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**Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education**

Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific  
Regional Unit for Culture in Asia and the Pacific  
Advisor for Communication and Information in Asia  
Regional Advisor for the UNESCO Institute for Statistics

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Hong San See Temple in Singapore wins the Award of Excellence in the 2010 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards**

Bangkok, September 1 2010 — **Hong San See Temple** in Singapore has been honored with the **Award of Excellence** in the 2010 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation.

A total of 33 entries, from 14 countries in the region, were submitted for consideration. The conservation project entries include museums, hotels, cultural institutions, educational institutions, religious sites, industrial sites, public institutions, residential buildings, urban districts and islands.

The two **Awards of Distinction** went to the **Red Brick Warehouses** in Yokohama, Japan and **Gulabpur Khanqah** in Skardu, Pakistan.

The three **Awards of Merit** include the **Fu'long Taoist Temple** in Sichuan, China; the **Chowmahalla Palace** in Hyderabad, India and the **Old Houses in the World Heritage Fort of Galle** in Sri Lanka.

Three **Honourable Mentions** were also announced. They are the **Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute** in Ballarat, Australia; **North Xinjiao Street** in Zhejiang, China and the **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Prince of Wales Museum)** in Mumbai, India.



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No projects were selected for the 2010 **Jury Commendation for Innovation**. The Jury Commendation aims to recognize newly-built structures which demonstrate outstanding standards for contemporary architectural design which are well integrated into historic contexts. The 2010 Jury Commendation submissions include three projects (an educational institution, a city complex and a museum) from two countries in the region.

The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture 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.

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.

UNESCO believes that recognizing private efforts to restore and adapt historic structures 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 noted that the range of proposals received this year point to the increasing momentum and level of conservation in the Asia-Pacific region. All winning entries demonstrated sound understanding of the issues of conservation in relation to the cultural, social, historical, and architectural significance of the building or complex. In addition, all award-winning entries had an important impact in terms of stimulating further conservation works and all made a contribution to cultural continuity in their respective communities.

### Profiles of 2010 Conservation Awards Winners



The Award of Excellence winner, **Hong San See Temple** Singapore, has revived an important icon of Minnan temple architecture of the late Qing dynasty which is a living heritage landmark for the Lam Ann settlers and the Singapore community as a whole. The project's rigorous conservation methodology has ensured that the authentic structure and fabric of the building are well-preserved. The community-based approach to restoration at Hong San See Temple stands to have a major impact in shifting the paradigm of conservation policy and practice in Singapore and around the region.



The first Award of Distinction winner, the **Red Brick Warehouse** in Yokohama, Japan, has borne witness to the history of industrial development of Japan over the past century and was revived as a vigorous civic space, allowing the citizens of Yokohama to retrace their city's industrial heritage while enjoying a modern lifestyle complex. Through a successful partnership between the private and public sectors at all levels, the Red Brick Warehouse has become a catalyst for urban regeneration in the historic Yokohama port area.



The second Award of Distinction, the **Gulabpur Khanqah** in Shigar, Skardu, Pakistan, has saved this 331-year old historic monument which served as the long-time centre of social, cultural, religious activities for the surrounding communities. The project demonstrates the inclusion of yet another building typology in the grassroots conservation movement already actively underway in Shigar. A great sense of commitment was demonstrated by the Gulabpur community, which makes the project an exemplar of community-led architectural restoration undertaken with a view towards sustaining living cultural traditions.



The **Fu'long Taoist Temple** in Sichuan, China has been recognized with an Award of Merit, the restoration of which represents a noteworthy model for post-disaster reconstruction and restoration of cultural heritage. The project was carried out in conformity with international conservation principles calling for retention of as much historic fabric as possible and restoration to the last known condition. With completion achieved in a short 18-month span, the project has restored not only a major monument of outstanding value, but also the confidence and spirit of the people of Sichuan.



**Chowmahalla Palace**, in Hyderabad, India has been recognized with an Award of Merit. The restoration of Chowmahalla Palace has rescued an extraordinary complex from years of abandonment and re-opened it up for contemporary civic use as a private museum after a meticulous process of restoration. The project has restored a cultural oasis in the heart of Hyderabad, giving impetus to reviving local building materials and traditional ways of construction as well as providing the public a glimpse into the lives of the old ruling family of Asaf Jah.



The **Old Houses in the World Heritage Fort of Galle**, Sri Lanka, has been recognized with an Award of Merit. The restoration of 55 old houses in the World Heritage Fort of Galle has revived the characteristics of Dutch hybrid domestic architecture and restored the town's historic streetscapes, which have been disappearing under the pressures of modernization. The project is notable for valorizing privately-owned, non-listed historic houses in Sri Lanka, and pioneering a new model for preserving them using a combination of homeowner contributions and grant funding from a heritage foundation.



The **North Xinjiao Street**, Zhejiang, China has been recognized with Honorable Mention. The project has restored the last remaining traditional commercial street in Taizhou as an historic enclave in the middle of a rapidly-developing modern city, representing a victory for the local residents, as it has sustained both the physical as well as the social fabric of the place. Traditional customs have been revived, ensuring that the 100-year old street once again is a vibrant part of the city's living history.



The **Ballarat Mechanics' Institute** in Victoria, Australia has been recognized with an Honorable Mention. The refurbishment of the building has restored the iconic landmark of the 19th century gold mining town and showcases a significant chapter of Australia's heritage. The highlight of the project is the restoration of the street façade, which demonstrates strong technical prowess and reinforces the coherence of the historic urban landscape. Exceptional public-private commitment to ensure the on-going accessibility and continuity of the institute's historical, architectural and social significance was demonstrated.



The **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Prince of Wales Museum)** in Mumbai, India has received an Honorable Mention. The project has given a much needed uplift to a major Indo-Saracenic monument that houses one of Mumbai's leading museums. The project is notable for the careful restoration of the façade, which typifies the eclectic mixture of European, Hindu and Islamic architecture that characterizes the heritage building. Public-private partnership is noteworthy in this project which will ensure the sustainability of this graceful edifice as a landmark in the historic Fort precinct for generations to come.

Further information about the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation and this year's winning entries can be found at the following website:  
<http://www.unescobbkk.org/culture/heritageawards>

**Media contact :**

Culture Unit  
UNESCO Bangkok  
Tel : (66 2) 391-0577 Ext. 509  
Fax: (66 2) 391-0866  
Email: [culture.bgk@unesco.org](mailto:culture.bgk@unesco.org)