

Architectural Heritage Conservation in Thailand

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การประชุมครั้งนี้มีจุดประสงค์ที่จะให้ผู้เข้าร่วมประชุมได้มีโอกาสแลกเปลี่ยนประสบการณ์ของการทำงานอนุรักษ์มรดกทางสถาปัตยกรรมและสร้างความร่วมมืออย่างจริงจังระหว่างองค์กร (ที่มีชื่อองค์กรรัฐบาล) ซึ่งทำงานทางด้านอนุรักษ์มรดกทางสถาปัตยกรรมในประเทศต่าง ๆ ซึ่งอยู่ในกลุ่มสมาชิกสมาคมอาเซียน (ASEAN)

ในการประชุมครั้งนี้ ผู้จัดได้กำหนดให้มีการเสนอรายงานของแต่ละประเทศ โดยกำหนดหัวข้อของรายงานให้ครอบคลุมประเด็นต่าง ๆ ดังนี้คือ

1. ข้อมูลทางเทคนิค
2. ข้อมูลด้านกฎหมาย
3. ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับการจัดองค์กร
4. ข้อมูลด้านการวางแผน

ซึ่งผู้เขียนในฐานะผู้แทนของประเทศไทยก็ได้เสนอรายงานเป็น Country Report เรื่อง " The Architectural Heritage Conservation in Thailand " หรือ " การอนุรักษ์มรดกทางสถาปัตยกรรมในประเทศไทย " และได้นำรายงานนี้มาเสนอไว้ ณ ที่นี้

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN THAILAND (A COUNTRY REPORT.)

Indonesian National Heritage Trust Informal Dialogue on " Architectural Heritage Conservation " Jakarta, Indonesia March 13 - 16, 1991

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1. Introduction

Human beings are now approaching the dawn of the 21st century ; by far a highly technological age, and the most advanced society men have ever experienced scientifically. They have learned to travel to outer space, going far beyond Earth to the extent never realized even slightly in the imagination of the people in the past ages. To explore, and to know the Universe.

But the fact remains, man has yet a lot to learn about himself.

Architectural Heritage is a mean of indicating the knowledge of the people who created them; providing that the meaning of the Architectural Heritage is properly understood, and the work properly taken care of and well maintained.

The people of South-East Asia not only share similar natural and cultural backgrounds, but, as the various activities on conservation of the Architectural Heritage as organized by SPAFA and other ASEAN organizations have shown in recent years,

they have also illustrated common interests and responsibilities to safeguard their Architectural Heritage.

In so doing, the basic understanding is that, they share common cultural heritage. The experiences of conservation works shared during this dialogue, not only reflect progress in technical know-how, but also show the unity of human values and the strong will to safeguard cultural property and cultural continuity for the people of the future generations.

2. Definition

2.1 Conservation. It is essential to the proper understanding of any subject that it be discussed in clearly defined terms. In this case, four words need such clarification; *Preservation, Restoration, Reconstruction* and *Conservation*.

2.1.1 Preservation. The word describes the static maintenance of an object to keep it in its existing state.

2.1.2 Restoration.¹ The objective of restoration is to carefully revive the original concept or legibility of the object. Re-integration of details and features is based upon respect for original material, archaeological evidence, original design and authentic documents. Replacement of missing or decayed parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but must be distinguishable from the original ones.

2.1.3 Reconstruction.² Reconstruction of historic buildings and historic centres may be necessitated by disasters such as fire, or war, etc. The objective is to rebuild the object into its original state. The difference between reconstruction and restoration is that, reconstruction can not have the patina of age, even though the same types of building materials are used. As in restoration, reconstruction must be based upon accurate documentation and evidence, never upon conjecture.

2.1.4 Conservation. Conservation embraces all acts taken to prolong the life of our Architectural Heritage.³ It includes the act taken to prevent decay, maintenance, and even takes on a dynamic character by being concerned also with needed adaptations.

2.2 Architectural Heritage. The scope of the word "Architectural Heritage" consists mainly of the built environments ranging from the historic urban or rural areas, the historic buildings, to the structures of certain technological values. It embraces not only buildings of the classic or the sublime values but also the humble ones. It also ranges from the buildings of national to local interest and importance.

The Architectural Heritage of one nation is meaningful. It represents the creative reaction of men towards their environments,

to serve their physical needs as well as to serve their spiritual and emotional needs. It shows their faiths, their technical know how, even their tastes. It also represents the measure of the civilized mind. It is the symbol of one nation's cultural identity and cultural continuity.

2.2.1 The "Values". In all, "values"⁴ assigned to the Architectural Heritage come under three major headings:

(a) **Emotional Values ;** wonder, identity, continuity, spiritual and symbolic.

(b) **Cultural Values ;** documentary, historic, archaeological, age and scarcity, aesthetic and symbolic, architectural, townscape, landscape and ecological, scientific.

(c) **Use Values ;** functional, economic, social, political.

2.3 Architectural Heritage Conservation. Since the Architectural Heritage Conservation represents the task that deals with cultural properties, conservation requires both technical and cultural understanding plus the knowledge that one is dealing with the subject that always arouse one man's curiosity - the need to know more about the people and the culture that produced it.

Architectural Heritage Conservation embraces not merely questions affecting a single structure or a group of structures related to one another, but it is also concerned with the environment of an isolated building or group of buildings. Questions of visual appearance from view points near and far, the effects of new and possibly much larger adjacent structures upon an apparent scale and the blocking of views or approaches, all arise in the general context of conservation. Hence, it may be

said that Architectural Heritage Conservation consists of the cherishing of existing structures so that they may not merely continue, but may also receive a more abundant life from the changes and fresh associations which occur thereby.

3. Aim

Dealing with the topic of Architectural Heritage Conservation in Thailand is not at all an easy task, since the scope is rather wide. But it is hoped that the participants will be able to get an overall view of the Architectural Heritage Conservation works as experienced in Thailand, particularly on certain points as hoped to be discussed during this dialogue. The said points are, technical aspects, legal aspects, organizational aspects and planning aspects respectively. Moreover, examples set by the works at Sukhothai Historical Park and Phnom Rung Historical Park may give the participants a clearer view, be it positive or negative, towards the works carried out in Thailand.

4. Architectural Heritage Conservation in Thailand

The observations on Architectural Heritage Conservation in Thailand will be addressed upon the following issues:

- 4.1 Conceptual History
- 4.2 Organization
- 4.3 Legislation
- 4.4 Planning
- 4.5 Technique
- 4.6 Case Study

4.1 Conceptual History

In so far as the general understanding is concerned, the formation of the Conservation Concepts is based on 2 factors:

4.1.1 The (proper) understanding on the meaning of Conservation.

4.1.2 The (proper) understanding on the meaning of Architectural Heritage.

In Thailand, approximately 1400 buildings have been listed as ancient monuments. Most of them, were built as places of worship. Some of them are still being utilized.

In the olden days when society was far more religious and exercised less activities than the present time, building a place of worship was always a task of neat and artistic expression. Particularly if the building was royally commissioned, the end result was normally an edifice possessing a state of arts. Thus naturally, the building was built with great faith, and built with durable materials. Buildings produced in a similar manner, although in a different pattern, were palaces of the Kings and the people of ranks. However, not many palaces were built compared to the construction of religious buildings which were greater in number: particularly during the Sukhothai Period (1235-2438 A.D.), and Ayudhya Period (1350-1767 A.D.)

The religious buildings in Thailand, as in elsewhere, have always been built with specific and clear requirements: to serve religious functions and to serve spiritual needs. Building a place of worship is a mean of merit making according to the Buddhist belief.

Conservation works on old buildings carried out in the past, as have been found in historical records, were generally restoration of old religious buildings.

Restoration works were normally carried out with faith and to fulfill one's spiritual needs. (The act of merit making by means of rebuilding the places of worship).

In so doing, the buildings had to be

restored to their complete conditions so as to show respect to the religion and to the places of worship themselves as well as for the buildings to be able to physically serve the religious functions to the best.

Thus traditionally, the Thai's perceptions of the conservation of old buildings, particularly in the olden days, have been based largely on past experiences of the restoration of old religious buildings. The traditional understanding towards the meaning of conservation was largely that restoration was rebuilding.

As for the perception of old religious buildings, they were traditionally perceived purely as the places of worship with religious values and regardless of other cultural values, be it historical or archaeological etc.

The scholarly approach to the perception of old buildings as something which possess the cultural values on history, archaeology, or aesthetics etc. seemed to be pioneered by King Rama IV or King Mongkut who reigned between A.D.1851 to A.D.1868. As found in his chronicle⁵ (no date was given) in which he wrote about the ancient pagoda found at Nakon Pathom (50 km. south of Bangkok), the King refused to follow the explanation of the origin of the pagoda according to the folk legend. Instead he suggested that, "..... if one wants to know the true story, one should take the historic area and the ancient objects produced by the people of the past into account. And start analysing from that"

King Rama V, who reigned between A.D.1868 to A.D.1910, inherited his father's interest in history and archaeology. The first glimpse of the careful restoration with regards to the Architectural Heritage's cultural values is evident in his chronicle⁶ (no

date was given). In the chronical about the restoration of the Temple of Dawn, he wrote "..... *The restoration of the Temple of Dawn and its site, I hope to preserve all of the old objects. Don't try to re-touch the old mural paintings in order to make it look new..... Decorative ornaments or art objects in any form, must be preserved in its original form. If changes are unavoidable, I have to be notified.....*"

However, the restoration of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha⁷ in A.D.1882, which was the sole responsibility of the King himself, revealed that the traditional practice of restorations as rebuilding still prevailed. The temple was restored to the most possible perfection. The restoration included a number of changes and the rebuilding of certain structures and parts of the buildings in the compound.

King Rama VI, who reigned between A.D.1910 - A.D.1926, issued the first conservation law in 1923. The law dealt with the conservation of cultural properties, including the conservation of Architectural Heritage. It authorized officials to select what should be preserved and also to find the means to preserve the objects.

The law illustrated that the meaning of Architectural Heritage Conservation was not only understood by the King but he was also trying to organize a body to find measures to safeguard those heritage.

In 1926, King Rama VII founded the Royal Council with Prince Damrongrajanubhab being the Chairman. The Council took full responsibilities on the conservation of Cultural Heritage.

In 1930, Prince Damrongrajanubhab gave lectures to provincial governors on the topic of Conservation of Ancient Cultural Properties.

In his lecture, the Prince dealt solely with the conservation of ancient buildings and ancient objects.

He began by defining the term "ancient" by considering the object's age to be of at least 100 years.

On the subject of Architectural Heritage Conservation, he began by giving insight on the values of Architectural Heritage embracing historical, aesthetic, craftsmanship etc. aspects.

The Prince then went on to the process of conservation. He suggested that it should be done as follows :

(a) To survey, to make an inventory and to carry out documentations.

(b) To study the monuments from archaeological and historical approach.

(c) To preserve the monuments, there should be 3 measures:

firstly - to prevent and to protect them from being destroyed by humans,

secondly - to consolidate and to maintain the monuments,

thirdly - to restore the monuments.

On practical restoration, the Prince suggested that it should be carried out according to the following conditions:

(a) To preserve the original style. The form and ornaments should not be altered.

(b) Do not destroy the ancient monuments so as to reconstruct a new one.

(c) The environment of the monuments must be maintained. New buildings should not be built within the proximity of the monument, or it will detract the monument's uniqueness. Land use in the area should be laid out for the construction of new buildings.

The Prince's aforementioned lecture was the first intensive and collective expla-

nation on the subject of Architectural Heritage Conservation. It showed that the modern and international approach towards the subject was clearly understood, and accepted by a Thai intellectual even before the Athens Charter was issued in 1931.

In 1961, the registration of the historic area of Sukhothai city, 560 km. north of Bangkok, saw the realization of the new concept of Conservation Area. The concept aimed at protecting the quality of group values together with their environments.

The "Sukhothai Historical Park Development Project", which started in 1977, revealed the proper methodology implemented on Urban Conservation and the proper perception of conservation as a subject of an interdisciplinary nature.

In 1985, The Fine Arts Department issued a Charter of Conservation so as to be a guideline for practical work. The Charter is in fact an answer to the Venice Charter of 1964. The Thai Charter is an illustration of an effort to follow the guideline as suggested by the Venice Charter and at the same time, to include the traditional concept of restoration as rebuilding which have been perceived from the Thai experiences.

It has taken Thailand approximately 100 years to develop her concept the Architectural Heritage Conservation. From the traditional one of restoration as rebuilding, to the more modern and international approach of conservation with regards to cultural values.

They say old tradition dies hard. But it is not unusual that tradition be modified to serve the best interest to the society, although traditional values will have to be taken into consideration.

4.2 Organizations. Organizations

which have been active on Architectural Heritage Conservation comprise both government agencies and private organizations.

4.2.1 The Fine Arts Department.

The Fine Arts Department under The Ministry of Education, is the government agency responsible for the conservation of cultural properties in Thailand. The Conservation Act requires the Director General of the Fine Arts Department to take the sole responsibility upon the conservation works. Conservation works then, can not possibly be carried out without obtaining the consent of the Director General.

The Department has 10 Divisions, two of which are responsible for Architectural Heritage Conservation works: the Division of Archaeology, and the Division of Architecture.

4.2.1.1 The Division of Archaeology. The Division is responsible for :

- (a) The study, research, and documentation.
- (b) Preservation of historic buildings in the forms of dead monuments.
- (c) Conservation of old mural paintings.
- (d) Archaeological works.

The Division maintains 9 Fine Arts Units spreading all over the country as follows :

- 1st. Fine Arts Unit, in Ayudhya
- 2nd. Fine Arts Unit, in Supan Buri
- 3rd. Fine Arts Unit, in Sukhothai
- 4th. Fine Arts Unit, in Chiang Mai
- 5th. Fine Arts Unit, in Chachoengsao
- 6th. Fine Arts Unit, in Nakhon Rathchaisima
- 7th. Fine Arts Unit, in Khon Kaen
- 8th. Fine Arts Unit, in Nakhon Si Thammarat
- 9th. Fine Arts Unit, in Songkhla

4.2.1.2 The Division of

Architecture. The Division is responsible for :

- (a) Architectural design works, and building constructions.
- (b) Conservation of living monuments.

4.2.1.3 Finance. The Fine Arts Department receives its budget allocation through the Ministry of Education. The fiscal budget though, has to be designed to correspond with the National Social and Economic Development Plan.

4.2.1.3.1 Archaeological Funds

The Conservation Act also requires the Department to establish " *Archaeological Funds* " for the benefit of the conservation of ancient monuments or national museum. The sources of income are as follows:

- (a) Income which is a benefit from the ancient monuments.
- (b) Donation.

4.2.1.4 Re-Organization Plan. In 1990, The Ministry of Education initiated a Re-Organization plan to establish a Ministry of Culture. The reasons may be addressed as follows :

- (a) To encourage more power of administration, to increase the ratio of budget allocation, and to increase the number of personnels.
- (b) To illustrate the importance of cultural works.
- (c) To separate the cultural works from the educational works.

The said plan though, has yet to be materialized.

4.2.2 Private Organizations. A professional society which has always been positive and has taken a continuous role towards the Conservations of Architectural

Heritage is undeniably the Association of Siamese Architects.

4.2.2.1 *The Association of Siamese Architects (ASA)*

ASA is a professional society. Its main object is to encourage interests in the field of architecture and related arts, and to look after the quality of the architectural design works professionally and ethically.

The Society's main activity, organized every 2 years, is the architectural award presentation entitled "*Siamese Architecture*". The objectives⁸ of the activity are as follows :

- (a) To select the best architectural design works.
- (b) To select the best conservation works on old buildings.
- (c) To select persons or organizations which have produced outstanding works in the field of architecture and related arts.

The presentation of conservation awards has proved to be fruitful. For the public at large has been encouraged to realize the honour and the values of Architectural Heritage Conservation.

As for practical conservation work, the Society had organized a successful restoration of a 200 year-old timber library with mural paintings at Wat Rakang, Bangkok, during 1968-1982. The work has proved to be one of the best restoration works as it had been carefully and neatly executed.

4.3 Legislation. The present Thai Conservation Act was issued in 1961. The Act deals with ancient monuments, ancient objects, art objects and the national museum. It has 40 articles. On the subject of ancient monuments, the Act addresses as follow :-

article 4, defines the term "ancient monument" as an immovable object which by age, or by the art of building, or by historical evidences acquires values in art, history or archaeology

article 5, gives the Minister of Education the authority to designate and authorize conservation officers.

article 7, gives the Director General of The Fine Arts Department full authority to designate and enlist historic monuments, and also to designate historic areas.

article 11, gives the Director General the authority to authorize conservation officers to carry out conservation works.

article 32, reveals the measures of punishment of no more than six years imprisonment or a fine of 12,000 Bht. (US \$ 480), for violation of the laws on ancient monuments;

or, from 6 months to 6 years imprisonment, or a fine of no more than 20,000 Bht. (US \$ 1000) for the violation of an enlisted ancient monument.

4.3.1 Modification. The present Conservation Act, as illustrated, is apparently old and obsolete. Hence, certain modifications should be exercised. Some issues that should be modified are as follows :

(a) Definition. Definition of the term "ancient monument" should be redefined. It should encompass wider scope. The term's meaning should include the built environment ranging from the historic area, to the historic buildings, to certain structures of some technological values.

(b) Conservation Area Act. According to the present Act, the notion of conservation area is being dealt with on two lines. The act gives full authority to the Direct General to designate "..... the

boundary of a piece of land " and that the land, then, " is also an ancient monument "

This is certainly ill defined, and certainly inadequate for practical work.

Conservation Area Act should be separated from the present Conservation Act. It should be carefully designed and implemented.

According to this :

- the concept of the Conservation Area Act should be clearly illustrated.

- the meaning of the Conservation Area should be clearly defined.

(c) Punishment. Punishment measures should be modified, the fine and imprisonment terms should be increased.

(d) Definition of the term "*ancient*". It's worth noting that the term "*ancient*" is not defined. Should it be defined as "*more than 100 years old*" as proposed by Prince Damrong in 1926, or not?

The Fine Arts Department, in fact, has been trying to modify some of the said points since 1990. The issues have been presented during the cabinet meetings on various occasions, but have yet to be approved.

4.4 Plan

Thailand started her National Social and Economic Development Plan in 1962. Each Plan is a 5 years phase plan. Accordingly, it is required that each government agency designs its own plan to coincide with the National Social and Economic Development Plan. The Conservation Plan of the Fine Arts Department also follows this guideline.

4.4.1 Planning Methodology

In carrying out the task of conservation, understanding of concept, context and

methodology of conservation is eminent ; it must be taken into consideration as the first priority.

The right planning methodology will give an insight to the concept and the context of the project. As well as to be able to observe the project's operational system collectively.

4.4.2 Sukhothai Historical Park Development Project's Master Plan

The first conservation project in Thailand which was carried out with such systematic approach was the Sukhothai Historical Park Development project. The Master Plan for the project was implemented in 1977. It required experts of various disciplines from many institutions, stating the work of an inter-disciplinary nature.

The drafting committee carried out a series of 16 meetings. The sum of 300,000 Baht (US \$ 15,000) was spent in studies and research for the project.⁹

The Master Plan was designed to coincide with the the NESD plan from the 4th plan (1977 - 1981) to the 5th. plan (1982 - 1986). The Sukhothai Historical Park was inaugurated in 1988.

The study and proposals laid down in the Master Plan are as follows :

(a) Historical Background. This is an observation of the city's development in the past so as to understand the role of the city, and its general context.

The proper approach can give clues to the establishment of the project's context and to establish the present role of the city.

In case of Sukhothai, the historical study gives clues to some of the project's aims as follows :¹⁰

- " To enhance the atmosphere of the ancient city in every possible way, parti-

cularly by planting trees as described in the first stone inscription, as well as other trees and flowers "

- " To revive ceremonies and festivals that were practiced at the time of Sukhothai "

(b) Present Condition in Ancient Sukhothai. This is the study to establish the understanding of the physical environments and the urban condition at old Sukhothai. The studies are as follows :

- Present state of the ancient monuments and sites
- Landscape
- Land use
- Public facilities and utilities
- Water resources
- Economy and sociology of the old city
- Tourism development

(c) The Study and Proposals. This is the essence of the Master Plan to be carried out itself. The scope of this part is to deal with restoration works, land use, and urban development. It's main object is to conserve the area as well as to develop and to utilize the area properly so as to be beneficial to the urban community.

The studies and the proposals are as follows :

- The restoration and preservation of the ancient structures and sites
- Landscape development plan
- Village renewal and resettlement
- Tourist development programme
- Promotion of economy through increased job opportunities.
- Setting up of public facilities and utilities.

(d) Administration. This is the part that deals with the administrative aspects

of the project, such as management, finance, and personnels etc.

The study gives views of the administrative consequence of the project (which falls into 2 phases). Particularly on the arrangement of budget in each phase and investment returns.

The studies and the proposals are as follows.

- Project expenses
- Investment returns
- Outline of managements

In all, the Master Plan has proved that in undertaking the conservation project, the right methodology is important and essential for success.

4.5 Technique. In terms of technique, the Thais have always experienced restoration as rebuilding, as has been mentioned before, particularly the restoration of old religious buildings. The restoration of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha has always been a good example regarding this point.

But apart from the traditional point of view, modern approach on conservation, theoretically and technically had begun to slowly take its shape.

The Conservation Act of 1934, the original version of the present one, encouraged the establishment of the inventory of ancient monuments. As a result, a number of the monuments were systematically listed for the first time in 1938.

During 1934-1962, restoration works started to be developed slowly. The restoration carried out during this period exercised the technique introduced by the École Française d' Extrême Orient, Hanoi, which employed the technique to restore ancient monuments in Indo-China.¹¹

In principle, the technique was to

preserve and to consolidate the structures by building the external buttress. Re-integration of the missing parts, if needed, must be distinguished from the original one. The technique was generally used for the preservation of the dead monuments during 1934-1962.

During 1953 - 1955, the first restoration of Sukhothai took place. It covered 19 historic monuments. The technique was generally reconstruction. The restoration was a hasty work and carried out with less regard to the archaeological evidences.

In 1964, the restoration at Phimai, a Buddhist Mahayan Temple thought to predate Ankor Wat, saw the introduction of anastylosis technique by a French team to Thailand.

During 1965 - 1969, the second restoration at Sukhothai had been carried out. It covered 35 historic monuments. The restoration was undertaken with better technique and understanding. Documentation and photographic recording were also made during the course of the excavation and the restoration work. A report was published in 1969. But in all, the restoration technique was still focused on buildings as a single structure.

During 1963 - 1977, the Fine Arts Department with the co-operation of the Italian Government had sent a number of its officers to be trained at ICCROM, Rome. Modern concept and technique from Europe began to bear its fruits on the Thai soil.

In 1977, the introduction of the "*Sukhothai Historical Park Development Project*", saw the realization of the technique of "*Urban Conservation*" for the first time in Thailand. Technically, the project was the combination of conservation and urban

development.

Restoration works at "*Sukhothai Historical Park*" comprised various techniques, such as, preservation, consolidation, reconstruction, restoration. etc. But the technical report of 1981, carried out by the Fine Arts Department, revealed the lack of knowledge in the field of traditional building materials such as, laterite, brick, clay bonding etc.

In 1985 The Thai Charter of Architectural Conservation was issued by the Fine Arts Department. It deals with the practical aspects of the Architectural Heritage Conservation works. It's quite obvious that the charter is trying to strike the balance between the international technique-careful restoration with regards to the objects' cultural values, and the traditional concept of the Thais restoration as rebuilding or reconstruction.

The Thai Charter is a result of years of experience in conservation. It has 21 articles, but only 1 article deals vaguely with conservation areas. It says "*The conservation of any ancient monument must also take its landscape and environments into consideration...*". This is certainly inadequate for the practical conservation of historic areas. With the Historical Park Projects being supported strongly by the government, what Thailand also needs now is a charter for the safeguarding of the historic areas; and the charter should be implemented as soon as possible.

The technical experience as had been perceived in Thailand is the experience of Tropical Conservation. The unique nature of Tropical Conservation is the common feature shared among fellow countries in this region.

4.6 Historical Park

The term "*Historical Park*" is derived from the first project, "*The Sukhothai Historical Park*". Sukhothai is known from the Sukhothai Stone Inscription No. 1, to have forests with various kinds of trees in the capital city, and the interpretation is that Sukhothai was a garden city, hence "*Historical Park*"

The term "*Historical Park*" becomes common in reference to the conservation of a group of buildings, immovable objects, or area. This, according to the Thai sense, means the conservation of the monuments and sites which bear the quality of a group value with a clear definition of the project area. In Thailand, all of the historic sites are maintained and managed by the Historical Park Section, Division of Archaeology, and the Division of Architecture in the Fine Arts Department. They control, and are responsible for developing historic monuments and sites into appropriate evidences of the Thai cultural heritage leading to the realization of the nation's cultural heritage and thus aid the economy of the country by the promotion of tourism.

There are 6 Historical Parks and 4 Historical Park Projects as follows.

4.6.1 Historical Parks

4.6.1.1 Sukhothai Historical Park, inaugurated on 20th November 1988.

4.6.1.2 Phanom Rung Historical Park, inaugurated on 21st May 1988.

4.6.1.3 Si Satchanalai Historical Park, inaugurated on 17th May 1990.

4.6.1.4 Muang Singh Historical Park, inaugurated on 3rd April 1987.

4.6.1.5 Phimai Historical Park, inaugurated on 12th April 1989.

4.6.1.6 Phra Nakhon Khiri Historical Park, inaugurated on 20th July

1989.

4.6.2 Historical Park Projects

4.6.2.1 Ayutthaya Historical Park Project

4.6.2.2 Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park Project.

4.6.2.3 Si Thep Historical Park Project

4.6.2.4 Pu Phra Bat Historical Park Project.

4.6.3 Case Studies. Two case studies, from Sukhothai, and Phanom Rung will be observed respectively.

4.6.3.1 Sukhothai Historical Park. Sukhothai is the first Thai Kingdom with clear evidence of its existence. It was founded in the middle of the 13th century A.D.

The old town of Sukhothai is situated in the province of Sukhothai 12 km. west of the new town, and 560 km. from Bangkok. The town is rectangular, approximately 1,400 metres wide and 1,800 metres long. It is surrounded by three rings of earthen ramparts. Between each rampart then existed a moat 20 metres wide.

The historic area of Sukhothai city covers an area of 40,000 rai (16,000 acres) containing 180 historic structures. The area was registered by the Fine Arts Department as a government protected zone on August 2, 1961. This was also announced in Volume 12, Part 112 of the Royal Gazette on June 12, 1975.

The actual conservation project, of ficially named "*Sukhothai Historical Park Development Project*" started in 1977. It was the first-one to be carried out systematically. The aim of the project is to revive the historical atmosphere of the ancient city by preserving and restoring ancient edifices, reviving the landscape, improving

communication systems, and developing the community.

In 1979, Unesco announced its co-operation with Thailand to safeguard and to develop Sukhothai.

The work was completed and the Historical Park was inaugurated on 20th November 1988. Until the day of its completion, the budget of 168, 340, 400 Baht. or approximately US\$ 6.7 million had been spent.

The greatest impact of the Sukhothai Historical Park Development Project is that, it has made the government realize, for the first time, the importance of the conservation project. That the project can be worked out successfully, and that, conservation project can be beneficial towards the community socially and economically.

4.6.3.2 Phanom Rung Historical Park

Phanom Rung was built as a Hindu shrine, probably between 10th and 13th centuries AD. It stands on top of an extinct volcano in Buri Ram, 400 km. northeast of Bangkok. The monument is 380 metres above sea level and some 190 metres above the plain.

Many structures at the site appear to have been gradually added over a long period of time. Two brick towers, one facing east and the other facing south, appear to be the earliest structures found, dating from the 10th century A.D. The main sandstone tower should date from the early 12th century. The other structures were added in the 13th century.

The shrine was listed as an ancient monument in 1935, but was left in ruins since. The restoration, using the anastylosis method had been underway since 1971. It was completed and inaugurated

in 1988. This is the first successful anastylosis restoration which was carried out by the Thai team.

The Vishnu Lintel, During 1961 - 1965, Phnom Rung was vandalized and looted, probably by using dynamite. The looter carried away, possibly by helicopter, the Vishnu Lintel. The lintel was found on exhibit at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1973, by Prince Subhadradis Diskul. The Prince reported the matter to The Fine Arts Department. The Department then, tried to arrange, through the Foreign Ministry, negotiation with the Art Institute of Chicago for the return of the lintel. But it was in vain.

The issue was taken seriously again in 1988, by the Thai media, who had organized an information campaign. The message was clear, an unconditional return of the lintel to Thailand.

The matter had been reported as headline news continuously from early 1988. The Fine Arts Department also joined force, together with a Member of Parliament from Buri Ram Province. Being supported by the Thais, with the candid reports by local media in Chicago, the campaign had created great pressure on the Art Institute of Chicago.

The Vishnu Lintel was returned to Thailand in November 1988. Now it has been placed on its original position.

What emerges from the observation of the case of the Vishnu Lintel are as follows :

(1) The case has brought, for the first time, the national unity on the realization of the values of the cultural property and the care of old buildings.

(2) It has proved that the power of the media in creating public opinion and

public perception is eminent, because the media can communicate with the majority of the people in a direct and understandable way.

(3) The people of Buri Ram were particularly enthusiastic and active. They considered themselves "owners" of the lintel and organized a number of protests against the Art Institute of Chicago.

It was a good sign for the care of the cultural heritage at its root. It represented the local people who cared for their cultural heritage.

4.7 Proposals. Following the general observation, some proposals shall have to be addressed as follows :

4.7.1 Organization. The re-organization of the administrative structure may be necessitated in order to encourage a more dynamic and efficient performance with more power of administration, greater budget, and greater man power.

4.7.2 Legislation. Certain issues of the Conservation Act should be modified so as to be modernized, such as, definition of the term "ancient monument", terms of punishment, etc.

Conservation Area Act Should be designed and separated from the present conservation act, and implemented in details. This is to encourage a more effective system.

4.7.3 Technique

(1) The understanding of conservation work as the work of an inter-disciplinary nature is necessary. Co-operation and good understanding among people of various disciplines engaged in the work is eminent. They must be taken into consideration with the proper methodology.

(2) More studies on traditional struc-

tures, traditional building materials and traditional craftsmanship should be encouraged.

(3) The Charter for the Safeguarding of Historic Areas should be designed and implemented as soon as possible, so as to be the guideline for the practical works of the Thais' Historical Park Projects.

4.7.4 Education. The establishment of the main body of knowledge is necessary. This is to collect data, to carry out study and research and to organize a systematic education on conservation. Probably in the scope of the post graduate study level.

5. Summary

The proper approach on the Architectural Heritage Conservation in Thailand was evident around A.D. 1930 as illustrated by Prince Damrong's lecture. The proper legislation and proper administration body originated around A.D. 1934. The practical aspects of conservation have been developed since then.

The early restoration works were influenced by the École Française d'Extrême Orient's technique of preservation and consolidation. Restoration work at Sukhothai during 1953-1955 was mainly reconstruction with less regard to the archaeological evidences. Anastylis technique was introduced at Phimai by the French, in 1964. While the second restoration at Sukhothai during 1965-1969 was undertaken with better technique and understanding with a report published in 1969.

The concept of "Urban Conservation" was introduced in 1977, with the introduction of the "Sukhothai Historical Park Development Project". The project illustrated conservation as an interdisciplinary subject

and was carried out following a well planned methodology.

Thailand's Charter on Architectural Conservation, issued in 1985, reveals an attempt to combine the traditional practice of the Thais, restoration as rebuilding, with the international technique as proposed by the Venice Charter.

Throughout the history of conservation, Thailand has experienced both positive and negative aspects. But at least it has been

the labour of great intention to abide by the civilized approach as accepted by the civilized community.

Safeguarding one nation's Architectural Heritage is a humane act. The Architectural Heritage Conservation in Thailand does not only represent the conservation of the national or regional heritage. It also represents the conservation of the cultural properties of mankind.

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