

2.2.5 CULTURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

1. TOWN TOURISM

1.1 GENERAL

Although most people today know of Phuket Island because of its beautiful beaches, this factor was the last things on the minds of those who came to it long ago.

Ptolemy's Geography documents the existence of the small town of Thalang on Phuket Island, settled around A.D. 140. The discovery and exploitation of tin on Phuket, necessitated the development of a commercial center. In 1583, records reveal that Siam exported a great deal of tin which came from Phuket and that the Portuguese established a trading post there. Since that time, trading was to play a major role in the course of Phuket's history.

Historically, Phuket has attracted peace-loving merchants and businessmen and later, tourists, but in 1809, the island was also a temptation to the invading Burmese. When the invaders had been driven out, the island's capital was moved from Thalang to its present location where it continued to grow and flourish.

Some of the many Chinese who immigrated to Thailand during the reign of King Rama III (1824-1851) settled in Phuket and made their living in as small traders. Mean while, the export of tin to Europe through the British trading post at Penang, Malaysia, inflated the price of tin, creating the genesis of an era of relative affluence at Phuket. By this time, the population of Phuket was comprised of Thai, Malaysian and Chinese people who had started their own mining business to meet the heavy demand for this valuable metal.

Throughout the reign of King Rama IV (1851-1868) and by the reign of King Rama V (1868-1910), a class of wealthy mine-owners emerged and spent their money replacing the modest wooden buildings with those built of more durable materials-brick and stucco. Their elegant homes reflect this very prosperous period in Phuket's history.

The appointment of Governor Phraya Rasadanupradit came at a time of modernization and increased trade with Western countries. It was he who introduced the western flavor to the design of buildings in the town. Shophouses which had previously been built in Chinese style now blended with early 19th century Neo-Classical style as seen today.

The governor was also responsible for establishing a well-planned design for the town's government quarters, many of which were built during the height of this period's great monetary and artistic wealth. It was even noted that

"the government office center, and buildings in Phuket were the most magnificent in Thailand"

They were located at the foot of Khao Rang hill-currently a popular public park. Lovely views of the town can be seen from here.

Phuket still enjoys an atmosphere of prosperity nowadays, although not to the same extent as in the past. New sources of income have been generated from the tourist industry over the last few decades.

Preserving Phuket's past heritage as a source of pride for the townspeople while, at the same time, it serves to attract tourists.

1.2 BUILDINGS IN PHUKET TOWN

In Thailand, Western-influenced architecture styles were first adopted in Bangkok where King Rama V used architecture and other aspects of culture as a ploy to ward off those ambitiously seeking to colonize his kingdom. He decided to change "face" of Bangkok so that it would appear more "civilized" by Western standards. As the same time, quite unknown to visiting Western politicians, the traditional values and lifestyles of his people were retained. Essentially then, the king introduced Western architecture for political reasons in Bangkok; not because he preferred them.

On the other hand, similar architecture was not adopted for the same reasons in Phuket. Rather, it was Phuket's closeness with Penang, both in terms of their spatial and their commercial relationship which helped to determine the appearance of the streets in Phuket. Phuket's historical buildings were constructed as a result of preference and of having enough disposable income generated from tin mining enterprises to experiment in such a grand scale. Hand in hand with the economic factor came the trading of new ideas in art and architecture which are in evidence to this day.

A manifestation of Phuket's distinctive architectural achievement, came in the form of Chinese-influenced buildings built during the reign of King Rama IV (1851-1868). Although foreigners were building well before this time, because they were probably doing so in wood, only this later brick structures remain standing. These Chinese-style, one and two storey shophouses have load-bearing wall constructions so that the walls are very thick-generally not less than 50 centimeters thick and the roof tiles are unglazed Chinese curved tiles. Roof forms, opening and ornamental features are all in Chinese fashion.

Due to the European influences which came to Phuket by way of Penang, architecture in the following period incorporated western features, mixing aspects of European 19th century Neo-Classical art with Thai-Chinese art. Later, the walls were to become thinner, probably because of the implementation of post-and-lintel construction techniques. These two or three storey buildings are from sixty to one hundred and thirty years old. One remarkable characteristic was the presence of arches connecting the spans which, along with columns, created the arcaded in front of the shophouses.

The stucco ornaments on the capitals, columns and opening frames on the second and third floors were delicately moulded, resembling the Classical mode. On the other hand, the openings in the walls of the ground floor, its furniture and interior design were in Thai-Chinese style. The mixture of styles is well-balanced, creating an interesting and distinctively beautiful overall appearance.

Wooden double doors usually marred the front entrance. Carved wooden doors faced the street and glass in wooden frames comprised the inner doors. Walls were made of local brick with mortar and stucco. Floors were of concrete covered with glazed or unglazed tiles painted with geometric or floral designs from Penang. High ceilings (about 3.5 m high), improved air circulation, creating a natural cooling system. Other special characteristics of the buildings constructed in this period are the five-bay houses with skylights in each bay and the fact that most of the houses have their own wells, helping to prevent the spread of epidemic diseases.

Among the roads in old Phuket town which are graced by historical buildings are Thepkasatree Road, Thailand road, Yaowaraj Road, Krabi Road and Deebuk Road. The owners of some of these buildings have been preserving them but others have been replacing or converting the old buildings into what they think of as modern architecture. Fortunately, however, some new buildings were designed to resemble the old style preserving the architectural character of the town. The result is that now there are many buildings built with variety of compatible characteristics all in the old town Phuket which retains its position as the commercial center of the island to this day.

1.3 GENERAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE PROJECT AREA

1) INAPPROPRIATE STRUCTURAL ALTERATION

- a. Renovation to historical buildings are sometimes in conflict with the character of either the building itself or with that of the neighboring buildings.
- b. Demolition of the old buildings because of disrepair and decay followed by subsequent rebuilding in various and often incompatible income available to those who live in this relatively affluent community.
- c. Recommendations:
 - Every effort should be made to preserve, maintain, and/or improve the significant value of the buildings.
 - Compatible use for historic building should be encouraged as well as an attempt to retain the original function.
 - The non-compatible structures should be removed or altered to encourage compatibility with the district atmosphere, so that they do not degrade the overall environment.
 - New construction should be encouraged to build compatible forms in the district on the non-compatible plots of land.
 - Cooperation from the local people who own the buildings might be acquired by granting compensation and business advantages to those involved.
 - The passing of additional city ordinances to control the buildings in the historical zone might be necessary.

2) UNKEPT, DISORDERLY STREETSCAPE

- a. Obstruction of pedestrian walkways poses a problem in the arcades which would otherwise provide a pleasant covered, safe area for people to walk along from shop to shop. As it is, owners of the buildings are apt to put their merchandise or belongings in a place where they block the pedestrian traffic, thus forcing the people off the sidewalks onto the gutter covers. Moreover, these concrete covers are sometimes hazardously broken, forcing the pedestrians still further out onto the road into the path of passing motor traffic.
- b. A lack of green space give the overall impression of a rather drab, depressed atmosphere and a scarcity of plants along the narrow walkways, contributes to this.
- c. Obstruction by signs, advertisements, electric poles and wires stand in the way of vistas which would otherwise be quite pleasing to one's eye. The interpretation of the town as a historic landmark is lost, due to these obstructions, the aforementioned problem of shopfronts overflowing onto the arcade and the lack of unified design in landscape furniture adds to the general untidiness of the street.
- d. Recommendations:
 - Cooperation by the local people to maintain their shopfront is of utmost importance.
 - Increasing the amount of green and open spaces could be implemented by utilizing vacant lots or by expropriating them if necessary.
 - The passing of city ordinances dictating the floor area ratio in the historic Zone would control the land use.

3) TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND LACK OF FIRE FIGHTING SYSTEMS:

- a. Air pollution from traffics places the inhabitants and visitors in dissatisfactory and unhealthy situation.
- b. The excessive volume of traffic which is currently a problem in the downtown core, is bound to increase in the future, especially when entire decisions of the roads are closed due to implementation of the project.
- c. The lack of water supply carrying water to fire hydrants in conjunction with the traffic congestion, creates another potential hazard, particularly considering the highly flammable and crowded nature of the buildings themselves.
- d. Recommendations:
 - Restriction of heavier vehicles on the roads in the downtown core would help to decrease their effect on air pollution hazard.
 - The construction of two by-pass - one which would go round the downtown area and one which would go around the entire town - would facilitate those who don't need to stop in town, decrease the excessive volume of traffic in the proximity of the project and thus contribute to the decrease of the negative effects of pollution and vibration on the historical landmarks.
 - Re-routing the traffic around the project vicinity, especially during certain hours would help to create a peaceful and relaxing atmosphere in the town.
 - Providing adequate parking away from the immediate area of the historic district, would also help to relieve some of the pressure created by the large number of cars in the downtown area.
 - Installation of water pipes and fire hydrants and their subsequent maintenance would help to prevent future catastrophe in the event of fire.

4) DRAINAGE

- a. Flooding occurs after heavy rains because of an insufficient drainage network. Although the water eventually drains out through the only canal which is the primary drainage course, the periodic flooding is inconvenient and troublesome.
- b. Existing gutters and drainage pipes are too small and insufficient to cope with the volume of water.
- c. Recommendations:
 - Enlarge the canal would help it to manage the large amounts of water it is expected to drain.
 - Improvement of the gutter network would facilitate its ability to carry the excess water to the canal.

5) TOWN PLANNING

The current plan to widen the roads has been suggested as a response to the increase in traffic volume without considering historic buildings. The plan if implemented, most buildings along the streets would be dismantled to give ways to streets. The town will lose its valuable heritage and full of streets but no useful land.

Recommendations:

- The existing town plan should be adjusted co-operating with the proposed area as a preservation zone.
- A detail masterplan for conservation should be developed to improve its townscape, infrastructure, solve traffic problems and attract visitors.

6) LACK OF TOURIST INFORMATION

The apparent disinterest of tourists in cultural phenomena is due, in part, to a lack of available literature on what Phuket has to offer. If the visitor can actually identify the point of interest, there is the additional problem of not having an information board or plaque to describe what he is looking at.

Recommendations:

An information system should be well organized and divided into the following three components:

- Information center in the historic district.
- Information sign-boards or plaques at recommended zones or buildings or sub-centers.
- Informative, affordable literature such as maps, leaflets, and brochures are essential for the convenience of visitors.

1.4 ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

1) PHRA PHITAKCHINPRACHA HOUSE NO. 1

a. Location: 98 Krabi Street

b. History:

The house was built in 1907 by Phra Phitak Chinpracha, the same person who built 96 on Krabi Street. It was originally intended to serve as a bridal house, but for some unexplained reason the house stood unoccupied for 21 years. The house was then turned over to Khun Chinsathan Phitak, one of Phra Phitak's sons, whose family continues to live there; the present owner being Mr. Pracha Tantavanich, one of Khun Chinsathan Phitak's son. The original plan of the house has been altered two times. Khun Chinsathan Phitak, demolished the front part of the house, using some of the stone for the construction of his beloved wife's tomb. The left wing addition was built by Mr. Pracha. He incorporated stone left from the demolished section into floor paving. Although the house has undergone changes, it still maintains a well balanced appearance.

c. Architectural Description:

This was the first house built in European style and incorporated some elements of Chinese design such as the front door and windows. There are arched windows wooden louvers and stucco ornaments in elaborate patterns of leaves in Chinese style. The roof is constructed of Chinese unglazed ceramic tiles, a common material found on most of the old houses in Phuket. The interior is decorated in traditional Chinese style with an open well in the middle of the house. An opening above the well allows light and air circulation, making the house well-lit and comfortable breezy. This house is a fine example of balanced exterior facades and a complimentary interior atmosphere. Mr. Pracha has diligently maintained and preserved some of the finer furniture and decoration. A carved staircase, inlaid mother-of-pearl shell furniture, and antique grandfather's clock are some of the unique items gracing the house.

2) PHRA PHITAKCHINPRACHA HOUSE NO. II

a. Location: 96 Krabi Street

b. History:

Construction of the building was begun c. 1920's and was completed shortly after World War II. Phra Phitak-Chinpracha, the first owner, designed and supervised construction of the house. The contractor, craftsman and some of the construction materials were imported from Penang, Malaysia. The house was designed to be large and spacious in order to accommodate the owner's very large family. Mr. Sith tantaqvanich, the twelfth son of Phra Phitak Chinpracha, currently occupies the house.

c. Architectural Description:

The house, built in Chinese-European style, combines an asymmetrical design with a well-planned building position, and artfully designed facades enhance its overall beauty. It is a two-storey house with arched windows and columns positioned at the two entrances on the left and right wings. The floor and interior wall tiles were imported from Italy, and the roof tiles from China. Although the roof tiles are in generally good condition, damaged tiles are replaced with tiles left over from the original construction. The restricted use of stucco ornaments, and simple, yet perfectly balanced proportioning gave the building a distinctive character and authentic dignified appearance rarely found in other buildings in Phuket.

3) PHUKET THAIHWA SCHOOL

a. Location: 24 Krabi Street

b. History:

Until 1930, Phuket Thaihwa School functioned as a Chinese shrine, and was converted into a school in 1934. The shrine committee formed a foundation which supervised the transfer and continues to administer the school. The building underwent several renovations before 1930.

c. Architectural Description:

The school is a 2-storey building with very thick rusticated walls and some stucco ornamentation. The four columns at the front entrance are connected by three-centered arches with key-stones and mouldings along the capitals. This building is a good example of mixed Chinese and European architectural styles. For example, Chinese characters form the stucco ornamentation on the front gable. Roofing is of Chinese unglazed ceramic tiles. Both the interior and exterior are designed symmetrically, complimenting each other. This is seen with the front 3-bayed room where 2 staircases which flank the room, lead to the second floor in parallel. U shaped positions. Another remarkable feature is the use of rectangular-shaped windows and doors, rather than arched windows, characteristic of most other houses dating to the same period. The rectangular openings communicate a formal atmosphere reflecting the building's function.

4) ROMMANEE LANE

Architectural Description:

All of shophouses on Rommanee Lane are two storeys with continuous arcades along the road, although some of the upper facades have been modified into plain walls with wooden windows, many buildings retain the original old European style with Chinese columns. The ground floor's facades are built in Chinese style with wooden doors between two similar wooden windows. Most of the buildings have unglazed ceramic tile roofing.

5) THALANG STREET

Architectural Description:

While most of the buildings are 2-storey, some of the more recently built ones are 3 or 4 storeys high. The buildings are a mixture of Chinese and Western styles. Thalang is the street where the concentration on historic buildings was found.

6) THEPKASATTRI STREET

Architectural Description:

Most of the buildings along Thepkasattri Street are 1-storey shophouses, although some are 1-1/2 storeys with living quarters below the roof. Arcades along both sides of the road cover the sidewalks. Entrances made of iron or wooden folding doors are set back about 1.5 meters from the front columns. The buildings are in poor condition. They are ones of the oldest shophouses in Phuket.

2. VILLAGE TOURISM

2.1 VILLAGE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The principle objectives of the program to develop village tourism are two-fold. One purpose is to bring the economic benefits of tourism directly to the village residents in order to raise the standard of living, stimulate traditional activities, promote social stability, and ensure continued cultural affiliation in the community. The other aim is to create a unique and satisfying opportunity for tourists who wish to catch a glimpse of village life in Southern Thailand during which time they can sample local cuisine and handicrafts.

Development of small-scale tourist facilities and services are most appropriate given the size of villages and populations involved. Some villages can be chosen according to their inherent traditional, cultural and ethnic features; others will be selected depending on their proximity to nearby natural attractions to provide services to those visiting the attractions.

2.2 TODAY'S IMAGE/CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGES

In some cases, scenes of village life evoke images of laughing children, rustic houses fronted by cool verandas for resting, gossiping and making handicrafts, and fishermen untangling their nets on the sandy beaches; nestled in a natural environment void of the noises and confusion of city life. On the other hand, however, the realities of poverty, inadequate waste disposal facilities, poor sanitary conditions and a state of general neglect are quite evident in some villages, hardly presenting a positive image. These undesirable but relatively superficial factors are not beyond remedy by any means, and since the villagers are open to the prospect of tourism, their cooperative efforts are certain to improve conditions. The underlying ingredient of sincere, welcome hospitality is the most essential in this type of development. As that condition appears to exist, with help, the current shortcomings can be resolved.

2.3 VILLAGE EXPECTATIONS

The obvious solutions to these contrasting images of village life is to try to preserve the unspoiled naturally picturesque qualities as much as possible and to improve the negative aspects. Meeting these criteria is not a simple task.

The general infrastructure requires improvement while maintaining the natural landscape and existing architecture. Construction of facilities for both villagers and tourists, the development of literature, maps and road signs for tourists, possibly implementing a market day and handicraft demonstrations are among the factors requiring serious consideration.

Furthermore, to ensure the cooperation of the villagers and to develop the more effective plan, the planners ideally need to actually live in each village and work with the people, discovering their needs, acquiring a real "feel" for the village environment, and understanding its special assets and its disadvantages on a deep level so as to make meaningful, relevant and realistic recommendations essential to long-term success.

Of utmost importance for the future success of the villagers and the tourist industry alike is the absolute necessity of controlling the development of villages for tourism.

2.4 TOURISM REQUIREMENT

The drawbacks of developing any area for tourism include both tangible and intangible factors. With careful planning however, many of these potential problems can be avoided or at least minimized.

The more physical difficulties occur whenever one tries to bring tourism and nature together. Within this category are two sets of problems: the first deals with the negative effects tourists have on nature; the second concerns the potential hazards people are subjected to in a wilderness environment. One must be protected from the other.

The impact of the human presence on the environment is only too well known. With humans come noise, pollution, general disturbance of the environment and possible irreparable damage to the sensitive ecosystem.

In addition are the discomfort and risks people unaccustomed to outdoor life must endure. A holidayer's list of perils includes losing his way, falling off a boat while attempting to clamber ashore, tumbling down a rocky incline, food poisoning, motor and boating accidents, sunstroke and encounters with wildlife. Experiencing any one of these calamities or numerous others is enough to ruin a visitor's day possibly his entire holiday, but most, if not all of these potential dangers are avoidable if those responsible take necessary precautions.

The other category involves the relatively intangible difficulties and dilemmas which are encountered when a traditional village economy suddenly experiences an influx of cash income. The promise of material gain is an inadequate trade-off for the breakdown of the existing culture and social structure. When a local economy comes to depend almost exclusively on outside resources, it inevitably becomes vulnerable to the whims and fancies of public interest and to the price flux of consumer products. Incorporating the tourist industry to supplement the already existing economy, rather than depending on it, and making use of locally available renewable raw materials will help villagers to maintain their self reliance, stabilize the village economy and thus improve the general standard of living. A certain degree of control, advice and education concerning competition, quality, price and supply will maximize profits, and if adopted gradually and carefully, strengthen the long term development of the village areas.

Because of its great diversity, rich culture and natural beauty, the area under consideration has great potential... enough so that with carefully thought-out expertise and a gradual, well-rounded approach to development, the Phuket/Phang Nga/Krabi region stands to become one of the most popular tourist attractions in Southeast Asia.

Despite a natural inclination to do so, tourists cannot be lumped together as a single-minded mass, but need to be viewed as individuals with specific needs and interests, varying attention spans and energy levels. It is important to the success of the tourist industry that no one goes home complaining that his or her vacation was "boring", "exhausting", "bad value" or "nothing new". Every effort must be made to offer a wide variety of attractions and provide enough options so that everyone is pleased with their holiday.

Although stimulation is important, different people have different backgrounds. Explanatory literature in several languages on all points of interest needs to be readily available, affordable and informative.

Road maps and signs in Thai and English are necessary for individual travelers. Furthermore, the roads themselves need to be in reasonable condition and adequately maintained in all kinds of weather.

2.5 INVENTORY OF TOURISM VILLAGE

The followings are the Name of Villages to be surveyed:

- 1) Lanta Sea Gypsy Village
- 2) Bamboo Fishing Village
- 3) Panyee Sea-Based Shopping/Fishing Village
- 4) Ban Kuan - Rattan Furniture & Basketry Village
- 5) Lipon - Pottery Making Village
- 6) Sire Sea Gypsy Village
- 7) Rawai Sea Gypsy Village

1) LANTA-YAI SEA GYPSY VILLAGE

1. LOCATION: Lanta-yai Island, Krabi
2. ACCESS ROUTE: By boat from Bang Muang Pier, Krabi Province
3. CONDITION: Fair
4. INTEGRITY: Low
5. FUNCTION: Present-Inhabited, original-Village
6. PERIOD: Unknown
7. HISTORICAL/PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: The Sea Gypsies, one of Thailand's minority peoples, traditionally roamed the seas. They temporarily settled on the islands along the Andaman Coast from north of the Straits of Malacca to the west coast of southern Thailand. The Sea Gypsies settled at Lanta-yai Island, are of the "Urak Lawoi" group and speak the Urak Lawoi language. Their life is strongly determined by their beliefs in nature and the supernatural. These beliefs have been passed down orally in the forms of stories and legends from generation to generation. Every six months the Urak Lawoi hold a ceremony called Lajung. A boat called Belajak or Lajung is sent out to return their dead relative's souls, bad luck and evil spirits to "Gummung Yerai". Gummung Yerai might be their ancestral homeland or may have been a temporary settlement during their thousands of years of migration.

2) BAMBOO VILLAGE

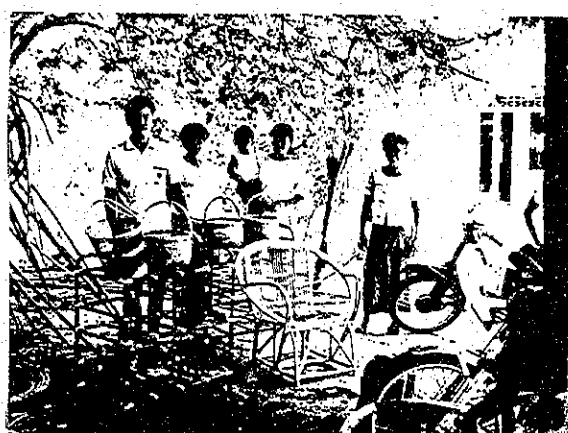
1. LOCATION: Ko Panyee Sub-district, Muang District, Phang Nga
2. ACCESS ROUTE: By boat from Phang Nga Bay Pier
3. CONDITION: Fair
4. INTEGRITY: High
5. FUNCTION: Present-Village; Original-Village
6. PERIOD: c. 1920's
7. HISTORICAL/PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: This village of approximately 35 families is located at the edge of a mangrove swamp in the area of Phang Nga National Park. Most of the houses are built of natural local materials such as bamboo, mangrove plants, and palm leaves. Fishing is the main occupation; each family owning at least one boat. The village is without electricity or a fresh water supply.



Baan Mai Pai (Bamboo) Village in Phang Nga Bay

3) PANYEE VILLAGE

1. LOCATION: Phang Nga Bay National Park, Phang Nga
2. ACCESS ROUTE: By boat, 6 km from Phang Nga Bay Pier
3. CONDITION: Good
4. INTEGRITY: Poor
5. FUNCTION: Present-Mercantile Village; Original-Fishing Village
6. PERIOD: c. 19th century
7. HISTORICAL/PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: About 100 years ago, the ancestors of the people who live at Panyee were on a ship which capsized during a storm. In desperation, as they tried to swim to safety, they promised their god to raise a white flag-a traditional symbol-on the island if they could reach it. Reach it they did and their descendents continue to live there in about 200 houses built on stilts over the water. Originally, the inhabitants of Panyee led a life dependent on fishing. To some extent, they still sell their catch to the local market in Phang Nga Town and produce fish by-products such as paste and dried additives used for Thai cuisine. Nowadays, income from these traditional persists only supplements that which is secured from the marketing of souvenirs to the many tourists who visit this village. Living conditions, are somewhat cramped. People live according to the precepts of their Islamic religion and an atmosphere of contentment, cooperation and harmony pervades. The reason for founding this village is rather unique. In addition, Moslems, the people who live there, represent one of the minority groups in Thailand. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this village is the demonstration of how a settlement can develop despite the fact that there is no available land. The people have adapted to their environment by building their houses on stilts over the water. In doing so, they have made themselves completely accessible to the water, taking advantage of the fresh sea breezes, transportation and, of course, the marine resources. It should be noted that sanitation and village access may appear inadequate to visitors accustomed to more sophisticated services.



Ban Kuan Village - Phuket Province -

4) BAN KUAN VILLAGE

1. LOCATION: Thalang District, Phuket
2. ACCESS ROUTE: 4.5 km from Tone Sai Waterfall and Highway No. 402 Junction
3. CONDITION: Good
4. INTEGRITY: Medium
5. FUNCTION: Present-Village; Original-Village
6. PERIOD: c. 1920's
7. HISTORICAL/PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Ban Kuan, a village community of approximately 45 families, is undergoing development; rustic bamboo residences are being replaced by brick and concrete houses. Villagers are encouraged to obtain part-time jobs in addition to their main occupation of rubber production. Good quality rattan furniture and basketry are produced by skilled craftsmen.



Lipon Village - Phuket Province -

5) BAN LIPON VILLAGE

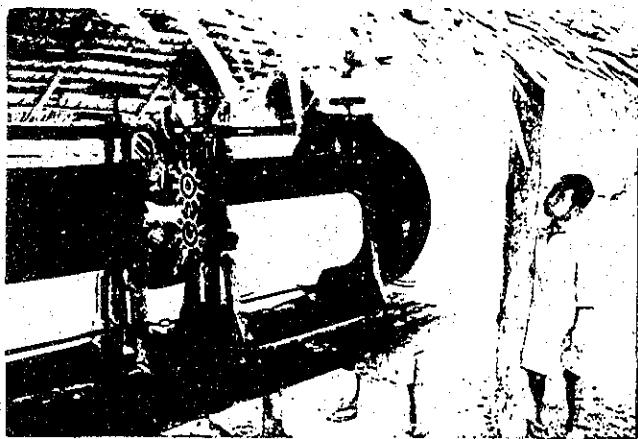
1. LOCATION: Thalang District, Phuket
2. ACCESS ROUTE: Highway No. 402
3. CONDITION: Fair
4. INTEGRITY: Medium
5. FUNCTION: Present-Inhabited; Original-Village
6. PERIOD: Unknown
7. HISTORICAL/PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Ban Lipon village is a community of 50 families whose main occupation is rice cultivation or rubber production. About 8-10 families are engaged in the art of pottery making, which has been handed down from generation to generation. For some families pottery making is a full-time occupation, while for others it supplements farming. The pottery making process is very simple; clay is obtained locally, hand-turned wheels and simple kilns are used, resulting in utilitarian quality vessels. The pots are decorated with traditional cord-mark designs, produced from delicately carved wooden paddles. However, the vessels are produced using traditional potting techniques, and have their own identity and character, which is unique to the study area. Those who visit the village can observe production techniques and purchase the pottery direct from the potter at a low price. Smiling and helpful villagers, and a quiet rural atmosphere greet visitors. An improved road is essential for tourism development.

6) SIRE SEA GYPSY VILLAGE

1. LOCATION: Sire Island, Phuket
2. ACCESS ROUTE: Bus
3. CONDITION: Fair
4. INTEGRITY: Low
5. FUNCTION: Present-Inhabited; Original-Village
6. PERIOD: Unknown
7. HISTORICAL/PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: The Sea Gypsies of Sire Island share the same origins, language, and cultural beliefs as the Sea Gypsies living on Lanta-yai Island and Rawai Beach in Phuket, and those settled on Rawai Beach and Lipe and Adong Islands in Satun Province. The Sea Gypsies continue to maintain their unique traditional way of life and provide an interesting cultural contrast to surrounding Thai, Chinese and Muslim communities.

7) RAWAI SEA GYPSY VILLAGE

1. LOCATION: Rawai Beach, Phuket
2. ACCESS ROUTE: Highway No. 4024
3. CONDITION: Good
4. INTEGRITY: Medium
5. FUNCTION: Present-Inhabited; Original-Village
6. PERIOD: Unknown
7. HISTORICAL/PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: The Sea Gypsies settled at Rawai Beach belong to the "Urak Lawoi" group and speak the Urak Lawoi language. They share the same beliefs and ceremonies as the Lanta-yai Island Sea Gypsies. This is the best known Sea Gypsy village on Phuket. Visitors to the village can find the carefree way of life that goes with the name of these people who traditionally stayed ashore only long enough to mend their nets and boats before setting off once again for far flung destinations. The people represent one of Thailand's minorities who trace their origin and culture from different sources and whose lifestyle is reminiscent of prehistoric man, who also depended on the sea for their livelihood.



Rubber Plantation at Phuket : Village on the Way to Nai Yang National Park or Ton Sai Waterfall