atmosphere of houses which are built relatively in the same patterns and styles Typically for housing estates, the property management of *muban-chad-san* is usually done in large-scale with massive and rapid constructions. For financial and management purposes, limited types of standard houses are available to choose from and limited modifications of the building are allowed.[25] Besides, land is approximately equally divided into blocks. Within any one development, there is however unlikely to be diversity even though several architectural typologies might be implemented in different commercial housing projects, such as single house, townhouse, detached house, row house, apartment, condominium, etc.

An almost complete bounded space found in *muban-chad-san* is however totally different from the simulated perspectives which are often portrayed in the advertisements as physically continuous – in the media, houses are surrounded by the greenery without any obstructions in-between (FIG. 9). Such made-up scenes could not however be implemented in real spaces as city people highly concern with legitimate land ownership and its monetary value, hence the identification of ownership of properties by legal demarcation is therefore perceived as necessary. Nevertheless, the illusiveness of unbounded quality displayed in various media suggests that this might be one of the common qualities that people prefer in residential space. Even though such quality of space may not be absolutely created for real, the idea to create unbounded space is enough to initially make good impression in people's minds.

The centrality of khlong

In *Ban* Bangraonok, *khlong* is an essential part of villagers' lives. Though the concern about the increasingly unsanitary water quality has stopped people from using it for drinking and cooking, the *khlong* is still a primary resource for other household activities and cultivation, a major occupation for most villagers. In this context, the *khlong* provides a central space for all sorts of day-to-day activities – private and public, individual and communal, and domestic and commercial activities are all conducted at and along the *khlong*.

On the contrary, the *khlongs* in most *muban-chad-sans*, both natural and manmade, serve the communities as drainages whereas the role of water, presented in the form of lake and pond, is mainly created for the aesthetic and recreational purposes. The prevalence of plumbing in all urbanized areas has impacted the *khlong*'s water which is also becoming more polluted. It is nevertheless found that waterside houses are usually sold in higher price as they are considered locating in a better environment. Consequently, there have been many attempts to design houses alongside water (some contain barriers and some do not), however the interrelationships between water and inland people were scarcely found. Water in this sense provide only visual scenery but not a meaningful place that deeply associate with people's everyday lives and their inner souls.

The previous research demonstrated that what makes people deeply attached to the *khlong* is the 'memory' or 'familiarity' with its space, uses, lives, stories, experiences and spirits, not just its physical settings. *Khlong* is always referred to not just because their house locations make them familiar with its existential space, but also because of their deep connections and experiences, built up over a long period of time. For these people, the waterway reminds them of their origins – it embodies the memorable stories of the establishment of their houses, families, and community. It is therefore understandably difficult for residents who have recently moved into the housing areas to develop such experiences.

It seems urban people dream to live in a 'peaceful' environment, containing a quality that happens to be embedded in the original atmosphere of '*ban suan rim khlong*.' There is however a significant difference between a scene that is peaceful, and one that is in fact becoming quiet and nearly lifeless, and modern *khlongs* seem to represent a shift from the former to the latter, where people have less association with the *khlong*, which may no longer be perceived as significant to their lives. There is however a question if the degradation of modern *khlongs* in physical, behavioral and perceptual aspects indicates the losing characteristics of Bangkok's space. The study tells us that without the constituents of people's living along and interacting with the *khlong*, the original notion of '*ban suan rim khlong*' cannot be generated. Hence the key question here should be "how do we bring life back to the *khlong*?"

The re-formation of Thai community

In terms of community organization, the notion of '*muban*' (village) in traditional Thai rural villages reflects mutual reinforcement of overlapping concepts of social networks, territoriality, economic organization, political status and administrative boundaries recognized in the bureaucratic system. The traditional characteristics of *muban* Thai (or Thai village), like *Ban* Bangraonok, are its open system, interdependent society, extensive social networks, and sustained or self-contained economic system (*tam-ma-ha-kin*) [26]: people grow rice for survival, make clothes for themselves, and share goods and supports with other members. [27] In these contexts, people are always willing to help and be considerate to each other, known as *nam chai* – this social quality is rarely found in *muang* (city) though it is still valued in Thai society. [28]

The essence of '*muban-chad-san*' in the modern context portrays a totally different notion from that of '*muban*' in a traditional context although they both refer to a place as a community. The declining mental connections to place in *muban-chad-san* environment were pointed by Askew, who described villagers as becoming just residents. [29] In this place, there are different people with different backgrounds and lifestyles living together in the same area. As newcomers who have just move into the areas, they have a short period of time to develop deep connections, both socially and mentally, with their neighborhood, especially areas outside their house compounds.

Lessons we learnt from *Ban* Bangraonok indicate that the open and continuous quality of space encourages people to have high local mobility and interaction contributing to more intimate and extended relationships among villagers. This explains why residents living in the enclosed areas have much less social interactions with their neighbors. In housing estates, people's modern lifestyles are shifting towards individualistic (*tang khon tang yu*), as expressed through the preferred lifestyle of independence (*itsara*), privacy (*pen-suan-tua*), and 'being oneself' (*pen tua khong tua eng*).[30] A villager, who lived in *Ban* Bangraonok, made a comparison of rural and city lifestyles.

> My sister sometimes sails here in the afternoon, sometimes in the evening. If she misses me, she will come for a chat. Rural people (*khon ban-nok*) are like this, different from city people (*khon Krungthep*). City people don't even know their neighbors. I'm so afraid…afraid [of living there!]
>
> (Participant No. 1-23).

The declined connection could possibly be explained by the typical process of creating *muban-chad-san*, whereby all former patterns and hence the behind stories referring to qualities attached to this place were completely erased. Commonly, land developers operate by buying many parcels of land, assembling, developing – meaning wiping out existing features – and building new infrastructure and utilities, parceling land into small uniform units, and selling allotments including optional houses to customers, who are mostly people who live in other areas.[31] Through the process, those subsisted qualities that have been accumulatively constructed through time would be all lost and new qualities (new meanings and values) will be entirely constructed.

The role of a local *wat* as a center of religious and social activities for a local community has also altered. Although Buddhist traditions are still popularly practiced, the residents did not attach themselves merely to their local or nearest temples. Various persuasive factors can now be reasons for people's choice of a temple such as convenience of accessibility, reputation of the temples or monks, or attractiveness of the setting. The reducing significance of the local *wat* has affected its traditional role of sustaining community and reinforcing spiritual connections between residents and the place where they live.

The research manifests the transformations of Bangkok towards 'modern' *muang*, implying the shifts towards community fragmentation, independent lifestyle (*tang-khon-tang-yu*), social separation and mental detachment from place. A decreasing sense of belonging and bonding (*khwam phukphan*) to the neighborhood results not only in lessening environmental concern but also in declining sense of community in urban places. If social and perceptual dimensions of place remain important in the processes of constituting community, then the

missing qualities in *muban-chad-san* would be major obstacles in creating a sense of community and yield ultimately (and arguably) mental comfort to people who live there.

LESSONS

Throughout the paper, there are several missing qualities in the newly built '*ban suan rim khlong*' illustrating the failure to capture the *real* essence of this concept in its original notion. The reviving notion of '*ban suan rim khlong*' back to modern Bangkok nevertheless provides an important step for sustainable development and communities in Thailand though it has never entirely achieved. Apart from lessons we learnt from the trials and errors in the new '*ban suan rim khlong*' that would at least tell us how to begin if we would re-perform the task in the future, such explorations also create opportunities for Thai people to establish the understanding of their own city, culture and identity.

The concentrations on merely physical surface in the design of modern housing projects indicate that both designers and developers still lack of knowledge about Thai space and place. In fact, the issue about place identity and the essence of Thainess embedded in space and place has become widely researched by both local and foreign academics over the past decade but the obtained knowledge has never been implemented nor had any contribution to the professional practices. This suggests that there is a need for designers, developers and researchers to collaborate, meaning to share knowledge of the essence of Thai place and help developing alternative designs that could maintain the 'true' identity of Thai space and place in the future.

Attempts by designers to recreate the nostalgically held atmosphere of '*ban suan rim khlong*' (house along *khlong* in orchards) in a modern Thai context demonstrate major problems in the processes of assimilating and re-assembling 'place.' The mere physical existence or re-production of the major elements of this 'essence' (*ban, suan* and *khlong*) are not, alone, sufficient to reproduce the entire essence of a place surviving in the memories that people hold of the old days. In the Thai context, it is indeed the intangible qualities – the social, psychological and spiritual meanings and values, and the interrelationships among all these – that combine to constitute place and its 'unique' qualities.

In contrast with much literature that focuses on the dominance of physical elements or settings in the reading of place and landscape,[32] the studies here indicate that existential space is just a part of the whole process of constituting place. Human interactions and their associations with space have a major role in creating spatial dynamics as well as enriching meanings and values (or qualities) underlying place. This conclusion could be

well illustrated by Meinig's interpretation of landscape that "…any landscape is composed not only of what lies before our eyes but what lies within our heads."[33]

How then, in the context of this problem, are we able to describe the *overall* qualities of place? The fragmented nature of language and of 'scientific' method means that both description and analysis only capture bits, pieces or parts of an atmosphere and meaningful nature of an environment, leading to a gap between what holistically exists in reality and what is selectively perceived and then described. In view of this linguistic/analytic entrapment in fragmenting and deconstructing place, there will always be a problem for designers to search for ways to aggregate these segmented layers and dimensions back together to reconstruct some new authenticity (genius loci) able to maintain the total effects of place.

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[2] *The kingdom and people of Siam*, p.392; Lucien Fournereau, *Bangkok in 1892*, trans. (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1998), p. 27.

[3] *Bangkok in 1892*, p.21; Phaladisai Sidthithanyakit, *Khanon bang-kok: na dan Krungsri-Ayutthaya.* [Bangkok: Frontier of Ayutthaya.], (Bangkok: Bantuek Siam, 1999), pp.37-39; Sombat Plynoy, *Lao ruang bang-kok.* [Telling stories about Bang-kok.], Vol.2, (Bangkok: Saitharn Publication House, 2001), pp.195-197; Sujitt Wongtes (Ed.) *Wiengwang fung thon chumchon chao Siam* [Palace on Thonburi bank and Siamese communities.] (Bangkok: Matichon Press), pp. 153-154.

[4] See the conceptualization and the shifting notions of '*ban*' and '*muang*' by Cuttaleeya Noparatnaraporn, "Living place and landscape in Bangkok: the merging character." in the proceedings of: *The Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities* at http://www.hichumanities.org/AHproceedings/Cuttaleeya%20Noparatnaraporn.pdf.

[5] This term will be of substantial use subsequently in the paper, as it summarizes a widely held understanding of traditional residential space. While it does not have carriage in the body of academic writing, it is argued here that the term resonates immediately with the idea and experiences of ordinary Bangkok people.

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[8] Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam mapped: a history of the geo-body of a nation.* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), p. 7.

[9] For the idea of human-space relationships, the reader may want to consult Henri Lefebvre, *The production of space*, trans. (Oxford; Cambridge; Mass.: Blackwell, 1991), p. 26.

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[12] Christopher Alexander, "A city is not a tree." in: *Humanscape: environments for people*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ulrich's Book Inc., 1982, c1965), p.390; D. W. Meinig, "Reading the landscape: an appreciation of W.G. Hoskins and J.B. Jackson." in: *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: geographical Essays*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979). pp.228-229; Yi-Fu Tuan, "Thought and landscape: the eye and the mind's eye." in: *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes : Geographical Essays*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979). p.89; Anne W. Spirn, *The language of landscape*. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 85-86.

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[14] *The language of landscape*, pp. 85-86

[15] This research adopted the principal of 'grounded theory', created by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. (Chicago: Aldine, 1973), p.79.

[16] Terdsak Tachakitkachorn, "Transformation process of waterside dwellings in *Khlong* Bangkoknoi: case study of waterside villages in *Khlong* WatSakyai and *Khlong* WatJumpa." in: *Modernity, Tradition, Culture, Water: an international symposium, Bangkok*, (Bangkok: Kasetsart University Press, 2003). pp. 1-2.

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[18] See *Transformation process of waterside dwellings in Khlong Bangkoknoi: case study of waterside villages in Khlong WatSakyai and Khlong WatJumpa*, p. 2.

[19] The interview of participant number 23, who lived in *Ban* Bangraonok, Nonthaburi, conducted in early 2002.

[20] Paritta Chalermpow, Koanantakool and Marc Askew, "Urban life and urban people in transition." in the proceedings of: *Who gets what and how?: challenges for the future* (Ambassador City Jomtien, Chon Buri, Thailand: The 2010 Project, 1993), pp. 170-171.

[21] Marc Askew, *Bangkok, place, practice and representation*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 77.

[22] *Urban life and urban people in transition*, pp. 47-49.

[23] Chatthip Nartsupha, *Ban kab muang*. [*Ban* and *muang*.], (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn Press, 1997), p. 3.

[24] The changing meanings and connotations of the term *chonnabot*, simply translated as a rural area, are discussed in *Living place and landscape in Bangkok: the merging character*.

[25] These insights were gained through the author's own experience of going through the process of purchasing a house and living in a housing estate environment for almost fifteen years.

[26] *Thrisdi chiwit ti porpiang* (sufficient-living theory) was proposed by King Rama IX in 1997 as the way to revive and sustain the economic system of Thailand, in order to yield the utmost happiness for the dwellers. You can find other details in Ruam-duai-chuai-kan (Ed.) *Thrisdimai nailuang: chiwit ti porpiang*. [King's new theory: sufficient living.], (Bangkok: Ruam-duai-chuai-kan).

[27] Chatthip Nartsupha, *Watthanatham thai kab kabuankarn plianplang thang sangkhom*. [Thai culture and the transforming process of Thai society.], (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn Press, 1991), p.155; Chatthip Nartsupha, *Watthanatham mubaan Thai*. [The culture of Thai village.], (Bangkok: Sangsan Publishing Co., Ltd., 1994), p.197; Chatthip Nartsupha, *Ban kab muang*. [*Ban* and *muang*.], (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn Press, 1997), pp.52, 53, 77; Phraya Anuman-Rajadhon, *Chiwit chao thai samaikon: ruang kan suksa ruang prapeni thai*. [Thai life in the past: the studies of Thai traditions.], (Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, 1988), p.31; *Maenaam lumkhlong sai pravatsart, p.112*; Vichit-Vadakan, 1979, p.118 cited in Marc Askew, *Interpreting Bangkok: the urban question in Thai studies*. (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1994), p. 77.

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[29] Marc Askew, "Landscapes of the urban fringe: a study of social, physical and economic changes in Nonthaburi province at the regional and local levels." in *Methodology for the implementation of urban planning in Thailand*, November, 7. (Bangkok: JICA joint research program, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University, 1996), p. 37.

[30] *Urban life and urban people in transition*, pp. 49, 52, 57.

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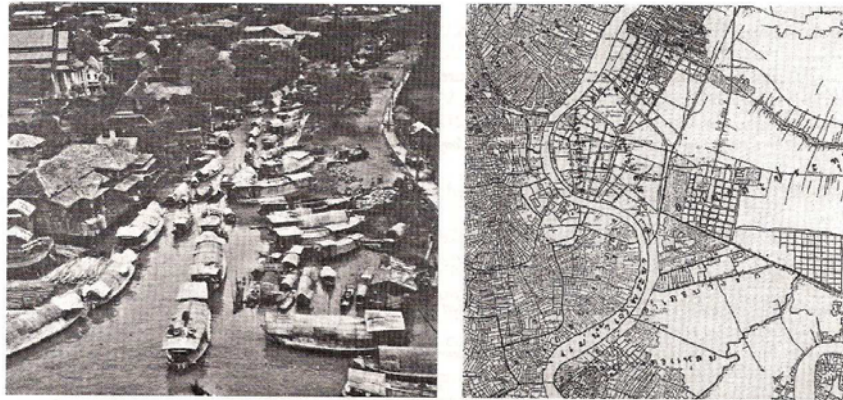
FIGURES

FIG. 1 A scene of Bangkok in 1900s when numbers of boats were generally seen and a map of Bangkok during the same time when the intricate networks of *khlong* still existed (Source: FAD and SCFC, *Krungthep 2489-2539 (Bangkok 1946-1996).* (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department and the Siam Cement Foundation Cooperation, 1996).
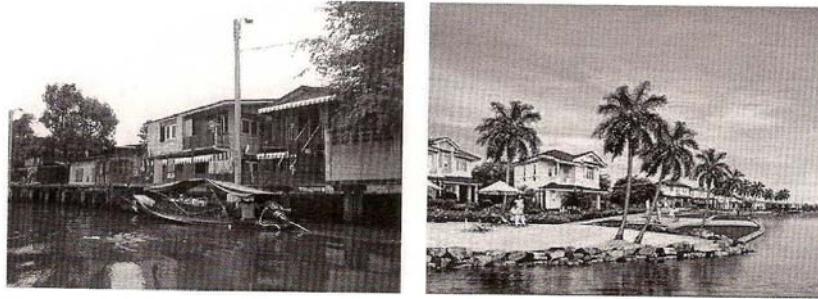
FIG. 2 Houses along a polluted urban *khlong* in Bangkok (left), and advertising image for a commercial housing project along a lake and surrounded by palm trees (right) (Source: Author (left) and www.lh.co.th (right)).
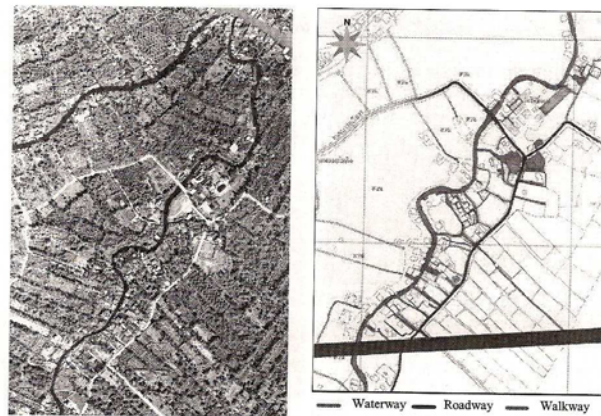

Waterway —— Roadway —— Walkway

FIG. 3 An aerial map of Ban Bangraonok in 2001 (Scale 1:15,000) and a map showing the three spatial structures of *khlong*, *thanon*, and walkway in 2001 (Scale 1:12,500) (Source: Modified from Urban Department of Nonthaburi survey in 2000).
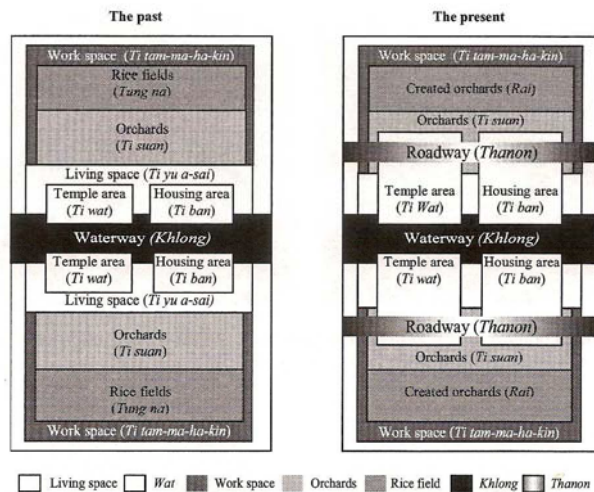
FIG. 4 The diagram simplifies the local land use system in Ban Bangraonok, based on the location of the major *khlong*. The left side shows the original system in the 1950s and the right shows the modified version, fifty years later, after the local road was built Source: Interpreted from interview data and author's observation in Ban Bangraonok, Nonthaburi).
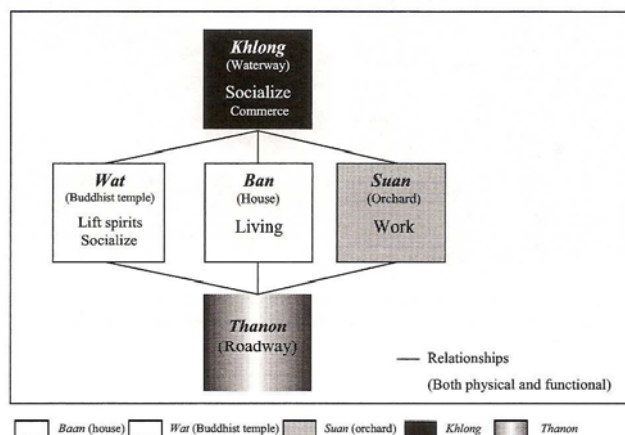

FIG. 5 The diagram simplifies the relationships between places and basic activities in a villager's everyday life in the present day (Source: Interpreted from the interviews with local people and author's observation in Ban Bangraonok, Nonthaburi).

FIG. 6 Social activities occurred along the *khlong* and at the local temple in Ban Bangraonok, Nonthaburi (Source: Author).

FIG. 7 The advertisements of two housing estates attemptiung to recreate *ban suan rim khlong* (Source: MLS, *MLS property guide*. Bangkok: Real estate information center, 2003).
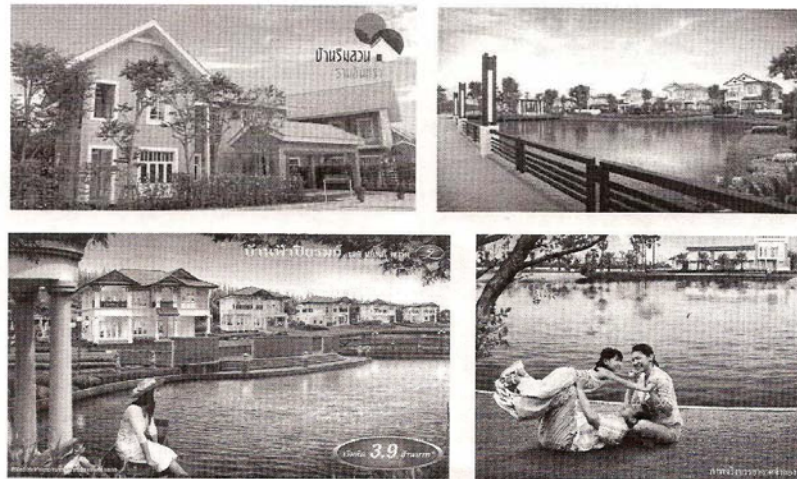
FIG. 8 Various examples of garden home (top left), lakeside home (top right) and lakeside and garden home (bottom) in advertising media: all the elements might be there, but still worlds away from the original *ban suan rim khlong* Source: *Home Buyers' Guide*, July 2006).

FIG. 9 Two contrast scenes of housing estate advertised in the media (Neighbor Home), which are physically continuous, and another in real space with a complete enclosed space. Source: *Home Buyers' Guide*, July 2006).

Memory or Nostalgia:
The Imagining of Everyday Bangkok

Cuttaleeya NOPARATNARAPORN and Ross KING

The modernization of Thailand has seen an aquatic everyday world replaced by a terrestrial one, and a loose occupancy of land supplanted by Western notions of rigid ownership and title deeds. While the aquatic past passes into memory (to pose some threat, however, to the interests of Thai elites), a Thai episteme based in images and surfaces, transforms that memory to less threatening nostalgia and ritual; and the previous fluidity of space likewise "survives" in surfaces. The study is of three areas of present-day Bangkok that manifest different stages in this transformation to a space of surfaces.

In a recent series of papers, Peter Jackson drew attention to aspects of a "Thai regime of images" (Jackson 2004*a*, 2004*b*). To begin with, "[a] defining feature of the Thai regime of images is a rigid demarcation between what is publicly unspeakable, especially in the presence of a non-Thai audience, and what is 'common knowledge' in private, local discourses" (2004b, p. 220). A distinctive episteme is traced back to a pre-modern culture of "face" and "reputation", manifested in the "the theatre state" and its preoccupation with surface ritual transforming itself in the 19th century into "the performative state". Penny Van Esterik is quoted to the effect that present Thai society can be seen as one that "encourages an essentialism of appearances or surfaces … The real is hidden and unchallenged. The surface is taken for real" (Van Esterik 2000, p. 4). Such a characteristic is also

deep-rooted in people's attitudes to achieve "social success in life" and in cultural values that Phillips (1965) called "social cosmetics", such as appearing "caring and considerate" (the concept of *kreng chai*), "politeness", "kindness and helpfulness" (Komin 1985, pp. 179–80). So, as also argued by Rosalind Morris, Thai modernity in turn stands on a mode of power that operates laterally across surfaces rather than vertically in the panoptic or all-seeing mode that Foucault identified as characterising Western politics and culture (Morris 2002, referred to in Jackson 2004*a*, p. 182) — it is "the love of the disciplined surface" (Morris 2000, p. 180).

There are correspondingly two urban realms. The royal and elite are that of palaces, *wats* (temples), the rituals and images of the "performative state", and their continuing extensions in military display, parliament, and contradiction-laden monuments (Dovey 2001). Against that is arrayed a private world of *khlongs* (canals), villages, spirit-informed landscapes, and the light, elevated, airy houses of both the human and the spirit occupants of water and land. Whereas the elite realm is to project permanence, solidity, authority, and its images to be impressed in some "collective imagination", the private is just that: private, passing, and ephemeral.

Admiring or even envious attitudes towards the development (*kan pattana*) and civilization (*khwam charoen* or *khwam ciwilai*) of foreign, initially European, countries inspired King Rama IV (r1851–1868) and King Rama V (r1868–1910) to initiate a number of evolutionary projects. The two major surviving legacies from that time that have most changed the spatial organization and physical characteristics of Bangkok are the construction of the *thanon* (road) network, superimposed over the antique world of the *khlongs* and ultimately to supplant it (though never completely), and the implementation of the new title deed (*chanod*) system (Sidthithanyakit 1999, pp. 7, 23–31; Wongtes 2001, pp. 120–21); and it was towards that private realm that these reforms were predominantly directed. A century and more later, these "reforms" have still only partly worked their way through the greater Bangkok metropolis (let alone up-country Thailand!), and it is to their present-day transforming effects that attention will be

directed — how does the *thanon* system and the new legalities of land ownership arise in the context of a far older spatial realm and of a constantly evolving, distinctive Thai episteme?

In several of its aspects modernization can manifest as surface, and call that episteme into new play. So there emerges a differentiation between "the front" (the public world of the *thanon*) and "the back" (the hidden world of *khlongs*), already reflected upon in the 1950s:

> You mustn't judge Bangkok by New Road and Bangkapi or Rajadamnoen Avenue. On the other side … you'll see thousands of people living almost as the people of Bangkok and Ayuthia have lived for hundreds of years. There are still busy *klongs* this side of the river, too, if you know where to look for them. (Bartlett 1959, p. 39)

However the urbanized streets of Bangkapi and elsewhere are present also as depthless image, though differently, and display the surface impact of Western culture in billboards, signage, architecture, and capitalist-popular lifestyles as a screen across private worlds (Basche 1971, p. 256).

Three Places in Bangkok

We will return to this question of the masks of surface across the eroding effect of the present on the past and its memories, and to further epistemological issues to which it gives rise. However, first we refract these initial ideas through observation of three locations in the present city that seem to manifest different stages in the *longue durée* of this transformation. In each case these brief essays have been based on close participant observation and extended in-depth interviews with residents (approximately 30 in each case), during 2001 and 2002 (Noparatnaraporn 2005); their immediate purpose is to explore what seem to be stages in this progressive transformation (erosion!), but their effect is to raise questions of nostalgia as a surface over the loss of older understandings and indeed of memory.

Memory or Nostalgia: The Imagining of Everyday Bangkok 61

Figure 1
Map of the Bangkok Region, with Locations of Case Study Areas
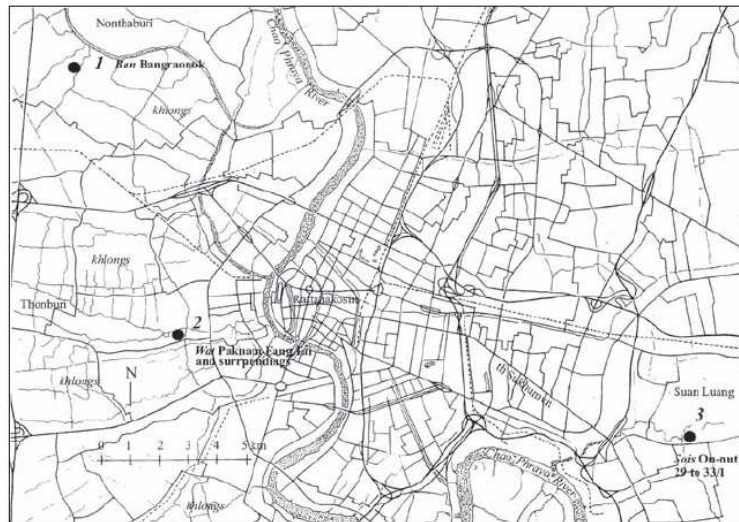
Source: Authors.

1. *Ban* Bangraonok, Nonthaburi

This *muban* (village), combining a secondary waterway, a *wat* (temple), waterside dwellings and orchards, displays the essential ingredients of a typical *ban suan rim khlong* (house along *khlong* in orchard) or what Tachakitkachorn (2003) has called an "agriculture-based waterside village", in the lower Chao Phraya Delta. It is in Nonthaburi Province, in the semi-rural fringe of Bangkok, and approximately 11 kilometres from the inner part of Rattanakosin island, which is the historic heart of old Bangkok. It seems that the local *Wat* Pho-en might have been constructed in the late 1600s, with the surrounding community established at roughly the same time; it is today accessed by two main passageways: *Khlong* Bangraonok, a natural waterway from the old aquatic realm, and the later-built road of *Thanon Ban* Pho-en (from 1990) (Noparatnaraporn 2003).

62   Cuttaleeya NOPARATNARAPORN Ross KING

Figure 2
Ban Bangraonok, Nonthaburi in 2001

Source: Modified from Urban Department of
Nonthaburi survey.

The *thanon* touches upon rather then intrudes into the village,
but has accelerated the latter's expansion into its inland orchards;
it has also eroded the old intimacy and sense of community. More
remotely, flood management projects on the Chao Phraya River and
khlong network have disrupted the age-old pattern of dry seasons and
annual flooding with its linked routines of agriculture, celebration,
and spiritual renewal. They have instead, however, brought a new
threat: there are still floods, but they are now infrequent, less
predictable, and more severe. The most extreme of these, in 1932,
1983, and 1995, progressively ended the old orchard culture, leading
to more diverse agricultural practices but also the need for work to
be found beyond the village.

Khlong Bangraonok continues as the backbone of the village, the centre of its life, its identifier, and giving it its name — Ban Bangraonok. Though polluted, its water no longer potable, it is still used for bathing and for transportation, and remains alive with boats trading household needs and cooked food, bringing visitors and, always, local information. On the evidence of close-bonded relationships within the neighbourhoods, it can also still define a community. As one participant could declare:

> People in this *khlong* are all related, as brothers and sisters. In fact from here (*Wat* Pho-en) onwards until *Wat* Hu-chang, almost everyone is associated as brothers and sisters. … It is like whoever lives in this *khlong* is considered as relatives because people from this *khlong* are "the same group of people". It is similar to *chonnabot* (rural area), being brothers and sisters, like in he past. It is exactly the same. Although we are not in fact real relatives, but it feels like we are.

And another:

> My sister sometimes sails here in the afternoon, sometimes in the evening. If she misses me she will come for a chat. Rural people (*khon ban-nok*) are like this, different from city people (*khon Krungthep*). City people don't even know their neighbours.

All such reports were however coloured by both nostalgia and apprehension — the world as known is seemingly passing away, and the emergence of *thanon* is seen as the cause; so from another participant:

> Road (*thanon*) has changed our daily life. In the past, we often met each other, as we normally walked here and there, like walking to the orchard. After the road occurred, no people grow orchards any more, and it makes us rarely see each other. We have become separated, seems like to be torn apart. People from the inner *khlong* and the outer *khlong* are now using different exits; therefore we don't often meet.

While the end of the old regularities and the advent of uncertainty were represented in the landscape of the village, in the form of a greater diversity of fruits, crops, and agricultural practices and hence, on all accounts, a greater botanical heterogeneity, yet the

characteristics of village space may have changed very little. The present-day functional system could be locally understood; however, land separation could not be identified in the blurred, boundless and undifferentiated space of the village. Solid walls were virtually absent, anything approximating to a fence would be transparent and easily passed through, and the elevation of houses above the ground gave continuity to the ground surface. Housing and orchard areas might be clearly different from each other, nevertheless the space of one would flow un-bordered into the other; marsh, irrigation channel, and *khlong* similarly flowed together; and the land of the kitchen gardens would melt into the narrow pathways that lead into the orchard. There was also no differentiation between physical and spiritual realms: virtually every house had the two types of spirit house on its land — a *saan phra phum* on a single central column (for the spirit who rules over and protects that land itself), and a *saan ta yai* or *saan chao ti* on four shorter columns at the corners (for the spirits of ancestors). The spirit houses and the profound respect accorded their spiritual dwellers suggest the reality of a world understood to subsist beneath the surface of ephemeral, physical space.

2. *Wat* Paknam Fang Tai and its surroundings, Thonburi

Thonburi Province is closer to the old inner city, and in fact was the capital of Siam during 1767–82, preceding the formal foundation of Bangkok. While *Wat* Paknam Fang Tai is less than 4 kilometres from inner Rattanakosin, it is, like Nonthaburi on the "wrong side" of the Chao Phraya, and therefore largely forgotten by the frenetically eastwards expanding metropolis (Smithies 1993; Askew 2002; Warren 2002).
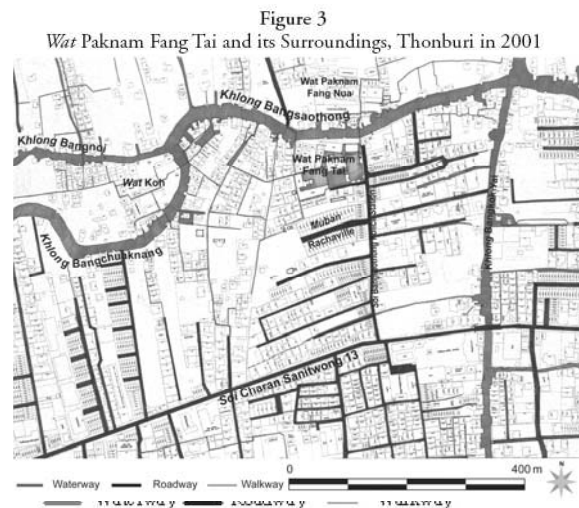
The earliest air photos, from 1932, reveal a village community along *Khlong* Bangchuaknang, in clusters around three water-linked *wats* (with another four nearby, but along other waterways). The first notable change comes in 1965 with the emergence of two *sois* (land-based laneways) to give access to a college to the south — specifically *Soi* Charan Sanitwong 13, constructed in 1965, which initiated both residential and commercial building bordering it.

Memory or Nostalgia: The Imagining of Everyday Bangkok   65
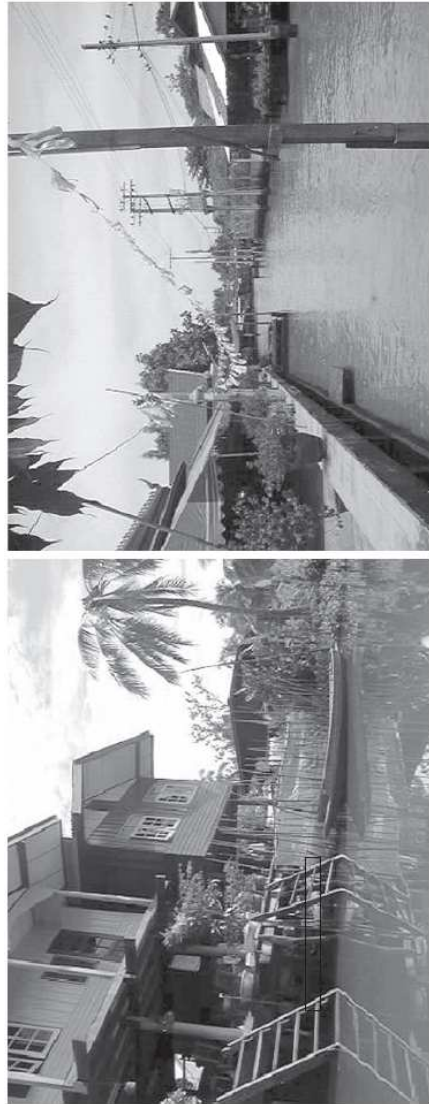
Borderless space of *khlong* and land; and spirit houses to signify unbounded, co-existing worlds of spirit and nature, *Ban* Bangraonok (Photograph courtesy of Cuttaleeya Noparatnaraporn)

66   Cuttaleeya NOPARATNARAPORN Ross KING

Figure 3
Wat Paknam Fang Tai and its Surroundings, Thonburi in 2001

Source: Modified from Metropolitan Electricity Authority survey.

The 1975 photos indicate that two distinctive settlements were developing along the two passages, namely along *Khlong* Bangsaothong on the north, and *Soi* Charan Sanitwong 13 to the south. Each constructed its own internal networks — narrow boardwalks and sub-laneways in canal and road-based settlement respectively. The two communities remained separate, though with *Wat* Paknam Fang Tai performing a linking role, until functionally connected by a new roadway, *Soi* Bangsaothong Police Station, in the early 1970s. The most dramatic changes however were after 1987, with both communities expanding into their orchard areas and a dramatic increase in building density, appropriating almost all the previously surviving green space. By 2001 only two remnant areas of orchard remained. There is a surviving community along the *khlong* (administratively known as *chumchon* or urban community), but also two other "new" settlement forms: *ti-chad-san* (land allotments)