



Archaeology of dance in Java: interpreting the past through iconography

*Alessandra Iyer traces
reliefs of the Siva Temple at
the Prambanan Complex in
Indonesia to reconstruct
dance movements of an
ancient art form*



My starting point is a concept of reconstruction broader than that normally used in dance research. I work with reconstruction in relation to dance styles and techniques of body manipulation which were once used in a performance context but are now obsolete.

Reconstruction is an interpretative act and for wide acceptance and credibility it requires the hallmark of authenticity. More recent research trends in the field of archaeology have highlighted the

Is sculptural/pictorial evidence admissible as a methodological tool, within this framework, for reconstructing a dance style? Opinion is divided. There are those who are prepared to consider iconography as reliable evidence and those who are not. The latter seem to be caught up in a way of thinking which automatically privileges and bestows authenticity to the written text alone.

The specific case study presented will be my recent investigation of some dance reliefs from Central Java, Indonesia, whose dance movement content I have identified and reconstructed in practice, using a model based on an obsolete dance



ambiguous nature of a notion of reconstruction based on concepts of absolute objectivity, re-evaluating subjectivity of interpretation.

The data is a "network of resistance" against which the act of interpretation is measured. Methodology becomes crucial. The relationship of the interpretation (and interpreter) with the "network of resistance" is defined by the refinement and contextual sensitivity/appropriateness of the methodology. This will also define authenticity.

technique of body manipulation which seems to have been linked with Saivism (cult of the god Siva) and its growth. The paper is, however, not concerned with the movement reconstruction alone; there are other issues worth exploring. What happens when a dance reconstruction (say, a style or a specific work) is accepted as authentic? What is the actual relationship between reconstruction and contemporary dance practice? Is reconstruction to be seen only as a tool for preservation?

I would question the notion of preserving a "conflict-free" heritage in constant need of being kept alive. Reconstruction cannot and should not exist only as revival of a petrified heritage in the name of preservation of antiquity and authenticity of tradition. Rather, it should strive for recognition of its independent status from tradition and heritage, as a form of intellectual enquiry inscribed in the present.

These are the issues I would like to raise for discussion. In the following pages I will focus specifically on my reconstruction work, limiting myself to initiating the debate.

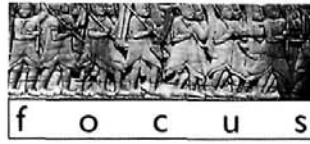
The Prambanan temple complex

In the village of Prambanan, about 15 kilometres from Yogyakarta, in Central Java, Indonesia, there is a large Śaivite (pertaining to Saivism or Śiva) complex, which is one of the largest in Asia.

The complex, believed to belong to the early part of the 9th century A.D.⁽¹⁾, is made up of a series of concentric courts which contained some 224 minor surrounding temples and 8 temples in the inner court. Only these temples in the inner court have been restored. Among them, there are three tall architectural structures, the most important temples (**candi**) of the complex. These are **candi Śiva** in the centre, with **candi Brahma** to the right and **candi Viṣṇu** to the left. The temples are so named because the main stat-



Candi Śiva, Prambanan complex
Photo: Alessandra Iyer



ues in the cellas represent these gods. **Candi Śiva** is more popularly known as **candi Loro Jonggrang**, after a legendary local princess identified with Durgā, whose statue is enshrined in the temple in the North-facing chamber.

The three temples are rich in iconography, and the inner side of the balustrade of **candi Śiva** and **candi Brahma** is covered with reliefs depicting the story of Rāma. On the inner balustrade of **candi Viṣṇu**, one can see episodes from the life of Kṛṣṇa, one of the heroes of the **Mahābhārata** epic. The outer walls of all the three **candi** are covered with a variety of ornamental motifs showing flowers, animals, and minor celestials. On the outer balustrade of **candi Śiva**, there are 62 reliefs showing dancers and musicians, together with another 70 reliefs showing groups of three celestial beings in standing postures, which are known as the **apsari/vidyādhara (gandharva)** groups. These reliefs are usually thought to be decorative but there are reasons to believe that mere decoration was not their *raison d'être*. I do not think there can be any dispute that these are dance scenes. But what kind of dance is represented? Although at this stage one cannot comment on the dance represented therein in terms of choreography, one can certainly present a formal analysis of the dance movements portrayed.

It is now possible to identify each one of the dance reliefs as a

representation of a **karāṇa movement**. A **karāṇa** is a small movement sequence which forms the basic unit of an obsolete technique of dance described in the Sanskrit text **Nāṭyaśāstra**, the foremost work on dance, music and drama of India. Although I am not the first to suggest that the dance reliefs at Prambanan are **karāṇa** (or related to **karāṇa**)⁽²⁾, no one had identified them as **karāṇa** on the basis of movement analysis, prior to this present attempt. Such an identification would not have been possible without the previous research on the **karāṇa** seen on In-

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dian temples that Subrahmanyam carried out. It is his reconstruction of the **karāṇa** of the **Nāṭyaśāstra** which I have used as a model to which the reliefs could be compared, for reasons I am about to explain⁽³⁾.

Can one reconstruct a dance technique from iconographic evidence? Reliance on iconographic representations of dance as doc-

umentation of dance forms which may no longer be in use is not universally accepted as a valid methodology, either in the context of Western or in that of non-Western dance research. Questions have been asked on how accurate static visual representations can be in recording dance movements and also whether these movements can be authentically recreated from a practical point of view⁽⁴⁾. Reliability of the dance image as record is questioned because it is thought that its narrative, devotional or symbolic function would automatically exclude a relationship with reality. (on scrutiny, this is clearly only an assumption which has unfortunately prompted some writers to dismiss dance images as uncertain evidence). Yet there is no reason why these images would not have taken their cue from forms known to the artists and craftsmen through living performance practices while also having a function other than realistic representation of dance.

If the iconographic evidence is further corroborated by other sources, such as manuals, literary works, extant practices in living traditions and so on, then clearly one cannot dismiss the possibility that such images do reflect what was dance practice. The question of reliability becomes then a methodological issue: the degree of accuracy in 'reading' the dance image and reconstructing the movement will depend entirely on the approach.



There have been different models of **karāṇa** reconstruction proposed over the years but Subrahmanyam's has the advantage of being practically oriented, that is, not merely based on translations of the chapter on **karāṇa** found in the **Nāṭyaśāstra**. Ultimately, what makes one reconstruction more acceptable than another is entirely determined by whether it allows us to make better sense of the data. Subrahmanyam's reconstruction fulfills this requirement. Her model is based on a correlated study of textual material and sculptural evidence from all over the subcontinent. The textual material consists of the **Nāṭyaśāstra** and its variant manuscripts, and the tenth/eleventh century commentary to it written by Abhinavagupta (deemed by all scholars who have worked on the **Nāṭyaśāstra** to be the essential tool for an understanding of the work), as well as a number of other texts, written in post-**Nāṭyaśāstra** times.

Subrahmanyam's reconstruction in its perfected and polished form was completed only by the end of the 1980s. Recording the reconstructed **karāṇa** with all their variants, obtained from alternative readings of the manuscripts that were consulted, was equivalent to creating a template, a pool of movement patterns of an obsolete dance technique which could then be used for comparative purposes in dance analysis and research or, if

one so wished, for choreographic purposes.

It was a widely held view, when I began my investigation, that the dance reliefs of Prambanan could not be representations of **karāṇa** because no relief is exactly identical with an existing relief seen in India - in temples such as the Bṛhadīśvara at Tanjore or the Naṭarāja temple at Chidambaram which are well known for their identified **karāṇa** representations. Those who held this opinion viewed the **karāṇa** as static poses, without realising that each **karāṇa** is a movement and as such, any portion of that movement can be visually rendered in a pictorial or a sculptural representation. Significantly, representation allows for multiple visual interpretations which can greatly differ from one another because different sections of that particular movement sequence may be focussed upon by the artists. However, if the whole movement sequence of each **karāṇa** is known, it is not at all difficult to relate the different portions seen in different sculptures (or paintings) to each other. So, due to the fact that adequate movement analysis had not been carried out, the reliefs at

Prambanan had either been glossed over or dismissed as representations of some old dance form of which nothing was known.

I would like here to give some examples of the analysis carried out in order to arrive at an identification of the movements shown



Dance reliefs and trio figures in niches, candi Śiva
Photo: Alessandra Iyer

in all the reliefs. I have selected relief P14, P22, P49 (the P here standing for Prambanan) corresponding to K 24 (**Bhujāṅga Trāsita**), K 27 (**Mattalli**), K 25 (**Urdhvajānu**). K refers to the **karāṇa** in the **Nāṭyaśāstra** list.

The drawings I have used to accompany the photographs of the Prambanan reliefs were prepared by Subrahmanyam when she was commissioned to design a new set of **karāṇa** reliefs for the newly built Śiva temple at Satara, in Western India. These drawings are helpful because they convey the main moments of the reconstruction, using the animation principle. Two figures, Devi and Śiva, portray dif-

ferent portions of the movement sequence prescribed for each **karaṇa**, going from right to left (of the viewer). In the Prambanan reliefs we find that animation is shown through three figures which indicate different portions of the same **karaṇa**. Sometimes the animation works from left to right, sometimes from right to left. In the reliefs, the most important figure, both iconographically and in terms of movement, is the one in the centre foreground. (see glossary for definitions of technical terms)

P14 Bhujāṅgatrāsita K24

Figure (relief no. 14) has the right knee crossed and lifted on the left. The hands in **abhaya** and **varada** show the beginning of **dolanṛtta hasta**, which involves an oscillatory movement. The centre figure has the right hand gracefully stretched on the left and the left hand held high near the head. The right foot, partly damaged, is at the front in **kuñcita pāda**. The third figure (in relief no. 14) is also quite damaged. Only the chest and part of the legs are visible. The right hand is in **hamsapākṣa** near the chest. The movement performed by this figure equates the very beginning of the **karaṇa** sequence. In the reconstruction drawing the movement phases are as follows: Devi's action follows that of figure (relief no. 14) in the Prambanan relief and Śiva's is immediately consecutive to that of the central figure in the relief.



Candi Śiva, relief n. 14
Photo: Alessandra Iyer



Karana Bhujāṅgatrāsita n. 24
Drawing, courtesy : Dr Padma Subrahmanyam

Candi Śiva, relief n. 22
Photo: Alessandra Iyer



P 22 Mattalli K 27

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* specifies that the two hands must be in **udveṣṭita** and **apaviddha**. **Udveṣṭita** is an outward movement of the hand/wrist led by the index finger and **apaviddha** is an in-out movement of the arms. Here, the main figure (relief n. 22 above) is clearly seen in **maṇḍala sthāna** (a wide stance, with outwardly rotated and bent knees) with the right foot as **kuñcita** at the back. The waist is raised on the right side. This is in consonance with the style of depiction seen in the Devi figure of the reconstruction drawing. In the reconstruction of the action, the waist is raised on the opposite side of the foot that is planted on the ground. In other words, the waist is raised on the side of the **kuñcita** foot. This is what is called **ābhasa bhaṅga**. The sculpture portrays a part of the movement and not a static posture, hence the body lines do not show the “normal” shift of weight but instead emphasise the dynamism of the concept. Here, the centre figure has the left palm turned in near the waist while the right hand is lifted near the shoulder. Together they portray the **nitamba nṛtta hasta** (a combination of **udveṣṭita** and **apaviddha**) required by this **karāṇa**. Unfortunately the other two figures are damaged.



Karana mattalli n. 27
Drawing, courtesy: Dr Padma Subrahmanyam



Candi Śiva, relief n. 49
Photo: Alessandra Iyer

P 49 Ūrdhvajānu K 25

Figure 1 (relief n. 49 above) has been beautifully mended. The right leg is in *sūci pāda* about to be lifted. The right hand is raised to the level of the shoulder in *kuñcita* for a *vyāvarta* action. The head is tilted to the right and the hip is also raised. Figure 2 (centre foreground of relief no. 49) is in *ūrdhvajānu*, like the *Devī* figure in the reconstruction drawing. Even the shifting of the torso on the left is similar. The left hand is in the process of being rotated towards the chest. Figure 3 (right of viewer) has only one leg visible, extended in front of figure 2. The adjacent slab on the left proper has only traces of face and hands, yet this is enough to surmise that the *ūrdhvajānu* movement here is performed sideways.



Karana ūrdhvajānu n. 25
Drawing, courtesy: Dr Padma Subrahmanyam



Karaṇa sculptures and cultural/artistic recycling: implications for a study of the cultural history of Southeast Asia

There is a number of issues connected with my study of the Prambanan reliefs which need to be discussed. Among these is the problem of the sequential order of the reliefs, which in many ways relates to their purpose and function. For one thing, the present sequence is not the original one. The Śiva temple was restored from a state of utter ruin and decay in the first half of the century, and old photographs from the Dutch Archaeological Service in Indonesia, taken between 1893 and 1937, show very clearly that the reliefs were not in place when the restoration work began⁽⁵⁾. Was the sequence meant to be made up of all the 108 **karaṇa** listed in the **Nāṭyaśāstra** - in which case some are missing - or was it meant to portray an **aṅgahāra** (a string of **karaṇa**) out of the 32 mentioned in the Sanskrit text? Further research is needed to clarify this point. It is, however, very obvious that since the reliefs show a dance sequence of some sort (perhaps an **aṅgahāra**), their presence was not for a decorative purpose.

The cosmic dance of Siva, known as **Tāṇḍava**, is articulated through **karaṇa**. Its significance is profound and it encapsulates the main concepts of Śaivism, a branch of Hinduism which centres on the

worship of the god Siva. **Aṅgahāra** is linked to the different **Tāṇḍava** that he dances. This is a temple dedicated to Siva. It is only fitting that the cosmic dance of the lord should be represented on its outer balustrade.

There is also the question of the identity of the performers in the reliefs. Could the dancers - all of them male - be Śiva himself dancing his cosmic dance? The figures in each relief usually show three dancers, all identical, which could well be a device deployed to show the unfolding of the **karaṇa** movement through time, with the "performers" being in fact only one. Identification of the performers and establishing the purpose of the sequence are still unsettled issues and are clearly related to an investigation of the cultural/religious background of ancient Java. If Śaivism was particularly strong in this area, why was it? There are no ready-made answers.

Intriguingly, the early ninth-century Prambanan **karaṇa** series is about 100 to 200 years older than the first known **karaṇa** series in India, seen at the Coḷa Br̥hadiśvara temple in Tanjore. It is thus very likely that there were no specific prototypes or samples for the **karaṇa** of Prambanan - the images can be regarded as a local concept. Is it a case of parallel development or could the idea of representing **karaṇa** in a serial order in Coḷa⁽⁶⁾ times have been taken back to India after Prambanan was carved?

This does not imply that the concept of **karaṇa** was not known in India before Prambanan nor that the **Nāṭyaśāstra** is of Javanese origin nor that **karaṇa** may not have already been a part of the dance practice of Coḷa times prior to their rendering in stone on the Br̥hadiśvara. Nor does it mean that isolated **karaṇa** had never been sculpted in India prior to either the Prambanan or the Tanjore complex.

I am simply suggesting that the idea of putting **karaṇa** in a *sculpted series* of some sort may have originated in Java⁽⁷⁾, and would call this an instance of recycling. The inevitable question is: were there other instances of recycling such as this? It would appear, from studies carried out in other fields, that this was a strong possibility, with a greater likelihood than the supposition of a parallel development.⁽⁸⁾

The question of Indian influence in Southeast Asia, whether it is the now outmoded concept of "Indianisation" or the more modern one of "localisation" of Indian influence, needs rethinking. The travelling of people - and of ideas - must have been a two-way traffic. Present political boundaries cannot be projected on to past history. The cultural recycling and relaying that took place among the Hindu-ised Southeast Asian regions - here Hindu-ised refers to both Hinduism and Buddhism - may well have involved India.⁽⁹⁾ Sedyawati, in her research on



Gaṇeśa, statuary of the Kadiri and Singhasari periods in Java, emphasises the existence of a multi-centred international culture⁽¹⁰⁾. The phenomenon of cultural recycling within Asia should thus be investigated further.

Reconstruction and living dance practices

Another important issue is that of the relationship between reconstructed dance techniques and living dance practices, which an exercise such as the one presented inevitably raises. It involves a debate on questions of authenticity, tradition, interpretation and the way the past is conceived of in relation to the present.

Recreation has often been presented as heritage. Different meanings and interpretations have been given to the concept of "tradition", but it is clear that tradition is constantly reinvented through subtle shifts which are not usually immediately detected. Indeed, it is this apparent state (shifts in tradition that are not detected) which reinforces the fiction of a constant, unchanging tradition.

Archaeological reconstruction is based on interpretation and is inscribed in the present. There is no separate objective past which can be presented in glass cases. The past in glass cases is indeed the result of selection and therefore once more an act of interpretation. Once the fiction of an objective past

is eliminated, it is possible to live with its multiple interpretations, "facing the contradictions of our contemporary relation with the past, unravelling but not resolving"⁽¹¹⁾. Within this framework, it is clear that concepts of truth, truthfulness and authenticity lose their absolute value.

If reconstruction is a re-inscribing of the past in the present, it follows that reconstructing the *karaṇa* of Prambanan may lead to recreating the technique in the present, as a living practice of Javanese dance⁽¹²⁾. This does not, however, necessarily imply or give a guarantee of a 'better' or more 'authentic' way to dance and choreograph. There cannot be such guarantees, only the possibility of exploring another way to be creative. ■

Glossary of dance technical terminology

abhaya

a hand gesture denoting protection, with the raised palm facing outward.

añcita

1. movement of the foot in which the foot rests on its heel.
2. bend of the arms with the elbows pointing outward.
3. side bend of the head.

angahara

a dance phrase made up of at least four *karanas*

apaviddha

the arms move away from the chest in a circular way.

āviddha an

aerial *cāri*. From a *svastika* the foot is lifted obliquely as *kuñcita* and then brought to its own side and placed on the ground as *añcita* beside the other heel. Feet are in *pārśva* and do not touch each other when they are in *svastika*.

bhujāṅga trāsita

an aerial *cāri*. The *kuñcita* foot is raised to the other thigh and the heel faces the hip. The knee must be lifted on the opposite side and the body must not be turned. Then the foot is folded in to touch its own thigh, the leg thus bent is stretched out from the knee and turned to its own side. During the twist the sole is upturned.

cāri

a movement of the lower limbs.

dola (nṛtta) hasta

the shoulders are slackened and the hands hang down in *patākā* by the sides.

hamsapākṣa

a soft, open palm.

karaṇa

small movement sequence which forms the basic unit of an obsolete technique of dance de-



scribed in the Sanskrit text
Nāṭyaśāstra.

kuñcita

1. pointed foot with contracted toes contacting the floor.
2. arms folded with the elbows facing the corners.

Nāṭyaśāstra

the foremost work on dance, music and drama of India.

nitamba

the wrists are circled at shoulder level and the arms are brought down at hip level, to the sides, where the wrist movement is repeated, bringing the arms up again at shoulder level.

pada

foot.

pārśva

side (sideways).

pataka

a gesture of the hand showing the extended palm

sthāna

stance.

sūci

1. a position of the foot with the tips of the toes touching the ground.
2. a cārī in which the foot is lifted as kuñcita and is then stretched to the level of the other thigh (or knee).

svastika

a crossing movement of either lower or upper limbs.

tāla

measurement equivalent to a palm.

udveṣṭita

outward movement of the hand and wrist beginning with the index finger.

ūrdhvajānu

erect (high) knee: the knee is raised, folding the shank over the thigh.

vaiṣṇava

a stance involving the distance of 2 and 1/2 tāla between the legs.

varada

a gesture denoting "giving", performed by showing the palm of the hand, palm pointing downwards

vyāvarta

the fingers are turned inward starting from the little finger.

Notes

(1) Roy E. Jordaan 1993 *Imagine Buddha in Prambanan. Reconsidering the Buddhist background of the Loro Jonggrang temple complex*. Leiden: Vakgroep Talen en Culturen van Zuidoost-Azië en Oceanië, Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden [Semaian 7]

(2) See Edi Hadimulyo Sedyawati 1982 'The question of Indian influence on

ancient Javanese dance' *RIMA* 16, 2: 59-82 and K. Vatsyayan 1977 'Dance sculptures of Lara Djonggrang (Prambanan)' *Quarterly Journal of the National Centre for the Performing Arts*, VI 91):1- 14

(3) Dr Padma Subrahmanyam, dancer and scholar, began her study of the **karāṇa** of the **Nāṭya-śāstra** in the early 1960s. She was a student of Professor T.N. Ramachandran, the then Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India, who had specifically worked on the **karāṇa** of the Bṛhadiśvara temple, discovered in the 1950s by K. Srinivasan. Her work culminated in a two-volume doctoral dissertation, *Karāṇa in Indian sculpture* (Unpublished 1978, Annamalai University) and in a documentary serial, *Bharatiya Nāṭyaśāstra*, which was produced by V. Balakrishnan and broadcasted by the Indian National Network "Doordarshan" in 1992.

(4) Sharon Fermor 1987 "On the question of pictorial 'evidence' for fifteenth-century dance technique" *Dance Research* V, 2 Autumn:18-32 (London) and also C. Brakel-Papenhuyzen 1976 'The court dances of Central Java and their relationship to classical Indian dance' *Archipel* 11:165-167. Brakel believes that the reliefs on Javanese **candi** do not provide sufficient evidence on the type of dancing in vogue in Java at the time.

(5) See Alessandra Iyer 1996 'Prambanan revisited: a fresh perspective on the dance sculptures of **candi Śiwa**', *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient* 83 and also 1997 *Prambanan: sculpture and dance in ancient Java. A study in dance ico-*



nography Bangkok: White Lotus. The reports of the former Dutch Archaeological Service (Oudheidkundige Dienst) also make it very clear that Prambanan and **candi Śiva**, in particular, underwent a number of restorations, during which the reliefs were shifted around several times, as can be seen from photos taken from 1926 to 1937.

(6) Name of a South Indian dynasty.

(7) It has recently come to my notice that a group of **karāṇa** can be seen on the **upapitha** at Bahur, near Pondicherry, a temple built in 965 A.D. by the rulers of Mankhed. See Dhaky, M.A. 1983 Bahur in M.W. Meister and M.A. Dhaky eds. *Encyclopaedia of Indian temple architecture South India, Lower Dravidaśa 200 BC - AD 1324* New Delhi: Oxford University Press/ University of Pennsylvania Press [American Institute of Indian Studies] p.219 plate 265. This would strengthen the argument of a recycling into India after Prambanan.

(8) Stuart Robson (from Monash University and at present engaged in research on the location of ancient Srivijaya) is a world authority on Old Javanese language, literature and culture. He recently pointed out to me a work by Jan Schoterman (*Indonesische sporen in Tibet*, 1986) in which it is shown that the cult of the goddess Tara was taken back to the subcontinent (Tibet and Nepal) from Southeast Asia (pers.comm. 1997). Unfortunately, I have no access to Schoterman's work.

(9) See Wang Gungwu 1986 'Introduction' in D.G. Marr and A. C. Milner eds *Southeast Asia in the 9th to the 14th*

centuries Singapore/ Canberra: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies/ Australian National University

(10) Edi Sedyawati 1994 *Gaṇeśa statuary of the Kadiri and Singhasari periods* Leiden: KITLV Press, p. 257

(11) Shanks, M and Tilley, C. 1992 *Reconstructing archaeology: theory and practice*, London/New York: Routledge, p.28

(12) I am not aware, to date, of any of such attempts in Java but I can think of a parallel in India, where Subrahmanyam has revived the **karāṇa** in dance practice, creating the Bharata Nrityam style, as distinct from Bharata Natyam.

Biographical note

Alessandra Iyer lectures and writes on dance, dance iconography and the visual arts of South and Southeast Asia. She obtained her PhD in Art and Archaeology in 1990, from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. From 1991 to 1994, Alessandra worked on a project involving the identification and reconstruction of the movements seen in the dance reliefs of the Prambanan temple complex in Central Java, Indonesia. She has just completed a book on the Prambanan dance reliefs, published by White Lotus, Bangkok. (see page 47)

Heritage and Habitat 6-8 April 1998 Penang, Malaysia

The Technical University of Darmstadt (THD) will stage a round-table symposium entitled 'Heritage and Habitat: The Context of Sustainable Development in Historic City Centres' on the current situation in Penang and the wider region of Southeast Asia. This forum for debate will be co-ordinated by Mr. Lim Hooi Siang, Ar&T Heritage Consultancy Sdn. Bhd. There will be four panels:

1. Public and Private sectors - Conflicting Approaches? Urban management and planning; local administration; legal frame work; renewal policy; partnerships in implementation.
2. Values and Urban identity Conservation and preservation; nostalgia, local sentiment; re-invention of history; guiding visions ('Leitbilder').
3. Housing and Working in Inner-City Areas Traffic patterns; gentrification; development pressure; rising land prices; neighbourhood structure, community character.

Following a previous workshop in Darmstadt in 1993 on the topic of

'Housing in Historic City Centres of Southeast Asia', the intent of the symposium is to get a better understanding of today's urban planning needs, of methods, phasing and priorities in this complex field, ranging from conservation to renewal. In this context the Darmstadt group will present their research findings, focusing on four case-studies, Penang, Singapore, Yogyakarta, and Hanoi. Designed to promote intensive debate, this meeting is open only to a limited number of participants.

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