

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Houkeng Timber-Arched Corridor Bridge (China) and  
Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum (India)  
Win Awards of Excellence in the UNESCO 2005 Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards**

**Meridian Gate Exhibition Hall of the Palace Museum (China) and  
Yuhu Primary School and Community Center (China)  
Win the Inaugural Heritage Awards Jury Commendation for Innovation**

Bangkok, 1 September 2005

The **Houkeng Timber-Arched Corridor Bridge** in Qingyuan County, Zhejiang Province, China and **Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum** in Mumbai, India have both been honoured with **Awards of Excellence** in the UNESCO 2005 Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation.

The two **Awards of Distinction** went to **Sideng Market Square and Theatre** (Shaxi Rehabilitation Project) in Yunnan Province, China and **Mehrangarh Fort**, Rajasthan, India.

The five **Awards of Merit** include **St. Joseph's Chapel** in Hong Kong SAR, China; **Tung Wah Coffin Home**, Hong Kong SAR, China; **Amburiq Mosque**, Skardu, Baltistan, Pakistan; **Dutch Reformed Church**, Galle, Sri Lanka; and **Ayuguthi Sattal**, Lalitpur, Kathmandu, Nepal

Five **Honourable Mention** prizes were also announced. They are **Pingjiang Historic Block**, Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China; **Zhaoxiang Huang Ancestral Hall**, Foshan, Guangdong Province, China; **Zain-ad-din Karavansara**, Yazd, Iran; **Far Eastern University**, Manila, Philippines; and **Tamnak Yai, Devavesm Palace**, Bangkok, Thailand

A total of 34 entries from 11 countries in the Asia-Pacific region were submitted for the Heritage Awards. These include six religious buildings, ten institutions, eight residential buildings, four commercial projects, two industrial buildings, three urban conservation programmes, and one historic structure.

The inaugural **Heritage Awards Jury Commendation for Innovation** was awarded to the **Meridian Gate Exhibition Hall of the Palace Museum**, Beijing, China and **Yuhu Primary School and Community Center**, Lijiang, Yunnan Province, China. The Jury Commendation recognizes newly-built structures which demonstrate outstanding standards for contemporary architectural design which are well integrated into historic contexts.

The inaugural Jury Commendation has drawn 12 entries from six countries. These include two religious buildings, two institutions, one residential building, five commercial properties, and two urban interventions.

## 2005 ASIA-PACIFIC HERITAGE CONSERVATION AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Awards recognize the efforts of private individuals and organizations that have successfully restored and conserved structures and buildings of heritage value in the region. Eligible projects must be more than 50 years old and the restoration must have been completed within the past 10 years. Buildings must have also been in viable use for at least one year from the date of the Awards announcement. UNESCO believes that recognizing private efforts to restore and adapt historic structures will encourage other property owners to undertake conservation projects within the community, either independently or by seeking public-private partnerships.

A panel of international conservation experts in architecture, urban planning, heritage conservation and landscape design conducted the selection process. The jury panel noted that the range of proposals received this year point to the increasing momentum and level of conservation in the Asia-Pacific region. All winning entries demonstrated sound understanding of the issues of conservation in relation to the cultural, social, historical, and architectural significance of the building or complex. In addition, all award-winning entries had an important impact in terms of stimulating further conservation works and all made a contribution to cultural continuity in their respective communities.

### Profiles of 2005 Heritage Awards Winners

The Award of Excellence winner, **Houkeng Timber-Arched Corridor Bridge**, sets a regional standard for outstanding technical excellence in safeguarding a significant wooden historical structure, one of the few remaining timber-arched corridor bridges in Zhejiang and Fujian provinces. The restoration reflects the community's respect for historic engineering principles and the art of building with natural materials. As a result of the project, the bridge has been restored as an integral component of the beautiful rural cultural landscape.

The second Award of Excellence winner, **Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum**, was undertaken through a pioneering public-private partnership between the municipality of Mumbai, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) and the Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation. Through a holistic conservation plan, which has addressed both the museum building and the collection, the project establishes a new benchmark in the conservation of museums for India and the region.

The Award of Distinction winner, **Sideng Market Square and Theatre (Shaxi Rehabilitation Project)**, was praised for its important achievement in safeguarding the tangible and intangible heritage of multiple ethnic groups associated with the legendary "tea and horse caravan trail" dating back over 500 years. As the first step in a longer-term multidisciplinary programme, the project is commended for being embedded in an ambitious planning and development framework that aims to protect the social and environmental setting, improve living conditions, and introduce sustainable tourism as a means of long-term development.

The second Award of Distinction winner, **Mehrangarh Fort**, was praised for setting exemplary standards in opening up and interpreting the complex for the appreciation of local community members, outside visitors and future generations. The far-sighted vision guiding the restoration of Mehrangarh Fort and its adaptive reuse into a museum has resulted in the safeguarding of the historic ruling seat as a living monument to the rich traditions of Rajasthan.

**St. Joseph's Chapel** received an Award of Merit. The jury praised the project for demonstrating the success of a community initiative that has garnered the support of multiple stakeholders amongst the local residents and the Hong Kong Catholic community. Within the confines of a limited budget, the modest conservation project has consolidated a fine example of a rural Roman Catholic chapel.

## 2005 ASIA-PACIFIC HERITAGE CONSERVATION AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The **Tung Wah Coffin Home** received an Award of Merit. The project was praised for preserving a unique building typology and an important cultural institution which reflects the evolving social history of Hong Kong. The complex includes a range of building traditions spanning from vernacular Chinese architecture to modern buildings.

**Ayuguthi Sattal** received an Award of Merit. The reconstruction of the building has restored a historic Newari vernacular building that forms the northern edge of the historic Patan Darbar Square. The restoration allows for an authentic physical reading of the square which is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

**Amburiq Mosque**, the first mosque built in Baltistan, received an Award of Merit. The project was praised for its sensitive conservation programme which was undertaken by the Aga Khan Cultural Services of Pakistan. The building and its courtyard have now been returned to modern use as a community museum, giving renewed life to one of the region's historically and socially significant structures.

The **Dutch Reformed Church**, a landmark building in the UNESCO World Heritage town of Galle, has received an Award of Merit. The building has been admirably restored through the collaboration of the local parish, the Central Cultural Fund, and the government of the Netherlands. A systematic conservation plan has successfully restored the building and its historic interior fittings.

The **Pingjiang Historic Block** in Suzhou has received an Honourable Mention. The revitalization project is a commendable example of integrated urban rehabilitation which has restored the physical, social and commercial fabric of one of China's most well-known waterway historic towns.

**Zhaoxiang Huang Ancestral Hall** has received an Honourable Mention. The conservation project has restored new life to this significant building in Foshan which has historic associations with the advancement of Chinese medicine.

**Zain-ad-din Karavansara** has received an Honourable Mention. The successful adaptive reuse of the historic building to accommodate modern day travellers promises to be economically and socially sustainable in the long-term, and could serve as a model for future efforts in Iran.

**Far Eastern University** has received an Honourable Mention. The conservation of the largest ensemble of Art Deco architecture that survives in Manila today presents an admirable and pioneering regional exemplar of a holistic campus-wide approach to university preservation.

**Tamnak Yai of Devavesm Palace** has received an Honourable Mention. The project sets a standard for conservation of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century buildings in Thailand. The Bank of Thailand, the present owner of the estate, has set an important precedent for corporate investment in heritage conservation in Thailand which could serve as a model for similar initiatives in the region.

**Profiles of 2005 Heritage Awards Jury Commendations for Innovation**

The **Meridian Gate Exhibition Hall of the Palace Museum** has received a 2005 Jury Commendation for Innovation. The construction of a modern exhibition hall located within the historic Meridian Gate building of the Imperial Palace complex is exemplary for its innovative technical and design solutions that have enabled the space to meet international museum standards. The choice of a contemporary architectural vocabulary provides an effective counterpoint to the vernacular timber structure, and indeed, serves to highlight the building's heritage values.

The **Yuhu Primary School and Community Center** has received a 2005 Jury Commendation for Innovation. Located within the UNESCO World Heritage site of Lijiang, the Yuhu primary school project is to be commended for its beautifully-nuanced design which evocatively reinterprets traditional architectural traditions within the context of modern building practice. The deft handling of local building materials and the innovative recasting of indigenous construction techniques has resulted in a powerful materiality which is deeply rooted in the local context while, at the same time, pushes the envelope of sustainable building design.

Further information about the Heritage Awards and this year's winning entries can be found at the following website:

<http://www.unescobkk.org/culture/heritageawards>

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