

บรรณานุกรม

- (กรมโยธาธิการ กระทรวงมหาดไทย. 2545; มุลนิธิสีบนาคะเสถียร. 2553; บุญส่ง สัตโยภาส. 2552; สำนักการจราจรและขนส่งกรุงเทพมหานคร. 2553) กระทรวงมหาดไทย, กรมโยธาธิการ (2545) 'สะพานพระราม 5', กรมโยธาธิการ กระทรวงมหาดไทย, กรุงเทพฯ. มุลนิธิสีบนาคะเสถียร (2553) ขยายถนนผ่านป่า เรื่องควรหรือไม่ควร. โดย มุลนิธิสีบนาคะเสถียร. ดูข้อมูลเมื่อวันที่ 28 ตุลาคม 2553 ปรับปรุงข้อมูลเมื่อวันที่ วันอาทิตย์ที่ 13 มิถุนายน 2553 เวลา 23:41 น.
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รายงานวิจัยฉบับสมบูรณ์ โครงการ การเปลี่ยนแปลงภูมิทัศน์ของชุมชนท้องถิ่นในกรุงเทพมหานครและปริมณฑล:
ผลกระทบจากการตัดโครงการขั้วถนนวงแหวนรอบนอกฝั่งตะวันตกของกรุงเทพมหานคร

Output จากโครงการวิจัยที่ได้รับทุนจาก สกอ. และ สกว.

1. ผลงานตีพิมพ์ในวารสารวิชาการนานาชาติ

- **Noparatnaraporn, C.** (2006), The regeneration of *ban suan rim khlong*: steps towards sustainability for Thai communities, Traditional Dwelling and Settlements Working Paper Series 2006-2007, IASTE, Vol. 192, Berkeley, USA, pp.1177-1198.
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2. การนำผลงานวิจัยไปใช้ประโยชน์

■ **เชิงสาธารณะ**

องค์ความรู้ในการอนุรักษ์และพัฒนาอย่างยั่งยืนนี้ได้เป็นฐานทางความคิดให้กับการจัดทำโครงการที่เกี่ยวข้องกับจังหวัดนนทบุรีและการพัฒนาที่อยู่อาศัยอย่างยั่งยืนหลายโครงการ ซึ่งโครงการเหล่านี้มีบทบาทในการสร้างเครือข่ายของชาวบ้านท้องถิ่นและเจ้าหน้าที่ภาครัฐให้เกิดกระแสของการอนุรักษ์พื้นที่สีเขียวและวิถีชีวิตริมคลองมากขึ้น มีรายชื่อดังนี้

- งานวิจัยเรื่อง “บึงหนองเรือ: บทบาทของวัดและชุมชนในการสร้างสรรค์ภูมิทัศน์วัฒนธรรมไทย” สนับสนุนโดย สำนักงานคณะกรรมการวัฒนธรรมแห่งชาติ กระทรวงวัฒนธรรม ประจำปีงบประมาณ 2549 (หัวหน้าโครงการร่วม สัดส่วน 50%) – พฤษภาคม 2548 ถึง กรกฎาคม 2549
- โครงการจัดทำแผนแม่บทการพัฒนาพื้นที่สีเขียวจังหวัดนนทบุรี ร่วมกับคณะทำงานจากคณะสิ่งแวดล้อมและทรัพยากรศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล เสนอ สำนักงานโยธาธิการและผังเมือง จังหวัดนนทบุรี (นักวิจัย) – ตุลาคม 2549 ถึง เมษายน 2550
- โครงการออกแบบและวางผังโครงข่ายพื้นที่สีเขียว ตำบลบางสีทอง อำเภอบางกรวย จังหวัดนนทบุรี โดยความร่วมมือระหว่างอบต.ตำบลบางสีทอง โครงการ สหวิทยาการระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา สาขาภูมิสถาปัตยกรรม บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย และ คณะสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยเกษตรศาสตร์ (หัวหน้าโครงการ) – พฤศจิกายน 2550 ถึง เมษายน 2551

- โครงการจัดทำฐานข้อมูลพันธุกรรมพืช จังหวัดนนทบุรี เสนอ องค์การบริหารส่วนจังหวัด นนทบุรี (คณะทำงานฯ) – ตุลาคม 2550 ถึง มีนาคม 2551
- โครงการจัดทำแนวทางการพัฒนาโครงการที่อยู่อาศัยที่นำไปสู่การพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืน กรณีศึกษา ที่ดินรุ่มเกล้า เสนอ การเคหะแห่งชาติ (คณะทำงานฯ) ตุลาคม 2551 – กันยายน 2552 *

■ เชิงวิชาการ

ผลการศึกษาจากงานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ได้ถูกนำไปพัฒนาการเรียนการสอนในรายวิชาต่างๆ ของคณะสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยเกษตรศาสตร์ ดังนี้

- รายวิชาพัฒนาการสิ่งแวดล้อมสรรค์สร้าง หลักสูตรปริญญาตรีบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาสิ่งแวดล้อมสรรค์สร้าง
- รายวิชาแนวคิดเชิงวิพากษ์และการออกแบบงานวิจัยทางภูมิสถาปัตยกรรม หลักสูตรภูมิสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตรบัณฑิต
- รายวิชาการออกแบบ วางผัง และการจัดการภูมิทัศน์ขั้นสูง หลักสูตรภูมิสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

นอกจากนี้ยังได้ใช้ประกอบการบรรยายพิเศษในรายวิชาภูมิทัศน์วัฒนธรรมไทย หลักสูตรภูมิสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตรบัณฑิต คณะสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์ อีกด้วย

3. การเสนอผลงานในที่ประชุมวิชาการ

- **Jiraprasertkun, C.** (2010), Reading the (Un)sustainable Development of Bangkok: Lessons Learnt from the Construction of Nakhon Inn Road, in the proceeding of: The mAAN*Y Singapore 2010 Conference, 1-4 August 2010, Singapore.

รายงานวิจัยฉบับสมบูรณ์ โครงการ การเปลี่ยนแปลงภูมิทัศน์ของชุมชนท้องถิ่นในกรุงเทพมหานครและปริมณฑล:
ผลกระทบจากการตัดโครงข่ายถนนวงแหวนรอบนอกฝั่งตะวันตกของกรุงเทพมหานคร

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ผลกระทบจากการตัดโครงการขายนางแหวนรอบนอกฝั่งตะวันตกของกรุงเทพมหานคร

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THE REGENERATION OF *BAN SUAN RIM KHLONG*:
STEPS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY FOR THAI COMMUNITIES



While the original notion of 'ban suan rim khlong' is no longer apt in describing modern Bangkok, its shifting meaning has been popularly used by modern housing estates in Bangkok and other parts of Thailand. This paper deals with the problem of 'authenticity,' the reading and interpretation of 'ban suan rim khlong' through the surviving qualities of Ban Bangraonok in Nonthaburi, Thailand, in the present-day. Meanings and values attached to this place will be comparatively discussed with those reproduced in the new housing estates, provoking a reconsideration of Bangkok's development towards sustainable communities.

INTRODUCTION

The approach to Bangkok is equally novel and beautiful. The Meinaam is skirted on the two sides with forest-trees, many of which are of a green so bright as to defy the powers of art to copy. Some are hung with magnificent and fragrant flowers; upon others are suspended a variety of tropical fruits...A few huts of bamboo, with leaved roofs, are seen; and in the neighboring creeks, the small boats of the inhabitants are moored. Here and there is a floating house, with Chinese inscriptions on scarlet or other gay-coloured paper.

Sir John Bowring¹

The descriptions of a velvet green city, with the curves of the waterways and the sparkles from palace and countless pagodas, delineate a picture of how Bangkok was seen in the old days (FIG.1).² Through the analysis of various kinds of presentations, there were potentially two significant notions, '*ban rim khlung*' or house along the waterway and '*ban suan*' or house in the orchard that conceptualized the 'real' characteristic and local side of the 'old' Bangkok.³ It was common to find these two characteristics (*ban rim khlung* and *ban suan*) combined, as orchards were inescapably associated with the irrigation systems. Thus the notion of '*ban suan rim khlung*' (house along *khlung* in orchard) has been perceived as a traditional characteristic of Bangkok and this term has achieved very common usage for Thai people. The three key-terms, *ban* (house), *suan* (orchard) and *khlung* (waterway), and the intimate relationships among them play an important role in denoting the image of a nostalgia-filled Bangkok.

Such representational image had continued to portray the characteristic of Bangkok until the phenomena of urban 'invasion' and modernization most observably began in 1950s. Over the past century and particularly the last fifty years, Bangkok has indeed been developing towards land-based settlements. *Chonnabot* (countryside) has been continually replaced by *muang* (city), stretching from the inner city to the urban fringe and reaching to the surrounding provinces.⁴ The urban sprawl of Bangkok has caused modifications of physical characteristics as well as people's ways of livings and worldviews. In contrast to fifty years ago when typical scenes of orchards and settlements along the *khlongs* still remained distinctive, the notion of '*ban suan rim khlung*' is now no longer able to describe the environment of modern Bangkok.⁵ Today, '*ban rim khlung*' can

be seen only on the edge of major *kblongs* because many inland sub-canals have already been filled and the remaining ones are only used for drainage while orchards (*suan*) and rice fields (*na*) have been almost entirely replaced by blocks of buildings and built landscapes (modern *suan*)⁶ (FIG. 2).

While the original '*ban suan rim kblong*' is becoming more rare in the urban areas of Bangkok, its repeated scenes and stories, portrayed in various media, have nevertheless conceived the idea of archetypal 'Thai space' in the collective imagination, creating a perception that such traditional qualities have survived and still exist, at least in people's minds, in the present day. Accordingly, the integrating concepts of *ban*, *suan*, and *kblong* have been fashionably and variously used in the marketing strategies for modern housing estates in Bangkok and other parts of Thailand.⁷ The evolution to reproduce the concept of '*ban suan rim kblong*' marked an important step in the Thai architectural development as recognized by the Architectural Siamese Association (ASA) as 'best architecture' awarded in several years. Such phenomena might indicate something akin to nostalgia for or a reminder of the aquatic and verdant qualities which the modern *kbon muang*, or city people, may be searching for or it might also be seen as an advertising gimmick playing on the notions. Attempts to assimilate *ban*, *suan* and *kblong* together nevertheless provoke the following questions. What are the qualities subsisted in the original '*ban suan rim kblong*' that portray the 'real' identity of Bangkokian space? How has this new assembling concept shifted from the nostalgically-held notion? Could the reproduction of '*ban suan rim kblong*' be able to encapsulate the original essence of a place? And how does the knowledge gained from this lesson contribute to a search for sensible ways of reconstructing the 'real' identity back into Thai places?

READING PLACE AND ITS DILEMMAS

To perform the task, there is therefore a need to deep read the original concept of '*ban suan rim kblong*': how has it conceptualized, what are qualities subsisted in this place, and how do the relationships among the key ingredients (*ban*, *suan* and *kblong*) contribute to the wholeness of place? By dealing with the reading and interpretation of place, the following methodological questions then bring to the fore: how are we to describe the 'authenticity' of place, how do we read original qualities of the past and what would then be a method of reading and interpreting place as a whole?

On the fist dilemma of 'real' place, in one sense, the reading of place is an investigation of how the 'authenticity' of place can be comprehended and identified, although it is realized that the idea of an absolute 'authenticity' is unreal and can never be achieved in real life. The reading of the subtlety and cultural sensibility subsisting in places is, nevertheless, an attempt to identify and describe the uniqueness and the characteristics of a place. Hence the idea of 'cultural landscape' that signifies place as a reflection of society, cultural values and social behavior developing over a span of time, is adopted here as a hoped-for approach

to read place in Thai contexts. Winichakul also raised the importance of local knowledge, vocabularies and conceptions, as major tools to create in-depth understandings of Thai place and its 'authentic' qualities. Accordingly, he then concluded that local viewpoints are vital yielding an intimacy that Thai people can achieve, but is something an outsider or *farang* (foreigner) can never achieve.⁸

If place is recognized as a representation of humans' interrelationships with and management of their environments, the reading of its manifestation will then be the way to understand the underlying (constituting) 'processes' by which the portrayed images have been shaped and constituted by residents and their way of living.⁹ Cultural shifts have major impacts on social attitudes and activities, and thereby on chronological and evolutionary effects on landscape over generations.¹⁰ The purpose of the paper to read the shifting notion of '*ban suan rim kblong*' is to gain insights into culturally constructing processes and to find ways of re-establishing the original essences of the city in contemporary time.

The second dilemma deals with the issue of time and space. The concepts behind the terms 'cultural landscape' and 'place as lived-world' remind us that the landscape or place we live in is active and constantly changes over time.¹¹ While it is inescapable that the study of place can only be conducted at the present time, one way to read the essence of place in the past is to make sense of subsisted qualities that have survived from the old days. Hence the paper explores the nostalgically-held notion of '*ban suan rim kblong*' through the present-day study of *Ban Bangraonok* in Nonthaburi, Thailand, a place that could be seen as the closest example to the archetypal notion of old Bangkok. In order to manifest how this notion has shifted through time, traditional characteristics and qualities of '*ban suan rim kblong*' found in this village are then comparatively discussed with those observed in the modern housing estates.

The third dilemma relates to the framework for reading and interpreting the wholeness of place. The literature reviews confirm that place, or the world we live in, does not exist in the form of fragmentations or itemizations that inevitably arise when we define or categorize visual reality as words.¹² Instead, all substances, both tangible and intangible, are composite and compounded in particular ways that create the special qualities of place in its entirety. According to Bortoft, the best way to conceive the whole is not to think as if it was a thing – like the meaning of a sentence that equals no-word, we try not to be aware of the whole instead allowing ourselves to be moved by its 'active absence.'¹³ Spiri nevertheless pointed out that a search for a specific vocabulary or grammar in the fragmented view, through making and living, would provide grounded knowledge for the understanding of place as a whole.¹⁴

In this paper, the attempt to portray a holistic picture of place is therefore pursued under the three fragmented dimensions of space and place, consisting of physical settings, human interrelations with space,

and meanings of place. Although people's comments in the field may fail to follow these neat categories, as they do not see the world in terms of such divisions, these three themes are used as a 'stimulus' to begin the initial reading of place.¹⁵ The interrelationships among these aspects which contribute to the wholeness of place will be highlighted as well as the individual characteristics of each component.

THE SURVIVING NOTION OF '*BAN SUAN RIM KHLONG*' IN *BAN BANGRAONOK*, NONTHABURI

(*Mu*)*ban* Bangraonok is in Bangkrui district, Nonthaburi province, and approximately 11 kilometers from the inner part of Rattanakosin Island, the historic heart of the old Bangkok. This village, combining a secondary waterway, Buddhist temple, waterside dwellings and orchards, displays the essential ingredients of a typical '*ban suan rim khlung*' (house along *khlung* in orchard) or what Tachatikachorn¹⁶ called an 'agriculture-based waterside village,' in the lower Chao Phraya Delta. Since the village settlements were formally recorded in 1952, the pattern of curvilinear settlements along the waterway has continually been a prominent characteristic of this village. Up until recently, the village had mainly small-scale changes until the two local roads (*Thanon Ban Bangkhunkong* and *Thanon Ban Pho-en*) emerged in 1980 and 1990, subsequent to the construction of a huge highway in 2003. This has resulted in the gradual expansion of the village to inland orchards, where the new road provides a new access for the community. Changes were also caused by severe floods, which occurred in 1932, 1983; the most extreme in 1995. Today, the three key components of the archetypal notion, *ban*, *suan*, and *khlung* still play important roles in characterizing the characteristics of this waterside village. The followings display the quality of space and place that has constituted the notion of '*ban suan rim khlung*' in physical, behavioral and perceptual dimensions. The information is mainly based on findings from the fieldwork conducted in early 2002 and late 2003.

Physical settings

Overall, the architectural style of this village is harmonious. Most buildings are two stories and of natural materials, such as in the common style of wooden houses on stilts and a few temporary bamboo sheds with thatch. All the houses are located along the *khlung*, except the recently built concrete buildings that face *thanon*. Docks, ladders, piers, *salat* (pavilions), verandas, and even postboxes to almost every house on the *khlung* side indicate the significance of the *khlung* as the main entrance. Although the roadside is still perceived by most villagers as the rear of the houses (*lang ban*), many old houses now provide a new access by adding a second entrance (garages, pathways, gates) connecting to the road. Today, the perception of 'front of house' (*na ban*) is, in fact, applied to both sides.

In terms of its space and spatial networks, Winichakul's 'unbounded' concept of Thai space¹⁷ explains the continuity of space in *Ban Bangraonok*. Space is continuous and lacks definition at its edges, as almost no permanent physical obstructions are built, except for small numbers concrete embankments along the *kblong* and a few fences along the *thanon*. The furrowed surface of orchard irrigation systems are typically seen except in the housing area where concrete dams were constructed at the edge of the *kblong* and lands were flattened for house constructions. The landform of this village no longer applies an original 'water edge spatial structure',¹⁸ which could be categorized into waterway shore (*lim-taling*), waterway levee (*taling*), and wetland (*lung-taling*).

The village is overlaid by three systems of passageways, comprising the intricate network of artificial and natural *kblongs*, the system of local roads (*thanon*), and narrow walkways (FIG. 3). *Kblong* Bangraonok, a natural secondary waterway, provides an artery that links the irrigation network and orchard systems together. The curvilinear pattern of local roads linking every *wat* (Buddhist temple) in the whole area reflects the original pattern of orchard blocks and the randomly donated pieces of land, which usually are not connected in a straight line. Additionally, walkways in this area, comprising the top of an irrigation dam (*taling*) and the concrete and wooden boardwalk, are roughly one meter wide and their patterns are random and irregular. They provide exits from houses to the *thanon* and to distant orchards. As the whole area is a mosaic of orchards, these walkways provide the permeable quality to the village.

Human interrelations with space

While land separation could not be observed in the blurred, boundless and undifferentiated space of the village, the functional system could be locally understood. Originally, the residential area (*ti yu a-sai*) and the workspace (*ti tam-ma-ba-kin*), in this case is the orchards, were clearly separated, forming a clear pattern of single purpose, homogenous land utilization of each space. From the interviews with local people, the village could originally be seen as organized into three main areas, consisting of 1) *ti ban* (housing area, traditionally located along the *kblong*), 2) *ti suan* (old orchard area located further from *ti ban*), and 3) *tung na* (rice paddy, located even further still from the *kblong* and next to *ti suan*) (FIG. 4). In the present day, many *ti suans* have been sold to both insiders and outsiders, nevertheless *ti ban* has continued to be considered as the 'last' family asset and is customarily kept for the living area and the property of the next generation. The homogenous land utilization applies not only to the land use system but also to the uniformity of vegetations in the village although various fruits and vegetables are mixed in the same orchard block.

The village lifestyle appears to have been originally very much enclosed and self-contained – living, working, and playing were all intimately associated (FIG. 5). One need not leave the village at all as friends, relatives, monks, foods, news and all necessary things in daily life would come directly to people's houses or could be

easily reached by boat within a short distance. The local *kblong* and *wat* embody all the main social and commercial functions of the village; therefore one's life cycle could be completed within those intimate surroundings.

In the old days, mixed uses and a variety of activities occurred at neither *ban* nor *suam*, but instead at the public spaces of the major *kblong* and the local *wat*; thus all sorts of social and commercial activities tended to happen in these spaces. Today, *Kblong* Bangraonok continues to be a backbone of the village and a center of all aspects in one's life. Apart from supplying water for agriculture and everyday life, it also provides major public space for water transportation, social interaction, commerce, social events, and recreational purposes. *Kblong* also performs a clear 'linking' role with living, working and socializing places (thus forming village space), in physical, functional, social, and spiritual terms. The multiple usages of the *kblong* and its significance were clearly expressed in the following passage.

Originally, people would row their boats out to the junction [Bangkuwiang floating market] to sell their orchard-products. Back then, ooh!...my child, both [*Kblong*] Bangraonok and [*Kblong*] Bangkuwiang were so crowded with boats. The rowers had to drag, pull, and push their boats to get through. ... If you were in a hurry, you would not make it in time...

Here, our land is always open, from the beginning until the end of the *kblong*. Just row your boat out somewhere, someone will greet you: Where are you going, grandma? Where are you going, auntie? We greet and chat with people along both sides of the *kblong*. Where are you going?...How are you going? Then we will reply them. Erh...to this house to that house. There must be somebody greeting. Ah...like this! There is such a thing like this (Participant No.1-23).¹⁹

The above dialogue explicates that the interlacing, labyrinthine quality of the *kblong* network not only applies to village physical space, but also to human interactions within neighborhoods. The interacting and exchanging activities at and along the *kblong* help tighten social relationships within the neighborhood. The *kblong* brings a social ambience into life as neighbors, friends, and visitors drop by at the pier to socialize and share news. The *sala ta nam* (pavilion along the water) provides a major space for all sorts of activities that transfer from the boat to the land. The continuous and inseparable space of *kblong*, *sala*, outdoor terrace (*chan*), veranda (*rabiang*), and onwards to the inner room (*bong*) of the Thai traditional house (*Renn Thai*) manifests the traditional lifestyle along the *kblong*.

Additionally, *Wat* Phoen is a 'true' center of activities for the village, both in social and psychological terms. Religious ceremonies provided all villagers with a regular opportunity to get together at the local temple to socialize, catch up with relatives or old good friends, visit a respected monk, receive news or documents from the head of the village, eat and exchange a variety of food, practice devotion, pray, and be preached to in

peace. Such moments were enjoyable, self-satisfying, and mentally relaxing. Occasionally, the *lan wat* (*wat* ground) of temples around the area take turns operating a weekly market, annual festival and a playground.

Originally, the close knit linking of *bans*, *suans*, *kblongs* and *wat* fabricated a village community or '*muban*' – a gathering of *bans*. Through the linkage of *kblongs*, *bans* are associated with an expansive and permeable network of *kblongs*, *wats*, and *suans*, each coequally performing a 'center' role for the village variously in terms of its physical, functional and spiritual aspects. While the *kblong* as earlier described is a center for public activities and an artery for transportation, the *wat* is still perceived as a spiritual core and a central communal space (FIG. 6). *Suan*, in the same manner, is observed as a major open space and a prime everyday workspace for villagers. This repetitive pattern forms extended networks of communities.

Until the two local roads were constructed, the *kblong* had maintained its 'key' role linking village places together. Apart from diversifying land use, the emergence of the *thanos* has enhanced the opportunities for villagers to travel and interact with each other. In the present day, the major places, *ban*, *suan* and *wat*, are all connected by roads hence the *kblong* has become less used and less active. *Thanon* not only provides new exits for the village but also new public space for the villagers. The evidence shows that commercial and recreational activities have slowly shifted to areas alongside *thanon*. The system of *thanos* would seem to tighten or create even more intimate social relationships and more frequent shared activities. However, the interviews indicated that roads have in turn decreased the number and the length of time of social relationships and activities consequent on the reduced sense of community. For this village, *kblong* is still a stimulus to villagers' social interactions albeit they have perceptibly declined.

Meanings of place

Kblong and *wat* are vital elements not only in people's everyday lives but also in their perceptions – they are perceived as landmarks for the village, both at community and individual scales. As most villagers usually attach themselves and their places to the local *kblong* and local *wat*, these two spaces have important roles in identifying a 'community.' For local people, a *kblong* has never been perceived as a barrier; traveling across the *kblong* is not a burden since boating is a part of their everyday life, whereas a *thanon* has a tendency to be an obstruction because of its size and the fast traffic which could be dangerous for pedestrians.

Villagers also appear to have common values, which create a strong sense of community and unity in the village. People's shared religious, social and community values, such as interdependency, regard the seniority, belief in gratitude and karma, and Buddhist ethic of giving have influenced their behaviors as being caring and considerate (*kereng chai*), generous, polite, sympathetic, flexible, etc. In this village, the extended family system

has gradually built up intimate social relationships within the neighborhood, thereby forming a network of village society. Such social intimacy among villagers is clearly described by one of the participants below.

People in this *kblong* are all related as brothers and sisters. ... We can tell exactly how this person relates to another. ... Whoever lives in this *kblong* is considered as relatives because people from this *kblong* (*kbon kblong ni*) are 'the same group of people.' ... Although we are not in fact the real relatives, but it feels like we are.

I know everyone. The elder can scold and give advice to the younger even if they are actually not my children because they strongly respect and regard the seniority.

... There is nobody who lives in this *kblong* that I don't know. And those people who live at the *kblong* junction (*pak kblong*) are not our relatives, but we are close friends, close neighborhood friends. If someone needs helps, we always rely on and are willing to help each other (*chui-jeu peungpa kan*) (Participant No. 1-16).

Additionally, Buddhist principals have deeply integrated into people's behaviors and worldviews. Here, Buddhism has blended people's various viewpoints and backgrounds together, and the *wat* provides a gathering place where villagers can feel free talking to someone who shares the same inner beliefs. In this sense, the *wat* is indeed a center of villagers' spirits and souls, associated with villagers from birth to death – it reminds them of their families, friends, respected monks, memorable times, and peaceful moments spent together.

In Bangraonok, the concepts of 'privacy' and 'tranquility' are to be understood as different. Living in this village is peaceful and quiet due to the small numbers of residences, buildings, traffic intrusions, and strangers. Yet it could be observed that village social life has in fact very little 'privacy.' Everyone knows each other very well and therefore it is not possible to live individually or escape confrontations with neighbors. Nevertheless, the intimate relationships within the neighborhood influence how people view their place as a part of the whole system, not just as an individual piece of land. The atmosphere of family relationships and the familiarity within the neighborhood have created a sense of an absolute 'comfort' (*kwam yu-yen-pen-suk*) and been developed on the basis of 'trust,' hence a sense of home and sense of belonging are extended beyond a house compound to the nearby area visited during everyday life.

Additionally, people's long length of stay (mostly since they were born) has helped enriching memories and thereby developing deep connections with their places. With the strong sense of belonging to and possessing the land even though, legally, it might not belong to them, people then have high responsibilities to look after and to ensure that their areas are neat and clean. Furthermore, the existence of spirit houses, both for a guardian spirit (supported by one column) and for ancestors' spirits (supported by four columns), in almost

every house compounds expresses a shared value and strong connection between dwellers and their ancestors, the human world and a spiritual world, and present and past.

THE SHIFTING NOTION OF 'BAN SUAN RIM KHLONG: WHAT IS MISSING?

Since the 1970s, the phenomena of *ti-chad-san* (land allotting) and *muban-chad-san* (commercial housing projects) have become increasingly widespread in the periphery of Bangkok and its region.²⁰ *Muban-chad-san* has become popular and sought to present the 'house of dreams' for 'new age' people.²¹ The environment of *muban-chad-san*, which provides public services and modern conveniences, is perceived as a somewhat 'better' living place than the congestion of the inner city, hence 'modern people' have a tendency to move out of their original locale to a completely new environment.²²

The search for Thai identity began in the late 1970s with the ideas of '*ekkalak Thai*' (Thai unique characteristic), '*kbwampenthai*' (Thainess), '*watthanatham*' (culture), and *moradok* (heritage) being widespread and popularly concerned in Thai society.²³ Consequently, housing developers had been challenged by the internal forces and people's increasing demands to produce a unique concept of residential space that portray a glimpse of 'Thainess.' Simultaneously, the idea to integrate 'lake and park' into the residential areas were introduced to many housing estates, as appeared on several projects' names such as Garden Lagoon, Private Lake Garden, Banfa Piyarom Lake and Park, etc. Subsequently, the reinvention of Thai contemporary houses has also been variously explored by local architects (FIG. 7).

In early 1990s, the term '*ban suan rim khlung*' was implemented to residential designs and used in the marketing strategies for modern housing estates, which were mostly located on the fringe of Bangkok. Buyers, who were mostly city people who desperately wanted to escape from city life, embraced these projects. Today, various reproductions of '*ban suan*' (garden home), '*ban rim nam*' (lakeside home) and a combination of both (lakeside and garden home) can generally be found, as displayed in various advertising medias (FIG. 8). The observations of these housing projects, both from real places and from the illusions of commercial advertisements, would give us insights to the newly constructed places and qualities that might be missing from the original notion. Based on the knowledge from the author's previous research, there are three key concepts yielding an understanding of Thai space and place, consisting of the unboundedness, the centrality of *khlung*, and the re-formation of Thai community. Hence the shifting notion of '*ban suan rim khlung*' is manifested under these three themes.

The unboundedness

The study of *Ban Bangraonok* in Nonthaburi exemplified aspects of a *chonmabot* (rural area)²⁴ environment, where physical space, land-use, social relationships and people's sense of place manifest aspects of the surviving 'unbounded' nature. Though the recently constructed *thanon* followed by the emergence of small numbers of physical obstructions and permanent demarcations alongside it has modified the absolute continuity of village space, the quality of unboundedness still dominates in most areas, retaining the sense of freedom and mental comfort for people to use the spaces surrounding their houses. The flexibility of villagers' behavior and mindsets is reflected in the lack of determined boundaries to their space and activity, and in the unfixed definition of functions whereby the one space could serve many purposes. In addition to the numbers of cantilevered structures along the *keblong* and the greenery distributed over the whole area creating a blurred-edge quality to village space, intermingling was also evident in the multiple functions and uses of the blended spaces of *keblong* and *wat*.

By contrast, '*mban-chad-san*' confines the idea of boundary and notion of community to the economic sense. In this *thanon*-oriented space, fence is observed as ordinary element – all private lands are enclosed by either opaque or transparent fences depending on the individual design. This also applies to waterfront houses without any evidence of physical connection between land and water. In many housing estates, the absence of unboundedness does not appear to only physical space but also to people's relationships with neighbors and their perceptions towards a sense of home. From the interviews with people who lived along streets, it was apparent that fencing was a hindrance to the development of social interrelationships with neighbors. Fewer social interactions in turn resulted in more independent and isolated lifestyles, as are normal to modern land-based society. Hence people's perceptions of '*ban*' in modern communities are now limited to the areas within their house compounds. The following interview by one participant who lives in *Ban Bangraonok* expresses the contrasting lifestyles of villagers and city people.

I went to see my friend's house in *muang* (city) located along the *thanon* (street) but I don't like it at all! There is no freedom, although there is the house and its compound, but it is enclosed by a fence. I told my friend "Hey! Your house has a fence but mine has no fence. I can go anywhere and do anything I want." My friend also said that it is free, not like living in Krungthep. Once you come in to the house, you have to stay there. You cannot go to any other area because you cannot intrude on other people's land. But when I am here, I don't have to be like that. It is so free, jumping into the *keblong*, climbing up to the land, walking to the orchard, walking to the area behind the house; everywhere is our home. I feel that this area, the whole area, is all our home, not only this house but also that house, uncle's house, behind the house, outside. It feels like they are all my home (Participant No. 1-17).

Apart from public buildings such as sport club and recreational facilities that are usually unfenced, the only evidence of continuity (or shall we call replication?) left in the housing estates is the repetitive scene and

atmosphere of houses which are built relatively in the same patterns and styles Typically for housing estates, the property management of *muban-chad-san* is usually done in large-scale with massive and rapid constructions. For financial and management purposes, limited types of standard houses are available to choose from and limited modifications of the building are allowed.²⁵ Besides, land is approximately equally divided into blocks. Within any one development, there is however unlikely to be diversity even though several architectural typologies might be implemented in different commercial housing projects, such as single house, townhouse, detached house, row house, apartment, condominium, etc.

An almost complete bounded space found in *muban-chad-san* is however totally different from the simulated perspectives which are often portrayed in the advertisements as physically continuous – in the media, houses are surrounded by the greenery without any obstructions in-between (FIG. 9). Such made-up scenes could not however be implemented in real spaces as city people highly concern with legitimate land ownership and its monetary value, hence the identification of ownership of properties by legal demarcation is therefore perceived as necessary. Nevertheless, the illlusiveness of unbounded quality displayed in various media suggests that this might be one of the common qualities that people prefer in residential space. Even though such quality of space may not be absolutely created for real, the idea to create unbounded space is enough to initially make good impression in people's minds.

The centrality of khlong

In *Ban Bangraonok*, *khlong* is an essential part of villagers' lives. Though the concern about the increasingly unsanitary water quality has stopped people from using it for drinking and cooking, the *khlong* is still a primary resource for other household activities and cultivation, a major occupation for most villagers. In this context, the *khlong* provides a central space for all sorts of day-to-day activities – private and public, individual and communal, and domestic and commercial activities are all conducted at and along the *khlong*.

On the contrary, the *khlongs* in most *muban-chad-sans*, both natural and manmade, serve the communities as drainages whereas the role of water, presented in the form of lake and pond, is mainly created for the aesthetic and recreational purposes. The prevalence of plumbing in all urbanized areas has impacted the *khlong's* water which is also becoming more polluted. It is nevertheless found that waterside houses are usually sold in higher price as they are considered locating in a better environment. Consequently, there have been many attempts to design houses alongside water (some contain barriers and some do not), however the interrelationships between water and inland people were scarcely found. Water in this sense provide only visual scenery but not a meaningful place that deeply associate with people's everyday lives and their inner souls.

The previous research demonstrated that what makes people deeply attached to the *kblong* is the 'memory' or 'familiarity' with its space, uses, lives, stories, experiences and spirits, not just its physical settings. *Kblong* is always referred to not just because their house locations make them familiar with its existential space, but also because of their deep connections and experiences, built up over a long period of time. For these people, the waterway reminds them of their origins – it embodies the memorable stories of the establishment of their houses, families, and community. It is therefore understandably difficult for residents who have recently moved into the housing areas to develop such experiences.

It seems urban people dream to live in a 'peaceful' environment, containing a quality that happens to be embedded in the original atmosphere of '*ban suan rim kblong*.' There is however a significant difference between a scene that is peaceful, and one that is in fact becoming quiet and nearly lifeless, and modern *kblongs* seem to represent a shift from the former to the latter, where people have less association with the *kblong*, which may no longer be perceived as significant to their lives. There is however a question if the degradation of modern *kblongs* in physical, behavioral and perceptual aspects indicates the losing characteristics of Bangkok's space. The study tells us that without the constituents of people's living along and interacting with the *kblong*, the original notion of '*ban suan rim kblong*' cannot be generated. Hence the key question here should be "how do we bring life back to the *kblong*?"

The re-formation of Thai community

In terms of community organization, the notion of '*muban*' (village) in traditional Thai rural villages reflects mutual reinforcement of overlapping concepts of social networks, territoriality, economic organization, political status and administrative boundaries recognized in the bureaucratic system. The traditional characteristics of *muban* Thai (or Thai village), like *Ban Bangraonok*, are its open system, interdependent society, extensive social networks, and sustained or self-contained economic system (*tan-ma-ba-kin*)²⁶: people grow rice for survival, make clothes for themselves, and share goods and supports with other members.²⁷ In these contexts, people are always willing to help and be considerate to each other, known as *nam chai* – this social quality is rarely found in *muang* (city) though it is still valued in Thai society.²⁸

The essence of '*muban-chad-san*' in the modern context portrays a totally different notion from that of '*muban*' in a traditional context although they both refer to a place as a community. The declining mental connections to place in *muban-chad-san* environment were pointed by Askew, who described villagers as becoming just residents.²⁹ In this place, there are different people with different backgrounds and lifestyles living together in the same area. As newcomers who have just move into the areas, they have a short period of time to develop deep connections, both socially and mentally, with their neighborhood, especially areas outside their house compounds.

Lessons we learnt from *Ban Bangraonok* indicate that the open and continuous quality of space encourages people to have high local mobility and interaction contributing to more intimate and extended relationships among villagers. This explains why residents living in the enclosed areas have much less social interactions with their neighbors. In housing estates, people's modern lifestyles are shifting towards individualistic (*tang kbon tang yu*), as expressed through the preferred lifestyle of independence (*itsara*), privacy (*pen-suan-tua*), and 'being oneself' (*pen tua kbong tua eng*).³⁰ A villager, who lived in *Ban Bangraonok*, made a comparison of rural and city lifestyles.

My sister sometimes sails here in the afternoon, sometimes in the evening. If she misses me, she will come for a chat. Rural people (*kbon ban-nok*) are like this, different from city people (*kbon Krungthep*). City people don't even know their neighbors. I'm so afraid...afraid [of living there!]

(Participant No. 1-23).

The declined connection could possibly be explained by the typical process of creating *muban-chad-san*, whereby all former patterns and hence the behind stories referring to qualities attached to this place were completely erased. Commonly, land developers operate by buying many parcels of land, assembling, developing – meaning wiping out existing features – and building new infrastructure and utilities, parceling land into small uniform units, and selling allotments including optional houses to customers, who are mostly people who live in other areas.³¹ Through the process, those subsisted qualities that have been accumulatively constructed through time would be all lost and new qualities (new meanings and values) will be entirely constructed.

The role of a local *wat* as a center of religious and social activities for a local community has also altered. Although Buddhist traditions are still popularly practiced, the residents did not attach themselves merely to their local or nearest temples. Various persuasive factors can now be reasons for people's choice of a temple such as convenience of accessibility, reputation of the temples or monks, or attractiveness of the setting. The reducing significance of the local *wat* has affected its traditional role of sustaining community and reinforcing spiritual connections between residents and the place where they live.

The research manifests the transformations of Bangkok towards 'modern' *muang*, implying the shifts towards community fragmentation, independent lifestyle (*tang-kbon-tang-yu*), social separation and mental detachment from place. A decreasing sense of belonging and bonding (*kwam phukphan*) to the neighborhood results not only in lessening environmental concern but also in declining sense of community in urban places. If social and perceptual dimensions of place remain important in the processes of constituting community, then the

missing qualities in *muban-chad-san* would be major obstacles in creating a sense of community and yield ultimately (and arguably) mental comfort to people who live there.

LESSONS

Throughout the paper, there are several missing qualities in the newly built '*ban suan rim kblong*' illustrating the failure to capture the *real* essence of this concept in its original notion. The reviving notion of '*ban suan rim kblong*' back to modern Bangkok nevertheless provides an important step for sustainable development and communities in Thailand though it has never entirely achieved. Apart from lessons we learnt from the trials and errors in the new '*ban suan rim kblong*' that would at least tell us how to begin if we would re-perform the task in the future, such explorations also create opportunities for Thai people to establish the understanding of their own city, culture and identity.

The concentrations on merely physical surface in the design of modern housing projects indicate that both designers and developers still lack of knowledge about Thai space and place. In fact, the issue about place identity and the essence of Thainess embedded in space and place has become widely researched by both local and foreign academics over the past decade but the obtained knowledge has never been implemented nor had any contribution to the professional practices. This suggests that there is a need for designers, developers and researchers to collaborate, meaning to share knowledge of the essence of Thai place and help developing alternative designs that could maintain the 'true' identity of Thai space and place in the future.

Attempts by designers to recreate the nostalgically held atmosphere of '*ban suan rim kblong*' (house along *kblong* in orchards) in a modern Thai context demonstrate major problems in the processes of assimilating and re-assembling 'place.' The mere physical existence or re-production of the major elements of this 'essence' (*ban, suan* and *kblong*) are not, alone, sufficient to reproduce the entire essence of a place surviving in the memories that people hold of the old days. In the Thai context, it is indeed the intangible qualities – the social, psychological and spiritual meanings and values, and the interrelationships among all these – that combine to constitute place and its 'unique' qualities.

In contrast with much literature that focuses on the dominance of physical elements or settings in the reading of place and landscape,³² the studies here indicate that existential space is just a part of the whole process of constituting place. Human interactions and their associations with space have a major role in creating spatial dynamics as well as enriching meanings and values (or qualities) underlying place. This conclusion could be

well illustrated by Meinig's interpretation of landscape that "...any landscape is composed not only of what lies before our eyes but what lies within our heads."³³

How then, in the context of this problem, are we able to describe the *overall* qualities of place? The fragmented nature of language and of 'scientific' method means that both description and analysis only capture bits, pieces or parts of an atmosphere and meaningful nature of an environment, leading to a gap between what holistically exists in reality and what is selectively perceived and then described. In view of this linguistic/analytic entrapment in fragmenting and deconstructing place, there will always be a problem for designers to search for ways to aggregate these segmented layers and dimensions back together to reconstruct some new authenticity (*genius loci*) able to maintain the total effects of place.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ John Bowring, Sir, *The kingdom and people of Siam*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 392.

² *The kingdom and people of Siam*, p.392; Lucien Fournereau, *Bangkok in 1892*, trans. (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1998), p. 27.

³ *Bangkok in 1892*, p.21; Phaladisai Sidhithanyakit, *Khanon bang-kok: na dan Krungsri-Ayutthaya*. [Bangkok: Frontier of Ayutthaya.], (Bangkok: Bantuek Siam, 1999), pp.37-39; Sombat Plynoy, *Lao ruang bang-kok*. [Telling stories about Bang-kok.], Vol.2, (Bangkok: Saitham Publication House, 2001), pp.195-197; Sujitt Wongtes (Ed.) *Wiengwang jung ibon chumchon chao Siam* [Palace on Thonburi bank and Siamese communities.] (Bangkok: Matichon Press), pp. 153-154.

⁴ See the conceptualization and the shifting notions of 'ban' and 'muang' by Cuttaleeya Noparatnaraporn, "Living place and landscape in Bangkok: the merging character." in the proceedings of: *The Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities* at <http://www.hichumanities.org/AHproceedings/Cuttaleeya%20Noparatnaraporn.pdf>.

⁵ This term will be of substantial use subsequently in the paper, as it summarizes a widely held understanding of traditional residential space. While it does not have carriage in the body of academic writing, it is argued here that the term resonates immediately with the idea and experiences of ordinary Bangkok people.

⁶ Suwattana Thadaniti, "The appropriate pattern and management of Bangkok green area." in *Methodology for the implementation of urban planning in Thailand*, November, 7. (Bangkok: JICA joint research program, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University, 1996), pp. 3-7.

⁷ Homeandi, *Ban suan and ban suan rim khlung projects*. by Plan Estate, Co., Ltd., Accessed on December, 13, 2004, Last updated at <http://ms.homeandi.com/Planestate>.

⁸ Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam mapped: a history of the geo-body of a nation*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), p. 7.

- ⁹ For the idea of human-space relationships, the reader may want to consult Henri Lefebvre, *The production of space*, trans. (Oxford; Cambridge; Mass.: Blackwell, 1991), p. 26.
- ¹⁰ Robert B. Riley, "Attachment to the ordinary landscape." in: *Place attachment*, (New York: Plenum Press, 1992), p.15; Edward C. Relph, *Place and placelessness*. (London: Pion, 1976), p.122; Michael Hough, *Out of place: restoring identity to the regional landscape*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 36.
- ¹¹ See D. W. Meinig, "Introduction." in: *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: geographical Essays*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) and *Place and placelessness* respectively.
- ¹² Christopher Alexander, "A city is not a tree." in: *Humanscape: environments for people*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ulrich's Book Inc., 1982, c1965), p.390; D. W. Meinig, "Reading the landscape: an appreciation of W.G. Hoskins and J.B. Jackson." in: *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: geographical Essays*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp.228-229; Yi-Fu Tuan, "Thought and landscape: the eye and the mind's eye." in: *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.89; Anne W. Spirn, *The language of landscape*. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 85-86.
- ¹³ Henri Bortoft, "Counterfeit and authentic wholes: finding a means for dwelling in nature." in: *Dwelling, place, and environment: towards a phenomenology of person and world*, (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), p. 290.
- ¹⁴ *The language of landscape*, pp. 85-86
- ¹⁵ This research adopted the principal of 'grounded theory', created by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. (Chicago: Aldine, 1973), p.79.
- ¹⁶ Terdsak Tachakitkachom, "Transformation process of waterside dwellings in Khlung Bangkoknoi: case study of waterside villages in Khlung WatSakyai and Khlung WatJumpa." in: *Modernity, Tradition, Culture, Water: an international symposium, Bangkok*, (Bangkok: Kasetsart University Press, 2003), pp. 1-2.
- ¹⁷ See *Siam mapped: a history of the geo-body of a nation*. You might also want to consult Cuttaleeya Noparatmarapom, "Transforming 'unbounded' nature: the evolution of a Thai cultural landscape." *Reneang: journal of the Faculty of Architecture, Kasetsart University*, Vol. 4, 10th anniversary edition, Text and Journal Publication, Co.,Ltd., Bangkok, Thailand, pp. 204-215.
- ¹⁸ See *Transformation process of waterside dwellings in Khlung Bangkoknoi: case study of waterside villages in Khlung WatSakyai and Khlung WatJumpa*, p. 2.
- ¹⁹ The interview of participant number 23, who lived in Ban Bangraonok, Nonthaburi, conducted in early 2002.
- ²⁰ Paritta Chalempow, Koanantakool and Marc Askew, "Urban life and urban people in transition." in the proceedings of: *Who gets what and how: challenges for the future* (Ambassador City Jomtien, Chon Buri, Thailand: The 2010 Project, 1993), pp. 170-171.
- ²¹ Marc Askew, *Bangkok, place, practice and representation*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 77.
- ²² *Urban life and urban people in transition*, pp. 47-49.
- ²³ Chatthip Nartsupha, *Ban kab muang*. [Ban and muang.], (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn Press, 1997), p. 3.
- ²⁴ The changing meanings and connotations of the term *chonnabot*, simply translated as a rural area, are discussed in *Living place and landscape in Bangkok: the merging character*.
- ²⁵ These insights were gained through the author's own experience of going through the process of purchasing a house and living in a housing estate environment for almost fifteen years.
- ²⁶ *Thrisdi chivit ti porpiang* (sufficient-living theory) was proposed by King Rama IX in 1997 as the way to revive and sustain the economic system of Thailand, in order to yield the utmost happiness for the dwellers. You can find other details in Ruam-duai-chuai-kan (Ed.) *Thrisdimai naihuang: chivit ti porpiang*. [King's new theory: sufficient living.], (Bangkok: Ruam-duai-chuai-kan).
- ²⁷ Chatthip Nartsupha, *Watthanatham thai kab kabwankarn pianplang thang sangkehom*. [Thai culture and the transforming process of Thai society.], (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn Press, 1991), p.155; Chatthip Nartsupha, *Watthanatham mubaan Thai*. [The culture of Thai village.], (Bangkok: Sangsan Publishing Co., Ltd., 1994), p.197; Chatthip Nartsupha, *Ban kab muang*. [Ban and muang.], (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn Press, 1997), pp.52, 53, 77; Phraya Anuman-Rajadhorn, *Chivit thao thai samaikon: ruang kan sukca ruang prapeni thai*. [Thai life in the past: the studies of Thai traditions.], (Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, 1988), p.31; *Muenaam lumkeblong sai pravatsart*, p.112; Vichit-Vadakan, 1979, p.118 cited in Marc Askew, *Interpreting Bangkok: the urban question in Thai studies*. (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1994), p. 77.

²⁸ Chatthip Nartsupha, *Wattbanatbam thai kab kabuankorn plianplang thang sangkehom*. [Thai culture and the transforming process of Thai society.], (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn Press, 1991), pp. 155-156.

²⁹ Marc Askew, "Landscapes of the urban fringe: a study of social, physical and economic changes in Nonthaburi province at the regional and local levels." in *Methodology for the implementation of urban planning in Thailand*, November, 7. (Bangkok: JICA joint research program, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University, 1996), p. 37.

³⁰ *Urban life and urban people in transition*, pp. 49, 52, 57.

³¹ *Urban life and urban people in transition*, p. 47.

³² For literature focusing on the significance of physicality, you may want to consult Kevin Lynch, *The image of the city*. (Cambridge [Mass.]: MIT Press, 1960); Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Concept of dwelling*. (New York: Rizzoli, 1985); John A. Jakle, *The visual elements of landscape*. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987); Tadahiko Higuchi, *The visual and spatial structure of landscapes*. Translated by Charles S. Terry, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983).

³³ D. W. Meinig, "The beholding eye: ten versions of the same scene." in: *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: geographical Essays*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 34.

FIGURES

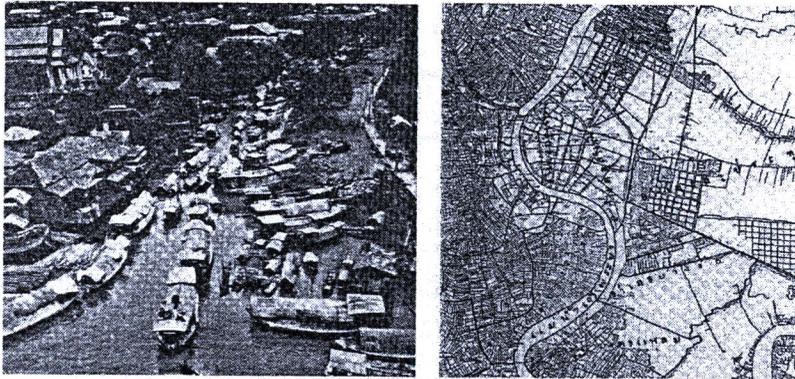


FIG. 1 A scene of Bangkok in 1900s when numbers of boats were generally seen and a map of Bangkok during the same time when the intricate networks of *klong* still existed (Source: FAD and SCFC, *Krungthep 2489-2539 (Bangkok 1946-1996)*. (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department and the Siam Cement Foundation Cooperation, 1996).

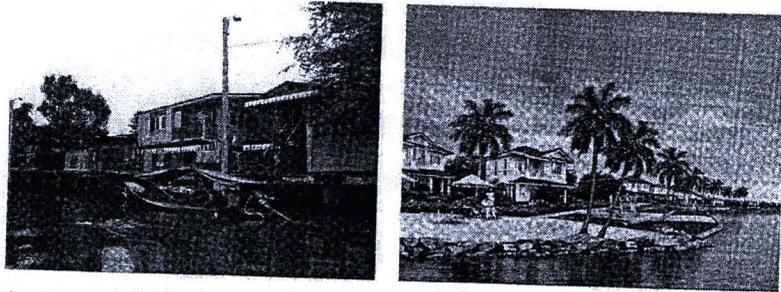


FIG. 2 Houses along a polluted urban *klong* in Bangkok (left), and advertising image for a commercial housing project along a lake and surrounded by palm trees (right) (Source: Author (left) and www.lh.co.th (right)).

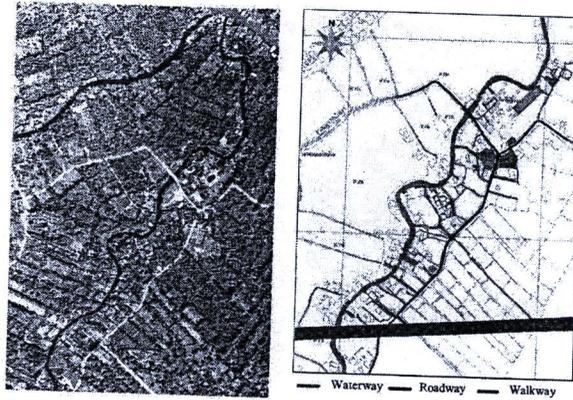


FIG. 3 An aerial map of Ban Bangraonok in 2001 (Scale 1:15,000) and a map showing the three spatial structures of *klong*, *thanon*, and walkway in 2001 (Scale 1:12,500) (Source: Modified from Urban Department of Nonthaburi survey in 2000).

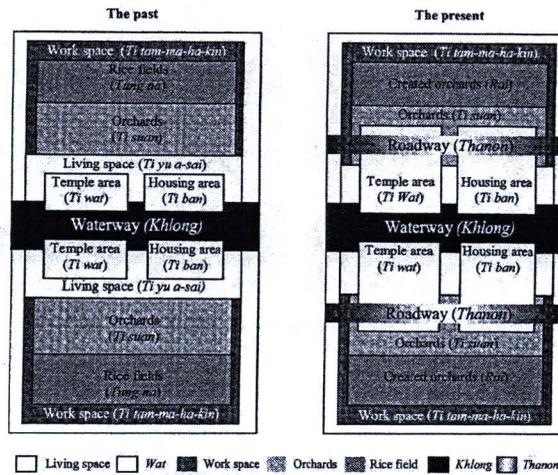


FIG. 4 The diagram simplifies the local land use system in Ban Bangraonok, based on the location of the major *khlong*. The left side shows the original system in the 1950s and the right shows the modified version, fifty years later, after the local road was built Source: Interpreted from interview data and author's observation in Ban Bangraonok, Nonthaburi).

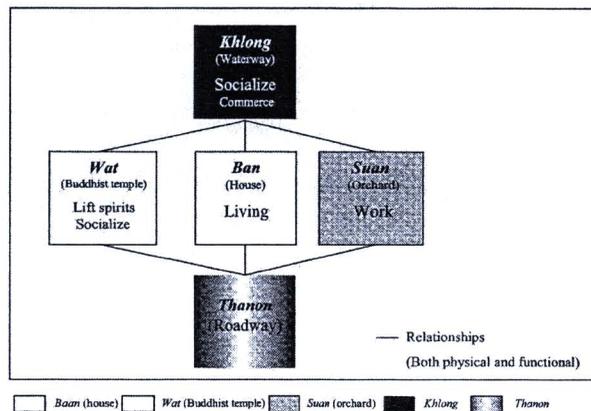


FIG. 5 The diagram simplifies the relationships between places and basic activities in a villager's everyday life in the present day (Source: Interpreted from the interviews with local people and author's observation in Ban Bangraonok, Nonthaburi).



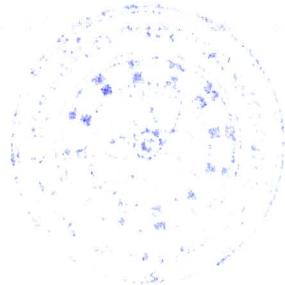
รายงานวิจัยฉบับสมบูรณ์ โครงการ การเปลี่ยนแปลงภูมิทัศน์ของชุมชนท้องถิ่นในกรุงเทพมหานครและปริมณฑล:
ผลกระทบจากการตัดโค่นชายถนนวงแหวนรอบนอกฝั่งตะวันตกของกรุงเทพมหานคร



FIG. 6 Social activities occurred along the *khlong* and at the local temple in Ban Bangraonok, Nonthaburi (Source: Author).



FIG. 7 The advertisements of two housing estates attempting to recreate *ban suan rim khlong* (Source: MLS, *MLS property guide*, Bangkok: Real estate information center, 2003).



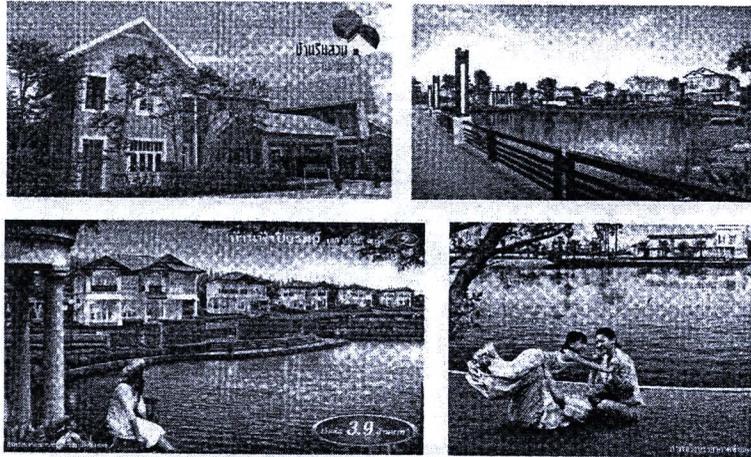


FIG. 8 Various examples of garden home (top left), lakeside home (top right) and lakeside and garden home (bottom) in advertising media: all the elements might be there, but still worlds away from the original *ban suan rim khlung* Source: *Home Buyers' Guide*, July 2006).

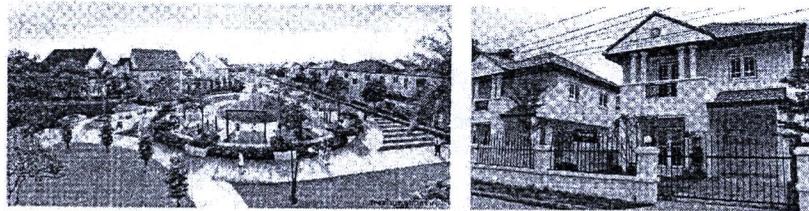


FIG. 9 Two contrast scenes of housing estate advertised in the media (Neighbor Home), which are physically continuous, and another in real space with a complete enclosed space. Source: *Home Buyers' Guide*, July 2006).

Memory or Nostalgia: The Imagining of Everyday Bangkok *

Cuttaleeya NOPARATNARAPORN and Ross KING

The modernization of Thailand has seen an aquatic everyday world replaced by a terrestrial one, and a loose occupancy of land supplanted by Western notions of rigid ownership and title deeds. While the aquatic past passes into memory (to pose some threat, however, to the interests of Thai elites), a Thai episteme based in images and surfaces, transforms that memory to less threatening nostalgia and ritual; and the previous fluidity of space likewise "survives" in surfaces. The study is of three areas of present-day Bangkok that manifest different stages in this transformation to a space of surfaces.

Keywords: memory, nostalgia, Bangkok, regime of images, episteme of surfaces, *klong* (canal), *thanon* (road) network, title deed, spiritual realm, *Ban Bangraonok*, Nonthaburi Province, *Wat Paknam Fang Tai*, Thonburi Province, Suan Luang, boundaries, boundlessness.

In a recent series of papers, Peter Jackson drew attention to aspects of a "Thai regime of images" (Jackson 2004a, 2004b). To begin with, "[a] defining feature of the Thai regime of images is a rigid demarcation between what is publicly unspeakable, especially in the presence of a non-Thai audience, and what is 'common knowledge' in private, local discourses" (2004b, p. 220). A distinctive episteme is traced back to a pre-modern culture of "face" and "reputation", manifested in the "the theatre state" and its preoccupation with surface ritual transforming itself in the 19th century into "the performative state". Penny Van Esterik is quoted to the effect that present Thai society can be seen as one that "encourages an essentialism of appearances or surfaces ... The real is hidden and unchallenged. The surface is taken for real" (Van Esterik 2000, p. 4). Such a characteristic is also

deep-rooted in people's attitudes to achieve "social success in life" and in cultural values that Phillips (1965) called "social cosmetics", such as appearing "caring and considerate" (the concept of *kreng chai*), "politeness", "kindness and helpfulness" (Komin 1985, pp. 179–80). So, as also argued by Rosalind Morris, Thai modernity in turn stands on a mode of power that operates laterally across surfaces rather than vertically in the panoptic or all-seeing mode that Foucault identified as characterising Western politics and culture (Morris 2002, referred to in Jackson 2004a, p. 182) — it is "the love of the disciplined surface" (Morris 2000, p. 180).

There are correspondingly two urban realms. The royal and elite are that of palaces, *wats* (temples), the rituals and images of the "performative state", and their continuing extensions in military display, parliament, and contradiction-laden monuments (Dovey 2001). Against that is arrayed a private world of *khlongs* (canals), villages, spirit-informed landscapes, and the light, elevated, airy houses of both the human and the spirit occupants of water and land. Whereas the elite realm is to project permanence, solidity, authority, and its images to be impressed in some "collective imagination", the private is just that: private, passing, and ephemeral.

Admiring or even envious attitudes towards the development (*kan pattana*) and civilization (*khwaam charoen* or *khwaam ciwilai*) of foreign, initially European, countries inspired King Rama IV (r1851–1868) and King Rama V (r1868–1910) to initiate a number of evolutionary projects. The two major surviving legacies from that time that have most changed the spatial organization and physical characteristics of Bangkok are the construction of the *thanon* (road) network, superimposed over the antique world of the *khlongs* and ultimately to supplant it (though never completely), and the implementation of the new title deed (*chanod*) system (Sidthithanyakit 1999, pp. 7, 23–31; Wongtes 2001, pp. 120–21); and it was towards that private realm that these reforms were predominantly directed. A century and more later, these "reforms" have still only partly worked their way through the greater Bangkok metropolis (let alone up-country Thailand!), and it is to their present-day transforming effects that attention will be

directed — how does the *thanon* system and the new legalities of land ownership arise in the context of a far older spatial realm and of a constantly evolving, distinctive Thai episteme?

In several of its aspects modernization can manifest as surface, and call that episteme into new play. So there emerges a differentiation between “the front” (the public world of the *thanon*) and “the back” (the hidden world of *kblongs*), already reflected upon in the 1950s:

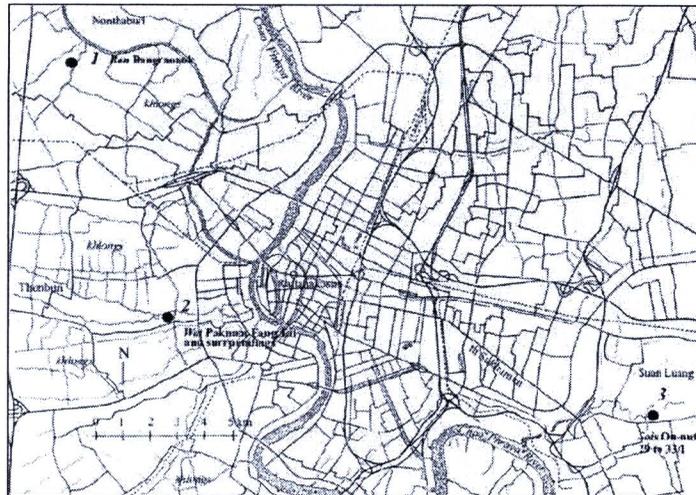
You mustn't judge Bangkok by New Road and Bangkoki or Rajadamnoen Avenue. On the other side ... you'll see thousands of people living almost as the people of Bangkok and Ayuthia have lived for hundreds of years. There are still busy *klongs* this side of the river, too, if you know where to look for them. (Bartlett 1959, p. 39)

However the urbanized streets of Bangkoki and elsewhere are present also as depthless image, though differently, and display the surface impact of Western culture in billboards, signage, architecture, and capitalist-popular lifestyles as a screen across private worlds (Basche 1971, p. 256).

Three Places in Bangkok

We will return to this question of the masks of surface across the eroding effect of the present on the past and its memories, and to further epistemological issues to which it gives rise. However, first we refract these initial ideas through observation of three locations in the present city that seem to manifest different stages in the *longue durée* of this transformation. In each case these brief essays have been based on close participant observation and extended in-depth interviews with residents (approximately 30 in each case), during 2001 and 2002 (Noparatnaraporn 2005); their immediate purpose is to explore what seem to be stages in this progressive transformation (erosion!), but their effect is to raise questions of nostalgia as a surface over the loss of older understandings and indeed of memory.

Figure 1
Map of the Bangkok Region, with Locations of Case Study Areas

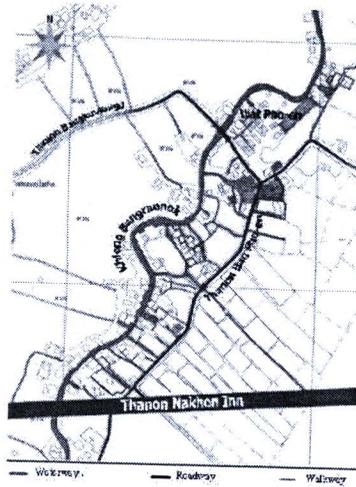


Source: Authors.

1. Ban Bangraonok, Nonthaburi

This *muban* (village), combining a secondary waterway, a *wat* (temple), waterside dwellings and orchards, displays the essential ingredients of a typical *ban suan rim khlong* (house along *khlong* in orchard) or what Tachakitkachorn (2003) has called an “agriculture-based waterside village”, in the lower Chao Phraya Delta. It is in Nonthaburi Province, in the semi-rural fringe of Bangkok, and approximately 11 kilometres from the inner part of Rattanakosin island, which is the historic heart of old Bangkok. It seems that the local *Wat Pho-en* might have been constructed in the late 1600s, with the surrounding community established at roughly the same time; it is today accessed by two main passageways: *Khlong Bangraonok*, a natural waterway from the old aquatic realm, and the later-built road of *Thanon Ban Pho-en* (from 1990) (Noparatnaraporn 2003).

Figure 2
Ban Bangraonok, Nonthaburi in 2001



Source: Modified from Urban Department of Nonthaburi survey.

The *thanon* touches upon rather than intrudes into the village, but has accelerated the latter's expansion into its inland orchards; it has also eroded the old intimacy and sense of community. More remotely, flood management projects on the Chao Phraya River and *khlong* network have disrupted the age-old pattern of dry seasons and annual flooding with its linked routines of agriculture, celebration, and spiritual renewal. They have instead, however, brought a new threat: there are still floods, but they are now infrequent, less predictable, and more severe. The most extreme of these, in 1932, 1983, and 1995, progressively ended the old orchard culture, leading to more diverse agricultural practices but also the need for work to be found beyond the village.

Khlong Bangraonok continues as the backbone of the village, the centre of its life, its identifier, and giving it its name — Ban Bangraonok. Though polluted, its water no longer potable, it is still used for bathing and for transportation, and remains alive with boats trading household needs and cooked food, bringing visitors and, always, local information. On the evidence of close-bonded relationships within the neighbourhoods, it can also still define a community. As one participant could declare:

People in this *khlong* are all related, as brothers and sisters. In fact from here (*Wat Pho-en*) onwards until *Wat Hu-chang*, almost everyone is associated as brothers and sisters. ... It is like whoever lives in this *khlong* is considered as relatives because people from this *khlong* are “the same group of people”. It is similar to *chomabot* (rural area), being brothers and sisters, like in the past. It is exactly the same. Although we are not in fact real relatives, but it feels like we are.

And another:

My sister sometimes sails here in the afternoon, sometimes in the evening. If she misses me she will come for a chat. Rural people (*khon ban-nok*) are like this, different from city people (*khon Krungthep*). City people don't even know their neighbours.

All such reports were however coloured by both nostalgia and apprehension — the world as known is seemingly passing away, and the emergence of *thanon* is seen as the cause; so from another participant:

Road (*thanon*) has changed our daily life. In the past, we often met each other, as we normally walked here and there, like walking to the orchard. After the road occurred, no people grow orchards any more, and it makes us rarely see each other. We have become separated, seems like to be torn apart. People from the inner *khlong* and the outer *khlong* are now using different exits; therefore we don't often meet.

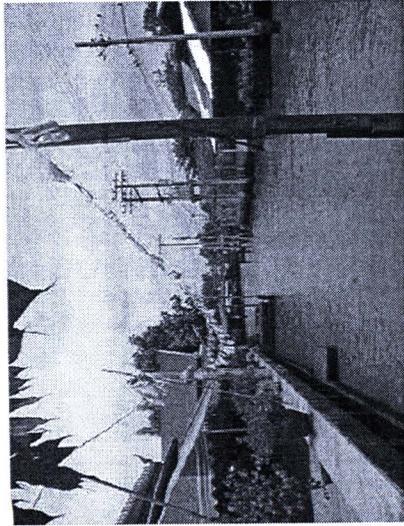
While the end of the old regularities and the advent of uncertainty were represented in the landscape of the village, in the form of a greater diversity of fruits, crops, and agricultural practices and hence, on all accounts, a greater botanical heterogeneity, yet the

characteristics of village space may have changed very little. The present-day functional system could be locally understood; however, land separation could not be identified in the blurred, boundless and undifferentiated space of the village. Solid walls were virtually absent, anything approximating to a fence would be transparent and easily passed through, and the elevation of houses above the ground gave continuity to the ground surface. Housing and orchard areas might be clearly different from each other, nevertheless the space of one would flow un-bordered into the other; marsh, irrigation channel, and *khlong* similarly flowed together; and the land of the kitchen gardens would melt into the narrow pathways that lead into the orchard. There was also no differentiation between physical and spiritual realms: virtually every house had the two types of spirit house on its land — a *saan phra phum* on a single central column (for the spirit who rules over and protects that land itself), and a *saan ta yai* or *saan chao ti* on four shorter columns at the corners (for the spirits of ancestors). The spirit houses and the profound respect accorded their spiritual dwellers suggest the reality of a world understood to subsist beneath the surface of ephemeral, physical space.

2. Wat Paknam Fang Tai and its surroundings, Thonburi

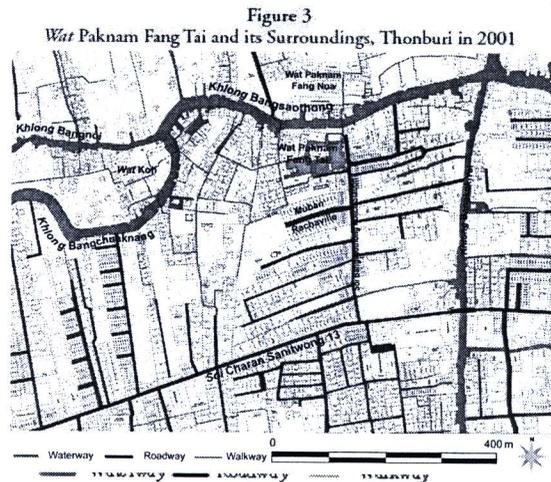
Thonburi Province is closer to the old inner city, and in fact was the capital of Siam during 1767–82, preceding the formal foundation of Bangkok. While *Wat Paknam Fang Tai* is less than 4 kilometres from inner Rattanakosin, it is, like Nonthaburi on the “wrong side” of the Chao Phraya, and therefore largely forgotten by the frenetically eastwards expanding metropolis (Smithies 1993; Askew 2002; Warren 2002).

The earliest air photos, from 1932, reveal a village community along *Khlong Bangchuaknang*, in clusters around three water-linked *wats* (with another four nearby, but along other waterways). The first notable change comes in 1965 with the emergence of two *sois* (land-based laneways) to give access to a college to the south — specifically *Soi Charan Sanitwong 13*, constructed in 1965, which initiated both residential and commercial building bordering it.



Borderless space of *klong* and nature, *Ban Bangraonok* (Photograph courtesy of Cattraleya Nopantnaporn)





Source: Modified from Metropolitan Electricity Authority survey.

The 1975 photos indicate that two distinctive settlements were developing along the two passages, namely along *Khlong* Bangsaothong on the north, and *Soi* Charan Sanitwong 13 to the south. Each constructed its own internal networks — narrow boardwalks and sub-laneways in canal and road-based settlement respectively. The two communities remained separate, though with *Wat* Paknam Fang Tai performing a linking role, until functionally connected by a new roadway, *Soi* Bangsaothong Police Station, in the early 1970s. The most dramatic changes however were after 1987, with both communities expanding into their orchard areas and a dramatic increase in building density, appropriating almost all the previously surviving green space. By 2001 only two remnant areas of orchard remained. There is a surviving community along the *khlong* (administratively known as *chumchon* or urban community), but also two other “new” settlement forms: *ti-chad-san* (land allotments)

with a pattern corresponding to the original orchard blocks, and *muban-chad-san* (housing estate) of repetitive town houses, named *muban* Rachaville.

Accounts were that *Khlong* Bangsaothong used to be narrower and shallower in the past, enabling people to easily cross it; so it was the centre of the community, a space for transportation, social interaction, commercial business, and recreation. While it remains picturesque and a visiting place for tourists and an alternative transportation route to the river and beyond, its extreme pollution erodes former uses. A recent sign now proclaims “No fishing — forgiving zone”, perhaps warning of danger, certainly also upholding a basic Buddhist principle of not harming any living creature, but now also negating the most ancient basic function of the *kblong*, as a resource for food. Religion is invoked as comforting balm and rationalization for loss. There are nevertheless signs of other, perhaps earlier roles — so, from one respondent:

I think *kblong* is still important for people who live along it. Sometimes I still see them use water to bath and do other things. But if you talk about people who live in this [inner] area, it might not be like that anymore.

However, from another:

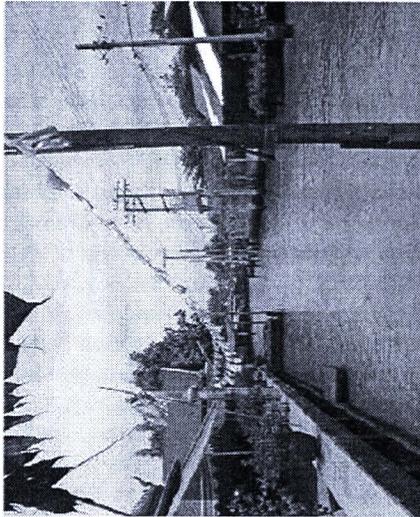
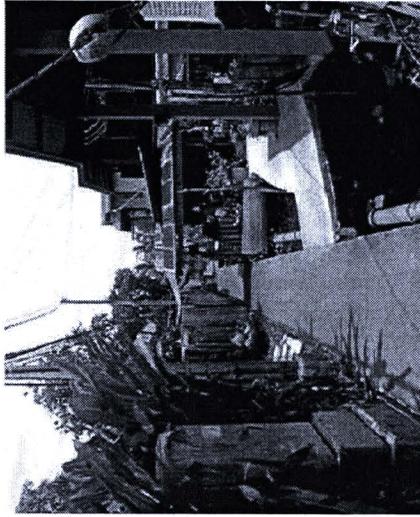
... people are too careless. They simply throw rubbish into the *kblong*. Although there is a boat cleaning rubbish from the *kblong*, people still continue doing that.

Similarly disappearing is the old sense of spatial continuity, though differently in different parts. In the surviving village along the *kblong*, there are now occasional constructed levees to limit erosion of the banks — the old continuity between land and water will be denied! Elsewhere boundaries are marked more by landmarks than by fences. Stated one participant: “a good neighbour is an even better fence than the real one”. In the *chumchon* area, by contrast, the imposition of fences began fairly recently, along the *sois* (laneways) and walkways or next to rented houses to protect against strangers. However the clear preference is for flexible and informal types of fencing that still

รายงานวิจัยฉบับสมบูรณ์ โครงการ การเปลี่ยนแปลงภูมิทัศน์ของชุมชนท้องถิ่นในกรุงเทพมหานครและปริมณฑล:
ผลกระทบจากการตัดโครงชายถนนวงแหวนรอบนอกฝั่งตะวันตกของกรุงเทพมหานคร

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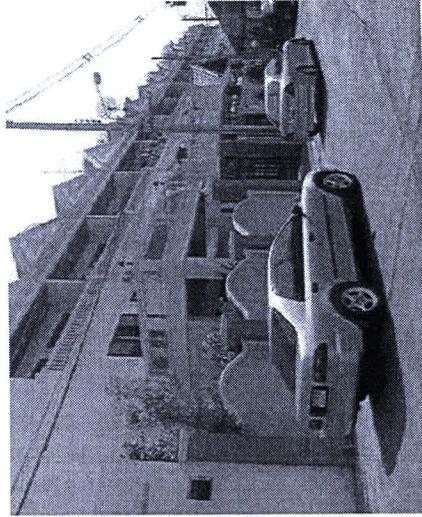
Cuttaleeya NOPARATNARAPORN Ross KING



The concrete embankment at *Wat Paknam Fang Tai*; and semi-opaque borders and cantilevered canopies along a walkway in the northern area, *Wat Paknam Fang Tai* area. (Both photographs courtesy of Cuttaleeya Noparatnaraporn)

Memory or Nostalgia: The Imagining of Everyday Bangkok

69



Demarcated space along *tharoen* in the southern area and the privatized, exclusionary space of *Mibani* Rachaville. (Both photographs courtesy of Curaleeya Nopamnaraporn)

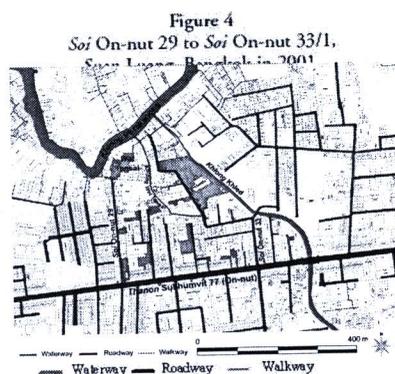
permit a measure of permeability, albeit only visual. In the case of the more “modern” housing in *ti-chad-san*, issues of security and privacy are even more strongly expressed: most residents would be considered middle-income and their houses often targeted by thieves; land value increase is a prized attribute and so one’s land is to be demarcated and defended; the fence becomes a symbol of status, and will usually be permanent and opaque. Fencing not only inhibits interaction, but also reduces the scope of accessible area from a neighbourhood to only a house compound. So, domestic gardens now become an object of conscious design (never so in the old communities!), meticulously maintained, as if to compensate for a greater loss. Then finally there is the Rachaville housing estate, a gated community, where isolation from the wider community is complete!

The intersecting universe of spirits is also less in evidence than in Nonthaburi: the survey revealed only two-thirds of respondents’ houses with *saan phra phum*, and one-third with *saan chao ti*. The relative absence of the latter (for the spirits of ancestors) would seem to indicate the lesser degree of spiritual connection and its expression that “modern” people accord to the history of their place. It may only be history that is so disregarded, however: two sacred trees in the area continued to be venerated (at least by some), with colourful wrappings, flowers and offerings in evidence, and old, discarded spirit houses collected to be placed under their care.

3. *Soi* On-nut 29 to *Soi* On-nut 33/1, Suan Luang, Bangkok

The third case study brings us into Bangkok proper. Though at 15 kilometres it is the most distant from Rattanakosin, this is part of the major eastwards expansion of the metropolis, in the *Thanon* Sukhumvit corridor, and now thoroughly urban. Though *Soi* Sukhumvit 77 (or *Soi* On-nut) was evident in the earliest 1952 air photos, as late as 1965 the area was clearly still rural, with most buildings clustered along the area’s three waterways — *Khlong* Phra Khanong, *Khlong* Khled and *Khlong* Wat Tonsai. However at that time two further *thanons* were constructed running off *Soi* On-nut, to be named *Soi* On-nut 29 and 33, giving access to *Wat* Tonsai

but also opening up the extensive area of rice paddy to urban development. Development rapidly lined the various *sois*, as well as the *khlongs*, while the middle area remained green. By 1987 more *thanons* (sub-*sois*) had been built, land had been subdivided into regular rectangular lots, development intensified, and *thanon*-based settlement had virtually submerged the *khlong*-based.



Source: Modified from Metropolitan Electricity Authority survey.

There were many comments on the end of agriculture, but by now memory seems to turn to nostalgia. One sample:

Old people are very diligent — they never feel tired; instead they had fun planting trees, working this and that, and chatting among their groups to update news. But nowadays evolution has changed our lives. People are too lazy to do this kind of work. They rather prefer convenience. Only people who really have passion in cultivation will continue to do so. ... We have no time — we always go out early in the morning and come back late at night.

Similarly there are the memories of the water world:

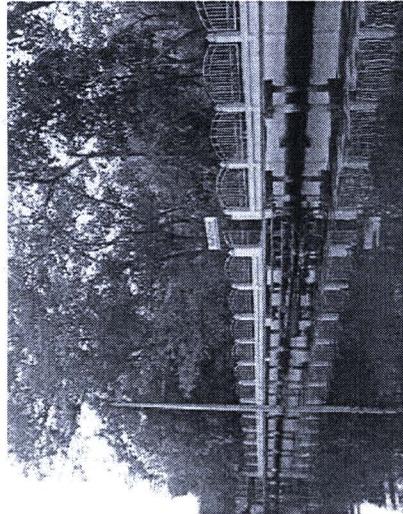
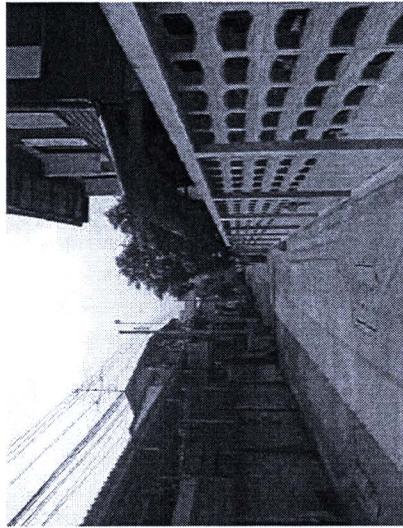
In the old days, *khlong* water was still usable. ... In the past, we used to swim in *Khlong Phra Khanong*. I could swim because I practised in the *khlong*, in front of *Wat Tonsai*. Around fifty years ago it was really like a rural area (*ban-nok*) — no embankment was built at the temple, unlike concrete fences and embankments nowadays.

The reference is to the concrete levees also encountered sporadically in the Thonburi case (but never in Nonthaburi); here however they are now ubiquitous, and the separation between land and water is sharp and emphatic. The levee with its concreted path does however provide for an altogether new practice: it is the place for the evening recreational and socializing stroll, in one sense replacing the old boat-borne visits of previous times, but reducing the *khlong* from community fulcrum to simple spectacle (and, with the possibility of flood, to threat).

While there are still occasional boats to be seen on *Khlong Phra Khanong*, the two sub-*khlongs* now function primarily as parts of the Bangkok drainage system: watergates are at the junctions of every significant *khlong* (including *Khlong Khled*) to block the natural flow — the network has been destroyed even though its net-like structure remains. The aquatic regime has become a machine. One respondent, living along *Khlong Wat Tonsai*, named it “the Amazon”: it is covered by big trees and inhabited by reptiles. All has deteriorated.

Space is everywhere fragmented and delineated. Security and the fear of strangers lead to a realm of borders and barriers. The fragmentation of community, both in physical space and in people’s perceptions, is also the result of the reorganization of community structure and administration: the former village system (*mu* or *muban*), whereby the social boundaries of neighbourhood space also determined administrative (political) boundaries, was swept away in 2000 in the name of bureaucratic neatness. So now there is no community structure — space is “uniform” and every house becomes its own (bounded) world. So, judged one respondent:

It is impossible to gather these houses along the laneways together.
I already thought about it, but there is no way to construct a



A temple fence, which also functions as an embankment, with paralleled boardwalk along the khlong; and a small laneway bounded by fences on both sides, Suan Luang. (Both photographs courtesy of Cutraleeva Noparatnaraporn)

chumchon community here. It is unworkable because there is no collaboration among residents. In order to set up a *chumchon*, everyone must participate. ...

The articulation of profane space with spiritual space is here complicated by the presence of a small Muslim community on parts of *Khlong* Phra Khanong, and the more recent arrival of a Christian component, and for both these groups the spirit realm has no meaning. (But, as we shall see, it is not as simple as that, for at the surface level *all* groups will participate in the grand national celebrations that are essentially Buddhist and Brahman infused.) Among Buddhist respondents, less than two-thirds exhibit *saan phra phum*, and one third still have *saan chao ti* — around the same proportions found in the Thonburi case. And only one sacred tree was observed — significantly in the *Wat* Tonsai compound.

Remembering, Forgetting, Imagining

Khlong Phra Khanong, like others, may have become a repository of filth and degradation, but then there are moments when it bursts into brilliant, almost magical life as it becomes the focus of spiritual beliefs and practices relating to the water and space of the *khlong* as symbol of prosperity, cleanness, freshness, and sacredness. The belief in the goddess of the river (*Mae Khongkha*) is still paraded and is represented through the activities of the annual *Loy Krathong* ceremony. However for “modern” people, the emphasis of this day is on festivities for fun and enjoyment rather than on the old purpose of seeking forgiveness from the spirits — the *khlongs* will be afloat with thousands of little containers with their twinkling lights, but it is a spectacle that yields yet further rubbish and environmental damage. The irony of a ceremony of expiation for damage done to the ecology that the spirits guard and in which they inhere, but which itself adds to the damage, seems lost on the Thai people!

The very point of the spirit world is its inseparability from the (ecological) processes of nature — in one sense they are the

same. The modern consciousness separates them, and the realm of the spirits loses its (ecological) depth — it becomes mere surface in the sense described by Morris (2000, 2002) and reviewed earlier. The question however is how such fundamentals become superficial.

We can begin with the idea of memory. Halbwachs (1992), in exploring the social and collective framing of memory, rejected any Durkheimian notion of a reified or superorganic cultural memory, instead looking at how social institutions and contexts made possible certain memories, encouraging certain recollections while discouraging others (Legg 2005, p. 482). Stephen Legg cites Halbwachs as intellectual context for the vast, seven-volume (1984–92) *lieux de mémoire* (realms of memory) project of Pierre Nora (see, for example, Nora 1986). These “realms” (also translated as “sites” and “places”) emerge from dissecting memories of the (French) Republic, then the nation, and finally France itself, and can be a celebrated event, a name, a monument. The argument is that these sites are now necessary because people no longer live in *milieux de mémoire* (environments of memory). So, “with the rise of modernism and its attendant traits of globalisation, mediatisation, democratisation and massification, modern media is substituted for collective memory. What we have now is not lived memory, but reconstructed history. To compensate for this lack, sites of memory have arisen” (Legg 2005, pp. 483–84, referring to Nora 1989).

Legg goes on to criticize the Nora project on the grounds of a “melancholic nostalgia for ‘real environments of memory’ and for the unifying power of the nation-state” pervading the work (Legg 2005, p. 481). Applied to the “progression” of the urban villages of Bangkok, the argument takes on some strength. The idea of an “environment of memory” can usefully refer to the Nonthaburi case in the present study; it is fading in the compromised case of Thonburi; and by the time we reach Suan Luang it is clearly a regime of constructed “sites” of memory. So we are back to Halbwachs’ notion of encouraging certain recollections while discouraging others. How, and why?

In exploring the idea of “the nation” as an “imagined community”, Benedict Anderson (1991, pp. 199–201) draws attention to Ernest Renan’s aphoristic observation that “the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common and also that all [must already] have forgotten many things” (Renan 1947–61). Certainly, as Legg (2005, p. 481) notes, “‘forgetting’, as a cognitive mishap or active willing, has shadowed the theory of memory”. Anderson’s point however is to emphasise the active willingness rather than the cognitive collapse, and to link purposive forgetting to *imagining*, and so is close to Halbwachs’ concern with the social and political framing of memory and imagining.

In Thailand there are ceremonies for the King’s birthday that see a *surface* of quasi-religious shrines bedeck the city, flags and bunting, glorious light shows, and military parades — the nation itself becomes a surface below which one does not peer. The spectacle is repeated for the Queen’s birthday. *Loy Krathong* sees expiation turned to fun, and *Songkran* similarly turns the idea of respect into carnival, as the practices of everyday life are similarly elevated — albeit for a brief moment — to this plane where boundaries between diverse spheres are to be blurred. The world of the *khlongs* departs from the ecological to become part of the “performative state”, in Jackson’s terms. There are however no monuments or memorializing events (*lieux de mémoire*) to the student massacres or the political assassinations (Anderson 1998; Dovey 2001, and more broadly Reynolds 2006); similarly the elevation (reduction?) of the aquatic sphere to quasi-religious fun effectively takes the mind off the destruction of that sphere and of the regional and national ecology that modernism bequeaths.

Still to be dealt with is Legg’s insistence that the idea of “sites of memory”, at least in Nora’s vast project, is pervaded by a “melancholic nostalgia for ‘real environments of memory’” (Legg 2005, p. 481). Legg quotes a “definition” of the nostalgic from Susan Steward (1984, p. 23):

The nostalgic dreams of a moment before knowledge and self-consciousness that itself lives on only in the self-consciousness of

the nostalgic narrative. Nostalgia is the repetition that mourns the inauthenticity of all repetition and denies the repetition's capacity to form identity.

While Steward's observation might ring plausible, one must wonder if the repetitions of Bangkok (the cult of Rama V, the endless shrines to the King's birthday, ritualized *Loy Krathong*) are perceived alongside the loss of old spiritual and ecological *milieux de mémoire* so that mourning becomes possible. Or, instead, is the "reality" of the surface the only accepted reality, as Jackson suggests (and as reviewed previously)?

Boundaries and Boundlessness

We need to return to that earlier observation that the two over-riding legacies of the modernizations of Rama IV and Rama V were the *thanon* suppression of the old *khlung*-based aquatic world, and the implementation of the title deed (*chanod*) system. The former has been discussed above; the latter in the present era of Bangkok is manifested in the fences, walls, barriers against the *khlungs*, and fears of intruders that effectively determine the spatial character of Suan Luang, the current trajectory of spatial change in the Thonburi case study, and emerging fears in Nonthaburi (see Winichakul 1994). The present surveys have certainly revealed the persisting memory of that previous time whose relics persist in the flowing, transparent, unbounded space of Nonthaburi, and are recalled mournfully in the accounts from Thonburi and Suan Luang. Also in this dimension of urban space, however, we similarly find a reduction to the level of surface.

Whereas the Suan Luang locality can be identified as "Sukhumvit soi 77", that reference is to the great, structuring, west-to-east *Thanon* Sukhumvit that leads out of the city, effectively from Rattanakossin to the eastern seaboard and ultimately to the Cambodian border, and which determines the major direction of the city's expansion. Inner Sukhumvit and its network of *sois* is part of Bangkok at its most frenetically urbanized, and it is here (and in the greater expanse of urbanized Bangkok) that one confronts most directly the physicality of

Thai space as unbounded (uncontrolled, disordered) and Thai reality as surface. All land is subdivided, boundaries are established and legally sanctioned, ownership is frequently contested (most violently in the periodic raids on squatters or unwanted tenants), occupancies are exclusionary, and nothing could be further removed from the flowing, unbounded space described in Nonthaburi. However it is in the *uses* of land that unboundedness reigns: any activity might go anywhere, there is no zoning in the Western sense, and Bangkok is a space of chaotic and improbable juxtapositions.

The drama of Sukhumvit arises in the effect of deep-rooted cultural practices — the disregard for boundaries and regulation, and the creative, even aggressive superimposition of surfaces over *all* space — as it plays out to produce an entirely new form of urban space. It is Michel de Certeau's notion of spatial practices making the city:

The ordinary practitioners of the city live “down below”, below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk — an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, Wandersmänner, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban “text” they write without being able to read it (de Certeau 1984, p. 93).

The city is made by the “walkers” and their everyday “spatial practices” (Lefebvre 1991), and the power of Bangkok is in its revelation of how an underlying episteme and culture will play out anew, in an evolving, modernizing (post-modernizing?) world, to transform the city, creatively, into something that is altogether new and unique. It is the brilliance of the muddle, limitless contradictions and complexity of everyday Bangkok.

It is however in the public realm that the transposition of the unbounded presents its greatest challenges: the overlay of the spiritual becomes less ordered, shrines appear and then disappear, spirit houses are fewer but now in the most unexpected of places (on roofs of high-rises, balconies, in “entertainment” venues), and garlands, offerings, and displays of prayerful respect are far more in evidence than ever found in the villages of Nonthaburi (the surface

again supplanting — compensating for — the reality!). The religious and the spiritual are not “passing away”, but vibrantly transforming. Again it is de Certeau’s argument of the micro-practices of everyday life making the city.

Ambivalently merging with the spiritual is the royal: the ubiquitous images of Rama V and of (the current) Rama IX, and the periodic proliferation of royal birthday shrines (sites of memory, and “the repetition that mourns the inauthenticity of all repetition”). Then there are other, more profane overlays: the endlessly multiplying street stalls, roadside kitchens and hawkers fragment and enliven the space of the public realm. These multiple overlays are however never distinct, nor are they ever completely separate from the “hard” base of delimited allotments of defended private property. The unboundedness is thus now between levels of both activity and reality — between the layers, as it were.

The consequence of all this is that urban space is reduced to a fantastic visual jumble — in effect to a surface in Morris’s sense — where it would seem an unnecessary and futile exercise to try to discern “order”. And the reification of surface, in relation to both *khlong* (the splitting of the spiritual from the ecological) and *thanon* (the muddling of the issue of ownership and exclusion) can be seen to serve elitist interests, of both the state and property capital — everything might be permitted.

Conclusion

While the purpose of this paper has simply been to explore what the idea of a regime of images and of an episteme of surfaces might suggest about the progress of Thai modernity and the transformations of Thailand’s urban space, it would nevertheless be remiss not to speculate on where this acceptance of the superficial might be taking the city, and on the possibility of an alternative.

If nostalgia is indeed the escape from the rupture of *milieu de mémoire*, and if the surfaces of a spiritual realm divorced from nature (that is, from its ecological “mirror image”), of spirit reduced to consumerist entertainment, of Nation to cult, and modernity as

surface displays of the imagery of capitalist consumption, then one can only conclude that the links between surfaces and what lies behind them are desperately in need of discursive reflection. But this flies in the face of the episteme — “the love of the disciplined surface”. Epistemes do however metamorphose — they have a genealogy and a present trajectory. So while the Nation might remain revered, the state is increasingly interrogated; misuses of the law of *lèse-majesté* are publicly debated; corruption (the previously unseen realm of private venality) is now exposed and noisily decried; an aggressive civil society relentlessly pushes out the boundaries — for the flip side of the globalist-capitalist incursion is indeed an expanding, demanding, increasingly educated middle class and civil society. Missing still however is a vigorous discourse on eroding, distorting greed and the violence of development (to do so would be to attack “the family”), on the silence of religion in the face of ecology compromised and nature destroyed (that would be criticizing the monkhood!), on the quality of built environments (the architects always seem to escape, and the landscape architects work for the elites), and on a singular lack of a dream of a better space of everyday life. This last is ultimately the task of the designers — to show ways whereby “the back” can re-invade “the front”, the water world restored to life, and that profound Buddhist reverence for nature re-connected to ecological realities. The *khlongs* and their transformation both physically and in discourse, we would argue, hold a key. Another is to return reflectively to the epistemic concern with being “caring and considerate”, politeness and kindness cited previously, and to call for an architecture and urban design that once again “offers alms” to a public realm and the spirits of (ecological) nature. Above all the surfaces are to be seen, and revealed in design, *as surfaces* — but now self-consciously and constructively! The design disciplines however are severely compromised (comfortably bedded with the elites and with capital), and trapped in the culture of surface respect (it is vulgar to criticize!); even the university faculties are silenced, as inadequate budgets compel academics to augment salaries by joining the compromised.

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Reading the (Un)sustainable Development of Bangkok: Lessons Learnt from the Construction of Nakhon Inn Road

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ABSTRACT

The phenomena of Bangkok turning into 'a city of nowhere' have been explored through the longitudinal study (from 2002 to 2009) of the areas alongside Nakhon Inn Road. Massive changes rapidly occurred due to the emergence of this 60-meter wide highway are consequent to the losing identity of place as well as the beginning of an unsustainable cycle of city development. The transformations of settlements alongside this road are explicated under three spheres of sustainable development, consisting of environmental, economical and social. The paper indicates evidences of how the spirits of old community have survived through the processes of urbanization. It also suggests what urban planners should consider in order to preserve local communities.

KEYWORDS

Transformation, Sustainable Development, Urban fringe, Reading place, Bangkok

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, urbanization has continually expanded to the outskirts of Bangkok, following the emergence of *thanon* (roads) and the expansion of land-based settlements. Nowadays, the suburbs of Bangkok in people's understandings extend beyond the municipal boundary into the adjacent provinces, consisting of Nonthaburi, Samut Prakarn, Pathum Thani, Nakorn Pathom and Samut Sakhon. Rapid development and urban sprawls of Bangkok have caused the need to reduce traffic congestions in the inner city; hence the Outer Ring Road project was initiated in 1978 to create bypass routes for the city. The project started with the constructions on the West side of Bangkok (finished in 1995 and later in 2000), followed by the East side (finished in 1998), and recently on the South (finished in 2007).

Since these highways have been completed, new developments have continually replaced old settlements and thereby changed the scenic landscapes of suburban Bangkok. The phenomena of local people selling their lands, housing estates replacing orchards and new commercial buildings taking over local markets could be described as common (in many cases expectable) consequences after such highways were constructed. There is a concern if the continuum of these repeated occurrences would destroy the uniqueness of locality and places in Bangkok. Lessons need to be learnt in order to prevent Bangkok from turning to be a "city of nowhere".

Nakhon Inn Road, a 60-metre wide highway built during the period of 2000 and 2003, was chosen as a case study representing impacts from the development in Bangkok's urban fringe. This paper focuses on the transformations of areas alongside this road which have been massively changed over seven years (from 2002 to 2009). The urbanization processes have resulted in the intermixed characteristics, with the co-existence (indeed juxtaposition?) of old and new elements, qualities and values. While local

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communities have been intruded and swallowed, they have also been under the pressures of finding ways to survive their own identities. Hence it would be valuable to explore how these communities have changed – what have survived, how local people have adapted their ways of living and how the changes of people's values and beliefs would reform any new community identity.

2. READING CHANGES OF PLACE

The idea of "reading and interpreting place" – how people perceive, shape and value their environment – was the starting point for this research. Much literature indicated the importance of dynamic and changing qualities in the conceptualizations of place and landscape (Gustafson, 2001, p.6; O'Hare, 1997, p.21). Place connotes the idea of dynamic processes where physical and social constituents are continually produced and reproduced by the interactions of humans and their surroundings over a period of time (Gustafson, 2001, p.6). Through such constituting processes, social identity and meanings are thereby constructed and attached to existential space (Brindley, 2003, p.61). This conceptual understanding is consonant with the idea that place is changing according to transformations of culture and societies (Walmsley and Lewis, 1984, p.160). At the same time, meanings and connotations of 'place' from people's perspectives are also modified and reconceptualized alongside transformations of physical existence.

The above understandings stimulate the idea that we need to read 'place' through its constituting processes, which are continuous from the past through the present into the future (Eckbo, 1969, p.7). How then can we read the constituting process of community? The dimension of time or temporal effects is addressed as a very important factor, which should not be dismissed in the reading of community formation, where meanings and affiliations are constructed through longitudinal and on-going processes (Rivlin, 1987, p.28). We now face the dilemma of two dimensions of reading – reading change through time, and through space (Tuan, 1977).

The author's previous research (in 2002) was the attempt to read Bangkok's transformations through the reading of three places – three communities in Nonthaburi, Thonburi and Suan Luang, which portrayed different stages of urbanization (from a seemingly rural to a more urban area), were studied (Figure 1). The reading of these places indicated that Bangkok's development was moving towards community fragmentation and diversification. It is questioned if any places in Bangkok would actually be developing in the anticipated direction. Hence a reading on changes of particular places in Bangkok over time is thereby a challenge task for this continuing research.

Though generally in research, a longitudinal study is a rare option for researchers to observe changes of any places over a long period of time. Nevertheless, the researcher took the privileges from being able to observe changes of Bangraonok village (one of the three cases in the former study) seven years ago. At that time, Nakhon Inn Road was still under construction and villagers still had no idea how they would have to adapt their lives once the road completed. Data observed during those times are valuable information for a comparative study with those observed several years later.

The current research comprises two scales of observation and data analysis. First (the macro scale) is the physical observation of settlements alongside Nakhon Inn Road, particularly between the intersection of the West Outer Ring Road and Rachapreuk Road. And second (the micro scale) is the physical and behavioral observation of settlements in *Ban* Bangraonok (Bangraonok village) (Figure 2(1-3)). Fifteen in-depth interviews of local people were also conducted in order to understand how people perceive and have adapted their ways of livings. The first part was conducted in 2007 while the second part was carried out in 2009. Additionally, mapping, diagram and content analysis of people's own accounts are used as tools to explicate the transformations of this area.

The study of how this place has changed through times provides a ground for further speculation of how this place is moving towards as well as brings the benefits to other places where the emergence of roads become crucial to the future changes. In addition, the attempts to read place, meaning patterns and processes of constituting place through time, would also create opportunities for the new invention to be corresponding with or relating to the old.

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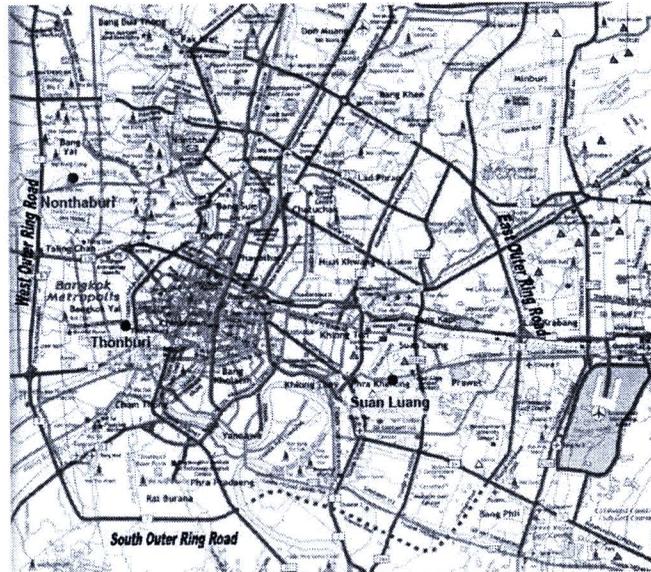


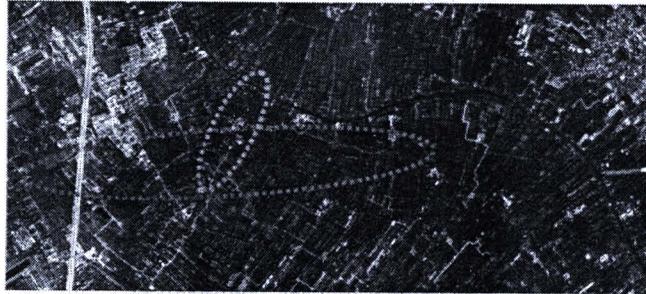
Figure 1: Map of the Bangkok Region, with locations of case study areas
Source: www.bookingtothailand.com/bangkok.html

3. THE EMERGENCE OF NAKHON INN ROAD

The outcome from several researches indicated that Bangkok has been developing towards a land-based city since King Rama V period (1868-1910) and the construction of road is one of the major causes of the dramatic changes of the city (Sidthithanyakit, 1999; Smithies, 1993, pp.35-53). Correspondingly, the evidence shows that the west side of Nonthaburi had remained distinctive characteristics of residential and agricultural areas for hundreds of years until the Outer Ring Road (a 70-metre wide highway) emerged in 1987. Before then, the scenes of houses along waterways surrounded by prosperous orchards (*ban suan rim khlong*)¹ and colorful life along *khlongs* (waterways) were still commonly perceived.

The scenery of this area would have remain green, with only minor physical changes, if the Rama V Bridge and connecting roads had not been built. The construction of Rama V Bridge and connecting roads were actually initiated in November 1999 in order to relieve traffics in the inner city of Bangkok (PWD, 2002). Rama V Bridge, completed in June 2002, is one of the sixteen bridges in the Bangkok Region which links the east and the west side of Chao Phraya River together. In order to create shortcuts from the Nonthaburi to Thonburi, two huge highways were built in the North-South and the East-West directions (Figure 2(2)). *Thanon Nakhon Inn*, a 12.40 kilometer-long road, creates a link between *Thanon Tiwanont* on the East and the West Outer Ring Road (*Thanon Kanjanapisek*). *Thanon Rachapreuk*, a 17.92 kilometer-long road, provides a link from *Thanon Rattanaibet* on the north to *Thanon Petchkasem*, a major highway to the southern part of Thailand.

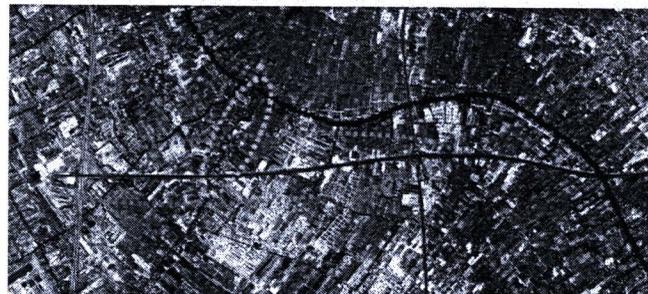
¹ This nostalgically held notion of '*ban suan rim khlong*' (house along waterway in orchards) has been perceived as distinctive characteristics of Bangkok in the old days. It has been used as marketing strategies for many housing estates in modern day. See further discussions at (Noparatnaraporn, 2007).



Aerial Photograph taken in February 2001



Aerial Photograph taken in January 2002



Aerial Photograph taken in February 2007

Figure 2(1-3): Aerial photograph of the study area in 2001, 2002 and 2007

Source: Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (Public Organization) (GISDA)

○ The study area (micro scale)
Ban Bangraoek
○ The study area (micro scale)

During the construction of Nakhon Inn Road, from 2000 to 2003, people living on both sides of the road still crossed over each other and continued their ways of living as if there was not any obstruction. Though the road was not yet finished, the business of buying and selling lands along this road already started booming. Many large pieces of land were taken over by the land brokers and then further to the real estate companies, waiting to be constructed once the road was opened.

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Until the road completed in 2003, the 60-metre width of the road had enormous impacts to local people's lives, with great numbers of middle-income people moving in and massive buildings constructed. Several concrete buildings taking over vast areas of orchards have completely changed the scenery of both sides of the road (Figure 3). Nowadays, this area can be no longer described as *'ban suan rim khlong'* (house along waterway in orchards). Rather, it has turned to be a typical scene similarly to other Bangkok urban fringe, with linear shop houses and big signage along the huge highway and various styles of modern housing estates popping up along the way.

It was then the starting of the repeated story to other urban developments alongside highways in Bangkok². Our interest here is on changes occurred after the road construction and the survival of community identity. The research was conducted with hope that something could be learnt through both transforming and surviving processes. Mistakes in the past would be great lessons for future developments in Bangkok and other big cities in Thailand.

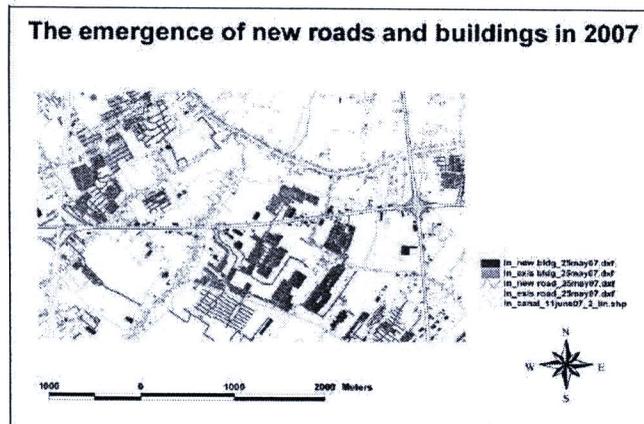


Figure 3: The emergence of new roads and buildings in 2007
Source: Author

4. OBSERVABLE CHANGES

Since 2003, Nakhon Inn road has become major route connecting Nonthaburi and the inner city of Bangkok. Subsequent to the increasing use of this road in only a few years later, the areas alongside have been dramatically changed in terms of its appearances, physical settings, land use as well as people's ways of living. By adopting the sustainable development framework (IUCN, 2006), changes are thereby presented under the three spheres of sustainability, consisting of environmental, economical and social changes.

4.1. ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

In 2002, *Ban Bangraonok* was indeed a good example of a *'bang'* or water-based community. At that time, it still conveyed the nostalgically held notion of *'ban suan rim khlong'*, where waterside settlements were surrounded by the greenery of orchards. It portrayed the image of a countryside village, where the notion of

² This phenomenon also happened to the area alongside the Eastern Outer Ring Road; middle-income people moving into the new housing estates and a lot of orchards being sold to the land brokers.

chonnbobot or *ban-nok*, literally meaning 'rural area', was an assemblage of traditional *bans* (houses), extensive areas of *suans* (orchards), networks of *khlongs* (waterways) and a local *wat* (Buddhist temple), and where only a few land-based settlements were built.

The pattern of curvilinear settlements along the waterway has long been a prominent characteristic of this village. In the old days, this area was mainly surrounded by prosperous orchards – the ditch and dike pattern applied mostly to the green areas. Hence the intricate networks of waterways performed a major role linking other three important places in people's everyday lives together, comprise houses (lived-place), orchards (workplace), and Buddhist temple (recreational place).

The system of local roads, which connected all local temples together, was in fact the portrayal of how social and cultural systems had been integrated in the way people constructed their own place. On the contrary, the strong axis of the highway totally neglected these existing networks, rather concentrating merely on how to make the shortcut effective. The new roads were therefore built on the east-west and north-south directions, superimposing on the curvilinear networks of *khlongs* (waterways), the systems of local roads and the patterns of orchards (Figure 4). Its gigantic width has divided the area into two sides, separating communities which were once connected by the *khlongs* and obstructing villagers to visit each other.

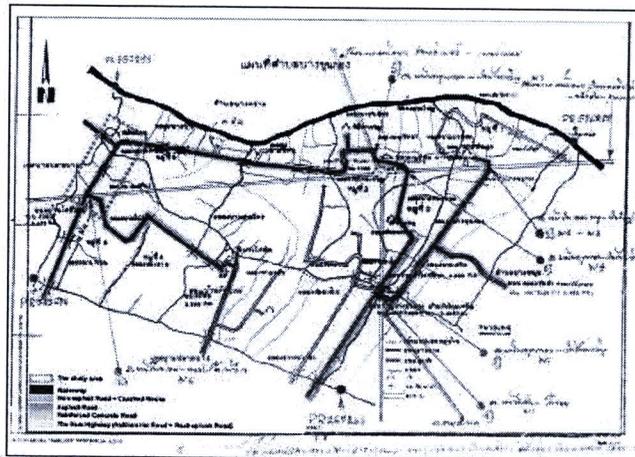


Figure 4: The networks of *khlongs* (waterway), *thanons* (road) and the new highway in Bangkok district, Nonthaburi.
Source: Modified from the map surveyed by Bangkok administration in 2000.

Since the linking system of local road has been destroyed, each *thanon* (road) becomes an exit to Nakhon Inn Road. The pattern of dead-end street was then applied to numbers of new settlements along the highway. It was however the uniform pattern of housing estates that has actually changed the characteristics of this place, from the harmony of linear settlements along *khlongs* to the coexistence of two contrast patterns of the unplanned and planned settlements. It would be interesting to study how local people in these two types of community live and whether there is any social interaction between them.

Additionally, the increase of various types of buildings along Nakhon Inn Road, such as commercial buildings, factories, office buildings, shop houses, restaurants, housing estates, etc has made the land price getting higher. Local people therefore have gradually turned themselves from being orchard growers to land sellers. The green areas, which were once prosperous orchards, are now left abandoned waiting to be sold (Figure 5(1)). While many orchards are left messy, many also have been filled for further building constructions. The changing landform from the furrowed surface to an elevated flat lands has had impacts

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on a very few surviving orchards – orchard growers often blame housing estates for causing water pouring into their low lands. Several cultivators admitted that they lost attempts after fighting with annual floods many years; they finally decided to earn more money by selling their lands.

Another observable change is the increase of water pollution. A few years ago, people were still able to use water from the *khlongs* in daily life but nowadays, they can only use water to wash old rugs as it becomes very dirty and smelly. The scene of children playing and people bathing in the canal are rarely seen as they experienced illness after using *khlong's* water. Besides, water pollution also affects the lessening biodiversity of aquatic animals and the prosperity of aquatic plants.

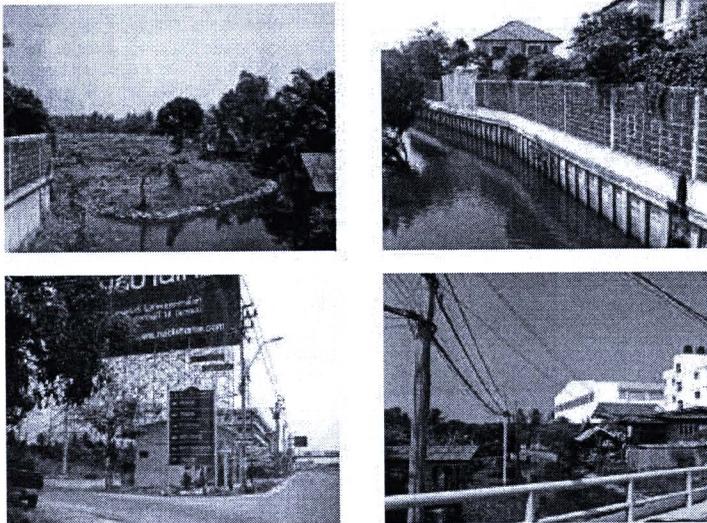


Figure 5(1-4): An abandoned orchard, already been filled and waited to be sold (top left). One of the *khlongs* which is neglected by the new housing estate (top right). The entrance of Ban Bangraonok with the scenery of huge signage and shop houses along the highway (bottom left). The coexistence of old and new settlements (bottom right).

Source: Author

4.2. ECONOMICAL CHANGES

In the past, *khlong* provides space for all sorts of activities in everyday life including commercial activities – there were many boats selling coffee, cooked food, vegetables, deserts, groceries and even noodles passing by at different times during the day. People who live along *khlongs* had to go nowhere as necessary things could be bought in front of their houses.

Since 2003, business along *thanons* is increasingly popular as observed from numbers of stores, restaurants and shop houses along both major and minor streets. Nowadays, there are not many commercial boats left as most people have changed their lifestyles, from staying mostly at home to going outside the neighborhood. The local weekly markets at the temple are no longer villagers' favorite places like in the old days. Instead they like going to the air-conditioned supermarket (Lotus) and inland market (Rama V market) for the cheaper prices and cooler temperature. Even the famous noodle boat that had been selling in *Khlong* Bangraonok for over thirty years still moved to the shop house along Nakhon Inn

Road – the seller said their business is much better though their old customers would no longer come to the new location. In this aspect, local businesses have enlarged the scale to the wider markets.

Another observable change is the opening of Rama V market in 2005, only two years after the road finished (Figure 6(1)). The happening of this market has totally changed the economic system in this area – it has now become a new magnet for both locals and travellers. This large market is crowded mostly on weekend and night time (7pm to 4am) when the cheap wholesale market is open. It suits the lifestyles of those people living in the housing estates who prefer convenient style of grocery shopping. Most products are not from the local which is rather disappointing for city shoppers who thought they could get local fruits and vegetables from the local market.

The new business emerging in this area is the renting business. In the past, most people would live in their own houses and lands; and very few would rent temple's lands for living. After a few years of economic booming in this area, a lot of labors have increasingly moved into the locale closing to their workplaces. Hence the demands for cheap rooms for rent thereby correspond with the increase of flats and residences in the inner areas (Figure 6(2)).



Figure 6(1-2): The atmosphere of Rama V market during the day (left).
An elevated land on sold and the flat with rooms for rent at the background (right).
Source: Author

4.3. SOCIAL CHANGES

Corresponding to the two types of settlements, the curvilinear villages and the uniform housing estates, two different patterns of social lifestyles could also be observed comprise a traditional lifestyle along the *khlong* and a modern lifestyle in the housing estates.

4.3.1. A traditional lifestyle along the *khlong*

The first group is a social network of close relatives who live along the same *khlong* (waterway) – all villagers knows each other very well and usually have social gatherings at each other houses or at the local temples. In the past, *khlong* was signified as a major element for villagers – the first generation (great grand parents) usually built their houses along the *khlong* while the later generations would build their houses next to their parents, closer to *thanon*. The remnants of docks, ladders, piers, *salas* (pavilions), verandas, and even post-boxes observed at almost every house on the *khlong* side indeed indicate the significance of the *khlong* as one of the main entrances even now.

Since Nakhon Inn Road finished in 2003, road has become major route for transportation – the new highway which cut across the whole area makes the villages that were once very far from the main road become easier and shorter to access. Although the roadside is still explained by most villagers as the rear of the houses, people commonly use *thanon* as the main access to their houses. Consequently, several new houses were built facing the local road with permanent fences and closed gates contrasting to the

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unbounded space³ in the past. Such evidence could be described that *thanon* is perceived as increasingly unsafe due to the increased numbers of pass-by strangers. It is worthwhile noted that the style of newly built houses are similar to those found in the typical housing estates. This could be explained that modern house seems to be perceived as "the house of dream" by new age people.

While numbers of new comers moving into the area is increasing, many local villagers are on the other hand considering moving out. The emergence of Nakhon Inn Road has made the local road easy to access; hence numbers of passengers who use this *thanon* as a short cut is therefore increasing. Consequently, local people have gradually developed the feeling of insecurity and unhomey whereas evidence of thieves was described as increasing.

Khlong, on the other hand, remains everyday space though the frequency of uses is much less. Every household has car or motorcycle as it already becomes necessary thing in life while boats are left unused in the dock without maintenance. Though a few people still row their boats to visit relatives and a lot more to the temple during the Buddhist day, numbers of boats selling food have instead moved to the shop houses along the road serving more customers who pass by.

Besides, the interviews also explicated that most elders have stopped growing orchards whereas the youngers mostly work or study in the city – many of them live in the city during weekday and come back to their hometown during weekend or special Buddhist occasions. There are only a few low-income people who still work in the village as orchard labors, construction workers or motorcycle drivers, etc. In Bangraonok, the only three families that still growing orchards are considered well-to-do – they are proud of being cultivators and love doing it, nevertheless they have sold some of their lands to earn money for living but decided to keep their houses and orchards closer to their houses as assets for their children.

Though physical environment has been altered over the years, one thing that has never changed is villagers' strong beliefs in Buddhism – local temple is always crowded during every Buddhist day (Figure 7(1)). The ambiance of familiarity, unity and warmth could be perceived while people were helping each other performing ceremony (Figure 7(2)). In this aspect, local *wat* (Buddhist temple) still strongly perform a major role in uniting villagers together.



Figure 7(1-2): The ambiance of Buddhist ceremony at Wat Pho-en (left) and social gathering during the ceremony (right).
Source: Author

4.3.2. A modern lifestyle in the housing estates

The second group is residences who live in the modern housing estates. It is a road-oriented space where all houses face *thanon* and people commonly drive. These projects were designed with attempts to construct sense of community, hence shared facilities and public spaces are built for purposes of recreations and social interactions. Land is approximately equally divided into blocks and residential

³ See further discussions on the unbounded quality of Thai space and its transformations at (Noparatnaraporn, 2005).

buildings are also built relatively in the same style. The houses in these estates are usually two-storey concrete buildings surrounded by small gardens.

The slogan "good quality of life comes with good safety" has been frequently used in these housing advertisements. Hence all eight housing estates, which were all located along Nakhon Inn Road, have extremely high security systems – visitors must get permissions from the owners before being able to access these communities; visitors with no business will not get permission. Besides, all houses in these estates are bounded with permanent fences and many are double projected with security alarm systems.

However, high safety often comes the ambience of quietness (city people call it 'peacefulness' rather than 'lifeless!') – very few people and activities could be observed on the inner streets (Figure 8(1)). Though residences have paid for the shared facilities and infrastructures, they hardly had time to use public spaces, i.e. pocket park, playground, swimming pool, club house, etc. The neat and well-designed spaces with good maintenance were most of the time left emptiness except weekend afternoon when people were free from work (Figure 8(2)).

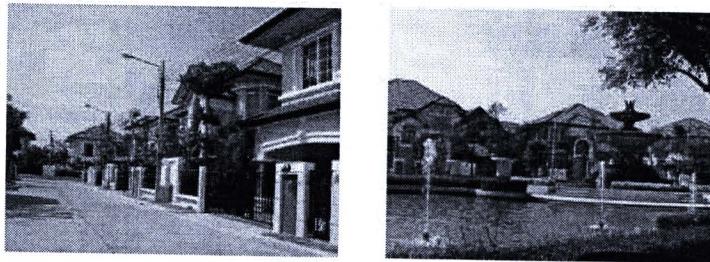


Figure 8(1-2): Lifeless scene along the thanon (road) (left) and in the public park (right) in the housing estate.
Source: Author

In this community, people use car to go everywhere – they hardly walk on the street or use public transportations. Most people have city lifestyle; they go to work during weekday and to the supermarket or Rama V market for grocery shopping on weekend. When they are free from work, they prefer staying at home or go outside the neighborhood. Some of them still visit the nearest *wat* on their special occasions such as birthday or special Buddhist Day. In this aspect, *wat* are indeed a gathering space for both groups of people who live in the same area but have totally different lifestyles.

5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The picturesque of Bangkok urban fringe has increasingly become similar in terms of its appearances – the scenery of massive highway paralleled by linear shop houses with very few trees, the juxtaposition of traditional and modern buildings in various styles and numbers of huge signage become typically seen. It then comes to the question of where such places are developing towards and how we could prevent these places from turning into placelessness. The reading of transformations along Nakhon Inn Road therefore provides us great lessons for future city development.

As we read along the three cases in the former study, Nonthaburi, Thonburi, and then Suan Luang, respectively, one could see that the newly built land-based settlements have increasingly invading the traditional water-based settlements. Various combinations of these two types of communities have indeed created diversity of places in Bangkok. While physical environments were described as developing towards betterment, social and mental connections were on the other hand perceived as down grading. In this aspect, sense of community is rarely found in the urban area; instead communities are moving towards fragmentation or in other words individualistic.

The above study explicated that Nonthaburi over the past seven years has also been changing in the same direction which is towards the expansion of land-based settlements. If we look closely at Thonburi case, the coexistence of old and new settlements has constructed special characteristics for this place – Each community has developed their different ways of dealing with space and perceiving place. While *khlong* was still used for transportation and some daily activities, *wat* still perform a major role of uniting people in these two communities together.

For Nonthaburi present-day, the two types of communities (old villages along the *khlongs* and newly-built housing estates) also coexist: people in each community have completely different lifestyles, senses of community as well as environmental perceptions. Similar to Thonburi case, although people in each community lives separately and do not have social interactions, they still share the strong beliefs in Buddhism and perform ceremonies together at local *wat*. Besides, the decreasing uses and changing role of *khlong* in Nonthaburi (though in a lower degree) was also similarly observed in Thonburi.

Accordingly, it could be anticipated that, in the near future, Nonthaburi case could possibly be transforming to be close to Suan Luang case. In Suan Luang, urban area has almost taken over the old community. The increasing complexity of buildings, spaces, vegetation, residents and activities was observed at the same time as the disappearance of greenery and degrading of activities along the *khlong* and at the temple. The old notion of “*ban suan nim khlong*” or houses along *khlong* in orchards remains only nostalgically recalled in the minds of a few indigenous people, who still live in this area. In this area, most people hardly socialized – they lived in a completely enclosed space and rarely spend time in the neighborhood.

Consequently, there is a great concern if Bangkok continues developing in this direction, how would local communities be able to survive? If data presented in this paper enables readers to speculate the unsustainable development of Bangkok in the future, there is therefore an urgent task to sustain indigenous communities as well as to seek for possibilities to restore those ruined ones.

We have learnt from the study that physical changes with the lacking of consideration to the prior ecological systems are major consequent to the modifications of economics and social systems in the area. Consequences from environmental changes have had impacts on the adaptations of people's ways of living as well as the decrease of social connections and commercial activities. The lesson from the construction of Nakhon Inn Road also tell us that the width of the road is also an important factor obstructing or even destroying the existing network. Hence appropriate scale for urban development should also be considered in the planning and design. Nonetheless, it is proposed that a consideration to the existing (both visible and invisible) networks before making any changes to the area would enhance possibilities for people to sustain their environmental, economical and social networks.

Through the reading of changes, there is however an indication showing that old communities along waterways are able to maintain strong sense of community. This suggests that urban invasion may have high impact on changes of physical characteristics but the spirits of this place are able to survive in form of subsisted intangible qualities. The findings emphasize the significant role of local *wat* and *khlong* in the surviving processes. These two places are key mechanisms that enable people to develop their sense of place, sense of home, sense of community and thereby the deep connection to their place. It is therefore important to maintain these two places in good condition – the evidence of its degradation either in terms of its uniting role or quality of space for everyday life would tentatively be a sign for losing sense of community.

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รายงานวิจัยฉบับสมบูรณ์ โครงการ การเปลี่ยนแปลงภูมิทัศน์ของชุมชนท้องถิ่นในกรุงเทพมหานครและปริมณฑล:
ผลกระทบจากการตัดโครงการข่ายถนนวงแหวนรอบนอกฝั่งตะวันตกของกรุงเทพมหานคร

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แบบสัมภาษณ์

ข้อมูลทั่วไป

เลขที่ผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ _____
สถานที่สัมภาษณ์ _____
วันที่ _____ / _____ / _____
เวลา เริ่ม _____ เสร็จสิ้น _____ รวมเวลา _____ ชั่วโมง _____ นาที
รายละเอียดเพิ่มเติม _____

รายละเอียดส่วนบุคคล

ชื่อ-นามสกุล _____
อายุ _____ ปี
เพศ ชาย / หญิง
ศาสนา พุทธ / คริสต์ / อิสลาม / อื่นๆ _____
ที่อยู่ _____
โทรศัพท์ _____
อาชีพหลัก _____
อาชีพเสริม (ถ้ามี) _____
สถานที่ทำงาน _____

เงินเดือน _____ 0 – 5,000 บาท/เดือน
_____ 5,001 – 10,000 บาท/เดือน
_____ 10,001 – 20,000 บาท/เดือน
_____ 20,001 – 30,000 บาท/เดือน
_____ มากกว่า 30,000 บาท/เดือน

ประวัติของผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์

- ท่านอยู่ที่บ้านหรือชุมชนนี้มากี่ปีแล้ว

- หากย้ายมา ท่านย้ายมาอยู่ที่นี้กี่ปีแล้ว และทำไมจึงย้ายภูมิลำเนา

- ท่านมีญาติอาศัยอยู่แถวนี้บ้างหรือไม่ ท่านรู้จักใครในละแวกนี้บ้าง

ชุดคำถาม

1. การเปลี่ยนแปลงของหมู่บ้านและผลกระทบ

- 1.1 กรุณาเล่าเรื่องราวที่ท่านคิดว่าเป็นเหตุการณ์สำคัญที่เกิดขึ้นในหมู่บ้านนี้ที่ท่านทราบเหตุใดท่านจึงคิดว่าเหตุการณ์นี้สำคัญ และในช่วงที่เกิดเหตุการณ์นั้นท่านมีส่วนร่วมหรือไม่ อย่างไร
- 1.2 ท่านสังเกตเห็นอะไรเปลี่ยนแปลงไปบ้าง ภายหลังจากตัดถนนนครอินทร์ (ทั้งในด้านสภาพแวดล้อม วิถีชีวิต ระบบสังคม และเศรษฐกิจ การค้าขาย)
- 1.3 ปัจจุบันนี้คงเหลือครอบครัวที่ทำสวน (เป็นเจ้าของสวนเอง) หรือ รับจ้างทำสวน ในหมู่บ้านท่านบ้างหรือไม่ มีจำนวนเท่าไร
 - ท่านคิดว่าสาเหตุใดเป็นสาเหตุหลังที่ทำให้จำนวนครอบครัวที่ทำสวนลดลง
- 1.4 ปัจจุบันนี้ กิจกรรมที่ยังคงเหลือในคลองบางราวนกมีอะไรบ้าง (กิจวัตรประจำวัน ค้าขาย เดินทาง เล่นน้ำ ฯลฯ)
 - ท่านคิดว่าสาเหตุใดเป็นสาเหตุหลังที่ทำให้กิจกรรมในคลองลดลง

2. ชีวิตประจำวัน

- 2.1 กรุณาเล่าถึงกิจกรรมที่ท่านทำเป็นประจำในชีวิตประจำวัน
 - ท่านทำอะไรบ้างในวันทำงาน และ วันหยุดเสาร์อาทิตย์ ตั้งแต่ตื่นนอนจนกระทั่งเข้านอน
 - โดยปกติ ท่านจ่ายตลาดหรือซื้อของใช้ในบ้านที่ใด (หากับตัวเองหรือไม่)
 - ท่านมักใช้เวลาในการพักผ่อนที่ใดในวันว่าง
- 2.2 ในระแวกนี้สถานที่ใดที่ท่านไปประจำ และท่านมักไปทำอะไร

3. ทัศนคติ

- 3.1 ท่านชอบในการใช้ชีวิตอยู่ในหมู่บ้านนี้หรือไม่ เพราะเหตุใด
- 3.2 สถานที่ใดในหมู่บ้านนี้ที่ชอบเป็นพิเศษ เพราะเหตุใด
- 3.3 หากท่านสามารถเปลี่ยนแปลงแก้ไขอะไรก็ได้ในชุมชนนี้ มีอะไรบ้างที่ท่านอยากจะเก็บรักษาไว้ และอะไรบ้างที่ท่านอยากจะเปลี่ยนแปลง เพราะเหตุใด

สิ่งที่ต้องการค้นหา

- การเปลี่ยนแปลงและผลกระทบที่เกิดขึ้นภายหลังจากตัดถนนนครอินทร์ ใน 3 ด้านหลัง ดังนี้
- ด้านระบบนิเวศวิทยาสิ่งแวดล้อม (สภาพแวดล้อมกายภาพ พื้นที่ทำสวน คุณภาพน้ำ/ดิน/อากาศ)
 - ด้านเศรษฐกิจและการค้าขาย (การค้าขายริมคลอง/บนบก)
 - ด้านระบบสังคมและวัฒนธรรม (วิถีชีวิต กิจวัตรประจำวัน Live-Work-Play ประเพณีท้องถิ่น ทัศนคติของคน)

**โครงการวิจัยเรื่อง “การเปลี่ยนแปลงภูมิทัศน์ของชุมชนท้องถิ่นในกรุงเทพมหานครและปริมณฑล:
ผลกระทบจากการตัดโครงข่ายถนนวงแหวนรอบนอกฝั่งตะวันตกของกรุงเทพมหานคร”**
สนับสนุนโดยสำนักงานคณะกรรมการการอุดมศึกษา (สกอ.) และสำนักงานกองทุนสนับสนุนการวิจัย (สกว.)

โครงการวิจัยนี้เป็นงานวิจัยต่อยอดจากการทำวิทยานิพนธ์ระดับปริญญาเอก เรื่อง การอ่านและแปลความหมายภูมิทัศน์ของกรุงเทพฯในปัจจุบัน : การเปลี่ยนแปลงทัศนคติและคุณค่าความหมายของพื้นที่ ณ มหาวิทยาลัยเมลเบิร์น ประเทศออสเตรเลีย ซึ่งได้ทำการศึกษาการเปลี่ยนแปลงภูมิทัศน์ของชุมชนในกรุงเทพมหานครผ่านกรณีศึกษา 3 ชุมชน ทั้งนี้ หมู่บ้านบางรวก จ.นนทบุรี นับเป็น 1 ใน 3 ชุมชนที่ผู้วิจัยได้ทำการศึกษา เมื่อ 7 ปีที่แล้ว (ระหว่างปีพ.ศ. 2545 ถึง พ.ศ.2547) ซึ่งในขณะนั้น เป็นช่วงเวลาที่ถนนนครอินทร์ยังอยู่ในระหว่างการก่อสร้างและยังไม่ได้เปิดใช้

ผู้วิจัยได้เห็นถึงความสำคัญของการตัดถนนนครอินทร์ ซึ่งได้ก่อให้เกิดการเปลี่ยนแปลงและผลกระทบต่อหมู่บ้านบางรวกในเวลาต่อมาเป็นอย่างยิ่ง จึงได้เลือกทำวิจัยต่อเนื่องในพื้นที่นี้และศึกษาผลของการเปลี่ยนแปลงดังกล่าวนับตั้งแต่ถนนเปิดใช้จนถึงปัจจุบัน หนึ่ง งานวิจัยนี้ประกอบไปด้วย 1) งานสำรวจภาคสนามเพื่อเก็บข้อมูลทางด้านกายภาพของหมู่บ้าน 2) การสังเกตการทางพฤติกรรมศาสตร์ และ 3) การสัมภาษณ์ผู้อยู่อาศัยในหมู่บ้าน ในการนี้ ผู้ทำวิจัยจึงต้องขอความร่วมมือจากผู้อยู่อาศัยในหมู่บ้าน โดย การให้สัมภาษณ์และตอบคำถามประมาณ 12 คำถาม ซึ่งเกี่ยวข้องกับเรื่องราวการเปลี่ยนแปลงต่าง ๆ ของหมู่บ้าน วิถีชีวิตประจำวัน และความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับการเปลี่ยนแปลงของหมู่บ้าน นอกจากนี้หลังการสัมภาษณ์ ยังต้องขอความร่วมมือในการพาชมบริเวณโดยรอบบ้านและขออนุญาตให้ถ่ายภาพบริเวณรอบบ้าน รวมไปถึงการระบุตำแหน่งสถานที่ในชุมชนที่มีการกล่าวถึงในการสัมภาษณ์โดยการชี้ในแผนที่

หนึ่ง การสัมภาษณ์นี้จะใช้เวลาประมาณ 1 – 1 ½ ชั่วโมง ข้อมูลที่ใช้ในการสัมภาษณ์นั้นจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่องานวิจัยเป็นอย่างยิ่ง ดังนั้นหากท่านจะกรุณาอนุญาตให้อัดเทปการสัมภาษณ์นี้ จะเป็นการสะดวกต่อนักวิจัยในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเป็นอย่างมาก เนื่องจากจะเป็นการประหยัดเวลาในการจดย่อข้อความ อีกทั้งจะสามารถรวบรวมใจความได้ครบถ้วนอีกด้วย อย่างไรก็ตามหากท่านไม่สะดวกที่จะให้อัดเทปตลอดการสัมภาษณ์ หรือแม้แต่บางช่วงของการสัมภาษณ์ ทางผู้สัมภาษณ์ยินดีที่จะทำการจดข้อมูลทดแทนได้ นอกจากนี้ท่านยังสามารถขอให้อัดข้อความที่ไม่ต้องการออกได้หลังจากการสัมภาษณ์เสร็จสิ้นแล้ว หนึ่ง ข้อมูลทั้งหมดที่ได้จากการสัมภาษณ์นั้น ทางนักวิจัยจะรักษาจรรยาบรรณในการไม่นำข้อมูลนี้ไปเปิดเผยที่ใด นอกจากการอ้างอิงข้อมูลในงานวิจัยหรือบทความของนักวิจัยเท่านั้น ซึ่งจะไม่มีการอ้างถึงผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์โดยตรง

หลังการสัมภาษณ์ หากท่านต้องการสอบถามละเอียดหรือข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมที่เกี่ยวกับงานวิจัย ท่านสามารถติดต่อสอบถามโดยตรงได้ที่หัวหน้าโครงการวิจัยตามที่อยู่ด้านล่างนี้ นอกจากนี้จะมีการจัดทำเอกสารสรุปการสำรวจภาคสนามและส่งให้กับหน่วยงานกลางที่ดูแลหมู่บ้านของท่านต่อไป

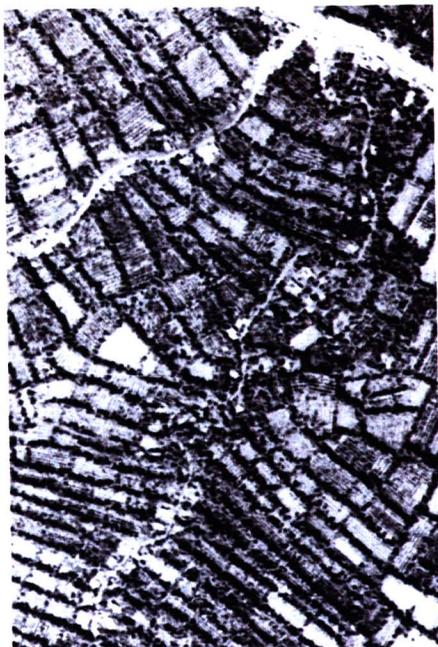
ขอขอบพระคุณทุกท่านที่ให้ความร่วมมือกับการศึกษาวิจัยนี้ ข้อมูลจากท่านจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่องานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ รวมไปถึงการพัฒนาทางวิชาการในสาขาการวางผังเมืองและสาขากฎมิตยกรรมของไทยในอนาคต

ด้วยความเคารพอย่างสูง

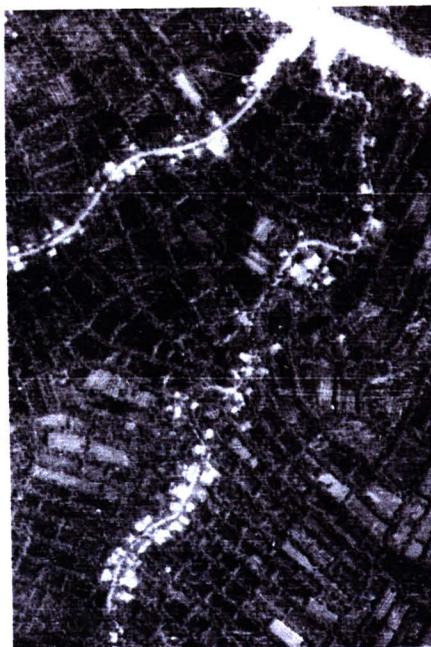
นางศัทธียา จิรประเสริฐกุล (หัวหน้าโครงการวิจัย)
คณะสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยเกษตรศาสตร์
50 พหลโยธิน บางเขน จตุจักร กรุงเทพฯ 10900
ทำงาน 0-2942-8960-3 ต่อ 310

รายงานวิจัยฉบับสมบูรณ์ โครงการ การเปลี่ยนแปลงภูมิทัศน์ของชุมชนท้องถิ่นในกรุงเทพมหานครและปริมณฑล:
ผลกระทบจากการตัดโครงการขั้วถนนวงแหวนรอบนอกฝั่งตะวันตกของกรุงเทพมหานคร

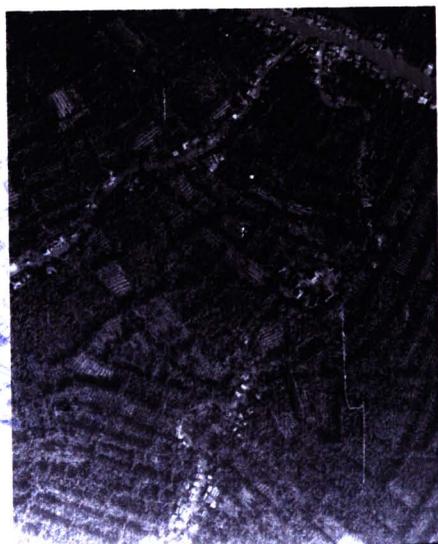
ประมวลแผนที่ภาพถ่ายทางอากาศของหมู่บ้านบางราวนก ตั้งแต่ปีพ.ศ.2495 ถึงปีพ.ศ.2544
ที่มา กรมแผนที่ทหาร



ปี พ.ศ. 2495



ปี พ.ศ. 2510



ปี พ.ศ. 2518

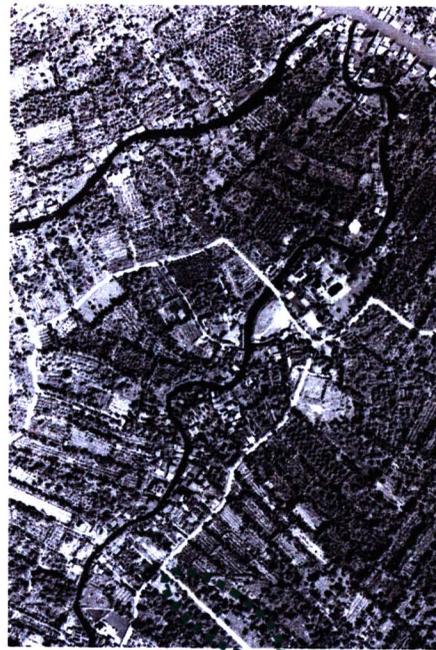


ปี พ.ศ. 2530

รายงานวิจัยฉบับสมบูรณ์ โครงการ การเปลี่ยนแปลงภูมิทัศน์ของชุมชนท้องถิ่นในกรุงเทพมหานครและปริมณฑล:
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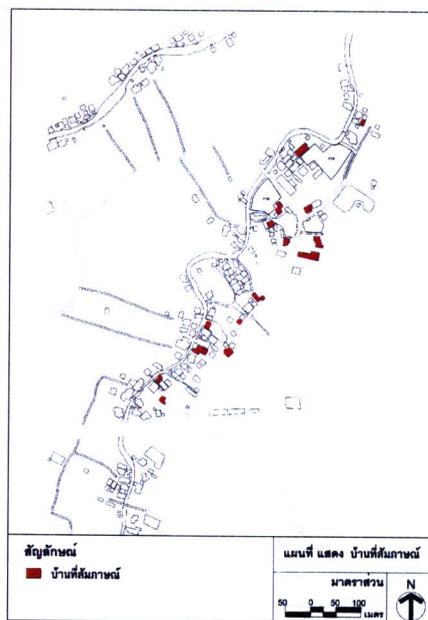


ปี พ.ศ. 2542



ปี พ.ศ. 2544

ภาพที่ ค-1 แผนที่ภาพถ่ายทางอากาศของหมู่บ้านบางราวนก ปีพ.ศ. 2495 ถึงปีพ.ศ. 2544
ที่มา กรมแผนที่ทหาร



ภาพที่ ค-2 แผนที่แสดงตำแหน่งของบ้านที่ทำการสัณหาณในหมู่บ้านบางราวนก ปีพ.ศ.2552
ที่มา ผู้ทำวิจัย

