



SPAFA Trainees Study Ancient Cities and Settlements



A Thai prang (tower) derived from Khmer art and Ayutthaya Buddha images (top) found in the old town of Supan Buri, Thailand, were among the ancient monuments studied and visited by the SPAFA trainees (left).

The emerging awareness of the Southeast Asian communities on the importance of ancient cities and settlements resulted in the creation of the SPAFA training programme on the Conservation of Ancient Cities and Settlements. The course officially commenced on August 14 in Bangkok, Thailand, and ended on November 11, 1988. A total of 11 participants joined the course that included two Indonesians, one Malaysian, four Thais, and four Filipinos.

The course's primary objective was to train conservators on the

technical aspects of conservation and the architectures of ancient cities and settlements. Furthermore, for the participants to have a better understanding and a broader perspective in conservation, the course provided a balance between scientific conservation techniques and the historical, cultural and economic impact of the ancient cities to the nation.

The three-month training course was divided into three parts. The first part was spent on classroom situations. Lectures delivered dealt on the different aspects of conservation,

the history of Thailand, archaeological aspects of ancient cities and settlements, architectural studies of historical monuments, selected case studies and other related topics.

The second part brought trainees to different historical sites all over Thailand for a clearer view of and better insights on ancient cities or settlements.

Field works in Buri Ram and Sukhothai provinces consisted the last part of the training course. Here participants were given the opportunity to practise, investigate and analyze a particular ancient settlement using the knowledge acquired from the course. A comprehensive report and a course evaluation was submitted by each trainee to the organizers at the end of the training course.

The group of SPAFA scholars consisted of: R.M. Susanto and Sri Unggul Azul Sjafrie from Indonesia, Saadun Bin Ari of Malaysia, Evelyn I. Esguerra, Trinidad G. Lasafin, Candido H. Castro and Roberto A. Balarbar from the Philippines, and Wongchat Chatrakul Na Ayuddhaya, Jirassa Kachachiva, Prateep Pheng-tako, and Erbprem Vatchrangkul from Thailand.