

Tourism and Cultural Heritage in Southeast Asia

Edited by Malcolm Bradford and Ean Lee.
Bangkok, Thailand: SEAMEO Regional Centre for
Archaeology and Fine Arts, 2004; 105 pp., illustra-
tions, photographs; \$10.00.

This publication is a compendium of 10 papers from 4 regional seminars in Southeast Asia in 2002 and 2003. The seminars were held in Thailand, Cambodia, and Singapore under the sponsorship of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization and the Regional Centre for Archeology and Fine Arts. They were intended to present information on the effects of tourism on Southeast Asian society and culture and the measures and actions being taken in response to this phenomenon.

The papers are presented in three groups—“Living Cultures: Case Studies,” “Heritage Management,” and “Eco-Tourism”—and represent the experiences of five Southeast Asian countries. The experiences of Thailand, Brunei, the Philippines, Singapore, and Viet Nam are included. Papers representing other member states—Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, and Myanmar—may have added to the diversity and value of the publication.

Readers conversant with the current literature on tourism and cultural heritage will find familiar views and statements, albeit from an Asian perspective, in most of the papers. While the target audience for the publication is in Southeast Asia, much of the content is relevant and transposable to tourism and cultural heritage initiatives in the rest of the world. However, what make these papers particularly interesting are the specific and in-depth treatments of subjects unique to the individual countries. Of special interest are those papers dealing with countries that are in the earliest stages of modern tourism development, such as Brunei and Viet Nam.

Thailand is the subject of 4 of the 10 papers with a

focus on the national government's post-1997 economic philosophy of a “sufficiency economy” and its relation and influence on both tourism development and the recognition, protection, and enhancement of cultural heritage. The detailed descriptions—objectives, methodology, process, subjects and outcomes—found in the case study of a sustainable tourism model for Phetchaburi Province are especially useful and highly transferable to similar initiatives outside of Thailand.

In Brunei, the country is coming to recognize the role of contemporary tourism, and the native population's economic role, in what is already a very wealthy country. Having recently developed its first national tourism master plan, the country is focusing on its unique heritage of the Kampong Ayer (The Water Villages), which were noted by the earliest western visitors in 1521. In pursuing modern housing for its population on dry land, the society faces the problem of preserving and maintaining an economic and modern life given its unique historic and cultural resources. The inventory of positive and negative impacts of tourism development related to these sites is of particular interest and relevance to many surviving cultural complexes, be they built over water or on dry land.

In Viet Nam, the national government enacted legislation in 2001 to protect both the tangible and intangible heritage of some 54 different ethnic groups. One paper presents an overview of the intended effects of the legislation and touches on the resultant challenges of implementing this legislation where there are many significant competing demands for government financing in a developing country.

A paper on the Philippines examines the process of the country coming to understand its own heritage and national identity in the postcolonial era. Of particular interest is the adoption in 1987 of a new national constitution that incorporates numerous specific responsibilities of, and authorizations for, the national government in the identification, pro-

tection, and interpretation of their national heritage. Using this legal foundation, the development of a national teacher education program in 2002 is presented in detail with a case study on its application in rural communities.

The chapter on Singapore explores the private, non-government role of the all-volunteer Singapore Heritage Society in a country where the national government is the major force in nearly all aspects of the country's pursuit of a "civil society." The paper details the society's founding in 1987, and its organization, advocacy, growth, and contributions to the preservation of man-made and natural heritage in this densely populated island city-state. Of particular interest is the future of historic cemeteries in the face of demands for additional public housing. The paper concludes with advocacy for the creation of a more effective and better-funded public-private Heritage Conservation Trust.

The two papers on eco-tourism cover familiar ground but are noteworthy for illustrating what has, and is, taking place in Southeast Asia as a direct result of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

Nearly all of the papers include comprehensive lists of additional published references and some include related Internet sites. While several of the papers refer to the lack of financial and human resources, none of them include specific information on project costs and the numbers of personnel involved. An appendix including the four complete seminar programs would have provided additional context for the selected papers.

Readers not intimately acquainted with the regional and national geography of Southeast Asia and these five countries would benefit from the inclusion of some simple maps. Likewise, for a subject that lends itself so well to accompanying illustrations, they are few in number and small in scale.

Following the devastation of the December 2004 tsunami, which particularly affected the western

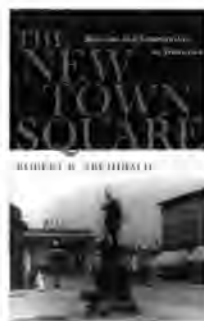
coastal tourist centers in Thailand, one waits with interest and concern for information on the new challenges facing those responsible for tourism and cultural heritage in this region of the world.

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The New Town Square: Museums and Communities in Transition

By Robert R. Archibald. American Association for State and Local History book series. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004; vii + 224 pp., illustrations, notes, index; cloth \$69.00; paper \$24.95.



The Missouri Historical Society's director, Robert R. Archibald, is both concerned and optimistic. He is troubled that the forces of marketing, commerce, and land use are tearing apart the community cohesion, self-perception, and social interaction that infused

the world of his youth, but he is convinced that the application of history can blunt these insidious assaults on the common good. These conflicting responses to change serve as connective tissue for *The New Town Square: Museums and Communities in Transition*, which presents edited versions of Archibald's recent lectures and addresses. Using a variety of approaches and examples, the museum administrator argues that a sense of community is dependent upon the respect of others and their differences, an understanding of our individual and collective pasts, the preservation of representative symbols of our history, and an awareness and appreciation of the natural environment.

Maintaining that "we must find new ways to nurture the civic 'we' instead of our current overemphasis on the individualistic and insular 'me,'" Archibald

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