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PRESS RELEASE

Two Top Awards Given to Baojiatun Watermill in China and Sumda Chun Gonpa in India for the 2011 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards

Bangkok, 1 September 2011 — **Baojiatun Watermill** in Guizhou Province, China and **Sumda Chun Gonpa** in Leh, India have been honoured with the **Awards of Excellence** in the 2011 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

The **Award of Distinction** went to the **Altit Fort** in Hunza, Pakistan. The two **Awards of Merit** include the **Serkhang Monastery** in Qinghai Province, China and the **Scriptures Hall of Wat Thepthidaram Worawihan** in Bangkok, Thailand.

Three **Honourable Mentions** were also announced. They are the **SCAD Hong Kong (Former North Kowloon Magistracy Building)** in Hong Kong SAR, China; the **Na Phra Lan Historic Shophouses** in Bangkok, Thailand; and the **Salarian Pavilion of Wat Kutao** in Songkhla, Thailand.



*The **Baojiatun Watermill** in Guizhou Province, China and **Sumda Chun Gonpa** in Leh, India, both win the Award of Excellence in the 2011 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation*

A total of 34 entries, from 10 countries in the region, were submitted for consideration. The conservation project entries include museums, hotels, offices, cultural institutions, educational institutions, religious sites, industrial sites, public institutions, residential buildings and urban districts.

The two 2011 **Jury Commendation for Innovation** were awarded to the **Sydney Harbour YHA and the Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre** in New South Wales, Australia and **Ma'anqiao Village** in Sichuan Province, China. The Jury Commendation recognizes newly-built structures which demonstrate outstanding standards for contemporary architectural design which are well-integrated into historic contexts.



Sydney Harbour YHA and the Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre, NSW, Australia



Ma'anqiao Village, Sichuan Province, China

The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation recognizes the efforts of private individuals and organizations that have successfully restored and conserved structures and buildings of heritage value in the region.

UNESCO believes that recognizing private efforts to restore and adapt historic properties will encourage other property owners to undertake conservation projects within the community, either independently or by seeking public-private partnerships.

A panel of international conservation experts in architecture, urban planning, heritage conservation and landscape design conducted the selection process. The jury panel was particularly impressed with a heightened level of community participation and involvement within the conservation process for this year's entry submissions. The winners were selected based on the way that the projects reflected a clear understanding and application of the various components of the Awards criteria, such as the articulation of the spirit of place, appropriate use or adaptation, or the project's contribution to the surrounding environment and the local community's cultural and historical continuum.

Eligible projects must be more than 50 years old and the restoration must have been completed within the past 10 years. Buildings must have also been in viable use for at least one year from the date of the awards announcement.

The 2011 cycle of the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation is supported by the Macau Foundation. UNESCO and the Macau Foundation share similar objectives in promoting, developing and nurturing the importance of our cultural heritage.

Profiles of 2011 Heritage Awards Winners



The **Baojiatun Watermill** in Guizhou Province, China received an Award of Excellence. The restoration of the ancient watermill in the village of Baojiatun sets an outstanding precedent for safeguarding a living agricultural landscape in China. Innovative partnerships among various agencies underpinned a holistic approach to the conservation of the site. The project showcases the significance of Asia's cultural landscapes which are rapidly vanishing under pressures of modernization.



The **Sumda Chun Gonpa** in Leh, India was also recognized with an Award of Excellence. The heroic rescue of the Sumda Chun Gonpa has brought back to life one of the oldest monasteries in a remote area of Ladakh. The restoration of the historically significant but severely dilapidated structure was carried out in a systematic and sensitive manner guided by meticulous research. The exemplary project was realized through the steadfast commitment of the local community and the monastic order, in cooperation with cultural foundations and international partners.



The Award of Distinction winner **Altit Fort** in Hunza, Pakistan represents yet another step forward in the model of community-based conservation practice that has been evolving in the body of work of the Aga Khan Cultural Service of Pakistan. Meticulous historical research and scientific investigation informed the conservation work, which successfully tackled a complex array of problems. Today the building has regained its iconic place in the Hunza Valley and now serves as a beacon to inspire future generations.



Serkhang Monastery, Qinghai Province, China has been recognized with an Award of Merit. It is one of the few surviving Tibetan monasteries in Qinghai from the 14th century. Serkhang Monastery has been restored through close cooperation between the Nangra community and invited international conservation experts. The project is commendable for its comprehensive approach to conservation, encompassing the entire site and the valuable collection of wall paintings.



An Award of Merit was also given to the **Scriptures Hall of Wat Thepthidaram Worawihan**, Bangkok, Thailand. From a state of serious disrepair, it has been restored with an outpouring of public support and a united effort from the Thai conservation community, the monastery and the local neighborhood. The methodology of restoration was also praiseworthy, demonstrating meticulous research, documentation and continual learning throughout the course of the project.



SCAD Hong Kong (Former North Kowloon Magistracy Building), Hong Kong, SAR, China received an Honourable Mention. The adaptive re-use of the former North Kowloon Magistracy as an international university of the arts has breathed new life into a decommissioned 1960s government building. The project demonstrates the possibilities of adaptive reuse for public buildings of this typology and is a model for successful public-private cooperation under the framework of Hong Kong SAR's policy for retaining and optimizing the value of heritage buildings.



The **Na Phra Lan Historic Shophouses**, Bangkok, Thailand was also recognized with an Honourable Mention. The refurbishment of the Na Phra Lan Historic Shophouses has uplifted a historically significant urban complex in the heart of the historic core of Bangkok. Prominently located across from the Grand Palace, the project has restored not only this architectural landmark from the early 20th century, but also the surrounding historic streetscape as well. The project establishes a commendable model for participation by the long-term tenants, who contributed to the project costs and have committed to maintaining the buildings in the years to come.



The **Salarian Pavilion of Wat Kutao**, Songkhla, Thailand was granted an Honourable Mention. The restoration of the pavilion highlights the accomplishment of a participatory conservation approach involving the local community, educational institutes and technical specialists. The project received an outpouring of support from the community and has inspired a greater awareness of local cultural heritage, leading to the subsequent restoration of other historic structures in the monastery.

Profiles of 2011 Heritage Awards Jury Commendation for Innovation Winners



The winner of the Jury Commendation for Innovation is the **Sydney Harbour YHA and the Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre** in New South Wales, Australia. The project successfully puts urban archaeology in the spotlight, showcasing the site through creative use as a youth hostel and a public education centre. Located in Sydney's historic harbourside precinct, with a view of the city's most prominent modern architectural icons, the building's sleek design stands out as a fresh contemporary counterpoint.



The other winner of the Jury Commendation for Innovation is the **Ma'anqiao Village** in Sichuan Province, China. One of the villages devastated by the Sichuan earthquake in 2008, Ma'anqiao is a noteworthy example of post-disaster reconstruction that fits comfortably in its immediate cultural and environmental context. By ensuring that the vernacular rammed earth technology has been adapted to meet modern standards for both seismic performance and green buildings, the project ensures that the newly-built houses will sustain traditional lifestyles and protect human lives, while setting new standards for eco-architecture in China.

Further information about the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation and this year's winning entries can be found at the following website:

<http://www.unescobkk.org/culture/heritageawards>

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