

SPAFA-ICOMOS as partners, to care for monuments and sites

ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) and SPAFA are due to enter a new phase of mutual assistance and co-operation after Dr. Roland Silva, International President of ICOMOS, visited SPAFA on Friday 6 February 1998. At the SPAFA Centre, Bangkok, he discussed several matters with Mr. Pisit Charoenwongsa, SPAFA's Officer-in-Charge, during a meeting which was also attended by Mr. Prasanna Weerawardane (Co-ordinator, SPAFA's Cambodian Project) and Mr. Ean Lee (SPAFA's Publication Manager).

Dr. Silva began by referring to the minutes of the previous SPAFA-ICOMOS meeting held at SPAFA in September 1997. He expressed his profound sympathy and condolences at the demise - in December last year - of Dr. Ruang Chareonchai, SPAFA's former Director.

Some of the issues discussed concerned:

- monuments and sites of Mankind-2000 AD;
- addition of SPAFA's member countries to ICOMOS' publication of the book series titled 'Monuments and Sites of the Member States of ICOMOS';
- the nomination of Mr. Pisit Charoenwongsa as a member of the ICOMOS Executive Committee (to which post he has now been elected);
- the encouragement of the countries in the region which are not members of ICOMOS to join.

Dr. Silva, are you visiting Thailand on a special mission?

I'm on my way to China for an inspection of monuments for ICOMOS.

With reference to Thailand and more specifically to SPAFA, ICOMOS would like, as a matter of convention, the director of SPAFA to be an Executive Member of ICOMOS, on behalf of South-east Asia.

Secondly, we hope SPAFA will use its office to carry the message of ICOMOS to the nine countries in Southeast Asia, of which three are members, and to attract the other six to become members - Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam - and later perhaps Myanmar.

Also, by the next general assembly in Mexico, September 1999, we would like to publish - under the Monuments and Sites Series - the work of five Member Countries of SPAFA, which will indicate their modus operandi on how they manage their monuments and sites.

We would like SPAFA to help to liaise with the respective countries in the production of these publications.

It is the wish of ICOMOS to have all UN member states become members of ICOMOS in order that the standards of conservation could achieve the highest levels. This is why we have translated the Venice Charter, at its 30th Anniversary, into twenty-eight languages so that it could be widely disseminated, and that the people who matter, the masons and carpenters, who are conserving the monuments, can understand the internationally-accepted principles of conservation.

How is ICOMOS helping countries to share one another's experiences?

Initially, we will be concentrating on sharing methods to conserve monuments and sites. China may have some new ideas, for example, which they can share with the rest of the world.

Dr. Roland Silva ►

We are publishing books on monuments and sites, such as the one published on Japan, that tell the world, "This is how we look after our monuments and sites." Already we have published 18 such books from different countries.

We are hoping another 20 will come out in 1999 at the General Assembly in Mexico, including one, on Thailand. By exchanging these information, we are sharing the research of private research institutions.

We all have different national legislation and provisions (on conservation of monuments), and it is a question of sharing our separate experiences, and build an even higher and superior set of standards. We can, thereby, enrich one another's professional approaches to monuments and sites.

What is the immediate role of SPAFA in the collaboration with ICOMOS?

SPAFA covers ten individual Southeast Asian countries, whose concepts are reflected and shared amongst these countries. You are in the ideal position to assist these countries by:

- enhancing the individuality of a country;
- establishing a collective personality of the region; and
- contributing to elevating the international personality of ICOMOS, which presently covers about a hundred countries.

The regional concepts of conservation practice in Asia, Europe, Africa, America, etc. will finally blossom out in an updated international charter like the Venice charter. These may supplement existing charters, such as that of Venice; or even replace the archaic charters on excavation, made in 1954.

The most important thing is that we use SPAFA as the epi-centre of the international interest on monuments and sites in Southeast Asia because your centre is centrally located, and you have the direct links with the institutional organisations, and are able to make contacts as an umbrella body, with the nine countries of ASEAN.

How can SPAFA help such objectives currently?

SPAFA has already built the infrastructure to communicate with Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Not all of them are ICOMOS members at the moment. Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand are members. Singapore is unfortunately not, because

it is not a member of UNESCO. We want to bring in the other countries as members of ICOMOS.

We will be working together to make SPAFA an epi-centre. In fact, ICOMOS had initiated such an effort with Professor Diskul (former Centre Director of SPAFA) years ago; he was made an

Executive Committee member of ICOMOS, but unfortunately he could not play an active role - although he was an elected member, he could not participate fully at all the meetings that we had because of the travelling distance to Europe. This is why I have insisted that our meetings must be held in different parts of the world. And now, our European colleagues are beginning to feel "Oh my goodness, how can we go that far?" The third world Asians, Africans, and South Americans had to travel that far to come to Paris all these many years.



Dr. Roland Silva (in jacket) meeting in SPAFA

How is ICOMOS managing its international mandate?

One of the major strengths of ICOMOS is its international committees. We have established in each discipline, on buildings, vernacular architecture, archaeological heritage management, underwater archaeology, stained glass, cultural tourism, rock art, etc., all together nineteen such scientific committees.

The 'Blue Shield' is the latest international committee of ICOMOS, and it is concerned with emergencies, such as when monuments are damaged by natural disasters or human conflicts. For example, the Sacred Temple of the Tooth in Sri Lanka was recently blasted by terrorists, and had a Blue Shield institution been operating there, the head of the institution together with the staff would have known exactly what to do and how to treat the religious and cultural objects of the site. The standard procedures are for a group to fight the fire; another to inform the police, ambulance, and fire brigade, while a group will go to the key objects that have to be preserved.

In an emergency, preparatory care is important and consequently this becomes crucial in the final repair work for which we would need proper documentation, good drawings, photographs and other details of the objects.

ICOMOS

ICOMOS is an international, non-governmental organisation dedicated to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites. The organisation was founded in 1965, as a result of the international adoption of the Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites in Venice the year before. Today the organisation has National Committees in nearly 100 countries.

ICOMOS is UNESCO's principal advisor in matters concerning the conservation and protection of monuments and sites. With IUCN (The World Conservation Union on the Conservation of

Nature), ICOMOS has an international role under the World Heritage Convention to advise the World Heritage Committee and UNESCO on the nomination of new sites to be on the World Heritage List.

Through its nineteen International Scientific Committees of experts from around the world, and through its triennial General Assembly, ICOMOS seeks to establish international standards for the preservation, restoration, and management of the cultural environment. Many of these standards have been promulgated as Charters by the organisation as a result of adoption by the ICOMOS General Assembly.

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Aims and Activities of ICOMOS

Aims:

1. to bring together conservation specialists from all over the world and serve as a forum for professional dialogue and exchange;
2. to collect, evaluate and disseminate information on conservation principles, techniques and policies;
3. to co-operate with national and international authorities on the establishment of documentation centres specialising in conservation;

4. to work for the adoption and implementation of international conventions on the conservation and enhancement of architectural heritage;
5. to participate in the organisation of training programmes for conservation specialists on a world-wide scale;
6. to put expertise of highly qualified professionals and specialists at the service of the international community.

Activities:

1. the strengthening of its presence world-wide by encouraging the creation and growth of ICOMOS National Committees;
2. extending the influence of the Venice Charter by creating flexible doctrinal texts for specific sectors of architectural heritage;
3. defining adaptable management techniques for cultural properties;
4. developing training programmes on a multilateral basis involving the collaboration of National and International Committees;
5. enriching ICOMOS' international Documentation Centre in Paris and setting up video and slide libraries devoted to architectural heritage;

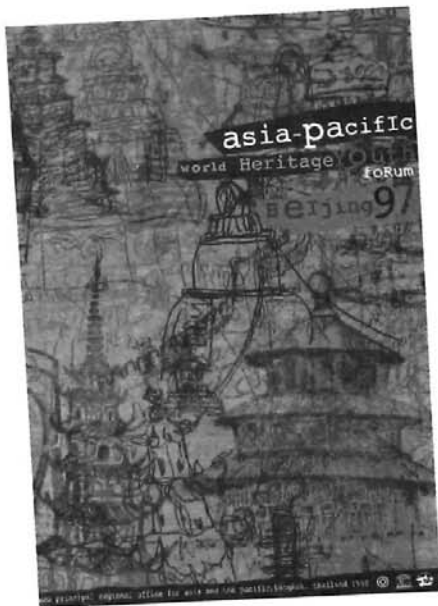
6. organising and managing expert missions at the request of heritage administration and legal entities which judge necessary the intervention of a consultant for a particular conservation question;
7. playing a vital role in counselling UNESCO on those cultural properties to be included on the World Heritage List and in monitoring the properties already listed;
8. reaching specialists by means of wide distribution of the organisation's quarterly journal, ICOMOS News, and through publication of the proceedings of symposia on conservation;
9. awaking public interest in conversation by encouraging media coverage and the celebration of the International Day for Monuments and Sites

Membership

Individual, Institutional, Affiliated, Benefactors.

All members must be qualified in the field of conservation, having exercised the profession of architect, archaeologist, urban planner, engineer, heritage administrator, art historian, or archivist.

As of 1 January 1996, ICOMOS had 5,300 members in 100 countries.



A report from the Asia-Pacific World Heritage Youth Forum, describing its main features and events, shedding some light on the concept of World Heritage and World Heritage Education, and presenting the students' and teachers' proposals for future action.

if you are an **educator**, you will find **inspiration** to teach about **World Heritage**.

if you are a **student**, you will discover ways to take part in saving the world's cultural and **natural heritage**.

if you are a **site manager**, you will find a whole range of proposals on how to present a site for visitors and how to make the visit even more **memorable** for them.

This report seeks to encourage World Heritage Education in Asia and the Pacific - all according to the suggestions given by the 86 students and teachers from 20 countries who came to the Beijing Forum, 1997.

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