


**3<sup>rd</sup>. FEALAC**  
**CONFERENCE ON NATURE BASED TOURISM AND**  
**ECOTOURISM**  
**Barranquilla, Colombia**  
**23-25 August 2012**



**Ecotourism in Asia:  
Trends, Issues and Prospects**

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# CONTENT OF PRESENTATION

- Main issues related to Protected Area (PA) management and ecotourism in Asia
- Evolving role and philosophy of PA management
- Celebrating and leveraging on success stories in existing cooperation
- Asia Protected Areas Philosophy – is there one?
- Relevance to rest of the world

# MAIN ISSUES RELATED TO PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT IN ASIA

Poverty Induced  
Encroachment Into  
Protected Areas

Human-Wildlife  
Conflict

Lack of 'Buy In'  
From Local  
Communities and  
Private Sector

Uncontrolled  
Tourism  
Development and  
'Greenwashing'

Marginalisation of  
Local Communities

Natural Hazards  
Becoming Natural  
Disasters

# EVOLVING ROLE/PHILOSOPHY OF PROTECTED AREAS

...the story so far

1 <sup>st</sup>	Seattle, 1962 World Parks Congress
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Yellowstone/Grand Teton, 1972 World Parks Congress
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Bali, 1982 World Parks Congress
4 <sup>th</sup>	Caracas, 1992 World Parks Congress
5 <sup>th</sup>	Durban, South Africa, 2003 World Parks Congress

# RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> WORLD CONFERENCE ON NATIONAL PARKS, USA, 1962

1. Park interpretation services
2. Research into undisturbed biotopes
3. Management - based on scientific research
4. Protected areas definitions and standards
5. Exclusion of damaging development
6. Inclusion of support for protected areas in aid programmes
7. Marine protected areas
8. Species protection by protected areas

# RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> WORLD CONFERENCE ON NATIONAL PARKS, YELLOWSTONE & GRAND TETON, USA, 1972

1. Conservation of Representative Ecosystems
2. Conservation of Tropical Forest Ecosystems
3. Conservation of North and Sub-Polar Ecosystems
4. Marine National Parks and Reserves
5. Establishment of Antarctica as a World Park under UN Administration
6. International Parks
7. Regional Systems of National Parks and Other Protected Areas
8. Conservation of the World Heritage
9. Wetlands Convention
10. Standards and Nomenclature for Protected Areas

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> WORLD CONFERENCE ON NATIONAL PARKS, YELLOWSTONE AND GRAND TETON, USA, 1972 (cont.)**

11. Integrity of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves
12. Usage of National Parks
13. Detrimental Effects of Vehicles, Boats and Aircraft in National Parks and other Protected Areas
14. Research on National Park Values
15. Planning of National Parks and Other Protected Areas
16. Exchange of Information
17. Technical and Financial Assistance for National Parks
18. Training
19. Interpretation Services for National Parks
20. Education in National Parks and other Protected Areas

- Second Conference **FAILED** to address the connections :
  - between protected areas and development, and
  - between protected areas and the surrounding environment
- **NO** interest shown in local communities or indigenous peoples – except as a threat to protected areas.
- **NO** direct attention to biodiversity and genetic resources conservation.

# 3<sup>RD</sup> WORLD PARKS CONGRESS IN BALI, INDONESIA

## New Agenda.

- *Role of Protected Areas in Sustainable Development*
- *Protected Areas and Traditional Societies*
- *Conservation of Wild Genetic Resources*
- *Development Assistance and Protected Areas*

## Bali Congress regarded as **WATERSHED**

- First Congress to link between protected areas and development questions
- Acknowledging key role of local and indigenous groups



# RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> WORLD CONGRESS ON NATIONAL PARKS, CARACAS, VENEZUELA, 1992

## New Themes Emerging:

- *Global Change and Protected Areas*
- *Global Efforts to Conserve Biodiversity*
- *People and Protected Areas*
- *Financial Support for Protected Areas*
- *Protected Areas and the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources*
- *Partnerships for Protected Areas*
- *Ecological restoration*

# Workshop Themes for 5<sup>th</sup> World Parks Congress, 2003

## 7 Vertical Themes

1. Linkages in the Landscape/Seascape
2. Building Support for Protected Areas
3. **New Ways of Working Together – Governance of Protected Areas**
4. Developing the Capacity to Manage – Capacity Building
5. Maintaining Protected Areas for Now and Future – Management Effectiveness
6. Building a Secure Financial Future – Finance and Resources
7. Building Comprehensive Protected Area Systems – Gaps in the Systems

## 3 Cross-cutting Themes:

- Marine Protected Areas
- World Heritage
- **Communities and Equity**

# MODERN PARADIGM FOR PROTECTED AREAS

## As it was: protected areas were

Planned and managed against people

Run by central government

Set aside for conservation

Paid for by taxpayer

Managed by scientists and natural resource experts

Managed without regard to local community

Developed separately

## As it is becoming: protected areas are

Run with, for, and in some cases by local people

Run by many partners

Run also with social and economic objectives

Paid for from many sources

Managed by multi-skilled individuals

Managed to help meet needs of local people

Planned as part of national, regional and international systems

# MODERN PARADIGM FOR PROTECTED AREAS (cont.)

## As it was: protected areas were

Managed as 'islands'

Established mainly for scenic protection

Managed mainly for visitors and tourists

Managed reactively within short timescale

About protection

Viewed primarily as a national asset

Viewed only as a national concern

Managed in a technocratic way

## As it is becoming: protected areas are

Developed as 'networks' (strictly protected areas, buffered and linked by green corridors)

Often set up for scientific, economic and cultural reasons

Managed with local people more in mind

Managed adaptively in long term perspective

Also about restoration and rehabilitation

Viewed also as a community asset

Viewed also as an international concern

Managed with political considerations

# FORCES BEHIND THE CHANGES

Scientific understanding

Cultural and social awareness

Acknowledgement of human rights

Political developments

General developments in management practice

Technological advances

Economic forces

# IMPLICATION ON ASIA:

## Asian Century and Asian Mobility

- Asia Pacific the fastest growing tourism region in the world – until September 2011 worth US 212 b. and 5 % increase from 2010
- Also culturally and politically plural region
- Certainly not homogenous!
- But similar trend in high visitation to protected areas (for ecotourism)
- In contrast to Western concept of seeking seek 'solitude' or 'the wilderness' many Asian tourists visit national parks 'be with friends' and for 'leisurely pursuits'

# Accommodating New 'Asian Mobility'

## Traditional Roles of Protected Areas

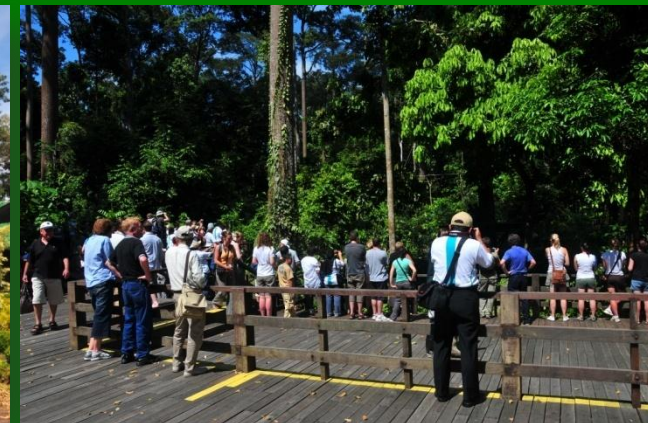
1. Conservation
2. Education
3. Research
4. Public Enjoyment

1.

The Need To Revisit  
the Philosophy  
and Role of  
Protected Areas in  
Asia

## Contemporary Roles?

1. Conservation
2. Public Enjoyment (tourism)
3. Education
4. Research



# WHAT THIS MEANS TO PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT IN ASIA

- The need to revisit changing role/philosophy of protected areas
- Two levels – management/operational and regional cooperation
- **Management/Operational** – from ‘confrontation’ to ‘cooperation’ between government agencies and local communities
- **Regional cooperation** – networking, regional best practice, cross border protected areas

# NEED FOR STRONGER COOPERATION

- Diverse region/plural society but common issues in park management
- Common issues could lead to shared solutions
- Environmental threats have no national boundary (climate change, floods, haze)
- Building on existing regional (economic) partnerships e.g. IMTGT, BIMP EIGA, GMS
- Expanding cross border flagship projects e.g. Coral Triangle and Heart of Borneo

# NEED FOR STRONGER COOPERATION (cont.)

- Economic crisis in Europe causing significant reduction in funding from international donors e.g. SNV leaving Cambodia hence affecting CBET projects
- Success stories in regional cooperation as launch pad for stronger cooperation (recent creation of transborder elephant corridor between China and Laos)
- Celebrating Asia's contribution towards protected area management e.g. ASEAN Heritage Park

# NEED FOR STRONGER COOPERATION (cont.)

## LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

- India successful in managing human-wildlife conflicts
- Nepal has successful business models for incorporating local communities in PA management e.g. through community forestry
- Japan incorporating PA with disaster management (after 2004 Tsunami)
- Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines have many successful Community Based Ecotourism (CBET) projects

# TOWARDS A COMMON VISION

- WCPA Asia active in organising capacity building workshops since 2010
- Both Akita Workshop and Sabah Workshop revealed common issues and challenges
- Main area of contention – relationship between PAs and surrounding communities
- Also the rapid increase in domestic tourist visitation to national parks (and its threats)
- More importantly there are success stories e.g. community forestry projects
- The need to move on from problem identification to developing a common vision and providing innovative solutions

# POTENTIAL AREAS FOR STRONGER COOPERATION

- Cross border protected areas including transborder World Heritage Sites
- Network for training, staff exchange, development of best practice
- Self help regional projects (donor funding drying out)
- Expanding ASEAN Heritage Parks to rest of Asia
- Formulating Asian Protected Areas Philosophy

# ASIAN PROTECTED AREAS PHILOSOPHY

- Initial idea to investigate and make a case for Asian Protected Areas Philosophy mooted during WCPA Asia conference in January 2011 held in Akita International University, Japan
- Concept paper presented at Side Event of Asia Regional Conservation Forum, Incheon, Korea in September 2011
- Poster session during World Conservation Congress to be held in September in Jeju Island, Korea
- To be one of main themes of inaugural Asia Parks Congress to be held in Japan in 2013

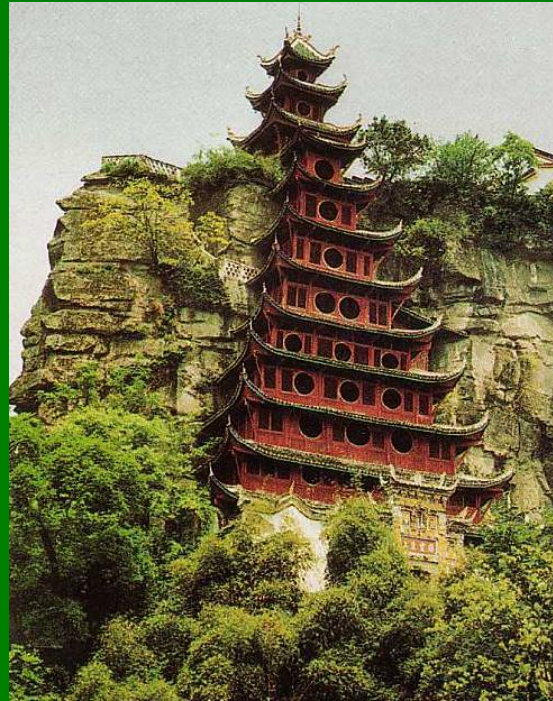
# NOT ABOUT RIGHT OR WRONG

- Traditional/Western philosophy of protected areas initially biocentric in nature
- Nature and humans kept apart
- Values associated with pristine environment/wilderness and absence of human activities
- Colonial interpretation also kept local people out of protected areas
- 3<sup>rd</sup>. World Parks Congress paved the way for anthropocentric approach

## **...BUT ABOUT ADDING A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE**

- Commentators e.g. Sofield and Li; Winter; Teo etc argued against 'Anglo Western Centrism' or 'positivist/scientific/Christian values' being regarded as the only 'correct way'
- Adding to old debate – biocentric vs. anthropocentric
- Daoist philosophy 'Man and nature in harmony'
- In 2009, workshop in Lijiang, China proposed 'Chinese Park Model'

# Nature Not Perfect So Human Intervention Required



‘Imposing ‘ natural environment requires human treatment to achieve ‘tezhi’ (essence)

*Source: Sofield, 2009*

# Calligraphy Vs Graffiti

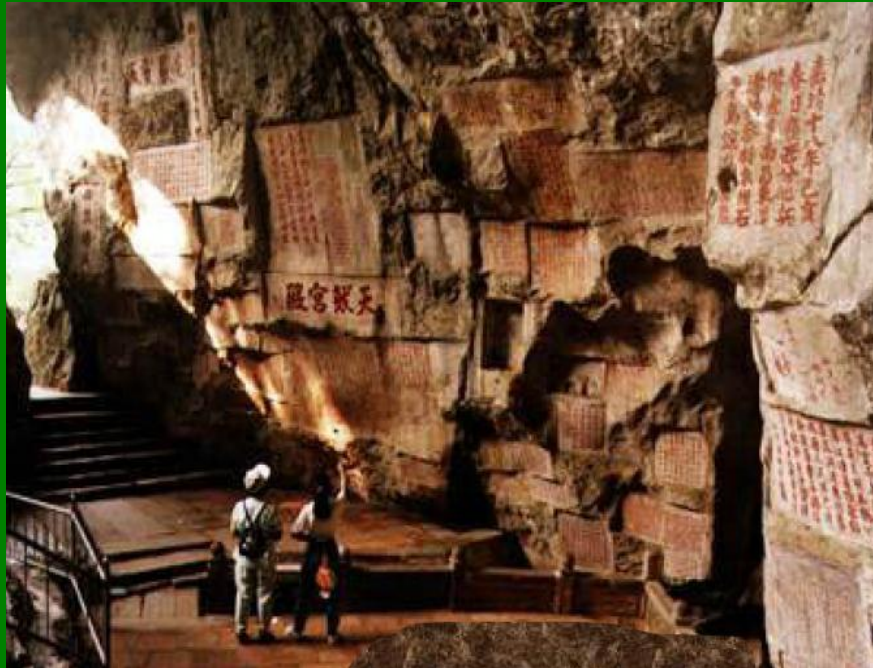


*Calligraphy  
adorns natural  
sites all over  
China*



Source: Sofield, 2009

# Protected Areas Cultural Not Natural Landscape



‘Dysnification’ from Western eyes

Source: Sofield, 2009



Yaolin Cave

# Man/Nature Co-Existence in Protected Areas in Asia

- Local communities traditionally living in protected areas maintained sustainable livelihoods based on natural resources
- Boundary of protected areas often overlap with sacred/spiritual sites hence ensuring 'buy in'
- But marginalisation and exploitation of local communities upset equilibrium
- Led to poverty- major cause of forest exploitation, poaching etc. with greater economic gains going to outsiders
- Search for an economically sustainable source of livelihood as more and more rural areas gazzeted as PAs
- Is Community Based Ecotourism (CBET) the answer?

# Under Researched But Growing Interest Among Asian Academics



# RELEVANCE TO THE REST OF THE WORLD

- Active role of IUCN WCPA Asia could be a model for regional cooperation despite the challenge of ensuring 'buy in'
- Projects such as the Asian Protected Areas Philosophy could be the catalyst to cultivate sense of belonging/regional cooperation
- Revisiting the role of sacred/spiritual places in mainstream PA management
- Stronger PPP and new governance models such as 'Community Forestry'
- Incorporating disaster prevention in PA management
- Evolving from IUCN Category 2 (National Parks) to category 5 Landscape/Seascape( and 6 (Sustainable Use)
- Need to improve skills of PA managers in visitor management