Neak Ta* disappeared, people believe the *Neak Ta*'s power still remains and they come to provide offerings where the statues used to stand.<sup>77</sup>

*Bang Bat* means owner spirits of ancient Khmer temples. Some believe that they are spirits of people who had honesty and integrity. They usually do not harm people, but when something happens to a temple, such as when the roof falls down, people suspect that *Bang Bat* might be angry. *Bang Bat* stays where the temples are. When the temples are no longer there, they stay in the jungle where the temples used to be.<sup>78</sup>

*Phi* means spirits in Thai and Lao which can refer to both souls of the dead or spirits residing in houses and in nature. They can be both kind and malicious. Those domestic *Phis* provide protection to house members, while those in nature are in control of natural resources such as forest and water and need to be given respect to, so that they would protect people and resources. They are also protectors of villages and cities. In Luang Prabang in Lao PDR, there is a worship of the “semi-human ancestors” who prepared the ground for the ancient Kingdom.<sup>79</sup> They are represented

<sup>75</sup> Freeman and Shearer, *The Spirit of Asia : Journeys to the Sacred Places of the East*, 39.

<sup>76</sup> Keiko Miura, “Conservation of a ‘living heritage site’. A contradiction in terms? : Views from a case study of Angkor World Heritage Site” *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 7 (2004) : 15.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Grant Evans, ed., *Laos : Culture and Society* (Chiang Mai : Silkworm Books, 1999), 195.

by human masks called *Phu Ngyoe* (grandfather) and *Ngya Ngyoe* (grandmother) and a lion mask called *Sing Keo Sing Kham*. They are part of the pantheon of the *Thevada Luang* who are followers of the Buddha.<sup>80</sup>

*Naga* refers to protective water spirits resembling giant water serpents. They are much revered all over Mainland Southeast Asia. The Thais in the Northeast and the Laotians believe that *Naga* reside in the Mekong River where they would annually celebrate the beginning of Lent by lighting fireballs from under the River, which can be seen from the Mekong banks. They are also ancestral spirits of the Khmers and protectors of the Buddha. Some believe that they also reside in caves, ponds, and springs, and mediation needs to be made with them through offerings in order to use water from these sources.<sup>81</sup>

The cult of the *village guardian spirits* is most commonly practiced in Viet Nam. In each village, the *dinh* or shrine for the village guardian spirits is the focal point of the village. The spirits are in a way similar to the Burmese *nats* since they were human in their past lives, but are conditioned to become village guardians because of their connections with a specific village or the nature of their deaths. The spirits are named, appointed, and controlled by the Vietnamese Emperor.<sup>82</sup> A community is only officially acknowledged as a village when it has its own guardian spirits appointed by the Emperor.<sup>83</sup> Usually a village has a *dinh* and a *chua* (Buddhist pagoda) which reflect a mixture of beliefs of the Vietnamese.

Therefore, though Buddhism is practiced throughout the region, it is not canonical Buddhism, but is rather infused with influences from Hinduism and Animism as well as Confucianism in the case of Viet Nam. This point should be noted before taking a further research into material and immaterial cultures of the region which reflect this mixture of beliefs. Nisbett (2003: xvii) explains that the members of different cultures differ in the 'metaphysics' or the fundamental beliefs about the nature of the world, and their thought processes are influenced by the metaphysics. Therefore, people's worldviews and social practices are governed by these beliefs.

### **Traditional Concepts of Materiality and Time**

There are three major Buddhist concepts which play a very important role in shaping traditional views on materiality in Mainland Southeast Asia; especially on what materiality means and how it is interacted with. 'Traditional' here refers to the period before Western Colonization.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Charles F. Keyes, *The Golden Peninsula : Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia* (Honolulu : University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 191.

<sup>83</sup> Niel L. Jamieson, *Understanding Vietnam* (Berkeley and Los Angeles : University of California Press, 1995), 29.

## Impermanence

The first concept deals with impermanence, which is one of the key concepts of Buddhism. Impermanence (*Anicca*) is one of the three basic facts of existence. As mentioned before, the other two facts are Suffering or *Dukkha* and No-self or *Anatta*.

The Buddha explains that all sentient beings consist of five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) including materiality or matter, feeling, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness. When asked what is permanent, the Buddha answered: "There is no materiality whatever, O monks, no feeling, no perception, no formations, no consciousness whatever that is permanent, ever-lasting, eternal, changeless, identically abiding forever."<sup>84</sup>

Impermanence means that all things are constantly changing in nature. There is not a single thing that stays unchanged. Realizing this truth, it is not possible to cling onto a being and think of it as being eternal. It is this inherent characteristic that makes a cycle of life – birth, death, and rebirth. Things perish because of this inherent nature, and not by other outside factors.

Impermanence makes changes possible, and with these changes, new things can happen. As a result, it keeps the world in its rhythm and allows changes for the better.

Sand pagodas as well as other Buddhist ephemeral offerings such as flowers and candles reflect impermanence. However beautiful or magnificent, everything is going to decline and perish. This is well observed by a Buddhist monk, Piyadassi Thera:

It is a common sight in Buddhist lands to see the devotees offer flowers and light oil lamps before a Buddha image. They are not praying to the Buddha or to any 'supernatural being'. The flowers that fade and the flames that die down, speak to them of the impermanency of all conditioned things.<sup>85</sup>

Thus, when Buddhist structures are built, the buildings are there as source of merit, and in another way as reminder of impermanence. They are not meant to last. Their impermanent nature also allows maintenance and repair<sup>86</sup>, which will yield further

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<sup>84</sup> "The Three Basic Facts of Existence: I. Impermanence (*Anicca*)", with a preface by Nyanaponika Thera. [Access to Insight](http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/various/wheel186.html) [Online], accessed 7 June 2009, Available from <http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/various/wheel186.html>

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Maintenance "means the continuous protective care of the fabric and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction." (Burra Charter Article 1.5)

Restoration means "returning the existing *fabric* of a *place* to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material;" (Burra Charter Article 1.7) "to reveal the original state within the limits of existing material...to reveal cultural values and to improve the legibility of its original design." (Management Guidelines for World Cultural Heritage Sites)

Renovation entails refurbishing and/or adding to the appearance of an original building or elements of a building in an attempt to "renew" its appearance in keeping with contemporary tastes and perceptions of "conservation. (Hoi An Protocol for Best Conservation Practice in Asia)

merit to those undertaking the works, and creates continuity of spiritual value and function. This concept of impermanence penetrates into the beliefs of the people in the region and is reflected in their notions regarding built materials, as stated below.

The buildings are all made of crumbling, sun-dried brick, for it is enough to gratify the pious feeling of the moment, and even the long years that the most solidly built stone edifices might last would only be as an evanescent drop in the stream of eternity. Thus the Burman sees no harm in building pagodas of sand, or even cloth and pasteboard, and in the national annals the victory which false shrines won over more substantial erections is a favourite theme.<sup>87</sup>

However magnificent they are, it can be said that Buddhist buildings are not built to showcase architectural grandeur or skills of builders but rather to symbolize and to express faith in Buddhism. With the prevailing rule of Impermanence, it is generally recognized that pagodas are not intended for posterity.

### **No-Self**

The concept of no-self (*Anatta*) is another side of impermanence. When everything is impermanent and is in an ever-changing state, it can be said that everything is empty of self, since there is no single permanent self that can be held onto. No-self is also described as ‘interdependence’, which means that an existence is a result of various different causes that come together, as pointed out by Rahula (1996: 53) that “...nothing in the world is absolute. Everything is conditioned, relative and interdependent. This is the Buddhist theory of relativity.” The Vietnamese Zen monk, Thich Nhat Hanh (1999:132), explains further that:

When we look deeply into impermanence, we see that things change because causes and conditions change. When we look deeply into nonself, we see that the existence of every single thing is possible only because of the existence of everything else. We see that everything else is the cause and condition for its existence...From the point of view of time, we say ‘impermanence’ and from the point of view of space, we say ‘nonself’.

Ideally, there is a need for all to view the world as an interdependent entity. This concept of interdependence is important to the conservation of material culture in the region and shows that the local community is crucial, since, “a pagoda is dependent upon people worshipping around it for its very being. (It) is this action that provides its meaning”.<sup>88</sup> The community of monks (*Sangha*) is dependent on the local community while the local community looks up to the monks and depends on them as spiritual leaders. This shows a truly interdependent society in a physical and spiritual sense.

Interdependence also applies to the Animistic world of Mainland Southeast Asia. Many folk societies are concerned about maintaining a balance and a good

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<sup>87</sup> Sir James George Scott (Shway Yoe), *The Burman : His Life and Notions* (New York : Norton Library, 1963), 159.

<sup>88</sup> Jamie MacKee, *Restoring Non-Secular Heritage in South and Southeast Asia in the Aftermath of a Natural Disaster* [Online], accessed 6 February 2009, Available from <http://www.aicomos.com/wp-content/uploads/jamiemackee.pdf>

relationship between the spirits and the living. This balance can be achieved through offerings and different rites and rituals performed regularly to please the spirits and gods. When a balance is maintained, the wellbeing of the living is ensured by the spirits. Interdependence is therefore crucial in maintaining a balanced society.

### **Merit**

The concept of merit is directly related to the popular Buddhist cosmology which consists of tiers of hells, earth, and heavens. Generally, a person can become a higher being in the next life when one has acquired enough merit.

According to Buddhism, merit is a practice of virtuous conduct which means “a kind of spiritual energy that can be accumulated when we maintain a steady practice. This energy protects us and brings us joy and insight.”.<sup>89</sup> Merit is generated from giving, virtue, and meditation. All of these, combined with a wholesome volition (*kulasacetana*), and the degree of sanctity of the person who commits the deed, condition the amount of merit to be gained, as pointed out by Shway Yoe (1963:158) that “the merit is strictly proportioned to the degree of sanctity or perfection of him who receives the alms. Hence the glorious release which awaits an otherwise bad man who erects a pagoda.”

Throughout history, Buddhist Kings in the region maintained a tradition of building and repairing a large number of pagodas and monasteries because of the belief that by doing so, merit would be gained. The practice is not limited to court elites, but is also performed by commoners. Shway Yoe also commented on the act of pagoda building as follows:

No work of merit is so richly paid as the building of a pagoda. The Paya-taga (pagoda builder) is regarded as a saint on earth, and when he dies he obtains the last release; for him there are no more deaths...the Paya-taga is finally freed from the three calamities...and he attains the holy rest. Little wonder then that...the pious man hoards his wealth for such an object, and that pagodas are so plentiful in the land.<sup>90</sup>

An act of repairing a pagoda is also believed to cause a lot of merit as commented below in the *Chulakanti Pakorn*, an amendment chapter of the *Mahavagga* as cited by Khanjanusthiti (1996: 128).

In the case of the stupa that falls into a ruinous state, without anyone to look after it, is situated in an unsuitable place, ..., if any merit-seeking individual intervenes with it in any respect or dismantles and restores it into its normal condition, he will receive as great merit as in the case of the royal doctor, Jivaka Komarabacca, who bled the bad blood from the Lord Buddha.

There are variations on how much merit can be gained from repairing pagodas in different societies. In Myanmar, there is a belief that pagoda repairs will only yield merit to original founders, and that building new pagodas is a better way than to repair old ones, unless they are one of the great pagodas. As a result, pagodas are

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<sup>89</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, *Opening the Heart of the Cosmos : Insights on the Lotus Sutra* (Berkeley : Parallax Press, 2003), 83.

<sup>90</sup> Scott (Shway Yoe), *The Burman : His Life and Notions*, 153-154.

most plentiful in Myanmar than in other places in the region. Shway Yoe has provided an explanation as follows:

It avails little to repair a previous dedication, unless it be one of the great world shrines at Rangoon, Pegu, Prome, or Mandalay. In the case of ordinary pagodas the merit of the repair goes practically entirely to the original founder. Hence that puzzle the Europeans, the building of a bright new place of worship close to one which a very little care would save them from crumbling away into a simple tumulus.<sup>91</sup>

The beliefs in merit also inspire local artisans to work with great devotion on religious architecture and objects since their works were a kind of religious offerings. Dedication purifies their mind while merit gained brings them closer to Nirvana. This has created different masterpieces and styles which were later divided into different schools of religious arts. It should be noted, though, that the efforts to produce the most beautiful pieces of religious architecture or objects were dedicated purely to religion and the works were not viewed as arts, but as places and objects of worship.

These three concepts have shaped how the people in Buddhist countries view their cultural materials; firstly, they are not meant to last; secondly, they exist through interdependence; and, thirdly, in most cases, restoration of Buddhist sites and objects, which are the representation of Buddha, will bring about merit.

### **Historical Time and Ultimate Time**

The concept of time in the mind of the Buddhists is distinctly different from the Westerners'. It is observed that people in the East "did not grasp the concept of time quantitatively...".<sup>92</sup> This non-historical concept is very specific to Buddhist traditions.

The *Sasanavamsa*, a Pali chronicle written in 1867 during the fifth Buddhist Council held in Mandalay, recounted four events when the Buddha came to the area of present-day Myanmar. A story of the Buddha's visit to the city of Aparata in present-day Myanmar mentioned that *Naga* and God *Indra* (called *Sakka* in the chronicle) joined the celebration of the Buddha's visit to the land where he left a footprint which has been revered by the local people until nowadays. Another account is made on the *Mahamuni* Buddha image, now enshrined in Mandalay, saying that it was built by God *Indra* following a visit from the Buddha to Arakan.<sup>93</sup>

These accounts can easily be challenged by present research, for it is unlikely that the Buddha as a historical person would be omnipresent, but they were never questioned by Buddhists. Some see them as being the localization of Buddhism in order to enhance faith and pride among worshippers, but it can also be due to the Buddhist concept of time.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>92</sup> Pinraj Khanjanusthiti, "Buddhist Architecture : Meaning and Conservation in the Context of Thailand" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of York, 1996), 167.

<sup>93</sup> Bischoff, Buddhism in Myanmar : A Short History, 23-26.

In Buddhist tradition, time can be perceived in two dimensions. The first is the historical dimension, and the second is the ultimate dimension.<sup>94</sup> The historical dimension is what happens according to a time line, but the ultimate dimension is perceived through the mind and held as an absolute, where there is no time and no space. In a sense, the ultimate dimension is where and when the mind realizes its own true nature or the nature of Buddha. As a result, Buddha can be perceived in both historical and ultimate dimensions. In the historical dimension, he passed away about two thousand five hundred years ago, but in the ultimate dimension, the nature of Buddha is presented everywhere, and that is Nirvana. Therefore, the unlikely visits from the Buddha in the region as recorded in Buddhist texts are symbolic, and refer to the ultimate time, not historical time.

In the Buddhist cosmology, time as explained in the *Tribhumigatha* (a Buddhist Cosmology), written in the Sukhothai period by King Lithai, was divided into a series of millions of years whereby everything would be destroyed and renewed at the end of each series. Since time is repetitive in all scales, from cycle of life up to cycle of the universe, time in Buddhism is perceived as intertwined, continuous, and repetitive. However, this cycle of time is breakable through the realization of one's own Buddha nature. Thus, the religious value, or the nature of the Buddha, is timeless.

### **Traditional Views on Past Material Remains and Conservation**

#### **Concept of Significance of Past Material Remains**

In traditional Mainland Southeast Asia, which refers to the period prior to Colonization, built properties and objects could be divided loosely into the sacred, the semi-sacred, and the secular. The sacred ones, such as religious buildings, places of worship, and objects, were representations of religious and spiritual beliefs. Their meaning extended beyond their age, form, and materials used. They were taken care of by the community of monks and the faithful in order to represent spiritual faith and to maintain their spiritual value. In a temple, there were two main kinds of buildings; the first included monastic buildings such as ordination hall, multi-purpose hall, and monk's dwellings; and, the second included the pagodas (sometimes are called *stupa*, *cetiya*, or *chedi*). Materials used for constructing both kinds of buildings were different. Usually the pagodas were constructed using more durable materials such as brick while monastic buildings were built by wood. This difference signified the need to provide stability for the safekeeping of the relics, which were deemed the most sacred. As a result, this implied a sense of the significance to the pagodas, as shrine of the Buddha's relics, more than other parts of monastic buildings which were for everyday use. Shrines of other religions also fall in this category.

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<sup>94</sup> Thich, Opening the Heart of the Cosmos : Insights on the Lotus Sutra, 1-4.



### 1. The Shwezigon Pagoda in Myanmar<sup>95</sup>

The semi-sacred ones were exclusively related to monarchy, especially royal palaces and regal objects. Because of influences from Hinduism, Kings in traditional Mainland Southeast Asia possessed a God-like status and were perceived as semi-divine. Since Buddhism became the main regional religion, Kings had been viewed as Buddha-kings who would maintain and protect the kingdoms through their virtues. The semi-divine character extended to all royal possessions making them semi-sacred. The royal palaces in Mainland Southeast Asia were usually built following a Hindu-Buddhist *mandala* symbolizing each palace as center of the universe where the king – ruler of the universe- resided. This gave a symbolic meaning to the royal palace which was called ‘*prasada*’ in Sanskrit meaning ‘temple’ and ‘palace’.<sup>96</sup> However, the symbolic meaning of the palace as center of the universe was not fixed in space, and the palaces tended to move a lot following personal and political situations. As a result, royal palaces were not viewed as monuments and they were usually not constructed using permanent materials.<sup>97</sup> Early records of Francis Garnier written in the 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D. mentioned that the Lan Xang Royal Palace as well as residences of aristocrats was built of hard wood. Only monks were allowed to build their residences with stone while commoners lived in small huts with thatched roof.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>95</sup> V.C. Scott O’Connor, *Mandalay and Other Cities of the Past in Burma* (London : Hutchinson & Co., 1907)

<sup>96</sup> John Miksic, “Jacques Dumarçay: The Palace of South-East Asia. Architecture and Customs”, *Bulletin de l’École Française d’Extrême-Orient* 79, 1 (1992) : 299.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Sophie Clément- Charpentier and Pierre Clément, *Huean Lao Lem Nueng* (L’habitation lao dans les regions de Vientiane et de Louang Prabang), trans. Sounanta Kanlaya Kattiyasak, Keopilavan Apailat, Viengkeo Souksavatdi, Apixaiyadet Insixiangmai (Vientiane : Champa Kan Pim, 2003), 3-4.



## 2. The Mandalay Palace<sup>99</sup>

The secular ones, such as houses and objects of everyday's use, were important because of their functions. They were constantly repaired and renovated so as to make them functional, and their significance lasted as long as they were used. When no longer functional, they were simply discarded or adapted to suit other uses. French researchers, Sophie Clement-Charpentier and Pierre Clement, noted that the palace of the Chao Ratchasamphan or the Prince of the Back Palace in Launag Prabang built in the 1900s was constantly being renovated and replaced by new materials.<sup>100</sup>

Therefore, places and objects which held the highest significance in the eyes of the public and generated the desire among the public to conserve were only sacred sites and objects. Semi-sacred sites, though symbolic, were viewed as living private properties, and, same as secular sites and objects, were not regarded as things to be conserved or to be passed on by and to the public. Judging from the long standing traditions of repairs and an interaction between religious sites and people, religious sites and objects in a traditional sense were organic living entities constantly shaped and cared for by human actions resulting from a complex beliefs system. To sever an interaction between human and religious sites and objects is to rob the sites and objects of their meanings.

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<sup>99</sup> V.C. Scott O'Connor, Mandalay and Other Cities of the Past in Burma (London : Hutchinson & Co., 1907)

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.



3. An example of a traditional Mainland Southeast village<sup>101</sup>

### What is Conservation?

In traditional Mainland Southeast Asia, works done on both religious and secular structures usually fall under ‘renewal’ and ‘repair’. As Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, Director General of the Department of Heritage of Lao PDR, stated, “there are no vernacular words for museum, conservation, preservation, restoration in the traditional Laos language. Vernacular words exist only for ‘repair’.”<sup>102</sup>

The *Tripitaka* mentioned the first ‘repair’ of Buddhist structures since after the great passing away of the Buddha, and suggested that the Buddha was agreeing with ‘repair’ as follows:

... O Monks, the Buddha commended the repair of dilapidated dwellings of monks.  
We should repair the dwellings in the early months of the year...

(the *Tripitaka* Vol. 7, *Vinaya Pitaka* Vol.7, *Panjasatikakhanthaka*)

While Buddhism teaches of Impermanence, repair is not in contrary with the teaching for the desire to repair is related to nature conservation and the wise use of resources, which is also addressed by Buddhism. According to an abbot monk, in fact, to think of all matters as being impermanent and then neglect care and maintenance of those matters are against the nature of Buddhism, since it does not follow the law of Nature. However, to care for and to maintain something so that they remain in good use, but

<sup>101</sup> V.C. Scott O’Connor, *Mandalay and Other Cities of the Past in Burma* (London : Hutchinson & Co., 1907)

<sup>102</sup> Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, “Development of Museums in Laos,” paper presented at ASEAN Museum Directors Symposium, Singapore, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007.

always to realize that no matter what care is being taken, nothing will last, is what should be kept in mind for Buddhists.<sup>103</sup>

Wijesuriya (2005: 34) added that the significance of the religious heritage makes it impossible to present them in a ruined or dilapidated condition – a stupa should be seen “in its full functional state and convey the symbolic meaning it represents”. Since buildings materials decay, this can only be achieved through renewal by means of repairs which will provide continuity.<sup>104</sup>

As a result, nothing that has come to be used by monks is thrown away. If they fall into state of disrepair and can not be used in accordance with their original functions, they will be used in other ways so that are not wasted.

In the past, there were numerous records on the repairs of religious buildings and structures by Kings and commoners. In 1086, a Burmese King sent men, money, and materials to repair the Bodh Gaya, the place of Enlightenment of the Buddha in India.<sup>105</sup>

The earliest act of restoration in Thailand was recorded during the Sukhothai period, according to a 1345 inscription, when a Prince was ordained as a monk and then went on a pilgrimage to Lanka before returning to Sukhothai with Singhalese craftsmen to repair the Wat Mahathat monastery.<sup>106</sup>

In Viet Nam, Buddhist kings through time had sponsored the constructions and restorations of numerous temples, as well as in Cambodia and Lao PDR, since this constituted part of the duties of the *Buddharaja* or the Buddhist kingship.

In case of secular architecture, structures of different scales, such as city walls, palace buildings, and houses, were maintained in order to continue their functions and symbolic values. Since most secular structures were made of organic materials, they easily perished and were repaired or otherwise replaced by new structures, which implied a sense of continuation. There was not an attempt to preserve them in the same state as when it was built. The concept of renewal still played an important role in ancient societies as noted by Van Vliet (in Baker, Na Pombejra, Van de Kraan, Wyatt, 2005: 243) that a King of Siam, same as other Kings, “... had the walls of Ayutthaya wholly renovated and the palace and city greatly improved. He has built, renewed, renovated, and repaired more temples, towers, and pyramids<sup>107</sup> than any of his predecessors.”.

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<sup>103</sup> Interview with the abbot of the Wat Phra Chao Lan Tong temple, Chiang Saen, Chiang Rai, 6 November 2009.

<sup>104</sup> Gamini Wijesuriya, “The past is in the present” in *Conservation of Living Religious Heritage*, ed., Herb Stovel (Rome: ICCROM, 2005), 34.

<sup>105</sup> Than Tun, *Essays on the History and Buddhism of Burma*, (Edinburgh : Kiscadale Publications, 1988), 24.

<sup>106</sup> Pinraj Khanjanusthiti, “Buddhist Architecture : Meaning and Conservation in the Context of Thailand” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of York), 118.

<sup>107</sup> pagodas

In a sense, ‘conservation’ as practiced in traditional Mainland Southeast Asian societies focused on continuity of spiritual value, symbolic value, and function, rather than on authenticity of forms and materials.

The following discussion explores the concepts of value, authenticity, and continuity as related to conservation in traditional Mainland Southeast Asia.

### **Value**

One strong aspect of traditional conservation system for religious sites is that it aims to maintain spiritual value, not historical value. A record of events maintained by the Shwedagon Pagoda Trustees shows that the pagoda has been regularly repaired, reconstructed, and renovated since 1372 by different royal members and donations from the common people. The repair and regilding of the pagoda is scheduled at every 4 years.<sup>108</sup> When old materials are worn out, they are subsequently replaced with new ones. This system has given very little concern to material authenticity which relate to historical and aesthetic value. The pagoda has changed through time in terms of material and form, but it still remains the centre of Buddhist faith due to the fact that its religious value is still intact.

During the Ayutthaya period, K.Taisa (1707-1732) restored a gigantic reclining Buddha image at the Wat Pamok temple with consultation with monks. It was decided that the image be moved intact while the temple building had to be demolished to necessitate the work. It was noted that “it is not the architectural fabric but the spiritual representation of the Buddha that was the aim of the (conservation) to safeguard it”.<sup>109</sup>

King Mongkut of Siam spent 17 years (1853-1870) restoring the Phra Pathom Chedi Stupa in Nakhon Pathom and the restoration work was continued by King Chulalongkorn. Khanjanusthiti (1996: 122) observes that:

...the restoration of King Rama V typifies the ancient way of restoring stupas in Thailand by enclosing the original structure with a new one which is usually larger and taller and can be of a different style. This intervention on the monument emphasizes restoring to achieve its original glory without considering the archaeological and historical evidence.

The value of Buddhist sites and objects, therefore, never depends on the materials used, the greatness of those who built them or those who repair them, but on what they represent.

### **Authenticity**

Traditionally, Buddhist structures, as source of merit, were always changing because of repairs. Pagodas, for example, change in forms and materials when they were

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<sup>108</sup> Elizabeth Moore, Hansjorg Mayer, and U Win Pe, *Shwedagon : Golden Pagoda of Myanmar* (Bangkok : River Books, 1999), 160.

<sup>109</sup> Pinraj Khanjanusthiti, “Buddhist Architecture : Meaning and Conservation in the Context of Thailand” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of York, 1996), 119.

constantly repaired and renewed. There are no rules in the *Tripitaka* on how to repair a pagoda or a monastic building, but in Thailand, the Council of Elders or Maha Thera Samakhom added a chapter, *Chulakhanti Pakorn*, in the *Mahavagga*, regarding the restoration of ruined stupas and Buddha images as follows:

...actions done by people with good intentions are acceptable and considered to be acts of merit. Example of these include; the demolition of a ruined stupa and the rebuilding of a new one in the same place; the alteration of a ruined stupa in order to improve the structure; the demolition or dismantling of a stupa not of great beauty and rebuilding one which is more beautiful; the removal of stupa that had been situated in an unsuitable place to a new place deemed more suitable.<sup>110</sup>

The Sangha realizes an important role of the faithful on the survival of Buddhism. It was stated by the Thai Supreme Patriarch in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that if a religious structure such as pagoda is situated in an unsuitable place, which referred to a place where there would be no Buddhist to look after it, the whole structure can be removed to a place where there are Buddhists. If the structure can not be removed, it can be dismantled and its materials can be used to build a new one, even though the new structure is not the same in appearance as the original one.<sup>111</sup>

It is evident from the recommendations of the Council of Elders that there were concerns on the interdependency between the Buddhist community and the Sangha, the continuity of use, and the religious value, with least concerns on materials and forms of the places of worship.<sup>112</sup>

In case of Viet Nam, the Tran Quoc pagoda, one of the oldest pagodas in Hanoi built in the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D., was originally built by a river bank. Later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the river bank broke, and the pagoda was dismantled and rebuilt on an island in the middle of the West Lake which is its present location.<sup>113</sup>

Therefore, it is observed that Buddhists are more concerned with the authenticity of value rather than the authenticity of material. If the representation of Buddhism is still imbued in a Buddhist structure or object, that structure or object is deemed authentic in a true spiritual sense regardless of age, materials, or building techniques. This contrasts rather sharply with present conservation methods as also pointed out by Dawson Munjeri that “in a number of living cultural traditions, what makes a relic authentic is less what it was (in form) than what it did.”<sup>114</sup>

The concept of material authenticity did not apply to secular architecture and objects in traditional Mainland Southeast Asia either. The secular buildings, in particular, were not viewed as historical evidences, but as living environment, and were regularly repaired and rebuilt.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> There are guidelines in the *Tripitaka* on how religious structures should be constructed.

<sup>113</sup> Vietnamnet/DT, [Repairs commence at Hanoi's Oldest Pagoda](http://www.lookatvietnam.com/2009/06/repairs-commence-at-hanois-oldest-pagoda.html) [Online], accessed 21 February 2010, Available from <http://www.lookatvietnam.com/2009/06/repairs-commence-at-hanois-oldest-pagoda.html>

<sup>114</sup> As quoted in Hoi An Protocol for Best Conservation Practice in Asia, 2005

## Continuity

There are three aspects of continuity which relate to the conservation of tangible heritage in traditional Mainland Southeast Asia: the continuity of time, value, function.

Continuity of time is one significant concept in traditional Buddhist society; where time is seen as continuous with no break between past, present, and future; and existence is viewed as “continuation, but without identity”.<sup>115</sup>

Van Vliet, a Dutch merchant living in Ayutthaya, provided an account on a major restoration scheme of Buddhist structures undertaken by a King of Ayutthaya as follows:

The Siamese count the ages, or time, by thousand years and at the end of a period of a thousand years, they say that the whole country...is going to be reborn and renewed. Last year (1639) was the last of the previous age...(the King) would be the renewer of everything...by building and repairing many new temples...In view of this the king had all the principal temples in the entire country, and even in uninhabited place, repaired.<sup>116</sup>

By doing so, the King became the renewer of time who kept the cycle of time flowing and symbolized himself as semi-divine. The restoration, in this case, is part of a symbolic act to renew and restore the whole city to continue the life of the city. By way of renewing, it provides a continuity which “revive the cultural meaning, significance and symbolism”<sup>117</sup> attached to the city.

In many examples given in the previous paragraphs, it became clear that there is an interdependence between religious places and the faithful. Religious sites and buildings were conserved because they were the representation of Buddhism and sources of merit; and, at the same time, it was the faithful who provided meanings to the sites. This interaction between man and place is a continuation of spiritual value.

Regarding the continuity of symbolic value, one example took place in the early Rattanakosin period when Thai Kings worked hard to restore the symbolic values of Ayutthaya and to enhance the greatness of the new capital. King Rama I, for example, supervised the construction of Bangkok when:

...many shiploads of bricks were taken from Ayutthaya and Thonburi, where derelict buildings were completely demolished to furnish the basic materials from which new palaces, fortifications and monasteries were created...the decision to take bricks from Ayutthaya may have had ritual value: by using parts of the old

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<sup>115</sup> "The Three Basic Facts of Existence: I. Impermanence (Anicca)", with a preface by Nyanaponika Thera. Access to Insight [Online], accessed 7 June 2009, Available from <http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/various/wheel186.html>.

<sup>116</sup> Chris Baker and others, Van Vliet's Siam (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2005), 156.

<sup>117</sup> Herb Stovel, "Introduction" in Conservation of Living Religious Heritage, ed., Herb Stovel (Rome : ICCROM, 2005), 1.

buildings of the legendary capital, some of its glamour and greatness was transferred to the new city site.<sup>118</sup>

This probably happened because of the lack of resources or the haste in building a new capital, but in a way, instead of viewing the ruins of Ayutthaya as a dead history, King Rama I incorporated elements of Ayutthaya into the new city, and promptly revived the legacy of Ayutthaya. The King symbolically restored the old capital and continued the linkages between the two cities. In this case, the derelicts of Ayutthaya were much better used as construction materials and symbolic gestures to continue its life in another form, rather than being left as ruins of the past glory.

As part of an authenticity of value, Buddhist structures were maintained in order to be able to serve their functions. Most of the times, the repairs were not meant to beautify the structures, but to keep them functioning. Khanjanusthiti (1996: 135) observed the repair works taking place at the Wat Po temple in Bangkok in 1839 by King Chulalongkorn as follows:

The proposal of the restoration signifies the two different approaches to the care of a living monument. While the traditional methods of repair were undertaken without concern for the archaeological value of the structure, it is mentioned in the proposal that the objective of repairs is not to make the old look new as if they had been just constructed but to repair the dilapidated elements so that they retain their use and durability....Therefore, it is possible that the structures were seen not as historical architecture but functional and contemporary ones.

From the above observation, two important characteristics of the traditional care of religious sites and objects were highlighted; the first is that there was not a concern on archaeological or historical value of the material remains; and the second is that the material remains were seen as functional and contemporary regardless of age. When the religious sites and objects were used by the people, they continued to live and were sustained by care from the faithful.

In case of secular sites and buildings in traditional Mainland Southeast Asia, continuity was also a keyword, since the sites would never fall into a state of disrepair if they were continuously being used and thus constantly maintained.

As a result, it can be concluded that the traditional way to maintain all material remains was to allow them to be continuously used by the people in order to continue its value and function.

### **Traditional System of Conservation and Management**

The concept of merit was crucial to the construction and maintenance of religious sites in the region, while continuity of value and function remained an important factor to keep all types of sites alive. Traditional system of conservation and management of religious sites and objects was largely merit-based while the

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<sup>118</sup> B.J. Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History : From the Fall of Ayutthaya to Recent Times* (Bangkok : River Books, 2005) 65-66.

conservation and management of semi-secular and secular sites was based on functions.

### **Merit-based**

It is apparent that the faithful and the local community were willing to build and maintain places of worship since these deeds were to bring them merit. By the thirteenth century A.D., the maintenance, repairs, and management of places of worship in the region, both Hindu and Buddhist, were done by priests, monks, together with slaves donated.<sup>119</sup>

In the Khmer Kingdom of Angkor, there were inscriptions regarding slaves donated by the Kings and Queens to take care of temples. The slaves could consist of dancers, musicians, farmers, caretakers, healers, etc., as many as 80,000 people.<sup>120</sup> These people were attached to the temples for life and were responsible to various duties such as supplying the Brahmans with rice and food or maintaining the temples in good conditions.

The Buddha also allowed for monastery attendants, as stated in Mv.VI.15.2, who are:

...lay people whose job is to look after the affairs of the monastery. In feudal and pre-feudal days, these attendants would be given to a monastery by a king or other feudal lord. The origin story to the allowance suggests that in some cases the gift would encompass the inhabitants of an entire village. The tax revenues and corvée labor from the village, instead of going to the secular authorities, would go to the monastery. Apparently, one of the possible duties for monastery attendants was to farm for the monastery.

Monastic slaves were usually donated to monasteries by kings and queens and wealthy people. The kings of the Ayutthaya and Early Bangkok periods had a tradition to donate slaves for royal monasteries.<sup>121</sup> They usually were slaves captured from other countries and could not liberate themselves by paying back the money.<sup>122</sup> Other non-royal monasteries were cared for by the local community. In Pagan in present-day Myanmar, these slaves were called pagoda slaves. They often were the faithful who voluntarily turned themselves into slaves out of devotion. Sometimes Kings even donated their children as slaves.<sup>123</sup> When donating slaves, donors usually thought thoroughly about works to be done in a monastery and donated slaves who would be useful for those works.

In 1269, a donor dedicated a laksma - carpenter, and a panphay - blacksmith to a ruined monastery to carry out necessary repairs. Another donor dedicated eleven

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<sup>119</sup> Pinraj Khanjanusthiti, "Buddhist Architecture : Meaning and Conservation in the Context of Thailand" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of York, 1996), 124.

<sup>120</sup> Chitr Bhumisak, Tamnan Haeng Nakorn Wat (Legends of Angkor Wat) (Bangkok : Amarin Printing, 2008), 25.

<sup>121</sup> Pinraj Khanjanusthiti, "Buddhist Architecture : Meaning and Conservation in the Context of Thailand" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of York, 1996), 124.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Than, Essays on the History and Buddhism of Burma, 51.

slaves in the same year to his religious establishment so that they would be useful when necessity for repairs arose.<sup>124</sup>

It was generally believed that pagoda slaves gained merit from serving the religion and they would not go to hell in their afterlife. On the other hand, people who molested or harmed pagoda slaves would suffer in hell and would not attain nirvana.<sup>125</sup> However, it was noted that pagoda slaves in Pagan, at least in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D., were almost like an untouchable class. Though they were able to gain wealth and high social status, they usually married among themselves –since no one from outside the group wanted to marry them- and their services to their respective pagodas transcended to their children and grandchildren.<sup>126</sup>

Aside from slaves, some donors also donated lands to the monastery, so that they could be used for farming.<sup>127</sup> Some donated a building, such as a library or a pagoda, and continued to maintain them by dedicating lands, slaves, and funds, so that the repair of building and the objects were possible.<sup>128</sup>

A 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Laotian chronicle mentioned Vat Kaeo in Laung Prabang which received donations in form of “paddy fields, family of servants with their land to provide for the monks, family of servants to maintain the pagoda and supply materials for worship, as well as an important area of land”.<sup>129</sup> At another temple, Vat Visun, founded in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the names of servants and the dimensions of land donated to the temple were inscribed on a gold sheet.<sup>130</sup>

The donation of monastic slaves and land revenues had been a common practice in the traditional Theravada Buddhist kingdoms. It was an act of piety expected from *Dhammaraja*, but not a rule and could be changed according to circumstances. In Myanmar, for example, King Bodawpaya (1782-1819) revoked land rights of all monasteries, and selected only certain monasteries to receive land grants which were minimal, in order to increase royal lands and subsequently state revenues.<sup>131</sup> However, the tradition was widespread and was one of the core supports given to temples in the ancient time.

The case of Viet Nam was similar, and donation of land seemed to be a continuous practice of Buddhist Kings and Queens and wealthy people. Historical accounts mentioned that in the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D., pagodas enjoyed royal donations of public land. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D., a large piece of land was donated to a pagoda in Hanoi where “on all 126 acres rice was grown to make rice-cakes to feed monks; three acres

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>125</sup> O'Connor, Mandalay and Other Cities of the Past in Burma, 288-296.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Than, Essays on the History and Buddhism of Burma, 53.

<sup>128</sup> Than, Essays on the History and Buddhism of Burma, 32, 41.

<sup>129</sup> Michel Lorrillard, The Earliest Lao Buddhist Monasteries According to Philological and Epigraphic Sources [Online], accessed 7 June 2009. Available from

<http://laos.efeo.fr/spip.php?article14&lang=lo>

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Journey through Burma in 1936 (Bangkok : River Books, 1991), 115.

were given to pagoda keepers and the remaining part was given to inhabitants for pagoda festivities, and for alms to forsaken spirits.”<sup>132</sup>

Donations were also given to the temples by the faithful which could be used for maintenance and restoration.

In case of punishment, the law of Ayutthaya (1350-1767) stated that if one burnt a Buddha image for gold, the offender would be burnt alive to death.<sup>133</sup> This signified the strong reverence toward Buddhist objects of worship, which were protected by the highest form of punishments.

### **Function-based**

The value of monastic buildings was two-folded. Though constructing or repairing monastic buildings was a source of merit for the faithful, monks viewed monastic buildings as places of everyday use and repaired them according to their functions. According to the *Tripitaka*, the monks have a duty to keep monastic buildings in good repair.<sup>134</sup> Repair works of the pagodas and monastic buildings are referred to in the *Tripitaka* as ‘major affairs’ and a failure to undertake the major affairs will prompt a monk-to-be to fail in his probation.<sup>135</sup> Though the *Sangha* has a neutral view towards materiality, it is important to keep the temple properties in good order so as to maintain their functions and to keep a good relationship between the faithful and the *Sangha*.

Semi-sacred buildings and secular buildings in traditional Mainland Southeast Asian societies were also conserved and managed based on their functions. Their use<sup>136</sup> usually determined how they would be conserved. Private properties were to be taken care of by their owners. Public sites were taken care of by a local community, for example, ancient water wells in Hoi An have been maintained by the community who used the wells and they would continue to be used as long as they were functional. Even a palace was maintained as long as the present king wanted to continue to live there. If there were political shifts, it could then be abandoned and a new one built. Examples are quite abundant, especially in the ancient Burmese Kingdoms, where palaces moved 6 times in a period of 100 years though the dynasty remained intact.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Nguyen Thai Thu, ed., *The History of Buddhism in Vietnam* (Washington D.C. : The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008), 91.

<sup>133</sup> Pisit Charoenwongsa, “Cultural Heritage Management: A Royal Concern,” paper presented at the International Conference on Cultural Environment Conservation: An Integrated Conservation Approach Toward Sustainable Development, ?.

<sup>134</sup> Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "Buddhist Monastic Code II: Chapter 18", *Access to Insight* [Online], accessed 7 June 2009. Available from <http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/bmc2/bmc2.ch18.html>.

<sup>135</sup> Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "Buddhist Monastic Code II: Chapter 14", *Access to Insight* [Online], accessed 7 June 2009. Available from <http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/bmc2/bmc2.ch14.html>.

<sup>136</sup> Use means the functions of a place, as well as the activities and practices that may occur at the place. (Burra Charter Article 1.10)

<sup>137</sup> Miksic, “Jacques Dumarçay: The Palace of South-East Asia. Architecture and Customs”, *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 79, 1, 299.

## Summary

In traditional Mainland Southeast Asia, local beliefs combined with remnants of Hinduism and the practicing of Buddhism made the region one unique cultural melting pot. Material cultures of the region and their values are reflective of this beliefs system. The concepts of impermanence, non-self, merit, and time explained why the traditional people did not view heritage as source of historical value; did not preserve historical buildings and objects in their authentic forms; or, were keen to rebuild or repair old religious buildings. Traditionally, the concern was more on the preservation of the meaning imbued in a cultural material than the material itself. These concepts also governed how the people viewed and interacted with their cultural materials.

Material remains of the region could be divided into the sacred, the semi-sacred, and the secular. The most significant cultural materials in the mind of the people, which could be evident from what was conserved the most throughout history were only religious. Their roles as representation of faith and source of merit have made them invaluable for the people. At the same time, it was the people who used the sites who provided the meaning to them. It became apparent that continuity is a key concept in heritage conservation and that man is the key to provide that continuity – through the reproduction of meaning and continuous use and care.

The conservation and management of sacred sites were merit-based, meaning that all conservation acts done to the sites were based on the beliefs that merit would be gained. This has created a kind of devotion which prompted the Kings and Queens to donate slaves to the temples. The faithful and the local community also played an important role in maintaining religious heritage. As for other types of sites, public properties were cared for by the local public while private properties remained private matters.

It can be concluded that, up until before the Colonization period, material remains of highest significance in Mainland Southeast Asia only referred to religious buildings and objects, which were meant to be continued in order to maintain their roles as constant sources of merit, guiding the faithful to nirvana. Their conservation and maintenance largely depended on the faithful and the local community.

The next chapter will discuss how the traditional system of conservation and management of material remains gradually changed and how others values such as archaeological, historical, educational, economic, and nationalistic came into existence in Mainland Southeast Asia, as a result of an arrival of Colonialism in the mid nineteenth century.

## Chapter IV

### The Colonized Past

*...A new world has emerged, as Chateaubriand says in his Memoirs, 'Then the whole surface of the globe was changed: a new face of nature appeared; the curtain which had for thousands of centuries covered part of the earth was raised...There was exposed to view the wise and splendid East, whose mysterious history was mingled with the journeys of Pythagoras, the conquests of Alexander, and the memories of the Crusades, and whose perfumes were wafted across the fields of Arabia and the seas of Greece.'*

(Groslier, 1966: 153)

This chapter discusses the Colonization of Mainland Southeast Asia from the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., the European interests in past material remains of the region, the influences of the Westerners on the traditional worldviews, and the birth of tourism in Mainland Southeast Asia.

### Western Colonization

In the West, there were very little records of Southeast Asia before the arrival of the first Europeans in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Ancient geographers who gained knowledge of the region from commercial activities between Rome and India mentioned an *India extra Gangem* and its ancient port of Kattikara.<sup>138</sup> Marco Polo mentioned Burma, which was described to him by the Mongols, and Champa, where he passed by in 1285. His account encouraged other merchants, including the Venetian merchant Nicolo di Conti to follow his trail to Burma in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D., but Southeast Asia was still largely off the map.

In the late 15<sup>th</sup> and the early 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D., European travelers were finding their ways to the region in quest of spices. Malacca was landed by the Portuguese Alfonso de Albuquerque in 1511, who later established himself as governor there.<sup>139</sup> Albuquerque sent ambassadors to Ayutthaya where they obtained permission to trade. Once regular trading activities had developed, merchants started to explore the region more and more. By 1600, a number of missionaries and travelers from both Portugal and Britain had travelled to Burma and provided descriptions of their travels.<sup>140</sup>

In 1555 a group of Dominican priests went to the court of Cambodia and, in 1585, the Portuguese friar Antonio de la Magdalena visited Angkor. He provided a good historical record of the time when the Khmer King was reestablishing himself

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<sup>138</sup> Bernard Philippe Groslier, *Archaeologia Mundi : Indochina* (Geneva : Nagel Publishers, 1966), 131.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Luigi Bressan, "Introduction" in G.F. Marini, *A New and Interesting Description of the Lao Kingdom* (Bangkok : White Lotus, 1998), viii.

there.<sup>141</sup> In 1596, a publication titled *Itinerario...near Oost ofte Portugaels Indien* was published which revealed the secret sea routes of the Portuguese causing a period of 'gold rush' when Europeans were flocking to the newly discovered region.<sup>142</sup> A Jesuit mission was established in Fai-fo or Hoi An in Viet Nam in 1615 and Father Alexander de Rhodes who was there from 1624 – 1645 invented the transcription of Vietnamese language into romanized scripts, which formed the present Vietnamese written language. A Dutch merchant from Batavia, Gerit Van Wuijsthoef, went to Laos in 1641, where he had an audience with the King at the That Luang ceremony, and kept a journal of his voyage.<sup>143</sup>



4. Map of East and Southeast Asia in the 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>144</sup>

In 1662, King Louis XIV sent a mission of Roman Catholic priests to Ayutthaya during the reign of King Narai, and Ayutthaya became the seat of the Bishopric of the Far East. The French helped build the court and the city at the second capital of Lopburi. The missionaries were successful to convert Constantine Phaulkon, the Greek traveler who rose to the position of Principal Minister of Siam. This led to a strong anti-French and anti-Christian sentiment which ended the Siamese-French relationship when the new King ascended the throne.<sup>145</sup> At this period, there started to be more substantial accounts which contributed to the knowledge of the region such as the description of Siam by Simon de La Loubère in 1661 and an account of the Jesuit Father Bouvet in 1687, which provided the first Western comment on the antiquities of Siam.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Groslier, *Archaeologia Mundi : Indochina*, 131.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>143</sup> There are different spellings of his name including Wuysthof and Gérard Van Wusthof.

<sup>144</sup> Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe : Volume 1 The Century of Discovery* (London : The University of Chicago Press, 1965).

<sup>145</sup> H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Miscellaneous Articles : Written for the Journal of the Siam Society by His Late Royal Highness Prince Damrong* (Bangkok: Kuruspha Press, 1962) 108-109.

<sup>146</sup> Groslier, *Archaeologia Mundi : Indochina*, 134.

As contacts between the two worlds deepened, curiosity in history and antiquities of the East grew stronger among western scholars. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, systematic studies of China and India were taking shape, which led to a deeper understanding of Southeast Asia, as ancient texts from India and China were being studied. Commercial activities of the Europeans in the region, however, seemed to suffer due to the rivalry of powers in India by the British, French, and Dutch and the expulsion of missionaries from Viet Nam in 1750.<sup>147</sup> It was at this period, nevertheless, that complete maps of the region were produced, as well as the first explanation on the power of Angkor by Pierre Poivre in 1768.<sup>148</sup> In 1795, the School of Oriental Languages was established in France and the Collège de France offered courses in Sanskrit and Chinese languages.

In the early nineteenth century, traditional Mainland Southeast Asia was to change forever when Europeans started to take more interests in the region's resources as prompted by the Industrial Revolution. Industrial development in Europe and improvements in international communication, especially after the opening of the Suez canal, opened up new markets for commodities such as sugar, coffee, tobacco, and rice.<sup>149</sup>

In 1820s, different European nations began to launch commercial and political schemes in Southeast Asia so as to gain ownership of the abundant natural resources available and to secure their strategic positions in the region. Southeast Asia's location between India and China became important now that the British were seeking to secure the Eastern part of British India and to protect the sea routes to China.<sup>150</sup> France, a permanent rival to Britain, also had commercial interests in the region. The events that followed created political turmoil and the loss of independence among the traditional Kingdoms in Mainland Southeast Asia, which ended the Traditional era and separated the region by boundaries, not anymore by inhabitants or rulers.<sup>151</sup>

### **British Control of Burma**

In the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, the British had already firmly established their base in India and started to take an interest in Burma which was critical for the security of the eastern frontiers of India. Burma was also a strategic point from where the British were able to watch the French's activities in China. Even though the first attempt to establish their base there in 1753 was not successful as King Alaungpaya ordered a massacre of the whole staff of the British India Company,<sup>152</sup> the British, however, sent the first official delegation to Burma in 1795 in order to investigate possibilities for India to trade with China through Burma. A commercial deal was granted by the King who was not aware that the British was with an intention to keep out the French

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Norman G. Owen, David Chandler, and William R. Roff, eds., The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia (Hawaii : University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 77.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Terwiel, Thailand's Political History : From the Fall of Ayutthaya to Recent Times, 79.

<sup>152</sup> D. R. SarDesai, Southeast Asia : Past & Present (Colorado : West View Press, 1994), 102.

from trading with China and to assert their hegemony on Burma in the same manner as what they had done to India.<sup>153</sup>

In 1824, the British encouraged traditional vassal states of Burma including Arakan, Assam, and Tenasserim, whose territories overlapped with British India, to refuse to acknowledge Burma's suzerainty over them, which prompted the Burmese King Bodawpaya to annex Assam and marched to Arakan. This broke off the first Anglo-Burmese War which lasted from 1824-1826 resulting in the signing of the Yandabo treaty which forced Myanmar to cede the coastal provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim to Britain.<sup>154</sup> In the years that followed, the Burmese maintained a good relationship with the British hoping that they would be given back the two provinces. However, in 1850, a big fire broke off in Yangon and burnt down a major part of the city, which was becoming an important port. The Mayor of Yangon started to impose high duties on foreign vessels in order to use the revenue to rebuild Yangon. This combined with British illegal exports of bullion caused further commercial conflicts between the British and the Burmese which led to the Second Anglo-Burmese War in 1852 when the Lower Burma was annexed to British India.<sup>155</sup>



5. The capture of Ava by the British<sup>156</sup>

The new King, Mindon Min, who ascended the throne in 1853, gave up monopolies of many businesses except ruby, teak, and earth oil in favour of the British in exchange with weapons to help protect his throne. As a result, Britain was gaining more from its businesses in Burma and resumed its interest in building a railway to link China and Upper Burma. In 1878, King Thibaw, who began his rule by ordering a massacre on anyone that could be a treat for the throne, sent ambassadors to Europe in an attempt to establish a relationship with France as an act to balance out Western powers in Burma. The Anglo-French Treaty was signed in 1885 which generated a rumour that the Burmese gave to the French the royal concessions of teak and ruby

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 105-6.

<sup>156</sup> V.C. Scott O'Connor, Mandalay and Other Cities of the Past in Burma (London : Hutchinson & Co., 1907)

mining. Fear of an increasing French influence on Burma, the British was further angered by the refusal of the Burmese High Court to change its verdict against the Bombay-Burmah Company. Thus the Third Anglo-Burmese War took place in November 1885, when the British marched into the Mandalay Palace and assumed control over Upper Burma. The Burmese monarchs were exiled to India, ending the centuries-old Burmese monarchy and the independence on Myanmar.<sup>157</sup>



6. King Thibaw, the last King of Burma<sup>158</sup>

### **French Control of Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China**



7. French soldiers in Tonkin in 1884 (Source: [www.militaryphotos.net](http://www.militaryphotos.net))

In the 1820s, a large number of Catholic converts in Viet Nam disturbed the Confucianist Emperor Minh Mang so much that he ordered a persecution of French

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 114-5.

<sup>158</sup> V.C. Scott O'Connor, Mandalay and Other Cities of the Past in Burma (London : Hutchinson & Co., 1907)

missionaries and catholic converts. He also launched a decree to abolish all churches with a death penalty for converts, though it was argued that the decree never took a full effect. As a result, by 1836, Viet Nam closed its ports completely to European shipping.<sup>159</sup> With the desire to occupy Cochin China in order to open up a market in China, France, under the government of Napoleon III, took this opportunity to intervene. In 1858, France and Spain formed an expedition to Viet Nam claiming to save imprisoned missionaries since there were one French and one Spanish missionaries executed in that year. While Spain gave up after receiving a promise of non-persecution from the Vietnamese court, France continued the fight. In 1862 Emperor Tu Duc signed a treaty to, in addition to a huge financial compensation, cede three provinces in South Viet Nam including Saigon, or Cochin China, to France as well as to assure France that it would be the only foreign power in Viet Nam. The Emperor, also facing a difficulty of rebellions in the North, allowed five ports to be opened to France and allowed France to navigate the Mekong River. In 1867 France took over the whole South Viet Nam and gained a complete control over the Mekong Delta while the Vietnamese court still ruled Central (Annam) and North Viet Nam (Tonkin).<sup>160</sup> In 1884, after the death of Emperor Tu Duc, a treaty was signed between France and the court of Hue to acknowledge French protectorate in both Annam and Tonkin while the Emperor would still rule under French administration, which prompted battles between China and France.<sup>161</sup> However, in 1885, a treaty was concluded between China and France whereby China recognized French suzerainty over the whole Viet Nam and ended the nearly two thousand years of Chinese rule over Viet Nam.<sup>162</sup>

### **French Protectorate of Cambodia**

The Khmer Kingdom, after the fall of Angkor in 1431, gradually weakened and became a vassal state of Siam during the time of the Ayutthaya and the early Rattanakosin periods. In the late seventeenth century, the Vietnamese Nguyen dynasty also rose to power and started to claim Khmer territories in the Mekong Delta, while asking for tributaries from the Khmer court. The Khmer was facing a difficult situation and decided, in 1802, to send tributaries to both Siam and Viet Nam, thus accepting Cambodia's status as a vassal state of both kingdoms. This allowed both Siam and Viet Nam to intervene with internal affairs of the Khmer court and waged constant wars on the Khmer soils from 1830s until 1845. In the process, major parts of Cambodia were lost to both Siam and Viet Nam.

In an attempt to gain independence from the Thai and the Vietnamese courts, King Ang Duong wrote to Napoleon III in France in 1853 asking for the emperor's friendship, but the response from the French court was unknown.<sup>163</sup> After France took control of Cochin China in 1862, it claimed the Khmer territory under the Vietnamese protectorate as its own. In August 1863, upon the signing of a Franco-Khmer Treaty

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 116-7.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>161</sup> Keyes, *The Golden Peninsula : Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia*, 2003.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Owen, Chandler, and Roff, eds., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, 121.

by King Norodom, Cambodia had officially become a French protectorate.<sup>164</sup> There was a difficulty in installing King Narodom on the throne, as his royal regalia were kept in Bangkok, but later he was crowned with consent from both France and the Siamese court showing that Siam still maintained its influence on Cambodia. However, upon the signing of a Franco-Thai treaty in 1867, Siam gave up its suzerainty over the whole Cambodia under the condition that France recognized the provinces of Battambang and Siem Reap as belonging to Siam.<sup>165</sup> Later Siam was to cede Battambang, Siem Reap, and Sri Sophon to France in 1907,<sup>166</sup> which began a phase of French colonization of the whole Cambodia.

### **French Control of Laos and the Independence of Siam**

Siam had become a powerful state in the region since Ayutthaya. By the early Rattanakosin period in the late eighteenth century, Siam was exercising its powers over a the whole Laotian territory which, at that time, was divided into three Kingdoms including Wieng Chan in the Central plain, Luang Prabang in the North, and Champasak in the South. The arrival of France had caused many losses to Siam's territories. In 1868, after gaining a major part of Cambodia, France set up an expedition team led by Francis Garnier and Doudart De Lagr   to explore the Mekong River. The explorers mentioned that the five major Rivers of Indochina including the Red River, the Mekong River, the Chaopraya River, the Salaween River, and the Irrawaddy River should fall under France, otherwise it would be considered a grave mistake of the French government.<sup>167</sup> In two other occasions in 1883<sup>168</sup> and 1893<sup>169</sup>, French officers had expressed their wills to include the whole of Siam under its protectorate. The period of Western colonization took place during the reign of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn of Siam.

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<sup>164</sup> SarDesai, *Southeast Asia : Past & Present*, 120.

<sup>165</sup> Owen, Chandler, and Roff, eds., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, 122.

<sup>166</sup> Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History : From the Fall of Ayutthaya to Recent Times*, 223.

<sup>167</sup> Maha Sila Vilavong, *Pawatsat Lao Tae Buran Tueng 1946* (Lao History from the Past until 1946) (Vientiane : Rong Phim Sueksa, 2001), 181.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History : From the Fall of Ayutthaya to Recent Times*, 208.



8. In 1905, France gained control of the Thai province of Trad. (source: le Petit Journal)

After getting hold of Viet Nam, France seized the provinces of Sibsong Chao Tai and Hua Phan in 1887, which were parts of the Kingdom of Luang Prabang before the latter became Siam's vassal state. France claimed that these territories belonged to Viet Nam since Siam was not able to provide any substantial document to prove that they were part of Siam.<sup>170</sup> This led to another expedition by both French and Siamese officers along the Mekong River to facilitate the demarcation of border.<sup>171</sup> Upon an investigation on the border issue, France laid a claim that the Laotian Kingdom of Wieng Chan, including the lands on both sides of the Mekong River, was part of Viet Nam during the reign of the Laotian Prince Chao Anou in 1827,<sup>172</sup> therefore, they also belonged to France. In 1893, the situation between France and Siam worsened. Siam proposed for the issue of border to be submitted to international arbitration, but France rejected.<sup>173</sup> Following fights and conflicts over the border here and there, France sent a number of gunboats to the Chaopraya River and a fight broke off. The signing of a new treaty between France and Siam after the incident allowed the French to gain control of the left bank of the Mekong River.<sup>174</sup> As a result, the Laotian territory of Wieng Chan was divided and a majority of Laotians remained under Siamese control.

The British perceived a threat by the French to Myanmar and the Malay Peninsula which bordered Siam. Negotiations between the British and the French began after the 1893 incident, and, in 1896, an Anglo-French treaty was signed to guarantee the

<sup>170</sup> Vilavong, *Pawatsat Lao Tae Buran Tueng 1946* (Lao History from the Past until 1946), 184.

<sup>171</sup> Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History : From the Fall of Ayutthaya to Recent Times*, 206.

<sup>172</sup> Vilavong, *Pawatsat Lao Tae Buran Tueng 1946* (Lao History from the Past until 1946), 188.

<sup>173</sup> Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History : From the Fall of Ayutthaya to Recent Times*, 208.

<sup>174</sup> Vilavong, *Pawatsat Lao Tae Buran Tueng 1946* (Lao History from the Past until 1946), 198.

independence of the Chaophraya River basin which served as a neutral zone to safeguard both French and British interests in the region.<sup>175</sup> Once the French retreated from Bangkok in 1893, they seized the province of Chantaburi and set up their base there for over ten years. In 1904, France offered to return Chantaburi to Siam provided that Siam ceded parts of the land on the right bank of the Mekong River which belonged to the Kingdom of Luang Prabang to France, to which King Chulalongkorn of Siam agreed. This formed the totality of the Laotian Kingdom under French control and concluded the border conflict between France and Siam for the time being. However, France relocated from Chantaburi to the province of Trad, the village of Dan Sai, and to other small islands in the area. In 1907, France made a negotiation with Siam to return these lands in exchange with the provinces of Battambang, Siem Reap, and Sri Sophon.<sup>176</sup> France, therefore, got hold of an area titled “French Indochina” consisting of Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam, while the British ruled Myanmar which was considered part of the British India. Siam remained independent though it had lost a large portion of lands to both France and Britain.

Over the course of British and French colonization in the region, there were imperative cultural, social, and political changes taking place in the British Myanmar, the French Indochina, and Siam. For the first two, they were in accordance with the policies of the western powers, while for the last it was necessary in order to remain independent. It was now that slavery was abolished; modern school system was developed; and there was a big improvement in public infrastructure, communication, as well as in the health sector when modern medicines replaced traditional ones. The traditional administrative system also changed in favour of the Western system while traditional rulers were still allowed to rule in Laos, Cambodia, and Viet Nam under colonial administration.



9. August Pavie negotiating with Laotian princes in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Source: Wikipedia)

<sup>175</sup> Terwiel, Thailand's Political History : From the Fall of Ayutthaya to Recent Times, 211-2.

<sup>176</sup> W.A.R Wood, History of Siam (Bangkok : Chalermnit Book Shop, 1924), 107.

### European Interests in Antiquities from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. to 1940s

Since the Europeans came to Southeast Asia with a different and a sense of superiority over the local people, they saw their forms of administration as better than the local system; their intelligence higher than that of the indigenous people; and, their culture a superior form of civilization. The traditional lack of historical sense and archaeological enquiries puzzled the Europeans, who took the matter into their hands and assumed the duty of discovering and protecting lost and dilapidated heritage. Sir Stamford Raffles wrote:

(We must) collect the scattered remains of the literature of these countries...The rays of intellect now divided and lost will be concentrated into a focus from which they will be radiated...brightened...and strengthened by our superior lights...<sup>177</sup>

At this point, Theravada Buddhism had established as the main religion of the region. The only conserved material remains of the past were of religious significance. There was not a study of ancient inscriptions or architecture. Though there were chronicles kept of past events such as those of the Siamese and the Khmer courts, they mostly concerned daily activities and events related to an administration of the kingdoms. Historical buildings such as Khmer temples and Christian churches were appropriated for Buddhist use,<sup>178</sup> while archaeological sites were not given attention. It was owing to European scholars, who undertook the tasks to collect, compile, translate, and publish all the ancient texts; and, to explore and study the material remains of the region which shed more lights on the past of Mainland Southeast Asia.

The early studies of the history of Mainland Southeast Asia done by Western scholars were abundant. Some of them were completed in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century including books and accounts on History of Burma and its archaeological heritage, books on Cochin China, and Siam, written by missionaries and expatriates, and a translation of Chou Ta Kuan's A.D. 1296 account on Angkor. It was not until the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that interests in the past of the region reached its height with the 'discovery' of Angkor by the French naturalist Henri Mouhot in 1860. This greater interest in Khmer heritage arguably led to France's desire to control the province of Siem Reap, which was then under Siam.<sup>179</sup> It should be noted, however, that "when we say Mouhot discovered Angkor we mean only that he revealed it to Europe. For centuries the Cambodians had been living near the temple and were familiar with it..." and that the first study of Angkor was done at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century by a Japanese pilgrim named Shimano Kenryo under the Tokukawa Shoguns.<sup>180</sup>

At this period, Angkor gripped an interest of the Western world. A number of scholars and explorers of different nationalities contributed to the early study of Angkor including a recognition of the Indian origin of the religion and the script of Angkor by the German orientalist A. Bastian; an interpretation of symbols at Angkor

<sup>177</sup> Groslier, *Archaeologia Mundi : Indochina*, 254.

<sup>178</sup> H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Miscellaneous Articles : Written for the Journal of the Siam Society by His Late Royal Highness Prince Damrong*, 103.

<sup>179</sup> Owen, Chandler, and Roff, eds., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, 121.

<sup>180</sup> Groslier, *Archaeologia Mundi : Indochina*, 252.

Wat by the Scottish explorer John Thomson in 1866; and, the translation of the Cambodia royal chronicles arranged by Francis Garnier.<sup>181</sup> In 1873, Louis Delaporte took a quantity of sculptures and casts to France which gave birth to the first Indochinese museum at La Trocadéro in Paris and the general study of Khmer art.<sup>182</sup> The Cham monuments in Viet Nam were discovered in 1885, and were studied with less enthusiasm, since they were overshadowed by the grandeur of Angkor. The hype of this scholarly quest to discover the past of this region was described by Terwiel (2005: 80) as follows:

...by the late nineteenth century (the Europeans) were succumbing...to an “Orientalizing” impulse, quick to recognize and eager to study Southeast Asia’s distant and seemingly exotic past. French, Dutch, and British scholars gave early Southeast Asian history a chronological coherence it had lacked.

Southeast Asians were considered incapable... of self-government or modernity. To guide them slowly toward enlightenment, or merely to extend their own power, the colonists catalogued, counted, and evaluated local cultures, categorized the past, and “protected” vulnerable or even defunct institution.

### **France and the ‘Nationalization’ of Indochinese Past**

The colonial policy of France known as *mission civilisatrice* was applied in all the regions of Indochina the same as in Africa, and was used as a pretext of colonization. France justified that since the indigenous people were not civilized, France had a duty to educate them so that they “could become Frenchmen and thereby partake of all the advantages accruing to those who were French” by ways of either ‘assimilation’ or ‘association’.<sup>183</sup> In 1899, there were five administrative units in Indochina, including Cambodia, Tonkin, Annam, Cochin China, and Laos.<sup>184</sup> France established the position of Indochina Governor General, who took care of the matters of the whole region, and supervised the *Résident Supérieur* who acted like governor of each colonial unit. There were local *residents* who were in charge of administration of provinces. The Governor General of Indochina had his office in Cochin China while there were *Résident Supérieur* in both Annam and Tonkin. In Cambodia, the *Résident Supérieur* was in Phnom Penh. In Laos, Vientiane was made the seat of the *Résident Supérieur*. Though there were still royal families in Hue, Luang Prabang, and Cambodia, the French had made agreements with them so that they were still entitled to their traditional ways of living and ruling, though they had to relinquish monopolies which were the main sources of their revenues.

To make political centralization possible and to facilitate trading activities, a major development of transportation was taking place all over the region. Telegraphy was installed by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>185</sup> By 1940s there were roads connecting major cities in Viet Nam Laos, and Cambodia, though railways were only built in Viet Nam. Traditional administrative system was changed from client-patron

<sup>181</sup> Groslier, *Archaeologia Mundi : Indochina*, 156.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Keyes, *The Golden Peninsula : Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia*, 205.

<sup>184</sup> Grant Evans, *A Short History of Laos : The Land in Between* (Chiang Mai : Silksworm Books, 2002), 46.

<sup>185</sup> Keyes, *The Golden Peninsula : Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia*, 273.

relationship to impersonal bureaucracy. In Viet Nam, the French introduced an elective system of village notables, which was thought of as an introduction of democracy. However, this went against the traditional way and was not well received.<sup>186</sup> Most traditional leaders did not take part in the election and did not collaborate with the elected leaders, making it even more difficult for the French to administrate.

The *mission civilisatrice* also did not seem to take off very well in terms of education. Viet Nam was the first place in Indochina to receive French system education, but there were still observations that France did not pay real attention to educate the Vietnamese.<sup>187</sup> Though Cambodia became a French protectorate since 1865, the first modern school, Lycée Sisowath, was only established in 1936.<sup>188</sup> In Laos, the first junior secondary school, École Auguste Pavie, was established in 1921.<sup>189</sup> Prior to this, Cambodian and Laotian elites were to be sent to Saigon or to France to study, while commoners still went to monasteries to follow the traditional mode of education. Since the *lingua franca* of Indochina was French, there was a need to employ Vietnamese to work in the Indochinese administration, causing tension among the native Cambodians and Laotians. In 1937, there were 46 per cent of Vietnamese holding senior positions in the colonial administration in Laos.<sup>190</sup> The majority of population was still receiving rudimentary education.



10. A French Colonial school in Laos in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Source: [www.belleindochina.free.fr](http://www.belleindochina.free.fr))

There was also an air of colonial racism, which placed the French on top of the social hierarchy and the uneducated natives at the lowest. The *colons*, or the European inhabitants, did not much mingle with the natives, and preferred to live within their own community, which was not large. A census in 1937 revealed that the total number of Europeans and those who acquired French citizenship was only 0.18 per

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 206.

<sup>187</sup> Keyes, *The Golden Peninsula : Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia*, 215.

<sup>188</sup> David P. Chandler, *A History of Cambodia* (New South Wales : Allen & Unwin, 1993), 160.

<sup>189</sup> Evans, *A Short History of Laos : The Land in Between*, 49.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 47.

cent of the total Indochinese population.<sup>191</sup> In Laos, at most there were not more than several hundreds of *colons*.<sup>192</sup> There was also a case of *métis*, or the half-raced, who were looked down as those who broke the boundary between the pure race and the less civilized.<sup>193</sup> Though small in number, the French began to reconstruct ‘modern’ Indochina in accordance with their own ideologies, in order to transform traditional Southeast Asian states into France, but on the contrary, they still “associated themselves with the royal past”<sup>194</sup> in order to stress their political and cultural dominance in the mind of the natives.

Vientiane, when becoming a French protectorate, was in a ruinous state following the war with Siam and the invasion of Chinese Haw, the Black Flags, which left Vientiane as almost a deserted city. The That Luang pagoda, which was the heart of Laos, was badly destroyed when the Ho was digging the pagoda for treasures and because of lightning. Other temples in Vientiane were in dilapidated state, and the Royal Palace of Lan Xang was destroyed to the ground.



11. That Luang Pagoda in Vientiane destroyed by the Chinese Haw<sup>195</sup>

In 1900, the first administrator of Vientiane, Pierre Morin, decided to restore the That Luang pagoda resulting in “a monstrosity, the curved central *chedi* structure being replaced by an angular ‘Norman Tower’” and the entrance to the pagoda was also changed from the east to the west to facilitate an access to the pagoda by road, though the traditional entrance was by water.<sup>196</sup> In 1902, after Vientiane was made the seat of the *Résident Supérieur*, the French decided to build the permanent *Résidence* on the former ground of the Royal Palace of Chao Anou.<sup>197</sup> At the beginning of the French protectorate, the French also initiated a ceremony for the Laotian notables to pledge

<sup>191</sup> Keyes, The Golden Peninsula : Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia, 213.

<sup>192</sup> Evans, A Short History of Laos : The Land in Between, 59.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>194</sup> Askew, Logan, and Long, Vientiane : Transformations of a Lao Landscape (Oxon : Routledge, 2007), 93.

<sup>195</sup> August Pavie, Mission Pavie Indo-Chine 1879-1895 : Géographie et Voyages I Exposé des Travaux de la Mission (Paris : Ernest Leroux, 1901)

<sup>196</sup> Askew, Logan, and Long, Vientiane : Transformations of a Lao Landscape (Oxon : Routledge, 2007), 93.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

allegiance to France at Wat Sisaket using the traditional oath that was given to Laotian kings.<sup>198</sup> A royal palace was built in Luang Prabang by the French in 1904-1909 to replace the one destroyed by the Chinese in 1887, as means to please the King Sisavangvong, but at the same time to symbolize the dependency of the traditional rulers on the French. Under the French protectorate, the King undertook various restoration, preservation, and beautification projects in Luang Prabang. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, France was already ruling Laos both physically and symbolically.



12. Residence of the Résident Supérieure in Vientiane, 1903<sup>199</sup>

At the same time, France played a very important role in returning the 'lost provinces' to Cambodia. It was made more important for the fact that Angkor was returned. Angkor was always remembered by the Khmer as the spiritual centre and the glory of their kingdom. After the rediscovery of Angkor and the heightened interest in Angkor among the Europeans, Angkor's image had changed into a nostalgic symbol of the Khmer civilization, which later was to turn nationalistic. After Angkor was once again under Cambodia, a copy of Khmer *Tripitaka* was deposited in a monastery on the ground of Angkor Wat in 1909, and the Khmer monarchs, for the next 60 years, regularly visited Angkor Wat and conducted religious ceremonies there.<sup>200</sup> In Phnom Penh, France also built the Royal Palace in the traditional Khmer style for the Cambodian monarchy.<sup>201</sup> The French's restoration and rebuilding of royal palaces and residences in Hue, Phnom Penh, and Luang Prabang connotes a sense of nation building and signified a new period of these traditional states which were 'creations' of the French civilization.

<sup>198</sup> Evans, *A Short History of Laos : The Land in Between*, 69.

<sup>199</sup> Askew, Logan, and Long, *Vientiane : Transformations of a Lao Landscape* (Oxon : Routledge, 2007), 83.

<sup>200</sup> Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 150.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

### The *École Française d' Extrême-Orient*

In 1865, the *Société des Études Indochinoises* was founded in Cochin China (Saigon) to conduct studies on the French Indochina. The *Mission archéologique d'Indochine* was established in 1898 by Paul Doumer, the Indochina Governor General, in order to carry out research activities in history, language, and heritage of Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam.<sup>202</sup> Two years later there was a decision to establish a “permanent scientific (organization) to study the history of its colonies”.<sup>203</sup> France, through the *Académie de Inscriptions and des Belles Lettres*, thus, created the *École Française d' Extrême-Orient* in January 1900 in Saigon, following a model implemented in Greece, Italy, Spain, and Egypt, to replace the *Mission archéologique d'Indochine*.<sup>204</sup> Its first director was Louis Finot, a famous Sanskrit epigraphist. The EFEO was equipped with a library and a museum. In 1902 it was moved to Hanoi. The first mission of the EFEO was to conduct an inventory monuments and inscriptions in both Champa (led by Henri Parmentier) and Angkor (led by Lunet de Lajonquière) even though Angkor was still under Siamese protectorate then.<sup>205</sup>

In 1908, after Siam retroceded to France the provinces of Battambang, Siem Reap, and Si Sophon, the EFEO undertook the responsibility to study and conserve Angkor by setting up the *Conservation d' Angkor* in Siem Reap.<sup>206</sup> The first task was to clean up the “first-ranked” monuments including Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom in order to give them access for scholars and visitors, which took more than 20 years to complete.<sup>207</sup> It was also pointed out that the clearing of vegetation had two purposes. Some monuments such as Ta Phrom were left in the state of ‘controlled vegetation’ in order to “satisfy the romantic aspect of the Angkorian myth” and to promote restoration works conducted at other temples.<sup>208</sup> The second phase of the mission began in 1916 to still clear up the monuments and to conduct some partial consolidations of the temples without much success. The third phase started when the anastylosis method, which was popular in Europe, was employed as suggested by a Dutch director of the Indonesian archaeological department who visited Angkor in 1929. By this method, a number of temples were restored- the first being the Banteay Srei temple.<sup>209</sup> At the same time, a number of research activities on Angkor were taking place.

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<sup>202</sup> Michel Lorrillard, “100 ans de recherche de l’EFEO au Laos,” paper presented at Centre culturel et de coopération linguistique de Vientiane, Lao PDR, 15 June 2001.

<sup>203</sup> Christophe Pottier, “The Contribution of the École Française d’Extrême-Orient with Respect to the Cultural Heritage of Angkor during the Past 100 Years” *Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* 18 (2000) : 254.

<sup>204</sup> See Lorrillard “100 ans de recherche de l’EFEO au Laos,” paper presented at Centre culturel et de coopération linguistique de Vientiane, Lao PDR, 15 June 2001; and Christophe Pottier, “The Contribution of the École Française d’Extrême-Orient with Respect to the Cultural Heritage of Angkor during the Past 100 Years” *Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* 18 (2000) : 254.

<sup>205</sup> Pottier, “The Contribution of the École Française d’Extrême-Orient with Respect to the Cultural Heritage of Angkor during the Past 100 Years” *Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* 18, 254.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*

It should be noted that the major temples were still in relatively good condition when the French arrived. Though Siam never attempted to restore the temples, they were left intact, despite a failed attempt to relocate some small temples to Bangkok by King Mongkut months before the rediscovery of Angkor by Mouhot.<sup>210</sup> It was reported to the King that, in April 1860, when Thai officers together with Khmer workers were trying to dismantle the ‘Phathai Taphrom’ temple in Siem Reap which consisted of two towers, a large group of angry natives, about 300 in total, came out of the forest and attacked the officers causing several deaths and injuries. The King therefore canceled his plan.<sup>211</sup> The incident was also mentioned in a letter from Father E. Silvestre, a French missionary based in Battambang, to Henri Mouhot in the same year. The ‘angry natives’ were by no means barbaric since they involved “the mandarins of Ongkor” as well as a son of the late Governor of Battambang.<sup>212</sup>



13. Angkor Wat in 1866 with small huts in front of the temple (source: [www.mamatus.centerblog.net](http://www.mamatus.centerblog.net))

This incident demonstrated a strong sense of ownership of the temples among the local people. In fact, since the fall of Angkor, the temples had been maintained by the local communities, worshippers of Buddhism and Neak Ta, who continued to live in surrounding villages in a succession of generations.<sup>213</sup> It is noted that “the exceptional condition of the temple today results not from modern restoration work, but rather from continued care by the faithful, as well as the skills of its original constructor”.<sup>214</sup>

<sup>210</sup> Chao Praya Tipakornwong, *Phra Ratchapongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan Tee See* (Royal Chronicles of the Rattanakosin Period during the Reign of King Rama IV) (Bangkok : Kurusapha, 1961), 224.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>212</sup> Henri Mouhot, *Travels in the Central Parts of Indo-China (Siam), Cambodia, and Laos, during the years 1858, 1859, and 1860* (Bangkok : White Lotus, 1986), 285.

<sup>213</sup> Khoun Khun-Neay, “Angkor : A Living World Heritage Site,” paper presented at the Workshop on Living Heritage: Empowering Community, Phrae, Thailand, November 2005.

<sup>214</sup> APSARA, *Angkor : Past, Present and Future*, 90.

The condition of Angkor Wat also suggested that the maintenance of the temple by the monks was continuous since the fall of Angkor.<sup>215</sup>

There were clashes of interest between the French conservation team and the local communities after the EFEO assumed authority in safeguarding Angkor. There was a big difference in the perspectives of the French and the local people on Angkor. To the French, Angkor was a dead civilization, the “Asian Atlantis”<sup>216</sup>, whose mystery had to be revealed by scientific studies and superior minds. To the local communities, Angkor was a living place of worship, a place for interaction between man and spirits, and a field of merit according to their concept of Buddhism.

European scholars had expressed for a number of times their unwillingness “to accept that the ‘backward’ natives peoples they encountered in Indochina could have been responsible for the great temples of Cambodia and Champa...”.<sup>217</sup> Their interpretations of the monuments and ways of working with the local communities, therefore, were sometimes “colonialist in slant”.<sup>218</sup>

By not accepting, or perhaps not realizing, the connection between the local people and the temples, the scholars were trying to select the most grandeur period of Angkor to show to the world, while severing other things thought irrelevant. They, for instance, dismantled the Buddha images on top of the Phnom Bakheng which were created in the 16<sup>th</sup> century thinking that they were not suitable for the Hindu mountain temple site.<sup>219</sup>

When the French arrived in Angkor, there were about twenty families living on the ground of Angkor Wat and, though there was not a monastery, monks were living on the temple ground and prayed in the gallery of Thousand Buddhas.<sup>220</sup> Angkor Wat until that point had remained a place of worship which was frequented by pilgrims from different places including Siam, as evident by notes made by the pilgrims on the wall of the gallery. The French ordered the monks to move, and allowed them to build two new monasteries at a distance from the building, but still within the compound, while statues were taken away from the temple without considering their significance to the local people.<sup>221</sup> The villagers were also expelled, so they built their new villages around Angkor Wat to the west and to the south. There were also villages in Angkor Thom during the Siamese occupation, but those were relocated after the French’s arrival.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Britt Baillie, “Conservation of the Sacred at Angkor Wat : Further Reflections on Living Heritage” *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 8 (2007) : 123.

<sup>216</sup> A term coined by Pottier

<sup>217</sup> Ian C. Glover, “Some National, Regional, and Political Uses of Archaeology in East and Southeast Asia,” in *Archaeology of Asia*, ed. Miriam Stark (Massachusetts : Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 27.

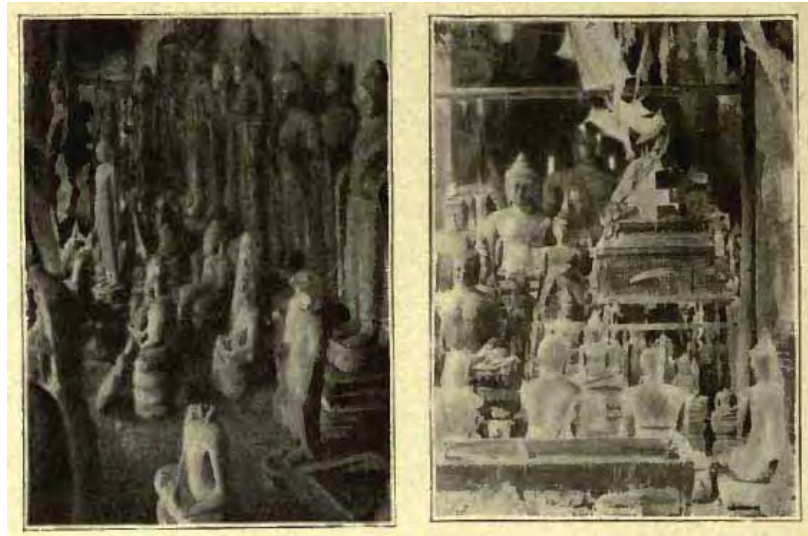
<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>219</sup> APSARA, *Angkor : Past, Present and Future*, 90.

<sup>220</sup> Miura, “Conservation of the Sacred at Angkor Wat : Further Reflections on Living Heritage” *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 7, 16.

<sup>221</sup> Baillie, “Conservation of the Sacred at Angkor Wat : Further Reflections on Living Heritage” *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 8, 125.

<sup>222</sup> Miura, “Conservation of the Sacred at Angkor Wat : Further Reflections on Living Heritage” *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 7, 16.



14. Buddha images at Angkor Wat in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>223</sup>

The local inhabitants lived on farming and collecting food and natural products in the forest that thrived in Angkor. When Angkor was declared Southeast Asia's first archaeological zone, *Parc d'Angkor*, in 1925, the local people were pushed away from the temples even more as there were different kinds of bans and regulations imposed. During this period, all conservation works were undertaken by French scholars who employed local Khmers as workers, but no actual training was given to the Khmers.<sup>224</sup>

In the late 1920s, the work on Khmer chronology by Philippe Stern and George Coedès challenged a number of hypotheses posed on Angkor. As a result, numerous archaeological excavations took place in order to find out more about the truth of Angkor.<sup>225</sup> Outside Angkor, restoration works and studies were also done on temples such as Koh Ker and many pre-Angkorian temples. Following an example of Conservation d'Angkor, a *Conservation de Cochinchine – Cambodge* was established in the 1930s and undertook restoration and excavation works at Phnom Chisor, Ashram Maha Rishi, Sombor, and Mlu Prei.<sup>226</sup> The knowledge on Angkor suddenly was, as stated by Pottier (2000:259), “radically different” from what was available ten years before.

The EFEO also played an important role to promulgate the first law for historic monuments in Cambodia in 1901 which was regularly updated until 1953.<sup>227</sup> George Groslier planned and designed the first museum in Cambodia in 1917 which was known as the *Musée du Cambodge* in Phnom Penh. Upon its completion in 1920, the museum changed its name to *Musée Albert Sarraut* in honour of the then French Governor General of Indochina. The museum was operated for its first 20 plus years

<sup>223</sup> J. Commaille, *Guide aux Ruines d'Angkor* (Paris : Hachette, 1912)

<sup>224</sup> Pottier, “The Contribution of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient with Respect to the Cultural Heritage of Angkor during the Past 100 Years” *Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* 18, 257.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

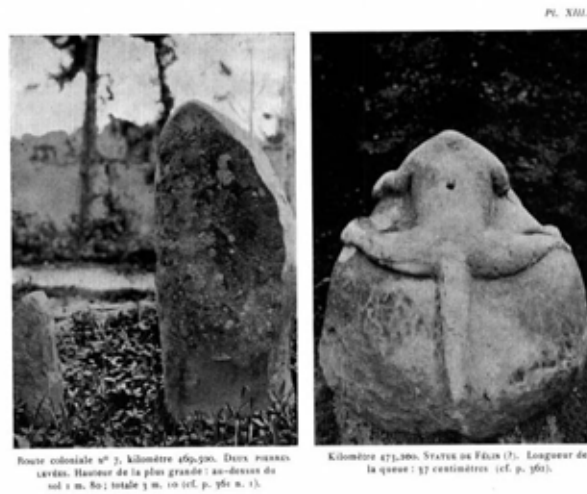
under the administration of scholars of the EFEO including Groslier, Jean Boisselier, and Solange Thierry. It was apparent that the French was in control of the Khmer heritage. The past glory of Cambodia was finally illuminated by the superior lights of the Europeans.

In present-day Viet Nam, the Geological Service of Indochina was established in 1899 in Tonkin (Hanoi). Upon the study of geology of the region, the scholars came across prehistoric human remains which took to their interests. Since architects and archaeologists were busy studying monuments, the geologists became the first people to study prehistory in the region. In 1906, Henry Mansuy was already identifying the Bacsonian culture from the information gathered during his field surveys at Phu Lang Tuong and Lang Son. Madeleine Colani, who later joined the EFEO, discovered the Lang Cuom cave in Hoa Binh in 1923 and the excavations there led to the definition of the Hoabinian culture in 1928. Colani expanded her research to the region of Thanh Ninh which included the Laotian provinces of Xiang Khoung and Hua Pahn, where she discovered the Megalith culture consisting of stone tombs and menhirs of Hua Pahn as well as the Plain of Jars. She published her research titled “*Megalithes du Haut- Laos*” in 1935, which remained until present an authoritative research on the subject. The excavated artifacts featured in the book have since been lost making the research the most fundamental piece to be studied by present archaeologists.



15. A small bronze statue found by Colani<sup>228</sup>

<sup>228</sup> M.Colani, “Champs de jarres monolithiques et de pierres funéraires du Tràn-ninh (Haut-Laos),” *Bulletin de l’École Française d’Extrême-Orient* 33, 1 (1933)



16. Some of the anthropomorphic stone sculptures found by Colani<sup>229</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, Europeans started to collect artifacts from Mainland Southeast Asia. Since 1883, bronze drums started to appear in European collections, which interested F. Heger who began the study of the drums in 1902. The Bronze Age remains of Thanh Hoa attracted attention in 1919 and the finds were so many that the EFEO took it into its responsibility. The work of EFEO scholars together with the Swedish prehistorian Olav Janse continued until 1939. In the meantime a book titled “*L’Age du Bronze au Tonkin*” was published by Victor Goloubew. All of these findings constituted the first knowledge about the Dongsonian culture.<sup>230</sup>



17. Henri Parmentier and Charles Carpeaux having lunch at one of the Cham monuments, 1903-1904.<sup>231</sup>

Cham monuments which scattered along the Central part of Viet Nam or Annam interested missionaries and travelers since 1885. The first study of the Cham

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Groslier, *Archaeologia Mundi : Indochina*, 160.

<sup>231</sup> Pierre Baptiste, “The Archaeology of Champa : the French Excavations,” in *Champa and the Archaeology of My Son (Vietnam)*, eds., Andrew Hardy, Mauro Cucarzi, and Patrizia Zolese, 19.

monuments was done by Louis Finot, the first Director of the EFEO, and his team in 1899 which was published under the title “*Inventaire sommaire des monuments chams de l’Annam*”. In the next two years, Henri Parmentier undertook the task to study the remains of the Champa Kingdom. In 1902-1903, he worked to clear up and document the Buddhist monuments of Dong Duong and the Hindu monuments of My Son in the province of Quang Nam, together with Charles Carpeaux and a large number of local workers which sometimes reached 200 per day.<sup>232</sup> Parmentier published *Inventaire descriptif des monuments chams de l’Annam* in 1909 and 1918. After the retrocession of Siem Reap in 1907, the EFEO focused their attention to the restoration on Angkor, and the Cham monuments suffered from neglect. By the early 1930s some sculptures from Dong Duong began to appear in some European and American collections, therefore the EFEO transported the most precious pieces to the museums in Danang, Hanoi, and the *Musée Guimet* in France.<sup>233</sup> Further works were continued at Tra Kieu, Thap Mam, Po Nagar, Bang An, and My Son.<sup>234</sup> Philippe Stern published the book titled “*Art du Champa*” in 1942 and R. Stein, in 1947, studied all the Chinese sources about Champa which finally gave a complete picture on the civilization of Champa.<sup>235</sup>



18. Local workers at My Son Group B, C, D., 1903<sup>236</sup>

By 1930s, a number of museums were established in all major cities of Viet Nam. The first museum was established in 1910 in Tonkin (Hanoi) under the name *Indochina Oriental Art Museum* to collect archaeological artifacts and ethnographic objects related to the Nguyen dynasty. It was later expanded between 1925 – 1932 due to a large number of collections received from China and other Asian countries.<sup>237</sup> When it reopened in 1933, it was titled *Musée Louis Finot*, following the

<sup>232</sup> Baptiste, “The Archaeology of Champa : the French Excavations,” in Champa and the Archaeology of My Son (Vietnam), eds., Andrew Hardy, Mauro Cucarzi, and Patrizia Zolese, 16.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Groslier, Archaeologia Mundi : Indochina, 178.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>236</sup> Baptiste, “The Archaeology of Champa : the French Excavations,” in Champa and the Archaeology of My Son (Vietnam), eds., Andrew Hardy, Mauro Cucarzi, and Patrizia Zolese, 23.

<sup>237</sup> ASEAN COCI, Comparative Museology and Museography in ASEAN (Chiang Mai : Silkworms Books, 1997), 90.

name of the first Director of the EFEO. In 1923, a museum was set up in Hue to exhibit belongings of the Nguyen royal family. In Tourane (Danang), *Musée Parmentier* displaying artifacts of the Cham civilization from Dong Duong, Tra Kieu, and My Son was opened in 1934. *Musée Blanchard de la Brosse* in Cochin China (Saigon) was opened in the botanical and zoological park in 1929.<sup>238</sup>

The works on Cham monuments of Parmentier became and still remain an important source of information since from then on a number of monuments have deteriorated and some were later destroyed by war.

Based on a speech by Michel Lorrillard in 2001, in Lao PDR, Lunet de Lajonquiere published the first study about Laos on the new capital city of Wieng Chan in the second issue of the Bulletin of the EFEO in 1901. After that there was a mission to conduct an inventory of the Khmer monuments in Laos along with the ethnics of South Laos. In 1902, Louis Finot published an article on Vat Phou while Auguste Barth, a Sanskrit epigraphist, published a translation of the 7<sup>th</sup> century inscription found at Vat Phou. Works of the EFEO on Laos after this period were mainly on the translation of ancient inscriptions. In 1911, however, Henri Parmentier surveyed a number of religious buildings, and, made a list of priority of the temples and sites that should be preserved including Wat Sisaket, the library of Wat In Peng, Wat Yot Keo, the That Luang Pagoda in Vientiane, as well a pagoda in Xiang Khoung, and the Khmer monuments of Vat Phou. He also proposed that the Wat Sisaket be made a museum where ruinous and abandoned Buddha images should be kept. A detailed article on Vat Phou, complete with plans, was published in 1914 in the Bulletin while another architect of the EFEO, Charles Bateur, restored the That Chom Si in Luang Prabang.

In 1914, Louis Finot came to Laos to conduct a major programme to preserve ancient religious manuscripts in Luang Prabang using the Royal Palace as a library while copies of the manuscripts were made to furnish the collections of the EFEO. On the way back to Hanoi, Louis Finot brought with him a few Laotian steles including the one dated from 1560 given to him by the Prince Maha Upparat of Luang Prabang. Collected from Dan Sai in the Thai province of Loey, the stele inscribed a border and friendship treaty between the Laotian and the Ayutthaya Kings. The stele was returned to Laos in 1954 to be kept at the Ho Phra Keo where it remains to date.

From 1922-1923 and 1927-1931, restoration works finally took place at the Wat Sisaket by Charles Bateur supervised by Prince Phetsarath, the then Laotian crown prince. In 1924-5, Bateur also made a survey of archaeological sites, which revealed the sites at Thakhek, and those in Vientiane. In 1924, the Governor General of Indochina proclaimed the first listing of Indochinese monuments, which put into effect the 1913 French law on the classification and protection of historic monuments.<sup>239</sup> 1926 saw the first list of historic monuments in Laos including those in the provinces of Attapeu, Champasak, Savannakhet, Khammouan, Vientiane, Xieng Khoung, Luang Prabang, and Upper Mekong or the present-day Bokeo. In 1927, Parmentier finished the documentation works that he began in 1911 forming

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>239</sup> Askew, Logan, and Long, *Vientiane : Transformations of a Lao Landscape*, 94.

the basis of knowledge on Lao arts which were published in 1954, five years after his death.<sup>240</sup>

Another architect at the EFEO, Louis Fombertaux, led the That Luang restoration project from 1930-1935, which revealed the original form of the pagoda hidden under the present one.<sup>241</sup> The restoration then followed the original form rather than the poorly restored form of the early twentieth century by Pierre Morin. In 1936-1942, a restoration of Wat Phra Keo followed, which was a joint project between the EFEO staff and Prince Souvanna Phouma and Prince Phetsarath.<sup>242</sup>



19. That Luang after the restoration by Pierre Morin in 1919<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 34, 1 (1934) : 772.

<sup>242</sup> *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 34, 1 (1934) : 231.

<sup>243</sup> Askew, Logan, and Long, *Vientiane : Transformations of a Lao Landscape*, 96.



20. That Luang at present after the restoration by Louis Forbertain<sup>244</sup>

The EFEO also played an important role in preserving Buddhist manuscripts and Pali language. In 1929, Suzanne Karpeles, who headed the Royal Library in Phnom Penh, reorganized the library in Luang Prabang, set up a Buddhist Library in Vientiane, and returned to Cambodia with a number of monks who were adept in teaching Pali. Madeleine Colani, prior to her work on the Megalithic culture in Laos, was writing on ceramic traditions in the province of Khammouan, and Prehistory of Indochina in general.

Despite an attempt of France to establish museums in other Indochinese regions, the effort was not replicated in Laos, perhaps due to the fact that there were not many artifacts that took interests of the French, since the region was overshadowed by the Khmer and the Cham civilization. Interestingly, the first Lao-language history curriculum produced by the French in 1920s was trying to link the origins of the Laotians with the Cham people – which was to attach the Laotians to an ancient civilization, and, as Evans suggested, to distance them from the Tai culture.<sup>245</sup> It was noted that Prince Phetsarath, who was educated in France, wanted to set up a museum of religious art at the Wat Ho Pha Keo and started collecting religious artifacts from in and around Vientiane.<sup>246</sup> It was noted that the effort was joined by Vientiane Governor Khampai Souvannavong in 1917.<sup>247</sup> After the Wat Ho Pha Keo was restored in 1942, the collections were relocated there, making it the first and the only museum in Laos until almost 40 years later. By this time the Wat Ho Pha Keo was recognized by Prince Phetsarath to represent “...far more than a mere religious

<sup>244</sup> Michel Lorrillard, “Les inscriptions du That Luang de Vientiane : données nouvelles sur l’histoire d’un *stūpa* lao,” *Bulletin de l’École Française d’Extrême-Orient* 90 (2003-2004)

<sup>245</sup> Evans, *A Short History of Laos : The Land in Between*, 72.

<sup>246</sup> Askew, Logan, and Long, *Vientiane : Transformations of a Lao Landscape*, 96.

<sup>247</sup> *Lao Cultural Profiles* [Online], accessed 18 October 2009, Available from <http://www.culturalprofiles.net/Laos/>

building and is truly the symbol of the soul, and the national and moral unity of the Lao people...”.<sup>248</sup>

### **British Burma and the Ownership of Buddhist Antiquities**

During the first Anglo-Burmese war in 1824-6, the British troop seized Yangon, later to be known as Rangoon, and committed a series of vandalized acts on the Shwedagon Pagoda as well as numerous other smaller pagodas and Buddha images in an attempt to destroy icons of “devil worship” and to find treasury. A number of Buddhist libraries were also looted and religious texts burnt “as useless lumber”. Local opportunists followed suit and a large number of pagodas and Buddha images were destroyed.<sup>249</sup> It was not the only time, however. The British gained control of Rangoon again after the annexation of Upper Burma in 1852. This time there was an attempt to reopen the tunnel that was dug under Shwedagon in 1824. The British gained a number of valuable offerings from Shwedagon and other pagodas including a large bronze bell with an estimated value of £17,000, and precious stones encased in the small pagodas. Due to protests by the Burmese and the British Governor, Arthur Phayre, Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General of India, issued an order to stop the vandalizing of any pagodas in Rangoon.<sup>250</sup>

Due to political unrest in the 1850s, the British troop took up their base at the Shwedagon pagoda and held their position at the western side of the hill. Throughout the period of their occupation at Shwedagon, the British tried to demonstrate their ownership of Burma by exercising control over the Burmese religious structures, especially on the Shwedagon Pagoda, which was the heart of the Burmese faith. Apart from military encampment, the British built a tomb for the deceased British soldiers at the base of the Pagoda, as well as ignored the ‘no-footwear’ practice of the Burmese within the Pagoda compound.

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<sup>248</sup> Askew, Logan, and Long, *Vientiane : Transformations of a Lao Landscape* , 107.

<sup>249</sup> Noel F. Singer, *Old Rangoon* (Sterling: Paul Strachan – Kiscadale Publications, 1995), 52.

<sup>250</sup> Singer, *Old Rangoon*, 69.



21. Edwardian British tourists refused to take off their shoes when visiting temples<sup>251</sup>

Aside of objects gained from looting the pagodas, the British had a habit of seeking war trophies from the colonies, and they wanted to bring the Maha Ganda, a great bell offered to Shwedagon by King Tharawaddy in 1840, to Calcutta. However, during transportation, the bell sank into the River, but the Burmese were later able to retrieve it under the permission from the British, who did not think they would be able to do so.<sup>252</sup> When the old *Hti* (crown) of the Shwedagon pagoda reached 100 years old, the people of Burma were asking for a replacement of a new one. King Mindon, who was still ruling Upper Burma at that time, ordered a new *Hti* to be made from his and the people's donations, and asked for permission from the British government to conduct a ceremony to replace the *Hti*. It was denied and delayed for more than one year, "for had this been done it would have been regarded by British Burmans as an acknowledgement of (the King's) suzerainty".<sup>253</sup> The replacement of the *Hti*, however, was finally granted, possibly in order to gain favour from the Burmese, under a strict supervision of the Government in 1871. King Mindon himself was not allowed to come to Rangoon to perform the ceremony, but the Burmese still participated in the event wholeheartedly. The event was recorded by the British as an impressive sight and no political upheavals took place as feared. By this time, the British had recognized that the Shwedagon Pagoda had transformed from an icon of Buddhism into an icon of Nationalism as well. However, there had been reports of looting of the Shwedagon pagoda by British soldiers, and, a pagoda faithful was murdered during witnessing one such incident.<sup>254</sup> In the period that followed, the British began to relax their attitudes with regards to the Pagoda and had conformed to the plea of the Pagoda Trustees. The footwear issue, a big ordeal on which a

<sup>251</sup> Noel F. Singer, *Old Rangoon* (Sterling: Paul Strachan – Kiscadale Publications, 1995)

<sup>252</sup> Scott (Shway Yoe), *The Burman : His Life and Notions*, 164.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>254</sup> Yangon City Development Committee, *Shwedagon : Symbol of Strength and Serenity* (Yangon : Yangon City Development Committee, 1997), 178.

conference was organized by Western educated Burmese and budding nationalists, was finally resolved when the British launched a rule for the British not to enter the Pagoda wearing shoes, except when on official duty. Though not fully satisfied, the Burmese accepted the condition. It was marked by a state visit of a British politician couple who visited the pagoda and happily took off their shoes.<sup>255</sup> This act of respect was published by various newspapers. In the 1906, the Prince of Wales (later crowned as Edward VIII) paid a visit to the Pagoda, and donated gold plates as means to pay homage to the Pagoda as well.<sup>256</sup> Finally, in 1920s, the tombs of British soldiers were relocated to another site in Rangoon and the Western stairways which were always off-limit to the Burmese were finally returned to the Pagoda Trustees after 77 years of British occupation. Once again the Shwedagon pagoda came back to its owners.

Other pagodas were not as lucky, however. As the town was developing, the new town plan of Rangoon covered an area with hundreds of pagodas and monasteries, which were subsequently demolished so that the land could be used for secular purposes. Many important relics were found when the pagodas were destroyed; one find included a golden scroll with an inscription and gold vessels believed to have belonged to the Mon Queen Shin Saw Bu or Bana Thau from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The pieces were sent to the Victoria and Albert Museum in England.<sup>257</sup>



22. Sketch of the first train operation in Burma<sup>258</sup>

To promote commercial activities, the government improved transportation and communication between the new capital and other towns, and the construction of the Irrawaddy Valley State Railway from Rangoon to Prome began in 1869. It was noted that much of the bricks and stone works from the ancient Pyu site of Sri Kshetra were used to build the foundation for the railway.<sup>259</sup> During the period of urbanizing

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>257</sup> Singer, *Old Rangoon*, 81.

<sup>258</sup> Noel F. Singer, *Old Rangoon* (Sterling: Paul Strachan – Kiscadale Publications, 1995)

<sup>259</sup> Singer, *Old Rangoon*, 91.

Rangoon, the British government encouraged Indians to migrate to Burma, now a province of British India, to become low-paid labourers. A large number of them were hired to work in the Government offices, since they were able to speak English and were content with low salaries. By 1881, there were more than 66,000 Indians in town,<sup>260</sup> not to mention the Chinese and immigrants from Upper Myanmar who fled their homeland where the ruling King Thibaw was overshadowed by the ambitions of his consort and his mother in law. Rangoon then was a metropolitan town with British inhabitants, Indian officers and labourers, Chinese merchants, European businessmen, international envoys, Burmese elites, and the local Burmese, who were pushed to live in the suburbs of Rangoon which were rather unhygienic. With the new government, pagoda slaves were no longer bound to their monasteries, but they still lingered there - since their families had been taking care of the monasteries all their lives - and became a social outcast.<sup>261</sup>



23. A Rangoon street full of immigrants<sup>262</sup>

Right after the exile of the royal family and the annexation of Burma to British India in January 1886, it was recorded that:

The six thousand houses located between the palace and the city wall were cleared out on payment of compensation... while the old *Shwemyodaw*, or 'royal golden city' was retained exclusively for the civil and military servants of Government, and transformed into Fort Dufferin.<sup>263</sup>

The British troop occupied the former Mandalay Palace, "so much admired by the Burmans as to be called 'the centre of the universe'",<sup>264</sup> and changed its name following the name of the then British Viceroy of India. Other buildings inside the palace were used differently by the British troop and civil officers. The Lion Throne

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>262</sup> Water Del Mar, *The Romantic East : Burma, Assam & Kashmir* (London : Adam and Charles Black, 1906)

<sup>263</sup> John Nisbet, *Burma under British Rule and Before* (Westminster : Archibald Constable and Co. Ltd., 1901), 119.

<sup>264</sup> R. Talbot Kelly, *Peeps at Many Lands: Burma* (London : Adam and Charles Black, 1908), 77.

Room was made into a church for the soldiers, while King Thibaw's monastery was used as a Protestant chapel.<sup>265</sup> Other buildings were rented out to make apartments inside the former palace. In some cases monks were made to leave their monasteries since the monasteries buildings were to be used by the Government.<sup>266</sup>



24. Mandalay Palace in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Source: The Directorate of Archaeological Survey, Burma)

The arrival of the British had shattered the old world of the Burmese, which centred on the Mandalay Palace. The occupation of the palace buildings by the British was a distress for the Burmese, since:

...there can (be) little doubt that such occupation of the Palace by all kinds of officials,..., and a club must have been highly distasteful to the great majority of the Burmese at Mandalay, to whom the Palace, the embodiment of long centuries of national power, grandeur and cherished traditions and usage, had become a sacrosanct building....<sup>267</sup>

It was not until 1901, when Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, visited Mandalay, that the palace was saved. A year prior to this, the new legislative for the protection of ancient monuments was launched in Britain, and the Archaeological Survey of India was established since 1861. Lord Curzon was upset by the state of the Mandalay palace and made a decision in time to prevent the palace from being pulled down because some feared that the sight of the palace would stir up nationalistic feelings among the Burmese. Lord Curzon made a comment that: “(the Palace's) survival and maintenance are both a compliment to the sentiments of the Burmese race, showing them that

<sup>265</sup> O'Conner, Mandalay and Other Cities of the Past in Burma, 481-82.

<sup>266</sup> Alexandra Green and T. Richard Blurton, eds., Burma: Art and Archaeology (London : The Trustees of the British Museum, 2002), 107.

<sup>267</sup> The Directorate of Archaeological Survey, Burma, Mandalay Palace (Rangoon : The Directorate of the Archaeological Survey, Ministry of Union Culture, 1963), 15.

we have no desire to obliterate the relics of the past sovereign, and a reminder that it has now passed for ever into our hands.”<sup>268</sup>

He then ordered civil and military officers occupying the rooms and buildings in the palace to find new locations, for fear of causing fire, and a list of scheduled palace buildings was to be made. Some architectural items and relics were to be shipped to display at the Calcutta Museum while buildings with no or little historical and aesthetic values were demolished.<sup>269</sup> He also stated that:

...the desirability of preserving King Mindon's Palace arises not from its historical importance ... nor from its antiquity...but from its value as a model—the only one that will before long survive—of the civil and ceremonial architecture of the Burman Kings.<sup>270</sup>

The palace was preserved as a “national monument”.<sup>271</sup> Then, the Mandalay Palace had become part of the history of the British, and a British national monument.



#### 25. The Queen's Golden Monastery<sup>272</sup>

After returning to India, Lord Curzon assigned the Archaeological Survey of India to work with the Archaeology Survey of Burma, established in 1899 and was working to restore Pagan,<sup>273</sup> in order to produce a list of scheduled monuments based on the

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>269</sup> O'Connor, Mandalay and Other Cities of the Past in Burma, 430-1.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 417.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 420.

<sup>272</sup> V.C. Scott O'Connor, Mandalay and Other Cities of the Past in Burma (London : Hutchinson & Co., 1907)

<sup>273</sup> Groslier, Archaeologia Mundi : Indochina, 157.

1904 law on the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act of India.<sup>274</sup> The law was undoubtedly based on the Act of the same title passed in England in 1900. The British Act excluded ecclesiastical property from the list, while in Burma, though some Buddhist wooden monasteries appeared on the list, they were still under care of the abbots and could not be regarded as government property.<sup>275</sup> In addition, since 1884, monasteries in major cities including Rangoon, Bassein, Henzada, Prome, Pegu, and Mandalay were administered by Trustees, who were selected from village elders.<sup>276</sup> This meant that the colonial government allowed Buddhists to practice freely, but the government still retained some control over what buildings to be erected in monasteries.<sup>277</sup>

It was also noted in 1907 that the efforts for the British Government to preserve Burmese monuments were focused at the Mandalay palace buildings and about thirty monuments in Pagan. A provincial list of scheduled monuments would be compiled whose "...selection will be made of such buildings as reflect the history and religion of the Burmese people".<sup>278</sup> By 1916, almost 500 monuments and sites all over Burma were scheduled.<sup>279</sup>

By conserving and restoring religious structures, it was noted that there had always been the "hearty co-operation of the people themselves, who are ready to help on the progress of the works with advice, money or labour" and with this policy, the colonial government was able to popularize itself among the Burmese who "accepted the responsibilities ever assumed by their own Kings".<sup>280</sup> However, without the patronage of the royal family, the upholder of Buddhism, minor monasteries were not given supports from the British Government due to its indifferent attitude towards Buddhism. The relocation of inhabitants also affected the survival of the monasteries since they could not exist without support from the faithful. A number of monasteries, therefore, were left empty, for monks had to move to other monasteries where their daily monastic functions could take place. This negligence combined with the general beliefs that merit could not be gained from repairing other people's previous works, "unless it be one of the great world shrines"<sup>281</sup>, left a large number of wooden monasteries in Mandalay in a state of disrepair. A series of fire that broke off in Mandalay in 1885 and 1892 also destroyed a large number of monasteries. This summed up the conservation ideology of the British which focused on major monuments of apparent beauty or importance. Buddhist structures, for the first time, were regarded for their historical and artistic value, and conservation was, in a way, a political tool to solicit loyalty from the Burmese Buddhists.

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<sup>274</sup> Sylvia Fraser-Lu, Splendour in Wood : The Buddhist Monasteries of Burma, (Bangkok : Orchid Press, 2001), 137.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>276</sup> O'Conner, Mandalay and Other Cities of the Past in Burma, 427.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 428.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 427.

<sup>279</sup> Green and Blurton, eds., Burma: Art and Archaeology, 107.

<sup>280</sup> O'Conner, Mandalay and Other Cities of the Past in Burma, 428.

<sup>281</sup> Scott (Shway Yoe), The Burman : His Life and Notions, 154.

As a province of India, Burma was not given much attention in terms of education. Though a railway was established in Burma since 1877, the first modern college was not opened until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Another fact is that a national museum was not established during the colonial period. It was recorded that a museum was set up once in Rangoon in 1871 and was named, after the first Chief Commissioner of Rangoon, the Phayre Museum. The museum displayed coins, stone implements, instruments, ethnic textiles, natural history collections, and Brahmanic sculptures from Thaton, and was existing with a mere £10 annual budget.<sup>282</sup> In 1911, the Government needed a location for a hospital and the museum building was the most suitable place. Thus, the museum was discontinued and artifacts kept in separate locations.<sup>283</sup> There also existed two site museums in Pagan and Mrauk-U, founded in 1902 and 1905 but with limited access to the public.<sup>284</sup> Prince Damrong of Siam visited Burma in 1936 and went to the Mandalay Palace museum displaying royal paraphernalia as well.<sup>285</sup> He also took note of the administrative system of archaeological works on Burma that, since the founding of the Archaeological Survey of Burma in 1899, three people had assumed the position of the Superintendent - none of them Burmese. The latest one, the French expert Charles Duroiselle, retired in 1933 and, lacking an expertise, the Burma Archaeological Survey had since been annexed to the Archaeological Survey of India. There were also a number of small repositories around the country where artifacts found were to be kept locally such as in Prome and Pagan.<sup>286</sup> As for prehistory, a group of geologists, who were there to explore oil for the British government, was the first group to study the prehistory of Burma since 1895 up to 1940s,<sup>287</sup> the most exceptional work on prehistory was done by T.O. Morris which exalted him to the status of "Father of Burmese Archaeology".<sup>288</sup>

The study of major monuments such as those in Mandalay, Pagan, and Prome was the focus of the government, implemented through the Archaeological Survey offices. In Pagan, some of the temples were never deserted since they were much revered by the faithful, who helped maintain them. Prince Damrong also observed that there was not any sign of plundering at these temples, even the deserted ones.<sup>289</sup> Once the British came to rule Burma, they launched a scheme to restore these monasteries. When the restoration was done, they asked if any lay people wanted to maintain the temples, if so, these people would be made a committee of trustees for the monasteries. If not, the Archaeological Survey would take care of them.<sup>290</sup> The Survey also collected and

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<sup>282</sup> Singer, Old Rangoon, 107.

<sup>283</sup> H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Journey through Burma in 1936 (Bangkok : River Books, 1991), 29.

<sup>284</sup> Nu Mra Zan, "Roles of Museums in the Context of Cultural Policy in Myanmar," paper presented at ASEAN Museum Directors Symposium, Singapore, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007.

<sup>285</sup> H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Journey through Burma in 1936, 121.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>287</sup> Michael A. Aung-Thwin, "Origins and Development of the Field of Prehistory in Burma" Asian Perspectives : The Journal of Archaeology for Asia and the Pacific 40, 1 (Spring 2001) : 7.

<sup>288</sup> Ian Glover, "The Past, Present, and Future of Prehistoric Archaeology in Burma" Asian Perspectives : The Journal of Archaeology for Asia and the Pacific 40, 1 (Spring 2001) : 120.

<sup>289</sup> H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Journey through Burma in 1936, 177-178.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

translated ancient inscriptions, which yielded interesting information on the past of Burma.

Another interesting case was at the old Arakan temple which housed the Manamuni Buddha image. It was noted that the faithful wanted to rebuild the monasteries which were destroyed in fire in 1884 and asked for permission from the British government, who allowed them to rebuild it in whatever way they liked. The faithful then commissioned an European architect to do the work which made the temple “oddest” for being the newest monastery housing the oldest Buddha image.<sup>291</sup>

### **Siam and the Politics of the Past**

Though Siam remained independent, it was inevitably influenced by the stream of modernization that was happening in neighbouring countries. It was noted that Siam at the time, as an agrarian, quasi-feudal Kingdom, was not well developed in critical historiography and that it was easy for the Thais to “take their past for granted”.<sup>292</sup> During the early Rattanakosin period, there was a concession of excavations in the former capital of Ayutthaya in order to find treasures. When new towns were built, demolitions of old city walls took place without concerns for their historical values.<sup>293</sup>

The King of Siam who first encountered the encroachment of Western colonization was King Mongkut (1851-1868), who was a learnt man with a mixture of scientific and religious mind. Prior to his crowning, he had been in monkhood for 17 years. During his period of seclusion, the King had a chance to acquire knowledge in “Sanskrit, Pali, history, religion, geography, physics and chemistry, astronomy and... the English language”.<sup>294</sup> Through contacts with missionaries, King Mongkut familiarized himself with the Western scientific way of thinking, and understood the values of the West. It was during this period that his curiosity of the past began to formulate, in an attempt to respond to the Western idea that a civilized nation was defined by its past.

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>292</sup> Glover, “Some National, Regional, and Political Uses of Archaeology in East and Southeast Asia,” in *Archaeology of Asia*, ed. Miriam Stark, 28.

<sup>293</sup> Krom Silpakorn (Fine Arts Department), Paed Sib Pee Haeng Kan Anurak Moradok Thai (Eighty Years of Thai Heritage Preservation) (Bangkok : Krom Silpakorn, 1991), 106.

<sup>294</sup> Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix, *Description of the Thai Kingdom or Siam : Thailand under King Mongkut* trans. Walter E.J. Tips (Bangkok : White Lotus, 2000), 302.



26 . King Mongkut and his Queen<sup>295</sup>

Prince Damrong, King Mongkut's son, recalled that the King decided that Siam "had met the time when the situation in the East would be changed by the Europeans who came with increasing power" and that "it was not enough to follow what had been done before, just for the sake of protecting custom".<sup>296</sup> The King realized that Siam had to reform in order to remain independent. Early in his reign he replaced the cyclical timeframe of Buddhist cosmology with the Western concept of linear time, and "with it developed an interest in the history of the Kingdom".<sup>297</sup> He also adopted the title "Siam" for the Thai kingdom for conveniences when dealing with Europeans.<sup>298</sup>

In the 1830s, as a Prince, he discovered the Ram Khamhaeng inscription of the Sukhothai period, dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the oldest surviving record of the Thai language. The stone inscription became an object of national identity and a 'proof of civilization' to the Westerners, which posed a controversy 60 years later whether "the inscription had been made to the order of King Rama IV in order to demonstrate the antiquity and 'modern' nature of the Thai Kingdom at a time when it was coming

<sup>295</sup> George B. Bacon, *Siam: The Land of the White Elephant, As It Was and Is* (New York : Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., 1878)

<sup>296</sup> Keyes, *The Golden Peninsula : Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia*, 104.

<sup>297</sup> Glover, "Some National, Regional, and Political Uses of Archaeology in East and Southeast Asia," in *Archaeology of Asia*, ed. Miriam Stark, 28.

<sup>298</sup> H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Journey through Burma in 1936*, 230.

under pressure from Western colonial powers”.<sup>299</sup> Whatever it was, the timely ‘discovery’ of the inscription greatly contributed to the civilized image of Siam then.



27. Impression of the Siamese Court in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D.  
(Source: [www.tibetanpost.com](http://www.tibetanpost.com))

Prince Mongkut could also be considered the first archaeologist of Siam. According to the Chronicles of King Mongkut, before crowning, he had paid homage to an old *Chedi* known as Phra Pathom in Nakorn Pathom for a number of times. He had done a comparative study between this *Chedi* and other *Chedis* in the whole Siam including those in Chiang Saen, Chiang Mai, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Laos, and Cambodia, and found out that this one was the largest of all. Further study from ancient books and records gave him an assumption that this *Chedi* must have been erected before all other *Chedis* in Siam, hence the old name “*Phra Pathom Chedi*” (the first *Chedi*), which was in contrast with the general belief that the name was a deviation of the word *banthom* (to sleep) signifying the site where the Buddha once slept. He believed that it was built when the Buddhist ambassadors of King Asoka came to Suvannabhumi. He then conducted the first ‘archaeological excavation’ of Siam, at a mound of bricks nearby the *Chedi*, leading him to a conclusion that the original *Chedi* had collapsed and had been rebuilt into a different shape to increase the *Chedi*’s stability. The Prince reported his findings to King Nangklao, and requested for a restoration of the *Chedi*, to which the King refused replying that the *Chedi* was too far away in the jungle that it would not bear much use to the people. As a result, King Mongkut took a chance to renovate the *Chedi* later during his reign in 1858.<sup>300</sup>

<sup>299</sup> Glover, “Some National, Regional, and Political Uses of Archaeology in East and Southeast Asia,” in *Archaeology of Asia*, ed. Miriam Stark, 28.

<sup>300</sup> Chao Phraya Tipakornwong, *Phra Ratchapongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan Tee See* (Royal Chronicles of the Rattanakosin Period during the Reign of King Rama IV), 211-215.



28. Phra Pathom Chedi (source: [www.old-picture-world.blogspot.com](http://www.old-picture-world.blogspot.com))

It should be noted that the King did not view the *Chedi* as an ancient monument whose past fabrics needed to be preserved, but he was restoring it out of his devotion as a Buddhist. When he visited the *Chedi* to oversee the restoration work, he dedicated to the *Chedi* 126 men in a nearby village as monastic slaves as well as land revenues from the nearby fields.<sup>301</sup> He also collected stone inscriptions from the jungle and kept them at Phra Pathom Chedi where he established a Buddhist monastery.<sup>302</sup> In the following year he organized the first private museum in Siam in the Grand Palace where his collections of antiques and objects of curiosity were kept. Among the audience was Sir John Bowring, the British diplomat. Later he built another building named “*Prapasipithapan*” (Hall of Museum Visit) where the collections from the previous hall were transferred to.<sup>303</sup> At this period, he was already collecting Buddha images and other antiques from temples in ancient cities for keepsake and launching a decree to assign the local communities to take care of temples and temple properties in order to prevent vandalism.<sup>304</sup>

His interest in the past such as in Angkor was apparent when he ordered for a relocation of a Khmer temple to Bangkok in 1860 as previously mentioned. In 1866, the King assigned an officer to make an architectural drawing of Angkor Wat, which would be made into a model to be exhibited at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha for everyone to see “that it was a wonder made entirely out of stone”.<sup>305</sup> The King’s attitude towards Angkor Wat, therefore, was inclined towards seeing it as a curiosity, rather than being a sacred temple for both Hindus and Buddhists as it had been for

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<sup>301</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>303</sup> Krom Silpakorn (Fine Arts Department), Paed Sib Pee Haeng Kan Anurak Moradok Thai (Eighty Years of Thai Heritage Preservation), 92.

<sup>304</sup> Chao Phraya Tipakornwong, *Phra Ratchapongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan Tee See* (Royal Chronicles of the Rattanakosin Period during the Reign of King Rama IV), 227.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 105.

almost one thousand years – showing a changing wind on how sacred monuments would be perceived in a later period.



.29 Model of Angkor Wat at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok (source: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com))

As an act of modernization, a modern school was set up in the court of King Mongkut for his children to study with European teachers upon a realization that the future Thai elites needed to have a proficiency in European languages. He also undertook a reform of Buddhism, thus creating a new sect known as the *Dhammayuktika nikaya*, which played an important role in the revival of Buddhism, not only in Siam, but also in Laos and Cambodia.

Though modern as he was, His relationship with his subject still remained as much as “father and children” following the traditional pattern of Sukhothai. He received and read complaints from the people and provided his judgement on some seemingly personal and trivial issues. From time to time, the King issued announcements to ward off people’s superstitions such as on the occasions of the Halley’s Comet, and a solar eclipse, explaining that those things were just natural.

King Mongkut passed away in 1868 after having caught malaria from Prachaub Khirikhan where he demonstrated his astronomical skills to Western dignitaries by predicting a solar eclipse. Before his death, he had fulfilled his deeds as *Dhammaraja* by building, reviving and repairing numerous temples as well as reviving Buddhism, and he was recorded to pass away in meditation. His eclectic nature representing both modern and traditional mind was the best demonstration of the social and cultural changes that were taking place in Siam then.

His son, King Chulalongkorn, ascended the throne at aged 15. He was the first King of Siam ever to leave the country to visit Java and India during his minority in 1871 where he learnt the Dutch and the British administration. At his coronation ceremony in 1873, he abolished the ancient custom of prostration.<sup>306</sup> In 1874, a decree to abolish slavery was issued. In the following years the King made an effort to improve

<sup>306</sup> H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Miscellaneous Articles : Written for the Journal of the Siam Society by His Late Royal Highness Prince Damrong, 114.

transportation and communication including establishing telegraphy in 1875 and railway in 1893. He established modern education system which allowed all children to go to school. In addition, he sent his brothers and children to study various subjects in European countries including the future King Vajiravudh and King Prajadhipok, so that when they returned to Siam they could spearhead the modernization of the country. His visits to Europe acquainted him with the European royal families, European cultures, administrative systems, as well as museums. He received a lot of interests from international press which was useful for Siam to project an image of a civilized country. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Siam had already undergone a major modernization scheme in all aspects. It was also during the reign of King Chulalongkorn that Siam lost a large part of territories to France and Britain as leverages to protect its independence.

King Chulalongkorn expressed further interests in antiquities since he realized that the past was important for a construction of national identity. In 1874, the first public museum in Siam was established at the Concordia Hall in the Grand Palace showcasing the collections relocated from the former museum building of King Mongkut. The first museum Director was an English man, Henry Alabaster. The collections were divided into Thai antiques and art objects, foreign art objects, and Thai royal paraphernalia.<sup>307</sup> During 1882-1894, King Chulalongkorn organized, for a number of times, the Exhibition, showcasing Thai antiques collections in both Siam and London,<sup>308</sup> probably following the trend of the French *Exposition Universelle* that had been organized since the 1860s. Two years later, the collections were moved into the three front halls of the palace of the Prince-Successor, which were the present location of the National Museum. In 1889, the Directorate of Museums was set up under the Department of Education and later was placed under the Ministry of Public Instruction. At that time the collections consisted of antiquities, art objects, and natural history objects, with complete cataloging in both Thai and English.<sup>309</sup> Other provincial museums were set up later in major cities with historical sites such as Ayutthaya and Lopburi.

The abolition of slavery affected the care of royal temples which were previously taken care of by monastic slaves. King Chulalongkorn had to reorganize the temple administration which would provide the temples with regular subsidies, though not manpower. Other non-Royal temples were not affected since they had always been maintained by the faithful.<sup>310</sup>

In 1899, King Chulalongkorn reconstructed a temple near a new palace that he was building. Prince Damrong recounted that the King had an idea that the Buddha images to be placed in this temple should be “selected from among numerous old and beautiful imaged made in various countries at different periods; and should be

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<sup>307</sup> Krom Silpakorn (Fine Arts Department), Paed Sib Pee Haeng Kan Anurak Moradok Thai (Eighty Years of Thai Heritage Preservation), 93.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>309</sup> The Fine Arts Department, The Development of Museums and Archaeological Activities in Thailand (n.p.: Sivaphorn Limited Partnership, 1965), 5.

<sup>310</sup> Pinraj Khanjanusthiti, “Buddhist Architecture : Meaning and Conservation in the Context of Thailand” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of York, 1996),

displayed in such a way that the public might acquire a knowledge of Buddhist iconography”.<sup>311</sup> The selection of Buddha images took many years, and the casting of some images had to be made if the original images were not of the right scale. The images had to be offered to the King before they could be placed in the temple, since the creation of Buddha images was, and still is, an act of merit. Thus, this temple, Wat Benchamabopit, became the first temple museum of Siam.

In 1907, the King established the *Borankhadee Samosorn* or the Society of Antiquarians of which he was the president and the Crown Prince Vajiravudh the vice president. The aim of the Society was to study the history of Siam, which was much lacking, from present up to 1,000 years earlier.<sup>312</sup> It was the first time that the word *Borankhadee*, or archaeology, appeared in Thai vocabulary. In 1908, the first secular monument, the Equestrian Monument of King Chulalongkorn, was established in Bangkok by a donation of the people to commemorate the return of the King to Siam after his long journey in Europe.

In 1923, King Vajiravudh issued a decree to establish the Committee of the Capital Library and a decree on the Management and Documentation of Antiquities. The Committee was responsible to inventory all antiquities in Siam and to provide a report on what pieces should be kept by the Government. It was the first law of Siam on the protection of ancient objects based on their historical and academic values.<sup>313</sup>

It was not until the reign of King Prajadhipok that members of the EFEO were assigned to join a Thai team on an expedition to survey archaeological sites in Siam in 1925.<sup>314</sup> Khmer sites in Siam were documented by Lunet de Lajonquière and later by Eric Seidenfaden, and the Archaeological Survey team began to clear up historic sites in Lopburi and Ayutthaya.<sup>315</sup> The early research works of Siam concerned the Dvaravati culture and translation of ancient texts.

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<sup>311</sup> H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Miscellaneous Articles : Written for the Journal of the Siam Society by His Late Royal Highness Prince Damrong, 118.

<sup>312</sup> Krom Silpakorn (Fine Arts Department), Paed Sib Pee Haeng Kan Anurak Moradok Thai (Eighty Years of Thai Heritage Preservation), 106-107.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, 108-109.

<sup>314</sup> J. Y. Claeys, “L’archéologie du Siam” Bulletin de l’École Française d’Extrême-Orient 31, 1 (1931) : 361.

<sup>315</sup> Groslier, Archaeologia Mundi : Indochina, 189.



30. H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab at a Khmer temple in Surin (Source: [www.minister.moi.go.th](http://www.minister.moi.go.th))

The National Museum was officially inaugurated in 1926 and was placed under the Royal Institute, whose responsibility included archaeology, literature, fine arts, and museums. Prince Damrong, Minister of Interior, and ‘Father of Thai History’, and George Coedès changed the category of the museum from general museum to archaeological museum exhibiting art and archaeological objects. In the same year a decree prohibiting illegal exports of art objects and antiquities were launched.

As a result, the independent Siam, under the ruling of the Thai monarchs, became a modernized country partly through the establishment of museums and archaeological surveys following the European fashion. The changes was inevitable since the museums and archaeology played a deep political role that constructed a ‘civilized’ past of the country and thus determined, as it were, the independence of Siam.

### **Early Tourism in Mainland Southeast Asia**

The interests of the Europeans in the past of Southeast Asia gave rise to tourism. Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the uncivilized image of the region and the difficulty of transportation made Southeast Asia a place for hardship diplomatic posts and adventurers, Indiana Jones- styled. However, through the promotion of the mystiques of the East as portrayed by the Colonial powers, and an image of modern civilized towns, resembling Europe, constructed by the Europeans, in an attempt to outshine other European colonial powers, turned Mainland Southeast Asia into a hotspot, considered in vogue and worth exploring by European tourists. The first attempt to promote the romantic image of the East and the success of the Colonial powers in transforming the land of the savage into a civilized inhabitable place was done through the *Exposition Coloniale* by the French.

### France and the Promotion of Indochinese Antiquities

Since 1867, France had organized a series of World Fair known as *Exposition Universelle de Paris* where different countries came to exhibit their arts, cultures, and architectures at life-size ‘Pavilions’ which acted as small museums where visitors could learn about the various civilizations. The Exposition branched out into *Exposition Coloniale* which exhibited the cultures of the French colonies. Each Exposition attracted a large number of visitors and played an important role in raising a tremendous interest among the public in the civilizations of the far away lands. By 1910s, tourism was growing in Indochina, where famous destinations were such as the pagodas in Tonkin, the ancient royal tombs, towns, and the Cham monuments in Annam, and Angkor.



31. Angkor Wat at the Exposition Coloniale in 1931 (Source: wikimedia)



32. The Hanoi Street at the Marseille Exposition in 1906 (Source: [www.blog.voyagemillebournes.com](http://www.blog.voyagemillebournes.com))



33. Angkor Wat Pavilion at the Exposition Coloniale in Paris in 1931 (Source: Wikimedia)



34. Angkor Wat Pavilion when being demolished (Source: unknown)



35. Paris Expo, 1931 (Source: unknown)

There were at least two guidebooks on Annam published; one was as early as in 1914, and the other was in 1921, complete with maps and illustrations.<sup>316</sup> A guidebook on Angkor by Jean Commaille, a member of the EFEO, was also published in 1912. The boom of tourism was partly initiated by a board of lobbyists consisting of major shipping companies in Paris together with French tourism advocacy groups and the hotel industry in Indochina.<sup>317</sup> The initiative was well responded by Albert Sarraut, the Governor General of Indochina, and tourism development was incorporated into the colonial policy, since it would be useful for international propaganda and economic growth.<sup>318</sup> To respond to France's policy, more than 80 hotels were established all over Indochina while the earlier ones such as the Metropole in Hanoi and the Hotel Morin in Hue had been there since 1901. Other facilities to answer to the growing number of tourists, who were mostly white and wealthy, were also appearing quickly. Apart from Steamers, by the mid 1930s, there were regular weekly flights to and from Europe as well as the railway, the *Transindochinois*, connecting Cambodia, Tourane, and Tonkin, which was a favourite choice of leisure tourists.<sup>319</sup> The last *Exposition Coloniale* in Paris in 1931, which showcased the 12.5 million francs full size replica of Angkor Wat, received as many as 33 million visitors, who came to witness the lost civilization saved by France.<sup>320</sup> There were pavilions from Annam, Tonkin, Cochin China, and Laos on display exhibiting traditional styles of

<sup>316</sup> L. Aurousseau, "L. Cadière. L'Annam. Guide du Touriste" *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 22, 1 (1922) : 174-177.

<sup>317</sup> Erich DeWald, "The Development of Tourism in French Colonial Vietnam, 1918-1940" in *Asian Tourism: Growth and Change*, ed., Janet Cochrane (Oxford : Elsevier Ltd., 2008), 222.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>320</sup> Tim Winter, *Post-Conflict Heritage, Post Colonial Tourism : Culture, Politics and Development at Angkor* (Oxon : Routledge, 2007), 38.

temple architecture. Varieties of tour options around Indochina were offered at the Exposition.<sup>321</sup>



36. Hotel Morin in Hue in the 1910s (Source: [www.morinhotel.com.vn](http://www.morinhotel.com.vn))

France's major campaign to 'advertise' antiquities of Indochina gained a big success. Naturally, tourists to Indochina increased greatly. At Angkor, the number of tourists rose from 200 in 1907 to more than 1,000 in 1920s, thanks to the efforts of the Paris-based organization *Société d'Angkor pour la conservation des monuments anciens d'Indochine* which promoted works of the EFEO in Paris.<sup>322</sup> By then there were regular connections by boat via the *Messageries Fluviales* from Cochin China to Phnom Penh and then to Siem Reap.<sup>323</sup> At this point the EFEO conservators were pressured by the demand to provide convenience, accessibility, as well as the anticipated 'romantic' image of Angkor to tourists. This, in a way, led to a major clearance of Angkor leaving it in a 'controlled vegetation' state for tourism, as well as the relocation of monks and the local people from the scene, since they were not conforming to the perception of Angkor projected by France. Tourist behaviours and facilities troubled conservators since the former started to invade the temples. In 1907, a 10 bedroom hotel, *Sala d'Angkor*, was built within Angkor where the view of Angkor Wat was readily available for guests from their bedroom windows.<sup>324</sup> However, after Angkor became *Parc d'Angkor* in 1924, the new hotel, *Grand d'Angkor*, opened in 1932, was located eight kilometers away from the site.<sup>325</sup> After achieving an archaeological zone status, an entrance fee was imposed on visitors. It was during this period that the guardianship of sacred Angkor was turned into the hand of the French who attempted to re-hindunize and museumize the temples and keep it at the disposition of tourists. With the visitors came the beginning of looting of Angkor. In 1924, André Malraux, a French writer who later became a Minister of

<sup>321</sup> Ellen Furlough, "Representing Cambodia : French Cultural Politics in 'Indochina'," paper presented at the Teaching Cambodia Workshop, Marlboro College and the Hill Center for World Studies, USA, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2005.

<sup>322</sup> Winter, *Post-Conflict Heritage, Post Colonial Tourism : Culture, Politics and Development at Angkor*, 39.

<sup>323</sup> J. Commaille, *Guide aux Ruines d'Angkor* (Paris : Hachette, 1912), 1-4.

<sup>324</sup> *The Grand Hotel d'Angkor 1932-1997 Chronology* [Online], accessed 8 December 2009, Available from [http://www.raffles.com/EN\\_RA/Property/RGA/History/](http://www.raffles.com/EN_RA/Property/RGA/History/)

<sup>325</sup> Winter, *Post-Conflict Heritage, Post Colonial Tourism : Culture, Politics and Development at Angkor*, 40.

Culture, was convicted for the looting of the Banteay Srei temple.<sup>326</sup> Since then artifacts from Angkor have become objects of demand by international collectors.



37. King Sisowath of Cambodia at Angkor Wat in 1921 with the French War Hero Joffre le Maréchal (Source: [www.belleindochine.free.fr](http://www.belleindochine.free.fr))

In Viet Nam, it was noted that the continuous use of religious sites by the faithful “complicated efforts by the colonial lobby to realize their tourism potential” since, before the 1920s, many sites were restricted to high ranking officials and permission had to be granted before anyone could enter.<sup>327</sup> The French administrator then undertook the responsibility to issue permits to tourists thus turning tombs and shrines into tourist attractions. Traditional festivals started to be organized as part of travelling experiences for tourists. The Cham sites, however, received less attention than Angkor, probably because they were in a less magnificent state and did not project the same romantic appeals. The temples were located mostly in different locations and some were used by the local people. The notion of living shrines possibly did not excite the tourists as much as the lost city in the forest, for which Angkor had been known.

Laos did not receive as many tourists as their Indochinese counterparts, though a high-class hotel, *Hotel du Commissariat*, was opened in Vientiane in 1925. Since Vientiane was badly destroyed by the Chinese War, the town was in the process of reestablishing itself through a major restoration programme of the French. The lack of transportation facilities made different parts of Laos quite inaccessible, unlike other French Colonies which were more developed in this area. It was noted that Laos was not yielding much economic benefits to France, which is probably the reason infrastructure was not well developed in Laos, and there were only 6,000 people in Vientiane in 1937. By then, Vientiane was a new town emerged by the efforts of the

<sup>326</sup> Jane Perlez, *A Cruel Race to Loot the Splendor That Was Angkor* [Online], accessed 23 September 2009. Available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/21/international/asia/21cambodia.html>

<sup>327</sup> DeWald, “The Development of Tourism in French Colonial Vietnam, 1918-1940” in *Asian Tourism: Growth and Change*, ed., Janet Cochrane, 224.

French to transform its landscape, and again the French took a guardianship of the Laotian antiquities.

The French was successful in establish cultural tourism in Indochina with the focus on antiquities, thus making it the first time that antiquities of Mainland Southeast Asia was seen as a commodity. Angkor Wat, decontextualized and losing its sacredness, started to appear in advertisements as symbol of wealth and class, and suddenly to travel to Indochina was fashionable, in the same way as the wealthy British travelled to India.

### Britain and the Tourism of Burma



38. The Strand Hotel in Rangoon<sup>328</sup>

Myanmar, as a new province of India, had become a destination for tourists since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1907, a quasi-guidebook for young adults in England already mentioned direct steamers from England, the more upper-class Bibby line, and the plain Henderson line, as well as railways connecting Rangoon to the interiors of Burma which began to develop “only after the disposition of the last monarchy and the government”.<sup>329</sup> The author also mentioned the Strand hotel,<sup>330</sup> which was established in the 1890s. In 1917, the guidebook to ancient monuments and monasteries in Mandalay, “*Archaeological Notes on Mandalay*”, written by U Taw Sein Ko who worked at the Archaeological Survey, served as important information for tourists who wanted to visit the sites. Prince Damrong of Siam was also using this guidebook, and others, during his visit in 1936 when he described the two kinds of guesthouses available for tourists outside Rangoon - the state guesthouses for high ranking officials, and the bungalows for all. The bungalows for travelers were known as the dak bungalows. Kelly (1906: 60) described this type of bungalows as follows:

These are small houses, containing two or three rooms, raised on poles above the ground. They are built of timber, with matting walls and thatched roof, much like the

<sup>328</sup> Noel F. Singer, *Old Rangoon* (Sterling: Paul Strachan – Kiscadale Publications, 1995)

<sup>329</sup> Kelly, *Peeps at Many Lands: Burma*, 4.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

Burmese dwellings I have described. Native custodians are in charge of them, and although specially intended for the use of Government servants, any traveller may use them. In the forest similar houses, called "tais," smaller and often built of bamboo, are erected.



39. Dak Bungalow<sup>331</sup>



40. People waiting for the steamer at the Irrawaddy bank<sup>332</sup>

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were at least nine hotels in the vicinity of Rangoon, including the more expensive first-class ones and the cheaper ones. Prince Damrong also visited the Savoy hotel in Rangoon which was a favorite spot for foreigners to have 'refreshments' – a totally new concept of eating out.<sup>333</sup> Once tourists landed at the Sule pagoda wharf, there would be agents from Thomas Cook to help prepare everything needed for the rough trip including bedding, tinned food, utensils, and an English-Burmese speaking Indian servant.<sup>334</sup> There were other shops selling travel related products if more adventurous tourists wanted to explore Burma on their own. To travel around the country, there was a well-connected railway, as well as the Irrawaddy Flottilla taking people from Rangoon to Mandalay.

## Siam

<sup>331</sup> R. Talbot Kelly, *Peeps at Many Lands: Burma* (London : Adam and Charles Black, 1908)

<sup>332</sup> R. Talbot Kelly, *Peeps at Many Lands: Burma* (London : Adam and Charles Black, 1908)

<sup>333</sup> H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Journey through Burma in 1936*, 158, 215.

<sup>334</sup> Singer, *Old Rangoon*, 164.

To promote its art and culture, Siam participated in the *Exposition Universelle de Paris* for the first time in 1867 during the reign of King Mongkut, following an invitation from Emperor Napoleon III, where Siam had won a few awards. Since then Siam had joined various Expositions such in those in Paris in 1889 and 1900, United States in 1904, and Turin, Italy in 1911. It was noted that there were 7.5 million visitors at the Thai Pavilion in Turin, which equaled the number of the Thai population at that time, and there were other exhibitions organized by King Chulalongkorn in Siam and London.



41. A Siamese Pavilion at an Expo in 1889 (Source: wikimedia)



42. Thai Pavilion in Turin, 1911 (Source: wikimedia)

In 1896, the Royal State Railways opened the first route from Bangkok to Ayutthaya, presided over by King Chulalongkorn, and has since been opening up new routes to destinations such as Hua Hin, Chumphon, and Padang Besar in Malaysia. In 1904, *The 1904 Traveller's Guide to Bangkok and Siam*, written by J. Antonio, is probably the first guidebook on Thailand, not to mention other earlier written travel pieces, whereby Bangkok was described as being 'out of the track' – though it was accessible by steamers from Saigon and Phnom Penh. In 1921, the Royal State Railways opened

the first hotel at the seaside resort of Hua Hin, which was considered the first School of Hotel Management in Thailand, and since 1924, the Royal State Railways was responsible to promote tourism and to facilitate tourist activities in Siam. It published a guidebook on Bangkok in 1924, on Nakhon Pathom in 1929, and on Phetburi in 1931; all of which were written by the famous archaeologist, Erik Seidenfaden. In order to respond to an increasing number of tourists, King Prajadhipok decided to convert an old palace of King Vajiravudh into a first class hotel known as the Phaya Thai Palace Hotel in February 1926,<sup>335</sup> though there had been hotels in Bangkok since the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hotel Phayathai was thought to be the best hotel in Bangkok at that time equipped with a bar, a dining place, and a live jazz band from the States. Tourist information on Siam was also distributed in the States, probably as a means to advertise Siam to a new world, when the British were travelling to Burma and the French to Indochina. In December 1926, Bangkok welcomed a group of 560 American students from the Tourism College of New York who stayed at the Royal Hotel and the Oriental Hotel while their professors stayed at the Phaya Thai Palace Hotel.<sup>336</sup> Later in 1927, the new hotel, Hotel Ratchathani, belonging to the Royal State Railways was established at the Bangkok Railway Station (Hua Lampong) which was considered among the first class hotels of Bangkok. In 1931, Siam received an official visit from Crown Prince Leopold and Princess Astrid of Belgium, who undertook a train journey around Thailand, visiting as far as Phrae to see the teak logging business.<sup>337</sup> It was noted that the Thai train service then was of the best quality, and hotels learnt how to provide their services based on the services provided on the train. However, after the Revolution in 1932, many hotels were closed down due to financial problems, and the Royal States Railways changed its title to the Thai Railways Department, while the tourism section of the Royal States Railways was transferred to the Ministry of Commerce in 1936, but again was closed down during the WWII.

### Summary

Groslier (1966: 253) made a remark on the interconnectedness between the region's past and the religion that:

...these links with the past are further strengthened by religion. In Burma and Thailand the restoration of ancient Buddhist monuments is still a meritorious work – though one which, paradoxically, is sometimes to the disadvantage of archaeology.”. He also added that “...we must always bear in mind that these systematic studies of Asia are the work of Europeans, and thus reflect specifically European modes of thought. This does not necessarily make them the best...They interpreted the facts, of course, according to their own system of values.”<sup>338</sup>

<sup>335</sup> According to the old calendar system, it was recorded 18<sup>th</sup> February 1925.

<sup>336</sup> Rotfaithai Community, Jod Mai Het Phra Ratchakit Rai Wan Nai Phra Bat Somdet Phra Pokklao Chao Yoo Hua (Journal of King Prajadhipok) [Online], accessed 19 August 2009, Available from <http://portal.rotfaithai.com/modules.php?name=Forums&file=viewtopic&t=92&postdays=0&postorder=asc&start=0>

<sup>337</sup> Ibid.

<sup>338</sup> Groslier, Archaeologia Mundi : Indochina, 252.

This demonstrates that the Eastern values were largely in contrast with the Western idea of conservation, which emphasizes values other than spiritual, and material authenticity, which sprung from the Christian tradition.

This is emphasized by Andrzej Tomaszewski, a former Director General of ICCROM, who gave an explanation on the differences between the Eastern and Western concepts of conservation below:

The origin of western 'materialistic' approach to the values of a historical monument lies in the Christian tradition. This belief lay behind the traditions of the cult of holy relics, being one of the bases for the doctrine of the Roman Church. This cult was and still is connected with the authenticity of their material substance. The cult of relics, at first limited to the bodies of holy martyrs, gradually widened its scope to include objects connected with holy people and with places imbued with their presence. In this manner architectural elements also attained the status of relics, and their authenticity depended entirely on their material substance...

The first European theory regarding the restoration of historical monuments, born and put into practice in the nineteenth century, was close to the philosophy of Plato. The principle of 'stylistic restoration' was based on the concept of the superiority of the ideal over the material....At the turn of the twentieth century, the purist concept of restoration of historic monuments was rejected and condemned, making the material substance of the monument the basic object of the work of conservators. The basic criteria used in the assessment and evaluation of historic monuments were the artistic, architectural, technical, and historical values of their material substance. This shows the lack of communication between conservation and the social sciences (history, art history, sociology), which study the message and content (and thus the non-material values) of works of art and architecture, and the way in which they are reflected on social memory. Change in western thought only took place by influences coming from the outside, from other cultural settings, namely, from the Far East and Africa. Conflict with the Far East regarding the concept of authenticity, understood there in terms of form, function and tradition and based - among other things - on a belief in reincarnation led, for the first time, to a global discussion on this topic among conservators.<sup>339</sup>

From the beginning of French colonization in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1940s, France was successful in constructing and controlling the political boundaries as well as the past of Indochina. Scholarly works of the EFEO were used as tools in shaping the national 'heritage' in the eyes of the native people, which was one important element of nationalism. The EFEO staff needed to be commended for their devotion and their extensive works which brought out to the world the knowledge of Mainland Southeast Asia's past civilizations. However, conservation and management of the region's past during the Colonial period was taking place with very little regard to the local people and the original use of the antiquities. No training on archaeology,

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<sup>339</sup> Andrzej Tomaszewski, "Tangible and Intangible Values of Cultural Property in Western Tradition and Science," paper presented at the ICOMOS 14<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and Scientific Symposium on "Place, memory, meaning: preserving intangible values in monuments and sites", Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 27 -31 October 2003.

museology, or conservation was offered to the local people, though it was understandable that the political and social situations were not quite accommodating.

The abolition of slavery had also changed the way religious sites had been maintained for almost the past 1,000 years. As pagoda slaves were free from bondage, temples were left at the care of monks and the faithful, though some pagoda slaves still attached themselves to the temples because of their sense of devotion. Land revenues assigned to the temples were given up making maintenance activities more difficult in some cases. The boom of construction provided more material and technical options on the rebuilding and restoration of temples, when wood was becoming more expensive and difficult to find. As a result, there were a growing number of Western style buildings replacing traditional wooden houses and monasteries. Influences from the West also appeared as secular monuments, which never before existed in the region.

Through the popularization of the Past, religious objects and antiquities had become commodity. Artifacts were sought after by collectors, who assigned them monetary value. In addition, it was at this period that religious sites were, for the first time in history, regarded for their historical and academic values, and their potentials to generate income from tourism. It was during this period that the perception and the function of past material remains in Mainland Southeast Asia were to change forever. Historical, political, and nationalistic values had been assigned to the heritage as well, and it was the first time that places and objects of worship were referred to as monuments and art objects, and were classified by their styles and 'significance'. As a result, it can be argued that the process of colonization was bringing changes to the traditional worldviews on materials of Mainland Southeast Asia, and the changes were to continue and branch out into different forms after the Independence in the 1940s.

## Chapter V

### Heritage and Politics

*He who controls the present, controls the past. He who controls the past, controls the future.*

(George Orwell from 1984)

This chapter discusses the post-colonial period of Mainland Southeast Asia from 1940s onwards and the development of the region's cultural heritage management system. During this period, antiquities have changed from the legacy of the colonial powers to national icons and sites of contestation. Unrest political situations brought new roles for the past. The management of the past became an important tool in nation-building. Since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., new challenges in heritage conservation and management have arose which call for a revisitation of present heritage management approaches in the region.

#### Thailand and the Birth of Heritage

Modernization arrived in Siam with the idea of national progress and a strong sense of nationalism, which was expressed through the loyalty to Nation, Buddhism, and Monarchy, which was seen to reach its height during the reign of King Vajiravudh.<sup>340</sup> The theme of national unity took place in a number of the plays that he wrote while he organized a para-military group of 'Wild Tigers' taking the idea from the British. King Vajiravudh built a model city known as the *Dusit Thani* at the Dusit Palace in Bangkok consisting of doll sized houses and offices belonging to himself and his officials which served as the place where democracy was first taught and trialed in Siam. The Dusit Thani had its own government as well as newspapers, demonstrating the King's attempt to bring democracy to the country which was then under the Absolute Monarchy. At this period, western- educated elitists and middle class started to return from Europe bringing with them an appealing notion of democracy. The idea of a fully democratized country of the modern youngsters who began to assume important posts in the Government clashed quite a lot with the old traditionalists.

Successor of King Mongkut, King Prajadhipok was educated in England and had previously expressed an intention to introduce democracy to Siam. He had reigned for 10 years when a bloodless coup was organized in 1932 led by the People's Party whose members were middle-class Western educated Thais and old aristocrat moderates. While there were budding nationalistic movements here and there in other countries in the 1930s, King Prajadhipok abdicated the throne in 1935 ending the Absolute Monarchy and gave birth to a new administrative system of Constitutional Monarchy. Prince Ananda, then a young child residing in Switzerland, was in line for the throne as King Rama VIII. The new Government caused major changes in the

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<sup>340</sup> Donald K. Swearer, "Sulak Sivaraksa's Buddhist Vision" in Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movement in Asia eds., Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King (New York : State University of New York, 1996), 210.

country's administration with a struggle of powers between different factions. The name of the country was changed from Siam to Thailand in 1939, under the leadership of Field Marshal Phibun who was Thai Prime Minister from 1938 to 1944 and 1948 to 1957, to reflect the modernized image of the country, thus closing the traditional era completely.



43. King Prajadhipok and Rambhaibhanni inaugurated the national museum. (source: [www.thailandmuseum.com](http://www.thailandmuseum.com))

With new Ministries created, the responsibilities to take care of national monuments were transferred to the newly established Fine Arts Department in 1933 under the Ministry of Public Instruction. 1934 marked a very important year for Thai archaeology. The three buildings formerly known as the Bangkok Museum were titled the National Museum, Bangkok, following a new antiquities act launched in 1934. During this time, archaeological excavations took place in Siam by the British archaeologist, Quaritch Wales, at many provinces including Pang Nga, Suratthani, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Khanchanaburi, Suphanburi, and Phetchabun.<sup>341</sup> Restoration works also took place on the buildings of the National Museum in Bangkok, arguably the first restoration by State on non-sacred buildings. The period that followed saw more excavations by foreign experts in different parts of the country. In 1935, the Fine Arts Department listed 69 national monuments.

Field Marshal Phibun introduced to Thailand an extreme cultural reformation scheme with an aim to turn Thailand into a 'civilized' country. The Thais were required to change their names to clearly signify their sexes; to follow the western dress code, hence the saying "*Hats make Thailand a powerful nation.*" (มาลาน้ำไทยสวมหม้ออำนาจ); and, to change Thai alphabets and spellings. There were inventions of nationalistic symbols including Thai signature dishes, especially Pad Thai, national anthem, and monuments. It was during this period that major secular monuments were constructed, under the supervision of the Director General of the Fine Arts Department, Luang Vajitvadhakarn, to connote a strong sense of patriotism including statues of the past kings and local heroic s in different provinces.

<sup>341</sup> The Fine Arts Department, The Development of Museums and Archaeological Activities in Thailand, 27.

While France was engaged in the war in Europe in 1939, Thailand demanded back the ceded territories of Siem Reap, Battambang, Sri Sophon in Cambodia, and Sayabouri in Laos from France. The Franco-Thai War followed in 1940-1941 when an agreement could not be made. Finally, an agreement was signed in Tokyo whereby the three provinces were returned to Thailand, though France was able to retain their rights on Angkor.<sup>342</sup> Field Marshal Phibun was then conferred the newly established highest rank of the Thai Army for the deeds he had done to the country. The Victory Monument was built in 1941 as a memorial of the Franco-Thai war.

With the outbreak of WWII in 1941, Field Marshal Phibun was allying with the Axis making Thailand a military base for Japanese troops, with a major disagreement from other factions, especially the educated Thais abroad. This group of people, led by Pridi Banomyong, formed together the Free Thai movement which stationed in different countries such as England, France, and USA. The Free Thai worked secretly with the American troops and provided intelligence service during the war. With a strong will to advocate Thai fine arts and culture as nationalistic symbols at this period, Field Marshal Phibun established the Silpakorn University, or the University of Fine Arts, in 1943 with only the Faculty of Fine Arts, under the guidance of the Italian artist Corrado Feroci.



44. The Victory Monument (Source: [www.oknation.net](http://www.oknation.net))

WWII ended with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Once Japan surrendered, Thailand technically lost the war, but the mission of the Free Thai movement turned Thailand into one of the winning countries. With the war ending, King Ananda returned to Thailand and the country resumed its normal situation for a little while. His short reign ended with a tragic event in 1946 when King Ananda was assassinated. King Bhumibol was then crowned the 9<sup>th</sup> King of the Chakri dynasty.

As an aftermath of WWII, the United Nations was founded by the Allies countries in the late 1945, together with UNESCO, the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Culture Organization. Thailand was vetoed by France from joining the UN since it was seen that the Franco-Thai agreement made during the war was unfair. As a result, Thailand once again retroceded Siem Reap, Battambang, Sri Sophon, and Sayabouri

<sup>342</sup> Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 166.

to France in 1946, which was the same year that the Fine Arts Department conducted the first excavation at Suratthani by Thai staff.<sup>343</sup>



45. King Vajiravudh at the Viharn Phra Mongkolbopit before the restoration  
(Source: [www.bloggang.com/twojay](http://www.bloggang.com/twojay))

In 1948, restoration works by the Fine Arts Department at the National Museum buildings resumed after being halted for 11 years. Recognizing the lack of personnel, the Thai Government gave a scholarship to MC Subhadradis Diskul, a son of Prince Damrong, to study archaeology in France and England in 1952-1955, who became the first scholar on the subject. With the founding of the Faculty of Archaeology at the Silpakorn University in Thailand in 1955, the Fine Arts Department started to have qualified personnel to fill in the required posts. Graduates from the Silpakorn University and staff of the Fine Arts Department were given scholarships to further their knowledge on archaeology, art history, museology, and conservation abroad, mostly in Europe and the United States. In 1952, Thai government led by Field Marshal Phibun conducted a major restoration project at the historic city of Sukhothai to glorify the past of Thailand. In 1954, another restoration project took place in Ayutthaya, which was marked by a visit from, U Nu, the then Burmese Prime Minister who donated B200,000 for the restoration of the Viharn Phra Mongkolbopit temple, which was sacked by the Burmese in 1767. This act of merit was in a way to reestablish a friendship between Thailand and Burma.

In 1972, UNESCO launched the World Heritage Convention to protect world heritage sites, and Thailand promptly ratified the Convention. After declaring a major part of Ayutthaya an archaeological zone, the Fine Arts Department gave birth to the Ayutthaya Historical Park in 1982 which was listed as a World Heritage site in 1991 together with the historic capital of Sukhothai. The prehistoric site of Ban Chiang was

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<sup>343</sup> The Fine Arts Department, The Development of Museums and Archaeological Activities in Thailand, 20.

listed in 1992 – summing the total amount of cultural World Heritage sites in Thailand so far.

While the birth of historical parks in Thailand generated conflicts between the Fine Arts Department and the traditional communities, the monuments have also been used with other purposes than religious or nationalistic. In order to promote tourism, various out-of-context activities were conducted at historic monuments such as the Loy Krathong festival in Sukhothai whereby history was being reenacted as part of entertainment. The heritage has once again undergone a transformation into a tourist attraction, and a commodity lacking of its original meaning. The gap between the people and heritage has never been wider.

The dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century marked another important movement in archaeological heritage conservation and management in Thailand. A new approach known as the Thailand Community Archaeology Project was initiated by the archaeologist Sayan Praicharnjit in a village in the province of Nan in Northern Thailand. The excavation taking place at a kiln site in the village was conducted by villagers together with Praicharnjit, and a museum was set up by the villagers, who also took care of the site and acted as tour guides. The success of the project was the fact that villagers were connected to the site and felt a sense of ownership, though the kiln site was not held sacred and had no earlier connections with the local people. The visits to the site of Princess Galyanivadhana and Princess Sirindhorn encouraged the local community to be more active in managing the site. This exemplary case was to have a wide repercussion in the years that followed. Together with political decentralization, the local community was allowed by law to take part in the conservation and management of their heritage. With the increasing awareness of the local community here and there to participate in site protection, some staff members of the Fine Arts Department were also implementing community museum or community archaeology projects whose results were revealed for the first time at a conference at the Silpakorn University in 2009.



46. Thailand Community Archaeology Project in Nan province (Source: [www.archaeopen.com](http://www.archaeopen.com))

The royal family still maintains their traditional role as patron of Buddhism. However, King Bhumibol was also concerned about heritage as source of historical

evidence and national pride. He once stated that “*archaeological monuments are honour of the nation. Even a piece of old brick is valuable. If we do not have Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Bangkok, Thailand does not have any meaning*”. King Bhumibhol and Queen Sirikit visited Ayutthaya in 1957 to see artifacts found at the Wat Ratchaburana temple. The King advised the Director General of the Fine Arts Department that archaeological objects should be kept in a museum for the people of Ayutthaya to see and they should not be moved to be stored elsewhere. Following the King’s advice, the Chao Sam Phraya National Museum was founded 4 years later and the King and the Queen presided over the opening ceremony. The King and the Queen also visited the Ban Chiang prehistoric site in 1973. King Bhumibhol was given the title ‘the Supreme Patron of Thai Cultural Heritage’ by the Government in 2007. Other members of the monarchy, especially Princess Sirindhorn, expressed a great interest on archaeological heritage conservation and management. She visited numerous archaeological sites in Thailand and abroad including one of the sites of the Thailand Community Archaeology Project in the province of Nan in 2005. The Princess’ birthday is also the Thai Heritage Conservation day. Lately, King Bhumibhol’s initiative on ‘living museum’, taking place at six branches of the Centre for Development Studies in six provinces, has been implemented by relevant organizations to reflect his theory of self-sufficient economy through new agricultural theory. These centres focus on agricultural development in different environment including the Northern, Northeastern, East, and South regions of Thailand to help demonstrate appropriate and successful agricultural methods to local farmers, who can freely visit the centres. The centres serve as ‘living natural museums’ which allow farmers to see how self-sufficiency can be accomplished through agricultural projects suitable to each region ranging from cattle rearing to rubber plantation. These centres have also taken a step further to promote nature conservation and to serve as centres for community-based agricultural tourism projects.



47. H.R.H. Princess Sirindhorn at the Bangkok National Museum (Source: [www.ohmpps.go.th](http://www.ohmpps.go.th))

### Independence of French Indochina and Its Heritage



48. Ho Chi Minh (Source: wikipedia)

In the 1930s, there was a current of anti-colonial movements around Indochina, mostly centred on nationalistic feelings, led by western educated youngsters. In Viet Nam, a prominent anti-French leader was Ho Chi Minh. Educated in the French system in Hue, Ho Chi Minh in his 20s went to London and France where he became a communist, whose ideology was not pure Marxist but more adaptive towards the Vietnamese context. The French administrative system during the Colonial period obliterated the former pillars of the Vietnamese society, which were the balance between heaven and earth maintained by the Confucian Emperors, and the cult of ancestral and spiritual worship.<sup>344</sup> Without anything to hold on to, young Vietnamese started to turn to Communism as new ideology which provided national solidarity. In 1930s Ho Chi Minh was leading the Indochinese Communist Party using stories of heroic acts of the Vietnamese in the past to solicit collaboration from the public, aiming at overthrowing the French.

During WWII, Japan was already stationed in major cities in the region, and in 1940, at the dawn of WWII, Japanese troops undertook a *coup de force* by disarming French armies in Indochina and declared a state of Independence of all colonized countries. Japan was propagandizing the idea of 'Asia for the Asiatics' in order to arouse Indochina to renounce the state of French protectorate. In 1945 Ho Chi Minh assumed the status of President of the independent Viet Nam under the Viet Minh government, while the Emperor Bao Dai still wanted to remain under the French protectorate. Once he was leading the government, Ho Chi Minh issued a decree in November 1945 to control all the museums built by the French.<sup>345</sup> In an attempt to reassert its hegemony over Viet Nam, France declared the Indochinese War with Viet Nam, which took place in 1946. However, in 1948, the Emperor Bao Dai signed an agreement with France which recognized the independence of Viet Nam, but at the same time associated Viet Nam with the French Union. Through this agreement,

<sup>344</sup> Keyes, The Golden Peninsula : Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia, 221.

<sup>345</sup> ASEAN COCI, Comparative Museology and Museography in ASEAN, 91.

France would still be influential on Viet Nam, which would be ruled as a non-Communist country led by the monarchy. This agreement, therefore, separated Viet Nam into two parts: Communist Viet Nam where the Viet Minh was ruling, and non-communist Viet Nam which was advocated by France. Anti-Communist United States began to support the French in fighting the Viet Minh, but the defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu made France reconsider its role in the region. The Geneva Agreements in 1954 settled the issue, whereby Viet Nam was divided into two countries. Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh were ruling North Viet Nam under the name the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, and, in the South, the State of Viet Nam was headed by Emperor Bao Dai and Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem. In North Viet Nam, the Musée Louis Finot was changed into the Viet Nam Museum of History showcasing the “various development stages of history, highlighting glorious feats against foreign forces of aggression for the cause of building and defending the country’s independence...”.<sup>346</sup> There were new museums created under President Ho Chi Minh’s government in 1959 including the Viet Nam Museum of Revolution displaying “...the revolutionary movements...and resistance wars for the defense of the nation’s independence...”, and the Viet Nam People’s Army Museum. The Viet Nam Art Museum was established in 1966. In South Viet Nam, no new museums were built and the old ones just carried on their functions.

In 1963, the US started to fully get involved with the Viet Nam War, and by 1964, wars broke off in both North and South Viet Nam. The construction of the past was therefore very crucial at this period in order to rebuild national identity. It was noted that President Ho Chi Minh paid a lot of attention to archaeology. He established the Institute of Archaeology in the 1960s and made his former secretary, Pham Huy Thonh, the director of the institute. There were heightened interests in prehistoric excavations, which were frequently visited by Ho Chi Minh himself even during the height of the wars.<sup>347</sup> The conference to prove the existence of the Bronze Age native Vietnamese culture before the period of Chinese invasion was organized from 1968-1971<sup>348</sup> at the Institute of Archaeology, and gave rise to the idea that the Dong Son culture was the product of the Vietnamese people before their subjection to China.<sup>349</sup> During this period, archaeologists and museologists were trained in China, the former Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria, to be in service of nationalism, and to outshine the works done by European scholars. It was noted that “it is a paradox that a country materially so poor, barely recovering from many generations of war..., has devoted so much attention to archaeology”.<sup>350</sup> The role of archaeology in establishing Vietnamese national identity was undeniable.

In 1975, North and South Viet Nam were unified. Archaeological excavations began to catch up in South Viet Nam. Museums were renamed and new ones set up under

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Glover, “Some National, Regional, and Political Uses of Archaeology in East and Southeast Asia,” in *Archaeology of Asia*, ed. Miriam Stark, 26.

<sup>348</sup> Yuko Hirano, *One Viewpoint of the Relation between Vietnamese Archaeology and the Formation of the National History* [Online], accessed 14 October 2009, Available from <http://www.angkorvat.jp/doc/ang-itEN06.pdf>.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

the control of the newly established Ministry of Culture, whose name was later changed to Ministry of Culture and Information. Museums which were built during this period usually served to enhance national solidarity and nationalism, such as the Ho Chi Minh Museum, the Viet Nam Museum of Ethnology, the Woman's Museum, to name but a few. Since 1970, the University of Hanoi started to offer classes in museology, which later were transferred, as a faculty, to the Hanoi University of Culture.<sup>351</sup> This consistency of classes offered provided Viet Nam with sufficient staff to work in more than 100 government museums all over the country.<sup>352</sup> However, it was noted that in the field of archaeology, staff shortage was one of the most serious issues.<sup>353</sup> Viet Nam ratified the World Heritage Convention in 1987. The imperial city of Hue was the first site to be listed as World Heritage Site in 1993. In 1999, the My Son group of monuments at Champa and the historic town of Hoi An were listed as World Heritage Sites.

In Cambodia, as early as 1925, there had been an incident when a French *Résident* of Kompong Chhnang and his entourage were beaten to death by angry villagers when they were reprimanded for the delay in tax-paying.<sup>354</sup> This was unprecedented since the Cambodians were usually thought of by the French as being the most cooperative. This reflects the growing dissatisfaction in the French administration which demanded high taxes for the building of a 'new' France comprising of infrastructures such as roads, railways, and some resort for the French<sup>355</sup> in conjunction with the World Depression in 1932. In the 1936, the first Cambodian language newspaper, *Nagara Vatta*, was founded whose title yet again demonstrated the importance of Angkor Wat in the mind of the people. The seeds of nationalism started to show through the newspaper's articles criticizing the domination of the Vietnamese in Cambodian administration and the Chinese in commerce, as well as the delay of the French in reforming education.<sup>356</sup> The newspaper, together with the *Institut Bouddhique*, the place of a few educated traditionalists founded with assistance of Susan Karpeles-a member of the EFEO, became the source of Cambodian nationalism that would manifest itself during and after WWII.

The period between the Japanese occupation in 1940 and the end of WWII in 1945 is the turning point in the politics of Cambodia as well as the whole Southeast Asia. During this period, the Franco-Thai war broke up resulting in the ceding of Battambang, most parts of Siem Reap, and parts of Laos to Siam in exchange with the sum of 6,000,000 piastres. Angkor, however, was retained, but this cessation deeply upset King Monivong who passed away months later in 1941, and King Sihanouk was enthroned.<sup>357</sup> Soon after this, there was an uprising by monks and laymen in 1942 to protest the arrest of a leading monk for plotting against the French administration. In 1943 the French regime expressed an intention to romanize Khmer

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<sup>351</sup> ASEAN COCI, *Comparative Museology and Museography in ASEAN*, 97.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> Hirano, *One Viewpoint of the Relation between Vietnamese Archaeology and the Formation of the National History* [Online], accessed 14 October 2009, Available from <http://www.angkorvat.jp/doc/ang-itEN06.pdf>.

<sup>354</sup> Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 157.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid., 166.

alphabets using the scripts invented by George Coedès.<sup>358</sup> These attempts seriously upset the Khmers, and, all events culminated into the declaration of Khmer independence in early 1945 changing the name of the country from Cambodge to Kamphuchea. Later that year the French regained their power in Indochina when the Japanese surrendered. In 1946, Cambodia signed an agreement with the French to be part of the French Union – consisting of Laos, Cambodia, and South Viet Nam – which gave a little bit more room for indigenous administration, and Angkor once again returned to Cambodia in 1947. At this period, the works of the EFEO at Angkor was interrupted. The French scholars left Indochina and no works were published. Under different political factions and ideologies, King Sihanouk dismissed the cabinet and began to rule the country under the National Assembly autocratic powers for three years in 1952. The King visited France and the United States on his quest for Cambodia's Independence which was granted in July 1953. By 1954, France lost its colonial power in Indochina, except for a small pro-French administration in South Viet Nam, and the United States started to get more involved in the region on the anti-communism mission. King Sihanouk abdicated for his father in 1955. By then, Angkor had already become an object of nationalism. Benedict Anderson (1991:183) stated that post-independence states exhibited marked continuities with their colonial predecessors which were a form of political museumizing – “but with the memory of the French colonial restorers wholly banished. French reconstructed Angkor Wat... became ... the central symbol of the successive flags of Sihanouk's royalist, Lon Nol's militarist, and Lon Nol's Jacobin regimes.”<sup>359</sup> The EFEO resumed its works again at the Conservation d'Angkor from the Independence of Cambodia until 1970, which was defined as the 'Golden Age' of the Conservation d'Angkor.<sup>360</sup> The Conservation d'Angkor was integrated into the newly-established Cambodian Ministry of Fine Arts but the EFEO staff still provided workforce and direction since “no qualified national (was) trained and prepared to succeed”.<sup>361</sup> The Cambodian and French governments jointly worked on the protection of Angkor, which was then the largest archaeological site in the world. At this point it was apparent that Angkor, the sacred symbol of pride and nationalism of the Khmers, had also become the nostalgic icon of the French colonization in Indochina, thus Angkor – and probably all Khmer temples - became both the Khmer and French legacy.

During this period, resources and equipment poured into the conservation of Angkor signified the most important role of Angkor in building national pride. Research and restoration works took place in Angkor with 1,000 staff and new workshops and offices. Excavations resumed in 1953 by a son of G. Groslier, Bernard Philippe Groslier, who was the first archaeologist in charge of the EFEO. He introduced a new methodology in terms of archaeological research to the Angkorian civilization which involved more civilian aspects, and a multi-disciplinary task of architects, epigraphists, and art historians, so the scope of works was widened to include statuary, bronzes, and ceramics.<sup>362</sup> In the 1953, the *Musée Albert Sarraut* was

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid., 169-170.

<sup>359</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London : Verso, 1991), 183.

<sup>360</sup> Pottier, “The Contribution of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient with Respect to the Cultural Heritage of Angkor during the Past 100 Years” *Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* 18, 257.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid., 259.

renamed *Musée National de Phnom Penh*, or the National Museum of Phnom Penh, and became a subject of bilateral agreement between the French and the Khmers. In 1966, the National Museum under the supervision of Madeleine Giteau was transferred to the management of the first Khmer Director, Chea Thay Seng, who was also the first Dean of the Faculty of Archaeology at the newly established Royal University of Fine Arts.<sup>363</sup> The University, founded in 1965, was a merge between the *École des Arts Cambodgiens* founded in 1918 and the National Theatre School. Archaeological training was given at the Faculty of Archaeology by the staff of the EFEO as well as at the Conservation d'Angkor itself.<sup>364</sup>



49. Jacqueline Kennedy with King Sihanouk and B.P. Groslier during her visit to Angkor in 1967 (Source: www.deveta.org)

However, at the height of the research on archaeology and heritage management, Cambodia plunged into a deep political turmoil in 1970s, when the Khmer Rouge took control of the country. Since the Independence in 1953, the Cambodia Communist Party received an increasing support from the Viet Minh. Pol Pot, a French-educated teacher whose sister was a concubine of King Monivong, was appointed the secretary of the CCP in 1962. He gathered cooperation from the peasants who were not content with high tax demands and the hierarchical society. As the United States was shunned by Prince Sihanouk, Gen. Lon Nol formed a coup against the Prince in 1970 and asked for foreign aids from the US in fighting the CCP, also known as the Khmer Rouge, who were using part of Cambodia as the Ho Chi Minh trail. This divided Cambodia into three political factions. In 1975, the Khmer Rouge took over Phnom Penh and ruled the country with an attempt to turn it into a peasants' Utopia, as Pol Pot was very much influenced by Communist China.

<sup>363</sup> [National Museum of Cambodia](http://www.cambodiamuseum.info/museum_history.html) [Online], accessed 7 September 2009, Available from [http://www.cambodiamuseum.info/museum\\_history.html](http://www.cambodiamuseum.info/museum_history.html)

<sup>364</sup> Pottier, "The Contribution of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient with Respect to the Cultural Heritage of Angkor during the Past 100 Years" *Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* 18, 260.



50. King Sihanouk and Queen Monique during the early period of Khmer Rouge (Source: [www.lg-media.blogspot.com](http://www.lg-media.blogspot.com))

Since 1970, the Khmer Rouge invaded Angkor, using it as their base. Though the temples were spared, the sculptures, and people along their course did not receive the same privilege. Britt Baillie (2005: 42) wrote:

On 20 January 1971 the Khmer Rouge seized Angkor. Bernard Groslier (EFEO) was severely wounded by a Khmer Rouge bullet. Another EFEO scholar, Francois Bizot, was taken captive by the Khmer Rouge, narrowly escaping death after a long period of captivity. In 1974, the French staff left and in 1975 the Khmer staff of *Conservation d'Angkor* was moved to Meanchey Commune where they were categorized as 'New People'. Land mines were laid thickly and fighting was heavy in this politically significant area.

It was noted though that Pol Pot was proud of Angkor, and even invited his war partners to visit Angkor during war time. A Villager also mentioned that no one was allowed to enter Angkor Wat during the Khmer Rouge because the Khmer Rouge "wanted to preserve it".<sup>365</sup> In 1975, the Conservation d'Angkor was closed. The Khmer Rouge eradicated education and Buddhism, and thought of the educated class as conspirators of the Imperial powers, who had to be executed. The Royal University and the Museum had to be closed; many of the museum staff lost their lives. It was estimated that about 1.6 million Cambodians died between 1975 -1979 and half a million fled the country. The Khmer Rouge, however, was overthrown by the pro-Vietnamese Communist regime led by Heng Samrin and Hun Sen in January 1979 which prolonged the stay of the Vietnamese troop in Cambodia for 10 years. The Paris Peace Accord in 1991 finally restored Cambodia back to peace and King Sihanouk to the throne. A coalition government was formed and elections followed. In 1997, the former Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot was under a house arrest after being dismissed by his people. When he died of a heart attack in 1998 peace was finally restored in Cambodia.

<sup>365</sup> Britt Baillie, "Angkor Wat : Conserving the Sacred?", (MPhil Dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2005), 104.



51. The National Museum in Phnom Penh (Source:www.angkorcambodiatriavel.com)

The National Museum was once again opened in 1979 but the museum was left in a devastated state. The museum building suffered from negligence and appeared in a state of decay while the collections were looted. The lacking of staff and expertise became an important issue. The Royal University of Fine Arts was reopened in 1980 as the School of Fine Arts. It was not until 1988 that the University began to offer a degree in Archaeology, and in 1993, with the reinstatement of the monarchy, the suffix 'Royal' was added to the University's title. In 1990, UNESCO launched a campaign to safeguard Angkor. Cambodia ratified the World Heritage Convention in 1991 and the EFEO reopened its centre in Siem Reap in 1992. Assurances were given from UNESCO, the Australian government, and the French government. Museum buildings were improved and the museum staff was trained in the field of conservation and museology. The International Council for Museums published in 1993 the book titled "*One hundred missing objects: Looting in Angkor*" which facilitated the return of some looted artifacts to the National Museum. With the effort of UNESCO to protect Angkor, Angkor was listed a World Heritage Site in 1992. This was the period which involved international cooperation to safeguard Angkor. The temples in Angkor were assigned to different conservation teams of different nationalities who undertook restoration and research works on the temples monitored by the ICC (International Coordinating Committee for the Conservation of Angkor) set up in 1993 and co-chaired by France and Japan. The APSARA Authority (the Authority for the Protection and Safeguarding of the Monuments of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap) was founded in 1995 under a Royal Decree, with the aim to create a national institution which is capable of taking care of this important national and world heritage. Training courses were given to the staff of the APSARA Authority, and APSARA has increasingly grown from the day of its inception. The Heritage Police under the Ministry of Interior was also established in 1994 and became official in 1997 to protect the sites from vandalism.

Conflicts, however, still arose between Thailand and Cambodia regarding the ownership of the temples and the disputed territories. In 2003, an unlikely anti-Thai riot took place in Phnom Penh over an alleged claim of the famous Thai actress, who was well known in Cambodia, Suwanan Kongying, that Angkor Wat belonged to Thailand, resulting in the destruction of the Thai Embassy, the looting of Thai-owned

businesses, and a loss of US\$42 million in damage.<sup>366</sup> The most recent conflicts at the time of writing over the ownership of the Preah Vihear temple and its surrounding territory, which was made a World Heritage Site in 2009, are also the outcome of the politics imbued in this sacred temple and the icon of the nation.



52. Angkor became a favourite spot for brides and grooms to have their wedding photos taken. (Source: [www.tokyo-ott.com](http://www.tokyo-ott.com))



53. King Sisavangvong and the Queen (Source: [www.amerilao.org](http://www.amerilao.org))

Laos in 1945 was in the same situation as its Indochinese counterparts. In March 1945, the Japanese urged the Crown Prince Savang Vatthana, the then-Prime Minister, to declare independence, but King Sisavangvong did not want to denounce the French Protectorate of Laos. The Prime Minister was then replaced by Prince Phetsarath, who promptly declared independence, causing the King to revoke his status. The King still maintained the status of Laos under France which drove Prince Souvannaphouma and Prince Souphanouvong to form the Lao Issarak (Free Lao) movement joined by Western educated Laotians. When the French came back to power in the early 1946, the Lao Issarak leaders fled to Thailand and the King was

<sup>366</sup> Glover, "Some National, Regional, and Political Uses of Archaeology in East and Southeast Asia," in *Archaeology of Asia*, ed. Miriam Stark (Massachusetts : Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 30.

restored on the throne. Prince Phetsarath remained the head of the government in exile while Prince Souvannaphouma, the deputy Prime Minister, tried to negotiate with the French. At this period, Prince Souphanouvong, who controlled the Lao Issarak army, got in touch with the Viet Minh. When Laos was finally granted a partial autonomy in 1949 by the French, Prince Souvannaphouma became the Prime Minister under the French control. The status of Laos then did not satisfy Prince Souphanouvong who formed the guerrilla army, Pathet Lao, in 1950. By 1952, the Laotian Communist Party, with a strong link to the Indochinese Communist Party, was formed under the Pathet Lao. The communist army gained control of the two provinces, Phongsaly and Sam Neua, in the North close to Viet Nam during the signing of the Geneva Conference in 1954.



54. King Savang Vattana, the last ruling monarch of Laos (Source: [www.laospirit.com](http://www.laospirit.com))

Following the Conference, Laos formed a national union government in 1957 of which Prince Souvannaphouma became the Prime Minister and Prince Souphanouvong a minister. The conflicts between the leftists and the rightists, however, caused a civil war from 1959 until 1962 when the neutralists joined the Pathet Lao with a full support from Soviet, while the American-supported rightist government was formed in Savannakhet under the government of Prince Boun Oum. The war ended in the mid 1962 when a government representing all factions was formed and Prince Souvannaphouma once again became the Prime Minister. By 1963, the US Government bombarded Laos heavily because of the Ho Chi Minh trail that passed through the country during the Second Indochina War.<sup>367</sup> The ceasefire between the United States and Viet Nam in 1973 led to an establishment of a coalition government in Laos, but the Pathet Lao took over Vientiane in 1975 following the fall of Saigon. King Sisavang Vattana abdicated and was sent to a labour camp along with his family, and never returned. As a result, Laos became the Lao People's Democratic

<sup>367</sup> Owen, Chandler, and Roff, eds., The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia, 375.

Republic and the 600 year-old monarchy ended.<sup>368</sup> Following this, the flag of Lao PDR represents the That Luang Pagoda in Vientiane as a national symbol.

The wars left Laos in a bad state. The strategic routes were heavily bombarded, especially the Plain of Jars, where 85% of the villages in the area was bombed. It was estimated that two million tons of bombs were launched, not including unexploded ordnance. Thus some of the jar sites were badly damaged. Archaeological works done by the EFEO gradually lessened since the 1940s and the focus of the study became traditions, languages, and philology of the Laotians as well as the ethnic minorities'. In 1956, an inventory of Laotian Buddhist manuscripts in Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Champasak, was completed after almost 40 years. In 1966, Pierre Bernard Lafont was the last representative of the EFEO to Laos.<sup>369</sup> He left Vientiane in the same year. In 1970s, under the old royalist government, a department dealing with Lao cultural heritage was created under the Ministry of Cults, but then moved to the Ministry of Education in 1976 under the title the Department of Museums and Archaeology.<sup>370</sup> The department was within the Ministry of Culture (now the Ministry of Information and Culture) in 1983 and changed its name in 2008 to become the Department of Cultural Heritage.



55. Lao National Museum located at the former building of the Hotel Commissariat

The first collections of Laotian artifacts relocated to Hanoi were returned to Laos in 1970s and were kept at the Ho Phra Keo in Vientiane. In 1986, the Lao National Museum was built at the former Hotel du Commissariat and it was formerly known as the Lao Revolutionary Museum. The President Kaysone Phomvihane museum was also built in honour of the founder of the People's Revolutionary Party and the first Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The Army Museum was built outside Vientiane, and there were a number of museums built in the provinces

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> Sayavongkhamdy, "Development of Museums in Laos," paper presented at ASEAN Museum Directors Symposium, Singapore, 49.

such as in Luang Nam Tha, Champasak, Sekong, Xieng Khoung, Pak Se, and Phongsaly.<sup>371</sup> The former Royal Palace in Luang Prabang was turned into a national museum displaying royal regalia and art objects.



56. The Luang Prabang National Museum or the former Royal Palace

With the ratification of the World Heritage Convention in 1987, Lao PDR proposed six sites to the tentative list of the World Heritage Sites including Luang Prabang, Vat Phou, the Plain of Jars, the Menhirs of Hua Muang, the That Luang Pagoda, and the Wat Sisaket in Vientiane. In 1993, a presidential decree on the protection and conservation of cultural heritage was introduced, but the law on National Heritage was adopted by the National Assembly in 2005. Luang Prabang was listed as a world heritage site in 1995, Vat Phou in 2001, and the Plain of Jars is about to be nominated in 2010 or 2011.

Archaeological training was not offered in Lao PDR until September 2009 when a BA programme in Archaeology and Cultural Resource Management was developed at the Lao National University.<sup>372</sup> Prior to this, Laotian personnel were mostly trained in France, Soviet, and Eastern European countries. With the establishment of the Department of Museums and Archaeology in 1983, Laotian archaeologists began to undertake archeological and heritage management works that were previously done solely by Western scholars. Since 1994, the Laotian archaeologist trained in France, Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, started to conduct archaeological excavations in many areas in Lao PDR, including the Plain of Jars, prehistoric cave sites in Luang Prabang, and Sepon. A number of Western archaeologists still conduct researches in the country including the Lerici Foundation at Vat Phou, Swedish researchers at the Lao Pako site, JICA at the Vientiane site, UNESCO at the Plain of Jars, and the Middle Mekong Archaeology Project by the University of Pennsylvania. New

<sup>371</sup> Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, "Current Situation of Archaeology in Lao PDR," powerpoint presentation presented at the ICCROM-SPAFA Living Heritage Sites Programme Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, 17 Oct. 2009.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

archaeological sites have been discovered and preserved, and the Department also advocates an involvement of the local community in taking care of archaeological sites at Luang Prabang, Plain of Jars, Lao Pako, and the Menhirs of Hua Muang. Recently the Department of Cultural Heritage established a new division dealing with Intangible Cultural Heritage as well.



57. Photos from the Middle Mekong Archaeology Project by University of Pennsylvania (Source: www.sciencedaily.com)

### **Burma's Independence**

The Burmese nationalistic movements against the British rule started to emerge since the 1930s, due to an oppressive system of administration imposed on the local Burmese. The old local administration system of *myothugyi* (district-chief) was destroyed and replaced by paid officials who were not able to gain the same trust and respect from villagers as the traditional headmen.<sup>373</sup> The British administration also employed a large number of Indians and minority groups and filled executive positions with anyone but the Burmese. The early sign of nationalism was shown through an establishment of the YMBA (Young Men's Buddhist Association), as opposed to the YMCA, which set up schools offering the teaching of Buddhism, while bible lessons were taught in other missionary schools. Its name was later changed to GCBA (General Council of Buddhist Associations) and was led by western educated youth.<sup>374</sup> The Reforms in India in 1919 provided a partial autonomous status to all provinces in India, but Burma. This combined with the passing of the Rangoon University Act which did not lend an autonomous status to the University caused an uprising by members of the GCBA who demanded the same reforms as taking place in India. It was not until 1935, however, that the British passed the Government of India Act separating Burma from India, to which Burma gained provincial autonomy, but the British Governor still retained power.<sup>375</sup> At this period a number of political parties were founded including the *Thakin* party which was an offspring of a Rangoon University students' party formed in 1929. The party was led by young Burmese and it emphasized social equality, the revival of Burmese Buddhist society, an education reform, and the opposition to non Burmese hold over

<sup>373</sup> SarDesai, *Southeast Asia : Past & Present*, 163.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

Burma's economy.<sup>376</sup> During WWII, the *Thakin* divided into different factions, and, in 1943, Burma claimed independence from the British. It was at this period that the Burmese Communist Party was established by members of the *Thakin*. After independence, some members of the *Thakin*, including the future national hero, Aung San, joined the Communist Party to oppose the Japanese and formed a new group called Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) of which Aung San was the president.<sup>377</sup> After the Japanese withdrawal, Burma was granted an election by the British in 1947, following the latter's decision to withdraw from India. Members of the AFPFL won almost all the seats in the Assembly, but Aung San and his members of cabinet were assassinated in July the same year by a Burmese opposition. This led U Nu to become the first Prime Minister who proclaimed Independence and the founding of the Union of Myanmar in January 1948.<sup>378</sup> U Nu sought to promote peace through the promotion of Buddhism by building and restoring numerous Buddhist pagodas and reviving Buddhist studies.<sup>379</sup> After independence, India returned Burmese artifacts home and the National Museum was inaugurated in June 1952 at the Jubilee Hall. Its first curator was the Burmese lady, Daw Nyunt Han, who studied museology abroad.<sup>380</sup> In 1954, the Archaeological Survey of Burma was reorganized as the Archaeology Department with the duty to protect and safeguard prehistoric and historic monuments and artifacts. The first Antiquities law was passed in 1957.

It was not until the late 1950s that factions within the Union caused more uprisings by the Communists. Ne Win, the army commander, was called to take care of the situation, which finally led to Ne Win's seize of power in 1962 thus beginning the era of military rule of Burma. In the 1960s, the first Burmese archaeologist trained at the School of Archaeology of the Archaeological Survey of India, U Aung Thaw, started to apply modern field methods on excavations at Beikthano<sup>381</sup> which began to be excavated by Burmese nationals since 1959.<sup>382</sup> Other two archaeologists trained abroad in the period right after independence were U Myint Aung, trained in India, and U Nyunt Han, trained in the United States, who assumed positions within the Department of Archaeology and trained their successors.<sup>383</sup> During the Ne Win's government, the Department received very small budget, thus archaeological works in this period were not progressing much.<sup>384</sup> The national museum was relocated in 1970 since the building that it was housed was to be used for some other purposes. In

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<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>380</sup> [The National Museum of Myanmar](http://www.aseancultureandinformation.org/coci/files/archive/The%20National%20Museum%20of%20Myanmar.pdf) [Online], accessed 18 October 2009, Available from <http://www.aseancultureandinformation.org/coci/files/archive/The%20National%20Museum%20of%20Myanmar.pdf>

<sup>381</sup> Glover, "Some National, Regional, and Political Uses of Archaeology in East and Southeast Asia," in *Archaeology of Asia*, ed. Miriam Stark, 29.

<sup>382</sup> Myo Theingi Cho, *Beiktano find resolves an historical mystery* [Online], accessed 18 October 2009, Available from <http://www.myanmar.gov.mm/myanmartimes/no173/Myanmartimes9-173/006.htm>

<sup>383</sup> Bob Hudson and Terry Lustig, "Communities of the Past : A New View of the Old Walls and Hydraulic System at Srisktra, Myanmar (Burma)" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 39 (2008) : 269-70.

<sup>384</sup> Green and Blurton, eds., *Burma: Art and Archaeology*, 110.

1975, an earthquake occurred at the Pagan area and badly damaged the monuments. This led to the UNDP-UNESCO project, headed by the French architect-restorer, Pierre Pichard, to restore and inventory the monuments which also offered trainings to staff of the Department of Archaeology. From then on UNESCO remained the main agency to safeguard the monuments of Pagan as well as other monuments in Burma through out the 1980s.<sup>385</sup>



58. The present National Museum in Yangon (Source: [www.myanmar.gov.mm](http://www.myanmar.gov.mm))

In 1988, Ne Win decided to step down. Burma changed its name to Myanmar. SLORC (State Peace and Development Council) was formed in September that year, and Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the NLD (National League for Democracy) was grounded by the SLORC under house arrest in 1989 in order to obstruct her party from winning the election. However, the NLD won a landslide election in 1990, but the SLORC still ruled Myanmar and has lengthened Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest until now.

Under the SLORC government since 1988, tourism was promoted as means to generate business opportunities and income in Burma. This resulted in the development of hotels and tourist facilities, as well as, the allocation of government budget towards rebuilding and restoring monuments, Buddha images, temples, and the new museum. The major pagodas were rebuilt and restored and traditional monasteries were decreed as means to showcase Burma's cultural heritage which could promote patriotism.<sup>386</sup> As a result, a number of wooden monasteries were restored by the Department of Archaeology. Though a majority of them were restored following the original styles and plans, some were subjected to "fanciful restorations" as imposed on them by members of the government and the faithful.<sup>387</sup> It was also noted that the beliefs in the demerit of restoring other people's works have not contributed to the restoration of pagodas and monasteries.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid., 116.



59. Restoration work at a pagoda in Pagan (Source: [www.6foot6.com](http://www.6foot6.com))

Following the large restoration scheme, Burma ratified the World Heritage Convention in 1994 and submitted in 1996 the tentative list including seven archaeological sites and one cultural landscape. The list included Pagan, Pyu cities, wooden monasteries of the Konbaung period, Badah-Lin and associated caves, ancient cities in Upper Myanmar, Mrauk-U, Inle Lake, and the Mon cities of Bago and Hanthawaddy. The museum was relocated again in 1996 to the present location.<sup>389</sup> The reason was to provide more space for the expanding collections, but it was argued that tourism was one of the main causes.<sup>390</sup> It was also stated that the objectives of the National Museum, apart from safeguarding cultural heritage, was to uplift the “dynamism of patriotic spirit”.<sup>391</sup> Thus the role of museum in building national identity is emphasized. In 1998, the new Antiquities law, *the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Law*, was passed, which replaced the word ‘antiquities’ with ‘cultural heritage’ and declared the year 1886 (the first year of British occupation in all Burma) as the ending point of the traditional era, thus any monuments and artifacts older than this point could be listed as national heritage. The latest law in 2009 amended the age of antiquities to be 100 years old from present.

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<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

<sup>390</sup> Nu Mra Zan, “Roles of Museums in the Context of Cultural Policy in Myanmar,” paper presented at ASEAN Museum Directors Symposium, Singapore, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid.



60. General Khin Nyunt visited Beiktano in May 2003 (Source: [www.myanmar.gov.mm](http://www.myanmar.gov.mm))

At present the University of Yangon offer BA and MA courses in Archaeology. Burmese archaeologists have worked with foreign researchers such as Bob Hudson, Don Stadtner, and Elizabeth Moore to undertake researches on the past of Myanmar. The Burmese also take full responsibility in conserving and managing their heritage sites. The most distinctive feature in heritage management in Myanmar, however, is that there is a distinction between the dead monuments, which are to fall under the responsibility of the Archaeology Department, and the living religious sites, which are managed by the pagoda trustees and the restoration of living sites must be done through consultation of both parties.

### New Challenges

In most Asian countries, local conservators in the 1990s were able to conserve their own heritage without depending on experts from outside, as expressed in the Keynote Address by Mr. Anand Panyarashund at a Getty Conservation Institute workshop in 1995 as follows:

...Asia has reached the point where responsibility for the conservation of cultural heritage now lies squarely with national governments. In most countries of Asia, the science of conservation has now advanced to the stage where national institutions and experts can increasingly take on the task of architectural conservation themselves. Heritage conservation is therefore moving out of what may be termed the “colonial” phase — where academics and concerned institutions, mostly in developed countries, took the lead in preserving historic monuments and artifacts in developing countries — and into a new “nationalist” phase — where national experts are now in the vanguard of protecting their own cultural heritage.<sup>392</sup>

It should be noted that after the WWII, most countries in the world have employed the Venice Charter, the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, adopted by ICOMOS in 1965, as the backbones of conservation principles of their countries. The Venice Charter, however, was aimed at

<sup>392</sup> Getty Conservation Institute, The Future of Southeast Asia's Past: Preservation of the Architectural Heritage of Asia. Summary of an International Conference held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, January 11-14, 1995 (California : The Getty Conservation Institute, 1995), V.

the restoration of monuments and sites damaged by the war,<sup>393</sup> therefore, it is highly technical and does not address the issue of public participation in heritage preservation. Nevertheless, the Venice Charter does provide basic guiding principles, though other charters addressing the specificity of the region are deemed appropriate.<sup>394</sup>

Together with the Venice Charter in 1964, the term ‘heritage’ was used for the first time to refer to places and objects from the past – which was an evolution of the term ‘antiquities’ that was used during the Colonial period. It should be noted that heritage is a new term, and arguably a new concept in Mainland Southeast Asia. With the scientific angle of the Charter, which has been used as the blueprint of conservation in the region, the trend of scientific conservation followed the period of colonization. At this point, heritage professionals in Mainland Southeast Asia were trained by Western institutions. The hype of the period was the various scientific conservation techniques that could be applied to the heritage. This period of scientific conservation was arguably in the same direction as to how Angkor, the forefront of archaeological park in Southeast Asia, had been managed by the EFEO. The effort to preserve a historic site as place of the past which ignores the local community’s present relationship to the site has caused the public’s indifferent attitude towards historic sites which bear no connection to them. As collectors’ demands for archaeological objects have been increasing since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this disconnection between sites and people only fosters further looting and vandalism, while site conservation is seen to lie in the hands of heritage authority. This disconnection was stressed further even after the period of Colonization, thus raising a question whether conservation is truly independent. As the number of listed sites increases, it is becoming more difficult for heritage authorities to take care of the sites and to train all the staff.

With the rises of local archaeologists, heritage managers, and university education, the responsibility to safeguard the heritage finally transferred from the hands of the Western scholars to the local staff. Heritage is now a term wholeheartedly adopted by local heritage professionals, who see the duty to safeguard their national heritage as their sole responsibility. Though the Colonial era has passed, local heritage professionals are still trained abroad and shaped by the Western model, since archaeology as well as modern conservation and restoration techniques are Western concepts and Western-based. With differing perceptions with regards to values and worldviews, the modern Western concept of heritage conservation and management is not fully applicable in Mainland Southeast Asia. The locally implemented Western-based efforts to museumize monuments and sites sever the tie between the local community and the monuments and undermine the very foundation of Buddhist structures which relies on interdependence. In the case of monasteries in Mandalay, a large number of monks have to relocate when their temples are isolated and turned into ‘living museums’. In historic sites such as Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Angkor,

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<sup>393</sup> ICOMOS Thailand, Song Tossawat ICOMOS Thai : Kan Anurak Moradok Tang Wattanatham Sen Thang Su God Bat Prathet Thai (Two Decades of ICOMOS Thailand : Cultural Heritage Conservation – Road to the Thailand Charter), 251.

<sup>394</sup> Getty Conservation Institute, The Future of Southeast Asia’s Past: Preservation of the Architectural Heritage of Asia. Summary of an International Conference held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, January 11-14, 1995, 61.

the proclamation of heritage parks has caused people to move out, while some are banned to continue their traditional livelihood, thus creating conflicts between the local community and the heritage authorities. It can even generate hatred towards heritage, resulting in indifference, looting, and vandalism. Furthermore, this has a full responsibility for the creation of the 'dead' monuments, when the aim of conservation focuses only on the material aspect of heritage.

The commodification of heritage which arrived in full scale during this Nationalistic conservation phase desacralized religious monuments and embedded in them monetary values. Though it is arguable that the systematic looting of heritage began since the Colonial period, it became a full-fledged crime in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1993, about 300 armed bandits looted the Conservation d'Angkor and took 11 statues which were worth more than 1 million US dollars on the international art market.<sup>395</sup> According to Heritage Watch in Phnom Penh, between 1988-2005, the New York auction house Sotheby's auctioned 348 Khmer artifacts which were mostly sandstone and bronze sculptures; the most expensive of which was worth USD27,600,<sup>396</sup> while 35% of Cambodians live with as little as 0.45 cents per day.<sup>397</sup> Eighty percent of these artifacts had no listed provenance.<sup>398</sup> Though looters are not just local villagers, but semi-professional and professional looters who are attached to organized crime groups, it is undeniable that the motivation comes from poverty and the lack of heritage awareness. The trend in Cambodia is now shifting from the looting of Khmer temples to other prehistoric sites. In Thailand, though the Fine Arts Department joined forces with the Provincial Governor, they were not able to stop looters who excavated more than 100 pits in a 2,500 year old site in the Sa Kaew province in 2008.<sup>399</sup> In October 2007, more than 60,000 items of artifacts were confiscated in the same province.<sup>400</sup> In Lao PDR, hundred of Buddha images were stolen from the historic town of Luang Prabang in 2000 and it was reported that hundreds of artifacts were smuggled through border checkpoints each year.<sup>401</sup> With the convenience of online shopping, illicit antiquity trade is made even easier. It has become one of the major crimes in human history and the annually smuggled antiques are worth eight billion US dollars, as estimated by the FBI.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> Miriam T. Stark and P. Bion Griffin, "Research and Heritage Management in Cambodia" in Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past eds., Rowan, Yorke and Uzi Baram (California : Altamira Press, 2004), 126.

<sup>396</sup> T. Davis, "Supply and Demand : a Glimpse into the Traffic of Illicit Khmer Antiquites," Culture without Context 18 (2006) : 5.

<sup>397</sup> Dougal O'Reilly, "*Shifting Trends of Heritage Destruction in Cambodia: From Temples to Tombs*" Historic Environment 20, 2 (2007) : 12-16.

<sup>398</sup> Davis, "Supply and Demand : a Glimpse into the Traffic of Illicit Khmer Antiquites," Culture without Context 18, 6.

<sup>399</sup> Muang Boran Journal, Gang Kud Boran Wattu 'Koklan' Heum Mai Luek (Looters do not stop digging at the Koklan Village) [Online], accessed 3 June 2009, Available from <http://www.muangboranjournal.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1880>

<sup>400</sup> Ibid.

<sup>401</sup> Lao Cultural Profiles [Online], accessed 18 October 2009, Available from [http://www.culturalprofiles.net/laos/Directories/Laos\\_Cultural\\_Profile/-1156.html](http://www.culturalprofiles.net/laos/Directories/Laos_Cultural_Profile/-1156.html)

<sup>402</sup> Frances Suselo, Cambodia's Heritage Going Cheap [Online], accessed 18 October 2009, Available from [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast\\_Asia/GJ05Ae01.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/GJ05Ae01.html)

Due to the centralization of heritage conservation and management, responsible heritage authorities are overloaded with works and the lack of financial resources and personnel become a problem. In Thailand, there are 15 Regional Offices of Archaeology responsible for cultural heritage protection and management in 75 provinces. In Cambodia, it was recognized that there was a lack of qualified personnel to take care of Angkor.<sup>403</sup> With the lack of heritage education, newly recruited staff of the Department of Cultural Heritage in Lao PDR is often not trained in archaeology or museology, making it more difficult to manage and protect the sites and artifacts. Large amount of budget will have to be allocated to effectively maintain all sites and artifacts in each country. In Mainland Southeast Asia in general, heritage education is not widely offered to the public, and heritage issues are not included in school curriculum. Therefore, the lack of awareness of cultural heritage among the general public is apparent, which results in the destruction of heritage sites and objects.

As a result, there is a need to find a better solution to enable an effective protection, conservation, and management of sites and artifacts in the region. Just recently, a rising trend of community heritage management and participation seems to take place in Mainland Southeast Asia. In Thailand, the Community Archaeology Project led by Sayan Praicharnjit has received applauses and interests from the public. At Angkor, the APSARA Authority and heritage professionals have worked more with the local community and taken their interests into consideration. In Lao PDR, villagers take part in surveying and site management at the Plain of Jars, Vat Phou, and Luang Prabang.<sup>404</sup> In Viet Nam, the most recent project took place at the Co Lao citadel in Hanoi in a form of cultural mapping, while the vice director of the Institute of Archaeology just gave an interview that there was an intention to create a community archaeology project in the country.<sup>405</sup> The Dean of the Faculty of Archaeology at Yangon also expressed an interest in organizing community archaeology and awareness raising activities in Myanmar.<sup>406</sup> It is possible that through an active collaboration with the local community, heritage will be better protected which help save time and resources of the heritage authorities. Therefore, the next chapter will discuss various models of heritage management in order to explore the most suited model for the region.

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<sup>403</sup> APSARA, Training [Online], accessed 27 June 2009, Available from [http://www.autoriteapsara.org/en/apsara/about\\_apsara/training.html](http://www.autoriteapsara.org/en/apsara/about_apsara/training.html)

<sup>404</sup> Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, "Current Situation of Archaeology in Lao PDR," powerpoint presentation presented at the ICCROM-SPAFA Living Heritage Sites Programme Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, 17 Oct. 2009.

<sup>405</sup> An Archaeology for the People, By the People [Online], accessed 27 June 2009, Available from <http://www.southeastasianarchaeology.com/2008/09/18/an-archaeology-for-the-people-by-the-people/>

<sup>406</sup> Conversation with Daw Yi Yi Aung, Dean, Faculty of Archaeology of the University of Yangon, Thailand, 14 August 2009.

## Chapter VI

### Current Heritage Management Practices in Mainland Southeast Asia

This chapter explores the issue of living heritage sites management in five Mainland Southeast Asian countries in order to study the present approaches and their advantages and disadvantages to as to come up with the most suitable model for cultural heritage management in the region.

There are five heritage places selected as sites for case studies including the historic town of Hoi An in Viet Nam, the Plain of Jars in Xieng Khoung, Lao PDR, Angkor in Siem Reap, Cambodia, the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon in Myanmar, and the Phrae province in Thailand. These sites are representative of heritage sites in Mainland Southeast Asia which encompass different heritage types namely a world heritage historic town, a prehistoric site, a world heritage religious site, a Buddhist pagoda, and a traditional town. These sites can be considered living heritage since they have connections with the traditional communities, and the study of their conservation and management should prove to be interesting to see how conservation issues are addressed in different contexts and with different degrees of public participation.

In order to ensure a thorough exploration of heritage management practices at these sites, issues to be addressed include the following points:

- Background history
- Management
- Level of community participation
- Legal framework
- Analysis
- Heritage Management Model

#### The Shwedagon Pagoda, Yangon, Myanmar

##### Background history

The Shwedagon Pagoda is the most revered Buddhist place of worships in the whole Myanmar and a national treasure. It is believed to be constructed in the time of the Buddha some 2,500 years ago to enshrine the *Hsandawshin* or the sacred hair

consisting of eight hair strands of the Buddha given to the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika.<sup>407</sup> According to legend based on the Kalyani Inscriptions by King Dhammaceti<sup>408</sup> in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century AD, the two merchants had an audience with the Buddha in India and were given eight hair strands and an instruction that the hair relics were to be kept at the Singuttara Hill, where relics of three other Buddhas of the past including Kakusandha, Konagama, and Kassapa were also enshrined. The merchants lost some of the hair relics on the way, but the hair strands came back to them when the merchants found the hill and received help from Nats and God Indra to enshrine the relics with the other Buddhas' relics. Following this it was recorded that 32 other Kings reigned the city of Dgun which later became Lagun and Dagon after the relics were enshrined, and then the pagoda fell into disrepair.<sup>409</sup>

Along the course of the Pagoda's history up until the colonization of Myanmar by the British in 1886, the Shwedagon Pagoda had been restored and renovated by successive kings (as shown in the records kept by the Shwedagon Pagoda Trustees Committee) since 1372 A.D. with donations from the Kings and the local community.

It is believed that the first person who restored the pagoda was King Asoka of India himself in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century B.C. In the 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. it was restored by a Pyu King from Srikshetra. King Anuwraha from Pagan in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. also made offerings at the Pagoda. From the 14<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. onwards Mon Kings of Pegu and Burmese Kings of Ava were competing for powers and it was reflected through offerings made at the Shwedagon Pagoda.<sup>410</sup> In the 15<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., Queen Viharadevi or Shin Saw Bu became one of the greatest patrons of the Pagoda. She donated gold her weight for the gilding of the Pagoda and raised the Pagoda to the height of 40 meters. Together with the restoration, she donated lands and appointed staff to take care of the Pagoda, such as wood carvers, plaster staff, gilding staff, and astrologers, which amounted to 1,006 people. The lands belonging to the Pagoda were practically covering the whole Yangon.<sup>411</sup>

Her son-in-law, King Dhammaceti, followed her practice and donated gold four times his and his queen's weight to the Pagoda and erected other structures as well as a large bronze bell which was later taken by the Portuguese ruler of Syrium, de Brito, and sank into the River. He erected the Kalayani inscriptions which were found by the British in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century AD, and founded the tradition for Monarchs to provide offerings to the Pagoda at the end of Lent.<sup>412</sup> After this period the Pagoda was restored and new buildings added by different Kings.

In 1610, it was recorded that the people of Dagon under the leadership of the Abbot Angebue gilded the Pagoda.<sup>413</sup> This is the first recorded act of restoration by the local

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<sup>407</sup> Elizabeth Moore, "Text and New Contexts: Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe Today," paper presented at the Conference on "Texts and Contexts", Universities' Historical Research Centre, Yangon University, Myanmar, December 2001.

<sup>408</sup> Sometimes written Dhammazedī

<sup>409</sup> Moore, Hansjorg, and Win, Shwedagon: Golden Pagoda of Myanmar, 144.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid.

<sup>411</sup> Win Pe, Shwe Dagon (Rangoon : n.p., 1972), 19.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>413</sup> Moore, Hansjorg, and Win, Shwedagon: Golden Pagoda of Myanmar, 185.

people. It was probably the first time in the history of the Pagoda that the local people initiated the restoration and that was why it was recorded. Despite the fact that the Pagoda had always been under royal patronage, it should be noted that the public were allowed to express their faith in restoring the Pagoda. Since then the Pagoda has undergone a lot of repairs and reconstructions since there have been a large number of earthquakes which destroyed the Pagoda almost completely at some point.



61. The Shwedagon Pagoda in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>414</sup>

With the arrival of the British during the First Anglo-Burmese War, British soldiers took up their base at the Pagoda and all religious activities were halted. The incident about the Bell discusses in Chapter II took place. The looting of the Pagoda and the small pagodas during the First and the Second Anglo-Burmese Wars greatly damaged the Pagoda. An effort was taken by U Htaw Lay (U Taw Lay) who was a judge from Moulmein, and an employee of the British, who asked for permission to repair the Pagoda and was joined by the Mons, Shans, Burmans, and Karens, showing that the Pagoda was revered by all.<sup>415</sup> He was appointed to be in charge of the Pagoda's affairs.<sup>416</sup> Until this period, the duty to take care of the Pagoda was laid in the hands of the "servants of the Pagoda who were formerly charged with it".<sup>417</sup>

<sup>414</sup> Noel F. Singer, *Old Rangoon* (Sterling: Paul Strachan – Kiscadale Publications, 1995)

<sup>415</sup> Win, *Shwe Dagon*, 41.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

## Management

In 1869, it was recorded that the leading monk, U Pya (Saya Daw U Pan Ni), who was assigned the task after U Htaw Lay, discussed with the “elders responsible for the upkeep and maintenance” of the Pagoda to consider the regilding of the Pagoda and the replacing of a new *hti* (the Pagoda finial umbrella). The elders of the Pagoda even climbed up the scaffolding to inspect the old *hti*.<sup>418</sup> Based on the record of the Trustees in 1999, this was the first founding of the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees.<sup>419</sup> From these two observations, it is apparent that until this period the management of Pagoda was done of by pagoda slaves, pagoda elders, and monks. It is possible that the pagoda slaves were to provide their labours for daily maintenance while the major decisions were to be taken by elders and monks.

In Mandalay, such as in the case of the Maha Muni Pagoda, it was noted that high-ranking court officials and ministers were to be elected to maintain and manage the Pagoda since the time of the Burmese Kings.<sup>420</sup> This shows that there was already a system in place to manage the affairs of Buddhist pagodas before colonization. This practice is seen in other Buddhist temples in Thailand as well.

When the decision to replace the *hti* was granted and the new *Hti* arrived from Mandalay in 1871, the Chief Commissioner of British Burma appointed “a committee of five of the most influential Burman inhabitants in Rangoon to manage the reception, charge and disposal of the *hti* on its arrival in Rangoon”.<sup>421</sup> This is undoubtedly the first official appointment of the Pagoda Trustees.<sup>422</sup> However, it was not until 1885 that a nine-member Board of Trustees was appointed to be in charge of the affairs of the Pagoda.<sup>423</sup> In 1898, the Trustees of the Pagoda were elected for the first time by the Burmese Buddhists in Rangoon.<sup>424</sup> These Trustees had the power to take care of all valuables, to employ watchers, to repair all buildings and to grant permission for new structures with the consent of the Chief Commissioner.<sup>425</sup> At the peak of the protest against the British in 1929, the British military left the Shwedagon Pagoda and handed it over to the Padoga Trustees after 77 years of occupation.<sup>426</sup>

In 1938, a new Scheme was passed so the Trustees elected under the new Scheme could hold the position for 7 years, but were allowed to be re-elected, whereas the previous ones were to be in the position for life.<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> Ibid.

<sup>419</sup> Moore, “Text and New Contexts: Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe Today,” paper presented at the Conference on “Texts and Contexts”, Universities’ Historical Research Centre, Yangon University, Myanmar, December 2001.

<sup>420</sup> [Mahamuni Pagoda \[Online\]](http://www.u-zeekwyet.org/mandalay1-e.htm), accessed 9 September 2009. Available from <http://www.u-zeekwyet.org/mandalay1-e.htm>

<sup>421</sup> Win, *Shwe Dagon*, 43.

<sup>422</sup> According to the record of the trustees, in 1872 five members of the Trustees were appointed, and the nine members of the Board of Trustees were appointed by the Supreme High Court in 1885.

<sup>423</sup> Win, *Shwe Dagon*, 48.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid.

An eligible candidate for the election must be a Burmese Buddhist aged between 40-60 years old who observes at least five precepts.<sup>428</sup> He must live in Yangon for at least 3 consecutive years and possesses immovable property valued at K10,000 or rents a house valued at K100 a month at the least. Besides, he must not trade in arms, liquors, drugs, poison, meat, or human beings, and must not be convicted of offences involving moral issues.<sup>429</sup> Voters must be Burmese Buddhists of at least 18 years old who lives in Yangon who are not monks or recluses whose livelihood are connected to the Pagoda.<sup>430</sup> The Pagoda Trustees work with an advisory board of nine venerable abbots and each of them takes turn to become the Executive Trustee for three months.<sup>431</sup>

At present, the organization of the Trustees has changed from its early days quite a bit. Since 1962 under Ne Win's government, the government introduced the multi-party system which was a mix of three government appointed military officials and six elected members. The election took place for a day and both men and women were invited to vote. At first women were not allowed to vote in some elections but they protested and were later allowed.<sup>432</sup> At present, all Trustees are appointed by the Government and the number of Trustees, though in principle is nine, increased to twelve who are selected from prestigious members of the society. Some hold the position part-time while still attach to ministerial works. It is speculated that after the country-wide Elections in 2010, the Pagoda will resume its traditional method of electing the Trustees.

The Trustees are required to always be present at the Pagoda. On normal days they have to stay at the Pagoda from 4 am to 10 pm and on duty days they have to take turn to sleep over at the Pagoda. Each trustee has a duty to supervise a division within the Shwedagon Pagoda including Secretariat, Administration, Budgeting/Accounting, Valuables, Construction and Maintenance, Security, Library and Museum, Supplies, and Daily Maintenance.<sup>433</sup>

The trustees also keep records of historical events and conservation works which are very important to the conservation of the Pagoda. In 1999, the Shwedagon Board of Trustees together with the Leading Committee for Perpetual All-Round Renovation implemented renovation works at the Shwedagon Pagoda including the replacement of a new *Hti* which was offered to the Pagoda by King Mindon in 1869.<sup>434</sup> The latest works done at the Pagoda took place after the cyclone Nargiss which damaged 90% of the buildings at the Pagoda. The Pagoda was closed and the restoration finished in

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<sup>428</sup> Interview with U Ba Shwe, a Pagoda Trustee, Yangon, 29 April 2009.

<sup>429</sup> Win, *Shwe Dagon*, 109.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>432</sup> Khim Maung, "A Burmese Portrait" *The Rotarian* XXXII, 4 (April 1928) : 14.

<sup>433</sup> This paragraph is a summary from an interview with U Ba Shwe on 29 April 2009.

<sup>434</sup> Moore, "Text and New Contexts: Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe Today," paper presented at the Conference on "Texts and Contexts", Universities' Historical Research Centre, Yangon University, Myanmar, December 2001.

two months.<sup>435</sup> Records of previous works help the Trustees to determine the most suitable practice.



62. Some photos of the past Pagoda Trustees (Source: Office of the Pagoda Trustees)

At present the Shwedagon Pagoda has about 800 employees; 280 of them are assigned for maintenance and conservation – and most of them engineers.<sup>436</sup> Every week the Board of Trustees will have a meeting to discuss various issues related to the management of the Pagoda. The Advisory Board, which includes monks and the Deputy Commissioner of Yangon will provide their advices and approvals.<sup>437</sup> The present ecclesiastic Advisory Board or the *Ovadacariya Sayadaws* contains 11 most reverent monks.<sup>438</sup>

The income for the Pagoda comes from interest in bonds donated to the Pagoda by the faithful as well as from large and small donations, rents, and sales. At present foreign visitors to the Pagoda are collected USD5 for each visit and the tickets contribute to the income, which then will be used for the operation and maintenance of the Pagoda. Though the maintenance of the Shwedagon Pagoda is extremely expensive, the costs are covered by donations the faithful. Dr. Myo Myint, Director General of the Department of Religious Affairs, explained that “Everything we get is from the people. The Department does not contribute funds because we don’t need to.”<sup>439</sup> Apart from in-kind contributions from volunteers, in 2003, a Shwedagon Pagoda Trustee said that each month the Pagoda received about K120 million (about USD120,000) from cash donations which is used largely for keeping the pagoda in shape.<sup>440</sup> Other major pagodas in Yangon also reflect the same charitable nature of Buddhists since “(Myanmar) is a Buddhist country, people donate actively and are

<sup>435</sup> Interview with U Ba Shwe, a Pagoda Trustee, Yangon, 29 April 2009.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid.

<sup>438</sup> [Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees](http://www.shwedagonpagoda.com/BOT.html) [Online], accessed 9 September 2009. Available from <http://www.shwedagonpagoda.com/BOT.html>

<sup>439</sup> Jessicah Curtis, [The Demanding Task of Maintaining Temples and Pagodas](http://www.myanmar.gov.mm/myanmartimes/no196/MyanmarTimes10-196/019.htm) [Online], accessed 9 September 2009. Available from

<http://www.myanmar.gov.mm/myanmartimes/no196/MyanmarTimes10-196/019.htm>

<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

particularly community-minded”.<sup>441</sup> Dr. Myo Myint added “The temples provide people with a sense of unity. Myanmar society, like other Southeast Asian countries, is very community oriented”.<sup>442</sup>



63. The Shwedagon Pagoda in 2009

### **Level of Community Participation**

In addition to employed staff, the Shwedagon Pagoda is associated with volunteer associations. In 1971, there were 32 associations, which had their headquarters on the Pagoda Hill. They took turn in maintaining the Pagoda such as by cleaning the platform, images and shrines, the small pagodas, and public facilities.<sup>443</sup> Some provided donations and offerings for the Pagoda and other monasteries in terms of supplies and food. These associations also organized and participated in religious ceremonies at the Pagoda. Some associations had their pavilions on the platform, such as the Chinese Merited Association which has been there since 1898.<sup>444</sup> Another association, the Thukhakayi Athin, provides assistance in sweeping and washing the platform once a week.<sup>445</sup> In fact, there are voluntary associations which have continuously been supporting the Shwedagon Pagoda for more than 100 years.<sup>446</sup> At present there are more than 70 associations which undertake the tasks such as cleaning and gilding under the supervision of the Trustees.<sup>447</sup>

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<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid.

<sup>443</sup> Win, *Shwe Dagon*, 111.

<sup>444</sup> Moore, Hansjorg, and Win, *Shwedagon: Golden Pagoda of Myanmar*, 152.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid.

<sup>446</sup> Jessicah Curtis, *The Demanding Task of Maintaining Temples and Pagodas* [Online]

<sup>447</sup> Interview with U Ba Shwe, a Pagoda Trustee, Yangon, 29 April 2009.



64. An old photo of a group of volunteers sweeping the platform every Sunday<sup>448</sup>

Apart from these volunteer associations, the general public in Myanmar take part to preserve the Pagoda by participating in different festivals and ceremonies held at the Pagoda throughout the year which reflect a deep bond between the people and the Pagoda. There are 12 month festivals at the Pagoda, similar to Buddhist and agrarian-based festivals in other Buddhist countries. In February – March, the Tabaung festival commemorates the day the hair relics were enshrined. In April, the Thin-gyan festival is the traditional New Year. In April – May, Buddhists come to commemorate the birthday of the Buddha during the Kasone festival by pouring water at the Bodhi Tree at the Pagoda. In July, the Waso festival marks the beginning of Lent while the end of Lent is in October when the Thadingyut festival is organized. In November during the Tazaungdaing festival, Buddhist women compete with time to weave robes within a day as offerings for the four Buddhas associated with the Pagoda.<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>448</sup> Win Pe, The Golden Glory Shwedagon Pagoda : A Guide to the Most Magnificent Pagoda of Burma (n.p. : n.d.)

<sup>449</sup> Shwedagon Pagoda Festivals [Online], accessed 9 September 2009. Available from <http://www.shwedagonpagoda.com/festival.html>



65. The faithful at the Shwedagon pagoda

### **Legal framework**

Nowadays, the Pagoda Trustees Committee is present at every living temple in Myanmar. It supervises the general maintenance of the temple as well as visitor management in collaboration with the monks. Pagoda Trustees of listed monasteries and pagodas work with the Department of Archaeology of Myanmar in conserving the pagodas and monasteries. They are recognized as NGOs with responsibilities to raise funds and carry out the conservation and maintenance under the technical supervision and guidance of the Department of Archaeology, Ministry of Culture.<sup>450</sup> If the pagodas and monasteries are listed, such as those in Pagan, Prome, and Mandalay, they are subjected to the Cultural Heritage law launched in 1998.

However, not all living religious sites are listed, and the Shwedagon Pagoda is one of the non-listed sites. Therefore it does not fall into the framework of the Cultural Heritage Law. The Advisory Board and the Pagoda are under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. As a result, the Pagoda operates free from the framework of the Cultural Heritage Law. Recently, the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), following its survey in 1996 made a list of heritage buildings in Yangon to be preserved. The criteria for the heritage buildings to be listed are that they must be more than 50 years old with architectural significance and have no private owner. The list produced almost 200 buildings ranging from hospital buildings, embassies, churches, mosques, and pagodas, as well as the Shwedagon Pagoda. The aim of the

<sup>450</sup> Periodic Reporting Exercise on the Application of the World Heritage Convention, Union of Myanmar, 2003:18

YCDC is to preserve these buildings while transforming Yangon into a “charming city”.<sup>451</sup> The YCDC states that the listed buildings “can be renovated, subject to the YCDC’s approval and as long as their original design and appearance are not changed. The materials used in the renovations must not detract from the building’s appearance.”<sup>452</sup>

Since the list has just been produced and its implication not very clear, it is difficult to define at the moment whether this new local regulation will affect the Shwedagon Pagoda. If the YCDC works closely with the Advisory Board and the Trustees, and provided that the Trustees follow the traditional maintenance, this should not pose a problem.



66. Some old buildings in Yangon

It should be noted though that the Antiquities Act contains relevant statements on the issue of ownership and management of religious places.

<sup>451</sup> Moe Zaw Myint, Developer Calls for Preservation of Yangon’s Heritage Buildings [Online], accessed 11 September 2009. Available from

<http://www.myanmar.gov.mm/myanmartimes/no192/MyanmarTimes10-192/19224.htm>

<sup>452</sup> Special Report [Online], accessed 11 September 2009. Available from

<http://www.myanmar.gov.mm/myanmartimes/no87/New/14.htm>

The Antiquities Act (1957) of Myanmar, which is the first Antiquities Act of the country after Independence, under section 2 (V), provides a definition of “owner of an antiquity” as follows:

(V) “owner” includes a joint owner invested with powers of management on behalf of himself or other joint owners, and any manager, or trustee exercising powers of management over an antiquity, and the successor in the title of any such owner and the successor in office of any such manager or trustee.

In section 13 (1), “The Director may...propose to the owner to enter into an agreement with the President for the preservation of any scheduled monument.”.

Also, Chapter V under the subject “Protecting and Preserving the Cultural Heritage Region” of the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Law of 1998, with regards to the dismantling of buildings which obstruct the view of an ancient monument, states that “the Ministry of Culture may direct the relevant Trust who are taking care of the ancient monument to do so without altering the original ancient form and structure and the original workmanship” of the monument.

The 1957 Act also acknowledges the protection of place of worship as stated in section 17 (1) that “A place of worship or shrine maintained by the President under this Act shall not be used for any purpose inconsistent with its character.”; and, in section 17(2) that:

...the Director shall make due provision for the protection of such monument,..., from pollution of desecration,..., by prohibiting the entry therein,..., of any person not entitled so to enter by the religious usages of the community by which the said monument or part thereof is used....<sup>453</sup>

This Act, therefore, shows the government’s acceptance in the roles of the local community in safeguarding and maintaining the Buddhist heritage, and recognition of the ownership of the people toward the Buddhist heritage and other places of antiquity. It also demonstrates a respect to places of worship and rights of the traditional community with regards to the use of places of worship. However, works to be done on the heritage must obtain permission from the Government, and the Government could provide a case by case agreement with regards to the preservation of a scheduled monument.

The State Peace and Development Council law No.9/98 titled ‘the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Law’ changes the term ‘antiquities’ as stated in the old law, referring only to places and objects with archaeological interests, to ‘cultural heritage’ which is “required to be protected and preserved by reason of its historical, cultural, artistic or anthropological value” including places existed before 1886.<sup>454</sup> However, the latest amendment has changed the age of cultural heritage to 100 years old.

<sup>453</sup> Parliament of the Union of Burma, The Antiquities Act, 1957.

<sup>454</sup> The State Peace and Development Council, Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Law, 1998.

Among the objectives of the Law, there are clauses about promoting public awareness and will and uplifting pride and causing dynamism of patriotic spirit of citizens by protecting and preserving the cultural heritage regions.<sup>455</sup> Though the issue of ownership is not clearly stated as in the old law, there is still a clause about directing the relevant Trust who is taking care of the ancient monument to dismantle a building which is not an ancient monument and which obstructs the view of an ancient monument. Thus the Trust is still acknowledged for their custodianship of heritage. Under Chapter VII on Prohibitions, article 20 states that no person shall willfully alter the original ancient form and structure or original workmanship of any ancient monument in the cultural heritage region, which might pose a conflict with the faithful in restoring their temples and pagodas.<sup>456</sup>

### Analysis

Though material authenticity is not the highest concern in the conservation of the Shwedagon Pagoda, it is a practice of the Trustees to follow the traditional style and elements when repairing the Pagoda. U Ba Shwe explained that though the original pagoda had been damaged by earthquakes so many times that the body of the present pagoda is a reconstruction, it would still be considered a bad omen to replace old elements of the Pagoda, such as the *Hti*, with new elements, when the old ones are still functioning.<sup>457</sup> As traditional construction materials, especially teak, become scarce, there is a need to employ new materials for repairs such as iron works, stainless steel, and reinforced irons as well as new construction technology.<sup>458</sup> The present *Hti* is made of stainless steel whereas the former one is wrought iron, and the method for repairing is to prefabricate new pieces before replacing them on the old *Hti* following the traditional style.<sup>459</sup> Though the Pagoda suffered damages from earthquakes quite a lot, U Win Pe mentioned that:

...each time Burmese artisans built it up again so that the original appearance was preserved. It is the tradition to observe the original design in restoring major pagodas. So the Pagoda as seen now is as it must have appeared to pilgrims through five centuries.<sup>460</sup>

However, U Ba Shwe observed that even though traditional materials are made available, there is a need to have specialists in wood carving and masonry to continue the traditions since present artists are not able to copy the original works.

The Trustees were formed based on the traditional management system that was passed on for many centuries. The abolition of slavery must have affected the management of the Pagoda, but once the Trustees system was in place, the Trustees have acted as site managers and are able to hire employees using the Pagoda's assets, gained from donations, to work on maintenance. In addition, assistance can be solicited from other Buddhist volunteers. Therefore, the system reflects the core

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<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

<sup>457</sup> Interview with U Ba Shwe, a Pagoda Trustee, Yangon, 29 April 2009.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid.

<sup>460</sup> Win, *Shwe Dagon*, 57.

concept of interdependence which demonstrates that Buddhist sites and people have to co-exist. One Pagoda Trustee, when asked about the numerous construction of shrines on the Pagoda platform, replied that "...it is not in accordance with Buddhist feeling that the right of any man to earn spiritual merit by adding something to the national pagoda should be denied...".<sup>461</sup> This statement shows that the Trustees take into account the needs of the Buddhists who are the patron of the Pagoda before others. This coupled with the auditing of the Trustees by the Advisory Board provide a rather stable system to ensure the site's sustainability. However, there are concerns about the present scheme of appointing Trustees since it might not reflect the best practice for accountability. When the traditional system of election resumes in 2010, the concerns might lessen.

Since the Shwedagon Pagoda is not a listed site, it is not representative of other listed religious sites in the country. There are complaints raised by scholars and archeologists regarding the reconstruction of pagodas in Pagan. The Burmese scholar, Than Thun, made the following statement:

In utter disregard of the good rules of conservation, preservation and restoration, rich and powerful donors have had repaired some of (the pagodas) recently...There is an organization called 'Pagoda Trustees' and it has proved quite often that it can not be trusted with repairs. The mad race of making (Pagan) shining has now reached an alarming stage. I am sad to admit the fact that repairs at present had done much havoc that the 1976 earthquake.<sup>462</sup>

According to Bob Hudson (2000: 85-86), from the period of 1998 – 2000, more than a thousand of religious structures were rebuilt in Pagan, some from the ground up which is a result of the sponsorship programme proposed by the Government which allowed donors to restore and reconstruct more than one thousand pagodas. This was heavily criticized by academics and scholars who believed the Government was trying to legitimize itself by associating itself with the restoration and re-glorification of heritage. From time to time, donors who sponsored the reconstruction of the temple did not have enough knowledge in art history to be able to provide the 'right' kind of restoration and reconstruction, and the craftsmen are not skilled enough to carry out such work which, in experts' opinions, harmed the heritage.

A Burmese archaeologist commented further that the best way is simple preservation "which does not damage the original structure. For good examples, you can look at Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Borobudur in Indonesia – both are UNESCO World Heritage Sites."<sup>463</sup>

While the concerns of the scholars are valid, these opinions raised further questions on what the 'right' conservation is and who dictates it. If the past Buddhist Kings and

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<sup>461</sup> Myanmar Pagoda Shwedagon Pagoda [Online], accessed 16 September 2009. Available from [http://myanmar-all.com/Myanmar\\_Pagoda.html](http://myanmar-all.com/Myanmar_Pagoda.html)

<sup>462</sup> Than Tun, *The Glory that Was Pagan* [Online], accessed 16 September 2009. Available from [http://www.asianmonth.com/prize/english/lecture/pdf/11\\_03.pdf](http://www.asianmonth.com/prize/english/lecture/pdf/11_03.pdf)

<sup>463</sup> Arkar Moe, *Experts Criticize Junta's Renovation Work* [Online], accessed 16 September 2009. Available from [http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art\\_id=15868&page=2](http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=15868&page=2)

Queens from at least the past 1,000 years decided to leave, for example, the Shwedagon Pagoda as it was found back then, for the concern of their historical values, what would become of the pagoda today? Should Buddhists be discouraged to use old religious places since evidences from the past are more important than the present living traditions?

The answer to the questions is to identify the right extent of the conservation – what is allowed and what is not. In this case, traditional knowledge and traditions become the determining factors. A dialogue will need to be built between heritage authority and the local people to set up a framework of conservation together.

In Prome, there is an example that the ancient Buddhist pagoda, the Phayagyi, still retain their original forms while being used as living pagodas through a dialogue between the Trustees, the Department of Archaeology, and the Township Monks Committee.<sup>464</sup> Such success therefore is possible.

As discussed in the first chapter, the Burmese do not usually restore merit works of other people unless they are the great shrines at Pagan, Pegu, Prome, and the Shwedagon, therefore, those that were restored at present must fall into this category of the ‘Great World Shrines’ which have been traditionally repaired and restored through time. At the same time, Sylvia Fraser-Lu observed that monasteries in Mandalay lack repairs due to this concept of merit-making, and she would like to urge Buddhist leaders to assure the faithful that the restoration of any temple or pagoda brings the same merit. As a result, this is the question of what is too much and what is too little. There needs to be a way to negotiate the level of restoration done on a religious site which requires a dialogue between the traditional community, which includes the monks and the faithful, the trustees, and the heritage authorities whereby the need of the traditional community to continue their Buddhist practices must be taken into account since it is a basic right of Buddhists.

The complaints above showed a disadvantage of the system of Trustees which lies within the power of the Trustees in decision-making process. However, within the election system, since there are a fair number of Trustees who work under the Advisory Board of monks, who are part of the traditional community, the system should have very little flaws and should be able to represent the needs of the traditional community, while the framework of merit-making and tradition govern the conservation and management decision.

## **The Angkor Complex of Monuments, Cambodia**

### **Background history**

Angkor, the seat of the ancient Khmer empire flourished between the early 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, is one of the world’s greatest remains of civilization. The temple complex at Angkor, including the sites at Rolous and Banteay Srei, represents the Kkmer’s ingenuity which was a combination of architecture and traditional

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<sup>464</sup> The Oldest Pagoda that Retains its Original Design [Online], accessed 16 September 2009. Available from [http://www.newsfinder.org/site/more/the\\_oldest\\_pagoda\\_that\\_retains\\_i.html](http://www.newsfinder.org/site/more/the_oldest_pagoda_that_retains_i.html)

landscapes mixed with deep religious traditions. It is a manifestation of the spiritual and physical world of the ancient Khmer people, who practiced Hinduism, Mahayana Buddhism, and the local cult of Animism. These beliefs coexisted and they were passed on to the present traditional communities. Well known for the temples of Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom, after its heyday in the reign of King Jayavarman VII in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, Angkor had slowly lost its power and was eventually neglected when the Khmer capital was moved in 1432 A.D. After the abandonment of Angkor, Theravada Buddhism became the national religion replacing Hinduism arguably because it allowed people from all walks of life to participate in and did not discriminate against anyone. A vast majority of the Khmer population had followed the sect and began to construct temples as well as to produce other religious objects such as Buddha images and palm-leaf manuscripts. During this “Middle Period”, some parts of Angkor were occupied by the traditional communities who appropriated Hindu structures for Buddhist functions, while other parts were covered by the forest. In the period of King Ang Chan, the King returned to Angkor and built Buddhist Viharas atop Hindu ruins. The King and his successors remained in Angkor while also reigning the city of Longvek, and this period of occupation shows strong Buddhist influences which left traces on the monuments of Angkor. Examples include the modification of the Baphoun temple into a gigantic reclining Buddha image and the Gallery of Thousand Buddha images at Angkor Wat.<sup>465</sup> In the following period, though without rulers, parts of Angkor had been well-maintained by the traditional communities who used Angkor as places of worship evident by records of a number of foreign visitors. After the “rediscovery” of Angkor by Henri Mouhot, a French naturalist, in 1862, a group of European scholars followed to study Angkor, but Siem Reap at that time was under the protectorate of Siam while a major part of Cambodia was under the French protectorate.

The initial restoration works of Angkor began when the Conservation d’Angkor was established by the École Française d’Extrême Orient (EFEO) in 1908 after Siam retroceded Siem Reap to France.<sup>466</sup> The works were undertaken by foreign scholars who employed the local Khmers as labourers, but no actual training was given to the Khmers, resulting in the continued service of the EFEO at Angkor even after the Independence in 1940s.

Conservation d’Angkor was dissolved in 1975 during its peak with almost one thousand employees when the Khmer Rouge attacked Siem Reap.<sup>467</sup> Before the war finished, a large number of artifacts were transported for safekeeping at the National Museum in Phnom Penh where most of them have remained until present. However, a number of temples were damaged by the war, while poverty has catalysed looting of artifacts. It was at the end of the war in the 1980s and early 1990s that looting and vandalism were common problems at Angkor.<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> APSARA, *Angkor : Past, Present and Future*, 83.

<sup>466</sup> Pottier, “The Contribution of the École Française d’Extrême-Orient with Respect to the Cultural Heritage of Angkor during the Past 100 Years” *Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* 18, 255.

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>468</sup> APSARA, *Angkor : Past, Present and Future*, 108-109.

## Management

In 1992, following the effort of King Norodom Sihanouk, Angkor was inscribed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO. In May 1994, with the efforts to preserve the Angkor Park, the King issued a Royal Decree to establish Protected Cultural Zones in the Siem Reap/Angkor Region known as ZEMP which divided the region of Angkor and Siem Reap into five zones whereby Zone 1 and Zone 2 required the most protection.

In February 1995 there was another decree to establish APSARA (Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap)<sup>469</sup> to provide national staff to take care of the conservation and management of Angkor and related sites. Since then APSARA has been working under the supervision of the ICC (International Coordinating Committee for the Conservation of Angkor) set up in 1993 and co-chaired by France and Japan. At the beginning, due to political unrest, APSARA had only 20 staff, and did not have its own budget. In 1997, the Heritage Police was formed to collaborate with the APSARA on the protection of Angkor.<sup>470</sup>

The situation improved in 1999, when the concession of entry tickets was given to a Khmer company which provided a percentage of the income to APSARA.<sup>471</sup> Since then APSARA has had a stable financial base to carry on its operation. It was first operated with several Departments and the main focus was on maintaining and restoring the monuments. At the beginning APSARA was lacking local staff, so the Ta Nei Training Programme was developed between UNESCO-ICCROM-APSARA and SEAMEO-SPAFA to train newly graduated engineers, archaeologists, architects, as well as administrative staff, which was first conducted in 2000. The trainees from the Programme including the Ta Nei I-IV were given positions within the APSARA Authority and have begun to undertake to task to manage Angkor. However, as Angkor is vast, international operations have volunteered to assist with the restoration and maintenance of the temples. The main contributors are Japan, France, Germany, Australia, and the United States. For example, the Japanese team has been taking care of the Bayon temple and the German team has been working on the study and restoration of APSARA on the bas-reliefs at Angkor Wat.

At the first phase from its inception until 2004, APSARA was criticized for being the 'controller' of the Angkor Park for its strict policies and regulations imposed on the traditional inhabitants. There were changes taking place on the traditional way of life of the local people which were considered necessary to conserve the temples and the forest. For example, the villagers were banned from rice cultivation within Angkor Thom and from collecting resin and forest products, which had been their traditional livelihood.<sup>472</sup> They also were prohibited from bringing cattle to the monuments; from using water from the ponds and barays; and, from organizing plays at Angkor Wat

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<sup>469</sup> Present name is APSARA National Authority (ANA).

<sup>470</sup> APSARA, *Angkor : Past, Present and Future*, 246.

<sup>471</sup> Khoun Khun-Neay, "Site Management and Local Communities" in *Angkor : Heritage Values and Issues* eds., Richard Mackay and Sharon Sullivan (n.p., University of Sydney, 2008), 132.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

during New Year.<sup>473</sup> There are also evidences that the Heritage Police have exploited their power by collecting money from the local people.<sup>474</sup> The ultimate change was to relocate inhabitants living in Zone 1 to other areas.<sup>475</sup>



67. Villagers working in the paddy fields (Source: Keiko Miura)

Moreover, the relationship between APSARA and the Buddhist *Sangha* was not smooth either, since there were several bans regarding the use of Angkor temple complexes for monastic purposes such as meditation and ordination, which had been traditionally practiced.<sup>476</sup> In 2002, APSARA also issued the destruction of 11 monasteries in Angkor, though it finally did not take place, the issue created more conflicts between the monks and the heritage authority.<sup>477</sup> The policy to conserve old pagodas, in addition, had a negative effect on the monastic life in Angkor. As Baillie pointed out, most of the time, monks were not allowed to repair old pagodas and monastic buildings, which left the buildings in a dilapidated state and could not attract worshippers, since “the *Sangha*’s approach shows respect...by maintaining the old religious rituals through the use of new wats and decoration in order to continue to attract worshippers.”<sup>478</sup> As the number of worshippers decreased, the temples were not able to gain income from donations, and could not support traditional religious studies, which hindered the conservation of their spiritual heritage.<sup>479</sup> These threats posed on the way of life of the local people widened the gap between Angkor and the traditional communities.

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<sup>473</sup> Keiko Miura, “Angkor as a Living Heritage Site: How to Empower its Community”, a powerpoint presentation given at the ICCROM-SPAFA Workshop on Living Heritage: Empowering Community, November 2005, Thailand

<sup>474</sup> Ibid.

<sup>475</sup> Khoun Khun-Neay, “Site Management and Local Communities” in *Angkor : Heritage Values and Issues* eds., Richard Mackay and Sharon Sullivan, 132.

<sup>476</sup> Baillie, “Conservation of the Sacred at Angkor Wat : Further Reflections on Living Heritage” *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 8, 127.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.

However, amidst these conflicts, there was an effort led by Prof. Ang Choulean, then the Director of a Department within APSARA, to establish a Social Research Unit in 2000 following the success of the first Ta Nei training course.<sup>480</sup> The Unit's five staff worked over a period of two years with villagers within the Angkor Park to study their way of life, traditions, and customs.<sup>481</sup> The Unit was halted in 2004 due to a restructuring of APSARA, which was a result of a conference in Paris in 2003, leading APSARA to its second phase.

From the restructuring onwards, another objective has been added to the works of APSARA which is sustainable development.<sup>482</sup> The aim was to reconcile “the desire for sustainable economic development...and conservation of the cultural and social heritage of the Cambodian people...”.<sup>483</sup> New departments and units were added to APSARA to reflect the goal. It was only after this period that the real community engagement took place, while tourism development was also a focus.

The newly established Department of Monuments and Archaeology II (DMA II) started to work with the local community on the management of built environment. They began to produce leaflets to provide information and guidelines to the traditional communities on house types and styles which were in compliance with the regulations, while offering free consultation service for villagers on house and monastic planning and design. The Department also organized a seminar in 2005 to discuss with the monks the conservation of religious heritage, since there was a policy that all religious buildings more than 50 years old were to be preserved and not allowed to be taken down.<sup>484</sup> The seminar allowed APSARA to seek agreement with and hear concerns from more than 230 reverent monks and the *Wat* committee members.<sup>485</sup> The DMA II views itself as a coordinator when working with the local communities and conducting community development projects.<sup>486</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> Im Sokrithy, “Social Values and Community Context” in Angkor : Heritage Values and Issues eds., Richard Mackay and Sharon Sullivan (n.p., University of Sydney, 2008), 47.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

<sup>482</sup> Khoun, “Site Management and Local Communities” in Angkor : Heritage Values and Issues eds., Richard Mackay and Sharon Sullivan, 132.

<sup>483</sup> Chau Sun Kerya, “Angkor Sites, Cultural World Heritage” in Art and Cultural Heritage : Law, Policy and Practice ed., Barbara T. Hoffman (New York : Cambridge University Press, 2006), 150.

<sup>484</sup> Khoun, “Site Management and Local Communities” in Angkor : Heritage Values and Issues eds., Richard Mackay and Sharon Sullivan, 134.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid.



68. A meeting with Buddhist nuns (Source: Khoun Khun Neay)

Aside from this, there are other ad-hoc awareness campaigns and activities conducted by the new Communication Unit within the Administrative Department which acts like a PR agency to coordinate with the local people and the general public. They have established methods to communicate with the local community by installing hotline numbers and eleven postboxes where people can drop their complaints anonymously. Documents regarding rights of the local community and legal framework are being distributed. Training programmes are also given to the Heritage Police and APSARA staff while education sessions are given to the traditional communities including students, monks and nuns. Other proactive works include helping the communities to fight drought and to maintain the ancient irrigation system, which helped improve crop yields.<sup>487</sup> It is hoped that these measures will improve the relationship between the heritage authority and the local community while at the same time promoting knowledge on cultural heritage protection. APSARA has also established a lecture programme at the Siem Reap Teachers College as well as publishing a monthly magazine, and broadcasting regularly on radio and TV.<sup>488</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> Khoun Khun Neay, "Angkor: A Living World Heritage Site", a powerpoint presentation given at the ICCROM-SPAFA Workshop on Living Heritage: Empowering Community, November 2005, Thailand

<sup>488</sup> Khoun, "Site Management and Local Communities" in *Angkor : Heritage Values and Issues* eds., Richard Mackay and Sharon Sullivan, 135.



69. A village meeting in 2005 (Source: Khoun Khun-Neay)



70. An APSARA postbox (Source: Khoun Khun-Neay)

There are other long-termed projects regarding site management which have incorporated community engagement such as the Living with Heritage Project in collaboration with the University of Sydney, UNESCO, the EFEO, and other international partners taking place from 2005-2009.<sup>489</sup> The project aims to identify key elements of cultural significance of Angkor, issues and threats regarding the conservation of Angkor, and policies and tools to ensure its ongoing conservation.<sup>490</sup> It was envisaged that the key elements identified will be recognized and incorporated into the future management of the site. The Steering Committee of this project consists of representatives from the traditional communities, a Buddhist monk, an MP, as well as members from the private sector and NGOs whose identified values

<sup>489</sup> Mackay and Sullivan, eds., *Angkor : Heritage Values and Issues* (n.p., University of Sydney, 2008)

<sup>490</sup> Richard Mackay, "Introduction" in *Angkor : Heritage Values and Issues* eds., Richard Mackay and Sharon Sullivan (n.p., University of Sydney, 2008), 3.

will be conserved in the future site management, thus giving voices to the local communities in the decision-making process.<sup>491</sup> This project shares some similarities with the Angkor Masterplan and Community Development Project organized jointly with New Zealand which aims to create a link between the needs of the local communities and the management of Angkor.

In addition, there is an interpretation project at the Phnom Bakheng temple in association with the World Monuments Fund. The Project organized in 2006 a seminar with representatives from villages, government officials, a school, and temples to ask questions to these people regarding the history of the Phnom Bakheng and its significance to them in order to use the information as a basis for interpreting all values relevant to the site. This project is seen as a model that could be implemented in all monuments in Angkor to contribute to each monument's multifaceted significance.<sup>492</sup>

Another case worth mentioning is the returning of the head of the Vishnu "Ta Reach" statue to Angkor Wat, which is the most revered *Neak Ta* in the whole Angkor. APSARA worked with the National Museum in Phnom Penh, the Ministry of Culture, and the German Apsara Conservation Project (GACP) led by Simon Warrack, a stone conservator, to return the head of the statue from the National Museum where it had been kept for safekeeping since the Khmer Rouge. The conservation team took into account the needs of the traditional communities since the statue was highly respected by them. A team was sent to a nearby village to consult with a medium who communicated with the spirit of *Ta Reach* asking him what he wanted in terms of restoration materials, techniques, and related ceremonies to be performed. The head was returned with a welcoming ceremony organized by the traditional communities who mysteriously found out about the news, though the date for the reattachment of the head was supposed to be a secret due to security issue. The head was finally reassembled to the body with assistance from villagers. This is the first time in the history of Angkor that an artifact is returned to site bringing joy to the communities, the conservators, and the spirit of *Ta Reach* himself.<sup>493</sup>

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<sup>491</sup> Khoun, "Site Management and Local Communities" in *Angkor : Heritage Values and Issues* eds., Richard Mackay and Sharon Sullivan, 136.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid.

<sup>493</sup> "Living Heritage at Angkor: the Restoration of Ta Reach", Simon Warrack, 2005. (digital)



71. Ta Reach at Angkor Wat in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and at present (Source: [www.tibetanpost.com](http://www.tibetanpost.com))

The case of Ta Reach serves as a precedent for a successful repatriation, and there is a plan to, little by little, return other artifacts from the Conservation d' Angkor to the site, too. The intention was supported by a training course on the subject organized jointly by CollAsia2010, a programme under ICCROM-SPAFA, and the APSARA Authority in 2008.

APSARA also manages a project regarding livelihood of the villagers by setting up a model house equipped with a small plantation for growing crops, a fishing pond, and edible hedges. The crops and the fish can be sold in town to cater for tourists. This house models a concept of self-sufficiency, which, at the same time, is equipped with sanitation system. The house will serve as an example for villagers and an information centre on Khmer traditional houses. The aim is to help reduce poverty and to contribute to the conservation of the Angkor Park.<sup>494</sup> One of the most recent projects is to establish a new village to the east of the protected zones about 30 mins from Siem Reap for newly married couples to move from Zone 1 and Zone 2 on a voluntary basis. The village will be self-sufficient and will be equipped with infrastructure, schools, and a Buddhist temple.<sup>495</sup> All in all, APSARA has largely strengthened its efforts in working with the traditional communities.

<sup>494</sup> Khoun, "Site Management and Local Communities" in *Angkor : Heritage Values and Issues* eds., Richard Mackay and Sharon Sullivan, 137.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

### Level of Community Participation

In 2005, according to survey by APSARA<sup>496</sup>, there were more than 100,000 people (or 18,500 families) living in the Protected Zones 1 & 2. These consisted of 5 districts, 19 communes, and 102 villages.<sup>497</sup> Zone 1 is the area of monumental sites and Zone 2 is the area of the protected archaeological reserves. There are evidences that these villages are ancient and have been occupied by a succession of generations. Some are situated on prehistoric, and/or Angkorian sites. Some are part of the ancient landscape along the historic road. A group of these villages developed as a cluster around a central Buddhist monastery which usually was built on an ancient temple or an ancient structure.<sup>498</sup> People living in the protected areas are mostly farmers who work in rice paddy fields within the monuments who collect resin and other natural products from the forest. They have occupied the lands in Angkor for at least three generations and some traced their origins back to the royal court of Angkor Thom.<sup>499</sup> The traditional communities live in harmony with natural resources. Their traditional system of forest and water management allowed them to live with self-sufficiency. The traditional communities are devout Buddhists who have strong connections with Angkor since they believe in *Neak Ta* or ancestral spirits which are present at the temples of Angkor. In *Angkor: Past, Present, Future* (2000: 90), it is noted that “the exceptional condition of the temple today results not from modern restoration work, but rather from continued care by the faithful, as well as the skills of its original constructor”. Some continue to use and maintain the Hindu statues for Buddhist worship. There is a belief among the traditional communities, and other Khmers alike, to come to pray at Angkor on their marriage day, especially to the *Ta Reach* statue situated at the West Gate of Angkor Wat who controls and protects the whole Angkor. Sick people and new born babies are also brought to Angkor for blessings and to speed recovery.

As discussed in Chapter II, the Angkor complex has long been occupied by the traditional communities probably since the fall of Angkor, and the Hindu temples have been appropriated by Buddhists. In 1909, French scholars identified 10 villages including one village inside Angkor Thom.<sup>500</sup> In 1929, after Angkor became Parc d'Angkor, villagers living in the preserved zone were prohibited to build new houses or to collect resin and to cut down trees. In 1960s, villages closed to Angkor Wat and Phnom Bakheng were relocated to new pieces of lands a few kilometers away, but they were allowed to come back to work at their old rice fields. Old villagers were still able to recount the displacement of villages in the area of Angkor Thom, Angkor Wat, and Phnom Bakheng, and that there were Mahayana Vietnamese monks in a

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<sup>496</sup> Khoun Khun Neay, “Angkor: A Living World Heritage Site”, a powerpoint presentation given at the ICCROM-SPAFA Workshop on Living Heritage: Empowering Community, November 2005, Thailand

<sup>497</sup> Recent survey by the Department of Demography and Development finds 112 villages.

<sup>498</sup> Im, “Social Values and Community Context” in *Angkor : Heritage Values and Issues* eds., Richard Mackay and Sharon Sullivan (n.p., University of Sydney, 2008), 53.

<sup>499</sup> Miura, “Conservation of a ‘living heritage site’. A contradiction in terms? : Views from a case study of Angkor World Heritage Site” *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 7, 8.

<sup>500</sup> Fabienne Luco, “The People of Angkor: Between Tradition and Development,” paper presented at the Phnom Bakheng Workshop on Public Interpretation, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 4-6 December 2005.

monastery at the top of the Phnom Bakheng who were relocated by the French.<sup>501</sup> Commaile (1916: 104) also mentioned that there was a Vietnamese monk who used some structures in Angkor Wat.<sup>502</sup> In the period that followed, the Angkor area was deserted because of wars and the Khmer Rouge occupation. Once the people came back to settle in their own lands, Angkor became a world heritage site, and once again, those living near Angkor Wat and Phnom Bakheng were relocated, but these people sold their new pieces land and resettled again in the Angkor Park near their rice fields. These displacements of villages damaged the traditional relationship between villages and their temples. Once the villagers moved away, the temples did not have the same support from the communities like they used to have, which gradually weakened the *Sangha*. However, the link between the local communities and Angkor remains very strong. In 1996, a UNESCO survey stated that the traditional communities have a strong attachment to the land of their ancestors and their traditions.<sup>503</sup> In 2003, it was noted by UNESCO that Angkor Wat was “a place of pilgrimage for Cambodians who give ‘soul to the site through their prayers, belief and ceremonies’.”<sup>504</sup> Even nowadays, the faithful still take care of statues in various temples in Angkor and modern Cambodians come to pray at the temples. Many of them link themselves with Angkor and the ancient rules through stories and traditional associated to the monuments.

The monastic community plays an important role in the lives of the traditional communities since it serves as the upholder of traditional religious practices and ceremonies. The presence of Buddhist monks in Angkor was noted since the arrival of the French when monks established monasteries at some Khmer temples. With the re-Hindunization of the temples, the monks were also relocated. It was noted that the French wanted to move the monks out completely, but were hesitant to do so since it would contradict with the name of Angkor Wat – the Temple City.<sup>505</sup> Their monasteries within Angkor are places of worship for the traditional communities where traditional ceremonies take place and ashes of dead ancestors are stored. They were traditional schools for Cambodians as well. During the Khmer Rouge, monks and laymen alike had to escape and most were killed. At some point during the war, Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom provided shelter for thousands of people from the traditional communities. After the Pol Pot regime, seven monasteries were set up on the foundations of old monastery sites in Angkor Thom, following a request made by the then Supreme Patriarch, in order to protect Angkor. They have remained in Angkor since then, but are very much affected by the regulations with regards to the management of the Angkor Park.

With the ban on traditional ways of subsistence, which relate to the use of forest and water sources in Angkor, the traditional communities have very little choices as to how they would earn a living. This caused a dispute on ownership rights between the

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<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> Commaile, *Guide aux Ruines d'Angkor*, 104.

<sup>503</sup> Baillie, “Conservation of the Sacred at Angkor Wat : Further Reflections on Living Heritage” *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 8, 126.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

<sup>505</sup> Miura, “Conservation of a ‘living heritage site’. A contradiction in terms? : Views from a case study of Angkor World Heritage Site” *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 7, 9.

villagers and a police who claimed that Angkor became a world heritage and a property of two billion people, not just some twenty families who have been living here.<sup>506</sup> The assumed guardianship of the national and the international community over Angkor has caused deep troubles to the traditional communities.



72. A Buddha image caretaker at the Bayon temple

The traditional way of life of the communities was the one which harmonized natural and spiritual worlds. Entering the new world as people living in the shadow of the world heritage status, the communities have to struggle. Though APSARA hires some of the villagers to be temple guards and maintenance staff, the positions are not available for everyone. While some villagers are able to source income from making handicraft products, others become construction workers in Siem Reap and vendors selling different products for tourists. With low level of education, many people remain out of job and some make their children quit school to become vendors. In a way, their existence still attaches to Angkor, but their traditional way of life has been changed, and they are being reconnected to their heritage through other means different from the traditional one.

With the increasing efforts of APSARA to communicate with the traditional communities and to incorporate their voices into the management planning of Angkor, it is hoped that the needs of the traditional communities will be answered more, and that they could fully take part in the management of Angkor in the future.

### **Legal Framework**

There are several laws related to the protection and management of Angkor including the Royal Decree establishing Protected Cultural Zones in the Siem Reap/ Angkor Region and Guidelines to their Management (1994), also known as ZEMP; the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage (1996); and, the Sub-decree establishing the Special Police Corps for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (1997).

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<sup>506</sup> Ibid., 12.

According to the ZEMP, the region thus was divided into five zones as follows:

Zone 1: Monumental sites

Zone 2: Protected archaeological reserves

Zone 3: Protected cultural landscapes

Zone 4: Sites of archaeological, anthropological, or historical interest

Zone 5: Socioeconomic and cultural development perimeter of the Siem Reap/Angkor Region

According to the Decree,<sup>507</sup> Zone 1 and Zone 2 require the most protection. Therefore, in Zone 1, all resident uses are prohibited and the inhabitants are to be relocated. No new religious buildings are allowed to be built and pilgrims are not allowed to stay overnight in Angkor except in three monasteries. In Zone 2, the inhabitants could remain and all old villages would be preserved, but new expansion is prohibited. Construction and reconstruction of old houses and religious buildings are to conform to regulations which concern the external appearance of new pagodas. However, in all zones, all pagodas are to be maintained, and regards should be shown to religious associations.

The Decree has stated quite a few concerns regarding the traditional way of life of the local residents. Article 8 c prohibits development within Zone 2, with the exception of development necessary for the preservation of local lifestyles. Article 11 c concerns the minimizing of the adverse impact of tourism on the local communities. Article 14 b and Article 16 b stipulated that traditional land use in form of rice paddies and pasture must be maintained as well as the old traditional rice fields. Article 17 states that local residents should have a priority of employment regarding site management and protection as well as trading permits and concessions on the sites. In case they are to be relocated APSARA should provide them with land and building materials.

The Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage (1996) regulates that the cultural heritage in the Angkor and Siem Reap Region is to be managed and protected by APSARA whereas elsewhere in the country it is to be the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. At present, there is a new authority established to manage the new world heritage site of Preah Vihear, known as the Preah Vihear National Authority, which follows the direction of APSARA. The site of Kbal Spean was just added to the protection of APSARA whereas the Ministry of Culture's responsibilities include the Pre-Angkorian and Angkorian sites at Sombor Prei Kuk, Angkor Borei, Koh Ker, Preah Khan, and Banteay Chhmar.

The establishment of the Heritage Police Corps following a Decree in 1997 was aimed to target looters, crimes, and thefts with regards to Angkor and to ensure the

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<sup>507</sup> Royal Decree establishing Protected Cultural Zones in the Siem Reap/ Angkor Region and Guidelines for their Management, 1994

protection of visitors. The Heritage Police Corps have to maintain its own inventory of cultural artifacts and to update the list with APSARA regularly.

### **Analysis**

The efforts of APSARA in communicating and working with the local community prove to be an interesting case study especially in terms of large living religious/heritage sites. APSARA's works have shown an effort to combine heritage conservation with the needs of the traditional communities. They reflect a good intention of the heritage authority who wants to work with the traditional communities and to provide benefits to them.

However, Angkor at present is viewed by many as a tourist site. The Cambodia government's goal is to promote cultural tourism of the Angkor/Siem Reap area. APSARA itself is operable from profits of ticket sales. Miura noted that APSARA would receive 70% of the profit if the total sales exceed USD3 million and 50% if the sales are less.<sup>508</sup> This might contribute to an influence in policies regarding the over-promotion of tourism. At present, even though there are more than one million tourists to Angkor per year, it is estimated that 75% of money spent by tourists to come to Angkor is spent outside Cambodia, and for the remaining amount, only half goes to the traditional communities.<sup>509</sup> Therefore, the traditional communities do not benefit directly from tourism. The impact of tourism is changing their ways of life, when the needs of tourists are viewed as greater than theirs. Inappropriate tourist behaviours such as dress code and manners expressed to monks and the traditional communities are issues that should be addressed. At present APSARA has put up picture sign boards to promote proper tourist behaviours in the temples, but the issues should be reflected in a management policy. There is a concern about the connection between the traditional communities and the use of the temples as their places of worship. The need to continue this long existing tradition should be addressed.

The various bans posed on the traditional communities are sometimes against the intentions stated by the Zoning Decree. As a result, there is a need to review the bans and the management policy to reflect the recognition of the rights of the traditional communities to continue their livelihood and the practice of their faith. This includes the needs of the monastic community.

Generally, there is a well founded effort to connect Angkor and the traditional communities through job creations, as expressed by an APSARA staff member that "(the communities) will become guardians of their own culture by providing insightful surveillance of their monument heritage."<sup>510</sup> However, the main focus should be given to returning the communities their rights on Angkor as it has been done traditionally as much as it could be. Angkor and its vicinity have been traditionally used as place of worship and source of life. Establishing new

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<sup>508</sup> Miura, "Conservation of the Sacred at Angkor Wat : Further Reflections on Living Heritage" *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 7, 12.

<sup>509</sup> Khoun Khun-Neay, "A Commitment to Community Engagement," paper presented at the Phnom Bakheng Workshop on Public Interpretation, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 4-6 December 2005.

<sup>510</sup> Chau Sun, "Angkor Sites, Cultural World Heritage" in *Art and Cultural Heritage : Law, Policy and Practice* ed., Barbara T. Hoffman, 152.

connections might be costly and not as sustainable. Though projects are being undertaken to hear the voices of the traditional communities, the Values-based approach will not prioritize their opinions over other stakeholders. In this case, their value equals other values of tour guides, school teachers, and government officials, who all have different needs and agendas. A mechanism should be permanently established for the communities to voice their concerns and to ensure that their voices are heard and prioritized. At present, the communities are heard only at the local level, but at the ICC which governs the policy for the management of Angkor, none from the traditional communities is represented.

Based on Britt Baillie's 2005 interviews with the local people, local tourists, and a Buddhist monk<sup>511</sup>, it can be concluded that the Khmers view Angkor with a mixture of feelings. For some, Angkor is their souls and the pride of the Khmers. For others, Angkor is a source of income for the local people and for the country. All of them, however, were in awe with Angkor's antiquity and the grandeur of its architecture, though most of them did not know much about Angkor's history. The most important aspect, however, is that Angkor is sacred and can 'never be unsacred', while its sacredness, as identified by interviewees, rested with the fact that it is being respected by the Khmers. This reflects again the concept of interdependence between the sacred and the faithful which provide meaning to, and, nourish each other. Therefore, this aspect will have to be considered in the conservation management plan of Angkor. In addition, the Khmers come to Angkor not only to see the temples, but to go to the pagodas and to venerate the *Neak Ta* and Buddha images at Angkor Wat, which make Angkor Wat the most sacred place among all of the temples. Many interviewees view Angkor as a Buddhist place of worship in connection with the pagodas. Therefore, the significance of Angkor for the local people, unlike tourists, does not only concern the ancient temples, but the *wats* and pagodas which serve as part of the whole Angkor landscape in the mind of the Khmers. Interviewees recounted stories, anecdotes, and tales regarding Angkor and the *Neak Ta* and the Buddha images at the Gallery of the Thousand Buddhas which are not recorded and published as a local version of the history of Angkor to represent what Angkor means to the local people, or the Khmers. This body of knowledge needs to be documented and studied for the best management practice of Angkor which answers to the needs of the local people.

It is recognized that working with communities is a long process. Examples shown by ASPARA have reflected genuine interests in the benefits of the traditional communities and the hope to reconcile conservation with human needs. The Living with Heritage Project acknowledges Angkor as a sacred landscape and "the need to move beyond traditional 'fabric-based' approaches to holistic site management and conservation".<sup>512</sup> Consultation with monks and community representatives is taking place in order to "afford greater priority to existing religious rituals, practices, and traditions".<sup>513</sup> In the case of Angkor, where tourism development is the main agenda for the government, it is probably more difficult to incorporate the needs of the

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<sup>511</sup> Britt Baillie, M.Phil Dissertation on *Angkor Wat: Conserving the Sacred?* Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, UK, 2005.

<sup>512</sup> Mackay and Sullivan, 2008: 121

<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

traditional communities when the needs are clashing with the tourists', but tourism is also acknowledged as essential for the survival of Angkor.

Nevertheless, the direction that APSARA is heading will serve as example for other heritage authorities that it is possible to move away from the conventional heritage management approach to allow "the local people to decide how they wish to continue their traditions, so that they may live their lives amid the new realities..."<sup>514</sup>

### **The Plain of Jars, Lao PDR**

#### **Background History**

The Plain of Jars is located in the Xieng Khouang province in the Northern part of Lao PDR. It covers the area of 50,000 sq. km. on the plain of 1,000 meters altitude. At present 85 jar sites have been identified<sup>515</sup> and it is estimated that there are more than 2,000 stone jars in total. The stone jars vary in sizes and shapes. The largest one found is 3.25 meters tall and weighs 14 tons while the smallest one is only 1 meter tall. Some are round and some are cylindrical. The traditional Laotians believes that the jars were made by the army of Khoun Cheuang, a legendary hero, to ferment rice wine to celebrate the victory of Khoun Cheuang about 1,500 years ago. The local Hmongs associate the jars with a Hmong Princess and her lover who escaped from the palace. It was told that the couple made these jars to be used as their cooking pots while they were running away.<sup>516</sup>



73. Two of the largest jars at Jar site I

<sup>514</sup> Khoun, "A Commitment to Community Engagement," paper presented at the Phnom Bakheng Workshop on Public Interpretation, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 4-6 December 2005.

<sup>515</sup> Draft of the Plain of Jars Archaeological Landscape Heritage Management Plan, May 2009.

<sup>516</sup> Charles Johnson, ed., The Story of the Plain of Jars: A Hmong Folk Tale in Hmong and Beginning ESL Level 2 (Minnesota : Linguistics Department, Macalester College, 1981)

In 1875, it was recorded that the jars were looted by arm bands of more than 600 people.<sup>517</sup> The first European who visited the Plain of Jars in 1909 was a French customs officer called Vinet, but the first European scholar to study the Plain of Jars was Henri Parmentier in 1923. He made a short note that the villagers were looting the jars for treasures. Adults looked for carnelian beads which could be sold, while children looked for things to play with, resulting in the loss of archaeological evidences of the sites. He also noted that things found in the jars included black pottery, hand axes, spindle weight, glass and carnelian beads, stone and glass earrings, bronze bells, and, most commonly, human bones.<sup>518</sup>

After the visit of Parmentier, the Plain of Jars was studied in 1931 by Madeleine Colani, a French archaeologist who was a member of the EFEO, together with her sister, Eleanore. Colani published a book called "*Megalithes du Haut-Laos*" in 1935 which provided details of the jars and the artifacts found at the jar sites. Colani's finds included bronze and stone tools, which were believed to be the tools used for carving the jars, glass and carnelian beads, baked clay beads with symmetrical designs, cowry shells, bronze bracelets and bells, iron blades, arrowheads, spearheads, iron slags, clay mould for bronze casting, pot sherds, and bronze sculptures. However, these finds have all been lost.<sup>519</sup>



74. A jar covered by a stone disk

Colani concluded that the jars were used to store ashes and bones after cremation which took place in a nearby cave which had two natural chimneys. An excavation in the cave revealed burnt human bones and pottery. The northeast wall of the cave was covered with black substance which Colani believed to be from smoke. She believed

<sup>517</sup> Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy and Peter Bellwood, "Recent Archaeological Research in Laos" *Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association Bulletin* 19 (2000) : 105.

<sup>518</sup> Russell Ciochon and Jamie James, *Laos Keep Its Urns* [Online], accessed 22 July 2008. Available from <http://www.uiowa.edu/~bioanth/laoskeep.html>

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*

that the jar sites were part of the then prosperous bronze culture of the North Cachar Hills in North India and associated to the Sa Hyunh culture in Viet Nam. The three sites were believed to be on the salt trade route from India to Sa Hyunh and Luang Prabang.<sup>520</sup>



75. Inside the cave at Ban Ang

The study of the Plain of Jars was halted by World War II and the Viet Nam War. The Plain of Jars, a strategic location, had been bombarded by two million tons of bombs. 85% of the villages in the area was bombed and there still are unexploded ordnance and land mines covering 25% percent of the Xieng Khouang province at present making many of the jar sites inaccessible.<sup>521</sup> A lot of jars as well as other archaeological evidences were destroyed during the wars. The cave where Colani indicated to be a crematorium had been used during the war as an explosive storage, and there are traces of the war artifacts left in the cave.

In 1987, after ratifying the World Heritage Convention, the Plain of Jars was included to the World Heritage tentative list, but it was not until 1994 that the Plain of Jars was once again being studied. An excavation in 1994 at the jar site no.1 by Prof. Ichi Nitta from Japan revealed a jar engraved with a similar to a man raising both arms. Prof. Nitta concluded that the jars were for secondary burial.

In the same year until 1996, Thongsavongkhamdy, the present Director-General of the Department of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Information and Culture, excavated the Phonsavanh and the Ban Xieng Di jar sites. The radiocarbon dates of charcoals and bones varied from 8,300 – 920 BP<sup>522</sup> meaning that the Plain of Jars have been used continuously by different communities. Sayavongkhamdy and Bellwood's theory is that the excavated sites had been used for farming before, and probably supported wet-rice cultivation. At a period it was turned into a cemetery by

<sup>520</sup> Russell Ciochon and Jamie James, Laos Keep Its Urns [Online]

<sup>521</sup> UNESCO Bangkok, The Plain of Jars : Important but Imperiled [Online], accessed 22 July 2008. Available from <http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=5672>

<sup>522</sup> Sayavongkhamdy and Bellwood, "Recent Archaeological Research in Laos" Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association Bulletin 19, 108.

which the mortuary practice revolved around the jars. Later the necropolis was abandoned for some centuries, then the use of the necropolis was continued by another group of people who used granite blocks to signify burials.<sup>523</sup>

During a trip to the Plain of Jars in 2006, the Director-General proposed that the jars were used for primary burials of men and high-ranked people of the community. Once their bodies decomposed the bones were taken out from the jars and buried around the jars. For women and children the bodies were cremated and buried in pottery urns. The estimated period of the jar sites is 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC to 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC.<sup>524</sup>

UNESCO Director General expressed concerns over the protection of the Plain of Jars in 1998, and it was in the same year that UNESCO and the Government of Lao PDR began the project called “Safeguarding the Plain of Jars” in order to develop a conservation and management strategy for the Plain of Jars.<sup>525</sup> Since then UNESCO has worked with the Department of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Information and Culture, and other local and international partners to conduct a further research on the Plain of Jars and to inventory the jar sites while clearing unexploded ordnance. The research team from UNESCO, led by Julie Van Den Bergh, the Project’s Chief Technical Advisor, believes that the people who made the jars were associated with the monolithic communities in the Cachar hills in India and the Sa Huynh Culture of Viet Nam by salt trade.<sup>526</sup> The idea of that the jars were used as mortuary vessels for distilling human essence before the bones were removed for secondary burial has become a working hypothesis for the jars. According to Van Den Bergh, “*The Plain of Jars may be the earliest site at which all the elements of what later became recognizable as traditional South-East Asian mortuary behaviour were practiced as an ensemble.*”<sup>527</sup>

At present, seven jar sites are cleared of unexploded ordnance and open to the public. In 2007, there were 25,000 visitors to the Plain of Jars.<sup>528</sup> The jars are vulnerable to looting, vandalism, and the problem of soil erosion which is one of the natural factors initiating the jars’ deterioration.

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<sup>523</sup> Sayavongkhamdy and Bellwood, “Recent Archaeological Research in Laos” *Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association Bulletin* 19, 107.

<sup>524</sup> Sayavongkhamdy, “Current Situation of Archaeology in Lao PDR,” powerpoint presentation presented at the ICCROM-SPAFA Living Heritage Sites Programme Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, 17 Oct. 2009.

<sup>525</sup> Julie Van Den Bergh, “Protection of Plain of Jars Set in Stone” in *Voices* (April-June 2009) : 16.

<sup>526</sup> *Jars of Wonder, Jars of Hope* [Online], accessed 22 July 2008. Available from <http://thestar.com.my/lifestyle/story.asp?file=/2008/12/7/lifefocus/2713686&sec=lifefocus>

<sup>527</sup> Ibid.

<sup>528</sup> *Draft of the Plain of Jars Archaeological Landscape Heritage Management Plan*, May 2009



76. Some jars and stone disks were broken to be used as sharpening stones and grinders. (Source: Jerry Redfern/ www.onasia.com)

### Management

UNESCO joined the Xieng Khouang Province and the Government of Lao PDR in the preservation of the jar sites in 1998. As the jar sites are located in different various locations, UNESCO and the MIC realized that with the government's constraints on staff and budget, it would be difficult for the MIC to protect the sites by themselves. As a result, they decided to work in collaboration with the villages located at or near the sites to manage and protect the jars as part of their heritage and source of income. The aim is to “*put mechanisms in place that ensure ongoing protection of the heritage resources linked to bringing socio-economic benefits for the local communities*”.<sup>529</sup>

UNESCO, Xieng Khouang Province, and the Government of Lao PDR set up an office, the Heritage House, at the town of Phonsavan and work in collaboration with other government departments on the project. They have identified the problems on the protection and management of the Plain of Jars to do with the lack of documentation and national expertise, the lack of national and local capacity to safeguard the site, the threats of looting and inappropriate development, and the unexploded ordnance. In order to address these issues, the Safeguarding the Plain of Jars project is divided into 4 phases as follows:<sup>530</sup>

Phase I: (1998-2000) Data collection and Initial GIS mapping

Phase II: (2000-2002) Design of Inventory Methodology, Training and Survey

Phase III: (2003-2005) Development and testing of community-based methodologies to preserve the cultural heritage of the Plain of Jars

Phase IV: (2006-2010) Fighting Poverty at the Plain of Jars: UXO Clearance, Pro-poor Tourism and Sustainable Resource Management

<sup>529</sup> UNESCO Bangkok, The Plain of Jars : Important but Imperiled [Online]

<sup>530</sup> Ibid.



77. Unexploded bombs adorned the ticket booth at Ban Ang

During Phase one and two, the main focus was on making a map of the entire plateau using GIS as well as conducting village-based surveys and inventories of the jar sites to be linked to a GIS database. The local communities were trained in site survey and equipped with skills needed to complete the inventory.<sup>531</sup> Community-based methodologies were developed and tested during Phase three which would enable an effective management of the jar sites by the local communities. The methodologies include those on site management, treating soil-erosion, clearing unexploded ordnance, as well as monitoring and mitigating threats to culture and biodiversity from heritage tourism.<sup>532</sup> The clearance of UXO was done in collaboration with the Mine Advisory Group or MAG, which continues until Phase four. Phase four, which is the present phase, has the goal to encourage sustainable community-based heritage tourism which generates income to improve the livelihood of the local communities. Training courses on GIS, heritage tourism and site management as well as meetings with the local communities have been organized through awareness-raising mobile groups. In May 2009, a training workshop for local heritage guides was conducted in collaboration with the Lao National Tourism Administration and site authorities.<sup>533</sup>

Phase four is a trial period for the seven selected sites, based on their tourism potential, to carry out the management of sites and tourism by themselves. After this phase, UNESCO plans to nominate the Plain of Jars to be included in the World Heritage List in 2011. It is hoped that the local communities will be equipped with necessary tools to conduct successful community-based heritage tourism programmes when the Plain of Jars becomes a World Heritage Site.

Nationally, the Plain of Jars is supervised by the *National Project Supervisory Committee* consisting of representatives from involving organizations and Lao Government units. The local management of the Plain of Jars is led by the *Office of Xieng Khouang Provincial Governor* which establishes the implementing bodies of the project and ensures effective coordination between local stakeholders; and, the *Xieng Khouang Provincial Steering Committee for National, Historical and Natural Heritage Site Conservation* which provides coordination with provincial, national and

<sup>531</sup> UNESCO Bangkok, The Plain of Jars : Important but Imperiled [Online]

<sup>532</sup> Ibid.

<sup>533</sup> Van Den Bergh, "Protection of Plain of Jars Set in Stone" in Voices, 6.

international bodies and supervises conservation areas in the province.<sup>534</sup> This Steering Committee consists of representatives from partner agencies and government units. Interestingly, the President of Provincial Buddhist Fellowship Organization who is a monk is also part of the Committee. According to the Draft Heritage Management Plan, the Steering Committee then supervises the Heritage House or ‘*Hong Kan Moladok*’ in Lao. The Heritage House, aimed to take a full effect in 2010, will consist of the Administrative Unit, the Site Protection Unit, the Research and Restoration Unit, the Impact Assessment Unit, and the Heritage Awareness Raising Unit. The Site Protection Unit is to work with the villages through the District Offices of Information and Culture on the protection and management of the jar sites as well as providing training for the villages. The Research and Restoration Unit, consisting of a historian, two archaeologists, a restorer, and a GIS expert, will coordinate and work with foreign teams and researchers. The Impact Assessment Unit will launch guidelines and regulations regarding site protection. The Heritage Awareness Raising Unit will publicize and promote relevant information and activities regarding the sites.

The District Offices of Information and Culture will work very closely with the Heritage House and the villages especially on raising awareness on site protection and responsibilities of the villagers in safeguarding the jar sites.<sup>535</sup>



78. UNESCO Project in 2005 (Source: Jerry Redfern)

### **Level of Community Participation**

Since 2001, the villagers have helped the UNESCO-Lao Safeguarding the Plain of Jars Project to identify 85 sites; 58 of which are recorded.<sup>536</sup> The population of the Plain of Jars is consisted of Laotians as well as ethnic groups such as Hmongs, and Khamus. Their relations to the jars are based on the stories about the jars told by their ancestors, and they have not been using the jars or the Plain of Jars for mortuary purposes. As mentioned earlier, the jar sites had been looted since the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century AD by bandits, and the jars were badly destroyed during the wars. The present communities have adjusted to their surroundings, which are inundated with

<sup>534</sup> UNESCO Bangkok, *The Plain of Jars : Important but Imperiled* [Online]

<sup>535</sup> Draft of the Plain of Jars Archaeological Landscape Heritage Management Plan, May 2009

<sup>536</sup> Ibid.

bomb fragments, by using bomb casings as their house stilts and water tanks for animals. In areas that have not been cleared, incidents with UXO occur regularly. Most of the time the communities lived with the jars in peace, but some of the jars and the stone discs have been used as foundation stones, grinders, water tanks, as well as sharpening stone. Some tourists attempted to break the jars or to collect pieces of the jars as souvenirs.

Since the project began, the local communities have been helping the project team to survey and identify jar sites in other areas beyond Sites No.1-3 which are the main sites for the public. The collaboration between the project team and the local communities has brought down the number of vandalism.<sup>537</sup>



79. The jar sites attract various types of tourists.

Following the methodologies developed by the UNESCO-Lao team, the local communities in seven selected sites will manage tourism and protect the sites in collaboration with the Heritage House and the District Offices of Information and Culture. A village site committee has been set up consisting of 8-20 people from different families. These people will take turn each day to sell tickets to both local and international visitors; maintain the jar sites by cleaning; clear out vegetation; take care of signage, restrooms, information booth, and ticket booth; and, make markers of or fencing protected areas.<sup>538</sup> The revenue from ticket sales will be divided into two parts. Each village committee can keep 40% of the revenue, which will be divided between the families who take care of the sites. The other 60% will go to the Provincial Office of Information and Culture, which will then be used for general management of the sites.<sup>539</sup>

<sup>537</sup> Conversation with Thongsasayavongkhamdy, Director-General, Lao PDR, 14 November 2006.

<sup>538</sup> Draft of the Plain of Jars Archaeological Landscape Heritage Management Plan, May 2009

<sup>539</sup> UNESCO and IFT, Tourism at Cultural Heritage Sites in Asia, Cultural Heritage Specialist Guide Training and Certification Programme for UNESCO World Heritage Sites : A Training Manual for Heritage Guides, (n.p. : n.p., 2007).



80. The ticket booth at Jar Site II



81. The ticket booth at Jar Site III

According to the Draft Management Plan, each village will have a duty to draft and propose its own five year budget plan for site management to the Heritage House, which can be reviewed annually. The budget each village will receive depends on the number of visitors and the area of its responsible site. In case that there are special needs, each village can propose a separate budget. The budget is allocated from the National Heritage Conservation Funds set up by the Government. Part of the Funds will also constitute the budget for the Heritage House as well.<sup>540</sup>

<sup>540</sup> Draft of the Plain of Jars Archaeological Landscape Heritage Management Plan, May 2009.



82. A village meeting in 2005 when the staff from the Ministry of Tourism met with the villagers (Source: Jerry Redfern/ [www.onasia.com](http://www.onasia.com))

This agreement at the village level is secured through a contract between the Provincial Office of Information and Culture and village representatives “*provides that villages have both the responsibility to protect the jar sites in return for a share of the economic benefits brought by tourism*”.<sup>541</sup> As a result, the villages are also responsible for tourism activities following the community-based heritage tourism model developed by the Project. They have the responsibility to “*ensure that when tourists visit the village they have an educational and enjoyable experience, and do not cause negative cultural and environmental impacts*”, and at the same time will earn from selling food and handicrafts, providing accommodation, and guiding services.<sup>542</sup> The villagers will be represented by the Village Tourism Committee who will work in partnership with local tour operators and tourism authorities, so that the tourism plan will incorporate the needs of the local communities especially with regards to tourist behaviours. Tourism activities will be conducted both by tour operators who have an agreement with the villages and by the villagers themselves. The tourism activities will be constantly monitored and reviewed. The Draft Management Plan stipulates that if an impact assessment reveals that 50% or more of the tourists or the villagers are not satisfied with the tourism activities in a particular village, that village will stop the activities to reassess them. If 25% of the jar sites are negatively affected by tourism activities, the activities will stop as well.

### **Legal Framework**

Laws regarding the safeguarding of the Plain of Jars include the followings:

*Decree of the President of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic on the Preservation of Cultural, Historical, and Natural Heritage (1997)*

<sup>541</sup> UNESCO and IFT, Tourism at Cultural Heritage Sites in Asia. Cultural Heritage Specialist Guide Training and Certification Programme for UNESCO World Heritage Sites : A Training Manual for Heritage Guides, (n.p. : n.p., 2007).

<sup>542</sup> Draft of the Plain of Jars Archaeological Landscape Heritage Management Plan, May 2009.

Any public, collective, and private assets and artifacts which are more than 50 years old holding historical or cultural importance and constituting evidence of the Lao country are national heritage.

All people and entities in Lao PDR have the obligation to contribute to the management, conservation, preservation, and restoration of the national heritage and the national cultural and artistic values.

The Plain of Jars is considered a national immovable heritage.

A heritage can be removed from the national heritage list if the heritage has devalued.

The national heritage management authority includes the Ministry of Information and Culture, the Province, Municipality and Special Zone Information and Culture Services, the District Information and Culture Offices, and Village Administration Authorities. They have the responsibilities to safeguard national heritage by researching planning, regulations, and guidelines on the safeguarding of heritage; providing an inventory of the heritage for local, national, or international listings; mobilizing funds from local and foreign sources; and, coordinating with other international agencies.

The Decree prohibits the construction of building, restaurant, or entertainment premise at the national heritage sites, unless permitted by the Ministry of Information and Culture.

The protection, conservation, and restoration of heritage will be supported by the National Heritage Conservation Funds provided by the Government's budget.

*Guideline for Village Administration Authorities Regarding the Conservation, Protection, and Promotion of Cultural, Historical, and Natural Heritage under their Supervisions (2003)*

The Guideline recommends the Village Administration Authorities to provide their best efforts to take care of the national heritage within their areas of responsibility.

*Guideline on the Safeguarding of the Plain of Jars, Provincial Office of Information and Culture, Xieng Khoung (2007)*

The Guideline lists different prohibitions for both villagers and tourists. In summary, cattle are not allowed in the jar sites; permission must be obtained before conducting any social activities at the jar sites; overnight stay at the jar sites is not allowed; climbing on the jars is not allowed; no weapons or large bags is allowed; and, tourists should abide by the regulations set up by site managers.

### *National Heritage Law (2005)*

This law, same as the aforementioned Presidential Decree, includes cultural, historical, and natural heritage, but it also includes new categories of cultural and historical heritage in intangible items, and, national icons. It divides the cultural and historical heritage into three levels including local, national, and world, where as the natural heritage is divided into local, national, regional, and world. The local and national heritage both have to be registered; the first at the Provincial Offices of Information and Culture, and the latter at the Ministry of Information and Culture. It stipulates that world heritage has a different status from other types of heritage, therefore, their management can involve activities that are different from those listed in this law.

Apart from these decrees, guidelines, and recommendations, the Xieng Khouang Provincial Steering Committee for National, Historical and Natural Heritage Site Conservation was set up by the Decree of the Provincial Governor of Xieng Khouang. The Decree assigns different roles and responsibilities to all partners in managing and safeguarding the Plain of Jars. The partners include the Provincial and the District Offices of Information and Culture, the Provincial and the District Tourism Offices, the Provincial and District Police Divisions, and the Village Administration Authorities and the villagers.

### **Analysis**

In the case of the Plain of Jars, the site and the people are connected through stories and collective memories. The Plain of Jars does not only offer prehistoric interpretation, but it is an important part of the Laotian history with regards to national building. There are caves and historic places relating to the war period. Villagers can relate more to the recent history of wars with which they had direct experiences rather than a lost civilization which was here 2,000 years ago. As a result there is a need to interpret the Plain of Jars as a continuation of history from the past until present, incorporating the stories of the faraway past and the recent time so that the identity of the traditional communities is not neglected and overwhelmed. In fact, the Director-General of the Department of Cultural Heritage indicated that the heritage authority intended to do so.<sup>543</sup>

The management plan of the jar sites can be initiated because of the legal framework of the country which allows and encourages all citizens to take part in the preservation of heritage. The fact that a monk is represented in the Provincial Steering Committee reflects that the Project recognizes the role of monks as natural community leaders and Buddhism as a fundamental part of the Laotian society. The interdisciplinary approach to site protection and cooperation between different levels of partners should be applauded. There is a concern expressed in the Management Plan regarding the vulnerability of traditional cultures and the negative impact of tourism. Therefore, the plan states that if half of the villagers are not satisfied with tourism they are allowed to stop, but the actual implications of this statement remain

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<sup>543</sup> Conversation with Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, Director-General, Lao PDR, 14 November 2006.

to be seen. The fact that the economy of these villages will from now on depend heavily on tourism will drastically change their traditional ways of life. With this, there will be a heavy promotion of tourism, which can over-compromise the needs of the communities and their traditional cultures. As a result, cautions are to be made regarding the scale of tourist activities in the selected sites and the promotion and preservation of traditional cultures.

Based on this model, heritage has become a revenue generator and its values are divided between economic and historical values. In a way, the traditional communities will see the heritage as a source of income and they will take care of it as long as the economic benefits continue. On the other hand, the historical value as well as the “sacredness” of the place, which is part of a value aimed to be inculcated to tourists by the heritage authority,<sup>544</sup> will continue to be appreciated only by scholars. To achieve this, there needs to be a more engaging awareness programme which allows the traditional communities to research about the jar sites and the local history. At present, their roles are comparable to museum employees who will guide tourists and clean the exhibits as long as they get paid, but whether or not they truly appreciate and understand the collections in the museum is still questionable.

The implication of this model, therefore, needs a long term planning and impact assessment, as well as community mobilization efforts, which will be very important given the vast area of the whole Plain of Jars. The heritage management structure is a well laid out one which provides staff of the MOIC to work even at the district level. In a long run, however, when there are more and more tourists coming to the sites, the treats posed to some other 70 sites are great, and there will be discrepancies in site management and protection, especially when the budget received by each village is based on the size of its jar site, and the number of tourists.

In inaccessible areas, the traditional communities will not benefit from tourism, and this poses a question whether the sites will still be protected. As a result, the heritage authority might need to review its structure and planning so as to provide enough coverage for the supervision of all sites based on a partnership between the heritage authority and the traditional communities. There is a need to be careful not to undertake a top-down approach whereby the authority is giving order and the community is taking order.

The Plain of Jars model may be applicable to other large-scaled archaeological sites, which has little or no connection with the traditional community. However, if a link between the heritage and the traditional community does exist, however small it is, it has to be respected and taken into account whether or not tourism is going to impact that link. This model is a very good model showing that the heritage authority has taken it into their consideration to work with the traditional communities. It is a benefit that the traditional communities can earn from the Plain of Jars site and in return the site is protected. However, it can be argued that it might not be sustainable and that awareness raising programme will still be needed to help ensure the sustainability of the site. If the traditional communities can see that the jar sites are

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<sup>544</sup> Draft of the Plain of Jars Archaeological Landscape Heritage Management Plan, May 2009.

part of their cultural landscape which has been continued from the past then they will be able to see the jars as part of their identity.

However, the Management Plan has given quite a long trial period to the communities and it will not be fully implemented unless the results are satisfying. Since it will be a long time before the Plan takes a full effect, adjustments can be made along the way to produce the best results from the trials and errors.

## **Hoi An, Viet Nam**

### **Background history**

Situated in the central part of Vietnam in the Quang Nam province, the ancient town of Hoi An has a long history. Since the prehistoric period, it was occupied by people of the Sa Huynh Culture (200 BC-200 AD) as evident by artifacts found at different wards in Hoi An such as burial jars, tools, glass and metal objects. The artifacts include Chinese coins and other items also found at Dong Son and Oc Eo sites, showing that the Sa Huynh people traded with other communities in China and Central and South Vietnam.



83. Hoi An at present

After the Sa Huynh period, the town became known as 'Lam Ap Pho' and became a large town constituting part of the Champa Kingdom of Tra Kieu from 200 AD to 1500 A.D. During the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Century AD it became an important port and there were merchants from the Arab World, Persia, and China coming to trade. The Cham people left behind a lot of vestiges such as building foundations, water wells, statues, as well as ceramics and jewelry from China and the Middle East. The Kingdom of Champa was pushed southward by the Kingdom of Dai Viet, and Champa started to decline in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. Once the Dai Viet people settled in Hoi An they became farmers and fishermen. Some of them brought along traditional craft skills and formed the foundation of the crafts villages in Hoi An. Because of its location near the Thu Bon estuary and the Japanese policy to trade with South East Asia in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century AD, Hoi An became a prosperous ancient port of Viet Nam frequented by merchants from China and Japan. Later in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century AD, it became an

important seat of European missionaries. One of them invented the romanized Vietnamese alphabets which are used until nowadays. Known then as Faifo, the town was visited by merchants from the West including Portugal, Holland, Spain, and France. Over the period of prosperity for 300 years, Hoi An had absorbed the influences of its visitors who settled down in the city, especially the Chinese and the Japanese, and imprinted Hoi An with their presence. This resulted in the uniqueness of the architecture of Hoi An. However, due to the drying up of the Thu Bon River connecting Hoi An to the South China Sea, ships could no longer reach the port and the centre of prosperity moved to the nearby Danang in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. During the French Colonial days, Faifo was introduced in a guidebook as a small village with beautiful pagodas.<sup>545</sup> Its people later took part in the fight for independence both from the French and during the War of Resistance against the United States. However, Hoi An had since become a quiet small town which, fortunately, spared it from being damaged by the War in 1960s.



84. An old street photo of Hoi An (Source: Hoi An Museum of History and Culture)

In early 1980s, because of Viet Nam's political link to the Eastern European countries, the Polish archaeologist Kazimierz Kwiatkowsky visited Hoi An while doing restoration works in a nearby city. It was the beginning of the cooperation between UNESCO and the Polish Government to protect and restore the ancient town of Hoi An. It was during this time that the local people started to recognize the cultural heritage value of Hoi An and it was listed it as a site of national value in 1985 though it was not part of the War of Independence.

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<sup>545</sup> Ph Eberhardt, Guide de l'Annam (Paris : Augustin Challamel Editeur, 1911)



#### 85. Monument of Kazimierz Kwiatkowski in Hoi An

In 1996, the local People's Party began to take control of the conservation of Hoi An by imposing rules and regulations regarding the renovation of old houses and the building of new structures in the Hoi An old town area. Hoi An was later nominated to the World Heritage Committee and was listed as a World Heritage in 1999 together with the nearby Cham My-Son Sanctuary. It was recognized by UNESCO since it is:

...an exceptionally well-preserved example of a South East Asian trading port in the period of the 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Its buildings and its street pattern reflect the influences, both indigenous and foreign, that combined to produce this unique heritage site....<sup>546</sup>

According to survey, the relics of Hoi An are divided into eleven kinds, including 1,068 ancient houses, 19 pagodas, 43 temples, 23 communal houses, 38 family temples, 5 assembly halls, 11 old wells, one bridge, and 44 ancient tombs.<sup>547</sup>

After granted the World Heritage Status, number of visitors to Hoi An rose from 11,000 in 1993<sup>548</sup> to more than one million in 2007 whereas the local population was a little more than 80,000. Land costs have also skyrocketed as a plot of land in the old quarter could be sold for VND3,000,000 (USD170) per square meter in 2004.<sup>549</sup>

<sup>546</sup> UNESCO, World Heritage Centre [Online], accessed 5 August 2008. Available from <http://whc.unesco.org>

<sup>547</sup> Quangnam Province [Online], accessed 5 August 2008. Available from [www.quangnamtourism.com.vn/en/potentours\\_1.asp](http://www.quangnamtourism.com.vn/en/potentours_1.asp)

<sup>548</sup> Hoi An World Heritage [Online], accessed 5 August 2008. Available from, [http://www.hoianworldheritage.org.vn/eg\\_index.htm](http://www.hoianworldheritage.org.vn/eg_index.htm)

<sup>549</sup> Duong Quang, Sizzling tourist trade fires up property prices in hot Hoi An [Online], accessed 5 August 2008. Available from [http://groups.google.co.th/group/rec.travel.asia/browse\\_thread/thread/62ae559e24091aac/c90ffeb2ac0b40ae?hl=th&lnk=st&q=%22hoi+an%22](http://groups.google.co.th/group/rec.travel.asia/browse_thread/thread/62ae559e24091aac/c90ffeb2ac0b40ae?hl=th&lnk=st&q=%22hoi+an%22)

Most people in Hoi An are Buddhists, but Buddhism is practiced with a mixture of ancestral worship and other beliefs.<sup>550</sup> There are year-round festivals and rituals related to Buddhism, local beliefs, and agriculture. Traditional games and traditional food also form part of the life of the Hoi An people. At present Hoi An is being advertised as a “Living Museum”. The preservation of Hoi An, therefore, needs to give priority the needs of the traditional community, but at the same time trying to benefit from tourism development, as stated in the Hoi An Ancient Town website as follows:

Cultural heritage preservation is, above all, for the people and for the country. Cultural heritage is the most interesting and impressing tourist product. So, Hoi An is trying to organize a happy wedding for the heritage town preservation and tourism development in order that the community can benefit and the heritage town can be preserved better and better.



86. Hoi An in 2008

## Management

Hoi An was made a national heritage in 1985 and in 1986, the local government decided to establish the Hoi An Cultural Relics Department under the Ministry of Culture and Information to take care of the heritage of Hoi An. The Department existed for 10 years then in 1996 there was a decision to establish a centre under the local government and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism to undertake and coordinate the management and preservation of Hoi An. The Hoi An Centre for Monuments Management and Preservation (HACMMP) was therefore founded.<sup>551</sup>

<sup>550</sup> UNESCO Bangkok, *Impact: The Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific: Cultural Tourism and Heritage Management in the World Heritage Site of the Ancient Town of Hoi An, Viet Nam* (Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok, 2008), 19.

<sup>551</sup> Interview with Mr. Phong Vo Dang, Architect, HACMMP, 22 December 2008.

In 1997, the Government of Viet Nam together with the Quang Nam provincial government and the Hoi An municipality began to restore government-owned historic properties in Hoi An to prepare for its nomination as a World Heritage. The Viet Nam Government received fundings and technical assistance from foreign donors and partners for the restoration of old houses.<sup>552</sup>

Since becoming a World Heritage site in 1999, the structure for the preservation and management of Hoi An has been set in place by different Government bodies together with assistance from UNESCO. The Government bodies include the People's Committee at the local, town, and provincial levels who are the policy makers working with implementation agencies such as the Hoi An Center for Monuments Management and Preservation, Hoi An Police, Hoi An Center for Culture and Sports, and Hoi An Department of Trade and Tourism.<sup>553</sup> However, the local government has the authority to make conservation decision based on information and assessment provided by the Hoi An Center for Monuments Management and Preservation (HACMMP) which has the duty to inform the public about the regulations regarding the management, use, and preservation of the Hoi An ancient town and to enforce the regulations. The Center works on awareness-raising issues by advising residents and tourism businesses on the importance of conservation and well as providing heritage conservation guidelines to the residents and business owners. It works in collaboration with other Government bodies such as the Hoi An Sport-Culture Centre and forms part of the Cross-Sectoral Inspection Team with the Ward People's Committee to monitor physical interventions on the built heritage within the old quarter of Hoi An.<sup>554</sup> HACMMP is also governed by the Center for Relics and Heritage Preservation in Quang Nam.

The principles for the preservation and development of Hoi An are listed into three points as follows:

A. Strong development of sustainable economy (esp. Tourism and tourist services) basing on the preservation of the local and national cultural value and character...Tourism in Hoi An is affirmed to be cultural tourism and therefore, culture is at the same time the motive and objective of development of tourist economy.

B. Preserving to the most all the original elements in tradition and culture and simultaneously meeting the needs of the present residents; both promoting the value of tangible and intangible properties of the heritage site for tourism development; improving the income, the standard of living of the people and at the same time protecting, enriching the local and national culture.

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<sup>552</sup> UNESCO Bangkok, Impact: The Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific: Cultural Tourism and Heritage Management in the World Heritage Site of the Ancient Town of Hoi An, Viet Nam, 29.

<sup>553</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid., 74-75.

C. Tourism development must go with the protection of ecological, cultural environment as well as having timely discovery, prevention and eradication of all social evils that often go along with tourism development.<sup>555</sup>

From the above principles, the ultimate aim for the preservation and management of Hoi An is to use tourism as means to support sustainable conservation while at the same time preserving the traditional values of the ancient town and its people.

To achieve this goal, the Hoi An People's Committee divided Hoi An into two zones which are the *Intact Protection Zone* (Zone I) and the *Ecological Environment and Landscape Protection Zone* (Zone II). Zone I includes the monuments in the old quarter and the areas that form part of the monuments' original elements, which are to be protected in their original state.<sup>556</sup> Zone II allows new constructions and development provided that they do not affect the architecture, natural scenery, and ecological environment of the monuments.<sup>557</sup>

Since the end of 1995, visitors to Hoi An who wish to visit major sites have to pay an entrance fee which covers entry to five types of sites including museums, assembly halls, old houses, cultural performances and temples. Those who do not wish to see the sites can still enter to the old quarter, but can not visit the sites listed. In 2008, the entrance fee was 75,000 VND (USD5). With one ticket, one can choose to see one of the four museums, one of the four old houses, one of the three assembly halls, as well as a handicraft workshop and a traditional music concert. The visitors can also choose to enter either the famous Japanese bridge or the Quan Cong Temple. If one wishes to visit two old houses, for example, a new entry ticket will have to be purchased.

For every ticket bought, all revenue will go to the Hoi An State Treasury. 75% of the revenue will be reinvested in conservation activities including renovation of old buildings, organizing traditional festivals, improving the infrastructure, as well as preserving the intangible heritage.<sup>558</sup> The remaining 25% will go to the maintenance of the Tourist Guide Office and the owners of the heritage buildings listed in the entry ticket.<sup>559</sup> A house owner will receive 1,000 VND for each local tourist visit and 2-3,000 VND for a foreign tourist visit.<sup>560</sup> It is noted that the share for house owners is quite large. In 2006, the Phung Hung house collected VND224 million (USD14,000) from entrance fees.<sup>561</sup> In 2007, the total revenue collected from the entrance fees was

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<sup>555</sup> Final Report on the Implementation of the Action Plans, Hoi An – Viet Nam, UNESCO project on Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management, September 2001.

<sup>556</sup> UNESCO Bangkok, Impact: The Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific: Cultural Tourism and Heritage Management in the World Heritage Site of the Ancient Town of Hoi An, Viet Nam, 29.

<sup>557</sup> Ibid.

<sup>558</sup> Final Report on the Implementation of the Action Plans, Hoi An – Viet Nam, UNESCO project on Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management, September 2001.

<sup>559</sup> UNESCO Bangkok, Impact: The Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific: Cultural Tourism and Heritage Management in the World Heritage Site of the Ancient Town of Hoi An, Viet Nam, 35.

<sup>560</sup> Interview with a house owner, Hoi An, 23 December 2008.

<sup>561</sup> UNESCO, Impact: The Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific: Cultural Tourism and Heritage Management in the World Heritage Site of the Ancient Town of Hoi An, Viet Nam, 35.

more than USD1,600,000.<sup>562</sup> As a result, the larger the number of tourism is the larger the amount of funds for heritage preservation.



87. Tan Ky house and the owner

Based on the criteria set up by HACMMP,<sup>563</sup> buildings in Hoi An are divided into five categories based on their cultural, historical, and scientific value. The most important buildings fall into the Special Category and Category I which refer to buildings whose all original elements are maintained and which possess special historical, cultural, and scientific value. Other categories define buildings with lesser original elements and values. Category IV, the last category, refers to new constructions using new materials which do not constitute part of the historic buildings.

HACMMP, in 2008, reveals that there are 1,254 built structures in the old quarter of Hoi An; 247 of which fall into the Special Category and Category I. A total of 929 houses are privately-owned, 120 are collectively-owned, and 205 are state-owned.<sup>564</sup> Since 1997, the Government bodies have joined hands to preserve the state-owned historic buildings. From 1997-2007, the Hoi An People's Committee provided 45.5% of the total restoration costs, while the Provincial and the National Government provided 49.5%, and the rest came from foreign donors.<sup>565</sup> They were able to restore 168 buildings, which then are available for government use or for leasing. Adaptive reuse of state-owned buildings is encouraged by the Government so that the income gained from leased properties will be reinvested into conservation and for improving public facilities.<sup>566</sup> For collectively-owned and privately-owned properties, owners have to ask for permission from the local government and obtain restoration guideline

<sup>562</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>564</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>565</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid., 38.

from HACMMP to restore their properties. The application form complete with the restoration proposal and budget plan will have to be submitted to the local government, then it will usually take about 21 days or less to obtain a permit.<sup>567</sup> Together with the application form for permit, if owners wish to ask for partial subsidy from the local government in restoring their properties they can indicate so. However, there are criterion for subsidy including the difficult financial or family circumstance of house owners; the category of the buildings; the level of deterioration; and the location of the building.<sup>568</sup> The contributions from the government depend on the significance and the location of the properties. The buildings located on the main road receive less financial support than those located in small lanes since they have more business opportunities. For example, a building of the Special Category will receive 60% of government support if located on the main road and 75% if located in a small alley.<sup>569</sup>

There is an exemption, however, for deteriorated properties listed on the Master Plan for the restoration of historic properties developed in 2003 by HACMMP. The owners of these properties need to raise only 15% of the total restoration cost, and will get the usual amount of subsidies entitled, while the rest will be given to them as an interest-free three-year loan.<sup>570</sup> In some cases, the local government will buy houses from owners who cannot keep their houses due to their financial situation, and, after restoration, will allow the original owners to rent the house at a favorable rate.<sup>571</sup>



88. A newly opened restaurant

<sup>567</sup> UNESCO Bangkok, Heritage Homeowner's Preservation Manual : Hoi An World Heritage Site, Vietnam (Quang Nam : Hoi An Center for Monuments Management and Preservation, 2008), 66-67.

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>569</sup> UNESCO, Impact: The Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific: Cultural Tourism and Heritage Management in the World Heritage Site of the Ancient Town of Hoi An, Viet Nam, 34.

<sup>570</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

Since Hoi An has a layer of history, the local government also attempts to preserve and promote sites related to the Sa Huynh Culture and the Cham Culture. There is a museum of Sa Huynh culture in Hoi An, and the government has recently expressed an intention to preserve the water wells from the Cham period, which are still used by the local people.

Hoi An is subjected to annual flooding because of its location on the bank of the Thu Bon River. The biggest flood occurred in 1964 and 1998 when some houses were flooded to the roof. In 2007, a big flood damaged the whole town and destroyed some structures. The old houses are also subjected to fire and termite, therefore HACMMP has indicated the need for risk preparedness of homeowners as seen in the presentation during the annual meeting of homeowners in 2008 and the Heritage Homeowner's Preservation Manual produced by UNESCO, HACMMP, and the Showa Women's University in 2008.

The preservation on intangible heritage is also a main task of the local government who is trying to promote traditional ways of life that are disappearing because of the change in livelihood. On the fourteenth night on each lunar month, the local government holds an event called the "Hoi An Festival Night" when all street lights are turned off and Hoi An was lit by the moonlight and the lanterns. On this night traditional games and traditional orchestra will be performed and participated by both residents and tourists who can buy traditional delicacies on the street.<sup>572</sup> Though the event is not an original practice, it helps in a way revive and preserve the traditional aspects of Hoi An that could have been lost. It was noted that the local government has begun to stage cultural performances for residents and tourists since 1995.<sup>573</sup> UNESCO and the local government also work together to revive the art of traditional woodcarving at the nearby Kim Bong village which was renowned since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century AD for making furniture, boats, and pagodas, but was in decline in the 1990s.<sup>574</sup> Through woodcarving training workshops initiated by UNESCO and the local government as well as on-the-job training offered by woodworking enterprises, the number of woodworkers in the village has increased to 200 and the number of woodworking enterprises has expanded as well.<sup>575</sup> Aside from this the local government also promotes other handicraft villages such as the pottery, the horticulture and the fishing villages, by encouraging tourists to visit the villages and buy their products. The *Heritage Homeowner's Preservation Manual* also lists information on highly-skilled local craftsmen who have worked with HACMMP on restoration projects, so that homeowners will be able to use them on their restoration projects, which is a way to continue the traditional craft skills.

The heritage management practice of Hoi An was awarded the Best Conservation Practice in Asia in 2000 and the Tang Family Worship Place just won a 2009 UNESCO Asia Pacific Award for Cultural Heritage Preservation.

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<sup>572</sup> Nguyen The Thuc, *Hoi An : The World Heritage in Vietnam* (n.p. : NXB Thong Tan, 2005), 77.

<sup>573</sup> UNESCO, *Impact: The Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific: Cultural Tourism and Heritage Management in the World Heritage Site of the Ancient Town of Hoi An, Viet Nam*, 42.

<sup>574</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.*



89. Traditional Performing Arts House



90. A lamp-making workshop

### **Level of Community Participation**

In Viet Nam, the government works closely with different civic groups such as the Youth Union, Women's Union, Veterans' Union and Farmer's Union, which are registered under an organization called the Fatherland Front.<sup>576</sup> These Unions act as messengers to deliver government messages to the local public, bridge the gap

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<sup>576</sup> Ibid., 76.

between the government and the people, as well as facilitate the implementation of government programmes.<sup>577</sup>

Through this system, the local government of Hoi An has worked with volunteers from the Youth Union to engage them in restoration projects by which they were given training from traditional craftspersons.<sup>578</sup> This is done through the UNESCO's project called "*the Youth Volunteers in Cultural Heritage Preservation Project*" which consist of a group of 20-30 youth volunteers living in the world heritage areas who will then invite other friends to join with the support of the UN Volunteers project and the Youth Union. The youth volunteers will be given training to familiarize them with the cultural heritage. After that they will perform awareness-raising activities in their communities and schools by setting up information centres, producing brochures and leaflets, and organizing activities. One of the objectives of the project is to make them aware of the income generating opportunities through heritage works.<sup>579</sup> At present there are more than a hundred members in the Volunteers group.

The local government also works on heritage education by integrating heritage education into city schools' curriculum focusing on the values of Hoi An to promote pride and encourage polite behavior when meeting tourists.<sup>580</sup> In addition, the local government's heritage education programme includes for heritage tours for school children, CDs on heritage education, and heritage education for hotel and restaurant staff.<sup>581</sup>

In terms of general community participation, in 2003-2004 there was a field school organized by JICA and the Showa Women's University for children, homeowners, and staff of relevant agencies in Hoi An.<sup>582</sup> Training courses such as the woodcarving and woodworking ones mentioned above are offered by UNESCO and the local government.

According to UNESCO, the Hoi An municipal government organizes the workshop titled "*Sustainably Conserving and Promoting Hoi An World Heritage*" twice a year.<sup>583</sup> The workshop, chaired by government officials, invites homeowners, construction company owners, and tourism enterprise operators to share their opinions on the general situation with regards to the conservation and Hoi An. The attendees will first be presented with a presentation by a representative from HACMMP and they will be given an opportunity to give feedbacks. Their feedbacks and opinions will be taken into account by government officials.

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<sup>577</sup> Ibid.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid.

<sup>579</sup> Youth Volunteers in Cultural Heritage Preservation [Online], accessed 22 July 2008. Available from [http://www.un.org.vn/unv/images/Project\\_Youth.pdf](http://www.un.org.vn/unv/images/Project_Youth.pdf)

<sup>580</sup> UNESCO, Impact: The Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific: Cultural Tourism and Heritage Management in the World Heritage Site of the Ancient Town of Hoi An, Viet Nam, 68.

<sup>581</sup> Ibid.

<sup>582</sup> Interview with Mr. Phong Vo Dang, Architect, HACMMP, 22 December 2008.

<sup>583</sup> UNESCO, Impact: The Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific: Cultural Tourism and Heritage Management in the World Heritage Site of the Ancient Town of Hoi An, Viet Nam, 71.

Aside from this, HACMMP organizes an annual meeting for homeowners in order to receive their opinions and comments. Each time about 100 homeowners are invited as well as keepers of communal houses, monks, and nuns. The meeting provides an opportunity for homeowners to meet and to discuss with HACMMP staff and to raise their concerns on issues related to their houses or properties. At the annual meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2008<sup>584</sup>, homeowners were presented them with the newly published *Heritage Homeowner's Preservation Manual* which could be used on their own. The manual provides them with essential information and step-by-step guide on the conservation and restoration of their houses.



91. Annual Homeowners' Meeting in December 2008

UNESCO (2008: 70) notes that the level of public participation in Viet Nam is limited to three types which are Passive, Contributors or Consultants, and Implementers, which means that the public are not involved in decision-making process. They are informed of the situation, and sometimes contribute their opinions and their labours, but they are not involved in analysis of the problems, planning, and decision-making.<sup>585</sup>

### Legal Framework

There are various regulations regarding the management and conservation of Hoi An launched at the national and local level. The most important ones are the Law on Cultural Heritage (2001) and the Regulation on Management, Conservation and Exploitation of Hoi An Monument and Landscapes (1997).<sup>586</sup>

<sup>584</sup> Attended by Author

<sup>585</sup> UNESCO *Impact: The Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific: Cultural Tourism and Heritage Management in the World Heritage Site of the Ancient Town of Hoi An, Viet Nam*, 70.

<sup>586</sup> Translation of the title of the regulation varies. In UNESCO publications, it is called Regulation on Managing, Preserving and Utilising the Relics and Scenic Spots in Hoi An and the Hoi An People's Committee Statute on Managing, Preserving and Utilizing the Hoi An Ancient Town.

The Law on Cultural Heritage adopted by the National Assembly in 2001 is very comprehensive. ‘Cultural Heritage’ in this law includes both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The tangible heritage is divided into historical-cultural sites, scenic landscapes, relics, antiquities, and national treasures. It is noted that all things passed on from the past is considered relics, while antiquities mean past objects which are 100 years old or more. National treasures refer to past objects with exceptional significance to the country. Article 28 defines ‘historical-cultural sites’ which, other than having historic, architectural, and aesthetic values, include sites with are related to national heroes, national building and preservation, and the period of revolution and the war of resistance. This shows that heritage is used for raising awareness on nation building and patriotism.

Article 29 defines three levels of sites which are provincial, national, and special national levels. The provincial local government has a duty to classify sites and submit the list to the Ministry of Culture and Information. The Ministry will pass on the list to the Prime Ministry who will then decide which special national site will be submitted to UNESCO for World Heritage nomination. Article 30 divides the sites into two protected areas, the same as the zoning applied in Hoi An.

Article 49 and 50 point out that to establish a private museum, permission must be granted by the Provincial-level People’s Committee on the condition that the museum has a person with a specialization appropriate to museum activities.

This law gives a specific focus on the investment in heritage and international cooperation in heritage protection and promotion. Article 61 states that: “The State shall prioritize investment in activities to protect and promote special national cultural sites, national-level museum, national treasures, historic sites of the revolution, and intangible heritage of particular level.”<sup>587</sup> Article 63 and 64 affirm the State’s role in promoting collaboration with overseas Vietnamese and foreign organizations. It is stated in Article 69 that organizations and individuals with outstanding achievement in protection and promotion of cultural heritage will be awarded.

This law signifies that the State has the ultimate role in making plans, policies, and decisions regarding cultural heritage promotion, protection, and management, though individuals have legal ownership of cultural heritage.

The *Regulation on Management, Conservation and Exploitation of Hoi An Monument and Landscapes* was launched in 1997 by the Hoi An People’s Committee. Article 2 of the Regulation states that the Hoi An People’s Committee is in charge of managing of Hoi An monuments and landscapes. It defines the protected areas within Hoi An and the responsibilities of different government bodies in coordinating with the Hoi An People’s Committee on the preservation and management of Hoi An. It also defines regulations on the conservation and use of the historic buildings and structures.

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<sup>587</sup> Law on Cultural Heritage, 2001.

## Analysis

Hoi An was being preserved in the old days because of the slow-paced lifestyle and its off-the-track location. Since being recognized as a national and then World Heritage, the heritage managers of Hoi An have worked very hard to maintain the traditional lifestyle of the people of Hoi An and the town's architectural fabric.

The principle in conserving Hoi An, as stated earlier, aims to use the benefits from tourism to alleviate poverty and to preserve the town as a living museum. So far the efforts have been very successful, especially on poverty alleviation and conservation of the architectural heritage. In 2007, the number of visitors to Hoi An was more than one million. About 60% of them are foreigners.<sup>588</sup> Revenue from tourism in 2007 was more than USD34 million.<sup>589</sup> The entrance fees collected in 2007 were almost two million US dollars. UNESCO shows that the poverty rate of Hoi An has decreased greatly in the past eight years.<sup>590</sup> There are more job opportunities for the local people in tourism industry. The preservation of the historic buildings is also working well because of the strict and comprehensive regulations and the cooperation from the general public who increasingly want to conserve Hoi An for benefits from tourism. It was noted that the local people are generally happy with the situation because the income from tourism has made their life better.

The cultural heritage legislations of Viet Nam play an important role in enabling heritage managers to undertake their conserving works and to gain recognition and support from the public and foreign agencies. The government's national policy to invest in cultural heritage is a laudable concept. Its top-down structure that reaches directly from the Prime Minister to the ward (commune) level has been effective in enforcing regulations.

However, there are still setbacks in the present management scheme of Hoi An. The ancient town has been used to promote tourism so much that the traditional houses and local businesses are turned into tourist accommodation, souvenir shops, and restaurants. Many people have sold their properties and moved out of the old quarter because the cost of living has risen and land price has skyrocketed. It was noted that since infrastructure development is taking place outside the old quarter, many people have also moved out to the outer area and sold their buildings for other tourist businesses.<sup>591</sup> In addition, young people have ignored traditional occupations in favour of jobs in tourism sector.<sup>592</sup> All in all, Hoi An is gradually turning into a tourist town void of its traditional self. This problem of gentrification is one of the main concerns for heritage towns, as noted by Tim Curtis from UNESCO, which can

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<sup>588</sup> UNESCO, Impact: The Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific: Cultural Tourism and Heritage Management in the World Heritage Site of the Ancient Town of Hoi An, Viet Nam, 47.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>590</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>592</sup> Ibid., 55.

bring “friction and pressure to the local community as they cannot afford the place therefore displacing these people and their traditions”.<sup>593</sup>

The traditional houses which are selected for tourists to see have become ‘living museums’ which affect the way of the life of house owners, as the living quarter of the house and its function have changed to accommodate tourists. One house owner explained that the family does not live there anymore, but someone had to take care of the house for tourists.<sup>594</sup> Another house owner mentioned that twelve members of her family lived together in a small space on the ground floor since the upper structure of the house was too unstable.<sup>595</sup> This tight space is made smaller by tourists who can roam freely to their kitchen to see what dinner is being cooked. A house owner was concerned that the family did not have enough funds to repair the house, even with partial subsidy from the government, especially when the young capable members of the family had to attend the house to welcome tourists instead of working during day time.<sup>596</sup> There is also a competition between houses since house owners’ income depends on the number of visitors, and visitors have to choose only one house to visit. House owners then need a good connection with tour operators who could sell and advertise their houses to tourists. This practice brings success to well-to-do and better educated house owners, while other house owners do not seem to be getting as much benefits as they should get.

On conserving old buildings, there are valid concerns raised by homeowners at the annual meeting. Some were worried about visitors’ behaviour. Some concerns related to the issues of rebuilding and significance. A workshop participant asked for a reconstruction of a new communal hall and he mentioned that some members of the community wanted to rebuild it larger, but based on conservation principles everything had to be kept as the original. Another one pointed out that some communal halls, though categorized as Category III, were important to the community but they were the last on the priority list. A representative of HACMMP pointed out that the government’s fund was limited so there needed to be a priority in restoration works. He mentioned further that there had been changes with regards to the mindset of the public on conservation. In the past many people wanted to rebuild their homes, but now many wanted to keep them because they attracted tourists, but there is a lack of traditional materials for restoration especially wood.

It has been noted that the local government is trying to address all the challenges mentioned here. With regards to tourism there are plans and a Master Plan being developed and the government is providing training in traditional craft skills as well as trying to control the number and type of businesses in the old quarter. It is also promoting other traditional villages outside the old quarter to avert tourist attention and traditional businesses and occupations are being encouraged to continue in the old quarter. Traditions are encouraged to be maintained as part of daily life, not just

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<sup>593</sup> Tim Curtis, “Keynotes Speech,” given at the Penang International Conference on Sustainable Cultural Development Economics of Heritage Revitalization. Penang, 8-9 October 2009.

<sup>594</sup> Interview with a house owner, Hoi An, 22 December 2008.

<sup>595</sup> Interview with a house owner, Hoi An, 23 December 2008.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid.

as tourist performances.<sup>597</sup> There is a plan to develop a less strict approach to heritage management and traditional and historic knowledge will be used when restoring historic buildings.<sup>598</sup> More concerns should be given to a conservation and revival of natural resources, which are related directly to restoration materials.

What is lacking in the management of Hoi An is community participation. As noted by UNESCO, the community participates in heritage management activities mostly as passive participants. Some are consulted, but most of the time there are not many forums for them to make their voices heard. If the local community is not reached, it is difficult to create a mutual understanding between the local government and its townspeople. It should be noted that though a larger population is happy with the tourism development, many of them are doing businesses in the old quarter and they do not live in there. Those affected directly from the impact of tourism are old house owners and keepers of communal and assembly halls who have to deal with tourists everyday. There should be a mechanism which allows these people to raise their concerns and actively engages them in decision-making process. Besides, there is a need to separate the traditional community from the business community to see how much benefit the traditional community is gaining from tourism and whether their traditional ways of life can be maintained since they are the 'living' element of the town. Without them, Hoi An is just a beautiful complex of old buildings.

It should be noted that when tourists come to Hoi An, or any traditional towns in the world, they expect to see and experience a traditional lifestyle. If tourism continues at this rate, only the traditional architecture of Hoi An will remain to be seen, since its conservation has been exceptionally carried out, but not the people and their cultures.

As a result, the preservation of Hoi An is a good case study of the conservation management of a living historic city and the ways the people have been dealing and benefiting from tourism, which is one of the main challenges in heritage conservation. The main struggle here is not about the conservation of the architectural heritage, but it has to do with maintaining a balance between allowing people to live the traditional lifestyle and accommodating tourism. The case of Hoi An provides lessons which can be useful on the preservation of other living historic towns or cities.

## **Phrae, Thailand**

### **Background History**

Phrae is a small province in Northern Thailand which was built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Since its founding, Phrae has been annexed to different kingdoms including the ancient *Lanna* kingdom which covered the whole Northern region of Thailand as well as Sukhothai and Myanmar. It was not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century AD that Phrae became part of Siam.<sup>599</sup> Because of its long history, the city has many temples and historical

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<sup>597</sup> UNESCO, Impact: The Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific: Cultural Tourism and Heritage Management in the World Heritage Site of the Ancient Town of Hoi An, Viet Nam, 69.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid.

<sup>599</sup> Surapol Damrikul, Lanna Sing Waed Lom Sankhom Lae Wattanatham (Lanna : Surroundings, Society, and Culture) (Bangkok: Krongkan Sueb San Moradok Wattanatham Thai, 1999), 75.

sites from different periods. The most revered temple is the *Chorhae* temple whose pagoda is believed to be built at the time of the founding of the city. The pagodas here are similar to the pagodas in Myanmar since the Kingdom of Lanna, whose capital was Chiang Mai, had been colonized by Myanmar for more than two hundred years.



92. An interpretation of the Phrae cultural and natural landscape (Source: Chakraphan Saengpetch)

Phrae is a walled city and its townscape reflects the traditional cosmology with the City Shrine in the middle of the town. In the city wall area there are nine temples whose age also dates back to the early period of Phrae. The location of traditional communities within the city wall signifies traditional land use and occupations, since communities were located based on their social status and craft skills. The location of temples in the city wall also defines the temples' status.



93. The last traditional ruler of Phrae (Source: Phrae PAO)

Similar to other *Lanna* cities in Northern Thailand, Phrae had its own royal lineage and administrative system. Even after the Lanna Kingdom became part of Siam, the court of Siam still maintained the traditional status of the Northern rulers. However, the central government's recognition of Phrae royal lineage ended in 1902 when the last Ruler of Phrae, *Chao Luang Piriyaheppavong*, allegedly conspired with a group of Burmese rebels who invaded Phrae and killed the governor and other officials. Chao Luang<sup>600</sup> was expelled to Luang Prabang and his residence was seized by the central government and became the Governor's Residence. Many heritage places relating to the former royal family of Phrae have become important tourist attractions nowadays such as the *Khum Chao Luang* Museum (Governor's Residence) and the Vongburi House, a historic house museum, which was built by the first wife of Chao Luang in the European gingerbread style mixed with traditional architecture. There are quite a number of historic houses remaining in Phrae to date. In addition, Phrae has unique vernacular wooden architecture with roofed stairways and large open indoor communal space. The number of historic houses and vernacular houses in the old quarter of Phrae amounts to 70-80.

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<sup>600</sup> Chao Luang means 'royal ruler.'



94. Wongburi House

The Phrae city wall, about two kilometers in circumference, forms an important part of the life of the traditional communities. They believe that the city wall is a sacred living entity. The destruction of the city wall will bring about bad fortunes and evil spirits. Parts of the city wall were destroyed in the last three decades when development projects occurred. Nevertheless, the city wall of Phrae is still the most intact city wall in the whole Thailand and it is also a listed archaeological site.

The ways of life of the Phrae people revolve around the traditional belief system. The local communities are Buddhists, but they also worship “*Phi*” or guardian spirits who take care of all natural resources and protect the people. It is common to see a spirit altar in a house together with “*Pap Sa*” or the sacred texts. Local artisans, especially the silversmiths, also worship “*Pitsanoo*” which derived from Vishnu who is held as god of crafts. Some communities within the city wall still practice their traditional crafts such as silversmith. One of the traditional crafts of Phrae is the art of ‘*Mohom*’ or indigo-dyed clothes. In the past the women used natural indigo dye in order to get a natural blue color for their clothes. At present, though there is still a traditional village making indigo-dyed products, most of the people are using chemical dyes causing a loss of traditional knowledge.

Being Buddhists, the traditional community is deeply connected to their neighbourhood temples. Each temple has a group of faithful, the *Sattha Wat*, supporting its religious activities and restoration. Some temples are supported by many generations of faithful who continue to come to the same temples as their ancestors. Among the nine temples located within the city wall area, three are listed monuments, and they are still used and supported by their traditional communities.



95. Wat Hua Kuang dated more than 1,000 years old (Source: SPAFA)

The traditional communities have a traditional system to manage natural heritage. Rivers and forests have been managed by communities as communal properties. For example, a river is divided up into different sections and each section is assigned to a specific community for safeguarding. Since it is believed that all natural resources are protected by *Phi* there are regularly-held ceremonies which relate to paying respect to *Phi* for protection. Surrounded by mountains, Phrae has been famous for teak wood and there were quite a few foreign companies, such as the Bombay Burmah and the East Asiatic, doing logging business in Phrae since the time of Chao Luang. At one point a logging school was established as a training centre for new recruits of the East Asiatic Company. Even Crown Prince Leopold and Princess Astrid of Belgium visited Phrae in 1931 to see the logging business. Though Phrae has the largest reserve of teak in the country, it is noted that the traditional communities never use more wood than needed since there were traditional rules that forests had to be used with respect.

During WWII, Phrae was an important base of the Free Thai Movement which helped save Thailand from losing the war. There are evidences related to the Free Thai Movement in many places in Phrae. This added to a history of the city.

However, as time passed, Phrae is now encroached by modernism. Since it is not a famous tourist destination, the development in Phrae is going quite slowly and does not drastically impact the heritage, but the effect is continuous and it is evident that old houses are being demolished almost every day while young people are leaving town to find job opportunities elsewhere.

### **Management**

In Thailand, the office responsible for heritage site protection and management is the Fine Arts Department (FAD). Phrae is under the 7<sup>th</sup> Regional Office of the Fine Arts Department which is located in Nan province, about 2 hours away from Phrae. As a result, Phrae does not receive regular visits from the Regional FAD Office due to the

distance and the shortage of staff. Very few excavations took place in Phrae, which makes the knowledge on the history of Phrae rather limited and does not extend beyond the founding of the city in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.



96. Excavation of the City Wall in 2003

There are provincial level organizations which have the responsibilities to take care of Phrae cultures including the Phrae Cultural Council and the Office of Culture. Local organizations such as the Provincial Administration Organization, *Tambon*<sup>601</sup> Administration Organization, as well as municipalities and communities all have duties based on the Constitution to take care of their local cultures and heritage. However, without expertise, Phrae is very much on its own in terms of heritage protection and management. The built heritage of Phrae, as mentioned above, includes historic houses, traditional houses, temples, and the city wall. The listed properties of Phrae include the city wall, a number of temples, and the Governor's Residence, which is now a museum managed by the Provincial Administration Organization. All of the temples are living monuments and managed by the monks and the temple committees. There are a couple of private museums exhibiting the traditional life of Phrae and the Phrae Free Thai movement.

### **Level of Local Participation**

In 2001, a group of Phrae natives consisting of Mr.Wuttikrai Pathong, Mr.Prasat Prathetrat, Mr. Chakraphan Saengpetch, and Ms.Sunantana Sanprasert got to know each other and found out they had the same aspirations, which were to revive traditional wisdom and to instigate pride and love in hometown for the local people. The group worked together on a research funded by World Health Organization to

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<sup>601</sup> Sub-district

recreate a “Healthy City” in the city wall area. This project allowed them to meet and work with other individuals who shared the same ideas.

In 2003, archaeologists from the Regional FAD Office excavated the city wall in order to study the construction technique of the city wall. Since the excavation happened without informing the traditional community, conflicts arose. The traditional community came together to protest the excavation and to organize awareness-raising activities on the value of the city wall as well as on the history of Phrae. It was during this time that the City Wall Blessing Ceremony was revived after last performed almost a hundred years ago in order to rid the bad fortunes and to welcome all good things.



97. Founding members of LLMP (Prasat, Wuttikrai, and Sunantana) with Gamini Wijesuriya from ICCROM and the author (Source: SPAFA)

This incident brought about the founding of a volunteer group known in Thai as Luk Lan Muang Phrae<sup>602</sup>(LLMP), which comprised of active members of the traditional community from all walks of life including students, monks, and elders. At that time, the group was one of the very few community groups working on heritage preservation in Thailand.

During this time, a group of student members of LLMP, following a project given by their teacher, did a research on the history of Chao Luang and became experts on the subject and on the architecture of the Governor’s Residence. They organized exhibitions inside the Residence based on the history and traditional functions of the place. When there were important visitors to the house, such as members of the Thai royal family, they would be selected as guides. However, once the Provincial Administration Organization (PAO) took over the management of the house, the students did not have any roles to play there apart from being occasional guides.

<sup>602</sup> The term literally means children and grandchildren of Phrae.

SPAFA<sup>603</sup> and ICCROM<sup>604</sup>, under the Living Heritage Sites Programme<sup>605</sup>, chose to work with LLMP on the Programme's pilot project in 2004-2005 due to the fact that other known community-based heritage conservation efforts in Thailand stemmed from advices and leadership of people outside the community, while the case of Phrae was an exception. Another interesting thing is that the initial focus of LLMP was on the intangible aspect of heritage and the awareness of people, not the physical heritage. They believed that successful heritage conservation could only happen when the people involved were aware of the significance and the values of the heritage, and that physical heritage conservation should only be implemented after successful dialoguing with the traditional community in order to provide a sustainable foundation for conservation.

The Pilot Project in Phrae aimed to engage the traditional community in understanding their heritage and its traditional conservation process, and to further develop methods for continuous care through a participatory approach. It also attempted to promote an active collaboration between the traditional community and the heritage authority. During the Pilot Project, conservation architects from the Bangkok Office of FAD formed part of the project team to work with LLMP. It should be noted that the project did not address a specific site or monument, but rather focused on areas where there seemed to be strong community members who were interesting in continuing their traditional cultures.

In 2004-2005, LLMP was working in four areas in three districts with the aim to instigate awareness of the significance of heritage both tangible and intangible. They dialogued with local wisdom leaders such as monks and respected individuals while discussing and exchanging ideas with local government units, such as the Municipality, the Provincial Administration Organization, and the Provincial Office of Culture, when opportunities arose.

LLMP believed that the dialogue part was extremely necessary since the local people were not used to expressing their own needs and opinions especially in terms of heritage preservation. It is common for people to think that heritage preservation is the duty of the government. During this process, LLMP was trying to stimulate ideas and to mobilize people, while also identifying key persons in each area to continue heritage awareness activities. The main focus of the group was still on the intangible aspect of heritage. Activities completed during the Pilot Phase included a series of one-day Cultural Mapping training for students and community members in three areas and a series of dialoguing forums with communities. An international workshop was organized by the LHS Programme at the end of the Pilot Phase to discuss the implications of the LHS approach, especially based on lessons learnt from LLMP's experiences.

It was learnt that one year was not enough to create radical changes in terms of awareness on heritage preservation. In the end, it was not possible for LLMP to work

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<sup>603</sup> Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts

<sup>604</sup> International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Properties, Italy

<sup>605</sup> The Programme aimed at five Mekong countries in Mainland Southeast Asia. See Chapter IV.

in all four areas since these places were too far away from each other and dialoguing with all key members and communities needed more time and efforts than what the group was able to provide. At that time the group was working on two projects and operating with funding from the Thailand Research Funds and the LHS programme. It seemed that LLMP's works did not proceed anywhere while there were management problems due to constraints and conflicts of interest within the group and with the project partners. There was a concern that nothing was achieved out of LLMP's works. While project partners wanted to see more concrete outcomes, LLMP was still insisting on dialoguing. This marked a gap period in the collaboration, but LLMP would later prove itself correct for heritage organizations could too much associate themselves with physical heritage, though their overarching aim was to look beyond the physical aspect.

Accomplishment at this level is the acceptance from the local government and the local people that LLMP was an important steering factor in the provincial and community levels in terms of heritage preservation. There was, generally, an increased interest in heritage among the Phrae local government units and the public which could be judged from the number of projects relevant to heritage conservation in the following years. This Pilot Project also provided a chance for the Fine Arts Department to exchange ideas and advices with LLMP, though the collaboration was limited.

In early 2006, LLMP decided to use the name the Luk Lan Muang Phrae Network instead of 'group' which reflects LLMP's changing structure. Some old members left LLMP while new ones joined. One key person who joined LLMP at this period was the architect Mr. Shinnaworn Chompoophan, who later cofounded the Architectural Heritage Preservation Club within LLMP.<sup>606</sup> The network covered projects of different varieties and interests, such as media awareness, public health, natural indigo promotion, and old house conservation, so that LLMP members were able to focus on their specialized fields. They would work together on projects which required all their skills or efforts.

In September 2006, SPAFA and representatives of the Bangkok FAD Office started to work with Ms. Sanprasert on "the Book House Project" at the Hua Kuang Community located in the city wall area. Ms. Sanprasert had rented an old house next to her house to establish the LLMP Book House which would sell books and provided space for LLMP activities to take place. Since the Book House was situated in front of a secondary school, it was frequented by school children. Seeing the opportunity, the Book House Project was founded as an awareness-raising programme for local school children on heritage preservation. Children who participated in the programme had learnt about their heritage through site visits, site surveys, plays, games, music, and other hands-on activities. These were done in collaboration with members of LLMP, the Hua Kuang Municipality School, the Hua Kuang Community Committee, as well as with members of the village and other relevant organizations such as the Municipality and the Provincial Cultural Office. The awareness activities at the Book House took place once a month usually during the first weekend of the month and the

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<sup>606</sup> The other cofounder was Mr. Sahayot Wongburi, owner of the Wongburi Historic House Museum.

project was going on for two years and engaged about 70-80 children in the project with about 20 regular members.



98. At the Book House (Source: SPAFA)

While implementing the Book House project, an important change at this period was the consistency of collaboration between LLMP and local government offices. LLMP was recognized as an advisory group for cultural heritage preservation activities especially in the city wall area. With three new key members, consisting of an architect, a museum owner, and a staff member of the Provincial Cultural Office, LLMP became stronger and more stable. The presence of the FAD staff in Phrae every month through the Book House project provided a chance for the local government to seek advice from them in terms of heritage management and planning. This project provided a forum for representatives of the heritage authority to work directly with a community group on planning and management of heritage conservation.

In 2007, LLMP received a funding from the Municipality to organize a series of monthly awareness-raising activities. The project is known as *Poh Ban Ew Muang*, a phrase from the northern dialect which means 'Let's see and tour our city'. The project took place once a month as a bicycle tour around the city. Each time a new route and a new theme would be chosen, so those who joined the tour were able to witness the past of Phrae evident by different heritage buildings, old houses, and temples. During each trip the group would stop by at 6-7 historic spots. Elders and wisdom leaders would explain the significance and the story of each place. This heritage tour provided about 30 rickshaws free of charge each time for those who could not ride. Those who owned bicycles could join freely. The children members of the Book House project also participated in most of the tours. The tour was always followed by *Kad Laeng* or an organized evening food market where people from different parts of Phrae would come to sell their local dishes, which was considered a kind of food revival projects. This activity required a good collaboration with the local police who had to redirect the traffic for the group. This project is now finished, but the Provincial Administration Office took over the idea and had already organized

a similar tour during the Thai Heritage week to take people to nine important temples around the city. A map of old Phrae is being made by LLMP and sponsored by the PAO. The Municipality also took the idea and is now providing free bicycles for tourists to cycle to historic attractions in the city center.



99. Photos from the Heritage Tour (Source: SPAFA)

The heritage tour took place usually in conjunction with a cultural exhibition at the monthly walking street fair which was funded by the Provincial Administration Organization. The cultural exhibition would show films and various exhibitions relating to the local heritage and the preservation of the old quarter of Phrae. With assistance from SPAFA and FAD, the Local Architectural Heritage Preservation Club produced a map of old houses and historic buildings in the city wall area, which was shown at the exhibition. At the same time, the Local Architectural Heritage Preservation Club is working with the Provincial Cultural Office with supports from SPAFA, and FAD on a project called *Tung Jai Ban Kao* or Old House Conservation Award, which will award house owners who take good care of their houses with a certificate and a banner. The banner can be hung outside the house to show that the efforts to conserve the house are recognized by the Local Architectural Heritage Preservation Club and the Provincial Cultural Office. There is a plan to produce a map of these houses which can be used as a cultural route for tourists. LLMP assisted the Office of Non-formal education to restore a 113-year-old missionary house located in the Office's precinct. The aim is to use the house, as well as other historic buildings in the area, as a local cultural learning centre. This marked the third phase of the LLMP works in Phrae, which is a move from dialoguing to awareness raising activities and to physical conservation.

Since old buildings in Phrae are being demolished at a rapid rate, LLMP and SPAFA have proposed for funding to conduct an inventory and a documentation of the old houses and their history in the city wall area, and the funding was granted by the 2009 US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation. Prior to applying for funding, LLMP already covered a lot of works and has produced some documents such as an old house inventory form (in collaboration with SPAFA and FAD) and different maps and drawings. A short session was set up with the Book House children and some other volunteers to survey some of the old houses in the city wall area. Present activities include outreach projects such as fairs and competitions as well as architectural drawings and documentation of local history through interviews.



100. Representatives of LLMP gave an Old House flag to house owner.

The latest development is the Community Archaeology Project at the village of Natong. The prehistoric site of Natong was discovered by the local community many years ago. Early in 2007, the Book House team (SPAFA, FAD, LLMP, and volunteers) visited the Natong site twice and recognized it as a prehistoric site. The local community of Natong expressed their interests in preserving the site, and tried to contact the Regional FAD Office, but somehow it was not successful. LLMP and Bangkok FAD representatives helped contact archaeologists from the Regional Office to survey the site. After that a report was submitted by the Regional Office to the FAD Headquarters in Bangkok that the site was a prehistoric burial site dated around 2,000 -4,000 years old and that it should be excavated and preserved. This discovery is crucial to Phrae and to Thailand since it was the first prehistoric site being surveyed by FAD in Phrae. However, the Regional Office did not have a budget to excavate the site.

In June 2008, SPAFA and LLMP invited Assoc. Prof. Sayan Praicharnjit, an expert in Community Archaeology from the Silpakorn University, to Phrae to give a talk on Community Archaeology and to visit the Natong site. This visit brought about a formulation of the Community Archaeology Project at Ban Natong which began in January 2009. Permission to excavate the site was given to the village headman by

the Director General of FAD, and the site was excavated by the local community in collaboration with SPAFA, LLMP, FAD, and the Silpakorn University.



#### *101. Natong Community Archaeology Project*

The excavation was divided into three phases. The first phase was conducted in collaboration with the Provincial Office of Non-formal Education and the villagers who joined the excavation were students registered with the Office. They would gain credits when they participated in activities to do with site research. Those who joined and supported the project received certificates from SPAFA presented by the Cultural Council and the Office of Culture. The second phase of the exhibition was also supported by the Mae-Sai Mae- Gon Rivers Management Unit which allocated their employees, who were from the village, to excavate the site. Villagers and students from the Natong Village came to take part in the excavation as well. The site received a lot of interests from the local public and the excavation was broadcasted on local cable programmes, newspaper, radio, and a national TV programme. During the third phase, the community decided to set up a small exhibition space in the village temple to keep the artifacts and the 4,500-year-old male skeleton that was found during the excavation. It should be noted that the representatives of the Regional FAD Office have worked closely with the local team. In 2010, following a request from the village committee, SPAFA and FAD have continued the training on heritage management for villagers as well as assist them to find funding to set up a permanent museum.

#### **Legal Framework**

Based on the Constitution of Thailand (2007), article 66 states that individuals who group together as community, local community, or traditional community, are entitled to preserve and revive local and national traditions, customs, wisdom and to participate in the management, maintenance, and use of natural resources and biodiversities in a balanced and sustainable way.

Article 67 stipulates that the rights of individuals to participate with the State and their communities in the conservation, maintenance, and use of natural resources and biodiversities are protected. Any projects or activities that will largely impact communities in terms of environmental quality, natural resources, and health can not be implemented unless an Impact Assessment and a public hearing process have taken place.

It can be seen that even though the Constitution recognizes the rights of individuals to take part in managing its own heritage, the scope is not very clear as to how much the individuals can be involved and in what way. The Constitution also focuses more on management of natural resources than cultural heritage.

The present cultural heritage law in Thailand is the Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums B.E. 2504 (1961) amended by the Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums (No. 2), B.E. 2535 (1992). It is by comparison the oldest law on cultural heritage that is still used in Mainland Southeast Asia. The law does not stipulate how individuals or communities can take part in the conservation of cultural heritage. It has not yet recognized the tangible and the intangible aspects of heritage. "Ancient monument" here refers to an immovable property including archaeological sites, historical sites, and historical parks. "Antique" means an old movable property, whether produced by man or by nature, which is useful in the field of art, history or archaeology. It is a separated category from "objects of art" which means a "thing skillfully produced by craftsmanship which is high valuable in the field of art" regardless of age. This reflects that the law has given a particular importance to the field of arts.

It is noted that the law does not link the use of cultural heritage with nation building in the same way as laws from other countries in the region. Regarding heritage management, there is not a clear guideline on how heritage should be categorized and there is not a distinction between local and national heritage. However, it is noted in section 26 that antiques can be kept at national museum branches, other museums, or temples, which shows that the law recognizes the role of temples in safeguarding cultural heritage. Section 13 bis. stipulates that the Fine Arts Department has the rights to allow individuals to carry out any activity that gains benefit from the compound of registered ancient monument. The person receiving the permit will pay ownership fees, remittances, and other fees to the Department of Fine Arts. The payment received will benefit the Archaeological Fund, which is separated from the budget of the FAD, which can be used to benefit archaeology and museum works as stated in section 29.

### **Analysis**

The aim of LLMP is for Phrae to become a living heritage town where the traditional community enjoys and cherishes their tangible and intangible heritage. LLMP aims to work to instigate sensible and responsible heritage conservation, management, and tourism, though it should be noted that none of the activities were initiated to promote tourism. The purpose is not to freeze the city, but changes should be made based on traditional wisdom and the full awareness of the traditional community. The ultimate

goal of LLMP is to be able to forge a sense of heritage ownership among the traditional community and to propose recommendations which could be included in national agendas regarding community participation in heritage conservation.

After 6 years (2004-2009), the works of LLMP now progress towards historic conservation and archaeological research, but dialoguing and awareness-raising activities still count as their number one priority. One of the positive aspects of the working approach of LLMP is that the planning, directions, and decision-making all come from the local community. The projects implemented aim first hand to benefit the local people, not tourists, and not for income-generating purposes. The working approach of the LLMP also taps into locally available resources which are to be used with respect while recognizing local wisdom and people. This approach will undoubtedly promote a strong platform for long-term heritage conservation. LLMP members are managers and instigators of projects, and sometimes implementers. They connect with different sectors of the community to facilitate the projects. The collaboration with local government units is a way to recognize the roles of these units in preserving cultural heritage, since they also have mandates to do so and most staff of the local government units are from the province and part of the larger Phrae community. These units are already allocated with the budget which can be used for cultural heritage preservation. Instead of duplicating works, LLMP thinks that it is possible to join forces with local government partners. As a result, most of the projects of LLMP are funded by the local government on ad-hoc basis. Partnerships formed with different units, as well as with local individuals, help LLMP a lot in terms of resources and promotion of activities. With very limited budget, a lot of equipment used during different activities was borrowed from partners. Many activities were promoted through words of mouth since LLMP does not have advertising money.

However, LLMP is operated on a voluntary basis and most of its members have a full-time job. As a result, there are quite a few constraints including time, money, and manpower. The main challenge is to make the project sustainable and to maintain its impact as well as to expand its network. Though funding to support the LLMP activities could be secured through partnership with relevant government units or possibly from setting up a provincial trust or raising funds from cultural products, the approach that LLMP believes in is to reawaken a sense of ownership and confidence among the traditional communities, so that they would take the responsibilities to take care of their heritage themselves. With the on-going approach, LLMP has reawakened and reaffirmed the sense of ownership in local heritage in many traditional communities on various subjects such as crafts, food, music, local dialects, architecture, museums, revival of traditional festivals and ceremonies, history, and archaeology. It is hoped that each traditional community will be able to carry out works and making their own decisions with support from the LLMP network. So far, through its dialoguing process, LLMP has been successful in partnering with different local government units and the local people, which should contribute to the collaboration of both parties. However, LLMP is fully aware that the traditional communities need to have strong voices and an awakened sense of confidence which will allow them to deal with others as equal partners. The most important thing is that

their voices, however, need to be accounted for more than needs of others, since it is the traditional communities who make the heritage living.

## **Chapter VII**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **The Journey of Heritage**

The traditional concept of materiality in Mainland Southeast Asia was that all beings were impermanent, continuous, interdependent, and, without identity. This concept applied to all things, sacred or secular. As a result, it implied that there was not a desire to try to conserve anything for posterity since all would perish, but necessary maintenance was needed since it implied the wise use of resources. The fundamental concept of time, which was known to be repetitive, cyclical, but breakable, drove people to perform acts of merit out of the desire to break free from the *Samsara*, or at least to attain better rebirths in next reincarnation, through an accumulation of merit.

These concepts led to two different approaches in dealing with built materials. If the materials were secular, they contained no value other than use value. If the materials were sacred, they also contained spiritual value. The secular built materials were used, and discarded when they could no longer be used or repaired to be used again. The sacred built materials were repaired, restored, rebuilt, and renewed, in order to attain merit and to pay homage to the greatness of the Buddha and his *Dhamma*. Because the belief in merit-making ran strong, there never existed the concept of material authenticity, since the places and objects of worship were held sacred because of what they represented, not what they were. It has been noted, however, that the places of worship were usually restored following their traditions, enabled by the availability of knowledge, craftsmanship, and materials. The most important aspect in restoring a place of worship was to maintain the interaction between the faithful and the place which continued the sacredness of place. This interdependent nature assigned value to a place of worship and merit to the faithful. If there was no worshipper to interact with a pagoda, that pagoda would be just a pile of bricks. As a result, interdependence was a fundamental concept for conservation in the traditional time.

The system of conservation and management that existed then also reflected this principle. The merit-based system was used with the places of worship, which was a sustainable way of management. Temples were taken care of by the *Sangha*, the faithful, and the pagoda slaves, while products and revenues could be collected from the lands donated. The function-based system was applied with secular places, which encouraged a wise use of resources.

In the following period, after the long spell of Colonization and interaction with the West, the traditional views with regards to materiality had changed. For Europeans, their traditional viewpoint was that material remains possessed inherent values. The values could be many things ranging from age, history, archaeology, and aesthetics.

Since these material remains had values, there was no need for an interaction between men and materials to make values happen. Since the Western view of time and materiality was different from the Eastern one, it was reflected in the way materials were conserved. European scholars chose a certain period of time in the life of the materials which they thought to contain the most outstanding values, and preserved the materials in that period, since time in their mind was clearly divided between the past, the present, and the future. The fact that material remains were able to tell something about the past drove them to preserve the materials as evidences, which led to the concept of material authenticity. Only minimum intervention was allowed to take place as reflected in the saying “as much as necessary and as little as possible”.<sup>607</sup> This method of conservation and management, therefore, contrasted with the traditional one practiced in Mainland Southeast Asia and marginalized the traditional owners of past material remains.

The influences of the Western ideas and powers led the local people to think of material remains in the same direction. It was during Colonization that material remains were used to as means to distinguish between the civilized and the non-civilized, which could lead to political consequences. Both sacred and secular material remains including inscriptions, objects, architecture, archaeological sites started to acquire values other than traditional ones. This gave birth to museums where all the national historical evidences were to be deposited for safekeeping as evidences of civilization. During this period, material remains came to be known as ‘antiquities’.

Antiquities had acquired symbolic value when Europeans were trying to own them in order to symbolize their privilege status over the natives. In order to understand them, they created lists of antiquities and judged them based on the values from their own backgrounds. Antiquities then started to have ranks and the highest ranking ones were the most desirable while the lowest ones were easily neglected or suffered maltreatment. This system of prioritization created a contestation of ownership of antiquities since many top-grade antiquities were considered sacred living space by the natives. The antiquities were then showcased as the wonders of the East which were saved from the natives by the civilized Europeans, prompting interests among other Europeans to see and own a piece of these antiquities, too. Therefore, these antiquities were commoditized and seen as having monetary value – leading for the first time to systematic looting, and, antiquities trades. The problem of border issues posed in many countries by modern map making complicated the matter further as to what antiquities belonged to whom. Some sacred sites, such as Angkor and the Shwedagon Pagoda, later became icons of patriotism which provided backdrops for quests for Independence.

This notion of the multifaceted-values and the contested nature of antiquities continued after the Independence of Mainland Southeast Asia. At the period of political unrest after Independence, antiquities were used as tools for instilling the

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<sup>607</sup> Pisit Charoenwongsa, “Patjuban Khong Adeet Muang Pra Nakorn (The Present of the Past of Angkor)” *Athit Rai Sapda* 827 (1993) : 39.

feeling of nationalism and patriotism among the public. Many regimes used antiquities as national icons and promoted nation building and loyalty by associating their regimes with antiquities – signifying the past glory of their nation. At the same time, in the 1960s, the term ‘heritage’ was coined by the Venice Charter and later by the World Heritage Convention in the 1970s to replace ‘antiquities’. Arguably, because of the long period of war happening around the world which greatly damaged cultural properties, the aim of the Convention were to forge collaboration between nations to take care of common heritage of humankind. Since then ‘heritage’ was born under the concept of being ‘shared cultural properties’. A number of heritage conservation organizations were founded.

After civil wars in many countries, Southeast Asia entered a more stable period. However, the connection between the traditional world and the new world was mostly lost. The long period of political unrest robbed these countries of their traditional ways of life, knowledge, and resources. Though the period of Colonization had passed, in most countries, the administrative structures were laid out by the former colonial powers. When all countries picked up the works done by the Europeans in heritage management, the Western model was still applied. Following this model, the State assumed the sole responsibility to take care of heritage, since it was believed that it was the task for experts only. With the framework inherited from the West, the present population, naturally non-experts, is viewed as threats to antiquities. Heritage professionals have become the sole owner of heritage and controlled the interpretation of heritage. Though ideally heritage is to be used and enjoyed by all, the traditional community is marginalized, and this process creates the notion of ‘dead heritage’ which signifies the lack of human connection with the heritage. This approach is known as the Conventional Approach which creates the Authorized Heritage Discourse.

Because of instable economics, many countries depend on their heritage to alleviate poverty and to increase job opportunities in the tourism sector. This has further commoditized heritage, and the issue of illicit trafficking still poses a lot of problems. In the past two hundred years, past material remains have come so far from being sacred/secular material remains to antiquities to nationalistic icons to art objects and tourist destinations.

The disconnection between traditional communities and heritage does not help the present heritage management system. In contrary, heritage professionals have to work harder and more resources will have to be spent to safeguard heritage, which is difficult for developing countries. This prompted some scholars and heritage managers to revisit heritage management in order to find out where the problem lies. If the traditional concept of conservation advocates interdependence between the traditional community and heritage, then it is the core of the problem of the present system is the loss of that interdependence.

At present, there have been new approaches which recognize the role of the traditional community in conserving heritage. World trends are also heading in the same direction, which is to engage the traditional community in heritage management. Public archaeology and community archaeology programmes as well as

training in cultural heritage management are being organized for heritage managers and traditional communities all over the world.

### **Discussion on Heritage and Conservation**

#### **What is heritage?**

Based on the above discussion, it can be seen that heritage is a new term and, because of its all-encompassing characteristics, it is rather difficult to define. To find out what heritage means, there is a need to look at its implications. Heritage is a word implying an act of handing down something from one generation to another generation and has a sense of continuity. This ‘thing’ can refer to place, land, object, or even tradition, knowledge, wisdom, and beliefs. Arguably, it is possible to pass on the intangible as heritage, but it is not possible to pass on a heritage without the intangible. Therefore, heritage is like a coin with two sides, tangible and intangible, which can not be separated. Heritage also has different layers. A heritage can be local, communal, national, and global at the same time.

Skeates (2000: 9) stated that heritage “...can also be regarded as a dynamic process, involving the declaration of faith in pasts that have been uncritically refashioned for present-day purposes...”. It can be summarized that the process of heritage starts when someone interacts with and assigns meaning to something at one point in time and passes it on to someone of the same spiritual or physical community who uses and provides an interpretation of that thing at present. As a result, one of the most important aspects of heritage is the continuity of ownership and use – which takes place in the present.

What is clear about heritage, then, is that it encompasses both tangible and intangible qualities; has different layers of ownership; and, connotes a sense of continuity of ownership and use.

#### **Who Owns the Heritage?**

Following the previous discussion, there is a question on who ultimately owns the heritage. At present, heritage is owned by many people, since heritage has various values and those who assign values to heritage think of themselves as owning it. The Values-based Approach, which is a move away from the Conventional Approach and the Authorized Heritage Discourse, recognizes the different values pertaining to different stakeholders. As a result, all stakeholders’ voices are taken into account in managing heritage, and as the Values-based Approach is based on democratic idea, it views all voices as equal, and all are owners of heritage. To refer back to the Convention Approach, owners of heritage are heritage professionals who assume the ownership on behalf of the people. However, if we look at the implication of heritage, it has different layers of ownership, and it refers to a continuous use by the same group of people. This implies that there is a traditional owner of heritage. For example, Angkor Wat, as a World Heritage, would have six billion owners, but Angkor Wat, which has traditionally been used as a place of the local cult of Neak Ta and Buddhist worship, has a traditional community as owner.

Therefore, before everyone is allowed to stake a claim on heritage, there needs to be an identification of the traditional owner whose cultural rights in expressing and continuing their cultural practices should be protected. Once found, their voices should be taken into account more than others, who do not traditionally use the heritage. If traditional communities are not present or the connection is forever lost, heritage professionals can then assume the role of heritage owners.

### **What is Conservation?**

Conservation has been variously defined by different charters, conventions, and scholars. It is used interchangeably with 'preservation'. According to the Burra Charter, conservation "means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance".<sup>608</sup> Preservation means "maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration".<sup>609</sup> As a result, conservation is to do with the process of maintaining the meaning of the heritage, while preservation is to do with maintaining physical materials of heritage. Gamini Wijesuriya (2007: 67) stated that conservation is "care of what has been transmitted through the generations and the guarantee to transmit this to future generations".

From these definitions, conservation is an interaction between heritage and the people who look after it which results in a continuation in the meaning of heritage expressed through its fabric, which can then be passed on. In this case, conservation is an interactive process which allows meaning to be retained and regenerated. It is also related to traditional knowledge such as how the heritage has traditionally been taken care of. As a result, conservation depends a lot on the traditional community who owns the knowledge and can continue the interaction. It is not wise to disconnect heritage from its traditional community because this interaction will not happen and the meaning of heritage will disappear. Therefore, conservation is to allow interactions to happen which will, in turn, allow continuity and protect the meaning of heritage. In short, to conserve is to continue. Thus, the most important aspect of conservation is not the fabric of heritage, but the knowledge necessary for the regeneration of the heritage itself. This knowledge is owned by traditional communities. The conservation of heritage is, therefore, for traditional communities to be able to continue to use their heritage, for the continuity of the heritage.

### **What is heritage management?**

If the goal of conservation is as stated in the above paragraph, then the ultimate aim of heritage management is to achieve continuity of use and interdependence between traditional communities and heritage which will bring about sustainable care of heritage. In many cases, heritage is managed in order to generate financial and social opportunities mainly not for traditional communities, but for heritage authority and visitors. This mindset needs to be changed since it does not provide sustainability to heritage conservation. Based on the Living Heritage Approach, it is important for heritage managers to bear in mind that heritage is managed to primarily benefit

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<sup>608</sup> Burra Charter Article 1.2

<sup>609</sup> Burra Charter Article 1.3

traditional communities who own the heritage, and that benefits can take place as other things rather than just financial gain.

In the context of Mainland Southeast Asia, it was apparent that to conserve heritage is not to freeze it, but to allow it to change based on its interaction with traditional communities. To manage heritage is, therefore, to manage change, and there needs to be a certain framework as to how much changes are allowed. It is very important that a balance between conservation and development has to be achieved, which encourages the traditional use of heritage, but at the same time protects it from extreme development. The key to address this issue lies in traditional practices. Heritage managers can base their judgement on how heritage has traditionally been used and conserved, and the framework for changes should always be decided by and with traditional communities.

Heritage management also involves the management of people and values rather than just materials and space. Heritage managers have the duty to provide technical training to members of traditional communities, so that they will be equipped with necessary tools to take care of their heritage. While working, local and traditional values related to heritage need to be taken into consideration and used as a basis for decision-making. Following the Living Heritage Approach, these values of traditional communities, especially related to sacred heritage, are actually given primacy, while universal or national values also contribute to decision-making.

Following the objectives of the thesis, it can be said that this thesis has covered relevant topics including an examination of current approaches and global trends in heritage management, concepts of heritage conservation and management in Mainland Southeast Asia from the traditional perspectives before the colonial period, and political and social issues during and after the colonial period until present which have influenced heritage management and conservation in the region.

It is discovered that there are currently three main approaches in heritage management including the Conventional Approach (CA), the Values-based Approach (VBA), and the Living Heritage Approach (LHA). It is also generally recognized by heritage institutions and professionals that public participation is a key for successful heritage management and conservation, hence the increasing amount of programmes relating to public involvement in heritage management. Out of the three approaches, the Living Heritage Approach seems to be most suitable to the context of Mainland Southeast Asia since it bases itself on the local context and advocates active public participation. It is noted that the traditional concepts of heritage management and conservation allow changes to take place with the heritage since the key to conservation is to allow an interaction and interdependence between man and heritage. Though the region has adopted the Western views regarding heritage conservation due to socio-political influences, a portion of religious heritage is still managed using the traditional way. Therefore, it is important to recognize the differences between the sacred and secular heritage, which affect the way heritage should be managed.

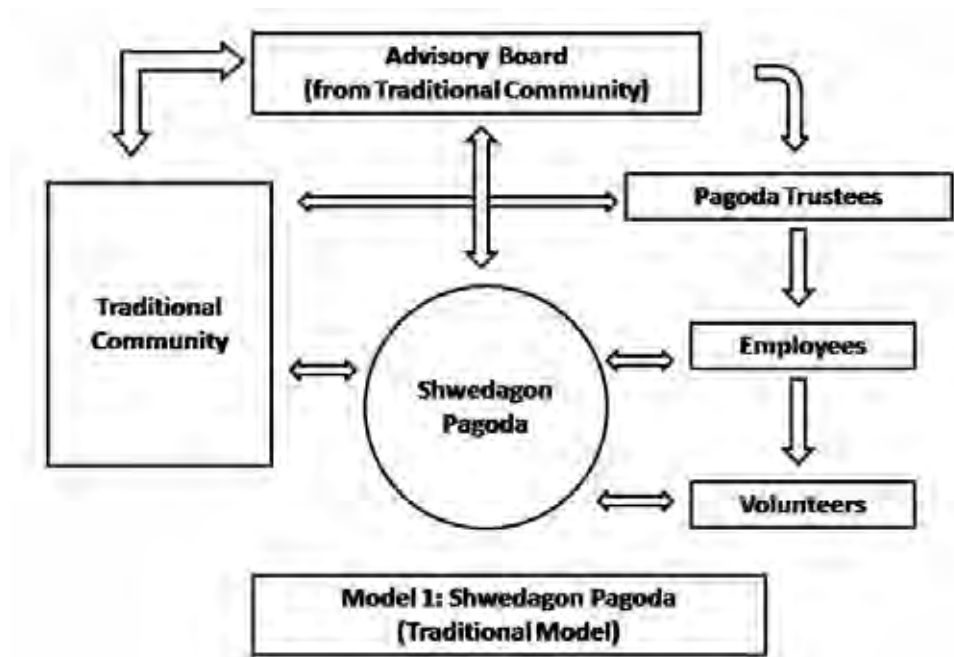
In the following section, guidelines and further recommendations for heritage managers which should benefit heritage management and conservation in the region

### Analysis of Heritage Management Models

Based on the discussion in the previous chapter, analysis of heritage management models of the case studies will be made and recommendations will be given to enhance the efficiency of heritage management in the sites. It should be noted that even though most heritage professionals in Mainland Southeast Asia have been managing heritage sites following the Conventional Model, the Living Heritage Approach can still be implemented, and it should be able to help awaken the sense of heritage ownership among latent communities. As mentioned earlier, religious sites mostly have a system in place which naturally allows the sites to be taken care of by the communities. The issue of cultural rights also plays an important role in decision-making concerning the management of religious heritage, since all should be allowed to express their religious and spiritual faith through traditional practices.

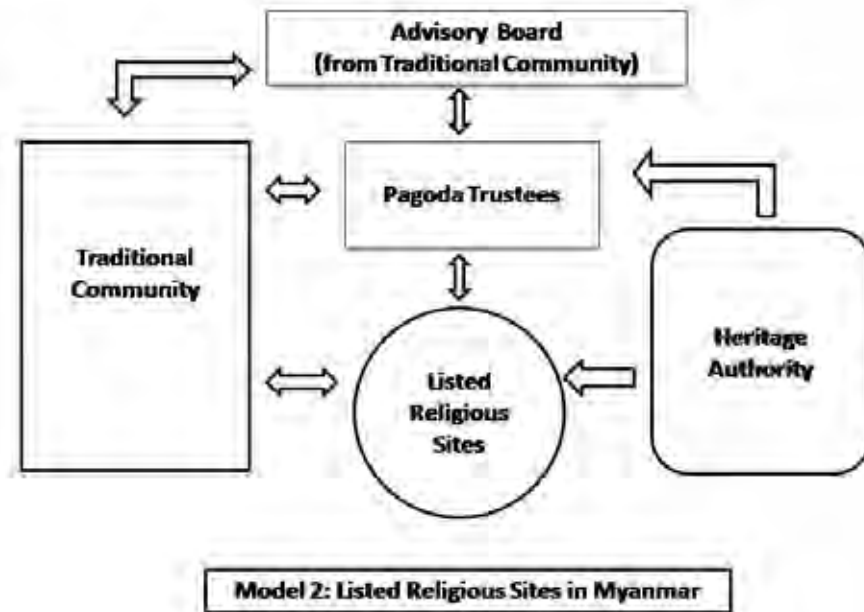
#### The Shwedagon Pagoda

In Myanmar there are two kinds of religious sites. The Shwedagon Pagoda represents sites which are not listed and fall under the umbrella of the Department of Religious Affairs. Model 1 shows a very sustainable and traditional way of management.



#### 102. Management model of the Shwedagon Pagoda

From the above table, it can be seen that there are strong connections between the traditional community and those who work for the management of the Pagoda, since all the divisions are created from the traditional community. The traditional community also retains its traditional link with the Pagoda, thus providing the Pagoda with supports and assistance which enable the Pagoda to be sustainable.



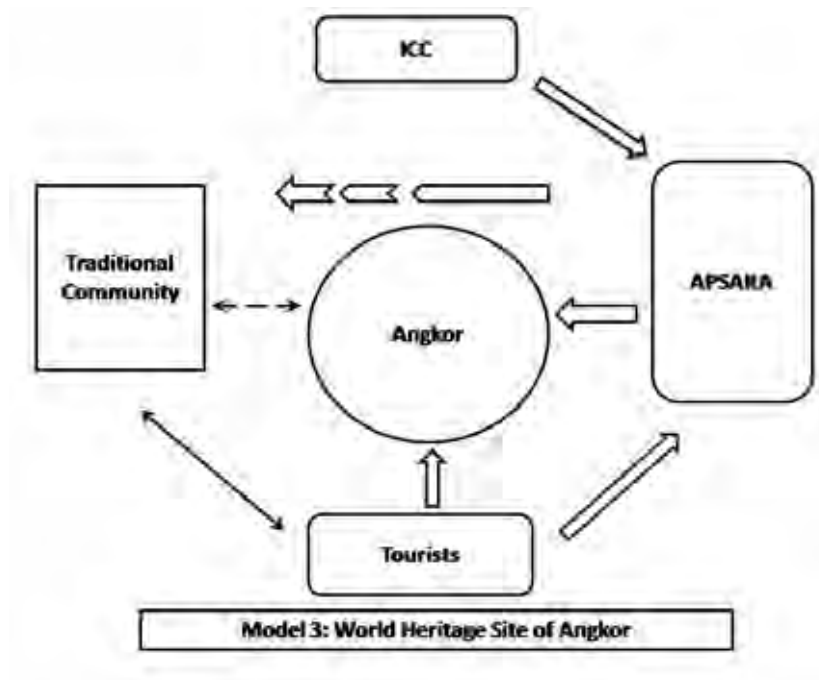
### 103. Management model of other listed pagodas

The other type of sites is the listed religious sites, which fall under the responsibility of the Department of Archaeology. Model 2 simplifies how these sites are managed which shows a general situation within the Authorized Heritage Discourse. Though mechanisms are in place to preserve and manage the pagodas, the control of the heritage authority over the listed religious sites gradually severs the traditional link between the traditional community and the pagodas, which means cutting the pagodas from supports naturally entitled to them. If this model takes place for a period of time, the mechanisms will disappear, leaving the pagodas on the resources of the heritage authority alone.

### Recommendations

In Mainland Southeast Asia, many religious sites face the same issue. Some religious sites or a place within a site may be registered, which prohibits trustees from performing traditional acts of maintenance on the listed heritage. To alleviate the problem, there needs to be a categorization of sites to see whether the pagodas are "safely dead" or living. If they have become safely dead monuments, such as in the cases of some pagodas in Pagan or Ayutthaya, then they should be the responsibilities of the heritage authority. If they are living temples, the heritage authority should promote its role as facilitator, trainer, and advisor, and allow trustees to carry on the maintenance tasks as they have traditionally done so. If this is not done, the heritage will gradually lose its tie with the traditional communities and finally will only be dependent on heritage authority, making it safely dead. If the pagodas have fallen into ruins and there are no traditional communities but there are needs by the general public to restore the pagodas, they should be allowed to do so but under the careful guidance and supervision of heritage professionals.

## The Angkor Complex of Monuments



### 104. Management Model of Angkor

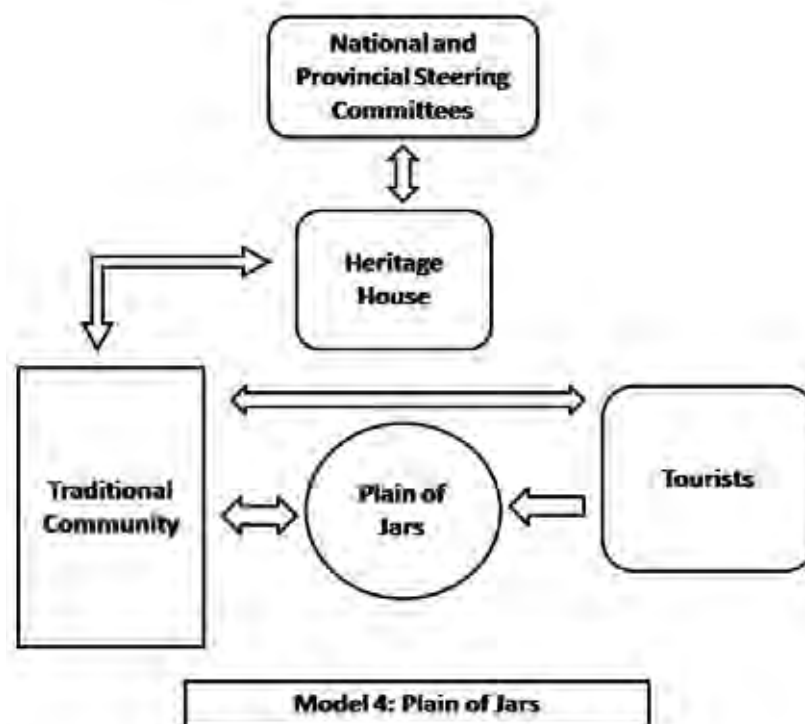
This model shows that the heritage authority is in control of Angkor, but it is establishing a link with the traditional community. This link also opens up an opportunity for the traditional community to reconnect with their heritage. Yet, the benefit tourism yields to the traditional community is very small. At the same time, tourists are an important factor who benefit from the heritage more than any other people. They have also become equal stakeholders with the traditional communities. It can be seen that the relationship between the heritage and the traditional community are two-way which shows the interdependence nature between the traditional community and Angkor, whereas the link between Angkor and tourists is one way. What is noted in this model is that the heritage authority also benefits largely from tourists since their budget depends on the number of entry tickets sold. This creates an atmosphere which allows for over- development of tourism and large scale tourism promotion, which can neglect the fact that Angkor is a sacred landscape.

### Recommendations

There is a need to hear the voice of the traditional community in the whole management process. Community concerns especially on the traditional use of Angkor should be taken into consideration and in the planning process so that the link between the community and Angkor can be reestablished. The traditional community should be encouraged to involve more as active participants in the conservation and management of Angkor. There needs to be regular strong assessments of tourism development at Angkor versus the proportion of benefits and opportunities gained by the traditional community from tourism so that the over-promotion of tourism can be

avoided. A mechanism to ensure that the traditional community benefits from tourism as equal as or more than the heritage authority and the business sector is also required. However, it should not be forgotten as well that Angkor is first and foremost a sacred landscape for the Khmers. The development of Angkor should take this fact into account and promote this fact to tourists, while, at the same time, providing an inclusive interpretation of the site.

### The Plain of Jars



#### 105. Management model of the Plain of Jars

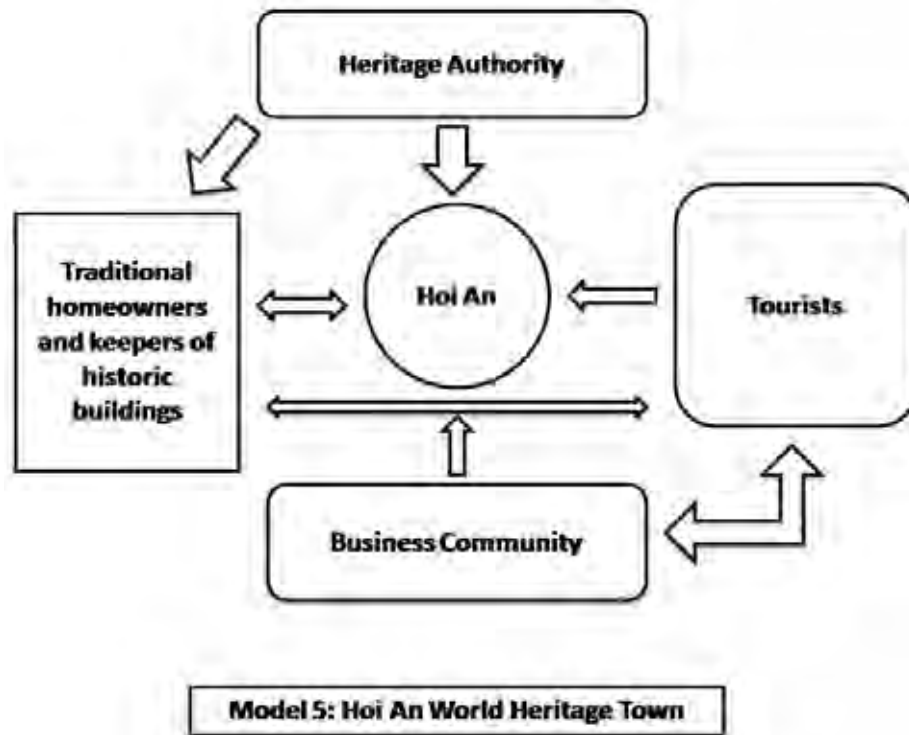
This model shows a hierarchical management scheme whereby there are different levels of supervision on the management of the Plain of Jars. What makes it different from the Conventional Approach is that the heritage authority does not directly control the heritage, but rather acts as a supervisor/partner of the traditional community who manages the heritage. There is a need to maintain this partnership status, otherwise the situation will be similar to the Conventional Approach. This model works because the traditional community is able to benefit directly from tourism and that a mechanism is in place for them to voice their concerns.

### Recommendations

According to this model, heritage is seen as a component of the tourism industry, and its safeguarding is sustained only by tourism. Therefore, there is a need to develop a mechanism which will ensure the sustainability of heritage even without tourism. The roles and the responsibilities of the Heritage House will need to be clearly defined and regular trainings on site protection and management should be given to the traditional community to ensure that they will have enough technical knowledge to

take care of the jar sites. The inclusion of local beliefs and values as well as collective memories into site interpretation is needed in order to provide a broad platform where members of the traditional community from different backgrounds can feel a sense of ownership towards the jar sites.

### The Historic Town of Hoi An



#### 106. Management model of the Historic Town of Hoi An

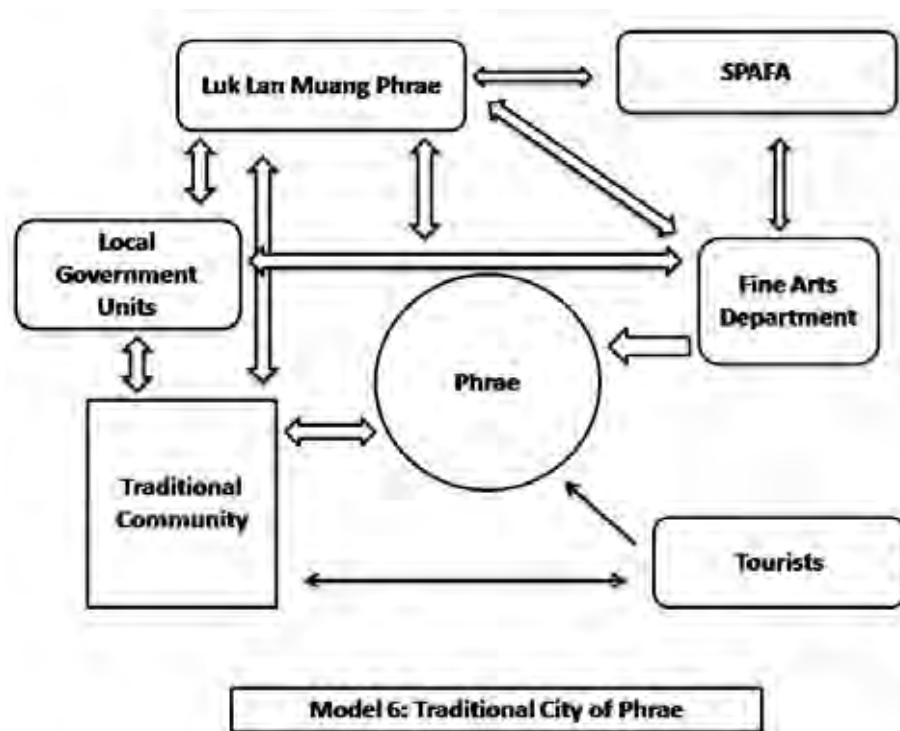
This model shows that there are many stakeholders in the management of Hoi An. The local government, which is also the heritage authority, is controlling the heritage, which is the ancient town. The traditional community, consisting of homeowners and keepers of historic buildings, is also controlled by the heritage authority. There is also a business community, including new business owners in the old quarter and the ones outside the old quarter, who are benefiting directly and largely from tourists. It is noted that the traditional community is living in Hoi An with a degree of control and does not benefit from tourism as much as the business sector. Though revenue from tourism can preserve the physical heritage of Hoi An, the traditional community is not fully integrated into the process and the risk of gentrification is taking place.

#### Recommendations

At present the traditional community of Hoi An is a passive actor in the heritage management process. They are consulted with but there is no guarantee that their concerns will be incorporated into the management plan of Hoi An, where decisions are made by top-ranked government officials. As a result, the heritage authority needs to come up with a plan to actively engage the traditional community into the management and conservation of Hoi An and to take their voices into account. The

present model allows the business community to benefit largely from tourism while a large amount of revenue generated from tourism goes to the preservation of the town, but the traditional community rarely gains from this encounter. While being restricted by rules and regulations regarding the maintenance of their own properties, homeowners are willing to move out when their properties fetch high prices in the market. One way to address the issue is to provide incentives to homeowners, which can take place as financial or social opportunities such as an entitlement to a special programme of social welfare or even a tax reduction. Once their concerns are heard and incentives received, the traditional community will be encouraged to stay. The preservation programme of the integrity of the traditional cultures of Hoi An should also be implemented.

### Phrae



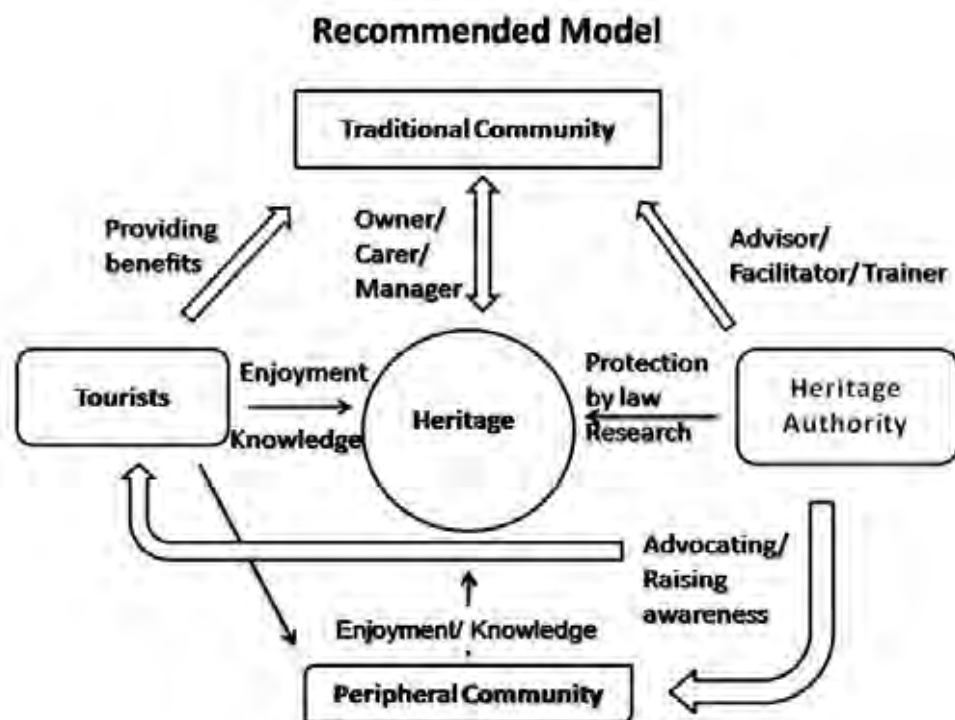
#### 107. Management model of Phrae

This model shows that the heritage of Phrae is maintained by many partners. The Fine Arts Department takes care of the listed heritage, while other things are traditionally taken care of by the traditional community. However, with the present system of administration, there are other local government units who are mandated and have the interests to take care of the heritage as well. LLMP, as facilitator, stemmed from the traditional community of Phrae, instigates and motivates interests and collaboration from different units including SPAFA to ensure the conscious conservation of the Phrae heritage. Tourists are passive participants in the process and they will not have much impact on the management of heritage.

## Recommendations

When there are many players in the field there are always confusions as to who is responsible for what. In the case of Phrae, all partners need a regular dialoguing sessions to clarify the roles of each unit in order to avoid duplication and misunderstanding. The weakness of this model is the voluntary and ad-hoc nature of the LLMP and their projects. As a result, a partnership needs to be forged with local authorities in the long run, and plans should be clearly written so that they will not be affected by the changes within the LLMP or other partners. In this case, official agreements between partners will prove to be useful. The LLMP also needs to expand their network so as to engage more people to the group. Awareness raising activities can help build new generations of members. The Fine Arts Department also needs to provide technical training to relevant people and presumes its active role as facilitator and trainer and should enter into a constructive dialogue with all partners as well as the public in general.

## Recommended Model



108. Recommended model for heritage management in Mainland Southeast Asia

Based on the previous models and discussion, the author has come up with a recommended model for heritage management which should benefit heritage managers in the region. This model spells out the specific roles of each partner under the Living Heritage Approach. It can be seen that the traditional community is given primacy since it is the owner/ carer/ and manager of the heritage. The traditional community is advised and trained by the heritage authority whose roles are to advise, facilitate, and train members of the traditional community while advocating and raising awareness among the peripheral community and tourists. The heritage

authority also performs duties according to its mandates which are to conduct academic research and protect the heritage by legal means. While tourists and the peripheral community enjoy the heritage, benefits from tourism should benefit the traditional community the most.

It is apparent that there are many issues in heritage management which can not be solved in a short period of time. Good as it is, the Living Heritage Approach is not a magic spell which can answer to all problems, since there are many factors influencing heritage management in general. The changes can happen in a small scale first, and they will eventually make an impact as a whole. The following guidelines, therefore, aim to provide basic step-by-step guides to heritage managers to implement their programmes of activities, no matter large or small. They are results of the study of this thesis taking into account the experiences of the region. They serve as examples but the actual implications will have to depend on the different contexts that heritage managers base their works on. Nevertheless, the following guidelines, though far from perfect, should make it easier for heritage managers to work with the local communities to manage and conserve heritage together.

### **Guidelines for Heritage Managers**

#### **1. What are the Problems in Present Heritage Conservation?**

As mentioned earlier, problems related to heritage conservation in the region are based on the changing views of materiality and the application of the Western heritage management model, which was out of context, to the heritage. These two factors have caused the following problems:

##### **Direct problems**

- Disconnection between traditional communities and the heritage
- Marginalization of traditional communities
- Conflict of interests in heritage management
- Negligence of heritage
- Lack of resources for heritage management
- Lack of awareness in the general public
- Loss of traditional knowledge regarding the traditional use and care of heritage
- Loss of understanding of traditional values
- Violation of cultural rights
- Commoditization of heritage

### **Indirect Problems**

- Looting, Vandalism
- Illicit trade and trafficking
- Political conflicts
- Tourist impact

### **2. How to Manage?**

In order to counteract the problems listed above, there needs to be a management approach which can fix the problems and must be sustainable and self-reliant. Since these problems generated from a change in the traditional view of materiality and an out-of-context management approach, a new approach which is based on the traditional knowledge should be able to solve them. The final goal of heritage management is that the heritage is continued and the traditional community is able to exercise their cultural rights by practicing traditional use and care of the heritage, while other stakeholders are happy and benefit from the situation. To sum up, there are five requirements pertaining to successful heritage management including inclusiveness, self-reliance, sustainability, traditional knowledge-based, and contentment.

#### **a. Self-reliance**

Self-reliance is achieved when the traditional community is strong and confident. They should be able to develop plans, make decisions, and carry out the heritage management activities by themselves. They should be able to work together and with others from outside the community and be able to share their opinions.

#### **b. Inclusiveness**

Inclusiveness allows all partners to meet and discuss their concerns, however, in LHA, the voice of the traditional community is given primacy since they are the owners of the heritage. Other concerns are taken into account, but when they are contrasting with those of the traditional community, the traditional community will be given priority.

#### **c. Sustainability**

Heritage management projects can be sustained when there are strong will and strong sense of ownership within the traditional community and/or a sustainable source of income to support conservation activities. Based on the models of Hoi An and the Plain of Jars, a mechanism has been put in place to ensure a steady source of income from tourism to support the conservation of the sites. However, the sense of ownership is still a priority in successful heritage management as it allows the heritage to be taken care of even without having to depend on large financial supports. In many cases, money is almost not needed in community-based heritage management, such as the case of the Thailand Community Archaeology Project.

Based on the Phrae experience, there also needs to be a strong network which can support its members.

#### **d. Knowledge-based**

Knowledge relating to traditional use and care of heritage is very important as it contains all the information needed for the continuity of heritage which is based on a traditional wisdom. This knowledge provides a context to heritage and ensures the in-keeping with traditions as well as a basis for developing a management plan. It also defines the concept of authenticity in the context of the local community. It can include information on materials, resources, craftsmanship, techniques, skills, ceremonies, traditional wisdom, management system, and others which are related to the heritage. Without this knowledge which is like a root of a tree, a tree can not grow. It should be well documented and disseminated to members of the traditional community who do not have or have limited access to the knowledge.

#### **e. Contentment**

Contentment is when all involved in the management of heritage feel satisfied with the outcome of the collaboration and the state of the heritage. This can be indicated by the exercising of cultural rights of the traditional community, the good governance of heritage, and the enjoyment for the general public.

From the case studies, it is obvious that the cases that are most self-reliant and seem to be the most sustainable are based on the initiatives of the traditional community. Therefore, the Living Heritage Approach as discussed in Chapter 1 should be the most suitable approach for heritage management in Mainland Southeast Asia. There might be concerns among heritage professionals that the Living Heritage Approach will revert the whole heritage issue back to a non-scientific, non systematic approach and relies only on the traditional knowledge. The concern is partly true that traditional knowledge will be used as a resource, but with an assistance of the advance of science and systematic inquiries of the present. Heritage professionals will use their expertise to help manage the heritage together with others involved. The heritage will become a leveled playing field where all partners come together to share their expertise and experiences with no dominant players. Heritage professionals will provide the technical know-how and guidance while the community will be the implementers. From the case studies, it is clear that working with the community is not something that can be achieved in a short period of time and there can be many trials and errors, especially when Mainland Southeast Asia has for so long been trapped in the Conventional Approach. However, there are still ways to achieve the above requirements through the Living Heritage Approach.

### **Step 1: Identifying the type of heritage**

The first important step to undertake is the identification of the type of heritage, whether it is dead or living and whether it is sacred or secular. The sacred and the secular heritage are fundamentally different and their conservation and management are not the same. The dead heritage, as discussed earlier, refers to the heritage that has not been continuously used and cared for by its traditional community for a certain

time period, which is long enough to cut its tie with its traditional community. An example of a dead heritage is such as a prehistoric archaeological site, which has just been found and bears no connection to the local community. In this case it can be managed using any of the three approaches. However, if its management does not engage the local community it is likely that the problems listed above will repeat. Though the local community is not its traditional community, there have been examples that linkages between the community and heritage can be established, making the site living again. Community archaeology process can address the issue and help establish the link.

If the heritage is living, meaning there is a traditional community which continuously uses and cares for the heritage, or the traditional community is there, but the traditional use and care are not allowed to take place, the Living Heritage approach can strengthen the voice of the community and revive their connection with the heritage.

Religious heritage is a foremost form of living heritage and the traditional community plays a very important role in caring and providing meanings to the heritage. In this case, heritage managers should be prepared to assume more advisory roles and should conduct a study on the traditional practices regarding the conservation and management of the heritage. If the heritage is secular in nature, heritage managers will have more proactive roles to play.

## **Step 2: Identifying the traditional community**

The core importance of the Living Heritage approach is the traditional community – who makes the heritage living. A living heritage has four components, including the continuous presence of the traditional community, the continuity of traditional use, the continuity of traditional care/ maintenance, and the continuity of space.<sup>610</sup> This simply means that there is a traditional community who continuously uses and maintains a heritage over a period of time using traditional knowledge as means to care for the heritage. If these aspects are present, a heritage is guaranteed to continue. However, the most important thing is the presence of the traditional community. Without this, a heritage can not be living. If other aspects are missing, there can still be ways to put them in place.

### **2.1 Latent or Active Community?**

Heritage managers should identify what kind of traditional communities is present. This can be done by observations and interviews. There are two types of traditional communities including latent and active communities. The latent community, in the case of the Plain of Jars, can relate to the jar sites, but takes no specific role in maintaining the sites prior to the arrival of the UNESCO project. The active community, in the case of Phrae, assumes an active role in the conservation and management of heritage. The roles of heritage managers in dealing with these two types of communities are different.

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<sup>610</sup> Based on discussion led by Ioannis Poullos, 18 October 2009

## 2.2 Identifying community leaders

Once the type of traditional communities is identified, community leaders will also need to be identified. There are also different types of leaders including natural leaders and political leaders. Natural leaders include spiritual leaders and wisdom leaders such as monks and teachers, while political leaders include those elected according to the administrative system to lead the community such as village headman or district head. These leaders are important partners in working with the community. While natural leaders can call for collaboration and provide mental supports and advices, political leaders can mobilize resources such as manpower and funding from government.

### **Step 3: Mobilizing the traditional community**

If the community is latent, it needs to be mobilized, which is to raise awareness among the community and to target attention on the heritage in question. Community mobilization will help form partnership in heritage management. There are different ways to mobilize the traditional community such as organizing exhibitions, seminars, events, and forum, but the key to the success of the mobilization task is to actively engage the community in the process, which can be done with assistance from community leaders who are identified in the previous step. In the case of Phrae, cultural mapping has proved to be useful since it fully engages the participants to focus their attention on the heritage. Events such as heritage bicycle tours also attract a lot of attention from the general public. Another popular method is a one-day community archaeology event where community members can take part in the digging. It is believed that once the mobilization process is implemented, heritage managers will gain more trust and collaboration from the community while a latent community will be awake and more members of the community will be interested to participate in the management and conservation of heritage. This step can be repeated until a partnership is formed.

### **Step 4: Engaging the traditional community in the planning process**

Once heritage managers feel that the community is awake and ready to take part in the management and conservation process, project planning will take place. It is at this stage that heritage managers will further dialogue with the community in order to develop a plan which takes into account the needs of the community. It is natural that there will be contested groups even within the community, so conflicts are unavoidable. Heritage managers will need to use skills in conflict resolution and mediation. It is most useful for heritage managers to act as facilitators who facilitate discussions and mediate conflicts. Heritage managers should also use the opportunity to explain and clarify legal issues and regulations regarding the management and protection of the heritage, which should provide a basis for discussion. At the planning process, different partners should be identified and responsibilities and duties clearly stated so as to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. Heritage managers should first reach a consensus with the traditional community and then further communicate with other partners such as the business sector in a broader framework. Community representatives should always be present to discuss the planning with other partners. The planning should always aim to achieve the five



These steps should provide simple ways of working with the community under the Living Heritage approach. However, this is a basic recommendation and it does not guarantee the success of the project since there are many factors involved in heritage management. Heritage managers should be prepared for unexpected issues and ready to tackle the problems based on their own judgement. It is most important, however, to bear in mind that heritage managers are working for the benefit of the heritage and the community, and that the concerns of the community should always be taken into consideration in all circumstances.

### **Explaining Tools**

The tools used in the above-mentioned process can be explained as follows:

#### **a. Dialoguing**

Dialoguing is a means to strengthen understanding, trust, and confidence. It can be done in a number of informal ways such as conversation, group discussion, forum interview, and game playing. It is basically to engage people together so that they could share their opinions with confidence through the building of trust and understanding. Based on the model of Phrae, it should be noted that dialoguing should be done repeatedly using various means to solidify a sense of confidence and trust of the traditional community.

#### **b. Cultural Mapping**

During the dialoguing process, there is a need to identify the traditional use and care as well as knowledge associated with the use and care of heritage. This can be done through various activities, but the most engaging tool is cultural mapping, which will allow the traditional community to identify their own heritage and their knowledge based on their own perception. This exercise will strengthen their sense of ownership in heritage. Cultural mapping does not aim for a map as its end product. It is a process to engage the community which allows different members of the community to take part in and affirms the sense of heritage ownership. The mapping activities might concern heritage, traditions, resources, knowledge, people, occupations, food, or any other things. The maps gained in the end are the by-products, but the ultimate aim is to engage the traditional community in this process. Cultural mapping activities done in Phrae were different in the techniques used and subjects, since cultural mapping should be context-based.

The dialoguing and cultural mapping should provide a set of outcomes including the traditional knowledge related to the heritage, a reawakened sense of heritage ownership, established confidence in voicing their opinions, and trust.

#### **c. Networking**

Networking is to create a linkage between groups of people which can facilitate heritage management. This linkage will allow the traditional community to gain assistance and a wider platform to share opinions and to collaborate. It is part of an inclusiveness and provides a space for multidisciplinary approaches in heritage

management. A network can be formed with organizations, government units, and individuals, or between different traditional communities.

#### **d. Legal Framework**

Legal framework should lead to good governance of heritage management. In some countries in Mainland Southeast Asia, the available legislations do not enable the traditional community to take care of their own heritage. The most important legal framework in this case is to do with cultural heritage, since it directly concerns the governance of heritage. The cultural heritage law, both at national and local level, should give rights to and encourage the traditional community to undertake decisions with regards to their own heritage. The legal framework should at least enable collaboration between heritage authority and the traditional community.

#### **e. Stakeholder Analysis**

To work with different partners who have different needs, stakeholder analysis proves to be useful in identifying roles and responsibilities of each player as well as their needs in heritage management. This has to be done carefully to analyze the different layers of heritage ownership and connections with heritage. It is to identify the traditional community, and then to prioritize their voice in heritage management since they are the traditional owner and ones who directly take care of the heritage. The roles of other governments units, individuals, and organizations are also recognized, which will enable an inclusive management planning and collaboration.

#### **f. Conflict mediation and resolution**

While working with different groups of people, skills on conflict mediation and resolution is very much needed to allow smooth operation of heritage management. One of the most important aspects of the skills is to be able to identify a common ground on which collaboration can be based. Through dialoguing process, these skills will enhance collaboration and understanding between partners when conflicts arise.

There might also be other tools needed based on each specific context and situation, but with these tools, the requirements listed above should be achieved which will enable successful heritage management.

### **Further Recommendations**

There are further recommendations for heritage managers regarding heritage management especially in the context of Mainland Southeast Asia. These recommendations are relevant issues which could arise during a heritage management process which should be given consideration.

#### **a. Division between religious and secular heritage**

Based on the traditional view on materiality and time, it is obvious that the purpose of religious heritage is different from the secular one. Its role as source of merit and spiritual guidance for the traditional community should remain the first priority and not to be overshadowed by other ascribed values such as aesthetics, history, and

archaeology. In the case of the Shwedagon Pagoda, its sustainable conservation stemmed from the in-keeping of the traditional practice on use and care over a period of time. Realizing that the value of religious heritage does not rest with their material authenticity, the traditional community should be allowed to exercise their cultural rights which are based on the long standing traditions. The degree of authenticity of religious heritage, same as secular heritage, will be identified by the traditional community based on the traditional knowledge related to heritage use and care. The division in heritage management between the religious and secular monuments will revive the traditions and lift much burden off the shoulder of the heritage authority. This is not to exclude heritage professionals who are mandated to take care of the heritage, but they can act as consultants while the managers of the heritage are the traditional community. Their roles can be further supported by enabling legal framework.

Care of secular heritage should also be based on traditional knowledge and allow interaction between the heritage and the traditional community. With the Living Heritage Approach, the conservation is moving from fabric-based to community-based. The decisions in managing heritage should, again, lie with the traditional community. This is why the documentation of traditional knowledge is very important because it will provide a basis for sound decision. The actual management work can be carried out by the traditional community while the heritage authority assists the community in research and training.

#### **b. Inclusiveness of interpretation**

Apart from an inclusiveness in management, there needs to be an inclusiveness in heritage interpretation. In most heritage sites, there are different layers of history and story as well as collective memory gathered by the traditional community. These layers define their relationship with the heritage. In order to facilitate a sustainable heritage management, these different layers will need to be included in the interpretation. For example, the Plain of Jars does not only relate to the prehistoric people, but also the history of wars and independence. For Cambodians, Angkor is not only a Hindu temple complex but also a Buddhist landscape incorporating the worship of present religious structures and images and the traditional belief in *Neak Ta*. In many cases, there are local heritage sites which are important to the traditional community, but they are not part of the national history and are often neglected. Therefore, it is not possible to exclude the recent history and select only the most prominent and beautiful part of history to exhibit to the public, which will fall back to the Conventional Approach and the Authorized Heritage Discourse. An inclusiveness of interpretation will forge a link between the traditional community and the heritage which allows the heritage to be appreciated and conserved.

#### **d. Enabling legal framework**

The present legal framework on heritage management differs in each country. In countries such as Viet Nam and Lao PDR, the existing structure of heritage governance as stipulated in the laws allows an inclusiveness of the traditional community more than elsewhere in the region since the structure exists in a commune/ village level. However, in Viet Nam, the public is not free to exercise their

ownership on heritage since the State assumes the responsibility to make all the decisions. In Lao PDR, all the people are encouraged to take part in heritage conservation, but the State assumes ownership of all heritage sites and objects. It is only in Lao PDR that the Cultural Heritage law gave rights to individuals to participate in the safeguarding of heritage. A reward programme listed in the Vietnamese law is a good example on how the public can be encouraged to safeguard heritage. It is also noted that new legislations such as those of Viet Nam and Lao PDR are quite comprehensive and inclusive. As a result, there needs to be an update of the outdated legal framework to better reflect the present situation of heritage management. In some cases, local regulations should be issued since they are more context-based. To sum up, an enabling cultural heritage legal framework should:

- Acknowledge an ownership of heritage by the traditional community;
- Encourage participation of the local population and organizations in safeguarding heritage;
- Be inclusive of different types of heritage;
- Provide a structure for good governance of heritage, including administrative structure and financial structure, such as in the case of Viet Nam and Thailand which allows a reinvestment in heritage;
- Be clear and comprehensive; and,
- Reflect the present reality of heritage management.

#### **e. Roles of heritage authority and government units**

With the Living Heritage Approach, the roles of the heritage authority and government units are to support, assist, advice, and facilitate the traditional community within their own expertise and capacity. In the Conventional Approach, they are controllers and superiors. This is going to be a shift in paradigm in heritage management, but will be based on the traditional knowledge and system sprung from the local context, more so than the Conventional Approach which is based on the Western cultures. The expertise of the heritage authority usually is the strength in research and technical knowledge, which can then be imparted to the traditional community to enhance their capability in heritage management. The government units usually are strong in networking, therefore they can facilitate collaboration and the smooth running of the heritage management. Based on the experience of Phrae, members of the local government units are also members of the local population, therefore, it is their rights to partake in the training given by the heritage authority to enhance their understanding in the heritage and in their roles in heritage management. All parties should engage in a dialoguing process to ensure an understanding which will lead to trust and sincerity.

#### **f. Heritage education**

Heritage education is a crucial component to generate interests and awareness in heritage among the general public. Heritage education should be introduced in

curriculum or in extra-curricula activities to allow the public to understand heritage more. This can be done at a local level, where local heritage is introduced to students, which will enhance pride and the sense of ownership among the children. Heritage education for the general public is also necessary and it can be accomplished through a series of activities such as heritage tours, exhibitions, community archaeology event, and so on. Heritage education is a direct responsibility of the heritage authority who can work in partnership with the traditional community to implement heritage education projects.

**g. Training on craftsmanship and knowledge transfer**

The loss of skills on traditional craftsmanship is a serious issue in heritage management since it means that the knowledge to regenerate the heritage is not available. There is a need to establish training activities on traditional skills relevant to the use and care of heritage, so that the heritage can be continued. Heritage managers can do this by identifying traditionally skilled craftsmen and working with them to document and pass on their knowledge to the next generation. There should be a mechanism to ensure that the knowledge transfer will be continuous.

**h. Research on knowledge**

Though the traditional community has maintained its traditional use and care of heritage through time, there might not be a systematic research on the knowledge being transferred. The heritage authority can assist the traditional community in conducting this research to gain a better understanding on the knowledge which can relate to properties of materials, techniques, and skills. The research result should be well documented and disseminated so that the knowledge can be accessed and understood from a scientific point of view.

**i. Holistic management**

It is undeniable that heritage management does not only concern cultural heritage, but also natural heritage. In the traditional time, all heritage was managed together as a single unit. Natural heritage was protected by beliefs and ceremonies, which in turn, allowed cultural heritage to take place and continue. The wise use of natural heritage is integrated in the wellbeing of cultural heritage. At the moment, there have been concerns all over the region that traditional materials, especially wood, are scarce and that there will not be enough materials to enable traditional conservation in the future. It is therefore a duty of all involved in heritage management to integrate the conservation of traditional natural heritage into the process to ensure the sustainability of built cultural heritage.

**j. Other benefits**

It has been demonstrated in many cases, especially by the works of the Thailand Community Archaeology Project, that heritage management can be used as means for community development. The term here does not refer only to economic opportunities, but also the wellbeing of a traditional community. In several TCAP activities, heritage management strengthens the bonds between the members of the community and gives meanings and purposes to the lives of many people. When it is

important to conserve heritage, it is always important to remember that the living element of the heritage is people. Therefore, heritage management process should benefit the traditional community as much as it benefits the heritage.

Community-based heritage management is a well recognized agenda which is gaining momentum all over the world. The impact of Colonization and western-based heritage conservation and management model is contributing to the present challenges faced by the heritage authority in Mainland Southeast Asia. Through the Living Heritage Approach, it is expected that the challenges will be addressed, and that this approach will lead to an inclusive context-based heritage management, which has a basis on traditional knowledge that has been trialed and tested through time. This knowledge coupled with enabling legal structure will provide a framework which allows the traditional community to make a sound decision on heritage management, which is to be assisted and facilitated by the heritage authority and the relevant units using their expertise and technical knowledge. It is hoped that heritage will therefore be continued by its traditional owner, and the management process will provide profits to the traditional community in return.

Based on the traditional concept of materiality, nothing is permanent. Instead of trying to conserve it for posterity, heritage should then be viewed as a continuous process, which is to be understood and appreciated in the context of the present.

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