

Role of the National Office of Buddhism (NOB) in Managing the Abandoned Monasteries of Chiang Mai

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Abstract

The objectives of the research are to study roles of the National Office of Buddhism (NOB) with respect to managing the abandoned monasteries of Chiang Mai, and specifically, 1) to identify unsustainable conditions that face abandoned monasteries, 2) to clarify unsustainable ways of thinking about abandoned monasteries, 3) to seek a rental management policy for abandoned monasteries, and 4) to seek management solutions for particular abandoned monasteries. Research problems are raised in relation to the lack of sacred fulfillment within the dead monument approach. Passive management in rental deeds without upgrading quality of life and community member interactions with the monuments indirectly lead to inappropriate conditions of some abandoned monasteries. I suggest that abandoned monasteries be thought of in terms of 'religious heritages' rather than 'historic sites' to provide multifaceted solutions to the management issues. There are 948 abandoned monasteries in Chiang Mai, only 8 of them are located in the city walled area. The abandoned monasteries within the old Chiang Mai city walled area, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand were physically examined. In addition to the site surveys of the abandoned monasteries, 33 in-depth interviews were conducted, with 12 interviews focusing on what I term the "official approach" (i.e. with government agencies and key higher education representatives) and 21 interviews focusing on what I term the "local approach" (i.e. with religious leaders and local community members). Secondary data analysis included a review of both Thai and English documents to identify the latest key thinking on management practices for abandoned monasteries. Literature sources analysis and case study analysis are also provided for 8 of the abandoned monasteries in the study area. Finally, 4 management keys (zoning management, public participation, sustaining of the sacred place condition, and local community ownership) were developed based on identified gaps in the NOB approach to managing abandoned monasteries. It can be concluded that the NOB approach to abandoned monastery deed management should consider 1) revising the 'dead monument' concept for hibernated sacred places that leads to unsustainable conditions, 2) the dilemma of the 'sacred space' that transitions to the 'profitable space' and represents unsustainable ways of thinking, 3) passive action of rental management is an outdated policy, and 4) results of the 4 management keys are supplemental solutions for the particular policy making and promoting sustainability of abandoned monasteries.

Keywords

Abandoned Buddhist monastery; Rental deed management; Dead monument; Living religious heritage; Sacred heritage; Ancient monument

1. Introduction

In Thailand, a mostly Buddhist country, the meaning of the 'Wat' includes an official definition as 'the place for making of ritual and religious activity that normally consists of Ubosoth and Viharn, and there is the monk dwelling.' (Matichon Dictionary of the Thai Language, 2004, p.801). Also 'Chedi' means the Thai Buddhist stupa that is the center of the site.

Presently there are ruins of 6,210 abandoned monastery sites throughout the country. There are 948 abandoned monasteries in Chiang Mai, only 8 of them are located in the city walled area. Abandoned monasteries in Chiang Mai are identified by the absence of monks dwelling on site and religious activity until today. The physical condition of the site has deteriorated and there is a lack of supplementary patronage.

The Fine Art Department (FAD) and the National Office of Buddhism (NOB) are the relevant authorities in preservation and management of monasteries. The FAD mandate is to protect and preserve the registered Ancient Monument with priority given over non-registered monuments. Any abandoned monasteries that are registered as Ancient Monuments would be declared protected under the law. Such protection includes maintenance of the walkable area around the Chedi base but with no stipulation on buffer zone allocations. The role of the NOB with respect to abandoned monasteries falls into two categories: i) under the 'Abandoned Monastery Deed' (with ruins still in place); and ii) under 'Public Religious Asset' (where no evidence of ruins now exists). Each of these categories has different rental management rates for use by the community. The conservation, development, and management of any abandoned monastery inevitably integrates these two official roles to address long term sustainability of the site.

2. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are fourfold: i) identify unsustainable conditions that face abandoned monasteries; ii) clarify unsustainable ways of thinking about abandoned monasteries; iii) seek a rental management policy for abandoned monasteries; and iv) seek management solutions for particular abandoned monasteries.

3. Literature Review

Abandoned monasteries in Chiang Mai exist in many forms and relationships to their neighborhood within the old walled city. Some of these monasteries accommodate 'contemporary functions' of their neighborhood which can either secure them or accelerate damage to their significant values. Some monastery ruins are registered as Ancient Monuments but some were removed from the site and replaced by new buildings. The contemporary functions may include being sited among schools, governmental places, poor communities, and of course some places have been revitalized to be a living monastery again. Physical preservation efforts alone may be inadequate to allow these sacred places to survive, so their 'people' aspects and social environmental contexts should be included for consideration in alternative and integrative solutions for preservation and management. These considerations challenge our generation with the question of how we can sustain life within and among these ruins. To develop towards a sustainable way of thinking, we must also consider how

these religious heritage sites can survive for the next generation while, at the same time, securing their significant values.

3.1 Characteristics of sacred place, management, continuity and living concept

The word 'sacred' is derived from a Latin term which technically means 'restriction through pertaining to the gods'. The term generally is associated with an 'unusual condition' as compared to normal places, objects and everything else concerned, as well as being connected to ancient spiritual beliefs concerned with people and their implicative tangible and intangible value (Shackley, 2001, p.178). In this way, Parker (2001, as cited in Shackley, 2001, p.335) stated that if we take "historical" back a few centuries, what is historic also can include a sense of sacredness. Sacred place, sacred space and sacredness also may be applied to both living and dead monuments. By ordinary views the increase in the number of believers and 'degree of sacredness' could correlate within 'individual's view of sacred space'. It could be also claimed that the sacredness 'is stratified with different levels of perceived sanctity' (Shackley, 2001, p.14).

In fact, as the 'sacred space is completed and self-referencing that a system composed solely through signification of itself' (Baudrillard, 1988 as cited in Shackley, 2001, p.187), it is difficult to convey a concept of sacredness across cultural boundaries. On the World Heritage List, a 'great proportion of the 100 historic cities' and 'nearly 200 sacred sites are located in the developing world' (Levi-Strauss, 2001 as cited in Serageldin et al., 2001, p.375). Various international scholars have tried to create sacred site definitions which are mostly based on their geographical or physical characteristics and condition as the best solution towards addressing sustainability of these sites. Shackley (2001) mentioned that a sacred site can be classified based on 'site type and location' rather than on religious tradition. Also, Levi-Strauss (2001, as cited in Serageldin et al., 2001, p.375) noted that 'function (secular/spiritual life)' and 'status (profane/sacred)' also can be used to identify sacred places.

In terms of the religious heritage, the sacred place is never isolated from the believers and followers who sustain them through time. Even though there are many sacred sites that do not arise from the religious perspective, sacred spaces always need 'belief and believer' as crucial factors. The visiting of a sacred site can be accepted as embracing the great or greatest sanctity which usually becomes the 'holy experience'. In case of the present visitation Shackley (2001, p.18) also remarked that various visitors could be divided into two basic groups: 1) those whose primary propose is to gain a religious experience; and 2) those whose major motivation is visiting the element of the world's religious heritage (i.e. tourism as opposed to a religious experience).

3.2 Continuity, life and renewal: the characteristics of sacred place

In terms of continuity, Sekler (2001) stated that 'human being' could be compared with 'cultural identity' in terms of a 'sense of continuity' towards the protection of the sacred sites and historic sites. Most preservation prospects could be supposed as 'investments' not only in culture but also with the theme of 'continual existence' investments. Indeed, asserted that continuity is a characteristic of the change process to which even historic cities are subject because:

They are living bodies. If we do not agree that historic cities are living bodies and if we do not allow them to change and adapt to new lifestyle and new standards of living, then we sentence them to die.

In addition, Williams (2001, as cited in Serageldin et al., 2001, p.403) concluded that historic cities should be placed such that they have 'life' which continues 'to be lived', cultural heritage might be at risk or not be protected if people in the community cannot make it a living part of their everyday lives. In addition to most of the traditional religious sources, such as 'Islam, Hinduism, the Chinese tradition and Christianity, and many other religious, the human body itself is often times compared to a city of kingdom, with all its political and social functions' (Serageldin et al., 2001, p.4). Obviously, the continuity of living approach is provided for in widespread international conservation fields. Monitoring and transformations are also accepted to be the critical tasks of safeguarding sacred places (Simeoni, 2003). Indeed, Sorkin (2001, as cited in Serageldin et al., 2001, pp.62,66) asserted that:

However, we must engage in a continuous process of judgment, of selecting what is the best in our social lives and in the settings we create for them... The point is that strategies for preserving historic architecture and cities are locked in a dynamic with strategies of innovation.

Thus, the primary goal of conservation is based on processes of renewal that continually 'revive the cultural meaning, significance and symbolism attached to heritage' (Wijesuriya, 2003, as cited in Stovel et al., 2005, p.1). Concerning the religious heritage aspects, Chatizigogas (2003, as cited in Stovel et al., 2005, p.70) mentioned that a framework of dynamic continuity and a process of addressing the sacred site to be a 'home for the faith expression' is the only way to conserve the built heritage, religious objects and its collections. The 'continued care' that respects the construction period, tradition and skilled workers are regularly 'a part of the traditions and the livingness of the religion'. Moreover, 'political and community support within the continued maintenance and adequate funding are also the typically influential factors' in sustainability of sacred places (Wijesuriya, 2003, as cited in Stovel et al., 2005, p.37).

In terms of living condition, some use the word 'living' as an antonym of 'dead' and always is used in the context of a place that is still in use. For heritage sites, it also specifically reflects the surrounding people and local communities (Inaba, 2003). For instance, Wijesuriya (2003, as cited in Stovel et al., 2005, p.31) mentioned that:

The idea of 'livingness' is embedded in the religious heritage approach in terms of the 'continuity' because it is always stated to be a fundamental premise of conservation. In this way, survival of the original values and associable communities of this heritage are inevitable to be the most essential phenomenon of the continuity process, therefore these religious heritage implications are the vital identification that the conservation would need more conditions than the other types of heritage.

Also Inada (2003, as cited in Stovel et al., 2005, p.48) stated that the crucial approach of the 'living' is 'continuity' that can enhance the heritage values not only spiritual and sacredness of believers but also while maintaining the physical condition. Obviously, in the living sacred places such as temples and shrines which have been continuously used for the original functions, it was usually found that their physical conditions were better than buildings that have been separated from the initial functions or were 'remodeled in order to survive'. As such, the best solution in maintenance could be created for sites so that they 're-incorporate into the everyday life of the community' (Chatizigogas, 2003, as cited in Stovel et al., 2005, p.72). Magar (2003) explored continuity under the condition in which it is quite common to find a desire within a community to replace 'old things' with 'new materials'. The renewal is seen as an opportunity for application and practice of traditional

arts and knowledge. Wijesuriya (2003) stated that the purpose of such renewal is not necessarily to retain the material contents but to sustain the 'cultural meaning', significances and symbolism of the heritage. 'It could be said that the authenticity of intangible-form heritage exists not in *material* but in *process*. How can we assess the authenticity of intangible heritage without material indicators?' (Inaba, 2003, as cited in Stovel, 2005, p.51)

In summary, Stovel et al.(2003: 9-11) outlined the living religious heritage concept as follows:

- Living religious heritage would be at risk from:
 - 'Fluctuating' significations of the 'faith'
 - A lack of correlative understanding between 'nature of religious heritage' and 'conservation to sustaining faith'
 - A lack of 'respect' of 'religious communities'.
- Living religious heritage always needs 'religious community' for conservation whose aims are:
 - To maintain the 'living character' within the 'faith' context
 - To minimize conflicts between religious community and conservation authority goals in heritage conservation
 - To sustain survival of 'religious values' with respect to the religious community's contribution and association.

Living religious heritage inevitably encounters the 'contemporary circumstance' in terms of conservation and adaptation. 'Lay authorities' should participate in decision making and control 'limits on the degree of change'.

3.3 The National Office of Buddhism (NOB) responsibility, legislation and management

As previously stated, the phenomenon of abandoned monastery is a special condition that tends to be dynamic rather than static in status and always exists among the definition of 'living monuments' and 'dead monuments'. Possibly, the 'hibernation' characteristic might need a 'special' strategic approach as well. In the past in northern culture, the phenomenon of deserted monasteries was normal and continually occurred in a circle of 'abandonment-revival'. Moreover, there is 'Kud' or the Lanna folklore which describes, regarding the situation of public religious space of any former monastery, that the land and ruins of any abandoned monastery should not be changed in any case, whether adapted, reused as a beneficial land-use, or for making profit. Change without revitalization and a religious purpose could be a cause of bad luck and a curse for the people concerned (Mahidol University and Silpakorn University, 199, p.20). In the ways of traditional society, the status of a place being a religious place and its sacredness tends to be preserved and secured. Possibly, before the arrival of centralization and modernization in Chiang Mai, most of the deserted religious monasteries were unoccupied without invaders and the making of beneficial purposes in line with the smaller populace. Unfortunately, in modern lifestyle, with the abandoned monastery phenomenon still remaining and complicated by a rise of the secularization process, the question becomes, what and how is the suitable management for this phenomenon?

The role of the NOB is defined by the *Clergyman Act (1906) Section 3* in which 'any monastery that was abandoned and lack of the monk dwelling, the monastery and its land property would be possessed by the kingdom's administrative responsibility.' Furthermore, the *Clergyman Act (1962) Section 72 Paragraph 2* addressed the possession of the monastery's property such that 'in case of the monastery was completely ceased, its asset and land property would transfer to be the public religious asset' (FAD, 1989, p.77).

The mandate of the NOB includes how to manage all abandoned monastery properties. Categories of abandoned monasteries have also been created based on various public purposes. Categorization of an abandoned monastery's properties can be evaluated by two criteria of physical condition. First, for an abandoned monastery's properties that still have remains of ruins and historic monuments, the NOB usually surveys and lists the property with an 'Abandoned Monastery Deed' as a step in the wait for possible revival. Second, for an abandoned monastery's properties where all evidences of there being a religious place have entirely vanished, the NOB usually lists the property as a 'Public Religious Asset' for profitable use considering the following:

1. Abandoned monastery properties that are based on the 'Abandoned Monastery Deed' could be rented at a low cost for agriculture and habitation purposes. This category intends to benefit the poor populace.

2. 'Public Religious Asset' which lack the evidence of monastery and are impossible to be revitalized, could be rented at a higher rate or a valid market cost, such as rental for a hotel business.

(J. Kittisri and S. Muangmutcha, personal communication, November 22, 2006).

In fact, not only is abandoned monastery management the main role of the NOB in each province, but it is also concerned with the various affairs of the living monastery and local Buddhist organizations. Generally, the meaning of the 'wat' is also defined by the official definition as 'the place for making of ritual and religious activity that normally consists of Ubosoth and Viharn, and there is the monk dwelling.' (Matichon Dictionary of the Thai Language, 2004, p.801).

4. Methodology

This research is qualitative research; its methodology consists of primary data and secondary data analysis.

4.1 The primary data analysis are physical surveys of the city walled site areas and 33 in-depth interviews. The in-depth interviews included official agents who have both direct and indirect responsibilities related to abandoned monastery properties and represent what I term the 'official approach'. Additionally, interviews were conducted with local community members, local Buddhist organization, abbots, and religious associates, representing what I term the 'local approach'. The most important aspect of this primary data analysis is identifying what are the key factors of 'unsustainable approach' in addressing the research questions at hand.

The Quota Sampling and Criteria Sampling are defined, there were 33 in-depth interviews; 36.36% were administrative officers and 63.63% were local community stakeholders:

4.1.1 'Official approach' 12 interviews were conducted with administrative officers including:

- Director of the Fine Arts Department Chiang Mai Office
- Fine Arts Department's officer
- Director of the Social Research Institution, Chiang Mai University
- Head of Chiang Mai Provincial Office of Buddhism (CMPOB), National Office of Buddhism (NOB)
- Head of the Policy and Planning Section, Yupharaj Wittayalai School
- Head of Religious and Cultural Supplementary Section, Chiang Mai Municipality City
- Assistant Director of the Anuban Chiang Mai School
- Director of the Puttisopon School
- Assistant Professor of the Faculty of Architecture, Chiang Mai University
- Assistant Professor of Department of Thai Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts, Chiang Mai University

4.1.2 'Local approach' 21 interviews with local community members, local Buddhist organization, abbots, and local religious associates, including:

- Secretary of the Borommathat Doi Suthep Foundation
- Leader of the Muan Nhlen Kong and community members
- The Anuban Chiang Mai School's staff
- Abbot of the Wat Inthakin (Sadurmuang) and community members
- Abbot of the Wat Fon Soi and community members
- Members of the Nong Yah Praeg Community

4.2 The secondary data analysis was based on reviewing literature sources of both Thai and English documents to identify the latest key thinking for management of abandoned monasteries. To address this research issue, I focused on the 'approaches' in management and solutions based on the basic assumption that the different approaches lead to the different outcomes.

4.2.1 Literature sources analysis Results of the primary data analysis shaped a rethinking of the case studies related to the present circumstances of the sites. The 'official approach' and the 'local approach' are different because of different intended *goals*. Relationships between the current land-use, local people and the religious remains are linked to one another and emphasized rather than the official procedures alone. Abandoned monastery remains are also reimagined as the 'religious heritages' rather than historic sites. Hence this analysis aims to identify what are the key factors of 'sustainable approach' by linking to everyday lives and also set the *goal* to address and include local people's awareness.

4.2.2 Case study analysis

There are 948 abandoned monasteries in Chiang Mai Province but 8 abandoned monasteries are located in the old city walled area (Figure 1). The study area of this research is the old Chiang Mai city walled area, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand and the abandoned monasteries that still remain today with physical evidences. All of them are declared as Abandoned Monastery Deed of the National Office of Buddhism (NOB) and have been long term rented by government schools and community's members. The 8 abandoned monasteries in the study area are categorized in 4 present land uses of school, market, community, and museum (Figure 2). The present context and everyday life concerns are also focused on heritage.

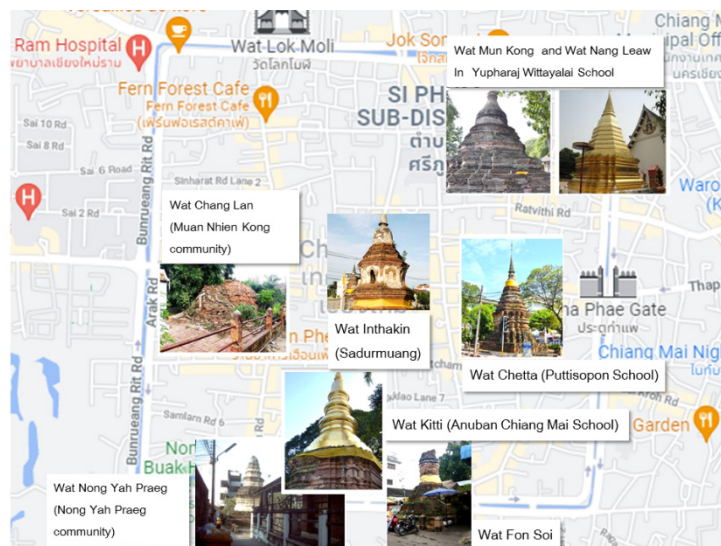
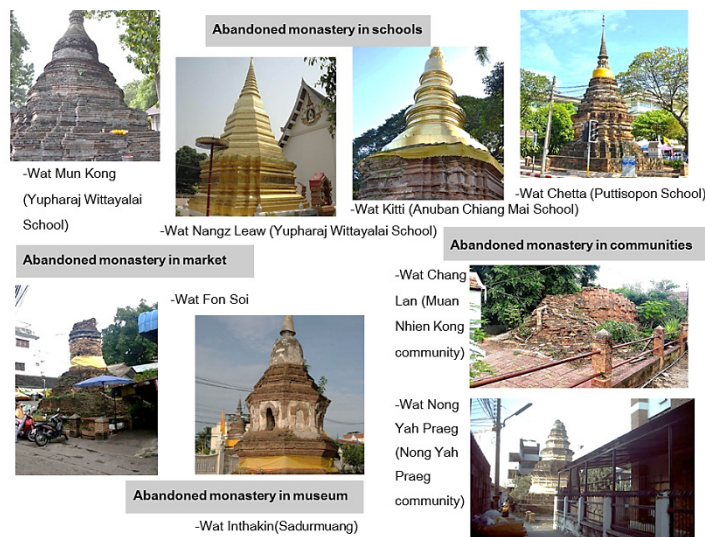


Figure 1 The study area and locations of the abandoned monasteries



Source: <https://maps.google.co.th> developed by the author

Figure 2 Category and case study

5. Results

5.1 To identify unsustainable conditions that face abandoned monasteries

Securing a sustainable future for abandoned monasteries may be different from general heritage protection. In management terms, general heritage monuments are identified as 'living monuments' and 'dead monuments'. Particularly in Buddhist heritage, the 'living monument' designation is provided to a monastery that has a monk dwelling in it. A 'dead monument' is identified as an abandoned monastery. In the absence of a residing monk there is the crucial marker of identification rather than the duration of any abandonment period.

However, in fact, the abandoned monastery phenomenon might be considered the 'hibernation' of the religious place. They only temporarily lack 'livability' and they could be 'awakened' by a revitalization process (J. Kittisri, personal communication, November 22, 2006). It could therefore be said that the abandoned monastery phenomenon exists among living/dead monuments as a *special* case which needs a *special* approach to sustainability. Currently, former Buddhist monasteries are usually seen and defined as 'dead monuments', both for the local Buddhists and in terms of official procedures usually employed for their management. With this mistaken view it is difficult or impossible to accomplish sustainability whether in the present or the near future.

5.2 To clarify unsustainable ways of thinking about abandoned monasteries

Since the arrival of the 1st National Economic and Social Development Plan (1961-1966), several monasteries in Chiang Mai inevitably saw a re-functioning of their land uses to be government offices, schools, and private commercial areas. These former monasteries which used to be 'sacred spaces' also encountered a transformation to a new function and status of 'profitable spaces' that still exist today. As previous noted, the abandoned monastery properties are categorized as either 'Public Religious Asset' or 'Abandoned Monastery Deed' and involve different management approaches. Focusing on the Abandoned Monastery Deeds in the urban area that still remain part of the historic monuments and could be revitalized, the National Office of Buddhism (NOB) generates rent from almost all former monasteries at a low cost for the public benefit of schools and dwellings. In these areas re-functioning might contradict the original purpose and become the

root of the current conflicts. The monasteries were founded for the religious communities and they usually were unoccupied 'public spaces'. Until the NOB management is activated, the former monasteries are inevitably to be rented as 'profitable spaces' but also may be transformed to be 'private spaces'. The 'private spaces' are arising under new circumstances and usually are closed to the public, such as public schools require enclosing for their students' security and poor communities which allocate the sacred public spaces to be subdivided into many lots for their complex households uses.

With these changes, the spiritual significance and being of a sacred place are distorted in many ways with respect to social perception and individual mentality. This is possibly a weakness of the NOB approach. In the view point of the economic and social approach, physical and geographic management usually proceed without consideration of the 'intangible value' of the sacred place and sensibility of the spiritual experience. Despite the official Abandoned Monastery Deed management waiting for the possibility of status revitalization, it is difficult for a sacred place to recover its sacredness. Deterioration of sacredness and sensibility always concerns the faith of Buddhists, not only currently but can accumulate and be embedded to the next generation as well. The sense of place and intangible values should be articulated in the management approach to prevent a religious dilemma in the long-term management.

5.3 To seek rental management policy for abandoned monasteries

Focusing on the Abandoned Monastery Deed management, passive action could be said to have caused the yearly debts that have occurred by the principles and the perspectives of the management. The migration of the rural people who were 'invaders' coming into historic sites of the former urban monasteries, since the beginning of the 4th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1974-1978), was solved by the NOB by reclassification of the 'invaders' into 'dwellers' with yearly rental contracts. Low rental rates still remain today for poor communities or slums in the urban area, yet these rates do not reflect a valid market price. These households mostly have dwelt from generation to generation and in some places are living without any completion of the basic infrastructures. Working in 'hand to mouth' jobs with low incomes, the people see continued debts year after year. Frequently, some initial dwellers sublet their possessions to external people and investors and then move to better conditions of living. The NOB usually takes responsibility not only for deserted monasteries, but also living Buddhist temples and many Buddhist organizations. It is inevitable that the organization is more focused on more prominent Buddhist issues. Possibly, this dilemma of the Abandoned Monastery Deeds has occurred because these sites mostly seem to be 'dead monuments' from the past rather than current Buddhist affairs and part of the Public Religious Assets management, which is more focused on following current market prices.

In the case of Chiang Mai, the Director of the Chiang Mai Provincial Office of Buddhism (CMPOB), Jumlong Kittisri declared that:

There are 930 abandoned monasteries are rented by villagers around 600 Rais (237Acres) of the total of 1,000 Rais (395 Acres) of abandoned monastery deeds and 97 sites are situated in the urban area. These properties can make a profit to the CMPOB around 4-5 million Baht per year... there are contestations with the privates about possession and invading into the court around 10 cases (Kom Chad Luek, 2007: 15).

The National Office of Buddhism (NOB) seems to have no way out its passive management towards the slum problems. Moreover, the passive action and failure in the rental management system are causing many social problems for poor communities and also lead to a lack of awareness of the significance of the heritage

monuments. The sense of the sacred place is damaged by this uncontrolled landscape, with poor infrastructure leading to a low quality standard of living for local slum dwellers. These related factors also continually cause a decline in the religious faith of both dwellers and Buddhist society. Although most of the historic Chedi in the city walled area were registered to be Ancient Monuments not at all are guaranteed to have suitable maintenance. The lack of an active strategy gradually deteriorates both the physical condition and spiritual value of the historic site.

5.4 To seek management solutions for particular abandoned monasteries

Since people see the Chedi as ‘dead monuments’ rather than religious monuments of monastery in hibernation, ways to bring ‘livability and continuity’ to present day abandoned monasteries could be a good way forward for this research. This could be done by enhancing the relationship between ‘local communities’ (how to live with the heritage places) and the ‘sacred places’ (developing a sense of sacredness) by applying integrated solutions. Practically, Thaisuntad (2008) stated that the 4 keys for policymaking to address the problems of managing abandoned monasteries and thereby enhancing sustainability are: zoning management, public participation, sustaining of the sacred place condition, and local community ownership. Each of these keys were assessed on a scale of 0 (none) to 5 (Excellent) for the case study abandoned monasteries within the old walled city. 33 in-depth interviews scored each own table(same format). Calculating all data to be 5 scaled to the summery table were appeared here by the researcher. Results of the scoring assessments are shown in Table 1 and Figure 3 and detailed presentation for each of the 4 keys is done in the following paragraphs.

Table 1 Scores of 4 management keys with case studies

Case studies	(1) Zoning management	(2) Public participation	(3) Sustaining of the sacred place condition	(4) Local community ownership	Sum 20
Abandoned monastery in schools					
Wat Mun Kong (Yupharaj Wittayalai School)	4	3	3	3	13
Wat Nang Leaw (Yupharaj Wittayalai School)	5	4	5	4	18
Wat Kitti (Anuban Chiang Mai School)	5	3	5	3	16
Wat Chetta (Puttisopon School)	5	4	5	4	18
Abandoned monastery in market					
Wat Fon Soi	3	3	2	2	10
Abandoned monastery in communities					
Wat Chang Lan (Muan Nhlen Kong community)	3	2	3	5	13
Wat Nong Yah Praeg (Nong Yah Praeg community)	4	2	3	3	12
Abandoned monastery in museum					
Wat Inthakin(Sadurmuang)	5	5	5	3	18

Adapted 5 scales of Likert Scale (Likert, 1961) are 5-Excellent 4- Good 3-Fair2-Poor1-Very poor 0-None

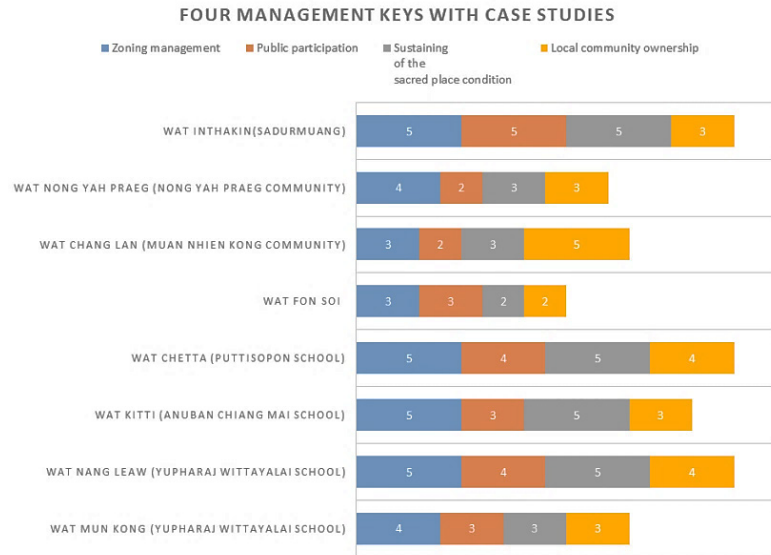


Figure 3 Overview of 4 management keys with case studies

(1) Zoning management

Highest scores

- Wat Nang Leaw (Yupharaj Wittayalai School)
- Wat Kitt (Anuban Chiang Mai School)
- Wat Chetta (Puttisopon School)
- Wat Inthakin (Sadurmuang)

Lowest scores

- Wat Chang Lan (Muan Nhien Kong community)
- Wat Fon Soi

In the category of poor communities, the ruined Chedi of Wat Chang Lan and the Chedi remains of Wat Nong Yah Praeg should be regenerated as a 'sacred zone' and a 'residential zone' that includes a buffer zone between the two zones. The initial center of the sites should be preserved as the starting-point to readjust for the adjacent buildings set-backs. The Chedi of Wat Chang Lan seems to be a critical case, despite there now being a sacred zone by enclosure, but there still remains some adjacent shelters. A buffer zone should be designated here for walking around the Chedi enclosure and which separates the sacred zone from the residential zone. Also with the Chedi of Wat Nong Yah Praeg, there still remains an impermanent shelter making it infeasible to walk around the Chedi. This space should also be developed into a buffer zone for the site.

In addition to the zoning management and buffer zone considerations, the way to reallocate the physical orders of the 'sacred zone' and 'residential zone' should start at the ancient Chedi. Despite both ancient Chedi being covered by the Monument Act 1961 (amended 1992), the provisions within the Act are inadequate for securing a sustainable future. Policymakers should look beyond this law by setting the limit for construction further back from the Chedi and defining the appropriate 'buffer zone' between the Chedi and the residential zone. Readjustments of the basic infrastructures, the order of habitual residences, the setback and the buffer-zone are also included to physically improve the area by planning specialists. When the physical conditions of poor communities are improved and the zoning of the sacred and the residential zone are clearer, including the sites being more opened to public awareness, then securing a sustainable future for the two ancient Chedi could be possible.

Under the commercial zone category, the ruined Chedi of the original Wat Fon Soi should also be regenerated as a 'sacred zone' and 'commercial zone' for better management. Since the Chiang Mai Gate Market in this area is an early market (4.00-10.00 a.m.), the buffer zone of the ruined Chedi could be adjusted into a small market on the ground for the market time (P. Wongsurit, personal communication, February 8 and 11, 2018) but it must be cleaned and cleared as a public space every day. This negotiation of 'buffer zone' into a 'public space' which links the ruined Chedi to the market people during market time could lead to a more respectful and sacred atmosphere at the Chedi. After a period of time, this public space could become the center of this market community and local activities.

(2) Public participation

Highest scores

- Wat Inthakin(Sadurmuang)

Lowest scores

- Wat Chang Lan (Muan Nhien Kong community)
- Wat Nong Yah Praeg (Nong Yah Praeg community)

According to the public participation key, the greatest weakness is that the Chedi are usually obscured and hidden in many ways. The gap between the ancient Chedi and the public should be lessened. Most of the abandoned monasteries in poor urban communities should be actively exposed to raise public awareness as much as possible. For example, the Chedi of Wat Nong Yah Praeg should be presented more to the public by removing the commercial buildings and allocating it as a public space following the former monastery context. There is also a lot of inappropriate construction in this area, such as higher adjacent and set-back buildings as compared to the heritage monument. The lack of effective and active local regulations to control such construction is also a critical problem. Possibly, if these inappropriate conditions are more exposed to the public, local people and the wider public will gain more opportunities to learn, discuss, and increase their religious heritage awareness. This process would probably lead to better legislation and a sustainable solution in the future.

(3) Sustaining of the sacred place condition

Highest scores

- Wat Nang Leaw (Yupharaj Wittayalai School)
- Wat Kitti (Anuban Chiang Mai School)
- Wat Chetta (Puttisopon School)
- Wat Inthakin(Sadurmuang)

Lowest scores

- Wat Fon Soi

The territory of the present Wat Fon Soi, which includes the ruined Chedi, covers the main street shop-houses for a small commercial area that is adjacent to the Chedi. Another dilemma in this case is that Wat Fon Soi's committee usually focuses on profitability via an 'economic approach' that always overlooks the multifaceted aspects of the religious monument. The ruined Chedi seems to be a lost connection to the present Wat Fon Soi and its people. Almost all of the former wat area is excluded and alienated to the present Wat, local community, and the Chiang Mai Gate Market. It could be said that the abandoned monastery remains are exploited by the 'commercial invaders' every day.

Therefore, the social misunderstanding about the NOB and the relative ‘gap’ between the Chedi and local people would possibly be lessened by a greater emphasis on the Chedi as a ‘sacred place’ and landscape improvements and faith fulfillment to create the appropriate condition and atmosphere of a sacred place. Improving the condition of the sacred place is necessarily the first management step because it could bring more religious faith to the local people. If a ‘sacred place’ is interpreted as a ‘sacred place’, not only a ‘ruined Chedi’ or an ‘Ancient Monument’, this way of thinking may lead to better maintenance, management, and a solution regarding religious heritage.

(4) Local community ownership

Highest scores

- Wat Chang Lan (Muan Nhien Kong community)

Lowest scores

- Wat Fon Soi

In the category of poor communities, the Wat Chang Lan community is a good example of a local viewpoint that brings different outcomes to the Chedi. As this Chedi’s significant value is lower than that of national heritages, non-registration as an Ancient Monument, and it being out of sight in a poor community, this Chedi is overlooked in public participation. The view from community leaders is like the view of Buddhist followers, simple but profound. That is, if the Chedi is a Buddhist monument then it needs a sacred atmosphere and respectful condition. Certainly most of the community members work hand to mouth, so they have no time to make merit at the nearby monastery. Another way of thinking is so simple that the ruined Chedi and its area should be made into a truly sacred place of the community.

According to the Abandoned Monastery Deed, the ruined Chedi comes under the possession of the present Wat Fon Soi. The original location of the Chedi and Viharn is usually filled with many shop houses and a lot of vendors every morning. There are vendors of the Chiang Mai Gate Market not only in the adjacent commercial stalls but also on both sides of the narrow street in front of the Chedi. Various people from many districts, including hill-tribe people, come to this market every day. It could be said that the ruined Chedi is situated between them and thus the ownership awareness overlaps. Perhaps sub-consciously, in the view of the market people who mostly live in the districts, the Chedi is a ‘dead monument’ of the FAD and NOB that never belongs to them. This is another consequence of the ‘gap’ between people and the Chedi in the same area that makes it difficult to achieve sustainability.

6. Discussion

The NOB categorized abandoned monastery properties to be either the ‘Abandoned Monastery Deed’ (with ruins still in place) or the ‘Public Religious Asset’ (where no evidence of ruins now exists) and are characterized by different rates of rental management. The research found that all 8 case studies in the city walled area are Abandoned Monastery Deeds. Based on the scoring of 4 critical keys to successful management and sustainability, (zoning management, public participation, sustaining of the sacred place condition, and local community ownership), 3 sites with the highest scores were situated in government schools and a museum. Wat Nang Leaw (Yupharaj Wittayalai School) is a best case of adaptation, becoming a school’s Buddhist classroom that sustains sacredness to next generation.

Effective zoning management is important. Wat Inthakin (Sadurmuang) also had one of the 3 highest key scores, as its area became a part of the local government's museum where the Chedi is interpreted as a museum's exhibition rather than a sacred site. On the other hand, Wat Fon Soi, located as a part of an old local market, scored lowest in all management keys. Despite its situation in public view, it lacks respectful management to the ruined Chedi and surrounding area. Wat Chang Lan (Muan Nhien Kong community) has lower scores but dramatically has the highest score for the local community ownership.

7. Conclusion

This research has identified a number of issues related to the NOB Abandoned Monastery Deed management: 1) the 'dead monument' approaches under which hibernated sacred places may lapse into unsustainable conditions, 2) the dilemma of the 'sacred space' transitioning into the 'profitable space' that is facilitated by unsustainable ways of thinking, 3) passive action of rental management is an outdated policy, and 4) results of the 4 management keys are supplemental solutions for the particular policy making.

Lastly, linking the abandoned monastery to the everyday lives of local people will enable the remaining structures to continually survive to the future. Integrated factors of zoning management, public participation, sustaining sacred place condition, and local community ownership are other approaches to rethinking sustainable solutions. Good visions and diverse ways of thinking are crucial for the management approach. In fact, the sustainable future of any sacred heritage site is never concerned only with periodic reinforcement alone but also with how to encourage people to be aware of their heritage in both tangible and intangible ways for the next generations.

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