

## **Managing Living Heritage Sites in Southeast Asia**

In the 14th century A.D., after the decline of Angkor and the rise of Pagan and Ayutthaya, Theravada Buddhism, from Sri Lanka, became the most prominent religion, and has been practiced in much of Mainland Southeast Asia (Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Myanmar) to the present-day. Mahayana Buddhism, spread from Tibet through China, and became popular in present-day Vietnam. Buddhist worldviews govern how traditional populations interact with past material remains, and are differentiated from worldviews held by Westerners which are based on Christianity. It has been suggested that the West perceives time as linear, and the cult of the holy relics dictated that values were inherent in material objects, whereas in Eastern values were ascribed to material objects.

The arrival of Europeans (to Southeast Asia) and colonization in the late 19th century A.D. greatly influenced local worldviews. After France and England gained control of most parts of the region they started to study the antiquities of the region, and this study became a legacy of the colonizers. After WWII, the wars of independence that took place in many countries gradually made France and England relinquish their control, and by this time antiquities had become icons of independence and nationalism. Though Siam was not colonized, its structure of heritage management was laid out by Westerners, which immersed Siam (later to become Thailand) in Western concepts of conservation and heritage management. The Venice Charter, launched in 1962, became the backbone of heritage conservation in many countries throughout Southeast Asia. The World Heritage Convention born in 1970s emphasized authenticity, a concept which was later questioned and caused heritage professionals to revisit heritage management in order to move away from fabric-based conservation, which has proven to not always be applicable. During this period, looting reached new heights, while the lack of awareness was also a serious issue leading to communities being separated from their heritage.

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

# Managing Living Heritage Sites in Southeast Asia

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## I. Introduction

At present the fragile heritage of Mainland Southeast Asia has been under threats from both manmade and natural causes. While illicit trafficking remains one of the main problems, other problems such as development and tourism are also posing real threats to heritage<sup>1</sup>. This situation causes a lot of losses and damages, not only to the physical part of the heritage, but also to its intrinsic value which are the irreplaceable knowledge and wisdom imbued in the heritage itself. It is undeniable that the root of the problems stems from the lack of awareness of the general public in terms of the significance and value of heritage.

The lack of public awareness is a result of unsuccessful communication between heritage professionals and the public. In Mainland Southeast Asia, since heritage conservation has legally been placed in the hand of responsible government units, traditional communities have been separated from the heritage. The present system of heritage conservation in the region does not allow traditional communities to actively take part in the conservation of heritage.

In order to address the issue of public participation in heritage conservation, and to find a suitable approach which can solve the problem, this paper attempts to explore the meaning of heritage and conservation based on the traditional interpretation from the non-Western context. The development of heritage conservation and management in Mainland Southeast Asia focusing on the historical, political, and socio-economic factors influencing heritage conservation and management in the region will be examined.

This paper also aims to study existing approaches in heritage management in order to provide background knowledge for heritage management framework in Mainland Southeast Asia where public/ community archaeology movement is still at an initial stage.

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

It is hoped that the results gained from the study will benefit heritage management in the region as a whole while advancing collaboration between heritage professionals and the public in heritage conservation in general.

## II. The Traditional Worldview

Southeast Asia or “Suvarnabhumi” was first mentioned in the Indian epic, *Ramayana*, written in 300 B.C., to refer to the “Land of Gold” in the East which had been a trading destination for Indian merchants since the time of the Buddha.<sup>2</sup> Archaeological studies revealed that major trading activities between India and Southeast Asia began in the first century A.D. during the Maurya Dynasty of India.<sup>3</sup> The Indians brought with them the complexed form of culture and belief system which later spread throughout the region by ways of trades and marriages between the local population and the Indians.

Indian traders set up a network of ports in different towns in Southeast Asia and brought with them Brahmans who propagated Hinduism to the local people as well as Buddhism, which was also practiced widely in India at that time. In 232 B.C., King Asoka the Great hosted the third Buddhist council and sent Buddhist missionaries out in all directions including Suvarnabhumi in order to propagate Buddhism. The King’s own son, Prince Mahinda, became a Buddhist monk and went to Sri Lanka as one of the missionaries. He established a strong base of Buddhism there and the *Theravada* School of Buddhism was founded which later spread to Mainland Southeast Asia.

In the second or third century B.C., a new school of Buddhism, *Mahayana* (Greater Vehicle) emerged. When Mahayana Buddhism first arrived in China in the first century A.D., it met with a well established local religion which was Confucianism. As a result, Confucianism and Mahayana Buddhism were deeply rooted in the mind of the Viet people and were passed on to the next generations from the Independence from China to the French colonization period until present. Nowadays, Buddhism still has the most followers among all religions and beliefs in Viet Nam.<sup>4</sup> As a result, it can be said that Buddhism as a religion is still influencing Mainland Southeast Asia.

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<sup>2</sup> Phasook Indrawooth, “Rong Roy Wattanatham India Nai Asia Tawan Ok Chiang Tai (Traces of Indian Cultures in Southeast Asia) in **Borankhadee Lae Prawattisat Nai Prathet Thai : Chabab Khu Mue Khru Sangkom Sueksa** (Archaeology and History in Thailand : Handbook for History Teachers) (Bangkok : Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University, 2002), 126.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of State, **Background Note: Vietnam, Oct 2009** [Online], accessed 16 February 2010. Available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/4130.htm>

## Traditional Concepts of Materiality and Time

Nisbett (2003: xvii) explains that the members of different cultures differ in the ‘metaphysics’ or the fundamental beliefs about the nature of the world, and their thought processes are influenced by the metaphysics. Therefore, people’s worldviews and social practices are governed by these beliefs.

Since traditional Mainland Southeast Asia (the traditional society before colonization) was primarily Buddhist, There are three major Buddhist concepts which play a very important role in shaping traditional views on materiality in Mainland Southeast Asia; especially on what materiality means and how human beings interact with it.

### Impermanence

The first concept deals with impermanence (*anicca*), which is one of the key concepts of Buddhism. Impermanence means that all things are constantly changing in nature. Realizing this truth, it is not possible to cling onto a being and think of it as being eternal. It is this inherent characteristic that makes a cycle of life – birth, death, and rebirth. As a result, it keeps the world in its rhythm and allows changes for the better. Thus, when Buddhist structures are built, the buildings are there as source of merit, and in another way as reminder of impermanence. Their impermanent nature also allows maintenance and repair, which will yield further merit to those undertaking the works, and creates continuity of spiritual value and function.

### No-Self

The concept of no-self (*anatta*) is another side of impermanence. When everything is impermanent and is in an ever-changing state, it can be said that everything is empty of self. No-self is also described as ‘interdependence’, which means that an existence is a result of various different causes that come together. For instance, the local community is crucial for a pagoda, since, “a pagoda is dependent upon people worshipping around it for its very being. (It) is this action that provides its meaning”<sup>5</sup> This shows a truly interdependent society in a physical and spiritual sense.

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<sup>5</sup> Jamie MacKee, **Restoring Non-Secular Heritage in South and Southeast Asia in the Aftermath of a Natural Disaster** [Online], accessed 6 February 2009, Available from <http://www.aicomos.com/wp-content/uploads/jamiemackee.pdf>

## Merit

According to Buddhism, merit is gained from practicing virtuous conduct including giving, virtue, and meditation. Throughout history, Buddhist Kings in the region maintained a tradition of building and repairing a large number of pagodas and monasteries because of the belief that by doing so, merit would be gained. The practice is not limited to court elites, but is also performed by commoners. An act of repairing a pagoda is also believed to cause a lot of merit though there are variations on how much merit can be gained from repairing pagodas in different societies.

## Historical Time and Ultimate Time

In Buddhist traditions, time can be perceived in two dimensions. The first is the historical dimension, and the second is the ultimate dimension.<sup>6</sup> The historical dimension is what happens according to a historical time line, but the ultimate dimension is perceived through the mind and held as an absolute, where there is no time and no space. In a sense, the ultimate dimension is where and when the mind realizes its own true nature or the nature of Buddha. Time is considered repetitive and continuous, from cycle of life up to cycle of the universe, but it is breakable through the realization of one's own Buddha nature. Thus, the religious value, or the nature of the Buddha, is timeless (*agaligo*). This timeless nature of the Buddha is ever-present in Buddhist structures and icons which makes them sacred.

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

## Traditional Views on Past Material Remains and Conservation

In traditional Mainland Southeast Asia, built properties and objects could be divided into the sacred, the semi-sacred, and the secular. The sacred ones, such as religious buildings, places of worship, and objects, were representations of religious and spiritual beliefs. Their meaning extended beyond their age, form, and materials used. They were taken care of by the community of monks and the faithful in order to represent spiritual faith and to maintain their spiritual value.

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<sup>6</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, **Opening the Heart of the Cosmos : Insights on the Lotus Sutra** (Berkeley : Parallax Press, 2003), 1-4.

The semi-sacred ones were exclusively related to monarchy, especially royal palaces and objects. Since Buddhism became the main regional religion, Kings had been viewed as Buddha-kings who maintained and protected the kingdoms through their virtues. This semi-divine character extended to all royal possessions making them semi-sacred. The royal palaces in Mainland Southeast Asia were usually built following a Hindu-Buddhist mandala symbolizing each palace as center of the universe where the king - ruler of the universe-resided.<sup>7</sup> However, the symbolic meaning of the palace as center of the universe was not fixed in space, and the palaces tended to move a lot following personal and political situations. As a result, royal palaces were not viewed as monuments and they were usually not constructed using permanent materials.<sup>8</sup> French researchers, Sophie Clement-Charpentier and Pierre Clement, noted that a palace in Luang Prabang built in the 1900s was constantly being renovated and replaced by new materials.<sup>9</sup>

The secular ones, such as houses and objects of everyday's use, were important because of their functions. They were constantly repaired and renovated so as to make them functional, and their significance lasted as long as they were used. When no longer functional, they were simply discarded or adapted to suit other uses.

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

### Concept of Conservation

In traditional Mainland Southeast Asia, works done on both religious and secular structures usually fall under 'renewal' and 'repair'. As Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, Director General of the Department of Heritage of Lao PDR, stated, "There are no vernacular words for museum, conservation, preserva-

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<sup>7</sup> John Miksic, "Jacques Dumarçay: The Palace of South-East Asia. Architecture and Customs", *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 79, 1 (1992) : 299.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

tion, restoration in the traditional Laos language. Vernacular words exist only for ‘repair’.<sup>10</sup>

While Buddhism teaches of Impermanence, repair is not in contrary with the teaching for the desire to repair is related to nature conservation and the wise use of resources, which is also emphasised by Buddhism. According to an abbot monk, to think of all matters as being impermanent and then neglect care and maintenance of those matters are against the nature of Buddhism. However, to care for and to maintain something so that they remain in good use, but always to realize that no matter what care is being taken, nothing will last, is what should be kept in mind for Buddhists.<sup>11</sup>

Wijesuriya (2005: 34) added that the significance of the religious heritage makes it impossible to present them in a ruined or dilapidated condition—a stupa should be seen “in its full functional state and convey the symbolic meaning it represents”. Since building materials decay, this can only be achieved through renewal by means of repairs which will provide continuity.<sup>12</sup>

In case of secular architecture, structures of different scales, such as city walls, palace buildings, and houses, were maintained in order to continue their functions and values. There was not an attempt to preserve them in the same state as when it was built. In a sense, ‘conservation’ as practiced in traditional Mainland Southeast Asian societies focused on the continuity of spiritual value, symbolic value, and function, rather than on authenticity of forms and materials. The traditional way to maintain cultural materials was to allow them to be used by the people in order to continue their value and function.

The concept of merit was crucial to the construction and maintenance of religious sites in the region, while continuity of value and function remained an important factor to keep all types of sites alive. Traditional system of conservation and management of religious sites and objects was largely merit-based which means that the act of conservation will yield merit which will be accumulated to enable the path to Nirvana. By the thirteenth century A.D., the maintenance, repairs, and management of places of worship in the region, both Hindu and Buddhist, were done by priests, monks, together with slaves donated.<sup>13</sup> The tradition was widespread and was one of the core supports given to tem-

<sup>10</sup> Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, “Development of Museums in Laos,” paper presented at ASEAN Museum Directors Symposium, Singapore, 3rd July 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with the abbot of the Wat Phra Chao Lan Tong temple, Chiang Saen, Chiang Rai, 6 November 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Gamini Wijesuriya, “The past is in the present” in **Conservation of Living Religious Heritage**, ed., Herb Stovel (Rome: ICCROM, 2005), 34.

<sup>13</sup> Pinraj Khanjanusthiti, “Buddhist Architecture : Meaning and Conservation in the Context of Thailand” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of York, 1996), 124.

ples in the ancient time. The conservation and management of semi-secular and secular sites was based on functions. Private properties were to be taken care of by their owners. Public sites were naturally taken care of by a local community. Even a palace was maintained as long as the king wanted to continue to live there. If there were political shifts, it could then be abandoned and a new one built.

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

### III. The Birth of Heritage and Nationalism

The traditional society of Mainland Southeast Asia gradually disappeared with the arrival of the colonial powers. The Western way of thoughts and administration penetrated into the lives of the local people and culminated a change in the traditional world view on heritage and conservation.

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

The origin of western 'materialistic' approach to the values of a historical monument lies in the Christian tradition. This belief lay behind the traditions of the cult of holy relics, being one of the bases for the doctrine of the Roman Church. This cult was and still is connected with the authenticity of their material substance. The cult of relics, at first limited to the bodies of holy martyrs, gradually widened its scope to include objects connected with holy people and with places imbued with their presence. In this manner architectural elements also attained the status of relics, and their authenticity depended entirely on their material substance...<sup>14</sup>

From the beginning of French colonization in the late 19th century until 1940s, France was successful in constructing and controlling the political

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

boundaries as well as the past of Indochina. With the establishment of EFEO, scholarly works of the EFEO were used as tools in shaping the national 'heritage' in the eyes of the native people, which was one important element of nationalism. The EFEO scholars should be commended for their devotion and their extensive works which brought out to the world the knowledge of Mainland Southeast Asia's past civilizations. However, conservation and management of the region's past during the Colonial period was taking place with very little regard to the local people and the original use of the antiquities. No training on archaeology, museology, or conservation was offered to the local people, though it was understandable that the political and social situations were not quite accommodating.

The abolition of slavery had also changed the way religious sites had been maintained for almost the past 1,000 years. As pagoda slaves were free from bondage, temples were left at the care of monks and the faithful, though some pagoda slaves still attached themselves to the temples because of their sense of devotion. Land revenues assigned to the temples were given up making maintenance activities more difficult in some cases.

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

After the 1940s, countries in Mainland Southeast Asia started to develop their own heritage conservation and management units. It was during this period that antiquities and archaeology were used to serve purposes other than academic. Unstable political situations in the region called for these countries to use the past to create the notion of nationalism and patriotism. In Cambodia, Angkor became the symbol of all three Khmer parties in the time of war.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London : Verso, 1991), 183.

The Shwedagon pagoda became a contested site where political opinions were expressed and a national icon. Viet Nam used museums to propagate political ideologies. In Thailand, the construction of monuments for past heroes and heroines constituted an attempt to promote pride and nationalism. Throughout this period of instability, a selected number of staff from these countries was sent abroad to further their knowledge in related fields.

It should be noted that after the WWII, most countries in the world have employed the Venice Charter, the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, adopted by ICOMOS in 1965, as the backbones of conservation principles of their countries. The Venice Charter, however, was aimed at the restoration of monuments and sites damaged by the war,<sup>16</sup> therefore, it is highly technical and does not address the issue of public participation in heritage preservation.<sup>17</sup>

Together with the Venice Charter in 1964, the term ‘heritage’ was used for the first time to refer to places and objects from the past – which was an evolution of the term ‘antiquities’ that was used during the Colonial period. It should be noted that heritage is a new term, and arguably a new concept in Mainland Southeast Asia. With the scientific angle of the Charter, which has been used as the blueprint of conservation in the region, the trend of scientific conservation followed the period of colonization. At this point, heritage professionals in Mainland Southeast Asia were trained by Western institutions. The hype of the period was the various scientific conservation techniques that could be applied to the heritage. This period of scientific conservation was arguably in the same direction as to how Angkor, the forefront of archaeological park in Southeast Asia, had been managed by the EFEO. The effort to preserve a historic site as place of the past which ignores the local community’s present relationship to the site has caused the public’s indifferent attitude towards historic sites which bear no connection to them. As collectors’ demands for archaeological objects have been increasing since the early 20th century, this disconnection between sites and people only fosters further looting and vandalism, while site conservation is seen to lie in the hands of heritage authority.

With the rises of local archaeologists, heritage managers, and university education, the responsibility to safeguard the heritage finally transferred from

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<sup>16</sup> ICOMOS Thailand, **Song Tossawat ICOMOS Thai : Kan Anurak Moradok Tang Wattanatham Sen Thang Su God Bat Prathet Thai** (Two Decades of ICOMOS Thailand : Cultural Heritage Conservation – Road to the Thailand Charter), 251.

<sup>17</sup> Getty Conservation Institute, **The Future of Southeast Asia’s Past: Preservation of the Architectural Heritage of Asia. Summary of an International Conference held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, January 11-14, 1995**, 61.

the hands of the Western scholars to the local staff. Heritage is now a term wholeheartedly adopted by local heritage professionals, who see the duty to safeguard their national heritage as their sole responsibility. Though the Colonial era has passed, local heritage professionals are still trained abroad and shaped by the Western model, since archaeology as well as modern conservation and restoration techniques are Western concepts and Western-based. With differing perceptions with regards to values and worldviews, the modern Western concept of heritage conservation and management is not fully applicable in Mainland Southeast Asia. The locally implemented Western-based efforts to museumize monuments and sites sever the tie between the local community and the monuments and undermine the very foundation of Buddhist structures which relies on interdependence. In the case of monasteries in Mandalay, a large number of monks have to relocate when their temples are isolated and turned into 'living museums'. In historic sites such as Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Angkor, the proclamation of heritage parks has caused people to move out, while some are banned to continue their traditional livelihood, thus creating conflicts between the local community and the heritage authorities. It can even generate hatred towards heritage, resulting in indifference, looting, and vandalism. Furthermore, this has a full responsibility for the creation of the 'dead' monuments, when the aim of conservation focuses only on the material aspect of heritage.

As a result, there is a need to find a better solution to enable an effective protection, conservation, and management of sites and artifacts in the region. Just recently, a rising trend of community heritage management and participation seems to take place in Mainland Southeast Asia. In Thailand, the Community Archaeology Project led by Sayan Praishanjitr has received applause and interests from the public. At Angkor, the APSARA Authority and heritage professionals have worked more with the local community and taken their interests into consideration. In Lao PDR, villagers take part in surveying and site management at the Plain of Jars, Vat Phou, and Luang Prabang.<sup>18</sup> In Viet Nam, the most recent project took place at the Co Lao citadel in Hanoi in a form of cultural mapping, while the vice director of the Institute of Archaeology just gave an interview that there was an intention to create a community archaeology project in the country.<sup>19</sup> It is possible that through an active collaboration

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<sup>18</sup> Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, "Current Situation of Archaeology in Lao PDR," powerpoint presentation presented at the ICCROM-SPAFA Living Heritage Sites Programme Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, 17 Oct. 2009.

<sup>19</sup> **An Archaeology for the People, By the People** [Online], accessed 27 June 2009, Available from <http://www.southeastasianarchaeology.com/2008/09/18/an-archaeology-for-the-people-by-the-people/>

with the local community, heritage will be better protected which help save time and resources of the heritage authorities.

## IV. Present Situation of Heritage Management

### Heritage Management Approaches

Usually, heritage is seen to be divided into two main categories of tangible and intangible heritage. The dualistic view plays an important role in objectifying and denigrating heritage since heritage professionals often “separate elements out and treat them as discrete things. Once we understand them, we believe we understand heritage. What we forget to do is to put them back together to see how they interact.”<sup>20</sup> Heritage is, in fact, encompassing both the tangible and intangible which cannot be separated.

To many, heritage is seen not as a thing, a place, or an inherited entity, but a process, since heritage is an interpretation of the past which translates into the present. Smith and Waterton (2009: 44) explains that “heritage is a cultural process or performance of meaning-making...(it) becomes not a thing or a place, but an intangible process in which social and cultural values are identified, negotiated, rejected or affirmed.” The idea of heritage as a process “allows for a broader capacity within which to consider how and why a variety of things can become heritage, or,..., cease to be heritage.”<sup>21</sup> With this concept, one is offered a wider way of dealing with heritage which goes beyond narrow categories such as being of outstanding particular values or tangible or intangible.

Realizing this, it is important to reflect on existing heritage management models in order to find a way which addresses the contested and diverse nature of heritage the most.

### The Conventional Approach

The Conventional Approach is very much related to the politics of the past and colonization. This approach has its root in the idea of the West that heritage is a vulnerable resource whose values are inherent in its fabrics. As a result, the approach is fabric-based and focuses on the museumization of

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<sup>20</sup> John Carman, **Archaeology and Heritage : An Introduction** (New York : Continuum, 2002), 24.

<sup>21</sup> Laurajane Smith and Emma Waterton, **Heritage, Communities and Archaeology** (London : Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 2009), 45.

heritage and opposes changes to the best without taking into account opinions and rights of the traditional community. It sees that heritage professionals is the ultimate custodians of heritage, since it assumes that non-heritage professionals are not capable of taking care of the heritage, which is the notion carried from the Colonial period. It also “privileges a Western knowledge system and displaces other ways of understanding the world around us” since other ways are seen as “primitive” and “incorrect”.<sup>22</sup> Relying heavily on expertise, it is recognized that this approach uses a large amount of state funding making it unsustainable. The approach also marginalizes other groups and creates a great divide between man and heritage, which results in other problems such as looting, illicit trafficking, negligence, ignorance, and even contempt towards heritage. This approach is associated with early conservation frameworks such as the Athens Charter, the Venice Charter, and the World Heritage Convention.<sup>23</sup>

Arguably, this model can be applied on the true ‘safely dead’ heritage, which no longer serves its traditional purpose, no longer in active use, and has no owners, but should not be used at all in all other cases.<sup>24</sup>

## The Values-based Approach

The Values-based Approach was developed following conflicts with the indigenous groups on issues concerning heritage management of sites which are of importance to the indigenous peoples. This situation and development were reflected in a number of Charters including the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places with Cultural Heritage Value (1996), the ICOMOS Australia Burra Charter (1999), the ICOMOS Charter for the Protection and Management of Archaeological Heritage (1990), and the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994). It was at this period that the needs of the indigenous groups were addressed for the first time in the history of conservation. Another turning point within this approach is that values were seen as being ‘ascribed’ on heritage by people, not as ‘inherent’ in the fabrics of heritage. As a result, there was an expansion of values associated with heritage as ascribed by different groups of people, including social and religious values, whereas within the Conventional Approach, values were historical, aesthetical, and archaeological.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> ICCROM, *the Living Heritage Approach Handbook*, 2009: 14-15 cited from Dean Sully, ed., *Decolonising Conservation: Caring for Maori Meeting Houses Outside New Zealand* (Walnut Creek, CA : Left Coast Press, 2007), 28.

<sup>23</sup> ICCROM, *the Living Heritage Approach Handbook*, 16.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

The approach aims to democratize heritage conservation and management by assigning various stakeholders with equal claims on heritage, which are supposed to have fair shares in decision-making process. However, because of this, the approach is criticized for being ultra-relativist since all can claim their stakes in heritage which lessens the voices of the traditional community who are the original custodians. Ultimately, heritage professionals still act as the main custodians who control the heritage discourse, so it is still expert-led and focuses on heritage fabric. In a way, it is seen as a disguise of the Conventional Approach which touches upon the issue of participation and multiculturalism. As a result, the Values-based Approach is neither democratic nor the best practice.

### **The Living Heritage Approach**

On the other hand, the Living Heritage Approach makes a statement by aiming to decolonize conservation.<sup>26</sup> It moves away from the old frameworks which are material-based approaches to be community-based. While taking into account voices from other groups, it gives the first priority to the needs of the traditional community. As Britt Baillie puts it, “for the LHA, heritage management is about learning from, understanding, and (interacting) with the past for the needs of today, whilst seeking to create the conditions needed for the survival and evolution of heritage for the future”<sup>27</sup> The most important aspect of this approach is that it allows change to take place to the heritage while recognizing change as agent of continuity since heritage is viewed as a continuous process and the tangible and intangible aspects are inseparable. Heritage professionals will facilitate conservation and management of heritage within the framework of the traditional community. As a result, the approach helps instigate pride and appreciation in heritage which will lead to community-based actions which reduce dependency from State in terms of manpower and other resources. The aim of this Living Heritage Approach is to conserve continuity and to promote an inclusive understanding of heritage which incorporates local knowledge, practices, perspectives, and traditional skills.<sup>28</sup> In essence, this approach is seen to be able to initiate a sense of awakening even among a latent traditional community, and to empower heritage professionals to work with the public.

While it may sound like a conservation Utopia, the approach also has several weaknesses which need to be addressed. For instance, it is noted that

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 29.

since the approach advocates the voice of the traditional community, there might be conflicts arising from different groups competing for the traditional, or core community status.<sup>29</sup> Another concern is about achieving a balance between the needs of the community and the conservation needs, which should be governed by existing traditions.

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

In order to find an appropriate approach which answers to the needs of Mainland Southeast Asia, there is a need to explore present heritage management and conservation practices in the region. Five sites in five countries were selected as case studies including the Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar, Angkor in Cambodia, the Plain of Jars in Lao PDR, Hoi An in Viet Nam, and Phrae in Thailand.

## **V. Present Practices in Mainland Southeast Asia**

### **The Shwedagon Pagoda**

Out of all five case studies, the Shwedagon pagoda is the most sustainable and has the highest level of public participation. A national icon and a spiritual center, the present management system of the Pagoda, by way of Pagoda Trustees, was in place since the time of the British rule. The Trustees system consisting of a board of elected five-precepts holders working together with an advisory board of abbots, was established in 1871 and has evolved through time. At present, all Trustees are appointed by the Government and the number of Trustees, though in principle is nine, increased to twelve. The Trustees are required to always be present at the Pagoda. On normal days they have to stay at the Pagoda from 4 am to 10 pm and on duty days they have to take turn to sleep over at the Pagoda. Each trustee has a duty to supervise a division within the Shwedagon Pagoda including Secretariat, Administration, Budgeting/Accounting, Valuables, Construction and Maintenance, Security, Library and Museum, Supplies, and Daily Maintenance.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> From the discussion during the ICCROM-SPAFA Living Heritage Sites Programme Meeting by ICCROM and SPAFA on 18 Oct. 2009.

<sup>30</sup> This paragraph is a summary from an interview with U Ba Shwe on 29 April 2009.

At present the Shwedagon Pagoda has about 800 employees; 280 of them are assigned for maintenance and conservation – and most of them engineers.<sup>31</sup> Every week the Board of Trustees will have a meeting to discuss various issues related to the management of the Pagoda. The Advisory Board, which includes monks and the Deputy Commissioner of Yangon will provide their advices and approvals.<sup>32</sup> The present ecclesiastic Advisory Board or the Ovacariya Sayadaws contains 11 most reverent monks.<sup>33</sup>

The income for the Pagoda comes from interest in bonds donated to the Pagoda by the faithful as well as from large and small donations, rents, and sales. Though the maintenance of the Shwedagon Pagoda is extremely expensive, the costs are covered by donations of the faithful. In addition, assistance can be solicited from other Buddhist volunteers. Therefore, the system reflects the core concept of interdependence which demonstrates that Buddhist sites and people have to co-exist. One Pagoda Trustee, when asked about the numerous construction of shrines on the Pagoda platform, replied that "...it is not in accordance with Buddhist feeling that the right of any man to earn spiritual merit by adding something to the national pagoda should be denied..."<sup>34</sup> This statement shows that the Trustees take into account the needs of the Buddhists who are the patron of the Pagoda before others. This coupled with the auditing of the Trustees by the Advisory Board provide a rather stable system to ensure the site's sustainability.

A disadvantage of the system of Trustees lies within the power of the Trustees in decision-making process. However, within the election system, since there are a fair number of Trustees who work with the Advisory Board of monks, who are part of the traditional community, the system should have very little flaws and should be able to represent the needs of the traditional community, while the framework of merit-making and tradition govern the conservation and management decision.

## Angkor

In 1992, following the effort of King Norodom Sihanouk, Angkor was inscribed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO. In May 1994, with the efforts to preserve the Angkor Park, the King issued a Royal Decree to establish Protected Cultural Zones in the Siem Reap/Angkor Region known as ZEMP which divided the region of Angkor and Siem Reap into five zones whereby Zone 1 and Zone 2 required the most protection.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> **Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees** [Online], accessed 9 September 2009. Available from <http://www.shwedagonpagoda.com/BOT.html>

<sup>34</sup> **Myanmar Pagoda Shwedagon Pagoda** [Online], accessed 16 September 2009. Available from [http://myanmar-all.com/Myanmar\\_Pagoda.html](http://myanmar-all.com/Myanmar_Pagoda.html)

In February 1995 there was another decree to establish APSARA (Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap)<sup>35</sup> to provide national staff to take care of the conservation and management of Angkor and related sites. In 1999, the concession of entry tickets to Angkor was given to a Khmer company which provided a percentage of the income to APSARA.<sup>36</sup> It was first operated with several Departments and the main focus was on maintaining and restoring the monuments. The management of Angkor by APSARA can be divided into two phases. At the first phase from its inception until 2004, APSARA was criticized for being the ‘controller’ of the Angkor Park for its strict policies and regulations imposed on the traditional inhabitants. There were changes taking place on the traditional way of life of the local people which were considered necessary to conserve the temples and the forest. People were banned from continuing their traditional livelihood and monks were banned from using Angkor temples for monastic purposes such as meditation and ordination, which had been traditionally practiced.<sup>37</sup> These threats posed on the way of life of the local people widened the gap between Angkor and the traditional communities.

In the second phase, the newly established Department of Monuments and Archaeology II (DMA II) started to work with the local community and tried to reconcile their differences. They organized meetings, seminars, as well as ad hoc awareness raising programmes to communicate with the local communities. They also work with international partners such as the University of Sydney, the EFEO, and UNESCO on a long-term basis to address issues of living heritage while viewing themselves as coordinator when working with the local communities and conducting community development projects.<sup>38</sup> One of the most outstanding practices was the return of the head of the Vishnu statue or Ta Reach to its body at Angkor Wat by the German Apsara Conservation Project. The effort was done in consultation and with participation of the local people who are the patron of the statue.

Based on Britt Baillie’s 2005 interviews with the local people,<sup>39</sup> it can be concluded that the Khmers view Angkor with a mixture of feelings. One thing

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<sup>35</sup> Present name is APSARA National Authority (ANA).

<sup>36</sup> Khoun Khun-Neay, “Site Management and Local Communities” in **Angkor : Heritage Values and Issues** eds., Richard Mackay and Sharon Sullivan (n.p., University of Sydney, 2008), 132.

<sup>37</sup> Britt Baillie, “Conservation of the Sacred at Angkor Wat : Further Reflections on Living Heritage” **Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites** 8 (2005), 127.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Britt Baillie, M.Phil Dissertation on *Angkor Wat: Conserving the Sacred?* Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, UK, 2005.

in common thought, is that Angkor is sacred and can ‘never be unsacred’, while its sacredness, as identified by interviewees, rested with the fact that it is being respected by the Khmers. This reflects again the concept of interdependence between the sacred and the faithful which provide meaning to, and, nourish each other. Therefore, this aspect will have to be considered in the conservation management plan of Angkor.

It is recognized that working with communities is a long process. Examples shown by ASPARA have reflected genuine interests in the benefits of the traditional communities and the hope to reconcile conservation with human needs. It is acknowledged that Angkor as a sacred landscape and “the need to move beyond traditional ‘fabric-based’ approaches to holistic site management and conservation.”<sup>40</sup> Consultation with monks and community representatives is taking place in order to “afford greater priority to existing religious rituals, practices, and traditions.”<sup>41</sup> In the case of Angkor, where tourism development is the main agenda for the government, it is probably more difficult to incorporate the needs of the traditional communities when the needs are clashing with the tourists’, but tourism is also acknowledged as essential for the survival of Angkor.

Nevertheless, the direction that APSARA is heading will serve as example for other heritage authorities that it is possible to move away from the conventional heritage management approach to allow “the local people to decide how they wish to continue their traditions, so that they may live their lives amid the new realities...”<sup>42</sup>

### The Plain of Jars

The Plain of Jars probably means more to the local communities as the site where the Laotian hero Khun Cheung stored rice wine than the fact that it is a prehistoric site and a necropolis dated from the 5th Century BC to the 1st Century BC.<sup>43</sup> A more prominent memory of the site is the large scale bombing by the U.S. at the Plain of Jars in the 1970s which left unexploded ordnance and land mines covering 25% percent of the Xieng Khouang province.

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<sup>40</sup> Khoun Khun-Neay, “Site Management and Local Communities” in **Angkor : Heritage Values and Issues** eds., Richard Mackay and Sharon Sullivan (n.p., University of Sydney, 2008), 121.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Khoun Khun-Neay, “A Commitment to Community Engagement,” paper presented at the Phnom Bakheng Workshop on Public Interpretation, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 4-6 December 2005.

<sup>43</sup> Thongsasayavongkhamdy, “Current Situation of Archaeology in Lao PDR,” powerpoint presentation presented at the ICCROM-SPAFA Living Heritage Sites Programme Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, 17 Oct. 2009.

UNESCO, in an attempt to preserve the jar sites and to use tourism to alleviate poverty in the Plain of Jar, has been working with the Ministry of Information and Culture of Lao PDR for more than 10 years to establish a system which allows the local communities to benefit from the development of the jar sites while at the same time encourages them to preserve and to take care of the sites. The Plain of Jars will be nominated for a World Heritage status in late 2010 or in 2011. The seven local communities living near the jar sites are selected to test the pilot project which employs community-based heritage tourism as tool to protect the sites.

A village site committee has been set up consisting of 8-20 people from different families. These people will take turn each day to sell tickets to both local and international visitors; maintain the jar sites by cleaning; clear out vegetation; take care of signage, restrooms, information booth, and ticket booth; and, make markers of or fencing protected areas.<sup>44</sup> The revenue from ticket sales will be divided into two parts. Each village committee can keep 40% of the revenue, which will be divided between the families who take care of the sites. The other 60% will go to the Provincial Office of Information and Culture, which will then be used for general management of the sites.<sup>45</sup> Each village will have a duty to draft and propose its own five year budget plan for site management to the Heritage House, which can be reviewed annually. The budget each village will receive depends on the number of visitors and the area of its responsible site.

The interdisciplinary approach to site protection and cooperation between different levels of partners should be applauded. However, there is a concern regarding the vulnerability of traditional cultures and the negative impact of tourism. The fact that the economy of these villages will from now on depend heavily on tourism will drastically change their traditional ways of life. With this, there will be a heavy promotion of tourism, which can over-compromise the needs of the communities and their traditional cultures. As a result, cautions are to be made regarding the scale of tourist activities in the selected sites and the promotion and preservation of traditional cultures.

Based on this model, heritage has become a revenue generator and its values are divided between economic and historical values. In a way, the traditional communities will see the heritage as a source of income and they will

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<sup>44</sup> **Draft of the Plain of Jars Archaeological Landscape Heritage Management Plan**, May 2009

<sup>45</sup> UNESCO and IFT, **Tourism at Cultural Heritage Sites in Asia, Cultural Heritage Specialist Guide Training and Certification Programme for UNESCO World Heritage Sites : A Training Manual for Heritage Guides**, (n.p. : n.p., 2007).

take care of it as long as the economic benefits continue. On the other hand, the historical value as well as the “sacredness” of the place, which is part of a value aimed to be inculcated to tourists by the heritage authority,<sup>46</sup> will continue to be appreciated only by scholars. To achieve this, there needs to be a more engaging awareness programme which allows the traditional communities to research about the jar sites and the local history.

In the case of the Plain of Jars, the site and the people are connected through stories and collective memories. Villagers can relate more to the recent history of wars with which they had direct experiences rather than a lost civilization. As a result there is a need to interpret the Plain of Jars as a continuation of history from the past until present, incorporating the stories of the faraway past and the recent time so that the identity of the traditional communities is not neglected and overwhelmed.

## Hoi An

Hoi An is a World Heritage town managed by different government units, but the main authority is the Hoi An Centre for Monuments Management and Preservation (HACMMP) established in 1996. Hoi An proclaimed to be a “living museum” and strived to preserve the traditional ways of life as well as the architectural heritage. Visitors are obliged to buy tickets to visit the historic sites of Hoi An and are able to select sites to visit based on the list issued by the heritage authority. The revenue from ticket sales will go to the Hoi An State Treasury. 75% of the revenue will be reinvested in conservation activities including renovation of old buildings, organizing traditional festivals, improving the infrastructure, as well as preserving the intangible heritage.<sup>47</sup> The remaining 25% will go to the maintenance of the Tourist Guide Office and the owners of the heritage buildings listed in the entry ticket.<sup>48</sup> A house owner will receive 1,000 VND for each local tourist visit and 2-3,000 VND for a foreign tourist visit.<sup>49</sup> It is noted that the share for house owners is quite large. As a result, the larger the number of tourism is the larger the amount of funds for heritage preservation. The heritage authority also devised a scheme for hom-

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<sup>46</sup> **Draft of the Plain of Jars Archaeological Landscape Heritage Management Plan**, May 2009.

<sup>47</sup> **Final Report on the Implementation of the Action Plans, Hoi An – Viet Nam, UNESCO project on Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management**, September 2001.

<sup>48</sup> UNESCO Bangkok, **Impact: The Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment in Asia and the Pacific: Cultural Tourism and Heritage Management in the World Heritage Site of the Ancient Town of Hoi An, Viet Nam**, 35.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with a house owner, Hoi An, 23 December 2008.

owners to obtain financial supports from the government in restoring their houses.

The principle in conserving Hoi An aims to use the benefits from tourism to alleviate poverty and to preserve the town as a living museum. So far the efforts have been very successful, especially on poverty alleviation and conservation of the architectural heritage. In 2007, the number of visitors to Hoi An was more than one million. The entrance fees collected in 2007 were almost two million US dollars. UNESCO shows that the poverty rate of Hoi An has decreased greatly in the past eight years.<sup>50</sup> There are more job opportunities for the local people in tourism industry. The preservation of the historic buildings is also working well because of the strict and comprehensive regulations and the cooperation from the general public who increasingly want to conserve Hoi An for benefits from tourism. It was noted that the local people are generally happy with the situation because the income from tourism has made their life better.

However, the ancient town has been used to promote tourism so much that the traditional houses and local businesses are turned into tourist accommodation, souvenir shops, and restaurants. Many people have sold their properties and moved out of the old quarter because the cost of living has risen and land price has skyrocketed. It was noted that since infrastructure development is taking place outside the old quarter, many people have also moved out to the outer area and sold their buildings for other tourist businesses.<sup>51</sup> In addition, young people have ignored traditional occupations in favour of jobs in tourism sector.<sup>52</sup> All in all, Hoi An is gradually turning into a tourist town void of its traditional self. This problem of gentrification is one of the main concerns for heritage towns, as noted by Tim Curtis from UNESCO, which can bring “friction and pressure to the local community as they cannot afford the place therefore displacing these people and their traditions.”<sup>53</sup>

It is been noted that the local government is trying to address all the challenges mentioned here. However, what is lacking in the management of Hoi An is community participation. As noted by UNESCO, the community participates in heritage management activities mostly as passive participants. Some are consulted, but most of the time there are not many forums for them to make their voices heard. There should be a mechanism which allows these

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50 Ibid., 55.

51 Ibid., 57.

52 Ibid., 55.

53 Tim Curtis, “Keynotes Speech,” given at the Penang International Conference on Sustainable Cultural Development Economics of Heritage Revitalization. Penang, 8-9 October 2009.

people to raise their concerns and actively engages them in decision-making process. Besides, there is a need to separate the traditional community from the business community to see how much benefit the traditional community is gaining from tourism and whether their traditional ways of life can be maintained since they are the 'living' element of the town. Without them, Hoi An is just a beautiful complex of old buildings.

### **Phrae**

Phrae is a historic town in Northern Thailand which still maintains much of its traditional self though it is also encroached by waves of development. In Thailand, heritage management is under the Fine Arts Department, but since the nearest Office of Fine Arts is situated in another province, Phrae was very much on its own in terms of heritage management. However, there is a volunteer group in Phrae known as the Luk Lan Muang Phrae network (LLMP) with four founding members which has worked on heritage conservation and management in Phrae since 2004. The aim of LLMP is for Phrae to become a living heritage town where the traditional community enjoys and cherishes their tangible and intangible heritage. LLMP aims to work to instigate sensible and responsible heritage conservation, management, and tourism, though it should be noted that none of the activities were initiated to promote tourism. The purpose is not to freeze the city, but changes should be made based on traditional wisdom and the full awareness of the traditional community. The ultimate goal of LLMP is to be able to forge a sense of heritage ownership among the traditional community and to propose recommendations which could be included in national agendas regarding community participation in heritage conservation.

LLMP has worked closely with SEAMEO-SPAFA since 2004. After 7 years (2004-2010) and a series of project such as researches, street fairs, bicycle tours, old house conservation, and others to raise awareness of the local public, the works of LLMP now progress towards historic conservation and archaeological research, but dialoguing and awareness-raising activities still count as their number one priority. One of the positive aspects of the working approach of LLMP is that the planning, directions, and decision-making all come from the local community. The projects implemented aim first hand to benefit the local people, not tourists, and not for income-generating purposes. The working approach of the LLMP also taps into locally available resources which are to be used with respect while recognizing local wisdom and people. This approach will undoubtedly promote a strong platform for long-term heritage conservation. LLMP members are managers and instigators of projects, and sometimes implementers. They connect with different sectors of the community to facilitate the projects. Since Local government units are already allocated with the

budget which can be used for cultural heritage preservation, instead of duplicating works, LLMP thinks that it is possible to join forces with local government partners. As a result, most of the projects of LLMP are funded by the local government on ad-hoc basis. Partnerships formed with different units, as well as with local individuals, help LLMP in terms of resources and promotion of activities.

However, LLMP is operated on a voluntary basis and most of its members have a full-time job. As a result, there are quite a few constraints including time, money, and manpower. The main challenge is to make the project sustainable and to maintain its impact as well as to expand its network. Though funding to support the LLMP activities could be solicited through partnership, it is not always successful. Therefore, the approach that LLMP believes in is to reawaken a sense of ownership and confidence among the traditional communities, so that they would take the responsibilities to take care of their heritage themselves. With the on-going approach, LLMP has reawakened and reaffirmed the sense of ownership in local heritage in many traditional communities on various subjects such as crafts, food, music, local dialects, architecture, museums, revival of traditional festivals and ceremonies, history, and archaeology. It is hoped that each traditional community will be able to carry out works and making their own decisions with support from the LLMP network.

So far, through its dialoguing process, LLMP has been successful in partnering with different local government units and the local people, which should contribute to the collaboration of both parties. However, it is fully aware that the traditional communities need to have strong voices and an awakened sense of confidence which will allow them to deal with others as equal partners. The most important thing is that their voices need to be accounted for more than needs of others, since it is the traditional communities who make the heritage living.

## VI. Conclusion

In Mainland Southeast Asia, heritage has come a long way from the Traditional time when the notion of antiquities and historical sense were not established in the mind of the people. The traditional concept of Materiality and time was governed by the Buddhist concepts of Impermanence, Interdependence, Merit, and Ultimate Time, which made the natives of Mainland Southeast Asia view the world differently from the Westerners. While in the West, conservation meant to stop something from changing, conservation in Traditional Mainland Southeast Asia referred to changes and continuity. In most cases, objects and structures were preserved by allowing the local communities to use

them so that their values and functions were continued, since the local communities were the one who ascribed meaning to cultural materials.

The arrival of the Europeans during Colonization affected the worldview of the local population. With changing perceptions, the local people started to recognize the concept of antiquities and ascribed values other than spiritual and symbolic values to antiquities. Later on, antiquities acquired monetary values which prompted antiquities trade and looting. During the late Colonization period and after Colonization, antiquities and the past were used as nationalistic and patriotic symbols as well as propaganda tools. It was undeniable that the past played a very important role in shaping the nations in the region. In the 1960s, the term heritage was first used and the heritage management system established by the West was continued to be used by the native administration. Heritage authorities in different countries adopted the Western concept of heritage management which separated the local communities from heritage, thus problems in heritage conservation arose. The Conventional Approach used by heritage authority is linked to the Colonial notion, and proved unsuitable to living sites. The Values-based Approach is a move away from the Conventional Approach, but in practice it still does not offer a sustainable solution. The Living Heritage Approach, however, seems to be the most suitable and practical answer which can be applied to living sites.

After examining the management practices of five case studies, the most successful case is the Shwedagon Pagoda, which is sustainable and self-reliant. It is also very similar to the Living Heritage Approach since its administration stems from the local community. The Buddhist concept of merit also played a part in maintaining the pagoda and governs the way the pagoda is managed and conserved.

The case of Angkor is quite similar to the Values-based Approach for the fact that the local communities still lack an active role in managing the site and they are still not allowed to use the site as it had traditionally been practiced. Consultations were made with the local communities, but their voices are counted as part of the stakeholders and not given main priority. However, the present approach of APSARA has demonstrated a real intention to work with the local people.

The Plain of Jars is an interesting case since it is not yet implemented and therefore would be useful to know how successful the management plan is. This concept is actually quite similar to the Living Heritage Approach since the local people were allowed to undertake an active role in site management and there is a system to enable them to address their concerns. However, the heritage authority needs to equip them with regular training and awareness raising

activities so that the need for conservation is not overshadowed by the need for income.

Hoi An is a very successful case in terms of site management and conservation of historic buildings. With the present management approach, the poverty rate is reduced while the buildings are nicely conserved. However, the approach is very much similar to the Conventional Approach for the fact that the local communities do not have roles to play and do not have a permanent forum to raise their concerns.

The case of Phrae is different from the above-mentioned sites since most conservation efforts are initiated and implemented by the local people. It falls under the Living Heritage Approach but it still needs more supports from the government units.

Based on the case studies, it can be summarized that successful heritage management and conservation practice should be inclusive, self-reliant, sustainable, and it should base on traditional knowledge, and bring about contentment to those involved.

### **Recommendations**

On a practical level, heritage authority should provide training in craftsmanship and knowledge transfer to the local community. The loss of skills on traditional craftsmanship is a serious issue in heritage management since it means that the knowledge to regenerate the heritage is not available. There is a need to establish training activities on traditional skills relevant to the use and care of heritage, so that the heritage can be continued. This can be done by identifying traditionally skilled craftsmen and working with them to document and pass on their knowledge to the next generation. There should also be a mechanism to ensure that the knowledge transfer will be continued from one generation to another. Heritage education should also be provided to the local community and the general public in order to generate interests and awareness in heritage among the general public. Heritage education should be introduced in curriculum or in extra-curricula activities to allow the public to understand heritage more.

Heritage authority should also act as facilitators when working with the local communities. They should support, assist, advice, and facilitate the traditional community within their own expertise and capacity. The expertise of the heritage authority usually is the strength in research and technical knowledge, which can then be imparted to the traditional community to enhance their capability in heritage management.

On a policy-making level, the management of religious and secular sites should be separated since there are different in nature. Religious sites need strong supports from the faithful and continuity is ensured only when the faithful is allowed to follow their traditional practices. Rules and regulations which prohibit the traditional practices should not be imposed on the sites and the faithful. Therefore, it is more convenient to separate the management of these two types of site.

There needs to be an update of the outdated legal framework to better reflect the present situation of heritage management. In some cases, local regulations should be issued since they are more context-based. To sum up, an enabling cultural heritage legal framework should acknowledge an ownership of heritage by the local population; encourage participation of the local population and organizations in safeguarding heritage; be inclusive of different types of heritage; provide a structure for good governance of heritage, including administrative structure and financial structure, such as in the case of Viet Nam and Thailand which allows a reinvestment in heritage; be clear and comprehensive; and, reflect the present reality of heritage management.

In addition, holistic management should be encouraged. It is undeniable that heritage management does not only concern cultural heritage, but also natural heritage. In the traditional time, all heritage was managed together as a single unit. Natural heritage was protected by beliefs and ceremonies, which in turn, allowed cultural heritage to take place and continue. The wise use of natural heritage is integrated in the wellbeing of cultural heritage. At the moment, there have been concerns all over the region that traditional materials, especially wood, are scarce and that there will not be enough materials to enable traditional conservation in the future. It is therefore a duty of all involved in heritage management to integrate the conservation of traditional natural heritage into the process to ensure the sustainability of built cultural heritage.

Lastly, the local communities also need to remind themselves that benefit received from different conservation projects do not necessarily take place as financial gains. Benefit here does not refer only to economic opportunities, but also the well being of a traditional community. When it is important to conserve heritage, it is always important to remember that the living element of the heritage is people. Therefore, heritage management process should benefit the traditional community as much as it benefits the heritage.

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