

SI SATCHANALAI ON GLOBAL STAGE

A Collection of Research Essays Presented
at International Academic Conferences



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EDITORS

Koompong Noobanjong, Ph.D.
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In accordance with the current regulations from the Office of the Civil Service in Higher Education (OCSCH) stipulated in 2017 (B.E. 2560), the scholarly contents of all the five chapters were examined by the following triumvirate of reviewers who also certified their academic values and validity for publication in this anthological volume.

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FOREWORD

Deriving from original research projects conducted in communities around Sukhothai, Kamphaeng Phet, and Si Satchanalai historical parks—which were collectively registered by the UNESCO in 1991 as a tripartite World Heritage site in Thailand—*Si Satchanalai on Global Stage* presented a tangible contribution to the global academic community by scholars from the Faculty of Industrial Education and Technology, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology, Ladkrabang, (KMITL).

Via collaborative efforts with members of Heritage by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN] Research Community (HARC)—a multilateral network established at KMITL in 2018—all the constituent chapters incorporated multifaceted investigations, ranging from those in the fields of science and technology, humanities and social studies, to urban planning, historic preservation, and heritage management.

Owing to such expansive scopes of intellectual profundity and epistemological complexity, I would like to acknowledge that the collection of research articles in this book exemplified KMITL's vision for dissolving conventional disciplinary boundaries. With reference to the present age of global interdependence and academic interconnectivity, it would be my pleasure to congratulate that *Si Satchanalai on Global Stage* represented a major step for multidimensional advancements of scholarly and practical knowledges at once.



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PREFACE

SURASAK KANGKHAO

*"In the time of King Ram Khamhaeng this land of Sukhothai is thriving. In the water there is fish and in the fields there is rice. The lord of the realm does not levy toll on his subjects for travelling on the roads they lead their cattle to trade or ride their horses to sell. Who wants to trade in elephants can do so, who wants to trade in horses can do so, who wants to trade in gold or silver can do so."*¹

Opening lines on the first facade of the Ram Khamhaeng Inscriptions at Sukhothai Stone Stele No. 1, as translated by Cornelius Beach Bradley in 1909.

This book contained a collection of five scholarly essays, which were born out of original research projects undertaken by members of HANUMAN Academic Research Centre—a sub-division of Heritage by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN] Research Community (HARC)—at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology, Ladkrabang (KMITL), Thailand. Altogether, they conveyed multifaceted responses to the corpus of knowledge on Si Satchanalai, accumulated by Thai and foreign intellectuals alike during the past decades.



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Notwithstanding the diverse objects and subjects of inquiries, all the constituent chapters concentrated the theme of their investigations on Si Satchanalai Historical Park in conjunction with the Sukhothai and Kamphaeng Phet counterparts—constituting the Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns—which were collectively registered by the UNESCO as a tripartite World Heritage site in 1991.² With such an emphasis, the authors acquired first-hand information through their real-life experiences, by conducting a series of workshops and study trips to collect crucial data in those locations. The said activities were carried out in 2013,³ 2015,⁴ and 2017⁵ via collaborative efforts by KMITL and international students—under the supervisions by combined teams of Thai and foreign instructors—with the local populace in the towns of Sukhothai, Si Satchalai, and Kamphaeng Phet.

Within a period of merely four years, key personnel involved with all five research projects had rapidly increased from few core faculty members at KMITL to many dozens of academics, provincial administrators, state officials, community leaders, local business entrepreneurs, and practitioners from various walks of life. In fact, some of these projects received financial supports in terms of research grants from outside sources at the national level, e.g., Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA), Thailand Research Fund (TRF), National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT), and Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation.

Accordingly, on June 1, 2018, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between KMITL, a score of universities, administrative bodies of Sukhothai and Kamphaeng Phet provinces, and an anthropological research organization was signed to establish the HARC nexus as a leading agency for advancing sustainable developments and conservations of the UNESCO World Heritage sites in the Southeast Asian region.

Through the abovementioned multilateral framework, the immediate tasks for HARC comprised expansions of its strategic partnerships with respectable academic institutions from abroad, starting with those in the Anglosphere (English-speaking nations).

Since the English language had become a de facto worldwide lingua franca for knowledge disseminations and communications by most renowned scholars, the selection of the United Kingdom (UK)—where prestigious universities, research institutes, and academic publishers in the disciplines of historic preservation, heritage management, and Asian studies were situated—as a point of departure to embark on the overseas missions for HARC was logically perceptive and practically sensible. At the same time, HARC members did not abstain from participating in academic conferences in Thailand, where fresh first-hand knowledge and real-life experiences on Si Satchanalai were frequently exchanged between scholars and practitioners.

Be that as it may, a note should also be taken that a plan to introduce the five studies on Si Satchanalai to the communities of international scholars had already been conceived and executed prior to the implementation of the MOU, which eventually culminated in the publication of those research essays as book chapters in 2019.

In sum, not only did the creation of the book serve as a concrete evidence for scholarly contributions to the academic communities in international arena by Thai scholars, but coincide with the first anniversary for an establishment of the HARC network as well. For that reason, a remark could be made that this anthological volume—regardless of its modest physique—signified a first but consequential step of HARC members in their intellectual quests for knowledge in a timely manner.

Notes

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- ¹ Bradley, C.B. (1909). The Inscription of Phra Ram Khamhaeng of Sukhothai, 1293 A.D. *Journal of the Siam Society* 6(1), pp.1-72. Retrieved from http://www.siamese-heritage.org/jsspdf/1904/JSS_006_1b_Bradley_OldestKnownWritingInSiamese.pdf.
 - ² United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2017). Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns. in *World Heritage List*. Retrieved from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/574/>.
 - ³ See: Noobanjong, K. and Ubonsri, B. (2013). An Integration of Project-based Learning and Haptic Senses: A Case Study in Architectural Education. *Journal of Architectural /Planning Research and Studies* 10(1), pp. 165-188.
 - ⁴ See: Noobanjong, K. and Louhapensang, C. (2015). Bridging the Horizon: A Collaborative and Cooperative Approach for Cross-cultural Learning on the Artistic and Architectural Heritages of Central and Northern Thailand. *Journal of Architectural /Planning Research and Studies* 12(1), pp. 103-122.
 - ⁵ See: Noobanjong, K. and Louhapensang, C. (2017). The Pedagogical Efficacy of Learning from the Built Environment through Real-life Experiences: A Case Study from Communities around Si Satchanalai Historical Park. *Journal of Architectural/ Planning Research and Studies* 14(2), pp. 41-60.



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PROLOGUE

Si Satchanalai as an Ongoing Dialogue between the Past, Present, and Future

KOOMPONG NOOBANJONG

"In 1207 saka [1285 A.D.] a year of the boar, he [Lord Ram Khamhaeng] caused holy relics to be dug up so that everyone could see them. They were worshiped for a month and six days, then they were buried in the middle of Si Satchanalai, and a cetiya [a pyramidal structure] was built on top of them which was finished in six years. A wall of rock enclosing the Great Relic Monument was built which was finished in three years."¹

Opening lines on the fourth facade of the Ram Khamhaeng Inscriptions at Sukhothai Stone Stele No. 1, as translated by Cornelius Beach Bradley in 1909.

Si Satchanalai as a Temporal Discourse

The accepted convention on Thai historiography has always given credit to Prince Damrong Rajanubhab (1862–1943)—an influential historian, modern provincial administrator, and half-brother of King Chulalongkorn of Siam (Rama V, r. 1868–1910)—in laying a groundwork for the

rectilinear schema of Thai history, which had been sanctioned by the state until today as seen from school textbooks throughout the country. In 1914, he wrote that the history of the Thai in Siam proper commenced with the establishment of the Kingdom of Sukhothai as an independent state about the year 1238 A.D. This first Siamese kingdom was followed by Ayutthaya, Thonburi, and Rattanakosin (Bangkok).²

The aforementioned narratives by Damrong had cemented a reputation of Sukhothai and its satellite settlements—including the town of Si Satchanalai—as Thailand's first important kingdom.³ Nevertheless, contemporary historical discourse had disputed that the prince's mode of historiography was outdated, containing many philosophical and methodological flaws—by perceiving historical facts and analyses simply as a tool to verify or promote a predetermined objective while neglecting evaluations on the accuracy and authenticity of an evidence used to stake a claim or argument—thus resulting in serious blunders in his interpretations of Thai history.⁴

For instance, Thanon Phra Ruang—an ancient passageway running from Kamphaeng Phet via Sukhothai to Si Satchanalai—had traditionally been understood as a road. Nonetheless, a range of findings from ground surveys of the northern section between Sukhothai and Si Satchanalai contended that the structure was more sensibly construed as a canal with an adjacent embankment. Correspondingly, a long-held belief that Thanon Phra Ruang was a vital means in transporting ceramics south from the production sites north of Si Satchanalai had been disputed by the field evidence.⁵

Despite the ongoing academic disagreements and contestations, the historic town of Si Satchanalai had remained important as it had always been, not only in terms of a key archaeological site and a national treasure, but also as a temporal discourse—linking the past, present, and future together—leading to advancement of knowledge through new discoveries and reinterpretations, as exhibited by the investigation on Thanon Phra Ruang as a prime example. On that account, a reflexive remark could be made that all the constituent research articles featured in this anthology engaged the discourse of Si Satchanalai from multiple angles,

ranging from the fields of science and technology, humanities and social studies, to urban planning, historic preservation, and heritage management. Such a multidimensional approach would be examined in details by the forthcoming analytical and critical discussions in the following chapters.

Contextual Background on Si Satchanalai

Before proceeding further, it would be intellectually prudent to equip those unfamiliar with the subject matter and theme of enquiries that structured this anthological work with some basic information about Si Satchanalai. Being among a handful of archaeological sites in Thailand that had been extensively researched by scholars worldwide, the historic quarter of Si Satchanalai was incorporated into Si Satchanalai Historical Park by the Fine Arts Department in 1982.⁶ In combination with the Sukhothai and Kamphaeng Phet historical parks, the property was registered by the UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1991, as already explained.⁷

Located in Sukhothai province at the lower northern region of the country, Si Satchanalai distanced approximately 450 km. away from Bangkok. Standing 50 km. north of the present Sukhothai city, the historic town of Si Satchanalai occupied more than 320 hectares (800 acres) of land. Within this property, the 91-hectare (288 acres) area protected by the old laterite ramparts a 12-meter-wide city moat sheltered the main archaeological components in this historical park, composed of the 13th–15th century ruins of celadon factories—the Thuriang Kiln—along with remains of temples and shrines (Figure A to D).⁸

Formerly called Mueang Chaliang, this urban settlement was founded in 1205 on the bank of the Yom River. From the 13th to 16th centuries, it developed into a major hub in manufacturing pottery and ceramics, many of which were exported to the Philippines, Japan, and Indonesia.⁹ According to early stone inscriptions, local legends, and historic chronicles, Si Satchanalai

was a second administrative centre of Sukhothai Kingdom (1238–1438), exclusively governed by the crown prince, as exemplified by Phaya Li Thai—who was highly regarded as a great ruler and scholar—ruling the city before ascending the throne as King Mahathammaracha I of Phra Ruang Dynasty (r. 1347–1368).¹⁰

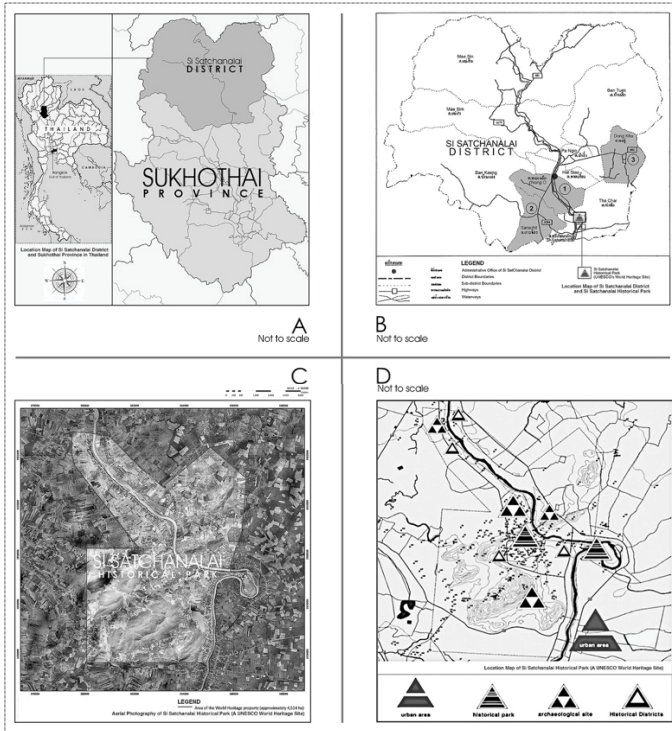


Figure A. Location map of Si Satchanalai district and Sukhothai province.
Source: Google Earth, 2017, with notations from the authors.

Figure B. Location map of Nong O, Sarachit, and Dongkhu sub-districts.
Source: HANUMAN Academic Research Centre, KMITL, 2017.

Figure C. Aerial photography of Si Satchanalai Historical Park.
Source: Courtesy of the UNESCO, 2017.

Figure D. Location map of Si Satchanalai Historical Park.
Source: HANUMAN Academic Research Centre, KMITL, 2017.

Origin, Aim, and Scope of Inquiries

As already mentioned, the book was developed from a collection of research essays presented at three international academic conferences, which were later published in their respective proceedings.

- Centring on the interplays between intangible and tangible cultural heritages, through pluridimensional explorations of their intricate and intertwined interactions, the first was *the 2018 Architecture, Media, Politics, Society (AMPS) Conference on Tangible–Intangible Heritage(s): An Interplay of Design, Social, and Cultural Critiques of the Built Environment*, which was held at University of East London, London, UK, on June 13–15, 2018.¹¹
- Focusing on all aspects of pedagogical innovations in information science, technology, and education—especially analytical examinations on the practical challenges in tandem with proposed solutions to address those problematic encounters—the second was *the 3rd International Conference on Information and Education Innovations (ICIEI 2018)*, which also happened in London between June 30 and July 2, 2018.¹²
- Concentrating on multidisciplinary approaches for pedagogical innovations and practices—along with other related subjects in higher education—the third was *the 15th International Conference on Developing Real-life Learning Experience: Smart Education for Sustainable Development (DRLE 2017)*, which took place at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology, Ladkrabang (KMITL), in Bangkok, Thailand, on June 16, 2017.¹³

Taken together, not only did the scholarly content of the book demonstrate a concrete contribution to the global academic community by emerging Thai scholars, but also serve as an intellectual contact zone—where exchanges of knowledge, perceptions, ideas, worldviews, and beliefs took place.

Substantially benefited from suggestions, constructive comments, and critical questions—offered by the reviewers, proceedings volume editors, and audiences at the three conferences both in the UK and Thailand—which helped shape this book to its final form, the forthcoming chapters essentially function as a multidisciplinary dialogue to bridge a horizon of cultural understanding between Thai and foreign scholars in order to pursue a common wisdom for all humanity.

Organisation of the Book

Consisting of five chapters in total, the below descriptions elucidated the synopses on the scholarly content of the book.

- In **Chapter 1**, Chaturong Louhapensang and Surasak Kangkhao investigated the satisfactory levels of local organisations and community leaders in Si Satchanalai district with a proposed master plan to develop strategic models for creative tourism for communities around Si Satchanalai Historical Park. Evolving around the ways in which heritages—both tangible and intangible ones—had been perceived and used by the local inhabitants, their studies incorporated a case study on a pilot project—operating on the principles of co-ordination, co-operation, and collaboration—that resulted in the creations of many tourist information maps in the district.
- In **Chapter 2**, Chaturong Louhapensang and Surasak Kangkhao examined travel routes connecting Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai, and Kamphaeng Phet historical parks together. Via a mixed-methodological approach, the enquiries consisted of three stages. Relying on ethnographic experiences, the first phase concentrated on formulating imaginary itineraries that would lead to a construction of a journey pattern, incorporating major landmarks and key points of interest in communities around the historical parks. Next, the

second phase analysed the pathways frequented used by tourists, encompassing places of sociocultural importance that remained absent from typical guide books. Finally, the third phase presented a series of tourist maps—delineating travel links among the historic towns of Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet—which would also serve as an empirical ground for future investigations in conjunction with implementations of public policies and development projects in the areas.

- In **Chapter 3**, Koompong Noobanjong and Surasak Kangkhao first looked into how intangible heritage in Si Satchanalai acted as a definite force in promulgating a common identity among the populace via representations of space in built forms, as well as significations of traditional artefacts by social practices and customs of the native people. Second—informed by a Lefebvrian theoretical positions of space and spatiality—their inquiries disclosed how tangible heritage cultivated a sense of place and belonging in the collective psyche of the local residents by analysing the spatial-cum-temporal narratives that cognitively linked the place names in the district with archaeological ruins in Si Satchanalai Historical Park. Third, aside from illustrating a discursive nature in conveying meanings for cultural inheritance by means of spatial representations, their investigations testified that similar to space—which was neither already produced nor ready to be occupied—heritages were social constructs, existing in a state of perpetual evolutions. On that basis, their research concluded that both tangible and intangible cultural heritages were made and utilized before they were conceptualized, construed, and institutionalized as such.

- In **Chapter 4**, Chaturong Louhapensang and Surasak Kangkhao presented an exploratory research on an application software for tourism safety, experimented at the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Si Satchanalai. The pragmatic aims of this so-called Smart World Heritage Si Satchanalai Application (SWHSA) were to supply tourists with a customizable, diversified, and cost-

effective cybernetic means to conceive and organize their travel planning, which could be tailored to suit particular needs of the users according to their travel durations, types of leisure activities, and numbers of attractions preferred to see in a certain length of time. Their analytical and evaluative discussions further revealed that such criteria were, in fact, specified by the distance, in association with variety and distribution of places intended to visit per day by the users. In sum, their enquiries on SWHSA displayed its values in terms of an interactive model that could provide multifaceted information, which would not only help the inhabitants and state authority in the district monitor and respond instantaneously to evolving situations on tourism safety, but also allow travellers to customize their trip planning.

- Finally, in **Chapter 5**, Koompong Noobanjong and Supornchai Saengratwatchara introduced an educational inquiry into a three-week fieldwork in communities around Si Satchanalai Historical Park, which was jointly conducted by a combined team of faculty members and students from KMITL, and Ball State University (BSU), U.S.A., in early 2017. Being an integration of architectural scholarship and pedagogy, their investigations relied on the ethnographic experiences of the partakers—by means of active learning on the livelihood, along with artistic and architectural heritages, social and cultural practices of the local dwellers in the district—as a contextual basis for the analyses and interpretations. Informed by the theoretical premise of Cooperative and Collaborative (C&C) pedagogical model, the studies examined the 2017 KMITL-BSU workshops and field trips for their roles in advancing knowledge of the participants on the said subject matters, as well as in expanding a horizon of understanding between the two distinctive bodies of students; one operated on their own cultural root whereas the other did not. In a nutshell, the authors validated that not only did the KMITL-BSU fieldwork in Si Satchanalai exhibit a methodological applicability of the

C&C approach in architectural and design education, but also its scholarly values in cross-cultural learning.

Overall, owing to such expansive scope of investigations, intellectual profundity, and multidisciplinary complexity, it became evident that this anthological volume eloquently elucidated and rearticulated the dialectical dialogues among the past, present, and future of Si Satchanalai—from which myriad opportunities for more enquiries would arise—thus opening new windows for a wider perspective on this historical town together with its inhabitants, history, cultural legacies, built environment, geography, as well as evolving socio-economic conditions and foreseeable changes in time to come.

Editorial Note to Readers

As stated before, all the five chapters aimed to engage multiple readerships, ranging from architectural, artistic, historical, archaeological, social, and ethnographic researches, to studies on creative economy, sustainable development, cultural and agro-tourism, urban and regional planning, together with heritage conservation and management.

Although they shared a unified theme of investigations on Si Satchanalai Historical Park, both the objects and subjects of their studies were diverse—of which the scope, profundity, and complexity—could cause numerous difficulties for readers, especially those who were not acclimatised with those areas to thoroughly penetrate them at one time.

Perhaps, the only way to gain insight into the questions raised was to cross the scholarly boundaries among academic disciplines embedded in the analytical and critical enquiries that constituted this anthological volume. As a consequence, readers should make up their own minds about whether and how to approach those chapters.



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