

EDITORIAL

The Asian School of Knowledge (ASK) is delighted to bring to you this issue of the ISVS e-journal pursuant to the ISVS-14 in Vietnam in December 2025. ISVS-14 made history by connecting with other design disciplines other than architecture, which vernacular is often connected with, and demonstrated how traditions and vernacular could inform design professions such as fashion, graphics, furniture and jewelry design. Some of the papers from the ISVS-14 will thus appear in this issue and the forthcoming ones that will illuminate the relevance of traditions and the vernacular in architecture as well in other design fields.

This issue of the ISVS e-journal has nine papers in keeping with the scale-down approach which it is following since the beginning of 2025. In the first paper of this issue, Tadiboina Samantha Kumara, Pidaparathi Lakshmi Prasannab & Ramesh Srikondac present how sustainable traditional materials and practices are employed in the production of architecture in rural Andhra Pradesh in India. They point out that traditional practices in rural Andhra Pradesh embody a deep relationship between culture, environment, and material use. They conclude that integrating traditional knowledge with modern design approaches can enhance resilience, promote local economies, and sustainable development in rural settings in India.

In the second paper, Nurulin Timur examines the influence of ancient Indian spatial concepts on the geometry of Kangju Architecture in Central Asia: Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. This is a unique study, and a continuation of a similar issue of origins and meanings of cross-shaped buildings that exist in Central Asia. She demonstrates that the architecture of Kangju is closely connected with ancient Indian architectural traditions. Indeed, she concludes that the religious buildings in Kangju most likely relied on knowledge derived from the ancient Indian treatises on geometry, such as Vastu-vidya and the Śulba Sūtras.

Barry O'Reilly takes us far away from Uzbekistan into Ireland and to examine a completely different issue. He examines architect-designed houses across three eras in Ireland, inspired by the historical vernacular. He thus concludes that the 'bungalow': a form of architect-designed house that has originated in Ireland stands between the formal and the vernacular and continues to influence the architect designed houses.

Tran Hanh Minh Phuong brings us back to the sustainability of vernacular. She points out that the ancient houses of Binh Duong represent an essential layer of indigenous heritage of Vietnam, where cultural values, material intelligence and environmental adaptations intersect. Constructed mainly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these dwellings illustrate local ingenuity in responding to climatic conditions while sustaining social and spiritual traditions. She concludes that the ancient houses of Binh Duong in Vietnam demonstrate "embedded sustainability" where ecological performance is integral to spatial and cultural logic. They offer enduring lessons for environmentally responsive and culturally grounded architectural practice.

In contrast, Lestari and Ikaputra examine a very different issue. They focus on the distinctive structural systems of vernacular houses, bringing insights into the architectural tectonics of Lamban Balakh in Pekon Hujung, in West Lampung, Indonesia. They demonstrate that this is a great example of local expertise and creative structural adaptation, showcasing the earthquake-resistant vernacular architecture in Indonesia.

Hai-Yen Hoang sees a huge issue in the high-rise buildings in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. He therefore examines how the traditional principles can inform sustainable design strategies for contemporary high-rise buildings in HCMC. He discovers that integrating vernacular wisdom into modern constructions could enhance thermal comfort, reduce energy demand, and support a low-carbon transition. He concludes that vernacular heritage offers a rich source of sustainable knowledge applicable to modern sustainable architecture.

Anshika Sharma examines the interplay of spirituality and vernacular built forms in riverine settlements in Asia. She studies three settings: Varanasi in India, Hoi An in Vietnam, and Ayutthaya in Thailand. By reframing sacred landscapes as living vernacular systems, she advances culturally responsive strategies for managing heritage riverfront settlements in rapidly transforming Asian cities, which indeed is an urgent need.

Sara Feras Hashem takes us to Bahrain, where urbanization is transforming the cities. She examines the erosion of architectural identity of Bahrain in the face of globalization and demonstrates that there exists a strong preference for traditional architecture and a concern that modern architecture lacks cultural resonance.

Finally, Foram Bhatt and Aditya Jain present the approaches to settlement conservation in historic towns of Gujarat, India, in the face of urban development. They conclude that there is an urgent need to derive heritage-centric development bylaws to protect the integrity and authenticity of the historic settlements. Indeed, they develop a framework to create context-responsive interventions for retaining heritage in India.

Undeniably, these papers divulge the nuances of the manifestations of culture, traditions and the unique practices that exist in the human settlements bringing out insights hitherto not available. We are grateful to the authors for the insights shared. We look forward to their active contributions in the future too.

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Editor-in-Chief