

EDITORIAL

This year, in 2020, ISVS e journal is being published in the most unusual circumstances. For the first time for centuries, the world has been gripped by a pandemic that has seen no cure, no control. Universities and educational institutes closed, and normal life across the world has come to a grinding halt. New concepts such as 'social distance' and 'wearing masks' have come to dominate contemporary life. Humanity has faced an alarming situation where two people cannot interact even if they knew each other, and trust each other. History tells us that 'Black Death' had spread in Europe in the 13th century was similar, having originated in China and travelling to Europe through Mongolian armies. We can only hope that this epidemic will not be as bad as the Black Death.

There is an interesting argument doing rounds these days which deserve attention. The argument is that this is the Nature's reaction to over-population and destruction of the natural habitats of the globe; pollution, and ruthless intrusion of the territories of the other species; especially animals, who are shedding their diseases: viruses to the human population. Reports say that since the beginning of the Pandemic, skies have cleared up in China and pollutions have come down, because factories have closed, travel stopped and negative human productions have subsided. Needless to say, the Vernacular settlements come to mind in which the earth was treated with a sense of reverence, due care and acceptance of human subservience to Nature. When we survive this pandemic, we will need to look at the vernacular settlements more seriously and learn how to live in harmony with Nature, with a sense of urgency to re-produce our contemporary settlements with similar wholesomeness.

In this issue, six papers have been published, on numerous aspects of the vernacular settlements. The paper by Gusti Ayu Made Suartika, Alexander Cuthbert, Gusti Made Putra, and Kadek Edi Saputra tell us about sacred and vernacular cultural landscapes in Bali. Taking the case of Goa Gajah Temple in Bali, and taking a phenomenological approach, they demonstrate how sacred structures represent, condense, and integrate culture, Nature and identity in landscape formation. The paper demonstrates various forms of communication emanating both from inherent and state-imposed roles and four dimensions of cultural significance associated with the landscape. The study reveals a process of depersonalization and commodification of a historical legacy whose symbolic significance goes beyond the state's political and economic agendas. It also proposes better ways to govern such settlements.

In the second paper, Sezin H. Tanrıöver, draws our attention to the exceptional natural and built environment of Bodrum in Turkey which has undergone a tremendous change after 1960's. Once a modest town with plain white cubic houses of a community depending on agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing, Bodrum has turned into the most famous touristic resort of Turkey by 1980's. Immigration and urban sprawl have been the most serious threads for the distinguished identity of the town. Many examples of traditional architecture had been torn down and replaced with new structures of non-style, since 1960's. The numerous new constructions for the increasing population have changed the topography and plantation in and around the town forever.

In contrast to the abandonment of Vernacular, Venkata Krishna Kumar Sadhu & Ramesh Srikonda present the ways in which vernacular settlements are valued in India. By examining the causes of transformations of vernacular houses in a selected village of coastal Andhra Pradesh state of India, they demonstrate the acceptance level of people towards vernacular houses. They conclude that people are not happy about the transformations and there is an attachment for the vernacular houses, which they argue must be seriously considered when producing contemporary houses and settlements.

Evawani Ellisa, and Ghina Azharia on the other hand examine truly authentic vernacular settlements in Indonesia, sustained by the intervention of the state as a tourist orientated place. They show how the ritual of KaSa'o is an expression of hospitality at the traditional village of Tololela, Flores, Indonesia. The paper is an interesting demonstration of how the professional architecture community can come to play a role in supporting such communities to maintain their traditions. The University of Indonesia's team's involvement in the construction project of Batanua has immensely helped Tololela, Flores, Indonesia and demonstrates what can and should be done.

Finally, Ranjith Dayaratne takes us outside the strict boundaries of the vernacular settlements to examine how the construction of artificial islands in Bahrain which he claims is an imagination of new spatial geographies and architecture of poetic terrains, couched in the essentialist character of people's relations with the sea. As he argues, that has been its traditional settlement nature which defined the core identity of the island.

With such a wide range of papers on vernacular settlements and extending them further afield, this journal issue lays the foundation for a more amenable human world to be constructed that will sustain the earth.

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