INTRODUCTION TO THEMED ISSUE

WORLD HERITAGE:
CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
GIVING ASIA-PACIFIC A SENSE OF PLACE

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Guest Editor

Cultural resource management (CRM) is about conservation and sustainability of tangible and intangible aspects of culture. Asia-Pacific cultural sites are under consideration for international recognition to safeguard as a place of value for humanity, as well as places where people live, raise children, build their society, and protect environments.[1] Who manages cultural resources? They are: policy administrators, politicians, local communities, academics and environmentalists.

This provides a point of departure for thinking about our landscapes and artifacts. I have often thought the idea of world heritage is linked to European origins with the concept of heritage sites coming as a result of the European Enlightenment and the Age of Reason. According to Dario Gamboni (professor at the Institute of Art History of the University of Amsterdam), since the French Revolution, our idea of "world heritage" is more recent, stemming from the 20th century. Gamboni cites in his article for *Conservation* that French author and statesman, André Malraux wrote in 1957, "for a long time, the worlds of art were as mutually exclusive as were humanity's different religions" drawing our attention to civilisations having their own "holy places" being listed for humanity. Malraux further observed that for the first time, "dying fetishes have taken on a significance they never had before, in the world of the images with which human creativity has defied the passage of time, a world which has at last conquered time" (Gamboni, 2001).[2]

Once coming through the colonial channels of trade, objects and sites worldwide became sought after as treasures to enhance the capitals and grand estates of Europe. In the beginning since the Crusades to the Renaissance, Europeans were interested in religious heritage connected to

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[1] Michael Buckland, "Histories, Heritages, and the Past: The Case of Emanuel Goldberg," in *The History and Heritage of Scientific and Technical Information Systems*, ed. W. B. Rayward and M. E. Bowden. Medford (Medford, NJ: Information Today) 2004, 39–45.

[2] Dario Gamboni, "World heritage: Shield or target?" *Conservation: The Getty Conservation Institute Newsletter*, 16(2), 2001.

the Holy Land. With the discovery of routes to the Far East and Western Hemisphere up through the 19th and 20th centuries, ethnic and indigenous items were of interest. With the advent of classical archaeology in the 18th century and ethnology a century later, again, objects and later sites were exciting and generated curiosity among the antiquarian collectors and later scholars. Scholarship began when the context of origin became important. Museums[3] were established as institutes to conserve, protect, and study the historiography of materials. Materials as components of culture were collected as texts and paper documents were collected for libraries.

Yet, Gamboni admits that the heritage concept as we know it is built upon notions of *historic monument* and *cultural property* transcending boundaries and ownership with symbolic messages, having a collective interest in their preservation for humanity:

> The concepts of monuments and heritage originated in cultic objects and practices crucial to the identity and continuity of collective entities such as family, dynasty, city, state and most importantly, nation. The idea of a historic monument implied an awareness of a break with the past and the need for a rational reappropriation (or a retrospective construction) of tradition. Its artistic dimension further required the autonomy of aesthetic values that had appeared in the Renaissance. The crisis of the French Revolution, which made a historical and artistic interpretation of the material legacy of the *ancien régime* indispensable to its survival, accelerated this evolution. The term vandalism, with its reference to the devastation of the Roman Empire by "barbarians," condemned attacks against this legacy by excluding their perpetrators from the civilised community (ibid.).

The most important modern international consensus resulted from the devastating Second World War when treaties concluded with the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954 (also known as the Hague Convention) that made central the idea of world heritage. It stated that "damage to cultural property belonging to any people whatsoever means damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind, since each people makes its contribution to the culture of the whole world."

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[3] The concept of museums originated from the Greek *muse*, which means to entertain and learn from. Museums worldwide began as antiquarian and eclectic collections by individuals, families, and dynasties. Since the 19th century, museums have become public institutions following the initiative of libraries.

Yes, damage to heritage property is a loss to humanity no matter who presently claims it.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is a non-governmental, non-political organisation of professional scholars and curators advising the World Heritage Committee to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for establishing cultural heritage standards. In the ICOMOS Venice Charter, definition is given for heritage monuments:

> Article 1: The concept of a historic monument embraces not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilisation, a significant development or a historic event. This applies 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.

In the second article, there is mention of conservation:

> Article 2: The conservation and restoration of monuments must have recourse to all the sciences and techniques which can contribute to the study and safeguarding of the architectural heritage.

This concerns the living "open air museum" model or modern society reflecting ethics of its unique heritage. Here, I will cite from the innovation of current thought on UNESCO's Intangible World Heritage. On May 18, 2001, UNESCO proclaimed 19 categories of the world's most unique oral and intangible living heritage. Emphasis has been placed on the importance of "protecting this outstanding but endangered heritage—cultural spaces and forms of popular and traditional expression—and of preserving cultural diversity."

1. Forms of popular and traditional expression—such as languages, oral literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, costumes, craftwork, and architecture.

2. Cultural spaces—a place where popular and traditional cultural activities take place in a concentrated manner (sites for storytelling, rituals, marketplaces, festivals, etc.) or the time for a regularly

occurring event (daily rituals, annual processions, regular performances).

This idea of intangible cultural heritage was reviewed by the signatory state delegates to facilitate the UNESCO Convention and discussed on 22–30 April 2003 for:

(a) giving a function in the life of the community,

(b) safeguarding intangible values,

(c) scientific, technical, and artistic studies, and

(d) adopting legal, technical, administrative, and financial measures.

UNESCO has classified world heritage in (1) cultural sites, and (2) natural sites, for selection based on their unique value and appreciative worth to humanity. Yet, when considering such sites with the greatest percentage and concentration existing in Europe, I wonder about the value system applied. Now, agencies in Taiwan are listing cultural, ecological, and historical sites as a local source of pride to include in the UNESCO list of world heritage. Accordingly, to local thought, this would be a connecting process with international organisations based on corresponding to world heritage membership. It was in 1972 that the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage sites was established. It was the accepted view that war, natural disaster, environmental degradation and industrialisation threaten our world's heritage. Now, about 890 sites have been listed worldwide. In Asia-Pacific, 182 sites are marked ranging from Central Asia to Australia across mid-Pacific, yet very few of those registered come from Oceanic islands.

The Asia-Pacific region became known geographically for its vast range of cultural and linguistic diversity. The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Significance (The Burra Charter), April 10 2007, has given a policy foundation for the region in conjunction with previous UNESCO commitments cited above.

This issue of the *International Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies* (IJAPS) presents articles on the conservation and sustainability of cultures by present-day research and documentation scholarship. The authors offer a diversity of research by addressing issues and concepts across the region. Felicity Morel-EdnieBrown shares with the readers her role as a cultural heritage manager for an old town district of Perth, Australia. It is about discovering a 'sense of place' with authenticity. Stories from the past are

interwoven with an understanding from heritage sources including photographs, letters, and artefacts, tracing lives with interpretation. Her article explores the richness found in central Perth through the Northbridge History Project, an initiative to revitalise the inner city by tracing its diverse voices of histories. Northbridge has undergone transformation in infrastructure and generational change in the last two decades, bringing a "dislocation of its identity." Remainders of the old town are collated into an internet, government-based digital archive of original sources (see, www.northbridgehistory.wa.gov.au). The website is visited with frequent activity, making available histories of this culturally diverse section of town, reinforcing a public "new sense of identity and community engagement, bringing out awareness that the life of the city is played out against the backdrop of the built environment… the soul of the city comes from its context within the cultural fabric." Produced by governmental policy makers, there is stimulation in valuing the Indian Ocean gateway of Australia. A geographic information systems (GIS) web portal service is key to the planning to associate the archive interactively with the environment of cityscape, giving a virtually layered past of the history for interpretation, community policy, and on-going research.

Tjeerd de Graaf presents the research audio program *Voices from Tundra and Taiga* applied to documenting endangered languages and cultures of the Russian Far East. This shares an edge with previous work on reconstruction technology for early sound recordings of archives in St. Petersburg. These recordings offer comparative references with contemporary spoken languages today, yet now endangered. Assembled are recording catalogue and audio-video library of documented stories, folklore, singing, and oral traditions of ethnic minorities. The project updates the recording with metadata in current technological formats and storage facilities in the Russian Federation for best practices and world standards. Updated archives offer availability for further analysis work in phonetics, sociolinguistics, anthropology, history, ethnomusicology and folklore. In terms of cultural resources and its conservation, these recordings are indispensable for teaching methods leading toward revitalisation of endangered languages and cultures. De Graaf features background on endangered languages and the results of field research projects such as the Paleo-asiatic languages Ainu and Nivkh in North-eastern Asia.

Igor Sitnikov presents the 18 deities, a belief in northern Taiwan that leads him to compare sets of Eurasian-Pacific religious symbols that were preserved in the Taiwanese cult. He argues that Taiwan religious culture introduces a guide to elements that remained stable in Taiwan popular religion from Paleolithic and Neolithic epochs. These traces reveal long-

surviving elements spanning cultures across Eurasia-Pacific area, relating symbols relevant in Ireland to China, Taiwan, and Oceania. The study is based on continuum theory applications, threading non-dualistic approaches, allowing the understanding that sustainable popular beliefs contribute to unity in cultural varibility. Sitnikov's contribution analyses the "Temple of 18 Deities" origin mythology and sets of symbols in popular religion genesis with common meanings and stages of transformation across Eurasia-Pacific.

Taking a contemporary view of Taiwan inter-relation with island cultures of the Austronesian Language Family, David Blundell explores linguistic factors of dispersal from Neolithic prehistory to became about 1,200 languages spreading across vast oceans. These connections have developed modern partnerships from associations of heritage. Settlements for most of the region of Island Southeast Asia and Oceania, the Austronesian speaking peoples have prevailed for several thousand years. These languages are valuable assets for peaceful processes of development. The article opens clarity and conceptualises Taiwan and Austronesia across the Asia-Pacific, positioning historical roots and contemporary languages and cultures to associate "island inter-connectivity" across the region.

Dean Karalekas introduces legal and policy heritage claims and rights of indigenous peoples in Taiwan and First Nation Canadians. The government of Taiwan is establishing a legislative framework for power sharing agreements with the indigenous groups with the recently approved Indigenous Peoples Self-Government Act. This law awaits approval by the legislature. In formulating policy initiatives, the Taiwan government has consulted blueprints initiated in other Pacific Rim nations. Canadian First Nation People's negotiated policies are seen as a viable working model to consider. Karalekas effectively compares and contrasts historical and cultural heritage of government's relationship with indigenous populations in Canada and Taiwan, giving variances and identifying problems and successful implementation of viable mechanisms to devolve authority. His study concludes with recommendations for indigenous governing policy relevant to current Taiwan legislation.

Steven Martin takes a single case of ethnography among the Bunun for a specific life recording of oral history. With its high-mountain heritage, the region of Laipunuk (Nei Ben Lu) maintained a separate existence during the Japanese colonial period (1895–1945). Then in 1942, a brave Bunun man waged with singleness a war against Japan's imperial rule—and lost. As a result, from this remote highland, the Bunun people were forced down to southeastern Taiwan valleys. Langus Istanda, who was born in 1920, personally was forced with her family by the Japanese police to leave

Laipunuk. Martin researched, by ethnographic methods, to record Istanda's childhood memories, revealing stories of the lifestyle she experienced in her isolated culture. This study contributes to understanding values of a human society and its culture for generations to come. It opens Bunun epistemology to English language readers. The ethnography was a mutually beneficial endeavor to both the researcher and the participant, giving extensive cultural resource information, "as well as a sense of reconciliation to the Bunun elders; it represents the fortitude of Bunun tradition."

This issue on Asia-Pacific cultural resource awareness, conservation, and management is a cohesive set of articles to present the region as being interconnected by scholarship in linguistics, history, anthropology, public policy and ethnography. The contributors have given a range of ideas, fieldwork techniques and heritage evaluations for the reader to grasp the region as a valuable and fragile expanse of territories and cultures.