

Impacts of Modernization VS Architectural Tourism

Donruetai Kovathanakul

Faculty of Management Science, Khon Kaen University
dkovathanakul@yahoo.co.th

Abstract

This paper aims to study about the contestation: case study in the impact of Khaosan Road's modernization that why it affect to Architectural Heritage (Wat Chana Songkram).

The growth of Khaosan Road and industrial tourism is one of the reasons in the modernization's stream that crash strongly from the rapid growth to Wat Chana Songkram. This is the time where we have to consider this problem.

This paper will answer this question that maybe occurs to the Thai Buddhist heritage. The diagram of problems in part of origins of the conflict will make you to more understand about the process of contestation study.

Keywords : Tourism, Architectural Heritage, Impact

Introduction

This paper concern about contestation: case study about the impact of Khaosan Road's modernization that why it affect to Wat Chana Songkram.

The growth of Khaosan Road and industrial tourism is one of the reasons in the modernization's stream that crash strongly to the Buddhist heritage, Wat Chana Songkram.

Is this the time where we have to consider this problem?

This assignment will answer this question. The diagram of problems in part of origins of the conflict will make you to more understand about the process of contestation study.

Research Methodology

1. Documenting the preliminary and secondary resources
2. Field Study
3. Analysis of the documents
4. Conclusions
5. Recommendations

Scope of the Study

1. Wat Chana Songkram
2. Khaosan Road

“The local community is the important factor to conserve the heritage. If the native people is trained the knowledge, the site can develop parallel with the heritage in the best way.”



Figure 1 Map of Chana Songkram Road

Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand. [Map of Chana Songkram Temple](http://www.tatnews.org/events/events/april/2548.asp). [Online]. Accessed 11 October, 2005. Available from <http://www.tatnews.org/events/events/april/2548.asp>

Description of Place

1. Wat Chana Songkram

Location: 77 Chana Songkram Sub-District, Phra Nakhon District, Bangkok

Boundary: North - Soi Rambutreé
South - Chana Songkram Canal
East - Jakrapong Road
West - Tanao Road

Area: 0.339 square kilometers of Chana Songkram Sub-District

Plan: plain area, rectangular plan, covered with walls, 4 doors around the site, connected all sides with road

History

This temple is an old monastery, which was built before the First Reign of Rattanakosin (that is, before 1782). The former name of this temple is "Wat Klang Na" (temple in the paddy field). Later, King Ramah I ordered Phra Ratchawang Boworn Surasinghanat to give the new name "Tong Pu" (name of a town in Myanmar), imitated temple name from Ayuddhaya and Lobburee period and then renamed again to be "Chana Songkram", which means winning a war (History of Wat Chana Songkram, 2003).



Figure 2 Wat Chana Songkram
(History of Wat Chana Songkram, 2003)

Tucked away in the center of the backpacker area of Bangkok is the temple of Wat Chana Songkram. People often use the temple as a shortcut between Khaosan Road and the river without ever stopping to take a closer look. Big mistake, built in the 18th century, the temple has recently been renovated. If approaching the temple from the riverside area, you first pass through the shady courtyard (and parking lot) of the temple housing (*kuti*), where both the monks and lay workers for the temple live. The courtyard also usually has a few stalls for the tourists.



Figure 3 Outer wall of the ubosot with its gilded window frames.

From the *kuti*, you pass under a bell tower (being renovated in February 2003) to reach the temple compound. The ubosot lies in a simple courtyard. If coming from the river, you are at the back of the ubosot. The gable ends of the ubosot are beautifully decorated in carved gilded wood and mirrored tiles.

Inside the ubosot, the alter is quite impressive with its gilded Buddha image in front of a large gilded fan, and ceremonial umbrella above. Of special note, there is one pair of wooden elephant tusks, which made from ebony, to be the side aisle of the small-enthroned statue of King Taksin.

Ubosot

This dates from the reign of King Rama I. Gable end decoration is a Naga or serpent, a special feature of Front Palace artisans. Behind the chapel walls and window frames are flame motifs. Ogival stones on the temple wall are in the shape of Vishnu.

mounted on a Garuda. The outside arch has stucco flame motifs, while inside the doorframes are colored paintings. Around the chapel and behind the principal Buddha image are containers of the ashes of the princes of five kings.



Figure 4 Closeup of the ubosot's window.

Chedi: Two chedis were built in front of the chapel in the early Rattanakosin period. They are in the Jom Hae, or wide base and sharp top shape.



Figure 5 Entry to the ubosot of Wat Chana Songkram.

Principal Buddha Image

Phra Putthanorasirilokkachet is an image in the subduing Mara posture, made of plaster, lined with lead and gilded, in the reign of King Rama I. The base is surrounded by 15 Buddha images, which were all made at the same time.



Figure 6 Principal Buddha Image.

(History of Wat Chana Songkram Ratchavoramahaviharn 2003: 1-3)

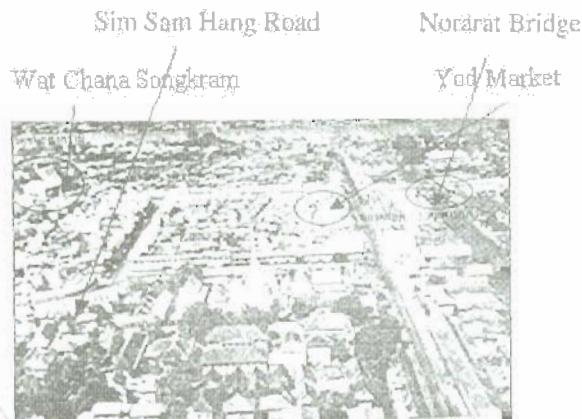


Figure 7. Aerial photo in 1957. (Chunya Chevaporanuwat, 2001)

2. Khaosan Road

In the period of King Rama I, Islam people moved from Ayuddhaya to locate in front of Wat Tong Pu (Wat Chana Songkram, at the present).



Figure 8. Khaosan Road Today

In the period of King Rama V, he would like to expand the royal residences to urban of Bangkok and he thought that the royal residences should build around outer area of Rattanakosin Island because the air was fresh and the royal residences could expand the area easier. So Phra Ratchawang Boworn Sathan Mongkol (Wang Na, the brother of King Rama V) ordered to enlarge the area to the north beside the old city canal and along Chao Phraya River close Phra Arthit road, Chakrapong road, and Khaosan road. (Pratna Rattanasit 1994: 6)

This area, there are many people who buy clothes and accessories, souvenirs and music CD.

Khaosan Road is located in Banglampoo district. In general, it opens daily from 10am to 10pm.

Since Khaosan road has transformed itself into a Mecca for backpackers, there is a need to buy some new personal belongings when they arrive or ready to take off for new destination. All kinds of souvenirs are also in huge demand from tons of these tourists who

are about to go back home. Ready-made clothes both in Thai and western styles as well as knock-off products ranging from watch to music CD can be found everywhere. Bargaining is a must here.

Statement of Heritage Significance

Historical Value

Wat Chana Songkram:

Wat Chana Songkram, there are many heritages that can conserve the original evidence of the history such as:

1. The old bathroom for monks at Wat Chana Songkram.
2. The platform of Kuti (bedroom of monks) that show the authentic Thai style architecture: it is like big rafts on the land and put the post for raised up the high land. But at the present, it has already destroyed as replace by the new one through the times.



Figure 9 The old platform of Kuti (Chunya Cheevaporanana, 2001)

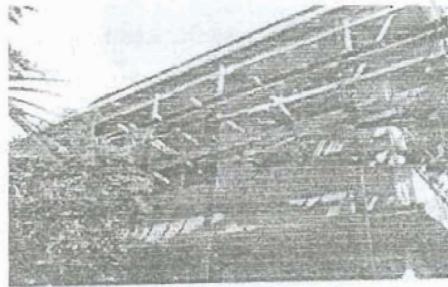


Figure 10 The new platform of Kuti (Chunya Cheevaporanana, 2001)

Once, Wang Na Wat Chana Songkram is the royal residence of Phra Ong Chao Tosinee was located in this area too.

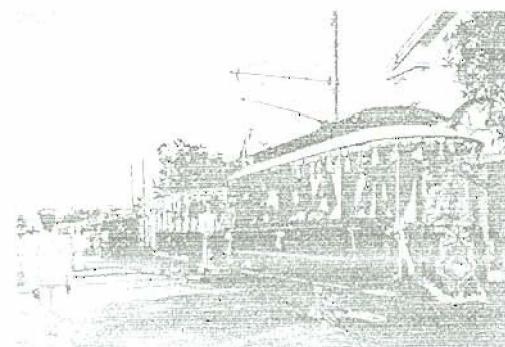


Figure 11 In the past, Tram rail route passed by Wat Chana Songkram. The new platform of Kuti (figure from Chunya Cheevaporanuwat, 2001)

KHaosan Road:

The second guesthouse on this road, Bonny Guesthouse, which shows the revolution of guesthouses in Thailand.

The only one group of wood house on Khaosan Road that rare to find them on Khaosan Road as at the present, it may also have historic value as the site of an important event. (Burra Charter, 1988, p.12)

Cultural Value

The diversity of culture gathering through this road, each nationality of foreigners bring the indigenous of life style in the modern life to Khaosan Road, it is the important thing that no one ignore because in the future, anybody cannot know the life style that it may be change through the layer of time. While the heritage of any specific place may have a universal dimension, the needs and wishes of some communities should be respected. (ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter, 2002 p.11)

Associative value

When many people come to live together, it will become the social that everybody can associate each other. Wat Chana Songkram is the community's landmark of Khaosan Road in case of religion. The temple shows the spiritual connections between past and present. The association of foreigners and Thais is linked with events having a profound effect on a community. (Ken Taylor, 2003)

Spiritual value

In Thailand, the most religion that people respect is Buddhism. It provokes the mental value. It encourages Thais' mind to do good things and it is the reason of that why Thais is helpful.

Interpretative value

Why the tourists would like to find the different culture? The answer is, they would like to interpret the meaning of diversity of culture. The ability of Wat Chana Songkram landscape inform and enlighten us on social history, promote sense of place feeling, create links with the past together (Ken Taylor, 2003)

Integrity of fabric, materials and design, association, setting and the physical components are one of the important parts of situation analysis. The evidences of the earlier period of landscape making; it is a means of establishing historic identity and contributes to a sense of the stream of time and links with the past. (Ken Taylor, 2003)

The Conflict

The impact of modernization of Khaosan road

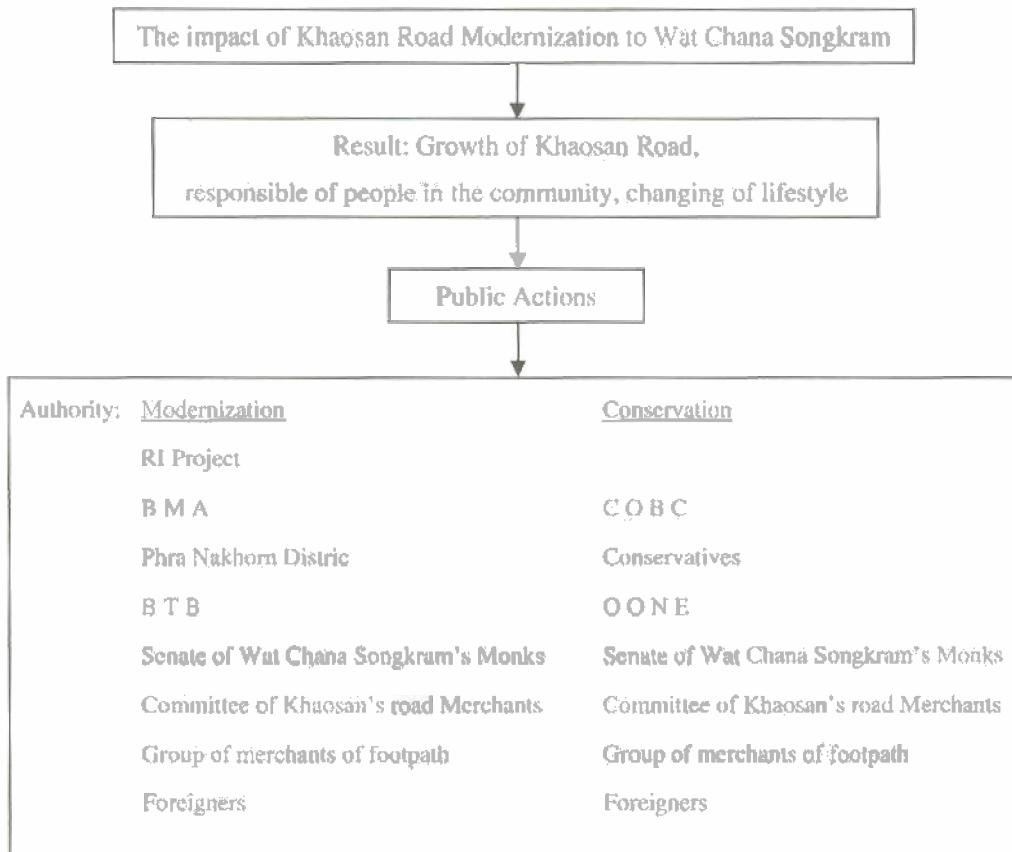
The impact of modernization of Khaosan road is the conflict of Wat Chana Songkram as the transformation of Khaosan road destroys the identity and the peaceful ambient of the site.

1. The Growth of Khaosan Road attack strongly to the Buddhist heritage that was built in the period of Ayutthaya. The plan of Wat Chana Songkram was changed through the stream of time. The main reason of this is the development of socioeconomic growth of Khaosan road when the government had policies to support tourism in Thailand.
2. The people in the community around Khaosan road do not take care and responsible the heritage, Wat Chana Songkram as much as they should do. Because the former people has already moved to another area and the new populaces come by do know the past in the mental memory.
3. The lifestyle of people who live in the community of Khaosan Road changed by the modernization. Thai lifestyle is one of the heritages that when we look at the present, we can see only some evidences of the existence of that.

Origins of the conflict

1. The expansion of city in the period of King Rama IV and King Rama V affect to the lifestyle because in the past, the canal was used as transports but when the change came, the roads became the main route to journey.
2. When Khaosan Road by westernization, it is in the period of King Rama V after the development of industries. The policies of government purpose to develop the city to the modernization.
3. In the period of King Rama 9, since the plan of development national social and economic the government, issue 4th (1977-1981), the numbers of tourists makes the industrial development grow in the first rank since 1982 and grow better in every year. So the guesthouses business in Thailand started in 1971 by Khaosan road in 1979. And it invaded the old community around the site.

The changing above affect to the site directly as the careers and services are changed for support the tourists' demand e.g. internet cafés, laundries, pubs, bars and restaurants. All of that have to describe the advertise in English and in big size to attract the viewpoint of visitors. And it destroys the authentic feeling to the heritage.

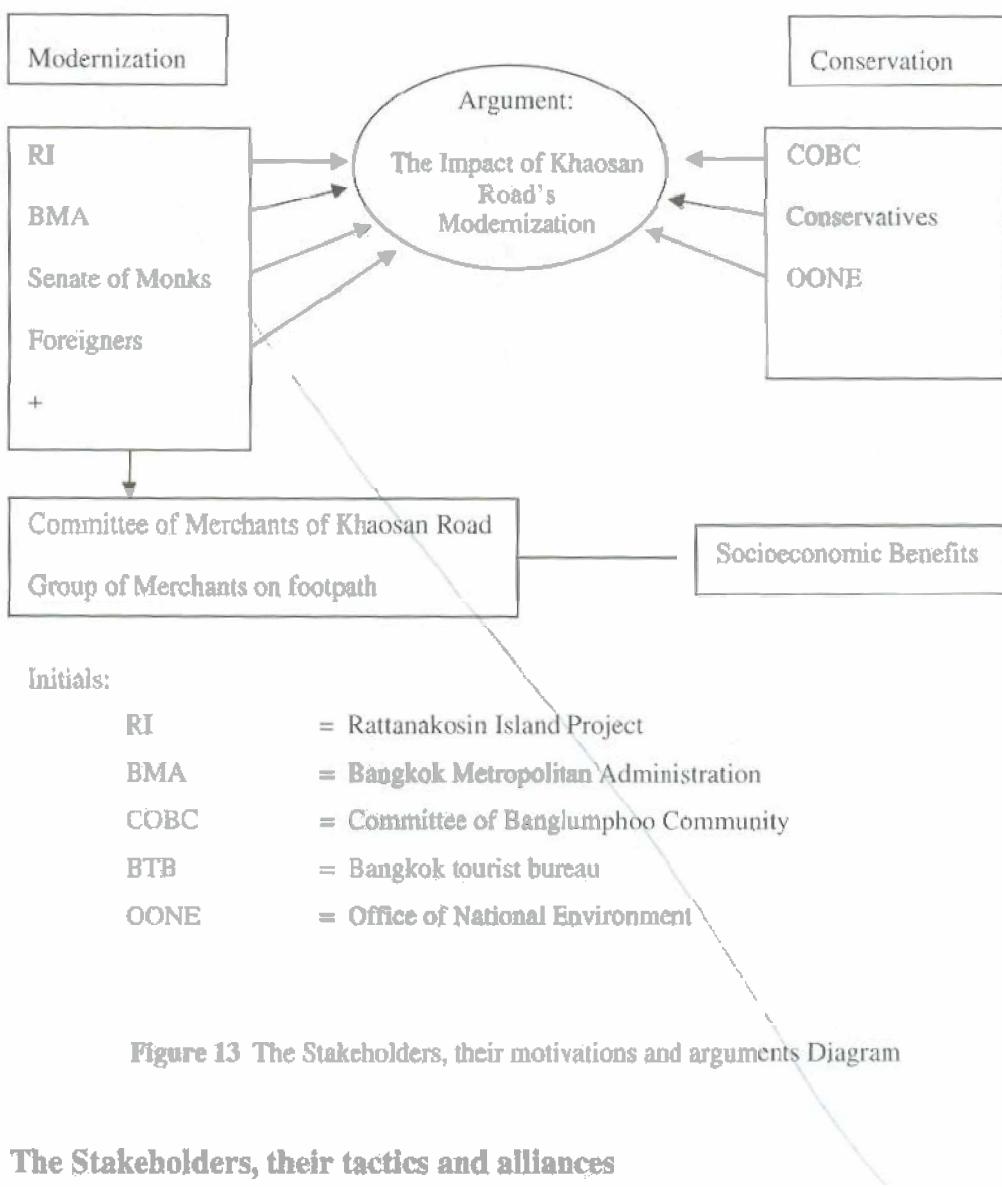


Initials:

RI	= Rattanakosin Island Project
BMA	= Bangkok Metropolitan Administration
COBC	= Committee of Banglumphoo Community
BTB	= Bangkok tourist bureau
OONE	= Office of National Environment

Figure 12 Origin of Conflict Diagram

The Stakeholders, their motivations and arguments



The Stakeholders, their tactics and alliances

The tactics of stakeholders: when the stakeholders in part of Modernization would like to change some, they do not ask the part of conservation as the part of modernization already has the authority to control it and the codes of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration do not write to protect the heritage much.

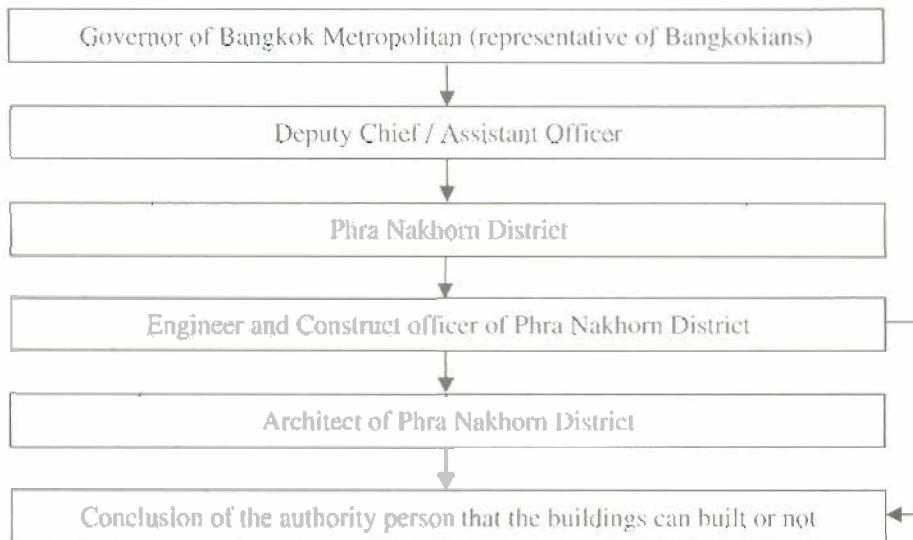


Figure 14 The Stakeholders, their tactics and alliances Diagram

From above diagram: we can remark that when local people would like to construct or adapt his/her residences, they have to ask permission to do. The important is in the process of authorized person, as it has to check the scale and correct plan that appropriate and relevant to legal?

Tactics of Stakeholders

In fact, after I have interviewed the information from Mr.Surapong Kasontikul, architect of Phra Nakhon District. The hierarchy of the engineer or construct officer in Thai government official system is higher than architect; we can propose to them by do not have to pass the architect who has only 1 person in each district. That is good for the merchants who would like to build high rising. If the regulation is approved, they will conceal Wat Chana Songkram.

See diagram in the stakeholders, their motivation and alliances for more information

Conclusion (Outcomes of the Conflict)

We well begin the result of the conflict at Khaosan Road as it is the reason of Wat Chana Songkram's changing: The Moving residences before setting Rattanakosin period.

Physical

The changing of Khaosan road in human life is the big collision of the social and economic of the small community in the past. By normally, it can occur in every social. But Khaosan Road is the "Jumping Changing" and none planning destination.

The social changing

In the past, Khaosan Road was no important meaning as it is only the small community in Banglumphoo District. As in that period, Banglumphoo was well known as the business center, the location of Banglumphoo canal, and the fortresses. The connection to

the others places hard to find too though tram rail did not past to this area. (Tram rail is the important route in that period).

When we look back in the earlier period, Thai houses was built closed to the road, the quiet covered this area. In the day, shop houses was opened in the morning and closed in the evening but some things change when cheap rent houses occurred. So Khaosan Road became the places that tourists ask.

From the image of Thai and Chinese people walked around the street at the café or the liquor shops, talked in-group in front of the house disappear. Until the present, the chaos comes to this site. The foreigners are so strange pass by, some has many things to hold, the objective is only to find the place for sleep and go out to see the civilization of Bangkok by do not want to look back anything.

The hiding meaning is the relationship between the local people in the community. Once Khaosan Road was the place where activities happened and connected the association of the leader in the public, was lost. The things at the present still are the new generation who interest only their benefits.

The economical changing

The monks' appliance shop in the Khaosan quarter is the earlier business that up-country people come to buy something. But everything change when guesthouses and small hotels were built.



The modern business change by did not conserve the old evidences. It supports tourists' want in some period such as the peak growth of guesthouses. Wooden houses were separated in many rooms for rent. The money is representative of every language. The numbers of rooms is not enough for tourists so it was rebuilt to townhouses, ground floor is the food shop that name of Thai foods were rename in the strange way, the next floor is the room for rent.

The footpath that the old generation walked became the place for buy variety of goods for attracting the tourists. Taxis and Tuk-Tuk parking are in queue for waiting the passengers. The high prize of renting the land, time out with the services, most of merchants try to serve high quality to the customers. Everybody seems to challenge with the continuing of business. The doors always open for the strangers. The tourists are the sources of fund, so the merchants try to use many techniques to make the visitors pay money to their goods.

"Some old shops still conserve their identities. New buildings are replacing the old one that has only 2 stories but the height of them became the competition."

From the message above, the nearest Buddhist heritage, Wat Chana Songkram still stand alone among the modern life style that attack to it by crowed tourists, noises, pubs, bars, restaurants and many actions that some are improper.

The committee of temple supports the wanting of tourists by putting the convenient things into the heritage but they forget to consider the mental appropriation.

At the present, Khaosan Road has important role in part of:

1. Tourism
2. Commerce

3. The center of activities in variety of festivals

At the present, the study of physical form make we know that, the land uses are changed from commercial buildings and houses to be the guesthouses by adapting the olds and built the news. The expansion of guesthouses in the study area, some of that affect to the physical form provokes the negative points to the social, communities, cultures and Thai traditions especially the nearest Buddhist heritage, Wat Chana Songkram.

By the way, Wat Chana Songkram affected directly by the growth of Khaosan Road as in the past it located with the peace. The environment around the site appropriate with the Buddhist activities. So we will see in detail of this transformation of Khaosan Road that why it affects to Wat Chana Songkram.

Physical

When we see the aerial photos of 2001, the group of buildings around Khaosan Road was adapting and expand bigger for built guesthouses that it appropriate with the numbers of houses in the study area in 1988 Chana Songkram sub-district has 1,017 houses and 2003 Chana Songkram sub-district 846 houses. The statistic of permission and repairing building in 1986-1995 (10 years), the area around Chana Songkram sub-district, the land uses for built houses was decreased but the land uses for commercial buildings was increased highly (interviewing Mr.Surapong Kasanikul, Architect of Phra Nakhon District). So crowded tourists, pubs, bars, restaurants and many activities are built, all of chaos does not respect the heritage in the way that they should be.

Mental

For Thais, the temple is the place that Buddhists will come to do many activities in almost of their life from birth to death. So the environment should peaceful and separate from the disorder.

In the evening, when we walk in to the temple, there are many booths what show liquors and cigarettes in front of the temple. More than that, some people dress in the misappropriation.

The parallel of the development of Khaosan road and Wat Chana Songkram like a contrast image that it can see in many countries.

By the way, when Khaosan Road was built, we do not have the planning to control the augmentation of the modernization that is the main reason in this contestation case study in this paper.

Better Ways to Resolve the Conflict

“If the social base is strong, the root is so deep so we prepare to accept the stream of culture from everything by don’t affect, don’t bend, know how to consider, good thing don’t refuse, bad thing cannot cover us. (Sorn, actor of movie “the overture”)”

The solution to conserve the uniqueness of the heritage:

Things to consider

1. Activity for tourism
2. Activity for commerce
3. Activity for public activity center
4. Activity for residences

Form of setting the building that appropriate:

Function of land uses and activity

Residence

The community around Wat Chana Songkram should protect the identity of community and stakeholders should support the quality of life e.g. infrastructure and the traffic net.

As the increasing of the habitation for tourists from the area of Khaosan road to around Wat Chana Songkram, the inclination of visitors augment to 17,000 persons per year (statistic from TAT, 2003). So in the future, it still plays the important role in the part of travelers' activity, but we have to control the measurements strictly.

Guesthouses and services center for tourism

When we consider in this part, we should not permit to the tourists pass the route the area around Wat Chana Songkram that the chaos might be defeat the monks' activity.

1. The visitors should use the route that pass Rambutree road beside Wat Chana Songkram.

2. Issue the measurement for control the land uses and type of buildings by consider from the capacity and indigenous culture.

3. Control the area that has the historical and cultural significances.

Commercial

We can permit to do the business but have to control the cleaning and neatness and for the illegal building should solve immediately.

The measurement should control:

The setting panel as they conceal the whole landscape. Maybe keep taxes to support this policy.

Religion Places

Renovation the atmosphere around the site.

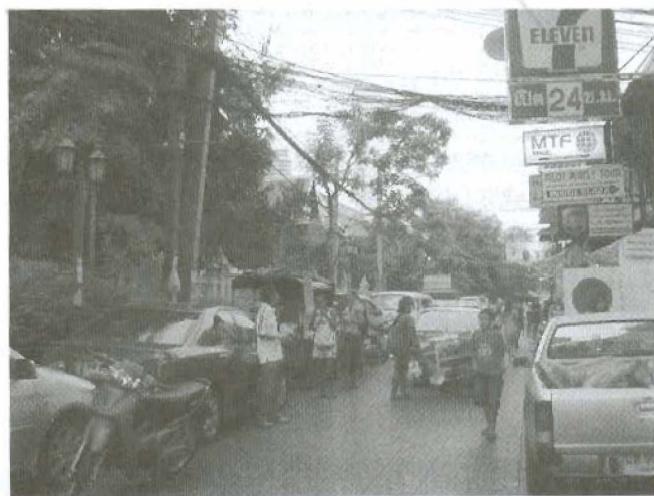


Figure 15 Khaosan Road at the present

Source: Donruetai Kováthananakul, October 10, 2005



Figure 16 Draft Landscape: After Renovation of Khao San Road

Source: Anusorn Boonchai, October 17, 2005

References

Australia ICOMOS. (2003). **Burra Charter**. Victoria: Deakin University.

Bangkok Tourist Bureau. (2002). **The must see sites in Bangkok**. Bangkok: Bangkok Borpit Printing.

Cheevaporanawan, C. (2001). **The factor that affect to moving residences in Banglumphoo area**. Master thesis, M.A., Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok.

ICOMOS International. **Cultural Tourism charter** [Online]. Retrieved on October 11, 2005 from: <http://www.icomos.org/tourism/charter.html>

Rattanasit, P. (1994). **Changing on Khaosan Road in all human life**. Master thesis, M.A., Silpakorn University, Bangkok.

Taylor, K. (2003). **Cultural landscape**. Bangkok: Silpakorn University.

Tourism Authority of Thailand. **Map of Chanasongkram Temple**. Retrieved on October 11, 2005 from: <http://www.tatnews.org/events/cvents/april/2448.asp>

Vichayakorn, P. (2003). **History of Wat Chana Songkram**. Bangkok: Wat Chana Songkram.