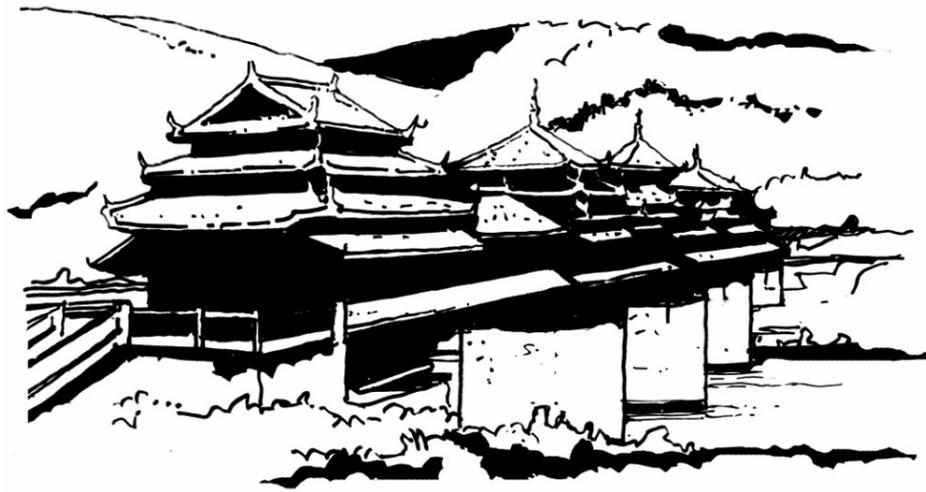


Communication and Exploration



Foreword

Human communities have always been fascinated by the past, using the information gained from elders, the landscape, ancient sites and objects to plan for the future. More or less consciously, innovation is often based on the knowledge we have inherited from earlier generations. Such knowledge is not only a variety of technical skills and traditional savoir-faire, but also a range of behaviours: uses and reciprocities, covenants and unwritten rules, mutual exchanges and informal relationships that can be defined as “social capital”. These assets may be regarded as trivial, and may even be disregarded when things work well, but can be an important resource in a crisis.

The central role which heritage can play in order to enhance and preserve this particular kind of wealth is increasingly recognised. Today's public policies value heritage and culture, they are no longer simply regarded as resources used only for entertainment.

Ecomuseum policies and practices, which embody both cultural and local development initiatives, are a prominent example of this new trend. Some thirty years after the first ecomuseum projects were initiated, they now operate in every corner of the world. Some indication of the strength of the ecomuseum movement was demonstrated at the Communication and Exploration Conference held in Guizhou, China. More than a hundred scholars and practitioners from fifteen countries on the five continents met in 2005 to talk together and share ideas and experiences. The themes discussed indicated the very real challenges facing contemporary society, and highlighted the connections between history, memory and innovation.

One of these challenges relates to our ability to provide for the development and welfare of communities while encouraging sustainable solutions to natural and cultural heritage preservation. To cherish the inheritance of the past means also to respect the inhabitants and the individuals of the present. Respectful and sustainable development cannot rely upon simple or unfailling formulas, yet in the difficult arenas of local development - in Europe and in China - this is one of the most deep-rooted concerns of academic scholars and people working in the field. The concept that knowledge is a strategic resource is also deep-rooted yet in a contemporary context, knowledge cannot be grounded in technical skills alone. This implies that it is important for all actors to be part of a large and interactive network. This will help to establish relationships, to encourage field initiatives, exchange experiences and evidence of successful projects. A network is also able to provide fertile soil for the everyday communication of scholars, local leaders and activists, and politicians. When mutual learning leans on

such a framework it can spread a positive and powerful influence.

Achieving development and heritage conservation is a demanding challenge. The experiences of the participants in the Communication and Exploration suggest that solutions can be found.

*Margherita Cogo
Deputy Chairman and Head of the Culture Department
Autonomous Provincial Authority of Trento, Italy*



The Provincia di Trento is an autonomous local authority according to Italian Constitutional Law. As a consequence it deals with all subjects not expressly included in the central state competencies. In 2000 it passed a law titled "Creation of ecomuseums for the exploitation of local tradition and culture" and actively promoted the establishment of ecomuseums in the area. According to this law, Trento Province coordinates the activities of recognised ecomuseums, provides information and advertising campaigns, publishing facilities, and technical support to newly-proposed projects, and ensures that ecomuseum staff are professionally trained. In 2004 it was among the promoters of the European network of ecomuseums.



IRES is the research institute of the regional government of Piedmont (Italy). It provides guidance and input to regional policies and suggests ways to make those policies more effective in the long term. To do this it carries out surveys according to the needs of the regional communities; it promotes long-lasting relationships with the regional governments and other key stakeholders and interest groups to ensure the delivery of regional policies. IRES applies a cooperative and interdisciplinary work approach within the scientific community and its methodology is based on continuous collaboration with the bodies working in the region and more widely in Europe, including local governments, parks, museums and university departments.



The International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies (ICCHS) at the University of Newcastle is a well established and renowned organisation whose primary roles are: to produce, stimulate and supervise cutting edge research (applied and pure) relating to the history, philosophy and practices operating in the cultural and heritage sectors; to provide postgraduate vocational training for those who wish to work in the cultural and heritage sector, including museums, galleries, the historic and natural environment and the conservation and interpretation of intangible heritage; to provide consultancy expertise and professional advice.



The Chinese Society of Museums is the largest non-governmental organisation of museums and museum professionals in China. Its main tasks are to encourage and carry out museological research and to facilitate international academic and professional exchange. It seeks to improve the professional and academic standards of museums and their workers by promoting the activities of domestic museums and enabling the exchange of ideas between museum professionals in China. It does this through its conference programme, its edited proceedings and the publication of its journal, Chinese Museum, and other monographs.

The Liuzhi Principles

The people of the villages are the true owners of their culture.

They have the right to interpret and validate it themselves.

The meaning of culture and its values can be defined only by human perception and interpretation based on knowledge. Cultural competence must be enhanced.

Public participation is essential to the ecomuseums. Culture is a common and democratic asset, and must be democratically managed.

When there is a conflict between tourism and preservation of culture the latter must be given priority. The genuine heritage should not be sold out, but production of quality souvenirs based on traditional crafts should be encouraged.

Long term and holistic planning is of utmost importance. Short time economic profits that destroy culture in the long term must be avoided.

Cultural heritage protection must be integrated in the total environmental approach. Traditional techniques and materials are essential in this respect.

Visitors have a moral obligation to behave respectfully. They must be given a code of conduct.

There is no bible for ecomuseums. They will all be different according to the specific culture and situation of the society they present.

Social development is a prerequisite for establishing ecomuseums in living societies. The well-being of the inhabitants must be enhanced in ways that do not compromise traditional values.

*The international editorial board included:
Su Donghai, Zhang Jinping, Peter Davis,
Hugues de Varine and Maurizio Maggi.*

*Special thanks are due to Peter Davis (Professor of Museology, ICCHS,
University of Newcastle) who patiently revised the English translations
of the texts.*

Preface

'Communication and Exploration' was one of the most fascinating meetings promoting new museology held in recent years. The Guiyang seminar and the study trips to ecomuseums in Guizhou (Suojia, Zhen-shan and Tang'an), Inner Mongolia (Olunsum) and Guangxi (Huaili), was a schedule that demanded deep and passionate involvement from the participants. It was an opportunity not only for more than one hundred museum professionals and local leaders (coming from 15 countries and five continents) to meet, but also to create a connection between two worlds, East and West, and their cultures. The 'Wind and Rain' bridge of Sanjiang on the first pages of this book reflects that connection and a need for continuing and intense dialogue in the future.

Both common elements and different and inspiring approaches emerged from the meeting. Among the former is the idea that community wellbeing is the first aim of any local cultural project, a point that is effectively enshrined in the Liuzhi principles.

An interesting and stimulating feature - and one that is unique to Chinese museology - is the awareness that when facing the deep and worldwide changes affecting humankind, the future must be anticipated, not suffered. This was shown to be possible when an effective and balanced alliance appeared between the scientific community, local leaders, experts and local people. Communities which are aware of the value of their places and active in its preservation are a crucial element for successful ecomuseums. The recognition of the need for this approach proved to be the principal recommendation of the final forum of the conference.

*Maurizio Maggi
IRES, Institute for Social and Economic Research*

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Chinese ecomuseums: the path of development

Su Donghai¹

The first museum in China was built in 1905, many years after the concept of museums was introduced from the West at the beginning of the 20th century. In the 1980s theories of a new kind of museum - the ecomuseum - spread to China and led to the birth of the country's first ecomuseum in 1995.

Why did the international ecomuseum movement attract so much attention in China in the 1980s, at the climax of the country's museum building and expansion? First, China started to pay a large price for its rapid industrialization and economic development as its natural environment became polluted. Its ecological balance was broken, and the situation was worsening in the same way that it had happened in many other industrialized countries. The restoration of the ecosystem and the protection of the environment emerged as a focus of society at the same time as the international ecomuseum movement loomed into the sight of Chinese museum professionals. Second, more than 1000 museums had been built around China by that time and museum professionals, who were exploring to expand the scope of cultural heritage protection, found the international ecomuseum movement a suitable counterbalance to traditional museums.

The journal of the Chinese Society of Museums, *Chinese Museum*, has (since the 1980s) published Chinese scholar' papers on the relations between museums and the ecological and environmental sciences, and introduced the international ecomuseum movement. The latter included Chinese versions of important papers by Georges Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine, and other papers, announcements and reports of ecomuseum conventions.

In 1995 China's first ecomuseum project was launched by a Sino-Norwegian team consisting of Su Donghai , (standing member of the executive council of the Chinese Society of Museums), An Laishun, (associate researcher with the society), Hu Chaoxiang , (head of the cultural heritage protection office of the provincial government of Southwest China's Guizhou Province), and Norwegian museologist John Aage Gjestrum. The team won support from the Chinese government, which expressed a strong wish to strengthen the protection of the country's cultural heritage. The Norwegian government had always

¹ honorary member of the executive council of Chinese Society of Museums and manager of the Guizhou Ecomuseums Project.

given attention to issues of environmental and cultural heritage protection, publishing a “Feasibility Studies Report of the Establishment of China’s First Ecomuseum in Soga County of Guizhou”. The project, inscribed on the list of “1995-1996 Sino- Norwegian Cultural Exchange Programs”, was co-signed in the presence of Norwegian King Harald V and Chinese President Jiang Zemin in October 1997 in Beijing during the king’s visit to China. The strong governmental support for the establishment of the first-ecomuseum in Guizhou, China prompted the building of a series of ecomuseums in the province.

China’s first ecomuseum lies in the remote mountains in Liuzhi Prefecture, Liupanshui Municipality of Guizhou Province. Within its area live members of a small branch of the Miao Ethnic Group, who have adhered to their traditional culture and to the natural economy. There are a number of such compact and poverty-stricken communities which have been cut off from mainstream civilization. They have retained various types of traditional cultures and thus contributed to the diversity of Chinese civilization. To date seven ecomuseums have been established in China to preserve the living traditions of respectively the Miao, Bouyei, Dong, Yao, Mongolian and Han ethnic groups. Traditional cultures are retained at the seven ecomuseums only because the social environment for the survival of the traditions has been maintained. These extraordinary cultures could become extinct if their peoples are assimilated into mainstream civilization. Therefore it is an urgent task in China to help residents of the ecomuseums to have the essence of their traditions and cultures preserved and recorded. To do this, museologist Gjestrum and Chinese scholars trained young residents of the ecomuseums to use sound and video recorders in the “Memory Project”, in which they wrote down their oral history, interviewed the old and recorded the life at the ecomuseums. The documented “memories” are preserved and displayed at the information centres built at the ecomuseums. The residents’ passion for recording their living history has enabled visitors to appreciate their traditions, and the villagers’ confidence for their local culture has also grown.

Based on the experience gained during the establishment of the country’s first ecomuseum, the project’s consultant Dag Myklebust and the researchers together formulated “The Liuzhi Principles” for the development of ecomuseums in China. These are:

1. The people of the villages are the true owners of their culture. They have the right to interpret and validate it themselves.
2. The meaning of culture and its values can be defined only by human perception and interpretation based on knowledge. Cultural competence must be enhanced.

3. Public participation is essential to the ecomuseums. Culture is a common and democratic asset, and must be democratically managed .
4. When there is a conflict between tourism and preservation of culture the latter must be given priority. The genuine heritage should not be sold out, but production of quality souvenirs based on traditional crafts should be encouraged.
5. Long term and holistic planning is of utmost importance. Short time economic profits that destroy culture in the long term must be avoided.
6. Cultural heritage protection must be integrated in a total environmental approach. Traditional techniques and materials are essential in this respect.
7. Visitors have a moral obligation to behave respectfully. They must be given a code of conduct .
8. There is no bible for ecomuseums. They will all be different according to the specific culture and situation of the society they present.
9. Social development is a prerequisite for establishing ecomuseums in living societies. The well being of the inhabitants must be enhanced in a way that does not compromise the traditional values.

The nine principles have been outlined in an effort to enhance the “in-situ” preservation of local cultures and to respect the villagers’ ownership of their cultures. However, our practices demonstrate that as it is difficult to build an ecomuseum to our ideals, it is even more difficult to maintain and to improve it. The idea of an ecomuseum, a fruit of post-industrial society, cannot be bred on its own at a primitive village in China. Ecomuseums appeared in China thanks for the government’s resolution to maintain the cultural diversity and the experts’ thoughts and passions. In fact, a resident of an ancient village has to make efforts to understand the building of an ecomuseum, and to go even a longer way to voluntarily help to solidify the ecomuseum. The ecomuseums are maintained as they are improved, and they can only be maintained when improved. The trial and error at the first generation of ecomuseums in China has led to the birth of the second-generation of ecomuseums in the country that are more professional in preserving traditions and in displaying and sustaining local cultures.

The ecomuseum is in essence a museum which is more than an institute of cultural heritage preservation. It doesn’t fit its name if it’s only an area of cultural autonomy. The four ecomuseums in Guizhou have well preserved communities and “Memory Projects” successfully launched, but the two ecomuseums in Southwest China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region have gone much further in making the communities “museum-like”. The two have set examples for the second genera-

tion of ecomuseums in the country, as they have demonstrated a maturity in researching, displaying and sustaining local cultures, building on the knowledge gained by the four pioneering ecomuseums in Guizhou. Researchers of the Guangxi Ethnography Museum have been involved in the building of the two ecomuseums. They not only helped the villagers realize the historical and artistic values and socio-anthropological importance of their cultures, but also taught them how to preserve their traditions and in this way turned the villagers into “part-time researchers”. Such a close collaboration of villagers and researchers has to be built if the ecomuseums are to be maintained and improved. The two second-generation ecomuseums in Guangxi have given an emphasis to displaying and sustaining local cultures among other functions of an ecomuseum. They have another name for the information centre of an ecomuseum - it is called the “exhibition centre”. The unique culture of a village has to be exhibited to the outside world so as to contribute to the diversity of the cultural scene. The appreciation of visitors can fill villagers with pride in their traditions and thus encourage them to better preserve their ethnic cultures. Displays at “exhibition centres” of the two ecomuseums are designed in a professional way. The intangible cultural heritages displayed and preserved are inevitably disadvantaged before the mainstream cultures, but they can be retained and revived as long as their owners understand their values, cherish them and display them not for short-term profits but out of pride. With understanding and pride, the villagers will hand down their cultures and traditions, of which they are the true owners, voluntarily and enthusiastically. It is also important for residents of ecomuseums to welcome visitors, whose arrivals will give ecomuseums vitality and enhance their developments. At the Olunsum Mongolian’ Ecomuseum in North China’s Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region a van shuttles between the airport and the patch of grassland which is the area of the ecomuseum, and visitors can read documents of the ecomuseum during their ride in the van. The van is itself a hospitable gesture to visitors. The second generation of ecomuseums in China have learned much from the first generation of ecomuseums in Guizhou, as they are progressing towards a higher level of preserving and displaying their cultures.

The first generation of ecomuseums in China - the first Chinese museums without walls - promoted the “in situ” preservation of cultural heritages and thus remedied defects of traditional museums. Heritage is kept alive in ways that involve local communities and encourage their democratic participation in the building and management of ecomuseums. The second generation of ecomuseums in China is not limited by the concept of museums in communities - they are more professional at preserving and displaying heritages, and are continually making improvements so as to be sustainable.

The establishment and sustainable development of ecomuseums in China

Su Donghai²

At the beginning of the speech I would like to express my gratitude to the Norwegian Government, which has provided academic, financial and professional help to establish ecomuseums in China for eight years. We are especially grateful to the two Norwegian consultants, who have been especially important in our project, namely the late Mr John Aage Gjestrum, who helped us find the means and approaches to build ecomuseums in China, and Mr Dag Myklebust, who has supported us along the way. Their names will be remembered forever in the history of ecomuseums in China. I also want to say “thank you” to all those involved at the symposium. Thank you for coming to western China and communicating your ideas about the worldwide ecomuseum movement. We are especially honoured to welcome Mr Hugues de Varine, the movement’s pioneer.

I would like to discuss with all of you here at the conference the following questions about ecomuseums: What are the necessary conditions to establish and sustain ecomuseums in China’s rural areas, which are almost half a world away from where they were first born?

Even as China moves towards becoming a major industrial and world power, we have to recognize that the country still has many isolated, poverty-stricken ethnic minority communities. Having almost been cut off from the modern civilization, such communities have retained their varied cultures and traditions. They have been the focus of our efforts to preserve cultural diversity in the past decades. Since the 1980s China’s museum professionals have been exploring both the means and feasibility to enable the establishment of ecomuseums in such communities. The Chinese government supported their efforts to find a new way to preserve cultural heritages. China’s first ecomuseum project was launched with the efforts of researchers with the Chinese Society of Museums, and later with their Norwegian colleagues, in Southwest China’s Guizhou Province. Their influence has since expanded to other parts, and ecomuseums have also been established in Southwest China and also Northern China.

I have observed the cultural phenomena that have appeared during the implementation of the ecomuseum concept in these ancient ethnic

² Professor of National Museum of China, Project Leader of Ecomuseums in Guizhou Province, China

cultures. Among the three forces driving the ecomuseum project, namely the government, the scholars and the community residents, the scholars are leading it because they are the only ones who know what an ecomuseum is. The local authorities are supporting and executing the project because it would be impossible to deliver such a complex project in China without their coordination. The community residents dominated the projects from the beginning. Here is a unique cultural phenomenon that I call “cultural consignment.” The exterior forces have become “agents” of the community’s culture, they have somehow ‘acquired’ it and assume responsibility for it. Meanwhile the residents are perceived as no longer being owners of their culture, but are merely treated as “honoured” ones, that is they are treated with respect.

In China, it is not that difficult to found an ecomuseum but it is very hard to sustain it. The government and academics can be major forces in establishing an ecomuseum, but the community residents are the only ones who can sustain it, and they are able to do so only when they have upgraded from “honourable” status to being the actual owners of their culture. It is possible that such a phenomenon has never appeared in other countries, but it seems almost inevitable in China that an ecomuseum has to go through a stage of “cultural consignment.” Only when it has upgraded from a stage of “cultural consignment” to a position of “cultural autonomy,” when community villages have become actual owners of their cultures, can an ecomuseum be said to be properly founded.

For an ecomuseum to upgrade from a phase of “cultural consignment” to that of “cultural autonomy,” the community residents must play a key role. The residents have three stages to go through to fully accept an ecomuseum: the interest-driven stage, the emotion-driven stage and the knowledge-driven stage. They have natural yearnings for economic benefits from the ecomuseum project and also affections for their culture. For them to achieve the knowledge-driven stage they have to acquire a better understanding of the value of their culture. Only when they fully realize the historical, artistic and academic values of their own cultures, can they cherish their cultures and traditions in the face of mainstream civilization, and begin to focus on the long-term benefits. In China it is necessary to give the ecomuseum’s residents a briefing on related concepts, but it is urgent to help them achieve a better understanding of their culture. Guangxi Province is making an experiment in this respect, as the Guangxi Ethnographical Museum has built a cooperative relation with ecomuseums founded there. Researchers with the ethnographical museum make studies at the ecomuseums and their achievements are benefiting ecomuseum residents. We expect more creative methods to be put into practice in the future development of ecomuseums in China.

The Guizhou ecomuseum project from a Norwegian point of view

Dag Myklebust³

International conferences are a reflection of the globalised world – with people able to communicate in ways that were unthinkable only a few decades ago. They can be good in content, which are what we hope for with this conference, but even if a conference is not necessarily good in its substance, it is always a meeting place where people can see colleagues from other countries with similar interests, and establish relations that can be developed into concrete and productive projects.

The ecomuseum project here in Guizhou must be perceived in this perspective. The Norwegian museologist John Aage Gjestrum, a man with a special interest in the ecomuseum approach in the preservation of the cultural heritage in its broadest sense, met Chinese colleagues in conferences in the middle of 1990s. Especially important was the annual conference of the museology committee of ICOM in Beijing September 1994.

Out of Mr. Gjestrum's relations with professor Su Donghai and Mr. An Laishun, both distinguished representatives of The Chinese Society of Museums (CSM), sprang the project which we now in this conference both shall celebrate but also evaluate.

It is absolutely necessary to say some words about Mr. Gjestrum on this occasion. He was a great personality and a very visible person in the Norwegian museum world. He deliberately took the position as a rebel, and was a controversial person in his professional environment. His qualities, however, were shown in the way he established the Toten Ecomuseum in his home municipality. It still is, I believe, an outstanding example of the ecomuseum ideology, of which far greater experts than me will speak later today. Mr. Gjestrum managed to get the Norwegian Development Cooperation Agency, abbreviated NORAD, interested in financing a feasibility study on establishing ecomuseums in China.

It is a pleasure for me now to see from the archives that I wrote a positive letter of support for this project in my capacity as a bureaucrat in the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage, the governmental agency responsible for cultural heritage management in my country. I must confess, however, that I did not remember this when I had my first en-

³ Senior Adviser, The Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage, Norway

counter with the concrete results of the project in March 1999. At this time, with only two days notice due to the illness of my Director General, I became a member of the delegation of the Norwegian Minister of Environment on her official visit to China. This included a visit also to this wonderful province of Guizhou, where among other environmental projects, the establishment of ecomuseums was a central topic for the minister's visit. As excellent support on this for me surprise trip, I had my colleague, Ms. Reidun Veia, who is also present at this conference.

What had happened in the time between the first application to NORAD for funding and the ministerial visit to Guizhou? A project team, including Mr. Gjestrum, was set up by the CSM and, under the leadership of professor Su Donghai, made an expedition to Guizhou in April 1995 to investigate a number of villages to select four, suitable for being included in the project.

They selected the following four villages: Soga with Quing Miao people, Zhenshan with Buyi, Tang'an with Dong, as well as Longli with a Han population in a minority situation. To my mind this was an excellent selection, since these four places represent not only different people, but also different situations and different challenges.

The program obtained formal approval from NORAD in 1995, and work could start. The decision was to start working in Soga, which actually is a group of several villages, with the village of Long'ga as the centre. In 1999 Mr. An and Mr. Gjestrum published an article in the Nordic Magazine for Museology about this first phase of the project. Here they state:

“The main theoretical starting point of the ecomuseum is that people should not be separated from their cultural heritage but that they should have the opportunity to create their future based on it.”

This is the ideological platform this project must be evaluated against. On 31 October 1998 Soga ecomuseum with its documentation centre was opened, and the first ecomuseum in China was a reality.

This was what Ms. Veia and I met in March 1999. Even if we were overwhelmed with visiting Zhenshan and Soga as folkloristic experiences, and of the hospitality we met, as well as being impressed by the documentation centre, we made a lot of observations and reflections on both the positive possibilities and probable dangers this new situation meant for the local community. For instance, what happens with a community which after two centuries of relative isolation is suddenly opened to the outside world, both in terms of communication and of cultural influence from a society with an extremely higher level of social and technological development? This is a key issue to answer in

studying the impact of the ecomuseum on the Quing Miao people.

When Ms. Vea and I visited these two villages and listened to what different people said, we noticed a gap in the principal understanding of the concept of ecomuseums between the different administrative levels on the Chinese side. We felt that the representatives at national and provincial levels had a good grasp of the ideals of the project. We also felt that (thanks to the excellent work done by the project group on the ground level), the concept was rooted in the villages, at least among the key players. However, at the intermediate administrative levels, we felt that the ecomuseum concept was regarded only as a tourism development issue.

We thought that it would be a good idea to address this issue in a seminar where all the players on the Chinese side would be on foreign ground to see the situation from another perspective. We thought a seminar in Norway could be suitable for establishing a common understanding of what the ideology and goals of the project were. Then all levels would be on common ground, bound together by sharing the travelling experience.

After hard work Ms. Vea succeeded in making NORAD accept and fund this proposal, and the seminar in Oslo was scheduled for September 2000. Participants were selected, and Guizhou province wanted to send an official delegation to take part in the beginning of the seminar, under the leadership of Vice governor of the province, Ms. Long Chaoyun, who was a great supporter of the project in the provincial administration.

To our surprise and great delight the Chinese participants wanted to have a preparatory seminar in Guizhou before the mission to Norway took place. Mr. Gjestrum and I were invited to give lectures at this occasion. The venue of the seminar was the town Liuzhi. There we met the participants from the four villages to the Oslo seminar, as well as the key persons from CSM, local administrations on the different levels and the provincial administration of Guizhou. It was a very successful seminar, establishing a common understanding of the values and principles that must guide the work of the four ecomuseums. The principles were refined and supplemented in the seminar in Oslo. The quality of the discussions, where not only representatives of the four chosen villages took part, but also people from other villages, and of course people working on the different administrative levels and professor Su and Mr. An from CMS. The seminar visited Soga and Zhenshan, and was followed by a visit for us Norwegians also to Longli and Tang'an. This was another great adventure for me, and consolidated my deep love for Guizhou province. I allow myself to be this personal, because this pro-

ject can not be reduced to an intellectual or theoretical exercise, but it is about the life of people that become your friends and whom you care about. All of the people who have been involved, Norwegians and Chinese alike, have felt this way.

The museological part of the seminar in Norway was organised by Mr. Gjestrum, who took the participants on a study tour showing them examples of museum management. In the final summing up session the young participants from the villages made a deep impression on us Norwegians by their critical reflections on what they had seen and what could and could not be used in their local setting. The seminar was also visited by the Norwegian Foreign Minister of that time, Mr. Torbjørn Jagland, who had previously made a private visit to Soga.

The outcome of this was what we have called *The Liuzhi Principles* after the town where we started this work. These principles were agreed upon from both sides and by participants from all levels. For us on the Norwegian side of this co-operation this ideology is the very core of the whole project, and we believe that these principles must be read and understood by everyone who has anything to do with these four ecomuseums in particular. But we believe the principles are applicable to most ecomuseums, especially if they are focused on minority culture.

The Liuzhi Principles are the following:

- The people of the villages are the true owners of their culture.
- They have the right to interpret and validate it themselves.
- The meaning of culture and its values can be defined only by human perception and interpretation based on knowledge. Cultural competence must be enhanced.
- Public participation is essential to the ecomuseums. Culture is a common and democratic asset, and must be democratically managed.
- When there is a conflict between tourism and preservation of culture the latter must be given priority. The genuine heritage should not be sold out, but production of quality souvenirs based on traditional crafts should be encouraged.
- Long term and holistic planning is of utmost importance. Short time economic profits that destroy culture in the long term must be avoided.
- Cultural heritage protection must be integrated in the total environmental approach. Traditional techniques and materials are essential in this respect.
- Visitors have a moral obligation to behave respectfully. They must be given a code of conduct.

- There is no bible for ecomuseums. They will all be different according to the specific culture and situation of the society they present.
- Social development is a prerequisite for establishing ecomuseums in living societies. The well-being of the inhabitants must be enhanced in ways that do not compromise traditional values.

I offer these principles to the conference as a tool both to understand and to manage the development and not least maintenance of ecomuseums. We must always remember that it is not enough to establish something. Without sound management and maintenance of that initially invested of economical and human resources it will deteriorate and finally cease to exist.

In April 2001 Mr. Gjestrum met a far too early death. This was a great loss to everybody connected with this project. In all four villages they have planted memorial trees for him, and some stone memorials are also erected. My travel with him and his wife in the year 2000 made me see for myself his great ability to make contact with the villagers even without having any common spoken language. But for him body language and gestures were enough to make great friends. And already during the ministerial visit in March 1999 we heard a lot of people speaking about "The Gjestrum spirit".

Since I had at this time established a good knowledge of the project and of the people involved, I was asked by CSM to replace Mr. Gjestrum as a scientific adviser. My speciality is not in museology but in cultural heritage protection. But in this phase of the project restoring buildings was an important part. During two missions in September 2002 and February 2004 I made my observations and had discussions with the people involved. Before I offer some reflections attached to each of the four villages, I will make some general remarks.

Concerning funding, only a small part of the budget has been allocated from NORAD in relation to the input from the Chinese side. A contribution has been made from The Chinese State Authority for Cultural Heritage, but by far the greatest part of the cost has been carried by the Guizhou Provincial Administration. They have in some cases put additional money to what was their original agreed part of the budget. But another important element is that provincial investment in infrastructure in several sectors has been directed towards a number of minority villages, among them, of course, "our" four. This is connected for instance to roadbuilding, electric power supply and new housing.

Many people on several levels have contributed to the realisation of this project. One man must be mentioned, however. Mr. Hu Chaoxiang from

the Cultural Heritage Division in the Guizhou Provincial Administration has been the motor in getting things done on the ground. His dedication has been essential in the project's realisation.

In conclusion I have some comments on the four different places.

Soga. Soga is clearly the most difficult place among the four. The low standard of living makes the danger of people selling out their original heritage very high. Especially due to the spectacular festival hairstyle of the women the Quing Miao people are known to the outside world, and package tourist tours go there.

Soga consequently attracts a relatively high number of visitors, both foreign and domestic, compared with its size. And there it is difficult to find a balance between this as a living community and a tourist site. Another challenge is of course to secure that a sufficient part of the revenue generated by tourism actually remains in the local community. For the ecomuseum project it has been a clear ambition that hand in hand with the documentation of the culture by tape recorded interviews and so on, it had to contain social development. Improving the water supply has for instance been an integral part of the working plan.

Ten of the most important buildings have been restored in a way that we find professionally acceptable, with concessions to factors such as lack of sufficient natural resources - for instance to maintain the thatched roofs in traditional style. An interesting observation I made during the mission when the restored houses were inspected for the first time, was that the owner of one of these houses expressed his "great gratitude for his new house". What I saw was a restoration of an old house. Fortunately in this case there is no conflict between these two different perceptions. But it is a reminder that people look differently at things from different points of departure. We have again to bear in mind that it is the world seen from the villagers' point of view that must be the platform for building an ecomuseum.

Zhenshan . The documentation centre here opened in July 2002. It is a rather large building in modern style architecture based on traditional elements from the local building tradition. It is splendidly situated, a little outside the village, with a wonderful view of the Flower Lake. The building contains exhibition areas as well as offices and rooms for the accommodation of scholars carrying out research. It presents itself to the visitor not only as a documentation centre, but also as a more general centre for the Buyi culture. It was also built with supplementary funding from the Guizhou Province out over the sum allocated in the Project Budget. The exhibitions are of high quality, giving a good pres-

entation of the Buyi culture.

A major challenge is the fact that the centre is situated outside the village. This means that special attention must be given to the integration of the centre with the inhabitants of the village. It is important to maintain a feeling among the people that the documentation centre is something that relates to their daily life, and that it is not seen as something that is primarily an attraction for visitors from outside. The fact that Zhenshan is situated so near to the provincial capital Guiyang will naturally lead to a flow of visitors from outside, which is basically a positive element, but will represent a threat to the fundamental ecomuseum idea, if the integration of the villagers is not secured.

Longli . This place is in reality a small, original fortified town where the Han people live as a minority amongst other people. The documentation centre opened last year, and is a large building built as a traditional town house in analogy with the surrounding houses. It is important here to avoid turning this into a traditional town or city museum, but to keep the ecomuseum perspective of having the documentations centre as a tool to keep traditional culture alive. The greatest challenges here, however, are the consequences the re-establishment of the fortifications has for the urban development. New housing will be needed in a place where land for new buildings is difficult to find, unless you build in the rice fields. Today the town is beautifully set in the landscape, as a ship or an island in an “ocean of rice”. This effect will to a great degree be destroyed if the existing plans are realised.

Tang’an. This extremely beautifully located village of the Dong people is quite spectacular. Here the discussion of finding the right location for the documentation centre has been important. For me as an adviser it has been clear that the centre should not be something that was experienced as “above” or “outside” the village. The documentation centres are of great symbolic value, and the integration of all the centres in the daily life of the villagers is a continuous issue that has to be addressed. The Dong people have a strong and wonderful music tradition, which you will experience later in this conference. It has been of great value for instance for the elderly women when the young women doing the documentation work showed interest in the song tradition they were carrying. This has given them added meaning in their lives.

It was also a beautiful thing that when the elderly villagers were asked with what shall the restoration work begin, they asked for the reconstruction of the traditional “wind and rain bridge” that had been destroyed by a flood. This is the traditional gathering place for the young people of the Dong villagers, where they flirt with each other and eventually find a partner. The elderly had the perspective of the future in their

choice.

Future challenges

A lot has been achieved, and I reiterate that I am impressed by the dedication of the people involved. But now, at the end of the Norwegian-Chinese co-operation project, I would point out some of the challenges. I have already touched upon the importance of the integration of the documentation centres with the daily life of the people to whom they belong. If this perspective is lost, then the ecomuseum idea is lost.

A second point is the need for securing regular maintenance of buildings and exhibitions, their surroundings and the infrastructure. The museums must be integrated in the regular museum structure of the province.

A third perspective is that as many as possible of the persons holding the positions attached to the ecomuseums should be recruited from the four minorities. It is how their cultures are perceived and interpreted by them themselves that is the platform for both preservation and development.

Fourthly a code of conduct for people visiting these four places, and for other minority villages for that matter, must be elaborated and disseminated in a form that reach the visitors before they enter.

The fifth point is that The Liuzhi principles must be actively used. These stem from a common understanding and represent the core ideology of the ecomuseum project.

Finally I must express my Directorate's, Mrs. Vea's and my great and deep gratitude for having been allowed to be involved with this project. It has been professionally extremely stimulating, but it has also meant meeting great personalities and deep personal friendships. These are experiences both of the mind and the heart that I will carry with me the rest of my life.

Ecomuseums in Guizhou: practices and explorations

*Hu Chaoxiang*⁴

Chinese and Norwegian museologists made their first ecomuseums feasibility study in Guizhou in 1995. The origins and development of the project are described here.

Guizhou was the first place in China to introduce an ecomuseum project.

Since 1986 the journal of the Chinese Society of Museums, *Chinese Museums*, edited by Prof. Su Donghai, has described the emergence of ecomuseums throughout the world. In November 1986 at a symposium of cultural heritage protection in Guizhou Prof. Su suggested that ecomuseums be built to preserve the rich cultural diversity in Southwest China province, in Guizhou.

In January 1995 I consulted Prof. Su in Beijing immediately after a visit to Hawaii about creating a new type of museum in Guizhou. Su suggested building China's first ecomuseum and he invited renowned Norwegian museologist, the late Mr John Aage Gjestrum, to be the project's consultant. In April 1995 Su led a team of Chinese and Norwegian museologists in a feasibility study in the province, and the team decided to establish China's first ecomuseum in Soga County of Liuzhi Prefecture, Guizhou. It took pioneering museum professionals nine years (from 1986 to 1995) to turn the ecomuseum from a concept into practice, and I am honoured that this first exploration was made in my province.

Principles were outlined to promote the establishment of ecomuseums in Guizhou.

The first principle is that the concept of ecomuseums has to be "localized". Prof. Su emphasized the importance of locality in the feasibility study in 1995. He noted that ecomuseums in China must have Chinese characteristics and the Norwegian ways of developing ecomuseums built need not necessarily be copied directly.

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While building China's first ecomuseum in Soga, we on the one hand refrained from imitating the Norwegian practices indiscriminately, and on the other hand looked out for the possibility of making it too "localized". We wanted it to be a real ecomuseum that conformed to theories and principles of the international ecomuseum movement. Ecomuseums in Guizhou needed to be accepted by the world's museum professionals and to be in keeping with the situations in China, as well as in the province. They must be "ecomuseums with Chinese characteristics".

The second principle is that the government has to guide, experts to direct and local residents to be involved in the building of ecomuseums in China. The guiding role of the government tallies with the situation in China -- the government is necessary if activities of different parties involved are to be coordinated.

The third principle is that cultures have to be preserved and economy be developed at the same time. The ecomuseum project cannot win support from local residents in Guizhou if it is incapable of improving their lives.

The founding of ecomuseums has proved effective in preserving ethnic cultures.

Ecomuseums in Guizhou were created in communities where ethnic cultures had been largely preserved. As China's reforms and open-door policy have brought a remarkable change in mainstream society, they are making an impact on the ethnic communities that used to be thought of as remote and inaccessible. Cultures and traditions of the communities have been exposed to three major threats: 1. They may be abandoned rapidly with the development of the market economy. 2. They may be ruined while being turned into commodities. 3. The intangible cultural heritages may fall into oblivion: folk artists are losing their popularity and their art may be lost forever after their death. The ecomuseum plays an important role in the preservation of ethnic cultures and folk arts as they keep traditions alive in communities.

The ecomuseum project enabled cultural exchanges between Guizhou and the rest of the world.

The Sino-Norwegian ecomuseum project has been the first major Sino-foreign cultural exchange program launched in Guizhou. An agreement was signed in Beijing on October 23, 1997 in the presence of Mr Jiang Zemin, who was then President of China, and Norwegian King

Harald V. Since that time Guizhou has had frequent cultural exchanges with Norway and also other parts of the planet. Those who visited the inland Chinese province included the President of the Norwegian Congress, the former Norwegian Premier, the three Norwegian ambassadors to China, the Norwegian Minister of Environment, and Norwegian scholars, musicians and women's representatives. Guizhou's scholars, ecomuseum residents, artists, musicians and government officials also paid visits to Norway at the invitation of Norwegian authorities and institutes. In 2001 ecomuseums in Guizhou became an honored group member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

An ecomuseum has to go through an initial stage and a transition period before reaching maturity.

At the initial stage an information Centre was built, and an administrative organ was established with its members coming from the communities included in the ecomuseum, the academic circle and the local cultural authorities. A 'memory database' -- an archive of the history, culture and living traditions -- was launched, folk artists were discovered and documented, plans and regulations were made to preserve both the lifestyle and the natural surroundings of the ecomuseum. A fund was allocated to protect folk arts from extinction, and lectures were given on a regular basis to community members about the new kind of museums they are living in. At this stage the foundation was built for the healthy development of an ecomuseum.

At the transition period an ecomuseum gets 'localized' so that its existence is accepted by all those involved in the project. All the ecomuseums in China are located in the inland, western part of country, and most are in poverty-stricken areas. The building of an ecomuseum must be supported by the local government and also residents of those communities included into the ecomuseum, if it is relevant to the residents' economic interests. Otherwise the residents won't be voluntarily involved in the project.

At the transition period the communities, which used to be almost cut off from the outside world, are impacted by the market economy. The residents come to have a strong wish for economic developments and for improvements in their lives. Their traditional values are challenged. But, in spite of a willingness to join the business world they often need an understanding of the market.

With the challenge from the market economy, it is important to help the residents see how precious their culture is. The long-term existence of

an ecomuseum is decided upon by the residents' attitude toward their traditions. Only when the residents realize the value of their own culture can they really feel proud of it in comparison to mainstream cultures, preserve it and hand it on. But such a realization can be difficult for the residents if they are not educated about the importance of their culture.

When an ecomuseum reaches its maturity, its residents have had both their material and spiritual lives much improved. They have a great confidence for their tradition and hand it on voluntarily. They are truly "masters" of their culture.

Guizhou's ecomuseums are only "children" or "infants" among the world's ecomuseums. Their building and running still wait for our explorations, but we believe they will be a great success in Guizhou and also in China, despite the impact of globalization and industrialization.

Ecomuseums in Guangxi: establishment, exploration and expectations

*Rong Xiaoning*⁵

China's ecomuseums have been endowed with a "Chinese flavour" since the first one was created. The appearance of "ecomuseums with Chinese characteristics" has been inevitable because of the fact that China's ecomuseums have been used to sustain ethnic cultures, a new approach to the use of ecomuseum principles for development. The majority of these new kinds of museums are rooted in underdeveloped rural areas.

During the establishment of ecomuseums in Guizhou, their location, as well as the realization that every part of China is being affected by the trend to the development of the market economy, has been acknowledged. Using a practical approach our colleagues in Guizhou have steered the boat of ecomuseums through difficult waters during the past decade, and we have learned from their experiences.

The establishment of ecomuseums in Guangxi

The projects began at the end of 2003 to have three ecomuseums built in Southwest China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. They are devoted to the care of the culture of the White Trousers Yaos at Nandan, the Dongs at Sanjiang and the Zhuangs at Jiuzhou. We are exploring, with passion and caution, how to best establish "ecomuseums with Guangxi's characteristics".

- a) *Ecomuseums in Guangxi are founded in a professional way under the guidance of scholars.* Ethnologists, archaeologists, anthropologists, museologists and historians have been involved in the feasibility studies and establishment of the three ecomuseums. Before joining the projects everyone involved has been provided with a training course on ecomuseum development in China, led by Prof. Su Donghai and colleagues from Guizhou.

- b) *The Guangxi Ethnography Museum currently under construction*

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provides a powerful underpinning for the three ecomuseums. The ecomuseums and the new museum of ethnography are to join forces in the preservation, research and exhibition of ethnic cultures. The ethnography museum will use the ecomuseums as sites for field studies. It tracks the development of ethnic communities and collects samples of cultural heritages at the three ecomuseums. The four are to share an internet platform as well as other resources.

- c) *Establishing and managing ecomuseums in Guangxi.* The Sanjiang Dongs' Ethnography Museum was remodeled for use as the information Centre of the ecomuseum. Meanwhile the ecomuseum itself includes nine Dong villages, which are scattered along a mountain range of 15 kilometers at the upper reaches of the Miaojiang River which runs through Sanjiang County. Although located outside the "protected area", the information Centre with its experienced professionals and a rich collection has played a vital role in the establishment and management of the ecomuseum.

The three ecomuseums in Guangxi have similarities and also differences in their ways of they have been established and are managed. They will all provide important reference points in the founding of other ecomuseums in Guangxi in the future.

The achievements and influences of the three ecomuseums in Guangxi

- a) *The establishment of ecomuseums has proved to be an effective way to protect ethnic cultures.* At all three ecomuseums in Guangxi the ethnic cultures are thriving among groups of people who are extremely proud to own such cultures.
- b) *The ecomuseums have become bases of worldwide researches on the ethnic cultures preserved at their "protected areas".* Ethnologists, anthropologists, archaeologists, sociologists and museologists have arrived from home and abroad to study the communities protected at the three ecomuseums. The ecomuseums also play an educational role as students, mainly from local schools and colleges, have visited the protected communities and many have carried out their own researches on their lifestyles and traditions. Moreover, the ecomuseums have promoted Guangxi's cultural exchanges with the rest of the world.

- c) *The establishment of ecomuseums has enhanced the development of protected areas in an holistic and harmonious way.* The ecomuseums have set an example of striking a balance between the preservation of traditions of ethnic communities and the development of the economy in Guangxi. For instance, the White Trousers Yaos are enjoying water sources near to their homes and also a road leading into and from the mountains because of the ecomuseum project. The government of Nandan County, where the ecomuseum is located, has received financial support from upper levels of government, and from other enterprises, for road construction and for diversion works serving the protected communities. International aid has arrived to have sanitation installed in more than 400 households at the ecomuseum. Meanwhile, the ecomuseums have started to attract tourists, who have brought money into the local economy, as well as a glimpse of the outside world.
- d) *The ecomuseums founded have gained support from sponsors and extensive media coverage; this has encouraged the building of other ecomuseums in Guangxi.* The Nanning Machinery and Electronics Group and the Nanning Branch of Guangxi Telecommunications Co Ltd has donated some one million yuan (US\$120,000) to the two projects at Jiuzhou and Nandan. Local and national media outlets have also given coverage to the three ecomuseums in the province. The “1+10 Project”, described below, will soon begin in a further effort to preserve ethnic cultures, has also attracted attention from institutions, enterprises and media outlets.

Guangxi’s “1+10 Project”: one ethnography museum plus more ecomuseums

China’s next Five-Year Plan of Development (2006-2010), will enable the cultural authorities of Guangxi to further improve the three established ecomuseums improved and to create new ones. Their ambition is to form an alliance among the ecomuseums and the Guangxi Ethnography Museum to ensure that the urgent task of ethnic culture protection in the province is achieved. The ambition has been firmly based on the experiences of our colleagues in Guizhou and on our own attempts at the three ecomuseums in Guangxi; we have every reason to be positive and ensure our dreams become a reality.

The Olunsum Mongolian Ecomuseum: the first Mongolian ecomuseum in North China

*Yu Wurigeqingfu*⁶

The Olunsum Mongolian Ecomuseum is located 35 kilometers to the north of the famous Lark Lamasery at Darhan-Muming'an Banner of Baotou, North China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. At its centre lie ruins of Olunsum City, one of the greatest cities in the reign of Genghis Khan and his successors during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). The city's importance was demonstrated by the marriages of eight princesses of Yuan to its governors. Olunsum was also allegedly the Oriental capital of Christian Nestorians in the 13th and 14th centuries and later a centre of Catholicism.

Renowned Chinese museologist Su Donghai visited Olunsum three times from 2000 to 2005. In 2000 a project was started to establish an ecomuseum for the local ethnic people, famous for their relationship with horses and their association with the ruins of their ancient city. In 2005 the building of the ecomuseum was officially announced on the Internet. In addition to residents of the ecomuseum, those involved in the project included Prof. Su, officials from the cultural authorities of the autonomous region and of the Baotou municipality, the Banner government, Mr Liu Huanzhen, former director of the Baotou Museum, and Mr Mengke Deliker, retired Banner governor.

In the past five years founders of the ecomuseum have put their emphasis on restoring the ecological balance on the grassland. They have also taken measures to protect the six-century-old ruins of Olunsum City and to document Mongolian traditions.

Protection of the Natural Environment

- a) *The ecological balance has been largely restored at the ecomuseum.* Strict restrictions have been made since 1997 on the number of sheep and horses fed on the grassland within the "protected area" of the ecomuseum. Trees have been planted and grasses grown since 2000 within and around the "protected

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- area” to prevent the invasion of deserts to the north of the grassland.
- b) *The number of households living at the ecomuseum has been reduced to conform to the capacity of the grassland area.* More than 100 families of herdsmen have moved out of the “protected area” and were compensated by the local government for doing so. There are now only 15 households in the “protected area.”
 - c) *Wild animals and birds are thriving at the ecomuseum.* As hunting of them is forbidden in the “protected area”, “residents” and frequent visitors to the ecomuseum have included foxes, wolves, wild goats, wild donkeys, eagles, swallows, larks, swans and geese.

Preservation of the Historical Site

- a) *Protection of the Olunsum Ruins* *Olunsum City*, also known as Zhaowang City, was inscribed on the list of cultural heritages of national importance by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage in December 1999 and since then has been protected primarily at the state level. The ecomuseum is also responsible for its preservation.
- b) *Investigations of the Ruins* The cultural heritage administration of Baotou municipality has organized several investigations at the historical site. From 1997 to 2003 Sino-Italian archaeologists, historians and scientists made an investigation of the ruins. They claimed that Olunsum City is one of the best-preserved historical sites of the Yuan Dynasty in China, and that it is of great value in archaeological and anthropological researches.
- c) *Preservation with State Funds* In 1997 fences were built around the Olunsum Ruins and a working station was established with a state fund of 120,000 yuan (US\$14,500). In 2000 a contract was signed between the Banner’s cultural heritage administration and Mr Siriguleng, a herdsman at the ecomuseum, to have the latter assist in the preservation of the ruins. In 2002 a four-metre-tall, 750-metre-long dam was constructed to protect the ruins from floods of the Abgai River which runs close by. Funding for the project included 800,000 yuan (US\$96,400) from the central government, 150,000 yuan (US\$18,070) from the

Baotou municipal government and 200,000 yuan (US\$24,096) from the Banner government.

Preservation of Grassland Culture

- a) *Herdsmen at the ecomuseum have largely retained the lifestyle of their ancestors.* They have traditional Mongolian food including various dairy products, make woollen sheets and ropes with their own hands, and live in yurts as well as one-storey houses built of compacted soil.
- b) *Mongolians on the grassland hold their Nadamu party every year in the “protected area”.* The Nadamu is the annual revelry party of the ethnic horseback group. It originated in 1225 when Genghis Khan had a grand celebrative party held after the Mongolian cavalries conquered the Hualazimo Tribe. On May 13 of the Lunar Calendar each year, the Mongolians compete in archery, horseracing and wrestling. They also have singing contests and dance in groups around bonfires.
- c) *A van serves as the information Centre of the ecomuseum.* It shuttles among yurts of the families, which live far from each other at the ecomuseum, and transports visitors between the Baotou City and the grassland. In the van are displayed documents of Mongolian folklore, history, arts and religions.
- d) *A focus has been put on the documentation of Mongolian intangible cultural heritages.* A survey is being carried out on the Mongolian cultures and lifestyles that have remained at the “protected area”, and an archive is being built of the living and abandoned traditions. The information centre of the ecomuseum is to have its website launched on the Internet.

Taiwan's ecomuseums: the past and the present

By Yui Tan Chang⁷

This paper has dual intentions: firstly, to describe a brief history of the museum industry in Taiwan and, secondly, to illustrate the historical backgrounds and present development of ecomuseums in Taiwan with two case studies, that of Taipei City's Beitou Hot Spring Life Environmental Park and Taipei County's Gold Ecological Park respectively.

A brief history of Taiwan's museum industry

Taiwan's museum industry dates back to the Japanese colonization of Taiwan (1895-1945), which began over a century ago. During the fifty years of colonization, a total of 18 museums were built, which can be divided into three categories: one group for merchandise or commodity exhibition, another for the promotion of education and health, the other as a miscellaneous group of local culture museums, mountain museums, zoos, botanical gardens, and a planetarium. These museums are known as colonial museums, a device used by the Japanese colonial government to directly or indirectly shape the Taiwanese people's ideology, economically, politically, and physically.

Taiwan was returned to China after World War II. In 1945, the Ch'ing imperial collection of art treasures, immense in quality, moved with the Nationalist Government in the wake of China's domestic insurrection engineered by the Communists. In 1957, the National Palace Museum was restored in Wai-shuang-his in the suburbs of Taipei, and was among the museums built in the 1950s, including the three national museums located in the Nanhai Area, namely the National Museum of History, the National Museum for Science Education, and the National Museum for Arts Education.

The National Palace Museum is now ranked as one of the top five museums in the world. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Taiwanese government adopted an export-oriented strategy while paying little attention to cultural development. As a result less than 30 museums were built during this 20-year period. The total number of museums was less than 40. From 1958 to 1980, the National Palace Museum led the museum industry, and remains today a 'must-see' cultural spot for foreign visitors.

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The 1980s played a significant role in the history of Taiwan's museum industry. Due to economic prosperity, the museum industry was booming, with approximately 40 museums being established during this period. The National Museum of Natural Sciences, equipped with hardware and software facilities was the best in Taiwan at that time. About twenty "Cultural Centres" were also partially completed around the same time. Although ridiculed as "empty centres" due to the emphasis on their hardware facilities rather than the software aspects, these centres were indicative of the central government's gradual attention to the development of local culture. Taiwan's museums increased up to a total of around 80 during this period.

Riding the wave of success in the 1980s, the number of museums in Taiwan continued to rise throughout the 1990s up until today, with the total climbing to 200 or so. Museums have since sprung up like mushrooms. As quite a number of national museums had been established back in the 1980s, local governments at various levels – county, city, township, and village – set out to build local museums featuring local culture to strengthen the sense of community. This 15-year period saw various local cultural centre-turned museums, which played an increasingly significant role in the museum industry and are sure to continue to grow in the future. These relatively new museums have spread from the city to towns and villages, dealing with various issues such as community identity, the reconstruction of ethnic autonomy, cultural heritage management, and promotion of local industries. A series of museum development plans based on discourse of local communities development and ecomuseums have been mapped out, creating a new movement called "local era" in Taiwan's museum industry.

The term "ecomuseum" was used in Taiwan's museum documents as early as the 1990s. Museums adopting the concept of ecomuseum in their planning include Lanyang Museum in Ilan County, 921 Earthquake Educational Park in Taichung County, Mei-nong Hakka Folklore Museum in Kaohsiung County, and Beitou Hot Spring Life Environmental Park in Taipei City, and the Gold Ecological Park in Taipei County. Some museums used "ecomuseum" or "community museum" in their documents, while others preferred "living park" or "living environmental park" by translating the equivalent term in Japanese.

I will now cite Taipei City's Beitou Hot Spring Living Environment Park and Taipei County's Gold Ecological Park to illustrate the history and development of Taiwan's ecomuseums.

Beitou Hot Spring Living Environment Park

The landscape of the Beitou area in Taipei City, which covers Shipai, new and old Beitou, and Guandu, features volcanoes, sulphur, hot springs, and Hokutolite. In 1895, the Japanese Imperial Government established the Armed Forces Sanatorium in Beitou. Due to the area's abundant hot spring resources, Hirada Gengo opened up "Tian Gou An" the following year, which was the first hot spring hotel ever built in Taiwan. A variety of hot spring hotels were established during the Japanese occupation. As a result, Beitou came to be known as the "hot spring village." In 1913, Taipei Prefectural Government, now known as Taipei City Government, started construction of the Beitou Hot Spring Baths, which claimed to be the largest of its type in East Asia at that time. Marked by English countryside villas, Roman columns, and mosaic windows, Beitou Hot Spring Baths is a truly romantic landmark and historical heritage.

After the Japanese left Taiwan, the Beitou area underwent significant changes both politically and economically. Beitou Hot Spring Baths was used as KMT's local headquarters, as a Community Service Centre, as Taipei City Council Reception Centre, a police station, and so on. Most Japanese-run hotels were taken over by the Taiwanese. Following the Korean War and Vietnam War, Taiwan became an important tourist spot because of its geographical proximity to the war zone. Located near the domestic airport, or Taipei Songshan Airport, Beitou, with its abundant hot spring resources, soon became a popular tourist attraction among the American soldiers. There were a total of 47 hotels in the heydays of this area. Combined with the hotels around the Yangminshan area, the total stood at nearly 90, making Beitou *the* place to go for fun and relaxation.

In the 1970s, the government imposed a ban on prostitution, causing the hotel business in Beitou to hit rock bottom. Beitou Hot Spring Baths was seriously affected, gradually losing its past glamour and popularity with tourists after former occupants left one by one. The inability of Taipei County Government to properly maintain the site only made the situation worse.

In 1995, two teachers of Beitou Elementary School, Huang Gui-Guan and Lu Hong-Wen, came across this abandoned and long forgotten building while taking their students out on a field trip. To keep this building from being torn down, both teachers elicited help of Beitou Elementary School students in launching a petition to Taipei City Council in 1995, but to no avail. Not a bit discouraged, they decided to raise the awareness of the local community by asking residents to jointly sign

a petition. Moved by their effort, Beitou Lee Rein Association, scholar Chen Lin-Song, the Organization of Urban Re-formers or OURS, and a member of the Assembly, Xu Yang-Ming, all showed their support for this campaign. Besides support from the political arena, a community journal entitled *Beitou She* was launched to help preserve the historical heritage and initiate the construction of Beitou Hot Spring Water-Intimacy Park.

On April 2, 1996, Taipei City Government officially designated Beitou Hot Spring Baths as a historic site. On April 5 of the same year, Beitou Lee Rein Association and *Beitou She* proposed that the government construct Beitou Hot Spring Park. The proposal was later passed, paving the way for restoration of Beitou Hot Spring Baths. The Ministry of The Interior (MOI) officially designated Beitou Hot Spring Baths as a third-class historic site on Feb. 20, 1997, allowing the commencement of the project to return the building to its original appearance. Restoration of the baths began on March 1, 1998. The building was later transformed into what is now known as Beitou Hot Spring Museum, officially open to the public on Oct. 31 of the same year. Beitou Hot Spring Water-Intimacy Park was also completed. According to the Council for Cultural Affairs, Beitou Hot Spring Museum was ranked the sixth most popular historic site for three consecutive years from 2000 to 2002, with visitors reaching nearly one million.

Beitou Hot Spring Museum is the creation of joint effort and devotion of residents in the Beitou area, scholars and experts, legislative representatives, and various community organizations. The concept of ecomuseum espoused by French museologists Hugues de Varine and Georges Henri Rivière can be seen in the planning documents. As indicated by Chen Lin-Song (1999:77-78):

More than 10 historic sites and other historical buildings are linked to the development of the hot spring area and the society's culture through Beitou's most valuable characteristic of hot spring resources. All of the hot springs are within walking distance from each other. If properly planned, coupled with the Hot Spring Water-Intimacy Park and Public Baths-turned Hot Spring Museum, the "Living Environment Park" can well be the cultural blueprint for the redevelopment of Beitou. The Hot Spring Museum will serve as the core museum for promoting hot spring culture, conducting related research, offering life-long learning for the community, and generating public discussions. Satellite museums, townships, villages, and local schools, on the other hand, will each play their own part in forming a dynamic cultural network.

The joint support of scholars, experts, community workers and legislative representatives has contributed to forming the idea of the Beitou Living Environment Park, with the Beitou Hot Spring Museum as its core museum, and with historic heritage, natural sites, cultural resources and tourism around the Beitou area as its satellite museums. Travelling around the park will be made easy by the public transport network. Such a project is expected to bring prosperity to the Beitou community and people living there.

However, the colossal project of constructing the park is not without difficulties.

As pointed out by Xu Yang-Ming [Xu Yang-Ming, 2000:224-232], the main difficulties include:

- How to keep historic sites and natural scenery intact;
- How to regulate private and public hot spring baths; and
- How to revise city planning to incorporate renewal of both public and private hot springs.

At the moment, work has been done on designation of historic sites, dredging of Beitou Creek, and preservation of Hokutolite. Other issues such as the skyline, protection of the green mountains, the Geothermal Valley, Beitou Creek, designation of land for parks, and city planning renewal still remain unaddressed.

As indicated by Xu Ming-Yang, the Beitou Living Environment Park should not try to encompass everything so as to end up being an “unreal construction” or “inflated illusion” without substance. The implementation of the project of the Beitou Life Environment Park is undoubtedly a long-term task, requiring support of the local community and careful planning: [Xu Yang-Ming, 2000:117]

The Beitou Living Environment Park is based on the existing community and ecology as well as completed or ongoing construction projects, utilizing the concept of ecomuseum as its framework. Its success will be determined by people's faith in such a concept. Without support of the local community, the project will be disorganized and disintegrated, with each tourist attraction and cultural heritage site standing on its own rather than being part of a whole unity. It will also be pointless to create such a park, as it will not be able to set an example for future ecomuseums.

Gold Ecological Park in Taipei County

Jinguashih is located in Reifang township in Taipei County on the northeast coast of Taiwan. Around this popular scenic spot is a mix of sights ranging from Teapot Mountain, Keelung Mountain, and the breathtaking Yin Yan Bay. Originally a deserted mountainous area off the beaten track, this spot later stamped its mark on the tourist map for its close resemblance to a pumpkin, which is pronounced as “Jingua” in the Taiwanese dialect.

Gold was first discovered as far back as the early days of the Ch'ing Dynasty. In 1893, the Ch'ing Dynasty government established an office called Gold Dust Office to manage the gold business. In 1895, the government was forced to cede Taiwan to Japan after losing the Sino-Japan War. To facilitate management of the gold mines, the Japanese imperial government divided the area into Chiufen/Reifang Mining District on the west and Jinguashih Mining District on the east based on the line going north and south through the peak of the Keelung Mountain. In those days, Jinguashih was a gold mining district, but it also became a copper mining district after copper was discovered. Due to its large deposits of gold and copper, Jinguashih was called “the richest metal mountain in Asia.” Mining brought unparalleled prosperity to the area. However, mining in the Chiufen/Reifang Mining District went downhill after 1902, which was taken over by Taiwanese contractor Yan Yun-Nian, who founded Taiyang Mining Co. After the restoration of Taiwan, Taiyang Mining Co. was renamed Taiwan Metal Mining Co. or Taijin in 1955. With the closedown of Taijin in 1987, Jinguashih and Chiufen/Reifang areas began to lose their past glamour and prosperity.

Precious metals in the Jinguashih area had been exploited for nearly a century from an extensive catacomb of tunnels that covered a combined area of over 600 km, part of which was as deep as 132 meters below sea level. Many of the buildings, mine shafts, tunnels, tools, and monuments of the mining period provide a clear view on the history of the Japanese occupation and economic activities in East Asia during the first half of the last century. Due to its unique mineral deposit geology and mining culture, Jinguashih has been selected as one of the potential world heritage sites in Taiwan.

Work on the project of the Gold Ecological Park was initiated by the Taipei City Government in 2002. With the Gold Museum as its core, the park will cover both the humanities and ecological resources around Jinguashih area. In addition to offering regular exhibitions, the park also aims to preserve precious natural landscape, the mining sites, ancient buildings, and cultural heritage by integrating the community so as to

bring new life and energy into the area.

The first stage in the park's development has been completed and it was opened to the public in August, 2004. Stage-one facilities include:

1. Gold Museum, designed to introduce the mining culture and history of Jinguashih;
2. Crown Prince Chalet, a mansion once used by Japan's Emperor as a summer retreat, allowing the visitors to experience the graceful life of the Japanese royal court;
3. Japanese colonial dormitories on Jin Guang Rd. and Shi Wei Rd., an integral part of the Jinguashih community, renovated to promote development of the community and to allow people to enjoy a pleasant and relaxing trip in such facilities as "Dorm Village" and "Experience Alley";
4. Benshan Fifth Tunnel Experience Area, renovated to provide the tourist with real-life experience in the tunnel, first of its kind in Taiwan ever open to the public; and
5. Golden Temple, Keelung Mountain, and Teapot Mountain, used as natural learning environment for ecological education.

In addition to stage-one facilities, the Gold Refinery and Concentration Camp Memorial Hall are also under construction, both designed to offer the public a more comprehensive view of Jinguashih. Since the opening of the first stage facilities, the public has showed their approval and support of the Gold Ecological Park, which opens a new chapter in the history of mining tourism in Taiwan. Yet more challenges lie ahead for the development of the park. According to Director of the park Chiang Min-Chin, goals to be achieved by the park include (Chiang Min-Chin 2004)

1. Documenting the history by gathering historical information from former miners and those involved in the mining industry, collecting oral accounts of important festivals and development of the community by the older generation, gathering memories of Jinguashih female residents, acquiring old photos and historical relics.
2. Keeping the original appearance of the community intact by raising awareness of the community through education and creative management.
3. Preserving the natural landscape for educational purposes. In addition to its unique geology, Jinguashih also has a large number of plants, such as ferns. Birds, as well as plants, are great targets for research. Research on natural resources of the park and completion of a database are crucial in promoting education on the ecology to the community. Local residents can be trained

- as tour guides so they not only contribute to the promotion of education but also get to cherish unique resources in their own community. The park has also begun work on establishing a mechanism for environmental protection, such as the ongoing lily breeding project.
4. Strengthening sense of community. While the park is state-run, the key to long-term development lies in spontaneous participation and sense of community of the local residents. The park will offer regular courses and programs on English and Japanese learning, tour guide training, and creative management. It will also hold seminars, community exchange and cultural events. All of these are aimed at providing a channel for exchange and raising awareness of the local community.
 5. Compiling information about Jinguashih. As Jinguashih is endowed with abundant cultural and natural resources, research is needed into various fields such as community history, fauna and flora, Japanese-style buildings, gold handicrafts, mining culture, reuse of old buildings and unused land, etc. The priority at the moment is to compile all records related to Jinguashih, files, pictures, and photos, especially publications in the Japanese occupation period and all documents left behind by Taiwan Metal Mining Co
 6. Promoting tourism that cares about people and quality. Successful development of a local industry lies in creative management. Tourism based on awareness of the local community can be a tremendous boost to a local industry. As a unique geological spot, Jinguashih should not be turned into a place where huge crowds of tourists pour in at one time running from one attraction to another without taking their time appreciating what this culturally rich area has to offer. Only by promoting tourism that cares about people and values quality over quantity can Jinguashih serve as a truly “spiritual back garden.” And only by doing so can the uniqueness and preciousness of the park be preserved.
 7. Promoting exchange with similar parks in other countries to come up with creative ideas for future development and enhancement.

Conclusion

In sum, thanks to joint effort by experts and scholars, the local government and residents, ecomuseums are starting to develop and grow in Taiwan. Yet more work remains to be done in the future. As indicated by the discussions above, both Beitou Hot Spring Life Environment Park and Gold Ecological Park are facing similar issues, such as preservation of and research on historical sites and natural landscape, regulations

and policies of private and public use of the natural and cultural resources, and potential impact tourism development may have on the environment and humanities. The most pressing issue at the moment is lack of involvement of the local population and their interaction with the parks as a result of control still lying in the hands of some scholars and experts as well as the local government.

Late museologist Georges Henri Rivière (1897-1985) said in "The Ecomuseum: An Evolutive Definition" (Rivière: 1985: 182-183):

An ecomuseum is an instrument conceived, fashioned and operated jointly by a public (eg. local) authority and its local population. The public authority's involvement is through the experts (staff), facilities and resources it provides; the local population's involvement depends on its aspirations, knowledge and individual approach.

French museologist Hugues de Varine, one of the participants at this conference, also said (de Varine, H., quoted from Mayrand, P., 1984:36):

An ecomuseum is special in that its democratic nature ensures involvement of the local population at all levels of museum operations. An ecomuseum, therefore, plays a crucial role in community development.

Construction of ecomuseums is a nonstop process of production and problem solving. It is also a long-term project whose achievements may not be seen right away. As emphasized by action anthropology, ecomuseum provides an opportunity for learning and action. Such a process requires not only our active participation, but also a certain distance to leave room for critical thinking. There is no panacea for all the problems that may arise along the way. Only by allowing for constant involvement of the local community can ecomuseums be successful and thriving. This is a valuable lesson ecomuseums in Taiwan have learned during the development process.

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How the theory and practice of ecomuseums enrich general museology

*Song, Xiangguang*⁸

From its inception ecomuseum philosophy has been a focus for museum practitioners and academics. Although there are only about 300 ecomuseums around the world, and in China but a few, they have had a significant impact on the development of museum thought and practices. Scholars have analyzed their character, nature, beliefs, values, purposes, methods, structures and management styles. Efforts have been made to compare ecomuseums to 'traditional' museums and it has been suggested that the two are rivals, or that the ecomuseum is a rebel, an anti-museum. Is the ecomuseum a foreign entity, an experiment, or even a stranger? Some felt the ecomuseum was a joke and would rapidly become extinct. In texts on general museology, the ecomuseum merits only a paragraph in the history section, seemingly regarded as an impulsive experiment.

Despite these concerns, ecomuseums have survived for more than three decades. So what is its position now, and what impact has the ecomuseum had on the general museum world, museum studies and the museum development process? Do ecomuseums need the intellectual and moral support of the museum world, or can they stand alone?

Ecomuseums have deep roots in the development of museology in general, meeting the strong and immediate demands of museum reform. Ecomuseum emergence was timely.

Reflecting on the history of ecomuseums, Georges Henri Rivière mentioned that in 1936 Georges Huisman asked him to set up a museum in France just like Skansen, which Huisman had recently visited. However, in 1937, the Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions was erected in Paris with a mission to collect, research, conserve and display the ethnic culture of France⁹ under Rivière's guidance. He promoted the notion of the museum as a "laboratory" and "museum". As a laboratory, the top priority was to "record and interpret traditional society in our country and its transition to an industrial society". As a museum, its collecting policy ensured that objects were collected on site with 'all the technical, economic, social and cultural information necessary for their proper

⁸ School of Archaeology and Museology at Peking University, China

⁹ Georges Henri Rivière, *My Experience at the Musée d'Ethnologie*. Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1968

understanding”. Rivière also pointed out, when he set the relationship between the Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions and regional museums, the local museum should “bring together archaeology, history and ethnology into a single framework”. The display in the Culture Gallery was based on Claude Levi-Strauss’ anthropology theories and was divided into “the Universe and Society”. Rivière said his task was to establish an ethnology museum in which “the relations between man and nature will be set in a framework of world history.”¹⁰ It would appear that the basic ideas and principles of the ecomuseum were already in Rivière’s mind at this time. For him, the museum cannot be separated from the reality of social development, and should keep pace with it, serving and benefiting people through its activities.

The ecomuseum was the result of the persistent pursuit by museum specialists who felt a strong responsibility for society. They tried to make the museum a tool to serve social development. The ecomuseum is essentially one point on the trail created by museologists in the context of the post-industrial society.

The ecomuseum is regarded as a sign, a turning point, a breakthrough point, a symbol of an “experiment” and a mark of rethinking the museum. If we reflect on the historical moment when the term “ecomuseum” was created it might help us to better understand the historical context and the original intention. Hugues de Varine, the god-father of the term “ecomuseum”, recalled that historical moment:

‘In spring 1971, Georges Henri Rivière, the former director and permanent adviser at ICOM, Serge Antoine, adviser to the Minister of the Environment and myself, at the time director of ICOM, met for a business lunch at the “La Flambée” restaurant on Avenue de Ségur in Paris. Our intention was to discuss aspects of the ninth general conference of the International Council of Museums, which was to be held in August of that year in Paris, Dijon and Grenoble.

We spoke of the day in Dijon and the fact that we were to be received by Robert Poujade, Mayor of the City and France’s first ever Minister of the Environment. One of the subjects we spoke about was the tone of the speech the Minister-Mayor was going to make. Georges Henri Rivière and I were keen that, for the first time in an international conference of that importance, a leading politician should publicly link museums to the environment. It was a question of opening up a new way of museological research in a field whose importance had only just been acknowledged, but was to be solemnly confirmed at the UN conference in

¹⁰ Georges Henri Rivière, 1968 (cit.)

Stockholm the following year.

Serge Antoine was reticent: no way could museums be the subject of any truly innovative statement, he argued. Considering how much they are tied to the past, to speak of the utility of museums at the service of the environment would only make people laugh. No, to convey such a message we had to abandon the word “museum” altogether. Poujade would certainly be sensitive to the educational role of museums as a supplementary means for his crusade for the ... protection of nature, but it would be wrong to pronounce the word “museum” in anything other than a purely formal speech. We, Georges Henri Rivière and I, struggled in vain to convince our fellow diners of the vitality of museums and their utility. Finally, almost jokingly, I said, “It would be absurd to abandon the word; it would be far better to change its commercial brand image ... but we could also try to create a new word based round ‘museum’...” I tried different combinations of syllables round the two words “ecology” and “museum”. At the second or third attempt, I came up with “ecomuseum”. (...)

Minister Poujade first used the term “ecomuseum” a few months later, in Dijon, on September 3 1971, in a speech to 500 museologists and museographers from all over the world. “We are moving towards what some already define as the ecomuseum, a living approach through which the public – youngsters, first and foremost – can re-appropriate the evolution of the basic grammar of man, of his possessions and of his environment.”¹¹

Georges Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine had invented the term “ecomuseum” simply for a keynote speech but it has now become a banner for a special museum movement.

The ecomuseum is a revolution, revising the view of the museum as a place for pure research, using accepted historical techniques and housed in a grand building. The ecomuseum movement is a Renaissance, still holding high the public museum’s banner of “science” and “democracy”. But how does it relate to the basic philosophy of the modern public museum?

In the early 20th century, industrialization changed the face of the rural landscape and its culture. At this time the museum had become research oriented and more professional. Although being ‘professional’ enhanced the standards of many aspects of museums and improved

¹¹ Hugues de Varine, *L'ecomusée*, in Wasserman F. (ed.) *Vagues*, MNES, 1992, p. 448

museum management, in my opinion it changed the notion of museum philosophy from “creative” to “conservative”. Museums became research focused and inward looking. The theory and practice of ecomuseums has pushed museum professionals to re-consider the character, function and role of museums, to re-define their social responsibilities, and deliberate on the meanings of the museum. The ecomuseum would be like a snakehead fish which stirred the stagnant water, making ripples in the museum pond.

The museology of the 1930s was elitist, with a central focus on collections management and research. The museum qualified visitors to join the social elite and high culture, creating or reinforcing deep divisions in society. The ecomuseum challenged this situation, evolving as an inclusive institution. We can see this from Rivière’s evolutive definition of the ecomuseum and from Hugues de Varine’s definition of “community museum”:

“a community museum is one which grows from below, rather than being imposed from above. It arises in response to the needs and wishes of people living and working in the area and it actively involves them at every stage while it is being planned and created and afterwards when it is open and functioning.”¹²

The ecomuseum seeks to meet the demands of social development. Since the social, economical, political, cultural, ethnical, environmental and ecological conditions are varied between each country and region, every area faces different challenges and opportunities. The local people also have various demands, and ecomuseums have to meet these conditions by adopting their own operation style, mission and focus. For example, ecomuseums in northern Europe pay much attention to the revitalization of former agricultural and industrial regions; those in North America focus on minority nationality’s life style and culture identity. In Guizhou, China, the focus is on the preservation of the culture heritage of specific ethnic groups. Does this flexible structure mean that ecomuseums can only be an “ideal” or an “experiment”, which can never be integrated into general Museology?

It might be argued that the ecomuseum has had a positive impact on museology by inventing new museological approaches and critical thinking. Its influence on the philosophy, value, purpose and mission of the modern museum is obvious to those who know them. The traditional museum has now also accepted a clear social task and the demand for

¹² Hugues de Varine, *Tomorrow’s Community Museums*. Lecture at the University of Utrecht, 1993

development. The museum should use all its resources to evaluate its effectiveness and achievements from a social development perspective. Museums will become more important in the social life of their region as they achieve their social mission. Another important contribution of ecomuseums is the fact that they are “people-Centred”, a notion now also accepted by more traditional museums. The practices of ecomuseums ensure that we encourage community member’s creativity, enhance their abilities and promote harmony.

Ecomuseums encourage systematic approaches, synthesis, creativity and variation. In comparison traditional museology encourages analysis, segmentation, partition, and one accepted doctrine. For many years museums were object-based and concerned only with material culture. By contrast, ecomuseums recognized the complexity of the relationship between cultural heritage of a particular community and the demands for development. Ecomuseums were also early to recognize the importance of intangible heritage, language, beliefs, and human-relationship, and to signify the differences that existed between places and their communities. Ecomuseums did not turn their back on the past, but made a conscious effort to embrace the present and the future. The intellectual basis for ecomuseums seems based in the humanities, social sciences and geography, an exploration of complex human interactions with their environment.

Ecomuseums encourage creation and practice and have brought reform to museology. Influenced by rationalism and a management style based on industrial experiences, the traditional museum laid down rules which had to be kept. However, ecomuseums tend to break accepted practices to achieve social development. They enable the creative ability of their participants, and include local community members, museum experts and volunteers from other communities. Management styles, service delivery and outputs reflect the needs of local people.

After more than 30 years’ journey, the ecomuseum now is a vital and integral part of the museum world, just like the industry and technology museums, open-air museums and science museums that emerged during the earlier parts of the 20th century. Ecomuseology has gradually stimulated progress in the museum world in general, and at the same time become part of the framework of general museology. The ideas and practical methods promoted by ecomuseums have been absorbed by general museology, so that now all museums are concerned with issues of regeneration and development, the participation of local community members and the acceptance of a wider, more inclusive view of what ‘heritage’ is. We might now suggest that what were thought to be extreme views have now become accepted by the museological world, and that the theory and practice of the ecomuseum has

enriched the methods and theories of general museology.

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A crucial issue for ecomuseums: the link between idealism and reality

*Huang Chun Yu*¹³

From the 1970s, when the concept of the ecomuseum originated in France, ecomuseum practice has spread to many countries. However, the undeniable fact is that the development of the ecomuseum movement in the world is not as inspiring as the founders and the advocates might have expected. The concept of the ecomuseum has led to heated arguments and variations in practice. These arguments and difficulties need to be researched and ecomuseum practice evaluated. However, constructive and critical attitudes to these issues are essential, because outright support or blind condemnation is not helpful to the development of ecomuseums. It is important to face up to the truth and pursue the possibility of the link between idealism and reality.

Tracing back the historical background of ecomuseums, we have seen that in many circumstances, they emerged from the process of post-modernism and the rethinking of the social functions of 'traditional' museums. They have attempted to seek the answers to questions such as whether ecomuseums can be a factor in developing the local economy, or whether they should be considered simply as institutions which are related to welfare facilities. Should ecomuseums aim to enhance mutual understanding between different communities? Should they be special places where enjoyment can be provided only for the educated? Or should ecomuseums be places where people can receive education? Should they be cultural activity Centres, or places to welcome tourists? In the process of ecomuseum evolution several scholars and institutes have given their definitions of the ecomuseum. Most of them still take the philosophy of the community museum as core. In the framework of the ecomuseum, active participation of local people is emphasized and the experts of traditional museum are marginalized in order to make museums more democratic. In structure, the ecomuseum preserves and interprets heritage *in-situ*, rather than divorce it from its location as occurs with traditional museums.

As regard to their purpose, ecomuseums seek to go beyond the limits of the traditional museum, becoming a resource where local inhabitants can participate in the planning and development of their community. It is true that such an approach might inspire those who know the limitations

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of the traditional museums, but such idealism cannot work without taking into account the reality of the local situation.

Ecomuseums declare themselves as being established for the communities, and that they are cultural institutions conceived of, managed and built by the local people themselves. However, it is not always the residents' choice, but just another manifestation of experts' will with the addition of a dose of "humanism". In many cases, ecomuseums, from the ordinary people's point of view, are still institutes that are established for those "better educated" people. They have evolved in the same way that traditional museums came into being, when a few elites donated their collections to create museums that were then opened to the public.

It is not difficult to see that a considerable number of existing ecomuseums were established in the locations where people are living 'on the edge'. We may not doubt the rationality of the concept of the ecomuseum, but at the same time, it is essential to find out how to focus experts' knowledge and will to meet the real needs of communities, how to link idealism with the reality. It is important to ensure that ecomuseums that have originated from an "opposing authority" (i.e. top down) have to change into an "admitting authority" (i.e. bottom-up). The ecomuseum should inspire us not only by linking natural and cultural environments, but also by activating the principle of participation of the community. Therefore, the nature of ecomuseum should be extensive participation of the local people, and the core of it should be the protection of entire heritage in the specific community.

In creating the link between idealism and reality, what is easiest to realize is the technological link, such as recording, maintaining, preserving, and the establishment of the "documentation Centres", which can be achieved through traditional museum practice. However, what challenge ecomuseums the most is creating the link between encouraging self-understanding of cultural values, promoting self-identity and pride in local life style and the ecomuseums' purpose for protecting cultural heritage.

When thinking about this link, we must realize that "marginalised groups" may cherish their cultural tradition, or may abandon some or all of them. From a practical point of view, whether to preserve their traditional culture or not has to be decided by the people themselves. Hence, there is a contradiction between ecomuseums' idealism and reality. On one hand, ecomuseums aim to sustain the cultural practices and material culture of communities, but on the other hand they must respect the rights of those communities to interpret their own culture and their right to development and a better future. If traditional culture is dissipated or lost altogether, and the ecomuseum is used simply as a

tool to improve community life, then we might argue that the ecomuseum has been a failure. If the enthusiasm and intensity of the participation of the community residents for their culture cannot be maintained, there is a danger that what will emerge is a traditional museums which attracts tourists to look at a lost way of life.

Therefore, the idealism of the ecomuseum depends upon the degree and extent of participation by the community to maintain its culture, and whether ecomuseums can construct and cultivate an environment that will sustain the community. In ecomuseum practice in China, the efforts made to create ecomuseums have been inspirational. However, if we are content to train only a few members of the community in ecomuseum methodologies and practices, we may never realize the ideal ecomuseum, one which is truly democratic and leads to the conservation of heritage.

Interdisciplinary approaches are considered significant for our work. Cultural- anthropology, history, language, archaeology, heritage science and sociology may help us to unscramble the social structure of the communities where the ecomuseums are situated in order to establish the theoretical framework of the ecomuseum. In other words we need to go beyond museology itself. If we look at the ecomuseum as a cornerstone of community culture and a tool of community social development instead of being a 'rare specimen' of a type of museum that can be researched by experts and scholars, or simply a tourist experience, we may find possible routes to link idealism and reality.

Ecomuseum models and the ‘value’ of rural village landscapes

*Yu Yafang*¹⁴

The concept of the ecomuseum and rural village landscape protection

Because villages are frequently located in outlying areas that lack communications with urban centres, they are very different from urban spaces in terms of village form, lifestyle and cultural beliefs. I define these parameters in total as the rural village landscape. Confronting the advance of industrialization and urbanization, there have appeared various theories and practices trying to protect rural village landscapes. Since 1995, the ecomuseum^[1] has proved to be one of the new approaches, and has been adapted by the Chinese heritage protection professionals in rural area, resulting in the establishment of the Soga Miao Ecomuseum in Guizhou and Lihu White-trousers Yao Ecomuseum in Guangxi. Naturally, like other protection measures, ecomuseums need to be tested in the rural village development process. The author attempts to study this topic by focusing on the valuation of rural village landscapes.

The values of rural village landscape

Using the value of rural village landscape. The rural village as a place where people live, its function of providing a habitat, a home, is the essence of village landscape. It is the home of villagers and has economic, social and environmental elements.

Economic perspective: the balance of the economy that provides a living for the villagers. The economic structure of the village influences the formation and evolution of the rural village landscape. For example, there are two Miao villages in southeast Guizhou, the Paidiao and Shiqiao villages. Paidiao village is located in hillside fields, with an agricultural economy focusing on crops grown on terraced fields. Shiqiao village, in contrast, is located in flat fields near a river, and its economy is based on papermaking. Circumstances change with the passage of

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time, every village has its own economic system which supports village life.

Society Perspective: the gradual development of ethnic culture forms the spirit of the homeland of villagers. Culture is the spiritual interpretation of human life. Rural villagers inherit and transmit their cultural traditions by oral and literary means. For example, villagers' spiritual pursuits are well reflected in ploughing and studying culture in South Anhui, the song and dance culture in west China, and handicrafts culture in southwest China. Rural village landscapes are witnesses to the sustained development of various ethnic cultures.

Environment Perspective: the ecological balance supporting the stability of villages. Rural villages are usually located in relatively discrete areas within harmonious ecological circumstances. The ecological balance between village and surroundings is the precondition for the cohesion and stability of the settled village.

The tourism value of rural village landscapes. The popularity of the village tour can be traced back to the origins and development of agriculture tourism. The shift from agriculture tourism to rural village landscapes is a manifestation of tourists' interests that has been transferred from appreciating material objects (an instrumental reason) to wishing to understand people's lives (metaphysical value reason). The attraction of rural village landscapes is in part because of the contrast with the urban environment and urban living.

The cultural communication value of rural village landscapes. Villagers create the village culture in their work and lives over many generations. People understand the value of the living culture of rural villages. It demonstrates real differences to the urban community in terms of lifestyle, resulting in the complex cultural communication of identification, imitation or rejection. Outsiders seeking novelty and nostalgia come to see rural village landscapes and villager's lives, but they are also carriers of different cultures. During the process of cultural interactions, villagers can also begin to understand the 'outside' world.

The academic research value of rural village landscapes. The academic research value of rural village was firstly discovered and utilized by architects, planners and landscape architects. Many universities, including those specializing in the field of design have established field stations in rural villages. The study of rural villages and traditional architecture has been a research platform to other related fields. Observ-

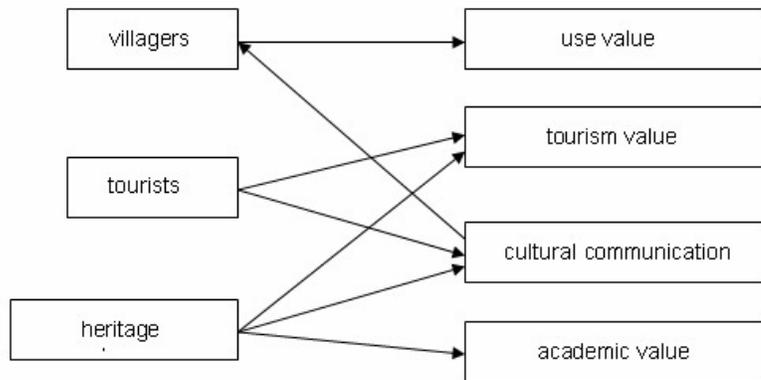
ing village landscapes is the most direct method for us to begin to understand them. Furthermore, scholars have also studied rural village landscapes from the view of Anthropology, History, Sociology, and Folklore.

Analyzing the dialectic relationship of the values of rural village landscapes

The rural village landscape and its consciousness . Rural village landscapes attract not just the villagers, but heritage researchers and tourists. Any village is the homeland of the local people, but in virtually every rural village in China poverty is a major problem. Heritage specialists, who pay closest attention to rural village landscapes, act as almost an integral part of the landscape of rural villages. Their behaviour belongs to the metaphysical category. Tourists pay attention to the vitality and diversity of different village landscapes.

Analyzing the fragile factors of rural village landscape value orientation. The following diagram indicates that there is only on relationship between villagers and their locality, which is one of utility. On the other hand, heritage researchers and tourists as the outside groups of village focus on the academic and tourist value.

The value relationship between people and village



Cultural communication values are accepted passively by villagers, but outside groups participate actively. The villager’s value orientation belongs to material ideology and the other groups’ belongs to a metaphysical ideology. Use is the original value for village development, though the above schema suggests it is the weakest of all values. In

short, these problems lead to some fragile factors such as enclosed economic development, the ecological balance between village and environment, the invasion by colonizing tourist culture. There may also be a tendency for villages to decay or decline, accompanied by a loss of indigenous culture, and conflict between keeping the original folk house styles and a way of living on gaining knowledge of material comforts.

Thoughts and suggestions

Villagers, tourists, heritage protectionists and researchers are the subject group of rural village landscapes. Their value orientations have a significant influence on the development of rural villages. Based on this point, the author thinks it is important that we insist on the people-oriented protection in order to keep a balance between the demands of the three types of user. Villagers are the hosts. We should carry out the cultural preservation and transmission work to promote their understanding of the value of their own culture. Heritage researchers are important factors to adjust relations among the subject group. Their involvements can energize village life. Tourist activities must be restrained, geographically and temporally. Finally, to eliminate poverty is a dream for villagers. To achieve this the key is to use preservation of cultural heritage for development, and to motivate villagers from inside. Developing cultural industries may be a good idea for this important task, because when villagers start to pay attention to their culture, this action itself will become an integral part of village economic activity.

The origins of the new museology concept and of the ecomuseum word and concept, in the 1960s and the 1970s

*Hugues de Varine*¹⁵

I have been both a witness and an actor of the emergence and development of the so-called "new museology movement", while I was director of the International Council of Museums (ICOM). During this period (1964-1974), nobody talked about new museology, and the ecomuseum was mostly a French phenomenon, although there was a slow but very obvious "revolution" within the museum world, due to a number of political as well as cultural factors, among which the most important, in my opinion, are the following.

The recent independence of the majority of the former colonized countries, mostly in Africa. This political independence led naturally to a strong desire to strengthen national and local identities and to depart from the cultural influence of the colonial powers. For all scientific, cultural or educational institutions, the decision processes were taken over by local governments and institutions. Even if some countries adopted the classical Euro-American models, soon non-conventional initiatives were taken to establish more vernacular programmes, like in India, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal or Cuba.

In North America, equal rights movements among Afro-American, Latino and American-Indian groups. Faced with the domination, cultural as well as economic and political, of the white affluent classes, the oppressed minorities, under the charismatic leadership of great people like Martin Luther King, fought for their rights to equal treatment as citizens and to research their roots. Renewed interests in ethnic memory and cultural heritage among these groups resulted in soul music, books or calls for "repatriation" of alienated treasures, and exhibitions.

In Latin-America, revolutionary movements and the emergence of aboriginal and mestizo cultures. Among political and social struggles for freedom and democracy against military dictatorships, the population of many countries, predominantly American-Indian or Mestizo, rediscovered their pre-colonial past through anthropological and archaeological research and literary works. Cultural institutions and revolutionary movements tried to improve the representation of the various segments

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of the population, like in Cuba, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, and Salvador.

The 1968 "students movement" in Europe. The overall contestation of the intellectual and political establishment resulted in the creation of small groups of pioneers of new ways for expressing the essential problems of society, in education, culture and economy. The idea was to encourage imagination and creativity, and to go back to basic values.

The re-discovery of the cultural and social values of small local communities. The multiplication of open-Air museums in Scandinavia or Romania, and of regional Nature Parks in France are the visible examples of a new awareness of the need to reinforce community identity as an antidote to the growing standardization of culture. This was particularly true of rural areas in the process of desertification.

The identification of traditional cultural institutions with elite and captive publics. The traditional historical sites, monuments and museums, more and more protected and object of considerable investment, separated themselves from the mass of the population, in order to raise funds, undertake extensive restoration, expand their exhibition space and their collections, become essentially a leisure place for the rich and the educated, an educational aide for school parties, and a "must" for wandering tourists.

New Museology: three creative years followed by a slow but steady development

All the above factors combined led the most provocative young museum professionals to a feeling of dissatisfaction with the traditional museum model, then represented by ICOM. They were not organized, nor did they represent a significant proportion of the museum profession, but they were ready to invent something. This happened in the first years of the 1970s, almost by chance.

I can identify three different stages of this story:

Innovations. This covers largely the sixties, after the great museum week in Mexico (September 1964), which was a political, cultural and museological event of a great magnitude. Six museums were opened in succession, when the famous Museum of Anthropology, created by Pedro Ramirez Vazquez and Mario Vazquez, with the help of independent "experts" were asked to give advice on the exhibitions and interpretation of their own cultures.

During that period, many museum projects and experiments show the

impact of the above mentioned factors on heritage strategies:

- the neighbourhood museums in the USA, and particularly the Anacostia Neighbourhood Museum), created by John Kinard in that exclusive African-American area in Washington (DC) to offer his fellow citizens of a tool for restoring their cultural pride (self-confidence) and for finding solutions to their most pressing social and cultural needs (empowerment),
- the establishment of many open-air museums in Scandinavia, a result of the growing consciousness of the identity of local communities,
- the National Museum in Niamey (Niger) being commissioned by the President of the Republic and the Chairman of the National Assembly to unify the country and to promote the cultural values of the many different ethnic groups,
- the creation of Riksställningar, the National Institute for Travelling Exhibitions, in Sweden, which promoted interactions between local cultural activities and the rest of the world, through non-museum activities,
- the development of small local museums and the open-air museum in Marquise in France.

Formulation of new concepts. In 1971, 1972 and 1973, several major events occurred:

- a. the ICOM General Conference, held in 1971 in France, where it was decided to modify ICOM's definition of the museum, and to add the concept of development as one of the essential objectives of the institution. Speakers from Africa and Latin-America expressed strong feelings about the cultural specificity of non-European continents and people, and their need to develop independent museum models.
- b. during the same ICOM meeting, the word ecomuseum was coined, in order to relate the museum institution to natural and human ecology, as a contribution to the international debate on Environment and for the UN Conference to be held on this theme in Stockholm in 1972.
- c. in 1972, an international seminar organized by ICOM defined more precisely the term ecomuseum, linking it to the territory and to the population or community (this is called the "Rivière definition").
- d. that same year, a round table, organized jointly by Unesco and ICOM in Santiago de Chile for leading Latin American museum directors, defined the concept of the "integral museum", outlining the responsibility of the museum to serve all members of the community, including the most marginalized, particularly in urban situations.

- e. the years 1971 to 1973 saw also the birth of a new type of museum based within local communities in a partly industrial, partly agricultural zone in France around the cities of Le Creusot and Montceau. This is what was to be called later the Ecomuseum of Le Creusot-Montceau.
- f. I consider this succession of events as the actual source of the "new museology", although the word was never used at the time. At the ICOM General Conference, many members resisted fiercely any modification to the classical museological concepts. ICOM itself did not try to encourage a coordination of all these isolated cases. It was a sort of underground movement, born from a new awareness of the political usefulness of the museum, as a means of raising the cultural consciousness of local communities and of oppressed minorities.

Development of new practices. After this series of spontaneous initiatives and events, there was an explosion of local experiments and non-conventional projects, some of which failed, while others were very successful and became the origin of several generations of "new museums", which constitute now the new museology movement.

The most striking examples:

- industrial museums, mostly in Europe and North America, often following the closure of historic sites: mines, metallurgy, power plants; in many cases, former workers, who had become either unemployed or retired, were the founders or the main actors in these projects;
- school museums and community museums in Mexico, and in Mexico City the attempt to create "la casa del museo" in a slum suburb of the capital;
- ecomuseums in Quebec (Canada), France, Portugal, Norway, Sweden, Brazil, Japan and, of course, China.

One can identify two different tracks of development of these ideas. In Latin America, the influence of the Santiago Meeting led to the promotion of the "integral museum" which implies that there are associated social and political objectives in the projects. In the rest of the world, the influence of the Creusot-Montceau Ecomuseum, led to the creation of museums more oriented towards conserving and celebrating the memory of their communities.

Expansion and solidarity

Today, the movement is constantly expanding, with new formulas adapted to local contexts, in Italy, Spain, India, China, and Japan. Ecomuseums are not the only form used and they are not always linked to new museology. In France and in many other countries, the ecomuseum word has become fashionable and the philosophy is considered capable of replacing the traditional museum one, but includes local environmental interpretation centres or small anthropological museums dedicated to local traditions and crafts. In Canada, some commercially minded people have even invented the concept of the "economuseum", which is in fact a tourist-trap which makes and sells objects produced in the traditional way in front of the public.

Other names are used, sometimes to avoid the word museum or ecomuseum altogether. We find more and more community museums (Latin America), Cultural Parks (Spain) and Heritage programmes (Brazil, Australia, India, Canada).

An International Movement for New Museology (MINOM), affiliated to ICOM, was founded in 1984 and has tried to develop solidarity between these local initiatives, often carried out with little money, and sometimes being regarded as irrelevant by the museum 'establishment'. Several international meetings devoted to ecomuseology or community museums have been organized by various promoters: MINOM holds a Workshop every year in a different country, Brazil has convened already three international meetings of ecomuseums, Italy helps to organize cooperation between ecomuseums in Western and Eastern Europe.

And, finally, China opens her ecomuseums to the rest of the ecomuseological world. Thank you for your hospitality and for your creativity.

New museology and the de-Europeanization of museology

*Hugues de Varine*¹⁶

In the 1960s the International Council of Museums (ICOM), (which I served for 12 years between 1962 and 1974), was a club for big museums, mostly art and history museums from Europe and North America. In other countries, museums followed the models set up in the "old world", which was the rich world and the leading, 'first' world. Museology was not yet an academic discipline and museum professionals were distinguished scholars dedicated to the advancement of their respective fields of expertise.

The worldwide earthquake of decolonization and liberation wars, the international fora created by UNESCO and professional NGOs like ICOM, grassroots movements among ethnic minorities and local communities led, in less than one decade, to the emergence of a new generation of national and local cultural activists. They were interested in the preservation, use and transmission of their cultural and natural heritage, and were found in industrialized countries and in developing countries, in rural and urban areas. This had a strong impact on some young museum professionals, who were more interested in the ways that museums could be of service to society, the re-discovery of identity and independence rather than in "pure" scientific research. This resulted in the spontaneous movement which was later called "new museology", or even "ecomuseology".

This must be linked to a similar movement for the repatriation of heritage objects, documents and collections which had been "exported" to the great museums of the Colonial powers, in order to restore national pride and the cultural capital necessary for future development and true independence.

A few examples and events must be listed and analysed in order to decipher the complex nature and the clearly political contents of this movement, for instance:

- the National Museum of Niamey (Niger)
- the Neighbourhood museums in the United States
- the community museums in Mexico
- the Santiago Seminar in 1972
- Alpha Konaré's presidency of ICOM

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More recently, this issue was openly discussed in fora in Brazil, and on the Internet. Community museums, a term which covers also those ecomuseums which have established close links to their communities, are now frequently and publicly presented as instruments for the interpretation of heritage resources, as part of local development policies and programmes.

As a consequence, museological theories and museographical methods and techniques have changed: from the classical model *building-collection-public*, there has been a move to another model of *territory-heritage-population* (or community). The concept of collective responsibility for the heritage of the local community, the extensive use of exhibitions, interpretation sites, and participatory observation are among the new forms of museum practices.

This movement implies that there is no accepted or compulsory standard for this kind of vernacular museology: each community may devise its own model and find its own solutions to meet the needs of their local problems and to their living cultures.

Such museums are thus liberated from the European or North-American standards in museology. They help liberate the identity and creative potential of local communities, through a typical "bottom-up" process based on their heritage while being oriented towards the construction of their future.

Ecomuseology and sustainable development

*Hugues de Varine*¹⁷

We all know that Development, whether at international, national and local levels, has to be made and kept sustainable if we want it to succeed and to last. "Sustainable" means, in my opinion, not only the reasonable management and consumption by the human population of Earth's renewable and non-renewable resources, but also the personal and collective commitment to recognize the value of the common natural and cultural heritage of humankind, as a precondition for any development programme. Without this commitment, all so-called development plans and programmes will remain rootless and will bear short-lived results.

This is obviously not a responsibility that belongs only to governments or even to local powers. It is a requirement to be carried out by each citizen and by each human community. Natural and cultural heritage is a resource that is both non-renewable (we cannot replace a lost landscape, a ruined monument or the last master of a certain craft, since they are unique in themselves, at least to their community) and renewable (we can create new landscapes, new habitats, new artefacts). We all know that mass tourism, industrial pollution or economic crisis can destroy, effectively and quickly, not only monuments or natural environment, but also the cultures and the ways of life of whole populations, if they do not create themselves the cultural and mental antidotes to these exterior destructive factors.

So, we need educational tools to teach the present and future generations how to recognize, respect, use, transmit and produce this essential capital, as a base for building up all development processes, at local and global levels. Such a tool can be found in museums, or more generally speaking in exhibition techniques. But of course, if the museum, like the exhibition, wants to play this role in heritage education, it must adopt new teaching methods, new languages, a new proximity to its context and to the community to which it belongs, which means being or becoming a community museum. I wouldn't trust a big art museum, a scientific archaeological or natural history museum, dedicated to research, to tourist masses and to school parties, to do that. Even small local museums are ill equipped for dealing with complex situations, and even more so with global challenges.

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The "eco" prefix to ecomuseums means neither **economy**, nor **ecology** in the common sense, but essentially **human or social ecology**: the community and society in general, even mankind, are at the core of its existence, of its activity, of its process. Or at least they should be... This was the intuition of the "inventors" of the ecomuseum concept in the early 70s.

Some of the first ecomuseums, like many "new museums" today (which can be called by different names), have consciously and successfully devised methods and practices to fulfil these missions. My own experience with the Ecomuseum at Le Creusot-Montceau in France, or what I learned from the observation of the Projecto Identidade in Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil), my present work with aboriginal communities in Quebec (Canada) and elsewhere, many exchanges with correspondents all over the world, have convinced me that community (eco)museums and heritage education are among the best means of bringing people to the consciousness of their personal responsibility in:

- the conservation and balanced utilization of their environment and natural resources; of course these communities can and must adapt to the general social, economic and technical changes, but they should be allowed and helped to do it at their own rhythm, in continuity with their past and in accordance with their living culture(s).
- the preservation, transmission and permanent enrichment of their cultural heritage, base of their identity and of their creativity; this includes their immaterial heritage and their skills and know-how, because nomads should not lose their capacity to survive in an hostile environment, craftsmen should not forget the traditional materials, technologies, forms, etc.

I'll take as an example the Projecto Identidade, at the Quarta Colônia in the Brazilian southern State of Rio Grande do Sul. Although its promoters decided not to call it formally an ecomuseum, I find in it some of the components of an exemplary ecomuseological process. It started with a classical search for the memory of the first Italian migrants to the region, then it went to a general mobilization of the population on their culture, including the revitalization of their native language, an Italian dialect called Veneto. This led to the recognition of the original identity of the "Quarta Colônia" and of its social and economic current problems. Part of them had to do with the environment (the native forest known as "Mata Atlântica", which is an important asset for the preservation of the Biosphere), another part concerned the traditional agricultural resources, potatoes and rice, hydrological system, another the living conditions of the people, education, hygiene, housing, cultural services, etc. And it

became a concerted community development process that is still alive 15 years after its first steps.

One of the advantages of the community (eco)museum is its interactivity: it is not a traditional educational instrument, in the line of what Paulo Freire called "banking education", where people who know try to transfer knowledge to people who do not know. It is a two-way media, where the concrete knowledge and experience of the citizen is exchanged with the more learned theoretical knowledge of the specialist, through a jointly built exhibit. In the process, which is really the ecomuseological process, there is the construction of a shared understanding and a common work plan covering the whole field of development approached through its cultural dimension.

What conclusions can we draw from these statements?

One is that an ecomuseum, or a community museum, must define clearly its political and cultural objectives: sustainable development is both a political challenge and a cultural process. These objectives must be consciously shared at least by the active sector of the community, its leaders, its administrators, its educators, its parents, so that these local actors will become agents of the museological process and of the daily educational use of its activities.

Another conclusion, in my opinion, is that it must be, and remain, an expression of the community, an endogenous product, to be recognized by the community as its own property and instrument; so it must speak the language of the community, rooted in the living culture of the people. By language, I do not mean only the spoken and written language, but the means of communication which are easily understandable by everybody in the community, because they relate to its daily preoccupations.

It must at the same time remain open to the rest of the world in order to be able:

- to receive selected useful inputs from outside and to be a tool for adapting the community and its culture(s) to a changing world;
- to communicate the original contribution of the community to the global sustainability challenge. Here, we are not talking about mass tourism, or even classical ecotourism, but a provocative contribution to the eco-consciousness of the visitors, based on the actual practices of what would become a "model" community.

The ecomuseum can fulfil all these missions at the same time: reveal to the people what they are and what they own, lead them to an exemplary

behaviour and make them aware of their solidarity with other communities around the world and of their duty to them.

Ecomuseums worldwide: converging routes among similar obstacles

Maurizio Maggi¹⁸

The IRES institute has been involved, in last few years, in many working groups, together with museum professionals and local ecomuseum leaders. This has provided an opportunity to explore many ecomuseums worldwide and to compare many different local situations with new museology projects, the problems they face and the way they react. About 250 initiatives in the world call themselves “ecomuseums”, but although there is a deep knowledge of what is happening in the field, beyond official programs and declarations, it is necessary to understand them in depth. Almost all ecomuseums, even when using different denominations, have a particular mission: they try to promote sustainable development and citizenship through local heritage and participation. The most relevant obstacles they face seem to be the same almost everywhere: people involvement, effective leadership and the continuity of the initiatives. Some provisional warnings can be drawn from this experience.

Ecomuseums worldwide

After its first appearance, in France at the beginning of the seventies, the ecomuseum approach experienced a slow expansion. At the end of the decade there were less than 20 initiatives in Europe calling themselves “ecomuseum” or applying the ecomuseum method, and even less in the rest of the world. The new approach initially found fertile soil especially in Portugal and Scandinavia and, out of Europe, in Canada and notably in Latin America. *Museum*, the quarterly review of UNESCO, testified the importance of ecomuseums in 1985 by devoting a whole volume to the subject and providing a vivid worldwide picture of the state of the art. This new situation was far from surprising if we consider the many different new features the new model implied, such as the participatory approach in management and the innovative museography schemes, which tried to implement the idea of holistic description of places and communities. This approach impressed many contemporary scholars and museum professional, as reported in the literature of those early years. The crucial precedents for the development of the new ecomuseum approach were due to the creation of a number of new political and cultural environments throughout the world. As a result this

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provided new situations, which were ideal for the establishment of ecomuseums. For example there were changes in Portugal after 1974 with the new political and cultural situation experienced as a result of the end of the dictatorship; similarly egalitarian tension and the pressure towards a larger political involvement of people which spread in the seventies and still crosses the southern American continent. In addition there has always been the historical and deeply rooted point of view of the Scandinavian museology towards the idea of cultural landscape that supports the ecomuseum ideal. However, in many other countries –Italy among them- change would not come easily, as there has been a rooted primacy of objects and material collections and their pivotal role in museums. This situation was exacerbated further by the presence of a strong public bureaucracy in the heritage domain, which represented severe resistance towards new museological approaches. The “French case” was an important stimulus for supporting debates on the new ideas, but ecomuseum initiatives were rare if not absent (as in Italy, for instance).

The following decade, the eighties, and the first years of the nineties as well, witnessed a lively creation of new museums referring –in theory at least - to the ecomuseum model, which occurred in France and in many other European and non European countries. This further stage took place in a new scenario, characterised by the worldwide raising of local power (vs. the central state) and strong regional competition among different districts (at least in Europe), led by emerging local leaderships and inspired by the principles of place marketing. The new emerging local class also managed its rivalry with the central government on a symbolic ground. Being short of “high level” museum collections, local authorities found the idea of museums without walls, permanent staff, or running costs fascinating. That they were mainly based on a widely available local heritage was also intriguing. At the same time regional competition - in the tourism market but not only there - encouraged the discovery of local distinctiveness. Unfortunately this was often misunderstood and misdirected towards the mechanical replication of a formula, so producing nothing more than ineffective cliché. As a result, in the middle of the nineties, about a hundred ecomuseums or would-be ecomuseums, existed in the world.

During the last decade, the number of ecomuseums has nearly doubled, and there are now 250-300 initiatives in the world, which are situated mainly in France, Italy, the Iberian peninsula, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, Canada, Mexico (although with the name of *Museos comunitarios*), Brazil, Japan and now also in China. Recently there has been more consideration by the promoters of the ecomuseums on items like local distinctiveness and people involvement than there was during the eighties, but the problems are still not resolved.

Ecomuseums: theory and reality

Many initiatives, groups and museums are now calling themselves “ecomuseums”, but these are sometimes nothing more than normal ethnographic museums and far from implementing the theories supported by the new museology. Others, on the contrary, try to perceive ecomuseological goals, such as sustainable development and community building through heritage and participation, without using the name “ecomuseum” (Hugues de Varine provides an effective picture of this contradictory situation). Probably the most effective way to detect the real ecomuseological consistency of an initiative, is to see its results, although these are not easy to assess (Peter Davis provides an effective analysis of this issue). However, by observing the overall “ecomuseum movement”, we can see, through the confusion and contradictions which are the normal conditions of any growing social and cultural phenomenon, that some common features emerge.

Some obstacles

Almost all ecomuseums, regardless of where they are, how large they are or how long they have operated, face specific problems linked to the local situation and their peculiar history, and structural problems. Among the latter, we can undoubtedly observe participation, training and continuity.

People involvement is still the first priority of most ecomuseums. *Participation* is both a necessary means to achieve the ecomuseum’s goal and an essential part of the goal itself. It doesn’t matter whether it occurs in the rural areas of China or in a valley in the European Alps: development often means a sea change in the local society’s organisation and lifestyle, which is impossible without participation. Three items to be considered:

- Involvement cannot be an “extra”, it must be a central factor from the beginning of any project; it is very difficult to involve people in a project if it is conceived without their input.
- Leadership ability is the essential skill; it is the most important investment you can make in order to develop a place: a balance must always be maintained between investments on “things” and people.
- Strategies of involvement are necessary, and not only museological techniques. It means you must know which interests can mobilise people in your specific context and to offer them practicable ways to be involved in the ecomuseum project.

Training is a second problem. The ecomuseum concept is a relatively new one and knowledge is crucial. Experiences from the past are scarce and not always properly supported by the scientific literature. Some relevant issues seem to be:

- Training is a two-way path: the professionals can also learn a lot from the local non professionals; it is important to find a common “language” in order to properly communicate with both groups.
- It is mainly a question of creating a “learning environment”: our normal educational paradigm is pyramidal: one teacher-many pupils, but we need a net-like paradigm with many teachers-many pupils (but this is expensive and doesn’t match the framework of our educational system)
- Training is not just for people directly involved in ecomuseum management, but also for adult local people: if a new approach to the place and to the local heritage is necessary, a new knowledge for the citizens (a new citizenship) is necessary as well

If it is difficult to create an ecomuseum, it is maybe even more difficult to give it *continuity* and sustain it. Also, the best ecomuseum lives a dangerous life and runs a permanent risk of disappearance. Three issues to work with:

- Relationships with local authorities is crucial, because authorities are permanent factors. But on the other hand a too strong institutional presence can restrain the ecomuseum’s ability to involve outsiders (people generally not interested in heritage initiatives).
- Relationships between professionals and volunteers are crucial because institutional bodies (universities, research centres) are again permanent factors, but a sound model of cooperation must be found (otherwise the previous point can also emerge).
- Relationships with local society and its ability to offer new leaders; it is crucial to provide a turn-over of leaders and the continuity of the substance (not necessarily of the form) of the ecomuseum.

Converging routes?

A large team of about 30 European ecomuseums was created in 2004 as a permanent workshop, to survey ecomuseum activities and ideas and to propose solutions for the many problems arising (IRES and Trento County were among the promoters). The emerging results for the involved ecomuseums are that participation, training and research are the most central issues. Best practice exchange, learning journeys through ecomuseums and provision of self-assessment tools seem to

be the most marked solutions to face these issues. However, international meetings and relationships with many scholars and in-the-field actors, provide a larger outlook for ecomuseums and similar initiatives, in many countries and continents.

Looking at them we observe:

- A new, more reliable and well-grounded approach to local distinctiveness, an attempt to discover the diversity of places slowly, avoiding the shortcuts sometimes suggested by “place marketing” science promoted by tourism initiatives. Local distinctiveness is realized through participation, in order to support citizenship and the building of new local leadership. Parish maps, participative inventories, discovery walking are just a few of the methods used to reach this converging strategy.
- A significant focus on mutual training among ecomuseums worldwide. Often the answer to an ecomuseum’s problem can be found in another one. That is why international cooperation plays such a crucial role. For this to be fruitful, it is necessary to have interpretive grids to properly “read” the visited ecomuseums. Here, the role of scholars, universities and research institutes can be relevant. But it is even more important to be part of a permanent, flexible and non bureaucratic network of ecomuseums.

Again, participatory approaches, mutual self-training and research are keywords. International cooperation is of central importance, provided it is grounded on local resources. As Su Donghai once told me: ‘for a tree to grow well, the seed can be international, but the soil must be local’.

Ecomuseums: a mirror, a window, or a show-case ?

Marc Maure¹⁹

New museology - a new role for museums

A great pioneer of new museology, John Kinard (Director of the Anacostia Neighbourhood Museum, Washington DC) described the role of museums as follows:

"If museums are to meet the needs of the man of today and tomorrow, they must involve themselves in every area of human existence. This is a responsibility that challenges their most creative resources. Instead, they stand accused on three points:

- 1. failing to respond to the needs of a great majority of the people.*
- 2. failing to relate the knowledge of the past to the grave issues confronting us today or to participate in meeting those issues.*
- 3. failing to overcome their blatant disregard of minority cultures".*

(John Kinard, "To Meet the Needs of Today's Audience", *Museum News*, 1972)

New museology - new museum models in the 1970s

Museums which have the characteristics of new museology – as do ecomuseums, among others - can be defined by the following paradigms:

Identity: The valorisation of cultures that were "forgotten" when nation states and national identity were built. The culture of ethnic and others minorities becomes the areas favoured by the new museology.

Ecology: An ecological approach, global and dynamic, to the complex inter-relations between people and their environment, including the historical and cultural dimensions.

Participation: The members of the community do not just passively receive the message delivered by experts, but they take an active part in the operation of the museum, in dialogue with professional museologists.

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Norway – the tradition of the open-air museum

In Norway during the 19th century, national identity was built on the rural heritage, that is to say, the traditional culture of farmers. For the past 100 years a very large number of rural ethnographic museums / open-air museums have dominated the Norwegian museum system.

Norway – the development of new museums during the 1980s

The museum development in Norway during the 1980s was marked by the occurrence of reaction against traditional rural open-air museums. New models of museums - such as ecomuseums - were created, emphasizing other heritages - the maritime heritage, the industrial heritage, and the heritage of minorities (such as the Sami, also known as Lapland people).

The ecomuseum - a mirror

Georges-Henri Rivière, the "father" of ecomuseums in France, defined the role of ecomuseums as the following:

“An ecomuseum is an instrument conceived, fashioned and operated jointly by a public (for example, local) authority, and its local population.... It is a mirror in which the local population views itself to discover its own image, in which it seeks an explanation of the territory to which it is attached and of the populations that have preceded it... It is a mirror that the local population holds up to visitors” (Rivière, 1985)

The concept of the mirror is an essential. The ecomuseum is a consciousness-raising instrument for the community. It allows them to increase their knowledge of their own culture, and to become aware of the values it represents. In this mirror, the community sees itself, recognizes itself, finds itself "beautiful" and learns to love itself. This self-esteem is a necessary condition for learning to love "others".

The ecomuseum - a window

But the danger of using the mirror is to fall in love with one's own image, and to find everybody else outside of the community "ugly" or inferior. This is the problem with societies that are so convinced of their superiority and of their own values that they show indifference, hostility and

even aggression to anything that is foreign. It is therefore necessary that ecomuseums should not be closed upon themselves. They should also be a window, that is to say, an opening to the world outside that will invite dialogue and exchange with the "others", the foreigners who visits the museum.

Nostalgia

In the film "Nostalgia" by the Russian director Andrej Tarkovski, the main character, a Russian intellectual in exile in Italy, thinks with nostalgia about his country which is far away, about the culture which is lost, about his language that he can no longer use. Nostalgia is a profound and necessary emotion for all individuals and all societies. Nostalgia is the feeling that something essential has been lost in time and in space, and that it must not be forgotten. Ecomuseums - like all museums - cultivate nostalgia. In fact, this is the fundamental reason for the existence of all museums. But ecomuseums should not be only an instrument for the cult of nostalgia, that is to say only a mirror that reflects the past. They should also be a window opened to the real world of today. Ecomuseums must help the community to come to terms with what has been lost and what is being lost, to open up to the world and to prepare for the future.

A showcase

Ecomuseums have great potential for the development of activities in connection with tourism. This is, of course, extremely important for the economic development of the community. If we look at tourism activities, the relationships between the community and the visitor are not based on a dialogue between individuals operating on the same level, but on monetary exchange, the sale and purchase of cultural products. The visitor is not a guest but a customer. In this situation, ecomuseums are not a window, they are a showcase.

More and more ecomuseums, as well as other museums in many countries, are faced with the need to develop commercial activities that require them - among other methods – to increase the number of visitors, hence tourism. The question we must ask ourselves is how can this showcase function develop without damaging the function of the mirror? An ecomuseum must of necessity combine both the functions of the mirror and the window.

But can ecomuseums be both a mirror for the community and a showcase for tourism?

Ecomuseums - what are they?

In fact, the question we are asking is to identify exactly what ecomuseums are. Are ecomuseums mainly museums for community development, that is to say, a definition based on the social and cultural roles of the museum? Or is an ecomuseum mainly a “decentralized” museum or a museum “without walls”, aimed at all types of users and particularly tourists, that is to say, a definition based on the type of physical infrastructure of the museum?

In reality

“There is no bible for ecomuseums. They will all be different according to the specific culture and situation of the society they present”, say The Liuzhi Principles, and that is probably a good conclusion.

Standards, performance measurement and the evaluation of ecomuseum practice and 'success'

*Peter Davis*²⁰

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is responsible for administering the 'Accreditation Standard', a scheme that sets nationally agreed standards for UK museums (MLA, 2004). These include basic conditions relating to how they are governed and managed, the services they provide to their users, and how they care for and document their collections. Successful 'Accreditation' means that museums are then eligible to apply to sources of funding otherwise unavailable; however, the overall process encourages better planning and development of museums and leads to greater benefits for their visitors. The scheme provides 'benchmarks' – minimum standards of practice - for the services provided. In addition, as museums have become more professional, they have adopted management practices that encourage reflection and assessment of their achievements, namely performance measurement. In the UK, museums administered by local authorities are required to assess their performance through measurement systems known as 'Best Value' or 'Comprehensive Performance Assessment'. This brief paper explores what these approaches demand of museums in the UK, and questions whether the application of such standards and performance measurement to ecomuseums is either desirable or feasible. Are such management techniques useful to ecomuseums, and can they be used to effectively judge the success of ecomuseum projects?

Standards.

MLA Accreditation requires a museum to reach standards in four discrete but related areas: governance and management; user services; visitor facilities and collections management. The aims of the scheme are not just to assist museums to reach these standards, but by doing so to foster confidence in museums (which hold collections in trust) and engender a shared ethic, a 'code of practice'. Accreditation is a stamp of approval, providing national recognition as an 'Accredited Museum'. The process of accreditation also has the potential to improve staff morale and motivation and promote the awareness of curatorial activity to a wider audience.

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Governance and museum management. The MLA's requirements in this area demand that there is an acceptable constitution for the governing body and proper management arrangements, including those for the ownership of the collections. Security, financial bases, strategic planning, emergency planning, adequate staffing and training, access to professional advice and compliance with health and safety regulations are important considerations where minimum standards must be met to achieve accreditation.

User services. Several basic user services make up the MLA's requirements, including published information on location, opening arrangements and the facilities available to visitors. Access, including provision for an inclusive approach to visiting, the consultation with user groups, making collections and their associated data widely available, and the support of interpretive facilities (exhibitions, activities) that promote learning and enjoyment must all meet basic standards.

Visitor facilities. The requirements for accreditation in this area include the provision of a wide range of accessible public facilities (shop, restaurant, toilets, cloakrooms), appropriate signage and orientation internally and externally, excellent customer care and the maintenance of visitor facilities to a high standard of functionality and cleanliness.

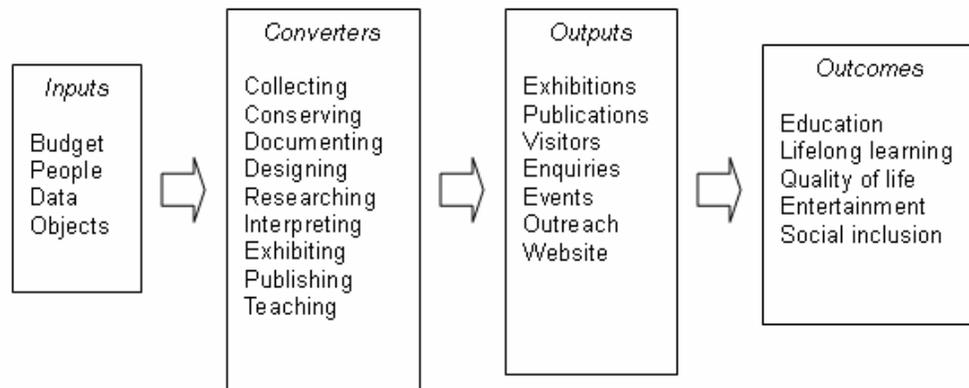
Collections management. The care of collections is a pivotal role for all 'traditional' museums, and the MLA has an extensive list of standards that must be met to achieve accreditation. A formal collection and disposal policy, the maintenance of agreed guidelines and procedures for collections documentation and the maintenance of the documentary evidence are all essential features. Standard phrases are provided for adoption into the formal collection policy in order to ensure museums adhere to international conventions (such as UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Illicit trade in Cultural Property, the CITES Convention), and national laws (e.g. the UK Treasure Act 1996) or guidelines (e.g. Spoilation principles, 1998, see www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/spoilation.html). Evidence of procedures to minimise the risk of deterioration and damage to collections must be provided, including a comprehensive professional security survey of the potential risks of theft, vandalism or other potential disasters.

In the Accreditation Guidelines the MLA also makes constant reference to other 'codes of practice' which it suggests should be met, such as the Code of Ethics for Museums (Museums Association, 2002), or sources of advice for good practice, such as the National Centre for Volunteering's (2005) guidelines on health and safety for volunteer workers, or on how best to assist visitors with a disability (MLA, 2004). A comprehen-

sive list of other related organizations is provided, all of which have generated their own standards of practice, including ICOM (Code of Professional Ethics), the Museum Ethnographers Group (codes for dealing with ethnographic collections, including human remains), ICCROM (Indicators for Preventative Conservation) and Resource (on access and cultural diversity).

Performance Measurement

Good management requires that targets are set, and that performance towards reaching those targets is measured. The area of management dealing with performance measurement is rife with jargon. So museum managers require performance **indicators**, that is, any information that helps to judge how well a service is being delivered, and performance **measures**, which are useful statistical information. Performance **standards** relate to the levels and quality of service provision that is expected, while **targets** are commitments made in advance to achieve a level of service. Any museum service requires inputs, outputs and outcomes:



Performance measurement can tell us how economically, efficiently and effectively outputs and outcomes are being achieved. Perhaps the most difficult decisions to make are how to choose a museum's performance indicators – they should be relevant, uncomplicated and capable of quick analysis. They should also be related to strategic aims, cover both quality and quantity, and above all, assist managers to make decisions. This means that performance measures must be chosen with real care and reflect the nature of the organisation and its mission. Typical indicators used in the UK are number of visitors per month, number of

tourist visits per season, the number of acquisitions made in the year, the percentage of collections fully documented, the number of exhibitions staged, the number of educational school visits and so on.

Ecomuseums and standards.

Ecomuseums, as demonstrated during the Guizhou Conference, do not conform to a particular pattern. They vary in how they are governed, managed, financed and staffed, in their approach to collecting, and the services and facilities they provide for visitors. Some – such as the larger French ecomuseums of Pays de Rennes, or Ecomusée d’Alsace, are essentially very professional and well-resourced ecomuseums that conform to MLA standards of management. However, most ecomuseums are small institutions that rely on local Associations (sometimes working with other funding or professional bodies) to achieve their aims. This is not to say that they are badly governed or managed, but simply that they have adopted different systems that suit their circumstances and will have set different standards. However, it is very clear that many ecomuseums face financial problems, and do not have sufficient staff expertise, nor a strategy to ensure their development and sustainability. There are many instances of short-lived or extinct ecomuseums - for example many of those that appeared on a wave of enthusiasm in Quebec in the 1980s have disappeared – and many other small rural ecomuseums share a difficult ‘hand to mouth’ existence.

Because of the variation in the range of ecomuseums it would be very difficult to apply a set of agreed standards that they all must reach, although I would argue that adopting some of those required by the MLA would be no bad thing. However, a case might be made to adopt standards that more closely reflect the philosophy of ecomuseums.

So, with respect to governance and management we might accept that as ‘standard practice’ a local association/community will manage the ecomuseum according to an agreed, written constitution, with proper management arrangements, but that active public participation in a democratic manner will be adopted as a matter of principle. We might also expect reference to a ‘twin-management’ system, where there is joint ownership and management between local people and ‘experts’. Emphasis would also need to be given to the importance of volunteers and their support and training. There would also need to be a forward plan that includes a statement of purpose, outlining the specific objectives that are peculiar to the ecomuseum’s situation – with essential reference to the aim of aiding local regeneration, social and environmental development.

Similar detailed specific changes to MLA standards – reflecting the subtleties of ecomuseum activity – could equally be applied to all other areas of practice, including collecting, exhibitions, events and education. What, I suspect, would make an ecomuseum statement of standards appear somewhat different, would be its emphasis on the local – on local geography and environment, local economy and local products, local distinctiveness, and especially, the needs of local people. Arguably, standards might be more ‘inward-looking’ so emphasizing the needs of those most closely involved with the ecomuseum, as well as its visitors. What is clear is that this issue of ecomuseums standards of practice is yet to be fully explored, and it is certainly one that demands further exploration and research.

Ecomuseums and performance measurement.

The variation in ecomuseum practices and procedures, differences in scale and funding, and differences in local situations mean that applying an accepted list of performance indicators to ecomuseums is also fraught with difficulty. Ecomuseums will frequently have very different strategic visions, and hence very different long and short-term targets in terms of their performance. If their vision is so different, what performance indicators, or performance measures, should we adopt?

If, for example, we consider the Soga (Guizhou) ecomuseum, its strategic vision is to utilise local ethnic minority culture to enable sustainable cultural tourism and benefit the lives of local people. However, the other, arguably more important vision on the part of the regional government and its Norwegian supporters has been to benefit local people by liberating resources to pay for essential utilities such as running water, medical care and sanitation. These two aims have gone hand-in-hand in order to create a sustainable situation for the Miao people. So what sort of performance targets could be adopted for 2006 to ensure that Miao culture survives and that the ecomuseum functions effectively? They might include:

- Train x local people in the techniques of interpretation in the next year in order to facilitate a better museum experience
- Led by the local people, carry out a review the management structure for the ecomuseum and negotiate a way of working with local officials
- Secure x,000 Yuan from the local government to develop the ecomuseum ‘documentation centre’ with more emphasis on the lives and stories of local people

- Attract x,000 tourist visits to the site
- Develop, with the help of specialist, a village web site to promote the ecomuseum; monitor the number of hits
- Set achievable targets for the production and sale of local crafts
- Attract 200 local schools to the ecomuseum site
- Carry out 50 interviews with local people to add to the database in the Documentation Centre

These are, of course, purely hypothetical, as I have little knowledge of the local situation. However, having set such targets means that a system begins to be put in place to measure, at the end of 2006, what has been achieved in relation to these targets, a measure of ecomuseum success. I would suggest that ecomuseums should take performance management seriously – being ‘different’ from other museums does not mean they cannot apply these techniques and benefit from them.

Ecomuseum ‘success’ – the importance of ‘capital’.

I do, however, have some doubts about only applying statistics and management techniques – do they really capture the essence of ecomuseums, can they really measure the success of such projects? During recent work in Piemonte, Italy (Corsane et. al. in prep) it became very clear during conversations with ecomuseum activists that apart from the standard measures of performance (number of visitors, number of events, number of educational activities, proportion of local residents visiting etc.) there was one other very significant outcome that was neither predicted, nor really measurable. This was the impact that the ecomuseums had had on the lives of the people closely involved in their establishment, management and plans for the future. Without an exception, the local people interviewed referred to the ways in which their social and intellectual lives – their own personal visions - had changed as a result of being actively involved. They felt that they had acquired knowledge (of the past, of a process, of local history or local environment), skills (techniques, language, communication), new social networks and deep friendships. Some had travelled to other countries as a result of their ecomuseum involvement, so recognising the significance of their heritage and that of others. They had become to feel proud of their place, and took pride in knowing they had played a part in either conserving or interpreting part of their heritage. All had a renewed sense of purpose – in short they had acquired social and cultural capital.

But does this acquisition of capital go beyond those immediately involved with ecomuseum projects and reach out further into local communities? The interviews in Piemonte suggested this is the case. Initially

in Piemonte it was demonstrated as a 'ripple effect' amongst the participants' families and friends, but as more local people have become involved, and ecomuseums have become better established, so more local people have also began to gain a measure of capital. Perhaps, with the ecomuseum philosophy in mind we should identify the gain of 'capital' by local residents as a key measure of success – one that is arguably much more significant than the more measurable performance statistics.

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Museum, ecomuseum, anti-museum: new approaches to heritage, society and development

Tereza Cristina Scheiner²¹

The history of humankind is permeated by the experience of territoriality. Each human group designs and defines its identity in the local sphere. Immediately after the sensible territories of the body and of the mind, our primary level of connection to the outside world, we recognize our territories of origin – the geographic spaces to which we fundamentally identify and connect – even if, nomads by origin or by contingency, our life is spent in constant movement. It is at local level that we first define ourselves, our ‘culture’, articulating our biological and cultural singularities in the symbolic constructor that will identify us as presence; and where cultural forms are designed, under kinship relations, or neighbouring links. Cultural studies have systematically proven the immense political force which emanates from such articulations.

Yet the development of technology and of the means of transportation has diminished, through time, the importance of locally defined cultures, giving privilege to the mechanisms of association through wider territories. Artificially planned spaces were instituted, and the social order identified, more and more, with architectural order. Reaching for the ‘perfect space’, planners of old and modern cities conceived the architecture and distribution of buildings according to criteria of uniformity, regularity and homogeneity: buildings were subordinated to the necessities of the city as a whole, and artificial spaces were identified, dedicated to different functions, or to different categories of people. More and more, spontaneous relations were substituted by formal social relations, developed in artificial spaces, which overcame natural spaces. We have inherited a world organized as a cross path of territorial, urbanistic and architectonic units, planned and articulated to offer a rational coherence between the whole and its parts.

At a certain point of this process, the importance of tradition and folklore as spontaneous mechanisms of symbolic representation, at popular level, decreased. The local sources of authority have been relegated to a minor level, generating, in most societies, a deep sentiment of loss of identity. Today, when cybernetic space has arisen as a new element, operating in real time, people are learning to communicate virtually. The Web creates a false perception of presence: being near now means being connected – even when the other is at the far side of the world.

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But instead of unifying people, the virtual environment has created a new form of polarization: while it diminishes distance and connects people, it draws from the territory its significance and identity. Information flows, independently of its bearers, and signs are reordered without the reordering of bodies in the geographic space. A global elite exerts power over those who are geographically limited, without even having to keep direct contact with such communities. Separated by physical spaces and temporal distances, we pretend that the experiences developed at local level are not important.

In this context, the sense of belonging modifies, and mobility becomes a privilege of the elites. The 'social' locality has been transferred to cyberspace; local territories lose their social significance and are reduced to mere physical spaces, or redesigned as periphery. In a world of globalized cities and economies, specialization of consumer markets reorganizes labour; the formal labour market of Modernity loses its central character as a social force – great contingents of manpower lose stability and the distribution of wealth becomes more and more unequal. Marginality grows and becomes grave social and economic exclusion, with the consequent aggravation of the problems related to the maintenance of basic quality of life: housing, public health, food, education.

It is not by chance that the global imaginary has put under quest the significance of concepts such as 'national culture' or 'cultural heritage'. When a new cultural industry gains shape, diffusing as productive sector and radiating from the dominant centres through the Web, many cultural forms are mutilated and destroyed.

New perspectives for heritage and development

All these changes bring the need of new directions for the world policies of culture and development. There is a growing attention to the concept of planet Earth as a global ecosystem, with global economy as a subsystem. Nature and humankind are now perceived as natural capital – and the adoption of policies of development which take into account the balance between economy, nature and humankind become a priority for all. At world and regional level, programs and policies that support biodiversity, multiculturalism, group identities and the world heritage become a reality.

It is now imperative to examine the importance of identities and of heritages, at local level – where individual exchanges still takes place. It is

at the local sphere where history creates and re-creates its links²², and where contemporary societies develop compensatory mechanisms that articulate their lack of ideologies and their fears of change: community or neo-tribal partnerships; recovery of folklore and of the rituals of tradition; creation of new popular rituals. It is in the sphere of tradition, long lasting memories and the exotic that individuals and social groups re-view the links between space and social memory.

That brings the need to re-conceive heritage and development.

Since 1997, UNESCO²³ has called attention to the risk of reducing the idea of development to economic development, assigning culture a mere instrumental function – a simple means for the promotion of economic progress. Identifying culture and identity to the explosion of the markets, we forget that the cultural stability of societies has strong links with the natural environment and with traditional values, memories, institutions and everyday practices. All communities have physical and spiritual roots symbolically linked to their origins – and this is their main means of identity. Most people wish to participate in ‘modernity’, but without leaving aside their traditions.

The search for a sustainable future requires the recognition of the cultural values of all societies – including those considered, up to recent times, as ‘minor’, ‘exotic’ or ‘decadent’. And the great challenge of educational and cultural agencies is to make sure that all social groups have their cultural identities considered. The practice of a multicultural ethic also implies the courage to face convergent and divergent knowledge, ideas and perceptions of development, from local to global levels. This means revising the concepts of knowledge and development - accepting the possibility of the existence of different paradigms of knowledge, different levels and forms of development. Local and traditional practices are not to be considered cultural curiosities, but as cultural patterns which are as important as literature. This is the difference that has to be made concerning the 20th century.

Among the mechanisms which may effectively offer alternatives to the perverse game of forces instituted by the local vs. global paradox, the world heritage experience gains a growing importance. It may serve as a true alternative of survival, especially to those small localities, whose socioeconomic structure is essentially linked to local values and dynamics. To nominate a local community as world heritage may be a

²² maffesóli, Michel. Apud Claval, Paul. *Human Geography*. p. 405

²³ UNESCO. *Our Creative Diversity*. World Commission for Culture and Development, 1997. p. 11-21

way of defining its place in the world, to project it towards the world, as-signing it a distinguished place in the globalized context - without draining its essential forms of identity and local organizational forms; or ignoring the pre-existent affective links between local groups, their total environment and their system of production. In a world where local and global are more and more perceived as opposed values, defining local communities as world heritage may represent a movement of aggregation of values, effectively contributing to their economic and symbolic sustainability.

Each community defined as world heritage must be able to: a) protect its essential and more important identification traits – thus guaranteeing the continuity of its symbolic production and sociocultural dynamics; b) incorporate more ‘contemporary’ values and qualities, being able to participate in the globalized society (and specially in the tourist market).

Let us not forget that the process of constitution of heritages depends of the recognition of the value of a distinctive context by a social group – a tangible and/or intangible context, which is vital for the maintenance, valorisation and development of its identity. And, since the new social contract implies rethinking the relationships between nature and humankind, instituting natural heritage as a new instance of the sacred, this context will necessarily include the natural context and its relationship to local cultural forms. It is also important to recognize that the relationship with heritage is a history of emotions, strongly influenced by the relational subtleties between the geographic environment and our sensible universe. That recognition and valuation of heritage has a strong emotional component, founded in the sense of belonging that each individual or group develops towards their environment. The strong links between heritage and the total environment must be acknowledged: it is not possible to think about heritage as a group of objects and/or monuments – mere cultural products, forgetting the intangible references or the signs of the human presence over the territory.

The valuation of heritage contexts, both in complex urban areas or in small local communities may benefit from some clearly defined movements:

- a. recognition and valuation of the immense interactive network of relationships existent at the base of cultural, spiritual and social diversity. To recognize and respect the total heritage of all social groups is a fundamental ethical duty of contemporary societies. In 1999, the book *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Bio-*

diversity²⁴ focused the central importance of such values in the appreciation and preservation of all life forms. The book demonstrates that many cultures still recognize nature as an extension of society, starting from perception of natural phenomena. Based in the cultural experience of indigenous peoples of all continents, it emphasizes the strong relational links between communities, culture, spirituality, nature and territory, offering a strong opposition against the implicit prejudices that lie under the perception of certain cultural groups and/or manifestations as 'minor' or 'exotic'.

- b. recognition of the intangible bases of heritage. It must be remembered that heritage is not a ready-made reality, but a process, a permanent construction of the social body. As such, it is based in a context of symbolic values of tangible and intangible nature, which are themselves in permanent development. Therefore, it is very important to acknowledge what the different social groups define, today, as heritage. And this must be done by asking the groups which are the symbolic traits they identify with.
- c. respect for the internal systems of values of each cultural group. Traditional costumes and rituals may be preserved in a sustainable way, thus contributing to strengthen the integrative links between social groups. But this must be done in a way that does not imply that traditional societies will be 'cared for' by other social groups: they must be able to develop their own strategies of sustainable development. Respect for this simple rule will prevent unnecessary frictions and strategic distortions in the policies of valuation and protection of heritage; each social group will only value and respect the references they identify with, no matter which policies are developed around those references.

Humanized strategies of heritage action: the role of museology

All these points lead to the perception that heritage development claims for humanist policies and strategies of action. It is not enough to provide for people's welfare: it is also necessary to recognize and respect the affective mechanisms that link communities to their places of living and local cultural practices, in all kinds of environments – in small vil-

²⁴ Posey, Darrell A. *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Diversity. A complementary contribution to the global diversity assessment.* UNEP / ITP, 1999. 764 p. II.

lages, but also in complex urban environments.

Preserving the sense of belonging is a sure way to guarantee social balance and a peaceful road to economic development. All governments know that today it is only possible to attain manageability by developing a balanced system of alliances and networks between the private and the public sectors. And the importance of the cooperation of social actors, at local level, to the success of such policies has been more than proven²⁵.

Those humanist strategies will include:

Recognition of people and social health as heritage. By doing so, it is possible to value the relationships between people and their territories, especially in areas that have a strong potential as heritage sites. It is imperative to reflect on the relationship between culture, environment and heritage from a humanistic perspective, remembering that people are the social heritage of a country – especially children and youngsters, who are the stakeholders of its present and of its future. All have the right to a dignified life, in an environment which values individual and group potentialities. For decades, UNESCO's studies have proved the importance of adequate housing, education, health and work opportunities for social and cultural development. But we may not forget that these are also important heritage values. It is a primary ethical duty of those who work in the heritage field to insist on the adequate connections between social and economic development policies and heritage development policies – in all regions of the world.

Development of mechanisms to help people deal with heritage. Many heritage areas in all regions of the world are occupied by people with major economic and social difficulties, and are considered by specialists as explosive cellars of social marginality. It may be very difficult to implement policies of heritage protection and/or tourist development in those areas, if the local inhabitants are not connected to them. It is important to stimulate the affective relationship of individuals towards their areas of residence, strengthening the bonds at family and/or neighborhood level, bonds which are so important to the sentiment of belonging, the roots of identity. Local communities need to be aware that, before belonging to the higher social strata, the government or the tourists, heritage belongs to them – it is their environment. They must

²⁵ The social responsibility of enterprises, as well as of labor unions and organizations based in voluntary work must also be remembered. In several countries, voluntary networks are responsible for a considerable percentage of the Gross Internal Product, in services and products directly related to social and to heritage action. This is a potential that only starts to be taken into account.

also be aware that they are part of this heritage. The strategies of heritage awareness may include development of environmental education programs²⁶ and of community museums.

Musealization of 'heritage contexts' represents a second level of intervention over geographical areas defined for their patrimonial relevance. The process of musealization usually defines the limits and possibilities of the experiences, providing a pathway for action. In those cases, the ecomuseum experience may be a real alternative – when developed by local groups, with minor intervention from the outside. There is a real danger of having governments, official policy-making bodies, traditional museums and even museum specialists involved in developing ecomuseum experiences. All these actors may – and must – be involved in the process of musealization and management of heritage sites; yet they cannot assume the voice of the communities and must never stand for their leaders. An ecomuseum or community museum that does not speak for itself is not a positive heritage experience: it is an anti-museum, a reality that only exists in academic and/or official documents. So, we must respect what has been long proposed in many ICOM documents: let the communities speak and act for themselves.

Identification of the positive community experiences that already exist, and the implementation of such experiences through networks of community action. Some of these experiences refer directly to cultural production and development; others, to the maintenance of traditions. But they all have in common the fact that they were started and are developed by local people, who have learnt how to deal with their tangible and intangible heritage.

Many experiences may be taken as example, and I will only mention some Latin American experiences. In Rio de Janeiro, the Ecomuseum of Santa Cruz²⁷, created in the early 90's after a long process of debate which included the local communities, representatives of the municipal government, professors of the School of Museology and specialists of MINOM, has developed in the past decade a strong institutional and social network, both at internal and external levels. The former partners keep giving advice to the experience. At the moment, a participatory inventory of the local cultural heritage is being launched, with the help of museologists and of museology students. In the city of Salvador, Ba-

²⁶ We use the term environmental education in its broader sense – which refer to education for the total environment (natural, cultural, social) and for the total heritage (natural, cultural, social, tangible, intangible)

²⁷ Ecomuseu do Quarteirão Cultural do Matadouro, Santa Cruz – city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The ecomuseum is located in an area of Rio de Janeiro occupied by some 280.000 people

hia, traditional ritual sites are being musealized by the communities themselves, also with the help of specialists²⁸.

The 90's have been marked in Europe by the development of policies and strategies of development which focused on areas of heritage and tourist value with a high potential for recovery. Similar initiatives took place in Latin America, where the heritage and museum experience has been linked - in countries such as Mexico (Xochimilco), Ecuador (Cuenca), Venezuela (Amazonic Museum) and Argentina (Puerto Madero, in Buenos Aires). Brazil, the first country of the Region to design heritage policies at national level and to create a National Heritage Institute²⁹, is now developing a national network of heritage and museums. But Latin America still lacks a stable and competent development matrix, able to optimize the integrative relations between environmental and human potentials, under the banner of heritage. The programs of education for sustainable development are just starting to be acknowledged in the Region.

UNESCO has long been recommending the mobilization of cultural resources which are endogenous of each culture, and the adoption of alternative solutions that are adequate to the necessities of local populations. Such solutions always cost less than the official governmental programs, since they optimize simple methodologies of learning, which value identity traits that are fundamental for those groups.

As an example of such a tendency I will mention the city of Coro, in Venezuela – where the population articulated, in the 80's, to defend, at the Venezuelan parliament, the nomination of their city as World Heritage Site. A dossier elaborated by leaders of the community was taken to the federal government, which officialized the plea within UNESCO. The city was inscribed in the list of World Heritage Sites. Following this step, the same local leaders, worried about the preservation of their heritage, created the Centre UNESCO/Coro, which systematically develops educational and cultural projects. One of them, linked to the Ministry of Youth, is the School of Argyle – where youngsters of lower social strata learn traditional construction techniques and traditional local craft skills. Such knowledge is fundamental for the maintenance of their historic, architectural, artistic, cultural and environmental heritage. Located in the village of Tara-tara, 20 minutes by road from Coro, the School of Argyle was erected by the students, with the same traditional techniques used by their ancestors in the construction of Coro, 500 years ago. The School generates a local labour force fully qualified to

²⁸ Professors from the Museums Course of the University of Bahia

²⁹ IPHAN – Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage, founded in 1937

keep their own heritage, in simple activities that generate income. Basic information about administration and tourism is offered as well.

The valuation of specific cultural traits and the reinforcement of identity profiles at community level have proved to be a viable alternative to face the immensely grave problems of social exclusion. Individuals and groups with low social self-esteem are notoriously more inclined to adopt 'marginal' behaviours, or to be marginalized by society. Efficient social policies, when developed and managed with the full participation of civil society, may constitute a powerful combination of forces to face such social challenges. In reference to heritage, the total development of areas as heritage sites will certainly depend of a positive relationship of each individual towards what he/she recognizes as his/her own territory: the geographic place where cultural symbolism turns into everyday practice, and practice is symbolized as tradition. This is what will enable these areas to be integrally protected and used as heritage sites.

The participation of local communities is thus fundamental for the success of sustainable solutions towards heritage. Proper valuation of heritage sites by local people may be the starting point for their urban, touristic and economic development and – which is more important – a guarantee of its preservation. Helping this process is the main ethical duty of contemporary museology. When considered under contemporary paradigms, museology can be a tool for sustainable development, being responsible for a more humanized strategy of action towards the total heritage. But it is necessary that museum professionals recognize that museology is primarily about people and their environment, not about museums and objects.

Development of the mechanisms of identification between local communities and the areas they inhabit will stimulate the reactions of symbolic appropriation and the sentiment of belonging. This must be the main objective of governments, at national, state and/or municipal level: to return heritage sites to their true owners – the owners of the land. Because governments come and go, and with them, specific heritage policies; but the population remains, and will remain taking care of what they consider as their heritage, from the depth of their hearts.

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French Ecomuseums

*Alain Joubert*³⁰

The term 'Ecomuseum' was born in France, created in 1971 by George Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine. The concept had already been tested from 1968 on the Island of Ushant, in Brittany, by Jean-Pierre Gestin. More than 30 years later, it is interesting to reflect on how the first ideas evolved, and how this has led to the current situation of ecomuseology in France.

The basic idea : man in his environment.

Ecomuseums were supported by the inter-commune structures (Regional Natural Parks, urban communities) that existed as part of the policy of decentralization that had started in France in 1963. These first ecomuseums were created by George Henri Rivière working with the museologists of the French Regional Natural Parks, and were characterised by three concepts:

- interdisciplinarity
- a close connection with the environment and communities which they reflect, and
- participation of these communities in constructing and operating the ecomuseum

In practical terms this means, for each ecomuseum:

- a territory
- a heritage project on this territory
- an associated population and actors
- the will to educate

Hugues de Varine worked alongside George Henri Rivière, and he strongly promoted the development of the community through ecomuseum activities, introducing the idea of co-operative organization for development and a system that encouraged continuous evaluation and change. This revised concept was close to the notion of the "integral museum" defined at the meeting in Santiago, Chile, in 1972. To quote

³⁰ Director, Musée des Traditions et Arts Normands and Musée industriel de la Corderie Vallois, France

Hugues de Varine: "*The Ecomuseum is an instrument of popular participation in regional planning and community development*" (Hugues de Varine, 1978).

Ecomuseums in France: a diversity of the projects

Currently, the Federation of Ecomuseums and Museums of Society include 138 French establishments, among which 41 are ecomuseums. It is possible that there is an equal number of (even slightly superior) organizations utilising the term 'Ecomuseum' without putting into practice or even being aware of the principles of ecomuseology. (Goujard 2002). This increases the total number of established ecomuseums to approximately 85 or 90 in France.

It would be a mistake to think that all ecomuseums in France follow the same pattern of working or even start from a common position or use common doctrines, or are following a nominated stereotype. To do so would deny them one of the tenets of ecomuseology, one that recognises the diversity of territories and of the inhabitants, each one of which having evolved in its own way.

Some generalisations can however be made. The first observation is that very few 'community ecomuseums' exist in France. i.e. those ecomuseums which, as Hugues de Varine suggested, should put community development at the centre of their activities, or as the principal, even single ecomuseum objective. In the past, Le Creusot Ecomuseum and Fresnes ecomuseum, (in a neighbourhood of Paris) did endeavour to place local communities at the heart of their work, putting into practice various initiatives to encourage the participation of the population, especially in collection building (Delarge, 2002). In certain countries like Canada, (especially in Quebec), these ecomuseums are much better represented.

The second observation is the prevalence in France of ecomuseums with projects that are related to the economic development of a territory. Here the objective is to emphasize the richness of the heritage in a territory through tourist or cultural projects, like interpretive trails, museums, country houses, or publications. This objective is an important concern for most ecomuseums, which try to involve the population at various levels (management, demonstrations, active participation with cultural activities and the creation of exhibitions. There is also a tendency to the institutionalization of these ecomuseums because of their inter-commune administrative structures (communities of communes, communities in cities), and ecomuseums frequently become the organ-

izer and the manager of the heritage sites in the nominated territory. A typical example of these ecomuseums is Fourmies-Trelon ecomuseum in the North of France.

The third observation is the persistence, in a very small number of ecomuseums, of the central role of scientific research on the territory and/or conservation of a collection. A little disconnected from the Brownian movement which animates the world of ecomuseums, they are generally supported by public bodies (a government body, a commune...). A good example is the Ecomuseum of Mont Lozere in the Cevennes National Park. The local population can be associated with the research, with the making of collections, and even with their restoration.

The last and fourth observation is that some ecomuseums have disappeared, victims of the lack of involvement of the population, or of financial problems. The North Dauphine ecomuseum, and the Beauvais ecomuseum are examples. Others are 'asleep' and, if they " do not awake ", their fate will be to close.

Tendencies and evolution

The misuse of the term. It is often difficult to differentiate an ecomuseum from a traditional museum in France, for several reasons:

- the term has been used to indicate any type of local museum which exhibits the material civilization of an area
- several traditional museums gave up their vision centred on the collections, to deal with ethnology, the environment, the history of the local population, and hence ecomuseology gained other categories of museums
- the formation in 1991, of the Federation of Ecomuseums (created in 1984) with Museums of Anthropology is a sign of convergence. This Federation of Ecomuseums and Museums of Anthropology had not wished to give an official definition of the ecomuseum or be supplied with a charter that would verify the use of the term ecomuseums.

The tendency for the institutionalization of ecomuseum associations as a means of survival. Confronted with the difficulties of being self-financing, associative structures, often lead by the community, ecomuseums were encouraged by The Direction of the Museums of France, to become more professional, to employ trained personnel, and

as a result became even more dependent on public subsidies. To ensure their survival, some conformed to this practice, (while still benefiting from the structures of local governance) to become ecomuseums of a city, of a region, of a community of communes or of community of cities. For them this meant losing part of their autonomy and freedom. In addition, the recourse to professional employees sometimes created conflicts with volunteers, who felt sidelined, their local knowledge being ignored or undervalued.

Decentralization. Even if some ecomuseums lost their soul, I have the feeling that recombining culture, identity and social issues in the territory, was done without ecomuseums, or, worse, to their detriment. For example, for other inter-commune structures like the Regional Natural Parks, the administration of the area was devolved to several inter-governmental and other structures. Admittedly, the law provides that the councils of development of the regions include heritage and cultural actors working in their territory, but these councils are often only advisory, and decisions are taken by the elected officials and their professional teams after only minimal consultation with local people.

Finally, if ecomuseums were precursors of sustainable development, they gave up little by little their prerogatives in this field to other structures, like the Regional Natural Parks, Permanent Centres for Environmental Initiation (CPIE) or environmental defence associations.

In conclusion, one can only wish, as does Marc Goujard, (Director of Fourmies-Trelon Ecomuseum) that Ecomuseums, should be structuring tools to bring together their communities, local associations and local government to the benefit of their territories, based on community involvement. (Goujard 2002).

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Ecomuseums of the Autonomous Provincial Authority of Trento, Italy

*Margherita Cogo*³¹

First of all I would like to thank the organizers of the “2005 Guizhou International Forum of Ecomuseums” which introduced us to a part of China of immense cultural and environmental interest. China is a continent with one billion three hundred million people, destined to become the economic and political centre of the world. It represents a challenge and important opportunity for the Western world. I believe it is important for our country to establish mutual understanding and co-operation on matters of shared interest, by means of a network of institutions and active participants. Therefore it is particularly satisfying for me and the Institution I represent to be able to contribute to a co-operative project based on local culture and development.

The promotion of individual and collective wellbeing, social cohesion and freedom of action and thought, represent, in the current global context, new reference values for advanced societies and provide challenges and questions to state decision-makers over and beyond merely economic growth. The cultural perspective, understood as a complex mixture of knowledge and ways of interpreting experience and individual/collective growth, is the key to the development of a knowledge-based society. Culture is the means we have to lay the foundation for a fruitful exchange with others and to promote creativity, essential for future sustainable growth.

Without doubt, ecomuseums have been able to bring cultural potential together with the needs of local development, supporting processes by which our environmental, social and cultural heritage can be properly appreciated. This heritage consists not only of material assets, (for example historic buildings or artistic products or other things which are the expression of a local tradition), but everything that can be preserved, valued and used in various ways. The dimension of the knowledge-based society in which increasingly we live, has had the great merit of making us understand and appreciate better our intangible heritage³².

³¹ Deputy Chairman and Head of the Culture Department, Autonomous Provincial Authority of Trento, Italy

³² “Recent developments in the fields of communications and information technology are indeed revolutionary in nature. Information and knowledge are expanding in quantity and accessibility. In many fields future decision makers will be presented with unprecedented new tools for development. In such fields as agriculture, health, education, human resources and environmental

It is precisely in this niche – this rather uncertain and complex area – that ecomuseums live and work, enabling us to value above all intangible assets, such as tradition, memory, scientific study, relations, actions, processes, social models and forms of governance.

Ecomuseums and the province of Trento

In November 2000, the Province of Trento issued Law 13 “Creation of ecomuseums for the exploitation of local tradition and culture” part of a complex legislative framework safeguarding and promoting the cultural, environmental and historic heritage of the territory. Ecomuseums have the specific aim of responding to the wishes of the local community in terms of “placing at the centre of the territory the historic evolution of the countryside, visible in signs of agricultural transformations, in the infrastructure, in the distribution of the population and settlements. The ability to re-read the history of a people through its tangible and intangible culture is an important attempt to free research from ideological prejudice about the sources of culture and history. To reconstruct the process by which an area become a civilization is a task of the utmost importance” (cited from the law creating ecomuseums in the Trentino)

So far, four ecomuseums have gained recognition:

- The Vanoi ecomuseum
- The Val di Pejo ecomuseum – the “small Alpine world”
- The Judicaria ecomuseum - “From the Dolomites to Garda”
- The Valle del Chiese ecomuseum - “Gateway to the Trentino”

In addition to these established ecomuseums new projects are ongoing, creating a network of institutional and private actors to involve the entire community in the process of valuing the territory.

Ecomuseums: an international phenomenon

A recent phenomenon, existing in certain but not all parts of the world, ecomuseums are going through an experimental phase, based on action and subsequent scientific analysis; the result is that the first problem of ecomuseums is to explain their function and mission to themselves, given the various types of ecomuseum which exist now in the

management, or transport and business development, the consequences really could be revolutionary. Communications and information technology have enormous potential, especially for developing countries, and in furthering sustainable development” (Kofi Annan)

world. In order to begin on this topic allow me to use the definition worked out by the international workshop organized by the Autonomous Provincial Authority of Trento and IRES in Piedmont. The workshop was called “Long Networks – Ecomuseums and Europe” and was held in Trento in May 2004. Here is the definition:

“An ecomuseum is a dynamic process by which communities preserve, interpret and value their heritage in relation to sustainable growth. Ecomuseums are based on community consensus”.

This brief definition summarizes a complex reality, and includes within its sensibility the following elements:

- the awareness that cultural processes are at the centre of a knowledge-based society
- the wish to affirm a socio-cultural identity at the local level, alongside the process of globalization
- the promotion of a variety of forms of participation for local governance
- sustainability and social responsibility
- experimentation with new management processes.

More specifically, ecomuseums can today be described as a reality promoting the social and economic development of a territory by valuing and making available cultural assets via a network the local cultural heritage, creating synergy with the tourist industry and other economic forces, and safeguarding the environment within the logic of sustainable growth. It also carries out an important role in spreading the awareness of a cultural context, an important step in preserving it and in making comparisons with other cultures.

The mission of ecomuseums

Literature and a number of studies indicate that the mission of ecomuseums includes:

- the safeguarding and valuing of local socio-cultural traditions
- the safeguarding/rediscovery of collective memory in terms of the intangible heritage comprising the identity of a population, and its mediation with contemporary society
- the study, research and dissemination of local naturalistic, historical and social topics
- the promotion of sustainable economic and tourist development, by using natural and historic resources, the social heritage and other

local resources, via a network able to attract tourists and the additional exploitation of cultural resources, the promotion of socially responsible business enterprise and the active participation in processes of sustainable growth.

Consensus and dynamism

Ecomuseums can also be seen as the element of consensus by which a community decides to *look after a territory* and its social and cultural, environmental and economic development. The term *consensus* is used to indicate broadly shared aims, common values, a joint vision of sustainable growth, of today and tomorrow and a common lifestyle.

Consensus should involve not only institutional actors but also broad sectors of society, aware that the success of an ecomuseum can be achieved only through active involvement. In turn, the ecomuseum should also be able to change people's attitudes- the consensus should, as it were, roll on, involving more and more people. It is therefore also a force for creating a social identity "*aiming to strengthen the community and its ability to manage its territory, placing at its disposal useful tools to think of, plan and carry out concrete projects, by internal co-operation and work with outside forces.*" (Hugues de Varine) This is one of the conditions necessary for creating effective, sustainable development. Before going into a such a broad area of involvement and sensibility it is important that those responsible for the ecomuseum who are directly or indirectly involved in its workings, acquire concrete tools for local development and take an active part, assisting in promoting widespread action by the community.

The concept of *looking after* the territory is a broad one, involving culture, history and local traditions, their preservation and dissemination, since they represent roots and awareness of the present. The general aim of sustainable growth can be achieved only within the context of overall cultural growth and the active participation of the community in social and/or economic processes that are coherent with the environmental heritage.

The new role of institutions and associations therefore considers not only historic, artistic and environmental heritage as tangible assets, but also all aspects of community social and cultural life. The consensus concerning the ecomuseum has institutional support and a strategic vision, but is dynamic, able to accept new challenges in a changing world, and to redefine itself and its aims.

To sum up, ecomuseums today represent:

- a process, open to broader society, and able to interpret change: they are flexible by definition
- an actor able to involve a broad spectrum of society, over and beyond institutional support
- a phenomenon able to anticipate change and shape itself by innovation, without forgoing traditional values and a historic identity.

Aims

As said earlier, ecomuseums promote the local cultural, social and environmental heritage of a largely intangible nature, for the benefit first and foremost of the local community. Therefore it is not unreasonable to expect the ecomuseum to contribute to the sense of local identity, to positive social dynamics and the improvement of the quality of life of residents.

The economic promotion of the territory, by means of targeted actions, may be a collateral objective in the process of valuing the territory from the social, cultural and environmental points of view. In other words, we should not think of ecomuseums as a copy of tourist promotion agencies (we have a number of them in the Trentino), and this confusion of roles can be avoided only by continuous reference to the mission of ecomuseums: from the strategic vision to the operational level, including the way the ecomuseum communicates with the outside world.

This does not mean ecomuseums do not have an economic dimension, only that the promotion of tourism is not the main business of an ecomuseum, but is just one of its aims, which should be properly balanced. In fact, if we examine ecomuseums, each one has a particular mix of needs and opportunities, and a specific sensibility. This is true of all ecomuseums that arise “spontaneously”. So it is not surprising if some ecomuseums, in the short-term, privilege the economic or tourist aspect of their activity; what is important is the balanced vision of the future activities of the ecomuseum.

Common identifying elements . From their theoretical start-up to implementation, ecomuseums have yet to fully define themselves. This is partly because ecomuseums in the world are so varied³³. In Europe there are many types, so it may be useful to identify some things they all

³³ Hence the initiative of the Provincial Authority of Trento in co-operation with IRES – the Piedmont Regional Authority – involving workshops including all the main ecomuseums in Italy and many European partners. The project concluded with a Workshop entitled Long Networks – Ecomuseums and Europe, that took place in Trento from May 5 – 8 2004

have in common in order to identify what appear to be the fundamental characteristics of ecomuseums. Broadly speaking they are:

- the crucial importance of culture for a balanced and cohesive development of society
- importance of sustainability and social responsibility
- prevailing intangible nature of actions (research, values, traditions, relations, processes, social models and forms of territorial governance)
- dynamic nature, responding to changing needs within the community
- a preferably bottom-up approach, broad involvement of the local community, consensus
- attention to what is happening in the territory and reference to an extended territory.

The latest research we have carried out in our territory and a comparison with other areas in Europe has enabled us to identify some common identifying elements for ecomuseums:

Ecomuseums as a process of social and cultural promotion. The first mission of ecomuseums is social and cultural. In a complex, global world in continuous change, shortening distances and bringing down technological and communications barriers, the importance of culture, particularly local culture, is increasing, since it is the source of our sense of identity and belonging. At the macro level, culture is a crucial strategic resource for the territory, within the framework of potential development.

Ecomuseums correspond to a philosophy of social and economic development within a sustainable and socially responsible framework. The creation of an ecomuseum is the result of a given strategy for the development of a territory, involving sustainable growth and social responsibility, which the ecomuseum itself embodies and disseminates. The mission of ecomuseums is intimately linked with these two principles and all their actions must be coherent with them. They are principles enshrined at the European level and in our Provincial Development Plan, as well as in the Articles of Association of many ecomuseums.

Ecomuseums encourage the participation of public institutions, private actors and citizens. Co-operation between the public and private sectors, within the framework of horizontal subsidiarity, is characteristic of actions carried out by ecomuseums and also distinguishes it from the institutions that support it. If the participation of private actors, such as category associations, is important for the ecomuseum, the involvement of citizens is fundamental, both at the design and implementation stages

(for example, we could think of the social value of voluntary organizations in the cultural field). Experience suggests that the involvement of the local population in projects for territorial development is an essential prerequisite for their success.

Ecomuseums must create good relations with existing public institutions, without duplicating roles. It is important for every ecomuseum to monitor the authorities and institutions that, directly or indirectly, work for local development so that the initiatives already being carried out are known. Such authorities in Italy include local authorities, tourist consortia, nature reserves, infrastructure companies, technological innovation agencies and so on. Ecomuseums need to earn their spurs as possible partners or promoters for initiatives. Similarly, ecomuseums need to know what specialist research is being carried out in the territory. Forms of permanent co-operation may exist with research agencies (generally historical/ethnographic) in the territory, and with leading museums, in all leading sectors (natural sciences, local customs, history and art). The aim is to tap the existing resources in the territory, fostering initiatives of scientific quality and useful partnerships between associations and institutions to create social and economic development projects within the framework of sustainability and social responsibility, as well as for fund-raising purposes.

Ecomuseums should act throughout the territory, not just in local authority areas. One of the most important functions of ecomuseums is to create a network that is able to promote the entire territory, at times taking on the difficult role of mediating between various development agencies.

What is the role of ecomuseums?

To conclude, ecomuseums can rightly consider themselves on the brink of fulfilling a crucial, new role, continuously researching and implementing ideas and projects to develop the social and cultural heritage of a territory, with an eye to the local economy. Ecomuseums are dynamic processes of innovation and experimentation, able to harness the resources of the community, to mediate between the present and tradition, and with the aim of becoming:

- a strategic instrument for the promotion of local culture and society
- a centre for the creation of innovative ideas for the territory, its social and economic development as well as for the implementation of the resulting projects
- a place of dynamic consensus.

In this way, ecomuseums can develop their full potential for innovation within the area of implementing projects based on consensus within a framework of sustainable growth and social responsibility and cohesion. In this dimension, ecomuseums may co-ordinate actions for local development in the territory.

Let me finish by wishing you luck in the creation with Guiyang over the next few days of a stable network of ecomuseums throughout the world. This network will be a way of comparing different territories, of exchanging information, materials and products, good practices and providing mutual assistance within the framework of different cultural identities.

Ecomuseums in Sweden

*Ewa Bergdahl*³⁴

Sweden has around 9 million inhabitants in an area of 450 000 square kilometres. This means that the province Guizhou is 10 times more densely populated than Sweden. The images of our ecomuseums reflect this fact.

In the late 19th century our country rapidly transformed from a farming economy into an industrialized one. Railways and roads were built, new cities grew up and the whole society changed radically. A lot of people moved from the countryside to the cities and started to work in factories and industries. Others, about 1.2 millions inhabitants (or 20% of the population), emigrated from Sweden to America and started a new life there.

As a result of these changes a local heritage movement was constituted around the beginning of the 20th century in order to document and save old traditions and local heritage connected to the farming economy. The most famous promoter of this idea man was Arthur Hazelius, who was the founder of Skansen in Stockholm. This 'open-air' museum was a new and radical way of interpreting and preserving threatened heritage by collecting not only objects and items of different kinds, but also by moving houses and farms to a new site in central Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. These buildings from different parts of the country were erected and furnished in the old traditional way. Skansen developed a totally new museum model, where reconstructed environments and farmhouses from different parts of Sweden were opened up for the public. Hazelius was also one of the first museologists to recognize the importance of demonstrations by craftsmen and he often used living models dressed in traditional clothes to show daily life in the cottages. This specific development of museum theory and practice in Sweden has played an important role in creating an environment that promotes the creation of ecomuseums in the landscape. Today, the local heritage movement in Sweden has around half a million members organized into local associations, and there are now about 1.400 'copies' of the original Skansen throughout the country.

Sweden was not involved directly in the Second World War. While the rest of Europe was devastated after the war the Swedish industry and

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economy was growing. Today the industrialization structure has changed from many locally situated businesses into a few high-technology global concerns; as a result of this change unemployment has risen, and many factories and plants have been closed down in Sweden during the last thirty years. The central part of Sweden - an area of importance for iron and steel from medieval times - has been particularly badly affected by these changes. The same effect can clearly be seen in other industries too, including textiles, food production, engineering and electronics.

Ecomuseums in Sweden 2005

In Sweden today there are twelve museums that can be recognized as ecomuseums. Either they call themselves so, or they really work as ecomuseums without using the term. One important factor that inspired people in Sweden to start creating ecomuseums was the loss of industrial heritage when industries and factories started to close down.

Old mines were abandoned and filled up with water. Plant and industrial buildings were torn down because they were of no use and others were transformed into new functions, but lost their identity and history as a result. This caused the loss of both jobs and identity for the inhabitants in these regions. Something had to be done.

A simple way of describing the ecomuseum model is this picture, showing the differences between a traditional museum and an ecomuseum. (Figure) We can identify an ecomuseum by the level of participation of the local inhabitants. A real ecomuseum is a mirror of local culture and heritage which is interpreted by the people in the region where it is situated. It is a way of using history to create the future.

Ajtte Fjäll- och samemuseum. Among the Swedish ecomuseums there is only one dealing with a minority group's heritage. The AJTTE museum in the north of Sweden tells the story of the Sami people and their daily life both in the past and today. It is situated in a small place named Jokkmokk. The museum has the ambition to work in the whole Lapp landscape.

Ecomuseums of iron production history. In the middle part of Sweden there are four ecomuseums and in the south eastern part one other. All of these have the ambition to show how several centuries of old mining and metal production, has influenced life, culture and organization of the society.

Husbyringen is the smallest of these museums, situated around a lake

and based on the story of woodlands, but show the clear connection between the iron industry and the demand for charcoal for iron production.

Vallonbruken / Uppland consists of a number of the most magnificent ironworks in Sweden created by Louis de Geer – a rich Dutchman - in the 15th century. These big estates are today used as hotels, restaurants and tourist sites. The owners of the sites have worked together in an association for about twenty years. It is not really an ecomuseum because of the lack of local engaged people, but at the same time there are some similarities, while visitors have to travel around in the landscape to get to know the museum area and appreciate its history.

Järnriket Gästrikland and *Ekomuseum Bergslagen* are both more genuine as ecomuseums. They were created by local authorities about twenty years ago. The work at the more than 70 sites is done by volunteers. These two ecomuseums try to show the way ordinarily people have used the resources of nature to create a good life. Ore mining and steel production has been the basic industries of this region for centuries. The sites have different qualities and there are a lot of small industrial heritage sites where visitors can meet local people demonstrating how the machinery and the equipment works, or take part in local folk festivals.

Åtvidabergs Bruksbygd is the youngest of the ecomuseums, but the model is the same. It is created by local inhabitants in partnership with the local heritage movement in this region.

On the border between Norway and Sweden is *Ekomuseum Gränsland*. Life here is influenced by the geographical proximity of the two countries. People have moved across the border as refugees during war time and in commercial matters in peace-time. A lot of stories can be told about the illegal traffic and the smuggling from both sides. In this area the quarrying industry has been important.

The other sites on the map show ecomuseums dealing with the traditional farming culture or ecomuseums devoted to natural history and landscape. They are all situated along rivers. Water in this landscape is important not only as a power resource for mills in historical times and for hydro-electrical power stations today, but also because they have connected people to each other, as natural routes for boats in the summer and sledges on the ice in the winter. The conditions for growing seeds and other crops are also good along river banks where there is good access to water.

In the southwest part of Sweden there are many old traces from pre-historic times. Megalithic tombs raised about 8000 years ago are visible in the agricultural landscape giving it a specific character. In this area the *Ekomuseum Falbygden* consists of sites where prehistoric times are recreated and visitors can experience stone-age cooking and paddling in reconstructed canoes.

In the southernmost part of Sweden there are three ecomuseums dealing with ecological matters. In *Ekomuseum Kristianstad Vattenrike*, which is the most established, the wetland around the city of Kristianstad is rich in unusual birds and vegetation and the visitors can walk along wooden footbridges in order to come close to nature.

Ecomuseums strengthen local democracy

The ecomuseums, spread out in the landscape over vast areas without walls and without big collections to take care of, have good opportunities to develop a more democratic way of interpreting heritage, since it is the local inhabitants that decide the objectives of the museum. There is, of course, a need for experts to train people in documentation methods, but the work is all done by the inhabitants themselves. Local people's influence on the organization will strengthen democracy and give the ecomuseum flexibility.

Heritage tourism and ecomuseums

Finally I will say something about the relationship between the local ecomuseums and the tourism business in Sweden. Adding the prefix "eco" to tourism, means that tourism is developed and managed with consideration for nature and the local heritage. Since tourism is an increasing business steered by commercial interests, there are many contradictions between sustainable approaches and money-making.

During the last twenty years there has been a growing acceptance among tourism managers in Sweden of the need to preserve and protect unique and local traditions and physical remains in the landscape. This also means that there are more opportunities today for local and regional long-term economic development due to the tourism business. However, everyone has to be aware of the risks. When a local society becomes a well-known visitor site, the genuine quality of the products can be destroyed. Cheap copies of items and poor reconstructions of old buildings threaten the quality of the site. Tourists, like all of us, appreciate quality and if a place is declining they will travel to other places and sites. In 1999 ICOMOS launched a charter for International Cultural

Tourism. Today 119 countries in the world have signed this agreement, including Sweden.

In this charter it is stressed how the dynamic interaction between Tourism and Cultural Heritage can be kept in balance. Encouraging and facilitating a dialogue between conservation interests and the tourism industry is necessary in order to make tourism managers understand the fragile nature of heritage sites and living local cultures and find ways to use heritage as tourism products without threatening it and destroying it. It is of course not an easy thing to do, but with mutual respect from both sides it is possible.

From outreach to inreach: how ecomuseum principles encourage community participation in museum processes

*Gerard Corsane*³⁵

Basic differences between the 'traditional' museum and the ecomuseum

Before one can consider the key principles of the ecomuseum ideal, it is useful to gain a basic understanding of the differences between the 'traditional' museum and the ecomuseum. These differences have been very concisely illustrated in a pair of equations developed by Hugues de Varine and added to by René Rivard³⁶. These equations are stated as follows:

- *Traditional Museum = building + heritage + collections + expert staff + public visitors; and,*
- *Ecomuseum = territory + heritage + memory + population.*³⁷

With this basic understanding of the differences in place, one can delve deeper into the philosophy and practices of ecomuseology.

Key principles of the ecomuseum ideal

Within the philosophy and practices of ecomuseology one can identify a number of indicators that tend to characterise individual ecomuseums (Boylan 1992b: 30; Corsane & Holleman; 1993: 114-117; Davis 1999: 219-228; and Corsane, G., Elliott, S. & Davis, P. 2004). These can be viewed as the key principles of the ecomuseum ideal. Any list of these indicators, or principles, is likely to include variations on the twenty one outlined below.

In this list, numbers 1 to 6 focus on the democratic and participatory nature of ecomuseums, 7 to 12 deal with what an ecomuseum includes and covers, and 13 to 21 centre on what an ecomuseum can do and the approaches and methods often used in ecomuseology.

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³⁶ 1984: 43-53; 1988: 123-4; and, also see Boylan 1992a: 29

³⁷ The differences expressed in these equations have been further expanded and graphically represented by Davis (1999: 72-73)

1. An ecomuseum is initiated and steered by local communities.
2. It should allow for public participation in all the decision-making processes and activities in a democratic manner.
3. It should stimulate joint ownership and management, with input from local communities, academic advisors, local businesses, local authorities and government structures.
4. In an ecomuseum, an emphasis is usually placed on the processes of heritage management, rather than on heritage products for consumption.
5. An ecomuseum is likely to encourage collaboration with local craftspeople, artists, writers, actors and musicians.
6. It often depends on substantial active voluntary efforts by local stakeholders.
7. It focuses on local identity and a sense of place.
8. It often encompasses a 'geographical' territory, which can be determined by different shared characteristics.
9. It covers both spatial and temporal aspects. In relation to the temporal, it looks at continuity and change over time, rather than simply trying to freeze things in time. Therefore, its approach is diachronic rather than synchronic.
10. The ecomuseum often takes the form of a 'fragmented museum', consisting of a network with a hub and antennae of different buildings and sites.
11. It promotes preservation, conservation and safeguarding of heritage resources *in situ*.
12. In the ecomuseum ideal, equal attention is often given to immovable and movable tangible material culture, and to intangible heritage resources.
13. The ecomuseum stimulates sustainable development and use of resources.
14. It allows for change and development for a better future.
15. It encourages an ongoing programme of documentation of past and present life and people's interactions with all environmental factors (including physical, economic, social, cultural and political).
16. It promotes research at a number of levels - from the research and understanding of local 'specialists' to research by academics.
17. It promotes multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approaches to research.
18. The ecomuseum ideal encourages a holistic approach to the interpretation of culture/nature relationships.
19. It often attempts to illustrate connections between: technology/ individual, nature/culture, and past/present.
20. The ecomuseum can provide for an intersection between heritage and responsible tourism.

21. It can bring benefits to local communities, for example a sense of pride, regeneration and/or economic income.

However, although the above principles can be used as indicators of ecomuseums, no two ecomuseums will ever look the same. Each will be distinct and unique. The reason for this is that the core pillar of the ecomuseum ideal is that an ecomuseum is not a fixed structure, or approach, that is imposed. Rather, it should be a living and changing organism that right from its inception should be responding continually to particular local environmental, economic, social, cultural and political needs and imperatives. Consequently, individual ecomuseums have not followed all of the same principles to the same degree. In each the emphases will have been different.

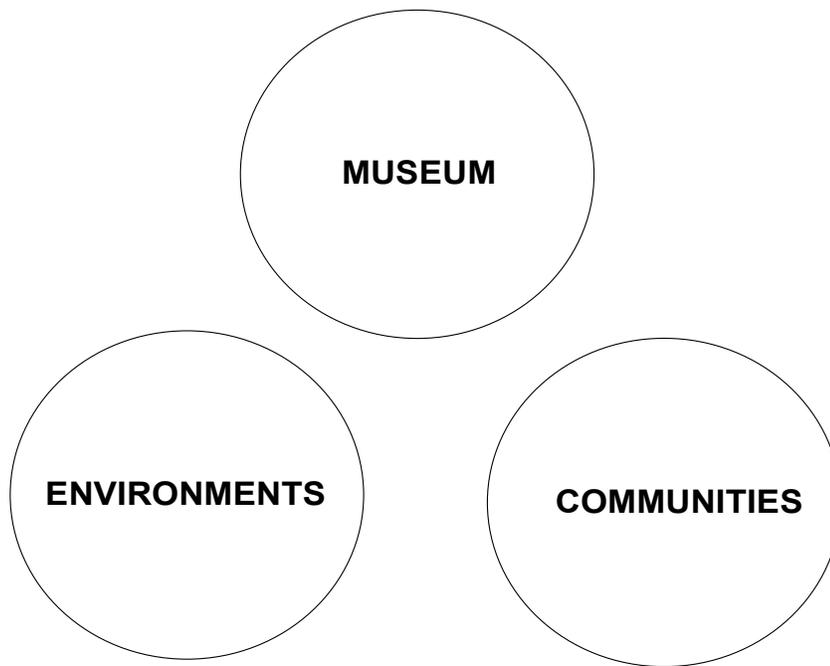
From outreach to 'inreach'

Since the 1960s and the start of the 'second museum revolution' (van Mensch 1993a: 54; and, Davis 1999: 52), museums in many countries around the world began to review a whole range of key issues, including their environmental and social roles (see Stam 1993). In these processes, certain central concerns came to the fore. These included how museums could become more involved in environmental conservation, community-driven development and social responsibility. Enmeshed in these are a number of other considerations that link to the concepts of representation, identities construction and the acquisition and exchange of human, social and cultural capitals (Newman 2005).

As in other disciplines and post-discipline fields of studies (for example archaeology, anthropology, history, human geography, environmental studies, cultural studies and development studies), these concepts have found increasing expression within academic and practitioner discourses. All of this has resulted in continuing shifts in museum theory and practice, with museums facing exciting new challenges in terms of adapting old paradigms and devising new programmes of museum action, as they have worked towards increasing their value and worth. Currently, new 'buzzwords' have entered into the discussions, adding further layers and depth to the challenges to change. These include lifelong learning, access, audience development, social exclusion/inclusion, citizenship, the constructivist museum (Hein 1995) and interpretive communities (Hooper-Greenhill 1999). These have generated current museological imperatives that are often driven by political expediency and economics. However, the meshing of more 'traditional' museum approaches with these imperatives is not totally straightforward.

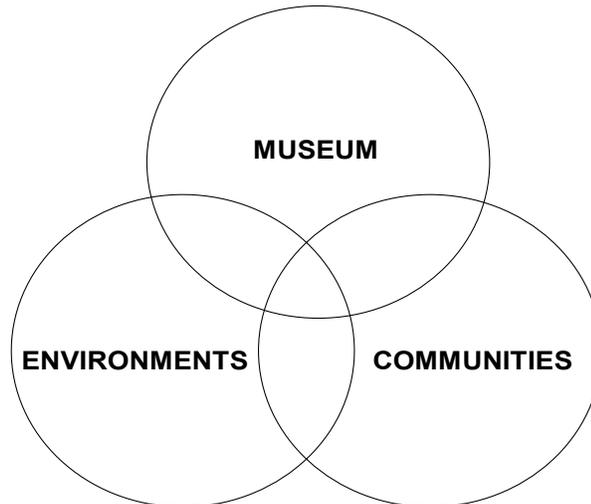
It could be argued that the reason why traditional museums have found change difficult to achieve is that they are often more distanced from the environment and communities within society. The traditional museum distanced itself from the environments that it was working with by collecting (or extracting) to conserve. The museum removed material from its original environmental contexts (physical, economic, social, cultural and political) and brought it into the museum building. This led to a form of distancing, where the collected material was alienated from its real spatial and temporal settings (Bellaigue-Scalbert 1985: 194). On the societal plane, traditional museum approaches have led to a distancing between museum and certain communities and groups within society. This distance is variable and dependant on socio-political and economic contexts. In the most extreme instances of the traditional museum there is still a legacy from when they were primarily perceived as centres for scholarship and research. Historically, this perception led to the widest distance between the museum as a bastion of ivory tower expertise, which located it beyond the reach of the majority of people – in effect a separate entity (Davis 1999: 32). Both of these forms of distancing can be depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The extreme case of a traditional museum perceived as being distant from communities and environments (Davis 1999: 74)



However, in less extreme cases of museums that follow the more traditional approaches to museum action, there has been a certain amount of success in closing the gaps between the museum, environments and communities. In spite of this, even when museums are very proactive in adjusting to these new imperatives through developing more people-orientated initiatives, the physical and ideological parameters of the traditional approaches within which they operate do not allow them the flexibility to encompass the total merging of the museum with its environments and communities. At best, they can find points of overlap. This is demonstrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Museums following traditional approaches that have programmes that allow for more points of contact with communities and the environment (Davis 1999: 74)



Museums that follow the more traditional approaches to museum action and heritage management have often responded to these new imperatives by developing what have been termed 'outreach' programmes in order:

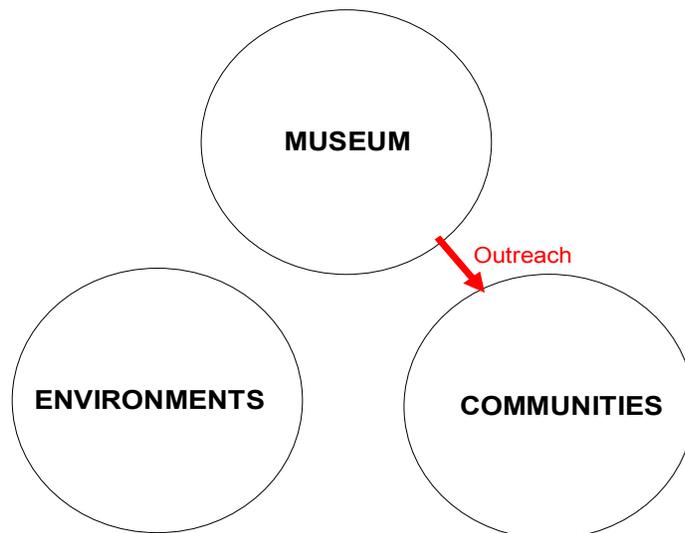
- to develop new 'audiences';
- to increase access by taking museum activities out to communities;
- and, to combat social exclusion.

Yet, although outreach programmes have had very positive outcomes in developing new audiences and users, the very term 'outreach' has problematic connotations. It can be noted that when utilising an expres-

sion like outreach – with an etymological association to ‘outcast’ – museums are effectively strengthening perceptions of distance and separation and alienating themselves (Davis 1999: 32). Indeed, the very notion of ‘outreach’ places these institutions and organisations somewhere outside – above and beyond – society. It suggests that they have to reach out across some sort of divide or gap. In the extreme cases of museums following traditional approaches, this gap is wide and can be very difficult to bridge. These museums are set so far apart from communities in society that their relevance for the majority of people is not recognised. This gap, and how outreach programmes attempt to span it, are illustrated in Figure 3.

With these extreme cases, outreach activities aimed at developing new audiences are ‘tacked on’ at the periphery of museum work, often as short stand-alone projects, rather than being at the core of museum action. They may reach some people, but their impact is still fairly limited in terms of encouraging the long-term involvement of new audiences.

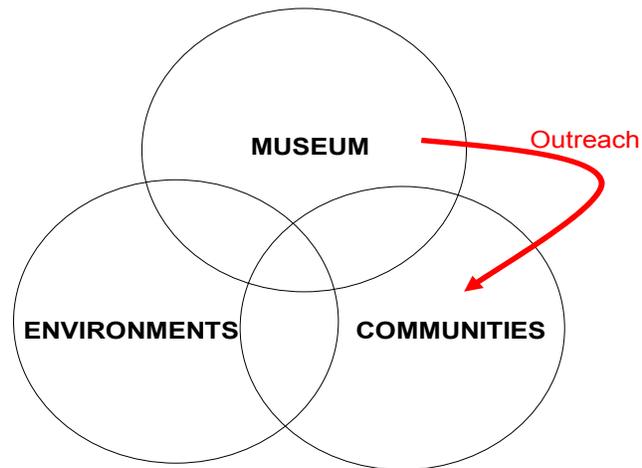
Figure 3: In extreme cases of museums following traditional approaches the gap is difficult to span with outreach programmes



There is often still too much of a gap between the museum and communities in society for these outreach activities to have lasting value. Yet, even in those museums that follow traditional approaches – but which have managed to lessen the gaps and establish some convergence between themselves, the environment and communities – there remains a large number of people who fall outside the points of connection. This

situation is represented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Traditional museums with points of convergence, but which still need to reach out



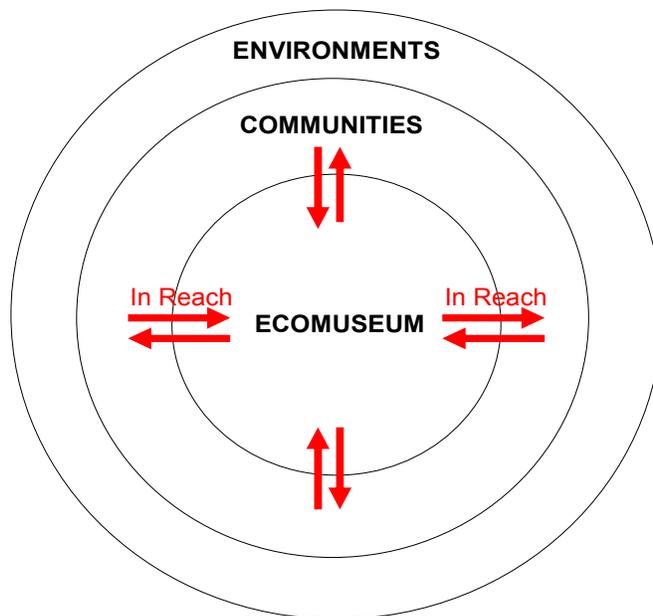
In these museums, more successful outreach programmes, that are closer to the core of the museum's activities, can still be problematic. To have lasting value that retains the interest and participation of any new audiences attracted into the museum, they need to be maintained as ongoing continuous programmes.

Although the initiation of outreach activities has encouraged more public participation in museum action, creating the development of closer interaction between museums and society, it is clear that there is scope to rethink the terms of the relationship. In order to help in democratising museology, it may be more appropriate to look to a notion of *inreach*, where institutions and organisations can be seen as being placed more centrally within society and the environment (Corsane, 2004: 14; 2005: 10; and, also see Skamstrad, 1999: 128; and, Sheppard, 2000: 64).

When this is done, the institutions may be more willing for people to reach into and take part in museum action and heritage management processes. Likewise people may be more interested in becoming involved, thereby allowing the institutions to reach into society as empowering agents for education, the construction of identities, and citizenship. This is where the principles of the ecomuseum ideal, community museology and 'holistic' museology are so important, and where they have made such a contribution where they have been deployed. Where they have been adopted, these principles have helped to posi-

tion museum action and heritage management right at the heart of communities and the environment – a good example of this is the Ecomuseum of Hirano-cho, Japan (Davis 2004: 97-101). Almost automatically, when these principles have been promoted, they have stimulated inreach as outlined in Figure 5. Whereas the outreach programmes of museums using traditional approaches often are fairly disparate and ‘tacked on’ around the periphery of the other programmes, inreach should be viewed as a central underlying philosophy that influences all that the museum does.

Figure 5: An ecomuseum is located within its communities and local environments (based on Davis 1999: 75)



Inreach, as a broader notion, can be usefully considered in relation to certain other terms. In many traditional museum contexts, there is talk about how institutions need to ‘consult’ with their ‘audiences’. However, again, these concepts of ‘consultation’ and ‘audiences’ denote distance between museums and communities in society. One has to go out to consult – and even when one does, it does not necessarily mean that the input is incorporated into the processes of museum action and heritage management. Consequently, rather than using the term ‘consultation’, it would be better to think in terms of *‘negotiation’*, which is far more participatory and democratic. Likewise the word ‘audience’ conjures up a picture of fairly passive observers, or consumers of a product. Instead, it may be more appropriate to talk of *‘active participants’* and/or *‘users’*, who are involved in the processes of museum action and heri-

tage management.

With the ideals of inreach, negotiation, and active participation in mind, it may be worthwhile to go on to consider the actual processes of museum action and heritage management and to propose a model (Corsane 1996: 53; and, 2005: 3).

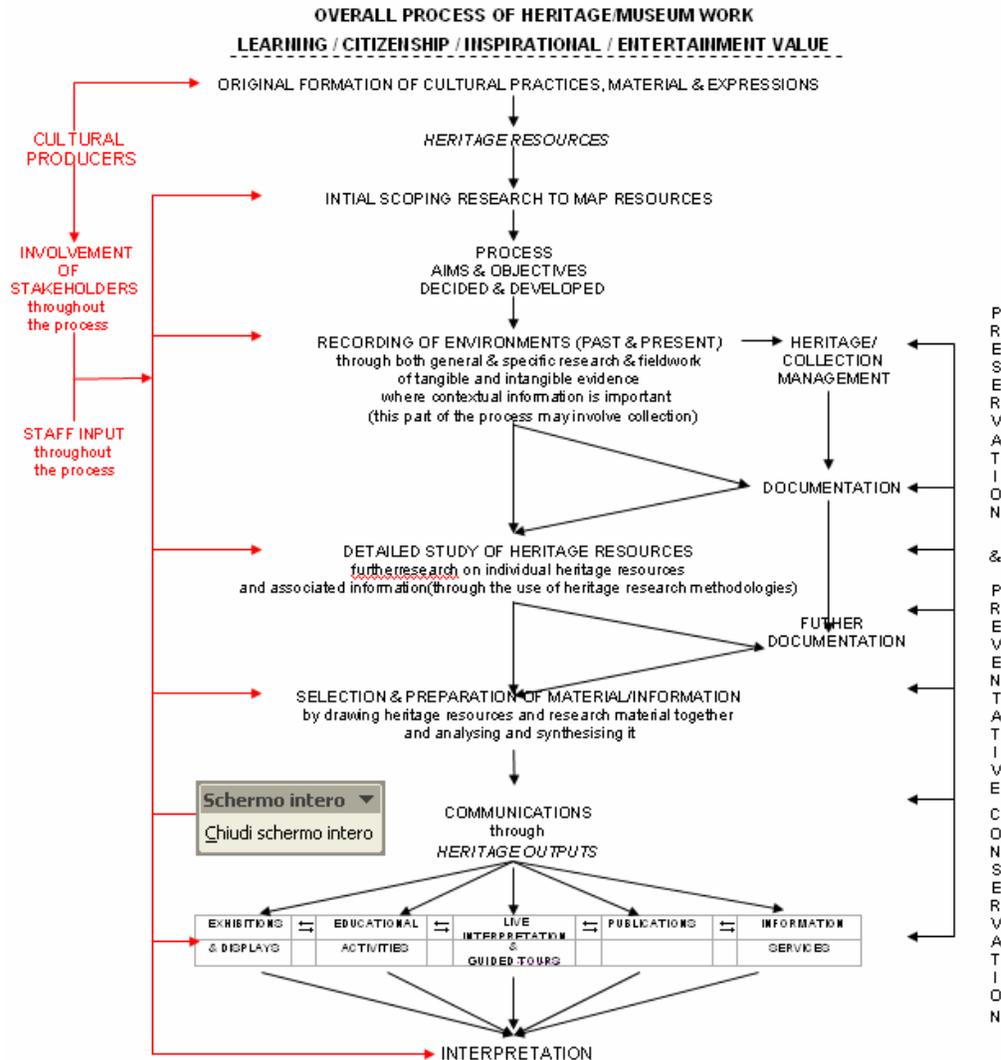
The overall process of museum action and heritage management: a proposed model

The proposed model (Figure 6) emphasises the importance of public participation in all stages and activities of a holistic overall process, from involvement in the activities themselves to the decision-making processes that both lie behind these activities and connect them.

The model takes as its starting point the notion that museum and heritage work is performed to provide vehicles for learning, citizenship, inspiration and entertainment. Taking note that there would have been processes behind the original formation of cultural practices, material and expressions, the overall process in the model works from the *heritage resources* at one end, through to the *outputs* that are communicated at the other. This central line of activities performed in the model and the acts of interpretation that follow denote the *processes* of meaning-making in museums and heritage.

Ideally, throughout the process, practitioners work with active representative participants from different stakeholder groups and 'communities' in an atmosphere of negotiation. Together, they identify appropriate heritage resources through initial scoping research. This initial research provides the basis for developing aims and objectives that guide the ongoing process, starting with activities where 'environments' are recorded and documented (Kavanagh 1990; and, Corsane 1994) in a holistic way. The word environment is used here in its broadest meaning and includes natural, social, cultural, creative and political contexts and the relationships between them. This level of recording will require the use of a range of different research methodologies and techniques in order to gain both general and specific information. It will involve 'field-work', which again is used in its broadest sense to mean recording *in situ* all forms of heritage resources and the relationships between them, in order to retain the sense of place by leaving these resources where they are currently located.

Figure 6: Model of the overall process of museum and heritage work



Although the process may appear very linear and rigid in the diagram, this would not be the case in reality. The process should be viewed as being circulatory and dynamic in character. At any point during the process one must be aware of the importance of allowing for feed-back loops which can further help to expand areas of the process already worked through.

Valuable heritage resources include the immovable and moveable tangible resources, as well as the intangible cultural heritage resources related to them. Consequently, these recording activities may involve documenting and studying anything from natural habitats and ecosystems, urban and rural landscapes, archaeological and heritage sites, the built environment, suites of material objects, archival material, and artistic forms of expression. In addition, they will need to take account of the intangible resources, such as different knowledge systems, belief patterns, oral traditions, oral testimonies, songs, dance, ritual, craft skills and everyday ways of doing things. The activities of recording and documentation at this level may involve the active collection of movable objects. Wherever this takes place, the documentation activities are of even more importance, as associated contextual information is needed for material that is moved from its original location.

Following these first level recording and documentation activities, the research can become more focused on the individual aspects and sources of evidence. For example, in museum research, material culture and artefact study approaches are employed to read meanings out of (and into) the material (see for example Pearce 1992 and 1994). In all of this documentation and research, information is produced and fed into the second level (or archival) documentation that becomes part of the heritage and collection management line of documentation denoted by the arrows down the right-hand side of Figure 6.

The results of this documentation and more detailed research then goes through a process of selection and preparation and become the communication outputs, which are conveyed through a range of different – but interlinking – media. This final part of the meaning-making process involves a certain amount of mediation as decisions are made about:

- the selection of material and information;
- the construction of the messages to be communicated;
- and, the media to be used in the communication.

It is at this stage that the input from stakeholder groups (being all those that could have a vested interest) and communities may be most crucial, although they *must* have been included throughout the overall process.

Traditionally, these last stages of the processes have been viewed as the activity of interpretation. However, the acts of interpretation of the museum and heritage outputs involve the different interpretive communities of users. These users need to be seen as active participants in the processes of interpretation. They come with different sets of prior

knowledge and experience that will inform the way they interpret what they see and hear. In addition, they will often come as part of a group of family and friends and they will discuss what they are coming into contact with. Therefore, the involvement of the users in interpreting for themselves what is communicated to them is frequently a social activity of meaning-making.

Parallel to the central process of meaning-making runs the process of heritage and collections management, which involves taking care of the heritage resources through documentation, preservation and conservation of the material and associated information. What is undertaken in this parallel process should also be negotiated with stakeholders. In addition, it should be noted that whatever is done in this process will have some form of impact on meaning-making.

Finally, when considering the model, two further points need to be made. The first and most direct is that, ideally, the process should allow for feedback and evaluation loops. Secondly, it needs to be understood that there are a range of external factors that will influence the process. These factors could be set by political, economic, social and cultural conditions and agendas.

Although this process model is an ideal in theory, it is believed that it can help to liberate museum action and heritage management. In addition, from the study of many ecomuseums and community museums, it is clear that these organisations are already using such process approaches. This being said, it would be worthwhile considering the value of trying to implement the model in a context where traditional approaches have been followed in the past and, in many instances, continue to feature and dominate.

The District Six Museum, Cape Town, South Africa

For a useful example of a museum that has challenged the more traditional approaches to museum work in the ways discussed above, one can consider a very special museum in the country of South Africa. In many ways this museum could be called an ecomuseum – although the museum does not include the term ‘ecomuseum’ in its title. The chosen example is the District Six Museum (see Rassool & Prosalendis 2001; and, Mpumlwana, K. *et al.* 2002:254-257), which is located in the city of Cape Town.

In the legislation passed to support the apartheid system in South Africa, people were segregated and grouped according to race, ethnicity and

perceived difference. An important example of these laws was the Group Areas Act of 1950, which, when enforced, basically meant that people perceived to be belonging to specified groups had to live in areas designated for their groups. District Six became a problem for the local authorities in Cape Town when it came to trying to implement this legislation, as the area was particularly culturally diverse. After being declared a 'white group area' in 1966, a process of removals of other groups from the district was started and was followed in 1968 by increased forced removals and the demolition of buildings in the area. The only things left were religious buildings and the infrastructure of roads (Plate 1).

In April 1994, the first democratic elections were held in South Africa and the new government began to dismantle the apartheid system. In December of that year, an exhibition entitled *Streets: Retracing District Six* was opened in the Central Methodist Mission building, only a few streets away from the demolished area of District Six, to tell the stories of segregation and forced removals. This exhibition, which was meant to be temporary, never closed and became the core of a 'community-driven' museum that has, without overtly knowing it, followed many of the principles of the ecomuseum ideal and the process model discussed earlier in this article. The museum is certainly about sense of place and people's experiences of District Six. It also acts as a hub from which people can move beyond the physical walls of the building that houses the exhibitions out to the general district itself. Indeed, in the space of the building visitors find information and hear oral testimonies that they can use to orientate themselves as they move out to explore and find meaning in the wider area of what was District Six. It can be said that the building itself is more of a site for the exchange of individual and shared memories, as people meet and engage with ex-residents and their descendants, who volunteer to come in and talk about their experiences. It is this aspect that makes the museum so different to other established institutions. Indeed, unlike the more traditional museum, the District Six Museum is fairly limited in terms of its actual material collections of artefacts. Central to this collection of artefacts are the street signs from the area (Plate 2), many of which were gathered up and kept by one of the workers involved in the demolition work. However, the most important collection for the museum is the memories that are constantly being shaped and re-shaped. This is a museum of memories more than a museum of lifeless objects removed from their original contexts.

In terms of public participation, the museum has become a very social space where ex-residents regularly meet and, in a sense, symbolically reclaim their identities and ownership of the area. This symbolism finds

particular expression on the canvas map of the area, with its clear plastic covering, which is placed centrally on the floor in the hall. When you look at the map closely, you can see where ex-residents have been allowed to lift the plastic covering and add their names to where they used to live in the area (Plate 3) thereby re-claiming the space. More recently, the museum has also become a venue for discussions about actual cases of claims to the land. Regarding the day-to-day activities and functions of the museum, staff members facilitate public participation as much as possible and ensure that public input is incorporated wherever possible. Through meetings, forums and workshops, stakeholders are included in decision-making mechanisms and in the development of the museum's recording, research and communication programmes. This all promotes a sense of shared ownership of the processes and products associated with this museum's work. In the museum, a working balance has been found between the input of staff and the input of interested stakeholder representatives.

With its activities, approaches and strong community-based support and direction, the District Six Museum provides a useful example of a museum that allows people to reach into its life and work. Conversely, the museum reaches into society in ways that are both empowering and challenging. It gives previously marginalised people a forum to voice their experiences and concerns and most visitors become active participants in a life-changing experience of engagement. It is a museum where process is more important than product and where people can feel included and respected.

In conclusion, if one looks back to consider the differences between the traditional museum and ecomuseum, the key principles of the ecomuseum ideal, the proposed concept of inreach, and the process-based model, the District Six Museum provides an interesting illustration of how successful these new approaches to museum work can be in integrating museums into society.

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Community participation and professional museologists

*Torveig Dahl*³⁸

Ecomuseums are concerned with communication through time and space – and give the museologists special practical challenges. The more technical museographic work is more or less the same in all museums, so it is the methods of participation that are the main focus in this article. I will deal with four aspects : 1. The ecomuseum concept: 2 Toten Ecomuseum, 3 Shinyanga Mazingira Museum and 4 Community participation and the professional museologists. As I have been working on an ecomuseum project in northern Tanzania, Shinyanga Mazingira Museum, I have chosen to use my experiences from this museum, combined with the experiences from Toten Ecomuseum, to enlighten the main topic of this paper: the methods of participation.

The ecomuseum concept – a framework of inspiration

I have chosen some quotations that are relevant for my focus:

“Nature is the home of culture” (N. Faarlund, an eco-philosopher from Toten, Norway). Nature and culture are linked throughout history, and it is important to focus on these eternal connections to understand how culture has developed. Biodiversity is also an important aspect for the past, the present and the future, and should be considered in ecomuseum work.

The Sukuma people, living in the boundless universe, one foot in the stone age, the other in the atomic age. The Sukuma people of Tanzania are pastoralists, living in a vast landscape where the domestication of land has turned into disaster for the land, and therefore also for the people. The forests are almost gone, as also has the wildlife, and many areas are very dry. ‘The boundless universe’ is also a picture of ecomuseums, because people are people all over the world.

Museums often focus on the past and the present, very often the past as the old agrarian lifestyle, before industrialization. The past is often portrayed as something stable, but this is not really the case. There may be a period of stability, but then there is a change, and a new stable phase comes; but change is a part of life. Ecomuseums must strive to interpret changes, to provide links to

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the past, and to help people understand connections and development over time. People often live in different “times” at the same time, not understanding how important this understanding is in order to take charge of their future development.

“Whereas the European may walk slowly, the African must run” (President J. Nyerere, Tanzania). Once again a picture of a missing link, and ecomuseums have a special challenge in development at the meta and micro levels.

Territory – heritage – population – memory – education – participation – ecology – identity (J. Aa. Gjestrum). These are all important words to give us inspiration and help us to understand the different combinations that exist in every community.

The ecomuseum gives the museums a concept for change - with the community - throughout time. The ecomuseums have methods to deal with change in the community, whereas the traditional museum concept is more linked to the past as a constant condition.

The ecomuseum – a mirror, a window or a showcase? (Marc Maure) This was discussed in Marc Maure’s speech (and paper) in the conference, I do not need to repeat this, but only want to add that the ecomuseum must not become just a pretty picture of something that has never been, but must always relate to reality.

The ecomuseum: an object/data bank, an observatory of change, a laboratory and a showcase (Hugues de Varine). This has been a main inspiration for the development of the different structures and methods developed at Toten and is the key guideline to develop and run an ecomuseum.

A museum with only objects is no museum (J. Aa Gjestrum). Many museums have objects, museum items, items of fine art, and even a museum building is also an object. The museum need the links to the community, life itself, not simply to display only dead objects in a showcase.

A landscape has a never-ending history, along with its people and fauna, integrated ...

Toten Ecomuseum

1881 Established – on the basis of a private collection (E. Gihle)

- objects from the changing agricultural community
- old coins
- excavated artifacts, from the stone age until today

- natural history (stuffed birds, insects, documentation)
- stories, folk tales, oral tradition
- church objects from the early catholic period (1100-1537)

1934 Organized *with* an open air museum; exhibitions and activities

1949 A plan for organizing the museum alongside the local historical work (Johs. Sivesind)

- cooperation professional staff and volunteers
- working de-centralized in the whole Toten area (boundless museum) with several *in-situ* antennae
- systematic transcript of archives in a unique equal/democratic system – involving *all persons* from historic time until today

1976 The ecomuseum concept (J. Aa. Gjestrum) – combining international theory with regional museum work, combining professional museologists and museographers with volunteers

1991 Reorganizing: the ecomuseum is the *heart and brain* of the activities, - a new operating concept

- Defining the museum in a new setting
- Involving volunteers more systematically
- Interdisciplinary theory methods: documentation, nature – cultural - art - industrial history, oral tradition, local crafts, demonstrations and interpretation
- Defining roles (catalyst)
- The *documentation centre* = the bank of Toten = the Toten common history (different sources of history: 11,000 books, 130,000 photographs, 1,800 tapes of oral history, 400 metres of archive boxes – all private sector with a common cultural ownership)
- Interpreting landscape changes, landscape history using local interpreters and in situ preservation
- More focus on the professionalism of the museologist and other professions cooperating with local volunteers
- The integrated museum (i.e. within the staff, staff/ community)
- The *micro/macro/meta* focus – and the *ecological/ sustainability* focus

This organizational history is not important on its own, but I chose to focus on it here to show that a museum needs an organization, a board, a leadership that can function in a contemporary setting. So museums have to reorganize once in a while to get a leadership/organization/ a staff connected to today and the future, not married to old structures. So the international links combined with the local work gives inspiration and renewal, helping us to answer the everlasting how and why questions.

Shinyanga Mazingira Museum

1996 – the first steps towards making a local collection with associated documentation in a concept that evolved as part of a large agro-forestry program in a region suffering ecological disaster (HASHI/NORAD)

1997-2002 I undertook 7 field trips to Shinyanga working on an ecomuseum program for the evolving museum, where there was a recognition of

- participation methods
- reestablishing knowledge of the local heritage in a rapidly modernizing/changing community
- increasing urbanisation
- ecological/sustainability/gender focus

Through the whole project we discussed with the National Museum and the Village Museum in Dar es Salaam to provide a place in the National strategy for museum development for the SMM, and for the Norwegian specialists to be able to relate to the museological challenges and routines in Tanzania.

The museologist in the ecomuseum often acts as a catalyst, but working in another culture gives special challenges for these methods. The tools which we used included:

Catalyst methods:

- inspiring
- developing awareness of heritage in urbanizing process
- learning by doing – works both ways
- documentation, developing skills and methods, research
- interdisciplinary work and thinking (ecological/holistic)
- museographic techniques
- participation
- involving and withdrawing
- identifying a network of good interpreters/agents

Results of special interest in Shinyanga

- documentation staff with good skills/methods
- registration of historical sites/in situ locations – created awareness and overall system for the conservation and interpretation of historical sites
- documentation collection (library, tapes, video, photographs, objects) established, main focus on music/dance traditions and forestry
- school visits with heritage focus

- exhibition hall for activities and changing exhibitions
- the SMM is today a part of a National Resource Centre

The community participation and the professional museologists

- The volunteers may be the specialists?
- The museologist may be the generalists?
- Focus on museological and museographic skills and methods – that is being a museum professional
- Focus on the goal and the road – and their integration
- The ecomuseum: an object/data bank, observatory of change, a laboratory and a showcase (de Varine)
- To be able to say *no/stop* when something is going in the wrong direction – or rather ask for *timeout* to redefine the strategy
- It is for the museologist to know the role he/she is playing in any process as a catalyst
- The museologist must always add a democratic dimension
- Common, cultural ownership, not only private ownership
- If you don't ask, you will neither get *yes* nor *no*
- To be able to listen and communicate
- To participate not dominate

Conclusion

In all contracts there is always the 'small print' at the end which may be of uttermost importance. Some skip reading these words, and regret it later. I would like to conclude this paper with the most important and basic tool in museological work and methods:

respect
 respect
 respect
 respect
 respect
 respect
 respect

Ecomuseums in Japan today

*Kazuoki Ohara*³⁹

Ecomuseums in Japan: a brief history

The concept of the ecomuseum was developed in France in the late 1960s; the word ecomuseum is a translation into English of the French word *écomusée*, a compound of ecology and museum. The word “eco” is used as the root of ecology or economy is from the Greek word “oikos,” meaning “house.” In contemplating the history of museology in Japan, one exhibition method followed was that of the living history movement. Initially adopted by Skansen, an open-air museum in Sweden, this movement is based on the notion of a “house museum” describing in detail how people lived in days gone by. The very first open air folk museum in Japan was the *Nihon Minka Shuraku Hakubutsukan*, (Open-Air Museum of Old Japanese Farm Houses) established in 1956. The open-air museums, which began to emerge at around this time at various locations, relocated and preserved traditional houses of architectural significance as an emergency measure since they were exposed to the imminent risk of destruction. It was not until in the 1980s when, as seen in the foundation of *Sanshu Asume Yashiki*, (The Folklife Museum in Asume-Town), people’s living conditions were restored and exhibited as part of the museological approach. However, as far as Japan is concerned, ecomuseums did not originate from these successful open-air museums.

Soichiro Tsuruta was the first person to formally introduce the concept of the ecomuseum to Japan. He referred to it as an “environment museum” in his speech when introducing one of the International Council of Museums’ (ICOM) conventions. At the time, only the museum professionals specializing in science and natural history recognized it. Others perceived it as a natural history museum that had something to do with the environment. The ecomuseum initially failed to attract any interest in terms of the regional development activities, or indeed recognize the potential that it enjoys today. People in those early days were unable to see the true nature of the ecomuseum, and years later, was only acknowledged as “one category of museum focusing on ecology.” For a long while before that, even the word ecology stayed forgotten among the Japanese public.

The term ecomuseum was reintroduced into Japan in the mid to

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late 1980s, coinciding with the burst of the economic bubble. It was a period when increased spending on public works projects in rural areas, induced both by capital concentration in cities and consequently inflated urban economies, were being reviewed. Up until then, different types of museums were built one after another in various regions; state of the art exhibition facilities were constructed in towns and villages as tourist attractions. Once built, they entailed large maintenance costs. Local governments, weary of their burden, came to realize with much regret that these facilities were no longer needed. At the same time, interest and momentum for self-directed revitalization of local economies and communities started to rise. Once into the 1990s, many municipalities grew rapidly interested in the ecomuseum, a development that did not require the building of facilities.

Furthermore, triggered in part by the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, ecology became a popular word. The newly-defined roles of the ecomuseum were the conservation of the natural environment and the development of sustainable communities by way of raising people's awareness. Museum-like exhibitions and panels were placed to create a learning facility where the natural environment was conserved, and people often referred to them as ecomuseums.

Interest in ecomuseums grew rapidly thereafter. Various local governments constructed plans for ecomuseums while local people formed groups, developed activities and held events with the aim of creating ecomuseums. However, actual activities were somewhat precarious, as many of them did not have an independent organization. Some of them were mere liaison offices for local governments represented by a member of the local government while others just hastily constructed documents and maps.

The “Rural Environmental Museum” and the Ecomuseum

In Japan, there is no official system designed to promote ecomuseums. Nonetheless, the “rural environmental museum” program (in Japanese, DEN-EN KUKAN HAKUBUTUKAN) adopted in 1998 by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan envisions a museum conserving natural environments, landscapes and traditional cultures. The idea comes by and large from the *écomusée* in France. It is probably one of the rare programs that have much to do with the establishment of the ecomuseum. The “rural environment improvement program” focuses on laying the groundwork. Some fifty areas in Japan have already been selected and developed.

The gist of the “development scheme for rural environmental museums” compiled in preparation for their establishment is as follows: (1) Be faithful to local histories and traditional cultures; (2) The core facility and satellites, or exhibition facilities scattered around the core facility across the area, shall be organically connected by footpaths; (3) Exhibitions shall be limited to open air ones, i.e., the reproduction of traditional agricultural settings, and the restoration of beautiful rural landscapes. Indoor exhibitions in buildings may be planned where necessary; (4) The rural environmental museum shall enlighten local people on the importance of landscaping and streetscaping activities, promoting their active participation; (5) Municipal governments or semipublic enterprises, depending on the situation in each area, shall be entrusted with the museum operation in an effort to make it a sustainable and efficient organization.

As such, the program does not come under the authority of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and hence does not set out a vision for the development of the museums. The idea is that the processes of “museum” being developed and maintained are all parts of the exhibition. As such, whether or not the rural environmental museum would function as Japan’s equivalent of the ecomuseum could be a point of dispute. This, however, is not the real problem. That is, given that the ecomuseum is not a mere form but a collective of activities and that the rural environmental museum program is not designed to provide security for museum activities, the two should be treated as different entities. The question whether or not an area marked off as the rural environmental museum could also become an ecomuseum, the latter of which in effect consists of local activities, should be taken up afterwards.

Thus, the most appropriate answer to the question of whether the creation of the rural environmental museum as part of the rural environment improvement program can serve as an ecomuseum is that, in many cases, the former is a necessary but not absolute requirement for the latter. Yet it is still desirable in promoting the ecomuseum and their activities to have a home-based organization. Arranging physical settings that the ecomuseum activities require could be a prime driver for the ecomuseum. By contrast, without activities and their management, the development of the former alone cannot complete the museum. The uniqueness of the ecomuseum is that it is not constrained by physical forms.

This program acted as a trigger for the formation of ecomuseums by raising a question about the development of rural environments. This has also made a great difference in heightening the public’s awareness and interests concerning the ecomuseum, even though

many of the misunderstandings have yet to be addressed.

Significance in Present-Day Japan

One may ask why the ecomuseum has become accepted in Japanese society today? Judging contextually, the following three elements brought people's attention to the necessity and meaning for something that was originally born in the late 1960s in France.

Reaffirmation of Identity. One possible explanation for the increasing necessity for the reaffirmation of identity is that the social situation of today's Japan resembles that of France in the late 1960s. That is, such phenomena as the loss of balance between urban cities and rural communities and psychologically browbeaten people, both adults and children, have become prominent. The autonomy of local regions, particularly rural communities, and the creation of dynamism at local level are strongly called for to combat these situations. Furthermore, the recovery of humanity through environment creation is sought after. Likewise, a number of city people are becoming increasingly concerned by the uncertainty of their own identities in a society of an anonymous nature. What is more, in an advanced information-based society, where individuals are homogenized and symbolized, the ecomuseum can provide an effective platform for a search for identity.

This is because the ecomuseum works effectively in confirming the temporal and spatial identities of inhabitants. The local people will be able to familiarize themselves with the land on which they are standing. They will also come to appreciate their *raison d'être* in today's world by learning about their local history. Note, however, that the notion of territory for the ecomuseum is very important, being a theme for the ecomuseum in a sense that local people with their subjective intentions and viewpoints make choices from a variety of options. The promotion of ecomuseum activities as such will help the local people uncover and affirm their potential and direction.

The Importance of Being Connected by a Network. As symbolized by the recent ecology boom, the concept of the ecosystem has become widely accepted. This shows that people are trying to find the meaning of their existence, not as an independent self but as an integrated member of society. Instead of separating the notions of production and consumption, there is a growing tendency to view comprehensively that there is a need for good balance between the two forms of the social system.

Moreover, the era of creating something anew by sabotaging the old is long gone. Present-day regional development is characterized by the attempts to do away with building efforts, i.e., revitalization and conversion, affiliation and cooperation, presentation and rendition. With the boom in building local museums slowing down, the multilateral and ecological utilization of the existing local heritages through mutual interactions and social networks at local level is gaining much importance. That is to say, existing local heritages should be regarded not as private property of some individuals but as a joint property of the community. This way, local people have to work together in utilizing, exploiting and diverting the common assets; these are the basic principles of the ecomuseum.

An example: Local Peoples' Activities in Miura Peninsula Ecomuseum and Their Current Status

Various public activities are developing in the Miura peninsula region. Once these activists realized that they are partners of the ecomuseum, all became connected in their consciousness, creating the ecomuseum network across the entire region. As such, surveys were conducted in 2000 and 2004 to find out more about history-oriented, environment-oriented, and culture-oriented local associations, the features and directions of their activities, and the extent of their interaction and cooperation.

(1) Inter-Group Cooperation

- History-oriented: With strong inclinations for lifelong study, many are the members of two or more organizations. The members become the instructors of their favorite fields and interaction among different groups is promoted through study sessions.
- Environment-oriented: Often the fields of activities coincide and overlap amongst different groups. As a result, activities are well coordinated compared with those in other areas by ways of sharing information, human resources and events.
- Culture-oriented: The number of research projects is of the highest, though cooperation among different bodies is limited, probably because their activities are more like personal hobbies.

All in all, interdisciplinary communication is weak, though there is active interaction between history-oriented and environment-oriented groups. The "Yokosuka City Museum" and the "Hayama Shiosai Museum" stands in-between the network linking different fields; they seem to function as a go-between.

(2) Bases of Activities

Quite often, the history-oriented groups are derived from lifelong study courses. Thus mostly "community Centres" are used as their home bases. The environment-oriented groups are not constrained by buildings in carrying out their activities. The culture-oriented bodies utilize various facilities, though most of them are easily accessible "private homes" or "neighbourhood meeting places."

(3) Spheres of Activities

- History-oriented: There is a slightly high density of these groups on the eastern coasts in Yokosuka. The history-loving civil groups have activity spheres beyond political jurisdictions. Their bases are scattered evenly over the entire peninsula.
- Environment-oriented: The sphere of activities is concentrated on the green zone, where nature remains relatively unspoiled, and the coastal area (especially seashore and cape).
- Culture-oriented: Activities are carried out mainly in the city areas of the region. They are also active in boroughs or residential areas, as many groups are founded by the demands of government.

Suppose that there is an area in which different activist groups share common aspirations, a 'theme community'. One of their objectives must be mutual cooperation in the region. For example, networking of different groups in the same field so that environmental protection is effective. However, it is equally important for the groups of different specialist interests, e.g. nature watch groups and study groups of historical buildings, to network together and jointly study the same site. This is because interacting with groups of varying specialties makes it possible to see the multi-tiered and comprehensive significance of the region. Such attempts are sure to develop into regional development activities by the hands of people residing in the same region. In other words, the ecomuseum can, by the means of a 'theme community', help realize the restructuring of local communities.

The Necessity of Regional Development as a Study. With the arrival of the lifelong learning era, it has become ever more important to combine regional development with lifelong learning, and to learn something through regional activities (action-oriented learning). To put it the other way around, the process of finding the region's identity by studying the local environment can also work as regional development in the hands of local people. This is exactly how the value of the ecomuseum as a museum body is verified in that the ultimate aim of the said activities is not regional planning or environment conservation in themselves but to provide the local people with opportunities for learning and passing their learning on to the next generation.

Ecomuseum activities are never ending. They are constantly developed, reviewed and altered. And it is the local people who set the directions for them. The people have to be wise enough to make directional decisions in conformity with the region's identity while regularly studying the continuity of the regional environment between past, present and future. At the same time, the ecomuseum is supposed to be effective as an educational institution that produces wise citizens.

Challenges Faced by Japanese Ecomuseums – 1: Persistence with a Stereotypical Model

The concept of the ecomuseum is still in its early stages in Japan. At the time of its introduction, little information was available. As a result, the idea of the ecomuseum is still ill-received by many. One of the reasons for the prevailing misconceptions is that people try to mold ecomuseums into stereotypical models. Ecomuseums are supposed to have free forms and be allowed to vary greatly depending on local distinctiveness. Denying distinctiveness of each area is as serious a mistake as giving up thinking all together.

One of the biggest and most dominant misunderstandings about the ecomuseum has something to do with its form or structure. The widely held view is that the museums consist of the following three structures: “core museum/facilities,” “satellite museum” and “discovery trail.” These are the basic three elements that have been adopted by the aforementioned rural environmental museums. This also is the model adopted by *Asahimachi Ecomuseum* in Yamagata prefecture. The problem, however, is that this has come to be recognized as the only possible form for the ecomuseum. Of course, an ecomuseum could take on this structure. But it is neither a *sine qua non* nor a set definition of the ecomuseum. Such a misconception is problematic because it could lead to the extensive creation of standardized ecomuseums which fail to recognize the significance of local identity.

Another problem is that the pair of words “core” and “satellite” represents a rank relationship. The existence of core facilities is certainly important. But this is only because a management body fully responsible for networking scattered sites is needed rather than allowing each site to be free to manage itself. The ecomuseum is not about putting together a tourist map showing the scattered sites. An organization governing and linking all the sites is called a headquarters or core facility, and this is an essential prerequisite for the ecomuseum. Nonetheless, the core facility is a mere supporting body of the network with no authority to control and thus does not rank any higher than the others. Bringing in the issue of hierarchy is totally at odds with the philosophy of the ecomuseum.

Challenges Faced by Japanese Ecomuseums - 2: Relation with Museology

The second challenge faced by many ecomuseums in Japan is their remote relation with museums and museology. Unfortunately, the majority of museums in Japan are unusual because they are more for tourists than for local people. As such, the local people do not find them easily accessible. Also, despite their original role as research and training grounds, there is a general misunderstanding that the museums are exhibition facilities only. Given this, Japanese ecomuseums also all too often end up becoming storage for old things, customer attractions, souvenir stores or display galleries. These indicate that the definition of the museum is not rightly understood and that museology dealing in the social significance and role of museums is in a vulnerable position.

In the meantime, traditional museologists regard the ecomuseum as an activity for regional development that is alien to the museum.

Some say that the ecomuseum is founded not on museology but on regional study, it is simply a case of the museum being used in regional study. The dominant view among them is that the ecomuseum is one thing and the museum quite another. Very few take an interest in the latest movement and development in ecomuseums. Museums aiming to become community-oriented with the focus set on the local area and local people are in the minority in Japan. Museum laws in Japan, as seen in the definition of museums by ICOM, do not stipulate a role for “the service of society and its development.” It is a serious problem that the foundation of traditional museums in Japan failed to contain the picture of museums contributing to the development of local communities. It is imperative that, in promoting the ecomuseum, museology itself achieves major progress.

On the other hand, some of the ecomuseum advocates also create problems. With too much emphasis placed on differentiating themselves from the conventional museums, they argue as if the ecomuseum is something that negates the traditional museum; some even disrespect the traditional museum approach. The reality is that sound, full-scale cooperation between ecomuseum representatives and museologists is somewhat difficult to achieve.

At present it is true that the majority of ecomuseums in Japan are merely “playing at being museums.” Limited knowledge about museum activities sometimes results in the creation of amateurish and non-academic ecomuseums. The immediate task is to face these realities critically and seriously, and to develop museum activities of social education in an effort to nurture citizens capable of bearing responsibility for regional communities.

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The Eco-cultural museum project in Gangol Maul, Korea

Hongnam Kim⁴⁰

A settled village is called a "maul" in Korean, the maul being the lowest unit of traditional Korean society. One maul usually consists of an average 20-40 households. Typically these mauls are farming villages inhabited by certain clans made of a few land-owning upper-class families and their hired farmers, as well as some independent farming families. If a maul is home to one or more famous scholar families, there can be schools of lower and higher education, one or two pavilions for pleasure, and austere ancestral shrines. A maul maintains one or two wells for common use and a sacred tree where village rituals are observed. Stone or wooded guardians stand at the village entrance by a gnarled old tree. These mauls appear at a glance very spontaneous in design, but the common features in their overall layout and geological and ecological environment reveal the geomantic intention in site-selection and planning. Mauls typically overlook rice fields and are located near a water source and enclosed by a protective wooded-hill, ideally in half-circle, where villagers are buried. Each maul maintains a certain distance from another maul.

Once peaceful and natural, these mauls are now rapidly disappearing and being disfigured following Korea's rapid modernization programme of the last two decades. A major contributing factor is the modernization of the education system, that is the centralization of education in urban cities. Therefore youths and middle-aged people are hard to see in such villages, which are dominated by the elders. There are a few mauls that have kept their original appearance. One of them is the Gangol maul, the topic of this paper.

The village Ganggol maul is located at Obong-ri, Deungryang-myon, Bosung-gun, in Jollanam-do province. The village has 39 households, most of which belong to the Li family from Gwangju in Gyeonggi-do province. The Li family is supposed to have entered this village in the latter half of 16th century. Four houses of the village including a beautiful jeongja (pavilion), Yeolhwa-jeong, are designated as Important Folklore Material of the Province. It is assumed all of the four houses were built at the turn of the 20th century. Each of these four has a pond in front of the house, one of the unique characteristics found in this settlement.

What can be done to preserve the authenticity and the beauty of

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the Gangol maul and to prevent the villagers from self-destruction and self-denial and to protect them from the deceitful promises of a better life promoted by ruthless developers and their aides in the government? How to help them to earn respectful and a reasonable living in their own unchanged environment without losing self-confidence and pride, and yet still feel to be an important part of contemporary life?

The eco-cultural museum approach to the Gangol maul is believed to be the only answer to such quests while allowing the village to be sustainable. The method is not to add a new museum but to turn the entire village with its all surroundings into a site museum. The project team will be made of the village representatives, the district and prefectural officers in charge, the two NGOs (the National Trust of Korea and the Forest of Life), as well as the National Folk Museum of Korea. Each is to be given specific roles to play in unison with other parties to implement the ecomuseum concept.

It is important that planning should be proceeded by research. Much of the research can be carried out by the curatorial staff provided by the National Folk Museum of Korea except for the study of ecology which will depend on the Forest of Life:

- On the location and development of settlement
- On the socio-economic structure of the settlement
- On the forces and principles shaping the spatial structure
- On the water system of a Korean clan village
- Analysis of houses and other buildings
- On the village's intangible heritage
- On the ecology
- On the special features of farm land, farming tools and technology
- On their production and crafts

Provided with the research results, museological content and programs can be developed, designed specifically for the village. All these results will be in turn a sound basis for the organization of museum administration and curatorial and other manpower. In the meantime, the National Trust of Korea will raise funds for property purchase of vacant houses (now privately owned) and their restoration, while the local government will try to secure funds for running the Gangol maul eco-cultural museum. The Forest of Life will be responsible financially and scientifically to preserve and maintain the ecological environment with the help of villagers. The villagers will also participate in the education programs and other visitor programs in their rice field and in the village, while actively engaged in the merchandising of local products provided with

enough start-up funding. All this still remains a dream, but not an impossible one.

I am certain that our Gangol maul project will benefit from this Ecomuseum conference as well as from the lessons in the mistakes made in my first eco-cultural museum project in the Gurim maul, Yeongam-gun, Jollanam-do province in 1997-2000.

Cheongju City Ecomuseum: the conservation of cultural properties by civil campaign in Cheongju, Korea

*Choi Hyoseung*⁴¹

Five thousand years of history have given Korea a rich cultural and natural heritage. Cultural properties are inheritances of every nation, so do not belong to a country, to a local self-governing community or an individual, but to everyone. The public properties we preserve will pass to our descendants and become their responsibility. Cheongju is well known for its beautiful landscape and the thousands of cultural sites and cultural traditions it preserves.

For example, at the Heungdoksa Temple the world's oldest printed books, including copies of *The Selected Sermons of Buddhist Sages* and *Zen Masters'* printed with metal type are preserved. The 'Iron Flagpole of the Yongdusa Temple site' (known as the Chuldanggan, National Treasure No.41) is also a good example.

However, the environment around these sites is not well kept, as it should be for such outstanding examples of world cultural heritage. Partial improvement around both sites has been accomplished by citizens' support and their cultural campaign. However, it is now an appropriate time to realize a strategic plan to make the area into a symbolic urban plaza for Cheongju.

The government has promoted this preservation project through a detailed site survey and political efforts to repatriate other early printed books taken by the French which are now in the custody of Paris Central Library. This is important in order to let the world know that Cheongju is the first place where metal type was used in printing and publishing. With government support some environmental improvements have been made & a development project is underway for a community road to connect the Cheongju Arts Centre to the Heungdoksa Temple site. However, at a time when the conservation of cultural properties is dependent on the national budget, it is impossible to preserve everything, and as a result civil cultural campaigns could become an important alternative source of funding, knowledge and inspiration. The civil cultural campaign to preserve the site of the Chuldanggan of Cheongju provides a useful example

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General knowledge of Danggan

'Danggan' is a pole and its supports, usually made of stone or iron. They are placed as a kind of 'Gidang' in a yard or in front of the gate of a temple. Known originally by the popular name 'Gwaebul', they have painted surfaces with Buddhist motifs, and are used to celebrate events at Buddhist temples.

The construction of these structures in Buddhist temples dates from the unified Silla Kingdom era in Korea's history. But, danggans were damaged or demolished over time. Only Chuldanggan has been ascribed as a national treasure (No.41), because the year of building is certain. It was erected by a king in the 13th Koryo Dynasty in 962 A.D. It is an iron cylinder in 20 sections; the third iron cylinder from the base is inscribed with the building date. This record is important, enabling the study of society and culture in a primitive or early period of the Koryo Dynasty. The inscription is also important evidence for the ability to produce Jikjisimcheyojeol, the first metal printed books, a demonstration of the casting technology that has endured for a thousand years. In addition, according to Feungshui theory, the Chuldanggan has played a role of protecting local people, giving it symbolic meaning, a site of religious, scientific, historic value.

Conservation effort for Chuldanggan: the civil campaign

The Japanese specified Chuldanggan as a national treasure (No.210) in 1936, a status re-ascribed in 1962 when Korea's Cultural Properties Protectorate was established.

Table 1. Conservation Campaign Process

yyy/mm/dd	Contents
1990.06.11.	Adoption of Civil cultural campaign for Chuldanggan conservation as a Standing Committee
1990.07.23.	Dispatch cooperation document about the Chuldanggan conservation campaign to each group
1990.07.31.	Issue the first newsletter of Chuldanggan conservation campaign, street distribution and dispatch to schools and social groups
1990.08.21.	Dispatch cooperation request document about Chuldanggan conservation to Cultural Properties Administration
1990.09.1.	Appointment of 2 resident administrators for Chuldanggan management(Cheongju City)
1990.10.27.	Symposium for Chuldanggan conservation & environment improvement with members (citizens) donation. The beginning of donation acceptance for Chuldanggan conservation
1991.02.1.	Transmission of the first donation (8,262,740 won) for Chuldanggan conservation to Cheongju City
1992.04.12.	Issue the second newsletter of the Chuldanggan conservation campaign, street distribution and dispatch to schools and social groups
1992.07.12.	Transmission of the 2nd donation (5,756,000 won) for Chuldanggan conservation to Cheongju City
1993.12.	Cheongju City negotiate regarding adjacent buildings (gross area 193.7 m ²) and land (89.3 m ²) in the reserved area
1993.07.	Application for approval for the improvement of the Chuldanggan surroundings to Cultural Properties Administration (Cheongju City)
1993.09.	Approval of the application(Cultural Properties Administration) and operation of safety examination(Cultural Properties Research Institute)
1993.10.	Expert inquiry about building removal methods and starting first improvement works in Chuldanggan reserved area (Cheongju City)
1993.12.	Completion of first work (removal of the most adjacent building, pavement works of plaza and raising bollards to calm traffic) (Cheongju City)

1993.12.22.	Ceremonial citizen's festival for first work(Danggan Festival, playing Korean instrumental peasant music, concert, feast with local dishes. Transmission of the third donation(6,365,000 wons) for Chuldanggan conservation to Cheongju City
1994.04.16	Danggan Festival (citizen's day)
1995.04.	Erection of Chuldanggan imitation at the plaza of Cheongju Art Centre
1996.02.	Ceremonial festival of 15th of January
1996.06.	On Environment Day, a commemorative oratorical contest
1996.08.	Devising second-stage plan for purchase of remaining buildings in reserved area
1996.09. 6.	The First Danggan Cultural Festival
1999.06.	Study of safety examination and conservation treatment of Chuldanggan
1999.07.	1st Cheongju international architectural design conference (Theme : Environmental Improvement & Development surrounding Cultural Properties)
2002.11.	Ecomuseum City Cheongju Plan Project is initiated (Administration by Cheongju city with expert guidance)
2004.07.	2nd international architectural design workshop in Cheongju 2004(Theme : Exhibition-Working Activity Satellite and Mall)
2004.012.	Cheongju Exhibition-Working Activity Satellite Plan Project (Adm., citizens and expert participation)

From 1976 some 20 meters on all sides of the Chuldanggan has been included in the designation. In 1989, an autonomous group, the 'Chungbuk Citizens Association' (now the Cheongju Citizens Association) was formed. Their conservation efforts, working with local officials, led to the most adjacent building (4-stories, gross area 180 m²) being removed. The main activities of the conservation and fundraising campaign were as follows:

The building removal has had several important outcomes. It has enabled a secure base for the conservation of the Chuldanggan; the procedure has taken place with the help of local people, and created a link with the past, a link to more than one thousand years of history. Land has been re-appropriated by local people.

Table 2. Role and Period by subject of Civil Campaign

Period	First Step	Second Step	Third Step	Fourth Step
Citizen group	-The citizen group's project for Chuldanggan conservation initiated -Positive participation by members -The Chair of Culture Department issues a Cheongju newsletter weekly (a register is provided of the names of contributors)	-delivery of one of the extended group's several projects -Decrease membership's concerns about Chuldanggan conservation - Stopped issue of Cheongju newsletter weekly	-Individual participation in the Cheongju International Architectural Design Camp	
Expert	-Participate positively in planning of symposium, preparing of program, and consulting on the removal of building	-resolve problems of a)Accurate Measurement and Structural Safety Examination of Chuldanggan and b) diminution of time investment	-Safety examination and conservation treatment of Chuldanggan -1st Cheongju International Architectural Design Camp(July 1999)	-2nd Cheongju International Architectural Design Workshop (July 2004)
Administrative	-Firm action by administrator and assistant of City Assembly to deliver project the exchange of land, removal of buildings and restoration of space to local people	- popular newly elected mayor -The installation of iron railing for preservation and safety Examination resulted in substantial problems		

The result of safety examination and preservation treatment research on the Chuldanggan, and later, the findings and comments from the International Architectural Design Conference led to increased concern on the behalf of local people. However, the citizens cultural campaign has undoubtedly been a success, with the first efforts (June 1990 - Dec 1993) leading to building removal and the creation of an open plaza. The fruit of the civil campaign must however be placed in context. The budget demands, the performance of citizen associations and their links with the administration all posed problems. Table 1 makes a useful comparison between the first and second campaigns, and provides some reasons why progress slowed. Sustaining relationships is a difficult process, but only by doing so will heritage conservation be achieved.

The cost of removing the southern building by purchase is prohibitive. I propose that a "win-win" situation is desirable for both the land owner and Cheongju citizens. Changes to the buildings could result in an attractive 'open café' area which will attract customers. At the same time Cheongju citizens would enjoy this new space. The central shopping area will be greatly improved and populated. It is clear from this experience that conservation and preservation of cultural heritage is difficult to accomplish without positive participation and cooperation of citizens, experts and administration working as a team.

Another aspect of the civil campaign: the Cheongju International Architectural Design Conference, 1999

The purpose of the conference. I researched conservation methods and carried out a structural safety examination working with a team of experts. In July 1999, the 1st International Architectural Design Conference was held. The theme was the improvement of the environment surrounding the Chuldanggan. Architects, urban designers and citizens came together to discuss design concepts and plans. As a result citizen awareness about cultural heritage conservation, and methods of conservation and improvement adopted in other countries was greatly enhanced. It was also an opportunity to promote the cultural heritage of Cheongju City.

The Cheongju International Architectural Design Conference began as the new millennium approached, which acted as a useful lever to achieve its goals. It would not be honorable to either our ancestors or their descendants to celebrate the new millennium leaving the Iron Flagpole of the Yongdusa Temple, and its environment, in such poor repair. As part of the project, the design and construction of a Millennium Grand bell was proposed.

The aims and objectives of the Design Conference

- a) Building and caring for a city and its architecture with civil participation
On the first day of the conference each team gave a presentation and then listened to the opinions of the audience. 'Comment boards' were placed next to each work displayed and the free discussion between architects and the public was encouraged.
- b) The acceptance of the change in the role of the professionals from decision makers to coordinators. Even though architects and city planners take charge of making spaces, diverse suggestions about the downtown environment can be drawn from the public. This process does not exclude the architect from expressing creativity and artistic inspiration.
- c) Cultural assets, arts and culture coexist in the everyday environment of modern human beings.

Alternative approaches to cultural assets preservation and the City economy can be effective. On the basis of this, the following ideas could be carried through:

- a) Design of a water screen cloud to protect the Iron Flagpole of Yongdusa Temple from acid rain
- b) The planning of a 'culture street' that connects the Iron Flagpole of Yongdusa Temple and Central Park with Seongan Street; this would be the first national car-free street
- c) Reconstruction planning, renovation of existing buildings and maintenance planning of the facade toward Chuldanggan Plaza
- d) Maintenance planning of the route to a neglected alleyway
- e) Lighting planning for the Iron Flagpole of Yongdusa Temple
- f) Roof garden planning of the neighbouring buildings

The significance of the conference. Architects and city planning specialists from Korea and foreign countries discussed together the conservation of a cultural asset and its surrounding environment and presented an agreed solution. However, the most important concept to emerge was the inclusion of local people in decision-making.

The conference also had practical benefits, with some land donation in the protected area, lighting of the Chuldanggan at night from February 2000, and the completion of construction. Improvement of the plaza environment, rebuilding of surrounding buildings and changes in the landscape architecture all progressed after the conference.

Ecomuseum City, Cheongju

Although it has many museums of tradition, history and culture, Cheongju is not perceived as a place of education and tourism. There is a need to research Cheongju history and culture, and to create some form of Cheongju History Centre that has a different remit from the existing museums. The idea of 'Ecomuseum City Cheongju' has gradually begun to emerge, a plan for a living museum for the whole area.

Research for a basic plan for the Ecomuseum Core Centre, and for an ecomuseum strategic plan, have begun. Already there is active citizen participation and the potential for ecomuseum satellite design is being pursued. After the World Cultural City Forum held in Cheongju City in May 5, 2001, the 'Cheongju Declaration' of urban culture announced these ideas to local people, visitors and foreigners. Now, the study for Geumsan (it means Silk Mountain) Ecomuseum, and ideas for the Cheongju Ecomuseum are being taken forward. These studies and practices in Cheongju have played an important role in testing the application of ecomuseum principles in Korea.

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Cheongju City Ecomuseum: its exhibitions and activities

Choi, Hyo Seung, Jung, Jin Ju, Shin, Hyun Yo⁴²

Most museums simply display collected materials inside a building. This is the situation in Korea, with permanent exhibitions that did not encourage repeat visits. The ecomuseum is a new paradigm that is seeking to reverse this trend. The ecomuseum concept, first proposed in France in the 1960s, has had a significant influence on many museums. The ecomuseums, representing the whole region museum, preserves regional heritage in-situ and encourages the positive participation of local people. In Cheongju, the project called Cheongju City Ecomuseum is seeking to establish the whole local area as an open air museum with the participation of citizens, experts and administrators.

Various initiatives have begun to create an active network. The Cheongju National Museum has opened a 'Children's Centre', a new building for various activity programs, including folk life, archaeological excavation and a working pottery to encourage educational activities. The metal printing program in the Jikji Pavilion in Cheongju is one of the most popular activity programs. The Silk Museum, at Cheongwon in Chungbuk now has an enlarged building for activity programs. Museums in which visitors participate directly in activities improve the quality of the experience, especially if the buildings have been especially designed for that purpose. This tendency has gradually been adopted not only by national and private established museums, but also by small museums managed by individuals.

The Concept of Exhibition and Activity Satellites

Satellites are an important element of the ecomuseum. The idea of an exhibition and activity satellite have been promoted by Maggi and Falletti (2006). They are places having experience spaces or facilities in which visitors participate and can work actively there or in an ecomuseum program.

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Other activities are being developed in the Cheongju area, including trips with 'culture guides', practical work in the Pyeongdong rice cake village, the experience of traditional etiquette education in a local school annexed to a Confucian shrine and making pottery at the Cheongju International Industrial Arts Biennale, a famous international event.

A trial at an activity Satellite: the Dorim Gongbang Pottery

Dorim Gongbang is located in an old street in Cheongju downtown's neighborhood, an area not frequently visited by local people and visitors. However, the potter was keen to develop a practical experience program, even though space and budget were limited. Despite his willingness, and the relevance to the City's policy towards promoting industrial arts industry, little progress seemed possible. The ecomuseum team chose this area to investigate the problems, and potential solutions that would enable a sustainable activity program. This included the rearrangement of studio space and an investigation into retail potential. As a result students and ordinary people began to visit, leading to interchange of experiences and the formation of links with other art workshops and educational facilities.

Activity Satellites and the International Architectural Design Workshop in Cheongju, 2004

Theme Presentation. Cheongju City has promoted 'Cultural Urban Design', built theme museums through community involvement and recently made efforts to create the Cheongju City Ecomuseum. The Cheongju National Museum will emphasize new spaces that are the common property of citizens, and is representative of one of the cultural zones of the city. The museum will display 20,000 objects representative of past and present history of the city, situated in an historical protected landscape, connected to the old road from Yullyangdong to the Sangdang Mountain Fortress. The design has taken heed of the advice and support of experts to reach an appropriate solution.

With this background, the workshop held a discussion on the actual site. Planning of the museum for storing and displaying the collections, were linked to an outdoor mall that recreates architecture and design style from the 1950's to 1960's. The Chiba Prefecture Bosonomura Museum in Japan provided a good example of period restoration in the Meiji period.

Examples of shops in this recreated street include groceries,

sweetshops, a dispensary of Chinese medicine, an audio store, a photo studio, a furniture store, an antiques shop, a pottery shop and a handicraft shop. In these stores, spaces for the sale of goods, for activities and exhibition are needed. Street design and the scale of buildings will be varied in order to create a 'real' experience.

Organizing Team and Participation with Observers. Workshop participation was restricted to practicing architects and graduate students; five teams (Chiba University, a multinational team from Japan, Yonsei University, Wega Architects and Cheongju University) initially. There were also observer teams of elementary and middle school students from Korea, and high school students studying in the USA. Members of the observer teams made important suggestions, particularly in relation to the potential visitor experience. A month before holding the workshop, participants were provided with information about the concept and the site through an internet web site. A site model (scale 1/1000) and a site map were prepared, and bicycles were provided to enable the participants to explore and understand Cheongju.

Result of workshop. The 2004 workshop followed the pattern of a previous design conference in 1999, when each team, represented by a lead member or tutor, lecture and critically appraise one another. This reciprocal criticism was found to be very fruitful, much more so than inviting guest architects to lecture.

Proposal from Cheongju University Team: Cheongju Ecomuseum

- The ecomuseum concept cannot be directly applied to our city following models applied in Europe and Japan. We need to define the current situation of our city first, and then re-define the concept of the ecomuseum to find out the best way of implementing it.
- Program: Visitors & Residents require a main Museum (with Permanent Exhibition, Management) + Themed Exhibition Centres (Display, Participation) + Community Centre (Outdoor theater, Auditorium) + Plaza, Park, Cafe(Entertainment)

Proposal from Team Yonsei University & Wega Architects, Korea:

- Cheongju Citizen Life Museum – CCLifeM which is a time tunnel exploring the past and present of Cheongju. A Museum that challenges continuity + a Museum that presents new ideas
- 5 issues for Cheongju Citizen Life Museum : Preservation vs. Originality / Tradition vs. Renewal / City vs. Nature / Ground vs. Slope / Public vs. Profitability
- program inside of CCLifeM : Cheongju Life street / Happium / Familium / Memorium / Life Tower / Nature Trail / Culture Trail / Life Bus
- Program Management : Differentiated Strategy to Each Target Group / Membership Benefit / CCLifeM Planners, Friends Advisors, Family Advisors

Proposal from Team Chiba University, Japan : MIWANIUM

- IDEA : Human life is influenced by environment (especially nature) and receives a variety of benefits from nature. For example, trees, soils, clean air, fuels etc. But now the relationships between nature and humanity is not so clear. Cities are always changing by many elements, their climate, topography, people, community, period. It is an organic creature; cities grow and reform again and again.

- CONCEPT : The contents, forms, functions and activities of the museum are changing constantly by the change of nature or the resident's dynamism. So we plan "unfinished ("miwan" in Korean) museum" = "MIWANIUM".
- Five programs making relationship nature and life : Program Teacher / Kimchi de Gohan / Waste Revival Project / Uam Ranger / Echo Program

Proposal from Team Multi-National :

- Impetus, Incubation, Information, Interaction, Infinity. In these 5 words, capture the core activities of the museum. Follow the process that helped to develop the Folk Experience Museum. Centre should be the impetus for citizen's participation.
- It would incubate the well-being of citizens, encouraging interaction and activity. As the Centre grows, so will Cheongju.

Understanding Cheongju as a whole via Activity Satellites

Through the process of observation by, and experience of visitors, it is possible that a new understanding about Cheongju will emerge, helping to preserve its history, culture and natural environment. 'Activity Satellites' are not ordinary museum institutions but a means for rediscovering Cheongju. The collaboration of citizens, experts, and administrators is essential to create them, so establishing regional identity and aiding the understanding of the culture of Cheongju.

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Borobudur, Indonesia: from monument to cultural landscape heritage

*Laretna T. Adishakti*⁴³

The current change of understanding about heritage and the social economic condition by the local people of Borobudur has created a movement to rethink of the whole system of heritage management in Borobudur and to raise a basic question “what is the Borobudur heritage?” Is it mainly a temple or the cultural landscape of the Borobudur area?

Those questions have encouraged various parties to rethink the value and assets of this world heritage and its environment where there are many old settlements around the monument. One further question emerges - “Is the Borobudur cultural landscape an ecomuseum?”

Brief review of heritage management in Borobudur

1. Borobudur temple was, for the first time, restored in 1907 – 1911;
2. In 1955, the Indonesian government sought international help from UNESCO for the restoration of the Borobudur temple;
3. Under the self study by the Government of Indonesia, and with the technical assistance of the Japanese Government in 1973-1979, Borobudur was designed as a National Archaeological Park. The studies were divided into three stages as follows:
 - Regional Master Plan Study: 1973 – 74
 - Project Feasibility Study: 1975 – 76
 - Review: 1977 – 1979
 - i. abovementioned data & a basic socioeconomic study of the park areas
 - ii. the former plans & the basic socio-economic survey
4. In 1979, the Study Team proposed that there are three basic concepts that would act as pillars for further development. They believed that the park can be successful only if all three concepts are integrated. The concepts are as follows (JICA Study Team, 1979):
 - a. Parks for Permanent Preservation of the Monuments
 - b. Centre for Archeological Research in Indonesia
 - c. For All Children in the Future

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5. The project implementation was from 1975 to 1983 for the restoration, and 1983 – 1989 for the creation of archeological park.
6. During this restoration 5 management zones were delineated. There are:
 - a. Zone I : the monument/sanctuary area (200 m radius, 44,8 ha)
 - b. Zone II : the archaeological park area with facilities for visitors, offices, parking, exhibition halls, etc./buffer zone (500 m radius, 42,3 ha)
 - c. Zone III is supposed to protect the setting of the temple (2 km radius, 932 ha)
 - d. Zone IV is the Historical Scenery Preservation Zone (5 km radius). In this zone there are 13 archaeological sites.
 - e. Zone V is the protected historical district. There are 21 archeological sites.
7. In 1980 – 1983, two villages, Ngaran and Kenayan, were removed in order to create the second zone, the tourism park.
8. Mr. Soeharto (the President at that time) officially reopened the monument to the public in February 1983.
9. In 1991 Borobudur and Prambanan temples were inscribed in the World Heritage List no. 592 and 642 under cultural criteria:
 - i. unique artistic achievement;
 - ii. exerted great influence
 - iii. directly or tangibly associated with events or ideas or beliefs
10. In 1986, 1989, and 1995 was monitored by UNESCO Experts with regard to the stone work and the stability and drainage of the structure.
11. A celebration marking 20th years post restoration was held in 2003.
 - i. Protests began by the local community as well as heritage concerns and organizations from around the world against the proposal for a large commercial project.
 - ii. A local community declaration pointed out the ineptness of the management body for the Park of Borobudur, Prambanan.
 - iii. The Fourth International Expert Meeting on Borobudur organized by UNESCO and Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Republic of Indonesia took place in 2003.
 - iv. The Ministry of Cultural and Tourism established Borobudur Conservation Office in December 2003. This office has other responsibilities, to develop preservation methodologies and heritage conservation in Indonesia.
12. In 2004, the government of Indonesia established the Steering Committee for the “Second Stage of Borobudur and Prambanan Restoration Focusing on Community Development”

Borobudur: strategic issues

National Issues.

- Perception on the development and utilization of world heritage conservation. There is a perception that development is profit oriented, while conservation is non profit oriented
- Development concept of world heritage district. It cannot be delineated by fences but it is actually dependant on the interaction of between the monument and its surrounding area. The concept of development should be reoriented based on the “Mandala” system where the participation of local community is accommodated from the planning stage to its implementation. However, the understanding of various stakeholders in this issue is varied.
- The management zone system for world heritage based on the integrated zoning system does not work well.
- The benefit for local people is not optimised.
- The potential of the surrounding villages is not clearly developed, or even considered.
- Lack of financial capital for local business development
- Marketing is one of the key successes of local development
- Who will take a lead in this community based development, government or local people?

Global Issues. The global issues have emerged in various international forums such as:

- Fourth International Experts Meeting on Borobudur (2003)
- 27th General Assembly UNESCO-World Heritage Centre (2003)
- UNESCO-ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring (2003)
- 28th General Assembly UNESCO-World Heritage Centre in China (2004)

Mostly critically focused on the commitment of the Borobudur management, they are:

- Review the Zone 1,2,3,4, and 5 (UNESCO-ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring (2003)
- New road in the Zone 1 – 3 and shopping mall construction are prohibited (Recommendation of 28th General Assembly UNESCO-World Heritage Centre, 2004)
- To strengthen the coordination among stakeholders (Recommendation of 27th General Assembly UNESCO-World Heritage Centre, 2004)
- The development of Borobudur has not followed the concept of community based development (Fourth International Experts Meeting on Borobudur, 2003)

Further discussion

Since 2003, I have engaged with the local community in Borobudur to find a way to cope with the social problems there. In 2004, the Centre of Heritage Conservation, Department of Architecture and Planning, Gadjah Mada University in collaboration with Wakayama University organized the First International Field School on Borobudur Cultural Landscape. The Second Field School will be organized in September 2005. At the same time, I have agreed to be a member of the Steering Committee of Second Stage of Borobudur and Prambanan Restoration. For the elective course on Cultural Landscape Heritage Conservation in the Department of Architecture and Planning, Gadjah Mada University, we also utilize Borobudur as our case study area. Currently, supported by many volunteers, a collaboration with the local people, we are making a Green Map. Learning from those academic and practical exercises, there are eight issues that should be reviewed, emphasized, re-purposed and elaborated:

What is the meaning of Borobudur Heritage? Is it a temple and its archaeological park or, as suggested in the UNESCO Expert Meeting on Borobudur in 2003, a means to understand Borobudur in the wider context of cultural landscape? If we agree with the latter, a lot of other approaches, basic principles, and regulations should be further considered.

On the other hand, we also have to re-justify what is the main function and meaning of Borobudur for the current generation. Is it a Centre of Excellence in the cultural landscape (*Pusaka Saujana Borobudur*) or just a place of recreation, a tourism industry destination?

These basic considerations should be clearly stated in the Steering Committee policy and strategy otherwise it will not generate new perceptions of Borobudur when the Organizing Committee executes the Second Stage of Borobudur Restoration.

Critically review the current management of Borobudur World Heritage. Since the establishment of this Steering Committee, the first important issue is the need to critically review the current management of Borobudur World Heritage. As mentioned before, the management zone system on world heritage based on the integrated zoning system that involves several stakeholders does not work well. The local community seems not to have any mechanism for dialogue and discussion with the managers. The review may focus on several issues such as:

- Start the examination from the Presidential Decision no. 1 year 1992 on the establishment of Tourism Park of Borobudur, Prambanan, and Ratu Boko Co. Ltd.

- Re-assess the management of Borobudur, Central Java Province, which is currently separated from Prambanan and Ratu Boko in Yogyakarta Special Territory.
- We understand that conservation management of the historic environment requires the exploration of the interrelationships between cultural and economic development, which always creates conflicts. In this regard, to restructure the scheme of the Borobudur cultural landscape heritage management into one management team which will accommodate various stakeholders from central, provincial, and local government, heritage professionals, and the local community. The scope of management should include the issues of:
 - Heritage conservation
 - Tourism development
 - Rural landscape development
 - Participatory program
 - Economic development
- To transform the “Mandala” concept into practical management.

Which master plan should be reviewed? It is stated that there is an action plan to review the master plan of Borobudur. The question is what or which master plan is actually now utilized in Borobudur. So far it is not clear, as the effective management of the heritage sites is also questioned.

Rethinking the concept of Borobudur restoration formulated in 1979. There are three concept of Borobudur restoration: a) Parks for Permanent Preservation of the Monuments, b) Centre for Archeological Research in Indonesia, c) For All Children in the Future. Based on the today’s condition, those concepts should be examined, as per the following questions:

- Is the meaning of ‘Park’ a place without housing compounds/lifeless? Is it a beautiful place without houses and people? I do not think so. It is urgent to have common perception and to rethink the meaning of a Park. The Park should not remove local people from their place of origin. We can create a village park or even a cultural landscape park where local people can pleasantly live.
- Is a Centre for Archeological Research part of tourism management? Or is tourism management just a part of the whole Centre for Archeological Research. Could the Centre become a Centre for Heritage Research?
- Is Borobudur just a place for recreation/mass tourism? Where is the evidence that Borobudur is “For All Children in the Future”? Are there any interpretative programs to educate children about the monument and its surrounding area?

How to fulfill the lack of comprehensive data regarding the Borobudur cultural landscape? The current information about the Borobudur cultural landscape is very limited, and mainly focuses on the temple of Borobudur, the park, and some artifacts. For further sustainable development, a comprehensive account is desirable. The question is, with the current management, who will carry out this inventory, and review it annually? Before and new draft policy and strategy can be operated, a review and re-structure of the management of this heritage site is extremely important.

Reposition of villages/rural area surrounding Borobudur temple (cultural landscape) and the role of local people. Heritage is both tangible and intangible resources that past generations have preserved and which have been handed on to the present. A significant group of the population wishes to hand this heritage on to the future. In the Indonesian Charter 2003, it is understood that the heritage of Indonesia is the legacy of nature, culture, and *saujana*, the weave of the two. Natural heritage is the construct of nature. Manmade heritage is the legacy of thought, emotion, intentions, and works that spring from over 500 ethnic groups in Tanah Air Indonesia, singularly, and together as one nation, and from the interactions with other cultures throughout its long history. *Saujana* heritage is the inextricable unity between nature and man-made heritage in space and time.

Continuity amidst changes is the central concept of conservation, a notion that differs from preservation. Heritage conservation is also the management of change which now tends to involve the different levels of tangible and intangible heritage, from the neighborhood up to the national level. Heritage is not only the nationally outstanding treasures, but also the activity system of communal value, such as small-scale industries, intimate townscapes, traditional houses, and religious and cultural festivals.⁴⁴ Conservation has moved from being mainly concerned with beautification to a more holistic approach that is based on participation programs, economic analysis and attracting business and cultural activities to the area. Heritage conservation is a culture movement. In such case, people who live in this environment must be considered.

We should recognise that indigenous heritage may have equal value with the monument, and consider the villages surrounding Borobudur temple as part of this world heritage. We cannot simply place those local heritages as complimentary to the Borobudur temple and carry out a community empowerment program. What we have to plan is Borobudur's cultural landscape (the total *saujana* Borobudur) where Borobudur temple, other temples and archaeological sites, villages, and its surrounding natural heritage have the same value. Several actions

⁴⁴ Mimura, Hiroshi, 1990. "Community and Private Sector Linkage in Urban Small Scale Industries", The Second International Training Workshop on Strategic Areal Development Approaches for Implementing Metropolitan Development and Conservation, Yogyakarta

could include:

- To change the approach from community based development into community based management
- To conduct detail inventory of those villages and identify all stakeholders
- To formulate village action plan
- To formulate design guidelines of village development

Maintaining and conserving the rural landscape. The vulgarization of design in the Borobudur region has occurred stage by stage. These new developments, such as a type of offices and commercial buildings, have been constructed without any institutional control mechanism. As discuss before in the point 5, formulation of design guidelines is required to maintain and conserve the value of the rural landscape in the overall Borobudur cultural landscape.

Risk and disaster management. Cultural Properties and Historic areas are irreplaceable cultural and social resources and a yet under utilized resource for sustainable development for benefit of humankind, which should be handed down to future generations. However, catastrophic hazards such as fires and tsunami caused by earthquakes, typhoons, floods and other disasters, pose grave threats, especially in the countries of Asia and the Pacific rim (Kyoto Declaration, 2005). Borobudur is surrounded by 5 mountains, where one of them, Merapi, is very active. History shows that Borobudur was damaged due to the earthquakes when Mount Merapi erupted in the 10th Century and totally changed the civilization of this area. A risk assessment and the preparation of a disaster plan is essential.

A sense of place, power and identity: the ecomuseum experience of Museo san Isidro Labrador de Pulilan in the Philippines

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The Ecomuseum has been defined by the Natural History Committee of ICOM as “an institution which manages, studies and exploits – by scientific, educational and generally speaking, cultural means, the entire heritage of a given community, including the whole natural environmental and cultural milieu. Thus, the ecomuseum is a vehicle for public participation in community planning and development. To this end, the ecomuseum uses all means and methods at its disposal in order to allow the public to comprehend, criticise and master, in a liberal and responsible manner- the problems which it faces. Essentially, the ecomuseum uses the language of the artefact, the reality of everyday life and concrete situations in order to achieve desired changes” [quoted in Davis, 1999: p.69].

Compared to the traditional museum, an ecomuseum assumes new museology attributes – multidisciplinary displays, exhibition themes that promote enquiry, internal and external networking, community involvement and outreach team working, access policies, social roles, working within limited resources, new attitudes to income generation, social and environmental aims, site museums and the celebration of other cultures [Davis, 1999; Sola, 1997]. Most of these attributes reflect ecomuseums off site programs that enrich the impact of the museum service in the community. Specifically, the impact of the ecomuseum is that it provides a sense of place to the community, a sense of power to the people and a sense of identity to society [Fuller, 1992].

The ecomuseum is an emerging phenomenon in the Philippines. Although not formally studied and documented, some local Philippine museums manifest distinct attributes of ecomuseums. This paper documents the community program of a Philippine ecomuseum, the Museo San Isidro Labrador de Pulilan. What is the vision of this museum? How does the museum translate this vision into off site programs? What is the impact of these off site programs and how do these programs contribute to the people’s sense of place, power and identity?

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Museo San Isidro Labrador de Pulilan

Pulilan, established in 1790, is one of the oldest towns in Bulacan province. Only 45 kilometers north of Manila, the once rustic and quaint atmosphere of the town has been transformed into bustle and frenzy with the rise of modern fast food outlets and shopping mall amenities. The accessibility and proximity to the city Centre have brought along social issues like river pollution, drug addiction, land conversion and the gradual erosion of local traditions.

The Museo San Isidro Labrador de Pulilan was established on December 20 1997 by JEFARCA, a youth organization, supported by the church, local government and civic group (Rotary Club). JEFARCA was formed on February 28 1989 by a group of high school students of St. Dominic Academy in the town of Pulilan, Bulacan who believed in serving the greater community as brothers. Later, the all-male group decided to accept members who are willing to serve and take part in the solution of problems and issues of the community.

The museum serves as a venue for local history awareness and a catalyst for social change. According to the “Project Proposal on the Build the Museo San Isidro Labrador de Pulilan Project” [Museo San Isidro Labrador de Pulilan, 1997], it is envisioned to fulfill community oriented aims. In part,

“To document, preserve and enrich the unique socio-cultural heritage of Pulilan (of which the famous carabao [water buffalo] festival is but one of the many), the artistic, intellectual and historical legacy of its citizens and educate all Pulileños of facts through well researched, insightful and relevant exhibitions, forums and festivals.”

“To serve as a unifying factor for the people of Pulilan, the repository of their artifacts, the educator of their youth, the Centre for its intellectual and cultural development and the symbol of a proud, progressive, just, pious, historically conscious and culturally active population eager to participate in the continued, sustainable and meaningful development of Pulilan.”

Located on the Parish Church’s ground floor the 2 meter wide by 10 meter long space was developed at a cost of P45,000.00 donated by the Rotary Club. The walls are lined with old photos and reproductions of bygone Pulilan, with accompanying texts. In the middle of the room is a reproduction of the Laguna Copperplate Paleograph, the oldest document in Philippine history to mention Pulilan. Old icons of San Juan de Sagun and Santa Clara de Montefalco, formerly placed at the church altar, prominently figure

in the room. The most valuable document on exhibit is the church's baptismal book dating back to 1863.

The museum also features significant elements of the town. Fifteen old houses have been photo documented with labels stating their significance, location, architectural iconography and future use. Photos of prominent Pulilenos are hung on the wall with pictures of their outstanding works. The museum experience is enriched by the use of authentic Pulilan music in the background.

The museum has undertaken many socio-civic activities for the community. It has implemented relief programs for typhoon victims, campaigns for clean and honest elections, art exhibitions, tree planting activities and cleanliness drives. In terms of community skills development, it has regularly conducted values formation workshops, leadership trainings and team building seminars for young people, linking in to cultural and historical resources.

Echoing ecomuseums

The programs of Museo San Isidro Labrador de Pulilan evolved out of professional and systemic influences. The community museum was formerly led by three young professionals who grew up together in the town – a bank management trainee who is a frustrated painter, an unlicensed architect who works in a city museum and a university cultural lecturer and art critic who heads a national arts organization. These professional backgrounds fortified the establishment of the museum as the Centre of community activities and account for the museum's exhibition, research and display policies and practices (from the art critic), the penchant for seminars and workshops (from the management trainee) and the emphasis on heritage structures and design (from the architect). These inaugural leaders, who now serve on the Council of Elders, have passed over the reins of the museum to the succeeding youth organization.

This community museum has ecomuseum attributes that are not found in traditional museums. Ecomuseums and traditional museums differ in their physical forms and collection philosophies. A basic impact of an ecomuseum is that its programs establish a sense of place. "An Ecomuseum is defined by the geographic area or audience it serves, and is not confined to a single building. Collections are viewed from much broader perspectives. They are organized around the community's interrelations with its culture and physical environment" [Fuller, 1992: p. 330].

The meagre collection on display at the Museo San Isidro Labrador

de Pulilan came from the church and benevolent private individuals. But the museum collection, in coordination with local government, serves as an advocate for the preservation of the town's built and natural heritage.

Since its inception, that museum has played a pivotal role in the annual re-enactment of the town's popular tradition of the carabao festival. Every 14th of May, the feast of San Isidro Labrador, patron saint of good harvest, carabaos (water buffalos) are cleaned, conditioned, decorated and paraded in front of the Catholic Church where they genuflect on the revered saint's icon. Other than this, the museum organizes homeowners to embellish their house facades with fruits and vegetables as prosperity symbols of good harvest for the coming year.

A milestone project of the museum was the Bulacan Arts Festival held in 2003. The museum organized a weeklong province-wide celebration highlighting arts and culture through exhibitions, workshops, seminars, competitions and parades. Visitors and tourists from Manila flocked to the town. This achievement was commended by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts as a community effort to create a sense of belonging.

The museum has also undertaken innovative programs that have strengthened the town's heritage awareness and appreciation. It embarked on a local radio program that aired commentaries on cultural issues. It developed an awards scheme to recognize the best conservation project (i.e. house, public building, road, bridge, monument, etc.) It mobilized senior citizens to stop the demolition of a religious monument in the town plaza.

Another impact of ecomuseum programs is education and empowerment. "To promote the feel of autonomy, ecomuseums focus on activities in which individuals are provided the skills necessary to work successfully in daily life rather than on the creation of an end product" [Fuller, 1992: p.331]. This museum has implemented strong programs on skills development, training and values education.

The Museum has initiated seminars to new members of the JEFARCA society using unconventional highly experiential approaches. To provide an integrated holistic approach to heritage management, members are required to go the Biak na Bato Forest Park, the town's watershed resource, to physically clean up the forest that tourists have littered, and to scrub off graffiti on stone boulders. This natural heritage custodianship activity is complemented by built heritage field trips to significant houses in town known for their history and architecture where members listen to

the tales and stories of homeowners. Members are regularly encouraged to interact with socio-civic organizations of artists, poets, architects, teachers and even social workers.

The museum has annually published "Kasumuran", a special newspaper released in time for the town fiesta. The newspaper features articles and essays on history, culture, arts and other related issues affecting the town.

The final impact of ecomuseum programs is a sense of group identity. "In order to build group identity, ecomuseum activities examine individual relationships to the community as a whole. Exhibitions often address the political and economic implications of an issue from the perspective of their effects on individual community members' lives. Ecomuseum exhibitions can be staged in one central place or coordinated throughout several locations at the same time" [Fuller. 1992: p. 331]. This community museum has integrated itself into the mainstream community projects through outreach exhibitions and satellite activities.

The museum organization established Café Pulilan in 2001. The café caters authentic Pulilan food and meals are accompanied by live Pulilan rustic music. The cafe's menu illustrates a cultural map of the town punctuated by important structures and landmarks.

The museum has likewise established a satellite museum called the museum of traditional farm implements. Located at the backyard of an old house, the open air museum exhibits fast disappearing farm implements and technology of the community. This network of museums, café, and historic structures has led to the famous Pulilan heritage tour, which demonstrates the character of the town as an agricultural and historically significant place, with a vibrant community.

Conclusion

The most enriching off site programs are provided by ecomuseums. With their ability to work within the context of the community, collections include artifacts, houses, rivers, forests, festivals, skills and traditions. The Museo San Isidro Labrador de Pulilan continues to make its museum display collection accessible to the community but the off site programs are appreciated by the wider public and highly significant to the sustainability of community identity.

The ecomuseum concept has revolutionized the role and function of museums. Objects are not only used as a vehicle to educate but

to educate to answer people's needs and improve people's lives. Activities that integrate the community, through various modes of interactions are encouraged, to evolve a holistic and realistic development. This interaction, across time, dealing with past objects and collective memory, and across people, neighbors and cultural enthusiasts, provide people with a sense of belonging that empowers them and anchors their identity.

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Ecomuseology in India: an appraisal with special reference to the Satra institutions of Assam

*Parasmoni Dutta*⁴⁶

Ecomuseology in India: An Appraisal with Special Reference to the Satra Institutions of Assam

Indian museological scholarship began to take its share in the new museology in general, and ecomuseology in particular, from the middle of the 1980s. This relatively late entry of the new museum philosophies into India can perhaps be attributed to the fact that most of the writings on the pioneering thoughts and experiments of new museology of the 1960s and 1970s were limited to French only. The much-needed writings in English, for countries including India, were published in *Museum* in 1985, as V. H. Bedekar, the foremost ecomuseologist of the country, described the new museological enlightenment in India:

... through the articles in UNESCO's MUSEUM special number 4, of volume XXXVII, 1985, on New Museology, Indians were made aware for the first time of the parting of ways of thinking between the traditional, conservative museologists and the champions of New Museology. Pierre Mayrand's article "The new museology proclaimed" was a wake up call for persons like me in India. The Declaration of Quebec made us sit up and take note of the new movement to which we were oblivious, because we were in "English knowing" country. (Bedekar 2000).

That awakening led to humble beginnings in an obvious and inevitable manner. The practices and philosophies of new museology were taken for scrutiny by the Indian museologists, and deliberations were made on their possible applications and ramifications in the country. In 1988, the Museums Association of India organized a national seminar at Guwahati on "New Museology and Indian Museums". The participants of the seminar formulated the first Indian pronouncement, in a formal and official manner, in the form of the "Guwahati Declaration on New Museology". However, what is clearly visible in the declaration is the juxtaposition of two apparent polarities: one is the then indelible stigma of the modernist museum-centric conventional museology, a concern for safeguarding "one universal museology" and other is the recognition of the radical ideas ("self chosen goals" and "integrative conservation" "by each community itself") of new museology, if possible to be seen as

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mere extensions of conventional museology. As described by V. H. Bedekar, who himself was one of the participants in the seminar for adopting the declaration, this “was directly related to the apprehensions or fears on the part of participants about the unity of the discipline of museology” (Bedekar 1995: 169).

The Guwahati Declaration can be seen as a prelude to the museological developments in India that occurred in the last decade of the twentieth century. Many Indian museums began to incorporate comparatively broader views on cultural and natural events, with noticeable deviations from the erstwhile rigidity in indoor and outreach presentations. Serious insights were made on the strengths and merits of the radical ideas of new museology as well as their necessity and possibility in Indian contexts. In 1995, the National Museum Institute of History of Art, Conservation and Museology of New Delhi published the first book on new museology, titled as *New Museology for India*, authored by V. H. Bedekar. In this book, Bedekar came out with a more unambiguous stand, concluding that “New Museology ought to transcend “museum-centric” traditional museology”. He offered strong criticism of the traditional museums in the contexts of the issues of protection of the vast human and natural diversity of the country and ensuring their sustainability and development.

In January 1999, under the active initiative of Bedekar, the “Korlai Community Museum” was started in Maharashtra. This museum has been recognized, both inside and outside the country, as the first and the only ecomuseum in India so far. However, in recent times, several projects are in the pipeline, particularly in western India where ecomuseological potentials of identified places have been thoroughly explored and the strategies for community-based museum programming are taking shapes in the hands of some emerging groups, museologists and activists. Two examples are Moushumi Chatterjee’s conceptualization of the ecomuseum in Alwar city of Rajasthan, and the works of heritage activists in different parts of Gujrat.

An interesting outcome of the ecomuseological explorations in India is that certain places (and their peoples) are found to be bearing ecomuseological characteristics on their own. Kazuoki Ohara mentioned about such ecomuseum-like activities in Japan, and I guess the same has been experienced in other countries too.

At present, ecomuseum projects are being implemented in many regions [of Japan]. While the local people may not refer to them as “ecomuseum” projects, many interesting local community activities, with elements that qualify them as such, are to be found in various parts of

Japan. All such efforts contain elements of heritage and participation, so if museology is added, they easily qualify as full-fledged ecomuseum projects. (Ohara 1998: 26-27)

In India, one such traditional establishment which has been functioning in the ecomuseological way, is the institution of the satras of Assam, in the northeastern India. The satras are the monasteries of the Vaishnavite monks. The beginning of these satras in Assam can be traced back to the 16th century A.D. when Sankardeva (1449-1568), the great Vaishnavite guru, social reformer and versatile artist, led the neo-Vaishnavite movement in Assam. In later times, the satras in Assam not only grew in number but they also came up with a fully-fledged institutional setup.

There are more than five hundred satras in Assam today. But all satras are not alike. Rather, they vary in respect of the number of monks, the degree of influence among the masses, material possessions, specialized fields of activity, and also in terms of their affiliations to the different sub-sects of Assam Vaishnavism. A typical satra may include several hundreds of celibate monks residing together in the satra campus, while there are small satras that are held by single families.

The campus of a typical satra is composed of four architectural units: Entrance or gateway, cloisters of monks, a prayer-hall and a sanctum sanctorum. The gateway is a small open house at the entry-point of the satra, constructed with a roof usually standing on four decorated pillars. It demarcates the satra arena from other settlements in the neighbourhood. Distinguished visitors and guests are received in the gateway in the traditional customs of the satra. The passage from the gateway leads to the core arena of the satra where a central prayer-hall is surrounded on four sides by four rows of cloisters. Each cloister is a series of compartments, under a continuous roof, where the monks live. The prayer-hall is the place for daily and occasional congregational prayers as well as for various satriya performances. The sanctum sanctorum is attached to the prayer-hall. This is the place for the deities to be installed in their different forms.

The territory of a satra, however, is much bigger than this physical campus. Traditionally, it is customary for each and every Assamese Hindu family to take religious ordination under any one satra, no matter how far away the family resides from that satra. These families are called the sisyas of that satra. They are to pay their tithes to the satra at regular times. Thus, this spiritual network makes a satra more widespread than its apparent physical campus.

The satras possess their own system of organizational management. Every satra has its one chief functionary, who is called the Satradhikar. He takes all the important decisions regarding the satra, in consultation with senior monks as and when necessary. Under him, the monks are entrusted with specific duties to perform and offices to run. The following are some of the important offices invariably held by the monks of different satras:

Deka-satradhikar : deputy to the chief, and also the would-be chief after the demise of the current chief

- Bhagavati : person who recites and expounds the religious texts at prescribed hours
- Pathak : person who recites the metrical renderings of the religious texts
- Gayan : singers (vocal)
- Bayan : instrumentalists (drummers)
- Deuri : in-charge of worshipping in the sanctum sanctorum
- Namlagowa : leader in the congregational prayers.
- Dhan-bharali : Treasurer
- Caul-bharali : Store-supervisor
- Likhak : copyist for writing and copying manuscripts
- Khanikar : versatile artist, does the work of painting, sculpture and other visual craftsmanship.

The recruitment of monks takes place in two ways. A mature adult man may get a seat inside the cloisters if he willingly desires. However, the satras have their own norms to see that the man is qualified, and there are specific customs of initiation that the man would have to be put through. Secondly, it has been a custom for many Assamese rural families to offer one of their children to the satra from where the family had taken its religious ordination. Such little monks are brought up under the guardianship of the senior monks. They are provided with education and schooling from the satra, and are trained in specialized activities of the satra culture.

The satras are the Centres of traditional arts and crafts of all genres: literature, painting, music, dance, drama, sculpture and architecture, puppetry, basketry, etc. In such various fields of arts, the satras of Assam have marked their own style, which is often called as the Satriya style. The satriya dance has now been recognized as the major art forms of the country. An outstanding variety of satriya music is the barigits (noble songs), which are classical in nature and each of such songs is set to a specific raga of Indian classical music. On a number of occasions, the artists of satras have given their performances in different places in India and abroad. The satras developed their unique school of paintings that occupies a significant place in the domain of the painting tradition

in Assam.

The life of the monks inside the satra is immensely spectacular. They possess a distinctive set of customs and mannerisms, food-habits and clothing, daily and occasional ceremonials, and even spoken words and phrases. Everyday, a monk in the satra is to follow the precise customs, ritualistic performances, apart from the special activities on specific occasions of festivals and anniversaries of earlier gurus.

The satras have made an immense contribution to the Assamese art and culture, and have played a significant role in the cultural history of the state. They have also been taking pioneering roles in the field of education by establishing and supporting a good number of schools and colleges since the British regime. Mention can be made about the fact that the second Assamese newspaper was launched from one satra of Majuli in upper Assam in 1871 for which the then Satradhikar imported a modern printing press from outside the state. Besides, the satras are still successful in imparting good moral values of life in the greater Assamese society. In the light of the emerging Assamese nationalism in the post-independence times, the Satriya culture is being placed at the centre of the national culture of the Assamese, and is regarded as the markers of Assamese national identity.

From the ecomuseological perspective, the satras seem to be highly significant. It is in the sense that many of the parameters of today's ecomuseums are well achieved by the satras, although they are far away from the professional museum-world. They demonstrate a traditional system where self-motivated people unite to live together, for the cause of the sustenance of their traditional expressive practices including religion. In the course of that, they have made novel contributions for the development of the greater society in the relevant fields, and finally have been able to generate a healthy sense of community identity of the Assamese people.

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“Contextualization” in museums and ecomuseology: some challenges.

Vasant Hari Bedekar⁴⁷

Museums collect their original material from natural, social and cultural environments. This is preserved, documented, researched and exhibited in public galleries. The individual specimens of nature and objects of arts and crafts become separated from their original environments or contexts; this is “decontextualization”. Most of the original material has the potential to pose problems for curators and designers when being interpreted for the lay public. Such potential loss of meaning can result in the under-interpretation or misinterpretation of the original objects. This phenomenon needs remedial measures in all museums, but especially in ecomuseums, because their primary concern is not objects but people. Innumerable methods have been invented by museum professionals in this respect. Use of the audio-visual techniques and graphics representing the original environments and the original “man-object” relationships are very popular methods. With the advancement in technology more effective methods like the use of films, video, and the installation of objects in an artificially created natural and social settings are in use all over the world. More enterprising museums have begun re-creating whole sites from which the original tangible material was separated. The effectiveness of such artificially fabricated settings is enhanced by introducing appropriate multi-sensory stimuli. This article offers some examples of such enhancement. In view of the rapid strides in the art and techniques of “simulation” of desired situations, new opportunities are available to museums for creating dramatic contexts in which the natural and cultural heritage can be presented, appreciated and understood. Examples are cited of the efforts by Hazelius or Henry Ford in creating open-air museums and by others who have created entire heritage sites. The Korean Folk Village is one example in which an entirely artificial landscape has been created, one where homes are set up to show arts and crafts and their relationships with the native traditions. This article also refers to both benefits and limitations of such artificial and simulated contexts.

It was interesting to read in the *Times of India*, (Ahmedabad edition, January, 8, 2005), that “The world’s largest artificial resort, called Tropical Island , in Germany, is now open to the public”.. The concept is truly innovative. A Malaysian entrepreneur has built the first man-made tropical island destination complete with waterfalls,

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sandy beaches, a lagoon, a rainforest with 500 plant species and loudspeakers emitting appropriate insect noises. The resort also contains shops, restaurants and a tropical sea, with the climate being carefully controlled by latest technologies, even the moisture in the air can be condensed to start a light drizzle. On a screen, behind the sea, an enormous “sun” is projected with an effect of a few clouds. There are different temperature controls for the lagoon, the sea and the air. With such perfect “simulation” of stimuli, one can experience the diversity that nature can offer in one’s own country. A question is asked in this report in the *Times of India*: ‘Imagine Srinagar’s beauty replicated, say in West Bengal. Or Kerala’s scenic backwaters in Madhya Pradesh. Or the Swiss Alps in Bihar. In view of the growing and constant threat of terrorism who would not desire an experience of natural beauty even though artificial in the most secure and convenient place? In the dangerous world that will represent a safe option of tourism’. But it is said in the “counterview”, in the same newspaper, that if such islands are built in different countries (as the Malaysian entrepreneur intends to do, then it will kill all desire to learn from different places, cultures and people and it will spell the end of the tourism industry.

Are there lessons for the museologists in the above news? Yes, in my opinion, very significant lessons can be drawn. Every museum after all is an artificial arrangement. In nature there are no “museums” that can represent “virgin forests”. Some forests have, of course, been turned into managed ‘natural parks’ which are museums according to the broad definition accepted by the International Council of Museums. Every museum - whether it is a building, an aquarium, a botanic garden or a nature reserve - is designed and fabricated by man. So, the difference between museums and ‘Tropical Island’ in Germany is not of kind but of degrees. The important issue here is not the artificially created environment but the purposes for which they are created. It might be argued that some heritage site museums, such as the Korean Folk Village, are like the above referred “Tropical Island.” They have similar limitations but offer immense freedom for creative experiments.

Once the artificiality of the museum is acknowledged, its inherent changeability is self-evident. Then none should insist on certain permanent definitions of its forms and functions. What can possibly be common to all museums might be the human heritage (in its broadest sense) which they possess. Which aspect of human heritage will become the focus of a given museum depends on the group, or in rare cases, the individual who is responsible for its conception and creation. Several examples can be cited of museums conceived and created by specific individuals. The Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum in Pune, Maharashtra, is one such Indian

example. The Ecomuseum of Haute-Beauce in Quebec, Canada, is a foreign example. On the other hand, there are innumerable examples of museum-like agencies which are not named as museums simply because no such word was known by the group of men who were responsible for their creation. An example of that category is the "Where Whakairo" which serves the local Maori community as an indigenous museum. But it was not organized on the pattern of a traditional museum in the Western sense. The success of Tropical Island might start a new museum movement. In that movement, museums might be created anywhere, by anybody in which the sole criteria of success will be the meaningful context in which originals and reproductions of human activity are shown conveniently and effectively.

Since there will not be a bias against artificiality, a new kind of museum could be partly on land and partly underwater. For example, the proposed new site museum of the ancient capital of Lord Krishna, Dwaraka, in Gujarat, might be created partly on land and partly under the sea. The excavations and explorations in the past have proved that the original city of Dwaraka has sunk into the sea in the course of time. Such "amphibious" physical construction or reconstruction will be conducive to tell the full story of the history of Dwaraka. One can assume that the modern advances in the technique of simulation might also be used very advantageously in the new museum of Dwaraka so that the whole story could be represented on land but the visitors will experience it as if they have been shifted physically deep into water. There is no limit to the possible uses of this approach for creating new museums primarily for experiencing a different reality. Such experience can be a legitimate purpose of a museum as claimed below.

It seems there are three basic and different ways of presenting original objects in the public galleries of the museums. In Dr Pott's opinion, the different ways are needed to fulfill the expectations as well as needs of the multi-layered contemporary public which come to museums for their own reasons. What he has elaborated in his writings and museum work can be summarized here for our purpose. He refers to his own survey of visitors and concludes that there are three primary interests found in them. The public may have intellectual interest and/or aesthetic interest and/or recreational interest, in and for visiting museums. Firstly, a visitor might decide to visit a museum out of curiosity to learn about a subject. The second reason could be to satisfy his innate love for beauty. So, if the first can be termed "intellectual" or "cognitive" interest, the second is aesthetic. In Dr Pott's opinion, there is one more reason for the public to visit museums. It is for new experiences. Outside museums, people crave for novel experiences when they visit places as tourists, or when they read new books. This they do be-

cause people wish to break the monotony of everyday life and seek the unusual or out of the way experiences. They like to transport themselves to another time or place or a situation, at least temporarily. That is the reason, from time immemorial, that people love to listen to stories, invent myths and legends, gather to listen to the accounts of travellers after their return from faraway lands. All such interests can be termed “escapist” because they help in escaping from their own current problems and difficulties. The motivation in it is to experience what is not ordinarily available in daily life. The escapist interest can be served by an experience that is very much simulated. It can be “virtual”. It can also be more or less private and personal.

One may ask: “Can the same or similar museum material be shown in three different ways to serve three different interests?” That it is possible was demonstrated by Dr Pott in a special exhibition, in the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, the Netherlands where he was the Director for several years. Dr Pott made it clear that he was not “dividing” people into three categories but what were differentiated were the possible interests they can take in museums. Same person is capable of taking different interests at different times, if not simultaneously. Clearly, when an individual is showing aesthetic interest he is not showing intellectual interest because they are different if not mutually exclusive. When someone is showing “escapist” interest he is not primarily interested in the beauty or in information. The three interests are because of different attitudes. The plurality of interests is a fact of life. The museum curator has to respect the desires of the public. What they want is more important than what he wants. This is also the attitude of the Ecomuseologist who is visitor-centric or public oriented. It is necessary on the part of the museum to provide appropriate context or contexts to things so that the visitors get what they want in the museum. That such plural contexts can be provided is amply demonstrated in the artificially created surroundings for works of art and crafts in many museums. It can be seen in Skansen in Stockholm, Sweden, it can be seen in the Korean Folk Village of Seoul, South Korea. Very near Skansen is the Biologiska Museum or Biological Museum which is a huge circular building that has well-mounted flora and fauna of Sweden installed against a huge continuous circular painting of the context of the typical environment in which they live. The specimens are lifelike and so are the painted habitats. It was the work of one Gustaf Kolthoff. He was responsible both for the construction of the scenery and for all the wild-life in it. He collected and stuffed all the Scandinavian species of mammals and birds, with their nests, offsprings and eggs. He also collected the trees, moss, bushes and installed them to form a continuous diorama or a series of “habitat groups”. He was keen to show the mammals and birds in very natural environments. Gustaf

Kolthoff thought that people in Sweden knew very little about their own natural heritage. His creation of the Biological Museum was the first of its kind and it became the model for similar panoramas all over the world. The museum was opened in the year 1893, as an independent institution, since July, 1st 1970 it has become a part of the Skansen Foundation which is another pioneering Swedish institution.

Skansen is the oldest open-air museum of the world. It is a gift of the great heritologist Artur Hazelius to the museologists of the world. He was the great pioneer of research into the cultural history of Sweden. He perceived that both objects and information about them must be collected if people were to be educated about the life in Sweden in the past. He started collecting in the 1870s, and it was in 1891 that he opened "Skansen" as the world's first open-air museum. It was the time when new technology was impressing the Swedish people. But against that background, Hazelius managed to make people interested in everyday objects of the past and historical traditions and customs.

The Skansen idea spread very fast and followed the contemporary wave of patriotism, nationalism and provincial romanticism. Hazelius' efforts inspired national collections of folk and everyday life material all over Scandinavia. Several models of open air museums emerged. They inspired Americans too. Instead of focusing only on ethnological documentation, Americans emphasized social, cultural history. The first American open-air museum which followed the European model was Henry Ford's Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan opened in 1929. Like Hazelius, Ford collected warehouses which were full of artifacts associated with everyday American people. He built a 14-acre museum structure to house them. He organized a nearby village for showing the progression of domestic American architecture and industry. At the centre of that open-air museum was the laboratory complex of Thomas Edison. Ford believed that the objects used by the people and the ways in which they are used and the ways people lived were the most important aspects of history. Another dimension of the American open-air museum movement was the attention to historical preservation. The best example is the Colonial Williamsburg museum, based in the former 18th century capital of Virginia. The project was supported by John D. Rockefeller in 1926. A team of researchers, architects, archaeologists and curators worked to rebuild, restore and refurnish homes and workshops in the historic township. Many later open-air museums explored the concept in depth by undertaking programmes of "living history", the interpreters attempting to understand and recreate past lifestyles by following daily, weekly and seasonal work schedules as closely as possible. For that, they consulted primary source materials such as

diaries , cookbooks, domestic economies, state and traders' inventories and account books. While working on the sites, the interpreters actually lived and worked as if they belonged to the past period. The living history programmes were exciting both to the volunteers and the visitors. Much of the success of these ventures was due to the fact that the American projects were started by individual antiquarians or entrepreneurs and remained private.

Skansen is not fully 'artificial' because it has original houses and structures removed from the original sites in different areas of Sweden, partly to save them from decay and partly to have them together on one campus to explain to the Swedish public the evolution of national and regional architecture. In Skansen, one meets human guides who demonstrate the native crafts and ways of life. In Skansen, we encounter structures which are decontextualized because they are removed from the original sites but which themselves provide contexts to the objects, furnishings and traditional skills. Behind the creation of these examples of contextualization is the patriotic love for the national tangible as well as intangible heritage. The basic objective and ideal is to preserve, to present and to document the cultural heritage for everybody to understand and appreciate Swedish identity. Similarly, it is Korean identity which is the objective behind the creation of the Korean Folk Village. So, all of them are artificial, just like the resort called Tropical Island. But they are successful only because of the "willing suspension of disbelief". The educational, aesthetic and escapist interests are fulfilled in the artificial environments to the extent to which the visiting people can overlook the artificiality of the situations and concentrate on experiencing the inherent man-environment relationship.

A very large number of examples can be cited to show that the process of contextualization can take place within the limits of the available resources of a museum in order to make a lay visitor forget that he is in the confines of a museum building and he might imagine himself to be somewhere away in another environment or situation connected with a given theme. What is important is to appreciate that all those attempts are basically to serve the escapist interests of the visitor, to captivate the attention so that the other two interests namely, aesthetic and intellectual are eventually fulfilled. By that way the full potentiality of the museum material is actualized. In this connection one may discuss the modalities of contextualization. The creation of illusion of a situation as in the case of "Tropical Island" is now possible because of the available resources and technology. But the final effect will be useful only for achieving the escapist interests. That degree of illusion is not necessary for satisfying the other two intellectual and aesthetic interests.

For example, a reconstruction of the old studio of the great painter Raja Ravi Varma in the compound of the Maharaja Fatehsing Museum in Baroda where the painter was working for many years will not be cost-effective if it is done exclusively to increase the aesthetic appeal of his paintings in that museum. Neither is that exercise needed for the interpretation of the style of Raja Ravi Varma. On the other hand, non-illusionistic methods like showing enlargements of the brush strokes on the different parts of the paintings of Ravi Varma can be appropriate for explaining how he could achieve the final effects and the chiaroscuro. Such subtleties are not easily visible. An attempted perfect illusion of the studio will not be as appropriate as other methods which focus on what is painted and how it was painted. It must be argued therefore that judicious reasons are needed to justify the incorporation of illusion. They might be employed more advantageously in association with the didactic and aesthetic components in an exhibition. A good example of that was found in a special exhibition devoted to Surinam in the Tropical Museum of Amsterdam. In addition to the separate displays of the costumes, ornaments, arts and crafts of Surinam, a large area of the exhibition was turned into a green-house. Inside that, the characteristic native plants of Surinam were installed, most of them borrowed from the Dutch botanical gardens. Moreover, from the local zoo some small mammals and birds were borrowed and installed. To give the visitors the experience of the typical tropical climate of Surinam, air-conditioners were used to recreate the levels of temperature and humidity. Being an Indian, I really enjoyed the Surinam exhibition in cold Amsterdam and such must have been the experience of the hundreds of the local people. Not only the climate control inside the exhibition was helpful in the illusionistic effect but the visitors were able to get the "feel" of the ground in Surinam forest while walking on the floor of the gallery. Over the space occupied by the special exhibition, Tropical Museum arranged to spread dry leaves well in advance and made them wet and moist so that the characteristic smell of the decomposed leaves in a tropical forest was experienced by the museum visitors. They also had to walk over the leaves to get the feeling of walking in a tropical situation. Audio speakers were concealed here and there and from them the sounds of tropical insects and frogs could be heard. So there was a mix of the visual, audio and olfactory stimuli used to create the effect of Surinam's natural environment. The exhibition also had a section in which the special dishes of Surinam were prepared and served. Such multi-sensory experience did not fail to offer insights into the reality of the Surinam's cultural and natural heritages. After a visit to that special exhibition Surinam did not remain a mere abstraction. This is important because in a museum we expect educational experience vastly different from what one gets in a school

or a library.

While designing a small gallery for the blind, it was suggested that besides the informative aspects of the Braille script the general public be made to get an idea of the problems of the blind for which they be blind-folded for some time and made to move about in the gallery independently. That way they will appreciate the difficulties encountered by the blind. More sympathy for the blind by the public can be generated if even for a few minutes sighted people get a taste of the fate of the blind. The latest use of the sophisticated technology for physical guidance for the blind for their safe movements ought to be explained in such a special gallery. For that purpose the co-operation of the local agencies for the blind is necessary. The museum can avail itself of the financial help reserved for the handicapped sections of the population in making such exhibits. The museum has the potentiality of offering many such opportunities for new wholesome experiences. In the Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. the lay public could taste the samples of food which the astronauts are required to consume during their flights. How will the lay visitors ever forget their visits to that section? Making the visits of the public “memorable” has to be the main aim of all museums for which non-intellectual and non-aesthetic interests need also to be satisfied.

The term “contextualization” should be understood in the broadest sense. It need not be confined to include only to the original tangible environment from which the museum materials were separated. It should also mean the cultural, historical and social contexts which might be intangible. While an historical antique material is tangible, history as such is intangible. It is invisible though its products are tangible. It is precisely for that reason that history is liable to be manipulated or distorted leading often to the undesirable consequences. I recall my visit to the galleries of an anti-Indian institution. I found the identical cultural material shown in the gallery as evidence of the lack of identity in the Indian sub-continent as evidence of continuous conflict and waves of migrations. But in the Indian section, the process of continuous cultural synthesis was presented as evidence of a national Indian trait. The same tangible material in two galleries but two contrasting intangible contexts made a world of difference. The term “cultural synthesis” is an abstraction. It refers to an “intangible heritage”.

Similarly, in Art History, what is represented as a mark of stylistic synthesis can also be condemned as a mark of decay and deterioration under alien influence by a hostile art historian. Therefore, in the realm of intangible heritage, the judgements of value dominate. One’s commitment to an ideology invariably and invisibly lend

colour to one's pronouncements of quality. Strict neutrality becomes an ideal which is difficult to achieve in practice. That complicates the matter because the changes in styles are shown as related to the prevailing dominant socio-political ideologies. This should prove once again the relationship between the tangible and intangible heritages and their tangible and intangible contexts. While the former has to be the same, the latter might be different. There might be as many contexts as the number of view-points. It is, therefore, important to identify the different "world-views" which lurk behind the writings of the cultural historians. On their world-views will depend their emphasis or neglect of the ground reality. The processes of "contextualization", "decontextualization" and also "re-contextualization" of the tangible and intangible heritages are very significant themes in the realm of ecomuseology where people are more important than objects.

The above study can be done in the natural environments when it is about the communities which live in them. But can we say categorically if such study is possible when the communities are invited to live in artificial environments? This question can best be answered by those who have the experience of dealing with the communities in the open-air parts of a cultural habitat like in the Indira Gandhi Rastriya Manav Sangrahalaya (National Museum of Man) in Bhopal, in India. But in this connection, I may cite the account heard from a museologist who had organized a tribal cultural competition in Ahmedabad some years ago. Several tribal groups came together for the state level festival. It went on for a considerably long time. During that period, several members of the different tribal groups came in close contact and became familiar with their special styles of dancing and music. That does not normally happen because those tribal groups live in isolation. In the course of their close contacts, they also came to know which of their dances were fetching them more awards in the competitions held earlier. One adverse and undesirable result of those close contacts was the unexpected contamination of their own styles. Some performers were tempted to imitate the parts from the alien forms which were reportedly very popular elsewhere. The inevitable result was a kind of hybridization of some art forms which in the past in their pristine forms represented the intangible heritages of the respective communities. Here is an example of a bad recontextualization of art forms.

The most important and key-factor in the new philosophy of the conservation of heritage is the link with community development. A study of community heritage can be made in the physical context of an artificial landscape as well as in a natural environment. But a genuine development of a community will be difficult to assess in a completely artificial situation. Can the genuine heritage of a living

community be used for developmental purpose in a fully artificial situation like Tropical Island when only tourists are expected to visit them for the “escapist” purposes? It is like expecting a paper plant to grow new branches or a paper flower to emanate sweet fragrance. As a part of our ecomuseological initiatives in India, we are busy these days with watching how community development and conservation of heritage can be done together in Chaul, Revdanda and Korlai area of the Raigad district on the coast of the state of Maharashtra.. Our first task was to meet the real people of the communities in the real situation for introducing developmental projects. They cannot be mere abstractions. They cannot be undertaken by the concerned communities in vacuum. They need real soil, real roads, real gardens and farms, real places for tourism, real schools for children and much more as the components in a real socio-cultural situation to provide the right context to test our hypothesis about new ways of using local heritage for the purpose of community development. Even if the present situation in that area is far from ideal, it is just what we need for our fieldwork because we treat the area like a museological laboratory. A perfectly designed, clean simulated cultural complex like an artificial Tropical Island will not produce the results we want even though it will be a tourist paradise. We will also need living human population groups which are ready to face the harsh reality of semi-rural undeveloped society and who are struggling to make the most of their limited resources for their economic betterment. In the real situation where we have started our ecomuseological experiments the communities are blessed with the presence of the natural and cultural heritages but they do not know how those heritages can be taken care of and exploited for development. They are at a loss to regain their cultural identity under threat because of the fragmentation of traditional life. Once that area was isolated but now it is exposed to new forces of urbanization as well as industrialization which are making new demands for the preservation and security of the traditional tangible and intangible heritages. There are new challenges which are very much real. Can such challenges be grafted onto an artificial environment like a Tropical Island? Will an entirely artificial tropical island that is originally fabricated for the enjoyment of the escapists serve as the appropriate context for experimenting to find out the ways of using the heritage for real life development? Open-air museums as well as heritage sites have to face such problems arising out of the new demands on a community or society to use their cultural and natural heritages for human development. In the past, their heritages were placed behind glass and allowed to be enjoyed primarily by those who had escapist interests. The organizers of heritage exhibitions have to face more complex problems in order to satisfy intellectual interests seriously. One reason for the complexity is the recent advances in the field of educational technology. One should understand the dynamism of

“contextualization” for serving the heritage as well as people in ecomuseological experiments.

(This paper is based on author’s original article written recently for inclusion in the Inaugural issue of the *Bulletin of the Indira Gandhi Rastriya Manav Sangrahalay* (National Museum of Man), Bhopal, India and the author is thankful to its Director Prof. Kishor K. Basa for using a part of it for this paper.)

Conclusions of the Symposium

*Su Donghai*⁴⁸

Our symposium has proved to be a fruitful and happy event on the international ecomuseum scene. We had a wonderful communication of both our explorations in theory and those in practice, and of our joys and sorrows felt during such explorations. A friendship has developed among us based on our efforts towards achieving a common goal, a friendship that will continue to grow as our exploration continues.

We have managed to hear different opinions and to see various practices. This is our greatest achievement at the symposium. As we have a better knowledge of varied opinions and practices, we reach some common understandings on the following three points:

First, theories of ecomuseums are in the process of a constant development. There is no such thing as a standard definition of the ecomuseum. Controversies have been going on as to what an “ecomuseum” is since Hugues de Varine invented the word. Georges-Henri Rivière, a pioneer of the ecomuseum movement, published three definitions based on his efforts to put the theory into practice. He called the last one “an evolving definition.” At our symposium scholars have made various descriptions of the ecomuseum concept, with its various expressions making it a phenomenon of theoretical fascination and a fertile ground for research. Presentations showed that the theory of ecomuseums and also the intention of the concept are in the process of a constant development, constant evolution.

Second, various practices of ecomuseums have been explored and new ones are constantly emerging. We don't have a standard mode of practice. Representatives from about 40 ecomuseums communicated their experiences at the symposium, all with their own approaches and management styles. We cannot impose a standard way of working, and indeed should not do so. Ecomuseums have been built in different countries, in many different situations, with different heritages to preserve. It should be seen as a feature of ecomuseums that new modes of practices are always to be explored as the situation changes.

Third, there should be a core principle to decide what is or is not an ecomuseum. Some scholars expressed their concerns at the symposium that the term “ecomuseum” is being abused. It is nec-

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essary to determine the constant elements of an ecomuseum. There should never be an ecomuseum without these elements. Many scholars have given their ideas of such elements. In summary the core principle of an ecomuseum lies in the in-situ preservation of cultures by the owners of those cultures. So can measure the extent of localization of the ecomuseum concept, the effectiveness of an ecomuseum in the preservation of cultures and the ecomuseum residents' awareness of the importance of their cultures to determine whether (or not) a project is a true ecomuseum. Of course, not everyone agreed on the principle.

We brought with us problems to the symposium, solved some of them, and discovered new ones. We are still developing the concepts and theories of ecomuseums. This is my conclusion.

Pictures

- Cover: Sanjiang: The 'Wind and Rain' bridge (by R. Cardia)
1. Guiyang: Su Donghai (by M.P. Flaim)
 2. Guiyang: the representative of Miao people prepares for speaking (by M.P. Flaim)
 3. Guiyang: the representatives of Dong and Miao people (by M.P. Flaim)
 4. Guiyang: the representative of Dong people during her speech (by courtesy of CSM)
 5. Guiyang: attending the Forum (by courtesy of CSM)
 6. Guiyang: the representative of the Miao people during her speech (by courtesy of CSM)
 7. landscape between Guiyang and the Miao land (by G. Corsane)
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 9. On the van, towards the Miao people ecomuseum (by M.P. Flaim)
 10. Suojia: the new village (by G. Corsane)
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 13. Suojia: a Miao family (by G. Corsane)
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 23. Zhenshan: a street in the village (by M. Maggi)
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 31. Tang'an: drum tower (by courtesy of CSM)
 32. Huaili: the Yao village (by H. de Varine)
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 34. Huaili: Yao ceremony (by courtesy of CSM)
 35. Huaili: a rice granary (by H. de Varine)
 36. Huaili: Yao young people (by P. Davis)
 37. Huaili: rice granaries (by P. Davis)
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Guiyang: Su Donghai



Guiyang: the representative of Miao people prepares for speaking



Guiyang: the representatives of Dong and Miao people



Guiyang: the representative of Dong people during her speech



Guiyang: attending the Forum



Guiyang: the representative of the Miao people during her speech



贵州生态博物馆群建成暨国际学术论坛
International Forum of Ecomuseums

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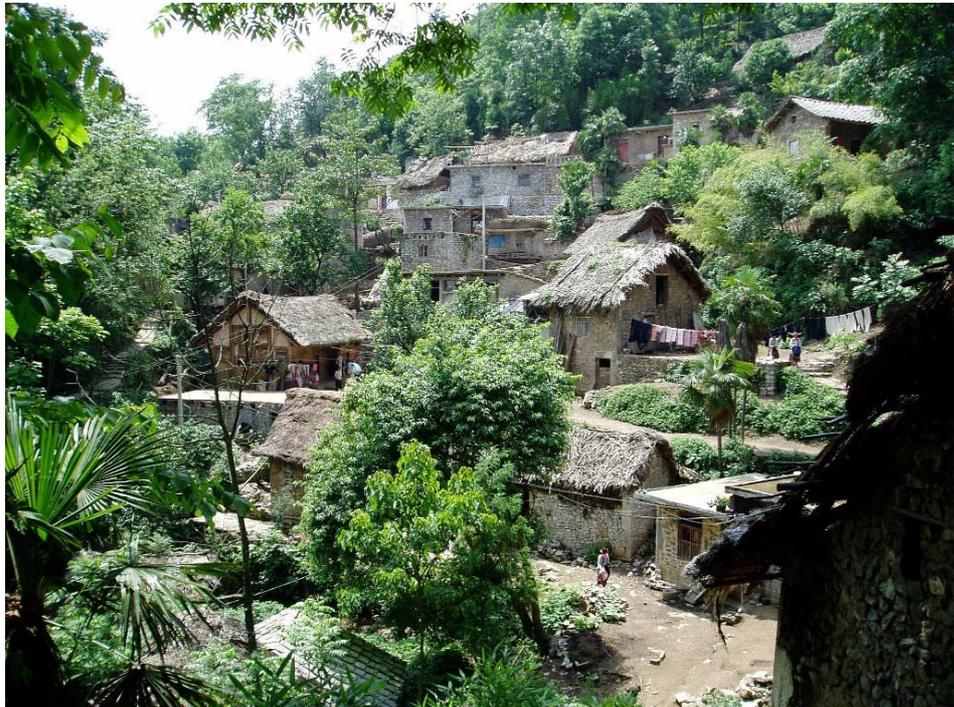
On the van, towards the Miao people ecomuseum



Suojia: the new village



Suojia: the restored village



Suojia: the old village



Suojia: a Miao family



Suojia: Miao women at the loom



Suojia: the ecomuseum's entrance



Suojia: Miao children



Suojia: computing in the visitor centre



Suojia: among the Miao people



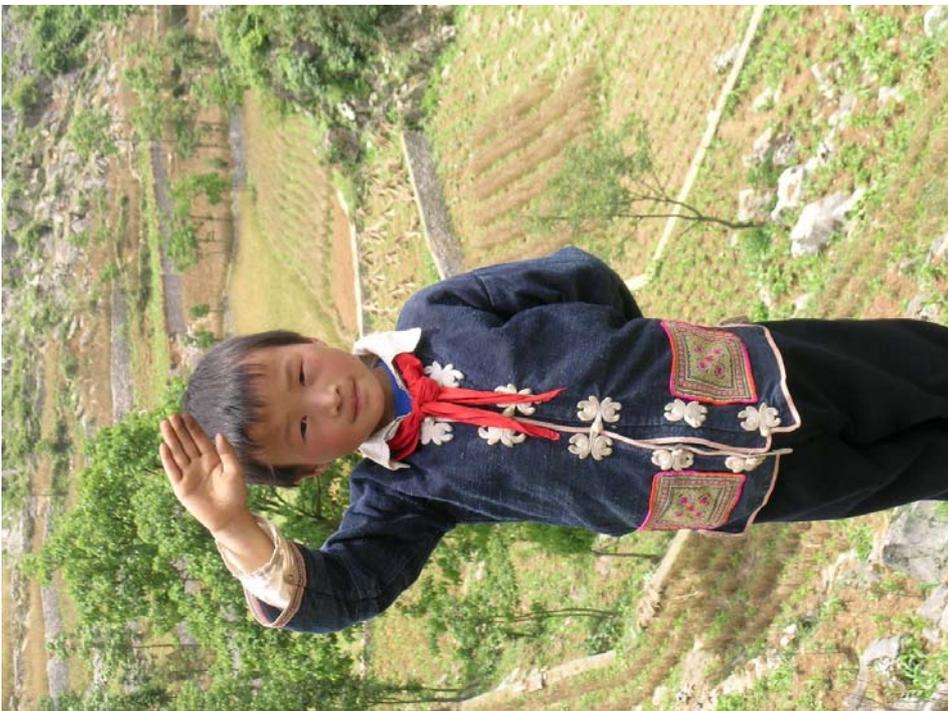
Suojia: carrying water from the well



Suojia: Miao woman



Suojia: student at the Miao school



Suojia: child at the Miao village



Zhenshan: a street in the village



Zhenshan: the Huaxi river



Zhenshan: women weaving



Zhenshan: the ecomuseum's visitor centre



Olunsum: inside a Mongolian tent



Olunsum: the remains of the antique Mongol capital town



Olunsum: a Lama ceremony



BailingMiao: talking with people



Tang'an: drum tower



Huaili: the Yao village



Huaili: White trousers Yao village



Huaili: Yao ceremony



Huaili: a rice granary



Huaili: Yao young people



Huaili: rice granaries



Huaili: among the Yao people

Report on my visit to some Chinese ecomuseums, in Guizhou and Inner Mongolia Provinces

*Maurizio Maggi*⁴⁹

A museum meeting, like many other scientific seminars, is important not only because of the event itself (the presentation of the papers, the people you know, the ideas you exchange) but also because of what happens before and -more than ever- after it. Hence, if the success of a meeting and the results it provides depends also on its follow up, the many scholars who attended the Forum in Guiyang and the field trips to the ecomuseums can be helpful to the organisers by providing their comments and suggestions.

This kind of mutual aid is very important in a field of study –the ecomuseums field- where literature, especially in English or other worldwide known languages, is still quite scarce. In this situation the direct experience of scholars is of crucial importance and the mutual exchange of comments after a field trip is a very effective method to socialize knowledge.

This report should not be regarded as an appraisal of the work done by the Chinese museologists or by the local communities of the ecomuseums. My work with ecomuseums, in Italy and everywhere, consists mainly in creating opportunities for self-assessment and mutual comparison between local actors living in different places. The people who can best evaluate this kind of practice are their direct protagonists. Moreover, my knowledge about the Chinese social and institutional situation is very limited. As a consequence, the following opinions must be carefully considered. I plan to make a further visit to China in 2006 and I hope it will increase my understanding.

General overview of the Chinese ecomuseums

The actions developed by the Chinese Society of Museums seem to follow a conscious strategy, considering different generations of ecomuseums, making reviews and evaluations of the past experiences, enlarging the international partnerships according to the ecomuseums growth. This careful approach is a strong point of the Chinese situation.

A broad overview of the Chinese ecomuseums shows also the potential for a convergence towards a sort of national network. This

⁴⁹ Institute for Social and Economic Research (IRES), Italy

phenomenon is quite normal among ecomuseums worldwide, with national networks already existing (or in the making) in many countries (France, Japan, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Brazil, Mexico). In this process, it is important to empower the single ecomuseums and their local leading groups, allowing them to act in the emerging networks as actors, not simply as extras. From this point of view, it is crucial to accompany the development of network building (which often implies a strong role for scholars and authorities) with the work in the field, alongside local people. It is impossible to establish a strong network of ecomuseums that will aid local development without strong and competent local leadership.

Documentation about the existing ecomuseums is good, both “on site” and remotely. On site, each ecomuseum has an interpretation centre where it is possible to get good information (in Chinese and English) about the project, the place and the people living there. From a distance, a complete guide to the seven ecomuseums, in Chinese and English, is available, explaining and documenting places and people. Unfortunately, from abroad, it is very difficult to know about the plans of the local authorities (about transportation, houses, education, agriculture, handicraft) and their relationships with the ecomuseums. Probably, given the quite advanced stage of the overall project, a website devoted only to the Chinese ecomuseums could be useful both for scholars (in China and abroad) and also for the people living in the seven ecomuseums, to know and exchange knowledge amongst each other.

The accessibility of the Chinese ecomuseums remains problematical. Accessibility for tourists is probably not a priority, and in the absence of tourist facilities the potential for benefits for local people from tourism would be very limited. However, despite their remote location, each ecomuseum could be a point of reference for the people belonging to the same minority and living outside the ecomuseum area. The potential of an ecomuseum goes beyond the specific heritage it preserves, and can include its role as an example to those in similar situations. Thus, outside the 12 villages of the ecomuseum, millions of minority people could learn a lot about the importance of their culture, by visiting the existing ecomuseums.

Soga ecomuseum

Strengths

- Better living conditions for local people (water, especially) are a tangible result of the ecomuseum and make it sustainable
- Extensive participation in maintaining the local heritage, the living character of the place
- Strong distinctiveness of the place and of the local people

Weaknesses

- Mostly grounded on the past memory and old traditions, but it is very difficult to preserve a tradition if this is not connected with the present (see further, about “authenticity” and exhibiting).
- Autonomy of local leaders of the ecomuseum seems feeble compared to the local politicians initiative (in part it is a consequence of the previous point)

Questions

- Who moved from the old houses to the new ones? Will the other people in the old village receive new houses in the future?
- Do Miao people need a monetary economy? If that is the case, have they developed any commercial activity (such as weaving and embroidery)?
- Did the people who do not live in the Miao village receive benefits from the ecomuseum?
- Did the ecomuseum improve the self-reliance of local people?
- Did this affect their ability to manage their development (better houses for those who do not have them, for instance).
- To what extent is the ecomuseum a point of reference for the whole Miao minority? Do the other Miao know and visit the ecomuseum?
- How is the ecomuseum connected with the local development plans? (for instance, can it be an example (not only for the Miao people) of the importance of restoring old houses with low impact on the landscape and the environment?).

Zhenshan ecomuseum

Strengths

- The economic conditions seem have benefited from the ecomuseum (new restaurants, shops for visitors).
- A partial restoration of the houses has been realised, following the architectural character of the place and using local materials.
- Some young people (maybe professionals?) are involved in the ecomuseum

Weaknesses

- It is not clear whether the benefits of the ecomuseum are distributed widely (some young people of the village seemed to ignore the existence of the ecomuseum)

Questions.

- What about the new economic activities (restaurants, shops)? Are they managed by local villagers? Do the activities rely on, and use, local suppliers?

Olunsum ecomuseum

Strengths

- Fifteen families are involved in the management of the ecomuseum, so providing potential for participation and continuity
- The staff of the local ethnographic museum (which will be opened in Bailing Miao town next year) will be a reference point for the new ecomuseum (and its motivated and skilled people)
- The sensitive approach to tourist and other visits (in small groups and with a minivan) is atypical, but ensures a low impact on the local cultural landscape
- The Mongolian culture seems very strong and there is awareness of its distinctiveness

Weaknesses

- When most people will reside in new houses, it will be very difficult to ensure that old traditions survive, such as the everyday life in the tent.

Potential for the future

- Organisation among villagers to improve their ability to manage their living conditions (the water supply was a gift of the CSM and the government, but will local people be able to improve other aspects of their life by themselves?)
- Deeper connection with the other members of ethnic minority groups
- To be an example to people living in areas where there isn't any ecomuseum
- To make a connection (if it does not already exist) between ecomuseum activity and local development plans
- Interconnection between the Chinese ecomuseums, in order to learn from one another (in part, it happened during the Forum)
- Marketing of local products to raise money but also, importantly, to connect memory and present activities and to allow people to innovate
- Websites (partly managed by the villagers and partly by CSM) and a travelling exhibition of the existing ecomuseums, as tools for interconnections

Of course, these suggestions, like this whole document, are a result of a short visit, and they should be regarded as points for discussion rather than a professional essay.

“Authenticity” and “Exhibiting”: some considerations on cultural diversity

During the visits, both in Guizhou and in Inner Mongolia, we talked a lot about the alleged “originality” of some aspects of the local life of those ethnic minorities (the way they weaved, how the tents were made and so on). It suggested to me some thoughts about the precarious concept of “authenticity” and the meaning we would like to confer on the concept of “cultural diversity”.

One of the main goals (together with local development) of the first phase of the Chinese ecomuseums, according to the talk we had in China and the reading of the many articles written on the subject by their promoters, was to preserve the very rich cultural diversity of some Chinese places and populations. Have they been successful in this? In order to answer this question, we have to ask ourselves why we consider cultural diversity so important.

I can think to five possible answers: to provide knowledge for scholars, to provide delight and insight for tourists, to assure distinctiveness for competition between places, to respect a basic right of the local people, and to contribute to the improvement of the human culture.

Diversity can be important for scholars and students, because they can learn so much from the observation and comparison of different cultures. From this point of view also ethnographic museums can do much, even if they do not preserve a living culture. Scholars can learn also from papers (even when written decades or centuries ago), from the examination of old artefacts, from viewing pictures and photographs, and from listening to recorded oral testimonies. The Chinese ecomuseums provide outstanding opportunities for scholars and students. In this meaning of “cultural diversity”, they have been successful.

Diversity can be important also for tourists, because they more and more would like to observe “local heritage”, because of the increasing demand for “authenticity” and “uniqueness” in the cultural domain in comparison to the standardization and uniformity of their own (often Western) cultures. Although we know that the ecomuseum will not maintain any “original” culture, because culture is modified day by day by the people, we can consider it successful from this point of view, because the diversity is preserved enough to meet the demands of tourism.

Moreover, preserving cultural diversity for tourism can be an opportunity (although an ecomuseum is probably unnecessary in this case), as “cultural character” and distinctiveness are important

assets in the competition between places. Here products connected to the place, such as food and handicraft, are especially relevant. From this point of view, it is difficult to say whether the Chinese ecomuseums have been successful or not, because distinctiveness can act as a competitive element only if a) the local people recognise the significance of their own culture, b) there is a need to improve their monetary economy and c) local people have the required entrepreneurship and associated skills.

Diversity, then, can be important for minorities, because they have the right to maintain their original culture, if they like, and from a “paternalistic” point of view, we can empower them by providing them with the right tools to manage the inevitable process of acculturation in a more beneficial way. From this point of view, it is once more very difficult to measure the success of the Chinese ecomuseums: they have accelerated the process of acculturation but at the same time have given local people more instruments to manage it. It is probably too early in the process to know whether this definition of success has been achieved.

Last but not least, diversity can be important –and I think we all agree about this- because it can enrich our vision of the world. This is not only because it can be a witness of the past (it doesn’t matter if this past is important for scholars, for tourists, for the local entrepreneurs or for old local people who are proud of their traditions), but also because it can raise the profile of our knowledge to shape the future. For this to be possible, many cultures have to “give their contribution” to this general knowledge and must have the opportunity to do this without be squashed (for example, if the process of acculturation is too fast and only one-way). This is not a paternalistic point of view: we help minority cultures to survive because we need them.

To provide an example, the Miao people of the village we visited would probably like, in the future, to live in new houses. As a result the old village could simply disappear, or at the very least the old dwellings will be abandoned and new houses will be built. These could be made with concrete bricks and tin roofs, as in too many other parts of the world. This “nowhere style” would transform that small beautiful corner of China into an anonymous place, similar to many others from the periphery of Mexico-city to the shattered “sprawl-scape” of some parts of southern Europe. But, on the contrary, the inevitable process of change of the local culture, could lead to new houses different from the others (as in part has already happened), changing – perhaps - the material outline of the landscape but preserving its “sense of place”.

This is one example of course, and I think that the contribution of

cultural diversity can go far beyond the preservation of many different landscapes, combining them into a unique but more varied and beautiful landscape. It can preserve a rich variety in our way of thinking, making our own lives richer and more varied.

The awareness of people about the process of change of their “traditional” culture and the tools they have to manage this process are probably the crucial points. Cultural diversity is successful when is able to provide this awareness and these tools. Innovation plays an important role in this context and can be helped by cultural diversity.

I remember a young musician who talked during a meeting at an ecomuseum in the Alps, in a place inhabited by a minority (the Occitans) people who have a different language, different music and different traditions. “A music is dead” he said “ when you have to defend it instead of playing and dancing it”. Ten years ago, when the local language and music were close to extinction, he studied the old traditions and then created a group with some friends, using traditional instruments unchanged since the Middle Ages. However, the instruments has been electrified, the songs were based on traditional tales but with new words, following the traditional spirit but talking about present problems. Thousands of young people now attend their concerts and the Occitan music (both traditional and “revisited”) is well known and far from the risk of extinction. So innovation can be grafted on tradition, but only when the value of tradition is properly acknowledged by local people.

In the end, if one of the main goals of the Chinese ecomuseums was to preserve cultural diversity, then both their past success, their present operations and their planning for the future should be evaluated from this point of view. Each step we take in heritage preservation (of traditions, of material heritage) should be accompanied by a step in the enhancement of the so-called social capital (people awareness and self-reliance, local networks) in order to make local communities more and more capable of managing their culture, to control its change and the acculturation process, to use it to support innovation and development.

Notes: An International Ecomuseum Conference in China Guiyang, June 1-6, 2005

*Hugues de Varine*⁵⁰

Since 1995, in close professional cooperation with the late John Aage Gjestrum, a group of Chinese museologists under the leadership of Prof. Su Dong Hai, have developed in the province of Guizhou a first group of ecomuseums, in places particularly meaningful for the cultures of several ethnic minorities. Today, more ecomuseums are at various stages of development in other parts of China, the autonomous province of Guangxi, Inner Mongolia and Yunnan. This experience has proved sufficiently rich and worthwhile to be presented to an international panel of specialists and particularly to colleagues from other countries of the region. The International Ecomuseum Conference gathered for a week of discussions and field visits, and included participants from China (including Taiwan), South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, India, the UK, South Africa, Brazil, Italy, France and Sweden. Norway was represented by a large delegation from the Norwegian Museums and Cultural Heritage administration, headed by the Ambassador himself. It has been deemed appropriate to hold this event on site, and to publish a number of the papers presented during the plenary sessions. They will provide an update on the situation of "new museology" in Asia and the Far-East. For the first time, these countries have had the opportunity to exchange ideas, experiences and problems, and to confront their theories and practice during long and detailed visits to ecomuseums.

I would like to propose a number of personal remarks as a community development consultant and former director of ICOM.

New Museology and the Asian world

This conference has, if not revealed, at least given coherence and visibility to the development of new museology ideas and projects in Asia. Even if the word ecomuseum is often employed to cover different realities, we are faced there with a research and experimentation in the use of heritage, museums and community action for the development of territories and endangered cultures. In societies which are changing fast to adapt to global standards (which influence also mainstream museums and cultural policies), a growing number of human groups, in rural as well as in metropoli-

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tan areas, are marginalized. In countries so densely populated, hundreds of millions may be affected in this way.

Apart from the Chinese cases which I'll discuss later, we heard about these realities from various sources. Visitors to this site know already some of the problems faced in India by many local communities. Prof Parasmoni Dutta reported on them at the conference. In Indonesia, the example of the populations surrounding the famous Borobudur Stupa showed mass tourism endangering both the natural environment and the agricultural activities of the inhabitants. From South-Korea came projects of a more urban nature, dealing with the adaptation of the population to the growth of small or medium-size cities from a traditional organization and way of life to striving modern industrial centres. In other cases, the major question was the confrontation between a population rooted in its past and heritage, but poorly adapted to modern change, and the inevitable tourist trade.

It was the general impression that the ecomuseum, (or perhaps this is better expressed as new museology methods), could propose solutions for strengthening the original cultures of the people, while helping them to reach new standards (habitat, hygiene, health, education, for instance) and to be ready to accept and receive visitors as guests and factors of economic development.

It was also evident that, in Asia as well as elsewhere, there are two necessary conditions to a successful and "sustainable" use of new museology solutions: a strong support by political and administrative powers, and a real participation of the communities and their members. The Liuzhi principles, which were originally devised for the Guizhou ecomuseums, have been unanimously adopted by the participants as a set of rules to be observed in all situations by the promoters of these new museums or of similar projects.

In China, ecomuseums and the minorities

It appears that China has a problem of development among its many ethnic minorities. Divided into innumerable villages situated often far from urban centres and main communication lines, they live still in their traditional ways, with an economy of survival: pre-industrial habitats, agriculture, crafts, ancestral religious and cultural practices. Some have neither water and electricity supply, nor school or health services.

The governments (at national and provincial level) are using the ecomuseum process to start changing this situation. I think we can consider the first ecomuseums we visited or heard about as ex-

periments to test a method which combines a participatory development programme based on local cultures and heritage, objectives which include building up self-confidence, an amount of empowerment using the traditional community structures, and a number of basic facilities, like improvement of road access, habitat, water supply, new schools, etc.

The considerable internal tourist industry presently developing in China will undoubtedly make this policy doubly essential, since these villages selected for the ecomuseum programme will in time become very attractive to visitors. Their size (a few hundred inhabitants) and the richness of their heritage will at the same time make them fragile and subject to many temptations, if they are not prepared and conscious of the risks and challenges they will have to meet. I shall come to that later.

Also, there are questions which will soon be raised, I am sure: each ecomuseum we have seen in Guizhou and Guangxi "represents" and "exhibits" a minority. What will be, in the years to come, the cultural role of each village-ecomuseum within the total population of its ethnic group? Will it become a sort of "national cultural centre", a repository of cultural, artistic and spiritual treasures and values of the group or a documentation and research centre linked with universities and national scientific institutions? Will the ecomuseum send out information, exhibits, cultural programmes to other communities of the same culture or to other minorities in order to create inter-communication and interaction? It seems that other groups of the same minority outside the village chosen for an ecomuseum have not been consulted or associated with the project.

These questions, which will certainly receive answers in the future, as the ecomuseological process develops, show the importance of the movement which has started in China. It is of interest to all museum professionals, to governments and to local development agents in many countries, to observe the evolution of these ecomuseums in various parts of China.

The economic and cultural impact of mass tourism

As of today, the Chinese ecomuseums do not bring significant changes to the life style and culture of the populations concerned. It is nevertheless possible to see some indications that such changes are coming. For instance, in Soga, the construction of a new village, with more modern architecture and facilities, has created a sort of quality gap between the life of the inhabitants of the old village and that of the new village dwellers. In Zhenshan, the

rehabilitation of the lowest part of the village, which is now dedicated to tourist shops and restaurants, creates a visual separation from the upper part, which remains traditional in architecture and comfort facilities. Also, the use of industrialized building materials for rehabilitation (particularly for replacement of windows) marks the sudden introduction of techniques which are obviously the mark of urban architects.

Although these transformations may seem inevitable, they will produce a cultural and economic impact on the populations of these villages. They will for one make them stand apart from the other villages of the same minorities, due to the privileges which are associated to their nomination as "ecomuseums". Secondly, they will bring the communities to move very (too) quickly from an almost non-monetary economy, to an almost modern rural economy, with the addition of the tourist trade.

There is another factor to be taken seriously. We saw in Nandan County the Yao ecomuseum, where one of the spectacular manifestations of the local culture is music and dance, accompanied by the famous "bronze drums". These drums, which are kept in the various families of the community, are often very old (I saw one which was said to have been in its family for 12 generations), they are exquisitely decorated and they are at the centre of a number of important religious beliefs and traditions. We were told that about 1000 such drums existed in this community. I have been concerned, during my ICOM days, with the international problem of the illicit trade in cultural property, and I am still aware of the growth of this trade, despite the efforts of all countries to prevent or to curb it. My first reaction in the Yao Ecomuseum was to warn the government officials in Nandan County about the danger of alienation of this important cultural heritage of the Yao community, and of China in general, as soon as foreign tourists are able to reach the village and discover this cultural treasure. The amount of money offered by foreign collectors or clandestine intermediaries for these kinds of objects is of such magnitude that it will be very difficult for the villagers to resist the temptation. We have a long experience of this dramatic evolution, in rural areas rich in archaeological sites, in Turkey, Guatemala, Peru or India. In the other ecomuseums we visited, there were no objects of that importance, but we saw many interesting pieces which will undoubtedly interest collectors. One of the roles of ecomuseums should be to invent methods to avoid these consequences of the mass tourism invasion.

Finally, there is the question of the handicraft production of these populations, once it is confronted to the tourist market. We all know that hand made objects are unique and depend on the demand: they are supposed to fulfil a need, functional, symbolic, spiritual,

decorative, expressed either by the craftsman or by his/her family, or by a market, usually local or regional. When these products meet the tourist, they become mere souvenirs, gifts, exotic exhibits, with no real function. But the demand can grow so much and so quickly that the producers end up working only for this new market, making in large numbers a limited number of "typical" objects which are supposed to satisfy the illiterate eye of the tourist. And in the process, their production loses its quality and its cultural contents. Also the producers are exploited, because they do not understand the economics of tourism: the selling price is very cheap and does not represent a sufficient compensation for the work done.

This is another possible (or necessary) vocation of an ecomuseum: to lead the villagers to a more adequate understanding of the difference between the traditional market and the tourist market and to organize themselves, for instance into cooperatives, to keep the quality, develop creativity, respond to new functions more adapted to the use and taste of urban visitors and generate better income. Ecomuseums could thus become experimental sites for developing a tourist trade that is both more profitable and more respectful of the local cultures and at the same time more innovative.

Impressions and reflections on two ecomuseums in China.

Eva Bergdahl⁵¹

I will try to summarize my impressions on the two ecomuseums in Guizhou, which I had the opportunity to visit during the International conference on Ecomuseums 1-4 June 2005.

The first visit was to the Soga ecomuseum, which was a small village situated far up in the mountains in the central part of Guizhou province. The Miao people who were living here seemed to be well prepared for our visit, I suppose the visit of a lot of foreigners to this small village was an extremely unusual happening and influenced the preparations for the warm welcome of the delegates.

Marc Maure compared a good ecomuseum with a mirror for the local people, in which they could see their own culture and history reflected as they themselves experienced it and developed in their daily lives. I felt during the visit to the Miao village of Soga, that this element was missing. The inhabitants were in effect showing their culture and heritage in a “showcase” to us, reflecting not their own proud opinion about it, but rather the picture that they had been told to present to outsiders and visitors.

My impression is that the spirit of this people was not so open and communicative. But this maybe reflects their true culture more than I know, since my knowledge of the Miao culture and people is very poor and we do not speak each others languages. I really missed this type of information in the ecomuseum information Centre. There was very little in the texts about the Miao themselves, their thoughts, their religions, their daily life, their history and so on, but more about the ecomuseum concept and the Norwegian-Chinese project. I wondered what the portrait of the Norwegian King and Queen had to do with the Miao culture. I would have preferred to have information on the Miao heritage, told by the Miao themselves, who at the same time could describe their daily work and life.

The computer room at the information Centre was a nice surprise. I saw some Miao girls and boys working there during our visit. The old village at the top of the hill was not supposed to be a part of our sightseeing, but many of the delegates went up the hill to visit it and came back with impressions of great poverty. In order to tell visitors the normal Miao way of life, it would have been better to

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show both the old village and the new one, built at the bottom of the hill where also the newly-built school was situated. I would have appreciated to walk around there listening to the women and children and seeing their daily work. Compared to the “show” we were presented, this would have been a more real and unique ecomuseum experience for us.

The Miao people did not seem to be aware of the value of their own culture. They showed it to us more as a ceremony, but they did not “live” it. A depressing experience was an old lady who tried to sell her traditional skirt to us. It seemed to me that the Miao people have to get the knowledge to be more aware of the precious nature of their heritage. They have the right to strive for more welfare and better houses and this modernization is not contradictory to preserving and appreciating their own traditions, culture, language and music. Culture is changing and developing continuously and you cannot expect any people to stop this process in order to show visitors their “traditions”.

If a larger number of tourists visit the ecomuseum of Soga, the people here in the future have to develop a system for making money by opening up their village to foreigners. Local cooperative business where some of their traditional items can be produced for sale would be necessary. The lack of pride and the shyness they showed us were perhaps natural, as few tourists have so far found their way up to their village.

The PiangBa TianLong Village with its medieval structure and narrow streets was a quite different experience. We visited the inhabitants more on their own conditions and they seemed to be much more used to visitors and tourists. I do not know if the spirit of the people (Miao and Han) reflects a different attitude or if the atmosphere was due to the fact that the Han people were more conscious of their heritage. If I got the right information, many of the houses in this old city had been restored using traditional materials and styles. I went around by myself for a quarter of an hour and felt like an equal guest. A woman opened up her house and let me in for a short while and several people signed to me that they wanted me to approach and step into the backyards of the houses.

Compared to our Swedish ecomuseums I felt that the Chinese examples have a great potential. The way the ecomuseum is combining consciousness of heritage with future development and modernization is hopeful and is something more powerful and more politically interesting than the Swedish ecomuseums, which are more focused on the past and lifetimes that have gone. The demonstrations and the stories told in the Swedish ecomuseums are often more concerned with praising the past times and a long-

ing for them to come back.

In some of our ecomuseums there is a lively and fruitful discussion about the same subjects we discussed during the conference in Guizhou. How do we combine necessarily modern development in traditional societies with preservation of the heritage? Who will define what is worth saving and preserving for the future? I felt these questions were pertinent to the debate in China too and I hope we never stop asking them.

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