

Thailand National Periodic Report

Section II

State of Conservation of Specific World Heritage Properties

Section II: State of Conservation of Specific World Heritage Properties

II.1 Introduction

- a. State Party

Thailand

- b. Name of World Heritage property

Historic City of Ayutthaya and Associated Historic Towns

- c. Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

North-west corner: Latitude 14° 20' 52" N

South-east corner: Longitude 101° 33' 38" E

- d. Date of inscription on the World Heritage List

December 1991

- e. Organization or entity responsible for the preparation of the report

Organization (s) / entity (ies): *The 3rd Regional Office of Fine Arts,
Pra Nakorn Sri Ayutthaya Province,
Bureau of Archaeology, Fine Arts Department*

Person (s) responsible: *Head of the Ayutthaya Historical Park*

Address: *Ayutthaya Historical Park*

City and Post Code: *Muang District, Pra Nakorn Sri*

Ayutthaya 13000

Telephone: *66-35-242284*

Fax: *66-15-242286*

Email: *-*

- f. Date of Report

February 2003

- g. Signature on behalf of State Party

II. 2 Statement of significance

The historic city of Ayutthaya and associated historic towns were granted Cultural World Heritage status by the World Heritage Committee following the cultural criteria (iii) which is “*to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared*”. They were the evidence of the highest prosperity of a Southeast Asian civilization in the 14th – 19th centuries AD. Ayutthaya, founded in 807 AD, was the second capital of the Kingdom of Siam after Sukhothai. It was one of the important economic and trade centers of the region. The economic prosperity of Ayutthaya had resulted in the flourishing of all sorts of arts and culture, which are still evident nowadays. The numerous palaces, temples, fortresses, the way of life of the Ayutthaya people, as well as architecture, paintings, sculptures, and literature, are the testimony of this great civilization.

II. 3 Statement of authenticity/ integrity

The historic city of Ayutthaya and associated historic towns underwent restoration since before they became a World Heritage. The first restoration was in 1854-1868 and the second restoration was in 1868-1910. In 1935, the Fine Arts Department registered the historic city of Ayutthaya covering the area of 2.8 sq. km. as ancient monument, and it has always been protected and maintained. In 1977, the Royal Government of Thailand allowed the Fine Arts Department to conserve and manage this historic city and devise the Ayutthaya Historical Park Plan with the aims to restore only the monuments in the inscribed area. However, after becoming a World Heritage in 1991, the Fine Arts Department improved the Plan to cover a broader area and aspects. The Plan is known as the Master Plan of the Historic City of Ayutthaya, which aims to maintain the integrity and uniqueness of this World Heritage site.

II. 4 Management

The historic city of Ayutthaya and associated historic towns are protected by various national laws such as:

- The Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums B.E. 2504 (1961) and the Amended Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums B.E. 2535 (1992)
- The Ratchaphasadu Land Act B.E. 2518 (1975)
- The Urban Planning Act B.E. 2518 (1975)
- The Building Control Act B.E. 2522 (1979)
- Land Code B.E. 2497 (1954)
- Regulations of the Fine Arts Department Concerning the Conservation of Monuments B.E. 2528 (1985)

The Fine Arts Department is a government agency responsible for the management of cultural property and the coordination with other agencies such as the Pra Nakorn Sri Ayutthaya province, the Municipality of Pra Nakorn Sri Ayutthaya, the Sub-District Administration Office, and the Department of Religious Affairs. In 1993, the Master Plan on the Conservation and Development of the Historic City of Ayutthaya was devised to provide a framework and guidelines. The Master Plan is comprised of 5 major plans as follows:

1. Archaeology, History, and Ancient Monuments
2. Development and Improvement of Infrastructure
3. Improvement of Environment and Landscape
4. Development and Improvement of Community
5. Relocation and Improvement of Land Use

The committees of these plans are delegates from both central government and local sectors. The plan implementation follows the various academic measures based on the ICOMOS standards. The Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums is used to protect the historic city as the Act has indicated clear definitions and punishment. As the present Constitution prescribes local agencies to take part in the protection of cultural heritage, it is necessary to educate the locals on the preservation and management of cultural heritage. The local agencies can also prescribe their own rules concerning the preservation and management of cultural heritage.

The budget used in the management and the preservation of the historic city of Ayutthaya is allocated by the Government of Thailand. However, the budget allocation does not meet the requested amount in the budget framework of the Master Plan because of the world economic situation. As the annual allocated budget is relatively low, it is deemed necessary to apply for assistance from other international funding agencies such as SIP and OECF.

The Ayutthaya Historical Park is using IT system to aid the facilitation and working efficiency. The Office has five PCs with access to Internet and email for the communication and exchange of information. There is a scientific laboratory for the conservation of ancient monument. The staff of the Ayutthaya Historical Park can be divided into Academic section and Administrative section comprising of experts, architects, scientists, archaeologists, engineers, construction technicians, researchers, and fine arts technicians. The staff should receive additional training on site management and community involvement. The researches conducted are, for instance, *Chemical Application for the Restoration of Brick and Stucco* and *Impact Assessment of the Vibration Caused by Vehicles*.

Concerning the convenience of visitors, the Master Plan inscribes that the local sector and the Tourism Authority of Thailand collaborate to manage the tourism of the site. The Ayutthaya Historical Park has prepared printed matters, video documentaries, exhibitions, and a website for visitors. Sufficient infrastructure is also provided such as

parking space, public restrooms for normal and disabled visitors, electricity, tap water, local and international telephone service, telegram, Internet, email, and currency exchange service. There have been an increasing number of visitors (337,425 Thais and 706,523 foreigners). The Historical Park has gained Baht 25,810,020 from the entrance fees. The increasing amount of visitors could probably have been resulted from the promotion via Internet and the annual tourism calendar as well as from being a World Heritage. In every December, there is a light and sound festival to celebrate the World Heritage status as well.

II. 5 Factors affecting the property

The Ayutthaya historical city is situated on a low land area and risks flooding in the high water season of every year. A Disaster Preparedness plan is devised to handle the problem by constructing a system to prevent flooding both within and outside the City Isle. The construction is implemented by the Department of Public Works, Ministry of Interiors. At present, the system construction within the City Isle is completed. There are a system to prevent flooding inside the monuments at different locations and a plan to improve different areas following the Master Plan, which is divided into two phases. The first phase has been successfully implemented.

II. 6 Monitoring

The cabinet approved the Master Plan for the Preservation and Development of the Historic City of Ayutthaya on 23 March 1993. The committee for the Monitoring of the implementation of the Master Plan was set up with the Deputy Prime Minister as President and the Director-General of the Fine Arts Department as Secretary. The Fine Arts Department has assigned its staff to conduct the monitoring and it is now in the process of establishing a formal monitoring system to control, monitor, and supervise the preservation of the historic city.

II. 7 Conclusions and recommended actions

The historic city of Ayutthaya and associated historic towns is being preserved and managed to maintain its integrity. There is an attempt to expand the preserved area to provide a buffer zone, which will protect and benefit the management and preservation of the site. The true dedication to preserve the historic city of Ayutthaya and the devising of the Plan to preserve and develop the ancient Ayutthaya area to be the Ayutthaya Historical Park, has created the harmony between the ancient and the modern Ayutthaya cities.

