

William Chapman

Asia and the Pacific

A Big Area to Cover!

Wo Hing Society building, Lahaina, Maui, c. 1912. Quill and ink drawing © by Ramsay. Used with permission.

Angkor Wat, only one of 43 major monuments within the Angkor Historic City in northern Cambodia. Photo by the author.

This issue of *CRM* concentrates—if that could be the word for so complex and vast a topic—on historic preservation and cultural resource issues in the Asia-Pacific region. Extending from the west coasts of North, Central, and South America across the Pacific and into China, Korea and Southeast Asia, enveloping in its scope the scattered islands of Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia and the countries of Japan, New Zealand, and continental Australia, the Asia-Pacific region has been held up for some time as the predicted center of action for the next century.

The economies of all of the countries in the region are definitely on the upswing. Japan, of course, is now a long-recognized powerhouse in the region, despite more recent and much-publicized setbacks. Korea is following close behind. Expansion and economic growth in countries such as Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia have been dramatic—a part of what has been termed the “Asian Miracle.” Thailand’s economy grows at an estimated 8.5% a year, Indonesia’s at 7.0%, and Singapore’s at 10% (real GDP). Gargantuan China looms increasingly into the picture. With its population of 1.2 billion, its immense resources, and the renaissance of major trading centers such as Shanghai—as well as the absorption of Hong Kong, an eventuality which takes place in 1997—China promises to dominate the region in one way or the other before long.

The United States is in many ways at the periphery of this rapidly changing area—an area referred to as the Pacific Basin. Of course, for many years the U.S., and particularly the states



along the west coast, have been tied in with Asia and the Pacific countries and islands. California, Washington, and Oregon all have substantial historic links to the region and populations that, perhaps more than other states, reflect those long-standing connections. Hawai‘i, of course, is at the center of the region, although with the introduction of long-range commercial aircraft over the past 20 years, the state’s central position is more symbolic than efficacious.

Still, the majority of U.S. citizens have been slow to appreciate the significance of the shift in power and influence to the Pacific Region. Efforts of the Clinton Administration to push the U.S. into the center of economic agreements and coopera-



tion in the region, such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Agreement (APEC), have failed to capture the attention of most Americans. As reflected in the distribution of our foreign aid, the coverage in the press and television, Asia and the Pacific are still thought of as far off, and in many ways irrelevant places; the focus remains—often frustratingly for those of us in the Pacific and with ties to Asia—clearly on Europe and the Mediterranean. The dissolution of Yugoslavia and

the subsequent turmoil and fighting there captures considerable press; continuing political problems in Cambodia, Burma, and Korea are less noticed. The focus of foreign aid shifted dramatically to Eastern Europe in the mid-1980s, following the breakup of the Soviet Union. Developing countries in Asia and the Pacific seem barely a trickle by comparison.

Not surprisingly, Asia and the Pacific increasingly have charted their own courses of development and alignment. This has been as true for historic preservation interests as in other areas. Japan has long been noted for its attention to "living treasures" as well as buildings and monuments. Pacific islanders have made the point for many years that their interests lay in preserving their *cultures*, not merely artifacts. Australia has energetically promoted its own Burra Charter, to some degree a counterpart to the famous Venice Charter, but in other ways a rallying cry for alternatives.

A conference held in Hawai'i in 1992, "Cultural Heritage in Asia and the Pacific: Conservation and Policy," sponsored by the Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA), the Getty Conservation Institute, US/ICOMOS, and the

Traditional meeting house (pebai), Yap, Federated States of Micronesia. Photo by William J. Murtagh.



University of Hawai'i's Historic Preservation Program, and a follow-up conference in Thailand this past year called "The Future of Asia's Past," have revealed many of the *differences* in Asian and Pacific approaches to preservation. It is clear generally, for example, that Asians see their monuments more as living places, still functioning as part of the social and religious life of their peoples, than as treasures to be venerated and set aside for posterity. Many Pacific islanders see the preservation of older monuments and, especially, Western-introduced elements, as virtual impediments to the development of their own forms of cultural appreciation.

Some of these differences are not so great as they might at first seem. The basic strictures of the Venice Charter appear to be fundamentally unchal-

lenged, as Lester Borley, Secretary General of Europa Nostra, pointed out in discussions in Chiang Mai, Thailand, as part of the Getty-sponsored conference on "The Future of Asia's Past" last January. Still, there are important points of divergence—at least *perceived* differences in assessments of what is significant and what is not and what should be preserved or not—among the many peoples and cultures of the region. Western ideas of preservation will simply no longer be accepted *prima facie*; other points of view will have to be taken into account as part of the process.

This *CRM* means to take a stab at some of these issues and provide a preliminary forum for venting some of the more evident areas of conflict. Stressing Australia's increasingly influential perspective in the region, landscape architect and National University of Australia professor Ken Taylor discusses his country's efforts to preserve the traditional landscape heritage of Australia and give recognition to sacred sites and other places of special interest to the Aboriginal population. Peter James, Chairman of Australia ICOMOS and a former instructor in the University of Hawai'i's summer field school, provides some thoughts on the Burra Charter and its implications for the preservation of both "native" and imported heritages.

Focusing on the preservation of colonial architecture, former Hawaiian National Trust Advisor Gerry Takano describes his nearly two-year involvement with the former British colony of Fiji and that, now independent, country's efforts to develop the small town of Levuka as a tourist site. The results of an assessment of training needs in Micronesia, including the Republic of Belau (formerly Palau), the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia, undertaken by the University of Hawai'i on behalf of the National Park Service, is described in detail in the article "Historic Preservation Training in Micronesia: An Assessment of Needs."

Other more building-oriented historic preservation concerns are addressed in Jeff Cody's informative article on the preservation of European- and American-designed architecture in China and on the status of preservation efforts in Hong Kong. Robertson Collins, Vice President of the Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA), headquartered in Singapore, and past Vice President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, shares some informal insights into the character of Singapore's preservation efforts from the developers' and tourists' perspective. The interpenetration of "East" and "West" is treated in University of Hawai'i Architecture Professor Chris Yip's study of San Francisco's Chinatown, the subject of his dissertation for Berkeley; and the discussion by Gail

Dubrow, of the University of Washington, of the identification of the frequently illusive Japanese cultural heritage in the Pacific northwest. The history of Honolulu's own Chinatown is covered in a short article by Greg Mark.

Preservation education is the subject of Chester Liebs' article recounting his experience in Japan as a visiting Senior Fulbright Scholar. Professor Liebs, formerly Director of the Historic Preservation Program at the University of Vermont and currently a board member of US/ICOMOS, spent a year working with Japanese students and instructors on a variety of preservation projects and strategies. Lowell Angell and Rosemary Ruhr discuss the University of Hawai'i's program and the ways it interfaces with the community and, in many ways, serves as a catalyst for change. Bion Griffin, Chairman of the University of Hawai'i Department of Anthropology, Miriam Stark, Professor of Anthropology, and Judy Ledgerwood, Senior Research Fellow at the East-West Center in Honolulu, describe the University of Hawai'i and the East-West Center's joint effort to provide training in archeology and historic preservation to the recently re-established University of Fine Arts in strife-ridden Cambodia.

Also, Professor Bion Griffin gives some background on the University's first season in Angkor Borei, a significant 1st to 10th century site on the Cambodian border with Vietnam that the University of Hawai'i began work on this past summer. Graduate student Mike Dega describes the first season's results. In the northern part of the country, at Siem Reap, World Monuments Fund Project Director John Stubbs explains the Fund's on-going work at Preah Khan, a magnificent 11th-century site now under selective restoration. John Stubbs, who also teaches in Columbia University's Historic Preservation Program, discusses some of the difficulties facing cultural resource experts in this incomparable World Heritage area—an area incorporating the perhaps more famous Angkor Wat and some 40-plus other major monuments.

The final important theme in this issue is the War in the Pacific and the legacy of World War II. The Pacific was a primary theater of the Second World War. It was where the war began for America, following the famous December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, and it was where the war ended, with the Japanese signing of the documents of surrender in Tokyo Bay on the USS *Missouri* on September 2, 1945. The Pacific islands, as well as the mainland of Asia, contain the historic sites of the conflict: the battlefields of Iwo Jima and Guadalcanal; the scenes of imprisonment and forced marches such as Corregidor, Burma, and southern Thailand; and the memorials to the devastated remnants of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Hawai'i

was America's "eye" on the Pacific war, the strategic center of the U.S. Pacific naval and military operations; so it is appropriate that an issue emanating from the University of Hawai'i's Historic Preservation Program should discuss the legacy of this enormously significant era.

In this issue Geoff White, anthropologist, Senior Fellow at the East-West Center, and a well-known author on World War II, discusses varying, and sometimes contrasting, approaches to commemorating the war. National Park Service Cultural Resources Specialist Jim Adams covers Pearl Harbor and upcoming problems faced by managers there. Jim Adams also discusses the USS *Arizona* site and other lesser-known resources in Pearl Harbor. Other National Park Service sites relating to the Pacific theater are also mentioned. Finally, Ann Yaklovich and Glenn Mason describe the assessment of World War II resources in the Pacific.

The Pacific, with its geographical and cultural links to both Asia and America, is a profoundly significant region. It is significant for its place in the history of the world and for its future potential in the world's economy. It is an area that deserves more attention from historic preservationists and cultural resource specialists, one that possesses its own kinds of legacies and requires its own particular approaches and solutions. It is hoped that this issue of *CRM* will help bring some of this work into better view.

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This issue of *CRM* was compiled and edited by the Historic Preservation Program at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Contributions were made by Chapman; Lowell Angell, program administrator; and graduate historic preservation students Delta Lightner, Jennifer Malin, Shannon Smith, and Rosemary Ruhr. Our thanks to the authors and to Ron Greenberg at the National Park Service.

This is the first of two issues edited by the University of Hawai'i's Historic Preservation Program. The second, to be published in the fall of this year, will focus on Hawai'i's own unique "cultural resource blend," including articles on Native Hawaiian perspectives, the plantation heritage, and the state's important urban heritage.