# Part I

# Emergence of cultural landscape concepts

Chapter 2

# Landscape and meaning

## Context for a global discourse on cultural landscapes values

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> Our human landscape is our unwitting biography, reflecting our tastes,
> our values, our aspirations, and even our fears in tangible visible form.
> <div align="right">(Lewis 1979: 12)</div>

The cultural landscape construct proposes that heritage places are not isolated islands and that there is an interdependence between people, social structures and the landscape. Inextricably linked to this cultural concept of landscape is that one of our deepest needs is for a sense of identity and belonging and a common denominator in this is human attachment to landscape and how we find identity in landscape and place. This chapter reviews emerging trends in the non-monumental cultural landscape approach; reflects on how the innovative ideas of cultural geographers and anthropologists from the late nineteenth/early twentieth century through the twentieth century shifted intellectual discussion on landscape from physical determinant to cultural construct creating a context for a global cultural landscape discourse; and reflects on cultural landscape opportunities in Asia.

## Landscape: shifting ground from physical determinant to cultural construct

### Post-1970: product or process?

Over the last thirty years or so there has emerged the idea of historic cultural landscapes being worthy of heritage conservation action. It is reasonable to ask why this has occurred. Where does the philosophical basis lie for the current interest in cultural landscapes, particularly in the interpretation of their meanings and their associative/intangible values? Here I propose to look critically at two periods in reverse chronological order. Enquiry on landscape in cultural (human) geography and related disciplines such as anthropology since the late 1970s has progressively delved into landscape not simply or predominantly as history or a physical cultural product, but

also – and more significantly – as cultural process reflecting human action over time with associated pluralistic meanings and human values.

From a cultural geography perspective landscape as process has connections with the aim of visual theorist, W.J.T. Mitchell (1994: 1) 'to change "landscape" from a noun to a verb . . . [so] that we think of landscape not as object to be seen or a text to be read, but as a process by which identities are formed'. Landscape therefore infers cultural context, human action and activity and also change over time. It is what Olwig (2007) calls 'an active scene of practice'. Mitchell sees his approach as absorbing two approaches to landscape. The first he calls contemplative, founded in art historical paradigms of reading landscape history. The second is interpretative, with efforts to decode landscape as a body of signs. Therefore:

> *Landscape and Power* aims to absorb these approaches into a more comprehensive model that would ask not just what landscape 'is' or 'means', but what it *does*, how it works as cultural practice. Landscape, we suggest, doesn't merely signify or symbolise power relations; it is an instrument of cultural power, perhaps even an agent of power . . . independent of human intentions.
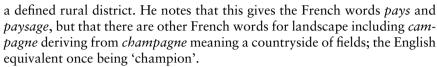>
> (Mitchell 1994: 1–2)

Robertson and Richardson (2003: 7) recognize that, while there has been within cultural geography 'a shift from textual interpretation . . . to an interpretation of these texts in popular cultural practice', it is also within the field of anthropology that the notion of landscape as cultural process finds consistent expression. The definition of landscape as cultural process is the stance taken by Hirsch (1995: 3) when he acknowledges the existence of cultural meaning in landscape but that this must be viewed in the context of 'the concrete actuality of everyday social life ("the way we now are")'. Like Mitchell, Hirsch proposes two landscapes: the one 'we initially see and a second landscape produced through local practice and which we recognise and understand through fieldwork and through ethnographic description and interpretation' (ibid.: 2).

The landscape as process thesis can be seen to have connections with the etymological derivation of the word in English from its Germanic roots (Jackson 1984; Olwig 1993, 2002). This dates back to 500 AD in Europe when the words – *landskipe* or *landscaef* – and the notions implied were taken to Britain by Anglo-Saxon settlers. The meaning was a clearing in the forest with animals, huts, fields and fences. It was essentially a peasant landscape carved out of the original forest or weald, that is, out of the wilderness with interconnections to patterns of occupation and associated customs and ways of doing things. Jackson further indicates the equivalent word in Latin languages – with its antecedent like Germanic and other languages harking back to the Indo-European idiom – derives from the Latin *pagus*, meaning

a defined rural district. He notes that this gives the French words *pays* and *paysage*, but that there are other French words for landscape including *campagne* deriving from *champagne* meaning a countryside of fields; the English equivalent once being 'champion'.

'Landscape' from its beginnings therefore has meant a human-made artefact with associated cultural process values. It is an holistic view of landscape with its morphology resulting from the interplay between cultural values, customs and land-use practices critically explored by Wylie (2007).

The conjunction of the word 'cultural' with landscape also infers an inhabited, active being. Olwig (1993) links this to its Latin origin *colere* (culture), with various meanings including inhabit, cultivate as in tillage, protect, honour. Additionally 'culture', like the German *kultur* (and therefore 'cultural'), is about development of human intellectual achievement, care (*Oxford English Dictionary*): hence the German term '*kulturlandschaft*' (see below). French usage gives us *paysage culturel*, the term used in the World Heritage List inscription (2000) for the Loire Valley, which notably includes urban settlements as well as rural land. The assumption that is often made that 'cultural landscape' is only to do with agricultural settings is misplaced: it is concerned with all human places and the process of making them and inhabiting them.

Landscape as idea in the Western genre also has had since the sixteenth-century art historical connections with painterly renditions of landscapes, whether they be the history painting genre of the Italianate School (Poussin, Lorrain et al.) or the realism of the ordinary everyday landscapes of the Dutch School. This is the landscape as scenery interpretation. Wylie calls it 'representational, symbolic and iconic meanings', aestheticized pictures of the natural world and culture–nature relations, or a landowning elite way of seeing. It was the focus of critical commentary by cultural geographers in the 1990s. Olwig (1996), for example, proposes the need to understand and return to the substantive nature of landscape: a landscape that is real, not artistic; real in a legal sense, real rather than apparent. This standpoint meshes in a sense with his argument that landscape originally means a political community of people (polity) and associated customary, administrative local laws: 'a nexus of law and cultural identity' (Olwig 2002: 19). He points to the diverse local polities, i.e. landscapes or in German, *ländschaft*, a term still used (Jackson 1984) for a territory or administrative unit.

We may ask whether this attitude to landscape and art, which it must be noted is not universal, is representative of a wider view system that sees landscape art representation with its symbolism somewhat suspiciously. Is it predominantly a Western view? How does it sit with Eastern views? Western landscape art since the Renaissance has focused substantially on portraying landscape reality even when the landscape portrayed is symbolic. In contrast, Eastern landscape art has often focused more on imaginary landscapes as in Chinese landscape art (and literature) where, over one thousand years

ago at the end of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE), a deconstruction of material nature was taking place. This genre was accompanied by a representation of nature that 'began to express its more spiritual side. Appearances became less important and spiritual reality emerged as the main focus . . . paintings became more and more abstract and symbolic' (Feng Han 2006: 79–80; Gong 2001: 228). In this way, Chinese depictions of nature – cultivated landscapes – were expressions of the mind and heart of the individual artist rather than of the real world, reflections of human beliefs and emotions (Metropolitan Museum of Art 2000). Even so, the often seemingly fantastic renditions in these landscapes do reflect the hauntingly beautiful shapes seen in Chinese landscapes. Nevertheless both forms, Eastern and Western, represent subjective notions of an ideal, perhaps illusive, nature. If this is a way of seeing landscape, should it be eschewed? I think not: it is for me integral with the idea of landscape as process even if it is the process of making imaginary landscapes.

To this end modern cultural geography, as Denis Cosgrove (1993) suggested, delves into how intellectual forces and spiritual sensibilities are as important as economic, social and environmental constraints in understanding how people transform and view their surrounds. He points out that landscape interpretation involves a dialogue between changing social and economic structures and human visions of a harmonious life within the natural order. As a result 'no longer is the geographical landscape confined to visible and material features on the earth's surface' (ibid.: xiv).
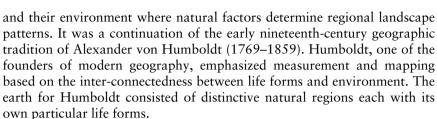
### Pre-1970s: environmental product or cultural process?

In the early nineteenth century the primacy of the natural order and creationist views in determining environmental form were clear. While Darwin rocked the theological boat, he did little to shake the conviction that natural forces shaped us and our world. Alternative evolutionary theories as in the Neo-Lamarckian model of adaptive modification of organisms passing on qualities they acquired entrenched the scientific view that environment was the shaper of people, their landscape and even their values. Such views were attractive to the increasingly vocal discipline of geography that craved to be accepted into the scholarly world as a science in the latter half of the nineteenth century. A scientifically deterministic view of environment firmly established itself in the geographical mindset. But this was challenged by an emergent German human geography tradition, thereby laying the foundations for how we have come to understand the cultural landscape construct.

Nevertheless the early foundations still inferred natural factors as the determining agent. Alfred Hettner (1859–1941) emphasized the concept and practice of *Länderkunde* (regional study). Here distinctive regional landscapes are established as a reflection of the relationship between people

and their environment where natural factors determine regional landscape patterns. It was a continuation of the early nineteenth-century geographic tradition of Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859). Humboldt, one of the founders of modern geography, emphasized measurement and mapping based on the inter-connectedness between life forms and environment. The earth for Humboldt consisted of distinctive natural regions each with its own particular life forms.

This view was supported by the English geographer Halford Mackinder. In 1887, in his address to the Royal Geographical Society, Mackinder maintained that geography's task was to reintegrate society and environment and to build a bridge over the gap between the natural sciences and the study of humanity. The growing union between the natural sciences, particularly biological sciences, and geography was a significant aspect of the developing nineteenth-century scholarly base of geography. Livingstone (1992: 190–192), in his history of the foundations of geography, calls Mackinder's approach 'the geographical experiment – an experiment to keep nature and culture under one conceptual umbrella' and proposes that while this was centred on the relationship between nature and culture with Mackinder seeing man as the initiator, nevertheless 'nature in large measure controls'. In these evolving constructs we may, I suggest, see early stirrings of the current view of cultural landscapes being at what Rössler (2006: 334) calls 'the interface between nature and culture, tangible and intangible heritage, biological and cultural diversity'.

In a reaction to Hettner's physical basis for regional geography – *Länderkunde* – there was a move towards emphasising human activity – culture – in shaping landscape patterns. Thus started the German geographical tradition of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in landscape studies. Its recognition of the significance of *kulturlandschaft*, as for example in the work of Otto Schlüter (1872–1959), is seminal to our present understanding of cultural landscapes.

The emergent German school of cultural geography questioned the entrenched deterministic view of geographers, which concentrated on the thesis that regional landscape form was determined by natural factors. It was Otto Schlüter who 'came to champion the view that the essential object of geographical inquiry was landscape morphology as a cultural product' and he 'emerged as a major exponent of the significance of the cultural landscape (*Kulturlandschaft*) in contrast to the natural landscape (*Naturlandschaft*)' (Livingstone 1992: 264). Principles of *Landschaftkunde* were seen to offer a more holistic view of the relationship between people and land: the landscape. Nevertheless the German cultural geographers first concentrated on the material aspects of culture visible in the landscape rather than including aspects of custom, values or traditions. Interest in non-material aspects of landscape making came later. Neither did Schlüter abandon the notion of the influence of natural environment on regional human landscapes. It was

left to subsequent geography scholars to trace the influence of non-material culture on regional landscape morphology.

The perceptive and innovative thinking and practice of Franz Boas (1858–1942), anthropologist and geographer, extended the new human geography to embrace the idea that different cultures adjusted to similar environments and taught the historicist mode of conceptualising environment (Livingstone 1992). It was a philosophy that emphasizes culture as a context ('surroundings'), and the importance of history: a Boasian anthropological approach referred to as historical particularism. Boas argued that it was important to understand the cultural traits of societies – their behaviours, beliefs and symbols – and the necessity for examining them in their local context. He established the contextualist approach to culture known as cultural relativism. He also understood that as people migrate, and as the cultural context changes over time, the elements of a culture, and their meanings, will change. This led him to emphasize the importance of studying local histories to aid the analysis of cultures.[1] His teachings and ideas in social anthropology and geography remain central to present-day interest in the cultural landscape idea where landscape, as Lewis (1979) opines, is a clue to culture.

Geographical scholarly endeavour was continued in the twentieth century through the work and writings of influential thinkers. Nevertheless there have been, and remain, tensions in various schools of cultural geography landscape studies. It is a tension that Wylie posits is

> between proximity and distance, body and mind, sensuous immersion and detached observation. Is landscape the world we are living *in*, or a scene we are looking *at*, from afar . . . a set of visual strategies and devices for distancing and observing?
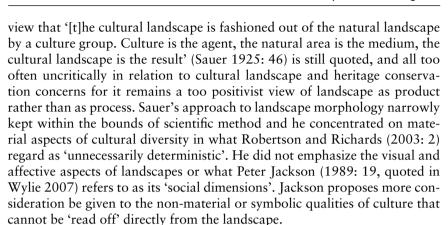>
> (Wylie 2007: 1–2)

Here is the tension between our lived-in world concept and landscape as an artistic and historical genre.

Landscape as lived-in process has built on the work of scholars such as Carl Sauer, Fred Kniffen, Wilbur Zilensky, David Lowenthal, Peirce Lewis, Marwyn Samuels, Donald Meinig, Tuan, Denis Cosgrove, Duncan and Duncan, and historians such as W.G. Hoskins. It was Hoskins as a landscape historian in the 1950s in England who saw the advantages of being out in the landscape rather than just studying in the archives. In this mode his work had similarities to that of Carl Sauer. It is a body of work that I contend acted as a necessary precursor to the establishment in the 1990s of the construct of landscape as process discussed above.

Sauer established the Berkeley School of cultural geography in the 1920s. He continued the *kulturlandschaft* tradition and elaborated an empirical cultural and historical geography tradition by championing the idea of reading the landscape based on clear observation and recording in the field. Sauer's

view that '[t]he cultural landscape is fashioned out of the natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result' (Sauer 1925: 46) is still quoted, and all too often uncritically in relation to cultural landscape and heritage conservation concerns for it remains a too positivist view of landscape as product rather than as process. Sauer's approach to landscape morphology narrowly kept within the bounds of scientific method and he concentrated on material aspects of cultural diversity in what Robertson and Richards (2003: 2) regard as 'unnecessarily deterministic'. He did not emphasize the visual and affective aspects of landscapes or what Peter Jackson (1989: 19, quoted in Wylie 2007) refers to as its 'social dimensions'. Jackson proposes more consideration be given to the non-material or symbolic qualities of culture that cannot be 'read off' directly from the landscape.

### A cultural construct: not spectators

An enduring contribution to the idea of social dimensions of landscape are the writings and understanding by J.B. Jackson of the American vernacular landscape, the landscape people inhabit and make through everyday activities. He suggests, for example, that 'we are *not* spectators: the human landscape is *not* a work of art. It is the temporary product of sweat, hardship and earnest thought' (Jackson 1997: 343).[2] His interest essentially was in patterns in the landscape and the processes that shaped these, rather than individual buildings. Jackson's writings in *Landscape*, the journal he started, are still worth reading. Notably also he gave attention to the contemporary urban landscape rather than the rural. Current interest in the idea of historic urban landscapes (HULs) at World Heritage level has antecedents here.

During the late 1980s and 1990s humanistic approaches to understanding landscape as a cultural construct used the metaphor of landscape as text. Duncan and Duncan (1988: 117) claim texts 'are transformations of ideologies into a concrete form'. They argue cogently that landscapes can be seen as transformations of social and political ideologies. They base their claim on insights from literary theory applied to the analysis of landscapes and reading them as texts. Duncan and Duncan were dismissive of the then contemporary work of cultural geographers as naive (a word they use twice in their opening paragraph) in that it views landscape as a kind of cultural spoor, indicating the presence of a cultural group. In my view their argument of landscape as text is better seen as adding further to the insights on symbolism in landscapes. Central to these has been the connection between present landscapes and the way in which they reflect vital links, tangible and intangible, with history. As a result we respond affectively to them, to the symbolism of the memories, ideas and associations inherent in their very existence, as well as to the tangible material patterns and structures that represent how the landscape has been, and is continually actively used, shaped and changed.

A coherent aspect of an accumulation of approaches is, therefore, that landscape is a cultural, or social, construct that demands examination. It is not simply what is seen as an assembly of physical components and natural elements, but rather, as Cosgrove proposes (1984: 1), it is

> a way of seeing that has its own history, but a history that can be understood only as part of a wider history of economy and society; that has its own assumptions and consequences, but assumptions and consequences whose origins and implications extend well beyond the use and perception of land; that has its own techniques of expression, but techniques which it shares with other areas of cultural practice.

Cosgrove further argues that landscape is an ideological concept and this theme resonates through his writings (Cosgrove 1984, 1990). Cultural landscape form, past and present, is therefore profoundly and systematically influenced by political, religious, economic and social values and forces.

### Tourism

More recently new forces such as tourism and its ideological baggage have the potential to mould perceptions of cultural landscapes and possibility of adding new layers to an already rich assemblage. The growth in cultural tourism, for example, has potential to influence cultural landscape appreciation and, coincidentally, our view of the past through interpretations and presentations of history. A series of essays in a volume edited by Ringer (1998) delves into these considerations through viewing cultural landscapes of tourist destinations as socially constructed places, the extent to which tourism both establishes and falsifies local reality and effects on local cultures not least through manipulations of history and culture. In this connection Sigala and Leslie (2005) probe how the three components of cultural tourism – travel, the tourist and sites – interact. Two management questions arise from this interaction: how may we identify which tourists wish to seek interaction with traditions, behaviours and ways of life of local people; and how to capitalize on such interest in interpretation and presentation of local cultural context within the rubric of cultural landscape settings?

Discussions in tourism often give attention to marketing, facility management or growth statistics. In contrast, in a focus on Asian tourism, the essays in *Asia on Tour* (Winter et al. 2009: 6) eschew these 'to situate tourism within its wider social, political and cultural contexts, addressing an array of topics, including aesthetics . . . heritage . . . and nation building'. The authors, in centring on Asian tourists in Asia, address important issues of the links between heritage and tourism and explore how Asian tourism challenges many accepted assumptions and norms based on an Anglo-Western slant. In the Conclusion Winter proposes that what is needed in scholarship

in tourism in Asia is a pluralistic approach to help understanding of the profound changes resulting from Asian tourism.

How do Western notions of visiting exotic so-called 'unspoiled places and peoples' sit with how Asians view their heritage as mass tourism gathers pace? Examples such as Samchuk Market (Hundred-year-old Market) in Suphanburi Province near Bangkok show how local effort and solidarity in the face of economic slowdown have led to success and a feeling by locals that they have maintained their identity. Extended, the old part of the market survives, with original timber shop-houses transformed into grocery stores, toy shops and many others stimulating childhood memories. Original Thai food and desserts are also offered in shop-houses and kiosks. Boat trips are popular with domestic visitors who flock to the market; locals man the house museum and proudly explain their history to visitors. As a result Samchuk Market is a lively, thriving place. Is it a new face of Asian heritage tourism with a sense of stepping back in time for visitors (Figure 2.1)?

Tourism has the potential, and does, raise the profile of heritage places, but too often in developing countries tourism is seen mainly as an economic driver with the aim of increasing tourist numbers quickly (Smith 2003) and focusing them at well-known or famous hot spots while ignoring the cultural landscape context and setting (see reference to Borobudur and Angkor below). Silverman (2010) illustrates these various points with reference to the practice of heritage management and also associated global tourism concerns at Luang Prabang (Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR)) and at



*Figure 2.1*  Welcome to Samchuck Market, Suphanburi Province, near Bangkok.

Source: K. Taylor.

Phimai (Thailand). At Luang Prabang quoting from research by Dearborn and Stallmeyer (2010), Silverman (2010: 1357) observes that there is erasure by the Lao PDR government managing agency of

> particular physical and socio-cultural pasts that are seen as unpalatable for tourists, or incongruent with contemporary development, or do not serve the needs of the current Lao PDR government [resulting in] little room for locally embedded everyday activities or multiple readings of heritage.

At Phimai, which is on the World Heritage Tentative List, Silverman suggests there is varied support for the inscription resulting from a lack of consultation with local stakeholders and exacerbated by a master plan that calls for expropriation of several blocks of homes and businesses surrounding the temple in the middle of the town. In such cases of global or local we may well ask whose values are significant (Taylor 2010) and, allied to this, how to foster a better appreciation of the cultural landscape construct and its relevance to the cultural heritage management process. As the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) cogently argues, there is a pressing need generally, and not just in World Heritage sites, 'to strike *a balance between the local and the universal* . . . to anchor action in human solidarity at the local level' (IUCN 2007: 3).
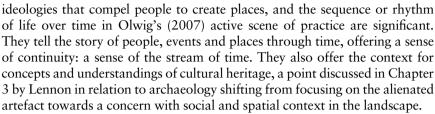
## The rise of cultural landscapes

The cultural geography, anthropological and historical discourses on constructs of landscape cumulatively may be seen to have created a context for a global cultural landscapes discourse that developed in the 1980s/1990s. As the management of cultural heritage resources developed professionally and philosophically a challenge emerged in the late 1980s/early 1990s to the 1960s and 1970s concept of heritage focusing on monuments and archaeological locations, famous architectural ensembles or historic sites with connections to the rich and famous. Here was the inception of an enlarged value system embracing such issues as cultural landscapes and settings, living history and heritage, intangible values, vernacular heritage and community involvement. It was the beginning of the shift from concentrating wholly on what Engelhardt (2007) pithily designates the three 'Ps' of Princes, Priests and Politicians to include People. Community involvement is discussed further by Lennon in Chapter 3.

The 1990s expansion of interest in, and enlarging understanding of, cultural landscapes is what Jacques (1995: 91) nicely calls 'the rise of cultural landscapes'. Cultural landscape study at this time was also coincidental with a widening interest in the public history movement and everyday landscapes. It underpinned the notion that landscapes reflecting everyday ways of life, the

ideologies that compel people to create places, and the sequence or rhythm of life over time in Olwig's (2007) active scene of practice are significant. They tell the story of people, events and places through time, offering a sense of continuity: a sense of the stream of time. They also offer the context for concepts and understandings of cultural heritage, a point discussed in Chapter 3 by Lennon in relation to archaeology shifting from focusing on the alienated artefact towards a concern with social and spatial context in the landscape.

The concept of cultural context is critical to an appreciation of the rich layering inherent in the cultural landscape idea. The theme of the 2005 International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) conference held in Xi'an, China stressed the importance of context within the parameters of the concept of setting in the practice of conserving cultural heritage in changing townscapes and landscapes:

> [S]etting is not just about physical protection; it may have cultural or social dimension. Tools need to acknowledge both the tangible and intangible aspects of setting. They also need to reflect the complexity of ownership, legal structures, economic and social pressures that impinge on the physical and cultural settings of immoveable heritage assets.
>
> (ICOMOS 2005a)

The term 'cultural landscape' is now widely used internationally. In 1992 cultural landscapes arrived on the World Heritage scene with the declaration of three categories of cultural landscapes of outstanding universal value for World Heritage purposes: landscapes designed and created by man; landscapes that have evolved organically; and associative cultural landscapes (see Chapter 3 for more detailed review).

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's commentary (UNESCO 2007a: 115) on associative landscape as being 'particularly crucial in the recognition of intangible values and the heritage of local communities and indigenous people' has particular relevance for the Asia-Pacific region. They symbolize 'the acceptance and integration of communities and their relationship to the environment, even if such landscapes are linked to powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural elements rather than material cultural evidence' (ibid.).

The declaration stands as a timely initiative and precursor to the 1994 Global Strategy for a Balanced, Representative and Credible World Heritage List. The strategy acknowledged lack of balance in the type and geographical distribution of properties represented, with the lionisation by developed countries, notably Europe. Enlarging on this UNESCO proposes:

> Cultural landscapes often reflect specific techniques of *sustainable land-use*, considering the characteristics and limits of the natural environment they are established in, and a specific spiritual relation to nature.

Protection of cultural landscapes can contribute to modern techniques of sustainable land-use and can maintain or enhance natural values in the landscape. The continued existence of traditional forms of land-use supports biological diversity in many regions of the world. The protection of traditional cultural landscapes is therefore helpful in maintaining biological diversity.

(UNESCO 2008: annex 3, para. 9)

By mid-2011 seventy-three cultural landscapes had been inscribed on the World Heritage List.[3] Dresden was delisted in 2009 (see Chapter 17) giving a total of seventy-two listed cultural landscapes. Bandarin (2009: 3) reflects most of these are living cultural landscapes and that over time cultural landscape categories (including relict and associative) 'provide an opening of the World Heritage Convention for cultures not or under-represented prior to 1992'. He quotes as examples the inscription of the Kaya Forest Systems in Kenya or the Chief Roi Mata's Domain in Vanuatu, the Kuk Early Agricultural site in Papua New Guinea (Figure 2.2) or the Tobacco production of Vinales Valley in Cuba, reflecting that none of these sites would have had a chance prior to 1992 of being recognized as cultural heritage on a global scale. Herein lies the major importance of the inclusion of the cultural landscape category in the operations of the Convention.

Of the seventy-two existing inscriptions only eighteen, as Lennon examines in Chapter 3, are located in the Asia-Pacific region. In contrast many inscribed properties in the region listed as natural sites or mixed natural/cultural are in fact cultural landscapes and offer considerable scope for renomination and re-inscription as happened in 1992 with Tongariro (New Zealand) and 1994 with Uluṟu-Kata Tju̱ṯa National Park (Australia). Mount Lushan in China is an interesting example inscribed in 1996 as a mixed site but with ICOMOS assessors commenting that it ought also be recognized as a cultural landscape. As Feng Han discusses in Chapter 5 the cultural landscape values of Lushan are now being re-investigated in China. The general question of renomination of landscapes was addressed by Fowler (2003) in his ten-year review of the cultural landscape categories and by Taylor and Altenburg (2006) for the Asia-Pacific emphasizing the continuity maintained by people through living traditions associated with the landscape settings to famous monuments and remains.

When the term 'cultural landscape' is used in South East and East Asia there is often confusion as to what it really means. There is, therefore, a need to address this uncertainty through a global discussion on what the term signifies to try to reconcile international and South East and East Asian regional values, because the region has so much to offer the world in the cultural landscape arena. This is not limited to deservedly well-known significant places – Bagan in Burma, Tana Toraja in Indonesia, or the rice terraces/*subak* system of Bali (see Chapter 4) with associated Hindu temples

*Figure 2.2* Kuk early agricultural site Papua New Guinea.

Source: J. Golson.

– but includes everyday landscapes and vernacular settlements such as the *klong* (canal) towns and surrounds of central Thailand (Figure 2.3) . These landscapes represent a particular way of living and provide examples of a continuous living history. They are therefore representative treasures, not only of living regional landscape culture, but of world culture and deserve to be recognized and celebrated as such (Taylor 2009). They are a vivid

*Figure 2.3*  Amphawa Klong settlement, Thailand, popular with domestic tourists and where local women have restarted traditional floating market.
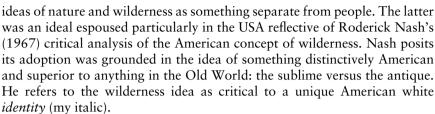
Source: K. Taylor.

embodiment of landscape as cultural process as opposed to being an objective cultural product.

## The culture–nature dilemma: Eastern and Western views

A cogent example of divergent Western and Eastern views relative to cultural landscape concerns is that of the concept of nature (Taylor 2009). Until the late 1980s there was some tension between cultural and natural heritage conservation. Culture and nature were uneasy, sometimes suspicious, companions. Reflective of this, cultural and natural criteria for assessment of properties of Outstanding Universal Value for World Heritage nomination and listing were separate until they were sensibly combined into one set of ten criteria in UNESCO (2005) *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (para. 77). The separation was originally based on the hegemony of Western values where cultural heritage resided mainly in great monuments and sites and natural heritage in scientific

ideas of nature and wilderness as something separate from people. The latter was an ideal espoused particularly in the USA reflective of Roderick Nash's (1967) critical analysis of the American concept of wilderness. Nash posits its adoption was grounded in the idea of something distinctively American and superior to anything in the Old World: the sublime versus the antique. He refers to the wilderness idea as critical to a unique American white *identity* (my italic).

Examination of the World Heritage List for natural heritage and mixed properties in Asian countries shows some properties included where local community associations with these places are omitted, or worse, obliterated because they were not seen as part of the intrinsic value. In contrast to this approach ought to be recognition of the value systems that traditional communities associate deeply with so-called natural areas as part of their cultural beliefs. Added to this is the fact that many traditional communities live in or visit these places as part of their life systems and have done so for millennia, for example Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks (India) or Sagamartha National Park, Nepal. These are listed only under natural criteria, although at least the nomination of the latter does refer to presence of Sherpas, with their unique culture that adds further interest to this site. A 1999 state of conservation report adds: 'The significant culture of the Sherpas is an integral part of the nature-culture continuum' (UNESCO 1999). Of note in these culture–nature and tangible–intangible relationships is the mounting appreciation of links between cultural and biological diversity and traditional sustainable land-use. It begs the questions of whether renomination as cultural landscapes ought to be seriously contemplated and what do we mean by nature? Is it the 1960s American model enshrined in the Wilderness Act with its connections to Protestant Christian, colonial and post-colonial cultural associations from the English-speaking Western world? Or ought it to be the concept of nature and culture not as opposites, but where nature is part of the human condition? In this connection is J.B. Jackson's (1984: 156) view that landscape 'is never simply a natural space, a feature of the natural environment . . . every landscape is the place where we establish our own human organization of space and time'.

Jackson's aphorism has particular import in Asia where links between culture and nature are traditional. People are part of nature within a humanistic philosophy of the world. Here is an holistic approach to the human–nature relationship as opposed to the idea of human detachment from nature. Lennon (2007) – see also her comments in Chapter 3 – notes that there are hundreds of community-based cultural landscapes across the Asia-Pacific region, officially unprotected areas but cared-for by communities as everyday working landscapes. Many of these cultural landscapes have national and regional values and form the basis of sustainable landscapes worthy of conservation. Why is this so? It is because cultural landscapes are regarded as being

at the interface between nature and culture, tangible and intangible heritage, biological and cultural diversity – they represent a closely woven net of relationships, the essence of culture and people's identity . . . they are a symbol of the growing recognition of the fundamental links between local communities and their heritage, humankind and its natural environment.
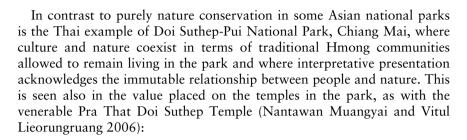
(Rössler 2006: 334)

A landmark UNESCO/IUCN international symposium in 2005 on sacred natural sites and cultural landscapes (UNESCO/IUCN 2006) explored the culture–nature diversity links. In an eloquent paper Lhakpa N. Sherpa (2006) enlarges on how *beyul*, the cultural phenomenon of sacred hidden valleys in the Nepalese Himalaya, traditionally support biodiversity conservation. Lhakpa (2006) shows how Western-influenced initiatives are targeting *beyul* for establishing protected areas without proper recognition of the symbiotic relationship between local communities and environmental conservation: the message is modern development, education, globalization and tourism are not supporting traditional stewardship. Lhakpa suggests that *beyul* and other sacred natural sites can be an asset for ecosystem conservation and lead to conservation of significant intangible cultural values. He proposes a series of actions involving strengthening involvement of local people with greater recognition of indigenous knowledge; physical surveys; collection of oral and written evidence; documentation and publication of material; dissemination of information to local schools and communities to rekindle the spirit and pride in *beyul*.

Notably this theme of the important conservation network value of recognizing the inextricable links between nature and culture and linked protection of biological and cultural diversity at sacred natural sites is continued by Verschuuren et al. (2010). The concept and developing recognition of cultural landscapes as a bridge between culture and nature is similarly explored by Taylor and Lennon (2011). Head (2010) takes what she calls the nature–culture dichotomy as a major theme in her review of cultural landscapes. She critically discusses how for much of associated history the two have been seen as oppositional, but then exploring how the gap, for instance, is being bridged through 'emerging trends . . . to discuss issues of biodiversity conservation in humanised landscapes, for example through traditional agricultural ones'. (ibid.: 429). Head further proposes that ecologists are increasingly recognizing that 'management of "nature" cannot happen only in protected areas, but must include landscapes where humans are dominant' (ibid.: 434). In this vein Berkes and Davidson-Hunt (2006: 35, quoted in Head 2010: 35) maintain that 'most of the world's biodiversity is in areas used by people. Hence, to conserve biodiversity, we need to understand how human cultures interact with landscapes and shape them into cultural landscapes.'

In contrast to purely nature conservation in some Asian national parks is the Thai example of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, Chiang Mai, where culture and nature coexist in terms of traditional Hmong communities allowed to remain living in the park and where interpretative presentation acknowledges the immutable relationship between people and nature. This is seen also in the value placed on the temples in the park, as with the venerable Pra That Doi Suthep Temple (Nantawan Muangyai and Vitul Lieorungruang 2006):

> Despite all the stunning natural beauty, the main reason many visitors come . . . is to visit Phra That Doi Suthep Temple. For Thais, this site is a must for the visit, as it is a sacred place to pay homage to the Lord Buddha's relic, . . . [it is] one of the most holy Buddhist sites in Thailand.

The Doi Suthep landscape is representative of the deeply felt associative values between local communities and indigenous people in Asia and their cultural landscapes. It underscores the need for intercultural dialogue and for initiation of local community and indigenous participation in cultural landscape conservation and management so that the links between physical and spiritual aspects of landscape are respected. This view is grounded in the fact that it is the cognitive and spiritual values of cultural landscapes in the Asia-Pacific region that are their most salient features (Engelhardt 2001). Recognition of a cultural place for heritage purposes can intentionally or unintentionally marginalize certain groups, the unrecognized 'others' with a long and verifiable association with the place. Examples such as Borobudur (Indonesia) and Angkor (Cambodia) are cases in point where the surrounding cultural landscape and its meanings are seemingly divorced from the archaeological monuments. At Angkor, for example, is an extensive engineered landscape extending over 5,000 sq. kms, (Figure 2.4): a cultural landscape reflecting the history of the area and everyday activities of people, which continue to this day (Taylor and Altenburg 2006; Engelhardt 1995).

ICOMOS and IUCN are active in dialogue with the World Heritage Committee on outstanding universal values and 'how references to values of minorities, indigenous and/or local people were made or obviously omitted' in nominations (UNESCO 2007b: 3). IUCN (2007: 33–34) notes in its commentary that it

> has long emphasised the importance of involving indigenous people in the planning and management of protected areas [and that] many natural World Heritage properties have very significant cultural and spiritual values for local communities and customary owners [but that] in recent years, the natural World Heritage nominations of the States Parties only rarely reflect on local cultures, the rights of these cultures, and

*Figure 2.4*  View over the everyday cultural landscape of Angkor forming a setting
for the monuments.

Source: K. Taylor.

prospective conflicts between these cultures and international efforts for
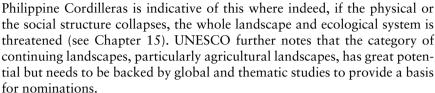protection.

Lennon in Chapter 3 draws particular attention to the challenge of the impo-
sition of scientific and external ideas affecting property, people's rights and
traditional practices.

### *Filling the gaps and thematic studies:*
### *cultural landscapes and Asia*

UNESCO (2007a: 116) in its report *World Heritage Challenges for the Mil-
lennium* reflected: 'The geographically unbalanced representation of cul-
tural landscapes on the World Heritage List . . . is striking.' Proportionately
Asia is not well represented. The *Millennium* report also notes that many
cultural landscapes have building techniques, vernacular architecture and
management schemes that often relate to complex social and contractual
arrangements. The example of the rice terraces and irrigation system of the

Philippine Cordilleras is indicative of this where indeed, if the physical or the social structure collapses, the whole landscape and ecological system is threatened (see Chapter 15). UNESCO further notes that the category of continuing landscapes, particularly agricultural landscapes, has great potential but needs to be backed by global and thematic studies to provide a basis for nominations.

An ICOMOS (2005b) report highlights the gaps in the Asia-Pacific region in the inscription of cultural properties on the World Heritage List in general, and cultural landscapes in particular. It indicates that the majority of places on the World Heritage or Tentative Lists are archaeological, architectural monuments and religious properties. While this logically reflects the importance, for example, of Buddhist or Islamic places and archaeological sites, the paucity of such ensembles as cultural landscapes, vernacular architecture, technological and agricultural sites – all within the cultural landscape spectrum – represents a missed opportunity taking into account the spirit of places in the region. Notable in this regard is the fact that many existing Asia-Pacific region properties on the World Heritage List would admirably fulfil the category of continuing landscape of outstanding universal value with cross references to the associative cultural landscape category. They offer scope for renomination, for example, Ayutthaya in Thailand, while in China there are the Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System or the Ancient Villages in southern Anhui-Xidi and Hongcun. Another important area for consideration is that of vernacular villages with the ICOMOS report noting the lack of vernacular buildings and settlements on the World Heritage List. It is another area where Asia has a rich heritage and where cultural diversity and biological diversity are palpable.

## Conclusions

In reviewing a periphery perspective from Asia on cultural landscape heritage values, significance and protection, it is instructive to look at the issue through the lens of *authenticity* and *integrity*. These are characteristics from UNESCO (2008) *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* where the spirit of place resides as much in the meaning and symbolism of places and their setting – intangible values – as it does in tangible physical fabric, i.e. landscape seen holistically. *Authenticity* (para. 80 of the *Guidelines*) concerns 'the ability to understand the value attributed to the heritage depending on the degree to which information sources about this value may be understood as credible or truthful'. We may see authenticity, therefore, as ability of a place to represent accurately/truthfully what it purports to be. Table 2.1, from UNESCO Bangkok's (2009: 8) *Hoi An Protocols* document, illustrates the importance of authenticity within an Asian context.[4]

*Table 2.1 Dimensions of authenticity in an Asian context*

| | Locating and Setting | Form and Design | Use and Function | Immaterial Qulities |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aspects | ▪ Place | ▪ Special layout | ▪ User(s) | ▪ Artistic expression |
| | ▪ Setting | ▪ Design | ▪ Use(s) | ▪ Values |
| | ▪ "Sense of Place" | ▪ Material | ▪ Associations | ▪ Spirit |
| | ▪ Environmental niches | ▪ Craffts | ▪ Changes in use over time | ▪ Emotional impact |
| | ▪ Landforms and vistas | ▪ Building tech-niques | ▪ Spatial dis-tribution of usage | ▪ Religious context |
| | ▪ Environs | ▪ Engineering | ▪ Impacts of use | ▪ Historical associations |
| | ▪ Living elements | ▪ Stratigraphy | ▪ Use as a response to environment | ▪ Sounds smells and tastes |
| | ▪ Degree of dependence on locale | ▪ Linkages with other proper-ties or sites | ▪ Use as a response to historical context | ▪ Creative process |

Source: UNESCO Bangkok (2009).

*Integrity* is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the cultural heritage and its attributes. Examining the conditions of integrity, therefore, requires assessing the extent to which the property (1) includes all elements necessary to express its outstanding universal value; (2) is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes that convey the property's significance; and (3) suffers from adverse effects of develop-ment and/or neglect. In relation to (3) I would add that judgement will be required when the whole might lack sense of integrity yet some parts or rem-nants possess it. The decision on overall integrity then will depend on how the parts with integrity are able to be read and interpreted to give an overall sense of continuity.

Finally it is apt to close with a quintessentially timeless quote by David Lowenthal (1975: 12):

> It is the landscape as a whole – that largely manmade tapestry, in which all other artefacts are embedded . . . which gives them their sense of place.

## Notes

1 Franz Boas: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Boas.
2 his quote is from Jackson's article 'Goodbye to evolution', *Landscape* 13: 2, 1–2. It is included p. 343 in J.B. Jackson (1997), *Landscape in Sight. Looking at Amer-ica*, edited by Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz.

3  The figure of seventy-two includes seven new inscriptions (World Heritage Committee meeting, June 2011).
4  *Hoi An Protocols* build on ICOMOS (1994) *The Nara Document on Authenticity.*

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