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Cultural Landscape for Sustainable Tourism Case Study of Amphawa Community Siriporn Luekveerawattana*

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Abstract

Amphawa community is a significant place with a long history of riverside settlement community dating back to the Ayuddhaya period as shown by some historic evidences and artifacts found in the temples and habitations of this area. Moreover, Amphawa area has plenty of cultural and natural resources which could be developed as natural and cultural tourism destination of Thailand. Therefore, it is necessary to manage tourism in Amphawa community in a sustainable way to avoid destroying the various values of its natural and cultural environment.

The best method to safeguard integrity and fabric and to keep Amphawa life style which is a unique community can be achieved by sustainable tourism management. There are many cultural resources which are evaluated as the value of Amphawa community or the unique community: these include the birthplace of King Buddhalertlarnaphalai, distinguished vernacular architecture, simply life-style of Amphawa people that have harmonious relationship with canal and river, and the lasting history about the famous floating market.

Sustainable tourism management could fulfill satisfactions of everyone and every organization concerned about Amphawa in aspect of using natural and cultural resources. This management can keep cultural heritage which shows our origin for our descendants. As a result of this study, the researcher has suggested Tourism Management Plan and Conservation Plan for promoting tourism and conserving cultural arts.
Cultural landscape, Sustainable tourism

1. Introduction

This article concentrates on the area of the municipality of Amphawa sub-district, Amphawa district, Samutsongkhram, Thailand. It contains 1,470 families (males 2,862 and females 3,196). Access is on the Prachasech Road from the main road no. 325.

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Amphawa municipality

Figure: 1 Amphawa Municipality

Amphawa municipality locates in Amphawa district, Samutsongkhram province, Thailand. This province is in the lower part of central region. There is Mae-klong River run through this province.

Amphawa community is an interesting case to study because of its authentic attributes of local settlement and community and their evolution through time from the early Rattanakosin period (the late 17th century) to the present. This community is composed of many cultural characteristics and themes which relate to the history of the area, ways of life, and ways of living. These include:

- Form and design, materials and substance, use and function of wooden architecture reflecting western influence;
- The immigration of Chinese people who settled in the area and later came to dominate commercial activity of Amphawa.
- The area is the birthplace of King Rama II of Chakri Dynasty.



Figure: 2 single riverfront houses, single gable is the distinctiveness of Amphawa community

The proposed study area forms the basis of excellent raw material to study cultural diversity of ruler group, locality and spirit place of each group. Relationship to natural ecology and way of thinking of people in Amphawa tells us about the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of the Amphawa area within the context of the cultural history of Thailand. Some parts of Amphawa’s characteristics tell us about what Thailand was like in the past. It is an important part of the Asian community with a rich store of historic, scientific and social value which deserves to be conserved and interpreted for future generations.

2. Aims:

2.1 To promote understanding of the cultural landscapes within Amphawa municipality to foreign and Thai visitors.

2.2 To enhance conservation awareness of stakeholders

3. Literature Review

3.1 World Heritage Cultural Landscapes

UNESCO wants to protect the linking of people and their cultures to the surrounding nature that have universal value by establishing international instruments such as convention, charter, operational guidelines. These instruments help the relevant bodies to manage and conserve the cultural landscapes of world heritage value. The actual action international recognition was promulgated in 1992.

The revised operational guidelines concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1992, are based on consideration of the associative values of landscapes. They address the following factors:

- Recognition of the diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment
- Introduction of the term sustainability into the operational guidelines via specific techniques of sustainable land-use
- Acceptance of the living heritage of indigenous people
- Introduction of traditional management mechanisms into the operational guidelines
- Recognition of traditional forms of land-use
- Maintenance of biological diversity through cultural diversity
- Consideration of spiritual relationships to nature
- Opening of the convention to other regions and cultures of the world[†]

Other considerations relating to cultural landscapes include:

- In the long term, cultural landscape on the World Heritage List should help to promote more awareness of particular cultural landscape and their heritage values.
- Generally cultural landscape is understood as rural cultural landscape. It is a narrow view. Cultural landscape should be included to urban landscape, industrial landscape, or other significant historic landscapes that display long relationship of human and nature. This relationship tells us about the continuity of human evolution associated to its natural environment. Moreover, those cultural landscapes should be an outstanding example of the history of humanity.

Next is the paper that describes about the important issues we should concern in conserving heritage in Asia-Pacific region.

3.2 Cultural landscape in Asia-Pacific : Potential for filling World Heritage gaps [‡]

[†] World Heritage Paper 7, Mechtild Rössler, *Cultural landscapes: the challenges of conservation*, p10

This paper is set within the framework of concepts of authenticity and increasing interest in the cultural landscape concept in Asia. It proposes that the public presentation for tourism needs to understand the sense of continuity and interrelationship between people, events, and place through time. It also suggests that the concept of world heritage in Asia tends to just focus on monuments and archaeological locations, famous architectural ensemble or historic site. However, there is a different value system inherent in cultural landscapes and associated heritage values. This is because cultural landscapes reflects everyday way of life, way people create places through time. The visitor can read landscape as a document of human history. This is why cultural landscape is so significant.

Angkor Wat, for example, strongly represents the concept of the continuous nourishing tradition of living history. It is a powerful interaction between people and environment that has created the cultural landscape setting for the monuments . Therefore, interpretation and presentation of Angkor Wat should provide evidence of continuous living like religious practices, sustenance farming, vernacular architecture, craft traditions, and trade skill to the visitor as well. All these things are the important component of continuous Khmer living not just the monument itself.

A notable example of an outstanding cultural landscape in Asia Pacific region is Tana Toraja, in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Tana Toraja is the traditional settlement, which comprise of ten settlements and their setting. These include: Pollawa, Bori Parinding, Kande Api, Nanggala, Buntu Pune and Rante Karassi, Ke te Kesu, Pala Tokke, Londa, Lemo, and Tumakke. There are many prehistory remains found in this living settlement sites. They have significance at universal level. Traditional systems of land-use, building, and customs at Tana Toraja represent a link with prehistoric living of Neolithic people and Austronesian-speaking and megalithic culture. The presence of this outstanding settlement consists of its dwelling (tongkonan) , granary (alang), burial place, ceremonial ground with menhir, rice field, bamboo forest and pasture for water buffalo and pig. Their cultural landscape and traditional practice especially burial ceremony is continuously perform and hand over to young generation that never sees from anywhere else. Their burial performances identify social status of Toraja people. Moreover, they have way of life and belief related to cosmology that are supreme power, god, divine ancestor as the form of house and its components that they live is the symbolic of Toraja cosmology. The special traditional technique in building timber houses involves the use of tongue and groove. It is a perfect rare traditional settlement of the world. It has educational, scientific, artistic and technical value. Now, it is a nominated World Heritage Site (February 2005) and is attracting increasing numbers of tourists. According to the Tana Toraja Regency office of Tourism, Art and Culture the number of visitors in 2002 was 62,516. The present conservation duty is undertaken by local community. They repair the heritage every four years. They gradually use the modern material to replace the traditional material because it is inexpensive and has long lasting such as they use corrugated zinc to replace bamboo as roofing material. They also set a foundation to response for maintaining and take care of traditional tangible and intangible culture of Toraja. Several programs have been implemented for Tana Toraja such as worldwide promotion, the Toraja Cultural festival, internet promotion, broadcast audio visual presentation, providing reliable information, ecotourism in Tana Toraja, interactive museum, publishing pictorial monograph and book, and launching annual Toraja traditional art market. The management of Toraja property must be undertaken under the republic of Indonesia Act number 5/1992. The authority departments are as the following;

- Deputy of History and Archaeology , Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia
- The office of Archaeological Heritage Conservation in Makassar
- The Tana Toraja Regency Office of Tourism, Art and Culture

[‡] Ken Taylor, Australian National University and Silpakorn University, Bangkok ; Kirsty Altenburg, Department of the Environment and heritage. K.Taylor@anu.edu.au

- Local Foundation of the nominated site.[§]

All circumstances of restoration and rehabilitation of Toraja property must be compatible with international standards of cultural heritage and traditional conservation techniques. Sources of funding for conserving and managing Toraja culture come from both central and local government.

3.4 Principle of sustainable tourism

The definition of sustainable tourism is the development, which respond to tourist requirement and local people and relies on the protection and preservation on the tourism resources.

Tourism broadly means the management of resource to respond economic, social and esthetic necessary while keeping cultural identity and ecological system.

The principles of sustainable tourism

- using resources sustainably
to conserve and moderately use all resources, including natural, social and cultural resources and to seek guidance of long-term tourism business
- reducing over-consumption and waste
to reduce over-consumption and waste, to cut some of the damaged resource maintenance cost and to expand the base of tourism industry
- integrating tourism into planning
to integrate tourism development into the framework of national strategy plan with local development. All of these can increase the tourism potential in the long-term.
- supporting local economic
to support local economic activity in aspect of price and environment value, to create economy of scale to the local and to protect environment
- involving local communities
to induce local participation in the tourism plan, to return a profit to them and the environment and to help raise the quality of tourism management
- consult stakeholders and the public
to perform in the same direction by the stakeholders and the public
- training staff
to educate about thinking and performing to human resource on sustainable development
- marketing tourism responsibly
to be responsible for marketing the tourism resource and to inform tourists to realize and respect the society and culture of that tourism resource
- undertaking research

[§] *Nomination of the Tana Toraja traditional settlement for inscription on the world heritage list*, Department of culture and tourism the Republic of Indonesia 2005, p 60

to follow these plan by undertaking research and checking up the process is to the benefit of managing the tourism resources and concerned people

Under the development concept for Thailand there is a focus on constructing a wealthy economy at the macro level. One of the many policies in developing of Thailand is promoting tourism attraction of remote places in Thailand to capitalize on the tourist dollar. The Thailand government tries to raise appreciation at the local level by encouraging public and tourism facility investment. This development plan has spread to remote pristine communities. The local way of living of these communities is interesting and a distinguishing hallmark to attract many tourists.

4. Cultural landscapes in Amphawa community as the tourism destinations

4.1 Unique architecture and riverside way of life found in Amphawa community

Unique cultural features as single riverfront house, house with double traditional Thai style roof , traditional floating house, contemporary Thai house and riverside way of life found in Amphawa community have social significance because Amphawa cultural landscape is a setting accumulated with spiritual and cultural sentiment to a riverside community of Chinese and Thai people over 40-50 years. As Burra Charter stated that social value embraces the qualities for which a place has become a focus of spiritual, political, national or other cultural sentiment to a majority or minority residents. Amphawa community cultural landscape is an old riverside settlement. The two main ethnological groups are Chinese and Thais. Majority of the Chinese people are merchants. They dominate commercial activities in this area. The outstanding example is the prosperity of Amphawa floating market in the past. There are many commercial boats floated on the surface of waterway at the intersection of Mae Klong River and the mouth of Amphawa canal to the front of Pak Ngam (Pra-ya-yad) temple. Most of these merchants are Chinese people.

Clear evidence of this landscape that reflects the thriving commercial activities of the past are floating houses, array of single houses, Chinese language school building, Joss house, living traditional occupation and antique artifacts which used to be in use in daily activities and work. These architectural features and everyday-used artifacts found inside are collections that display cultural and spiritual sensitivity and can help tell the story of Amphawa over time.

Some Thai people in this community are gardeners and rulers and landlord. Most of people in this community are landlord. The landowners that have a good land location near canal or river usually build wooden single houses for rental. While some landlords who own land at the further area always split their land and rent to other people for growing crops. As we notice from the architectural evidence such as big two-storey houses with western influence located at the mouth of mphawa canal belong to the ruler family of that time, big traditional Thai houses located next the commercial zone are belonging to the landlords in Amphawa. Moreover, there are spiritual places, such as temple located not far from these vernacular structures. This attribute shows status diversity and strong religious belief of residents in Amphawa. Moreover, this community still inherits traditional religious practice of their ancestors such as offering food to rowing monks in the morning, Chak Pra tradition, paying homage to the replica of the Lord Buddha's footprint tradition, and tradition of making merit.

These are the outstanding vernacular features of riverside community as Amphawa that is full of social significance.

4.2 Amphawan Chetiaram temple and King Rama II memorial park

Amphawan Chetiaram temple has historic significance because there is an important event concerning to Chakri Dynasty occurred in this temple location. It is a birthplace of King Rama II. Moreover, the original house of queen Amarin and her family was located in the boundary of this temple. The house she used to live in is no longer there; but the site is occupied by Amphawan Chetiaram temple. Therefore, this unit has historic value as described in Burra Charter that a place may have historic

value because it has influenced, or has been influenced by, an historic figure, event, phase or activity. It may also have historic value as the site of an important event. For any given place the significance will be greater where evidence of the association or event survives in situ.

It is the site that displays important historic value including both tangible and intangible heritage, in particular the location of King Rama II memorial park and Amphawa Chetiyaram temple related to the important person of Thailand that is King Buddhalertla Naphalai (King Rama II). Amphawa Chetiyaram temple used to be a residential palace of Queen Amarindaramas the queen of King Rama I and also the birthplace King Rama II. Later, Queen Amarindaramas renovated the building as a temple in dedication to her mother, Phrasirisophak Mahanak Naree. The Ubosoth is in early Ratanakosin style (19th century A.D.). King Rama II memorial park was built as the memorial place to King buddhalertla Naphalai's famous work, particularly his literature and craftsmanship. His valued work is *Kharp Hae Chom Kheang Khow Wan*^{**}. He appreciated Thai cuisine of his beloved lady. This poetry was composed he ascended to the throne. His poetical composition is like informal record tape that tells us about royal people way of life in the reign of early Ratanakosin period. It identifies that there is not even status in Thai society at that time. Only high status people and ruler group was able to have a chance of education. This poetry was the outcome of their esthetic emotion in cooking and living. Moreover, this poetry still reflects Thai feminine status at that time must depend on her husband strictly. There fore, these ladies have to take care of and hold her husband's mind by cooking the most elaborate dishes as mentioned in the poetry. This esthetic work tells us about status diversity of Thai culture and royal Thai cuisine in the past. If we visit King Rama II memorial park we will see demonstration of royal Thai cuisine as described in this poetry. In addition, in this park also contains sculptures of a key scene in a play composed by King Rama II such as *Sung Thong* and *Kai Thong*.

It reflects Thai traditional play performance that was popular in Thai culture at that time. In the boundary of Amphawan Chetiyaram temple is the location of many historic structures created and restored by the members of Chakri Dynasty family continuously from the early Ratanakosin period to present. Therefore, its style, pattern, material, and shape inform us about the story and history of a key person and craftsmanship as well as artistic skill of each period. It is fully of accumulated fabric and historic layers for the next generation to absorb their ascendant's history.

4.3 Embossed mural painting and architectural features in the compound Bangkokphom temple

The distinctive value of Embossed mural painting is scientific value. The embossed mural painting is on the inside wall of the Vihara. It is rare to see a technique used to depict traditional belief of Buddhist and history of Buddha. The other historic tangible heritages found in the compound of this temple are Ubosot (chapel), Sala kanprien (the meeting hall), and Vihara.

In the Vihara of Bangkokphom temple, there is an embossed mural painting. Which an artist used a special technique of the ancient method. It is still strong and nearly perfect even though it is passes the time over 200 years old. This embossed mural painting is a heritage from the ancient artist for the next generation to study. For mural painting within this Vihara, the artist used stucco to decorate inside wall which is different from the others because stucco is always used for outside decoration only such as on a gable, or outside wall.

This unique technique is found at 2 places in Thailand. The first place is at the Vihara of Bang ka phom temple. The second place is at the Ubosot Wat Pai Lom, Petchburi province but the condition is not perfect as Bankaphom temple because it has just left a frame of the story but no details to see.

^{**} A kind of Thai poetical composition, in this poetry describes about Thai cuisine and feminine.

It has scientific value because the extreme rarity of the technique used. The Burra charter states that the scientific or research value of a place will depend on the importance of the data involved, on its rarity, quality or representatives, and on the degree to which the place may contribute further substantial information.

The vihara(chapel), Ubosot(ordination hall) and Sala kanprien (the meeting hall) of this temple have architectural significance. These structures were created in the early Ratanakosin period. The vihara (chapel) reflects the influence of Chinese craftsmanship and the entrance of western people as stucco displaying on the front and back gable. The shape of doors and window also shows the influence of Chinese skill. Therefore, this vihara has architectural value for the next generation to preserve.

The architectural style and ornament of the Ubosot in Bangkok temple and sala kanprien(the meeting hall) are generally found in the early Ratanakosin period. So, the new generation can acknowledge and study more about traditional technique, material, style, pattern, decorative way done in that period underpinning their architectural significance.

4.4 Vegetation

Vegetation in Amphawa has a range of associative values. Vegetation in this research includes various types of plant and traditional way to cultivate it. Various types of vegetation such as mango orchard, coconut orchard, mixed – fruit orchard, lychee orchard, pomelo orchard, Lum Poo tree which is fire fly 's habitat, Chan and Bodi tree at Amphawan Chetiyaram, and botanical garden at King Rama II memorial park are totally related to the past of Amphawa area. These kinds of vegetation inform us on how to understand forefather action of Amphawa people in the past. Further, the landscape of Amphawa, with its underlying network of canals, reflects forming traditions of the area. It shows how people use and shape the landscape according to their way of life and ideologies. It shows that most Amphawa people in the past were growers because this area is fertilized. This vegetation is a connection with the past. Moreover, vegetation still tell people understand a link of floating market which is a symbolic of Amphawa community and commercial area in the past to Amphawa landscape. Therefore, it have associative significance to preserve for being historic evidence to tell the Amphawa community story. As quoted in Ken Taylor handout that associative value: ability to put into context what has occurred and who promoted the actions; this value hinges on a knowledge and understanding of the way our predecessors have been involved in landscape making. It is a powerful human value related to our need to understand past human actions and the people who participated. It is very much a sense of a link with the past and the resultant values and meanings people attach to places^{††}

5. Statement of significance of Amphawa community cultural landscape

Cultural landscape in Amphawa community presents pattern of living and traditional settlement identity of Thais over time. It has social significance as the representative of many association aspects in the past such as commercial, spiritual, social, educational, cultural pattern. As criterion G1 of Criteria for the register of the national estate (Australia) :Importance as a place highly valued by a community for reasons of religious, spiritual, symbolic, cultural, educational or social associations^{‡‡}. Criteria for the register of the national estate(Australia) is criteria of the record of natural, cultural and indigenous places that are worth for Australian. It would be useful to apply this criteria to a particular community with full of special associations as Amphawa.

The riverside way of life of Amphawa community still also display an outstanding way of life, custom, land-use, function or design that is rare to see in the present. As criterion B2: Importance in

^{††} Taylor K., Handout of Architectural Heritage Management and Tourism Program, Silpakorn University.

^{‡‡}Criteria for the Register of the National Estate, www.ahc.gov.au/register/furtherinfo/criteria.html

demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design no longer practiced, in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest.

Architecture and related ornament in the compound of Amphawan Chetiyaram temple and King Rama II memorial park as well as history in creating them are related to important royal figures which are in ruler scale in the late of Ayuddhaya period to early Ratanakosin period. So unit II has significance at national level as criterion H1: Importance for close associations with individuals whose activities have been significant with the history of the nation, state or region.

Mural painting at Vihara of Bangkokphom temple has technical significance for later craftspeople. It presents the rarity of craftsmanship in creating mural painting by using stucco to depict Lord Buddha history and belief of people in the late of Ayuddha period to early Rattanakosin period. Therefore, it is very importance to locality and next generation to preserve because they can understand ancient technique through this mural painting. As criterion F1: Importance for its technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement.

6. Recommendation

- Traffic and transportation management objective is to cycle and control the movement of the visitors to the appropriate point of the interpretative plan. For instance they should go to orientation hall before going to others point.
- Tourist bus management can reduce intrusion and dangerous impact on the fabric of historic area.
- Various transportation types should link into one another
- Bus stop positioned, riverside pier , pedestrian zone, need to tie into transportation system
- Good external links such as location on a major railway network will help to reduce the pressure of cars and parking (supported by good local network)
- Transportation has to be cheap to be attractive and must primarily serve the local need.
- Open –top double –Decker boat tour, the scale of this kind of boat is appropriate to a big river. Therefore, tour operators should cooperate with local rowing boat operators in taking the tourists to sightsee small scale of historic canals or water routes. This will help tourists experience the integrity and unity of Amphawa community’s environment.
- Cycle and cycle rickshaws
- Public transportation system will be good enough to discourage car usage
- Widening of pavements increased activity and was further supported
- This created a lively pedestrian area which encourages visitors to explore the old town and wander in the quiet of the small path in front the riverside houses
- With good access to central locations, visitors and encouraged to lodge centrally , thereby benefiting the local economy
- Authorities have to recognize the importance of design and creative initiative the design role covers many aspects of an historic town, including:
 - urban design
 - design of pedestrian areas, materials and interface
 - appropriate care car park
 - transportation and related facilities
 - visitor facilities , information booths, kiosks and the like
 - street furniture
 - heritage trails
 - signage

7. Conclusion

An outstanding cultural landscape in Amphawa community and surrounding area is the good attraction to many tourists. These include: unique architecture of local people and their riverside way of life, historic site as Amphawan Chetiayaram temple and the memorial park related to Chakri Dynasty of Thailand, mural painting in the compound Bangkokphom temple, and local wisdom in cultivating vegetation. All of these tourism destinations tell stories of what was going on in the past and is going on in the present. These places are historic evidences of Thailand. It also is the representative of pattern of riverside way of life related to the nature of this area. It shows how the nature shape way of live of local people and how the nature was shaped by local people. Therefore, in coping with the current of tourists in Amphawa area, the Stakeholders have to manage tourism in sustainable way. They need to conserve the significant of tourism destinations in Amaphawa area and interpret it to the tourists. When the tourists value these tourism destinations it likely guarantees that these places will be kept and submitted to the next generation. And the recommendation in this article is an optional way to handle the tourism in Amphawa community.

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