

Editor's Note

This issue of *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* follows completion of our well-attended December conference in Kuala Lumpur, which was based on the theme “Whose Tradition?” At the event we heard many high-quality presentations that considered issues of agency in the construction of traditions in space and place. Because traditions seek to shape the future by manipulating perceptions of the past, the discussion necessarily also involves time. Several of the articles in this issue explore how the passage of time — through processes of metamorphosis and evolution — may influence built traditions.

We are pleased to open with two articles that exemplify these issues in a global context. First, Vandana Baweja uses the cinematic lens of *Slumdog Millionaire* to investigate how nativist politicians and agents of global capital have set out to transform formerly cosmopolitan Bombay into homogenous, neoliberal Mumbai. She examines how the 2009 film critiques this effort by constructing an urban narrative that reflects on and intertwines with the lives of its characters. The film evokes three urban locales in particular: the Dharavi slum, the Lake Castle residential complex, and the colonial Victoria Terminus train station. Jun Zhang's examination of Guangzhou's *qilou* (arcaded buildings) then describes how values associated with built environments evolve to reflect contemporary concerns. She traces how contemporary nostalgia for these structures as a specifically South Chinese heritage differs markedly from views of them as modern, rational structures in the 1920s and 30s and pragmatic, communal ones in the 50s and 60s. Such an analysis points to the importance of regional identity in understanding contemporary China.

The next article sheds light on the transformation of tradition over time, but from a different perspective. For Wei Zhao, the issue is the variety of spatial relations, qualities, and uses that the seemingly static tradition of rural Chinese architecture has accommodated over the centuries. As her research in the village of Yanxia in Zhejiang province shows, while the style of architecture may be “invariable,” the reality of its inhabitation is far more complex. Our fourth article, by Paul Memmott, then takes us to contemporary Australia to explore “spiritual homelessness,” a plight affecting Aboriginal people who dwell in urban public places. His case studies of individuals separated from homelands and communities reveal a difference between those who are able to carry their traditions with them and those who have been unable to do so. Understanding such cultural dynamics may be crucial to project implementation in such areas as indigenous behavior settings. We conclude with a field report from Jeffrey Wenji He and Mark Henwood examining the heritage watertowns in China's Jiangnan region. Based on the Conzenian method of morphological analysis, they identify elements of this urban culture that continue to distinguish it, despite recent industrial and commercial development. They argue that such elements provide a better basis for future development than imported or generic patterns of urbanization.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to announce that the next IASTE conference will explore the theme “Legitimizing Tradition,” and that it will take place in Kuwait City, Kuwait, in December 2016, hosted by Kuwait University. The call for papers will appear soon. We hope you will all submit abstracts and join us there next year.

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