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CONSERVATION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE OF HUE: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the degree of Master of Applied Science, University of Canberra.
In 1993 I started working in the area of heritage conservation. Since then, I have been longing for the opportunity to conduct a conservation study on the World Heritage of the Vietnamese city of Hue. This dream has been realized while studying in Canberra, Australia.

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Preface

Heritage management is recognized as an increasingly complex and controversial domain, and heritage managers are confronted on a day-to-day basis by complex issues. Depending on local culture, characteristics of heritage places, legislation and many other factors, issues in cultural heritage management come in different guises, and solutions to them obviously vary.

As heritage preservation is a new profession in Vietnam, the conservation process is faced with many difficulties. Unfortunately many heritage sites in Vietnam are poorly managed and interpreted, resulting in both heritage conservation and the visitor experience being of poor quality.

This study looks at the relationship between the World Heritage of Hue, the tourism industry, government institutions and other relevant stakeholders. It is expected to lead to practical outcomes by indicating solutions and recommendations as well as opportunities for a better management of local heritage places.

Conservation philosophy in general has considerably changed over the last ten years, and a framework for cultural heritage management has been extensively developed. Apart from analyzing the ongoing issues facing the management of Hue’s cultural heritage and opportunities for sustainable development, this study also suggests the adoption of international conservation principles, particularly the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, in order to develop a conservation methodology suitable to the Vietnamese heritage context.

A case study is included to demonstrate particular problems in heritage conservation in terms of international cooperation. Although the key example provided focuses on Minh Mang Tomb, a wider context of heritage management of the World Heritage of Hue has been considered. It is desirable that the example provides not only a better understanding of the current conservation practice in Hue but also offers proper recommendations and solutions which will be employed in forthcoming restoration projects. In order to provide a more complete picture of Hue’s cultural heritage and its conservation, discussions and interviews with key conservation specialists are included in the appendices.
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