



SPEAKER 1: MS MIZUHO IKEDA

**THE FUNDAMENTAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACTIVATION OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN
CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION**

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Luk Lan Muang Phrae

**WORKSHOP ON
THE HERITAGE OF ANCIENT AND URBAN SITES:
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ABSTRACT

In this presentation, I would like to consider the basic necessity of having an overall framework or policy to encourage communities to participate in the process of cultural heritage conservation. Having joined several international conferences in the last couple of years, the discussion of cultural heritage management tends to fall into conceptual and activity-based debates. However, by considering successful cases of public involvement carefully, some key components can be identified. These key issues are not necessarily specific to Southeast Asia. Based on my experience working in Japan, Thailand and Central America, I have faced similar problems no matter where I went. The main issues discussed are;

- The definition of “participation”. Because the form and degree of participation expected with/from the community varies and actually affects the project itself. It is important to clarify this first.
- The presence of conservation activity at community level which also provides information regarding the degree of involvement.
- The framework/ policies in place which allow the community to join and to reflect their opinions.
- The necessity of new conservation systems and approaches which allow for the protection of cultural heritage not normally covered by ordinary heritage protection laws and categories.
- The presence of short and long term activities which make the community aware of the opportunity to join the conservation of cultural heritage.

Through the presentation above, I would like to use this as an opportunity to exchange opinions and ideas amongst fellow presenters and the audience.

BIODATA

Mizuho Ikeda is a Ph.D. student at Waseda University in the Department of Cultural Anthropology. Her current research focuses on heritage management and education in Phrae province, Northern Thailand. She has also worked extensively in Japan, Ireland, Egypt and El Salvador, the latter as a member of JICA's Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer programme. Her research interests cover not only Cultural Heritage Studies but also Interpretation, Community Development, and Social Studies Education. Moreover, as an archaeologist by training, she is highly concerned with the comprehensive management of tangible and intangible heritage.

CONFERENCE PAPER
A FUNDAMENTAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACTIVATION OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN
CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Key issue of the presentation: What are the key elements of successful public involvement in conservation of cultural heritage?

In this presentation, I consider the necessity of having an overall framework or policy to encourage communities to participate in the process of cultural heritage conservation. The discussion of cultural heritage management tends to fall into conceptual and activity-based debates. However, by considering successful cases of public involvement carefully, some key components can be identified. These key issues are not necessarily specific to Southeast Asia but in my experience working in Japan, Thailand and Central America, similar problems arose. I summarize these below:

1. The definition of “participation”

Because the form and degree of participation expected with/from the community varies, it affects the project itself. It is important to clarify this first, as the project’s direction will vary depending on whether participation is seen as (1) as a tool for implementing the project smoothly, or (2) participation aiming for local residents to learn something through the process of participation (Dudley 1993, Oakley 1991). In the latter case, a methodology called Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) has been well practiced in the field of Development study.

2. The presence of conservation activity at community level

The presence of conservation activity at community level which also provides information regarding the degree of involvement.

Case study: volunteer group “Luk Lan Muang Phrae” (LLMP), Phrae province, Thailand

- 2004-05: Living Heritage Sites Program
- 2006: Book house project
- 2007: Let’s see and tour our town project, Old house preservation award project
- 2008-10: Community-based archaeology project
- 2009-11: US ambassador’s fund for cultural preservation “Community-based architectural heritage preservation project”
- 2012- present: planning for the Old missionary house preservation

The presence of an active civic group in Phrae shows the extent and interest of public participation to conservation of cultural heritage. In general, local communities in Phrae are aware of the importance of conservation of cultural heritage. Also, LLMP possesses high management capacity such as organizing activities and the acquisition of funding. Nevertheless, the group remains discontented about the situation due to the lack of human resources and money. A further difficulty is that members of the group feel that there have been no concrete results from their action. In order to solve the issues, it is necessary to have the policies or framework in place which allows the public to join in. In other words, the policy which directly reflects the public opinion is required.

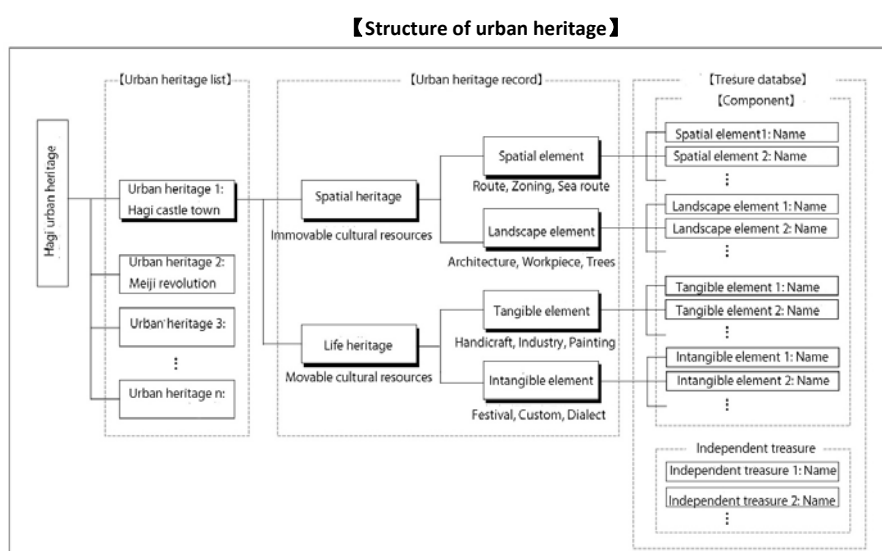


Figure 1. Luk Lan Muang Phrae

3. The framework/ policies in place which allow the community to join and to reflect their opinions.

Case study: Hagi-shi, Yamaguchi prefecture, Japan

- Development of a concept “urban heritage” in Hagi-shi
- The "urban heritage" system is a collection of treasures which local residents consider as important regional history, culture and stories regarding to nature and folklore, and that they would like to explain this to people who visit a city. In case of registration, it is necessary to register both stories and evidence that characterizes the story (or the essential elements to explain), and give a name as urban heritage. (Yoshimura, Nishiyama, Nakano & Arikawa 2005)
- This system has been applied not only to Hagi-shi, but also Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)'s “Sustainable Community Tourism Development Project in As- Salt City”, in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.



4. Conclusion: Process of community involvement

Participatory projects need to consider the degree of community participation maturity. Depending on this, objectives and goals will be different. In the long term, sustainability of community

participation relies on the presence of a framework or policies in place which allow public and governmental administration to collaborate. Systems need to be created by simple language and contents which local residents can easily understand. New conservation systems and approaches which allow for the protection of cultural heritage not normally covered by ordinary heritage protection laws and categories, and short and long term activities which make the community aware of the opportunity to join the conservation of cultural heritage, are crucial. Finally, not only learning but also enjoyment is an important element of participatory projects.

I conclude this presentation with a question: where do we see such example of Hagi-shi in SEA and how can this kind of cooperation be furthered?

5. Reference

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