



SPAFACON2021

**Papers from the SEAMEO SPAFA International Conference on
SOUTHEAST ASIAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND FINE ARTS**

13 - 17 December 2021

Editor: Noel Hidalgo Tan

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INTRODUCTION

This volume contains the extended abstracts from the papers presented at the SEAMEO SPAFA International Conference on Southeast Asian Archaeology and Fine Arts, which was held online from 13 to 17 December 2021. Also known as the SPAFACON2021, this conference was organised online due to the pandemic. Despite the disruption brought about by Covid-19 to our in-person events, training programmes and field research, it is heartening to see that archaeology and cultural heritage has continued under new modes of communication and collaboration.

This fourth iteration of the SPAFACON is also scheduled a year earlier than our usual triennial cycle to commemorate the 50th anniversary of SEAMEO initiating a centre dedicated towards archaeology and the fine arts. Over the past year, SPAFA has also been highlighting this legacy of international cooperation and capacity-building by sharing our photographic archives on our social media.

I am delighted by the high level of enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity brought by the participants to the conference. During our call for papers we received close to 90 submissions, but owing to the pressures of time and the online format, we were only able to accept 34 papers for the conference. The variety of papers present here, although a small set compared with our usual proceedings, reflects the breadth of the centre's ambit – covering not just archaeology, but also performing arts, visual arts, museum studies, and other aspects of Southeast Asian cultural heritage.

I would like to thank all the participants, without whom this conference would not be possible in its present form, in particular, our Governing Board members who represent every country in Southeast Asia, and to the Ministry of Culture, Thailand and the Ministry of Education, Thailand for their long-standing support of SEAMEO SPAFA and its activities.



Mrs Somlak Charoenpot

Centre Director

SEAMEO SPAFA

Forms of government and local community participation in the management of cultural World Heritage sites in Southeast Asia

รูปแบบของรัฐกับการมีส่วนร่วมของชุมชนท้องถิ่นในการจัดการแหล่งมรดกโลกทางวัฒนธรรม ในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้

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Abstract

This paper studied the management of three World Heritage sites in 3 countries of Southeast Asia : Malaysia, Laos, and Thailand. The results of this research show that a decentralized form of government in Southeast Asia provides opportunities for local communities to develop better participation in the World Heritage site management than the centralized forms of government. For local communities to contribute to the World Heritage philosophy, it is necessary to improve both the conceptual and practical aspects of the World Heritage Committee, Advisory organizations, and State Parties. They have to learn lessons and agree to work closely together.

บทความนี้เลือกศึกษาการจัดการแหล่งมรดกโลกจำนวน 3 แห่งในประเทศมาเลเซีย ลาว และไทย โดยใช้วิธีการสำรวจเอกสาร ผลการศึกษาพบว่า รูปแบบของรัฐในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ที่กระจายอำนาจจะเปิดโอกาสให้ชุมชนท้องถิ่นสามารถพัฒนาการมีส่วนร่วมในการจัดการแหล่งมรดกโลกได้ดีกว่ารูปแบบรัฐที่รวมอำนาจ การที่จะให้ชุมชนท้องถิ่นมีส่วนร่วมตามปรัชญาของมรดกโลกจึงจะต้องปรับปรุงทั้งในส่วนของกรอบคิดและการปฏิบัติทั้งในส่วนของคณะกรรมการมรดกโลก องค์กรที่ปรึกษา และรัฐภาคี โดยต้องสรุปบทเรียนและยอมรับร่วมกันอย่างใกล้ชิด

Keywords

cultural World Heritage management; forms of government; local community's participation; Southeast Asia; รูปแบบรัฐ การมีส่วนร่วม การจัดการแหล่งมรดกโลกทางวัฒนธรรม ชุมชนท้องถิ่น เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้

Introduction

The management of World Heritage sites has always been debated as to the balance between the universality in the form of World Heritage Committee criteria and the specificity or diversity of the localities, or regional, including in Southeast Asia. Different interpretations have created problems for the participation of local communities. The form of government is an important condition for the participation of local communities. This article aims to examine the relationship between the form of government and community participation in Southeast Asia. The methodology for this study will be based on a documentary survey, with three World Heritage sites selected as case studies.

Literature Review

It has been suggested that Asia has unique wisdom. When we look at power relations with the rest of the region, Southeast Asia is often linked to the conceptual debate about the value and contention of unequal power relations. It provides unique interpretation, practice, and evaluation of the management of World Heritage Sites, which are often located in cities (Daly and Winter, 2012; Hsiao, Foong and Pycam, 2017; Hitchcock, King and Parnwell, 2010; Labadi, 2013; Booth, 2007; McGregor, 2008; Morgenbesse, 2020). The management of heritage sites in Southeast Asia is always in conflict with World Heritage regulations (Esposito and Gaulis, 2010). Past studies have found that states in Asia and Southeast Asia so often rely on World Heritage as a bargaining tool for national integration that often has greater control over local communities. The community is also trying to rely on World Heritage to negotiate with the state and other sectors. Both state and local communities claim legitimacy from the regulations set by the World Heritage Committee (Daly and Winter, 2012; Winter and Daly, 2012; Hitchcock, King and Parnwell, 2010; Jimura, 2019).

The results of the study

This paper examines three cases, namely the Historic City of Ayutthaya, Town of Luang Prabang, and George Town.

Case 1 Historic City of Ayutthaya

Currently, the Thai state is governed in the form of a unitary state with centralized powers. At the same time, there is a fight against the decentralization trend, as is evident in the structure of Thailand's bureaucracy which is divided into three parts: central, provincial, and local. The local part, which emphasized decentralization, was only beginning to play a clear role in the 1987's (Charoenmuang, 1999).

The Historic City of Ayutthaya is a world heritage site with restrictions on local participation (Gozzoli, 2016). The state has moved people's houses or trading places from the heritage sites, improving conserving and developing resources, and preparing to support tourism. It was found that Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya municipality, which is the local administrative organization, will be the voice of the villagers in the area, which is their base (Taengphant, personal communication, 3 March 2020). There is now news that the sites that are almost on the World Heritage List are in danger from time to time.

Case 2 Town of Luang Prabang

Currently, Laos has a unitary state with a republic, based on central democratic principles, consisting of 17 provinces and 1 prefecture. The province consists of districts. The district consists of villages. Laos is governed by a single political party, with its supreme leader being the party secretary. Laos has the Lao National Assembly, elected from each province. The local state mechanism responsible for the implementation of Luang Prabang's World Heritage Sites is the Local Heritage Protection Committee, working under the National Heritage and Cultural, Historical and Natural Preservation Commission (Inthawong, 2003). There is a staff of the Luang Prabang Heritage Room, responsible for formulating the rules arising from the interpretation of the rules of the World Heritage Committee, and then enforcing them, until they are always in conflict with the villagers. The World Heritage Committee almost placed Luang Prabang on the list of endangered World Heritage Sites on several occasions (Lenaerts, 2016).

Case 3 George Town

Malaysia currently is a composite state. Malaysia's government is divided into two levels: the federal level and the state level. The government of each state has an executive and legislative branch that is directly elected by the people. Each state is divided into municipalities. Leading people including the Penang government also played a key role in pushing Georgetown to be a World Heritage Site, along with Malacca, in 2011 (Li, 2011). In 2008, the Penang state government belonged to the opposition party of the Federal government. But with a highly decentralized state model, Penang's government may need to create policies that are more responsive to the local people of their voice base (Lai and Ooi, 2015).

Discussion

According to a study of the state patterns of the three World Heritage sites, it was found that all three sites have four things in common: First of all, all sites located in urban areas are living and rapidly expanding cities. Second, the formulation of development

guidelines of all sources mainly stems from a central policy. Third, all sites are conflicted by three main parties, namely, communities with less bargaining power with other groups, international organizations, capitalist groups, and state mechanisms. The main conflicts are the state and local communities.

The findings from this study show that the participation of people in local communities in various forms can be very powerful in improving the management of cultural heritage sites in a decentralized state context. In Southeast Asia, a government form in which decentralization will give less powerful parties, especially local communities, more equal channels to negotiate with other parties as can be seen in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya municipality began to support more local communities. In the case of Georgetown, when the Penang state government is opposed to the federal government, they will create more responsive policies with the locals to counter the power of the federal government. The proposal from this study is, to develop the participation in the quality management of cultural heritage sites in accordance with the World Heritage Philosophy, all parties must promote the development of a more decentralized state model.

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