



ASEAN-Turkey ASLI (Annual Serial Landmark International) Conferences on Quality of Life 2016
AMER International Conference on Quality of Life, AicQoL2016Medan
25 – 27 February 2016, Medan, Indonesia

Preservation of Cultural Heritage Community: Cases of Thailand and developed countries

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Abstract

Preservations of cultural heritage community in Thailand often found that the heritage buildings and surroundings are carefully preserved while the way of life and socio-economic structure are not. On the other hand, this is not the same in developed countries. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the method of successful cultural heritage community preservation in those states. The conclusion is that, in order to preserve this heritage successfully, the preservation method must have an establishment of organizations that effected changes and systematic management procedures for maintenance.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the Association of Malaysian Environment-Behavior Researchers, AMER (ABRA malaysia)

Keywords: Cultural heritage community; heritage preservation; preservation in developed country; cultural tourism

1. Introduction

Preservation, whether the cultural heritage preservation or the natural heritage conservation, it is of particular importance. The purpose of the cultural heritage protection has four principal reasons. First, the cultural memory, a

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preservation of cultural heritage maintains physical evidence history and transfers value knowledge and skills of their ancestors. Second, the convenient proximity, the cultural heritage preservation can support the interaction among the environment, people and community activities. Next, the environment diversity, as an identity of the local community or difference, the preservation will retain local artifacts and local artisans among the stream of urban development. At Last, the economic gain, the preservation is a benefit to the community in two important ways, to saving a cost of new buildings and attractions to visitors.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has declared that cultural heritage can be tangible, such as buildings and surrounding, or intangible, such as local custom and way of life. In the widest sense, cultural heritage encompasses the whole eco-environment that depicts the activities and successes of humans in the past that cannot be replaced (Feilden & Jokileht, 1998). Furthermore, an effort to preserve cultural heritage should aim to conserve not only physical objects, such as buildings and their surroundings, but also intangible things such as arts languages, and customs (Indara Syahrul Mat Radzuan, 2014).

From The Nara Document on Authenticity, a diversity of cultural heritage in the world is an irreplaceable source of spiritual and intellectual prosperity for all mankind. The protection and enhancement of heritage diversity in the world should be proficiently promoted as a significant aspect of human development. Cultural heritage diversity exists in time and space, and requires respect for other cultures and all cultures and communities are rooted in the specific patterns and means of tangible and intangible exposition which become their heritage, and these should be respected. Furthermore, preservation of cultural heritage in all its forms is rooted in the values attributed to the heritage. The potentiality to comprehend these values depends on the degree to which information sources about these values be understood as reliable. Knowledge and realization of these sources of information, in relativity to original and after characteristics of the cultural heritage, and their implication, is a necessity foundation for evaluating all features of authenticity.

2. The study approach

According to The Venice Charter, the concept of a heritage sites not only the single architectural operate but also the urban and surrounding configuration in which is found the basis of a specific culture or civilization. This practises not only to great works of art but also to more modest works of the past which have acquired cultural significance with the passing of time. The preservation of heritages is always encouraged by making use of them for some socially expedient purpose. Such purpose is therefore satisfactory but it must not change the layout or ornament of the building. It is within these disposition only that adaptations demanded by a modification of function should be speculated and be authorized. Also, the heritage sites must be the object of specific treat in order to prevent their integrity and assure that they are apparent and demonstrated in an appropriate feature.

In Thailand, it is often found that a cultural heritage community conservation is done to the contrary of the above statement. Namely, the buildings and architectural features are carefully preserved while the way of life and socio-economic structure are not. This phenomenon has happened because once a community was declared to be a cultural heritage, more opportunities for the community to make money open up, drastically changing the people's way of life and socio-economic structure. As mentioned above, this is not the same in several highly developed countries, such as The United States of America (USA), The United Kingdom (UK) and Japan, where successful preservation projects are the norm (Pimonsatien, 2013).

Hence, this study aimed to investigate the process of successful cultural heritage community preservation in these countries as well as their socio-economic structure that supports the process. Our assumption is that, in order to preserve the intangible heritage, the conservation process must not adversely affect the community's socio-economic structure too severely.

3. The situation in Thailand

At present, cultural heritage community preservation in Thailand is mostly focused on preservation of heritage buildings and their surroundings. This kind of preservation is costlier than the community alone can support. One way to raise preservation fund is to adapt historical and cultural heritages of the community into a tourist attraction. Adaptation includes tourist accommodations such as hotel, restaurant, and tourist information center.

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