

Research Summary

The research 'Interpretation of the Second World War shared-heritage at Nakhonnayok' deals with the interpretation of heritage sites of the Imperial Japanese Army 37th Division in Nakhonnayok Province of Thailand. The Japanese army came to this area and set up a camp at Kao Cha-ngok in 1944. After WWII ended, these military sites have been transformed to the Royal Thai Army Academy. Such memorial place of WWII could be considered as shared-heritage which both old and new generations can learn from the past. It is necessary to understand what the shared-heritage tells us and how we can live peacefully in the multicultural society, rather than seeing the heritage as a reminder of the pain. Therefore, the aim of this study is to find out a different perspective of interpreting WWII heritage site. Three objectives are: 1) to identify the heritage value based on the voice of the local residents, 2) to observe the interpretation of the site, and 3) to give a recommendation for an interpretation of the WWII shared-heritage. The result of this research will be useful for heritage professionals in managing heritage sites and communicating with visitors. In terms of methodology, the research comprises two major steps. The first step is the identification of heritage value and what should be presented to visitors based on historical research and the voice of the local residents. The second step is the observation of the current interpretation at the site. The research employs qualitative data collection including interview of the senior local residents and researchers at Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy and the observation of the interpretation of the site. Moreover, as the interpretation of the case of WWII heritage site at Nakhonnayok Province is still at early stage, the two more famous WWII sites in Thailand – Pai-Khunyuan Road in Maehongson Province and the Death Railway at Kanchanaburi Province – were also investigated. The findings of the research shows that conventional interpretation of the WWII sites in Thailand predominantly focuses on two approaches with a little involvement of the local residents. One emphasizes cruelty, loss, torture, or inhumanity with strong influence of the Australian approach. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, such interpretation could point out the culprit and gives audiences enmity against the loser of the war. Another politically underscores a strong connection between Thailand and Japan by presenting romanticized stories of wartime. Interpretation of a shared-heritage site could bring the site to life when it is a place-based process paying attention to the opinion of the local residents. The case of Kao Cha-ngok would give audiences a different perspective towards WWII, as the local residents want to present the stories of their lives at the wartime and good relationship with the Japanese soldiers. In this regard, the way they see the Japanese soldiers is different from the conventional interpretation seen in other WWII sites focusing on cruelty and inhumane.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

The result of the research has been submitted to the *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development* (JCHMSD) published by the Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

<<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/products/journals/journals.htm?id=jchmsd>>

The paper is now under the peer review process.

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)