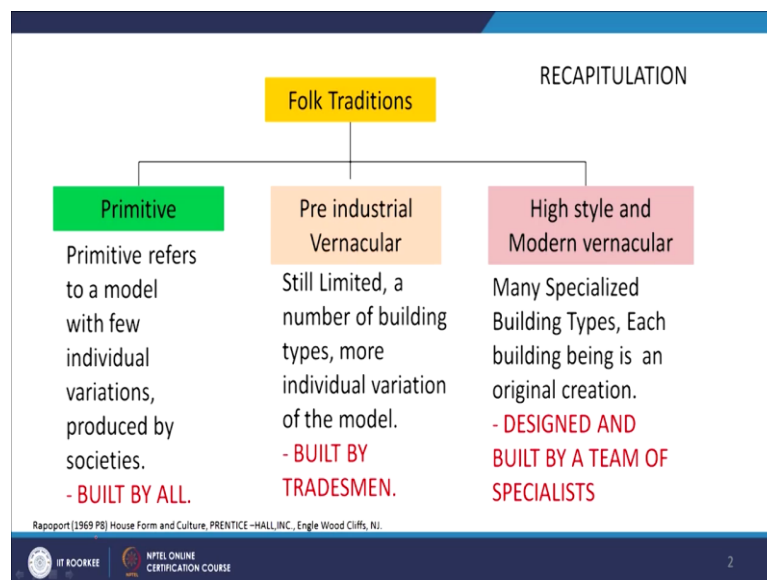


Culturally Responsive Built Environments
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Lecture – 05
The New Vernacular

Welcome to the course Culturally Responsive Built Environments. So, today we are at lecture 5 and we are talking about The New Vernacular. A little recapitulation from previous lecture, we did discussed about how the folk traditions are classified by Amos Rapoport in his book 'House Form and Architecture'. He mainly classifies from primitive and pre-industrial vernacular, and high style and modern vernacular.

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So, initially he refers to the kind of understanding of primitive; it is how a model is developed and adjusted to suit all the cultural and the economic and the social needs in a given particular time and they sets it; what is the best suited for them. And this particular model may have some few variations individual variations, but it is all produced by the societies.

So, this is where it is built by all; so, everyone is involved in building their habitats, their houses, it is everyone's issue or is everyone's business. So, here everyone is involved in, actively involved in making their places. So, this is what mostly primitive societies talk

about because each and every concern is a concern for each and every being of that place.

When the time passed on and when we are moving towards a specialised skills and also towards the differentiation of spaces; like the kind of spaces we need for the ceremonial purpose, kind of spaces we need for the elderly purpose. So, there are different variations which has a evolved in time process and this is where the individual variations have gone into more specifics.

Though the employee, they are aware of what building types they need, what is commonly accepted forms for them, but here the most of the active part is taken by the carpenter or the tradesman who actually builds it. So, because as the much specialisations have been came into existence. So, that is why this pre industrial vernacular is often referred where it is built by the tradesman.

Here the owner is a participant in the design process. The tradesman is sitting with the owner and discussing what do you want and what do you need and what are your dreams and aspirations and what are your needs. But the owner merrily is not a consumer; though he is a participant, he is not a consumer.

So, in the earlier stage, one is using the spaces and the trial through a trial and error procedure, they are modifying and developing a particular model. Whereas, the third one which we have not much discussed in the last class which is about the high style and the modern vernacular.

Here with time again there been many specialised building types and each building being as an original creation. So, this is how the specialisations are further differentiated and they have been built by a team of specialists. So, a carpenter does the crafts work, a mason does the mason work, an engineer does his work; so, that is how we talked about.

And with all these discussions on the vernacular architecture, especially the folk architecture, which is a common man architecture and we are talking from, we are moving from Bernard Rudofsky and which is in 1965 a 'Architecture without architects' which he referred as a non pedigreed architecture. And we moved further to 'House form and architecture' of Amos Rapoport and his further contributions on the meanings of built environment.

So, Paul Oliver he summarises all of the understanding because this whole awareness of vernacular architecture has started mostly from 50's and 60's onwards and then Paul takes it further and he composes The Encyclopaedia of vernacular architecture of the world'.

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"Vernacular Architecture comprises the dwellings and all other buildings of the people. Related to their environmental contexts and available resources, they are customarily owner- or community-built, utilizing traditional technologies. All forms of vernacular architecture are built to meet specific needs, accommodating the values, economies and ways of living of the cultures that produce them (Oliver 1997)".

Paul Hereford Oliver

Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World

Source: Oliver, P. (ed.) (1997), *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

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He defines 'the vernacular architecture comprises the dwellings and all other buildings of the people. Related to their environmental contexts and available resources, they are customarily owner or community built, utilizing traditional technologies. All forms of vernacular architecture are built to meet specific needs.

In fact, Paul have already developed further in his work, book titled 'Built to meet specific needs'. So, that is where the needs, how they keep changing and how a man is evolving himself and his understanding towards a habitat accommodating the values economies and the ways of living of the cultures that produced.

So, it is not just only for the economic need a man is making his place; it is also, a value is in-built in the way the process is involved in making his houses,, making his places.

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The aesthetic quality is not specially created for each house. - it is a model itself as the result of collaboration of many people including the maker and the users of buildings and artifacts and is handed down through generations. This is termed as *Traditional*.

Tradition

- Honored by Everyone
- Collective Assent
- Acts as a Discipline

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So, aesthetic quality is not specially created for each house; it is a model itself as a result of collaboration of many people, including the maker and the users of buildings and artefacts and is handed down through generation. So, basically the moment we are talking about, it is not a single person making; it has been a contribution from many people.

It could be a contribution from different craftsman, it would be contribution from the owner, it could be contribution from the maker. So, they are all collaborating with each other and then certain model has been adjusted and this particular thing has been passed on from one generation to the next generation and further on and further on. And this is what we refer as traditional, which actually come from the Latin word *traditionem* which is knowledge; which is also referred to a kind of packets of knowledge which is handed down from generation to generation.

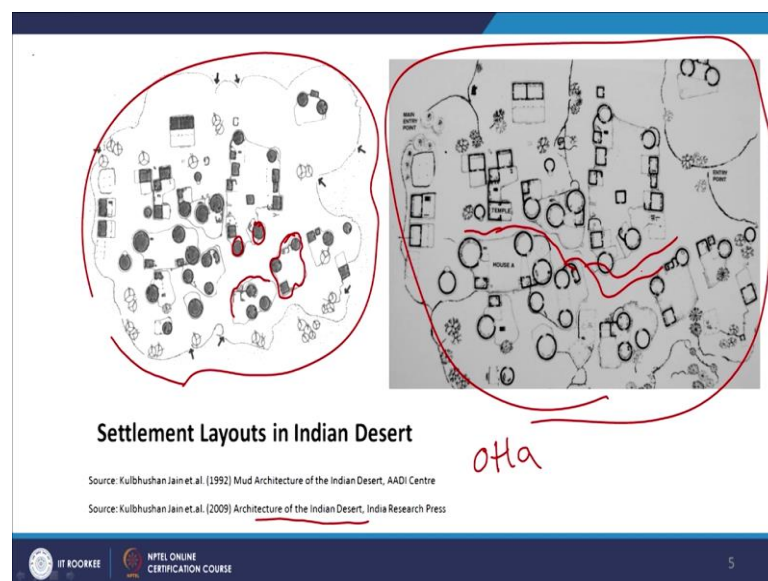
So, briefly here; I point out what is a tradition? So, here it is a kind of an accepted kind of law which is honoured by everyone. So, there is a society and they do follow certain traditions, they do respect it. So, when we are talking about it, it is also a collective ascent right. And it also formulates as acts as a discipline for a particular community. For instance, a South Indian will have certain customs and traditions which he got it from his father and his sisters.

Like being a South Indian; I eat my food with hand and at the same time when we go to any house; we first leave our footwear, wash our feet and go inside. So obviously, these are certain traditions which we follow, we commonly accept. So, the moment someone comes into my house with a footwear so; obviously, it takes me some time, it gives me different sense.

Now, that is how within each society we are all living within our neighbourhood, in a hometown, we follow these kind of practices which are common. These might vary as we said and these traditions can inform from a small practice and a habit and it can also evolve in the form of a product as well as it can also do a small house or a dwelling or even a cluster and even could a settlement.

Like for instance, I will refer to Kulbhushan Jain's work on mud architecture especially in the architecture of the Indian desert.

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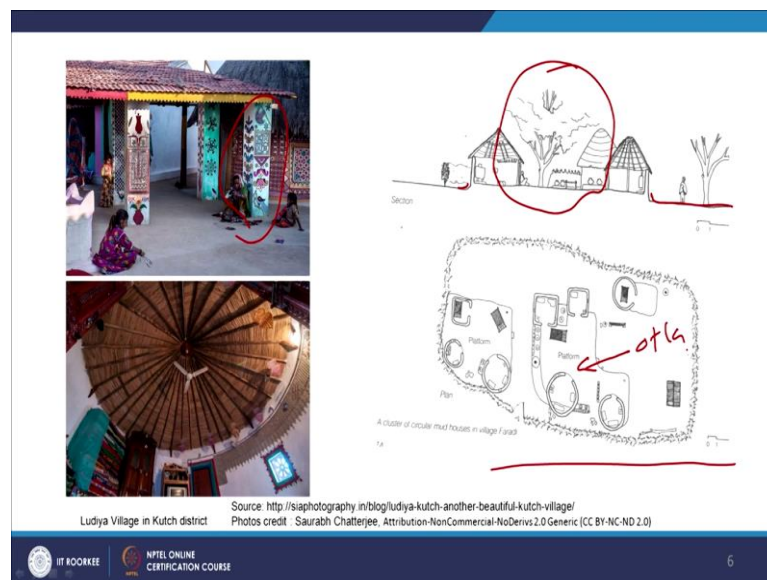
And where he actually documents the kind of circular dwellings and where he documents such kind of circular dwellings in the desert areas of Gujarat and also parts of Rajasthan. So, here because this particular model has been developed based on the geological, as being an earthquake prone area.

So, maybe they started constructing the circular bhoongas and then each family clusters have started developing what we call it as *otla* which is a little, just exposed raised

platform which actually gives a little sense of belonging of the families. And that is how the whole village is developed and a kind of a very inorganic way; passages and this all are inorganic.

But still it is all a model, it is all how a particular group of a society lives in the village how particular *mukhiyas* and *chauhans* live in part of the village, where as Dalits how they live. So, it is all some accepted norms and conditions.

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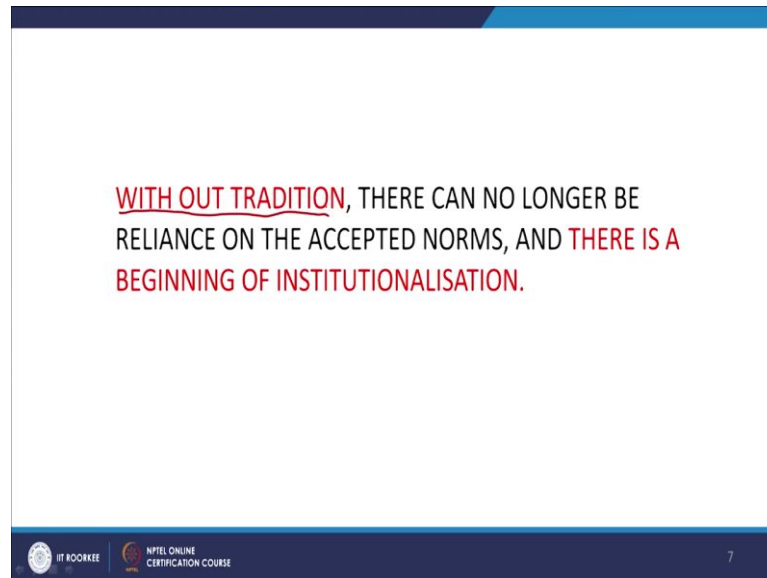
And similarly you can see from the same contributions that how as I said this is a raised platform here and then that gives a kind of sense of privacy and the kind of daily activities goes on, here this is what we call as *Otla*.

And in fact, because of the locally available resources; so the women and the men, they are all involved in the kind of handicrafts, were making certain crafts embroidery even the kutchy designs. So, you can see that was also incorporated in the dwellings, you can see the women making, decorating their walls and even the roof style, like usually the centre-post will bear, but still they learn this kind of techniques on how to make this kind of conical roofs.

And this is all coming from their daily habits, their activities and the kind of resources which doing. Now, what happens because till now we have discussed about tradition as a discipline, tradition as a regulator, tradition as a controller everyone is coming together

with a collective ascent, but here what happens when we, when the tradition does not exist; when what happens if the tradition disappears?

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So, here without a tradition there can no longer be a reliance on the accepted norms and there is a beginning of institutionalisation. This is one of the important component one has to look at because we set up certain patterns, we set up certain codes because we do not; our trust, it gradually disappears because our tradition we are not accepting with the kind of common language, common understanding. For instance what is this institutionalisation talking about.

So, tradition as a regulator has disappeared, why it has disappeared? So, Rapoport actually points out few reasons why these traditions started disappearing.

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**Tradition as Regulator has Disappeared...
WHY?**

- Greater number of Building types, many of which are too complex to build in traditional fashion.
- Differentiation in the spaces within the buildings
- Rise of specialization and various trades involved in design and erection.



Source: http://gardestatelegacy.com/files/Pattern_Books_Create_an_American_Architecture_Foster_GSL9.pdf

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So, I am not saying the traditions has completely disappeared, but how their regulatory mechanisms have gradually taken a new face. In fact, in the whole process when we are moving from the primitive way to the pre industrial to the high vernacular, or the modern vernacular; obviously, the greater number of building types have evolved.

And sometimes with the advent of technologies, with the advent of innovative materials as a time passes on, the greater number of building types many of which are too complex to build in a traditional fashion. For instance the way, the way the barn houses have developed themselves with the kind of differentiating the kind of spaces. And the second aspect which we are talking is the differentiation in the spaces within the buildings.

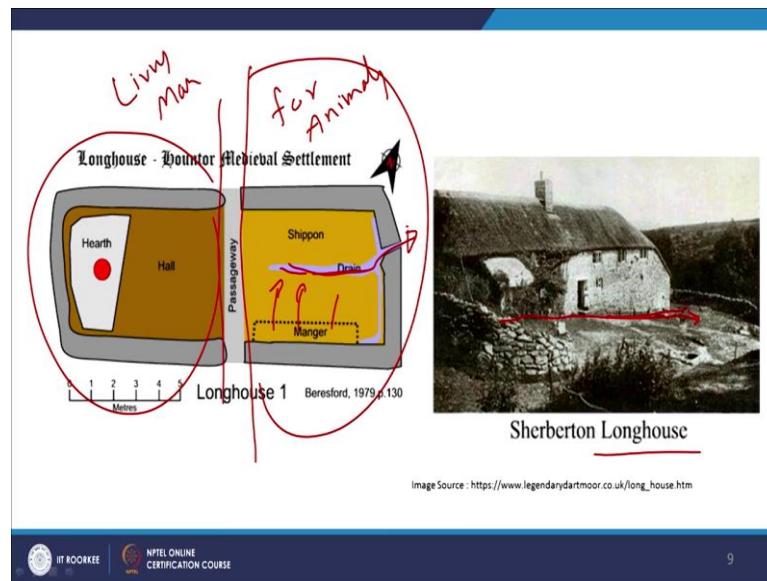
So, what purpose is the spaces are used, what how the needs have gradually changed and in order to tailor with the upcoming needs; so how man has developed the form of the dwelling. So, in the whole process again in the third part which we discussed is a rise of specialisation and various trades involved in the design and erection. Now, in this you can see from the American architecture; they started with the pattern books which created American architecture written by Janet Foster.

So in fact, as the different models have started evolving, different typologies have started evolving different specialisations; the one who is making glass has a different specialisation, the one which is making this kind of doors and window with the louver

system, and then the one who is making this ornamentations; he is a craftsmen of different; and the person who is building the main shingles of these, is a different person.

So, the same time with the invention of the technology the heating systems or any kind of electrical things. So, that is how this whole system have brought many specialisation. And in order to bring that, that is where the pattern books has started evolving, that is very much observed in the American architecture.

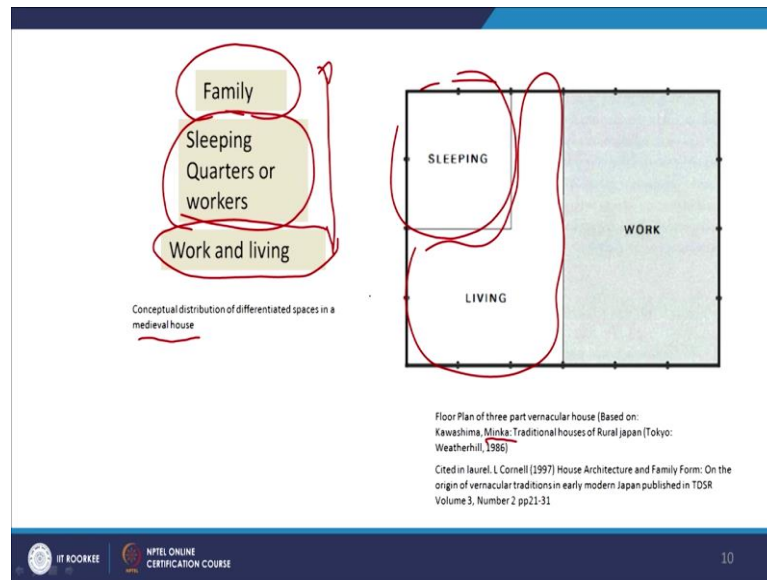
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And when we say about the differentiation of spaces; now, you can see a good example of the longhouses in the Dartmoor area in the Devonshire. So, I will just show you a small example of how a long house, you can see they have slope of, I mean it is following a terrain so that the water drains out. So, basically they divide into two components one is the living area for man and then for animals. So, they have whatever the cow dung, when they wash or everything, so, they are all directed like this; so, for that he follows a particular slope.

So, these kind of a differentiation of spaces do take place when man has started evolving his dwelling to, you know, to live more hygienic and to live more, the same time living with animals also make his dwelling warmer in the cold climate conditions.

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Now, when we talk about a similar differentiation of spaces like when, in the pre-industrial vernacular and even the during the industrial times, people started dividing their house even in a vertical format. Like where as in the ground floor they have a kind of work and living and where as in the above, the first stage they have the places for the workers, sleeping quarters are for workers who were working for their shops or any other thing and the more private for the family. So, this is how the segregation of spaces started evolving.


Whereas, I will give one more example of Japanese house which we call it as Minka, traditional houses of rural Japan. Here you can see, this is the work composition, almost half of it and the sleeping composition is only of one third of it and most of it is a living composition here. So, in that way it is a kind of three part vernacular house.

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Japanese society was divided into four groups: farmers, artisans, merchants, and the samurai class.

The minka dwellings were initially for the non-samurai castes or low level samurai.

nōka (farmhouses),
machiya (town houses),
gyōka (fishermen's dwellings), and
sanka (mountain dwellings).



Gassho-zukuri style, Shirakawa-go. Credits: Bernard Gagnon
Source: <https://www.idaho-japan.com/2015/05/the-japanese-minka-homes/>

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And Japanese society traditionally it was divided into farmers, artisans, merchants and the samurai class. So in fact, these Minka dwellings which I was talking about so, they were actually initially from non samurai caste or the lower level.

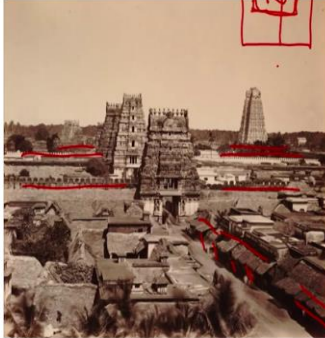
So, basically they are taking it little on a caste-based on the social hierarchy. So in fact, there are some technical, the local terms, which we call a noka which is farm houses, and the machiya townhouses, gyōka fishermans dwellings, and sankā mountain dwellings. So here you can see the kind of. In fact, in Shirakawa you can see the kind of traditional minka dwellings of a huge dense statues and how they are all built. In fact, there was also some UNESCO world heritage sites of these minka homes, still today exists.

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Loss of Common shared value system
and image of world with a
consequent loss of an accepted and
shared hierarchy.

Disappearance of the previous spirit
of cooperation which makes people
respect the rights of adjoining
people and their buildings, and
ultimately the rights of settlement as
a whole.

Srirangam



An 1870 photo of the gopurams in the temple town.

Image Source (T): By Unknown - Leiden University Library, KITLV, image 92170 Homepage media-kitlv.nl
KITLV, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=39956880>

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Now, when we talk about the traditions and how the differentiation of spaces; we are coming also with the specialisations. In fact, it is not only the usage of spaces it is also about how they are building up by various factors.

Now, the second thing which we talk about is the loss of common shared value system and the image of world with the consequent loss of an accepted and shared hierarchy. In fact, I will talk about a small example of Srirangam it is somewhere near down south, near Tiruchirapalli.

And this is a hometown. So, called referred also as a temple town and this is laid in a kind of concentric circles it have like. So, the centre one is for god and then it is referred with a different occupation base. So, that is how the whole town, you can see the walls here right. So, like that you have these concentric layers, but look at it, and each rectilinear forms; they are all dedicated for certain livelihood based groups who are working on bronze utensils or the potters; they are all and then looking at the format, though it is in the late 18th century. So, you look at the kind of understanding of what people had.

And they use to cooperate with each other and there is a lot of cooperation between different segments of the society, as well as within the society also to understand the common rules and the common traits how they can actually live together.

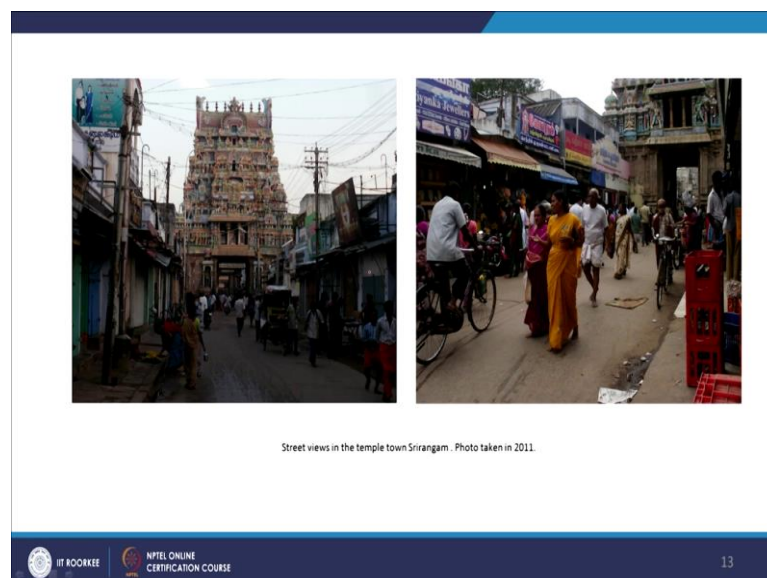
So, with time what happened was the disappearance of previous spirit of cooperation. So, one is we have gradually losing the spirit of cooperation we are unable to co-operate with each other. Because we are becoming look at the way we started from a primitive understanding of vernacular architecture where the unself consciousness moving towards the self consciousness.

And which makes people respect rights of adjoining people and their buildings, ultimately the rights of settlement as a whole. So, this whole thing, how people use to respect the rights of adjoining people and their buildings and ultimately the whole rights of settlement, as a whole.

So, now what happens to this Srirangam is look at the same street. We did the urban design studio with School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal. And we actually documented how the transformation of the temple streets that took place in Srirangam and especially after a decade of the mobile phones and how things have changed.

Now, what you have seen in the previous slot of which, the whole thing is in a kind of sitting in a harmony. And there is always a scale and harmony of these dwellings on the kind of spaces which are they composed.

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So, now if you look at it, the whole thing does not follow if you look at all the shop fronts, each one of them is independent to each other. So, it is very difficult to actually

bring certain negotiations between even shop to shop and talking about even maintaining a small balance between their fronts.

And the usages of the spaces how earlier this whole walking system has now convert into kind of shops and the storages. So, and the one more interesting thing in Srirangam cases; it was meant for a symbolic religious place, but now if you look at the kind of change it has taken place from people the religious aspects have gradually started; it is diluting the religious traditions rather it has becoming more into the tourist traditions, a touristic place. So, in fact, after the mobile business came into this historic cities, for instance an Airtel or any Aircel or any other image.

So, earlier the particular house fronts or a shop fronts had certain typical traditional character which is portraying a little about their occupation or they selling the bronze utensils or making of pots or any other thing. But today they are all become selling of toys for as in anything similar to what you see in a tourist place.

And also the mobile recharge shops where cinema actors will be posing on the Airtel hoardings; so, the whole front is completely, the meaning of the traditional and religious dignity has gradually disappeared because the same front of a Airtel or any mobile hoarding; everywhere it is same from Kashmir to south.

And first we talked about, if we look at the process, we talk about diversity of these building types and differentiation of spaces. This has resulted in kind of rise of specialisation. And we did discuss about loss of common shared value system and disappearance of the cooperation which is also talking about institutionalization.

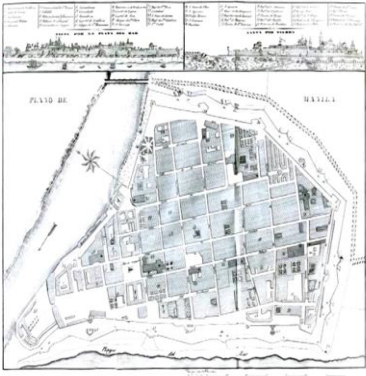
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Lack of Cooperation leads to introduction of controls (as codes, regulations concerning alignments and setbacks.

THE LAWS OF THE INDIES

In Book IV of the 1680 compilation of *The Laws of the Indies*, plans were set forth in detail on every facet of creating a community, including town planning.

These rules are part of a body of 148 regulations configuring any settlement according to the rule of Spain and its colonies.



Plan of Manila, 1851

Source: <http://codesproject.asu.edu/sites/default/files/TH%20LAWS%20OF%20THE%20INDIEStranslated.pdf>
Image Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plano_de_Manila_1851.jpg#filehistory

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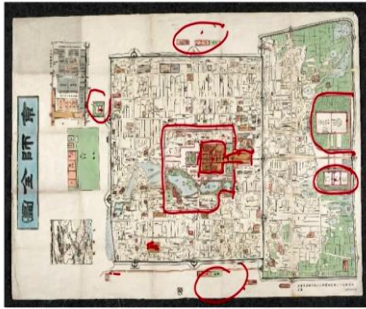
And this is where the lack of cooperation leading to the introduction of controls such as codes or regulation concerning the alignments and setbacks. For example, even in the early 15th century or 16th century, you can see that Laws of Indies, where they talk about the Spanish colonies; they have actually talk where ever, they have developed certain codes and norms how actually a settlement has to be framed; for instance the plan of Manila which they talk about the kind of narrow streets and the orthogonal grades.

So, in fact, in 1680, the compilation of The law of Indies, plans were set forth in detail on every facet of creating a community including a town planning. So in fact, these laws are one of the guidelines, how they actually set the whole structure of the town planning, making and their settlements. And they have been giving this kind of certain regulations of body of 148 regulation configuring any settlement according to the rule of Spain and its colonies.

It is not only within the Spain, but they have said, yeah to establish their identity on their whole system. So, they incorporated this kind of regulations whereas, similarly in the Chinese side of it, you can see the Imperial city and the inner city and the Forbidden city of the Chinese city. So, they are in the Peking which is the former name of Beijing.

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The Chinese, or southern, city can be seen separated by a wall from the Tatar, or northern, city. Within the Tatar city, surrounded by a wall (coloured red) is the Imperial City, and at the centre the Forbidden City (coloured yellow). Government offices are shaded yellow, palaces and great houses pink. By the southern wall of the Chinese city can be seen the Temple of Agriculture (left) and the Temple of Heaven (right), their walls curved to deflect evil spirits from the north.



A large coloured plan of Peking, including the Chinese city
Image Source: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/a-plan-of-peking>

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You can see that it is this red line which actually forms the Imperial city and this is the Forbidden city. And you can see the government offices, everything is mixed with a kind of colour patterns, shaded yellow and the great houses is in pink and they have the temples which have, one is the sun and the moon on the side and the earth on this side and the temple of agriculture and the temple of heaven.

So, earth and heaven and agriculture, sun and moon on either sides. So, their walls are covered to deflect evil spirits from the north; so in fact this whole colour patterns have evolved in giving certain fortifications and certain hierarchies of power and certain limitations, what to do and what not to do.

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Our Culture puts a premium on Originality, Often striving for it for its own sake.

As a result, society becomes dissatisfied with traditional forms and vernacular processes can no longer work.

In most traditional cultures, Novelty is not only sought for, but regarded as undesirable.



Chiang Mai has an old city and a new city overlapping within the same physical layer, and co-existing at the same time.

Photo Credit : Burin Tharavichitun

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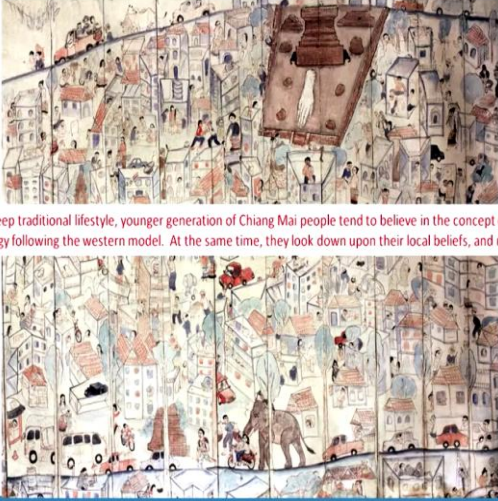
Now, the third aspect which we like to discuss is, our culture puts a premium on originality often striving for its own sake. So, it is adding sometimes it is our own culture adding a kind of added premium were because we need to struggle a little bit on it.

Because it is actually competing with the kind of modern techniques and the evolution and it is also conflicting with the kind of novel ideas. So, in fact, as a result what the society is, it becomes dissatisfied. The traditional forms and vernacular processes he may know, may no longer work.

But that is why, in many of those traditional societies, they do not encourage novelty. So, that is what Rapoport talks about, novelty is not only sought for, but is regarded as undesirable. But in the case of Chiang Mai if you look at the old city and the new city overlapping; you can see these how it is very much enmeshed, how the new and the old fabric are overlapping within the same physical layer when you compare with today's Bangkok.

So they are, in fact, they are coexisting at the same time and so now; so nice a kind of representation of where the old people of Thai communities, they are keeping their traditional lifestyle; where are the younger generation of the Chiang Mai people tend to believe in the capitalistic development and advanced technology following the western models.

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While old people keep traditional lifestyle, younger generation of Chiang Mai people tend to believe in the concept of capitalist development and advanced technology following the western model. At the same time, they look down upon their local beliefs, and no longer support them.

Photo Credit : an known source, procured from Burin Tharavichitkun

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So, until this point, they are also looking down upon the local beliefs and no longer support them. So, this is a kind of difference they are; so how this disappearance of traditions and because our culture itself sometimes becomes a barrier in the advancement of it. So, I stop here.

Thank you very much.