



Outline of the dimension stone potential in Thailand

A. Hoffmann and S. Siegesmund

Geoscience Centre of the University of Goettingen, Germany (ahoffma2@gwdg.de / Fax: +49 551 399700 / Phone: +49 551 399703)

The production of dimension stones is well established in Thailand and the country has considerable processing capacities in the region after China. The geological background of Thailand provides a huge potential of dimension stones, ranging from magmatic and metamorphic to sedimentary rocks. Major parts of the product range were used during times of economic wealth in the first part of the 1990s, when intensive construction activities took place especially in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area. But in 1997, the Asian countries and in particular those of SE-Asia were seriously affected by an economic crisis and many companies were forced to produce at very low levels for years. Since a recovery in 2001, the domestic building stone industry in Thailand is growing at an accelerated rate and the prospects of this continued growth are still promising. The expansion process for granite and marble sites in Thailand is mainly carried by companies defined as large scale enterprises, whereas new quarries in the sandstone sector are often operated by small to medium sized companies. The production sites are widely distributed across the country. However, investigations on the geological and economic assessment of dimension stone deposits in Thailand reveal that certain areas can be considered to play a major role in the production and processing of the material. Provinces like Tak, Khamphaeng Phet or Nakhon Ratchasima are prominent locations for the domestic production of granite, marble and sandstone and have an important influence on the country's dimension stone output. The conclusion is made on the basis of both quantities and variation of the products as not only the common materials are offered. One of the areas holds a deposit of an exceptional hornblendite that is presently mined and is supposed to have no competitor on the international market. The intention of the presentation is therefore, to provide information on characteristic products and processing data of selected provinces that demonstrate the dimension stone potential in Thailand.