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Chapter 12

Cambodian experiences of the manifestation and management of intangible heritage and tourism at a World Heritage Site

Georgina Lloyd and Sokrithy Im

Introduction

The role of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) within the cultural tourism experience of a heritage place is seldom a central focus of heritage conservation. Yet intangible heritage, or living culture, has a pivotal role to play in the tourist experience of a heritage place. Management of intangible heritage tourism – both the utilisation and presentation of forms of intangible heritage to tourists and the minimisation of impacts caused, directly or indirectly, by pressures of tourism on intangible heritage – are central aspects of heritage site conservation. At many heritage places, the management of intangible heritage is typically considered as an afterthought to the preservation and presentation of monumental remains or natural sites. There is, however, a growing understanding of the significance and interdependence of both tangible and intangible heritage. This general trend is consistent with the management of heritage at the Angkor World Heritage Site (AWHS). While conservation of the monuments has been of primary importance, in recent years there has been considerable research on the significance of intangible heritage and focus placed on the management of this heritage.

At the intersection of intangible heritage and cultural tourism there are a number of matters that require consideration for the management of heritage places. These include the modification of intangible heritage forms for tourism consumption including standardisation, commodification, homogenisation and fossilisation of heritage and a consequent loss of authenticity of cultural performance and practice and the decontexualisation of intangible heritage for the tourism market. The other concern is a failure by the tourism industry to recognise the significance of ICH and the need to ensure that it is presented, marketed and utilised in a sensitive and appropriate manner. There is, therefore, a need to enhance the tourism value placed on ICH and educate the industry in the potential impacts to the continuation, transmission and presentation of ICH that result from its utilisation for tourism purposes.

The AWHS is a living cultural landscape with complex associated intangible heritage values (see Figure 12.1). While the Angkor temples continue to have considerable archaeological value, the contemporary AWHS represents a complex matrix of values. These values are present on many levels, from globally recognised outstanding artistic and architectural values, nationalistic values of symbolism and cultural identity, community Buddhist and spiritual values to localised animistic spirit associations. At Angkor there has been continuous animistic, spiritual and other religious links with the temple landscape from the pre-Angkorian period until the present day. Many of the religious links at Angkor are a unique representation of intermingled Hindu, Buddhist and Animist elements. Norindr (2006: 66) establishes that: 'Angkor remains a spiritual place of devotion, dynamic site of pilgrimage, teaching and reflection, and not simply an archaeological wonder for well-heeled tourists'.

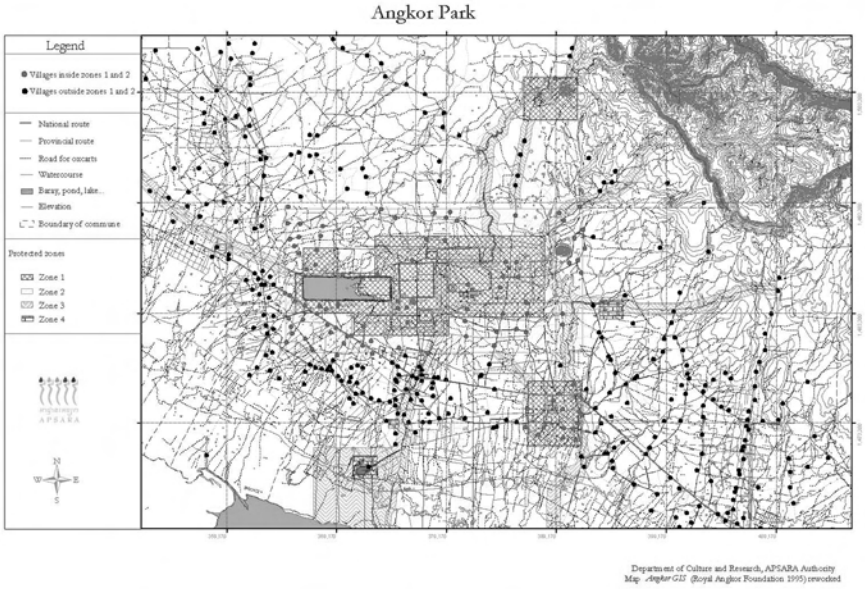

Figure 12.1 Map of Angkor World Heritage Site showing village locations and zones

Angkor designates not only a geographic region – one which is home to the magnificent Khmer temple ruins (including the legendary Angkor Wat, Bayon and dozens of other main temples), city walls, roads, water management systems and sites of local industry of the ancient Khmer Empire remaining in natural environments – it also designates a cultural

landscape which includes a living cultural heritage of inestimable importance in anthropological and linguistic terms. The villagers of the Siem Reap Angkor Region are known to be particularly conservative with respect to ancestral traditions, and a great number of archaic cultural practices that have disappeared elsewhere continue to be performed in its villages. Angkor represents, then, a dynamic cultural complex reflecting all aspects of Khmer society. As such, Angkor reveals memories of the past and through them offers hope for the future. This chapter presents only an overview of the multitude of ICH representations at Angkor.

Villages within the Angkor World Heritage Site

A growing sector of heritage tourism is the presentation to visitors of everyday landscapes that depict the lives of ordinary people (Dallen and Gyan 2009). Many of the village settlements within the AWHS are associated with ancient occupancies that date back to different periods of Cambodian history. Each village has accrued its own character and value. Some villages reflect the discernible ancient landscape along the historic arterial roads from Angkor (such as the road from Angkor to Pimai), and continue to use the roads as a central feature and communication artery (see Im 2008).

Village settlement and oral history

The settlement histories and stories of the villages are often reflected in their names. Several villages share a popular tale, which they consider to be a common history that creates a linkage between their communities. Another historical theme relates to the first man who came and cleared land for developing that community. Other villages have histories relating to natural, cultural or historical events of the region. Most stories of this type relate to nature and are concerned with a specific plant grown in the area. Probably, these histories can be dated to after the fall of Angkor. They have been told from one generation to the next and exist primarily as oral traditions, although a few stories have been published (Im 2008).

Temples, ancient roads, bridges, forests and the rice fields, lakes and ponds, have the names of ancestors attached to them or are surrounded by legends remains as important landmarks for local people. The names of villages are similarly reflective of local and natural elements and markers, or of shared history with other villages.

Village landscape and traditional livelihoods

Village landscapes are constrained by settlement structure and the local environment. Many villages are situated on ancient infrastructure (for example, dikes, water structures or ancient roads). Other villages are found

close to ancient temples or clustered around a temple, which gives a different character to the village landscape. Some villages have gradually developed in a cluster around a central Buddhist monastery, most of them built on an ancient temple or structure. The villages are surrounded by rice fields, vegetation or the forest of their communities. Some villages are isolated from others by rice fields.

The landscape reflects the different seasonal changes. Seasonal changes also influence traditional livelihood and ritual practices. The rainy season in particular can give much beauty to villages surrounded by rice paddy and seasonal vegetation. At this time of year the villagers are all busy with agricultural work, and their activities can be observed from dawn until night during half the year. Typically, a traditional rice paddy is grown, a variety adapted to this soil type and, particularly, water conditions. The second half year season comes next beginning with harvesting, new seasonal agriculture and the annual feast of agrarian rituals (see Figure 12.2). During this season handicraft construction, weaving, charcoal and blacksmith work are done along with the collection of medical plants and other natural forest products for trading with the citizen within Siem Reap. The residents of the Angkor area trade these products for fish and other commodities from the Tonle Sap area.

Figure 12.2 Ritual at an Angkorian temple, Neak Pean, to ask for rain
Photo: APSARA 2009

As the daily life of many Angkorian villages has not changed much, traditional crafts and weaving are still practised. These include roof thatch dressing, weaving cotton, making alcohol from rice and basket, mat and natural broom dressing (see Figure 12.3). These activities are performed under This game is for getting rain for the coming agricultural season or near the house. These practices have unique cultural value and should be the focus of sensitive management approaches as they may be utilised by the tourism industry.

Figure 12.3 Mat weaving at a village in the Angkor World Heritage Site
Photo: APSARA 2007

There is a large diversity of traditional and ceremonial events performed within the Angkor region and in general communities within the Angkor landscape strongly preserve their cultural identity. There are two main categories of ceremony: the first is concerned with rites of passage, and with rituals associated with either the fixed ceremonial calendar or with special occasions (which can occur at any time); the second aspect is concerned with customs and performing arts, which are also considered to have a ritual component. While all of these traditions have significant cultural value they may also have tourism value and as such careful management is required to ensure that the practice, presentation and transmission of ICH is not compromised by its utilisation for the tourism industry.

Rites of passage

Rites of passage are a series of ritual practices performed throughout the lifecycle of an individual from the stage of new birth to death and can be measured in eight rituals. For some communities in Angkor many rituals are still commonly practised. Many of these practices are strong historical links. Those series of rituals can be summarised and literally translated into English as follows: 'a ritual concerning birth'; 'the keeping and cutting of the topknot'; 'the Buddhist monk ordination'; 'girls of this stage undertake another ritual called Chol Mlob'; 'Marriage'; 'a ritual concerning delivery'; 'the ceremony of prolongation of life'; 'the funerary rite'; and, 'the burying of the ashes from incineration'.

A ritual concerning birth is performed a few days after delivery, called in Khmer *Kat Sak Bankok Chmob*, whereby the community shows recognition of the newborn, the family demonstrates gratitude to the midwife and any misfortunes caused by the mother's blood during delivery (which is considered an unclean thing) are driven away. It is believed that the midwife has ritually shaped the newborn making the baby a new human being of our world. This ritual is largely performed throughout the villages in the AWHS.

The keeping and cutting of the topknot is called in Khmer, *Kor Chuk* and is a ceremony to mark human age entering into pre-adolescence. It is a very traditional ceremony which is rarely performed elsewhere in Cambodia (see Figure 12.4).

Figure 12.4 Topknot ceremony conducted at a village in the Angkor World Heritage Site
Photo: APSARA 2011

The Buddhist monk ordination is called in Khmer *Bous Neak* and marks for a man a new step of life to the age of religious study. Young adult men prepare for ordination as novices in the Buddhist order. These events are also observed commonly in the communities, but not for all young men (see Figure 12.5).

Figure 12.5 Monk ordination ceremony at Angkor Wat
Photo: APSARA 2002

Girls of this stage undertake another ritual called Chol Mlob literally means 'entering to shadow'. The girl stays inside her room for a period of time and is banned from talking with strangers and men. She learns from an old woman sage to be a good housewife. Very few communities still practise this but it still survives in few villages of the Siem Reap region.

Marriage, in Khmer, is called *Reap Kar* and is a conjugal step between a man and girl who have passed through the adolescent step of life. There is a diversity of rituals performed during marriage events in the Siem Reap region. In general, from village to another, the practise of the ritual is slightly different. The diversity of rituals is in some cases unique to villages in the AWHS:

A ritual concerning delivery marks the transition from housewife to a mother. This ritual can be seen across the whole AWHS.

The ceremony of prolongation of life has several names, as *Chansok Kiri Sout, Chhark Toch, Chhark Thom* or *Chhark Maha Bangsakol, Tor Ayuk*. This ritual practice is associated with the elderly. The ceremony aims to prolong the life of the person concerned by simulating a cycle of death–gestation–rebirth. Meditation is practised by the elderly, notably elderly women, and brings the mediator to envisage his or her self as a corpse, presumably in preparation for death. The ritual is widely practised in the Angkor region.

The funerary rite is known as *Bochea Sap*, and is composed of three major components of ceremony: first burial, exhumation and definitive burial. The two major ritual components are exhumation followed by cremation of the remains.

The burying of the ashes from incineration is known as *Banchus Theat,* and is the final stage of the human life circle. This is a testimony to the continuation of an ancient tradition in the Angkor region.

Ceremonies of fixed date

Some of the fixed-date ceremonies are agrarian rites which are part of the collective gathering of crops and other agricultural events; others are the traditional ceremonies of 12 months written in the traditional calendar such as *Tgnai Sel* (holy days), Khmer New Year or *Pchum Ben*, and last but not least, the practices of animism, a homage to *Neak Ta*, a spiritual village protector. The traditional ceremonies of 12 months are performed similarly elsewhere in the Kingdom. The difference is found in the way these ceremonies are practised from one place to another (Im 2008). Some of these ceremonies have particular meaning at Angkor such as *Visak Bochea* celebrations.

*The ceremony of homage to Neak T*a is widely performed in every village within the AWHS. The most famous ceremony for the Siem Reap-Angkor region is the homage to *Ta Reach*, which is held within the monument of Angkor Wat. *Ta Reach* is one of the most prominent guardian spirits of the

Angkor Site (see Figure 12.6). There are many *Neak Ta* spirits within the Angkor monuments and this form of intangible heritage shows the continuing spiritual beliefs linking the local community and the Angkorian monuments (Lloyd 2009).

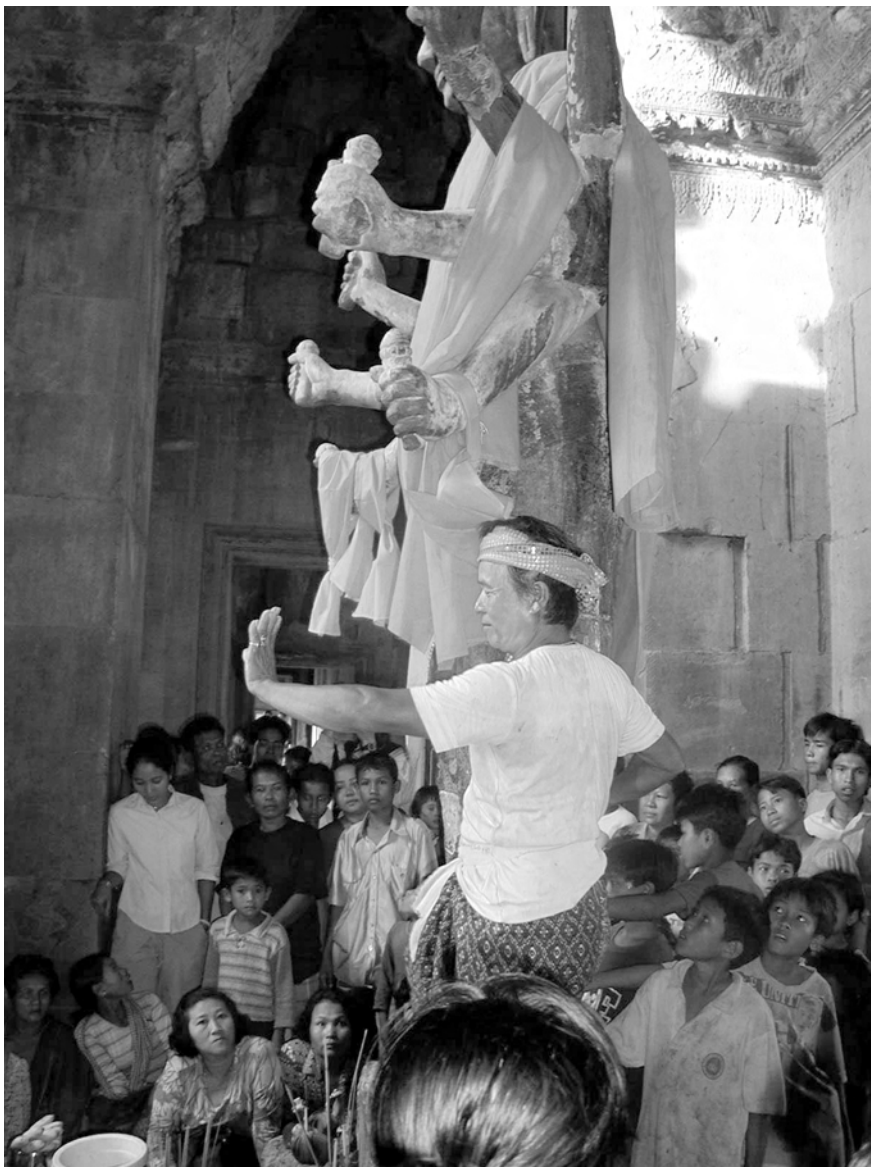

Figure 12.6 *Neak Ta* Ceremony for *Ta Reach* in Angkor Wat
Photo: APSARA 2002

The veneration of a god, Buddha or *Neak Ta* is a central element in the retention of village identity and memory of the Khmer people. Hindu gods and other elements of ancient structures also have spiritual power. Natural stones and Hindu or Buddhist icons have been appropriated as the embodiment of certain *Neak Ta* (Ang 2000; Im 2008).

Praying to the Hindu or Buddhist gods and the *Neak Ta*, and organising ceremonies and rituals is a continuing practice that reinforces both the sacred landscape and community identity. Within the landscape, certain 'special' places are commemorated through ritual, and their importance remembered and passed on within and between village communities (Im 2008).

Agrarian rites are commonly practised in the Angkor region and reflect the importance of agriculture as the main economic activity. A series of rituals concerning the rice paddy celebrates the beginning of the agricultural season through to the time the rice is stored. The agricultural season commences after the *Royal Ploughing Ceremony*, which is conducted by the King or his representative in late May.

Ceremonies of unfixed date

Ceremonies that are not tied into specific calendar events include those that are observed in the ritual of inauguration of a *Vihara*, or Buddhist monastery, or any public building: rituals related to the asking for rain; rituals to divert misfortune in a family or village or community; rituals at the beginning of house construction and house warming. This series of ceremonies is also widely performed throughout the region. Any ritual of this type can be performed on an auspicious date, determined by the traditional officiant or *achar* (Im 2008).

Customs

There are some performing arts which are considered to have a ritual gesture contributing to the collective events. These include dances, singing and music. Several popular dances are indigenous to the Angkor region and relate to the chasing of evil, bad spirits or wild animals which provoke misfortune over the communities. *Trot* is a form of dance which is performed only during the New Year celebration for chasing bad luck and misfortune. Several traditional games such as tug-of-war are also played during the New Year days. The tug-of-war game is for getting rain for the coming agricultural season (Im 2008).

These descriptions of village life, traditions and beliefs illustrate that ICH is manifested in myriad ways at the AWHS in Cambodia. It can be seen through localised animistic and Brahmanic beliefs, continuing Buddhist practices and traditional livelihood activities. Research and documentation

of ceremonies, livelihoods and customs has clearly shown that there is an organic and very spiritual link between Angkor and its people. The predominately rural World Heritage landscape of monuments and villages is steeped in rituals, ceremonies, orally transmitted knowledge and customary skills. Yet historically the management of this heritage site and the tourism industry has not reflected an awareness or appreciation of this living heritage.

Historical context

Until recently there has been little focus on the management of intangible heritage of Angkor. Since the late-19th century, stemming from the years of the French Protectorate, there has been a focus on monumental restoration and archaeological missions grounded in Western conservation theory. Early French laws outlined the role of the *École française d'Extrême-Orient* (EFEO) in the management of cultural property and the conservation and research of historical sites within the protectorate. To a large extent the French appropriated Cambodian heritage and managed sites and antiquities as French assets. In 1925 an area was officially delineated as the Parc d'Angkor and it is noteworthy that in 1929 there was acknowledgement that Indigenous peoples and other foreign Asians may visit the Park 'for a religious manner' and as such should be exempt from paying visitor fees. This acknowledgement, however, was relevant to the heritage value of the site and management was focused on the tangible heritage of Angkor. Even after Cambodia gained independence from France in 1953 a bilateral treaty was signed entrusting the EFEO with the management of the Angkor Conservation Office. The 1956 Treaty outlined that EFEO was responsible for supervising the work of the Angkor Conservation Office, pursuing archaeological research and maintaining the Angkor temples. This was again renewed in 1966. Following the period of independence and the period in the 1990s when heritage legislation was reintroduced, the French legal regime and conservation theory was strongly influential. In general, the system laid out by the French remained largely intact and applied to all moveable and immoveable objects of historic or artistic value in public or private possession (Royal Government of Cambodia 1998). The cultural heritage framework of Cambodia throughout the 20th century has been closely aligned to Western conservation ideals and monument focused conservation theories.

This historical focus on the tangible has meant that there has, in the past, been a failure to recognise the significance and meaning of intangible values and the protection of ICH has not been considered. Traditions, values and daily practices of local communities have often been overlooked. It is clear that the focus on tangible elements of Angkor, isolated from their spiritual context, has been the result of a process that began

during the colonial period and was influenced by traditional Western conservation theory. The Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap (APSARA) has effectively managed Angkor in line with the laws and policies that make up the heritage framework (i.e. those governing the physical fabric of Angkor). They have addressed the management of activities within Angkor (such as the establishment of structures, organisation of tourist activities) and the restoration and safeguarding of the temples of Angkor.

As is illustrated above, in recent years there has been substantial research conducted by APSARA that has highlighted the significance and uniqueness forms of ICH at Angkor and this research is now in the process of being translated into policy for incorporation into site management.

A recent shift in the management of the WHS towards a holistic protection of natural, tangible and intangible heritage has been paralleled by a seemingly exponential growth in tourism. The safeguarding of intangible heritage requires an understanding of the tourism development and the interplay between tourism and the continuation of traditional practice.

Tourism trends at Angkor

Angkor is Cambodia's major tourist attraction and one of Asia's fastest growing tourism destinations (Winter 2003). In 2007 (Jan–Nov) Cambodia received 1.76 million international visitors (Ministry of Tourism 2007) and almost two million tourists (international and domestic) visited Angkor. In 2008, there were 2.1 million tourists (Ministry of Tourism 2009). Tourism is seen as a tool for economic development and poverty reduction (March 2001) and the continued rapid growth of this market is actively promoted to be a priority for the Cambodian government. There continues to be a growing tourism market being driven both by international and domestic visitors.

At Angkor there is a trend towards mass tourism with a large number of the visitors coming from countries within the Asian region. These tourists are classified as predominately 'leisure tourists' (Gonzáles 2008) who visit on package tours with an average stay in Siem Reap of two nights. In 2007, six of the top seven market arrivals were from Asian nations: South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Taiwan, China and Thailand (Ministry of Tourism 2007). This trend is also visible in the first quarter of 2009 with 59.7 per cent of all international visitors to Cambodia (Jan–April 2009) arriving from Asian countries (Ministry of Tourism 2009). According to Tim Winter (2008, 2009) growth in tourism in Cambodia will likely continue this pattern, with increasing visitors coming from within the Asian region resulting in a parallel rise in mass leisure tourism.

Issues with intangible cultural heritage and tourism at the Angkor World Heritage Site

Lack of awareness and respect for the contemporary spiritual aspects of the landscape

For a large sector of the current tourism market there is a general lack of awareness and respect for the contemporary values and spiritual aspects of the Angkor landscape. Most visitors to Angkor are not aware of the rich intangible heritage, contemporary culture and significance of Angkor (Lloyd 2009). This may be attributed to the fact that not all tourists that visit Angkor are actively participating in what Timothy and Nyaupane (2009) define as the commonly understood notion of 'cultural heritage tourism', nor seeking cultural experiences to reinvigorate their interest in culture and understanding of the cultural environment, values, traditions and lifestyles of the local population. Rather, as suggested previously, the majority of visitors to Angkor are dependant tourists or 'leisure tourists' (Gonzáles 2008), that is those travelling in large groups organised by travel agencies who are consumers of a heritage product sold by those agencies and tend to be simply visiting a prominent heritage site for its marketed aesthetic and archaeological value. Jonathan Wager (1995: 518) classifies these tourists as 'general interest sightseeing tourists who are attracted to Angkor because of its worldwide renown, including its World Heritage status, and travel in large groups, staying only one or two nights and making only a limited contribution to the local economy'. It has been recognised within recent studies on heritage tourism (e.g. Nyaupane, White and Budruk 2006) that there are different categories of visitors to heritage places depending on individual motivations. These can range from leisure tourists who wish to visit a place without engaging in any local cultural experiences to those who are seeking to immerse in or reconnect with the local culture or what Gonzáles (2008) differentiates as 'existential tourists' – those that are travelling for a deeper more spiritual understanding and connection with the intangible heritage of the place. At Angkor, however, there is a need to understand what Poria, Butler and Airey (2003: 249) refer to as the difference between '*heritage tourists* and *tourists at heritage places*'.

The preferences of tourists visiting the AWHS because of the status that Angkor embodies as an important global destination, has been geared towards the predominately marketed tourism experience of viewing monuments as relics of the past in a fabricated manner. As Winter (2009: 111) stipulates: 'the tourism industry that has evolved around Angkor has also thrived off the romantic, mysterious and adventurous tales of rediscovering lost antiquities'. At present, there is not the demand or the desire of tourism operators facilitating this segment of the tourism market to promote or explain the contemporary cultural significance of Angkor.

After all, this is not part of the tourism product they are 'selling'. The tourism product of Angkor presented to most tourists follows a simplistic interpretation of the demise and abandonment of a glorious Khmer empire. Tourists are rarely presented with the modern significance of the Angkor monuments, their role in ceremonies both animistic and Buddhist, or the colloquial local legends and stories associated with them. Very little is presented of the recent history and cultural context of Angkor:

> In piecing together Angkor's history much less attention has been given to the Khmer inscriptions found among the temples or the evidence pertaining to the ongoing presence of animism. Indeed, within an account of architectural splendor and pristine glory, anthropological accounts that might reveal oral histories or the transmissions of cultural traditions across generations have been largely overlooked. (Winter 2009: 112)

In general the lack of awareness and understanding of the intangible heritage present at Angkor has resulted in a decrease in respect for the spiritual associations that continue to exist. Respect for the spiritual significance of Angkor is required to ensure that there is appropriate management and safeguarding of this heritage. Such respect may be generated through awareness-building measures and by encouraging respectful behaviour such as wearing appropriate clothing within the WHS. Awareness-raising measures may provide tourists with an enhanced experience of Angkor by developing a new appreciation for the spiritual value of the site.

Potential for commercialisation and commodification

Timothy and Nyaupane (2009: 62) state that one of the most 'often-cited side-effects of tourism is cultural commodification whereby culture becomes a product that is packaged and sold to tourists'. Tourism products performed and supplied in a commercial context have often lost the spiritual meanings or values that are present in their traditional cultural contexts. Ceremonies, performances, traditional healing or rituals conducted for economic benefit are often presented outside of the normal circumstances for that form of ICH as there is pressure to provide presentations to visitor on a regular basis rather than in the traditional context of, for example, the second full moon of the year or following the harvest season. Furthermore, often the commodification of culture involves privatisation by external stakeholders who utilise cultural elements for economic benefit without providing benefits to the local population. As George suggests, frequently there is:

> an inequity gap exists in benefits distributed to many rural communities whose cultural heritages are being appropriated and exploited by

> multiple commercial entities for tourism purposes and personal gain. Little, if any, of the profits realized benefit the local community – the actual creators and owners of the local culture.
>
> (2010: 376)

The commercialisation of cultural products by external stakeholders can lead to the perpetuation of false perceptions and stereotypes. This is present at Angkor with the perpetuation of the tale that the Frenchman Henri Mouhot was the lone explorer who discovered the abandoned city in a dense jungle. In reality there were many foreign visitors to Angkor before Mouhot – he was not even the first Frenchman, nor was the site completely abandoned although parts were heavily forested. Father Charles-Emile (Abbé C.) Bouillevaux visited Angkor and published his account in 1858, two years before Mouhot's arrival. It has been stated by Bouillevaux that the ruins of Angkor were not in fact found by Mouhot or any other Frenchman, for the reason that they were never forgotten or lost. Such stories, however, help to augment the commercialisation of the site, and Henderson (2009) argues that the Angkor Wat has been extensively commercialised by the tourism sector and multiple products created to maximise commercial opportunities.

Commercialisation and commodification has occurred for several forms of performing arts within Cambodia. Following the listing of *S'bek Thom* (Khmer shadow puppets) on the list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2003 (now listed on under the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention), the awareness and popularity of the artistic form within the tourism industry increased. A number of external stakeholders created commercial opportunities for the shadow puppet performance as the demand grew and there were increasingly more troupes performing without any formal training or reference to traditional presentation. Traditionally, *S'bek Thom* performances take place three or four times during the year as a call for rain or as part of other ceremonies undertaken for the good of the community' (Sisowath 2004: 96). Currently *S'bek Thom* performances are conducted several times a week for a purely touristic purpose and there is no portrayal of its intended function. Thus the performances are taken outside of their original context and performed by groups outside the community for reasons other than those intended. Similar concerns are found with the performance of Balinese dance (Barker, Putra and Wiranatha, 2006).

Potential for modification and simplification of traditions for tourism consumption

The motivations, circumstances and typology of visitors to heritage places influence the consumption and presentation of tourism products. For

leisure tourists, those that make up a majority of tourists who travel to Angkor, there is a greater propensity to modify and/or simplify intangible heritage performances. These mass-market package tourists usually demand standardised services and goods (Bacuez 2009). Forms of intangible heritage performed to leisure tourists are thus more likely to be staged and adapted for tourist expectations. Bak argues that it is

> highly likely that the local communities may modify their heritage in the way they think will be more attractive to the tourists . . . [and] locally relevant and culturally genuine values of the heritage may be compromised in the process of making it more palatable to the tastes of the consumers of the cultures (the tourists who are cultural outsiders).
> (2007: 27)

For example, the dramatisation of an Indigenous oral tale may be simplified and shortened to fit a 30-minute window for tourist consumption (Greenwood 1989). Engelhardt (2007) refers to this as the 'dumbing down' of heritage interpretation whereas MacCannell (1973) suggests that this is 'staged authenticity', where forms of culture are performed to groups and are inauthentic, mass-produced misrepresentations of the local people. Gonzáles (2008: 809) stipulates that most leisure visitors have 'short contact with the intangible heritage element as spectators whilst travelling within the destination' and 'perceive the constructed authenticity . . . as being more authentic'.

With the growth of mass tourism at Angkor, the risk of simplification and modification of intangible heritage for tourism consumption may be greater. Engelhardt surmises:

> In the rush to provide expanded facilities for the rapid increase of mass-marketed tourism, the authenticity and integrity of indigenous traditional culture are all too frequently sacrificed. Likewise, typical tourism promotional activities take the form in which complex cultural heritage is simplified, homogenized, packaged and in the end, trivialized for the quick and easy consumption of the tourist. Ironically, it is precisely the authentic traditional culture and customs that tourists, both domestic and foreign, expect to experience when they visit a heritage site. But instead of getting rich and authentic cultural insights and experiences, tourists get staged authenticity; instead of getting culture, they get kitsch.
> (2005: 3)

At Angkor and its nearby town of Siem Reap there are a number of examples of the modification and simplification of intangible heritage. Miura (2007) notes the standardisation of tourist experiences at Angkor and modification of the sacred space of Angkor. She uses the example of groups

of people clad in theatrical and dance costumes within a number of the most popular temples as creating a standardised and altered experience or 'pseudo-event'. These experiences are not based on the traditional use of the temple space. In Siem Reap there is the Cambodian Cultural Village which presents performances on a regular basis of Khmer rituals such as wedding ceremonies. Winter (2009: 110) suggests that this cultural village and others like it in Asia are geared towards the mass market and present intangible heritage that is 'performed, modernized and aesthetically stylized for consumption as a tourist product'.

Freezing of culture and disassociation from the living landscape

A common factor associated with heritage sites is the disconnection of the tangible from the intangible (Engelhardt 2007). The perceived romantic notion of Angkor as a 'lost temple' landscape marketed by tourism companies has meant that the tourism industry has participated in the cultivation of a perception that Angkor is a select number of monuments that are relics of the past (Mar 2001), rather than a vast landscape comprising both tangible and intangible representations of heritage that have both historic and contemporary meaning. To a certain extent the monuments of Angkor have become a frozen landscape. At the very least tourism at Angkor is largely disassociated from the living aspect of the landscape. This follows a general theme of presenting a vision of the 'glorious past' in an unchanging or frozen environment (Winter 2006).

It is not only the tourism industry that has contributed to the process of secularisation of Angkor. For many years, following the French legacy of site management, Angkor was managed as an archaeological or historical park typically following the model outlined by Black and Wall (2001) where in general people have been removed from around the remains, the grounds have been landscaped and the historical remains are presented in a park-like setting. This stems from the historical focus on monumental restoration or, as Miura (2005: 3) states, an 'old conservation approach of freezing an idealized past for the interest of outsiders'. The result has been 'the museumification of the landscape via representations of the past as linear narratives' (Winter 2009: 113). While in recent years following the inclusion of Angkor on the World Heritage List, Angkor has been touted as a 'living heritage site'. The legitimacy of this phrase has been questioned as the living qualities of Angkor are frequently overlooked.

Recent developments in the management of intangible cultural heritage at Angkor

In the past, the management framework of Angkor has not effectively articulated the contemporary religious meaning of the AWHS to visitors (Baillie

2007). There remains further potential to develop appropriate presentation and interpretation of the intangible heritage within the AWHS, there are very few guides who can provide proper interpretation of ICH within the landscape and there is a general lack of knowledge and understanding of the meaning and significance of ICH.

Heritage managers at Angkor are left with a conundrum of how, if at all, to incorporate meaningful and appropriate contemporary intangible heritage (as a fundamental characteristic of the AWHS) within the tourism experience of the predominately regional, leisure mass tourists and how, if they wish to incorporate this heritage element, to ensure that tourism operators transmit such knowledge appropriately within their products. This is a demanding challenge as mass tourism has frequently been seen as the antithesis of meaningful appropriate tourism at heritage sites. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) even stipulated in the mid-1990s that tourism operators at Angkor should 'develop facilities for cultural tourism so as to prevent the onslaught of low quality mass tourism provoking irreversible destruction of Angkor's cultural and natural heritage' (UNESCO 1996). Since 2001 UNESCO has developed a specific World Heritage Tourism Program that recognises the importance of incorporating intangible heritage within WHS tourism-management policies (Pedersen 2004). These matters are being addressed by the APSARA Authority along with potential solutions such as introducing a professional course on ICH interpretation and raising public awareness.

In early 2000, APSARA created two main sections – the Social and Heritage Research Unit and the Pluridisciplinary Research Unit. The Pluridisciplinary Research Unit conducted predominantly archaeological research in partnership with international team. The Social Research Unit primarily worked with villagers within the WHS, engaging with an in-depth study of their way of life, their traditions and customs – all of which are significant components of the intangible heritage of Angkor. The project involved collecting cultural information from the villages. Unfortunately, the work of the unit was postponed due to an internal restructure of APSARA, but nevertheless the project was not fully abandoned. In 2006, the newly created APSARA Department of Demography and Development launched a new small project entitled 'Traditional Craft' of Angkor's villages. The project aimed to study socio-economic parameters of communities within the heritage area. The research was a component of the 'community development' section of APSARA.

The Living with Heritage (LWH) project, conducted by APSARA–UNESCO–University of Sydney in 2005 and 2006, identified that the values of Angkor cover a much wider spectrum than those previously assessed and acknowledged in the World Heritage citation which celebrates Angkor's unique artistic realisation, technical achievement and testament

to a 'past civilisation' and which tended to concentrate on the larger and more obvious features such as the temples and their surrounding water-management systems. The LWH research helped to identify important significant scientific, symbolic and social values, in addition to the historic and aesthetic values that have previously been given prominence.

In recent years APSARA has also been part of a joint research project between Cambodian and Thai institutions. The collaborative work entitled Living Angkor Road Project (LARP) is a multidisciplinary research project. A socio-historic study has been conducted on communities living along the Royal Road in Cambodia and Thailand sides (LARP 2007, 2007–2008). The ethnographic survey has consisted of two sub-phases: location of all communities living along royal road and field survey to each community that has relation with the royal road (i.e. the community that has existed for long period of time, not newly established, with a buffer zone of two kilometres from each side of the predicted location of the royal road). The research has found that most of the village settlements are often associated with ancient occupancies. These villages have always been a spiritual landscape inhabited by protector spirits, *Neak Ta*, who live in temples and villages. Like many villages in the AWHS the royal road communities are continuing to live in the same spaces, within which there are inherited memories of ancestors' experiences and beliefs, overlain with the new generation's memories and experiences – and these all remain closely associated with particular places and localities within the wider landscape. Continuing practices also include storytelling, playing New Year games, dances, music and theatre.

The research conducted by APSARA has clarified the need to address intangible heritage within the management of the AWHS. In early 2010 H.E. Bun Narith, Director-General of APSARA, approved the creation of an intangible heritage project to examine the concept in Angkor and the creation of a policy for safeguarding ICH. An intangible heritage working group was created along with the appointment of an expert advisor (Professor Ang Choulean) and a consultant (Dr Georgina Lloyd).

The work of the intangible heritage project had the following principal objectives:

- Define the function of APSARA as the institution responsible for the safeguarding of intangible heritage at Angkor.
- Draft and put forward for adoption a policy for the safeguarding of intangible heritage and the recognition of, respect for and enhancement of intangible heritage in society particularly through education and awareness-raising.
- Increase the awareness and comprehension of the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention) and 2003 UNESCO

Convention for the Safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage (Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention) among APSARA staff.
- Assist APSARA departments to meet their tasks related to intangible heritage as established by the 2008 Sub decree regarding the Organisation and Functioning of the Office of the Director-General of APSARA (°50 ANK/BK).

The working group met on number of occasions throughout 2010 to examine the safeguarding of ICH and develop a draft policy for Angkor. On 20 September 2010, APSARA conducted a seminar to review the draft policy for protecting ICH. Several measures for managing intangible heritage were presented. For example, working with local communities to develop a calendar of traditional cultural events while ensuring that the community retains the ownership of the events and practises them within a traditional cultural context. Another action is the certification of holders of knowledge and local produce developed within the village context. H.E. Bun Narith established that APSARA will work towards raising awareness of intangible heritage among visitors, conduct further research on intangible heritage within the AWHS and undertake further training on intangible heritage for APSARA staff and guides.

In late 2010 the Angkor Heritage Management Framework (HMF) project started. This project was initiated by APSARA, in association with UNESCO and the Government of Australia. The HMF is being prepared by APSARA in collaboration with Godden Mackay Logan – an Australian heritage consulting firm. It will address heritage management concerns at Angkor, particularly tourism through the preparation of a Tourism Management Plan incorporating environmental and socio-cultural aspects of tourism including intangible heritage.

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