

Training Course on Management of Historical Parks as Cultural Heritage Resources

Twenty-two participants attended SPAFA's **Training Course on Management of Historical Parks as Cultural Heritage Resources**, that was held in Thailand for 2 weeks from June 16 to 29, 1997.

The National Park Service (USA), Fine Arts Department (Thailand) and SPAFA are joint partners in co-ordinating the course, which were conducted in Bangkok at the SPAFA Centre. Funding agencies were SEAMEO/SPAFA and The Japan Foundation.

Sites where important events changed the historical backgrounds of Southeast Asian countries abound in the region. These sites, either with or without tangible structures, exist to mark a part of the nation's history, and are thus cultural heritage which need attention and preservation; their relevance and significance must be made known to, and understood by, the people - inhabitants as well as visitors - because as it is part of history, it is a part of the people.

These historical sites, mostly established and developed as "historical parks" and primarily established for their intrinsic values, have become major attractions for people who travel. Until recently, historical parks, as cultural resources, have been greatly undervalued.

This training course focussed on management techniques concerned with the creation of administrative systems. It included management planning which covers aspects of park history, land use, design and implementation of preservation guidelines, existing park landscape, administration, problems and potential of the area as well as recommendation for further development.

The objectives were to facilitate an inter-cultural exchange among delegates of member-countries in current concepts, policies, plans, and issues which relate to management of historical parks as cultural heritage assets in their home country; to share generally-accepted principles and practices in historical park preservation and development, as well as theories of historical park organizational structures; and to train participants in the appropriate techniques of historical park management and cultural heritage promotion.

The training course was carried out at SPAFA Headquarters, and all the participants were individuals who were involved with heritage management and monitoring in their

respective countries. Professionally, it was a mix of architects, archaeologists, archivists and cultural administrators. The



Phimai

general reaction of the participants was that they learnt much which would be of use to their work, although quite a few felt that the Country Reports sessions should be expanded to allow detailed discussions on potentials and limitations of Historical sites, and including more classroom exercise sessions.

Field trips to Ayutthaya, Phetburi, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Buriram were conducted, where field work was also carried out.

Together with Mr. Pisit Charoenwongsa, SPAFA's senior archaeology specialist, Dr. Douglas Comer and Dr. Elizabeth Comer, of the National Parks Service of the USA, were involved as principal resource persons. They were both specialists in Heritage Management and Cultural Tourism. In addition, Dr. Richard Engelhardt, Regional Adviser for Culture in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO, also contributed as a Resource Person during the course. Others included Asst. Professor Banasopit Mekvichai, who is chairperson of BMA Governor's Advisory Board on City Planning, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration; Mr. Bovornvate Rungruji, Director of the Ayutthaya Historical

City Project, and the Ayutthaya Branch Office of Archaeology and National Museums; Mr Ronarit Dhanakoses, landscape architect, Ms. Saowalak Pongsatha, architect; Mr Porntham Wimol, architect from the Fine Arts Department; Mr. Narong Thongsrinoon, Managing Director of Asia Hotel Planer Ltd, and Mr. Sangiam Ekchote, Registrar, Association of Thai



Phnom Rung, Thailand

Mr. Pisit Charoenwongsa (SPAFA's senior archeology specialist) leading a tour of Phnom Rung



Ayutthaya



Ayutthaya

Travel Agents, representing the tourism private sector.

Heritage managers from the Fine Arts Department, Thailand, have always been kind in providing guided tours at sites, relevant information and insight into their management scheme for the benefit of participants in the training course From the Ayutthaya Branch Office of Archaeology and National Museums, assistance were given by: Mr. Prateep Pengtakko, and Mrs. Prapis Choosiri (from the Historical Park of Petchburi); Mr. Viset Petchpradab (Park Director, Phimai Historical Park); Dr. Rachni Tosrath (Park Director, Phimai National Museum); Mr. Samort Saphyen (Director, Phnom Rung Historical Park), Mr. Chalauy



Dr. Douglas Comer (from the National Parks Service, USA)



Course Trainees meet with local officials at Ayutthaya's Branch office of Archaeology and National Museum



Phnom Rung

Jasuphananond, (Park Director) and the assistants at a hilltop site of the park where course trainees stayed for a night.